

"THE CHEAT!" SENSATIONAL YARN OF SCHOOLBOY ADVENTURE, FEATURING **TOM MERRY & CO. OF ST. JIM'S.**

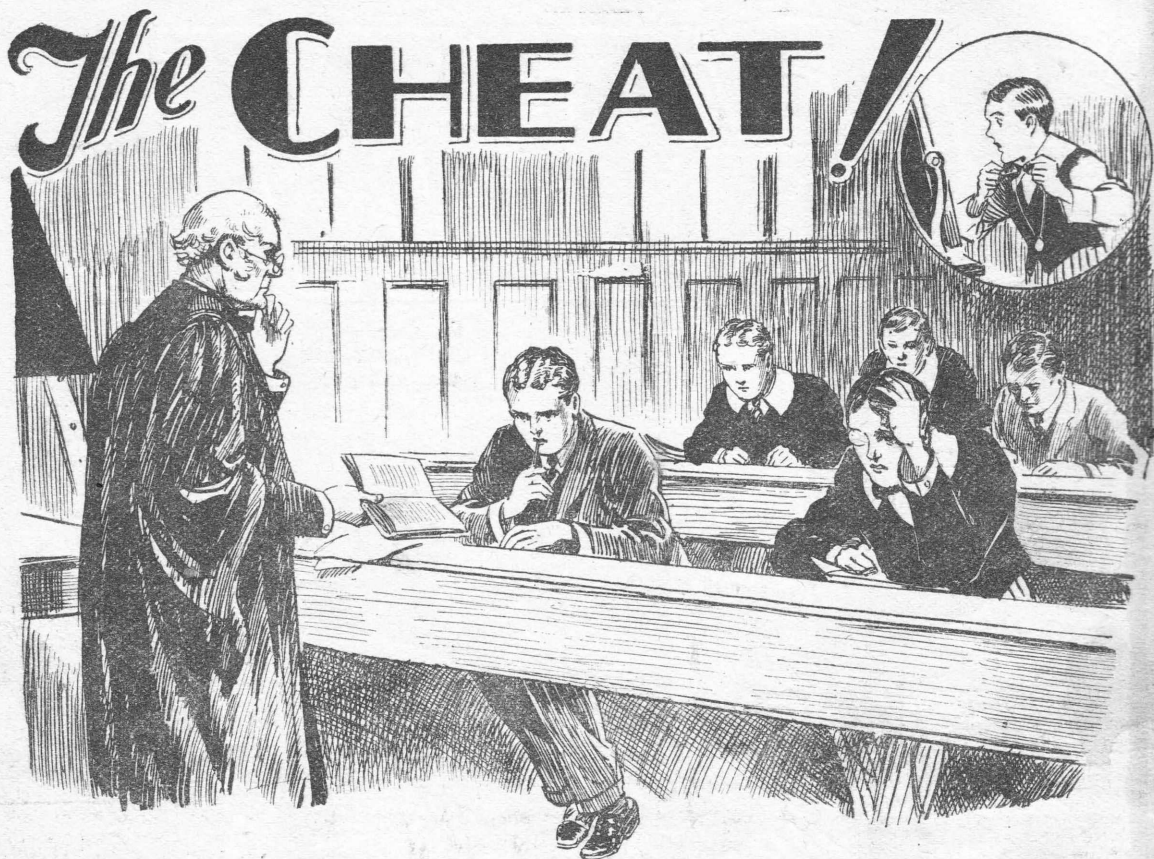
The GEM 2!

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EVERY WEDNESDAY.
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D'Arcy the Swot!

INTERRUPTED STUDIES! A Lively Incident from the Sparkling School Story—Inside.



With Mr. Lathom in charge, the five competitors worked at their examination papers in silence.

CHAPTER 1.

Ready for Work!

"GREAT Scott!"

"What the dickens—"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and the Shell—uttered those exclamations all together in tones of the greatest astonishment. They stopped in the passage and stared.

"Pway don't get in the way, deah boys—"

"But what on earth—"

"What are you up to, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form panted for breath. He was coming along the passage weary and heavy laden. In his arms he had a pile of huge volumes, and his pockets were bulging out with smaller volumes. No wonder Tom Merry & Co. were astounded. Arthur Augustus was not famous as a reading chap—indeed, he was supposed to devote much more attention to the pattern of his fancy waistcoats than to his lessons, and to think more seriously about the curl in the brim of his silk hat than about preparation or Form-room work, or any trifles of that kind.

And now—

Tom Merry & Co. simply stared. D'Arcy was staggering along under a weight of learning that might have bowed down a famous professor. In his arms were piled many great volumes, and the Terrible Three read the imposing titles of "Liddell and Scott's Lexicon," "Homeri Lias," Xenophon's "Anabasis," and the works of Plato, and THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,433.

the others were found to be Plutarch, Demosthenes, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. The end of a Greek grammar stuck out of his pocket on the right, and his other pockets were all full.

"Pway don't stop me, deah boys!" said D'Arcy breathlessly. "These books weigh a feahful lot, you know."

"They look a bit heavy," said Tom Merry, in amazement, "inside and out. What are you going to do with them?"

"I'm takin' them to my studay."

"What for? Going to play at barricades?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Or is it a new kind of gymnastics,

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

carrying weights and things?" asked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Arthur Augustus stopped in his career. The pile of huge volumes had lurched sideways, and it nearly toppled over. He jammed himself against the passage wall just in time to save it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"What on earth are you going to do with those books?" demanded Tom Merry. "Does anybody know you've been clearing out the school library?"

"Yaas, wathah! I have asked Mr. Lathom's permish to bowwow books f'rom the libwawy."

"A dozen at a time?"

"I wequiah them all."

"You're not going to read them?" yelled Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But you don't know any Greek!"

"Quite so. I'm goin' to learn."

The Terrible Three stared at the swell of St. Jim's blankly. That Arthur Augustus D'Arcy should take up Greek of his own accord—Greek, not being a compulsory subject at St. Jim's—was sufficiently surprising. But that he should start Greek with such works as the plays of Æschylus and the *Iliad* of Homer made the chums of the Shell gasp.

"You—you—you're going to learn Greek?" stuttered Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Are you starting with Æschylus?"

"Yaas. Nothin' like tacklin' the subject thoughfully, you know. But I've got a Gweek gwammah in my pocket, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' to laugh at, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, carefully balancing his burden against the wall, and trying to get it fair and square upon his arms again, to carry into the study. "The fact is, I'm goin' to swot a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry. "You must be going to swot if you're starting with Æschylus and Euripides."

"But what's the little game?" asked Lowther. "Have you suddenly made the acquaintance of an ancient Greek, and want to talk to him in his own language?"

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

—ST. JIM'S! GREAT YARN STARRING POPULAR TOM MERRY & CO.!

"I'm goin' in for the Gweek Medal," said D'Arcy. "I've thought that it would be a wippin' thing to win that medal, you know. My patah thinks I can't do those things, and I'm just goin' to do it to surprisise him."

"My hat! You will surprise him—if you do it!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, with considerable satisfaction. "I'm goin' to show the patah that I can do these things. You see, it isn't good form for me to go in for the scholarships and exhibitions, because they're intended for poor chaps who can't afford to pay their fees, and it's wathah wotten for a wick chap to walk them off. But the Gweek Medal is an entirely diffewent thing. It isn't worth much intwinstally, and it's all honah to win it, without much pwoift. Fellows in the Sixth compete for it, and it would be wippin' to whack the Sixth, wouldn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

"Anybody can entah, you know. I've entahed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And as it's only a week to the exam, I shall have to buck up," said D'Arcy.

The Terrible Three shrieked. The idea of Arthur Augustus learning sufficient Greek in a week to beat the Sixth Formers at an examination struck them as funny. Arthur Augustus was not what one would call conceited—that word did not apply to him in the least. But he had great confidence in his own powers. He was something like the young lady in the story who did not know whether she could play the violin or not, as she had never tried.

"Pway don't stand there cacklin' like a set of silly asses!" said D'Arcy. "Lend me a hand with these books if you want somethin' to do."

But the Terrible Three could not—they were in hysterics.

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

He had succeeded in carrying the terrible volumes upstairs, performing really wonderful feats of balancing in doing so. He was on the landing now, and the weight was telling upon him. He had asked permission of Mr. Lathom to borrow books for study from the school library, but probably the Fourth Form master had not suspected that he was going to make a raid of this kind.

Again the books toppled, and D'Arcy jammed them up against the wall to keep them from rolling over and whizzing to the floor. A Greek grammar dropped out of his pocket, and "Twister's Irregular Verbs" followed with a crash.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. laughed as they went to D'Arcy's assistance.

The Terrible Three helped to pick up the volumes. Blake and Herries and Digby—D'Arcy's chums in the Fourth—came up to assist. With a big volume each, they marched after Arthur Augustus into Study No. 6. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and as the weather was splendid, nearly everybody was going to spend it out of doors. But Arthur Augustus had evidently made up his mind to swot.

"Aren't you coming down to the cricket, Gussy?" demanded Blake, as he laid Æschylus on the table.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Too busy, deah boy!"

"You're going to stick in here all the afternoon?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Swotting?"

"Yaas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle! You chaps can

cleah out now," said D'Arcy, sitting down at the study table and opening the Greek grammar. "I suppose I'd bettah start with this," he added, rather dubiously.

"No; start with Æschylus!" yelled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Upon the whole, I think it would be best to learn the Gweek alphabet first," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go hon!"

"I wegard it as wathah a mistake of the ancient Gweeks to have this wotten alphabet," D'Arcy remarked. "I don't see why they couldn't have the same lettahs as we use. It would make the whole thing much easiah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howevah, it's no good wastin' time. Alpha, beta, gamma, delta!" started D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it!"

"Epsilon, zeta, eta, theta—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jota, kappa, lambda—"

Tom Merry & Co. almost staggered out of the study. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not heed their merriment. As they went down the passage they

Ernest Levison, of the St. Jim's Fourth, is clever enough to do anything but run straight. But he overreaches himself when he plays a cunning game for high stakes with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the pawn.

could still hear the aristocratic tones of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Mu, nu, xi, omicron, pi, rho, sigma!"

And they roared!

CHAPTER 2.

Interrupted Studies!

JACK BLAKE of the Fourth came off the cricket field with his bat under his arm, and a very thoughtful expression upon his sunburnt face.

The Terrible Three were standing outside the pavilion, talking cricket.

"I suppose you chaps have heard?" said Blake.

"That's according," said Lowther blandly. "We heard the bash just now, when Fatty Wynn knocked your wicket over, if that's what you mean."

Blake grunted.

"Oh, don't be an ass, if you can help it! I mean about Levison."

"Levison!"

"Yes."

"What about him?" asked Tom Merry.

"He's coming back."

"Oh!"

The chums of the Shell looked serious. It was some time now since Levison of the Fourth had gone away from St. Jim's for his health. Levison of the Fourth was a somewhat peculiar fellow, undeniably clever, and able to do many things that better fellows could not do. But he generally turned his cleverness

in directions that made him very unpopular. More than once he had been in danger of being expelled from the school, and he had fully deserved it. Indeed, if he had not left on the score of ill-health it was probable that he would have left by sentence of the Head. And when he went there was no one wished him to return.

Even his chum, Mellish of the Fourth, was not sorry to see the last of him. The curious duplicity in Levison's nature, which made him deceive even when it would have been more to his interests to be straightforward, made him the object of distrust and dislike in all the Lower Forms.

"Coming back!" said Manners.

"Blake nodded."

"Yes, I just had it from Kildare. The Head's allowed him to come back. How are we going to take it?"

"Well, I think it rotten," said Monty Lowther. "I'm fed up with Levison. The Head's too soft. The young cad will be at all his tricks again before he's been back a week."

"Most likely," said Manners.

"It isn't so bad for you chaps," said Blake. "He's coming to our Form, not to yours. I think it's pretty rotten for the Fourth. I was thinking of having some of the fellows up in the study, and having a jaw about it, so as to decide how to treat him. Dig says he ought to be sent to Coventry."

"Well, he ought," admitted Tom Merry. "But it's a bit rough sending a chap to Coventry when he's just come back after an illness."

"That's what we all think," agreed Blake. "The rotter's always got some rotten advantage over us, in one way or another. But come into the study, and we'll jaw it over."

"Right-ho!"

The news that Levison was returning to St. Jim's excited a great deal of interest among the juniors of the School House, especially the Fourth-Formers.

Levison had made himself so unpopular that nobody wanted to see him again, and there was a good deal of feeling on the subject.

Whether to send him to Coventry, or to give him a chance was a question that the leaders of the School House juniors had to decide, the rest of the House being likely to follow their lead.

Quite a little crowd came up to Study No. 6, in the Fourth Form passage, for the "little jaw" suggested by Jack Blake.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were the first, and Reilly and Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth followed them, and Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn of the Shell. Blake and Herries and Digby came in, with their bats under their arms. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was already there. The swell of St. Jim's was sticking to his purpose. While the other fellows had been enjoying open air and exercise Arthur Augustus had been "swotting" Greek.

He looked up from a sheet of impot paper covered with wild-looking characters, as the crowd of juniors poured into the study. More fellows were coming along, too—Brooke of the Fourth, and one or two more. Arthur Augustus frowned majestically as he looked at the invasion.

"Weally, my deah fellows!" he exclaimed. "I weally don't want to be inhospitable, but I'm wathah busy now."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "If work interferes with pleasure, give up work. It's quite simple."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

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"It's tea-time!" exclaimed Blake. "We want the table." D'Arcy shook his head. "Imposs., deah boy!"

"What?" "I'm feahfully busy! I'm mastewin' the Gweek alphabet like anythin'. I say, do you know those asses had thirty forms of the definite article? Wotten, isn't it, to a chap who has to learn Gweek in a huwvy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Never mind if they had three hundred forms of the definite article, old son," said Tom Merry. "We don't have Greek, thank goodness, though German's bad enough."

"I wogard it as wathah a mistake on the part of the govornahs to introwduce German instead of Gweek," said D'Arcy, shaking his head. "It places me in a wathah awkward posish, just now as I'm goin' in for the medal."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Are you going to shift these blessed books and papers?" asked Blake.

"Imposs. I don't want to get them mixed," said D'Arcy, casting an affectionate glance upon the sheets with which the table was covered. Weird-looking Greek letters were scrawled upon them, to say nothing of endless multiplications of the elusive definite article.

"We want tea!" bawled Herries. "Can't you have tea in Hall this evening?"

"What?" "And I should weally be much obliged if you chaps could do your pwep in some othah study, or else in the Form-woom."

"Eh?" "In the cires, as it's important for my papahs not to be disturbed, I should like to have the study to myself till aftah the exam," explained D'Arcy.

Blake and Herries and Digby looked at him speechlessly.

"Faith, and I think that takes the cake!" said Reilly of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Jack Blake took hold of one end of the table, and tilted it up a little towards D'Arcy.

The latter gave a wild yell of alarm.

"Hold on, Blake!" "I'm holding on!" grinned Blake. "Are you going to move that rubbish, or shall I shoot the lot on top of you?"

"It's not wubbish!" said the swell of St. Jim's indignantly. "I'm swot-ting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It will be a big honah for this study if I cawvy off the Gweek Medal," said Arthur Augustus. "You chaps seem to have no espwy de corps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Moving?" asked Blake.

"Certainly not! I—Yawwooooh!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had said that he was not moving; but he really had no choice in the matter. Blake tilted up the end of the table, and the formidable array of library volumes and the sheets of scribbled papers, and the inkstand, slid down towards the swell of St. Jim's.

Before Arthur Augustus could escape he was overwhelmed.

"Ow!" he roared. "Yawwooh!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash—bump—crash! The swell of St. Jim's sat suddenly upon the study carpet, and heavy volumes thudded round him, and written sheets floated through the air all over the study.

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The elegant junior sat amidst the wreck of his Greek studies and gasped.

"Ow! You uttah wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Get up!" yelled Blake.

"I wufuse to get up! I—"

"You're sitting in the ink!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus leaped up as if moved by a sudden electric shock. The spilt ink formed a pool on the study carpet, and Arthur Augustus had been sitting in it. Black ink streamed down his elegant trousers as he rose to his feet.

"Bai Jove! Oh, you awful wottah!"

Arthur Augustus twisted round to see the amount of damage done to his elegant bags.

The juniors yelled with laughter.

"You feahful wottahs! You've wuined my twousahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I'll give you a feahful thwashin'—"

"Better go and change your bags before they're soaked!" gasped Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ink will run into your socks!" suggested Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I—"

Arthur Augustus paused, and, giving Blake a look which ought to have withered him up on the spot, rushed from the study. The juniors roared with laughter.

"Oh, Gussy will be the death of me!" moaned Blake. "Get the fire lighted, Dig, old man! We want to make some tea. There's plenty of Greek exercises here to light it with!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Digby soon had the fire going.

The guests in Study No. 6 all lent a hand in getting tea.

Blake was in funds, and he had brought in a bag from the tuckshop which looked very tempting to the juniors, hungry after an afternoon in the open air.

The Greek volumes were stacked in a corner of the study, and the exercises that were not required for lighting the fire were piled upon them. The table having been cleared in so simple and efficacious a manner, the cloth was laid and the tea prepared.

There was a dozen fellows in the study, which was rather a crowd, but they were accustomed to crowding in the junior studies at St. Jim's.

Tea in Blake's study was soon going strong, and as soon as the duties of hospitality were under way, Blake broached the subject of the meeting.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!" said Kangaroo.

"Pass the marmalade!"

"I've called you together to—"

"Feed!" said Monty Lowther.

"To discuss a most important—"

"Spread!" said Lowther. "We're discussing it."

"If that ass is going to be funny there will be trouble in this study!" said Blake wrathfully. "I call on Tom Merry and Manners to muzzle Lowther if he's going to begin as a funny man, on an occasion like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Keep that for the comic column in the 'Weekly,' Monty, old man, and pass the jam go ahead, Blake, my infant!"

"Oh rats!" said Lowther.

"Most important subject!" resumed Blake. "Levison's coming back, and

we've got to decide how we're going to treat him!"

"I'm not going to treat him at all!" said Monty Lowther. "He never treats me!"

"Ha, he, ha!"

Blake rose in wrath.

"Chuck that ass out!" he exclaimed.

"Hear, hear!"

"Order!"

"If Lowther interrupts again—"

"Go on, Blake!" said Kangaroo.

"If Lowther's funny any more, I'll jab the jam down the back of his neck! Buzz ahead!"

And Blake, with a wrathful glare at the humorist of the Shell, sat down.

CHAPTER 3.

D'Arcy Regards it as a Duty!

"LEVISON is coming back to St. Jim's this afternoon," said Blake. "He may be back any minute. The question is, what's to be done when he comes?"

Monty Lowther was upon the point of remarking that whoever had anything to do with Levison would be done; but he caught Blake's eye and refrained.

"It's an open secret," went on Blake, "that the rotter would have been expelled if he hadn't fallen ill. I dare say the Head thinks that his illness would have had a good effect on him—show him the error of his ways, you know, and so on. You know the Head is a bit soft in some things; he hasn't got our experience."

"Hear, hear!"

"We can't prevent the chap coming back; but we can make him jolly well sorry he's come," went on Blake. "Only it seems a bit rough to jump on a chap when he's down."

"Yes, rather!"

"Levison is down on his luck, and he'll come sneaking back, and making out that he's turning over a new leaf," went on Blake. "He's had us that way before. Of course, nobody could think of taking his word."

"No fear!"

"It's for us to decide whether he's to be given a chance or not," said Blake.

"The rest of the House will follow our lead."

"Hear, hear!"

"Pass the jam!"

"If they don't, sure we'll punch their heads, the spalpeens!" said Reilly.

"Sure, I think we might give the rotter a chance!"

"Better rag him and make him bunk again," growled Herries. "I know jolly well that there isn't any good in him!"

"Good in everybody, more or less," said Tom Merry charitably. "though I admit that Levison is a rather hard case."

"Not in Levison, I know that," said Herries.

"How do you know?"

"Towser doesn't like him."

"Eh?"

"My bulldog, Towser," said Herries. "You remember how he took a dislike to Levison the first day he came to St. Jim's. He's never got over it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at. Dogs always take to decent fellows, and I've never known Towser to be wrong."

"Better give Towser the casting vote," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You might do worse," said Herries.

"Towser's got a lot more sense than some Shell chaps who set up as funny men."

"Look here——"
 "Order! Order!"
 "We're not getting on," said Blake.
 "I'm getting on all right," said Kangaroo, looking up from his third rasher.
 "I mean about Levison——"
 "Oh! Go ahead, then!"
 "We'll put it to the vote," said Blake, "whether we jump on him at once and keep him in his place, or whether we're civil to him and give him a chance."
 "Weally, deah boys——"
 Arthur Augustus entered the study. He had changed his lower garments, and seemingly his good humour had been restored by finding himself in spotless garb again. But he had a severe expression upon his aristocratic brow.
 "I am surprised at you, deah boys!" he said.
 "What's the matter now? We've left

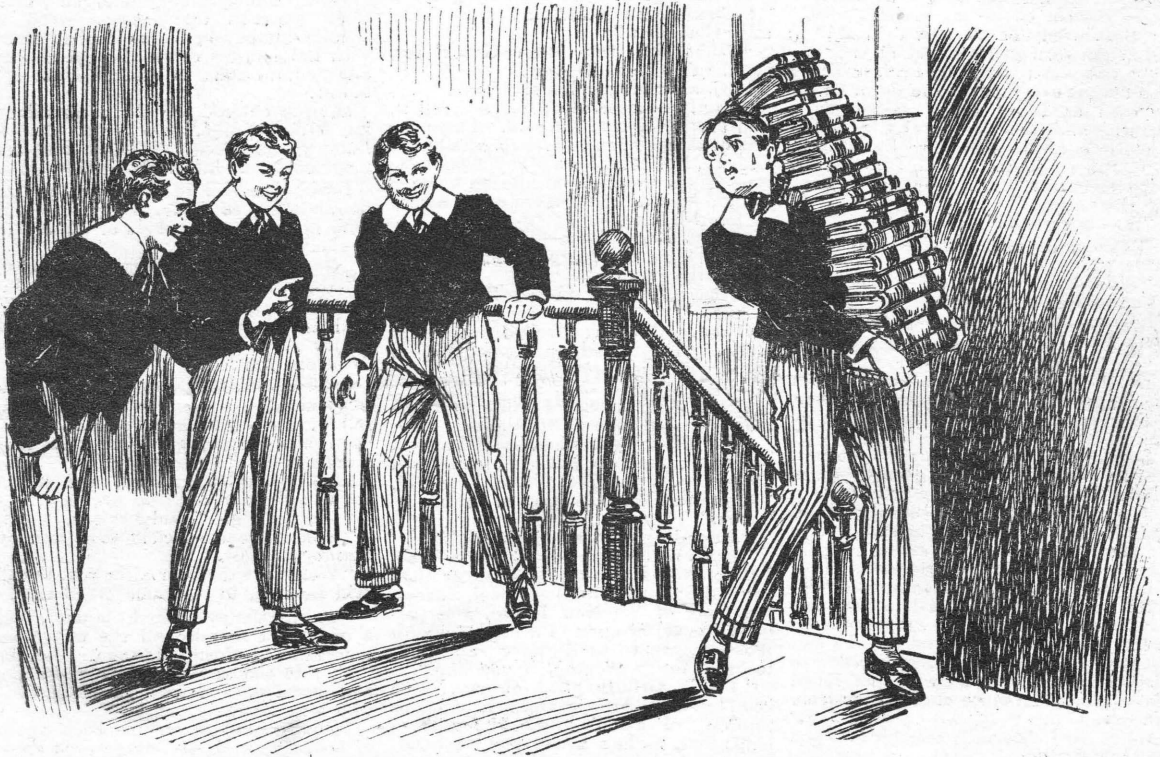
forget the past, and nevah wag him about what he's done, and assume that he's going to be decent, and speak to him civilly, and ask him into the study to tea, and all that. That's the best way of bwingin' out the good in a chap, if he's got any good in him."
 "Levison hasn't!" said Herries.
 "Oh, wats!"
 "By Jove!" said Tom Merry, looking round. "Gussy's suggestion is a jolly good one, and very like Gussy, too. I second it!"
 "And I third it," said Blake. "Let's give the rotter a chance!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Hands up for taking Levison under our wing and giving him a chance to show whether he's going to be decent or not," said Blake.
 Hands went up on all sides.
 "Good! Now hands up against it."

good chance, it won't be our fault if he doesn't."
 "Bosh!" said Herries.
 "Look here, Hewwies——"
 "I'm against it. I don't trust Levison——"
 A tap at the door was heard while Herries was speaking, and it opened. Levison of the Fourth, the junior of whom Herries was speaking in a somewhat loud voice, walked into the study.
 "Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 4.

Levison Makes His Peace.

LEVISON looked over the crowd of juniors and nodded.
 There was silence in Study No. 6.
 The fact that they had all been discussing Levison made the juniors feel a



"Pway don't stand there cacklin' like a set of silly asses!" said D'Arcy, as the pile of huge volumes he was carrying lurched and nearly toppled over. "Lend me a hand, if you want somethin' to do!" But the Terrible Three were too amused at the idea of Gussy taking up swotting.

you something to eat," said Bernard Glyn.
 "I'm not alludin' to that, Glyn. I am surprised at the suggestion that we should be down on a chap who's been away ill!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Whethah he is goin' to be decent when he comes back or not, I wegard it as our duty to give him a chance."
 "Rot!" said Herries
 "Weally, Hewwies——"
 "Put it to the vote!" said Tom Merry.
 "Hear, hear!"
 "I have a suggestion to make, deah boys."
 "Life's too short!" said Manners.
 "Put it to the vote!"
 "Pway don't be an ass, Mannahs. I have a weally good suggestion to make. I have thought the mattah ovah. Suppose we make up our minds to give Levison every possible chance to act decently. We can make it a point to

Only one hand went up this time; it belonged to Herries. The faith of Herries in the judgment and sagacity of his famous bulldog was unshaken.
 "Weally, Hewwies, old man——" said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of remonstrance.
 "Oh, rats!" said Herries crossly. "I'm against it!"
 "Well, the majority are in favour of giving Levison a chance," said Tom Merry.
 "Hear, hear!"
 "And I weally considah that it will turn out all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "Levison is a weally clevah chap, if he used his clevahness in the wight way. He knows Latin bettah than any fellow in the Fourth, exceptin' Bwooke, and he knows Gweek, and can entah for the medal if he likes. It's a great pity that such a clevah chap should be such a wotten cad, and I weally twust he is goin' to turn ovah a new leaf. Anyway, if we give him a

little awkward at his sudden entrance.
 Herries turned red.
 "Hallo!" said Levison cheerfully.
 "Hallo!" said Tom Merry.
 "Here we are again!" said Levison. "I thought I'd look in to see you chaps. I knew you'd all be glad to see me—especially Herries."
 Some of the juniors grinned, and Herries glared. The burly Fourth Former was not in the least inclined to retreat from the position he had taken up.
 "I'm not glad to see you," he said deliberately, "and I'm not going to pretend that I am. You won't get any soft sawder out of me!"
 "I don't expect it," said Levison, with a grin. "You always hit out straight from the shoulder, Herries, and I know what to expect. But I don't bear you any malice: I heard that all you fellows were in here, and I came to see
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you on purpose, because I've got something to say to you. I know you used to dislike me when I was here before, but I think you might give me a hearing."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"As a matter of fact, we've just been jawing you over," said Blake.

"Thanks!"

"We wanted to decide how to treat you," Blake explained. "I can't say we're overjoyed at your coming back, but if you don't begin any of your rotten tricks again, we're willing to give you a fair show."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's what I want to speak about," said Levison. "I've been away some time, and I've been ill. My pater has been fearfully ratty with me, and I haven't had the best of times at home. I'm sent back to St. Jim's to see if I can do better; and as a precaution against my getting into mischief, the pater has cut off all my pocket-money."

"Bai, Jove! That's wathah wuff!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I can stand that," he said. "But I don't want everybody to be down on me as soon as I get back. Give me a chance, and don't jump on a fellow when he's down. That's all I ask."

"Quite right, too," said Tom Merry.

"It's only fair."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake made room for Levison at the table.

"Sit down and feed," he said. "You're quite welcome. The past is all over, and you're going to have a fresh start."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

Herries frowned. He was as far from agreeing with the others as ever, but he felt that it was incumbent upon him to hold his peace.

Levison was hungry after his journey, and he "wired into" the good things in Study No. 6 with a hearty good will.

The juniors were hospitality itself. Only Herries quietly left the study, from a natural repugnance to eating in company with a fellow he distrusted.

Levison looked just the same as of old. His recent illness seemed to have left no traces, and indeed a suspicious fellow might have surmised that he had exaggerated it at the time in order to play upon the sympathy of the Head and avoid the sentence of expulsion from the school.

He chatted cheerfully enough over the tea-table.

Levison could be a very entertaining fellow when he liked, and but for the inevitable distrust his crooked ways inspired, he would have been a very agreeable companion.

He made himself pleasant enough now. Tom Merry & Co. were determined not to find fault, and so the time passed agreeably enough.

The guests in Study No. 6 departed one by one, or in twos, as the "spread" was finished, Levison remaining till the last.

He had caught sight of the Greek volumes and the exercises piled in the corner of the study, and asked what they meant.

Arthur Augustus explained.

Blake and Digby chuckled.

Levison stared at the swell of St. Jim's blankly.

"You've entered the exam for the Greek Medal?" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus nodded cheerfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But you haven't studied Greek?"

"Not yet."

"My hat!"

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"You could have entahed if you'd been here, deah boy," D'Arcy remarked. "But it is past the date for puttin' down the names."

Levison yawned.

"What's the good of the competition?" he asked. "There isn't any prize of any sort, or a scholarship."

"There's the medal."

"I heard one of the masters say that the medal only cost ten pounds," said Levison. "It wouldn't be worth that to sell."

Arthur Augustus sniffed. Levison's remark was so like the old Levison that it was difficult to believe that there was anything of a change in him that the juniors had hoped to see.

"There's the honah of winnin'!" said D'Arcy coldly.

"My hat! Fancy going into a sloggish examination for the glory of capturing a giddy medal, not worth a pound at a pawnbroker's!" said Levison. "I should want something a bit more solid than that."

"What did you learn Greek for, then?" demanded D'Arcy.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Partly because my pater ordered it, and partly for use," he said. "There are lots of things open to a chap who knows Greek. Besides, it isn't any trouble to me. But I wouldn't go into an exam if I could help it, unless there was a money prize. No fear!"

"There's the glowy—"

"Oh, blow the glory!" said Levison.

"Pass the jam!"

Arthur Augustus passed the jam in silence.

Blake and Digby strolled out of the study. They had had enough of Levison's society for the present. He was beginning to show all his old ways and his old manner of thinking again before he had been at St. Jim's an hour.

"But I'll tell you what," said Levison, helping himself to jam; "I can be of use to you, if you like, D'Arcy," he said, "if you're really thinking of taking up Greek."

"How do you mean, deah boy?"

"I can read that rot backwards," said Levison. "I know Greek better than any other junior in the school, excepting Kerr of the New House, and perhaps Brooke of ours. I'll help you with pleasure, and we'll have an hour together every evening, if you like."

"That's awfully good of you, deah boy!" said D'Arcy gratefully. "I was thinkin' of askin' Bwooke for some help; but, as he's a day boy, it would be wathah difficult for him to stay and help me aafh lessons, and he has work to do at home, too. But if you could lend me a hand at first, it would be wippin'!"

"I'll be glad," said Levison. "It will keep me out of mischief, too. I don't want to have too much to do with Mellish and Crooke now I'm back. Lumley-Lumley chucked them when he turned over a new leaf, and I'm thinkin' of doing the same."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Well, we'll begin this evening," said Levison. "Suppose you come along to my study at seven and we'll stick to it till eight."

"Thanks awfully! What books shall I bwing?"

Levison looked at the formidable pile in the corner of the study and grinned. "I should recommend getting that lot back to the library before they get damaged," he said. "Bring your Greek grammar, and some impot paper, and we'll begin at the beginning. My dear chap, you can't tackle Homer at first—there's parts in Homer that give the Head himself a twisting. Let's start with the alphabet."

"Vewy well, deah boy!"

"See you at seven, then," said Levison, as he strolled out of the study.

CHAPTER 5.

The Swots!

MELLISH and Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth were in their study in the Fourth Form passage, which they had shared with Levison while he was at St. Jim's.

Lumley-Lumley, at least, had found it more comfortable while Levison was away. Mellish, too, although he had been Levison's chum, seemed to have borne the loss of his society with great equanimity.

The juniors' studies at St. Jim's, especially in the School House, which was the older building of the two Houses, were not large. There was, as Jerrold Lumley-Lumley remarked, more room for two than three. And as Lumley-Lumley had been on bad terms with Levison, his return did not awaken any enthusiasm in Lumley-Lumley's breast.

Levison entered the study after leaving Study No. 6, and found Lumley-Lumley and Percy Mellish there, and they looked at him rather grimly.

Levison nodded to them with perfect nonchalance, as if he had parted with both of them on the best of terms only the day before.

"Room for one more?" he asked blandly.

"We're going to make room, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "I guess I shall do my prep in another study as I used to before you left."

Levison nodded.

"You always were a nice obliging fellow, Lumley-Lumley," he said. "I shall miss your company a fearful lot—I don't think!"

Lumley-Lumley grunted, and moved towards the door.

"Oh, don't go!" said Levison.

"You make me sick!" said Lumley-Lumley politely.

"Well, shut the door after you, then!" said Levison, in the same bland tone.

Lumley-Lumley banged the door, with a bang that sounded all the way along the Fourth Form passage. Levison sank into the armchair Lumley-Lumley had vacated, and grinned at Mellish, who was laughing.

"You're glad to see me back again, of course?" said Levison.

"Oh, of course!" said Mellish.

"You owed me some tin when I left St. Jim's."

"Did I?" said Mellish.

"You know you did."

"Well, if that's what you've come back for, you might as well have stopped at home," said Mellish sourly. "You never expected me to pay you, you never needed the money. And I haven't got it."

"Circumstances alter cases," said Levison. "I'm stony now."

"I should have thought that you'd have brought some good tips back, after being at home a long time—and ill, too," said Mellish, in surprise.

"You don't know my people. My pater's frightfully ratty with me, and he's cut off all my allowance of pocket-money for this term."

"Phew!"

"I've come back with exactly half-a-crown in my pocket, and I'm not going to have any allowance the whole term," said Levison. "That's what comes of a chap's father playing the giddy Roman parent—Brutus the Second, you know." "It's rough," said Mellish; "but it's no good reviving old loans of last term."

I couldn't settle then, and I can't settle now."

"I shall look to you for a bob or two until I make a raise," said Levison coolly. "I've got to raise the wind somehow, though. If there was any money prize attached to that rotten exam next week for the Greek Medal, I'd have a go at that. But it's only the glory, and any ass who likes that can rope it in."

"D'Arcy of the Fourth has entered for it," said Mellish, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"He's learning Greek on purpose," grinned Mellish.

"I know; I'm going to coach him," said Levison.

Mellish stared.
"You're going to coach D'Arcy?" he exclaimed. "I thought you were on bad terms with Study No. 6."

"So I was; but D'Arcy will be a useful friend to me," explained Levison. "I don't mind letting you into it. I've got to raise money from somewhere, and D'Arcy's governor is very liberal to him in tips."

Mellish grinned.
"I see," he said.

"The giddy ass is going to learn Greek in a week," said Levison. "Just about as sensible as his idea of carrying off the medal—useless rubbish, in my opinion. When he comes in you can get out, and leave us for an hour. I'm going to coach him here."

Mellish yawned.
"I'll jolly well get out—rather!" he said. "I don't want any blessed Greek! So you're going to be thick with those rotters in Study No. 6."

"Yes; till I see how things go, at any rate."

"When that silly ass comes—"
Tap!

"Hush! He's there!"
"Come in!" called out Mellish.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered the study. Levison looked at him anxiously for a moment, fearing that perhaps Mellish's voice might have penetrated to the door. But the face of the swell of St. Jim's was quite unsuspecting.

"Here I am, deah boy!" he said.
"Are you weady?"

"Quite!"
"I twust we shall not be incommo-din' you in any way, Mellish," said Arthur Augustus politely, as he laid his Greek grammar and lexicon and an imposing pile of impot paper on the table.

"Not at all," yawned Mellish. "I'm going out."

And he went.
Levison pulled out a chair for the swell of St. Jim's.

"Now to work," he said cheerfully.
"This is weally awfully good of you, Levison," said Arthur Augustus gratefully, as he sat down and opened his grammar.

"Not a bit," said Levison. "I only hope I shall be able to help you rope in the Greek prize. Besides, I've got to make up to you for playing rather a mean trick on you once. You remember the time I made up as you—"

"That's all wight, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "The past is all over and forgotten. Besides, that wasn't much. Kerr of the New House made up as me once, and he did it ever so much bettah than you did. Where shall we begin?"

"Beginning!" suggested Levison.
"That's a good place. Suppose you take the definite article for a start—the thirty different forms of the word 'the.' Take the singular number first, nominative case."

"Yaas."
"Write it down."

"In English letters?" asked D'Arcy hopelessly.

"You can't; you'll have to put it in Greek."

"But I don't know the Gweek lettahs."

"That's all right. Copy them from the grammar as you need them."

"Yaas; that's a good ideah."
And Arthur Augustus followed Levison's directions.

For a whole hour they worked together, and certainly Levison worked his new pupil hard. He kept him to the definite article; but as there were two dozen and a half forms of that dreadful word, D'Arcy had enough to do. And the discovery that in Greek there was a dual number, as well as a singular and plural, filled the swell of St. Jim's with dismay. But he struggled on bravely, though by the time the instruction was finished the word "the," in every shape and form, was buzzing in his brain and dazzling his eyes.

CHAPTER 6.

Not Backed Up!

THE examination for the Greek Medal was an annual affair at St. Jim's, and the fellow who won it—the medallist of that year—was a fellow of great account among the swotting section of the school. There were other fellows, certainly, who said they'd rather have their cap for the footer eleven, or in the eight, than win medals enough to start a shop with. Certainly the number of Grecians at St. Jim's was not large.

St. Jim's had followed the modern movement long ago of substituting living languages for dead ones. Latin still held full sway; but German had been substituted for Greek, as a part of the regular curriculum. There was no doubt that German was the more useful of the two. As Monty Lowther remarked, the fellows were likely to meet more modern Germans than ancient Greeks. But the Head, though he had fully concurred in the change—which had been brought about in his own time—had not lost a lingering fondness for the old way of things, and some of the governors fully agreed with him. Therefore, although Greek was no longer compulsory at St. Jim's, it was optional, and its study found every encouragement.

The Sixth Form produced a Greek play every year, and were popularly supposed to know what it meant. The Greek Medal, however, was the chief object of the ambition of the Grecians. The medallist was a great man for the time, and fags would look at him with deep awe, impressed with the marvellous weight of his learning.

To borrow the words of the poet:

"And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew

That one small head could carry all he knew!"

So, in spite of disrespectful remarks about "swots" and "cads" the Grecians were very keen about the medal, which had been instituted to encourage keeping up the old classical study; though some of the more worldly minded fellows suspected that a handsome money prize would have had a still better effect.

As no one could win the medal twice, several of the best Grecians at St. Jim's were debarred from entering on this occasion, and so the result of the exam was very much in doubt.

There were not many entrants; the total number was five. And, last of

these, but not least, was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

Any fellow was allowed to enter, irrespective of his position in the school. The exam was open to the Fourth as much as to the Sixth.

But it was not unusual for juniors to enter. On this occasion, Langton of the Sixth was one competitor. North of the Sixth was another, Lefevre and Campbell of the Fifth were in it. D'Arcy of the Fourth had then sent in his name, and it had been duly entered.

There were other and better Grecians at St. Jim's than any of them. But Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth, and Kerr of the Fourth, had all won the medal in previous years. Brooke of the Fourth was strongly tempted to enter; but Brooke was a day-boy, and he had work to do outside St. Jim's, and he could not find the time for working up for a very difficult exam. So much against his will he had to let it pass. But the honour of the Lower Forms was upheld—more or less—by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy's name had been put down on the list, as all names were that were sent in. But the candidature of the elegant junior was treated with a hilarity which caused him great indignation.

The fact that he was not a Greek student did not seem to D'Arcy any reason why he should stand out. Like the gentleman in the story, who said he didn't want many piano lessons, because he only wanted to learn how to teach that instrument, Arthur Augustus reasoned that he only wanted to know Greek to pass an exam.

And he frowned very loftily at the yells of laughter with which his pretensions were greeted.

"It's all wot!" he said to Blake, the day after Levison's return to St. Jim's. "Of course I wouldn't entah if I had to compete with Kildare or old Kerr." But I think I've got a jolly good chance now!"

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "Have you learned the alphabet yet?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's hear it!"

"Well, I've forgotten it again," confessed D'Arcy. "But I learned it all wight last night."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm expectin' a lettah fwom my patah about it," said D'Arcy. "The fellows all seem to take it as a joke. I weally don't know why. But my patah is certain to be impressed. I shouldn't wondah if he sends me a fivah just to encourage me. You know, he says I can't do things, and my majah—Conway—says the same. I jolly well pwoved that I could be useful the othah day, when I went ovah to Bwooke's house, and helped him with his work. I'm goin' to pwove it to my governah by cawwyyin' off the Gweek prize."

"You'll impress him, if you do it," said Blake solemnly.

"Yaas; that's what I mean to do, deah boy."

"Letter for you, Gussy," said Monty Lowther, looking into the Common-room.

"Thanks, deah boy! It's fwom my patah, I expect. I shouldn't wondah if there's a fivah in it. My patah is bound to be pleased at takin' up the exam for the Gweek Medal. It will show him that I can work instead of play."

"Fiver in the letter?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come on, you chaps! Let's go and help Gussy open the letter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus went into the Hall and took the letter. It certainly was in

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the handwriting of Lord Eastwood, who had the honour of being the pater of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

"If there's a fiver in it," said Monty Lowther cheerfully, "I beg to remark that it's a warm day, and Mrs. Taggles' ginger-pop is first-class."

"Hear, hear!"

"Open it, Gussy," said Blake. "You're keeping us on tenterhooks."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Tear it open!"

"Imposs, deah boy! I could not possibly open a lettah in that slovenly way. Can any of you fellows lend me a penknife?"

Reilly of the Fourth lent a penknife, and Arthur Augustus slit the envelope. Then he drew out the letter and opened it. There was no fiver.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked. "That's wathah wotten!"

"Hard cheese!" said Blake sympathetically. "But perhaps he's sent you an apology for the omission. An apology settles everything, you know, from one gentleman to another; quite as good as a banknote, except that you can't change it at the tuckshop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus glanced at his letter, and uttered an exclamation.

"Bai Jove!"

"No apology?" asked Tom Merry.

"I wegard this as wotten!"

"Pater kicking over the traces again?" asked Monty Lowther. "This is what comes of your carelessness in bringing him up, Gussy. If you'd attended to him with greater care during the days of his early youth—"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! Listen to this!"

And D'Arcy read out the letter in great indignation:

"Dear Arthur,—I am very much surprised to hear that you have entered for the Greek Medal. As you were not taking Greek as a study, I fail to see how you can even enter the examination, saying nothing of passing it. Pray do not be absurd.—Your affectionate
FATHER."

Arthur Augustus stared at the letter, and then looked round at the grinning juniors.

"Fancy a chap's own patah failin' to back him up in this way!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I am vevy much surprised at the patah! I shall wite him a wathah stiff lettah for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or, wathah, on second thoughts, I won't wite to him. I'll leave him to be cwushed by heavin' that I've won the Gweek Medal!" said Arthur Augustus. "That will be the best reply to his lettah!"

And the juniors agreed that it would.

CHAPTER 7.

For the Honour of the Form!

DURING the two or three following days, Levison was looked at askance by most of the School House juniors.

Many of the fellows who had determined to have nothing to say to him on his return were surprised to find that he had been taken up by Study No. 6, and were influenced by that circumstance.

Study No. 6 led the opinion of the Fourth Form, so far as the School House was concerned. And if Blake & Co. considered that Levison was good enough to speak to, there was no reason why the other fellows should not follow

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this example. The Terrible Three of the Shell, too, were quite civil to Levison, if not exactly chummy. Herries remarked that Levison was deep enough for anything, and that it was simply some more of his usual cunning.

But almost everybody else was disposed to give the cad of the Fourth a chance, and certainly Levison was very circumspect in his behaviour just now.

The fact that D'Arcy had taken him up told very much in his favour. Arthur Augustus was, as he sometimes remarked, very select, not to say swagger, in his acquaintances. But he was certainly getting quite chummy with Levison, and Levison was coaching him in Greek every evening.

A fellow much less keen and acute than Levison could have played upon the simple nature of the swell of St. Jim's, and Levison found it quite easy.

If Levison was not in earnest, it was a puzzle to know why he should take so much trouble. He had not borrowed any money of D'Arcy, much to the surprise of Herries, and certainly he worked hard with him over the Greek. D'Arcy was not an apt pupil. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak, and he yawned portentously over the thirty forms of the definite article and dozed upon the dual number.

But Levison did not slack. He worked hard himself, and made D'Arcy work hard. And although D'Arcy was pretty certain not to be able to speak or write the tongue of Sophocles in a week, he was certainly breaking the ground, and that was something.

Indeed, Levison's coaching opened Arthur Augustus' eyes to the magnitude of the task he had undertaken, and he began to be a little doubtful whether he would carry off the medal in the exam.

Kerr of the New House had an old exam paper which he lent D'Arcy to look at, so that he could have some idea of the difficulty of the exam. The present year's examination, of course, would be different, but on the same scale of difficulty, so D'Arcy was able to form some idea of the task before him.

He simply gasped as he looked at the exam paper, most of which he could not even read.

He brought it into Levison's study with him on Saturday evening when he came in for his usual hour.

"Look at that, deah boy!" he said, laying the paper on the table.

Levison looked at it. Mellish quitted the study, as he always did when Arthur Augustus came in with his Greek grammar and lexicon.

"What's that?" asked Levison.

"Last year's exam paper, deah boy. I got it fivom Kerr. He won the exam last year, you know," said D'Arcy. "He's a giddy medallist. Now, I've got a lot more bwains than Kerr, so I ought to be able to win quite easily. But—"

"You started studying rather late in the day!" Levison remarked, with a grin.

"Yaas, that's it. Kerr suggests that I should work out this papah, and if I make a good thing of it, it will show me what chance I've got for the pwsent exam."

"That's a good idea."

"But I can't even wead it, deah boy!"

Levison chuckled.

"It would give me a twist," he said, looking over the paper. "I should have to mug up a lot if I were going in for this."

"Bai Jove! Don't you think I've got a chance?"

"Well, old man, you do expect a lot, don't you?" said Levison.

Arthur Augustus nodded thoughtfully.

"Pewwaps I do," he said. "But a D'Arcy ought to be able to do things, you know. And I simply must win the exam now!"

"You want the medal so badly?"

"It's not only that. But I told the chaps I'm goin' to have it, you know, for the honah of the Form. And then there's the patah. He doesn't think I've got a ghostly. I'm jolly well goin' to pwove that I can do it!"

"Good egg!" said Levison heartily. "Well, I'll do my best to help you."

"Thank you, deah boy! I'm sure it's vevy good of you!" said D'Arcy gratefully. "You are a wippin' chap, Levison!"

"Not at all," said Levison. "You've been vevy good to me."

"Look here, old chap," said D'Arcy awkwardly, and colouring a little. "One good turn deserves another, you know. Your patah has cut off your allowance."

"Yes."

"I've got lots of tin!"

"I know you have," said Levison.

"Well, if—you should be stony at any time, you've only got to say. I should be delighted to help you tide it ovah till your govannah comes wound."

Levison shook his head.

"You're vevy good," he said, "but I couldn't accept even a loan from you. You see, if I let you lend me money, the fellows would say that I was chumming up with you now for the sake of what I could get."

"They wouldn't know."

"Oh, secrets are never kept! Besides, I shouldn't care to borrow money of you in secret. I've had enough keeping secrets in my time, and it's done me harm. Everything I do in future is going to be open and above-board."

"Bai Jove, Levison! I wish Hewwies could hear you speak like that!" said Arthur Augustus, in great admiration.

Levison laughed.

"Herries doesn't trust me," he said. "But I don't bear him any malice. He's got reason. I don't deny that I used to—well, that I didn't always play the game. And I admit that I am pretty hard up now, D'Arcy, but nothing would induce me to accept a loan from you. If you mention it again I shall be offended."

"I won't mention it again, deah boy," said D'Arcy, "and I must say that I wegard you as a wippin' chap. I knew all along that you were perfectly disinterested, of course, and I think even Hewwies would be convinced now."

"I dare say I shall convince him in time," said Levison. "Now, about your chance for the exam. I've been thinking it over. You are set on getting the medal?"

"Yaas, wathah—"

"If you withdrew from the exam—"

"Bai Jove! I couldn't. I should be laughed to death, you know."

"If you fail—"

"Well, I don't want to fail. But I shall have to go in, in any case. But I'm goin' to make feahful efforts to pass."

"The exam's on Wednesday afternoon," Levison remarked thoughtfully. "Lathom's the master in charge."

"Yaas."

"And he's short-sighted."

D'Arcy stared at Levison.

"Yaas," he said. "I know he is. What on earth has that got to do with it? He will have his glasses on to wead the papahs. And the Head goes ovah them, too."

"Yes, I know. But—"
 Levison paused.
 "What are you thinkin' of, Levison, deah boy?"
 "I'm thinking of ways and means to make you pass," said Levison. "I'm simply going to make you do it. I've made up my mind about that."
 "Thank you vevy much, deah boy!"
 "If you follow my lead, and do exactly as I tell you, it's bound to work out all right," said Levison. "Now to work!"

D'Arcy brightened up.
 "You feel sure about it?" he asked.
 "Yes, if you follow my lead."
 "I'll do that, wathah!"
 "Good! Now wire in—"
 And the two juniors set to work and followed the immortal Ten Thousand upon that historic journey which covered so many parasangs.

Arthur Augustus was considerably fatigued when the coaching was over, but he thanked Levison warmly and retired from the study feeling elated. Levison's assurance that he would pass the exam bucked him up very much.

CHAPTER 8.

Levison is Mysterious!

MELLISH of the Fourth came up to his study to do his preparation and found the door locked. He knocked on it in surprise.

"Who's there?" called out Levison from within.

"I am. Open the door! What have you got it locked for?"

"Mellish there?"

"Yes fathead!"

"Nobody else?"

"No."

"All serene!"

The door was opened, and Mellish went in, in a state of great astonishment. The door was closed again immediately, and Mellish looked round at Levison.

He stared at him blankly.

"Why, what—what—"

A strange alteration had taken place in Levison's appearance.

On the table lay a bag, opened, containing the articles Levison used for make-up when he was acting in the Junior Dramatic Society.

And the cad of the Fourth had evidently been making up.

Instead of his usual somewhat slovenly attire, he was dressed with exquisite neatness, in well-cut clothes that were easily recognisable as belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He was just D'Arcy's size, though not quite so slim, and the clothes fitted him very well. The fancy waistcoat, gleaming with colours, was one of D'Arcy's latest acquisitions. But it was not only in the clothes, and the extra height of the collar, that Levison resembled the swell of the Fourth.

He had been making up his face, too, and his short, dark hair was completely concealed under a wig, adjusted with wonderful exactitude, and exactly resembling the fair hair of the swell of St. Jim's.

Only Levison's somewhat swarthy face remained to give him away, and he was making that up when Mellish came in.

That he was making himself up to resemble D'Arcy was evident to Mellish, but why he should do it was a mystery.

Mellish could only stare at him in wonder.

"What's the little game?" he demanded at last.

Levison grinned. He was working at

his face before a glass, and his complexion was becoming fairer under his skillful hands.

"Can't you see?"

"Blessed if I can!"

"When I'm finished, whom would you take me for?"

"D'Arcy, I suppose. You made up as D'Arcy once before, I remember. But what are you doing it for now?"

"Practice."

"But what's the idea?"

"Never mind that," said Levison. "I just want to see if I can do it, that's all—enough to pass myself off as D'Arcy, say, before Lathom."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Mellish. "Lathom's as blind as a bat. Look here, I can see that you've got something on."

"Yes; D'Arcy's clothes—"

"What are you going to do?"

"Put this to the test. When I'm finished I want you to bring a fellow into the study and call me D'Arcy, and see whether the chap bowls me out. That will be a good test."

"Yes, but—"

"And don't ask too many questions, ray son," said Levison. "It may be better for you not to know anything about it."

"Oh, I don't want to get mixed up in it, if it's one of your old games," said Mellish hastily. "You've got me into trouble often enough."

Levison grinned, and went on with his work. Levison was very clever, and in the art of imitation he had few equals. He could imitate another fellow's voice, and he had often used that gift to play ill-natured tricks. He could imitate another fellow's handwriting, and that dangerous gift had been the cause once of his being very nearly expelled from St. Jim's. And as an amateur actor he had no equal at St. Jim's, excepting Kerr of the New House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was so extremely distinctive, both in person and in attire, that he really lent himself to the impersonator. Mellish watched Levison's progress with wonder and admiration.

"It's ripping!" he said at last.

Levison jammed a monocle in his eye.

Mellish gasped.

"My hat! You might be his twin!"

"Get somebody in to see me, and we'll soon know."

Levison put away his make-up box and seated himself in the armchair, with his face turned away from the light. Mellish quitted the study, and a few minutes later came back with Reilly of the Fourth.

"Hallo, D'Arcy!" he exclaimed.

The disguised junior turned his head. "I'm waitin' here for Levison," he said.

"Where is he?"

"I weally don't know, deah boy."

"Faith, and how are ye gettin' on with yere Greek, Gussy darling?" asked Reilly, who evidently had no suspicion.

"Wippin'. Weilly, deah boy!"

"Going to pass the exam?" grinned the Irish junior.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Faith, an' I hope ye will!" said Reilly. "Where are those toffees?"

"Levison's got them," said Mellish.

"He's not here."

Reilly sniffed and left the study. Mellish closed the door after him.

Levison allowed the eyeglass to fall from his eye and chuckled.

"How's that?" he asked.

"First chop! Reilly had no idea that you weren't D'Arcy."

(Continued on the next page.)



MAKE THE JESTER SMILE AND WIN HALF-A-CROWN!

Send your Joke to The GEM Jester, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

THE FIRE-FIGHTER!

Circus Manager (frantically): "The big tent is on fire! What shall we do?"
 Clown: "Call the fire-eater!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Fletcher, 36, King Street South, Rochdale, Lancs.

* * *

NO JAM!

The London policeman watched Sandy suspiciously as he walked up and down the busy street with a slice of bread in his hand.

"What are you doing with that bread?" asked the policeman at last.

"Hoots, mon," said Sandy, "I'm lookin' for the traffic jam!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Cameron, 105, Drake Road, Rayners Lane, Harrow, Middlesex.

* * *

THE NEW GAOL!

The local council of a small Irish town, municipally poor and sorely in need of a new gaol, met to discuss the situation. After a lengthy meeting, relieved by several fights, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"We hereby approve the building of a new gaol. It shall be built from the material obtained from the demolition of the old gaol, and the old gaol shall be used until the new one is built."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. MacArthur, 1,167, Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow, S.1.

* * *

UNDERSTOOD!

General: "And if you think of the Army as one large family and regard the officers as fathers, you'll do well. Understand?"

Young Recruit: "Yes, pop!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Plant, 21, Brogden Grove, Brooklands.

* * *

VERY TIRING!

Mike: "I dreamt last night that I was in work."

Jake: "I thought you looked tired this morning!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss M. Gordon, Police Station, Pochaber, Moray.

* * *

HE NEEDED ONE!

Sam: "Why did you leave Mrs. Bluff's apartments so suddenly after living there for six months?"

Ham: "I found they had no bath-tub!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. King, 57, Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

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"Not the slightest," agreed Levison.
 "I think it will work."
 "What will work?"
 "The wheeze."
 "But what is the wheeze?"
 "A secret!" said Levison coolly.
 And he locked the door and divested himself of his disguise.

CHAPTER 9. The Scheme.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into Levison's study on Tuesday evening with a somewhat sombre look on his aristocratic face.

Levison was seated in the armchair, and did not have his books out ready as usual.

"Weady, old man?" he asked.

"Quite!"

"I am beginnin' to think that I've taken on a big thing, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of discouragement. "The other fellows keep on chippin' me about it. I've told Tom Mewvy that I'm standin' out of the House match to-morrow because of the exam. I suppose you still think I'd better go in?"

Arthur Augustus looked at Levison very doubtfully as he put the question. The nearer the hour of the examination came, the more stupendous seemed to be the task of the swell of St. Jim's. The old saying that "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!" had been borne in upon the mind of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I want to have a talk to you about that," said Levison gravely. "Never mind the books for a minute. You've told pretty nearly everybody that you're in for the exam?"

"Yaas. The whole cull knows it."

"And your people?"

"Yaas. My patah doesn't take it sewiously. I fancy. But since you've backed me up, I've witten to him again and told him t'at I'm pwactically certain of the medal, and that a Gweecian here thinks the same. He's wplied that if I win the medal he will be vewy agreeably surprised, and he'll send me a banknote for twenty pounds."

Levison's eyes glistened.

"That's good!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It would make things pretty rotten for you if you drew out now," Levison remarked, watching the face of the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus looked dismayed.

"Bai Jove! Wathah! It wouldn't have been so bad if I'd dwawn out last week; but to put it off till just before the exam would look wotten! You see, the fellows will say I've been bwaggin', and I shall be laughed to death!"

"And your people—"

"Oh, it would be awful!" said D'Arcy, in great distress. "I couldn't face them aftah it! I simply can't withdwaw now, Levison, deah boy. I'd wathah go in and get nothing. But I suppose I'm bound to get a few marks, to keep up appeawance, anyway. You were sayin' to Blake that I'm pwactically certain of the medal?"

Levison suppressed a grin.

"I've been sticking to you, D'Arcy," he said. "You can't say that I haven't been helping you and backing you up. But—but the time was so short. I've had a talk with Lefevre of the Fifth, and I've looked at some of his papers. He's been swotting hard, and he's in great form. I didn't know that before."

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"Yaas; but—"

"I told you you should get the medal, and I'd see you through, D'Arcy," said the cad of the Fourth. "I had an idea in the back of my mind, though, for seeing you through all the same, even if you weren't in form to tackle the exam."

Arthur Augustus stared.

"I weally don't see, Levison—" he began.

Levison paused. For the proposition he was going to make he knew that he needed all his cunning, and all the simplicity of D'Arcy's unsuspecting nature. He had so encouraged the swell of the School House in his project, keeping him in it till the very last moment that it was almost impossible to recede.

Still, Levison was not feeling quite sure of his ground, and he paused before he went on.

Arthur Augustus was silent, looking at his false friend in uneasiness.

"I said I'd see you through," said Levison.

"Yaas."

"You've relied on me?"

"Yaas, wathah! When I began to get doubtful myself, you see, I natuwallly weliwed on a chap who knew Gweek, and knew all the chances of the exam. In fact, I've already awwanged with the chaps to have a big celebration when I get the medal."

"You can't back out now?"

"Imposs!" said D'Arcy, in alarm.

"Then there's only one thing to be done."

"What's that, deah boy?"

"You've got to get the medal, and I've got to help you."

D'Arcy stared.

"I don't see—" he muttered.

"Look here," said Levison, "getting a medal is like everything else. If you don't feel inclined to take the trouble yourself, it's all right if a friend does it for you."

"Eh?"

"Suppose you run a horse in a race," said Levison. "You don't ride, yourself. You put up a jockey to ride for you, and he wins for you. But it's your race, and you collar the cup, or the plate, or whatever the stake is."

"Yaas, that's all wight."

"Well, in this case, I'm your jockey."

"What?"

"You don't want the trouble of riding yourself, so you put up a jockey in the race. You don't want the fag of the exam yourself, so you put me in to do it for you. See?"

D'Arcy looked at him in bewilderment.

"No, I don't see!" he gasped. "It's not allowed by the wules for any chap to have assistance duwin' the exam. Mr. Lathom will be in the woom all the time, to see that it's cawwied out all wight."

"I know that. I'm not thinking of sitting on your left ear and prompting you!" said Levison impatiently.

"Then how—"

"I'm going in instead of you."

"Imposs. It's too late for you to entah your name. Besides, if you win the medal, that won't be my winnin' it, will it?"

"Yes; in this case it will."

"You're talkin' in widdles, deah boy."

"I'm not going in as myself," said Levison, sinking his voice to a whisper.

"Eh?"

"But as you!"

"As—as me?"

"Yes."

Arthur Augustus pushed back his chair a little, staring hard at Levison. His first thought was that Levison's recent illness had left his brain unhinged, and that he was wandering.

"Levison, old son, you're not well!" he said.

Levison laughed.

"You don't see how it's to be done?" he asked.

"Certainly not."

"It's quite simple. You will stay out of the examination-room and lie low. I shall enter in your name and walk through the exam for you."

"But—but the othah fellows will know you're not me!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in utter bewilderment.

"No, they won't!"

"What's to pwevent them?"

"Don't you remember the time I made up as you, D'Arcy? I took Tom Merry and Blake in. They didn't know the difference."

"Ya-as!"

"Well, doesn't that make it quite simple? I shall make-up as you, and go into the exam-room. Old Lathom won't know the difference—and he's short-sighted, too. The other fellows will be wrapped up in thinking of their blessed Greek papers. I shall get through early, and come out. You will lie low in this study all the time. It's a half-holiday to-morrow. The fellows are playing a House match; there won't be a chap in the House excepting the fellows in the exam. Nothing can go wrong. I shall win the exam hands down and when the result is declared, the winner will be Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Nobody will be a penny the worse or a jot the wiser."

For a full minute the swell of St. Jim's gazed speechlessly at Levison.

Then he found his voice.

"You awful wascal!" he said.

CHAPTER 10.

Levison Explains.

LEVISON winced. He had been prepared for difficulties in carrying out his scheme, but the contempt in D'Arcy's face cut him, all the same. He was considerably hardened to scorn; but contempt, as the proverb declares, will pierce even the shell of the tortoise, and the scorn in Arthur Augustus' look penetrated Levison's thick skin.

The colour came into his face. But he kept himself well in hand. If he had given way to angry feelings then, his deep-laid scheme would have been at an end, and all his trouble would have been taken for nothing. And his scheme of future profit would have been balked. Levison kept quite cool.

"I'm sorry you should look at it in that light, D'Arcy," he said. "I've tried to help you out of sheer friendship. If you don't want any help, I think you might say so civilly."

"Weally, Levison—"

"But I suppose you've come round to Herries' way of thinking, and you fancy that I'm doing this to benefit myself in some way."

"Oh! No, no! I don't see how you would pwofit by it. You would get only the hard work of the exam, and nothin' else."

"Well, that ought to show you that I'm disinterested in the matter, at all events," said Levison dryly.

D'Arcy flushed. In the first moment of surprise, he had certainly spoken rather sharply; and as he remembered Levison's services of the past week, he repented.

"I—I'm sowwy I called you a wascal,

Levison!" he stammered. "I—I weally didn't mean that. I only meant that the scheme was a wascally one. It is, you know!"

"I don't know it is," said Levison. "I've thought it out to help you, and save you from becoming the laughing-stock of the school."

Arthur Augustus winced in his turn. "Bai Jove!" he said.

"You can't win, as the matter stands," said Levison. "I hoped to be able to coach you up to it, and get you a chance; but there isn't time. You can see that for yourself."

"Yaas. But you told me——"

"I don't claim to be infallible," said Levison. "Say I was mistaken. I always had this idea at the back of my mind, that if you couldn't do it, I could go in for you and save you the trouble. If my friendship only makes you consider me a rascal, though, the less we say about it, the better."

D'Arcy looked somewhat distressed. "I'm sowwy," he said. "I'm weally sowwy, I apologise most sincerely."

"Well, that's all right," said Levison, more cordially. "I know some of the fellows have considered me unscrupulous. But I don't see anything wrong in this. If there's anything wrong in it, I think you might allow it's a mistake on my part, and not set it down to my being a rascal——"

"I withdraw that word, Levison, deah boy. Pway excuse me, I was so vewy much surprised, you know——"

Levison nodded.

"It's all right. As you won't let me help you, I suppose you're going to withdraw your name from the list?"

"Bai Jove! That would be wotten! The whole blessed school would be cacklin' ovah it," said Arthur Augustus miserably—"and my patah will cackle, too!"

"It's a rotten position, certainly. I don't seem to have been much use to you, after all," said Levison dejectedly. "I thought I could make it all right. It would have been better for you if I hadn't come back to St. Jim's. I've only made matters worse for you. After what's been said, you can't possibly withdraw."

"Pway don't wepwoach yourself on my account, deah boy. You have done a gweat deal for me, and I'm weally yewy gwateful."

"But you can't withdraw from the exam now!"

"No; it would be too widiculous the vewy day before the exam."

"But if you enter, and don't take a single mark——"

"Bai Jove! I shall be laughed out of the school!"

"No doubt about that!"

"It's an awfully wotten posish, isn't it?" said Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

"What would you advise me to do, Levison, deah boy?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders. "I've given my advice," he said.

"There's only one thing to do, but you won't do it!"

"But—but it would be wong!" faltered D'Arcy.

"It's the only way to save your face."

"Yaas; but it would be wong!"

"Now, look here, D'Arcy. I suppose you can give me credit for bein' comonly honest, can't you?" demanded Levison.

"Yaas, certainly!"

"Very well. Even if you think it would be wrong, you must admit that it's a matter of opinion whether it's wrong or not."

"Yaas," said D'Arcy slowly.

"I think it would be right," said Levison. "In fact, I think you ought to do it. The laugh will be up against

your study, as well as up against you, if you are made to look ridiculous over the exam."

"Widiculous, bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy, touched in his tenderest spot.

"And you ought to think of me, too," said Levison.

"You, deah boy?"

"Yes, me! Your friends have been saying things about me—that I've been leading you on, intending to let you down at the last minute, and make you look a fool. If you sneak out of the exam now——"

"Weally, Levison——"

"That's the right word," said Levison. "If you sneak out of the exam now, you let me down. Every fellow who's against me will say at once that that was what I've been planning all along—to make a fool of you and turn the laugh against Study No. 6. And yet I've been trying ever since I came back to play the game, and make the House think well of me. Do you think that's fair to me?"

"Well, no, it isn't, deah boy!"

"Very well, then. Why can't you do as I suggest? It isn't as if there were a money prize to be won. That would be dishonest, if you like. But it's only a medal—there's no pecuniary value in it."

"Yaas, that's twue."

"If you had time to swot over the exam you could pull it off easily enough?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You entered too late, that's all. Well, you can put me up to pull it off for you, just as a racehorse owner puts up a jockey to ride for him. It's the same thing."

Levison's sophistry would hardly have imposed upon Blake or Tom Merry, but he had an easier victim in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. It did not even occur



"The winner of the Greek Medal is D'Arcy, of the Fourth," said Dr. Holmes, "and I call upon that junior to step forward!" Immediately there was a buzz of astounded exclamations among the juniors and seniors. They could barely believe their ears. Arthur Augustus, whose entrance into the exam had been ridiculed, had come out on top.

to the swell of St. Jim's to suspect that Levison had ulterior motives. So far as he could see, Levison, right or wrong, was working in his interests, and could have no motive but the most disinterested friendship. So far as appeared, Levison was arranging to give himself hard work and considerable risk, in order that D'Arcy might save his face before the school.

If he had other motives, they were not apparent, and it was no wonder that Arthur Augustus placed faith in him.

"But—but it's not quite like that," said D'Arcy feebly. "A fellow's supposed to pass an exam off his own bat, you know."

"Yes, but this is a peculiar case. If you had a little more time you could do it hands down."

"Do you weally think so?"

"I'm certain of it."

"Of course, that makes a difference," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"Of course it does! And if you sneak out, you'll be grinned to death by the whole school, and your friends will say that I purposely led you into the position. I think you might consider me a little."

"My deah chap, of course I will. I shouldn't like you to suffah fwom havin' been too good a fwend to me."

"That's exactly what will happen, unless you agree to my scheme. I've been trying to live down what's happened when I was at St. Jim's before, and now you're going to muck it up and make my position quite hopeless."

"Bai Jove, I wouldn't do that for anything!"

"I dare say I deserve it," said Levison. "I suppose I've got no right to expect that you will consider me in any way."

"Don't say that, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, in great distress. "I'm thinkin' of you more than anybody else. Fellows in my study are sayin' now that this is one of your old twicks, I admit. It would be wotten if—"

"I shall be sent to Coventry."

"I shall stand by you, deah boy."

"Well, even if you do, it won't be very pleasant for me, being cut by the whole school," said Levison. "Besides, I shouldn't allow you to do it and sacrifice yourself. No! If the fellows get down on me again I shall leave the school."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"It will mean the finish for me here."

"It's awfully wotten," said D'Arcy, rubbing his forehead in an effort of thought. "The way you put it, it doesn't seem vewy wong, but, somehow, I feel that I oughtn't to do it, you know."

"If it's wrong, it's my fault, not yours. I'm going to do it," said Levison. "You will simply keep quiet."

"Yaas, but—"

"I think you ought to make up your mind to it, for my sake, D'Arcy. I've got myself into this position for your sake."

"Yaas, but—but I'd bettah think it ovah," said D'Arcy. "I—I'll think it ovah and let you know, deah boy."

"All serene. Not a word about the scheme outside the study, you know. Whether we do it or not, it's to be kept dark."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I rely on you for that."

"Honah bwight, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus left the study with his brain in a whirl.

Left alone when the door had closed behind the swell of St. Jim's, Levison chuckled softly. It was a chuckle full of cynical derision. He felt that success was in his hands, and once Arthur

Augustus had consented to take part in the cheat, Arthur Augustus would be under his thumb. And that prospect made the cad of the Fourth chuckle with great satisfaction.

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy's Double!

TOM MERRY slapped the swell of St. Jim's on the back. It was the day after Levison's talk with D'Arcy in his study, and morning lessons were over.

The afternoon was a half-holiday to all St. Jim's, excepting the five competitors for the Greek Medal and the master in charge of the examination.

Tom Merry came upon D'Arcy in the passage after dinner, but the swell of St. Jim's was so deeply preoccupied in thought that he did not notice the Shell fellow approach. He started with an exclamation as Tom Merry bestowed a hearty slap upon his shoulder.

"Bai Jove! Ow!"

"Penny for your thoughts, dear boy!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

Arthur Augustus coloured. He was not likely to tell Tom Merry what his thoughts were at that moment.

"Weally—" he began.

"Going to chuck the exam and play in the House match, after all?" asked Tom Merry.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Then you're really going in for it?"

"Yaas."

"More duffer you!" said Tom Merry. "Better come and play cricket!"

"I'll come and have a look at the cwicket when the exam's ovah."

And he went up to Levison's study.

The Terrible Three walked on to the cricket field, Tom Merry looking puzzled. But the House match with the New House team soon drove the remembrance of D'Arcy's half-confidence from his mind.

Arthur Augustus entered Levison's study and found that valuable friend there.

"Time for the exam in half an hour," said Levison. "It's to be held in the Fourth Form Room; begins at half-past two. Two hours allowed. We've got no time to waste if we're going in."

Arthur Augustus looked undecided.

"I've thought ovah it a lot," he said.

"I hope you've decided."

"No, I haven't."

"I'm sorry. I can't do more than I've done," said Levison. "If you choose to make yourself look a silly ass and set the whole gang against me, I suppose I can't stop you. I think I deserve something better at your hands, that's all!"

Arthur Augustus winced.

"I wish you wouldn't put it like that, Levison. If it weren't for thinkin' of you in the mattah, I should chuck the whole thing now."

"I think it's up to you to think of me."

"Yaas; that's what wowwies me," said Arthur Augustus with a sigh. "I feel that I can't wefuse to stand by you. But I don't like the ideah."

"If there's anything wrong in it, it's on my shoulders, not yours," said Levison. "If I'm willing to do so much for you, you might let me do it."

D'Arcy looked him full in the face.

"Will you give me your word of honah, Levison, that you don't think there is anythin' wong in doin' this?"

"Certainly!" said Levison, without moving a muscle.

"Honah bwight?"

"Honour bright!"

Arthur Augustus looked relieved.

"Well, I give in, then," he said. "Go ahead!"

"Good!" said Levison. "Lend me a hand."

And he set to work after locking the door of the study. He had everything that he needed ready to hand, and he worked with facility. Arthur Augustus watched him in silence.

He helped Levison as much as he could, but the cad of the Fourth did not need much help.

In a suit of D'Arcy's clothes, with D'Arcy's well-known waistcoat and high collar, with fair hair skilfully placed over his dark head, with his complexion made fairer, his dark eyebrows lightened, and other changes, Levison soon made himself into D'Arcy's double.

Doubtful as he was in his mind, the swell of St. Jim's could not help regarding the startling transformation with wonder and admiration.

"Bai Jove!" he said. "It's wemarkable!"

Levison jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and grinned.

"I think I shall pass," he remarked.

"But if you are bowled out?"

"I'll pass it off as a lark of my own, without mentioning your name. You stay here, and keep the study door locked."

"Yaas."

"I'm off!"

Levison, with a firm step, quitted the study, and waited till D'Arcy locked the door behind him. Then he descended the stairs.

It was a warm afternoon, and the House was naturally deserted on the half-holiday. All the fellows were in the quad, or out on the playing fields. Levison did not meet a soul till he reached the door of the Fourth Form class-room, and when he entered it he found it empty. He was early. He took a seat in the shadiest corner of the room, and waited.

A few minutes later the other competitors came in. They took their places.

Mr. Lathom entered with papers in his hand, and handed them to Langton of the Sixth, who distributed them to the boys.

Levison's heart was beating fast as the prefect handed him his paper.

But there was not a shadow of suspicion in Langton's face. Such an unheard-of imposture naturally never entered his head, and Levison's impersonation was perfect—a work of art that would probably have passed muster even in the open sunlight of the quad.

And the competitors were thinking of the exam, not of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mr. Lathom sat at his desk, and the five fellows worked at their papers in silence. And even Levison soon forgot the fact that he was impersonating D'Arcy, in the difficulty of grappling with one of the hardest papers he had ever tackled.

CHAPTER 12.

Too Late!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY paced up and down Levison's study for the next hour and a half in an unenviable frame of mind.

D'Arcy had thought over the matter incessantly from the time Levison had first made his insidious proposition, until he felt his head turning round and round with trying to think it out.

The door was locked, and everyone out of doors; but the slightest sound in the House made his heart beat almost to suffocation.

If someone should find him there,

when he was supposed to be in the Form-room at the examination!

He shuddered at the thought. No one came to the study. From the window D'Arcy could see the cricketers, and the big crowd watching the House match. He wondered what Tom Merry & Co. would have thought if they had known what was going on in the School House.

Two or three times he started towards the door, feeling that he could stand it no longer, and that the deception should not be allowed to go on.

But the thought of what would happen to Levison restrained him.

Levison was in the examination-room under his name.

To show himself now would be to betray Levison, who was taking the risk for his sake—or so D'Arcy, in his simplicity, still believed.

But the waiting in the study was intolerable.

The hour and a half seemed like centuries to the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's.

Footsteps sounded in the passage at last, and there was a knock at the door. Arthur Augustus almost choked.

"Let me in!" It was Levison's voice, and D'Arcy breathed more freely.

He unlocked the door, and Levison came in, so strangely like D'Arcy in appearance, that the swell of St. Jim's started, prepared as he was to see his double.

Levison locked the door again. Arthur Augustus gazed at him in silence. His throat was dry and husky, and his face was pale. There was no sacrifice the swell of St. Jim's would not have made at that moment to get clear of this wretched entanglement. But Levison was in great spirits.

"I think it's all right," he said. "The exam isn't ovah yet, deah boy, is it?"

"I didn't need the full time," explained Levison. "Langton is finished, too, but the others are still slogging away."

"You've finished your papah?" "Yes." "And—and you think—" Levison nodded.

"I don't know, of course," he said. "But I think it will be all right. This kind of thing is easy enough to me."

"You are an awfully clevah chap," said D'Arcy, in admiration.

Levison grinned. He had been told that before, and it was true.

Levison began to divest himself of his disguise.

"Better get these things off," he remarked. "We've got to keep all this jolly dark, or there will be a fearful row!"

Arthur Augustus hesitated. "Levison, old man," he said, "I—I can't have it!"

"What do you mean?" asked Levison. "I can't let it go on! It's awfully good of you to stand by me like this; but—but I've thought it over, and it isn't honest, old fellow."

"Leave that to me!" "I can't leave it to you. It's all vevy well about there bein' no money pwize; that's true enough. But the medal won't weally belong to me. I shall be goin' about undah false pwences, you know."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Levison easily. "It isn't all wight! I should feel an awful cad."

"Perhaps the medal won't be given out for your paper, after all," said Levison. "Perhaps the paper I've done will be the lowest in the list."

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! I can't forget my ducking, says Skimpole. Wash it out! Quickly, now: How many sides has an ice-cream cone? Two—inside and outside. Its teeth never bite. What is it? A comb. "A train travelling at sixty miles per hour would take a hundred years to reach the nearest star," said Mr. Selby. "What a long holiday they'd have!" sighed Gibson. "Nothor: 'You ought to have been in the office by nine o'clock!" snapped the employer. "Why, sir, what happened, then?" asked the office-boy. How long should one stay on a visit to a friend? asks Digby. Oh, just be easy-going. Good-men are scarce, says Mr. Railton. And bad men make themselves scarce. Mr. Rateliff says he would move heaven and earth to improve his golf handicap. So far, he has only moved the earth. "Tee" hee! "Why did you eat my ice-cream on the sands?" demanded Gibson of Hobbs. "It was too windy on the cliffs," said Hobbs. A film producer is worth £10,000,000. He thanks his "stars"! A store of firearms was found in the Wayland Town Hall. A sort of Parish Magazine! Blake asks how he can cultivate an Irish brogue. You must go to Ireland to get it off Pat. What's that? Yes, the correct dress for a tug-of-war is a pullover. Oh, it was Skimpole who thought a horseradish

"Bai Jove! I hope so!" "But if it wins—" "If it wins, I can't accept the medal, Levison." "You must!" "Weally—" "You can't give me away. I should be expelled from St. Jim's if the Head knew what I'd done," said Levison angrily. "You know that." "I—I forgot that." "It's too late for thinking about it now," said the cad of the Fourth. "We've got to go through with it. But there's nothing to worry about; it's all right." "I feel like a feahful wottah," said D'Arcy miserably. "I shall be takin' cweedit for what I haven't done. It's like buyin' honahs, you know." "Well, bought honours are as good as any other honours," said Levison cynically, "and much more common, I can assure you." "But I don't want them." "Besides, they're not bought in this case. You've given me nothing. I've taken all the risk, and all the trouble for nothing." "It's jolly good of you, Levison! But—" "I suppose you don't want to ruin me, after what I've done for you?" said Levison testily. "Wathah not!" "Well, I shall be done for." "I—I suppose so." "Go down to the cricket now, and show yourself," said Levison, "and mind, not a word." "All wight." Arthur Augustus quitted the study. His face was gloomier than anyone

was a quadruped. What a "tail"! Do you know the Welsher's Song? I Diddle Diddle. Young Jameson writes to say he has seen a lot of aristocrats at a circus. "Acrobatic" English! Jameson also saw some Indians with turbines on their heads. "What's this?" demanded the diner. "Chicken soup, sir." "The water you boiled the egg in, what?" snapped the diner. Well, as the conjurer said, noting his audience was growing restive: Are you all enjoying myself? Remember, mud slung is ground lost. Then there was the dustman who talked so much rubbish. Yes, and bear in mind that the rich baker's son may not be much to look at, but he has the dough. "Happiness is the pursuit of something and not catching it," observes Dr. Holmes. Wonder if the Head has ever had his hat blown off? Manners says snapshots enable you to see back how you looked on the sea front at the seaside. "See" it? "How did you come to fall in?" asked the rescuer, surveying the small boy. "I didn't come to fall in," answered the lad; "I came to fish." A new liner can do over 30 knots. "Tying up" all rivals! Wally D'Arcy has just written to say he is on a cruise and has accidentally hit the captain with a pea-shooter. What steps shall he take? Fast ones! I hear a new explosive has been discovered. Bang up-to-date. Then there was the burglar who boasted he had "lifter" a thousand pounds. But the evidence was too "strong" for him! "What does 'Not in' mean?" asks Gibson. Often it means "Clean Bowled." A "wicket" joke. The Peacock Men of China are tattooed all over. But they never squawk. "This, sir," said the canvasser, "is a device that stops doors from slamming." "Well, it won't stop this one from slamming!" snapped the business man. Have a "grand slam" this vac, chaps!

had ever seen it before as he left the Junior House and walked down to the school cricket ground.

Tom Merry's wicket had just gone down to the doughty bowling of Fatty Wynn of the New House, and he came off the pitch and stopped to speak to Arthur Augustus.

"Hallo! Exam finished?" "Yaas." "Got through all right?" "I don't know, deah boy."

"Result's made known on Saturday," said Blake. "I wonder whether we shall have the glory of seeing Gussy presented with the giddy medal before all St. Jim's."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "We'll have a high old celebration if he gets it," said Digby. "But I hardly think we shall be called upon to celebrate."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Well, I hope against hope that he's got it," said Tom Merry. "He's going to have twenty quid from his pater if he does—and we'll make him spend it!"

"Hear, hear!" D'Arcy started. "Bai Jove! I'd forgotten that!" he exclaimed. "I shan't accept it!" "What!"

The juniors started as the swell of St. Jim's made this exclamation. "Not accept twenty quid?" yelled Blake.

"Wathah not!" "Well, you ass! Why not?" "Because—because— Well, I shan't, that's all, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away to avoid further questioning. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,453.

"Well, there's not much risk!" grinned Tom Merry. "I really don't think Lord Eastwood will be called upon to hand over that twenty quid."

"Ha, ha, ha! Not much!"

And, strange to say, Arthur Augustus hoped sincerely that his paper would not be the one to capture the medal, and failure in the exam would open a way to him out of the difficulties Levison had brought upon him.

The swell of St. Jim's waited eagerly and anxiously for Saturday, eager to hear that he had not won, but that he had lost.

CHAPTER 13.

The Winner!

"WALK up!" said Jack Blake cheerily. "Come and see Gussy capture the giddy medal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was Saturday, and the order had gone forth for the school to assemble in Hall, to witness the award of the yearly medal for the Greek paper.

The general opinion of St. Jim's was that Langton of the Sixth would capture it. As for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his chance was never mentioned without a smile.

It was generally understood that D'Arcy himself had given up hope, for during the last few days he had been very moody and downcast.

His chums had vainly tried to cheer him up.

In order to rouse him out of his deep despondency, Blake had even tried to pretend to think that he had a chance of the medal; but, to his astonishment, that seemed to worry D'Arcy more than the previous chipping on the subject.

The swell of St. Jim's could not endure to hear the subject mentioned, and it had been dropped in Study No. 6.

But the rest of St. Jim's still took D'Arcy's entry into the exam as a joke.

The juniors chuckled over it as they assembled in Big Hall for the award.

The name of the successful competitor was not yet known, as it was to be announced by the Head himself from the platform.

Arthur Augustus walked in with the rest of the Fourth in a troubled frame of mind. The other competitors were looking hopeful and anxious; but D'Arcy seemed to be plunged into gloom.

Tom Merry tapped him on the shoulder.

"Cheer up, Gussy!" he said encouragingly. "You'll soon know the worst, at all events!"

Arthur Augustus nodded without speaking.

"Blessed if I can understand Gussy!" said Digby. "He was so jolly cocksure about it at first, and now—"

"Get ready to cheer D'Arcy!" said Blake.

"Silence!" called out Kildare.

The Head had entered by the upper door. The buzz of voices in the Hall sank into silence. Upon a table where Dr. Holmes rested his hand, the medal was lying—a handsome medal, with a Greek inscription upon it. The St. Jim's fellows were about to learn to which of the competitors it was to be awarded.

The five fellows stood before the platform, waiting. Arthur Augustus tried to look calm and composed; but his hands were trembling. He was in dread of hearing his name announced as that of the successful candidate. Since

Levison's deception, he had thought the matter over more fully, and realised more and more clearly what he had done. He still believed that Levison had acted out of sheer friendship for him; and the fear of repaying Levison's devotion by getting him into trouble had forced him to keep silent.

He was under a spell, as it were; he was in honour bound to let a dishonourable trick succeed, but it weighed fearfully upon his mind, for when he had had time to look at the matter in all its bearings, he could no longer disguise from himself the fact that it was a dishonourable thing.

The crowd in the Hall waited for the Head to speak.

"I have to announce the result of the examination for the Greek Medal!" said Dr. Holmes.

"I am glad to say that all the papers are very creditable, and that, in spite of modern changes, the love of classical learning is by no means dying at our old school!"

There was a cheer.

And fellows looked at one another in surprise. If all the papers were creditable, Arthur Augustus' entrance into the exam was not so absurd, after all.

Blake rubbed his nose in perplexity.

"Blessed if I quite understand this!" he said.

"I told you D'Arcy had a chance," said Levison.

"But he hasn't—he can't have."

"You'll soon see!"

"First on the list," resumed the Head, "comes a paper that is the work of a junior—the second time in succession that the Greek Medal has been won by a member of the Fourth Form."

There was a buzz.

"The winner of the medal is D'Arcy of the Fourth!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gussy!"

"Crumbs!"

Even the respect of the fellows for the presence of the Head could not restrain the exclamations of amazement.

Dr. Holmes held up his hand.

"Second on the list is Langton's paper," he said.

"The rest are not so good, and are very nearly equal with one another—all very creditable. D'Arcy, will you come forward?"

Then there was a roar.

The Saints were astounded—so astounded that they could scarcely believe their ears. But the juniors, at least, were delighted after the first surprise. D'Arcy of the Fourth had beaten competitors in the Fifth and Sixth—old Gussy had won!

"Bravo!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Bravo, bravo!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The Big Hall rang with the cheering.

Jack Blake slapped Levison on the back.

"I take back all I said!" he exclaimed in the fullness of his heart. "You're a brick, Levison. It's splendid! You

knew what Gussy could do better than his old chums!"

"Looks like it," said Digby. "I beg your pardon, Levison!"

"Now then, Herries!" urged Blake.

Herries snorted.

"I don't beg Levison's pardon!" he said. "There's a trick somewhere!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus stumbled up the steps to the platform. His face was very red, and his eyes downcast; but that was attributed to modesty, and it only made the fellows cheer him more loudly.

The Head, with a few complimentary



Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton stared in astonishment as Arthur Augustus, who took it in a nerveless hand. He certainly did not look much like a conqueror.

There was a rush of his friends towards the platform. In their delight at the victory of their Form-fellow, entirely unexpected as it was, the Fourth forgot everything else.

"Shoulder high!" roared Blake. "Yes, rather!" yelled Tom Merry. "Hurrah!"

The Head smiled. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was flung up on the shoulders of Jack Blake and Tom Merry, and the crowd swept out of the Hall with D'Arcy proudly aloft.

Out into the sunshine of the quadrangle they went, with the famous medal gleaming in the sun.

The cheers were deafening.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus was too dazed to speak. Every cheer, every hearty handshake, every word of congratulation, went to his heart like a knife. In the midst of the universal delight and congratulation, D'Arcy felt himself, for the first time in his life, an impostor—and he knew that there was not a fellow there who would not despise him, if he could have known that the hero of the hour was glorifying in false honours!

lessly meeting the eyes of the fellows he knew.

But that was all changed now.

The honour he had won was not his—the praise heaped upon him was a hollow mockery, and would have been turned at once into scorn if the truth had been known.

Langton of the Sixth had the second place in the list, and to Langton of the Sixth the Greek Medal rightly belonged.

Arthur Augustus realised that most clearly now.

He had taken Langton's medal; he had appropriated Langton's honours; he had usurped a place that was not his own.

He was a cheat!

Arthur Augustus was not a rapid thinker, and before the exam Levison had given him little time to think over the precious scheme. Levison's specious reasoning, too, had imposed upon him; he had not realised what he was doing.

And afterwards, it was too late.

Without betraying Levison he could not tell the facts; without betraying to punishment the fellow who had taken so much risk for him, he had to make up his mind to let the deception go on.

And his last hope that Levison's paper would fail had now been torn from him. The cad of the Fourth, with the cleverness which he had never turned to any good use, had won the exam and beaten senior rivals.

And Levison, who had succeeded, was standing aside to allow D'Arcy to reap all the glory.

The unfortunate swell of St. Jim's was in a hopeless position. He could not betray Levison—the commonest principles of honour forbade that. Without betraying Levison he could not decline to accept the medal.

Having once allowed himself to enter the downward path of deception, he was bound to go forward.

But he suffered intensely in the position thrust upon him. The cheers of the juniors rang mockingly in his ears. Kildare's warm handshake, Mr. Railton's clap on the shoulder, made him writhe with shame.

What a fool he had been!

If he had listened to Herries, he would never have trusted Levison. The fellow was utterly crooked; even when he felt a disinterested friendship, and tried to help a friend, he could only do it in his own crooked way, by trickery and wretched intrigue.

But it was impossible to betray him. The swell of St. Jim's groaned aloud as he sat in the study with his head resting in his hands, and realised how firmly he was bound, how utterly impossible it was to escape from the entanglement he was in.

The door opened.

Arthur Augustus looked up and saw Levison. The cad of the Fourth was

grinning with satisfaction. Evidently the result of the examination gave him no qualms, or any feeling at all but the gratification of success.

He closed the door carefully behind him and came towards D'Arcy. "Well, it worked!" he said.

Arthur Augustus nodded dully.

"Yaas," he said. "It's worked."

"You've got the medal?"

"Here it is!"

"Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Greek Medallist," said Levison, with a grin. "That's how your name will go down in the school reports, D'Arcy. Sounds all right, doesn't it?"

"No, it doesn't!"

"Eh?"

"I wish your paper had not won," said D'Arcy drearily. "I suppose it's no good speaking to you about it. You wouldn't understand. You've done this for my sake, and I can't say anything."

Levison looked very unpleasant.

"It's a bit late to say anything, isn't it?" he said. "If the fellows knew that you had got the medal by fraud, I think you'd be sent to Coventry pretty sharp."

"By fraud?"

"Yes; that's the word."

D'Arcy looked at him strangely.

"But you were sayin' that it was all wight, from your point of view," he said slowly. "Does that mean that you've come wound to my way of thinkin'?"

Levison grinned.

"Never mind that. Better send a wire to your pater announcing the glorious victory."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I don't want to do that," he said.

"But the twenty quid?"

"I shan't accept it."

"What?" yelled Levison.

"I can't take it, of course," said D'Arcy. "It would be swindling. It's bad enough to swindle poor old Langton out of his medal, without swindling my own patah!"

"Do you mean to say that you're not going to take the twenty pounds?"

"Certainly I am not."

"Are you mad?" said Levison roughly.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet. "I am not mad!" he replied coldly. "I am as honest as I can be undah the cires. I don't blame you for leadin' me into this; I blame myself. But nothin' will make me act worse than I've done already. Besides, I don't need the money; and, fwankly, Levison, I don't see that it's any business of yours."

Levison smiled unpleasantly.

"There are several things you don't see that I'm going to point out to you," he said. "In the first place, the Head would expel you if he knew you had cheated at the exam."

Arthur Augustus started as if he had been stung.

"Cheated!" he said breathlessly.

"What else do you call it?" asked Levison coolly.

"Levison!"

"You didn't win the exam—I won it! If the Head knew, he'd sack you from the school at once, and you know he would!"

"And serve me wight, too," said D'Arcy. "But I suppose you'd have to go along with me!"

"No fear! I should get off all right, from acting under your influence."

"What?"

"Especially if the Head knew that



Augustus D'Arcy handed over the medal. "What does this mean?" exclaimed the Head and the Housemaster simultaneously.

CHAPTER 14. Too Clever!

IT was over! The scene of wild enthusiasm had ended, and Arthur Augustus had been carried back to his study—and left there.

He pleaded a headache, and friends left him alone, and hurried away to prepare the feast of celebration in Tom Merry's study.

In Study No. 6 Arthur Augustus was glad to be left alone, to think.

His thoughts were agony to him.

Never before in his life had D'Arcy been unable to look his friends in the face, never had he shrunk from fear-

you threatened me with getting me sent to Coventry, unless I played this trick for you."

D'Arcy gazed at the cad of the Fourth in silence, deprived for the moment of the power of speech. The utter baseness and duplicity of the young rascal slowly dawned upon his mind. He realised, at last, that he had been a tool in Levison's hands from the first, for Levison's own purposes.

"You'd better buck up and send that wire to your father," went on Levison coolly. "I want the money."

"What?"

"I think I told you my pater has cut off my allowance. Well, I'm stony, and I haven't taken all this trouble for nothing. You're going to get that twenty quid from your father, and you're to hand it over to me."

"Bai Jove!"

"And whenever I want any money in future you're going to shell out," said Levison, with biting coolness. "And you're going to stand by me, and be my best chum, and generally make things easy for me in the House."

"Levison!"

"Now you know," said Levison. "And if you don't want to be shown up as a swindler and a cheat, and sacked from the school, you'd better toe the line."

For some moments Arthur Augustus stood stricken, gazing in silence at the unmitigated young scoundrel before him. It was hard for the swell of St. Jim's to realise that Levison was in earnest; but he undoubtedly was, and D'Arcy had to realise it.

But the effect of that discovery upon D'Arcy was wholly different from what the cad of the Fourth had anticipated.

For Arthur Augustus, overwhelmed with shame and mental agony at finding himself degraded in his own estimation, unable to meet the eyes of his friends, and humiliated as he had never been in his life before, had only been restrained from publicly announcing the truth for fear of betraying the friend whose devotion

had brought him into this web of deceit.

And Levison's revelation of his real character, of his real intentions, removed the restraint.

D'Arcy was no longer under the obligation to keep silence. Levison certainly never doubted for a moment that he would keep silent for his own sake. But he did not know Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Let's have it out plain, Levison," said D'Arcy, breaking silence at last. "You didn't do this out of friendship for me at all?"

Levison grinned.

"You were deliberately entwapping me into this, to make money out of me afterwards, when I came in your power?"

"Anyone but you would have smelt a rat, my son," said Levison. "We can't be too trusting in this world without paying for it."

"And when you assured me that the twick was perfectly honest, you knew all the time that it was a wotten swindle?"

"So did you."

"I did not. I—"

"Oh, rats! Of course, it was a swindle from beginning to end, and a fellow can't enjoy bought honours without paying for them."

"You awful vascal!"

"Hard words break no bones," said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I stood plenty of insolence from this study, and now it's my turn. I've got the upper hand, and you're going to toe the line."

"And you calculated, I suppose, that I should keep the medal, and keep silence about the way I got it, for fear of bein' sacked?"

"Of course you will!"

"And I am uttably undah your thumb?"

"Utterly!"

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"I don't see anything to grin at," said Levison savagely. "It's my turn to grin!"

"Wathah not!" said D'Arcy. "You came here to pin me down, you feahful

cad, and, instead of that, all you've done is to give me my freedom."

"What do you mean?" said Levison unceasingly.

"I mean that I am goin' stwaight to the Head to tell him the whole story, and hand this medal back that doesn't belong to me," said Arthur Augustus, turning towards the door.

"You dare not!"

"I'd wathah be sacked ffrom the school than wemain here a liah and a swindlah," said D'Arcy. "I don't expect you to undahstand it, you wotten cad, but that's how I feel. When the Head gave me the medal I should have told him the whole facts, but for one reason—I couldn't give you away, because I believed you had done this dirty twick out of friendship for me. Now I know the twuth there's no reason why I should hold my tongue."

"Stop!" yelled Levison, as D'Arcy opened the door. "You—you fool, stop!" He sprang after the swell of St. Jim's in his terror and dismay, and caught him by the arm. In his rage and fear at discovering how utterly he had overreached himself, Levison hardly knew what he was doing.

D'Arcy's eyes blazed.

"Don't touch me!" he shouted. "You're not fit to touch a decent chap. Take your hands off!"

"I tell you—"

"Take that, then!"

Crash!

D'Arcy's fist crashed full into Levison's face, and the cad of the Fourth rolled over on the floor of the study. Without even a glance at him, Arthur Augustus hurried away.

CHAPTER 15.

Honour First!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was seated in his study chatting with Mr Railton. They were discussing the award of the Greek Medal.

The fact that Arthur Augustus had won it surprised the masters almost as much as the boys.

"I never dreamed that D'Arcy had such abilities," the Head remarked. "I am very pleased to make the discovery. But what is most singular, he is not one of the juniors who takes Greek as an extra."

"That is the extraordinary part of the matter to me, sir," said Mr. Railton. "Instead of taking Greek here as an extra, he must have obtained tuition elsewhere—doubtless with the intention of suddenly surprising his friends with the result. He is not the kind of boy whom one would suspect of a joke of that kind. His entry for the medal was regarded as a joke even by his closest friends."

"It is certainly singular—Come in!"

A sharp knock at the door had interrupted the Head.

The door was opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy almost rushed into the study—breathless, crimson, panting for breath.

The Head and Mr. Railton stared at the excited junior in amazement.

"D'Arcy!"

"What does this mean?"

Arthur Augustus laid the medal upon the Head's desk.

"I have brought this back to you, sir!"

"Why? What do you mean, D'Arcy?" exclaimed the Head, in astonishment.

"It does not belong to me, sir!"

(Continued at foot of next page.)



SYLGUN the CENTAUR

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Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

HALLO, chums! I was reading recently of an incident which occurred in India and it reminded me very much of the theme of the St. Jim's yarn in this number. An examination of the students of a certain college was in progress. The room was uncomfortably warm, and though the windows were wide open, the students perspired at their tasks. After a bit one of the competitors made the request for the electric fan to be started. This was done and immediately there was a sensation. The strong current of air from the fan whisked away the moustache of one of the students! It was false, of course, and he was revealed as an impostor. He was masquerading in the guise of another student, and he was instantly recognised as the tutor of the student he was made up to represent. It was an attempt to cheat which, but for the fan being started, would have met with success. The other students were greatly incensed, and the impostor scuttled from the examination room, preferring ignominious flight rather than a ragging from the other competitors.

"THE SIXTH FORMER'S SECRET!"

This is the powerful and enthralling story of the chums of St. Jim's which is on the programme for next Wednesday. The yarn introduces Arthur Langton, the reformed Sixth Former, who, through the folly of his earlier days, is finding the past hard to live down. Langton still has a shady secret which is greatly troubling him, and unfortunately, Tom Merry overhears by accident what it is. That is the start of an unhappy experience for both the junior and the senior, and

it results in Tom Merry being scorned by all his school-fellows. This is a story that will compel your interest, and, like me, once you have started on it, you won't put it down until you have read to its satisfying conclusion.

"BILL RIDES HERD!"

This is the final yarn of our gripping "Packsaddle Rebellion" series, and it ends in a blaze of thrills for the rebels of the cow town school. It has been a long and hard fight for Dick & Co. against the roughnecks, but with Job Wash in their hands, the rebels are in a position at last to call the tune. Whatever you do, chums, don't miss this last smashing story of Frank Richards'.

In the next rousing chapters of "Mystery Mill!" the boys of St. Frank's start investigating the mystery of the River Stowe, and their investigations lead them to a derelict old mill, where startling developments occur. What happens to Nipper & Co. makes thrilling reading—so look out for the next exciting instalment of this grand serial.

X-RAY EYES!

The man who can see through anything—that's Kuda Bux! His power to read, write, drive a car, or play billiards while completely blindfolded has amazed people who have witnessed his demonstrations. At one of them his eyes were covered first with dough, and on top of that cottonwool, and

PEN PALS COUPON

3-8-35

"But it belongs to you, D'Arcy. You have won it—"

"I did not win it, sir!"

"What?"

"It was a swindle, sir."

Dr. Holmes started to his feet. D'Arcy's wild and excited look raised a suspicion in his mind that the junior was wandering in his senses—that the strain of the examination and the excitement of victory had been too much for him.

"My dear D'Arcy—" said the Head gently.

"It is true, sir. It was a swindle. I couldn't have won the medal if I had tried—but I never tried. I never enticed the examination-room."

"But your paper—"

"I did not do it."

"But your name is signed upon it, D'Arcy."

"Not by me, sir."

"It is in your handwriting," said Mr. Railton.

"I did not write it, sir. Another chap went in instead of me and did the exam for me, and put my name down."

"What!" exclaimed both the Head and the Housemaster simultaneously.

"It was a swindle, sir!" said D'Arcy excitedly. "I was dwagged into it. I didn't realise it was a swindle, and the wottah said he was doin' it out of friendship, and—and when I wanted to dwaw out he said it was too late, and I couldn't dwaw out without compwomin' him, and so I had to let him win."

"But Mr. Lathom was present, not to mention the other boys who entered the examination. How was it that such a thing was not observed?" asked the Head.

then bandages and table-napkins, and he was able to copy words which had been written on a blackboard and read from closed books, and never once did he make a mistake! No more proof could be needed that Kuda Bux has eyes which have the power of penetrating substances and seeing what's beyond. It is a gift that could make him a fortune, but he has no need for money—he is independent.

THE ADVENTURES OF A HEIFER!

When a cow ran amuck in Sittingbourne, Kent, a little while ago, it caused a lot of excitement before it was eventually captured. The animal escaped when it was being taken to market, and charged twice round the gasworks. Then it made off towards the High Street, scattering people in its path. Next it reached a school and charged in at the gates. In one of the class-rooms girls were having a lesson in cookery, and you can imagine their consternation and panic when the heifer suddenly thundered in. The girls jumped in all directions for safety, while the cow, continuing its wild career, rushed round the classroom, knocking desks and chairs flying. Finally it butted its nose into a lump of dough, and then made tracks for the open again, where, after covering about ten miles, it was at last captured.

A RECORD FLIGHT!

If someone had foretold twenty years ago that in time to come it would be possible to travel from London to Paris in an hour, he would probably have been laughed at. But such has been the rapid growth of speed in the air that the journey has twice been done in under the hour. When Captain Buckingham set up a record of 59 minutes for the 220 miles from Croydon to Le Bourget it was clear that a plane would have to touch 250 m.p.h. to beat that time. Now it has recently been done. Flying one of the famous de Havilland Comets, which A. W. Scott and Campbell Black used for their record-breaking flight of under three days to Australia, Captain Hubert Broad recently clipped another seven minutes off the record time. He completed the journey in 52 minutes, averaging 253 m.p.h. for the whole flight!

TAILPIECE.

Visitor: "Did you mix your colours on this?"

Artist: "What do you mean, sir? That is my greatest picture!"

THE EDITOR.

"The fellow was got up to look like me, sir."

"Is it possible?"

"Yaas, sir. He's an awfully clevah beast, a howbly clevah beast, and it's a wotten thing that he evah came back to St. Jim's. If I'd known bettah I should have listened to Hewwies, and shouldn't have twusted the awful wottah. But he-seemed all wight, and we all agreed to give him a chance."

Mr. Railton and the Head exchanged glances.

"You are alluding to Levison?" asked the Head.

D'Arcy flushed.

"I'd watah not mention names, sir, if you don't mind. I've come here to own up, and take whatever punishment you think fit, sir. But—but I can't give

(Continued on page 28.)

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NOT SO QUIET ON THE COW TOWN SCHOOL FRONT!—

The REBELS' Prisoner!



Job Wash's fat circumference was jammed between the window-sill and the plank, and he could not shift. "Let up, you pesky boob!" he shrieked, as Slick got busy with the quirt. "I sure can't crawl in, you bonehead—I'm stuck!"

Calling in the Parents!

"POPPER!" ejaculated Slick Poindexter.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Dick Carr.

"I guess that lets you out, Slick!" said Mick Kavanagh ruefully.

Slick knitted his brows.

The Packsaddle bunch, besieged in the schoolhouse, stared from the barricaded windows. The bright sunshine of Texas streamed down in the playground of the cow town school. A bearded man in a stetson hat dropped from his bronco at the school gate and strode into the playground, looking about him with a frowning brow. And Slick looked dismayed as he recognised his father—Rancher Poindexter.

The Packsaddle rebellion was going strong. It had lasted for quite a long time now, and it was the talk of Santanta County. From Packsaddle and other cow towns along the Rio Frio, punchers came up the trail to stare in at the school where the school-boys were standing a siege. They seemed to be amused, and most of them wished the rebels luck. For the bunch were standing for Bill Sampson, the six-gun schoolmaster who had been fired by the school committee—and Bill was very popular in the valley of the Frio.

Job Wash, chairman of the school committee, came out of Small Brown's cabin as Mr. Poindexter appeared. Slick was dismayed to see his father on the scene; but Job was pleased. Job had been beaten all along the line in his tussle with the rebels. Job had vowed that he would have the bunch under the hand of Elias Scadder, the new headmaster. But that you did not

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look like being fulfilled. And now the bunch could see that Job, fairly at the end of his resources, was trying a new game—calling in the aid of the boys' parents.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Poindexter!" said Job.

"Where's Slick?" rapped the rancher. Job pointed a fat forefinger towards the barricaded schoolhouse. The rancher stared at it. Then he looked round him again, and frowned at Hajr-Trigger Pete and his gang of rough-necks.

"What's them galoots doing here?" he demanded. "You got a crowd like that to help you handle the bunch? Search me! I reckon your best guess

boy of yourn, and tell him to come out of that goldarned shebang!"

"I guess I'll talk to him!" growled the rancher.

He strode towards the schoolhouse. Job Wash and Elias Scadder followed him. Both the chairman of the school committee and the new headmaster looked bucked. Slick and the rest of the bunch defied them both—but a fellow could not refuse to obey his father. Slick's game was up, Job reckoned; and the same method would prove equally successful with the rest! "Hyer, you young geeks!" shouted Job. "Hyer's Mr. Poindexter come to take his boy out of that shebang! You hear me?"

"Slick!" rapped the rancher. "Aw, this sure does get my goat!" groaned Slick. He looked out between two planks nailed across a window. "Yep! I'll say I'm here, popper!"

"Now, you listen to me!" rapped Mr. Poindexter. "I've sure rode thirty miles to talk to you, Slick! I hear that Mr. Wash has led the Packsaddle school committee by the nose, and got them to fire Bill!"

"You said it, popper." "You got a noo headmaster, and you ain't toing the line?"

"Nope!" "And hyer's Job himself, with a gang of the toughest bullwhackers in the county, come to put you in order, and you're sticking in that shebang and taking no notice?"

"Yep!" "You're standing for Bill?"

"Sure!" "And we're going on standing for Bill, Mr. Poindexter," said Dick Carr. "And if you take Slick away, the rest

By FRANK RICHARDS.

is to send for Bill Sampson to ride herd here, Mr. Wash, like he used."

Mr. Wash gave an angry snort. "Bill Sampson nothing! Bill's been fired! Bill's long suit is punching cows, and they've given him a job punching cows down at Kicking Mule! Forget Bill Sampson! Here's the noo schoolmaster."

Mr. Poindexter glared at the long, thin Scadder. He did not seem much impressed by Scadder.

"I'm saying that Bill's the man to ride herd!" he snapped.

"And I'm saying forget Bill!" snorted Job. "I ain't sent for you to give me advice about Bill, feller! Nope! I sent for you to talk to that

—WONDERFUL YARN OF THE GREAT PACKSADDLE REBELLION!

of the bunch will carry on. We want Bill, and we won't have Scadder."

There was a roar from the bunch.

"We want Bill!"

"Nix on Scadder!"

"You hear them, sir?" squeaked Elias. "You hear the young rascals? You hear—"

"Pack it up, Scadder!" said the rancher. "I guess I'm here to talk to my boy Slick." He glared at Dick Carr's face showing at the aperture at the window. "You pack it up, too, you young gink! Who's talking about taking Slick away?"

Slick's face brightened. It dawned on him that this new move of Job's was not going to be the success he banked on.

"Now you listen, Slick, and all you young geeks!" rapped out the rancher. "You're standing for Bill—the whitest man in Santanta County! If you didn't stand for Bill, Slick, I'd sure quirt you a few, and then a few more! Keep it up! You keep it up till that old boob Wash sends for Bill to come back!"

"Doggone you!" roared Job. "That ain't what I sent for you to say to that young scallywag! I guess—"

"Mebbe not!" said the rancher. "But that's what I've moseyed along to say to Slick, and that goes! You keep it up, Slick! If you back down afore they send for Bill, you look out for the quirt when you hit the ranch agin."

Slick chuckled.

"Popper, you're sure spilling a hatful!" he said.

"Look here, you boob Poindexter—" roared Job.

"My dear sir—" squeaked Elias Scadder.

The rancher turned on them. "I've sure spoken my piece to Slick," he said, "and now I guess I'm putting you wise what I think of you, you Job and you Scadder."

He made a sudden grasp at both of them.

Job, short and fat, Scadder, long and thin, wriggled in the powerful grasp of the rancher. But they wriggled in vain. There was no resisting that muscular grip. The sinewy hands dragged them forcibly together, and their heads met with a sudden shock.

"Whoo-hoo!" squealed Scadder.

"Aw, great gophers!" yelled Job.

Bang!

"Ooooh!"

"Woooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Packsaddle bunch. They gazed from the windows in huge delight.

Bang!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a swing of his arms, Rancher Poindexter hurled Mr. Wash and Elias Scadder sprawling on the earth.

"Keep it up, Slick!" he said.

"You bet, popper!"

And the rancher strode away to the gate, leaving Job Wash and Elias Scadder sprawling and spluttering. Hair-Trigger Pete and his gang eyed him, but they did no more than eye him. The rancher remounted his bronco and rode down the trail. Job Wash and Elias Scadder tottered away gasping, and a roar of laughter from the Packsaddle bunch followed them.

The Rebels Hit Back!

"HIT back!" said Dick Carr.

"Meaning—" asked Slick. Dick was watching the enemy as the sun set behind Squaw Mountain. His face was very thoughtful.

"We've beaten them all along the

line," said the tenderfoot of Packsaddle. "But—old Wash is a sticker, you fellows! He's as obstinate as a mule—"

"And then some!" agreed Mick.

"I'll say he's no quitter!" remarked Slick. "But he can't do a thing! Not unless the eats give out!"

"And we still got some eats," said Pie Sanders.

"The grub won't last for ever," said Dick Carr, "and you can bet they won't give us a chance of getting in another lot. They're watching us like cats."

"Sure!" assented Hunky Tutt. "But we can't stop them. What are you getting at, tenderfoot?"

"Hitting back!" said Dick. "Look at them now! There's Hair-Trigger going to the gate on the trail and Tanglefoot watching the other gate and two or three of them patrolling the fences. The rest will turn in at the bunkhouse. Old Wash and Scadder are sticking in Small Brown's cabin since Brown was fired. Old Wash is thinking out plans for getting at us—but I'll bet he isn't thinking that we may get at him!"

"Get at him!" repeated Bud Dunn. "If we step outside this shebang, that gang will sure cinch us by the short hairs."

"What about a night attack?" asked Dick.

Slick Poindexter whistled.

"Forget it!" grunted Poker Parker.

NEVER SAY DIE!

That is the spirit of the rebels of Packsaddle School who, besieged in their stronghold by Job Wash and his roughnecks, prove themselves quite capable of hitting back!

"I guess this baby ain't getting in reach of them bullwhackers!"

"Not so's you'd notice it!" said Slim Dixon.

"Gum!" said Slick. "I'll say it's a stunt! You pack it up, Poker, and you, Slim! I guess you ain't got the sand for it! But—"

"If we get old Wash—" breathed Mick, his eyes gleaming.

"That's the idea!" said Dick Carr.

"We've got enough grub for a couple of days longer—and you can bank on it they won't give us a chance to get any more. And if old Wash fetches along any more poppers they mayn't take the same view as Slick's popper. Job reckons that he's only got to hold on till we drop into his paws. But—if we had Job here—"

Slick chuckled.

"You said it!" he declared. "I guess whatever Job's thinking of he ain't thinking of that! Them guys don't figure that we're aiming to start anything. I'm telling you it will be a surprise for them."

And as the night fell, the Packsaddle bunch discussed the tenderfoot's plan in low, eager voices.

The stars came out over the Rio Frio, but there was no moon and the night was dark. From the bunkhouse came a roar of voices, where the roughnecks were singing a chorus. But that din died away at a late hour when they turned into the bunks formerly occupied by the schoolboys. A light still burned in Small Brown's cabin. But it was

extinguished at last and darkness reigned.

At midnight no sound was to be heard, save the lapping of the Rio Frio on its banks. Usually at that hour the besieged bunch slept with one or two fellows keeping watch. But now not an eye had closed in the schoolhouse.

Quietly nails were withdrawn from one of the planks nailed across the window to give room for fellows to drop out. Dick Carr put out his head, watched, and listened.

The bunkhouse was silent; the roughnecks there were sleeping. Four or five of the gang were keeping watch at the gates and along the fences, ready to stop any attempt to smuggle food in.

Staring out the rebel bunch was Job's plan, and he still hoped that it would prove a winner if other means failed.

The enemy was on their guard against any attempt to get out of the school grounds, but they were not on their guard against an attack from the besieged bunch. Such an idea had never crossed their minds. At close quarters with the gang of roughnecks the bunch had no chance in a scrap. But it was not a scrap that Dick Carr was thinking of. He was thinking of a raid on Small Brown's cabin, getting hold of Job, and capturing him before his gang could come to his aid.

It was taking a long chance, with a big risk of capture. But Dick and Slick and Mick were ready to take the risk, and most of the bunch were keen enough to follow their lead.

"Three will be enough," said Dick Carr. "They would spot a crowd. You fellows keep watch while we're gone."

"You bet!" said Pie.

"If they get us, carry on just the same!" said Slick Poindexter. "I guess we can stand the racket."

Dick squeezed through the window and dropped quietly. Slick and Mick dropped after him. The rest of the bunch packed at the window, breathlessly watching.

Silent, on tiptoe, the three stole away from the schoolhouse. They knew every inch of the Packsaddle playground. They passed the bunkhouse and heard a sound of deep breathing and a snore or two from within. The roughnecks there were fast asleep. Without a sound, the three reached the cabin once occupied by Small Brown.

Dick Carr felt the door. It opened at his touch.

All was dark within, and there came the sound of steady breathing. Dick crept in and Slick and Mick crept in after him. Softly the door was closed.

So far, all had gone well. But it was so dark inside the cabin that the three could not see one another. Dick felt for his matches.

"Ready?" he whispered.

"You bet!" breathed Poindexter.

Dick struck a match.

The idea was to grab Job and hook him away—in silence, if possible. But as the glimmering match illumined the interior of the cabin, the three adventurers stared in dismay. Elias Scadder lay asleep in Small Brown's bunk, but Job Wash was not in the cabin. And as Dick held up the match and they stared round, Elias awoke—and sat up in the bunk with a startled yelp, fixing his eyes on them!

Taken by Surprise!

SURPRISE at the sight of the schoolboys almost made Scadder's eyes pop out of his long thin face.

Why they were there he never guessed for a moment—but he knew that

their intentions must be hostile. And he opened his mouth for a yell that would have rung all over the school.

Had that yell been uttered it would have reached the roughnecks guarding the fences and the others asleep in the bunkhouse—and Job Wash, wherever he was. But it was not uttered. Even as Elias' lantern-jaws opened, Slick Poindexter bounded at him, grabbed him, and clapped a hand hard over his mouth. Instead of a yell, there came only a muffled gurgle.

"Pronto, you guys!" panted Slick. "We'll have the whole caboodle on our necks in two shakes of a 'possum's tail."

"Keep him quiet!" breathed Dick. Mick sprang to Slick's aid, and Dick struck a second match as the first flickered out.

A bony fist crashed on Poindexter's face, and his nose spurted blood. But he did not heed the blow. He held on tenaciously to Scadder, and kept his hand hard on the wriggling man's mouth. Elias struck a second time, and Slick yelped. But he held fast, and then Mick's grasp was also on the schoolmaster.

Mick grabbed the bony wrists and held them in a grip of iron that rendered Elias helpless. Either of the strong and sturdy Texas schoolboys was a match for him—together they were a good deal more than a match. They forced him down in the bunk, Slick's hand choking back his attempt to howl for help.

"The rope, Dick!" breathed Poindexter. "We've got him dumb—never mind the light—weigh in with the rope."

Dick dropped the burnt match and groped to the bunk. In the darkness, the struggling Elias was only a shadow—wriggling, gurgling, striving to break loose and yell.

But Slick and Mick had him fast, and Dick passed the end of a rope round his bony wrists. They were dragged together and the rope knotted. His head was jammed into the blankets and the blankets twisted round it and tied in a bundle with the rope.

From the interior of the bundle came faint muffled howls and gurgles. But the sound was too subdued by the blankets to be heard by Hair-Trigger and his gang. Elias was safe!

Leaving him wriggling and gurgling in the bunk, the three schoolboys stepped back to the open door and listened.

But there was no sound of alarm. Except Scadder, who did not matter now, none of the enemy knew that a sortie had been made from the besieged schoolhouse.

"We got Scadder!" muttered Slick. "But we don't want Scadder! I guess bony Scadder cuts no ice! We want Job!"

"Where the great horned toad—" muttered Mick.

They had fully expected to find Job in his quarters. He was not there, and they did not know where he was. But Dick Carr guessed that he was making a round to see that watch was kept. He remembered the night when he had smuggled in the supply of food—it was Job who had spotted him. Job had been making a round of the fences to keep his men up to the mark. Hair-Trigger's gang of roughs and toughs were only too likely to nod on the watch if they were not kept up to it!

"Listen!" breathed Mick.

A voice came through the silence—from the direction of the gate. Distant as it was, the schoolboys caught Job's tones.

"I'm telling you to keep your eyes

open, you Hair-Trigger! You want them young geeks to run loose and get in the cats like they did afore!"

"Aw, can it, boss!" came Hair-Trigger's deep growl. "I guess I'm jest as wide awake as a doggoned prairie wolf, and then some! Them young geeks won't run loose while I'm around!"

"I sure found Yuma with his gold-darned eyes shut a-sitting agin the fence and snoring a few!" snapped Job. "I'm telling you I ain't paying you guys five dollars a day and grub stakes to squat around and snore! Nope!"

There was a sound of footsteps. Job, evidently, was going on his round, and it was pretty clear that his sentries needed it!

"You hear that?" whispered Dick. "Job doesn't mean to give us another chance of getting out of the school for grub. If we'd gone anywhere near the fence we should have been grabbed."

"You said it!" murmured Mick. "But I'll tell a man it's Job for the grabbing when he hits this hyer cabin agin!"

They waited in deep silence just within the cabin door. Job, it was clear, was taking every precaution to make sure that none of the bunch got outside the school fences again. But it was equally clear that he had no suspicion that any of them had got out of the schoolhouse without thinking of approaching the high fence that enclosed the playground. Job was in happy ignorance of the fact that the Packsaddle rebels had planned to hit back.

The fat storekeeper of Packsaddle was in no hurry to return to the cabin. Several times they heard his voice from different points as he snapped at the men on watch. But they waited patiently. Sooner or later, it was certain, Mr. Wash would come back to his quarters. And they were ready for him when he did.

In the bunk, Scadder wriggled and mumbled. But the schoolboys gave him no heed. They watched and waited for the chairman of the Packsaddle school committee. Job was their game.

Footsteps approached the cabin at last.

"Watch out!" breathed Poindexter. "He's coming!"

It was too dark to see Job as he came, but they could hear him. Satisfied at last that watch was being kept round the fences, Job was coming back to the cabin to return to his night's rest. The footsteps came nearer and nearer.

A black shadow loomed in the doorway. They heard the fat storekeeper grunt and fumble, and guessed that he was feeling for his matchbox.

But they gave him no time to strike a light.

Suddenly, to Job's intense and startled surprise, a grasp was laid on him in the darkness, and he was dragged headlong inside the cabin and squashed down on the floor.

Bump!

Job Wash hit the floor hard.

He gurgled in amazed surprise. Hands grasped him on all sides—a hand was feeling over his fat face with a neckscarf in it, and the neckscarf was drawn over his mouth and knotted hard. Before Job had any clear idea what was happening he was gagged.

"Got him!" breathed Dick.

Job jumped as he heard the voice of the tenderfoot of Packsaddle. He knew then in whose hands he was.

But he could make no sound beyond a faint mumble. He strove to resist as his fat wrists were jerked together and tied behind his podgy back. But he had no chance. He was helpless in three strong pairs of hands.

With his hands tied he was jerked to his feet. He mumbled under the gagging scarf, and his eyes glared with rage in the gloom. Slick and Mick held him by his podgy arms.

"Keep your whiskers on, Job!" chuckled Slick. "We ain't going to hurt hide nor hair of you, so long as you behave like a good little man. But we sure got you."

"I'll tell a man!" chortled Mick.

"Come on!" whispered Dick Carr. "We're taking you to the schoolhouse, Mr. Wash! Got that?"

"We sure want your company, Job!" grinned Slick. "You savvy? Get a move on, you old mule, you!"

Job resisted as they attempted to walk him out of the cabin. He planted his feet firmly and strove to hold back.

"I'm saying get a move on, Job!" snapped Slick Poindexter. "You ornery old mule, you, move, pronto! I'm sure going to pull you by the nose, Job, till you move!"

Gurgle!

Job moved.

Led by the nose, gurgling with fury under the gag, Job Wash walked out of the cabin, and followed his captors across the playground to the schoolhouse!

Captured!

PIE SANDERS peered from the schoolhouse window. Moving shadows in the darkness of the playground loomed faintly, and a low gurgle reached his ears.

"By the great horned toad!" breathed Pie. "I'll say they've got him!"

"Sez you!" muttered Poker Parker doubtfully.

"Look, you piecan!"

Four dim figures stopped under the window. The central figure was that of the fat storekeeper of Packsaddle. Round him were Dick and Slick and Mick. Job's face was half-hidden by the neckscarf that gagged him; but what could be seen of it was crimson with fury.

There was a chuckle from the bunch packed inside the window.

"Lend a hand here!" came Dick Carr's whisper "You ready, Pie?"

"You bet!" grinned Pie.

He reached out and grasped the fat storekeeper. Hunky Tutt and Bud Dunn reached out and grasped him also.

With three fellows pulling him within, and three fellows hoisting him without, Job Wash rose from the earth.

Job could not speak; but if he could have spoken his feelings could not have been expressed in words. Never for an instant had he dreamed of such a move as this on the part of the besieged bunch. His whole thoughts had been concentrated on getting at them! He had never figured that they would think of getting at him!

He gurgled frantically and spasmodically in his wild efforts to utter a yell. One yell would have brought his gang of roughnecks rushing to the rescue. Job was desperate. He was not going to be dragged inside the building if he could help it.

Up he went, Pie Hunky, and Bud dragging; Dick, Slick, and Mick

shoving from below. Job dragged a leg loose and kicked.

Silence was precious; but the silence was broken by a fearful yell from Mick Kavanagh. Mick really could not help it. A kick landing on a fellow's nose might have made anyone yell!

Mick, in the first moment of anguish, felt as if his nose had been kicked through the back of his head. He let go, staggered back, and yelled wildly.

"Quiet!" panted Dick Carr.

"Mick, you piccan!" gasped Slick.

"Yarooo-hoop!" roared Mick.

"Sure me nose is broken intirely, so it is— Yarooooooh!"

"Blow your nose!" gasped Dick.

"Hold him, Slick!"

"Pack it up, Mick, you big stiff!" exclaimed Pie.

"Yurrrig-ggggh!" spluttered Mick.

"Ow! Me nose! Wow!"

Job's legs thrashed wildly. But Dick and Slick secured them. Mick was hors de combat. He ceased to yell, but he clasped his anguished nose and mumbled. There was a distant shout.

"They've heard!" panted Dick.

"Quick with him!"

Job was wriggling like an eel and striving frantically to kick again. Mick's yells had reached many ears. Hair-Trigger was shouting from the direction of the gate—and another voice called from the bunkhouse. There was no time to lose.

Unluckily, more haste made less speed. Pie, grabbing at Job's wriggling head, grabbed the neckscarf and tore it loose. Job unexpectedly found himself un-

gagged.

Instantly he started yelling.

"Help here, you galoots! You Hair-Trigger—Yuma—Tanglefoot—they got me—they sure cinched me—help here—"

"Oh, great gophers!" gasped Slick.

"That spills it! Pronto—"

"This way!" shrieked Job. "You Hair-Trigger—"

"Shove him in!"

Footsteps and shouting voices rang in the dark. The alarm was given on all sides now.

"Say, boss—" came Hair-Trigger's roar.

"This way—" raved Job.

But his head and shoulders were inside now. Pie and his comrades dragged him right in, and he bumped down headlong on the planks of the schoolhouse floor.

"Hurry up!" gasped Dick Carr. "You first, Mick—quick—"

"Ow! Me nose—"

"Quick!" panted Dick Carr, and he shoved Kavanagh at the window. Mick clambered in, helped by the fellows inside.

Running feet were approaching the spot. A herculean figure loomed up in the shadows, and the schoolboys had a glimpse of the red-bearded, startled face of Hair-Trigger.

Dick and Slick were still outside the window. They jumped at the bullwhacker together, and crashed him over. Hair-Trigger Pete sprawled at full length, roaring. Then they dived for the window.

Before the roughneck could get to his feet, Slick had dived headlong in, and Dick Carr after him. Dick rolled on the floor. Slick Poindexter landed on something softer. For the moment he did

not know what it was. Then a fiendish yell apprised him that it was Job Wash.

Hair-Trigger staggered to his feet, peering round him in the gloom. He hardly knew what was happening.

"Say, boss!" he stuttered. "What the great jumping Jehoshaphat—say, where are you? I guess I heered you toot—"

"Say, Hair-Trigger, what's this game?" came a yell from Yuma Dave out of the darkness. He came groping up.

"You can search me!" gasped Hair-Trigger. "I reckon they got the boss—"

"I sure did hear Mr. Wash tooting a few—"

"We sure got him, you guys!" roared Pie Sanders jubilantly. "We got that goob by the short hairs!"

Hair-Trigger came closer to the window, peering. An inkpot whizzed out and landed on his red beard hard. It was followed by an empty beef can. Hair-Trigger promptly retreated.

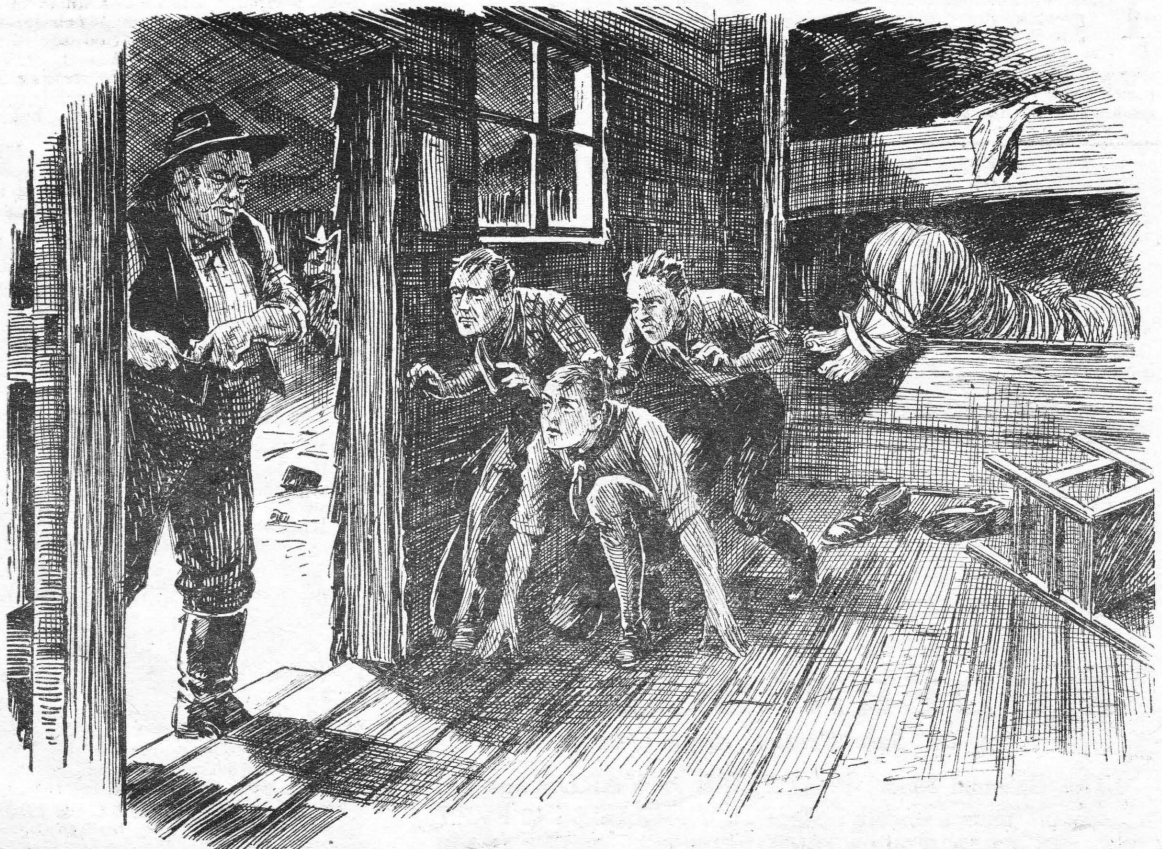
Mr. Wash, sitting up on the school-room floor, was yelling wildly.

"Say, you goobs, they got me. You come on and get me out of this! You hear me? You doggoned piccans, I'm telling you to get me out of this!"

"Not in your lifetime, Job, old-timer!" chuckled Slick. "They won't get you out of it, not a chance!"

"I'll say nope!" chortled Pie.

A kerosene lamp was lighted. There was a sound of hammering as Pie and Hunky nailed up the plank across the window again. The voices of the gang of roughnecks came from the darkness outside. But they were keeping their distance. Hair-Trigger and his gang had been beaten off every time they had tried to rush the schoolhouse, and they



Footsteps sounded nearer and nearer as Dick, Slick, and Mick crouched in the darkness, waiting. A moment later and a black shadow loomed in the doorway. "Watch out!" breathed Slick. "It's Job! Get ready to grab him!"

were not anxious to try it on again. There was no rescue for Mr. Wash.

He sat on the floor blinking in the light. His fat face was purple with fury. The bunch surrounded him with grinning faces. Dick Carr's stunt had been touch and go, but it had been a success, and Job was a prisoner in the hands of the bunch. They chuckled gleefully over their capture.

"You letting me loose?" roared Job. "Not so's you'd notice it!" grinned Slick. "We sure want your company, Job, old hoss, so long as this hyer circus goes on."

"We're keeping you, Mr. Wash!" said Dick Carr, laughing. "And when we go short of grub again, you'll go short, too. Got that?"

"You doggoned young gink!" gasped Job.

"Pack it up, Job!" said Slick. "We got you dead to rights! You want to get loose, you sing out to Scadder to send for Bill!"

Job spluttered with rage.

"You figure, I'll send for Bill, you pesky young scallywags!" he howled. "You got another guess coming! I sure ain't sending for no Bill!"

Job jerked at his tied wrists.

"You let a guy loose!" he roared. "Say, you figure you're going to keep me tied up like I was a hogtied steer?"

"I'll say so!" assented Slick.

And, Job, in a state of volcanic fury, spent the remainder of that eventful night with his hands tied behind his podgy back, and his legs tied to a desk in the school-room. The bunch had captured Job, and they were taking no risks of losing him again.

No Escape!

THE Packsaddle bunch were in great spirits the next morning. Job Wash was not!

Job was rather stiff and rather sore and as mad as a hornet. When the bunch turned out in the morning he was released from his bonds. Job's first

thought, when he was freed, was to hurl himself at the fellows who had captured him, and smite them hip and thigh. But Job thought better of that! He realised that he would have got most of the smiting!

Out in the playground, Elias Scadder blinked at the schoolhouse in the bright morning sunshine. Scadder had been found and released, to learn that Job was a prisoner in the hands of the bunch. He kept his distance—wary of missiles whizzing from the windows.

So did Hair-Trigger Pete and his gang. Even when Mr. Wash had been there, to urge them on, the roughnecks had not been keen on attacking the rebels of Packsaddle. They had tried it more than once and had captured a good many hard knocks. Now they were less keen than ever. Indeed, many of the gang of bullwhackers could be seen grinning, as if they saw something funny in Job's misadventure.

When Job glared from a window he could see that there was little hope of Hair-Trigger & Co. making any attempt to rescue him. And when he yelled to them, he was seized, and jerked away from the window, and rolled along the school-room floor.

Job was no quitter. He was the most obstinate guy in the Valley of the Frio. But hitherto he had reckoned that he had only to wait till the bunch fell into his hands. Now circumstances were sadly changed. If the "eats" ran short for the Packsaddle bunch they ran short for Job Wash also.

But he was not going to quit! He was not going to send for Bill Sampson to come back from the Kicking Mule Ranch and ride herd at Packsaddle School! He was going to get away—somehow! And then he would bring the bunch to heel, and they should be sore and sorry!

He was allowed to share the school-boys' dinner. After that he rolled into the room that Bill Sampson had occupied when he was headmaster of Packsaddle, landed himself in Bill's bunk and snored.

In the school-room on the other side of the porch the schoolboys were passing the time with a game of leap-frog. There was plenty of din as heavy boots clattered on the hard floor. Job Wash ceased to snore, sat up in Bill's bunk, and listened.

Then he crept to the window of Bill's room. Unless some fellow came across and looked in he would not be seen. They figured that he was taking a nap after dinner. He breathed hard! This was his chance!

Planks were nailed across the window of Bill's room, as across all the windows in the building. There were spaces between the planks, but too narrow for the fat storekeeper to hope to squeeze through. One of the planks had to be removed to make space. Job grasped and tugged.

He panted and sweated over the task. But it was too much for him. The plank remained immovable. Long nails had been driven in right up to the head. Job could not shift that plank.

But he was not beaten yet. The big iron poker lay by the stove. Job grasped it, and, using it as a lever, succeeded in loosening the plank.

Then, with a final desperate tug, he got the plank down. It was the lowest plank—there were more above it. But between the next plank and the window-sill was a space for a guy to squeeze through—at least, Job hoped that there was. In terror every moment of being spotted by the bunch, he lost no time. Head and shoulders he shoved through the aperture, and started squeezing out. He gasped, he panted, and he squeezed. He got through—as far as his waist!

Then he had to stop. He was stuck fast!

"Aw, wake the snakes!" gasped Job.

There was nothing for it but to get back, and hope that he had time to shift another plank before the bunch spotted him escaping. He started squirming inwards.

Then he made another interesting discovery. He could not get back!

He wriggled and wriggled, but in vain.

There was a sudden shout. Mick Kavanagh, looking into Bill's room, jumped almost clear of the floor at the sight of a pair of fat legs wriggling at the window.

"Say, you'uns," yelled Mick, "Job's beating it!" He rushed across at Job and grasped his legs. The bunch came swarming in from the school-room. Slick Poindexter swished his quirt.

"Hold on to his legs, Mick!" grinned Slick. "I'll sure quirt him till he crawls in!"

Whack, whack!

"You pesky goob!" shrieked Job. "Let up! I sure can't crawl in, you bone-head! I'm sure stuck in this winder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the bunch.

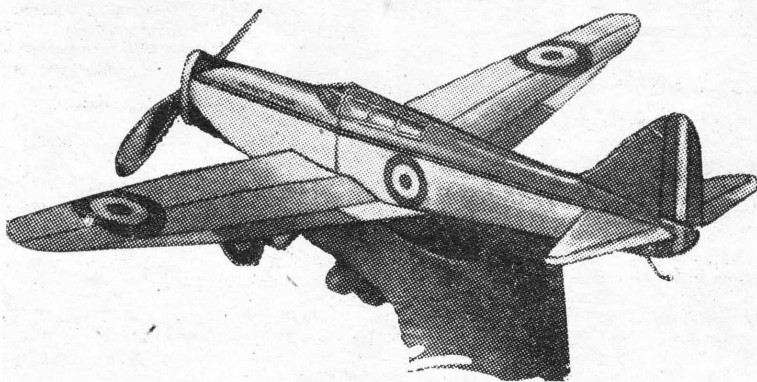
They had to loosen the upper plank to get Job in again. It was slow work, for they were doubled up with laughter. But they got it loose at last, and Job rolled back into the room, sprawling on the floor and gasping.

"I guess we'll keep tabs on Job after this!" chuckled Slick. "We'll sure keep tabs on the ornery old guy! You chew on this, Job, you piefaced piecan—you ain't getting loose till we get Bill back!"

And Job, as he pressed his hands to his aching circumference, and realised that there was no escape for him, began to wonder whether, after all, it might not be a good idea to send for Bill!

(Next week: "BILL RIDES HERD!" Look out for the final thrilling yarn in this great series—telling how the rebels triumphed. Order your GEM early.)

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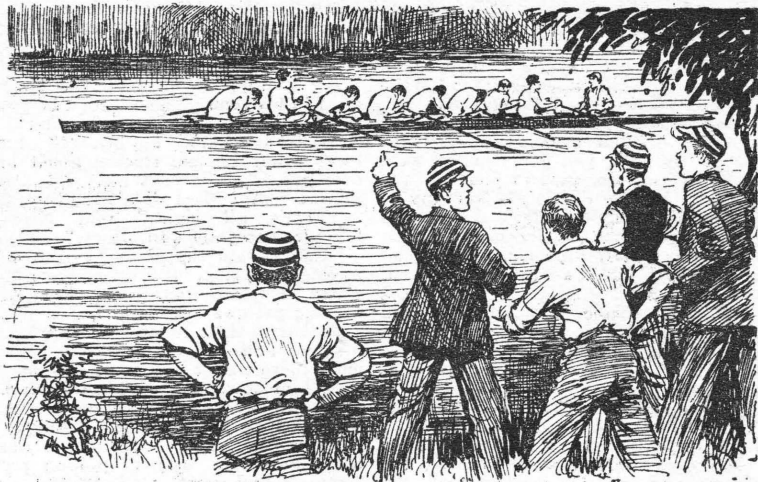
THE CHUMS OF ST. FRANK'S IN A GRAND NEW YARN OF SCHOOL AND DETECTIVE ADVENTURE.

MYSTERY MILL!

An Alarming Theory!

WILLY HANDFORTH, Juicy Frank's, take a boat out early three Third Form fags of St. Lemon, and Chubby Heath, one morning on the River Stowe. When they reach a quiet stretch of the river, Willy Handforth is amazed to see scores of dead and dying fish on the surface! Something is obviously wrong with the water.

Willy & Co. are discussing the startling happening when a senior eight pulls along the river and nearly collides with the fags' boat. In the confusion the latter capsizes, and the fags get a ducking. The boat overturns on Juicy Lemon, and he is nearly drowned. Willy and Chubby get him ashore and apply artificial respiration. After a time Lemon comes round. He rises giddily to his feet, shivering. Willy suggests a trot up and down, but before Juicy can take a step, he sags at the knees!



As the craft containing the Sixth Formers came nearer, the watchers from the bank could see that the seniors were strangely exhausted. "You seniors have been overdoing it!" sang out Nipper.

"Look out!" yelled Chubby.

But it was too late. Juicy Lemon had fallen, and the next moment Willy and Chubby were kneeling by his side in the grass. There was a curious change in Juicy now. He had gone as pale as a sheet, and he was somehow different. His skin seemed to be drawn and stretched, and his eyes were half open. "Juicy, old man!" said Willy earnestly. "Pull yourself together! You'll be all right in a few minutes!"

But there was no response from the unfortunate Juicy. Willy shook him, but it made no difference.

"Oh, what's the matter with him?" asked Chubby Heath hoarsely. "He was all right a minute ago! He came round splendidly, and I thought he was himself again. What's the matter with him, Willy? Is he—is he—dead?"

"Don't be an idiot!" replied Willy curtly.

But his voice was unusually strained. And it was rather significant that he placed a hand over the region of Juicy Lemon's heart.

"Well?" breathed Chubby.

It was unnecessary for him to put that query, for the expression on Willy's face was eloquent. He was tremendously relieved.

"It's all right, you scaremonger!" said Willy. "His heart's beating steadily enough. He's fainted, that's all."

"But why should he faint?" asked Chubby.

"How should I know?"

"People don't faint after drinking a few gallons of water," said Chubby.

"Besides, we got most of it up. I've seen lots of fellows hauled out of the river after being nearly drowned. They're generally seedy for a bit, and then they're themselves again. But just look at Juicy! Look at his face! He—he looks ghastly!"

Willy Handforth frowned.

"Yes; there's something unusual about this," he agreed. "He hasn't merely fainted—he's lost consciousness. He's absolutely dead to the world."

"Dead!" gasped the other.

"I don't mean really dead, you fad-head!" frowned Willy. "He's only temporarily senseless. And I can't understand it. He recovered from the effects of the ducking all right, but something else seemed to hit them then."

"What do you mean—something else?"

"I don't know—it's a mystery," replied Willy. "I suppose we'd better do something. We'd better carry him to the school, or—"

"Hi, you fellows!" yelled Chubby suddenly. "Help! Here! Quick! We're in trouble!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Nipper, falling on his knees beside Juicy Lemon. "Ods tragedies and disasters!" said Archie Glenthorne, adjusting his monocle and gazing blankly at the still figure. "You don't mean to absolutely say that the poor old lad is defunct?"

"No. Of course not," replied Willy. "He's only fainted."

Handforth major gave a snort.

"It's about time that you reckless fags had a lesson!" he said sternly. "Playing about with your silly boat—eh? I heard rumours that you were trying—"

"You shouldn't take any notice of rumours, Ted," interrupted Willy. "The boat's all right, but we overturned in getting out of the way of some seniors."

And Willy gave a few details of the mishap.

"Well, it's very rummy," said Nipper at length, as he frowned down upon Juicy. "You say you got up nearly all the water that he swallowed?"

"Practically all of it," replied Willy. "We applied artificial respiration, and everything. We thought he was all right, and then suddenly he collapsed again."

"Well, I'm blessed if I can understand it," said Nipper. "The kid almost looks as though he'd been drugged."

"Drugged?" repeated Chubby, staring. "My only aunt!" said Willy, a gleam coming into his eyes. "Drugged! You—you mean poisoned?"

"Not exactly; but it's very much the same thing," replied Nipper. "Still, that's rot. Juicy couldn't have received any poisoning from the river—"

"Couldn't he?" broke in Willy tensely.

"Oh, goodness!" said Chubby, with a start.

The two fags were looking so alarmed that the Removites stared at them in wonder.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,433.

By

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

Willy glanced round and found that Chubby Heath was waving his hands frantically. In the distance a group of figures had appeared. They were clad in flannels, and Willy could recognise the form of his major amongst them.

"Yes, I suppose you're right," he said slowly. "It's rather a pity to have Ted messing about, but we shall have to do something. Juicy seems to be in a bad way."

In response to Chubby's calls, the figures approached at the double. They turned out to be Edward Oswald Handforth of the Remove, Nipper, Archie Glenthorne, and Church and McClure. Having finished early cricket practice, the Remove fellows were taking a stroll by the river.

"What's wrong here?" asked Nipper, as he came running up.

"Bit of an accident," replied Willy briefly.

"What's the secret?" asked Handforth.

"What an idiot I was not to think of it before!" said Willy rapidly. "Of course! Poor old Juicy has been poisoned!"

"Good gad!"

"Yes, poisoned!" went on Willy. "It's the only possible explanation! The whole river's poisoned, you chaps! Juicy swallowed an awful lot of water, although he brought most of it up. Perhaps the poison got into his system—"

"What utter rot is this?" interrupted Edward Oswald impatiently. "What the dickens are you talking about, you young chump? How can the river be poisoned? Who ever heard of such piffle? Besides, you and Chubby were in the water, too, weren't you?"

"Yes; but we didn't swallow any of it," replied Willy quickly. "A mouthful or two, perhaps, but nothing to count. Juicy was nearly drowned, and he had a tummyful. That's why he's affected, and we're not."

"Kindly cheese it, laddie!" said Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, dash it! It's a bit thick when you say that the good old river is somewhat poisonous."

"Look out, there!" said Willy curtly. "If you don't believe me, look at those fish!"

All eyes were turned towards the river. And now, for the first time, the Remove fellows understood what Willy was getting at. There was nothing unusual to be seen at first, but when the attention was concentrated upon the river little bubbles could be seen here and there. Fish, large and small, were at the surface, gasping and gurgling. In one or two odd places fish were floating down the stream, dead.

"Phew!" whistled Nipper, with a startled look at the others. "Willy's right, you chaps! There's certainly something wrong with this water. The fish are dying by the hundred!"

"Ods riddles and puzzles!" said Archie.

"Well, I'm blowed!" declared Handforth. "You're right, Willy. 'I've never seen fish like this before! What on earth can it mean?'"

The Mystery of the River!

FOR a few tense moments there was a silence. All the juniors were thunderstruck by the discovery. And, one and all, they were staring down at the unconscious form of Juicy Lemon.

If this mysterious poisoning could kill the fish, then it could have a similar effect upon Juicy Lemon! He had been trapped under that overturned boat, and he had swallowed an enormous amount of water. Owing to the prompt efforts of Willy and Chubby, most of this water had been brought up, but perhaps the poison had remained in his system.

"Look here, we'd better rush him to the school!" said Nipper suddenly. "It's no good standing here and discussing the problem. The poor kid may be dying. We'll get him into the sanny, and Dr. Brett must have a look at him. It may be deadly serious!"

"Just what I was thinking," said Handforth. "Willy, you young ass, why didn't you call us before? It'll be a terrible thing if Juicy dies—"

"We'd no idea he was so bad!" interrupted Willy defensively. "He only fainted a minute or two before you came in sight. And it's all rot to start blaming me—"

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"What-ho! Laddies, kindly gaze upon the patient!" put in Archie Glenthorne. "It seems to me that the old tissues are somewhat restored. In fact, the young blighter is absolutely quivering at the eyelids!"

"Thank goodness!" said Willy fervently.

They all forgot the mysterious pollution of the river. Juicy Lemon was coming round! There was no mistake about it. His eyelids were moving, and he was not looking quite so pale and drawn.

"It's all right, Juicy, old man," said Willy gently, as he took his chum's head in his arms. "You'll soon be yourself again now. Buck up, old son!"

"What's—what's happened?" muttered Juicy Lemon, staring about him dazedly. "Hallo! When did these fellows come? I—I didn't see them."

"That's all right," said Nipper. "You're not quite well, Juicy."

"Rats!" said the fag. "I—I'm only feeling a bit sick. It must be the rotten water I swallowed. Oh, my hat! Lemme get away!"

Rather to their relief, he struggled to his feet and ran off rapidly. Apparently there wasn't very much the matter with him now. He vanished behind a clump of bushes, and ominous sounds disturbed the peace of the morning.

"Now that he's recovered, I don't think he'll take long in pulling right round completely," said Willy, with satisfaction.

"Yes; we'd better leave him alone for a few minutes," said Nipper, eyeing Willy and Chubby very narrowly. "You two kids aren't looking particularly bright, either," he added. "You're both a bit shaky."

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Willy. "We had a wetting, and we're a bit chilly."

Both he and Chubby knew differently. They were feeling shaky, trembly. An ordinary ducking in the river would not produce these effects. In a very slight degree they had the same symptoms as Juicy. But, then, they had swallowed hardly any water, and that was probably the explanation of their comparative immunity.

While the juniors were standing in groups, discussing the surprising affair, a boat came into sight round the bend of the stream. It contained the Sixth Formers. They were coming down-river after their practice.

As the slender craft came nearer, the watchers from the bank could see that the seniors were looking strangely exhausted. Only two of them were making any attempt to row. The others were leaning forward with bent backs and with drooped heads.

"You seniors have been overdoing it!" sang-out Nipper, as the craft came gliding past.

"No, we haven't," said Wilson of the Sixth. "There's something funny in the air this morning."

"In the air?" repeated Handforth.

"We can't understand it," replied Wilson. "We're all pretty well exhausted, although we've gone over the same course dozens of times without any effect. An' yet this morning, we feel as ill as dogs!"

"Ill!" whispered Willy. "Phew! Did you hear that, you chaps?"

"Have you been drinking any of the river water?" shouted Handforth.

"Don't be an ass!" retorted Wilson. "Of course we haven't. And it wouldn't make us ill even if we had! The air seems all right this morning, but it must be enervating, or something."

A moment later, the seniors were out

of earshot—and out of sight round the bend. The Removites and the fags gazed at one another significantly.

"Those seniors don't suspect a thing!" said Willy. "They put it down to something in the air. But it's as clear as daylight that the river has affected them."

"But Wilson says they haven't drunk any of the water!" protested Chubby.

"We didn't drink any!" said Willy. "The river's polluted, I tell you. It's poisoned in some way. Poor old Juicy has copped out most because he swallowed a lot of the water. We're feeling shaky and trembly because we had a ducking. And those seniors are just weak because they've been well up the river—where the pollution seems to be coming from. What the dickens can it mean?"

Nobody answered, for nobody had an explanation. And then Juicy appeared, looking much better. He came up to the group rather sheepishly.

"Sorry, you chaps," he said. "I'm feeling heaps better now, though."

"Did you bring up any more water?" asked Willy pointedly.

"About a pint," said Juicy, with a shudder. "Oh, my hat! I felt absolutely rotten. But I'm better now, though. Still shaky, but I'm not a chap to make a fuss over a ducking."

"It isn't the ducking we're worrying about, my lad," said Handforth major. "You've been poisoned—just like these fishes!"

"Poisoned!" ejaculated Juicy, with a jump. "Oh, corks, that—that explains it, then!"

"It's nothing much," said Willy. "You'll be yourself again in no time. Juicy, old man. If these fellows will help us to put the old motor-boat on an even keel, we'll bale out the water, and then get back to the boathouse. It must be near to breakfast-time, anyhow."

"You'd better not go on the river again!" said McClure warningly.

"Oh, rats!" replied Willy. "It won't do us any harm—particularly down-stream, where the water doesn't seem to be affected much. Besides, I'm not going to leave my new Silent Two here. Be sports, you chaps, and lend us a hand!"

And within five minutes the new Silent Two was righted, and most of the water had been baled out. But all those juniors—Removites and fags alike—were still thoughtful. They were very startled by the surprising events of this dramatic morning!

The Decision!

OF course," said Nipper, "we can't leave the thing like this!"

"Like what?" asked Edward Oswald Handforth quickly.

"We shall have to make a report," said Nipper. "We shall have to tell our Housemaster—or the Head—that there's something wrong with the river. If we don't, other chaps might be getting ill."

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "Good gad! I'm not sure that I'm not feeling a bit willy already, dash it!"

Willy shook his head.

"Better say nothing," he advised.

"But, my dear kid—"

"Take a tip from me, and keep mum!" went on Willy. "We're the only chaps who know about this mysterious pollution, and the sensible thing will be to say nothing. Those seniors don't suspect the truth, and there's no reason why they should be enlightened. They haven't the faintest idea that the

river is responsible for their exhaustion. I don't suppose they noticed the dying fish."

"They couldn't have done," said Nipper. "But I'm not so sure about keeping mum, Willy."

"All right, have your own way," said Willy, shrugging his shoulders. "But you'll regret it, if you report this business to the Housemaster. Mr. Nelson Lee may be your gun'vor, Nipper, but he's a master, just the same. And all masters are funny beggars. They haven't any consideration for us chaps. And before you know where you are, the river will be out of bounds."

"By George!" said Handforth. "There's something in that, you know!"

"There's a whole lot in it," agreed Church, nodding. "Willy's right. The river will be placed out of bounds like a shot if the Head gets to know about this affair."

"But he's bound to know about it, sooner or later," argued Nipper.

"Sooner or later—yes!" said Willy. "But you know what masters are. It may be days before they get wind of this rummy business. It may blow over altogether. Perhaps the pollution is only temporary. In any case, I feel like investigating on my own. Just us chaps, I mean."

"That's a pretty brainy idea!" nodded Handforth. "By George! An investigation, eh? We'll probe the mystery ourselves! Willy, my son, that's a dashed good idea!"

"Yes, I thought of it just in time," nodded Willy calmly. "It was on the tip of your tongue, Ted, wasn't it? You were just going to suggest the same thing, eh?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was," said Handforth, in surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The famous Edward Oswald had had no idea that his younger brother was pulling his leg. But the other juniors appreciated the joke keenly. Handforth always "thought" of ideas that somebody else had just suggested.

"It's all very well to talk about making a personal investigation," said Nipper. "And it's all very well, too, to talk about keeping the thing dark. You may be right, Willy, when you say that the masters will probably know nothing for days. But what about young Lemon?"

"He's all right," replied Willy promptly. "Aren't you, Juicy?"

Juicy Lemon, who was looking pale and shaky, gave a feeble grin.

"Well, not exactly," he said. "I feel shaky, and—"

"But you're all right—aren't you?" insisted Willy.

"Oh, rather!"

"You don't want to be taken to the sunny, do you?"

"No fear!" said Juicy hastily.

"You wouldn't like to have Dr. Brett examining you, eh?" continued Willy.

"You wouldn't like to be kept in the sunny for a week, my lad? In fact, and to put it bluntly, you haven't the faintest desire to see a doctor, have you?"

"Not the faintest," said Juicy, in a weak voice. "I—I'm feeling as fit as a fiddle!"

For Juicy had seen that Willy Handforth's eye was fixed upon him. And there was something in Willy's look that made any other answer impossible. Truth to tell, the unhappy Juicy was feeling unutterably "rotten." His legs were unsteady, his head was aching abominably, his eyes were shooting with pain. But he pulled himself together, and almost succeeded in deceiving himself as well as the others.

The juniors themselves felt that Juicy's ill-effects were only temporary and would soon pass off completely.

And so it was settled.

These fellows were the only ones who knew anything about the unusual condition of the river, and they would keep mum about it. For Willy had been quite right in saying that the Stowe would be placed out of bounds if anybody in authority heard of the mysterious "poisoning." And for the river to be out of bounds at this season of the year would be disastrous.

Indeed, these juniors felt that they owed it to the rest of the school to keep quiet. Why should they compel everybody to suffer, just because Juicy Lemon had swallowed a gallon of the water? Besides, perhaps this sensational pollution, or whatever it was, would be all clear by the morrow.

And if the story reached the ears of the Head the river would be barred, there would be a long investigation, and the days would drag on before the fellows could use the stream again. Perhaps weeks. The better part of the term would go while dilly-dallying experts came down and made all sorts of unnecessary examinations.

"Yes, it's far better to keep quiet about it," said Nipper later, when they had reached the school. "I've just been having a word with old Browne of the Fifth, and he's heard about those seniors already."

"They don't suspect the truth, do they?" asked Handforth.

"Not a bit of it," said Nipper, with a smile. "It seems that they all attended a special supper in Wilson's study last night—and they are blaming the grub."

"Good egg," grinned Handforth.

"That's just it," said Nipper, with a chuckle. "Eggs were the chief item on the menu, and those seniors believe that the majority of them were bad eggs. They haven't the faintest suspicions against the river, and they feel a lot better now, anyhow. Their weakness was only apparent while they were in the boat. And that proves, Handy, that the river is poisoned."

"Well, it's a rummy affair," said Edward Oswald, scratching his head. "How the dickens can the river get poisoned? It seems so—so idiotic! And what are we going to do about an investigation?"

"We'll form a little party directly after lessons this afternoon," replied Nipper. "We'll take a boat, and go up the river. We'll try to track the thing to its source."

"The river?" said Handforth, staring.

"No, you ass—the pollution," replied Nipper. "It can't be very far upstream. A thing like this is bound to be purely local. It's too concentrated to be a general complaint."

And so they went indoors, vaguely uneasy, and full of mystification.

The Cricket Fiend!

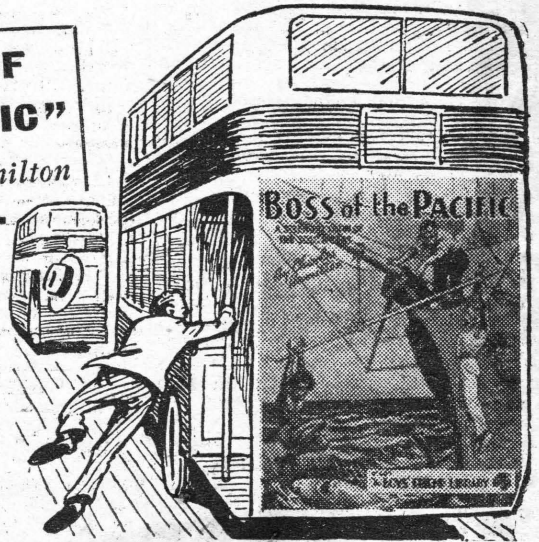
MR. AUSTIN SUNCLIFFE sat dreaming at his desk in the Third Form classroom.

The Third was supposed to be at work, but none of the fags thought it necessary to remind Mr. Suncliffe that ten minutes of the first lesson had already gone, and nothing whatever had to be done.

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The Third was enjoying itself.

Various stalwarts were drawing rude and uncomplimentary caricatures of Mr. Suncliffe on odd scraps of paper. Others were whispering together. One or two were surreptitiously eating doughnuts and similar delicacies. One rash sportsman was even cracking peanuts.

Work, of course, was the last thing to be thought of.

And Mr. Suncliffe still sat at his desk, dreaming. Perhaps it was the weather that was affecting him. At any rate, the Form-master was gazing absent-mindedly out of the window, across the sunlit Inner Court. From here he could see a goodly portion of Big Side, and now and again a white figure would appear in sight. Some of the seniors were busy at the nets, being coached.

The Third, of course, knew exactly why Mr. Suncliffe was so abstracted. He was thinking of cricket. For the whole of the summer term Mr. Suncliffe would think of little else but cricket.

It was a familiar sight to see Mr. Suncliffe during the summer term dashing down to the village at the double, in order to obtain the first editions of the evening papers. He wasn't satisfied with following the fortunes of the St. Frank's cricketers. He always had his eye on all the counties. Unless he knew exactly where Middlesex or Surrey stood overnight he would not get a wink of sleep. And when any big county championship game was left in a crucial stage, Mr. Suncliffe would be like a cat on hot bricks.

"Pity isn't a half-holiday to-day, sir," remarked Willy innocently.

Mr. Suncliffe started.

"Yes, Handforth minor—yes," he said. "A great pity!"

"Ripping weather for cricket, sir."

"Perfect—perfect!" agreed Mr. Suncliffe happily.

"I hope it will be fine for the Remove match against the River House chaps next week, sir," said Willy cheerfully.

"Yes, we must all hope for the best," said Mr. Suncliffe. "Naturally, the Remove boys will win this match."

"Oh, rather, sir!"

The rest of the Third sat tight, and grinned. It was nothing unusual for Willy Handforth to deliberately "rag" the Form-master in this way. Willy's tone was so conversational that Mr. Suncliffe had completely forgotten that this was no moment for the discussion of junior cricket problems.

But he suddenly realised that he was letting his thoughts run away with them.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing, Parry?"

Parry minor of the West House looked very much as though he were eating a doughnut. As a matter of fact, he was.

"Who, sir?" he gulped. "Me, sir?"

"Yes, Parry!" said Mr. Suncliffe, with a jump. "You are eating?"

"No, I'm not, sir!" gasped Parry, opening his mouth wide. "Have a look, sir!"

Mr. Suncliffe winced.

"I have not the slightest desire, Parry, to gaze into your mouth," he replied coldly. "Good gracious me! Whatever time is it? What are we doing? Upon my word! Why haven't you boys got your lesson books out? This won't do—this won't do!"

The Form sighed, and came to the conclusion that the entertainment was over.

"There must be no further references to cricket," went on Mr. Suncliffe, adjusting his glasses and gazing at the Form. "I am surprised at you, boys,

for this lamentable exhibition of slackness. Come! Let us get to work!"

There was a slamming of desks, books were brought out, and Mr. Suncliffe stationed himself by the blackboard.

But before a start was made on lessons the Third found another attraction. Willy Handforth suddenly noticed that several fags were looking searchingly at Juicy Lemon. A few of them were whispering excitedly together. And in less than a minute the whole Form was staring in the one direction. Everybody in the apartment was looking at the discomfited Juicy.

And they had every reason to do so.

An Extraordinary Development.

"WELL, I'm jiggered!"

"What the dickens is the matter with him?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Suncliffe rapped upon his desk as he heard sundry whispers and ejaculations.

"Silence!" he commanded. "Boys, how dare you! What are you staring at?"

"Look at Juicy, sir!" ejaculated Owen minor excitedly.

"Juicy?"

"Lemon, sir," said Owen minor. Mr. Suncliffe frowned.

"I am well aware, Owen, that most lemons are juicy, but I see no reason—Ah, you mean Lemon?" he added hastily. "I see—I see! How dare you refer to Lemon by such a preposterous nickname?"

"But just look at him, sir!" urged Owen minor, in alarm.

"I see no reason for this alarm and agitation!" said Mr. Suncliffe angrily. "It is merely an attempt to delay the commencement of lessons. And we are already very late. Attention, everybody!"

"I think you'd better have a look——" began Freddy Mason.

"Mason!" snapped Mr. Suncliffe. "Silence!"

"Yes, sir; but——"

"I can see that I shall have to cane some of you!" fumed Mr. Suncliffe excitedly. "Now, then! Attention! I will attend to Lemon after you have got over this ridiculous excitement. I cannot bear people who get excited!"

The Third sat still and smiled. They had their own opinions on the subject of excitement. Mr. Suncliffe himself was one of the worst offenders.

"Now, Lemon, come out here!" said the Form-master.

"Please, sir, I'd rather not!" said Juicy Lemon awkwardly. "There's nothing the matter with me, sir."

"I thought not," retorted Mr. Suncliffe. "We will therefore turn to our books——"

"But there is something the matter with him, sir," said Owen minor grimly. "He's just trying to spoof you, sir."

"Will you be quiet, boy?" roared Mr. Suncliffe. "Good gracious me! I am getting very tired of these interruptions. Lemon, come here!"

"Please, sir, if you don't mind——"

"Come here!" thundered Mr. Suncliffe. "It seems that an inspection of your—er—exterior is the only way of obtaining order."

Juicy Lemon, with a glare at the rest of the Form, left his place and stood out in the gangway between two rows of desks.

"H'm! I can see nothing particularly wrong," said Mr. Suncliffe, peering forward. "Do you feel all right, Lemon?"

"Yes, sir."

"No pains?"

"None, sir."

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Just as I thought," said Mr. Suncliffe triumphantly. "You will go back to your place, Lemon."

"Thank you, sir."

But before Juicy could dodge back to his desk, Owen minor had left his seat, and he was dragging Juicy towards Mr. Suncliffe.

"I'm sorry, sir, but you've got to have a look at Lemon more closely!" said Owen minor firmly. "You're a bit short-sighted, you know, and you can't see him at that distance. Please adjust your glasses, sir, and give him a closer look."

"Of all the impudence!" fumed Mr. Suncliffe. "Owen minor, I—— Good gracious! Lemon! Why, I—I—— Good heavens!"

Quite unconsciously, Mr. Suncliffe had obeyed Owen minor's instructions. He had adjusted his glasses, and he had peered closely forward at Juicy Lemon. And now, suddenly, that junior had ceased to be a mere blur, and had become a definite object. And at the very first glance at Lemon's face Mr. Suncliffe experienced a shock. Owen minor returned to his place, satisfied.

"This—this is extraordinary!" said Mr. Suncliffe, adjusting his glasses again and peering even more closely.

"Lemon! Whatever is the matter with your face?"

"Nothing, sir!" said Juicy miserably. "He was born like that, sir," said Willy. "He's not responsible for the shape of it, you know. But he wasn't always that colour."

"I should hope not!" said Mr. Suncliffe, in alarm. "Upon my soul! Lemon, you are yellow!"

Juicy, who was vaguely aware of this fact, groaned. It had been coming on for quite a little time now—but during the last half-hour the development had been extremely rapid. In some extraordinary, unaccountable way, he had completely changed colour.

Willy Handforth and Chubby Heath had their own thoughts—but the rest of the Third knew nothing about that episode in the River Stowe. And Willy thought it advisable to appear just as surprised as any of the others. Chubby Heath had taken the tip, and was acting likewise.

"You are yellow, Lemon!" went on Mr. Suncliffe. "I have never seen anything like it in the whole of my life! What have you been doing to yourself? How dare you come into the Form-room in this condition?"

"I didn't do it, sir!" protested Juicy indignantly.

"Nonsense!" said the Form-master. "Your face is painted, Lemon! Is this some—some joke? I am aware that lemons are generally yellow, and it seems to me that some humorist has been——"

"But it's not true, sir!" insisted Juicy. "I've done nothing! I've—I've gone like this!"

"Gone like it?"

"During the last half hour, sir," said Juicy. "I feel all right, too! There's nothing really wrong with me—I'm not ill!"

Mr. Suncliffe, convinced at last that this was a very unusual case, wetted a finger and drew it along Juicy Lemon's cheek. Then he inspected his fingertip, and found that none of the yellowness had come off.

"Good heavens!" he said huskily.

"Whatever is the matter with the boy?"

He stared at Juicy in real alarm now, for Juicy was not merely sallow, he was not merely pasty. He was positively, atrociously, vividly yellow. And this yellowness had an aggressive quality. The unfortunate fag was a truly remarkable sight as he stood there in front of the Form.

But Juicy had already caught Willy's eye, and Willy's eye had contained a warning. Not a word about that river episode! And Juicy was filled with acute uneasiness!

Poor Old Juicy!

WILLY HANDFORTH and Chubby Heath were uneasy, too.

They had never anticipated any such development as this! During breakfast, Juicy Lemon had seemed to recover with remarkable speed. He had even declared that his sickness was all gone, and he had partaken of a hearty meal. And, upon going in to lessons, he had announced that he was as right as rain.

True, at the time, Willy noticed that Juicy was just a little strange in colour. But he had thought nothing of it.

Now, however, in this dramatic fashion, Lemon had turned as yellow as a lemon.

And it would be idle to say that Juicy himself wasn't frightened—he was. In fact, he was badly frightened. He thought it highly necessary to give an account of what had happened at the river that morning. But Willy had given him a clear warning, and he dared not ignore it.

Mr. Suncliffe was very excited. "Do you assure me, Lemon, that this remarkable colour of yours is perfectly natural?" he demanded.

"Of course it's not natural, sir," protested Juicy.

"Ah! Then it is nothing more nor less than a practical joke—"

"No, it isn't, sir!" broke in Juicy. "When I say it isn't natural, I mean that I didn't do it myself. It's not a joke, sir—it's not a rag! I've just turned yellow—that's all!"

"You didn't apply this colour yourself?" asked Mr. Suncliffe suspiciously. "It seems to me that your skin has been dyed—"

"It hasn't, sir—it hasn't!" burst out Juicy frantically. "Nobody's touched me! Why, when I came into the Form-room, sir, I was all right. You saw me then, didn't you? It's all happened since I've been in here. I've turned yellow!"

Mr. Suncliffe was convinced at last. "Handforth minor, Heath!" he said, turning. "You will go with Lemon at once to the sanatorium. Take him to Dr. Brett. I fear that the poor boy must be developing some extraordinary disease. Take him to the sanatorium this instant!"

"Oh crumbs!" moaned Juicy. "Come on, old son!" said Willy briskly.

In ten seconds they had yanked Juicy out of the Form-room, and Willy was extremely glad that he and Chubby had been chosen as the escort. Nothing, in fact, could have been better.

"You're not going to take me to the sanny, are you?" asked Juicy breathlessly.

"Yes, we are!" replied Willy, as they emerged from the School House. "Dash it, we've got to obey old Sunny's orders, you know."

"But I'm all right! I feel as fit as—"

"It doesn't matter how you feel, old man—you look awful!" said Willy. "Of course, it's that stuff in the river! It must have got right into your system!"

"I—I was thinking the same thing," said Juicy, in anguish. "Shall I be like this always? I haven't seen myself properly yet—but my hands are yellow, too!"

"It's your face that's got the full blossom," said Willy, inspecting Juicy's face with a critical eye. "My hat! You look like a walking sunflower! Don't forget, my lad—not a word about the river!"

"But why not?" protested Juicy. "I've got to say something, haven't I?"

"You can say anything you like—except that."

"But I ought to explain!" said Juicy. "Perhaps I'm dangerously poisoned. Perhaps I've got some horrid disease. And the doctor won't be able to do anything unless he knows—"

"That'll be his trouble—not yours," replied Willy. "You feel all right, don't you? Very well, then! Why should the whole river be put out of bounds for days—perhaps weeks—just because you've turned yellow? You may be all right again within a few hours."

"Yes, but supposing I'm not?"

"Well, in that case, we shall explain everything," said Willy. "But we'll give you a few hours, anyhow. Say until this evening. If you're no better by this evening, Juicy, we'll tell the Housemaster. But as you're feeling fit in yourself, we'd better keep the thing dark for a bit."

Juicy could not fail to see the force of this argument, and so he made no further protests. Hurrying across Inner Court towards the sanatorium, the fags encountered Browne of the Fifth. Browne paused, and allowed himself to express a little mild surprise. "Ah, this, I take it, is some preparation for amateur theatricals?" he inquired politely. "Splendid! At the same time, no real Chinaman is quite so yellow—"

"You long ass!" said Willy. "Juicy isn't made up as a Chinaman!"

"No?" exclaimed Browne. "You surprise me!"

"He's come over like this!" put in Chubby. "Everybody noticed it in the Form-room. The silly chump has gone all yellow, and we're taking him to the doctor."

"You could do nothing better!" said Browne enthusiastically. "By all means let Brother Brett give him the once-over without delay. And if Brother Brett can do nothing, allow me to make a suggestion. I have heard, on the best authority, that sandpaper, judiciously applied—"

But the fags did not wait to hear the remainder of William Napoleon Browne's advice. They walked on, and a moment later they were within the sanatorium, and Dr. James Brett was staring at Juicy Lemon in very real astonishment.

(What is the mystery of the river? Why has Juicy Lemon's ducking caused him to turn yellow? There are thrilling developments in next week's chapters, when Nipper & Co. go investigating. Don't miss their adventures.)



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THE CHEAT!

(Continued from page 17.)

a fellow away, sir, though he's an awful wottah."

"Let me understand this, D'Arcy. You say this boy, whatever his name is, persuaded you to let him go into the examination under your name to win for you?"

"Yaas, sir. I—I called him a wascal at first, but he talked me wound. He would talk anybody wound, I think. He's frightfully deep."

"What was his motive?"

"I thought it was friendship, sir. He said it was, and I believed him. How was I to know what an awful wascal he was, especially when he declared that he had reformed? And—and when he had gone in for the exam, I—I couldn't say anythin' without givin' him away, so I had to hold my tongue. But I felt an awful wascal when I took the medal from you to-day, sir. I hoped the papah wouldn't win, but it did win, and—and I had to take the medal, or else betwax Lev—the chap, sir."

"But you are revealing the plot now," said the Head. "Whether you mention the boy's name or not makes little difference. There can be no question as to whom it is. What has made this sudden change in your intentions?"

"Because I've found him out, sir."

"In what way?"

"I fancied he was doin' it all frowm friendship, and although he was gettin' me into an awful posish, I—I felt I couldn't say anythin' to wisk gettin' him into a wov. But I've just found him out. Aftah I'd got the medal he thought it was all wight, and he came to me and told me what he'd weally done it for. My patah promised me twenty pounds if I won the medal, but, under the circs, of course, I refused to have it. Lev—this chap, sir, insisted that I should take the money and give it to him. He said I was under his thumb, as I should get sacked for havin' swindled at the exam. And wight up to the last moment he was tellin' me that he regarded it as perfectly honest," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, gasping.

"This is a very strange story, D'Arcy," said the Head, with his eyes on D'Arcy's face very intently.

"Yaas, sir; I know it is."

"Probably Levison will have a different account to give."

"Pewwaps, sir. He is an awful fibbah!"

The Head smiled. Mr. Railton suddenly glanced at the door, stepped quickly towards it, and opened it inwards. Levison of the Fourth fell forward into the study on his hands and knees.

"Levison!" exclaimed the Head.

Levison staggered to his feet. His face was crimson. The Head regarded him grimly.

"I need not tell you what D'Arcy has said, Levison. You appear to have taken measures to know all that was said in this study."

"I—I—"

"Have you anything to say?"

"It—it's not true, sir," said Levison.

"He—he got me to go into the exam for him, and—and promised me the twenty pounds he was to get from his father, but I—I refused to take it, sir. I did it all out of friendship, because he persuaded me, and never thought of benefiting myself in any way. I knew I was running a risk, sir, and I—I didn't like the idea, but he persuaded me, and he threatened to send me to Coventry for what I did before I left St. Jim's, sir, so I—I gave way, sir, and did it."

Arthur Augustus gazed at Levison as he made this precious statement with an expression so astounded that the Head could hardly help smiling.

"So you did this out of friendship, Levison?"

"Yes, sir."

"Friendship towards a boy who was threatening to get you sent to Coventry?"

Levison bit his lip. He was fairly caught. As usual, he had been a little bit too clever and had overreached the mark.

"Well, sir, I—I—it was partly out of friendship—and and—"

"Please do not tell me any more falsehoods, Levison. I know from your father that you are not being allowed any pocket-money this term, and it is quite clear to me that you have adopted this means of getting a very simple lad into your power for the purpose of exorting money from him."

"I—I—"

"In any case, what you have done deserves a severe punishment. I have

never seen so unscrupulous a boy before. Levison. I hardly think you realise the full wickedness of your actions, but I shall try to make you realise it. I shall flog you most severely, Levison, and your conduct will be made known to the whole school. I would expel you for what you have done, but for consideration for your father. But you will be very severely punished. As for you, D'Arcy, you have acted foolishly and have shown too much simple faith in a bad school-fellow. You have allowed yourself to be duped into wrongdoing, but I think the lesson you have had will make you more careful in future. I shall neither expel you nor flog you. You may go!"

"Thank you, sir!" faltered D'Arcy. "I am vevy glad you believe my explanation, sir. I had a howwid feelin' that pewwaps you might doubt my word, sir, undah the peculah circs. I thank you vevy much, sir!"

And Arthur Augustus quitted the study, feeling ten years younger. The Head rang for the porter as he went, and five minutes later wild howls of anguish proceeded from the Head's study.

Arthur Augustus made his way up to Tom Merry's study. There was a cheer from the crowded juniors in the study as he appeared.

"I've got somethin' to say to you fellows," he said.

And Arthur Augustus explained, telling the story amid breathless excitement in the study.

When he had finished there were exclamations of amazement, and some laughter.

"It's jolly lucky for you you've owned up, and not waited to be found out," said Blake.

"What about the feed?" demanded Fatty Wynn of the New House. "No good giving that up. As we can't celebrate Gussy getting the medal, we'd better celebrate Levison getting found out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the celebration took place, all the same. Levison was sent to Coventry, as he fully deserved, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy felt very much relieved in his mind at having got rid of his bought honours.

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