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**VICTOR BANCROFT, MATLOCK.**



and Levison's crowd licked Backe's lot. Two more ties to be played on Saturday—that's to-morrow. That will finish the first round. Study No. 6 plays Figgins & Co. of the New House, and I play a fag team." Grundy snorted. "Like the cheek of the Third Form fags to enter into the competition at all. Still, they were let in, and I'm drawn to play against D'Arcy minor's fags. It won't be anything of a match, still, I'm going to take proper measures to win."

"Oh, good!" said Wilkins, suppressing a yawn. "I've been making up my team," resumed Grundy. "Now, the advantage of the ties being played on different days is this, that fellows can play in more than one tie. For instance, Tom Merry's lot don't play again till the semi-finals; so there's no reason why I shouldn't borrow Tom Merry to play for me."

"Oh!"

"Mind, I don't think much of Tom Merry as a footballer," said Grundy disparagingly. "Not my style at all."

"Not your style, certainly!" murmured Gunn. "So I've made up a list of fellows who aren't playing in the ties on Saturday to put in my team," said Grundy. "Rather a curious lot, really, but a football captain must work with what material he can get."

"Oh," said Wilkins, "so—so that's what you've been scribbling on that paper?"

"What did you think it was?"

"Oh, some game or other," said Wilkins.

"You silly chump!"

"Hee! Pass the toast, Gunn!"

"Now," said Grundy, eyeing his study-mates, "we're pals in this study, and you two fellows are footballers—after a fashion."

"Only after a fashion!" murmured Wilkins.

"Yes, I'd like to put you in my eleven, to win the cup!" said Grundy. "Can't very well leave you out. Only—you don't mind my putting it plainly—we want to win the cup!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wilkins and Gunn.

"I hate to say anything unpleasant to pals," said Grundy, "but you see how it stands. I want to win the cup. Yet I feel that it wouldn't be chummy to leave you out of the team."

That was apparently Grundy's difficulty. Wilkins and Gunn stared at him. As Wilkins and Gunn had confided to one another—privately—that they wouldn't be found dead in Grundy's team, the difficulty did not seem to them insuperable.

"Oh!" said Wilkins. "I—I—I see!"

"I see!" murmured Gunn.

How to get out of playing for Grundy, without having a fight on their hands, had been the problem that confronted Wilkins and Gunn. Grundy was opening a way for them.

"My dear old chap," said Wilkins, "leave us out. We—we shan't take it amiss."

"Not at all!" said Gunn heartily.

"You mean that?" asked Grundy.

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, quite!"

Grundy smiled genially.

"Well, that's sportsmanlike," he said. "I'd hate to leave you out, but the way you take it makes it easier. You see, this self-sacrifice on your part—"

"Self-sacrifice!" murmured Wilkins. "Oh! Ah! Yes."

"This self-sacrifice on your part makes my job easier. And you'll be compensated by seeing the cup in the study. It will look rather well on the bookcase," said Grundy, glancing round.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Grundy. He simply couldn't help it. Gunn seemed to be suffocating.

Grundy stared at Wilkins.

"What's the joke?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha—I—I mean—nothing!" gasped Wilkins. "The—the cup will look nobly on the bookcase—when—when you've won it."

"When?" gasped Gunn.

"I don't see where the corker comes in," said Grundy, puzzled. "Look here, you chaps! I hate leaving you out! In the first round I play only a fag team. Dash it all, if you're keen on it, I'll play you and chance it! It's understood, of course, that you can't play for me in the second round. I couldn't risk that. But against the fags—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You expect to get into the second round?" shrieked Wilkins.

"Eh? Of course!"

There was a yell from Wilkins and Gunn. They tried to keep grave when Grundy was talking football, but it was too much for them. Wilkins sometimes played for the junior eleven, Gunn was a fairly good footballer; either of them could have made rings round Grundy at the game, or any other game. So Grundy's remarks had their humorous side, though the great George Alfred was unaware of it.

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Grundy jumped up from the table.

"What do you mean?" he roared. "What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose this means that you've got doubts about the cup coming to this study!" roared Grundy. "Well, there might be a doubt about it if I played you two silly owls in my eleven! I shan't do it! After this, I decline to play either of you! I was willing to take the risk. Now I won't! You're out of it—right out!"

And George Alfred Grundy walked out of the study and closed the door after him with a resounding slam. And it was quite some time before Wilkins and Gunn could control their merriment sufficiently to finish the toast and sosses.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Rebellious Recruits!

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther had finished prep, and were chatting in Study No. 10 in the Shell before going down. Their talk ran on the subject of the Cardev Cup—the one great topic at St. Jim's in these days.

It was quite a big affair—the competition for the Cardev Cup—that handsome silver challenge cup stood by old Lord Reckness in his grandson's name, now reposing in Mr. Railton's study. It was not every school, as many of the St. Jim's fellows remarked, that could turn out eight junior teams to compete for a cup.

True it was, the eight elevens were not all complete. Grundy's team was still very much 'in the air.' Other teams borrowed players from teams that did not happen to be playing on the same day. Still, there were eight football captains competing, and in each tie they could put an eleven, of sorts, into the field—excepting perhaps Grundy. It remained to be seen what sort of team Grundy could put into the field.

"That as Grundy oughtn't to have been let in, really," Monty Lowther remarked. "He'll never raise an eleven, and the match goes to the other side if he can't turn up for it."

"Well, he undertook to put an eleven into the field," said Tom Merry. "I don't see how he could have been barred. I suppose he can bag Wilkins and Gunn. They always toe the line in his study."

"It came easier with eight teams than seven," remarked Manners. "If Kangaroo had raised a team—he was talking about making up a Colonial eleven—then Grundy could have been sat on."

"Hallo! Talk of angels!" murmured Lowther.

Grundy of the Shell threw the door open and walked into the study. The Terrible Three of the Shell noticed that he had in his hand a sheet of impet paper scrawled with names.

Grundy nodded to the Terrible Three. His manner was quite genial. Generally, Grundy hadn't much politeness to waste on anybody. Now he was wasting some on Tom Merry & Co.

"Time we went down," remarked Tom Merry, rising as Grundy came in. That was a hint for the interview to be short. Grundy's society was not enjoyed or yearned after by his Form-fellows. Grundy's conversation was generally about himself—a subject he found full of interest, but which seemed to pall, somehow, on other fellows.

"Don't clear out yet," said Grundy amicably. "I've come to speak to you about the cup to-morrow, Tom Merry."

"We're not playing to-morrow," said Tom. "It's only the finish of the first round, and we played out our tie with Reddy on Wednesday."

"I know. But I'm playing to-morrow."

"Oh! You!" Tom smiled. "Of course! You're drawn against Wally & Co. of the Third."

"Chance for you, Grundy," remarked Manners. "If you pull up your socks you might beat a fag team—with luck."

"It would want a lot of luck," remarked Monty Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"Don't talk rot!" said Grundy tersely. "I'm making up the final list of my eleven, Tom Merry."

"Oh! You've got an eleven together?" asked the captain of the Shell, with interest. Nobody but Grundy had ever believed that George Alfred would succeed in getting an eleven together.

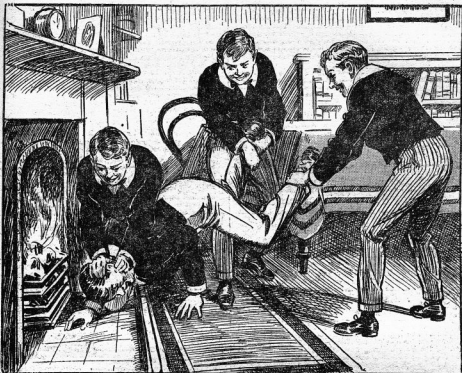
"I'm getting it," explained Grundy. "You see, the ties being played out on different days gives me a chance. It's understood that a fellow who plays for one captain on one day can play for another on another day if he likes."

"That's so."

"Well, here's the list," said Grundy. "I think it's a pretty good one. I've put you in."

"Me!" ejaculated Tom.

"Yes. That doesn't mean that I think much of your



"So you refuse to play for me, Tom Merry?" roared Grundy. "Then I'll jolly well stop you up for your cheek!" In great wrath, he rushed at the captain of the Shell. The Terrible Three were ready for him. They seized him, and he was whirled off the floor. As he struggled furiously, his head was rubbed in the cinders and ashes in the fender. (See page 6.)

footer," said Grundy. "I don't! But a fellow must work with what materials he can get hold of. See?"

"I—I see!" gasped Tom. "But—"

"Don't jaw for a minute, old chap. Look at the list." Tom Merry looked at the list as Grundy held it out. There were plenty of erasures on it, showing that Grundy had gone over it very carefully indeed. He had made a long list of names, about twenty or twenty-five, and crossed out all but eleven. They were the pick of the bunch, in Grundy's opinion. Whether they would consent to play under Grundy's captaincy was, apparently, a point he had not yet considered.

Tom Merry, Talbot, Noble, Gore, Dane, Glyn, Lowther, Levison, Olive, Manners, Grundy!

That was Grundy's list. Quite a good one, excepting for the last-named. The Terrible Three aimed at it: They were all there. Grundy was honouring the whole study. But it was an honour that was not coveted by Study No. 10 in the Shell.

"Not bad, considering the material I've got to work on—what!" said Grundy.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"I don't really like putting in Fourth Form kids like Levison and Olive," said Grundy. "But it's a case of necessity. Besides, they play a fairly good game. Not my style, but fairly good."

"Have they agreed to play?"

"I haven't told them yet. I'm going round telling all the fellows that I've selected now," said Grundy. "I've dropped in to tell you not to have any other engagement for to-morrow afternoon."

"To—to tell us!" stammered Manners. "Not to ask us!"

"It's the same thing," said Grundy. "Now, I want you to understand that, though I'm playing you chaps for want of better material, I'm captain of the team, and that's got to be clear at the start. The fact that you are junior captain of St. Jim's, Tom Merry, had better be forgotten at once. In my team you're simply an ordinary player, like the rest, and there will be no room for swank."

"Oh!" gasped Tom.

"I shall stand no nonsense, you know."

"Dear man!" said Monty Lowther.

"That's all," added Grundy, and he turned to the door. Tom Merry gasped.

"Hold on! That's not quite all."

Grundy glanced back.

"You needn't trouble to make any suggestions, Merry. You're not likely to be able to advise me about the team, you know. I fancy I know more about football than you do."

"Ha, ha, ha! I wasn't going to make suggestions," gurgled the captain of the Shell. "I only want to mention that I sha'n't be playing for you to-morrow, Grundy. As you seem to have taken it for granted, I thought I'd better mention it."

Grundy stared at him.

"Not playing?" he exclaimed.

"No fear!"

"Same here, old bean!" smiled Lowther.

"And here!" said Manners, with a chuckle.

"And why not?" demanded Grundy, puzzled and angry. "There's no rule, I tell you, against a fellow playing for any team he likes, so long as his own lot isn't engaged on the same day."

"I know that!" chuckled Tom Merry. "I'll explain if you like. You see, you can't play footer for toffee!"

"What?"

"I wouldn't be found dead and buried in your eleven!" explained the captain of the Shell. "Is that clear?"

Apparently it was not quite clear to Grundy. He had to think it out. He wrinkled his brows and thought it out, the Terrible Three watching him with grinning faces. Finally Grundy appeared to understand, and a dark frown overspread his rugged face.

"That's cheek!" he said.

"Go hon!"

"So you refuse to play for me?" roared Grundy.

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"Just that!"

"Then I'll jolly well mop you up for your cheek!"

Grundy, in great wrath, rubbed at the captain of the Shell. But the Terrible Three were ready for him. Three pairs of hands seized George Alfred Grundy, and he was whirled off the floor. As he struggled furiously in the grasp of the Terrible Three his head was rubbed in the cinders and ashes in the fender. Then he left the study—at one fell swoop!

Bump!

Tom Merry closed the door after Grundy of the Shell. Grundy sat in the passage, and gasped, and rubbed cinders from his hair, in a state of dazed astonishment and wrath. It was some minutes before he staggered to his feet; and then he hurled open the door of Study No. 10 and rushed in.

For some moments there were wild sounds from Study No. 10—sounds of tramping feet and rocking furniture, of gasping and yelling and spluttering. Then George Alfred Grundy came hurtling through the doorway again, to land in the passage with another bump. This time his hair, already ash and cindery, was adorned with ink. Again the study door closed on him.

Grundy sat and spluttered. And when he staggered up again he did not charge into Study No. 10 any more. He limped away to his own quarters. For quite a long time afterwards Grundy was busy with his hair, and when he was seen later he had a very flushed face. And Tom Merry & Co. were not down to play in Grundy's eleven in the captiv.

### CHAPTER 3. Just Like Gussy!

"PASS!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Pass, you ass!"

"Weally—"

"Fathead!"

"I do not regard this as the propog thing to do, Blake," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, gently but firmly. "You are vewy well awah that we are not allowed to play football in the passage."

"Bow-wow!"

"And there would be a waw if a prefect came up."

"Bother the prefects!"

"The worst of a prefect, Blake, is that he declines to be bothered. You had better chuck it!"

There was no doubt that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, was right. In his statements he was displaying his well-known tact and judgment.

But Blake and Herries and Digby did not seem to see it. Neither did Julian, nor Kerziah, nor Hammond, nor Reilly, nor any of the Fourth Form fellows who were "urging the flying ball" in forbidden precincts.

As a rule Blake did not venture on football in the corridor. But it was a special occasion.

Study No. 6 were entered as a separate team in the cup competition. Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy were the backbone of the new team, as it were—the rest of the members being picked up from the Fourth. On the morrow the tie was to be played—Blake & Co. of Study No. 6 against Figgins & Co. of the New House. And darkness was setting in early now, and the juniors hadn't so much time for footer practice as they wanted. So, the occasion being very special, Blake had introduced a football into the Fourth Form passage after tea, and once the game was started plenty of juniors were found ready to join in it.

Certainly it wasn't a very scientific game. There was more kick and rush than anything else. The ball bounced in at the open doors of studies—in touch, as Blake said—it rolled down the stairs, and had to be chased and recaptured; it was, in fact, a very free and easy game, and King Football would hardly have known himself in such a guise. Still, there it was, such as it was, and Blake declared that it was better than slacking about in the studies. It wasn't Blake's fault that darkness set in so soon after lessons. That was the fault of the climate, for which Blake declined to take responsibility. Football in the passage might bear only a distant resemblance to Soccer. But such as it was, there it was—and only the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was raised in expostulation. D'Arcy had just come upstairs, wondering what the terrific row in the Fourth Form passage meant, and thinking that it was perhaps a New House raid. The ball bumped on him as he reached the landing, and he was called upon to pass. Instead of which he proceeded to give the footballers some fatherly advice.

Instead of listening to that paternal counsel, Jack Blake rushed at the ball, slaving Arthur Augustus aside. He sent it whirling up the passage, in the midst of the juniors.

"On the ball!" roared Herries.

"Go it! Play up!"

"Gwoogh!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he staggered against the passage wall. "Blake, I regard you as a wude head!"

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"Play up!"

"On the ball!"

Half a dozen juniors were on the ball, and they tripped and sprawled over it. Arthur Augustus, standing by the top stair, jammed his eyeglasses into his eye and surveyed the scene with disapproval. The ball came out of the press and whizzed along the passage towards the head of the stairs.

Blake scrambled up.

"Stop that ball, Gussy!" he roared.

Arthur Augustus hesitated a moment, then he played up. The ball was coming right at him, and if he allowed it to pass it would shoot down the staircase. So Arthur Augustus met it with a kick—rather a hasty and unjudged kick, as it proved. For the ball, instead of speeding up the passage again, rose right into the air over Gussy's head, and dropped on the staircase.

"Wooooop!"

"There was a wild yell on the stairs.

A little gentleman in cap and gown and spectacles was hurrying up the stairs, and he was precisely in time to catch the ball with his head.

It was Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form.

Mr. Lathom, of course, had not come upstairs with the intention of heading the ball. He was no footballer.

But he headed it!

The ball bounced off the little gentleman's head and proceeded on its career downstairs. Mr. Lathom sat on a stair and spluttered. Never had Mr. Lathom, in his whole career as a Form master, been so surprised.

Sudden silence fell in the Fourth Form passage.

"Lathom!" gasped Julian,

"Bai Jove!"

"My only hat!"

"We're in for it!"

Mr. Lathom staggered up. He was a good-tempered little gentleman as a rule. Now he looked furious. Perhaps that was not surprising, in the circumstances.

"What—what—what!" he stuttered. He came up to the landing, his face crimson, and his mortar-board cocked at a rakish angle over his left ear. "I—I came here to inquire into the cause of this lawless disturbance, and I have been—been assaulted—"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Blake.

"Quite an accident, sir!" stammered Digby.

"Yass, wawah!"

"Are you playing football in the passage?" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Hem!"

"Answer me, Blake—yes or no?"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Blake.

"Do you know that it is forbidden?"

"Hem!"

"Every boy present will take a hundred lines!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "And the boy who kicked the ball at me will be detained for the half-holiday to-morrow!"

"Oh cwumps!"

"Who was it!" demanded Mr. Lathom.

"Weally, sir—"

"Was it you, D'Arcy?"

"Yass, sir! But—"

"You will be detained to-morrow, D'Arcy, in the Form-room until half-past five o'clock. I shall set you a task in Latin prose. I have a very great mind to cane you also."

"It—it was an accident, sir—"

"That will do! Such accidents must not be allowed to happen within the precincts of the School House."

Mr. Lathom turned away, very wrathful. Really, the juniors were getting off quite easily, and they knew it. But Arthur Augustus realised, with horror, that detention on the morrow would keep him out of the captiv. That was not to be thought of. He rushed after Mr. Lathom.

"If you please, sir—" gasped Gussy.

"You need say no more, D'Arcy!" said the Fourth Form master over his shoulder.

"I—I have a very important engagement for to-morrow afternoon, sir," stammered Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Lathom paused. He was angry, but he had a very kind heart.

"Indeed! You may tell me what your engagement is, D'Arcy, and I will consider whether I can postpone your detention."

"I am playin', sir—"

"What?"

"Is a football match—"

"Football!" roared Mr. Lathom.

It was an injudicious moment for mentioning football to the Fourth Form master—when his scholarly head was aching from the violent impact of a footer! He glared at Arthur Augustus over his spectacles as if he would eat that noble youth.

"Football! You—you impertinent young rascal!"

"Weally, Mr. Lathom—"

"You are detained to-morrow afternoon!" thundered



The ball rose into the air over Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's head. "Whoop!" There was a sudden wild yell behind him. A little gentleman in cap and gown and spectacles was hurrying up the stairs, and he was precisely in time to catch the ball on his head. It was Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form! (See page 6)

Mr. Lathom. "One word more, and I will detain you for all the half-holidays in the term!"

With that, Mr. Lathom swept down the staircase like a thunderstorm. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed after him speechlessly.

"Bei Jove!" he ejaculated when Mr. Lathom was gone. "The dear man's ratty!" remarked Blake. "Just like Gussy to bung a footer on his sapper!"

"Oh, just!" said Herries.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass indignantly upon his chums.

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Depend on Gussy to get detained when the captie's to be played!" said Digby. "Gussy all over!"

"You uttah asses!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I advised you not to play footah in the passage. You vemenbah—"

"And you kicked the footer at Lathom's cranium!" said Blake. "What did you do it for! Is this a time for larking with Form masters?"

"I wogard it as bein' wholly your fault, Blake! You can thank yourself for losing the Gardew Cup!" said Arthur Augustus sternly.

"Eh? We haven't lost it yet!"

"I am afwaid that it is a practical certainty now, as I shall not be playin' in the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Gussy will have to get off somehow," said Digby. "But I must say that he ought to be bumped for getting detained at a time like this!"

"Yes, rather!" assented Herries.

"It was all your fault!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, in great excitement.

"Bump him!"

Arthur Augustus bolted into Study No. 6 and slammed the door. There was a chortle in the passage. But Blake & Co.

soon returned to seriousness. As a matter of fact, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was wanted in Blake's team for the captie—wanted badly. There were fellows who could have replaced him in ordinary circumstances, but in captie circumstances they were engaged elsewhere. And Gussy, with all his dandified ways, was a good and reliable forward.

That evening Jack Blake had plenty to think about as well as prep. There was a vacancy in his team—on the eve of the captie. It was cruel luck for Study No. 6, and Blake & Co. gave much more serious thought to it than they gave to prep.

#### CHAPTER 4. Nothing Doing!

**G**EORGE ALFRED GRUNDY of the Shell came out of Study No. 11 in the Shell passage suddenly. That study belonged to Harry Noble, otherwise known as Kangaroo, and Dane and Glyn. All three of them were "down" to play in Grundy's eleven in the captie on Saturday. Grundy had called in to tell them so.

Apparently Grundy had not prospered. This could be seen by the way he emerged from Study No. 11. He came out suddenly, and sat down with a jolt and a jar. His football list was crummed down the back of his neck; his collar was round his left ear, and his jacket was split. This looked as if Grundy had found trouble, instead of recruits, in Kangaroo's study.

"Grooh-hooh-hooh!" splattered Grundy, as he scrambled up breathlessly.

He limped away, setting himself to rights as he went. He was in a state of astonishment and annoyance.

First, the Terrible Three had declined to play for him—emphatically. Now Kangaroo & Co. had declined the honour with equal emphasis. Grundy simply couldn't understand it. Fellows might have been expected to jump at the chance of playing under such distinguished leadership. But they

didn't jump at the chance. Apparently they jumped at Grundy!

It was inexplicable, but there it was. Dark doubts began to assail Grundy as to whether he would fill up his eleven in time for the match. It looked as if he would have to fall back on Wilkins and Gunn, after all, and still have vacancies to fill.

"Still, there's the Fourth Form kids!" he murmured. "Levison and Clive won't be bad—under my leadership! And I can let some more fags in. After all, the football here is all much of a muchness; nobody plays in quite my style. A really good and capable captain can pull together almost any sort of a team. That's one comfort."

Comforted by that reflection, Grundy started for Study No. 9 in the Fourth, when he had set himself to rights.

He found Levison and Clive and Cardew in Study No. 9, the first two at prep, the last named lounging in the armchair, trying to make up his lazy mind to begin. Levison & Co. snubbed at the sight of Grundy. They had heard of his recruiting efforts. And the mere thought of Grundy in connection with football, was enough to make any fellow smile.

"Busy?" asked Grundy politely, with unusual politeness for Grundy. Perhaps he was learning a lesson from his experiences with Tom Merry and Kangaroo.

"Yes," answered Levison.

"Well, I won't keep you long," said Grundy.

"Don't keep us at all!" suggested Clive.

to playing in the same team with a born idiot who doesn't know a goalkeeper from a goalkeeper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, the fags will walk all over any team that plays with such a dummy as you in it," further explained Levison. "Nobody is thirsting for a licking from the Third Form. Catch on!"

"I understand," said Grundy darkly. "It's a conspiracy. I'm not standing it. Now, it's too late, Levison; I shall not play you in my eleven. You either, Clive. But I'm going to show you what I think of you for entering into a conspiracy like this against the only really good footballer in the school."

Grundy made a jump as he finished, and the next moment Ernest Levison's head was in chancery. Levison roared, as he was dragged away from the table, with Grundy punching at him, as if Grundy mistook him for a punchball.

"Thump, thump, thump!"

"Yoop! Yoop! Rescue!" raved Levison, struggling wildly in the burly Shell fellow's grasp.

"Oh gad!" gasped Cardew. "Pile in, Clivey!"

Sidney Clive did not need telling. He was already jumping at Grundy. Ralph Reckness Cardew detached himself from the armchair, and joined in. Grundy came down on the study carpet with a crash, still clutching Levison, and dragging that hapless youth down with him.

"Og, ow!" gasped Clive.

"Og, ow! Ooooop!" spluttered Levison. "Mop up the silly idiot! Squash him! Slaughter him!"

## JAMES BLAIR. (Cardiff City and Scottish International.)

THE rise of Cardiff City has been one of the romances of the football field during recent years, and it is not going too far to say that one of the players who has contributed at least a fair share to the success of the side which plays at Ninian Park is left full-back James Blair. Standing five feet nine inches, and weighing eleven stone eight pounds, he is as safe and sure in defence as a rock, and the strength of his man stands out clearly the minute you see him on the field—all muscle and as hard as steel.

Blair is not one of those fall-backs who go tearing up and down the field, here, there, and everywhere. Rather might he be described as typically Scottish in style, which means that he has discovered the art of making his head save his legs from unnecessary running. This, of course, is the same as saying that he knows all there is to know about being in the right place at the right time, and the way he constantly intervenes to break up the combination of the wing men opposed to him provides an object lesson in anticipation.

Born at Glenbowg, which, as you may know, is in Scotland, Blair showed signs of real football genius at the early age of fifteen, being then associated with a club called Bonnybridge Athletic. Later he was induced to become a professional member of the Clyde team, and after they had played him in several positions on the field, he finally settled down to his present job as left-back.

He first came under the notice of the selectors of representative teams in 1912, when he appeared for the Scottish League against

## See This Week's FREE Photo.

the English League, and his play that day impressed the managers of several English clubs who happened to be present. Many offers were made for his services, but in the end it was the Wednesday of Sheffield, which managed to hook this fine player, though to do so they had to pay what was in those days the very big transfer fee of £1,950. This was in 1915.

During the war Blair went back to Scotland, and when the conflict was over and Victory International matches were played, Blair was recognized as the best man in the country in his position, and was given a couple of caps. But, of course, Sheffield Wednesday was the club to which he really belonged, and he returned to the place of cutlery. For some reason or other, however, he never seemed to settle down completely, and made no secret of the fact that he would like a move from Sheffield. Hence his transfer to Cardiff City for a fee at least twice as big as that which the Wednesday had originally paid for him.

Not every footballer who has changed his club at a big price has proved a sound investment, but seeing that Blair immediately helped his new masters to win a place in the First Division, as well as to get to the Semi-final of the Cup, it may be suggested that Cardiff people have been well satisfied with their bargain. He has been Scotland's left-back in all their international matches since the war was over, and if he continues to show his present form, we may be justified in referring to him as an international player who "chooses himself." A natural footballer—cool, calm, and full of resource.

## Another Splendid AUTOGRAPHED Photograph FREE Next Week. (A. E. QUANTRILL, Preston North End.)

Grundy did not heed that suggestion.

"It's about the football to-morrow," he said. "The captie, you know."

"Our match was played on Wednesday," answered Levison. "We don't play again till the semi-finals next week."

"You are free to volunteer for my team to-morrow, if you like."

"Oh, if we like, certainly!" said Levison, laughing.

"I" murmured Clive.

"I want you two fellows—"

"Not little me?" asked Cardew plaintively.

"No fear!" No lazy slackers in my eleven," answered Grundy. "I'm out for the cup, you see. You're no good, Cardew."

"Thanks, old bean!"

"I've got your names down, Levison and Clive," said Grundy. "I hope you'll play for me to-morrow."

Certainly Grundy's manners were improving.

"I'm afraid it can't be done," said Levison, while Clive shook his head and resumed his prep.

"Now, look here, Levison, I want you," said Grundy, with emphasis. "I've put it civilly—quite civilly. But I don't expect a refusal."

"You're getting it, all the same," smiled Levison. "Shut the door after you, Grundy."

"This looks to me like a conspiracy," said Grundy darkly. "A regular conspiracy to keep me from making up an eleven for the captie. There's no other reason why fellows should refuse to play for my team in this wholesale way."

"You can't think of any other reason," grinned Levison. "Doesn't it occur to you that fellows might have an objection

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Oooop!" roared Grundy, as Study No. 9 proceeded to deal with him, scientifically and methodically.

Grundy had had painful experiences that evening in Tom Merry's study and in Kangaroo's study. But compared with his experiences in Study No. 9, his previous adventures were as moonlight into sunlight, as water into wine. He was raged, and rolled, and lumped, and inked, and stumped, and shaken. There was a crimson stream oozing from Levison's nose, and it seemed to make Levison ratty. The wild roars and gurgles of George Alfred Grundy rang far beyond Study No. 9, and brought a crowd of Fourth-Formers out of their rooms to see what was on. A yelling crowd crammed the doorway to look on, apparently greatly entertained.

"Sure, it's only Grundy recruiting," said Reilly. "Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When Grundy was finally bundled out of Study No. 9 he was barely recognisable; he hardly knew himself, or whether he was on his head or his heels, or in one piece or a dozen pieces. How he got back to his own quarters he hardly knew. A yelling crowd followed him to his door, where he staggered in, and collapsed into an armchair.

Wilkins and Gunn, who were at prep, suspended prep to stare at him. They asked him what was up, but Grundy couldn't tell them. He could only gasp and pant and splutter.

So Wilkins and Gunn went on with their prep again, and left him to recover at his leisure.

Grundy found his voice at last. It was feeble and gasping when it came.

"Ow! Oh! Ow! Wow! I've done with the rotters now!"



"I hope they've done with you, too!" said Wilkins cordially. "You look a bit of a wreck!"

"I shall refuse to make up an eleven now!" gasped Grundy. "There's a conspiracy to keep me out of the cupties. I fancy Tom Merry's at the bottom of it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Standing out, after all!" asked Gunn.

"Not at all. Luckily, we're only meeting the fags of the Third in the tie. I could, of course, play such a team entirely on my own, and beat them. I shall not really need a full eleven. I shall want you fellows—"

"Us?" ejaculated Wilkins.

"Yes; you two—"

"But you left us out!"

"I know I did! You're not much good, as I said. But it's a case of any port in a storm," explained Grundy. "Rotten players as you are, you're better than nothing."

Wilkins and Gunn stared at Grundy. It could not be denied that Grundy had a graceful way of putting it.

"I shall show them how much I care for their conspiracy," said Grundy, while his study-mates stared. "I shall play the fags to-morrow with a team of three—you fellows and myself. Of course, we shall beat them easily."

"But—?" stammered Wilkins.

"That's enough! It's settled."

Wilkins and Gunn exchanged a glance. It was settled; Grundy and Alfred Grundy said so, therefore it was so. But Wilkins had an idea—and Gunn had an idea—that when that cuptie came round on Saturday, two members of Grundy's peculiar team would be missing from the scene; and that Grundy, if still keen on playing the tie, would play it on his lonesome own.

But they did not mention that to Grundy!

## CHAPTER 5. In Detention!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY wore a worried look. He turned out of bed in the Fourth Form dormitory on Saturday morning, with a worried look. He walked with it in the quadrangle before breakfast. And at breakfast the worried look was still dimming the light of his aristocratic countenance.

Blake acknowledged that the matter was serious; and to Arthur Augustus it appeared very serious indeed.

It was not without difficulty that Jack Blake had made up a team to represent Study No. 6 in the cupties. Shell fellows were not keen on playing for a team representing a Fourth Form study; so Blake had only the Fourth to choose from—and the School House division of the Fourth; at that! New House Fourth-Formers, naturally, were backing up Figgins & Co. of the New House.

Arthur Augustus was the glass of fashion and the mould of form in his House; but also he was a really good forward, and often played for Tom Merry's eleven in school matches. So he was wanted in Blake's team—badly wanted.

Doubtless he could be replaced, but a substitute would not have been anything like Gussy's form. And Study No. 6 wanted to be at top strength to meet Figgins & Co. in the tie.

And Gussy was detained. It was no use speaking to Mr. Lathom on the subject—the mere mention of football was like a red rag to a bull, so far as Mr. Lathom was concerned, just at present.

In that direction there was "nothing doing." Blake & Co. had to make up their minds to it; though it was not pleasant.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had not made up his mind to it. Without his noble self in the ranks, the cuptie would go to pot—there was no doubt about that, in D'Arcy's mind at least.

Somehow he had to play for his side that afternoon; and the order of detention stood in the way, like a lion in the path.

At morning lessons Arthur Augustus cast several glances at his Form master; but when Mr. Lathom caught his eye, he frowned. Evidently he had not yet forgotten that "biff" from the football on the Fourth Form staircase.

Arthur Augustus determined to placate him as much as possible by being extremely good, and very attentive to lessons. Unfortunately it did not work out like that.

With a worried look on his noble brow, and a worry on his noble mind, Gussy was unable to "play up," as it were.

Instead of being extra satisfactory that morning, he was absentminded; which was natural enough when he was thinking of other matters. Instead of placating Mr. Lathom, he further exasperated that gentleman.

During the morning he earned a hundred lines, and came very near earning a caning.

So that when the Fourth were dismissed, Arthur Augustus was worse off than ever; and it was obviously out of the question to hope that Mr. Lathom might relent on account of the cuptie.

D'Arcy was called to the Form master's desk, as the Fourth marched out, and Mr. Lathom's look was cold and frigid.

"You will return to the Form-room at two o'clock," D'Arcy, said Mr. Lathom.

"If you please, sir—"

"You will remain until half-past five."

"Yaas, sir! But—"

"I shall prepare a task for you, so that you will not be wasting your time, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, sir! But—"

"You have very vague ideas, D'Arcy, on the subject of the ablative absolute."

Arthur Augustus suppressed a groan. If there was anything he really found energy enough to hate, it was the ablative absolute. To miss a footer match, for the sake of being shut up for a whole afternoon with the ablative absolute, was really too bad. It was like insult added to injury.

"A few hours devoted to this important subject will be all for your good, D'Arcy," continued Mr. Lathom.

Arthur Augustus did not betray any signs of enthusiasm.

"You may now go, D'Arcy."

"But, sir—"

"I have said that you may go."

Mr. Lathom's tone was final; and the hapless swell of St. Jim's went. The worried look on his aristocratic brow was still more pronounced.

"Hallo! Little boy in trouble?" asked the cheery voice of Monty Lowther, as the Terrible Three came along the corridor from the Shell-room.

"Weally, Lowthab—"

"What's the trouble, old chap?" asked Tom Merry, with a smile.

"It's weally feahful, deah boy. The cuptie this afternoon is goin' to pot," groaned Arthur Augustus. "I am detained until five-thirty, and I shall not be able to play."

"Too bad, old fellow!" said Manners sympathetically.

"It means Figgins & Co. winnin' the tie, I feah," said Arthur Augustus. "Lathom is verry watty, and he will not let me off. But there is a proverb that desperate diseases weaquish desperate remedies, isn't there? I am thinkin' seriously of cuttin' detention."

Tom Merry whistled.

"That's rather serious, old chap."

"Yaas, wathab! But, as the fellow warns in the play, it amounts to be the only way, you know."

"If Lathom misses you—"

"I shall have to wick it."

"But he would guess where you were, and come down to Little Side and yank you back," said Tom.

"Bai Jove!"

"Isn't it just like Gussy to get detained on an occasion like this," said Blake, coming along. "You can always rely on him to do something of this kind."

"Weally, Blake—"

"It's too bad!" said Tom Merry. "We'll try to help. After all, it's up to Shell fellows—Middle School chaps—to help you fags out of your silly troubles."

"You silly, cheeky owl!" roared Blake.

"I regard you as an ass, Tom Merry!"

Which was all the gratitude the captain of the Shell received from the chums of the Fourth. They walked away together, and Tom Merry grinned.

"It's hard cheese!" he said. "We must try to think this out, you fellows. We're not playing this afternoon, and if we can help Gussy—"

"I don't want to miss seeing Grundy's game!" said Lowther.

"Hs, ha, ha!"

"We mustn't miss that," agreed Tom. "But we must help Gussy out of his scrape somehow. We'll think it over."

The Terrible Three, in the kindness of their hearts, thought it over. But by dinner-time nothing had occurred to their minds; and after dinner they thought it over again, still without any net result. And at two o'clock Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a heavy heart, went into the Fourth Form rooms with his books and a worried brow; and Mr. Lathom kindly handed him a Latin exercise—which was to improve vastly his knowledge of the ablative absolute. Then Mr. Lathom left him to enjoy himself, as it were, remarking that he would look into the Form-room later on.

At which Arthur Augustus's noble heart sank almost into his elegant boots.

If Mr. Lathom was going to look into the Form-room during his detention, obviously he could not "cut"; he would be missed at once and brought back. The thought of playing in the cuptie faded from Gussy's mind, and was gone like a beautiful dream; and in the most pessimistic mood he had ever experienced, the swell of St. Jim's settled down dismally to an afternoon with the ablative absolute.

## CHAPTER 6.

## All Right for Wally!

**D**'ARCY MINOR—the younger brother of the great Arthur Augustus—was far from sharing Gussy's pessimism that afternoon. Wally of the Third was in great spirits.

Most of the Shell and the Fourth agreed that it was a cheek for the Third to butt into the cup competition at all. But the Third had butted in; and Wally, their great chief, had had the luck to be drawn against Grundy in the first round.

It was probable that Wally & Co. had no great expectation of fighting their way into the final. But it was something to survive the first round; and with Grundy's team to beat, there was a good chance of earning that distinction, at least; whereas Wally & Co. rejoiced.

Grundy's recruiting efforts had caused much merriment in the School House; most of all among the Third. Grundy in search of a team had become a standing joke already.

It was quite clear by Saturday that Grundy would not have a full eleven ready; but with whatever kind of an eleven he had formed, he had to meet his engagement, or let the victory be awarded to the other side. That was the condition of the contest.

Wally of the Third did not expect Grundy to turn up with more than four or five assistants; but by Saturday afternoon it transpired that Grundy did not expect to lead more than two followers into the field.

Only Wilkins and Gunn, his study-mates, were now on Grundy's list. Despised and rejected at first, they had been gathered in by Grundy as a last resort. It did not occur to Grundy that Wilkins and Gunn might have something to say about that.

He told them they would be wanted, and that, in Grundy's opinion, was all that was necessary.

"Three of them," Wally said to his comrades, after dinner—"only three, and one the biggest chump at St. Jim's! Looks like a win for little us—what?"

"It does—it do!" agreed Reggie Manners.

"Simply a walk-over," said Levison minor. "It was utter rot for Grundy to butt into the bizney at all."

"Tooh!" agreed Wally. "But it sees us safely through the first round."

"Yes, rather!"

"Not to put too fine a point on it," continued Wally. "I'm not quite sure—ahem!—what will happen if we meet Tom Merry's team in the next round, or even Study No. 6, or Figgins & Co. But, anyhow, the fellows won't be able to say we were knocked out in the first round. Grundy is seeing us safely through."

"Vote of thanks to Grundy!" remarked Jameson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the fags chuckled gleefully.

So while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was settling down to the relative absolute in the Form-room, Wally D'Arcy was leading his merry men to the football-field in cheery anticipation of victory.

A good many fellows had determined to see the match. Lelevre of the Fifth was referee, and Lelevre grumbled when he heard that Grundy was going into the field eight men short. However, there was nothing to be done. The tin had to be played, and Grundy had the right to leave out as many men as he liked.

Only two fellows knew, so far, that Grundy's team was going to be still fewer in numbers than three. Those two fellows were Wilkins and Gunn.

After dinner, Grundy told his followers what he expected of them. In spite of the depleted state of his team, Grundy was full of cheery confidence. He himself was equal to at least four or five fellows in the team, so the paucity of numbers was not really such a serious matter as might have been supposed. He explained this to Wilkins and Gunn, with the idea of backing them.

Wilkins and Gunn listened politely. As they had no intention whatever of "guying" themselves by playing in such a farcical match, they did not mind letting Grundy run on.

So George Alfred Grundy ran on.

"I want you to back me up as much as possible, of course," he said. "It's really lucky that we've got only Third Form fags to meet, in the circumstances. Practically, I can beat such a team on my own. But you fellows will be useful."

"That's good!" said Wilkins solemnly.

"I shall put you in as back, Wilkins."

"I play forward when I play in the junior eleven," murmured Wilkins.

"That's owing to Tom Merry's want of judgment."

"Oh!"

"I'm a football skipper of a rather different calibre from Tom Merry," Grundy explained.

"You are!" agreed Wilkins, with conviction.

"Three Shell fellows ought to be able to beat any number of fags," said Grundy. "I shall take the forward line all to

myself, and help all round. You will play back, Wilkins, and look after the goal—drop back into the chicken-run if necessary, you know—not that I think it's likely to be necessary."

"No?" asked Gunn.

"No. I shall keep the ball right up to the fags' goal all the time, I expect."

"Oh! I—I see."

"I'm putting you in as half, Gunn."

"Make any arrangements you like, old bean," said Gunn cordially, comforted by the knowledge that he would be miles away when the tie was played.

"Of course," said Grundy. "I shall do that. What you fellows really have to do is to let me have the ball in the unlikely event of the fags getting it past me. You understand?"

"Oh, quite!"

"Then we'd better go in and change," said Grundy, looking at his watch. "The kick-off was fixed for two."

"No time to lose," agreed Wilkins.

The three Shell fellows went into the School House. Grundy went to his study for the handsome match-ball that was to be used in the tie. Wilkins and Gunn dropped behind, and then walked quickly out of the School House. While Grundy was sorting out his match-ball and his football boots, Wilkins and Gunn were wheeling their machines out of gates. They mounted in the road, with smiling faces.

"Dear old Grundy!" remarked Wilkins.

"Dear man!" said Gunn.

"Isn't it wonderful that Grundy can't see what a howling idiot he is?" asked Wilkins.

"Amazing, old chap!"

"Fancy his thinking that we should play the goat on the footer-ground this afternoon, with all St. Jim's chortling at us!" remarked Wilkins. "I wonder what put such ideas into his head!"

"I wonder!" assented Gunn.

And the two Shell fellows rode cheerily off, at a good speed, and were quite a good distance away by the time George Alfred Grundy came out of the School House with his match-ball under his arm.

## CHAPTER 7.

## Grundy's Game.

"SEEN Wilkins!"

"No."

"Seen Gunn!"

"No."

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Grundy, in great exasperation. Grundy of the Shell had arrived on the ground, ready for the match. He arrived alone.

He was rather puzzled that Wilkins and Gunn had not turned up to walk to the ground with him, but he expected to find them there.

They weren't there!

Quite a number of fellows had gathered round the field, but Wilkins and Gunn were only conspicuous by their absence.

Grundy was puzzled and annoyed.

Blake and Figgins were in the crowd. Their own match was timed for two-thirty. They had agreed on that, so as to be able to witness Grundy's game. They did not want to miss an entertainment like that; neither did their followers. They stood round in coats and mufflers, to see that wonderful game got under way.

But there was delay.

"Anybody seen Wilkins and Gunn?" bawled Grundy, addressing the crowd generally.

"I've seen them," said Julian of the Fourth.

"Where are they, then?"

"Gone out."

"What?" roared Grundy.

"Gone out on their bikes," explained Julian, with a grin.

"I saw them start."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter. Wally & Co., who were in the field ready for play, yelled. They had expected to have three opponents in that amazing match. Apparently they were going to have only one! A football team entering the field ten men short was something really unique, and the juniors roared at the idea.

Grundy seemed unable to grasp the truth for some moments.

"Gone out on their bikes!" he stammered. "Just before a match they're to play in. Impossible!"

"I saw them start!" chuckled Julian.

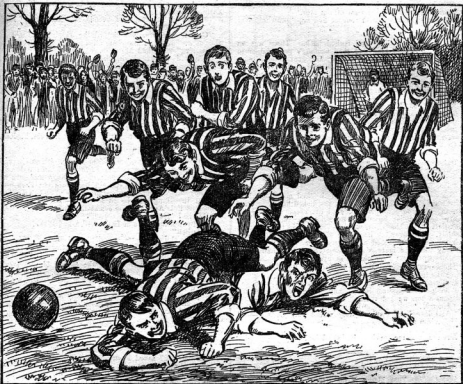
"And, sure, and so did I!" grinned Reilly of the Fourth.

"And, sure, they looked in rather a hurry, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Grundy, old man, you're not really good at recruiting. Are you handing over the match to the Third?"

"Don't be an ass, Tom Merry! The match had better be postponed till I find Wilkins and Gunn—they can't have gone far—"



Within one minute from the kick-off Grundy of the Shell was overwhelmed by the rush of Wally D'Arcy's Eleven. They fairly walked round him. Finally, he went sprawling, with four or five fags toppling over him. "Ooosh!" he groaned. "Up, Grundy!" shouted the crowd on the touch-line. "Stick to 'em!" (See page 12.)

"You silly chump!" yelled Monty Louther. "Can't you see that they don't mean to play?"

"But—but they agreed—" gasped Grundy.

"Did they?"

"Well, I told them they were to play. It comes to the same thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Does it?" clucked Blake. "Perhaps it doesn't—quite."

"Perhaps!" chortled Figgias.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," broke in Lefevre of the Fifth, "I came here to referee a football match. I'm wasting my time. Have you got any team to put into the field, Grundy?"

Grundy gasped.

By this time it had dawned even upon his powerful brain that Wilkins and Gunn did not intend to turn up for the match at all. His lordly commands had been disregarded. It was amazing, incredible; but here it was—he was left in the lurch. Even his own faithful followers had raised the heel against him! The conspiracy to keep him out of cuppies had gone deeper than he had ever imagined—that was how Grundy looked at it. Even his own chums were in it.

"Well?" demanded Lefevre.

"I—I'll smash them!" gasped Grundy.

"Look here—"

"I'll pulverise them—"

"Grundy—"

"I'll mop up the study with them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is this match going to be played, or isn't it?" snorted the Fifth-Former. "That's what I want to know!"

"Yes," roared Grundy. "It's going to be played!"

"Where's your team, then?"

"I'm going to play ten men short!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar.

Lefevre of the Fifth stared at Grundy, and then grinned.

"You young ass—" he began.

"I can beat a silly gang of fags on my own," said Grundy. "I'm not afraid of the result. But I'm going to wallop Wilkins and Gunn—"

"Never mind that now. I don't think this match ought to proceed," said the senior. "It's simply a farce!"

"Bound to be, anyhow, with Grundy in it!" remarked Monty Louther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to play!" roared Grundy. "I can play ten men short if I like, I suppose?"

"Well, I—I suppose you can!" said Lefevre doubtfully. "Blessed if I ever heard anything like it!"

Grundy strode on to the field, followed by shrieks of laughter. Wally & Co. grinned joyously. Undoubtedly, now, the Third Form were going to survive the first round for the Cardew Cup.

Wally's face was beaming as he tossed with Grundy for choice of ends. Kick-off fell to Wally.

Lefevre, with a frowning brow, blew the whistle. He felt that this match detracted from his Fifth-Form dignity. The crowd round the field evidently regarded it solely in the light of a comic entertainment.

"Go it, Grundy!" roared the crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Play up, Grundy!"

"On the ball, Grundy!"

Grundy played up. If Grundy had been the finest footballer of his age at St. Jim's, he could scarcely have beaten an eleven on his "lonely own." As a matter of fact, he was the worst footballer in the whole school, with the possible exception of Baggy Trumble. But he was full of confidence. He faced the Third Form array with contemptuous confidence in his face, evidently dreaming of victory.

But, as the poet would remark, a change came o'er the spirit of his dream. And it was not long in coming.

Within one minute from the whistle, Grundy of the Shell was overwhelmed by the rush of the fags.

He went sprawling, with four or five fags sprawling over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy scrambled up and rushed back. There was an empty goal behind him, and even Grundy's powerful brain grasped the fact that an undefended goal offered easy chances to the enemy. Covered with mud, the great Grundy gasped and leaped into goal, and the leather followed him in. Grundy did not stop it. He couldn't! It landed in the net, and the crowd roared:

"Goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The ball was kicked off again, and Grundy tried a rush up the field with it. He was robbed of the ball at once, much to his surprise; and then he raced the fags for his own goal. After that, it dawned upon Grundy that he had better defend. Attack, even Grundy understood at last, was not within the range of even his great powers.

But Grundy was not a boss goalkeeper. As a forward he was useless, as a half he was futile, as a back he was only in the way; but as a goalkeeper he was hopeless.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's crowd roared and shrieked and howled as they watched. Each time the ball was kicked off, after that, Grundy sprinted into his own goal to defend it. And on every occasion he failed to defend with success. The clumsiest fag in the Third was able to send in the ball past Grundy. Wherever he thought it was, it wasn't. In fifteen minutes the score stood at ten goals for the Third, and Grundy was in a state of breathless fury and exhaustion—and the spectators were almost in hysterics.

Then even Grundy realised that there was "nothing in it." After the tenth goal Grundy staggered off the field.

Wally of the Third gave a joyful chuckle.

"We get into the semi-finals, anyhow, my sons, whatever happens when we get there!" he said.

"Hurrah!"

"And if only the other party would play Grundy——"

said Levison minor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But that was too much to be hoped for!

## CHAPTER 8.

### Tom Merry to the Rescue!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. wiped their eyes and almost limped away. The competition for the Cardew Cup was a very serious matter; but Grundy of the Shell had introduced an element of comic relief. But there was a more serious tie to be played out that afternoon; and Grundy and his proceedings were dismissed from the minds of the St. Jim's juniors. Blake & Co. had to meet Figgins & Co. at two-thirty; and it was now close on time. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, that brilliant member of Blake's forward line, was in the Form-room, grinding out the ablative absolute, instead of lining up for the match. Blake had settled on a fellow to replace D'Arcy; but he was not content on the subject—the substitute was the best he could get, but it meant a weak spot in the front line.

"Cheerio!" said Tom Merry. "We're going to rescue the one and only, Blake. We've thought of a stunt."

Blake grunted. Apparently the chief of Study No. 6 hadn't much faith in Shell stuffs.

"Latham won't let him off," said Digby. "I've just looked in to see poor old Gussy! He's got an exercise in Latin that he's got to grind through, and he says Latham's promised to give him a look-in during the afternoon."

"That's to make sure that he doesn't cut," remarked Herries.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Leave it to us!" he said. "Somebody else will have to do Gussy's exercise for him—you're good at Latin, Manners."

Manners made a grimace.

"You're not so bad," he remarked.

"Not anything like your form," said Tom. "What variety of the rotten classics is Gussy digging into, Dig!"

"The jolly old ablative absolute."

"That's where you come in strong, Manners," said Tom, encouragingly. "You were jawing it in the study the other day—something about old Teucer—was it Teucer?"

"Example in Horace!" grinned Lother. "Teucer something or other, and what's-it-name Teucer—is that it, Manners?"

Manners sniffed. The classical attainments of Harry Manners were great; they were standing him in ill-stead

now. Apparently he was going to be landed with Gussy's Latin exercise.

"Teucro! Teucro! Teucro!" said Manners. "That's a class is sample——"

"Good! You see, you know the ripping old ablative absolute, as well as I know the off-side rule," said Tom.

"Better!" remarked Manners.

"Any old thing! Well, then, you take the Latin off Gussy's hands, and that's that. Lother and I will keep Mr. Latham from looking in to the Form-room till after the match is over. And that's that!"

"But can you do it?" asked Blake dubiously.

"Leave it to your elders, dear kid," said Tom.

"Pathad!"

Figgins of the Fourth strolled up.

"Turned two-thirty," he remarked. "I don't want to hurry you school House kids, but——"

"Give us five minutes to gather Gussy in, if it can be done," said Blake.

"Fifteen if you like."

"Five will be enough," said Tom Merry. "You chaps get down to the field, and have Gussy's footer rig in the dressing-room all ready for him to change. We'll go and jerk him out. After the match he can cut back into the Form-room and copy out Manners' leucubrations on the ablative absolute, so that the thing will be in his fist. Latham might get suspicious if D'Arcy's exercise was in Manners' fist."

"Ha, ha! He might."

"And you'll take care of Latham?" asked Blake.

"You bet."

"Well, it's the best we can do," said Blake. "If Gussy doesn't turn up, I'll play Smith minor, after all."

"Gussy will turn up."

The Terrible Three went into the School House, leaving the other fellows to prepare for the match. As Tom and Manners and Lother were not playing that afternoon, they regarded it as a bounden duty to help the other footballers who were engaged in a cup-tie. Probably Mr. Latham would have taken a different view of their duty, if he had known their intentions. But that couldn't be helped; besides, he didn't know.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting at his desk in the Form-room with a dismal countenance when the Terrible Three looked in with smiling faces.

He gave them a lugubrious look.

"Getting on?" asked Tom.

"Wathah not."

D'Arcy had dipped his pen in the ink several times. Apparently he had done little more than that so far.

"Well, we've come to the rescue," said Tom. "Leave your exercise to Manners, and cut."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Mr. Latham is lookin' in presently," he said. "If he found me gone he would come down to the footah ground. Nothin' doin', deah boys."

"We're taking care of Latham," explained Lother. "He won't look in."

"Bai Jove!"

"Cut off, and chance it, Gussy. Blake's waiting for you."

Arthur Augustus brightened up wonderfully.

"You think it will be all right, deah boys?"

"Right as rain."

"They haven't started yet?"

"Waiting for you, old top!"

"Wight ho! I'll wisk it! Awf'ly obliged, deah boys."

"Don't mench."

Arthur Augustus fairly scudded out of the Form-room. Manners—not looking very in-ful—sat down in his place, to work out a rather difficult Latin exercise.

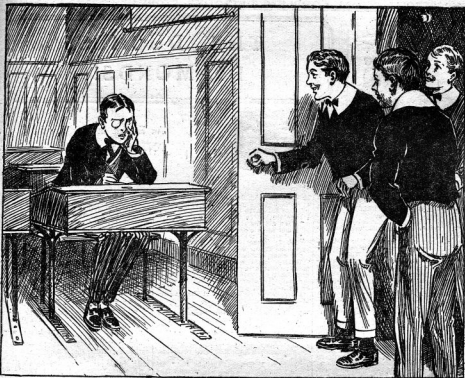
Certainly he was better equipped for the task than D'Arcy, being miles and miles ahead of Arthur Augustus in the classics. But it was not exactly the way Manners would have chosen to pass a half-holiday. However, he was willing to play up.

"Turn out something good, old fellow," said Tom Merry.

"We want Latham to be pleased with Gussy's afternoon's work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving Manners to it, Tom Merry and Lother quitted the Fourth Form room. Their own task was rather more difficult; they had to keep Mr. Latham from paying his promised visit to the Form-room. Once that was enacted, all was well. If Mr. Latham did not miss the detained junior, he would never know that Gussy had cut detention and played in the cup-tie—the exercise that would be handed over for his inspection would be quite a satisfactory one, which was really all that the most exacting Form master had a right to expect. What he didn't know wouldn't worry him; it was a case of ignorance being bliss. If the Terrible Three were successful in their little scheme, everybody concerned would be satisfied; which surely was a most desirable state of affairs.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting at his desk in the Form-room with a dismal countenance when the Terrible Three looked in with smiling faces. "We've come to the rescue. Leave your exercise to Blanners, and cut!" D'Arcy shook his head. "Mr. Lathom is looking in presently," he said. "If he found me gone he would come down to the footst gground." "We're taking care of Lathom," explained Lowther. "He won't look in." (See page 72.)

Tom Merry and Lowther proceeded to Mr. Railton's study. Mr. Railton was away that afternoon, as they were aware, so there was no reason why they should not borrow Mr. Railton's telephone. Tom Merry kept guard at the study door, while Lowther unhooked the receiver, and rang up the exchange and asked for Mr. Lathom's number.

"Hello!"

"Is that Mr. Lathom, St. Jim's?" asked Lowther, assuming a deep bass voice for the occasion.

"Yes, yes! Mr. Lathom speaking!"

"Would it be possible for you to step over to the rectory this afternoon, Mr. Lathom? I believe it is a half-holiday at the school."

"Yes, yes! Certainly! But—"

"That is, if you would be willing, sir, to give your opinion with regard to a rather interesting question of a geological nature. Your knowledge on this subject is authoritative, and so I have ventured to ask you—"

"My dear sir, I shall be only too pleased," purred Mr. Lathom. "I did not recognise your voice—"

"Bless my soul! The telephone—"

"Quite so. I will step over at any time you please—"

"It is really too bad to disturb you, Mr. Lathom, but if you could walk over immediately and stay to tea—"

"I should be very pleased."

"Thank you so much."

"Not at all—not at all."

Monty Lowther hung up the receiver. Undoubtedly Mr. Lathom supposed that the rector had telephoned. That wasn't Lowther's fault; most certainly he hadn't said so.

"Good man!" murmured Tom Merry. "I fancied that geology would work the oracle. Is it all right?"

"Right as rain."

"Then the sooner we clear out of this the better."

"What-ho!"

The two Shell fellows promptly cleared. Five minutes later, when loafing about the door of the School House, they

saw little Mr. Lathom tripping hurriedly out in hat and coat. There was a beaming anticipatory smile on Mr. Lathom's face. Geology was his hobby; he would have walked ten miles to see a prehistoric relic—even a chip of old red sandstone was enough to make his eyes glimmer behind his spectacles. The rector had similar tastes, and the two gentlemen often had interesting discussions on that enthralling topic, as the juniors well knew. Mr. Lathom not only forgot such an unimportant trifle as a junior under detention, but he forgot time and space when a geological question appeared in the offing. He trotted off to the rectory in a state of the greatest satisfaction and anticipation.

Tom Merry and Lowther watched him go, equally pleased. "The rector will be a bit surprised, perhaps," remarked Lowther reflectively, "but he's sure to stand Lathom some tea, and, anyhow, he'll get the walk. Exercise is good for Form masters."

"Quite good!" said Tom, laughing.

"And he's safe off the scene," said Lowther. "We may as well get down to Little Side and see how the fags are getting on."

And they got.

## CHAPTER 9.

### "The Best-Laid Schemes—"

"GOAL!"

"Bravo, D'Arcy!"

"Well kicked, sir!"

That ringing shout greeted the chums of the Shell as they arrived on Little Side.

Evidently Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was going strong. The first half of the cupie was under way in great style. There was a big crowd round the field. Some of the fellows

(Continued on page 16.)

## OUR SPECIAL SHORT COMPLETE DETECTIVE STORY!

## THE DUCHESS' DIAMONDS!

An Episode in the Career of  
ANTHONY SHARPE—Investigator.

## A Strange Case!

"MR. JACOB WATERLOW." Anthony Sharpe, the famous investigator, glanced at the slip of pasteboard, and then thoughtfully stroked his chin.

"Waterlow?" he muttered reflectively. "Waterlow? Now, who the dickens—Ah, of course! Show him up, Wilson!" When a man—or woman, for that matter—had passed the night in a state of anxious sleep bordering upon madness, it attracts a good deal from his or her personal appearance. Were it not for this, the detective's early-morning visitor would have undoubtedly been pronounced rather good-looking and well preserved.

"Mr. Sharpe, I presume?" the newcomer said interrogatively.

"Correct, sir," was the reply. "Pray take a seat."

Mr. Jacob Waterlow sat down and passed his hand wearily across his brow. He was silent for a few moments whilst the detective drummed his fingers rather impatiently on the desk.

"Well, sir," he said, a trifle brusquely, "what's the trouble? Anything wrong at Hatton Garden?"

Waterlow sat holt upright in his chair.

"Then you—you know?" he gasped, in surprise.

Sharpe smiled a little.

"Oh, no, I don't," he replied. "All I know is that you're a rather well-known personage there, so I thought that perhaps—"

Waterlow drew his chair a trifle closer.

"Well, you've hit it!" he cut in, in a low voice. "I am in trouble there—devilish trouble—or soon will be. The diamonds have disappeared."

Sharpe raised his eyebrows inquiringly.

"Whose diamonds? Please be a little more explicit, sir; I am not a magician."

"Oh, I forget, you wouldn't know, of course," said Mr. Waterlow. "You must pardon me, but I'm in such an infernal pickle that everything—"

"Try and pull yourself together, sir!" exclaimed Sharpe, laying his hand encouragingly on the man's shoulder. "The sooner you do, the sooner we'll get down to bed-rock. What diamonds have disappeared?"

"The Duchess of Salcester's—worth a mint of money, on account of the Ranipoota Ruby, which holds no equal in the world. And—and I had charge of them."

"Why?"

"They were brought to me to be overhauled—some to be reset, others restrung and altered slightly."

"Please describe them," said Sharpe.

"One—the most valuable article—is a necklace, in which the Ranipoota Ruby forms a pendant. The remainder comprise some half a dozen rings and brooches."

"Ah! Great wealth in a moderately small compass. Not very difficult things to conceal, eh?"

"No."

"And when did you first miss them?"

"About eleven-thirty last night."

"At your place in Hatton Garden?"

"No," said Waterlow. "I had them there till yesterday morning, when my sales were being overhauled, and the expert told me that he would advise new locks, as those which are at present in use can no longer

be considered burglar-proof. Consequently, I removed these jewels, with some other valuable things, to my private home, where I have the newest thing in safes."

"When did you place them there?"

"About seven o'clock yesterday evening."

"And after that?"

"I went to the Duke of Linnminster's conversation at Dorlington House."

"At what time did you leave there?"

Waterlow drew his hand across his forehead, as though he were trying to remember something.

"That's just where the difficulty comes in," he replied. "I don't know."

Sharpe shot a curious look at him, and the other flushed slightly.

"Oh, I know what you're thinking," he said, "but you're altogether wrong! I'm a total abstainer—have been all my life, as a matter of fact."

"Yet you can't recollect when you left Dorlington House," the detective persisted, "though you remember missing the jewels at half-past eleven? How does that come about?"

"Just as I was getting into bed," explained Waterlow. "I suddenly thought that I had made a slight error as to the rearrangement of the necklaces—that I had reversed some of the stones in the opposite way to what the duchess desired. I went downstairs, and opened the safe—but the whole lot had disappeared. I spent half the night searching like a fool about this room, though I knew that I had put the things in the safe; but I was frantic, and don't believe I rightly knew what I was doing."

"I'm!" cried Sharpe. "Pity you didn't keep a better grip on yourself and come to

me at once! However, it can't be helped now. Do you remember going upstairs and undressing yourself?"

"No—at least, only vaguely. My first moment of clear recollection was when I was actually getting into bed. It was then, as I told you, that I thought I had made a mistake in the work."

Sharpe pursed his lips. It seemed to him like a case of temporary loss of memory, or something like that.

"Then it amounts to this," he said, ticking each incident off on his fingers. "You took home the jewels yesterday, locked them in your private safe, then went to the Duke of Linnminster's, and from that time you knew nothing until you were going to bed last night?"

"Well, I remember part of the conversation—up to about the middle of Mademoiselle Lucie's entertainment."

"Ah!" said Sharpe. "Who is she, may I ask?"

"Oh, she's the great illusionist and Society entertainer from the Paragon, you know. But this is rather beside the point, Mr. Sharpe, is it not?"

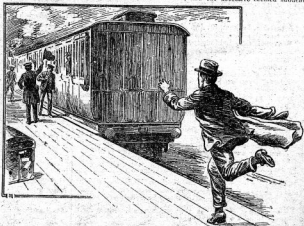
"Probably," was the response; "but a good detective cannot afford to overlook anything, no matter how slight it may appear. We'll go along to your place now, sir, if you please. I want to examine that safe."

A taxi quickly covered the distance, and Sharpe was soon engaged in making his examination.

"Nobody but yourself knows the combination of this, I take it?" he said at length, indicating the lock.

"Not a single soul," replied the other.

Waterlow's valet entered the room at this moment, and the detective seemed suddenly



Anthony Sharpe dashed on to the platform somewhat breathlessly. The boat-train was just beginning to move as he raced along the platform.

to supside an unmastered craving for a smoke.

"I say!" He turned to the man. "Where did you put my overcoat—downstairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you might bring me my cigar-case; it's in the right-hand pocket, I think, thank!"

The servant left the room, but he had scratched the bottom of the second step before Sharpe came pounding after him.

Waterloo remained in the room alone.

"It's all right," said the detective. "I find my overcoat the way it is. He tapped his foot. "Sorry for bothering you. It's by the by—just step into this room for a moment, will you?"

Wonderingly, the other obeyed, following Sharpe into the dining-room of the hall.

"Listen," the latter said swiftly. "I want to ask you a question or two. I'm a detective, and your answers are important! Did you let your master in last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"About what time did he return? Carefully, now!"

"Exactly five minutes to nine, sir. I remember, because I looked at my watch just afterwards."

"Five to nine?" repeated Sharpe, in surprise. "Are you quite sure?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Did you notice anything—er—peculiar about him?"

"Well, no, I can't say I did, sir—except that he was very quiet. Passed upstairs and into that room we left just now without saying 'good night.'"

"Ah! Went in there, did he? And after that?"

"Then he went out again, and didn't come back till between ten and eleven."

"What way was he then?"

"Just the same, sir. Not a blessed word out of him. He sat in his study for about half an hour, and then went off to bed."

"I see, thank!"

Sharpe ascended the stairs again, rejoining Waterloo, with whom he had a little further conversation. Then he left the house.

"Either he's put the things somewhere else and can't remember, or—though I can scarcely believe it, on account of his excellent reputation in the jewelry business—he's playing some daring game," the detective mused. "But there's a third possibility—yes, there's decidedly a third possibility."

**A Clue!**

**A** QUARTER of an hour later Anthony Sharpe rang the bell at Dorlington House and handed in his card.

"Were you present at the conversation here last night?" he asked of the man who opened the door for him.

"I was, sir—at least, most of the time."

"Mr. Jacob Waterloo, one of the guests, arrived about seven forty-five, I think?"

"About that."

"When did he leave?"

"Let me see, now," the man reflected. "It would be just in the middle of the musician's tricks—somewhere between half-past eight and nine, I should say. Rather funny he was, too."

"Ah!" breathed Sharpe. "How so?"

"Why, he just stood up from his chair and walked out without saying a word. We all thought he was suddenly taken ill."

"I see," said the detective. "And the musician—what time did he go?"

"She, sir," corrected the man. "It was Mademoiselle Lucie, from the Paragon, you know. She finished her turn and left shortly afterwards, as she was due at the music-hall at ten."

"How did she go—by taxi?"

"No, she didn't seem to be in any great hurry—anyway, it's not very far from here to the hall. I let her out myself, and she walked a few yards down the street; then she stood under the lamp at the corner. Seemed to be waiting for someone, I thought."

Sharpe's eyelids flickered almost imperceptibly.

"Thanks very much," he said, slipping a coin into the man's hand. "That's all I want to know—good evening!"

He hardly expected to find the manager of the Paragon at the music-hall so early, so, happening to know that worthy's private address, he made for there.

"You have a Mademoiselle Lucie billed for this evening, I think?" he asked, as soon as he was struck into the manager's presence.

"Yes—or, rather, we had!" was the somewhat mournful reply. "But she can't complete her contract. She was taken very ill last night—half-way through her turn, and will not appear again. It's devilish unfortunate; for she was a good draw—"

"So she appeared last night, did she?" said Sharpe, rising quickly. "What's her address? And give me a photo of her, if you have one."

"No, Mr. Oakland Mansions," replied the manager, rummaging through his papers and producing a small photograph. "I—er—trust there's no trouble concerned with Mademoiselle—"

But Sharpe, armed with the necessary information and the likeness, was flying down the stairs, three at a time, towards the street.

"Bluesy he jiggered!" he muttered, as he jumped into his cab. "Oakland Mansions, and drive like blazes!"

Oakland Mansions were a spacious set of flats, mostly occupied by artists, literary men, and the higher-class members of the theatrical profession.

Sharpe buttonholed the porter and asked to see Mademoiselle Lucie.

"But she's gone away, sir," replied the man. "Left for the Continent not fifteen minutes ago. She came back ill last night, and said she would go home for a rest—"

Sharpe muttered something under his breath, and, leaping into his taxi, drove away at a rapid pace towards the station.

**Cornered!**

**T**HE boat-train was almost on the move as the detective raced along the platform. He jumped into one of the rear-most carriages, and sank down breathlessly on the seat. Then he drew out the photograph and commenced to study it intently.

"Curious!" he mused. "I seem to have seen that face before, or one very like it."

He covered the lower half with the point of his finger, uttering a startled ejaculation as he did so. "Jehoshaphat! Well, of all the—"

As he regarded the photo in his pocket and leaned back with contented smile on his lips. Then he closed his eyes and did not open them until the screech of brakes announced that the train was drawing up at its destination.

Making his way quickly to the cross-Chamber boat, Sharpe took up his position alongside the gangway, and closely scanned the faces of the passengers as they came aboard.

Suddenly he spotted a porter carrying a couple of small portmanteaux, whilst behind him walked a tall, good-looking woman whose eyes kept constantly darting from right to left.

Sharpe slipped behind one of the deck-houses, from where he watched the woman come aboard and enter a cabin farther astern. Then he stepped along the deck, and, having knocked at the door, turned the

handle. But the door was locked on the inside, and he received no answer.

Returning to his point of vantage, he watched the cabin closely. The steamer was now drawing away from the pier and heading out to sea.

In about twenty minutes the cabin door opened again, and the woman emerged. She passed Sharpe without giving him so much as a glance.

Having seen her go down to the saloon, the detective slipped into the cabin and looked round. The two portmanteaux stood side by side on the floor, and, whipping out a bunch of skeleton keys, he had them open in next to no time.

Some odds and ends lay inside, packed away with a variety of costumes, but there was nothing else—not a sign of what he sought.

"Must have 'em about her somewhere," he muttered. "She's taking no chances—"

Suddenly a soft footfall sounded behind him, and, swinging round, he found himself confronted with a tiny revolver.

"I should be glad of an explanation, m'sieur," said the woman, with a scarcely perceptible trace of a foreign accent. "I presume this is another case of mistaken cabins, is it not so?" she added, with biting sarcasm.

Whilst she was speaking she kept him covered with fingers as steady as a rock, and for the moment Sharpe felt himself cornered. But he quickly pulled himself together.

"Pray pardon my intrusion," he said calmly, "but have I not the pleasure of addressing Mademoiselle Lucie of the Paragon—or, rather, late of the Paragon?"

"Yes, m'sieur," she replied. "I am Mademoiselle Lucie, but—"

"Could I have a few words with you?" pursued Sharpe. "It will not take long."

"Well, hardy, m'sieur," responded the

A soft footfall sounded behind him, and, swinging round, Sharpe found himself confronted with a tiny revolver.



woman, with a slight smile. "When a lady discovers a—er—gentleman rifling her baggage like a common thief, it is scarcely the time to think of friendly conversation. Don't move, please! I must send for the captain at once."

"I should not do so, were I you—er—Madame Sara Karloff!" said Sharpe quietly.

The woman gave a slight gasp, but recovered herself almost immediately.

"I am afraid you are mistaken, m'sieur," she said slyly.

"Not at all!" he replied easily. "The disguise is pretty good, but— Let's sit down and talk, madame."

"Who are you?" she asked, curiously apparently mastering her.

He handed her his card. She glanced at it, and her partly teeth came together with a snap, as she crushed the slip of postcard between her fingers.

For the moment she was off her guard, and, seizing his opportunity, Sharpe sprang

**"RIVAL FOOTBALLERS."**

(Continued from page 13)

who knew that Arthur Augustus was under detention that afternoon had been surprised to see him turn up for the match. But the natural supposition was that his Form master had let him off.

The game was rather more serious than the brief display by George Alfred Grundy and the lags.

Study No. 6 of the School House and Figgins & Co. of the New House were fighting hard, and both sides were putting up a great game. But the first goal had fallen to Study No. 6, and it had been taken by the swell of St. Jim's.

"Goal! Hurrah!"

Jack Blake slapped his noble chum on the shoulder with a mighty slap, and there was a howl from Arthur Augustus.

"Yawwooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Gussy!" chuckled Blake.

"Wow! You needn't break my bones, dear boy, even if you are very pleased!" groaned Arthur Augustus, rubbing his damaged shoulder.

Fatty Wynn, in the New House goal, kicked out the ball. The players walked back to the centre of the field, Blake & Co. looking very satisfied. Blake gave Tom Merry a nod and a grin to convey his thanks for the rescue of Arthur Augustus.

"Good old Gussy!" said Tom. "It was worth the trouble, Monty."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Lowther. "Let's hope Manners is thinking so. I do hope he's thoroughly enjoying the ablutative absolute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The teams lined up again, and George Figgins kicked off. There was a New House rush now, and Herries, in Blake's goal, was hard put to it to defend.

But he succeeded in keeping his citadel intact, and the game swung away into the New House half.

Tom Merry & Co. looked on with keen interest. The winner of this match was to play in the second round of the Cardew Cup competition; probably against Tom Merry's team. That did not prevent Tom from wishing the best of luck to the best team.

But there seemed little to choose between them. Figgins & Co. were in great form, and Blake & Co. were quite up to the mark.

Both goals had narrow escapes; but though the Study No. 6 party seemed rather stronger in attack, Figgins & Co. were certainly stronger in defence. Fatty Wynn in goal being a tower of strength. Again and again Blake & Co. forced the fighting right up to the goal; but Fatty Wynn was found "all there." David Levellyn Wynn was at the top of his form.

It was close on half-time when Figgins & Co. came through, and Herries failed to save for the School House side. Figgins put the ball in, and there was a roar.

"Goal!"

"Good old Figgie!"

Darrell of the Sixth, who had kindly consented to referee, blew the whistle for half-time a few minutes later. Both the teams looked rather "gruelled," and the score was level.

"Anybody's game, so far!" remarked Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"How's it going?" asked a lazy voice at Tom's elbow, as Ralph Reckness Cardew lounged on the field, idle and elegant as usual, with his hands in his trousers pockets.

"One to one, so far," said Tom.

"Awfully interestin'—what?"

"Oh, yes!"

Cardew yawned. As the founder of the Cardew Cup, he might have been supposed to take a keen interest in the cup-ties. But it would have been very unlike the dandy of the Fourth to take a keen interest in anything.

"Haven't you been watching the game?" asked Tom.

"Nunno! I've been out for a ramble," said Cardew. "Then I suddenly remembered there was a cup-tie this afternoon, an' determined to give it a look-in. Is that the second half?"

"Just beginning."

"Wasn't Gussy detained?" asked Cardew, noting the most elegant figure on the football field, and raising his eyebrows a little.

"He seems to have got off detention," said Monty Lowther gravely.

Cardew smiled.

"Hooked it from the Form-room?" he asked.

"Hem!"

"Latham's out," assented Cardew. "Good man! I dare

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say Latham won't think of coming down this way when he gets back."

"Oh, he won't be back yet!" said Tom. "I've a sort of idea that he's gone over to the rectory."

Cardew looked at him rather queerly.

"Is he likely to miss Gussy when he comes back, if he comes back soon?" he asked.

"Possibly."

"That's too bad—for he's comin' in!"

"What!"

"I passed him on the road while I was ramblin'," yawned Cardew. "I happened to see him meet the rector."

"What?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Couldn't help noticin' them," said Cardew. "Latham and the jolly old rector were comparin' notes about some-thing, and both of them seemed to be surprised. I heard Latham say that a trick must have been played."

"My only hat!"

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther looked at one another blankly.

It is said that "the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley." The Terrible Three had laid their plans with great skill and circumspection. That Mr. Latham, on his way to the rectory, would happen to meet the rector himself was such an unforeseen contingency that the youthful plotters could not possibly have been prepared for it.

"Oh dear!" mumbled Lowther.

"Anything' wrong?" asked Cardew.

"Oh crumbs! Didn't Latham go on to the rectory?"

"No; he parted with the rector and turned back."

"Ye gods!"

"I think I got in about five minutes ahead of him," said Cardew. "He's a bit of a slow-coach. He looked ratty, I thought."

"I—I'm not surprised at that!"

"Go it, Gussy!" came a roar.

Tom Merry turned his eyes to the field again.

Arthur Augustus had the ball, and was shooting for goal. But Fatty Wynn, between the sticks, was equal to the test. The leather came out again from a plump fist.

There was nothing to be done now, and Tom realised it. He could only hope that Mr. Latham would not look into the Form-room when he came in. So far as Gussy was concerned, nothing could be done; but Manners could be warned to get out of the danger zone. The Latin exercise would have to take its chance.

"Better out to see the Form-room and tell Manners," whispered Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Too late!" murmured Cardew.

"What!"

"Here he comes."

"Oh scissors!"

Cardew's information had come too late—that was clear. Tom Merry looked round, to see Mr. Latham advancing with hurried steps and a frowning brow.

The captain of the Shell made a grimace.

"All up!" he murmured.

Only too plainly it was all up. The Terrible Three had done their best; but their little scheme had "ganged agley!"

**CHAPTER 10.****Awful Luck!****"STOP!"**

Mr. Latham fairly shouted that word. For once the master of the Fourth was seriously angry.

Every fellow in the crowd turned round to look at him; even the footballers paused to look. Mr. Latham, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles, strode upon the field of play.

"Darrell! Stop this game!"

The Sixth Form referee stared at him blankly.

"Mr. Latham—"

"Stop at once!"

In utter amazement Darrell blew the whistle.

The second half of the cup-tie had been going on less than fifteen minutes. There was a sudden cessation of play, and all the footballers blinked at the angry master. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a groan.

"Bai Jove! The game's up!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Blake.

"D'Arcy!" thundered Mr. Latham.

"Yaas, sir."

"You are under detention this afternoon!"

"Yaas, sir."

"Yet I find you here playing football!"

"Yaas, sir."

"I was called away," exclaimed Mr. Latham, "by a telephone call, which I supposed to come from the rectory."

"Oh, bai Jove!"



"Fortunately, I met the rector, and learned that I had been tricked," gasped Mr. Latham.

Arthur Augustus could not regard it as fortunate!

"I returned here, and found Manners of the Shell writing out your exercise in the Form-room," said Mr. Latham. "I have reported Manners to his Form master."

"Oh dear!"

"I assume, D'Arcy, that you or some friend of yours played this trick on me in order that you could break detention with impunity."

"Oh cwombs!"

"You will leave the football-field at once, and return to the Form-room!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I shall also cane you, D'Arcy!"

"I—I don't mind that, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "But if you would be so kind as to allow me to finish this match—"

"Boy!"

"It's an important cueptie, sir!" ventured Blake.

"Go at once, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir—"

"If you could stretch a point for once, sir, and punish D'Arcy after the match is over—" murmured Darrell.

"I am surprised to hear a prefect of the Sixth suggest such a thing!" snapped Mr. Latham.

"Oh!" said Darrell.

"You will leave this field at once, D'Arcy! I shall take you back to the Form-room with me!"

"Weally, Mr. Latham—"

"Come!"

Mr. Latham's hand dropped on D'Arcy's shoulder, and the hopeless swell of St. Jim's was marched off the field.

With a lugubrious face, he disappeared in the distance with his incensed Form master.

"Well, of all the rotten luck!" groaned Blake. "This is what comes of Shell stunts!"

"We did our best, old chap," said Tom Merry. "We couldn't foresee—"

Blake nodded dismally.

"All serene, Tommy. It can't be helped. But we're dished now."

"You're going on, I suppose?" asked Darrell of the Sixth.

"Oh, of course! Line up, you fellows!"

The game was resumed without Arthur Augustus in the ranks of the Study No. 6 team.

Blake & Co., hard as they had been hit, put up a gallant fight, and the game was hard and fast. Manners of the Shell came along and joined his chums by the ropes, with a rather lugubrious countenance.

"Rotten, isn't it?" he remarked. "I've been reported to Linton. Two hundred lines—grogh!"

"Rotten!" granted Tom Merry.

"And it was such a ripping scheme!" sighed Monty Lowther. "One of our very best, you know! Rotten luck!"

"He, he, he!"

That unpleasant cachinnation came from Baggy Trimble. Baggy, apparently, was deriving some entertainment from the unfortunate state of affairs.

The Terrible Three turned on Baggy, and smote him hip and thigh. He came just in time to receive the vials of their wrath, as it were; and came in useful for once.

Baggy Trimble did not cackle any more. He fled, yelling. And the Terrible Three, a little solaced, turned to watch the game again.

Fortune was against Study No. 6 now. They put up a great fight, but they missed the brilliant Gussy sadly. Figgins & Co. pushed them hard, and Kerr put the ball in, and the New House were ahead on the score. And struggling as they might, Blake & Co. could not succeed in equalising.

When the final whistle went Figgins & Co. were two goals to one. Figgins slapped Blake on the shoulder as they came off.

"Hard cheese, old top!" he said sympathetically. "Still, I suppose we should have beaten you, anyhow."

Blake snorted.

"Beaten your grandmother!" he said witheringly.

"Fathead!"

And Figgins grinned and walked away. Figgins & Co. were booked for the second round now, and Study No. 6 had dropped out of the competition for the Cardew Cup. Blake bore it as philosophically as he could, but he needed all his philosophy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into Study No. 6 at tea-time, and gave his chums there a sympathetic smile.

"It's wotten!" he remarked.

"We're out of the ties," said Blake.

"Awfully wotten, deah boys!"

"You were bound to get detained, weren't you?" asked Herries.

"Weally, Hewvies—"

"Just like you—what?" asked Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Bump him!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake— Yoocooop!"

Possibly it was not quite just to bump Arthur Augustus. He had pointed out a dozen times that it was Blake's wonderful idea of football in the Fourth Form passage that had caused his detention in the first place. Nevertheless, he was bumped—one, twice, thrice; and the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was heard the whole length of the passage in tones of wild wrath and indignation.

A little later there were again sounds of strife in the School House. That was when Wilkins and Gunn came in from their spin. They found Grundy of the Shell ready for them.

There was trouble at once. Grundy did not waste words on his faithless followers. As soon as he spotted them in the Shell passage he charged.

But the time had come for the worms to turn! As it was no longer possible to avoid trouble with Grundy, Wilkins and Gunn collared Grundy, so to speak.

They collared Grundy, and piled on him, and handed back as good as he gave. The burly George Alfred was almost a match for the two of them, but not quite. There was a terrific scrap in the Shell passage, and afterwards Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn were all in a state that was shocking to look upon. And for some days afterwards there were very strained relations in Grundy's study.

But at St. Jim's there were four fellows at least who found matters wearing a satisfactory aspect. They were Tom Merry, Levison, Figgins, and Wally of the Third—the four football captains who had survived the first round of the competition. And those four were looking forward with keen anticipation to the semi-finals.

THE END.

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## CHAPTER I.

### Ashtorpe Hall—The Uninvited Guest!

**J**IM STONE looked up from the littered table and sighed wearily, then thrust the pile of letters and bills from him, as though they hurt his feelings—as they most surely did. Old James Stone, his father, had been wealthy enough; but, like many wealthy men, he had rather over-enjoyed his money whilst it was in his possession, and Jim had more than once wondered how long it would take for those card-parties, suppers, swagger dinners, and so forth, to make a big hole in the family exchequer.

And, indeed, it had turned out even worse than Jim feared; for when James Stone died—rather suddenly—it was found that a considerable part of the fine old mansion's contents would have to go towards squaring up, unless—

Jim paused in his reflections, gazing round the big apartment and presently letting his eyes wander through the tall window which overlooked the stable-yard. A small, wiry man was rubbing down a couple of fine steeplechasers, standing quietly outside their boxes—the last of Stone's once famous stud, the others having been sold from time to time, according as a good offer was received for them. One of these—a sleek, black, spotted beauty with a single white star between his eyes—was Black Duncan, who to run his last race under the Stone colours the following day, ere he, too, passed over to a new owner. That is, unless he won. And Jim had high hopes of Black Duncan's saving the situation, bar accidents.

But can anyone bar accidents in a steeple-chase, which is so different to, and much riskier than, a flat race? The biggest event of the season in those districts was the Beverleigh Cross-Country, which attracted everyone with a "horse" interest for miles, and usually meant something in the neighbourhood of £3,000 for the winner. And, according to Tony Weekes, who was now grooming him, "Duncan stood as good a chance as the best of 'em, an' a better chance than most."

Three thousand pounds! Jim Stone mentally saw the figures, as though outlined in fire, flashing before his eyes. Such a sum would clear off the most pressing debts, and still leave a fair balance. But the big Beverleigh event was a steeplechase—a wild gamble in which the best nag might break its neck, and the worst reach the post!

If Black Duncan failed, he, with his sole companion, Patrol Leader, would have to go for what they could fetch—as also would several other things, leaving the half-empty shell of Ashtorpe Hall for Jim to occupy

without a penny in his pockets; whereas, if the horse gained the day in such a difficult competition, he would surely establish a fresh reputation for Jim Stone as a breeder and trainer—quite a valuable asset to add to the money already won.

As yet the mansion had not been mortgaged—a wonder, truly!—and was Jim's own property as his father's only son, the next heir, in the event of the young fellow's death, being Nevil Stone, his cousin. Nevil was an ex-Army captain, who had spent most of his life abroad—in India—but the previous summer taken Beverleigh Towers, a big place a few miles away, where he resided with a couple of Indian servants whom he had brought over with him.

Jim did not like his cousin, for some reason or other—these dislikes are often inexplicable—and he felt pretty sure that his cousin didn't exactly fancy him. The captain had been a frequent guest at the Hall during the last few months of Joan Stone's life-time, but Jim had not seen him at all since the day of his father's funeral, about three weeks before. Nevil seemed to have severed all ties of intimacy when his uncle died, but young Stone didn't care over-much one way or the other. There is little use preserving a veneer of friendship with a man you don't like.

But now, as though to suggest that Captain Stone was still within easy reach of the house he would be occupying at that moment, but for his cousin's presence on earth, Jim saw him again for the first time in three weeks; for as his gaze travelled from Black Duncan's sleek coat to the rolling moorland beyond the boundary wall, two mounted figures appeared from a dip and rode slowly past in the direction of the Towers. They were not too far off for Jim to mistake the stockily-built form of the foremost, for Captain Nevil, of the well-knit, well-groomed, erect body of a man who has spent a number of years in a crack cavalry regiment; but, strange to say, it was the second rider, and the horse he rode, who claimed most of young Stone's attention. He noticed a pair of powerful binoculars from a side-table and focused them on the distant figures; then, after a brief scrutiny, he lowered the glasses, a strange expression creeping over his face.

So it was true, then, what he had heard rumoured—that his cousin had gone in for horses also, and that he was entering one for the Beverleigh Steeplechase! If so, it would make the race even more interesting. Jim reflected with some irony; and it was evidently a fact, it seemed, for the second animal was undoubtedly a promising "chaser," whose appearance suggested jumping powers well above the average.

And what of its rider? Jim could see that he was quite the build of a smart jockey, light as a feather, yet wiry of frame, but not British—his face through the field-glasses looked swarthy almost to the hue of yellowish-brown, and he wore carriages. Evidently he was one of the Indian servants who looked after cousin Nevil's warts at Beverleigh Towers.

Jim turned slowly from the casement as the horsemen disappeared behind a clump of trees, and reflectively strolled towards another window of the big apartment—one

which commanded the front of the Hall. Here he again paused, gazing unceasingly across that portion of the grounds when the sides of the chasers were a level is the high, elm-lined wall directly facing his across the lawn. This window was slightly open at the top, and a draught of keen, crisp air fanned Jim's brow as he stood there, his mind feeling to him a whirlpool of thoughts and images, some a trace of memory round and round ere one by one they were sucked into the vortex, to be succeeded by possible incidents of the future—plans and imaginations that dissolved almost before they took shape.

Suddenly, however, he came back to earth and fixed his eyes upon the broad drive, curving like a bow from the porch to the gates. A man—a seedy-looking fellow—had just entered the grounds and was swiftly approaching the Hall.

"Another tramp, I suppose," Jim muttered grimly. "Well, he'll go through it—I simply love putting 'em through it!"

Tramps were rather a nuisance in that locality, and young Stone had lately been adopting a novel method of choking them off. When an abject-looking man came begging bread Jim would offer him a shilling, provided he did a certain amount of work to earn it. The tramp usually jumped at the offer, whereupon Jim conducted him to what he called his "boxing loft"—an empty room over one of the stables—and there he made him put on the gloves for ten minutes or so. Young Stone was a promising lightweight, and though some of his opponents proved to be tough customers enough, by the time the bouts were finished they felt that a different way of money-making would be more preferable. Hence there was quite a scarcity of the "Weary Willie" fraternity round the Hall recently.

Jim strode to the door and swung it open as the man reached the front steps; but though the fellow looked seedy, it was plain at a glance that he was not quite a tramp. It was also plain that he had been looking out the cold; for he swayed visibly as he tipped his faded bowler, giving a semi-intoxicated leer at the same time.

"Mishter James Stone Jun-ier?" he asked, somewhat thickly.

"Yes; what d'you want with me?"

"Business, sir—a small matter of business," replied the fellow. "I—"

"Come in!" rapped the lad. "I can't discuss business on the steps in nippy weather like this!"

He turned, followed by the other, like a spun round with a start as a heavy crash sounded behind him. The newcomer had slipped on the thickly waxed floor of the hall, and had fallen heavily, his head striking a well-scrubbed chair in his descent. Now he lay limply on his back, his eyes closed, and a thin trickle of blood oozing through his hair.

As Jim stood dumfounded, staring down at the inert form, Tony Weekes approached from the back of the hall. He had finished with the horses, and had just entered the house by the stable-yard door below.

"Duncan's as fresh as paint, sir, an' as tough as leather!" he announced. "Fit to run for a kingdom, he is—"

Then Tony also gazed as he caught sight of the man on the floor. His mouth opened wide, and he scratched his red head in astonishment.

"Why what he— Who's that, sir?" he gasped.

"Don't know yet," replied Jim; "but 'ud best find out. He said he wanted to see me on business, and slipped just now. I— By sea!"

Whilst speaking, he had stooped and fished some papers out of the senseless man's breast-pocket, presently detaching an official-looking one from the sheaf.

"What's that, sir?" queried Weekes. "Not one of 'em?"

"It were than an ordinary writ, Tony," rapped Black Jim hoarsely. "It's a bailiff's order! Do you know what that means?"

The crowd shook his head in perplexity. He understood all about horses, but little of the law.

"I'll tell you," pursued his master. "It means that only for this chap coming a cropper, he'd be sitting in the drawing-room, or anywhere else he chose, and defying to touch a single article here until those debts were squared. In fact, Tony, it means that we three have Black Duncan to Beverleigh, for the same reason. Those bills should have been settled weeks ago, but

There's no money, as yet, to settle 'em with."

"D'you mean, sir, that this chap could have prevented Duncan running in the steopchase?" gasped the amazed groom. "Surely you don't mean that!"

"But I do—every word of it!" snapped Jim. "This order gives him a power we don't defy—if he had served it on me, he'd didn't get the chance, and— Tony!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Cauterize ill's require desperate remedies!" said young Stone, looking his employe full in the eye as he reflectively traced over the piece of paper in his fingers. "Are you game to back me up in this? There may be a big risk, but we must take it—or lose everything!"

Tony's teeth came together with a snap. "I'm with you, sir!" he answered. "Duncan must run, no matter how we manage it!"

"Good! Then, see here!" Jim crossed to the big hearth which stood at one side of the hallway, and thrust the ballist's order in among the glowing coals. "That's the end of that! Now you get this chap up to bed, and doctor him as best you can. I don't think he's badly hurt, except for that rap. He's been drinking, from the look of him, and it didn't take much to knock him out."

These instructions were soon fulfilled, and presently Weekes returned with a joyous grin overpadding his round face. He was one of the two remaining servants left at the Hall, the other being an old housekeeper who had practically grown up with the family; but she had obtained leave the previous day to visit an invalid sister, so Tony and his master had the place to themselves.

"Well!" said Jim.

"Snerin' like a pig, sir!" laughed the groom. "An' looks like doin' a good twelve-hour stretch in the arms of old whaf'-his-name—Mor-phat! The cat's not only a scratch, an' he's not really hurt!"

Young Stone nodded.

"Splendid! Now, look here; you get both nags over to Beaverleigh, and put 'em up at the Plough. Binns will lend you a spare double beer. You'll keep these yourself, too, and only let anyone take the horses over your dead body. Understand? We're running no more risks after this affair!"

Tony's eyes glittered.

"Right-ho, sir!" he rapped back. "You may depend on me! And what—what are you goin' to do?"

Stone winked.

"Well," he replied, "I'm beginning by putting the best of the silver and stuff in a safer hiding-place; there are a couple of old street rackets in the house that happen to know the trick of it. The gentleman upstairs is harmless without his authority, but suppose he should reeveer quicker than we expect, and go back for another order, then we'd be in the cart! It's a fair while till three o'clock to-morrow, you know, and a lot might happen meantime!"

Weekes nodded comprehendingly, for the Beaverleigh Steopchase was timed to start punctually at three the following afternoon.

## CHAPTER 2.

### The Telephone Message—What Happened in the Fog.

THIS programme was accordingly carried out, Tony sleeping at the Plough bectery in the little town, where he was able to act as guardian angel to his two charges, whilst Jim Stone, having seen to the safety of the more valuable silver, passed the night in a second bed opposite to that of his snoring, unwelcome guest.

Jim slept well enough, despite the regular rumbing from the other side of the room, and it was vital that he should sleep well, since he was riding Black Ducau himself on the morrow. He knew every trait of the big 'chaser, even better than Tony did, and felt pretty sure that the horse would perform better under him than anyone else.

The morning dawned thick and foggy, but it was probable that some wind would spring up later to clear the air. Jim jumped out of bed, noticing as he did so that the ballist was already awake, looking about him stupidly, but now perfectly sober.

"Good-morning!" said Stone pleasantly.

The man stared, and nodded.

"Good-mornin'!" he returned. "D-d'you mind tellin' me where I am, an' what it's all about? I've got a beauty of a headache!"

"Shouldn't wonder, after that whack you

got," Jim observed. "You came here yesterday, saying that you wanted to see me on business, but before I heard what it was, you slipped on the ball floor and banged your head badly. However, I'm at your service now."

The man got out of bed, and began dressing as rapidly as his feelings would permit, several times pausing to dab his forehead with a wet towel; then he struggled into his coat, and turned round.

"I'll tell you my business quick enough, sir!" he said, thrusting his hand into his breast-pocket. "I've a—a— I've a—"

He paused stupidly, feeling in the opposite pocket, and then in the side ones, his mouth opening wide in perplexity.

"Lost anything?" asked Stone carelessly.

"Y-yes, I'm afraid so!" the fellow stammered. "Matter o' fact, I'm—I'm a ballist's officer, and—and I had an order to—"

"Hang it! Where can it have got to? Perhaps I dropped it downstairs!"

"Oh on your way here, maybe," suggested Jim. "You see, you'er—weren't quite yourself yesterday, and possibly you'er—accidentally pulled it out of your pocket with some other papers. These things often happen!"

The man gave a sheepish grin.

"Yes, sir—quite so, sir!" he agreed. "I forgot myself yesterday, I'll admit, and—"

"Oh, well! I must go back an' get a fresh order, that's all!"

Inwardly chucking, young Stone saw him to the door and watched until his murky figure disappeared in the fog. Then just as the lad was about to prepare himself a light breakfast, another form blundered through the mist, and Jim started back with a slight gasp of amazement.

"Tony! What the deuce—"

"Yes, sir! Binns gave me your message, sir. What did you want me for?"

"Want you! I didn't want you, man!" cried Jim, in perplexity. "What message are you talking about?"

"Why, sir, didn't you phone the Plough twenty minutes ago? Old Binns knocked me up and said you'd just told him to send me along here at once—so I've come!"

For perhaps half a minute young Stone

could only stare dumbly at his employe, then he seized his cap and caught the groom by the arm.

"Come along!" he snapped. "I don't know what it means, yet—but I sent no phone message to the Plough! Whoever did, wanted to get you out of the way for some reason, and—and I've got the wind up about Duncan. Was the box locked?"

"Yes, sir! I've the key in my pocket—"

Jim did not reply. Together they raced down the long hill into the dip where Beaverleigh nestled in a hollow of the moor, soon pulling up before the Plough stable.

Weekes produced the key and unlocked a big double box on the left.

Both horses stood quietly inside, apparently as right as the mail, but there was no time to examine them closely at that moment, for as the pair entered, a slight sound high up in the back wall attracted Jim's attention.

"What's that?"

Both glanced up, peering through the work, which seemed to have invaded everything, and saw the dim shape of something that moved and blotted out what faint light came through the solitary window. Next instant it had vanished.

"Bound to the back, sir!" grated Tony. "We must have surprised the beggar, whoever he was, but we'll get him!"

They dashed round the end of the stables, just in time to see a dim shape melting into the mist over the low wall which bounded the bectery's premises. Jim darted forward like a hare, his fingers closing vice-like round a bony ankle and hauling its owner back. The man came down with a crash on the cobbles, snarling something in an unfamiliar tongue.

Weekes pounced on him and turned him over, then started up with a gasp.

"Look, sir, for the love of Mike!" he cried, pointing. "A nigger!"

Stone bent down, a queer feeling suddenly taking possession of him. The man, though dressed in European clothes, was undoubtedly an Indian-tail, bony, and very wiry. Why was he there? Who had sent



Jim Stone darted forward like a hare, and his fingers closed vice-like round a bony ankle, hauling its owner back. The man came down with a crash on the cobbles, snarling something in an unfamiliar tongue.

him? And who had sent that scottish message to Tony, if not—

"We'll hand him over to Binns!" Jim said sharply. "He'll keep him safe in his cellar until we've time to sift the matter. We can't risk delay by dragging the police in now—and perhaps I don't want to drag 'em in at all," he added to himself. Then aloud: "It's past twelve, and we've got a lot to do by three!"

Weekes nodded and looked up, though still wearing a tight grip of his prisoner's wrist.

"Right, sir! The fog's cicatrix a bit, too, so it'll probably shift quick enough now if it started—Ah! There's Binns! Hi, Joe!" The proprietor of the Plough waddled out of the back door and approached the trio. His rufous face grew even more moon-shaped as he glanced down at the Indian—who, by the way, had not uttered a syllable since that infuriated outburst of jargon when he fell.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked, touching his forelock—or, rather, where his would have worn his forelock had he not been as bald as a melon—to Jim Stone. "I thought I 'eard a bit of a scuffle when I was at the— Bless my life, a nigger!"

"Why, sir, that's one of Captain Stone's men—relates to you, sir, as the 'Towers.' E brought two niggers with 'im—

"All right, Joe!" cut in the lad. "We'll look into that later—we've no time now. Meanwhile, will you take charge of this chap till this evening? Show him your wince in your cellar, or anywhere you like, so long as he can't escape until I come back. Mind, it's important!"

Binns grinned and nodded his big bald head.

"Right you are, sir! I'll make him nice an' comfy! Come along, Boot Polish!"

He grabbed the foreigner with a fat, but tough, hand, and frogmarched him inside. Then Tony Weekes turned towards the stable again.

"You can trust Joe, sir; your man will be waitin' for you when you want him," he said. Then added anxiously: "An' now to see if anythin' really did happen. I fancy we interrupted whatever monkey tricks he was up to, but we'd best make sure!"

A careful inspection, however, proved Black Duncan to be all right; but such was plainly not the case with his companion, Patrol Leader, for the latter was now shivering violently, as though with some sudden chill, whilst his eyes seemed as heavy as lead.

Tony went all over him, examining the glossy coat minutely, but could find no sign of a puncture nor the accompanying swelling which generally remains for a short time after a hypodermic injection. Evidently the horse had not been doped in the most usual manner according to the novelists.

But as Weekes bent lower to examine the foreleg, he suddenly stopped, smiling sharply; then he unknipped a bandage from

just above the fetlock and held it to his nose.

"By Jinks!" he muttered. "I put a bandage on him myself yesterday, but it didn't smell like that! What is it, sir, if you know?"

He passed the wrapping over to Jim, who also sniffed at it, but shook his head hopelessly. The odour was strange to him—a kind of heavy spice, so powerful that his eyes watered as he held it close to them.

"I'm all at sea," he confessed; "but there's certainly something fishy about the whole thing. However, I'm pretty sure of one point—the main one, so far as we're concerned—

"What's that, sir?"

"Why, man, the fog's been the kindest thing that ever happened to us, for it made that fellow mess matters beautifully! Don't you see? He's noddled the wrong horse in the gloom here!"

"Phew!" whistled Tony. "Then you think your case—"

"I don't think anything—I know!" snapped Jim. "But it must wait over till after the race. Then there'll be a merry noose! You'll see!"

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Beaverleigh Cross-Country—Neck and Neck—Revelation.

BY one o'clock the last traces of the fog had vanished, and by two the sun was shining brightly, though the air was keen and crisp—a foretaste of frosty weather to come. A big crowd had already assembled, waiting for the chief event of the season—the Beaverleigh Cross-Country to start, and this year the "field" was a heavy one. All the regular "hardy annual" owners had entered, whilst several new names also figured, and the tide of betting ran high.

Captain Nevil Stone's horse Simla, with his Indian jockey, came in for a good deal of inquisitive attention as the runners were not ready, and undoubtedly Simla was a promising-looking beast. Its owner, it was rumoured, felt more than hopeful of its leading at the finish, provided it got through the earlier stages, and had backed his fancy heavily in consequence.

Punctually at three they were off—first bunched together, then gradually straggling out in a long line of varied colour. The first obstacle put a couple of the best horses out of action, and three more came to grief at the water-jump. But after that things went smoothly enough until the last steeple were entered upon, when it was seen that Simla led the remainder of the field, with Colonel Bronson's Panther second, and Black Duncan a close third.

Captain Nevil, who had arrived just too late to witness the start, through his car having broken down, winced visibly as he heard a bystander mention his cousin's horse, and raised his glasses swiftly to his eyes. Yes; there was no doubt about it—Pine's Duncan was pounding along just at Pine's stall, with only two more jumps—a gate and

a hedge—between the leaders and the winning-post. As he watched the black chaser slowly but surely overhurl Bronson's gray the captain's teeth met viciously in his lower jaw.

Panther scraped the top bar of the gate, and stumbled wildly as he landed on the other side, just swaying clear of the sixth Black Duncan, who took the obstacle like a hind in flight, and tore ahead after Simla. But not a word was said by the crowd, who had taken the lightning into his feet, for as Jim Stone slowly crept up behind the Indian jockey in front, a pounding of hoofs behind warned him that his cousin's horse was not yet his only rival. He risked a half-turn, and saw a flash of rufous and chestnut—the Hew J. B. Davis' mare Cairo, with her jockey urging her on for dear life.

As Jim drew closer to the leader, Cairo also steadily advanced; and when Black Duncan was running neck and neck with Simla, Cairo was almost level with their withers.

The Indian jockey glanced swiftly sideways. Jim meeting his eyes for the fraction of a second; and what he read there seemed in some mysterious manner to telegraph a warning to his alert brain. There was something in that narrow, half-closed slit, that moment young Stone involuntarily drew away a little to the left—and then the last jump seemed to be rushing towards them.

Black Duncan rose like a swallow, and, even as he left the quivering life left beneath him, he saw Simla's nose strike the lightning—missing Duncan by inches, and barging into Cairo on the extreme left. Next moment he had topped the hedge, and was making for the post, just as a heavy crash and a single sharp cry sounded behind him.

Then the ringing chorus drowned all else. Black Duncan's horse was home without a rival within yards of him!

The big, gloomy library at Beaverleigh Towers contained three occupants a couple of hours after the racing was over, and the steeplechase. One was a mere lad, who looked a trifle pale but very composed; the second, a small, wiry, red-headed man who said little; and the third, a stockily built individual, whose straight back and rather earthy complexion suggested the soldier who had spent some years of his life in the hot places of the earth.

"We shan't keep you long, cousin Nevil," the boy was saying, in a low but very clear voice, "only long enough to prove to you how much we know of your connection with this matter. We have obtained a signed confession from your man, Ali Mehmet, who, fortunately, doped the wrong horse with some infernal Indian poison which operates through the skin. He admits fixing a bandage saturated with that stuff, acting on your instructions, round the foreleg of my second horse, Patrol Leader, mistaking him in the gloom for Black Duncan, and we only discovered it barely in time to save the animal's life. The double motive is easy to find. You had backed Simla heavily, but feared that Duncan might overtake yesterday, and you also hoped that the doctor's horse might collapse beneath me, and probably put me out of your way—"

"I—"

"I—"

"One moment!" broke in Jim quietly. "Perhaps I am a young rat; but I'm old enough to gnaw you badly, cousin! A fitful telephone message drew my groan away from the stables, where he must have been to attend to the horse's leg yesterday; but we both arrived in time to nab your man. All trying to make his escape. Very probably he made the stuff stronger than he intended, so that it took effect rather soon; and my own opinion is that his real intention, and yours was to let the poison to begin working on Black Duncan when the race had actually started. However, it doesn't matter much one way or the other, since the wrong horse got the dose. But what does matter is that your other man, Simla's jockey, had also been told to let the poison to begin working on Black Duncan by any chance succeed, despite his dope, in lasting out and overhauling him. I know that, because he gave himself away—I saw it in his eyes—and he deliberately tried to crash me at the last jump, so that we've got to stay here, what happened then; your man missed me and struck Cairo instead, breaking his own neck and Cairo's foreleg."

Nevil Stone remained perfectly silent as Jim paused to let his words sink in; but a

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amorous grey was creeping up under his tan-palor which he could not hide.

"Very well," continued the lad mercifully; "you wanted me out of your way, as well as being anxious to win the steechase. Why? I'll tell you. In the event of my death, Ash-thorp Hall passes to you—that's why! Have I made everything clear?"

The captain licked his dry lips, his muscular jaws clucking and unclenching.

"Fiercely," he replied, in a hard, cracked voice. "Well, go on! It's a wonderful story! What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing!" snapped Jim instantly. "That is, nothing unless you force me to. My—my father—your uncle—has been buried less than a month, and, after all, you're my own flesh and blood; so I don't want a scandal at such a time. But that confession of All Nehmet's is lodged in the bank, and he himself would be an important witness against you if you compel me to go to extremes. As it is, I'll give you twenty-four hours to clear the country!"

"And if I refuse?"

Jim shrugged his shoulders, whilst a slow smile crept over the ruficand face of Werkes.

"You know the alternative, cousin Nevil. But, of course, please yourself!" replied young Stone. "You came from India; why not go back there? In any case, I've given you my time-limit!"

Five minutes later the pair were walking rapidly in the direction of Ashthorp Hall, Tony Werkes punctuating his footsteps with insistent chuckles.

"Think he'll go, sir?" he asked presently. "He will—unless he's a fool!" returned Jim. "He saw I was in earnest—and I am!"

Jim Stone was right in his prophecy. A couple of days later "For Sale" bills plastered the windows of Beavefork Towers, and Captain Nevil had suddenly disappeared from the locality. Where he went, or what eventually became of him, they never heard—nor cared!

#### THE END.

("FATE'S WHITE HOPE") is the title of next week's thrilling sporting story. Note a week of reading it.)



Black Duncan rose like a swallow, and, even as he felt the quivering bit beneath him, Jim saw Birma avenge his lightning missing Duncan by inebriate, and charging into Cairo on the extreme left. Next moment Jim had topped the hedge.

## "THE DUCHESS' DIAMONDS."

(Continued from page 13.)

forward and caught her wrists. There was a brief struggle, and the pistol clattered to the floor. He kicked it into the far corner of the cabin.

"Rather a dangerous thing for a lady to carry," he said. "Come, now, madame! Sit down, because I don't wish to humiliate you with these useless absolutely necessary"—he snatched a pair of handcuffs meaningly.

She shrugged her shoulders with an air of surrender, and complied with his request. "What do you want with me?" she asked, evidently determined to preserve her sang froid to the end.

"On the jewels you received from Mr. Jacob Waterlow," he replied. "As for the rest—well, of course, the law will attend to that."

"She gave a rather shaky laugh. "Jewels! I have no jewels," she said, raising her brilliant eyes upon him.

Sharpe leaned back in his chair and returned her gaze unflinchingly.

"Look here, madame," he said quietly. "I must request you not to stare at me like that; it's rude, to say the least of it, and won't have the slightest effect in the way you intend! It is not the first time you've employed that scheme, but it's going to be the last—for a while! Now, the jewels, please, without further beating about the bush!"

The woman slowly removed her hat, and drew several articles from the lining, where they had been securely stashed up. She handed them to Sharpe without a word.

"Thank you, madame!" he said, with a grim smile. "And now, I fear I must go farther for my welcome company upon you for a little while, until we reach Ostend." He glanced at his watch. "It won't be very long; we are travelling well to time."

"Ah, Mr. Sharpe! I get your message all right! What's the news?"

Mr. Jacob Waterlow burst excitedly into the consulting-room, and dropped into the nearest chair.

"Keep calm, sir—keep calm!" Sharpe said. "Too much excitement is inclined to affect the heart, you know. Is that your property?"

He crossed to the table and laid the missing jewellery down beneath the eyes of the amazed Waterlow. The Rainputa Ruby seemed to burn with liquid fire as it flashed and scintillated in the rays of sunshine which came through the lofty window.

"Scotland!" gasped the jeweller. "Yes, those are the things! How can I thank you, Mr. Sharpe? But who took them—"

"You did, my dear sir!" replied Sharpe, his eyes twinkling.

Waterlow drew himself up, flushing red.

"What do you mean?" he cried angrily.

"Do you inquire—"

"I insinuate nothing," cut in the other, still smiling, "save that you took the Duchess of Balchester's diamonds from your own safe, and, what's more, handed them over to one of the cleverest thieves who ever breathed! That's the fact of the matter—but, of course, you didn't know what you were doing at the time."

Waterlow clenched his fists.

"Look here, Mr. Sharpe!" he snapped.

"This is going a bit too far, by James! First you deliberately say that I robbed my patron, then you try to soften it by implying that I was drunk when I did so, though I have already told you—"

Sharpe laughed outright.

"There, there, don't bridle up, man!" he said. "I'll relieve the tension by telling you exactly what occurred. You weren't drunk, but hypnotised— However, I'd best begin at the beginning.

"Well, frankly, I was puzzled at first, until I made some inquiries about Mademoiselle Lucie; but when the man at Burlington House told me she left not long after you, and had waited at the corner of the street, I began to get a faint glimmering of the truth.

"I went to the manager of the Paragon, and was informed that she had been suddenly taken ill and would not appear again;

then, at her lodgings, they told me she had just departed for the Continent.

"These facts strengthened my theory, and I ran her down on the cross-Channel boat. I had obtained a small photo of her from the music-hall manager, and, though disguised, I knew her to be a certain Sara Karloff—one of the most daring female thieves in Europe. This woman and I have crossed wires before on one or two occasions, though she never saw me undisciplined, and consequently did not recognise me when I entered her cabin. Unfortunately, though, on those occasions she managed to slip the net by the skin of her teeth, so I was very glad to have been instrumental in handing her over to the Continental police, who really have more against her than we have. Therefore, Madame Karloff will not likely be heard of again for a while.

"Her record is well known—and it's rather a romantic one. Born in the East, where she lived for a number of years, and where she inherited and cultivated her extraordinary powers of hypnotism—her mother was a native—she ultimately drifted to Europe, where she took up the theatrical profession and followed it honestly for a while. But she degenerated, descending lower and lower, until the police of every Continental capital have her history filed away for use at any time. A wonderfully gifted woman, Mr. Waterlow."

"I see," said the other. "And during her performance at Burlington House she hypnotised me, compelling me to bring her the jewels!"

"Precisely!" agreed Sharpe.

"She seems to have known your business transactions pretty well, and also to have been aware of your invitation to the conversation. Yet, between you and me, I fancy she made a bit of a blunder somewhere—that is, I believe she intended the spell to last till she got clear away, but, fortunately for us, it didn't. Good-bay, sir!"

Mr. Waterlow with a pleasant smile, left the consulting-room.

#### THE END.

(Look out for another of these special detective stories.)

### YOUR EDITOR CHATS TO HIS READERS.

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

My Dear Chums,—

Well, what do you think of it? Isn't this week's grand Bumper Number of the GEM just the finest paper ever seen? It will enjoy an enthusiastic reception, I know. Everybody is talking about it, and, what is more, everybody says the new features are bound to enhance the world-wide popularity of the famous Wednesday story paper can claim for itself during the many years it has been running.

#### THOSE PHOTOS!

They are superb. Don't omit to mention this feature, as well as all the other good things, to any chum who, up to the present, has had the rare ill-luck to miss the GEM. There has never been such an interesting, and specially auto-graphed series as this new portrait gallery of footer favourites. The collection will give pleasure for years to come.

#### A GREAT HIT!

Look out for the dramatic boxing yarn in next week's GEM. It will be complete in the issue, and its title is "Fate's White Hope!" It is the work of two of the cleverest authors, writing in collaboration, both of whom have studied the science of boxing through and through.

#### STIRRING TIMES!

There are plenty of these in the follow-on of Mr. Duncan Storm's great new serial. I think we may all be mighty proud of this serial. Storm is a man to follow—to keep your eye on, anyway, for he is much travelled, and, as with most of the intrepid, voyaging sort of fellows, he is for ever turning up something fresh and startling. His new serial will be found to be a veritable hotbed of amazing surprises. But the yarn speaks for itself in no uncertain way.

#### ST. JIM'S FOR EVER!

I am thinking specially just at the moment of the Special Edition of the "St. Jim's News," which you will find in the GEM next week. But, what with one thing and another, I have so many subjects I am keenly desirous of chatting about that one hardly knows which way to turn. But, anyway, you may take it from me that the coming number of the "St. Jim's News" will go one better still, and we all know what a jolly little supplement it is!

#### T. M. & COMPANY!

Rightly speaking, I should have mentioned next week's long—extra long—story of St. Jim's first; but, after all, it scarcely matters a jot where the really big subject is located, for it makes its own first place. I can vouch for the grit and go which distinguish the capital football story which will appear next Wednesday with Tom Merry and his

galiant followers occupying prominent positions. The tale bears the title of.

#### "PLAYING THE GAME!"

and it is full of excitement and hustle, though the final decision regarding the Cardew Cup is not yet.

#### A BIG SEND-OFF!

Maybe that description does not exactly fit the case, but I was thinking of the winter trip the GEM is starting on. With a bigger and better programme than ever, I am out to beat my own record, for the GEM has always enjoyed the enthusiastic support of thousands upon thousands of fellows all over the world. And yet there is something very special on this occasion, a lot more enthusiasm, and the reasons for that are not far to seek, since it was the very enthusiasm of Gemites which has called forth this additional effort, this real determination to make the old paper even better than before, if possible, to give more scope for the splendid stories, and to add trenchant and gripping yarns to our bill.

#### ENCORE THE GEM!

So that is just exactly how it is. I am doing my best to show my appreciation. I know to a dead certainty that you will all play your part, and play up for the GEM, and for a bigger triumph still. Look out for another Bumper and Free Gift Number next week!

YOUR EDITOR.

## OUR EASY "ONE WEEK" FOOTBALL COMPETITION!

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Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Everton 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, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Everton" Competition, Gax Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, November 16th.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a 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.

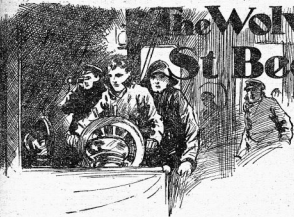
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# Wolves of St. Beowulf's!

Our Grand New Serial of Thrilling Adventure.

By  
**DUNCAN STORM.**

## CHAPTER 1.

### The Arrival of the Trois Freres.

"NOW, boys," said Jack Wabby, brightest and best of the famous Lincoln scholars of St. Beowulf's School, "none of you lads would have dreamed a few weeks ago that we few duple schoolboys would have put paid to the stern end of a high-toned gang of international burglars. It just shows what you can do with a little bounce and a good deal of luck!"

"And now we are going to put paid to the stern end of the gang," replied Stickjaw. Six boys were sitting in the dark hollow under the shadow of the trees, by the bank of the River Swale, watching the river. Five of these, between them, had managed to save the plate of Lord Tantivy and Lord Bradbury from about the most enterprising gang of burglars that ever had come under the notice of Scotland Yard. They had likewise managed to rescue the stolen jewels of the Countess of Castlewood, neighbour and patron of their school, from the same destination as the plate—Amsterdam, to wit, the one city in the world where a diamond can be recut and disguised so that it may never be known again as a stolen jewel.

They were waiting for the arrival of the motor fishing-boat, Trois Freres of Ostend, which was venturing into British waters under the fond impression that it was going to carry off the proceeds of a series of daring robberies.

John Lincoln, Governor of St. Beowulf's School, and Mr. Travers, of Scotland Yard, who, stumbling upon the activities of Wabby and his chums, had promised that they would not interfere, save to look after the safety of the boys themselves, had been as good as their word.

"They had never interfered with Wabby and his chums, and, even now, the boys were alone as they waited and watched the motor river which bonaded John Lincoln's estate of High March.

"We are a proper old gang now, cobbers," said Wabby. "It's gang against gang. What shall we call ourselves?"

"The situation," suggested Stickjaw, who was very fond of reading detective stories, "is, 'Oh, take it home!' replied Wabby sorrowfully, with his Australian frankness. "I hate any name that suggests policemen!"

Vicount Waffington, crouching alongside the boys, delighted by the chance which had released him from his aunt's care, and had sent him to join in the adventures of his new chums of St. Beowulf's School, supplied the name.

"What about the Wolves of St. Beowulf's?" he suggested.

"Well, my boy," said Wabby, "you are a lot of imagination. Wolves is right. That is the name of our football team. Wolf-cubs are the bright boys of the Boy Scouts. Wolves we will hit—Wolves of St. Beowulf's. That is the right name for us, pals!"

Jim Ready laughed. "What about Nobby?" he asked, referring to Jack Wabby's pet kangaroo, who was now snugly stowed away in a loose box in the stables of High March Castle.

Jack Wabby sighed. "It's a jolly he can't be with us to-night on this adventure," he said; "but you can't very well pretend to be a member of a gang of British burglars and trapse about with a tame kangaroo. If those chaps who are coming in on the Trois Freres saw Nobby with us, they'd smell more than a rat, they'd smell a kangaroo!"

The boys stared, but Wabby smiled. "Don't you forget it, though, boys," he said. "Nobby, the kangaroo, is a proper member of the gang. Kangaroos have been heard of before now. Years and years ago mysterious footprints were seen near Roundish, and all London was full of stories of Spring-Heeled Jack, who jumped over hedges and scared old women into St. Spring-Heeled Jack was talked of all over the world, and, about London, nobody dared go out o' nights for fear of meeting him. And nobody's ever explained who or what he was."

"What was he?" asked Stickjaw. "I've heard of him. They say they caught him jumping over a railway-bridge, by laying down a pool of treacle on the other side of the bridge!"

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"Rot!" replied Wabby. "It's my notion that Spring-Heeled Jack was nothing more nor less than an escaped kangaroo!"

"Here, not quite so much noise, gentlemen!" put in William Stubbs, John Lincoln's valet, who was sitting in the darkness close by. "The craft can't be far off now. I sighted her from the tower of the castle before sunset, standing off and on, and she's only been waiting for sunset to come into the river."

"Right-ho, Stubbs!" replied Wabby promptly. "We'll be as quiet as little mice."

Stubbs was quite right. The fishing-mark Trois Freres, No. 705 Ostend, had already entered the river, and was now making her way up against the tide towards the spot where the boys were hidden, the trysting-place where the proceeds of the burglaries were to be handed over to her, and where she was to take on board several men and youths who had made England too hot to hold them.

As a matter of fact, the Trois Freres hailed from Holland, and the international gang of burglars who had chartered her for this rather risky job had their headquarters in Germany.

There was little wonder, then, that the Trois Freres kept a good offing, well outside the three-mile limit, till after sundown. She had no desire to be overhauled by the coast-guard.

The boys had already made acquaintance with Stubbs in the gun-room of High March Castle, where he seemed to spend most of his time cleaning and overhauling the vast armory of sporting weapons and tackle belonging to his master.

As boys must have a hero, they had made a hero of William Stubbs.

William Stubbs was more than valet to John Lincoln. He had been the constant companion of his master in all his travels and adventures for many years.

He and his master had been the only two of their party to break through on the great march through Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. Next to John Lincoln, Stubbs knew more of the secret history of the African Continent than any man living, but he did not let a great deal of it go.

He also knew of the strange mystic races of Africa, amongst whom he had lived as a sort of king for a long time.

Stubbs found much that was congenial to him in the society of Jim Ready, Wabby, Stickjaw, Lung, Lal Singh, and Washington. He liked boys, and he did not tire of satisfying their endless curiosity in the museum of wonders which filled the galleries of High March Castle.

To nearly every one of these objects was attached a story.

There was the skull and tusks of the great bull elephant, with its hundred and ten pound tusks, which had driven at Stubbs when he lay helpless on the ground, and there was the bullet-hole of John Lincoln's shot which had saved Stubbs' life. In the gun-room there was the .450 which had fired the shot.

Even Wabby was glad that they had Stubbs

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with them as they waited there in the shadow of the oaks, listening for the chugging of the fishing-craft's motor, which she would have to see in coming up the river.

Near by the boys, but unseen by them, were John Lincoln and Mr. Travers of Scotland Yard.

"I'm glad we've got these lads with us, after all, boys," whispered Wobby to his companions as they crouched in a little hollow beneath the trees. "We were biting of a bigger bite than we could chew, and we should have looked silly if those tugs had nabbed us and clucked us overboard, as they might have done. That would have spoiled the whole business."

"I say, Wobby," whispered Wallington, his voice trembling with eagerness, "do you think we shall get any fighting?"

"I expect we'll get all you want, little Lord Fauntleroy," answered Wobby. "What a kid you are. You are only just out of your nursery, and you are looking for men to eat. Regular tiger, you are!"

"Don't be an ass!" replied Wallington. "I only wanted to know."

"I don't know for a cert," replied Wobby, "but I should think that it is highly probable when these tugs find that we have the police with us they'll make a rough house of it. But listen! What's that?"

The vibration of a slow-running motor was audible down the river.

Six heads at once peeped over the rim of the pit. But the high slopes that rose on either side of the river, with their overhanging woods, made it impossible to distinguish the dark sails and hull of the fishing craft.

The sound of the motor, however, increased.

"She's coming!" said Wobby. "Where's Mr. Lincoln?"

John Lincoln was not far away. There was a soft step in the darkness behind them, and, in company with Mr. Travers, he made his appearance from the shadows of the underwood.

"Here she comes, sir," whispered Wobby.

"I thought I heard her," answered John

Lincoln. "Are the sacks all ready on the landing-place?"

"All complete, sir," responded Stubbs.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Lincoln, "we answer her signals, and she will send a boat to the shore. You must leave the talking to Mr. Travers, Stubbs, and myself. We are the only ones who speak Dutch. If it comes to a fight, leave all you can of that to us three men."

The party could now make out the dusky outline of a large lug-sailed craft against the darkness of the opposite shore.

It was the *Trois Freres*, sure enough, for there were no fishing boats of this rig on the coast.

They heard the creaking of the pulleys in the blocks as her sails were lowered and the splash of the anchor and the rattle of the anchor-chain as she swung to her mooring on the ebb tide.

Then a light flashed thrice in the darkness.

"Answer her, Wobby!" ordered John Lincoln.

Wobby had his electric-lamp ready. Thrice he flashed its light across the river.

Soon they heard the creaking of blocks again and voices raised in argument.

"They are launching the boat," said Stubbs, listening intently to the sounds that came across the still water, "and they are arguing about it. That's the way with all these farmers. They can't launch a boat without makin' a Tower o' Babel of it!"

"What language are they speaking," Stubbs asked Wobby in a low whisper.

"Every language under the sun, Master Wobby," replied Stubbs. "I heard a bit of Russian, a bit of Dutch, a bit of French, and some Flemish talk and Italian. It's a gang o' mixed picklers that we've got to do with—regular confederate o' crooks!"

"They are taking a long time to get that boat away," said Wobby.

"So much the better for us," answered Stubbs. "I'm inclined to think that most of 'em are amateurs at sailing. Perhaps they've all been sea sick outside. They've been standing on and off most of the afternoon with the wind against the tide and a

nice bobble of sea on. P'raps their stomachs are still upset. But here they come!"

The big smack's boat was coming away from the side of the *Trois Freres* now. They could hear the rattle of her oars in the rowlocks, and it was pretty plain to Stubbs, practised ear that those who were pulling her had still a good deal to learn of the art of rowing.

"Now keep quiet, young gentlemen," ordered Mr. Travers, "and don't forget what Mr. Lincoln told you: Hold your tongues and let us do the talking!"

Mr. Travers was almost unrecognisable this evening. In place of his smart, trim suit and neat felt hat, he was wearing a Yankee cut suit and a cheap and shabby velvet hat, pulled well down on his eyes. He looked, as Wobby remarked, more like one of the lads of the village than a responsible officer of Scotland Yard.

Wobby flashed his light for a second to show the boat where to steer for the little private landing-place close under the trees. But the international gang of thieves on board, though they might be expert enough at ripping up safes and burgling strong-rooms, were no great boatmen.

They allowed the tide to take them, and were swiftly damped on a bank of gravel a dozen yards from the shore.

"Vere vas der laand'placc?" asked the voice of the steersman.

"Here!" replied Stubbs. "Where do you think you are getting to?"

"It's your fault, Macatta!" growled the steersman. "Ven I say pull, you do not pull—you back der water!"

"You tells me to pull, and I did-da pull!" spluttered an Italian voice in the darkness. "You think I no understanda de boat? I row for years in de 'arbour at Napoli!"

They could see the party in the boat now. They were standing up, trying to shove her off the gravel-bank with their oars.

Suddenly there was a heavy splash and a gurgle of "Socorro!"

"That's the Erythalian gone overboard!" muttered Stubbs with great satisfaction. "Taking his Saturday night bath for once in a way."

The boys could hardly restrain their laughter.

There was a thumping and a rattling of wood against wood in the darkness. The rascals were evidently flogging Macatta out of the water.

In the argument that followed, they learned that the steersman was one Stein, a German, whilst the gentleman who was rowing now was a Czech Slovak.

The party on board hauled in the dripping Italian, who burst into a flood of voluble abuse. He was still telling his friends what he thought of them when they managed to get him thought of them when they managed to stage.

#### A Queer Crow!

THE crowd of cosmopolitan thieves were so busy saying what they thought of one another that they hardly condescended to notice the silent group who were standing by the bags on the bank.

Presently they shimmered down.

"Vilssenger!" mumbled the German, Steu.

"Anvers!" replied Stubbs, in response to the password.

"Are you got der stuff dere, Englander?" asked the German rather sourly.

"All of it," replied Stubbs.

"Good!" replied Stein. "Put it on der boat, and we vill row you aboard!"

The bags which contained the supposed treasure were heavy as bricks and sumps could make them. The original claim that they had contained had been carefully weighed up, and a corresponding weight had been placed in them. Then they had been sealed again.

"I was notta my faulta dat we did-da getta on da rocks," started up the ruffled steersman.

"Stand up, you Erythalian fool!" bawled Mr. Travers. "Do you want to get us all captured? The police are about!"

It was one of Mr. Travers' modest claims that he always spoke the truth, even in his business. The truth is often stranger than fiction, and little did Signor Macatta dream that the gentleman who thus warned him was a representative from Scotland Yard itself.

The treasure was stowed in the boat, and



In the light of the lantern, Stubbs brought the little craft alongside the *Trois Freres* with a biff that knocked the heads of the crowded ruffians together, and nearly sent Signor Macatta flying into the water.



ke mutterings of delight went up from the sag as one by one they lifted the heavy sealed bags on board.

Then John Lincoln and Stubbs stepped into the boat, and the boys, with Mr. Travers, followed.

She was very deep in the water as they pushed off, but Stubbs had taken the tiller, and, as he knew every inch of the river at this point, they did not run on any of the hidden gravel-banks, but made straight for the dark shadow of the Trois-Freres.

A shaded lantern dangled from her side, showing the gangway, and Stubbs, who was always an artist, brought the boat alongside this with a lift that knocked the heads of the crowded refugees together, and which surely set Signor Macotta into the water again for another Saturday night dip as he stood up in the boat to grab the line which was thrown to him.

Stubbs' clumsiness was intentional. Sailors, as a rule, are not expert sailors, and he knew that amongst this motley crew there must be one or two who knew their job. One of these he met as he climbed up the ladder.

"Captain Dunk!" announced Stein. A yellow-faced Dutchman, stolid and crinkled, held out his hand to Stubbs. "We get out of dis quick," he said. "The eb will soon finish. It is an early tide to-night."

"And the police are about?" whispered Stubbs, putting his finger to his lips as he looked round furtively at the dark shores of the river.

"Is all der stuff ders?" asked Captain Dunk, as stolidly as if he were shipping a few bags of onions.

All the same, his narrow eyes gleamed with satisfaction as the heavy bags were hoisted up the side and dumped on the deck of the Trois Freres. The pots and pans with which they were stowed bulged the canvas sacks in a most natural fashion, and not one of this gang doubted their loads as they dragged the bags to the cabin.

Captain Dunk shook hands with Mr. Travers and with John Lincoln, but took little notice of the boys. He glanced rather curiously at Lal Singh's Indian face. But he said the same to the Chief of the Dam as a member of the gang working in England—a smart young Hindu dacoit, exceptionally clever at climbing. He apparently made up his mind that Lal was Ram Chunder Dass, escaping from the country he had made too hot to hold him.

"First we will get to sea," Mr. Smith," he said; "then we will look at your little catch."

The remark was addressed to Stubbs.

Stubbs nodded, well pleased that Captain Dunk had taken him for the famous Frisky without question.

There were twenty odd men moving about the wide decks of the great fishing craft, and from their movements, and judging by the way they stumbled about in the darkness, Stubbs made out that only four of them were sailors.

He marked these four men.

The rest to Stubbs were a foreign-looking crowd. He would have dumped them all in under the generic heading of dodos.

There were many men of the pallid, sive-complexioned type, common enough in the Whitechapel Road and in the neighbourhood of Soho.

They wore felt hats that were a little too high in the crown and a little too wide in the brim for a sailor's liking. Some wore patent-leather boots.

There are no sailors who go to sea in patent-leather boots, save the mates of Italian trading barques of the sunny Mediterranean.

But Mr. Travers, standing in the shadow of the hatch, was greatly interested in all these young men. Some of them were known to Scotland Yard by face, others by finger-print.

If Mr. Travers was not greatly mistaken, the young man who was dragging a bag of the supposed plunder towards the cabin consisted of Fritz Magari, one of the most accomplished of Germany's spies during the war-time.

Fritz was a Hungarian gipsy, and about as dangerous a lad as could be found outside a European prison. Since the war he had taken up with the Bolsheviks, and his presence with this gang was not without its meaning.

To the boys Fritz did not look a bit dangerous as he dragged the bag along the deck. He was a mean-looking, undersized rat



The bows of the Trois Freres suddenly lifted till they seemed to point skyward. Then they fell with a heavy crash, punching a large wave into a cloud of spray, which wetted the boys almost to the skin, as it drove along the docks.

or a youth, as was the youth who was helping him.

This youth jostled against Wobby, innocently enough, and raised his hat with a polite excuse for his clumsiness.

"Crums," thought Wobby to himself, "these jobs have not better manners than our Lower School kids, even if they are a gang of safe-cracking tugs!"

He did not know that this pallid-faced youth, with his tiny little side-whiskers and long black eyelashes, was none other than Satan le Cou-Cou, most dreaded of the apaches of Paris, and badly wanted by the French police for a recent murder.

Mr. Travers' keen eyes had taken Satan le

"Beaver!" whispered Waff in Wobby's ear.

"A King Rufus beaver?"

A young man, with a long red beard which had never known a razor, was helping to haul one of the sacks.

Amongst the boys this young man would have been a best. They would gladly have gambolled with him, but their orders for silence kept them respectfully staid.

There was a flicker in Mr. Travers' eyes as the gleam of a lantern fell on that red beard, and he recognised in this beaver none other than Red Rodriguez, the Barcelona anarchist on whose head there was a standing reward from the Spanish Government of ten thousand pesetas.

Mr. Travers was charmed.

He did not regret now that he had played a sporting part with Wobby and his chums.

"It always pays in the long run to be a sport," he muttered to himself. "If I'd taken matters into my own hands and stopped these schoolboys playing at my game, I'd never have been let into this. Half these rascals aboard this packet are the big stuff. This is the day of young men, and this craft is a Noah's Ark of international criminals. Ha, ha! The internationals! Well, we'll collar the whole team!"

At the same time, Mr. Travers did not forget that fifty per cent. of these young

men on board were wanted for murder as well as for other crimes, and that probably never since the days of the old pirate ships had such a choice gang of criminals been afloat together.

He saw the whole of the treasure locked in Captain Dunk's cabin and the key taken from the lock and given to that worthy.

Then a bottle of Schiedam was produced, and glasses were clinked in honour of the English comrades who had brought off so magnificent a haul.

### On the Open Seas.

THE boys did not join in the drinking, neither did John Lincoln or Mr. Travers. Their excuses were understood. In these days of competition and pressure, fine craftsmen in the trade of crime are as temperate and as careful as surgeons.

Captain Dunk came climbing up the narrow stairway from the cabin.

"Now we go to sea!" he said, turning to Stubbs. "I do not like dis river. Do your friends know 'em to der bar? We came near to strike when we came in."

"My friend here, Masters, knows every corner and channel tight or day," replied Stubbs, jerking his thumb in the direction of John Lincoln.

"Dot vos good enough," said Captain Dunk. "He shall come der passage with me."

"Which passage did you come in by?" asked John Lincoln.

Captain Dunk described the passage.

John Lincoln shook his head.

"No wonder you came near getting into trouble," he said. "It's all right on the charts, and all wrong in the passage. It's filled up a lot in the last few years and since the last survey. You have got to go out by the South Passage and through the Deep Nines till you round the Shutter Lightship."

"But dere vos der race—der Smugglers' Race?" objected Captain Dunk.

"That does not matter much on the eb tide with the wind in the present quarter," said John Lincoln. "I suppose your crew are all good sailors? They don't mind an hour of booksteking about?"

"Dere vos only four sailors on de ship

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with myself," replied Captain Dunk. "All der rest vos assack when we came in."

"Well, it won't do 'em any harm to be assack, as we go out, will it?" asked John Lincoln, laughing.

"Deres vos too many of dem," muttered Captain Dunk gloomily; "but dey will come to see fair play. Dey do not trust der treasure to me. I do not trust it too much to them."

"Then all de letter if they are assack!" replied John Lincoln boldly. "Give them a good shake up, and you won't have any trouble this side of Saker's Gut!"

"The old Dutchman laughed merrily. It was plain that he thought that John Lincoln's advice was good.

"Have it your own way, captain," he said. "We will go out by the South Passage."

The oil engine was set running, and the Trois Freres moved up to her anchor, which was lifted. Then John Lincoln took the wheel, and the vessel glided down the river towards the sea.

The ebb was flowing strong, and the dark tree-covered banks on either side slid past rapidly.

The strange crowd of young men, who had crisscrossed had time in the calm waters of the river to forget their anxieties, were now gathered in the cabin, fortifying themselves against another trip to sea. A black steward was attending to them.

The boys, with a peep through the open skylights, could see the evil, bearded faces gathered round the table, where large German sausages, a ham, and long loaves of bread were laid out. The little band were all eating heartily, and coaks were popping merrily.

MacLiffe, with both elbows on the table, was shovelling down a large dish of macaroni, and drinking from a great fagon of red wine.

All were smoking cigarettes as they ate, and all were drinking heavily as a preparation for the morning's wallop.

To the boys this little glimpse into the cabin brought remembrance of stories they had read about pirates and buccaners.

They hardly realised that the group of young, pallid men gathered round the table well represented the pirates of the modern world, the devil's body of criminals ever at war with the forces of law and order.

A dozen languages were being spoken in that frowsy little cabin below. Hands were gestaculating, and voices were raised in quarrel and hater.

Mr. Travers and Captain Dunk stood by John Lincoln as he steered the Trois Freres.

From the moment John Lincoln had turned the ship and headed her down the river, edging of a dangerous shallow, Captain Dunk had seen that he was in the hands of a pilot who knew his business.

He asked no questions of the steersman. In the shady world in which Captain Dunk had moved for many years, men did not ask questions of one another.

To Captain Dunk John Lincoln looked like an ex-officer of the late German Navy. There were lots of officers in the late German Navy who had been more English than the English. In a nation of snies there are men who can simulate any nationality.

On the crew of the Trois Freres, two were tending the Kelvin motor, whilst the other two, standing in the bows, were keeping an anxious look-out.

The boys, grouped by themselves, were handed from the steersman and his companions by the smack's boat.

"Look up the river! Right there they are! Get a full view of the crowd below!"

"A pretty lot of young lugs," muttered Wobby to his chums. "Hallo, young Waff!" he added. "How do you like coming to see an adventure?"

"It's coming to sea," answered Waff cheerfully, "but we haven't had many adventures yet."

"You want a little while!" responded Wobby. "They'll be coming thick and fast on. It's a pity we haven't got old Nobby with us. I think we are going to get into just the sort of stouthing match that he'd enjoy."

"I wish my aunt could see me now!" whispered Waff.

"You'll wish she couldn't in about half an hour. It would worry her!" answered

Wobby, feeling for his trusty boomerang which was stowed away safely under his waistcoat.

"When do we come to the sea?" asked Waff, as the Trois Freres wound round between the dark tree-crowned hills following the wide channel of the river.

"In about ten minutes the channel widens out. It's round the next bend in the river," answered Wobby. "Then the sails will fill, and off we go down the south passage, past the bar, and out to sea through the sand-banks."

He looked up at the tanned sails, which were flapping idly, as the tide and engine carried the fishing-smack along at a good speed.

Soon there was a warning cry from one of the men on the look-out.

The boys stood up and peered across the dark water.

Presently they heard a hail and an order to the Trois Freres to heave-to. But the Trois Freres kept on. Her sails filled as she sped through the opening of the river, and she began to race through the water, her bluff bows tearing over a roaring wave of foam.

The boys had a glimpse of a coastguard boat pulling strong across their course. But the Trois Freres was travelling faster than they were, and the boat crossed under their stern, the man in her sternchairs shouting angrily.

"That's the coastguard!" muttered Wobby. "They've spotted us coming in, and they want to know something about us. I expect they've taken our number!"

This supposition was quite correct, but the crew of the Trois Freres, expert in these little excursions of mystery, were already at work.

The false lettering and numbering which were born on the bows and quarter of the Trois Freres were torn off, and the black plates of tin carrying the false lettering and figures were cast into the sea.

They came astern, and in a few seconds the nameboard of the Trois Freres of Ostend gave place to that of the Marta Huys of Palembang, No. 573.

"This supposition was quite correct, but the crew of the Trois Freres, expert in these little excursions of mystery, were already at work. They came astern, and in a few seconds the nameboard of the Trois Freres of Ostend gave place to that of the Marta Huys of Palembang, No. 573. "They have changed our ticket. There were lots of these Belgian craft sold up and down the coast to Holland and France during the war, and they haven't gone home again. They're afraid that the coastguard will wireless the Fisheries Protection cruiser to overhaul us!"

"That will be a bit of a lark!" said Stickjaw. "Perhaps they'll make us all prisoners. Crumbs! What's that?"

"That was the sudden bluff of a sea, which hit the bows of the Trois Freres and another bar wide decks with a drive of spray.

They were well in the south passage now, and clear of the surrounding land, and the drain of the sea over the sands was beginning to make itself felt.

The wind was blowing up, too. The sails which in the sheltered river had flapped so idly against the mast were now straining in their bolt-ropes, and the deck of the heavy craft suddenly took on an alarming angle.

The Trois Freres was heading now down for the bar, and on either side of them they could hear the deep roaring of miles of breakers.

"There was a sudden change in the movement of the vessel; she was meeting the short, steep seas that drained in over the bar, and met the last of the ebb from the river.

The bluff bows suddenly lifted till they seemed to point skyward. They fell with a heavy crash, punching a large wave into a cloud of spray, which wetted the boys almost to the skin as it drove along the decks.

"Hi-hum!" muttered Wobby. "The old craft is getting lively. Hang on, Waff, and mind you don't get washed overboard!"

Bang!

Another wave followed up the first, the heavy hull pitching back in a great burst of broken water.

Down in the cabin a sudden hush had fallen on the gang of roystering criminals. It was plain to all that they did not like going to sea. They looked at one another apprehensively, and handed their glasses a great deal more freely than their knives and forks.

Round the Beaver rose from the table, and closed the skylights down.

"I believe they are beginning to feel a bit gummy in their insides again!" chuckled Wobby. "That's all the better for us if it comes to a tussle. There's nothing like a bit of sickness to take the fight out of a chap!"

The red-bearded anarchist shoved his head up at the companion-stair.

"He'd not finish his sentence. Another bit of spruce swept along the ship, and a yell went up from the cabin as a pitch and a toss sent the redoubtable anarchist tumbling down the steps.

"Then the scuttle was hastily closed down. "That's the ticket!" whispered Stickjaw, rubbing his hands. "The fog down below will keep 'em up. Lead us a hand, Jim; we'll drag that tarpaulin over the skylights. Then they can't lift 'em at all!"

The boys seized the heavy tarpaulin which lay on the deck, and dragged it over the skylight. Captain Dunk nodded his approval, for the light from the skylight dazzled the eyes of the steersman, and here the south passage was narrow and dangerous, for they were close on the bar.

"Hang on, boys!" shouted John Lincoln.

The boys hung to the stays of the mainmast as a great white sea sprung rearing past, filling the air with thick mist.

The Trois Freres lay for a moment almost on her beam-ends, then she punched into another sea, sending it flying right and left.

"Feel like an iron bar, to judge by the way she's dumping on it!"

But it was water and not sand that the Trois Freres was hitting, and soon she had cleared the stiff short seas of the bar, and was sailing away, rising and falling on the long dark rollers.

"How are you feeling, Waff?" asked Wobby under his breath.

"A bit rotten!" answered Waff. "I feel as if my tummy was trying to crawl up my backbone. This is the first time I have ever been sick. I don't care. I'll get used to it soon. What's that red light that keeps going out—right away out there at sea?" he asked.

"That's the Shutter Lightship," answered Wobby. "We get round that, and then we shape our course up Channel for Holland. But the Smugglers' Race is in between us and the light."

"What's that?" asked Waff. "More rough water," replied Wobby. "We shall be into it soon, and that will stir up the lads down below."

"It will stir up some of the lads on deck, too!" replied Waff. "But I don't care! I wish my aunt could see me now. She wouldn't think I was such a kid!"

Waff's aunt would have been considerably alarmed if she could have seen him during the next half-hour or so as the Trois Freres punched her way through the broken water of the Smugglers' Race, that strong tide which, once met, most craft gave a wide berth, save at slack water.

Sometimes her bows pointed to the sky. Then she would dive into the deep hollow of the sea as though she never intended to come up again.

"Look out!" came John Lincoln's warning voice. "Hang on, boys! Hang on for your lives!"

In the darkness ahead the boys had a glimpse of a great white-topped breaker driving at them through the darkness.

The Trois Freres did not seem to rise to it. She hung sluggish for a moment.

The boys were slumped down upon her decks, burying her bottom deep in stern in a boll of white water, blotting her out.

Jim Ready felt his hands torn from their hold, and knew that Waff went with him.

He was overboard!

(Are the two lucky youngsters to drown? Don't fail to read next week's most exciting instalment of this powerful serial. Make no mistake about it, boys, there's a thrill in every paragraph of this splendid yarn. Get your chums to read it!)



# My Readers' Own Corner.

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## This Wins Our Tuck Hamper:— EQUAL TO THE OCCASION!

The conversation over the garden fence had taken anything but a friendly turn. "An' if your boy, 'Erbert, ties any more came on our poor dog's tail," was Mrs. Moggins' stern reminder. "e'll 'ear about it, that's all! Oh, and perhaps you've done with that saucen you borrowed last Monday?" "Erbert," asked Mrs. Grubb shrilly, "what 'ave you been doin' to Mrs. Moggins' dog?" "Nothin', ma," replied the boy unblushingly. "There," said his mother triumphantly. "An' you returned the saucen yesterday, didn't you, dearie?" "Yes," replied Herbert calmly. "I sent it by 'er dog!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to S. Robinson, 137, Chantlerlands Avenue, Hull.

## ANOTHER CHESTNUT!

"What's this?" asked the Editor of a well-known 'weekly' of a humourist contributor. "That's the joke, sir," replied the contributor. "Jolly good joke, that, eh?" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Editor, highly amused. The contributor had high hopes of winning a prize until the Editor exclaimed: "The first time I read that joke the tears ran down my pinafore!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Master W. Hunt, c/o Bandmaster, 2nd Royal West Kent Regiment, Ballykinlar Camp, Co. Down, Ireland.

## SPOILING THE EFFECT!

The couple had just become engaged. Monty thought he would show his feelings by writing to his ladylove. This is what he wrote: "Dearest Priscilla, I would go through fire and water for you. I would conquer thousands, smash mountains, in fact, do anything to be by your side. I remain, yours always, Montague. P.S. I will come and see you to-night, if it does not rain."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Morris, 12, Emond Road, Kilburn, N.W. 6.

## TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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## A SHARP RETORT!

Brown had just missed the ten o'clock train, after a breathless dash to the station. "Missed the train, sir?" asked a sympathetic porter, who stood near by. "No," answered Brown angrily, "I simply hated the sight of it, so I chased it out of the station!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Arthur Hood, 41, St. Helen's Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.

## ENGAGING!

A lady owned a young parrot, who, though it was beautiful, could not speak a word. One day a gentleman who was staying in the house arose at about six o'clock, with the object of teaching the parrot to say something, as a surprise for its mistress. He thought "Hallo!" would be a suitable word to teach it. He started "Hallo, Polly!" but got no reply. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he cried again. Still silence. He went on like this for about twenty minutes, when suddenly the parrot snapped out: "Number engaged. Shall I call you?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Stuart Levy, 76, Bedford Street, Liverpool.

## SENT TO COVENTRY!

There are several explanations for the origin of this phrase, which appears so often in school stories. One is that the citizens of Coventry objected so much to any intercourse between the garrison and the town, that every soldier in Coventry was "cut." Another idea of the meaning of the saying when first used dates back to the Civil Wars. The Parliamentarians used to send any obnoxious Royalist to the town, and once in Coventry, the supporter of the King found he had no friends.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Nixon, Kiltumbilly, Blackliam, co. Cavan, Ireland.

## RATHER EMBARRASSED!

One day, Mary, the scullerymaid, came rushing into the drawing-room, gasping. "Oh, ma'am, what shall I do?" she cried. "The twins have fallen into the well." "Good gracious, Mary!" cried the horror-stricken mistress. "Run into the library, quick, and get me that green-covered volume 'How to bring up children!'"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to George Adamson, 9, Victoria Avenue, Charlton Lane, Rothwell, Leeds.

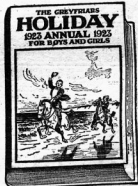
## THE LARGEST PIKE.

The Mausheim pike that attained the length of nineteen feet, and was captured in 1497, at the advanced age of 257 years, had in its gills a brass ring. On this ring was engraved in Greek: "I am the first fish that was placed in this pond (Kaiserweg Lake) by the hand of Frederick II., Governor of the world, on October 5th, 1230." The skeleton and ring were long preserved in the Cathedral of Mannheim.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Greene, the Haven, Brands Hill, Colahbrook, Bucks.

## CORAL ISLANDS.

Coral islands have been built up from the bottom of the ocean by tiny sea animals called polyps. As these grow they put forth buds, which are bound together like the branches of a tree. At the end of each branch there is a polyp, which sucks carbonate of lime from the sea, and so the skeletons of those tree-like animals are formed. And when they die, the hard, bony skeletons which remain are known as coral. In this way the coral islands of the Pacific Ocean have been formed.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Thomas Auld, 8, Mansfield Street, Partick, Glasgow.

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