

THE BOY WHO BETRAYED HIMSELF! GREAT YARN OF A SCHOOLBOY WITH A GUILTY SECRET— **WITHIN.**

The **GEM** 2^D

**20 MORE
ARMAMENTS
STAMPS
FOR YOUR
COLLECTION
— INSIDE!**



THE GREAT "ARMAMENTS" RACE!

15 First Prizes of Hercules Bikes **6,000 Other TIP-TOP PRIZES**

FIRST PRIZE-GIVING THIS WEEK!

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN! This is the end of the first lap in the Great Stamp Race. We are now going to give away five of the "Hercules" Bicycles and up to 2,000 of the other Super Prizes—they are waiting to be sent off to the readers who, during the first four weeks, have collected the highest number of two kinds of stamps—**BOMBERS** and **SUBMARINES**.

So, lose no time! Get out all the stamps you have been collecting each week, and add to them those given in this issue (five on this page, and fifteen more on Page 35). Sort them out carefully and then count up how many *Bomber* and *Submarine* Stamps you have altogether. For instance, if you have nine Bombers and eleven Submarines, your grand total will be twenty. *No other stamps are wanted this month!*

Having found your total, write it clearly in ink on the coupon given here, remembering that no allowance will be made for incorrect totals. Add your name and full address also, and fill in at the foot of the coupon which of the following prizes you would like in the event of your being a second-prize winner:

FOOTBALL
WRIST-WATCH
DART BOARD

CRICKET BAT
PEN-AND-PENCIL SET
CAMERA

FOUNTAIN-PEN
PROPELLING PENCIL
A FAMOUS BOY'S BOOK

When you have completed the coupon in full, pin or clip your *Bomber* and *Submarine* Stamps only together, and attach them to the coupon. Post, in a 1½d. stamped envelope, to:

GEM "Armaments" No. 1,
1, Tallis House,
London, E.C.4. (Comp.).

This Month's Closing Date for Home Readers is **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st, 1938.**

OVERSEAS READERS! Remember that you, too, are included in this scheme, and special awards are to be given for the highest collections from overseas readers. Send in your stamps according to the directions for Home Readers, but note that in your case the closing date is specially extended to Wednesday, September 14th, 1938.

N.B.—As you know, this great gift scheme is also appearing in other popular boys' papers like "Modern Boy" and "Magnet," and you will find more stamps in them to swell your total.

And here's a good tip, pals—this week's "Modern Boy" (issue dated May 28th) contains **FOUR BONUS Submarine Stamps**, making twenty-four stamps in all in that issue.

When you have sent in your *Bomber* and *Submarine* Stamps, keep all the other stamps you have collected safely. There are still Ten More Bikes and 4,000 other Prizes to be given away in the next two months. More stamps will be given next week, and at the end of next month you will again be told how and where to send in for the second month's prizes. So keep at it, and accumulate all the stamps you can, because even if you don't happen to secure a prize this month, you still have two other winning opportunities.

RULES. Five First Prizes of £4 7s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and up to 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit each month during the contest to the readers declaring and sending the largest collections of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Ties for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (as given here); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence. No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

You can also collect or swap *Armaments* Stamps with pals who read "Magnet," "Modern Boy," "Thriller," "Detective Weekly," "Triumph," "Champion," "Boy's Cinema," and "Sports Budget."

"The GEM" ARMAMENTS RACE No. 1.

Herewith I enter

..... stamps of
BOMBERS and SUBMARINES

In entering this competition, I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Your
Name

Address

Prize you would like if a second-prize winner.

NOTE: The total of stamps to be given above is the combined total (that is, your grand total of the two kinds). See that your total is correct —no allowance made for error.

1



THE ST. JIM'S FUNK PUTS THE "OUT" IN "KNOCK OUT"!



Three of the footpads attacked Outram savagely as he stood over the fallen Arthur Augustus. But the new junior did not seem to feel the blows of his adversaries. He threw himself into the unequal fight as if he enjoyed it, and the roughs went down before his powerful drives.

CHAPTER 1.

The Funk's Champion!

"FUNK!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just come out of the School House with his new chum, Outram of the Fourth, when that offensive word smote his ears.

Arthur Augustus looked round, his eye glittering through his eyeglass.

Pratt of the New House was grinning at him from the quad, and as he caught D'Arcy's eye he repeated cheerfully:

"Yah! Funk!"

The remark was not meant for Arthur Augustus. Nobody of St. Jim's would have dreamed of calling the swell of the Fourth a funk. It was addressed to his companion, Outram of the Fourth, the new boy at St. Jim's. And the fellow to whom it was addressed flushed slightly, but did not speak.

"Pway excuse me a moment, Outwam, deah boy, while I thwash that wottah!" said Arthur Augustus, with aristocratic deliberation.

Outram caught his arm.

"Never mind him!" he said.

"Wats! I'm goin' to thwash him!" Arthur Augustus shook off Outram's detaining hand, and bore down on Pratt of the New House. Pratt stood his ground, grinning.

"Why doesn't your friend the funk speak up for himself?" he inquired.

Arthur Augustus did not reply. He pushed back his cuffs and sailed in.

Pratt did not have time to ask any more questions; he had plenty to do to defend himself from D'Arcy's onslaughts. In a moment they were fighting hammer and tongs.

Biff, biff!

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

"Hallo! What's the row?"

Tom Merry of the Shell came out of the School House with Manners and Lowther. "Gussy going it again!"

"Go it, Gussy!" said Lowther encouragingly.

"Mop him up!" said Manners. "Give the New House bouncer one for me!"

It did not take long for a crowd to collect. "Scraps" were not uncommon at St. Jim's. But a fight just outside the School House, almost

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,580.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

To save his only pal at St. Jim's, Valentine Outram, the funk of the Fourth, finds himself called upon to betray his own guilty secret!

under the Housemaster's window, was most unusual.

"Gussy again!" exclaimed Jack Blake, as he arrived on the scene with Herries and Digby. "Gussy, you ass, this is the tenth time this week!"

"Gussy, you fathead," yelled Herries, "you'll have Railton out in a minute!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus had Pratt's head in chancery by this time, and was pommelling valorously.

Pratt was roaring, and pounding at Gussy's noble ribs. But the combatants were quite reckless of Housemasters now.

"Drag 'em apart," said Tom Merry. "What's the blessed row about?"

"Pratt called Outram a funk!" grinned Racke of the Shell. "Gussy's fighting his battles, as usual. The funk can't stand up for himself."

Outram's cheeks burned, but he did not speak.

Tom Merry gave him a glance of contempt.

"Stop them!" he said. "Railton will be out in a minute!"

"Here he comes!" said Lowther.

"Cave!"

But the two fighting men were too excited to heed the warning. They were still struggling and hammering furiously when Mr. Railton strode upon the scene, his brow dark with anger.

The crowd parted.

"D'Arcy! Pratt!" thundered Mr. Railton. "Cease at once!"

The two combatants separated at last, gasping for breath, and looking very flushed and untidy.

Mr. Railton surveyed them with a thunderous brow.

"Now what does this mean?" he exclaimed sternly. "How dare you fight in the quadrangle, under my window!"

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"I think you were to blame, D'Arcy. From my window I saw you attack Pratt."

"I weally had no choice in the mattah, sir. Pwatt applied an oppwobvious epithet to a fwient of mine, so I was bound to thwash him."

"You have been concerned in a number of disturbances during the past week, D'Arcy. You seem to me to be a quarrelsome boy."

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all, sir! But I cannot allow any boundahs to apply oppwobvious remarks to a fwient of mine!"

Mr. Railton stared at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Am I to understand, D'Arcy, that you take it upon yourself to fight battles for all your friends?"

"No, no! Not exactly, sir. I am standin' up for Outwam."

"And why, D'Arcy?"

"Because—because I feel it a duty, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, mopping his nose with his handkerchief. "Outwam is a chap with vevy high pwinciples—"

"What?"

"His pwinciples pvevent him fwom fightin', sir," explained Arthur Augustus. "Some of the fellows wegard him as a funk. But, as a fellow of tact and judgment, I have a gweat wespect for him. I do not pwofess to undahstand his remarkable pwinciples, but I wespect pwinciples on—on pwinciple, sir. So as Outwam does not thwash the wottahs, sir, I thwash them for him; so it is all wight."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,580.

Some of the juniors grinned. Mr. Railton looked very seriously at Arthur Augustus.

"And is this the reason why you have been concerned in so many disturbances of late, D'Arcy? The matter has been reported to me."

"Yaas, sir. I am not at all quawwelsome."

"Such quixotic conduct is likely to cause as much trouble as if you were quarrelsome, D'Arcy. You will take two hundred lines. Pratt, I shall report you to your Housemaster."

And Mr. Railton, looking somewhat perplexed, returned to the House.

Arthur Augustus continued to mop his noble nose.

"Two hundwed lines!" he said. "That's wathah wuff for thwashin' a New House wottah."

"Thrashing your grandmother!" snorted Pratt. "You couldn't thrash me in ten years!"

"Why, you cheeky wottah—"

"Bow-wow!" said Pratt.

It looked as if the fight would recommence; but Tom Merry & Co. pushed in between the antagonists.

"You cut off, Pratt!" said Tom Merry. "You want bumping for coming on the respectable side of the quad. I give you two minutes!"

The two minutes were enough for Pratt. He did not want to be bumped. He disappeared towards the New House.

"Gussy, you silly ass," growled Blake, "you're getting into scraps every day. If Outwam doesn't mind being called a funk, what do you want to chip in for?"

"I wegard it as a duty, Blake."

"Fathead!"

"I wufese to argue the mattah with you, Blake! I am goin' to bathe my nose!"

"Well, it needs it, ass!"

Arthur Augustus went into the House, with his handkerchief to his nose. It certainly did need bathing.

Outram, with a gloomy brow, followed him in, and went to his study.

"I'm jolly well fed-up with this!" growled Blake. "That fellow could stand up for himself if he liked, only he is a rotten funk! Gussy ought to chuck him!"

"No good arguing with him!" snorted Herries. "Instead of chucking him, he's made us take him up! That's the kind of obstinate mule he is!"

"I wish he'd get out of St. Jim's!" growled Digby. "What does he want here, anyway? This isn't the proper place for funks!"

"According to Levison, he's going soon," grinned Monty Lowther. "Levison's uncle is coming to-day."

"Oh, blow Levison and his uncle!" said Blake. "I jolly well wish Levison's yarn about him was true, then he'd have to go!"

"Cheer up, and let's get down to cricket!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors went down to cricket, but Jack Blake was still looking grumpy. It was a thorn in Blake's side that his noble chum persisted in keeping up his friendship with the funk of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 2.

The Accident!

LEVISON of the Fourth was in his study when Percy Mellish came in, grinning.

Levison was busy. He had a sporting paper open on the table, and was making pencil-

marks in it while he smoked a cigarette. Such were Levison's agreeable manners and customs.

"Shut that door!" he growled.

Mellish closed the door, with a chuckle.

"How are you getting on with Weekes, the bookie?" he grinned. "I hear that Blake and his pals found you with him the other day and gave you a hiding each. Is it true?"

"Mind your own business!"

"I heard Dig speaking of it," said Mellish, laughing. "Blake licked you, while Gussy laid into the bookie with a big stick. He, he, he!"

"They may be sorry for it before long!" snapped Levison. "What was the row about in the quad?"

"Oh, Outram again! Pratt called him a funk, and Gussy went for him. The silly ass has had a fight every day for a week past!"

Levison smiled cynically.

"That cad Purkiss is keeping the game up well," he remarked, "but he's going to be bowled out to-day!"

Mellish yawned.

"Still on that yarn?" he said.

"You don't believe it?"

"Of course I don't. Nobody does. The fellows think you've taken a dislike to Outram, and made up that yarn about him. That's the kind of reputation you've got!" grinned Mellish.

"Why should I dislike him any more than the other fellows?" snarled Levison. "They're all down on Outram, and yet they're down on me for telling the truth about him."

"Telling whoppers, you mean! What's the good of keeping it up? You've said that Outram is an impostor—that his real name is Murkiss or something."

"Purkiss—George Purkiss."

"Well, Purkiss; and that he was a prisoner in Hilstall Reformatory last year, where your uncle's boss, and was there because he half-killed a man in a row at Brighton."

"That's the truth!"

Mellish laughed heartily.

"Well, what's the good of asking chaps to believe such a yarn when the fellow's a funk and afraid of his own shadow? A chap who half-killed a grown man in a fight, and was sent to a reformatory for it—would he let a kid call him a funk and punch him? According to your yarn, he's a regular ruffian, and he must have plenty of pluck, at least. And the whole school knows that he's a sneaking funk!"

"That's his little game," said Levison. "I tell you that kid is as strong as a horse and a splendid boxer, and he could knock out Kildare of the Sixth if he liked!"

"Ha, ha, ha! And he let me punch him without hitting back!"

"That's his game, I tell you. He's come here under a false name, and he doesn't mean to get known as a fighting-man. That would be evidence that he was really Purkiss, of Hilstall Reformatory. He's playing the part of a quiet and peaceable chap, so as to make the distinction clear. Don't you see?"

"Well, he might within reason, but not to the extent of being punched. A chap would only take that if he was a real funk!"

"Well, there's going to be proof," said Levison. "My uncle, the governor of Hilstall, is coming this afternoon."

"My hat! You've been ass enough to write that idiotic yarn to your uncle?"

"Every word! I've told him that George Purkiss, his prisoner last year, is at St. Jim's, posing as a new boy, under the name of Valentine Outram. He was jolly surprised to hear it, and he's coming to see the Head this afternoon."

"Well, he must be an ass to take any notice of such a yarn!" commented Mellish. "He can't know what a whopper-merchant his nephew is!"

"I've sent him a photograph of Outram," said Levison sourly. "I took it with Julian's camera last week when the cad wasn't looking. I've got his letter here. He says he recognises the photograph as that of Purkiss."

"There must be a likeness, then."

"It isn't a case of likeness—he's the chap!" said Levison. "And when my uncle comes, you'll see that Purkiss will be bowled out!"

"I shall see that you'll get into a row," said Mellish. "You told your yarn to Railton, and

THE GEM SPELLING BEE

TRY YOUR SKILL!

Do you fancy yourself as a speller? Whether you do or don't, have a shot at finding the mistakes in this list of ten words:

INFALLABLE
REFERING
ACCORDEON
QUAGE
DELAPIDATED
INVIEGLE
HUMOURIST
PRONUNCIATION
PICNICING
RHYMSTER

Correct the words you think are spelled wrongly, and then turn to page 34 and see how many you have got right!

he proved conclusively that Outram's what he says he is. He told you you'd be licked if you said anything more on the subject."

"I'm risking that. It will be all right when I've proved it's true. I'm doing this from a sense of duty, of course."

"Oh, of course!" grinned Mellish. "What a chap you are for sticking to a yarn, Levison! How do you account for Major Outram thinking this chap is his son, and Sir Robert Outram believing he's his nephew?"

"Purkiss has done them somehow."

"Then there must be a real Outram?"

"Of course!"

"Then what's become of him? I suppose a genuine Outram wouldn't stay away and let a chap named Purkiss come here in his place?"

"He may have been kidnapped—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

Levison rose angrily to his feet.

"Well, you'll jolly well see this afternoon!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Hawes—that's my uncle—will recognise him, and tell the Head so. That will be the finish. Time my uncle was here, too. I'll get down to the gates to meet him."

"I'll come with you," said Mellish, following Levison from the study.

Levison scowled as he made his way to the school gates. Whether it was a sense of duty, as he said, or malice, the cad of the Fourth persisted grimly in his strange accusation against the new boy. Since Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had chummed with Outram, however, Levison had not ventured to call Outram by the name of Purkiss, or to repeat his story in public. He had received one tremendous licking from the warlike Gussy, and one was enough for him.

Levison and Mellish looked out of the gates. It was time for Mr. Hawes, of Hilstall, to arrive.

Mellish was grinning. His opinion was that Mr. Hawes would have his journey for his pains, and that he would "jaw" his nephew for bringing him to St. Jim's for nothing.

A small motor-car came in sight from the direction of Rylcombe.

It was speeding along the road at a great rate. There was only one man seated in it, driving.

Levison uttered an exclamation:

"That's my uncle's car!"

Mr. Hawes was evidently in haste.

The car came whizzing along the road, and Mellish uttered a sharp exclamation as a farm-cart turned out of a field into the road.

"Great Scott! There will be an accident!"

Levison turned pale.

The cart had not seen the car, and the farm-cart almost filled the road directly in the path of the rushing motorist, who was certainly exceeding the legal speed limit.

The two juniors gazed on spellbound.

It seemed inevitable that the motor-car must crash fairly into the big vehicle blocking the road.

"He'll be killed!" panted Levison.

Crash!

The motorist had seen his danger. He jammed on his brakes, and turned the car into the grassy bank by the roadside and smashed through a fence.

With horrified eyes the two juniors watched the car climb the bank and roll over.

There was a crash and a sharp cry. The motor-car lay on its side and the motorist was pinned beneath it.

CHAPTER 3.

Outram's Amazing Strength!

"HELP!" Levison uttered the shout as he ran down the road towards the overturned car.

The lad in charge of the farm-cart was staring blankly at the wrecked car.

Mellish ran back into the quadrangle, calling for help, and a crowd of St. Jim's fellows came from all sides.

The news of the accident interrupted the cricket practice, and Tom Merry & Co., still in flannels, came crowding out into the road.

Levison had reached the car, and was looking at his uncle with horrified eyes.

The governor of Hilstall was pinned under the car, but, as if by a miracle, he was not crushed. He had fallen in a hollow of the soft grassy bank, and the car was across him, pressing him down. But the soft earth was yielding under the heavy car, which was sinking almost visibly, and the white face of the pinned man was full of horror.

"Uncle!" panted Levison.

The sudden tragic occurrence had unnerved the

junior, cool as he was usually. He stared at his uncle with helpless apprehension.

"Get help!" the governor of Hilstall muttered hoarsely.

"Help!" shouted Levison.

The St. Jim's fellows were gathering round now in an excited crowd.

Tom Merry was first on the spot.

"For Heaven's sake, get the car moved somehow!" pleaded Levison. "It's my uncle!"

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

There were enough of the juniors to drag the car down the sloping bank, but to move it was fearfully risky for the pinned motorist. The slightest slip would throw the full weight upon him, which meant serious injury.

"We must move it somehow," said Tom.

"It's sinking on me," said Levison's uncle, "It's getting harder every moment."

"If—if somebody could push under it, and shove it upwards a bit!" muttered Jack Blake.

"Who could shift that weight?" said Tom.

"Impossible!" said Mr. Hawes. "Besides, the risk is too great. Lift the car away, as best you can, and I must take my chance."

"Hold on!"

It was a quiet voice. Outram of the Fourth had joined the crowd.

Even at that terrible moment, the eyes of the governor of Hilstall turned upon Outram's face with a startled look.

Evidently he recognised the junior, or fancied that he did.

Outram hardly glanced at him.

"I think I can help him," he said quietly.

"You!" exclaimed Blake.

Outram nodded.

"If someone got under the car—there is room in that hollow beside him—and raised the weight on his shoulders—he could crawl out. I think I could do it."

"Are you as strong as a horse, you fathead?" shouted Blake.

"I think I am strong enough."

Outram wasted no more time in words. He dropped on his knees beside the overturned car.

The St. Jim's fellows watched him almost dazedly.

Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder.

"Outram! You can't! You might be crushed, too!"

"Let me go!"

"And you can't do it; you're not strong enough. I'm stronger than you are, and I couldn't move that weight from underneath!"

Outram smiled faintly.

"Let him alone!" muttered Levison. "He can do it—he's strong enough. He's as strong as any two chaps here."

The juniors fell silent.

If Outram was indeed George Purkiss, the reformatory ruffian, as Levison had declared, doubtless he was able to carry out that task.

Was it possible that Levison's accusation was true?

No hand was raised now to stop Outram.

With perfect coolness, though his handsome face was pale, the funk of the Fourth squeezed himself into the hollow beside the pinned motorist. There was easy room for the slim form of the junior. The stout, middle-aged governor of Hilstall was pinned beneath the car and the yielding earth, but the slim junior edged into the place beside him without difficulty.

The juniors watched him spellbound.



With Outram exerting his great strength, and the juniors lending a hand, the overturned car was slowly but surely raised, till it was clear of the man pinned in the hollow of the bank. Then hands grasped the governor of Hilstall Reformatory and dragged him clear.

Outram was fairly under the car now, and with his back and shoulders against it, he was exerting his strength to rise on his knees, and thus raise the weight higher.

The juniors grasped the car, and lent him what aid they could.

The great mass moved.

The strength exerted by the junior underneath was amazing—incredible in a lad of his years. The car moved.

Slowly but surely it rose, till it was clear of the man who was pinned in the hollow of the bank.

Hands grasped the governor of Hilstall, and dragged him from beneath the car.

He sank down exhausted on the grassy bank.

At this moment Mr. Railton arrived on the scene.

Outram, flat on the soft earth in the hollow, was crawling out into view, the car sinking to its former level. But there was room for the slim, wiry form of the junior to emerge.

The Housemaster stared at him blankly.

"Outram!" he gasped.

Tom Merry gripped Outram as he emerged and helped him to his feet.

The junior's face was very red, and his eyes had a glazed look. The terrible exertion had told on him. His breath came in long, shuddering gasps.

"Not hurt, old chap?" asked Blake.

It was the first time he had called the funk of the School House "old chap."

Outram shook his head without speaking.

"Outram," said Mr. Railton, in a moved voice, "you have shown great courage!"

"The boy has saved me from serious injury,"

said the governor of Hilstall. "Thank goodness he was not hurt!"

"It's Purkiss, uncle!" muttered Levison. "It's the fellow you came to see."

"He saved my life!" repeated Mr. Hawes.

"But—but you're going to see the Head?" said Levison. "Can I help you in, uncle?"

Mr. Railton helped the governor of Hilstall to rise, and Mr. Hawes disappeared in at the school gates with him.

Levison followed slowly.

Tom Merry & Co. surrounded Outram, who was leaning on the car, breathing heavily.

"Feel done up?" asked Figgins.

Outram nodded.

"What have you pretended to be a funk for?" demanded Monty Lowther warmly. "What was the little game, you ass?"

Outram smiled slightly.

"I told you I was not a funk," he said.

"You might have been seriously injured Outram," said Tom Merry quietly.

"I know."

"And—and you weren't afraid?"

"No."

"But where did you get that dashed strength from?" exclaimed Herries. "Why, I couldn't have shifted that weight, or half of it!"

"You must be as strong as a horse!" said Tom Merry, with an odd look at Outram. "You could handle all those chaps who were ragging you the giddy lot together, if you liked!"

"I know."

"Then why didn't you?"

CHAPTER 4.

Levison Asks For It!

"I've told you that I'm not a fighting chap."
"Blessed if it doesn't look——" began Racke
of the Shell; and then he paused.

Racke had always been one of the new junior's
persecutors, but even Racke felt a little remorse
now. But the juniors understood what was in his
mind.

Levison had maintained that Outram was play-
ing a part—that he was stronger than any fellow
at St. Jim's, that he was not a funk, that his
whole game was to make clear a distinction
between himself and George Purkiss, of Hilstall.

Outram read easily the thoughts in the minds
of the juniors, and a bitter smile came over his
face.

Without a word he turned and walked away.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged an uneasy glance.

"He's a splendid chap!" said Tom, after an
awkward pause.

"And he's not a funk!" said Blake.

"No fear! I don't think anybody would call
him a funk after this."

"But—but this bears out what Levison has
always been saying."

"But the fellow proved that he was Outram,
and not Purkiss," said Tom decidedly. "That's
been clearly proved. Levison is a liar, anyhow.
But I think even Levison will shut up now. That
man Outram saved is Levison's uncle."

"Outram's true blue! And if Levison says
another word against him we'll scrag him!"

The juniors returned to the school in a puzzled
frame of mind. Their opinion of Outram had
improved, but he puzzled them more than ever.

"THE MAN WITH THE HIDDEN FACE!"

by Frank Richards



There's a price on the head of the Rio Kid, the
Boy Outlaw, and a deadly six-shooter stands
between him and captivity. But he has firm
friends in Harry Wharton & Co. Why? Read
this thrill-packed school story, telling of the
exciting Wild West holiday adventures of the
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The MAGNET

Every Saturday. At all Newsagents. 2d

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,580.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY smiled.

He really could not help smiling.

The swell of St. Jim's had been busily
engaged in bathing his noble nose during the
excitement of the motor accident.

When he came into public view again he found
all St. Jim's talking about it. He hunted up
Blake, and Dig, and Herries, and learned the
particulars from them.

Then he smiled.

It was a lofty smile—the smile of a fellow of
tact and judgment, who had been right all along
the line, and had seen things which were hidden
from less powerful intellects.

"I won't say I told you so, deah boys——"
began Arthur Augustus.

"No, don't!" growled Blake.

"Certainly not, deah boy! I won't pile it on,"
said Arthur Augustus magnanimously. "But
pewpaws you chaps will admit now that I was
wight?"

"Oh, rats!"

"I pwesume that you do not still considah
Outwam a funk?"

"Well, we can't!" said Herries. "He can't
be a funk to do what he did."

"He has an objection to fighting, you know.
It's a case of pwinciple, as I have told you fellahs
several times. I saw it all along, and did him
justice. That is why he has nevah licked Wacke,
or Cwooke, or Mellish for their beastly impertin-
ence."

"Blessed if I understand it," said Blake, with
a shake of the head. "Unless Levison was telling
the truth by accident."

"What has Levison to do with it?"

"He says Outram is really George Purkiss, of
Hilstall Reformatory."

"That is wotten slandah, of course!"

"Yes; we all thought so. But Outram has been
keeping it dark that he's as strong as a horse,
and making out that he's a funk, and all that.
What was he doing that for?"

"Wats! His pwinciples——"

"Oh, blow his principles! Yet Levison's yarn
couldn't be true, because it's proved that this
chap is Outram, right enough, and not Purkiss.
Only Levison's brought his uncle here to prove
his case. And—and I saw Mr. Hawes looking at
Outram, and it was easy enough to see that he
knew him."

"It is a case of wemarkable wesemblance.
There was a chap vewy like Tom Mewwy in
Wylcombe once, you wemembah."

"Ye-es; I suppose it's possible. It's a jolly
queer bisney," said Blake. "Anyway, Outram's
a good sort. Chap must be decent to do what he
did."

"Yaas, wathah! Pewpaws you fellows will
admit now that I was wight, and will wely on
my tact and judgment on futuah occasions."

To which Herries, Dig, and Blake responded
unanimously:

"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus sniffed and walked away to
greet Outram, who had come out of the School
House.

Outram was looking quite himself again now,
but there was a cloud on his brow.

"I congwatulate you, deah boy!" said Arthur
Augustus. "You have wathah shut up those
asses who were callin' you a funk."

Outram nodded.

"Still feelin' the stwain?" asked D'Arcy.

"No; I'm all right."

"I wathah think Levison will come and apologise to you now," said D'Arcy. "I suppose he must feel wathah grateful."

Outram smiled bitterly.

"You know who that man was?" he asked.

"Yaas; Levison's uncle."

"Yes; the governor of Hilstall Reformatory," said Outram. "Levison has got him to come here to identify me. He's with the Head now. I suppose I shall be sent for."

"Yaas; and that's wathah lucky. It will cleah up the whole mattah. Levison will have to admit that you are not Purkiss when his uncle tells him so."

Outram was silent.

Levison of the Fourth came up at that moment.

"You're wanted, Purkiss," he said. "The Head wants you in his study."

Outram went into the House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyes blazed at the cad of the Fourth.

"You have called my friend Outwam by that offensive name again, Levison!" he said.

"I've called him by his right name!" sneered Levison. "It's going to be proved now."

"You are still keepin' up that wotten yarn, aftah Outwam has saved your uncle?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see that that makes any difference. A convict's a convict, all the same, I suppose? Purkiss gave himself away by doing that—showed up all the humbug he's given us since he's been here."

"I won't argue with you, Levison. You are too disgustin' to talk to! But I told you that I would thrash you whenever you insulted my friend Outwam, as his high pwinciples pwevent him fwom thrashin' you himself. Put up your hands, you wottah!"

"Oh, go and eat coke! Yaroooh!" roared Levison, as he caught Arthur Augustus' left with his chin.

He went down with a bump.

D'Arcy pushed back his cuffs.

"Now come on and have some more, you fearful wottah!"

Levison gave him a deadly look as he picked himself up. But he did not come on. He went into the School House, gritting his teeth.

CHAPTER 5.

No Luck for Levison!

OUTRAM of the Fourth tapped at the door of the Head's study and entered.

His face was a little pale, his brow clouded; but he was quite calm.

Mr. Hawes was in the study with the Head, as well as Mr. Railton. Their eyes turned on the Fourth Former as he entered.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Outram.

"Yes, my boy," said Dr. Holmes kindly. "In the first place, I wish to express my admiration for the great courage and presence of mind you have shown this day. Mr. Railton has told me of your action, and I congratulate you, Outram. And this gentleman, Mr. Hawes, wishes to thank you for the aid you rendered."

"It was nothing, sir," said Outram, colouring.

"It was a good deal to me," said Mr. Hawes, his keen eyes resting curiously upon the boy's face. "You saved me from serious injury, at great risk to yourself. This makes my task here

a very awkward and disagreeable one. You are aware why I have come?"

"I have guessed, sir," said Outram. "Your nephew has made a ridiculous accusation against me, and you have come to prove that he is mistaken."

Mr. Hawes coughed.

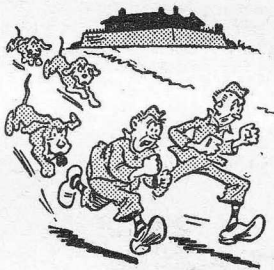
"Not exactly," he said. "My nephew wrote to me that a boy who was once in my charge, as a prisoner in Hilstall Reformatory, had come to this school under an assumed name. Ernest saw that boy while he was staying with me on a vacation last year. I did not heed his statement very much at first, as it seemed quite incredible; but he sent me your photograph. And then I could not help seeing that his statement was correct."

"Mr. Hawes!" exclaimed the Head.

"I have no alternative but to say so, sir," said Mr. Hawes. "I am sorry for this boy, who has evidently changed in character, and has to-day rendered me an immense service. But I must tell you the facts. And the facts are that this boy's real name is George Purkiss, and that last year he was a prisoner in Hilstall Reformatory."

"Impossible!" said the Head.

"Impossible!" repeated Mr. Railton. "Levison informed me of his strange suspicion the day



"We can't shake these ounds off, Bill!"
"No! I see now why they made us use scented soap!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Underhill, 10, South Road, Guildford, Surrey.

Outram came to the school. I dismissed it at once. I forbade him to mention the matter again."

"He was convinced of its truth," said Mr. Hawes, "and when I saw the photograph, I could not doubt that it was right. I felt it my duty, Dr. Holmes, to come here and warn you that you are harbouring a dangerous character, who has somehow entered your school under false pretences and a false name."

"I thank you!" said the Head. "It was undoubtedly your duty to warn me, if you were convinced that such was the case. But it is a mistake."

"One moment," said Mr. Railton. "What character did this boy Purkiss bear in your institution, Mr. Hawes?"

"The worst," said Mr. Hawes. "He was imprisoned for injuring very seriously a man with whom he had quarrelled and fought at Brighton. The man was a rough, and perhaps deserved little sympathy; but Purkiss showed an almost diabolical temper, and hammered him mercilessly, with the result that he spent several weeks in hospital. He was treated as a juvenile offender, and confined to Hilstall for three months. His sentence was lengthened to six months for an attack upon a yarder."

"What character has this boy borne in the school,

Mr. Railton?" asked the Head. "He is in your House."

The Housemaster smiled slightly.

"He has never, I believe, been engaged in a fight since he came here, sir. So far from being quarrelsome and violent, he has shown a peaceable disposition to a very remarkable extent—to such an extent that he is generally considered a coward by the rest of the boys."

"That does not bear out your description, Mr. Hawes, you must admit."

"It certainly does not," said Mr. Hawes, rubbing his plump chin. "The boy's character has evidently changed for the better. If you choose to keep him here, Dr. Holmes, it is not my business to dissuade you; in fact, after what he has done to-day, I should be very ungrateful to attempt to do so. But it is my duty to repeat that he is here under a false name."

"I had hoped," said the Head, "that a personal interview with Outram would convince you of your mistake."

Mr. Hawes shook his head.

"On the contrary, it confirms my belief. I know his face perfectly well; in age and size, in everything, he is George Purkiss. But what does the boy himself say? My lad, now that you know I recognise you, surely you will not keep up this deception?"

Outram's eyes had a haunted look.

"I can only repeat, sir, that my name is Valentine Outram," he said. "I am the son of Major Outram. My uncle is Sir Robert Outram, and I have lived with him ever since my father was sent out to China, sir."

"I can corroborate those statements," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I am acquainted with both the father and the uncle of Outram. Sir Robert Outram brought him to this school when he came."

The governor of Hilstall looked somewhat staggered.

"But the boy——"

"I saw him two years ago at his father's house," said Mr. Railton. "He was then thirteen."

"I—I confess I am perplexed, then," said Mr. Hawes.

"I trust you are satisfied now, sir?" said the Head, smiling a little.

"I am very puzzled, but I still believe that this lad is George Purkiss, who was under my charge less than two years ago," said Mr. Hawes. "I cannot doubt that."

"It is a case of resemblance," said the Head decidedly. "Outram, I am sorry you have had to go through this unpleasant examination. Do not think for one moment that I doubt you."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You may go now."

Outram left the study.

"It is a very perplexing case, gentlemen," said Mr. Hawes. "I fear that it may mean that a crime has been committed. This boy has evidently taken the place of a lad named Valentine Outram, with such success that he has deceived the real boy's father and uncle."

"You think that a boy of fifteen would be capable of such a deception?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Impossible!" said the Head.

"It seems very nearly incredible, I admit. But there is no other explanation."

"That explanation does not fit all the facts," said Mr. Railton quietly. "The boy Purkiss was

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in your hands last year, but the year before that I saw this boy at his father's house. The supplanting of Outram must, therefore, have taken place two years ago, if this boy is Purkiss. After that, he stayed in your reformatory for six months. Now, sir, if he was an impostor bearing the name of Valentine Outram two years ago, how comes it that he was a reformatory convict bearing his own name one year ago?"

"I confess that I have no answer to that, sir," said Mr. Hawes, after a long pause. "It really does seem as if it is a case of mistaken identity, founded upon a remarkable resemblance. Yet I would almost stake my life that this boy is George Purkiss. However, I see that it is useless to pursue the matter further."

And Mr. Hawes, evidently in a great state of perplexity, took his leave.

"A very remarkable matter," said the Head, when he was gone, "and very unfortunate for Outram."

"Very," said Mr. Railton. "His resemblance to a desperate character like Purkiss may cause him trouble at other times. Perhaps I had better speak to Levison on the subject, and warn him to cease any mention of the matter."

"Yes, certainly."

A little later Levison of the Fourth was called into Mr. Railton's study.

The Housemaster spoke to him with exceeding plainness, and warned him that a flogging would result if he repeated his statements concerning Outram of the Fourth.

Levison left the study with a sullen brow.

"The rotter!" he muttered, clenching his hands. "He's fooled them—even fooled my uncle! But he can't fool me! He's Purkiss, and I'll show him up somehow!"

And the cad of the Fourth found much comfort in that reflection.

CHAPTER 6.

Mr. Weekes Lays His Plans!

MR. WEEKES, of Wayland, was seated upon a grassy bank in the shade of the thick trees in Rylcombe Wood, and keeping an eye on the footpath.

The fat bookmaker was smoking a cigarette, and he had a sporting paper spread on his knees; but he read with only one eye, so to speak, keeping the other on the alert.

As a footstep sounded on the grassy path, Mr. Weekes half rose, and then settled down again as he saw that the newcomer was Levison of the Fourth.

Levison nodded to the bookmaker, leaned against a tree close at hand, and lighted a cigarette.

"'Arternoon!" said Mr. Weekes. "I've been waiting for you."

"I came as soon as I could," said Levison.

The bookmaker glanced along the shady path again.

"I don't like coming near that blessed school, and that's a fact," he said. "Tain't much more'n a week ago, and you know what 'appened."

Levison nodded.

"D'Arcy and his friends collared you, and D'Arcy licked you with your own stick," he remarked.

Mr. Weekes' red face grew redder.

"I'll make 'em pay for it!" he said. "Let 'em wait till I get a chance, with a few pals with me."

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

It's going to be a good summer for bees, we hear. Swarm weather!

Can the British public be made shoe-conscious? asks an American. Yes, at a pinch!

Fireproof cushions are a feature in a new air liner. The proof of the padding is in the heating!

"And when you are making this new suit for me," said the old Scotsman thoughtfully, "you might make the pockets a wee bit hard to get at!"

Third Form Flash: "Did you know that Columbus discovered America, Gibson?" asked Mr. Selby sarcastically. "Why, who lost it?" asked Gibson. "It wasn't lost," said Mr. Selby. "Then how could he have found it?" demanded Gibson.

Quickly, now: Why is the fourth of July? Yes, it is. Is what? "Y" is the fourth of July, isn't it?

Thieves who broke into a house in Rylcombe took a bath before leaving. Perhaps they wanted to show the police a clean pair of heels!

A cowboy in Texas is the pie-eating champion of the wide open spaces. At meal-times, however, both Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wynn are prepared to challenge all comers with wide open faces.

Skimpole says Italians are convinced that they must help one another first. Charity begins at Rome!

"Boxer to Take Long Holiday," runs a headline. Presumably at a spa!

The Rylcombe barber has a new idea—he fines his assistants every time they cut a customer. He keeps a petty gash account!

STORY. Bank Clerk: "I don't understand why this cheque is made out for £12A." "That's right," said Mr. Latham, coughing. "You see, I'm terribly superstitious!"

A foreman on a street repair job in Wayland tackled one of his men sternly. "Look here, Mike, how is it that although you started digging at the same time as Jack here, he has dug more soil than you?" "Well, you see," explained Mike, "he's digging a bigger hole than I am!"

Must get down to cricket practice now. I'm a yard and a half late already. See you at a quarter to which, or maybe half past why, chaps!

Let 'em wait—specially Master Stuck-up-D'Arcy! I'll teach 'em to lay 'ands on a honest man."

"I've heard them talking about it," said Levison. "They intend to serve you the same every time they find you near the school, because of your affair with that ass Skimpole."

"You got a licking, too," growled Mr. Weekes, apparently not pleased by the way Levison was dwelling upon the unpleasant incident.

"I haven't forgotten!"
"Look here, you told me it was business, in your note," said Mr. Weekes. "I've walked here from Wayland. I don't see why you couldn't tell me your idea in the letter—"

"Catch me putting anything of the sort in a letter!" said Levison, laughing. "I'm not quite so soft as that. If you mean business, Weekes, I can tell you how to get even with those rotters."

"Just give me a chance!" said Mr. Weekes. "I've got some pals as will 'elp me—the Ferret and Bill the Smasher, and Ikey Mo, and a few more. Let's get a chance at the young whelp, that's all!"

"Then it's a go," said Levison. "You don't want to tackle the whole crowd together—they might be too much for you. There's D'Arcy—never mind the others. Can you spare time for him on Saturday?"

"Any day you like," said Mr. Weekes. "'Ow can I get at the young rip on Saturday?"

"He's going over to Abbotsford on his bike,"

said Levison. "I heard him telling his friends about it—it means that he'll have to stand out of the cricket on Saturday. His brother, Lord Conway, is visiting Abbotsford, and D'Arcy is going over to meet him there."

"And he'll go alone?" asked Mr. Weekes, with a cunning gleam in his eyes.

"Yes; his pals are in the House team. They'll be playing cricket, and they can't go with him."

"Good!"
"He will come back towards dark, most likely—perhaps after dusk—and he will come this way. The fellows always use this path as a short cut across from the Wayland Road. They're not supposed to ride here, but they always do. This path is very lonely at night."

Mr. Weekes nodded.
"I'll 'ave three or four pals with me," he said. "I dare say 'e will 'ave enough dough about 'im to pay for the trouble."

Levison set his lips for a moment. His revengeful nature spurred him on to take this method of vengeance; but he had not foreseen that Mr. Weekes would think of robbery as well as violence. But he nodded.

"You'd better take care that he does not recognise you, if that's your game," he said.

"I'll take care of that, anyway. It would be a six months' stretch for what I'm goin' to give 'im if I was known. And when he crawls 'ome

to the school, I'll bet you his father won't know 'im. I'm much obliged to you, Levison."

"Not at all. Hallo! Look out!"

There was a sound of voices on the path, and the Terrible Three came in sight from the direction of Wayland, with D'Arcy and Blake and Outram following them down the footpath.

They caught sight of Mr. Weekes and Levison at the same moment.

The bookmaker gritted his teeth. It roused all Mr. Weekes' indignation to reflect that he couldn't show himself anywhere near St. Jim's without being "handled" by those high-handed young gentlemen. Mr. Weekes would have appealed to the police for protection, if his relations with the gentlemen in blue had not been very strained.

He jumped up at once and disappeared into the wood, in a very great hurry.

The Terrible Three came up at a run.

Levison regarded them with a sneering smile.

"Gee-gees again, what!" said Tom Merry with a curl of the lip. "You'll get it in the neck when a perfect spots you some day."

"That needn't worry you," said Levison.

"Disgracing the school worries us, though," said Tom. "If we could have got hold of your precious friend, we'd have jolly well bumped him."

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus. "I gave the wottah a feahful thwashin' the othah day, and I am quite prepared to give him anothah. In the circus, as he has disappeared, I think we had better bump Levison."

"Good idea!" said Blake.

"Jolly good idea!" said Monty Lowther heartily. "Come and be bumped, Levison, dear boy. It's for your own good, you know."

"Hands off, you rotters! Oh! Ah! Oh!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Tom Merry & Co. walked on, leaving Levison of the Fourth sitting in the grass. They felt that they had done their duty.

Levison looked after them, with wrathful eyes. If he had felt a twinge of remorse for the rascally compact he had made with Mr. Weekes, it was gone now.

CHAPTER 7.

The Shadow of Suspicion!

"WOTTEN!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark in Study No. 6, in tones of emphatic indignation.

"Hallo, what's biting you?" yawned Blake.

"Nothin' is bitin' me, Blake. Pway don't be ridiculous! I regard it as wotten, in fact, wevoltin'."

"Lend a hand in getting tea instead of jawing, old chap," suggested Herries.

"Bothah tea! It's disgustin'!"

"You might open the sardines," hinted Dig.

"I wufuse to wowwy about the sardines, Dig. I regard it as uttably disgustin', and I considah that you fellows ought to back me up. Outwam—"

"Oh, Outram again!" groaned Jack Blake.

"I wish that fellow had never come to St. Jim's."

"Same here," said Dig. "Anybody seen the tin-opener?"

"Bothah the tin-openah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "In the mattah of Outwam bein' a funk, you fellows have to admit that I was right."

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You could weally have welied on my tact and judgment. But you waited for pwoof. Well, now Outwam has pwoved that he is not a funk, you are still down on him, and all the fellows are down on him."

Blake grunted uneasily.

"I'm not down on him," he said. "But—but—"

"It's all so fishy," said Herries. "I don't like fishy chaps."

"I wufuse to allow my fwient to be chawactewised as fishy. What have you got against him?"

"Well, nothing exactly," said Blake. "But—but—"

"But what, you ass?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"I quite undahstand you, Blake. Since Outwam has pwoved that he is not a funk, you have begun to believe that wotten yarn of Levison's."

Blake was silent.

"Wacke, Cwooke, Mellish, and Piggott, and that cwev believe it now," said D'Arcy. "I am weally ashamed to see fwients of mine agweein' in anythin' with Wacke and his wotten set!"

"Well, a chap's bound to agree even with Racke in some things," agreed Blake. "F'rinstance, Racke believes that the earth is round, and so do I!"

"And he believes that Gussy is a silly ass," remarked Dig, "and so do I!"

"Wats! I wepeat that it's disgustin' and wevoltin'! All because a chap has shown vewy remarkable pluck, without bein' a quawwelsome, fightin' beast!"

"Look here, Gussy, we're not down on Outram; but it's fishy," said Blake. "If a chap's sane, it can't be against his principles to hammer a chap who punches him. Outram told you he'd a beastly temper and was trying to keep it in check. All the House knows it. We thought that was an excuse for funking—"

"And you were w'ong—"

"Yes. We admit that. But what he did bears out what Levison said. Levison says he was sent to a reformatory for getting into a fight and half-killing a chap in a fearful bad temper. After that he might make up his mind to keep out of fighting—I don't know. He's a queer chap, if that's the case; but it might be a sensible thing to do, if he can't trust his temper. Anyway, he's been spoofing us, and all the school knows that the governor of Hilstall went away believing that he was George Purkiss."

"The govannah of Hilstall is an uttah ass!"

"Oh, rats! He knows Purkiss well enough, and they have photographs and things to go by in prisons," said Blake. "If Outram's above board, there was no need for him to spoof us as he's done. I don't believe he's Purkiss, but I say it looks jolly fishy."

"That's it!" said Herries. "I wouldn't say I believe Levison's yarn exactly. But it looks fishy. It's no good jawing, Gussy. If you jawed us deaf and blind, it wouldn't make any difference to the other chaps. They all think the same."

"Yaas; and I considah it simply wevoltin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "And whatevah othahs think of him, I am stickin' to him through thick and thin!"

"You always were an ass!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies! So you believe, Blake, that poor old Outwam has made away with Major Outwam's son, and taken his place?"

Blake shifted uncomfortably.

"I don't say I believe it. I say it's fishy, and I don't like people who are fishy. There's a lot of suspicious circumstances, too. Outram's supposed not to be able to box. But—but I believe he could box all right if he liked; and Levison said that fellow Purkiss was a first-class boxer."

"You uttah ass! Outwam boxed me once, and I knocked him all ovah the place. He was a wegulah duffah at boxin'!"

"Spoof!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Look here, I know it's spoof," said Blake. "I saw him at the punchball the other day. I could tell by the way he hit the ball that he could box if he liked."

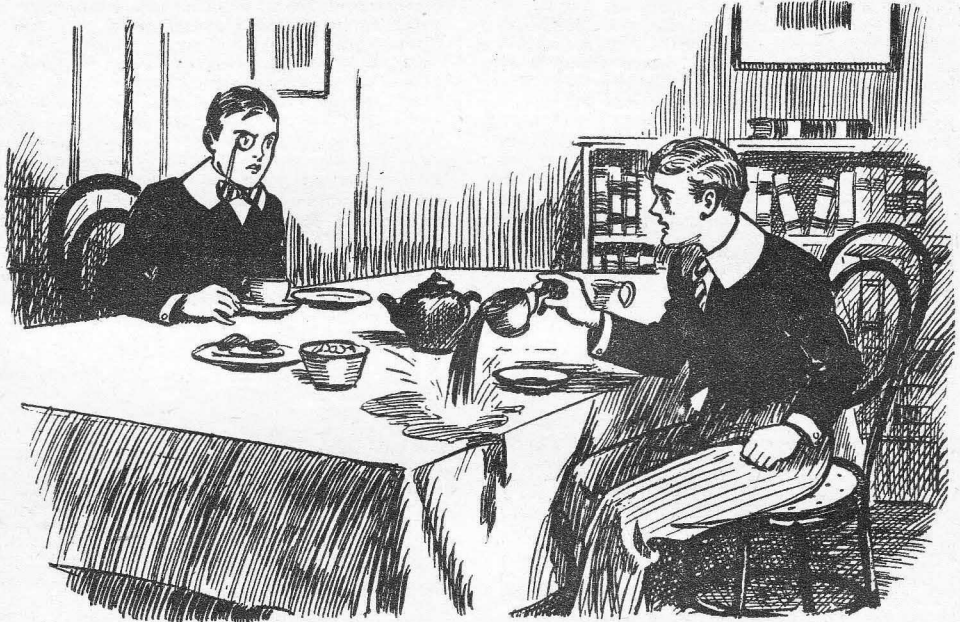
Tom Merry and his chums looked serious at once.

"Those asses in my study more than half cwedit Levison's wotten yarn," said Arthur Augustus. "It's wevolutin'! I twust you fellows do not believe anythin' of the sort?"

"Well, we don't believe it," said Tom slowly; "but it's jolly queer! It seems to be proved that the chap is really Outram, but—but—"

"But wats!"

"It's no good, Gussy!" said Manners decidedly. "I don't want to say anything against Outram, but it looks fishy. I don't hold with Levison's yarn, but he said all along that Outram was spoofing us, and it's come out now that it was so."



"Now, don't you see how the mattah can be cleahed up?" said Arthur Augustus. Outram shook his head. "Find Purkiss!" explained Gussy. Crash! Outram's teacup fell from his hand into the saucer, and tea flooded the table. The new boy gazed at D'Arcy with startled eyes.

"As a mattah of fact, Outwam has nevah actually said that he cannot box."

"No; but he's let everybody believe so, and allowed you to box him baldheaded, when he could have knocked you off your feet if he liked."

"I wefuse to cwedit for a single moment that he was spoofin' me!"

Blake yawned.

"Well, let it drop, and let's have tea," he said. "I'm fed-up with Outram, anyway."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus retired from the study and closed the door hard; he was simply burning with indignation.

He strode along the Shell passage to Tom Merry's study and entered it like a hurricane.

The Terrible Three were at tea.

"Hallo! Wherefore that thunderous brow?" asked Monty Lowther cheerily.

"I have come to speak to you about my friend Outwam—"

We thought he couldn't be Purkiss because he couldn't do what Purkiss had done. Well, now we know he could if he liked."

"I wegard you as bein' even biggah asses than Blake, Hewwies, and Dig!" said Arthur Augustus, breathing hard.

"Thanks! Shut the door after you," said Lowther.

Slam!

Arthur Augustus met Kangaroo in the passage and stopped him.

The Cornstalk eyed his excited face curiously.

"Noble, deah boy, you do not believe that wotten yarn about Outwam bein' Purkiss—"

"I'm afraid it looks like it, Gussy."

"Bai Jove! Are you a silly ass, too?"

"Well, it looks—"

"Oh wats!"

Arthur Augustus strode away, leaving the Corn-

stalk staring. He looked into Talbot's study and found Talbot, Gore, and Skimpole there.

"Talbot, deah boy, do you believe that wotten yarn about Outwam?"

"I'd rather not say anything about it," said Talbot quietly.

"Wats! Do you, Skimpole?"

"My dear D'Arcy, I have had no time to think of the matter," said Skimpole, blinking at him. "My time is taken up with the study of Entomology at present."

"Oh wubbish! Do you, Gore?"

"Yes, I do!" said Gore.

"Then you are a silly ass!"

Arthur Augustus quitted the study with that remark, leaving Talbot looking very grave, and Gore grinning.

The swell of St. Jim's did not seek any more supporters. He realised that he stood alone in his championship of the suspected junior. With a moody and indignant face, he made his way to Outram's study.

Arthur Augustus had been alone in standing up for the new junior when the latter was condemned as a funk. Events had proved him in the right. He was alone now in defending the new junior from a much more serious suspicion. But Arthur Augustus was loyal to the core, and he never dreamed of failing his friend in this emergency.

CHAPTER 8.

The Loyalty of Gussy!

OUTRAM was alone in the study. He was seated at the tea-table, but he was eating nothing.

His face was dark and moody.

It brightened a little as D'Arcy came in. To the lonely and suspected junior D'Arcy's unwavering friendship was the only ray of sunshine. The devotion of Arthur Augustus meant very much to the outcast.

"Havin' your tea, deah boy?"

Outram nodded.

"Do you mind if I join you? I haven't had my tea, Outwam."

"I'll be jolly glad!" said the Fourth Former, with a sigh. "I don't like feeding alone."

"Where are your studymates?"

Outram coloured deeply.

"They've gone out," he said.

He did not add that they were having tea in another study because they did not care for his society. But Arthur Augustus guessed it. His eye gleamed behind his monocle.

"I say, this is wotten, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, after a pause, while Outram poured out the tea.

"It isn't pleasant for me," said Outram. "I was a fool to come here, I suppose. But how could I guess that Levison——"

He paused.

"How could you guess that Levison would spweed such a wotten yarn about you?"

"Ye-es."

"And nobody would have believed a word of it if you hadn't saved that man fwom sewious injuw," said D'Arcy.

"Yes, that was a bad break," said Outram, with a faint smile. "Still, I'm not sorry I prevented Mr. Hawes from being crushed under his car."

"Of course not. Can you box, Outwam?"

Outram started.

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"Box! Why do you ask?"

"Some fellows think you are only spocfin' in makin' out that you can't box."

"You remember how you knocked me about in the gym?"

"Yaas; it was vewy plain that you couldn't box," agreed Arthur Augustus. "And that wotten beast Purkiss was a good boxah, accordin' to Levison. P'way don't think that I doubt you for one moment, Outwam. I'm not that kind of chap. I flattah myself that I can see whethah a chap is twue blue or not."

Outram's brow was darkly troubled for a moment.

"You're a good chap, D'Arcy," he faltered.

"Nothin' of the sort. I wathah pwide myself on my judgment, that's all. Nothin' would make me ass enough to believe that you could possibly be that young scoundwel Purkiss——"

"That—that what?"

"I suppose he was a young scoundwel, as he was in a weformatowy for knockin' a man about vewy sewiously."

"There—there may have been excuses for him," faltered Outram. "Suppose—suppose he was a fellow who was tremendously strong for his age, and had a hasty, rotten temper, because he'd always been allowed to have his own way at home owing to his father being away in China? A chap like that might do more harm than he ever intended in a scrap and be sorry for it afterwards."

"Bai Jove! You speak just as if you knew the fellow!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in wonder.

Outram bit his lip.

"I—I don't mean that, of course," he said. "I was only putting a case. I don't like being hard on a chap who's down."

"Quite wight!" agreed D'Arcy. "Now, I'm backin' you up in this, of course. I'm stickin' to you, and somehow the othah fellows have got to be bwought wound."

"It doesn't look as if they ever will be," said Outram, with a sigh.

"I have been thinkin' it out," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I've got an ideah for cleawin' the mattah wight up."

Outram looked at him curiously.

"You see, it's no use callin' in your welations as evidence, because the chaps are beginnin' to believe that you have spoofed Sir Wobert Outwam through bein' like his nephew, and that you are not Valentine Outwam at all. It appears that there is a surpwisin' wesemblance between you and that fellow Purkiss, of Hilstall. Now, don't you see how the mattah can be cleahed up?"

Outram shook his head.

"Find Purkiss!" explained Arthur Augustus.

Crash!

Outram's teacup fell into his saucer from his hand, and the tea flooded the table. He did not seem to notice it. He was gazing at D'Arcy across the table with startled eyes.

"What did you say?" he gasped.

"Bai Jove! I didn't mean to surpwise you like that, deah boy! That's my ideah—to find Purkiss!"

"Find him!" muttered Outram. "What—what good would that do?"

"Don't you see?" said D'Arcy eagerly. "This fellow Purkiss was at Hilstall Weformatowy last year. He could be twaced. He must have gone somewhere aftah leavin' the weformatowy, you know. Vewy likely the police made a note of him,



America For the Taking!

The story of Sweden's bid to stake a claim in North America—as told on one of her latest series of stamps!



IN the stirring days when King Charles I sat on the throne of England, North America was something of an old-time Klondyke. Most European countries of the time were doing their utmost to stake a claim in the land over which the Redskins then ruled supreme. Sweden was well to the fore in this struggle—as one of her latest and handsomest series of stamps reminds us.

One autumn day in the year 1637 two stately sailing ships, the *Kalmar Nyckel* and the *Fagel Grip*, set sail for the New World from the Swedish port of Gothenburg. These vessels are remembered on the 15-ö stamp illustrated here. After a lengthy and very stormy crossing of the Atlantic the ships eventually reached America and sailed up the Delaware river, dropping anchor opposite a spot where the modern town of Wilmington now stands.

RENTED FROM THE REDSKINS.

Johan Printz, leader of the venture, went ashore, and was fortunate enough to meet a tribe of Indians with an eye to business. Instead of having to fight for their corner of America tooth and nail, as so many other Europeans had had to do, the Swedes were able to rent a plot of ground from the Redskins. Printz's parley in this connection is recalled on the new 5-ö stamp, where we see him busily talking to an Indian chief.

The Swedes' first task when the rent deal was settled was to show the world that their bit of land was really theirs. The new 20-ö stamp reproduced on this page reveals how this was done. A post bearing the royal arms of Sweden was driven into the soil and the land solemnly named New Sweden. Note the Red Indian

holding the pipe of peace, on this stamp—token of the Indians' friendly attitude towards the settlers.

Palisades were now built and log cabins erected. Printz himself was elected governor of the new colony, and under his wise control the enterprise prospered amazingly. There were skirmishes, of course, with hostile Indians, in the years that followed, but in the end it was the palefaces, in the persons of the Dutch, who proved New Sweden's undoing.

FOUNDERS OF NEW YORK.

In 1655 the colony was captured by the Dutch, who, you may recall, were themselves founders of present-day New York (they called it New Amsterdam, then). Despite this conquest most of the Swedish settlers still retained their nationality and their national customs—as the quaint Swedish church still standing in Wilmington testifies. This old-world building forms the subject of the new 30-ö stamp, and Queen Christina of Sweden, through whose patronage New Sweden was started in the first place, smiles at us from the highest value of the new series, the 60-ö.

These stamps are printed by the delicate line-engraving process for which most Swedish stamps are justly famed, and, apart from the interest in their subjects, they provide a welcome change from the ever-increasing number of new stamps now being printed in photogravure. Some of the newcomers, by the way, you'll find perforated all round; others have perforations only at the sides. These latter are for use in the many automatic stamp machines which have been set up throughout the length and breadth of Sweden.

and pewwaps kept on his twack. Anyway, a detective could easily twack him out."

"But—but——"

"You have plenty of money, deah boy; and if you needed it, I've got a fivah I could contwibute, and I'd ask my govnerah for anothat, if neces-sawy. All you've got to do is to explain to Sir Wobert Outwam, and ask him to employ a detective to find that wottah Purkiss!"

"I—I couldn't. I—I should be ashamed to admit to my uncle that—that such a suspicion about me existed!"

"Well, pewwaps there is somethin' in that," said D'Arcy, after a moment's thought. "Of course, Sir Wobert would be vewy shocked and angwy. But you can do without Sir Wobert at all. We can employ a detective ourselves."

"It wouldn't be possible. We're only school-boys——"

"I will speak to Mr. Waitlon about it. He is vewy angwy with Levison for spweadin' that yarn.

When I tell him that you are suspected by the whole House. I am sure he will help us at once."

"You're a good chap!" said Outram, with a break in his voice. "I—I wish I'd known you years ago, D'Arcy! But—but——"

"We'll go to Waitlon togethah."

Outram shook his head.

"I'd rather not," he said.

"But you want Purkiss found?"

"No."

Arthur Augustus stared across the table at his friend. For a brief moment a chill of doubt invaded his heart. Why didn't Outram want Purkiss found when, as D'Arcy explained, that would clear up the whole matter?

But the swell of St. Jim's drove away that momentary doubt.

"Outwam, deah boy," he said gently, "I weally assuah you it is the wight thing to do. It would settle the mattah to ewwybody's satisfaction."

"They've no right to suspect me!" exclaimed Outram passionately. "I shall take no steps whatever! Let them think as they like! A suspicion like that is beneath my notice!"

"Bai Jove! Pewwaps you are wight, deah boy!"

"I think I am," said Outram. "I shall take no notice of the rotten slander at all. I've proved that I am Valentine Outram. My father and uncle have proved it. What more can anybody ask?"

"Nothin'. They are unweasonable asses!"

"Only I—I don't want to make trouble between you and your friends," said Outram hesitatingly. "If—if you'd like to have done with me, I shan't be offended!"

To which Arthur Augustus replied emphatically: "Wats!"

And when the two juniors left the study after tea, Arthur Augustus walked with his arm linked in Outram's, with a gleam of defiance in his eyes.



Smash-and-Grab Raider:
"Ow! Just my luck—it's unbreakable glass!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Davis, 20, Shafton Road, S. Hackney, London, E.9.

Outram might be regarded with suspicion by the whole school, but that was only an additional reason why Arthur Augustus should demonstrate publicly his unshaken faith in him.

CHAPTER 9.

Arthur Augustus Sticks To It!

DURING the following two or three days Outram of the Fourth was left very much to himself.

But for the loyalty of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy he would have been almost completely an outcast.

In that time of trial, the unswerving faith and friendship of the swell of St. Jim's stood him in good stead.

Tom Merry & Co. did not want to be hard on the "outsider" of the Fourth, but they could not help the distrust they felt.

They had agreed to regard Levison's accusation with derision and contempt. That was when they regarded Outram as a pusillanimous funk, utterly different from the "reformatory ruffian" Levison described. But they could not help believing now that he had been playing a part.

If all was fair and above-board, why had he been playing a part? There was only one answer to that question.

There was something "shady" he had been concealing.

Outram's proofs of his identity had seemed to

be overwhelming. Those proofs were still just as strong. But suspicion was abroad, and it could not be helped.

And if the new junior was an impostor, bearing a name that did not belong to him, where was the real Valentine Outram?

Levison hinted at a crime, and the juniors had laughed at the hints at one time. But they did not laugh now. If there was another Valentine Outram whose place this fellow had taken, something must have become of him. Where was he?

Tom Merry had the same idea as Arthur Augustus—that the matter could be settled to everybody's satisfaction by the finding of the real Purkiss—easy enough by an application to the police or a private detective.

He made the suggestion to Outram in quite a friendly way, and Outram's curt refusal could only have one effect.

When the fellows knew that Outram did not desire Purkiss to be produced, that settled it for them.

Arthur Augustus might believe that Outram's motive was a lofty contempt for a slander and a disdain to defend himself against it. But Arthur Augustus was alone in that opinion.

The belief gathered ground that the new boy in the Fourth was an impostor, bearing the name that did not belong to him, and, naturally enough, fellows did not want to have much to do with him.

He was never called a "funk" now. Certainly he was anything but a funk, and he had no raggings to fear.

Racke & Co. were not likely to venture to rag a fellow who was strong enough to tackle Kildare of the Sixth if he chose.

They wondered why he had stood their raggings so long, and they found the explanation in the fact that he was really Purkiss, and was afraid of giving himself away. It seemed the only possible explanation.

There were warm arguments in Study No. 6. Blake, Herries, and Dig were sorry, but they could not help their opinions. And Arthur Augustus was in a state of almost perpetual wrath and indignation.

But the only effect of the arguments upon Arthur Augustus was to make him a little more demonstrative towards Outram of the Fourth.

And towards Levison he was bitterly hostile. It was all Levison's fault, Arthur Augustus considered. He had started the whole business. Levison had succeeded now. The whole House, so far as the juniors were concerned, had come round to his opinion.

But Arthur Augustus made a point of "going for" Levison every time he heard him referring to "Purkiss."

Levison had some painful experiences during those few days. Arthur Augustus would willingly have fought the whole House in defence of his friend. As he could not do that, he "took it out" of Levison on every possible occasion when the cad of the Fourth ventured to cast aspersions upon the outcast.

There was a House match on Saturday afternoon, but Arthur Augustus was standing out of the School House team. His elder brother, Lord Conway, was on a visit to friends at Abbotsford, and Arthur Augustus intended to see him there. And his chums learned on Saturday that he intended to take Outram with him.

(Continued on page 18.)



In Town To-day

Introducing Ephraim Taggles to the Microphone. By a B.B.C. TALENT SCOUT.

INTERVIEWER: That must have bowled D'Arcy minor over, surely?

TAGGLES: No, it didn't—not even a real cannon ball could spike Master D'Arcy's guns. He answered, casual-like: "You'd better not let it get away, then." "I'm not letting you get away with anything," I snapped back. "Perhaps you don't know, Taggy," went on D'Arcy minor; "the carrier has delivered a cheetah to St. Jim's. The packing-case is just outside the gates." Sure enough, there was a big packing-case, labelled: "Live Cheetah—with care."

INTERVIEWER: And how did you approach the matter, Taggles?

TAGGLES: I approached it carefully. The knots were loose already, and I could see that any loose handling and we'd need a lasso to get the animal tied up again. "It's addressed to St. Jim's, but not to anybody in particular," I said. "Well, the Head's out, and if you don't let the poor thing out it may starve, or die of thirst," said D'Arcy minor. Well, I wasn't exactly thirsting to know what was inside, but I couldn't eat my words in front of a young rip in the Third, so I got my hammer and crowbar and began to open the case. There was a lot of grunting from inside it, and it sounded that weird, I hesitated. Suppose I let a wild animal loose in St. Jim's, and it harmed somebody? Then D'Arcy minor spoke up: "Go on, Taggy—the poor cheetah is probably at its last gasp for want of air!" That decided me. I wrenched off the top boards—and like a jack-in-the-box the thing inside leaped up before my eyes. What do you think it was?

INTERVIEWER: A cheetah, Taggles!

TAGGLES: No—a boy! Young Master Piggott—a Form mate of D'Arcy minor's.

INTERVIEWER: But you said he was making weird grunting noises?

TAGGLES: That was because he had a gag in his mouth—and crouching in the case, he couldn't reach it with his hands. Across his chest was a placard: "PIGGOTT—THE PRIZE CHEAT OF THE THIRD." Master Piggott is a young demon, admitted, but I couldn't understand what Master D'Arcy and his friends were laughing at. "Where's the cheetah?" I demanded. I thought Master D'Arcy would have choked, laughing. "There, in front of your eyes, Taggy!" he gasped. "Piggott, the chap who sneaked on Gibson and got him gated—Piggott, the champion 'cheater' of the Third."

INTERVIEWER: Quite a joke on you, Taggles. A pity nobody gave you the tip.

TAGGLES: Oh, but they will, Mr. Interviewer. Joking aside, the young gentlemen never forget old Taggles at the end of the term!

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INTERVIEWER: Well, Taggles, I suppose it is some time since you were in the public eye like this?

TAGGLES: You're right, Mr. Interviewer. The last time I remember catching anybody's eye was when I was presented with my medals.

INTERVIEWER: Whose eye did you catch then, Taggles?

TAGGLES: The sergeant-major's—because I had a button of my tunic undone!

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

TAGGLES: Second down from the collar. Oh, you mean where was I? Out in South Africa—the Boer War, Mr. Interviewer.

INTERVIEWER: Well done. You must have found it quiet as a gate porter at St. Jim's after that?

TAGGLES: What with the pranks and tricks I've had played on me during the past thirty-eight years, it was quieter fighting the Boers!

INTERVIEWER: But surely an old soldier like yourself is more than a match for any of the fags at St. Jim's?

TAGGLES: They'd burn your fingers, Mr. Interviewer. That young Wally D'Arcy, now—only the other day he came and asked me if I'd ever seen a cheetah.

INTERVIEWER: A cheetah? One of those very fast running animals, two of which were recently matched in a race with greyhounds?

TAGGLES: That's right, sir. Mind you, I've never seen a cheetah in my life, but I had read about them racing, and I wasn't going to let D'Arcy minor get past me—

INTERVIEWER: Why did D'Arcy minor want to know if you had seen one?

TAGGLES: I couldn't see, sir. He said: "Are you sure you've seen a cheetah, Taggles? You'd know one if you saw one?"

INTERVIEWER: You still couldn't see the light?

TAGGLES: I was completely in the dark, sir. But I says to meself, "Am I going to be beaten by this young scamp? No," I says to myself. "I'll stick to my guns," so I fired back point-blank with: "Yes, a cheetah is a bigger hump for trouble than you are yourself, Master D'Arcy!" So he said, innocent-like: "How fast can a cheetah run, Taggles?" So I scratched my head, feeling I was near splintered, but remembering what I'd read, and determined to stick to my guns, I replied: "As fast as a cannon ball, young sir."

Blake at once tackled him on the subject.

"You're taking Outram?" he asked abruptly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You'd better not."

"Wats!"

"Look here, Gussy!" said Blake earnestly. "It will all come out about that fellow, sooner or later."

"Wubbish!"

"It will come out that he's an impostor, that he's been in a reformatory, and that he's done something with the chap whose name he's taken. And when it comes out, you oughtn't to be mixed up in it, you chump. What would Lord Conway think if he knew what the fellows thought of Outram here?"

"Old Conway would wegard you as a set of asses."

"Suppose you stay in and play cricket instead?" suggested Digby.

"Imposs, deah boy! I awwanged with old Conway to visit him neahly a week ago. He is expectin' me this aftahnoon."

"He isn't expecting a reformatory hooligan along with you," growled Herries.

"I wefuse to heah that wemark, Hewwies."

"Oh, you're a champion ass!" said Blake. "I suppose there's no stopping you. Look here, if you like, I'll chuck the cricket, and come with you instead of Outram."

"I shall be very pleased with your company, Blake, if you will pwomise to be chummy with my fwend Outwam. He will come, too."

"Oh, rats!"

And Jack Blake did not chuck the cricket.

After dinner, Tom Merry & Co. went down to Little Side, and Arthur Augustus looked for Outram.

He found the outcast of the Fourth in his study. He was looking gloomy and grim.

"Weady, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"Ye-es. You're sure you want to take me, D'Arcy?"

"I have asked you, haven't I, Outwam?"

"Yes. But if you'd rather not, on second thoughts, as you're going to meet your brother and some of his friends—"

"Wats! Weally, Outwam, you are speakin' as if there were somethin' in that wotten slandah against you!"

"I don't mean that, of course. But you know what all the fellows think."

"Bothah the fellows! It's a wippin' aftahnoon for a long spin."

Outram nodded, and the two juniors went to the bike-shed and wheeled out their bicycles, while the cricketers were starting play on Little Side.

Levison of the Fourth was at the gates when they went out, and he started at the sight of Outram in D'Arcy's company.

"Is Outram going to Abbotsford with you, D'Arcy?" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus passed on with his noble nose in the air, disdaining to take the slightest notice of Levison's existence.

The strangely assorted chums mounted their machines and pedalled away.

Levison stared after them. He had not counted on that. Mr. Weekes and his precious friends would have two instead of one to encounter in the wood that evening, if Outram

were keeping with the swell of St. Jim's all the afternoon.

But, after all, they would be only two school-boys against five or six grown men. The "mauling" of Arthur Augustus would come off, all the same, and Outram would come in for his share of it.

Careless of Levison and his reflections, and little dreaming of the dastardly scheme laid by the cad of the Fourth, the two cyclists pedalled away in the summer afternoon.

Outram's clouded face cleared very soon, and he was cheerful enough by the time they arrived at Abbotsford, where they met Lord Conway. And that afternoon was one of the brightest Outram had known since he had come to St. Jim's—a bright spot in the midst of the shadows that had so strangely fallen upon his life.

CHAPTER 10.

Caught in the Trap!

"WHAT a wippin' aftahnoon!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark in a contented tone as the two juniors were cycling home along the Wayland Road in the cool of the evening.

They had left themselves just time to reach St. Jim's by locking up.



As the two juniors reached the heart of the wood, Arthur and his two looking men, each with a handkerchief tied over his face, all exclaimed

"Ripping!" said Outram. "Your brother's a splendid chap, D'Arcy. And he's met my father, too. He knew me by my likeness to dad." Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"I wish some of the chaps had been there to hear old Conway talkin' to you," he remarked. "It would have shown them what uttah asses they are. It is vevy remarkable that the chaps should let a wottah like Levison lead them by the nose. But it will all blow ovah in time."

"I'm afraid it won't," said Outram quietly. "And I'm afraid that if you stick to me, D'Arcy, you'll soon find yourself in trouble with your own friends."

"Oh, they will come wound!" said Arthur Augustus confidently. "And if they don't, I shall always tell them vevy plainly what I think of their bwains. They will have to admit in the long wun that I am quite wight, you know. They always have to admit that in the long wun."

Outram fell silent.

"Here we are!" said Arthur Augustus, as they reached the end of the footpath that led away through the wood. "Lift your bike ovah this stile, Outwam. We shall be home in less than half an hour now, and Taggles won't have any excuse for shuttin' us out and weportin' us."



Augustus jammed on his brakes. Three or four rough-earred in the path ahead, blocking the way. "Footpads!" said Outram.

The machines were lifted over, and the juniors remounted and rode along the dusky path through the wood.

The footpath was a lonely place towards night-fall, and the cyclists had it all to themselves for some distance, at least.

But as they reached the heart of the wood, Arthur Augustus jammed on his brakes.

Three or four dusky figures appeared in the path ahead, blocking the way.

The two riders slowed down, and, as they did so, a couple of figures emerged from the wood behind them, cutting off their retreat.

"Pway get aside!" called out Arthur Augustus. A savage laugh was the only answer.

"Bai Jove! They mean to stop us!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

The two men behind were running on now, and the four ahead had closed up together. It was deep dusk under the trees, but the juniors could see that they were roughly clad men, and that each of them had a handkerchief tied across his face, to conceal his features.

Outram's teeth came together with a snap.

"Footpads!" he said.

"Gweat Scott!"

The two juniors jumped off their machines. It was evidently useless to charge the four burly men in the path. They were trapped!

"Back up, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, quite coolly. "They're not goin' to wob us, if I can help it!"

Outram nodded.

The two bicycles were jammed against a huge tree-trunk beside the path. The juniors stood warily, waiting for the ruffians, who had joined forces, and were now advancing on them.

"What do you want?" demanded Arthur Augustus, when the party was within a few paces. "I warn you to keep your distance!"

A fat man, with a squat figure, evidently the leader of the party, chuckled in an evil way.

"We want you," he said, in a deep, husky voice, disguising his natural tones. "The other bloke can clear off."

"If you intend to wob us——"

"That aint all. You can clear off, young shaver!"

Outram did not move.

"Do you 'ear me?" exclaimed the fat man angrily. "You aint' our game. You can clear off, and don't waste time."

Outram shrugged his shoulders. Evidently, he had no intention of deserting his chum.

"Well, if you'll 'ave it, too, you can 'ave it!" growled the leader of the footpads. "Rush 'em!"

"Back up, deah boy!"

There was a rush of the footpads. It was evident that their intention was not merely robbery, and there was nothing to do but to resist. Not that Arthur Augustus would have been tamely robbed, in any case. He put up his hands valiantly, and hit out fiercely as the roughs rushed on.

Outram's eyes glittered.

For a single instant hesitation was visible in his manner. But the sight of Arthur Augustus reeling under the blows of two of the footpads was more than enough for him.

He fairly hurled himself into the combat.

The result was a surprise for the footpads. They looked on Outram as a mere schoolboy, of no

more account than Arthur Augustus. But they very quickly found out their mistake.

Crash, crash!

There was a wild yell from Mr. Weekes as Outram's fist was planted firmly upon the handkerchief that hid his face.

The bookmaker went down like a log—went down as if a cannonball had struck him. And one of his comrades fell across him, with a shriek. The others backed away hastily.

Those two terrible blows, dealt as if by a boxer, had astounded them, and they backed off in alarm.

For a moment the two juniors stood unassailed.

Arthur Augustus panted. He was reeling against the big tree, dazed by several heavy blows that had reached him.

"Bwavo, deah boy!" he gasped. "The wottahs! The feahful wuffians! Gwoogh!"

Mr. Weekes crawled to his feet. The handkerchief had been knocked from his face, and he could be recognised now. His nose was streaming red, and his lip was cut. He stood almost dazedly caressing his damaged face.

The other man who had fallen was still sprawling in the grass, and evidently unable to rise.

The five ruffians drew together, scowling and muttering.

"Are you hurt?" muttered Outram.

"Wathah thumped!" said D'Arcy breathlessly. "Bai Jove! You were hittin' out like a steam-hammah, deah boy!"

He looked rather curiously at Outram.

Weekes & Co. were still holding off, in a state of fury, mingled with doubt.

A sudden change came over D'Arcy's face.

Outram saw it, and his teeth came together.

"Outwam!" D'Arcy's voice was a little shaken. "Outwam, deah boy, you—you—you—"

He broke off.

Outram knew what was in his mind—what could not fail to enter even the unsuspecting mind of the swell of St. Jim's.

In that brief struggle Outram had not even been touched; not a single blow had reached him. And with a couple of drives he had felled two men one of whom was evidently quite knocked out. That he was a wonderful boxer, and of amazing strength, was not to be doubted longer. And D'Arcy remembered how he had had the gloves on with Outram in the gym, and had knocked him about helplessly. Blake had said that Outram was "spoofing" then. It was only too clear now that he had been spoofing. Kildare of the Sixth could not have stood up against Outram in a fair contest. His muscular development was rare—found once in a thousand times!

Arthur Augustus felt a chill at his heart.

"Outwam, deah boy!" he said feebly.

Outram smiled bitterly.

He had had that choice—to abandon his friend to the ruffians, or to betray himself—to betray a secret he had so long guarded.

He had made the choice, knowing what the result must be—that to save his only friend he had to forfeit that friend's faith and confidence, perhaps even his friendship.

"Look out!" he muttered.

Mr. Weekes had made a step forward, and his followers gathered behind him, growling.

The attack was coming.

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CHAPTER 11.

A Fight Against Odds!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS braced himself to meet the attack.

He had had several savage blows already, and was very nearly knocked out.

It was pretty clear that most of the fighting would fall to Outram.

But Mr. Weekes was disposed to parley.

"I give you a chance to clear off, you young 'ound," he said hoarsely. "Our business ain't with you!"

"Both or neither!" said Outram.

"It's that wotten wascal Weekes," said D'Arcy faintly. "That wotten bookmakah I thwashed the othah day!"

Mr. Weekes ground his teeth.

"You're goin' to have that back, with interest, my pippin!" he said. "When I done with yer I shall be surprised if you can crawl 'ome!"

"You uttah wascal!"

"I hain't no quarrel with this 'ere young 'ound," said Mr. Weekes. "I give 'im a chance to clear. You 'ear me, you young 'ound? You take a 'and in this game that don't concern you, and you'll get treated the same as the other. We'll maul yer till you can't crawl. Cut off, while you've got the chance!"

"I'm staying," said Outram quietly, "and you won't maul us so easily. I've knocked out tougher men than you!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy.

"I'm not only not going," said Outram, his eyes glittering, "but I'm going to thrash you, you scoundrel! You don't know what this means to me, but I'll make you suffer for the harm you've done. Come on, D'Arcy!"

And Outram, without waiting to be attacked, rushed forward and renewed the fight.

Arthur Augustus backed him up valiantly.

In a second there was a fearful struggle, wild and whirling, in the shade of the trees on the lonely path.

Mr. Weekes went down under a drive that almost fractured his jaw, and another of the ruffians dropped half-stunned. At the same moment Arthur Augustus was felled like a log, and he sank, groaning, into the grass.

He made an effort to rise, but sank back again.

Three of the footpads were attacking Outram savagely. He stood close beside his fallen chum, facing the odds gallantly.

Fierce blows had rained on him in those brief moments. His nose was streaming with blood; one of his eyes was blinking; his forehead was cut.

But he did not seem to feel his injuries. His face was savage, his teeth were clenched, and he threw himself into the unequal fight as if he enjoyed it. The St. Jim's fellows would not have known the quiet, sedate Fourth Former if they had seen him now. They would have taken him for some youthful champion of the ring.

Trample, trample! Crash! Bump!

With savage oaths, the roughs assailed the junior as he stood over Arthur Augustus, defending him.

Four of them were down now, groaning in the grass, hurled there by drives that seemed to have come from a sledgehammer.

The others had fastened on Outram like cats, and were seeking to drag him down. Once on the

(Continued on page 22.)



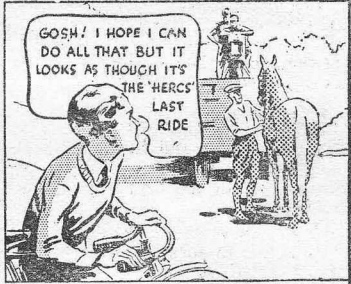
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ground, piled on by the ruffianly gang, even his amazing strength could not have saved him.

But he stood like a rock.

His fist crashed into a savage face with a blow like that of a mallet, and a groaning rascal dropped at his feet.

Outram closed with the other, grasping him as in hands of iron, and the ruffian fairly crumpled up in his grip.

"Ow, ow! Let up!" he panted.

Outram dragged him fairly off his feet, whirled him round, and hurled him to the earth with a crash.

He groaned and lay still.

The gang were beaten.

Mr. Weekes had already crawled away; he had had more than enough. One of his gang had followed him into the thickets. Four of them sat or lay dazed in the grass, watching Outram with terrified eyes, and showing no desire whatever to renew the conflict.

"A bloomin' young boxer!" groaned Mr. Weekes, as he crawled away in the thicket. "Oh, my lor! I ain't got a tooth that ain't loose! Ow! That young 'ound would make a fortune in the ring! Ow, ow, ow!"

Outram bent over Arthur Augustus.

"You're hurt?" he muttered.

"I—I—I'll try to get up!" muttered Arthur Augustus faintly. "I'm sowsy I couldn't help you, Outwam! Where are they?"

"Knocked out!" said Outram coolly.

Arthur Augustus sat up.

His bruised eyes wandered over the field of battle. There were only four of the footpad gang to be seen, and they were making off, muttering and groaning.

The swell of St. Jim's could hardly believe his eyes.

Outram raised the junior to his feet without an effort.

"They're going," he said. "It's all over, D'Arcy. I hope you're not very much hurt, old chap. I did my best."

"I am wathah hurt, but it does not mattah. Those wottahs were goin' to injah me because I thwashed that wottah Weekes. I—I might have been—" Arthur Augustus shivered a little as he realised what would have happened to him if Outram had not been there. "Outwam, 'deah boy, I am vevy much obliged to you!"

Outram smiled bitterly.

The swell of St. Jim's was full of gratitude, but his tone had changed. He could not help that. Even into the simple mind of Arthur Augustus the truth had been borne at last. There was only one fellow who could have put up that fight against odds, and that fellow was George Parkiss of Hilstall!

Arthur Augustus knew it now, and Outram knew that he knew it.

He avoided meeting Outram's eyes, afraid that his own would tell what was in his mind.

But Outram did not need telling.

"Can you walk?" he asked quietly.

"My—my head is wathah swimmin'," muttered Arthur Augustus, leaning heavily on his companion. "I—I will try."

"You can't walk," said Outram, "and you can't ride. Get on my back."

"What?"

"I shall have to carry you into Rylcombe, and get a cab or something. I'll come back for the bikes."

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"You—you can't cawwy me a mile!"

"I could carry you ten miles! Come on!"

Arthur Augustus made no further demur.

Outram caught him up as if he had been an infant, and bore him along the dusky footpath.

Not a word was spoken as they went, but their thoughts were bitter.

They reached the village at last, and the cab at the station was engaged to take D'Arcy to the school.

"You're comin'?" said D'Arcy, as Outram placed him in the cab.

"I'm going back for the bikes."

"You can't!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Leave them there. Those wottahs may set on you again!"

Outram laughed grimly.

"They wouldn't set on me for a thousand pounds," he said. "Some of them will be laid up for a week or more, as it is; but there's no danger of a reformatory this time!" he added bitterly.

Arthur Augustus groaned.

The cab drove away towards the school, and Outram disappeared by the footpath through the wood.

CHAPTER 12.

A Startling Confession!

"THAT ass has missed calling-over!" growled Blake.

Jack Blake was referring to the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

After the House match the chums of Study No. 6 had gone down to the gates to wait for D'Arcy.

But Taggles came out to lock the gates as the dusk deepened, and the swell of St. Jim's had not arrived.

Blake & Co. went in to tea.

When tea was finished, still Arthur Augustus and Outram had not put in an appearance.

They had been marked absent at calling-over, and Kildare had inquired after them.

There was only one fellow in the School House who could have given information, and Levison of the Fourth had no intention of doing so.

Levison was not wholly easy in his mind.

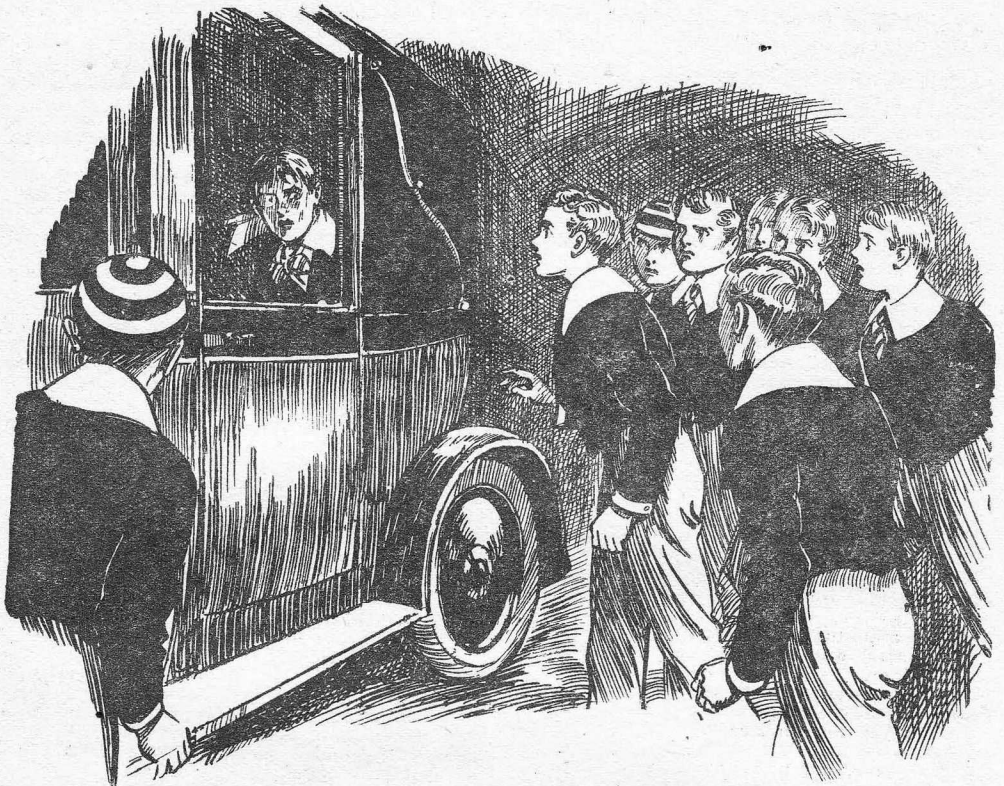
He knew what must have taken place under the shadows of the trees on the lonely footpath. As the time passed on, and D'Arcy did not return, his uneasiness increased. He had intended that the swell of St. Jim's should be subjected to a terrible beating, beside which a flogging would be a pleasant experience. But he wondered now whether Mr. Weekes, in his rage and revenge, had gone too far, and inflicted some serious injury on the unfortunate junior.

Levison was a rascal, but that thought alarmed him. When nine o'clock rang out, and D'Arcy had not returned, the cad of the Fourth was in a very unenviable frame of mind. He wished fervently that he had never thought of that cunning scheme for "getting even" with the swell of St. Jim's.

He pictured D'Arcy lying under the dark trees, perhaps unconscious and severely injured, and he shuddered at the picture.

But he dared not speak.

If D'Arcy was there, there he had to remain. For his safety's sake, the cad of the Fourth must be silent.



"What's happened?" exclaimed Tom Merry, as the juniors saw Arthur Augustus' pale, bruised face in the cab. "Where's your bike? Where's Outram?" "We've had a fearful adventure, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "We were attacked in the wood by a gang of wotten footpads!"

Blake looked into Tom Merry's study with a worried face.

The Terrible Three were busy on "Tom Merry's Weekly," but they turned from their editorial labours as Blake came in.

"Hasn't Gussy turned up?" asked Tom.

"No. He's missed calling-over."

"Delayed at Abbotsford, perhaps?" suggested Manners.

Blake shook his head.

"Kildare's reported it to Railton, and he's telephoned to Lord Conway's friends. Lord Conway says D'Arcy and Outram left there at six."

"Then he had lots of time to get in."

"He could have got in by calling-over, if he bucked up," said Blake. "Dash it all, what's become of him? He seems to want to miss bedtime as well as call-over!"

"Can't have been an accident," said Tom. "Outram's with him. Both of them can't have had accidents."

"Then why the dickens doesn't he come in?" growled Blake. "I didn't like that rotter going with him!"

"My hat! You—you don't think——" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Well, no; only the chap's a reformatory hooligan, and you never know when that kind of specimen is going to break out," said Blake

uneasily. "You see, what can be keeping them? It's past nine!"

"Punctures, perhaps," said Lowther.

"But they could have walked the whole distance in this time, or in less."

"It's jolly queer."

The Terrible Three put the "Weekly" aside. They were as anxious as Blake. D'Arcy's absence was inexplicable; and somehow it added to their uneasiness to know that he was in the company of the fellow whom they believed to be George Purkiss, late of Hilstall Reformatory.

"Let's go down to the gates," said Tom.

Herries and Dig joined them in the passage. They were equally anxious about the missing junior. All the anxiety of the chums was for Arthur Augustus—none for Outram of the Fourth. And impossible as it seemed that the reformatory "hooligan" could have harmed his companion, a heavy disquietude weighed upon their minds.

There was the sound of a motor-car on the road, as they looked out through the bars of the big gate.

The station cab stopped outside.

"Gussy!" shouted Blake, in relief. "Is that you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, deah boy!" came a faint voice through the dusk.

"Anything the matter?"

"Yaas."

"Buck up, Taggles!"

The porter unlocked the gates, and they swung open.

The cab turned in, and was surrounded in a moment by the juniors.

Through the darkness of the interior of the cab they saw Arthur Augustus' face, pale, with dark bruises on it; and he was alone.

"What's happened?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Where's your bike? Where's Outram?"

"We've had a feahful adventure, deah boys! We were attacked in the wood—a gang of wotten footpads, with that wuffian Weekes—"

"Are you hurt?"

"Yaas. Only some hard knocks, though—not what that wuffian intended. Outwam defended me," said Arthur Augustus quietly. "I was knocked wight out, but he kept them off, and licked them."

"Outram did!" ejaculated Blake, with a pang of remorse for his half-formed suspicions.

"Yaas, and cawwed me on his back to Wylcombe. I couldn't walk. He put me in this cab and went back for the bikes."

"Back into the wood after dark," said Lowther. "And that's the fellow we used to call a funk!"

"More like a lunatic, I should say!" remarked Manners. "If Weekes and his gang are still there—"

"He is quite safe, deah boys!"

"How many were there of them?" asked Digby.

"Six!"

"And—and Outram beat off a gang of half a dozen roughs?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus crimsoned.

"Yaas," he said, in a low voice.

"Oh!" said Tom.

"Dwive on, please," said D'Arcy, and the cab rolled on towards the School House.

The juniors followed it slowly, with sombre faces. During the drive home to the school, Arthur Augustus had been thinking hard.

The scene in the wood had enlightened him—he could not help that. He knew what would be the verdict of St. Jim's when it was known. It would be taken as the final proof of Outram's imposture, and even D'Arcy would be unable to deny it now.

Outram had been playing a part, and, as if by the irony of fate, it was his pluck and devotion that caused the proofs to pile up against him. Had he allowed the governor of Hilstall to be crushed under the car; had he deserted D'Arcy in the wood, nobody but Levison would have believed that he was George Purkiss, of Hilstall. His own brave actions had condemned him, as Arthur Augustus realised miserably.

D'Arcy had wondered if silence could be kept. But he knew that that was impossible. What had happened in the wood must be told; he had to account for the state he was in, and the police must be set on the track of the footpads.

There was no concealing such an affray. Outram's gallant defence of his chum was fated to be the last nail in the impostor's coffin.

The impostor! Even D'Arcy could not help realising now that Outram was an impostor. It was the bitterest blow of all to the simple junior. His trust had been misplaced—yet, though he realised it, he could not falter in his friendship towards the lad who had stood between him and

brutal injury. But his heart was as heavy as lead.

Mr. Railton came to the door of the School House, and stepped to the side of the cab as it stopped. His eyes fell upon D'Arcy's pale, bruised face with a startled look.

Arthur Augustus explained what had happened, and he entered the School House leaning hard on the Housemaster's arm.

Blake, Herries, and Dig hurried in, and they took him to Study No. 6 to render what aid they could.

Mr. Railton went to the telephone and rang up the police station to give them news of the affray.

Then he went down to the gates in great anxiety for Outram.

He had heard D'Arcy's story with the greatest astonishment, and he feared for the safety of the junior who had gone back into the wood. But a little later there came the whir of cycles in the road, and Outram pedalled up, wheeling D'Arcy's cycle.

He jumped off at the gate, and raised his cap to the Housemaster.

"Thank goodness you have returned, Outram!" exclaimed Mr. Railton, in great relief. "How could you be so foolhardy as to venture back into such a dangerous place?"

"I did not think there was any danger, sir," said Outram quietly. "Those ruffians were gone."

"They might have attacked you again. However, no matter; you are not hurt."

"Only a bruise or two, sir."

"D'Arcy has told me how gallantly you acted, Outram." Mr. Railton looked curiously at the junior. "You have behaved very bravely and nobly, my boy. It is extraordinary that you should have been able to deal with such odds. You must possess a very remarkably developed strength."

"Yes, sir," said Outram. "I am very strong."

"Outram"—Mr. Railton paused a moment—"you have shown great courage to-day. I am not unaware of the estimation in which you were held by your schoolfellows, owing to your disinclination to fighting. It appears clear now that you could have nothing to fear in any encounter—even with a senior. May I ask you, Outram, why you have exercised such an extraordinary patience, even to the extent of allowing your schoolfellows to believe you wanting in courage?"

Outram did not reply for a moment.

"I had a good reason," he said at last. "I wasn't always so careful. I gave way to my temper once, and used my strength against a fellow, and—and it ruined my life. I had a lesson then, and—" He paused. "I can't stay at the school any longer, sir, after what has happened."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Housemaster.

Outram smiled bitterly.

"I mean that after this, sir, everybody at St. Jim's will be quite certain that I am George Purkiss, the boy convict of Hilstall."

"Nonsense! You have proved that your name is the name you bear."

"That is true, sir. I am Valentine Outram, but—"

"But what?"

"But I am George Purkiss, too," he said quietly. "It can't be kept dark any longer, and I must go."

"Are you out of your senses?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"It is the truth, sir. The whole House knows it."

Mr. Railton gave him a startled look. He could read the dumb suffering in the boy's face.

"Take your bicycle in, Outram, and then come to my study," he said quietly.

"Yes, sir."

The Housemaster, with a knitted brow, strode back to the School House.

CHAPTER 13.

Under Two Names!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY lay back in the armchair in Study No. 6.

His chums had been looking after him. They found a dozen big bruises on the hardly used junior, and he was still somewhat dizzy, but he was recovering.

Fortunately, no serious injury had been done.

Tom Merry & Co. were silent now, and Arthur Augustus was silent, too. They knew one another's thoughts.

D'Arcy's chum was George Purkiss, of Hil-stall. He had been "spoofing," and there could no longer be a doubt. That was not all, for the miserable thought hammered in D'Arcy's mind—if his chum was Purkiss, where was the real Valentine Outram? Did the strange junior's secret include the secret of a terrible crime?

There was a tap at the door, and it opened. Outram of the Fourth looked in.

The juniors coloured as they looked at him, all feeling awkward and embarrassed.

Outram came in quietly and closed the door.

"I can come in?" he said.

"Of—of course," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "I twust you are not feelin' vewy knocked about?"

"Not at all. And you?"

"I'm gettin' on all wight. I was knocked out. That awful wottah Weekes meant to injure me vewy seviosuly, I think. Jolly lucky that you were with me, Outwam!"

"It was lucky," said Tom Merry.

"And lucky I was able to deal with the brutes," said Outram. "Lucky that I am the fellow I am."

There was a dead silence.

"Don't go," said Outram, as the Terrible Three made a move towards the door. "There's something I've got to say before I leave St. Jim's, and I'd like you to hear it."

"Leave St. Jim's," repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes; it's come to that." Outram's lips curved in a bitter smile. "You know as well as the rest that I'm George Purkiss, of Hilstall, now."

D'Arcy gave a groan.

"Why—why didn't you tell me?" he muttered. "It's howwid! I—I didn't want to believe it—and it's a wotten shame aftah what you've done for me—only I couldn't help seein'—"

"Of course, you couldn't help it," said Outram. "But perhaps I'm not quite so bad as you may have thought—all of you. Levison has suggested that I have got Valentine Outram out of the way somehow, and taken his place. It seems clear enough to you, I suppose, now you know that I am the reformatory boy Levison took

me for. But you need not think me worse than I am. I am Valentine Outram."

"You can't be two persons at once," muttered Lowther.

Outram smiled.

"I can—and I am," he said. "I am both Valentine Outram and George Purkiss. I am the son of Major Outram, and I am the prisoner of Hilstall Reformatory who was under the charge of Levison's uncle. Now that you know, I can tell you; but outside this study I shall keep up the pretence I have tried to keep up so long, for the sake of my father's name. It will not take me long to explain. Last year, while my father was abroad, I went to stay with my uncle, and at that time I went to Brighton for a holiday. There I got into a row with a rough. We fought, and—and I hurt him."

Outram's voice quivered a little.

"You know—now—that I am strong for my age. You would not guess it to look at me, but you know it now. I am a good boxer, and as strong as many boxers years older than myself. I was proud of my strength once. Nobody could stand against me in a fight, and I was



Plumber (to mate): "Haven't we forgotten something, Bert?"

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often in fights. But—but what happened that time at Brighton cured me of my desire to fight. The man I fought with was as much to blame as I was, as far as that went. But I lost my temper; I beat him, and he was hurt. He would never be the same man again afterwards, and—and I was taken in charge by the police. My victim went to hospital, and I was taken before the magistrate."

He paused again.

There was silence in the study.

"I found myself in a cell," resumed Outram at last, his face very pale. "I had the prospect of punishment and disgrace before me—disgrace to an honoured name, disgrace to my people, disgrace to all who had anything to do with me. I knew that I must go to prison. But while I was thinking it out in a cell, a way out of that horrible disgrace came into my mind. I had nothing about me to prove my identity. I was in a strange town where no one knew me, and I had refused to give my name when charged. I resolved that when I was questioned I would give a false name, and keep silent concerning my people."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry. He understood at last.

"I carried out this plan. I gave the name of George Purkiss—the first that came into my mind. I was tried and sent to a reformatory—as George Purkiss. I became a prisoner at Hilstall."

"I—I undahstand now," said Arthur Augustus. D'Arcy's face had brightened.

It was bad enough, but not so bad as Levison believed—as he had wanted to make others believe.

George Purkiss had not come to St. Jim's under another's name; he had come in his own name. That much, at least, was true.

"But your people?" said Tom Merry, in wonder.

"My people did not know what had become of me. But afterwards I contrived to get a note sent to my uncle, telling him that I was gone to stay with friends in Scotland, and would write later. Even my uncle was not told what had happened to me. I was determined that no living being should ever know that George Purkiss, the boy convict, was Valentine Outram. My uncle was surprised, alarmed, anxious, as he did not hear from me again, but it could not be helped. Anything was better than disgrace. But—but you can imagine what my feelings were like in the restraint of the reformatory, and—and I broke out again. My temper, always bad, got the upper hand, and I fought with a warden and—and hurt him, and my sentence was lengthened. But—but that lesson was enough for me. When I was free at last I had made a resolve."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"You wesolved nevah to fight again?" he said. "I wemembah you told me somethin' like that the day you came here."

Outram nodded.

"I resolved that, whatever happened, I would never get into a fight again," he said. "I could not trust my temper or my strength. I went back to my uncle's house. He was angry at my long absence and silence. He questioned me, but I answered nothing. He supposed that I had been on a long holiday, and had been guilty of disrespect and negligence towards him, and he was angry, as you can believe. But I could not explain—I would not explain—the truth would have been a harder blow to him than his belief that I had been insolent and ungrateful. Naturally, he did not feel the same affection for me afterwards, and that is one reason why he sent me here. I came here supposing that George Purkiss was done with for ever, and that I could take up my life again as if that horrible incident had never happened. But I was mistaken."

"Levison," said Blake.

"It was rotten ill-luck that there was a fellow here who had seen me at Hilstall. I never dreamed that the governor of the prison had a nephew at St. Jim's—of course, I could not guess anything of the kind. Levison had seen me there, and he knew me at once. But his accusation was not believed. It was easy enough for me to prove that I was Valentine Outram." The junior smiled slightly. "And—and my reserve—that caused me trouble, too, as you know. Whatever I am, I am no coward, but only D'Arcy was able to see that I was not."

"Gussy was right," said Blake. "But—but—"

"I don't blame you," said Outram quietly. "You had no idea what I had been through, and you could not understand that a fellow might choose to be called a funk rather than enter into a scrap. I had had rather too much of scrapping."

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I had made a vow that I would never again raise my hand against anyone, and—and it was not hard to keep it. Not at first. But afterwards, when I was despised and avoided, I was tempted to break my word. But for D'Arcy I think I should have done so. But my luck was out all the time, for what happened when the governor of Hilstall came here gave me away, and you all guessed."

"We—we couldn't help it," faltered Tom Merry. "We didn't want to think badly of you, but—"

"But you thought I had been pretending to be a funk to make it clear that I was not George Purkiss. You were wrong—I did not pretend. It was rotten enough for me. But it helped me to keep the truth dark, and that helped me to keep to my resolve. But after what had happened that day I knew that the game would be up sooner or later. Still, I hoped that it might die away, that others would follow D'Arcy's example. So long as he believed in me I felt that I could stick it out. And now—"

He pulled himself together as his voice faltered.

"I had the choice to-night of keeping D'Arcy's confidence by allowing him to be brutally injured, or—or of losing it by defending him. You know what I chose. Then there was nothing left but to explain—and go. I'm going!"

"You're jolly well not goin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "The whole thing isn't half so bad as that wottah Levison made out. You are not an impostah, only—only you have a wathah wotten sewet to keep. Nobody will wepeat outside this study what you've said—"

"Not a word," said Blake.

"And the othah fellows will come wound in time," said D'Arcy.

Outram shook his head.

"It can't be! I can't explain to others what I've explained to you. I still have the secret to keep, for my name's sake. The affair will be forgotten when I'm gone—and the sooner the better. I must go—"

"But, weally—"

Arthur Augustus' voice died away. He knew that Outram was right, that St. Jim's was no place for him now.

Outram gave him an affectionate look.

"You know now that I have been in a reformatory—a prison."

"That makes no difference to me," said D'Arcy steadily. "You are my fwiend, deah boy, and I don't care for anythin' else."

"I must go!" said Outram. "I have already told Mr. Railton the truth. There was nothing else for it. I am going to leave St. Jim's in the morning, and—and I'd like you to think the best you can of me."

"We shall always think of you as a splendid chap!" said Tom Merry, holding out his hand. "I wish you'd told us all this sooner. It's not nearly so bad as it looks. And we're not likely to forget that it was for another chap's sake that you gave yourself away."

"It's wotten for you to go!" said D'Arcy. "Wotten! But we are always goin' to be fwiends, all the same, and I shall see you again somewhere else."

The next morning, by the first train from Rylcombe, Valentine Outram left.

The St. Jim's fellows wondered a little.



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R. J. Bull, 92, Quoravian Road, Kingswood, near Bristol; pen pals; any age; anywhere.

N. C. Batchelor, Lismore, Fernleigh Road, Plymouth, Devon; age 15-16; tennis, postcards, and films; all letters answered.

C. Lister, 46, York Street, Norwich, Norfolk; age 12-16; films, radio, reading, writing, association football, cricket, tennis, and indoor games; British Empire.

G. Little, 37, Home Road, Battersea, London, S.W.11; age 15-17; films, sports, German, and books; Germany, France, or Canada.

V. Lewis, 23, Elmcroft Crescent, Golders Green, London, N.W.11; age 11-13; Football or cricket.

K. Bell, 22, Agrew Road, Gorton, Manchester, Lancs; age 14-19; all sports, chiefly Rugby and football, autographs, stamps.

Miss I. Brasier, 61, Frederick Street, Rockdale, Sydney, Australia; girl correspondents, age 12-15; any hobbies; U.S.A., Switzerland.

Miss H. Henderson, 4, Danehurst Street, Fulham, London, S.W.6; girl correspondents, age 13-16; stamps, geographical pictures; anywhere except the British Isles.

Miss Z. Stuart, 24, Effra Mansions, Cowstone Road, Brixton, London, S.W.2; girl correspondents, age 14-18; stamps, swimming, aviation, outdoor games.

Outram had drawn so much attention upon himself of late that his sudden departure could not fail to be commented upon.

Levison of the Fourth surmised that he had been "bowled" out, but at the first sneering word in regard to Outram the cad of the Fourth found himself collared by Tom Merry & Co. and bumped with great heartiness. And Levison held it wiser to keep his thoughts on the subject to himself after that.

Outram's secret remained a secret with Tom Merry & Co.

Whether Outram was really Purkiss, of Hilstall,

E. J. Edgson, 21, Oakland Avenue, Crows Hill, Enfield, Essex; age 15-18; Coronation and Silver Jubilee stamps.

R. Jenkins, 9, Colville Mansions, Poiris Terrace, Bayswater, London, W.11; cigarette cards, cinemas, film stars; Pacific Isles, California, Hawaii.

Miss M. Lazarus, 14, Junction Avenue, Parktown, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa; girl correspondents; sports, reading, stamps, photography; anywhere in the world except Australia.

A. Daniels, 15, Virgil Street, Waverley, N.S.W., Australia; age 11-15; stamps.

Miss E. Yih, 119, Warwick Street, Dingle, Liverpool 8; girl correspondents, age 13-15; cartoon drawing; all parts of the world.

D. Fairbrother, c/o Mrs. Chambers, King's Lodge, Stratford-on-Avon; pen pals; all sports.

Miss B. Knowles, 18, Dickens Avenue, Preston, Lancs; girl correspondents, age 13-16; swimming, films, first-aid, and books; all letters answered.

E. Bennett Booker, Edenmore House, Raheny, Co. Dublin, Ireland; age 14-17; Rugby and football; I.F.S.

J. Rivett, 3, Bury Grove, Morden, Surrey; age 12-17; Boys' Brigade, stamps; British Dominions and Colonies.

A. Jackson, 74, Mayeswood Road, Grove Park, London, S.E.12; age 11-14; stamps, story-writing, lettering and designing; U.S.A., Greece, Czecho-Slovakia.

R. Walker, 61, Cartwright Street, Warrington, Lancs; age 13-17; reading, writing, general topics; overseas, preferably France or Australia.

E. Burrows, 16, Hovingham Mount, Harehills, Leeds 8; age 12-13; football, ice hockey, stamps, farming; Australia, Canada, America, Empire.

J. Thorneley, 117, Cross Lane, Gorton, Manchester 18; age 15-17; cricket, football, boxing, all-in wrestling, tennis; Australia, U.S.A.

Miss A. Ewington, 1, Albert Villas Road, Acton, London, W.3; girl correspondents, age 18-21; snaps, postcards, books, guitars; all letters answered.

John Moyes, 59, West Park Street, Cowdenbeath, Fife; age 16-19; GEMS, "Magnets," football, films; Scotland, England, South Africa, Australia.

D. Young, 1, Newtown, Talaton, near Exeter, Devon; age 12-18; stamps, postcards; all over the world.

T. Pratt, 3504, West 19th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; age 13-15; sports, stamps; anywhere, especially Jamaica.

A. D. Olive, 8307, Blenheim Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; age 13-15; sports, reading.

Miss P. Black, 25, Wineco Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; girl correspondents, age 13-16; stamps, autographs; anywhere except Canada.

B. Katz, 92, Buitenkant Street, Gardens, Capetown, South Africa; any age; stamps and sport; Canada, England, India, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Australia, Jamaica, Straits Settlements.

P. A. Sleet, 21, Davistock Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex; age 15-17; stamps; Empire.

Miss P. Hepworth, 29, Bassett Road, Kensington, London, W.10; girl correspondents, age 15-18; stamps, cricket, swimming, scouts; any country.

Miss E. Birch, 279, Abbey Street, Derby; girl correspondents, age 13 upwards.

Miss J. Gilchrist, 5, Yron Avenue, Southend-on-Sea; girl correspondents, age 13-16; films, horses, sports, books; Canada, Australia, U.S.A.



was still a problem with the rest of the fellows, but the matter was soon forgotten.

Tom Merry & Co. thought kindly of the strange and wayward lad who had gone wrong, but had tried to atone for it, and who, by his own courage and devotion, had betrayed his own strange secret.

(Next Wednesday: "GRUNDY THE VENTRILOQUIST!" George Alfred, the funny man of St. Jim's, is at it again, and he's funnier than ever. Look out for his latest amusing antics.)

FORAGING FOR FOOD AND DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST FOREIGN FOES GIVES THE GREYFRIARS CASTAWAYS SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!

The Greyfriars Crusoes!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Accompanied by Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara of Cliff House School, Harry Wharton & Co., and Billy Bunter, Wun Lung, and Mark Linley take out a sailing boat for a trip to Seagull Island, a small, barren islet off the English coast.

They are about a mile out when a mist suddenly sweeps down over the sea and a storm breaks. The sails are ripped away by the gale, and the boat, half-swamped, is driven out to sea.

Fortunately for the Greyfriars juniors the boat runs ashore on Seagull Island, and everyone is saved. But the boat is wrecked, and the castaways have to spend the night on the island. The next morning they rescue some of the food from the boat and have breakfast. Just as they finish the meal the juniors are amazed to see a foreign-looking man appear on a rock fifty yards away.

(Now read on.)

Foreign Foes!

THE Greyfriars juniors stared at the foreign-looking sailor in blank amazement. Knowing that the isle was uninhabited, they had never dreamed of meeting anyone there. It immediately rushed upon their minds that theirs had not been the only wreck of the previous night. Some other craft had come to grief on the rocks, and this sailor was a survivor of the wreck.

"My hat!" said Frank Nugent. "So we're not alone here."

Harry Wharton frowned a little. It was not a wholly pleasant discovery. This man was not a British seaman. His dark skin, his keen black eyes told of foreign blood. He was evidently an Italian, or at least a member of some southern race, and Wharton guessed at once that there might be trouble. Was the man alone—or—

The question was answered almost before he had formed it in his mind. The dark-skinned man on the ridge turned back whence he had come, and waved his hand to someone as yet unseen, and gave a sharp whistle. A second and a third burly form appeared on the ridge, and stared down at the group of juniors.

"Three of them!" muttered Mark Linley.

This appeared to be the whole party. They came down the ridge towards the beach, speaking together in a language of which the juniors caught a few words. Its soft tones told of the Italian. The three foreigners grinned as they came up.

"Good greeting, signorine!" exclaimed the man who had first appeared, in very fair English. "It is a surprise that we meet. Is it you are also wrecked?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Our ship go down," said the man, with a gesture towards the seaward side of the isle. "We are wrecked. We have no food."

"There is food here, Marco," grunted one of the others.

Marco grinned.

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"True, Beppo, and the signori intend to invite us to eat. Is it not so?"

Harry Wharton hesitated. There was mockery in the man's manner, as if he knew that he could take by force what he chose. And the looks of the three Italians plainly enough showed that they would not stand on ceremony. Nor would Harry have wished to refuse to share with shipwrecked seamen. Every additional mouth was a serious matter, in the circumstances, but that could not be considered. But the boy doubted much if the Italians would be willing to take their share only.

"Come, signor," said Marco, who seemed to have authority over the others. "Is it not so?"

"You're welcome to share with us," said Harry. "We have only the quantity of food that you see, and it must last us until we're taken off."

"And when will that be, signor?"

"I don't know. It may be days, or even weeks."

Marco laughed.

"What you have there will not last many days."

"We're only having small allowances."

"That will not be enough for me. We are hungry, signor. Fall to!" said Marco, turning to his companions.

Harry Wharton stepped in their way.

"Hold on!" he said quietly, but with a glitter in his eyes. "This food belongs to us. We're willing to share with you, but only on our own conditions. An allowance—"

Marco grinned again.

"Stand aside! Do you think we shall be allowed by infants? All that is here is ours!"

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"You'll find that it isn't! Stand back!"

The grin vanished from Marco's dark face. An evil light glittered in his dark eyes.

The Greyfriars juniors closed up round Wharton. They were only boys, but the odds at least were on their side.

The two parties glared at one another for some moments. The girls looked on with fear and apprehension. Marco muttered a word or two to his companions in Italian, and they drew knives. At the glimmer of steel Marjorie and Clara shrank back, and the juniors turned pale.

There was no telling to what lengths the three ruffians might go, and the juniors had no weapons to use in a struggle. Yet Wharton did not move. All the obstinacy of his nature was aroused.

Marjorie Hazeldene ran to him and caught him by the arm.

"Harry! Don't—you shall not—"

And Bob Cherry dragged him away.

"It's no good, Harry; we can't buck against cold steel," he said in a low voice. "Don't play the giddy goat. Those scoundrels would stab you as soon as look at you!"

There was no help for it. There was no hope of success in a struggle with three armed ruffians. The juniors furiously and unwillingly drew back, and the three Italians sat down and commenced

CONTINUING OUR THRILLING YARN OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S ADVENTURES ON A BARREN ISLE.

eating a hearty meal—which left very little of the provisions that were to have lasted the castaways for days.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is rather too rich for Crusoe life. I'd rather be in the Remove-room at Greyfriars, thank you!"

"The ratherfulness of my worthy self is also great," said Hurree Singh.

"I say, you fellows, you might as well have let me make a good meal," said Billy Bunter tearfully. "It's rotten to see the grub going down those thieves' throats!"

Bunter's lamentations were not answered. The juniors were in gloomy and savage mood. To have to knuckle under to foreigners was naturally irritating to English lads, and to see the precious provisions that were required so urgently wasted so carelessly by the three ruffians was exasperating in the extreme. But they were helpless. And Harry Wharton could not help thinking that there might be worse to come.

In the Soup!

THE castaways spent the remainder of the morning in exploring the rocky islet, taking care to avoid the Italians. The latter, having finished a greedy meal, were lying on the sands in the sun, smoking, apparently untroubled by the fact that they were shipwrecked on a barren rock in the English Channel.

To find food and shelter in case of a return of bad weather were the first necessities. At the same time, Harry Wharton was thinking of making some signal to the mainland. Unfortunately, the isle was only in sight of Pegg Bay in clear weather. A flag had no chance of being seen, and it was doubtful if even a column of smoke from a fire would attract attention. But the latter idea was evidently the only useful one.

Bob Cherry looked round the barren rocks expressively when Harry suggested it. No tree or bush grew on the isle; only moss and seaweed could be seen on the weather-worn rocks. But in the hollows of the shore heaps of driftwood were gathered, rotting in the shallow water. Harry pointed to that.

"It's wet," said Nugent.

"It will dry in the sun. We can spread it out on the rocks, and make a fire with it presently."

"Right you are!"

And the juniors set to work. To drag the masses of wood out of the water and sand and spread them on the rocks was no light work, but nobody grumbled, except Bunter. The Owl of the Remove declared that the work was too hard for him, and that without sufficient nourishment he could not be expected to labour like a navy. And while the others were busy he disappeared.

The two girls gathered shellfish while the juniors were at work, for it looked as if the castaways would have to depend on that for food. Wun Lung, the Chinese, gathered some curious weeds, too, and explained when he was questioned that they would make edible soup.

As the Chinese could make delicious soups and stews of the most unpromising materials, the juniors did not doubt him, though as they looked at the greenish weeds they could not help thinking that a great deal of skill would be required to make them palatable.

There was ample wood on the shore for the juniors' purpose, and it was only a question of the labour of salving it. At a hint from Harry the



The stones flew hard and fast from the school-boy defenders of the cave. Beppo shrieked as one crashed on his chin and hurled him to the rocks. Harry Wharton & Co. were putting up a stouter resistance than the three ruffians had expected!

juniors took care to select fragments that could be fashioned into handy cudgels with their pocket-knives. The three foreigners were pacific enough at present, but there was no telling how soon there might be trouble.

The juniors were busily engaged when a call from the girls down by the water's edge attracted their attention, and Harry looked round to see Marjorie waving her hand. In a few moments he had joined her.

"Look!" she said, pointing.

Wharton uttered an exclamation. On the half-sunken rocks of a little cove lay the remains of a shipwrecked brig, evidently a recent wreck, and he guessed at once that it was what was left of the vessel the Italians had belonged to.

The brig had simply been smashed on the rocks, and the water was washing in and out of the cabin portholes. On the fragment of the bows, visible in shallow water, Harry read the name of the vessel—Cavour, and then Palermo.

"We may be able to get something useful out of her," he said. "It's worth while trying, anyway."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Tit for tat," he remarked. "They've had our grub, and we're entitled to what we can lift here. But if we get anything out that's worth having those rotters will drop on us again, Harry."

Wharton's face set grimly.

"They won't find it so easy next time," he said.

"We can't tackle fellows who are ready to use knives, you know," said Hazeldene. "We shall have to draw a line at that."

"There are eight of us and we have cudgels,"

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said Wharton. "My idea is to get the things into a place where we can hold our own. There are caves among the rocks here. That's what we want."

It was evidently useless to labour at rescuing supplies from the wrecked brig until they had a place of safety to stow them in. It was already noon, and the sun was blazing down upon the isle. The heat was pleasant and cheering, and but for the thought of the enemy the juniors would have been light-hearted enough.

A little cloud of smoke arose among the rocks. It came from a fire lighted by Wun Lung. He had arranged three spars leaning together over it, in gipsy fashion, and his materials were all ready for roasting. All he wanted was a pot to sling over the fire, and that was not lacking for long.

The little Chinese scrambled into the wreck of the brig and brought a big iron pot out of the galley. With a grin of satisfaction, he washed it in a spring he had discovered near at hand, and then proceeded to sling it over the fire with his wonderful soup in it to cook. And curious as his materials were, a very savoury smell was soon rising from the pot.

Bob Cherry, who had begun a lunch on shellfish, stopped and looked towards the Chinese's gipsy-like arrangement with an appreciative sniff.

"My hat!" he said. "That doesn't smell so bad, you chaps."

"Good!" said Nugent. "What's it made of, Wun Lung?"

The Chinese grinned.

"Kind of seaweed," he said. "Velly good, and shellfish. Nearly donee."

And, as a matter of fact, the odour of the soup attracted Marjorie and Clara and all the juniors to the spot.

"I'm sure it's very good—nicer than the soup at Cliff House," said Clara. "It smells very nice. What a clever boy!"

"Me goodee cook," said Wun Lung, beaming.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where have you been, porpoise?"

Bunter grunted discontentedly.

"I've been resting," he said. "I'm exhausted. I say, what have you got there? It smells nice."

"Velly good!" said Wun Lung. "You findee shell, me servee you!"

Plates and spoons, of course, were conspicuous by their absence. Such utensils as the juniors had brought from Greyfriars were still in the wreck of their boat. But large shells from the shore served the purpose of plates, and they drank their soup from the edge of them.

Wun Lung served the soup with a big hollow shell, carefully washed for the purpose. The soup was really delicious and decidedly invigorating. Everybody wanted a second helping, and Bunter a third and fourth. And there was still a great deal remaining in the big iron pot when the meal was finished.

"My hat!" said Nugent. "The Chinese is worth his weight in oysters. If we have to begin cannibalism I vote we leave Wun Lung till last. When I think of what he could make of Bunter, I—"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look there!"

Three burly forms came into sight over the rocks. Either the Italians had caught the scent of the soup on the wind, or else they were on the prowl in the hope of finding something more to steal. Their dark faces brightened up at the sight

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of the fire and the swinging pot, and they quickened their pace towards the party. Harry Wharton set his teeth.

"It's the same game over again," he said.

"No matter!" said Wun Lung, with a curious grin. "Lettee them lob us again!"

"Yes; but—"

"Me tinkee they no likee soup."

"Why shouldn't they like it?"

Wun Lung grinned and showed a little ivory box he took from an inner pocket. He lifted the lid with his thumb, and a pink powder was revealed. He had his back to the approaching Italians, and they saw nothing.

"What's that?" asked Wharton.

"Allee lighttee!" murmured the little Celestial.

"Powder makee feel pain, velly muchee pain!"

He dropped the powder in the soup and concealed the box in his clothes. The juniors chuckled. If the Italians robbed them again they were likely to pay dearly for it this time. And there was no doubting the intentions of the three swaggering foreigners as they came up.

"We are much indebted to you, signor," said Marco. "We have finished all that there was, and we are still hungry. We will eat this soup with pleasure."

"You will touch it at your own risk!" said Wharton.

Marco grinned at his companions and spoke to them in Italian. They all grinned, and Beppo touched the haft of his sheath-knife significantly.

"We shall risk it, signori," said Marco. "I think we can manage the whole of it, so you bambini can go."

And the juniors not unwillingly left the spot. The three Italians seated themselves on the rocks round the fire and slung down the pot to the ground between them. Then they commenced to eat from the pot, using the shells for spoons.

The juniors watched them from a distance with great interest. The foreigners seemed to enjoy the soup as much as the juniors had enjoyed it. The powder added by the little Celestial had not made the flavour any different.

"Look here, have you been pulling our leg, you image?" demanded Bob Cherry, taking Wun Lung by the pigtail. "They don't seem to be suffering much."

"No pullee leg. Wait a little."

"Oh, I see! It begins to work later?"

"Allee light—what you tinkee?"

The three Italians rose from the feast, looked mockingly towards the juniors, and then strolled away over the rocks, and disappeared.

A Painful Penalty!

"HERE'S the very place!" exclaimed Mark Linley.

The juniors were exploring the big rocks that sheltered the cove where the brig had been wrecked. In the bright, warm afternoon, rambling among the rocks was pleasant, and for the time they had almost forgotten the Italians. Billy Bunter was asleep on the beach, but the others were all active enough.

Mark Linley's exclamation brought them all to him at once.

The junior was standing looking into the opening of a cave in the cliff that extended back farther into the shadows than the eye could penetrate. The cliff below the cave sloped down abruptly to the beach, so that the ascent was not easy. The cave was not more than five feet wide at the opening, but it was evidently of considerable interior dimensions.

"Good!" exclaimed Wharton, as he peered into the shadowy hollow of the rock. "That will suit us down to the ground. Let's explore it."

"Look out for pitfalls, then. It's jolly dark in there!"

It looked dark from the outside, but within, out of the blaze of the sun, it was only twilight. When the juniors became used to the dim light, they could see about them very well.

Wharton stepped towards the back of the cave. Here it narrowed to a width of less than two feet; but beyond this it again broadened into a second cave larger than the first. The ground was thick with fine sand, and through fissures in the rock overhead, the sunlight glistened in upon the sand.

"My hat!" said Nugent. "This is ripping! We can camp out here splendidly, and stack anything here we want to. We could easily keep the dagoes out of the cave if they tried to get in."

"Yes, we could!"

"We could roll some of the rocks across the entrance," remarked Linley, "and get some jagged chunks to pelt them with if they attack us."

"That's the idea!"

There was a sudden call from outside the cave.

"I say, you fellows, come here, quick!"

As a rule, Bunter's calling was not likely to be much regarded; but his voice was so excited now that the juniors ran out of the cave, grasping their cudgels. There was no telling what to expect from the three ruffians who shared the isle with them. But it was not an alarm of danger. Bunter was standing on a high rock, and grinning. "They're at it!" he exclaimed. "The row woke me up."

"Who're at what?" demanded Hazeldene.

"The foreigners—look at them wriggling. Can't you hear 'em?"

From beyond the rocks could be heard strange sounds. There was a succession of hair-raising groans, faint shrieks and cries, and the sound of a voice cursing in Italian.

Wun Lung executed a sort of hornpipe in his delight.

"What you tinkee?" he gurgled. "They feelee painee, velly bad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors clambered on the high rock beside Bunter. They could see the Italians from that coign of vantage. Beppo was stretched on his back on the ground, with both his hands pressed to his stomach, and groaning away as if for a wager. Marco was staggering to and fro, and his was the voice that used the emphatic words that were audible all over the islet. The third man was in a sitting posture, swaying to and fro in silent agony.

"My only hat!" gasped Wharton. "Are you sure you haven't overdone it, Wun Lung?"

"What you tinkee? No danger. They all light to-night."

"To-night! Do you mean to say they'll be like that all the rest of the afternoon?" demanded Wharton.

"What you tinkee?"

"By Jove!"

"Serve 'em jolly well right!" said Nugent.

"They'll learn to keep their hands from picking and stealing perhaps!"

"It will do them good," assented Wharton.

"What a row they're making! It's not so funny to them as it is to us. But while they're doubling themselves up like that, they can't interfere with

us, and we may as well go and gather up what's left of our property."

"Good wheeze!"

"Will you stay in the cave?" said Wharton, looking at Marjorie and Clara. "And if those brutes should happen to come this way, call out and we'll be back in a jiffy. Come on, you chaps—now's our chance!"

It was a chance too good to be lost. There were many things from the wreck of their boat that might be useful to the castaways. They hurried to the spot where they had come ashore, where broken bottles and empty salmon-tins remained to show where the ruffians had demolished their little store of provisions.

On the shore lay the canvas they had spread there to dry, with several utensils and their bags, and the spars of the boat. The tide was low, and the broken boat lay quite exposed to the sun now, and deep in the wet sand were jammed many articles the juniors had been unable to recover before. One of them was a portmanteau full of provisions, and Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles as he dragged it to safety and opened it.

"Any good?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather! The bread and cheese are no good, but there's some tins of salmon and corned beef, and a tin of pineapple, and a jar of jam. I may as well start on the pineapple now; it will do for a snack—"

"You may as well let it alone, you mean!" said Nugent, snapping the soaked bag shut. "I'll carry this!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Come on!" said Wharton. "We've got about the lot, I think."

And they hurried back with their salvage to the

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cave. As they went, the groans and cursing of the Italians still sounded in their ears. Marco & Co. were still paying the penalty of their robbery.

The Camp in the Cave!

MARJORIE'S eyes danced as she looked round the cave a little later. Few as were the articles saved by the juniors, they were enough to give the place a much more comfortable look.

Big chunks of wood were all they had to serve as chairs, but, covered with canvas and the juniors' coats, they were comfortable enough. In the outer cave Wun Lung had re-erected his cooking arrangement, and the smoke of the fire rose steadily to a wide fissure in the roof of the rock, and poured out into the open air.

The little Celestial already had another soup on the go, and he had enriched it with the contents of some of the tins. Although he had made so excellent a lunch of weeds and shellfish, there was no doubt, that corned beef improved the present soup. And as the sun went down the smell of that soup was refreshing to the castaways.

Just outside the cave a spring bubbled among the rocks, one of the many that existed on the island, so that a supply of fresh water was always at hand. And in the cave the boys discovered a fragment of an old boat, and by the spring a tin mug, which showed the place had been occupied before. Whether by shipwrecked seamen, or by a picnic-party from Pegg, they did not know—most likely the latter.

As the dusk deepened the glow of the ruddy fire was very cheerful in the cave. The juniors had been very hard at work, and they had really accomplished wonders. There were huge stacks of sun-dried wood now under the shelter of the cave, and several big rocks had been dragged to the entrance to block it up in case of necessity.

Just inside the narrow opening was a pile of jagged stones ready to be used as missiles in case of attack. They were likely to inflict painful wounds if thrown with any force, but in a fight with lawless foes armed with deadly weapons, the castaways could not afford to stand on ceremony.

It had been arranged that the inner cave was to be kept for the two girls, and at night the canvas was to be taken there to make up such beds as was possible. The juniors were to sleep round the fire in the outer cave, to keep it going and to be ready to repel an attack. So long as the fire was kept blazing, the heat of it was spread through the whole place, and cold was not to be feared, in spite of the scarcity of bed-clothes.

The juniors gathered in the cave at dusk, very well satisfied with themselves. They had done very well. And the smoke of the fire, rising in a dense column through the fissure in the rock overhead, was a signal to the land. Sooner or later it must be seen by someone in Pegg, or by a fisherman in his boat, and then rescue would come.

Meanwhile, although naturally concerned about the alarm that would be felt at Greyfriars, the juniors were not disposed to grumble. Things might have been very much worse.

"How long's that soup going to be?" said Bunter, as he sat down upon a rock. "I'm fearfully hungry and quite fagged out. If you don't mind, I'll have this tin mug instead of a shell, as I want a rather large helping."

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"Velly good!"
"Put some of the chunks of meat into it, too—"

"Me keepee chunkee meat for next soupee!"
"That's a good idea, in one way, but you may as well give me some. If you don't mind, you can bring it to me here, to save me getting up. I'm tired!"

"Me blingee," said the obliging Wun Lung.
When Wun Lung was very obliging it often meant trouble for somebody, but Bunter was too lazy to move. Wun Lung served the two girls, and Marjorie said the soup was delicious, and Clara declared that it was ripping. Then the little Chinese took the tin mug for Bunter, and Bunter watched him with an anxious eye.

Wun Lung came towards him with the tin mug half-full and handed it to him—and let go before the fat junior had hold of it.

There was a wild yell from Bunter.
The hot soup splashed over his trousers, and he sprang up and danced in the cave as if he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Ow! Wow! Groo!"
"Go it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
"Keep it up!"

"You rotters!" howled Bunter. "I'm scalded!"
"Well, go on dancing, then; it will relieve your fearful injuries. And it's funny."
But Billy Bunter did not go on dancing.

He received no sympathy, and he rubbed his trousers dry and sat down again, looking very sulky. By that time all the juniors had been served, and when Bunter asked for his helping Wun Lung shook his head.

"You servee," he explained.
"Oh, really, you rotten heathen, you spilt the stuff over me!"

"Wastee good soupee!"

"It was your fault!"

"No savvy."

"I want some more!"

"No savvy!"

The juniors roared with laughter. Bunter blinked round at them, growing as red as a turkey cock in his excitement.

"You—you rotters, I'm famished! That heathen brute spilt the soup over me on purpose! I'm going to have some more!"

"P'l'aps me givee some if goodee boy!" said Wun Lung, relenting a little.

Bunter accepted his new helping, which was a plentiful one, and his fat face grew more contented as he travelled through the soup.

It was quite dark in the cave now, save for the ruddy glow of the fire. The sky was no longer seen through the fissures in the rocks overhead. Night had fallen upon the isle—the second night of the Crusoes' stay there. But this was a much more comfortable nightfall than the previous one.

They had almost forgotten the Italians again, but as they finished their meal, a sudden sound brought the ruffians back to their minds.

From the silent shore came only the wash of the sea, but through the silence rang the chink of a falling stone.

The juniors were on their feet in a moment. They knew that the stone must have moved under human tread—the enemy were at hand.

In the ruddy glow of the fire the boys exchanged startled glances. Their hearts were beating faster now.

"The Italians!" muttered Linley.

Wharton ran towards the entrance and the

others followed him. There would be no more surrender to the three bullies. Wharton looked out of the opening upon the shore. The sun had gone down, and it was almost completely dark outside. He could see the glimmer of the sea and the dim shapes of the great rocks.

Among the rocks were three moving shadows, and as Wharton caught sight of them, he also was sighted at the opening of the cave, for there was a sharp exclamation in Italian. Then the footsteps of the ruffians sounded on the sloping rocks as they came quickly towards the cave.

Facing the Foe!

HARRY WHARTON stood in the opening of the cave. A flush of ruddy firelight behind him threw his figure into relief. He raised his hand as the Italians came clambering up the ascent.

"Stop!"
So sharp and commanding was his voice that the three ruffians involuntarily stopped. They looked towards him.

"Stop where you are!" Harry went on in a steady voice. "You've robbed us twice, and that's the end of it. You can't come here!"

Marco laughed.
"We are hungry, signor."

"Then find food, as we've done!"
"It is easier to take it than find it, signor!" said the Italian, with a scoffing laugh. "You will not be fool enough to try to stop us!"

"If you take another step this way you will suffer for it. I give you fair warning!"

"Young fool!"
"Take the warning, that's all!"

Marco spoke in a low tone to his companions, and the three of them came quickly on. Harry stepped back into the cave, and the juniors, shoving all together, shifted a big boulder into the spot where he had been standing. The entrance was now blocked nearly breast high, and the juniors stood behind their defences ready for battle.

Marjorie and Clara were very pale, but quiet. It was Billy Bunter who was more frightened than anybody else. The fat junior had left off eating, a sure sign that he was very much disturbed. He was now looking helplessly round in search of a hiding-place, blinking excitedly to and fro through his big spectacles.

Nobody took any notice of Bunter. All the other juniors were ready to back up Wharton.

Mark Linley jammed a fresh heap of wood on the fire to dim the glow of it, so that the enemy could not have the advantage of seeing the defenders. The interior of the cave was now darker than outside, and the juniors were able to see the shadowy figures of the Italians more clearly as they came on.

Wharton's voice rang out again as the three dusky forms came close to the entrance.

"Will you go back?"
An oath in Italian was the only response, and they came on.

Wharton gritted his teeth.
It was war now, and no time for half-measures.

He caught up a jagged stone and threw it with sure aim at the nearest Italian.

There was a yell from Marco.
He reeled back, clapping his hand to his chest where the stone had struck him. Harry could have crashed it into his face as easily; but he still hoped that the ruffian would take warning.



Wun Lung handed Bunter the mug of soup—but let go of the mug before the fat junior had hold of it. The hot soup splashed over Bunter's trousers and he sprang to his feet and danced and yelled. "Ow! Wow! Groo! I'm scalded!"

Marco reeled for a moment, and then sprang forward furiously. His black eyes were blazing with rage. A knife gleamed in his hand.

But the juniors did not falter. Five or six jagged stones whizzed together through the air, and three of them struck the Italian full in his dusky face.

Hard and jagged, and hurled with all the force of strong arms, the stones were deadly at close quarters. Marco staggered back, his face streaming with blood, and shrieking with the pain of his wounds.

Wharton's face was pale now, but hard as iron.

"Keep it up!" he said shortly.
The stones flew hard and fast. Beppo shrieked as one crashed on his chin and hurled him on the rocks and the other rascals dodged out of the way.

Marco sprang forward again with blazing eyes. Stone after stone struck him, but he came on, grinding his teeth. The murderous gleam in his eyes showed only too plainly what the boys were to expect if he got to close quarters. But though the stones did not stop him, the defence was still good.

He came up to the barricade of rocks, and, not expecting it there, crashed against it and reeled back. And as he reeled Nugent leaned over the rock and dealt him a hard blow with his cudgel. The Italian groaned and dropped as if he had been shot.

The other two were rushing on. They stumbled over Marco, and as they stumbled, a whizzing shower of sharp stones cut into their skin, and they yelled with rage and pain and raced back to shelter.

But Marco still lay where he had fallen.
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"Hurrah for us!" roared Bob Cherry, his pent-up feelings finding vent in an uproarious cheer. "Licked, by jove!"

"Hurrah!" The shouts rang and reverberated through the hollow cliff. And a cry of relief from the girls joined in the shouting.

As the cheering echoed away, there was a groan from Marco, and he staggered to his feet. He had been stunned, and there was already a lump as large as an egg under his dark hair. He put his hand mechanically to it, and stared dazedly at the boys.

Wharton pointed to the shore.

"Clear off!" he said crisply.

The Italian broke into a volley of oaths. Wharton's hand rose with a stone in it, and the ruffian broke off suddenly and ran.

He joined his comrades among the rocks, and there was silence, save for a faint muttering of voices, in which the juniors could not distinguish the words.

"Licked!" said Cherry. "I rather think we've kept our end up pretty well this time."

"Lickee hollow," murmured Wun Lung. "Velly good. Keepee watchee nightee or comee back, p'laps."

"Yes, rather. We shall have to sleep with one eye open to-night."

"I say, you fellows, are they gone?"

"They're gone, Buntie."

"Good! I'm sorry I couldn't help you. I was looking round for a stick or something, and I was just going to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Bunter peevishly. "But I'm glad they've gone, as I want to finish my supper. I suppose you fellows are going to keep watch to-night. It won't be safe for me to keep watch, as I can never stay awake. Gimme some more soup, Wun Lung."

And the fighting being over, the fat junior ate contentedly, and then rolled up some canvas and several coats to form a bed, near the fire, and stretched his plump limbs upon it. He put his spectacles carefully into their case and stowed it away, and blinked round sleepily at the grinning juniors.

"Call me if there's any danger," he murmured drowsily. "But don't make a row if you can help it. I'm fearfully exhausted, and what I'm in need of now is a really good sound sleep. Mind you keep up the fire."

And he sank into slumber.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Curious how some chaps like to be comfy," he remarked, as he stepped towards Bunter's bed. "But how that fat chump can imagine that we're going to let him have our coats to snooze on, is more than I can understand."

Bob calmly stooped and gripped the folded canvas that formed the foundation of Bunter's bed, dragged it away, and rolled the fat junior out on to the cold ground. Bunter spluttered and awoke.

"Ow! What's the matter? Ow! Woooooh!"

"Jump up!" shouted Bob Cherry in alarming tones. "Quick! Quick!"

"Ow! Wow! Mercy!" howled Bunter, thinking at once that the enemy were in the cave, and unable to see for himself till he got his glasses on. "Help! You can have all Wun Lung's soup! I'll show you where Wharton has put the tins of salmon!"

"Well, you young rotter!" murmured Harry in disgust. But Bunter was too possessed with his terrors to hear him.

"Ow! Don't! I give in!" he roared. "Let me off and you can go for the others if you like! I—I'll show you where the grub is and where Wun Lung keeps his money!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, unable to restrain himself any longer. The juniors were all laughing, and Marjorie and Clara were almost weeping with merriment.

Bunter blinked round in amazement. The laughter told him that his fears were groundless, and he groped for his spectacles and jammed them on his fat little nose. Then he glared at the yelling juniors wrathfully.

"Aren't they here?" he gasped. "I—I thought—I mean it was all a joke, of course. I knew they weren't here. I was taking you fellows in! I'll bet you thought I was frightened!"

"I'll bet we did!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You did it marvellously well, Bunter. If it wasn't genuine you ought to be on the stage. You could be put on to play the part of a mean-spirited, cowardly, little rotter, and you wouldn't have to make up for the part."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Scat! I've got a good mind to roll you out of the cave! Dry up!"

Bob Cherry collected the canvas and coats, and carried them into the inner cave, and the two girls bade their friends good-night. They were tired out, and early as the hour was, quite ready for sleep.

Billy Bunter watched his cosy bed disappear with a grumpy glare, but he did not venture upon a word of remonstrance. Bob Cherry was looking too dangerous.

The juniors gathered round the fire to sleep on the sandy floor, and with their feet to the embers, they were quite warm enough for comfort. Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh took the first watch, and they sat at the opening of the cave with their cudgels in their hands, ready for the enemy, if they should come.

Rescue at Last!

THROUGH the night the Greyfriars juniors slept and watched by turns. Billy Bunter could not be trusted to keep watch, but he was dutifully awakened whenever the watch was changed. He grumbled more loudly every time, but Bob Cherry said it wasn't playing the game for him to sleep all the time, and so Bunter's slumbers were considerably broken that night.

Right or Wrong?

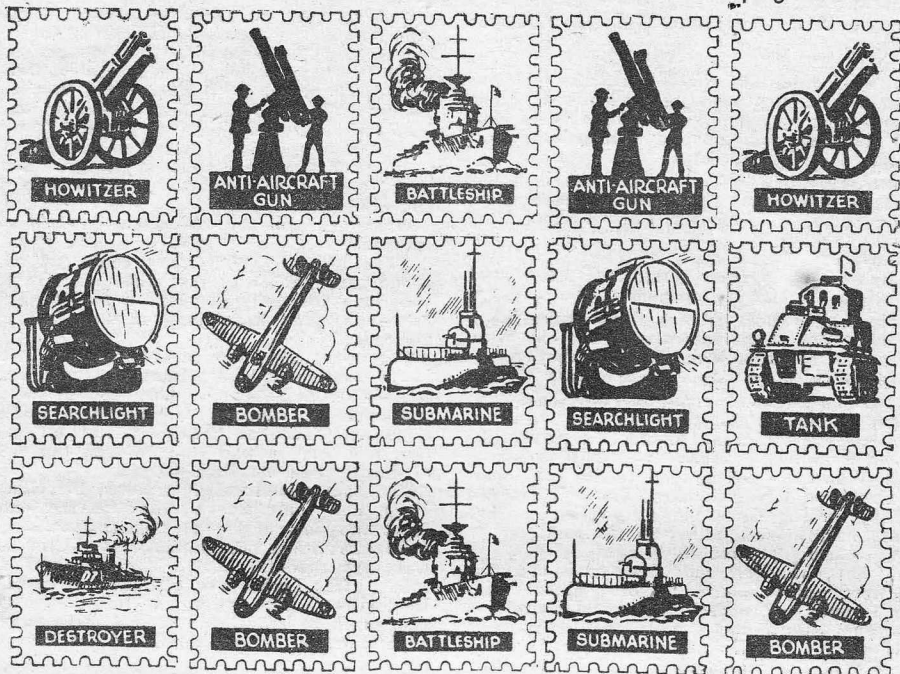
There's a mistake in every word in the Spelling Bee on page 5. Here is the corrected list:

INFALLIBLE
REFERRING
ACCORDION
GAUGE
DILAPIDATED
INVEIGLE
HUMORIST
PRONUNCIATION
PICNICKING
RHYMESTER

Better luck next week!

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MORE STAMPS FOR YOU, PALS! See page 2.



There was no attack from the foreigners during the night. Once or twice the watchers heard them moving, and once a dim form loomed up near the opening of the cave. Mark Linley caught it with a large stone, and there was a muttered oath, and the shadow disappeared. Then there was silence till morning. The Italians had evidently had enough of attacking.

Morning flushed over a calm sea and blue heavens. The light stole into the cave through the fissures of the rocks, and the juniors awakened. Bunter stirred, and looked round to see if there were any signs of breakfast, and went to sleep again.

The fire was still burning cheerily, having been fed whenever the watch was changed, and the smoke poured out of the fissures above. Bob Cherry yawned and rubbed his eyes.

"I should like a jolly good dip in the sea!" he remarked. "We shall have to cut the morning tub this time. But I say, Harry, what about those rotters? We can't be cooped up here all day."

Wharton shook his head.

"Not much. But let us have breakfast now."

Wun Lung soon had an appetising meal ready, and the Crusoes enjoyed it heartily.

Wharton rose with a serious face when breakfast was over. Marjorie looked at him uneasily.

"You're not going out?" she said.

Harry smiled.

"We can't remain cooped up here," he said. "We shall stick together, and I dare say they'll let us alone. If not, we shall have to tackle them at close quarters. It's all right, Marjorie; there's enough of us to manage the rotters."

The girl was silent. Wharton was right; it was impossible to remain in the cave for an indefinite time. But the Italians in their present mood—hungry, savage, and smarting from their wounds and their defeat—were capable of anything.

"You will remain here—and Bunter," said Harry, with a glint in his eyes as he picked up his cudgel. "It's no good beating about the bush, you chaps. We've got to master those scoundrels or knuckle under to them. Come on!"

There was no dissenting voice. After all, it was quite probable that the rascals would hesitate to go to extremes. The juniors stepped out of the cave together and moved down the slope towards the beach.

The three Italians, who had slept the night on the beach, saw them coming and drew closer together. Their glances were turned savagely towards the boys. The Greyfriars juniors did not hesitate.

They strode straight towards the Italians. With their cudgels in their hands they were a dangerous party to tackle, and the ruffians seemed to realise it, for they hesitated. Wharton spoke as soon as he was near enough.

"We don't want any trouble with you!" he said in a crisp voice. "We only want to be left alone. If you like to keep on the other side of the island we shan't quarrel. We're not going to have you hanging about here. What do you say?"

Marco put his hand up to his gashed face. "Look at that! I will get my revenge for that!"

He added a word to his companions in Italian, and sprang towards the juniors.

"Line up," shouted Harry Wharton, "and hit your hardest!"

"Right-ho!"

And a crashing blow from Harry's cudgel sent the knife whirling from Marco's hand. The ruffian sprang upon him, unheeding a fierce blow across the face, and, grasping him in his powerful arms, bore him to earth.

The other two were rushing on, and in a few seconds a desperate fight would have been raging, but at that moment came a shout from the sea:

"Ahoy, there!"

There was a cry from Marjorie as she waved her handkerchief at the opening of the cave.

There was a shout from a dozen voices as a big motor-boat swept shorewards into the cove. In the boat could be seen Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and a dozen other fellows.

The Italians looked round at the shout and changed colour at the sight of the rescuers. Then they darted away among the rocks like frightened rabbits. Marco was still grasping Harry Wharton, too enraged to see or hear. Bob Cherry and Nugent seized him and dragged him off, raining fierce blows upon him. The Italian, half-stunned, rolled on the sand.

"We're coming!" roared Wingate.

The boat thudded into the sand, and the Greyfriars fellows poured ashore. Marco staggered dazedly to his feet and stared blankly at them, then turned and fled just before Wingate reached him. He disappeared among the rocks after his fleeing companions.

Wingate clapped his hand on Wharton's shoulder as the junior rose breathless.

"Hurt?" he asked anxiously.

"No," gasped Harry; "only winded. Lucky you came, though!"

Marjorie and Clara were greatly relieved. Wingate glanced his eye quickly over the party, and was relieved to see that they were all there.

There was a rapid volleying of questions and answers.

"We thought you had gone down in the gale," said Wingate. "Somebody thought of the island, but it didn't seem possible that you had landed on it in such weather. The wonder is that you weren't all drowned. But somebody from a boat yesterday declared that he saw smoke on the island at sunset, and then we guessed that there was a chance some of you had got here. We came off first thing this morning, and we seem to have come at a lucky time. Who were those scoundrels?"

Wharton explained. Wingate frowned as he listened.

"The brutes! Well, they can't get off the island, and we shan't take them off. They can wait here till the police send a boat for them," he said. "You kids jump in now—and quick about it!"

The rescue had come at an opportune moment, yet it was not without a pang of regret that the juniors stepped into the boat and looked their last upon the island where they had lived their short experience as Crusoes. After all, it had not been such a bad time, though the element of danger had not been wanted.

The boat glided swiftly towards the village of Pegg, and there was a crowd on the shore to greet and stare at the returned castaways.

Miss Primrose, the headmistress of Cliff House, was very thankful to see Marjorie and Clara safe. Dr. Locke was rather stern with the Removites. But, after all, they were not so very much to blame, and beyond forbidding such expeditions in future, the Head let the matter pass.

The heroes of the adventure were not let off so lightly by their schoolfellows, who made them relate at endless length their exploits on the rocky isle when they had been shipwrecked.

(Next week: "RIVAL SCOUTS!"—a humorous and exciting yarn of scouting and school adventure, starring Harry Wharton & Co. Don't miss it.)

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Printed in England and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription rates: Inland and abroad, 11s. per annum; 5s. 6d. for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—Saturday, May 28th, 1939.