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# GEM

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No. 1,058.

Vol. XXXIII

May 26th, 1928.

EVERY  
WEDNESDAY.



## SAVED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH!

*A tense moment in the grand long story of  
Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's—in this issue.*

A STIRRING LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY—

# For FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE!

by  
MARTIN CLIFFORD

## CHAPTER 1.

### At Odds with His Chums!

"**B**RING that paper here, Levison minor!"

It was the harsh, grating voice of Mr. Selby, master of the Third Form at St. Jim's, that spoke. Third lesson was nearly over in the Third Form-room at St. Jim's, and Frank Levison gave an inward groan as Mr. Selby rapped out the order.

"Oh crumbs!"

It was just his luck!

By nature and inclination, Levison minor was as well behaved a youngster as any in the Third—which is not to make him out a prig or a paragon. He had his fair share of mischief. But there was no vice in him, and no spite, and among his comrades he often played the peacemaker's part.

But Mr. Selby looked upon him with a jaundiced eye. Mr. Selby disliked all boys. Some he disliked more than others, and among these were Wally D'Arcy & Co., to which illustrious fraternity Frank belonged.

Now, as Frank came slowly out in front of the class with the incriminating paper in his hand, there was a glitter in Mr. Selby's eyes that boded ill for the Third-Former.

He fairly snatched at the paper, and Frank waited with eyes cast down. The fag did not know exactly what was on that sheet, which had been folded several times. He had been the second to write on it, after Wally had set the ball rolling, and since then it had passed through several hands, and all who had handled it had written something on it.

The game the fags of the Third had been playing was founded on the parlour game of "Consequences." But the Third had changed the game to suit themselves.

A jumble of statements caused by writing something about who and where, and when and how, without seeing what those before you had written, did not appeal greatly to the Third. But to start with a more or less veiled reference to somebody unpopular, and to pile upon that remarks about his appearance, his manners, his character, and his habits, was the kind of thing that the Third entered into with gusto.

Everybody read what those before him had written, of course. Then he ventured as far as he dared in the way of adding to it. Always it was understood that no name must be mentioned.

But no one had any doubt as to who was meant. Last time they had played the game Reuben Piggott had been their subject. Piggott, the cad of the Third, had just made himself more unpopular than usual, so that when the sheet was full it had been thrust before him, and he had had the pleasure of reading what the Form thought of somebody unnamed, but of whose identity there was not much room for doubt.

That had happened on the Friday afternoon. It had been a very hot day, and Mr. Selby had relaxed his usual vigilance, feeling sleepy. The Third had had quite an easy time of it.

But Saturday morning was cooler, and Mr. Selby was suffering from indigestion. Also Piggott was looking out for a chance of revenge.

Piggott had caught Mr. Selby's eyes upon him, and, instead of looking intently at the geography before him, he had glanced at Frank Levison. And that had had the result of bringing the master's gaze upon Frank, and upon the paper in his hand.

The master of the Third's suspicions had been aroused at once, for no writing was required during the lesson in progress. Indeed, the taking of notes was barred, since the

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Third were supposed to be memorising the countries of Europe, with their capitals.

Now Mr. Selby read the paper which had circulated in the back desks, and as he read his thin lips tightened and his eyes gleamed under his knitted brows.

Wally had started with something about "A big-footed bouncer." Mr. Selby had big feet. Frank's addition was harmless. Reggie Manners thought it tame. It was only: "stood in the quad." Reggie contributed: "gloating as he fingered a cano." Then he had passed on the paper to Jameson, of the New House.

Half a dozen more had scrawled something before sending the paper on its return journey to Wally. Mr. Selby had never imagined himself to be popular with his Form, and as he read that extremely disrespectful effusion through he had less doubt than ever on that point. Wally & Co. might have been expressing their opinion on an unpopular prefect like Knox of the Sixth, but Mr. Selby's suspicious mind did not entertain that thought for a moment.

Most masters would have given the writers lines for wasting time and dismissed the matter from their minds, but the look on Mr. Selby's thin face showed that that was not likely to be his way of dealing with the matter.

Frank Levison had expected to be caned. He would have preferred to be caned, and have it over and done with, especially if that would avert punishment from the rest.

But the master of the Third knew well that to postpone the penalty was to increase it in the case of a sensitive youngster like Levison minor.

He glanced at the clock. The hands stood at ten minutes to twelve.

"You will go at once to my study and await me there, Levison!" he snapped.

Frank went, with dragging steps. Before he had reached the door Mr. Selby had rapped out questions concerning the supposed study of the hour.

Ten minutes is not a very long time in which to deal with the knowledge which should have been learnt in fifty. But it was long enough to reveal to Mr. Selby that fully half the Form had slacked.

Wally informed him that Finland used to belong to Denmark, but no longer did so. The leader of the Third was thinking of Iceland, no doubt, but he could not have read very carefully, if he had read at all.

Curly Gibson expressed an opinion, which had nothing to recommend it except the fact that it was quite unbiassed, that Latvia was one of the Balkan States.

Jameson said that Poland was near Greece, and Leggett that Portugal was the capital of Spain. Piggott correctly gave Paris as the metropolis of France, and one or two others who got quite easy questions were able to answer rightly. But the great majority boggled and blundered, and Mr. Selby distributed lines with a liberal hand.

The Third almost gasped with relief when they were dismissed at last and Mr. Selby left the Form-room.

Frank heard the swish of his gown as he came along the passage. It would soon be over now!

But Mr. Selby did not seem to be in a hurry to get it over. He sat down at his table and spread that sheet of paper before him.

There was a look of scorn on the Third-Former's face. It seemed to him something short of decent that a man should take like this anything that really mattered so little.

Mr. Selby looked up suddenly, and met the gaze of the fag's clear blue eyes.

Perhaps he read in them the contempt that was in Frank's mind. He spoke even more harshly than usual.

# —FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!

In Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth, young Frank Levison has always had a staunch friend in time of trouble, and when the Third-Former finds himself badly up against it Cardew is the fellow who comes to the rescue. Certain it is, however, that could the Fourth-Former have foreseen the amazing and nearly-tragic happenings that were to result from his well-meant scheme he would have dropped it as if it had been red hot!



"How much of this abominable stuff did you write, Levison?"

"Only one line, sir."

"Which one?"

"The second."

It was the only one of them all which contained no possible offence, but that made no difference. The fact that Mr. Selby knew Frank to be truthful made no difference, either.

"Hold out your hand!"

The fag was kept holding out his hand while the master crossed to the cupboard and took out a cane. But the hand was still steady when Mr. Selby turned with the selected cane hard gripped.

Frank winced under those three terrific cuts, but he made no sound.

Mr. Selby threw the cane on the table.

"Now," he said, "be good enough to tell me who wrote the rest of this vile production!"

No answer.

"Do you hear me, Levison minor?"

Still the fag did not speak. His eyes met the master's glare with a fearlessness that infuriated Mr. Selby. His hand tightened on the cane.

"You will either tell me, or—"

"I can't tell you, sir. You know I can't!" burst out Frank.

"I know nothing of the sort! I am quite sure that you are able to disclose the names of most, if not all, of those who had a hand in this."

Again no answer. Frank had spoken once for all. He could not sneak, and Mr. Selby knew it.

"Hold out the other hand, Levison!"

Three more cuts, even more vicious than the others! But Frank bore them manfully.

"You can now go! But you are to send D'Arcy minor, Frayne, Gibson, Manners minor, and Jameson to me at once!"

Frank's eyes gleamed as the master of the Third rapped out the names. He had been punished for not telling what Mr. Selby knew already. More than that, only Wally & Co. were going to be punished although, as the master must have known, several others had had a hand in it.

Before he was dropped upon by Mr. Selby, Frank had just had time to read the words Reggie Manners had written. They came back to him now, seeming like a prophecy.

For Mr. Selby did seem to be "gloating as he fingered his cane!"

Frank Levison left the study and went slowly down the

passage. His chums were waiting round the corner and they crowded round him sympathetically.

"Catch it hot, Franky?" asked Wally D'Arcy.

"A bit," replied Frank, with a wan smile.

"Rough luck, old top! He needn't have taken it out of you for the whole crowd!"

"'Fraid he hasn't," Frank answered. "You're all to go to him."

"What?" howled Reggie Manners.

"Oh, stow it, Reggie!" growled Curly Gibson.

"You never gave us away, did you?" demanded Reggie, glaring at Frank.

"'Ere, don't talk rot, Reggie!" put in Joe Frayne. "You know 'e wouldn't!"

"Well, it's my opinion he did!" retorted Manners minor, with increasing bitterness.

Reggie Manners was the stormy petrel of the little band.

When there was trouble with outsiders any of them—though Frank and Joe Frayne were less likely than the others—might have started it. But when dissension arose within their own ranks Reggie was usually the cause.

"Oh, shut up and come along!" said Wally. "We may as well get it over."

And he smiled at Frank as he went. Wally did not reckon Frank a traitor. None of them did but Reggie. But the accusation hurt, and as Frank waited for his chums to come back his face was flushed with indignation.

They returned, bearing every sign of having been through it hard.

But three of the five were tough where caning was concerned. Curly Gibson could not stand it as stoically as Wally and Jameson and Joe Frayne, but he always stood it as well as he knew how. It was Reggie Manners who took it worst.

Reggie never could see why he should be punished. It was always someone else who was chiefly at fault when Reggie caught it hot.

He could not get back on Mr. Selby, whom he looked upon as a tyrant. Therefore, he wanted to get back on Frank, whom he chose to look upon as a sneak.

"You didn't answer my question, Levison minor!" he snorted.

"I'm not going to. It doesn't want answering," returned Frank.

"Oh, chuck it, you two!" groaned Joe Frayne.

"Frank might as well answer, though," said Jameson, looking at Levison minor rather queerly.

"Just as well," agreed Curly Gibson. "Though I must say Reggie's a fathead to fancy Frank would sneak."

"Easy enough for that old hunk to guess that we were all in it," said Wally. "That was how it was, I suppose, Frank?"

But Frank's temper was up now. Wally and Jameson were not offensive, but it seemed to him that they were rather taking sides with Reggie. And Reggie, who persisted in keeping his flushed and angry face close to Levison's, was very offensive, indeed.

"I'm not going to answer," said Frank deliberately.

"I say! You don't want us to think——"

"If you're mean enough to think I'm a sneak, Wally——"

"That isn't it. I don't—we don't—it's all rot, of course! But you might just as well——"

"I won't!"

"Look here, young Levison——"

"I'm looking! But I'm not answering questions like that!"

"The young cad did sneak!" hooted Reggie.

"Oh, chuck it. Come away! You'll have old Selby down on us again if you make all that row here!" said Curly, desperately.

They moved away. Wally, furious now, went off with Reggie, and Jameson followed them. Curly Gibson hesitated, then scuttled after the three.

Only Joe Frayne remained with Frank.

"I say Franky, I know you didn't sneak, but you might just as well 'ave told us you were innocent," said Joe.

"The rotters had no right to suspect me of such a cad-dish trick, and if you think that I ought to have denied it, you'd better go after them!" replied Frank hotly.

Joe went. He hoped to bring Wally, at least, if not Reggie, to see the matter reasonably.

But he failed, and at the dinner table Frank found his chums giving him the cold shoulder. All but Joe Frayne—and even Joe was not quite the same as usual.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Cardew, the Comforter!

ERNEST LEVISON and Sidney Clive came together into No. 9 study in the Fourth-Form passage, which they shared with Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Clive and Levison were in flannels.

Cardew was not. Cardew lay on the couch, apparently too lazy even to read.

"Are you coming to cricket, you slacker?" demanded Levison.

It seemed rather an unnecessary question. Really, no one could have looked less like having any intention of the sort than Cardew looked just then.

"Dear man, I am not," replied Cardew, with a yawn. "Does it look like it?"

"It looks like a lazy, good-for-nothing loafer, and that's about what it is!" snorted Levison.

"You flatter me, Ernest," drawled Cardew.

And he took a cigarette case from his pocket.

Levison gave a grunt of disgust.

"Oh, come on!" said Clive. "You know when he says he won't, he won't, and that's all about it."

"Sidney," yawned Cardew, striking a match, "I congratulate you on your remarkable perspicacity."

"Fathead!" retorted Clive.

The two Fourth-Formers left the study and went down to Little Side without further argument with their chum. They did not trouble to shut the door.

Cardew blew out the match. He did not really want to smoke just then.

He was just returning the cigarette to the case when someone spoke from the door.

"Cardew!"

"Sir?"

Cardew sat up. That was all. He did not get up from the couch. And he did not try to hide the cigarette-case, as most fellows in his place would have done.

It was Mr. Selby who stood at the door. He had chanced to be passing, and had seen Cardew stretched on the couch, with a cigarette in his hand.

Since smoking was a breach of the school rules, it was but natural that the master of the Third should bring Cardew to book. He would have done so even had there been no feud between them.

But a feud there was. More than once Cardew had been "up against" Mr. Selby, and the master had not always got the better of the exchanges.

Moreover, Cardew shared with the rest of the Shell and Fourth, a rooted objection to any interference with them by the master of the Third.

Mr. Railton was Housemaster. No one questioned or ever wanted to question his rights of discipline.

Mr. Linton ruled the Shell, Mr. Lathom the Fourth. Neither of these gentlemen cared much to be bothered about anyone out of his own Form. They had consciences,

of course, and there were times when they felt bound to take action.

When they did so resentment was not acute. For the Shell generally had some liking for little Mr. Lathom, of the Fourth; and the Fourth had respect, if no great liking, for Mr. Linton, of the Shell.

But neither Shell nor Fourth could stand Mr. Selby at any price. If they detested him less than his own Form did it was only because they had less to do with him.

Cardew considered that Mr. Selby should have passed the open door of No. 9 without a glance inside. What might be going on was no business of his. But Mr. Selby was not likely to miss a chance of making trouble for the slacker of the Fourth.

"You were smoking, Cardew!" he rapped out.

"Excuse me, sir—your mistake! Sorry to contradict you, but I was not smokin'," answered Cardew.

"Boy! How dare you deny it? You have a cigarette in your hand now!"

"I don't deny it, sir. But perhaps you will have the goodness to observe that it's not lighted."

Mr. Selby scowled.

No other member of the two Forms, much as they barred Mr. Selby, would have had the "nerve" to answer him like this.

And Cardew knew perfectly well, despite his coolness, that there was trouble ahead.

It did not matter in the least, really, that the cigarette was not lighted. His possession of it was an offence.

"You will take a hundred lines, Cardew!"

"Yes, sir. An' where shall I take them?"

Mr. Selby nearly foamed at the mouth. He glared at Cardew like a basilisk.

"Boy! Cardew! This—this impudence——"

"Oh, no, sir! I merely meant to ask who would receive them. As you are not Housemaster, or Form master——"

Cardew paused and put away his cigarette case. He had gone beyond the bounds of prudence, and he knew it.

But prudence had never been one of his characteristics. Some irresponsible impulse lurked within him, urging him to say things better left unsaid, to do things better left undone.

Yet there was something in his objection. It was not customary for a master, other than Mr. Railton, to give lines to a boy not in his Form.

But he had offered Mr. Selby an opening, and the Third Form master took it with a quickness that won reluctant admiration from Cardew.

"You will take five hundred lines, Cardew! And you will show them to Mr. Railton, explaining exactly why I gave them to you."

Cardew had to admit that Mr. Selby had scored there.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, knitting his forehead, as though in deep perplexity, "but if I am to explain I ought to understand. It was one hundred lines in the first place. Now——"

"Another word from you, Cardew, and it will be a thousand!"

The slacker of the Fourth was silent. He realised that five hundred lines for one word was rather too much of a good thing.

He could expect no help from Levison or Clive in doing his impot when they knew why he had been punished.

A thousand lines! The very thought of that number made Cardew shudder. And if they were given they would have to be done. Mr. Selby would not forget, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, stood no nonsense.

Mr. Selby stalked away down the passage, his thin features showing his satisfaction at having scored in his encounter with the dandy of the Fourth.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Cardew ruefully. "Five hundred lines! What a life!"

He yawned again, and stretched himself on the couch. He could not be bothered to get up and close the door. That imp of the perverse made him long for a cigarette now. But it was really too much trouble to get the case out of his pocket.

As for the lines, they could be left for a start on them during the hour of prep.

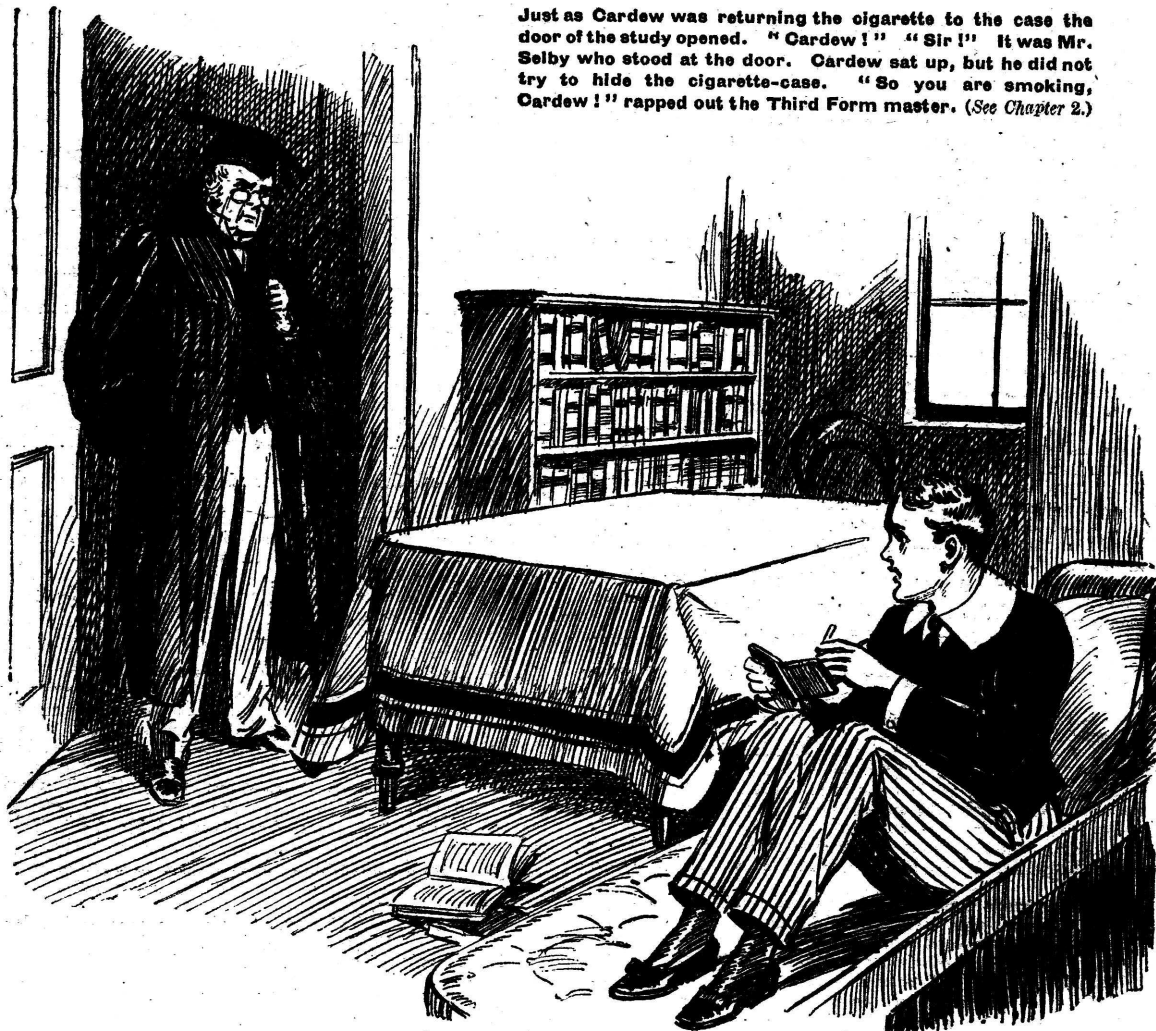
Cardew usually scamped prep, trusting to luck, or to help, in the time of need from his chums. A novel or a crossword puzzle interested him more than taskwork.

Though monotonous, the writing of five hundred lines would be less trouble than wrestling with quadratic equations or Greek roots.

Thinking how much more comfortable St. Jim's would be if only Selby were scragged neatly and education dispensed with in the cases of fellows like himself, who honestly felt it a bore, Cardew closed his eyes, and presently dozed off.

He was awakened by the sound of the door being closed. It was closed very carefully and quietly, but Cardew was a light sleeper.

Just as Cardew was returning the cigarette to the case the door of the study opened. "Cardew!" "Sir!" It was Mr. Selby who stood at the door. Cardew sat up, but he did not try to hide the cigarette-case. "So you are smoking, Cardew!" rapped out the Third Form master. (See Chapter 2.)



His opening eyes fell upon a rather forlorn little figure.

"May I come in, Cardew?" asked Frank Levison, with a choke in his voice.

He hardly needed to ask. With all his faults, Ernest Levison was a good elder brother. Frank's coming to St. Jim's had had much to do with bringing him into the straight path, and the feeling he had for Frank's straightness had helped to keep him there.

If only for this, Levison's chums would have been fond of Frank. But there was more than that in it. They were fond of him for himself. Clive and Cardew were like two more elder brothers to the youngster.

"You are as welcome as the flowers in May, Franky," answered Cardew.

"I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind me coming to sit here for a bit, you know, Cardew."

That queer choke was still in his voice, and there was trouble in his blue eyes.

"Sit, dear boy—sit!" said Cardew. "Take two chairs, if you like. You are welcome to the use of anythin' whatever in the room except the couch. An' you'd be welcome to that except for the fact that I really don't feel equal to gettin' up. I have had an encounter with your amiable Form master, an' it has left me worsted an' limp exceedingly."

"What did old Selby get on to you for, Cardew?" asked Frank.

And now his voice was much as usual, because, for the moment, he had thrust his own trouble into the background.

"For not smokin' a cigarette, my son."

"Oh, rats! He couldn't—"

"He did. On my word of honour, I wasn't smokin' it. I merely had it in my hand."

"Just going to, of course? And then you gave him cheek, Cardew. I know you! I tell you it doesn't pay to monkey with old Selby."

"You are absolutely right, Franky. I got five hundred lines, an' they're to be shown up to Railton, with an ex-

planation as to why they were awarded me. I don't like the lines one little bit, but I confess that I like even less the prospect of that explanation."

"Five hundred! My word, that's a whack, Cardew! Could I help you? I'm afraid my fist isn't much like yours, though."

"I'm afraid it would hardly be taken for it by any but a blind man. An' the dear Railton has the full use of both eyes. What's the matter with your hands, kid?"

Frank had not meant to show them. But Cardew had got a glimpse of one of them, and now he turned up his palms.

They were crossed with livid weals. Mr. Selby could wield a cane with anyone at St. Jim's, master or prefect. It was the only exercise he cared for much.

"Great jumpin' Jehosaphat! Did Selby do that?"

Cardew had risen from the couch in his indignation.

Frank nodded.

"What for?"

"Oh, I don't want to talk about it, Cardew! Besides, it's not so much the caning I mind, really."

Frank hung his head as he spoke. The distrust of his chums made him miserable.

"What, then?"

"Oh, never mind, Cardew! Could you lend me a book to read?"

"When you've explained."

Cardew took Frank's chin in his hand and held his face up.

Cardew had never been anything but kind to his chum's minor. Even now there was kindness in his touch—something in it, too, that made Frank's eyes go misty and a lump rise in his throat.

And the queer thing was that Cardew, whom few people counted sympathetic, knew just how the youngster felt, and sympathised with him keenly in his own whimsical way.

"Oh, it was fine of him!" cried Marie Rivers. "Sometimes I don't like Cardew a bit, and then he goes and does something that makes you think a heap of him—like this!"

Manners nodded. That was much as he and his chums felt about Cardew. He had made them think him an utter rotter more than once, and then he had won back their friendship. He had disgusted Levison and Clive, his own special chums, but always he had come back to his place in their affection.

In the ordinary way of life one could not depend upon Cardew for two days together. But when a crisis came, when courage that took no heed of self was needed, then Cardew was to be relied upon!

"Well, it's plain what you two must do now," said Marie Rivers. "Get your bicycles and go after the rest and fetch them back! They'll all be glad to know that Frank's here, I'm sure."

"Can we have a squint at him first?" asked Manners. "I don't see why you shouldn't. But tread softly! I'd like him to sleep if he can, for he's bound to be in pain while he's awake."

All three, Clive limping in the rear, followed the school nurse to where Frank lay in bed in something deeper than a doze now. His face was very pale, and against the pallor a long red graze from its contact with the road showed up.

They said nothing. They simply looked at him and passed out again. But Clive's eyes were misty, and both Talbot and Manners felt lumps in their throats.

Frank looked such a little chap to have gone through so much and shown such pluck. He had certainly had a day of it!

CHAPTER 11.  
All's Well!

**D**ASH it all!" Ernest Levison, some distance beyond Wayland, was having more trouble with his bike. The nut of the saddle pillar seemed to have worn badly, and twice he had been very nearly thrown by the saddle's sudden looseness. On the third occasion he did actually come down, but luckily with no serious damage.

Now he was screwing up the nut again, though with little hope that it would hold.

It was not an easy job. The moon had retreated behind clouds once more, and he needed both hands for his task, so that he could not use his lamp with much effect.

He felt desperate.

He was alone, and his mind was full of trouble about Frank and about Cardew. Where Frank was he could not guess. That Cardew was ahead somewhere he knew, and he

would have been more than glad of the slacker of the Fourth's companionship then.

It was through Cardew that Clive had had to turn back. Cardew should never have struck that blow, though he had had provocation, and though he had never imagined it would have the consequence it had. Cardew had treated Frank badly. Yet he had not meant to be unkind to the kid.

And Cardew had saved the lives of Wally and Jameson. Levison's heart glowed as he thought of the courage of his chum. That was like Cardew!

If Frank were all right—if he had not run away, after all—or if, having run away, he were brought back, both Levison and Clive would easily forgive Cardew, as they had forgiven him many a transgression in the past.

But if anything had happened to the Third-Former—that would wreck the friendship which had weathered so many storms.

Out of the gloom a voice hailed him—the cheery voice of Tom Merry.

"That you, Levison? Though we might catch you up. Wally said your bike had gone wrong."

The cloud passed. The moon gleamed out once more. Six fellows, all ready to help, clustered round Levison, and he felt new hope surge up in him.

"Here, this is what you want!" growled Herries.

He pulled a loose thread from the turn-up of his trousers, and held out his hand for the nut which had given so much trouble.

With the thread wound round it, the nut screwed up tightly.

"Weally, theah is some value at times in bein' an untiday boundah!" remarked Arthur Augustus pleasantly. "Now, I could not have supplied Levison with anythin' like that, because I should not dweam of allowin' my twousahs to get in that condish!"

"Fathead!"

"Seen Cardew and Selby, Levison?" asked Lowther.

"Neither of them. Selby, with a car, is miles ahead of me, with a blessed jigger that won't go, and I dare say Cardew's miles ahead, too."

"But they're together!" said Tom Merry.

"Together? What do you mean?"

"Selby's taken Cardew in the car. We heard from a bobby in Wayland."

"Oh, my hat! I say, you fellows, you've heard what he did at the crossing, of course? You must have met Wally and the rest."

"We've heard," said Tom Merry briefly.

"Yaas, wathah! Cardew has played some wotten tricks (Continued on page 28.)

THE ONE AND ONLY HANDFORTH!

Ever met Edward Oswald Handforth, the "big noise" at St. Frank's? No! Then you're booked for a real treat. He's coming to St. Jim's next week and Tom Merry is making special plans to receive him. You see, Handforth's reputation travels in advance of him, so to speak. They know at St. Jim's that Handy's leg was simply made to be pulled, therefore, why shouldn't they pull it? Why not? Once Tom Merry & Co. start the leg-pulling business the fun is fast and furious. But Edward Oswald can't see anything amiss. He takes what comes to him as his due.

You chaps will laugh loud and long over this amazing new boy. Look out, then, for:

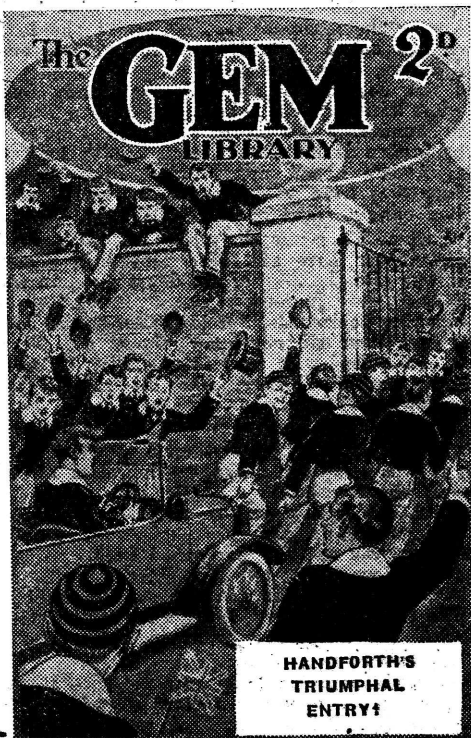
"HANDFORTH AT ST. JIM'S!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the

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young man, shot right across their path. If Cardew had lost his head a smash would have been certain.

But with a deft swerve to the left Cardew avoided the danger, while Frank held his breath, wondering what would be said and felt at St. Jim's if he and Cardew were killed.

"You're not fit to be in charge of a perambulator, sir!" shouted Cardew at the offending motorist.

There was no shake in his voice. His hands on the wheel had not trembled. Want of nerve was not one of Cardew's weaknesses.

No answer came. The young man held on. "Might chase him an' tell him a few things for his own good," said Cardew. "But perhaps we'd better not. Put the wind up you, kid?"

"A bit, Cardew. I say, you can drive!" "Yes. A bit better than Tom Merry or Kangaroo or Talbot, not to mention Figgins," replied Cardew dryly.

"Oh, I didn't mean—"  
"That's all serene, my son. I know you didn't, an' you spoke the truth. But I do like best to be doin' things that I can do better than the ruck—see? Enjoyin' it all, in spite of road-hogs an' narrow squeaks?"

"Oh, rather! It's ripping!" answered Frank. Cardew wondered whether the Third-Former would be quite so sure of that if he knew all that was in the mind of his benefactor.

But it would not hurt Frank much, except for a few minutes, and, if things worked out as Cardew expected, it ought to be a lesson to Wally & Co., and possibly to the tyrant Selby.

"You pay at the desk, Franky," he said. "I'll just take a squint outside to see whether that chap from the garage is about."

It would have been strange if Frank had suspected anything. He did not, and he was rather pleased with the commission entrusted to him.

Cardew had never been anything but kind to Frank. Cardew reckoned that he was being kind now. It had hardly occurred to him that there was some cruelty mixed up with the kindness, though he wondered just how Frank would take what was coming.

There were several people in front of the St. Jim's fag at the cash desk. One of them was an elderly lady of forbidding aspect, who took up some time in settling matters.

First she laid a complaint against the waitress who had served her for tossing her head when tipped with a half-penny. Then she disputed an item in her bill. After that she said her change was wrong. She finished by declaring that she would never enter the shop again. Frank, highly amused, thought that the shop was lucky.

He was in no hurry. He felt happy and comfortable after a good tea.

Soon the drive would be over, and he would get back to the school, very likely to find his chums still angry with him.

No, that was not very likely, though. Reggie might still be sulky. But cricket would have dissipated Wally's wrath, and probably Jameson's, too. And Joe and Curly were not really in it.

More than ten minutes elapsed between Cardew's going

**HERE'S SOMETHING UNUSUAL IN THE WAY OF CROSS-WORD PUZZLES:**

See if you can solve it!

**CLUES DOWN.**

1. Children sing ——— .
2. Merrily.
3. A sad fellow does not go ——— .
4. ——— whistled Tom Merry.
5. Gaily.
6. Full of merriment.
7. How Bob Cherry laughs.
8. Cheerily.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							

**CLUES ACROSS.**

1. Industrious insects.
9. Measures of length.
10. Organs of sight.
11. To irritate.
12. Aspirates.
13. Comfort.
14. Same as 9 across.
15. Brainy.

The solution of this puzzle will be given in next week's issue.

There was a risk that Frank would lose that faith in Cardew which Cardew—holding most things lightly—really valued. But he would regain it when he came to understand.

And, anyway, Ralph Reckness Cardew was used to taking risks.

"Here we are!" said Frank cheerily, as they ran into Wayland.

They made straight for a teashop favoured by St. Jim's fellows when in the market town.

Here Cardew ordered a big pot of tea and a selection of cakes and pastries that made Frank's eyes glisten.

"Wouldn't Baggy like to be here?" said the Third-Former, as he waded in.

"I can't exactly imagine myself takin' Baggy for a drive," Cardew answered. "But if I did it would be with the notion of settin' him down somewhere a good long way off an' lettin' him get back as best he could."

"Oh, I say, Cardew! Poor old Baggy! Bit rough on him, you know."

Levison minor had quite an average Third Form appetite, and Cardew did not despise the good things before them. It was some little time before they made an end of their meal.

Cardew slipped a shilling under his plate for the waitress. Then, as they were passing out together, he handed Frank a ten-shilling note with the bill.

and Frank's getting his turn at the desk. Cardew would be wondering why he was so long. But it would not hurt the slacker of the Fourth to wait. He might not have found the Rylcombe man yet, for that matter. He hurried out with the change in his hand.

The car was no longer there!

He looked up and down the street. There was no sign of it.

Had it been stolen while they were in the teashop? Frank had not been able to see it from where he sat. But he had thought that Cardew was keeping an eye on it.

But if it had been stolen Cardew would surely have run in to tell him before going to the police.

He might be hunting for the chauffeur. Or he might have seen a master or a prefect, and be keeping out of the way for a bit.

At least a quarter of an hour passed before the first notion that he had been deserted came into Frank's mind.

He tried to dismiss the idea. Why should Cardew play him so shabby a trick?

But he could not help remembering what Cardew had said about Baggy.

If that was Cardew's idea of a joke it was a rotten one!

The minutes dragged on. Frank grew disheartened.

It did not occur to him to ask anyone if they had seen the car. But he would hardly have brought himself to ask

even if he had thought of it, for people in Wayland must know that St. Jim's juniors were not allowed to drive cars, and any question from him might give rise to awkward questions elsewhere.

Frank Levison was not timid or helpless. He knew that he could get back to St. Jim's all right.

But he was sensitive, and Cardew's comradely treatment of him made him feel even more acutely the baseness of this betrayal. For the betrayal seemed to make it all false.

When an hour had passed Frank gave Cardew up. By that time the Fourth-Former must have been back at St. Jim's, having been driven within a quarter of a mile of the school. And Wally & Co. were back from cricket and were getting rather bothered about Frank.

The fag had no money of his own. That was Cardew's change, which Cardew had felt sure he would draw upon for the few pence that a railway ticket cost, if he were short.

That was one of Cardew's miscalculations. He had not reckoned on Frank's pride.

"I won't use a penny of his money!" said the Third-Former to himself, as he thrust the change into his pocket. "I can walk back!"

And he started on the tramp across Wayland Moor.

He had enjoyed himself immensely that afternoon. It was such a treat as had rarely come his way.

But now the treat was wiped out, much as something might be wiped from a slate by a wet rag.

There was never much bitterness in Frank's loyal and generous heart, but it was sore as he trudged over Wayland Moor—sore with Wally & Co., who called themselves his chums and yet refused to trust him, and sorer still with Cardew, who had pretended kindness only to betray!

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### Where is Levison Minor?

"YOUNG fathead!"

It was Reggie Manners who spoke.

Tea was long since over at St. Jim's, and it wanted only a few minutes to locking up, but Frank Levison had not returned.

In the Third Form room Wally & Co. were beginning to feel rather uneasy as the time for prep approached, and there was still no sign of their chum.

"Who—Frank?" demanded Wally D'Arcy, with a glare at Manners' minor. "I don't reckon he's such a fathead as you are!"

"What have I done?" snorted Reggie.

"Why, it was all your fault, you silly chump!"

"I dunno about that," put in Joe Frayne. "It was Reggie first go off. But you backed 'im up, Wally."

"Oh, rot!" answered Wally. "I thought the young ass might have said that he didn't sneak—that was all."

"Did you ever believe that 'e would sneak?"

"Not really. But—"

"There you are! You did back Reggie up, and it's no use sayin' you didn't. An' if anythin's appened—"

"Oh rats, Joe!" interrupted Curly Gibson. "What could happen?"

But Curly's tone was uneasy.

"Anyway, 'e ain't 'ere, an' 'e don't know a bit where 'e is. An' very soon it'll be lock-up, an' then—"

"Hallo, Cardew!" sang out Wally, as the Fourth-Former entered the stronghold of the fags, where it was not always safe for a Fourth-Former to come alone. "Seen young Levison?"

Cardew had come because he was beginning to get anxious about Frank.

If the fag had caught the train from Wayland he would have arrived at St. Jim's soon after tea, which was later on half-holidays than on other days.

Hoping to smuggle him in unseen and keep him in Study No. 9 till Wally & Co. began to feel alarmed about him, Cardew had waited at the gates quite a long time.

Frank had not shown up. Now it was evident that Wally & Co. were at least wondering, if not actually alarmed. Cardew's state was worse than theirs, for he was a trifle worried, though he did not see how anything could possibly have happened to Frank.

It was rather the thought of what the youngster would be feeling than fear for his safety that troubled Cardew.

But he answered Wally's question in his usual manner.

"Lots of times, my son."

"I mean lately, you ass," said Wally.

That Wally was uneasy the fact of his failing to object to being called "my son" by Cardew showed.

"Since when?" asked Cardew.

This was very much according to programme. What was not according to programme was that he himself should not know where Frank was.

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"Any time since dinner?" said Curly.

"Oh, yes, I've seen him since that!"

"Where?" asked Wally eagerly.

"On the other side of Wayland," replied Cardew.

That was true, though it was not the whole truth.

It was also according to programme. But again there was something that spoiled Cardew's scheme.

The slacker of the Fourth could have appreciated much better the bewildered looks on the faces of the fags, the manner in which they glanced doubtfully at one another, if only his own mind had been quite easy.

The fags would possibly have gone to Mr. Selby for permission to go after their chum, though of course it was on the cards that they would start without a word to the master of the Third. Cardew had hoped not. He wanted Mr. Selby, as well as Wally & Co., to believe that Frank had bolted, broken-hearted by the way he had been treated.

That would have given old Selby and the young rascals a pretty bad quarter of an hour, Cardew had reckoned.

It could not have lasted much longer, for Frank would not have stayed in Study No. 9 after time for prep had arrived. To ask him to play a part in the scheme would have been futile; and even if he had been willing to do that it was unlikely that Levison major and Clive would have agreed.

Moreover, there would have been a bill for Cardew to settle if the fags were sent by him on a wild-goose chase.

Cardew began to wonder now whether the scheme had been quite as water-tight as it had looked. Even apart from the unaccountable absence of Frank there seemed leaks in it.

"On the other side of Wayland!" gasped Curly. "He must have been running away!"

"Silly young ass if he was!" snorted Reggie. "What had he got to do that for?"

"If 'e 'as it's more your fault than anyone else's, Manners' minor!" said Joe Frayne.

"How's that?" inquired Cardew.

"It's no bizney of yours," returned Reggie sulkily.

The rest of the Third had crowded round now. Prep was close at hand, and they had been drifting into the Form-room.

Wally had said nothing. But Cardew saw that he meant to do something, and Cardew could guess what.

Between Cardew and Arthur Augustus and Wally D'Arcy there was some distant relationship, and Cardew had a way of referring to this that Wally hated—a way that seemed to imply that it was rather funny.

Wally did not actually hate Cardew. There were times when he liked him well enough, for many of Cardew's escapades appealed strongly to his adventurous spirit. And Cardew, while regarding Wally as a cheeky young rip, had a good deal of unspoken respect for the courage and resolution of the leader of the Third.

"Look here, Cardew," said Wally suddenly, "you're not pulling our legs, are you?"

"I've told you nothing but the truth," answered Cardew, still reluctant to give up his scheme.

Frank must have missed the train and had to walk. He thought. If Wally & Co. went after him, they would be pretty sure, in that case, to meet him not very far from the gates.

Cardew hardly liked to think of what the fag's thoughts would be during that tramp from Wayland.

But he could put it right with Frank, and he was not going to let off Wally & Co., or to give up the hope of worrying Mr. Selby.

The fags would turn up late for prep if they went. But that was a minor offence, entailing nothing worse than lines or a caning.

"Do you think he was running away?" asked Wally. "Not that it matters much what you think, for, of course, you don't understand."

Perhaps it was unfortunate that Wally had not stopped short at his query, for the rest of what he said put Cardew's back up:

"I shouldn't think he was at all a fellow to do a bunk," Cardew said. "But you know best what reason he may have had for bunkin'."

Wally turned his back on Cardew.

"We've got to go after him," he said.

"But—but it's nearly time for prep," objected Curly Gibson, who had pluck, but not the reckless daring of his leader.

"Silly young ass! He'll come back," muttered Reggie.

"You shut up!" snapped Wally. "You needn't come, anyway. And Curly can stay behind if it suits him. But Joe will come, I know, and so will Jimmy—won't you, Jimmy?"

Jameson had come in only a minute or so before, with some of the other New House fags; but he had heard enough to have made up his mind, and he nodded.

"I'm coming," growled Reggie, choking down his sulkiness.

"And so am I," said Curly, summoning up his pluck.



Cardew found it difficult to think quite so badly of them as he had done. There was good stuff in them all, even in Reggie Manners.

He hurried away. It would be a stroke of luck if Frank had turned up. He might go first to Study No. 9, to inquire why Cardew had deserted him at Wayland.

But Frank was not in Study No. 9. Cardew merely looked in, and would have gone again without a word, but Clive called to him.

"Hi, you slacker! Time for prep. You may not do any work, but you're bound to be here."

"Not so sure of that," replied Cardew, as he went in haste.

He had made up his mind now what he must do. Probably Frank was on the way back, though it was rather strange that he should take so long on it. Cardew must go and make sure—go on to Wayland, if necessary—and he would have to turn back the fags.

He realised that this last would be a far from easy task.

Ernest Levison had heard it. It seemed that half the Fourth had heard. Faces showed at study doors. Fellows swarmed into the passage.

Trimble had started something! Cardew felt that he could cheerfully have slain the fat and fatuous Baggy.

"What's it all mean, Ralph?" asked Ernest Levison anxiously.

"Can't stop to tell you. I'm goin' after that kid," answered Cardew.

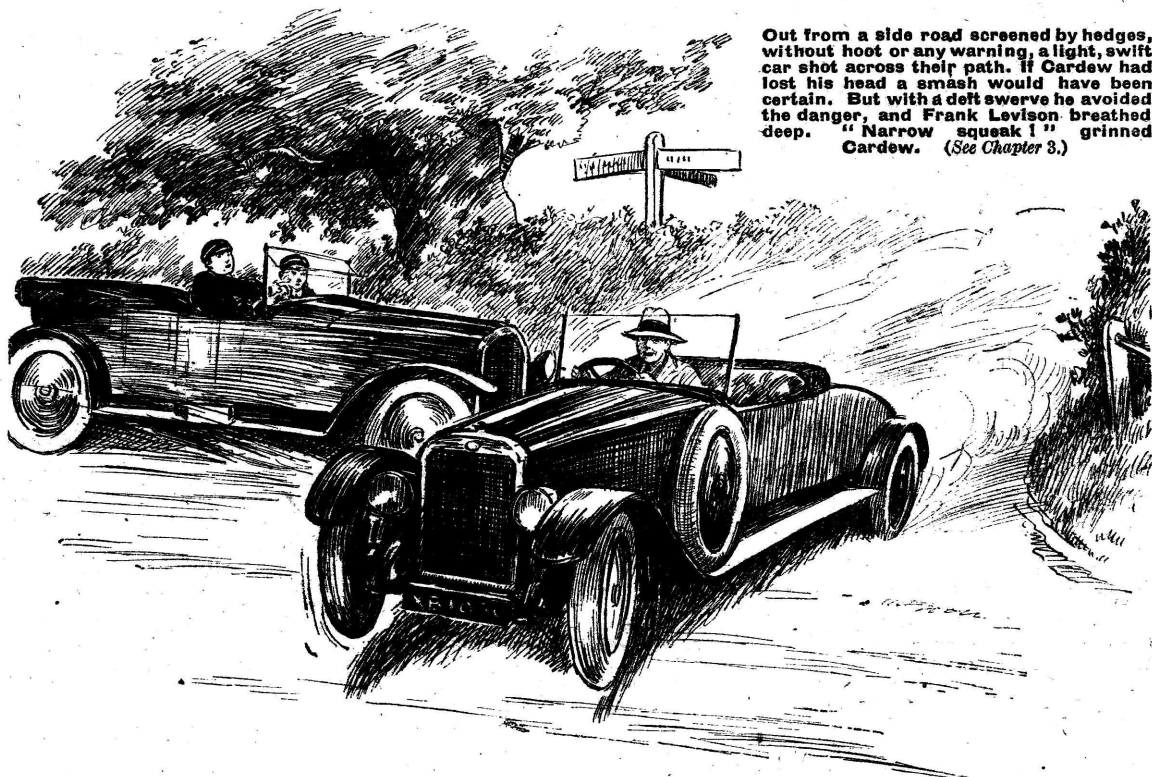
"Not without us!" returned Levison hotly. "Come on, Clive!"

The South African junior came on the instant. He and Levison dashed down the stairs after Cardew. None of the three had a cap, and they could not afford to waste precious minutes in getting them.

They made for the bike shed. Already the fags had got out their machines, and were rushing for the gates.

The gates were still open. They should not have been, and Taggles, coming to the door of his lodge, awakened to

Out from a side road screened by hedges, without hoot or any warning, a light, swift car shot across their path. If Cardew had lost his head a smash would have been certain. But with a deft swerve he avoided the danger, and Frank Levison breathed deep. "Narrow squeak!" grinned Cardew. (See Chapter 3.)



It would hardly be done at all without some confession on his part. He hated the thought of that, naturally.

As he dashed for the stairs he met Wally.

"Where are you going?" he asked sharply.

"Have you told Levison major that Franky's run away?" returned Wally.

"No. Don't talk rot! Frank hasn't run away. I'm sure of that."

"He, he, he!" That unmusical cackle proceeded from Baggy Trimble, as he stood in the doorway of his study, a fat grin on his face. "He, he, he! Cardew ought to know. He was with young Levison in a car at Rylcombe this afternoon!"

Cardew stood flabbergasted. Even his cool nerve failed him at that moment.

He had no notion that Baggy had seen the Third-Former with him in the village. The fat junior's revelation came upon him like a bolt from the blue.

"Is this true, Cardew?" demanded Wally, clenching his hands, and looking very much as though he meant to go for the Fourth-Former.

"Yes."

"Then where is Frank now?"

"I know no more than you do."

"I was going to tell Levison major; but I think you'd better do that. We're going to look for him before the gates are shut," said Wally.

The chances were that the gates were already shut. It was past the time for lock-up, but Taggles was not always punctual.

On the chance that they were yet open Wally rushed off. But there was no need for Cardew to tell Levison major.

the sense of duty neglected, and made a lumbering dash at them.

But Wally & Co. were ahead of him. Behind them the three Fourth-Formers, seeing that it was a matter of seconds, mounted their machines, and rode full speed up the gravel path. Broken rules were not likely to worry them just then.

Wally & Co. were past, but by now Taggles had got to the gates.

"Come back, you young rips!" he roared. "Which I'll report yer! What I says is this 'ere— No, you don't, Master Cardew! Stop, I tell yer!"

Cardew was desperate. He must get past! Whether Levison and Clive followed he did not much care. Perhaps on the whole he would have preferred that they should remain within gates. The explanations he had to give could be given much less awkwardly when once Frank was found.

Leaning from his saddle, he had given Taggles a vigorous push in the chest.

"Ow! Ooooch! Yoooop!"

Thud!

Next moment Taggles was on his back, with his feet in the air, and roaring in a manner that would have done credit to Stentor of old.

Cardew had all but collided with the massive gatepost. He managed to avoid that, and swerved out into the road, followed a second later by his chums.

Taggles yelled after them:

"Come back! Come back, you young rips! Which I'll report the lot of yer!"

His yells pursued the flying Fourth-Formers. But if they heard they certainly did not heed.

Bent over his handlebars, Cardew rode as if for dear life.

Ahead of him the fags were putting all they knew into it, while behind him Levison and Clive pedalled their hardest.

Wally was in the lead. Next to him came Jameson. Reggie Manners and Joe Frayne rode side by side. Curly had already fallen a little to the rear.

Cardew caught up Curly and flung a few words at him. "Go back, you young idiot! You'll get in no end of a row with Selby! Leave this to us!"

Curly made no answer. He was blowing hard. But he held on.

Cardew drew up to Manners minor and Joe Frayne. By this time his chums were drawing up to him. Hard as he might strive, he could not hope to outdistance them. Cardew's cigarette smoking was something of a pose. He would go for weeks together without a whiff. But he did slack; and because of that Levison and Clive, keen on all games, and always fit, had the advantage of him.

They heard him rap out angry words at Manners minor and Frayne. They heard Reggie's answer.

"Wally's trying to put this on to me. But I reckon it's your fault, Cardew, you cad!"

"That was like Reggie, never willing to admit that he was to blame.

Joe Frayne said nothing, but held on. Levison and Clive followed Joe's example. It was useless to waste breath; Frank's chums could not be turned back. And it was to Cardew that Levison and Clive wanted to talk.

Jameson kept in front of Cardew, and Wally maintained his slight lead of Jameson. Those two youngsters were as hard as nails, and neither was blowing yet.

But Cardew found his breath uncomfortably short. And then he found that Levison and Clive were ranging alongside him, one on the right, one on the left. And he knew that they were both furious with him.

"Where is Frank?" demanded Ernest Levison.

"Ask me another!" gasped Cardew. "He ought to have been back before now. I left him in Wayland."

"Why did you leave him?" asked Clive sharply.

"I can't explain now. Tell you later. Let's turn these kids back, for goodness' sake!"

"I'm not going to waste time on them," answered Levison grimly. "It's Frank I'm thinking about. You didn't help him to run away, Cardew?"

"Of course I didn't! He'd no intention of runnin' away, an' I'm dead sure he hasn't done anythin' so dashed silly!"

"Then where is he?" asked Levison.

Cardew could not answer that.

Where was Frank Levison?

## CHAPTER 5.

### Mr. Selby in Pursuit!

JUST about the time when Taggles should have been locking the gates Mr. Railton had come up with a suitcase in his right hand, and had stepped into a car which was waiting for him.

A friend of his University days had come to fetch him for a short week-end. It was seldom the Housemaster was absent; but there had seemed nothing to stand in the way of his going off until Monday morning.

Mr. Henry Selby was left in charge of the School House. Of the three middle-aged Form masters there he ranked as senior, though his Form was junior to those of the others. Neither Mr. Linton nor Mr. Lathom would, in any case, have cared to dispute with him the question.

Mr. Selby had scarcely had time to realise his position before trouble developed.

The Third, who had no studies, did their prep in the Form-room under the master's eyes. A glance round showed Mr. Selby at once that the Third was not at full strength.

It hardly required another glance to tell him who the absentees were. Just the boys he would have expected to give trouble at this or any other time! Mr. Selby regarded Wally & Co. as little better than fiends in Eton jackets.

"Where are D'Arcy minor, Levison minor, Frayne, Gibson, and Jameson?" he asked.

No one answered for a moment. Most of the fags tried to look as though they really had no notion where the absentees might be. But Mr. Selby could see that they were excited.

Piggott spoke. He may have had the best of motives. If so, he was unfortunate, for no one credited him with any-

thing higher than a desire to sneak when sneaking was safe.

"Please, sir, the rest of them have gone to look for Levison minor," said Piggott.

"To look for Levison minor? But why should Levison need to be looked for?" snapped the master.

"They say he's run away, sir."

"Run away? Who says anything so absurd?"

But Mr. Selby did not feel easy. He knew that he had been very rough indeed on Frank Levison.

On the other hand, he had been every bit as rough before this without driving his victim to run away.

"Tell me all that you know about this at once, Piggott!" ordered Mr. Selby, receiving no answer to his last questions.

"That's all I know, sir. I don't really know that—it's only what I've heard. But I believe Trimble of the Fourth knows more."

News had spread quickly. By this time the Fourth, Shell, and Third had all heard that Cardew was mixed up in the trouble—that is, if Baggy was to be believed.

Baggy was not a disciple of the late lamented George Washington. But there really seemed no reason to believe that he was lying now.

"Fetch Trimble here, Hughes," commanded Mr. Selby; and the fag to whom the order was given obeyed with all speed.

Mr. Selby said nothing about getting on with work, and the Third saw no use in beginning before they were obliged. They waited in eager curiosity for the reappearance of Hughes and the advent of Baggy.

Hughes found the fat Fourth-Former the centre of a crowd.

"Is this the truth, Trimble, or one of your usual yarns?" he heard Tom Merry ask.

"Weally, you know, Baggay, it's a sewious mattah!" spoke Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I undahstand that my minah has gone after young Levison. There will be a feahful wov about it, and if you are not tellin' the twuth—"

"Mr. Selby wants you at once, Trimble!" piped up Hughes, from the outskirts of the crowd. But no one paid the slightest attention to the fag.

"It's the truth, you rotters!" hooted Baggy indignantly.

"Likely that I should make a yarn like that up, ain't it? Besides, Mellish knows that Cardew couldn't deny it."

"That's right enough!" replied Mellish. "Baggy's telling the truth this time—I don't know why."

"Mr. Selby wants you, Trimble!" shouted the fag.

Still no attention was paid to him, and still doubt lurked in some minds as to the truth of Baggy's story. If there was anything in it, it certainly looked as if Cardew was helping Levison minor to run away.

But why should Cardew do anything so mad? He did many reckless things, but this was worse than reckless.

Then Dick Julian spoke up in his quiet way.

"I heard Cardew admit to Levison that it was true," he said.

That convinced the crowd of juniors. Baggy and Mellish were unsatisfactory witnesses. It would have been hard to say which of the two was the worse liar, though Baggy was certainly more random in his lying than Mellish.

But Dick Julian was to be trusted.

"Tell us what you saw, Baggy," said Jack Blake.

"Yaas, bai Jove! Aftah all— What do you want, youngstah?"

Hughes was trying to get at Baggy, and in his desperation had clawed at Arthur Augustus' jacket.

"Selby wants Baggy Trimble; and if he doesn't come at once there'll be a row!" shrilled the fag.

"Oh, hang old Selby!" exclaimed Herries. "Tell us first, Baggy. Let him wait!"

"I shouldn't think of doing such a thing, Herries," replied Baggy importantly. "My information is needed, and I am going to give it!"

He stalked off, with his fat little nose in the air.

Why Baggy should regard himself as a person of great importance because he might be able to throw a little light on a doubtful matter was a mystery. Nevertheless, as he followed the fag in the direction of the Third Form-room the fat Fourth-Former swelled with pride until it seemed as if he would share the fate of the frog in the fable.

There was a moment's hesitation; then with one accord the whole crowd followed Baggy.

Hughes ran ahead of him.

"He's coming, sir!" he said.

Baggy heard, and was quite thrilled. It was like being announced by a herald.

Mr. Selby put a hand to his ear as the tramp of many feet sounded in the passage. If that were Baggy coming, then Baggy must surely be a centipede!

But Baggy marched in alone. The rest waited outside, pressing to get near enough to hear, till the crowd round the Form-room door looked like a Rugger scrum.

"You have taken your time, it seems, Trimble!" said Mr. Selby acidly.

"I couldn't come before, sir. The fellows were all round me," explained Baggy. "But I'm here, and ready to answer any questions you put to me, sir."

And he stuck his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat and looked up at Mr. Selby, with a smirk on his podgy face. The master of the Third looked down at him with extreme disfavour. But he was anxious to get to the bottom of the trouble, and would not waste time in bringing Baggy to book for his ridiculous airs.

"I am told that Levison minor has run away, and that you are able to give me some information on the subject, Trimble. Tell what you know briefly."

"I was in Rylcombe this afternoon, sir. I had been into Jenkins' shop—"

"Yes, yes! It is not your movements that are in question, but those of Levison minor."

But Baggy persisted in telling the story in his own way.

"I was coming out of Jenkins' shop, sir, when I saw Cardew in a motor-car—"

"It is not about Cardew that I am inquiring; but about Levison minor, Trimble!"

"Yes, sir. I know that, sir. But Levison was in the car as well. I saw him get in."

"Which Levison?" asked Mr. Selby sharply.

"Levison minor, sir. I thought it was him we were talking about," replied Baggy in a tone of gentle reproof.

There was the sound of a chuckle from the passage, and Mr. Selby cast a keen and angry glance at the door.

But he was too eager to hear what Baggy had to tell to deal with the listeners then.

"You saw Cardew and Levison minor in a car together at Rylcombe, Trimble? But how do you deduce from this that Levison minor has run away?"

"I don't, sir. I never said he'd run away," replied Baggy in injured tones.

"But where is he now?"

"I don't know, sir, I'm sure."

"Where is Cardew?"

"I don't know where he is now, sir; but he was in the Fourth Form passage only a few minutes ago, sir. He hasn't run away."

The self-importance was oozing out of Baggy. Mr. Selby evidently regarded him rather in the light of a common or garden junior than a valuable witness.

Yet the master might have felt a spark of gratitude; for if Baggy was telling the truth—and there seemed no reason to doubt his story—Cardew was badly implicated in the trouble. And that suited Mr. Selby.

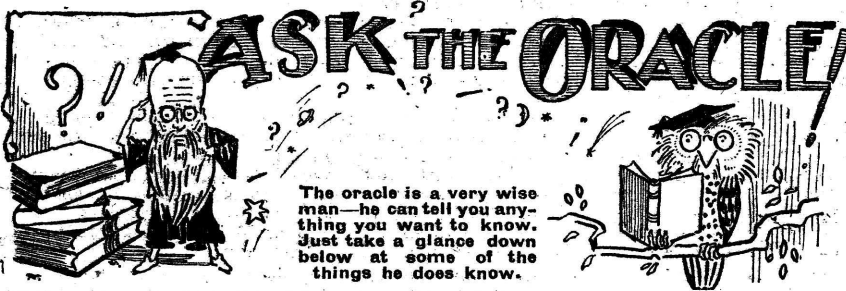
He swung round upon his Form.

"Can anyone here tell me more?" he asked sharply. "It appears that D'Arcy minor and others have gone to look for Levison minor. They would not have done that unless they had believed this tale of his having run away. But what originated it?"

Again it was Piggott who replied.

"I wasn't here at the time, sir; but they say that Cardew

*(Continued overleaf.)*



The oracle is a very wise man—he can tell you anything you want to know. Just take a glance down below at some of the things he does know.

**Q. How does a snake sting?**

A. In reality a snake doesn't sting at all—it bites. That queer little black, forked thing that sometimes may be seen shooting in and out of the snake's mouth, is its tongue. Two long curved teeth in the upper jaw are hollow inside and at the base of them are little poison sacs. When a snake strikes with its teeth or bites, these sacs are compressed and the poison is shot through the hollow teeth into the wound. Snakes such as the Indian cobra and krait can kill a man within a few minutes by their poison. One or two species of snakes have the power to squirt poison several feet through the air. It is then a case of mind your eyes, boys!



**Mr. COBRA.**  
Not a pleasant fellow.

the distinguishing green turban and to use the title of Hadji before his name.

**Q. Where is Timbuctoo?**

A. A good many fellows have been told to go to Timbuctoo, perhaps you among them. Few, I dare say, have any idea how to get there. Timbuctoo is an actual city in French West Africa, situated practically on the River Niger. The climate is hot, for it is subject to the winds that blow down off the flaming Sahara; and the trouble and expense of going there might not be worth your while.

**Q. Who are the Thin Red Line?**

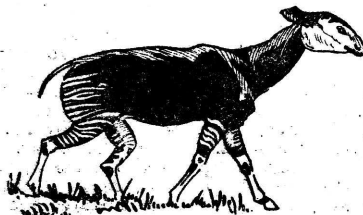
A. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The regiment gained their name by stopping a massed Russian cavalry attack at Balaclava in October 25th, 1854. Our Turkish allies had skinned out, and Sir Colin Campbell, the brave British commander, refused to form square. In a thin red line the gallant Highlanders poured fire into the Russian horse and hurled them back in a rout.

**Q. What is an okapi?**

A. One of the most curious animals of the darkest forests of the Congo. In appearance it is a queer mixture of deer, giraffe and zebra, and was discovered less than thirty years ago. You would make a small fortune if you could capture this timid creature and get him safe and sound into a cage at the London Zoo.

**Q. Why do midshipmen wear brass buttons on their sleeves?**

A. For a somewhat similar reason that midshipmen are known as "snotties" in the Royal Navy and never as "middies." Legend has it that in days gone by these young gentlemen of the Service were apt to put the sleeves of their jackets to the use for which handkerchiefs have been



**THE OKAPI.**  
A very rare creature indeed.

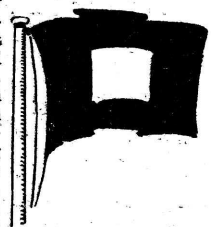
expressly made. To stop this deplorable habit My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty ordered three buttons to be sewn on each sleeve of a midshipman's jacket. Thus the snotties were encouraged to wipe their noses in the polite, orthodox way.

**Q. What is a focum tenens?**

A. The deputy who acts for your doctor or clergyman when he is ill or on holiday. It is a Latin term that almost literally means, one who holds the place of another.

**Q. When does a ship fly the Blue Peter?**

A. When she is in port and about to depart on her voyage. It is a blue flag with a white square in the centre and is hoisted at the fore part of the rigging. In liners it is often flown during the twenty-four hours preceding the departure and lowered when the ship is under way.



**The Blue Peter.**

**Q. What is a gazebo?**

A. In the strange lingo of the great United States, fellows are sometimes called gazebos apparently for the same senseless reason that they are called plain bo's or ginks. Yet gazebo is an honest English word, derived perhaps in days long gone by from some Oriental language. It means a high structure from where a good view may be taken—such as a tower turret or a balcony.

**Q. Why is the sky blue?**

A. The high atmosphere, like that around our earth, is filled with millions and millions of minute particles of what we could call dust. These by the sun striking on them reflect to our eyes short waves of light which in our vision give a blue colour. Strangely enough, if there were no dust in the atmosphere, the sky would be dark and all the light of the sun would strike directly through to the earth instead of some of it being reflected to us.

said that he'd seen Levison minor on the other side of Wayland."

"But Cardew and Levison minor were together, according to Trimble's story!" snapped Mr. Selby.

"It's quite true, sir!" said Baggy. "I wouldn't think of telling you a lie."

Mr. Selby began to understand. So did the listening crowd of fellows outside.

It was plain that Cardew had played a trick upon Wally & Co. He had told them what was true, and yet had caused them to believe what was untrue.

But was it untrue?

If Frank Levison had not run away, where was he now? Cardew might have been helping him to get a good start of any pursuit.

It seemed an unutterably silly thing for Cardew to do. But he often did silly things. And, of course, he had not counted upon being seen by Baggy Trimble.

"Has anyone here seen Levison minor since early this afternoon?" asked Mr. Selby.

The Shell and Fourth Form fellows waited for an answer to that. It seemed to them that Cardew was very badly in the cart this time. And, though most of them had been annoyed by the slacker of the Fourth at one time or another, very few of them wanted to see him in trouble.

Racke and Crooke of the Shell and the rest of the black sheep of the two Forms might be glad of his coming a cropper; but not fellows like the Terrible Three, or the four chums of Study No. 6, or Talbot, or Kangaroo, or Julian.

There was no answer to Mr. Selby's question. The fags looked at one another. None of them had seen Frank, or had the least idea where he was at that moment.

Mr. Selby saw that nothing was to be learned from them. In his wrath he was glad of someone to punish, and he lifted his voice to the juniors outside.

"Come in—all of you!" he called harshly.

There was a startled gasp from Racke & Co. Those worthies were well to the front of the crowd; but at Mr. Selby's order they evinced a sudden desire to occupy a less prominent part in the proceedings. Unheeding the contempt on the faces of Tom Merry & Co. they elbowed their way out, and disappeared round the corner of the passage at great speed. Nobody attempted to stop them. Indeed, Aubrey Racke was helped on his way by Grundy's hefty boot in a manner that elicited a yelp from the cad of the shell.

The rest marched into the Form-room, Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus side by side, Talbot and Blake and Manners just behind them.

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Selby sourly.

"Well, you see, sir, we weally—"

"Silence, D'Arcy! Merry, what does this mean? Why are you not at your preparation?"

"Sorry, sir," replied Tom Merry. "But you sent for Trimble just as he was going to tell us what he knew, and we were so keen to hear that we came down after him."

"That is no excuse whatever! Every boy from the Shell and Fourth present will write me two hundred lines. You will hand me in a list of their names to-morrow morning, Merry. Now return at once to your studies."

There was an indignant murmur from the crowd.

How could Selby expect them to get on with prep. in these circumstances? Mr. Railton would have known better.

Tom Merry spoke up for the rest.

"Wouldn't you like us—I mean, couldn't we help in the search, sir?" he asked.

"Certainly not! I regard the suggestion as nothing better than an attempt to evade work."

"Shall I tell Kildare, sir? The Sixth could help, I suppose."

Tom Merry was not without hope that Kildare might prevail upon the acting Housemaster to let, at least, a few of the Shell and Fourth share in the search.

"You will do nothing of the kind! This matter can be left to me. Before I go I shall ask Mr. Lathom to see that there is no neglect of work in my absence."

"But, sir—"

"Be silent, D'Arcy!"

"But, sir, my minah—"

"Will you be silent! I am well aware that D'Arcy minor is one of those concerned in this escapade. I do not regard that as any excuse for your neglecting your work."

"My young brother's gone, too, sir!" broke in Manners. "I do think it concerns us. You might let D'Arcy and me and a few more get our bikes out and go after them."

"There is no need for that, Manners. I am going after them. That is quite sufficient. If you say another word, I shall be obliged to punish you further!"

Mr. Selby gave a gesture of dismissal, and they went.

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Arthur Augustus waxed very indignant. It is doubtful whether he really felt much anxiety about Wally. He knew that young rascal to be very well capable of taking care of himself. But he considered that there were sacred family rights which should not be trodden upon by persons like Mr. Selby.

Manners said little. But he really was worried.

Harry Manners' people held him responsible for Reggie. Bitterly had he felt that responsibility in the past, when Manners minor had landed into various kinds of trouble, and his major had been brought to book for not keeping him out. And Harry Manners had no such confidence in his minor as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had in his.

Reggie was in a scrape, and the one thing Manners was sure of was that if there was any way of getting deeper into it Reggie would take that way.

He would have felt even more worried had he known of the trouble in the ranks of Wally & Co. That the trouble was Reggie's fault Manners would have admitted at once. He and Tom Merry and Lowther would no more have believed Frank Levison guilty of sneaking than Frank's major and Clive and Cardew would have done.

"Look here, Tom!" said Manners. "I'm going!"

"I thought you'd say that, old chap," replied Tom Merry quietly. "Of course, Monty and I come with you."

"I don't see why you should. It only means a row with Selby."

"Oh, hang, Selby! You can bet your boots Gussy's made up his mind to go, and Blake and Herries and Digby as well. As for Selby—well, I can't see that the way he's taking it is reasonable or decent. He's not the only person concerned. You and Gussy have your rights, and I'm jolly sure Railton would have let the rest of us go after Cardew and the rest. The more the better, for there's no telling which way Frank will have headed."

"What beats me," Lowther said, "is that the young fathead should have done a bunk. There's a catch in it somewhere. I simply can't imagine that kid doing it. But, of course, I'm coming."

"Do as you like about that," growled Manners. "As for young Levison's bolting, it seems certain he has done it. And what's the use of arguing about it?"

Mr. Selby had said that he was going in pursuit. It was plainly safest to let him get away first. They knew that Mr. Linton would not give them leave to go, in face of the Third Form master's order. But they counted on being able to dodge Mr. Linton without much difficulty.

For the next twenty minutes or so one or another of the Terrible Three kept watch upon the quad from the window in Study No. 10 in the Shell passage. It was dusk now, but there was still light enough to see Mr. Selby when he emerged.

They had guessed that he would ring up the Rylcombe garage for a car. In less time than they had expected a hoot came from the neighbourhood of the gates, and next moment the master, who must have been waiting for the sound, hurried out, and made his way across the quad with hasty strides.

"There he goes!" said Lowther. "And now we'd better get a move on. I say, Tommy, it's going to be a bit of a job getting our bikes over the wall!"

"We might try bluffing Taggles first," answered Tom Merry. "I'm not sure we can get them over. And I'm dead sure we might just as well stop here as go without them. Let's have a shot at it!"

As they stole towards the stairs, keeping their eyes peeled lest master or prefect might intercept them, they became aware of four figures ahead of them.

The passages were not yet lighted, and the four were as mere shadows. But the Terrible Three did not doubt who they were.

Suddenly, the four figures came to a halt, as one of them gave a warning hiss:

"All right, you fellows! It's only us." Tom Merry spoke softly as he hurried up with his chums.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his monocle upon them inquiringly. "You fellows gone, too?"

"What do you think?" returned Manners.

The seven passed down the stairs and out, luckily without being seen.

They got their bikes swiftly from the shed. And they did not even have to bluff Taggles. That worthy had had to make a stupendous effort to prevent Mr. Selby from suspecting that he was not absolutely sober, and at the moment when they came up he was still inside the lodge pulling himself together, with the aid of the gin bottle, after that effort.

The gates stood wide open. The seven ran their bikes out, mounted, and pedalled away down Rylcombe Lane, in the wake of the other nine—Cardew, Clive, and Levison major, Mr. Selby, and Wally & Co—who had already taken the road to look for the missing Third-Former.

CHAPTER 6.

Ralph Cardew's Pluck!

**T**HROUGH Rylcombe and out on to Wayland Moor the lead established by Wally and Jameson was maintained. They rode together now.

But their keeping the lead was mainly due to the fact that Clive and Ernest Levison were not willing to ride on ahead of Cardew till they had got the truth from him. And Cardew was not as fit as Wally and Jameson, or as his chums.

Till they were a good four miles on the way the two fags had not spoken to one another. But well out on the moor Wally broke the silence.

"Poor old Franky! Wonder where he is? We were cads, Jimmy!"

"I know. But Reggie started it," replied Jameson.

"What's it matter who started it, chump? The more shame for us to let ourselves be led into it by Reggie!"

Jameson considered that for a full minute. Then he said: "You're right, Wally. We were cads!"

And then, as though it were the only way to give vent to his overcharged feelings, he pedalled more fiercely than ever.

But he could not draw ahead of Wally. They still rode side by side.

Levison and Clive and Cardew were left farther in their rear. The lights of Wayland twinkled in front.

"Oh, buck up, Cardew!" exclaimed Levison. "You're letting those fags outdistance us."

"I'm doin' quite enough," answered Cardew. "But I'm not holdin' you two back. You can ride on if you want to."

"We will—when you've told us what this trick with Frank was!" snapped Levison.

"Can't you wait? On my honour I meant no harm to him! Surely you know me better than to think I'd do anythin' to hurt Frank!"

"But you've done it!" snapped Clive.

Cardew was silent.

He was even more anxious about Frank than his chums were. They believed Frank had run away; but did not think he was likely to be in any particular danger.

Cardew, however, could not believe that Frank had run away; and Cardew's mind now was full of uneasy thoughts as to what might have happened to him.

If the fag had come from Wayland by rail he would have been at St Jim's long ago. If he had tramped over the moor and had not been back before they started, they must have met him on the way.

Where was he? Had he met with an accident in Wayland?

Cardew prided himself on being hard—on his ability to meet any turn of fortune unflinchingly.

But here it was not himself who was chiefly concerned, and he found it impossible to harden his heart against the thought of Frank. In the impulse the slacker of the Fourth decided to tell his chums all he knew.

"Get off for a moment," he said. "I can't talk properly while we're ridin'."

Levison and Clive dismounted. They stood together by the side of the moorland road, with the lights of Wayland ahead. The sky had darkened with the dusk; but now the moon, nearly at its full, gleamed through a break in the clouds.

Its light shone on the grim faces of Levison and Clive, and Cardew gave a bitter laugh.

"Dash it all, I haven't murdered the kid!" he cried, in a burst of resentment, of which he felt ashamed next moment.

"We know that. What have you done with him? That's what we want to know," answered Levison.

"I'll tell you. I was a silly ass, but I didn't mean any harm. Frank came to the study after you'd gone to cricket. Selby had put him through it pretty rottenly for some row in the Form-room, an' then the other kids had turned on him an' accused him of givin' them away to Selby."

"What, Franky? Can you see him giving anyone away?" said Clive.

"Of course not. I should have known he hadn't even without his sayin' so. Well, I'd got five hundred lines to do for Selby—I'd had a little dust-up with him just before Frank drifted in, and I was feelin' sore with the old hunks on my own account as well as on Frank's. I thought those young rotters deserved a lesson. So I took Frank for a motor drive—"

"Knowing that the kid would get it in the neck for going if you were caught!" snapped Levison.

Before Cardew answered, Reggie Manners and Joe Frayne rode past. They glanced at the three Fourth-Formers, but did not speak. Toiling after them came Curly Gibson. Cardew let him pass also before he made reply.

"There's not much in that," he said. "The blame would have fallen on me. We had a bit of a run, an' had tea at Wayland. I left him with a ten-bob note to pay the bill while I pretended to go out and look for the driver from Rylcombe. I found the chap directly, an' we buzzed off."

"Leaving Frank there? What was the idea, Cardew?"

"I thought he'd come home by train. If he'd no money of his own he had my change."

"He wouldn't use it! Don't you know Frank better than that? Don't you see that the treat you'd given him made him feel the way you'd deserted him all the more? Selby had put him through it, you say—and then those young rotters—and then you finish it all! Haven't you any decent feeling, Cardew?"

"Dash it all, Levison, I didn't look at it that way! I'm not sure that I thought Frank would understand. But I hadn't any notion of hurtin' him badly."


"I can't see what you were driving at in it all, Cardew," said Clive.

"I'd reckoned to scare D'Arcy minor an' the rest—perhaps Selby, too. I told them that I'd seen him on the other side of Wayland. So I had—he was with me there in the car. That was to give them the notion that he'd bolted. They'd be sure to go after him, an' I counted on their meetin' him somewhere in Rylcombe Lane."

"Well, you've scared Wally and the rest all right, and Selby, and us—and yourself, too, if I'm not jolly well mistaken!" said Levison bitterly. "You've asked for the sack, and it looks odds on your getting it! I don't care a scrap about all that. All I care about is—where's Frank?"

"I don't care very much about anythin' else myself," replied Cardew.

(Continued on next page.)



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"Hanged if I'd ever have thought you could play such a rotten trick, Cardew!" said Clive.

Cardew could have borne that from Levison. Coming from Clive, it was too much for his strained nerves.

His fist shot out, taking Clive in the chest. The South African, utterly unprepared for the blow, staggered backwards, and fell over his machine.

He groaned as he struggled up. His right ankle had been caught between the pedal bar and the mudguard of the front wheel as the wheel swerved. The injury was hardly serious—a slight strain and a nasty graze—but the pain for the moment made him bite his lip, and the strain meant that Clive was out of the chase.

"Sorry, Clive!" muttered Cardew. "I—I didn't mean—"

That apology was not easily made. Apologies never came easy to Cardew. But Clive did not even look at him.

"Afraid I'm out of this, Ernest," he said. "I may be able to crawl back, but I can't go on at any pace that's worth while. You'll have to carry on alone."

Cardew's eyes blazed. So he was to be ignored! Clive was to go back, and Levison to hold on alone. He did not count.

And the worst of it was that he knew he could not keep up with Levison, if Levison chose to ride ahead. His slacking habits would soon tell.

"Rough luck, old chap!" answered Levison. "But I won't wait. You know how it is. I must get on!"

He threw his leg over his saddle, and was off. Clive began to limp away. A hundred yards farther on he could mount and ride downhill. But he knew he could only manage the ascent on foot.

Cardew's anger died down. What was the use of getting angry? Clive had called him a cad, and on the face of things he had good reason. The slacker of the Fourth called after the retreating figure of his chum.

"Clive!"

Clive trudged painfully on, not even turning his head.

Cardew swung round. He had one glimpse of Levison, his figure shown up clearly on the top of the rise in the bright moonlight. Then Levison swooped down the incline beyond at full speed, and another cloud came over the moon. When Cardew turned again he could no longer see Clive.

He stood alone by the moorland roadside with a feeling of shame and misery that was strange to the cynical Fourth-Former.

But he did not stand there long. He mounted again, and found himself the better for the short breathing space.

He breasted the rise, and a couple of hundred yards on his way, at the foot of the slope, he passed Levison. Something had gone wrong with Levison's bike, and he had been forced to dismount.

He saw Cardew ride past. He did not speak, and Cardew pedalled on without a word.

Something seemed to have put new vigour into the slacker of the Fourth. He caught up and passed Curly Gibson, Joe Frayne, and Reggie Manners. When the moon shone out again he saw Wally and Jameson only a little ahead of him.

The fags were nearing the level crossing. They heard, as Cardew did, the rumble of a train in the distance.

But the gates were still open.

"Come on, Jimmy!" cried Wally. "We can get through before she comes!"

It was a mad thing to attempt. The minute or two lost by waiting for the train really could not matter. But in the excitement of their chase the Third-Formers did not stop to consider that.

"Hold on!" yelled Cardew.

They did not hold on in the sense that he meant the words. But they held on their way, sure that a spurt would take them through before the gates closed.

But Cardew was far from being sure of that. The thunder of the train sounded ominously near now.

He pedalled like a madman. His shortness of breath, the shaky feeling at the knees when Levison and Clive had made the pace too hot for him, were forgotten now. He rode far faster than they had ridden then.

The gates were closing!

Wally and Jameson saw that too late. Already they were on the line, riding their hardest, still hoping to get through.

Then Jameson saw their peril.

"Look out, Wally!" he cried, jamming on his brakes.

Wally jammed on his. But it was too late!

The gates closed upon them, catching the front wheel of Wally's bike. Jameson barged into Wally, unable to stop in time.

The next moment they were down, right across the rails which hummed with the approach of the oncoming train. Wally's bike had momentarily jammed the gates.

The engine would sweep that obstruction away. But where would the two youngsters be when it had passed?

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Cardew sprang from his bike, throwing it aside as he landed on his feet. He dashed on to the line.

No thought of his own danger entered his mind. If he thought at all it was to realise that he had but one chance in a hundred of saving the fags.

It was his fault that they were there, and he would rather die with them than hang back!

Just how he did it he never knew. Wally and Jameson were both pretty hefty youngsters. In an ordinary way, Cardew would never have imagined it possible that he could seize one with his right hand, the other with his left, and drag them clear of the metals at a single effort.

But the engine was almost upon them, and their desper-



ate danger lent him strength. The three staggered clear as the engine swept up.

Sparks from the funnel singed Cardew's neck and Jameson's face. There was a terrific smash as the engine struck the gates and the two machines. A broken spoke scored Cardew's cheek, fetching blood.

The three lay by the side of the track, and saw the train rush past on its way to the junction. The driver was leaning from his cab, aware that something had happened. Faces showed at the lighted windows.

The train thundered on. The crossing was some distance from Wayland Station, and not until it had been passed was speed slackened.

"M-my hat! It's Cardew! You've saved our lives, Cardew!" panted Wally.

Jameson could not speak. His breath came in great sobs. He was as plucky as most youngsters; but he knew that he had been within a few inches of sudden death, and he was completely unnerved.

Cardew answered as might have been expected of him.

"Young fools!" he snapped. "You never ought to have tried to get through."

He and Wally scrambled up. Between them they helped Jameson to his feet. He could hardly stand, but neither Cardew nor Wally felt inclined to despise him. For Wally's knees were shaking, and Cardew staggered.

"Your face is bleeding, Cardew!" said Wally.

"Hang my face!" snorted Cardew. "I only hope my bike's all right!"

It was. It had fallen on the grass by the roadside, and had sustained no real damage. But Wally's machine was a bundle of twisted scrap iron, and Jameson's was a pretty complete wreck.

"There's only one thing for you kids to do," said Cardew. "You've got to get back as best you can. I'm goin' on!"

The gates, damaged, but still in working order, had swung back to position, leaving the way clear for him. He had no mind to wait till Levison came up.

"Here, I say, Cardew!" protested Wally. But Cardew had run his machine across the lines and mounted. He did not even turn his head.

He was clear away before Levison, with Joe Frayne, Curly Gibson, and Manners minor, came up together.

They found Wally holding up Jameson, who was white and trembling. They saw the wreckage of the bikes and the battered gates.

Leaning from his saddle, Cardew gave Taggles a vigorous push as he shot past. Thud! Taggles went sprawling on his back, and with a whirl the three Fourth-Formers were through the gateway. Ahead of them the fags were putting all they knew into the race. (See Chapter 4.)



"What's happened?" rapped out Levison, jumping from his saddle.

"Cardew's saved my life and Jimmy's—that's all!" replied Wally.

"How was it?"

"We thought we could get across. The gates closed on us and caught my bike, and—and—"

Wally broke off. The imminent peril had been too much even for the cool and self-possessed leader of the Third. He would have pulled himself together in another five minutes, if only because Jameson needed him. But there were others on hand now to help Jameson, and the reaction was having its effect.

"Cardew pulled you out of it? I'm not surprised—it's just the sort of thing he would do! See here, Wally, it's no use any of you trying to come on. Get back as best you can, the whole crowd of you. I'm going after Cardew! You bet he and I will find Frank all right!"

And Ernest Levison mounted again and rode on. But Cardew had the start of him.

Joe Frayne put an arm round Jameson. "There—there, Jimmy! It's all right, old chap—it's quite all right!" said Joe soothingly.

Curly Gibson was fit for nothing. He could hardly have

been more unnerved by the peril through which his chums had passed if he had shared it with them. Curly had imagination; and he seemed to see the engine rushing down upon them, and the desperate effort by which Cardew had saved them.

When they talked of it afterwards, both Wally and Jameson were sure that it must have been just as Curly said, though for their own part they had no clear memory of how it had gone.

But Reggie, more self-centred, less imaginative than Curly, came out strongly in that moment.

"Look here, Wally, you take my bike," he said. "You can ride back with Curly and Joe. I'll help Jimmy along. You'd better get someone to come and meet us, I guess. But, anyway, you get along."

And Wally actually agreed without argument.

Just as they were about to start, the lights of a car showed along the road from Rylcombe. They stood aside, and the car flashed past.

Its occupant did not see them. But they saw the occupant. "Selby!" gasped Wally.

The master of the Third was in the car, well wrapped up, his sharp nose barely showing above the collar of his coat. It struck Reggie, the only one of the five who got a good look at his face, that he seemed distinctly nervous.

There was some excuse for his nervousness.

His driver was the same who had driven Cardew and Frank to Wayland. Bill Bury had friends in the town, and the friends were hospitable. He had had quite enough to drink before he got back to Rylcombe, but when he was back, the Green Man had lured him. Expecting nothing more to do that evening, he had settled down there when he was fetched to run over to St. Jim's and take up Mr. Selby.

The master had said that he was in a hurry. When he was sober Bill Bury had a liking for passengers who wanted speed. In his present condition Bill was extremely likely to give any such passenger more speed than he wanted!

The car whizzed past.

"He never saw us—he's in a blue funk," Reggie said. "It doesn't matter whether he saw us or not; it's all bound to come out now. I only hope he finds Franky. I say, I don't tumble to what Cardew's game was in this bizney, but he's started something, and no giddy error!"

CHAPTER 7.

Some Return I.

WALLY, Joe Frayne, and Curly rode off together. Joe would have preferred to stay with the other two, but Curly could not go alone with Wally, who had been within so very short a distance of death; and somehow Joe was sure that Jameson could be left to Reggie then, though in a general way his faith in Reggie was small.

But under all the sulkiness and obstinacy that made Manners minor a sore trouble to his elder brother and to his chums, at times there was better stuff. Reggie did not quite see how being kind and patient with Jameson could make up for his behaviour to Frank, and yet in giving up his bike to Wally and taking charge of the New House fag he was honestly trying to make up for it.

It seemed that the searchers for Frank were now reduced to three—Mr. Selby, Cardew, and Levison major. But before they had gone a mile Wally and Curly and Joe met a band of seven on the quest—the Terrible Three and the four chums of Study No. 6.

Both parties dismounted, and Joe told the seven what had happened.

Arthur Augustus was pale when the fag had finished. "Weally, Wally," he said, "I am vewy glad that you came out of it all wight. But—but—"

He could say no more. The thought of the tragic tidings that would have travelled to Eastwood House but for Cardew's courage was too much for him. He told himself that he would never again think ill of Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"It's all right, Gussy," answered Wally, shaken out of his usual attitude of hostility towards his major. "My bike's smashed up, but I'm not hurt. Something hit Cardew, though—his face was bleeding."

"Where is he?" asked Blake.

"He's gone on after Franky. Levison major, too. That's all, except you fellows. Clive seems to have dropped out."

They had met Clive. He was making his way homewards, limping painfully up the slopes, free-wheeling down them. He had explained that he had hurt his ankle; but he had said no word of Cardew's connection with the injury. That remained a secret which none but the three chums of Study No. 9 shared, for no one else was ever told. "Reggie and Jameson are behind," said Wally. "The bizney turned Jimmy up rather, and Reggie said I could

have his bike, and he'd look after Jimmy. Reggie's not a bad sort, you know, Manners."

Harry Manners did not answer that, but to hear it did him good.

"What about Selby?" asked Tom Merry. "He must have passed you."

"Oh, yes, we saw him! But old Selby's no good!"

Tom Merry & Co. grinned.

Wally, fresh from deadly danger, was still Wally, as full of contempt for his Form master as ever.

The three rode on towards St. Jim's, the seven towards Wayland.

But in a very few minutes Tom Merry & Co. were out of their saddles again.

They had met Reggie and Jameson. Reggie had his hands full, for Jameson could hardly stand without help. Getting him back to the school looked like proving an all-night job.

"We've got to do something for these kids, Tom," said Manners major, speaking too low for the touchy Reggie to hear him. "They can't be left like this."

"You're right, old chap. We must send a car along from Wayland to pick them up. They can sit here until it comes. I'm not sure that someone oughtn't to stay with them, though."

"I'll stay," answered Manners.

It meant dropping out of the search, for he could hardly hope to catch up his chums after the car had arrived.

They knew he hated it. But no one else was willing to stay.

"You're a sport, old chap!" said Tom Merry.

The six remounted and rode on. Jameson dropped on to the turf and lay moaning. His nerve was completely broken for the time being.

"Leave him to me, Harry," said Manners minor.

Reggie threw himself down beside his chum, and put an arm round him. Harry Manners laid his machine on the grass, having first blown out the lamp, and sat within a yard or so of them, thinking hard.

Manners minor said no word, but the grip of his arm soothed Jameson. Gradually his moaning ceased.

"I believe he's asleep, Harry," said Reggie, removing his arm.

"No!" came from Jameson.

But he made no further sound. He was trying to pull himself together.

"Harry!"

"Yes, Reggie?"

"It's all my fault, really. If I hadn't got on to Frank like that—and I knew all the time that he wouldn't have sneaked—yes, it's all my fault!"

"Well, I don't know all the ins and outs of it, old fellow, but I rather fancy that Cardew wouldn't agree with you there. You were an ass about young Levison. But you've done your best since! Ah, here comes the car!"

Tom Merry had been in luck. A car was just coming into the garage at Wayland as he arrived there, and it had been ordered out again at once.

It drew up as Manners stepped into the road and signalled.

One moment Manners hesitated. He wanted to go after his chums, but perhaps it was not fair to Reggie.

"Can you manage my bike, driver?" he asked.

"Do that all right, sir. I'll give you a hand with the youngster who's ill first, though."

"I'm not ill!" muttered Jameson, as they lifted him in.

The machine was easily dealt with—for the car was a big one—and it went on the seat behind the driver. In three minutes from the car's arrival they were on the move.

Before they reached Rylcombe they caught up the three fags who had started to ride back.

Reggie hailed them.

"Got a car for Jimmy? Oh, good egg!" came Wally's answer, clear and ringing.

"You all right?" inquired Manners major.

"Right as rain!" replied Wally cheerily.

The car sped past.

"Wally's pretty tough, you know," said Reggie. "I don't mean that I'm blaming Jimmy for not being able to take it the same way. There aren't many fellows about like Wally."

At St. Jim's there was trouble with Jameson. Manners major thought the sanny was the right place for him. Jameson positively refused to go there. He only wanted to get to bed, he said.

That meant an unpleasant task for Manners. Mr. Ratcliff, the New House master, met them as they went in. And naturally Mr. Ratcliff wanted to know all about it.

He naturally drove Manners mad before he finished asking questions.

Manners had hoped to go back in the car to Wayland and try to pick up the trail of his chums. But he could not tell Mr. Ratcliff of that intention. He had to send Reggie to get the bike out and tell the driver he could go.

Free from Mr. Ratcliff at last, Manners hurried across to

the School House. He was wondering what had become of Clive, who had not seemed likely to reach the school soon.

The Fourth and Shell passages were buzzing. No one had done any prep. Both Mr. Linton and Mr. Lathom were very worried and they had not insisted upon it. They were reported to be with the Head in Mr. Ralton's study.

Clive was not among the crowd in the passages. He was not in Study No. 9.

"Anybody seen Clive?" Manners asked.

"Not lately. He went off with Levison and Cardew," answered Kerruish.

"But he had to come back—strained an ankle or something. I say, I hope we didn't pass him on the road."

"You couldn't very well do that without seeing him," said Julian. "What brought you back, Manners?"

"Have the others come, too?"

"Has young Levison been found?"

"I can't answer a dozen questions at once," said Manners. "We might have passed Clive without seeing him, because we were in a car. If he'd been resting—"

"Came back in a car? But why?" queried Gore.

"I can't explain it all. Wally D'Arcy will be along in a few minutes. He can tell you. Lots of things have happened, but as far as I know Frank Levison isn't found yet. No, I'm not going to tell you any more—I'm off to look for Clive."

"I'll come with you," said Talbot. "You fellows might have let me know what you were doing, I think!"

Lumley-Lumley, Julian, Reilly, Hammond, Durrance—a dozen more—wanted to come, too. But Talbot choked them off. Taggles might let him and Manners out; but he would not let out a crowd.

The crowd might have swarmed over the wall, but Wally and Joe and Curly turned up just then, with a story that soon made the juniors forget Clive.

Talbot and Manners slipped away together.

"Oh, dash it all!" said Manners. "We never asked those kids if they'd seen Clive."

"If they had he'd have come in with them," said Talbot, as they crossed the quad. "Was he badly hurt, Manners? He may be lying by the side of the road, fainting perhaps."

"Oh, I don't think it could have been as bad as that. It's a mystery where he can be, though. My only hat!" He gave a low whistle at the sight of the wide-open gates. "The whole crowd could have got out easily enough!"

They glanced into the porter's lodge, and saw at once the reason for Taggles' neglect of duty.

He was huddled up in an armchair, sleeping noisily, with an empty gin bottle by his side.

"He'll get it in the neck for this!" remarked Talbot.

"That's his look-out!" said Manners, a look of disgust on his face. "Talbot, old chap, Taggles may be in the soup, but he isn't in it as badly as Cardew—and I don't know that Cardew's much more to blame than my minor—or that old Selby isn't as bad as either of them!"

And Manners proceeded to tell Talbot all that had happened. As they went they kept a sharp watch for Clive. But they reached Rylcombe without seeing anything of him.

There they had news. P.-c. Crump had seen Clive go through the village some time before, riding slowly and with apparent difficulty.

He must have reached the school, for he certainly was nowhere on the way from Rylcombe.

"Great Scott! What asses we were not to think of it!" ejaculated Talbot. "The odds are that he's in sanny—anyway, that he went straight there when he got back. He'd know that Marie could see to his ankle heaps better than he could do it for himself. I'll bet he's been there if he isn't there now."

"I believe you're right. Let's sprint back," returned Manners.

They had been looking for Clive all the way to Rylcombe, and had been forced to go slowly.

But now they ran.

The door of the lodge was still open, like the gates. Dame Taggles had probably gone to the village shopping, and had stayed gossiping with friends. Taggles still snored in the armchair.

They did not waste time in awakening him. They left him to Nemesis—in other words, to Dame Taggles, and made at once for the sanatorium.

And there a big surprise awaited them!

## CHAPTER 8.

### A Perilous Ride!

CARDEW rode on into Wayland, every now and then wiping away the blood which trickled down his face.

The trickling annoyed him. But he did not feel the smart of the wound. His mind was too busy to let him.

Wally and Jameson had all but met with death through their own recklessness. Frank was not so reckless as they.



But accidents might happen to anyone. Suppose some accident had chanced to Frank?

The youngster might be lying now in hospital at Wayland, so badly hurt that he could not tell who he was—or, worse than that, he might have been killed!

And if anything had happened to him it was Cardew's fault!

Had he been cooler Cardew would have realised that Frank could hardly be in the hospital with no clue to his identity, for he had been wearing his St. Jim's cap.

The Wayland streets were thronged with Saturday night shoppers. Cardew found the teashop at which he had left Frank still open. It did not seem of much use inquiring there. But he had made up his mind to miss no chance, and he went in, leaving his bike propped against the window.

He wondered why the eyes of everyone in the place were turned upon him. To him it seemed that something must have happened, and that they connected him with it.

He did not realise that his face was smeared with blood, that the wound was still bleeding, dripping on to his jacket and tie and collar. Nor did he guess how drawn and tragic that face was.

The manageress came forward. "You've met with an accident, sir," she said, recognising Cardew as a fairly frequent customer. "Perhaps you would like to wash your face? I'm afraid it's bleeding too fast for sticking-plaster to be of much use. But I might be able to do something for it."

Cardew put up his hand, brought it away blood-stained, and looked at it as though he had never seen it before and could not make out what the blood meant.

"It's nothin' that matters," he replied. "I say, I was in here to tea this afternoon with a youngster—kid with a school cap and blue eyes. I think you must have seen us. You were about at the time."

"Yes, I saw you. I noticed that as you went out you left him to settle up at the cash desk. You had a car outside. A little later I looked out of the window and saw him standing there. But the car had gone. I remember that at the time I thought it rather strange. But we were busy, and when I looked out again he was no longer there."

Cardew moistened his dry lips with his tongue before he could reply.

"Nothing has happened—I mean, you haven't heard of—of any accident to him?" he asked huskily.

"Dear me, no! Oh, I do hope that nothing has happened! Do you mean that he is lost?"

"Somethin' like that," muttered Cardew, lifting his cap as he turned to go.

"But you will surely let me attend to that cut? You are really a sight to frighten your friends!"

"It's all right," answered Cardew, hurrying out. And as he went he muttered to himself:

"If I frighten anyone it won't be a friend, for after this I shan't have a dashed friend left at St. Jim's!"

He was just about to mount his bike when he saw a constable on the other side of the street, and dashed across. So precipitate was he that he had not two inches to spare in clearing a car—a car driven by Bill Bury, with Mr. Selby quaking behind him.

"Stop! Stop at once!" sang out the master, seeing Cardew.

"I say, young feller-me-lad, you'll be getting yourself run over if you're not more careful than that," said the policeman, regarding Cardew with dispassion. "And what have you been doing to your face? Looks to me—"

"Never mind about my face!" Cardew broke in. "Has anyone been run over to-day? Has an accident of any sort happened? That's what I want to know!"

The constable shook his head.

"Not to my knowledge—and I should have heard if there had been one," he said. "You don't mean yourself, of course, though it's plain enough that something's happened to you."

"I'm all right, I tell you! It's a kid I'm inquirin' about—fair kid with blue eyes, about twelve or thirteen. Have you seen him about?"

"From St. Jim's—eh? Don't you worry about him. He's nêrly in a good deal better case than you are. What's the trouble with the kid, anyway?"

"Cardew!"

It was Mr. Selby's voice, harsh and snappish as ever, and as the master spoke he laid a heavy hand on Cardew's shoulder.

Cardew shook it off impatiently.

"I'm askin' the constable if he's seen young Levison," he said.

"That is of very little use. I am fully persuaded that by this time the boy is miles away. Fortunately, it is hardly possible that he should have taken any but the London road."

"I don't see that, sir. The Levisons don't live in London.

And if he has run away—and I don't believe he has—he may not be on the road at all. He may have taken the train. He had money—pretty nearly enough to take him home, if not quite."

Cardew's wits were quickening up again. He had overlooked that possibility till now. But even now it seemed to him a most unlikely one, and his chief object in mentioning it was to induce Mr. Selby to go to the station and leave him alone.

The policeman glanced from one to the other. There must be something pretty seriously wrong, he thought. He tried to fit together Cardew's wounded and blood-smeared face, Mr. Selby's evident nervous agitation, and the matter of the blue-eyed kid.

But he found himself unable to make anything out of it. "You must come with me, Cardew!" snapped the master of the Third.

"I can't, sir. I've got a bike over there."

"You will have to leave it somewhere. I insist upon your coming! The man whom those careless people at Rylcombe sent to drive me is intoxicated! I refuse to go on alone with him. But go on I must. This is a very serious matter!"

Then Cardew looked up the street, and the light from a shop window gleamed full upon the face of Bill Bury, seated in the front of the car from Rylcombe.

Cardew knew Mr. William Bury very well indeed. He was aware that Mr. Selby was probably correct in his statement. Bill was rather too apt to lift his elbow without counting how many times he lifted it.

"Do you want me to drive you, sir, instead?" asked Cardew.

He would have welcomed the chance to do that. It would at least have been doing something definite. And, as it really did not seem that Frank could be in Wayland, it was possible that he might be on the road ahead.

Mr. Selby hesitated. Between Bury's half-drunk condition and the recklessness of Cardew he saw small choice. He knew that Cardew could drive. But, for all his recklessness, the fact remained that the other fellow was a professional.

"No, Cardew," said Mr. Selby. "The man is able to drive, though he goes at a dangerous and alarming speed. I feel that—that, in short, I must have someone with me—someone who is better used to cars than I am, and I insist upon your coming!"

"Oh, very well, sir! But I suppose you'll let me get my bike first?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly!"

Mr. Selby was quite civil. It was a great relief to him to think that he need not go on wholly at the mercy of his driver. Cardew was an arrogant puppy. He was used to ordering men like this about. Very likely the driver would take more notice of him than he did of the master.

But Cardew, as he bolted across the street, had no notion of going on with Mr. Selby. He counted on being in the saddle of his machine before that gentleman could guess what he intended. Then he could dodge down a side street and reach the westward road. Frank was more likely to be on that than on the highway to town, he thought.


To the St. Jim's junior's utter amazement the bike was gone!

Cardew stood staring at the place where it had been. Someone must have had the check to go off with it under his eyes and those of the bobby.

Well, hardly that, when one came to think of it, for his back had been turned; and very likely the constable had never even noticed the machine, for between him and it there had been a strong tide of traffic.

The loss of the bike, though annoying, was a smaller thing to Cardew than it would have been to most St. Jim's fellows. What troubled him was that its loss upset his plans.

(Continued on next page.)



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But in an instant he had made up his mind what to do. Since he could not dodge Mr. Selby and carry on, he would carry on with him. After all, if Frank was on any road it might be the London one. He had relatives in town, Cardew knew.

He dashed back across the street.

"Bike's gone, sir," he said. "Someone's stolen it. Don't you think I'd better drive?"

"Dear me, Cardew! Wait a moment. You ought to report the theft to the constable, describing the machine—"

Mr. Selby had moved nearer the car, and the policeman was out of earshot.

"Not worth the bother," Cardew interrupted the master. "It's fifty to one that I shall never get it back. Am I to drive, sir?"

"No, Cardew, no. I still think— But perhaps you are the best judge as to whether the loss of the bicycle is of any importance to you. Tell that wretched fellow to drive to the station. We had better make inquiries there before we take the London road."

Mr. William Bury winked solemnly as Cardew gave the order.

"Old gent thinks I'm screwed, don't he, Mr. Cardew?" he said.

"An' doesn't think far wrong!" snapped Cardew.

"Oh, come now, sir, you know me better than that!"

"I don't. I've known you as bad as that, if not worse. But you be careful, my man, or you'll have me to reckon with!"

Bill Bury scowled. He had looked upon Cardew almost as a pal. The arrogance that Mr. Selby imagined in Cardew's dealing with social inferiors was not much in evidence unless there was need of it.

In a few minutes they were at the station.

Here there was a hubbub not to be accounted for by the ordinary business of the junction. People stood about talking excitedly in groups, and the stationmaster was issuing orders to men who were not porters.

Cardew guessed what it meant. The smash at the level crossing had been reported; as it was inevitable it should be, and men of the permanent-way gang were being sent to make all clear at once.

How much the engine-driver had seen Cardew could only surmise. But he had gathered his wits together now, and he did not want to show his wounded face in the booking-office. The driver's report might have included him and Wally and Jameson. The man had seemed to be looking right down on them from his cab as the engine thundered past.

"You'll make the inquiries, I suppose, sir?" said Cardew blandly.

"Ah, perhaps I had better," answered Mr. Selby, though a moment earlier he had thought of delegating that task to the junior. He marched into the station.

"Hope he won't hear anythin' that will set him askin' me questions," muttered Cardew to himself. "I can't stand much of that."

Then he stood up and spoke into the ear of Mr. William Bury, quite as much for that individual's benefit as for his own or Mr. Selby's.

"Look here, Bury, you go easy," he said. "If I were alone I wouldn't mind how fast you drove her. But Mr. Selby—"

"Old ugly mug!" growled Mr. Bill Bury.

"Mr. Selby," repeated Cardew, with emphasis, "doesn't like high speed."

But Bill Bury had reached the sulky and obstinate stage.

"Old ugly mug told me as he was in a hurry," he said.

"I act accordingly. What then? Told I'm drunk! Nice thing for me—eh?"

"You are drunk, or jolly near it!" snapped Cardew.

"I thought you were a gent, sir. Now I know you're a liar, an' a cheeky young liar at that!"

Cardew dropped into his seat, breathing hard. Bill Bury weighed half as much again as the slacker of the Fourth, but only the fact that Mr. Selby was on hand kept Cardew from dragging him out of his seat and going for him.

He jumped out of the car as Mr. Selby emerged from the booking-office.

"No news," said the master. "They cannot be certain, but the clerk at the ticket window for London and stations between, and the man at the other window, have both been on duty since four o'clock, and neither has any recollection of a boy in a St. Jim's cap. Of course, it was merely a chance that Levison minor should have taken the train. But I think I have done rightly in making inquiries."

Mr. Selby spoke in a curiously subdued way. If Cardew had not known him he would have taken him then for a normally good-tempered person, instead of the harsh tyrant he was.

"I didn't think we should hear of him here, sir, only that there was just an off chance," Cardew said. "Don't you

think I'd better drive? That fellow isn't fit to have charge of a car. I'm not sayin' he's incapable, but I'm sure you'd be safer with me at the wheel."

"No, Cardew, no! Get in with me. There is something I want to ask you."

That was just what Cardew wanted to dodge. But he really had no choice.

They got in together, less at feud than they had ever been since their first collision.

"The London road," said Mr. Selby to Bury.

A grunt from the chauffeur was the only reply. They swerved in dangerous fashion out of the station yard.

Cardew leaned forward and spoke again in Bury's ear. "You'd better be careful, my man, or you'll have me to reckon with!" he said.

"You—you young cock-sparrer! Call me 'your man' do you? I'll show you!"

But he drove through the crowded streets as skilfully as though he were perfectly sober.

Until they were out of Wayland Mr. Selby did not speak. When he broke the silence, it was to ask, with less than his usual harshness:

"How came you by that cut on your face, Cardew?"

"Somethin' hit it, sir!"

"What?"

Cardew might have said that he did not know. He had not been at all sure at the time. It was only now that he realised it must have been something from Wally's wretched bike, or a splinter from the gates.

He kept silent.

"I expect an answer, Cardew! I heard something in the station and was reminded of the fact that in passing the level crossing our driver swerved suddenly, as though avoiding some obstacle. There must have been a narrow escape from tragedy there, unless I have mistaken what I have heard. Is it possible that you were mixed up in it?"

"I wasn't responsible in any way for it, sir, if that's what you mean," answered Cardew.

"I did not suggest that. I should like to hear more about it."

"An' I'd much rather not tell you more!" snapped Cardew.

He expected a sharp and angry reply. But he got no reply at all. Mr. Selby subsided into silence.

What he had heard amounted to no more than what the engine driver had been able to see from his cab in the space of a second or so. But he knew St. Jim's boys had been concerned, and the wound on Cardew's face had naturally made him suspect that the Fourth-Former was one of them.

Hard and unsympathetic though he was, Mr. Selby realised something of the nervous strain to which the boy by his side had been subjected, and did not care to add to it.

For some three or four miles along the London road Bill Bury behaved himself quite well. The pace was fully as great as Mr. Selby cared for; but he was less nervous now than he had been when alone with the driver. And Bury kept a straight course where the road was straight, sounded his horn when he should have sounded it, and took the bends with due care. One could hardly have guessed that he had had too much to drink.

The moon still shone out from time to time, like a great golden globe in the sky. But the clouds had not disappeared, and every now and then they obscured it. Mr. Selby began to fear that they might run past Frank in one of these dark spells.

He told Cardew so. Cardew thought that if Frank was on this road at all he would be much farther along than this. But he was not inclined to argue the matter.

"Will you kindly tell the man to moderate his speed, Cardew?" said the master.

Cardew stood up. Bury's impertinence still rankled in his mind, and his command was peremptory.

"Go slower!" he yelled in the chauffeur's ear.

"You be jiggered! I'll drive as I think best!" snarled the fellow.

From that moment the spirit of evil seemed to have taken possession of him, and the next five or ten minutes constituted one of the most hectic times of Mr. Selby's life. Even Cardew got no enjoyment out of that experience, though at another time he might have gloated over the very evident funk of the tyrant of the Third.

The moon shone out in full splendour as they emerged from a stretch of the road bordered by thick woodlands on to a wide common.

The road stretched empty before them, empty and wide. It was not too empty or too wide for the tricks Bill Bury began to play!

He had made up his mind that he was booked for the sack, and he told himself that he would give his two passengers something by which to remember that drive!

The car rocked and swerved and zigzagged in every direc-

tion but backwards. Once it hit a big pile of stones, and two of the wheels left the ground. Cardew saw that for a fraction of a second both Bury's hands had lost their hold upon the steering-wheel and he set his teeth against the smash that seemed inevitable.

But the fellow gripped again, the car righted itself, and for twenty yards or so they sped on in a straight line.

Then Bury restarted his tricks. Mr. Selby, flung to and fro, made desperate grabs at Cardew, but did not cry out. For that mercy Cardew was thankful. This was just about as much as he could stand; Selby's shouting would have been the last straw.

"Hold on tight, sir!" he yelled in the master's ear. "We can't stop him; but I don't think he'll carry on much longer in this way."

The common was left behind. Down a steepish incline they swooped, and in spite of the pace Mr. Selby breathed a little more easily, for now the driver was keeping the middle of the road.

But in that very fact there was danger. Cardew's keen

"Put 'em up!" cried Cardew. "I'm goin' to give you the hidin' of your life!"

"You? Give me a hidin'?" snorted Bury. "You jest try it on, that's all!"

"Cardew! Cardew! I cannot have this!" cried Mr. Selby, scrambling out of the car, his legs wobbling under him.

But Cardew had already made his attack. Like a tiger he sprang at Bill Bury, hitting out with fists that seemed to the fellow as hard as iron.



Baggy Trimble marched into the Third Form-room, and the rest of the juniors crowded near the doorway. "I couldn't come before, sir," said Baggy. "But I'm here now, and ready to answer any questions you put to me, sir." He stuck his thumbs into the armpoles of his waistcoat, and looked up at Mr. Selby with a smirk on his podgy face. (See Chapter 5.)

eyes saw a nasty bend ahead where the road ceased to dip. His ears caught the sound of a motor-horn, and next moment a pair of dazzling headlights appeared round the bend.

He yelled at Bill Bury. But the man, as though fascinated by those lights, held his way down the very middle of the road, less wide here than on the common.

The horn of the other car sounded again—kept on sounding. Bury did not give an inch to the left!

A collision seemed inevitable. Cardew jumped to his feet.

"Throw your legs up on the seat, sir!" he shouted. "I'll jump!"

For if there was a collision it would be practically head on, and Mr. Selby would have a far better chance of escaping from the smash with his legs up thus.

But when it seemed that it must be too late Bill Bury made a wild swerve to the left, and the cars did no more than touch as they passed, with some slight damage to mudguards and enamel, but with nothing worse.

Cardew did not jump. But he would have been flung out if that swerve came but that Mr. Selby clutched him round the middle and hung on. The slacker of the Fourth knew that he had been saved by that action.

Round the bend they went on two wheels, and all but ran into a farm waggon. But again Bury swerved, right off the road this time, to crash through a thick hedge and bring the car to a standstill within a couple of feet of a pond that showed black in the moonlight!

The driver tumbled from his seat. Cardew jumped out, furious. From behind them came wild words from the driver of the other car and some strong language from the man with the wagon.

"How's that suit you, old stick-in-the-mud, an' you, young cock-sparrer?" gibed the driver.

Bury was not so drunk but that he could hit back. But his hitting was wild. He had little science, while Cardew was quite a skilful boxer.

Mr. Selby flung himself between them.

"I will not have this!" he shouted.

One of Bill Bury's wild blows took him on the side of the head. The master stumbled. A splash—a cry of fear—and he was in the pond!

And he could not swim—Cardew was sure of that. Mr. Selby was not the kind of man likely to be able to swim!

The pool was deep, for the master of the Third had disappeared under the black water.

Cardew jumped in on the instant, only a second before Bill Bury.

The man had come to his senses now. He saw himself threatened with worse trouble than the sack. There might even be a charge of manslaughter laid at his door!

Cardew would never have got Mr. Selby out alone. He admitted that afterwards. Twice the master dragged him under in his frantic fear, clinging to him in that hampering way which can nullify the efforts of the strongest swimmer.

Between them, though with much difficulty, Cardew and Bill Bury at last got Mr. Selby on to the bank. He lay gasping, and for a few minutes all that his rescuers could do was to lie by his side. Even when Bill Bury was able to move and give help Cardew still lay there, beaten to the wide.

## CHAPTER 9.

### How Levison Minor Came Back!

**T**RUDGING along the road over Wayland Moor, Frank Levison felt desperately downhearted.

He had been so grateful to Cardew, and Cardew had let him down like this—had played him the kind of trick he had talked of playing Baggie Trimble!

His chums had doubted him. That had been hard to bear, but the seeming kindness of Cardew had taken some of the sting out of it.

Now that he knew how false Cardew's kindness had been the sting returned.

It must be his fault somehow, Frank supposed. But he could not see how. They might have known that he would never give them away to Selby. And Cardew—how could Cardew have been so cruel?

The fag sat down upon a heap of stones, elbows on knees, chin on cupped hands, and gazed gloomily into the distance.

It did not seem to matter much when he got back to St. Jim's. If he were after lock-up it would only mean an impot. In his present mood impots did not appear to him of the slightest consequence.

Someone came shuffling along the road—a very unsavoury-looking tramp. Frank paid no heed. Tramps did not concern him.

But it seemed that this particular tramp was minded to concern himself with Frank.

He halted when he came up.

"Got a copper or two about you, young gent?" he whined.

"Sorry, I haven't," replied Frank.

He had nothing but Cardew's ten-shilling note.

"You don't mean that?" the tramp wheedled.

"Yes, I do. I've only—"

Frank stopped short. His natural candour had very nearly caused him to blunder badly.

Perhaps it was rather more than "very nearly." The wayfarer scented something.

"O'ny what?" he asked. And now his tone was less whining, more menacing. "If it's silver, 'tain't too much for a bloke down on his luck like what I am. You lives on the fat of the land. I can tell that from the looks of you. What do you want'er go grudgin' of a tanner—or, mebbe, a bob, or even 'arf a dollar—to one what fought all through the Great War—eh?"

"I haven't any silver," Frank said.

He rose. The tramp had come too near for his liking.

The fellow looked up and down the road, moistening his cracked lips with his tongue as he looked. Frank thought he had never seen anyone quite so unwholesome.

"I haven't anything at all to give you, and I'm going on," he said firmly.

"Your way's my way, an' the road's as much mine as yours," said the tramp.

"Well, go ahead, then!" Frank answered.

"Don't see why I should. I likes company."

There was no one in sight. The rascal had made sure of that. Frank saw it, and his heart fell.

His pride had forbade his breaking into that note of Cardew's. He meant to hand it back to him intact.

But if this rotter took it from him he could not do that, and he was not sure that Cardew would believe his story. His own chums had doubted him. Why should not Cardew?

"Will you go on, or shall I?" he asked desperately.

"Both of us, matey. Both of us together, like good pals. You ain't too proud to walk alongside of a pore bloke that was with Jellicoe in Palestine, an' fought under Kitchener at Wipers, are you?"

The rascal was a humbug, of course. Frank knew enough about the War to be aware that Jellicoe had commanded on sea, not on land, and that Kitchener's work had been done at home.

"I don't want your company," he said, flushing.

For Frank hated to be rude to anyone. If he had had any cash of his own the tramp's first request would have been granted. But he felt that he would rather die than have that Treasury note taken from him.

"Oh, don't you! Too 'aughty, I reckon—eh? Well, we stays 'ere together, or we goes on together. It's your choice, me-lad."

Frank answered that by starting off at a brisk pace.

But the tramp, though he puffed and groaned, kept pace with him.

Anxiously the St. Jim's junior looked for car, trap, or pedestrian. But nothing showed on the white, winding road.

His unwelcome companion grinned evilly.

"Better fork it out!" he said. "Sooner's just as good as later. An', wotever it may be, I mean to 'ave it!"

"Don't talk rot! You can't rob anyone on the high-road like that."

"Oh, can't I? I've done that afore now, an' wuss things—things as you wouldn't never dream of, bein' young an' innocent as you are. Wy, afore now I've—"

"You can't scare me!" spoke Frank. "You may threaten all you like; but you'll never do that. So you may as well save your breath. You haven't much to spare, you know."

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Blowing hard, the tramp caught him by the collar. "I ain't!" he answered fiercely. "This pace don't suit me a bit—so it don't! But it's easy to stop it. And over!" Frank wriggled in his grasp, but could not get free. "I'm not going to hand over!" he said hotly.

The tramp twisted his collar, half-choking him. Frank kicked his shins. He hated doing it. He could not remember that he had ever before kicked anyone's shins. It was the kind of thing Reggie Manners might do in his worse moments; but it was not in Frank Levison's line.

But this rascal was somewhere about twice his weight, and after all one could not submit to being throttled.

The grasp on his collar relaxed. The tramp staggered back, his face contorted.

Frank bolted.

Rather, Frank tried to bolt.

The attempt was a failure. The tramp shot out a long leg, hooked Frank's legs, and brought him to the ground with a thud.

Almost stunned, Frank was lifted and carried to the side of the road.

There he was pitched down, like a sack of potatoes; and dirty hands proceeded to explore his pockets.

He did not struggle at first. He was nerving himself for a big effort when the rascal got too warm.

Mr. Bert Bungo was misled by his taking it so quietly, and was put off his guard. He prosecuted his search without fear of resistance.

But when his right hand tried to insinuate itself into Frank's left-hand trousers' pocket Frank's knees suddenly shot up, taking him hard in the lower region of the waist-coat.

"Yoop! Yow! You young 'ound!" he howled.

Frank wriggled from underneath him, got to hands and knees, and then got to his feet.

But a hand caught him round the ankle, and held on. He stamped at the hand with his free foot, but got no change out of that. He was down again, and the horrible red face was grinning into his, and the dirty hand explored once more.

At that moment the sound of thundering hoofs fell upon Frank's ears, and he saw a black horse, with a light trap behind it, come over the crest of a rise a hundred yards away in the Rylcombe direction.

The moment after he heard the hoot of a motor-horn, and saw a car in the distance, coming from Wayland.

The tramp heard, too. He rolled off Frank, scrambled up, and bolted for the nearest hedge.

The ten bob note was saved!

Jumping to his feet, Frank saw something that made him forget all about both tramp and note.

The black horse had bolted!

There could be no doubt about it. He had taken the bit between his teeth. The light cart rocked from side to side. The boy in it, hardly older than Frank, was pulling his hardest at the reins without the least effect. His face was white with fear.

Honk! Honk!

Frank heard the warning toot of the horn. The car was swooping down the road. Its driver had apparently not yet seen that there was anything wrong ahead.

He might not see it till too late. The horse would keep on his way along the middle of the road, and a terrible collision would follow.

Frank, with buzzing head and bruised body, screwed up all his pluck.

He was far from sure that he could stop the horse. But of one thing he was quite sure—it was up to him to try.

To his brain there flashed all that he had ever heard or read about what was best to do in such an emergency.

He hurled himself at the horse's head, and grabbed the reins within a few inches of the bit. He threw all his weight into a downward pull. That was the nearest he could get to doing what he knew should be done.

It was not instantly effective. He was swung off his feet, but he held on. He found the road again, and a hoof crashed down on his right foot, making him sick with pain.

Still he held on, and the boy in the trap did his best, and the pace of the black horse gradually slackened.

Frank saw over the hedge the great red face of his enemy, the tramp. Next moment a strong arm was thrown around him, and a big hand in a leather glove grabbed the reins and brought the black to a standstill.

The motorist had pulled up his car, and had jumped out to the rescue.

"Catch him!" cried Frank, pointing to the would-be robber.

He was on the verge of collapse; but there still worked in his mind the agony of the thought that Cardew's Treasury note might have gone, and Cardew might not have believed his story.

The motorist, who had not noted the struggle, stared in



Mr. Selby flung himself between Cardew and the driver. "I will not have this fighting!" he shouted. Biff! One of Bill Bury's wild blows, intended for Cardew, took Mr. Selby on the side of the head. He stumbled, then with a cry and a splash he was in the deep pond! (See Chapter 8.)

doubt. The tramp scrambled through the hedge and bolted in the direction of Wayland. Frank fainted.

But his unconsciousness only lasted a minute or two. When he came to himself he was lying on the grassy edge of the road, with the man who had come to his aid bending over him.

The boy had clambered down from the trap, and was soothing his frightened horse. The tramp was streaking for Wayland.

"My word, you've pluck, youngster!" said the motorist warmly.

"Rayther! Went at it like a man, he did. Couldn't have done no better myself," the boy said. "Steady then, Carraway! You didn't ought to go an' take a scare at nothin' at all like that. He ain't a bad 'oss, sir, but he's got nerves."

"That fellow! He tried to rob me!" gasped Frank.

"Did he? We'll see about him, then! Sure your horse is all right now, boy?"

"He's all right now, sir. Don't you bother about me. That's true about the thievery, that is—I saw 'em strugglin' as we come up."

The motorist snatched up Frank in his arms, ran with him to the car, dropped him on to the lap of a lady in the tonneau, got into his seat, had the car going at once, swung it round, and pursued Mr. Bert Bungo.

That sweet specimen of humanity looked over his shoulder, saw the car coming, and legged it as he had not legged it for years. He did not perceive the hopelessness of trying to get away. He would have seen it, of course, had he been able to think. But his fear was too great for that; his flight was mere instinct.

"I saw," said the lady into whose lap Frank had been dropped. "I suppose my son was too intent on his driving to see it; but I saw you fighting against that terrible creature, and then your dash to stop the horse. Really, it was wonderful, wasn't it, Sylvia?"

Sylvia, whom Frank guessed to be the motorist's wife, chimed in.

"It was the bravest thing I ever witnessed!" she said. "I do hope you didn't get hurt? We'd better make room for him between us, mater; he may not care about being nursed."

Frank was still in the older lady's lap. He had not properly realised his position, so intent had he been upon the chase of Mr. Bert Bungo.

All the vengefulness in Frank's nature—which was not much at ordinary times—had been roused. If it had been his own money he would not have felt so bitter. But it was Cardew's, and it seemed to matter terribly that he should hand it back to Cardew.

"Are you hurt?" asked the elder lady.

Frank became aware that his right foot was very painful indeed.

"A little," he answered. "The horse came down on my foot rather hard, but I can move."

He was careful to avoid putting any weight on the injured foot as he shifted and snuggled down between the two ladies, but it hurt more than a little.

The moment of Mr. Bert Bungo's capture approached.

To him it seemed that he had been running for hours and hours—had run miles and miles. Actually it was a matter of a very few minutes, and possibly a quarter of a mile.

The car swished down a slope upon him. At that moment a burly, blue-clad form crested the opposite slope—one of the Wayland Police Force on his beat.

At the sight of the constable Mr. Bert Bungo made a break for the open moor. There was no hedge here.

The constable stopped a moment, then went after him. The car was pulled up, and its occupants watched the chase. It did not last long.

Mr. Bungo had already used up most of his wind on the road. The moor made rough going. Its tussocky grass seemed to snatch at his clumsy feet, and it was pitted with little holes and sprinkled with gorse-bushes.

He crashed down at length, with one foot in a hole and his face and upper body in a mass of prickly gorse, and the constable, himself blowing hard, promptly sat upon him.

The ringing laugh of the motorist sounded over the moor. This end to the chase amused him greatly. But the ladies did not share his amusement, and Frank was in too much pain to see the funny side of it, while the constable was only indignant.

He came up to the car, grasping the back of Mr. Bungo's

coat-collar, and urging on that individual by the application of a knee at intervals.

"What's the charge, sir?" he asked

"Better inquire of the gentleman in the car, constable," the motorist said.

The man in the blue looked for the gentleman in the car, and saw the pale face of a small boy between the two ladies.

"You, sir?" he asked doubtfully.

"Yes. He tried to rob me," said Frank. "He asked for coppers, then silver. I hadn't anything but a ten-bob note, and, of course, I couldn't give him that. So I thought I'd better bolt. But he tripped me up, and—"

"It's all a pack o' lies, sergeant!" whined the tramp. "I never touched 'im, though I own I did arsk 'im for the price of a meal!"

"But we saw!" said the older lady quickly. "We saw, didn't we, Sylvia?"

The younger lady nodded.

The constable screwed round the head of Mr. Bungo in order to get a better view of his repulsive countenance.

"If I ain't badly mistaken," he said solemnly, "you're wanted on a more serious charge than this, though I don't mean to overlook this, neither! If you wouldn't mind givin' an eye to this one, sir, while I get out my notebook, I'd be obliged!"

"Anything I can do?" replied the motorist genially.

He got down and kept an eye—two very keen eyes, in fact—upon the sullen Mr. Bungo, but he did not hold him. Mr. Bungo did not appeal to him as the sort of person to approach too closely.

The constable took names and addresses. Frank had to pull himself together before he could give his. Things seemed slipping away from him. The pain in his foot was intense, and his head swam.

"St. Jim's—eh?" said the motorist. "It's on our way, or only just out of it; and if it were ever so far out it would be all the same. We will take him there, won't we, mater? You don't really think that this charge matters much, constable—I mean, not so much as the other you mentioned? For I don't fancy my young friend here will be in any condition to go over to Wayland to give evidence to-morrow or for some days."

"That's all right, sir. Unless I'm badly off it we'll put this one where he belongs without troubling the young gent. Looks as if the blackguard had hurt him pretty bad."

"I don't think the worst of his damage comes from that. He had just stopped a runaway horse as we came up, and his foot was stamped upon."

The constable contemplated Frank with interest and admiration. But Frank was unconscious of his look, and only heard dully, without understanding them at the time, the words he spoke.

"My word, an' him only a kid! Well, that's a fair knock-out! I thank you, sir—not that it's anyways necessary!"

A tip had passed. The motorist was back in his driving-seat. The constable marched Mr. Bungo on the first stage of his journey to one of his Majesty's houses of hospitality. Frank, in his place between the two ladies, had lapsed into a state in which he could only feel pain, but could not think clearly or speak.

The journey to St. Jim's was only a matter of minutes. At the open gates the car halted. The driver lifted Frank in his strong arms.

Just then a pretty girl in a nurse's uniform appeared.

"Oh, it's Frank Levison!" she cried. "What has happened to him?"

"Let's get him in first. I'll explain then," answered the motorist.

"Yes, that's best. There's the sanny. I'll catch you up."

For a moment the pretty girl waited to speak with the two ladies in the car. What they said about Frank would have made him blush if he had heard. But he could not have heard even had he been there; when he was laid upon a bed in the sanatorium he was quite unconscious.

## CHAPTER 10.

### In the Sanny!

**N**URSE MARIE RIVERS, Talbot's girl friend of the old days before his coming to St. Jim's, and his chum still, met Talbot and Manners in the hall of the sanatorium.

"Seen anything of Clive, Marie?" asked Talbot.

"Clive? Oh, yes, he's here! Clive has more sense than some of you. He brought his bad foot to me instead of trying to see to it himself, and in consequence it will be better a day or two sooner than it would have been."

"Is it very bad?" asked Manners.

"Well, it's strained, and there's a nasty graze that needed cleaning. But it's not half as bad as poor little Frank Levison's."

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"Frank!" gasped Manners and Talbot together.

"Why, yes. Didn't you know? I sent to report to Mr. Railton that he was here, and I'd no doubt that everyone concerned knew of it long before now."

"Railton's gone off for Sunday," said Talbot. "I see how it all was. He had no notion that only you and he knew, and he didn't think of mentioning it to anyone before he went."

"But didn't Clive tell you?" asked Manners.

"Clive has told me nothing. He was in a pretty bad way when he came in, and I told him to be quiet while I attended to him. It didn't matter to me at the moment how he had come by the hurt; afterwards was time enough to tell about that. Then I went off to get Frank something to eat—"

"Did I hear you say Frank, Marie?" sounded the eager voice of Sidney Clive.

And the Fourth-Former came limping into the hall.

"Then you didn't know he was here, old chap?" said Talbot.

"No, I didn't. How should I? Marie didn't say anything about him."

"But why should I?" smiled the school nurse. "Anyway, why should I have been in a hurry to say anything? I didn't know there was anything wrong, though it did occur to me that it was queer Clive should have been hurt like that during prep."

"How did Frank get hurt, then?" asked Manners.

"Trying to stop a runaway horse on Wayland Moor! And he did stop it, too, the little hero! The people who brought him along in a car said that they had never seen anything pluckier done by a mere youngster. But the horse trod on his right foot. There aren't any bones broken, but it's terribly bruised and very painful. I shall have Frank here for a week or ten days at least. I'm sorry for him, but it's luck for me, apart from that, for it's dull enough here at times, and Frank's very good company."

Talbot and Manners and Clive looked at one another. Even now they could not quite understand how Frank could have been brought back to St. Jim's in a car and taken into the sanatorium without anyone, even Taggles, knowing of it.

But then it was by no means certain that Taggles had known. He had not been in any condition to be questioned, and no one had thought of questioning him.

Nurse Marie made it all clear.

"I had been for a walk, and was coming in at the gates, when the car drove up and I saw Frank," she said. "No one else was about. The owner of the car carried him here. Taggles? Oh, yes, I suppose he did see—he was at the door of his lodge. I suspected him of having had too much to drink. But he must have seen. There, I've explained all that I can. Now it's your turn. What is all the trouble about?"

"Everybody thinks Frank has run away," answered Manners. "Selby and my minor and Wally and Cardew are all mixed up in it. I haven't got the hang of the story myself, so I can't tell you properly. But the fags started out after Frank, and then Levison and Clive and Cardew went, and Selby sent for a car from Rylcombe, and as soon as he'd cleared we three and Gussy and Blake and Herries and Digby went, too."

"Clive's come back damaged, and Frank's here, damaged, too!" exclaimed Marie in amazement. "Are all the rest of you— But you're back, Manners. What does that mean?"

"I came back with my minor and Jameson. Wally and Jameson were very nearly killed at the level crossing near Wayland. They would have been killed if it hadn't been for Cardew. Wally's got any amount of pluck. He was able to ride back. But Jameson was knocked right out—sick from sheer nerves. So I waited with him and Reggie till Tom got a car sent from Wayland, and we all came back in that."

"But where is Jameson? Why didn't you bring him here? Oh, Manners, you ought to have brought him here!" cried Marie.

"He wouldn't come. He said all he wanted was to get to bed. I think he'll be pretty much all right in the morning. And Wally and Frayne and Gibson are all in now. But Cardew and Levison and the fellows who started with me are still out searching, and Selby hasn't come back."

"And all the time Frank's lying in bed here! He's asleep now, but only dozing, and I thought he would want something to eat when he woke. My patients usually do," said Nurse Marie, with a twinkle in her eyes.

Then her face grew grave again.

"You say that Wally and Jameson would have been killed but for Cardew, Manners?" she said.

"There's no doubt about that. They tried to get across the level crossing just as the gates were closing. They'd cut it too fine. Wally's bike got jammed. They barged over on to the rails, right in the track of the train. And Cardew waded in and pulled them away just in time."

"Oh, it was fine of him!" cried Marie Rivers. "Sometimes I don't like Cardew a bit, and then he goes and does something that makes you think a heap of him—like this!"

Manners nodded. That was much as he and his chums felt about Cardew. He had made them think him an utter rotter more than once, and then he had won back their friendship. He had disgusted Levison and Clive, his own special chums, but always he had come back to his place in their affection.

In the ordinary way of life one could not depend upon Cardew for two days together. But when a crisis came, when courage that took no heed of self was needed, then Cardew was to be relied upon!

"Well, it's plain what you two must do now," said Marie Rivers. "Get your bicycles and go after the rest and fetch them back! They'll all be glad to know that Frank's here, I'm sure."

"Can we have a squint at him first?" asked Manners. "I don't see why you shouldn't. But tread softly! I'd like him to sleep if he can, for he's bound to be in pain while he's awake."

All three, Clive limping in the rear, followed the school nurse to where Frank lay in bed in something deeper than a doze now. His face was very pale, and against the pallor a long red graze from its contact with the road showed up.

They said nothing. They simply looked at him and passed out again. But Clive's eyes were misty, and both Talbot and Manners felt lumps in their throats.

Frank looked such a little chap to have gone through so much and shown such pluck. He had certainly had a day of it!

CHAPTER 11.

All's Well!

"DASH it all!" Ernest Levison, some distance beyond Wayland, was having more trouble with his bike. The nut of the saddle pillar seemed to have worn badly, and twice he had been very nearly thrown by the saddle's sudden looseness. On the third occasion he did actually come down, but luckily with no serious damage.

Now he was screwing up the nut again, though with little hope that it would hold.

It was not an easy job. The moon had retreated behind clouds once more, and he needed both hands for his task, so that he could not use his lamp with much effect.

He felt desperate. He was alone, and his mind was full of trouble about Frank and about Cardew. Where Frank was he could not guess. That Cardew was ahead somewhere he knew, and he

would have been more than glad of the slacker of the Fourth's companionship then.

It was through Cardew that Clive had had to turn back. Cardew should never have struck that blow, though he had had provocation, and though he had never imagined it would have the consequence it had. Cardew had treated Frank badly. Yet he had not meant to be unkind to the kid.

And Cardew had saved the lives of Wally and Jameson. Levison's heart glowed as he thought of the courage of his chum. That was like Cardew!

If Frank were all right—if he had not run away, after all—or if, having run away, he were brought back, both Levison and Clive would easily forgive Cardew, as they had forgiven him many a transgression in the past.

But if anything had happened to the Third-Former—that would wreck the friendship which had weathered so many storms.

Out of the gloom a voice hailed him—the cheery voice of Tom Merry.

"That you, Levison? Though, we might catch you up. Wally said your bike had gone wrong."

The cloud passed. The moon gleamed out once more. Six fellows, all ready to help, clustered round Levison, and he felt new hope surge up in him.

"Here, this is what you want!" growled Herries.

He pulled a loose thread from the turn-up of his trousers, and held out his hand for the nut which had given so much trouble.

With the thread wound round it, the nut screwed up tightly.

"Weally, theah is some value at times in bein' an untidday boundah!" remarked Arthur Augustus pleasantly. "Now, I could not have supplied Levison with anythin' like that, because I should not dweam of allowin' my twousahs to get in that condish!"

"Fathead!" "Seen Cardew and Selby, Levison?" asked Lowther.

"Neither of them. Selby, with a car, is miles ahead of me, with a blessed jigger that won't go, and I dare say Cardew's miles ahead, too."

"But they're together!" said Tom Merry.

"Together? What do you mean?" "Selby's taken Cardew in the car. We heard from a bobby in Wayland."

"Oh, my hat! I say, you fellows, you've heard what he did at the crossing, of course? You must have met Wally and the rest."

"We've heard," said Tom Merry briefly. "Yaas, watah! Cardew has played some wotten tricks

(Continued on page 28.)

THE ONE AND ONLY HANDFORTH!

Ever met Edward Oswald Handforth, the "big noise" at St. Frank's? No! Then you're booked for a real treat. He's coming to St. Jim's next week and Tom Merry is making special plans to receive him. You see, Handforth's reputation travels in advance of him, so to speak. They know at St. Jim's that Handy's leg was simply made to be pulled, therefore, why shouldn't they pull it? Why not? Once Tom Merry & Co. start the leg-pulling business the fun is fast and furious. But Edward Oswald can't see anything amiss. He takes what comes to him as his due.

You chaps will laugh loud and long over this amazing new boy. Look out, then, for:

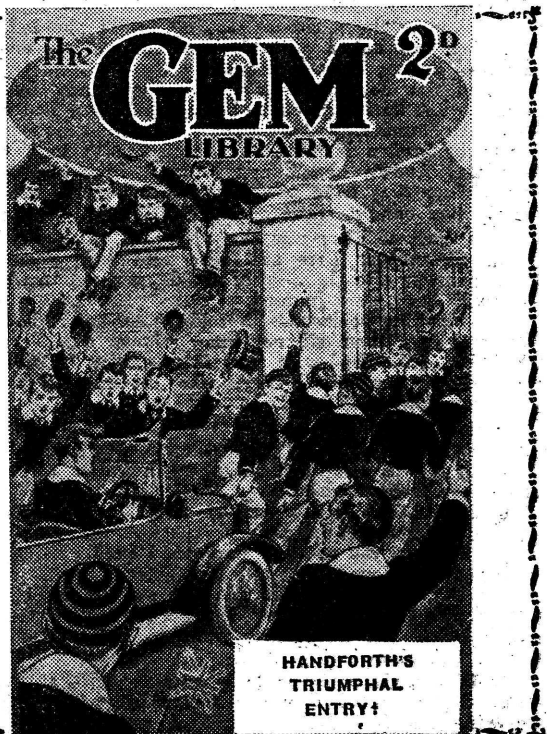
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### Trouble with Mr. Filer!

"STOP it, you idiot!" exclaimed Dick Dare.

But Andy Whelan would not stop it.

He had got a good grip on Dick, and he meant to get his own back. Five minutes before, in the old ledger-room, whither the boys had been sent to use the stamping machine on a batch of policies, Dick had easily put him on his back. Now Andy forgot where they were. He forgot Mr. Filer.

"That does you!" he cried in triumph, as he sent Dick reeling.

Then he gasped in dismay.

And after that he fled.

The encounter had taken place on the wide landing at the top of the staircase leading up to the ledger-room. It was not a suitable spot for an impromptu wrestling match, by any means.

But it was not for Dick's neck that Andy feared, though what he imagined to be a half-Nelson had sent his chum floundering downstairs. If Dick Dare's neck was to be broken it must have been broken long ago. That was Andy's belief, and he and Dick had been chums since they were youngsters of twelve at school.

Andy had caught sight of Mr. Filer.

Mr. Augustine Filer was the most unpopular member of the Marchester Fire and Life Insurance Society's staff. He was also the head of the department in which Dick and Andy were juniors.

Dick, crashing backwards, felt Mr. Filer before he saw him, and even then did not know who it was.

But Mr. Filer had seen that it was Dick before the crash came; and Mr. Filer, who disliked all boys, positively detested Dick Dare.

The manager smote the floor with a mighty thwack.

Picking himself up, unhurt and not even winded, Dick saw who it was that had served as a buffer for him, and said in all sincerity:

"I say, sir, I'm really awfully sorry!"

Mr. Filer grunted angrily.

"Let me help you up, sir," suggested Dick.

"Leave me alone!" snorted Mr. Filer.

Dick left him alone. He did not see he could well explain that this accident was not his fault, as indeed it hadn't been. All due blame went to Andy, who had started the skirmishing.

But Dick could not give Andy away.

The departmental manager scrambled to his feet, breathing heavily. He was lean of frame. It is the

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stout man who takes longest to recover when bowled over thus.

"If that is your usual manner of descending the staircase, Dare—"

"It's not, sir, of course."

"I suppose not. If it were you would probably have killed yourself before this. Not that that would have been any great loss to the office. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

"No, sir," Dick replied.

"Then you are fined five shillings!" snapped Mr. Filer.

Dick stifled a groan. This system of fines, to which only those members of the staff who were under twenty-one and had less than two years' service were subject, was a standing grievance with the juniors. At best their incomes were small; a petty tyrant, like Mr. Augustine Filer, could out into them nastily. And Mr. Filer did so. Not once yet had Dick received the full amount of his monthly salary.

Well, he would see that Andy paid half of this particular fine, anyway. And that was letting Andy off lightly. Confound the silly ass, he ought by rights to pay it all!

But, much as he disliked Mr. Filer, Dick saw that that gentleman really had some cause to feel aggrieved.

"Will you let me brush you down, sir?" he asked.

"No!" snapped the martinet.

Then, with as much dignity as he could summon up, Mr. Filer went back into the office.

Dick waited for Andy.

His chum came down, a trifle shamefaced.

"Sorry, old top!" he said. "Who could have dreamed the File would butt in like that? I oughtn't to have bolted. But I never had your pluck."

"You owe me half-a-dollar, you fat young donkey!" said Dick.

Andy turned out his trousers' pockets, disclosing a latchkey and threepence-halfpenny in coppers.

"Best I can do towards it just now," he said, with a wry grin.

"I must wait till Friday, then. You're a penny better off than I am, anyway."

"A tanner between us—let's toss to see which should have it!" returned Andy.

If Dick had stopped but a second to think he would have refused. But to stop and think was not much in his line.

"Right-ho!" he answered.

Andy flipped up the halfpenny.



"Heads!" said Dick.

It was heads—in a double sense. At the precise instant that the coin landed on the back of Andy's hand head uppermost, the head of Mr. Filer appeared round the door of the Policy Office!

"Ah! Playing pitch-and-toss?" snorted Mr. Filer.

They were silent. There was simply nothing to be said.

"You are fined five shillings each!" announced the agent.

"He's missed a point there. According to the book of rules we might be charged ten bob each for gambling on the office premises," whispered Andy, as they followed Mr. Filer through the heavy door into the musty and ill-lighted office where their work lay.

"Dash the book of rules, and the old File, and this mouldy place altogether!" retorted Dick. "I'm fed up with it all!"

Little wonder!

And small wonder that he voiced this grievance when Dick was essentially an open-air fellow. Andy might settle down in course of time into a model insurance clerk, though at present he was very far from being a model. But Dick never would.

The open spaces called to him. He had wanted to go abroad; but his guardian would not hear of that.

Above the frosted lower halves of the office windows could be seen green trees, and even into the dingy office some rays of the bright May sunshine crept. Summer breathed over the land.

Already nets were up on cricket grounds, and on the County Ground, not a mile away, the lucky fellows who could play cricket all the summer were at work—if that was to be called work which to Dick Dare would have been sheer joy.

With all his heart Dick loved cricket. He had left school at sixteen. His guardian saw no use in keeping him there longer. But already he had done such deeds as none had ever done before for Yarnley Grammar School. Joining the office staff in August of the year preceding, he had proved himself in the eleven before the season ended. He was looked to as one likely to be a tower of strength this year.

But what did it all amount to? Half-day matches against opponents no stronger than those the school had been wont to meet—that was all.

He might be a Triton among minnows. He did not want that. What he wanted was to have a chance of proving himself among his peers—a chance to show what he could do among real players.

He had honestly tried to make good at the office. But he feared he never would. The work did not interest him, though he did it well enough. He would have got into fewer scrapes but for the fact that the department numbered three other fellows of much his own age, all full of high spirits and disposed to kick over the traces.

They gave Mr. Filer a chance to show what a disciplinarian he was. Mr. Filer welcomed that chance. He showered fines. Each month each one of those four youngsters had a contribution to make in the way of fines to the superannuation fund—which, as Andy Whelan said, wouldn't do them any good for donkeys' years.

**Dick Rebels!**

**F**RIDAY happened to be the monthly pay-day. On Saturday the first match of the season was to be played.

Dick wanted a new bat. There was no hope of being able to buy one. Seventeen-and-sixpence had to be deducted from his six pounds ten, and the five pounds per month which came to him from the funds his guardian controlled had gone a fortnight ago.

"I should like to see the old File up to his neck in boiling oil!" he remarked, sotto voce, to Andy as they sat side by side on their stools.

The fine weather held; that Saturday morning might have been a midsummer one, instead of the last Saturday of the fickle month. The sunbeams, streaming in, made a sort of halo, though rather a dusty one, around the bald head of Mr. Augustine Filer as he sat at his desk at the end of the room—a desk raised by a platform some two feet high to a position adapted to give him a view of every man in the room, for all faced him, and he looked downwards on them all.

"Never mind!" said Andy. "We're going to put it across those West Court bounders this afternoon, for a dead cert. On form you're good for a century and seven or eight wickets, Dick, and I'm expecting to make twenty or thirty myself, if old Rowley will only let me have an innings before he declares."

Dick grunted. Form did not always work out quite like that, he knew. All the same, he knew he was in form.

Work stopped at one o'clock on Saturdays at the Marchester Fire and Life Insurance Society's headquarters.

At a quarter to one Mr. Filer got down from his high seat and stalked up to Dick.

"I shall need you this afternoon, Dare," he said, in his driest tones.

Dick gasped.

No payment was ever made for overtime by the company; but it was a condition of service that any member of the staff required after the usual hours stayed on.

Not often was the Saturday half-holiday spoiled for anyone thus; but it was not exempt.

Dick's first impulse was to say that he'd be hanged—or see Mr. Filer hanged—if he would stay.

But that would not be playing the game. Moreover, he remembered his guardian's sneer that he would never do any good anywhere. That sneer had come back to his mind more than once when the conditions at the office had oppressed him.

He must obey. Quite likely old Filer did not even know that there was a match on. He took no interest in any game.

"Very well, sir," Dick answered.

Andy gulped. The others in the room had heard, but they were not specially interested, for there were no active cricketers among them.

Dick did not see Andy slip down from his stool and follow Mr. Filer up the room. His head was bent over the book before him, while his cheeks flamed anger and his eyes gleamed the rebellion he was trying to subdue.

He did not see, but he heard Mr.



Dick Dare, the young hero of this fine cricketing yarn.

Filer rap out crossly:

"Certainly not, Whelan! I will not have my arrangements questioned. Return to your seat at once!"

Andy's cheeks were flaming, too, as he came back.

"Old brute!" he muttered to Dick.

"Eh?"

"I asked him if I could take your place, but—"

"By Jove, you're a pal, Andy!"

"I'm a cricketer, I hope, even if I'm a pretty poor one; and I know you're worth more to the team than half a dozen of my sort. Besides, it's so rotten for you, Dick!"

"Oh, I guess I can bear it! Thanks all the same, old fellow. I shan't forget."

A few minutes later came a general stir. In other departments men might make their preparations for departure at a quarter to one; but under the eyes of Mr. Filer no one stirred till the hands of the clock showed the five minutes to the hour.

Dick remained at his desk.

"You had better go and get some lunch, Dare," said Mr. Filer. "I can give you three-quarters of an hour. I shall expect you back at a quarter to two. There is some reading in I want you to do with me."

"Very well, sir," replied Dick dully.

Reading in with old Filer, while someone else filled

his place in the team! He felt as though the first mouthful of lunch would choke him.

The office luncheon-room did not open on Saturdays, and Dick had to go to a restaurant a hundred yards away. The cold roast beef and pickles did not prove so bad after all, and the cheese-cakes were better than anything in the pastry line provided in the office menu. He was back a couple of minutes before the appointed time, feeling rather better.

Mr. Filer did not show up at a quarter to two. The hour sounded from the town hall clock, followed by the chimes. The minutes dragged their leaden length.

At ten minutes past two Mr. Filer appeared.

By this time Dick was in a rage. He had been striding up and down the room like a caged animal. He could not do a stroke of work till the departmental head returned, and every minute was a robbery of his time.

His long strides brought him face to face with Mr. Filer. He was unconscious of the glare on his own face, but he saw the hateful leer of triumph on that of the tyrant.

Even then a word of apology would have caused Dick's anger to subside, and a word of apology was certainly due.

But Mr. Filer did not offer it.

"You should learn to curb your impatience, Dare," he said. "You need discipline. On that account I chose you to help me this afternoon. You behaved very badly the other day—"

"When I tumbled you over—though that was an accident?" burst out Dick. "But I've been fined for that!"

"True. But I did not consider that in itself the fine was sufficient to impress adequately upon you the lesson of respect to superiors. Therefore I—"

"Do you mean that I'm to be punished twice for the same thing?"

Dick's blood was up. Right to the roots of his dark brown hair his face was crimson, and the gleam in his blue eyes seemed to Mr. Filer ferocious.

"That is hardly the way in which I look at it, Dare—"

"But it's the way I do, and I'm not standing for it! I didn't kick when you picked on me to stay, though it certainly wasn't my turn, and though it made more difference to me than it would have done to most of the fellows. But I kick now. I'm going!"

"I forbid you to go!"

"Fat lot of use that is! Stand out of my way! You're too old and too flabby for me to punch, but I'm not going to be stopped by you. Clear out of the road!"

But Mr. Filer, though trembling between fear and anger, would not move an inch.

He was no match for Dick, and he knew it, and Dick knew it. It would have been better to stand aside. But he was obstinate and spiteful, and he detested Dick.

Without a moment's hesitation or thought of the consequences of his action, Dick seized him by the collar and swung him round as easily as though he had been a child. Releasing his hold, he gave a thrust in doing so—perhaps a harder thrust than he realised.

Mr. Filer staggered, tried to retrieve his footing, floundered, and sat down upon the dusty floor.

"Come back, Dare!" he shouted savagely.

"Oh, pick yourself up!" shouted Dick.

And the outer door of the office slammed behind him.

#### To the Rescue!

"THERE will be trouble about this!" muttered Dick, as he hurried to his diggings. "Well, it can't be helped. I'm no worm, and even if I had been one I reckon the time for turning had come!"

He snatched his cricket bag from the cupboard in the sitting-room which he shared with Andy and rushed out.

There was the barest possible chance that he would get a game, but he was not going to let even a slight chance slip.

If "old Rowley," as the irreverent youngsters of the team called the dignified Mr. Rowland, of the Fire Claims Department, who had captained the office team for so long that he found it impossible—though others did not—to imagine anyone else in his place, had won the toss, the West Court skipper would hardly object to Dick's coming into the side. That is, if old Rowley would ask him. But the veteran skipper was a stickler for etiquette, and he was not specially fond of Dick.

A glance at the town hall clock showed that it was twenty past two. The match should have begun at two.

A tram going west came along on the opposite side of the road. Dick, chafing with impatience, found his way across the street barred by a block of traffic. A big open Daimler had drawn up against the kerb close to him. It had only one occupant besides the chauffeur—a man of fifty or more with an iron-grey moustache, whom Dick fancied he had seen before, though he could not remember where.

Behind the car a boy held back with difficulty a young and nervous horse harnessed to a light trap.

On a sudden the frightened shriek of a woman sounded from the upper deck of the tram. The young horse had reared, and the boy had lost all real control of him, though he hung on to the reins, with teeth set hard and face like chalk.

As the plunging hoofs descended Dick dropped his bag and gave a leap right into the car.

He grabbed the man with the grey moustache just in time to save him from the peril of being brained by the iron-shod hoofs.

Even as it was one hoof came down with great force on his right shoulder.

The trap tilted back; the slender shafts snapped. The boy driver yelled. Men shouted.

Dick plunged forward and snatched the reins with both hands, while the man to whose rescue he had gone threw himself to the left, out of danger.

For a moment it seemed that Dick would be lifted right out of the car and trampled underfoot. His feet were dragged from the floor. He hung on grimly. Flecks of foam from the horse's bit splattered his face.

But Dick Dare was no featherweight. He bore down the tossing head and regained his footing.

A man dodged through the traffic and seized the reins from below, jerking the animal's head down with all his force.

"It's all right, sir! I've got him!" he said.

Dick knew him well. He was Tom Deeks, the groundsman at the enclosure which the office club shared with another club, a man who had played a few times for the county in his day, though he had never been quite a first-class cricketer.

"Is Mr. Ainsley hurt bad?" Deeks asked anxiously.

Then Dick knew that the man to whose rescue he had gone was one whom every good cricketer in Markshire honoured. John Ainsley had practically made the county club. Before he took it in hand and devoted no small share of his wealth to developing it the Markshire C.C.C. had not even played among the minor counties. For a score of years it had played occasional games with its nearest neighbours, and had given its members other matches of the club type.

Now, thanks to Mr. Ainsley, it was among the elect, playing in the county championship, and reckoned to have a chance of winning it before long. Not money alone had done all that, however. Money alone could not have done it, for the buying of ready-made first-class players would have alienated the counties without whose friendly offices promotion could never have been attained.

Before all else, Mr. Ainsley was a judge of the game. He could see the makings of a fine cricketer in a youngster who seemed to less keen critics no more than an ordinary player. Figures had no glamour for him; he judged by how a lad shaped, not by the easy runs piled up or the cheap wickets taken. It was said in Manchester that he had never made a mistake. He knew better than that. But certainly his mistakes had been few.

It was Ainsley himself who answered.

"It's nothing serious, thanks, Deeks—only a rap on the shoulder."

But Dick saw that the man's face was pale and drawn with pain, and as he ceased speaking the white teeth came down upon his under lip, as though to keep him from exclaiming in his agony.

The chauffeur had jumped from his seat. Now he reached his employer's side and put an arm round him to hold him up. Dick scrambled out.

"Don't go for a moment," said Mr. Ainsley. "I want to thank you. It's all right, Robins; there's no great harm done, though there might have been but for the promptitude and courage of my friend here."

Beads of the sweat of pain stood upon Mr. Ainsley's forehead as he spoke, and Dick guessed he was very near to fainting.

"I didn't do anything much," Dick said. "But I'm glad if it saved you from getting worse hurt, sir."

"You saved his life, near as I could see," spoke up Tom Deeks.

"I think so, too," said Robins, the chauffeur. "I turned just in time to see it, sir, and it fairly frightened me."

"Hallo, Tryon!" he answered "What's up?"

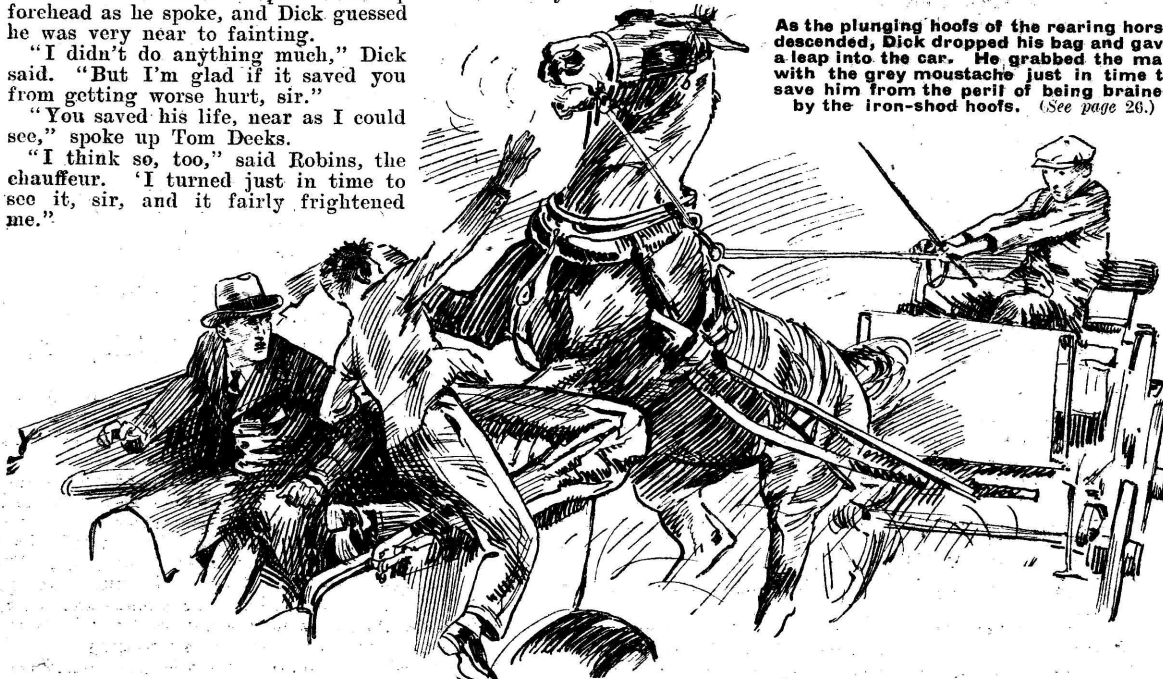
"Have you a game on?" demanded Tryon anxiously.

"I had. But it's gone west."

"Come round here, then! I want you badly. I'm in a hole. Ainsley gave me the skipping of a club and ground side raised all in a hurry to play Wickhamdene. All the best pros have gone to Yarnley; I've two ground staff juniors, but they are nothing great. Now two of the blighters I counted on to do the bowling have thrown me over at the last minute, and Ainsley took my word it would be all right, or he wouldn't have had the game fixed up. Bring your bag round, and do a record quick change into your flannels."

"I say, though, Tryon, I'm not a member of the county club."

As the plunging hoofs of the rearing horse descended, Dick dropped his bag and gave a leap into the car. He grabbed the man with the grey moustache just in time to save him from the peril of being brained by the iron-shod hoofs. (See page 26.)



"Will you tell me your name?" Mr. Ainsley asked, smiling bravely in spite of his pain.

"Dare, sir. I'm with the Fire and Life Society in Bank Street."

"Thank you. I shall not forget. You had better drive me to Dr. Kemp, Robins. I will see you again, Dare!"

The traffic block dissolved. Deeks led the fractious horse aside. Robins drove on. Dick lifted his hat, and Mr. Ainsley's hand—the left—went up in a salute in return.

Someone handed Dick his bag. Deeks spoke.

"Get him to give you a chance for the county, Mr. Dare! You're good enough, and he knows a good 'un when he sees him."

Dick heard, but at the moment the words made no impression on his mind. But he had cause to remember them later, however.

When Dick arrived on the ground the office side was in the field. Luck seemed against him that afternoon.

From his post at long on Andy Whelan gestured welcome and surprise. Dick waved back to him.

But even now Dick did not repent of having defied Mr. Filer. There was no great pleasure to be got out of seeing the West Court batsmen knock old Rowley, the slow bowler, about, and all chance of a place in the team had gone. But his defiance had not been based on that chance, but on principle. He was not going to be punished twice for the same offence.

Dick turned and looked over the palings, which were no more than five feet high.

He had not known that there was a game on the county ground that afternoon. He knew that a club and ground side was at Yarnley, playing Yarnley Town. But there must be something on, for wickets were pitched, and there were flannel-clad figures outside the pavilion.

"Hi, Dare, is that you?"

The voice came from someone who was hurrying towards him across the ground. He recognised Neville Tryon, an old boy of his own school, who was a candidate for a place in the county team.

"What's the odds? You soon can be. I'll put it through for you with the secretary this afternoon. It's only a couple of guineas."

"Can't afford it—that's flat."

"Oh, never mind about it, then! Only come along!"

"You're sure it will be all right?" Dick asked eagerly.

"I'll answer for it."

That seemed good enough. Dick rushed round. For the first time he entered the county club pavilion, and was in such a hurry to get into flannels that he forgot to be thrilled by what would have been to him a memorable experience in other circumstances.

"I'm putting you on first, young 'un," said Tryon. "And as things are, I only wish I could put you on at both ends! Bowl as you did when I was last down at Yarnley, playing for the O.B.'s, and it will make Wickhamdene sit up!"

Dick remembered the day referred to—one of the great days of his life. The Old Boys' team was reckoned a strong one; but the wicket was queer, and no one could stand against him. Six for 16 in the first—eight for 11 in the second—top scorer with 53—and the Old Boys beaten by an innings and 28 runs! Yes, that had been a great day for him.

But the Wickhamdene side was probably stronger than the Yarnley G.S. O.B.'s team, and to-day the pitch was plumb. Dick would get no such help from it as he had got from the varying paces of that wicket on the old school ground.

He knew the batsman who faced him as he ran up to the wicket to deliver his first ball. Herbert Blair had played for Markshire, though he was not a regular member of the county side. He made no end of runs for his club, but Dick fancied that he would hardly make many against first-class bowling. He had one or two weak spots; and the old hand, or the youngster with brains, for that matter, soon finds out such things. And Dick was out to get wickets that afternoon.

(This game at the county ground is destined to alter Dick's fortunes entirely. Don't on any account miss next week's instalment.)

## FOR FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE!

(Continued from page 23.)

at times. But he saved my minah's life, an' in future it is up to me to do my vewy best to think well of him."

"He saved Wally's life right enough," said Levison. "But what's he done to Frank? If anything's happened to the kid, Selby's partly to blame; but he did no worse than he'd often done before. Those other kids had a share in it; but Frank must have known that was only a passing breeze. So it's Cardew that's to blame most of all!"

"Nothing can have happened to the kid, surely, old chap!" said Tom Merry.

But there was no great conviction in his tones. They had kept on telling one another that nothing could have happened to Frank; but it was rather less comfort said the fiftieth time than it had been when first spoken.

"I don't know. Where is he?"

Levison spoke almost wildly. The others realised that it was well they had caught him up. He was hardly in a fit state to be toiling on alone.

At the bottom of his trouble, at the bottom of the doubt that all there felt, was this.

They could not believe that Frank had bolted. It was against all they knew of his character. The fags might believe it, well as they knew him; but they had not thought it out. Tom Merry and Lowther and the rest had. If Frank had run away, he had done something dead contrary to all that they knew of him.

And if he had not—where was he?

They pushed on, riding hard, with only a word spoken here and there. Ernest Levison knew what Cardew had not known, or had forgotten—that, since his mother was on a visit to relatives in town, it was for London Frank would make. So along the London road they pedalled, now in bright moonlight, now under clouds. The moon could not cheer them; the clouds could hardly depress them further.

And a few miles behind them, making the best speed they could, the bearers of glad tidings, rode Talbot and Manners.

Over a wide common and down a slope pedalled the seven, then round a bend:

Tom Merry, slightly in the lead, jumped from his saddle. "You silly ass!" howled Herries. "You very nearly had me over!"

"Here's Cardew!" yelled Tom.

"And Selby," added Lowther. "What a pity Cardew couldn't have lost him somewhere!"

But when he heard what had happened he repented of that speech. St. Jim's had no use for Mr. Henry Selby; but St. Jim's did not want him drowned.

And that night he seemed much more human than ever before.

He came forward, the water dripping from his clothes. Behind him came Mr. William Bury, quite sober now and very repentant, wondering whether the aid he had given Cardew in fishing Mr. Selby out would save him from the sack.

There was no need for him to worry about that. He did not get the sack. But he promised faithfully to sign the pledge.

"Everybody doesn't need it; but it's quite a good notion for you, my friend," Cardew told him.

Now Tom Merry & Co. saw that both Cardew and the driver were also soaked.

They saw, too, that the car had broken through a thick hedge, and was standing close to a pool. As Lowther said, it hardly needed the deductive powers of a Sherlock Holmes to make a guess at what had happened.

It was Mr. Selby who told them that the other two had fished him out. He spoke dryly enough, in spite of his dampness. But they did not doubt his gratitude—any more than they believed that it would have any influence on his behaviour in the future.

"We want a bit o' help with that there car," said Bill Bury. "She's fair stuck, an' we hadn't the strength to pull her out of it."

Most of the fellows hurried at once to help. Mr. Selby was shivering, and Cardew seemed, as he was, utterly done. Cardew and Levison were brought face to face.

They saw each other haggard and worried. Levison had had another proof of what courage and readiness there was in this wayward chum of his. Cardew knew what a great wrong he had done. There was no thought in him of having repaired it by what he had done.

But somehow the look in Levison's eyes made him stretch out his hand, and his chum's met it.

Levison did not help in getting the car out. He tried to, but Tom Merry thrust him aside, sure that he had already had more than enough.

It took some time. But, at length, the wheels were dragged out of the mud around the pool, the headlight swung round towards the gate, and Bill Bury drove the car out.

The rest followed. It was plain that the pursuit must be given up for that night.

Suddenly, there came the sound of wildly-rung bicycle bells, and two lamps showed round the bend.

"Manners!" said Tom Merry. "Pd know that lamp anywhere!"

"Manners ahoy!" roared Herries.

"St. Jim's ahoy!" shouted back Manners. "It's all right, Frank's in the sanny!"

Cardew's fingers closed upon Levison's arm, with a clasp that left their prints visible for hours afterwards. Levison staggered, and but for that clasp might have fallen.

Manners and Talbot swung themselves out of their saddles. Their faces beamed. They were the bearers of glad tidings, for Frank's injury was but a little thing compared with what the juniors had dreaded.

Cardew slept in sanny that night. There was danger for him of a bad chill, and he was best where he could be looked after. Levison major was there, too, partly because he also was in a pretty bad state, and partly for the sake of Frank and Cardew.

Mr. Selby, on reaching St. Jim's, had gone to bed, allowing just enough time to elapse to admit of a fire being lighted in his grate, and a hot-water bottle prepared for him.

He did not get up at all on Sunday, and he was not in the Form-room on Monday. But Tuesday saw him back there, less severe than usual, a little less disposed to look upon Wally & Co. as beings who might have come from the nethermost pit.

No one expected the change to last long, and it did not. In the sanny that Saturday night Levison and Cardew, both in bed, spoke to one another across the sleeping Frank.

"My hat! To think what's happened since this morning!" said Levison.

"I'd certainly call it a day, dear boy!" drawled Cardew.

THE END.

(Next week's grand story of St. Jim's introduces Edward Oswald Handforth from St. Frank's. Make sure you meet him in "HANDFORTH AT ST. JIM'S." Look out, too, for a special 2-page Supplement of the St. Jim's News.)



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