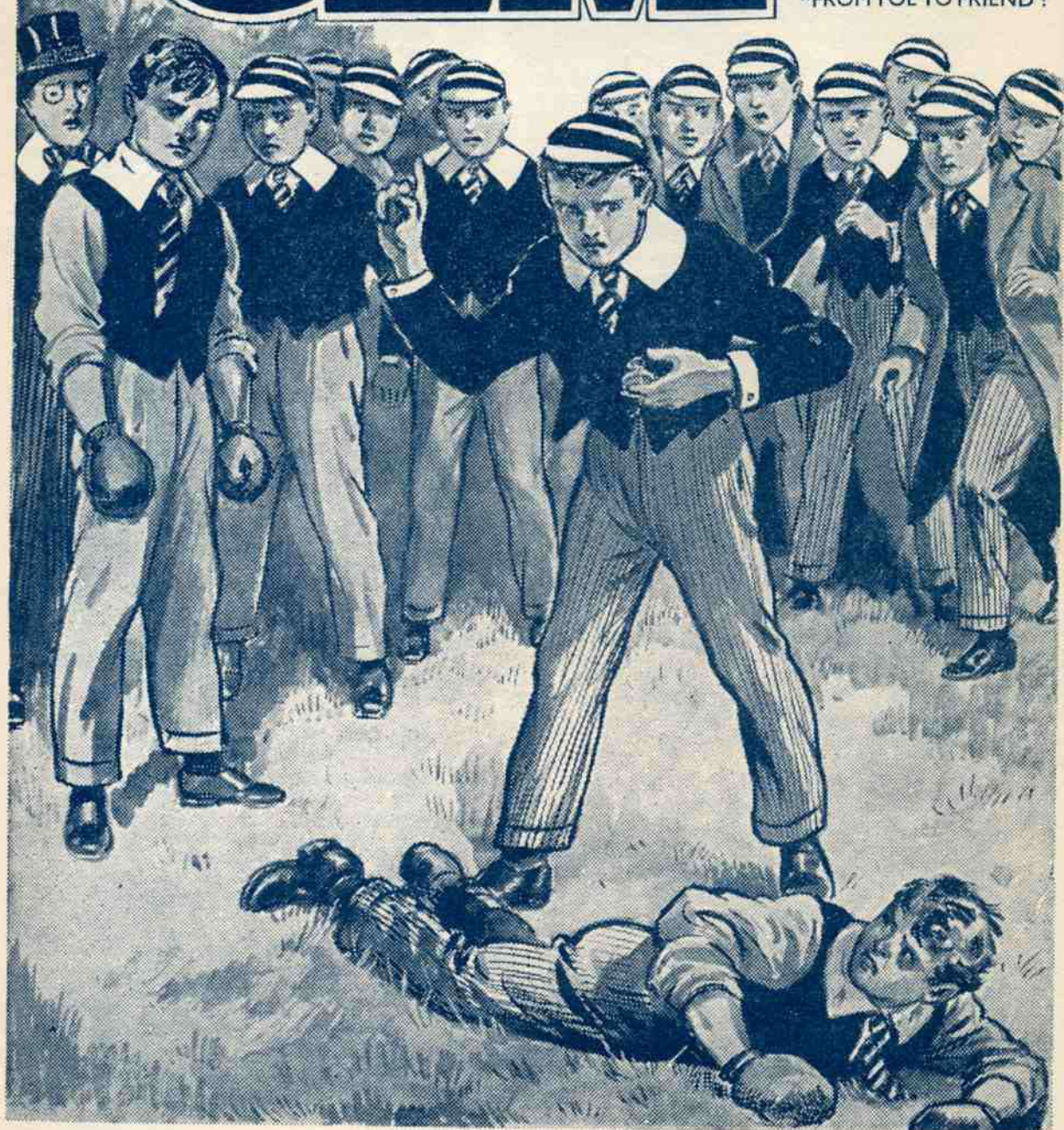


"FLOODED OUT!" & "THE TROUBLES OF TUGKEY!"
TIP-TOP SCHOOL TALES INSIDE.

The GEM ^{2D}

THE K.O. FOR TOM MERRY?—See this week's gripping yarn of St. Jim's—**"FROM FOE TO FRIEND!"**





Blake Answers Back!

Jack Blake's here to answer your letters and deal with your queries. Write to him c/o The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.A. Be as candid as you like—Jack Blake likes a plain speaker, being by nature a John Blunt himself! But keep your letter SHORT, and enclose if possible a photo of yourself for reproduction on this page. No photos can be returned and no replies given by post.

"Interested Reader," of Nottingham, writes:

1. Do you have many holidays at St. Jim's? 2. In which part of Sussex is St. Jim's situated? 3. My favourites are Levison, Clive and Talbot. Will you tell them so? 4. Now for a riddle. Why does a dog wag its tail? 5. Can I send my autograph-book for some of you at St. Jim's to sign? P.S.—How long does it take before one's name is printed in the "Pen Pals"?

ANSWER: 1. Two halves a week, and the usual at Christmas, Easter, and so on. 2. One of the most secluded parts—a lovely stretch of comparatively unspoiled country. 3. I gave your comps to Levison, Clive, and Talbot. Levison said "Thanks," Clive said "Thanks very much," and Talbot said "It was nice of you to have written." All admired the photograph. 4. After hours of thought, the whole study is reduced to walking round in circles, chanting: "Why does a dog, etc.?" Towser won't say. I think it's something

about a dog preferring a happy end, but Gussy insists it's something about the stump being farthest from the bark. Can any reader put us out of our agony? 5. Sorry about autographs, but we aren't allowed to oblige. In reply to your P.S., the Editor says, owing to the tremendous popularity of "Pen Pals," it is impossible to say definitely. The names are published in



"Interested Reader" of Nottingham.

strict rotation as soon as possible after being received. What did you say? Bow-wow?

A. J. S., of Bucks, writes:

What I want to know is—why do you condemn every chap who backs horses, smokes fags, and dislikes football, as a rotter? There's nothing wrong in a cigarette or two, and a liking for a sporting gamble is nothing to be ashamed of. So what? Why are Tom Merry & Co., and Harry Wharton & Co., down on the fellows who dislike wholesome sport?

ANSWER: I'm not a preacher, so we'll leave the morals alone. But do you seriously contend that frowning in the woodshed, breathing a smoky atmosphere, and risking pocket-money you can't afford to lose on a game of chance, is going to do you as much good as playing football or cricket? Please yourself; it's your body

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you're building up, or dragging down. Cigs are no good to anybody under sixteen—s'tact, vouched for by medical authorities. And only a silly ass seorns owning a fit body and mind. You've got to live inside that carcass of yours for the next forty or fifty years, you know—perhaps longer. Good luck to you!

"An Old Reader," of Dusingham, Norfolk, writes:

Who is chess champion of the St. Jim's juniors? Are you any good at the game? I chess-t wondered.

P.S.—Do you live anywhere near Johnny Bull of Greyfriars?

ANSWER: Manners of the Shell can give any junior a beating at chess, though Kerr of the Fourth is a close rival. I'm no "king" of the "castle" at it, though some "knights" after prep we "bishop" the books to one side, and "pawn" der over a game.

No; though I've met Johnny Bull more than once, and admire his bluntness, I don't live near him.

"Gentle Inquirer," of Westerham, writes:

Sorry to awaken you from your winter sleep—but suppose I was using a public footpath, and a farmer told me to get off, what would be the exact position?

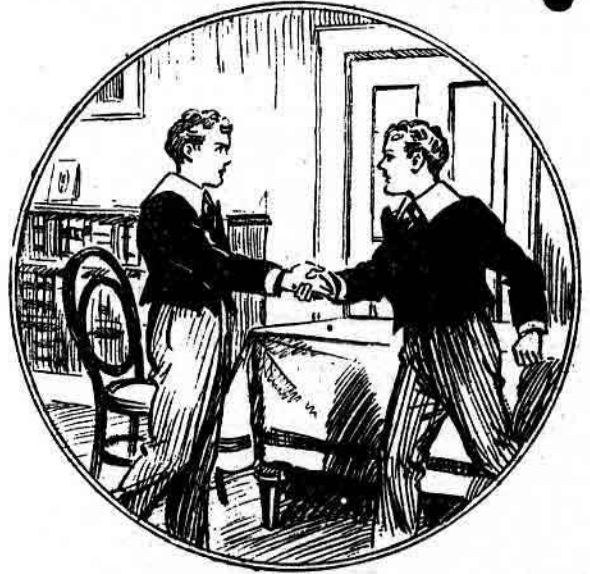
ANSWER: Well, it would depend to some extent on the size of the farmer; but if you are certain you are using an official right-of-way, you are quite at liberty to tell the farmer just where he, not you, gets off. Landowners do occasionally try to close public paths; but farmers, in general, are kindly disposed towards hikers, always provided you remember to shut the gate after you, to keep the cows from straying. And don't tickle the bull in the ribs, either. Once you get a bull bellowing with laughter he often won't stop still he has tossed everybody on the farm over the windmill. Yaw-aw-aw! Mind if I get back to bed now?



"An Old Reader," of Dusingham, Norfolk.

THE FIGHT OF THE YEAR—TOM MERRY v. DICK ROYLANCE! THAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THE FEUD OF TOM'S CHUM!

From FOE to FRIEND!



CHAPTER 1.

The Third Form Testimonial!

THUD!

The door of Tom Merry's study, No. 10 in the Shell, flew open, knocking over a chair and scattering a few books about the floor.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther suspended their conversation to turn three separate and expressive glances upon the two Third Form fags who marched in.

"You cheeky young asses!" exclaimed Lowther wrathfully.

"Pick up those books, some of you!" said Manners.

"Bother the books!" was the reply of D'Arcy minor of the Third. "You shouldn't leave books on a chair—it's untidy. Hold out the hat, Levison!"

Levison minor of the Third held out a hat.

It was—or it had been—a silk hat, but it looked very much the worse for wear. Levison minor held it out towards the Terrible Three of the Shell, who stared at it.

"It's worth three farthings, at the most," said Monty Lowther.

"You silly ass!" said D'Arcy minor. "Do you think we've come here to sell you a hat?"

"It seems to me that you've come here to collect whackings!" remarked Tom Merry.

"We'll collect all you can give us, and chance it!" said Wally D'Arcy promptly.

"Done!" said Lowther, jumping up.

"Order!" exclaimed Frank Levison. "Cheese it! Shut up, Wally! Look here, you fellows, this is rather important."

"What is," demanded Tom Merry, "that old topper?"

"Fathead! We're collecting for a testimonial. We're going to present it to D'Arcy—Wally's major, you know," said Levison minor impressively.

"Oh, I see!" said Tom.

"How much are you standing?"

"I think we've stood as much as we can of you kids," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Don't be funny!" implored Wally. "Keep that for the comic column of the 'Weekly,' Lowther. It will come in useful for a paper-chase then. Now, look here. You chaps know my major saved young Manners' life, don't you?"

"We've heard so," agreed Tom Merry.

"I don't say it was worth while, but he did it."

"What?" ejaculated Manners.

"Well, perhaps it was worth while, then," conceded Wally. "Anyway, old Gus did it, and he's so jolly modest about having been a terrific hero

that he won't even own up that he did it. Just like old Gussy! He hides his light under a bushel as quickly as he'll hide his topknot under a silk hat. Well, Reggie is in our Form—not much of a credit to it, but there it is—and the Third Form," concluded Wally, with dignity, "have decided to recognise the action."

"Bravo!" said Tom Merry.

Nothing can make Manners forget his bitter animosity towards Dick Roylance until he discovers who saved his brother's life!

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD

"After a consultation—I mean a pow-wow, you know," explained Wally—"after a consultation we've decided to raise a fund for a testimonial, to be presented to Gussy, with a few well-chosen words—I think that's the right expression. Old Gussy objects to being made a fuss of, but that doesn't count. We're going to buy something for a testimonial—anything the money will run to. Now, shove your contributions in."

The Terrible Three, grinning, felt in their pockets

"Small contributions gratefully received, larger ones in proportion," went on Wally. "Shell out! If we raise enough cash we hope to present Gussy with a gold-mounted walking-stick, or something with an inscription in Latin or Greek. But if the fellows are mean it mayn't run to more than a tin of sardines."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry dropped a shilling into the hat, and Monty Lowther clinked in a number of pennies. The fags had brought a topper, doubtless with the idea of having plenty of room for the contributions. Certainly if that topper was filled with cash there would be no doubt about the gold-headed walking-stick.

"What price you, Manners?" demanded Wally. "It was your minor's life that was saved. The only one he had, you know. Shell out!"

Manners dropped in a two-shilling piece. He was not insensible to Wally's special appeal. Undoubtedly Reggie Manners was his minor, and Reggie had been most gallantly rescued from the savage bull in the Moor Fields.

"Two bob!" said Wally. "Well, if your minor's worth two bob to you, you put him at a higher figure than we do in the Third. Come on, Frank!"

The two fags marched from the study, coins clinking in the hat. Three Fourth Formers came on them in the passage—Levison, Clive and Cardew of Study No. 9—and at a sign from Wally, Levison minor held out the topper at once.

"Hold it steady!" said Cardew, drawing his foot back for a kick.

"Hold on, you ass!" Levison minor jerked the hat back. "It's a collection—"

"Testimonial to Gussy, the heroic rescuer!" chimed in Wally.

"Third Form testimonial—to be presented—" went on Frank Levison.

"At the next session of the St. Jim's Parliament," pursued Wally, taking up the tale again.

"Oh, good!" said Levison major, laughing. "Here's a tanner!"

"And here's ninepence," smiled Sidney Clive.

"Any objection to paper money?" asked Cardew.

"None at all!" answered D'Arcy minor at once. "Shove in all you like!"

"Good! Here you are, then!"

Cardew extracted a penny stamp from his pocket, dropped it into the hat, and walked on with his companions.

Wally fixed a glaring eye on the penny stamp.

"The—the—the funny beast!" he gasped at last.

Levison minor chortled.

"Never mind; it's a penny, anyway," he remarked. "Hallo, here's Talbot! Shell out, Talbot!"

"What for?" inquired Talbot of the Shell, in surprise.

"Testimonial to the heroic Gussy—"

"For saving the life—"

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"Of Manners minor—"

"From a mad bull—"

"Oh, I see!" interrupted Talbot, with a smile.

"Will half-a-crown do?"

"Bravo! You're a Briton!"

"I hear that Grundy's had a big remittance today," said Talbot, laughing. "And Grundy's tips run into quids. Verb sap!"

"Good! Come on, Franky!"

The two fags hurried at once to Grundy's study. They found George Alfred Grundy at tea there, with Wilkins and Gunn. The three Shell fellows stared at the sight of the old silk hat and the two fags.

"Subscriptions wanted—"

"Go and eat coke!" replied Grundy.

"For a testimonial—"

"For the heroic Gussy!" chanted Wally.

"What rot!" said Grundy. "I'd have done the same if I'd been there. So would any fellow! Buzz off!"

"Oh, here's a bob!" said Wilkins.

"And here's another!" said Gunn.

"Thanks!" said Wally. "I say, Grundy, if you don't feel inclined to give any subscription, will you make the speech when the presentation is made, at the next meeting of the St. Jim's Parliament?"

Grundy's expression relaxed.

"Well, I don't mind doing that!" he said graciously. "Yes, D'Arcy minor, I'll make the presentation speech, if you like."

"Thanks awfully," said Wally gravely.

"You're a good chap, Grundy! You see, you could put it better than anybody else—in your oratorical manner, you know."

"I know!" assented Grundy, who never could see when his leg was being pulled. "And I don't mind standing five bob towards the collection. After all, D'Arcy major did a fine thing."

Five shillings clinked into the topper. In the passage outside Wally closed one eye at Levison minor, and Frank grinned. A soft answer is said to turn away wrath, and in this case it had not only turned away wrath, but extracted five shillings from the wealthy Grundy.

CHAPTER 2.

Gussy Gives Advice!

TRAMP! Tramp! Bump!

There was a good deal of noise in Study No. 7 in the Fourth when the Third Form collectors arrived at that apartment.

"Sounds like a row," remarked Wally.

"Never mind—they can scrap afterwards," answered Levison minor; and he opened the door.

Study No. 7 was tenanted by Contarini, the Italian junior, Smith minor, and Dick Roylance, of New Zealand, the new fellow in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

It was not a scrap, but a boxing match. Roylance had the gloves on with Contarini, and Smith minor was sitting on the table, which had been pushed into a corner.

"Hold on, you chaps!" called out Wally.

"Business before pleasure."

Roylance looked round, and Contarini laughed rather breathlessly and dropped his hands.

"Ecco! I am glad of a rest," he remarked. "You are too much for me, amico mio. I think perhaps you will beat Tom Merry to-morrow."

"I hope so," said Roylance, with a smile. "What do you fags want?"

"Cash!" said Wally, with Spartan brevity.

"Quite a common want just now," said Roylance. "But you've come to the wrong shop. Apply next door."

"It's a testimonial!" explained Wally. "Gold-headed walking-stick with Latin inscription, to be presented to the heroic rescuer."

"What!" exclaimed Roylance, in astonishment.

"You've heard about my major——"

"Your major?"

"Yes; the one and only Gussy. He risked his life in saving Manners minor from a bull."

"Did he?" exclaimed Roylance, in astonishment.

"You've heard about it, I suppose?" said Wally warmly. "It was last half-holiday. You were out with Gussy that afternoon."

"Oh, I see!"

"We're going to make a handsome presentation," said Wally loftily. "Contributions required."

"But——"

"Don't 'but,' old scout; this isn't the time for butting. Shell out!"

Roylance did not shell out, however. He stood looking greatly surprised. Smith minor tossed a penny into the hat, and Contarini added a shilling. Wally looked sternly at Roylance.

"You're shelling out, I suppose?" he demanded. "Didn't you bring any pocket-money from New Zealand?"

"But——"

"There you go—butting again, like a billy-goat!" growled Wally in disgust. "Are you going to shell out or not?"

"Does D'Arcy know you're doing this?" asked Roylance.

"Fathead! Of course not! Gussy is hiding his light under a soup tureen, as usual. He gets waxy if a chap calls him a heroic rescuer!" chuckled Wally. "So I call him one every time I see him. He even denies that he rescued Manners minor at all, which would shock George Washington, if Georgie were a St. Jim's chap. But the Third Form are out to recognise courage, in the form of a gold-headed walking-stick. Shell out, then!"

Roylance dropped a coin in the hat with some hesitation. It was not the coin he was hesitating about, but quite other considerations, unknown to the fag.

"Good!" said Wally. "Why couldn't you do that at first, without jawing? Come on, Franky! There's a lot more to do yet."

The fags left the study, leaving Roylance with a very perplexed expression on his handsome face.

"My turn!" said Smith minor, getting off the table and taking the gloves from Contarini. "Not fagged, young mutton?"

"Not at all!" said Roylance.

"Good! You've got to be in form to-morrow to tackle Tom Merry. It would be no end of a credit to the study if you licked him. May as well have the gloves on with Figgins of the New House this evening, too. If you can stand up to him, you'll have a good chance against Tom Merry."

And the boxing practice in Study No. 7 was resumed.

Meanwhile, the enthusiastic collectors were going on their way, reaping quite a harvest, chiefly of coppers. They stopped at last outside Study No. 6, which was the quarters of the great Gussy himself.

"Can't ask Gussy to contribute to his own

testimonial, I suppose?" observed Wally thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha! No. But the other chaps. And it's all right; Gussy's out!"

"Good!"

They marched in, and found Blake, Herries, and Digby finishing tea. The great Arthur Augustus was visiting the New House.

The silk topper was held out, and Wally explained once more.

Blake shook his head.

"Gussy says that he didn't rescue Manners minor at all!" he observed.

"That's only his blessed modesty."

"It's a whopper, if it isn't true," said Herries.

"Gussy never tells whoppers," remarked Digby, with a shake of the head. "You've made a mistake about the heroic rescuer, Wally."

"Rats!" retorted Wally. "I tell you it's so. It was Gussy—there wasn't any other ass on the spot! Shell out!"

"Oh, all right!"

More coppers clinked into the hat

"Mind, not a word to Gussy!" cautioned Wally. "He shall have the presentation at the Parliament meeting in Pepper's Barn to-morrow afternoon, after Tom Merry's fight with Roylance."

"Right you are!"

"It's to be a pleasant surprise, you know," said Levison minor.

And the fags went on their way.

Study No. 6 was last on the list, and the collectors returned to the Third Form Room with the laden topper. There they were surrounded by a crowd, anxious to know the result.

Under Wally's lead, the Third Form had taken up the testimonial to Arthur Augustus very seriously. Manners minor thought it was a good idea—it was his life that had been saved. Coppers had been contributed by nearly all the fags. Wally turned out the contents of the old topper on the desk, and the fags counted up the cash in little piles.

"My hat! Thirty-five bob!" exclaimed Jameson.

"One pound fifteen, by gum!" said Manners minor. "I say, can you get a gold-headed walking-stick for one pound fifteen?"

"Rolled gold, perhaps," suggested Hobbs.

Wally snorted.

"I'd like to see anybody presenting a rolled-gold walking-stick to my major!" he snapped. "It's to be the real article or nothing."

"Ask Gussy himself," suggested Levison minor.

"Gussy's not to know, ass!"

"Fathead!" answered Levison minor. "Ask him without telling him what we're going to do, of course."

"Well, that's not a bad idea," assented Wally, after some thought. "He mightn't like a gold-headed walking-stick. We'll catch Gussy when he comes in and draw him."

And when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth returned from the New House he was met in the doorway by his minor and Frank Levison.

"Hold on, Gus!" said the two fags together.

Arthur Augustus held on.

"What is it, deah boys?" he inquired.

"We want your advice."

Arthur Augustus beamed. He prided himself upon his tact and judgment, and he was always

prepared to place them at the service of less gifted fellows.

"Wight-ho!" he replied. "You have come to the wight chap, Wally! What is the affair?"

Wally closed one eye at Frank.

"We're getting up a Form testimonial to a fellow we all respect very highly," he explained. "A really good chap, though rather an ass."

"Yaas!" said Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly.

"We've raised a handsome sum of money by contributions. Now, what would you recommend by way of a presentation?" inquired Wally.

"It depends a great deal on the sort of chap!" said Arthur Augustus. "What is he like?"

"A bit of an ass, as I said, but all right! Suppose you were the chap, what would you like?" suggested Wally. "A gold-headed walking-stick?"

Arthur Augustus shuddered.

"Bai Jove, no!"

"A diamond pin?" suggested Levison minor.

"Not at all! If I were in the chap's place I should certainly pwefer the presentation to take the form of cash, and then I should give it to the Wayland Cottage Hospital."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wally.

"But, of course, it depends on the chap!" added Arthur Augustus. "Tastes diffah."

"I think we'll take your advice, Gussy! Thanks awfully!"

"You are vewy welcome!"

The two fags returned to the Form-room, and D'Arcy's decision was communicated to the Third, and received with many chuckles. And it was agreed that the testimonial should take the form of cash, to be presented to Arthur Augustus in a handsome box.

CHAPTER 3.

In the Gym!

THE Terrible Three strolled down to the gym after tea.

Tom Merry was in a thoughtful mood.

On the morrow—Saturday—his fight with Roylance was to come off. The prospect of a fight, with Roylance or anybody else, was not a dismaying one to the captain of the Shell, by any means; it was not that that caused a thoughtful shade to linger on his brow.

But this particular fight was not pleasing in some ways. He had liked the New Zealand junior, and had become very friendly with him, and it was an unpleasant thought that a fellow he had thought well of had acted meanly. And that was what Tom Merry believed; and Roylance was a good deal too proud to think of offering an explanation that was not asked for.

Manners was very quiet, too. Only Monty Lowther looked as cheerful as usual. He was going to witness the great combat, and write a ripping descriptive account of it for the "Weekly." He had not the slightest doubt that he would record a victory for his chum. Roylance was rather a tough customer, and he had defeated Manners in a fight; but Tom Merry was sure to give a good account of himself.

It was natural enough that Tom should take the quarrel up for his chum. He believed that Manners was in the right, and that poor Manners, after a fight to the limit of his strength, had been defeated by a fellow who was in the wrong. That defeat was going to be wiped out, if Tom

Merry could wipe it out; and few of the School House fellows doubted that he could.

"Hallo! They're going it!" remarked Lowther, as the chums of the Shell entered the gym.

A boxing match was in progress between Roylance and George Figgins of the New House, with a crowd of juniors looking on. Figgins was a mighty man with his hands, but it could be seen that he was not a better man than the new junior. It was quite a friendly match with the gloves on, but both the juniors were getting some rather hard knocks, which they did not mind at all.

The Terrible Three looked on, Manners with a gloomy brow. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was there, regarding his New Zealand friend with a beaming face. He came over to the Terrible Three.

"Looks wathah pwomisin'—what?" he remarked.

"Who does?"

"Old Woylance!"

"Oh, he looks all right!"

"You will have wathah a big pwoposition in hand to-morrow, Tom Mewwy, if the fight comes off."

"It is coming off," said Tom Merry dryly.

"I should be vewy pleased, deah boy, to heah that it had been called off!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, you won't hear anything of the kind!"

"There is no weason whatevah why you should fight with Woylance."

"Bow-wow!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligent or a polite we mark, Tom Mewwy!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

And he joined Blake & Co. in the crowded ring.

"Queer how Gussy sticks to that cad!" growled Manners.

"He isn't exactly a cad," said Tom Merry uneasily.

Manners grunted.

"I call him a cad," he answered. "I only wish I could lick him. But I've tried twice, and it's no good."

Tom Merry paused before he answered.

"I—I suppose there's no mistake about it, Manners?" he said at last. "You haven't made a mistake again, have you?"

"Again?" growled Manners. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you made a mistake about Roylance when he first came here," said Tom, hesitating. "You found him shaking young Reggie, and went for him, thinking he was bullying your minor. That was how you came to have your first fight with him. You owned up you were wrong when Reggie let it out that he hacked Roylance's shin, and got a shaking for it."

"I owned up, and told him I was sorry!" snapped Manners. "I suppose I couldn't do more than that?"

"What I mean is, that was a mistake. Now I know Rake and his sneaking set sneered about your apologising to Roylance, though you had to do it, as it was the right thing to do. Those cads tried to make out that it was funk. But I feel sure Roylance took it the right way."

"I thought he did—at first."

"If Roylance really said you were a funk he's a cad, and he wants the licking of his life. But are you sure he did? If you made a mistake once you might again."

"I know he did."



"And now, gentleman," said Grundy, "the presentation will take place. This box contains the testimonial in the form of cash, D'Arcy——" "You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wegard these pwoceedings as widic! It was not I who wescued Weggie Mannahs!"

"Well, if you know he did, that settles it. But it knocks on the head the opinion I had of the chap."

"Perhaps it's barely possible that you made a mistake, too," said Manners sourly.

"Likely enough!" said Tom Merry-humouredly. "Let it go at that, then. If the fellow really said a thing like that I certainly was mistaken in him. He can't say it again after your fight with him, anyhow."

"I wish I could have licked him!"

"You did your best, and a fellow can't do more than that. No disgrace in getting the worst of a fair fight. And, by Jove, he's tough!" said Tom Merry, with some admiration. "Look at that! Figgy's down!"

The great Figgins was on his back, looking rather dazed. Kerr and Fatty Wynn picked him up.

"My hat!" ejaculated Figgins breathlessly.

"That won't do, Figgy!" said Kerr severely.

"Buck up, you know!"

"Do you think I tumbled over on purpose, you ass?" growled Figgins.

"Well, don't do it again!"

"The New House expects you to whop him, Figgy!" said Fatty Wynn, with a solemn shake of the head.

Figgins snorted.

He faced Roylance again with a gleam in his eyes. The friendly spar was becoming rather earnest on both sides.

But Figgy's chums were consoled by the result of the next round. It was Roylance who went down.

Arthur Augustus helped the New Zealander up. "Mustn't let that happen to-morrow, Woylance!" he remarked.

Roylance grinned.

"Not if I can help it," he replied. He peeled off the gloves. "That will do for to-night, Figgins, or I shan't be able to toe the line to-morrow."

"Right you are!" said Figgins. He glanced round at the captain of the Shell. "Come and have a round or two, Tommy, and let's see how you're shaping."

"I'm your man!" said Tom.

Roylance left the gym with Arthur Augustus as Tom Merry and Figgins set to with the gloves. They returned to the School House for prep.

"I suppose you're bound to fight Tom Mewwy to-morrow, old scout?" said Arthur Augustus regretfully.

"Looks like it, as he challenged me."

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"He is undah a w'ong impwession, Woylance."

"I know that."

"Couldn't you explain?"

Roylance set his lips.

"I'm going to explain afterwards. But he's no right to believe that I said such a rotten mean thing about Manners."

"He could scarcely wefuse to take Mannah's word, deah boy."

"Manners ought not to think so, either. I suppose he was ready to believe anything, on account of the trouble with his dashed minor the day I came here!" growled Roylance.

And Arthur Augustus said no more.

CHAPTER 4.

The Great Fight!

AFTER lessons next day there was excitement in the School House at St. Jim's.

The fight between Tom Merry and Roylance was to come off early in the afternoon outside the school walls.

It was a scrap of uncommon interest, for Tom was one of the best in the scrapping line and Roylance had proved that he was of unusual quality.

As for the cause of the quarrel, that was a matter of lesser interest, and the juniors hardly knew what to make of it, either. Manners had had the worst of his first encounter with Roylance, and Manners had fought him again because Roylance had twitted him with funk. But Roylance denied having done anything of the kind, and neither was he a fellow who could be supposed to lie; so the general opinion was that there was some mistake in the matter.

Soon after dinner the Terrible Three sauntered out of the school gates together, Monty Lowther carrying a bag. As the fight was of a more serious kind than a harmless glove contest, it had to be kept from the knowledge of the prefects, so a certain amount of caution was observed.

Roylance quitted the school five minutes later with his studymates, Contarini and Smith minor, Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy following them soon afterwards. Figgins & Co. of the New House followed, and after them a regular army of juniors in twos and threes and fours.

The chosen spot for the fight was a strip of meadow by the river, shut in by trees. In that spot interruptions were not likely to take place.

Lowther was Tom Merry's second, and Arthur Augustus acted for Roylance. Kangaroo of the Shell was appointed timekeeper.

There was a thick crowd round the ring, and Racke was offering the odds on Roylance. Racke, Croke, and Clampe were there in great spirits. Racke & Co. disliked the new fellow, and detested Tom Merry; so that, whatever the result of the fight, it was to be satisfactory from their point of view. They hoped fervently to see Tom Merry licked, but a licking for Roylance would also have afforded them great pleasure.

The basins were filled with water from the river, and the sponges floated in them. Lowther and D'Arcy produced towels from under their coats. Kangaroo of the Shell drew out a watch.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom Merry; and Roylance nodded.

The principals had thrown off their jackets, and their sleeves were rolled back, and they had donned the gloves.

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"Two to one on Roylance!" called out Aubrey Racke, apparently understudying a bookmaker.

Grundy looked round at him.

"Racke!" he rapped out.

"Hallo!" said Racke.

"Stop that!" ordered Grundy autocratically.

"Eh?"

"Stop it!"

"You cheeky ass——"

Grundy strode towards him.

"You're not going to make dirty bets here!" he said. "Stop it, or I'll boot you out of the place fast enough!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Blake.

"I suppose I can do as I like?" roared Racke, exasperated by the intervention of the high-handed George Alfred.

"That's your little mistake; you can't!" said Grundy coolly. "Shut up!"

"Two to one on Roylance!" shouted Racke defiantly.

He had reason to regret his defiance at once. Grundy seized him by the collar and rushed him away. They disappeared round the trees, Racke struggling frantically in George Alfred's muscular grip. A yell of laughter followed them.

Grundy came back in a couple of minutes, rather flushed and alone. The sportive Aubrey did not reappear.

"Where's Racke?" asked Wilkins.

"I left him in the ditch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you doing any betting here, Croke?" demanded Grundy.

Croke's answer was hasty and in the negative.

Meanwhile, the combatants were getting to business. They shook hands as they met in the ring, and Harry Noble called "Time!"

The first round began.

All eyes were on them now

Tom Merry was the bigger of the two, and a little older; but Roylance was evidently a tough customer for even the captain of the Shell. The difference in size was not marked. And, good boxer as Tom Merry was, the first round showed that Roylance was his equal in that line.

Manners looked on rather glumly as round after round was fought through.

After four rounds it was anybody's fight, as Jack Blake remarked. Fortune inclined as yet to neither side. And Manners, who a few days before had tackled Roylance, saw clearly enough that he had never had the ghost of a chance. Tom Merry had to go all out, and it was not at all certain so far that he would get the upper hand.

And the fellows, watching Roylance, were surprised at the form he showed. He was so quiet and unassuming that few had thought him able to put up such a fight. A fellow who could stand up to the captain of the Shell for round after round might have been excused for putting on a little side; but Roylance had never shown any trace of side. His fistical powers were not revealed at all till the time came when he was called upon to use them.

Arthur Augustus sponged his heated face after the fifth round. In spite of the gloves, a good deal of damage was being done on both sides.

Roylance looked fresh enough still.

"Bai Jove! I nevah dweamed that you were such a corkah, deah boy!" the swell of St. Jim's remarked. "Weally, I do not feel at all sure that I could knock you out myself, you know!"

Roylance laughed.

"Time!" said Kangaroo.

The New Zealander stepped up with alertness

for the sixth round. Junior scraps seldom ran to six rounds, but it was plain that this particular scrap would run to many more than that.

"There goes Roylance!" muttered Crooke.

It was the first fall. The New Zealander was down. Kangaroo began to count. Before five had been counted Roylance was up again and fighting. He stalled off the Shell fellow's attack till time was called, and he was breathing hard as he sank on the knee Arthur Augustus made for him.

The seventh round was slower, but in the eighth the fight woke up again, and Tom Merry went to grass. It was still quite a matter of doubt what the result would be.

"Ninth round!" said Jack Blake, when the Australian junior called time again. "Sticking it out, by Jove! They ought to stop now. Look at Tommy's nose and Roylance's eye!"

"And his chin!" grinned Herries. "And his nose, too, for that matter."

"It's gone far enough," said Dig.

But the ninth round went on, both combatants getting punishment, and both evidently the worse for wear.

"Time!"

"Feelin' all wight, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus rather anxiously, as he sponged the crimson face of his principal.

"Good for some more, anyway," answered Roylance quietly.

"Bwavo!"

Monty Lowther was slightly anxious as he looked after Tom Merry. His faith in his leader was not shaken, but he could not deny that it was, as Blake had said earlier, anybody's fight, so far. Tom Merry smiled faintly as he read Monty Lowther's thoughts in his face.

"All serene!" he said. "I shall pull through, I think. Roylance is the toughest chap I've ever scrapped with—tougher than Grundy, even. Difference in size and weight, though, and that's on my side. I shouldn't wonder if that makes all the difference."

"Go in and win!" said Lowther.

Tom nodded, saving his breath for his work.

"Time!"

It was the tenth round, and Tom Merry began by pressing his opponent hard.

Dick Roylance gave ground steadily. He was driven half round the ring, and his defence seemed to fall away feebly. D'Arcy's face was keen with anxiety as he watched. Tom Merry rushed in, and then, all of a sudden, the New Zealander met him with a sudden irresistible attack. The captain of the Shell reeled back from a drive fairly in the face, followed up by a post-man's knock that almost lifted him from his feet. There was a heavy bump as he went down in the grass.

"Bwavo!" chirruped Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry lay dazed.

Experienced scrapper as he was, he had been lured on by the astute Fourth Former, with disastrous results. The affected feebleness of the New Zealander had completely taken him in.

"One, two, three, four—" came from Kangaroo grimly.

Monty Lowther's face was set. Manners looked hard and savage. Was Tom, too, to be defeated by the youth from the land of the Southern Cross? Tom made a big effort to rise, but he sank back again, his senses whirling. He had taken punishment that would have knocked out most fellows on the spot.

"Five, six, seven, eight—"

"Tom!" breathed Mauners.

"Nine—"

Tom staggered to his feet with a tremendous effort. Roylance could have knocked him spinning the moment he was up, but Roylance was standing back, giving his adversary plenty of time to recover. It was only that chivalry of the New Zealand junior that saved Tom Merry from defeat.

It was Tom who renewed the conflict, but when the call of time came he almost tottered to Lowther's knee.

Lowther did not speak. He did what he could for his chief in the brief interval of rest, but Arthur Augustus was fairly grinning as he clapped Roylance on the back.

"Good man!" he said, half a dozen times.

"Time!"

"Eleventh round!" said Clive.

Tom Merry came up a little slowly to the call of time, but steadily. He was recovering. And now he was very wary, and no feint was likely to take him in again. He contented himself with defence till he was stronger, and the round was uneventful.

"Twelfth round, by gad!" said Cardew, with deep breath, when the adversaries faced one another again at the call of time. "Good men, both!"

"Last round, too, I think," said Levison quietly.

And Levison was right.

Tom Merry was attacking hard and fast, and this time his opponent was outclassed. Twice the New Zealander nearly went down, but recovered, and then a terrific straight drive sent him spinning. He landed in the grass with a crash.



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Kangaroo counted.

At nine there was a buzz of deep-drawn breath. All eyes were on Roylance. He made an effort to rise, his face drawn and contorted with the intensity of it; but he sank back again. He spent.

"Out!"

Kangaroo slipped his watch into his pocket.

Arthur Augustus, with a rather glum face, helped his principal out of the ring. Roylance sat on his knee and panted. Tom Merry, in little better case, rested on Lowther's ready knee. It was some little time before either of them in that well-fought fight cared to move. Roylance was the first on his feet, as it happened.

Tom Merry rose and stepped towards him. He held out his hand to the New Zealand junior.

Roylance gave him a rather queer look, but shook hands readily enough.

"You've pulled it off," he said coolly.

"You're a good man," said Tom. "You let me off in the tenth round. It was your fight, if you'd chosen. We'll try it again another time, if you like. I've had quite enough, if you have."

Roylance grinned faintly.

"Enough to go on with, thanks!" he said.

He looked round.

"Manners!" he called out.

"Hallo!" said Manners.

"Now it's all over I've got something to say. I did not call you a funk. I never thought of such a thing. It was a lie of Racke's. That's all."

Roylance turned to Arthur Augustus to help him on with his jacket, and left the ground with the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry blinked after him, and he blinked at Manners. He found it difficult to look at anything just then without blinking.

"Come on!" said Monty Lowther.

And Tom's chums led him from the field.

CHAPTER 5.

After the Battle!

GRUNDY of the Shell looked in at Tom Merry's study about an hour later.

Tom Merry was reclining in the arm-chair, not much inclined to do anything else after his terrific slogging match.

He had won on the count, but the fight had been so close that it was hardly a victory. And the punishment given and taken had been very severe. Tom Merry was feeling, as he remarked to his chums, as if he had been under a motor car that afternoon—and a very heavy motor car at that. Strong and fit as he was, it was likely to be some time before he fully recovered.

"Coming?" asked Grundy, looking in.

"Rats! No," said Tom Merry. "I'm not coming anywhere."

"You're a bit soft, aren't you?" remarked Grundy.

Tom gave him a feeble glare.

"Kill him, somebody!" he said.

Monty Lowther picked up the poker.

"Here, hold on! No larks!" said Grundy.

"It's the session of the St. Jim's Parliament, you know. Presentation to Gussy—speech by me—"

"Speech by you!" said Tom. "I couldn't stand that if I was feeling my very best. Call again!"

"Don't lie up for a bit of a scrap," said Grundy encouragingly. "Be a man, you know. Take it

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smiling! Keep a stiff upper lip! Be a sport like me!"

"Monty, if you were a pal you'd brain him!" moaned Tom Merry. "You've got a poker. Why don't you brain him?"

"I'm going to."

"Here, stop that! No larks!" roared Grundy. "Why, you mad idiot, wharrer you at? Keep off! Yaroooh!"

Grundy spun out into the passage as the poker whirled round his head. Monty Lowther did not quite brain him, but he gave Grundy some taps that made the great George Alfred feel as if he were on an anvil. Grundy staggered across the passage, and glared at Lowther as if he could eat him.

"You potty ass!" he roared. "You—you—you—"

"Oh, don't be soft!" grinned Lowther. "Come and have some more! Don't lie up for a bit of a tap!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Grundy.

"Here, have some more like that, and that!"

"Yaroooop!"

"That" and "that" were terrific prods in Grundy's ribs, and apparently he did not want any more, for he fled along the passage and vanished. Lowther chuckled as he came back into the study.

"That make you feel better, Tommy?" he inquired.

"Yes," said Tom, grinning. "The silly ass! I'll bet he wouldn't have stood up to Roylance for twelve rounds! Soft! The silly chump! I feel as if I've been through a mangle!"

"I'm glad you licked him," said Manners.

Tom made a grimace.

"Well, I suppose I licked him, as he was counted out," he said. "But I feel remarkably as if he'd licked me."

"He's a good man," said Monty Lowther. "Never mind; you've saved the prestige of the study."

"I'd rather have saved my nose," mumbled Tom Merry. "It feels as if it wasn't there. And I believe it was all about nothing, after all. Roylance says he didn't say anything about Manners."

"He did!" said Manners.

"Well, it beats me hollow!" confessed Tom. "A chap who could put up a fight like that ought to be pretty decent. You saw how he let me off in the tenth round. It was his fight, if he'd knocked me out, as he could, then, under the rules. He gave me a chance, and got licked in the finish for doing so! Only a really decent chap would play the game to that extent."

"Hallo! Talk of angels!" said Monty Lowther, as Dick Roylance stepped in at the open doorway.

Roylance showed a good many signs of the fight. The gloves had saved the worst, but a great amount of damage had been done.

Tom Merry gave him a faint grin. Tom was backing up Manners in the dispute, but he simply could not feel ill-will towards a fellow who had put up such a fight as Roylance had put up that afternoon.

"Hallo! Feeling chirpy?" he asked.

"Not very!" confessed Roylance.

"If you've come for some more, call to-morrow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I haven't come for any more. I've come to explain something. I think you

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

A reader complains he has lost a yellow basket. A-tasket, a-tasket, what ever shall he do? Well, old chap, you're not the only one!

Third Form flash: "Now, D'Arcy minor, you really must take more interest in your French," said Mr. Selby. "Why, half the people in the world speak French." "Isn't that enough, sir?" asked Wally D'Arcy wearily.

Modern methods of education are very fine, states an authority, but is the schoolboy of to-day the man his father was? I know the answer to that one. No, he is his son.

"Well, sir," said the artist, "now I have finished painting your portrait, is it a good resemblance?" "Perfect," agreed the sitter. "In fact, I might just as well have had a photograph!"

Baggy Trimble saw a shilling on the floor of a shop in Wayland and bent and tried to pick it up, but the coin stuck fast to the floor. He rose hastily as a shop assistant approached. "Now that you have tested the powers of our wonderful new glue, sir," said the assistant, "perhaps you would care to buy a bottle!"

ought to hear me," said Roylance. "It's about what Manners quarrelled with me for."

"Well, we don't want to hear you," said Manners gruffly.

Roylance coloured.

"Does that apply to all three of you?" he asked, very quietly.

"No, it doesn't!" said Tom Merry at once. "Give the chap a chance to speak, Manners! I felt all along that there was some mistake about the matter."

"There was no mistake!" said Manners bitterly. "I can believe my own ears, I suppose?"

"Not without using your brains, if you have any!" said Roylance tartly. "I don't care twopence what you think, to be candid; but I'd rather Merry did not think that I had acted like a mean rotter. It was like this, Merry. Racke and Crooke asked me into their study, and I found that they wanted to egg me on to fight with Manners. I understand that they are up against this study for some reason—"

"That's so."

"Well, I refused to be drawn, and was leaving the study when Manners came by. Then Racke said something as if answering what I had said.

At the Wayland Assizes: "You are earning under two pounds a week," thundered the magistrate, "so what on earth can you want with a car?" "Petrol, your worship," replied the defendant meekly.

Gore: "When I hit anybody, they remember it!" Grundy: "When I hit anybody, they don't!"

Overheard at the Wayland Hippodrome: "Gosh!" exclaimed one actor. "Those comedians have pinched all our jokes!" "Quiet," whispered his partner. "Maybe they had 'em first!"

They say that Pratt, of the New House, intends to become an airman, as no job on earth is good enough for him.

Two "ham" actors had been engaged as "supers" in the pantomime, which had an Eastern setting. "What?" exclaimed one. "You mean to say the manager expects us to pack up the costumes after doing our act?" "Yes," replied the other. "He said we might make ourselves useful as well as Oriental!"

"These rings are real gold," insisted the man in old Isaacs' jeweller's shop in Wayland. "You don't know your onions, Mr. Isaacs." "Maybe not," admitted old Isaacs, "but I know my carats!"

Remember, there are always alternative paths to success. People who go in for crosswords will have noticed that.

LATE EXTRA: *The school doctor says work before breakfast can be harmful. Unfortunately, he says nothing about the intervals between meals.*

Come again next Wednesday, chaps!

It was a clever trick, and it fairly flabbergasted me for the minute. He said something to the effect that he didn't believe Manners had been dodging me, and he didn't believe Manners was a funk, just as if I'd been saying it. I give you my word that I didn't! It was a trick of Racke's, because he saw Manners outside the door, and he wanted him to hear."

Manners set his lips.

"It was just like one of Racke's tricks!" said Tom Merry. "So that was how it happened, Manners! You never heard Roylance say anything at all."

"I heard Racke answer him."

"As Roylance has just described it?" demanded Lowther.

"Yes."

"And that was all?"

"That was enough."

"I suppose you believe me, Tom Merry?" said Roylance quietly. "Even if I were mean enough to tell a lie, there's no reason why I should. I intended to tell you this after our scrap, whichever of us got the better of it. It was simply a trick of Racke's because I had refused to be his

catspaw. Manners didn't wait to ask a question; he just rushed at me and hit out."

"I'd do the same again!" said Manners.

"Then you don't believe my explanation?"

Manners hesitated.

"Well, yes, I suppose I do, really," he said at last. "It was just like one of Racke's tricks, I admit that."

"Of course we believe you!" exclaimed Tom Merry warmly. "And I must say that Manners was a silly ass to be taken in so easily. If he'd told us how it happened we should have guessed it was one of Racke's tricks. You had a scrap with Racke in his study that evening, I know. That was the reason?"

"Yes."

"Well, you leave the court without a stain on your character!" said Monty Lowther, with a grin. "Manners, old chap, you do seem rather to rush to conclusions like a bull at a gate. I rather think you owe Roylance an apology."

Manners looked grim.

"I don't want that," said Roylance. "It doesn't matter a bit. But I wanted you fellows to know the facts. If I'd said what Racke pretended I'd said I should have been a mean cad. That's all."

Manners flushed uncomfortably.

It was impossible to doubt the explanation so frankly given, and once more Manners had to admit that his "down" on the new junior was due to a misunderstanding caused by his own hastiness. But Manners was true blue; he was ready to admit that he was wrong when he knew he was wrong.

"I'm sorry, Roylance!" he said, with an effort. "I don't think I was much to blame, if you come to that. I naturally thought Racke was answering something you had said when I heard him. But I believe you, of course, and I am sorry!"

"All serene!" said Roylance. He paused a moment, and then went on, colouring slightly. "Look here, Manners, you've been down on me ever since I've been here, and it was all due to mistakes. You've owned that much. I don't want to be on bad terms with anybody. I'm not looking for trouble. I'm willing to shake hands and let bygones be bygones if you are."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "It's up to you, Manners, old scout!"

Manners was silent. There was a struggle in his breast between his better nature and the bitterness of his feelings towards the new junior. But dislike, even though admittedly founded upon misapprehension, was not to be overcome in a moment. Manners put his hands in his pockets.

"Manners!" muttered Monty Lowther.

"Well, if that's how you feel, all serene!" said Roylance. "It doesn't worry me."

And he quitted the study.

Manners looked at his chums, his face hardening as he read the condemnation in their looks.

"I don't like him," he said. "You needn't scowl at me. I've admitted that the wrong was on my side. But I don't like the fellow. I suppose I'm allowed to have my own likes and dislikes if I choose?"

"No good jawing about it!" said Tom Merry shortly.

Manners, with a clouded face, left the study. He was not satisfied with himself, or with his chums, or with anything at that moment. But he had never felt less inclined to make friends with his enemy.

CHAPTER 6.

For Valour!

"COME on, Gussy, you duffer!"
"Wait till I tie my tie stwaight, deah boy!"

"Bother your tie!" growled Herries impatiently.

"I wefuse to bothah my tie, Hewwies!"

"Look here, it's an important session this afternoon!" exclaimed Blake. "You can't be late, least of all! Come on!"

"Weady now!" said Arthur Augustus graciously.

And the swell of St. Jim's left Study No. 6 with his chums.

Quite a little army of St. Jim's juniors had started for the barn in Pepper's field, where the St. Jim's Parliament, which had recently been formed, held its sessions. That afternoon the presentation to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was to take place. It was to be made for the heroic rescue of Manners minor of the Third Form. D'Arcy had denied that he was the heroic rescuer at all. The denial was generally put down to Gussy's great modesty.

It did not seem possible that anybody but the great Gussy had been the rescuer.

Manners minor had ventured into the field, and the savage bull had run him down, and Reggie had fainted with the brute fairly upon him. He had come to in Mr. Bunce's cottage, to find that somebody had rescued him—who, he had not the faintest idea. His major had found him there and brought him back to the school, having learned where he was from Arthur Augustus. Naturally, all parties concluded that it was Arthur Augustus who had rescued Reggie from the bull.

D'Arcy certainly had helped to take the fainting fag into the cottage, and had gone for the doctor. And if he wasn't the rescuer, why couldn't he say who was? There was no answer to that question, excepting that Gussy's modest desire to blush unseen led him to deny his own heroism.

There was no doubt that the fellow who had rescued Reggie had risked his life. The wonder was that he had not lost it. And, but for his aid, Reggie would have been gored to death by the savage animal as he lay helpless; that was another certainty. And a fellow who had shown unlimited pluck and saved the life of his schoolfellow was a fellow whom St. Jim's delighted to honour. So there was great enthusiasm for the presentation of the testimonial in a handsome box to the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus, quite ignorant of the intentions of his schoolfellows, walked down to the barn with Blake and his chums. Manners joined them on the way. Monty Lowther was staying in with Tom Merry. Tom Merry did not feel inclined for parliamentary proceedings that afternoon.

Manners didn't, for that matter, but he felt bound to turn up, considering the nature of the occasion.

His minor in the Third was a good deal of a worry to him, but Manners was strongly attached to Reggie, all the same; and he felt far more gratitude to the rescuer than the fag himself did. Master Reggie had rather a way of taking everything for granted. But Manners knew that it was not every fellow who would have run under the horns of a savage and maddened bull to save a young rascal whose own wicked recklessness had brought his peril upon him.

The House of Commons was growing crowded when the chums of Study No. 6 entered. Most of

the St. Jim's Cabinet were on the front bench, and Mr. Speaker—otherwise Talbot of the Shell—was in his place. A buzz greeted the entrance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Here he is!" shouted Reggie Manners, who had squeezed in with the crowd.

"Hurrah!"
 "Bai Jove, this is wathah flattewin'!" said Arthur Augustus, surprised and pleased. "The fellows know how to appreciate a weally good speech by a chap who knows somethin', Blake. They are expectin' somethin' vewy good fwom me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

ranks of the fag members. "Why didn't you bring a fan to hide your blushes?"

"Weally, Wally——"

"Will the honourable member kindly rise to the occasion," said Mr. Speaker.

"Bai Jove! I weally do not compwehend——"

"Gentlemen," said Grundy, for the first time making a speech without being howled down.

"Gentlemen, some of you are acquainted with the gallant action of the honourable member in the St. Jim's Cabinet, but some may not be. For the benefit of the latter I will utter a few remarks."

"The fewer the better," murmured Blake.

"Gentlemen, the other day the honourable



"Look!" shouted Wally. On the tab inside the cape there were worked initials. And the initials were "R. R." "Richard Roylance!" exclaimed Levison minor. "So it was that New Zealander who rescued me," said Reggie Manners.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Order! Silence!"

Grundy of the Shell rose, looking very important.

"Mr. Speaker and honourable members, I move that this House resolve itself into a committee——"

"Hear, hear!"

"For the purpose of making a presentation to the honourable member, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bai Jove! What does that mean, Blake?"

"Wait and see!" grinned Blake.

"Good old Gussy!" bawled Wally from the

member spotted a silly young idiot in the Third Form in a field with a mad bull."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"With a personal courage remarkable in a politician——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He rushed to the rescue. He got the silly fag from under the horns of the bull and saved his life. It was an act of great courage. Of course, I should have done the same if I'd been there."

"Oh, would you?"

"So would any fellow. But, all the same, it was ripping of him. And now, gentlemen," continued Grundy, "the presentation will take place. This box contains the testimonial in the form of cash, D'Arcy—"

"You uttah ass!"

"What!"

"I wegard these pwoceedings as widic!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "It was not I who wescued Weggie Mannahs! It was not a membah of the St. Jim's Parliament at all! I wefuse to accept a testimonial! I wegard you as asses!"

And with that wrathful announcement, Arthur Augustus stalked out of the House of Commons, and Grundy was left with the presentation box in his hand. And the session of the St. Jim's Parliament broke up in an exciting buzz.

CHAPTER 7.

Keeping It Dark!

BLAKE & CO. found Arthur Augustus in Study No. 6 when they came in to tea.

D'Arcy was looking disturbed and wrathful. The scene in the St. Jim's Parliament had annoyed him.

"Look here, Gussy, you silly ass—" began Blake.

"I wegard you as an uttah ass, Blake!" exclaimed D'Arcy loftily. "I pwesume you were a party to those widiculous pwoceedings?"

"Of course, ass! It's one up for this study to have a testimonial for valour, fathead!"

"The wight person is not in this study."

"Who is the right person, then?" asked Herries.

"That is a secwet, Hewwies."

"Why is it a secret, fathead?"

"I'm sowwy, I cannot explain that."

"Look here!" said Blake. "There's been enough of this mystifying. Was it you who rescued Manners minor or not, you blinking duffer?"

"I wefuse to be called a blinkin' duffah, Blake! And I have already answahed in the negative."

"And it isn't only your modesty—what?"

"Certainly not."

"That's all right. We'll take that as official," said Blake. "Now we want to know who it was. You were there, and you know. Who was it?"

"Wats!"

"If you won't answer on the voluntary system, compulsion will be applied," said Blake warningly.

"Wubbish!"

"Take hold of him," said Blake.

"I wefuse to be taken hold of! Hewwies, you ass, leggo my neck! Dig, you wuffian—Yawwooooh!"

Arthur Augustus' chums were in deadly earnest. They did not see any reason for a mystification, and they were fed up. They seized the swell of St. Jim's, and his elegant person smote the study carpet with a bump.

"Ow, you wottahs! Ow!"

"Now tell us who it was."

"Wats!"

Bump!

"Name!" said Blake, grinning.

"Oh, you feahful wuffians!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "Oh, you wottahs! You are wuinin' my twousahs!"

"Name!" roared Herries.

"Go and eat coke!"

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Bump, bump!

"Yawwooh! Leggo! I wefuse to give the name!" howled Arthur Augustus, struggling wildly. "I distinctly wefuse—yooop!"

Bump!

"Oh cwumbs! I cannot give you the name, you silly duffahs, as I have pwomised Woylance not to do so."

"Roylance!" exclaimed Blake.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"What's Roylance got to do with it?"

"I wefuse to explain! Leggo!"

"Roylance!" repeated Blake, in wonder, and released the swell of St. Jim's, who sat up and gasped. "So it was Roylance, was it?"

"I wefuse to weply—ow!"

"Why did Roylance make you promise not to mention his name?"

"Gwoooooogh!"

"Answer, you ass!"

"I wefuse to answah! Oh deah!"

"I think that's clear enough," remarked Digby.

"It's because Roylance is on fighting terms with Manners major. As Reggie fainted, he didn't see who it was who pulled him out, and so Roylance left it at that. I see now!"

"But Gussy told us Roylance wasn't with him when Reggie was pulled out of the field," said Herries.

"That was quite twue, Hewwies. I had parted with Woylance, and saw him fwom a distance, you ass!"

"Then you admit it was Roylance?"

"I wefuse to admit anythin'! Havin' made a pwomise I am quite unable to give you any information."

Blake chuckled.

"We don't need much more than you've given us already," he said. "Roylance wouldn't have asked you to keep it dark if he'd known your method of keeping secrets."

"I intend to keep it as secwet as the gwave, Blake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' whatevah to cackle at, you uttah ass!" Arthur Augustus picked himself up, and proceeded to dust down his beautiful bags. "I wegard you fellows as uttah wuffians, and I have a gweat mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound!"

"Roylance had better have that testimonial!" grinned Dig.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked alarmed.

"Weally, Dig, if you have guessed that it was Woylance, pway do not bweathe a word outside this study. He will think I have bwoken my pwomise."

"You shouldn't have promised anything of the sort, ass!"

"He asked me, deah boy."

"Because he was on bad terms with Manners?"

"Yaas."

"I don't see that it mattered," grunted Herries.

"You see, Woylance is wathah a fellow of tact and judgment," explained Arthur Augustus. "He felt that it would be wathah bad form to place Mannahs undah a personal obligation to him, at a time when Mannahs was goin' for him as an enemy, you know. I quite appwoved. It would have made Mannahs feel an awful silly ass!"

"Well, he is a silly ass, so I don't see why he shouldn't feel it."

"Howevah—"

"Better not say anything as Gussy made that idiotic promise," remarked Blake. "I dare say

Detective Kerr**Investigators**

No. 30.

**THE
MISSING
FOOTBALL.**

A NEW football belonging to Jack Blake of the Fourth, which disappeared apparently into thin air, was the cause of numerous inquiries. Blake, D'Arcy, and Digby had left Study No. 6 to go up to the dorm to change for footer practice. Herries, playing with his dog Towser, said he would follow in a tick. Arriving on Little Side, Blake remembered his new football, which he had left in the study, and cut back for it. Herries had left the study when Blake re-entered it—and the ball had gone, too! Study No. 6 had been empty for a very few minutes, and only Trimble, Cardew, and Wyatt were in the Fourth Form studies just then. At Figgins' suggestion, "Detective" Kerr offered to investigate.

KERR: You didn't notice Blake's football in the study before you left with Towser, did you, Herries?

HERRIES: Oh, yes, I did! I meant to take it to Little Side for Blake myself, but, trying to smuggle old Towser out of the House without a beak spotting me, it slipped my mind.

KERR: You aren't supposed to have pets inside the School House, I know.

HERRIES: I often fetch old Towser up to the study, though. It makes a change for him—not that Gussy likes it.

KERR: So you actually know nothing about the missing football, Herries?

HERRIES: I'm sorry, I don't, Kerr.

KERR: Wait a minute, Trimble. I'm not going to bite you.

TRIMBLE: I'm not afraid of you, Kerr, if that's what you think. I say, though, I don't know anything about Blake's football. Honest Injun, I don't!

KERR: You were in the House when the ball disappeared. Do you know what sort of a ball it was?

he will let it out himself soon enough. He's let it out to us, and he will let it out far and wide before long."

"I have not let it out!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "You fellows seem to have guessed somethin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as asses, and I see no weason whatevah for cacklin'."

But Arthur Augustus' chums apparently saw some reason, for they persisted in cackling.

TRIMBLE: Just an ordinary new footer pill. I remember it had a long lace, that Blake said he would have to tuck in.

KERR: So you actually saw it, Trimble?

TRIMBLE: Yes—I mean, no. If you think it was me, I never saw the ball in my life. I didn't look into the study through the half-open door when Blake was talking. It wasn't me at all, Kerr. That's the truth.

CARDEW: Awfully nice of you to drop in on a fellow, Kerr. I suppose you're looking for Blake's lost property?

KERR: Right first time.

CARDEW: Well, I admit I was here in my study at the time of its disappearance. If Herries left Study No. 6 before Blake came back for his ball, I could easily have slipped along the passage and purloined it—if I'd had a particular yearnin' to pinch a footer.

KERR: I'm not suspecting you, you ass. But did you see anybody about?

CARDEW: Much as I'd like to find you a giddy victim, I can't. Unless you try Wyatt. He was in his study, I know. But have a care. Wyatt is a nervous chap, and if you clink your handcuffs at him, he may have a fit!

KERR: Wyatt, did you see anybody snooping around Study No. 6 yesterday, about half-past two?

WYATT: Oh, no! I was writing two hundred lines of Virgil for Mr. Lathom then. But I heard some fags squabbling over a new ball that seemed to belong to Watson as I went down later.

KERR: How's your new ball going?

WATSON: Fine, thanks, Kerr!

KERR: You don't often get a new football given you, I suppose?

WATSON: Not nearly often enough, considering we play twice as good a game as you old fogies in the junior eleven.

KERR: You heard about the raid on Blake's study yesterday afternoon?

WATSON: Has Blake lost anything? Most of us fags were at practice then, so we couldn't have been in the Fourth Form corridor.

KERR: No. But didn't I see Wally D'Arcy smuggling his mongrel Pongo into the House?

WATSON: You're mistaken, Kerr. You probably saw Herries. He had his bulldog Towser in his study, I know.

(Can you discover who took Blake's ball? Kerr's solution is on page 33.)

CHAPTER 8.**A Chance for Roylance!**

THERE was a good deal of curiosity among the School House juniors on the subject of the rescue of Manners minor.

Reggie was questioned by some of the fellows, but he could only say that he had become unconscious—he refused to admit that he had fainted—and had come to in Mr. Bunce's cottage, and his rescuer was gone before that. Arthur

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Augustus' statement that he was not the person was taken at last as "official," but it was quite a puzzle who the person might be. Study No. 6 knew now, but they said nothing. Gussy had let the secret escape him incautiously, but they did not want Roylance to get the impression that he had broken faith.

The matter was talked of for a time, but mainly forgotten by the next day. Wally & Co., with the testimonial left on their hands, were rather perplexed what to do with it. Levison minor proposed saving it till the real rescuer turned up; but Wally pointed out that probably it wasn't a St. Jim's chap at all, and they would never see or hear of him. Piggott proposed a Form spread with the cash—a suggestion that was sat on at once. Wally, in withering terms, explained to Piggott that the money was not theirs to spend. And the question remained undecided.

Dick Roylance of the Fourth was glad enough to hear an end of the talk on the subject of Manners minor and the unknown rescuer.

It had been from sheer good-heartedness and chivalry that he had asked D'Arcy, his companion on that eventful afternoon, to keep dark his share in the rescue.

Manners was so bitter against him, though without real reason, that the new junior did not want to put the Shell fellow under an irksome obligation, and he shrank, too, from the limelight. He had done what seemed to him a quite ordinary thing, and he did not want to be praised for it; and, above all, he did not want an awkward and reluctant acknowledgment from Manners. He simply wanted the whole affair forgotten, and but for D'Arcy's peculiar way of keeping a secret no one in the School House would have known the facts.

Manners least of all had any suspicion. He was curious on the subject. He knew what a terrible risk Reggie's rescuer had run, from Mr. Bunce's description of what he had seen. The thought had crossed Manners' mind that it might have been Roylance, but he had dismissed it angrily. It was not the fellow he had regarded as an enemy who had saved the life of his minor—he was sure of that. It would have been a little difficult for Manners to explain how he was sure; but he was sure.

Manners was still keeping up his old attitude towards Roylance. They came little in contact, but when they did, Manners was like ice. And his chums, who really liked the New Zealander junior, felt themselves constrained to keep out of his way. Manners was irreconcilable, but his chums wished that he would have a little more sense.

But even if they had wanted to avoid the New Zealander, it was not possible for Tom Merry quite to do so. Roylance was very keen on footer. Short as was the time he had been at St. Jim's, he had already shown that he would make his mark in the junior footer. Tom had already marked him as a reserve for the junior House eleven, and about a week after the great fight he resolved to give the New Zealander his first chance in a House match.

By that time both Tom Merry and Roylance had quite recovered from the effects of their slogging match, and, indeed, had almost forgotten it. Tom Merry stopped Roylance to speak to him one day after lessons.

"You're getting on jolly well with your footer," he said.

"You think so?" said Roylance.

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"Yes. I've had an eye on you. It's my business, you know, as football skipper. I'll give you a place in the House match to-morrow, if you like."

Roylance beamed.

"I'd jolly well like!" he answered. "If you think I'm good enough, I'm your man!"

"I'll put your name down, then," said Tom, with a smile.

"Good!"

And Dick Roylance's name went down in the list. Tom, thinking only of football and his duty as a skipper, had forgotten about Manners' feud with the new junior; not that he would have allowed that to interfere with duty, anyway.

In the study that evening Manners broached the subject.

"Talbot's not in the eleven to-morrow, I understand," he said.

"No," said Tom. "His uncle's home again, and Talbot's going to see him. He's taking Levison with him, too."

"Two out of the eleven?"

"Yes. I'm calling on the reserves. I was thinking of you, Manners, if you feel up to it."

"I was thinking of it, too," grinned Manners. "I'm up to it right enough. After all, I can play footer. I don't want you to put me in because we're pals, but you needn't leave me out simply because we're in the same study."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Right-ho! You go in, then."

Cardew of the Fourth knocked at the door and looked in.

"Made up your list for to-morrow, Merry?" he inquired.

"Yes, thanks."

"Levison told me he's off with Talbot, so I thought you might be in want of a rather good forward," drawled Cardew.

"I've got one, thanks."

"No room for an enterprisin' youth about my size?"

"Sorry, no! Are you getting keen on footer, Cardew?" asked Tom, with a smile.

He could not quite imagine the slack dandy of the Fourth keen on anything.

"Well, I was thinkin' of givin' it a turn," said Cardew. "I've been rather stickin' to practice lately, too. But if you don't want my valuable services, I won't press them on you. Ta-ta!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew strode out again.

Tom Merry conned over his list thoughtfully.

"No room for Cardew to-morrow," he remarked, "but I might give him a chance if he sticks to practice. He's got the makings of a jolly good footballer in him if he chose to play up."

"What's the list as it stands?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Herries in goal; Reilly and Gore; Lowther, Noble, Clive; Blake, D'Arcy, Manners, Roylance, and self."

"Roylance!" exclaimed Manners, with a start.

Tom Merry started, too, as Manners spoke. Immersed in footer and football considerations, he had forgotten other matters.

"Yes, in the front line," he answered.

"You're playing that fellow?"

"I'm playing Roylance."

"Why?"

"Because he's a good man, and it's time he had a turn," said Tom. "Why shouldn't I play him?" he added sharply. "I suppose I'm not to keep a fellow out of the football because you don't happen to like him, am I?"

"Play him, if you like, of course," said Manners, setting his lips. "You can scratch my name out, though."

Tom's eyes glinted a little.

"I won't scratch your name out, Manners! You're going to play in the House match!"

"Not if Roylance does!"

"Do you think you have a right to drag your silly likes and dislikes into football matters?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I mean what I say! After all, you don't need me. I'm not one of your giddy champions!" said Manners bitterly. "Play Cardew; he's keen enough."

"He's not as good as you."

"Thanks! Play him instead of Roylance, then!"

"I think you must be off your rocker, Manners! What sort of a skipper should I be if I dropped a chap out of the team simply because my studymate doesn't like him?"

"Drop me, then!"

Tom Merry rose to his feet.

"I won't!" he said tartly. "I'm keeping your name down, and I hope you'll have a bit more sense to-morrow!"

"Are you going to post that list up?"

"Yes; this evening."

"Take my name out first!"

"I'm leaving your name where I've put it, Manners! You've jolly well ragged me a dozen times for not playing you!"

"I can't play to-morrow."

"You mean you won't."

"Well, I won't, then, if you like that better!"

"I hope you'll think better of that to-morrow," said Tom Merry quietly. "You're putting rather a hard strain on our friendship, Manners."

And Tom Merry quitted the study before Manners could reply, feeling that patience would reach breaking-point if he argued the matter further.

Ten minutes later the football list was posted up, and the names of both Manners and Roylance appeared in it for all the School House to read.

CHAPTER 9.

Wally & Co. Make a Discovery!

"THIRTY-FIVE BOB!" said D'Arcy minor very thoughtfully.

"Lot of money!" remarked Hobbs, looking serious.

"The blessed question is, what are we going to do with it?" said Wally peevishly. "I suppose we've got to take Gussy's word that he's not entitled to it?"

"Well, he says so," observed Levison minor. "I thought it was his fatheaded modesty at first; but, after all, D'Arcy major wouldn't tell a whopper even for the sake of modesty. And it would be a whopper!"

"But what are we going to do with it?" grunted Wally. "We've raised it as a blessed testimonial for the blessed rescuer, bless him! You silly ass, Manners! You're always causing trouble!"

"Oh rats!" was Reggie's reply.

"What did you want to go into the field at all for?" growled Wally.

"You went in it!" snapped Reggie.

"Well, I had sense enough to keep away from the bull! You ought to have known what an ass you are!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Besides, you'd know who the chap was if you'd seen him; only, of course, you had to faint!" said Wally sarcastically.

"I didn't faint!" roared Manners minor.

"Then who was the chap who pulled you out?"

"I didn't see him, idiot!"

"Because you fainted!"

"You cheeky ass! I didn't faint! I just became unconscious somehow; I don't quite know how."

"I do! You fainted!"

"I'll punch your nose if you say I fainted!" howled Reggie indignantly.

"Look here——"

"Order!" murmured Frank Levison. "Punching noses won't settle what's to be done with the tin. Suppose we give it to the Cottage Hospital at Wayland?"

"It isn't ours to give."

"Well, the chap we raised it for won't turn up, and I'm getting fed up with it, for one!"

"Same here!" growled Reggie.

"We've got to find the chap!" said Wally obstinately. "And when we find him we'll jolly well rag him for keeping it secret and giving us all this bother!"

"Perhaps it wasn't a St. Jim's chap at all," suggested Hooley.

"Oh, it was, right enough! Gussy knows who it was, only he won't say."

"We could find out," remarked Levison minor thoughtfully.

"How, ass?"

"Let's go and ask Bunce."

"Those Shell bounders asked him, and he didn't know. He doesn't know every St. Jim's chap by sight and by name, fathead!"

"We could get a description from him."

D'Arcy minor snorted.

"What's the good of a description? One chap's just like another. Suppose he said a pudding-faced chap with a fat head; that would suit either you or Manners minor!"

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Manners minor. Frank Levison laughed.

OVERSEAS PALS WIN PRIZES!

August "Footer-Stamps" Result.

PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH have been awarded and sent to the following twenty-four competitors who all submitted entries with scores of 34 "goals" and over:

V. Abrahams, 33, Somerset Road, Capetown, South Africa; J. P. Bloem, P.O. Delmore, Transvaal, South Africa; Clyde Butler, 3, Carlton Terrace, St. Bedes Road, Three Anchor Bay, Capetown, South Africa; R. Carrapiett, 18, Sandwith Road, Rangoon, Burma; Douglas C. Cassingham, "Invicta," Wexford Road, Jurgon's Estate Gardens, Capetown, South Africa; Low Meng Chim, 3, Gentle Road, Singapore, S.S.; Willie Chormous, 1124, Alfred Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Peter Claassen, P.O. Box 64, Oudtshoorn, Cape Province, South Africa; David S. T. Eng, 1830, Nibong Road, Teluk Anson, Perak, F.M.S.; W. D. Forssman, 498, Lutiig Street, Pretoria, South Africa; Ian Gibson, 11, Liverpool Street, Epsom, Auckland, New Zealand; Abdul Hamid, 109-101st Street, Kandawgalay Post, Rangoon, Burma; William Hunneybun, 473, Prame Road, University P.O., Rangoon, Burma; Harold Jones, 8, Wesley Street, Observatory, Capetown, South Africa; J. W. Lake, Wartburg, Natal, South Africa; E. Louw, 78, Strubens Road, Mowbray, Capetown, South Africa; Sam McCoy, 11, Dean Street, London, Ontario, Canada; J. Meyersohn, 24, York Street, Berea, Johannesburg, South Africa; E. J. Painting, P.O. Box 429, Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia, South Africa; Tan Hooi Piang, Jubilee School, Klang, Selangor, F.M.S.; Neville Robertson, Box 111, Nkana, N. Rhodesia, South Africa; Chew Beng Seng, 139a, Tanjong, Pagar Road, Singapore, S.S.; Alex Sunde, Shaw Road, Oratia, Auckland, New Zealand; Ed. Wirth, 772, McPhillips Street, Wainipea, Manitoba, Canada.

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"But he might be able to give us a clue. Suppose it was Skimpole? Bunce would remember his specs."

"It wasn't Skimpole."

"I know it wasn't; that's only an illustration. Suppose it was a chap with a nose like a hawk; that would suit Crooke—"

"Catch a funk like Crooke facing a bull!"

"I know, ass—I mean, there may have been something about the chap Bunce could remember, and we should know him by that."

Wally reflected.

"Well, perhaps there's something in that," he admitted. "We've got to get rid of that thirty-five bob somehow. We'll go down to Bunce's cottage after dinner and ask him."

"Too jolly far," said Hobbs.

"Oh, you can sit down and slack, if you like! I'll go!" snapped Wally. "I'm not afraid of a few miles!"

After dinner the three minors—Wally, Reggie, and Frank—started on their rather long walk to Bunce's cottage.

It was rather exasperating to Wally, after he had taken the trouble to raise a subscription amounting to the magnificent sum of thirty-five shillings, not to be able to discover a recipient of that handsome testimonial; though as Mr. Bunce evidently did not know the rescuer by sight, it was doubtful whether he could afford information.

Mr. Bunce was discovered working in his garden. He rested on his spade as the three St. Jim's fags came in at the gate.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Bunce!" said D'Arcy minor politely. "We're from St. Jim's, you know."

"'Arternoon, sir!"

"We've come—" began Manners minor.

"Dry up a minute, Reggie, for goodness' sake!"

"We've got to get back for the House match!" grunted Reggie. "They'll have started already."

"Then don't waste time!"

"I don't want to spend a half-holiday listening to you chinwagging, D'Arcy minor!"

"Dry up!" roared Wally.

And he turned to Mr. Bunce again, while Reggie snorted rebelliously.

"You remember this kid, Mr. Bunce," went on Wally. "He was brought in here one day last week after he fainted—"

"I didn't faint!" yelled Reggie furiously.

"When a chap got him away from a bull," said Wally, unheeding.

"I remember," said Mr. Bunce.

"We want to find the chap who did it," resumed Wally. "We can't find him, and we've got a testimonial for him. You don't know his name?"

"No, sir."

"Ever seen him before that day?"

Mr. Bunce shook his head.

"Was it a chap wearing an eyeglass?" asked Levison minor.

"No, sir; that was the other young gentleman."

"Oh, there were two, then!" exclaimed Wally.

"Yes. The young gentleman with the eyeglass was up the lane when the other one went into the field for this lad."

"Who was with your major that afternoon, Wally?"

"I believe Roylance was," said Wally, puzzled.

"But I understood that Gussy had parted from him before the affair happened with the bull."

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"Well, Mr. Bunce said he was up the lane—so he had parted from him," answered Frank.

"Oh, Gussy was diddling us when he said that, very likely. It may have been Roylance all the time. Was it a sunburnt chap, Mr. Bunce?"

"Yes, now you mention it," answered Mr. Bunce. "Nice-looking lad, very sturdy."

"That would be Roylance!"

"You saw it happen?" asked Levison minor.

"I saw it from the winder," said Mr. Bunce. "I come out, but the young gent had the lad out of the field by then, and the bull was raging against the hedge. He helped me into the cottage with him, while the other one went for the doctor. He slipped away quietly when Master Merry came with his friends. He stopped the bull by chucking his cycling cape over his 'orns. That there cape is in my shed now, if you'd like to take it back to the school. 'Tain't no use—ripped to strips, almost."

"You've got the cape?" exclaimed Wally. "Oh, good luck! His name might be on it."

"In that shed on the nail inside the door," said Mr. Bunce. "I picked it up in the field the next day, and 'ung it in the shed in case he should look in for it afterwards."

Wally ran to the shed and returned with the cape.

It was almost in tatters, and certainly beyond repair. The three fags examined it eagerly.

"Look!" shouted Wally.

On a tab inside the cape there were worked initials. And the initials were "R. R."



"It was Roylance who tackled Lucas' bull last week," said Roylance? The New Zealand Junior stood crimen an cape, there was not m

"Richard Roylance!" exclaimed Levison minor.

"That settles it!" said Reggie. "My hat! So it was that New Zealander all the time?"

"Why the thump hasn't he said so?" said Wally, mystified. "What was Gussy keeping it secret for?"

Reggie grinned.

"I think I see it now. It's the chap whose shin I hacked the day he came to the school."

"Yes, you young idiot!"

"Oh, cheese it! I told him I was sorry afterwards," said Reggie gruffly. "But my major never got over the licking by him, you know. I suppose Roylance felt it would be rather awkward meeting my major here, in the cires. Ha, ha, ha! Won't poor old Harry feel a silly idiot when he knows this?"

And Reggie laughed uproariously, evidently deriving only amusement from the fact that his major would feel "a silly idiot."

"My only Aunt Jane! It will make old Manners wild!" said Wally. "Still, he's going to know! Come on; we've found out now! Good-afternoon, Mr. Bunce!"

And the three fags started homeward for St. Jim's.

"Of course, those initials on the cape settle it!" remarked Levison minor. "But the chap might possibly have had another fellow's cape with him."

"Not likely!"

"No; but as Roylance has been keeping it

dark, he mayn't feel inclined to own up. We'll take him by surprise and tell him we've brought home his cape for him. Then he'll have to own up," suggested Frank. "We'll tackle him as he comes off the ground—he's playing footer this afternoon."

"Good wheeze!" said Wally. "We'll spring it on him suddenly, so that he won't have time to think—before all the fellows, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Third arrived at St. Jim's, gleefully anticipating the astonishment of Roylance of the Fourth when that dramatic surprise was sprung upon him.

CHAPTER 10.

The House Match!

"FOOTER!" said Tom Merry.

"I'm not playing!" said Manners shortly.

"Your name's in the list, old fellow," said Tom Merry.

"I told you to take it out!"

Tom Merry compressed his lips.

It was nearly time for the House match, and Tom Merry had not yet made any alteration in the list of the eleven. He had hoped that Manners' better sense would come to the rescue. But evidently it hadn't.

Monty Lowther began to whistle. He had given up the idea of arguing with Manners. The unexpected strain of obstinacy his chum had developed surprised and puzzled him.

"I'm not playing in the eleven if Roylance does!" said Manners quietly. "Drop him or me. I'm not dictating to you—I don't ask to play. Leave me out and play Roylance, if you choose."

"Ahem!"

Dick Roylance, with a very red face, looked in at the study doorway.

"Excuse me—I couldn't help hearing," he said. "Blake asked me to come and tell you that they were going down."

Tom Merry and Lowther coloured, but Manners only looked grim and uncompromising. He was not sorry that the new junior had heard.

There was an uncomfortable silence for a minute or two. Dick Roylance broke it.

"It seems that there's some bother about my playing," he remarked, looking at Tom Merry. "Of course, I'm ready to stand out, if you like. You're skipper."

"You're not going to stand out!" said Tom.

"But if Manners—"

"As you've just mentioned, I'm skipper," said Tom Merry. "If Manners chooses to play the goat, he can. You can get into your things, Roylance."

Roylance hesitated.

"Look here," he said. "I'm pretty keen on playing in the House eleven, but if it's going to cause trouble among the old members I'd rather stand out."

"All serene; but get into your things, all the same. Haven't you just mentioned that I'm skipper?"

Roylance laughed.

"Oh, all right! It's just as you say, of course." And he went down the passage.

"So you're playing him," said Manners slowly.

"Of course I am," answered Tom Merry sharply. "If you choose to resign your place, resign it, and be blowed! I'm getting fed-up!"

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aimed Tom Merry in wonder. "My hat! Was it you, dumb. As he had admitted ownership of the tattered more to be said.

"That's enough!"

Manners walked out of the study.

"Gently does it, dear boy!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Don't get ratty with a pal. Manners is simply potty on the subject of Roylance. Better run along and speak to Cardew."

Tom Merry nodded, and went in search of Ralph Reckness Cardew. He was feeling angrier with his chum than he had ever felt before. Manners had been trying the patience of Study No. 10 very severely of late.

Cardew changed for the match cheerfully enough. He was glad of the chance. Tom Merry, with a somewhat clouded brow, went down to the ground with his men.

Figgins & Co. of the New House were already there.

Arthur Augustus glanced at Cardew, who was in footer shorts under his coat.

"New wecwuit—what?" he asked.

"I'm goin' to do my best to stagger humanity at the great game," drawled Cardew.

"But who's standin' out?"

"Manners," answered Tom Merry.

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus, comprehending.

No more was said on that subject. Dick Roylance lined up with the School House footballers.

There was a good crowd of fellows round the field for the House match, and after a time Manners of the Shell joined them.

Manners looked on grimly. He was not wholly repentant of his inconsiderate action, but he was not satisfied with himself. Nobody knew better than Manners that personal animosities ought not to be carried into the realm of football, and nobody would have condemned such an unsportsmanlike action more than Manners himself—in another fellow.

It was no wonder that he did not feel at ease as he stood in the crowd and watched the game.

He was not consoled by some remarks from the fellows round him, who found that he had been dropped from the team, and did not know why.

"Hard lines!" Julian remarked. "Not feeling fit?"

"I'm fit enough," growled Manners.

Julian looked at him.

"But you're not playing."

"I don't care to."

"Oh!" said Julian, and he smiled.

For a fellow who was a footballer to say he didn't care to play in a House match, when he did not often have a chance to do so, was rather absurd. Manners coloured angrily as he saw Julian's smile.

"Dropped out—what?" asked Racke of the Shell, joining him. "Too bad!"

Manners grunted.

"Who's got your place—Roylance or Cardew?" further inquired Racke.

"Find out!"

Racke stared.

"You're jolly civil!" he remarked. "I suppose it does cut a bit to be dropped out of the team for a new fellow. Awfully sorry for you, don't you know?"

Racke walked away, after saying that. Manners was looking dangerous.

Manners had more remarks of the same kind to listen to during the game, and they did not improve his temper. He was a little worried as to how Cardew would fill his place. Manners would have felt extremely uncomfortable if a

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House match had been lost through his perversity of temper.

But there was no need to be alarmed on that score, as he soon saw. Cardew, though generally regarded as a slacker, was playing up remarkably well.

The first goal in the match was taken by Tom Merry, from a first-rate pass from Cardew, who seemed quite in his element.

Manners was relieved to see it.

Figgins equalised towards the close of the first half, and at the interval the score stood one all. The second half commenced with success to the New House. Kerr put in the ball. The School House rallied and attacked, but Fatty Wynn, in goal, was a tower of strength, and they could not get home.

With the New House one up, the struggle went on keenly. The match was drawing to a finish when three fags of the Third arrived on the ground. Wally & Co. joined Manners of the Shell.

"How's it going?" asked Reggie.

"New House leading two—one."

"Why aren't you playing?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Eh? Your name was on the list. I read it on the board last night," said Reggie. "Don't you feel fit?"

"Oh, yes! Never mind."

"Look here, you're not standing out because that New Zealand chap is in the team, are you, Harry?" exclaimed Manners minor.

Manners flushed.

"Oh, dry up!" he exclaimed gruffly. "Sheer off, you fags!"

"Nice manners they have in the Shell, haven't they?" grinned Wally; and his chums chuckled at Wally's pun.

Manners grunted and moved a little farther away.

"Suppose we tell him?" whispered Reggie.

D'Arcy minor shook his head.

"Not yet. Wait till Roylance comes off."

"What's that rag you've got there?" asked Julian of the Fourth, looking at the tattered cap hanging on Wally's arm.

But Wally did not answer that question. There was to be no revelation till the dramatic moment arrived.

"Hallo! There goes the School House!" exclaimed Levison minor. "Bravo!"

"Hurrah! Play up, School House!"

"Buck up, New House!"

There were less than five minutes to go, and Tom Merry & Co. were making a desperate attack on goal. All eyes were on the keen struggle. Fatty Wynn fisted out the ball twice, but a third shot beat him, and the leather lodged in the net.

There was a thunderous roar from the School House crowd.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well kicked, Gussy!"

"Good old Gussy! Hurrah!"

"Fancy my major pulling that off!" said Wally complacently. "Your major couldn't have got that goal, Reggie."

"Only a fluke!" opined Reggie.

"Why, you silly young ass, it was a ripping goal!" exclaimed Wally indignantly. "Gussy barely had time to shoot."

"Fool's luck, you know," said Reggie.

"My hat! I'll—"

"Hurrah! Goal!"

"It's a draw!" said Reggie. "Two—two. I dare say it would have been a win if my major had been in the team."

"A win for the New House, you mean!" scoffed Wally.

"No, I don't, you fathead! I mean—"

"Oh, never mind what you mean! Come along and catch Roylance as they come off," said Wally. "Roylance gave Gussy that pass. Redfern jolly nearly stopped him. Roylance knows how to play. Your major doesn't."

"Look here, Wally—"

"Oh, come on!" said Frank Levison.

And the three fags pushed their way forward.

CHAPTER 11.

Manners Plays Up!

TOM MERRY & CO. came off the field feeling rather glad that the match was a draw.

It had nearly been a New House victory. Roylance and D'Arcy between them had provided the equalising goal. Tom Merry patted the New Zealander on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he said approvingly.

Roylance smiled.

"Up to the mark?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! You'll be wanted in House matches again."

"Oh, good!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus. "Some silly asses would have shot for goal instead of giving me that pass. Woylance knows what is what. I wegard him as a good man."

"After which, there remains nothing to be said," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Hallo! What do you fags want?"

"Fags yourselves!" retorted Wally. "We want Roylance!"

"Well, here I am," said the New Zealand junior good-humouredly.

"We've got something for you," said D'Arcy minor mysteriously.

"For me?"

"Yes. We've brought your bike cape home for you."

Wally held out the tattered cape under astonished glances from the juniors round him.

Roylance stared at it.

"My—my cape!" he said.

"Yes. It's not much good, but we thought you might want it, so we brought it home for you," grinned Wally.

"Thanks!" stammered Roylance, mechanically taking his cape.

"How on earth did it get into that state?" asked Tom Merry. "Been passing your cape through a sausage machine?"

"N-no!" stammered Roylance, flushing red.

"Bai Jove, it is a wegulah wag!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"We brought it back from Bunce's cottage," explained Wally.

"Bunce's cottage!" repeated Tom.

"Yes. Bunce picked it up after Mr. Lucas' bull had done with it, and kept it in case Roylance called for it."

"My hat!"

(Continued on the next page.)

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"Roylance!" shouted Lowther. "Was it Roylance?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

"Roylance who tackled Lucas' bull last week!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in wonder. "My hat! Was it you, Roylance?"

Dick Roylance stood, crimson and dumb.

As he had the tattered cape in his hand, and had admitted the ownership, there was not much more to be said.

At that moment Roylance could have found pleasure in taking the three grinning fags and knocking their heads together.

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"It's come out, Woylance, deah boy!"

Roylance muttered something.

"Blessed if I see why it was kept dark!" said Tom Merry, staring after Roylance, as the New Zealander junior, red and confused, strode away hurriedly.

"That is because you are somewhat lackin' in tact and judgment, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus benignantly.

"What do you mean, ass?"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"Did you know it was Roylance?" shouted Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!" grinned Arthur Augustus. "As the whole mattah has come out now, owin' to these young boundahs, there is no harm in sayin' so."

"Then you were with him?"

"Not at all, deah boy! I had parted from him, and was at a distance when I saw him perform that hewoic deed."

"And why was it kept dark in this idiotic way?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Explain, ass!" shouted Tom Merry.

"There is vewy little to explain, deah boy. Woylance pweferred to say nothin' about it, owin' to Mannahs havin' set up to be his enemy. He felt that it would place Mannahs in a vewy uncomfy posish, and, as a fellow of tact and judgment, I agweed with him and appwoved."

"I see," said Tom Merry slowly.

He looked round for Manners.

Manners was striding away with a crimson face. He had heard all without speaking a word.

When Roylance of the Fourth had changed in the dormitory he came down to his study, and found Manners there.

The New Zealander started a little as he entered and saw the Shell fellow standing in his study.

Manners' cheeks were red

Roylance coloured, too. This was the moment he had dreaded—the distasteful moment when a fellow who disliked him felt himself driven to make some acknowledgment of a great service rendered.

"I—I—Manners spoke haltingly—"I—I heard what you said on the footer ground, Roylance."

"All serene!" said Roylance carelessly. "Nothing to make a fuss about."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Well, you can guess, I suppose."

"Because I was down on you, and you had my back up, and you wouldn't put me under an obligation, I suppose?"

"Well, it was only likely to make you more ratty, and you were ratty enough, goodness knows!" answered Roylance. "I'm fed-up with rowing, Manners—right up to the chin. I suppose this means that you are going to begin again, but—"

Manners' lips twitched.

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"You think I'm likely to be ratty because you saved my brother's life?" he asked.

"Well, no. I suppose you're glad I was there to do it, for that matter; but you'd rather it was any other fellow?"

"I wouldn't."

"You wouldn't?" said Roylance.

"No. I want to thank you—"

"Oh, all serene! I suppose you've got to go through with it," said Roylance. "Thank me if you like, but you needn't feel under an obligation; any fellow would have done it—or nearly any fellow. So there's nothing whatever for you to get your back up about, you see."

Manners winced.

"You don't quite understand," he said. "I'm sorry. I—I treated you like a cad, Roylance."

"Oh!" ejaculated Roylance, in astonishment.

He stared at Manners blankly. That was the last thing he had ever expected to hear Manners of the Shell say.

"I was nursing ill-feeling, and trying to think I was doing right," said Manners. "I—I can see better now. I'm sorry. That's all. But I don't expect you to forget the things I've said and done. I—"

"My dear chap, it's all right!" said Roylance. "I can see that you mean what you are saying now. I'm jolly glad! Let bygones be bygones. Here's my fist on it, if you like."

He held out his hand frankly.

Manners grasped it.

"That's wight!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass glimmered in at the doorway. "Mannahs, I am glad you are twyin' to wefwain fwom actin' the giddy goat. I have sevewal times been on the point of speakin' to you vewy severely—"

"Bow-wow!" said Manners disrespectfully.

"Bai Jove!"

Manners left the study. He glanced back in the doorway.

"Will you come along to Study No. 10 to tea, Roylance?" he asked. "I'll be jolly glad if you would!"

"Certainly! I'd be pleased!"

"Good!"

Manners went to his study. He found Tom Merry and Monty Lowther there, laying the frugal tea-table.

"Four teacups," said Manners.

"Anybody coming?" asked Tom.

"Yes; Roylance."

"Eh?"

"I've asked Roylance to tea. I suppose you fellows don't mind?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"My dear chap, I'm jolly glad!"

"I—I—I've been a bit of an ass, I know," mumbled Manners, flushing. "But—"

"We're all human at times," said Monty Lowther consolingly. "All serene, old scout! We'll open the last tin of sardines in honour of the occasion."

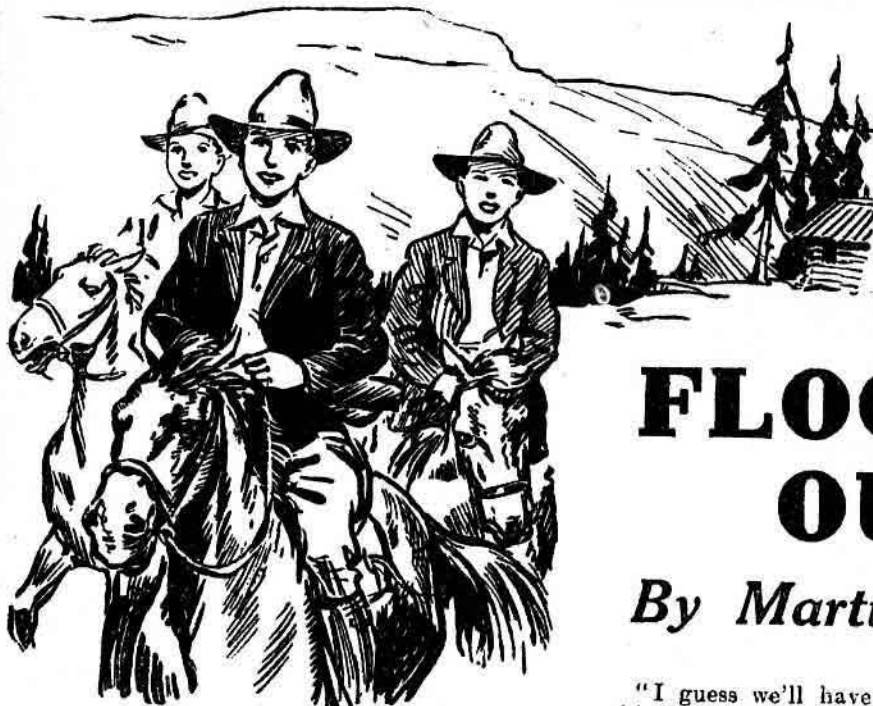
And, in spite of the very frugal fare, there was a cheery tea in Tom Merry's study that afternoon.

After tea there was an attempt on the part of the heroes of the Third to present the testimonial to the heroic rescuer, and Roylance consented to take it—to Wayland Cottage Hospital!

Manners went with him for that purpose, and a good many fellows in the School House, as they saw them, were glad to see that the clouds between them had rolled by at last.

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FLOODED OUT!

By Martin Clifford.

Beaulerc's Father!

"A THAW, and no mistake!" said Bob Lawless.

"Too much of a good thing!" Frank Richards remarked rather ruefully.

It was after breakfast at the Lawless Ranch, and time to start for Cedar Creek School. Frank and Bob looked out upon the drenched plain and the weeping trees, as the Kootenay "hand" brought their ponies round.

The snow was melting in the Thompson Hills, and the rain had come with the melting of the snow. Every creek and stream was swollen, and the Thompson River rushed between its banks in a turbid, yellow flood.

Snowshoes were not wanted any longer. Indeed, Bob Lawless remarked that a swimming costume would be more useful.

But Bob grinned good-humouredly as he slipped on his "slicker." Bob's cheerful spirits were not to be damped by bad weather. Frank Richards put on his oilskin coat. The cousins mounted, and rode away down the wet trail in the rain.

"There'll be a small house at Cedar Creek today, I guess," remarked Bob. "Some of the kids won't come. I reckon there will be floods in the Thompson Valley if this goes on."

The timber was weeping as they entered the forest trail. The chums halted at the fork in the trail, where they were accustomed to meeting Vere Beaulerc, on his way from Cedar Camp to the school.

"Hallo! The Cherub's not here!" exclaimed Bob.

He scanned the branch-trail that led away through the timber towards Cedar Camp. But there was no sign of Vere Beaulerc.

"Beau's usually here, before us," remarked Frank.

"I guess we'll wait."

But the son of the remittance man did not come in sight, and the cousins turned their ponies into the trail, to ride towards the camp and meet him.

"I guess we'll have to hustle to make up for this," said Bob. "But the Cherub will be mounted this morning, now he's got a geegee. Where the dickens can he be?"

Frank Richards was puzzled, too. The school-boys rode on till they came in sight of the shack outside Cedar Camp, where Vere Beaulerc lived with his father, the remittance man.

They wondered whether there was any trouble at their chum's home. Lascelles Beaulerc had lately received his remittance from the the Old Country, upon which he lived, and the chums knew—as all the section knew—how Mr. Beaulerc was accustomed to spend it. It was only too probable that he had been "on a bender" the previous night, and likely enough that he was ill in the morning.

Frank Richards glanced towards the creek, which flowed within a stone's throw of the shack. The stream was rushing swiftly, and upon it were borne blocks and chips of ice not yet melted. The water had overflowed the banks where they were low, and the draining-trench on the Beaulercs' clearing was overflowing.

"I don't like the look of that, Bob," Frank remarked uneasily. "If the water rises much more the shack may be flooded."

"I guess it's been flooded before," assented Bob. "That was before I knew Beau, but I heard that they had to clear out into the camp for a week in the autumn rains once. But where the thunder is the Cherub? We shall be thumping late, at this rate, and Miss Meadows will be wild!"

The cousins dismounted, and Bob crashed his riding-whip on the half-open door of the shack.

There was an exclamation within.

"Father! Thank goodness you've come!"

Vere Beaulerc threw open the door from within. At the sight of his chums a shade of disappointment overspread his handsome face. Evidently it was his father he had expected and hoped to see.

"You fellows!" he exclaimed, a flush creeping into his pale cheeks.

Frank Richards compressed his lips a little. He could see that Beauclerc had not been to bed.

Undoubtedly the remittance man was upon his accustomed "bender," and had not come home for the night. His anxious son had stayed up for him, but he had waited in vain.

"We've come for you, you duffer!" exclaimed Bob. "Don't you know it's high time we were at school?"

"I—I'd forgotten school!" stammered Beauclerc. "I—I—"

"Popper not come home?" asked Bob.

"No," answered Beauclerc, his flush deepening.

"You look a bit yellow about the gills, Cherub. You've been sticking up all night."

"I—I was afraid of an accident!" muttered Beauclerc. "My father has been—been delayed, and—and there are floods near the camp."

The chums could guess in what anxiety the Cherub had passed the long night, listening to the splashing of the rain and the swirl of the rushing creek.

"But you'll have to come to school, Cherub," said Bob.

Beauclerc shook his head.

"You can ask Miss Meadows to excuse me to-day," he said. "I can't go."

"But—" said Frank.

"I can't!" said Beauclerc. "You fellows get off; you'll be late. I'm sure Miss Meadows will excuse me; anyway, I can't go. Good-bye!"

"Hallo! Here he comes!"

A figure came in sight among the spruces, moving with an unsteady step towards the shack. Beauclerc's face lighted up. It was his father.

Mr. Beauclerc was wet and muddy from head to foot, and looked as if he had passed a considerable portion of the night on the trail. His face was reddened, his eyes heavy, and his uncertain gait showed that the influence of the liquor was still strong upon him.

"We'll vamoose now, Cherub; you come on," said Bob hastily.

The chums rode away quickly, feeling that Beauclerc would not want them to meet his father in his present state.

Beauclerc hurried to meet the remittance man. He gave the wretched man a helping hand into the shack. Lascelles Beauclerc sat down heavily on a bench, and blinked at his son.

"Wharrer doing here?" he asked thickly.

"Y'ought to be at school, you young monkey!"

"I waited for you, father."

"Stuff'n nonsense! Get off with you!"

"Can I do anything for you, father?"

"Wharrer mean? Get off with you!"

The wretched man fired up angrily at the hint that he needed looking after.

Without a word the boy left the shack, a deep and angry grumbling following him. He led his horse from the adjoining shed, and rode down the trail after his chums.

Frank Richards and Bob were half-way to the school when they heard a clatter of hoofs behind them, and Vere Beauclerc came up.

"Hallo! Here you are, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob, with forced cheeriness. "Now put it on, and we may be in time yet."

Beauclerc nodded, without speaking, and the three chums rode on to Cedar Creek School together.

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At School.

THE post-wagon from Thompson, with a crowd of boys and girls in it, drove up to the school as Frank Richards & Co. arrived there. There was mud on the wheels up to the axles. Kern Gunten was driving.

Chunky Todgers grinned at the chums from the crowd in the wagon.

"Hallo, you fellows got through?" he called out.

"Looks like it," answered Bob.

"There's water out on the Thompson trail," said Dick Dawson. "Gunten's had to collect us up in the post-wagon, and here we are!"

Schoolboys and schoolgirls crowded out of the wagon.

Attendance at Cedar Creek was not quite full that morning. But there was general cheerfulness as they dried and warmed themselves at the blazing log fire in the lumber school.

"You galoots won't get home to-night, I reckon," remarked Eben Hacke, as he kicked mud from his big boots. "Folks in Thompson say that the creek is rising. The snow's melted on the divide."

"Oh, we'll get home all right!" said Bob. "I've ridden through a foot of water before this!"

"It won't be a foot—it will be a yard!" said Hacke. "How's the creek looking at your shebang, Cherub?"

"It's rising," said Beauclerc.

"You'll be flooded out agin, I calculate, like you were last year," said Hacke. "I guess you'll have to swim home!"

Miss Meadows entered the school-room at that moment, and the schoolboys went to their places.

But Beauclerc was thinking of the shack, and of the rising creek close to it. And he paid more attention that morning to the rain than to Miss Meadows.

After morning school, most of the pupils collected in the wide porch, to look out; there was little to do out of doors. The rain was coming down steadily, and they could hear the foaming of the creek beyond the timber.

"It's still rising," remarked Tom Lawrence. "Lucky we've got the wagon to go home in! There'll be deep water at the dip of the trail!"

Bob Lawless tapped Beauclerc on the arm, as he stood at some distance from the rest, with a moody brow.

"Cheer-oh, Cherub!" he said. "Put a smile on, you know!"

Beauclerc smiled faintly.

"I'm thinking about the shack," he said. "It's only too likely there'll be a flood!"

"And you're anxious about your truck?" asked Bob.

"I haven't much there to be anxious about, in the way of property. But—but—"

"Your father will get off to the camp, if there's a flood, surely!"

"I—I suppose so."

"Not much supposing about it, I should reckon," said Bob, with a stare. "He won't stay in the shack to be drowned!"

"Of course not," assented Beauclerc. But the deep shade did not lift from his brow.

Bob Lawless joined Frank, who was in the school-room looking out of a window.

"What's the matter with the Cherub, Franky?" asked the rancher's son, in perplexity. "He can't be afraid his popper will be caught in the flood if the creek cuts up rusty, can he?"

"I suppose it's possible," said Frank slowly. "But there's rising ground all the way from the shack to Cedar Camp, and he's only got to walk his chalks."

Frank hesitated.

"Well?" said Bob.

"You remember the state he was in when we saw him this morning, Bob. I—I'm afraid Beau fears he mayn't be in a state to walk his chalks, as you call it."

Bob whistled expressively.

"But—but—" he said. "But— By gum, it's a rotten hard life for the Cherub, Franky! If—if the man wasn't the Cherub's popper, I guess I'd feel like laying a cowhide round him!"

"I believe he isn't a bad sort," said Frank. "Nobody's enemy but his own, you know. When he gets any money he gets into the hands of a set of wasters—Poker Pete and that lot. It's a rotten pity—worst of all for poor Beau. That's what makes him what the fellows call touchy. But—but you can't help liking him for standing by his pater, whatever he is. It isn't a fellow's place to judge his father."

"No fear!" agreed Bob. "The Cherub's a bit of a duffer, but he's never likely to be a prig. I like him for still thinking a lot of his popper, but—but the old galoot ought to have a taste of the cowhide, all the same!"

Frank Richards laughed.

Bob's ideas were always drastic; but it was very doubtful whether the cowhide would do the remittance man any good.

The best thing that could have happened to him would have been the stoppage of his remittance from his relations in England, which would have thrown him upon his own resources and compelled him to do steady work.

Afternoon lessons were cut short that day for the pupils who had a distance to travel home. It was earlier than usual when Frank Richards & Co. came out of the lumber schoolhouse, and fetched their horses from the corral.

In a downpour of rain, with their "slickers" round them and the oilskin caps drawn down over their ears, the three chums rode away from Cedar Creek.

The Flood!

SPLASH!

"By gum, it's wet!" grinned Bob Lawless.

Where the trail dipped it was flooded, and the schoolboys rode through a foot of water, till they reached the higher ground beyond.

Dim light came through the leafless branches over the trail. Rain-clouds were lowering over the whole sky.

At the fork of the trail, Vere Beauclerc drew in his black horse, Demon.

Demon was the savage animal the Cherub had tamed, and which Mr. Lawless had insisted upon making him a present of.

"Good-bye, you fellows!" called out Beauclerc.

"Hold on!" said Frank. "We'd better ride a way with you, Cherub. I want to see you're safe."

"No need—"

"Rot!" said Bob Lawless emphatically. "I guess we're going to ride all the way to the shack, Cherub. I reckon it's most likely under water by this time. The creek's over its banks in a dozen places."

Beauclerc hesitated.

"Here comes somebody who can tell us," said

Frank Richards, as a horseman came in sight on the branch trail.

The three schoolboys waited at the fork for the rider to come up. As he came closer, they recognised Poker Pete of Thompson. The chums were on the worst of terms with that sportive gentleman, but Bob Lawless called to him as he came within range.

"Hold on a minute, Poker Pete. You've come from Cedar Camp?"

"I guess so!" snapped the cardsharpener, without drawing rein.

"How's the creek at Beauclerc's shack?"

Poker Pete halted then, and grinned as he looked at the schoolboys.

"I've jest come from the shack," he answered. "The creek's over the bank, and spreading fast. I guess you won't get through. I rode through two feet of water to get away!"

"You've been at the shack?" exclaimed Beauclerc, his eyes glinting.

"I guess so!"

Beauclerc did not need telling what Poker Pete's business there had been. The cardsharpener had been relieving the remittance man of his cash, at the noble games of poker and euchre.

"Is my father there?" Beauclerc asked quietly, repressing the angry scorn he could not help feeling for the rascally cardsharpener of Thompson.

"Yep."

"Didn't he leave when you did?" exclaimed Frank.

"Nope."

"But if you rode through two feet of water the shack must be flooded!"

"You've hit it!"

"But why—"

Poker Pete laughed, with utter unconcern for the bitter anxiety of the remittance man's son.

"I guess Old Man Beauclerc had taken a little too much aboard," he said. "I warned him to get to the camp, and he offered to fight me. I guess he's pretty wet by this time!"

"He may be drowned!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"Oh, I reckon he'll crawl on the roof when the flood wakes him up!" answered Poker Pete coolly; and he rode on, grinning.

Bob gripped his riding-whip hard. He was greatly inclined to ride after the sport and lay the whip about his shoulders.

Vere Beauclerc, without speaking to his chums, dashed away at a gallop down the dusky trail.

His chums followed him at once. Swiftly as Beauclerc rode, his chums kept pace with him.

"By gum, it's deep!" exclaimed Bob in dismay, as they reached the steep slope of ground near the shack.

The trail from that point ran on under water, and the flood was deeper as they progressed. It was impossible to ride fast here, and they had to slacken almost to a walk.

In the last glimmer of daylight they sighted the shack at last. The scene presented to their eyes was very different from that of the morning.

The creek, no longer confined within its banks, was spreading in a flood over the low land. Water flowed and swirled round the shack, and it was up to the level of the little window. The door was swinging open in the flood, and water swirled into the building, and a bench could be seen floating within.

With a white, set face Beauclerc rode on through the swirling waters towards the hut. At the door he threw himself from his horse, sinking

nearly to the armpits in water as he plunged into the shack.

"Father!"

It was a cry of misery and fear that rang in the ears of his chums, and in their hearts. There was no answer to the call.

Beauclerc plunged in, reeling in the swirl, and stared wildly round the flooded hut in the dusky light.

"Father!"

The remittance man was seated at the table, his head leaning forward on his arms. The water was nearly at the level of the plank table, swirling round him as he sat. On the table were cards, scattered as they had been left, and a few coins.

Beauclerc caught the remittance man by the shoulder and shook him.

"Father!" he muttered huskily.

He lifted the man's head, and saw a dull, unconscious face. The miserable man was plunged in so deep a sleep that even the water flowing round him had not awakened him. Half an hour more and the flood would have been over him, and Lascelles Beauclerc would have been drowned like a rat in a trap.

He lurched heavily as his son drew him upright. But for the schoolboy's grasp he would have slipped from the chair into the water.

Frank Richards and Bob peered in at the door.

"You've found him, Beau?"

"Yes!" muttered Beauclerc huskily. "He—he's ill—"

"Get him out," said Bob. "You can hold him on your horse, Cherub, and carry him to the camp; and we'll help."

"Right!"

Beauclerc raised the unconscious man to his feet. But carrying him in the swirling water was a task beyond his powers.

Bob Lawless plunged in and helped him, while Frank Richards held the three horses. By their united efforts the insensible remittance man was got out of the shack and placed upon the black horse. Beauclerc mounted behind him, holding him upright in the saddle and bearing his weight.

"Can you manage like that?" asked Frank dubiously.

"I've got to. It's the only way."

That was clear, but it was very doubtful whether the double-loaded horse could struggle through the flood. It had to be chanced, and the three schoolboys pushed their steeds out into the water.

A good half-mile lay before them till the higher ground was reached, and the water was swirling in whirling currents.

Before twenty yards had been covered the black horse stepped into a gopher-hole, hidden by the water, and stumbled heavily. There was a loud splash as Vere Beauclerc and the remittance man fell together into the flood.

In Deadly Peril!

"HELP!"

Beauclerc was swimming now, supporting his father.

The black horse, with a loud whinny of terror, disappeared in the swirl of waters, swimming for safety, and vanished in a few moments in the gloom.

Frank Richards whirled round his pony towards

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his chum, and caught the remittance man by the collar, dragging his head up.

"I've got him, Beau!" he panted.

Beauclerc found his feet in the water, standing submerged nearly to the shoulders. The swirl of the flood would have carried him off his feet, but he clung to Frank's saddle.

"Back to the shack!" breathed Beauclerc. "We can never get through this! I've lost my horse, too!"

"The gee will be all right," said Bob. "He'll get out. But you won't see him again till tomorrow, that's a cert!"

"Back to the shack!"

The chums plunged away to the hut again. It was only too evident that the insensible man could not be taken away through the wild waters.

But they did not enter the hut. Vere Beauclerc clambered to the roof, and his chums helped him to drag up his father after him.

There, for the present, they were safe, though for how long there was no telling, for the water was rising fast. Mr. Beauclerc was laid on the sloping roof, and Beauclerc looked down at his chums.

"Get off, you fellows!" he said. "If it's left much longer you'll never get through on horseback!"

"But you—"

"I'm staying with my father."

Frank Richards set his teeth.

There were only two horses now, and it was plain that Beauclerc and his father could not be taken away on them. It was not easy for the riders to save themselves, as it was, in the whirl of waters.

"You can ride to the camp and get out a canoe," said Beauclerc. "There's no other way. Don't lose a minute! Heaven knows whether you'll get through alive!"

"I—I guess it's all that can be done!" said Bob Lawless grimly. "Wait till we come for you, Cherub! We won't lose a tick! Come on, Franky!"

Gladly enough the chums would have taken Beauclerc with them to share their chance, but they knew he would not even think of deserting his father. But as they moved away their hearts were heavy with fear for him.

They had a fight before them to get out of the flood, and if they failed, it meant drowning and death—and still more certain death to the chum they left on the roof of the lonely shack. But even if they won through, it was doubtful if they could return in time to save him.

The shack was a flimsy structure, and might be swept away bodily in the flood, and, in any case, the water was evidently rising to a higher level than the roof. Before the night was old the shack would be under at least three or four feet of water.

The sudden melting of the snows had swollen every stream. The accumulated waters of the divide were rushing down to find their level on the plains, and on all sides low-lying land was flooded.

Frank looked back in the deepening gloom as he rode away with his chum, his heart like lead. From the roof of the half-submerged hut Vere Beauclerc waved his hand, and then he disappeared from sight.

"Come on, Frank!"

"I'm with you, Bob!"

The chums were heading for Cedar Camp. But the trail had vanished from sight under the

whirling waters, and only by the branches emerging from the stream could they pick their way.

Again and again the horses stumbled, and plunged under, and they were drenched, but each time they righted, and kept on.

As the darkness thickened, and the rain fell more heavily, the lights of Cedar Camp came in sight at last in the distance. Never had a sight been so gladdening to their eyes. Those twinkling lights through the rainy gloom shone like beacons of hope.

"Look out, Franky!" yelled Bob.

He dragged his horse aside, splashing; but Frank Richards was not so quick. The darkness blinded him, and he did not even see the danger till a second too late.

A great log, whirled along by the flood, crashed into his horse, and the animal went sprawling and plunging over.

Frank Richards found himself struggling in the water, head under. He came up, gasping, and struck out for his life.

A hand grasped his collar, and dragged him up.

"Bob!" he panted.

"Hold on, Franky!"

Frank clutched wildly at his chum. Bob Lawless helped him up, and Frank slid upon the horse, behind his chum.

"Hold on to me," said Bob, and he rode on, with Frank behind.

Frank's pony had vanished, whether swimming or drowned, he could not tell.

Bob, with a grim face, forced his horse onward towards the lights of the camp.

They came out on the high ground at last, and the horse squelched on through rain and mud.

"We're out of it, Franky," said Bob, in a low voice. "Thank goodness, it's not got so far as the camp! But—but the Cherub—"

"Hurry!" muttered Frank.

But hurry was impossible. The exhausted horse, double-laden, could only proceed at a crawling pace.

Frank dropped to the ground as soon as he had recovered himself a little, and walked beside the horse.

Fatigued, almost worn-out, the chums arrived in Cedar Camp. But there was no time for resting. Within ten minutes of their arrival they were in a birch canoe, and the lantern in its prow gleamed out over a wild waste of waters as they paddled up the creek.

It was slow work against the current, and every moment masses of driftwood or broken ice whirled round the canoe.

A dozen times their lives seemed to hang by a thread. But their arms never rested as they paddled the canoe on through the darkness, scarcely heeding the dangers that beset them at every stroke of the paddle.

In the Shadow of Death!

DARKNESS lay round the lonely shack, in the midst of the swirling flood.

Silent, pale, but calm, Vere Beauclerc crouched on the sloping roof close by the ridge, holding on to his unconscious father, lest by a



Holding his father tightly, Beauclerc watched the black flood, eager to see a canoe shooting towards them, his ears strained to catch the beat of a paddle. But it did not come. His heart was heavy for his friends who had gone for help.

movement the remittance man should slip from his precarious refuge.

From the darkness came only the gleam of foam on the wild waters that rushed and hissed round the submerged shack.

And still the water was rising, fed by the heavy flow from the slopes of the divide, and by the torrents of rain that turned every gully into a cataract.

Higher it crept, till it was at the eaves, and splashes invaded the shaky roof upon which Vere Beauclerc guarded his father—the father who, with all his faults and weaknesses, had never lost the love and respect of his son.

Higher and higher, like a wild animal creeping on its prey, with a dull, sullen murmur that sounded like a threat.

There was a long, shuddering sigh in the gloom, and Vere Beauclerc's grasp tightened upon his father's coat as he looked at him. The insensible man was coming to himself.

Lascelles Beauclerc's eyes opened, and he stared upward strangely, stupidly. He put his hand to his head and groaned.

"What—what is this?" he muttered. "Who is there?"

"Father!"

"Vere! It is you! What has happened?"

"There's a flood from the divide, dad."

"Oh, gad!"

The remittance man lay silent for some minutes, trying to collect his dazed wits. He sat up at last, and only his son's grasp kept him from rolling off the roof. He started violently as he saw the white gleam of water licking at the edge of the roof.

"By gad!"

The sense of his peril was borne into his dizzy brain, and it had a sobering effect on him. He shuddered violently, but, to Vere's relief, the dazed look faded out of his face, and intelligence dawned in the heavy eyes.

His grasp sought the ridge of the roof, and he was able to hold on now. His other hand went to his head again. His head was aching and throbbing.

"Vere! Where did you find me?"

"In the shack, father."

"I was—was—must have been asleep."

"Yes," said Vere, quietly.

The remittance man's face was red for a moment. Even the wastrel of Thompson Valley was not quite lost to a sense of shame.

"When you came home from school?" he asked, after a pause.

"Yes. I came early."

There was an ominous movement of the roof. Under it the waters were beating, and round it the currents swirled. At any moment the flimsy building might yield to the fierce pressure of the flood, and whirl headlong into the foam.

"Good heavens!" muttered Lascelles Beauclerc. "Vere, my dear boy, you should have gone—you should have saved yourself and left me."

"I was not likely to, father," said the boy, with a faint smile. "We are not lost yet, dad. My friends came home with me, and they are gone to Cedar Camp for help. Any minute they may come."

"Lawless and Richards?"

"Yes, dad."

"They—they have seen me?" The white, wretched face reddened again.

"They helped me get you here, dad," said

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Beauclerc. "My horse was swept away. They will get back with a canoe as soon as they can."

"A canoe!" muttered the remittance man. "What craft could live in this flood? They will not come—they will not try to come."

"They will come," said Beauclerc confidently.

"You should have left me to my fate," said the remittance man bitterly. "What did it matter? Better to have drowned like a rat than to have sacrificed your life, my poor boy! I have always been a misery and a burden to you, Vere! You were a fool to save me, if you have saved me!"

"Father!"

The wretched man was in the mood of repentance that follows the excesses of a weak nature; the repentance that accompanies sickness and pain and reaction.

Many times Vere Beauclerc had seen his father in that mood, and sometimes he had hoped that it would last—last till the unfortunate man sought a new and better way of life. It had never lasted. Lascelles Beauclerc was no man's enemy but his own; but to himself he was a deadly enemy.

His glance turned wildly upon the licking waters, creeping now over the roof, and nearing the spot where the two clung to the ridge.

It seemed to the boy that he could read a desperate thought in his father's mind, and his grasp tightened convulsively upon his shoulder.

There was a long silence.

Beauclerc watched the black flood, eager to see a canoe shooting among the drift-logs, his ears strained to catch the beat of a paddle. But it did not come.

His heart was heavy with fear for his friends. What if they could not come? What if they had found their death in the flood before they could win to safety? His heart sickened at the apprehension.

The roof was trembling strangely under them. Well Beauclerc remembered the last year's flood, when they had abandoned the shack, and had returned, after the subsidence of the waters, to find the little building a wreck. He knew that the flimsy structure could not resist much longer.

"You do not see them?" asked the remittance man at last.

"Not yet, father."

"They cannot come."

"I hope—"

"The shack will not stand much longer, Vere. When it goes, you will get hold of a log and save yourself if you can."

"And you, father?" said Beauclerc.

The remittance man laughed harshly.

"I am as weak as a rat; I could not swim a yard," he said. "Save yourself, and leave me to take my chance, Vere. I command you!"

The boy did not answer, but his expression showed that he did not intend to obey that last command. It was both or neither, and if the flood swallowed the remittance man and put an end to his misspent life, it would close, too, over the head of his son.

"Vere," muttered Lascelles Beauclerc, "you will obey me; and—and I have never told you before, my boy, but I have heard from my brother about you. He has asked about you, and if you care to go to him in the Old Country, the way is open. I—I could not think of parting with you." His voice trembled a little. "I have been a bad father to you, Vere, but—but I cared for you, my boy—Heaven knows! After—after it's all over you will have a home and friends—better than this. The letter—"

"I do not want a home better than this, and I

could not have friends better than I have now, father," said Vere quietly. "I shall not go to my uncle. But—but we shall escape yet. At any moment—"

"I tell you, there is no hope now, Vere, and you must try to save yourself. I command you!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Vere, starting up on the roof, his heart beating wildly.

Faintly, from the darkness of the night, came a distant "Hallo!"

"They are coming!" shouted Vere joyfully.

The remittance man raised himself upon one elbow, and stared into the darkness. Like a will-o'-the-wisp, a light danced on the troubled waters in the distance.

"The canoe!" exclaimed Vere.

He shouted back.

"Bob! Frank! This way! Hallo! Hallo!"

An answering shout came from the waters. Vere Beauclerc watched the dancing light reflected on the waters, and shouted again and again. The gleam of light came from the lantern in the bows of a birch canoe, and soon he could make out the little craft, with two occupants sturdily paddling.

Bob Lawless guided the canoe, with what seemed miraculous luck, amid the logs and uprooted trees, and it drew nearer and nearer.

The chums had followed the creek from the camp, till they came to the flooded area, and then they had to turn off among the treetops to reach the shack. With all Bob's skill, it was doubtful if they would have found the submerged shack in the darkness but for Beauclerc's shouting.

"That's the Cherub!" exclaimed Bob, in great relief. "Give him a yell, Franky!"

The chums shouted as they paddled, and Beauclerc called back.

The light danced on the water as the birch canoe approached the shack, winding among the trees.

"Here we are, Cherub!"

"Thank Heaven!" panted Beauclerc.

Bump!

The canoe struck the edge of the roof, and it trembled. There was a sound of creaking and wrenching below. The shack was sinking. The canoe was within six feet of the refugees crouching on the roof. It had not come too soon, for the water was lapping them now as they lay.

"Take my father—" began Beauclerc.

"Slide down the roof, and we'll haul you in, sir!" called out Frank Richards.

"You first, Vere!"

Vere hesitated for a moment, and then obeyed. He slid down the roof, and Frank Richards grasped him and helped him into the canoe.

Mr. Beauclerc followed. He was utterly weak and spent, and once he had let go his hold he slid helplessly, and would have rolled into the flood but for the quick grasp of his son and Frank Richards.

The birch canoe rocked as the remittance man was dragged into it.

"All O.K.!" grinned Bob, who was all smiles now. "Thank goodness we found you, Cherub! We've been paddling round for you, I can tell you, till we heard your shout."

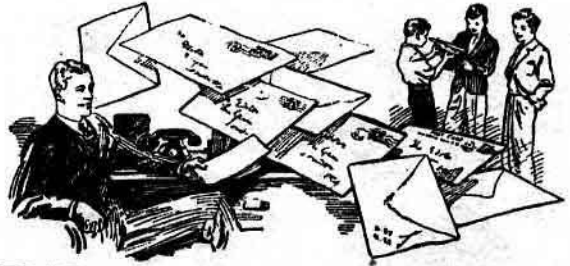
"The shack's going!" muttered Frank.

There was a grinding crash as the roof of the shack collapsed, and water bubbled up below.

"A near thing!" said Beauclerc quietly.

"Near enough!" said Bob. "But a miss is as good as a mile. Let her go, Franky! We've

(Continued on page 36.)



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! A glowing tribute was paid recently to our favourites, Tom Merry & Co., in the columns of a famous London newspaper. In a very interesting article the Reverend Arthur T. Rich, a minister in Devon, tells how he first set eyes on Tom Merry, looking at him from the cover of the GEM on a bookstall, and from that moment made a life-long friend.

"Gladly I suffered for Tom Merry, for often he got me into trouble," writes the Rev. A. Rich. "One never-to-be-forgotten day my precious volume was purloined (by his schoolmaster). But never shall I forget coming upon my teacher in the deserted classroom, after hours. He was enjoying five minutes with my hero, and, to my unbounded delight, he was shaking with laughter. He returned the book later. I believe he had read the story right through and enjoyed it." The author concludes his article with this hearty sentiment: "Here's to Tom Merry, Arthur Augustus, George Herries, and all! May they live long to entertain generations of British schoolboys in their clean, healthy English way!" And so say all of us!

"GUSSY'S BIG GAMBLE!"

That is the title of the next yarn in which the chums of St. Jim's will entertain you. The one-and-only is in the limelight again, but in a startling and unusual role. For Gussy takes up gambling on horse racing. It's time for the skies to fall when Arthur Augustus, of all the St. Jim's juniors, the one who has always been down on the "shady bounders," indulges in a flutter. What's come over him? His own chums are naturally flabbergasted; but they can get little out of Gussy, except that he is determined to make a big "splash" on a horse. Why Gussy is having a gamble, and what happens, I will leave Martin Clifford to tell you, in his most entertaining style, next Wednesday.

"THE RUSTLERS OF THOMPSON VALLEY!"

Frank Richards & Co., the Cedar Creek chums, find themselves involved in a thrilling adventure in the next great yarn of the Canadian backwoods school. Having lost their horses in the big flood in Thompson Valley, it is only by chance that Frank, Bob, and the Cherub get on the trail of them again. The steeds are not drowned, or roaming on the plains, lost. Rustlers have been busy in the valley. The three chums thereupon get leave from school, and set out after the horse-thieves. But can they catch the rustlers before the latter cross the border into the States to sell the horses? That you will learn when you read this gripping story.

The last item on our fiction programme is, of course, another sparkling tale of the school on the river. It's entitled: "Drake Gets His Own Back!" and tells how Jack hits back at a bullying prefect who is in league with Vernon Daubeny, Jack's enemy, to "fag" the Fourth Former, and keep him away from sport.

Monty Lowther, Jack Blake, and Detective Kerr all "do their stuff" in their bright and breezy style in the next number, rounding off another super programme.

I'll be seeing you, chums! Chin, chin!

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When Jack Drake and Rodney came into the study they stopped and stared. The table was laden with excellent things. Tuckey Toodles rubbed his fat hands and beamed. "Supper's ready!" he announced.

Not Wanted!

"DEAR old Drake—"
Tuckey Toodles was interrupted. The fat junior had put his head cautiously into the doorway of Study No. 8 on the Benbow, to make that affectionate beginning. He seemed to be expecting a hostile reception, in spite of his affection.

And his expectation was well-founded. Jack Drake was sitting on the corner of the study table, talking cricket to Dick Rodney, who was in the window seat. Drake had a cricket ball in his hand. And as Tuckey's fat and uneasy face peered round the doorpost, Drake's hand went up, and the cricket ball whizzed.

Crash!

Tuckey Toodles jumped back into the passage as if he had been electrified.

The ball missed him by a good foot, and bounced off the wall, but it might have bounced from Tuckey's bullet head to judge by the terrific yell that rang along the Fourth Form passage.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You awful rotter!" roared Tuckey Toodles, keeping well back from the door now. "You might have brained me!"

"Couldn't be done," answered Drake. "Still, I'll try, if you come in again!"

"Look here, Drake—"

"Give me the ball, Rodney!"

Dick Rodney fielded the ball, and tossed it back to his chum.

Drake caught it, and remained with his eyes on the doorway.

"I say, old fellow—" came a beseeching voice from the passage.

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The TROUBLES of TUCKEY! By Owen Conquest.

"Buzz off!"
"But I want to come in!"
"Come in, then. I've got the ball ready!"
"I know you're only joking, dear old fellow," mumbled Toodles. "You didn't mean that ball to hit me—you know that. I know you wouldn't chuck it at an old pal."
"Certainly not," agreed Drake. "I was chucking it at you, you fat toad!"
"I—I say, I want to come into my own study, you know," said Tuckey Toodles. "I say, I never meant to vote for Daub in the election. It was just—just a mistake—"
"You fat rascal!" said Drake. "It's through you that Daub is junior captain of St. Winifred's."
"Look here, what about the freedom of election, and all that, if you are going for a chap for

Barred from the feeds in Study No. 8, Tuckey Toodles sadly repents deserting Jack Drake in the captaincy election!

voting according to his conscience?" demanded Tuckey Toodles indignantly.

"You voted for Daubeny for ten bob!" said Drake.

"Ahem! I—I might have had a small loan from Daubeny just about the same time. I—I'm going to pay him back, of course. I'd have paid him already, only—only I've had a pound note blown away," said Tuckey Toodles pathetically. "I say, dear old boy, Daub treated me rottenly. He kicked me out of his study when I went to supper with him after the election."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd have voted for you, Drake, only—I had to vote according to my conscience, you know; and, besides, it was all a mistake, and I meant to vote for you all the time. And I'll vote for you in the next election."

"Unless Daub tips you ten bob."

"I won't do it under a pound next time. I—I mean, I won't do it at all, of course! I hope I'm honourable!"

"Oh, my hat! What a hopeful nature!"

"Can I come into the study now, dear old tops?"

"Certainly!"

"And you won't chuck anything at me?"

"Oh, yes; I shall chuck something at you!"
 "I say, don't be a beast, Drake. I'm jolly well coming in! It's my study."

And Rupert de Vere Toodles, taking his courage in both hands, as it were, marched into Study No. 8.

Jack Drake slipped off the table, and raised his arm, with the cricket ball in his hand.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"I—I say—"

"Here goes!"

Drake's arm swung over, and Tuckey Toodles made one terrified bound into the passage again. Certainly Drake would not have thrown the cricket ball at his fat studymate; but Tuckey Toodles was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and he was not taking chances.

"Look here, I'll go to Lovelace if you don't let me in, and complain!" yelled Tuckey Toodles from outside.

"Tell him you were bribed at the election, too."

"I—I say, I won't go to Lovelace, Drake. I wouldn't like to get you into a row. I say, I want my tea!"

"Go and have it."

"I want tea with you fellows. I shouldn't enjoy it without my dear old pals."

There was a chuckle in the study. Tuckey's studymates were quite well aware which he enjoyed the most—his tea, or the society of his "dear old pals."

"Now, I'm not going to be kept out, Drake. It's a thing no fellow would stand, you know. If you don't let me in I shall go and tell Mr. Packe you won't let me into my own study to tea."

"Cut off, then!"

"I mean business!" roared Toodles.

"Scat!"

"You wait till I come Packe with back—I mean back with Packe!" howled Tuckey Toodles; and he marched off in great wrath.

And Drake and Rodney resumed their cricket chat, in supreme indifference to Master Toodles and his indignant wrath.

Toodles the Tactful!

TUCKEY TOODLES marched away along the deck of the old Benbow in a very determined mood. He was, as he would have described it, quite "fed" with the present disagreeable state of affairs. For two or three days he had been excluded from the study—ever since the re-election of the junior captain.

During the excitement of the election, Tuckey Toodles had been a most important person, for the result had depended on a single vote.

Tuckey was a conscientious fellow, as he often declared, and he had intended to vote according to his conscience on the great occasion. Unfortunately a bribe from Vernon Daubeny had caused his conscience to veer round in favour of the Shell candidate. Tuckey had never acted against his conscience, but undoubtedly his conscience was a very accommodating one.

Naturally his studymates were wrathful. Tuckey was at liberty to vote for any candidate he pleased, or not to vote at all; but to "dish" his studymate for the sake of a ten-shilling note was a little too much.

So the vials of wrath were poured out upon Tuckey's head, and he was a pariah in his own quarters.

It was all the harder for Tuckey, for Jac. Drake had come back to St. Winifred's for the new term with ample supplies of cash in his pockets. Study No. 8 had had a lean time the

previous term; now it was like unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Tuckey beheld the good things of which he could not partake, like a very grubby peri at the gate of Paradise. The unfortunate youth repented with great sincerity that he had ever yielded to temptation and voted for Daubeny—especially as Daub had turned out so ungrateful after the election.

But repentance came too late; Tuckey was turned out, and he remained an outcast. His studymates felt that Tuckey required a lesson, as undoubtedly he did.

But Master Toodles was "fed." And in another sense, he wanted to be fed. He knew that there was going to be a spread for tea in Study No. 8, and he wanted to be in at the death of the good things. So he marched off to Mr. Packe's study in a very determined mood. He was in such a hurry that he ran into Estcourt of the Fourth as he came round the mainmast.

"Fathead!" said Estcourt, giving him a push that slammed him against the mast. "Look where you're going!"

"I say, old chap—" gasped Toodles. "I say, hold on, Franky—"

"What do you want?" grunted Estcourt, not at all flattered by being addressed as "Franky" by Tuckey Toodles.

"I say, you're jolly friendly with Drake now," said Toodles eagerly. "I know he stood down to let you bag the Founder's Scholarship. I know he likes you, Estcourt—blessed if I know why, but he does! I say, will you put in a word for me?"

"Put in a word for you?" repeated Estcourt, puzzled.

"Yes; Drake's got it up against me that I voted against him at the election, you know. Of course, I had to vote according to my conscience—"

"All the fellows know that Daubeny tipped you," said Estcourt in disgust.

"Well, they can't know it for certain; they can only suspect it," urged Toodles. "You see, I was alone with Daub when he gave me the cash—I mean, if the fellows only knew me a little better, they'd realise that I was incapable of anything of the sort. Look here, will you go to Drake and tell him the exact facts?"

"What are they?"

"Everybody knows you're a truthful chap. Drake would take your word like a shot," said Toodles eagerly. "You've only got to tell him that you know for a positive fact that Daub didn't tip me—"

"But I know he did!"

"What a chap you are for arguing, Estcourt!" said Toodles peevishly. "You wander from the point, you know. You just go and tell Drake that, on your word of honour, you know—he's bound to believe your word of honour. Then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get you asked into the study to tea. We're going to have a topping spread. Yaroooh!"

To Tuckey Toodles' great surprise and wrath, Estcourt interrupted him by taking him by the collar and rapping his head forcibly on the mast.

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Toodles. "Wharrer you doing that for? Leggo! Why, you're as big a beast as Drake! Oooooop!"

Estcourt gave him a final rap and walked away. Tuckey Toodles rubbed his head, and blinked after him furiously.

"Ow! Ow! What on earth did the beast want to get his rag out like that for?" gasped Tuckey. "Just when I was offering to do him a good turn. Ow!"

Still rubbing his head, Rupert de Vere Toodles made his way along the deck to Mr. Packe's study. But there, at least, he found sympathy, and a few minutes later he was marching back to Study No. 8 in company with the master of the Fourth.

—

Awful!

"BUZZ off, you fat rascal— Oh!" ejaculated Drake.

Tuckey Toodles appeared in the doorway of Study No. 8, and Drake's polite greeting was suddenly cut short by the sight of his Form-master looming behind the fat junior.

Drake slipped off the table, flushing red.

"I—I didn't see you, sir!" he stammered.

Mr. Packe entered the study with a severe brow.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "Toodles informs me that he is excluded from his own study, which seriously interferes with his work for the class. Is this the case?"

"Oh! Ahem!"

"H'm!" murmured Rodney.

"Well?" snapped Mr. Packe.

"We—we've been rather down on Toodles, sir," stammered Drake.

"Indeed? Why?"

Tuckey Toodles looked anxious for a moment. But he need not have feared that his studymates would acquaint the Fourth Form master with the facts.

"We—we—" stammered Drake.

"Well?"

"It was just a misunderstanding, sir," said Tuckey Toodles. "I'm quite willing to overlook it, sir, and be friendly—only, of course, I want to be in my study to—to work and—"

"Quite so. Let there be an end of this at once, Drake and Rodney," said Mr. Packe sternly. "Toodles is not to be interfered with in any way. If I hear anything further of this I shall take severe measures."

"Yes, sir!" gasped the two juniors.

And Mr. Packe, with a stern frown, quitted the study.

There was silence in Study No. 8 till the Form-master's footsteps died away in the distance. Then Jack Drake spoke.

"You toad!"

"You worm!" said Rodney.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Tuckey Toodles warmly. "I suppose a fellow wants to be allowed in his own study?"

"Suppose we'd told Packe, the facts?" said Drake.

"Well, I knew you wouldn't," said Toodles cheerfully. "You're rather a beast, but I knew you wouldn't sneak."

"You've just sneaked, you fat boulder!"

"Nothing of the sort; I've stood up for my rights—that's quite a different thing. I say, if you fellows don't mind, I'd rather let the whole matter drop. Shall I help you get tea?"

"No!" growled Drake.

"I'd really like to make myself useful, you know, as I'm going to have tea with you—"

"That's your little mistake," said Drake coolly.

"You're not."

"Oh, I say!"

"Dry up! Let's get tea now, Rodney; it's time."

"Right-ho!"

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Tuckey Toodles stood regarding his studymates with a dismal expression on his face as they made their preparations for tea.

"I—I say, can I open that tin for you, Drake, old boy?" he ventured, after a painful silence.

"No, thanks!"

"Like me to cut the cake, Rodney?"

"No."

"Shall I make the tea, Drake?"

"No."

"Oh!"

The preparations finished, Drake and Rodney sat down to tea. Tuckey Toodles hovered round them. He watched the faces of his studymates anxiously, hoping to see a smile dawn on them. But there was no sign of a smile. Drake and Rodney maintained a severe gravity as they travelled through the spread.

Tuckey Toodles saw it disappear with yearning eyes. He ventured to help himself to a slice of cake, and there was a loud howl as a knife-handle rapped on his fat knuckles.

"Oooop!"

"Let the grub alone, you fat rotter!"

"I say, dear old chaps, I know you're only joking—"

"Dry up!"

"You really want me to have tea with you—I know that."

Grim silence.

The two juniors had healthy, youthful appetites, and the feed vanished in good time. Half the cake was left, and Tuckey's eyes followed it hungrily as Jack Drake locked it up in the cupboard.

"I say, I'm late for the school tea!" urged Toodles.

"More duffer you!" said Rodney.

"Is this what you call pally?" asked Toodles, almost tearfully. "I call it mean. I say, Drake, suppose you ask the Head to order a new election? Then I'll vote for you, honest injun!"

"I don't want you to vote for me, fathead! You're barred because you voted for a bribe," said Drake. "You ought to have voted according to your conscience."

"But I did, you know," urged Toodles. "Daub happened to hand me ten bob, but—but that was only a coincidence. Coincidences will happen, you know."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Rodney cleared the table. The two chums strolled out of Study No. 8, and Tuckey Toodles was left alone—with a bare table and a locked cupboard. His feelings were almost too deep for words.

But he remembered that he was late for the school tea, and hurried off to the dining-room. Tea there was just over, and the juniors were coming out. In grasping at the shadow, like the dog in the fable, the hapless Toodles had lost the substance.

For some time afterwards Toodles might have been seen visiting one study after another, like a lion seeking what he might devour. In his desperation he even ventured into the Shell quarters, and looked in on Vernon Daubeny—only to make the painful discovery that Daub's elegant shoe was exceedingly heavy when applied to the person.

When Tuckey Toodles drifted into Study No. 8 for prep, he was looking so forlorn that his studymates almost relented. But not quite. They felt that Tuckey's lesson was not over yet, and

they sat down to prep in grim silence, apparently deaf to the pathetic groans which escaped at intervals from the fat junior.

The Founder of the Feast!

"DRAKE, old pal——"

"Cheese it!"

"Rodney, old fellow——"

"Dry up!"

It was the following day, and the Fourth Formers were coming out of their Form-room after lessons. Tuckey Toodles joined his studymates as they came out, and spoke in almost honeyed tones. But his blandishments were wasted on Drake and Rodney. They walked away together, deaf to the voice of the charmer.

"Oh dear!" murmured Toodles.

Evidently he was still in disgrace—barred by the study.

By this time Tuckey Toodles' punishment had brought reflection in its train, and he was willing to admit—having reflected with unusual seriousness—that he had not quite played the game in regard to the election. He was prepared to admit his fault, and to let bygones be bygones. But his studymates weren't.

Matters were really growing desperate. For whole days now Tuckey had not had what he called a decent feed—only what the school provided, which was merely enough. Enough was not sufficient for Tuckey.

Unless he sat down to a really good spread soon, Tuckey felt that something would happen. He had already confided to his studymates that he was going into a decline. And they only laughed heartlessly, and assured him that there was no such luck.

And to make matters worse, Study No. 8 was amply supplied with tuck. It would not have been so had the previous term, when that study was in the lean years. But the fat years had followed the lean, and so it was awful.

He drifted into Study No. 8 at tea-time. Drake and Rodney immediately assumed a stony gravity of expression, proceeding with their tea without regard to Toodles' yearning, almost soulful looks. When the meal was over they rose to leave.

"I—I say, Drake——" murmured Toodles.

"Can't stop—cricket practice."

"I say, you'll be hungry when you come in from cricket," said Toodles. "I'm going to stand supper this evening."

"Bow-wow!"

"I—I really am, you know," said Tuckey eagerly. "I—I want to make it up to you fellows. I—I admit I was a bit offside about the election. A chap can't say fairer than that, can he? I'm going to stand you fellows a tip-top supper to make up."

Drake chuckled.

"Well, the grub's run out," he remarked. "Just the right time for you to stand supper, Tuckey! Go ahead!"

And the chums of the Fourth quitted the study, laughing. As Tuckey Toodles was well known to be quite stony, they did not anticipate seeing any supper in the study that evening. Tuckey's actions did not always square with his words.

But a great surprise awaited the chums of the Fourth.

They were at cricket till dusk, and came on board the Benbow only just in time for call-over. Two or three hours in the open air by the river had given them a keen appetite, and they rather

regretted the fact that there was only bread-and-cheese for supper. But when they came into Study No. 8 they stopped, and almost rubbed their eyes.

The study table was spread, and it was laden with excellent things—cold beef and ham, and eggs, sardines, cucumber and butter and cakes, jams and marmalade, and honey and several more things. It was a more lavish spread than had ever been seen in Study No. 8 before, though Drake was rather given to extravagance when he had funds in his pockets.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Drake.

"Is this a giddy dream?" demanded Rodney.

Tuckey Toodles rubbed his fat hands and beamed at his studymates.

"Supper's ready," he announced. "Only got to make the cocoa. Water's nearly boiling."

"But—but what—how——"

"I told you I was standing supper. I hope you fellows are hungry," said Toodles hospitably.

"Pretty sharp-set," said Drake, laughing.

"But——"

"Sit down, then, old tops!"

"Look here, what does this mean?" asked Rodney. "That stuff on the table must be worth a quid."

"My dear fellow, I don't mind how much I spend on my pals," said Tuckey Toodles airily. "Besides, this is a feast of reconciliation—see?"

Drake and Rodney looked at one another.

"You're not going to keep it up, are you?" said Toodles anxiously. "I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. Sit down."

"We meant to bar you for the whole week," said Drake.

"Oh, sit down and have supper! Never bear malice, you know—I never do."

"Not at meal-times, anyhow, so perhaps we may as well follow your example," said Drake, laughing.

"That's right," said Tuckey, beaming. "Try the beef—it's prime—I've tried it myself. And the ham—that's splendid. And the eggs—let me help you, old tops. Ripping, isn't it?"

"Oh, topping!"

Drake and Rodney gave in. They had almost made up their minds that Tuckey Toodles was sufficiently punished for his sins, and the feast of reconciliation gave the finishing touch. And undoubtedly that feast looked very tempting, and they were hungry.

Tuckey Toodles beamed hospitably over the festive board.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: It was already established that nobody had been in the studies except Trimble, Cardew, and Wyatt, but there was no other evidence against them. The fact that the fags had suddenly acquired a new ball seemed suspicious, and, though Watson explained it very glibly, he committed himself when he said he knew Towser had been in Herries' study. If Watson had not been prowling around the studies, how did he know that? Challenged, Watson admitted he had boasted he would provide a new football for an important fixture the fags had arranged. His uncle having failed to weigh in with the expected tip, Watson had hit on the desperate expedient of "borrowing" Blake's ball. The fives-bat licking Blake gave him was "for keeps."

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"Pile in!" he said encouragingly. "There's plenty—lots. I say, did you fellows see Daub on deck?"

"I saw him," answered Drake. "He was going down to tea. What about him?"

"Oh, nothing!"

A footstep passed the door, and Tuckey Toodles paused, with a huge morsel on its way to his mouth, and his eyes were fixed on the door. But the footstep passed, and the morsel continued its journey into Tuckey's capacious gullet.

"Like the supper, old boys?" he inquired.

"First rate!"

"Jolly glad. Nice to be pally again, isn't it?" said Toodles, beaming. "I say, you fellows will stand by me, won't you, if I have a row with Daubeny of the Shell?"

"Certainly. But what are you going to row with Daubeny about?"

"He might row with me—he's such a beastly bully," said Tuckey. "You never know how to take him. He might come in here——"

"If he does he'll soon go out again," answered Drake reassuringly. "Don't you worry about Daub. Pass the cake."

"I believe there's a feast on in Daub's quarters, too," remarked Rodney. "Torrence was saying—Hullo, what's the matter, Toodles?"

"N-n-nothing!"

"It couldn't be a better feed than this," said Drake. "Tuckey, you are a fat little scoundrel, but you can consider yourself forgiven—till the next time. But I'm blessed if I can guess how you raised the feed. Did you get tick at the canteen?"

"Nunno!"

"Come into a fortune?"



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"N-no. Never mind that; just you pile in and enjoy yourself, old top."

"I'm doing that!" said Drake, laughing.

Tuckey Toodles gave a sudden start. There was a murmur of voices outside in the passage, which grew louder. Many footsteps approached the door of Study No. 8.

"I—I say," stammered Toodles, "you—you fellows will stand by me, won't you?"

"What's the matter?"

"I—I think I can hear Daub's voice," muttered Toodles. "I—I think the rotter is coming here——"

"No reason why he should come here. He doesn't visit in this study," said Rodney, with a smile.

"He—he's such a beast, you know," mumbled Tuckey. "I—I shouldn't wonder if—if Daub tried to make out that—that——"

"That what?" asked Drake, mystified.

"N-n-nothing!"

There was a crash at the door of Study No. 8, and it flew open. Three elegant youths appeared in the doorway—Daubeny, Torrence, and Egan of the Shell. They were looking excited, especially Vernon Daubeny, whose look was quite furious.

Behind the three bucks loomed a crowd of Fourth Formers, laughing. Vernon Daubeny pointed to Toodles, who started to his feet, his jaw dropping.

"That's the rotter——"

"Oh, I say!"

"There's the stuff!" shouted Egan, pointing to the table. "I know that jar of preserves, at least. I got it in the canteen, and Capps told me it was the last he had in stock!"

"It's our stuff right enough," said Torrence.

"Your stuff!" ejaculated Drake.

"I—I say, he's dreaming!" babbled Tuckey Toodles. "I don't know anything about it. I—I think somebody in the Shell raided your stuff, Daub. In fact, I saw Seeley——"

"You fat villain!" shouted Drake. "Have you bagged this stuff from Daub's study? Is that how you've stood supper, you burglar?"

"N-n-n-no, of course not! I—I—the fact is——"

"Collar him!" yelled Daubeny furiously.

"Collar the stuff!" exclaimed Egan.

Drake burst into a laugh. The spread was explained now, as well as the uneasiness Tuckey had betrayed during its progress. Drake and Rodney jumped up.

"If the stuff's yours, you can have it—what's left, Daubeny," said Drake. "You're welcome. Sorry there isn't much."

"I'll smash that fat thief!" howled Daubeny.

He rushed round the table at Tuckey Toodles. That plump youth promptly dodged round Drake.

"Keep him off!" he yelled.

"You fat duffer, why couldn't you let Daub's stuff alone?" retorted Drake. "You've asked for a licking."

"Let me get at him!" panted Daub.

"Ow! Keep him off! I—I say, Drake—I—I did it from conscientious—ow!—motives——"

"What!"

"I—I thought he ought to be punished for bribing voters at the election, you know," gasped Toodles, still dodging round Drake. "So—so I raided the spread—see? Yaroooh!"

Vernon Daubeny had hold of him now.

Thump, thump, thump!

The conscientious Tuckey was beginning to go through it!

"Smash him!" howled Egan.

(Continued on page 36.)



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THE TROUBLES OF TUCKEY!

(Continued from page 34.)

Thump, thump!
"Rescue!" yelled Tuckey Toodles. "You—you fellows said you'd stand by me—yaroooh! Help!"
"So we did," said Drake. "Hands off, Daub!"

He seized the junior captain by the collar and jerked him away from Tuckey Toodles. Daubeny gave a yell.

"The fat brute's robbed me!"

"No worse than bribing voters!" grinned Rodney. "Clear off!"

"I'll smash him!"

"Yaroooh! Help! Rescue!"

Daubeny jumped at Tuckey again, and Drake and Rodney promptly collared him. He went spinning through the study doorway, and crashed into the crowd of Fourth Formers outside. Egan and Torrence rushed at the chums of Study No. 8, and were met half-way, and driven out of the study after Daubeny under a shower of thumps.

Three bucks—no longer elegant—sprawled in the passage, surrounded by yelling Fourth Formers.

"You—you rotters! Give us our tuck!" panted Daubeny.

"Here you are!"

The tuck was handed out in a shower. Daub & Co. did not seem to enjoy it that way. They fled, followed by whizzing cakes and scones and other edibles, which were promptly fielded by the juniors in the passage, and lost beyond recovery, so far as Daub & Co. were concerned.

Drake and Rodney chuckled as they turned back into the study. Tuckey Toodles was gasping and groaning; Daubeny had smitten hard. But the fat junior contrived to grin at his studymates.

"All serene!" he gasped. "It was a jolly good spread, wasn't it? I told you fellows I'd stand a good spread."

"It wasn't yours to stand," growled Drake.

"Oh, never mind! I don't mind a bit so long as we're pally again, dear old top!" answered Tuckey Toodles affectionately. "I say, isn't it jolly for us to be chums once more?"

Tuckey Toodles received no reply to that question, but perhaps he took silence for consent. At all events, he was quite decided that he was Jack Drake's jolly old chum, and at the next tea-time in Study No. 8 he proved conclusively that the estrangement was a thing of the past!

Next Week: "DRAKE GETS HIS OWN BACK!"

FLOODED OUT!

(Continued from page 29.)

got to get to the ranch sharp. The popper and mopper will be no end anxious by this time."

Beauclerc started.

"To the ranch?" he exclaimed.

"You bet!"

"But—" Beauclerc glanced at his father, who had sunk into the bottom of the canoe, only half-conscious now. The boy's face flushed painfully.

"My dear man," said Bob. "Your popper's got to be taken into shelter, and so have you. You're going to dig with us at the ranch for a bit. We can get into the ranch creek with the canoe, at the Red Bluffs. Give way, Franky!"

"What-ho!" said Frank.

The canoe glided away through the flood, threading a path among the trees, over the trail where the schoolboys had ridden that morning.

Beauclerc said no more. His father had not spoken.

It was an hour later that the canoe, leaving the flooded low land behind, reached the ranch creek at Red Bluffs, and was paddled up the stream against the rushing current.

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A hundred yards from the ranch-house the canoe stopped, and Frank and Bob jumped ashore, and Vere Beauclerc helped his father out.

Through the rain, still falling heavily, they tramped up to the Lawless Ranch. A light was burning in the porch, and Rancher Lawless was anxiously watching there. He uttered an exclamation of relief at the sight of them.

"Here we are popper, safe and sound!" said Bob cheerily. "Mr. Beauclerc's been flooded out, so we've brought you some guests, I guess."

"They are very welcome!" said the rancher.

"Come in, Mr. Beauclerc. Take Vere to your room and give him a change of clothes, Bob."

And Frank Richards and Bob marched their chum into the ranch.

For Next Wednesday.

"THE RUSTLERS OF THOMPSON VALLEY!"

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