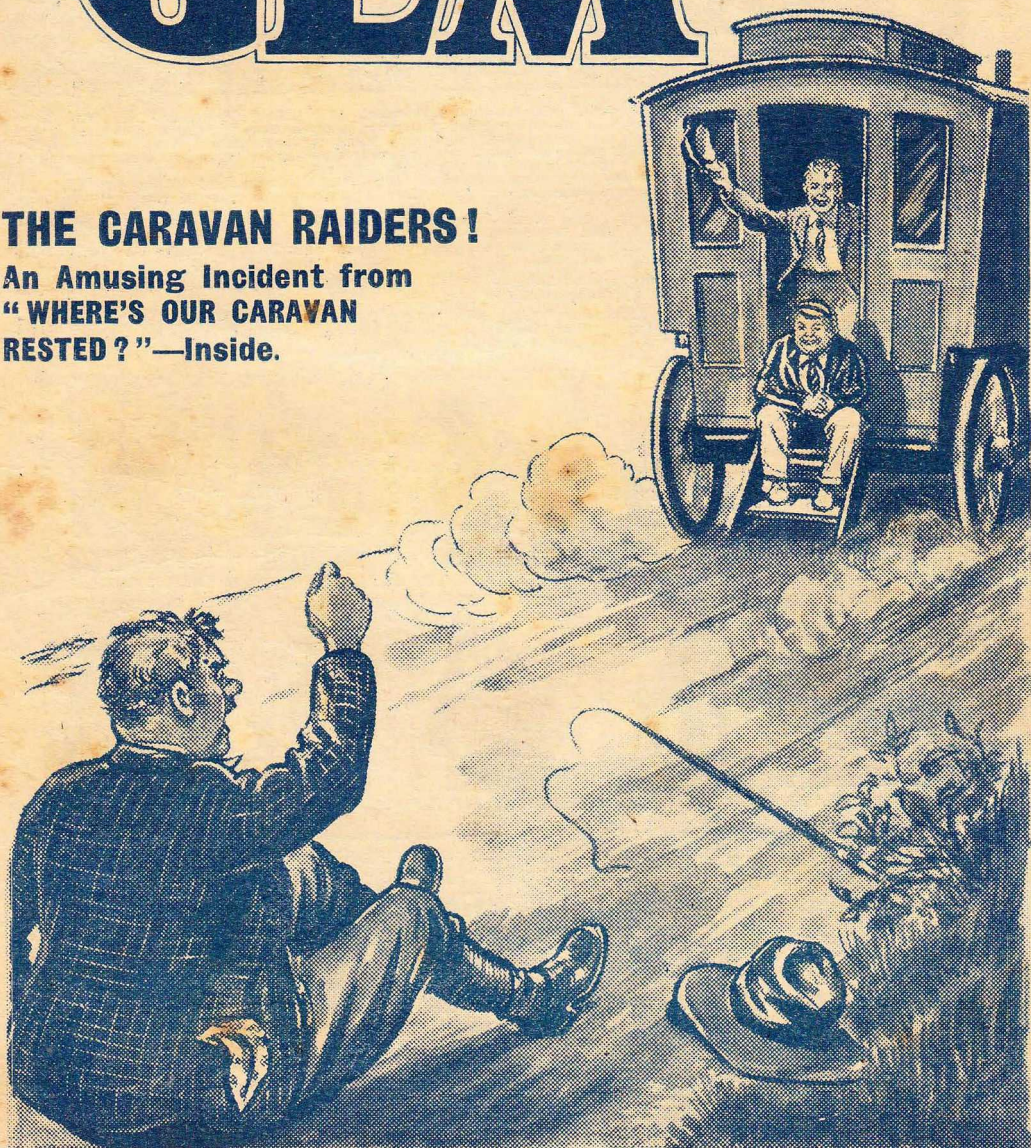


Great New Programme of School Stories Starts Within!

The GEM ^{2^D}

THE CARAVAN RAIDERS!

An Amusing Incident from
"WHERE'S OUR CARAVAN
RESTED?"—Inside.



THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE

5 More Bikes to be Won

2,000 Other Top-Top Prizes

FREE! FOR COLLECTING STAMPS! FREE!

Go on collecting all the Armaments Stamps you can—it's well worth your while! There are still Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to be given away in the July contest which will finish next week, for collecting the stamps GEM is giving. There are five different kinds to be collected now—BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS, and so on. All those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines, and Searchlights, which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are twenty more stamps this week—fourteen here, including **FOUR BONUS Tanks**, and six more on Page 35. Add them to your collection right away, and remember there are more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Modern Boy" and "Magnet."

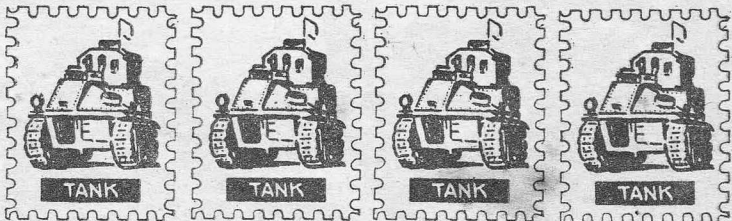
Hurry up and collect all the stamps you can, because next week we shall be asking you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. Then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. The rules governing the contest have already appeared and will be repeated next week, too.

OVERSEAS READERS are in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers, for whom there will be a special closing date.

N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments Stamps with readers of "Boy's Cinema," "Triumph," "Champion," "Magnet," "Sports Budget," "Modern Boy," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller." Stamps can be cut from all these papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize or share, of course.



FOUR
BONUS
TANKS



MORE STAMPS ON PAGE 35.

WE'RE OFF WITH THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S ON AN EXCITING CARAVAN TOUR!



WHERE'S OUR CARAVAN RESTED?

As the caravan came along the road, George Figgins ran out and held up his hand. "Halt!" The driver stared at him as he pulled in the horse. "What's the row?" he inquired.

CHAPTER 1.
Horsy!

TOM MERRY came along the Fourth Form passage in the School House at St. Jim's and looked into Study No. 6.

"Gussy here?" he asked.
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked round.
"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus, as it happened, was alone in Study No. 6. There was not much room for his studymates, Blake, Herries, and Digby, if they had been there. Two large trunks stood on the study carpet, and two hat-boxes on the table, and every chair was occupied with coats, jackets, or trousers, or some other article belonging to Arthur Augustus' very extensive wardrobe.

Tom Merry stared at the collection in astonishment.

"What on earth's this game?" he asked.

"I am packin', deah boy."

"Oh! Not starting a second-hand clothes shop in the study?" asked Tom humorously.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Are you taking that lot home with you for the vac?"

"I am taking a few things—"

"Oh, my hat! A few? Special train, I suppose?"

"Nothin' of the sort, Tom Mewwy. In fact, I am not goin' by twain."

Tom Merry shook his head seriously.

"There isn't a car built big 'enough for all your clobber, Gussy! I suppose you'll be having a lorry?"

"Wats!"

St. Jim's had only recently returned from their summer camp at Windyridge, where they had migrated for a fortnight while the school was being painted and redecorated. But the work had not been completed in the time, and, to enable the painters and decorators to finish their task, the school was breaking up a week earlier than usual—hence Arthur Augustus' activity.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Two rival St. Jim's parties intend to start the summer vacation caravanning. But as there's only one caravan, one party looks like being "left"!

He was carefully polishing a silk hat preparatory to stacking it in the hat-box. He went on polishing.

"You're wanted downstairs, Gussy!" said the captain of the Shell. "Kildare told me to call you."

"Bai Jove! Pway tell Kildare that I cannot come at pwsent. I am wathah busy."

"It's a call on the telephone in the prefects' room," explained Tom Merry. "Somebody is hanging on."

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"Oh deah! I suppose I had bettah come."

"I suppose you had!" grinned Tom Merry. "Kildare took the call, and told the person to hang on, whoever he is. Like your cheek to tell people to ring you up on the telephone!"

"I wequested Kildare's permish first, deah boy. It is a wathah important mattah. I twust those boundahs will not come in while I am away. They will disturb my clobbah, and if the things are mixed up it will take a feahful time to sort them out again."

Monty Lowther came along the passage and looked in.

"That chump here?" he asked.

"If you are alludin' to me, Lowthah——"

"Kildare says you're to come if you want to take that call, fathead!" said Lowther.

"I am just comin'. Would you fellows mind stayin' here while I am gone, and seein' that these things are not disturbed?"

"Would we?" grinned Lowther. "Yes, just a little, old chap! Come on, Tommy! Manners is calling for us!"

"I'm waiting for you two duffers!" said the voice of Manners of the Shell from the landing.

Tom Merry and Lowther left the study.

Arthur Augustus laid down the silk hat and the pad, and locked round the study with a rather worried expression. He did not like leaving his precious "clobber" strewn round the room unguarded and uncared for. He had well-founded apprehensions as to what might happen to it if his studymates came in to tea while he was gone.

"Bai Jove! This is wathah wotten!" he murmured. "I weally think that Spwiggs might have phoned at a more convenient time. Howevah, I suppose I had bettah go."

And he went.

Arthur Augustus closed the door of Study No. 6 carefully behind him and hurried to the stairs.

Baggy Trimble of the Fourth met him on the landing.

"Gussy, old chap——" he began.

"Pway do not detain me, Twimble! I am in wathah a huwvy!"

"Getting ready for the vac—what?" asked Trimble, accompanying the swell of St. Jim's down the stairs.

"Yaas."

"I asked you the other day to come home to Trimble Hall with me for the vac, Gussy."

"I am sowvy, Twimble, but I am obliged to decline your vevy kind invitation," said Arthur Augustus.

"I really wanted your company for the vac, D'Arcy," said Trimble sorrowfully.

"I am weally vevy sowvy!"

"But it's all right. If you won't come to Trimble Hall, I'll come home with you, if you like," said Baggy Trimble generously. "It will come to practically the same thing, won't it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"We'll consider it settled, old chap."

"The fact is, Twimble, I am not goin' home for the vac, so I shall be unable to enjoy your society duwin' the holidays, deah boy."

And with that Arthur Augustus quickened his steps and went into the prefects' room.

Kildare of the Sixth was in the passage, and he called out to the swell of St. Jim's.

"Better take your call, D'Arcy, or you'll be cut off."

"Thank you vevy much, Kildare!"

Baggy Trimble followed Arthur Augustus into the room. It was unoccupied just then.

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Arthur Augustus hurried across to the telephone and took up the receiver, which was off the hooks.

"I say, is Kildare letting you use the telephone?" said Trimble. "He snapped at me the other day when I wanted to use it. Favouritism, I call it!"

"This is a wathah special mattah, Twimble."

"I'd like to phone home to Trimble Hall about the car coming down to fetch me home," said Trimble. "I think——"

"Pway give me a west, Twimble! I cannot speak on the telephone while you are talkin', you know."

Grunt from Trimble.

"Are you there?" asked Arthur Augustus into the transmitter. "Mr. Spwiggs? Oh, vevy good! Yaas, I am D'Arcy. About the horse—— Oh, yaas! Pway go on! I am wathah particulah about the horse, of course. A vevy gweat deal depends upon it."

Baggy Trimble blinked at him.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "You backing horses, D'Arcy!"

"Pway dwy up, Twimble! You are intew-wuptin' me!"

"Fancy using the prefects' telephone to talk to a bookie about horses!" said Trimble, with wide-open eyes. "That takes the cake, that does! Kildare doesn't guess——"

"Dwy up, you fat duffah! I cannot heah what Mr. Spwiggs is sayin' while you are chattewin'!"

"Backing horses!" repeated Trimble. "I am surprised at you, Gussy!"

"Pway wepeat that wemark, Mr. Spwiggs!" said D'Arcy into the telephone. "I did not heah you, owin' to a silly ass chattewin' at my elbow!"

"What race is it for, Gussy?" asked Trimble eagerly. "Look here, you put a pound on for me, and I'll keep it dark!"

"Will you wing off, Twimble?" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I am not backin' horses, you silly duffah! Wun away!"

"You can't take me in, you know!" grinned Trimble. "I distinctly heard you asking about the horse. Now, look here, it means a licking if you're found out. I'll keep it dark, of course, as we're pals. But I really think——"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy laid down the receiver and made a rush at Baggy Trimble.

That fat youth found himself taken by the collar, and was then aware of an elegant but forcible boot that was planted behind him. Baggy Trimble departed from the prefects' room with a loud yell, and Arthur Augustus returned to the telephone to resume his talk with Mr. Spriggs— whoever Mr. Spriggs was—on the subject of the horse.

CHAPTER 2.

A Moving Job!

"TEA ready?"

Jack Blake of the Fourth asked that question as he came into Study No. 6 with Digby and Herries at his heels.

He asked it before he was aware that the study was empty, expecting to find Arthur Augustus D'Arcy there.

Then he stopped and stared.

D'Arcy was not in the study, but there were many signs that he had been there lately.

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Blake, staring round the study in surprise and wrath.

"My word!" said Dig.

Herries gave a snort. Herries was hungry, and he wanted his tea. As Arthur Augustus had not been at cricket with his chums, his chums naturally expected that he would get tea ready in the study.

There was no sign of tea; no sign of anything but clothes and trunks and hat-boxes.

"The howling ass!" said Blake. "What on earth has he lumbered up the study with all this rubbish for?"

"Packing for the vac, I suppose," grunted Digby. "What the thump does he want with all that clobber? Where are we going to have our tea?"

"Lend me a hand with these dashed trunks!" growled Blake. "We'll jolly soon shift them!"

Three pairs of hands grasped the larger of the two trunks. It was a huge trunk, and it was weighty. Fortunately, it was on castors, and it was run out of the study without difficulty. It whizzed out into the Fourth Form passage, propelled by three energetic juniors, and there was a loud yell as it crashed into a passing junior.

Kerruish of the Fourth sprawled over the trunk and roared.

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh crumbs! I didn't see you coming, Kerruish!" gasped Blake.

"Wew-ow-ow!"

Kerruish scrambled off the trunk and gave the chums of Study No. 6 a ferocious look.

"You silly asses!" he roared.

"Sorry, old chap!"

"You howling chumps! You've barked my knees with that silly trunk!" howled Kerruish. "What do you mean by wheeling a contraption like that about the passage?"

"Ask Gussy! It's Gussy's trunk. Lend a hand with the others, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"

Blake & Co. grasped the other trunk. The second trunk had no castors, and it was up-ended out of the study. It came down with a terrific crash on one side, and collars and neckties and shirts and underclothes and other articles streamed out of it.

"Now the rest of the rubbish," said Blake.

Two hat-boxes joined the trunks in the passage. Then coats and waistcoats, jackets and trousers, came whizzing out of the study in showers.

By that time a dozen fellows had gathered round in surprise and merriment. Loud roars of laughter greeted Arthur Augustus' property as it came pelting out of Study No. 6.

Five or six pairs of boots and shoes followed the clothes. Then a big travelling-rug and a sheepskin sleeping-bag and a waterproof sheet whirled into the passage.

By that time the Fourth Form passage outside Study No. 6 was pretty well barricaded.

Fellows who wanted to get along the passage had to scramble over Arthur Augustus' property—and it was unfortunate, but inevitable, that some of the property should be damaged in the process.

Blake & Co. were still hurling valuable property through the study doorway when the Terrible Three of the Shell came in to tea.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther stopped to stare.

"Hallo! Breaking up the happy home?" asked Lowther.

A couple of camp stools whirled out, and the Terrible Three dodged just in time.

"What's the name of this game?" demanded Tom Merry.

Blake looked out, with a rather flushed face.

"Blessed if I know!" he answered. "Ask Gussy. We found the study stacked with this lumber, and we want our tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you leaving it all in the passage?" gasped Tom Merry.

Blake snorted.

"Where can we leave it?" he demanded. "There's no room for it in the study, and we can't shove it up the chimney. Gussy wouldn't like us to drop it out of the window, either."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three scrambled over the barricade, and went on to their quarters, chuckling.

A surprise awaited Arthur Augustus D'Arcy when he returned to his study.

Blake & Co., having made a clearance, started getting tea.

The three juniors had nearly finished when the study door opened, and they looked round expecting to see Arthur Augustus. But it was Baggy Trimble who looked into the room.

There was a grin on Baggy's fat face.

"Cut off!" was Jack Blake's polite greeting.

BREAKING 'EM IN!

Cavalry Recruit (about to take his first lesson in horsemanship): "Sergeant, pick me out a nice gentle horse."

Sergeant: "Have you ever ridden before?"

Recruit: "No."

Sergeant: "Ah! Here's just the animal for you! He's never been ridden before. You can both start together!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Harper, 63, Sewell Street, St. John, N.B., Canada.

"I haven't come to tea!" snorted Trimble. "I don't want any of your measly kippers! At Trimble Hall—"

"Give Trimble Hall a rest, and us, too!" said Blake. "And take your face away and bury it. It worries me."

"You don't know where D'Arcy is!" giggled Trimble.

"Well, where is he, porpoise?"

"Gone to see a bookmaker."

"What!" yelled Blake.

"It's a fact," said Trimble. "I heard him on the telephone—talking to a man about a horse—"

"About a horse?" repeated Herries blankly.

"Yes—he asked him specially whether the horse was to be relied upon," said Trimble, with a nod, "and when he was finished on the phone he buzzed out of the House and cleared off at once. He's gone to see the man, of course—about the horse!"

"My hat!" said Dig.

Trimble chortled, evidently pleased at having made such an impression on Study No. 6.

"Fancy Gussy," he said, "backing horses, you know—dabbling in gee-gees, like Racke and Crooke, or Cutts of the Fifth! I'm shocked at him! Aren't you, Blake?"

"You fat idiot!" roared Blake.

"Eh?"

"Collar him!"

"Here, I say—yaroooh!"

Blake & Co. rushed at Trimble and collared

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the fat junior before he could bolt out of the study.

They were looking rather excited.

"Now, you fat rotter!" growled Herries.

"Leggo!"

"Bump him!" said Blake. "One for listening to Gussy on the phone——"

Bump!

"Yooop!"

"One for spinning us a yarn about Gussy——"

Bump!

"Help!"

"And one for himself!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-woop! Help! Fire! Yaroooh!"

"Now kick him out!"

Three boots were planted behind Trimble. The fat Fourth Former went out with a yell, and sprawled over Arthur Augustus' property in the passage.

Another shove from Jack Blake's boot helped him across it, and he fled.

Three flushed and indignant faces looked after him as he turned in the passage and shook a podgy fist at Study No. 6.

"Yah! Rotters!" he howled. "It's true, all the same—D'Arcy's backing horses, and he's gone to see a bookie! Yah!"

And with that Parthian shot, Trimble fled for his life.

CHAPTER 3.

Assistance Rendered!

"**B**AI Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy halted outside Study No. 6 about an hour later and surveyed the trunks, hatboxes, clobber, and other articles stacked in the passage.

There were two stacks, one on either side of the passage. Fellows coming along had found it too much trouble to clamber over the lumber, and they had shoved it aside—not very gently. There was a right of way, so to speak, between the two stacks.

Arthur Augustus screwed his celebrated eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the stacks in horrified indignation.

"Bai Jove! Some feahful wottah has been waggin' the study!" he ejaculated. "The New House boundahs, vewy likely."

The swell of St. Jim's threw open the study door and entered.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were sitting round the table beginning their prep.

"You fellows——" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Hallo, image!" grunted Blake.

"I am surprised at you!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly.

"What is there to be surprised at, fathcad?"

"Some feahful wottahs have been waggin' the study, and my clobber has been thwown into the cowwidor!"

"Go hon!"

"And you fellows are sittin' here peaceably as if nothin' had happened!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I am surprised at you! I do not wegard this as fwriendly. I pwesume you know who the wottahs were that pitched my pwperty into the passage?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Who was it, pway?"

"Us!"

"Wha-a-at?"

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"We had to have tea, you know," explained Blake. "You shouldn't turn the study into a second-hand clothes store, Gussy. There isn't room."

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"You—you—you have tweeked my clobber in this wuffianly way?"

"Little us!" agreed Blake.

"You feahful wottahs!"

"Go it!"

"You howwid wuffians!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You—you—you fwightful wottahs!"

"Hurrah!"

"I have a gweat mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Pile in!"

"I wegard you as thwee feahful bwutes! My shirts and neckties are all ovah the passage. Some of them have been twodden on."

"You should be more careful with your clothes, Gussy. You shouldn't leave them recklessly about the study. They're liable to get damaged."

"You—you—you——"

Words failed Arthur Augustus.

"I suppose you uttah wuffians wegard this as a joke!" he gasped at length. "I wegard it, personally, as an act of uttah barbawity! I shall wefuse, now, to twust my pwperty with you howwid wuffians, and I shall wecsind the awwngements I have been makin' for the vac."

"Oh, you've been making arrangements for the vac, have you?" yawned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I had a gweat surprisw pweared for you fellows——"

"Well, we've stooed you a great surprise, too," remarked Dig. "You must have been surprised to see your props in the passage."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you——"

"When you've blown off steam, Gussy, I've got something to say to you," remarked Blake. "I want you to answer a question."

"I wefuse to answah any questions! I wefuse to uttah a word to you, Blake!"

"Trimble heard you jawing on the telephone, and——"

"Bothah Twimble!"

"He says you were talking to a man about a horse——"

"That is quite twue!"

"True!" yelled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Blake. "The fat rotter says, too, that you went out after phoning to see a man about a horse."

"That is quite cowweet."

"Well, my word!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby were on their feet now, staring at their noble chum.

Arthur Augustus' candid confession had quite taken their breath away.

"You—you went to see a man about a horse?" stutted Blake.

"Yaas!"

"And you've got the nerve to own up to it?"

"I weally fail to see, Blake, that it wequiah any nerve to own up to the twuth."

"Are you potty?" shrieked Herries.

"I wefuse to weply to such a widiculous question, Herries!"

"I thought Trimble was gassing, as usual!" gasped Blake. "But he's right then, and you've been backing horses like that cad Racke of the Shell!"

"Weally, Blake——"



There were roars of laughter as Blake & Co. flung Arthur Augustus' property out of Study No. 6. Boots, shoes, and clothes, a travelling rug and a sleeping-bag and a waterproof sheet whirled out, and soon the passage was pretty well barricaded.

"Is it so, you silly ass?"
 "I wefuse to answah such a question, Blake. I wegard you as an uttah ass!"
 "Where have you been?"
 "Wats!"
 "Tell us where you've been, Gussy," said Dig.
 "I wefuse to tell you anythin', since you have tweeked my pwperty in such a wuffianly mannah! I do not wegard you as fwriends any longah!"
 "Look here, Gussy—"
 "Wats!"
 With that reply, Arthur Augustus strode out of the study.
 Blake & Co. looked at one another quite dazedly.
 "The—the silly chump!" stuttered Blake.
 "Gussy—of all people—getting mixed up with bookies, and backing horses! I can't believe it!"
 "He's as good as admitted it!" growled Herries.
 "Let's give him a jolly good bumping as a warning."
 "Let's get on with our prep!" suggested Dig.
 Blake looked out of the doorway. Arthur Augustus, with a red and wrathful face, was gathering up silk socks and neckties and collars. Half a dozen grinning juniors were looking on.
 "Gussy—" began Blake.
 "Pway do not address me, Blake!"
 "Won't you tell us where you've been, Gussy?" asked Blake, with great patience.
 "I wefuse to say a word to you, Blake. I wegard you as a wuffian, and I wefuse to speak to you!"
 "Look here, Gussy—"
 "Wats!"
 "I know where he's been!" giggled Baggy Trimble. "He's been to see a bookie about a horse!"

"Dry up, you fat idiot!" said Clive of the Fourth.
 "It's true!" giggled Trimble. "He can't deny it! Ask him whether he has been to see a man about a horse!"
 "You uttah wottah, Twimblé!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I have certainly been to see a man about a horse, but—"
 "Oh!" ejaculated Clive.
 "But the man was certainly not a bookmakah. If you wepeat your wotten wemarks, Twimble, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'."
 "What the thump have you been to see a man about a horse for?" shouted Blake.
 "I wefuse to weply!"
 "What man was it?"
 "Wats!"
 "What horse was it?" asked Racke of the Shell, with a grin.
 "What were the odds?" chuckled Crooke of the Shell.
 "Fancy D'Arcy punting on the races!" chortled Trimble. "He, he, he!"
 "Bai Jove!"
 Arthur Augustus spun round on Trimble, who scuttled away to the stairs, still chortling. This was an item of news that Baggy Trimble enjoyed, and he hastened to spread it far and wide.
 Heedless of all considerations but his valuable clobber, Arthur Augustus laboured at gathering up his scattered property.
 Jack Blake went back to his prep with a wrinkled and worried brow. It seemed impossible to suspect the noble swell of the Fourth of such shady practices as those indulged in by Racke and Crooke and their set, but his confession that he

had been to see a man about a horse was staggering.

Evidently someone had telephoned to the swell of St. Jim's about a horse, and D'Arcy had been to see the man on the subject; and really it seemed that the only possible conclusion was the one Baggy Trimble had drawn.

Unconscious of the worry he was causing to his old pals in Study No. 6, Arthur Augustus continued to pack his valuable possessions.

The Terrible Three came along after prep, and found him still busy, and kindly lent a hand.

When the task was finished, Arthur Augustus condescended to look into Study No. 6.

"Blake!"

"Well?" grunted Blake.

"Although we are no longah fwriends, I——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Although we are no longah fwriends," repeated Arthur Augustus, with frigid dignity, "I am obliged to continue to share this study with you! Before weplacin' my pwoperty in this study, I wequiah to be assuaged that it will be wespacted."

"My dear chap, go ahead, and bring it in!" said Blake. "I assure you that it will be pitched out again!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I give you my word, in fact!"

Slam!

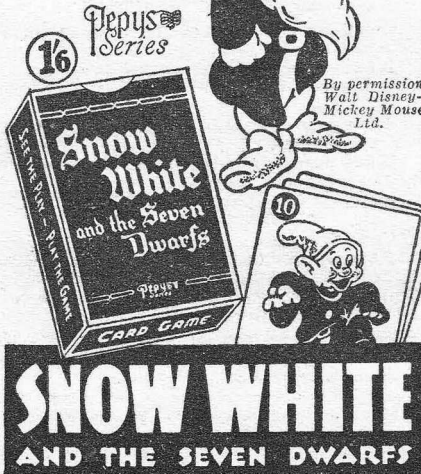
There was a chuckle in the study as Arthur Augustus closed the door with unnecessary emphasis.

The swell of St. Jim's surveyed the trunks, hat-boxes, and other paraphernalia. Evidently he could not leave them permanently in the passage, and it was equally certain that they would not be safe in Study No. 6.

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"It's rather a big order for a junior study, you know, Gussy," murmured Tom Merry, in the role of peacemaker. "There really won't be much room to move."

"Wats! I am bound to make pwopah pwepawations for the expedish?"

"Eh? Are you making an expedition?"

"Yaas."

"Going round the world during the vac?" asked Lowther.

"Certainly not!"

"Then what do you want with all this clobber?"

"I wegard that question as fwivolous, Lowthah! I was pwepawin' a vevy agweeable surprise for my fwriends—I mean, my fwiendh—and I was goin' to tell them when I came in. Now I shall wefuse to tell them anythin'! I—I weally don't know where to put my twunks now I have packed them."

"Shove 'em into Nobody's Study!" said Tom.

"Bai Jove! That's a good ideah."

And the extensive property of Arthur Augustus was trundled along to the empty room in the Shell passage and safely disposed of there.

Arthur Augustus thanked the Terrible Three graciously for their assistance, and returned to Study No. 6.

Blake & Co. eyed him as he came in.

"Now, Gussy——" began Blake.

"Pway do not speak to me, Blake!"

"Look here——"

"I am already late with my pwep, owin' to your wuffianly treatment of my pwoperty!"

"Do you think you can stack the study to the ceiling with boxes of rubbish?" roared Blake.

"Wats!"

"Now, we want you to explain where you've been, and what you've been up to," said Blake more calmly.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

"Why?" asked Blake patiently.

"Because I no longah wegard you as a fwriend."

"Ass!" roared Blake.

"I wefuse to be called an ass, Blake, especially by a fellow I do not know!" said Arthur Augustus coldly.

"Fthead!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat down to his prep, and refused to answer another word.

Blake & Co. eyed him for some minutes, but he did not turn his head, and they quitted the study at last in a state of great doubt and uncertainty.

CHAPTER 4.

Under a Cloud!

THE next day Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth found himself the object of a great deal of curiosity.

By that time nearly every fellow in the Lower School had heard Baggy Trimble's interesting tale, and it was generally supposed that Arthur Augustus had been "spotted" in following the way of the transgressor.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were much worried about it, but their attempts to obtain an explanation from the swell of the Fourth were quite unavailing.

Arthur Augustus persisted in giving his old pals the "marble eye."

Arthur Augustus was easy-going, but there was

a limit, and the drastic treatment of his clobber was beyond the limit. It was impossible to pardon disrespectful handling of a silk topper; human patience had its limits. Gussy's best silk topper had been rubbed the wrong way during its sojourn in the Fourth Form passage, and Arthur Augustus' indignation, in consequence, was not to be easily appeased.

In class that morning he seemed blissfully oblivious of the existence of his chums. After morning lessons Blake joined him in the passage, and he walked quickly away.

"Gussy!" roared Blake, in great exasperation. "Pway do not address me as Gussy, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus coldly.

"Why not, you ass?"

"I am Gussy only to my friends!" explained the swell of St. Jim's loftily.

"Oh, you image!"

"I refuse to be called an image, Blake!"

"Look here, Gussy——"

"I refuse to do anythin' of the sort!"

Arthur Augustus walked away, leaving Blake undecided whether to collar him and knock his head against the wall. Fortunately, Gussy was out of sight before Blake could make up his mind.

He ran into the Terrible Three in the quadrangle.

Tom Merry & Co. stopped him.

"Just looking for you, Gussy!" said Tom cheerily.

"Well, here I am, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus did not give the Terrible Three the marble eye. He was gratefully mindful of the assistance they had rendered in packing up his scattered clobber the previous evening.

"Do you know what the fellows are saying?" asked Tom, eyeing the swell of St. Jim's very curiously.

"Not at all."

"You are suspected of playing the giddy goat like Cutts of the Fifth," said Manners.

"Wubbish!"

"What does this talk mean, then, about your going to see a man about a horse?" demanded Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus grinned.

"That is all wight!" he replied.

"Well, it doesn't sound all right."

"If you suspect me of playin' shady twicks, Lowthah, like Wacke and Cwooke, I can only remark that you are an ass!"

"Well, of all the cheeky chumps——"

"I stwongly object to bein' called a cheeky chump, Lowthah!"

"Why don't you explain where you went yesterday, and what all this rot means about going to see a man about a horse?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You're worrying Blake no end."

"There is no need for Blake to wowwy, as he is no longah a friend of mine!"

"Ass!" said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Don't play the goat!" said Tom impatiently. "It looks as if you've been playing the fool like Racke! You ought to explain!"

"I wufuse to explain to anyone who suspects me of playin' the fool like Wacke!" answered Arthur Augustus stiffly.

And he walked on.

The Terrible Three looked at one another queerly.

"It can't be true!" said Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It can't!" he agreed. "But what does it mean, anyway? He certainly went to see a man about a horse. What man, and what horse?"

"Give it up!" yawned Lowther. "It really looks as if Gussy is trying to get the sack on the last day but one of the term. Hallo! There's Racke tackling him now."

Aubrey Racke, the black sheep of the Shell, joined Arthur Augustus in the quad, with an agreeable expression on his ill-favoured countenance. Trimble's story about Arthur Augustus had been pleasant news to Racke's ears, and he was more than willing to welcome the aristocratic Gussy into the select circle of "merry blades."

Arthur Augustus did not reciprocate his friendliness, however. He gave Racke a look of cold inquiry.

"I've heard about it, old chap," said Racke.

"About what, Wacke?"

"The gee-gee!" grinned Racke. "But, really, my dear chap, as a friend, I should advise you to be a bit more careful. You don't want it to become the talk of the school."

"I fail to comprehend you, Wacke."

"I mean, it may lead to trouble," explained Aubrey. "No harm in going the pace a little; but the Head or the Housemaster wouldn't look at it like that if they heard."

"If they heard what?"

"That you had been to see a man about a horse."

"Is there any harm, Wacke, in my goin' to see a man about a horse?"

Racke stared.

"Not at all," he answered. "Not the least bit in the world; but it's safer to keep such things dark. You must see that."

"I do not see it, Wacke."

"Well, please yourself," said Racke, in surprise, "but it looks to me like asking for trouble. By the way, would you care to drop into my study this evening, after tea, D'Arcy? We're going to have banker, and some smokes, to wind up the term in a rather festive style, you know."

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye and surveyed the black sheep of the Shell with great contempt.

"I should not care to drop into your study this evenin', Wacke," he said very distinctly.

And he turned on his heel.

"Well, by gad!" ejaculated the astonished and discomfited Aubrey.

Figgins & Co. of the New House met Arthur Augustus as he walked away with an indignant brow.

The three juniors lined up before him.

"Halt!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgy——"

(Continued on the next page.)

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are

contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer; R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W. 1, or at any Post Office.

"Going the pace, I hear!" grinned Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn——"

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Kerr severely. "Backing gee-gees at your time of life!"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"It's up to us to keep the School House kids to the straight and narrow path," remarked George Figgins. "Never shall it be said that we neglected to bump a fellow who needed it. Collar him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jumped back.

"You uttah asses! Keep off! I wefuse——"

"D'Arcy!"

"Oh, my hat! Kildare!" murmured Figgins; and the New House trio melted away.

Arthur Augustus turned to the captain of St. Jim's.

"Yaas, Kildare?"

"You're wanted in Mr. Railton's study," said Kildare, with a sharp look at the junior. "I dare say you know what it's for."

"Weally, Kildare, I do not know. Mr. Wailton cannot want to say good-bye to me, as we do not bweak up till to-morrow."

"Well, cut along and see!" said Kildare abruptly.

"Vewy well."

Arthur Augustus headed for the School House, followed by many curious glances. He was called before the Housemaster, and the juniors who had heard Kildare speak to him did not need telling that the School House master had heard the story of the man and the horse, and was going to inquire into it, as was his duty.

Arthur Augustus walked cheerily into the School House and headed for the Housemaster's study. It did not look as if the coming interview had any terrors for the swell of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

Quite Simple!

"THERE he is!" growled Blake.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were loitering in the corridor near Mr. Railton's door.

They surrounded Arthur Augustus as he came along.

"Kindly allow me to pass," said Arthur Augustus, with frigid dignity. "I have an appointment with Mr. Wailton!"

"So have we!" growled Herries.

"We've all been sent for, you ass!" grunted Blake. "Railton's heard that yarn about you."

"Bai Jove!"

"And we're sent for because we're your study-mates," said Digby. "If you've been playing the goat, we're supposed to know. That's it, of course."

"Oh, you ass!" said Blake.

"I decline to be called an ass, Blake. Pway allow me to pass. I do not wish to keep Mr. Wailton waitin'."

"We're coming in with you, fathead!"

Jack Blake knocked at the Housemaster's door and the four juniors entered the study together.

Mr. Railton rose from his table as they came in, with a very stern brow.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Blake meekly.

"Certainly, Blake! A very extraordinary story has come to my ears," said Mr. Railton. "It appears to be the talk of the whole school, and

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a prefect has reported it to me. D'Arcy is the person principally concerned; but as you three boys are his studymates, you probably know something about the matter."

"Oh!" murmured Blake.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir?" said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"You used the telephone in the prefects' room yesterday?"

"With Kildare's permission, sir."

"Quite so. But according to what I have heard, some man telephoned to you on the subject of horses."

"Not horses, sir; a horse."

"It makes little difference. Kildare had the impression, he has told me, that you were making some arrangements with regard to the vacation."

"I told him so, sir. That is quite cowwect."

"Who was it telephoned to you?"

"Mr. Spwiggs, of Wayland, sir."

"I have never heard the name. Are you acquainted with this man Spriggs, Blake?"

"N-no, sir."

"The man telephoned to you about a horse, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"You went out immediately afterwards?"

"Quite cowwect, sir."

"To see this man Spriggs?"

"Yaas."

"On what affair?"

"About the horse, sir."

"And why?"

"It was necessary for me to make sure that the horse was all wight, sir, before I parted with my money."

"What?"

"I twust I make my meanin' cleah, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "Ow! Who's tweadin' on my foot? Blake, you ass——"

"You need not make signals to D'Arcy, Blake!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Oh, no! N-no, sir!" gasped Blake.

"It will be advisable for D'Arcy to make a full confession," said the Housemaster. "This is a most surprising and shocking discovery to me. I have never suspected you, D'Arcy, of such foolish or reckless conduct before."

"I twust, sir, that you do not suspect me of anythin' of the kind now?" said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

"What? You have confessed that you went to interview this man Spriggs about a horse before parting with your money!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "Your words bear only one possible construction. This Spriggs, I presume, is a book-maker?"

"Not that I am aware of, sir. I should be vewy surprised to heah that he was anythin' of the sort," said Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "Weally, sir, I do not see any weason for iniquiwin' into the mattah. It is not a mattah of any consequence."

"Our opinions differ on that point, D'Arcy!" said Mr. Railton dryly. "I regard the matter as being of very great consequence indeed. The best that can be said of you is that you do not appear to realise the seriousness of what you have done."

"He—he's rather an ass, sir!" stammered Blake. "We—we always make allowances for him in the study, sir, on that account."

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Herries and Digby together eagerly. "Always, sir!"

"Bai Jove! I wepudiate the suggestion!" ex-

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Mr. Ratcliff complains that the cinema organ at Wayland gives him a headache. Wurlitzer popular item, anyway!

As the millionaire said in the telephone kiosk: "That's all very well, Exchange, but do I have to lose my tuppence?"

Yes, and it was Baggy Trimble who thought the Government were conducting a Fatness Campaign.

A relative of Gore's who is an animal trainer, claims he has taught his dog to read. Well, we have spelling bees already!

Echo of Spring: "Must be spring in the air," said the matron. "Look—the tortoise is coming out from under the dresser!" "Tortoise, ma'am?" exclaimed the maid, in surprise. "Why, I've been breaking the coal with it all the winter!"

The Chancellor of the Exchequer will undoubtedly come into his own this year, writes a political authority. And no doubt a good deal of ours as well!

People with fair hair are clever, and people with dark hair are imaginative, says a writer. And people with no hair are bald!

Hot One: "What are you playing in now?"

demanding the American critic of the English actor. "Hamlet," replied the Englishman. "Gosh, you are behind the times!" exclaimed the American. "Why, we had that in New York seven years ago!"

Open Letter Department: One reader asks why I do not write this column in verse. Another reader says it is blank enough already. Another prefers it without rhyme or reason. So what?

Story: "The very next thing you break will be the last," the matron warned the new maid. "Oh, no, ma'am," replied the maid, "there's quite a lot of cups and several dishes left yet!"

The Junior Dramatic Society were selecting a new play for production. "So there is no way you could possibly use my play?" asked Skimpole. "Well," said Tom Merry, "there is one way I could use it." "How?" demanded Skimpole eagerly. "Tear it up very finely," said Tom Merry, "and we could use it for a snowstorm."

A medico recommends bread-and-butter as a slimming diet, with brisk walks instead of motoring. Just plain bread-and-butter and no traffic jam!

"I shouldn't think twice about giving Grundy a punch on the nose," said Mellish with a sneer. "If I were you," replied his crony, Crooke, "I shouldn't even think about it once!"

"A Car To Suit Every Pocket" runs an advert. But you might have to take out your wallet to make room for it!

A Wayland police constable who is shortly to retire is said to be opening a beauty parlour. Of course, he has had considerable experience in dealing with ugly customers!

Chin, chin, chaps!

claimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "I twust I am not a fellow to swank, but I certainly considah that I am the only fellow with any bwains in the study!"

"D'Arcy! If you cannot see that you have done wrong—"

"Not at all, sir!"

"Not in visiting this Spriggs about a horse—"

"I fail to see anythin' w'ong at all, sir, in interviewin' Mr. Spwiggs on the subject of engagin' a cawavan horse for the occasion!" said Arthur Augustus in surprise. "It was vewy necessawy, sir, to make sure of havin' a good horse, or the cawavannin' would be a wank failure!"

"The—the what?"

"Cawavannin', sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton blankly.

Blake & Co. stared at Arthur Augustus as if his aristocratic visage mesmerised them.

The swell of St. Jim's looked at them, and then at the Housemaster.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake.

CHAPTER 6.

Taken Over!

MR. RAILTON looked searchingly at the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus met his eyes with perfect calmness and composure.

"You visited this Mr. Spriggs to engage a caravan horse?" the Housemaster exclaimed at last.

"Yaas, sir!"

"And—and that is the only horse you have been interested in?"

"Natuwally, sir. I twust," said Arthur Augustus loftily, "that you did not suspect me of takin' an intwest in wachhouses, sir?"

"You laid yourself open to that suspicion," said Mr. Railton tartly. "If your business with Mr. Spriggs was so harmless, why did you not explain the matter to your friends? I understand that you avoided doing so."

"I did not avoid doin' so, sir; I wefused to do so!"

"And why?"

"Because these boundahs—ahem!—I mean these fellows, sir, are no longah my fwinds. I have felt compelled to dwop their acquaintance, sir, because they have tweated my clobbah with gwoss disrespect!"

"Bless my soul! I shall telephone to Mr. Spriggs, D'Arcy, to ascertain that you have stated the facts. His number is in the directory, I presume?"

"Certainly, sir. But——"

"But I will say now that I believe your explanation."

"Of course, sir, I expected you to take my word!" said Arthur Augustus placidly.

Mr. Railton coughed.

"Well, I do take your word, at all events, D'Arcy," he said. "I should recommend you, however, not to be so secretive on another occasion."

"Weally, sir, I have not been scewative," said Arthur Augustus. "I was pwepawin' a surpwise for my fwinds, sir, that is all, and I should have told them all about it on my return, but I was compelled to dwop their acquaintance owin'——"

"Absurd!" said Mr. Railton.

"Weally, sir——"

"I am glad the matter has been so satisfactorily explained," said the Housemaster. "I advise you to make friends again at once. You may leave my study."

"Vewy well, sir."

The four juniors quitted the study. In the passage, after the door had closed, Blake, Herries, and Digby looked eloquently at the swell of the Fourth.

"So that was all!" said Blake, with a deep breath. "It was a caravan horse you were telephoning about, you crass idiot!"

"I wefuse to be called a cwass idiot, Blake! And I decline to weply to your wemark, as I no longah know you!"

"So we're going caravanning this vac, are we?"

"I have made all the awwangements with Mr. Spwiggs to supply a weally wippin' caravan and a first-class horse. Owin' to your wuffianly conduct, howevah, I feah that I cannot twust my clobbah with you, and the awwangements will be cancelled!"

"It was going to be a surprise to us, was it?" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, it's not a bad idea!" said Blake. "You ought to have let us know sooner, you duffer——"

"The ideah flashed into my bwain yesterday mornin'," said Arthur Augustus. "As a fellow of tact and judgment, I felt that it was up to me to make the awwangements. I am vewy sowwy that it has all fallen through."

"That's all right!" said Blake. "It hasn't fallen through. Caravanning for the vac is a jolly good idea, though we ought to have had more time for getting ready and letting our people know."

"It has fallen through!" said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I cannot twust my clobbah with you fellows. I am sowwy, but the awwangement is called off, and I am goin' to wing up Mr. Spwiggs and tell him so."

"Look here, Gussy——"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked away.

The Terrible Three were waiting at the end of

the passage, and they met him with a threefold inquiry:

"Licked?"

"Flogged?"

"Sacked?"

"Wubbish!" answered Arthur Augustus. And he walked on.

The chums of the Shell joined Blake & Co., considerably puzzled.

"What on earth's happened?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake explained.

The Terrible Three chuckled when they had heard the explanation.

"Isn't it just like Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, laughing. "Only a mountain out of a molehill, after all."

"Jolly good idea, caravanning, though, for the holidays," said Lowther. "I wonder I never thought of it. We've been caravanning before, and it was ripping!"

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Manners. "I could take my camera, too. We'll bag a caravan ourselves, you fellows. Our people would be able to bear it if we didn't spend the vacation at home."

"My uncle would, I know!" grinned Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded thoughtfully.

"It's not a bad idea!" he said. "We'll think it over, anyhow. When are you kids starting?"

"Not so much of your kids!" grunted Blake. "According to Gussy, we're not starting at all. He says he's going to cancel the arrangements because we hoofed his clobber out of the study yesterday!"

"The ass!" said Digby.

Blake burst into a chuckle.

"It's all serene!" he said. "Gussy was going to hire the caravan and take us along as guests. Well, if he cancels the order, we'll hire the same giddy van, and take him as a guest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're not rolling in wealth like Gussy, but we can whack it out," continued Blake. "If you fellows like to join in, we'll make it a caravanning party, and take a tent and things. What do you say?"

"Good!" said the Terrible Three together.

"We'll fix it up," said Lowther. "Let's go and see what Gussy's doing now."

"He's gone to the telephone, I expect. Come on!" said Blake.

The six juniors hurried to the prefects' room.

That select apartment was tenanted at present by only one person, Arthur Augustus, who was standing at the telephone.

Tom Merry & Co. heard his concluding remarks as they came in.

"I am sowwy—vewy sowwy—but I shall not wequiah the cawavan and the horse, aftah all. Vewy sowwy indeed. Good-bye, Mr. Spwiggs."

Arthur Augustus was about to replace the receiver on the hooks when Tom Merry calmly jerked it from his hand.

"All serene, Gussy! We've got to speak to your cheery Mr. Spriggs!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Here you are, Blake—you can do the talking!" said the captain of the Shell.

Blake took the receiver.

"Are you there, Mr. Spriggs?"

"Yes. Is that Master D'Arcy?"

"No; it's Blake—Blake of St. Jim's. I understand that D'Arcy has cancelled the arrangement about the caravan."

"Yes, sir!"

"We shall want it, all the same. Put my name

down for it—Jack Blake. I'll bike over and see you about it this afternoon, Mr. Spriggs."

"Oh, very well, sir! You can't do better than that caravan, sir—and as for the 'orse, 'e's a beauty, Master Blake!"

"Right-ho! We'll see you about it this afternoon, after lessons."

"Right you are, sir! I'll expect you."

Blake rang off, and turned away from the telephone with a grin.

Arthur Augustus' face was a study.

"You—you—are baggin' that cawavan?" he ejaculated.

"Why not?" smiled Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"We're all going," said Blake, "and you shall come as a distinguished guest, Gussy, on condition that you don't take more than a dozen silk hats and six suits and three dozen pairs of socks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked out of the prefects' room with his noble nose high in the air.

Tom Merry & Co. grinned as they followed him.

Arthur Augustus was still giving his old pals the "marble eye"; but the cheery Co. did not doubt that he would "come round" soon.

CHAPTER 7.

Figgins Has An Idea!

"**W**HEREFORE that ruffled brow, Adolphus?"

George Figgins of the Fourth asked that question humorously.

Figgins was looking very cheerful that afternoon. So were Kerr and Wynn. The approach of the summer holidays had that effect upon the New House Co. But there was a frown on the brow of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Weally, Figg, you are vewy well aware that my name is not Adolphus!" he answered.

"My mistake—I meant Aubrey, Gustavus!" said Figgins affably. "But what are you scowling about, old top?"

"I was not aware that I was scowlin'!"

"You are aware now I've told you, then. What's the trouble? Confide it to your Uncle George!" said Figgins. "Can't you get a special train to carry your silk hats home for the holidays? Allow me to make a suggestion. Sell 'em to the ragman at a penny a time. You will raise hundreds of pounds—"

Fatty Wynn and Kerr chortled.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally do not see the point of all these feeble jokes about my wardwobe. As for silk toppahs, I intended to take only two in the cawavan, as well as a stwaw hat and a Panama and a few caps."

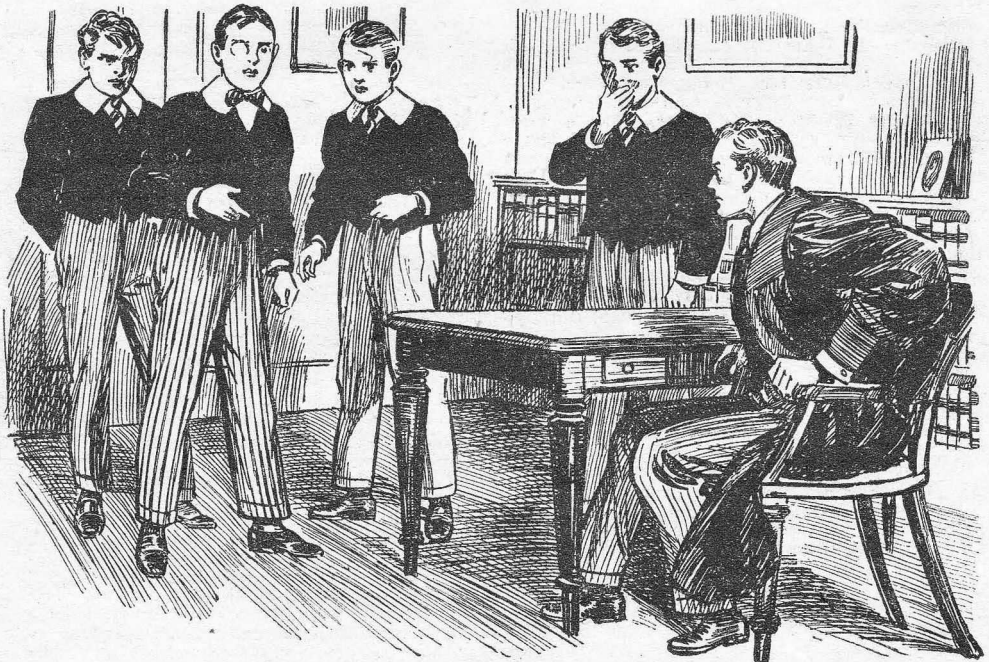
"In the caravan?" repeated Kerr. "Are you going caravanning in the vac?"

"That was my intention, deah boy; but it is now wescinded."

Figgins nodded sympathetically.

"Question of cash?" he asked. "It comes expensive, of course. Lots of things a fellow would do if the tin would run to it."

"It is not a question of cash, Figg. My



"It was vewy necessary, sir, to make sure of havin' a good horse, or the cawavannin' would be a wank failure," said Arthur Augustus. "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton blankly. Blake & Co. stared at Gussy as if mesmerised, for they had all assumed that he had been backing a horse!

governah agweed to stand the exes—I telephoned and asked him.”

“What a stunning gov’nor!” said Fatty Wynn admiringly. “Then what is the trouble, old chap? You ought to be feeling ripping!”

“You see, the whole thing has been mucked up,” explained Arthur Augustus. “I am no longah on speakin’ terms with my formah fiwends—”

“Oh my hat!”

“Don’t let the sun go down on your wrath, Gussy!” said Figgins.

“I feah, Figgy, that it is too late to considah that. It is impos for me to ovahlook the dis-respectful way my clobbah was tweated. I was awwangin’ the cawavan bisney as a happy surprise for my fiwends, and now I have cancelled the ordah!”

“Well!” said Figgins. “My word!”

“But that is not all,” said Arthur Augustus, apparently finding some comfort in unbosoming himself to the New House trio. “I had awwanged for the cawavan to turn up here to-morrow to leave the school in. I thought that was wathah a wippin’ idea to begin the vac, you know, in a cawavan. Havin’ cancelled the ordah, I concluded that it was all ovah, but that feahful boundah Blake had the feahful cheek to telephone Mr. Spwiggs and engage the vevy same cawavan, and now all six of them have gone to see Spwiggs and awrange the maitah. So the cawavan will be comin’ just the same, but it will not be my cawavan, but theirs!”

“My hat!” said Kerr.

“When is the caravan coming?” asked Figgins.

“The awwangement was for eleven-thirty to-morrow.”

“And you’re not going with the party?”

“Impos, as I am not on speakin’ terms with them.”

“Why not make it up?” suggested Kerr.

“Impos!”

“It’s too bad!” said Figgins, with a grin.

“But if you’ll take the advice of your Uncle George you’ll make it up with your old pals before you part for the holidays.”

“I am vevy much obliged to you, Figgy, but it is not possible to act on your suggestion.”

And Arthur Augustus, with a stately nod to the New House trio, walked on across the quad. Figgins & Co. exchanged a grin.

“Another rift in the lute!” sighed Figgins.

“They’ll make it up all right, of course. But I’ve got an idea. How do you fellows like caravanning?”

“It’s all right!” said Kerr.

“Ripping, if you’re careful to take plenty of grub,” remarked Fatty Wynn. “That’s the important point—never to risk running short of grub. With plenty of grub—”

“Never mind the grub,” said Figgins. “We’ll chance the grub!”

His chums stared.

“We’re not caravanning, are we?” asked Kerr.

“I thought we were going to Wales with Fatty.”

“No harm in beginning the vac in a caravan, as Gussy’s arranged for one to call for us at half-past eleven to-morrow,” chuckled Figgins. “We can leave our boxes with Taggles, to be sent off—that only means a tip. And we can wind up the term by dishing the School House bouders fairly in the eye. We meet the caravan outside the gates—”

“Oh!”

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“And bag it!” said Figgins coolly. “It appears doubtful whether it belongs to Blake or Gussy. We’ll settle the point for them. It’s going to belong to us!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“We’ll leave it somewhere for them to pick up after a day or two!” said Figgins generously.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn yelled. They could imagine the feelings of the School House juniors when their caravan was bagged by the New House.

“Hallo! Here they come!” murmured Figgins.

Tom Merry & Co. came in at the gates—six cheery juniors with very satisfied looks. Evidently they had made a satisfactory arrangement with Mr. Spriggs of Wayland about the caravan.

“Hallo! You kids are looking very chirpy!” remarked Figgins, as the School House crowd came along.

“We’re nicely fixed up for the vac,” said Tom Merry, with a smile. “Caravanning, you know. It was Gussy’s idea, and we’ve adopted it.”

“What a coincidence!” said Figgins. “We’re going caravanning, too!”

“My hat! Is caravanning catching, like measles?” ejaculated Blake. “If we meet you on the road, Figgy, we’ll show you how to do it.”

“Bow-wow!” was Figgy’s reply to that.

And the New House trio chortled as Tom Merry & Co. went on to the School House.

There were two parties at St. Jim’s who intended to begin the vacation caravanning; but as there was to be only one caravan, it was evident that one party would be “left.” It remained to be seen which.

CHAPTER 8.

The Cold Shoulder!

“Gussy!”

“I have already requested you, Blake, not to address me, as Gussy!”

“Aren’t you going to have tea?”

“I am goin’ to have tea in Hall.”

“Now look here, Gussy—”

“Wats!”

“It’s all nicely arranged about the caravan,” said Blake. “Spriggs is a good chap. It’s a really gorgeous caravan, and a splendid horse—the one you selected, Gussy.”

“Jolly good!” said Dig. “I must say that Gussy showed his usual tact and judgment in selecting that horse.”

“Lots of room in the caravan, too,” said Blake. “Of course, you’re coming, Gussy?”

“I have already remarked, Blake, that I am not comin’!”

“It won’t be like a holiday without you, Gussy!”

“I am sowwy, Blake!”

And Arthur Augustus walked out of Study No. 6.

Blake & Co. had found him there when they came in; but the swell of St. Jim’s was not staying in to tea. Apparently he could not have tea with fellows he was not on speaking terms with.

“Well, my hat!” said Blake, as the swell of the Fourth disappeared. “Gussy’s got his back up, and no mistake! What have we done?”

“Only pitched his blessed clobber out of the study!” said Herries, in an aggrieved tone.



**Detective Kerr
Investigates**

No. 1.

**Mr. Lathom's
Surprise
Packet!**

MR. LATHOM found what appeared to be a postal packet on his study table. As he opened it, soot was blown all over his face by an ingenious spring attachment inside. The only clue was the label, addressed in big, round handwriting, not unlike Fatty Wynn's. Mr. Lathom remembered giving Wynn lines for talking in class. He had also punished two Shell fellows whilst taking a combined class—Crooke and Glyn. Fatty Wynn was in danger of being punished when "Detective" Kerr of the New House, his chum, decided to question each of the suspects in turn:

KERR: Fatty, you were one of the chaps who missed the school air raid precaution meeting during the lunch hour. The "bomb" that sooted Lathom must have been planted then. Crooke has said he saw you coming out of Lathom's study, though it's always very dusky in that corridor, as there's no window.

WYNN: But I was in the tuckshop, Kerr. Dame Taggles had some lovely fresh doughnuts.

KERR: Was Dame Taggles in the tuckshop all the time you were eating them?

WYNN: No. She went to the inner room, as she had served me.

KERR: So there is no witness to say that you were actually in the tuckshop the whole time?

KERR: Glyn, Lathom has listed you as a suspect because you weren't at the air raid precaution meeting. Why didn't you turn up?

GLYN: I was here, in my study. I've been very busy lately experimenting on my new wonder explosive. I'll guarantee it would only take as much as will go on a sixpence to blow you as high as St. Paul's Cathedral.

"What the thump did he expect us to do with it, I'd like to know!"

"We should have had to pitch it out of the caravan, anyhow, if he'd got it in!" remarked Dig.

"Of course we should! Let's have tea," remarked Blake. "Here come the Shell bounders!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came into Study No. 6. They brought their own supplies for tea with them. It was the last study tea of the term, and they were making a "spread" of it.

"Gussy not here?" asked Tom, glancing round.

"He's still got his back up!" grunted Blake.

"You did handle his clobber rather drastically,

KERR: It may have been a small dose of your explosive that was used in Lathom's surprise packet. Did anybody know about it besides yourself?

GLYN: Yes, Crooke. He looked in yesterday evening, and was asking me all about it. Had I better tell Lathom?

KERR: No; he's too explosive at the moment! I'm off to see Crooke.

KERR: Just a tick Crooke!

CROOKE: Sorry, I'm in a hurry!

KERR: As Fatty Wynn's chum, I'd like to see if there's any way of getting him out of a jam. You told Mr. Lathom you actually saw Wynn leaving his study, didn't you?

CROOKE: What if I did?

KERR: Do you remember the time?

CROOKE: It was exactly a quarter to two.

KERR: *Exactly?*

CROOKE: Yes. I happened to glance up at the clock on the school tower through the window.

KERR: That certainly puts Wynn in a spot—though you needn't have split on him, Crooke.

CROOKE: I didn't want to. Lathom suspected me. I had to clear myself.

KERR: Naturally. Why did you miss the meeting, Crooke?

CROOKE: I had five hundred lines to do—you remember Lathom gave them to me yesterday. He thought I'd planted the bomb for revenge. Anyhow, I'm glad he got the soot right in the eye! Serve Lathom jolly well right!

KERR: Where exactly were you when you saw Wynn come out of Lathom's study? At a distance—on the landing?

CROOKE: No, in the corridor—not five yards away.

KERR: And that was at a quarter to two—by the clock on the school tower?

CROOKE: Yes.

KERR: Thanks, Crooke. You've told me all I wanted to know. But don't be surprised if you hear more of this!

(Is Crooke the culprit? If so, how did he give himself away? Solution on page 33.)

you know," said the captain of the Shell, laughing.

"He had it stacked all over the study. Besides, he seems to have been stacking it ready for the caravan, as it turns out. The caravan's a big one, but it wouldn't hold Gussy's clobber. We should have had to strew it all along the road."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy's got to be brought round somehow," said Tom thoughtfully. "It's really his caravan, and he can't be left out."

Blake nodded.

"Of course Gussy's got to come!" he said. "I shouldn't care for it without Gussy, though he does worry a chap at times. We shall have to pull

his leg somehow and bring him round. Let's have tea first, though; I'm hungry."

And the six juniors sat down cheerily to tea.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had tea in Hall, nursing his dignity. His noble brow was still overcast.

As a matter of fact, though Arthur Augustus had felt that he had no resource, consistent with his lofty dignity, but to "drop" his old pals, he was feeling rather "dropped" himself. The pleasures of solitude did not charm him.

It had been understood all along that the chums of Study No. 6 were to spend the vacation together, and St. Jim's was breaking up on the morrow.

The summer holiday did not seem quite so attractive now.

After tea in Hall, Trimble joined Arthur Augustus as he came out.

The swell of St. Jim's being on his "lonely own," Baggy Trimble felt that this was a good opportunity. The fat and fatuous Baggy was quite prepared to be friendly, in spite of a licking he had received from Study No. 6 over the "horse" incident—now, happily, explained away.

Trimble did not appear to observe the frown of repugnance on D'Arcy's brow as he joined him.

"So it's caravanning for the vac, is it?" said Trimble affably.

"Nothin' of the sort, Twimble!"

"Aren't you going with the others?"

"I am not!"

"Still ragging with them—what?" smiled Trimble. "You're quite right, Gussy, old chap; I wouldn't speak to them! They're a rotten lot!"

"To whom are you alludin', Twimble?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Blake and that gang," said Trimble. "Drop 'em, Gussy; that's my advice. They don't treat you well. Drop 'em!"

"You are a fat wascal, Twimble!"

"Eh?"

"I wegard you with wepugnance, and if you make anothah dunchawagin' wemark concernin' Blake I shall punch your silly head!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Arthur Augustus walked away to the Common-room, leaving Baggy Trimble staring.

In the Common-room, Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn were discussing the coming holidays in very cheery tones. The sight of the Shell chums did not have a cheering effect upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, cheery as they looked. It made him feel rather lonely.

He sat down and took up a book, with a clouded brow. He glanced up, however, as half a dozen juniors came into the room. He glanced down immediately as he saw that they were his chums.

Jack Blake came across to him, with a cheery grin, as if nothing had happened.

"Hadh't you better see about your packing, Gussy?" he asked.

"My packin' is done, Blake!"

"I mean for the caravan. It will be here to-morrow at eleven-thirty."

"I am not interested in the cawavan, Blake!"

"We've all been writing letters," said Dig.

"Our people will want to know what we are up to, you know. Hadh't you better write to your pater?"

"I shall see my natah to-mowwow, Digby!"

"Not if you come in the caravan."

"I am not comin' in the cawavan!"

"Look here, you ass—" began Herries warmly.

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"I wefuse to be called an ass, Hewwies!"

"Well, you are an ass—a thumping ass!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus put his book under his arm and walked out of the Common-room.

Tom Merry & Co looked at one another. It did not seem so easy a task as they anticipated to bring Gussy round.

"He, he, he!" came from Baggy Trimble.

Baggy seemed to derive some entertainment from the scene.

"Oh, bump that rotter!" growled Herries.

"Here, I say— Leggo! Woop!"

Bump!

Having found a little harmless and necessary solace in bumping Baggy Trimble, Tom Merry & Co. held a consultation on the subject of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Leaving Gussy behind was not to be thought of; they could not entertain that idea for a moment. Arthur Augustus was bound to be a member of the schoolboy caravan party. But with his noble back up, it was evident that diplomacy was required, and the six juniors held a council of war. And, by their smiling faces when it was over, it might have been guessed that they had come to a satisfactory conclusion.

CHAPTER 9.

Brought Round!

CLANG, clang!

All St. Jim's turned out cheerily at the clang of the rising-bell on that bright summer morning.

It was the last day of the term, always a happy day.

True, most of the fellows loved the old school; but, much as St. Jim's meant to them, they greeted the opening of the summer holidays with happy anticipation.

"No lessons to-day!" said Blake.

"Hurrah!"

"No more blessed Form-room for weeks and weeks!" said Clive. "No more blessed prefects calling a chap to order!"

"Hurrah!"

Only Arthur Augustus did not seem so chirpy that sunny morning. He was in a thoughtful mood. He glanced at Blake, Herries, and Digby, and saw them bright and cheerful, apparently in anticipation of a happy holiday. He left the dormitory by himself.

In the quad he found his hopeful young brother, Wally of the Third, with Frayne, Gibson, and Jameson. The four fags looked joyful.

Wally gave his major a cheery nod.

"Caravanning, I hear," he remarked. "I'll tell you what—if you like, we'll come; the four of us, of course, and—"

"Of course!" grinned Jameson.

"We'll manage for you, and, in fact, run the whole show!" said Wally brightly. "You'll simply have to do as you're told, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Gussy could cook for us!" remarked Curly Gibson.

"I don't know whether he's got sense enough!" observed Wally doubtfully.

"Weally, Wally—"

"We could stand over him with a stump," said Jameson. "Every time he burned the spuds we could give him a lick—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young wascals!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

And he walked on, leaving the heroes of the Third chortling.

After breakfast Arthur Augustus walked in the quad by himself. He was beginning to feel that he had made a mistake in allowing the sun to go down on his wrath. But not for worlds—not for any consideration whatever—would he have departed from the lofty attitude he had taken up. It was a question of "dig," and dignity came first.

Tom Merry & Co. came out of the School House looking for him. They ran Arthur Augustus down under the elms.

"Good-morning, Gussy!" said Tom cheerily.

"Good-mornin', deah boy!"

"Still feeling grumpy?" asked Herries.

"Bai Jove! If you describe my attitude as gwumpy, Hewwies—"

"What do you call it, then?"

"I have been tweated with gwoss diswespect!" said Arthur Augustus, with chilling dignity. "My clobbah has been handled wuffly and wudely. My silk toppah has been damaged. In the circs, I feel bound to dwop the acquaintance of fellows who are capable of tweatin' a chap's clobbah in such a mannah! I shall be obliged if you will wefwain fwom addressin' me!"

Blake closed one eye at his chums.

"The fact is, Gussy—" he began.

"Weally, Blake—"

"We've been thinking it over," said Blake, with deep seriousness. "Having bagged the caravan, we're bound to go. Now we're in an awful fix. We look to you to get us out of it."

"It's a case for your tact and judgment, Gussy," said Dig softly.

"That's it!" agreed Herries.

Arthur Augustus thawed a little. Six juniors were regarding him with the solemnity of owls. Evidently Tom Merry & Co. realised that it was a very serious matter indeed.

"If you are weally in a fix, of course, deah boys—" began Arthur Augustus, with some hesitation.

"Simply landed in a scrape," said Blake.

"Look which way we will, there seems no way out, unless you come to our help," said Tom Merry gravely.

"In that case, deah boy, you can certainly wely on me to point out the pwopah thing to do. What is the mattah?"

"You see, we're going caravanning for the vac, and—"

"Yaas?"

"We are young and inexperienced," said Tom Merry, with a gravity worthy of a judge on the bench. "What we need is a fellow of tact and judgment—ahem! A fellow like you, Gussy, to look after us—"

"To show us what to do," murmured Monty Lowther.

"To lead us on the right path, and so on," said Manners blandly.

"To see that we don't land ourselves in scrapes," said Dig.

"To take the lead generally, and see us through," said Blake. "If you desert us, Gussy, what's going to become of us?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Can you do it?" asked Tom Merry, with the same owl-like seriousness. "After practically bringing us up to rely on your judgment, old chap, can you desert us in an emergency like this? Is it playing the game?"

"Is it cricket?" said Herries sorrowfully. "I



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

GEORGE FIGGINS

CASTING a horoscope for George Figgins, leader of the New House juniors, was a rather alarming experience. I called to see Figgins in his study and found him engaged in a boxing bout with two of his chums at once—I refer to Kerr and Wynn. It was only practice, but seeing Figgins enjoying such a belligerent pastime suggested that he might have been born under the influence of the planet Mars—which, upon inquiry, I found to be correct.

Figgins' birthday, falling between September 23rd and October 23rd, makes him a subject of Libra, the Balance. All Libra-born people are not under the influence of Mars, but in Figgins' case the horoscope I cast showed him to be an aggressive, forceful individual, in fact; a born fighter. The stars indicate that he will not go through life without setbacks, but his powerful, plodding nature should overcome them and bring him a fair measure of success. Figgins is of the type which knows its own powers, and concentrates all the time on establishing a system of law and order based on strength and nobleness combined.

When I told him this, however, Figgins merely snorted and said: "Well, it isn't too bad, Skimmy—but you might have cut out the nobility. I'm not quite so great as all that, even if I am a New House man, you know!"

But, my friends, Figgins, like all of us, must bow to the verdict of the stars.

=====

ask you, Gussy, do you think it's cricket to go back on your old pals when they need you?"

"Put it to yourself, Gussy," said Blake sadly. "Mind, we know it will be an awful responsibility for you—six fellows to look after, as well as a caravan, a horse, and a tent. But what are we to do without you?"

"That's the question," said Monty Lowther. "What's going to become of us?"

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass firmly into his eye and scanned the faces of the six juniors. He read only owlish gravity there.

Tom Merry & Co. were looking distressed—as was natural, in the circumstances.

"Deprived of our guide, philosopher, and friend, what is going to happen to us?" asked Monty Lowther. "I don't want to slang you, Gussy. But it's unfeeling. I must say it's unfeeling."

"Bai Jove! I should be vevy sowwy to act in an unfeelin' way, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus, relenting still further. "I quite undahstand the posish, deah boys; and I admit that I have been feelin' vevy anxious about you goin' off in a cawawan without me to look aftah you."

"Oh, my hat!"

Arthur Augustus' statement very nearly broke down the gravity of his chums. Herries turned a chortle into a cough just in time.

"In the circs I feel it is up to me to ovahlook the uttahly diswespectful way in which my clobbah was tweated," said Arthur Augustus generously. "I twust I shall nevah be found wantin' at the call of duty."

"Oh!"

"Exactly!"

"Pway say no more about it, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "In the circs, I am willin' to

let bygones be bygones, and westore these chaps to my fwiendship. I will look aftah you, and see that the cawavannin' is a success. Wely on me!"

"Thank you, Gussy," gasped Blake.

"Not at all, deah boy! Now we are all fwiends again, I do not mind admittin' that I am vewy glad it is all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "The cawavan will be here at eleven-thirty—"

"You bet!"

"We will all start togethah, deah boys, just as I awwanged at first," said the swell of St. Jim's, beaming. "Wely on me to see you throug. I will go and tell Taggles to get my luggage down weady for the cawavan."

"Your—your what?"

"I am takin' only a couple of twunks and some hatboxes, and things. I have cut down the luggage to the vewy lowest point. Simply the things that were in the study, you know."

"Oh!" gasped Blake. "Only that lot! Not more than that?"

"Well, I might take an extwah silk toppah, in case of accidents. Nothin' more, deah boys!"

"Good idea! Accidents are very likely to happen to your silk toppers in the caravan," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Cut off and see Taggles!" said Blake hastily.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus, with a very cheerful face, hurried away to give the porter the necessary instructions with regard to his baggage.

Six juniors grinned at one another. The rift in the lute was mended at last. Gussy's noble leg had been pulled in the process; but that could not be helped.

"All serene!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"The serenefulness is terrific, as that Inky chap at Greyfriars would remark," said Monty Lowther. "But about Gussy's baggage—"

"Mum's the word!" said Blake, with a grin. "Gussy can take one bag, like the rest of us. But mum's the word! I dare say his things will be all right if they're left at the school over the vac. I hope so, at least, for they're certainly going to be left here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But mum's the word!"

And mum was the word!

Arthur Augustus had been brought round at last; but the delicate question of baggage required more diplomacy.

CHAPTER 10.

The Captured Caravan!

"**W**AITING for the bus—what?" asked Figgins, with a cheery grin, as he came down to the gates, soon after eleven o'clock. Tom Merry was standing in the gateway, glancing down the road.

He nodded, with a smile, to the New House trio.

"We're expecting our caravan along soon," he said.

"We're going to see about ours," said Fatty Wynn.

And the chums of the New House walked cheerily out of the gates, and Tom Merry turned back into the quad.

Figgins & Co. grinned as they disappeared from the School House junior's sight.

"Dear little innocent!" murmured Figgins.

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"Know a bloke named Figgins?" asked the driver. "What borrowed the caravan!" exclaimed the man. "What!" "The fea"

"We've actually told them we're going caravaning. But they won't guess it's the same caravan."

"They will soon," chuckled Kerr.

"They will! Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. proceeded down the lane as far as the turning that led off in the direction of Wayland. That was the route by which the caravan was sure to come.

Under a clump of green willows by the corner the chums of the New House waited and watched.

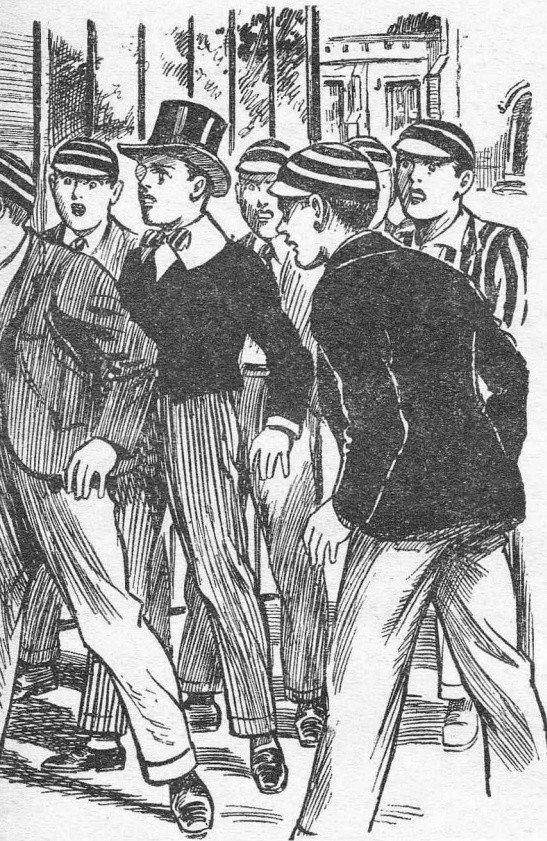
They were off for the holidays—or nearly. They had said good-bye to their friends in the New House, and were supposed to be off to catch a rather early train home. Their designs on the caravan had been kept strictly a secret in their own select circle. The three juniors rejoiced at the prospect of winding up the term with a House "rag" of unusual magnitude.

"I don't know what they'll do without their bus," Figgins remarked, "but I shouldn't wonder if they start hunting for us."

"Let 'em hunt!" grinned Fatty Wynn. "There's only one thing I'm anxious about, Figg."

"What's that?"

"Whether there's any grub ready in the van!"



rather!" said Blake. "What about him?" "He's
ed Blake. "Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.
undah!"

"B-r-r-r-r!"

"Well, that's an important point, you know,"
urged Fatty Wynn. "I believe in laying a solid
foundation, Figgy. No good starting a holiday
on an empty tummy. It's bound to spoil the
holiday. Do you think there will be any grub in
the van?"

"Blessed if I know—or care!" grunted Figgins.

"But if there isn't," said Fatty Wynn, with a
cloud of deep anxiety on his plump brow. "If
there isn't, old chap—"

"Here she comes!" said Kerr.

It was the caravan.

Figgins & Co. eyed it with great admiration
as it came along.

It looked quite roomy, for a caravan, and was
nicely done up with fresh paint, and looked as
neat and clean as a new pin. A man was driving
a powerful horse, and the van came along at
quite a smart pace.

George Figgins ran into the road.

"Halt!"

Figgins held up his hand as he shouted, and
the driver stared at him as he pulled in the
horse.

"What's the row?" he inquired.

"Is that the caravan for St. Jim's?" asked
Figgins.

"That's it!"

"For Jack Blake—"

"Master Blake is the name," said the driver.
"Wot about it?"

"Nothing—only we've come to meet you and
save you the trouble of driving to the school,"
smiled Figgins. "Jump down!"

"You Master Blake?" asked the man.

"Ahem, no!"

"We know Blake," explained Kerr, who had
stepped into the road with Fatty Wynn.

"I dessey you do!" answered the driver, gather-
ing up the reins. "But this 'ere van has got to
be delivered at the school. Them's my orders."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Figgins.

"Get aside, young gentlemen; I ain't any time
to waste!"

Figgins gave his comrades a quick look.

He had hoped to "bag" the caravan by methods
of persuasion; but in any case, he meant to bag
the caravan. If methods of persuasion were of no
use, it was necessary to resort to methods of
barbarism.

The three juniors jumped at the driver together.

Before that hapless individual knew what was
happening, he was sitting in the road, wondering
how he had got there.

"Sorry, old top!" said Figgins, jumping into
the driver's seat. "Trot on to the school, and tell
Blake that we've borrowed his caravan. Mention
my name—Figgins—and say I'm much obliged."

"Groogh!"

"Sorry you've got to walk—there's a two-bob
bit for your trouble, old scout!" said Figgins
considerately.

"Groogh!"

Figgins had the reins now, and Kerr had
dragged open the door of the caravan and bundled
in with Fatty Wynn.

Figgins set the horse in motion, the driver
sitting in the road and staring after him dazedly.

As the caravan rumbled on the man seemed to
realise what was happening, and he scrambled up
—the "two-bob" bit in his hand.

"Ere, you 'old on!" he roared.

"Good-bye, little yellow bird!" sang Fatty
Wynn.

"Stop, I tell you!"

"Ta-ta!"

"I'll call in the perlice!"

The driver's voice died away behind. Figgins
was urging on the horse to a speed not usually
adopted by a caravan horse. He was anxious to
get away.

The driver broke into a run in pursuit. He
could guess that he had been the victim of a school-
boy joke, and that it was not a case of highway
robbery; but he was naturally alarmed for the
safety of the van.

Figgins turned from the road into a lane.

Behind the rumbling van the driver panted on,
his face streaming with perspiration in the hot
sun.

But at the turning point he gave it up.

He shook his fist after the clattering van and
bawled, answered with merry laughter by the
schoolboy raiders.

Then he tramped on towards St. Jim's to carry
Figgy's message to Jack Blake, and to ascertain
whether the police were to be called in to deal
with the matter.

"He's chucked it, Figgy!" called out Kerr.

"Good egg!" answered Figgins.

"I say, Figgy——"
 "Hallo, Fatty!"
 "I can't find any grub in the van!"
 "Go hon!"
 "They haven't had any supplies put in," said Fatty Wynn. "Where are we going to stop for some grub, Figgy?"
 "We've had our bags sent on to Lexham. We'll stop there."
 "Eh? That's twenty miles."
 "Right!"
 "But what about lunch?"
 "Nothing about lunch, old top! Sit down and be quiet!" chuckled Figgins.
 "Oh dear!"

Fatty Wynn sat down, but he was not quiet. His remarks were incessant, and they were all on the subject of "grub." But Figgins was too busy with the horse to heed him; and Kerr was busy, too, examining their new quarters.

The caravan rumbled on the road towards Lexham, and was well on its way towards that town when the dusty driver arrived at St. Jim's with his startling news.

CHAPTER 11.

Left!

"TOM MEWWY!"
 "Hallo, old pippin!"
 "I suppose you have the key?"
 "What key, my son?" asked Tom Merry.
 "The key of Nobody's Study!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "My baggage is there, and I find that the door is locked and the key is gone!"
 "My hat!"
 "Have you the key, Tom Mewwy?"
 "Haven't seen it for dogs' ages," said Tom.
 "Bai Jove! What is goin' to be done, then?"
 "Ask me another!"
 Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his noble nose. His extensive property was in the empty room in the Shell passage—quite safe there.

NIGHTCAPS!

Customs Official (pointing to two bottles of whisky in a passenger's trunk): "Do you call these clothes?"
 Lady: "Yes. Those are my husband's nightcaps!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Sudano, Old Langham Hotel, 112, Kerk Street, Johannesburg, South Africa.

It was too safe, in fact. For the door was locked, and the key was gone, and it was just on half-past eleven. The caravan was due.

"Of course, I cannot start without my baggage," said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry nodded in a very thoughtful way. He could guess that Blake or Digby or Herries had locked up D'Arcy's baggage, which really was too much for any caravan, however large. Space was likely to be limited enough in the van, without two trunks and two hatboxes and the rest.

"Do you think you will want toppers in the van?" asked Tom.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "People don't go vanning as a rule in toppers, you know!"

"An occasion may arise when a toppah will be essential, Tom Mewwy. I am only takin' two."

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"A caravan wearing two toppers will look rather odd, won't he?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I am not goin' to weah them both at once, you ass! As a mattah of fact," said Arthur Augustus sternly, "I suspect one of you chaps of havin' locked up my baggage and collared the key!"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said the Terrible Three with one voice.

"I have inquired of Blake and Hewwies and Dig, and they declare that they have not locked up the study," said D'Arcy. "It is vevy odd. Some uttah ass is playin' a twick on me!"

"Hunt him down, and strew the quadrangle with his bones!" advised Monty Lowther.

"Wats!"
 Arthur Augustus quitted the Terrible Three with a wrinkled brow.

"Who the dickens can have the key, if it isn't Blake?" murmured Tom.

"I give that one up!" remarked Manners. "If it's some merry joker on the job it's a stroke of luck for us, anyway. We couldn't take Gussy's cargo!"

"Ha, ha, ha! No fear!"
 "Good-bye, you chaps!" called out Kangaroo of the Shell, coming along with Dane and Glyn.

"Cheerio!" said the Terrible Three.

"Has Gussy been inquiring after a key?" asked Kangaroo, with a grin.

"Eh? Yes! Do you know anything about it?"
 "It's in my study. Don't tell Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I suppose Blake asked you——"
 Kangaroo chuckled.

"Blake mentioned that if a fellow locked up the study and took away the key, it would save no end of trouble," he replied. "Ta-ta!"

Kangaroo & Co. walked on, grinning, and the Terrible Three chuckled.

The difficulty of Gussy's tremendous baggage had been solved quite easily—with the help of Kangaroo, and all Gussy's devoted chums were able to state with perfect truth that they had not locked up the study or removed the key.

"Half-past eleven," said Manners. "Time the bus was here."

"We're all ready, and the baggage downstairs," said Tom. "Let's go and look for it!"

The Terrible Three walked down to the gates, where they found Study No. 6 gathered, looking for the caravan.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was in a state of considerable excitement. He was demanding what was to be done, and Blake, Herries, and Digby professed a complete ignorance of what was to be done.

They left that problem to Arthur Augustus for solution.

"You see, we can't start without my baggage," said Arthur Augustus. "Do you think the House-mastah would mind if the door of that beastly study was bwoken in. Blake?"

"I rather think so."
 "Why not take a bag, like the rest of us?" asked Tom Merry.

"It is necessary to be wathah well dswessed, Tom Mewwy, even on a cawavan tour. What is goin' to be done?"

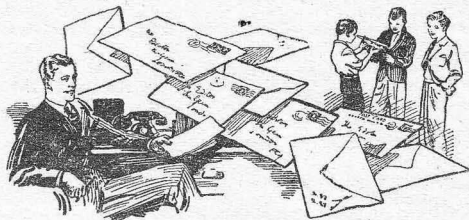
"Looks to me as if you are going to be done, old scout!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"
 "Hallo, who's this merchant?" asked Tom Merry, as a dusty man stopped at the gates.

"Man from Spriggs," said Blake. "I saw him at the place yesterday. Hallo, my man, what about the caravan?"

"You Master Blake?"
 "Yes!"
 "Know a bloke named Figgins?" asked the driver, blinking at him.
 "Yes, rather—a New House chap. What about him?"
 "He's borrowed the caravan!"
 "What?" yelled Blake.
 "Borrowed it, sir," said the driver, "and told me to tell you as 'ow he was much obliged!"
 "The—the rotter!" roared Blake. "Borrowed our caravan! Why, I—I'll—"
 "Bai Jove! The feahful boundah!"
 "They've bagged the van!" gasped Tom Merry.
 "How many were there of them, driver?"
 "Three, sir; one a very fat cove!"
 "Figgins & Co., of course!" said Tom. "The cheeky villains! They said they were going caravanning. Our caravan—"
 "We'll scalp them!" roared Herries.
 "Which I thought I'd mention it to you, sir, afore goin' to the police station," said the driver. Blake jumped.
 "Going where?" he ejaculated.
 "The police station. If the van's been stole—"
 "Nothing of the sort!" said Blake hastily. "It's all right—only a joke of some of our school-fellows. Leave it to us!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "I was ordered to deliver that there van to you, sir, personally. If you'll give me a paper to see me all right with Mr. Spriggs, I don't mind."
 "All right—I'll do that."
 Jack Blake was in a state of towering rage; but he was not forgetful of the rules of the game. He handed the driver the acknowledgment required and the man took his departure.
 Then the chums of the School House looked at one another grimly.
 "They've got our van!" said Blake.
 "The feahfully cheeky boundahs!"
 "They can't mean to keep it for the vac!" ejaculated Manners.
 "Figgins would have nerve enough!"
 "It's all in the game," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "We've got to get it back, that's all. The question is, which direction have they taken?"
 "The driver might know—"
 Tom shook his head.
 "They wouldn't start in the direction they intended to take till he was out of sight. It's not so easy as that. But—" Tom wrinkled his brows in thought. "I saw the bounders going out, and they hadn't any baggage with them. They can't be going on the vac without any baggage. They must have left it to be sent on—"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "And they must have left it with Taggles," said Tom Merry. "I'll jolly well ask Taggles!"
 "Good!"
 Tom Merry cut off to the porter's lodge. But he came back in a few minutes looking crest-fallen.
 "Well?" said Blake.
 "They left bags with Taggles, and he sent them on," said Tom. "He's told me that. But he won't tell me where."
 "Why not, the old hunks?"
 "Because Figgins has tipped him not to, of course," said Tom ruefully.
 "Oh, my hat!"

(Continued on page 22.)



THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Let the Editor be your pal. Drop him a line to-day, addressing your letter: The Editor, The GEM, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, Chums! It gives me much pleasure and satisfaction to present to you in this number our grand new programme of school stories and features. I'm pleased because I feel confident that readers will find the greatest enjoyment in the present stories, and I'm satisfied because, though I say it myself when I shouldn't, I have got together a programme which is the best in the history of the old paper.

My difficulty at first was to get two good school series which were entirely different in character and setting from the St. Jim's yarns, and I think I have overcome that difficulty very satisfactorily with Frank Richards' schooldays in Canada, and the adventures of the boys of the School on the River. As to the new features, I am sure you will all vote them a big improvement on anything that has appeared before.

I should like you all to read three or four numbers of the GEM, so that you can get used to the new attractions, and then let me know your candid opinions. Just jot your remarks down on a postcard and send it to the above address. Thanks!

"SEVEN IN THE SOUP!"

Having had their caravan collared by their New House rivals, Tom Merry & Co. have certainly made a disastrous start to the summer holiday tour. As a matter of fact, in the next story, the School House chums are well in the soup, for though they scour the countryside far and wide, never a sign of the missing caravan do they see. And to add to their troubles, in seeking the New House raiders they land themselves in all sorts of bother—thanks chiefly to Gussy!

How Tom Merry & Co. fare further in their weary search I will leave you to discover next Wednesday.

"AN INNOCENT IN THE BACKWOODS!"

In the second episode of Frank Richards' schooldays, Martin Clifford tells of the tenderfoot's first day at school in the backwoods. Frank Richards has no idea what his new school is like, and his cousin Bob pulls his leg without mercy. The result is that Frank turns up at school in Etons and topper—and is his face red when he finds himself among boys and girls in ordinary, servicable Western kit! He's the laughing-stock of the school!

"THE FLOATING SCHOOL!"

How do you like the first yarn of Owen Conquest's great school series? Grand, isn't it? In next Wednesday's story you will read of Jack Drake's return to the old Benbow, on the River Chadway. How he makes a new chum in the train and deserts him when he meets the "Bucks" again, and how he "funks" telling his indolent companions that he's now the son of a ruined man, and must work hard to hold his place at St. Winifred's, makes absorbing reading.

Finally, Detective Kerr investigates "The Tuckshop Burglary." Professor Skimpole casts the horoscope of Gussy, and jokes, "Pen Pals," and Monty Lowther's fun complete the number. Don't forget that early order, chums.

All the best!

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"Bai Jove! We shall have to get that cawavan back, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"And the first step—"

"Well, what's the first step?" grunted Blake.

"The first step, deah boy, is to find that missin' key—"

"Eh?"

"And get out my baggage—"

"What?"

"And then we shall be weady to start—yawwooooh!"

To his great astonishment and wrath, Arthur Augustus found himself collared by his chums and thumped on the gate.

Blake & Co. were not in a humour just then to hear any more about Gussy's celebrated baggage, though Gussy did not guess as much.

"Gwoogh! You uttah asses! Welease me! Yoop!"

Arthur Augustus sat down. His comrades left him sitting, and hurried away to the bike-shed.

CHAPTER 12.

Taking The Trail!

"WELL, we've got to go!"

"No doubt about that!"

"What a sell!"

"Rotten!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

It certainly was time to go.

Tom Merry & Co. had spent some hours in scouring the country on their bicycles, in various directions, looking for a newly painted caravan. They had not been successful.

Tired and wrathly, they had gathered again at the school; but it was clear that they could not remain there.

All the fellows but themselves were gone by that time.

Taggles were eyeing them surlily, waiting for them to clear off so that he could lock up.

The chums of the School House were in a state of great exasperation.

Arthur Augustus had almost forgotten the precious baggage locked up in Nobody's Study.

What was to be done was a deep question.

Figgins & Co. had bagged the caravan—there was no doubt on that point. It was the last House rag of the term, and it left the School House party in what Gussy justly described as an "awkward posish."

They had obtained permission from home to undertake the caravan tour, and therefore they were not expected home.

Certainly they could not remain at the deserted school, even if they wanted to—which they did not. It was probable that their caravan was not many miles away.

But looking for it over the wide countryside was like looking for a needle in a haystack. They might have chanced upon it at any minute, and they might not have chanced on it in three months.

"We've got to go!" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"We're not going home," said Blake. "In fact, we can't! It's too late for a train up to my place in the North. Besides, we're not going to let those New House bounders score over us. They'd yell us to death next term if we did."

"Imposs!"

"We've got to find the caravan," said Tom Merry determinedly. "We'll track it down if

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it takes half the vac, and make an example of those New House bounders when we find them!"

"Yaas, wathah! Put yourselves undah my guidance, deah boys, and I will lead you on the twack—"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake!"

"There's Taggles goggling at us!" growled Herries. "He's wondering why we don't clear. We'd better get out before the Head notices that we're still here."

"But what the thump are we going to do?" exclaimed Digby.

"There's the blessed bags!" remarked Manners.

"Yaas, and my baggage—"

"Oh, bother your baggage!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Tom Merry knitted his brows in thought.

There was no doubt that it was a very awkward position, and Figgins & Co. had scored completely.

But the chums of the School House did not intend to accept defeat, especially such a crushing defeat as this.

Figgins & Co. had to be found and brought to book; and the caravan had to be recovered.

"After all, we can run them down in time," said Tom Merry resolutely. "We can leave the baggage at the Railway Arms in Rylcombe, to be sent after us when we get the caravan back. That's simple enough. And we can stick to the bikes and start after those New House bounders."

"In what direction?" asked Manners.

"We've got to find that out, that's all. Let's get the baggage put up in the village and start. We can't hang on here any longer; we shall have the Head inquiring what's up. We want to scalp Figgins & Co., but we don't want to get them into a row with the Head."

"Wathah not!"

"Come on, then!" said Blake.

Fortunately the baggage was light, having been planned for a caravan tour.

Six bags were wheeled along on six bikes easily enough. But the great burning question of Gussy's baggage was still unsolved.

Much to the indignation of the swell of St. Jim's, Tom Merry & Co. made their preparations for starting without even an attempt to solve that burning question.

"Are you fellows startin'?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Do you want to stay here to-night?" grunted Blake.

"But—"

"Then come on!"

"My baggage is locked up in Nobody's Study!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"Then you'll have to take root here, that's all!" said Blake. "Sorry to lose you!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come on, you fellows—"

Six juniors wheeled their machines out of the gates, with six bags resting on the saddles.

Arthur Augustus stood holding his handsome jigger, with wrath and dismay in his aristocratic face.

"Bai Jove! This is a feahful posish!" he murmured. "If those young asses go aftah Figgins & Co. without me, they will lose themselves, or land in some dweadful swape. But I cannot—"

(Continued on page 36.)

FIRST GRIPPING STORY OF FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS IN THE
BACKWOODS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA!

A Tenderfoot in Canada!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.



*Captured by Redskins!
Frank Richards' long
journey across Canada
to his uncle's ranch
ends on a thrilling note!*

Cousin Bob!

CANADA at last!
Frank Richards drew a deep breath as he looked shoreward from the deck of the liner. His face was flushed and his eyes shining.

Only a few short weeks before he had been a careless schoolboy, and his thoughts had scarcely wandered beyond the shores of England. Now the broad Atlantic lay behind him, and before him lay a new world—new and strange.

Frank was on his way to British Columbia, where his uncle had a ranch in the backwoods, and he was looking forward keenly to his visit.

His eager eyes had not rested for a moment as the liner throbbed her way up the great St. Lawrence. As the great ship passed under the frowning Heights of Abraham, the story of Wolfe and Montcalm came freshly into his mind, and of the old days of strife before English and French-Canadians were united in one great people.

Dusk was falling as the steamer came alongside the wharf at Point Levis, and Quebec gleamed through the darkness like a fairy city, glittering with electric lights to the edge of the rippling water.

Passengers were coming and going. There was a buzz of voices and a rumble of baggage. Frank did not heed. He was going on in the steamer as far as Montreal, where someone was to meet him and take him to his uncle's ranch in the west.

He stood by the rail, out of the way of scurrying passengers, watching the glittering lights of the city. A sudden slap on the shoulder startled him, and he spun round with an exclamation.

"What the dickens!"

A sturdy lad of about his own age was standing there, regarding him with a good-humoured grin.

Frank gazed at him curiously.

He was not one of the passengers on the steamer. Frank had never seen him before. Evidently he had just come on board at Quebec.

"Well?" said the stranger.

"Well?" said Frank.

"You've just been pointed out to me. You came over in a bandbox, I understand, in charge of the skipper?"

"I came over in charge of the captain," said Frank. "Not in a bandbox."

"Labelled 'This side up, with care'!" grinned the stranger.

Frank Richards flushed a little.

"Look here!" he began. "I don't know who you are, or what you're jawing to me for. But I generally punch a fellow's nose if he's cheeky!"

"By gum!" The youthful stranger whistled. "Do you?"

"Yes. That's a tip!"

Frank turned to the rail again and looked landward. The next moment he received another slap on the shoulder, which pitched him forward against the rail. He whirled round, with a flash in his eyes. The sturdy youth was grinning at him in the most provoking way.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Frank angrily.

"What do you want?"

"I'm waiting for you to punch my nose."

"Oh, I won't keep you waiting!"

Frank Richards pushed back his cuffs and started. Frank had been known as the fighting man in the Fourth Form at St. Kit's, in far-away England. He was not at all averse to giving this aggressive stranger a taste of his quality, though he could not possibly imagine why the fellow had sought him out in this way.

The other fellow's hands went up like lightning. It was plain at once that he knew as much about boxing as Frank could teach him.

In a moment or two a terrific fight was raging, which reminded Frank queerly of the old scenes behind the gym at St. Kit's.

Frank caught with his chin a set of knuckles that seemed like iron and staggered back to the rail.

He rushed forward the next instant, however, and his left and right came into play with lightning quickness, and the stranger went flying backwards.

As ill-luck would have it, a passenger was scurrying past laden with baggage. He was a tall American gentleman, with a bag in each hand, a rug over his shoulder, another bag under one arm, and several more articles piled about him.

The reeling lad crashed fairly into him.

"Waal, I swow! Yah!" came in a roar from the American gentleman. He sprawled at full

length on the deck, with his baggage flying round him in a crashing shower.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated the cause of the disaster.

The American gentleman sat up amid his baggage and stared round him with a bloodthirsty eye.

The Canadian lad gripped Frank Richards by the arm.

"Hook it!" he said laconically.

"I—"

"Come on, greenhorn! Do you want that Johnny to scalp you?"

He dragged Frank away from the spot just as the American gentleman clambered to his feet, with vengeance in his looks.

The two lads vanished amid the throng on the deck, and the unfortunate passenger, with a series of lurid remarks, gathered up his baggage again.

"All serene," said Frank's curious companion, with a chuckle, stopping at a safe distance.

Frank regarded him oddly.

All the youth's aggressiveness seemed to have vanished, and he looked quite friendly, and Frank did not know in the least what to make of him.

He rubbed his nose, where Frank's knuckles had struck hard.

"You can scrap pretty well for a tenderfoot," he remarked. "I guess I didn't know you had it in you. We'll finish that little tussle some day, with the gloves on."

Frank stared at him.

"I don't suppose I shall ever see you again," he said.

"I've forgotten to introduce myself," grinned the stranger. "You're Frank Richards, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you're my cousin Frank."

"What!"

"I'm Bob Lawless."

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank in astonishment.

The youth held out his hand in the frankest manner. Frank Richards took it cordially enough, though somewhat doubtfully.

"Pop sent me down to Montreal to meet you," explained Lawless. "I came on to Quebec to meet the steamer on my own. I'm going up-river with you. We land at Montreal and take the train west. Father couldn't come; he's too busy on the ranch just now. So I came."

"Oh, I see!" said Frank.

"I'm going to take you safe to the ranch," said Bob. "Pop's trusted you into my hands. We're going to school together."

"Oh!"

"Pop says we're to be great friends," grinned Lawless. "Perhaps we shall be. We've started well."

Frank laughed.

"I don't see why we shouldn't be," he said. "I didn't understand. If you'd told me you were my cousin—"

"All serene. No harm done," said Bob cheerfully. "I say, suppose we go and scout for some grub? You know the way, I suppose? Lead on, Macduff!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank. And he led the way.

Across Canada!

THE next day the steamer was gliding up the St. Lawrence again. That day Frank became better acquainted with his cousin.

Bob Lawless was a young fellow of the most

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exuberant spirits and of the greatest good-humour, and Frank could not help liking him.

But it seemed to be fixed in Bob's mind that the newcomer from England was a "tenderfoot"—a greenhorn of the greenest variety. And Frank soon learned that his Canadian cousin had an irrepressible sense of humour, and a strong propensity to "pull the leg" of the new arrival.

But Frank, new as he was to the western continent, was not an easy victim.

When Bob rushed down to the state-room to warn him that a fleet of Indian canoes were coming to attack the steamer, Frank Richards continued to pack his bag with great equanimity.

"Don't you understand?" demanded Bob, staring hard at him. "Indians, you know!"

Frank nodded and went on packing.

"Red Indians!"

"Yes, I know," said Frank. "They board all the steamers and scalp all the passengers!"

"Ahem! Exactly!"

"Well, let 'em come!"

And Bob laughed and gave it up.

"What is that?" asked Frank a little later, as he sighted from the deck a dark object drifting on the river.

"By gum! A whale!" exclaimed Bob Lawless excitedly. "Buzz off to the bridge and tell the skipper that there's a whale in sight!"

"I think I'll see that whale a bit closer first," Frank remarked. And when the whale came close it proved to be a drift log!

But when they landed in Montreal at last, Bob Lawless was very useful to his cousin from the Old Country.

He piloted Frank through the custom house, took him to see the cathedral and the tubular bridge, and finally landed him, with his baggage, on the Canadian Pacific Railway—the great and famous C.P.R.

The Canadian Pacific was a wonderful experience to Frank. The great cars which sped day and night over limitless distances required getting used to.

They passed through Ottawa at night, and breakfasted the next morning at Toronto.

"Now, which way would you rather go?" Bob asked at breakfast.

"Is there more than one way?" asked Frank. "I've never been to Canada before, you know."

Bob grinned.

"Yes, I know. But you can keep on the west of the railway all the time, or you can do part of the journey by steamer on the Great Lakes. That's a bit longer, but it's pleasanter. Say which you'd like."

"The Lakes," said Frank at once.

"Right-ho!"

And by the Lakes they went onward, taking the steamer on Lake Huron at Owen Sound. And Frank's boyish eyes opened wide when they came out on the wide waters of Lake Superior.

"My hat, is this a lake?" he exclaimed.

Bob shook his head solemnly.

"No; this is the Pacific Ocean," he explained.

Frank laughed. But the huge expanse of water might have been the ocean, for all the human eye could tell.

Frank was enjoying the journey, and he found Bob Lawless a useful and entertaining guide, with all his propensity for practical jokes.

The journey, tremendous as it was to Frank, seemed an easy enough concern to the Canadian lad.

The Canadian Pacific received them again on

its cars at Port Arthur, on the western extremity of Lake Superior.

The pullman sleeping-car on the C.P.R. was Frank's first experience of real comfort in railway travelling. Night and day succeeded one another as the train boomed westward.

Manitoba lay behind, and in Assiniboia Frank had his first sight of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in two stalwart troopers who boarded the train.

After passing Regina, the capital of Assiniboia, the train boomed along over limitless prairie.

Frank was never tired of standing on the train-platform and watching the vast expanse as they hummed by. Once or twice he caught sight of antelopes in the distance.

Bob, to whom it was all commonplace, watched his interest and delight, with a pleasant grin.

The two cousins had quite forgotten by this time that their acquaintance had been opened with a fight. It was at Medicine Hat, where the railway crosses the South Saskatchewan River, that Frank saw his first Indian. Bob grasped him suddenly by the arm, with a look of alarm.

"Indians!" he whispered in a thrilling voice.

"Oh, rats!" said Frank.

"Look!"

Frank looked round and started violently as he saw a tall Redman close by him. It was a real Indian at last.

But the Redman was only offering bead ornaments for sale, and there was nothing to be alarmed at. It was only one more of Bob's little jokes.

From Medicine Hat the train ran on westward into Alberta, and the same day Frank Richards had his first sight of the Rocky Mountains.

He felt his heart beat faster at the sight of the dim peaks that rose beyond the horizon.

"The Rockies?" he asked.

Bob nodded.

"Yes, my infant."

"We're going over the Rockies?" asked Frank.

"Naturally, as we've got to get to the other side," said Bob, laughing. "What do you think of the Rockies?"

"Bigger than the South Downs," said Frank, with a smile.

Frank feasted his eyes on the mountains as they drew nearer and nearer. He was never tired of watching them, and breathing deep the scent of the pine forests.

The train climbed farther and farther, hour after hour. Higher and higher went the snorting engine into the Kicking Horse Pass.

"How far up is this?" Frank asked, when the train stopped at last at the summit of the pass.

"About a mile," said Bob. "Above sea-level, I mean."

"My hat!"

"And now we're going down," remarked Bob, when the train was in motion again.

The train was descending now, in sight of the foaming waters of the Kicking Horse River, dancing along by the track.

"Where are we now?" Frank asked at last.

"British Columbia—and near home!" said Bob cheerfully.

Roughing It!

BUMP, bump! The wagon jolted on the rough road that ran between the great stretches of forest.

Bump, bump!

Frank Richards lay back on a pile of sacks in

the wagon, dreamily gazing about at the new, strange sights.

The railway had been left at last. While the train rushed on towards its destination—the shore of the blue Pacific—the two boys had boarded the wagon at the wayside station.

The long journey had not tired Frank, for in the pullman car he had slept as soundly and comfortably as in his bed in the dormitory at St. Kit's.

He was quite fresh and cheery as he sat in the wagon, and bumped hard, and jolted along, he knew not whither.

Bob had said that they were "near home," but there was no sign of home so far as Frank could see. But "near" might mean anywhere within a couple of hundred miles.

A brown-faced man in leather "crackers," red shirt and a huge slouched hat, was driving the wagon. The two horses kept up a good pace, rough as the trail was.

"Are we getting near the ranch, Bob?" Frank asked at last.

Bob grinned.

"We don't get to the ranch to-night," he answered.

"Oh! Where do we stop, then?"

"Cedar Creek."

"Is that a town?"

"Yes, it's a town of sorts, I guess," grinned Bob. "We take horse there and ride home. Can you ride?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Good," said Bob. "If we meet any Indians on the way—"

"Oh, go easy on the Indians!" said Frank, laughing. "You've been stuffing me with Indians all the way here! I'm not afraid of Indians!"

"You never know, you know," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "Have you got your revolver with you?"

"No; I haven't one."

"That was an oversight," said Bob, so seriously that Frank could not tell whether he was joking or not. "You may need it."

Bob rose to his feet in the wagon.

"There's the Creek," he said.

Frank looked round him with interest as the wagon rumbled and jolted into the town—or rather, camp.

"Where are we going to stay?" he asked.

"At the Hotel Continental."

"Phew!"

The Hotel Continental sounded promising, though the aspect of the border town gave little promise of such splendour.

The wagon stopped at last in an irregular street dotted with cabins, near a large, ramshackle wooden building. Frank Richards would certainly not have taken it for an hotel but for the board nailed over the doorway which bore the words in irregular letters:

"HOTEL CONTINENTAL."

"Is—is that the hotel?" ejaculated Frank.

"I guess so."

"Oh!"

"You're in the backwoods now," grinned Bob. "This isn't Quebec or Montreal or Ottawa, you know. We're a hundred miles from anywhere."

"I—I see."

"You've been to school in England?" Bob asked.

"Yes."

"Public school?"
"Yes."

"You're going to school here, but it won't be quite like your old school at home, I fancy."
"I dare say not," agreed Frank. "I didn't expect it to be. The pater told me I should have to rough it here, most likely."

Bob gave him rather an odd look, but he did not pursue the subject. He jumped out of the wagon and gave Frank a hand with his "truck," as he called the baggage. Frank had found that impedimenta of any kind was generally alluded to as "truck."

"How are we going to get the bags to the ranch if we're going to ride?" asked Frank.

"They'll come on by the wagon that brings the stores. This way to the hotel!" said Bob.

Bob Lawless led the way into the Hotel Continental. In the cities and towns he had passed on the C.P.R. Frank had seen hotels that for palatial splendour equalled anything he had seen at home. But he was far from the splendours now.

The backwoods hotel was much the same as an inn in a remote country district in England, though run on different lines. It was built entirely of wood, and the heating seemed to be provided by a gigantic stove.

They entered a long room, or rather hall, with a counter along one side, at which Bob stopped. A man in shirtsleeves was sitting on the counter, picking his teeth with a toothpick, and he gave Bob Lawless a friendly nod, evidently being acquainted with that lively young fellow.

"Here we are again, Pete!" said Bob.

"Howdy?" yawned Pete.

"This is my cousin from the Old Country."

Pete gave Frank a nod.

Bob Lawless closed one eye at the hotel-keeper, the eye that was farther from his English cousin.

"Any news of the Indian rising?" he asked.

The gentleman in the shirtsleeves glanced at him, and glanced at Frank. Then he nodded.

"Yeah. There's goin' to be trouble. You youngers better hang on hyer, I guess, till the trail's safe."

"Oh, we're going to the ranch to-morrow," said Bob. "We'll chance the Kootenays. Where's our room, Pete?"

"Room No. 4."

"Right! Come on, Frank."

Frank Richards followed his cousin up the creaking wooden stairs to the room assigned to them. His heart was beating a little faster. He had seen a good many Indians on his journey across Western Canada, and the Redman had certainly seemed quite peaceable and harmless wherever Frank had seen him.

But an Indian rising seemed rather a different matter.

"Is that another joke, Bob?" he asked, while they were removing the signs of travel.

"Eh? Is what a joke?"

"That Indian rising?"

Bob grinned.

"Getting nervey?" he asked.

"No!" said Frank indignantly. "But——"

"You'd rather stay here a bit till it's over?" asked Bob, looking at him curiously. "You'd rather not risk meeting the Kootenays on the trail to-morrow?"

Frank coloured.

"I'm quite ready to risk it if you are," he said.

"Then it's a go!" said Bob. "Buck up with your dusting! I'm hungry!"

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And in a few minutes the two cousins were seated at a crowded table downstairs before a substantial meal, to which they did full justice.

Captured by Redskins!

FRANK RICHARDS was silent for the most part as he ate his dinner. Most of the inhabitants of Cedar Creek seemed to have supper at the hotel, and there was a crowd at the table and a buzz of talk.

Bob Lawless seemed to be acquainted with everyone there, and exchanged greetings with nearly all.

It was another example of the Canadian democracy of which Frank had seen a good deal. The rich rancher's son was greeted with perfect familiarity by big cattlemen and team-drivers. In that spacious country there seemed to be no room for snobbishness or any of the smaller and meaner feelings.

Frank had been doubtful whether the "Indian rising" was not another of Bob's attempts to pull his leg till he found that it was a general topic at the supper table.

A prospector in from the hills told a story of burning and scalping, and several men urgently pressed Bob Lawless to think of the danger of riding on the trail to Lawless Ranch till the trouble had blown over.

When the comrades went to bed Frank had no further doubts about the reality of the Indian rising, and any unwillingness on his part would have looked like showing the white feather. And all the scalping-knives between the Klondyke River and Rio Grande would not have induced Frank Richards to do that.

He slept soundly enough that night, but he dreamed of ferocious braves on the warpath, of torture stakes, and scalping-knives. He knew that there had been such things in Canadian history.

He was awakened in the morning by Bob's voice and a hearty shake.

"Time to get going!" said Bob cheerily.

Frank was up at once.

After breakfast in the log hotel the horses were brought round by a Kootenay stableman.

A dozen fellows gathered round to see them off, all with very grave faces. Pete, the hotel-keeper, was shaking his head portentously.

"Ready, Frank?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes!"

His cousin paused.

"Look here, if you feel nervous——"

Frank looked at him steadily.

"Do you feel nervous?" he asked.

"I'm used to the country," smiled Bob. "But you're a tenderfoot fresh from the Old Country, you know. If you're uneasy——"

"Oh, rats!" said Frank. "If you can go, I can, I suppose."

"But I'll ride alone, if you like, and you can come on later in the wagon."

"Then you're going, anyway?"

"You bet!"

"So am I!" said Frank coolly.

"Right you are!" said Bob cordially. "Jump up, then!"

He vaulted lightly into the saddle, and Frank followed his example. With a clatter of hoofs, they rode away down the irregular street and out upon the open trail.

Bob Lawless whistled cheerfully as he rode, but Frank was silent. He had plenty of pluck, but he could not help thinking of the Kootenays on



The Redskins rode round and round the two motionless boys, yelling in savage triumph. Frank Richards watched them with fast-beating heart.

the warpath and of the grave looks of the men at Cedar Creek.

The trail ran for many miles through a forest rich with scents in the sunshine. If the Indians were really "up," every tree might have hidden a lurking brave in war paint.

But Bob Lawless seemed unconscious of possible danger, and Frank, who found his cousin's eyes on him a good many times, maintained an elaborate appearance of unconcern.

Beyond the forest they rode out on the grassy plain in the blaze of sunshine. The trail was slightly marked—not marked at all to Frank's inexperienced eyes—but Bob evidently knew his way well.

Suddenly the Canadian lad wheeled his horse and halted, staring back the way he had come, shading his eyes with his broad hat.

"By gum!" he ejaculated.

Frank halted and followed his glance.

From the forest behind them a horseman had emerged. Even at the distance Frank could see the coppery gleam of his skin and the dancing feathers that adorned his thick black hair.

It was an Indian!

A thrill ran through the English boy's veins. He gave Bob a quick look, and noted the seriousness of his expression.

"An Indian?" said Frank.

"Yes; a Kootenay."

"Is he after us?"

"Looks like it! We shall have to ride for it!" said Bob. "Come on!"

They rode on again, at a gallop now. Frank glanced back after a few minutes. The Kootenay was galloping, too, on their track, waving a rifle and shouting. His hoarse tones came faintly to Frank's ears on the wind.

"Is he gaining?" panted Bob.

"I think not."

"Hark!"

There was a sudden report.

Crack!

Frank Richards' heart thumped as the rifle-shot rang out.

But he sat his pony steadily, and rode on side by side with his companion. Behind came the steady thud of heavy hoofbeats.

Bob Lawless was sweeping the horizon with his eyes as he rode, apparently in expectation of sighting other enemies.

He uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Corralled, by gum!"

Ahead of them on the trail three horsemen appeared in sight—Indians at a glance.

The cousins were cut off!

Bob slackened speed.

"Follow me, Frank!" he shouted. "We'll dodge them yet!"

He swerved from the trail, riding at right angles to the previous course, and Frank dashed after him.

Frank's face was flushed with excitement now. The sense of danger gave him a curious feeling of exhilaration.

Over the rough, rolling ground they dashed at full speed, starting many a prairie rabbit from his hole.

But the Kootenays had followed at once, and they were riding hard to cut off the fugitives.

And suddenly Bob drew rein, with a muttered exclamation.

"We're done!"

From a clump of trees ahead two more horsemen appeared in sight. The fugitives were surrounded.

From all sides now the Redskins were closing in on them.

"Well?" panted Frank, stopping as his cousin stopped.

"We're done, Frank! Pity we didn't stay at Cedar Creek, after all!" said Bob grimly. "The game's up, and it's all my fault!"

Frank sat silent on his steed. Further flight was impossible, and resistance was not much use. There were six Indians closing in on them, and

even if the boys had been armed the odds were too great.

"Take it quietly," said Bob. "They may only take us prisoners—"

He had no time to finish. The Redskins were close at hand, and they rode round and round the two motionless boys, uttering terrific whoops. Frank watched them, with fast-beating heart. Then one, who seemed to be the leader, rode directly up to them and spoke.

"Injun no kill. You come with um!" he said in broken English.

Bob looked at Frank Richards. The latter was calm and quiet.

"Take it easy, Frank. We may get out of it yet."

Frank nodded.

The Redskin dismounted and bound the two boys to their saddles with ropes, at the same time securing their hands. Then the horses were set in motion again, and Frank Richards and his cousin rode away in the midst of their savage captors.

A Bid for Liberty!

IT seemed like a strange wild dream to Frank Richards.

Somehow St. Kit's came into his mind just then. What would his old schoolfellows have thought if they could have seen him then?

This was his new life in the Canadian West—a prisoner of the Redskins, his fate unknown!

Bob Lawless gave him several hopeless looks as they rode away, bound to their saddles, in the midst of their captors.

He did not see a sign of "funk" in Frank Richards' quiet face.

Whatever was in store for him, the English lad had plenty of pluck to help him face it.

Mile after mile disappeared under galloping hoofs.

They rode over rolling plain and rugged ridge, fording creeks, and plunging through patches of forest.

The hot sun of the Canadian summer streamed down upon them. It had long passed the meridian now, and was sloping down towards the west—towards the far-off waters of the Pacific.

More than once Frank Richards sighted cattle grazing, and he wondered whether there was any habitation at hand. But no habitation appeared in sight.

The Indians rode without a word, either to the boys or to one another. And the prisoners did not speak. Speech was difficult, with the horses in ceaseless motion over the rough ground.

The Redskins halted at last.

In the midst of a thick clump of timber they drew their steeds to a halt and dismounted.

Frank glanced at his companion.

"What's going to happen now?" he muttered.

Bob shook his head with a hopeless expression. The Kootenays unfastened the ropes that bound the prisoners to their saddles, and lifted them to the ground. They were muttering to one another now in guttural tones, in a language which was wholly strange to Frank.

The Kootenay who appeared to be the leader of the band pointed to a tree, and the prisoners were placed against it and the rope run round the trunk, securing them there.

The horses were staked out among the timber.

"They're going to camp here, Bob," said Frank, in a low tone.

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"Looks like it."

"And—and we—"

"We're not dead yet," said Bob quietly. "While there's life there's hope, Frank. You—you haven't said anything to me about bringing you out of Cedar Creek into this."

Frank smiled faintly.

"What's the good?" he said. "It can't be helped now."

Bob looked at him curiously, but did not speak again. The two prisoners watched the Redskins in silence.

Frank surmised that the Kootenays intended to rest in the shelter of the trees during the heat of the afternoon, and resume their journey when the sun was lower—doubtless for their distant lodges.

Some of the braves disappeared among the trees, but two of them remained near the prisoners.

They rolled themselves in their blankets in the grass and slept.

"Frank!"

Bob's voice in a whisper broke the silence, after a long pause. Frank looked at him.

"My hands are a bit loose," muttered Bob. "I think I could get this rope off, Frank. Are you game to run for it if we can get loose?"

"Yes, rather!" Frank's heart beat fast at the thought. "What-ho!"

"If they shoot—"

"I'm ready to risk it if you are."

"It's a go, then."

Bob Lawless worked quietly at the rope. The two Kootenays in the grass slept on, unsuspecting.

In about five minutes Bob's hands were loose.

His hand glided into his pocket and came out with a penknife in it. Quietly he sawed through the ropes that secured him and Frank Richards to the tree.

Frank drew a quick, deep breath.

"Come on!" he whispered.

Bob caught his arm.

"No good going on foot," he breathed. "We've got to have horses. Don't make a sound."

On tiptoe they crept past the two sleeping Indians in the direction of the horses.

Frank's heart was beating almost to suffocation. If the Redskins should awake—each had a rifle in the grass by his side.

But the copper faces were still in repose; the fierce, black eyes did not open.

Frank breathed more freely when they were left behind.

He kept his eyes well about him for the rest of the Kootenays. But they were not to be seen among the timber.

Their own ponies were grazing among the Indians' horses, and it was not difficult to pick up the trail-ropes and pull the animals in.

Frank glanced back towards the sleeping Redskins as he drew in his pony, and put his hand on the saddle.

The two Kootenays, apparently alarmed, sat up suddenly.

"They've seen us, Bob!" panted Frank. "Quick!"

"Up you get!" shouted Bob.

He leaped upon his pony, Frank Richards following his example with lightning swiftness.

There was a shout from the Kootenays, as they leaped up and seized their rifles.

At the same moment Frank Richards and Bob Lawless dashed away at full gallop for the plain beyond the timber.

Dodging the branches overhead, swerving from the trunks and bushes, the ponies dashed on, and



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in a couple of minutes were racing away on the open grassland.

And at a mad gallop they dashed away across the plain, under the red westerling sun, and from the clump of timber behind the Kootenays emerged, galloping in hot pursuit.

The Lawless Ranch!

"BOB!" Frank Richards shouted breathlessly. "Look!"

Ahead of the riders smoke was rising in the distance, and under the smoke a building loomed into view—a great building, with out-houses and corrals.

Frank Richards knew that it must be a ranch.

He had followed Bob Lawless' lead in that hurried flight, leaving the guidance to the Canadian lad.

He had noticed, as they galloped, signs of cultivation and herds of cattle, and he had hoped that Bob was heading for some settlement. But there was no track on the plain that the English lad's eyes could discern.

Bob nodded and grinned.

"All serene now, Frank!"

"What luck! You knew the place, Bob?" panted Frank.

"You bet! It's our ranch, I guess!"

"Oh, ripping!"

Frank Richards glanced back over his shoulder. The Redskins, apparently careless of the fact that they were nearing the white man's dwelling, were still riding hard in pursuit.

"They're still coming on, Bob."

"Let 'em!" said Bob.

Closer and closer they drew to the ranch-house. A tall man, with a sunburnt face under the shade of his big stetson hat, came out of the porch and stood staring towards them. Frank looked back again.

The Indian riders swerved from the track and rode away towards a clump of buildings at a distance from the ranch-house. The man in the

J. Downer, 78, Dersingham Ave., Manor Park, London, E.12; pen pals; anything of interest; anywhere.
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B. W. Barrett, 39, Sunnyside Road, Ilford, Essex; age 16 or over; sport, history, and general topics; anywhere in the world excepting England.

A. C. Bowman, 6, Napier Street, Norwich; back numbers of the GEM wanted; No. 1,449 and others.

D. Oliver, North Lodge, Vicarage Lane, Hessele, near Hull, Yorks; age 12-13; stamps, cigarette cards; British colonies.

PEN PALS COUPON

23-7-38

stetson showed no trace of alarm at the sight of the Red braves.

A sudden misgiving smote Frank Richards.

"Bob!"

Bob Lawless did not reply. A grin was visible on his face—a grin that had been long suppressed.

They dashed up to the ranch-house and halted and slid down from the sweating ponies.

"Here we are again!" sang Bob Lawless. "Howdy, dad?"

"So you're back, Bob," said the rancher in a deep voice.

"Safe and sound, dad!" said Bob cheerily.

"And here's Frank, from the Old Country. I've toted him along from Quebec, this side up with care."

Frank Richards stood dazed for a moment. A suspicion of the truth had flashed into his mind, and it was a certainty now. He swung towards Bob Lawless, who was grinning broadly.

"So you're my nephew Frank," said Mr. Lawless, extending a big brown hand to Frank, who took it mechanically. "Welcome, my boy! Have you had a good journey?"

Frank Richards stammered helplessly, dazed by the unexpected turn of events. The Canadian rancher looked at him curiously.

"First-rate, pop!" said Bob, answering the question. "Only we were captured by Redskins on the way here from Cedar Creek—"

"What!" roared the rancher.

"But luckily they were only our Kootenay cattlemen, so we haven't been scalped!" said Bob cheerfully.

"You young rascal!" roared Mr. Lawless. "Have you been playing monkey-tricks on your cousin?"

"Oh, you spoofer!" gasped Frank. "Then—then it was all a trick?"

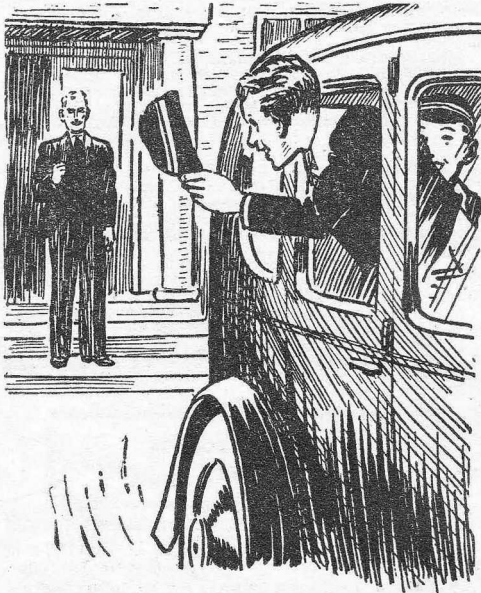
Bob roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Of course, fathead! Do you think there are savage Indians in Canada at this time of day? Ha, ha, ha!"

(Continued on page 36.)

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OPENING YARN OF A POWERFUL SCHOOL SERIES FEATURING A WEALTHY SCHOOLBOY WHO SUDDENLY FINDS HIMSELF A PAUPER!



Lightheartedly Jack Drake went off with his pals to have a gay time—little guessing that a crushing blow was about to fall upon him!

The Last Day at Home!

“JACK!”

Jack Drake did not seem to hear.

He was standing at the window, with his hands in his pockets, looking out, with a rather eager expression on his handsome, sunny face. The dining-room window commanded a view of the drive, and Jack Drake was evidently expecting an arrival.

Mr. Drake was seated in a deep armchair. For a long time his gaze had been fixed on the sturdy figure at the window, though Jack Drake was quite unconscious of it. The boy had indeed forgotten that his father was in the room. Several times the father's lips had opened as if to call his son, but he had closed them again. When he spoke at last his voice was low, almost tremulous, and it did not reach the ears of the schoolboy at the window.

“Jack!”

There was the hoot of a motor-horn in the distance, and Jack Drake uttered an exclamation.

“That's old Daub at last, I suppose! 'Time he was here, too! He's jolly late!”

“Jack!”

“Hallo! Did you speak, dad?”

“Yes. Come here, Jack,” said Mr. Drake quietly.

Jack reluctantly left the window. He started a little as he came towards his father and observed the old gentleman's face. Mr. Drake was a little pale, and there was a deep wrinkle in his brow.

“Anything up, dad?” asked the schoolboy.

“Yes. I have to speak to you, Jack, very seriously.”

“Oh!”

The “Bucks” of the Benbow!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

A slightly obstinate look came over the schoolboy's face. His look showed plainly that he expected a parental lecture and that the prospect did not please him.

“Sit down, my boy.”

“I—I say, dad—”

“Yes, Jack?”

“I'm expecting old Daub any minute, dad: If—if you're going to keep me a long time—”

Jack hesitated.

“I'm afraid I shall have to keep you some time, Jack.”

“I—I say, the Head hasn't been grouching, has he, dad?” asked Jack. “You haven't said anything about it during the vac.”

“Your headmaster's report last term was not a very favourable one, my boy!” said Mr. Drake, with a sigh.

“I'm going to do better this term,” said Jack

His father ruined! The family fortunes vanished! Jack Drake, one of the indolent, spendthrift “Bucks” of the floating school, makes whoopee for the last time!

Drake. “I mean it! Last term I slacked a bit. But I can tell you, dad, old Daub used to call me a sap.”

“A—a what?”

“Sap—chap who works too hard, you know!” said Jack, with a grin. “If the Head's grouched about me, I wonder what he's said about old Daub?”

“Who is old Daub, Jack?” asked Mr. Drake quietly.

“Daubeny, you know—Daubeny of the Shell,” explained Jack. “Awfully good sort, old Daub—in his way, of course! The biggest buck at St. Winifred's; no end of tin! We get on well, though I'm only in the Fourth. That's the chap who's calling for me to-day in his pater's car. I—I believe I can hear the car outside now.”

The St. Winifred's junior stole a look at his father as he made this remark. It was a hint to the old gentleman to cut the lecture short. Drake of the Fourth was quite prepared to face

lectures from his father, as he faced wiggings from his Form-master and an occasional "jaw" from the Head, but he considered that they ought to be short. As for lectures, wiggings, or jaws making any difference to his conduct, that idea had not crossed his mind so far.

But Mr. Drake evidently did not intend to take the hint. He motioned to Jack to sit down, and the junior reluctantly sank into a chair.

"It's school again to-morrow, Jack," said Mr. Drake, after a pause.

"Yes, dad. That's why we were going to make the most of it to-day," said the junior, rather dismally. "Old Daub's come twenty miles in his car for me, and it's jolly good-natured of him. I expect Egan will be with him, and Torrence. I want you to see them, dad."

From outside there came the sound of a car. Mr. Drake did not seem to hear it, but Jack half-rose—and sat down again. A sulky expression was coming over the junior's face. It really was too bad for the pater to select this moment for a lecture just when old Daub and his pals were calling for him.

"It's school again to-morrow," repeated Mr. Drake. "My boy, I am afraid this term will be very different from the last—"

"I'm going to slog this term, dad," said the junior—"I am, really. I'll buck up old Daub, too; it's time he did some work. We'll make a regular swot of it. It will be rather a lark, too, and surprise the fellows. I can fancy old Toodles' fat chivvy when he sees me swotting at Latin in the study! It will give him a fit!"

And Jack grinned.

"My poor boy!"

"Eh?" Jack Drake started. "I—I say, there's nothing really wrong, is there, dad?"

"Yes!" muttered Mr. Drake.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a brief silence. Jack Drake's eyes wandered to the door. He was expecting an announcement that Daubeny & Co. were waiting for him. But there was something in his father's look and manner that struck him with a sense of uneasiness.

"Is it—is it about the money?" he asked at last.

"Money, yes!"

"I—I know I did get rid of some last term," said the junior remorsefully. "I don't quite know how it went. I'm going to be more careful this term, and keep inside my allowance—well inside."

"You don't understand, Jack, and it is a bitter task for me to explain," said his father. "But you must know—before you return to St. Winifred's; you must know how—how matters stand. I—I am afraid it will be painful to you, my boy, after what you have been accustomed to. But—but I haven't told you before because I would not spoil your holiday. But—"

There was a tap on the door, and it opened.

A youth in very elegant Etons glanced into the room through an eyeglass.

"Jack, you bounder— Oh! Excuse me, Mr. Drake!" said Daubeny of the Shell, colouring a little. "I didn't know you were here, sir! Please excuse me for showing myself in! I've called for Jack—"

Mr. Drake rose to his feet.

"Come in, my boy!" he said. "Jack, I will speak to you later. Enjoy the last day of your holiday, my boy. You may go!"

"Oh, Daub won't mind waiting a tick or two!" said Jack generously. "You buzz off, Daub, and I'll be after you in a brace of jiffies."

"Right-ho!" said Daubeny.

"No; go with your friend, Jack," said Mr. Drake. "I will see you when you return."

"Just as you like, dad?"

And Jack Drake followed his friend. His father stepped to the front door and looked out. A big Rolls-Royce was halted in the drive, with two youths seated in it. Daubeny and Jack Drake came out to join them. Jack's face was bright and sunny now; he looked like a fellow who had not a care in the world—as, indeed, he had not at that moment. His father's brow clouded as he watched him take his seat in the big car and glide away with his laughing companions.

Long after the car had disappeared Mr. Drake stood staring from the door, with a sombre brow. He turned at the sound of a quiet step.

"You have told him, John?"

It was Mrs. Drake.

Mr. Drake shook his head.

"His friends called for him. Let him enjoy his last day," he said. "It's never too late to tell bad news. Let him enjoy to-day; to-night will be soon enough for him to learn that his father is a ruined man!"

The Last Flutter!

"LET her rip, Rawlings!"

"Yes, sir!"

The big car was out on the road now, and the chauffeur proceeded to let her rip.

Vernon Daubeny of the Shell at St. Winifred's was in great spirits. His two companions, Egan and Torrence, were equally merry and bright. The three "Bucks" of St. Winifred's were evidently bent on making the most of the last day of the vacation, and Jack Drake was quite prepared to help them in that noble object.

Drake was not looking quite so cheery as his companions, however. Something of the unusual seriousness in his father's manner had penetrated through his happy carelessness, and he was in rather more thoughtful mood than usual.

Drake was not much given to reflection, as a rule. He had found the pathway of life made easy for his feet so far. He was a rich man's son, and he had fallen among a wealthy and easy-going set at St. Winifred's, and found himself very comfortable among them. He had slacked at school, without exactly intending to do so—he was always going to turn over a new leaf in that respect. The new leaf had not yet been turned over—it was still going to be.

It was not, as a matter of fact, easy for a member of the honourable society of the Bucks to settle down to work. Drake had dimly realised once or twice that he had not made a good start at St. Winifred's, and that it would be wiser to see a little less of Daubeny & Co. But he was too easy-going and good-natured to find fault with his friends, or to think of making a change. If he joined in some of the somewhat shady escapades of the Bucks it was chiefly from good-humoured indolence.

As the big car rushed on Drake was thinking, haunted somehow by that sombre, troubled look on his father's face. His companions exchanged glances and smiled.

"Penny for 'em, old top!" remarked Torrence, tapping the Fourth Former on the shoulder.

Drake started and coloured a little.

"I was just thinking," he murmured.

"You haven't thanked me yet," said Daubeny, with a grin.

"Thanked you?"

"Yes; for rescuin' you from the griffin."

"The—the griffin!" stammered Drake.

"I was in the nick of time, you fellows," Daubeny explained. "The griffin had Drake cornered, and was spinnin' a lecture at him. I could see what was on, and my heart bled for him—it did really! I can't say how glad I am that I dropped in. Our sufferin' pal was rescued from the griffin's claws."

"Oh, chuck it, Daub!" muttered Drake, with a flush. "If you're speaking of my father—"

"No disrespect to the old gent, I'm sure," said Daubeny negligently. "Tell the truth now—weren't you landed for a sermon?"

"I—I—"

"The Head's been pitchin' a tale," said Daubeny. "I guessed it, because he pitched a tale about me. I've been through it. The pater had me on the carpet. Wastin' my time at school—idlin' with idle companions—that's you chaps."

"Oh, my hat!" said Egan.

"Us!" said Torrence. "Us idle!"

"You!" said Daubeny. "You two and Drake. You're my idle companions, and I hope you're properly ashamed of yourselves. I'm glad to see Drake lookin' thoughtful and repentant."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall have to be careful next term, though," said Daubeny, with a shake of the head.

"Just what I was thinkin'," said Drake. "After all, it's a bit rotten to see the pater lookin' cut up."

"I mean we shall have to be careful not to get spotted."

"Oh!"

"Can't be too careful, in fact," said Daubeny.

TIMELY DEFINITION!

Son: "Father, what is an optimist?"

Father: "An optimist is a man who buys a watch for half-a-crown and rings up the B.C.C. to tell them that their time signal is five minutes slow!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Reeves, 174, Wincheap Street, Canterbury, Kent.

"I had no end of a fag to bottle up the pater. He asked questions—no end of questions. But I had a good yarn for him, fortunately."

"What yarn did you spin, then?" asked Egan curiously.

Daubeny laughed.

"Owin' to the change of quarters of the school, it was difficult to settle down to work," he explained. "After all, it was a change. They found out that the foundations at St. Winifred's were rocky, and the whole school had to clear out—dash it all, it was a sudden change!"

"I was counting on a long holiday," said Torrence ruefully. "But the Head blocked that—trust him!"

"The Head's a grim old bird," said Daubeny. "Nobody could guess what he would do; for everybody knew that there wasn't a building to be had in the country, for love or money, where the school could be carried on. And the diggin' and delvin' at St. Winny's may last for years before we can go back. But who'd have thought of the old boy transferrin' the school to a giddy old ship anchored in a river? He was downy, the Head was. I dare say he knew we were all expectin' an extra holiday, and was glad to nip it in the bud. Not that the new quarters made any difference to me—

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I like them, in fact. But it was a good yarn for the pater. Seasick at first—"

"Seasick!" yelled Torrence.

"That's it."

"But the old Benbow doesn't move an inch!"

"The pater doesn't know that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Drake did not join in the roar of laughter. His brow clouded a little.

"Dash it all, Daub, you oughtn't to have told your pater that!" he exclaimed.

"Why not? It dried him up."

"Well, it wasn't true."

"My only sainted aunt!" ejaculated Daubeny. "Is that our old pal Drake speakin', or have we landed a Good Little Georgie in the car by mistake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Torrence and Egan.

Drake flushed uncomfortably.

"Well, there's a limit, you know," he muttered.

"I wouldn't have spun my pater a yarn like that."

"Is that firstly?" asked Daubeny.

"Eh?"

"Get on to the secondly, old bean," said the knut of St. Winifred's encouragingly. "Silence, gentlemen, for the sermon by John Drake, Esquire. Go it, Drake! My dear young friends, I beseech you to take warnin' in time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Drake. "Where are we going?"

"But we haven't had the sermon."

"Don't rot, I tell you," growled the Fourth Former. "What are we going to do to-day? You said you had a stunt for the last day of the vac."

"So we have, old top. We're going to paint the town red to-day, and wind up the vac in style," said the Shell fellow impressively. "A regular beano, before we go back to the old barge and become good little boys again. We're going to meet some fellows at the Lobster Pot and have a gay time."

"That's near the old Benbow—"

"Oh, we shan't run into any of the beaks," said Daubeny carelessly. "Nobody on the boat in vacation time, exceptin' the caretaker. Anyway, the Lobster Pot is a good distance from the school. We're meetin' a couple of chaps from Highcliffe School—one of them's a cousin of mine—you know Ponsonby? They're on vac and killin' time, and we're goin' to help them. You've come heeled, Drake?"

"I've got some money. But—"

"We shan't be disturbed at the Lobster Pot," said Daubeny. "We'll get lunch there and somethin' to wash it down, and some billiards afterwards—and a game of poker in a quiet room. Then we'll all pile in the car and finish up at a theatre in town."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Glorious, old boy!" said Torrence.

"We're fairly goin' to make the fur fly this time," said Daubeny, polishing his eyeglass. "We shall have to keep our end up against the Highcliffe chaps. They pride themselves on being rather goey at Highcliffe. I think we can put them up to a wrinkle, though."

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I—" began Jack Drake.

"Don't you like the prospect?" asked Daubeny, in amazement.

Drake flushed hotly. He hardly knew why he did not like the prospect. Somehow that strange, sombre look on his father's face haunted his mind. On any other occasion he would have entered

cheerily enough into Daubeny's reckless scheme. Now, somehow, it did not appeal to him.

"You fellows won't mind if—if—" he began awkwardly.

"If what?"

"If I don't come."

"Won't we, though?" said Daubeny, with a laugh. "We will, rather! You've got to come, old bean! Can't do without you. Don't worry; I can see what's the matter with you. This is what comes of taking lectures from a giddy griffin! But we'll give you somethin' to cure all that—won't we, you chaps?"

"What-ho!"

"But—but I'd rather clear off, really—"

"Goin' to walk back ten miles?" grinned Daubeny. "My dear chap, don't play the goat! Of course you're comin'! Can't spare you!"

"Don't go back on your pals, Drake," murmured Torrence.

"After we've come twenty miles to fetch you!" said Egan. "Draw it mild, old fellow!"

The big car rushed on.

Jack Drake opened his mouth, and closed it again.

"Oh, all right!" he said at last. "After all, it's the last day of the vac. But, look here, you chaps, I'm really goin' to sap next term."

"I don't think!" grinned Daubeny.

His comrades chuckled, and the big Rolls-Royce sped on its way, eating up the miles, till Daubeny announced at length:

"Here we are!"

Black News!

JACK is very late!"

It was Mrs. Drake who spoke. The hour was certainly very late. Twelve o'clock had struck, and the servants had long gone to bed. Mr. Drake sat in an easy-chair, his brow grim and sombre.

"You had better not wait up, Mary," he said quietly.

"I—I think I will wait until Jack comes. Where can he be all this time?" said Mrs. Drake uneasily.

"I had no idea he intended to remain out this evening. It is possible that the car may have broken down—at a distance—" Mr. Drake set his lips. "If he has remained out till this hour without any reasonable excuse—"

"It is his last day home, John; you will remember that."

"I remember that and other things, Mary. You need not fear that I shall not be kind to our boy. But you had better go to bed."

Mrs. Drake sighed softly and rose. When she had left him her husband walked to the window, drew aside the blind, and looked out into the night. The stars were glimmering in the sky.

"Where can he be at this hour?"

The man paced restlessly to and fro. The communication he had intended to make to his son that morning, and which had not been made, weighed heavily on his mind.

The minutes ticked away as he restlessly paced the library. Half-past twelve! The thought of an accident was in his mind now; and yet—what accident could have happened?

The sudden hoot of a motor-horn broke the silence, and Mr. Drake started. There was a sound of footsteps and low voices, mingled with suppressed laughter, without. Jack Drake had returned, and apparently his friends were with him.

Mr. Drake hastily left the library and hurried to the door. He did not want the bell to ring at that hour. He threw the big door open and looked out. In the dim starlight three figures were visible on the broad steps.

"Hallo! The door's open!" It was Vernon Daubeny's voice, rather thick in utterance. "Buck up, Drake! Your pater's in bed long ago, and you can tip the servant not to mention how late you got in!"

"Jack's father is here!" said a quiet voice in the doorway.

"Oh, by gad, it's your pater, Jack!"

Mr. Drake switched on the electric light. Jack Drake came in with a flushed face, and Daubeny and Egan raised their caps politely to the stern-looking old gentleman.

"Good-evenin' sir! Sorry to disturb you so late, but we've just brought Jack home in the car!" said Daubeny cheerfully. "We won't come in, thanks! The car's waitin', and we've got miles to go! Good-night, sir!"

The Bucks of the Benbow disappeared in the gloom, and the buzz of the starting car was heard a few minutes later. Mr. Drake closed the big door and fixed his eyes upon his son. The school-boy's face was flushed, but it looked very tired, and his flush deepened under his father's searching glance.

"I'm sorry, dad!" he muttered. "I never meant to be so late! We had a long run in the car."

"Where have you been?"

"We—we wound up in London—at a theatre. No harm in that, dad. Last day of the vac, you know. I—I never supposed you'd sit up for me. I—I say, dad, I'm really sorry!"

The schoolboy stammered out his explanation, and then stood, with his head a little bowed, waiting for the storm to burst. But the storm did not burst.

"Go into the library, Jack," said Mr. Drake very quietly.

"Yes, dad."

Mr. Drake switched off the light in the hall and followed his son. He closed the library door, and stood for some moments regarding the sheepish-looking junior of St. Winifred's.

"You have been smoking, Jack!" he said abruptly.

"I—I—"

"Your clothes reek with tobacco!"

"I may have had a cigarette or two, father."

"Have you been drinking, too?"

"Oh—no!"

"Your companions had."

"That silly ass Ponsonby—he would stand champagne!" said Drake. "I just sipped it—rotten stuff! I say, pater"—his face broke into a frank smile—"you don't think I'm squiffy, do you?"

"I am very glad to see that you are not squiffy,

(Continued on the next page.)

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution :

KERR: Crooke is the culprit. He said he saw Wynn come out of Latham's study at a quarter to two—by the clock on the school tower. I mentioned previously that there is no window in that corridor, so he couldn't have seen the clock. All I did was to ask Mr. Latham if he would ask Crooke to show him the exact spot from which he saw Fatty Wynn and the clock on the school tower at one and the same time!

as you call it!" said his father. "I did not know you were in the habit of smoking, Jack!"

"Oh, not in the habit! Dash it all! But—but a chap didn't want to look soft before those Highcliffe bouncers! It's not done me any harm, father. And—and Daub said he would run me home in the car, and I never thought we'd get back so late. It's a shame to have kept you up!"

"Sit down, my boy!"

Again the junior had expected the storm to burst, and the kindness in his father's tone startled him. He sat down mechanically. Mr. Drake stood leaning on the mantelpiece, regarding him.

"I am afraid you have fallen among bad companions at St. Winifred's, Jack."

The junior shifted uncomfortably.

"They're all right, dad—jolly good fellows! There isn't much harm in any of them."

"They are rich, I suppose?"

"Oh, they're rolling in it!" said Drake, with a smile. "Daub's the wealthiest fellow in the school. Some of the Sixth are jolly civil to old Daub."

"Then I imagine you are not likely to see so much of their society in the future."

"Why not, dad?" asked the schoolboy, in wonder.

"They probably do not consort with the poorer juniors!"

"Well, no. The fellows are split up into two sets at St. Winny's; Daub's lot are the rich set. But—we're not poor, dad."

"We are poor, Jack."

"What?"

"This is what I was about to tell you this morning, my boy, when your friends called for you."

Jack Drake stared at his father blankly. He

could not take in the sense of the words all at once.

"Poor!" he repeated. "Us poor? Wha-a-at do you mean, father?"

"I mean what I say," answered his father quietly. "We have been rich, Jack, but we are poor now."

"Oh, gad!"

"You had to know it, Jack, before you returned to school. I could have told you some weeks ago, but I left it till the end of the vacation to spare you as long as possible."

"But—but—" Drake looked dazed. "Poor—us!"

"I have had very heavy losses in business," said his father. "While you have been at school, Jack, I have not been happy. I have been struggling with adversity—and I have failed. Even this house will not remain ours. I am already in negotiation for its sale."

"Our home!"

"It will not be our home more than a few weeks longer. It is only with the greatest difficulty that I have been able to pay your fees for another term at St. Winifred's."

"Father!"

"You know the truth now, Jack."

"Oh, gad!" muttered the junior.

He rose to his feet and stood looking at his father. There were lines of suffering in the man's face, but the boy did not notice them then. He was thinking of himself—of his changed prospects. The blow had almost dazed him.

"Us—poor!" he muttered. "I've always held my head up at St. Winny's. I've been in the best set there. I'm going to be a poor rotter like Toodles or Sawyer—I couldn't stand it, father. I'd rather not go back to St. Winny's at all."

"My dear boy—"

"But it's impossible!" exclaimed the junior. "It can't be so bad as that—it can't! Oh, gad! What will the fellows say? I shan't be able to look Daub in the face. Oh, it's too rotten! It's a shame!"

The junior sank back in his chair and covered his face with his hands. The long and reckless escapade of the day had tired him out, and the blow was too much for him. Still, it was himself he was thinking of—himself and the difference it made to him.

"Pull yourself together, Jack. There is still a chance for you at St. Winifred's," said Mr. Drake quietly. "It depends on yourself. You have been idle and careless, but there is good stuff in you; I am assured of that. You can remain at St. Winifred's—only on one condition. Your name has already been put down for the Foundation Scholarship—"

"My name?"

"Yes; and if you gain it you will stay at St. Winifred's for three years longer. You must work, my boy—the days of idleness are past."

"Get the Foundation!" The junior looked at his father again, almost scoffingly. "That's a cert for Estcourt—"

"Who is Estcourt?"

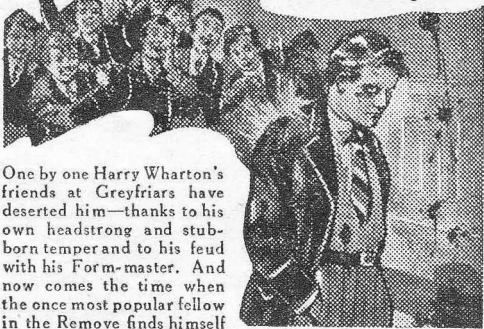
"Oh, a swot—a sap!" said Drake scornfully. "A fellow who lives to work and enjoys it. The Foundation is his—and everybody knows that. Lot of chance my staying at St. Winny's if it depends on that."

"It depends on that, Jack—and upon yourself. You can work if you choose, and there is no reason—"

"It's a shame—a shame!" burst out the boy. "It's not fair to me—it's not fair!"

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Mr. Drake drew a deep breath. "You will go to bed now, Jack. I shall see you again in the morning—before you start for St. Winifred's."

Afar in the night Daubeny & Co. were singing cheerily, as the big car carried them on in the darkness. Jack Drake thought of them as he almost tottered to his room. What would they think of him? What was life going to be like at St. Winifred's now? He threw himself upon his bed, but not to sleep. His heart was too full of passionate bitterness and resentment for that. It was long before his eyes closed.

Off to School!

JACK DRAKE'S face was pale when he came down in the morning, and it had a worn look. He was still feeling the effects of his reckless day out, and the want of sleep. But it was the change in his prospects that weighed in his mind. He had always been reckless with money; he had held his own with the best fellows at the school. How was he going to stand the change?

He was beginning the term nearly stony, too. Ponsoy of Highelife had cleared him out the day before at poker. What a fool he had been! Reflections upon his folly, however, did not afford him much comfort. He came down in a black and resentful mood, and didn't even notice his mother's look of affectionate concern. His own wrongs, his own grievances, filled his mind to the exclusion of all else.

He hardly touched his breakfast, and afterwards he listened in dull silence to what his father had to say—hardly hearing what he said. He had heard enough; he knew that he was poor, that he was going back to St. Winny's to be a disregarded boulder like Toodles, or a hanger-on of the fast set like Raik. That was more than enough.

The cab came to take him to the station at last. His box was on the vehicle; he was ready to go. His father came out into the hall. Mr. Drake's face was cold and severe.

"Your mother is in the library, Jack. You had better go in—"

Drake wondered why his mother did not come to the door to see him off, but he went into the library. His mother was alone there, and the boy started as he saw her. Her head was bowed in her hands, and he heard a faint sob.

"Mother!"

Drake ran towards her.

At that moment the cloud of sullen self-compassion seemed to roll suddenly from his mind. It was as if a glimpse of light had suddenly come to him. He caught his breath as he ran to his mother's side.

"Mother! What's the matter? What—what are you crying for?"

Mrs. Drake looked up through her tears.

"My poor boy! It is hard on you—very hard! But—but you'll think of your father, Jack, and of me, and do your best at school. For our sake, my dear boy, more than for your own."

"I—I—of course I will! I—I say, mater, don't cry, you know," muttered Jack miserably. "I—I say, I've been a beast—I was only thinking how hard it was for me. I say, don't cry—"

Mrs. Drake smiled faintly.

The boy's arm was round her neck now.

SAVE THESE STAMPS!

(See Page 2.)



"What an awful rotter I was!" muttered Jack remorsefully. "I was only thinking—and I ought— Oh, mother!"

"You are my own dear boy," said his mother softly.

"It will be awfully rotten for you, giving up the house and all that! I was only thinking—" Jack set his lips. "I say, mother, I've been an awful ass. But—but it's going to be a bit different this term. Don't you worry about me. That rotten schol—I mean that schol the pater was thinking of—I'm going to bag that. I really mean business this time. If it will help you—and the pater—I'll do anything—"

"Keep to that, my boy," said a deep voice, and Jack Drake turned to see his father. "Keep to that, for your mother's sake."

"I'm going to, father. You believe me, don't you, mater?"

"I believe you, Jack—I know you will do your best. Good-bye, my boy!"

"Good-bye, mother!"

The schoolboy turned away and left the room. At the door he said good-bye to his father.

The cab rolled away from the door.

"I've been a rotter!" Jack Drake was muttering savagely, as the cab whirled on to the station—"a rotter! The poor old mater—and dad, too. What would they say if they knew what kind of a rotten fool I was—only yesterday! I shall have to keep clear of Daub. The poor old mater! I'll jolly well show her that she can trust me."

The arrival of the cab at the station dispelled his thoughts with a jerk.

A few minutes later Jack Drake was in the train, speeding away for St. Winifred's. He was glad that he had a carriage to himself, as the journey began. He was thinking hard of his new prospects, and of his new determination—a determination that he meant nothing should shake. There would be difficulties; there would be temptation, but he would win through. With a troubled mind, but with a high heart, Jack Drake faced his new life at St. Winifred's.

(Next Week: "THE FLOATING SCHOOL!")

WHERE'S OUR CARAVAN RESTED?

(Continued from page 22.)

"I'm waitin' to lock the gates, Master D'Arcy," said Taggles.

"Bai Jove! Tom Mewwy!"

No answer.

"Blake!"

Jack Blake seemed to be deaf.

Taggles jingled his keys.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had to make up his mind to it at last.

He wheeled his machine out—baggageless.

The gates closed with a clang.

"Weally, you fellows—" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as he overtook the six juniors in the lane.

"Hallo! Coming?" asked Blake.

"It is impos for me to remain at the school, Blake, and I should be vewy sowwy to allow you youngstahs to wun into scwapes by yourselves!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' to cause wibald mewwiment in that remark."

A TENDERFOOT IN CANADA!

(Continued from page 29.)

"They—they belong to the ranch?" stuttered Frank.

"I guess so. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—and you fixed it up with them last night, I suppose, at Cedar Creek?" exclaimed Frank.

He remembered the grave faces of the men at the camp, and the talk of the Indian rising. He understood now—rather late—that Bob Lawless was at the bottom of it all, and that the merry men of Cedar Creek had joined in "taking a rise" out of the tenderfoot.

His face was scarlet.

"You young rascal, Bob!" exclaimed the rancher, amused but vexed. "It was too bad to play such a trick on a greenhorn! Is that what you call hospitality to your cousin?"

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"Go hon!"
"I have had to leave my baggage behind," said Arthur Augustus. "Fortunately, the guv'nah has come down wathah handsomely for the holidays, and I am not short of cash. I shall be able to do some shoppin' en woute."

"Buy anything you like, old top," said Blake heartily. "If there's not room for it in the caravan, we can always chuck it out!"

"I wegard that remark as uttahly asinine, Blake. Are you aware that I have not even a change of clobber?"

"I can lend you a pocket-handkerchief, if that would do," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Wats!"

"Here we are!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors halted at the Railway Arms in Rylcombe. There the bags were disposed of—for the present.

After that, the seven juniors mounted their bikes—to take up the trail of Figgins & Co., and the captured caravan.

The New House raiders were a good many miles away by that time—but they were destined to see Tom Merry & Co. before long.

(Next Wednesday: "SEVEN IN THE SOUP!")

Bob coloured.

"It was only a joke, dad," he said contritely. "I—I wanted to see whether Frank would show the white feather. And he didn't—not a bit of it. He thought—ha, ha!—that he was captured by scalping Indians, and he took it like a little man! I say, Franky, I'm sorry—really!"

"I—I thought—" stammered Frank.

"Of course you did," said Bob repentantly. "You couldn't think anything else. And I can tell you it isn't everybody who'd have taken it so pluckily. But I'm sorry—really! You can punch my head if you like!"

Frank laughed.

"All serene!" he said. "I'm jolly glad it was only a joke!"

It had been a thrilling experience, and he was glad that it was no more than what the St. Kit's fellows would have called a jape. And that evening in the ranch the "Indian rising" was a subject of much merriment.

(Next Week: "AN INNOCENT IN THE BACKWOODS!")

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