

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!" EVERY BOY'S READING THIS GREAT GREYFRIARS YARN — INSIDE.

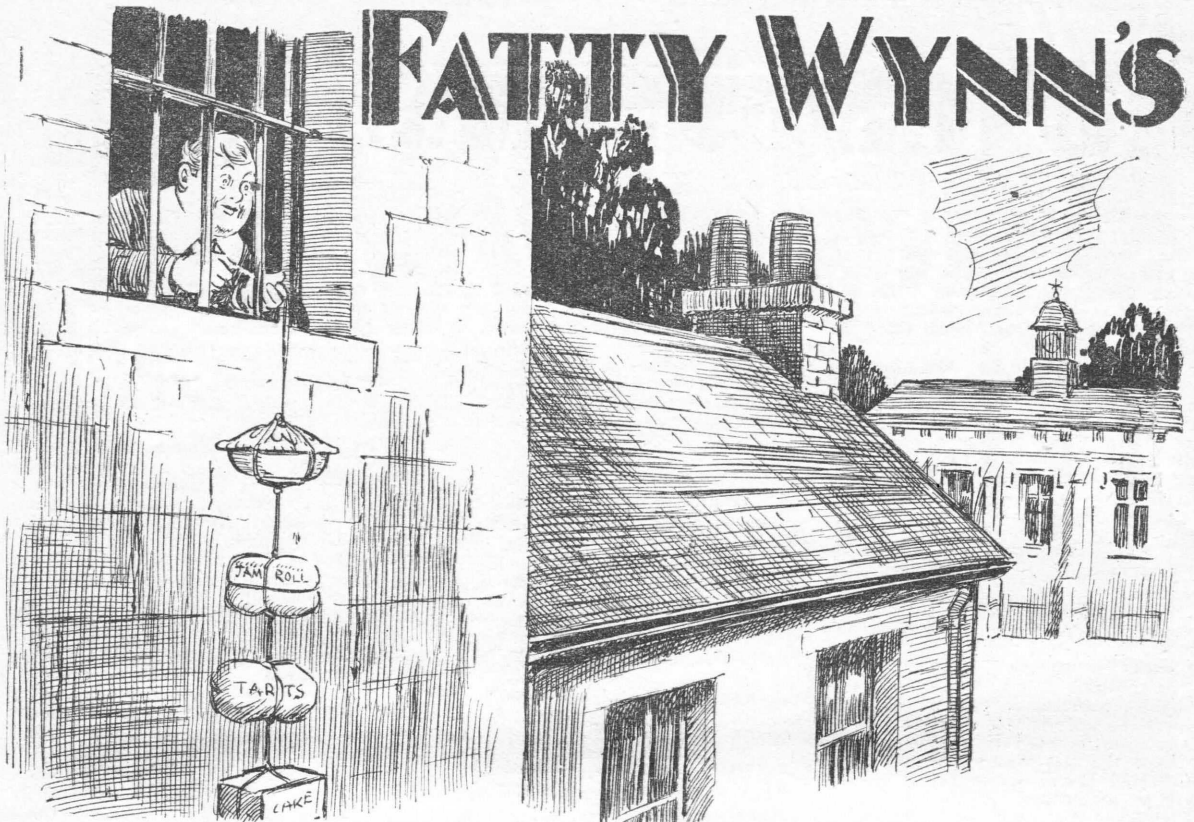
The GEM

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Fatty Wynn's
HUNGER-STRIKE!

LOCKED IN THE PUNISHMENT-ROOM ON A STARVATION DIET, ST. JIM'S GLUTTON NO. 1 GOES ON HUNGER-STRIKE!



In a minute or less came a shake on the cord as a signal from Tom Merry to haul, and Fatty Wynn pulled it up. His eyes danced as he saw a pie and a series of packages tied on the cord, one below the other!

CHAPTER 1. Fatty's Fiver!

FATTY WYNN'S plump face was illuminated by a beatific smile. Fatty Wynn of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's was always a good-tempered fellow. He was always cheerful, excepting when funds were low, and there was nothing to eat between meals. On such occasions as that, Fatty Wynn's full moon visage would be overcast. But as a rule he could be depended upon for good-temper, good-humour, and an unlimited supply of the milk of human kindness.

But his plump face had seldom beamed as it did now.

Judging by Fatty Wynn's expression, as he emerged from the New House with Figgins and Kerr, his inseparable chums, everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Indeed, as he looked so beatific, Tom Merry & Co., crossing the quad on their way to the School House, stopped to look at him.

Usually there was war between New House and School House at St. Jim's. But Fatty was too happy to think of warfare then. He was in a mood to have embraced his worst enemy—if he had had one.

"Come on, you chaps!" he exclaimed genially.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther looked at him. They had never seen the Falstaff of the New House brimming over with such good-humour.

"Whither bound, O fairest and fattest THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,474.

of porpoises?" asked Monty Lowther politely.

"Tuckshop," said Fatty Wynn. "Come along, and call all the fellows you meet. It's my treat!"

"Come into a fortune?" asked Tom Merry.

"Or has your Aunt Jemima sent you a postal order for one-and-six?" asked Lowther.

Fatty Wynn sniffed.

"One-and-six be blowed! It's a fiver!"

The Terrible Three of the School House stared at Fatty Wynn in surprise. Fivers were not common in the Lower Forms at St. Jim's. True, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form sometimes had fivers from his pater; but then D'Arcy's pater was a noble earl, and was popularly supposed to be rolling in fivers and tenners. It was an event for any other fellow to have a whole fiver—an event which other fellows were always willing to help him celebrate in an appropriate manner.

"A fiver," repeated Fatty Wynn. "It's from my uncle. Kerr's going to help me write a letter thanking him presently. I don't often get a fiver—in fact, it's the first I've had since I've been at St. Jim's. I'm going to blow it!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Terrible Three.

And Monty Lowther rushed at Fatty Wynn and hugged him.

"Come to my waistcoat, my chubby angel!" sobbed Lowther. "Let me fold you to my watchchain and weep!"

"Leggo, you silly ass!" roared Fatty Wynn, struggling in the embrace of the exuberant Lowther. "Don't play the giddy goat! The bell will be going for classes soon."

"No time to lose!" said Figgins. "Come on! Hallo, Reddy, Lawrence, and Owen! Come on! Walk up! Walk up! Fatty's got a fiver, and it's his treat!"

"Hurrah!"

Escorted by quite a crowd of enthusiastic friends, Fatty Wynn rolled on towards the tuckshop.

As the news spread, fellows came from far and near. Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy of the School House arrived first, and Kangaroo of the Shell followed, and Glyn, Dane, and Thompson, and Reilly, Kerruish, Ray, Gore and Skimpole, all joined the party.

Dane Taggles, who kept the little tuckshop in the corner of Big Quad, looked a little alarmed as the army marched in. For a moment she thought it was a rag, and that the exuberant juniors had come to sack the tuckshop. But her fears were quickly relieved. Fatty Wynn threw down the crisp, rustling fiver on the counter with the air of a prince.

"Change that, Mrs. Taggles, will you?"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Taggles. "Certainly, Master Wynn!"

Fatty Wynn waved a fat hand.

"Walk up, you fellows, and give your orders, will you?"

The little shop was crammed. Outside, the crowd was thickening. There

READ HOW, IN THIS LIVELY LONG YARN, FATTY WYNN, THE FOURTH FORM FALSTAFF, FACES HIS ORDEAL.

HUNGEIR-STRIIKIE!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

was, as Monty Lowther said, standing room only, and there was not enough of that. Orders rolled in upon Mrs. Taggles—seldom had there been such a rush of custom. The good dame was kept busy with incessant orders.

Fatty Wynn was soon busy, too. He had helped himself to a large pie, and had started on it with a keen appetite. It wasn't very long since he had had his dinner. But, as Fatty Wynn would have said, he had only had three helpings of everything at dinner, so he was quite ready for another feed. The pie was large, and the pie was good. It was growing rapidly smaller now.

A dozen fellows were drinking Fatty's health at once in ginger-beer or lemonade. Fatty Wynn grinned upon them all good-humouredly. He was too busy to speak.

"Fatty, old man," said Blake of the Fourth, "you're a prince! I must pat you on the back, Fatty!"

Smack!
"Groo-oogh!"

Blake's enthusiastic pat on the back came at an unfortunate moment. Fatty Wynn's mouth was full, and he choked. Perhaps the pat was somewhat hard, the School House junior being carried away by enthusiasm.

"Grooogh!"
"Catch him—he's suffocating!"
"Thump him on the back!"

"Ow! Wow-wow-wow-wo-wo-o-oh!" gasped Fatty Wynn, as several juniors patted him on the back at once, to help him get his breath. Their efforts seemed to have quite an opposite effect to that intended. Fatty Wynn struggled away from his rescuers, crimson in the face, and gasping.

"Ow! Chuck it! Stop it! Groogh! Leave off, you silly asses! You're busting my blessed backbone! Grooh!"

"Feel bettah, deah boy?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically.

"Groogh!"
"Hallo! There goes the blessed bell!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, watah! Thanks awfully for the tweek, Wynn, deah boy! Bettah cut in now."

The crowd began to melt. The fellows outside the shop had to go away unsatisfied. But Fatty Wynn had not finished the pie yet. Figgins shook him.

"Come on, Fatty!"
"Can't!"

"Bell's stopped," said Kerr.
"Blow the bell!"

"You'll be late!" bawled Figgins.
"Look here! I'm going to finish my pie!" roared Fatty Wynn indignantly.

"I haven't had time to have a mouthful. I'm not going to famish all the afternoon, you silly asses! You cut off, and tell old Lathom I'm busy! Tell him I'm ill! Tell him anything you like!"

Figgins and Kerr grinned, and laid violent hands upon Fatty Wynn, and yanked him away from the counter.

"Come on, Fatty! Mrs. Taggles will give you your change after lessons."

"Look here—"
"This way!"
"Let me get something to put in my

pocket, anyway!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Keep that pie for me, Mrs. Taggles; I'll take this toffee with me. All right, you beasts, I'm coming!"

And Fatty Wynn shoved a huge chunk of toffee into his pocket, and then his chums rushed him out of the tuckshop and across the quadrangle to the School House, and the fat Fourth Former, in a breathless and almost dizzy state, was rushed into the Fourth Form Room.

CHAPTER 2.

Trouble in the Form-room!

MR. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, looked at Figgins & Co. over his glasses as they came in.

The rest of the Fourth Form were in their places. Mr. Lathom was a mild little gentleman, with a mild little glance and a mild little voice.



When Fatty Wynn incurred the wrath of the sour-tempered Mr. Ratcliff and was given solitary confinement on a bread-and-water diet, his protest was to declare a hunger-strike. But there was more in Fatty's hunger-strike than met the eye—at least, Mr. Ratcliff's eye!



He shook his head at Figgins & Co. more in sorrow than in anger.

"You are—er—late," said Mr. Lathom.

"So sorry, sir!" said Figgins. "We ran all the way—"

"Simply scudded, sir!" said Kerr. "Very well. You may go to your places," he said.

And the chums of the New House went to their places. Figgins and Kerr were glad enough to escape without lines, but Fatty Wynn was not contented. He was thinking of the pie. It was beyond his reach until lessons were over; but the thought of it haunted Fatty Wynn, and it made him feel hungry.

He whispered to Figgins that he was famished, and that he doubted whether he wouldn't faint before the Fourth were dismissed. But Figgins only grinned, and did not show the least sympathy.

"I say, Blake, have you got anything about you a chap could eat?" Fatty Wynn whispered to the chief of Study No. 6.

Jack Blake looked round sympathetically. Mr. Lathom was busy with the blackboard just then.

"Peckish?" asked Blake
"Famished," said Fatty Wynn pathetically.

"Yes, you must be," said Blake, with a nod. "I can see that you are growing visibly thinner, and gradually fading away."

"Got anything a chap could eat?" repeated Fatty Wynn, taking no notice of Jack Blake's pleasantry.

"Well, yes, if you'd care to eat it."
"Hand it over. I'll eat it right enough. I've only got some toffee in my pocket, and I can't break it without attracting attention. Hand it over!"

"I don't know that my little lot is particularly tasty," said Blake thoughtfully.

"Never mind, so long as a chap can eat it."

Blake fumbled in his pocket, and produced something which he pressed into the palm of Fatty Wynn, stretched out under the desk to receive it. Fatty Wynn opened his hand and looked at it eagerly, and found that it was a chunk of wax. The fat Fourth Former glared at Blake; but Blake's head was turned now, and the back of his head was quite impervious to Fatty Wynn's ferocious glare. It was true enough that Fatty Wynn could have eaten the gift if he had liked; but he did not like.

He looked round in despair. He tossed a paper ball to attract the attention of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the next form. The pellet caught the swell of St. Jim's on the cheek, and he started in surprise, and uttered an ejaculation.

"Bai Jove!"
"Oh, you fathead!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn knew that D'Arcy had a bar of milk chocolate in his pocket—he had seen him slip it there. After lessons Fatty Wynn would be willing to hand him half a dozen bars of milk chocolate in return for that piece now. A bird in hand was worth a whole flock in the bush to Fatty Wynn when he was hungry.

But Arthur Augustus evidently did not understand that the missile was intended to draw his attention as a friendly signal. He was very much astonished. Mr. Lathom heard his ejaculation and looked round.

"You must not talk in class," said Mr. Lathom mildly.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I was vewy much surprised. Somethin' stwuck me on the cheek, sir," said D'Arcy.

"Indeed!"

"Yaas, it was most surprisin'. I suppose it must have been a fwagment of plastah fwom the ceilin', sir," said Arthur Augustus, jamming his eye-glass into his eye and looking intently upward.

"Well—well, never mind," said Mr. Lathom.

And he continued dabbing fearsome angles on the blackboard.

Fatty Wynn waited a few moments, rolling up another paper pellet in his fingers. When Mr. Lathom's back was turned again, he projected the pellet skilfully at D'Arcy, and caught him neatly on the side of his aristocratic nose.

Arthur Augustus gave quite a jump. "Gweat Scott!"

Mr. Lathom came towards him, looking almost irritable. He turned his spectacles very severely upon the swell of the Fourth.

"D'Arcy, I cannot allow these absurd ejaculations! You must keep order in class, or I shall be compelled to punish you!"

"Somethin' stwuck me on the nose, sir!"

"Probably some boy is throwing paper pellets at you," said Mr. Lathom.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

Arthur Augustus looked round him suspiciously. Some of the Fourth Formers were grinning.

The swell of the Fourth elevated his noble nose in the air. Pelting him with paper pellets was highly disrespectful, and Arthur Augustus was "wrathy."

As soon as Mr. Lathom was engaged again, Fatty Wynn whizzed a third pellet at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's caught the movement, and looked at him quickly, and the pellet, instead of hitting his ear, caught him in the eye.

"Oh cwumbs!"

"You ass!" whispered Fatty Wynn. "Milk chocolate!"

"Gweat Scott! He must be insane!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"He throws a piece of papah in my eye, and says 'Milk chocolate.' Is it a game, you ass?"

"D'Arcy," thundered Mr. Lathom, "you are making a noise again!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"You are talking to Wynn!"

"Yaas, watah!"

"Did you throw those pellets at D'Arcy, Wynn?" asked the Form-master, picking up a cane from his desk.

Fatty Wynn groaned.

"Yes, sir!" he admitted.

"Then I shall cane you! Stand out here!"

"Pway excuse me, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, rising in his place. "But I feah that Wynn is not in his wight senses. He thwew those pellets at me, and said: 'Milk chocolate.' I am unable to find any meanin' in his remark. I weally think he must be a little loose in the wockah!"

"Wynn, did you ask D'Arcy for milk chocolate?"

"Yes!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Oh, the idiot!"

"Have you any milk chocolate about you, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove! Now I wemember it, I have, sir! My deah Wynn, I didn't undahstand that you were askin' me for milk chocolate, or I would have passed it to you at once! I weally thought you were goin' off your wockah—"

"Idiot!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"You will come out here and lay the chocolate on my desk!" said Mr. Lathom. "Such articles are not allowed to be brought into the Form-room, as you know very well! The chocolate will be confiscated! Wynn you will take fifty lines!"

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

Arthur Augustus walked to the Form-master's desk, laid the packet of chocolate thereon, and returned to his place.

Fatty Wynn was in despair. Several other fellows in the Fourth had eatables about them; but, after the disaster with D'Arcy, Fatty Wynn did not feel inclined to endeavour to obtain possession of them. And he was getting hungrier and hungrier.

There was nothing for it but to eat the toffee; and the toffee was in a sub-

stantial chunk, and could not be broken without attracting the attention of the Form-master. It was much too thick and solid to be bitten through—at least, until it had been sucked for a considerable time.

Fatty Wynn debated the matter in his mind all through the lesson, and during the following lesson he resolved to risk it.

Mr. Lathom was taking the Fourth Form upon a personally conducted tour amid the antiquities of that most interesting city, Rome. Mr. Lathom was quite eloquent on that subject.

Fatty Wynn popped the chunk of toffee into his mouth, and gurgled over it with delight. It bulged out his cheek as if he had had a terrific attack of toothache; but he kept his head down, and the burly Herries was in front of him, so he had some cover from observation. He hoped that he would not be called upon to answer any questions. If he had to stand up, the swelling in his cheek would show at once, unless he swallowed the huge chunk whole, which he could not do without imminent danger of a fatality.

Perhaps the incident of the milk chocolate made Mr. Lathom keep an unusually sharp eye on Fatty Wynn. He rapped out the Fourth Former's name:

"Wynn! Stand up!"

Fatty Wynn had to obey. He knew that he had to get rid of the toffee, and he could not eject it from his mouth under the eye of the Form-master. He made a desperate effort to bite it through.

But, to his dismay, he found that his teeth would not come out again. They had met in the middle of that obstinate chunk, and were fixed there, stuck too fast to be withdrawn. The toffee was not visible now, but he could no more have spoken than he could have flown across the Form-room.

Mr. Lathom eyed him severely.

"Wynn, I fear you are not paying attention to the lessons!"

Fatty Wynn silent.

"Kindly tell me," said Mr. Lathom severely, "the name of the King of Rome who was driven into exile."

Fatty Wynn knew all about Tarquin, but he could not say so. He could not say anything.

Mr. Lathom looked surprised as the junior stood, crimson and silent.

"Wynn, can you answer my question, or can you not?"

Silence.

Mr. Lathom grew a little pink in the face.

"Wynn, I command you to reply!"

Fatty Wynn made a desperate struggle with the toffee, but it was in vain. His jaw was as firmly locked as if it were in the fatal grip of lockjaw. He could only stare in dismay at the angry Form-master.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room. Mr. Lathom was quite red now. A refusal to reply by a junior was disrespectful.

"Will you answer me, Wynn?"

Silence!

"Very well," said Mr. Lathom, greatly incensed, "I shall cane you, Wynn. Stand out here!"

Fatty Wynn, in utter dismay, advanced before the class. Mr. Lathom took up his cane. The kind little gentleman did not like punishing the boys, and he hesitated before he told Wynn to hold out his hand.

"What is the meaning of this conduct, Wynn?" he asked. "You are not a disrespectful boy as a rule. What is the meaning of this? Answer me!"

Fatty Wynn made a wild effort, in

vain. His jaws were firmly fixed, and would not come asunder.

"I give you one more opportunity of explaining yourself," said Mr. Lathom. Silence.

"Then hold out your hand!"

Fatty Wynn held out his hand, and grunted as the cane descended. He could grunt, but that was the sum total of his vocal powers at that moment.

"Now go back to your place," said Mr. Lathom. "I am sorry to cane you, but you have left me no other resource. Your conduct is unparalleled! I am shocked at you, Wynn! Have you not the grace to say that you are sorry?"

Fatty Wynn was sorry enough, but he hadn't the power to say so.

"You are incorrigible, Wynn!" exclaimed the Form-master. "You will be detained for two hours after lessons, and will occupy the time in writing out Latin verbs, giving the complete tenses of each verb. Go to your place!"

Fatty Wynn went to his place, silent, and overwhelmed with dismay. Detained for two hours after lessons. Alas! for the unfinished pie.

CHAPTER 3.

Tom Merry to the Rescue!

TOM MERRY & CO. met the Fourth Form as they came out.

The Shell fellows were quite ready to resume the interrupted feed at the tuckshop, and to back up Fatty Wynn until his five-pound note had vanished. But Fatty Wynn was not among the juniors who came streaming out of the Fourth Form Room.

"Hallo! Where's Fatty?" asked Tom Merry.

"Detained!" said Figgins.

"Poor old Fatty! How long?"

"Two hours."

"He'll be dead by that time!" said Monty Lowther, with conviction. "He can't be kept from his pie for that length of time and survive it. Poor old Fatty! We must have an epitaph on him in the next number of the 'Weekly.' I think I could turn out something very touching.

"Here lies Fatty Wynn, who most sadly did die,

Far away from his home—far away from his pie—"

"Shurrup!" said Figgins. "Poor old Fatty's got it in the neck this time! It was rotten hard lines!"

"I wegard Fatty's conduct as most diswespectful, Figgins," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He deliberately wefused to ansawah when Mr. Lathom ordahed him."

"Rats!" growled Figgins. "He couldn't speak, ass!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Why couldn't he speak?" asked Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"Because he had his teeth jammed into a chunk of toffee," said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Shell fellows roared.

"Well, it was funny!" admitted Figgins, grinning. "But it was no joke for Fatty. He's got detained for two hours. He will be thinking of the pie all the time."

"Couldn't we sneak it into the Form-room for him?" suggested Tom Merry. "Lathom is going out this afternoon. He goes over to the vicarage to tea today, you know. He won't be on the look-out!"

"Good egg!" said Figgins heartily. "That's a good idea. Unless Lathom

asks some beastly prefect to keep an eye on Fatty," he added.

"If he does, we'll dodge the prefect, somehow," said Manners. "Fatty is blowing his fiver like a nobleman, and we're bound to stand by him in the hour of need. He shall have his pie in the Form-room if—"

"Shush!" whispered Blake. But it was too late. Mr. Lathom, coming out of the Fourth Form Room, had heard what Manners said. He did not speak; but he gave Manners a glance, and passed on towards the Fifth Form Room. The chums of the School House looked at one another in dismay. The scheme was discovered now.

The Fifth Form were not yet out, but they came out a few moments later. Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the Fifth, and Housemaster of the New House, followed the seniors into the passage, and Mr. Lathom stopped him.

Mr. Ratcliff was looking as serious and sour as usual. He was not a good-tempered man. One of the chief worries of Mr. Ratcliff's life was that, being master of a Senior Form, he could not use the cane in the Form-room. He could make the Fifth Formers writhe with a sarcastic and biting tongue, but he could not cane them. He made up for it, however, by dealing with the juniors of his House.

He nodded to Mr. Lathom, and was passing on, when the Fourth Form master detained him.

"A word, Mr. Ratcliff," said the little Form-master.

"Certainly!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "I have had to detain a member of my Form," said Mr. Lathom, his brow clouding over again at the remembrance of Fatty Wynn's supposed disrespect. "A boy who belongs to your House, Mr. Ratcliff."

The New House master looked more cordial at once. Punishment was a matter that appealed to him, and made him quite interested.

"Indeed! Figgins or Redfern, I suppose?"

"No; Wynn. He has been guilty of the greatest disrespect, and I was compelled to punish him," said Mr. Lathom. "I have detained him for two hours. I have to go out this afternoon, Mr. Ratcliff, and I understand that some of the juniors intend to convey eatables to Wynn after I have gone."

Mr. Ratcliff smiled genially. "I will see that nothing of the kind happens, Mr. Lathom," he said. "I will certainly take the matter under my supervision, with pleasure."

Mr. Ratcliff spoke quite truly there. It was a pleasure to him to have a hand in punishing anybody.

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Fourth Form master. "That is what I was about to ask. I trust I am not a severe master; but really Wynn's conduct was outrageous, and calculated to bring his Form-master into contempt with the Form. I really think that he deserves his punishment."

"I am sure of it," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You may rely upon me."

"Thank you very much!"

And Mr. Lathom departed. Mr. Ratcliff, instead of going over to his own House, as usual, after lessons were finished, went into the Fourth Form Room. Fatty Wynn was sitting at his desk there, looking very glum. He had been slowly negotiating the toffee, and had succeeded in getting his teeth free at last. But there was still a chunk of the toffee left in his mouth, which he was sucking.

Mr. Ratcliff glanced at him with a sour smile.

"I hear that you have been disrespectful to your Form-master, Wynn!"

"I am sorry, sir!" said Fatty.

"I have no doubt you are—now that you are detained," said the New House master disagreeably. "I shall see that your detention is not interfered with. Your friends will not be allowed to convey disgusting and indigestible eatables to you, as I find is their intention. Bless my soul! You are eating something now! Wynn, you are a most disgusting boy!"

"Oh, sir!"

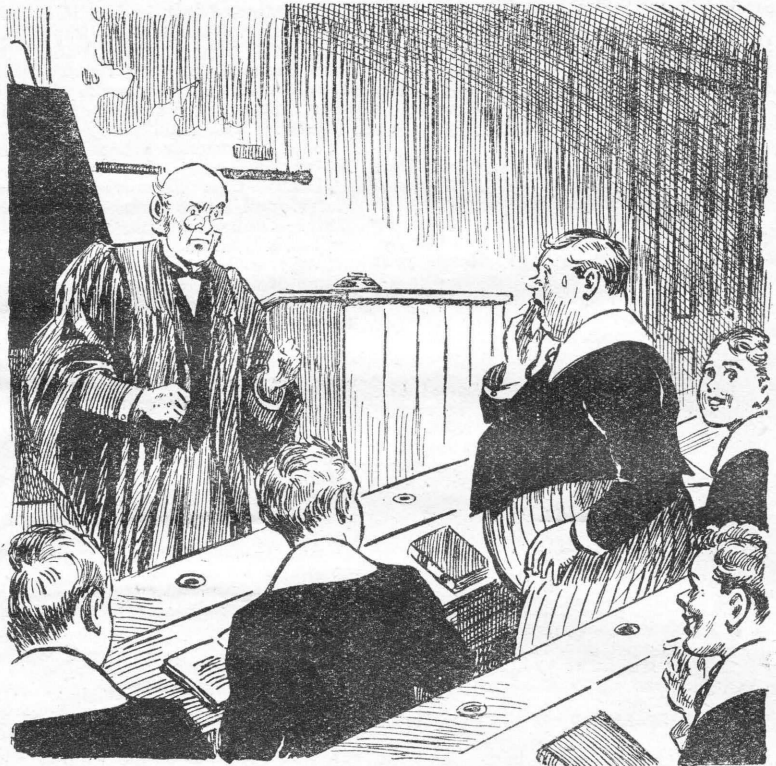
"You are always eating," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You have more helpings of meals than any other boy. You hold, I believe, orgies of greed in your study. It will do you good, Wynn, to be placed on bread and water in the punishment-room."

Fatty Wynn did not reply to that.

matters to attend to." Fatty Wynn's face unconsciously brightened up, but it fell again as Mr. Ratcliff went on sourly: "But I shall look in from time to time and see that you are working and that you have not been supplied with disgusting stuff from the tuckshop. I shall do my best to eradicate the greed from your nature, Wynn!"

Fatty Wynn did not speak, and the Housemaster left the Form-room, closing the door behind him. Fatty Wynn shook a fist at the door, and then turned wearily to his work.

Writing out Latin conjugations while a feed was waiting for him in the tuckshop was really work, and Fatty Wynn groaned over it. He had hoped to be able to dodge out of the Form-room after Mr. Lathom was gone out—but Mr. Ratcliff's intervention had nipped that scheme in the bud! Fatty Wynn groaned and scribbled verbs.



"Can you answer my question, Wynn, or can you not?" asked Mr. Lathom. Silence! "Wynn," exclaimed the Fourth Form master, "I command you to reply!" Fatty Wynn made a desperate effort with the toffee in his mouth, but his jaws were firmly locked in the sweet! He could only stare at the master in dismay!

The mere thought of it made him turn cold all over.

"What are you eating?" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Toffee, sir!" faltered Fatty Wynn. "Go to the grate immediately and eject it."

Fatty Wynn went disconsolately to the grate and ejected the remains of the toffee. He gave the diminished chunk a mournful look, and returned to his place.

Fatty Wynn's luck was out that day. Mr. Lathom had been unusually severe with him—but the little finger of Mr. Ratcliff was heavier than the right hand of Mr. Lathom. Now that he had fallen into the clutches of his Housemaster, Fatty Wynn gave up all hope.

"You will now do your work," resumed Mr. Ratcliff, when the toffee had been disposed of. "I cannot remain with you, Wynn, as I have other

Mr. Ratcliff strode away from the Fourth Form Room, frowning at the group of juniors in the passage as he went. Tom Merry & Co. watched him go. But he did not go over to the New House. He made his way to the school library, an apartment which was situated in the School House.

"Well, he's gone," said Tom Merry. "Lathom's asked him to keep an eye on the Form-room, I suppose. But—"

"We can dodge him!" said Lowther.

"We can get something into the Form-room," said Kerr. "It's rough on Fatty. He's standing a feed like a giddy prince, and they've barred him off from grub till six o'clock. It's up to us to help him."

"I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry. "Some of you can keep watch for Ratty, and I'll buzz into the Form-room with the pie under my jacket."

"Better let me do it," said Figgins. "No reason why a School House chap should run the risk."

"Less risk for a School House chap," said Tom Merry. "Ratty would have to report me to my own Housemaster—and Railton wouldn't be so rough on me as Ratty would be on you."

"Bai Jove, that's vewy true!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But you had better leave it to me, Tom Mewwy. A delicate matter like this wequiah a fellow of tact and judgment!"

"Kerr can buzz off and get the pie," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!" said Kerr. And he buzzed off at once.

The juniors kept a keen eye open for Mr. Ratcliff. They knew that the sour-tempered Housemaster would be glad to catch them if he could. But there was no sign of Ratty returning from the library. Blake posted himself in the library passage, to whistle if the big oak door opened. But it did not open.

Kerr returned with the pie, and Tom Merry slipped it—as well as he could—under his Eton jacket. Then the juniors cleared off, to await the result at a distance. Blake was still on the watch in the library passage, but he had given no signal.

The coast seemed clear, and Tom Merry boldly entered the Form-room. Fatty Wynn looked up, expecting to see Mr. Ratcliff. His face lighted up at the sight of Tom Merry with the pie.

"Here you are, Fatty! Here's your pie!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed the fat Fourth Former.

"Shove it under your desk in case Ratty comes in— Oh!"

"Merry!"

It was the sharp, acid voice of Mr. Horace Ratcliff. Tom Merry spun round. Framed in the window was the head of the New House master—and he was looking in, with his eyes fixed upon Tom Merry and the pie.

CHAPTER 4.

Catching It!

TOM MERRY gazed blankly at the New House master. He had supposed Mr. Horace Ratcliff to be still in the library, as Blake had given no signal of alarm.

It was some moments before he realised the duplicity of the New House master.

Mr. Ratcliff must have left the library by the door that led into the Head's house, instead of in the usual way.

From the Head's house he had let himself out into the quadrangle, and had walked round to the windows of the Fourth Form Room.

How long he had been standing at the window, looking in, neither of the juniors knew.

But undoubtedly Mr. Ratcliff had been there when Tom Merry entered the Form-room. He had seen the Shell fellow enter, and had heard every word he had spoken to Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry was deprived of the power of speech for the moment. Anger and indignation were in his face. He had broken a rule, certainly, in bringing a pie to a junior under detention in the Form-room. But masters and prefects were expected to "play the game." Mr. Ratcliff had not played the game. He had played the spy.

No other master at St. Jim's, nor any prefect excepting Knox, would have been guilty of the meanness of sneaking

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round by an unexpected way and watching an unsuspecting junior through a window.

Mr. Ratcliff had done it, however, and he did not look at all ashamed of himself. He was looking pleased—as pleased as a cat might look when a long-expected mouse falls into its claws at last.

Tom Merry looked at Mr. Ratcliff, and Mr. Ratcliff looked at Tom Merry. The thin lips of the Housemaster curled in a grim smile.

"What are you doing with that pie in your hands, Merry?" he demanded through the window.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"You know very well, sir, as you were listening to what I said!" he replied recklessly. He was too angry to be careful what he said.

"Merry," thundered Mr. Ratcliff, "you are impertinent!"

Tom Merry did not reply to that. As a matter of fact, he had intended to be what Mr. Ratcliff called impertinent.

"I shall report your conduct and your language to your Housemaster!" said Mr. Ratcliff, his voice trembling with anger. "Wynn, I shall deal differently with you!"

Fatty Wynn made a hopeless gesture. He was in for it now.

"Leave this Form-room instantly, Merry, and go to your Housemaster's study! Take that pie with you! I shall join you there!"

"Very well!"

Tom Merry gave Fatty Wynn a hopeless glance, and quitted the Form-room. There was no help for it.

"As for you, Wynn," said Mr. Ratcliff, "you will remain here until the time for your detention has expired, and then you will immediately report yourself in my study!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff strode away.

Tom Merry had left the Form-room with the pie in his hand. Jack Blake met him in the passage, and stared at the pie.

"Didn't you give it to Fatty?" he asked.

"Ratty caught me!"

"Ratty!" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment. "He's still in the library, isn't he? The door hasn't opened, anyhow!"

Tom Merry smiled bitterly.

"He must have sneaked out of the other door into the Head's house to catch us. He was at the window when I walked in!"

Blake jumped.

"Oh, my hat! The mean cad!"

"I've got to take this pie to Railton!" growled Tom Merry. "Ratty's coming to complain. Nice, isn't it?"

And he walked away to the Housemaster's study. He found Mr. Ratcliff there. Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was frowning.

The New House master was only too glad of an opportunity of getting Tom Merry's Housemaster "down" on him. Mr. Ratcliff did not approve of Mr. Railton's lenient methods with his boys, and he interfered with them as much as he dared. Mr. Railton was, as a matter of fact, "fed-up" with Ratty's complaints. But in this instance he could not decline to take notice of it. Hence his frown of annoyance as Tom Merry came in, pie in hand.

"Merry, Mr. Ratcliff tells me that you have taken eatables into the Form-room to a New House boy under detention?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Mr. Ratcliff also tells me that you were impertinent to him when he discovered you."

"Grossly impertinent!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"I don't see how I was impertinent in stating a fact, sir," said Tom Merry. "Mr. Ratcliff asked me what I was doing with the pie. He had already heard me tell Wynn that I had brought it for him, as he was listening at the window. I did not know he was there till he spoke."

Mr. Railton coughed, and the New House master turned crimson.

"Is this the way you allow your boys to speak to a Housemaster?" asked Mr. Ratcliff thickly. "The boy is insolent, and you are encouraging him!"

"That is not correct. I am going to punish him," said Mr. Railton. "You know very well you should not say such things to Mr. Ratcliff, Merry! Hold out your hand!"

And Tom Merry was caned. It was a stiff caning, too, but he bore it with grim silence.

"You may go!" said Mr. Railton. "May I take the pie, sir?" asked Tom.

"Oh, certainly!"

Tom Merry quitted the study. His hands were aching, but his anger was not directed against his Housemaster. It was Ratty he longed to be even with. Mr. Railton had had no resource but to punish him.

Mr. Ratcliff strode away to his own House. Tom Merry's scornful words had cut him deeply—deeper than a cane could cut. He boxed Redfern's ears as he entered the House, and then went to his study. At six o'clock he was there—waiting for Fatty Wynn.

CHAPTER 5.

"Ratty's" Raid!

WHEN six o'clock sounded, and Fatty Wynn came out of the Form-room, he found a crowd of his friends waiting for him.

School House and New House fellows alike were full of sympathy, and ready to follow Fatty Wynn to the tuckshop. Fatty Wynn's plump face was lugubrious.

"Wherefore that solemn brow, my infant?" asked Monty Lowther, slapping him on the back. "Come and wire in, my fat tulip!"

"Can't!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Bai Jove! You have not lost your appetite, deal boy?" exclaimed D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"No fear! Ratty says I'm to go to his study the moment I come out of the Form-room!" groaned Fatty. "He'll be keeping an eye on the tuckshop, you can bet! I've got to go and report myself to the beast!"

"Oh, rotten!"

"Take this before you go," said Tom Merry; and he held out the pie.

"Oh, good!"

The fat Fourth Former retired into the window recess and travelled through the remainder of the pie at top speed. He finished by five minutes past six. There was a gleam of resolution in his eyes.

"I'm jolly well going to the tuckshop!" he announced. "That has only whetted my appetite. I'm going, and I'll chance Ratty!"

"Better buzz off and see Ratty first," said Figgins unceasingly.

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"He might detain me. He may have heard that I've got a fiver and want to blow it. You know what a sypping beast he is. I'm not going to risk it. Come on!"

And Fatty Wynn marched off to the tuckshop. The crowd of juniors followed him there.

In a few minutes the feed was resumed. Fatty Wynn, with his mouth full, gave Mrs. Taggles instructions for a particularly large and tasty pie to be delivered to Figgins' study in time for supper.

Fatty had hardly travelled through a dozen tarts, however, when a shadow darkened the door of the tuckshop, and there was a grunt of dismay from the juniors. The New House master strode in with rustling gown.

"Wynn!" he thundered.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Did I not order you to report yourself in my study as soon as your detention time expired?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff.

"I—I was just coming, sir."

"You will go there at once—at once, do you hear?"

Fatty Wynn rolled out of the tuckshop. Mr. Ratcliff, with a dark glance at the crowd of juniors, followed him. He could guess the remarks that would be made after he was gone. They were made, and they were not complimentary to Mr. Ratcliff.

In his study, Mr. Ratcliff fixed a stern glance upon the fat Fourth Former. Even Fatty Wynn's cheerful, plump face was looking a little sulky now.

"Wynn!"

"Yes, sir!" grunted Fatty.

"Don't answer me in that disrespectful manner, Wynn," said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "While under detention in the Form-room, you have had disgusting eatables conveyed to you. What have you to say for yourself?"

"I'm hungry, sir."

"Nonsense! You are greedy, Wynn—atrociously greedy. You have more helpings at meal-times than any other boy, even the older boys. You eat between meals—you frequently gorge yourself. There is no other word for it—you gorge yourself in your study."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Don't contradict me, Wynn. You gorge yourself, and I think your health will suffer. I am determined to put a stop to this. Unless you change your ways, I shall feel compelled to order you detentions for a time in the punishment-room, upon a diet of bread and water."

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed, but he said nothing.

"For a time, at least," said Mr. Ratcliff, "I shall place the tuckshop out of bounds for you, Wynn!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Fatty, in dismay.

"Don't interrupt me with ridiculous exclamations, Wynn. I shall also take care that you do not celebrate orgies of greed in your study. I shall make it a point to visit your study from time to time, in fact."

Fatty set his teeth. He had a wild desire to pick up a cushion and biff Mr. Ratcliff, but fortunately he restrained himself.

"If you please, sir, I've had a good-sized remittance to-day," he said meekly. "I was celebrating a bit, that's all, sir. I don't have a fiver every day, sir."

"Do you mean to say you are expending a five-pound note in food?" asked Mr. Ratcliff, aghast.

"Well, it was a treat for a lot of us, sir."



Motorist: "Now isn't that a slice of luck for you? I've knocked you down right in front of a doctor's house."

Victim: "Luck be blowed! I'm the doctor!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Taylor, 12, Halley Road, Darwen, Lancs.

"Disgusting! I shall take care that nothing of the sort happens again. You will take two hundred lines, Wynn, and will proceed immediately to your study and write them out. You will not go to the tuckshop again. Now leave my study."

Fatty Wynn went, without a word. His friends waited for him in the tuckshop in vain.

Figgins and Kerr found him in the study when they came in, writing out lines.

Fatty Wynn looked up, glowering, as his chums entered.

"Lines?" asked Figgins.

"Two hundred."

"Rotten!"

"I shall biff him some day!" said Fatty Wynn wildly. "I know I shall! Lines—and the tuckshop is out of bounds!"

"The cad!"

"I'd give a term's pocket-money to give him just one good wallop!"

"So would we all!" grinned Figgins.

"I've brought your change, Fatty—here you are; sixteen-and-ninence—and the pie will be delivered here in time for supper."

"Old Ratty says there are to be no more orgies in the study!" snorted Wynn.

"Oh, he can't stop us from having supper in the study," said Kerr. "Even Ratty can't do that!"

"I don't know. He was ratty because Tom Merry said he was listening at the Form-room window—and so he was listening, and spying, too, blow him!" said Fatty Wynn.

And the fat Fourth Former ground out his lines with a darkened brow.

But Fatty Wynn bucked up again a little later in the evening, when the pie was delivered.

It was a large pie, and it was done to a turn. It was smoking hot, and the crust was beautifully brown. When Fatty Wynn jabbed a pen into the crust a savoury steam rose from the aperture. Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened. At that moment he was at peace with all the world, even with Horace Ratcliff.

The Co. sat down to supper with

cheerful looks. Fatty Wynn was beginning to carve the pie, and had taken out one section, when the study door opened. Mr. Ratcliff came in without knocking; a little way he had that did not endear him to the juniors.

He fixed a grim look upon the pie on the table, and on the dismayed faces of the Co.

"I thought so!" he said. "Did I not tell you that the tuckshop was out of bounds for you, Wynn?"

"I haven't been there, sir," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then how did that enormous pie come here?"

"It was delivered, sir."

"We're allowed to have pies for our supper, sir," said Kerr.

"To whom does that pie belong?"

"To all of us, sir."

"Who has paid for it?"

"Wynn, sir," said Figgins reluctantly.

"I thought so. It is a trick to escape from my command. Wynn, take that pie to my study immediately. It will be confiscated."

"Wh-ah!" stammered Fatty Wynn. "My pie! Confiscated!"

"Yes! Confiscated!" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "It shall be used for dinner to-morrow for the Fourth Form. I will put a stop to this disgusting gormandising, Wynn, or I will know the reason why. Take it to my study immediately!"

Fatty Wynn closed his teeth hard. But Figgins gave him an imploring look—matters could only be made worse by defying the Housemaster. Fatty Wynn, controlling his fury with difficulty, rose to his feet, and lifted up the huge pie, and carried it out of the study. Under Mr. Ratcliff's greenish eye, it was carried down to the Housemaster's study, and Wynn placed it on the table there.

Without a word he departed. His feelings were too deep for words!

CHAPTER 6.

Mr. Ratcliff Gets the Pie!

TOM MERRY came over to Figgins & Co. just before bedtime. The captain of the Shell had important matters to discuss with the Co. concerning cricket. But he did not find the New House chums in a humour to discuss even cricket.

They were not in their study. Fatty Wynn was seated on the stairs, whence he could watch Mr. Ratcliff's door. Figgins and Kerr leaned against the wall near him, and so Tom Merry found them.

"What's up?" Tom asked in surprise. "Fatty looks like a cat watching a hole for a rat."

"Exactly what he is doing!" grinned Figgins.

"Ratty has confiscated the pie," explained Kerr. "He's thinking of getting it back. It will only cause more trouble, but he is an obstinate ass."

"I'm going to have my pie!" growled Fatty Wynn. "Ratty has no right to confiscate it. We were going to have supper in my study when he swooped down. He's got it in there now. As soon as he clears out of his study I'm going to have it, even if he catches me. He won't be able to get it back when I've eaten it, anyway!"

"Hard cheese!" said Tom sympathetically. "I came over to talk cricket—"

"Oh, blow cricket!" said Fatty.

That remark from the champion

bowler of St. Jim's was enough to show how deeply the feelings of Fatty Wynn were stirred.

"You'll get it in the neck if you raid your Housemaster's study, Fatty, old man!" said Tom Merry persuasively. "I don't care!"

"It might mean a flogging."

"Let it!"

"He's an obstinate ass when he makes up his mind," growled Figgins. "Of course, I don't blame Fatty for being waxy, but it's no good butting at a stone wall. All these blessed Welshmen are the same—they never know when to give in."

"I'm not going to give in," said Fatty, in a sulphurous voice. "I'm going to have my pie."

"Suppose Ratty doesn't come out—"

"Then I'll raid his study after lights out!" said Fatty. "But I think he's going to old Flatt's room to jaw—he often does in the evening. Hallo! There's his blessed door opening now. Lie low!"

The juniors crept back into the shadow of the staircase. Mr. Ratcliff came out of his study, tapped at the door of Mr. Flatt, the music-master of St. Jim's, and entered. He disappeared from sight, and Fatty Wynn rose to his feet.

"I'm going to chance it now!" he said.

"Fatty, old man—"

"I'm going. You fellows stay here."

"We'll come with you, if you're bound to risk it," said Figgins.

"Don't. Easier for one to scud off than three—and I can carry the pie all right," said Fatty Wynn. "You'll be in the way. Keep here."

And Fatty Wynn went downstairs, leaving Figgins, Kerr, and Tom Merry in an uneasy frame of mind. The fat Fourth Former's Welsh blood was fairly up now, and when he was in his present mood it was useless to argue with him.

The three juniors watched him over the banisters. Even if Fatty succeeded in getting clear with the pie there would be trouble afterwards when Mr. Ratcliff discovered that it was gone. But it was very doubtful if he would get clear. Mr. Ratcliff might come out of the music-master's study at any moment; and, even as the three juniors thought of it, he came.

Figgins groaned under his breath.

"There comes Ratty!"

Wynn was still in the Housemaster's study. He had found the study dark, Mr. Ratcliff having turned off the light when he left it. Fatty did not venture to put on the light, but he groped round for the pie.

He knocked over an inkbottle and heard the ink swish over Mr. Ratcliff's papers, but he was too busy to notice a trifle like that. The pie was there—and Fatty's grasp closed over it. It was cold now, but through the crust came a very appetising smell of the rich gravy.

Fatty Wynn was starting for the door with the pie in his hands when he heard a whistle from the staircase. Fatty Wynn made a rush to get out of the study.

He made that rush just as Mr. Ratcliff reached the doorway.

The Housemaster, a little surprised to see his door wide open, when he remembered closing it after him, paused.

As he paused, Fatty Wynn came bolting out at top speed.

There was a terrific collision.

The fat Fourth Former rushed right into the Housemaster, Mr. Ratcliff

crashed on the floor, and Fatty Wynn and the pie rolled over him.

Bump! Crash!

"Oh, good heavens!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Tom Merry, on the staircase. "Fatty's done it now!"

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff.

"Groogh! Ow. ow!"

Fatty Wynn rolled over the Housemaster. The piedish was inverted over Mr. Ratcliff's head, and the crust was smashed on his nose. Gravy and pieces of beef and kidney rolled thickly over the Housemaster's countenance.

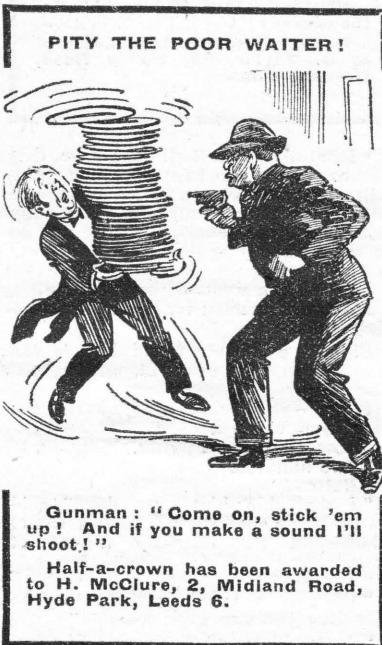
"Oh, my hat!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"That's caused it!"

"Groogh! Help! Oh!"

Mr. Ratcliff sat up on the floor blindly, and the piedish crashed down and broke. With a face streaming with thick brown gravy, the Housemaster stared and blinked round him. There was a rush of startled fellows from all sides at the uproar.

"Great Scott! What has happened, sir?" asked Monteith, the head prefect of the New House.



Gunman: "Come on, stick 'em up! And if you make a sound I'll shoot!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. McClure, 2, Midland Road, Hyde Park, Leeds 6.

"Seize that junior!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "It is Wynn! He has assaulted me—he has hurled me to the floor!"

"I—I—it was an accident, sir!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "I didn't see you."

"Don't tell falsehoods, Wynn!"

"I'm not telling falsehoods," shouted Fatty Wynn furiously, "and you know I'm not!"

"Wynn!" yelled Mr. Ratcliff.

Mr. Ratcliff staggered to his feet. The fellows in the passage chuckled; they could not help it. The gravy, smothering his face and his collar, gave the Housemaster a very peculiar appearance. But the furious looks he cast about him caused the chuckling to die away very suddenly.

"Wynn, you came to my study to take away the pie I had confiscated!"

"Yes, I did!"

"You dare—you dare say so?"

"You asked me," said Wynn. "You want me to tell you lies?"

"You—you insolent young rascal!"

"You shouldn't have taken that pie!" said Fatty Wynn. "You had no right to, and you know you hadn't!"

The New House fellows gasped. The Housemaster had certainly never been talked to like that before. But Fatty Wynn was furious, and did not care in the least what he said.

"Cheese it!" whispered Monteith.

"Shan't! I came here for my pie because I had a right to it, and Mr. Ratcliff knows it. I'd say so to the Head himself."

Mr. Ratcliff gasped for breath. He was so taken aback by that unexpected defiance that he could hardly find his voice.

"Wynn!" he stuttered. "Wynn, you—you—"

"Oh, I know you're going to lick me!" said Fatty Wynn. "I don't care. You'll find some excuse or other, anyway."

"Take him away, Monteith, and lock him up in the punishment-room, and bring me the key."

"Very well, sir. Come along, Wynn!"

And Fatty Wynn was marched off, with Monteith's hand upon his shoulder. Mr. Ratcliff walked away to clean off the pie.

Figgins and Kerr regarded one another in utter dismay. Tom Merry was as concerned as Fatty Wynn's own chums.

"Well, he's done it now," said Figgins. "Fairly done it!"

"Fancy slanging old Ratty!" groaned Kerr.

"Well, he stood up to the cad jolly well!" said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I thought Fatty had it in him! Poor old Fatty!"

It was evidently impossible to discuss cricket that evening, and Tom Merry left the New House. He took the news of Fatty's disaster over to the School House, and the fellows grinned gleefully at the story of how Fatty Wynn had "slanged" his Housemaster.

"But it isn't a laughin' mattah for poor old Fatty!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "Watty will be fwightfully down on him, deah boys. He'll keep him in the punishment-woom on bwead and watah now he's got a good excuse, in case the Head heahs about it."

And all the School House fellows agreed that it was "hard cheese" on Fatty Wynn—as indeed it was.

CHAPTER 7.

Fatty Wynn's Resolve!

FATTY WYNN was alone.

Monteith had led him to the punishment-room and locked him in, and had taken the key to Mr. Ratcliff.

Fatty was left to his own reflections.

His reflections were not pleasant ones. The detention-room in the New House was a small apartment, with a little barred window looking out on a blank wall. It had a bare floor, and a little iron bedstead in the corner, and a few articles of furniture. It was a grim and comfortable apartment, very dusky in the daytime, owing to the window being overshadowed by another building.

Fatty Wynn walked to and fro in the little room, growling. He was very much annoyed. His pie had been lost, after all. He wondered whether he would be allowed to have any supper; and that was a more important question for Fatty Wynn than anything that might happen afterwards.

After the way he had "slanged" Mr. Ratcliff, the probability was that he would be taken before the Head, and perhaps flogged. But the pressing and immediate question was supper.

There was a slight tap at the door and a whispering voice at the keyhole.

"Fatty!"

The fat Fourth Former hurried to the door. He knew Figgins' voice.

"Hallo, Figgy!"

"All serene there, Fatty?"

"Oh, jolly comfortable!" said Fatty Wynn, with a grunt. "It's jolly ripping in this blessed den—I don't think! How's old Ratty?"

Figgins chuckled.

"He's in the bed-room now, cleaning off the pie."

"My pie!" said Wynn. "All wasted on his silly chivvy!"

"He's sure to come and see you soon, Fatty. Be careful how you jaw to him. It's no good slanging a Housemaster, you know."

"He hadn't any right to take my pie!"

"Of course he hadn't!" agreed Figgins soothingly. "But it can't be helped, you know; and you don't want to risk getting sacked, you know. Ratty persists that you biffed the pie into his chivvy on purpose."

"As if I'd have wasted it like that!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Be diplomatic with him, Fatty," urged Figgins through the keyhole. "It wouldn't be a joke to be kept here for twenty-four hours on bread and water."

Fatty Wynn shuddered.

"He couldn't do it," he said. "I can't miss classes."

"Ratty wouldn't care for that if he got his back up. All he cares about is having a good excuse to give the Head, if the Head should hear of it and make an inquiry."

"I jolly well shan't touch his bread and water!" growled Fatty Wynn. "If they try to keep me here and starve me, I'll jolly well go on strike!"

There was a chuckle outside the door. Figgins could not help being tickled at the idea of Fatty Wynn going on a hunger-strike if there was food within reach. Fatty Wynn heard the chuckle, and he grew wrathful.

"Do you think I couldn't do it?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes; of course you could, if you liked," said Figgins. "But—but it would be better to soothe Ratty and get out, wouldn't it?"

"Blow Ratty!"

"If they keep you here over to-morrow, Fatty, I'll see if I can get you something to eat," whispered Figgins. "I may not be able to come and jaw to you again, so I'll tell you now. Kerr's keeping watch at the end of the passage, and he's going to whistle if anyone comes along. Ratty would like to catch me here. Your window looks out on the entry next to the museum, Fatty."

"Yes," said Fatty.

"It's barred, isn't it?"

"Yes; four bars."

"But you could pull anything up with a cord."

"I haven't a cord."

"I can get you one in to-morrow. You'll have to let down a string from the window, and I'll tie the cord to it, and you can pull it up."

"But I haven't a string long enough," said Fatty Wynn. "It's forty feet if it's an inch!"

"Make one!" said Figgins. "You can tear up your hanky into threads and join them together, and make a string strong enough to pull up a cord. When you have a cord, you can pull up anything. When you hear somebody whistling 'The Music Goes Round and Around' down below, you'll know I'm there."

"Right-ho, Figgy! If they try to starve me out you can get me some grub. I'll lower the change of my fiver on the cord," said Fatty Wynn.

There was a soft whistle in the passage.

"Good-night, Fatty!" whispered Figgins through the keyhole.

And he fled.

Fatty Wynn sat down on the chair—the only chair in the room—and waited for the enemy. A couple of minutes later the door was unlocked, and Mr. Horace Ratcliff entered the room. Fatty Wynn rose to his feet.

The Housemaster was looking pale and very sour and bitter. He had had a painful shock in the collision with Fatty Wynn in the doorway of his study. He had not recovered from it yet, and his temper did not seem likely to recover from it at all. His eyes glistened as he fastened them upon Fatty Wynn.

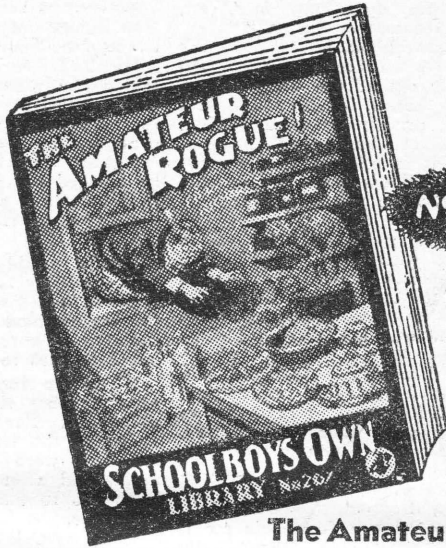
"I trust, Wynn, that you have had time to realise the heinousness of your conduct," he said in a harsh, grating voice.

Fatty Wynn did not reply.

"You and the two other juniors in your study have always been the worst-behaved juniors in the House," said Mr. Ratcliff; "but you have now gone beyond all bounds. You were disrespectful to your Form-master in class this afternoon."

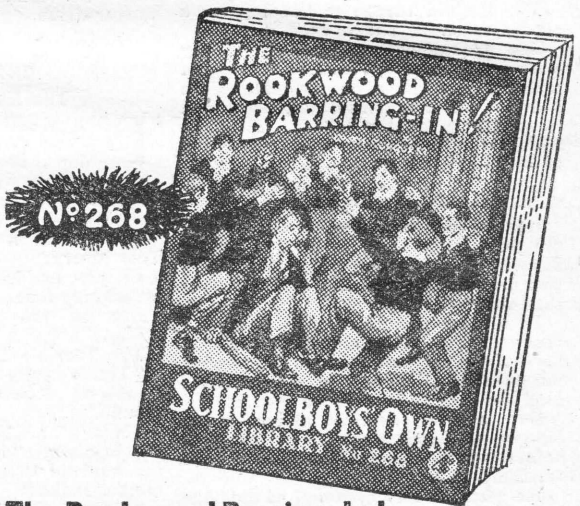
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"I didn't mean to be, sir," said Fatty Wynn.

"Silence! Mr. Lathom complained of your conduct, and very properly mentioned it to me, your Housemaster. You had indigestible food smuggled to you in the Form-room while under detention. You directly disobeyed my commands in getting a huge pie from the tuckshop. You attempted to take it from my study after it had been confiscated, and you rushed into me and broke the pie upon my face, sir, whether by accident or design!"

"It was an accident, sir."

"It was not an accident that you were running out of the study with a pie in your hands, I suppose!" said Mr. Ratcliff, raising his voice harshly. "Your conduct has been heinous, Wynn, and it is all due to your disgusting greediness—your insatiable desire to eat when you cannot possibly be hungry!"

Fatty Wynn reddened. It was a tender point with him. He had a healthy appetite, and he wasn't ashamed of it. He did not like to be called greedy. As he had often explained, he was not greedy, but he liked a lot.

"I am determined to cure the loathsome trait in your character," resumed Mr. Ratcliff. "I regard it as an important duty. For this purpose, Wynn, I shall confine you to this room for twenty-four hours upon a diet of bread and water."

Wynn's jaw dropped.

"When you emerge from this room, you will perhaps have learned, by forcible abstinence, to control your appetite," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"But I can't miss my lessons, sir," faltered Fatty.

"I shall explain to Mr. Lathom."

Mr. Ratcliff turned to the door as a tap came on it, and opened it.

The House-page brought in a tray with a loaf of dry bread and a jug of water and a glass on it. He gave Fatty Wynn a commiserating look, and set the tray on the table. Then he brought in bedclothes and proceeded to make the bed.

Fatty Wynn watched these preparations with a heavy heart.

He did not much mind sleeping in the punishment-room instead of in the Fourth Form dormitory. Fatty Wynn was a good sleeper. It was the supper that worried him.

To declare a hunger-strike seemed a really ripping idea—and he felt that if he did so Mr. Ratcliff would probably not venture to leave him without solid food for twenty-four hours.

But a hunger-strike meant going hungry, and that was the one prospect before which the fat Fourth-Former's fortitude failed.

He came to a resolve, and as the page left the room, having finished his work there, and Mr. Ratcliff began to follow him, Fatty Wynn turned and spoke:

"If you please, sir—"

"Well?" said Mr. Ratcliff, turning a frowning glance upon him.

"I can't possibly live a whole day on bread and water, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff smiled grimly.

"We shall see, Wynn!"

"But it's impossible, sir."

"I think not. At all events, the next twenty-four hours will show," said the New House master grimly.

"Very well, sir; then I must tell you that I shall decline to touch the bread," said Fatty Wynn firmly.

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"Indeed!"

"I mean it, sir. I shall have a hunger-strike."

"You are at liberty to please yourself about that, Wynn," said Mr. Ratcliff dryly.

And he quitted the room, and turned the key in the lock after him.

Fatty Wynn shook his fat fist at the door after the Housemaster, and then looked glumly at the bread and water on the table. Fatty Wynn's appetite was keen, and he was hungry. The thought of going without food for twenty-four hours made him hungrier.

He had heard that hunger-strikers stilled the worst pangs of hunger by drinking water, and Fatty Wynn tried it. He drank from the jug a deep draught, but it only made him feel the hungrier. During the next half-hour he finished the jug of water. By that time he was in a mood to eat anything. He began on the bread and ate little bits.

But he would not give way—he told himself firmly that he wouldn't. Mr. Ratcliff should see in the morning that he was as good as his word. He had declared a hunger-strike, and he was going to stick to it!

When the room was visited in the morning they should find the bread untouched. Poor Fatty was nibbling at it all the time that these heroic thoughts were passing through his mind, and after a time he was quite surprised to find that half the bread was gone.

"May as well finish it now!" he murmured. "After all, perhaps it would be better to begin the hunger-strike tomorrow!"

And the rest of the bread vanished in a twinkling and then Fatty went to bed. So commenced Fatty Wynn's hunger-strike.

CHAPTER 8.

The Hunger-Strike!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked for Fatty Wynn when they came down in the morning.

They did not see him, but Figgins and Kerr were in the quadrangle, looking extremely disconsolate. "Fatty got it in the neck?" asked Tom Merry.

Figgins nodded.

"Twenty-four hours on bread and water in the punishment-room," he said.

The Terrible Three whistled.

"That's jolly thick," said Monty Lowther. "Better than a flogging, though."

"Not for Fatty!" said Figgins hughubriously. "Fatty told me through the keyhole that he would declare a hunger-strike."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins grinned. A hunger-strike and Fatty Wynn certainly seemed a queer association of ideas.

"But poor old Fatty is in a bad way," said Kerr. "He slanged Ratty right and left, and Ratty never forgives. Joskins, the page, is taking in bread and water for his breakfast. He says Fatty has finished what he left last night, so I suppose the poor chap hasn't started his hunger-strike yet."

"I fancy he won't," grinned Monty Lowther. "It wouldn't be safe for Joskins to go into the room if Fatty hadn't had anything to eat for twenty-four hours."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going round to see him," said

Figgins. "I arranged a signal with him last night. You fellows can come if you like, only don't let anybody see you."

The juniors skirted the New House, and entered the bricked passage between that House and a portion of the wall of the school museum. It was a blind alley, and there was little danger of being observed once they were in the entry. High above them was the little barred window of the punishment-room in the New House.

Figgins, after a cautious look round, began to whistle the familiar tune: "The Music Goes Round and Around." The juniors kept their eyes fixed upon the little window high above. It was impossible for Fatty Wynn to look out, the bars being so close together. But a string was seen fluttering over the little sill, with a pencil tied to the end of it. The pencil came fluttering down towards the juniors.

"Good old Fatty!" said Figgins. "He's made a string out of his handkerchief, as I told him, and he's tied that pencil to weigh it down."

The pencil came within Figgins' reach. He caught it, and gave the string a shake to show Fatty Wynn that he had it. Then he drew a ball of cord from his pocket, and attached the end of it to the string.

"Jolly cute idea!" said Tom Merry. "I thought of it," remarked Figgins modestly.

Fatty Wynn, invisible behind the bars of the window above, drew up the flimsy string again, and Figgins unwound the ball for the cord to follow. It was very strong cord, capable of sustaining a good weight. The ball unwound slowly, and the end followed the string into the barred window.

"He's got it!" said Manners.

Fatty Wynn shook the cord as a signal. Figgins cut off the remainder of the ball.

"Communications are open now. That's always the most important point in warfare," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

Kerr took out of his pocket a small package of sandwiches, and tied it to the end of the cord. Fatty Wynn drew up the cord, and the packet of sandwiches disappeared through the bars of the window.

Then a hand was thrust out into view, and Fatty Wynn's plump forefinger pointed in the direction of the quad. Then the hand disappeared again.

"What does that mean, I wonder?" said Kerr.

"It means that we're to clear," said Tom Merry. "Somebody's coming."

"Cut!" said Figgins.

And the juniors hurried away.

Figgins and Kerr were satisfied. They had succeeded in conveying an instalment of provisions to the confined junior, and they knew how welcome the sandwiches would be to Mr. Ratcliff's victim.

And the chums of St. Jim's went in to breakfast, cheered up by the thought that they had not failed Fatty Wynn in the hour of need.

Fatty Wynn, in the punishment-room, was equally cheerful. Upon his table lay a tray with bread and water, as on the preceding night. He had not touched it yet, depending on Figgins and Kerr to come to the rescue, and his heart had jumped at the sound of Figgins' whistle below. He had received the packet of sandwiches safely, and was about to open it, when he heard a step outside the door. In a



"Here's your pie, Fatty," said Tom Merry. "Shove it under the desk in case Ratty comes in—" "MERRY!" It was the sharp, acid voice of Mr. Ratcliff! Tom Merry spun round, to see the head of the New House master framed in the window!

moment he made the signal to the juniors below, and squeezed the sandwiches and the cord under the mattress of the bed. He was sitting on the bed, looking quite unconcerned, when the door was unlocked, and Mr. Ratcliff came in.

Mr. Ratcliff glanced at the untouched bread and water on the table, and then glanced at the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"You have not eaten your breakfast, Wynn," he said.

"No, sir," said Fatty.

"Indeed! Does that mean that you are already learning to control your voracious appetite, Wynn?"

No answer.

"Are you not hungry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why do you not eat your breakfast, then?"

"I'm not going to eat bread and water, sir."

"Ah! I think you will probably change your mind about that," said Mr. Ratcliff, with a hard smile. "I think you made the same declaration last night, Wynn."

Fatty Wynn flushed.

"I am going to have a hunger-strike, sir, as a protest against bread and water diet!" he said firmly.

"Don't be absurd, Wynn!"

"I mean it, sir!"

"You will get nothing else," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Indeed, I think a fast of twenty-four hours will probably do you good, considering the state of over-eaten grossness you are in now, Wynn."

"I'm not!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn indignantly. "I never really get enough to eat."

"Your books and some paper will be brought to you," said Mr. Ratcliff, unheeding. "You will miss your lessons to-day, Wynn. But I do not intend that you shall be idle. This morning I shall expect you to write out a dozen deponent verbs in full."

"Oh!"

"Joskins"—the New House page

came in—"you may place Master Wynn's books and papers here, also pen and ink."

"Yes, sir."

"You will find your morning fully occupied, Wynn. If you neglect your work, I need not say that you will be severely punished."

"Can I have some tea, sir?"

"You may not."

Fatty Wynn's lips set obstinately.

"Very well; it's a hunger-strike," he said.

"Don't be impertinent, Wynn. However, I think you will soon be brought to your senses."

Wynn's books and papers, and pen and ink being placed on the table, Mr. Ratcliff retired, locking the door and putting the key in his pocket.

Fatty Wynn grinned as he was left alone.

He extracted the packet of sandwiches from under the mattress and opened it, and gave a chuckle of delight. The sandwiches were packed tight and close—there were a dozen of them—ham and beef, with a little packet of salt and mustard. Figgins had forgotten nothing. Hungry as Fatty Wynn was, there was ample for him there. He could afford to turn up his nose at the bread and water on the tray. Hunger-striking on these terms was not really such a difficult feat, after all.

Fatty Wynn piled into the sandwiches. He ate six of them without a pause, and then slackened down a little. The next three followed more slowly, and he washed them down with draughts of water.

With heroic self-denial he put the remaining three sandwiches away, to be eaten later. He started on the deponent verbs.

He had made, as a matter of fact, a heartier breakfast than usual. He worked quite cheerfully at those troublesome verbs, which are passive in form and active in meaning. He

was not in the least tempted to touch the bread on the tray.

Later in the morning he demolished another sandwich; later on, another; and finally the third disappeared just before dinner-time. He felt certain that Figgins and Kerr would contrive somehow to come to the rescue after dinner. He was industriously grinding away at deponent verbs when Mr. Ratcliff came in, having finished his morning duties in the Fifth Form Room. The House-master started a little at the sight of the bread untouched on the table. Fatty Wynn rose respectfully to his feet.

"You have not eaten your breakfast, Wynn?"

"I told you I should not, sir."

"You must be hungry."

"I should like my dinner, sir."

"You will have bread and water for your dinner. As you have not chosen to eat this for your breakfast, it will be left for your dinner! If you find it somewhat meagre, you have only your own obstinacy to thank, Wynn!"

"I shall not touch it, sir!"

"We shall see!"

Mr. Ratcliff departed, frowning. Fatty Wynn chuckled softly, and, leaving his verbs, went to the window and waited for another signal from Figgins.

CHAPTER 9.

Gussy Does His Best!

"I THINK I had better step in, dear boys."

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The Fourth Formers, of course, had missed Fatty Wynn from the Form-room that morning. Mr. Ratcliff had been seen speaking to Mr. Lathom, and it was observed that Mr. Lathom was looking very concerned. Figgins and Kerr soon explained to the rest of the Fourth what had happened to the missing junior. The sympathy of the Fourth

was unbounded. They agreed as one man that it was too bad. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy felt that it was up to him to step in, and he explained the same to his chums after morning lessons were dismissed.

"You see, something will have to be done!" said Arthur Augustus seriously.

"Fatty Wynn's being done at present!" Blake remarked.

"It is not weally a laughin' matter, Blake. Figgins has taken the poor kid some sandwiches, but you know what Fatty is like. I know those New House chaps are goin' to tvy to get some dinnah to him, but Watty is vevy sharp—vevy sharp indeed! I shouldn't wondah if he keeps an eye on Figgins and Kerr, knowin' what they'd be likely to do."

"Just like him!" said Digby.

"Yaas. Therefore, I considah that it is up to me to step in. Those New House boundahs are not weally up to Watty. I considah that a School House fellow had bettah take the mattah in hand, and, as it wequials a fellow of tact and judgment, I am goin' to do it!"

"Don't you go scouting round the New House!" grunted Blake. "Ratty will be sure to spot you, and you'll give Figgys's little game away."

"Wats! But I wasn't thinkin' of that! I am goin' to get Mr. Lathom to chip in. He is undah the misapprehension that Fatty was insultin' to him yestehday, whereas, as a mattah of fact, poor old Fatty was only suffewin' from a tempowawy attack of lockjaw. I think if we explained that to Mr. Lathom, he would get his ears down again, and would chip in and save Fatty from old Watty."

"Well, it's not a bad idea," said Blake thoughtfully. "Let's go and see Lathom. He's in his study now, and we can catch him. He's a good little ass, and I know he doesn't like Ratty's rotten ways. He may chip in and get poor old Fatty out of choky, perhaps."

And the chums of the Fourth made their way to the Form-master's study. They found Mr. Lathom looking worried. He was thinking, as a matter of fact, about Fatty Wynn. Mr. Lathom was a sensitive little gentleman, and had a great delicacy about interfering in the affairs of Mr. Ratcliff in his own House. But Wynn was in Mr. Lathom's Form, and he could not help feeling that he should have been consulted before the boy was kept away from classes.

It was a juncture when the authority of the Form-master clashed with that of the Housemaster, and little Mr. Lathom was not able to "keep his end up" against the pushing and obstinate Ratty. And as he had first complained to Mr. Ratcliff of Fatty Wynn's conduct, his position was very delicate in the matter. He was thinking about it when the chums of Study No. 6 came in.

"Well, my boys, what can I do for you?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"If you please, sir—" began Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy nudged his chum.

"Bettah leave the talkin' to me, Blake, old man," he whispered.

"Shurrup!" murmured Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"We've come about Fatty, sir—I mean, Wynn," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, sir! We weekon—" "Shurrup!" said Digby in a stage whisper.

"Weally, Dig—"

"I think we ought to tell you, sir, about poor old Wynn," said Blake. "He wasn't to blame when you thought

he was checking you yesterday, sir. You thought that he wouldn't answer you, sir—"

"He refused to answer me," said Mr. Lathom, frowning at the recollection.

"He couldn't, sir."

"It was impos, sir, I assure you."

"I do not quite understand you," said Mr. Lathom, in surprise. "Why was it impossible for Wynn to speak when I commanded him to do so?"

"He'd been eating toffee, sir," confessed Blake. "He tried to bite it, so that he could bolt it when you spoke to him, and he fixed his teeth in it, and couldn't get 'em out again. That's how it was, sir."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

Mr. Lathom's face broke into a smile.

"Dear me!" he said "This is—is extraordinary! I suppose you are not joking, Blake?"

"No, sir. It's the truth."

"Bless my soul! Wynn should have told me."

"He couldn't speak, sir."

"But you others might have spoken for him."

"Well, all of us did not know what was the matter, sir; and then we thought that you would be down on him for eating toffee in class, after what you'd said to him about the chocolate, and—and so we didn't, sir. But we thought we ought to come and tell you now poor old Wynn is getting it in the neck—ahem!—I mean—"

"I understand, Blake. I am very glad you have told me. I am glad to know that Wynn did not intend to be disrespectful. If I had known this I should certainly have punished him for eating toffee in class, but I should not have been so very much annoyed."

"We thought so, sir—"

"We weekoned that you might speak to Watty, sir—"

"What?"

"To Mr. Watchliff, sir, and get poor old Wynn off, sir. All the twouble arose out of that mistake about the toffee, sir."

"Very well!" said Mr. Lathom, after a pause. "As Wynn is in my Form, I will speak to Mr. Ratcliff. Of course, I cannot interfere with a Housemaster in his own jurisdiction. But I will see what can be done."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You are vevy kind, sir. Didn't I tell you fellows that our Form-mastah could be relied on to do the wight thing?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy triumphantly.

"Ahem! You may go now, my boys," said Mr. Lathom hastily. "I will see what can be done."

And the chums of the Fourth went, with their hopes high. A few minutes later Mr. Lathom was seen crossing over to the New House.

"He's gone to see Ratty," said Blake. "I wish Lathom was a bit stiffer; it needs a regular fighter to deal with Ratty. Railton would shut him up fast enough if a fellow in Railton's Form was concerned. But let's hope for the best."

Mr. Lathom went directly to Mr. Ratcliff's study, where he found the master of the New House. The latter received him cordially enough. He thought that the Fourth Form master had come with a complaint—and perhaps the wish was father to the thought.

"I have come to speak about Wynn," said Mr. Lathom, plunging into the subject at once. "I have received an explanation of his conduct yesterday, and it proves that I was deceived in supposing that he intended to treat me

with disrespect. He was to blame, but not so seriously as I supposed."

Mr. Ratcliff's smile became exceedingly dry at once.

"Indeed?" he said coldly.

"Yes. And so, in the circumstances, I thought I would put it to you, Mr. Ratcliff, that he might be released from detention and allowed to return to his Form."

"There is a slight misapprehension here," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I am not punishing Wynn for his conduct towards you, Mr. Lathom. He was punished for that yesterday. He is now being punished for his conduct towards me, in this House, last night."

"But as the second matter really arose out of the first—" urged Mr. Lathom.

"I am afraid I could not take that into consideration. Wynn disobeyed my orders and attempted to take away a pie that I had confiscated—and when I discovered him he hurled himself upon me and knocked me over, his House-master, sir! You will see that only a condign punishment would meet such a case."

"It is unfortunate that Wynn should be kept away from his lessons," said the master of the Fourth.

"I have seen to that. He is occupied in studying his Latin grammar."

"Ahem! He has now been confined for a whole morning, and, I understand, upon a very spare diet."

"Bread and water!" assented Mr. Ratcliff.

"A severe punishment for a boy like Wynn, don't you think?"

"My object is to teach him to keep his inordinate appetite within bounds. I think it will have a markedly beneficial effect upon him."

"Then you do not think that, in the circumstances, Wynn might be released?"

"I hardly think so, Mr. Lathom."

"Then I need trouble you no longer, sir," said Mr. Lathom, with a great deal of dignity, and he took his leave at once.

The chums of the Fourth did not venture to ask their Form-master the result of his visit to the New House. But when the Fourth Form assembled for afternoon lessons they knew that he had failed. Fatty Wynn was not in his place.

CHAPTER 10.

Tom Merry Takes a Hand!

FATTY WYNN had been looking at his watch anxiously for a long time. He knew that dinner-time had passed, and, in spite of the sandwiches, he was feeling hungry. He was sure that Figgins and Kerr would not fail him if they could help it—but there was danger that the obnoxious Ratty might be keeping a careful eye upon them.

Mr. Ratcliff would naturally guess that Figgins and Kerr would get into communication with their chum if they could, and he might be too clever for them. In that case Fatty Wynn would be reduced to terrible straits. The bread was still on the table—and Fatty Wynn was determined not to touch it. But if no dinner arrived, he was not quite sure that his own fortitude would be equal to the strain.

And so he watched the minute hand upon his watch, and waited and hoped. But the signal whistle did not come from below, and his hopes sank down to zero. It would be time for afternoon lessons soon, and then Figgins and Kerr had to go into class. And then—the whole afternoon minus dinner.

Where was Figgins? Fatty Wynn was a Welsh boy, and therefore, needless to say, he was fond of music. But he had never listened to the sweetest strains with as much pleasure as he would now have listened to the signal whistle if only he could have heard Figgins whistling it under his window.

He was sure that Figgins had not forgotten him, and was not neglecting him; and he was right in that. As a matter of fact, Figgins & Co. were thinking of him at that moment—and worrying. Ratty, as Fatty Wynn feared, had been one too many for them.

The New House master had suspected, not what Figgins had done in the morning, but what he might attempt to do. And, after dinner, he had taken his newspaper and seated himself on one of the old benches under the elms in the quadrangle, where he could keep an eye on the New House. Figgins and Kerr could not approach Fatty Wynn's window now without being seen as they went into the entry; and that, of course, would give the whole game away at once.

Figgins and Kerr consulted in a state of desperation.

Figgins had expended quite a little sum at the tuckshop on provisions for Fatty, and he had them fastened up in a set of packages ready to be raised by Fatty. But there seemed no means of conveying them to the prisoner.

"The awful rotter smells a mouse," said Figgins, in despair. "He knows we should think of the window. What's to be done, Kerr, old man? He won't take his beastly eyes away till we have to go into class. Can't you think of something? What's the good of being a blessed Scotsman if you can't think of things?"

Kerr was thinking hard.

"We shall have to get out of class," he said. "Jolly lucky we're not in the Fifth. We shall have to make some excuse to get out of the Fourth Form Room, Figgy, and get to Fatty when Ratty is taking the Fifth this afternoon."

"Well, we might—Lathom's a good chap, and—and we might work it—Hullo! There is the beast beckoning to us."

Figgins and Kerr reluctantly obeyed Mr. Ratcliff's beckoning finger. The Housemaster's eye had been upon them for some time, and probably the expressions upon their faces had told their own tale. Mr. Ratcliff laid his newspaper upon his knees, and looked at the two juniors with his keen, greenish eyes.

"May I ask what is causing your pockets to bulge, Figgins?" he asked. "It looks extremely slovenly."

"I—I've got something in them, sir," said Figgins, turning red.

"And you, Kerr?"

"I've got something in them, sir."

"Indeed! Kindly show me what you have in your pockets that causes them to bulge in that slovenly manner," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I do not like the boys of my House to look the most ill-dressed and careless in the school."

"I—I'll go and take the things out, sir," said Kerr.

"I'll go at once, sir," said Figgins. "You will take the things out here," said Mr. Ratcliff acidly. "And at once."

Kerr and Figgins exchanged a hopeless, furious look, and turned out their pockets. All those neat packets prepared for Fatty Wynn came to light.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling!



Hallo, everybody!
It goes without saying. What does? Your wireless set, if you don't pay the instalments!

You heard about the comedian who, when a boot was thrown at him, gave an encore in the hope of getting the other?

Man caught robbing an insurance company pleaded he was merely taking out a policy. Ow!

"Wayland Courier" says: "There are a thousand sportsmen roughly playing cricket in and around Wayland." More "body-line" stuff?

Story: "I always call the three stumps Faith, Hope, and Charity," said the dud batsman. "Why?" asked his friend. "Because I have faith the bowler won't hit my leg stump, I hope he won't hit the middle one, and it's charity if he misses the off stump as well!"

Quickly now: Why is the sea lazy?

Because it never gets out of its bed. "Irishmen are usually good broadcasters," we read. Pat and "mike" go well together.

Overheard at the Wayland by-election: "What do you think of the two candidates who are putting up?" "Thank goodness only one of them can be elected!"

Skimpole has just looked in to say

that Jack and Jill weren't half so bright as they ought to have been, because they couldn't reasonably have expected to find water on top of a hill.

Question: "Why are diplomats so funny-looking?" inquires Blake. That comes of talking with their tongues in their cheeks.

Story goes that Reilly is so superstitious that when he bumped his head he made a grab for an astrological paper to see what the stars said. Jumping Jupiter!

Chaps and girls together now: What two Christian names read both ways the same? Ada and Eve.

All right, I apologise, as the heavy-weight said when he realised he had "outed" a pal by mistake!

I always pity geologists. They're so often on the rocks!

Quickly, now: What's the best thing to part with? A comb, of course!

Next: Crooke says he would like to fly round the world in a luxury plane. Well, the rest of us would certainly be glad to see him go!

News: A new maid at St. Jim's is only four feet eight inches tall. The servant "shortage" gets worse!

Then there was the chap who got drowned in a football pool. Sorry!

Story: "You must get away from your business," said the doctor. "Can't," replied the patient. "I'm a memory expert."

Last crack: The visitor from England was being shown the Grand Canyon. "D'you know it took millions of years to carve out this great abyss?" said the guide. "You don't say!" exclaimed the Englishman. "I didn't know this was a Government job, too!"

I'll be seeing you, chaps.

Mr. Ratcliff regarded them with an acid smile.

"I need not ask what those packets contain," he said. "I have no doubt that they contain food of some kind. Is it not so?"

"Yes," grunted Figgins.

"Since when, may I ask, have you taken to carrying about food in packets in your pockets?" asked Mr. Ratcliff.

No reply.

"Perhaps I should not be wrong in assuming that you intended to convey those packages to Wynn."

Silence.

The Housemaster's smile grew sour.

"I suspected something of the sort," he said. "As a matter of fact, Figgins, I saw you go into the tuckshop before dinner. Those packets will be confiscated, and you will take fifty lines each. I shall also speak to your Form-master, and request him to take care that you do not leave the Form-room during the afternoon in order to carry out your lawless and nefarious business."

Figgins and Kerr were silent. They had a wild desire to collar Mr. Ratcliff and bump him on the ground.

"You will take this rubbish and place it on the table in my study," said Mr. Ratcliff, counting the packets. "And if there is any further attempt at anything of the kind, I shall consider whether to order you to share the punishment of Wynn. You may go!"

And they went.

The packets were duly deposited upon Mr. Ratcliff's study table, and Figgins and Kerr wandered away disconsolately. Ratty had been one too many for them, and it looked as though Fatty Wynn would have his hunger-strike put to a severe test.

The two worried juniors went down to the cricket ground. The Shell fellows were at practice there. Figgins and Kerr ran Tom Merry down outside the pavilion. The captain of the Shell was just going in to bat when Figgins collared him.

"Sheer off!" said Tom Merry.

"Hold on; it's important!" said Figgins. "We want you to help us. This isn't a time for House rags, ass!"

Tom Merry was cordial at once.

"Right-ho, what is it? Something for Fatty?"

Figgins explained the disaster that had befallen the consignment of provisions destined for the prisoner of the punishment-room.

Tom Merry listened sympathetically.

"Just like Ratty!" he said.

"Will you help us?" asked Kerr.

"Yes, rather, anything you like," said Tom Merry, at once.

"We can't get out of the Form-room this afternoon; Ratty's going to speak to Lathom about it. Same thing might apply to Reddy and the rest. But some of you Shell chaps might manage it."

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Will you do it—get out as soon as you can, and get some grub to Fatty? You know the signal? The worst of it is we've blued all our cash on that little lot," said Figgins ruefully, "and we're stony now."

"That's all right, I've got some tin," said Tom Merry. "We all stand together in a time of trouble like this. That's all right."

"You're a good chap. You'll do it?"

"Yes, rather! I'll be late for class," said Tom Merry. "Linton will give me lines, but I can stand that."

"We'll help you to do the lines," said Kerr.

And when the bell ran for classes that afternoon, Tom Merry did not go in with the rest of the Shell. He had confided to Manners and Lowther, so they did not look for him.

Just before the bell rang Tom Merry had gone out on his bicycle.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, noticed his absence immediately. He made a note of it, keeping the vials of his wrath ready for Tom Merry's devoted head when he came in.

But Tom Merry was not in a hurry to come in. First lesson was half-through when Mr. Linton asked Lowther if he knew where Tom Merry was.

"He went out on his bike, sir," said Lowther demurely.

"Indeed," said Mr. Linton, compressing his lips.

It was a quarter of an hour later when Tom Merry came in, looking ruddy and dusty. The master of the Shell gave him a severe glance.

"Merry!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir!" said Tom Merry meekly.

"You are half an hour late!"

"I am very sorry, sir!"

"You will be detained an hour after class, and will write out two hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir!"

And Tom Merry went to his place.

CHAPTER 11.

Going Strong!

TOM MERRY suffered cheerfully in the good cause.

But Fatty Wynn was not suffering just then; so that was all right.

The prisoner of the New House had been almost in despair when the signal whistle had fallen upon his ears at last. Fatty knew that it was past time for afternoon lessons, and he had almost given up hope. He sat with his eyes fixed on the bread on the table. The dry bread did not look very appetising, certainly. But Fatty Wynn was quite prepared to bolt it as if it had been the most delicate of morsels.

But he was on hunger-strike. In his mind's eye he could see the satirical smile that would curl Mr. Ratcliff's lip when he came in and saw that the bread had been eaten. Fatty Wynn swore inwardly that he would not give his persecutor that gratification.

But the temptation was growing stronger and stronger. Figgins and Kerr would not be released from class until four o'clock. Flesh and blood could not hold out that length of time. Fatty was hovering near the table now—when in the nick of time, as it were, he heard a soft whistle from below.

It was not Figgins' whistle, he knew—but it was the signal.

Fatty fairly jumped to the window,

and let the cord run out between the bars.

In a minute or less came a shake on the cord as a signal to haul, and Fatty Wynn pulled it up. His eyes danced as he saw the series of packages and a pie tied on it; one below another.

There was a note pinned to the first of the packages, in Tom Merry's handwriting:

"Sorry late—Figgys couldn't come. Cheerio.—TOM MERRY."

Fatty dragged in the string of packages. Tom Merry had done the thing in style evidently. There were nine packages and a pie, and all pretty heavy. Fatty Wynn felt so relieved and joyful, and grateful, that he did not open them at once, but scribbled a note on a sheet of impot paper and dropped it from the window.

"Thanks. Much obliged. You're a real sport. Still hunger-striking.—WYNN."

"P.S.—Next time see if you can send me a bit of chalk."

There was a whistle from below, to tell that the note had been received. Fatty Wynn proceeded to open the packages. The first one contained a half-dozen hard-boiled eggs, and Fatty Wynn bolted them one after another to go on with. He felt better immediately, and turned an eye of scorn upon the bread on the table.

Then the signal whistle floated up from below. Fatty Wynn whipped out the cord, and when he drew it up, he found a large stick of chalk tied to the end.

Whether Tom Merry guessed or not what the chalk was for, he lost no time in supplying the want.

"What a ripping chap he is!" murmured Fatty Wynn, as he concealed the cord under the mattress, and placed the chalk in his pocket.

Then he set to work on the packages again.

His eyes almost bulged from his head in delight. There was a beef-steak pie, quite enough for dinner for anybody but Fatty Wynn. There were cakes and tarts and dough-nuts. There was ginger-beer, and a cold chicken. There were oranges and apples and nuts and a bunch of bananas. There was more, in fact, than Fatty Wynn even could negotiate at a single sitting.

He did his best.

When he had finished there was a beatific smile of rapture upon his plump face, and there still remained a supply of provisions on the table.

Fatty Wynn washed down the repast with ginger-beer. He could despise the water now as well as the bread that Mr. Ratcliff had supplied him with.

With a cheerful grin, Fatty set to work clearing away all traces of the feed. Paper and string from the packages, and

the empty ginger-beer bottle, he concealed carefully in the chimney. In the chimney, too, he carefully concealed what remained of the provisions, carefully wrapped up. Then he cleared away every crumb that could have betrayed him. He was prepared to face Ratty now; and he went to work quite cheerfully on deponent verbs.

When four o'clock sounded from the clock tower of St. Jim's, Fatty Wynn took the stick of chalk from his pocket. He knew that he would receive a visit from the Housemaster soon.

Standing before the little glass over the washstand, Fatty Wynn daubed his ruddy face with the chalk, and rubbed it carefully in with his fingers. When he had finished, his face had assumed a pallid look, and it would have required a very intent examination to discover that the pallor was not natural.

Fatty Wynn chuckled at his pale and sickly reflection, and sat down to his verbs again. A quarter of an hour later, the passage outside creaked under the steps of Mr. Ratcliff, and the door of the punishment-room opened.

Mr. Ratcliff came in.

The Housemaster's glance went at once to the tray on the table. He expected to find that every crumb had vanished. His brow darkened as he saw that the bread had not been touched.

"Wynn!" he exclaimed sternly.

Fatty Wynn rose languidly to his feet.

He was not feeling at all languid; in fact, he had never felt better in his life. But he was aware that a fellow who had been hunger-striking all day ought to look pale and languid. So he assumed languor, and he was certainly pale enough, thanks to the aid of the chalk.

"Yes, sir," he said, in a weak, faint voice.

"You have not touched your food, Wynn!"



"Help!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff. "Groogh! Ow, o over the Housemaster's head, and gravy, crust, and
"Oh, my hat

"I told you I should not touch it, sir!"

"This is direct disobedience, Wynn!" "I am sorry, sir. But I was not sent to St. Jim's to be fed on bread and water," said the junior. "It would be against my principles to touch it, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff frowned darkly.

"You doubtless hope that your friends will be able to convey food to you!" he exclaimed angrily. "I may tell you that Figgins and Kerr have been discovered attempting to do so. The food has been confiscated, and they have been punished."

"I am sorry for that, sir."

"Are you hungry now, Wynn?"

"I should like to have my tea, sir, if I may."

"Your tea is there," said Mr. Ratcliff, pointing to the bread and water on the table; "you will have nothing else."

"Very well, sir."

"You will eat that, Wynn?"

"I cannot touch that, sir."

"Ah! You are persisting in the absurd and foolish freak which you are pleased to term a hunger-strike, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff set his teeth. The paleness of Wynn's face made him uneasy. If the boy should become ill, the consequences would not be wholly pleasant for Horace Ratcliff. And certainly the Fourth Former looked far from well.

"Are you aware, Wynn, that your health will suffer if you persist in this wretched obstinacy?" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly.

"I can stand it, sir."

"You will only have yourself to blame, Wynn, if the consequences should turn out seriously."

"Yes, sir."

"You are attempting to influence me, my boy, by risking your health!" exclaimed the Housemaster.

"You will do as you think best, sir."

"Wynn, I order you to eat that bread at once!"

"I cannot, sir. It would choke me,"

said Fatty Wynn, and, indeed, there was some truth in that—in fact, it was quite true. Fatty Wynn was so full up with good things that it would have been very difficult for him to cram dry bread down on top of them.

"I shall send you nothing else!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Very well, sir."

"You will be sorry for this obstinacy, Wynn!"

"Do you mind if I sit down, sir?" asked Fatty Wynn, staggering a little. "Starvation makes me rather weak, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff strode out of the room, and slammed the door. Fatty Wynn chuckled silently. He knew that his Housemaster was getting alarmed and uneasy, and he began to feel that he was getting a little of his own back on the tyrant of the New House.

Mr. Ratcliff, indeed, was in a most unpleasant frame of mind, and his brow was knitted as he went down to his study. He knew that his harshness was disapproved of in the House.

The House dame was very cold and formal to him. The boys looked upon him as a harsh tyrant—the prefects hardly took the trouble to conceal their disapproval. The very maids looked at him with horror, as if he were a kind of monster. Joskins, the page, had spread the story of the hunger-strike through the kitchen regions. The whole House knew that Fatty Wynn was refusing the spare diet accorded to him, and regarded Mr. Ratcliff with disgust and scorn for allowing the unfortunate junior to starve in the punishment-room.

But Mr. Ratcliff's position was difficult indeed. To release Fatty Wynn because of his hunger-strike was to allow his authority to be condemned and defied.

He had been too harsh. He had gone too far; but he had left himself no retreat without bringing his authority and himself into contempt.

Mr. Ratcliff was punishing Wynn of the Fourth; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Ratcliff, in his study, was in a far more uncomfortable state than Fatty Wynn in the punishment-room.

CHAPTER 12.

Bowled Out!

FIGGINS hurried in search of Tom Merry, as soon as the Fourth Form were released from classes. He was anxious to know if the hero of the Shell had been successful. He found Manners and Lowther in the passage, but not their chum.

"Where's Merry?" asked Figgins.

Lowther pointed lugubriously to the Form-room.

"Detained an hour for being late for class," he replied.

"Oh, rotten!" said Figgins. "I'm sorry! Has he told you if he got the stuff to Wynn?"

Lowther and Manners grinned.

"Yes, that's all right. He says he's sent him a giddy load enough to last him over till to-morrow

morning, if necessary. It ran into ten bob."

"Oh, good!" said Figgins. "Of course, we're going to settle that up! I'm awfully obliged; sorry poor old Tommy's detained."

And Figgins rejoined Kerr, and they walked over to the New House in a more cheerful frame of mind. Hunger-strike or no hunger-strike, Fatty Wynn was provided for. Monteith of the Sixth beckoned to them as they came into the House. The prefect was looking grim.

"Mr. Ratcliff says that you were trying this afternoon to get some grub to Wynn by the window of the punishment-room," he said.

"He caught us before we had a chance to try," said Kerr.

"Well, he has ordered that you are to keep in the House in case you should try to communicate with Wynn again," said Monteith. "Outside the House is out of bounds for you two till further orders."

Figgins grunted.

"Don't you think Ratty is piling it on a bit too thick, Monteith?" he demanded.

Monteith did not reply to that question. He smiled and walked away. He had his own opinion about Mr. Ratcliff, but he could not discuss his Housemaster with a junior.

"Looks as if we're dished about getting at Fatty," Kerr remarked, in a low voice. "But Tom Merry's seen him through to-day, anyway."

"And he'll be out to-morrow morning," said Figgins, with satisfaction.

"Unless Ratty should pile it on."

"The rotter! He might!"

Figgins and Kerr did their preparation in their study that evening in a worried mood. A number of School House fellows came over to see them, to ask if there was any news of Fatty Wynn. The chums of Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three discussed the matter with Figgins and Kerr, and joined with them in making uncomplimentary remarks about Mr. Ratcliff.

But there seemed nothing else to be done, and Tom Merry & Co. returned to their own House for locking-up, very much concerned for Fatty Wynn.

"It's simply wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House. "I don't believe the Head would allow it if he knew. That wotten ideah of punishment-wooms and bwead and watah is out of date."

"Latham ought to chip in, as Wynn is in our Form," growled Blake.

"Yaas, watah!"

"I believe he'd like to, intirely," remarked Reilly. "But he doesn't like seeming to interfere with a Housemaster."

"It's time to stretch a point," said Kerruish.

"Yaas, watah! I quite agree with Kewwuish, and if Watty doesn't let poor old Wynn out in the mornin' I think we ought to make up a wound wobin, or somethin', askin' for Mr. Latham to chip in."

"Not a bad idea," said Blake.

And the Fourth Formers discussed it at length after lights-out. Fatty Wynn being in the Fourth Form, of course, it was their special business. The fact that he was a New House fellow and their deadly rival mattered nothing now. School House and New House were quite in accord upon this subject.

While the juniors were going to bed in their various dormitories, Fatty



In the collision with Fatty Wynn, the piedish was inverted of beef and kidney rolled thickly down his countenance! ped Fatty. "That's caused it!"

Wynn was sitting somewhat disconsolately in the punishment-room in the New House.

He was feeling decidedly lonely.

The prisoner of the New House had hoped to hear the signal whistle again, or to receive some communication in some way from his chums.

But he had not heard a word or a whisper.

He knew that they were not neglecting him, and that it must be due to the watchfulness of the obnoxious Ratty. But time weighed heavily on his hands, and he felt the solitude keenly. Fatty Wynn was a sociable fellow, and he was seldom alone if he could help it. The silence and solitude of the punishment-room weighed on his spirits.

He broke the monotony from time to time by extracting choice morsels from the hidden store in the chimney, and, so far, he was in no danger of suffering from hunger. The store, however, was melting away under his constant attacks, and he was not likely to have much left for breakfast, and he was not quite certain at what time his release would come. Mr. Ratcliff was an unreliable man.

Fatty Wynn was cracking a walnut when the key turned in the lock once more, and he had just time to thrust the nut into his pocket when the New House master entered.

Mr. Ratcliff's glinting eyes noted that the bread was still untouched, though Fatty had drunk all the water by this time.

Joskins, the page, came in to replace the jug of water, and to "do" the room for the night. Mr. Ratcliff stood regarding the pale-faced Wynn with a corrugated brow. His keen eyes scanned the Fourth Former's face. Mr. Ratcliff was worried. He feared that Fatty Wynn was becoming ill, and rather than that he had made up his mind that he would release the prisoner.

But he was very suspicious and not easily satisfied. He was scanning the plump face for signs of illness, but there was nothing but the pallor of the complexion. The cheeks were as full and plump as ever—indeed, Fatty Wynn seemed to have just then quite a well-fed look.

"I see that you have eaten nothing, Wynn," Mr. Ratcliff said at last.

"I cannot touch that, sir."

"Are you not afraid of making yourself ill?"

"I'm willing to risk it, sir."

"You are looking pale, Wynn."

"Am I, sir?"

Mr. Ratcliff was still scanning Wynn's fat face. It was peculiarly white, undoubtedly; but along with the pallor there should have been other signs of emaciation, Mr. Ratcliff thought, and he was vaguely suspicious. His keen, wary eye caught a white smudge on Fatty Wynn's waistcoat, just over his pocket, and he started.

"Come here, Wynn!" he rapped out sharply.

Wynn approached him. The House-master inserted a finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket, and drew out a stick of chalk. A thundercloud came over his brow.

"Are you accustomed to carrying chalk in your pocket, Wynn?" he asked.

"I—I do sometimes, sir," stammered Fatty.

"Joskins!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes, sir!"

"Take that sponge and wet it, and rub it over Master Wynn's face—hard!"

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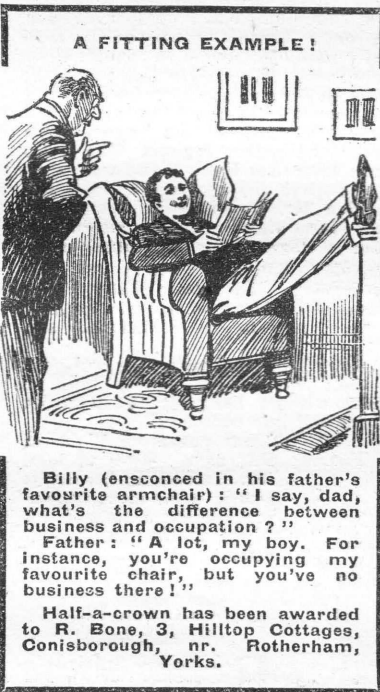
"Yes, sir!" said the astonished Joskins.

Fatty Wynn had to submit. The wet sponge was rubbed over his face, and Joskins gasped in surprise at the result. The pale complexion disappeared, and Fatty Wynn's ruddy and glowing cheeks reappeared in all their pristine healthiness. Mr. Ratcliff glared at the fat Fourth Former almost as if he would bite him.

"Wynn," he thundered, "you have been attempting to deceive me!—You have put chalk on your face, sir, to induce me to believe that you were becoming ill!"

Fatty Wynn was silent. His little dodge was clean bowled out now, there was no mistake about that. Mr. Ratcliff, remembering that he had really been upon the point of releasing the fat junior owing to his sickly look, could hardly contain his fury. A lurking grin on the plump face made him angrier than ever.

"I suppose you regard that as a very clever trick, Wynn!" he said at last.



"You have caused me some anxiety. You shall repent it. You shall stay in this room as a punishment for another twenty-four hours. We shall see, sir, whether you refuse your food for that length of time. If you do, I have no doubt that you will look a little pale, Wynn, without the aid of chalk!"

And with that gibe Mr. Ratcliff stalked out of the room.

Joskins followed him, and the door was locked, and Fatty Wynn was left to his reflections.

"Oh, the artful dodger!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn, as he towelled his wet face. "Fancy the downy old bird bowling me out like that! Oh crumbs!"

And Fatty Wynn went to bed in an exasperated mood. He was feeling very uneasy. He had enough provisions left for a frugal breakfast, but if his friends failed to convey any more to him, how was the hunger-strike to get on?

And Fatty Wynn was more determined than ever that Ratty should not triumph—that he would stick to the hunger-strike, even if it became a

genuine one. But that prospect was simply appalling to the Falstaff of the New House.

CHAPTER 13.

No Go!

THE next morning, after breakfast, Figgins of the Fourth ventured to approach Mr. Ratcliff as the master was about to start for the School House.

Mr. Ratcliff's expression was not inviting, but Figgins risked it. His manner was very meek.

"If you please, sir, is Wynn to come to class this morning?" he asked.

"No, Figgins; he is not!"

"But the twenty-four hours, sir—"

"Wynn will be detained in the punishment-room for an additional twenty-four hours," said Mr. Ratcliff, enjoying the dismay in Figgins' expressive face. "He attempted to deceive me by a trick—by chalking his face to make it look pale. I have, therefore, imposed this further punishment upon him, Figgins. I may add that any junior attempting to convey food to him will be most severely punished."

"But, sir, it's a half-holiday to-day, and Wynn was to play in a match this afternoon, sir!" said the dismayed Figgins.

"I have nothing to do with that, Figgins."

"But, sir, I—"

"That will do," said Mr. Ratcliff.

And with a frown at the junior he walked away. He had visited Fatty Wynn in the punishment-room and found the bread still untouched. The fortitude of the fat junior amazed him, but Fatty Wynn was looking quite rosy, and Mr. Ratcliff was no longer alarmed for his health, and he was grimly determined to see how long Fatty Wynn's obstinacy would hold out.

Figgins gritted his teeth as the Housemaster strode away. Sefton, the bully of the Sixth, who had old grudges against Figgins, was keeping an eye on him; but Figgins was determined to get a word to Wynn before morning classes. He had recourse to Redfern. Redfern was only too willing to help. A few whispered words were enough for Redfern.

Figgins went upstairs and into the passage where the punishment-room was situated, and Sefton was promptly on his track.

The prefect bore down on him.

"Where are you going, Figgins?" he demanded.

"I'm going to lessons," said Figgins innocently.

"By way of the punishment-room?" asked the prefect sarcastically.

"How did you guess that?" asked Figgins cheerfully. "Blessed if I think you are such an idiot as the fellows make out, Sefty."

The prefect stared at him blankly for a moment, too enraged to speak. Then he rushed at Figgins, grasped him by the shoulder, and marched him off to his study to be caned.

Little as Sefton would have guessed it, that was exactly what Figgins wanted.

While Figgins was being caned in the prefect's study, the coast was left clear for Redfern, and the latter, who was on the watch, scudded up to the punishment-room in next to no time. He tapped at the door softly, and whispered through the keyhole:

(Continued on page 18.)



Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! I had a letter from John Taylor, of Brighton, this morning, who wants me to settle an argument he has had with his chum. John says the spider is the fastest-moving insect, while his friend avers that the ant is. As a matter of fact, the spider could give the ant ninety-five yards in a hundred and beat it! So you are right, John, and your friend must stand corrected.

The spider can move at the astonishing speed of one hundred times its own length in a second! If the spider is about half an inch in length it means that it can move fifty inches in a second! By comparison the ant is very much slower. The speed of this hard-working insect varies, curiously enough, with the temperature. The warmer it is the faster the ant can travel. At a temperature of fifty degrees it will cover about seventeen yards an hour, whereas when the barometer registers one hundred degrees its speed rises to 260 yards an hour!

PUZZLE THIS OUT!

In his letter John also gives me one of those teasers, which seem so popular now, to solve. I knew the puzzle already, but I'm passing it on to other readers as it's rather a cute little problem. This is it: A water-lily doubles its growth each day, and it takes sixteen days to cover a pond. How many days will it take to cover half the pond? Think that one out, and then have a look at the answer given farther on.

"THE BOY WHO KNEW EVERYTHING!"

Ever met Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars? Readers of our companion paper, the "Magnet," will need no introduction to the "cute guy" from the Yewnetted States, but those readers who are not familiar with Fish will get to

know all about him in next Wednesday's full-of-pep yarn of Tom Merry & Co. He pays St. Jim's a visit and does he make things hum! Every minute he's at the school is packed with fun and laughter.

Illimitable confidence in his own abilities is the chief trait in the character of the Transatlantic visitor, and there's nothing he cannot do—at least, so he gives St. Jim's to understand. But when it comes to action—well, Tom Merry & Co. soon sum him up as all "gas." Fish's adventures at St. Jim's are a perfect scream, and his antics will keep you in fits of laughter throughout this sparkling long yarn. Look out for it!

RATS!

That sounds like a rude reply, but the people of Upsala, in Sweden, found it difficult to "reply" to a plague of them until—well, let me tell you the story from the start. The rat menace grew and grew in Upsala, and the city fathers, in an effort to stem the rat tide, ordered all people to take good care of their cats, offering free milk and meat to the owners of them. Whereupon, the cat population increased, while at the same time the rat population decreased! But that wasn't the end of the trouble for Upsala. The cats began to get out of hand, going about in hordes, doing a lot of damage to property, and frightening the people. So the city fathers put their thinking caps on again and evolved a new scheme. Now, to everyone bringing in a dead cat a small sum of money is paid!

A BATTLE TO THE DEATH!

Talking of rats, I was reading the other

PEN PALS COUPON

16-5-36

day of one that had a heated argument getting to grips with all the correspondence I have received about this great story. As fast as I answer letters more arrive. However, I'm happy to have this evidence of the tremendous popularity of this great story.

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

I've had a very busy time this week getting to grips with all the correspondence I have received about this great story. As fast as I answer letters more arrive. However, I'm happy to have this evidence of the tremendous popularity of this great story.

In next week's chapters Wharton is once more in the wars with his Form-fellows. The obstinate and self-willed junior, never counting the odds against him, sets up to defy the Removites in a matter of sport, with results that are all too painful and humiliating to the proud Wharton.

As usual there will be more illustrated jokes, for which the senders will receive half-a-crown each, and Monty Lowther is in fine form again. Don't miss this next grand number, chums—order early.

A WRITING RECORD!

How many words do you think you could write on an ordinary postcard? With great care you might get a thousand. But that number falls a long way short of the record, which is no less than 30,000! Just imagine it—3,000 more words than there are in the St. Jim's story in this number. The expert penman who performed this remarkable feat, which, incidentally, is a world's record, was A. V. Barnes, of Salford. Another achievement of his was to write all the letters of the alphabet on a space about as big as a pin's head!

RIGHT OR WRONG?

The solution of the water-lily puzzle is fifteen days. On the fifteenth day it is half the area of the pond, and doubling its size on the sixteenth day, covers it.

TAILPIECE.

Plumber: "I've come to mend the tap you wrote about, ma'am."
Housewife: "But I didn't send for you."
Plumber: "Aren't you Mrs. Smith?"
Housewife: "Mrs. Smith left here two months ago."
Plumber: "Lumme! Fancy sending for me to do a job and then moving!"

THE EDITOR.

Robert Parker, 59, Renfrew Avenue, Ottawa, Canada; stamps; age 15-17.

Miss Irene Jennings, 33, Trinity Street, Islington, London, N.1; age 15-17; girl correspondents; stamps, sports; overseas.

Miss Ellen Fletcher, 32, Trinity Street, Islington, London, N.1; girl correspondents; stamps, sports; overseas; age 15-17.

William V. Jones, 11, Worcester Lane, Four Oaks, Warwickshire; stamps; age 11-13.

Lorne Adams, 1145, Lajoie Avenue, Apt. 8, Montreal, Canada; sports, baseball, movies; U.S.A. especially.

Dick Reid, 18, Chichester Road, Belfast; age 10-12; cricket, football; South Africa.

Miss H. Buffa, 75, Skinner Street, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa; girl correspondents; age 18-19; snaps, post-cards; U.S., Canada, China.

Maurice Belchick, 9, Kербela Street, Bethnal Green, London, E.2; sports; age 11-15.

New World Film C.C.; members under 20; Sec. D. Whyte, 31, Woodlands Crescent, Prestwich, Manchester.

Dick Shiner, 820, Sellkirk Avenue, Victoria, B.C., Canada; Europe, British Empire; stamps, etc.

Raymond A. Firth, Daisy Lea, Canada Drive, Rawdon, Yorks; pen pals.

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A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

James Crawford, 1, Macfarlane Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire; age 13-15; Scouts; S. Africa.

Stanley Burrage, 25, Grosvenor Road, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London; age 15-17; overseas; radio, films.

Peter Bryceon, Union of British Youth, 40, Earls Court Square, London, S.W.5; overseas; under 21; aviation and rhythm sections.

Robert T. McCallum, 30, Hay Avenue, Brakspan, Transvaal, South Africa; pen pals.

Geoffrey B. Miller, 29, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa; age 13-18; stamps.

Miss Marjorie Cooper, 29, Leonard Road, South Chingford, London, E.4; girl correspondents; age 14-16; snaps, games.

"Fatty, old sea!"
"Hallo!" said Fatty. "That you, Redfern?"

"Yes; I've got a message from Figgins. Old Ratty is watching like a dozen cats, and he's got Sefton on the job, too. It will be difficult to get you any more grub, so you'd better be careful with Tom Merry's lot, and make it last—see?"

"There's some left," said Fatty Wynn; "enough for my brekker."

Redfern chuckled.

"Enough for the whole day for any other chap!" he said. "Make it last, Fatty. We're all putting our heads together, and we'll jolly well get some more to you, somehow, if we can. It will be jolly hard, but we'll try. Only don't think we've forgotten you; we haven't."

"Right-ho! Get in some grub if you can, Reddy, for goodness' sake!" said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "I want to keep up the hunger-strike, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha! Right-ho! So long!"

And Redfern scudded off. Figgins came out of Sefton's study with a red face, and rubbing his palms together. Redfern joined him in the quadrangle.

"All serene! I've jawed to Fatty," said Redfern. "Did Sefton lay it on?"

Figgins grunted painfully.

"Two on each hand, and regular nippers!" he said. "Never mind; we've done him in the eye, so it's all right."

And they went into the Fourth Form Room.

The School House fellows gave them inquiring glances. Fatty Wynn was not with them, so it was evident that the unfortunate junior was still under detention in the punishment-room.

Mr. Lathom was not in the Form-room yet, and the juniors gathered round Figgins & Co. excitedly.

"Isn't Fatty out yet, bedad?" demanded Reilly.

Figgins shook his head.

"Ratty bowled out his dodge about chalking his chivvy," he said. "He's given him another twenty-four hours' choky."

"On bread and water?" asked Blake.

"Yes; on hunger-strike."

"And we shan't be able to get any more grub to him unless a giddy miracle happens," said Kerr disconsolately.

Arthur Augustus mounted upon a form. There was a very determined look upon his noble features. He raised a hand to enjoin silence. It was clear that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was going to make a speech.

"Gentlemen—" he began.

"Hear, hear!" said the Fourth Formers.

"Gentlemen, I wish to remark that the time has come for action! Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! Our esteemed Form-fellow Wynn is in duwance vile, the powahless victim of the wabid wage of Watty—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well put!" roared Blake. "Keep it up!"

"The wabid wage of Watty!" remarked Arthur Augustus, very pleased with the expression. "Gentlemen, are we going to take this lyn' down? What becomes of the honah of the Fourth Form and the twadition of the School House? Gentlemen, I wise to remark th it is up to us to stand up for Fatty Wynn in the hour of need—"

"Hear, hear!"

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"I suggest, therefore, that we put it to Mr. Lathom, who is a good sort, that a Fourth Formah ought not to be shut up like this on bwعاد and watah—"

"Bravo!"

Mr. Lathom came in at that moment. The little Form-master looked surprised at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy elevated upon the form, and the juniors standing out of their places talking excitedly.

"My boys," said Mr. Lathom mildly, "what is all this? D'Arcy, get down from that form at once. Go to your places, boys!"

The Fourth Form hesitated. But Arthur Augustus did not hesitate. As he explained afterwards to Blake, it was the proper place for a D'Arcy to lead, and he led. He jumped off the form, and advanced towards the surprised master of the Fourth.

"Pway allow me to speak, Mr. Lathom," he began. "It is a vevy important mattah. A membah of this Form is detained in duwance vile—"

"What!"

"Mr. Ratcliff declares that poor old Wynn is to remain for anotheah twenty-four hours a pwisonah on bwعاد and watah," resumed D'Arcy. "You are pewwaps aware, sir, that Wynn has declared a hungah-stwike. As Wynn is a membah of this Form, we think it is up to you, sir, to chip in!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "Is not Wynn here? I fully expected to see him in class as usual this morning."

"He's got another twenty-four hours on bread and water, sir," said Figgins.

"He refuses to touch the bread, as he has declared a hunger-strike, sir. And Mr. Ratcliff is watching that we don't get any grub to him. We all think you will interfere, sir, as Wynn's Form-master."

"Yaas, watah, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom.

"I shall certainly speak to Mr. Ratcliff. Pray keep order for a few minutes while I am gone!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Lathom left the Form-room. The kind little gentleman was very much disturbed. He looked into the Fifth Form Room, where Mr. Ratcliff was already busy with the Fifth. Mr. Ratcliff was calling Cutts over the coals when Mr. Lathom blinked in over his spectacles.

"I should like a word with you, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Fourth Form master. "Very well," said Mr. Ratcliff.

He came to the door, with a grim expression on his face. He guessed what was coming, and was quite determined not to make any concession whatever.

"About Wynn," said Mr. Lathom hurriedly. "He has not come into class—"

"He is still detained, sir. He attempted to deceive me by a trick into believing that he was ill. He will remain in the punishment-room till to-morrow morning."

"Do you not think, Mr. Ratcliff, that that is an excessively severe punishment for a junior boy, whatever he may have done?"

"I must observe that I am the best judge of that, sir," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I must be allowed to keep discipline in my own House in my own way. However, to reply to your question, I do not think that it is severe."

"I cannot agree with you."

"I am sorry for that!" said Mr. Ratcliff satirically. "I must, however, adhere to my own opinion, with all respect to yours, Mr. Lathom."

Mr. Lathom grew very pink.

"I have some authority over Wynn, as he is in my Form!" he said warmly. "You seem to have forgotten that circumstance, Mr. Ratcliff."

"Not at all, sir. But first of all comes my authority as Housemaster. I'm sorry your views do not agree with mine. But it cannot be helped. Our methods are quite different."

"I am glad to say they are!" said Mr. Lathom, whose kind temper was growing a little excited. "I should be sorry to treat any boy as you appear to consider judicious, Mr. Ratcliff. I hear that this boy has declared what he calls a hunger-strike, and has refused to touch the food you have sent him."

"Quite so!"

"Is not that a reason for releasing him and punishing him in some other way, if you do not consider that he is already sufficiently punished?"

"No, sir. It is a reason for treating him with greater severity than before, in my opinion. I cannot permit my authority to be flouted!"

"If the boy should become ill—"

"I am keeping him under observation. I do not consider that there is any danger of that."

"You decline to order Wynn's release, then?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"I fear that I must decline."

"Then I shall have to consider whether it is my duty to acquaint Dr. Holmes with the matter, and ask his opinion!" said the Fourth Form master tartly.

"If you wish to cause friction between the headmaster and a Housemaster, you are at liberty to make the attempt, Mr. Lathom!"

"I—I did not mean that," said Mr. Lathom, a little dismayed. "I should be very sorry to cause friction. But I cannot approve of this treatment of Wynn, and, unless he is released, I hardly know what I ought to do. I do not want to speak to the Head about it. But—"

"Pray leave the matter in my hands, sir. I assure you that I am quite capable of dealing with it; and you must remember, too, that the first trouble arose out of a complaint you yourself made to me concerning Wynn's insolent conduct," added Mr. Ratcliff, with a bitter smile.

"That was a mistake. I have explained—"

"Quite so. But, to tell the truth, Mr. Lathom, you are keeping me away from my work, and, really—"

Mr. Lathom walked away. The New House master returned to the Fifth, feeling quite easy in his mind. Mr. Lathom was not likely to do anything that would bring upon him the reproach of causing trouble between the Head and a Housemaster.

The Fourth Formers watched Mr. Lathom's face as he came back into the Form-room. They did not read success there.

"Is it all wight, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mr. Lathom looked worried.

"I have spoken to Mr. Ratcliff," he said. "We do not agree, unfortunately. I shall consider what is best to be done. Meanwhile, we shall now go on."

The Fourth Form settled down to lessons. They knew that Mr. Lathom had done his best, and they were grateful. But while Mr. Lathom was considering what was best to be done, Fatty Wynn was still in the punishment-room, and he had consumed the last of his supplies—and the hunger-striker was getting to the end of his tether.

CHAPTER 14.

A Startling Discovery!

DINNER-TIME had come. Fatty Wynn heard the bell. But there was no dinner for the prisoner of the punishment-room.

The last of the provisions had been consumed, and nothing remained to be eaten but the dry bread upon the table, which the hunger-striker was determined not to touch.

Fatty Wynn knew that his friends had done their best for him. But they had not succeeded in conveying any further supplies into the punishment-room. They were at the end of their resources, and the hunger-striker was at the end of his tether.

Mr. Ratcliff came into the punishment-room soon after dinner. He found the prisoner in a truculent mood, and the loaf untouched. But Fatty Wynn was not looking pale now that the chalk was washed off; his fat, rosy face was the picture of health. The little dodge had failed. But another scheme was working in Fatty Wynn's mind. His faculties were sharpened by privation.

"I see that you are keeping up your foolish obstinacy, Wynn!" said Mr. Ratcliff, with a glance at the uncut loaf.

"I shall not touch that loaf, sir!"

"If you prefer to remain hungry, you may please yourself, Wynn!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "I have no doubt that a little abstinence will be beneficial to you, considering the state you have put yourself in by greediness and over-eating!"

"I am perfectly fit, sir!" said Fatty indignantly. "I'm due to play in the match this afternoon, too. If you don't think I'm fit, you can come and see me bowl!"

"I'm glad to hear that your confinement is not telling upon your health, Wynn!" said Mr. Ratcliff, with a sarcastic smile.

"I didn't mean that, sir!" said Wynn.

"Probably not. Well, as it would not be good for you to be unoccupied this afternoon, you may write out and construe a hundred lines from Virgil!"

"It's a half-holiday, sir!"

"I am aware of that!"

Mr. Ratcliff turned to the door.

Fatty Wynn's eyes burned.

"I want to be let out," he said. "It's a half-holiday, and you've no right to keep me here, Mr. Ratcliff."

"No impertinence, Wynn!"

"If I should do anything desperate, sir, you'll be to blame," said Fatty morosely.

"Fortunately, I have brought my cane with me," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Hold out your hand, Wynn. You must not say absurd things like that."

"Very well, sir," said Fatty, between his teeth. "You'll see!"

"Hold your foolish tongue!" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly.

And the Housemaster went out and locked the door, leaving Fatty Wynn with smarting palms.

The afternoon was long and weary to the imprisoned junior. He was really hungry now. But he would not touch the loaf. After all, a loaf would not have made much difference to a first-class appetite like Fatty Wynn's, when he had missed his dinner.

He had some hope that one of the Shell fellows might get into communication with him again. He dragged the table to the window, stood upon it, and looked out. He had a view of a blank wall and a strip of sky between the bars of the window. No one came in sight. As it was a half-holiday, the juniors would all be on the playing fields or the river. But Fatty Wynn knew that they



From under the bed Fatty Wynn crawled out, a broad grin upon his plump and ruddy face. "Hallo!" he said calmly. "Wynn!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "How dare you! You shall be punished for this trick! You shall be flogged!"

would leave no stone unturned to help him if they could.

The fact that they did not come proved that Ratty was on the watch. Fatty Wynn could picture the sour-faced man sitting on the bench under the elms with his newspaper or a book. Later in the afternoon there came a tap at the door of the punishment-room.

Fatty Wynn hurried over towards it.

"Hallo!" he whispered.

"How are you getting on, Fatty?" came Figgins' voice.

"Rotten!" replied Fatty. "I'm famished!"

"We can't get anything to you; Ratty is watching. Sefton's on my track, too—I can't stay a minute!" said Figgins hurriedly through the keyhole. "I'm sorry, Fatty! We're holding a council of war about it. We'll do what we can."

"Thanks, Figgy, old man. I know you will!"

"We're trying to get Lathom to interfere. You've got the bread there, I suppose?"

"I haven't touched it," said Fatty Wynn. "I'll die first! I'll show old Ratty that I mean business, hang him!"

"Poor old Fatty!"

"I say," whispered Wynn through the keyhole. "I'm going to take it out of Ratty. Don't be alarmed when you hear. I—"

Fatty Wynn broke off as a sharp voice was heard in the passage outside. The voice of Sefton, the bully of the Sixth.

"Figgins! You young rascal! Follow me to my study at once!"

"Good-bye, Fatty!"

"Good-bye, Figgy! Sorry!"

Fatty Wynn was left alone again. He was in a furious temper. It meant the cane for Figgins—he knew that. And Figgins had not been able to help him,

either, only to whisper a few words of encouragement.

Mr. Ratcliff had set Fatty Wynn a task of Virgil. He picked up the volume of the esteemed Latin poet and kicked it round the room, and dribbled it to and fro till the covers came off. That relieved his feelings a little. His hunger was sharper than ever.

But he did not touch the loaf. The fat Fourth Former was in deadly earnest; he was of the stuff of which heroes are made.

He knew that Mr. Ratcliff would come in again, or send Joskins in, about tea-time, and towards that hour he began to make preparations.

His first step was to strip off his clothes; the afternoon was very warm in the confined space of the punishment-room, and it was rather a relief than otherwise to get rid of his Etons. He twisted up the bolster, pillows, and sheets from his bed, and stuffed out his clothes with them, buttoning the jacket over the bolster and pinning it to the stuffed trousers.

To the ends of his trousers he attached his boots, jabbing holes with his penknife, and using the laces to fasten them in place.

By that time he had made up a dummy in a very good imitation of himself, but minus the head. That important part he manufactured of a pillow, stuffing the end of it into the neck of the jacket, and fastening the collar round it.

With his penknife he cut fragments from the hearthrug, which was of coarse matting. These he fastened upon the dummy head to represent hair.

In the light from the window the dummy could very easily be seen to be a dummy. But Wynn did not intend it to be seen in the light.

In the corner of the room were a couple of pegs for hanging clothes. Fatty Wynn put his braces round the neck of the figure and hung it to the peg nearest the corner, where it was in the shadow.

To anyone entering the room the figure looked exactly like a junior in Etons hanging by the neck from the peg.

The head, naturally, dropped over the breast, so the face would not be seen; and in the shadow the matting looked sufficiently like hair.

Fatty Wynn surveyed his handiwork with considerable satisfaction.

"I told him he'd be startled if he came in and found that I'd done something desperate," murmured Fatty Wynn. "If that doesn't startle him I'll eat my hat!"

And Fatty Wynn sat down in his underclothes to wait patiently for the advent of Mr. Ratcliff.

There was a step in the passage at last, and, quick as a flash, Fatty Wynn slipped under the bed.

He lay there, completely concealed from sight, as the door opened.

Joskins, the page, came in, carrying a tray, upon which was a new loaf and a jug of water.

Joskins paused, looking round in surprise for the junior.

Then he caught sight of the figure hanging in the corner.

Joskins stared at it blankly for a moment, his eyes nearly starting from his head, and then he let out a terrific yell.

The tray slipped from his fingers and crashed upon the floor at his feet.

Joskins, pale of face, and frightened out of his wits, tore towards the door again.

"Help! Murder! Ow! He's hanged himself!" shrieked Joskins. "Help! Master Wynn 'ave hung himself! He's dead! Help!"

CHAPTER 15.

A Shock for "Ratty"!

THE yell of the terrified page rang through the New House.

Mr. Ratcliff, who was about to follow Joskins into the room, was bumped into by the page as he rushed out, and very nearly floored.

He gasped Joskins fiercely by the collar.

"What do you mean?" he shouted. "Silence, you fool!"

But Joskins was not disposed to silence just then.

"Elp!" he shrieked. "Elp! He's dead! Master Wynn 'ave 'ung himself with his braces!"

There was a crowding to the spot immediately. Mr. Ratcliff, pale as death, released Joskins, and rushed into the punishment-room. Monteith and Sefton were only a second after him. Other fellows crowded in. Voices were buzzing through the House. Like wildfire the news rang through the New House—Fatty Wynn had hanged himself in the punishment-room, and Joskins had discovered his dead body.

A thrill of horror rang through the House at the news.

It was buzzed forth from the New House to the quadrangle; it reached the School House, and sent a thrill of horror there.

Fellows came flocking over to the New House.

It was marvellous how quickly the

dread news spread over the whole of St. Jim's from end to end.

Fatty Wynn had committed suicide.

His body had been discovered hanging in the punishment-room. He had been driven to the desperate act by the cruelty of Mr. Ratcliff. The fellows, as they crowded into the New House, were in a mood to lynch the House-master.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ratcliff was in the punishment-room. He had doubted Joskins' news—or he had tried to doubt. But the sight of the still form hanging in the corner of the room convinced even Mr. Ratcliff.

His jaw dropped. He gazed at the form hanging by the braces from the peg in the dusky corner, his eyes bulging with horror and fear.

For a moment compassion for the reckless boy made itself felt in his hard heart.

But if so, it was only for a moment. Mr. Ratcliff was thinking of the consequences to himself. What would the school say? What would the Head say? What would the newspapers say? In that dreadful moment Mr. Ratcliff realised that there must be an inquest. The story would be all over the kingdom. Mr. Ratcliff and his drastic methods of governing his House at St. Jim's would be discussed in every newspaper in the United Kingdom.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Monteith, so taken aback that he had not the presence of mind to do the obvious thing—cut down the hanging body.

"The young ass!" "He's hanged himself!" muttered Sefton.

Figgins dashed into the room, with Kerr at his heels.

Figgins remembered what Fatty had whispered through the keyhole—that he was not to be alarmed whatever he might hear; but he was alarmed, all the same.

Figgins sprang towards the hanging body to cut it down. His hands were upon it, when his expression changed. He turned to Kerr, who was close behind him, and closed his left eye.

Kerr understood. "No good cutting him down," said Figgins. "There's no life left—not a sign of it! He must be left for the police."

"The police!" groaned Mr. Ratcliff.

"Will you telephone for the police, sir?" said Figgins.

"Good heavens! I—"

"Nonsense!" said Monteith, recovering himself. "The body must be cut down at once. Better telephone for the doctor, sir. There may be a chance yet."

Monteith caught hold of the hanging form, to jerk the braces off the peg. Then a look of wonder came over his face.

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

Figgins and Kerr groaned. Monteith gasped, and then burst into a yell of laughter. He could not help it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Monteith!" yelled Mr. Ratcliff.

"Are you mad? This is not a laughing matter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take the body down at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Excuse me, sir; it isn't a body!"

"What!"

"It's a dummy, sir!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

Then Monteith's laugh was echoed by a yell from the fellows in the room and the passage outside.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a moment Mr. Ratcliff was almost giddy with relief.

"It's all right, sir. The young rascal has stuffed his clothes and hung them up here, that's all," said the prefect.

Monteith lifted down the dummy, and brought it out into the light from the little window. Then it was patent to all that it was a dummy. The laughter redoubled.

Mr. Ratcliff's face was like a thundercloud now. For a few moments relief had been his predominant feeling; but now he realised that his terrors had all been for nothing—that he had been the victim of an astounding jape. He was almost stuttering with rage as he thought of it. His feelings now justified that eloquent expression of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy concerning the "rabid rage of Ratty."

"Where is Wynn?" he thundered. "He must be here! Figgins, fetch the cane from my study instantly!"

Figgins did not move.

"Do you hear me, Figgins?"

"I hear you, sir."

"Then obey me!"

Figgins stood quite still. Mr. Ratcliff was almost foaming. From under the bed Fatty Wynn crawled out, his plump form encased in his underclothes, which fitted his fat limbs exceedingly tightly. There was a broad grin upon Fatty Wynn's ruddy face.

"Hallo!" he said calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wynn!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"How dare you! How dare you, I say! You shall be punished for this! You shall be flogged—flogged!"

Fatty Wynn looked surprised.

"Flogged, sir! What have I done?"

"What!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff.

"You dare to ask me what you have done?"

"Yes, sir. I suppose there's no harm in taking off my clobber on a warm afternoon, is there, sir?" asked Fatty Wynn innocently. "I wasn't expecting company."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you hung up that—that effigy, Wynn, in order to make me suppose that you had committed suicide!" roared Mr. Ratcliff.

"No harm in a fellow stuffing his clothes to preserve their shape, is there, sir?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't dare to bandy words with me, Wynn!" spluttered the Housemaster. "Get out of this room, all of you! Wynn, put on your clothes instantly. I shall cane you now, and then you shall be flogged—flogged as you deserve, you young rascal! I—"

Mr. Ratcliff broke off as Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, hurried into the room, the fellows making way for him. The Fourth Form master was looking very much alarmed.

"What is this I hear?" he asked. "Is it possible that Wynn—why, here is Wynn, safe and sound. Thank goodness! Wynn, my dear boy, I am sure you would not be so wicked and foolish as to do such a thing! I was sure there must be some mistake. Dear me!"

"It was a trick!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "An infamous trick! Wynn hung up a dummy, sir, to give me the impression that he had committed suicide. What is your opinion of that, sir?"

"My opinion is that we should all be very glad that the matter is no worse, Mr. Ratcliff!" said Mr. Lathom tartly.

"Hear, hear!" sang out the juniors.

Mr. Ratcliff glared at them.

"Clear away immediately, all of you!" he shouted. "Mr. Lathom, I

shall be obliged if you will retire at once. I'm going to punish Wynn so severely that he will never wish to play such a trick again!"

Mr. Lathom's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

"Indeed! I do not say that I approve of such a joke, Mr. Ratcliff, but I think that Wynn has been sufficiently punished."

"I don't agree with you, and I'm about to make an example of him! Pray leave me to regulate affairs in my own House, sir!"

"Wynn, dress yourself," said Mr. Lathom, paying no heed to the infuriated Housemaster. "You will accompany me immediately to the School House."

"Yes, sir," said Fatty, with alacrity. He was already dressing, Figgins and Kerr helping him.

"Wynn, I forbid you to leave this room!" said Mr. Ratcliff, almost choking with rage.

"I am bound to obey my Form-master, sir," said Fatty Wynn.

"You will obey me, Wynn!"

"Mr. Lathom comes first, sir," said Fatty cheerfully. "I could not possibly disobey a master whom I respect, sir."

There was a chuckle from the juniors at this plain intimation that Fatty Wynn had no respect for Mr. Ratcliff.

The Housemaster made a furious stride towards him. Mr. Lathom calmly stepped in between.

Mr. Ratcliff paused. He could not proceed farther without committing assault and battery upon Mr. Lathom, and even the infuriated Ratty stopped short of that.

"Very well, Mr. Lathom," he said, in a suffocated voice, "you have ventured to interfere with me in my own House; you will answer for it before the Head."

"I am perfectly willing to do that," said Mr. Lathom. "In fact, I shall proceed directly to Dr. Holmes, and take Wynn with me. Are you ready, Wynn?"

"Yes, sir!"
"Then come!"

Fatty Wynn walked out of the room with his Form-master. The juniors burst into a roar of cheering.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"
"Silence!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff, but his voice was drowned in the roar.

CHAPTER 16.

"Ratty" Climbs Down!

DR. HOLMES' brow was very stern as he listened to what the Fourth Form master had to tell him.

Fatty Wynn stood silent while Mr. Lathom was speaking.

Mr. Ratcliff entered the Head's study a few minutes later. He realised that it would not do to have the opposite version told first without interruption. Mr. Ratcliff had done his best to calm himself. It would be worse than useless to present himself before Dr. Holmes in a towering rage. But try as he would to calm his nerves, he was trembling with anger and excitement as he came in.

Dr. Holmes met him with a cold glance.

"I am sorry to see that a dispute has arisen between two masters," said the Head. "Such a dispute is calculated to bring authority into contempt in the school. Wynn, you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And Fatty Wynn quitted the study without a glance at his Housemaster.

"I am sorry to see this!" Dr. Holmes repeated, with emphasis. "On certain points the authority of a Form-master and a Housemaster must overlap, but it should be the special care of each that there should be no friction. Such friction can only have a bad effect upon the discipline of the school!"

"I am aware of that, sir," said Mr. Lathom. "I hesitated very long before bringing the matter to your notice. I felt, however, that I could do nothing else."

"Quite so, Mr. Lathom; my remarks were addressed more especially to Mr. Ratcliff," said the Head.

"To me, sir!" said Mr. Ratcliff, trying to calm his voice, but not succeeding very well. "I fail to understand you, sir. Mr. Lathom deliberately entered the House that is under my charge, and interfered with me in the execution of my duty."

"I interfered to protect a boy in my Form from cruelty and tyranny!" said Mr. Lathom dryly.

"Tyranny, sir! You dare—"
"Calm yourself, Mr. Ratcliff!" said



Mr. Lathom was blushing with pleasure as he quitted the study. The kind little gentleman had never been known to go upon the warpath before, and it had made him feel very uncomfortable and nervous, and the Head's words were balm to him.

But the Head's words to Mr. Ratcliff after the Fourth Form master had gone were by no means balmy or comforting.

"I don't think we need discuss the matter, Mr. Ratcliff. You have erred upon the side of severity. Wynn has played a very alarming prank; but we must thank our good fortune that it was only a prank and not a serious matter. It is quite possible that a boy might have been excited to the pitch of doing something very foolish, Mr. Ratcliff. I must request you never, in future, to inflict this punishment without in the first place laying the facts before me."

Mr. Ratcliff found it difficult to speak. "Very well!" he gasped, at last. "Your wishes shall be obeyed, sir. I will do my best, and if I find it impossible to meet your views, Dr. Holmes, I shall have no resource but to resign my position in this school!"

Mr. Ratcliff intended this as a thunderbolt; but the Head received the thunderbolt with great equanimity.

"I should be sorry, of course, if you felt obliged to take such a step, Mr. Ratcliff," he said. "However, if you considered it advisable to do so, I should be the last to place any obstacle in your way. Good-afternoon, Mr. Ratcliff!"

Mr. Ratcliff almost staggered from the study. He was not likely to resign his extremely comfortable and well-paid position at St. Jim's; but it came into his mind that the Head might request him to resign, and he realised that it would be best for him to be very careful. For once, Mr. Ratcliff was cowed, and to the surprise and delight of the fellows in the New House he showed unmistakable signs of a disposition to "lie down."

Fatty Wynn, needless to say, was the hero of the Lower School.

He had taken a rise out of Ratty; he had put the obnoxious Housemaster in his place, and taken him down several pegs.

He had carried out his hunger-strike, even after the supplies had been cut off, and fellows who knew Fatty Wynn best knew what a terrific strain that must have been upon his constancy and courage.

But he made up for the hunger-strike now.

His friends—and their name was legion—marched him off to the tuckshop, and they planked down their cash with royal liberality, standing Fatty Wynn such a feed as had seldom been stood him before.

And the smile returned to Fatty Wynn's plump face, and when he had finished that tremendous feed, and had no room left even for another jam-tart, his expression was simply beatific. Which was a very happy ending to Fatty Wynn's hunger-strike!

(Next Wednesday: "THE BOY WHO NEW EVERYTHING!"—another sparkling long yarn of the chums of St. Jim's, featuring Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee of Greyfriars. Don't miss it!)
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,474.

HARRY WHARTON ASKS FOR TROUBLE—AND GETS MORE THAN HE CAN MANAGE FROM BOB CHERRY!



Bob Cherry, the victor of the fight, walked away with his supporters, leaving Wharton leaning against the wall, dazed and aching all over from the licking Bob had given him.

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Cherry, cool, and little awed by new surroundings, Bob Cherry comes to Greyfriars. He is japed by a junior who tells Bob his name is Wharton, but actually it is Peter Hazeldene, the cad of the Remove.

While Bob is having an interview with the Head, Hazeldene causes his box to be broken open, and a crowd of fellows cheerfully help themselves to the new boy's tuck. When Bob discovers this he goes on the warpath after Wharton, thinking that is Hazeldene's name.

He finds Wharton in Study No. 1, and empties an inkpot over his head—only to see, when Wharton turns round, that he has inked the wrong fellow! Bob apologises, but Wharton loses his temper and they come to blows, the new boy getting the better of the set-to.

Bob then resumes his search for the fellow who broke open his box. He spots Hazeldene in the passage, but the latter darts away down the stairs. Bob slides down the banisters in pursuit, but, reaching the bottom, he collides with Mr. Quelch and knocks him flying.

Lucky for Bob!

BOB CHERRY'S first impulse, as Mr. Quelch was knocked flying, was to flee unrecognised, but he did not follow it. He stepped forward to pick up the master's mortar-board and spectacles and to help the amazed master to his feet.

"Th-thank you, my boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as Bob's hand assisted him to rise.

"Here are your glasses, sir."
"Thank you. I was knocked down," said the master of the Remove. "Somebody came flying down the banisters and collided with me with great force."

"I hope you are not hurt, sir?"
"I am not very much hurt," said Mr. Quelch, rubbing his elbow ruefully, "but I am very much annoyed. Did you see the boy who came down the banisters? It happened so suddenly that I could not see whom it was, especially as my glasses were knocked off."

"Well, I saw him, sir," said Bob reluctantly.

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The MAKING of HARRY WHARTON!

By Frank Richards.

"Ah! And who was it, my boy?"

"I am a new boy here, sir," said Bob Cherry diplomatically. "I do not know the fellows by sight, sir—only a few of them."

"Ah! Yes, I see. But you can tell me whether it was a junior. Of course, it must have been. A senior would not descend the banisters in that absurd and reckless way."

"I think it was a junior, sir."

"Have you seen him before?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would you know him again?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"Then you shall point him out to me."

"If you please, sir, may I say—"

"Well, go on!"

"I believe there is a great rule against sneaking in Public schools, sir," said Bob Cherry demurely. "I am a new boy, and if I started by giving a fellow away, however much he deserves it, they might be down on me. Of course, I must do exactly as you tell me, sir; but, if you wouldn't mind, I'd rather not tell."

Mr. Quelch frowned for a moment, but then his face cleared, and he gave a short nod.

"Perhaps there is something in what you say, my boy," he said. "I should

be sorry to be the cause of your starting here on bad terms with your Form-fellows. I will not ask you to point out the delinquent."

"Thank you, sir. You are very kind."

And Mr. Quelch ascended the stairs. Bob Cherry's heart smote him a little. The master's unsuspectingness made his little stratagem very much like deception, and deception was repugnant to Bob Cherry.

"If you please, sir—" he exclaimed impulsively.

Mr. Quelch looked back at him.

"Have you anything to say to me, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir. It was—it was I who slid down the banisters and biffed you on the chest, sir," said Bob penitently. "I'm very sorry, sir. I didn't see you were there, and—"

"It was you?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry—"

The Remove master gave him a curious look.

"Well, I'm glad to see that you can be so truthful, Cherry," he said. "In the circumstances—especially as you are new here—I will overlook your fault, but mind that nothing of the kind occurs again."

"Thank you, sir," said Bob joyfully.

He had certainly not suffered by his truthfulness. He walked away in search of Hazeldene. For a time his quest was unsuccessful, but presently he caught sight of the practical joker of the Remove under the elms, talking to Billy Bunter.

Hazeldene caught sight of Bob at the same moment, and he suddenly left Bunter.

"I say, what's the matter?" asked Billy, blinking in amazement as Hazeldene darted away. "Where are you going, Vaseline?"

Hazeldene did not reply—he was in too great a hurry. Bob Cherry stopped as Hazeldene vanished round a corner of the Cloisters, and Tapped Billy Bunter on the shoulder.

"I say, kid—"

"Hallo, Wharton!" said the short-sighted Billy, blinking at him. "Where did you spring from? You weren't in the Common-room when we scoffed the new kid's grub, were you? I was against it, but I had half a dozen of the tarts. Thought I had better, to save

ANOTHER ROUSING INSTALMENT IN OUR SPECIAL YARN OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GREYFRIARS CHUMS.

them from being wasted. Rather a cool sort of rotter, that new chap—don't you think so?"

"I don't know about the rotter part of it," said Bob, shaking him. "You see, you Owl, I happen to be the new fellow, not Wharton. Who was that chap you were talking to just now?"

"Oh, that was Vaseline!"

"What the dickens do you mean, by Vaseline? That's not his name, is it?"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"No; his name's Hazeldene, but we call him Vaseline because he's such a slippery beast, you know."

"The rotter told me his name was Wharton. I'll Wharton him!"

And Bob Cherry ran into the Cloisters in search of the cad of the Remove. His intentions towards Hazeldene were not very violent, but he thought he ought to give him some instruction on the subject of opening another fellow's trunk.

But Hazeldene knew what he deserved, and he was very anxious to keep out of the new fellow's way. Bob Cherry caught sight of him disappearing from the Cloisters, and put on a burst of speed to overtake Hazeldene.

The cad of the Remove panted as he heard the footsteps close behind him. He ran on harder, but his foot slipped on a stone, and he stumbled. Something fell from his pocket and tinkled on the ground as he recovered himself and ran on.

Bob Cherry stopped himself just in time to avoid treading on the dropped article. He stooped and picked it up, and, somewhat to his surprise, saw that it was a photograph, and he gazed in admiration at the fair face and laughing eyes that looked at him from the frame.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob. "What a stunning face! What on earth is a rotter like that doing with this? Hallo, hallo!"

He started and lowered the photograph as Hazeldene came running back.

"Give me that photograph!"

Bob Cherry did not immediately obey. "Rats! I've got a bone to pick with you, and now's the time. You burst open the lock of my trunk—"

"That was an accident—"

"And that's a whopper," said Bob coolly. "I had an idea of wiping up the ground with you, and I really think I ought to do it, but—"

"Give me my sister's photograph, you cad!" shouted Hazeldene.

Bob stared in astonishment.

"Your sister?"

"Yes. Give it to me."

"There you are," Bob Cherry handed over the photograph at once. "I didn't know it was your sister. Blessed if I know how a worm like you came to have a sister like that! And I'll let you off that licking, you young rotter. But if you tamper with my things again—"

Hazeldene restored the photograph to his pocket, and his usual manner returned to him at once. For a moment he had shown a glimpse of a better self, the redeeming trait in a mean nature. Now he was the slippery customer again whom the Remove juniors had nicknamed Vaseline.

"I say, I'm sorry about that lock," he said. "It couldn't be helped, you know. It slipped down from the porter's shoulder—"

"Oh, I know all about that! No good trying to gammon me. You made me get into a row with a chap named

Wharton through telling me that was your name."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you chuckle at me, you image—" began Bob indignantly. But Hazeldene did not wait for him to finish. Bob looked like getting angry again, and Hazeldene hastily walked off. Bob Cherry returned to the House in a very thoughtful mood. He was not thinking of the trick Hazeldene had played him, or the row with Wharton. It was the laughing face in the photograph that was haunting his mind.

Ruictions in Study No. 1!

TEA in Study No. 1 at Greyfriars was not, as a rule, a peaceable meal, nor a cheerful one. Discord reigned in the study, the only really placable member of the company of four being Billy Bunter, who blinked upon everybody with equal good humour.

Bulstrode was on the worst of terms with Harry Wharton, and Nugent backed up his friend, so that he was hardly on speaking terms with the bully of the Remove. At the same time he had an uncomfortable feeling that even Bulstrode would not have been so hard to get on with if Harry's temper had not been so uncompromising.

Wharton and Nugent were alone on

Harry Wharton has had some rough times since coming to Greyfriars—mainly due to his sullen pride and passionate temper. But never has he had a more bitter experience than to be licked to the wide by the boy he forced to fight—Bob Cherry!

this particular afternoon when tea came round, and Nugent jammed the kettle on the fire, and Wharton cleared the table, each with the hope that they were to have the study to themselves. They didn't object to Billy Bunter, who was too harmless for anybody to object to him. Billy's only fault was a perennial impetuosity, and he would share cheerfully in anything that was going, and owe his whack with equal cheerfulness, explaining on all occasions that he was in a stony state, which he hoped would soon be relieved by the arrival of a postal order, which, by the way, very seldom arrived.

"I fancy we shan't have Bulstrode here," Nugent remarked, as he cleaned the teapot, preparatory to making tea. "He was very low in cash yesterday, and had only sardines left for his tea. Unless we stand him a tea he can't have it in the study."

"Jolly good thing, too," said Wharton. "There's no peace when that fellow's in the study."

Nugent grinned as he bent over the grate. He couldn't help thinking that the blame for the endless quarrelling that went on in Study No. 1 was not all on one side.

The door opened as Nugent was making tea, and Billy Bunter came in.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, his usual commencement to any conversation, "you don't mind my having tea with you, do you? I'm stony."

Nugent grunted.

"My postal order hasn't come yet," said Billy. "It's rather strange, as I've been expecting it for nearly a week. I say, the tea in Hall is simply beastly, you know—weaker tea than ever, and the bread-and-butter like slabs of cement. You don't mind my having tea with you? I see you've got cake and some salmon. You know how to do things, and no mistake."

"Oh, we don't mind, Billy!" said Nugent, grinning. "When that postal order of yours arrives, I think we'll frame it and hang it up on the wall."

"It's really coming, I believe, Nugent," said Bunter. "I believe I owe you two fellows several little accounts. The trouble is that the postal order won't be big enough to settle them all. But we must do the best we can. It's jolly nice of you to ask me to tea. When you're stony, I'll do as much for you—if I'm able."

"That's all right, Bunter," grinned Nugent. "You'll never be able, but we'll take the will for the deed."

"You may have Bulstrode to tea, too," said Bunter. "I hear he's broke, and he was going into the Hall for the school tea; but he said to Cherry that he couldn't stand it. He's sucking up to that new fellow, I believe. Do you know whether Cherry's people are rich?"

"Don't know, and don't care!" said Wharton, to whom the inquiry was addressed.

"Well, no need to be grumpy about it. I don't like a fellow who sucks up to a chap because he's rich, you know. Still, a chap who can always stand feeds is worth knowing. I must find out," said Bunter, with a sage nod of the head.

Billy Bunter's information was correct on one point. Bulstrode was making himself agreeable to the new fellow. When the tea-bell rang, Bob Cherry had been feeling a little lonely. He was accustomed to making himself at home wherever he happened to be, but in a big school like Greyfriars a junior was a mere nobody, and Bob had yet to make friends.

He had not yet been assigned to any particular study, that being left for his Form-master to consider and settle. The only fellow he had yet seen whom he was at all inclined to take a fancy to was Nugent, and he was the chum of the fellow who had become his enemy.

When the bell went for tea, about half the Remove flocked into the Hall. They never had the tea provided by the college if they could afford to furnish it themselves in their own studies; but when funds were wanting they had no choice.

Bob Cherry was getting hungry and feeling a little solitary. He went with the crowd of Form-fellows towards the dining-hall, and met Bulstrode in the doorway. Bulstrode was looking into the room with an expression of extreme disfavour on his face.

"Going in to tea, kid?" he asked, with unusual agreeableness, as Bob Cherry came by. Bob stopped.

"I suppose so," he said. "No good missing meals that I know of. There don't seem to be many fellows here, though," he added. "Don't they turn up to tea?"

"We're allowed to have tea in our studies, if we like."

"That's jolly."

"Of course, in that case, we have to buy things ourselves."

"Naturally. It's jolly, though. It's pretty cold in the Hall, and the grub doesn't seem to be first-class."

"I can't stand the grub here," said Bulstrode. "If I weren't stony, I shouldn't be coming here, I can tell you!"

"You usually have tea in your study, then?"

"Yes; there are four of us there."

"And all stony?" asked Bob sympathetically.

"Oh, no! But I'm on bad terms with two of them, and I'm not going to ask them to let me share their tommy," said Bulstrode. "As for the other, he's always stony and sponging on somebody. I'm left out. By the way, what study have you been put into?"

"I haven't been told yet."

"Then you'll have to feed here."

"I suppose so," said Bob.

"I'll tell you what!" exclaimed Bulstrode, as if struck with an idea. "If you like to stand a tea, we'll have it in my study."

Bob Cherry's face brightened. He didn't particularly take to Bulstrode, but, as a newcomer and a stranger, he was glad to be with someone, and the suggestion was certainly a good one.

"Right-ho!" he exclaimed. "It's a good idea! But where can we get the tommy?"

"In the school shop. I'll show you."

"Is there a school shop here?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"Yes, come on, and I'll show you the way. It's kept by Mrs. Mimble, the gardener's wife," Bulstrode explained, as he led the way. "It's open out of school hours. You can get ripping grub—if you can pay for it. Are you in funds?"

"Yes, pretty well."

"That's all right, then."

The two juniors soon reached the school shop.

Mrs. Mimble was glad to welcome a new boy to the list of her customers. New boys usually had cash to spend, and all was grist that came to Mrs. Mimble's mill. And Bob was certainly liberal in his purchases.

Bulstrode pointed out several articles that he said he could recommend, and Bob sampled them all. By the time the shopping was finished, Bob Cherry found that he had five shillings to pay, but he paid up cheerfully enough. Laden with their purchases, the two juniors left the tuckshop.

"This way," said Bulstrode, when they were in the School House again; and he led the way upstairs, and along the upper corridor, to the door of Study No. 1.

Bob Cherry halted.

"I say, is that your study?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bulstrode, looking at him. "What's the matter with it?"

"That chap Wharton hangs out here, doesn't he?"

"Yes; Wharton and Nugent are the two fellows I told you of. They're at tea now, I fancy. I can sniff the salmon."

"But I had a fearful row with Wharton this afternoon."

The bully of the Remove grinned.

"Well, that doesn't matter. This is my study as well as his. Wharton is only a newcomer himself, and he was shoved in here against my will. If he says anything I'll jolly soon shut him up!"

Bob Cherry still hesitated.

It did not seem to him exactly the thing to go into this study to tea after the scene with Wharton earlier in the afternoon. Yet, as Bulstrode said, it was not only Wharton's room, and Bulstrode certainly had a right to take in any guest he pleased.

If Wharton thought that Bob had returned there simply out of defiance, let him think so. Bob did not like the position; but there he was, with his arms full of groceries, and Bulstrode waiting for him. He had promised to stand that tea, and he was hungry himself. There was evidently nothing to be done but go in and make the best of matters.

"Aren't you coming?" demanded Bulstrode, opening the door of the study.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Yes, I'm coming."

They entered. Wharton, Nugent, and Bunter were just commencing their tea, and there was a fragrant odour of tea and salmon. The three looked up at once as the newcomers entered, and a dark frown settled over Wharton's face, giving warning that there was trouble to come.

"Hallo!" said Bulstrode. "I see you're having tea, and you've forgotten to ask me if I wanted any! Luckily I found a friend."

"You know very well that you're welcome," said Nugent quietly.

But Wharton did not speak. To him, Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, was never welcome, and he had not the easy tolerating nature of Nugent.

"Well, I don't want any of your measly tea," said Bulstrode graciously. "All I want is a little room for a feed. There's the kettle, Cherry. Fill it and shove it on the fire, and I'll see to getting room for our grub."

Bob Cherry picked up the kettle from the grate and looked round the room.

"Where am I to fill it?" he asked.

"There's a tap at the end of the corridor."

Bob left the study, kettle in hand. Wharton turned a scowling glance on Bulstrode.

"What have you brought that fellow here for?" he asked angrily.

"He's standing me a tea."

"I had a row with him this afternoon."

"You're always having a row with somebody, I think."

"I'm not going to have that fellow in this study."

"Your mistake; you are!"

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"I tell you I won't put up with it!"

Nugent tapped him on the arm.

"Quiet, old fellow. We've no right to object to any fellow that Bulstrode brings in, so long as he behaves himself."

Wharton shook Nugent's hand from his arm impatiently: His sullen temper was fully roused now.

"That fellow's not going to have tea here!" he said obstinately.

Bob Cherry was just entering the study again with the filled kettle. The colour flushed into his face as he heard Wharton's rude words, but he went quietly to the grate, and put the kettle down upon the glowing coals.

"Well, he is," said Bulstrode, who was not blessed with especial delicacy of feeling, and regarded the matter simply as one to be settled with a strong hand. "He's my friend, and he's standing me a tea. He stays here."

"Ahem!" said Bob Cherry. "If it's all the same to you, Bulstrode, I think I'll go. I don't want to stay anywhere where I'm not welcome."

"Rot!" said Bulstrode, who was already clearing a part of the table, and getting out the recent purchases from the packets. "You've got to stay. What are you going to do for tea, I'd like to know?"

"I suppose I can have tea in the Hall?"

"After just laying out five bob on grub?" said Bulstrode, in astonishment.

"Well, you must be off your rocker, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry hesitated.

It was certainly "hard cheese," but he did not feel inclined to sit down to tea with one of the owners of the study glowering at him, even if it stopped at that. Wharton was evidently looking for trouble.

"Oh, don't go!" exclaimed Nugent. "It's all right. You've no right to start ragging the new kid, Wharton. If you



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want to have it out with him with the gloves on, well and good; but for goodness' sake don't start henpecking!"

Wharton turned a sullen red. Nugent spoke impatiently, but the only effect of his impatience was to make the headstrong junior more obstinate than ever on that point.

"I tell you I'm not going to put up with it," he said doggedly. "The fellow can go—"

"Oh, I'll go!" said Bob. "I couldn't eat my tea with a face like that in front of me, anyway. I don't envy you your friend, Nugent. If I had to dig in with him it would turn my whiskers grey!"

"You're not going," said Bulstrode, crossing to the door and closing it. "Do you think I'm going to have you turned out of the study like that? There's the grub, for one thing."

"Oh, I'll leave that here!" said Bob indifferently.

"Well, of course, that makes a difference. Still, I'm not going to have an outsider like Wharton turning a guest of mine out of the study!"

"Yes; but—"
"Hang it all, you're my guest, aren't you? Well, then, it's an insult to me to go!" said Bulstrode. "You can go if you like, of course, but if you do, I consider that it's time you learned better manners."

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Well, if you put it like that—"
"I do put it like that. I can't eat your grub and see you turned out!"

"Oh, that's all right, Bulstrode!" said Billy Bunter. "I'll eat it if you like. I don't mind in the least."

"Shut up, you greedy young codfish! You see, Cherry, you can't go. Sit down and make yourself at home. If Wharton doesn't like my friends, he can go himself!"

Bob Cherry looked across the table at Wharton and Nugent.

"You see how it is," he said. "I came here as Bulstrode's guest, and I must stay if he makes a point of it."

"You shan't stay!" said Wharton.

"I must!"
"You won't!"

"Then it comes to a question of chucking out," said Bob Cherry, his eyes flashing, "if that's how it stands! I tell you plainly that I won't go! I'm here by Bulstrode's invitation, and he had every right to invite me, and I to come—"

"I should say so!" said Bulstrode.

"And so I'm going to stay," said Bob. "That settles it!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. Nugent tried to pull him back into his chair, but Wharton angrily shook away his detaining grasp.

"Are you going, Cherry?" he asked grimly.

Bob's eyes met his furious glance steadily.

"No, I'm not going."

"Then you'll be thrown out."

"Who'll throw me out?"

"I will!"

Bob Cherry quietly pushed back his cuffs.

"Very well," he said. "I'm ready. Begin!"



"If you don't get out of this study you'll be thrown out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Who'll throw me out?" asked Bob Cherry. "I will!" snapped Wharton. "Very well," said Bob, pushing back his cuffs. "I'm ready! Begin!"

But this was not the first time his passionate temper had hurried him into an unequal encounter; but he possessed at least one undeniable quality, that of courage.

Bulstrode, who was sorting out tarts from the paper bag, looked on at the scene with a grin. He disliked Wharton intensely, equally for his good and his bad qualities, and he was more pleased than otherwise to see him come to blows with the new boy. If Bob Cherry got the worst of it, he was quite ready to interfere on his behalf.

Nugent looked red and uncomfortable. As for Billy Bunter, he did not look on the scene at all. He was busy finishing up the cake, while his companions were otherwise occupied.

"You had better go," said Wharton, in a low and strained voice.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Go ahead with the chucking-out!" he said. "You didn't make such a good job of it before that I've reason to be nervous now!"

Wharton made a spring forward.

Bob Cherry's clenched fist went up, but the blow was not struck, for Nugent sprang forward at the same moment, caught Wharton by the shoulder, and swung him back.

Harry glared at him fiercely.

"What do you mean by that, Nugent?"

"I mean that you shan't attack Cherry while I'm here," said Nugent resolutely. "You're in the wrong, Harry."

"Mind your own business!"

"This is my business, since I've been fool enough to make you my friend," said Nugent, with hasty bitterness.

"I don't ask for your friendship."

"No need to talk about that. I say you shan't touch Cherry. You are in the wrong, and you ought to own up like a decent fellow."

Wharton breathed hard.

"Stand aside, Nugent!"

"I will not!"

For a moment it looked as if Harry Wharton would attack the only fellow

at Greyfriars who had ever offered him the hand of friendship.

But enraged as he was, some glimmering of right feeling remained which kept him from that step, savage and reckless as his humour was.

"Very well," he said thickly. "If you take his part, Nugent, I'm done. But I won't remain, if he does!"

And Harry Wharton swung sullenly out of the study.

"Good riddance!" said Bulstrode indifferently. "What you can see in that sulky brute to make a friend of him for I can't imagine, Nugent."

"That's my affair!" said Nugent, with unusual tartness.

And he, too, left the study.

Bob Cherry looked uncomfortable. For Wharton he did not care a pin, but he already liked Nugent, and he felt that he had driven him out. Billy Bunter looked round, and blinked owl-like at the juniors.

"Hallo! Is that fellow Cherry gone? What the dickens did you want to bring him here for, Bulstrode? He's too cool by half; and if he were here now, I'd be very much inclined to sling him out myself!"

"You'd better start then," remarked Bob Cherry genially.

Billy Bunter gave a jump.

"Hallo! I thought you had gone out. I suppose it was Nugent who went. It's a great affliction not being able to see. As both Wharton and Nugent are gone, they won't want any more of this cake, so I may as well finish it."

And Billy Bunter did finish it.

"Let's get to tea," said Bulstrode.

"Hallo! What are you looking down-in-the-mouth for? You're not afraid of Wharton, are you?"

"Hardly!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "But— Never mind! Let's have tea. I'm fearfully hungry, anyway."

"Right you are!"

"I'll have a cup of tea with you, if you like," said Billy Bunter. "I always like tea that's fresh made. Those tarts look ripping too. If you don't mind, I'll have tea with you fellows."

"You've had your tea, you glutton!" said Bulstrode.

"Only some salmon and cake," said Billy Bunter disparagingly. "You've got a good feed there. I'd like to have a snack with you, just to show Cherry that I don't object to his presence in the study, like some people."

"Why, you were going to chuck me out just now!" exclaimed Bob.

Billy Bunter was abashed for a moment.

"Oh, that was only—a figure of speech!" he stammered. "You see, what I really meant was that I wished you were going to chum up in this study with us for good. That's what I really meant. Of course, I'll stand you a feed in return when I'm in funds again."

"Feed away!" said Bob Cherry.

"There's enough, anyway. Feed away, and don't tell me any more fibs."

"They're not exactly fibs," said the unabashed Owl, starting on the sardines. "I always tell the truth, except sometimes, and then it's not really my fault. You see—"

"Dry up!" said Bulstrode. "Here you are, Cherry! This is jolly good tea! I thought we'd have the best Mrs. Mimble keeps as you are in funds."

"Good wheeze!" said Bunter. "Always have the best of everything when

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Not Thrown Out!

WHARTON stood for a moment, his hands clenched, his eyes blazing. The remembrance of his former encounter was in his mind, and he knew how little of a match he had been for the new boy of Greyfriars.

another fellow is doing the paying part of the business."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Certainly! I say, you fellows, I wish Cherry were going to study in here instead of Wharton. Do you think we could get Wharton to change out?"

"Wish we could," said Bulstrode, as he helped himself very liberally and started tea. "He's an ill-tempered beast! He broke my camera when he first came to Greyfriars, and the Form ordered him to pay for it. I'd like to see him sacked from the school. Can't see what Nugent wastes so much trouble on him for."

"Nugent seems a decent sort of chap," Bob Cherry remarked.

"Oh, he's all right!" said Bulstrode. "Not enough spirit, you know. He seems to take everything from Wharton. Wharton pulled him out the river once; but that wouldn't make me stand his cheek, I can tell you!"

"I dare say it wouldn't," agreed Bob.

"I'm a bit different stuff from Nugent, you see."

"Yes," Bob Cherry assented. "I can see you are."

Bulstrode looked at him quickly to see if he meant anything more than his words implied. But Bob Cherry was eating sardines, and his face was as grave as a judge's.

In the Gym.

DUSK had fallen on the Close at Greyfriars. The long shadows of the elms mingled with the growing gloom. A thin rain was beginning to fall, blurring the school windows from which the lights gleamed out into the quad.

Under the elms a figure paced bare-headed. It was Harry Wharton's. With his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and his eyes savage, Harry Wharton paced there, unconscious of the rain. The drops pattered on the leaves of the elms, and came scattering down over him, but he did not heed them. A footstep sounded in the silence of the Close, and a shadow loomed under the elms.

"Are you there, Wharton?"

Harry stopped his restless pacing as he heard Nugent's voice.

"I am here," he said coldly.

Nugent came towards him.

"I thought I heard somebody," said Nugent, with a cheerfulness of manner he was in reality far from feeling. He did not quite understand Harry Wharton, and he never quite knew to what lengths the boy's intractable, un-governed nature might lead him. "Aren't you coming to the gym for the boxing lesson, old chap?"

Harry bit his lip.

"I forgot," he said. "I thought you came to look for me because—because I—"

Nugent knew perfectly well what was in Harry's mind. He thought Nugent was coming to look for him because he was sulking, though he would not have put it in those words. Nugent was too tactful to let the touchy lad know that he had guessed correctly.

"It's time for the boxing lesson," he said, "unless you want to miss it. That would be a pity, as you are getting on so well with the gloves."

"I'm going to fight Bob Cherry to-night," said Wharton abruptly.

"Not to-night, old chap. You're no match—"

"How do you know I'm not?"

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"Well, I don't mean exactly that," said Nugent, who hardly knew what to say. "I mean he looks the build of a fighter, and your boxing is hardly up to the mark yet for you to take on an unknown quantity like that."

"I'm going to do it, all the same."

"I don't see what you've got your knife into Cherry so much for," said Nugent, looking puzzled. "He's a bit lively, and thundering independent for a new kid; but I believe he's a decent, good-natured chap."

"If you want to chum up with him, I'll—"

"I don't; though I might do worse."

It was on Nugent's lips to say that he had done worse, but he refrained. The patience of his kind nature was equal to the strain Wharton put on it. "I don't see what you hate him for."

"I don't hate him."

"Well, you've managed to fall out with him, anyhow," said Nugent. "As for your idea of fighting him, there's no reason why you shouldn't, if you feel inclined to. A round or two with the gloves on won't hurt either of you; but leave it till you've picked up a little more boxing. There's no sense in standing up to be licked."

"I don't see why you should assume that I shall be licked," said Harry Wharton doggedly.

"I fancy he's a bit above your weight at present, old fellow. In a week's time, though, you might be able to stand up to him."

"I'm not going to let him think for a week that I'm afraid of him."

"I don't suppose he thinks so. I don't suppose he's thinking about you at all."

It was rather an unfortunate way of putting it. Wharton flared up into sudden anger at once.

"No; you suppose he regards me with contempt, because he got the better of me this afternoon!" he exclaimed savagely. "I don't thank you for your opinion."

Nugent was silent. He did not know how to deal with Wharton, and everything he said seemed only to make things worse.

"I'll show him, at all events, that I'm not to be despised!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "I tell you, I'm going to fight him to-night. We can have it out in the gym. I'm ready for that round with the gloves, if you are."

"Come on, then!"

They went into the lighted gymnasium. There were a good many fellows there, and some of them glanced curiously at the two juniors. Harry's looks showed that he was in what the Remove usually alluded to as his "tantrums." Others besides Bulstrode had wondered what made Nugent so patient with his perverse chum.

"Hallo!" said Hazeldene, coming up to them. "Did you pick that up after a circus had passed, Wharton?"

"Did I pick up what?" snapped Harry.

"That face!"

There was a snigger from the fellows standing round, and Harry's white face went red. He clenched his fist, but Nugent pulled him away.

"You don't want to fight with the whole Remove to-night, do you?" he muttered impatiently. "Come on, and let's get going."

The chums soon had the gloves on. Much to Harry's annoyance, a ring of Remove fellows formed round them to watch the glove practice. Harry was fully conscious that his boxing was not quite up to form, and he was sensitive on the point of showing any clumsiness

before an audience, especially an unsympathetic one. His hard reserve made him many enemies, and the boys were not backward in showing their resentment.

"Slip into him, Nugent!" exclaimed Trevor. "What are you playing with him for? You won't teach him to box by missing him every time."

"I should say not!" said Hazeldene. "Besides, you all know that that fellow wants a licking. He has been asking for trouble ever since he came to Greyfriars. He needs a licking badly. And I think that Nugent, as his friend, ought to give him one!"

The Remove sniggered. Harry pretended not to hear what was said. But his cheeks turned red, and the tightening of his lips gave his feelings away.

"Nugent won't hit him," remarked Owen, shaking his head. "Nugent wants to train him gently by wrapping him in cotton-wool!"

"And soothing him with syrup!" said Trevor.

"And kissing him nighty-nighty on his baby brow," said Hazeldene. "Very nice and very touching. But a licking would do the business better. That new chap—Cherry—gave him a licking today, and, in my opinion, he's all the better for it."

Harry Wharton went scarlet. He lost his guard, and Nugent's glove came home on his nose harder than Nugent had intended. Harry staggered back, and an unfeeling giggle went round the ring of Removites.

"That's one for his boko, at all events!" commented Hazeldene. "Nugent looks as if he could weep over him. I really don't see why he shouldn't for that matter. Trevor, fetch one of the fire-buckets for Nugent to weep into."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

Harry Wharton swung round like a tiger upon Hazeldene. He was in no mood to be ragged, and the cad of the Remove saw that he had gone a little too far. He felt it, too, the next moment, as Harry's boxing-glove came with a sounding thwack upon his prominent nose. He staggered back against Trevor.

"If you want any more," said Harry Wharton savagely, "you've only got to say so. I'll fight you, if you like, or any fellow in the Form!"

The Remove growled. The challenge was not much to their liking, and several showed a keen desire to take Harry at his word.

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Trevor instantly. "I'm your man!"

"And I!" said Owen.

"After you, then!" said Hazeldene, rubbing his nose. "I'll be your second, Trevor. I fancy that sulky rotter has bitten off more than he can chew this time!"

"Oh, shut up, all of you!" growled Nugent, as Harry glowered round upon the unfriendly faces. "Why can't you let the fellow alone?"

"He challenged us!" said Trevor.

"He's got a fight on his hands already for to-night. Now do leave us alone for a bit!" said the worried Nugent. "As for you, Hazeldene, you'll get it in the neck if you don't shut up, I can tell you!"

"Got a fight on already, has he?" said Hazeldene. "And who is he going to fight?"

"The new chap—Cherry."

"Hallo, here comes Cherry with Bulstrode!" ejaculated Owen. "Let the sulky rotter alone, kids. If he's going to fight Cherry, I fancy he's got more than

he can manage on his hands. We'll see him licked, and serve him right!"

"Come on, Harry!" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton was still very enraged, but he turned to the boxing again. He knew that he had taken a difficult task in hand, and that there was no avoiding it now, and the better fitted he was for facing it the better it would be for him.

Hazeldene strolled across to the doorway, where Bob Cherry and Bulstrode had just appeared. There was trouble ahead, and in troublous times—unless it came home to him—Hazeldene was happy.

A Fight to a Finish!

BOB CHERRY glanced round the gymnasium with his usual coolness as he entered. He saw that his entrance had excited general interest in the Remove, and he wondered why. He was feeling very comfortable and contented after a good tea, and Bulstrode, in unusual good-humour, had offered to show him round the school. They had come to the gym on the way round.

"Seems to be something on," Bulstrode remarked. "I say, anything going on, Vaseline?"

"Yes. Don't you know?" asked Hazeldene, looking at Cherry.

Bob Cherry stared at him.

"I certainly don't," he replied. "How on earth should I know, Vaseline, or whatever your name is?"

"Well, a chap generally knows when he's got a fight on his hands, I suppose," said Hazeldene.

"Yes, I suppose so; but I haven't got a fight on my hands that I know of."

"Then you don't know that Wharton is slogging away with the gloves on for the purpose of staggering humanity with his prowess, and that you are to be the giddy victim?"

"No," said Bob shortly, "I didn't know it, and I'm not going to take your word for it, either."

Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders.

"You needn't," he said carelessly.

"Any of these fellows will tell you the same, and I suppose Wharton won't leave you in the dark long."

"It's a fact, Cherry," said Trevor. "The sulky brute's got his knife into you for something. Have you had a row with him?"

"We've had a little disagreement."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Bulstrode. "I say, Wharton wanted to chuck him out of Study No. 1 when I took him in to tea. Cool, wasn't it?"

"Just like Wharton!" said Owen. "How did it end?"

"Well, Wharton would have got chucked out himself, only he preferred to walk. I suppose he wants to get his own back now. You'll stand up to him, Cherry?"

"I don't want to fight him," said Bob.

"Not afraid, are you?"

"You'd better not ask that question twice, Bulstrode! I don't want to quarrel with you, but I don't like that sort of remark."

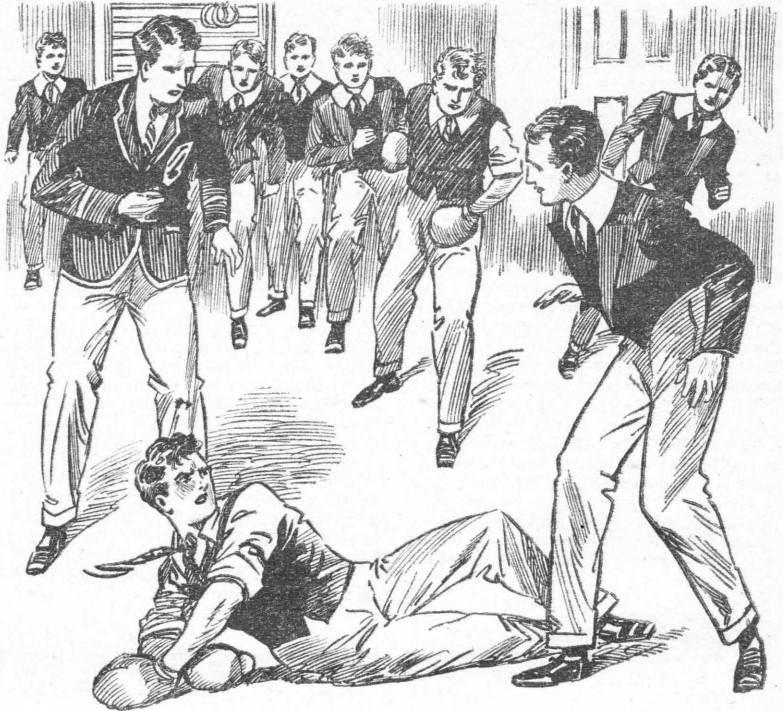
"Oh, keep your wool on! You'll have to face Wharton whether you like it or not if he's made up his mind. He's the most obstinate brute at Greyfriars!"

"Rather!" said Hazeldene. "He couldn't lick Cherry in a dog's age, but he'll try. That's his style."

"Come along, Cherry!" said Bulstrode, pulling the new boy by the arm. "Let's go over to them and have it out!"

Bob shook himself free.

"I'm not going to pick a quarrel with anybody," he said. "If he chooses to



Wharton lay upon the floor, too dazed and exhausted to move. "It's over," said Wingate. "It's not over!" gasped Wharton, making a frantic attempt to rise. "You haven't counted! I can stand up yet! Lend me a hand, Nugent, hang you!"

pick one with me, that's a different matter."

"Hallo!" exclaimed Carberry of the Sixth, coming into the gym. "What are you kids jawing about? Plotting some mischief—hey?"

"Oh, no, Carberry!" said Hazeldene. "It's only—"

"You oily young scoundrel! I've been looking for you! You haven't fagged for me at all to-day, and—"

"I've been ill, Carberry," said Hazeldene, dodging out of the bully's reach. "I have, really. You know I like fagging for you—"

"You lying young rascal!" said Carberry. "But what was that you were saying just now? Is this kid going to fight Wharton?"

"Yes; that's the programme."

"Good!" said Carberry. "I'll keep time for you. Come along, you kids, and I'll see to it; and if it's a good fight, I'll let you off your next licking as a reward!"

Carberry strode towards the spot where Nugent and Wharton had been boxing. They had left off now, Nugent deeming it advisable for his friend to get a rest before the encounter with Bob Cherry, which seemed destined to come off at once.

"Hallo, here!" said Carberry. "I hear that Wharton is going to fight Cherry, and I'm going to referee for you and keep time. Get a couple of sponges, Hazeldene. You can draw a basin of water, Bulstrode."

"Right you are, Carberry!"

"Chuck those gloves aside!" went on the senior. "You're not babies! You don't want those—knuckles are good enough!"

"I'd prefer gloves," said Bob Cherry.

"Afraid of getting hurt?"

"No; but I prefer gloves."

"Well, you're not going to have them!"

"Excuse me!" broke in the voice of Wingate, and the captain of Greyfriars

came quickly into the ring. "You are mistaken, Carberry! They will have the gloves on!"

Carberry glared at the captain. "I don't see what you want to interfere here for, Wingate!"

"I do!" said Wingate. "There's not going to be a bare-knuckle fight in the gym here if I can help it! There's no objection to two juniors settling their differences with a mill, but they've got to have the gloves on!"

"I don't see—"

"Well, it's not really necessary for you to see, Carberry," said Wingate, with a smile. "I'll take this matter in hand myself!"

Carberry scowled, and drew back. He knew that it was useless to oppose the captain of Greyfriars.

"Now off with your jacket, Cherry, and on with the gloves!" said Wingate cheerily. "I'll see you through this."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry; and he was quickly peeling off his jacket, which he handed to Bulstrode, who was to be his second.

"I don't want the gloves on!" said Harry Wharton.

The captain of Greyfriars gave him a quick glance.

"You've got to do as you're told!" he said. "There is such a thing as discipline here, Wharton, as I hope you will learn in time! And I fancy that before you are finished with Cherry, you will be glad that you had the gloves on!"

Wharton looked sullen. But Bob Cherry stepped into the ring briskly with the gloves on his hands, and Wharton had no choice but to follow suit.

"Just a minute," said Bob Cherry quietly. "I want to speak to you, Wharton. I haven't sought this quarrel with you, and I don't want to go on with it. It rests entirely with you."

Harry Wharton's eyes met Bob Cherry's with a steely glance.

"I'm going to fight you, and lick you if I can!" he said, between his teeth. "Get on with it!"

"Very well; I've said what I had to say."

The two juniors mechanically shook hands, and then the fight commenced.

In the first round Bob Cherry showed that he was the superior of the two in boxing skill and in the quickness of movement, and, in fact, in everything but bodily strength, in which, perhaps, Harry Wharton had a slight advantage.

Before a couple of minutes had passed Harry realised quite clearly that had the contest been with bare knuckles, it would not have lasted long for him. As it was, the incessant blows of the boxing-gloves were dazing him.

"Time!" called out Wingate, his eye on his watch.

The combat ceased for a minute's rest. Wharton was breathing hard, while Bob Cherry seemed as fresh as a daisy.

Bulstrode patted him on the shoulder. "You'll do, Cherry!" he said.

"You've got a fine style! I believe you could stand up to me for a few minutes."

"Really?" said Bob Cherry, looking him up and down. "Do you know, I think that's quite likely, and even for more than a few minutes, too. As a matter of fact, I think I could last you out, you know, and feel quite all right afterwards."

Bulstrode looked rather taken aback. He had not expected his kind patronage to be taken in this spirit.

"Time!" said Wingate.

The combatants faced each other again. More keen than ever grew the interest in the contest. Boys were standing three deep to look on.

The two juniors went at it hammer and tongs again. Some of Wharton's blows, planted with fierce strength, landed on Bob Cherry. But for every one that touched the face of Bob, at least two crashed upon Wharton.

At the end of the second round, Wharton was breathing heavily, and he sank upon the knee his second made for him. Nugent sponged his heated face.

He did not speak. He knew that whatever he might say it would be received in ill-part; but perhaps his face spoke plainly enough for him. He knew perfectly well that his chum was no match for Bob Cherry.

"Time!"

Harry Wharton stepped up to the fight again; his face was white, his eyes burning. Bruises were showing on the white skin, but he did not feel the pain.

Bob Cherry was calm and cool, and

not in the least danger of losing his judgment. But the anger was mounting like wine to Harry Wharton's head.

The third round was as keen as the previous ones, but it ended more badly for Wharton.

After a little sparring, a terrific right-hander caught him full upon the jaw, and though his feeble counter came, it was of no use. He was finished for that round. The blow flung him fairly on his back, and he lay gasping.

Wingate began to count.

"One, two, three, four, five—"

But at the count of six Harry Wharton staggered to his feet unsteadily, with his eyes ablaze.

A single blow would have sent him reeling to the ground again, but Bob Cherry did not strike it. He stepped back, with the evident intention of allowing his adversary time to recover, and Hazeldene laughed.

"Why don't you finish him, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry did not reply.

He filled up the rest of the round with sparring, and when time was called Harry Wharton was glad to sink upon his second's knee.

Nugent's face was very serious now, as he tended his principal. Wharton was to all intents and purposes licked, but he evidently intended to go on. He was full of dogged pluck, and did not know that he was beaten.

"Better chuck it now," Nugent whispered at last. "You can tackle him again later, you know; but now—"

Wharton shook his head.

"I'm not licked yet!"

"But the next round will finish you."

"You'll see."

Nugent was silent. It was useless to argue with one so obstinate, and the only thing to be done was to let Wharton have his own way, and allow the fight to go on to a finish. The finish could not be very far off now.

"Time!"

With his head reeling, and lights dancing before his eyes, Harry Wharton stepped into the ring; but so determined was he to keep on and control the weakness he felt creeping over him, that even Wingate could not see how bad a state he was in.

Bob Cherry faced him, and the fourth round commenced. It did not take the new boy at Greyfriars long to discover that his adversary was quite at his mercy, and that Harry Wharton was in his hands to defeat or to spare. Little as Bob liked the sullen nature of Wharton, he could not help feeling something of admiration for his grit and dogged pluck, and he held back the punishment he might have given him if he had chosen.

"Go it, Cherry!" sang out Hazeldene, ever ready to make mischief. "Don't

let him off. You can't hang it out all night, you know."

Wharton's face was black. He realised as he heard the words that his enemy was sparing him, and the humiliation was bitter to the proud and sensitive junior.

He rushed in savagely.

Two or three blows came home on Bob's face, and he staggered, and then he roused himself and struck out with equal fierceness.

Right and left, left and right!

The blows came home on Harry's face like hammer thuds, blinding in their force and bewildering in their swiftness. He staggered back, and fell helplessly to the ground. He lay there upon his back, too dazed and exhausted to move.

Wingate snapped his watch shut.

"It's over!"

Harry Wharton made a frantic attempt to rise.

"It's not over! You haven't counted! I can stand up yet! Lend me a hand, Nugent—hang you, lend me a hand!"

"It is over!" repeated Wingate sternly. "You have had as thorough a licking, Wharton, as I've ever seen a fellow have, and I must say that it serves you right. Even if you could go on, I should not allow you to do so, as I think this affair has gone quite far enough."

"I will go on! I will—"

"Hold your tongue!"

"I won't touch you again, Wharton," said Bob Cherry. "I think you're a spiteful rotter, if you want to know my opinion. If you want to have this out over again another time, you've only got to say so."

And putting on his jacket with Bulstrode's assistance, he walked away with a crowd of juniors.

Harry Wharton, who had regained his feet with Nugent's help, stood leaning against the wall, dazed. Slowly and painfully he donned his jacket. He had never felt quite like this before. He had had some rough times since coming to Greyfriars, but nothing like this. But for the gloves he knew he would have been badly battered. Even as it was, he was aching all over, and his brain seemed to be in a whirl.

"Let's get out of this, Nugent," he said huskily. "I—I'm feeling rotten. I—I suppose I've been a confounded fool; but I'll try again some day."

"Come along, old chap," said Nugent quietly, and he piloted his injured chum out of the gym.

Harry Wharton had yet to learn that pluck must be allied with chivalry.

Wharton's headstrong nature lands him in more trouble again in next week's gripping chapters. Make sure you read the further early adventures of the chums of Greyfriars.

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