

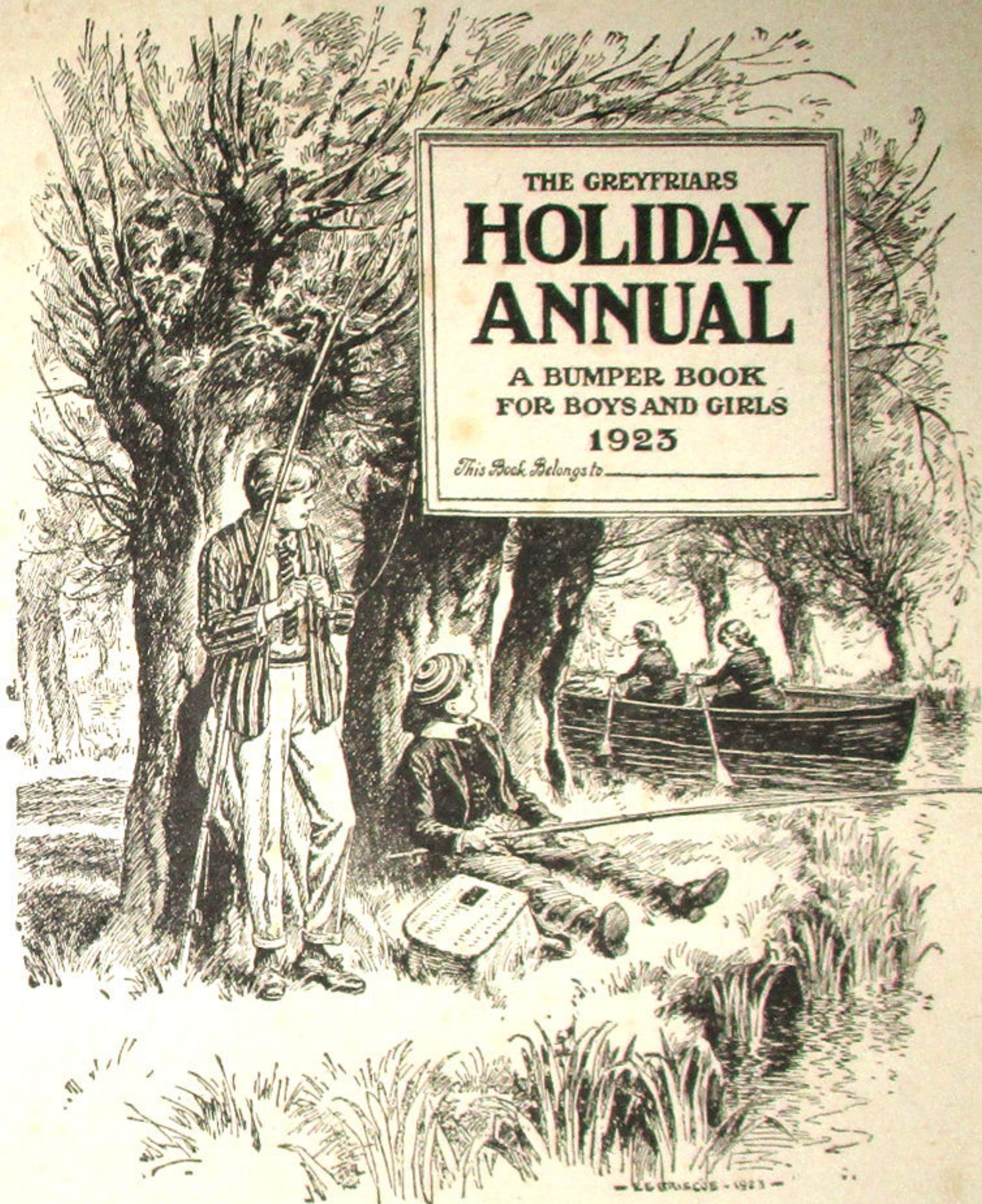
THE GREYFRIARS
HOLIDAY

1923 ANNUAL 1923
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



E. B. RHISCOE





THE GREYFRIARS
**HOLIDAY
ANNUAL**
A BUMPER BOOK
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
1923
This Book Belongs to _____

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

THE immense popularity of the previous issues of the Greyfriars HOLIDAY ANNUAL made the production of this—the volume for 1923—an exacting, but, at the same time, a pleasant task.

It is not too much to say that the expectations of a mighty host of my reader-chums are concentrated upon this volume, which now lies before them. It will be for them to pass the ultimate verdict upon it—and I am bold enough to look forward to that verdict with complete confidence.

The reason is not far to seek. The authors to whom I have entrusted the task of writing the letterpress, and the artists who have illustrated it, are well-known to British boys and girls as past masters of their art. Their popularity has long been fully established in the pages of the famous series of Companion Papers from which the HOLIDAY ANNUAL has sprung.

There is no need for me to call the attention of my old chums to the fact that the famous schools of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood—household words up and down the world—figure largely in the pages that follow; of course they do! So much goes without saying, to all readers the previous volumes of the "ANNUAL," at least.

In the attractiveness and variety of its contents, and especially by reason of its splendid school stories, the HOLIDAY ANNUAL may well claim to be the Holiday Book of the season. To the young its appeal is irresistible; and, if I be not mistaken, many of the seniors will be glad to give a place on the library shelf to a book which has in it the spirit of the good old schooldays, the magic of the playing-fields, and the reminder of the times when the thought of adventure overseas thrilled the very marrow of their bones!

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
Farringdon Street,
London, E.C. 4.



A Day with the Chums of Greyfriars!

[This Story is specially contributed by a reader of the Famous Companion Papers.—Ed. HOLIDAY ANNUAL.]

FOR years I had read of the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of the Greyfriars Remove. I had revelled in their japes, I had pictured myself sharing their joys and sorrows, and their fights and feuds and friendships. But I had never imagined, even in my wildest dreams, that I should ever meet these schoolboy heroes in the flesh.

I am just an average sort of fellow, with no wonderful virtues, and no particular faults—at least, I hope not.

My parents keep a farm on the borders of Kent and Sussex, and on leaving school, I went home to assist them.

We specialise in luncheons and teas for tourists, and, with my sister, I help to serve meals to weary cyclists and famished pedestrians.

Judge of our amazement when, one sunny morning in July, a party of not less than forty cyclists drew up at the farmhouse.

They dismounted from their machines, laughing gaily, and wheeled their bicycles into the two large sheds which stand in the yard.

"Public school boys," murmured my sister. I nodded.

"I can't quite make out from their caps which school they belong to," I said.

And then my eyes fairly started out of my head.

Amongst the chattering, laughing throng

I caught sight of a plump youth who wore spectacles.

"If that isn't the celebrated Billy Bunter," I said, "I'll eat my hat!"

"Billy Bunter!" echoed my sister in surprise. "You don't mean to say —"

"They are Greyfriars fellows!" I exclaimed. "They are the fellows we read about in 'The Magnet Library' and THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

We were so excited that we clean forgot our duties. We could only stand and stare in a fascinated sort of way at the cyclists.

At that moment a sunny-faced, curly-headed youth came strolling towards us. His cap was perched on the back of his head, and he quickly raised it and smiled at my sister. Then he turned to me.

"Lunch for forty, please," he said. "Rather a shipping order, what? Hope it won't take your breath away."

"I fancy we can cope with it, Master Cherry," I said with a smile.

"Eh? How did you know my name?"

"I recognised you from the sketches I've seen of you," I said. "It's a real treat to see you fellows in the flesh. We never thought we should have the honour."

"Indeed we did not," said my sister, smiling her sweetest smile which she reserves for special occasions. "What would you like for lunch, Master Cherry?"



At that moment a sunny-faced, curly-headed youth came strolling towards us, his cap perched on the back of his head. He quickly raised it, and smiled at my sister. (See page 3.)

"Cut out the 'Master Cherry,' if you don't mind, and call me Bob. So far as the grub is concerned, we'll have whatever you can give us. We've come a long way—we're making a tour through Kent and Sussex, you know—and we're as hungry as hunters—I might almost say as hungry as Bunters."

"We can give you cold chicken and salad, with apple-dumplings to follow," said my sister.

"Ripping! I say, you fellows, we're going to have the feed of our little lives!"

"Oh, good!" said Billy Bunter, squeezing his plump hands together. "Tell them to look sharp and get it ready, Cherry. I'm in the throes of starvation!"

"Not judging by your appearance, at any rate," chuckled Bob Cherry with a glance at Bunter's portly figure.

"By the way," added Bob, turning to me, "what is your name?"

"Jack Neville. And this is my sister Phyllis."

"Good! Perhaps you'd like to be introduced to our crowd?"

"We should love it."

Bob then performed the introductions. They naturally took some time, and Billy Bunter waxed impatient.

"I say, what about lunch?" he growled.

But no one heeded Bunter.

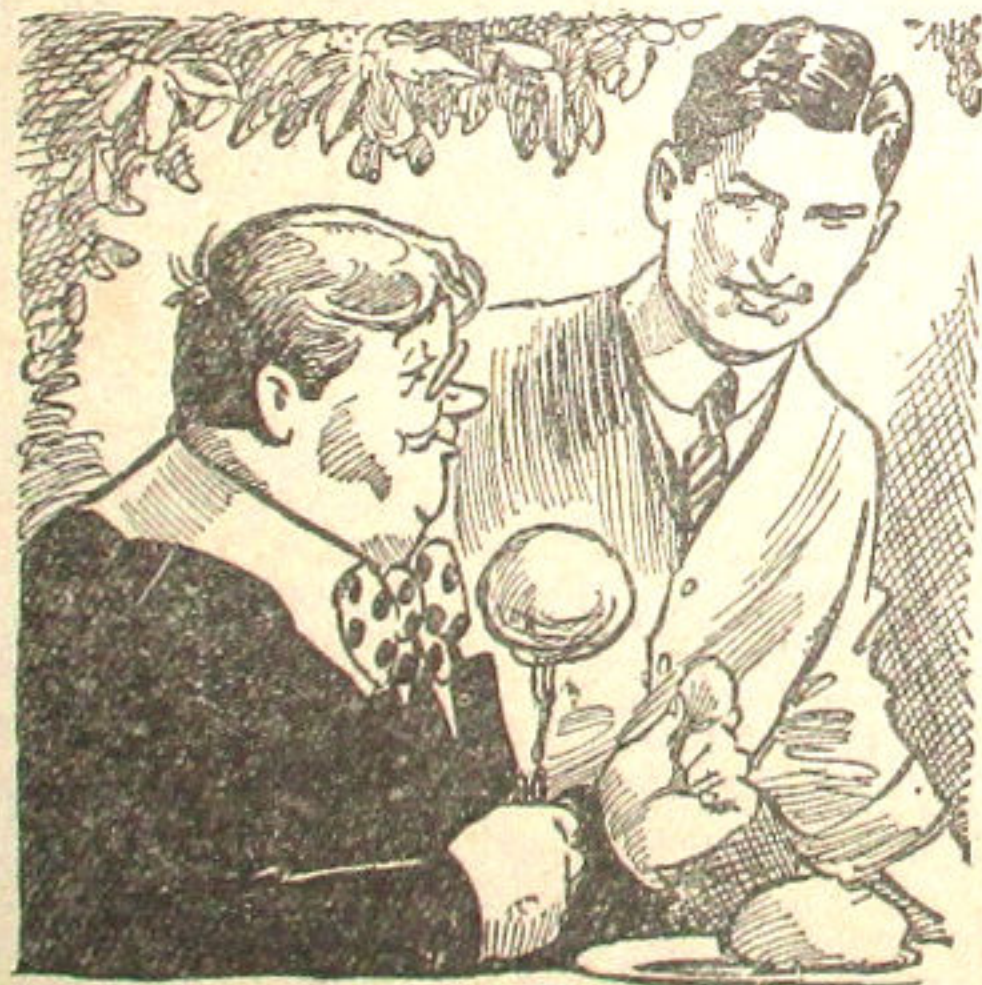
We chatted with Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, and found him an awfully decent sort. But then, we had known all along what a fine fellow he was.

We then had a brief conversation with Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull, after which Hurree Singh came forward, made a sweeping bow for my sister's benefit, and remarked that "the pleasure of meetfully encountering our esteemed and ludicrous selves was terrific."

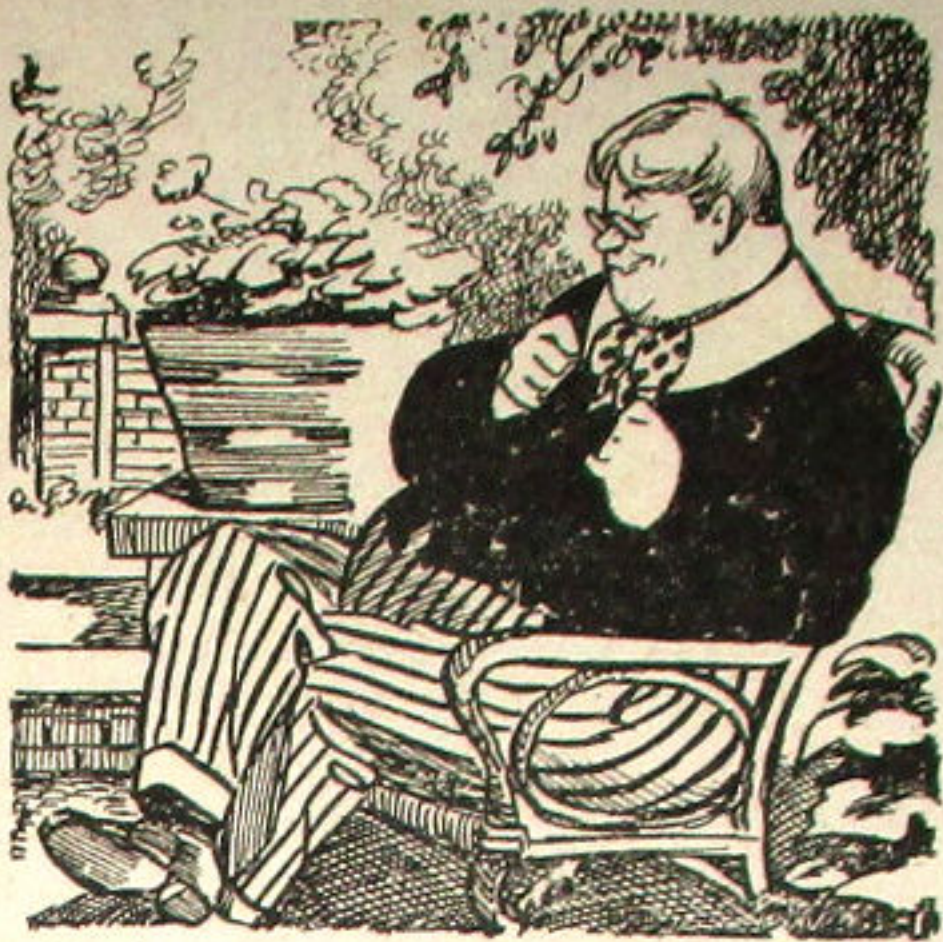
Vernon-Smith told us all the latest cricket news, and we listened with more than ordinary interest to the fellow who at one time had been a bounder, but who was now one of the shining lights of the Remove.

We had a cheery word with Peter Todd and Squiff and Tom Brown, and a rather more serious chat with Mark Linley. We asked several questions of Wun Lung, the little Chinese, but after he had said "Me no savvy" half a dozen times, we gave it up.

Billy Bunter did not deign to come and be introduced to us. At any rate, he was not particularly keen on talking to me; but I fancied I saw him wink at my sister. Had I felt certain about it, I should probably have punched his head, in spite of the fact that he was a Greyfriars fellow.



I looked at the fat junior in some alarm. He seemed to have swollen visibly. He had eaten seven big apple dumplings, and I expected him to go off pop any minute. (See page 6.)



Leaning heavily back in his chair, the Owl of the Remove dozed off to sleep. (See page 6.)

"There," said Bob Cherry at last, "I think I've performed all the introductions. One of these times, Neville, when things are slack at the farm, you must come and see us at Greyfriars."

"We shall be delighted," I said. "And now we'll see about lunch. You must be ravenous."

We bustled about to prepare lunch, and in ten minutes we had everything on the tables.

The Removites elected to feed in the open air. They seemed to enjoy the long, rambling garden, though Billy Bunter complained bitterly about the wasps which persisted in buzzing round his ears.

Bunter, in fact, complained about everything. He was a fellow with a grievance. When I set his portion of chicken before him, he blinked wrathfully at me through his big spectacles.

"Do you call this a suitable portion for a growing youth?" he demanded. "Why, it isn't enough to satisfy the cravings of a sparrow!"

"You would like some more, Master Bunter?" I asked politely.

"Yes. I want about six times this quantity. Give me a couple of legs——"

"You've got two already," said Peter Todd. "And a couple of wings."

"He thinks he's an angel now," said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better give Bunter a whole bird, and have done with it!" growled Johnny Bull. "I never saw such a greedy glutton in all my natural!"

"Oh, really, Bull—— I say, waiter. Don't stand there goggling at me like a country yokel! Buzz off and attend to my requirements."

"You might bear in mind the fact that there are thirty-nine other young gentlemen at the tables," I reminded him.

"Your sister can look after the others. Or, if you like, she can look after me exclusively, and you can attend to everybody else."

But I refused to consent to such an arrangement. I knew that Phyllis was not exactly pining for the task of looking after Billy Bunter.

In due course, I brought Bunter an ample supply of chicken—sufficient for six ordinary fellows, I should imagine—and he promptly set his jaws to work.

I looked on in blank amazement. I had read a good deal of Billy Bunter's eating achievements, but I confess that I had thought them rather exaggerated. I now saw, however, that there had been no exaggeration.



My sister and I brought our autograph-books out, and persuaded the Greyfriars fellows to give us their signatures. (See page 6.)

Billy Bunter polished off the chicken with amazing rapidity. Then he turned and beckoned to me.

"Hi, waiter! Make yourself useful. Can't you see that I've finished the first course? Apple-dumplings this way!"

It is with reluctance that I mention how many apple-dumplings Billy Bunter managed to consume. I am afraid some of my readers will think I am romancing.

But the solid fact is that Bunter ate seven. Seven! Just think of it! They were good-sized dumplings, too.

I looked at the fat junior in some alarm. He seemed to have swollen visibly. I half expected him to go off pop.

"Do you feel all right?" I murmured, bending over him.

"No, I don't. I feel jolly peckish."

"You—you wan't something more?"

Bunter nodded.

"Those apple-dumplings were very filling," he admitted, "but I've still a little space left, as the editor said when he accepted the poem."

"You'll have another apple-dumpling?"

"No, thanks. I believe in variety, you know. Got any jam tarts?"

"I'm sorry, but——"

"Bless your sorrow! Got any cake?"

"Yes."

"Home made?"

I nodded.

"Well, you might fetch me a slice."

"What do you call a slice?"

"Oh, about half a cake," said Bunter.

I brought the half cake, and the fat junior consumed it without turning a hair.

His gastronomic feats filled me with amazement. When the meal was over he was unable to rise, which was hardly surprising.

Leaning back heavily in his chair, the Owl of the Remove dozed off to sleep; his snore mingled with the hum of merry voices in the garden.

"I think we'll leave Bunter here," said Harry Wharton, "and go for a short spin. We'll return again for tea."

Nearly three hours later the Greyfriars fellows, having thoroughly explored the neighbourhood, came back. They brought

good appetites with them, and did full justice to the tea we provided.

After tea Bob Cherry suggested an open-air concert.

My sister brought the gramophone into the garden, and it was a treat to hear the Greyfriars fellows roar out the popular songs.

Kipps entertained the company with some juggling feats. Billy Bunter, who had been awakened in time for tea, and had eaten a tremendous meal, was called upon to do some of his celebrated ventriloquism, and Wibley proved himself an excellent mimic. He "took off" Mr. Quelch, and the Head, and Gosling the porter, and other well-known people.

When the concert was over, my sister and I slipped indoors for our autograph-books, and we persuaded the Greyfriars fellows to give us their signatures. This they willingly did, and those autograph-books will be our most treasured possessions in future.

The day was drawing to a close when Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their journey.

"We're putting up at the next big town we come to," explained Harry Wharton. He paid the bill and shook hands cordially.

"We've enjoyed ourselves immensely," he said. "Thanks awfully for looking after us so well."

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Bob Cherry. "This is the first time we've visited your farm, Neville, but we hope it won't be the last."

"Before the summer has expirefully ended, we shall be here again," promised Hurree Singh.

We were very sorry indeed to see the last of the Greyfriars party. But we were consoled by the knowledge that we should continue to read about them week by week in the pages of "The Magnet Library."

In future, we shall follow their adventures with a keener interest, and the day on which we had the pleasure of meeting our schoolboy heroes will ever remain a red-letter day in our calendar!

THE END

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



SKIPPER OF THE SCHOOL

By GEORGE WINGATE

A's for my ASHPLANT—a useful thing,
very!

It comes in quite handy for fags like Bob
Cherry.

B's for my BAT, which I joyfully wield
To slog Loder's bowling all over the field!

C's for the CAPTAINCY, which I possess:
A job I'll retain for a long time, I guess.

D's for the DORM., which I cautiously enter
To save a weak fag from his burly tormentor.

E's for the EGGS which are sent me from
home,

Resembling Macaulay's famed Lays of Old
Rome!

r's for my FAG, who, for burning the toast
Gets a jolly good lamming: he's not over-
dosed!

G's for the GYM., where there's many a
tussle

Between brawny giants of vigour and
muscle!

H is the "HERALD"—clean, chatty and
clever:

Let's hope that its flag will keep flying for
ever!

I's for the INK on my tablecloth spattered:
The clumsy young fag didn't think that it
mattered!

J is for JAM which is smeared on my chair,
Thus causing my visitors nearly to swear!

K's for my KODAK—I use it a lot,
And some very remarkable snaps I have got.

L is for LODER, so leering and lanky,
Believed by the fags to be hopelessly
cranky!

M's for my MINOR, the lawbreaking Jack,
Who sprints for dear life when I get on his
track!

N's for the NUMBER of goals that I get;
How grand when the sphere crashes into
the net!

O's for the ORGAN that rumbles in church,
And during the sermon I blink on my perch.

P's for the POET who's writing this verse—
George Wingate, whose rhymes are both
telling and terse.

Q is for QUELCH, whom I like and respect.
He'll give me an "invite" to tea, I expect!

R's for the RASHERS served up in the morn,
As tough and unsightly as Gosling's pet corn!

S are the SPATS which I sport every
Sunday,

For surely a skipper may swank just for
one day!

T's for my TEA, which I loathe such a lot:
It's often too weak to stand up in the pot!

U's for the UNDERDONE beef we demolish
A chunk of hard leather they ought to
abolish.

V's for the VICTORY gained on the field
Over foes who fought hardly, resolved not
to yield.

W's for WALKER, no duffer at games;
Though once a black sheep, he's now
straight in his aims.

X is 'XHAUSTION—I'm feeling it now.
These couplets are tough things to tackle,
I vow!

Y's for the YOUTHS whom I have to
control:
They work hard for Greyfriars with heart
and with soul.

Z's for the ZEAL which is shown by the
fags

In running the "HERALD"—the smartest
of "rags."



At intervals I sip my cup of coffee and proceed with my Editorial

MY BUSY DAY!

By HARRY WHARTON

(Editor of the famous "Greyfriars Herald")

I HAVE lots of busy days, of course. It stands to reason that a fellow who is captain of his Form, skipper of the eleven, president of the Debating Society and of the Amateur Dramatic Society, and Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald," finds his hands pretty full. It is in the last-named capacity that I work hardest.

If you have ever edited an amateur magazine you will agree with me that it is real hard graft. The magazine doesn't automatically produce itself; it has to be produced by hard work and tireless effort.

I am going to give you a picture of what it's like on Press Day.

I arise at five o'clock in the morning, and go down to my study, which also serves the purpose of an editorial sanctum.

If it happens to be summer one doesn't mind starting work at five. But on chilly, pitch-dark winter mornings one is inclined to agree with the words of the song:

"Oh, it's nice to get up in the morning,
But it's nicer to stay in bed!"

To rise at five on a dark December morning requires greater heroism than is possessed by the majority of people.

I don't want to pretend that I personally am

a hero. I simply have to turn out early on Press Day, whether I like it or not.

First of all, I lay and light a fire in my sanctum. Usually the wood is damp, or the coal refuses to burn. It is only on rare occasions that I can get the fire going at all.

Still, I have a little oil-stove which behaves fairly well. With the aid of this stove, I make myself a cup of coffee. Then I settle down to work.

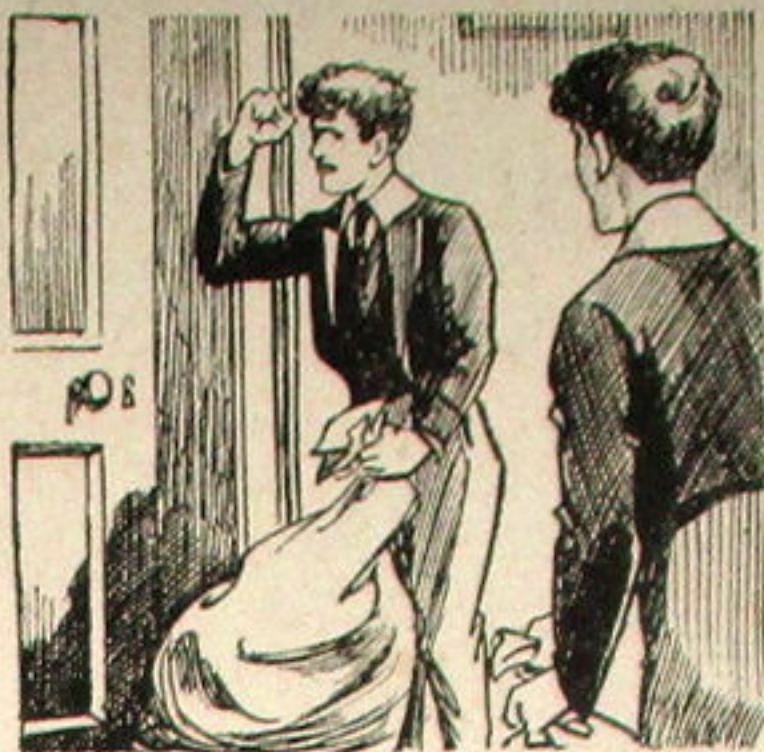
I ought to mention that before getting to business I always lock, bolt, and barricade the door, so that would-be intruders are compelled to keep their distance.

I have switched on my reading-lamp, and a beam of light is thrown over my desk.

Pausing at intervals to sip coffee, I proceed with my Editorial.

Now, it isn't the easiest thing in the world to write an editorial. Lots of fellows think it's the simplest thing to write in the whole issue.

By the time this volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL is in your hands, the "Greyfriars Herald" (which is incorporated in "The Magnet Library") will have been running over two years. That means that I have had to think out over a hundred editorials—all different. Naturally, it becomes more and more difficult as the weeks go by, to clothe



At about eight o'clock there comes a furious banging at the door. "Come in, fathead!" I exclaim

finished by this time, and a variety of odd jobs done—there comes a furious banging at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" I exclaim.

"You're the fathead!" comes the sharp retort. "How do you suppose I can get into the study when it's bolted and barred and hermetically sealed?"

I promptly remove the barricade, turn the key, and fling open the door.

Enter two of my sub-editors, Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent, each bearing a bulging sack of correspondence.

The sacks are tilted upside down, and discharge their contents.

Hundreds of letters shoot out upon the carpet. They have come from all parts of the globe. They are addressed, of course, to the Editor of "The Magnet Library," in London, and he has sent them on to me at Greyfriars.

In the interval before breakfast, I digest the news and views of my correspondents.

Some of the letters require immediate answers. The letters "R.S.V.P." appear at the foot of them.

"What does it mean?" asks Bob Cherry. "Readers Seem Very Pleased?"

"No, ass! It's a request for a reply. Pass over the pen and ink. How I wish we had a typewriter!"

"Any interesting letters this morning, Harry?" inquires Nugent.

"Yes. Here's one from a Birmingham

an editorial with freshness and originality.

My early morning labours, therefore, are anything but light. At about eight o'clock—the editorial is

reader. He says that some of our contributors—particularly that duffer Nugent—need muzzling."

Nugent gives a snort of rage.

"He says that, does he? I'll teach him to take my name in vain! What's his address? I'll write and tell him exactly what I think of him!"

I continue to go through the letters.

"Here's a note from a girl reader. She wants to know if Bob Cherry puts his hair in curling papers every night before he goes to bed."

"Tell the young lady not to be saucy!" growls Bob. "Curling papers, indeed! How can I help having curly hair? The curls are natural. I don't force 'em."

I take up my pen, and dash off as many replies as possible before breakfast.

After breakfast comes a brief interval for recreation. Then we go in to morning lessons.

When the class is dismissed I again repair to my sanctum, and find the midday post in.

Mountains of work have to be surmounted. I slog until dinner, by which time I generally have writer's cramp, brain fag, and housemaid's knee—the latter caused through burrowing on the floor amongst my correspondence.

After dinner, the real work of the day begins—the preparing of the next issue for press.

All through the afternoon—it's generally a half-holiday on

Press Day, but not for us, a steady stream of long-haired poets, artists, and other nuisances pours into my sanctum.

Coker of the Fifth has written a



Bolsover stops to argue the point; whereupon our Fighting Editor seizes him by the scruff of the neck, and frog-marches him out into the passage

"Sonnet to a Sossidge." Like the sausage, Coker badly wants skinning.

Bolsover major weighs in with a boxing story, entitled "Bill Basher, the Beetle-browed Bruiser." We have no use for Bill of the beetle brow, and we tell Bolsover so with more emphasis than politeness. Bolsover does not seem to understand that the Editor's decision is final. He stops to argue the point; whereupon our Fighting Editor seizes him by the scruff of the neck and frog-marches him out into the passage.

Then comes Alonzo Todd with an "Ode to a Chirping Chaffinch." Both Alonzo and his ode are bundled into the waste-paper basket, and a considerable period elapses before Alonzo is able to extricate himself.

Skinner comes to the fore with a detective story. It is described in the sub-title as "A Tale of Hair-Raising Horror and Morbid Mysteries." Neither horrors nor mysteries, we inform Master Skinner, are quite in our line, and with much gnashing of teeth he takes his departure.

Then Dick Penfold dashes in with a poem—the latest product of his busy brain.

Pen's poem happens to tickle our editorial palate. We pat the bard of the Remove on the back, and promise him the munificent sum of fourpence-halfpenny for his contribution. He prances gaily from the sanctum, with visions of a fourpenny jam tart and a ha'porth of bull's-eyes.

Of course, Billy Bunter is in the picture.

Although he edits a paper of his own, Bunter is not averse to contributing to a rival journal. Indeed, he considers he has a right to do so. We accept his contribution, not because of its

literary merit, which is nil, but because we know it will amuse our readers.

And so the merry game goes on until my sub-editors and I are completely snowed under with manuscripts. It now becomes necessary to pin to the door of our sanctum the following expressive notice:

"BEWARE!

"Whoever brings his balderdash
In hope of fame or 'rhino,'
Will exit with a sickening crash
And land upon the lino!"



Both Alonzo Todd and his ode are bundled into the waste-paper basket!

Perhaps I ought to make it clear that "rhino" does not refer to the beast of that name, but is a slang term for "money."

For hour after hour we pursue our unremitting toil, and at last our next issue is

ready for the printers. It appears in due course in "The Magnet Library," to be read by boys and girls throughout the Empire. I hope this article won't give anyone the impression that I am discontented with my lot.

Hard work is one of the secrets of a happy life. And I would not relinquish the editorial reins for anything. I love my job, and the members of my staff love theirs, with the possible exception of Lord Mauleverer, our Fashion Editor, who tells me he would rather take forty winks on the study sofa than write an article on fancy waistcoats or silk socks.

I have no doubt that our little paper will hold a permanent place in the affections of its readers. And the man at the helm—that's me—means to spare no effort to keep up the high standard of humour and brightness for which "The Greyfriars Herald" is famous.

—THE END—



Ballads of Famous Schools

No. 1

Greyfriars

UPON the suri-bound coast of Kent,
So much beloved by Caesar,
There stands a weather-beaten school,
Considerable its fees are.
It is a grand and glorious place
Once famed for deeds monastic;
But since those wondrous days of old
The changes have been drastic.

The monks have gone, and in their train
Have followed countless heroes;
Upright and true in all they do
And blithe as seaside pierrots.
We all love Wharton's winning ways;
We all respect the "Boulder";
Bob Cherry, too, so staunch and true—
A rattling good all-rounder!

The fellows shine in every line
Of schoolboy lore and knowledge;
And many are the contests waged
Against St. James's College.
When on the river, in the gym,
Or down the long track running,
The Greyfriars juniors stand supreme;
Their deeds are simply stunning!

The Head is worthy Doctor Locke,
A man of endless learning,
Who seeks to rule the famous school
With wisdom that's discerning.
With Prout and Quelch to back him up,
He makes his pupils pat in
The fundamental parts of Greek
And much-detested Latin.

George Wingate, captain of the school,
Well fills his proud position;
And on the playing fields he proves
A sterling acquisition.
He's down on Loder's little ways
And all that is improper;
And sneaks and cads, and "nuts" and "lads"
Have often come a cropper!

Here's health to all the gallant 'Friars,
Whose motto is no slack word,
But one which prompts them with desires
To flourish—not go backward!
Their actions prove that British pluck
Has not one whit departed;
So let us bid them great good luck,
The brave and lion-hearted!



Nugent Minor's Lesson

by
Frank Richards

*A Short, Complete Story of
the Chums of Greyfriars
School*

Illustrated by R. J. Macdonald

THE FIRST CHAPTER

At it Again!

"WHERE'S Nugent?" Wibley of the Remove Form at Greyfriars snapped out that question. He looked cross. In fact, he was cross. Wibley had come into No. 1 Study in the Remove with a very busy and serious air. Something important was on the tapis. There was a crowd of fellows in the study—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Bull, Hurree Singh, members of the Famous Five, and Dick Rake and Dick Rodney, and two or three more. But Wibley's eagle eye noted at once that Frank Nugent was absent from the gathering.

Nugent was wanted.

For it was a rehearsal, and Nugent was simply indispensable. Nugent's good-looking face and slim figure fitted him for feminine parts in the plays given by the Remove Dramatic Society, of which William Wibley was the great chief and head. Nugent was going to be Portia in the forthcoming production of the "Merchant of Venice," written by William Shakespeare, with modern revisions and improvements by William Wibley.

And when Wib came in, with all the busy, preoccupied manner of an overworked actor-manager, Nugent wasn't there

The rehearsal would actually have to wait. It had waited five minutes already for Wibley, but that didn't matter. The cast could wait for the actor-manager; but for the actor-manager to wait for a member of the cast was unheard of.

Wibley fairly snorted.

"Where's Nugent?" he roared.

"He doesn't seem to be here, Wib," Harry Wharton observed mildly.

"I can see that. Why isn't he here?" snorted Wibley. "Here am I wasting time and brain tissue, bullying you asses into some remote resemblance to actors——"

"Draw it mild, old chap," remonstrated Bob Cherry.

Wibley declined to draw it mild.

As general manager of the Remove Dramatic Society he had many responsibilities on his shoulders, and—like many older managers—he indemnified himself by ragging his company.

"Not here!" snorted Wibley. "Can't turn up to a rehearsal! Cheek! Fathead! I'll cut the part!"

"You can't cut Portia out of the 'Merchant of Venice,' old top," remarked Dick Rake.

"Shut up, Bassanio! I'll cut Shylock himself out if I like!" vociferated Wibley.

"Well, that's your part," remarked Johnny

Bull. "No great harm if you cut that out, Wib."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you ass——"

"You bag nearly all the play, anyhow," continued Johnny Bull. "You've nearly rubbed me out as Gratiano, I know that. I've often thought, Wib, that you spread yourself out a bit too much."

"The too-muchfulness is sometimes terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, gravely.

Wibley slammed a bundle of script on the table with a bang.

"I'll chuck the play!" he roared.

"Easy does it," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Nugent will be along in a minute or two, he only went to speak to his minor."

"Bother his minor!"

"Young Dick's kept him talking."

"Hang young Dicky!"

William Wibley was not to be placated.

"I'll call him," said Rake, who was nearest the door.

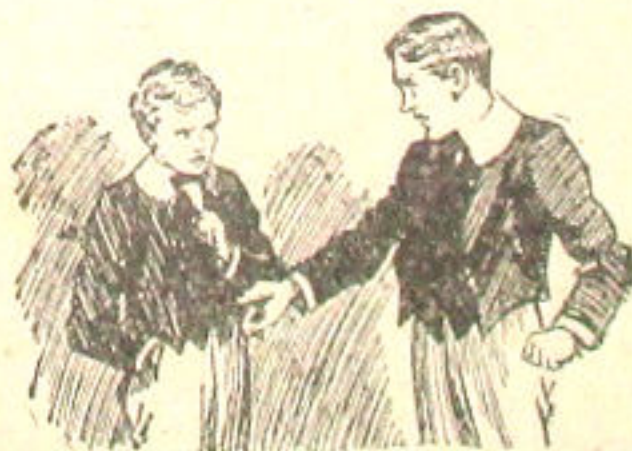
"Do," said Wibley, "and tell him that if he isn't here in two shakes of a lamb's tail, we cut Portia and the whole Court scene."

"Oh, my hat!"

Dick Rake stepped out of the study into the Remove passage.

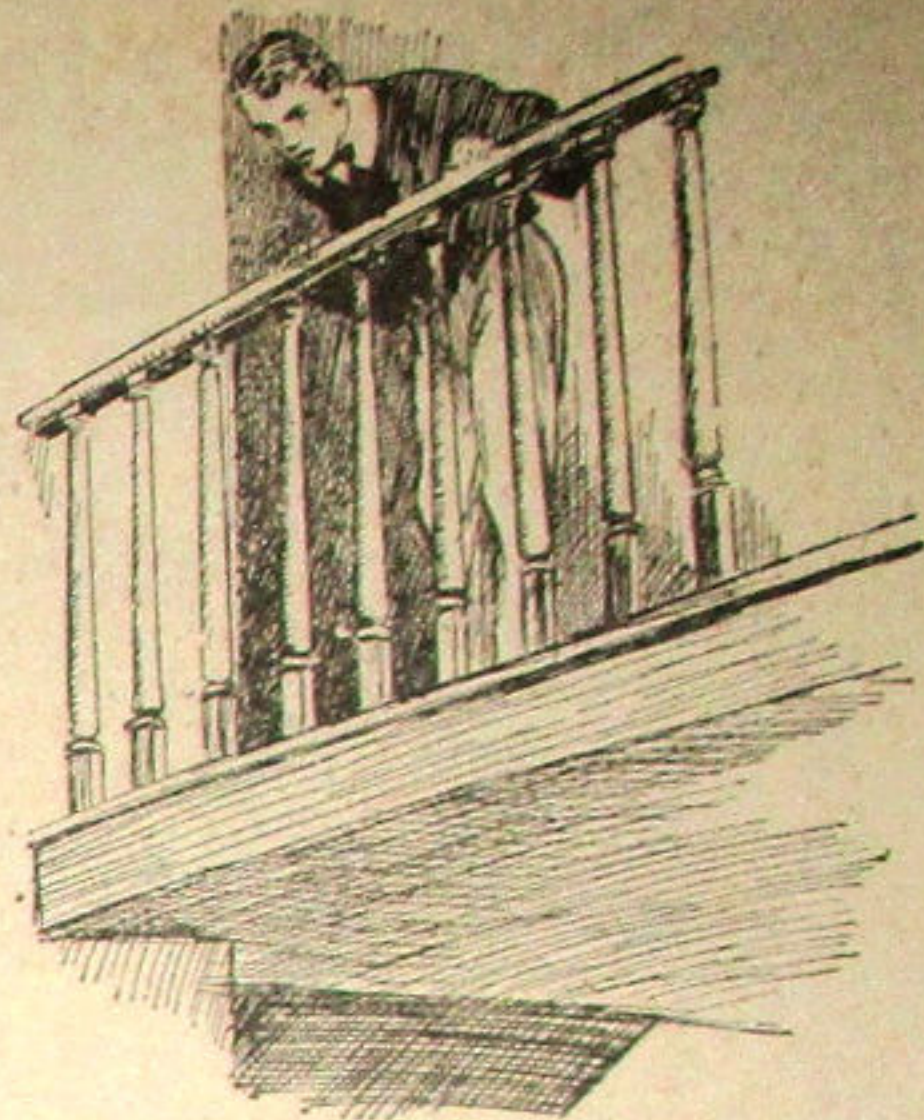
Nugent was not in sight, but, on going to the stairs, he saw the missing junior on the lower landing. Frank Nugent had evidently forgotten the rehearsal arranged in No. 1 Study. He was talking to his minor, Dicky Nugent of the Second, in rather raised tones.

Nugent minor looked sullen and derisive, Nugent major looked angry. Dick Rake



"You young sweep!" said Frank angrily.

"Oh, chuck it, Frank!" said Dicky Nugent impatiently



Frank Nugent was not in sight, but, on going on to the stairs, Rake saw the missing junior on the lower landing with his minor. (See this page)

could guess that he had cause to be angry easily enough.

"You young sweep!" His voice came over the banisters.

"Oh, chuck it, Frank!" said Dicky Nugent impatiently. "Look here, Gatty and Myers are waiting for me——"

"I want you to promise me——"

"Rats!"

"Only last week you were in trouble with that blackguard Banks, the bookie, and if Rake hadn't lent you two pounds, what would you have done?"

"Don't shout."

"Well, what would you have done, you young ass?"

"He did lend me two pounds," answered Dicky, as if that settled the question.

"And I've had to square it," said Nugent angrily. "And it's stumped me for weeks to come."

"You shouldn't have; Rake wouldn't have pressed you."

"I know he wouldn't; but I can't owe a chap money."

"You didn't owe it, I did."

"Could you have paid it?"

"I'm going to pay it, if I have any luck."

"Nugent!" called out Rake hurriedly.

Frank glanced up.

Rake ran down the stairs, and joined him on the lower landing. Dick Nugent gave Rake a nod and a cheeky grin.

"Excuse my bumping in," said Rake, "but you're talking a bit too loud, considering the subject, old chap. You don't want a pre-

fect to hear. And the rehearsal's waiting in the study."

"What do you think of this young sweep?" exclaimed Nugent, in great exasperation. "You know the scrape he got into last week, that you jerked him out of? Now he won't promise me not to see that rotter Banks again."

"I'm not going to see Banks," said Dicky Nugent. "It's really a friend of his, a chap who——"

"You're not going to dabble in betting again," said Frank. "You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, you young rascal! I've a good mind to write home to the pater, and tell him what you're up to."

Dicky grinned.

"The pater would say it was all your fault, old bean," he answered coolly. "He thinks you ought to keep an eye on me. Look here, Frank, don't get your wool off. Lend me a quid——"

"You—you——" spluttered Nugent.

"I tell you I've got a real sure snip this time," said Dicky eagerly. "I shall get back what I've lost, and—yah! Leggo!"

His exasperated major seized him by the collar.

It was no wonder that Frank was exasperated. His minor's reckless plunge a week or two before had given him endless trouble and anxiety, and the fag had only been saved from exposure by Dick Rake

coming to his aid. Now, utterly heedless of his narrow escape, the young rascal was planning to renew his folly. It was rather too much for Nugent to stand with patience, patient fellow though he was.

He shook Dicky vigorously by the collar.

Nugent minor roared and wriggled.

"You rotter! Leggo! I'll jolly well kick your shins! Yow-ow!"

Shake! shake! shake! shake!

"Now promise me——" panted Nugent.

"I won't!" roared Dicky. "I'll kick your shins! I'll——"

"Hallo, trouble in the family!" grinned Skinner, coming up the stairs. "Go it, Nugent! Kick his shins, Dicky! Come and look at this, you fellows!"

Nugent released his minor hurriedly, his face reddening.

Dicky, with a furious look at his major, darted off down the lower stairs and escaped,



Frank shook Dicky vigorously by the collar. Nugent minor roared and wriggled. "You rotter! Leggo! I'll jolly well kick your shins! Yow-ow!" (See this page.)

followed by a howl of laughter from Skinner. Nugent turned savagely on Skinner, but Rake slipped an arm through his and drew him away. Nugent allowed himself to be led up to the Remove passage. His face was crimson and troubled.

"Come in to the rehearsal old top!" said Rake soothingly.

"Oh, hang the rehearsal!"

"Wibley's getting his hair off—
Let him!"

William Wibley appeared in the doorway of No. 1 Study.

"Oh, you're here, Nugent!" he snorted.

"Yes, ass!" snapped Nugent.

His temper was decidedly ruffled—quite as much as the Remove actor manager's.

"Do you know we're waiting?" said Wibley.

"Wait!"

"I give you one second!" said Wibley.

"After that, I cut the part!"

"Cut it, and be blowed!"

And Frank Nugent stalked away angrily, leaving William Wibley on the verge of a volcanic eruption.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Something Like a Dodge!

"It's too bad!" growled Dick Rake, when he came into No. 3 Study to tea, after the meeting in Wharton's study.

"What's too bad?" asked Rodney.

"About Nugent."

Rodney nodded.

He sympathised with Frank Nugent, whose path, when duty drove him to keep an eye on his minor, was a thorny one.

"You can't do anything, old chap," he said.

"Well, it's a pity," said Rake. "I rather like Nugent, and we're good friends now. It's rotten for his minor to be worrying him like this. If he were my minor, I'd give him the licking of his life!"

"Same here, but Nugent doesn't seem to think of that."

"Not that it would do much good, perhaps," Rake remarked thoughtfully. "He's an obstinate little brute! You know the trouble he was in a week or two ago. Now he's actually beginning again. He's going to win back his losses, or some such rot!"

"He wants a hiding!" grunted Rodney.

"It's rough on Nugent," said Rake. "I've got a pretty clear idea of how things stand at their home; his people will blame Frank if anything goes wrong with Dicky. Of course, a chap ought to keep an eye on a young brother at school; but it's a hefty job, looking after young Dicky! It seems that he's been trying to raise a loan from Nugent to try his luck again, with some sporting



Rake sat on the corner of the table and watched Wibley. He was trying on some of his make-up as Shylock. "You make up jolly well, Wib," remarked Rake. (See page 17.)

friend of Mr. Banks at the Bird-in-Hand. Jevver hear of such an obstinate little idiot? And if he doesn't get any cash, he will plunge on tick, and there'll be the same trouble over again—a sharper to pay, or a row! He ought to be stopped somehow!"

"He should be left to take the consequences. So long as Nugent stands between him and trouble, he'll keep on!" said Rodney.

"I suppose he will. I wish I could think of a way——"

"You can't! Let's have tea."

Russell and Ogilvy came into the study, and the discussion ceased.

But Dick Rake remained very thoughtful.

He was concerned for Nugent. He could not help liking Frank, all the more because of his unflinching affection for his troublesome young brother. What Dicky Nugent wanted was a severe lesson, and undoubtedly, if he had been left to take the consequences of his folly, the lesson would have been severe enough. A flogging from the Head would have brought the young gentleman to his senses in very quick time.

But Dicky, half-unconsciously, relied upon his brother to help him out if trouble came, and Frank, with all his indignation, never failed to come to the rescue. But it was fairly certain that a time would come when he could not protect the reckless fag, and

then there would be trouble. Once before Mr. Banks had threatened to come up to the school if he was not paid, and Dicky had been in a pitiable state of terror until the money was found to square the sharper. If Mr. Banks had called on the Head, instead of getting his money, the flogging Nugent minor would have received, in consequence, might have been a very valuable instruction to him.

After tea, Dick Rake strolled out of the

study and took his way to No. 6, which belonged to William Wibley and his study-mates. Desmond and Morgan were out, and Wibley was there alone, still rather ruffled in temper. Wibley was going over his "props." As head of the Remove Dramatic Society, he had charge of the property-box, which was very well supplied. A good deal of Wib's own pocket-money went to supplying it, as well as



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Who's the merchant?" The "merchant," unknown by sight to the Greyfriars fellows, was coming in at the gates, when Gosling barred his path! (See page 18.)

the funds subscribed by the R.D.S.

Wibley gave Rake a short nod as he came in.

Rake had been given the part of Bassanio in the forthcoming play, and he had acquitted himself, so far, to Wibley's satisfaction. At least, Wibley had told him that, though he would never be an actor, he would scrape through. Wibley was rather an exacting commander.

"Busy?" asked Rake.

"Yes."

Rake sat on the corner of the table and watched him. Wibley was trying on some of his make-up as Shylock, and he looked very queer with a large nose and a long beard, and an ancient skull-cap over his white collar and Etons. The face of Shylock and the body of William Wibley of the Remove made a very striking combination.

"You make-up jolly well, Wib!" Rake, remarked.

Wibley grunted.

"I know that!"

"I've heard the fellows say that you've made up in lots of characters, and quite taken them in, before I came," went on Rake.

Wibley condescended to smile.

Wibley was an artist, in his own way, and the artistic temperament is always amenable to a little judicious flattery.

"My dear chap," he said, "I could make-up as your own father, and you wouldn't know the difference."

Rake laughed.

"I rather think I should," he remarked. "But I've heard that you made up as Mossoo once, and weren't spotted."

"That's correct."

"Would you have the nerve to go out of doors made-up?"

"Of course. Nerve enough for anything."

"I've been thinking out an idea!" said Rake.

"Something to do with theatricals?" asked Wibley.

His manner indicated that if it wasn't, Rake needn't take the trouble to expound his idea, whatever it was.

"Well, yes."

"Go ahead, then."

"About Nugent——"

Shylock's brow darkened.

"Don't talk to me about Nugent! I'd cut him out of the play if we could spare Portia! I wish I could get someone else for the part. I'd drop Nugent like a hot potato! Cheeky ass."

"He's rather bothered about his minor."

"I know that! Bother his minor!"

"You know that the young ass is playing the goat?"

"I think all the Lower School knows it," grunted Wibley. "Nugent makes a fool of himself butting in. It's a standing joke, his playing kind old uncle to his young brother."

"But it's jolly decent of him," said Rake.

"I dare say it is. I know he mucked up the rehearsal," said Wibley sourly.

"I've thought of a way of helping him out."

"Go and do it, then."

"With your help."

"Rats!"

Apparently Wibley was still greatly incensed against the junior who had failed to play Portia in the rehearsal in No. 1 Study.

"You're the only fellow that can help," said Rake soothingly. "It's only through your wonderful skill in making-up——"

Wibley thawed again.

"I don't quite catch on," he said amiably.

"Suppose you explain."

"I think that young rascal wants a thorough fright, to cure him of playing the goat, and worrying other chaps," said Rake. "Suppose some boozy bouncer from the Bird-in-Hand called at the school to see him——"

Wibley burst into a laugh.

"It would scare him out of his wits, I think. The Head would flog him if he knew what all the fellows know."

"Well, that's the idea," said Rake. "It nearly happened—only some money was found to settle with the sharper. It may happen again if Nugent minor goes on. My idea is to take the bull by the horns. If you can make-up as Mossoo, as the fellows say, you can make-up as a sporting character, rather the worse for rum."

"Eh?"

"And if you had the nerve——"

Rake had touched the right chord.

"You ass!" said Wibley. "I'd have the nerve to walk through Friardale made up as Lloyd George."

"Well, then, if there's any stuff wanted for making-up, you can get it at old Lazarus's in Courtfield."

"Props. cost money," said Wibley, sententiously.

"I'll stand a quid," said Rake. "I wanted

to make a contribution to the dramatic society funds, anyhow. And the stuff will come in useful for our plays. What?"

"Now you're talking." Wibley was beaming now. "Blessed if I thought you had brains enough to think of a dodge like this, Rake. It shows that a fellow often isn't such an ass as he looks."

"Why, you cheeky duffer——" began Rake warmly.

"Shush! Let's talk it over, and then we'll walk down to Courtfield and see old Lazarus."

A quarter of an hour later Dick Rake and William Wibley were strolling amicably out of the gates of Greyfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER Mr. Jorrocks Looks In!

"HOUTSIDE!"
Mr. Gosling, the school-porter, uttered that command warmly and indignantly.

A dozen fellows who were within hearing looked round at the sound of the porter's indignant tones.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Who's the merchant?"

The "merchant," unknown by sight to the Greyfriars fellows, was coming in at the gates, when Gosling barred his path.

He was not a pleasant-looking man.

In person he was short and fat and stumpy. He wore very old riding-breeches, and a fancy waistcoat and cutaway coat. The waistcoat was further adorned by a thick, rolled-gold watch-chain. His face was red, and ornamented with bushy eyebrows, a bristly moustache, and patchy whiskers. His whole appearance was not unlike that of an ex-bruiser, and several of his front teeth seemed to be missing. His bowler hat was stuck on the back of his head rakishly, leaving in view a mop of untidy hair.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "There's a picture for you! What on earth can he want here?"

"Chap like that can't have any business here!" said Nugent, staring at the disreputable, sporting-looking gentleman.

"Houtside!" repeated Gosling warmly. "Houtside! Wot I says is this 'ere, you hike off."

"Keep yer wool on, old cock," said the sporting gentleman. "I've called 'ere on business."

"Callin' to see the 'Ead, p'r'aps?" suggested Gosling, with crushing sarcasm.

"Nix! I've got business with one of the young gentlemen."

"You 'ave!" exclaimed Gosling in astonishment.

"Yes; the young gent what calls at the Bird-in-'And!" explained the visitor. "I'm Joe Jorrocks—I dessay you've 'eard the name."

"Not being a reader of the Noogate Calendar, I ain't acquainted with the name," said Gosling, still more crushingly.

"Oh, come off!" said Mr. Jorrocks impatiently. "I ain't got no time to waste

a-jawing to blooming menials."

"Houtside!" roared Gosling.

"I'm coming in, old gent."

Mr. Jorrocks marched on; and, as Gosling barred his entrance, he gave the old gentleman a poke in the ribs, which caused Gosling to sit down rather suddenly, with a gasp.

"Oh, lor'! My heye!" spluttered Gosling.

He sat and blinked at Mr. Jorrocks, who walked on cheerfully into the quadrangle, under fifty pairs of staring, astonished eyes.

"My only sainted aunt Sempronia!" murmured Bob Cherry. "There's trouble for somebody if that merchant don't clear off sharp. What on earth is he after?"



"Whom do you want to see?" asked Nugent hastily. "Young gent somethin' like you to look at," said Mr. Jorrocks, pointing his stick at the junior. (See page 19.)

Nugent caught his breath.

"It—it can't be——" he muttered.

He left his chums and ran towards Mr. Jorrocks.

"Frank!" called out Wharton.

Nugent did not heed him. The fear was in his mind that this might be one of the disreputable acquaintances Dicky had made at the Bird-in-Hand—that it was Nugent minor Mr. Jorrocks had called to see. His exasperation with his minor changed into anxiety for him at once. Mr. Jorrocks gave the junior an affable nod.

"Arternoon!" he said genially.

"Whom do you want to see?" asked Nugent hastily.

"Young gent, somethin' like you to look at," said Mr. Jorrocks. "I don't rightly remember his name, but I know him to look at. Jest called in to see him about the leetle business he has in hand with Mr. Banks at the Bird-in-'And. No 'arm, I suppose?"

"You—you had better go at once!" gasped Nugent, thankful that the man did not remember his minor's name, for there was no further doubt that it was Dicky that Mr. Jorrocks wanted to see.

"And why?" demanded Mr. Jorrocks.

"You'll get the kid into trouble!" breathed Nugent. "If the Head saw you, or his Form-master——"

"Ain't I a respectable man, what can call on a young gentleman?" demanded Mr. Jorrocks warmly.

Nugent gasped.

"Ye-e-es, of—of course; but——"

"But what, then?" said Mr. Jorrocks surlily.

"Please go out!" breathed Nugent. "There'll be an awful row! I'll—I'll bring the fellow you want to see outside the gates. I promise——"

"Why can't I see him 'ere?" demanded Mr. Jorrocks. "Why can't a man walk up to the 'ouse and ask for a young gentleman he knows?"

"I tell you——"

"Stuff!" said Mr. Jorrocks.

And he walked cheerfully on towards the schoolhouse, leaving Frank Nugent rooted to the ground.

Harry Wharton caught his chum by the arm.

"Don't worry, Frank; it can't be Dicky he wants!"

"It is!" muttered Nugent.

"Good heavens!"

"He—he ought to be stopped, somehow!" muttered Bob Cherry. "But—but——"

The Famous Five stared after Mr. Jorrocks. He had nearly reached the schoolhouse now—the centre of a hundred pairs of staring eyes by this time. He did not seem to be disconcerted by the general amazement his appearance caused. He walked on quite jauntily, and nodded and smiled to some of the fellows near at hand. Dick Rake and Rodney were on the schoolhouse steps, and they exchanged a glance at the sight of him.

"Nugent minor's merry visitor!" murmured Rake.

Rodney smiled.

"Better tell Dicky!" he said.

"Yes, rather!"

Rake hurried into the house. He found Nugent minor in the Form-room passage with two or three other fags. Dicky Nugent was engaged in a warm argument with his chums, Gatty and Myers, who were on rather hostile terms with Dicky since his late development as a sporting man. Rake called to the fag.

"Nugent minor!"

"Oh, don't worry!" called back Dicky, without turning his head.

"There's a man asking for you!"

"Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"You'd better go out, Nugent minor. He gives the name of Jorrocks, and says he's come from the Bird-in-Hand!"

Dicky Nugent jumped.

"Wha-a-at?" he stammered.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Gatty. "Some of your sporting friends come to see you, Dicky! What'll the Head say?"

"It's the sack!" said Myers solemnly. "The merry sack! I'm sorry for you, Dicky, but you can't say we didn't warn you! Can he, Gatty?"

"He can't!" said Gatty.

Dicky Nugent did not heed the fags. He was staring at Rake, with a white face, and standing quite still, as if rooted to the floor.

"A—a—a man from the—the Bird-in-Hand!" he gasped at last.

"So he says!"

"He—he can't want me!"

"He says he does!"

"I—I can't see him!" panted Nugent minor. "Tell him—tell him to go! Tell him to clear off! Oh, the fool, to come here! Oh, dear!"

"The game's up, Dicky!" said Gatty, with a shake of the head. "I must say it serves you right! Doesn't it, Myers?"

"I must say it does!" assented Myers rather sadly. "Dicky's asked for this; now he's got it!"

"He's got it, no mistake about that!" said Gatty.

Dick Rake turned to walk away, and Nugent minor ran after him and caught him by the sleeve.

"Make him go away!" he breathed. "I—I never thought—I never expected—Why, this will mean an awful

row! The fool—the brute, to come here! Get him away, Rake, there's a good chap!"

"My dear kid, I don't know how to handle public-house loafers!" answered Dick Rake.

"They're in your line, not mine!"

"I—I say——"

Rake shook the fag's hand off and walked away. Dicky Nugent, with his knees knocking together, limped after him. Somehow—anyhow—he had to get rid of this awful visitor before the Head saw him, before Mr. Twigg saw him, before the prefects saw him.

The fag almost tottered out into the quadrangle.

But there was no chance, naturally, of getting rid of the obnoxious visitor unseen. As Dicky Nugent put his head out of the schoolhouse, he saw a flashy, sporting-looking gentleman—whom he easily guessed to be the visitor—standing by the steps; and on the lowest step stood Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. Mr. Jorrocks's progress had been stopped.

Dicky backed out of sight instantly.

He did not know Mr. Jorrocks by sight, but he had no doubt that the man was one of the loafers of the Bird-in-Hand who had seen him visiting Mr. Banks there. To be claimed by him in public! Dicky trembled at the thought. As he backed into the house again, white as a sheet, he heard the loud voice of the sporting gentleman.

"Name of Jorrocks, sir!"

I've called to see a young friend of mine— young sporting friend of mine and Joe Banks, sir! Had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, recent, at the Bird-in-Hand, sir! I dessay you know the place! Put a bit on a 'orse, he did, like the young game-cock he is, sir!"

With a throb of terror at his heart, Dicky Nugent fled as if for his life, looking like anything but a young game-cock! He had only one thought in his mind—to hide himself out of sight—anywhere, anyhow—



"Wingate!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Yes, sir!" The captain of Greyfriars drew nearer. "Will you see this man off the premises?" (See page 21.)

until that dreadful visitor was gone. He scudded up the stairs, bumping into Billy Bunter and sending the fat Owl of the Remove flying. Heedless of Bunter's roar of wrath, he fled on, darted into the upper box-room, and plunged headlong into Lord Mauleverer's biggest trunk, and drew the lid shut!

There, with palpitating heart, the hapless sportsman of the Second Form waited, palpitating and perspiring, and scared almost out of his reckless wits!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Lesson for Dicky!

MR. QUELCH eyed the genial Jorrocks sternly.

A crowd of fellows had gathered round, looking on in amazement and something like amusement. Wingate of the Sixth had drawn near, ready to escort the sporting gentleman out of Greyfriars with a grip on his shoulder, at a sign from Mr. Quelch.

Dick Rake came out of the schoolhouse smiling. For a second his eyes met those of Mr. Jorrocks, and he closed one eye slightly.

No other sign passed between them. Rake joined Rodney and the Famous Five in the thickening crowd.

"Man!" stuttered Mr. Quelch, seeming to find his voice with some difficulty. "Jorrocks, if that is your name——"

"That's it, sir—Jorrocks! Pleased to meet you, sir! Care to drop in at the bar-parlour of the Bird-in-'And any evening, sir, and you'll be very welcome, sir."

"Mr. Jorrocks, leave this place immediately."

"Hay?"

"Kindly go at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I do not believe for a moment, sir, that you have acquaintance with any Greyfriars boy, and I believe your coming here, sir, is only a drunken freak. If you do not immediately go, I shall have you removed."

Frank Nugent breathed hard.

If only Mr. Jorrocks could be got rid of without having given away the fact that it was Nugent minor he had come to see!

Mr. Jorrocks blinked at the Remove master.

"I ain't going without seeing my young friend," he protested. "Walked over to see

'im, I 'ave. Who are you, anyhow? Call yourself somebody, I don't think. I want to see my young pal. Why, I got a message for him from Joe Banks about the 'orse he's backin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the juniors. But under the roar of laughter Frank Nugent groaned.

"Wingate!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" The captain of Greyfriars drew nearer.

"Will you see this man off the premises?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Look 'ere, I'll speak to the 'Ead," protested Mr. Jorrocks.

"You will not be allowed to disturb the Head," said Mr. Quelch. "You are a ruffian, sir! You will depart at once."

"Look 'ere——"

Wingate's hand dropped on the shoulder of Mr. Jorrocks. The big Sixth-former stepped up to the stumpy, fat sporting man.

"Get a move on!" said Wingate briefly.

"But about seeing my young pal——"

"Cut that out, and come along."

With Wingate's iron grasp on his shoulder, Mr. Jorrocks had no choice about going along. Wingate marched him down to the gates and into the road, amid loud protests from Mr. Jorrocks and yells of laughter from the Greyfriars crowd that followed.

"Now cut!" said Wingate. "I don't want to handle you, but if you're not out of sight in two minutes——" His brow set grimly.

Mr. Jorrocks was out of sight within the two minutes!

* * * * *

It was an hour later that William Wibley, of the Remove, came in at the gates, with a bag in his hand and a grin on his face. Dick Rake and Rodney met him at the gates, grinning too.

"All serene—what?" asked Wibley, alias Jorrocks.

"Right as rain!" chuckled Rake.

"Poor old Nugent looked rather knocked over."

"I told him at once, after you—after Mr. Jorrocks had gone," said Rake, laughing.

"It's all right."

"And what about Dicky?"

"He's disappeared."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He had one blink at Mr. Jorrocks from the door, and it seems to have been enough for him," chuckled Rake. "I fancy he's fed up with Bird-in-Hand loafers now! He bunked, and he's not been seen since. His major's hunting for him high and low."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley carried his bag, containing the outward semblance of Mr. Jorrocks, up to his study in the Remove passage. Harry Wharton and Co. were in the passage, and they grinned at the sight of Wibley. The Famous Five were in the secret now, though it was very carefully being kept from going further. Frank Nugent was engaged in searching for his minor, who had completely vanished from sight.

"We'd better help look for Dicky!" Rake remarked.

The juniors proceeded to hunt for the vanished fag. It was Bob Cherry who discovered him at last, in the box-room. He thought of looking into Mauly's big trunk, and as he raised the lid there was a squeak of terror from inside. The sportsman of the Second blinked up at Bob in an agony of apprehension.

"Is he gone?"

"Your friend from the Bird-in-Hand?" grinned Bob. "Oh, yes, he's been gone more than an hour, if you mean Jorrocks."

"Did he—did he mention my name?"

"I didn't hear him."

Dicky Nugent crawled out of the trunk.

"Oh, dear!" he groaned.

"Had a good time?" asked Bob genially.

"Oh, dear!"

Dicky Nugent limped away.

And if ever there was a young rascal who repented of his misdeeds, it was Dicky Nugent just then. He had had a much-needed lesson, and he never learned the fact as to the real identity of Mr. Jorrocks!

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 1.—FOOTBALL



The whistle goes: away we rush,
A pack of breathless players,
Forging our way through seas of slush
And mud piled up in layers.
We love to hear the welcome cries
Of "Goal!" and "Oh, well shot, sir!"
We all laud football to the skies,
A grand game, is it not, sir?

The pace is fast, the game is keen,
It is a thrilling tussle!
The forward play is swift and clean,
And skill combines with muscle.
The half-backs play with might and main,
The backs are strong and steady;
The goalie uses fist and brain,
And he is ever ready.

And so the stirring fight goes on
In manner grim and glorious,
Until the game is fought and won,
With cheers for the victorious.
And those who fought and failed to win
Don't nurse their sorrows after;
They meet reverses with a grin
And leave the field with laughter.

Such is the spirit of the game,
And may it long continue!
And may it ever be our aim
To strengthen nerve and sinew,
By taking part in wins and routs,
And rousing football battles,
While schoolmates urge us on with shouts
And whistles, flutes, and rattles!



The Pillow Fight!

(With apologies to "Casabianca.")

By **DICK PENFOLD**



THE boy stood boldly by the bed,
Whence all but he had bunked;
And pillows smote him on the head,
But none could say he funk'd.

Defiant and upright he stood
As born to rule the dorm.
A junior of heroic blood,
A proud, though child-like form.

The pillows buzzed—he would not go
Without his skipper's word;
That skipper, who had gone below,
His voice no longer heard.

He call'd aloud: "Say, Wharton, say,
If yet my task is done?"
But Wharton had gone forth to slay
The Fifth, and have some fun.

"Speak, Wharton!" once again he cried,
"If I my task may close."
But pillows fast and fierce replied
And caught him on the nose!

Upon his brow he felt them smite
And on his waving hair;
"My hat!" he murmured. "What a night!
It makes a chap despair!"

He shouted yet once more aloud,
"Oh, skipper! Must I stay?"
And then towards his bed the crowd
With one accord made way.

They placed him in a blanket, then,
And sent him hurtling high;
He wondered what would happen when
He hit the giddy sky!

Then came a burst of thunder-sound,
The reinforcements come!
And as they swiftly buzzed around
The enemy stood dumb!

With pillows, bolsters, even boots
They smite the foe full sore;
Until at length the latter scoots,
And all is peace once more!



I am too busy even to sit down.

SOME QUEER CALLERS!

By BILLY BUNTER

(Editor of the famous "Weekly,"
which bears his name)

READERS of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL will be surprised and delighted to observe that since the last "Annual" was published, I have completely mastered the ruddyments of spelling.

Occasional errors may still creep in; but then, we all go wrong sometimes, as the criminal said when he was sentenced to six months' hard labour.

Talking of hard labour, I may say that this term fully applies to the running of my "Weekly."

The life of an editor is not "one grand, sweet song," as many may suppose.

Some of my readers probably picture me reclining in a cosy armchair, languidly dictating articles to my plump sub-editors. On the table, conveniently close to my elbow, is a delightful rabbit-pie, and a glass of foaming ginger-pop.

The stern reality, however, is very different.

I am often too busy even to sit down. I stand in my shirtsleeves, busy with scissors and paste and the editorial blue pencil, and wading all the while in a sea of rejected manuscripts.

My editorial office—No. 7 Study, in the Remove passage—is a perfect beehive of industry. I am no slacker, in spite of what Mr. Frank Richards says about Bob Cherry having to wake me with a wet sponge every morning.

But I am wandering from the point, as the

child said when it dodged its mother's knitting needle.

I have set out to describe some queer callers who have dropped in upon me from time to time, in the course of my editorial kareer.

I shall never forget my first visitor. She was a female of advanced years—I don't like the term "old woman"—and she said her name was Mrs. Furniss. She looked a very fiery Furniss, too!

"Madam," I said, waving her towards the coal-scuttle, "take a seat!"

"Thank you, Master Bunter, but I prefer to stand. I am not the sort of person to sit down under anything—even your editorial mantelpiece!"

"To what," I said, blinking at her. "do I owe the honour of this visit?"

"I am going to write for your Weekly," was the reply.

"Oh!"

"I have made up my mind to contribute a Needlework Column each week. Also a Cookery Column, and a column article on the equality of the sexes."

"My hat!"

"For each of these column features, I shall require remuneration at the rate of one guinea," said Mrs. Furniss.

"Sure you wouldn't like to fill the paper, and accept a salary of twenty pounds a week?" I said, unable to repress my sarcasm.



I told her that I had no use for her needlework article. At this she brandished her parasol in a threatening manner.

"Madam," I said, as soon as I had recovered, "the truth is sometimes painful, but I always tell it. My first name is William. It should have been Washington. To be quite frank with you, I have no use for a needlework article, or an article on the equality of the sexes. As to the Cookery Column, I am quite capable of writing that myself."

Mrs. Furniss brandished her parasol in a threatening manner.

"As to letting you run this paper, madam," I went on, unheeding, "the whole thing is impossible—absurd! And now, would you be good enough to make yourself scarce, as I've got crowds of work to do."

No sooner had I uttered these words, than I fled from the editorial sanctum in terror of my life. For Mrs. Furniss, wielding her parasol above her head, was bearing down upon me.

"Boy!" she shrieked. "Impertinent jackanapes! How dare you insult me in this manner? Wait till I get hold of you. I will castigate you severely!"

I fled down the passage.

A very undignified chase followed.

Mrs. Furniss, breathing threatenings and slaughter, and brandishing her parasol aloft, pursued me fiercely, uttering screams which would have done credit to a terrified fag at the dentist's.

But I knew the geography of Greyfriars

Mrs. Furniss took me seriously.

"No, I wouldn't mind at all, Master Bunter," she said. "It is really very generous of you to make the suggestion."

I fairly gasped.

better than my lady visitor, so I was able, eventually, to take sanctuary in the woodshed, and she never found me.

It was not until a couple of hours had expired that I was able to summon up sufficient courage to emerge from my hiding-place. And then I learned, greatly to my relief, that Mrs. Furniss had left the school premises.

Shortly after this incident I had another visitor—a youth this time. He was what you would call tassy-turn; that is to say, a fellow of few words. He burst into my sanctum one afternoon, when I was in the middle of my editorial, and our conversation was, as nearly as I can remember, as follows:

"I'm Ben Bashem."

"Delighted to meet you, Mr. Bashem, I'm sure!"

"Brought you short story. Called, 'Percy, the Pugilist.' Take it?"

"No; I'm sorry, but——"

"Then take that!"

So saying, Mr. Ben Bashem, the man of few words, shot out his left, and I dropped like a stout log into the fender.

Crumpling his rejected manuscript in his hand, my assailant strode away. And I was very glad to see the back of him. I don't like these people who believe that actions speak louder than words, and who start knocking you about on the slightest provocation.

My next caller was a burly navvy, who was employed by the London, Frighten, and Slow-

coach Railway, and who worked on the line.

This hefty fellow laboured under the delusion that he could write poetry.

"Every night,



Mr. Ben Bashem, the man of few words, shot out his fist, and I dropped like a stout log into the fender.



Before I could realise how it happened, I was on the floor, blinking up at a maze of stars.

night, when I gets 'ome, I writes a hode."

"A what?" I gasped.

"A hode—a bit of poetry, you know. My wife—who knows a bit of French—says it's 'tray bong.' I've jest written a piece beginnin':

"I'm a navvy, I'm a navvy,
Workin' on the line."

"I think it's very good, meself," went on the navvy. "I sent it to 'Punch,' but they said it lacked 'punch.' I suppose that was their idea of a joke. Then I sent it to the 'Fireside Favourite,' and they sent it back an' told me to feed it to the flames. Since then, I've tried it on half a dozen papers, but they won't touch it. So I've brought it to you, Master Funker."

At this, my blood began to boil—as the missionary said, when the cannibal put him in the stewing-pan.

"Look here," I said, turning to my burly visitor, "my name's not Funker, neither is it Grunter or Stunter. I am William George Bunter, the editor of a highly respectable journal for boys, published weekly in the 'Popular.' I don't know what your name is, and I don't care. But I may as well inform you, here and now, that I have no use for your poem. You can feed it to the office mastiff, or you can take it away and bury it—whichever you like."

The next moment, I found myself in the grip of an earthquake.

when I gets 'ome, Master Grunter —" he began.

"Pardon me," I said, with dignity, "but my name's Bunter."

"Sorry! Well, as I was sayin', every

I saw the burly form of my visitor looming up before me like a grotesque giant, and then, before I could realise how it had happened, I was on the floor, blinking up at a maze of stars and consternations—or, is it constellations?

"I'll learn yer!" shouted my assailant. "I'll learn yer to say nasty things about my hode! Would you like a second 'elping?"

Now, as a rule, I am very fond of second helpings, but on this occasion I hastily declined the offer, and lay groaning on the carpet.

"Yow-ow-ow! You've fractured my spine, and broken my back in three places!" I gasped faintly. "Besides which, you've knocked my spectacles into the fireplace, and broken them, and now you'll have to pay for them!"

The only answer to this outburst was a loud snort. Then the navvy, with a final shake of his burly fist, stamped out of my sanctum, greatly to my relief.

You mustn't suppose, from the incidents I have just described, that all my interviews are of a painful nature. Some of them are very pleasant.

I shall never forget the benevolent old lady who called one day, and said she was most interested in my "adorable little paper," and that she had pleasure in presenting the editor with a parcel of tuck. Dear old soul! I could have fallen on her neck with joy. The parcel contained two cakes—one currant and one seed

—a delicious rabbit-pie, and plenty of sundries.

Another occasion an Old Boy of the school looked in to see me. He was a portly genial old



I shall never forget a benevolent old lady who called one day and presented me with a parcel of tuck.

boy, and he gave me his blessing—and a Treasury note.

“I used to occupy this very same study,” he told me. “Moreover, I ran a weekly magazine. But it wasn’t printed and published weekly, like your own paper. Funds wouldn’t run to it. We used to run off about fifty copies on a very inky duplicator. Very few of our readers could decipher the writing, so the paper soon went smash. By the way, if ever I can be of any assistance to you, kid, in your journalistic work, let me know.”

I fairly bubbled over with gratitude, and inwardly wished that a few more Old Boys would drop in, and treat me to cheery conversation—and Treasury notes.

Perhaps the most curious caller I have ever had was a long-haired, distracted-looking man of middle-age. He said he was an artist—I gathered as much from the smears of paint on his coat—and he went on to inform me that he was the father of the most miserable boy in Britain.

Glancing at the father, I could quite understand why the poor kid was miserable.

“My name is Mr. C. Scape,” said the artist. “My son, James, is known as Dismal Jimmy. He had never been known to smile—until the other day.”

“And what happened then, sir, to make him smile?” I asked.

“Why, he got hold of a copy of your Weekly. I watched him read it. After a few moments a slow smile overspread his features. Then he laughed outright. Then he guffawed. Finally, he went into convulsions.”

I wish I could linger to relate other editorial eggperiences I have had, but owing to pressure on my space—as I always say after dinner—I must bring this article to a finish.

Of course, if you hunger and thirst for more articles from my gifted pen, you will know where to find them.

In your town is a certain street. In the street is a newsagent’s shop. In the newsagent’s shop is a copy of “The Popular.” In the copy of the “Popular” is Billy Bunter’s Weekly. And the green grass grew all round, my boys, and the green grass grew all round!

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 2.—CRICKET



King Willow sits upon his throne,
His subjects flock around him.
And sportsmen all, in every zone,
Monarch of Games have crowned him.
In flannels white the fieldsmen stand
And pay their homage duly;
And they agree, on every hand,
That cricket thrills them truly!

Each Greyfriars fellow is a keen
And ardent leather-hunter;
A few exceptions may be seen,
There’s Snoop, and Billy Bunter.
By slackers such as these, I fear,
A bat is never wielded;
Nor is the swift, elusive sphere
By boys of this sort fielded.

But others love the grand old game,
The slogging and the smiting;
They love amassing runs—and fame,
In tussles most exciting.
Some find their pleasure on the stream
Or on the bounding billow;
But few of us would ever dream
Of shunning good King Willow.

Long may he reign! for he has proved
For many a generation,
A worthy king, esteemed, beloved
By boys of every station.
Let slackers smoke their cigarettes
In quiet glade or thicket;
The real good sportsman ne’er regrets
The hours he’s spent at cricket!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



THE GORGER'S CONFESSION!

By BILLY BUNTER

A's for the APPLES they grow down in Devon,
When eating them, why, I am in the seventh heaven!

B's for the BUNS, which I eat with great glee:
I once shifted nearly two dozen at tea!

C's for CREAM PUFFS, so delicious and nice.
Such delicate morsels are gone in a trice!

D stands for DOUGHNUTS, all jammy inside,
I think I could eat quite a score if I tried!

E's for the EATABLES Mimble supplies
To do my heart good and to gladden my eyes.

F is for FISH (I don't mean Fisher T.),
But the herrings and sprats that are caught in the sea.

G is for GRUB—what a wonderful word!
The sweetest and fairest that ever was heard.

H is the HALL, where the fellows are fed
On cheap margarine and a hunk of stale bread.

I is for IMPOTS., I get quite a lot
For grousing to Quelch that my soup isn't hot!

J's for the JUICY and succulent plum,
To think I can't have any makes me feel glum.

K's for the KITCHEN—I raid it at night:
Down the corridor creeps a fat phantom in white!

L is for LOBSTER, served up with nice salad.
On this "fishy" topic I'd write quite a ballad!

M is for MATRON, to whom I retire
When I've eaten too much, and could almost expire!

N's for the NUTS, which I crack with great skill,
Whether chestnuts or walnuts, or those from Brazil.

O's for the OMELETTES, rippingly fried,
And choice to the palate, but rarely supplied.

P's for the PUDDING served up at our dinners,
I sample my own, and then Smithy's and Skinner's.

Q is for QUELCH: he declares I'm a glutton
And eat far too much, but I don't care a button!

R's for REMOVALS—I carry them out
Whenever there's cake or jam-tarts left about!

S is for SAUSAGES, served up at brekker:
I'd have 'em for tea, but, alas! my exchequer.

T's for TOMATOES, so ripe and so red:
I like them so much I could eat them in bed.

U's for the UPROAR I cause in the Hall
When my appetite's large and my helping is small!

V's for the VISIONS I have when in bed
(I always have nightmares when I'm over-fed)!

W's my WEEKLY, you've heard of it, yes?
It's streets in advance of the "Herald," I guess!

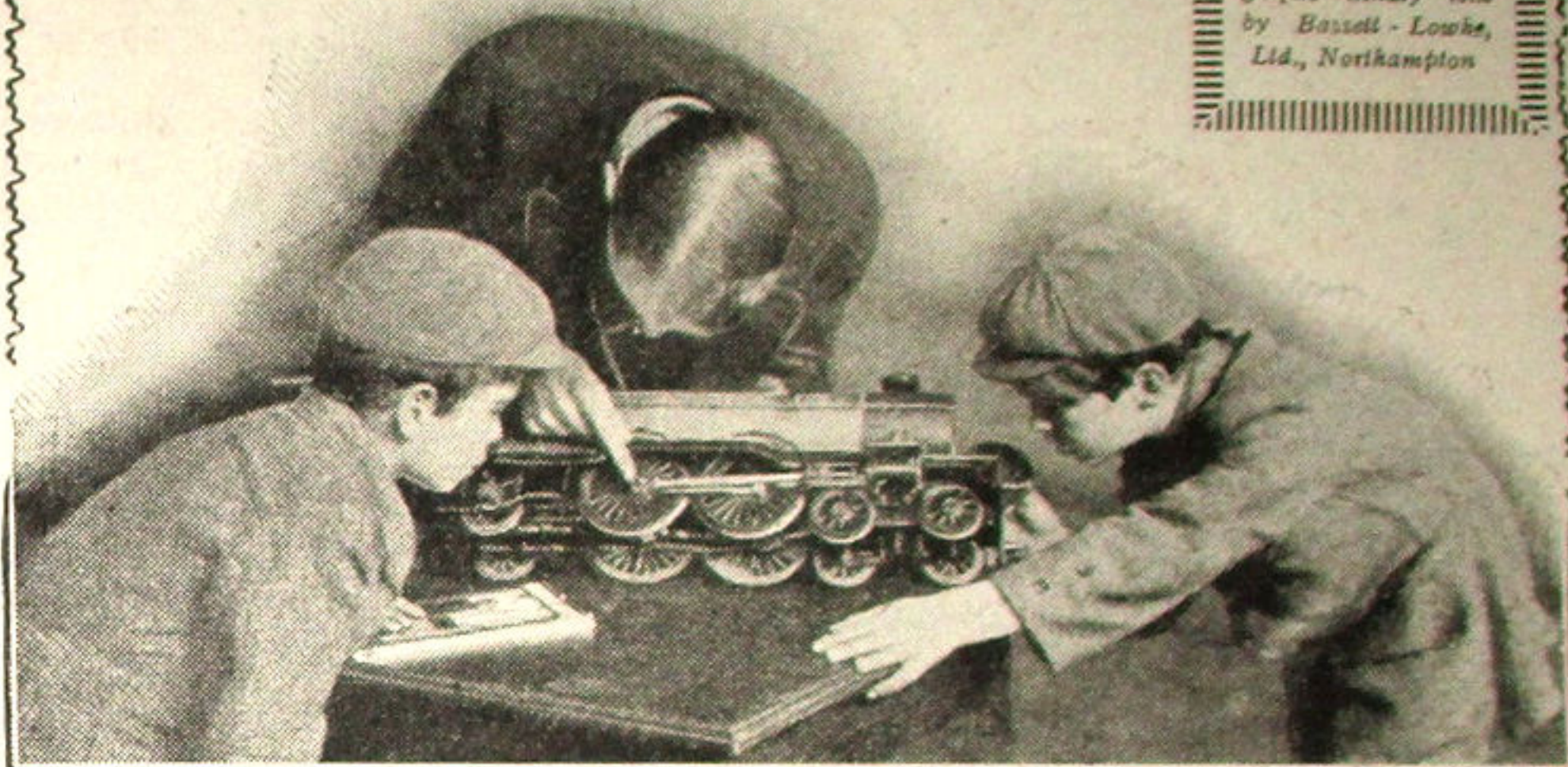
X is 'XCESSIVE—my appetite's that:
If it grows any bigger I'm bound to get fat!

Y is for YESTERDAY, when I sat down
To a wonderful orgy; it cost half-a-crown!

Z is the ZEST with which I devour
The contents of cupboards, when placed in my power!

THE FASCINATION OF THE MODEL RAILWAY

Illustrated by photographs kindly lent by Bassett-Lowke, Ltd., Northampton



Explaining the working of a model engine to two keen young engineers

THIS is an age of engineering achievement, and every modern boy takes a keen interest in the marvels of mechanics he sees working all around him in the course of everyday life.

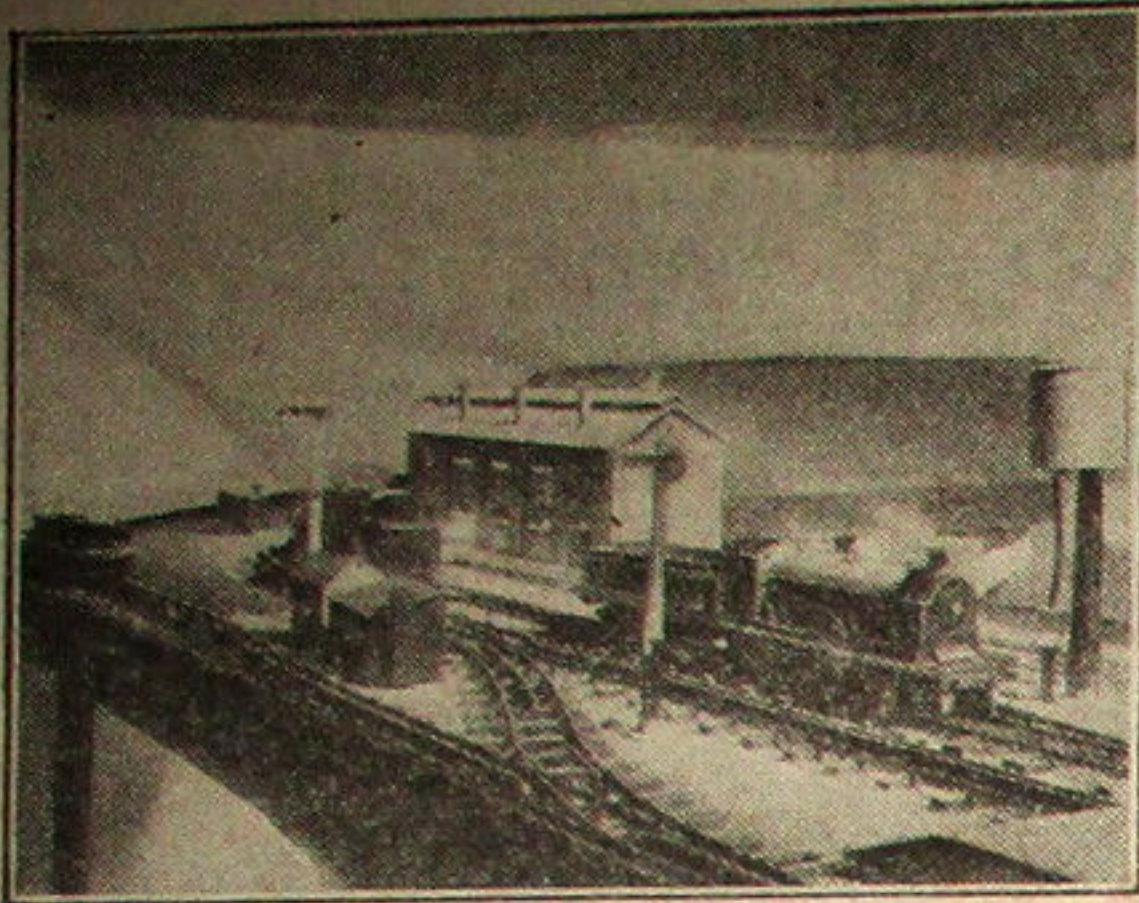
It is natural, then, for a boy to turn to mechanical models to play with, and this natural tendency is one that should be encouraged by all wise parents, for there is much valuable instruction as well as amusement to be gained from the mechanical models which are the most popular of all toys to-day.

The enthusiasm of many of the world's greatest engineers was first fired by playing with cleverly designed toys, from which they learnt the first principles of their craft.

Of all mechanical toys, none possesses the supreme attraction of the model railway. It offers interest and amusement in endless variety, and no boy alive can resist the fascination of playing with a model railway.

As a matter of fact, very few fathers can resist it either! The wise boy will soon discover that this is a toy in which it is easy to arouse the interest of father; this is a very useful point to remember, for to possess a really good model railway with all its manifold details requires the expenditure of a certain amount of cash, and this is where father will come in useful!

But a model railway is so fascinating that interest in it will last for years, and conse-



A wayside station on a model railway

quently it can be built up from quite modest beginnings.

A start is usually made with a few lengths of tin-plate track laid round the dining-room table. As time goes on the stock of rails can be added to, until the line gets too big for the table and has to be transferred to the floor. If necessary it can later be laid in the garden, which, of course, offers the best scope of all for realistic effect, with real tunnels, sidings, and wayside stations. Some lucky youngsters possess lovely garden railway systems, with solid metal rails fastened down with tiny miniature "chairs" on real wooden sleepers. A few grown-up enthusiasts even have model railways laid out round their estates, which will carry passengers, the little trains being pulled by model locomotives which are miniature reproductions, exact in every detail, of famous engines working express trains on the crack railway systems. But this luxurious type of model railway, of course, costs a small fortune to build and equip, and is a toy for the wealthy enthusiast only.

The Question of Gauge

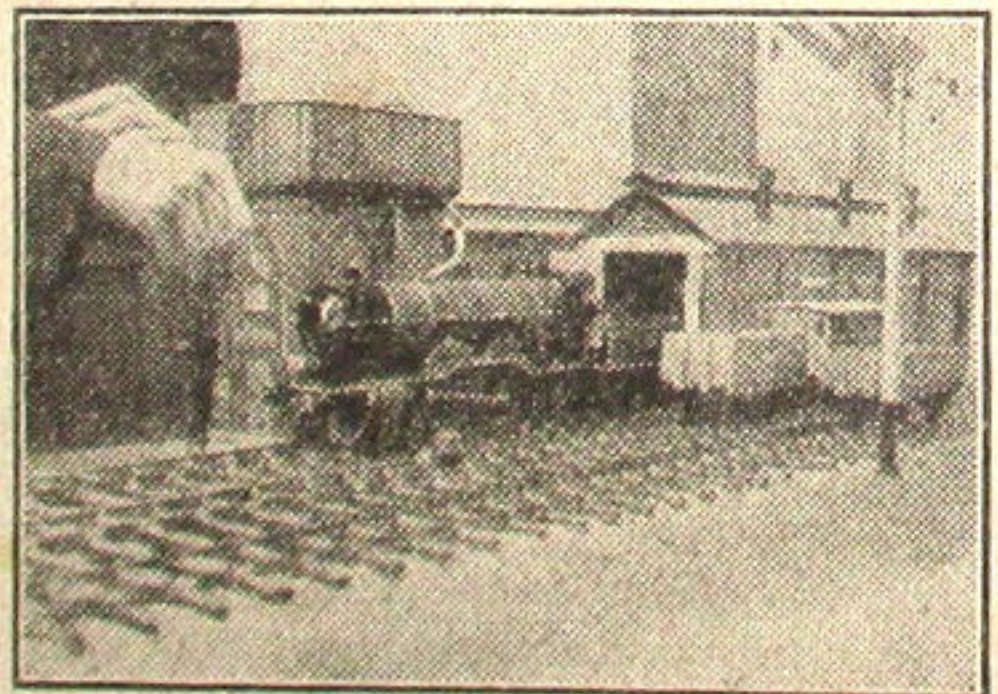
THE indoor railway which makes use of tin-plate rails fitting together in convenient lengths is fascinating enough to satisfy the ordinary boy, and in starting to build up a system of this kind, the first thing to be considered is, which gauge is the most suitable?

The gauge referred to in the catalogues of model-makers and toy-shops as No. 0 is the cheapest, and naturally the smallest; but perhaps the most useful size for all-round purposes, for all but the simplest of systems, is No. 1 gauge, which is only slightly dearer than No. 0 gauge. Much greater choice of engines and rolling-stock is available in the No. 1 gauge size, while it is amply big enough for all but the most elaborate systems.

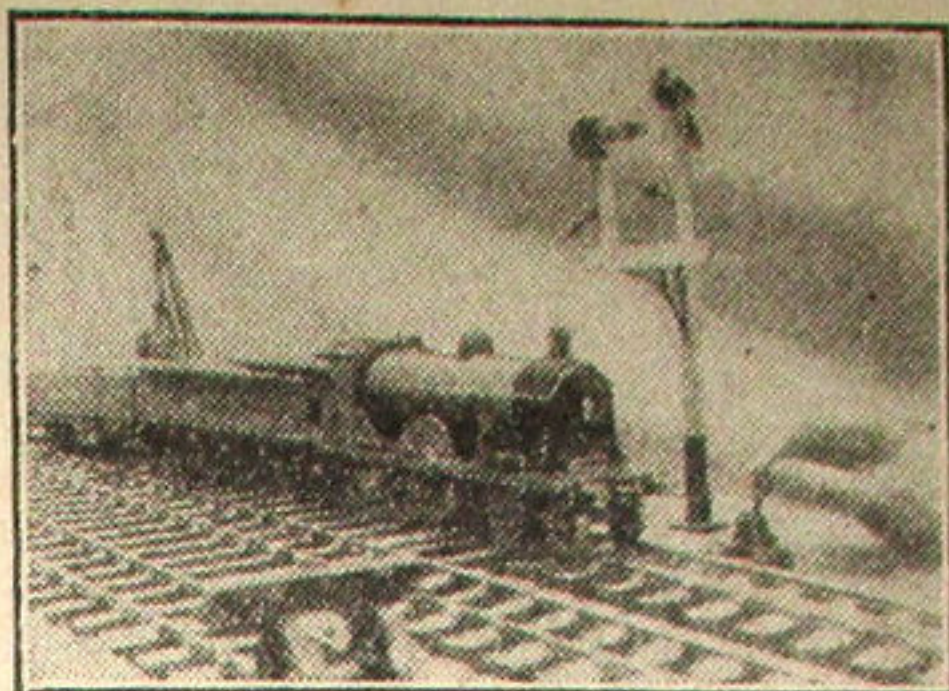
The next item to be considered is the motive power of the railway—steam, clockwork or electricity? For most boys electricity will be ruled out, as the apparatus required is somewhat complicated, and generally needs the care and superintendence of a grown-up person. Clockwork is no trouble, involves no mess or risk of conflagrations, or damage to table or carpet, and is always satisfactory.

The Lure of the Steam Engine

ON the other hand, steam is undoubtedly the most fascinating. Handled intelligently and carefully, according to the maker's instructions, a modern model steam locomotive is perfectly safe and infinitely the most realistic, and most boys would plump for a steam engine in preference to any other sort. What could be more fascinating than a perfectly proportioned little model steam train, puffing proudly round its track, in and out of tunnels, past sidings and wayside stations, rattling over the "points" with exactly the



Before the run; oil and water for a model engine



Working the "points"

same noise, on a smaller scale, of the famous "Flying Scotsman"!

The engine can be started, stopped, reversed, or made to whistle or blow off steam, at the will of the young engineer in charge, who will take a pride in his model which clockwork mechanism, with all its advantages, is incapable of inspiring. But for all that, the sturdy clockwork engine forms a valuable adjunct to a model system of which the main motive power is steam.

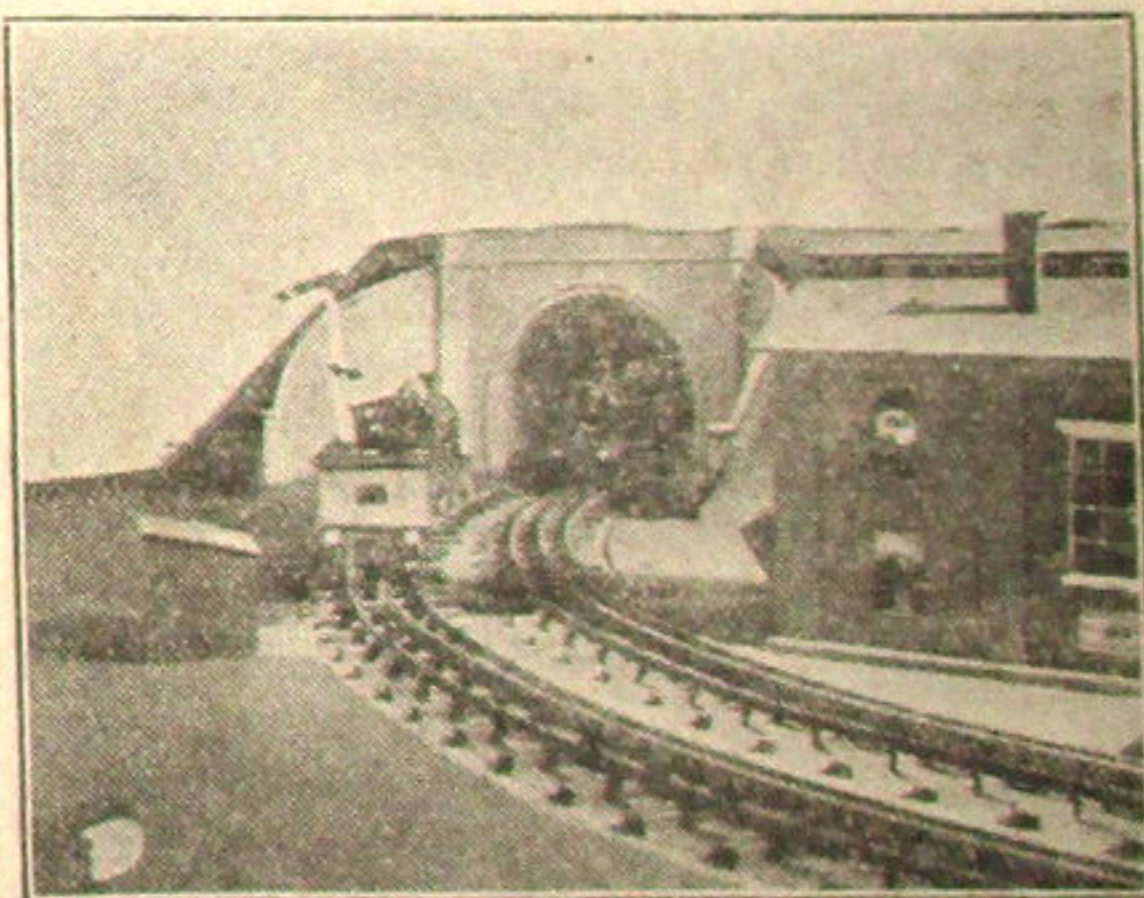
There is a wonderful choice offered to the model railway enthusiast in both steam and clockwork engines, which can be bought in most of the standard gauges at any big toy-shop or stores. Messrs. Bassett-Lowke, the famous model engineers of Northampton, have specialised for many years in model locomotives which are exact reproductions, correct to scale and enamelled in the correct colours, of well-known types of engines used by all the big British railways. Goods engines, tank engines and big compound express engines, of the types used to haul the crack long-distance trains, all have been faithfully copied for the benefit of the model railway owner; and when once the choice of system has been decided—that is to say, whether Great Northern, Midland, London and North Western or other type is to be followed—then all the rolling-stock can be obtained to match. Every detail of a real railway system can be obtained in model size, if required, in addition to every type

of rolling-stock; stations, signals, signal-boxes, tunnels, buffers, even tiny models of the metal advertisement-plates displayed on stations, correctly lettered; while little lead guards, porters and passengers can be had to people the model system.

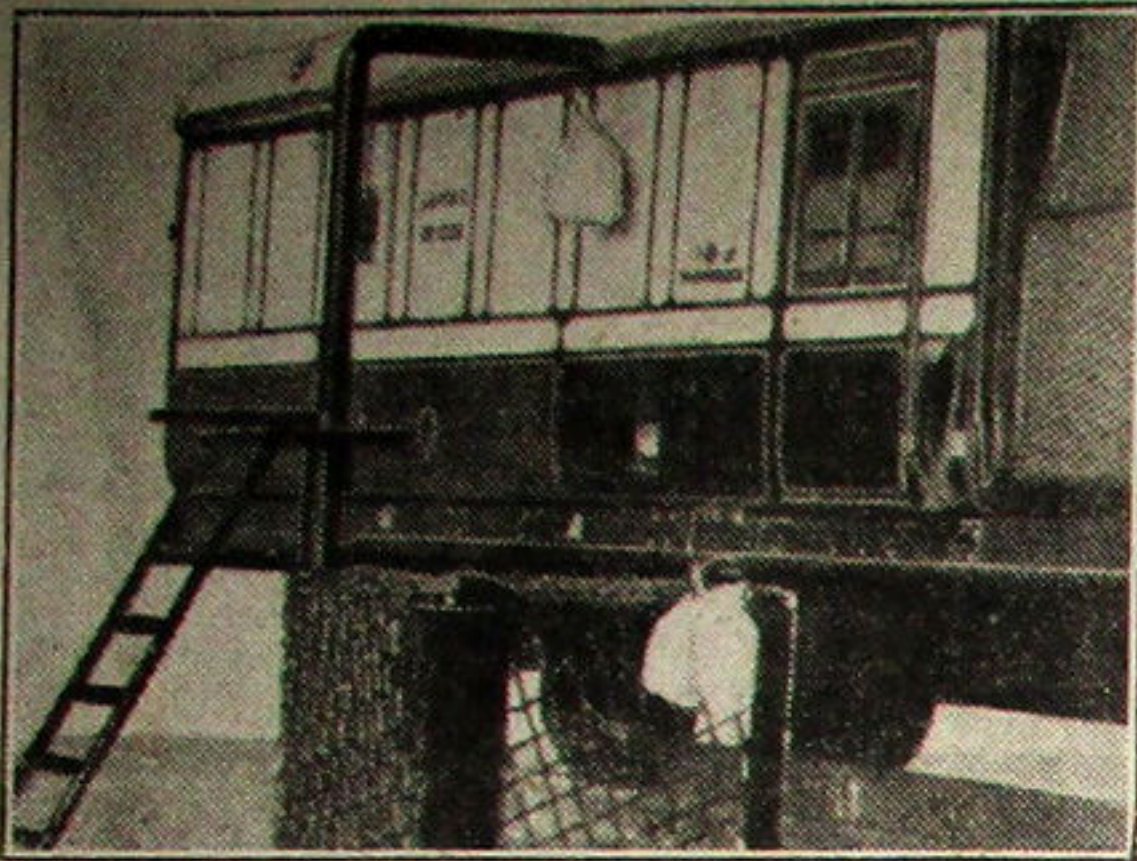
Building up the Railway System

ONE of the great advantages of model railway engineering is that the work of building up your system is never finished. Endless scope is offered for the young engineer to construct himself many of the accessories he requires to make his line more realistic. The building of a model station, for instance, is a most fascinating occupation, which allows ample opportunity for the exercise of a boy's natural ingenuity. The station can be modelled on the lines of an important terminus, with its arched roof and a thousand and one elaborations of detail. It can be a wayside station, a simple construction with a wooden shelter; or it can be just a "halt," little more than a platform edged with railings.

The model railway which starts with a dozen feet of rails, one locomotive and a few trucks can be built up little by little, into an elaborate system; the owner will find the interest and the fascination of the pastime grow upon him as the system grows, and he will learn something all the time. The expenditure of a few shillings here upon, say,



The mouth of the tunnel. Another view of a miniature railway.



Scale model of a Post Office van, showing the device used for picking up and dropping mailbags while the train is in motion

a set of points; the construction, by personal labour, of a realistic tunnel; every separate article has its own place in the building up of a model which will be a joy and a pride to the young engineer and his boy friends.

How to Handle the Engine

ANY boy can learn how to handle a model steam locomotive in a very short time, but before the first run of a new engine, the maker's instructions should be read very carefully, or the mechanism of the engine may be injured. To prepare the engine for a run, the young engineer should proceed as follows: First remove the lamp from the engine, fill the container with methylated spirit, and replace the screw cap; next, fill the boiler two-thirds full with clean water, either cold or warm, by unscrewing the safety valve; after making sure that it works freely, replace the safety-valve. The lubricator, which is usually to be found in the smoke-box, should then be filled with cylinder-oil; the spirit lamp may now be lighted. During the three or four minutes that it takes for steam to get up, the axles and other moving parts should be lightly oiled. The whistle should be tried occasionally, and when it blows clearly, steam should

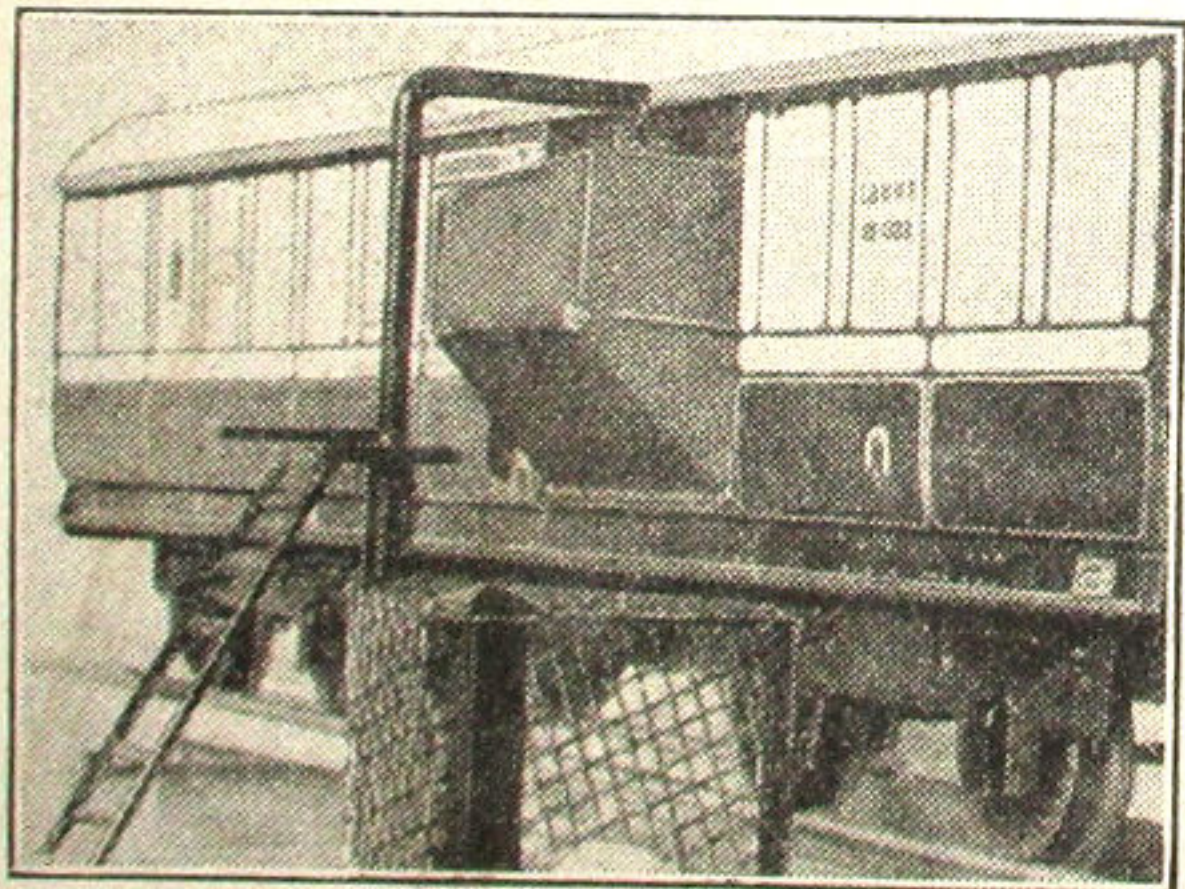
be turned on to the cylinders by gently moving the regulator. This is the great moment, as the little engine, slowly at first, and then gathering way, steams majestically along the track!

The young engineer should remember that although the safety-valve is provided to deal with excessive pressure of steam, it is not wise to allow the engine to stand still for more than a minute or two with the lamps burning, or the whole model will be liable to overheat, and damage may be caused.

When the methylated spirit in the lamp is exhausted, the container must, of course, be replenished; but it is very important to remember that the boiler must also be refilled with water every time this is done. Most model engines are designed so that the water in the boiler

just outlasts the spirit in the lamp; when the latter is refilled, therefore, the boiler must be replenished at the same time, or it will soon run dry, with disastrous consequences.

It is clear then that it is quite a simple matter to manipulate a model steam locomotive successfully; and careful handling and close following out of the above instructions will help the young engineer to obtain the maximum of efficiency, together with long and satisfactory service from his model.



This photo shows one set of mailbags caught by the net at the side of the track. The "scoop" on the side of the van is "picking up" another bag

The Simplicity of the Clockwork Engine. Some Points to Note

SIMPLE as the steam engine is to run, the clockwork engine is simpler still. The great point to be careful of is not to overwind the engine. Overwinding results in the breakage of a spring and puts the engine right out of action, though the spring can, of course, be replaced when a new one has been obtained.

The clockwork mechanism should not be over-lubricated, as too much oil clogs it, and picks up so much dust that the efficiency of the en-

gine is greatly reduced. Light sewing-machine oil should be sparingly used to oil the axle-bearings, cog-wheels and coupling-rods, while a little should be worked between the plates

of the spring. Do not hold the engine in the air and allow the wheels to fly round while you manipulate the reversing-gear and other levers, as this will damage the gear-wheels.

In choosing a clockwork engine, note the width of the spring, the thickness of the gear-wheels, and the width of the pinions, which should be of steel and of ample dimensions. Long and trouble-free service will repay the attention which is paid to these important particulars.

Don't forget that a clockwork engine six months old, if it has been properly treated,

will run better than a new one, as the gear-wheels will have become nicely worked into one another.

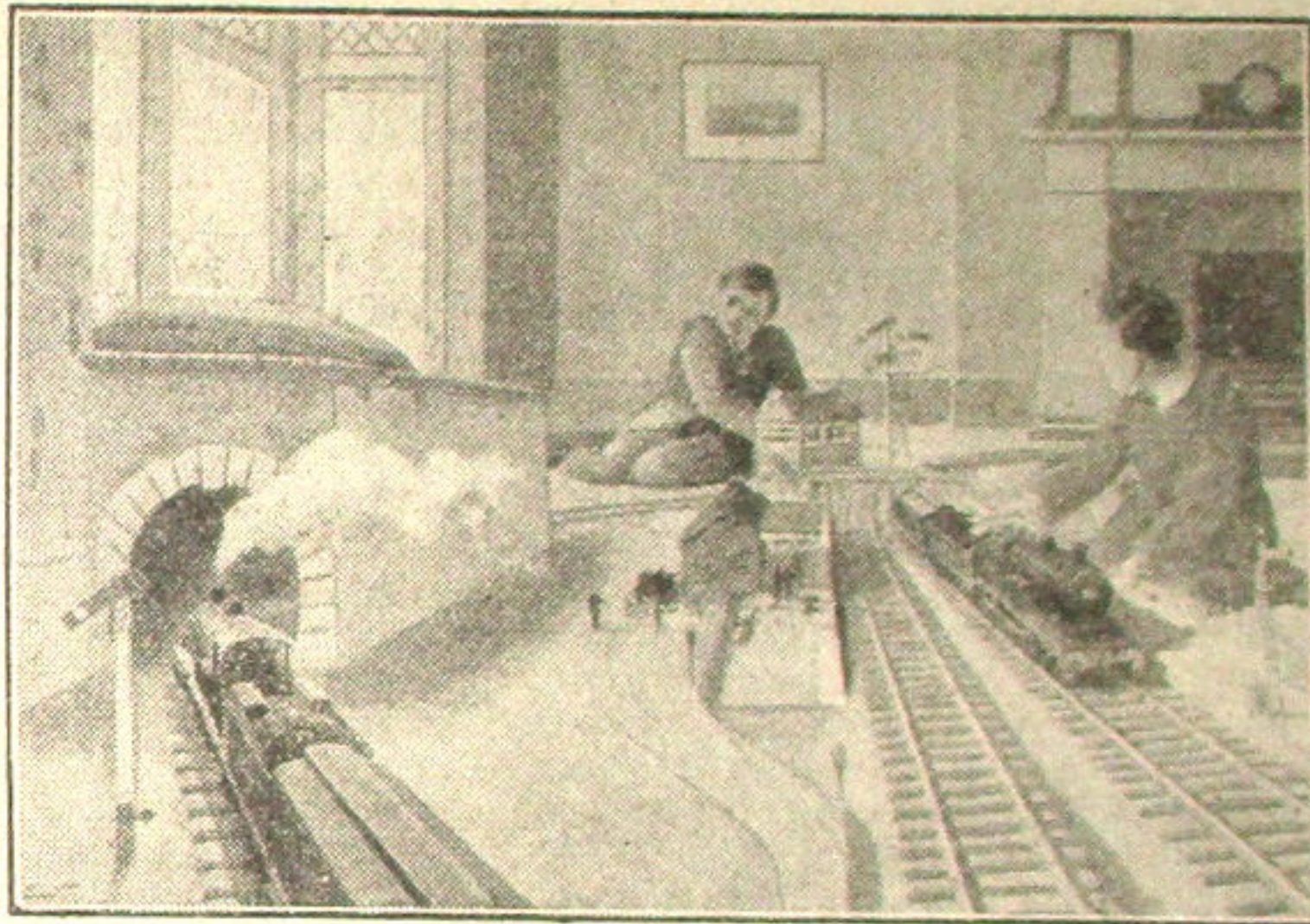
Model engines, whether driven by steam or clockwork, must be handled carefully and intelligently to give the best results. And the same applies to every piece of mechanism in the world.

This is one of the many valuable lessons learnt by the boy who is lucky enough to possess one or more of these beautifully constructed playthings. The thorough grasp of the construction of the model mechanism, and clear understanding of the mechanical

principles involved which is automatically acquired by the young model-railway enthusiast cannot fail to stand him in good stead later on, in this age of universal machinery.

As time goes on the opportunities offered to ambitious boys by the engineering profession, in its manifold branches, cannot fail to become greater, and at the same time competition for the best posts will doubtless become keener. And in the race for supremacy the boy who has an elementary knowledge of mechanics as a foundation for his technical training, and who has been accustomed to handling machinery in miniature himself, will possess a valuable advantage. The young model railway enthusiast should take care to put this point of view, which is undoubtedly a sound one, to his father. It will help!

C. M. D.



Working a model railway is fascinating and instructive as well



*A Short, Complete Story of
the Chums of Greyfriars*

BY TOM BROWN

DARKNESS had descended like a pall over Greyfriars School.

It was a bitterly cold evening, and the majority of the fellows were indoors, either doing their prep. or playing chess.

The Famous Five of the Remove, however, were outside, exposed to the cold and the darkness. With the agility of monkeys, they had swarmed up on to the roof of the gym. by means of the water-pipe.

The gym. roof was at no great height from the ground. At the same time, it had been a risky climb, and had one of the party made a false move, and fallen, he would have been an ambulance case.

"Here we are!" panted Bob Cherry. "Just half a tick, you fellows, while I get my bearings. Ah, there's the window of Loder's study—just opposite where we're standing!"

"Good!" murmured Harry Wharton. "He won't be able to recognise us, will he?"

"Not likely! Too dark for that," whispered Johnny Bull.

The pockets of the Famous Five were bulging suspiciously. They were full of ammunition in the form of prehistoric eggs. So ancient were those eggs, in fact, that they resembled Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome. It was the intention of the juniors to bombard Loder of the Sixth.

Loder, as everybody knows, is a bully and a beast and a bad egg. And, as Bob Cherry remarked, it was only right that bad eggs should be pelted with their namesakes.

Only that afternoon, Loder had ill-treated Frank Nugent's minor because the latter had refused to go down to the village and buy him some cigarettes.

Dicky Nugent had received a very rough handling; and the Famous Five had planned revenge on the heavy-handed prefect. They had climbed on to the gym. roof for the purpose of putting their plan into execution.

From where they stood they got quite a good glimpse of Gerald Loder. A beam of light from his study window revealed him seated at the table, conning the pages of a sporting paper, and blissfully unconscious of the fact that he was under observation.

"Now!" muttered Harry Wharton.

The avengers groped in their pockets and produced an egg apiece. Then, measuring the distance, they took careful aim.

Crash!

Two of the shots missed their target, and crashed against the window-pane. But the remaining three, hurled with unerring aim, found their billet. They went whizzing through the window, and two of the eggs burst on Loder's forehead, while the third smote him on the chin, and the yolk streamed down his fancy waistcoat.

"Yarooooh! What the thump——" gasped the astonished prefect, leaping to his feet.

And then a further volley of ammunition crashed upon his person.

Pressing his handkerchief to his nose—for the aroma of those eggs was far from savoury—Loder staggered to the window and looked out.

At first he could see nothing, so intense was the darkness; but presently he discerned a number of shadowy figures on the roof opposite. He had no idea who his assailants were, but he was determined not to take the

bombardment lying down. He believed in the policy of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and an egg for an egg.

Opening his locker, and taking an egg from a paper bag, Loder hurled it in the direction of the shadowy figures. He heard a smashing sound, followed by a yelp of anguish; but he failed to recognise the voice of the victim.

Then the roof-party set up a further bombardment. But Loder was determined not to retreat. Mad with rage, he picked up a flower-pot, and hurled it at his assailants. Even as he did so, however, a shower of eggs smote him in the chest, checking the force of his throw.

The flower-pot fell short of its objective and dropped into space.

Now, it so happened that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was strolling in the Close, with the object of taking a "breather" before settling down to a strenuous evening's work.

Suddenly, and without warning, a hard and heavy object descended from above, and flattened Mr. Quelch's mortar-board over his eyes.

The Form-master sat down violently on the flagstones, utterly dazed. He vaguely wondered if there had been a revival of the air-raids.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "This—this is appalling! But for the protection of my mortar-board I should have been stunned!"

He tottered to his feet, and peered around him. Then he discovered what had struck him. It was a flower-pot.

Mr. Quelch picked up one of the fragments and examined it. But there was no clue as to where the flower-pot had come from.

And then, gazing upwards, the Remove-master beheld five shadowy figures on the roof of the gymnasium.

In the uncertain light, the Famous Five had the appearance of fully grown men rather than schoolboys. And Mr. Quelch immediately jumped to the conclusion that they were suspicious characters who had broken into the school with some ulterior motive.

"How dare you!" he shouted. "How dare you insult me in this manner! Who are you?"

No reply came from above.

"Come down, and give yourselves up!" thundered the Form-master. "You are

detected, and escape is impossible!"

Still there was no reply from above.

Mr. Quelch's brain worked swiftly. He was quite convinced, by this time, that the individuals on the roof were burglars, or, at any rate, marauders.

How could he apprehend them?

He was not agile enough to climb to the roof

of the gymnasium. Besides, he would need help in dealing with five apparently desperate ruffians.

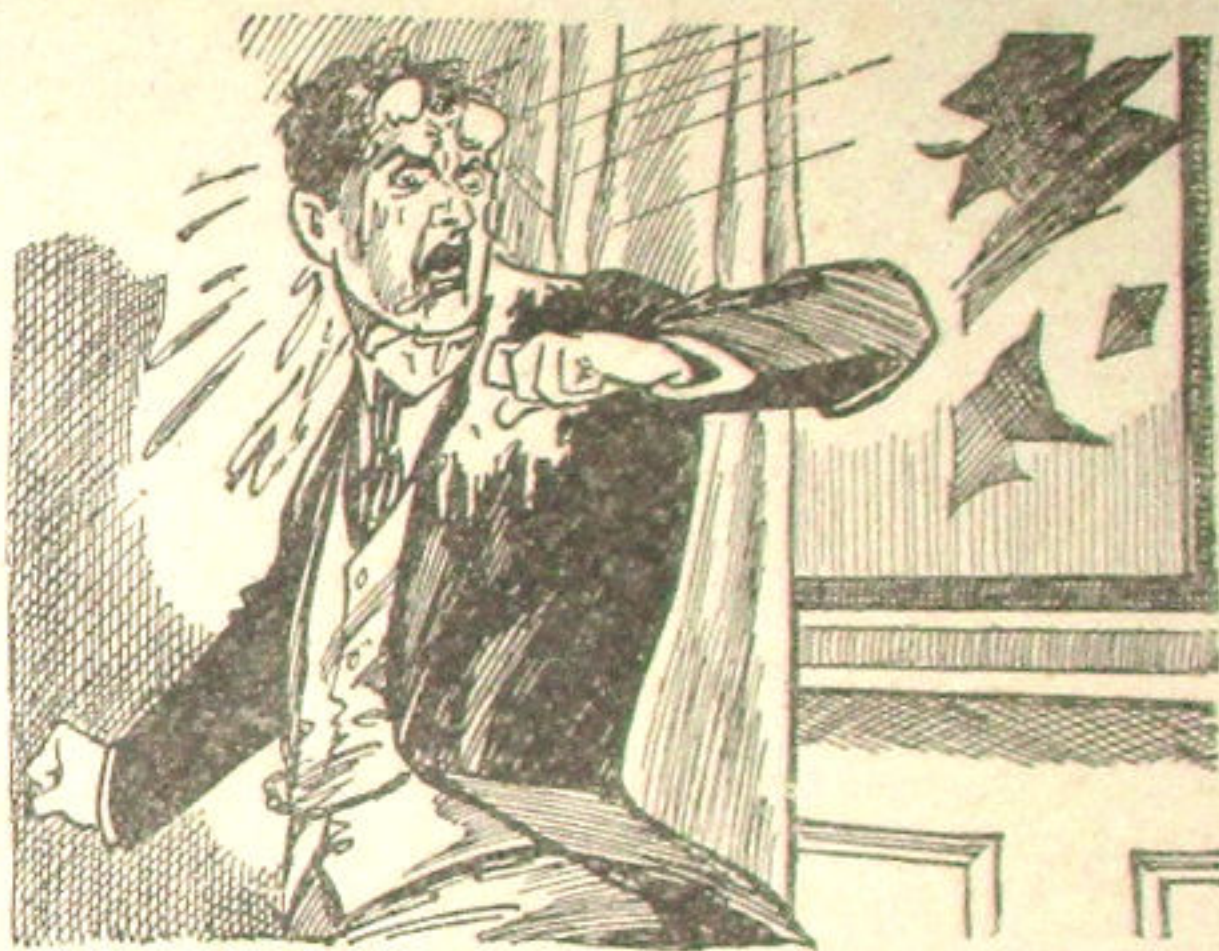
And then a happy inspiration occurred to him.

He would sound the alarm. He would ring the bell which was provided in the case of fire or other emergency.

Having formed this resolve, Mr. Quelch groped his way towards the bell-rope and tugged it viciously.

Clang, clang, clang, clang!

The jangling, discordant notes rang out on the night air. And the effect was instantaneous.



The eggs, hurled with unerring aim, went whizzing through the window and burst on Loder's forehead. (See page 34.)

Fellows who were doing their prep. hurriedly closed their books and dashed out of their studies to see what the alarm was all about. And fellows who were playing chess and similar games sprang to their feet and rushed out to investigate.

"What's going on?"

"Ask me another!"

"Is the school on fire?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Let's go and investigate."

"Yes, rather!"

The alarm-bell continued to clang, and all was chaos and confusion.

II.

THE Famous Five were wise in their generation.

They knew that if they remained on the roof, detention and punishment would follow.

So they descended, via the water-pipe, into the Close.

Mr. Quelch was too deeply engrossed in tugging at the bell-rope to observe the juniors' descent.

"Safe!" muttered Johnny Bull, who was the last of the five to reach terra firma.

"What's the next move, Harry?"

Harry Wharton gave a chuckle.

"Follow me!" he rapped out.

And he dashed up to Mr. Quelch, with his chums following hard at his heels.

"Where's the fire, sir?" he asked breathlessly.

Mr. Quelch, still clinging to the bell-rope, inclined his head as the captain of the Remove addressed him.

"On the gymnasium roof——" he began. He was about to say, "On the gymnasium roof I distinctly saw five figures!" But as soon

as he had uttered the first four words the Famous Five rushed away.

"Fire!" they yelled loudly. "Fire!"

By this time the Close was thronged with excited fellows. And the cry was taken up on every side.

"Fire! Fire!"

Wingate of the Sixth clutched Bob Cherry by the arm.

"Where's the fire?" he panted.

"Quelch says it's on the roof of the gym!"

"My hat!"

Wingate lost no time in setting to work. He despatched a number of fellows for the fire-

hose and appliances; then he sprinted away to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke stood at the window, with an expression of utter bewilderment on his face.

"Wingate!" he gasped. "What—whatever does this disturbance mean?"

"Fire, sir!" said the captain of Greyfriars briefly.

"Bless my soul! Where?"

"On the gym. roof, sir! I came here to use your 'phone. May I summon the local fire brigade, sir?"

"Yes, yes!" murmured the distracted Head. "By all means, Wingate!"

The Sixth-former hastily snatched up the receiver and spoke into the transmitter.

"Give me the local fire station—quickly!"

A moment later the operator's voice announced:

"You're through!"

A sleepy voice sounded over the wires.

"Wake up, man!" snorted Wingate.

"There's an outbreak of fire at Greyfriars! Do you hear? Summon the brigade at once!"



Gazing upwards, the Remove-master beheld five shadowy figures on the roof of the gymnasium. (See page 35.)

"Very good!" came the reply, in tones which suggested that any old time would do.

Wingate rang off, and went out into the Close.

There was plenty of animation, there was heaps of excitement, but there was no sign of a fire.

Wingate gazed upwards, expecting to see clouds of smoke ascending from the roof of the gym., but everything seemed as usual.

Meanwhile, a party of juniors dashed up with the fire-hose, which was speedily brought into action.

The amateur firemen had a very poor sense of direction, for the jet of water, instead of shooting upwards, descended in a deluge upon the crowd in the Close.

Panic-stricken fellows rushed hither and thither to avoid a ducking. And Mr. Quelch was shouting and gesticulating wildly.

"There is no fire, my boys. The hose is not needed. Let this absurdity cease! I tell you, there is no——"

Swoosh!

Mr. Quelch got in the way of the stream of water which shot from the hose-pipe, and he was nearly swept off his feet by the force of the current. He staggered back, spluttering wildly.

"Oh, dear! Gug-gug-gug! I am drenched! My garments are soaked! Desist, my boys—do you hear? There is no fire!"

"No fire, sir?" said Johnny Bull, in surprise. "Then why did you sound the alarm?"

"Had you stayed to listen to my explanation in the first place, Bull, you would have understood the facts. A number of suspicious-looking characters were visible on the roof of the gymnasium!"

"My hat!"

"Doubtless they were burglars; but of that I am not certain."

"We'll jolly soon see, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "Stop fooling about with that hose, you fellows! Yoooop! You're pointing it straight at me, you duffers! Up with it! Level it at the gym. roof!"

The fellows with the hose-pipe obeyed and a moment later the upturned hose played upon the roof of the gymnasium.

"That'll fetch 'em!" said Coker of the Fifth.

But it didn't. Whereupon Coker and his two study-mates, Potter and Greene, sped

away to the woodshed for a ladder. This they reared against the wall with some difficulty.

"Turn that hose off, you kids!" said Coker, in tones of authority. "We're going up to investigate."

And the three Fifth-formers hastily swarmed up the ladder.

Scarcely had they reached the top, when a loud clanging and

rumbling announced the arrival of the local fire brigade.

As the engine turned in at the school gateway, one of the men sang out to Gosling, the porter:

"Where's the fire, mate?"

"Roof o' the jimnasium!" replied Gosling.

The fire-engine rushed on, halting at length in the midst of the surging crowd.

"Don't see no sign of a fire!" grunted the chief fireman.

"Can't you see tongues of flame leaping up from the gym. roof?" asked Nugent.

"Dashed if I can! Still, we might as well



"Where's the fire, sir?" asked Harry Wharton, running up breathlessly. (See page 36.)

turn the 'ose on, mates. We ain't come all this way for nothin'!"

Blissfully unconscious of the fact that there were people on the roof, the firemen got busy with the hose.

It was a much more powerful hose than that which the Greyfriars juniors had been using.

Sizz-z-z! Swish! Swoooosh!

Coker, Potter, and Greene, who were groping about on the roof, looking for the burglars, had the shock of their lives.

A powerful stream of water smote Coker in the chest, and he cannoned violently against Potter, bowling him over like a ninepin. Then Greene stopped the stream of water with his chin, and with a wild yell he toppled over on top of Potter. After which, the hose-pipe played upon all three.

Choking and spluttering, and gouging the water from their eyes and ears, the Fifth-formers staggered to their feet, only to be knocked down again.

The Arctic conditions which

prevailed did not render a shower-bath enjoyable, and wild gurgles and fierce exclamations greeted the ears of the hysterical crowd below.

Finally Mr. Quelch succeeded in persuading the firemen to cease fire. And when Coker, Potter, and Greene, having sorted themselves out, came down the ladder, they resembled a trio of drowned rats.

Coker's fury knew no bounds. He clenched his big fists and rushed at the chief fireman, who promptly took refuge behind Mr. Quelch.

"Coker!" thundered the master of the Remove. "You forget yourself, sir!"

"Lemme get at him!" hooted Coker. "I—I'll burst him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at us, sir—soaked to the skin! Did you ever see such awful-looking guys?"

"You're no worse-looking than usual, Coker, old man!" said Bob Cherry.

And there was a fresh burst of laughter.

Heedless of Mr. Quelch's stern protestations, Coker made another rush at the fireman. But Wingate of the Sixth seized him by the shoulders and swung him back.

"Tell me, Coker," said Mr. Quelch eagerly, "were there any desperate scoundrels on the roof?" Coker was sullenly silent.

"Only Coker, Potter, and Greene, sir!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, Bull!"

Mr. Quelch passed his hand over his brow.

"I—I am positive I saw a number of marauders on the roof of the gymnasium!" he muttered. "I can only conclude that they have got away by some subterfuge."

Then, after

apologising to the firemen for the unnecessary trouble to which they had been put, Mr. Quelch hurried into the building to change his garments.

The fire-engine rumbled away, and gradually the crowd dispersed, realising that it was a false alarm, and that there had been much ado about nothing.

As for the Famous Five, they were almost sobbing with merriment.

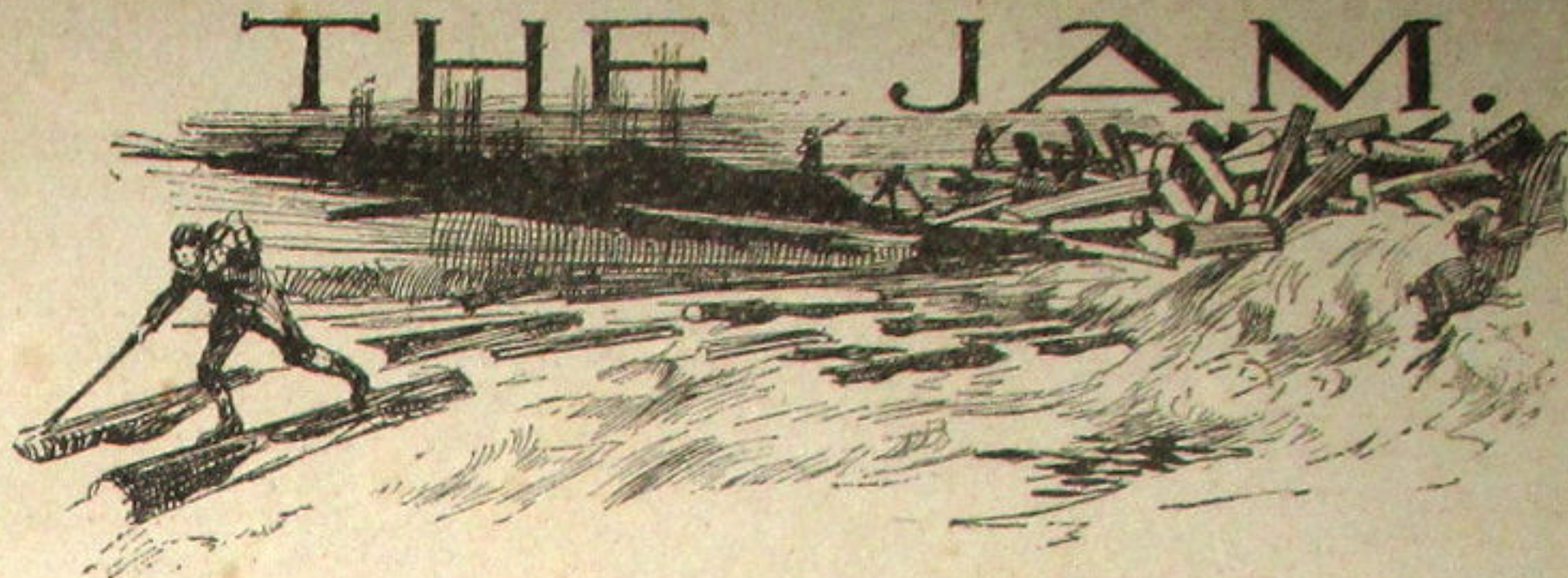
"What a lark!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "If only Quelchy knew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE END



Mr. Quelch got in the way of the stream of water which shot from the hose-pipe, and he was nearly swept off his feet by the force of the current. He staggered back spluttering wildly. (See page 137.)



A Thrilling Story of the Adventures and Dangers of the Lumberman's Life in Canada

By **PERCY LONGHURST**

WHEN a Canadian lumberjack talks about a "drive" he does not mean a pleasant outing behind a fast-trotting horse, or a run in a motor-car. Each of these can be exhilarating, but the lumberjack's drive is a whirl of fierce excitement. Sometimes it is a fight all the way, and more often than not someone gets hurt.

The gang Steve Chandler worked with had piled the great tree trunks, that the summer had been spent in cutting down, beside the river. And when the river was swollen by the autumn rains, the "drive" commenced. The "sticks" were heaved and tumbled into the rushing water which would carry them down to Lake Nipissing. Once there, they would be taken over by the company to whom the boss lumberman had contracted to sell his season's "cut."

Getting the logs down to the lake formed the "drive." And if there were a jam and they didn't get down, or arrived after the agreed-upon time, Big Ben Burnet's contract was broken. The company would pay him nothing.

If all goes well, the boss lumberman makes a small fortune. But if the logs get hung up in a "jam," or for some reason aren't delivered on time, then he goes broke. Next season sees him cadging a living around the hotels, or working as an ordinary lumberjack.

But no decent boss ever went broke if his

men could help it. They will risk drowning and broken limbs, work like madmen for forty-eight hours on end, wet to the skin, half-frozen and without grub—but they will get the drive through—somehow.

If they've a grudge against their employer or the river boss—the foreman who has charge of the drive—then it is a mighty poor chance the boss has of seeing any money to repay him for six months' work.

Big Ben's gang swore by their employer; he was a white man all through; the river boss, Tom Tower, they tolerated. He was a man with more nerves than a lumberjack ought to have, irritable and fault finding. Worse than that, he showed he had little trust in the gang—was continually worrying and prying around, suggesting his belief that they would not work as they ought unless he was continually looking them up.

And if there is one kind of man the lumberjack despises it is the boss who insinuates that he isn't up to his work. He'd rather have a boss who told him outright that he was a lazy lubber and was prepared to prove as much with his fists.

For the lumberjack has pride. He hates being bossed by a fellow whom he does not take to be at least as good a man as himself. If the boss is a better, then the lumberjack respects him.

For four days the "drive" went well enough.



Down came the log with a mighty "Swish!" Steve, jumping from its path, came into collision with Tower, and went down in the water. (See this page.)

Then Joe Lemoine, who had been sent on ahead, came back and reported that at Elbow Corner the water had shoaled and they'd have to look lively to avoid a jam.

Which made Tower get rattled.

He began fussing around, finding fault, showing rivermen more experienced than himself how to do their work. He tackled Steve Chandler one day.

"That ain't the way, kid, to handle a peavey," he yelled, his eye falling on Steve, who was engaged in prying a big stick from a snaggy shallow. "Land sakes, who taught you?"

Steve Chandler might be a kid, that is, he was no more than eighteen, nearly six feet of slim strength of the wire and whipcord type, and with merry blue eyes that seemed to look upon most happenings as a good joke. But more than half of his years had been spent in a lumber camp or on the river. The old hands called him "Kid" all right, but they knew he owned a man's experience.

"Taught me, boss! Why, no one," he returned good-temperedly. "I just picked it up. What's wrong?"

"Everything yer doin'!" snapped Tower. "Here, let me show ye!"

He snatched the peavey from Steve's fingers.

"You ain't puttin' all yer strength into it, an' what yer are is in the wrong place," asserted the river boss.

"Go ahead," smiled Steve, splashing through the water to give Tower room. There was a grin on his lips.

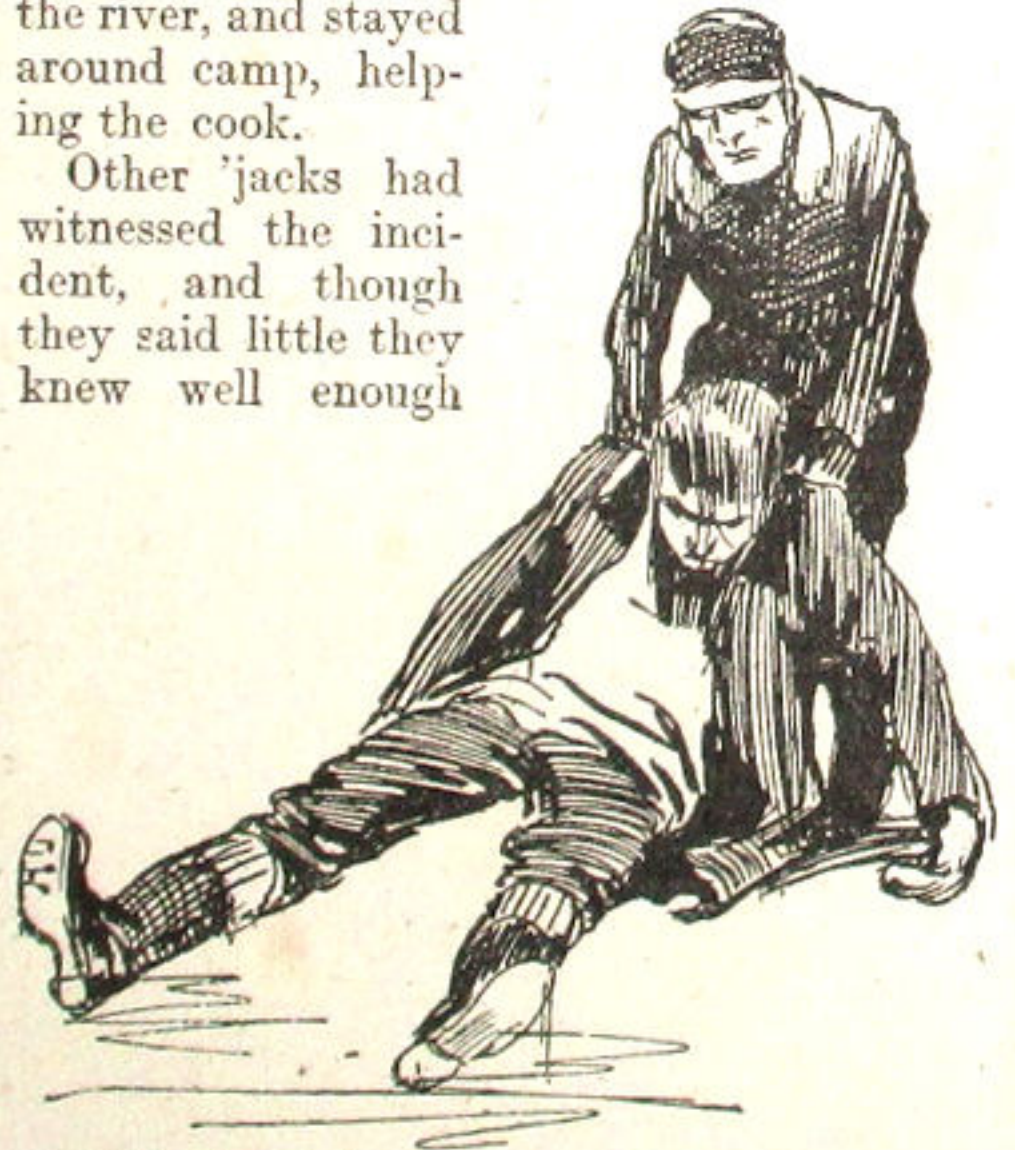
Down went the peavey under the stuck log—Tower put all his weight into a mighty heave, and up went one end of the log, nicely balanced athwart a snag. But it did not slide forward, and when it had reached its highest point down it came with a mighty "swish!" Then it rolled, and Steve, jumping from its path, came into sudden collision with Tower, who also had jumped—blindly. Tower was the heavier by fifty odd pounds and Steve went down in the water, and the log on top of his legs.

Five seconds later he had regained his feet, his face suddenly white and drawn with pain.

"Hurt?" exclaimed Tower. Then he growled, "It's clumsy people allus do get into trouble."

Steve limped away. His left leg had narrowly escaped being broken, and the next day he could barely move. He was no use on the river, and stayed around camp, helping the cook.

Other 'jacks had witnessed the incident, and though they said little they knew well enough



At midday Leggatt was fished out with a broken thigh. (See page 41.)



To face page 40

RISKY WORK!

The picturesque life of the Canadian lumberman is full of peril, and calls for the greatest pluck and skill

the river boss's folly had lost to the gang one of its hardest-working members.

Two days later the cook moved camp to Elbow Corner. As Lemoine had reported, it was a likely place for a jam.

At the Corner the river made an abrupt swing to the left. A hundred yards above, a small islet lay dead in the centre of the river, and just above that a sudden drop in the river bed formed a rapid. Unfortunately, the drop did not extend wholly across the river, and it was quite likely that the greater flow of water where it did occur would take the bulk of the logs and swing them into the restricted waterway produced by the existence of the island.

With more logs than it would accommodate, one of the passages past the island was likely to get choked, while the passage on the other side would receive few, if any, sticks.

"Two men to keep th' waterway clear," ordered Tower, after an examination of the situation. "You, Leggatt an' Red Joe'll do."

Now this was hazardous work, unnecessarily hazardous, as every 'jack knew. With the rushing water and the hurtling logs, the men trying to keep the waterway from getting choked were gambling with death. Leggatt told Red Joe so, and Joe nodded agreement. But they went. It is not the way of the riverman to shirk a dangerous task.

What followed was as expected. Leggatt and Red Joe failed to keep the passage open—

couldn't do it even with two more men's help. At midday Leggatt was fished out with a broken thigh, and in the neglect of the work consequent upon his rescue the logs jammed.

Tower saw the disaster and lost his nerve and his temper. He cursed and bellowed, issued contradictory orders. Finally, all the 'jacks quietly left the job.

"You've caused th' trouble; you find a way out of it," the men told Tower when he wildly expostulated.

"Can you see what ought to be done?" Tower said at last to Steve, sitting by the cook's fire.

"I could have told you what to do half a day earlier," Steve answered. "I guess it's too late now."

But he went limping to where the 'jacks sat smoking, and for ten minutes he talked to them. Then each man got up and moved to the jam.

"What are you going to do?" Tower asked, coming forward.

They didn't trouble to answer.

While six worked at the jam, trying to pry it loose, Steve and a handful of

others, their lives worth hardly a minute's purchase, jumped from log to log as it came shooting from the rapid, and turned it into the open waterway on the other side of the island, thus preventing a further accumulation at the jam.

And what such work meant to the kid with his injured leg a lumberjack could guess, but only Steve himself really knew.

But the drive was saved. And until the lake was reached Tower was a dumb man.



The Lumberjacks jumped from log to log, as they came shooting from the rapid. (See this page)

TWO LEAVES FROM HARRY WHARTON'S AUTOGRAPH ALBUM

May every happiness be yours Wharton! I've always
been one of your stoutest pals. Could you advance me
five bob on my postal order?
W.G. Bunter

Life is mostly froth an' bubble
Two things stand like stone:—
Dodgin' duty at the double
Leavin' work alone
Herbert Mauleverer

I don't as a rule rook condescend to write ha-
ughtygraphs in fags books: but hears a bit
of advice for you Wharton:—
never be cheeky to your superiors, amongst
whom is Horace Coker.

"If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds worth of distance run,
Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,
and, what is more, you'll be a Man my son!"
(R. Kipling) H.H. Zurcher

Dear Wharton, I autograph, but I can't: I've
sprained my wrist in the gym.
Peter Todd

Shoot straight, and hit the target every time!
I did so in the Rockies, in my prime.
Although some scoffers are inclined to doubt,
There's not a better marksman than Paul Prout.

What i says is this here - May you
go down to prosperity, Master Wharton!
William Gosling

I wish you from my heartfulness the bestfulness
of luckfulness
I much admire your smartfulness, your zestfulness, and
pluckfulness!
And always rememberfully bear in mind, my esteemed
chum, that it is a long lane that has no silver lining,
as your English proverb has it.

Murree Jamsel Ram Singh
I kinder sorter guess and calculate that you're a galoot
who'll go far - like the merchant who invented dynamite!
Fisher Tarleton Fish

Yours till the last bellow - Bull

Eat not to live, but live to eat - That's my motto!
When are you going to invite me over to Greyfriars
for a little snack?
Bessie Bunter

You're a cheeky young cub, Wharton, and you can
take a hundred lines for leaving your autograph album
on my table for me to write in!
Gerald Loder

We'll always cling together like the ivy
Down which Loder climbs at night!
I'm rather afraid that the metre of this verse
is several yards too long.
But I've got the rhyme all right
Bob Cherry

Bunter had a little lamb,
And promptly came to grief;
Said Billy Bunter, "After this
I'd better stick to beef!"
Dick Penfold

Towser's Narrow Escape

by Martin Clifford

*A Complete Story of the
Boys of St. Jim's*



framework enclosing a series of box-like compartments. And from the sides of this protruded three tiers of queer-shaped wings, covered with a vivid-patterned wallpaper, patched here and there with bits of newspaper.

"I give it up," remarked Monty Lowther, in answer to Tom Merry's question. "It's either a new device for scaring crows or an aeroplane designed and built by an inmate of Colney Hatch. We'd better investigate this, chaps."

And Monty Lowther led the way towards the little crowd surrounding the queer contrivance.

"Hallo! Just what I guessed!" chuckled Lowther, as the three pushed their way through the group. "It's another of Skimmy's giddy inventions. Cheerio, Skimmy! What is it this time? A giant

mouse-trap, or a patent bird-catcher?"

Herbert Skimpole, the genius of the Shell, who was busy winding thick cord on a small winch-like arrangement, turned an earnest and enthusiastic face to Tom Merry & Co.

"It is neither, my dear Lowther," he replied, with a glance of conscious pride at his invention. "It is a new type of flying machine."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"In its present state of construction, of course," pursued Skimpole, seeming oblivious of the chorus of chuckles, "it merely embraces



THE FIRST CHAPTER

Skimpole's Latest

"WHAT on earth is that box-of-tricks?" gasped Tom Merry, in astonishment.

The Terrible Three were crossing the quad on their way indoors from cricket practice when Tom Merry stopped short and pointed towards the wood-shed, where a grinning crowd of fellows were congregated round a—well, it would be hard to classify what the weird and wonderful contraption really was. It stood about six feet high, and appeared to consist mainly of a long bamboo

the simple properties of an ultra-powerful man-lifting kite. Before adding the motive power, however, it is necessary to test the lifting capacity of the—er—planes. That, my dear fellows, I am about to do. I am exceedingly gratified, my dear Merry, that you have arrived so opportunely. You will be willing to help, I am sure——”

“Like a shot, Skimmy!” smiled Tom Merry, good-naturedly. “What do you want me to do? Wind the thingummyjig up?”

“No; I will attend to that. I merely desire you to seat yourself in this,” beamed Skimmy, indicating a flimsy trapeze suspended from the body of his invention. “Unless the cord breaks, it will be quite safe, I assure you. When you have ascended to a thousand feet——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Eh, what? Half a mo’, Skimmy!” said Tom Merry, hastily. “If it means going up in that blessed thing, then my help’s off—decidedly off!”

“But, my dear fellow! In the name of science——”

“Science be blowed!”

“But reflect upon the high honour of being the first——”

“A broken neck is too dear a price to pay, Skimmy, my dear ass. Why not test the thing yourself——”

“Ahem! Allow me to offer you the opportunity, Lowther——”

“Nothing doing, Skimmy,” said Lowther, gravely. “But I’ll remember your kind offer when I contemplate suicide, old fellow.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Manners, my dear fellow——”

“Rats!”

“Dear me!”

Skimpole sighed deeply, and blinked round appealingly, through his big glasses. But there were no takers—only grins. There was really very little chance of Skimpole’s flying-machine flying—his inventions never did work. And none of the grinning juniors seemed willing to take the risk of this one being a success. It was really most disheartening to the St. Jim’s inventor.

“Really, my dear Merry,” he began again, earnestly. “Pray reconsider——”

But Tom Merry & Co. did not stay to reconsider the matter. They walked away chortling. In the schoolhouse doorway they ran into Blake, Herries, Digby and D’Arcy of the Fourth, who were gathered round a large hamper standing in the Hall.

“My hat!” exclaimed Tom Merry. “That’s a whacking great hamper, Blake!”

“If it contains tuck, then we’re your friends for life,” said Lowther. “Who d——”

“Shush!”

The stealthy warning came from George Herries, who was kneeling by the hamper, putting the finishing touches to the rope that bound it.

“Shurrup, you silly asses!” he breathed. “He’s asleep.”

“Eh! Who’s asleep?” ejaculated Tom Merry.

“Towser, of course! He’s had a jolly good feed, and I want him to sleep all through the journey, if possible—he doesn’t like hampers,” explained Herries, rising to his feet. “And now about a label——”

“But—but is Towser in that hamper, Herries?” gasped Tom Merry. “Surely you’re not going to sell the beggar, Herries?”

“You—you dummy!” snorted Herries. “Of course not! I’m sending him to the show at Wayland, you—you ass! He’s going to bag the first prize for pure-bred bull-dogs, let me tell you. But we’re wasting time. I suppose you haven’t a tie-on label you can spare me, Merry?”

“Dare say we can find you one, if you’ll come up to No. 10,” grinned Tom Merry.

“Oh, good! I’ll leave you chaps to look after Towser, Blake, old man. And mind,” added Herries warningly, “you don’t wake the poor old chap.”

And Herries hurried away after the Terrible Three to get the promised label.

Blake, Digby and Arthur Augustus D’Arcy groaned wearily when he had departed. They had spent the best part of a sunny half-day helping to prepare Towser for the dog show, and all three were feeling “fed” with Herries and his beloved pet.

“I’ll be thumped if I’m going to waste any more time over that blessed animal!”



The crowd watched in agonised suspense, expecting every second to see the ivy break away in the plucky junior's grasp. (See page 48)

snorted Blake. "Let's go and get tea, and blow Towser and all his works!"

"Yass wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "I cannot say I dislike old Towser—though he has absolutely no wegard whatever for a fellah's twousers. But weally, Hewwies expects too much of his fwiends, bai jove! That hampah will be safe enough heah. Come along, deah boys."

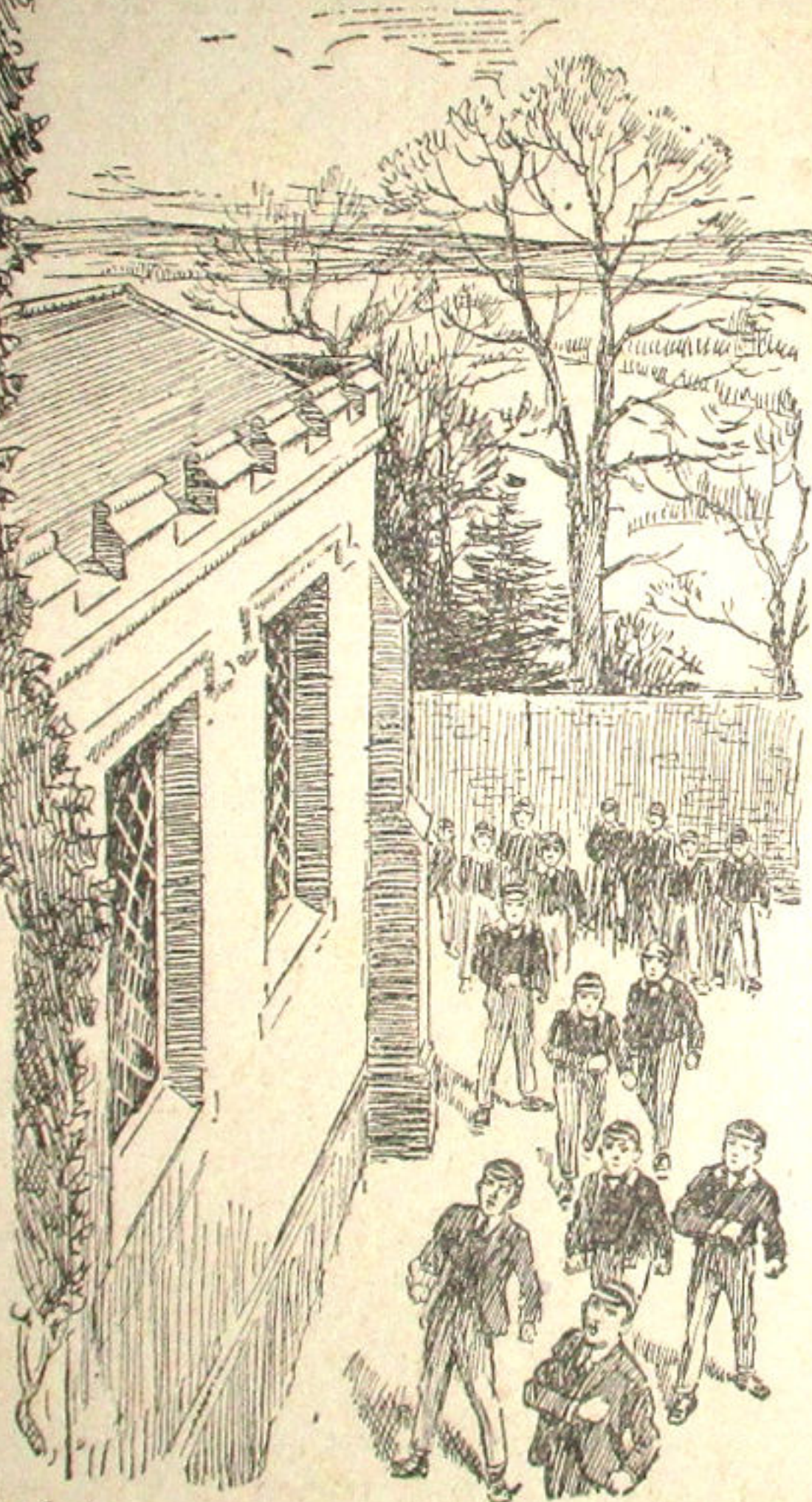
And the three Fourth Formers departed,

leaving the hamper containing the sleeping Towser to take care of itself.

But, as it happened, Towser was by no means "safe enough heah." Barely had Blake & Co. gone when three juniors entered the Schoolhouse. They were Racke, Crooke, and Mellish—three shady juniors who were always ready to harm anyone or anything.

"My hat!" exclaimed Racke, spotting the hamper. "That's a stunnin' hamper, by gad! Whom does it belong to, I wonder?"

Crooke stooped and peered between the interstices of the basket-work.



"It's that dashed bulldog of Herries'," he grunted. "He's fast asleep, too, the lazy brute. I say, there's nobody about. Let's roll the beast down the steps, Racke."

"Toppin' wheeze, Crookey," grinned Racke. "He'll think it's an earthquake. Yank hold."

He gripped one handle of the hamper and Crooke was about to grasp the other when Herbert Skimpole came ambling up the Schoolhouse steps. There was a decidedly dispirited expression on the inventor's brainy features, and Racke & Co., who had been amongst the crowd in the quad, chuckled as they saw it.

"Ah, my dear fellows," he began, eyeing Racke & Co. somewhat doubtfully, "I wonder if I can prevail upon one of——"

"Oh, buzz off, you tame lunatic!" said Crooke with a sneer. "If you jolly well think we're fools enough to play with your potty toys——"

"Half a mo'!" said Racke quickly. "I suppose you haven't persuaded anyone yet to test your invention, Skimmy?"

"Unfortunately, no," replied Skimpole sadly. "But I——"

"And you won't, I'm afraid," observed Racke gravely. "But if I might make a suggestion, why rely upon anybody when your object can be attained by tying a heavy weight—say that hamper of rubbish there, on to the trapeze—eh, what?"

Skimpole looked from Racke to the hamper, then he placed a bony finger to his bulging forehead reflectively.

"Ah, h'm, yes! Your argument is certainly logical, Racke, my dear fellow," he observed somewhat doubtfully. "An inanimate object would undoubtedly serve my purpose equally well. It would also be much—ahem!—safer. But are you sure that hamper only contains rubbish?"

"Certainly; we were just carrying it out to chuck away," said Racke glibly. "Catch hold, old sport—carefully, though."

"But—er—ahem! Very well!"

As Racke gripped a handle of the hamper, Skimpole, still a little doubtful, grabbed the other, and a moment later all four were ambling across the quad towards the wood-

shed. And with them went poor old Towser—a burnt offering, as it were on the altar of Skimpole's genius.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Towser's Peril

MEANWHILE, Towser's master, George Herries, had arrived at No. 10 study with Tom Merry & Co. But, unfortunately, Tom Merry's assurance to find a label did not materialise. For about ten minutes Herries waited impatiently whilst the three Shell fellows searched drawers and cupboards, and at last Tom Merry gave it up.

"Sorry, old chap," he murmured apologetically. "I'm jolly certain, though, we had some somewhere, but they've gone."

"Well, you silly asses!" growled Herries ungratefully. "Making me wait all this time for nothing. B-r-r-rr!"

And George Herries was about to retire wrathfully when through the open window sounded a loud and decidedly ironical cheer.

"Hallo! What's up?" said Tom Merry, stepping to the window. "Well, my hat! Ha, ha, ha! It's Skimmy's flying machine——"

"And actually flying," chortled Manners. "The only giddy invention of Skimmy's that ever worked. Look at it wobbling! Oh, crumbs!"

Manners broke off with a gasp of alarm, echoed a second later by Lowther and Merry. Out above the quad was Skimpole's wonderful flying machine, and, more wonderful still, it was, without a doubt, steadily rising in the air. But they were not alarmed at that, but at the sight of a large hamper swaying gently like the basket car of a balloon beneath the body of the queer-looking machine.

"Towser!" shouted Tom Merry. "What the dickens——"

At Tom Merry's startled shout, Herries jumped to the window and looked out into the quad. Then he gave a howl of horrified dismay and wrath.

"Towser!" he almost shrieked. "It's poor old Towser! Oh, that fool Skimmy! I'll—I'll——"

And Herries dashed from the study and clattered down the stairs like a madman.

"After him—there'll be trouble!" snapped

Tom Merry sharply. "What on earth is that idiot Skimpy thinking about?"

Followed by his equally alarmed chums, Tom Merry dashed hot-foot after Herries. Out in the quad the ironical cheers and howls of laughter ceased abruptly as George Herries dashed amongst them, horror in his heart and fury in his eyes.

"Skimpole, you mad fool, bring him down again!" he shouted frantically. "Oh, you—you——"

Herbert Skimpole backed hastily, and blinked in astonishment at the wild-looking Herries.

"My dear, dear Herries," he gasped. "Wha—what, pray, is the——"

He was interrupted by a shout from the fellows watching the progress of the weird-looking "flying machine" as a sudden gust of wind caught the thing and it ducked and "stunted" in an alarming manner. Then came a crash as it nose-dived and jammed itself in a confused mass of splintered bamboo and torn wallpaper on an ancient chimney of the Schoolhouse tower.

And a second later came a muffled yelping as the hamper containing the unfortunate Towser swung with a dull thud against the ivy-clad wall of the old tower. Evidently that concussion had awakened Herries' fat and lazy pet, not only from his slumbers, but to the fact that something was seriously amiss.

As yet he stood in little danger—so long as the cord held; for Skimpole's unlucky invention was jammed too securely on the chimney-pot to be shifted by anything short of a hurricane. But Towser's terrified yelps were enough for Herries.

Before anyone could raise a hand to stop him, Towser's master had dashed to the foot of the old tower, and was climbing swiftly and recklessly up the thick and twisted ivy.

"Come back, Herries, you idiot!" shouted Tom Merry in alarm.

Herries went on climbing doggedly, hand over hand. Then came a shout, and Kildare and Darrel of the Sixth rushed up.

"Herries, you young fool, come down!" shouted Kildare angrily. "Stop!"

But Herries would not have obeyed even the Head just then. He would have cheerfully

given his life for his beloved pet, and Kildare knew it.

In tense silence the horrified crowd watched in agonised suspense, expecting every second to see the ivy break away in the plucky junior's grasp. But the old gnarled roots were thick and tough, and happily they held.

Foot by foot the junior climbed steadily until he reached the hamper swinging sixty feet above the ground. Clinging with one hand to the ivy he reached out and grasped the hamper. Then, as if he realised the hopelessness of doing anything that way, he drew back and began to climb higher to the parapet a few feet above his head.

Then came the tense moment to the watchers below. The parapet jutted outwards dangerously, and it seemed impossible for the reckless junior to accomplish the task. But Herries did not attempt it—not there. Clinging desperately to the ivy tendrils he moved slowly sideways to where the broad top of a square drainpipe broke the evenness of the parapet.

Even there the task was highly dangerous. But George Herries was not troubled with nerves. And in dead silence, save for the yelping of the imprisoned Towser, he hauled himself up with the help of the pipe and vanished over the parapet. He reappeared a moment later over the spot where the hamper swung in mid-air, and leaning over, grasped the cord and prepared to haul.

"Wait!" shouted Kildare from below. "Wait—we'll be up there in a moment, Herries!"

Followed by his chum, Darrel, the captain of St. Jim's disappeared through the doorway of the tower. Several breathless seconds passed; then the figures of the two seniors appeared on the roof of the tower alongside Herries. Fortunately, Herries had had the good sense not to attempt to haul the heavy hamper up single-handed, and the rest was easy.

Inch by inch the hamper was raised, and when it topped the parapet, Kildare and Darrel grasped a handle each and dragged it into safety.

And then the tension of the past few minutes broke, and a wild cheer rose from the

watchers in the quad below. And a still greater cheer rang out as Herries, with his beloved bulldog in his arms, emerged from the doorway of the old tower a minute or two later

"You—you old ass!" said Blake, in a husky whisper. "You—you might have been killed, Herries!"

Herries did not reply. He strode over to where the unhappy Skimpole was standing, whitefaced and shivering.

"Now, Skimpole," he ground out harshly, "what do you mean by that—that dirty trick? If you weren't a born idiot, I'd—I'd——"

"Steady on, Herries," said Tom Merry quietly. "I don't believe Skimmy had any idea Towser was in the hamper."

"Really, I—I—I most emphatically assure you that I did not," gasped the unhappy inventor feebly. "Racke assured me that the hamper merely contained rubbish, and I——"

"Oh!" Herries turned and looked at Racke & Co., who were now wishing they had made themselves scarce.

"Is that true, Racke?" asked Herries furiously.

Aubrey Racke glanced uneasily at the angry faces hemming him in.

"I—I never—that is, I never thought that thing would really fly," he stammered, licking his dry lips. "It—it was only a joke."

Herries' eyes blazed, and he seemed about to hurl himself—Towser and all—at Racke. But Jack Blake was before him.

"Then perhaps this," he snapped, shooting out his fist, "will make you see the point of the joke, you rotter!"

The blow was straight from the shoulder, and it sent the rascally schemer with a crash to earth.

"Here, stop that!" snapped Kildare, striding up. Then, without a second glance at the prostrate and howling Racke, he turned to Herries. "Herries, you young ass, you may think yourself jolly lucky you're safe and sound. It was a mad thing to do. But all the same, it was jolly plucky, and—and I'm glad old Towser's safe. Now clear away, the lot of you."

Glad enough to get away, Racke & Co scuttled across the quad.

"Never mind; it can wait," said Herries, through his teeth. "I'll settle with those cads later."

"And we'll help you," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Yass, wathah, bai jove!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

And they did. After tea that evening Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. visited Aubrey Racke's study in a body, and Messrs. Racke, Crooke and Mellish had good cause to regret, from the bottom of their hearts, being the cause of Towser's Narrow Escape!

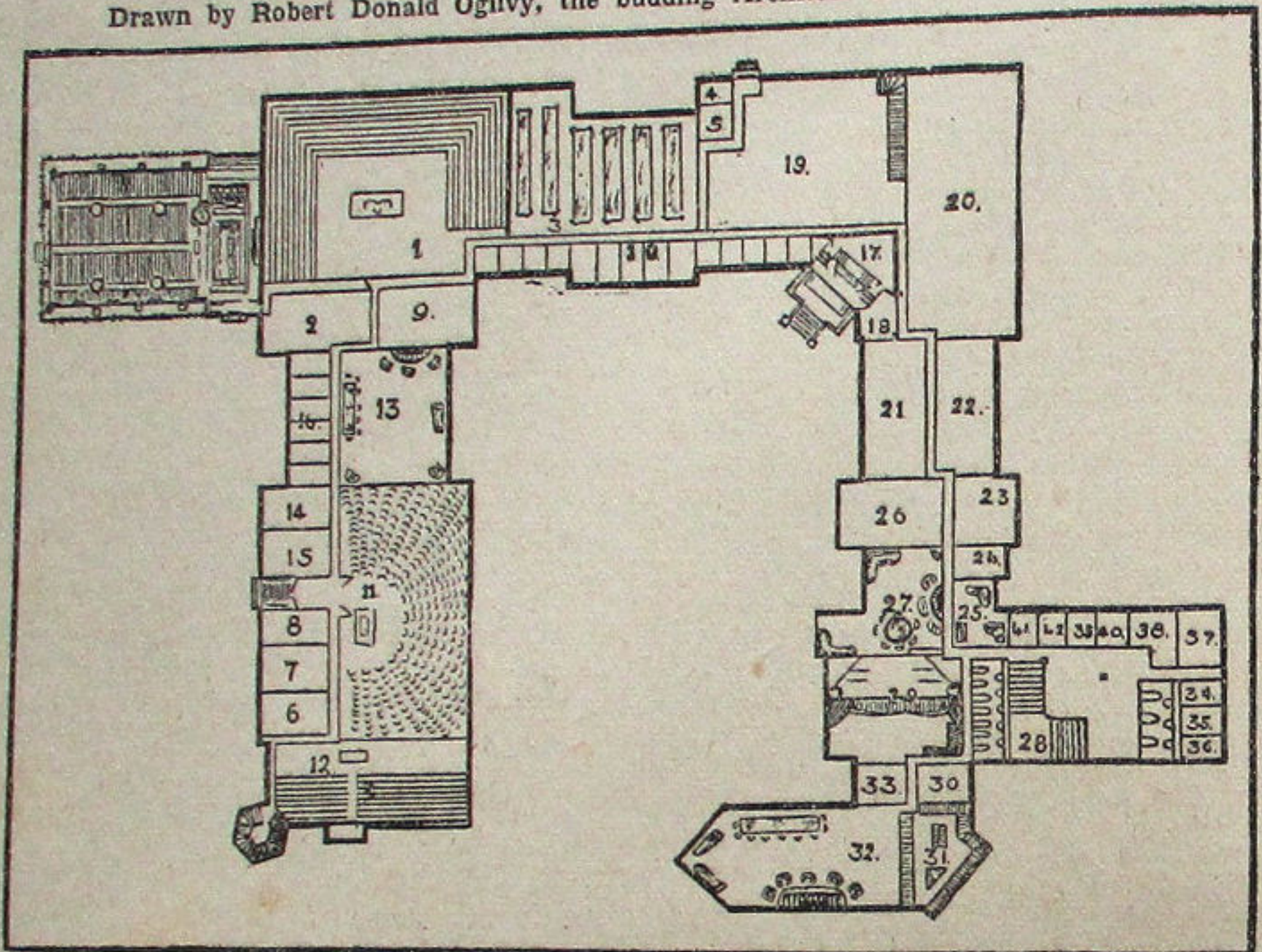
THE



END

GROUND-FLOOR PLAN OF GREY-FRIARS SCHOOL

Drawn by Robert Donald Ogilvy, the budding Architect of the Remove Form



- No. 1.—Big Hall (to left, School Chapel).
- No. 2.—Prefects' Room.
- No. 3.—Dining-hall.
- No. 4.—Coalcellar.
- No. 5.—Larder.
- No. 6.—The Head's Study.
- No. 7.—Governors' Room.
- No. 8.—Masters' Room.
- No. 9.—Senior Lab.
- No. 10.—Sixth Form Studies.
- No. 11.—Assembly Hall.
- No. 12.—Shell Form Class-room.
- No. 13.—Senior Common-room.
- No. 14.—Shell Laboratory.
- No. 15.—Senior Workshop.
- No. 16.—Guests' Rooms.
- No. 17.—Lobby.
- No. 18.—Waiting-room.
- No. 19.—Kitchen.
- No. 20.—The "Rag."
- No. 21.—Art Museum.
- No. 22.—Natural History Museum.
- No. 23.—Tuck-shop.

- No. 24.—Junior Lab.
- No. 25.—Music-room.
- No. 26.—Reception-room.
- No. 27.—Masters' Common-room.
- No. 28.—Remove Staircase.
- No. 29.—Remove Rehearsal Room.
- No. 30.—Drawing Studio.
- No. 31.—Library.
- No. 32.—Junior Common-room.
- No. 33.—Electrician's Room.
- No. 34.—German Master's Study.
- No. 35.—Maths. Master's Study.
- No. 36.—French Master's Study.
- No. 37.—Fags' Laboratory.
- No. 38.—Science Room.
- No. 39.—Boxroom.
- No. 40.—Fire-apparatus Room.
- No. 41.—Hot-water Room.
- No. 42.—Photography Dark Room.

NOTE.—The top floor at Greyfriars comprises mainly eight large dormitories, the punishment-room, and a number of box-rooms.

GREYFRIARS GOSSIP

Some Interesting Facts about the Famous School

By FRANK RICHARDS

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, though considerably heavier and older, is not much taller than his famous sister, Bessie.

Harry Wharton is an orphan, looked after by his uncle, Colonel James Wharton, who acts as his guardian.

Roderick Sylvester, of the Second Form, is the son of an American multi-millionaire.

Tom Redwing, now a scholarship boy, and one of the most popular fellows in the Remove, was formerly a fisher-lad at Hawkescliffe, a sea-coast village ten miles from Greyfriars on the coast of Kent.



George Wingate

George Wingate, the famous captain of this college, has an elder brother, Bob, who was an officer during the Great War, and a minor in the Third Form named Jack.

Micky Desmond, known as "Young Tipperary" to the Remove, is one of the oldest

characters in the Greyfriars stories.

Temple, and Vernon-Smith long before he came to Greyfriars. He owns a powerful motor-cycle, and causes a considerable amount of havoc with it every term.

Horace Coker, the funny man of the Fifth, has had at least half a dozen motor-cycles since he came to Greyfriars. His generous Aunt Judy paid for them on every occasion, though.

Bulstrode was captain of the Remove prior to the advent of Harry Wharton and a fellow named Yorke was skipper before him.



Harry Wharton

Dicky Nugent once got into very hot water with the school authorities, and as a means to enable himself to stay on at the school, thought out a really staggering wheeze. After disguising himself as an Indian, he strolled into Greyfriars one morning, and proceeded to make things hum

under the astounding name of "Inky Minor."

There are at present forty boys in the Remove Form.

Robert Donald Ogilvy has six Highland brothers, all of whom served with the colours.

Chunkleys, of Courtfield, have been gradually extending their business, until they now own about an eighth of the shops in the town. The confectionery and provisions department is sparsely patronised by the Greyfriars boys, owing to the high prices charged.

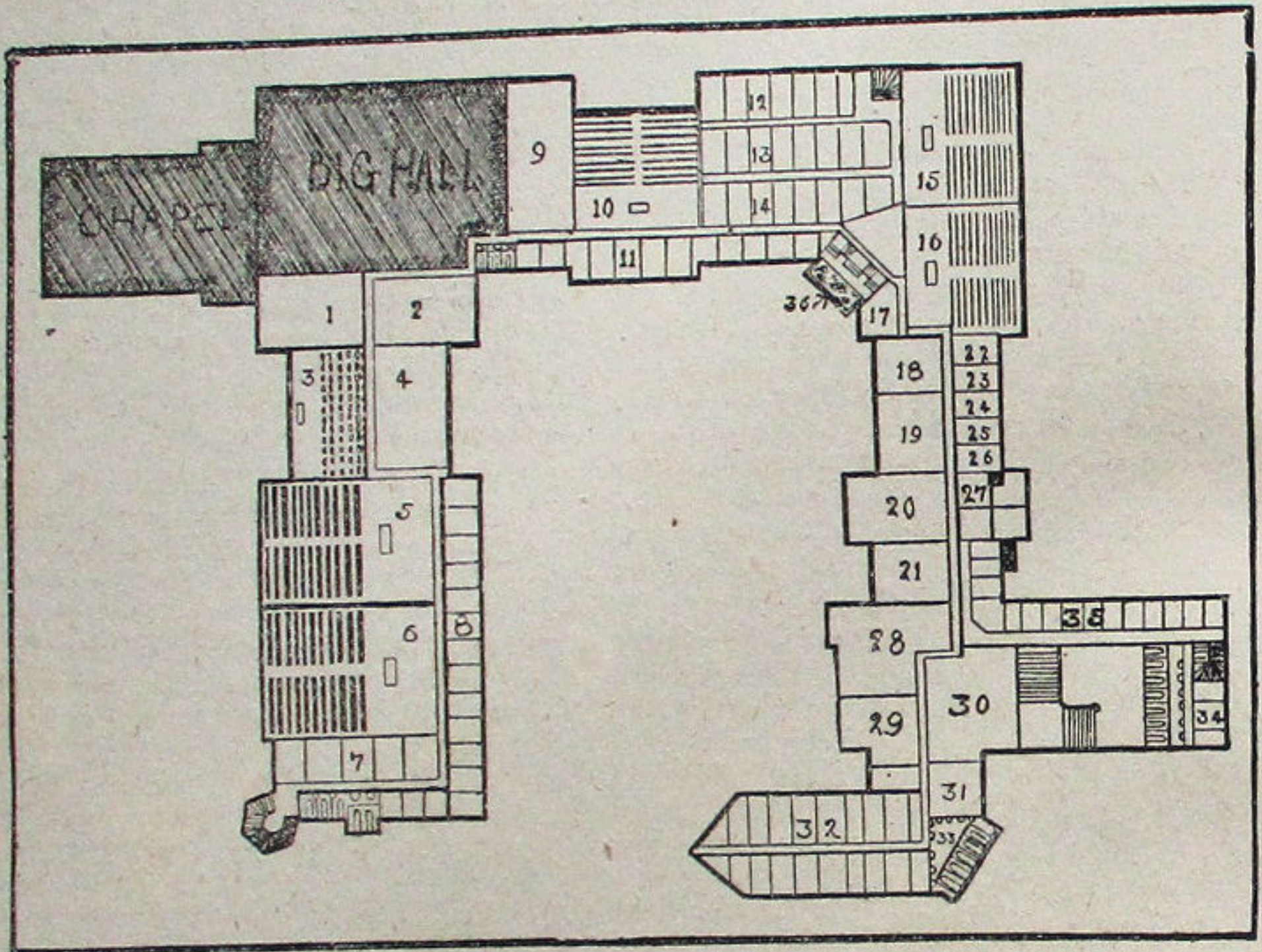
Ferrers Locke, the well-known detective,

Vernon-Smith, Bulstrode, and Hazeldene all came to Greyfriars with many lessons to learn. After many relapses, Vernon-Smith reformed, Bulstrode became subdued and ceased to bully, and Hazeldene has made a final attempt to turn over a new leaf.

Aubrey Angel, of the Upper Fourth, was known to Sir Jimmy Vivian, Cecil Reginald

FIRST-FLOOR PLAN OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL

Prepared by ROBERT DONALD OGILVY



Key to Above Plan

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| No. 1.—Fifth Form Clubroom. | No. 19.—Third Form Clubroom. |
| No. 2.—Shell Form Clubroom. | No. 20.—Remove Form Clubroom. |
| No. 3.—Sixth Form Classroom. | No. 21.—Upper Fourth Form Clubroom. |
| No. 4.—Sixth Form Clubroom. | No. 22.—Mr. Prout's Study. |
| No. 5.—Remove Form Classroom. | No. 23.—Mr. Hacker's Study. |
| No. 6.—Upper Fourth Classroom. | No. 24.—Mr. Capper's Study. |
| No. 7.—Spare Rooms. | No. 25.—Mr. E. Twigg's Study. |
| No. 8.—Fifth Form Studies. | No. 26.—Mr. B. M. Twigg's Study. |
| No. 9.—Room for dancing tuition. | No. 27.—Tuckshop Storerooms. |
| No. 10.—Fifth Form Classroom. | No. 28.—Sports Meeting-room. |
| No. 11.—Shell Form Studies. | No. 29.—Spare furniture-room. |
| No. 12.— | No. 30.—First Form Room. |
| No. 13.— | No. 31.—Boxroom, or Mr. W. Bunter's Study. |
| No. 14.— | No. 32.—Upper Fourth Form Studies. |
| No. 15.—Second Form Room. | No. 33.—Bathrooms. |
| No. 16.—Third Form Room. | No. 34.—Storerooms. |
| No. 17.—Mr. Quelch's Study. | No. 35.—Remove Studies. |
| No. 18.—Second Form Clubroom. | No. 36.—Balcony. |

who now has Jack Drake as an assistant, is a cousin of Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars. He has helped to elucidate many mysteries, both at this college and at St. Jim's.

Greyfriars has eight Forms. Before now



Bob Cherry

as many as twenty footer elevens have been playing at the same time.

Just after the coronation of the present sovereign Hurree Singh returned to India on a visit.

Vernon-Smith, Wun Lung, and Lord Mauleverer are the wealthiest trio in the Remove. They are not, however, in-

clined to be at all ostentatious.

Bob Cherry claims the honour of being top fighting man in the Remove. There are also several Fifth Formers whom he could lick on points.



Frank Nugent

Piet Delarey, the boy from South Africa, has been nicknamed the "Rebel" on account of his fiery nature. His father was a Boer, who fought against the British in 1900.

The distance from Greyfriars to St. Jim's is about fifty miles, and the distance from St. Jim's to

Rookwood is roughly forty.

Harry Wharton's pocket-money is ten shillings a week, and Billy Bunter's is half a crown.

Lord Herbert Mauleverer draws fifty pounds

from his bank whenever he is in need of it. He spends on an average about two pounds a week, and loses on an average about seven!

Fisher Tarleton Fish is rumoured to have



Herbert Vernon-Smith

once lent Tubb of the Third half a crown, and made in all fifteen shillings from the transaction. The most unpopular fellows in the Remove are Percy Bolsover, Harold Skinner, William Stott, Fisher T. Fish, and William George Bunter. All of the Remove have excellent opinions of themselves.

Skinner opines that he is a jolly good sort; Stott is under the delusion that he is a popular individual; Percy Bolsover thinks himself cut out to be the one-day heavy-weight champion of the



Lord Mauleverer

world; Fishy calculates he is a galoot with an eye-tooth for a slick business deal; and W. G. B. has a firmly fixed idea that he is a refined gentleman with nice polished manners.

Bunter has two aunts well known to fame. They are Aunt Rebecca and Aunt Prudence.

Mark Linley had a minor named Gerald. He came to the school, caused his elder brother to receive the sack, set matters right again, and then left.

Blundell the skipper of the Fifth Form

and his chum, Bertram Bland, have been firm friends ever since they were in the Third Form.

There were originally twelve studies in the

Remove Passage. A thirteenth was added when Mr. Quelch instructed Bob Cherry to leave No. 1, and the fourteenth was converted from a box-room into a study when Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fisher came along.

Tom Brown celebrated his arrival at Greyfriars by kicking a football all the



Mark Linley

way from the station to the school.

Alonzo Todd's greatest day at Greyfriars was the occasion when he allowed himself to be directed to the Head's study. Here he found a magnificent repast awaiting him, and forthwith got outside it. When Dr. Locke arrived, it was to find a thin junior seated in his best chair, enjoying forty winks.

There are thirteen boys in the Remove who could lick Percy Bolsover on points.

Dr. Locke has been Headmaster at Greyfriars for

twenty years. It is presumed generally that when he resigns, he will hand over the reins of office to Mr. Quelch, the capable master of the Remove.



Johnny Bull

Random Riddles



Billy Bunter

Why is Billy Bunter like a football?

Because he's repeatedly "blown up" and kicked.

* * *

Why is a duffer at history like a drenched terrier?

Because both are "out in the reign."

* * *

Why is Fisher T. Fish like his native city (New York)?

Because both are noted for "tall storeys."

* * *

Why is Mr. Quelch like a balloon?

Because he frequently goes "up in the air."

* * *

Why is Billy Bunter like a 'bus-conductor?

Because he often has "no room inside."

* * *

Why is Coker's motor-bike like a "sacked" office-boy?

Because they both get the "push."

* * *

Why is Mr. Quelch an excellent angler?

Because, in class, he's always "catching Fish."

* * *

Why is No. 13 Study often in a "stony" state?

Because it contains a Cherry.



Huree Singh



"Beware!" exclaimed Bunter, dramatically.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Danger Ahead!

BILLY BUNTER was sitting in the arm-chair in No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, when Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

No. 1 Study in the Remove did not belong to Billy Bunter, but he looked as if it did!

He was reclining at his ease in the arm-chair, and his feet were resting on another chair. On a third chair at his fat elbow stood a ginger-beer bottle, empty, and a plate upon which a few crumbs of plum cake remained. Billy Bunter had evidently been making himself at home.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him.

The plum cake belonged—or had belonged—to Wharton. The ginger-beer was the property—or had been the property—of Frank Nugent. The study belonged to both of them, but the rights of property never had appealed to Billy Bunter very much.

Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had come along to share the plum cake over a chat. Evidently they had arrived too late for the plum cake, if not for the chat.

Bunter nodded affably to the five juniors, and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"Come in, you fellows!" he said.

"May we come in?" asked Harry Wharton, with deep sarcasm.

"Certainly, old fellow!" Sarcasm was wasted on Billy Bunter. "Trot in, by all means! Jolly glad to see you, in fact!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Nugent, also sarcastic.

"Not at all! I've been waiting for you fellows," said Bunter. "I've something rather important to mention to you. You don't mind my helping myself to the cake? I was rather peckish."

"Not much good our minding, it seems to me!" said Wharton.

"Is that the cake we were coming to interview?" asked Bob Cherry.

"That's it."

"Lucky I brought in my bat!" said Bob thoughtfully. He took a grip on the cane handle of the bat and made a stride towards the fat junior in the arm-chair. "Where will you have it, Bunter?"

"I—I say, you fellows, don't be beasts, you know!" said Bunter. "As I've finished the cake, I'll stand you a new one—a larger one. I suppose to-morrow will do?"

"And where are you going to bag a cake to-morrow?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Has somebody else got one?"

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm going to get it

at the tuck-shop, of course. I'm expecting a postal order to-morrow morning——"

"Squash him!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"In the esteemed circumstances," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "the squashfulness ought to be terrific!"

"Your innings, Bob!" said Wharton. "Make it a boundary hit!"

Bob Cherry swung up his bat.

In the twinkling of an eye, Billy Bunter had whipped out of the arm-chair and taken refuge behind it.

"Keep off, Cherry, you beast!" he howled. "Look here, you fellows, I've got something to say to you; that's why I've been waiting while you've been footling around at the cricket—what you call cricket!"

"What we call cricket?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes; not what I call cricket!" said Bunter. "When I play cricket, I play it, you know—with the accent on the 'play'! I've got something jolly serious to say to you about the cricket week that's coming off soon."

"Come out of that corner!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'm waiting to brain you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

Billy Bunter seemed to prefer to keep in the corner behind the high back of the arm-chair.

"You fellows have simply got to listen to me," he said. "In fact, it's an ultimatum!"

"A which?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, lowering the bat in his astonishment.

"An ultimatum!" said Bunter firmly. "Hitherto I've allowed you fellows practically to keep the cricket in your own hands. I've disdained to push my claims. Although the best junior cricketer at Greyfriars, I've let you fellows keep me in the background!"

"My hat!"

"I think it's pretty generally known," continued Bunter, while the Famous Five blinked at him blankly, "that I've been kept in the shade owing to personal jealousy of my powers as a cricketer—my prowess, as I may say!"

"His prowess!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Bunter's prowess—as a cricketer! My only sainted Aunt Matilda!"

"But the time has come for all that to

stop!" said Bunter. "You can cackle, if you like——"

"Thanks, we will!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," roared Bunter, "but I mean business! Now that there is going to be a cricket week, it's time for all this paltry jealousy to be put aside. I'm not asking to captain the junior eleven——"

"Not!" ejaculated Wharton.

"No. I don't mind saying that I should make a better captain than you, Wharton; but I'm a reasonable chap! I ask simply to be put into the junior team—on my merits."

"My dear owl," said Wharton, "on your merits, you'd be put into a lunatic asylum!"

"I'm accustomed to envy!" said Bunter loftily. "As I've said, I've regarded this sort of thing with disdain—hitherto. Now I'm going to put my foot down! The Head's given leave for a cricket week to be held at Greyfriars, and on such an occasion I intend to insist upon my rights! I'm going to play in the match against Rookwood!"

"By Jove! Are you?"

"Yes; and in the match against St. Jim's!"

"Phew!"

"You'll be glad, afterwards!" said Bunter. "You can't help being jealous of my powers, but I believe you're not without some patriotism—you'd like to see Greyfriars win all round. Well, with me in the eleven, the result will be a foregone conclusion!"

"It would!" said Bob Cherry, with conviction.

"No doubt about that!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I shall ask my people to come down and see me play," continued Bunter. "A lot of my titled relations will turn up, too. That will give the whole thing a tone, won't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Now, I want you to come down to the facts, Wharton. As cricket captain, it's your duty to play the best man you can get. You're thinking of playing Cherry, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing.

"Well, leave him out, and put me in. It means a century in each of our innings—and

the hat trick once or twice," said Bunter. "I'm as good a bowler as batsman——"

"Quite" agreed Nugent.

"And there's precious few fellows like me in the field——"

"None at all!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"On any other occasion," continued Bunter, "I should disdain to push my claims. But this is rather unique. Tom Merry and Co. are coming over from St. Jim's, and they're staying on here along with the Rookwood fellows. I shall have to come out into the lime-light a bit. My people will expect it of me. My pal D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, will expect to see me in the match. My old friend Jimmy Silver, of Rookwood, will be disappointed if I don't play. I simply refuse to be passed over on this very unique occasion. I hope I make myself clear, Wharton?"

"Perfectly!" chuckled the captain of the Remove.

"The clearfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter folded his fat arms across his podgy chest, and fixed his eyes upon the captain of the Remove majestically.

"And now, Wharton, I want your answer!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"That isn't an answer, you fathead!"

Wharton wiped his eyes. The idea of the fat Owl of the Remove figuring in the most important fixture on the Greyfriars list seemed rather too much for him. Bob Cherry leaned on his bat and sobbed.

"Mind, I mean every word I say!" said

Bunter warmly. "Very likely you'll try to keep me out, as usual. Well, I warn you that there'll be trouble if you do. Serious trouble."

"You'll lick us all round?" asked Johnny Bull, with a gurgle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall not deign to thrash you," said Bunter loftily. "You deserve it, but it would be beneath my dignity."

"That's jolly lucky for somebody."

"But if I am excluded from motives of jealousy, as usual," said Bunter, "I shall retaliate! I shall come down heavy!"

"You will, if you come down at all," chuckled Bob. "Fourteen stone, isn't it? —or fifteen?"

"I shall make you squirm," continued Bunter. "I shall muck up your cricket week, and make it a failure——"

"You'd make it a giddy failure if you played cricket for us," said Harry Wharton. "But, otherwise——"

"In fact, I shall crush you!" said Bunter, waving

a fat hand at the hilarious five. "Take warning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

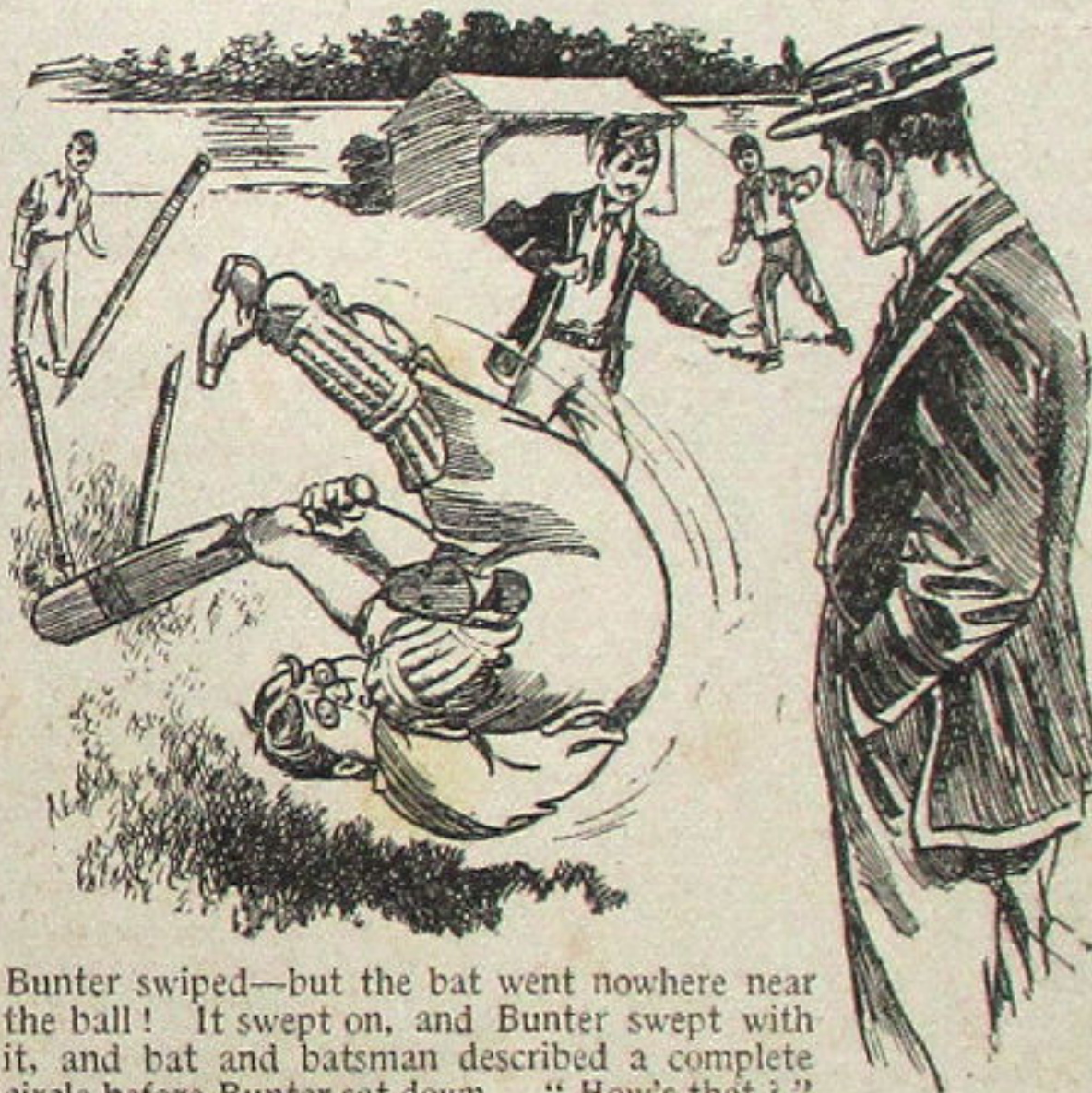
To judge by the roar of laughter that rang through No. 1 Study, the chums of the Remove were not greatly alarmed by Bunter's dire threats.

"Now, what's your answer, Wharton?" demanded Bunter. "Am I playing for Greyfriars in both matches, or not?"

"Ha, ha! Not."

"Look here——"

"When we play St. Jim's at marbles, or



Bunter swiped—but the bat went nowhere near the ball! It swept on, and Bunter swept with it, and bat and batsman described a complete circle before Bunter sat down. "How's that?" chirruped Vernon-Smith. (See page 60)

Rookwood at hop-sotch, I'll think of you, gurgled Wharton. "But so long as it's cricket, Bunty, I'm afraid you will have to blush unseen."

"This rotten envy——"

"The cake's gone," said Bob Cherry, "the ginger-beer's gone. Isn't it time that Bunter was gone, too?"

"High time!" said Frank Nugent.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry jerked his arm-chair away. Then his bat came into play. It prodded in Bunter's fat ribs, and there was a loud howl from the Owl of the Remove.

"Yoooooop!"

Prod!

Billy Bunter made a rush to the door. The bat prodded him from behind as he went; and Bunter rolled into the passage with a yell.

In the doorway of the study he turned, and shook a fat fist at the yelling five.

"You awful rotters——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I disdain to thrash you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But beware!"

"Eh?"

Bunter raised an accusing and very fat right hand, and pointed a podgy forefinger at the gasping chums of the Remove. Evidently some recollection of the thrilling incidents of the "pictures" was in Bunter's mind, as he stood in that majestic and denunciatory attitude in the doorway of No. 1 Study.

"Beware!" he exclaimed dramatically.

And he strode away.

He left five juniors behind him sobbing with merriment. Billy Bunter's dramatic denunciation had almost reduced them to hysterics; and not one of the five seemed to realise in the least that there was danger ahead!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Giving Bunter a Chance!

"I SAY, Wingate!"

Wingate of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars, glanced down at Billy Bunter, and smiled.

It was the afternoon of the day following the important interview in No. 1 Study, in

which Bunter's services as a cricketer had been so ungratefully declined by the Remove skipper.

Harry Wharton and Co. were busy on Little Side, at cricket practice. Wharton was keeping his men well up to the mark, in view of the important events ahead. And it is much to be feared that the Remove cricketers had forgotten all about Billy Bunter and his claims.

But Bunter had not forgotten. Bunter was very much in earnest. Bunter was determined that somehow, by hook or by crook, he was going to cut an imposing figure in the Greyfriars Cricket Week.

Such an opportunity for getting into the limelight was rare. Such a distinguished crowd of visitors were seldom gathered at Greyfriars. On such an occasion Bunter yearned to distinguish himself. In his mind's eye he saw himself swiping away the ball to the boundary, over and over again. In his mind's eye, he saw himself performing the double hat trick. In his mind's eye, he saw himself in the field, making wonderful catches, and spreading terror and dismay in the ranks of Rookwood and St. Jim's.

Bunter was not likely to see all this with any other eye than the mind's eye. But with his mind's eye he saw it all clearly and convincingly.

For once Bunter was not to be trifled with. Bunter meant business. So he was now addressing Wingate, captain of the school and head of the games. Wingate was the man to see him righted, if anybody would or could.

Wingate smiled. He looked down on the fat, podgy Removite, and couldn't help smiling. Bunter was in flannels, which seemed on the point of bursting, and he had a bat under one plump arm. And he had a frown of wrath and indignation on his fat face.

"I say, Wingate!" he repeated.

"Well," said the Greyfriars captain, good humouredly, "what is it, Bunter?"

"You're head of the games, Wingate. I want you to see justice done," said Bunter, impressively.

"That's my job," agreed Wingate. "What's up?"

Bunter jerked a fat thumb towards the

junior cricket ground, where the Removites were at practice.

"You see that crowd?" he asked.

"Yes."

"They've left me out."

"Oh!" said Wingate.

"You mayn't have noticed, personally, what a first-rate cricketer I am, Wingate."

"I can't say I've ever noticed it," agreed the Greyfriars captain.

"Well, whether you've noticed it or not, it's the fact. I'm not bragging," said Bunter.

"I'm not the sort of fellow to swank, I hope. But that's how it is. There's a lot of jealousy in cricket matters in my form. As a rule, I disdain to take notice of it. But this time I'm standing up for my rights. I want you to see fair play."

Wingate looked rather puzzled.

"That's for Wharton——" he began.

"That's just where the shoe pinches," explained Bunter. "Wharton's jealous of my form, and he hates the idea of being put in the shade. I'm excluded from the Remove eleven for that reason. And—would you believe it—I've just gone down to practice, just to show them what I can do—and Bob Cherry chased me off the ground with his bat! He said they couldn't be bothered when they were getting ready for the St. Jim's match. I'm entitled to practice with the Remove, ain't I?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, that's what I want," said Bunter.

"Once I get a chance of showing all the fellows what I can do, Wharton won't be able to keep me out. I'm at the top of my form to-day. I could convince the Remove that they can't afford to leave me out. And they won't let me start. I want you to see that I have a chance, Wingate. As head of the games, you know——"

Wingate pursed his lips.

"Well, as Wharton's pretty busy now——" he began.

"You see, they're getting ready for the St. Jim's match next week," said Bunter. "That's why it's important for me to show what I can do. Wharton will have to put me in the eleven, if the fellows demand it. And they will—when they see me in really great form.

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 3.—BOXING



The gym. is packed from end to end,
The boxers take their places;
Friend whispers eagerly to friend,
And tense are all the faces.
The referee now clears the ring,
Some wise advice imparting;
Supporters dance a Highland fling—
The boxing bout is starting!

They crouch like greyhounds in the slips,
And take each other's measure;
Determination stamps their lips,
They've little time for leisure.
First blow is struck; a mighty shout
Goes up from roof to ceiling;
Then a responsive fist shoots out,
And see! the victim's reeling!

Though partly dazed, he does not fall,
But pulls himself together;
Yet, though the damage done is small,
Fresh blows he has to weather.
They rain upon his face and chest
(To thrills the crowd is treated),
Until he gives his rival best
And owes himself defeated!

The noble art of self-defence
Should never find us lacking;
And every boy of common-sense
Will draw the line at slacking.
Great boxing prowess he will seek,
That he may thus be ready
To face the strong and shield the weak
In manner brave and steady!

"I'm willing to stand or fall by my merits!" added Bunter, loftily.

"Come along!" said Wingate.

He started for Little Side, and Billy Bunter trotted off with him, greatly elated. His fat little legs had to go like clockwork to keep pace with the strides of the big Sixth-former.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Here's that fat bluebottle buzzing along again. What does Wingate want, I wonder?"

"Wharton!" called out the Greyfriars captain.

Wharton came towards him.

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Bunter tells me that he is excluded from the practice, and that he wants to show his form, with the idea of being put in your eleven for the matches next week."

"Just that!" chirped Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed, and then frowned.

"We're rather busy now, Wingate," he said. "There isn't much time to waste on Bunter. He doesn't know one end of the bat from the other."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Well, suppose you give him a few minutes," suggested Wingate. "Bunter may have developed some unexpected form. If he can't play, it won't take him long to show it. Give him a chance."

"Anything you like, Wingate."

"I'll look on and see how he shapes," said the Greyfriars captain. "I'll tell you whether you're in eleven form, Bunter."

"Thanks, awfully, Wingate. You've only got to see me at the wicket," said Bunter, confidently.

"Right-ho," said Wharton. "Get to the wicket, Bunter. Smithy, you take the ball."

"I'm your man!" grinned Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars caught the ball Wharton tossed to him, and went along to the bowler's end.

The junior cricketers gathered round, with grinning faces. They had seen Bunter at cricket before, and they were looking for an entertainment. George Wingate, as a matter of fact, knew Bunter's play as well as they did; but perhaps there was a remote possibility that the Owl of the Remove had

developed some new and unexpected powers. Anyhow, Billy Bunter was going to have his chance to show what he could do.

The fat junior took up his position at the wicket, with an exaggerated straddle, and blinked along the pitch.

"Ready?" chortled Vernon-Smith.

"Waiting!" snapped Bunter.

The ball came down. It looked quite an easy ball—easy enough for even Bunter to play. And Bunter swiped at it confidently, fully expecting to send it right over the tops of the elm trees in the distance.

It was rather unfortunate that Bunter put so much force into that swipe. For the bat went nowhere near the ball, and as it met with no resistance, it swept on, and Bunter swept with it, and bat and batsman described a complete circle, before Bunter sat down.

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the cricketers.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter.

"How's that?" chirruped Vernon-Smith.

Bunter blinked at the wicket. The middle stump was out, and the bails were down.

"Out!" chortled Bob Cherry. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the outfulness was terrific.

"Is that a new style in batting, Bunter?" inquired Wingate.

Bunter scrambled up breathlessly.

"I—I—I wasn't—my foot slipped," he gasped. "Besides, that was only a trial ball, wasn't it? Give a chap a chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another, Smithy," said Wharton laughing. Peter Todd tossed back the ball to the Bounder, who prepared to bowl again.

"Give him a whole over," said Wingate.

"Right-ho."

Smithy sent down the ball again, and this time Bunter played it more carefully. He did not swipe so recklessly; and he did not sit down on the crease. That was so much to the good. But it booted not, as a novelist would say. His middle stump was jerked out of the ground.

Bunter blinked at the toothless-looking wicket in great surprise.

"Just try that again!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"



The ball flew from Bunter's fat fingers with terrific vim. For a second it was not clear where it had gone. Then a fiendish yell from Wingate of the Sixth announced where it was! (See page 62)

Vernon-Smith tried again. He finished the over, and with every ball the wicket went down. It was the double hat trick, if that had been worth anything in the circumstances.

The whole field was yelling with laughter, and Wingate was grinning. Billy Bunter gave a wrathful blink round.

"Well, are you satisfied now, Bunter?" asked the Greyfriars captain. "You don't expect Wharton to put up a batsman like that against St. Jim's, do you?"

"The—the fact is——" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It puts a fellow off his form to have a lot of goats cackling round him," said Bunter warmly. "Besides, I'm greatest on bowling. As a rule, my batting is the best in the Remove. But bowling is my strong point. I want you to see me bowl, Wingate."

"Give him the ball!" said Wingate resignedly.

"The bowl-fulness will be terrific," murmured Hurree Singh. "I am going to put my esteemed and valuable self out of danger."

And the Nabob of Bhanipur prudently retired into the pavilion.

There was a general backing away as Billy Bunter grasped the round red ball. The Removites knew their Bunter. Squiff took the bat, and he looked cheery and confident enough at the wicket. There was no danger of the ball getting there. But there really was no telling in what other direction it might or might not go; and the Removites wisely ran no risks. Bunter had a clear field, save for the batsman and the captain of Greyfriars, who stood looking on with his hands in his pockets.

Bunter was very careful. He realised that a lot depended on his prowess now. Even Bunter had to admit that his batting had not been exactly brilliant. But he hoped to save

his bacon by his wonderful bowling; he was prepared to witch the world with noble bowling, as it were. A succession of wrecked wickets would see him safely through.

He retired, grasping the ball, and took a little run, and then turned himself into a fat imitation of a Catherine-wheel. And the ball flew from his fat fingers with terrific vim.

Squiff, at the wicket, kept his eyes open, lest by some unexpected chance the ball should come that way. But there was no need for that. For a second, it was not clear where the ball had gone. Then a fiendish yell from Wingate of the Sixth announced where it was.

“Yaroooop!”

The next moment the captain of Greyfriars seemed to be executing a wild impromptu jazz.

Both his hands were clasped to his head, and he fairly danced with anguish. Bunter blinked at him, and the whole field burst into a frantic yell.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, dear!” gasped Bob Cherry, throwing himself into the grass, and kicking up his heels in ecstasy. “Wingate’s got it! He knows how Bunter bowls now.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I—I say, you fellows, where’s that ball?” gasped Bunter. “Why don’t you field that ball? Is it a bye?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Look out, Bunter!” yelled Peter Todd.

Wingate suddenly unclasping his damaged head, made a rush towards the astonished bowler.

Bunter blinked at him, for one moment—not for two! He had brought Wingate there to see fair play—and to see him bat and bowl. Wingate had seen him bat—and felt him bowl! Now he looked as if he were going to slaughter Bunter on the spot—and Bunter did not stop to argue the point. He spun round and fled for his life.

“Stop, you young villain!” roared Wingate. “I’ll teach you to chuck a cricket ball at my head! Stop! I’ll—I’ll—I’ll——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, crumbs!” gasped Bunter.

Billy Bunter was not a bright youth. But

he was much too bright to stop just then. He ran for his very life.

There was a wild yell of laughter on the junior cricket ground. Bunter and Wingate disappeared through the elms, the Owl of the Remove putting on a speed that was really amazing. And it was five minutes, at least, before Harry Wharton and Co. could sufficiently restrain their feelings to get on with the cricket. Then they got on with it—without Bunter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Not Bunter’s Lucky Day!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

“What the thump——”

The Famous Five of the Remove, coming in ruddy and cheery from the cricket, met with a surprise.

William George Bunter stood before them; and the attitude of William George Bunter was striking.

The fat junior looked at the chums of the Remove, with a lofty and scornful glance. They stared at him. Bunter’s big spectacles fixed on their astonished faces first, and then his glance travelled down to their feet. From their feet it travelled slowly up again to their astonished faces.

This was what Bunter called “looking them up and down.” It expressed the most withering contempt and scorn.

Properly speaking, the Famous Five should have been withered on the spot. They should have hung their heads with abasement.

But they didn’t. They stared at Bunter, as if not quite understanding the meaning of his peculiar performance.

“Anything the matter with you, Bunter?” asked Bob Cherry. “Are you ill, old bird? Are you potty? Has your feeble brain given away at last?”

“Yah!” snapped Bunter.

“Well, what are you grimacing for?” demanded Johnny Bull.

Bunter snorted. It wasn’t much good looking fellows up and down with biting scorn, if they only supposed that he was grimacing.

“I wasn’t grimacing, you silly owl!” he snapped.

"The grimacefulness was terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I was trying to make you understand that I despise you!" said Bunter cuttingly.

"Ha, ha, ha! You weren't trying to startle us into a fit?" asked Bob.

"No, you ass!"

"Then, for goodness' sake, don't make weird faces like that any more."

"Yah!"

The Famous Five grinned and passed on their way. They seemed quite impervious to Bunter's scorn. The Eastern proverb says that contempt will pierce even the shell of the tortoise. But Bunter's contempt seemed perfectly innocuous.

"I say, you fellows," hooted Bunter, rolling after the Co., "I've got just a word to say to you."

"Buzz off and say it to somebody else," suggested Nugent. "You're a bore, old chap."

"A terrific bore, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I'm fed up with you," said Bunter, unheeding. "It's pretty plain now that I'm not going to have a chance in the cricket. Even Wingate—captain of the school as he is—is jealous of my form."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Pretty rotten, isn't it?" said Bunter bitterly. "Even the Sixth are jealous of me now."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shall refuse to play for Greyfriars in the cricket week," said Bunter. "If Tom Merry or Jimmy Silver asks me how it is I'm not playing, I shall tell him the facts."

"You'll tell him you're a born idiot?" asked Bob. "My dear chap, no need to tell them—they know it."

"But don't you fellows think that you'll keep me out of the cricket week and show off your feeble cricket," said Bunter. "I'm going to put a spoke in your wheel. I'm going to come down heavy on you. I decline to allow the proceedings to—to proceed."

"Roll away, old barrel," said Bob Cherry kindly.

"Beware!" said Bunter darkly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wait," said Bunter, with the same dark mysteriousness. "You'll see what you will see!"

The chums of the Remove chuckled and went up the staircase. Billy Bunter stood and looked after them in an attitude of lofty scorn. There were deep, dark thoughts working in Bunter's fat brain. He felt that his uncommon injuries and grievances demanded vengeance. When he rolled into No. 7 Study to tea, there was the same dark frown on his fat brow. Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was in the study, making toast. Peter Todd was gone to the tuck-shop for supplies for tea.

"Anything up?" asked Dutton, noting Bunter's frowning brow.

"I'm going to make 'em squirm," said Bunter.

Dutton raised his eyebrows.

"Who's a worm?" he asked.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Bunter. He was not in a mood to be bothered by Dutton's affliction.

"Moke?" said Dutton. "Did you say moke or joke? If you're calling me a moke, you fat chump——"

"Oh, give us a rest!" said Bunter crossly. "You're enough to tire a fellow out."

Dutton jumped up.

"You think I'm deaf, but I heard that plain enough," he said. "So I'm a lout, am I? What are you calling me a moke and a lout for?"

"I—I didn't. I said——"

"Eh?"

"I never said anything of the kind," howled Bunter.

"Out of my mind, eh? I'll show you whether I'm out of my mind," exclaimed the deaf junior angrily. "What have I done to you, you fat bounder? You come in here scowling, and call me a moke and a lout, and say I'm out of my mind! I'll——"

"I—I say——" Bunter jumped back as Tom Dutton made a rush at him. "I—I say—keep off—I—I——"

Bunter dodged out of the study in a hurry. It was sheer ill-luck that Peter Todd arrived at that moment in the study doorway, with a bundle under one arm, and a bag of eggs in

the other hand. Billy Bunter crashed into him backwards.

Smash!

There was a howl from Todd as the bag of eggs went to the floor.

"You silly owl!"

"Oh, dear! I—I say, Peter—yaroooooh!"

"You've smashed up two bob's worth of eggs!" shrieked Peter Todd.

"I—I—yarooooh!"

Peter Todd was exasperated. He caught up the bag of broken eggs, and jammed it on Bunter's head. Peter regarded that as making the punishment fit the crime.

"Grooooooogh!"

"You can have the lot!" gasped Peter Todd. "Perhaps you'll look where you're going next time."

"Ooooooooch!"

Billy Bunter gouged at the eggs that were streaming down his fat face, and made a rush for the nearest bathroom.

When he came back, newly swept and garnished, so to speak, tea was over in No. 7 Study. Bunter blinked round the study wrathfully.

"Where's my tea?" he demanded.

"You've had all the eggs," said Peter.

"That was more than your whack."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, in search of tea in another quarter. He looked into No. 11, where he found Skinner and Snoop and Stott. Skinner smiled at him and picked up a loaf.

"You've come to tea, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes, old chap."

"Where will you have it?" inquired Skinner, poising the loaf in the air.

Bunter dodged into the passage.

"I say, Skinner, old chap——"

"I hear you've been distinguishing yourself on the cricket ground," grinned Skinner. "I heard Coker of the Fifth say you nearly brained Wingate."

"Wingate got in the way of the ball. He doesn't know much about cricket."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've declined to play for the Remove eleven now," said Bunter. "I say, I'll come in to tea, Skinner, and stand you a ripping

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 4.—ROWING



The River Sark flows swift and cool
Through wood and copse and bracken;
Oarsmen are there, from Greyfriars School,
Their efforts never slacken.
See how, with strong and sturdy strokes,
They carry all before them!
What frantic cheering it provokes!
And who can but adore them?

The rival crews speed side by side,
Each keenly bent on winning;
Then shouts re-echo far and wide,
Caps in the air are spinning.
The goal is gained; the winning Eight
Attains its proud ambition;
Resolved that no one, soon or late,
Shall capture its position!

Great is the banqueting that night!
The crews, with ruddy faces,
Discuss that stern and hard-fought fight,
That thrilling race of races!
The toasts are drunk with one accord,
Long life and health denoting
To all who, at that festive board,
Enjoy the thrills of boating!

This exercise must surely rank
With football and with cricket;
It is no senseless sport or prank,
One needs strong will to stick it.
It calls for stamina and grit
And heaps of grim endurance;
Yes, rowing, as a sport, is IT;
Such is our firm assurance!

iced in my study to-morrow. I'm expecting a postal order by the first post in the morning."

"The same one you were expecting when we were in the Third Form?" asked Skinner, agreeably.

"Oh, really, Skinner! I say, that looks a nice cake."

"It is a nice cake!" agreed Skinner. "Trot in, old fellow. I think I could get you fairly on the boko with this loaf."

Bunter remained in the passage. He was rather keen on the cake; but evidently he did not want the loaf—not on his fat "boko."

"Why don't you offer your services to the Fourth?" continued Skinner, in a humorous vein. "The Fourth Form eleven is playing St. Jim's when they're here next week; and Temple would jump at the chance—with both feet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Bunter started. Skinner had made the suggestion in a humorous mood, but it struck Bunter quite seriously.

"Blessed if I don't!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Oh, do!" said Skinner chuckling.

"I'm going to—and Wharton will look a bit sick next week, when he sees me bagging centuries for the Fourth——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, full of that new idea, leaving Skinner and Co. roaring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Declined—Without Thanks!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE, the captain of the Greyfriars Fourth, was seated at his study table, with Fry and Dabney, at tea. Cecil Reginald looked his usual elegant and nutty self, and there was a look of serene satisfaction on his face. Cecil Reginald was, in fact, in rather high feather these days. He was looking forward to a great time in the Greyfriars Cricket Week, when he was going to distinguish himself. He was holding forth on the subject now, at tea with his chums.

"You see, this is where we come in strong!" Temple told Dabney and Fry. "Properly speaking, the Remove club ought not to bag any outside fixtures at all. We're the junior club of Greyfriars——"

"We are!" agreed Fry.

"Oh, rather," said Dabney. "Pass the cake, old chap."

Temple passed the cake and resumed.

"Wharton's crowd have simply butted in, you know, and made out that they're a team—but they aren't. I don't say they can't play cricket—after a fashion——"

"After a fashion——" agreed Fry.

"They've even beaten us sometimes——"

"They have."

"But properly speaking, it's us that ought to bag outside fixtures, not that crowd of Remove fags," said Temple. "I've thought a good many times that they ought to be put in their place. Well, this time I fancy it's goin' to happen. This cricket week is a jolly good idea. St. Jim's and Rookwood are goin' to play the Remove and play us. Now, I haven't the faintest shadow of doubt that they'll walk all over the Remove."

"Oh, rather."

"But we," said Temple placidly, "we shall beat them. We're goin' to beat them hollow. I shall make a special point of it. What are you grinnin' at, Fry?"

"Was I—I grinning?" asked Fry.

"If you don't think we can beat St. Jim's and Rookwood, Fry——"

"Of course we can, old top—with you captainin' us!" said Fry pacifically.

Cecil Reginald's brow cleared, and he nodded.

"That's it," he agreed. "What a cricket team needs is a really good skipper, to hold it together, you know. Goin' in first, I shall encourage the chaps by knockin' up about ninety. That's my idea."

"Jolly good idea, if it comes off," said Fry.

"If you don't think it will come off, Edward Fry——"

"Of course I do, old bean. Practical certainty!" said Fry, winking into his teacup.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I say, this is jolly good cake."

"We shall have a really good chance," continued Temple. "'Tain't often a junior team has a chance of a two-day match. Now, when St. Jim's and Rookwood have beaten the Remove hollow, and we've beaten St. Jim's and Rookwood hollow, I think we shall have



"I'll put a spoke in their wheel!" chuckled the short-sighted Owl of the Remove. "Hallo, is that Rookwood?" "You fat rascal!" roared Wharton. (See page 169)

proved pretty clearly to all Greyfriars what our real standin' is."

"When!" murmured Fry.

"What did you say, Fry?"

"Nothin', old chap. Barge on."

"After that, the Remove can scarcely do less than retire gracefully into a back seat," said Temple. "Wharton didn't quite realise what he was doin' for himself when he fixed up this cricket week, and got the Head to agree. He was practically arrangin' to give his own club the kybosh."

"Certainly he couldn't have realised that!" murmured Fry. "Let's hope it will come off."

"Not much doubt about that! We're goin' to make it a point of winnin' both matches," said Temple, confidently. "I've been stickin' to practice no end! I'm in great form now. You fellows have noticed that?"

"Oh, rather," said Dabney, his usual remark.

"Haven't you noticed it, Fry?" demanded Temple, as that youth did not speak.

Temple of the Fourth was a wealthy and well-connected youth, and a great nut, and quite a big gun in the Fourth Form. And he was accustomed to admiration from an admiring circle. But Fry did not always play up, as it were.

"Oh! Yes! Of course!" said Fry. "I wonder somebody don't come along and bag you for the county, Temple."

Cecil Reginald looked at him a little suspiciously. But Fry was quite grave.

"Stranger things than that have happened," said Temple, a little stiffly. "If you're tryin' to pull my leg, Fry—Hallo, what does that blinkin' porpoise want?"

The fat face and big spectacles of William

George Bunter, of the Remove, blinked in at the doorway.

Temple raised an elegant hand.

"Cut!" he said briefly.

Instead of cutting, Bunter rolled into the study. He bestowed an ingratiating smile on the three Fourth-formers.

"Hallo, Temple, old fellow," he said affably. "I haven't really come to tea, but if you insist——"

"Kick him, somebody," said Temple.

"Oh, really, Temple——"

"We don't have Remove fags to tea in the Fourth!" said Temple, with lofty superiority.

"I've come to talk cricket," said Bunter, with a longing glance at the cake. "I've declined to play for the Remove, Temple."

"Go hon!" said Cecil Reginald, sarcastically.

"It's a fact," said Bunter. "Wharton begged me almost with tears in his eyes. But I felt bound to refuse. I've never been treated in a proper way by those fellows; and now they want me for important matches, I decline to be made use of. I think I'm justified."

Temple and Co. stared at Billy Bunter.

"That's how the matter stands," continued Bunter. "But the fact is, old fellow, I'd rather care to play in the cricket week—a lot of my titled relations will be coming down to Greyfriars, and they'll expect to see me play. Having declined to play for the Remove, I've decided to offer my services to the Fourth."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"My hat!"

"Surprises you a bit, what?" smiled Bunter. "But that's what I've decided to do. Of course, 'tain't usual for a Remove chap to play for the Fourth. But on a special occasion, you'd be justified in borrowing a specially good man from another Form. What?"

"A—a—a specially good man?" said Temple dazedly. "Oh, my only Aunt Sempronia!"

Bunter nodded cheerily.

"So that's that!" he said. "If you've made up your eleven, Temple, you can leave out any man you like to make room for me. Dabney, for instance——"

"What?" ejaculated Dabney.

"Dab's not much good," said Bunter. "He will admit that."

"Why, you--you—you——" stuttered Dabney.

"Or Fry!" said Bunter cheerily. "Fry's cricket is really enough to make a cat laugh, ain't it, Fry?"

Fry did not answer; he only stared at Bunter, with a stare of gathering fury.

"If you'd like me to captain the team," went on Bunter, encouraged by the dazed silence of Temple and Co., "you've only got to say the word, Temple. I'll take it on."

"You—you'll take it on!" murmured Temple.

"Yes. It will mean a win for you, instead of a practically certain defeat. I don't want to say anything against your cricket, Temple, you know; but it's really a bit funny, ain't it?"

"A—a—a bit fuf-fuf-funny!" stuttered Temple.

"Yes. You should hear the way fellows in the Remove talk about your cricket," said Bunter. "Bob Cherry says you ought to play cricket on the front page of 'Chuckles.'"

"D-d-does he?"

"Yes, and he's about right, you know. Now, with me in the team, it will pull your blessed crowd of slackers and fumlbers together, won't it?" said Bunter agreeably. "I'm not only willing to play for you in the cricket week, but I'll give you some coaching beforehand."

"Kik-kik-coaching!"

"Exactly; I'll put you up to real cricket, you know; not your style at all. Is it a go?" asked Bunter.

Temple blinked at him. He did not seem to feel equal to answering. But, to judge by Cecil Reginald's expression, it was not a "go"; it was, in fact, anything but a go!

Temple rose to his feet, and Dabney and Fry followed his example. All three of the juniors seemed to realise that it was a time for action, not words.

"Scrag him!" gasped Temple.

"Here, I say, you fellows! Hands off, you know——" stuttered Bunter, as Temple and Co. rushed on him.

"Bump him!"

"I—I say! Help—yaroooooop!"

Three pairs of hands had fastened on William George Bunter, like three iron vices. The Owl of the Remove found himself whirling into the passage, and he sat down there with a mighty bump.

Bunter roared.

"Kick him back to the Remove passage!" howled Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"Yow-ow-woooooop!"

Bunter did not wait to be kicked. He leaped up and fled for the Remove passage at top speed. Temple and Co. pursued him as far as the staircase. But terror lent Bunter wings, and he escaped up the Remove staircase in time. He burst into No. 7 Study, and plumped into the arm-chair there, breathless.

"Hallo, what's the row now?" asked Peter Todd.

Bunter gasped.

"Oh, dear! Beasts! They're all beasts! Ungrateful beasts! Ow! I—I shall refuse to play in the Cricket Week at all now! Ow!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

The Eleventh Man!

"DRAKE?"

"Jack Drake?"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I think it's a good idea," he said. "Of course, Drake isn't a Greyfriars fellow now, but he has been——"

"One of the has-beens," remarked Bob Cherry.

"He was a jolly good cricketer," said Frank Nugent.

"The jolly-goodfulness was terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, with a nod of his dusky head. "It would be an excellent and esteemed compliment to ask him to play for us in the cricket week."

"Exactly; though I'm not thinking so much of that as of strengthening the team," said Harry Wharton. "We've got to be jolly careful to come off with flying colours, you know."

"Let's look at the list!" said Johnny Bull. The cricket list was on the table in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five were at tea there,

and giving their consideration to the very important subject of the Cricket Week at the same time.

The subject deserved consideration; it was quite an unique affair.

St. Jim's and Rookwood were sending over teams to play the Remove; and they were also going to play the Fourth Form club. In the circumstances, it was natural that the visitors should be put up at the school; and, fortunately, there was plenty of accommodation at Greyfriars.

The scheme had gradually developed, and the Head had given it his very sympathetic consideration. Two-day matches were a great improvement on one-day matches, and as each of the visiting teams was to play two matches, there would be four whole days of cricket. The making up of the Remove eleven was a matter that exercised Wharton's mind to the exclusion of most other things just now. Upon the Remove skipper a great responsibility rested. He had to pick and choose, and the offers he received were simply overwhelming in number. Billy Bunter was by no means the only fellow who yearned to distinguish himself in the cricket week.

The list for the eleven was not quite completed yet. So far it ran: Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith, Linley, Todd, S. Q. I. Field, and Tom Brown.

For the eleventh place there were almost innumerable candidates, and among them, those with the best chance of selection were Hazeldene, Penfold, Russell, Ogilvy, and Redwing.

"Drake was a jolly good man," said Harry. "I'd like to see him in the team. If he can't come along, I think I'd better put in Hazeldene. He's as good as the rest, anyhow."

"And Marjorie would like to see him play," remarked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'd like to please Marjorie Hazeldene, of course," he said. "But we've got to think of the cricket first."

"Oh, of course."

"Well, what about Drake?" said Nugent. "The question is, can he come? He's in business in London now—assistant to a private detective."

"Ferrers Locke!" said Harry. "I dare say he's busy. But we can ask him, at any rate. It will do him good to get out of Baker Street for a bit, and come along here and play cricket."

"You bet," agreed Bob.

"Ask him, anyhow," said Johnny Bull. "Time's getting on. Better get Drake's answer as soon as you can. Can you get him on the telephone?"

"That's what I was thinking of," said Harry.

"Then the sooner the quicker."

Harry Wharton nodded and left the study. He went downstairs to the study of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

That gentleman greeted him with a kindly nod, and acquiesced immediately when the Remove captain requested the loan of the telephone for a trunk call. Wharton rang up the exchange, and asked for "Trunks," and gave Ferrers Locke's number.

He sat down to wait while he was put "through."

Mr. Quelch left the study, and Wharton strolled to the window, and stood looking out into the quad. He had to wait some time to be put through to London.

The study door opened quietly, and Wharton glanced round, expecting to see Mr. Quelch returning. But it was not the Remove master who entered.

A fat face, adorned by a large pair of spectacles, blinked cautiously into the study.

Billy Bunter stepped quickly in, and closed the door after him, and rolled across to the telephone.

Wharton grinned.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not seen him, as he stood in the window recess, partly hidden by the curtain.

Evidently the fat junior had seen Mr. Quelch leave the study, and had crept in to use the telephone surreptitiously.

Bunter took up the receiver, and to Wharton's surprise said "Trunks," to the exchange. Apparently Bunter also was in want of a trunk call that afternoon.

"Number! I don't know the number, but it's Rookwood--Rookwood School, Sussex," said Bunter into the transmitter. "I want to speak to Rookwood School."

Wharton started.

Billy Bunter, certainly, had no business to be speaking to Rookwood School. The fat junior, unaware of the surprised glance directed on him from the window recess, grinned complacently.

"I fancy I'll jolly well put a spoke in their wheel," he murmured aloud. "Jimmy Silver won't know a voice on the telephone--he'll think it's Wharton speaking all right. And when I tell him that the cricket week's off owing to a sudden outbreak of influenza--he, he, he!"

Bunter chuckled.

"You fat rascal!" roared Wharton.

"Eh! What?"

Billy Bunter gave a startled jump.

His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as Wharton came out of the window recess, his eyes blazing.

"I--I say, Wharton, wh-w-at are you doing in Quelch's study?" gasped Bunter.

"You fat villain!" thundered Wharton.

"Oh! I--I say--"

"So you were going to ring up Jimmy Silver at Rookwood, and tell him that the cricket week was off!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Nunno! Nothing of the sort!" gasped Bunter. "I--I was going to--to ring him up and--and ask him how he was! That's all! I--I mean, I wasn't going to ring him up at all. I--I--I was going to ring up the--the bun shop in Courtfield--yaroooooh!"

Wharton's grasp closed on the fat junior's collar, and he shook--and shook--and shook, till Bunter quivered like a fat jelly.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!" spluttered the Owl of the Remove. "I--I wasn't--grooh!--besides, it was all your fault for leaving me out--ow!--wow!--and I wasn't going to--yoooooop!"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Oh, crumbs! Ow, wow!"

With a swing of his strong arm, Wharton spun the fat junior to the door. He opened the door with his left hand and spun Bunter into the passage. The Owl of the Remove spun there a good deal like a very fat humming-top, and sat down with a crash.

"Ooooooop!"

Wharton closed the door on him. Billy Bunter scrambled up and limped away, a sadder if not a wiser Bunter.

Buzz-z-z-z!

The telephone bell rang, and Wharton picked up the receiver. He was through to Baker Street at last.

"Hallo!"

"Is that Mr. Locke?" Wharton asked.

"His assistant speaking," came the reply.

"J a c k
Drake?"

"Yes."

"I'm Whar-
ton."

"Oh, hallo!
How are you,
old chap?"
asked Drake
cordially.

"Topping!
How are you
getting on as a
merry detective,
Drake? Catch-
ing a burglar
before breakfast
every morn-
ing?"

"Ha, ha!
Not quite!"
Drake chuckled.

"I rang you
up on busi-
ness," continued
Wharton.

"My hat!
Something hap-
pened at Grey-
friars? Has
Bunter burgled
the larder?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No, not your kind of business—ours," said Harry, laughing. "We're having a cricket week here next week, and we want you to run down and play for the Remove. Like to?"

"Oh, good! I'd like to no end. Next week?"

"Yes."

"Rotten!" said Drake. "I'm booked for the first part of the week, anyhow. I'm

going down to Folkestone with Mr. Locke. The case may keep us the whole week, unluckily. What a chance to miss!"

"Can't be helped," said Harry. "I thought I'd ask you, though, of course, I knew you'd very likely be busy. Folkestone isn't very far from here, and if you get time to run across, we'll all be jolly glad to see you."

"Right-ho!" said Drake. "I may be able to manage that, and I shall be jolly glad to. Whom are you play-
ing?"

"St. Jim's first, then Rookwood," said Harry. "They're all staying on here for the week and playing Temple's lot, too—two-day matches. You'll see some good cricket if you can come over."

"I'll jolly well come over if I can; you can bet on that. Anyhow, I'd like to know how the matches go," said Drake.

"You can ring me up in Folke-
stone, if you
like; telephone
number double-

three double-three. Don't forget."

"Good!"

"Do you wish another three minutes?" came a sweet, musical, feminine voice over the wires.

"No, thanks! Good-bye, Drake old chap, and come over if you can. I'll let you know the verdict, anyhow."

"Right-ho! Good-bye!"

Wharton rang off.

He returned to No. 1 Study, where he



"Now sit down!" said Jimmy Silver, and Bunter sat down—forcibly—on the bridge. And he roared again as he sat!
(See page 77)

announced the result to his chums with a shake of the head.

"Drake can't come."

"Too bad!" said Bob Cherry. "Then it will have to be Hazeldene."

Wharton nodded and wrote Hazeldene's name in the blank place on the cricket list, and at least two persons were pleased thereby—Hazeldene himself and his sister Marjorie, at Cliff House School—when Hazel joyfully biked over and told her the good news.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Arthur Augustus to the Rescue!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, lounged elegantly into the common room at that ancient and celebrated foundation, and turned his eye-glass upon a group of juniors there.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell, were bending their heads over a time-table. Blake and Herries and Digby, of the Fourth, were looking on, all interested in the time-table. So were Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, and Redfern, of the New House.

"You fellows lookin' out twains?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Yes; don't bother!" said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Take a reef or two in your jawing tackle, Gussy, old top!" said Monty Lowther. "We're trying to make head or tail of this dashed time-table! I think we ought to leave it to Manners; he's best man at maths!"

"The train seems to be taken off," said Tom Merry, wrinkling his brow. "But there's one at nine that would suit us."

"Saturdays only," said Manners.

"How do you know?"

"That little wriggly thing means Saturdays only."

"Bother it!" said Tom.

"Pway do not wowwy about the twains, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"We've got to bag a train for Monday, haven't we?" demanded Tom Merry. "Are you thinking of walking to Greyfriars and carrying the cricket bags in your top-hat?"

"Wats! I wegard the suggestion as

widiculous!" said D'Arcy. "I could not possibly cawwy the cwicket bags in my top-hat, Tom Mewwy! Besides, I shall not be wearin' a top-hat!"

"You'll be wearing a fat head, as usual, I suppose!" remarked Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Nine-thirty-seven," said Tom. "What about the nine-thirty-seven?"

"Pway listen to me!"

"Nine-thirty-seven goes only as far as Canterbury," said Manners.

"Blessed if I see——"

"This little squiggly thing means——"

"What with wriggly things and squiggly things, a time-table wants some making out," said Tom Merry ruefully.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus. "But——"

"Dry up for a minute, Gussy!" implored Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"Give us a rest, old chap, and give your chin a rest!" said Kerr. "Your chin will be showing signs of wear and tear soon, if you keep it going at this rate!"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"Couldn't Gussy go and talk in the passage?" suggested Fatty Wynn, as if struck by a brilliant idea. "If he went into the passage and shut the door, he could go on talking and it wouldn't matter."

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, Wynn——"

"I think the eleven o'clock is the one," said Manners. "There's only two changes——"

"Gussy will get left behind at each change," remarked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Well, we've got to get to Greyfriars somehow," said Tom Merry. "That train will land us pretty late, but better late than never."

"Yaas; but——"

"See if there's a better one, Manners, old chap," said Monty Lowther. "What's the good of being brilliant at mathematics, if you can't get a good train out of a time-table?"

"Bai Jove! Mannahs cannot get a good twain, Lowthah, if there is not a good twain there!"

"Go hon!" said Lowther. "Did you work that out in your head, Gussy?"

"Weally, you know——"

"The eleven o'clock is the one," said Manners. "I suppose this is the latest time-table?"

"It's Gussy's," said Herries.

"Bai Jove! Did you want the latest time-table?" asked Arthur Augustus, innocently. "You did not say so when you asked me if I had a time-table, Hewwies."

"You ass!" roared Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

Manners gave a snort. He turned over the time-table, and looked at the date on it and snorted again.

"Three months old!" he remarked, caustically. "We've been construing it for nothing."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove! You fellows should weally look at the date on a time-table befoah you start pickin' twains out of it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, while Tom Merry and Co. glared at him. "It saves time, you know. Howevah, fortunately it does not matter."

"Doesn't it!" roared Tom Merry. "We've been pegging away at this jolly time-table for a quarter of an hour at least."

"Bump him!" said Digby.

"Weally, Dig——"

"I think Gussy had better be bumped," said Tom Merry, rising to his feet. "First he lends us an out-of-date time-table, and then he comes in and wags his chin while we're trying to make head or tail of it. Collar him."

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jumped back.

"Pway don't be wuff beasts, you know," he exclaimed. "It weally does not mattah at all about the twains——"

"You howling ass!" roared Blake. "Can we get to Greyfriars on Monday without a train?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Do you think we can walk it, ass?"

"Certainly not. But——"

"Bump him!"

"If you fellows will only listen to weason, I will explain——"

But Arthur Augustus had no time to explain. Tom Merry and Co. closed in on him, and the swell of St. Jim's was swept off the floor. He gave a yell of alarm.

"Mind my clobbah, you duffahs! Pway don't wumple my twousahs, you feahful wuffians! Yawoooooh!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat on the carpet.

"Gwoogh! You feahful wuffians!" he gasped. "I have a great mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound! Oh! Ow! You howwid wottahs. I wefuse to tell you now that my patah is sendin' down the big car to take us ovah to Gweyfwiahs on Monday! Ow!"

"What!" yelled the juniors.

"Oh, cwumbs! You have thwown me into quite a fluttah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "A button is gone off my beastly waistcoat! Oh, deah!"

"The big car!" said Tom Merry. "My hat! That's a jolly good stunt, Arthur Augustus."

"Why didn't you tell us before?" demanded Blake.

"Gwoogh! How could I tell you befoah, when I have only just awwanged it by telephone," gasped Arthur Augustus. "I wegard all of you as a set of beastly howlin' idiots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My twousahs are quite dustay——"

"So we're going over to Greyfriars by car on Monday," said George Figgins. "That's a ripping idea."

"Yes, rather."

"I wefuse to tell you, now, whethah we are goin' over by car or not!" spluttered Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to say a word on the subject—and you will not know till the car comes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired in great dignity, to seek a clothes-brush, and give the required attention to his immaculate trousers. And a loud chortle followed him from the common-room.

William George on the Cricket Field!

Some Lightning Sketches by C. H. CHAPMAN



It is one of Billy Bunter's favourite delusions that he can play cricket. He is always complaining that it is "personal jealousy" on the part of Harry Wharton that keeps him out of the Remove cricket eleven. Yet when he does play, incidents such as those depicted above invariably happen!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Nothing Doing!

MONDAY was a great day at Greyfriars School.

Twenty-two cricketers were arriving that day, eleven from St. Jim's and eleven from Rookwood; and they were bringing other fellows with them, so the total of the guests would not be much under thirty.

It was a great occasion for the Remove. Indeed, the juniors would have been quite willing to turn every summer week into a cricket week; and, in fact, every winter week into a football week! They would have regarded that as a great improvement on lessons. But, kind and considerate as Dr. Locke was, his kindness and consideration were not likely to stretch to such an extent. One cricket week was much to be thankful for.

Accommodation had been provided in the dormitories, and the guests were going to breakfast and dine in Hall; and for tea and supper they could choose between Hall and the studies. The weather was glorious, and there was every prospect that it would continue glorious. The Lower School of Greyfriars was in high feather.

Billy Bunter wasn't satisfied; but nobody seemed to mind very much whether Bunter was satisfied or not. The Owl of the Remove was not a very important person in the scheme of things at Greyfriars. If Bunter wore a frown on that auspicious day, it is probable that no one even noticed whether it was a frown or a smile; which naturally added to the ire of William George Bunter, who, in his own eyes at least, was a person of the very first importance.

"They're coming over from St. Jim's by car," Harry Wharton remarked to his chums. "D'Arcy's pater is lending a car; I've heard from Tom Merry. The Rookwood chaps get to Courtfield by express train, and take the local on to Friardale. We'll have a brake to meet them there."

"I say, you fellows——"

Bunter's interruption passed unheeded. The Famous Five were too full of great affairs to heed Bunter.

"I've fixed up with the man about the

brake," continued Harry. "I've got to tell him the time of the train. Jimmy Silver arrives at Courtfield at twelve."

"That means the local to Friardale arriving at twelve fifteen," remarked Frank Nugent.

"That's it; twelve fifteen at Friardale. One of us had better run down on a bike and tell the brake merchant."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off, Bunter."

The Famous Five walked away, discussing the matter, leaving Bunter blinking after them angrily.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "Not even offering a chap a lift in the brake to meet his old pals from Rookwood. Lemme see!" Bunter wrinkled his fat brows in thought. "They get to Courtfield Junction at twelve, and it takes some minutes to change trains—and very likely they'll have to wait for the local." Bunter grinned. "My hat! I'll jolly well put a spoke in their wheel! He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter blinked cautiously round him.

Harry Wharton was wheeling out his bike, apparently to ride off with the instructions for the brake. Bunter chuckled as he wheeled his bike out of the gates. The Owl of the Remove followed, and stared after Wharton, disappearing in a cloud of dust towards Friardale. Bunter turned in the opposite direction, and trudged away towards Courtfield.

It was between two and three miles to Courtfield, and Bunter was not a good walker, and he did not like walking. Progress was slow, and made slower by several long halts for rest in the grassy bank by the roadside. It was just as well that Bunter had started quite early, for the walk to Courtfield occupied an hour and a half. But the fat junior, red and perspiring, rolled up to Courtfield Junction Station at last. It was ten minutes to twelve.

"Good!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled into the station, and expended a penny upon a platform ticket, and stationed himself on the platform to await the train from Latcham which was bringing the Rookwood crowd.

Prompt at noon the express came buzzing in.

It stopped in the station, and the passengers crowded out, among them a party of school-boys with cricket bags and other bags, in whom Bunter recognised Jimmy Silver and Co. He knew them all by sight—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Mornington, Erroll, Conroy, Tommy Dodd, Cook, Doyle, Towle, and the friends who had accompanied the cricketers. And they knew him, too; his fat figure was prominent on the platform, and Jimmy Silver waved a hand to him.

"Hallo, it's Bunter!" said Jimmy.

"They're not meeting us here," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "We go on to Friardale; that's the arrangement."

"Three minutes to catch the local," said Mornington. "There it is, on the other line. We go over the bridge."

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver.

Billy Bunter hastened to join the Rookwooders as they started in a body for the bridge over the line.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, Bunter, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver genially.

He did not esteem Billy Bunter very much, but Jimmy was always genial; and, besides, he was in great spirits that day.

"I came along to meet you fellows here."

"Thanks, awfully."

"Don't hurry over the bridge," said Bunter.

"There's nothing to catch the local for."

"Eh? We've got to get on to Friardale for Greyfriars."

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm awfully sorry, old chap," he said.

"But it's no go. That's why I came to meet you here. Hasn't Wharton told you about the outbreak of influenza?"

"Influenza!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Yes. Practically the whole school down with it," said Bunter calmly. "I suppose you missed the telegram at Rookwood when you started."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in dismay.

"It's too bad," said Bunter, blinking sympathetically at the Rookwood cricketers, who had halted in a dismayed crowd on the bridge. "I'm really awfully sorry. It struck me that you mightn't have got the telegram

in time, so I came along here to meet you, and save you making the rest of the journey for nothing."

"What a go!" ejaculated Raby.

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Lovell.

"The best thing you can do is to take the next train back to Rookwood," said Bunter sympathetically.

Jimmy Silver eyed him.

"This outbreak is awfully sudden, isn't it?" he asked.

"Frightfully sudden," said Bunter. "It—it grew up like a mushroom in the night, you know."

"All well yesterday—what?" asked Jimmy suspiciously.

He knew something of Bunter, and of his partiality for the methods of Ananias, and he had a growing suspicion that the fat junior was seeking to pull his leg.

"Yes, quite; but when we woke up this morning it was fairly on us," said Bunter. "That—that's why Wharton couldn't telegraph till this morning. He did it as early as he could."

"Is Wharton ill, too?" asked Lovell.

"Horribly! Lying on his back and groaning when I left him," said Bunter. "It was—was heartrending!"

"If he was horribly ill, how did he manage to send a telegram?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"He—he—was just able to write it, and the—the porter took it—old Gosling, you know," said Bunter. "I—I told Wharton I'd come and meet you here, and save you finishing the journey for nothing, and he thanked me with tears in his eyes."

"He did, did he?" asked Jimmy.

"Yes, I am his best friend, you know—pals ever since we came to Greyfriars," explained Bunter. "He put his hand in mine, and said 'Thank you, Billy, old chap,' in a weak voice."

Billy Bunter had a lively imagination, which had been rendered more and more lively by constant visits to the "pictures." He was now piling on the agony, so to speak, in order to give his surprising statement a convincing effect. As a matter of fact, the effect he produced was anything but convincing.

All the Rookwood cricketers were looking very suspicious now.

"How many are down with it?" asked Newcome.

"The whole school. The doctor's there now isolating them," said Bunter. "You fellows must be careful to keep clear of the place. You know how dangerous small-pox is."

"Small-pox!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, it's a fearful disease, and you might catch it simply by calling at the gates."

"You said influenza a minute ago!" yelled Lovell.

Bunter started. Once more he had forgotten, as he often did, that a certain class of persons should have good memories.

"I—I mean influenza," he said hastily. "Or—or, to be more exact, it—it's a combination of influenza and small-pox; awfully dangerous. There have been several deaths already."

"Great Scott!"

"And the whole school is isolated," said Bunter.

"Then what are you doing out of gates?"

"Oh! I—I—I mean——"

"You've come along to give us influenza and small-pox combined, what?" asked Lovell.

"Nunno! I—I——"

There was a shriek of a train-whistle, and Lovell uttered an exclamation.

"There goes the train!"

"It's Bunter's fault!" exclaimed Jimmy

Silver, wrathfully. "We've lost it now! I'll scalp that fat bounder for stopping us!"

"Oh, really, Silver——"

"Cut off and enquire the time of the next train to Friardale, Lovell. Now," continued Jimmy, as Arthur Edward Lovell ran off—"now, Bunter, you fat villain, what do you mean by spinning us this yarn and making us lose the connection?"

"If you doubt my word, Silver——" exclaimed Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Your word! My hat!"

"Serag him!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"I—I say, you fellows—it—it's true, every word!" gasped Bunter. "I tell you every fellow at Greyfriars is down with scarlet fever——"

"Scarlet fever?" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

"I mean small-pox—that is to say, influenza—yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Jimmy Silver seized him by one ear, and Mornington held on to the other.

"Yooop! Leggo! Help!"

"Knock his head against the bridge," said Jimmy.

"You bet!"

Crack!

There was a fiendish yell from Bunter, as his head came into contact with the iron bridge.

"Yaroooooooh!"

"Now tell us the truth, you fat villain!"

"Yow-ow! I have——"

Crack!

"Yoooop! Stoppit!" yelled Bunter. "I—



Billy Bunter, uninvited as he was, decided to devote his attention to the cake, which he did with great effect. The fellows near him were kept pretty busy passing things. (See page 79)

I—I was only j-j-joking—can't you take a j-j-joke?"

Crack!

"Whooooooooooop!"

"Now sit down," said Jimmy Silver, and Bunter sat down—forcibly—on the bridge. And he roared again as he sat.

The Rookwooders marched on to the local platform, leaving Bunter sitting on the bridge, rubbing his head, and gasping for breath. Once more the little schemes of William George Bunter had gone awry. Arthur Edward Lovell rejoined his comrades with the news that there was another train for Friardale in a quarter of an hour.

For fifteen minutes Jimmy Silver and Co. had to cool their heels on the local platform at Courtfield till the train came in. During that interval Billy Bunter did not venture to approach them. But when the train came in, the Owl of the Remove came rushing up.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Scat!"

"I say, I'm coming in this train——"

"Take your bat to him, Lovell."

"I—I say—give a chap room——"

"Get into some other carriage!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'll jolly well biff you if you cram in with us, you fat fraud."

"Lend me a bob for the ticket——"

"What?"

"I—I left my money indoors—all my bank-notes and—and currency notes!" gasped Bunter. "Lend me a bob——"

"Lend him your bat, Lovell."

"I—I don't want a bat—I want a bob to pay my fare—yaroooooooooh!" It was the bat not the "bob," that Bunter received, and he sat down on the platform as Arthur Edward Lovell prodded him. The Rookwood fellows crowded into the train, and as it moved out of the station, the windows were crowded with merry faces, watching Bunter.

Bunter, still breathless, sat on the platform, blinking after the train.

"Good-bye, little bird!" sang out Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, dear—ow——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The train glided on with the crowd of

Rookwooders—who arrived fifteen minutes after time at Friardale, and found Harry Wharton and Co. waiting for them with the brake. Fifteen minutes did not matter very much, but Bunter's plight was much more serious. He had to walk back from Courtfield to Greyfriars—and three miles in the sun was no joke to William George Bunter; and as he dragged one weary fat leg after the other, he repented him deeply and sincerely that he had thought of "putting a spoke" in the wheel of the Removites. And when he arrived at Greyfriars he found it crowded with guests—but dinner long over—and there was no dinner for Bunter.

Which was the last straw! It was not until tea-time that life seemed to Bunter to be worth living.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Tea in No. 1 Study

"BAI JOVE! This is weally wippin'."

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Certainly it was ripping. At tea-time there was a very distinguished party gathered in No. 1 Study in the Remove.

That celebrated study, though unusually ample in size for junior quarters, could not accommodate all the guests. But every study in the Remove and the Fourth was open and welcome to the visitors. In the Remove passage, nearly every study had a guest or two, and in the Fourth, Temple, Dabney and Co. were rivalling the Remove in hospitality. But the most distinguished circle had gathered in No. 1, Remove.

The Famous Five were all there, of course. The two visiting captains, Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver, were there. So were Blake and Herries, and Talbot of the Shell at St. Jim's; and Arthur Edward Lovell of Rookwood, and last, but not least, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the St. Jim's Fourth. No. 1 Study was pretty well filled with twelve fellows in it—but nobody minded; good-humour reigned supreme. And the spread on the study table was unusually magnificent. The afternoon sun glimmered in at the windows—outside, the old quad. of Greyfriars and the elm trees could be seen, with a strip of the playing-fields—where Wingate and the

mighty men of the Sixth were at cricket. Sixth-Form cricket, however, did not draw much attention from the Lower School now. The juniors were fully occupied with the Junior Cricket Week. Play was to begin on the morrow, and Bob Cherry declared that it would be a perfect pitch. While the Remove played St. Jim's, the Fourth Form were going to play Rookwood—and Bob had privately predicted that Greyfriars would score a victory and a defeat—needless to say, Bob opined that the victory would rest with the Remove, while defeat would be the portion of the Fourth.

“Another cup of tea, D'Arcy?”

“Try the cheese cakes——”

“Yaas, wathah! Thank you very much, deah boys. It's awf-ly agweeable to see you fellows wound about again,” said Arthur Augustus, beaming amiably upon the assembly. “I am only sowwy that we are goin' to whop you on your own gwound—but aftah all, the game is the thing, isn't it?”

“Perhaps you're not going to whop us, you know,” said Harry Wharton, laughing.

“Pewhaps, deah boy,” assented D'Arcy. “Cwicket is a vewy uncertain game, and there is weally no tellin' what will happen. Extwa-ordinawy chances do occur in cwicket.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I say, Gussy, old chap!” said a fat voice in the doorway. The door had been left open for coolness; and now the doorway framed the fat form of William George Bunter of the Remove.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his famous eyeglass upon the Owl of the Remove.

“Bai Jove! How do you do, Buntah, deah boy?” said Arthur Augustus, with just a trifle less geniality in his manner.

“Awfully glad to see you again, Gussy! You haven't forgotten the time I came over to St. Jim's, what?”

“Not at all, Buntah.”

Bunter wedged into the study. Five pairs of eyes looked at him very expressively; but Bunter did not catch any of them. And Harry Wharton and Co. felt a certain natural hesitation in slinging Bunter out under the eyes of their distinguished guests.

“Got room for a fellow?” asked Bunter agreeably.

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 5.—CYCLING



The clarion call of spring is come,
So get your cycles ready!
And then select your favourite chum,
Dick, Tom, or Bob, or Teddy.
Set off together, side by side,
Through country lanes and byways;
And whistle gaily as you glide
Along the pleasant highways!

O'er hill and dale, past hedge and stream,
Go gliding at your leisure:
With joy of life your eyes will gleam,
Your cheeks will glow with pleasure.
The fair and charming countryside
Will prove both sweet and striking;
You will enjoy a topping ride
And bless the joys of biking!

What matters if your tyre goes flat,
Or if you can't continue?
You'll heed no obstacles like that
If optimism's in you!
The puncture mended, on you'll speed
Through scenes of sunny splendour,
Seeking some farmhouse, there to feed
With many a gay week-ender!

The pleasures of the open road
Are plain to all beholders;
There all your troubles, in a load,
Go sliding from your shoulders.
Then seek the joys of dale and hill,
Away from all distractions;
And, laughing gaily, drink your fill
Of cycling's keen attractions!

"No!" hissed Bob Cherry under his breath.

"What did you say, Cherry?" asked Bunter very loudly.

"Plenty of room," said Blake. "Here's half my chair——"

"And half mine, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Thanks very much," said Bunter calmly, seating himself between the two St. Jim's juniors, heedless of the Famous Five. "Jolly glad to see you again, Gussy. Pass the cake, will you?"

"Certainly, Buntah."

Arthur Augustus passed the cake, and was rather surprised to see Bunter transfer it bodily to his plate. There were several cakes, but they were going fairly fast, and Bunter apparently did not want to risk getting "left."

"Did you have a good run over in the car, you chaps?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Topping!" said Tom Merry. "Luckily, the chauffeur wouldn't let Gussy show him the way, so we got here on time."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Lucky bargees," said Jimmy Silver. "We had to come over by a common or garden train."

"Why didn't you let me know, old chap?" chimed in Billy Bunter. "I'd have asked my pater to send over his big Rolls-Royce for you."

"Bai Jove! That would have been vewy kind of you, Buntah," said Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly. "It is weally a pity Silvah did not let you know."

"On another occasion, Silver, I'll do it," said Bunter. "Would you rather have the Rolls-Royce or the Mercédès?"

"Quite easy to send either, I suppose!" remarked Jimmy Silver, with a touch of playful sarcasm.

"Oh, quite! It's only a matter of telephoning to Bunter Court. I'll send you home in one of them if you like."

"That's awfully good of you, Bunter," said Jimmy Silver, "but we want to get back to Rookwood before our extreme old age, you know."

"Eh?"

"An! I'm afraid we should be fairly ancient

by the time the Rolls-Royce and the Mercédès turned up," said Jimmy, shaking his head.

There was a chuckle in No. 1 Study, and Billy Bunter coughed. He decided to devote his attention to the cake, which he did with great effect. The fellows near him were kept pretty busy passing him things. True, the Famous Five seemed deaf when Bunter called for supplies, but the St. Jim's fellows and the Rookwooders played up, so the Owl of the Remove was well looked after.

There was a merry hum of conversation in No. 1 Study over tea—in which Bunter's voice was heard considerably, though rather muffled, as his mouth was full most of the time. Bunter confided to D'Arcy and Blake that they hadn't much to expect in the way of cricket during their stay—the best man had been left out of the Remove team, he explained, owing to personal jealousy on the part of the cricket captain.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus quietly.

"Oh, really, D'Arcy——"

"I have seen you play cwicket, you know, Buntah."

"Same here," grinned Blake.

Bunter blinked at one, and then at the other.

"You St. Jim's fellows don't know much about cricket," he said. "When I was over at St. Jim's I noticed that. Look at the way you fumble when you're bowling, D'Arcy."

"What?"

"And the way you stand at the wicket," said Bunter. "Enough to make a cat laugh, isn't it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Cherry, old chap, do try to think of your manners when we've got guests here," said Bunter chidingly. "Don't mind him, D'Arcy—he's always like that. I try to cure him, but——" Bunter shrugged his fat shoulders hopelessly.

"Weally, Buntah——" murmured Arthur Augustus feebly. William George Bunter was almost too much for the swell of St. Jim's.

"Another cup of tea, Wharton," said Bunter, holding out his cup. The tea was finished, and the tea-party were rising.

Wharton did not heed; he was not there to satisfy the unbidden guest.



"Where do you feel the pain?" asked Bob Cherry. "All over!" said Bunter, pathetically. "I'll give you something to cure all that, my fat old bean!" said Bob. Swipe! (See page 81)

"Deaf, old fellow?" bawled Bunter.

"I'll give you a cup of tea, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"Thanks. Plenty of sugar."

Bob Cherry filled the cup to the brim, chiefly with hot water. Billy Bunter grinned as he took it. But at the same moment Johnny Bull pushed past his chair, and, perhaps by accident, his boot kicked the leg of it, and it was swept away.

There was a spluttering roar from Billy Bunter as he sat on the carpet, with the tea streaming over his fat face.

"Yooooooooooooop!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Oh, sorry!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh! Beasts! You did that on purpose," roared Bunter, mopping his streaming face. "One beast gave me the tea

while the other beast kicked my chair. I'm scalded—I'm wet—I'm smothered! Gimme a hand up, you rotters! Ow! Leggo my ear, Bob Cherry—leggo my ear, Bull, you awful rotter! Yarooooooh."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton and Co. and their guests crowded out of the study, leaving William George Bunter roaring. They were grinning as they went down the Remove passage; even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was smiling. As they came out into the quad., Gussy confided to Tom Merry "that that boundah Buntah was weally the absolute limit." Tom Merry agreed that he was, and a little over. When William George Bunter—having mopped off the spilt tea—rolled out into the quad-rangle in search of his chum Gussy, the swell of St. Jim's unobtrusively, but very carefully, gave him a wide berth. For some reason—

ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS!



To face page 80]

FIRE-DRILL AT GREYFRIARS SCHOOL!
The Junior Fire Brigade Puts in some Strenuous Practice

quite a mystery to himself—William George was not popular among the guests at Greyfriars. He blinked morosely at the crowd of cheery juniors.

“Let ’em wait!” murmured Bunter. “They little know! Ha, ha, ha! Let ’em wait!”

From which, if Harry Wharton and Co. had heard it, they would have deduced that Billy Bunter was still under the influence of the “pictures.”

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Missing!

CLANG! Clang! Clang!

The rising bell rang out over Greyfriars in the clear, sunny morning.

Bob Cherry, as usual, was first out of bed in the Remove dormitory. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, of St. Jim’s, sat up and yawned a little.

The long, lofty dormitory was fairly well filled. There was ample space for the extra beds that had been placed there, and the St. Jim’s party were all accommodated in the Remove sleeping-quarters; the Rookwooders being with the Fourth. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy sat up and looked round him with a benignant smile, after a yawn.

“Good-mornin’, deah boys,” he said.

“Top of the morning, old top!” roared Bob Cherry. There was no need to shout; but Bob Cherry always started the day in exuberant spirits.

“The topfulness of the esteemed morning is terrific, my worthy and ridiculous friend,” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a beaming smile on his dusky face.

Arthur Augustus grinned. Hurree Singh’s flow of language was a delight to him, and he never suspected that his own remarkable accent was a source of joy to other fellows.

“Slept well?” asked Harry Wharton.

“Yaas, wathah.”

“Like a top!” said Tom Merry cheerily.

“Bai Jove! I slept as soundly as anythin’, you know,” said Arthur Augustus as he projected a silk-pyjama-clad leg from the bed. “Nevah slept bettah in my life. It’s goin’ to be a wippin’ day for cwicket, I think.”

“Turn out, Bunter!” roared Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked sleepily from the bed-clothes.

“I say, you fellows, I’m not getting up yet. No lessons to-day, you know, for the Remove, so there’s no need——”

“Roll out, porpoise.”

“You might mention to Quelchy that I’m ill, and that I’d like my brekker in bed,” said Bunter.

“Ill?” said Bob. “Poor old Bunter! If you’re ill, old fellow, I’m going to look after you.”

“Poor old Buntah!” said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. “I am vewy sowwy to heah that you do not feel well, deah boy. Bai Jove! What are you up to, Chewwy?”

The St. Jim’s fellows stared, as Bob proceeded to look after the invalid. He took the bolster from his bed for the purpose. Billy Bunter eyed him with apprehension as he approached.

“Look here, you beast——” he began.

“Where do you feel the pain?” asked Bob.

“All over,” said Bunter pathetically. “I think I’ve got pneumonia in the left lung, and a slight attack of colic in the ribs——”

“I’ll give you something to cure all that, my fat old bean.”

Swipe!

“Yarooooh!” roared Bunter.

He rolled out on the other side of the bed, with an activity remarkable in a fellow who was suffering from both pneumonia and colic. He landed on the floor with a bump, and roared again.

“Have some more?” asked Bob.

“Yah! Beast! No.”

“I’ve only given you one for the pneumonia,” said Bob. “Won’t you have another one for the colic?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Beast!”

Bunter seemed cured all of a sudden, and he turned to dressing—bed being out of the question with the exuberant Bob in the dormitory.

“Bai Jove, you know!” Arthur Augustus murmured to Talbot of St. Jim’s. “The fat boundah was only shammin’. I do weally wegard Buntah as the outside edge, you know.”

And Talbot laughed and nodded. But for the fact that he was a guest at Greyfriars, Arthur Augustus would probably have treated Bunter to a little fatherly advice. As it was, he held his peace, but he gave the Owl of the Remove a glance of strong disfavour.

The toilet of Arthur Augustus was a more serious matter than it was with most fellows. Most of the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows had gone down before D'Arcy was finished. Even Billy Bunter was out of the dormitory. Harry Wharton lingered, from motives of politeness, while the swell of St. Jim's gave himself the finishing touches.

"Pway don't wait for me, deah boy," said D'Arcy kindly. "I shall only be a few minutes more——"

"No hurry," said Wharton, and he sat on a bed.

"Some fellows," said Arthur Augustus confidentially, "think it weally does not mattah how you tie a necktie in the mornin'. My ideah is that if a thing is worth doin' at all, it is worth doin' well. What?"

"Certainly," said Harry, with a smile. "That's the third necktie you've tied, isn't it?"

"Yaas. I am always wathah particulah about my ties," confessed Arthur Augustus. "Not that I think vewy much about dwess, you know. But a fellow likes to be decent. Is this all wight?"

"Right as rain."

"You think the pearl pin goes well with the blue?"

"First rate," said Harry, as gravely as he could.

"I agwee with you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, surveying himself in the glass. "I wathah think that will do. Now I want my watch and chain, and I shall be finished."

He approached his bed, to take the watch and chain from under the pillow, where he had placed them the preceding night. He turned back the pillow, but the watch and chain were not to be seen.

"Bai Jove! The botherin' things have slipped down into the bed somewhere," said Arthur Augustus.

"I'll help you."

Wharton came to the aid of the swell of

St. Jim's, and jerked away pillow and bolster, and then the bedclothes. Arthur Augustus began to look surprised—and so did Wharton. The watch and chain certainly ought to have been in sight then—but they were not to be seen.

"Sure you put them under your pillow?" asked Harry.

"Yaas, wathah! I wemembah puttin' them there, aftah windin' up the watch, you know."

Wharton nodded. He remembered now having seen D'Arcy winding his watch; the celebrated gold "ticker" which had been a present from his noble pater, Lord Eastwood. It had, in fact, attracted many glances in the Remove dormitory. The gold watch was worth a large sum, and the gold chain was a very valuable one; and on the end of the chain Gussy wore a little russia leather purse, in which he kept his banknotes. Altogether, the article was a very valuable one. Arthur Augustus had certainly placed it, all together—watch, chain and purse—under his pillow the night before. But now——

"Better search right through the bed," said Wharton abruptly.

"Yaas, wathah."

The two juniors turned the bed thoroughly out. They were so occupied when Bob Cherry looked in at the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You fellows making the beds?" he inquired.

"Come in, Bob," said Harry, in so quiet a tone that Bob looked at him in surprise.

"Anything wrong?" asked Bob as he came in.

"D'Arcy can't find his watch and chain."

"My hat!"

"It is wathah wemarkable," said Arthur Augustus, evidently in a state of great astonishment, "it was undah my pillow last night—and now it appeahs to be gone."

"Gone!" ejaculated Bob.

"Yaas, wathah."

"But it can't be gone," exclaimed Bob, incredulously. "Dash it all, the thing must be in the bed somewhere. Let's look."

"We've looked," said Harry quietly. "But we'll look again."

"Yaas, wathah."

Once more the bed was turned out thoroughly. Every sheet and blanket was shaken separately; and the juniors searched under the bed, and round about it. But there was no sign whatever of the missing article.

They desisted at last, and stood looking at one another. Harry Wharton's face was a little set; Bob Cherry's flushed and surprised. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was very thoughtful.

"Some silly ass has been larkin'," said the swell of St. Jim's. "Pway don't think that I mind, deah boys—it is simply a case of a mistaken sense of humah. Some silly ass abstwacted my watch and chain fwom undah my pillow for a pwactical joke."

"I suppose that was it," said Bob. "It's certainly not here."

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Practical jokes of that sort on visitors aren't allowed," he said. "I'll jolly well punch the silly ass's head when I find him out. I dare say it was Skinner—just one of his tricks."

"Most likely," assented Bob.

"Pway don't punch Skinnah's head, deah boy," said D'Arcy mildly. "It would distwess me vevy much to be the cause of a wow."

"Well, I'll ask him," said Harry.

Johnny Bull looked into the dormitory.

"Brekker's ready," he announced. "What are you roosting up here for?"

"Coming!" said Bob.

And the juniors went down to breakfast.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

A Mystery!

AFTER breakfast that morning, most of the fellows were thinking of cricket. Stumps were to be pitched fairly early, and two matches were to begin: Remove v. St. Jim's, and Fourth Form v. Rookwood. Harry Wharton had expected to give his whole attention to cricket that morning; but now he had another matter to think about. The question of D'Arcy's watch and chain had to be settled without delay. Wharton could not believe that the disappearance of the article was anything but a practical joke, but such a joke on a visitor, with an article of great value concerned, made him angry. He did not want

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 6.—RUNNING



Near the school gates the runners stand,
A group of light-clad figures;
And while they wait, an eager band,
The slacker stands and sniggers.
Cries he, "Those fools intend to run
Through muddy, miry places;
Why, as for me, I should be 'done'
Before I'd gone ten paces!"

The pistol cracks; away they leap,
Those figures clad but thinly;
Some cling together in a heap,
The leading light is Linley.
He sets the pace, resolved that in
The vanguard they will find him;
While Cherry, with a genial grin,
Is pressing hard behind him!

Mile follows mile, and one by one
The runners quit the tussle;
For some are "whacked," and fairly done,
And can no longer hustle.
But Linley "sticks it!" to the end
And proves a splendid winner;
Loud cheers from every loyal friend,
And then—a bumper dinner!

That running is a manly sport
All manly folk inform us;
When tired of gym. or tennis court,
Its value is enormous.
Let slackers slack; let cunning cads
Continue in their cunning;
But all the really sporting lads
Will find delight in running!

to spoil the harmony of the great occasion by a "row," but certainly he would have liked to punch the head that had thought of such a practical joke. When the juniors left the dining-room, the captain of the Remove followed Skinner into the quadrangle. The latter was loafing about with Snoop and Stott, not being greatly concerned in cricket. Harry Wharton tapped him on the shoulder.

"Were you larking in the dorm. last night, Skinner?" he asked.

Skinner stared at him.

"Not unless I was walking in my sleep," he answered. "What's the row?"

"Look here," said Wharton abruptly. "If you've been playing tricks on D'Arcy, Skinner, own up at once, and the matter can drop. It's not a matter that can be left unsettled."

"Blessed if I know what you're driving at," said Skinner, and he certainly looked puzzled. "Has anybody been pulling the D'Arcybird's noble leg?"

"His watch and chain and purse were taken from under his pillow last night while he was asleep."

Skinner whistled.

"Do you know anything about it?" asked Harry.

"Nothing."

"It was some rotten practical joker——"

"Thanks," said Skinner, with a yawn. "I may be a rotten practical joker, as you so politely and elegantly put it. But I didn't play this particular rotten practical joke. Not guilty, my lord!"

"Do you fellows know anything about it?" asked Wharton, looking at Snoop and Stott. They shook their heads.

"Well, it's got to be found!" said the captain of the Remove, rather at a loss.

"Look for it and find it, then, old top," said Skinner agreeably. "Your business as the chap's your guest—not mine. But you needn't tell me any rot about a practical joke. Fellows in their senses don't pinch gold watches for a joke. If the watch is gone, it's been pinched."

"Rot!" exclaimed Harry sharply.

"Better ask Bunter," grinned Skinner. "He always believes that a thing belongs to him, if he wants it. I noticed that D'Arcy

had a fat purse on the end of his watch-chain. Perhaps dear old Bunter's taken a fancy to his banknotes."

Wharton started.

"He—he—wouldn't—he couldn't—it's—it's impossible."

"Nothing's impossible, where Bunter and cash are concerned together," chuckled Skinner. "Try Bunter."

And Skinner and Co. walked away, laughing. The slackers of the Remove had nothing to do in Cricket Week. And they looked as if they were rather pleased than otherwise at this cloud that had suddenly appeared on the horizon.

Harry Wharton stood for a few minutes in thought, his brow very dark. Only too well he knew Billy Bunter's little ways—and the great confusion of his fat mind on the subject of *meum* and *tuum*. If Bunter had picked up a banknote, probably he would have kept it, on the principle that findings were keepings; he really was too obtuse to realise clearly the dividing line between honesty and dishonesty. But this was quite a different matter. If D'Arcy's watch had been taken to keep, it was a deliberate theft—and no amount of obtuseness could disguise that fact from the perpetrator. And Bunter, though he sometimes ventured perilously near the dividing line, was not a thief.

"It's not possible!" Wharton muttered aloud. "It could only be a joke—a rotten silly joke——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry joined the captain of the Remove. "You've asked Skinner——"

"He says he knows nothing about it."

"Then it was some other silly ass——"

"He suggests Bunter——"

"It's possible," said Bob. "Let's look for Bunter. Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is! Bunter!" bawled Bob.

Billy Bunter was rolling along at a little distance; but he did not turn his head, though certainly he must have heard Bob's stentorian hail. He rolled on regardless.

"Bunter!" roared Bob.

Still the fat junior did not stop or turn his head. Wharton and Bob broke into a run, and intercepted him.

"You fat idiot——" began Wharton angrily.

Bunter blinked at him, with a blink of lofty contempt.

"I'll be glad if you fellows will keep your distance," he said.

"What?"

"I'm left out of the cricket," said Bunter. "You've refused me a place in the Remove team—and I've declined to play for the Fourth, though Temple begged me with tears in his eyes to see him through. I refused—I'll play for my own Form or none! I'm left out! In the circumstances, Wharton, I decline to speak to you. You've treated me badly, from motives of personal jealousy——"

"Look here, you fat duffer——"

"I may say that I despise you, Wharton. I think I ought to say that. I'll try to overlook your conduct. But for the present, I'll be obliged if you'll keep your distance."

"You chump!" roared Bob Cherry. "Did you pinch D'Arcy's watch and chain last night?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Did you?" snapped Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Will you answer me?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, angrily. "Some silly owl took D'Arcy's watch and chain from under his pillow last night."

"If you think I'm a thief, Wharton——" said William George Bunter, drawing up his little figure to its full height—which was not extensive.

"I suppose it was done for an idiotic joke,"

said Harry. "I want to know where the thing is."

"How should I know?" demanded Bunter.

"Did you pinch it?" snapped Bob.

"I decline to answer such a question," said Bunter. "If you accuse me of pinching a watch and chain I shall go to the Head. You've no right to accuse me."

"We're not accusing you," growled Wharton. "We don't think the thing has been stolen. Somebody's taken it for a fool joke."

"Skinner, perhaps——" suggested Bunter.

"Skinner thinks it was you——"

"What an awful rotter! I say you fellows, perhaps D'Arcy never had a watch and chain at all——"

"You ass, a dozen fellows saw him put it under his pillow."

"Perhaps it's still there," suggested Bunter, brightly.

"Fat head! We've looked."

"Well, look again," said Bunter. "No good bothering a chap who doesn't know

anything about it. After the way you've treated me, Wharton, I decline to give you any more advice about the matter."

"I don't want your advice, you fat chump—I want the watch and chain," growled the captain of the Remove.

"Perhaps Tom Merry pinched it," suggested Bunter. "He was in the next bed to D'Arcy. He's rather a beast——"

"What?"

"I asked him to lend me five bob this morning, and he refused," said Bunter. "I told him I was expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning, and he just cackled!



How it happened the swell of St. Jim's never quite knew; but his bat swept the empty air, and the next second his middle-stump was reclining on the ground! (See page 88)

Talk about manners! I'd have licked him for his cheek, if he hadn't been a guest here. I've a very low opinion of Tom Merry, Wharton. Perhaps he pinched it——"

"Ass!"

"Well, it's no good calling me names," said Bunter. "I've only one suggestion to make——"

"What's that, fathead?"

"Play me in the Remove team to-day. It will mean a big win for Greyfriars."

"You silly owl!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

The captain of the Remove turned angrily away. He tried to clear his clouded brow as he met Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his chums in the quad.

"I hear that Gussy has been scattering his giddy jewellery around as usual," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Heard anything of it yet?" asked Tom Merry.

Wharton shook his head.

"I've been inquiring," he said. "Nothing so far—I can't make it out——"

"Pway don't wowwy, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, placidly. "It will turn up all wight."

"Was there much money in the purse?" asked Harry.

"No, deah boy."

"That's good, anyhow."

"How much was there, Gussy?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Only a fiva——"

"A five-pound note?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas, and a few cuwwency notes," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

"Oh, my hat!"

Jimmy Silver of Rookwood came sauntering along. He stopped and looked at the juniors, noticing Wharton's concerned face and Bob's worried look with surprise.

"Nothing wrong with the pitch, what?" he asked.

"No," said Harry, with a smile. "Both pitches are right as rain. Some silly owl has been playing a trick on D'Arcy, that's all."

"It is weally nothin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"I can take a joke with anybody. Some

silly ass weckoned he would alarm me by hidin' my watch and chain somewhere, but I assuah you I shall not wowwy about the mattah at all. Pewhaps it was you, Lowthah."

"Fathead!" said Lowther.

"Well, you are a pwactical jokin' ass, Lowthah—you will admit that."

"Watch and chain missing!" said Jimmy Silver, looking grave. "Chap must be a howling chump to monkey with valuables."

"Never mind! We've got to think about the cwicket now," said Arthur Augustus. "It will turn up."

And the matter, annoying as it was, perforce had to be left at that for the present.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

King Cricket!

HARRY WHARTON dismissed the matter from his mind when the cricketers went down to Little Side. Cricket claimed all his attention now. The Remove won the toss, and batted first. Tom Merry and Co. went into the field. A crowd of fellows gathered round to watch the game.

On the Fourth Form ground, Temple, Dabney and Co. were staring with the Rookwooders. It was a glorious day, and all four teams were in the greatest of spirits. Temple, Dabney and Co. felt their great spirits a little dashed as the morning wore on, however. Cecil Reginald Temple had his plan clear in his mind; he was going to "wallop" Rookwood, while St. Jim's were beating the Remove. That would establish, in a proper way, the proper standing of Temple's eleven. Unfortunately, the facts did not fit in well with the theory; the cricket did not go according to plan. For Rookwood gained the upper hand from the start over the Fourth—and the great Cecil Reginald himself being dismissed by Jimmy Silver for three runs. While, on the Remove ground, a much tougher game of cricket was in progress.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith opened the innings for the Remove, and the partnership started well, and it was a long time before it was broken. Tom Merry put on the best bowlers for a time in vain—even Fatty Wynn, the demon bowler of the New House at St. Jim's, seemed unable to touch the wickets.

It was a lucky catch in the field by Talbot of the Shell that dismissed Wharton at last, and not before he had scored forty runs.

The captain of the Remove was loudly cheered by the crowd round the ground. The cheering brought Billy Bunter to the scene, to see what was going on. Billy Bunter indulged in a sniff.

"Wharton out?" he asked, addressing the fellow nearest him, who happened to be Hazeldene.

"Out for forty," said Hazel.

Bunter sniffed again.

"Fat lot of good forty runs," he remarked.

"I should have made eighty at least, against that bowling."

"You silly owl!" said Hazeldene. "You wouldn't have kept up your silly wicket against the first ball."

"Yah!" was the only reply that Billy Bunter could think of to that remark.

Bob Cherry went in to join Smithy. The latter was bowled by Talbot after scoring thirty-five; and Bob Cherry was good for twenty. The Remove were certainly beginning well.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked to Tom Merry as the field crossed over. "They are wathah hot stuff, deah boy."

"They are," admitted Tom.

"Hadn't you better put me on to bowl, Tom Mewwy?"

"I think not," grinned Tom.

"But they are vewy hot stuff——"

"Which is why I am not going to put you on to bowl, old chap."

"Weally, you know——"

Talbot was bowling again, and Fatty Wynn relieved him, and then Blake. The Greyfriars wickets fell a little faster. But the running was still good, the score mounted up. Mark Linley was "not out" at the finish, and the last wicket fell in time for the luncheon interval. The Greyfriars Remove score was a level 120.

It was undoubtedly good work for the first innings; and the Removites were feeling very well satisfied with themselves.

Wharton was rather curious to know how the Fourth had fared; and he soon ascer-

tained. The Fourth had been all down for fifty; and the Rookwood first innings had started with thirty for three wickets. Harry Wharton smiled as he learned the result of the contest so far. He was well aware of Cecil Reginald Temple's ambitions. This did not look as if Cecil Reginald's ambitions would be realised.

After the lunch interval the cricketers resumed play cheerily.

Tom Merry and Talbot opened the game for St. Jim's, and Harry Wharton and his merry men were keen and alert in the field.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Remove's champion bowler, started with his ball, and Tom Merry found that he had all his work cut out to defend his wicket.

He captured two runs on the over, and that was all. And then Squiff bowled to Talbot.

Talbot of the Shell was generally a host in himself, to his side; but the Australian junior's bowling found out a weak spot. To the surprise and dismay of the Saints, Talbot did not live through the over.

He had taken four, when Squiff knocked down his bails, and Talbot, with a rather reddened face, carried his bat back to the pavilion.

"Hard luck, old chap," said Tom Merry, as Talbot passed him.

"Bai Jove, you know, it was weally cwel luck," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Talbot joined the waiting crowd of batsmen at the pavilion. "Howevah, it will be all wight, Talbot; don't wowwy. I feel in gweat form to-day, and I weally hope to bag a centuwy."

"Minus ninety-nine!" grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Man in!"

"I am weally goin' to supwise these Gweyfwiahs boundahs, you know," said Arthur Augustus, confidently.

"By taking a run?" asked Digby.

"Weally, Dig——"

"Man in! Next man in!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Get a move on, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! I forgot I was next man in!

All wight—comin', deah boys."

"Don't be all day!" bawled Herries.

"Weally, you know——"

Arthur Augustus was ready at last, and he trotted cheerfully on the field to the wicket Talbot had vacated.

He took up his position, and smiled along the pitch. He was quite prepared to knock Squiff's bowling shy-high, or higher.

But the Australian junior was on his mettle. There was a tricky break on the ball that rather puzzled Arthur Augustus. How it happened, the swell of St. Jim's never quite knew; but undoubtedly it did happen that his bat swept the empty air, and that the next second his middle stump was reclining on the ground.

"How's that?" chirruped Squiff.

And the umpire grinned.

"Out!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He stared at his wrecked wicket, and then at the grinning wicket-keeper, and shook his head like one to whom such an extraordinary problem was past understanding. Then he trotted back the way he had come.

"What price duck's eggs?" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Cheap to-day!" chuckled Skinner.

Arthur Augustus coloured a little. The batsmen at the pavilion gave him grim looks. They had not come to the Greyfriars Cricket Week as collectors of duck's eggs.

"That was wathah wemarkable, wasn't it, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, as Blake went on to the wicket.

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Monty Lowther, sarcastically. "I really thought you'd take one run."

"I fully intended to bag a centuwy——"

"Which would have taken you about a century!" remarked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"Bad luck, old fellow," said Talbot.

"It was not exactly bad luck, Talbot. It was a weally most wemarkable fluke," explained Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah in that wemark, my deah fellows," said the swell of St. Jim's mildly. "I do not want to cwiticise the umpiah, of course; but weally

such a feahful fluke ought hardly to count. Howevah, I am out, and the first innin's has gone to pot."

"It's barely possible that some of the other fellows may bag a run or two," suggested Monty Lowther, still sarcastic.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry was going strong again. When Blake's wicket went down, Figgins joined the St. Jim's junior skipper, and between them Tom Merry and George Figgins made the fur fly, so to speak. The St. Jim's fellows had been unlucky to begin with, but they were making up for it now. It was a good time before another wicket fell, and Tom Merry had forty-eight to his credit when he was at last clean bowled by Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's lookin' up," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a glance at the figures. "Ninety-six alweady—we shall beat them on the first innin's, aftah all—and that is weally wemarkable, considerin' that I have contwibuted nothin' to the score."

"Only a big round 0," said Blake.

"Wait till you see me in the second innin's to-morrow, old chap," said Arthur Augustus confidently.

"Two centuries will be due to-morrow," remarked Monty Lowther gravely. "The one that didn't come off to-day, and the one that won't come off to-morrow."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

There was a cheer from the St. Jim's fellows when the score topped the hundred, with three wickets yet to fall. The tail of the innings brought in twenty-one runs, so that St. Jim's finished one ahead of the Remove—with a total of 121.

By that time the shadows were lengthening on the green sward, and Tom Merry and Harry Wharton decided not to begin the Greyfriars second innings till the next morning. They strolled off the field together in the sunset, both of them well satisfied with the day's play, and both pretty confident with regard to the morrow. On the other ground, the Fourth Form and Rookwood match was still going on, and the two skippers stopped to watch it. Jimmy Silver and Lovell were at



There was a cheer when the St. Jim's score topped the hundred, with three wickets yet to fall.
(See opposite page)

the wickets, and Temple and Co. looked rather red and breathless in the field. The Rookwooders wore smiling faces—and Wharton was not surprised when Jimmy Silver declared the innings at an end. Rookwood were 150 for seven wickets—against the Fourth Form score of fifty. Temple, Dabney and Co. sidled away unostentatiously to hide their blushes; and Jimmy Silver joined Wharton and Tom Merry.

"We sha'n't be very busy to-morrow," Jimmy Silver remarked, with a smile. "I don't think we shall have to bat again."

"We'll give you some harder work when you play us," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Jimmy Silver nodded and smiled, and went into the pavilion. He came out soon afterwards, with a rather curious expression on his face, and looked round. Harry Wharton was still on the ground, chatting with Tom Merry and D'Arcy and some other fellows, and the Rookwooder came across to him. His serious expression drew general attention.

"Anything up?" asked Harry.

"Yes, a little," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"I think your practical joker has been at work again."

"Wha-at?"

"I—I suppose it's a joke," said Jimmy, though his face did not exactly bear out his

words. "Anyhow, somebody's been through my jacket in the dressing-room, and taken something out of the pocket. I wouldn't have mentioned it—but—but—the same thing's happened to Lovell—and to Mornington. Somebody's made a clean sweep, and there's some currency notes missing. I thought you'd better know."

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

The Unknown Hand!

"**B**AI JOVE!"

Tom Merry and Co. looked very uncomfortable. The Rookwooders who heard Jimmy Silver's words looked very uncomfortable, too. But their feelings were nothing to Wharton's.

The captain of the Remove turned quite pale.

The purloining of D'Arcy's watch might be attributed to some foolish practical joker. During the keen interest of the day's play, Wharton had almost forgotten the occurrence—though he intended to look into it as soon as the cricket was off his mind. But the picking of pockets in the pavilion could scarcely be called a practical joke. If it was not theft, it was so like theft that it was difficult to find any distinction.

"You—you're sure?" stammered Wharton at last.

"I shouldn't be likely to say such a thing without making sure first," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I—I suppose it isn't possible that some stranger could have got into the place?"

Wharton shook his head. A good many strangers had dropped in to see the play—people from the village and the country-side, as often happened. But it was not likely that a stranger could have penetrated into the pavilion without being observed. Besides, there was the affair of D'Arcy's watch overnight. That, certainly, could not have been the work of an outsider—and it was pretty clear that the same hand had been at work.

"Not likely," said Harry. "It—it's somebody on the spot. What's been lost?"

"About five pounds in all—in currency notes, and Morny's silver penknife, and one or two little things like that."

"Somebody must have sneaked into the

pavilion while all the fellows were keen on watching the game," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. "If—if—if it was only a joke——"

He paused.

"It wasn't a joke," said Bob Cherry. "That's rot!"

"I can't think it was anything worse," said Jimmy Silver, hesitating.

"Imposs., deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gently. "We cannot imagine for a moment that there is such a howwid thing as a thief at Gweyfwiahs."

"I say, you fellows——" Bunter rolled up.

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter," snapped Bob Cherry, for once irritable.

Bunter blinked at him indignantly, but he did not buzz off.

"I say, you fellows, I want to ask you something. Has anybody seen my gold watch?"

"Your watch?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes, my twenty-five guinea gold watch, you know——"

"Do you mean your tenpenny rolled-gold turnip?" growled Bob.

"I mean my splendid gold watch!" roared Bunter. "It's been pinched, and I want to know who took it."

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you mean to say you've lost your watch?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, I do. I took my waistcoat off because it was so jolly warm, you know," explained Bunter. "I hung it on the back of a seat, and forgot about it. When I went back for it I found that the watch and chain had been taken out. I want to know who did it."

"This is getting rather serious," remarked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah."

"I can't afford to lose that watch, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at the juniors. "It cost my pater thirty guineas, and then there was the chain. If you've got it, Wharton——"

"I!" roared Wharton.

"Well, somebody's got it," argued Bunter. "If you've got it, Bob Cherry——"

"Do you want to be squashed into a fat

jelly?" demanded Bob Cherry sulphurously.

"I want my watch, that's what I want. If it ain't found, I'm jolly well going to the police-station about it," howled Bunter truculently.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wefuse to believe that anything has been stolen at all. It is weally too howwid to believe anythin' of the kind. I wepeat that there is nothin' like a thief at Gweyfwiahs."

"At Greyfriars very likely," snorted Bunter. "But there's a lot of chaps here now who don't belong to Greyfriars."

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Well, look at it sensibly," said Bunter coolly. "There wasn't anything missing before this crowd came——"

"Will you shut up?"

"Of course, I don't mean to say that you bagged my watch, D'Arcy——"

"Gweat Scott!"

"You've lost a watch yourself, I know. It can't be Jimmy Silver, either, as he's been robbed, too——"

"Thanks," said Jimmy Silver sarcastically.

"Not at all, old fellow—you've been robbed, and that clears you. But it might have been Tom Merry——"

"What?"

"Or Figgins——"

"Me!" stuttered Figgins.

"Or Wynn——"

Fatty Wynn blinked at Billy Bunter.

"Or Erroll, or Raby, or Newcome, or—— yarooooooh!" Bunter's list of possible suspects was interrupted. Bob Cherry took him by the back of the neck and shook him vigorously. The fat junior gasped and spluttered in Bob's powerful grasp.

"Yurrrggh! Leggo! Beast! Help! Murder! Fire!"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Gug-gug-gug!" gurgled Bunter. "Leggo, you beast! I don't say it was—ow!—you—perhaps it was Smithy—yow!—or Tom Brown—groogh! If you shake me like that, you beast—groogh!—you'll make my specs fall off—yow-ow—and if they get broken—grooogh—you'll have to p-p-pay for them! Wooooop!"

Bump!

Bunter sat down in the grass with a heavy concussion, and roared.

"There, you fat rotter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Now shut up."

"Yaroooooh!"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed D'Arcy warmly. "Your insinuations, Buntah, are in the vevy worst of taste."

"Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter spluttered, and blinked up at the angry juniors through his big spectacles. "Look here—ow! I want my watch, and Gussy wants his watch—and Jimmy wants his currency notes. That blessed thief's got to be found. I propose that Tom Merry and Silver and all the rest shall be searched——"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"You fat rotter!" he exclaimed.

"I should certainly wefuse to be searched," exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "If you fellows think for one moment——"

"Nothing of the kind," exclaimed Harry Wharton hastily. "Don't take any notice of Bunter. The fat idiot wants kicking."

"And I'll jolly well give him what he wants!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter roared, as Bob suited the action to the word. He rolled away in the grass, picked himself up, and fled.

But his words had left great discomfort behind. To suspect that there was a thief among the cheery juniors who had come over to Greyfriars for the Cricket Week was impossible to Wharton—but to suspect that there was a thief in the school itself was equally repugnant. And Bunter had made one statement that had stuck, as it were—certainly there had been nothing missing before the cricketers arrived from St. Jim's and Rookwood. There was a cloud over the happy gathering now.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Wharton has a Brain-Wave!

"IT'S awfully rotten!"

Bob Cherry made that remark in No. 1 Study a little later. The Famous Five were gathered there without any visitors.

Both parties of visitors realised that the five were going to consult over the mysterious thefts that had taken place, and tactfully left them to themselves. It was rather a dismal gathering in No. 1 Study.

"The rottenfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head. "There is an esteemed and ridiculous thief somewhere."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I suppose it comes to that!" he said slowly. "We can't imagine that the biggest fool going would carry a silly practical joke so far. The things have been stolen."

"Looks like it!" grunted Bob Cherry, dismally.

"It's pretty clear," said Frank Nugent. "And the question is, who did it, and how are we going to bowl him out?"

"I—I thought of Bunter," muttered Harry. "But fool as he is, he isn't a thief. Besides——"

"Well?"

"Well," said Harry, colouring a little, "there's been money taken, both last night and this afternoon. I've asked Mrs. Mible in the tuck shop, and Bunter hasn't bought anything there to-day. When he has any money, you know where he goes. It hasn't gone there."

"Besides, his own watch was taken," said Nugent. "It wasn't worth much, but the thief may have supposed it was real gold."

"Not a Greyfriars fellow," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's rolled-gold watch is a standing joke in the school."

"That's true!"

Wharton shifted uncomfortably.

"If there's a thief about the place, I don't see that we're bound to conclude that he belongs to our own school," he said. "Just as likely to—to—to——"

He broke off.

"That's rather a horrid idea," said Nugent, in a low voice. "It's pretty rotten to suspect any of the St. Jim's chaps, or the Rookwooders——"

"I don't—but if there's a thief, he's as likely to belong to St. Jim's or Rookwood as to Greyfriars."

"I suppose that's so."

"Bunter's babbling about going to the police-station," said Bob. "Of course, we can't have that. We couldn't have such a disgrace——"

"The disgracefulness would be terrific——"

"No fear!" said Harry Wharton, decidedly. "That would be too beastly. We've got to nail the rotter ourselves somehow."

"But—but how——"

The captain of the Remove made a hopeless gesture.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "We've got to think of something, that's all."

"What a rotten thing to happen!" said Bob, dismally. "It's spoiling our cricket week."

Wharton set his lips.

"We'll make the rotter squirm, when we do find him," he said.

"I—I say, if it goes on, we shall have to tell Mr. Quech, or the Head," said Johnny Bull. "It can't be kept very dark. All the Lower School knows it already. I saw Skinner and his pals cackling over it. Bunter has been jawing it up and down the school. It'll get to the prefects soon."

"I'm afraid it's got to the prefects already," said Harry. "I noticed Wingate giving us a look as we came in——"

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Bob Cherry. "What a kybosh for our cricket week—to have the Head holding an inquiry for a thief!"

"It mayn't come to that yet. It—it may turn out to be some idiotic practical joke after all——"

"Not likely."

"Well, I know it isn't likely," confessed Wharton. "I—I—I wish I could think of some way——"

He knitted his brows in thought.

"My hat!" he ejaculated, suddenly.

"Thought of anything?" asked Bob, hopefully.

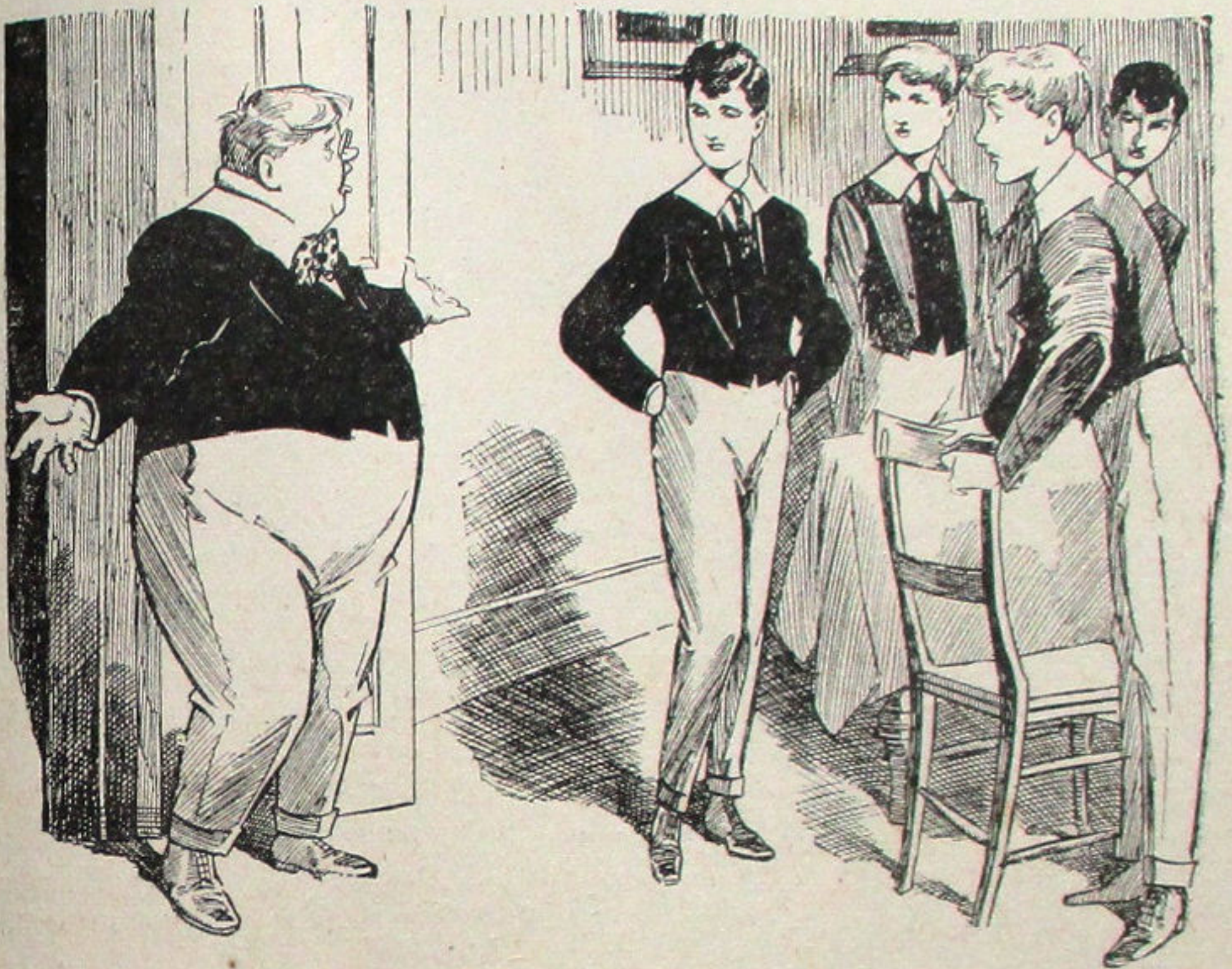
"Yes. Jack Drake."

"Drake! What about Drake?"

Harry Wharton jumped up with excitement in his face.

"Drake's at Folkestone now," he said.

"That's not so jolly far away. If he could



"I don't want any rot!" roared Bunter. "Where's my thirty-five guinea gold watch? I'm going to the police-station about these thefts"! (See page 94)

run over here. You know he's working with Ferrers Locke, and he's no end of a detective——"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bob, in great relief. "If he could come——"

"But you asked him, and he couldn't!" said Nugent doubtfully.

"That was to play cricket. This is quite a different matter. I'll ring up Mr. Locke, and tell him about the thefts, and ask him if Drake can come over to investigate," exclaimed Harry, greatly taken with his new idea. "After all, that's his business, as a detective, you know—and Drake could happen in simply as an old Greyfriars chap, without being suspected of playing the detective. He could keep his eyes open while we're playing cricket. Ten to one he would nail the rotter who's giving us all this trouble."

There was a general brightening of faces in No. 1 Study.

"Good for you, old chap," exclaimed Bob Cherry, heartily. "It's a regular brain-wave. I——"

Bob broke off, as the door of No. 1 Study was thrown open, without a knock, and Billy Bunter rolled in. The Famous Five did not give him welcoming glances. But Bunter did not heed. His manner was full of confidence.

"I say, you fellows——" he began.

"Get out!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I'll get out fast enough!" said Bunter, disdainfully. "I rather fancy you'll make me stay, in a minute. I've come here to put it to you plain. My watch has been stolen."

"Bother your rolled-gold turnip," snorted Johnny Bull.

"My splendid thirty-five guinea watch!" went on Bunter. "The one my pater gave me as a birthday present, you know, with a chain that cost fifteen guineas. Well, I'm not a millionaire, and I can't afford to lose that watch. I don't know what my pater would do if he heard I'd lost it——"

"Perhaps he would drop into the nearest second-hand shop, and buy you one for eightpence!" suggested Johnny Bull. "Then you'd have one the same value exactly——"

"I don't want any rot!" roared Bunter. "I've dropped in to tell you chaps that I'm going to the police-station about these thefts."

"You're not!"

"I am—I want my watch and D'Arcy wants his watch, and Jimmy Silver wants his money. I'm going to tell the inspector the whole story, and let him pick out the thief among the Rookwooders or St. Jim's fellows, whichever it may be——"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five gave Bunter basilisk glares. Such a proceeding on his part was, strictly speaking, within his rights; but it would have been a ghastly disaster in the Greyfriars Cricket Week. The thought of a policeman "nosing" among the Greyfriars guests looking for a thief made the chums of the Remove feel quite sick.

"Well, I mean it," said Bunter. "My gold watch——"

"Look here," said Harry Wharton quietly. "We're going to take some measures to get the things back, Bunter. We don't want the matter shouted from the house-tops till we've done all we can."

"What do I care?" demanded Bunter, truculently. "You've refused to play me in the Cricket Week. You've treated me scandalously. Making out that I can't play cricket! Now you ask me favours. When I've lost a magnificent gold watch, with check action and jewelled in every hole. Go and eat coke."

"You fat rotter——"

"That's enough!" said Bunter, waving a fat hand, "I'm done with you. I've mentioned before that I despise you! I throw you off! I discard you! I drop your acquaintance! Yah!"

Bunter made a step back to the doorway. Bob Cherry made a step forward, and seized him by his little fat nose.

"Yurrrgggghh!"

"Now just listen!" said Bob.

"Gurrrgggghh!"

"You're not going to the police-station," said Harry, savagely. "If you do, we'll scrag you."

"The scragfulness will be terrific."

"Gooooooch!" spluttered Bunter. "Led go by dose."

Bob Cherry released Bunter's nose, and the fat junior rubbed it furiously. The glare he gave the Famous Five almost cracked his spectacles.

"Oh! Ow! You awful beasts! Now I'm going——"

"You speak a word outside Greyfriars, and we'll lynch you!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, utterly exasperated. "D'Arcy's lost a real gold watch, and he's not making a song about it. Shut up."

"My lovely gold forty-guinea watch——"

"Cheese it!"

"We want this kept dark, for the sake of everybody, Bunter," said Wharton. "We'll find your dashed watch sooner or later. It's still in Greyfriars somewhere."

"My nose is hurt," roared Bunter.

"Blow your nose!" growled Bob.

"If you fellows ask me civilly, perhaps I could let the matter stand over a time," said Bunter. "You'll have to ask me civilly, though."

Wharton made an effort.

"Well, I do ask you, Bunter," he said.

"If you put it like that, old fellow, I'll do my best for you," said Bunter. "I'll keep it quiet for a day or two, anyhow. I shall expect to be treated decently if I grant you favours like this. Did I mention to you that I was expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning? Could you fellows let me have five bob to-day, and take the postal-order when it comes?"

The Famous Five exchanged glances, glances that were silent but eloquent. Then, without a word, each of the juniors produced a shilling, and the five shillings were dropped into Bunter's fat palm.

Quite an amiable smile appeared on the face of the Owl of the Remove.

"Thanks, old chaps," he said, "I'll do the best I can for you." He turned to the door, but in the doorway he looked back. "I say, you fellows, it's barely possible that the postal-order mayn't come by the first post in the morning. Could you wait till the afternoon in that case?"

"You fat spoofer!" roared Johnny Bull. "Do you think we believe that you're getting a postal-order at all?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, very well, Bull, I'll hand back the five bob——"

"Go and eat coke!"

"And I'll go to the police-station about my watch——"

"Where's my bat?" said Johnny Bull, looking round.

Bunter backed away hurriedly.

"Look here, you fellows, will to-morrow afternoon do if my postal-order doesn't come in the morning? I want that settled. I suppose you don't think I'm the kind of chap to borrow money without intending to square?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I want this put on a business footing," said Bunter, blinking at them very seriously. "If you don't think I'm going to square, you're practically making me a gift of this five bob. I couldn't accept that! I'm not the sort of fellow to accept money from anybody, I hope. Will it be all right if I settle to-morrow afternoon, Wharton?"

"Oh! Yes," gasped Harry.

"Right-o, then."

Bunter rolled out, that important point being settled. It was really rather difficult to know whether Billy Bunter actually believed in the existence of his celebrated postal order, which was always expected but never arrived. But certainly he liked it to be taken seriously by other fellows.

Johnny Bull breathed hard when the Owl of the Remove was gone.

"I shall brain him some day!" he said, with conviction. "I know I shall."

"The fat brute's got us under his thumb," said Bob Cherry. "Cut off and telephone to

Drake, Harry. I only hope that he will be able to jerk us out of this dashed pickle."

Harry Wharton nodded, and left the study. All the hopes of the chums of the Remove now were centred in Jack Drake, once of the Greyfriars Remove, and now the assistant of the famous Baker Street detective, Ferrers Locke.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Jack Drake to the Rescue!

WINGATE of the Sixth met Wharton in the corridor near the prefects' room. The Greyfriars captain was looking very serious.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton," he said. "Step in here."

Wharton followed the captain of the school into the prefects' room, with a sinking feeling at his heart. He could guess what Wingate wanted to speak about.

There was no one else in the prefects' room just then, and Wingate closed the door. He fixed his eyes on the junior.

"I've heard some chatter about thefts taking place, since your visitors got here, Wharton," he said. "Is there anything in it?"

"I'm afraid so," said Harry reluctantly.

"Tell me what's happened, then."

Wharton explained.

The Sixth-former knitted his brows as he listened.

"This is a pretty serious matter," he said. "It will have to be looked into at once, Wharton. Perhaps you'd better come with me to the Head."

"It's a rotten business, Wingate," said the junior. "In the circumstances, we—we want to keep it as quiet as possible——"

"It can hardly be kept quiet, if it is really a case of theft," said the prefect; "and if it's a silly practical joke, the practical joker wants the hiding of his life."

"I know that! But if there's an official inquiry, it will be awfully uncomfortable for everybody concerned, and it will simply ruin our Cricket Week," said Harry. "I—I was going to ask you to let me use the 'phone here, to get Jack Drake to come——"

"Drake?" Wingate smiled. "The kid

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



THE MIDNIGHT FEAST

By DICK PENFOLD

A's for the ANTICS of chaps in our Form
When drawing up plans for a feast in the
dorm.

B is for BUNTER, who's soon wide awake
And stuffing himself with a stunning plum-
cake!

C is for CANDLES which light up the scene
As soon as the skipper has cried "All
serene!"

D's for the DOUGHNUTS, a shocking old
sham,

You dig like a navvy, but fail to find jam!

E's for the ENERGY feasters display
In stowing all manner of good things away.

F is for FRIARDALE, where there's a shop
At which we buy hampers and grand ginger-
pop!

G's for the GRUMBLING of Bolsover major,
Who swallows meat patties as if for a wager!

H is the HIDING which comes in the
morning

When the scout on the landing has failed to
give warning!

I is for INKY: with smile beatific
He says that bananas are simply terrific!

J's for JAM-TARTS, so delicious to eat,
But the jam will persist in adorning the
sheet.

K's for the KNIVES that are smuggled
from Hall:

They're excellent, save that they won't cut
at all!

L is for LODER, who creeps up the stairs
In order to catch us, he hopes, unawares.

M's for the MARMALADE, tempting and
sweet,

Which somehow or other gets mixed with
the meat.

N's for the NUTS which we constantly crack,
Then push the cold shells down Mauleverer's
back.

O's for the ORANGES, juicy and nice;
Such excellent dainties go down in a trice.

P's for the POP which is spilt on the floor,
And flows in a swift-rushing stream to the
door.

Q is for QUALMS which you feel the next day;
Even physic won't take the anguish away.

R's for the ROPE which we always shin
down

When taking a midnight excursion to town.

S is the SNEAK who puts Quelch on our
track

In order to try and get Wharton the sack.

T is for TUCK, packed in glorious hampers,
For which each Removite delightedly
scampers.

U's the UNSPEAKABLE feeling of loathing
When treacle flows freely all over your
clothing.

V's for the VICTIM, who murmurs in pain:
"I'm dashed if I'll ever touch doughnuts
again!"

W's for WHARTON, who's quite a good
chap:

He likes lemonade, and is fond of a scrap.

X is 'XCITEMENT, of which there's no lack,
Especially when there's a "beak" on the
track!

Y's for the YELLS of the fellows who sneak,
They find that they cannot sit down for a
week!

Z's for the ZEBRA, which Bunter re-
sembles;

At his gay striped pyjamas the timid soul
trembles.

who used to be in the Remove here, and has become a detective?"

"Yes. I've got the Head's leave to have him here as a guest," said Harry. "He's Ferrers Locke's assistant, and a jolly clever chap. I think he could look into the matter, and settle it, without a lot of scandal, if he was given a chance."

Wingate reflected a moment or two.

"Well, it's not a bad idea," he said. "Least said soonest mended, certainly. Telephone by all means, and if Drake can come, that may settle the matter."

And with a nod, the captain of Greyfriars left the prefects' room; and Wharton, greatly relieved, went to the telephone.

He called up double-three double-three Folkestone as Drake had directed him, and was put through quickly enough. A deep voice came along the wires. Wharton remembered the voice of Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, who had visited Greyfriars more than once, being a relative of Dr. Locke, the headmaster.

"Is that you, Mr. Locke?" asked Harry.

"Yes. What is wanted?"

"Harry Wharton speaking, from Greyfriars School. Perhaps you remember me, Mr. Locke?"

"Perfectly."

"I wanted to speak to Drake—your assistant, you know. But—I'd better ask you—could Drake come here?"

"Drake has told me about your cricket week," came the detective's reply, "but——"

"It's not cricket I'm thinking of now, sir. That's going on all right. There have been several thefts in the school since the Rookwood and St. Jim's chaps arrived——"

"Ah!"

"Some of the visitors have been robbed, as well as a Greyfriars fellow. It's making us all feel rotten, of course, and we haven't the faintest idea who's at the bottom of it. I thought that perhaps Drake could come along—as a detective—and investigate——"

"Ah! I understand."

"If he can't help us, there will be an inquiry by the Head, and you can guess how rotten that will be, in the circumstances, Mr. Locke."

"Doubtless. Hold on a few moments."

"Yes, sir."

Wharton held the line, and there was silence for nearly a minute. Then a boyish voice he knew well came through.

"Hallo! Are you there, Wharton?"

"Yes, rather, Drake."

"You want me to come along—as a detective?"

"That's it! I suppose Mr. Locke has told you——"

"Yes. As it's a professional matter"—Drake chuckled a little—"I am coming! I'm at work here watching the steamers for a man who's wanted—but Mr. Locke is going to put another chap on the job so that I can come along to Greyfriars and help you out."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Will it be all right if I happen in some time to-morrow?" asked Jack Drake.

"Yes, rather! The sooner the better, of course."

"Then expect me to-morrow."

"Good! About the fees!" said Harry.

"The what?"

"Fees! I suppose you charge fees, or Mr. Locke does, now that you're a private detective?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Drake's laugh rang pleasantly along the wires. "My dear chap, cut that out. I'm going to drop in as your guest for a few days, and help you out—if I can—for the sake of old times. If you say a word about fees I shall jolly well punch your nose."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Then I won't say a word," he answered.

"By the way, we're playing cricket to-morrow, of course; but I'll see that something is sent to the station to meet you, if you come by train——"

"Don't!" said Drake. "Most likely I shall bike over; anyhow, the less fuss the better. Go ahead with the cricket, and if you're busy when I come, I'll hang around and watch the game—and perhaps watch other things, too. Now I must cut off. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

Harry Wharton left the prefects' room feeling very satisfied in his mind. That Jack Drake was quite capable of dealing with the mystery that was casting a shadow over the

Greyfriars Cricket Week, he felt assured. And Drake was coming on the morrow. It was with a lighter heart that the captain of the Remove rejoined his chums in No. 1 Study.

They looked at him eagerly as he entered.

"All serene!" said Harry. "Drake will be here to-morrow."

"Hurrah!"

"No need to mention, of course, that he's here as a detective," said Harry. "I've told Wingate, that's all. Drake will drop in just as an old Greyfriars chap—and I haven't the slightest doubt that he will bowl out the rotter who's bothering us. And if it turns out to be a Greyfriars fellow, we'll jolly well make an example of him."

"Yes, rather."

And the council in No. 1 Study broke up, much relieved in their minds. There was a merry party that evening in the junior common-room, with Monty Lowther at the piano, and Johnny Bull with his concertina, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy obliged with a tenor solo—which, if not exactly of great value as a solo, at least added considerably to the gaiety of the Cricket Week.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

The Second Innings!

"PLAY!"

Wednesday dawned bright and sunny, and in the glorious sunshine, with a day's cricket before them, Harry Wharton and Co. succeeded in dismissing from their minds the troublesome mystery which had haunted them. Stumps were pitched fairly early for the resumption of the St. Jim's and Remove match; both sides realised that there was a long fight ahead. The Rookwooders and the Fourth did not begin so early. Jimmy Silver and Co. had no expectation of having to bat again; and Temple's team were not likely to use up a great part of the day with their second innings. Cecil Reginald Temple, indeed, looked like anything but a conquering hero when he came on the field to face the Rookwood bowling, and the fall of the Fourth-Form wickets was more rapid than gratifying.

But Harry Wharton and Co. had no eyes

for the neighbouring match. They were hard at work with the Saints.

Harry Wharton opened the Greyfriars second innings with Bob Cherry as a partner. Fatty Wynn went on to bowl for St. Jim's David Llewellyn Wynn, however, did not succeed in touching Wharton's wicket, and when the field crossed over, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had something to say to Tom Merry.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy, just a minute."

"Cut it short, Gussy."

"They are standin' up to the bowlin' wathah well, Tom Mewwy."

"They are," assented Tom.

"I suggested yestahday that you should twy me as a bowlah——"

"Lucky I didn't, wasn't it?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Hop into your place, old chap! Don't keep the field waiting!"

"Yaas; but I weally think you had bettah put me on for an ovah," said Arthur Augustus seriously. "A wicket or two now would encouage the fellows no end!"

Tom Merry seemed to have a sudden attack of deafness, for he walked away without replying.

Arthur Augustus shook his head seriously as he took his place. His duck's egg of the previous day had not discouraged him. He was prepared to make a century when his innings came along, and, in the meantime, he was ready to perform hat-tricks galore. But Tom Merry pinned his faith to his own selected bowlers, and Gussy was left to blush unseen, as it were.

It was some time before the bowlers had any luck, but it came at last when Bob Cherry drove the ball into the long field with a mighty drive. A graceful figure was running, with an eyeglass that glimmered in the sun, and all eyes were upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the batsmen crossed and re-crossed. The swell of St. Jim's was putting on a turn of speed that surprised the fellows who had seen him lounging elegantly about the quad., and suddenly he stopped and backed, his eyes skyward, his hand ready; and the ball fairly floated down into his palm.

There was a roar.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Good old Gussy!" roared Blake.

"Bravo, Gustavus!"

"Well caught, sir!"

Arthur Augustus smiled sweetly.

"I wathah think that was all wight!" he remarked.

Bob Cherry did not seem to think so as he carried out his bat. The hardest hitter of the Remove was out for fourteen runs.

"Call that cricket?" Billy Bunter inquired, as Bob came up to the pavilion.

Bob's reply was not in words. He jammed the business end of his bat gently on Bunter's well-filled waistcoat, and the fat junior sat down and did not repeat his impertinent inquiry.

"Hard luck, old bean!" said Vernon-Smith, as he passed Bob, going in. "Give Bunter a kick for me!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to safer quarters.

Vernon-Smith's luck was not good that morning. The Greyfriars crowd had expected great things of the Bounder, but the glorious uncertainty of the great game of cricket was exemplified once more. Smithy had taken four when he was caught and bowled by Talbot of the Shell, and his face was quite glum as he travelled back to the pavilion, his scarcely used willow under his arm. If Bunter had been there to make unpleasant remarks, the bat would certainly have been used very vigorously; but, fortunately for himself, the Owl of the Remove had gone.

Tom Brown was next man in, and he kept the innings open with Wharton. It was the captain of the Remove who fell next to a ball from Fatty Wynn. After that, as with the Raven's unhappy master, unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster.

Squiff and Hazeldene and Mark Linley were dismissed for a few runs each, and faces in the Greyfriars crowd grew longer and longer, and the St. Jim's fellows smiled to one another. Peter Todd had better luck, and

for a time kept up the running with Johnny Bull at the other end. Johnny Bull put in some useful stone-walling, while Peter gave the Saints a considerable amount of exercise in leather-hunting. But Peter Todd was caught out at last by Tom Merry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took his place.

"Buck up, Inky, old chap!" Wharton whispered, as the Nabob of Bhanipur fastened his pads. "Things don't look very rosy! Let her rip!"

Inky nodded.

"The ripfulness shall be terrific, my esteemed chum, if I can manage it!" he replied.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh could not manage it, however, and he was dismissed by a catch by Figgins of St. Jim's in a very short time. By the time Frank Nugent went in as last man the Remove score stood at ninety. Harry Wharton kept up a cheerful face, but he had no expectation of topping the hundred now. Johnny Bull was still industriously stone-walling, and with a brilliant



All eyes were upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He put on a turn of speed that surprised the fellows, and suddenly he stopped and backed, his eyes skyward, his hands ready; and the ball fairly floated down into his palm. There was a roar.

"Good old Gussy!" (See opposite page)

bat like Smithy or Wharton himself at the other end the innings might yet have been palled out of the fire. But Frank Nugent, though a useful bat, was not likely to stand up for long against bowling that had downed the mighty men of the Remove.

Wharton's expectations were verified. Nugent lived through two overs, and added four to the score. Then a fast ball from Fatty Wynn knocked out his leg stump, and the innings was over, Johnny Ball "not out."

"Ninety-four!" said Bob Cherry. "Well, that's all right if the Saints only bag ninety-two."

"If!" murmured Hazeldene. "They bagged a hundred and twenty-one in their first innings!"

"We've got to see that they don't bag more than that," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "It depends on the bowling now."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, go away, Bunter!"

"I'm going to make you an offer," said Billy Bunter. "Tom Merry's rather a sportsman; you know that! Well, tell him candidly that you've made a mistake in the selection of your team, Wharton!"

"What?"

"Own up, like a man," said Bunter. "Ask him to let you off. He's a sportsman; he'll agree. Put me in. You've said yourself that the game depends on the bowling now. With me to bowl——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not joking!" roared Bunter. "I mean it! It's the only way of saving the match! With my splendid bowling——"

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bob Cherry, chuckling. "We wanted a little comic relief at this tragic moment! Thanks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I say, you fellows——"

"Bow-wow!"

Billy Bunter's generous offer was not accepted. As there was still plenty of time before lunch, the St. Jim's crowd started their innings, and when the cricketers knocked off for lunch they stood at twenty for one wicket. And at lunch the spirits of Tom Merry and Co. were high and exuberant, while the Removites were reduced to hoping

against hope. Perhaps they found some consolation, however, in the knowledge that they had done much better than Temple, Dabney and Co. For the Fourth Form match was finished at lunch, and Rookwood were the winners by an innings and fifteen runs. Cecil Reginald Temple did not appear at lunch with the cricketers. Apparently he was hiding his diminished head in seclusion.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

Just a Win!

"MARJORIE!"

"And Clara—and Barbara——"

Cricket was about to recommence on Little Side, when the girls arrived from Cliff House. Wednesday afternoon was a half-holiday at Cliff House School, and Hazel had cycled over immediately after lunch to fetch his sister Marjorie and her friends.

The Removites gave them a warm greeting. Marjorie Hazeldene looked very bright and cheery, evidently pleased by the fact that her brother was in the Remove eleven. Miss Clara, and Barbara Redfern, and Mabel were in the best of spirits, and very keen on the cricket; or, at least, they tactfully seemed so. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was glad that it was the St. Jim's innings now. As he was one of the waiting batsmen he had an opportunity of basking in the smiles of Marjorie and Co., which suited him down to the ground. Arthur Augustus always came out into the fullest bloom, so to speak, in the presence of members of the gentle sex.

Tom Merry and Kerr went to the wickets, and Harry Wharton and Co. into the field; but Gussy, keen as he was on the match, was not watching Tom Merry's exploits with the willow. He stood in a graceful attitude beside Marjorie's chair; and Billy Bunter, who was also a squire of dames in his own opinion, regarded him with glances of strong disfavour. Billy Bunter intended to take Marjorie under his wing, but Marjorie Hazeldene did not even seem to see the fat junior. And she was listening with quite a sweet smile to the observations of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

For some reason—quite a mystery to William George Bunter—Arthur Augustus

seemed more popular with the ladies than the Owl of the Remove.

"Wippin' game," Arthur Augustus remarked, in reply to a question from Marjorie. "Gweyfwiahs are weally puttin' up a gweat fight. They are givin' us quite a tussle, in fact."

"But the conclusion is a foregone one, I suppose?" remarked Miss Clara Trevlyn, who was by way of being slightly sarcastic at times. Sarcasm, however, was not likely to be perceived by Arthur Augustus.

"Yaas, wathah!" he answered innocently. "They wan us wathah close in the first innin's, and I told Tom Mewwy plainly that we should have to pull up our socks, you know. But it's all sewene now."

"What's the score?" asked Marjorie.

"We're one down for twenty in the second innings——"

"Two down!" said Monty Lowther. "Kerr's out."

Arthur Augustus glanced round. In his interest in the ladies he had actually omitted to notice that a St. Jim's wicket had fallen!

"Yaas, two down—for twenty——"

"Twenty-six!" said Blake.

"Yaas, twenty-six," said Arthur Augustus. "That's how it stands at pwesent, Miss Marjowie. I do not think we shall wequiah all our wickets."

"The bowling seems rather good," said Miss Clara, "and that was a good catch at cover point."

"Yaas, Gweyfwiahs are not bad in the field," assented Arthur Augustus. "They are all pwetty good, in fact, exceptin' one chap who muffed a catch in the othah innin's. He seemed wathah a duffah."

"Which one was that?" asked Barbara.

"I do not know his name—that chap standin' at mid-off," said Arthur Augustus.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter.

Miss Clara suppressed a chuckle, and Barbara and Mabel smiled. Marjorie Hazeldene looked straight before her, and Arthur Augustus looked rather puzzled.

"I twust I have not put my foot in it in any way," he remarked after a pause. "Pway do not think I am wunnin' down the wival team, deab gals. I wepeat that they are all wippin' cwicketahs exceptin' that chap——"

"That's Marjorie's brother!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus crimsoned.

There was no doubt that he had put his noble foot in it!

"I weally beg your pardon, Miss Hazeldene," he stammered. "Of course, when I wemarked that he was wathah a duffah, I did not weally mean that he was wathah a duffah, you know, I—I weally meant——"

"Well, he is a duffer," said Billy Bunter. "Wharton ought to have put me in instead of Hazeldene. I told him so."

"Weally, Buntah——"

"Bravo, Hazel!" came a roar from the Greyfriars crowd.

The ball from Manners' bat had fairly settled into the ready palm of Hazeldene of the Remove. It was a good catch, and rather unexpected on the part of Hazel, who really was not quite up to the form of the rest of the team. But he was doing his very best now, and he was doing well. Marjorie's face lighted up, and she clapped her hands, and Arthur Augustus, glad to atone for his error by generous applause to a successful rival, clapped his aristocratic palms with a series of reports like pistol-shots.

"Jollay good!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus heartily. "Poor old Mannahs—out for two! That's vevy hard luck."

"Well caught!" exclaimed Miss Clara.

"Bravo!"

Hazel looked round with a flushed and pleased face. Manners was going out, looking a little glum.

"Looks as if you may want your wickets after all," Miss Clara remarked to Arthur Augustus, with a mischievous smile.

"Yaas, it is quite possible," said Arthur Augustus amiably. "Cwicket is a most uncertain game."

"There was only one duck's egg yesterday!" remarked Billy Bunter, perhaps with the idea of being very agreeable to the visitor. Arthur Augustus coloured and coughed.

"Who bagged it?" asked Miss Clara.

"D'Arcy."

"Oh!"

"It was a vevy wemarkable fluke," said

Arthur Augustus. "That is the one drawback of cwicket—the wemarkable flukes that sometimes occur in the most unexpected way——"

"Especially when you're at the wicket, old top," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"They're going strong," Billy Bunter remarked. "I fancy Wharton will be sorry yet that he left out his best bowler."

Tom Merry and Co. were certainly making the "fur" fly. They wanted ninety-four to win, ninety-three to tie, on their second innings, and the Greyfriars fellows looked grave when the board showed fifty for five wickets. It was still five wickets when the score was at sixty. Then Figgins went down, and Talbot of the Shell added only ten when he was cleverly caught by Harry Wharton.

"Seventy for seven wickets!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, thoughtfully. "I twust I shall make the score look a little bwightah."

"Man in!"

"Weady, deah boy."

"Now look out for a big round nought!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not deign to hear that remark. He walked out gracefully to the vacant wicket. Tom Merry was still batting; he seemed impregnable to the home bowling. Arthur Augustus gave him a reassuring smile as he passed him.

"Wely on me, old top," he remarked.

"Don't run me out," said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"The field's waiting, old man: get along."

"I was goin' to suggest, Tom Mewwy, that you should put in some solid stone-wallin'——"

"Eh?"

"And leave the wun-gettin' to me, deah boy. Do you think that is wathah a good ideah?" asked Arthur Augustus, innocently.

The St. Jim's junior skipper gave his hopeful follower a look. But Arthur Augustus, like Brutus of old, had paused for a reply.

"What do you think, old bean?" he inquired.

"I think you'd better get along, before I brain you with this bat," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, you know——"

Tom made a motion with the bat; and the

swell of St. Jim's walked on to his wicket. Vernon-Smith took the bowling, and Arthur Augustus found all his work cut out for him to defend his sticks. The Bounder gave him plenty to do, and Gussy, somewhat to his astonishment, found himself reduced to the stone-walling he had recommended to Tom Merry. It was a relief to the rest of the Saints when he lived through the over, and the bowling came to Tom Merry again.

But Tom's long spell of luck was broken, with the next ball from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His middle stump went, and there was a delighted crow from the Greyfriars crowd.

"How's that?"

"Out!" chuckled Miss Clara, clapping her hands. "Now then; seventy for eight wickets. We shall do it yet."

Miss Clara spoke quite as if she were a Greyfriars fellow herself.

"Wouldn't be much doubt about the result, if I were on the bowling crease," remarked Billy Bunter. "I offered, too."

Miss Clara looked at him.

"Did Wharton decline your services?" she asked, with an air of astonishment.

"Yes, he did! You'd hardly believe it, would you?" said Bunter, greatly comforted by finding a sympathiser at last. "But he did!"

"What could possibly have been his reason?" asked Clara with almost owl-like gravity.

Bunter sniffed.

"Sheer jealousy," he explained.

Miss Clara shook her head.

"I think there was another reason," she remarked.

"What's that?"

"Perhaps Wharton didn't want to make St. Jim's a present of the match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at Miss Clara through his big spectacles. He realised now that that lively young lady had been pulling his fat leg.

"Oh, really, Miss Clara——"

"Well caught, Hazel!" roared the Greyfriars crowd.

Marjorie clasped her hands delightedly. Hazel had caught out Monty Lowther, and



Billy Bunter regarded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with glances of strong disfavour. For some reason or other, Arthur Augustus seemed more popular with the ladies than the Owl of the Remove did!
(See page 100)

St. Jim's were nine down for seventy-eight. There were bright smiles in the Greyfriars crowd now. Things were looking up for the Remove. Jimmy Silver and Co., mingled with the Greyfriars crowd now that their own game was over, cheered as loudly as any.

"Last man in!"

Fatty Wynn joined Arthur Augustus at the wickets. D'Arcy was at the pavilion end, and the fat Fourth Former stopped to speak to him.

"Where's your giddy century?" he asked.

"Weally, Wynn——"

"You've bagged four so far——"

"Pway twy to keep the innings open, deah boy, and I will bag the othah ninety-six."

Fatty Wynn grinned.

"We only want sixteen to win," he said. "We've had hard luck; but if you don't play the goat, we'll pull through. None of your blessed swank now."

"Weally, you ass——"

"Man in!" roared Tom Merry.

David Llewellyn Wynn trotted on to his place. Wynn was a wonderful bowler, but not conspicuous as a batsman; he contented himself chiefly with stopping the balls that were sent to him. The bowling came to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy again, and feeling that the result of the match depended upon his efforts, the swell of St. Jim's let the leather have it, so to speak. He hit the ball for four, and for four again, and there was a buzz among his comrades when the board

announced eighty-six. Then came a two, and another two, and a single, and Fatty Wynn added another single for the last ball of the over.

"Ninety-two!" murmured Tom Merry to his comrades. "We'll do it yet. Only one wanted to tie—two to win."

"Ninety-two!" murmured Harry Wharton to his comrades. "We'll do it yet! They still want one to tie—two to win."

Fatty Wynn had the bowling now, and the eyes of all Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood watched him as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went on to bowl. The Nabob of Bhanipur put all he knew into it; but Fatty Wynn stopped ball after ball, with phlegmatic calm. The over was a blank, and there were tense looks on the faces of the Greyfriars field as they crossed over. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had the bowling again, and all eyes were fixed upon the graceful figure of the swell of St. Jim's.

The ball came down from Squiff, and there was a clack as the bat met it and sent it on its journey. The batsmen ran—but a sturdy figure leaped fairly into the air in the field—a palm closed on the ball hot from the bat, and there was an almost frenzied roar from all Greyfriars.

"Well caught, Bob Cherry!"

"Oh, well caught, sir!"

Bob Cherry gripped the ball, grinning with satisfaction. It went up straight as a die from his hand, to be caught again.

"How's that, umpire?" roared the crowd.

"Out!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had quite a singular expression on his face as he walked home. Miss Clara met him with a sweet smile.

"You did require all your wickets, after all," she remarked.

"Oh! Ah! Yaas!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Yaas, wathah."

"Close thing, old chap," said Tom Merry, as Harry Wharton came out of the field, "but a miss is as good as a mile, and you've beaten us by one run. Jolly good game, anyhow."

"Jolly close thing!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff. "Wharton ought to have played

me. I don't believe in running these risks with matches."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked round in search of Marjorie, intending to take that charming young lady in to tea, and bestow the priceless boon of his company and conversation upon her there. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was already walking off between Miss Marjorie and Miss Clara, and Bunter was left once more. He headed for Barbara—only to see Babs snatched up under his eyes, as it were, by Jimmy Silver of Rookwood—and when he blinked round for Mabel, Mabel was already captured by Tom Merry. And Billy Bunter gave a discontented grunt, and rolled away all on his lonely own, but he indemnified himself at the festive board. Whosoever had distinguished himself on the cricket ground, there was no doubt that, at tea, William George Bunter was an easy first.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

The Detective on the Case!

"ROOM for a little one?"

A pleasant voice asked that question at the doorway of No. 1 Study. It was some time after tea, and the Cliff House guests had gone home, escorted by Hazel and Bob Cherry, Jimmy Silver and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Harry Wharton and Co., with the exception of Bob, were in the study, and Tom Merry was there, and all of them were looking worried. Their worried faces, in fact, made quite a contrast to the cheery countenance that looked in at the doorway.

"Drake!" exclaimed Nugent.

Wharton jumped up.

"Thank goodness, you've come, Drake!" he exclaimed.

He shook hands heartily with the boy detective. Tom Merry regarded him rather curiously.

"You met this chap when you were here before, Merry, I think?" said Harry. "Jack Drake, you know; he was in the Remove, then."

"I remember," said Tom, shaking hands with Drake. "Glad to see you again. From what Wharton tells me, you've come along to help us out of a rotten sort of scrape."

Drake nodded.

He looked very fit and well, and cheerful. It was evident that Ferrers Locke's assistant was very glad to find himself among his old schoolfellows once more.

"I wish I could have turned up for the cricket," he said. "I suppose the first match is over now. How did it go?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Greyfriars beat us by a run," he said. "We're going to take it out of the Fourth, to get even."

"Well, I'm jolly glad the old school came out ahead," said Jack Drake. "If I hang on long enough, Wharton, I hope I shall see you wallop Rookwood."

"Not in your lifetime," said a cheery voice at the door, and Jimmy Silver came in with Bob Cherry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, is that Drake?" exclaimed Bob. "You chaps haven't met him, I think—terrific famous character——"

"Draw it mild," said Drake, smiling.

"No end of a big gun in detective circles," said Bob. "Assistant to Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, and the terror of evil-doers."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, with great interest. "I am vewy pleased to meet you, Dwake. It must be wippin' to be a weal detective. I have often thought that I had wathah a gift that way myself."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Weally, Silvah——"

"Gussy's good at detecting the latest thing in neckties, at all events," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Shut the door, Bob," said Wharton. "Now we're all here, let's get to business. Drake has arrived in the nick of time, really."

"Anything fresh happened since you telephoned?" asked Drake, taking the chair Nugent pulled out for him.

"Yes—and it's rottener than ever," said Harry. "Our cricket week is only half through, and it looks like being mucked up completely by the rotter that's bagging people's things. Miss Hazeldene—you remember Marjorie?"

"Yes, rather."

"Well, she was here to see the finish of the match," said Harry. "At tea she missed her bag—the what-d'ye-call-it she carries on her wrist, you know——"

"Dorothy bag?" said Drake.

"Yes. She had hung it on her chair at the pavilion while she was watching the game, but it wasn't there when it was looked for. It had been——been——"

"Pinched!" said Bob Cherry.

"Anything valuable in it?" asked Jack Drake.

"Only a few shillings, and a handkerchief, Marjorie says," answered Wharton. "But the bag itself is rather valuable, I believe. Anyhow, it's been collared."

Bob Cherry clenched a pair of formidable fists.

"I want to get within hitting distance of the skunk that pinched it!" he said sulphurously. "I want to alter his features for him. You've got to find him out for us, Drake."

"I'll try," said Drake.

"Pway wely on me to assist you, Dwake, if I can do anythin' to help!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly, old chap," said Drake, with a smile.

"All you weally wequiab, I think, is a clue," said Arthur Augustus, brilliantly. "Havin' obtained a clue, you follow it up, you know, and lay your fingah on the wascal. What?"

"Just that," agreed Drake. "Easy as falling off a form—if you obtain the clue, and if you follow it up successfully."

"Yaas, wathah."

Drake glanced round the study.

"Is it generally known that I've come here to look for the pincher?" he asked.

"No—only the chaps here know, as well as Blake and Talbot and Lowther and Manners," said Wharton. "They've been warned to keep mum."

"Good! Of course, it gives a chap a better chance if the thief doesn't know there's a detective at his elbow."

"I thought of that. Most of the fellows suppose that you've just dropped in for the cricket week, as an old Greyfriars fellow."

"That's good."

"Yaas, wathah! You can't be too careful, you know," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a sage nod of his noble head. "I twust all you youngstahs will be vewy careful to keep it dark."

"Fathead!" remarked Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Dry up a bit, Gussy, and let's get to business," suggested Tom.

"Bai Jove!"

"Perhaps, first of all, you'd better give me an outline of what's happened so far," said Drake. "You give it, Wharton, and the other chaps chip in if you leave anything out."

"Right-o!"

Harry Wharton proceeded to give the boy detective a succinct account of the mysterious happenings during the Greyfriars Cricket Week. Jack Drake listened with careful attention, making a note every now and then in his pocket-book and occasionally putting in a question. His quiet, business-like way made a good impression on the juniors.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy watched him with keen interest, his eyeglass being glued, as it were, to the calm, quiet face of Ferrers Locke's boy assistant. Evidently Gussy was deeply interested in seeing a "real live detective" at work.

When the captain of the Remove had finished his narrative, with the help of occasional details from the other fellows present, all eyes were fixed inquiringly upon Jack Drake.

Drake's face was very thoughtful.

Perhaps some of the juniors hoped to hear him offer an elucidation of the mystery on the spot. If so, they were disappointed. Drake read over the notes he had written, and his brow wrinkled in thought. He had a list of the missing articles, and the circumstances in which they had disappeared; but whether he was in possession of a clue to the thief or not, Harry Wharton and Co. could not guess.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, at last, "how does it strike you, Drake? Any idea who the rotter is?"

"Can you tell us the colour of his eyebrows, from the size of the gold watch he pinched?" asked Jimmy Silver, humorously.

"I don't think my gifts are quite so extensive as that," he answered. "I'm afraid I can say no more than that I'll take the matter in hand, and keep my eyes wide open, and nail the rotter if it's possible. And I haven't very much doubt that it's possible."

"That's all we can expect, of course," said Wharton. "I've a lot of confidence in you, Drake; but if you don't succeed, it can't be helped. We shall know you've done all you can for us."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Is it what you'd call a difficult case?" asked Tom Merry.

The boy detective shook his head.

"I think not—very," he answered. "The big point is that the thief is still on the spot, and only waiting to be picked out."

"Among two hundred and fifty fellows," said Bob Cherry, ruefully.

"But most of the two hundred and fifty are above suspicion," remarked Nugent. "That lets out a lot."

"Bai Jove! I should wegard the whole lot as above suspicion," said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head.

"Well, the rotter must be here, so there's at least one chap who isn't above suspicion," said Drake.

"Yaas, that's so, bai Jove!"

The study door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in.

"I say, you fellows, if you're having supper here, I don't mind joining you. Hallo, is that you, Drake?"

"Little me," said Drake, eyeing the fat junior rather curiously.

"Jolly glad to see you, old chap," said Bunter effusively. "I dare say you remember that you owed me ten bob when you left Greyfriars, Drake."

"Not quite."

"Good opportunity to square, now that you've dropped in," said Bunter.

"I remember that you owed me a good many bobs, you fat bounder," answered Drake. "Good opportunity for you to square."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll that porpoise out!" growled Johnny Bull.



"Drake!" exclaimed Nugent. Wharton jumped up. "Thank goodness you've come, Drake!" he exclaimed. (See page 104)

"If you don't want me to supper, Bull, I shall go at once, of course," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "In fact, I'm thinking of taking a walk down to the village before lock-up. On consideration, I really think I ought to let the police know about the loss of my splendid gold watch——"

"You can stay to supper, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, in a suppressed sort of voice.

"Certainly, old chap, as you're so pressing," said Bunter, cordially.

And he stayed.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Trouble!

JACK DRAKE'S arrival was a great relief to Harry Wharton and Co. They felt it so, the next day, when they were able to devote themselves to the great business of cricket, leaving the mystery to the thefts in the capable hands of Ferrers Locke's assistant.

That mystery was growing a more and

more irritating one. After what had happened, nobody felt that his personal possessions were quite safe, and the need of exercising care over watches and purses and so forth was extremely irritating in itself. And the total absence of any clue to the thief was the cause of suspicion and distrust on all sides.

Some of the Rookwooders had been heard to remark that they had come to Greyfriars to play cricket, not to have their currency notes "pinched"; and, in return, some of the Greyfriars fellows had observed that "pinching" had been quite unheard of there before the Rookwooders arrived. A state of tension was growing up, and it seemed probable that it would increase, and that the cricket week might not end without actual fisticuffs in some cases. Most of the cricketers were very keen to keep the peace, and to pour oil on the troubled waters; but there were fellows who were not at all keen on

anything of the kind, and they made mischief. Skinner and Co. seemed to find a peculiar pleasure in adding to the trouble, and a rumour that D'Arcy's gold watch had been found in Jimmy Silver's cricket-bag was suspected to have emanated from Skinner. Then there was another rumour, that some of Jimmy's missing currency notes had been changed at the tuck-shop by Tom Merry or Monty Lowther.

Such rumours were easily proved unfounded; but they added to the tension, and all parties realised that unless the mystery was solved soon, the Greyfriars cricket week would be anything but the happy event the fellows had been looking forward to.

Indeed, on Thursday morning, Arthur Edward Lovell, of Rookwood, was seen bathing a set of barked knuckles, and Snoop of the Remove was observed to wear a larger size in noses than was his custom. And a connection was suspected between Lovell's barked knuckles and Snoop's swollen nose. And an argument between Bolsover major of the Remove and Figgins of St. Jim's was stopped only just in time before there was an outbreak of war.

Jack Drake walked down to the cricket ground with Harry Wharton and Co., and the face of the captain of the Remove was very grave.

"You see how things are going, Drake," he said. "It's getting too warm for comfort. If anything more happens, the cricket week looks like ending in a general scrap all round."

"It's a rotten shame," said Drake. "Looks as if somebody is bent on mucking up the affair more than anything else."

"It will end that way, anyhow," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, we're not going to have it made out that the thief is necessarily a Greyfriars chap. Why should we? There's no getting away from the fact that nothing was stolen before the visitors arrived."

"That's a solid fact," said Johnny Bull. And Hurree Singh declared that the factfulness was terrific.

"Of course, it's pretty hard to believe that a thief came over from either St. Jim's or Rookwood," said Harry. "Can't expect the

visitors to admit it, anyhow. But we're not having it put on Greyfriars."

"Not without proof, anyhow," remarked Nugent.

Jack Drake nodded. He understood how delicate the situation was, and how possible it was that serious trouble might crop up at any moment. He stood by the pavilion and looked on, when Jimmy Silver and Co. came down to play the Remove. Jimmy Silver greeted Wharton cheerily enough, but some of the Rookwooders looked rather restive. Arthur Edward Lovell was heard to whisper to his comrades—in a stage whisper—not to leave anything of value in the dressing-room.

Harry Wharton heard that whisper, and flushed crimson.

"Shut up, Lovell," said Jimmy Silver hastily.

"Well, I suppose we'd better be careful, hadn't we?" said Lovell, rather obstinately. "We don't want our pockets cleared out again."

"If you think——" began Bob Cherry hotly.

"Cheese it, Bob!" muttered Wharton.

"Well, he's not going to——"

"Dry up, you ass!"

Bob Cherry "dried up," but he looked wrathful and rather excited. Arthur Edward Lovell gave Bob a look that was not exactly one of defiance, but might easily have been mistaken for it.

"Order, you fellows!" muttered Jimmy Silver. "We're here to play cricket, not to——"

"Not to have our watches pinched," said Mornington. And there was a laugh among the Rookwooders.

"Shut up, Morny! Not to rag, I was going to say," answered Jimmy Silver. "This rotten affair is worrying the Greyfriars chaps more than us."

"Why don't they find out their blessed thief, then, and kick him out?" said Valentine Mornington.

Bob Cherry broke out savagely.

"How do you know it's a Greyfriars chap at all?" he bawled.

Mornington looked at him coolly.

"I take that for granted," he replied.

"You've no right to do anything of the sort."

"I assume the right, dear boy," answered Mornington, with provoking calm. "When I lose property in a place, I naturally figure it out that there's a thief about the place. I know I didn't bring one with me in my cricket-bag."

Again there was a laugh among the Rookwooders.

Bob Cherry strode towards Mornington with a very grim expression on his face. Wharton interposed at once, and just in time. Jimmy Silver pushed Mornington back.

"Can't you shut up, Morny?" he said savagely. "I tell you plainly that if there is a scrap here on your account, I'll turn you out of the team and put in one of the reserves."

Mornington shrugged his slim shoulders.

"Keep your wool on, old scout," he said coolly. "I'm not looking for a scrap with anybody. But I think——"

"Never mind what you think, so long as you don't talk," snapped Jimmy. "Shut up, and let's get on to the cricket. I'm waiting to toss, Wharton."

"Right-ho," said Harry.

Rookwood won the toss, and Jimmy Silver decided to bat first. He opened the innings with Mornington. Lovell had been on the list to begin, but Jimmy made the change at the last moment, being anxious to get Morny away from the pavilion crowd. Morny seemed to be in one of his quarrelsome moods, and there were plenty of Greyfriars fellows about who would not have been backward in picking up a challenge.

Harry Wharton and Co. went into the field, some of them looking red and angry. The keenness of the game, however, banished other considerations in a short time, and the mysterious thefts were forgotten, for a time at least, while the leather and the willow were busy. But when Mornington, in a bold attempt at four, was stumped and out, there was a loud laugh among the Greyfriars fellows, which was not quite good-natured, and which showed that they remembered Morny's unfortunate remarks earlier. Valentine Mornington looked round with a sneer as he walked

back to the pavilion, and Lovell came out to take his place.

The dandy of Rookwood was observed to lounge well away from the Greyfriars fellows, and when Ogilvy of the Remove passed near him, Morny was also observed to place his hand over his pocket in a sort of protecting way. Ogilvy observed the action, and he stopped and looked at Mornington with gleaming eyes.

"You rotter!" he said. "If you weren't a guest here, I'd mop the ground up with you!"

And Ogilvy walked away, strongly tempted to mop up the ground with Morny, guest or not. Mornington shrugged his shoulders and sneered. And Jack Drake, who was looking on, realised that it was high time that something was done to ease the tension.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

D'Arcy Helps!

JACK DRAKE remained watching the Remove-Rookwood match for sometime, and then sauntered away to the Fourth Form ground. There, Cecil Reginald Temple and his merry men were playing St. Jim's. The latter were batting, Tom Merry and Talbot being at the wickets. Drake joined the little crowd of waiting batsmen, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed a cordial nod and smile on him.

"Goin' stwong, deah boy?" he asked.

Figgins glanced round.

"Why, what's on?" he asked. "You're not in the cricket, Drake?"

Drake shook his head.

"I feah I cannot tell you what is on, Figgay," said Arthur Augustus mysteriously. "It is wathah a secwet."

Figgins looked astonished, as well he might. He was not aware that Jack Drake was there as a detective, but from the way Arthur Augustus was keeping the secret it was probable that he would not long remain in ignorance of the fact.

Drake moved hastily away, and the swell of St. Jim's followed him.

"Time for a little chat, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus affably. "I'm sixth on the list, and pewwaps I shan't be wanted at all.

We're knockin' the Fourth Form bowlin' sky-high. How are you gettin' on with the case, if I may inquiah?"

"Don't let it out all over the shop, you know," urged Drake.

"No feah!" said Arthur Augustus promptly. "I am keepin' your biznay heah vewy dark, old chap. You heard me tell Figgins that it was a secwet, didn't you?"

Drake suppressed his feelings.

"I have been thinkin' ovah this affair," continued Arthur Augustus, after a very cautious glance round to ascertain that there was no one within hearing. "I wemarked yestahday that I wathah thought I had a bit of a gift as a detective, Dwake."

"You did!" assented Drake.

"I have been twyin' to work it out, in the mannah of Fewwahs Locke or Sherlock Holmes, you know," confided Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I am not thinkin' of takin' the mattah out of your hands——"

"Thanks."

"Not at all! My ideah is simply to assist you, by givin' you the benefit of my wreflections on the subject."

"You're too good," said Drake.

"It would be a vewy gweat pleasuah to me to be able to put you on the wight twack," said Arthur Augustus modestly. "Have you thought of the pwocess of elimination?"

"The which?"

"Pwocess of elimination, deah boy. You eliminate all the fellows that couldn't be the thief, you know, and then you are bound to find the wascal among those that wemain."

"And how do you figure it out?"

"F'winstance, when there is a theft, there is the wobbah and the wobbed," said Arthur Augustus.

"No doubt."

"You eliminate the wobbed, and that leaves you with fewah people to look among for the wobbah, see?"

"Good!"

"I am glad to see that you agwee with me, Dwake. I wathah think that you are a weally good detective, youngstah as you are. Now, as a first pwoceedin', I should make a list of the fellows who have been wobbed."

"And eliminate them?" asked Drake.

"Yaas, wathah."

"You ought to be a detective yourself," said Drake with great admiration. "How do you think of these things?"

"Just wreflectin' on the mattah, that's all," answered Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly. "I have gone so fah as to make out a list of the wobbed chaps. Myself to begin with, and Jimmy Silvah, Lovell, Mornington, and Buntah, as well as Miss Marjowie. Of course, gals are above suspicion in any case."

"Of course," assented Drake gravely.

"That's five fellows to eliminate," said D'Arcy. "You see the point?"

"Quite."

"Of course, on personal gwounds I should eliminate evah so many more. But a detective cannot afford to be a wespectah of persons. You are bound to suspect evewy possible person until you find your man."

"You've got it."

"Yaas, wathah! But by eliminatin' the wobbed, you weduce the numbah of suspects, and that simplifies the whole bizney. If there are any more wobbewies, you will be able to eliminate some more, you know, which will weduce the numbah still furthah."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Drake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy beamed.

"I thought you would agwee with me," he said. "I had some doubts at first, Dwake, if you don't mind my sayin' so, as you are such a youngstah, but I can see now that you are a first-wate detective."

Drake grinned.

"There's just one little weakness in your system," he observed.

"Bai Jove! I should be glad to know what that is. I have weally pondahed ovah it vewy deeply."

"Suppose the thief should rob himself——"

"Eh?"

"By pretending to lose something——"

"Oh!"

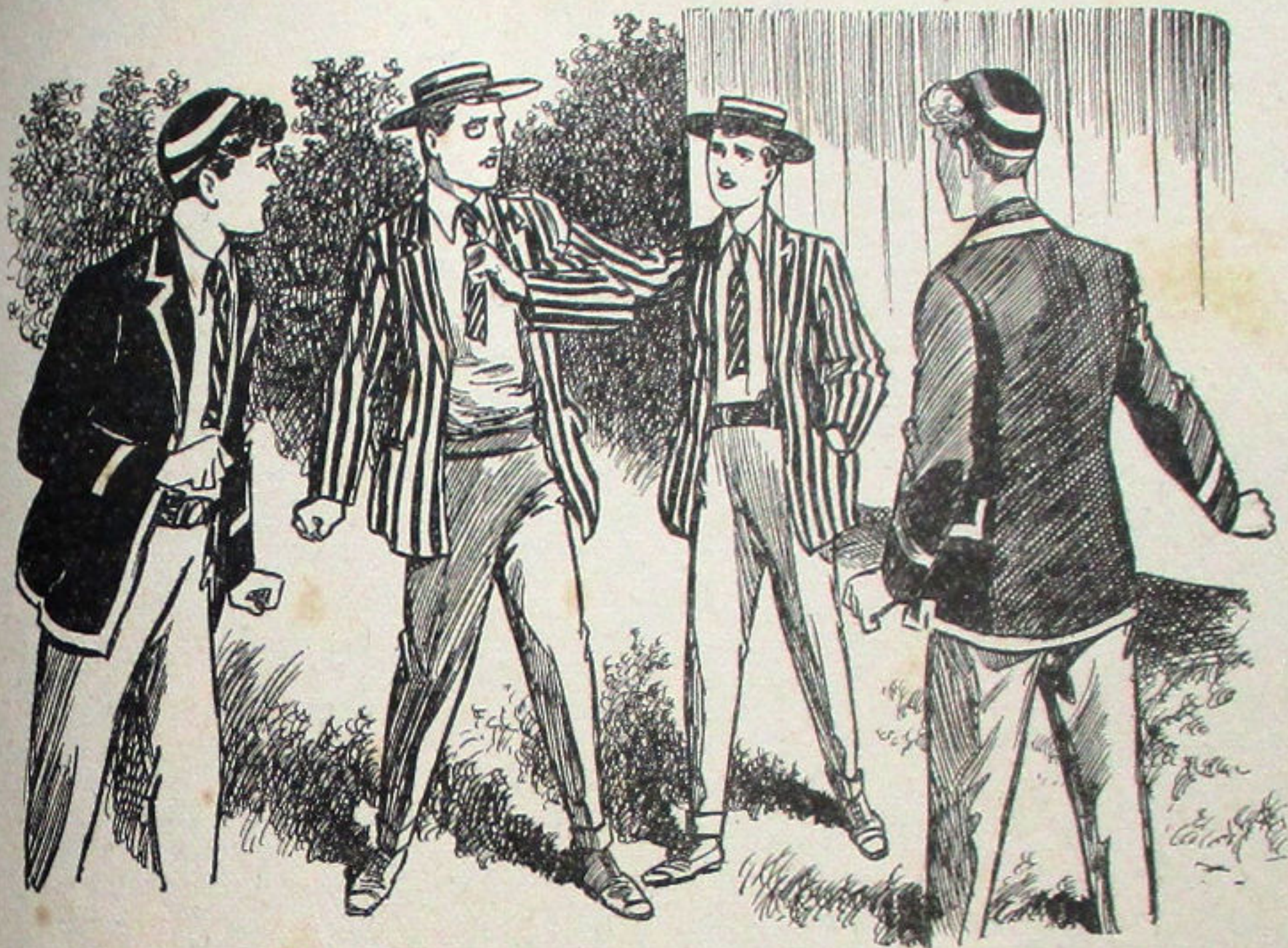
"That would put him on the list of the robbed——"

"Ah!"

"And eliminate him——"

"Hum!"

"And leave him safe and sound, and high and dry, while you're looking among



"When I lose property, I naturally figure it out that there's a thief about the place," said Mornington, with provoking calm. Bob Cherry strode towards Mornington with a very grim expression on his face. (See page 109)

an innocent crowd for your man!" grinned Drake.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "I nevah thought of that!"

Jack Drake strolled away, leaving Arthur Augustus doing some further pondering. It occurred to Gussy's powerful brain, at last, that there was more in a detective's business than he had dreamt of in his philosophy. And the swell of St. Jim's returned to the cricket, and gave the game his attention, sagely resolving to let Ferrers Locke's assistant go ahead without his valuable aid.

"I say, Drake——"

Billy Bunter hailed the former Removite of Greyfriars in the quad. He came rolling up with a very friendly grin on his fat face.

"Hallo, fat old bean!" said Drake.

"About that ten bob——"

"What ten bob?"

"Didn't you owe me ten bob when you left Greyfriars?"

"You know I didn't, you fat fraud!"

Bunter coughed.

"Well, never mind the ten bob," he said.

"I'll tell you what, Drake. I've been disappointed about a postal-order this morning——"

"Not really?"

"Yes, really, you know," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I was expecting a postal-order by the first post——"

"The same one you were expecting when I was in the Remove here?"

"Nunno——another one——quite a different one. But it hasn't come."

"I remember it never did," assented Drake, with a nod.

"Some delay in the post," said Bunter.

"What with strikes, and the way the

Government manages things, a fellow never can depend on getting his postal-orders to time. But it can't very well be delayed later than this afternoon. Would you mind lending me ten bob till it comes, Drake?"

"Yes, rather."

"I mean five bob," said Bunter, moderating his transports, as it were. "Now I come to think of it, the postal-order will be for five bob, Drake. You wouldn't mind lending me that, I suppose?"

"My dear chap, your supposer's out of gear," said Drake, kindly. "I should mind very much."

"If you're going to be mean, Drake——"

"Just that!" assented Drake.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, more in sorrow than in anger.

"We used to be such pals, when you were here!" he said.

"What a memory you've got," said Drake admiringly. "Now, I don't remember anything of the sort."

"Beast!"

"But I'll tell you what," said Drake, laughing. "Come into the tuck-shop, and I'll stand you ginger-pop and a tart."

Bunter brightened up at once.

"My dear chap, I'll come with pleasure, as you're so pressing," he exclaimed. "This way."

And Bunter tucked a fat arm into Drake's and led him to the tuck-shop, and perched his fat form on a high stool, and proceeded to enjoy himself. And while he disposed of the ginger-pop and the tart—and another ginger-pop and another tart—Bunter bestowed the delights of his conversation on Jack Drake—and Drake listened with an attentive interest that Bunter seldom observed in a listener to his entertaining conversation.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

On the Track!

HARRY WHARTON looked hopefully at Drake when they met at lunch. Drake gave him a cheery smile; but his smile told the captain of the Remove nothing.

There was much discussion at the table, but, unfortunately, the topic was chiefly cricket. Here and there, however, there were

remarks that would have been much better left unmade, and some grim looks.

Valentine Mornington, of Rookwood, was in a mischievous humour, and Arthur Edward Lovell seemed a little surly; and Herries, of the St. Jim's Fourth, was rather outspoken when it would have been more judicious to keep silent. Skinner, and some other Remove fellows, persisted in keeping to the topic of the mysterious thefts, and dropped hints and gave mysterious shrugs, which were not lost on the visitors. There seemed to be a touch of electricity in the atmosphere at lunch, and most of the cricketers were glad when it was over.

After lunch, Herries of St. Jim's disappeared from view, and so did Russell of the Remove. When they were seen again, they were dabbing their noses—which needed it.

Evidently there had been a fight in some secluded corner. A little later, Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, "guessed" in a rather loud tone that he could give thirty names among which would be found that of the thief—a plain hint which several of the visitors took at once; with the result that Lovell and Raby and Newcome, and several St. Jim's fellows, collared Fisher T. Fish and lumped him, forcibly; and Fishy quickly repented of his guessing. But a crowd of Removites came round the scene; and Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, and Jimmy Silver, acting together, had all their work cut out to prevent a general row.

It was a great relief when the call came to cricket again. It stopped argument and recrimination, at least among the cricketers. Some of the visitors were heard to say that they would think twice before they came along to Greyfriars for another match; and plenty of Greyfriars voices answered that they would think three times before they asked fellows who brought a pickpocket along with them.

The Greyfriars cricket week, so far as cricket was concerned, was going strong; but in every other respect, it seemed likely to turn out a ghastly failure.

Harry Wharton wore a worried look as he walked down to Little Side. The morning's play had gone satisfactorily; Rookwood, in their innings, were all down for the even

hundred, and the Remove had taken twenty runs for two wickets in their innings, so far. But much less pleasant thoughts than those of cricket worked in most minds now. Harry Wharton joined Drake, with a clouded brow.

"Things are going from bad to worse," he said, in a low voice. "We're all at sixes and sevens. If something isn't done by to-morrow, there will be a dozen scraps on, I'm sure of that. I'm beginning to be sorry that we ever thought of a Cricket Week at all, as it turns out."

"It's hard cheese," said Drake.

"Any luck so far?" asked the captain of the Remove, bluntly.

"I've been gathering up some points," said Drake, guardedly. "Can't all be done in one jump, you know. I've got my eyes open. I had a long jaw with Bunter this morning in the tuck-shop."

Wharton raised his eyebrows.

"Bunter?" he said. "Fat lot of good talking to Bunter, I should think." He coloured. "Excuse me, Drake—this rotten affair is getting on my nerves. I know you know your way about better than I can tell you."

"Well, I ought to," said Drake, unruffled. "Besides, I've got a lot of information from Bunter. It seems that he was keen on playing in the Cricket Week, and awfully sore at being left out of the eleven."

Wharton laughed impatiently.

"The fat fool! Has he been inflicting all that on you?"

"Yes," smiled Drake. "Lots of it."

"You weren't bound to let him bore you with his rot. You can kick him if you like."

Drake laughed.

"But I was interested," he said.

"Blessed if I see where the interest comes in," said the captain of the Remove, a little crossly. "We can stand Bunter at times, but just now, with this thing worrying us, I don't think I could." He gave a sudden start. "You don't suspect Bunter?"

"I suspect everybody till I've found my man."

"I thought of Bunter," said Harry. "But though a lot of valuables have been taken, he's as hard up as ever."

"I've noticed that."

"And then his own watch was taken——"

"I know."

"That's why most of the fellows think it must have been one of the visitors," said Harry. "Everybody at Greyfriars knows that Bunter's watch was no good. A thief wouldn't take an article he knew to be valueless, I suppose?"

"As a rule, no."

"As a rule?" repeated Wharton. "I should think that was always the case."

Drake did not reply to that.

"Some of the St. Jim's fellows think the police ought to be told and a description of D'Arcy's watch circulated, so that it can't be sold or pawned by the thief," said Harry, in a low voice. "Of course, they're right. But—but it would be a frightful disgrace for Greyfriars. Luckily, D'Arcy refuses to hear of anything of the kind—he's a splendid chap, and he knows he's risking never seeing the watch again."

"I think he will see it again," said Drake, quietly. "I think the plunder is still inside the walls of Greyfriars."

Wharton looked more hopeful.

"I'm glad of that," he said. "I hope to goodness you'll get on to something tangible to-day. By to-morrow it will be impossible to keep the peace in this crowd, I'm afraid—it may even end in the last match being thrown up, and the cricket going to pot."

"I've not been idle," said Drake. "I'll see you again at tea, Wharton. I suppose you'll have tea in your study, with some of the visitors."

"Yes."

"Have Bunter there—I'd like him to be present, and I'll come."

"Blessed if I know why you want him," said Harry, puzzled. "But he'll come anyway. He's holding it over our heads about going to the police with a tale of the robberies, and we have to let the fat villain have the run of the study to keep him quiet."

"Wharton!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Time, old top."

With a nod to Drake, the captain of the Remove hurried away to the cricketers. Drake remained with a thoughtful brow

watching the game for some time. When he sauntered off the ground, he was looking about him, as if in search of someone. He entered the School house, which was almost deserted by the juniors, and went up to the Remove passage. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were in their study, enjoying—or otherwise—surreptitious cigarettes; but for that dingy trio, the Remove quarters were deserted.

Drake went on up the staircase to the Remove dormitory. That big apartment was drawn blank.

He sauntered on imperturbably to the Fourth Form dormitory, which was shared with Temple, Dabney and Co. by the Rockwooders. It should have been quite untenanted at that hour in the afternoon. But as Drake approached it the door opened, and a fat figure rolled out.

“Oh!”

Billy Bunter uttered that ejaculation suddenly, in startled tones, as he sighted Drake.

The latter nodded affably.

“Just looking for you, Bunter,” he said.

“Wha-a-at for?”

“Like a ginger-pop?”

“Oh, certainly, old top,” said Bunter, his fat brow clearing at once. “I don’t mind if I do. Come along. I—I was—was looking round, you know——”

Drake had asked no questions, but the Owl of the Remove seemed to feel impelled, somehow, to explain his visit to the Fourth Form dormitory.

“Looking round!” repeated Drake.

“Yes, I—I thought the—the thief might be rooting about there,” said Bunter, blinking at Drake with a sidelong blink. “Might have been pinching something, you know, while all the fellows were down at the cricket.”

“That was rather thoughtful of you,” said Drake, with a very curious look at the Owl of the Remove.

“I’m a thoughtful chap,” said Bunter.

“Found anything out?”

“Oh, not at all! Nothing.”

Billy Bunter seemed rather preoccupied as he went to the school shop with the former Removite. He demolished his ginger-pop rather hastily, and rolled out of the tuck-shop.

Drake followed him.

“Coming to watch the cricket?” he asked.

“No fear!” Billy Bunter sniffed contemptuously. “Blow the cricket! Worth watching if I’d been in the team, perhaps.”

“They’re cheering Wharton——”

Another sniff from Bunter.

“Some rot!” he said. “You cut along and watch the cricket, Drake.”

“My dear chap, I’m sticking to you for a bit,” said Drake. “So nice to see you after such a long time, you know.”

This was very flattering; but Billy Bunter did not seem to be flattered, somehow. He seemed uneasy.

“Better get along and watch the Remove play Rookwood,” he said. “Wharton will expect to see you there.”

“Not at all. Let’s go for a stroll.”

Bunter’s uneasiness seemed to increase.

“The fact is, I don’t feel inclined for a stroll,” he said. “You go for a stroll, old fellow; I’m going to sit down under the trees.” And the Owl of the Remove plumped his fat form on one of the old oaken benches under the elms.

“Good idea,” said Drake, sitting down beside him. “Nothing like a rest in the shade of the trees on a warm afternoon.”

“Look here, Drake,” began Bunter.

“Well?”

“Oh, nothing.”

Bunter sat for some minutes under the trees; but he did not seem to be enjoying his repose in the pleasant shade. Far from looking restful and contented, he seemed to be almost in a twitter. He rose at last.

“I think I’ll go in,” he said.

“I’m coming in,” remarked Drake, casually.

“Better stay in the open air——”

“No; I’ll come in.”

Billy Bunter stopped, and turned on Drake, with his little round eyes gleaming through his glasses.

“Look here, you buzz off, Drake,” he exclaimed, tartly. “If you can’t take a hint, I may as well tell you that I don’t want your company. There!”

Jack Drake smiled.

“You don’t want my company?” he repeated. “Not even when we used to be such pals when I was in the Remove?”

Coming to a Crisis!

"Oh, go and eat coke," snapped Bunter. He rolled away to the School house; and Drake walked in the same direction. On the steps of the house, Bunter turned his head and blinked back; and he frowned angrily as he saw Drake a dozen paces behind him. He fairly bolted into the house.

When Drake entered, the fat junior was out of sight. But as Ferrers Locke's assistant stood in the hall, Billy Bunter came down the big staircase again, looking breathless and flushed. Drake's eyes rested on him curiously, intently.

Bunter, without heeding him, rolled out into the quad., and went down to the cricket ground. Jack Drake, after some reflection, followed him, and arrived on the Remove ground a few minutes later. Bunter eyed him morosely when he arrived at the pavilion there, and rolled away at once to watch the Fourth and St. Jim's.

Drake did not follow him further. He remained where he was, watching the play between the Remove and Rookwood, keenly interested in the cricket, and apparently oblivious of the "case" upon which he had come to Greyfriars.

Indeed, to judge by his expression, one might have supposed that the boy detective had already brought his case to a successful conclusion.

There he remained until the end of the play, then, with a glance at the scoring board, turned and walked towards the Hall.

HARRY WHARTON AND CO. gathered to a rather late tea in No. 1 Study, after the close of the day's play. The result of the play, so far, was very gratifying to the Co. Rookwood were 100 for an innings; and at the close the Remove had scored 115 for nine wickets, having one yet to fall when play was resumed on the morrow. So the Famous Five felt pretty cheerful when they

gathered in No. 1 Study, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver as their guests there. Billy Bunter, of course, rolled in, too—he had at present the "run" of the study, as Wharton had expressed it.

It was quite a cheery party in No. 1 as Jack Drake strolled in. But all the study parties were not so amicable; the worry of the mysterious thefts was on all minds, and some tempers were

growing bitter. Some of the visitors preferred feeding in the Hall to entering the Remove and Fourth studies as guests, and there was a good deal of stiffness and distant politeness to be seen on all sides.

There was no doubt that the series of mysterious occurrences during the Cricket Week had cast a shadow over the whole affair, and that matters were going from bad to worse.

No. 1 Study had started tea, when there was a knock at the door, and it opened to



While Bunter, seated on a high stool, disposed of ginger-pop and tarts, he bestowed the delights of his conversation on Jack Drake. (See page 112)

reveal Valentine Mornington, of Rookwood. On Morny's face was a sarcastic smile.

"Trot in, old top," said Bob Cherry, resolutely forgetting the altercation of the morning. "Lots of room."

"Thanks, I haven't come to tea," yawned Mornington. "I've been up to the Fourth Form dormitory, where I've been so kindly accommodated, an' I thought I'd mention to you fellows that somethin's missin'."

Dismay fell on the faces of the cheery tea party.

"Something missing again!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Just so!"

"Bai Jove, this is weally gwowin' too wotten!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a look of great distress.

"He, he, he!" That unmusical cachinnation was William George Bunter's contribution to the discussion.

Bob Cherry gave the Owl of the Remove a furious look.

"If you cackle again, Bunter, I'll give you something to stop your blessed cackling," he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"What have you missed now?" demanded Bob gruffly, turning to Mornington with a far from amiable look.

Morny shrugged his elegant shoulders.

"Nothin' much. I'd locked my valuables, such as they are, in my bag. I wasn't takin' any more risks——"

"Cut that out, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver tartly.

"To hear is to obey," said Mornington sarcastically. "However, thinkin' that my clobber was safe, I left it lyin' around. Careless of me, I admit, in the circumstances."

"Has anybody been interfering with your clobber?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Merely a pair of sleeve-links—simply that and nothin' more," said Mornington lightly.

"Plain gold, with a pearl in each—not very valuable, but your pet pickpocket seems to have thought them worth takin' out of my shirt. I thought I'd let you know."

Arthur Edward Lovell looked in over Morny's shoulder.

"Look here, Jimmy Silver, that dashed

thief's been going through our things in the dorm, while we were at the cricket," he exclaimed. "I'm fed up with this kind of thing. If our shirts ain't safe here, the sooner we get out of Greyfriars the better."

"That mayn't make your shirts any safer," snorted Johnny Bull. "Perhaps you'll take the thief home with you to Rookwood."

"No thieves at Rookwood, I can tell you," retorted Lovell.

"Well, there's none here, you cheeky ass."

"Cheeky ass yourself!" said Lovell. "Go and eat coke! Bad enough to have our things pinched, I think, without——"

"Pway calm yourself, deah boy," interposed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pacifically.

"Who's not calm?" roared Lovell.

"Bai Jove! You are not, at the pwesent moment, deah boy."

"Oh, you're an ass——"

"Weally, Lovell ——"

"I'm fed up, I tell you!" shouted Lovell.

"You can make signs at me if you like, Jimmy Silver; but I tell you I'm fed up. My tie-pin's gone—of course, I ought to have locked it up, considering where we are——"

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"But I came here to play cricket, not to lock up my tie-pin," roared Lovell, quite as angry as Johnny Bull. "I left it on the washstand, and now it's gone, and so has Morny's sleeve-links. And I can jolly well tell you that I'm jolly well inclined to take the first train back to Rookwood in the morning, and let the cricket go hang."

"The sooner the better!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Johnny, for goodness' sake," breathed Wharton.

"Rats! That cheeky rotter——"

"So I'm a rotter for not wanting my pockets picked, am I?" bawled Lovell. "Step out here in the passage and call me a rotter again."

"I'll jolly soon do that!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, springing up.

"You won't!" Wharton pushed his excited chum back into his chair. "Keep quiet, bother you!"

"Look here——"

"Quiet, I tell you!"

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway keep your tempahs, deah boys. No good waggin'."

Arthur Edward Lovell, with a scornful snort, stalked away along the Remove passage. Mornington only lingered to bestow a sardonic grin on the study party, and followed him.

Jimmy Silver sat looking red and uncomfortable. Every face in the study was dark and dismayed, excepting Bunter's. The Owl of the Remove was grinning. Jack Drake's eyes were on Bunter's fat face, curiously, keenly.

"I say, this is awfully rotten," said Jimmy Silver, breaking a painful silence. "I'm awfully sorry at the fellows cutting up rusty like that, Wharton. But—but——"

"It's natural enough," said Harry, with an effort. "It's enough to make any fellow wild, I suppose."

"Yaas, wathah."

"We hoped that Drake might be able to nail the rotter," said Bob Cherry hopelessly. "That turns out to be no good. No offence, Drake, you know," he added quickly. "I know you've done all you could."

Drake smiled.

"Perhaps I've done better than you've thought," he said tranquilly. "I've not been wasting my time while you've been at the cricket."

There was a quick moment of eager interest in No. 1 Study. Harry Wharton looked at the boy detective almost breathlessly.

"You've discovered something?" he exclaimed.

The juniors hung on Drake's reply; especially Bunter. The Owl of the Remove quite forgot to punish the cake. He stared at Drake, with his little round eyes open behind his spectacles—his mouth full, but his active jaws suddenly ceasing their activity.

Drake's answer was short and crisp:

"Yes!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in great relief. "Do you mean to say that you can put your finger on the thief?"

"I think so."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"And the stolen property?"

"The stolen property is still inside the School house," said Jack Drake calmly. He did not look at Bunter, and did not seem aware of the wide-open saucer-like eyes that were fixed upon him. "I know where to look for it. And once it is in our hands——"

"Yes?" breathed Bob.

"You've heard of finger-print clues?" drawled Drake.

"My hat!"

"Ow!" That was a sudden ejaculation from Billy Bunter. But no one heeded him, in the excitement of the moment.

The Owl of the Remove rose to his feet.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter—don't jaw now——"

"Oh, really, Wharton—if you speak to me like that——"

"Shut, up I tell you."

"I shall decline to remain in this study, Wharton, if you can't speak to a fellow civilly."

"Then get out, and be hanged to you," said the captain of the Remove testily. "Now, Drake——"

Billy Bunter rolled to the door, and slammed it after him as he went. His departure did not trouble the juniors in any way; all their attention was fixed on the boy assistant of Ferrers Locke. Their faith in him had wavered a little; but Drake's words had restored it.

"Now, where's the stuff?" exclaimed Nugent eagerly.

"And the thief?" demanded Bob.

Drake smiled.

"The stuff is upstairs, somewhere—I suspect in the Remove dormitory," he answered quietly, "and the thief——"

"Where is he?"

"Gone to hide the stuff in a fresh place——"

"What?"

"To get it out of sight before I can get hold of it and examine it for finger-prints!" said Drake.

"Wha-at?"

"Bai Jove!"

Then there was a yell in No. 1 Study as the juniors comprehended:

"BUNTER!"

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

Stop Thief!

JACK DRAKE rose quietly to his feet. There was a buzz of excitement in No. 1 Study.

"Bunter!" repeated Bob Cherry. "But

"Wasn't Buntah's own watch stolen?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I—I say, Drake——"

"Wathah wemarkable for a chap to bag his own watch," said Arthur Augustus. "That's a vewy odd pwoceedin' for a beastly thief, you know."

"There was no thief," said Drake.

"What?"

"I mean, it's not a case of theft. The fellow who bagged the things had no intention of keeping them. He has simply hidden them away."

"What on earth for?" asked Tom Merry, in amazement.

"To muck up the Greyfriars Cricket Week."

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Why?" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Drake smiled slightly.

"Because he had a fool idea that he ought to play for Greyfriars in the Cricket Week, I fancy, and felt injured at being left out. It was his idea of punishment."

"Great Scott!"

"Bai Jove, of all the uttah duffahs——"

"I remember now," gasped Bob Cherry, "the howling ass said he would make us sit up for leaving him out of the cricket——"

"He told us to beware!" ejaculated Nugent. "I remember! I thought he had got the pictures on the brain."

"So did I," growled Wharton. "I never thought—where are you going, Drake?"

"Unless I'm mistaken, Bunter has gone to shift the loot to another hiding-place," said Drake. "I'm going to keep an eye on him. My idea is that we shall find him walking off with the whole bundle in his pockets. One or two of you come with me—not a crowd, or he nay take the alarm."

"Right-ho."

Harry Wharton and Tom Merry followed Drake from the study. The rest of the party

remained in a buzz of tense excitement. They did not see yet how the boy detective had ascertained the facts—but they did not doubt that he was right. And there was deep relief in every face now, at the prospect of clearing up the mystery, and lifting the dark cloud that hung over the Cricket Week. And it was a relief, too, to know that the whole affair was not, after all, a real case of theft, but only an obtuse scheme of vengeance inspired by the "films."

Mornington and Lovell were talking in the passage, and Drake called to them.

"Did Bunter pass you?"

"Yes," answered Lovell, shortly.

"Which way did he go?"

"Up the staircase."

"Good."

Drake and Wharton and Tom Merry hurried up the staircase leading to the dormitories. As they reached the dormitory passage, they trod softly. It was necessary to avoid giving the alarm to the Owl of the Remove. Drake's idea was to catch him fairly in the act, with the looted property on his person, which would prove the case beyond the shadow of a doubt, and leave no room for the exercise of Bunter's remarkable gift of lying.

The door of the Remove dormitory was ajar, as it had been left by someone entering hurriedly. Undoubtedly it was Bunter.

Drake held up his hand for silence, and the three juniors stopped outside the door, and peered in through the opening.

"Bunter!" breathed Wharton.

The Owl of the Remove was in full view.

There was a wall-cupboard at the end of the dormitory, and the doors of it were wide open, and Bunter was visible, on his hands and knees, kneeling inside the big cupboard.

Evidently he was raising a loose board in a corner of the floor.

The three juniors had a view of Bunter's conspicuous trousers as he knelt there, with his back to them.

In the silence of the dormitory, they heard him lay aside the loose section of board he had prised up.

Then he bent further forward, groping in the opening below.

Once he looked round nervously over his

shoulder, blinking with evident alarm. But the short-sighted Owl of the Remove could not possibly see the three watching faces at the door. He turned to his task again.

In silence the juniors watched him.

One by one hidden articles were taken out of the recess under the cupboard floor, and transferred to Bunter's pockets.

His task completed at last, the fat junior replaced the section of board, and they heard him jamming it securely into its place, and replacing two or three pairs of boots over it.

Then he rose to his feet, gasping for breath.

There were beads of perspiration on his fat brow. Billy Bunter was not accustomed to hurrying himself; but he had hurried breathlessly on this occasion.

He stood for some moments, with his fat brow wrinkled in thought.

As clearly as if they could read the workings of his fat brain, the watching juniors knew that he was debating in his mind the question of a new place of concealment for the abstracted articles.

Apparently he decided that the Remove dormitory was not safe enough; for he started towards the door.

Drake signed to his companions to step back.

They retreated across the passage, and

waited for the Owl of the Remove to emerge from the dormitory.

The door opened, and Bunter rolled out.

At the sight of the three juniors, he stopped suddenly. His little round eyes seemed to bulge through his spectacles, as he stared at them.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Well, Bunter?" said Harry Wharton, grimly.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"What have you been doing up here?" asked Tom Merry.

"N-nothing."

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I think the case is pretty complete now," said Jack Drake, quietly.

"Yes, rather."

Bunter's eyes dilated behind his big glasses.

"I—I say, you fellows, if—if you think——"

"We don't think—we know!" interrupted the captain of the Remove, curtly.
"And now——"

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Billy Bunter gave a wild blink round him, and started to run. In a second the three juniors were sprinting on his track down the passage to the stairs.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Drake.

In ordinary circumstances, Bunter would have been collared before he had covered three yards. But terror lent wings, as it were, to the Owl of the Remove. He ran as he had



Bunter was visible, on his hands and knees, kneeling inside the big cupboard. He was raising a loose board in the corner of the floor. (See opposite page)

never run before, reached the staircase, and bounded down it two or three steps at a time.

After him came Drake and Wharton and Tom Merry, at top speed.

"Stop him!" roared Wharton, as Bunter reached the landing below, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of St. Jim's appeared in sight there. The three St. Jim's juniors stared round in astonishment.

"Stop him!" shouted Drake.

"Yaroooh! Lemme alone!" gasped Bunter.

He rushed right on, and Figgins and Co. stood up to the charge. Figgins was bowled right over, and sprawled on the landing, and Kerr went reeling under Bunter's weight. But Fatty Wynn stood up to it—his own weight was very nearly equal to Bunter's—and he grasped the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter struggled desperately.

"What the thump——" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Hold him! He's the thief!" shouted Wharton.

"Oh, my hat! I've got him."

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

"No fear! Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wynn, as Bunter, quite desperate now, jammed a fat fist under his chin.

Fatty Wynn's grasp relaxed, and Bunter tore himself loose. Just before Drake reached him, he bolted on, and dodged into the Remove passage. There was a roar as he collided with Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Stop him!"

"Stop thief!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came sprinting out of No. 1 Study, with the rest of the Co. at his heels. "Collar him!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"Why—what—what's this?" stuttered Lovell. Something that glittered on the floor of the Remove passage caught Arthur Edward's eye. He picked it up; it was his own tie-pin.

Bunter made a desperate break for the lower staircase. But there was no chance for him. There were thirty fellows at least in the passage now, and a dozen of them were reaching out for Bunter. Bob Cherry's grasp closed on his collar; Johnny Bull secured his right ear, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh his left. Bunter was a prisoner at last!

"WHAT the thump——"
 "What the merry dickens——"
 "I say——"

There was a roar of excited voices in the Remove passage. Nearly all the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows had gathered there, with a crowd of the Rookwooders. The passage was almost crammed.

The rumour had spread with amazing swiftness that the mysterious thief was caught. Arthur Edward Lovell was holding his tie-pin up on high, in great excitement.

"He dropped it!" roared Lovell. "Bunter dropped it when he biffed into me. He had it—Bunter had it!"

"He's the thief!"

"A Greyfriars fellow, after all!" said Mornington, with a curl of the lip.

"Lynch him!"

"Serag him!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, it's all a mistake. I—I can explain. Only give me time——"

"If you came before a magistrate for this he would give you time!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I say, you fellows, it's all a mistake——"

"Have you got the loot about you?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not."

"Rag him!"

"Make him shell out!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his voice dominating the excited crowd. "This matter is in Drake's hands——"

"Bother Drake!" said Lovell. "Who's Drake, anyhow?"

"Drake came here to find the thief," said Harry. "He is a detective—the assistant of Ferrers Locke, and he came here to help us out. And he's done it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, you beast!" groaned Bunter.

"I've got something to say if you fellows will give me a chance to speak," said Jack Drake.

"Go ahead, old bean."

"Yaas, wathah!"

DETENTION!



To face page 121]

TUBBY MUFFIN OF ROOKWOOD HAS SOME PANE-FUL REFLECTIONS!

"It is not a case of theft, in my opinion
—" went on Drake.

"Rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"I do not think any of the stolen property
will be found to be missing," continued
Drake. "Bunter isn't a thief—he's only a fat
fool, with the 'pictures' on the brain——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Drake——"

"Bring him along to the Rag," said Drake.
"There's room for all the fellows there, and
the matter can be explained. And we can
decide how to deal with Bunter. This isn't a
matter for the Head."

"I—I won't come!" roared Bunter.

"Won't you, my fat old bean," grinned
Bob Cherry. "I rather think you will. Roll
him along."

"Yow-ow! Help!"

"Help him with your boot, Lovell."

"You bet!"

"Yoooooop!"

Billy Bunter decided that he would go. He
stumbled down the staircase in the midst of an
excited crowd, held on all sides. More and
more juniors were arriving on the scene, and it
was quite an army that marched into the Rag
with Billy Bunter in their midst.

The Rag was an extensive apartment, used
by the juniors for their meetings; but it was
well crowded now. All the Rookwooders and
the St. Jim's fellows were there, and nearly all
the Remove, and a crowd of the Fourth.

Jack Drake closed the door when the crowd
were all inside.

Billy Bunter stood gasping for breath, with
the perspiration in beads on his fat brow. He
realised that he was "in for it" now. All his
remarkable gifts as an Ananias were not likely
to save him.

His extraordinary scheme for "mucking
up" the Greyfriars Cricket Week had been a
success—up to a point. Certainly the Cricket
Week had bade fair to be thoroughly
"mucked" up. But for the intervention of
Ferrers Locke's assistant, Bunter's scheme
would probably have been a success all along
the line. But the young rascal had been brought
up sharply now. He blinked round in alarm
and apprehension at the crowd of threatening

faces. He strove to collect his wits, and to
think of a "whacking" lie that would see him
through. But the case seemed hopeless.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter feebly, as
the juniors gathered round him. "I say, I—
I can explain it all——"

"You'll be given a chance," said Harry
Wharton grimly. "You're going to have fair
play, you fat rascal."

Lovell held up the tie-pin.

"He dropped it when he biffed into me—
that settles the matter!" bawled Lovell.

"I—I didn't——" gasped Bunter.

"I picked it up where you dropped it——"

"You—you didn't! I—I think it was
Mornington dropped it——"

"What?" yelled Mornington.

"Or—or somebody! What are you down on
me for?" demanded Bunter. "I haven't
done anything—not a thing! If Drake ac-
cuses me, let him trot out his evidence. I'll
knock it right on the head."

"Well, my hat!"

"Give a fellow fair play," urged Bunter.

"You fat bounder——"

"He wants to gain time to make up a
thumping lie," remarked Skinner; and there
was a laugh.

"Go ahead, Drake," said Bob Cherry.
"It's not quite clear to me how you fixed it on
Bunter. Let's hear."

"Yaas, wathah! We're awf'ly intewested,
deah boy."

"Go it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" grinned
Vernon-Smith.

Something like silence was restored. All the
juniors were very keen to hear how the boy
detective had elucidated the mystery.

"It was not what I should call a difficult
case," said Drake, with a smile.

"It beat us!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"We're not budding Ferrers Lockes!" said
Tom Merry, laughing. "Get on with it,
Drake."

Jack Drake proceeded to explain quietly,
and the juniors listened with rapt attention.

"First of all, I got full details of the affair
from Wharton and the others," he said.
"Then I had a big think. There was a bit
of a clue to begin with——"

"How's that?"

"The first article stolen was D'Arcy's watch and chain. It was taken during the night in the Remove dormitory. That looked rather as if the thief was in that dormitory. A fellow coming along from another dormitory to grope round for plunder would run a good many risks, and he could hardly know where D'Arcy had put his watch and chain on going to bed. On the other hand, most of the fellows in the Remove dorm. would have noticed Gussy's tremendous ticker."

"Bai Jove!"

"It was taken from under his pillow while he was asleep. Anybody outside the dorm. would not have known it was there—could not even have been sure which bed D'Arcy occupied—so I figured it out that the thief was in the same dormitory."

"Yaas, that appeahs vewy pwob. as you put it!"

"That confined the search to the Remove and the St. Jim's fellows, and cut out the Rookwooders and all the rest of Greyfriars," continued Drake. "From the time when I was at the school I had a pretty thorough knowledge of the Remove, and I knew most of the St. Jim's chaps, and I couldn't think of anyone who was likely to be a thief. I thought of Skinner with the idea that the whole thing might be a hoax."

"Thanks!" yawned Skinner.

"But Skinner was out of gates on Wednesday afternoon when Miss Marjorie's Dorothy bag was taken, as I learned from a little inquiry. But from the first I did not believe that it was a case of real theft. I believed that the things were taken from another motive, and I looked for the motive. Bunter was kind enough to enlighten me."

"Oh, really, Drake—"

"I found that Bunter had been very keen on getting into the Remove eleven for the Cricket Week, and that he was very sore at being left out," continued Drake. "I found that he had been throwing off dark hints about making the Cricket Week a failure, if he wasn't given justice, as he called it. He didn't get what he considered justice—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I kept an eye on Bunter. Then there

was the matter of his own watch being stolen. I remembered his watch, and I couldn't figure it out that a thief would be ass enough to waste his time bagging a thing that had no value—"

"My watch was worth thirty guineas!" bawled Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Certainly no Greyfriars fellow, however dishonest, would have thought of taking it," said Drake. "So if it was a real thief, that reduced the possible suspects to the St. Jim's fellows."

"Bai Jove!"

"But it was a St. Jim's fellow who had been robbed first. If any of D'Arcy's companions had had designs on his watch, there was no reason why they should wait till he came over to Greyfriars to bag it in the Remove dormitory. So I figured it out that it was pretty clear that there was no thief at all, only a thumping young rascal playing a rotten trick to make the fellows believe there was a thief, and to muck up this merry gathering. I think he came near to success. I believe there were signs that relations here were growing strained."

There was a laugh in the Rag.

"Yaas, wathah!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Lovell blushed.

"I—I'm sorry I—I rather kicked up a row!" he mumbled. "I—I was just falling into the rotter's trap in doing it, I suppose?"

"Exactly!" said Drake.

"Let me get at him!"

"Hold on!" interrupted Jimmy Silver. "Drake isn't finished yet. Get on with the washing, Drake!"

"Right! I wanted to find a fellow with a strong motive for causing general trouble and mucking up the Cricket Week, and I found him in Bunter. I figured it out that he had bagged his own watch and hidden it with the rest of the plunder to keep suspicion off himself. I kept an eye on Bunter, and bestowed my company on him, which he did not seem to enjoy very much on one occasion, at least. This afternoon I caught him sneaking out of the Fourth Form dormitory while you fellows were at the cricket—"



"Shell out, you fat rotter!" roared a dozen voices. Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically while his pockets were turned out by half-a-dozen hands. Quite a curious collection came to light! (See page 124)

"I explained that!" hooted Bunter.

"He spun me a yarn of keeping a watch for the thief," said Drake. "I let him think he had taken me in. I stuck to him, knowing pretty well that he had raided the Rookwood fellows' things and had some more plunder about him."

"Beast!"

"He tried to get rid of me, and I hung on long enough to make it quite clear that he wanted to be alone to hide his plunder," continued Drake, while Billy Bunter eyed him like a basilisk. "I followed him to the House again, and there let him go. It was

clear after that that he was easy in his mind, so it was clear that he had hidden the plunder inside the House somewhere. As he was too cautious to go near the place while he was being watched, it might have been a long and difficult job to find the loot, and then to connect Bunter with the thefts. So I laid a little trap for him."

"Yah!"

"I asked Wharton to have him to tea in No. 1 Study. I wanted him to hear me mention to Wharton that I knew where the plunder was, and that I could find the thief's finger-prints on it and identify him by that

means. I knew, of course, that as soon as Bunter heard that, he would bunk out of the study to get at the loot and hide it in another and safer place. He did so, and we followed him to the Remove dormitory."

"And then?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"We collared him as he came out, and here he is!" said Jack Drake. "He dropped Lovell's tie-pin, but the rest of the loot will be found in his pockets. That's all."

Every eye turned on Bunter.

"Shell out!" said Bob Cherry.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

Rough Justice!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the crowd of juniors. He had listened to Jack Drake's exposition of the case with growing dismay. His cunning scheme had been good enough to baffle the Greyfriars fellows, but the boy detective had torn it to shreds and tatters with scarcely an effort. The Owl of the Remove realised that he was caught, but he did not give up hope yet. He still hoped to save himself by the methods of Ananias.

"Got anything to say, Bunter?" demanded Johnny Bull.

Bunter gasped.

"Yes, certainly! I'm innocent!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Have you got the loot about you?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not! I never hid it under a loose board in the Remove dormitory!"

"What?"

"And—and I didn't go there to take it away——"

"Great Scott!"

"The—the fact is——" stammered Bunter.

"Yes, let's have the facts," grinned Skinner. "Bunter's nuts on facts! Get on with the facts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I—I'm shocked at you fellows," said Bunter. "I'm really disgusted. Knowing me to be a perfectly honourable fellow——"

"Phew!"

"Knowing me to be the soul of honour, I think it's simply rotten of you to accuse me

like this! All I can do is to retire from— from the scene, and—and leave you to—to repent of your unworthy suspicions!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I prefer to let the whole matter drop!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"I weally think that chap must be a little bit pottay!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with conviction.

"Shell out, you fat rotter!" roared a dozen voices.

"Search him," said Johnny Bull, impatiently.

"I—I say you fellows, I object to being searched," yelled Bunter. "It's—it an insult——"

"I'm afraid you'll have to swallow the insult, old top," grinned Bob Cherry. "Turn out his pockets, you fellows, while I hold his neck."

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter wriggled spasmodically in Bob's iron grasp while his pockets were turned out by half-a-dozen hands.

Quite a curious collection came to light.

First of all came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's gold watch and chain and purse, which was handed over to the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! I'm weally vevy glad to see that again!" remarked D'Arcy.

"Count the banknotes in the purse," said Wharton.

"Not necessary, deah boy. I am sure they are all there."

"Count them, ass," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Count them, fathead."

"Oh, vevy well!" said Arthur Augustus, resignedly.

And he counted the banknotes, and announced that they were intact.

The rest of the plunder was turned out of Bunter's pockets by that time. Marjorie's Dorothy-bag was taken possession of by Hazeldene; and the Rookwood fellows found their currency notes to the right amount, and Mornington received his pearl sleeve-links undamaged. Even Bunter's own famous watch was among the collection; but that was left to Bunter.

William George Bunter's face was a study,

as the purloined property was extracted, and handed round to the owners.

In the face of evidence like this, even the celebrated Ananias might have felt his wits fail him.

But even yet Bunter did not give up hope. He was so accustomed to getting out of scrapes by telling "whoppers" that he did not realise that whoppers could not serve him now.

"Well, that's that!" said Bob Cherry. "And now we've got to deal with Bunter."

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Weally, Buntah, I do not see that you can have anything to say, as the stolen property has been found in your pockets."

"Let me explain!" yelled Bunter, as there was a movement towards him among the juniors.

"Rats! Collar him!"

"Oh, let him explain," said Bob, waving back the too eager Removites. "Let's see what frightful whoppers he will spin out! Go it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I can explain everything," gasped Bunter. "I—I think you fellows might be—might be a little grateful to me, for finding the stolen property in this way."

"What?"

"That's how it is," said Bunter. "I—I set my wits to work, you know, and—and elucidated the mystery. That's how it was! I—I discovered that the stolen stuff was—was hidden in the Remove dormitory, and—and went to search for it, and—and found it! I—I was just bringing it along to you, Wharton——"

"Well, if that don't take the cake!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The juniors gazed at Bunter in silence—the silence of astonishment. That he should spin so unconvincing a yarn was amazing; but it was still more amazing that he should hope to find any believers. But the silence encouraged Bunter, and he rattled on with more confidence.

"That's exactly how it happened! I—I knew Drake wasn't any good as a detective, and—and I did his job for him! I think

you fellows might be grateful! I really think that."

"Then why did you bolt when we met you outside the dormitory?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I—I didn't——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, it was only a lark," gasped Bunter. "I—I thought I'd pull your leg, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"And why did you suggest that Morny had dropped the pin you dropped, if you were only restoring the stolen property?" hooted Lovell.

"I didn't—I—I mean, that was another joke——"

"Too many little jokes about you, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "You're too funny by half, old top."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Any more whoppers to tell, Bunter, before we scrag you?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Collar him!"

"Hold on, you fellows," yelled Bunter. "I—I haven't explained yet. The fact—the—the actual fact is, that the whole thing was a joke! I—I just hid the things, you know, to take a rise out of you! C-c-can't you fellows take a joke?"

"We're getting nearer to the facts," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"You fat rotter!" said Harry Wharton, sternly. "You played this rotten trick on us to muck up the Cricket Week, and you jolly nearly succeeded."

"It was all your fault, Wharton."

"My fault?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

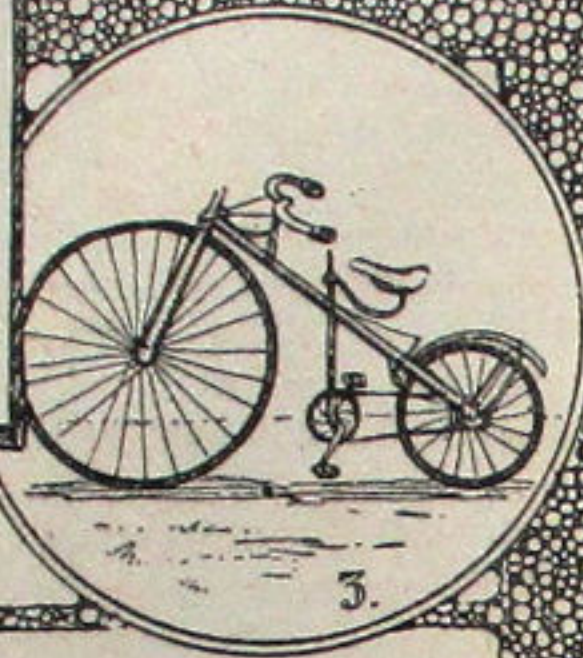
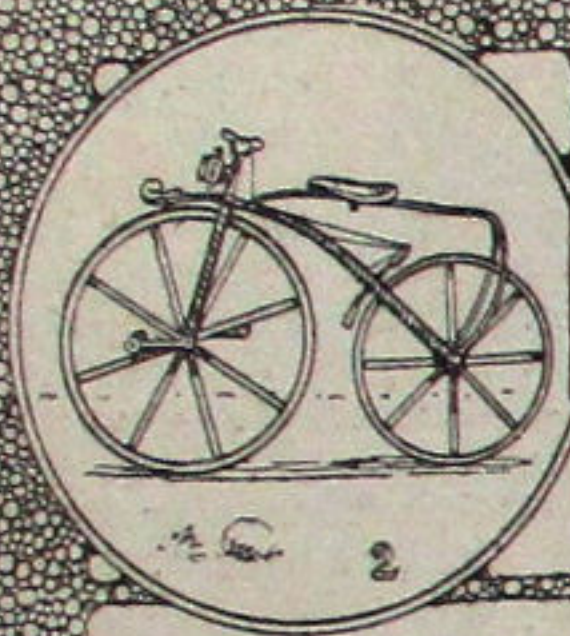
"Yes, yours," said Bunter, hotly. "If you'd played me in the Remove eleven, according to my rights, it wouldn't have happened. I warned you that if I didn't have my rights I'd muck up your dashed Cricket Week. You can't deny that."

"Why, you—you——"

"Collar him!"

The wrathful juniors were not to be

The Development of the Bicycle.



The bicycle has been in use in England for just over a century. The original machines were, of course, very crude in design, and by no means comfortable to ride. Fig. 1 illustrates one of the earliest bicycles and shows clearly how it was propelled. This particular bicycle was called the "Dandy Horse," and was not much more than a beam carried on two wheels. The rider sat in a sort of a saddle, astride the beam, and pushed the "Dandy Horse" forward by kicking the ground backwards with each foot alternately.

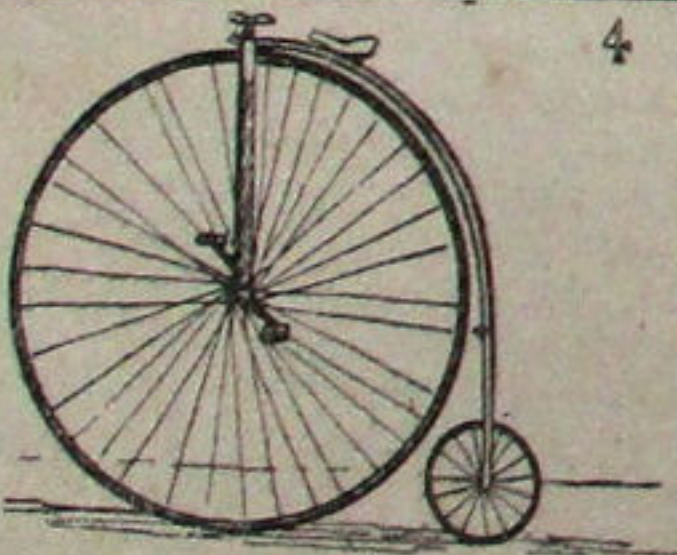
About the year 1869 a great improvement was manifest in bicycle construction. See Fig. 2. Pedals were used for the first time, but on the front wheel. This machine became universally known as the "boneshaker." One does not need to seek far for the reason.

Fig. 3 is of a bicycle of the year 1879, and shows more improvements still. The pedals, it will be noticed, are no longer on the front wheel, but in the position we have them to-day. This bicycle is the first in which a chain is used to pull the back wheel round, and is, in fact, the original model of present-day machines.

Fig. 4 shows the famous "Penny-farthing" machine, a few of which are actually still in use to-day, although they are very rare.

The bicycle began to be popular soon after 1880, when what is known as the safety bicycle was invented. Then bicycle building went ahead by leaps and bounds. Pneumatic tyres, the free wheel, new methods of gearing, etc., made cycling such a pleasure that millions of men, women, and children took it up. An up-to-date bicycle is shown in our last sketch.

Some remarkable performances have been put up on bicycles. An American cyclist is credited with having ridden 8,000 miles in a year, and in 1884 a Mr. Thomas Stevens started from San Francisco on a world tour, by bicycle, which took him three years to accomplish. Since then the globe has been traversed several times on bicycles.



restrained any longer. They closed round Bunter like a tidal wave.

That the affair was not a matter of theft at all was clear enough now, and that was a great relief to all the fellows. But Bunter's trick was exasperating to all concerned. He had almost ruined the Cricket Week—he had caused doubts and suspicions on all sides, and trouble even to the extent of fisticuffs. But for Drake's timely discovery, the Greyfriars Cricket Week would probably have finished disastrously—if it had finished at all. It was a case that called for exemplary punishment.

And exemplary punishment was what Bunter received.

Greyfriars and Rookwood and St. Jim's all joined in the proceedings, and all of them seemed very anxious to get at close quarters with Bunter.

Bunter was not at all anxious to be got at; but Bunter's wishes didn't count. He was got at—severely!

He was bumped, and he was rolled; and he ran the gauntlet of the whole crowded Rag, and the crowd almost fell over one another in their keenness to get in a whack at Bunter.

Arthur Augustus, in his excitement, gave Blake a terrific smack, and Figgins another, which were intended for Bunter, but arrived at the wrong address. But Billy Bunter received a sufficiency of whacks and smacks and thwacks. By the time he had run the gauntlet, he was feeling as if he had been through a series of earthquakes and air-raids and boiler explosions.

When the juniors crowded out of the Rag at last, satisfied that justice was done, William George Bunter was left sitting on the floor, with a strong impression that justice had been considerably over-done.

He was breathless, and gasping for his second wind. His collar was gone; most of his buttons were off; he was dusty and he was dishevelled. And for a quarter of an hour at least, Bunter's remarks were confined to:

“Ow! Ow! Ow! Wow! Yow! Oooooop! Ow!”

It was likely to be a long time before the hapless Owl of the Remove started in business again as a plotter!

THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

A Glorious Finish!

THE last day of the Greyfriars Cricket Week dawned bright and sunny.

It was a glorious day for the grand old game; and all the cricketers looked as sunny as the blue summer sky.

The clouds had rolled by; the mystery that had troubled them was a mystery no longer; and everything in the garden, as Bob Cherry said, was lovely.

Fellows, who had been a little “edge-wise” under the irritating influence of the mysterious thefts, were only anxious now to forget that there had been any trouble; Lovell and Johnny Bull were quite chummy that morning, and even Valentine Mornington smiled a smile that had no trace of sarcasm about it. If there was one clouded face, it was William George Bunter's. But nobody had any attention to waste upon William George Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Co. went down cheerfully to the cricket, with the Rookwood crowd. A little less cheerfully, perhaps, Temple Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, faced St. Jim's. Cecil Reginald Temple had hoped to atone for his defeat at the hands of Rookwood by wiping St. Jim's off the face of the earth, as it were. But the wiping-off proved to be what Hurree Jamset Ram Singh called a boot on the other leg. Tom Merry and Co. walked all over the hapless Fourth, and at noon the match was finished, with a St. Jim's victory by ninety runs.

It was a much more protracted conflict that took place on the Remove ground. The Remove finished their first innings with a total of 126, which was twenty-six more than Rookwood had scored. But Jimmy Silver and Co. were far from losing heart.

They started their second innings in great form, and by lunch they were 101 for eight wickets. The innings finished after lunch, with a total of 130.

By that time, the Fourth Form match being over, Tom Merry and Co. came along to watch Rookwood playing the Remove; and half Greyfriars was crowded about the ground to see the finish of the match.

Harry Wharton opened the innings for the

Remove, with Bob Cherry at the other end. And the two mighty batsmen of the Remove gave Rookwood a considerable amount of leather-chasing.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, watching the game sedately through his celebrated eyeglass. "Bai Jove, you fellows, it looks as if Gwayfwiahs is goin' to beat Wookwood, too! Forty for no wickets! They weally are hot stuff!"

"They are!" agreed Tom Merry. "But you never can tell."

"Pewwaps Dwake can detect which is goin' to be the winnah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Jack Drake laughed. The assistant of the Baker Street detective did not carry his detective powers to that extent. Drake was watching the match with the keenest interest, all his wishes on the side of his old school, and the success of the Remove batsmen delighted him. But there came a sudden change; in the course of an over, Bob Cherry was bowled by Jimmy Silver, and Hazeldene, succeeding him at the wicket, was caught out by Mornington, and Nugent, the next man in, was stumped. It was one more example of the glorious uncertainty of cricket.

"Thwee down for fortay!" said Arthur Augustus.

Harry Wharton was the next down, beaten by a fast ball from Jimmy Silver. But Vernon-Smith and Squiff kept the game going, while the runs piled up. Smithy fell at last, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, who took his place, was dismissed for a single—a dismaying result to the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Hard luck, old bird," said Bob Cherry, as the dusky batsman came out.

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh shook his dusky head mournfully, and remarked that the hard-luckfulness was terrific.

The runs went up, and the wickets went down, and eyes began to scan the board anxiously. Greyfriars wanted 104 to tie, 105 to win; and when they were 100 for nine wickets, the excitement was intense. Tom Brown, the New Zealander, was batting, when Peter Todd went in to join him as last man.

"Four to tie, five to win!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Stick to it, Toddy."

"Buck up, Browney!"

The Rookwood field were keenly on the alert. It was, as Arthur Augustus sagely remarked to his comrades, anybody's game now.

The ball came down to Tom Brown, and the New Zealander cut it away, and the batsmen ran. Once, twice, their feet seeming scarcely to touch the pitch; and the ball came whizzing in, straight for the batsman's wicket. Tom Brown rather felt than saw it coming, and he put on a tremendous burst of speed, and his bat clumped home. Crash went the wicket.

There was a breathless hush. But the umpire shook his head.

"Not out!"

Greyfriars breathed again.

"Hundred and two!" said Bob Cherry.

"We'll do it yet."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter! Kick him!"

Billy Bunter backed away.

"I say, don't play the goat, you chaps. I—I've got an ache all over, you know, from last night——"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Wharton unsympathetically.

Bunter sniffed.

"There goes Browney's wicket!" he said.

"And it serves you jolly well right, Wharton! Perhaps you wish now that you had played me, after all."

"Fathead!"

Billy Bunter was a little too "previous," so to speak; Browney's wicket was not gone. His bat was on the crease after a swift single before the stumps went down, and again the umpire shook his head. The New Zealand junior was taking risks for the runs that were wanted; but he had pulled through again.

"Hundred and three!" breathed Bob Cherry. "And still going strong! Put your beef into it, Toddy!"

Peter had the bowling now, and he handled it well. Jimmy Silver sent down the ball, and the Rookwood field watched like famished wolves for chances. But Peter did not give them any chances. He snicked away the ball for one; and the batsmen changed places.

And there was a buzz among the Greyfriars crowd.

"Hundred and four!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We tie, at any rate."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "One more wun wanted to win, you fellows! Bai Jove! I weally wish I were at the wicket now playin' for Gwey-fwiahs; I should weally like to make a suah thing of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Dwake, I see nothin' to cackle at in that wemark——"

Tom Brown stood steadily up to the bowling. All eyes were upon him and Jimmy Silver. There was a feeling that this was going to be the last over of the match—and it proved to be not only the last over, but the last ball.

Jimmy Silver sent it down, hot and hard. But the ready willow met it, and it sailed away. Away went the whizzing leather, with a flight that eye could hardly follow. Peter Todd was starting to run, but Tom Brown waved him back.

There was no need to run. It was a boundary hit, and the batsman knew it. From all Greyfriars came a deep-throated roar:

"Bravo!"

"Good old Greyfrairs!"

And then the green field swarmed with excited juniors, yelling and waving their hats. Greyfriars had won the second match; and that was all that was needed to fill the cup of joy for the Remove to overflowing. The cricket week had been a success!

Harry Wharton and Co. gave their visitors a hearty send-off on the following day. St. Jim's rolled away in their big car, and the brake bore the Rookwooders to the station. With much hand-shaking and waving of caps, the visitors departed; and Greyfriars settled down to the normal once more. Jack Drake was given a still heartier send-off; for all the Removites were aware that it was owing to Ferrers Locke's boy assistant that success and triumph had attended the Greyfriars Cricket Week.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 7.—SWIMMING



A splendid summer sport is this,
Its joys have oft been written;
It brings delight, and boundless bliss
To every son of Britain.
To rise upon the billow's crest,
To hear its tuneful measure,
Is often voted as the best
And grandest summer pleasure!

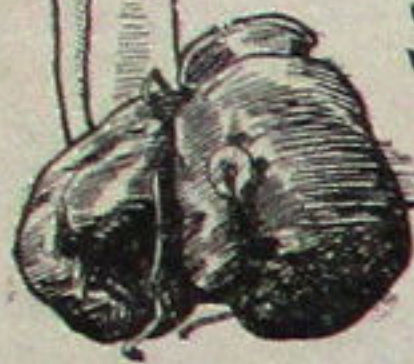
Some slackers shirk the icy dip,
The breakers and the billows;
They much prefer to "let it rip,"
And rest upon the pillows.
We know full well the lazy ways
Of Bunter and of Mauly;
Upon the couch they spend their days,
With Dickens or Macaulay!

But Robert Cherry and his clan
Are always keen on swimming;
They bathe each morning, when they can,
And through the waves go skimming.
They love to hear the breakers roar,
And see the great waves leaping;
Whilst lazy slackers by the score
Within their beds are sleeping.

To swimming, healthiest of sports,
We pay our tribute duly;
And every loyal lad supports
This pastime well and truly.
Then "three times three" for the delight
Which swimming sets before us;
All lovers of it will unite
In one whole-hearted chorus!

BOXING for BOYS

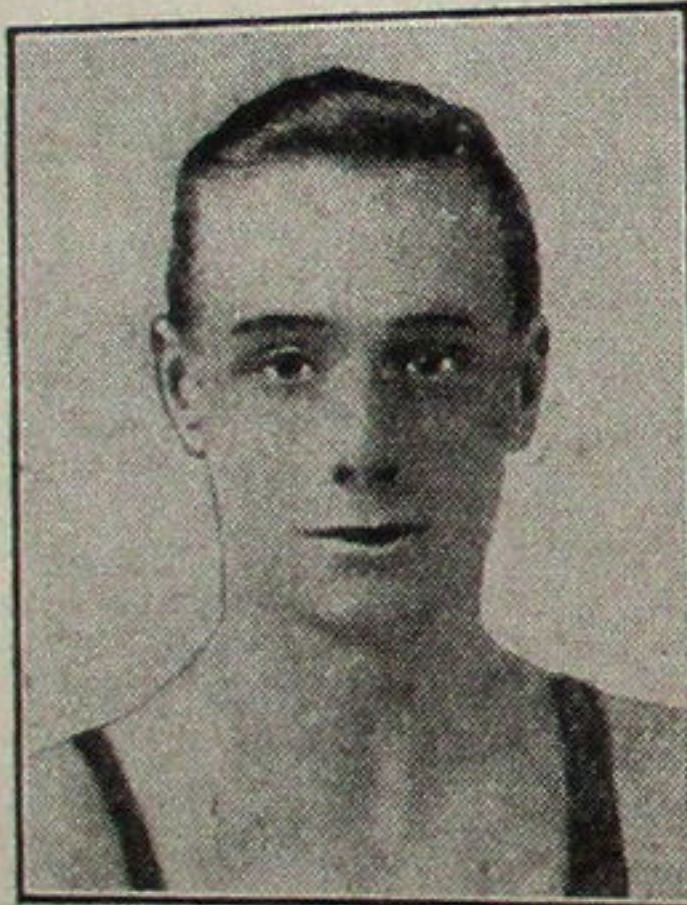
By
Stanley Hooper



LEARNING TO GIVE AND TAKE

I MAY be inviting criticism when I state that boxing is the greatest of all sports on account of the wonderful virtues it possesses; and this, in itself, is the main reason of the remarkable popularity enjoyed by boxing at the present day.

The boxing enthusiast has to learn to give and take hard blows with good humour, and to restrain himself in trying circumstances. Above all, he has to be hardy and strong. The training that is necessary for him to become an able exponent of the "Noble Art" strengthens the constitution, washes away most common ailments, and keeps him to the right course of life. Here we have concentration of mind over body, and this is necessary for man and youth alike to keep from acquiring habits that are prejudicial to good health. The commendable desire for manhood strength—to become a master of men—keeps the aspirant to boxing honours to the healthy course. The actual boxing itself lends the enthusiast confidence in himself and his abilities. This will prove of the utmost value in after life. With constant training and boxing practice comes vigour and energy, whilst self-reliance inevitably follows.



The Author of this fine article

A FEW SIMPLE EXERCISES

So, if, as is quite possible, the Ministry of Health, or the Board of Education—whoever has the matter in hand—finally decide that the qualities enumerated above will amply repay for the small amount of trouble and

time spent in the inauguration of compulsory boxing exercise in the schools, there will, so far as I can see, be only one section of the public at large that will have cause for complaint. I am referring to the members of the medical profession, whose fat bank balances are likely to diminish considerably in consequence of the all-round improvement in the health of the youthful generation.

Boys who wish to take up boxing with all the seriousness that it deserves, should promptly set to work with whole-hearted enthusiasm to prepare the con-

stitution and to fit themselves generally to withstand the strain that the arduous exercise of boxing entails.

I think that the first thing I did as a lad when commencing my boxing career was to perfect my "breathing apparatus," so that my "wind" should always be in good order. So very few people know how to breathe correctly, and so very few realise the wonderful

health benefit derived from the correct interpretation of inhaling and exhaling, that a few words of advice on this important subject would not come amiss.

Some of the results arising from faulty breathing are pallid cheeks, lustreless eyes, flat chests, lack of energy, and a tendency to chills, colds, and disease. These are only a few of the evils contracted, and are due to oxygen starvation. When breathing, hold the body in such a position that, standing or sitting, the breathing is free and perfectly natural.

The following simple exercise, adaptable to young and old alike, and performed for two or three minutes in the open air every morning upon rising, will improve the wind and incidentally tone up the whole constitution.

Stand upright and hold the arms straight at the sides, with hands extended. Then draw them outward from the sides and upward, perfectly rigid, and inhale gradually until the backs of the hands touch over the head, when the lungs should be absolutely full. Now let the hands drop slowly to the sides again, exhaling the while.

The air in the lungs should be exhausted by the time this second movement is completed. The exercise should be gone through about half a dozen times. Again, the lung capacity can be enlarged to its fullest extent by standing erect, filling the lungs, and then contracting rigidly the muscles of the hands, arms and chest, and then bending backward

and forward from the waist. Breathing exercises are essential to the would-be boxer; for to excel at the sport the enthusiast's wind, it is obvious, must be of the soundest variety.

WALKING FOR HEALTH.

Plenty of walking exercise should be indulged in. Keep the limbs nice and supple, and walk with head erect. Inhale through the nostrils and exhale through the mouth.

Regulate your breathing while walking, and fill your lungs to their utmost capacity with each breath you take until you feel they are going to burst, which will be a sure indication that the exercise is doing you good.

Remember, walking is one of the finest healthful exercises known—and the cheapest.

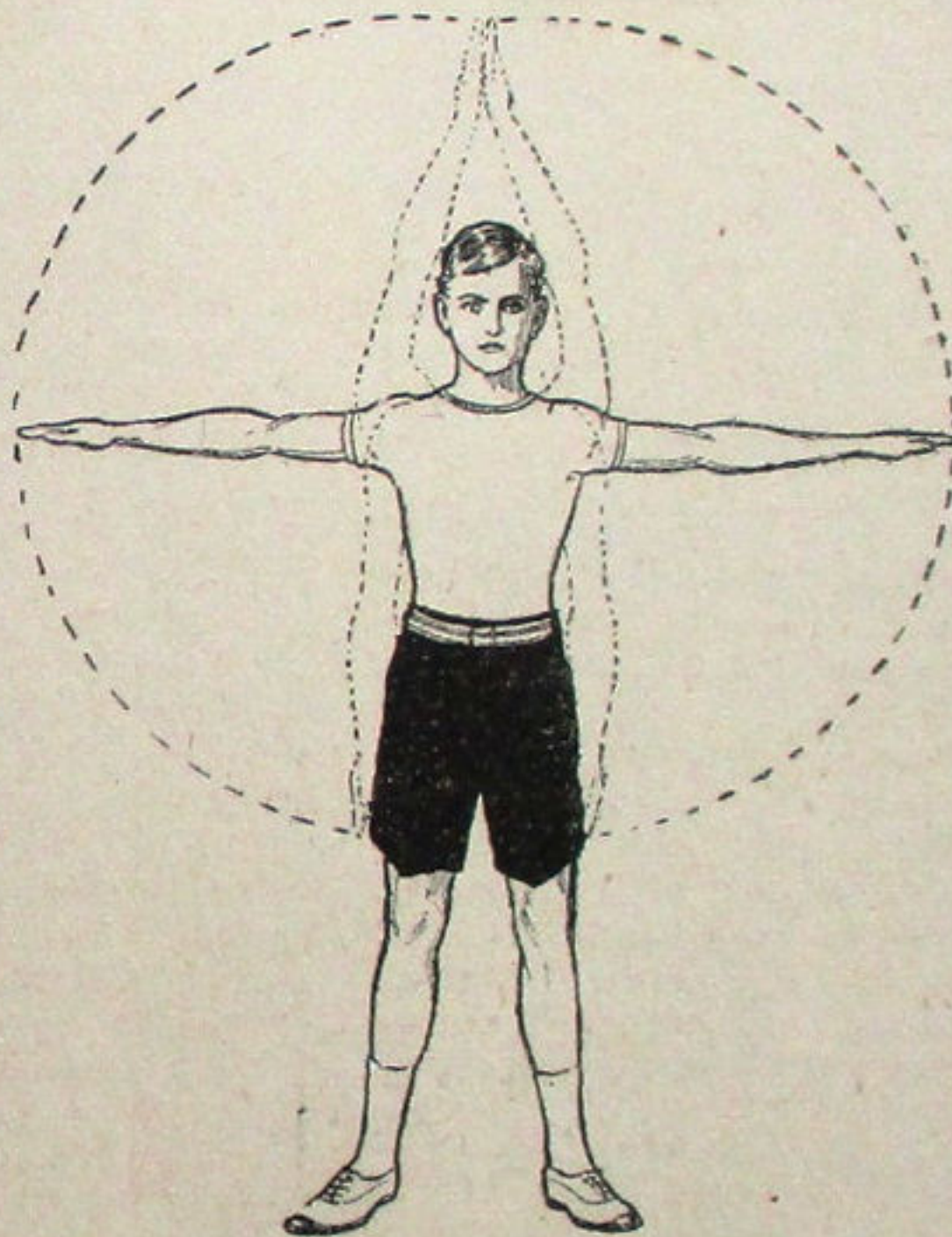
Looseness and flexibility of muscle is imperative to the boxer, with the exception of the abdominal muscles, which must be hardened and tightened in order to offer resistance against body blows.

A helpful way to toughen up the stomach region is to lie on the floor stretched out on your back, with legs perfectly straight and heels touching.

Fold your hands behind your head, then raise your legs until they are at right angles with the body.

Now sit up, by muscular exertion alone, without bending your knees.

You will find it hard at first, no doubt, but it will come to you easily after a little practice.



Illustrating the exercise described on this page

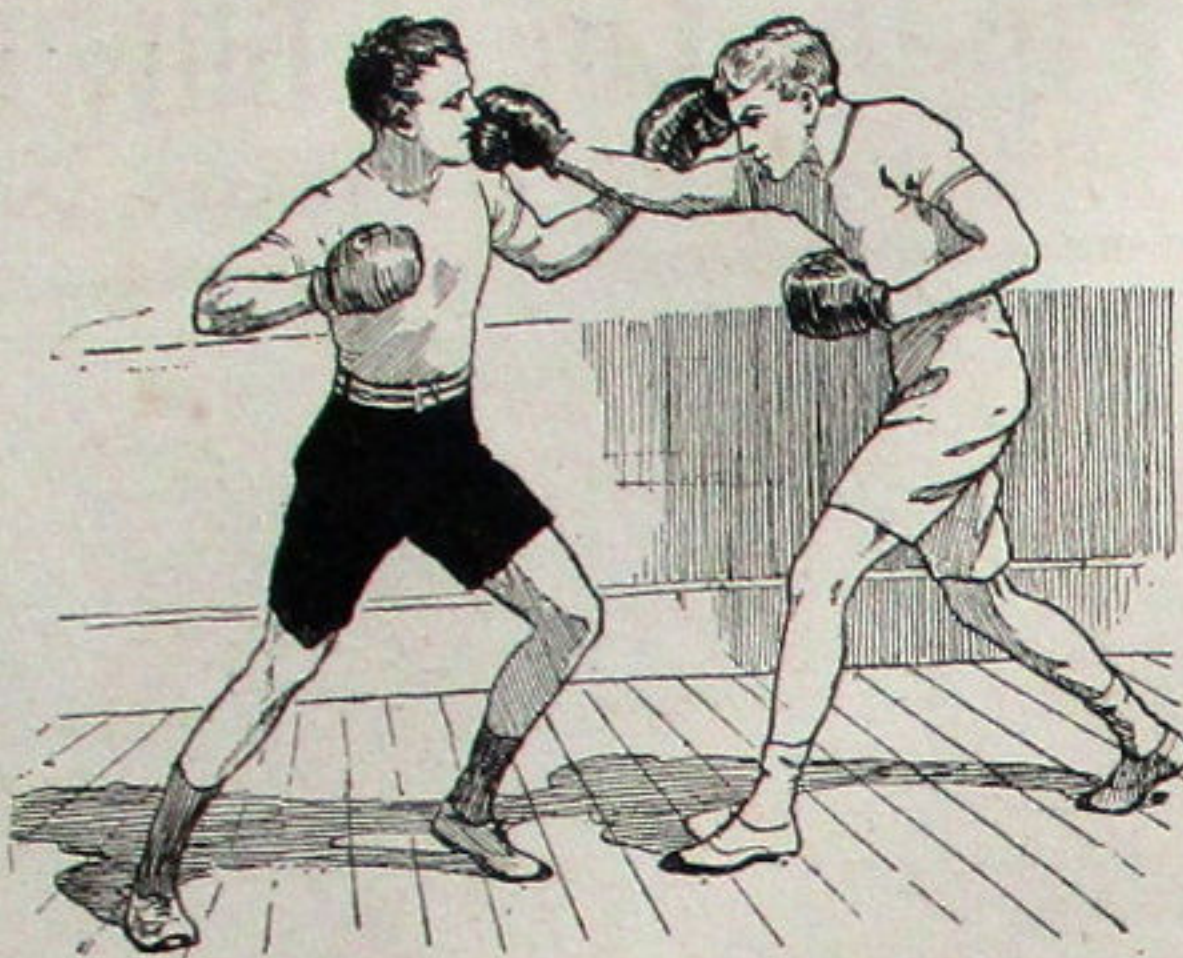
SOME HELPFUL HINTS.

By following the foregoing directions carefully you will notice a great improvement in your health and general condition in a very short space of time.

You will then be ready to don the gloves, and I should advise you to get a chum somewhere about your own age, weight, and size to practise with. You may be able to borrow a set of boxing gloves; if not, you can obtain a set fairly reasonably at any sports outfitters.

Try and get someone who is fairly proficient in the "Noble Art" to stand by and supervise your work. Perhaps you know an old army instructor, or a friend a little older than yourself who has had some experience in a local boxing club.

If you are keen you will soon pick up the rudiments of the manly art, and the more

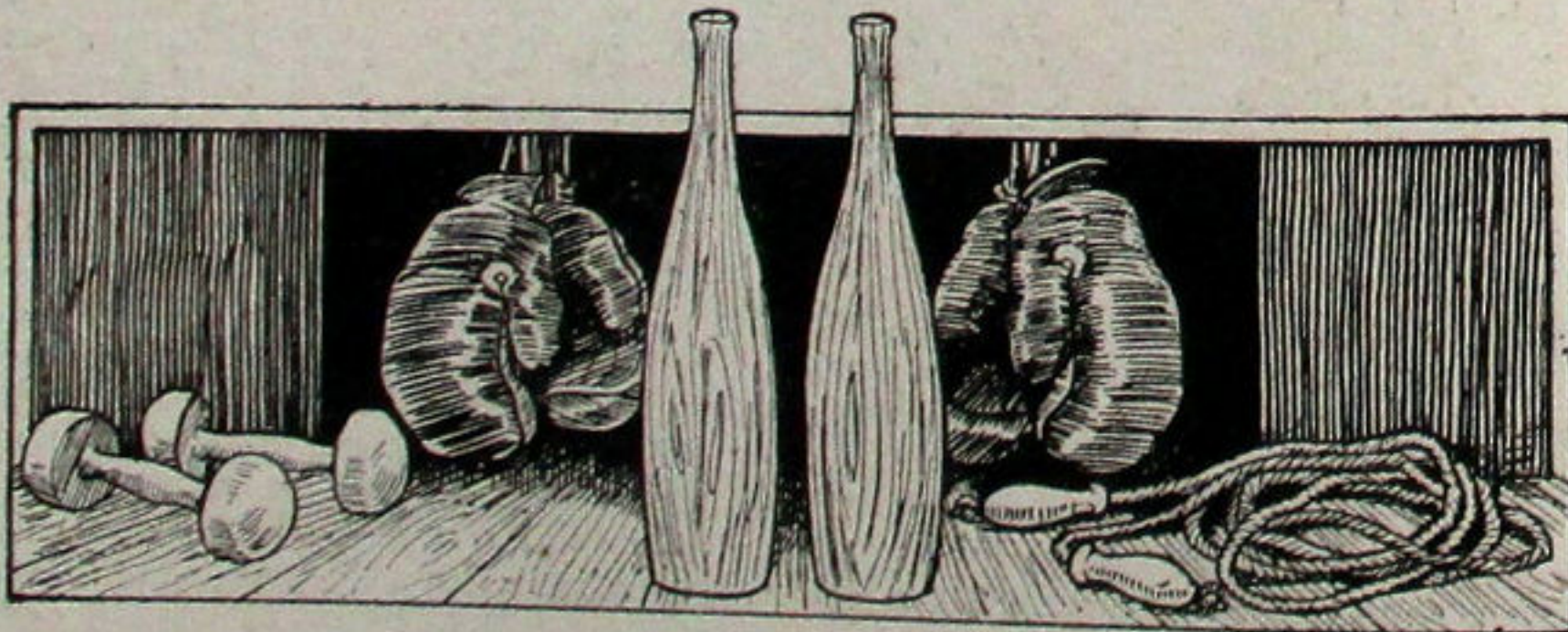


I should advise you to get a chum somewhere about your own age to practise with. (See this page)

earnest advice to you is to go in for the sport with whole-hearted zeal and zest—no half measures—taking always as your motto the words: "Sacred thy body even as thy soul."

You will succeed and the doctors will be out of work! The sport will make *men* of you all.

Stanley Cooper



scientific knowledge will come with time and experience.

Your gymnastic apparatus will at first cost you but very little. All you will require to commence with is just a light pair of dumb-bells, ditto Indian clubs, a skipping-rope, and a good set of gloves.

In conclusion, my

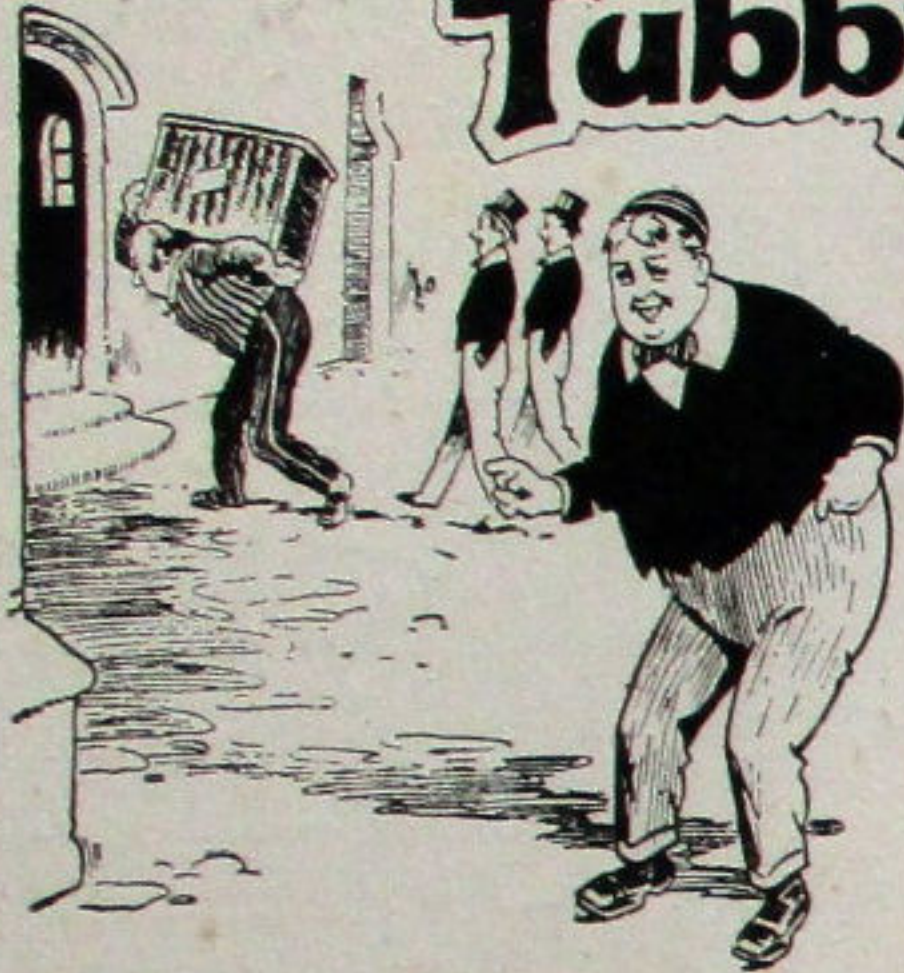
A Day in the Life of Billy Bunter

Depicted by C. H. CHAPMAN



William George Bunter is the fattest junior at Greyfriars School. Owing to his peculiar habits and customs, he does not always find life in the Remove Form at Greyfriars a bed of roses. But, as a rule, allowance is made for his little weaknesses, and, in spite of his insatiable appetite and his habit of borrowing things that do not belong to him, he gets off pretty lightly in the end!

Tubby and the Tuck Hamper!



A Story of Rookwood School.

Narrated by Teddy Grace.

REGINALD MUFFIN—commonly called Tubby, on account of his rotundity—was in despair.

There was a famine in the land.

Tubby was in the state known as "stony." It was a condition with which he was painfully familiar.

Generally, however, there were other fellows in the Fourth Form, on the Classical Side, who had ample supplies of either money or tuck—or both. And Tubby Muffin was in the habit of feeding on the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, so to speak.

But on this occasion everybody was in the same boat.

The term was drawing to a close, and the end of term is always a lean time.

Jimmy Silver & Co., the dashing leaders of the Classical Fourth, were "broke." Mornington, whose pockets were usually well-lined, had squandered all his substance. Erroll and Conroy and Van Ryn were penniless. So were the black sheep of the Form—Peele and Lattrey and Gower.

On the Modern Side, things were just as bad. Tommy Dodd was heard to remark that he proposed paying a visit to the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy. Tommy Doyle inquired—

jestingly, of course—if there happened to be a moneylender in Latcham.

You can therefore guess what sort of a plight Tubby Muffin found himself in. Despair gnawed at his vitals. He had to content himself with the meals in Hall; and the school fare, though excellent in regard to quality, was somewhat lacking in quantity.

The tuckshop was inaccessible to Tubby. And there was nothing in the study cupboard beyond a tin of very stale and ancient sardines.

"I say, you fellows," said Tubby, rolling up to Jimmy Silver & Co. in the quadrangle, "I believe I shall go under, you know."

"No such luck!" grunted Lovell.

"Oh, really, Lovell! I say, Silver, you haven't a piece of cold pudding in your pocket, by any chance?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I'm not in the habit of carrying cold pudding on my person," he said.

"A bar of chocolate, then?" pleaded Tubby.

"Sorry, porpoise, but I've nothing at all in the eating line."

"I've got a pair of bootlaces," said Newcome. "You can start on those, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby Muffin showed no desire to masticate the bootlaces.

"I'm famished!" he groaned. "I can feel starvation creeping on! I've got a sort of sinking feeling—"

"Like you had when you capsized your boat

on the river the other day?" asked Raby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Everybody seems to be broke," lamented Tubby, "and they don't give you enough in Hall to keep body and soul together. It's awful! Hallo! Here comes the postman!"

The postman's arrival kindled great expectations in the breasts of the juniors. But only in one case were the expectations realised.

There was a letter for Tubby Muffin.

Tubby fairly snatched the letter from the postman's grasp. He opened it eagerly, his little round eyes gleaming with anticipation.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood together in a group, looking mildly amused. It was a treat to watch the expression on Tubby Muffin's face.

"Good news, Tubby?" inquired Lovell.

"Yes, rather! This is from my Uncle Joseph, you know!"

"Has Uncle Joe enclosed a fat remittance?" asked Newcome.

"No."

"Then why are you beaming like a full moon?"

Tubby, having perused the letter, handed it over for his schoolfellows' inspection.

The message ran as follows:

"My dear Reginald,—I find that I omitted to send you something for your birthday. I was out of England at the time, on business, and was unable to attend to any personal matters.

"I am now making good the omission by putting on rail a hamper of foodstuffs. It is addressed to you at Coombe Station, to be

called for. I trust that when you have collected the hamper, you will thoroughly enjoy the contents. Best wishes, dear boy,

"Your affectionate

"UNCLE JOE."

Jimmy Silver & Co. were grinning.

Tubby Muffin completely misunderstood their grins.

A suspicion suddenly dawned upon the fat junior's mind—a suspicion which ripened into certainty. This letter, signed by Uncle Joe,

was not genuine. It was a jape on the part of Jimmy Silver & Co.

The jape was not a novel one.

On a previous occasion, Tubby Muffin had received a letter, purporting to come from one of his relatives, and advising him that a tuck hamper was waiting for him at the station. On going down to the station to collect it, he had discovered that the hamper was abnormally heavy. By dint of much energy and exertion, he had dragged it up to the school, only to

find that the hamper was full of bricks!

Having been caught napping before, Tubby was on his guard this time.

"What are you fellows grinning at?" he demanded.

"We're smiling at your good fortune," said Jimmy Silver.

The explanation failed to satisfy Tubby. He was thoroughly convinced by this time that the letter was a fake, and that the whole affair was a practical joke.

"Hope you enjoy the hamper, Tubby," said Lovell.



"I say, you fellows," said Tubby rolling up to Jimmy Silver and Co. in the quadrangle, "I believe I shall go under, you know." "No such luck!" grunted Lovell. (See opposite page)

"Spare your old pals a slice of cake a-piece!" pleaded Raby.

Tubby Muffin rolled away without replying. He was looking very thoughtful.

Presently he broke into a cackle.

"I know!" he exclaimed gleefully. "This is a ripping chance to pay off a very old score!"

There were two fellows in the Fourth who had annoyed Tubby Muffin considerably. They had caught him raiding their study, and had bullied him unmercifully, taking it in turn to chastise him with a cricket stump.

Those two fellows were Peele and Gower.

Tubby now scented an excellent opportunity of getting even with the cads of the Fourth.

He waited until afternoon lessons were over. Then he rolled up to Peele and Gower in the quadrangle.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo!" said Peele, stopping short. "What does our corpulent friend want?"

"There's a hamper of tuck waiting for me at the station," said Tubby. "My Uncle Joe sent it."

"Lucky beggar!" said Gower.

"The fact is," Tubby went on, "I don't feel like having a blessed orgy. I've got horrible pains in the chest; I think it's indigestion. I shall never be able to shift the contents of that hamper."

"Then we'll jolly soon shift them for you!" said Peele, with a chuckle.

"Yes, rather!" said Gower. "We're always willing to do a chap a good turn."

Tubby Muffin waved his hand in the direction in which the station lay.

"You're quite welcome to go and collect the hamper," he said, "and consider it your own."

Peele and Gower were frankly astonished.

Tubby Muffin's name was not usually associated with philanthropy. He had never been known to give away a tuck hamper, or any portion thereof. His generosity, unexpected as it was, was truly amazing.

Peele rubbed his eyes. Gower pinched himself, to make sure he was not dreaming.

Tubby Muffin must be in a very bad way, they reflected, if he was unable to eat the contents of a tuck hamper.

Peele was the first to find his voice.

"You — you mean that, Tubby?" he gasped.

"Of course!"

"We can collect the hamper, and scoff all the contents?" said Gower.

Tubby nodded.

"But why do you go out of your way to shower this kindness on us?" asked Peele suspiciously. "There's no catch in it, I hope?"

"Not at all!"

The fact is," said Tubby Muffin, in a burst of confidence, "I'm very much attached to you two fellows. I'd do anything for you—go anywhere with you—follow you to the ends of the earth. I—I'm your stout pal, you know."

"Very stout indeed!" murmured Gower, glancing at Tubby's ample form.

The cads of the Fourth were amazed beyond measure.

Between themselves and Tubby Muffin there had been no bond of friendship such as existed between David and Jonathan, and Damon and Pythias.

As a matter of fact, Peele and Gower had



"You're welcome to go and collect my hamper," said Tubby, "and consider it your own!" (See this page)

been at daggers drawn with their plump schoolfellow. This sudden burst of generosity on Tubby Muffin's part knocked them all of a heap.

They decided to go and collect the hamper before Tubby had time to change his mind.

Thanking him rather breathlessly, they sprinted down to the school gates.

Tubby Muffin remained where he stood, doubled up with merriment.

"He, he, he! What a lark!" he gurgled. "Those bounders will have a terrible job, carting that hamper up to the school. And when at last they manage to get it here, they'll find it full of



There was a strangled cry from the doorway, as Tubby rushed towards his hamper. "My hamper! Gimme my hamper!" (See page 138)

bricks! Oh, what a giddy sell! He, he, he!"

Peele and Gower, however, had no intention of turning themselves into a sort of fatigue party.

They brought the hamper up to the school

with the minimum of trouble. It was placed on the station hack, and it was the ancient horse which had to bear the burden—plus the weight of Peele and Gower.

Mack the porter was requested to convey the hamper, on arrival, to Peele's study. Mack struggled along valiantly, with the hamper on his broad back, and Peele and Gower followed. Tubby Muffin formed the tail-end of the procession.

He meant to be in at the death, so to speak. It would be worth a guinea a box, he reflected, to see the expressions on the faces of Peele and Gower when the hamper was opened.

Advancing through the study doorway in a crouching position, Mack allowed the hamper to slide down his back on to the floor. Then he raised himself erect, and mopped his perspiring brow.

"'Ot work, young genclmen!" he observed.

Peele was already prising open the lid of the hamper. He raised it at length, and a layer of packing was visible.

Tubby Muffin, looking on from the doorway, chuckled. He could guess what was underneath the packing!

The next moment Tubby had the shock of his life.

When the straw and shavings had been cleared away, a choice assortment of wholesome tuck lay revealed!

"Ripping!" said Peele, drawing a deep breath.

"Absolutely top-hole!" exclaimed Gower.

There was a strangled cry from the doorway.

"My hamper! Gimme my hamper!"

Peele and Gower stared in surprise at the speaker.

"But you've already made it over to us, with your blessin'!" said Peele.

"Oh, crumbs! I—I thought——" stuttered Tubby Muffin.

"The hamper's ours," said Gower, "and we're going shares. I must say your Uncle Joe knows how to make up a hamper, Tubby!"

"Young gents!" chimed in Mack the porter. "Which the weight of this 'ere 'amper was suthin' crool!"

Peele tossed a shilling to Mack, who shuffled contentedly out of the study.

As for Tubby Muffin, he was in a state bordering on frenzy. He had jumped to an entirely false conclusion.

The letter from Uncle Joe, and the hamper which followed it, had both been genuine!

Peele and Gower were deaf to Tubby's protestations. They proceeded to "whack out" the contents of the hamper between them.

"It's mine! It's mine, I tell you!" screamed Tubby.

"You said you had horrible pains in the chest, and didn't feel like having an orgy," said Peele, solemnly.

"And you told us we were quite welcome to consider the hamper our own," added Gower, "and we're going to."

"But I didn't know! I—I——"

Tubby Muffin attempted to gain possession of the hamper by force. He was repulsed with heavy casualties, as a war correspondent might say.

Peele and Gower had the contents of the hamper to themselves.

With the object of pacifying their plump school-fellow, they made him a present of a single slice of plum cake.

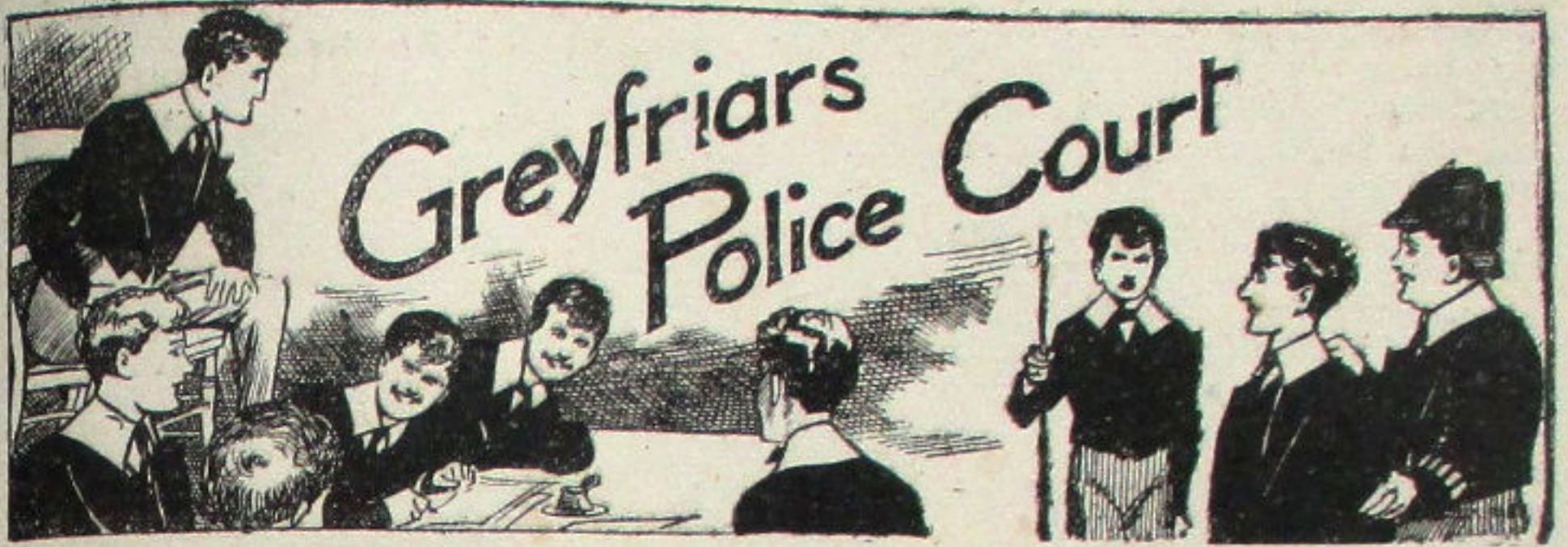
Tubby accepted it with a growl.

And that was the only "crumb" of consolation that the unfortunate Tubby Muffin received!



They made Tubby a present of a single slice of plum cake. (See this page)

THE END



Being a Record of the latest Sitting of the Junior Courts of Justice



THE FORTUNE-TELLER

Fisher T. Fish Sentenced for Fraud

THERE was quite a commotion in court when a hatchet-faced youth named FISHER TARLETON FISH was hurled into the dock.

Prisoner gave his age as fifteen and a decimal fraction, and his address as The Aquarium, East-two-hundred-and-ninety-ninth Street, New York City. He described himself as a man of means.

MAGISTRATE: Sure you don't mean a man of meanness? (*Laughter.*)

PRISONER: I guess these hyer court proceedings are a howling farce!

MAGISTRATE: Tweak his nose, Constable Bull, for contempt of court! That's the idea! Now, let's get on with the—er—washing!

MR. ROBERT CHERRY, K.C., who had been making copious notes on his shirt-cuffs, rose to address the court.

MAGISTRATE: Are you the counsel for the—h'm!—persecution?

MR. CHERRY: Ay, ay, cap'n!

MAGISTRATE: Then don't be too long-winded with your opening speech. I'm anxious to adjourn to the tuckshop. (*Laughter.*)

MR. CHERRY: Prisoner is charged, your worship, with obtaining dough by false pretences.

MAGISTRATE: Great Scott! Has he looted a baker's shop?

MR. CHERRY: Nunno, your worship! By "dough," I mean money—coin of the realm—

brass — tin — greenbacks — spondulicks! Prisoner has defrauded several silly mugs at Greyfriars. In fact, he defrauded me! (*Loud laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: In what way, old fruit?

MR. CHERRY: He professed to be able to tell fellows' fortunes by studying the palms of their hands, your worship. For instance, he examined Billy Bunter's paws, and predicted that Bunter would become a coal-heaver. (*Laughter.*) He examined my friend, Mr. Linley's, and said he would rise to dizzy heights, like the fellow who invented dynamite. He examined my own snow-white palms, and he—he said—

MAGISTRATE: Yes, yes! What did he say?

MR. CHERRY (*wrathfully*): That my future would be dark and stormy; that I should be disappointed in love; that a dark-haired villain who called himself captain of the Remove would constantly cross my path and thwart my ambitions. Finally, that my declining days would be spent in a dungeon at Dartmoor. (*Laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: He said that, did he? And what was his fee for giving you this interesting information?

MR. CHERRY: A tanner, your worship. He said that if I gave him another tanner, he'd paint my future in glowing colours! (*Laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: These fortune-telling stunts interest me! I shall be glad if prisoner will step up on to the bench and tell my own.

PRISONER: Yep! I shall be delighted, your worship!

MAGISTRATE: Step this way, then, and mind you don't trip over the slumbering form of the Court Usher!

(Prisoner promptly joined his worship on the bench.)

MAGISTRATE (extending his hand): Now, you see my hand? Does it suggest anything to you concerning my past?

PRISONER: Yep; you haven't had a really good wash for weeks, your worship! (Loud laughter.)

MAGISTRATE: Why, you—you—

PRISONER: You have also been severely caned within the past twenty-four hours.

MAGISTRATE: That's true enough, but don't dwell upon such painful subjects. What of my future?

PRISONER: Everything depends on whether you acquit me or not. If you don't, your future will be blighted, I guess. You'll suffer dreadful agony, occasioned by a swollen nose and two black eyes; you'll be crossed in love; you'll be hurled from your high estate; you'll be haunted by the thought that you've punished a prominent American citizen—

MAGISTRATE: And supposing I acquit you?

PRISONER: In that case, everything in the garden will be lovely. Fame and fortune will be yours. Your present income, consisting of the fines you inflict and the contents of



"Does my hand suggest anything to you?"
"Yep! You haven't had a really good wash for weeks, your worship!" (See this page)

the poor-box, will be doubled—trebled, in fact! And instead of being regarded as the biggest freak who ever sat on a bench, you'll be looked up to with awe and reverence. In short, your worship, you'll make a mark—

MAGISTRATE (grimly): Yes, I think I will! Hand me the court poker, somebody! (Laughter.)

(His worship, having been presented with the poker, proceeded to belabour the prisoner.)

PRISONER: Yaroooooh! Chuckit! Stoppit! Wharrer you up to, you mugwump?

MAGISTRATE: I'm making a mark—several, in fact! (Loud laughter.)

Having chastised the prisoner, his worship sentenced him to one hour's detention in the woodshed and half an hour's imprisonment in the coal-hole, the sentences to run concurrently.

JOTLAND YARD'S LITTLE JOKE!

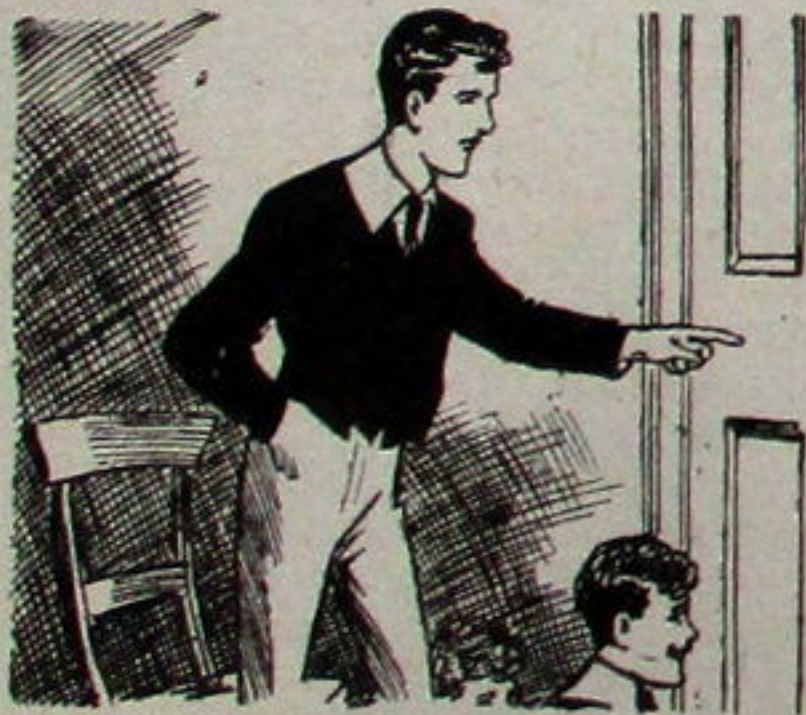
His Worship's Scathing Comments!

A BURLY youth, named George Bulstrode, was charged with ill-treating a fag.

MAGISTRATE: Bullying, eh? Well, this court has a short way with bullies. You will be sentenced to receive ninety-nine strokes with—

MR. CHERRY: Might I suggest that your worship hears the evidence first and pronounces sentence afterwards?

MAGISTRATE: Wouldn't be a bad idea, would it? Call the first witness.



Mr. Robert Cherry, K.C., who had been making copious notes on his shirt-cuffs, rose to address the court. (See previous page)

At this juncture Detective-Inspector Penfold, of Jotland Yard, turned a double-somersault and alighted in the witness-box.

MAGISTRATE (*sternly*): This is not a circus!

WITNESS: No? Then it must be a menagerie!

MAGISTRATE: What leads you to think that?

WITNESS: The sight of your face! (*Loud laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: You'll rouse my magisterial wrath to such an extent that I shall be compelled to dot you on the boko, as the saying goes! Now, you say that prisoner ill-treated a fag?

WITNESS: That's so, your worship.

MAGISTRATE: But he's got a nice, kind face. I can't understand him doing anything like that. Kindly relate the circumstances.

WITNESS: On the 32nd instant, your worship, I was in the Close, disguised as a tree-trunk, when I saw Skinner strolling under the elms, smoking a cigarette. Prisoner came up to him, snatched the cigarette out of his mouth, and crushed it under his heel.

MAGISTRATE: And that's what you call ill-treating a fag?

WITNESS: Precisely, your worship!

MAGISTRATE: I suppose you think that's funny?

WITNESS (*in alarm*): Anybody would think that I was the prisoner!

MAGISTRATE: So you are! Where's the public executioner?



William Gosling, the keeper of the gate, was the next prisoner to appear. (See page 142)

P.C. JOHNNY BULL: Here, your worship!

MAGISTRATE: Take this map-pole, and belabour our humorous friend until he squeals for mercy!

VOICE FROM THE GALLERY: Lay it on, Johnny! The bounder got me convicted last week for making faces at the magistrate! (*Laughter.*)

VICTIM: Hold on! You can't commit assault and battery on me! I'm a detective!

MAGISTRATE: And a very defective detective, at that! Pile in, Johnny! You needn't be afraid of busting the map-pole! (*Renewed laughter, followed by shrill yells of anguish from the victim.*)

PRISONER: What about me, your worship?

MAGISTRATE: You're acquitted, old bean. Hop it!

PRISONER: But aren't I to be recompensed for all the inconvenience I've suffered?

MAGISTRATE: Oh—ah—certainly! Take a jimmy-o'-goblin out of the poor-box, will you?

PRISONER: But the poor-box has been removed from its accustomed hook on the wall, your worship.

MAGISTRATE: That's a tragedy! Still, it can't be helped. The court will adjourn for a few minutes, while I go to the tuckshop and fortify myself with a few siphons of soda-water.

As his worship left the court, it was noticed that one of his coat-pockets presented a somewhat bulging appearance. Evidently it contained the missing poor-box!



William Stott was charged with smoking a fat cigar during court proceedings. (See page 143)

GOSLING'S GRIEVANCES
Distressing Scene in Court!

WILLIAM GOSLING, the keeper of the gate, was the next prisoner to appear. He saluted the Bench by respectfully tugging his forelock.

MAGISTRATE: It grieves me more than I can say to see a man of your age in the dock. There is some excuse for the younger prisoners, who have not yet arrived at years of discretion. But when a man of ninety-four so far forgets himself as to—

PRISONER (indignantly): Which I ain't ninety-four yet—not by long chalks!

MAGISTRATE: Then what, pray, is your age?

PRISONER: I've seen sixty-seven summers an' sixty-eight winters, yer worship.

MAGISTRATE: H'm! You are not yet seventy?

PRISONER: Hindeed not, yer worship! I hurls the hinsinuation back in yer teeth!

MAGISTRATE (grimly): If you are not yet seventy years of age, what do you mean by going down to the post-office in the village, and drawing an old-age pension?

PRISONER: Oh, crumbs! I—I—

MAGISTRATE: Either you are defrauding the Government, or you are a direct descendant of Ananias! Which is it?

MR. CHERRY, K.C.: I submit that it's both, your worship! (*Laughter.*)

PRISONER: The—the fact is, yer worship, I—I've just turned seventy!

MAGISTRATE: Same here! I've just turned



On his Worship's return it was noticed that his complexion was a sickly yellow. (See opposite page)



After a brief interval Mr. Prout came charging into court. He carried a Winchester repeater. Barristers and jurymen fled for their lives! (See opposite page)

seventy prisoners out, and ordered them to the dungeons! And you'll be the next one!

PRISONER: Spare me, yer worship! Think of me wife an' fambly!

MAGISTRATE: You know jolly well that you're a flighty young bachelor, Gossy! By the way, what's the charge against you?

MR. CHERRY: The charge is a very serious one, your worship. Last night six members of the Remove Form paid a visit to the cinema at Courtfield. When they got back to Greyfriars they found the gates locked. They called upon prisoner to unlock them, but he refused. He remarked, "Wot I says is this 'ere—'ow dare you young rips come rolling up at this time o' night? Which I'll report yer."

MAGISTRATE: Did he carry out his threat?

MR. CHERRY: Yes, your worship. He summoned Quelchy, and the six fellows got it where the chicken got the chopper.

CHORUS FROM THE GALLERY: "Shame!" "Scrag him!" "Pulverise him!" "Give him six months' hard, your worship!"

PRISONER (pleadingly): Which I was only doin' my dooty, yer worship! It went against the grain to 'ave to report them young gents, but dooty comes before everythin'. You know wot Cromwell said at the Battle of Waterloo? "England expects that every man this day will do 'is dooty!" Well, I follered that there maxim.

MAGISTRATE: Prate not to me of duty! You got six fellows into a row—

PRISONER (*with a sudden burst of anger*): An' I'm glad—werry glad! The young rips in question ain't given me a single tip all through the term! I've attended to their luggidge for 'em—I've 'elped 'em in all sorts o' troubles—I've bin a perfect father to 'em. I 'ave—an' they ain't so much as said, "'Ere you are, Gossy, 'ere's tuppence. Go an' drink our 'ealth in Guv'ment ale!" (*Laughter.*) Alas! 'ow black is man's ingratitude!

MAGISTRATE: Who were the six fellows in question?

PRISONER: There was Master Skinner, an' Master Snoop, an' Master Stott, an' three more of the same kidney.

MAGISTRATE: And they've not given you a tip all through the term?

PRISONER: Not a penny-piece, yer worship! Master Skinner said as 'ow he'd remember me when 'is ship came 'ome; but his ship—like Master Bunter's postal-order—is a long time comin'! (*Laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: I'm jolly glad you reported the mean, stingy beasts! And I hope Quelchy laid it on good and hard! As for you, Gosling, I am satisfied that you acted from the best of motives, and from the highest sense of "dooty." You are acquitted.

PRISONER: Yer worship's kindness is far in excess of yer personal beauty! (*Loud laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: Go—or you'll find yourself charged with contempt of court!

Prisoner shuffled away.

REPORTS IN BRIEF

William Stott was charged with smoking a fat cigar during the court proceedings.

MAGISTRATE: Has he finished the cigar?

MR. MARK LINLEY, K.C.: No; but it's nearly finished him, your worship. (*Laughter.*)

MAGISTRATE: I'll trouble you to hand me the unfinished cigar. Thanks!

His worship then left the court, remarking that he would be back in half an hour. On his return it was noticed that his complexion was a sickly yellow.

MAGISTRATE (*to prisoner*): I cannot congratulate you on your choice of cigars. The beastly thing's made me feel quite ill!

PRISONER: What! Have you been smoking my cigar?

MAGISTRATE: Not at all. I merely took it away in order to have it dissected. I found it totally unfit for human consumption, in the same way that you're totally unfit for human society! You will receive a round dozen with the court poker.

P.C. Johnny Bull carried out the sentence, and the members of the Greyfriars Ambulance Corps carried out the prisoner.

A guileless-looking youth named Alonzo Theophilus was charged with loitering in the coal-cellar for an unlawful purpose.

MAGISTRATE: What were you doing?

PRISONER: My brother Peter called me a silly ass, and when I remonstrated with him he told me to go and eat coke. I therefore adjourned to the coal-cellar. (*Loud laughter.*)

Prisoner was handed over to the medical authorities, in order that his mental condition might be inquired into.

Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout was summoned for discharging firearms to the peril of the public.

Prisoner—possibly because he happened to be a master—did not appear.

MAGISTRATE: Where's the Court Usher? Oh, there you are—fast asleep, as usual. Rouse yourself, man, and go and tell old Prout to come here at once!

COURT USHER: I'd rather you delivered the message yourself, your worship!

MAGISTRATE: Go, varlet!

After a brief interval, Mr. Prout came charging into the court. He carried a Winchester repeater.

MAGISTRATE: Help! Murder!

MR. CHERRY (*soothingly*): You are in no danger, your worship. Mr. Prout is levelling his weapon at the foreman of the jury.

MAGISTRATE: Therefore he's bound to hit me.

The next moment there was a loud report, followed by a shattering of glass.

Barristers and jurymen and constables fled for their lives, and there was no need for his worship to say, "Clear the Court." Mr. Prout had already cleared it.

THE MESSENGERS

BY CLIVE FENN

IT was a bleak and blinding day of snow, and the two horsemen from Revik City had their work cut out to get on through a desolate country in which there were no tracks now, while they were followed, as they knew well, by the emissaries of the guerilla chief, Stanislas. Revik had not yet settled down as the new capital of the new State of Rothnia. It wanted help, and Ivan and Stepan had been deputed to carry the despatch to chief headquarters, asking for aid. But the mischief was that Stanislas and his roving bands of freebooters were infesting all the land. Stanislas did not wish for order and peace. Such things would stop his filibustering for ever and a day.

"Not a sign of the rebels!" grunted Ivan in his moustache as he walked his horse down into a valley. "I reckon our commander was worrying himself without a cause. I would for my part like a meeting with some of the scum. Warm one. Faugh, it is cold!"

Stepan nodded. He was an old campaigner.

"Ah!" he growled.

He was thinking of the plight of the folks in Revik, their supplies cut off by the insurgents, no corn, no mutton, nothing. The last supply convoy was diverted to the camp of Stanislas, who, with his followers, was in clover.

"Hear anything?" asked Ivan, after they had been riding on for another hour.

"No," said his comrade, getting chatty again.

"There it is again!" cried Ivan, turning in his saddle.

From far away came once more the low muttering sound which had caused Ivan to speak.

Wolves!

The horses threw up their heads and showed

signs of alarm. The headquarters, where the message meant deliverance for Revik and its famished people, was still many miles distant to the west.

Behind, the alarm note was plainer than before.

"Your beast is fresher than mine," said Ivan as he felt for his wallet. "If it comes to it, you shall ride on. I will settle with those brutes."

"I shall not leave you," replied the other.

As he spoke he hazarded a glance over his shoulder. They had passed out of the valley on to the plains, and the white expanse, touched as with a brush with the shadow of night, was dotted with grey forms.

Ivan sprang from his saddle as his mount stumbled and fell to its knees, for a wolf had charged and fixed its fangs in the horse's leg. Stepan was at his comrade's side, and their revolvers for a time checked the hideous onslaught, but the grey tide swept forward irresistibly. The sword of Ivan flashed in the air. His companion's revolver cracked for the last time, sending another savage ranger of the wilderness to earth, and it was then a diversion occurred. One of the pack threw up its head and howled, and there floated across the landscape the faintest cloud of smoke.

The two men looked and saw what had saved them. The pack wavered and fell away, and from a quarter of a mile away came the crackling of a bivouac fire. A party of Stanislas's men were camping for the night not far off.

It was fortunate that night was near. The second enemy never saw the two riders stealing off into the shadows. They would have been easy prey, for speed was impossible. But this was how the message got through and Revik was saved.



Ivan's sword flashed in the air, and his companion's revolver cracked! (See "The Messengers" on opposite page) (145)

THE GOLD TRAIL.



A Thrilling Story of African Adventure

BY ERNEST BRINDLE

CHAPTER I.

LOST IN THE WILDS!

DEEP in the heart of a wild and desolate valley begirt by great mountains, a white man, lost, despairing, sat huddled against a big rock on the bank of an unknown stream.

Want and privation had worn him to a shadow. The fire of a wasting fever burned in his eyes. His clothes were in tatters. The strips of deer-skin that he had bound round his feet had split and become useless to protect them.

Clasped in his arms was a golden-haired baby-girl. She was fast asleep. The soft flush of perfect health showed in her dimpled cheeks; no falling shadow of fear, no stab of hunger, disturbed her sweet repose.

The man was dying so that she should live. So that she should not lack for nourishment he had denied himself of any share of the food he carried with him, existing for days on such roots and berries as were eatable.

Now he had come to the end of his struggle with fate. His strength was gone; the terrible African swamp fever had him in its grim clutch. The death he dreaded, not for his

own but for the child's sake, was reaching out invisible hands to claim him.

"No!" he cried hoarsely, his heart filling with anguish at the thought. "I will not die and leave my darling alone and helpless in this awful place! Than that, it would be far, far better that she should perish with me."

He rose to his feet, only to stagger and sink weakly down again, utterly exhausted even by so slight an effort.

His foot dislodged a piece of loose rock. It rolled over, sparkling in the blazing sunlight, so that the man, his attention suddenly arrested, stared at it in startled wonder.

Reaching out a trembling hand he picked up the rock, and slowly turned it over. It was veined with a dull, yellow metal that shone and gleamed in the light as he moved it to and fro.

"Gold!" he exclaimed, his mind swiftly oblivious to all else but the thrilling fact of his great discovery. "Gold at last!"

Shaken with excitement, he looked round at the great rocks all about him, and saw that they, too, were streaked with gold.

So the tale of the Valley of Gold that he

had heard was, after all, a true one. It had fired his imagination when he first heard it.

With wife and child, he had set out to search for the new El Dorado that Zukali, the old Zulu witch-doctor, had told him about. Week after week, month after month, he had pursued his quest with a dogged faith and resolve that nothing could shake. And when, at last, doubts and misgivings crept into his mind, it was his brave young wife who inspired him with fresh hope and courage.

So they travelled on, farther and farther into the unknown, until both were stricken down with the deadly swamp fever.

The Kaffir servants deserted them, driving off in the big ox-wagon during the night, and taking away everything of value but a small medicine-chest and a meagre supply of food and fresh water.

Death passed by Lester Tremayne, but it took from him the one whom he loved better than his own life. In the shadow of a mighty rock he laid his wife to rest, marking her grave with a simple wooden cross.

Then he went onward again with his baby-girl, bereft of all hope. All desire to reach the fabled Valley of Gold left him. His one care was for the helpless little mite he carried in his arms.

Ever deeper into the trackless wilds he

pushed his way, hoping against hope that he might come to some native village, or encounter a wandering party of white men.

Never a living soul did he meet. No sign of human habitation gladdened his aching eyes. He and his child were alone in the wilderness.

And now the goal he had set himself to reach was his at last. The Valley of Gold, that old Zukali had spoken of, lay before him. He had found it, this place of hidden wealth, but too late.

The child stirred in his arms, sighed, and then nestled closer to his breast. He gazed down at her with a look of sadly-yearning affection in his drawn, haggard face.

He closed his eyes, thinking of his little one, seeking for an inspiration that might show him how to ensure her safety after he had gone.

At that moment a fish rose to the surface of the stream below with a loud splash. The sound flashed a thought to the man's brain that

he lost no time in acting upon.

Opening the oil-sheet in which he carried his few possessions, he took out a pocket-diary, and started adding to the written pages. After writing for some time he tore the written pages from the diary, rolled them



"Gold!" he exclaimed, picking up the piece of rock with a trembling hand. "Gold at last!" (See opposite page.)

tightly together, and then thrust the roll into an empty water-flask.

After securely corking it, Tremayne threw the flask into the stream and it was quickly carried away. He watched it until it was out of sight, hoping and praying that it would fall into the hands of someone who, acting on the written instructions it contained, might be the means of saving the life of his child.

"I can do no more," he muttered. "May Heaven above guard my darling, and bring her safely out of danger. I can no longer shield her from harm."

Making a pillow of his coat for her head, he gently laid her down, and then waited for the end. The child slept on through the scorching heat of the day. As the sun was sinking behind the peaks of the mountains in a flaming ball of crimson, she started up, and looked round with innocently wondering gaze.

"Daddy!" she cried, toddling towards him. "Is oo asleep, daddy? I'se so hungry!"

The man, still and lifeless as the great rock towering above him, did not speak. Never again would she hear his voice. Fatherless, motherless, she was alone in the wilderness!

Catching sight of some food that Tremayne had put out for her, she laughed gaily, and hastened to satisfy her hunger. Then, finding that the attempts she made to waken her father were of no avail, she gave way to an outburst of childish grief.

Tears changed to smiles of delight as she saw the moon rising in the sky. Gaily she skipped along between the rocks, stretching out her tiny hands to grasp the beams of silvery light, laughing and prattling to herself in gleeful excitement.

Tiring at last she sat down, leaning her fair head against the trunk of a withered tree. Her eyes closed. In another moment she was fast asleep, with none to watch over her, a lost child in the wilderness!

CHAPTER II.

AFTER MANY YEARS!

ACROSS the African veldt came a drove of oxen, moving with slow, ponderous tread, in charge of a mounted white man and several Kaffirs, who were on foot.

The horseman, a lean, sinewy little Scotchman named Wilson Grant, had bought the oxen from a Boer farmer, at a place called Delspruit, and was taking them to his farm, some thirty miles away.

A wild shout from the Kaffirs suddenly warned him that something had gone amiss. One of the oxen, straggling out of the line, had slipped down the deep bank of a dried-up water course.

The terrified beast made frantic efforts to clamber out, but without success, and he had to be roped and hauled up the bank by Kaffirs and oxen pulling in unison. As the task was being carried out, Grant, looking down at the dry bed of the old water course, noticed a water flask sticking out of the soil trampled up by the ox.

Curiosity prompted him to send a Kaffir down for it. The cask was thickly caked with dry mud and gravel that, in course of time, had become hard as porous rock.

"It must have been lying there for years!" said Grant. "It's worthless, anyhow, as it is."

He flung the flask away, and forgot all about it until the next morning, when one of the Kaffirs brought it to him. Picking it up when his master flung it away, the native, pleased as a child with a new toy, had carried the flask home with him.

There he had chipped off the hard substance adhering to it. The flask, of native make, had a leather case bearing the name initials, L. T., and the cork had been driven down level with the top of the neck.

Extracting the cork, the Kaffir found that the flask contained a thick roll of paper. It was this circumstance that led him to bring the flask to Grant, who lost no time in ascertaining the exact nature of its hidden secret.

The roll of paper consisted of several loose sheets, evidently torn from a pocket diary, and a small packet addressed to Clive Hanson, Royston Hall, Devonshire, England.

Deeply interested, Grant started to read what was written on the loose sheets of paper, uttering a cry of amazed surprise as he noted the date at the head of the page.

"Fourteen years ago!" he said. "All that time this message has been bottled up in the flask, where it would have remained until

doomsday if that ox of mine hadn't slipped into the old water course!"

The message was the one that Lester Tremayne had written, when at the point of death, by the stream flowing through the Valley of Gold. In it he briefly described the circumstances of his hopeless position, and spoke of his anxiety and distress on account of the child who, when he died, would be left alone in the wilderness.

The description given of the desolate region where the dead man had breathed his last was not very enlightening. His illness and despair had apparently robbed Tremayne of his interest in the country that fate had led him to.

The only thing he made clear was that he had travelled, from first to last, in a northerly direction.

"As he had been on the move for months," Grant reflected, "he must have got far into the wild land that the white man is still a stranger to. Poor fellow! It was best for him to die a natural death. Had he lived, the savages would have got him."

He sighed, thinking of the child bereft of her father, left to perish of hunger and thirst, even if she met with no worse fate.

"Ah, well!" he murmured, with a sad shake of his head. "It's all past and done with now. The wee bairn's been at rest and peace these many years gone!"

By the outgoing post he forwarded on the packet addressed to Clive Hanson, enclosing

a letter explaining how it had come into his possession, never dreaming what the result of his action would be.

CHAPTER III.

AT ROYLSTON HALL!

UP the steep, shady lane leading to Roylston Hall a tall, strapping lad of eighteen was making his way, with a look of brooding thought in his handsome face.

"I'm sick and tired of it all!" he murmured to himself. "I can't stand it much longer! The best thing I can do is to go right away. This place is more like prison than home to me!"

Yet as he looked at the fine old mansion before him, Clive Hanson knew that it would be bitterly hard for him to leave it. He loved it with an affection that grew stronger every year of his life.

It was in a sadly-neglected state. The ivy rambled at will over the thick walls, blocking up some of the windows and working its

destructive way under the tiles of the roof. The grounds in which it stood were in the same state of neglect; weeds choked up the flower-beds.

This was the fault of Hartley Fanshawe, under whose guardianship Clive had been placed five years before, on the death of his father. It was always a mystery to Clive how his parent had ever made such a close and trusted friend of the man.



Grant lost no time in ascertaining the exact nature of the hidden secret of the water-flask. (See opposite page)



"Give those papers to me! You should have brought them to me in the first place!" said Hartley Fanshawe harshly. (See page 152)

He had a conviction—in which he was right—that his father had gradually fallen under the stronger will of Fanshawe until he was completely dominated by his evil genius.

There had never been any feeling between the lad and his guardian but one of dislike. Harsh, cruel, and vindictive, Hartley Fanshawe took an evil delight in persecuting the son of his old friend and benefactor.

He had a secret reason for hating Clive, for he had misappropriated the money left in trust for his young charge, and feared the inevitable day of reckoning.

Little wonder that Clive fiercely rebelled against his lot. Insulted, humiliated every day of his life, he had reached the limit of his endurance.

"It must end!" he vowed silently, as he reached the house. "I'll clear out—go abroad—do anything but let things go on as they are going!"

A bicycle bell rang just behind him. He looked round to see a postman.

"A letter for you, Mr. Clive," said the man, handing one to him. "I hope it brings you good news."

The letter, as Clive saw at a glance, was from South Africa. The post-mark told him that it had been stamped at Delspruit, which

place, however, he had never heard of before. Eagerly he tore open the envelope.

Then, changing his mind, he took the letter into the house to read at his leisure. Going to the old library, where the shadows of the oak-panelled walls mingled with the shafts of sunlight shining through the quaint, dormer windows, Clive quickly scanned the few lines that Wilson Grant had penned a few weeks before.

"Why," he exclaimed wonderingly, "this packet, found in the water-flask, was meant for my father! He and Lester Tremayne must have been friends!"

Taking up the packet, he removed the paper wrapper, and the pages of the diary that Tremayne had kept lay on the table before him.

With shining eyes and a deepening sense of interest and excitement, Clive perused the tragic chronicle set down by the doomed man fourteen years before. He came to the last two pages of the manuscript.

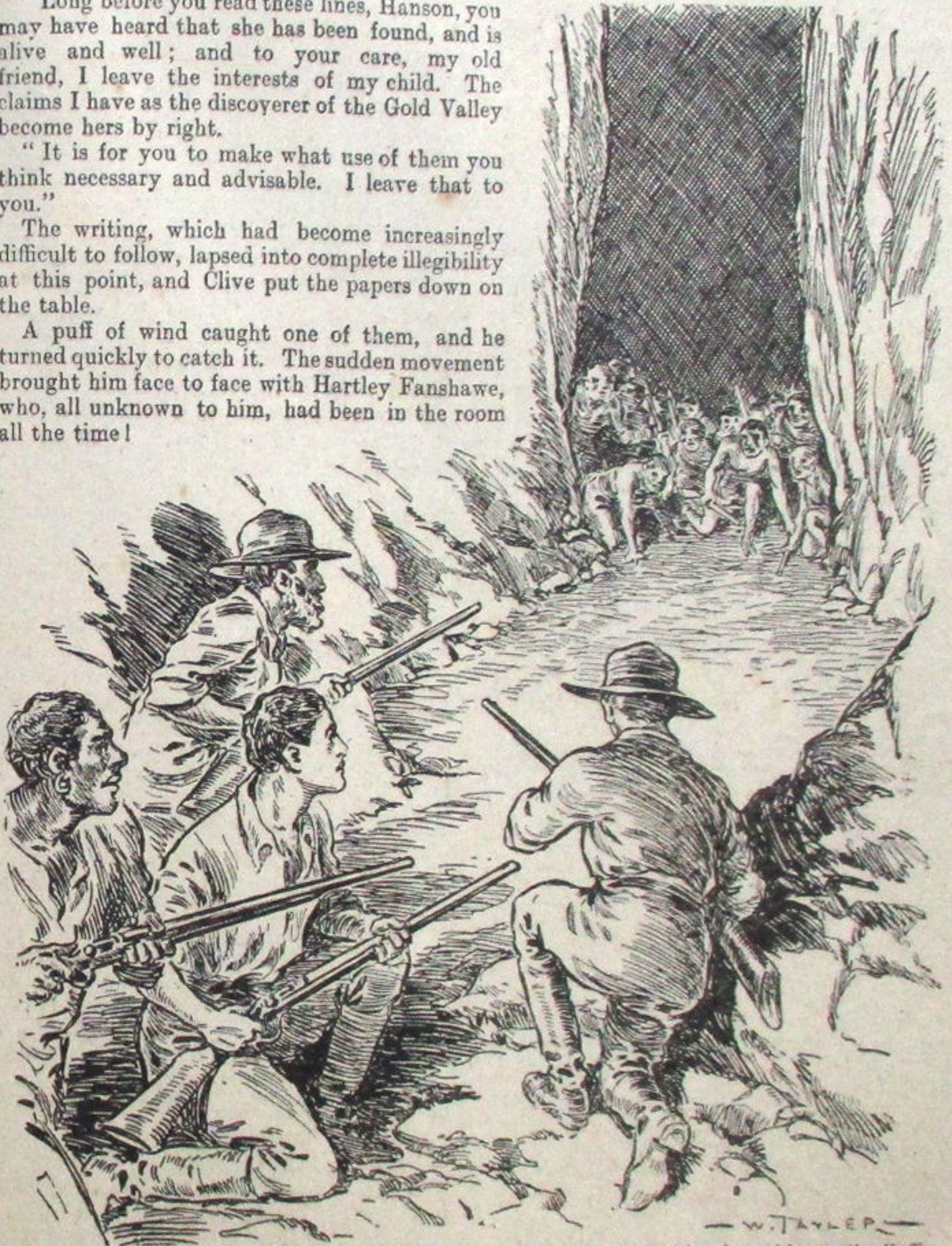
"The sun is setting behind the mountains," he read. "I shall be dead long before it rises again. My darling Mavis is asleep. Something tells me that I shall never hear her voice again. I am praying and trusting that she will be spared my fate."

"Long before you read these lines, Hanson, you may have heard that she has been found, and is alive and well; and to your care, my old friend, I leave the interests of my child. The claims I have as the discoverer of the Gold Valley become hers by right.

"It is for you to make what use of them you think necessary and advisable. I leave that to you."

The writing, which had become increasingly difficult to follow, lapsed into complete illegibility at this point, and Clive put the papers down on the table.

A puff of wind caught one of them, and he turned quickly to catch it. The sudden movement brought him face to face with Hartley Fanshawe, who, all unknown to him, had been in the room all the time!



— W. TAYLER —

"Here they come!" shouted Wilson Grant. Crawling over the ground on hands and knees, the Kaffirs had come within a yard or two of the ravine. (See page 155)

"You've been spying!" exclaimed Clive hotly, a quick flash of intuition revealing the truth to him. "You were looking over my shoulder while I was reading these papers!"

Hartley Fanshawe did not deny the charge. "You should have brought them to me in the first place!" he said harshly. "Give them to me now!"

He was a tall, sparely built man, with a thin, hawk-like face and hard light-brown eyes that had a queer glint in them.

"Give the papers to me!" he said again, stretching out his hand for them. "They were sent to your father, in whose place I stand, and not to you!"

"I know that," Clive answered. "But I'm his son, and I shall keep them."

He swept up the papers and replaced them quickly in the envelope from which he had taken them. Taking a step forward, Fanshawe seized the lad by the wrist and gave it a cruel twist.

"Let go!" said Clive, his cheeks pale. "I'll knock you down, else!"

The warning was lost on Fanshawe. He badly wanted those papers that he had looked at while Clive was going through them. His brain reeled at the thought of the priceless information they contained, and which he had already resolved to make use of to his own advantage.

With a snarling hiss, he struck furiously at Clive. The lad avoided the blow, and, at the same moment, his clenched fist shot out, and Hartley Fanshawe went down on his back with a crash that jarred every bone in his body.

"You've got what you asked for!" said Clive coolly. "Let it be a lesson to you not to lay hands on me again! You'll get worse than that if you do!"

Fanshawe, showing his teeth like a cornered rat, glared up into the lad's face.

"I'll pay you out!" he snarled. "I'll be even with you in a way you never dream of, you whelp!"

With a scornful smile on his lips, but not deigning to reply to the threat, Clive pocketed the papers and walked out of the library. Making his way to a secluded part of the old garden, he stayed there for some time,

thinking over what had happened, and wondering what he ought to do.

A shrill whistle reached his ears, followed by the sound of his own name spoken by a lad of about his own age who was looking down at him from the top of the garden-wall.

"Hallo, Dan!" he said. "Stay where you are. I'll join you."

Scaling the wall, he dropped on the far side, where there was a little sheltered glade amongst the trees that covered the spot.

"I've had a big row with Fanshawe," he explained to Dan, "and I don't want to see him again just yet. He'd only cause trouble if he saw you with me in the garden."

Dan Penshurst laughed. A youth without a relative in the world, he worked for a firm of boat makers at Royston, and was of a bright, lively disposition. He and Clive were great chums, often going out sailing and fishing together, and exploring the cliffs and caves along the coast.

"That fellow is always making things disagreeable for you," he said, as he stretched himself out on the grass. "I'm surprised you put up with it. Why don't you make tracks for some place abroad? I'd come with you, as I've often told you before, and we should come back rich men some day."

"I'm going," Clive answered. "I'm off to South Africa, and you can come with me, Dan, if you like."

Dan sat up with a look of excited interest in his sunburnt face.

"D'you really mean it?" he inquired quickly.

"Sure I do!" Clive answered. "I made up my mind to go just now, on the strength of a letter from South Africa that came to hand by the last post. It was meant for my father, but I thought it was for me, and I took it to the library and read it. Fanshawe was there, unknown to me, and I believe he read it, too, looking over my shoulder. That's what the row was about."

He went on to inform Dan of the contents of the packet that had come into his possession, showing the other the papers that Lester Tremayne had placed in the water-flask found so many years later by Wilson Grant in the old water-course.

"If my father had been alive," he said, "he'd have gone out to Africa to find out what had become of Mavis Tremayne, though the chances are that the poor child perished in the wilderness. And it's up to me to do what he would have done."

"Of course it is!" exclaimed Dan Penshurst promptly. "You are doing the right thing, and I shall go with you, Clive. You'll want a chum. Together, we'll find the Valley of Gold and the girl, Mavis Tremayne, if she's alive. The thing to do is to reach Africa before Fanshawe."

"You think he'll try to get there first?"

"I'm sure he will," Dan replied, "if he read those papers, as you believe he did. He'll go for the gold."

That Dan Penshurst was right in his belief was proved very speedily. That same night Hartley Fanshawe secretly took his departure from Royston Hall, and Clive had no doubt as to the intentions of his scoundrelly guardian.

It was not until nearly a week later that he and Dan Penshurst were able to leave home. Between them they were able to raise enough money for the long voyage to Cape Town and the overland journey to the north that would follow, what they would do when they reached Delspruit being left for the future to decide.

Full of hope and courage, undaunted by the thought of difficulty and danger, the two chums set out on their strange and

romantic quest for Mavis Tremayne and the Valley of Gold that her father had discovered only at the cost of his life!

CHAPTER IV.

THE END OF THE TRAIL!

"WE'VE done all we possibly can do," said Wilson Grant, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe-bowl, "and not a trace of Mavis Tremayne have we come across. I never expected us to, as you know. It's been my belief from the very first that the child perished on the very same night that she lost her father. Just look round! It stands to sense that a poor, helpless mite, as she was, couldn't exist long in a place like this."

Leaning on his elbow, he stared across the wild, rocky valley, ringed about by towering mountain ranges over which the shades of approaching night were fast deepening.

His two companions, Clive Hanson and Dan Penshurst, followed his example. They realised the hard truth of his words. A man, lost in such a wilderness, much less a little child, would be doomed to a speedy death.

"Do you suggest, then," said Clive, "that we abandon our search?"

Grant gave a nod.

"I think it would be for the best," he replied slowly, and not without reluctance. "We're only wasting time. Two months



Clive, putting all his weight into the effort, set moving a great rock that was poised on the ledge. (See page 155)

have we spent looking for Mavis Tremayne, all to no purpose, and now our food supply is getting dangerously short. We've about enough to take us back to Delspruit, but no more. The Kaffirs are getting sulky; they might leave us in the lurch. What I propose is that we shall strike camp to-morrow and trek back to Delspruit, where we can lodge our claims with the government people and fit out a fresh expedition."

"There isn't anything else to do," said Dan Penshurst, with a glance at his chum, "so far as I can see, and it isn't as if we were entirely giving up the search for Mavis Tremayne. Later on, when we get back here, we can still carry on with it."

Clive was silent for a moment or two.

"I suppose you're right," he said then. "But I'd far rather we had found that poor girl than the gold. I shall never rest content, either, until I know what became of her on that night, over fourteen years ago, when her father breathed his last on this very spot."

The three comrades sat and talked for some time longer by the camp fire that blazed on the bank of the river flowing through the Valley of Gold, and then covered themselves with a blanket apiece and prepared to rest for the night.

Sleep, however, did not come to Clive Hanson. He lay awake, listening to the swirl and splash of the river flowing swiftly through the gorge, his mind filled with thoughts and memories of all that had happened to him during the last few months.

He and Dan Penshurst had found a staunch friend in Wilson Grant, who had given them a warm welcome to Delspruit. It was he who had planned and made every arrangement for the search for the Valley of Gold, the description of which, in Lester Tremayne's diary, being clear enough to give him a correct idea of its locality.

The search had been a long and arduous one, attended by countless dangers and hardships, but at last it had met with success.

The three comrades, with a large following of Kaffirs engaged for the enterprise by Wilson Grant, had now been in the Valley of Gold for three weeks. They had explored it thoroughly, making numerous maps and draw-

ings of the country, which promised to become one of the richest gold-bearing territories in the world.

Frequently they had caught sight of parties of natives, but every attempt to get into communication with these people had failed, so that they were unable to gather any information that might have thrown light on the mystery of Mavis Tremayne's fate.

This failure to ascertain what had become of the girl troubled Clive Hanson a great deal. Against all reason, he had clung to the hope and belief that Mavis would be found, even though she had been lost to the world so many years.

"I'd like to stay on here," he thought, as he stared up at the starlit sky, "and carry on with the search while Grant and the others go back to Delspruit to refit. It's a queer, funny thing, but I can't get the thought out of my head that Mavis Tremayne is not far from us."

He closed his eyes, and was dropping off to sleep, when a sudden cry from one of the Kaffirs, who had their own camp about twenty yards away, made him spring to his feet.

Immediately afterwards there was the sound of rifle firing, and a bullet whizzed past him. Snatching up his own rifle, he started towards the Kaffir camp, with Wilson and Dan, whom the noise had instantly awakened, close at his heels.

The cause of the uproar was speedily ascertained. A sudden attack had been made on the camp by unknown enemies. Several of the Kaffirs had already taken to flight, but the rest were offering a stout resistance.

"Stand steady!" cried Wilson Grant in the native tongue. "There'll be double pay for every man who does his best. Keep cool! These dagoes can't get past you."

In the darkness it was difficult to see anything of the men who were attacking the camp. They were careful to take advantage of the natural cover provided by the great rocks, from behind which they kept up an incessant rifle fire, seldom venturing into the open.

"They'll never get through!" said Grant

confidently. "Had the Kaffirs all fled, at the first attack, they'd have taken the camp by now. No doubt they were relying on that. This place is a natural fortress. It would take a whole army to rush it."

This was true. The camp was pitched in a deep, narrow ravine leading down to the river. The entrance from the more open valley beyond was no more than ten yards in width, and, resolutely defended, it was a formidable position to take.



"A girl!" exclaimed Grant hoarsely. "It may be Mavis Tremayne her very self!" (See page 156)



About ten of the Kaffirs whom Grant could trust were armed with rifles. He and his white comrades were likewise armed, and were crack shots into the bargain, so that the attacking force met with a sharp and unexpected resistance.

The firing continued on both sides for over an hour, at the end of which time two Kaffirs had been killed, and five or six wounded. Then there was a lull in the struggle.

"Guess they've had enough of it!" said Dan. "I vote we go forward and attack them."

Grant shook his head.

"We'll stay where we are," he said. "They've not gone yet. Look out for some surprise move."

Time went by. Not a sound came from the black shadows massed like an impenetrable wall outside the entrance to the ravine. It was trying work waiting for one knew not what. Suddenly Wilson Grant gave a warning shout.

"Fire!" he shouted. "Here they come."

Crawling over the ground on hands and knees, the attacking party had come to within a yard or two of the ravine, and now, jumping up, they rushed to the assault.

For a few moments the Kaffirs wavered before the fury of the attack. They were swept back into the ravine, where it was impossible for them to use their weapons

with effect, and the enemy pressed on, uttering fierce, exulting cries.

"I'll stop them!" said Clive, as a sudden inspiration flashed across his mind. "Take my rifle, Dan."

Clutching hold of the rough, jagged side of the ravine, he climbed up to a ledge some twenty feet above the ground. Then, putting all his weight and strength into the effort, he set moving a great rock that was poised on the

ledge, and which slightly overhung the entrance to the defile.

As it shook and trembled a yell told him that he was seen by his foes, and a volley of rifle shots hummed and whistled all about him.

He gave a great push, and the big rock, toppling over, thundered down from the ledge to the ground, completely scattering the terrified and discomfited marauders who had been so sure of victory not a minute before.

They fled in confusion. Joining his comrades again, Clive took his rifle, but had no further use for it. The defeated enemy vanished under cover of the darkness, and the attack was not renewed again.

"They're beaten!" said Grant. "The rock was too much for them. We sha'n't be troubled any more to-night."

The wounded Kaffirs were picked up and their injuries attended to. Two or three of the enemy, who had been shot and left behind by their more fortunate companions, were also found lying just inside the mouth of the ravine.

They were blacks, dressed like white men, and Grant suspected that they were natives from the towns farther south. Questioning one of them, he found that he was right in his suspicion.

The man stated that he came from Kimberley, along with several more natives of his own class, and that they had all been engaged by a white man, whom he referred to as the Boss.

"The Boss paid us well," he said. "He brought us here six weeks ago, but we've been on the far side of the valley till yesterday, when we came here on our way back to Kimberley. The Boss was going there for machinery to crush the gold out of the rocks. He promised that we should all be rich for the rest of our lives. He was very angry when he found that you were here."

"How did he find that out?" asked Grant.

"A band of natives we met told him," the black answered. "They had seen you. The Boss said you must all be killed, or we should never have any gold. The natives brought us to the ravine after dark. The Boss said you would all be asleep, and that it would be easy to kill you."

"What's the Boss like?" asked Grant. "Just give a description of him."

"A tall man," the prisoner replied, "with eyes that sparkle like green fire when he is angry. The other day he killed the chief of a tribe living in the forest at the other side of the valley. The chief wouldn't let him have a white girl that he wanted to take away."

The three comrades started violently, and stared at one another in excited surprise.

"A white girl!" exclaimed Clive Hanson. "What was she doing with a native tribe?"

The black did not understand what the lad said to him, so Grant rapidly translated the question into the native tongue.

"She has lived with them many years," said the man. "They found her when she was a little child. She has grown up with them. The Boss brought her away, but she escaped in the darkness, as we were on our way here."

Clive trembled with excitement when he heard these words.

"It's Mavis Tremayne!" he cried. "I'm certain it must be."

Grant Wilson held up his hand.

"Someone calling!" he said quickly. "Who can it be?"

All listened. A faint, but silvery, clear voice, speaking in a native tongue, fell on their ears.

"A girl!" exclaimed Grant hoarsely. "It may be Mavis Tremayne her very self! Follow me, boys!"

He darted off, with Clive and Dan close behind him, going in the direction whence the sound had come. The voice still continued calling. It led the seekers to a spot not far from the entrance to the ravine.

Here they found a girl, wearing a picturesque native costume, lying on the ground, unable to move. She had fallen and badly sprained her ankle. Thinking that friends might be near, she cried out to them.

The comrades carried her gently back to their camp. Was she Mavis Tremayne, after all, or merely some native girl? The next morning they were satisfied that she was the strange white girl who had lived with the tribe in the forest since she was a child.

The captured black recognised her as the

girl whom the Boss had carried off not many days before. Unable to speak any English, she conversed with Wilson Grant in a dialect that he had mastered during his travels in the interior.

"We shall have to find the tribe," he said at last. "She can tell me nothing that will lead to the establishment of her identity."

That same day, Grant and his little party set out for the forest at the far side of the valley. On the way they came upon the dead body of a white man.

"The Boss!" cried the black prisoner, who was acting as guide. "He was shot last night during the fight."

Clive Hanson stared down at the lifeless figure.

"Hartley Fanshawe!" he said, his voice trembling a little. "He got here before us, Dan, as you said he would, but only to meet with a violent end."

That night the forest was reached, but it was some days before the tribe being searched for could be found, and then the mystery was cleared up at last.

The information given by the natives was of such a nature as to leave no doubt in the minds of Wilson Grant and his young comrades that the white girl, who had lived with them, was Mavis Tremayne.

The quest Clive Hanson had set out on had met with complete success. He had found Mavis and the Valley of Gold, as he had vowed to do.

Mavis is now at school in England. Her interests in the Valley of Gold are being well looked after by Clive Hanson and Dan Penshurst, who, with Wilson Grant, are the moving spirits in the great enterprise that is being conducted out there.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 8.—PHYSICAL DRILL



There may be some who won't agree
That drill's a splendid pastime;
They're thinking of the pain, you see,
They had to suffer last time!
They had to hop around the gym,
Then gallop at the "double."
Although it kept them well in trim,
They'll vote it "too much trouble."

Some fellows simply love to drill
With dumb-bell or with rifle;
Others condemn it with a will:
Contempt they cannot stifle.
When moving to the right in fours,
Some chaps are always happy;
The slacker sullenly ignores
The sergeant's orders snappy.

"Left, right! Left, right!" in accents gruff,
How well we know that order!
Some say, "We're convicts, sure enough,
The sergeant is our warder!
This gym's a beastly, stuffy place,
We don't know how to stick it;
We'd much prefer a paper chase
Or else a game of cricket."

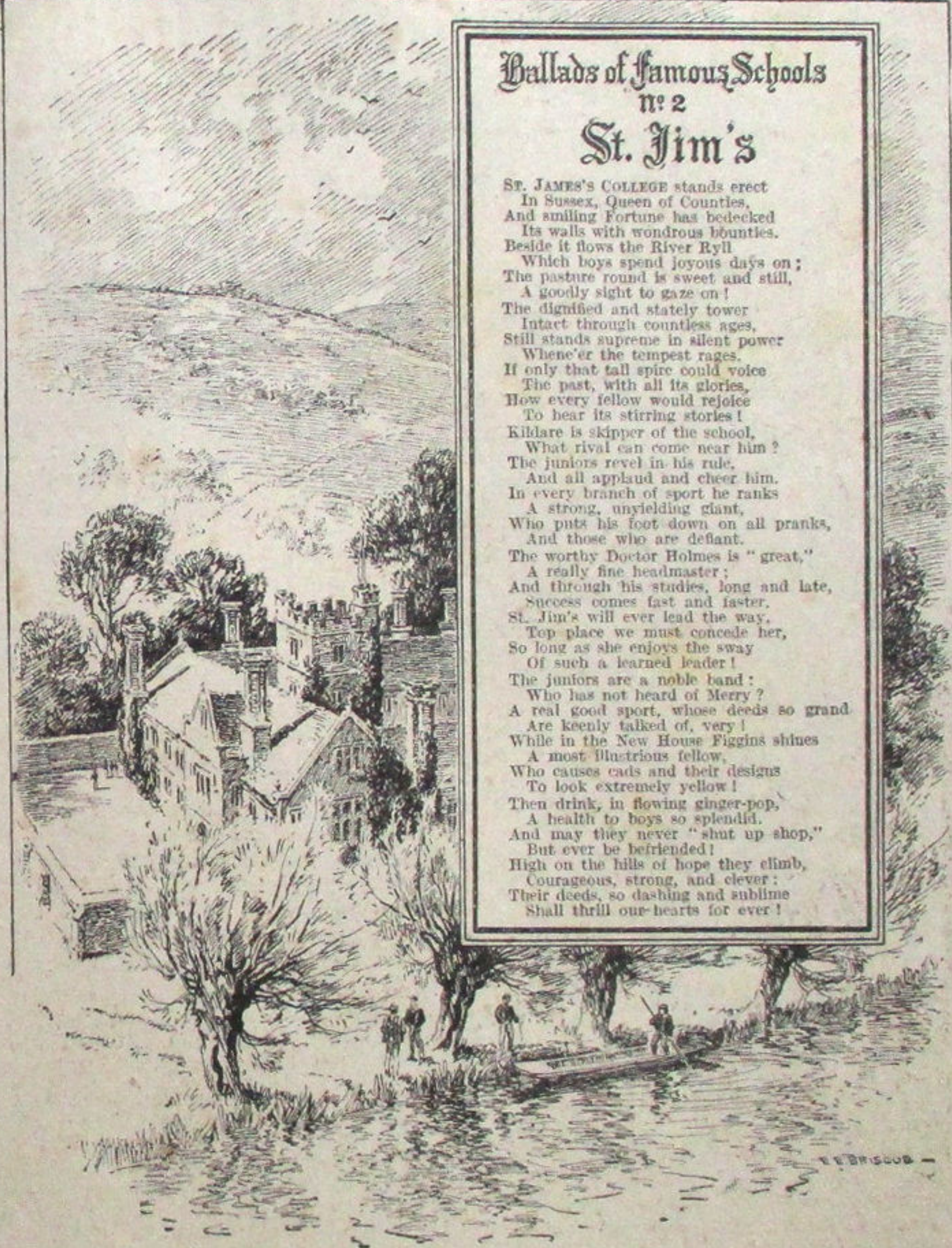
But drill, when all is said and done,
Is not without attraction;
It has its joys, it has its fun,
And overcomes inaction.
Then let us drink (at any rate,
Those of us who are willing)
To all the joys and health which wait
On those who take up drilling.

ALONZO IN THE LIMELIGHT!

A Page of Sketches by C. H. Chapman



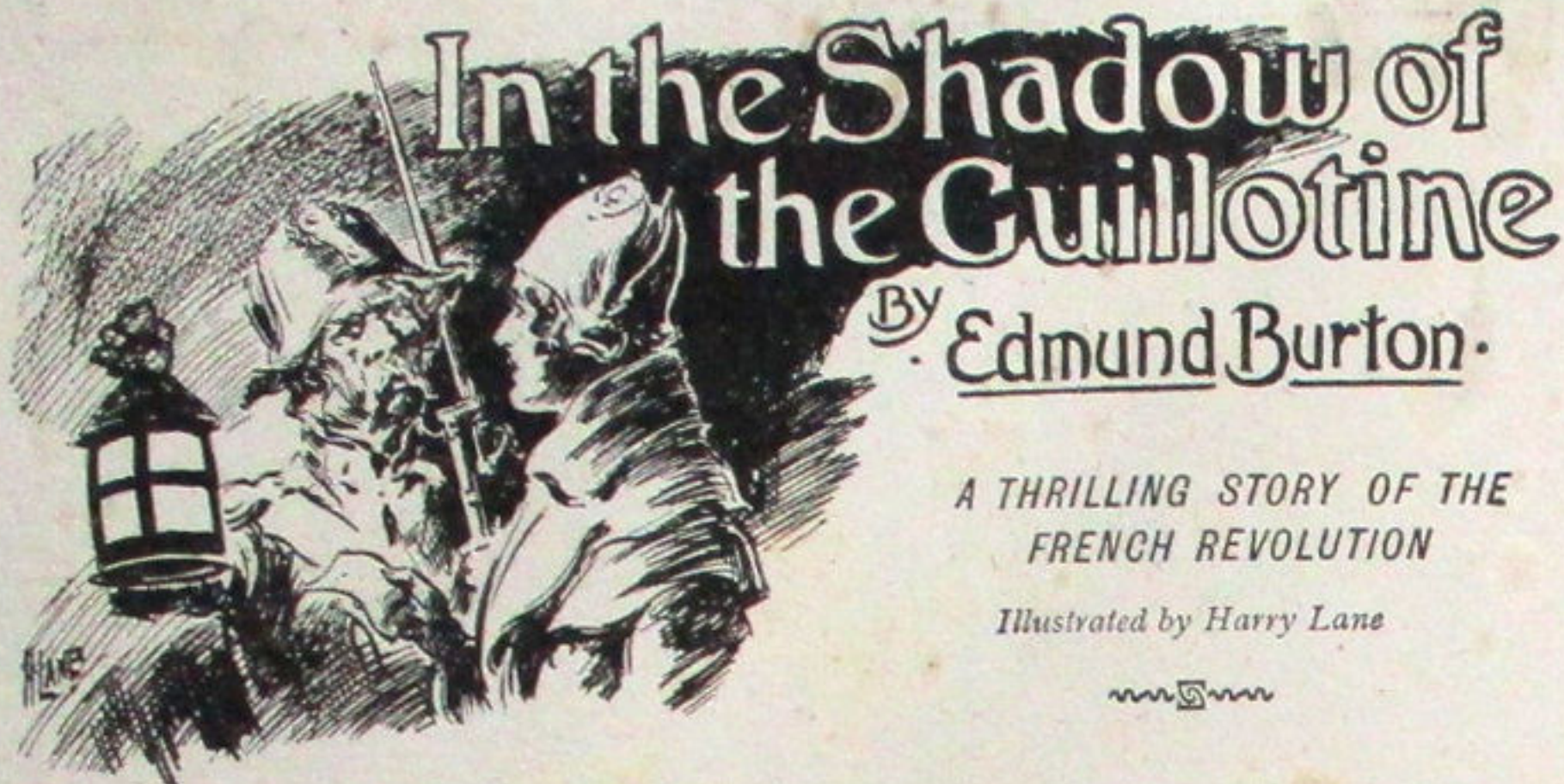
Alonzo Todd had not been long at Greyfriars before he earned the title of "The Duffer." By nature simple and confiding to a degree, he spent much of his spare time studying a book entitled "The History of a Potato," which he had been recommended to read by his Uncle Benjamin. Alonzo closely resembles his cousin Peter in face and form, but not in nature. Peter is a very wide-awake lad, while Alonzo is the natural prey of every Removite who feels an inclination to indulge in the gentle art of "leg-pulling."



Ballads of Famous Schools
No. 2

St. Jim's

ST. JAMES'S COLLEGE stands erect
In Sussex, Queen of Counties,
And smiling Fortune has bedecked
Its walls with wondrous bounties.
Beside it flows the River Ryll
Which boys spend joyous days on;
The pasture round is sweet and still,
A goodly sight to gaze on!
The dignified and stately tower
Intact through countless ages,
Still stands supreme in silent power
Whene'er the tempest rages.
If only that tall spire could voice
The past, with all its glories,
How every fellow would rejoice
To hear its stirring stories!
Kildare is skipper of the school,
What rival can come near him?
The juniors revel in his rule,
And all applaud and cheer him.
In every branch of sport he ranks
A strong, unyielding giant,
Who puts his foot down on all pranks,
And those who are defiant.
The worthy Doctor Holmes is "great,"
A really fine headmaster;
And through his studies, long and late,
Success comes fast and faster.
St. Jim's will ever lead the way,
Top place we must concede her,
So long as she enjoys the sway
Of such a learned leader!
The juniors are a noble band:
Who has not heard of Merry?
A real good sport, whose deeds so grand
Are keenly talked of, very!
While in the New House Figgins shines
A most illustrious fellow,
Who causes cads and their designs
To look extremely yellow!
Then drink, in flowing ginger-pop,
A health to boys so splendid,
And may they never "shut up shop,"
But ever be befriended!
High on the hills of hope they climb,
Courageous, strong, and clever:
Their deeds, so dashing and sublime
Shall thrill our hearts for ever!



In the Shadow of the Guillotine

By Edmund Burton.

A THRILLING STORY OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

Illustrated by Harry Lane

Harry Lane

AN UNEXPECTED FRIEND

"MONSIEUR!"
Carrington raised his eyes wearily and glanced across the dimly lit cell. It had sounded like a voice—a boy's voice—yet—

"Monsieur! Do you not hear me? Monsieur Carrington!"

The last word was pronounced with a curious rolling of the r's, suggesting some difficulty in framing the name. Carrington sprang erect and stared into the gloom. The door had opened noiselessly, and a young lad was standing within a few feet of him.

The captive gazed in astonishment. Surely this was no gaoler, this youngster? Surely someone bigger than he would have been sent to summon him to the only other place to which he expected to be summoned before the end—to the so-called Tribunal conducted by that fiend in human guise, Fouquier-Tinville, whose reprieves were as nothing compared with his condemnations.

"Hallo, youngster!" Carrington said presently, pulling himself together. "To whom am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

The boy interrupted him by a warning gesture.

"Hist, m'sieur; not so loudly! Put on these!"

He withdrew a bundle of clothing from beneath his arm and handed it to the other.

"I wish you to escape, m'sieur," he explained calmly.

"Escape!" Carrington echoed, scarcely daring to believe his ears. "But why, lad?"

The youth came a step nearer and clutched his arm. Even in the dim light his face showed its drawn eagerness.

"Because—because, in the first place, you are British, not French; and, even if you were of our people, there is no crime against you, save that you belonged to the D'Avignon household!" he replied, in a tense whisper. "The D'Avignons were never like the rest, though that seems to have been forgotten. They are of the aristocrats, and that is sufficient. But, monsieur, I—I do not forget how your adopted father, le cher marquis, treated us during that black winter when food and work were scarce, how he clothed and fed us when all France lay buried under the snow. But the others, they never think of these things. The cry is, 'A bas les aristos!' and all must go, the good and the bad together. It seems it must be so, but I—I know your story. Perhaps you may not remember me. Is it so?"

Carrington paused in the act of scrambling into the clothing so unexpectedly offered him, and strained his eyes properly to see his companion's face. Then he shook his head.



To face page 100

A BID FOR FREEDOM FOILED!

The aristocrat, fleeing from the Red Terror, is arrested at the very gate of Paris!

"N-no; I can't say I do. But there were so many at the château——"

"Yes, there were many. The marquis kept a large retinue, but how few have remembered his goodness to them! I was there when you came, M'sieur Carrington, and the story soon travelled round. We learnt how your parents had both perished in that awful fire, and how you were rescued and taken charge of by your late father's life-long friend, the Marquis D'Avignon; how you adopted his name and became one of the family, until—— until—— But we have no time to speak further. Haste, I pray you, m'sieur! We may be disturbed at any moment!"

The boy gave an anxious glance up and down the passage outside, then returned to the cell in time to see Carrington put the finishing touches to his disguise. He rubbed some dust from the floor into his face, and effected such a transformation in his appearance that his youthful deliverer could barely restrain a gasp of satisfaction.

"But it is wonderful!" he whispered. "Now take this and follow warily!" Carrington felt a piece of paper slipped into his hand, and by holding it close to his eyes was able to read:

"Pass Citizen Devigne outside La Force.— JULES LEROT, Governor."

"The name will do as well as any other."

explained the lad. "By a trick, I got my father to sign the paper when he had taken more wine than was good for him."

"The citizen-governor is your father, then?"

"Yes. I am Armand Lerot. But hasten—this way!"

He led Carrington along the corridor, then down a winding stone staircase which emerged on the prison courtyard. Here the boy pointed towards a flickering lamp some yards away.

"See! Yonder is the gate. Show your permit to the guard there, and, once outside, mingle well with the crowd. It is your only chance!"

Carrington stepped forward, then halted uncertainly.

"But you?" he queried. "You must come also. They'll find out——"

The other, however, laughed softly.

"Non—oh, non!" he smiled. "They

will never suspect me, a son of the people, of such a traitorous action; and it is not likely that my father, even if he remembers, would accuse his own offspring, knowing what it would mean. Nay, I shall be safe, m'sieur; be sure of that."

He turned and remounted the stairs without more ado, thus forestalling further argument on the part of his companion. Carrington, shrugging his shoulders in resignation, and mentally vowing to reward his



"She has been busy lately, has Madame," said a ruffian next to Carrington, jerking his thumb upwards towards the guillotine. "Wonderfully busy; so surely she deserves a rest!" (See page 162)

young deliverer amply should the opportunity ever present itself, strode across the courtyard, where he was at once challenged by the sentry.

"Arretez! Who comes there?"

The man raised his lantern and closely scrutinised the face of the newcomer. Carrington stared back coolly, though his heart was beating unpleasantly fast.

"Your permit, citizen?"

It was handed over.

"When did you come in?" inquired the fellow. "I did not see you."

It was plain that, permit or not, he had his suspicions.

"Very probably you did not," replied Carrington calmly, "since I entered by another gate."

The sentry glanced at the paper, which he carefully folded up and placed in his pocket.

"Very good," he growled. "You can pass!"

He unlocked the massive gate, allowing Carrington through. The street outside was thronged with rabble, and, remembering the boy's advice, he worked his way into the thickest part of the crowd and let the human tide carry him along. They passed the now idle guillotine, cheering, and he cheered with them, though his soul revolted at the sight of the instrument which might yet claim him if he were not careful. He was not afraid of death itself, but death in such a form, and at such hands! Ugh!

The very thought was sickening.

"She has been busy lately, has madame," said a ruffian next him, jerking his thumb upwards. "Wonderfully busy; so surely she deserves a brief rest!"

"Ay, citizen! As you say, she is no idler." Carrington played his part well. "Even such dainty heads as those of Capet and his spouse have failed to make her take a holiday!"

There was a coarse laugh from those around.

"Well said, citizen, well said!" exclaimed the man who had first spoken. "And there is plenty more work for her. La Force and The Abbaye are full!"

Remarks of this kind went on almost without cessation, until the crowd, finding some excitement in another direction, broke up and left Carrington standing alone.

He knew his Paris well, so, striking out for the barrier which guarded the Calais road, he trudged along, meeting scarcely a soul, for whatever had occurred had drawn the crowd away to another part of the city.

When near the gate, however, he was dismayed to find half a dozen of the National Guard posted there, and apparently very wide awake.

"Good heavens!" he breathed. "Am I to be stopped after getting so far? They've seen me, too!"

His fears were justified, for two of the men were advancing towards him, one of them swinging a lantern as he came.

"Well, citizen? What——" began the taller of the pair, when the other suddenly shouted:

"Quick, Jean! The lantern! What is the meaning of this?"

Carrington, following the direction of the other's gaze, glanced down and saw, to his horror, that a couple of the buttons of the rough coat he was wearing had become unfastened, allowing a small portion of his own clothing to show through.

With a shout they sprang at him, tearing the coat open and revealing the rich apparel beneath.

"An aristo! And, sacre bleu, 'tis the son of the accursed D'Avignon! 'Twas I who helped to arrest them, and I would know him in a thousand, despite the dirt on his face!" cried one.

It was no moment for thought, only for action, swift and ruthless. Snatching the lantern from the man's hand, Carrington brought it down with a crash on his head. The fellow dropped with a grunt, and the other made a wild attempt to run Carrington through, but the lantern, flung with unerring aim, caught him full in the face and rolled him over into the gutter. The remainder of the guard, hearing the scuffle, now came running up, and Carrington dashed off like lightning up the narrow street.

Crack! A ball sang past his ear. *Crack!* Again, another tore through the sleeve of his coat. *Crack, crack, crack!* A regular fusillade rang out, but now he was around the corner, and——

Crash! He had run full tilt into a mounted man who was hastening towards the scene of the commotion. The rider rapped out an oath, and made a slash at Carrington, who dodged nimbly aside.

Then a daring plan flashed into the fugitive's brain. With a sudden spring he had gripped his antagonist round the middle, tearing him from the saddle. The cry the other would have uttered was cut off short as Carrington's hand was clapped over his mouth. Then he dragged his prisoner, kicking and struggling wildly, through an open gateway, the horse following meekly behind; but no sooner was the gate kicked to again than a scurry of passing footsteps told that the action was only in the nick of time.

"Close thing, that, mon ami!" Carrington said pleasantly to his terrified captive.

"Rather too close for my liking. And now I think I must make you somewhat uncomfortable, but let us hope you will soon be discovered. I should not advise you to shout," he added suggestively, "because I could easily settle you before they took me!"

He tore a strip from the rough coat and tightly gagged the man. Then, having stripped him, he proceeded to dress him in his own clothing, and bound him securely with some rope that was lying in the yard. The

soldier made no resistance whatever; Carrington's expression warned him not to.

Then Carrington donned the other's uniform, and, bidding his discomfited prisoner an ironical good-night, he led the horse out through the gate.

Swinging himself into the saddle, he pulled his hat down well over his eyes, and rode back at a brisk trot towards the barrier. Only one man was on guard there now, and Carrington gruffly inquired the cause.

"Number Thirty-seven has escaped from La Force," replied the man, "and the others have gone in pursuit."

"I trust they get him," said Carrington. "But open the gate quickly. I am on important business."

The soldier hesitated.

"But the Citizen-President has given orders that no barriers are to be opened after night-fall," he objected.

Carrington laid his hand upon his sword.

"'Tis on the Citizen-President's business I am going, pig!" he snapped. "Open at once, or 'twill be the worse for you."

The man sullenly obeyed, and Carrington passed through, smiling.

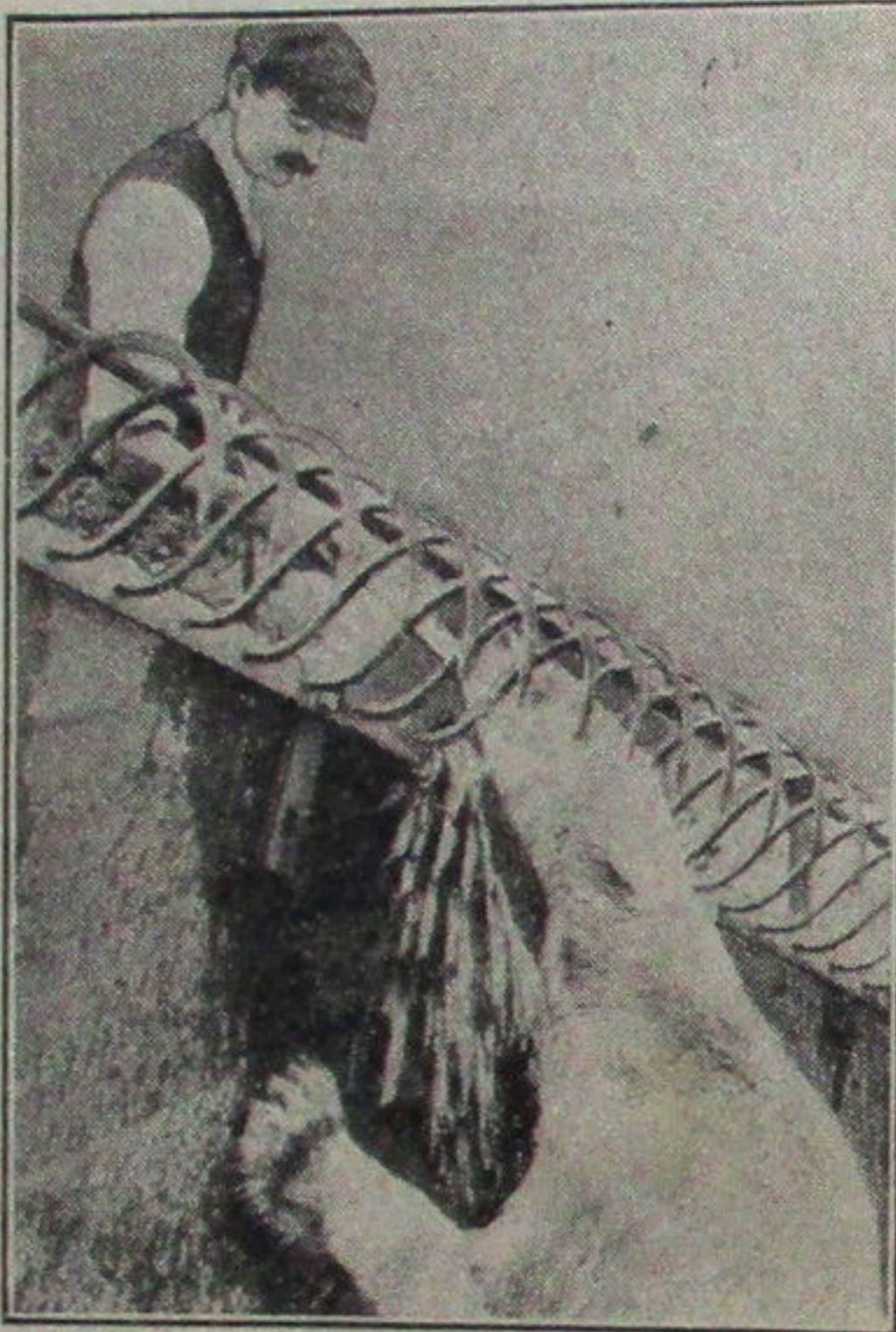
The gate crashed to behind him, and soon every beat of his steed's hoofs was taking Carrington nearer Calais, and farther from Paris and "The Terror."

THE END



One fellow dropped with a grunt, and the other made a wild attempt to run Carrington through, but the lantern, flung with unerring aim, caught him full in the face, and rolled him over into the gutter. (See opposite page)

SOME ZOO STORIES



Sam, the Polar Bear, drinking from a hose-pipe

*Wonderful, True Tales of
Animal Heroes, Bullies,
Villains and Tricksters*

By LESLIE G. MAINLAND

*Illustrated by drawings and photo-
graphs reproduced by permission of
"Daily Mail."*

To really enjoy the Zoo to the utmost you want to know something about the *characters* of these interesting prisoners, so here are some stories of things I have seen and heard there during the last twenty years which will help you to know the most interesting things to look out for.

To look at old Sam, the giant polar bear, for example, you would imagine he was a plain, honest fellow. Of course, he would eat you if he could get at you, but as the bars stop *that* little game, you would not think he would bother his head much about visitors.

As a matter of fact, Sam has always had a great passion for collecting umbrellas and walking-sticks. He kept them at the bottom of his pond until the keeper cleaned it out, and this is how he got them by a piece of cunning trickery.

He can stand on his hind legs and stretch to a height of *eleven feet*. When no one was looking he used to take a piece of fish and perch it on a high ledge. When visitors came he

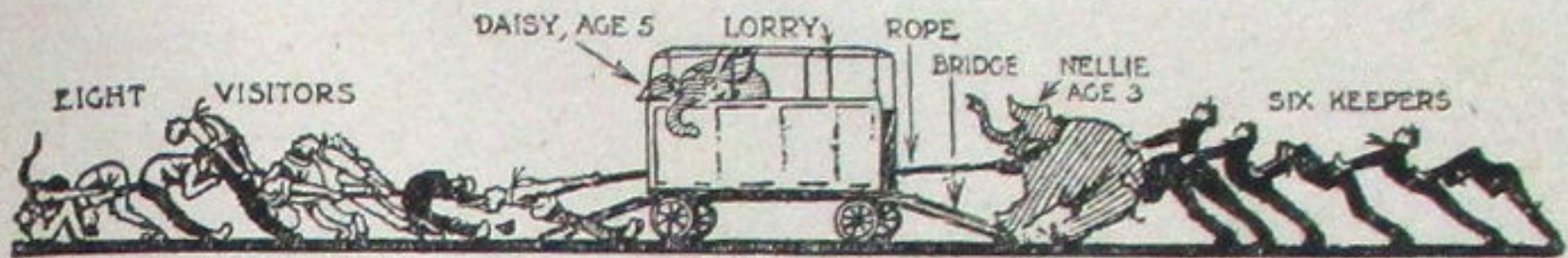
JUST like a great school, and just like the outside world, the Zoological Gardens has its heroes, its bad characters, its truants and escaped prisoners, its bullies, and its cunning tricksters.

Some of the creatures are wise and clever, some *very* silly, some are comic, others lazy; and many seem to be blessed with more commonsense than half the people who go there.

would crouch under the fish and make an awful fuss—sniffing and whining, and pretending he wanted it tremendously, and could not reach it.

Visitors could get up a path near this piece of fish, and they used to say:

Not long ago, two girl-elephants, named Daisy and Nellie, went to the Zoo as visitors while their owner was looking out for a nice school for them where they could learn to carry children, or to walk through streets of people without being frightened.



[Drawing by Chris Heaps.]

The six keepers pushed Nellie from behind and the eight visitors pulled from the front. (See this page)

“What a shame to tease the poor brute!” And Sam would look so grateful, the cunning old brute. Then the old lady visitor would try and poke the fish down with her umbrella.

As soon as it was pushed inside the cage, Sam would leap, and show how far he really could reach. Once the umbrella was gripped in his jaws, the poor visitor had a short tug-of-war, which Sam *always* won. When the keeper got the wreck of the umbrella out of Sam’s pond, the owner usually unscrewed the silver handle and went away with it; nothing else was worth taking.

One polar bear used to have arguments with his wife, which he finished up by ducking her in the pond. When he got her in the water, he used to sit on her head till she was “good.” The last time he did this he sat on her head rather too long, and his wife became so “good” that she turned into an angel—at any rate, she died.

Barbara, Sam’s present wife, once had a box of oysters sent to her by a visitor who was interested in her little twin cubs. She was a very bad mother, however, and left them lying about in the cold till they died. Some animals go to the Zoo for a stay, just like a family of children going to the seaside for a holiday. They do not belong to the Zoological Gardens, but are just guests needing lodgings for the time being.

He found a good place at which to educate them, so Daisy and Nellie were sent for. A heavy covered van with a sort of drawbridge was taken to their cage at the Zoo, and Daisy, aged five, went in like a lamb.

Everyone thought that three-year-old Nellie would be just as good, but it seems that she simply hated the idea of going to school.

Though she was no taller than a good-sized donkey, she was ten times heavier, and perhaps twenty times more obstinate.

She broke a thick rope necklace which had been thrown round her neck, and squealed like a magnified pig. For half an hour she had a great game of touch, hide-and-seek, and puss-in-the-corner with six hot and tired keepers.

Then a stronger rope was slid over her ears, and the six keepers said, “Heave!” and tried to pull her into the van. Nellie turned her back and walked off, dragging all six men after her.

So the keepers asked the visitors, who were looking on and laughing, to “please stop giggling and help.”

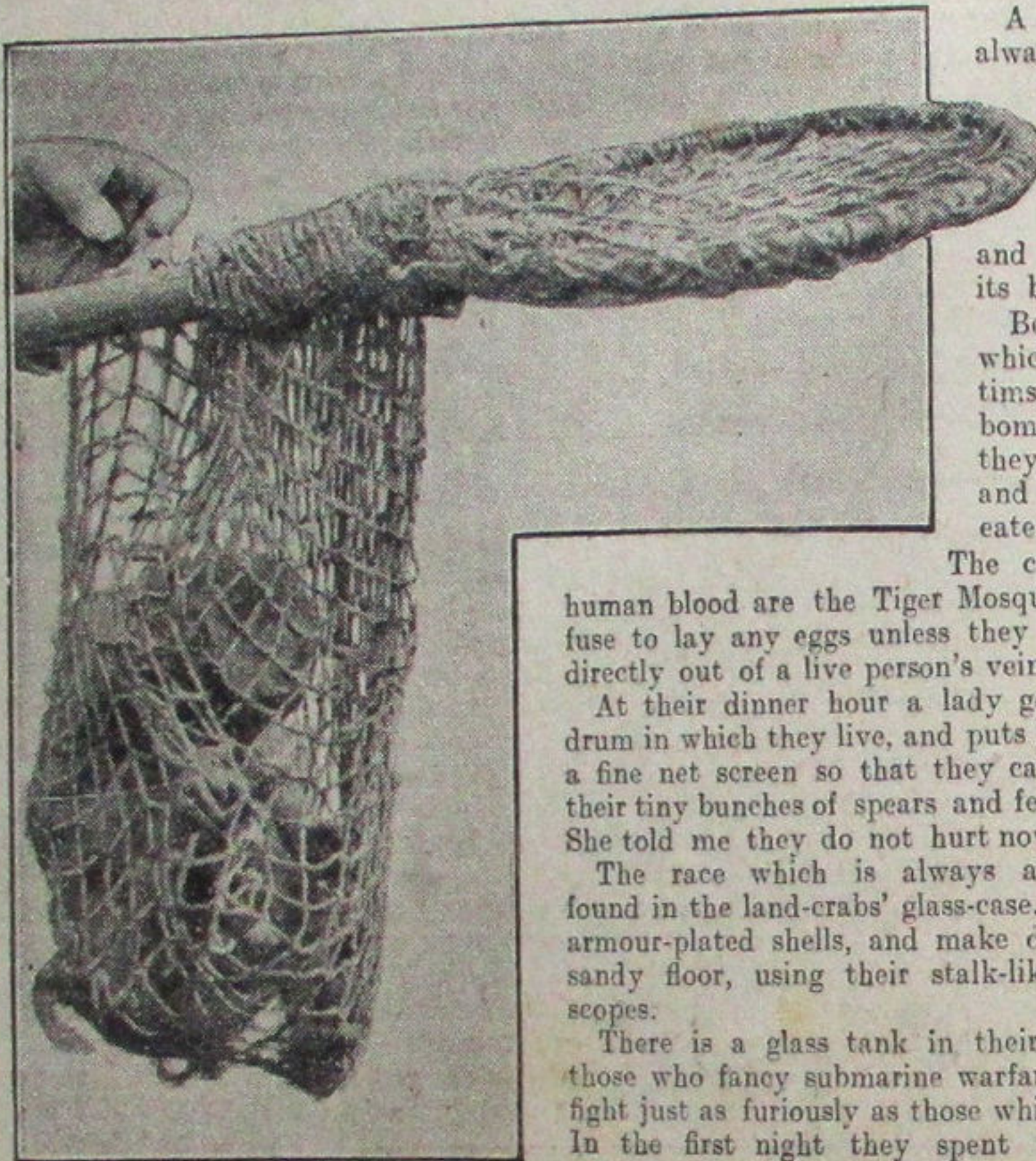
Eight men visitors said “All right!” and

the rope was passed *through* the van to them. The six keepers pushed Nellie from behind and the eight visitors pulled from the front. That imp of an elephant got on the drawbridge and then sat down.

This was the moment for brains.



The Tiger Mosquitoes are fed on human blood; they refuse to lay any eggs unless they get their meals directly out of a live person’s veins. (See page 166)



The Weeper was eventually caught in a big strong net on a pole, like a heavy butterfly net. (See page 168)

Everyone rushed to the drawbridge and started to lift it up. Nellie squealed for all she was worth, but up she went, and finally sprawled in the van, waving her tail in a perfect fury.

One of the most interesting spots in the Zoo is the Caird Insect House, which most people dash through because the "crawlies" that live there seem too small to be worth looking at.

There you will find :

Creatures that are fed daily on human blood.

A race that is always at war and uses dugouts, armour-plate, ambushes, submarines and periscopes in its battles.

Beasts of prey which trap live victims in pitfalls, and bombard them till they are helpless and ready to be eaten.

The creatures fed on human blood are the Tiger Mosquitoes, which refuse to lay any eggs unless they get their meals directly out of a live person's veins.

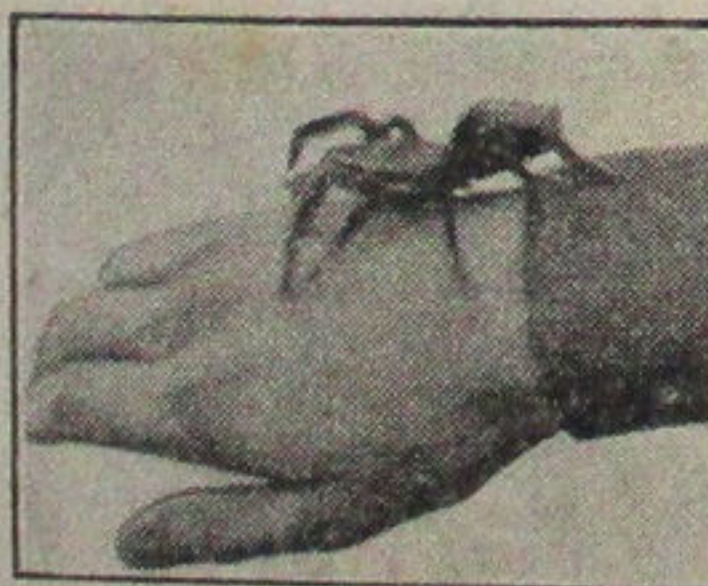
At their dinner hour a lady goes to the glass drum in which they live, and puts her arm through a fine net screen so that they can stab her with their tiny bunches of spears and feed on her blood. She told me they do not hurt now—just a tickle.

The race which is always at war will be found in the land-crabs' glass-case. They all wear armour-plated shells, and make dug-outs in their sandy floor, using their stalk-like eyes as periscopes.

There is a glass tank in their cage in which those who fancy submarine warfare can dive and fight just as furiously as those which live on land. In the first night they spent there three dis-

appeared, for they are terrible cannibals.

They now appear to be pretty well matched and do not kill each other, but they have tremendous duels and wrestling matches at feeding-time.



The Tarantula argues to himself like this: Here is a soft, warm, pink thing, which picks me up gently and seems much too big to eat. (See opposite page)

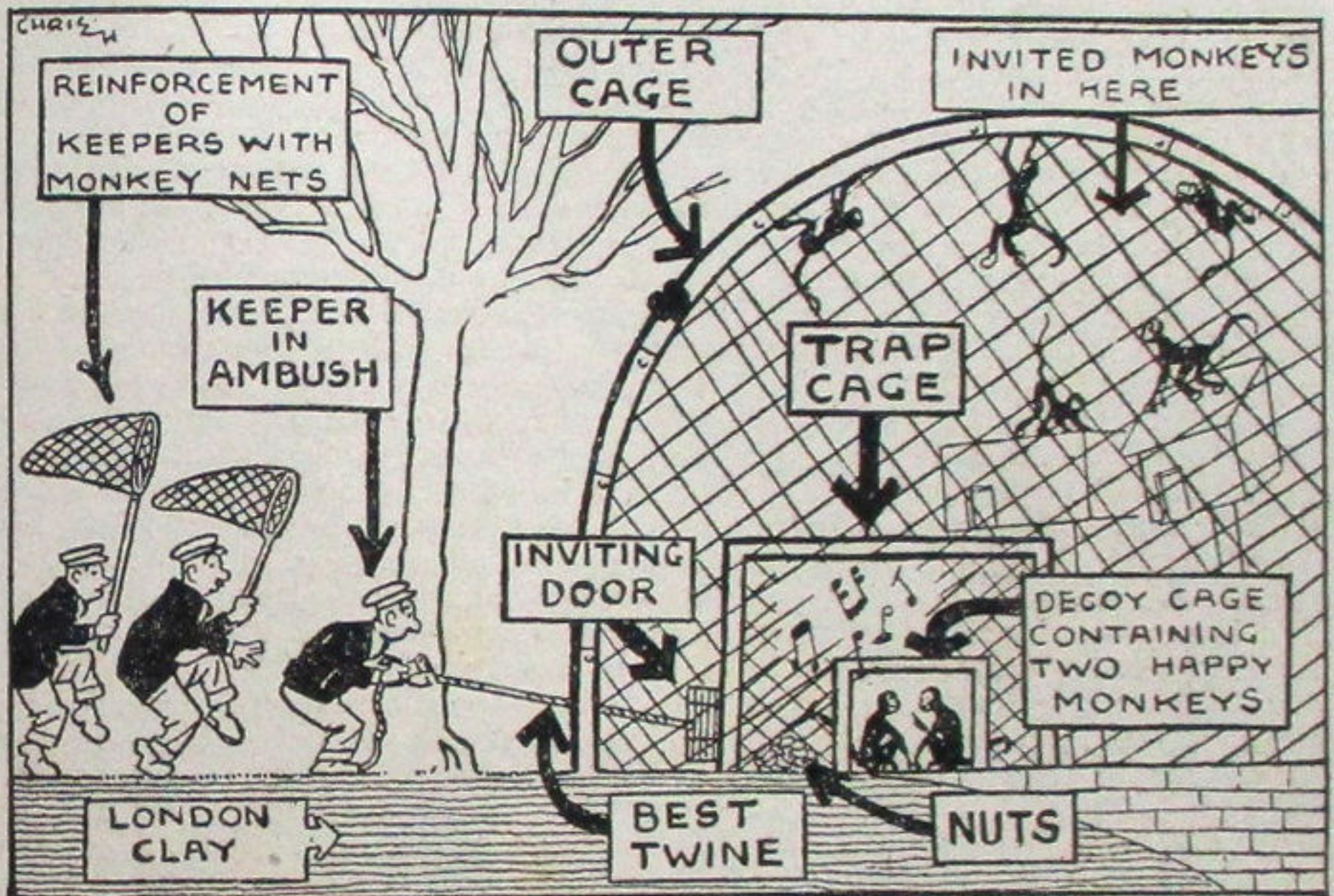
The dangerous moment for a land-crab is when he grows too big for his shell. It splits, and he comes out all soft. He gets hard again very quickly, but woe betide him if he has to fight while he is still flabby.

Two big chaps were placed in a cage by themselves. One shed his armour during the night, and his "friend" left nothing of him by morning except the very tips of his claws.

The creatures which trap victims in pitfalls are the ant-lions. They have a sandy desert to

ant. It is just like pelting a man with bricks, for the grains of sand stun and bewilder the ant and he slips a little lower down. More bombardments follow, until the poor ant falls within reach of the ant-lion's hidden jaws, and that is the end of the chapter.

The lady who feeds the Tiger Mosquitoes is great friends with a very wise old tarantula. The tarantula is the great hairy, poisonous, bird-eating spider, and this chap came over to England in a bunch of bananas. He gave the



[Drawing by Chris Heaps.]

A cunning trap is used when it is necessary to catch one of the monkeys in the big cage. (See page 168)

live in, and lie in wait buried at the bottom of the round pits they make for themselves. Watch them when some ants have been dropped into the desert. Round rush the ants until one of them stumbles at the edge of a pit. He falls half-way down, and then starts a scramble—all six legs working to help him escape.

Then the hidden ant-lion gets busy.

With a sort of butting movement with the head, he throws a little shower of sand at the

girls at a fruit merchant's warehouse a frightful scare, but he was caught and sent to the Zoo. The lady picks him up and lets him run over her hand and arm without a moment's hesitation. She says the tarantula argues to himself like this:

"Here is a soft, warm, pink thing which picks me up very gently and seems much too big to eat. It does not hurt me a bit, so why should I bite it and waste my good poison?"

Go on past the crawlies in the Insect House, and you will find the spider monkeys, capuchins, and other delicate South American monkeys which need special "looking after."

You will find there that miserable fraud the "Weeper Capuchin." This is a long-tailed, leggy, sorrowful-looking chap with a most piteous cry like a baby that has been hurt and terrified.

Ladies see a "Weeper," and feel they *must* buy him and be kind to him. The lady that first bought the fellow now in the Zoo was very badly bitten, and got rid of the deceitful little wretch with a thankful heart. When he arrived, he looked such a pitiful bundle of misery that his keeper opened the cage to give him an extra bunch of grapes. The ungrateful little beast snatched the grapes and jumped out of the cage over the keeper's shoulder like a streak of lightning.

The hunt for him started at once, but darkness came and there was not a trace of the Weeper to be found. If he were left out in the cold all night it would mean the death of that imp of mischief, so a senior keeper kept on searching until very late.

Looking into a furnace-room, he saw a grimy "something" dart into a dark corner. It was the Weeper.

The keeper got a big strong net on a pole (like a heavy butterfly net) and started to try and catch him. The Weeper loved the new game of "Here we go round the furnace-room on a cold and frosty evening." The Weeper wept with laughter when the poor keeper climbed up to the top of a mountain of coke, made a swoop with the net—which missed—and then fell head over heels into the messy dust.

Half an hour later the keeper got him with a lucky swish of the net, grabbed him so that he could not use his needle-sharp teeth, and crammed him into a basket for the rest of the night.

In the large open-air monkey cage by the Elephant House you will see a biggish fellow who is treated with great respect by the others. He is easily the strongest of the lot,

and now and then you will find him behaving like a regular bully. The curious thing is that he is *meant* to be there to bully the others.

Monkeys in captivity are a very lazy lot. They do not have to hunt for their food, they are safe from enemies (such as snakes), and there is nothing to force them to take enough exercise to keep themselves fit and alert.

They used to die too early just because they had too easy a time, for continual laziness and slackness kills—really kills—just like a disease.

Then someone thought of putting a big brutal chap in the cage to keep them "stirred up." He does not injure them badly (for the Zoo does not want a murderer for the cage "bully"), but he chases them and bangs them about if he catches them, and so keeps them in good health.

Something of the same kind is done in fishing trawlers. Turbot and choice flat-fish are sometimes brought to market alive in tanks. They very often used to die on the voyage, until the fishermen hit on the scheme of putting a dog-fish (like a small shark) in the tank with them. The dog-fish bullies the turbot, and they get so interested in keeping away from his jaws that they forget to die.

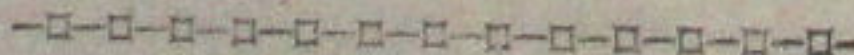
Sometimes it is necessary to catch some of the monkeys in the big open-air cage, and a very clever trap is used.

A biggish cage with a trap-door is pushed in the great enclosure, and inside is a smaller cage with a pair of well-fed, happy monkeys which are used to decoy the others. A lot of bananas, nuts, and other dainties are placed in the trap, and whenever a monkey goes in for a feed, a hidden keeper pulls a string and shuts the door.

The butterfly-net (such as was used to capture the Weeper) soon makes short work of the prisoner, and the trap is set once more.

Although the monkeys *see* what happens to those who walk into the trap, they are so piggish and inquisitive that they walk into the trap themselves soon after.

And the decoy monkeys thoroughly enjoy themselves!





Billy Bunter's Blunder!

A Short Story
of Greyfriars School

By FRANK NUGENT

(Of the Remove Form)

"ANY luck, Sammy?"

Billy Bunter blinked eagerly at his minor as the latter rolled into No. 7 Study.

Sammy shook his head dolefully.

"No luck at all!" he said. "I've moved heaven and earth to raise the wind. I've tackled everybody in the Second, but the beasts buttoned up their pockets when they saw me coming!"

"So you got more kicks than pence—what?"

"A jolly sight more!"

"Same here," said Billy. "I canvassed the whole of the Remove, but there was nothing doing. The fellows refused to believe that my postal-order was on the way, and that I should settle up as soon as it arrived."

"I'm not surprised," grunted Sammy. "That postal-order yarn of yours is as old as the hills, and as stale as a pre-historic sardine! Can't you think of something new—some gilt-edged wheeze—for raising a loan? You're always swanking that you've got more brains than the rest of the family put to-



gether. Very well. Let's see you get your think-tank to work!"

Silence fell between the two Bunters—the silence of despair.

Billy was in the state known as stony. So was Sammy. Billy had been stony for weeks. So had Sammy. Billy had made frantic efforts to raise the wind. So had Sammy. And the enterprising firm of Bunter Brothers was still without capital. Worse than that, they both owed money. And they realised the bitter truth of the saying that in the midst of life we are in debt.

Billy had just made a tour of the Remove studies, in the hope of acquiring funds. He had repeated the same formula in every study, like a small infant reciting a poem by heart.

"I say, you fellows! For once in a way, I happen to be stony; and if you'll advance me five bob I'll pay you back out of my postal-order, which is due to arrive by the very next post!"

This appeal failed to touch either the hearts or the pockets of the fellows it was addressed

"So you're not going to tell me what the stunt is?" demanded Sammy. "No!" "Selfish beast!" snorted Sammy. (See page 170)

to. And the manner of Billy Bunter's exit from the various studies had been much quicker than the manner of his entry. Sometimes he had been rolled out, sometimes booted out, and sometimes thrown out. But he had invariably finished up on his back in the passage, wondering if an earthquake had happened.

Sammy's experiences had been equally painful. His appeal for funds had left his schoolfellows cold.

Both Bunters were feeling hungry. Billy had only been allowed five helpings of apple pudding at dinner, while Sammy had not been permitted to go beyond three. And in their present state of impecuniosity the tuckshop was closed to them. Billy cudgelled his brains—such as they were—to think out a solution to the eternal problem of raising the wind.

It would be useless to write to his father.

Mr. Bunter was reported to have unlimited wealth stored away in the old oak chest at Bunter Court. But none of that wealth ever found its way to Greyfriars. Possibly, like Bunter Court, it did not exist. Anyway, it was easier to get blood out of a stone than to squeeze a remittance out of Billy Bunter's pater.

It would be equally useless to write to Aunt Sally or to Aunt Prudence. Those good ladies were very generous in the matter of giving advice to their nephews, but that advice was seldom, if ever, accompanied by hard cash.

And then, just as he was about to abandon the problem, inspiration came to Billy Bunter.

Why not approach Colonel Wharton or Major Cherry—or both?"

Billy Bunter had, at various times, stayed at Wharton Lodge. He had also been a guest of Bob Cherry's father. He imagined, in his colossal conceit, that both gentlemen were very favourably disposed towards him—that they doted upon him as if he were their own son.

"Surely, if I ask them for a small loan, they'll do the decent thing?" murmured Billy.

Sammy darted a suspicious glance at his major.

"What are you muttering about?" he demanded.

"I've got a wheeze!"

"A wheeze for raising the wind?"

"Yes."

"Get it off your chest!"

But Billy showed no desire to do this. He remained silent, heedless of Sammy's glare.

"So you're not going to tell me what the stunt is?" demanded Sammy.

"No!"

"Selfish beast! Unbrotherly cad! I can see what your little game is. You don't want me to have a share in the spoils."

Billy pointed to the door.

"Scat!" he growled.

And Sammy, realising that he was no match for his major, physically, "scatted."

The fat fag was furious at not being admitted into Billy's confidence. But something seemed to tell him that he would have the laugh of his major at the finish.

As soon as Sammy had gone, Billy wrote two letters—one to Colonel Wharton and the other to Major Cherry.

It did not occur to him that he was descending to the level of a begging-letter writer. Indeed, he did not regard the letters as being of a begging nature at all.

"All I'm asking for is a loan," he told himself. "And, being a fellow of honour, I shall settle up the moment my postal-order comes!"

The fat junior had told the tale of the postal-order so often that he had almost come to believe it himself!

No sooner had he finished the letters than his study-mate, Peter Todd, came in.

Billy Bunter hurriedly folded the letters, and thrust them into the envelopes, which were already stamped and addressed. He sealed them in hot haste, fearful lest Peter Todd should discover what he had been doing.

"What's the game, Tubby?" asked Peter, in surprise.

Billy Bunter did not reply. He snatched up the letters and rushed through the open doorway like a cyclone, almost bowling over his study-mate en route.

Two minutes later the letters reposed safely in the pillar-box. And Billy Bunter heaved a deep sigh of relief.

But the fat junior would have felt far less

easy in his mind had he realised that, in his feverish haste, he had mixed up the two letters, putting Colonel Wharton's in Major Cherry's envelope, and vice versa!

II.

COLONEL WHARTON was seated at the breakfast-table at Wharton Lodge. Before him lay a little heap of letters.

The colonel's attention was arrested by the topmost letter of the pile. It was addressed to him in a sprawling, spider-like hand, and the postmark was Friardale.

"H'm! That's not Harry's writing, I'll be bound!" mused Colonel Wharton. "I wonder—"

He ripped the envelope and drew out a grubby sheet of notepaper. The next moment he started forward in his chair, and his eyes nearly bulged out of his head.

The communication which greeted his gaze ran as follows:

"Dear Major Cherry,

"I make no appolergy for writing to you, as yore son and I have allways been boozum palls.

"The fackt is, I happen to be sumwhat short of the reddy; in other wurd, I am on the rox. I reelly don't no wich way to tern. My pater is away on the Kontinent, and I can't get into tuch with him. The same remark applies to my Ants. I did think of writing to Colonel Wharton, asking for a lone, but he's such a meen, stinjy beest, and such a conseated orterkrat, that I'm sure it wouldn't be any use. But I no you won't fale me, deer Major, and if you will let me have a fiver by return of post I will

repay you out of my postle-order, when it comes.

"Hopping you will be able to meat my wishes in this respekt, I remane,

"Yores sinseerly,

"W. G. BUNTER.

"P.S.—You won't let Colonel Wharton no what I think of him, will you?"

For some moments Colonel Wharton sat like a man in a dream.

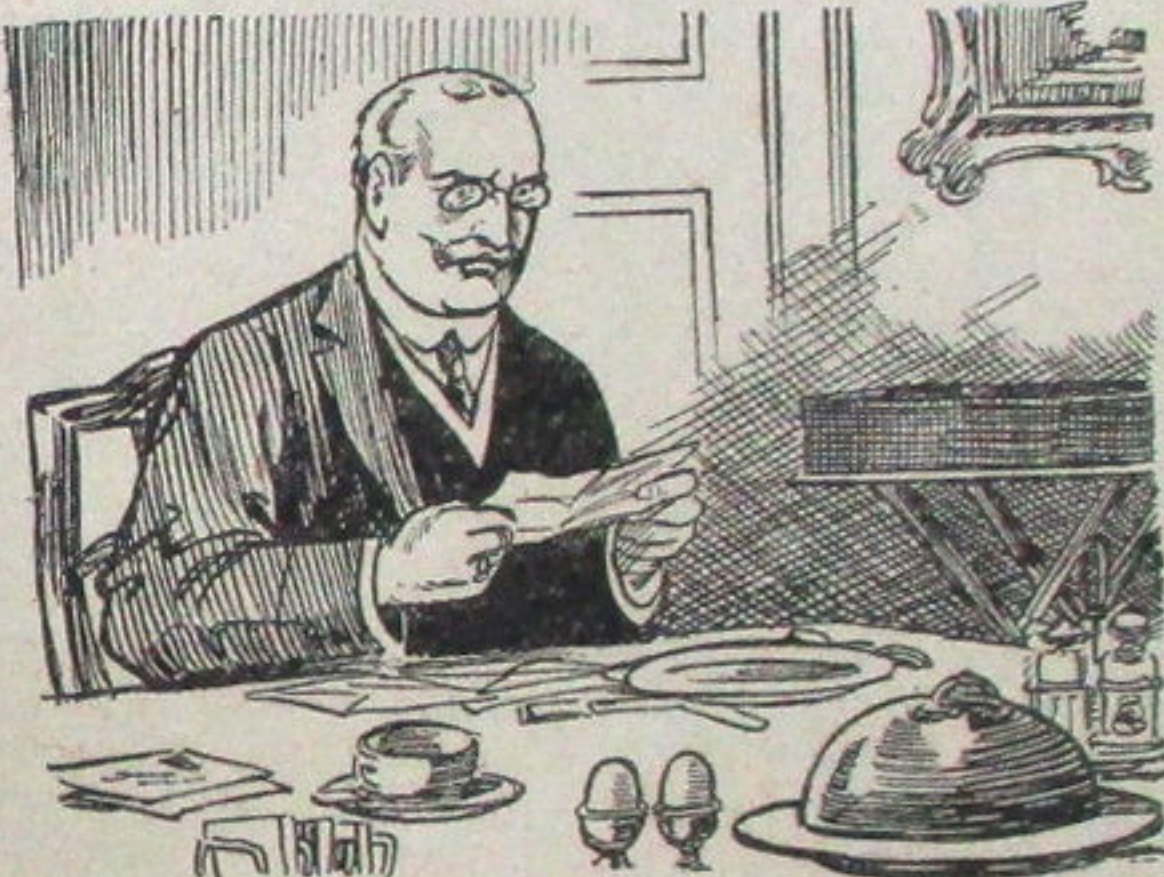
His first impression was that the whole thing was a practical joke. The amazing spelling seemed to suggest that.

On consideration, however, the colonel realised what

must have happened. This letter had unwittingly been put into the wrong envelope.

Colonel Wharton fairly spluttered with wrath.

"A mean, stingy beast, am I?" he snorted. "A conceited autocrat? I'll make that precious rascal feel sorry he ever penned such words! I'll get through to Dr. Locke on the



Colonel Wharton fairly spluttered with wrath. "A mean, stingy beast, am I? A conceited autocrat? I'll make that precious rascal feel sorry he ever penned such words!" (See this page)

telephone—no, I won't—I'll pay a personal visit to Greyfriars! After all, I haven't seen Harry for some time."

And the colonel promptly instructed his chauffeur to have the car ready after lunch.

Meanwhile another military gentleman—Major Cherry, to be precise—was ramping and raving, and letting off steam, in the breakfast-room at his residence.

The major had just finished reading the following extraordinary epistle:

"Dear Colonel Wharton,

"I need no interduckshun to you, as I have on numerus okkashuns vissited Wharton Lodge as yore gest, and been the life and

sole of the party. I am allso a close chum of yore nephew Harry. A long wile ago I promised you I would take him under my wing at Greyfriars, and I have foolfilled my prom-mis.

"I now wish to approach you on a rather dellyket subjick. I am short of funds, and for varyus reeasons my titled rellations are unable to help me. I did think of writing to Major Cherry, but he's such a cross-graned old buffer that I don't no how he'd take it. Besides, I hate his sen Bob like poyson, so I will seek no favers from that $\frac{1}{4}$. You are much more of a gentleman than Major Cherry, so I appeal to you with konfidense. If you will send me a fiver by return, I shall nevvver forget yore jennyros-sity. An I will pay you back as soon as my postle-order comes.

"I trussed you are kwite well as it leeves me at pressent with a slight tuch of hooping-koff.

"Yores in antisipashun,
"W. G. BUNTER.
"P.S.—Should

you meat Major Cherry at any time, please don't tell him my private oppinion of him."

"The cheeky young cub—the insolent young jackanapes!" roared Major Cherry, striding up and down in great wrath. "A cross-graned old buffer, am I? Much less of a gentleman than Colonel Wharton! By George! I—I'll make that audacious young reprobate eat his words! I'll notify his head-master—no, I won't—I'll go to Greyfriars and deal with the rascal myself, begad!"

Major Cherry continued to deliver himself in this strain. Billy Bunter's very outspoken criticism had infuriated him beyond measure.

The major had some business to transact

that morning, but after lunch he drove to the railway station and took a ticket to Friar-dale.

Billy Bunter wasn't expecting visitors that afternoon; but this was one of those cases where the unexpected would happen—with a vengeance!

III.

WE—that is to say, the Famous Five of the Remove—were at tea in No. 1 Study, when the throbbing of an automobile in the Close caused us to go to the window.

Billy Bunter was present. He had been trying to cadge a free feed, and we had been about to pitch him out neck and crop when the arrival of the car diverted our attention.

"Why, it's your uncle, Harry!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"My uncle! Great Scott! I wasn't expecting him."

"I—I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "Colonel Wharton's come specially to see me!"

"Eh? Why should he want to see you, you fat duffer?" demanded Johnny Bull.

Bunter said nothing. But he thought he knew why the colonel had come. Realising that the fat junior was urgently in need of funds, he had made a special journey to Greyfriars in order to hand him a fiver. So Bunter thought, anyway. But he was soon to be disillusioned!

A moment later Colonel Wharton came into the study. He exchanged hasty greetings with Harry—then he spun round upon Billy Bunter.



"The cheeky young cub—the insolent young jackanapes!" roared Major Cherry. "A cross-graned old buffer, am I?" (See this page)

"You impertinent young rascal!" he thundered.

"Oh, really, sir——"

"How dare you make libellous statements concerning your betters? How dare you, I repeat?"

Billy Bunter looked utterly flabbergasted.

"I—I——" he stammered feebly.

"What's Bunter been doing, uncle?" inquired Wharton.

"He wrote a letter to Major Cherry, and apparently sent it to me in error. He referred to me in the letter as a mean, stingy beast and a conceited autocrat!"

"Oh, help!" groaned Billy Bunter.

And he fervently wished that the floor would open and swallow him up. The floor, however, remained firm.

Colonel Wharton then cross-examined the fat junior at some length, and pointed out to him, in measured tones, the error of his ways.

"I should be perfectly justified

in reporting you to Dr. Locke," he concluded.

"Your conduct is altogether unprecedented!"

"Leave the fat worm to us, uncle," said Harry Wharton. "We'll deal with him!"

And we did!

Billy Bunter was heaved across the study table, face downwards, and a fives bat was applied to his plump person. Johnny Bull acted as public executioner.

"Yarooooh! Help! Murder!"

The victim's yells of anguish echoed along the Remove passage.

"I think that will do," said Colonel Wharton at length.

And Johnny Bull desisted.

No sooner had Billy Bunter rolled off the table on to the floor than Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior, poked his head into the study.

"Guess your pater's here, Cherry!" he announced.

"What!"

"He's on the warpath, too! Looks as if he's going to wring some galloo's neck!"

"Help!" panted Billy Bunter.

And he dashed wildly out of the study.

I will not attempt to describe in anything like detail the scene which followed.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to a game of hare-and-hounds. Billy Bunter was the hare, and Major Cherry the hound.

The unfortunate Owl dodged here, there, and everywhere in order to escape the vials of the major's wrath. Up and down staircases, in and out of studies, round the corridors, and across the Close, the terrified junior fled, as if a pack of wolves were at his heels. And, indeed, he would have preferred

meeting a pack of wolves rather than the infuriated major.

Finally, Billy Bunter sought sanctuary in one of the lumber-rooms, where he remained until dusk.

When he emerged, hours later, covered with dust from head to foot, he encountered a grinning crowd of juniors in the passage.

"Has—has he gone, you fellows?" he inquired anxiously.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Thank goodness! I've never had such an awful afternoon in my life! It's been a perfect nightmare!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"Has—has he gone?" inquired Bunter, anxiously.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Thank goodness! I've never had such an awful afternoon in my life!" (See this page)

Billy Bunter's painful ordeal was over at last, and he rolled disconsolately away. He hadn't gone very far when he caught sight of his minor.

Sammy was chuckling gleefully. His fat face was positively beaming with delight. It resembled a full moon.

"What's the joke?" demanded Billy irritably.

"I'm in funds!" chortled Sammy.

"Eh?"

The fat fag produced a couple of Treasury notes from his pocket. He flourished them under his major's nose.

"How—how did you come by those?" gasped Billy.

"It was like this," explained Sammy. "While Major Cherry was chasing you from pillar to post, he happened to drop his wallet, and there was a big bundle of notes inside. By a lucky chance, I found it——"

"And stuck to it?"

"Not at all! I returned it to Major Cherry, and he rewarded me with a couple of quid, and said I was an honest little fellow! He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter attempted to link his arm in that of his minor.

"I've always been an affectionate brother to you, Sammy," he said. "Let's come along to the tuckshop!"

But Sammy wrenched himself free.

"You wouldn't let me share your wheeze for raising the wind, so you're not going to share my wealth!" he said. "I'm going down to the bunshop in the village to have a jolly good tuck-in. Ta-ta!"

And Sammy rolled away, while Billy gazed after his minor's retreating figure, with feelings too deep for words!

—THE END—

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 9.—TUG OF WAR



See how they strain upon the rope!
Two sturdy lines of fellows;
While messages of cheer and hope
Each keen supporter bellows.
"Pull, Bunter, pull! On, Cherry, on!
Extend your beef and muscle!"
And not until their breath is gone
Will they give up the tussle.

This way and that the rivals away,
'Mid loud and frantic cheering;
Each team resolved to win the day,
Each fellow persevering.
See! Billy Bunter tugs with vim,
Just note his look conceited,
As if to say that but for him
His team would be defeated.
Then comes a loud and mighty roar,
The strenuous fight is over;
And Billy Bunter chuckles, for
His comrades are in clover.
They stoutly pulled, with might and main,
Until they won the issue;
And now, worn out, they feel the strain
In every joint and tissue.

Among the sports where strength and weight
Are needed every minute,
The tug of war is just first-rate,
Few other sports are in it.
So let us, in the game of life,
Pull hard, each effort bigger,
And gamely combat storm and strife
With energy and vigour.

HOW TO MAKE AND WORK A PANORAMA

To the question, What is a Panorama? the answer might be, "A panorama is a painting of a complete scene viewed from a central point or made continuous upon an unrolling canvas."

This reply would be correct, but there is very much more to be said about it, for the "panorama" is the grandfather of the whole cinema family around us to-day, and possibly it is a more beautiful production. It can be viewed as a stationary picture, or as a moving one.

In the latter case wonderful effects can be produced by the aid of just a little ingenuity.

In the days of some fifty years ago the panorama was not only a thing of beauty, but a highly instructive amusement. It used to be taken about from town to town and exhibited by a clever lecturer well versed in his subject, who dilated on the various beauties presented, and who possessed a good store of anecdotes both amusing and instructive.

In fact the advent of the panorama caused nearly as much excitement to the young folks then as the visit of a circus to the town. Many a grandfather, ay, also many a grandmother, recounting the pleasure enjoyed at the panorama of their young days, and would rejoice to have the opportunity of a repetition.

Now, it is the purpose of this article to tell

our young readers how to make for themselves a panorama of simple and inexpensive construction and practical efficiency; all that is necessary to ensure success is a little ability and a little artistic taste, both of which are possessed by the youth of to-day.

HOW TO MAKE THE PANORAMA

If the reader likes carpentry he will quickly grasp the following directions:

See Fig. 1. This is the "floor." Procure pieces of wood of the following sizes:

A. 2 pieces 15 in. long, 1 in. wide, and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

B. 2 pieces 12 in. long, 1 in. wide, and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

C. 1 piece 18 in. long, 6 in. wide, and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

D. 1 piece 14 in. long, 3 in. wide, and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

To be fastened together as shown in the sketch.

On the piece marked D nail a strip of

wood about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide and one inch space from the front edge (see thick line on Fig. 1).

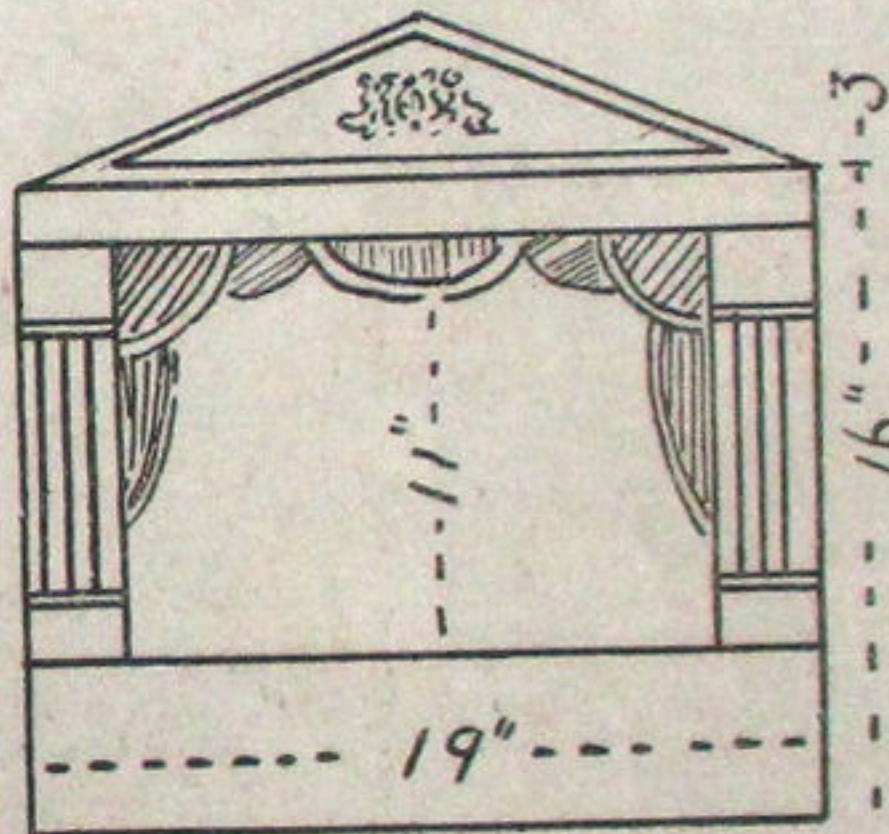
Fig. 2 is side view of the stage.

E. 1 piece of wood 12 in. by 3 in. wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick

F. 4 pieces of wood 13 in. long by 1 in. wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

G. 1 piece of wood 12 in. long by 1 in. wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick.

Fasten together as indicated in the sketch,



Panorama Stage, viewed from the front

and make duplicates for the other side of the stage.

Fig. 3. Two rollers will be required, and these should be 11 in. in length, and can be cut off a broom handle. A wire handle to be fixed in the top and a French nail driven into the other end, as shown in the sketch.

Fig. 4. This is the top of the stage.
 3 pieces of wood 15 in. by 1 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
 2 pieces of wood 12 in. by 1 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
 1 piece of wood 18 in. by 6 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The second rail on the top is to be fastened *under* the side rails, not on top of them, a space of one inch from the first rail, as in sketch.

Fig. 5. Front of stage.

Fig. 6. The Proscenium is the ornament

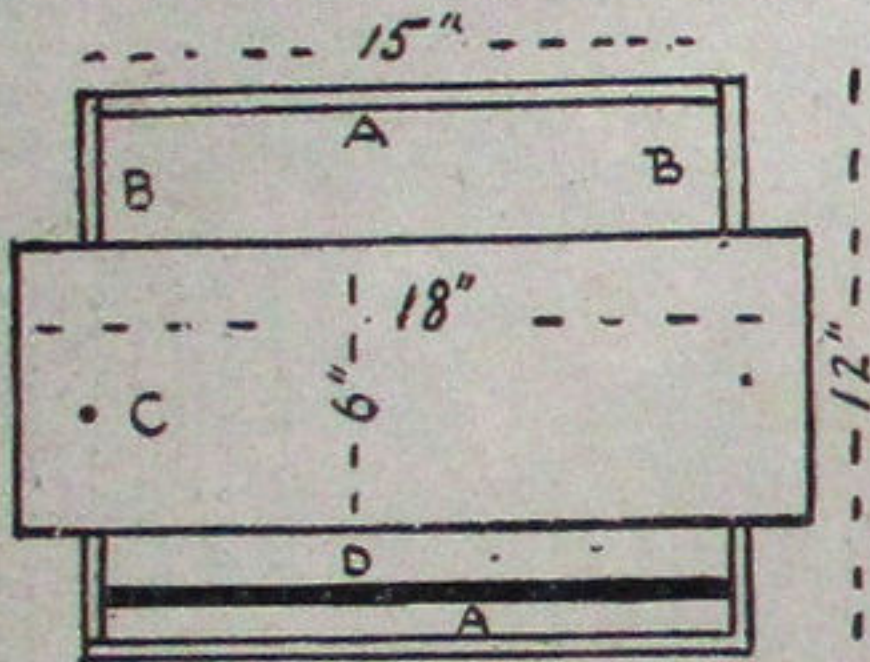


Fig. 1. Floor of Stage.

of the stage front. This is a simple design, but the young artist can, if he wishes, make a more elaborate one. It can be cut out of a sheet of cardboard, or in sections (which would be easier), according to the measurements in the sketch, or it could be made from pieces of white paper and stuck with gum, paste, or very thin glue, on stout brown paper, and then fastened on the stage front itself.

HOW TO WORK THE PANORAMA

A long roll of paper will be required, which can be provided very cheaply by obtaining a roll of decent wall-paper, about 22 in. wide. This, cut in halves the whole length, will give you about 36 ft. run twice over, by 11 in. in width, so you will have a good supply at little cost.

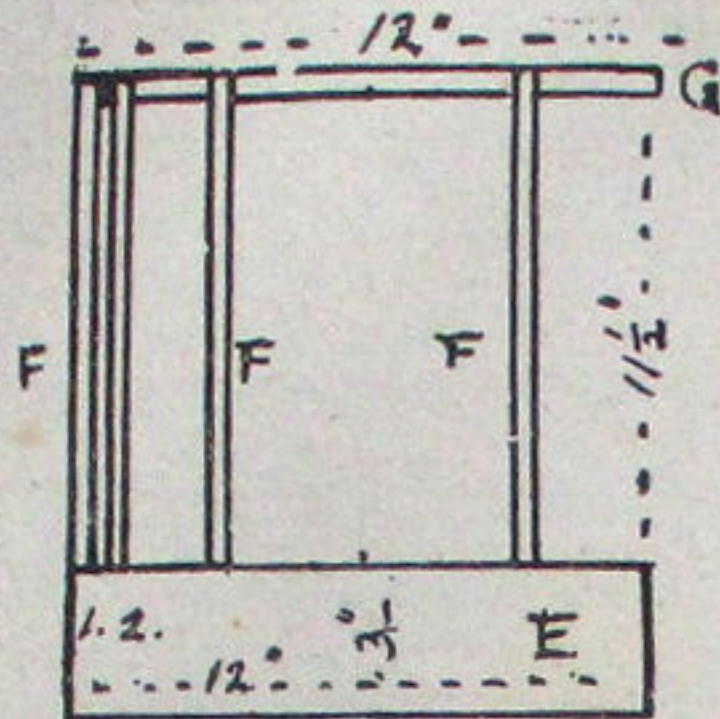


Fig. 2. Side view.

Now choose your subject: for instance, "Sights of London." Plenty of pictures for this could be got from various illustrated papers. Cut these out and paste them on the plain side of the scroll you have cut, at a little distance from each other. This might be followed by a "Visit to the Zoo." If so, cut out picture animals, and let these follow on the scroll. Then "Favourite Footballers" and "Cricketers" might follow; also "Cinema Stars." If on "The Thames," cut out pictures of barges, tugs, boats, etc., and add these on the scroll. A few anecdotes mixed in with the lecture as you proceed makes the thing the more enjoyable, especially if they are school stories.

Take another instance. Suppose you would like to give "The Prince of Wales's Visit to India," then begin with a picture of the Prince, and any of the staff that accompanied him. Then let a picture of the Renown follow on; pictures of some of the ships follow, a picture or two of the lighthouses round the coast, a yacht or two. Some of the pictures from such papers as the Daily Mail and Mirror, etc., will be useful for the Indian views. Then there's the "home-coming" of the prince—his arrival at the station, and drive to the Palace.

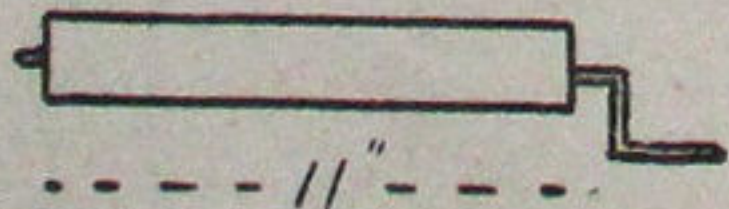


Fig. 3. Roller.

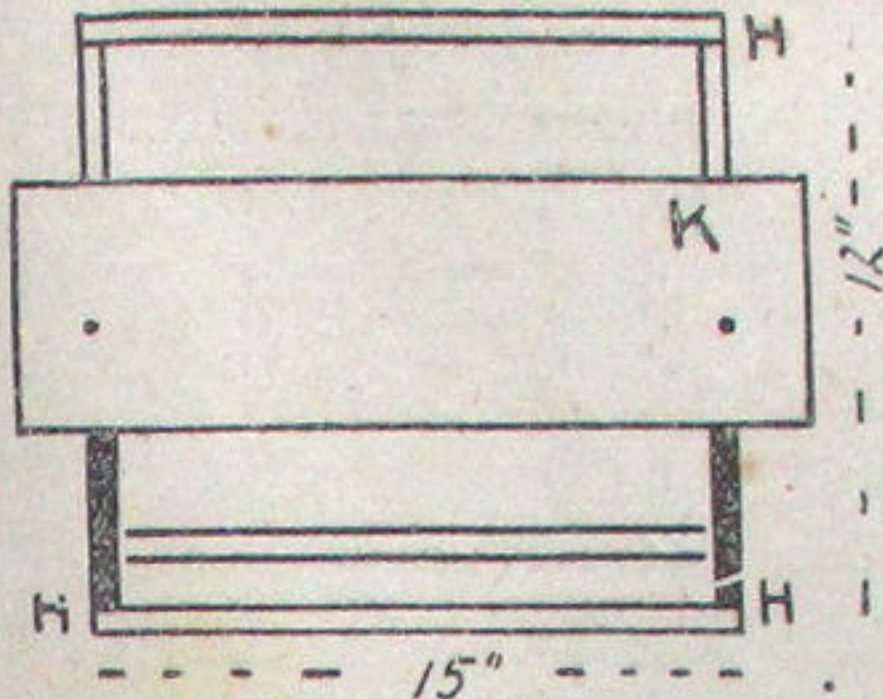


Fig. 4. Top of Stage

Again—if you like an audience of children you can give them illustrated nursery rhymes, and the more nonsense you rattle out with—the more laughable you make the pictures—the better.

These hints will give you ideas you can work upon, and other subjects will quickly come into your mind.

One end of the scroll when ready is to be fixed on one of the rollers and wound round it; then fasten the other end on to the other roller with the handle. This done, place the rollers in position, one each side of the stage on the platforms in Figs. 1 and 4 where you will see dots marking where holes are to be made. The scroll must go, that is travel, in between the rails 1 and 2 marked in

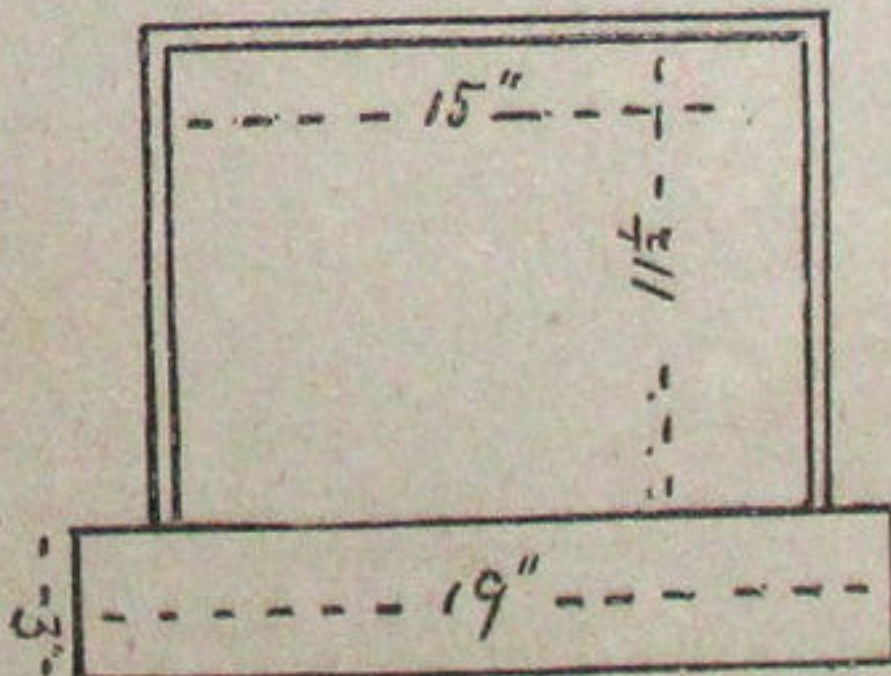


Fig. 5. Front of Stage.

Fig. 2—so as to keep it working close up to the front.

You will best work with an assistant. He will stand at the side of the stage to work the handle. You will want the scroll to stop at various points in its travel, so that you can talk about that particular picture or view.

To ensure this, put a small piece of paper on the back of the scroll (stamp-edging is the thing) at the place you desire a stop to be made. Your assistant, being at the back, will notice this come to a certain point, and so will not wind further until required.

If you can manage to borrow a curtain to hang on a cord across the room, and so hide your assistant, so much the better.

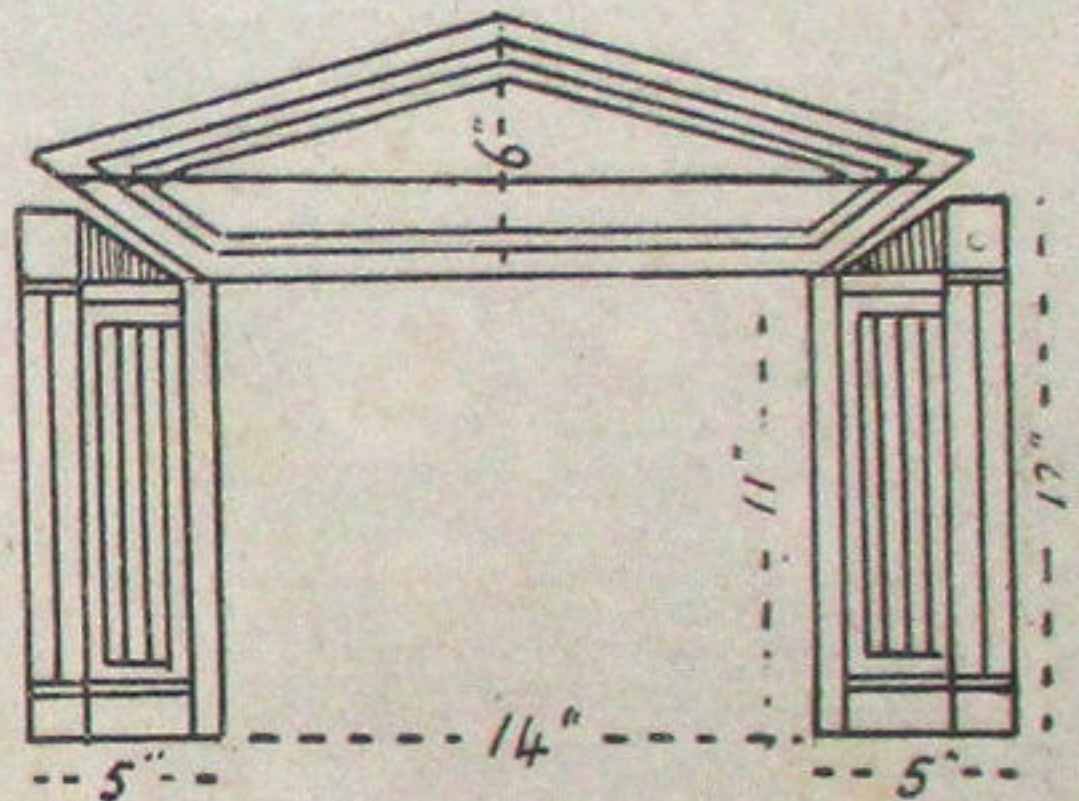


Fig. 6. The Proscenium

A final hint. Keep some "lay" figures for use, such as pictures of policemen, soldiers, sailors, a group of people, children, nurse, etc. Paste on stout paper and cut them out. A little piece of flat wood is wanted for a stand for each; fasten them on separately, then keep them by you, where they are at hand to place on the stage just in front of the scroll whenever you require a figure. As they will be stationary they will add materially to effect as the scroll passes along. If a piece of cotton is fastened on to each of these you can the more easily pull them off when you so desire.

ON TIME!

HOW THE COOK OF A "COW-CAMP" GOT HIS OWN BACK

THE cook of a cow punchers' camp is almost invariably an unshaved person with dirty overalls and an uncertain temper. Also, he is reckoned by the rest of the boys as fair game for any love of fun and practical joking that happens to be going around in the camp. And never yet was there a cow camp where this love wasn't prominent and well developed.

The resident cook of the C C C ranch down by the North Fork of the Concho river, in Texas, was a peach, a real jim-dandy, a nonsuch. He'd held the job for more years than the average "doctor" holds his for months, so you'll gather that he came mighty close to being an ideal cook. And the outfit, being an ordinary one, didn't help him any more than is usual.

Said Wild Joe one evening, supper being finished:

"Speakin' of cooks——"

"I hadn't heard it recent," interrupted Abilene Bill. "But as we ain't otherwise busy, pro-ceed, my son."

With a scornful glance at his interruptor, Wild Joe (so called because of his modest and retiring nature) continued.

"They is, accordin' to my experience, chiefly a whole lot mixed. I've met up with some as was good, a heap that was pizon bad; but bad or good, they're all shore unsafe to quarrel with. An' th' breed's plumb sensitive. Mebbe livin' next a scorehin fire most all the time makes their hides tender'n other fellers. They're shore uncertain; an' speakin' free an' large, th' only thing about 'em that ain't is that th' next'll be worse'n th' last."

Joe, having been gifted with a double dose of original sin in the matter of practical joking, his oracular pronouncement was received with due appreciation by the score

of punchers grouped around the stove; the subject was discussed with ardour and variety. For it is a topic of conversation never stale in a cow camp, the professional ability—or otherwise—of the cook being a matter of importance to all.

Substantially, Joe's contention was upheld, the criticism being fine and varied, and unaffected by the knowledge that Uncle Johnny, the resident cook, was well within earshot. But there was no malice behind the humour, for every man knew that the Carlisle Cattle Company (which meant themselves) was peculiarly fortunate in its "doctor."

Not only was Johnny a really first-class cook, but it was acknowledged that his smartness and punctuality in getting meals on the table—which matters a lot to a class of men always hungry and owning a hatred of waiting—were far beyond those of the average grub spoiler.

He was a clever old fellow, Johnny; and it was understood that an earlier stage of his career had been spent as a trooper in one of the crack British cavalry regiments. There, doubtless, he had acquired that habit of promptitude so much appreciated by his present comrades.

Presently the conversation was interrupted by the entry of Tim Maclean, foreman of the outfit.

"Say, boys," he said, finding standing place near the fire, for a December evening in Texas is liable to be chilly; "it's an early start for us to-morrow."

Ray Howitt looked up and inquired:

"Where?"

"Devil's River. There some right smart bunches of beef down along near th' water, and as it's farthest away, I reckon we'll start there first."

And Maclean moved along to the cookhouse

where Uncle Johnny, the washing up of his numerous pots and pans finished, was getting the stove fixed up ready for his morning operations.

Therein lay the secret of the cook's unfailing punctuality. He always began in advance. Maclean, watching, nodded approval.

"That's right, Johnny," he observed. "Reckon you won't have any time to give away to-morrow mornin'."

The cook looked at him with a mild surprise.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Because we're due for an early start, uncle. I'm taking th' outfit down along to Devil's River, and I mean making it bright and soon, for it's a long ride. So mind you see to it and give us breakfast right on time, for I don't want to be late. See."

Maclean, turning away, did not catch the expression that flickered into Johnny's clear brown eyes—a lot wondering and a trifle resentful. But it was gone again in an instant, and the man answered:

"That'll be all right, boss."

But the cook's feelings were hurt, and, the foreman gone, Uncle Johnny permitted himself to give vent to them.

"Four years, and I ain't never yet been once late with a meal," he muttered.

"The boss] didn't have no call to talk to me that way. Still——"

Methodically he continued his work. He filled the huge kettle and busied himself with a roasting of coffee. At last, his day's work finished, he betook himself into the big living-room, and, as was his habit, went straight to his bunk and turned back his blankets.

Turning out, as he has to do, at two o'clock

in the morning, the cook of a cow camp doesn't usually waste any time between the ending of his day's job and going to roost.

From the stove a grave voice called to him as he was removing his boots:

"Mind you ain't late in th' mornin', uncle."

Another took up the fun.

"Like me to call you, uncle?" he was solicitously asked.

"That's all right, boys; don't you worry," he told them kindly.

In a few seconds Uncle Johnny was rolled up and snoring portentously, undisturbed by the conversation about the stove, although the talk did not continue for much longer, Maclean's warning not being forgotten.

"Reckon I'll be poundin' my ear," remarked Abilene Bill; and rose from his seat.

"Me, too," said another. One by one the punchers found their bunks, the lamp was put out, and shortly after nine o'clock the long room, dark as pitch, was filled with the snoring and heavy breathing of a score of tired sleepers.

In due time the cook roused himself, dropped his legs over the edge of the bunk, and found the floor. Dressing was not a prolonged operation, and

within two minutes of awakening, Johnny was in his cookhouse, mixing flour and water and baking-powder by the light of the tin lamp.

Easily, methodically, quickly but without any appearance of haste, the old man worked, the glowing stove rapidly approaching the condition fit to deal with the huge panful of sliced steak waiting to hand. He quietly



Armed with an iron spoon and tin plate, he began the deafening clamour that announced that breakfast was ready.

hummed a tune as he worked, evidence that the foreman's interference—as he deemed it—of the night before hadn't disastrously affected his spirits or good humour.

During intervals of attending to the oven and frying-pan, he set out the long table in the big room with its load of ironware. Now and again he glanced at the tin-cased clock on a shelf in his sanctum, and seemed satisfied. In due course the beef was fried, the coffee ready, the bread cooked. Again he eyed the clock.

"Boss can't say I ain't on time," he told himself with evident satisfaction.

Going into the big room, he lighted the lamp, and armed with an iron spoon and tin plate, began the infernal clamour that announced breakfast was ready.

The response was prompt. From every bunk a puncher rolled out without loss of time. Boots were pulled on, blankets rolled up, and those with a fancy that way made a hasty toilet with a bucket of water and a rough towel. By the time the cook had the smoking dishes on the table every man was in his place.

Followed a busy time. Every man ate as though life depended upon rapidity of consumption. Conversation was at a discount, cowmen having no use for the theory that the taking of food should be accompanied with bright and cheerful conversation. Jaws were too hard at work for chat of any kind. Between living-room and cookhouse Uncle Johnny moved quickly, bringing along fresh supplies.

Jeff Hancock, whose turn it was to fetch the horses from the corral, was first to quit. Out he went, and the rest, as their appetites were satisfied, got up, rolled cigarettes, and gathered about the lighted stove until the arrival of their ponies.

Five minutes passed, and Tim Maclean began to grow restive.

"Jeff Hancock's slow this mawnin'," he growled, lighting a second cigarette.

The others thought the same, but said little. Now and again a few curt, low-voiced words might be heard. Still the horse wrangler did not put in appearance, and the foreman's irritation grew into evident annoyance.

Behind the idle group, too occupied with his own work to give them any attention, Uncle Johnny, whistling softly to himself, was clearing the table.

Maclean's annoyance was finding outlet in cuss words, and he was on the point of sending out a man to find what had become of Hancock when the door was thrown open, and that puncher stepped into the room.

"Queer thing," he cried shortly. "Too dark t' see any hosses, much less catch 'em." And he looked back at the foreman's angry eyes with equal anger.

"It shore is dark," admitted a puncher from by the window. "Don't wonder."

The foreman swung about, scowling ferociously, and all eyes were turned upon the cook. Going to the door, he had opened it, and was looking out curiously.

"What d'ye mean?" demanded Maclean savagely.

Uncle Johnny looked at him serenely, but on his way to the cookhouse made no answer. In an instant, however, he was back again.

"Reckon breakfast was early enough, eh, boss?" he asked the foreman.

And he set down on the table the tin-cased clock he had brought back with him—the only timepiece the whole outfit owned.

And everyone looked at the clock, the hands of which indicated almost midnight.

"Like dinner early, too?" questioned Johnny, with a perfectly straight face.

And then he made a swift break for the doorway, through which he darted fleetly, and disappeared, followed by a yell and, half a second later, by a roaring mob of bamboozled cowpunchers, the joke played upon them at last plain to their eyes. The foreman headed the crowd.

When they returned from their long chase—Uncle Johnny was fleet of foot and the darkness helped—the prisoner in their midst, good humour had overcome their anger, and Tim Maclean was the first to admit that this time it was the cook who had scored.

*
* * * * * —THE END— * * * * *
*



The Mystery of Ravenscar

A Grand Story of
Westavon College

—:o:—

By EDMUND BURTON

—:o:—

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Who is the Thief?

IN all probability few of my readers will require to be told what and where Westavon College is. It is too well known as one of the "cock" schools of Great Britain to need any further introduction from me.

But at the time with which this story deals its atmosphere was being sadly clouded by something hitherto unknown. Master looked at master, boy looked at boy, yet for six or seven long weeks the shadow hovered over Westavon, seemingly never to be dispelled until the hitherto stainless reputation of the college was besmirched for good.

Waythorne, of the Sixth—you know, the eldest son of Sir John Waythorne, C.B., O.B.E.—was the first to suffer. He missed a gold watch and chain—a present from his father—and though he could remember exactly where he had left it, the watch seemed to have taken unto itself legs and walked away. Sampson and Brickett, two other members of the same Form, had reported the loss of a diamond pin and a silver match-box respectively; whilst others suffered more or less in the same mysterious manner.

The Head, Dr. Barton, was in a quandary. Such a thing had never occurred in his long

connection with the college, and eventually he was forced to the reluctant conclusion that a thief—or, perhaps, to put it more kindly, a kleptomaniac—had by some chance strayed in amongst his pupils. The neighbouring pawnbrokers were apprised and given a description of the missing articles, but all to no purpose; and additional mysterious disappearances gradually blotted out these previous losses.

Finally, the Head, after assembling the whole school together in big hall and appealing to the culprit, for the sake of the good name of Westavon, to confess—which appeal was received with stony, indignant silence—was forced to declare all freedom at an end until the affair was cleared up. No boy, he said, would be allowed beyond the limits of the quadrangle until further notice, and if the thief was not discovered before a certain short time had elapsed, the police would have to be informed. This was a course which Dr. Barton would not have adopted except as a last resort, on account of the scandal which must surely ensue; but the stainless reputation of Westavon must be preserved at all costs, and the only way to preserve it was to eradicate the bad patch from the otherwise sound whole.

Naturally, this decision caused great indignation, just though it undoubtedly was; yet

the anger of the school was not directed against the Head, but against the mean rotter who allowed a couple of hundred boys to suffer for his own misdeeds.

Several more days passed, however, without anything further coming to light. A couple of extra losses were reported, but that was all. Smyth minor remarked, as he stared dully from the window of Study No. 5, that it only needed a bowl of skilly and a lump of oakum to complete the picture!

"Might as well all be in quod together!" he growled to an unresponsive audience of three, as he nodded across to where the

weed-encumbered grounds of Ravenscar Manor ran right up to the quadrangle wall. "Look at old 'Robinson Crusoe' there, wandering about his domains with his monkey an' parrot! I almost envy the beggar!"

The others glanced dully in the direction

Smyth indicated, but made no audible remark. Ravenscar Manor—a rambling old house, which, like many other buildings of the same kind, was reputed haunted—adjoined West-avon College, its grounds being separated from those of the latter by a boundary wall.



"Look at old 'Robinson Crusoe' there, wandering about his domains with his monkey an' parrot! I almost envy the beggar!" (See this page)

The Manor had been deserted for years, but had recently been taken by a queer-looking old josser who looked exactly like the miser of fiction, and who seemed mightily fond of pets. He was to be

seen almost daily pottering about the rambling wilderness of a garden, with a green parrot perched upon one shoulder and a small marmoset monkey on the other, to each of which he talked alternately as though they were children of his own.

His name, as the neighbouring village gossips could have told you, was believed to be Pendleby, and the man who had moved in his stuff could have added the information that most of the "furniture" consisted of heavy hutches and

cages, draped in cloth, from which came a variety of strange sounds; indeed, the village carrier was rather glad to get the job over and clear out, for, somehow, he didn't quite like carrying those articles, especially as something had poked its head out from beneath

one of the cloth coverings and made a vicious snap at his fingers.

Pendleby, therefore, was presumed to be a zoologist who kept a small private menagerie; but the Westavon boys had christened him "Robinson Crusoe," since he was rarely seen in the grounds unless accompanied by the green parrot and the marmoset monkey. He did not, however, interest the college pupils overmuch, as he never spoke to any of them; and Ravenscar Manor, being now occupied private property, was of course out of bounds.

"Look here, you fellows," said Smyth minor, suddenly turning from the window, "this kind of thing is apt to make a chap feel desperate. We simply *must* do something to create a diversion, or we'll go mad. What d'you say to a slap-up spread?"

"I think you've gone mad already!" snapped Jack Villiers sarcastically. "What about the Head's orders?"

"Orders be blowed!" exclaimed the desperate Smyth. "How much can we make up between us? I've three an' ninepence, if you fellows like to give me some pecuniary assistance?"

Nine-and-six was the ultimate total, after much pocket-rummaging; and a couple of hours later, when darkness had fallen, Smyth cautiously raised the window and grasped a hefty drain-pipe which ran down to the quadrangle below.

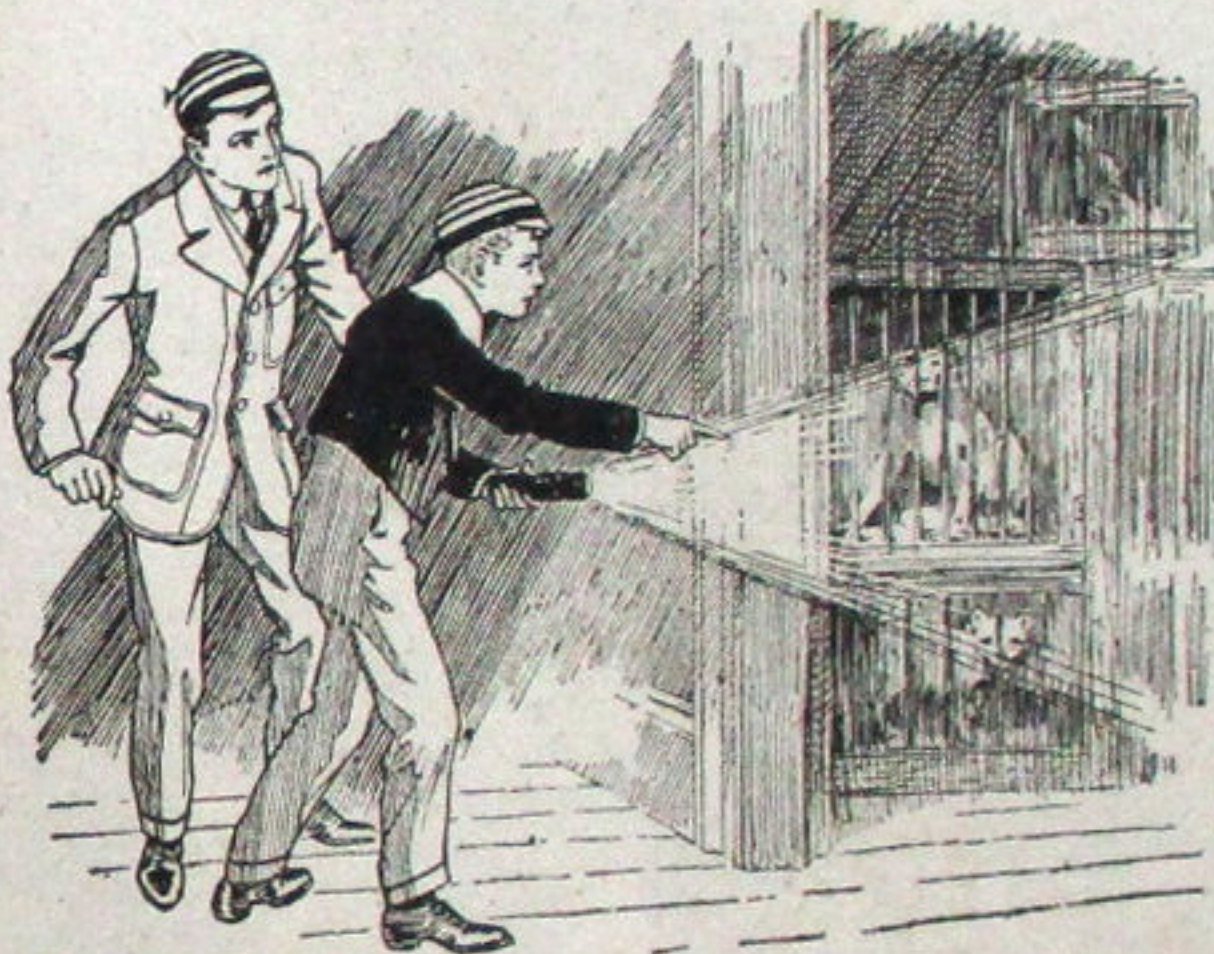
"It means expulsion if you're nabbed, old man!" warned Villiers, as the other's legs

disappeared through the window. "The Head's a clinker, but you know he's jolly strict if occasion demands——"

"You needn't worry; this is *my* funeral!" rapped back Smyth. "If one rotter chooses to be a blessed criminal, I don't see why the rest should be chucked into quod without any of the usual prison gratuities for good conduct!"

He vanished from sight, and half an hour later returned triumphant, carrying a well-stocked bag suspended from his shoulders, a bag upon which the other hungry occupants of Study 5 fell like so many ravenous wolves.

"Got through all right, you see!" said Smyth. "Fall to, my merry men, for the fare is fair, and—— Oh, by the by, one of old 'Crusoe's' beasts has escaped. I don't know what it was, but it was something pretty big—at least, bigger than what we've seen him with. I spotted it against the



They stole forward until a row of small wired hutches confronted them, from whence several pairs of beady eyes blinked in the glare of the torch. (See page 187)

moon on the roof of Ravenscar, as I was passing, but it moved into the shadows almost before I had properly noticed it."

This intelligence aroused little or no comment from the rest, for the tuck was good, and they were already busy "making little" of it in another sense. In a very short time only a few crumbs remained to tell the tale of the night's escapade, whilst a tightened feeling in the region of four waistcoats did ample homage to the success of Smyth minor's expedition.

Next morning Jeremy, of the Fifth, reported missing a set of gold sleeve-links and

a most valuable medal which had once belonged to his father; but these, like the rest of the thefts, were soon placed on the list of "unexplained crimes" which was steadily growing more formidable.

Ultimately, some of the boys having written home about it, parents began to ask awkward questions as to what was being done in the matter, saying that they could not permit their sons' belongings to disappear in such a mysterious fashion, and, unless the affair was cleared up at once—well, there were other places of instruction where the property of the pupils might be safer!

The Head now wore a perpetually worried look—almost a look of desperation—and the boys unanimously pitied him. He was a kindly man, if stern, and immensely popular with the majority since he had come to Westavon. He had made tireless efforts to trace the affair to its fountain-head, but, though a further scandal would surely mean complete smash to the already tottering reputation of the College, everyone inwardly felt that Doctor Barton's threat would have to be carried out without much delay—i.e., the police were almost daily expected on the scene, which meant long columns in the newspapers with big black headlines, and all the rest of it. It was, indeed, a bitter pill for those who loved the old school to be forced to swallow, but it seemed that little short of a miracle could prevent it now.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

"Young Sherlock!"

OF all the well-supplied pockets at Westavon, those of Aubrey Montgomery Conyers were perhaps the fullest. Aubrey Montgomery would one day enjoy a rent-roll running well into four figures, and, in anticipation of this, his people evidently thought he should learn how to spend it. In any case, Aubrey was banker, treasurer, and chancellor of the exchequer to such unfortunate beings whose desire for "tuck" was greater than their capital, and, keen business man that he promised to be, he did well out of sundry little advances which increased his own income by interest next pocket-money day, when the loans were

invariably repaid. On this particular Saturday, Aubrey's takings were rather larger than usual—a fact that was borne out by his satisfied grin as he counted the shekels scattered over his bed.

"How's that?" he said, turning his head towards his bosom pal, Wilkins, who was standing just behind him.

"Not bad," replied Wilkins. "Think I might do worse than start this game myself, if I could only get enough to commence with."

Conyers sniggered disdainfully.

"You!" he said. "Get out! You haven't the business brain, and you haven't a shred of reputation!"

"Perhaps not—but, though I may be dull, I guess I shouldn't let the whole school see what I've netted. There are three idiots standing at the door now, and maybe the thief's one of 'em!"

"Pshaw! What if he is? I guess I know how to look after myself. The door's got two bolts and a lock, and I'll sleep with the stuff under my pillow."

"And leave the window open, I suppose?"

"Why not? Look out and tell me why not, you ass! Forty feet to the ground, with a wall as bare as your hand, and only a broken, rust-eaten drainpipe within a yard of the sill! You don't suppose anyone's goin' to risk his life on *that*, do you?"

Wilkins murmured something unintelligible, and turned away. So far, he had lost nothing, and Conyers' business was—well, his own business.

Aubrey Montgomery, being a Senior, had a room to himself, and, after retiring that night, resumed his counting as though it had become second nature to him. With the coins—they were all silver, ranging from a shilling to a crown-piece—spread out on the coverlet before him, he sat up in bed until long after the rest of Westavon College were in the arms of Morpheus.

But even the astute Aubrey was not proof against the wiles of Nature, and ultimately his own head nodded forward, jerked up, and nodded again. Presently he was sleeping soundly amid his wealth, and dreaming of more to follow.

Pleasant though his dream was, however,

the awakening was distinctly the reverse. Roused by the first clang of the rising-bell, he sat up, scattering a few coins over the floor—but only a few. The vast majority had mysteriously vanished, although the door was still fast-locked and bolted.

Conyers tore his hair and came as near swearing as any respectable schoolboy can, but all in vain. More than three-quarters of the money had disappeared, and though he searched every inch of the bed and its surroundings, not one extra coin could he discover.

"Told you so!" said Wilkins triumphantly, inwardly glad that his bosom pal would not be so ready to call him an ass in future. "The rain-pipe did it, as I said, and——"

"But, you utter chump, it wouldn't bear an *infant*, and, what's more, the window's only open a foot or so!" replied Conyers disgustedly.

"Well, how was it done, then? If the door was still fastened nobody could have come in that way. And unless there's a secret panel——"

"Secret grandmother!" gasped Aubrey furiously. "Go and chew coal. Stay!

No, don't bother about the coal, but ask young Sherlock to come to me."

"Young Sherlock," though his Christian name was plain "James," thought his surname sounded sufficiently detective-like to warrant his believing himself a crime-investigator of no ordinary prowess. He had read all sorts, sizes, and descriptions of detective stories—from Sexton Blake to Lecocq—and the mystery of Westavon had given him "food for thought," though he had not as yet collected sufficient evidence to "make an arrest."

But the miraculous way in which this latest theft had been perpetrated caused Conyers to wonder if anything could be discovered, considering that the scene of operations was strictly confined to a small room by the door still being secured on his awakening; and, possibly, with his knowledge of detective methods culled from the literature he had imbibed, young Sherlock *might* hit upon a clue which would throw some light on the matter. Any port in a storm—and Aubrey was ready to snatch at straws.

James, swelling with pride at his small person being recognised by so great an individual as Aubrey Montgomery Conyers, hurried towards the latter's bedroom, and glanced round with the eye of a Holmes, Lecocq, and Pinkerton rolled into one.

"Now, kid, not so much of the theatrical!" snapped Aubrey bad-temperedly. "Get busy, and see if you can find anything—if not, get out! I don't suppose you'll do much except waste my time, but should you succeed I'll—I'll give you half a quid!"

This magnanimous offer—for Sherlock was none too rich in this world's goods—did much to dispel the "cold-water" feeling which had possessed him at his chilling reception, and he attacked his task with a will. From the bed to the floor, from the floor back to the bed, he crawled, examining each minutely by the aid of a small magnifying-glass, but for some time dead silence reigned in the room.

"Hang you!" cried Conyers, at length. "Look at my pillow, you dirty beast! Why didn't you wipe your feet on the mat—Eh, what?"



"Well, Pongo, any luck to-night? Your bag, sir!" (See page 188)

He broke off as Sherlock uttered a sudden exclamation of triumph, and stood erect holding something up to the light between his finger and thumb.

"Wh-what have you found?"

James did not reply for a full minute, but when he did his question seemed rather a foolish one:

"You haven't any grey hair, have you, Conyers?"

Aubrey gasped. His hair was almost as red as a pillar-box!

"Grey hair—my stars! Not yet, but I'll have a fine crop of it before *you* leave, I'm thinking! Here, get out, if you've nothing further to say!"

"But I *have*—quite a lot!" persisted James doggedly. "I have to tell you that whoever took your money has grey hair, yet it's a peculiar shade of grey—half brown."

"There's nobody here with hair that colour at all," replied the other. "The Head's grey, so is Mr. Watson of our Form, so is Tompkins, the porter, but not quite like that. What's more, they're absolutely above suspicion——"

"No one is above suspicion—to *me*!" retorted James professionally. (It was Blake who used to say that—or was it Holmes?) "I must suspect *everyone* until I discover the guilty party. I have found half a dozen stiff, greyish-brown hairs on the floor beside your bed, and two or three on the bed itself. When I find the owner of those hairs, all will be in order. I shall now examine the outside of the window and the flower-bed below."

He crossed the room, staring reflectively at the sill and the fragile rain-pipe, but then shook his head gloomily.

"No luck—no sign of a ladder having rested here, and no finger-prints on the glass; but, of course, we sha'n't get disheartened, shall we? Let's go down!"

The soft earth of the flower-bed immediately beneath the window held more success for the budding detective, for here a couple of distinct impressions of a bare foot were discernible, whilst, on the slime near the base of the spout a hand had evidently encircled

the metal work, leaving traces of four fingers and a thumb behind.

"Ah!" said Sherlock, his eyes gleaming. "Now we are getting on! Say, Conyers, d'you know if anybody here is a somnambulist?"

"A—what? Weatherly's pater is a spiritualist, but——"

"A somnambulist, I said—a fellow who walks in his sleep."

"Oh! N-no, I don't think so. Why?"

"Because this is the print of a bare foot, of course. Yet, it looks outlandishly small, and—— *Phe-e-ew!*" Sherlock broke off with a subdued whistle.

"Well?"

"No matter now, but I've got my suspicions, which can only be confirmed or removed in one way." James seized his companion's arm, gripping it tightly. "Say, are you game to run a bit of a risk?"

"If it gets my money back—yes."

"Then I'm going to Ravenscar after 'lights out' to-night, an' you're coming with me——"

"What the pip has Ravenscar to do with it——"

"Nothing—perhaps; but if those marks on the drain-pipe and flower-bed aren't the imprints of a monkey's paw and foot, I'll eat my hat! Look at the length and narrowness of the footprint in particular, and notice the shape of the toes."

"I see," nodded Aubrey, slowly beginning to realise that there might be something in his companion's brain, after all. "'Old Crusoe' certainly has a small monkey, for we've seen it, and he may have a bigger one in that giddy zoo of his which he's said to keep somewhere in the Manor yonder."

"That's the theory," confirmed Sherlock; "though it's, of course, only a theory, and we'll have to break bounds to sift it."

"All right, I'm with you!" agreed Conyers. "But if we're twigged there'll be trouble."

"Which you shouldn't salute till you meet it!" grinned James. "What time, then—eleven o'clock? Right!"

And so they parted, well satisfied with their discovery.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Solving of the Mystery

BEING such a tumble-down building, Ravenscar Manor presented few difficulties to even such inexperienced housebreakers as Conyers and Sherlock, and just as the school clock boomed the quarter after eleven they crawled through one of the lower windows, the hasp of which had easily succumbed to the gentle persuasion of a strong clasp-knife, landing noiselessly on the floor within. The small electric-torch which Sherlock flashed round revealed nothing but bare, damp-stained walls, but the adjoining apartment was certainly furnished after a fashion. A dusty carpet lay on the floor, and a few sticks of rickety stuff which any self-respecting furniture-dealer would have turned up his nose at were scattered here and there, without any apparent effort at order. If old Pendleby had taken the house with a view to living comfortably therein, he had evidently failed, since he did not seem to have sufficient stuff to make even a small cottage look anyway like home.

Possibly, the boys thought, he had bought or rented the place on account of its roominess, which would give him adequate space to distribute his private zoo without cramping, and had put personal comfort last. There was no knowing what these curious old fossils would do, when they were wrapped up in a craze or hobby to the exclusion of everything else.

The pair passed from room to room, their footsteps now and then creaking on the unsound boards despite their caution; but if "Old Crusoe" was on the premises, he

evidently didn't hear them, and presently they reached the great entrance-hall unmolested.

"The jolly menagerie must be upstairs," whispered Conyers. "There's not a sign—or smell—of it here."

They ascended the wide staircase, which might easily have permitted the passage of a coach-and-four, soon arriving at the first landing. Here, from an open door on the right, came a strange shuffling, scratching noise, telling them that they had at last found what they sought.

"It's in there!" breathed Sherlock, pointing. "Quiet, now! Don't let's disturb the whole giddy circus!"

They stole forward until a row of small wired hutches confronted them, whence several beady eyes blinked in the glare of the torch. Flanking these were some larger cages, towards one of which both boys suddenly looked, and exchanged meaning glances.

"Your theory looks promising, then," muttered Conyers. "You see what's yonder?"

Sherlock nodded.

"Just as I expected," he said.

"We're getting on famously!"

A large monkey—a chimpanzee—rustled the straw carpeting the end cage, and yawned in a strangely human fashion; but it was evident that he found little interest in the intruders, for he settled himself down to sleep again almost immediately.

"But what's become of the stuff—that is, if you're really right about this beast, or one of a similar kind, being the thief?" asked Aubrey Montgomery, rubbing his hand in perplexity through his red hair.

But ere his companion had time to reply a sound came from below—a sound like the opening and shutting of a door.



"Sherlock" withdrew his hand, grasping a miscellaneous collection of articles, among which silver coins, sleeve-links, studs, and other bright articles played a prominent part. (See page 188)

"What's that?"

Sherlock clapped his hand over the other's mouth, and, switching off the torch, drew him back into the shadows. Both stood absolutely still, every nerve strung up to concert pitch; then someone ascended the stairs, and a gleam of light crept across the landing outside.

Instantly the chimpanzee became very much awake, gripping the bars in front of the cage, and staring expectantly through. Then a lighted candle appeared in the doorway, the beam shining full upon the animal.

"Well, Pongo, any luck to-night? Your bag, sir!"

The newcomer drew open the cage-door, which the boys now realised had not been quite shut, and took a small calico bag that the chimpanzee intelligently passed to him, having detached it from its own shoulders where it had hung by a cord.

"Ah! None, I see! Well, Pongo, we can't expect good fortune every time, can we?"

He gave the beast a handful of nuts and an affectionate pat, then withdrew, having shone the light swiftly over the other cages, but luckily not in the watchers' direction.

Not until the sound of footsteps had died away below did the boys dare shift their position, but when Sherlock spoke his tone was triumphant—and pardonably so.

"Got him, the blackguard! My stars! Who would have thought it, to see him pottering about his grounds like a gentle, simple old oddity—but that's not the point; we must see if any of the stuff's hidden about here. If not, we'll have to get the police to fill in a search-warrant and raid the place."

A careful search, however, presently revealed a small Gladstone bag, concealed beneath a pile of empty packing-cases and straw in one corner of the room. The bag was locked, but Sherlock was by now

wound up to such a pitch of confidence that he wasted no time over a little matter like that.

Opening the strongest blade of his knife, he slit the leather from end to end, and thrust his hand through the opening. Then he withdrew it, grasping a miscellaneous collection of articles, among which silver coins, sleeve-links, studs, and other bright articles played a prominent part.

"How's that?" he gasped delightedly. "Sort of giddy safe-deposit, isn't it? Nice, benevolent-lookin' old ruffian—Pendleby—but his little game's played out now!"

As it transpired later, it had really been the chimpanzee's fault in the first instance. That is to say, only for the monkey happening to escape a couple of nights after Pendleby had taken up residence in Ravenscar Manor, and wandering into the college, where it had strayed into Waythorne's bedroom and been attracted by the glittering gold of that young gentleman's watch and chain, its master would certainly never have embarked upon this clever scheme of wholesale pilfering. But the animal had repeated the process upon a couple more occasions soon afterwards, and this gave Pendleby the idea of allowing the monkey every liberty, and providing it with a calico bag in which to carry anything it happened to come across. Pongo warmed to his work, and there were few nights he returned empty-handed.

But, though the monkey may have been the guilty party at first, and tempted Pendleby, who was not really a criminal at heart, to continue the game, the British law so far does not admit animals to convict prisons; so "Old Crusoe" had to stand the racket. He is now staying at a certain "hotel" where private menageries are taboo, and no doubt he will benefit by the change.

TRIFLES FOR THE FIRESIDE

No. 1—Painting a Sunset

MOST boys and girls own a box of water-colour paints, and therefore I am sure all my chums will be interested to hear how they can paint a lovely sunset quite easily, and yet in a manner that will surprise themselves. Get a piece of drawing paper, soak it in water, and pin it down on a sheet of blotting-paper. Prop the blotting-paper up to a slight angle and, with a large brush, paint as



No. 1

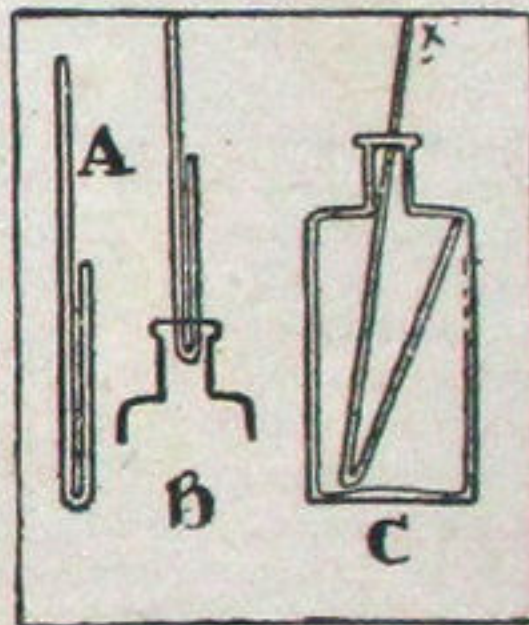
shown in the sketch: First the two blues top and bottom, then the two yellows, and then the two crimsons. Wait a few moments and then, with a dark mixture of indigo and green, paint in the bushes across the centre of the picture, making reflections underneath on the water as shown. Now wait until the picture has dried.

Next paint in the piece of ground in the bottom right-hand corner with the colours described, and also paint in the tree. For the tree, dab the brush from side to side; and, for the grass, work the brush up and down. (See the arrows on the diagram.) To complete this beautiful little picture, place a few lines of white over the tree reflections on the water.

No. 2—A Straw Trick

DO you think it possible to lift a bottle with a straw? It doesn't seem so, does it? Yet it can be done quite easily. Obtain a long straw and bend it as shown at A. Next insert it into the neck of a bottle as shown at B. Push the straw down to the bottom and let the smaller section of the straw spring into the side of the bottle as depicted at C.

Now, by holding the top of the straw (marked



No. 2



No. 3

by a cross in the diagram), you can lift up the bottle. Try this little trick for yourselves.

No. 3—Tipping the Penny

AS you know, there is more than one way of tipping. If you give a boy a penny for carrying your bag, it is known as tipping. But people who have to do that sort of tipping get tired of it, like the American who, after tipping the waiters, porters, boot-boys, and other servants at the hotel in which he was staying, saw the notice: "Tip the basin." Then he fainted. But that isn't the sort of tipping you have to do in the trick I am going to tell you about.

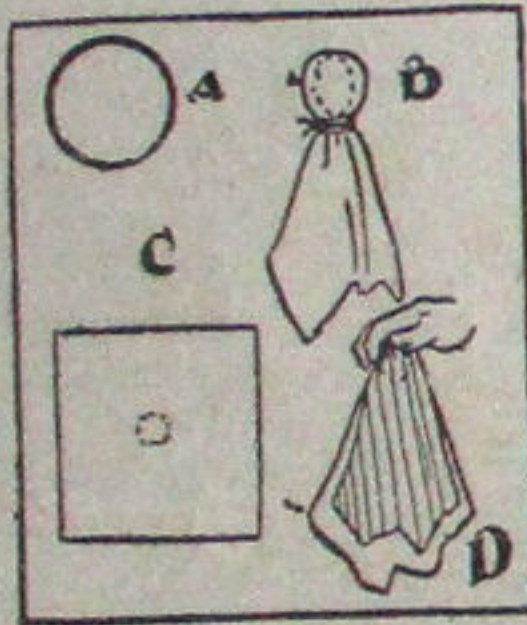
To perform this trick balance a penny on the edge of the table and stand to one side

with the left hand over the right. The left hand must not be nearer than twelve inches from the coin. Now, with a pencil held in the right hand, tip the penny and catch it with the left hand. (See the diagram.) While you and your chums are practising this trick together you can have a jolly game. Take it in turns to tip the coin, the one who catches it the most times being declared the winner.

No. 4—The Magic Ring

FIRST of all obtain two slender brass rings, and file through one of them and sharpen the cut place into two points, as shown in A. Next take two handkerchiefs exactly alike, and sew them together with the whole ring between the two.

To perform the trick, show the cut ring to your audience, keeping your finger and thumb over the two sharp points. Then place the ring in an old handkerchief, or a square of some thin material, and get someone to tie a piece of string round the handkerchief under the ring, as depicted in diagram B. The little arrow at B points out the cut ring inside the handkerchief. Next take up the other handkerchief with the whole ring sewn inside, and place it over the tied-up handkerchief.



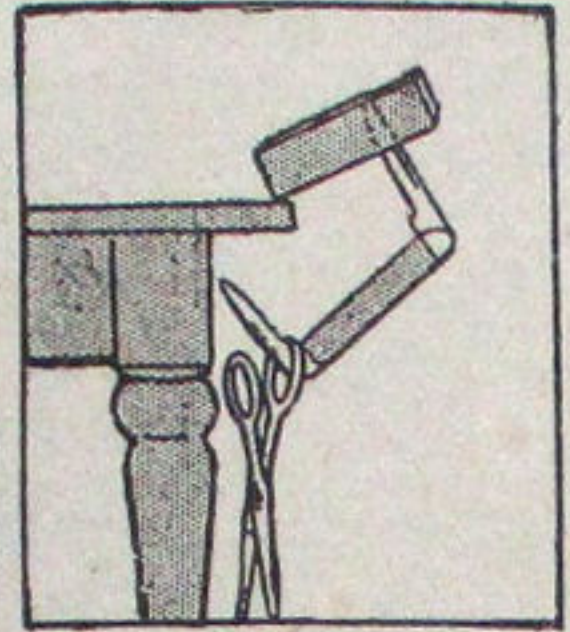
No. 4

Hold one handkerchief with your right hand and the other with the left, and, while you chat to your audience, work out the ring from the tied-up one by means of the sharp points. Of course, you keep the other handkerchief over the top all the time so that your chums cannot see you do this. Now, having worked the ring into the palm of your hand, which is under the outer handkerchief, ask some one to feel that the ring is still in its place. He will feel the ring which is sewn up inside, but will think it the one that was tied up in full view of the audience. As he goes to his seat

suddenly flick the outer handkerchief away. Show them the tied-up handkerchief. Although the string is still in position, the ring has gone.

No. 5—A Wonderful Balancing Trick

HERE is a balancing trick which, from the sketch I am giving in this column, you would think almost impossible to perform. Yet it can be done, as you can test for yourselves. Take the outside part of a matchbox, a penknife, and a pair of scissors.



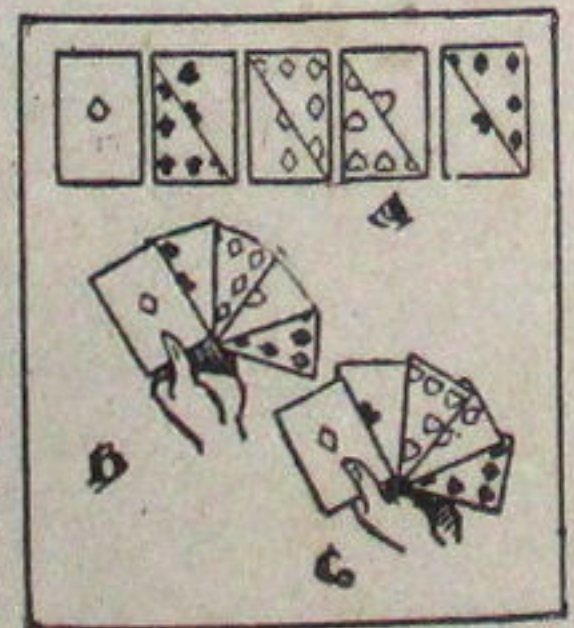
No. 5

Open the blades of the penknife in manner shown, and stick the larger blade through the box about three-quarters of the way from the end. Hang scissors on lower blade. You can balance the matchbox either on the thin top of a table or your hand, but before doing so make sure that the point of the large blade of the penknife grips into the top of the box, otherwise it will slip. The heavier the weight you hang on the lower blade the more upright will the matchbox stand on the table.

No. 6—Changing the Cards

SELECT eight cards from an old playing pack and cut them across from corner to corner.

Throw away half of each card, and join the other eight halves in such a way as to form four playing cards. This can be done by gumming the cut edge of each card, and if care is taken a firm job can be made of it. Now take the ace of



No. 6

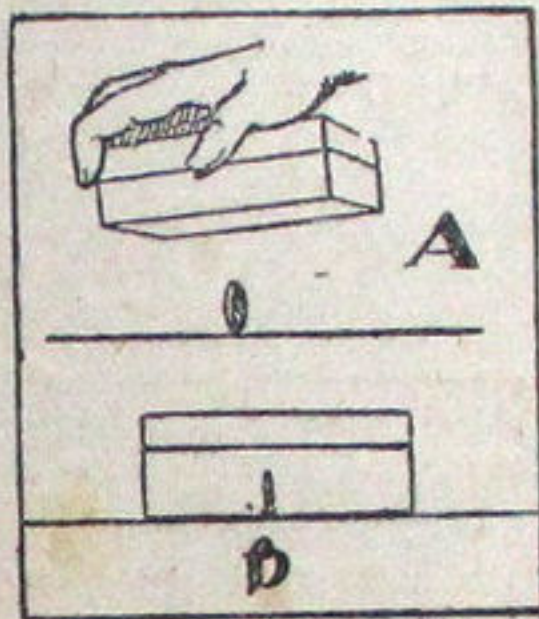
diamonds from the pack and place it with the made-up cards. You will now have five cards which look something like those shown at A.

Take the five cards and drop them face

downwards. If they are joined properly your audience will think they are normal playing cards. Pick them up and spread-eagle them in your hand, as shown at B. Tell your chums to have a look at them while you hold them thus. Close them up, wave your wand over them, and open up the opposite way, as shown at C. It appears as though the cards had been changed.

No. 7—The Box and Sixpence Trick

TELL your chums you can put a spinning sixpence in a box without touching the coin.



No. 7

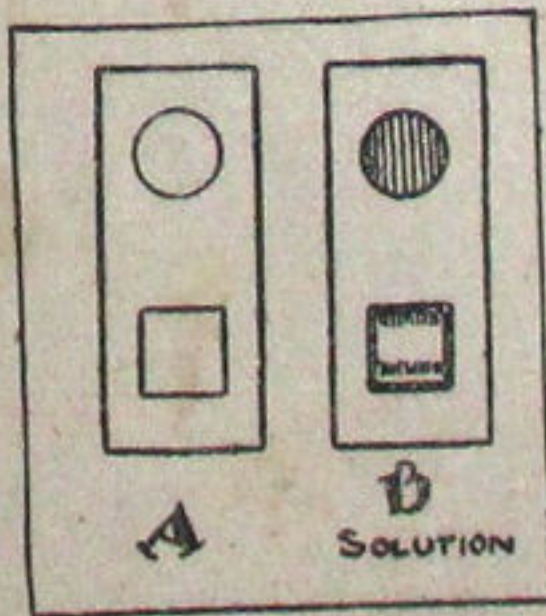
To do this you must get a thin cardboard box—an empty cigarette one will do. Twist the sixpence in your fingers so that it spins; then hold the box over it, as shown at A. Jam the box down on to the coin, which will cut

through into the box, as shown in diagram B.

This trick must be done very smartly, and a little practice should be undertaken before you show it to others. When you can do it well, it will appear to be a very clever and amusing trick to those who have never seen it before.

No. 8—The Square Hole Trick

OBTAIN a broom-handle an inch in thickness, and ask your father or big brother to saw you off a piece an inch long. Take a thick piece of cardboard and in it make a round hole



No. 8

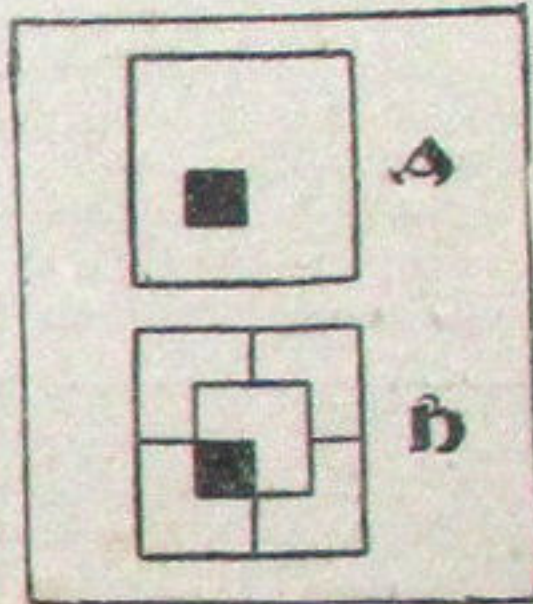
an inch across, and another an inch square—that is, each side must measure one inch—see diagram A. The trick is to put the small piece cut from the broom-handle into each hole in turn so that no light can be seen through the openings.

As far as the round hole is concerned, this is very easy. The difficult question is: How would you do it with the square hole? Diagram B shows the solution of this little problem. As you will see, the flat ends of the piece of broom-handle are placed against two of the sides of the square hole, and thus the opening is filled up.

No. 9—The Garden Problem

A MAN once sold a large house and garden to five people. Each of the purchasers had

three rooms, but the question arose how they were to divide the garden so that each one should have an equal share. Now how did they do it? Glance at diagram A for a moment. The small black square represents the house, while the space between it and the large square represents the garden. Now, by glancing at the lower diagram, B, you will see the solution. In this illustration the garden is divided into five parts, all equal in size. See if your chums can solve this interesting little problem.



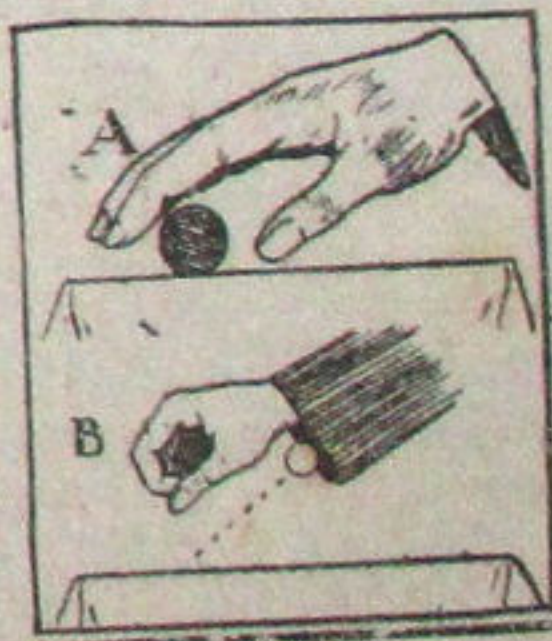
No. 9

three rooms, but the question arose how they were to divide the garden so that each one should have an equal share. Now how did they do it? Glance at diagram A for a moment. The small black square represents the house, while the space between it and the large square represents the garden. Now, by glancing at the lower diagram, B, you will see the solution. In this illustration the garden is divided into five parts, all equal in size. See if your chums can solve this interesting little problem.

No. 10—The Flying Coin

UNLIKE the above trick, this is one which requires not a little practice before you can perform before an audience. Take a coin—a penny, or a coin of similar size—and spin

it as fast as you can. Place your hand over the coin, as marked in the diagram A, taking care that your fingers are nearly touching the table, close the hand sharply, and the coin will fly towards the performer and into his sleeve.



No. 10

No. 11—Do This!

ASK your friends if they can make a six-penny-piece spin round and round without touching it with their fingers! I don't suppose they will be able to do it. If you



No. 11

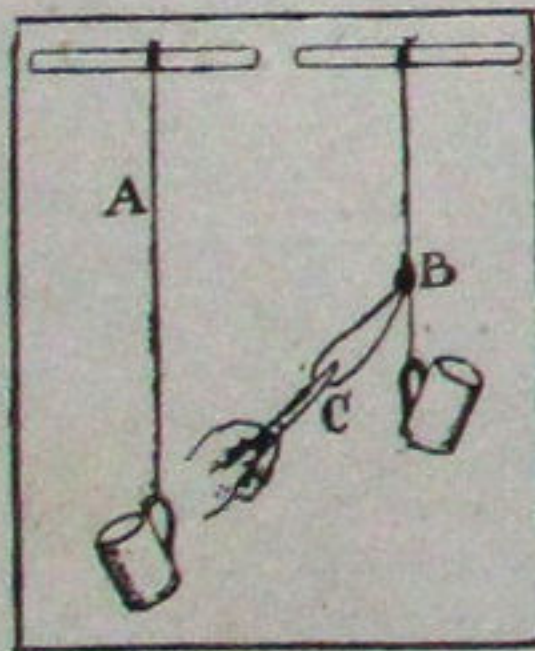
want to show them how to do it, just study this little trick.

Place a six-penny-piece on the table, and then place against it two pins as shown in the sketch A. Press slightly against the sides of the coin and lift it towards you, as

shown in the drawing. Then all you have to do is blow gently on to the sixpence. It will spin round. You must press the pins fairly hard against the coin—the real trick is knowing just how hard to press. Try it, boys and girls!

No. 12—The Mug "Catch"

THIS is a neat little trick—or, rather, catch—and needs no practice. Procure a mug, and attach a piece of string to the handle. Tie the end of the string to the gas-bracket,



No. 12

or any other place above your head.

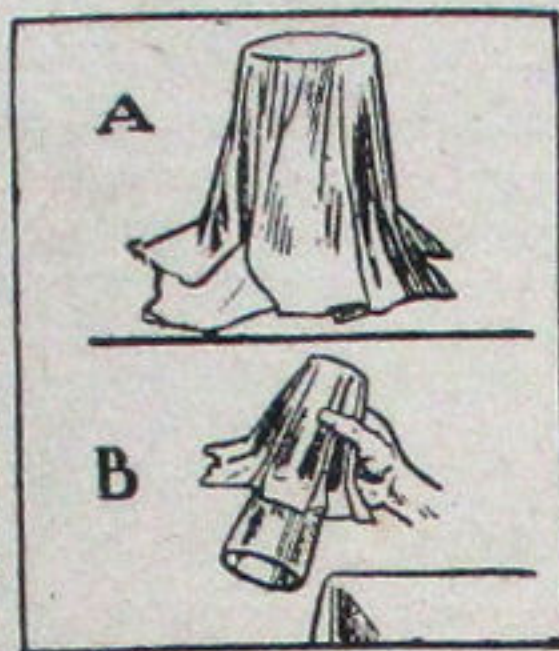
Now tell your friends that you can cut the string in half without making the mug fall to the floor. They will turn round promptly and tell you that it is bound to fall if you cut the string.

But not so. Tie a loop in the string as shown in the accompanying diagram, and marked C. Then, if you cut the loop marked B in the sketch, the mug will remain hanging up.

No. 13—Through the Table

PROCURE a tumbler and place it on the table—see that your audience is on the other side—and, with a piece of paper, you are ready to perform. You are going to push the glass through the table.

Cover the glass with the paper, moulding the latter to the glass, as indicated by the diagram, and marked A. Take hold of the glass and paper, as shown by sketch B, and, moving it towards you, let the glass drop into your left hand.



No. 13

Then, placing the paper mould on the table, hit it hard with your fist, and, bringing your left hand from under the table, produce the glass. It will appear that the glass has gone through the table.

No. 14—Try this Simple Game

"NAME your friend" is an amusing little game to try when you have not time for one of the big summer sports. It is best played by five people. One should be blindfolded and stand

as shown in the sketch A. The other four should be grouped about him as depicted by both the diagrams. Then the player, facing the blindfolded boy, must call out his name. Then the others state their names and where standing—that is,



No. 14

to his right, left, or behind him. Now the blindfolded boy must turn round three times, stop, and name the player he thinks he is facing. It's not so easy as it sounds. Try it.



Prince Ching Lung and Gan Waga go ashore!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Menagerie Man

“WELL,” remarked Mr. Benjamin Maddock, holding out a big red hand, “if it ain’t you, Widdler, it’s your ghost or twin brother, souse me!”

It was not Mr. Widdler’s ghost or twin brother, but Mr. Widdler himself. He was a hairy man of sea-faring aspect, with pale-blue eyes and a husky voice.

The two met on the quay at Pebblecombe. In the bay that shone sapphire-blue in the sunlight lay Maddock’s ship, the beautiful sea going steam-yacht “Lord of the Deep.” From the depths of his wiry beard Mr. Widdler grunted a welcome and grasped Maddock’s hand.

Down the hilly main street of Pebblecombe, carrying a bundle of letters which he had just obtained from the post-office, came Mr. Thomas Prout, who navigated the yacht for her millionaire owner, Ferrers Lord. Maddock hailed him.

“Why, if it ain’t old Widdler!” cried the steersman. “By honey, I’d know them whiskers a mile away. You look younger than ever and twice as beautiful, my lad. Last time

Upsetting Things!

An Amusing, Complete Story of Gan Waga, the Wily Eskimo, and his Companions of the Yacht, “Lord of the Deep.”

By SIDNEY DREW

(Illustrated by W. READING)

we struck you was up the Amazon, wasn’t it? What’s your line now? Have you chucked the menagerie trade and took on a respectable business?”

In a husky voice Mr. Widdler explained that he had wrecked his old steamer. No longer did he go tramping around strange waters of remote parts of the globe picking up cargoes of wild beasts, snakes and reptiles to sell to zoological societies and showmen. For the time being he had retired on his laurels and the insurance money paid out by the underwriters. He accepted his cigar from Prout, and though it was a long cigar, it was almost lost in the depths of his beard when he put it in his mouth. How he managed to light it without setting himself on fire was quite surprising.

“I’ve anchored down for a bit,” he said. “I got a ’ouse back there. Trade ain’t good just now, so it don’t matter. Next season I shall get another ship and start again. Snakes will be on the boom, and it’s snakes I’ll be arter principal. I’m bookin’ orders now, so if you’d like a nice anaconda you’d better let me put you down. I’ll do you a twenty-foot anaconda, strong and lively, at a pound a foot, and thirty bob a foot extra all over twenty.”

"Sorry, but we've given up keeping pets," said Maddock, the yacht's bos'un. "We've got a wild Eskimo aboard we'd like to give you a pound an inch to take away and sell to some menagerie. Souse me, Bill, but I'm real glad to see you again and no error. Come along aboard, and we'll treat you."

Mr. Widdler accompanied them to the end of the wooden jetty where a motor-launch awaited them. As they neared the yacht Prout slowed down to point out to their guest an object of interest that was slowly floating past on the lazy tide. Little of it was visible above water except its toes and face. In the mouth that formed a very necessary and important portion of the face was a cigar. From the nostrils of a very insignificant snub-nose came two trickles of blue smoke.

"That's him, souse me," said the bos'un; "that's the

Eskimo. He's asleep, I reckon, for the insect can keep on smoking even when he's asleep. Easy, Tom. Creep up close and I'll give him a prod wi' the boat-hook. If you'll kidnap that, Bill, and shove it in a zoo, we'll have a whip-round for you, my lad, and I'll head the list wi' my life's savings. Now watch me give him a jab, and hear him squeal!"

Maddock reversed the boat-hook and prodded. He nearly went overboard, for the boat-hook struck nothing more solid than blue salt water, for the wily Eskimo had dived.

He shot up on the other side of the launch, and as the bos'un recovered his balance perilously, a wad of wet seaweed hit him on the back of the neck.

"How yo' likes that stuffs, Ben, old dears?" crowed the Eskimo, his white teeth flashing in a wide grin. "Ho, ho, ho! I not so sleepiness as yo' think. Dears, dears! Who yo' gotted now? Who the jolliness old boy with the whiskers, Tommy? Where yo' dig ups that funny freaks, hunk?"

"Here, you get out of it and don't be rude,

souse me, blubber-biter!" roared Maddock, scooping the seaweed out of his collar. "I only wish I'd got a harpoon, souse me!"

To the astonishment of Mr. Widdler, the Eskimo replaced the cigar in his mouth. It was still alight. After taking a few whiffs, he put his thumb to his snub-

nose, spread out his brown fingers, and then sank from sight beneath the blue, unruffled waters of Pebblecombe Bay.

"He ain't human, that Eskimo ain't!" said Prout. "He ought to have been a fish. What are you squirming about, Maddock? Does something tickle?"

"There's some beastly clammy thing down my back, and I don't know whether it's a baby crab or a starfish!" growled the bos'un, writhing. "I'd like to poison that blubber-biter, souse me! Don't you take no notice of



"That's him, souse me," said the bos'un; "that's the Eskimo. He's asleep, I reckon." (See this page)

what he said about your whiskers, Widdler! He's so ignorant he don't know any better."

"And this being a free country, I reckon a man is allowed to wear any pattern in whiskers he likes," said Prout. "Catch that bit of string, Widdler."

A rope was thrown, and having handed in the letters, Prout joined the bos'un and their guest in their little snugger known as the booby-hutch. Here they provided their guest with liquid refreshment and a cigar. Five minutes later Gan Waga, the Eskimo, climbed aboard, squeezed the water out of his hair and out of his suit of striped pyjamas, and waddled below. He opened the door of the booby-hutch, and beamed in through the clouds of tobacco-smoke.

"Get out!" bel-lowed Prout and Maddock with one voice.

"Oh, don't be so rudeness, old beans!" said the Eskimo. "I not stay longfuls. I not help myselfs, Tommy; really I nots. I just gotted to look at those whiskers again, they so love-lifuls. What make them grows like that, Tommy?"

Would they comes like it again ifs yo' cutted them offs?"

"Look here, my lad," said Prout, clenching his fist. "I can stand a lot, by honey, but not too much. Widdler is a pal and a visitor, and I won't have him insulted by any blubber-eating savage like you. Haven't you got any manners or decency? Out of this, you cannibal; or I'll fire you out with a bump!"

"Stow it, messmate; stow it!" said Mr. Widdler, huskily. "They're like children, these chaps are, nat'rally curious, and I takes no offence. To ease your mind, my lad, I grows these 'ere whiskers because if I didn't

I'd spend half my time shaving and busting razors. Razors being expensive, I lets 'em grow more for cheapness than ornament. You ain't no oil-painting yourself, my lad, and I've had a gorilla or two pass through my hands in the way of business that were a sight better-looking and heaps more intelligent," he added, reaching for the siphon of soda-water to temper the grog Maddock had just poured out for him. "I've been collecting sich critters all my life. If you've lost your dad or any of your brothers, p'r'ps I could trace 'em for you. It would be just lovely to see 'em jumping round their cages with joy when they set eyes on you and recognised it was you. It would make 'em more happier than giving 'em a bun apiece."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed Prout and Maddock.

At this broad suggestion that his relatives belonged to the monkey race, and were spending their mortal existence in cages for the entertainment of the public, Gan Waga took no offence. He bestowed a beaming smile on Mr. Widdler, and added a few gurg-

ling chuckles to the mirth of Prout and the bos'un.

"Yo' a very funny mans," he said. "Yo' make us all laughs. I not mean to be rudeness now yo' tells me why yo' grow whiskers like that. If razors no goodness—ho, ho, hoo!—why yo' not trys gunpowder, and blow them off, and soak them in petrol and set them alights, hunk? I give yo' a can of petrol."

"You got a speck of black on your nose, my fat lad," said Mr. Widdler. "As I don't suppose you carry a handkerchief, let me get it off for you."

Mr. Widdler closed one blue eye to find the



Mr. Widdler closed one eye to find the exact range, and pressed down the top of the siphon. It was an excellent shot; for Mr. Widdler was dead on his target. (See page 196)

exact range, and pressed down the lever of the siphon. It was an excellent shot, for Mr. Widdler was dead on his target, and there was a fine pressure of gas in the siphon. Before the deluge of soda-water that took him squarely in the face, Gan Waga reeled out of the booby-hutch, and Prout shut and bolted the door. They grinned hugely as they heard the Eskimo gasping and spluttering outside.

"And that's that," said the bos'n. "You washed that microbe out, anyhow. He wasn't trying to be rude, souse me, only to be funny, and that's where he missed, souse me. What were we talking about afore the insect floated in? Shaking a leg ashore, and going up to your place, wasn't it? We could get leave easy, couldn't we, Tom?"

"Easy as eating jelly," answered Prout, nodding. "We sha'n't shift out of Pebblecombe afore Wednesday, when the owner is due to come aboard. Anyhow, we'll not be far away, and, if they want us sooner, they can fetch us. Better take Barry O'Rooney along, too, or he'll never forgive us. I'll go up and ask Mr. Thurston."

Rupert Thurston, who was in charge of the yacht during her owner's absence, raised no objection when Prout asked for leave for himself, Maddock, and O'Rooney.

"I'm well rid of the three of you," he said, smiling. "I'm not sure whether I ought to let you run loose without a keeper, but be as good and careful as you can."

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Over the Top!

His Imperial Highness Prince Ching Lung was having his head shampooed by the yacht's barber when Gan Waga discovered him. His jet-black hair was hidden by a creamy lather, into which the barber was digging his fingers. The Eskimo took a sip out of a bottle of scented hair-oil, and seemed to like the flavour of it. He could take such little liberties when the prince was about. The barber glared but said nothing. Had Ching Lung not been there, he would have chased the Eskimo out with a razor.

"That a very niceness flavours, Chingy," said Gan Waga, smacking his lips. "I gotted something to tell yo', my precious old packet.

Prout and Maddock have brought a pal aboard. His name Widdler, Chingy, and yo' never see such a hairy chaps and such whiskers. He a most rudness johnny, too. He say my relations all monkeys, and he gotted them shut up in cages. And he squirted water-sodas over me out of a siphon when I not expecting it."

"He may be a truthful man, but I don't like his manners," said Ching Lung. "Widdler, eh? Oh, yes, I remember that handsome youth. Two lovely black eyes, and a set of whiskers like a frayed doormat. He used to run a sort of rusty Noah's Ark, and collect wild animals. So he told you your relations were baboons, did he?"

"I think he said they were grillers, Chingy."

"Gorillas, not grillers, my dear Gan," corrected the prince. "As he is rather an authority on the subject, he may be perfectly—I mean he's had a lot to do with monkeys, you see, and it's not wise to contradict an expert. Have you anything to tell me?"

"Lotses Chingy," said the Eskimo. "Barry O'Rooney and Tommy Prouts and Ben Maddock gotted leave from Rupert, and goned ashore with old bristly face. He busted his ship, and he got a house in Pebblecombe. I found outs about it from Joe the carpenters. He called Amazon Villains, Chingy."

"Amazon Villa more probably," said Ching Lung, as the barber towelled his head. "Widdler did most of his animal-snatching and snake-chasing up the Amazon. Most interesting, of course; but what has it to do with me? Why shouldn't the boys have a day off, and spend it ashore with their friend, whiskers or no whiskers?"

"Yo' means yo' lets a chaps squirt water-sodas over me and call me a griller, and not do nothings, Chingy?" asked the Eskimo, in pained surprise. "I thought yo' so fondness of me. Yo' not helps me to get my owns back, hunk? Yo' let old whiskers insult me, and not punches him on the noses or nothings at all, hunk?"

"I would, my son," said the prince. "You are quite old enough and fit enough to look after yourself. Now, I happen to know for a fact that you were rude to Mr. Widdler. You attempted to be jocose about his

whiskers. As I have frequently told you to make personal remarks is not wit, but the sign of a low and vulgar mind."

"Then you not seen his whiskers, Chingy," said Gan Waga. "Ho, ho, hoo! They too loveliful! Yo' must see them, Chingy, old dears. We go ashore and call at Amazon Villains, hunk? Do be a jolly old sports, and say 'Yes,' Chingy? Yo' be sorry all yo' lifes if yo' miss those butterful whiskers."

"I'll think about it," said Ching Lung.

The sun was setting, and Pebblecombe Bay

had changed from sapphire blue to burnished gold when Prince Ching Lung and Gan Waga walked down the jetty. The Eskimo had wished to come in his pyjamas and bare feet, but as Ching Lung did not wish to create a sensation, he had persuaded Gan to don a respectable suit and a pair of boots. He had not asked Gan Waga to put on a tall hat belonging to Rupert Thurston. This was the Eskimo's own

idea. The hat was several sizes too small. Half-way up the High Street it fell off, and Gan Waga, who was waddling along at the prince's heels, trod on it and split the brim. This little misfortune did not add much to the beauty of the hat, but it fitted much more comfortably and did not fall off again.

A man with a red nose and earrings in his equally red ears gave Ching Ling the information he asked for.

"Bill Widdler's, gov'nor, eh?" he said.

"Bear round to the left at the top. There's a brick wall round it wi' broken bottles on it." He looked at Gan Waga and grinned as he added: "I don't think it's no use takin' that up there to sell to Bill. He's got all the stock he wants, and ain't trading. A pal o' mine tried to sell him a monkey last week, but there was nothin' doin'. Nice little chap it was, wi' a green coat and a curly tail, not so big as the fellow you've got 'ere, but a good 'un. Wish you luck."

As the red-nosed man winked and walked

away, Gan Waga gazed after his retreating figure doubtfully.

"What he mean, hunk, Chingy?" he asked. "What he talking abouts?"

"Possibly the poor fellow is very short-sighted," said Ching Lung, hiding a smile. "It's getting dark, too, you know, but he seemed to take you for a monkey. Anyhow, don't be nervous about it, for I have no intention of offering to sell

you to Mr. Widdler, so put your hat on straight. You have too much ear showing through it on the starboard side."

In the deepening dusk they reached the brick wall surrounding Mr. William Widdler's abode. If Widdler had emptied all the bottles whose spiked remains decorated the top of the wall, he must have been a very thirsty man. Presently they came to a green door with a small grating let into it, and "Amazon Villa" painted beneath the grating



The seals were on those haddocks like a couple of starving cats on a herring. Away came everything on the table, over went Mr. Widdler and his chair with a mighty crash, to be buried under the ruins. (See page 200)

in gold letters. Ching Lung peeped through. In the gloom he made out a small yard containing a number of strongly built and bulky packing cases that were evidently used by Widdler for the transport of livestock. There was a bell, and Ching Lung rang it.

"Ahoy!" cried the familiar voice of Mr. Thomas Prout. "Somebody waiting to come aboard, Widdler. Chuck being nice to each other and see who it is."

Across the gloomy yard came Mr. Widdler himself, stripped to the waist except for a singlet. He had some difficulty in opening the door, owing to the fact that he was wearing a pair of boxing-gloves. He peered at Ching Lung, recognised him, and opened the door wide.

"Come right in, sir, and welcome!" cried Mr. Widdler. "I'm just having a bit of an up-and-a-downer with my friend, Mr. O'Rooney. Maddock's cooking supper, so if you'll stop and take a bite, I'll be delighted. Come on, sir, and you—you get out!"

Mr. Widdler, as Gan Waga was preparing to follow the prince, gave the Eskimo a business-like jab on the nose. Gan Waga retreated a couple of yards, merely because he couldn't help himself. The gate shut with a clang and locked itself. To his rage and anguish, Gan Waga found himself alone and basely deserted in the cold and puddley road, with the shades of night falling fast around him, and several stars that were not real ones dancing brightly in front of his eyes.

He was not very much hurt, for there was plenty of padding in the glove. His feelings pained him a good deal more than his nose. It was awful to think that Ching Lung, whom he trusted and adored, should have treated him in this shabby and despicable way. Across the gloomy yard came sounds of mocking laughter. A pleasant fragrance floated across it also, the appetising fragrance of bacon, sausages, and tomatoes being fried.

Gan Waga inspected the wall, and took a walk round it. He discovered that Amazon Villa was built on the cliff. At the back of the house, thirty feet below, was the sea. Unfortunately for Gan Waga the wall, with its terrifying array of bottle-glass on top, was built up to the very edge of the cliff. Then

he stumbled over a plank. With the plank, which happened to be a long one, he prodded at the glass till he had cleared a space about two feet long. Leaning the plank against the wall, he climbed up it and looked over. It was a two-storeyed house with a small lawn in front of it. In the centre of the lawn was a pond, surrounded by an iron railing. A cheerful light streamed from the lower windows of the house. Barry O'Rooney, after thumping Mr. Widdler with the boxing-gloves, was now thumping Mr. Widdler's piano. Barry's voice was raised in song, and when he came to the chorus the others roared it lustily.

"Blo-ow, blo-ow, blow-ow a man down,
We're sailing out of Sydney town;
So give me some time to blow a man down—
Blo-o-o-o-oo-ow!"

Gan Waga lowered himself into Mr. Widdler's garden, and crept towards the window as Barry O'Rooney shut the piano. Prout, Maddock, Widdler, and the faithless Ching Lung, were already seated at the supper table. Into the cheerful little room came Maddock, bearing a mighty dish of rashers, sausages, mutton-cutlets, tomatoes, and fried potatoes, which he deposited in front of Mr. Widdler, whose whiskers seemed to bristle with joy at the sight of it.

"Ben, bhoy," said Barry O'Rooney, tucking a serviette under his chin, "ut's the very king of cooks that's yourself. Bedad, ut's iligant. Look at the lovely way he's browned thim spuds. Don't give me too much at wance, Widdler, for Oi'm thrying to kape down my weight. Not more than five sausages, three or four cutlets, and seven or eight rashers. Sure, it was a noble deed to push that greedy Iskimo out, for he'd have wanted the lot."

Gan Waga removed his flattened little nose from the window pane as he heard a splash and a curious grunt. He looked over the railings into the little pond. There was a ripple in the dark water. In the gloom he saw four gleaming eyes watching him unwinkingly. Gan Waga chuckled as he opened the iron gate, for he had found friends. The moon came from between a cloud, flooding pond and garden with light.

He waded into the pond and sat down, hooking his arms round a couple of seals, and talking to them in a low, gurgling voice and in a strange tongue. Whatever the language was, Mr. Widdler's tame seals seemed to understand it. When Gan Waga emerged dripping from the pond, the animals flip-flapped after him.

In Mr. Widdler's dining-room they were talking and laughing very much. Gan Waga found the back door, and it was unfastened.

A candle was burning in the kitchen. Gan Waga picked up the seals and dumped them down on the kitchen table. Then he nosed about till, in the scullery, he found a tub with a wooden lid on. When he lifted the lid a smell of stale fish hit him with such force that it would have stunned a person with a less sensitive nose.

The seals were where he had left them. He winked at them as he crept past with an ancient haddock in each hand. Gan had purloined the seal's breakfast, but he did not intend to rob them, but to give them supper instead. He cut away the blind cord of the passage window and crawled along the passage on hands and knees, dragging the haddocks after him by the ends.

"If poor old Gan Waga hasn't gone back to the yacht in disgust, I think I'll fetch him in, Widdler, if you don't mind," he heard Ching Lung say.

"Bless your life, sir, I ain't bearing no malice," said Mr. Widdler. "If I took notice of all the remarks passed about my whiskers, I'd be kept busy all the twenty-four hours of the day. Fetch him in, by all means, sir. If there ain't enough to eat we can easy cook some more. Shall I fetch him, sir?"

"By honey, after the biff you gave him, I'd take a pole-axe with me!" grinned Prout. "If he's still outside he'll go for you bald-headed the minute he sees you."



Gan Waga threw his arms above his head, and with the two seals dived into the sea. (See page 200)

Ching Lung rose. In the dimly lighted passage he discovered Gan Waga. He also discovered the smell. Ching Lung said not a word. He merely clutched his nose, opened the door, and staggered out into the fresh air. Onward swept the Eskimo. He emerged unseen behind Mr. Widdler's chair. Luckily for the Eskimo, the scent of sausages and rashers camouflaged the odour of

fish to some extent. Gan tied his big perfumed haddocks to the ends of the table-cloth and edged away.

"Whad's the gabe, Gad?" whispered the prince, putting his head round the door and still holding his nose. "Whad are you doing, you fad rasgal?"

Gan Waga vanished into the kitchen and emerged staggering under the weight of his two docile friends, the seals. He put them down side by side within a yard of the sitting-room door. Then he made a sign that the

sagacious animals understood. They hunched themselves together and went at a gallop.

"Yo-icks! Tally-hoos! Snatch them, old dears! Swat 'em, my butterfals! Pull hardness, old beans!" roared Gan Waga. "Brings them backness! Backs! Backs!"

The seals were on those haddocks like a couple of starving cats on a herring. Snatching the fish they swung round. The haddocks were tied on. Away came the table-cloth, plates, dishes, knives, and forks, glasses and bottles. Over went Mr. Widdler and his chair with a mighty crash, to be buried under the ruins. He kept bobbing up like some weird ghost, with the table-cloth wrapped round him, till the fish came away from the cords.

"Souse me, it's that mad Eskimo up to his tricks!" shouted Maddock. "He's let them seals out. After him and get his scalp!"

"Ho, ho, hoo, hoo!" laughed Gan Waga, holding his sides. "Yo' squirts waters-soda over me, again, hunk, and calls my relations grillers? Dears, dears! Don't make me laughs. Good-bye! I think I go now, fo' yo' too commonness peoples fo' me. Yo' muchful too low and vulgarness. Ob, ha, ha, haah! Ob, dears!"

Gan Waga whistled. Maddock leapt over the table, but before he could reach Gan Waga, he and the seals were outside. Maddock tugged in vain at the door, for to make the Eskimo's escape sure, Ching Lung had borrowed the key and locked the door on the outside. Recovering from the shock, O'Rooney hauled out Mr. Widdler.

"Wha—wha— Who done it? Tell me who done it?" howled Mr. Widdler, wild-eyed and gasping. "Show me who done it, and I'll— Who done it? Wha—where is it?"

"Calm down, calm down, by honey," said Prout. "We're done, that's what."

"You can bet the prince is in the swindle, too, for they've locked the door on us," said Maddock. "Chance an eye, Barry, and see what they're up to."

"Pwhat d'ye mane, chance an oie?" growled Barry O'Rooney. "Chance wan of your own, darlint! An' if the blubber-boiter slings a brick through the window Oi'm not a bit anxious to stop at wid my face. Oi moight want my face lather, bhoy, and Oi loike ut widout any dents or bumps."

There was little risk of Gan Waga doing anything so careless or dangerous as that, but long experience had taught the mariners that when Prince Ching Lung was aiding and abetting the Eskimo in one of his japes, it was as well to use discretion. Led by Mr. Widdler, they made a rush for the kitchen door. This, too, was locked, and they beat back to the dining-room. Mr. Widdler looked out of the window, and as no bricks came, the others also looked out.

Gan Waga was leaning against the railings of the pond, smoking a cigar. Beside him were the seals, one of them wearing Thurston's badly damaged hat. A bright moon shone down on the little garden and the placid sea. As Gan saw the faces at the window, especially the wrathful one of Mr. Widdler with his whiskers all bristling, he grinned and kissed his hand. The seals shook their flippers, and if ever seals laughed those two creatures did.

"Careful, Billy, careful, by honey!" cried Prout, as Mr. Widdler threw up the window. "Careful, my lad, or something nasty will happen to you."

Mr. Widdler flung caution to the winds. As he jumped through the window, Gan Waga gave another whistle and made across the lawn, and after Gan Waga, with their swift though clumsy lollop, went the two seals. But there was no escape, for beyond the low wall the cliff fell sheer to the deep waters of Pebblecombe Bay thirty feet below.

"Gotcher," said Mr. Widdler. "I'll give you smashing my crockery and letting loose my performing seals, my fat lad. I'll set about you in some style, I will."

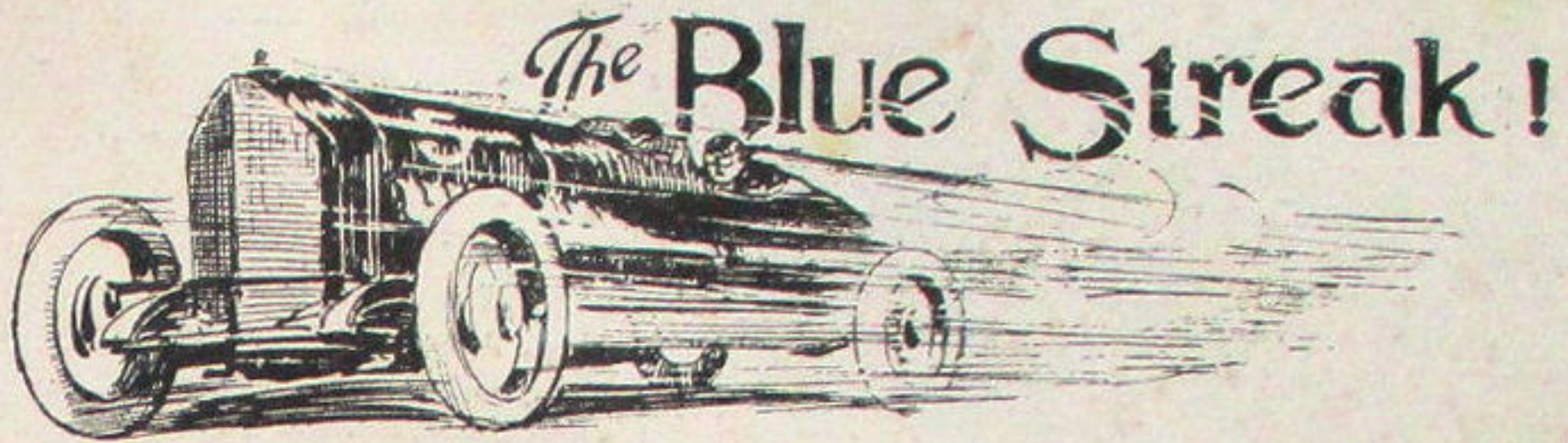
Gan Waga mounted the low wall, the seals scrambling up after him, and, turning, blew another kiss to Mr. Widdler. Then, with a last whistle, he threw his arms above his head and dived. Three sullen splashes came echoing upwards. Gan Waga and the seals had gone. Perhaps Gan Waga had told them that they were going back to liberty and the open sea, and that is why they laughed.

And as Gan Waga's worldly wealth consisted of one threepenny-bit and a trouser-button, of course Ching Lung had to pay for the missing seals.

THE END



A JONES
23



THE STORY OF A GREAT RACE

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Start!

"FIRST man gets away in ten minutes."

Phil Summers glanced at his wrist-watch and smiled at his companion. The air was filled with thunderous reverberations from the huge exhaust-pipes of a score of great racing-cars, and a fog of evil-smelling blue smoke hung in the air, through which the sun could hardly penetrate. The scene was the starting-point of the great international motor-race known as the Targa Italia, which was to be run over the mountain roads of the rugged island of Sicily. Phil Summers was not yet twenty years old, but to him motor-racing was the greatest thing in life. To-day he was to experience the fulfilment of his greatest ambition; he was to act as mechanic in an important road-race to Ralph Rollo, the most famous of British racing drivers. As Rollo stood quietly by the side of his car, dressed, as Phil himself was, in leather jerkin and racing-helmet, with goggles pushed up on to his forehead, the boy looked at him in undisguised admiration. Slender in build and of medium height, he possessed wrists of steel and iron nerve, as Phil well knew; while it was a by-word amongst race-drivers that "the greatest part about Rollo was his heart!" He had recently broken all records at Brooklands track by driving his monster twelve cylinder "Moonbeam" round at the rate of 140 miles per hour for a lap, a speed which many racing men considered to be well in excess of the

safety-limit of the famous track. Yet Rollo had "held" the great car without apparent difficulty at that colossal speed.

But it was perhaps a more exacting task that awaited him now. A road race is quite a different matter from a track race, and Rollo well knew that the Sicilian mountain course chosen for the Targa Italia was a specially difficult and dangerous one. The steep, winding roads were for the most part rough and stony, while there were no less than three hundred sharp turns on the circuit, which measured roughly seventy miles round. Part of the road, where it ran steeply downhill along a gloomy gorge, was particularly dreaded, for here the road was very narrow, and edged upon one side by the rugged mountain, while upon the other was a sheer drop of many hundred feet into the valley below.

Rollo was perhaps thinking of this, for his face was a shade thoughtful as he patted the long bonnet of the famous "Blue Streak," the specially built road-racer he was driving to-day.

"Wish it was time to start now!" he said, turning to Phil with a laugh. "This waiting about for the word 'go' always gives me the needle."

Phil glanced at his watch again.

"Five minutes more, for the first man," he said. "We're number five, so we start five minutes after him. Ah!"

A big blonde man, in racing garb, came by with a swagger in his walk.

"Ach, Rollo! We meet again, isn't it? Vell, I warn you! To-day I win!" And

with a wave of his hand, the big man passed on to his car, a huge white racer bearing the number 2.

Rollo gave a short laugh.

"That's Shaffner, the leading driver of the German Mercedes team," he said. "A fine driver, too, but a man to keep clear of, I fancy. He won a lot of good races before the war, but he has not had much luck since. He'd stick at nothing to win to-day, I believe."

"Well, he'll start three minutes ahead of us," laughed Phil. "If we can get by him, we'll see that he stays behind us. Shall I start her up?"

"Yes, it's about time."

Quiet and unflurried, Rollo got into the driving seat, while Phil pulled the engine over once or twice. Then, with a quick swing, the eight perfectly-tuned cylinders broke into song.

"The first man's away!" said Rollo quietly, as Phil, after a last swift look round, jumped up beside him.

A devastating roar, a cloud of blue smoke, and a shower of stones flung into the air—and No. 1, a huge red Fiat, driven by a popular Italian driver named Loretto, was off!

"He'll want some catching!" said Rollo.

"Trust the 'Blue Streak,'—and you!" murmured Phil. Another roar, and the big white Mercedes jumped into its stride. Shaffner was away!

Two fast French cars followed at minute intervals, and at last Rollo moved the "Blue Streak" up to the line. Phil pulled his goggles into position, and pumped up the pressure, while Rollo kept his eye on the starter's flag.

"Good luck, Rollo!" came a yell from the corner of the stand, where a little group of British enthusiasts were gathered.

Rollo waved his hand and smiled, the flag fell, and the "Blue Streak" jumped forward, and they were off!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

A Great Race!

THE "Blue Streak" had hardly got into her stride, when, with a hiss from her wonderful brakes, which acted on all four wheels, Rollo checked her sharply for

the first bad corner. Round they swung, with barely a skid, and the car shot forward again as the brakes came off and the throttle opened, like a greyhound slipped from the leash. But another bad corner already loomed in sight, demanding a further check on the speed. It was then that Phil realised the magnitude of the task that lay before Rollo, in setting out to drive a car capable of a speed of one hundred miles per hour, over a course which



"Ach, Rollo!" said the big, blonde man. "We meet again, isn't it? Vell, I warn you! To-day I win!"

made it impossible to average half that speed. Each of the three hundred corners in the seventy odd miles of narrow, winding, mountain road had to be faced no less than four times, for the race consisted of four circuits.

For the whole distance of over two hundred and fifty miles it would be a case of acceleration, with the engine screaming round, then on with the powerful brakes, a wrench round the corner, and down with the accelerator again! Such a race does not allow margin for the slightest error of judgment, which would almost certainly mean disaster.

But Rollo was not in the least dismayed. After going somewhat cautiously for the first few miles, he settled down to drive a great race. Half way round the first circuit, he caught the first of the French cars, while almost immediately after the other Frenchman pulled up with engine trouble.

Shaffner was in hot pursuit of the Italian in front of him, but Loretto drove like a demon, and at the end of the first lap was still successfully staving him off. By this time Rollo was hard on Shaffner's heels, and several times the crew of the "Blue Streak" caught sight of the flying white Mercedes on the winding road in front of them. Of the dozen or so cars that started behind them, Phil saw nothing, but as a matter of fact several of these came to grief in the first lap, while none of the others were fast enough to overtake the three leaders.

In the second lap Shaffner, driving like fury, managed to get by the red Fiat, almost forcing it off the road in doing so. The Italian made frantic efforts to regain his position, but the German did not mean to be caught, and Rollo, now fairly on his mettle, managed to get by the Fiat in his turn, only to experience a puncture immediately afterwards.

This mishap cost him nearly a couple of minutes, and several cars went by while he and Phil were rapidly changing the punctured wheel. However, Rollo quickly began to pick up the time he had lost, and at the end of the lap, when he pulled in at the replenishment pits for a fresh supply of petrol, oil, and

tyres, he found he was lying third. Shaffner got away from the pits just as Rollo pulled in, and the Italian left only a few seconds later.

"We've got to get a move on now, Phil," muttered Rollo, as the "Blue Streak" roared off in pursuit of the two leaders exactly one minute twenty seconds later.

Rollo settled down grimly to his task as the "Blue Streak" roared along, slithering round corners now in a shower of dust and stones, and only kept on the road by those wonderful steel wrists of Rollo's. It seemed to Phil impossible for any man alive to drive a car faster, or even as fast, over that tricky,

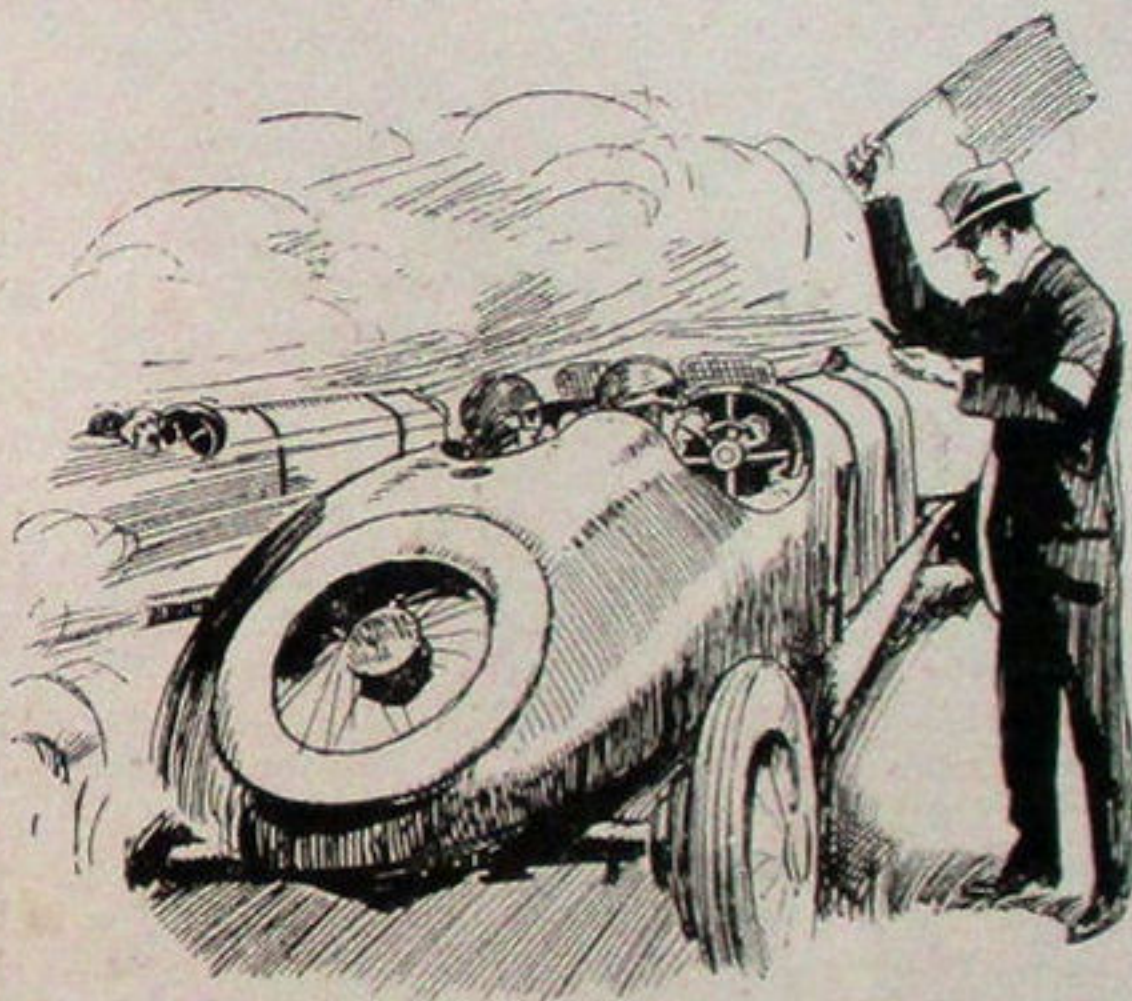
dangerous course. Yet it was near the end of the circuit—the third—before they sighted either of the two leading cars.

Then Phil gave a sudden shout, as he saw a gleam of white in a cloud of dust just flitting round a corner ahead.

"It's Shaffner! Loretto must have got past him! Hurrah!"

Rollo smiled. Loretto was a magnificent driver, and he had a wonderful car. If he, Rollo, could not beat the German, he hoped that the plucky Italian would.

It was by a superb bit of driving indeed that Loretto had edged his big Fiat past the great white Mercedes. The engine of Shaffner's car suddenly began to misfire, and the German, cursing his luck, felt his car slowing down. Furiously, the driver jammed his foot down on the throttle-pedal and his good engine, after a momentary splutter, roared off again at full power. But the momentary checking of the German car's speed had given



The flag fell, the "Blue Streak" jumped forward, and they were off!

Loretto, hanging grimly on at his rival's rear wheels, his chance.

Even as the engine of the big Mercedes regained its full-throated roar, the Fiat was by, in a shower of stones and a thunder of sound!

The Italian led in the race as he passed the grandstands to start on the last lap, and the roar of delight from the crowd was heard by the crew of the red Fiat even above the roar of the exhaust and of the wind in their ears.

Before the roar had died away, Shaffner dashed past the stands, with Rollo hard on his heels. The crowd went mad with excitement. Who would win?

Rollo crouched over the wheel of the "Blue Streak," with every line of his face tense. He knew the time had come to make a supreme effort, if he hoped to win. And yet he had to restrain himself. One slip, one error of judgment at one of the innumerable corners, and he would be out of the race.

He drove as he had never driven before, and at last was rewarded by a glimpse of the white Mercedes, flying along in front. Rollo made up his mind that he must pass Shaffner in the next five miles, if at all; for that distance farther on was the place where the road wound down the gorge, at the edge of the precipice, and here it was practically impossible to pass another car.

Nearer and nearer to the big white racer crept Rollo, until at last he was within fifty yards, in a cloud of choking dust. Then came one of the worst corners on the course, a sharp left-hand turn. Shaffner, driven on by the "Blue Streak," approached it rather too fast, skidded violently, and went round wide to the right, almost broadside on, his back wheels missing the bank by inches. His car consequently lost some way, and in an instant Rollo had changed gear, shot round on the inside of the Mercedes in a shower of stones, and was past! Phil saw the German tug desperately at his steering-wheel in a mad effort to lock over his front wheels so that they fouled the back wheels of the "Blue Streak," as she went past. Had he succeeded in doing so, it is probable that both cars would have gone off the road together, in one glorious smash. But fortunately the German

was just too late in pulling his huge car round. With her eight cylinders roaring out their thunderous song the "Blue Streak" drew clear, and Phil could not suppress a triumphant shout, as they plunged down the narrow winding road which traversed the gloomy gorge.

"Now to catch Loretto, if we can!" he thought. And then, as his eyes took in the narrow ledge in front of their flying wheels, which was the road, he gave a cry of warning.

"Look out, Rollo! The Fiat!"

For not a hundred yards in front was the red Fiat racer, drawn up on the road as near to the mountain side as it was possible to get, with her crew working feverishly to change a wheel. So narrow was the road that there was barely room for a car to pass between the stationary car and the edge of the precipice.

Rollo took in the situation at a glance. It was impossible to pull up in time, at the speed they were going, and even to apply the brakes might cause the "Blue Streak" to swerve from her course. Without the slightest slackening of speed, therefore, he rushed for the narrow strip of road that was clear. Phil involuntarily shut his eyes, as he afterwards confessed, and clung to his seat like grim death.

A twist of those strong wrists of Rollo's; a skid which took the back wheels within an inch of the edge—and no farther; and a shower of stones which rattled down over the precipice into space—and they were through!

Phil had a glimpse of Loretto standing, white-faced, by his car, wheel-spanner in hand, as they flew by; he waved his hand, and the "Blue Streak" was gone!

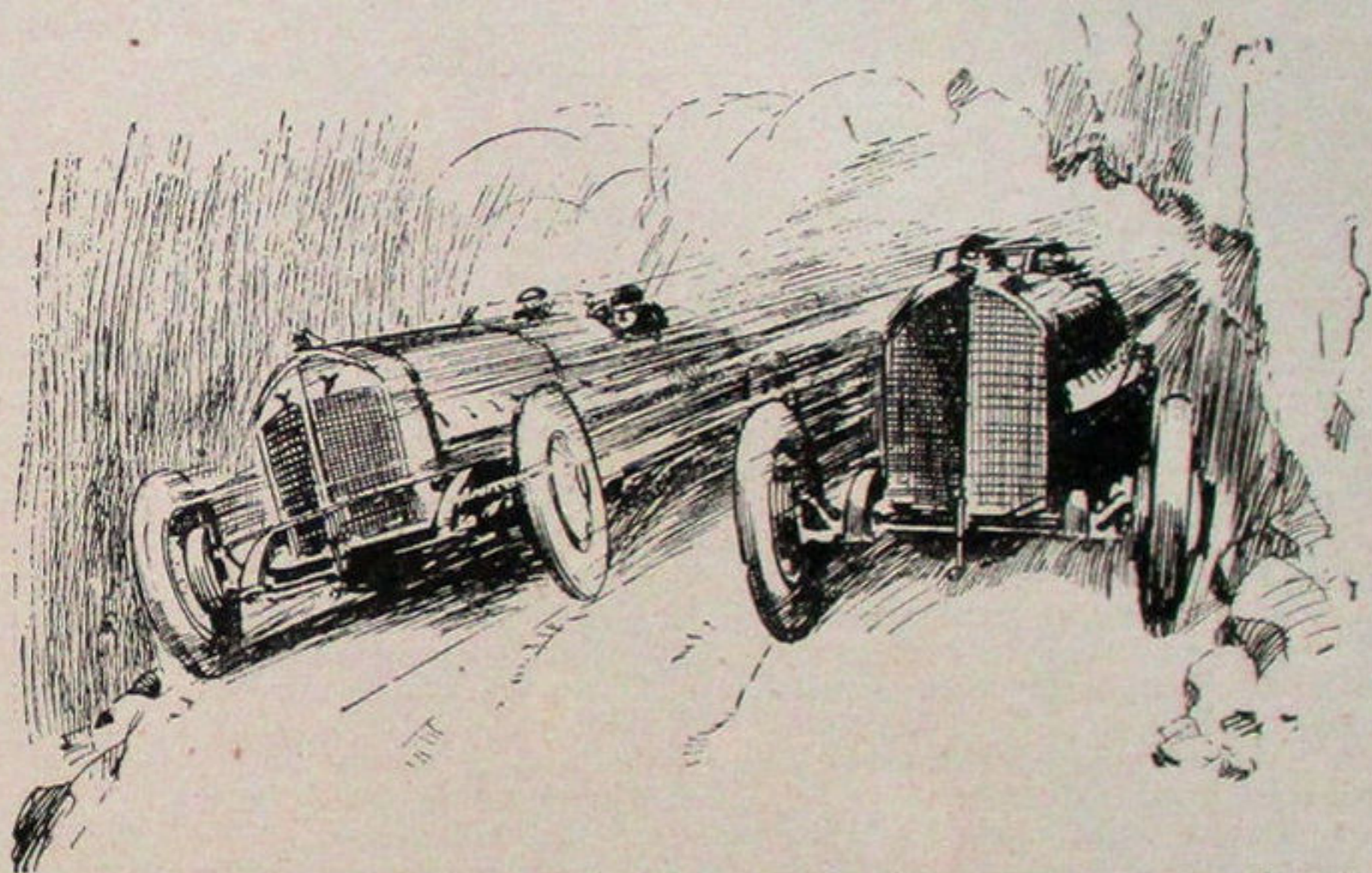
Shaffner got by, on the Mercedes, in no less miraculous fashion, but the experience shook his nerve somewhat, and he never looked like catching Rollo from that moment.

But the British race-driver dare not slacken speed for an instant. He was leading, and he vowed to himself that, if his engine would only stand up to the gruelling, he would never lose his lead now. Yet the slightest mistake in driving would be disastrous. Never had Rollo's cool head and iron nerve stood him in such good stead! Round corner after corner he swirled, skidding as little as possible

to save his tyres. The "Blue Streak" fairly ate up the miles which separated them from the winning-post. Rollo's luck held. The visions of tyre-trouble, which had worried Phil ever since they had won the leading position in the great race, began to fade, as the miles flew under their wheels. The good eight-cylinder engine never faltered. Nothing but the rankest bad luck could rob them of victory now. Would the winning-post never come in sight! Ah, there it was at last!

On tip-toe the crowd waited, in the hope of welcoming the Fiat into second place. But they were doomed to disappointment.

Shafner brought the Mercedes in three minutes after Rollo, and was closely followed by the plucky Italian Loretto, who had quickly got going again after the mishap which had deprived him of his lead. He received a tremendous ovation from his compatriots, in which Phil and Rollo joined heartily. It had been a magnificent race.



In an instant Rollo had changed gear, shot round on the inside of the Mercedes in a shower of stones, and was past!

The "Blue Streak" flashed past the stands and over the line an easy winner, to the accompaniment of wild "View holloas" from the band of English sportsmen present, and loud cheers from the sporting Italian crowd.

The latter was obviously disappointed at the non-appearance of their champion, Loretto, who had been leading at the beginning of the last lap. But, in the absence of the red Fiat, Rollo's blue racer was an infinitely more welcome sight than the white car of the German driver would have been.

"'Bout as exciting a little speed burst as I've ever had!" drawled Rollo, as he heaved himself stiffly out of the driving seat. "Feeling tired, Phil?"

"Yes!" said Phil frankly. "But, by gum, Rollo, you're wonderful!"

He held out his hand to the race-driver, who gripped it tightly.

"The 'Blue Streak' wins!" he said with a smile.

THE END



"Catch, Bunty!" said Bob, hurling the apple at the fat junior

Billy Bunter's Midnight Adventure!

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

*An Amusing Short Story of Greyfriars
School*

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

BY FRANK RICHARDS

I.

BILLY BUNTER was feeling hungry. That was Bunter's normal condition. It would have been very exceptional had he been feeling satisfied.

Even on top of a good meal, Bunter often declared he felt peckish.

"I'm in danger of wasting away, you fellows," he would say. "I don't get enough to keep body and soul together. I shall be a scraggy skeleton soon!"

"You'll have to lose about ten stone before that can happen, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry.

On this particular evening, Billy Bunter really was feeling ravenous.

At dinner he had been refused a fifth helping of steak and kidney pudding. He had had no tea, owing to the fact that none of the occupants of No. 7 Study were in funds. Shortly before bedtime, Bob Cherry had given him a dog biscuit, but it took more than a dog biscuit to satisfy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows," said the fat junior, as he started to undress in the Remove dormitory. "I—I've got a dreadful sinking feeling, you know! I don't want to alarm you, but I think I'm starving!"

"Starve away!" said Johnny Bull indifferently. "We'll see that you get a decent burial!"

"Oh, really, Bull! I wish you wouldn't be such a heartless beast. You might be starving yourself one of these days."

"If I am, I'll let you know," said Johnny, "and you can send me a brace of pheasants from Bunter Court."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked pathetically at his schoolfellows through his big spectacles.

"I say, you chaps, it's touch and go whether I shall be able to last out till the morning," he said.

"In that case, you'd better make out your will," said Skinner. "You can leave me the double-bladed penknife that you borrowed from Peter Todd last week."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sighed. His schoolfellows, he reflected, were utterly heartless. They could see that he was faint for want of food; they could see that he was wasting away under their very eyes, as it were. Yet they treated the matter as a huge joke.

"If you fellows had a spark of feeling," said Billy Bunter, "you'd see that I got something to eat."

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Let's make a collection of all the foodstuffs in the dorm," he said. "Now, you chaps! Trot out your eatables!"



Draped in a sheet, and possessing what appeared to be bright-green eyes, Bunter's appearance was sufficient to startle anybody.

more nourishment in that bar of chewing-gum than there is in a whole rabbit pie."

"I dare say," said Bunter. "But I'd rather have the rabbit pie!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Other contributions were speedily forthcoming.

Bolsover major sacrificed a chunk of toffee, which he extricated with great difficulty from the lining of his pocket, in which the toffee had been wedged for some weeks.

"Here you are, Bunty," said Bolsover, handing over the sticky mass. "It doesn't look very tempting. You'd better give it a bath before you eat it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry groped in his locker, and produced an apple. Judging by its appearance, it was the original apple which had been plucked in the Garden of Eden. Senility was on its features. It was in a state of dissolution and decay.

"Catch, Bunty!" said Bob, hurling the apple at the fat junior. "Eat that, and then shout for the steward!"

Billy Bunter caught the apple—with his nose. His yell of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

Dick Penfold, the poet of the Remove, produced a piece of plum cake. He happened to drop it, and it landed on the floor with a sickening thud.

"My hat!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith. "Is that a piece of your great-grandfather's wedding-cake, Pen?"

Fisher T. Fish solemnly produced a bar of chewing-gum, and handed it to Bunter.

"Guess that'll keep you going till the morning," said the Yankee junior.

"There's more nourishment in that bar of chewing-gum than there is in a whole rabbit pie."

"My aunt in Friardale made this cake, somewhere about the year dot," he said. "I remember putting it in my locker the day I first came to Greyfriars. Coming over, Bunter! If you can't break it with your fingers, I suggest you try the poker!"

Billy Bunter gave a dissatisfied grunt.

The things which were being showered upon him were no use to a fellow in the throes of starvation. The chewing-gum alone was eatable, and chewing-gum does not satisfactorily fill an aching void.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Penfold grinned.

"By the way," said Monty Newland suddenly. "I've got a couple of eggs in my locker. They were laid on Armistice Day, and I'm keeping 'em as souvenirs. But I don't mind parting with them, if it'll save a fellow from starvation."

"Don't you dare produce those eggs!" said Harry Wharton. "We haven't got our gas masks on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At this stage, Wingate of the Sixth came into the dormitory to see lights out.

The captain of Greyfriars stopped short at the sight of Billy Bunter, who was sitting up in bed with an expression of abject misery on his fat face.

"What's the matter, Bunter?" inquired Wingate.

"Groo! I'm starving!"

"What nonsense!" said Wingate sharply.

"It is not nonsense. I have not had a square meal for ages. And if I don't have something to tide me over till the morning, I shall collapse."



Bunter trod on a stair that wasn't there, and pitched forward into space. Bump-bumpety-bump.

"Rubbish!"

"I suppose you haven't got a piece of cold pudding in your pocket, Wingate?"

Wingate gasped.

"Do you suppose I'm in the habit of going about with pieces of cold pudding scattered about my person?" he demanded.

"Well, if you haven't got cold pudding, perhaps you've got something else that's good to eat?"

Wingate smiled good-naturedly, and groped in his pocket.

"Here you are," he said. "This is the only thing I can offer you."

And he tossed a bag of walnuts on to Bunter's bed.

"Thanks awfully, Wingate!" said the fat junior gratefully. "You've saved my life!"

The captain of Greyfriars extinguished the lights, and withdrew.

Crack, crack!

Billy Bunter's teeth were busily engaged as nut-crackers.

"What are the walnuts like, Bunty?" inquired Peter Todd.

"I've cracked two, and they're both bad."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crack, crack!

Billy Bunter proceeded with his nut cracking. To his dismay, he found that there was not a single sound walnut in the bag.

"What a sell!" he groaned. "Every single nut's a dud! I shall have to go hungry, after all. You'd better stay awake, you fellows. I fancy I shall expire in the night, owing to lack of nourishment."

The juniors did not stay awake. They were satisfied that when they arose in the morning they would find Billy Bunter still alive and kicking.

One by one they dozed off, until everyone in the dormitory—with the exception of Billy Bunter—was in the arms of Morpheus.

II.

BEFORE midnight, a bright inspiration came to Billy Bunter.

He remembered—why hadn't he thought of it before?—that there were good things galore in the school kitchen.

To carry out a midnight raid on the domestic regions was the only method by which Bunter's hunger could be appeased.

"Of course, I shall have to take precautions," reflected the fat junior. "There might be some masters on the prowl. The best thing I can do is to rig myself up as a ghost. Then, if anyone sees me, they'll be scared out of their wits, and they'll take to their heels. Afraid I'm a bit too fat for a

genuine ghost. But why shouldn't there be fat spooks as well as thin ones?"

Fired with his resolve, Billy Bunter stepped out of bed.

From the heap of bed-clothes he detached one of the sheets. With his pen-knife he made a couple of slits for his eyes. Then he "borrowed" some luminous paint from Skinner's locker. Skinner, as befitted one of the biggest practical jokers in the Form, always kept a ready supply of luminous paint.

Bunter smeared some of the paint on to the sheet, around the two holes he had made. This done, he covered himself with the sheet, binding it round his waist with a dressing-gown cord.

Although he did not look a typical ghost, Billy Bunter was certainly a terrifying spectacle. Draped in a sheet, and possessing what appeared to be bright-green eyes—this effect was produced by the luminous paint—his appearance was sufficient to startle anybody.

The fat junior chuckled softly.

"Nobody will be likely to interfere with me!" he murmured. "I'm not a nice sort of object to meet on a dark night. And now for the raid."



Mr. Prout was a few yards from the kitchen door when it opened, and a ghostly figure emerged—a terrifying, green-eyed figure.

Peering through the two crudely-cut slits which served as peep-holes, Billy Bunter made his way out of the dormitory.

He was not an expert at finding his way in the dark. Even in broad daylight his eyesight was defective. By night he was almost as blind as the proverbial bat.

However, he managed to grope his way from the dormitory, and found himself on the landing. Then he started to descend the stairs.

He managed to get halfway down the flight without mishap. Then he trod on a stair that wasn't there, and pitched forward into space.

Bump-bumpety-bump!

Billy Bunter fairly bounced down the remainder of the steps. Fortunately, there were not many, or he would have been an ambulance case.

As he alighted at the bottom, with an impact which shook every bone in his body, he gave vent to a wild yell of anguish.

"Yaroooooh!"

The yell echoed through the school building.

It was only too probable that it would be heard, and that an alarm would be given.

Billy Bunter sat up, rubbing his bruised limbs. He was dazed by the shock of the fall, and it took him some minutes to recover. At length, however, he tottered slowly to his feet.

"I was an idiot not to have borrowed Johnny Bull's electric torch!" he muttered. "A fellow wants cat's eyes to find his way about in this awful darkness! Hope nobody heard me yell."

Alas for the fat junior's hopes!

Although his yell had not awakened anybody, there had been one person already awake; and the yell had penetrated to the bedroom which that person occupied.

The individual in question was Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

Mr. Prout was lying in bed, reading the works of William Wordsworth by the light of a reading-lamp.

He was just pondering over the misfortunes of "a simple child, dear brother Jim, that lightly draws its breath," when a fearsome yell caused him to drop the volume on to the floor.

"Bless my soul! Whatever could that be?" murmured the master of the Fifth. "There is evidently something amiss below stairs. I will go and investigate."

Mr. Prout got out of bed, and put on a dressing-gown over his pyjamas. He also thrust his feet into a pair of slippers.

He glanced at the clock on his mantelpiece. It was five minutes to twelve. Then, switching off the light, he left his room and proceeded downstairs.

Although he would not have admitted the fact, even to himself, Mr. Prout was afraid.

It was very creepy and uncanny in the darkness. Strange, ghostly shadows seemed to flit here and there.

"I should feel more comfortable," murmured Mr. Prout, "if I had my Winchester repeater with me. I will go and fetch it."

With great difficulty—for he could scarcely see a yard in front of him—Mr. Prout made his way to his study. He had seen nothing, on the way downstairs, to account for the piercing yell which he had heard.

The Winchester repeater—with which Mr. Prout was alleged to have slain much big game in the Wild West—hung on the wall. Mr. Prout took it down, and loaded it with blank cartridges.

"If there should be a marauder in the building, I have no doubt that this will effectively scare him away!" muttered Mr. Prout.

He then started on a tour of the building.



Presently the barrel of Mr. Prout's rifle came into violent contact with Billy Bunter's ribs.

The quest proved abortive until Mr. Prout drew near to the kitchen. He was a few yards from the kitchen door when it opened, and a ghostly figure emerged—a terrifying, green-eyed figure.

Mr. Prout stopped short with a startled gasp.

It was difficult to say who was the more frightened, the ghost or the Form-master.

Billy Bunter could dimly discern Mr. Prout's form in the gloom. But it was not so much the figure of the Form-master that startled him—though that in itself was sufficiently startling—as the rifle which Mr. Prout carried.

Bunter knew that Mr. Prout was a most erratic shot, but at that short range—a matter of only a yard or two—it would be almost impossible for him to miss.

The fat junior's knees knocked violently together. He trembled as with the ague.

Mr. Prout was no less frightened. He did not, of course, recognise Billy Bunter. The white-clad figure, with the glittering green eyes, struck Mr. Prout as being something supernatural.

For one long moment master and junior stood stock still.

It was Billy Bunter who first regained the power of action. He turned on his heel, and scuttled away as swiftly as the encumbering sheet would permit.

The sight of the fleeing figure galvanised Mr. Prout into action.

He raised the Winchester repeater to his shoulder and fired.

Crack!

Billy Bunter uttered a gasp of wild terror. At any instant he expected a bullet to be embedded in his back.

Fear lent the fat junior wings. He sped on until he came to the box-room.

Mr. Prout, an undignified figure in his flapping dressing-gown, rushed in hot pursuit.

The Form-master was no longer afraid. The fact that the white-clad form had taken flight convinced Mr. Prout that he personally had nothing to fear.

Once inside the box-room, Billy Bunter concealed himself behind a pile of lumber.

The room was in darkness, and he hoped

that Mr. Prout would not make a thorough investigation.

Once again that evening the fat junior's hopes were dashed.

Mr. Prout came panting into the box-room. He had no means of obtaining a light, but he was satisfied that the ghostly apparition was somewhere in the vicinity.

He moved about the room, poking in all the corners. And presently the barrel of his rifle came into violent and painful contact with Billy Bunter's ribs.

"Yaroooooooh!"

Mr. Prout sprang back a pace. There was something in the sound of that yell which seemed familiar to him.

"Bless my soul! Who—what—surely that is not you, Bunter?"

"Ow!"

"Come out, wretched boy, and reveal yourself!" thundered Mr. Prout. He no longer had any doubts as to the identity of the "ghost."

Billy Bunter crawled out from behind the stack of lumber.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Mr. Prout. "You appear to be covered in a sheet, and to have illuminated your eyes in some manner. Have you been attempting to pass yourself off as a ghost?"

"Ye-e-es, sir," faltered the fat junior.

Mr. Prout looked grim.

"You may account yourself fortunate, Bunter, that my rifle was loaded with blank cartridges," he said. "Otherwise, you would most certainly have been shot!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You will remove that absurd drapery, and return to your dormitory at once!" said Mr. Prout. "I will hold a full inquiry into this affair in the morning."

Bunter wrenched the sheet off his plump person, and blundered away through the darkness.

Next morning he was brought up for judgment; and, on being found guilty, received three stinging cuts on each hand.

It will be a long, long time before Bunter launches another midnight raid on the school kitchen!

THE END

ON GUARD!

A Brief Description of the Proper Position to take up in Boxing—a matter of the greatest importance to Beginners

By AN INSTRUCTOR

THE best way for a boy to learn how to box is, of course, to put himself under a competent instructor, who, in a few practical lessons, is able to impart many useful hints and tips, which can be practised at leisure. As an instructor is unfortunately not available for every boy, the next best thing for the would-be boxer to do is to familiarise himself with the best methods from a book, and work them out with the assistance of a chum.

THE "READY" POSITION

The first and most important thing to do is to get the correct "ready" position. Stand with your *left foot* flat on the ground, pointing perfectly straight to the front. The *right foot* must be well behind the left, with the heel off the ground, so that the weight rests upon the ball of the big toe. *Knees* should be slightly bent, and the weight of the body balanced evenly upon both legs. The *body* must be inclined slightly to the right, and the *left shoulder*, which naturally points forward, should be held slightly higher than the right. The *left arm* is held

pointing straight to the front, slightly bent at the elbow, which must point downwards and not outwards. The *left hand* must be held with the thumb up, and knuckles pointing outwards and not downwards. The *right arm* should lie diagonally across the body, to protect the diaphragm; that is, the spot just below the centre of the chest which is known in boxing as the "mark." A blow on the unprotected "mark" will wind the best man who ever donned boxing-gloves.

The *head* should be held slightly to the right, with the *eyes* looking straight to the front. The *chin* should be kept well in, as this is a vulnerable point.

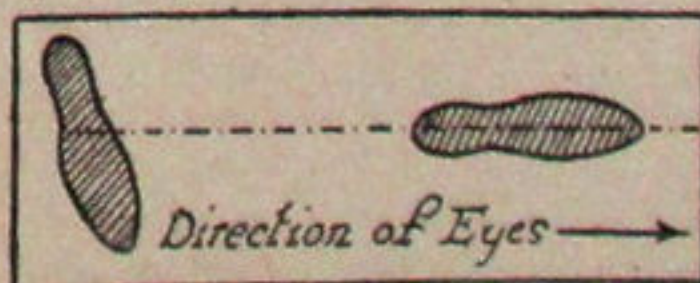
By paying careful attention to the foregoing, the beginner can attain the correct boxing stance, which has been proved by experience to be the best for



The correct "ready" position

all-round purposes.

It should be practised continually, so that the action of falling into the correct attitude at the commencement of a bout becomes instinctive. Of course, the more practice you have the more proficient you become.



Correct position of feet

THE FUR TRAPPER

I DARE say that a number of my readers have noticed what a high price is charged for all genuine fur goods—fur rugs, ladies' furs, fur-lined overcoats and the like—and perhaps it has occurred to some of them that the trapper, the man who gets the fur, finds his occupation a well-paid one; that he makes quite a lot of money.

I can assure them that he doesn't. His is a hard life, a mighty hard life, harder than the great majority of men would care to live for six months out of the twelve, and the money he gets out of his work during that time is just about enough to keep him going and find him in tobacco and grub during the rest of the year—if he's lucky.

There may be millionaire fur-traders and dealers; I've never yet come across or heard of a fur-trapper dying a rich man.

During the summer months the trapper has a pretty good time of it, even if he doesn't earn a deal of money; with the coming of winter his real business commences, and he has to be a pretty tough and resolute chap to get through those six months with all the trials and troubles they bring to him.

Where the best fur is obtained in Canada, which, you know, sends enormous supplies of fur into the markets, winter begins early and stays late, and while it's there it doesn't fool with its job. There's snow often and in plenty, and with the thermometer trying its best to get down to zero—that's 32 degrees below freezing point—and a long way below zero;

50 degrees below isn't unknown!—the deep snow speedily becomes frozen solidly.

It is over this snow that the fur-trapper does most of his travelling—twenty miles a day or more—and he doesn't grumble. He can move quickly and easily over frozen snow. It is when midwinter storms are about, and he is obliged to travel over soft snow, that he begins to wish he had some easier job.

As a rule he works alone, which means that

during the trapping season he is liable not to set eyes on another human being, trapping being carried on, as you'll imagine, in parts where human beings aren't frequent at any time. The wild animals don't care about human company. Neither is the average trapper at all pleased if he finds that another chap of the same occupation has established himself in *his* territory. There are yarns told of desperate fightstaking place between a couple of trapping rivals over the exclusive right of setting traps over a given line of country.

The trapper builds his own house, gets his own grub—shoots a deal of it—cooks it himself, and generally manages for himself. He

has to; there's no one to do these things for him. If he falls ill or meets with an accident, he has to doctor himself—or go without doctoring, usually the latter.

His house he builds of logs, usually one room, and not a big room at that. The bigger the room the more fire it takes to keep it warm. The crevices are chinked with moss; the roof generally has a covering of soil on it and the



The trapper pays a daily visit to his line of traps.

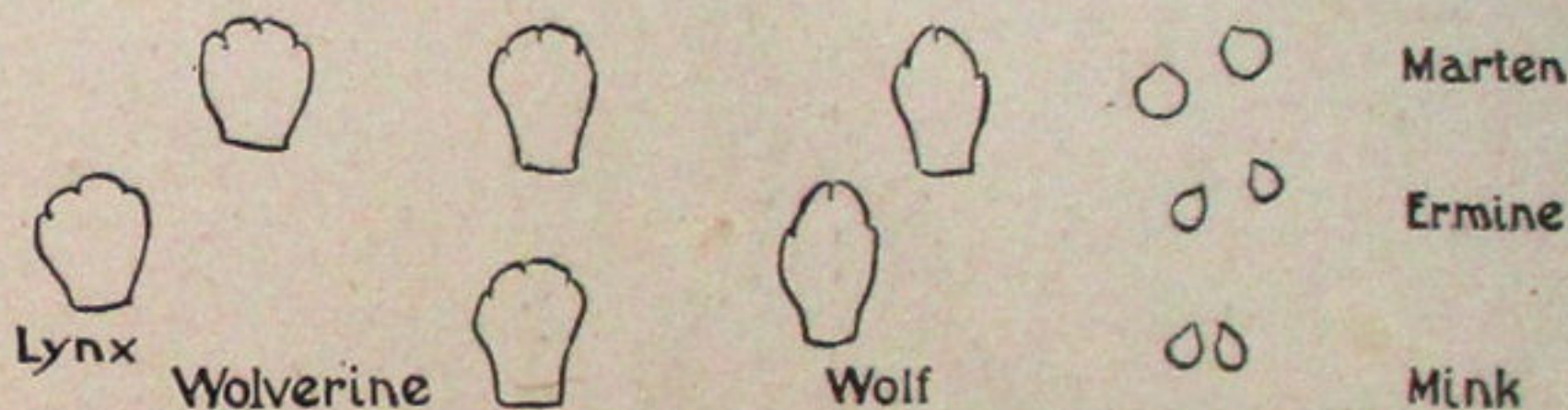
floor is generally of small spruce poles. Sometimes there's a glass window; often there isn't. With more dry poles he makes something that he calls a bed, and his mattress is dry grass and small spruce branches with his Hudson Bay blankets on top. Empty boxes serve for seats, and he makes his own table.

Sometimes, on account of extra work, tiredness, or bad weather, he won't be able to get back to his cabin at night, and he sleeps in a smaller edition of it, a tiny six by six shed of small logs, previously built—a day's work with an axe for a handy man such as the trapper has to be. In this he'll have a stove constructed out of a five-gallon oil can. Without this he'd have no grub, and might be frozen in his bed.

The fur-bearing animals—foxes, martens, otters, wolverines, lynxes, beavers, muskrats—he generally catches in steel traps. Bears he

fastened to it, and this attached to a stick; both chain and stick are buried in the snow. If the animal were to see them it would at once be suspicious.

The traps are invariably set a foot or so from the edge of the trail or path, never within the trail itself. For ermine, marten and mink, a little house of sticks upright in the snow, surrounding the trap, is built and roofed with brush. The bait is at the back of the house, so that the animal has to walk over the trap to get at the bait. For lynxes and wolverines a circular wall of brush is built around the trap, leaving a gap through which is to be seen an upright stick on which the bait is fastened. The lynx is a cowardly brute, and seldom shows fight when the trapper goes to remove it from the trap, but woe betide the man who handles a trapped lynx unwarily. You know that the lynx is a big cat—about as big as a



The fur trapper is always on the look-out for these tracks.

will set a deadfall for, constructed of heavy logs. Wolves are very suspicious and shy of traps, and some of these he tries to catch with poison mixed with food—fat or meat and flour mixed and made into a ball. Very cold weather is his best time. Then the animals are hungry and not so suspicious. But sometimes he'll go to his traps day after day for a week, to find that nothing has been caught.

On stormy days, or when the cold is too intense to be out, or during any other spells of leisure, he roughly prepares his skins, scraping and cleaning them, stretching some of them on frames.

To set a trap, the trapper first scoops a small hollow in the snow; in this he puts the trap and covers it with thin paper—to prevent the snow clogging it. On top of this he places a layer of snow. Each trap has a steel chain

retriever dog, and it's about the quickest mover in all creation. Its teeth are like double edged razors, and its temper is vile. A bite from a lynx is anything but a joke.

An English fox, as you know, is an artful beggar, but his relative of the Canadian Nor' West could give him a start and an easy beating where artfulness and suspicion are concerned. There must be no brush in the neighbourhood of a fox trap; it would at once tell him something was wrong. So just behind the trap is a stick set up, and this the trapper rubs with some strong-scented stuff. The fox likes this, but he hates the smell of the human hand, so that never must a fox trap be handled otherwise than with gloved hands, no matter how long before the trap is used!

The wolverine mentioned is often a nuisance to the trapper. He's an animal with

a big appetite—which is why he's sometimes called the "glutton," and if, in wandering about, the glutton finds another animal fast in a trap, dead or alive, he'll prefer making a meal off it to investigating the baits provided for his benefit by the trapper. It's a fighting animal, too, making desperate efforts to escape when trapped, sometimes finding and biting through the pole to which the trap is chained. When this happens the glutton clears off, dragging along with it the trap still attached to its leg.

Arctic hares, or rabbits the trapper calls them—and very pretty they look in their thick white furry winter coats—are caught in wire snares. Their skins aren't worth a lot, but the meat of them is useful, both for the trapper and for feeding his dogs. If near a lake the trapper will try to catch fish for the dogs, cutting a hole in the ice and dropping down a net. Of course, the fish freeze stiff immediately, but when slightly thawed out the dogs thoroughly enjoy them. Some of the fish he'll keep for his own use.

This procuring of food takes up a lot of the trapper's time. Another job to which he has to give attention is the cutting of timber for firewood. During six months a tremendous quantity of wood will be necessary, and although the trees that furnish it are not so far from his shack, the trapper finds it best to chop down a big supply at a time, building a huge stack of logs close to his cabin. Whenever he has any spare time he doesn't quite know how to use, the trapper cuts down trees for firewood.

How many traps, snares, deadfalls, etc., will a trapper look after? Well, it depends. If the country isn't overtrapped, his line will extend to sometimes as much as a hundred miles, and to go the whole length of this will occupy him about a week in favourable weather. Along this line his traps, etc., will number between six and seven hundred. Some job, eh, to keep an eye on this lot, removing the caught animals, renewing baits, and so forth. No, there's never any need for a trapper to be idle. He seldom is during winter, unless he's ill or has met with an accident.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 10.—CHESS



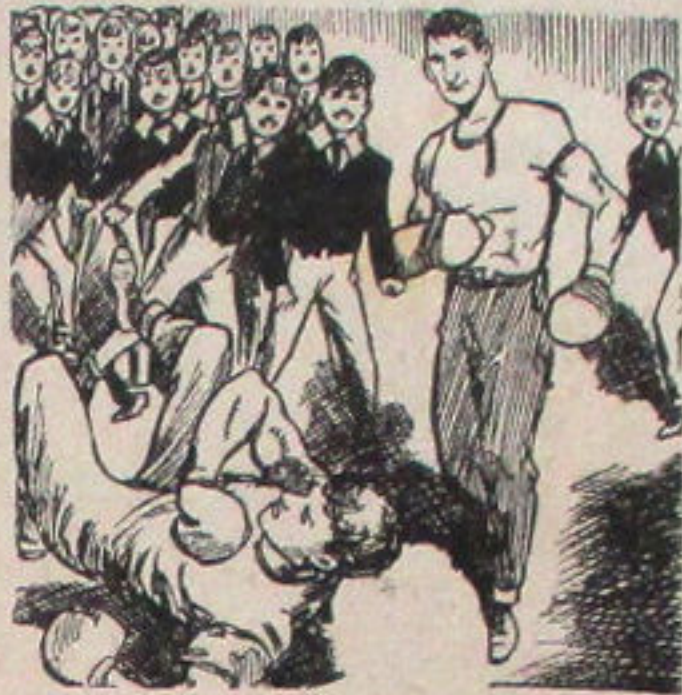
Although an indoor game, we feel
It merits our attention;
Some fellows follow it with zeal,
And one needs special mention.
I now allude to Hurree Singh,
The dark and dusky Nabob,
Who says to Cherry, "Now, old thing,
The chessful game we'll play, Bob!"

When nights are dark, and curtains drawn,
At chess we're often busy,
And play with bishop, knight, and pawn
Until we feel quite dizzy.
Although it's not an outdoor game,
Chess has a keen attraction;
It is the expert's constant aim
To beat the rival faction.

Some fellows love a game of "nap,"
And some like snakes-and-ladders;
While others, eager for a scrap,
Are venomous as adders.
But give to me the joys of chess
(At which I'm oft competing);
This, as an indoor game, I guess,
Takes quite a lot of beating.

When limbs are weary from the strain
Of many a football tussle,
One needs to exercise the brain
While resting joint and muscle.
So when you've played in mud and mire,
And come in soaked and muddy,
Just change your things, stoke up the fire,
And play chess in your study.

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



PERCY THE PUGILIST

By BOLSOVER MAJOR

A's for the **ART** which I always employ
In dealing out punches, my life's greatest joy!

B's for the **BLOWS** which I promptly
deliver:

There is pain for the victim, but not for the
giver!

C is for **CHERRY**, who thinks he can fight.
He'll alter his mind when I've licked him
to-night.

D is for **DUTTON**, as deaf as a post.
If he tries to attack me I've got him on
toast!

E's the **EXERTION** I always display
When scraps and disturbances come in my
way.

F's for the **FOLLY** of those who attack me,
And think, in a burst of conceit, they can
whack me!

G's for the **GLOVES** which I put on my
hands

When Wingate or some other prefect
demands.

H is the **HOOK** which I give to the jaw—
A blow which makes onlookers tremble with
awe!

I's the **IN-FIGHTING** I like very much.
There are fellows whose ribs near collapse
at my touch!

J is the **JOLT** which I land on the chin,
It floors the recipient, and stifles his grin!

K is the **KNOCK-OUT**, a mighty blow this,
My victim is vanquished, except when I miss!

L is the **LINGERING** pain a chap knows
When facing a crowd of my sledgehammer
blows.

M is the **MASTER**, who stalks on the scene,
And sees all the marks where the fighting
has been.

N is the **NOVICE**, who hopes to defeat me,
But whimpers and whines when he finds he
can't beat me.

O is for **O'GILVY**—licked him, you see,
So now he's as civil as civil can be!

P's for the **PLASTER** that's on fellows'
faces

When I've punctured their dials in six
different places!

Q's for the **QUALMS** which a new fellow
feels

When Percy the Pugilist's hard at his heels.
R is for **RUSSELL**, who thinks he's a
boxer,

But one of these days I shall give him a
shock, sir!

S is for **SCIENCE**—a thing I don't need.
"Hit hard and hit often!"—that sums up
my creed.

T's for the **TUSSLES** I've had in the gym.,
They're splendid to see, when I'm feeling
in trim.

U's my **UNSHAKEN** belief in myself.
All rivals of mine will be soon on the shell.

V is the **VIM** that I put in my punch,
The chap who has "stopped one" don't
want any lunch!

W's for **WEIGHT**, I possess a good deal:
When it lands on my victims, they splutter
and squeal!

X is a **LETTER** that's rare (don't know why),
I think I'll ignore it, and pass on to "Y."

Y's for the **YOUTH** who says "Bolsover's
mad!"

Then whines to his pals of the hiding he's
had!

Z is the **ZENITH** of my wondrous fame,
To bully and bluster is ever my aim!



DRIVER BY Edmund Burton- DUNN

A TALE OF THE IRON ROAD

Illustrated by Harry Lane

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Bill Dunn

THE huge locomotive backed slowly away from the water-tank, moving down the line with ever-lessening speed until her buffers kissed those of the first coach in the long train standing beside the platform at Millchester terminus.

So beautifully handled was she that scarcely anyone amongst the big complement of passengers was aware of her linking up, until her gentle pressure pushed the cars a few inches back. Then, with couplings secured, the 8.40 waited for the hands of the station clock to reach the scheduled minute ere commencing her night journey to the north.

Jack Prescott had almost attained the limit of his ambition; he had, only a week before, reached the footplate of the great four-coupled "No. 339"—"Rushing Rosie," as she was affectionately called by the employes of the company. He was now her fireman, second in command to Bill Dunn, the driver, whose hand had controlled her mighty machinery ever since the 8.40 was put on the time-table.

Jack had, of course, started his railway career in the usual way—as a cleaner—but so keen was he upon his work that he quickly attracted the attention of his foreman, and in a remarkably short space of time had

worked his way to his present position, with only Dunn between him and full control of the system's best loco.

But Bill Dunn, though frequently sour-tempered and morose, was a star driver with a fine record of service behind him. He had driven the 8.40 night after night for years, and never was he known to have dropped more than a few seconds on the journey. That train was his pet; he knew every turn of the wheels, every creak of a piston, every sigh from the big slide-valve cylinders that sucked the steam from the engine's huge boiler.

Yet it was small wonder that Bill was morose; he had his troubles—more, perhaps, than the rest of us. His affections in life were at one time equally divided between his wife, his kiddy, and his engine—until the terrible occurrence of just two months before this story opens, when little Bill had strayed too near the fire at home, with fatal results. His night-shirt had caught the blaze, and his mother, in her frantic efforts to save the child, had also sustained such severe burns that she succumbed a few hours after the poor little fellow, leaving Dunn Senior with but one remaining love to occupy his affections—the great iron horse that drew the 8.40.

There is no exaggeration here, let me tell you. It is common knowledge amongst railway folk that a driver will grow to love a particular

engine as though it were living flesh and blood. You see, it becomes part of himself, as it were, and a long-service man gets specially fond of the machine he has driven regularly from the time it leaves the builders until the day when it is condemned to the scrapping shop.

But Bill Dunn had been a good husband and father before that sad affair, and even "No. 339" was only an engine after all. Proud though he was of his charge, he now merely drove her mechanically—he never showed the great enthusiasm of late which had formerly been a by-word among his colleagues. The cheery Bill of a few short weeks before had developed into a short-tempered, sour, taciturn being who would scarcely even nod when a fellow-driver said, "Mornin', mate!"

And another thing—a *very* serious thing where an engine-driver is concerned—Dunn had recently been suspected of acquiring a taste for "strong waters." He was never actually intoxicated, but his visits to the local inn had been sufficiently numerous to draw forth a strong censure from his superiors on two distinct occasions already. They all knew what was wrong, and sincerely pitied the poor chap, but they also knew that the 8.40 was one of the most important trains running, and invariably carried a full load of passengers! Dunn, star driver though he was, would have to be superseded unless these disquieting signs quickly disappeared.

And this evening Jack Prescott had not been many minutes on the footplate ere he noticed, to his regret, that the driver did not seem to have heeded those warnings; for Jack was really fond of his companion, and felt as deeply for him as did the rest. Therefore, it was with inward dismay that he realised how strongly Bill's breath smelt of liquor, which, accompanied by a slight thickening of the speech, left no doubt in his mind that the driver would be better sleeping it off than conveying a big load of human beings over practically the whole length of the line. Yet, despite these signs, the man was certainly not actually intoxicated.

The guard's whistle presently sounded, its feeble note being quickly drowned by a sudden shriek from "No. 339's" whistle; then, with a tightening of couplings, the long

train pulled out of Millchester, clattering over the innumerable points until the iron way, clear and unbroken, lay like an interminable ribbon ahead.

Prescot stoked up when necessary, all the time keeping a covert eye on his companion, but Bill Dunn seemed quite capable of performing his duties. Indeed, nothing of any account happened during the first ten miles or so—until they were approaching Carlea, a small wayside station where all drivers were directed to reduce speed in order to take a sharp curve immediately beyond.

Jack had expected Dunn to follow the usual procedure, but evidently the drink he had imbibed had dulled the man's memory, for he completely ignored the rule.

"I say!" shouted Prescott, "we've passed the mark, Bill! Slow her, quickly——"

But Dunn, instead of complying, turned away from the levers—swung round until he faced his companion; and Jack backed away, for the moment unnerved by what he saw.

He knew the driver had taken drink, yet what he now beheld was not the result of liquor; for the other's face was dead white, relieved only by two glowing eyes that blazed madly into his own.

"Dunn! For Heaven's sake——"

The words were drowned in a cackle of insane laughter, as the man reeled nearer across the rocking cab-floor. His outstretched hands gripped the fireman's shoulders.

"Slow her! He, he, he! Slow her, ye say," he chuckled. "Not this trip, son! Thirty years I've worked for 'em—thirty year, man an' boy—an' now they'd like to fire me. Ho, ho, ho! *Me*—Bill Dunn—the best driver on the system——"

"You lunatic! Take your hands away!" gasped Prescott in panic, as he saw the lights of Carlea platform rushing towards them. "We'll be over, you mad fool!"

"Mad fool, am I? Well, small wonder, laddie. I've had enough to make me mad—a wife an' kid—no, ye don't!" as Jack tried to slip past him. "This engine's runnin' all out, I tell ye! I'll give 'em somethin' to sack me for—more'n takin' a drop of drink to kill my troubles."

Prescot had a swift mental picture of a

huge train piled in a mass of twisted wreckage upon the steep embankment beyond Carlea curve—hearing the agonising groans of the injured, and seeing the stretcher-bearers carrying their grim, white-sheeted burdens, illuminated by the fierce glow of the blazing coaches.

Poor old Dunn! It was easy to understand what had happened. His sorrow had bitten him too deeply, being still further increased by his threat of dismissal unless he gave up the only thing that made him forget his grief. His brain had not proved equal to it, and this was the result.

Carlea Station flashed by in a blur of light as the 8.40 rocked and roared between the platforms. Beyond—less than half a mile beyond—was the sharp curve that meant certain destruction at such a suicidal speed. It had got to be done—now or never.

Realising that he had a dangerous lunatic to deal with, even though Dunn's condition might be only temporary, Prescott saw that he would require to act both quickly and craftily. Feinting a spring to the right, he suddenly stepped the opposite way, darting past the driver and seizing the lever in front. But Dunn, with a howl of rage that could be heard even above the roar of the wheels, was after him like a cat, locking his arms round

Jack's waist just as the latter moved the handle across.

"Let go! Leave that alone, I tell ye! Ye young cub!"

Prescot got one hand under his adversary's chin, and pressed it desperately back. It is always a good move in a game like that, but the driver, with a madman's cunning, kept his head well down on his chest. To and fro they swayed, from the cab to the tender, then back

again—but the good work had been accomplished; the speed was perceptibly slower as the first few yards of the bend were rounded in safety.

Dunn was a powerful man, heavy, and tough as iron, and Jack felt as though every ounce of breath were being forced from his body. He pressed hard again at the other's chin, and at last the driver's head went up with a jerk; yet he still gripped



Jack shot out his hand, madly clutching at the rail, missed it by a foot as the weight of the other's body pulled him aside, and together they flew through space. (See opposite page)

his companion tightly, endeavouring to drag him aside.

They reeled back once more, Prescott's foot suddenly slipping on the steel plates, which threw all his weight against Dunn. The driver's grasp loosened for a moment; then, as he felt himself falling, he made a frantic grab at Jack, which the latter had no time to avoid.

The madman's fingers gripped and held; somehow even in his demented state he seemed to realise what was about to happen. They

had swayed opposite the gap between tender and cab, scarcely six inches of floor plating separating them from the open. Jack shot out his hand, madly clutching at the rail—missed it by a foot as the weight of the other's body pulled him aside, and together they flew through space, to strike the grassy embankment with a concussion that flung them apart.

And on through the night rushed the 8.40, the passengers in her comfortably-lighted carriages blissfully unconscious of what was happening in the darkness outside—unaware that the great engine which drew them was dashing to destruction like a mettlesome runaway, without a hand to control her!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

A Race Against Odds

BILL DUNN was dead. Being underneath when they fell, he had landed with fearful force, and Jack saw at once, by the now brilliant moonlight, that nothing could be done for the unfortunate fellow. The fireman staggered to his feet, shaken and bruised, staring as though fascinated at the triangle of red tail-lights disappearing away up the line.

“Great Heavens!”

The words suddenly hissed through his lips in a half-strangled gasp. It was bad enough at *any* time, in all conscience—but to-night of all nights! Jack had just remembered something which, in the headlong rush of recent events, had slipped his memory till now—something that chilled his blood, and almost caused him to sink back weakly again upon the grassy slope.

Usually the 8.40 had a clear, unbroken run from Carlea curve to Donthorpe, over fifty miles away; and, going as she was now at moderate speed, it was barely possible that a swift engine could overtake her before she covered the distance, when, by running alongside, a cool-headed fellow might essay crossing from cab to cab. It had been done before under similar circumstances, Jack had read, and he himself would be quite willing to risk it, considering what was at stake. But to-night utterly prevented any such plan being carried out, for the 8.40 was due to be held up at Croftbury Junction—the next place of importance on the route.

A royal party had been visiting the big manufacturing centres, and their train was scheduled to enter the main system from a branch line at Croftbury about the same hour as the express would reach that station. All traffic was to be suspended until the “Special” had passed; the points would be closed, and the signals against the 8.40; but, like a mad dog that rushes blindly ahead, she would keep to her headlong course—and Croftbury was less than twenty-five miles off!

Jack's teeth gritted together as he dashed down the embankment and into the four-foot way between the two lines of metals. Was there any hope? During his fight with Dunn he had had no chance of stoking, therefore “No. 339” had not received her usual regular “feed”; yet the fire was good, and would probably take her the fatal distance at half speed. What was more, the line unfortunately had a slight downward gradient for several miles.

Scarcely knowing what he wanted to do, he sprinted back towards Carlea like a man possessed. He must see the stationmaster; something *must* be attempted, no matter what.

Suddenly he gave a gasp, springing quickly aside. A huge six-coupled goods engine was coming towards him down the line, presently pausing and shunting back again—evidently to link up with some trucks in a siding at the station further on.

She was a fast-looking brute, capable of doing forty or fifty “all out,” and in a flash Prescott decided what he would attempt—as a drowning man seizes a straw.

Putting on a spurt, he overtook the engine—springing up the steps to the footplate, and gasping a few breathless words into the driver's ear. The man's face blanched, but he was a cool hand, and kept his wits about him.

“It's goin' to be a race, kid!” he said shortly, gripping the lever. “She's got a big start, but this old woman will catch her if anythin' can. I know her inside out.”

The huge engine seemed to spring forward like a restive steed, as soon as the dangerous curve was rounded; then on through the moonlight she tore, her wheels literally hopping across the rail joints, where every

succeeding chair and fishplate clicked beneath them like the tap-tap-tap of a drum.

Flames spouted from the funnel as her stoker fed the furnace every few minutes, and Jack hung out over the cab-side, breathlessly watching for the first sign of those triangular tail-lamps ahead.

On they clattered, under bridges and over them, shooting on and on, until a loud shout from the driver reached Prescott's ears, even above the din and clash of the machinery.

"Only five miles now to Croftbury, an' nary a sign of her! She's goin' faster than ye thought, lad-die!"

Ahead the track took another curve, but it wasn't sufficiently sharp to make any slowing down necessary. The goods engine buzzed round it, and then Jack uttered a yell of exultation.

"There she is! Good lord! Shut down, or we'll be into her!"

The driver's grimy hands flashed across the levers, then gripped the brake, and the wheels seemed to scream along the metals. Ahead three tiny red stars gleamed—four miles from Croftbury!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Touch and Go!

BEAUTIFULLY handled and her speed regulated to a hair, the big goods loco. gradually overhauled the distant 8.40.

In another mile, the space between pursuer and pursued had diminished by half; yet another saw the rear buffers of the express scarcely three yards from the forward ones of the second engine. Then Jack slipped from the cab; the fateful moment had arrived which was to mean complete success or utter failure of his plan.

Holding on like grim death, the rush of wind almost blinding him, he crawled slowly along the side of the engine, passing round to her

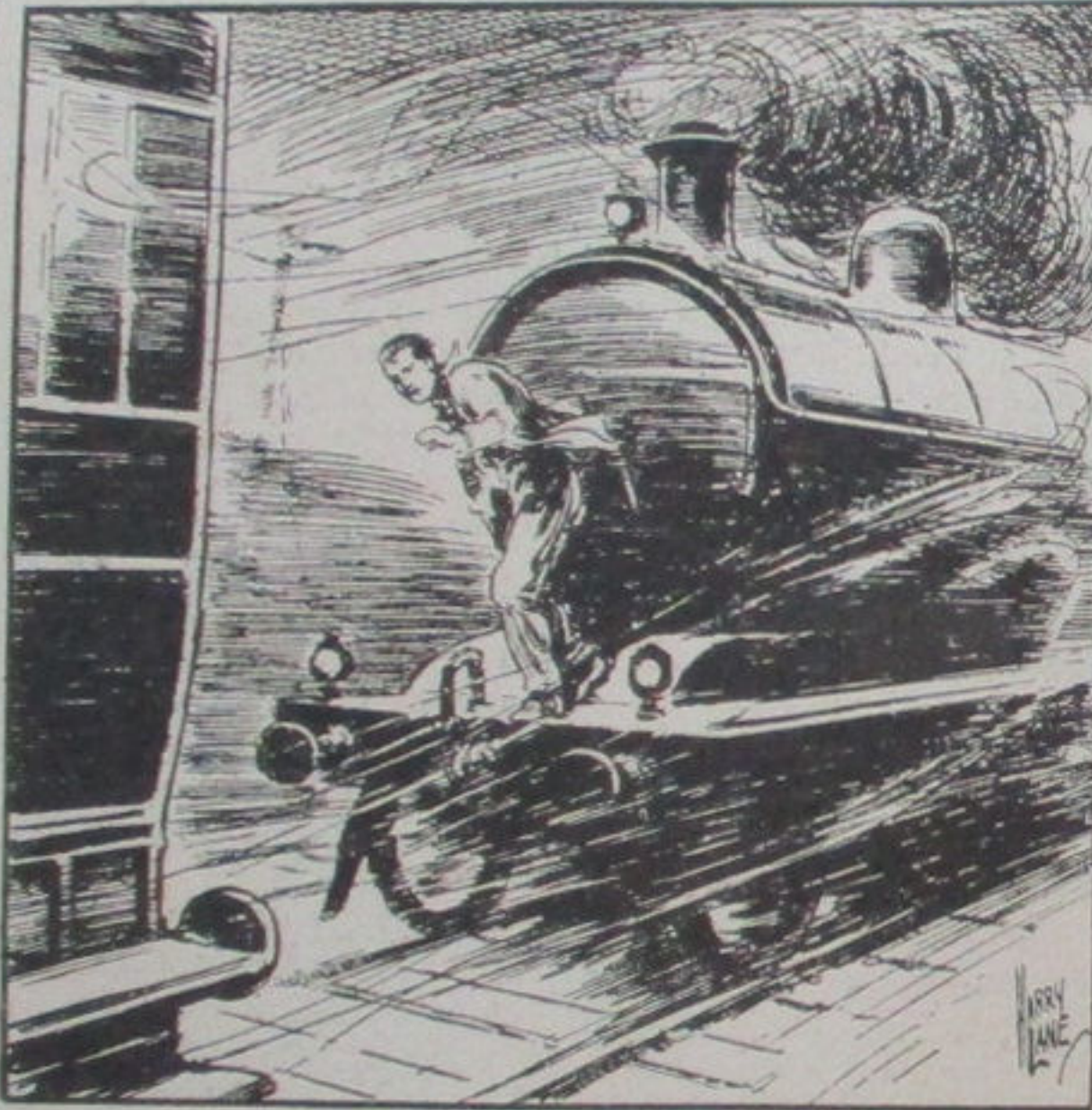
front, and crouching there with his gaze fixed upon the rear coach of the 8.40. The goods loco. crept still closer, until it seemed she was about to crash into the express from behind, but she was carefully regulated by an experienced hand, and never quite touched the other.

Slowly Prescott rose, every nerve braced for the most risky part of his plan. If

he sprang either too far or too short it meant certain death, and to make matters worse, the moonlight was now becoming clouded.

His eyes were upon the semi-circular hand-rail above the lamplighter's ladder—the half-dozen metal steps which one sees bolted to the ends of many railway carriages. Then, as the buffers almost kissed, he sprang.

It was but a second, but it seemed an eternity before he felt the cold steel of that rail sink into his palms; and there he hung



Slowly Prescott rose, every nerve braced for the most risky part of his plan. (See this page)

like a fly until his foot found one of the steps beneath. Then he swung himself cautiously upwards to the roof of the coach.

High overhead gleamed a red danger disc, and away in the distance a cluster of brighter lights—Croftbury Junction—but Jack tried not to see them, as he crawled along the rocking roof on all fours.

With his heart pounding like a steam-hammer whenever he crossed a gap between the coaches, he worked his way slowly forward, almost slipping more than once, but at length reaching the tender in safety. Here he risked a further glance ahead, and drew his breath in sharply.

The lights of Croftbury were almost upon them, whilst, away to the left, something else, brilliant and moving, met his horrified eyes—the royal train approaching from the branch line!

He slid like a madman over the coal, sprang across the cab, and shut off steam. Then he braked down, the handle fairly buzzing round, until he realised with a thrill of exultation that the express was surely slowing. Presently she came to a standstill, and Prescott leaned from the cab.

But what he saw there made him gasp afresh. Not fifty yards ahead half a dozen brilliantly lighted carriages were crossing the down-line at an angle—coming from the branch to the main up-track. Two minutes delay on his part would have spelt chaos!

The royal train flashed past with a roar, fast disappearing into the night, and Fireman Jack took the express slowly into Croftbury, when the red lights before him had changed to green.

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“Rushing Rosie” has a new driver now, who nightly controls the 8.40 on her northward run. But it's scarcely necessary to mention his name; you will have guessed that for yourselves long before this paragraph is written.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 11.—SHOOTING



“Nap” ranks as a delightful name
In many a youthful fool's eyes;
But sportsmen worthy of the name
Delight in scoring bull's-eyes.
They love to view the solid butts,
And hear the crack of rifles;
Whilst all the slackers and the “nuts”
Indulge in aimless trifles.

See Harry Wharton taking aim,
How cool he is, and steady!
A liberal wealth of shooting fame
Our skipper's won already.
Few “shooting stars” of Greyfriars School
Can hope to come out winners
Against this “crack,” who, as a rule,
Scores only bulls and inners.

Against the rival schools around
We have keen competition;
And side by side, upon the ground,
We take up our position.
Then comes the steady “Crack!” and “Zipp!”
And bullets fly before us,
Until the victors cry “Hip, hip!”
And vanquished groan in chorus.

Here's to all lovers of the sport!
From those who shoot a “grizzly,”
To those who, every season, court
Big shooting wins at Bisley.
That this is quite a splendid game
There's really no disputing;
Then let us boldly strive for fame
And skill in rifle shooting.



Ballads of Famous Schools

no. 3

Rookwood

GOD gave us Hampshire from of old,
And crowned her woods with glory;
He gave her stalwarts, strong and bold,
To shine in song and story.
And in this splendid southern shire
Stands Rookwood's situation;
Its noble walls, its stately spire,
Compel our admiration.

Majestic buildings greet our gaze,
One ancient, and one modern.
Within these walls, the highest praise
Both Silver and young Dodd earn.
One leads the "Classics," one the "Mods,"
In quite a firm and fair way;
When fighting foes, it's any odds
That victory comes their way!

George Bulkeley, strong and sound of limb,
Is Rookwood's gallant leader;
The juniors all look up to him,
His ways delight each reader.
A Trojan on the playing fields,
A mighty man of knowledge;
Small wonder Rookwood never yields
To any rival college!

Between the rival Sides exists
A feud of ancient standing;
And fast and furious fights with fists
Keep growing and expanding.
But when against a common foe
These factions are united,
They battle side by side, and show
How wrongs may all be righted!

Of Jimmy Silver be it said,
That he's a sturdy Briton;
No cunning foe does Jimmy dread,
By him they're often smitten.
He is a boy whose exploits rank
With those of Harry Wharton;
The leading light in every prank,
Or when there's any sport on!

Long flourish Rookwood! May she stand
Erect and strong for ever;
And may her sons, on every hand
Be spurred to high endeavour.
No boy can read without a thrill
Of her advancing glory;
And may her gallant exploits still
Be told in song and story!

E. E. BRISCOE



WHO'S WHO AT ROOKWOOD

HEADMASTER: THE REV. HENRY CHISHOLM, D.D., M.A.

Rookwood is divided into two sides, Classical and Modern. The former is by far the larger, and contains the greater number of scholars. The Modern side is barely twenty years old, and unlike the Classical side in every respect. The Classical side is draughty and ill-lit, whereas the Modern House is supplied with electric light, and every other up-to-date convenience. Dr. Chisholm himself takes direct charge of the Classical side, and leaves the Moderns to the care of Mr. Manders.

SCHOOL COLOURS: Purple and green.

Masters who come into the stories:

Mr. Herbert Manders, M.A.; Mr. Edward Greely, B.A.; Mr. Percy Jasper Mooney, M.A.; Mr. Dalton, M.A.; Mr. Frank Bohun, M.A.; Mr. Samuel Wiggins, M.A., B.S. French Master: Guillaume Monceau; German Master: Arthur Flinders; Maths. Master: Harold Bull.

The most important members of the Staff are:

House Dame: Mrs. Maloney.
Page Boy: Peter Tupper.
Porter and Lodgekeeper: John Mack.

Tuck Shop Proprietor: Sergt. Benjamin Kettle.

**SIXTH FORM.
CLASSICAL.**

FORM-MASTER: HERBERT MANDERS, M.A.

BULKELEY, GEORGE.—The head prefect and captain of the School. A splendid athlete, with a heart of gold. First in class, and first in field.

CARTHEW, MARK AUCKLAND.—The most detested black sheep in the Classical Sixth.

DICKINSON, WALTER.—A prefect, and a fellow who knows his job. Has a wild and reckless minor in the Fourth Form.

JONES, EDGAR.—A tall, strapping prefect, with two younger brothers in lower forms.

LONSDALE, RALPH.—Rookwood's crack bowler, and a fine all-round cricketer. Not very strong-willed, and consequently kept under the guardian eye of George Bulkeley.

MERTON, CHARLES.—A fellow who always tries to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Easy going and weak-willed.

NEVILLE, LAWRENCE.—The best and most intimate chum of George Bulkeley. Plays all games like a pro., and has backed up his leader through many a crisis. Captain of boxing.



The Headmaster.

MODERN SIXTH.

KNOWLES, CECIL.—Head prefect of the Form. Second to none in bullying, and possessing no pretensions whatever to decency. Is careful only to break the school rules strictly "under the rose," and thus contrives to hang on to his

office as a prefect, and keep in the good graces of those in authority above him.

GATESBY, STEPHEN.—A prefect who works hand in hand with Knowles, and never fails to make it warm for the juniors who are unlucky enough to cross his path.

BRAYNE, KINGSLEY.—A fellow of the right type, and a good footballer.

FRAMPTON, RONALD.—A follower of Knowles, but with far less cunning and hardihood. A prefect.

HOKE, TOM.—Not a bad fellow, but somewhat inclined to bully.

LEDBURY, JOSEPH.—A good sportsman.

MEDWAY, MICHAEL.—A good fellow at heart, but easily led. Selfish in temperament.



George Raby

MYERS, MARTIN.—A hectoring individual. Not at all a favourite.

TRESHAM, HORACE.—A prefect, and a pal of Brayne's.

FIFTH FORM.
CLASSICAL.

FORM-MASTER: EDWARD GREELY.

HANSON, EDWARD.—Captain of the Fifth. Rather a conceited fellow, who is for ever trying to down Jimmy Silver & Co. Has discovered, through long and painful experience, that it doesn't pay.

BROWN, HENRY.—A burly fellow with a great opinion of himself.

DUFF, HARRY.—Not what one would call a leading light, but all right in the main.

LUMSDEN, PHILIP.—A pal of Hanson's, and one of his great advisers.

JOBSON, TOBIAS.—The poorest fellow at Rookwood, but nevertheless one who is quite able to look after himself.

MUGGINS, PAUL.—A blundering, heavy-handed individual, very much after the style of Grundy of St. Jim's.

O'ROURKE, CECIL.—Comes from Belfast. Sound and decent.



Tubby Muffin

TALBOYS, CECIL.—The biggest dude in the Form. Pal of Hanson's, and a fellow who fancies himself a first-class pianist.

FIFTH FORM.
MODERN.

DE MONTMORENCY, LAURIE.—The leader of the Form, and a fellow with very highly connected relatives. His pockets are well lined with cash, and his three chums follow closely in his style.

The three chums of De Montmorency are:

TOM EVANS, RODERICK FLOWERS, and JAMES WATERSON.

SHELL FORM.

FORM-MASTER: PERCY JASPER MOONEY, M.A.
SMYTHE, ADOLPHUS MARMADUKE.—The leader of the "exclusive" circle of "nuts" in the Shell, and the most dandified boy in the junior school. Has plenty of money, and plenty of followers in consequence. Most of them are members of his "Smart Set" circle, "The Giddy Goats," and, like him, are highly connected, and well supplied with cash.

They are as follows:

CHESNEY, ALEC;
HOWARD, AUBREY (Smythe's study-mate);
GILBEY, ROBERT;
SEATON, MURRAY;
SELWYN, JACK; **TRACY,**
ALLAN (Smythe's other study-mate); **WAUGH,**
PAUL.



Mark Carthew

FOURTH FORM.
CLASSICAL.

FORM-MASTER: RICHARD DALTON, M.A.

SILVER, JAMES.—The central figure of all the stories of Rookwood in the "Boys' Friend." The leader of the Fistical Four, the junior captain of both footer and cricket teams. Luckily born with an everlasting supply of ideas and schemes for japes, and the improvement of things in general. Always firm, and often extremely obstinate. He has plenty of the right sort of "push," and ought to get on very well in the world. Called by many—himself in particular—"Uncle James."

CONROY, KIT.—The cornstalk from Australia, and a decent fellow all through.

DICKINSON, SIDNEY.—Came to Rookwood with a great idea of being a pirate or a wild and woolly Redskin. Brought with him huge quantities of lurid American literature, and his only aim in life seemed to be to read it. Gave it up, to some extent, as the result of a jape organised by Jimmy Silver.

ERROLL, KIT.—A quiet fellow, self-sacrificing to a degree, and the study-mate and pal of Valentine Mornington.

EVANS, PETER.—Minor of Tom Evans in the Modern Fifth.

GOWER, CUTHBERT.—One of the "nuts" in the Fourth, rather a shady character.

GRACE, EDWIN.—(Teddy). Originally nicknamed "Putty," because he appeared soft, but has since proved he is otherwise. An irrepressible joker, great



Arthur Edward
Lovell

at devising schemes, and hardy in carrying them out.

HIGGS, ALFRED.—Was once the bully of the Fourth. Dropped being so after getting repeatedly put in his place.

HOOKER, ERNEST.—A decent chap, with a ready wit. Appeared in many of the earlier yarns of Rookwood.

JONES, SIDNEY HERBERT.—A happy-go-lucky fellow.



Newcome passes—

LATTREY, MARK.—The cad of the Form. Made one great attempt to reform, but has since slipped back again. Is the son of an unscrupulous Private Inquiry Agent.

LOVELL, ARTHUR EDWARD.—Jimmy Silver's best chum, and the second member of the Fistical Four. Inclined to be a trifle pig-headed and to buck against orders, but is sound and decent in every respect. Lives in the famous end study.

MORNINGTON, VALENTINE.—Came to Rookwood wild and reckless, a bit of a rake, and always a dandy. Has proved over and over again that he can do the decent thing when he likes, as was witnessed when he rescued from the gutter the young ragamuffin who afterwards turned out to be his missing cousin, and the heir to the money he was spending. Will always be headstrong and defiant, but is undoubtedly a sportsman of the best type, and generally admired and liked by everybody.

MUFFIN, REGINALD.—The "egregious Tubby." Dull, dense, fat and stupid. But in all is very amusing, and often he unconsciously assists in working out a tangle or mystery which might have remained unsolved for ever but for his interference.

NEWCOME, ARTHUR.—Another member of the Fistical Four who shares the end study with Jimmy Silver. Rather quieter in temperament than the rest, but nevertheless, quite as capable.

OSWALD, RICHARD.—A decent fellow, well up in sports, who plays in the junior First XI.

PONS, CHARLES.—Better known as "Charlie." A French-Canadian junior, who can be described as being always, "cool, calm, and collected." A japer with a very deep nature, but always nice and likeable.

PEELE, CYRIL.—The biggest "blade" in the Fourth Form. Treacherous and unpopular. Can ride a motor-cycle well, but his real one redeeming quality is his ability for acting.

RABY, GEORGE.—Raby is the fourth member of the Fistical Four. A burly junior, slow to grasp things and generally rather dull. But, on the whole, George is a good fellow, and capable with his fists.

RAWSON, TOM.—A scholarship junior. When he arrived at Rookwood he was immediately marked down by Peele and Co. for a warm time. They quickly discovered, however, that he was one too many for them. A pal of Jimmy Silver's, and for that matter, of every decent fellow in the Fourth.

TOPHAM, HAROLD.—Another "nut." Not such an "out-and-outer" as Peele, but is very closely allied with him.

TOWNSEND, CECIL.—The study-mate of Topham, and one of his calibre.

VAN RYN.—Known as "Dutchy." From South Africa. A decent chap.

FOURTH FORM. MODERN.

COOK, TOMMY.—The study-mate of Tommy Dodd and a fellow always ready to back him up.

CUFFY, CLARENCE YORK.—Cuffy is greener than grass. Innocent, guileless, and capable of messing up anything entrusted to him to carry out.

DODD, THOMAS.—The great Thomas. Leader of the Modern junior section, and the organiser of all the terrific japes against the rival Classics. A real, capable leader, and a fellow who has proved himself quite equal to Jimmy Silver on more than one occasion.

DOYLE, TOMMY.—The third Tommy, and a study-mate of Dodd. Irish, and always full of fun. Talks a genuine brogue.

LACY, WALTER.—Sometimes a nut, sometimes a decent fellow, and ready for sports.

LEGGETT, ALBERT.—The biggest scamp on the Modern side. A moneylender to juniors who are hard up, and a little shark in threatening clients for interest. Has been firmly put in his place by Jimmy Silver and Co. on many occasions.



—to Jimmy Silver!

MCCARTHY, RICHARD.—A deceit fellow, and a firm backer of Tommy Dodd.

TOWLE, JAMES FREDERICK.—One of the first fellows to appear in the yarns of Rookwood in the "Boys' Friend." A staunch backer of Tommy Dodd, the study-mate of Lacy, and a good, reliable chum.

WADSLEY, ROBERT.—A Modern junior of a good all-round average ability.

THIRD FORM.

FORM-MASTER: FRANK BOHUN, M.A.

DE VERE, BERTIE.—A thorough-paced little blade. Tries in vain to persuade Algy Silver to join in his escapades.

SILVER, ALGERNON.—The wayward and troublesome cousin of Jimmy Silver of the Fourth. Headstrong and wilful to a degree, but all right when he is treated properly.

Other boys of interest in this Form are: Ernest Grant, Hamley, Gerald Hawes, Lucas, Peters,

Pipkin, Stacy, Fred Smithson, James Wegg, Bertrand Wylie, Tom Wyatt, Edward Lovell (Lovell minor, and very like Algy Silver).

SECOND FORM.

FORM-MASTER: SAMUEL WIGGINS, M.A., B.Sc.
The following come into the stories:

JONES, ARTHUR MONTGOMERY.—Jones minimus. A reckless youngster. One of the leaders of the fags.

MORNINGTON II., HERBERT.—Known better to most readers as 'Erbert. The waif whom Val Mornington befriended on the roadside. Afterwards discovered to be the lost heir to the Mornington title and fortune. Shows great affection for Mornny in the time of any trouble.

TRACEY, FRANK.—The minor of the fellow in the Shell.

Other boys of interest in this Form are:

Fisher, O'Toole, Roberts, George Snooks, Scott, and Ernest Vincent.

A CHAT ABOUT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By GEORGE BULKELEY, Captain of School.

ROOKWOOD is one of the many famous public schools in the South of England. Its history dates back a very long way, the Classical Side of the school being very ancient.

Rookwood holds rank with Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Highcliffe; and the rivalry between the four schools is of the keenest.

Of the many historic sporting tussles which have taken place, the annual cricket and football matches with Greyfriars have probably proved the most popular and exciting.

The first cricket match with Greyfriars took place nearly a hundred years ago, when clubs were used instead of bats, and when the prefects wore high hats when they took the field!

That amazing first match was won by Greyfriars by over two hundred notches (they did not call them "runs" in those days).

The following year there was no match, owing to an epidemic which had broken out at Rookwood. But a year later the Rookwooders took ample revenge, defeating their rivals from the Kentish school by a hundred and fifty notches.

Since that time, honours have been pretty even. Each school has won thirty-seven matches; and the remainder have been drawn.

Rookwood did not come into prominence as a footballing school until recent years.

There was a big controversy as to whether the school should take up the "Soccer" or the "Rugger" code, and eventually the former style of game was decided upon.

Rookwood can always be relied upon to put up a good fight on their own ground; but their form away from home is unreliable, and many defeats have been sustained at the hands (or should I say the feet?) of the rival schools.

A brief history of the school, giving the date of its inception, and so on, has already appeared in an earlier volume of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL; so I will not repeat information which is already generally known.

Rookwood has been somewhat unfortunate, in the past, in having a long sequence of Headmasters who, whilst doing everything possible to advance the scholastic welfare of the school, have sadly neglected the athletic side.

Happily, the present Head—Dr. Chisholm—has proved a keen sportsman, and the school's success at games is due in no small measure to his kindly encouragement.

In common with most of our public schools, Rookwood has had its share of rebellions, but in only one or two instances have they ended disastrously. In the majority of cases wiser counsels have prevailed, and the rebels have surrendered.

The future of Rookwood school is bright and full of promise. At no time has the school been more prosperous or popular.

The many exciting episodes in connection with school life at Rookwood are duly recorded by the Rookwood chronicler, Mr. Owen Conquest, to whose fine stories, rich in humour and abounding in incident, the success of such papers as THE BOYS' FRIEND and THE POPULAR is largely due.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Being Extracts from the ROOKWOOD SCHOOL MAGAZINE dated 20th July, 1822. Reproduced by kind permission of the Headmaster.

EXCITING SCENES AT ROOKWOOD.

"A serious fire broke out in the school box-room on the 5th of July. The alarm was given late at night by Martin Hooley, the school porter, and numerous efforts were made by masters and boys to get the flames under control. The head prefect worked the school pump, and it is estimated that over two hundred pails of water were hurled at the conflagration. At two o'clock in the morning the fire was got under control. Although no loss of life was occasioned, serious damage was done; and it is a matter for regret that we have no better system for extinguishing a fire than that of throwing buckets of water over it. We venture to predict that things will be vastly different a hundred years hence!"

THRILLING GAME OF BALL.

"A match of cricket took place at Rookwood on Saturday last, between the school and the village. Going in first, Rookwood scored many notches, the head prefect being very vigorous in the use of the club. The school obtained 305, to which the village replied strongly, Squire Donnithorne laying about him right lustily with his club. Eventually, however, he hit down his own wickets; and the rest of the villagers soon succumbed to the school bowlers, who threw the ball along the ground with swiftness and accuracy. Rookwood won a sensational game by eight notches. Squire Donnithorne and his men were afterwards entertained by the Headmaster, at whose private residence they quaffed many bowls of beaming punch."

OFFICIAL NOTICE.!

"I, SAMUEL LYCOMBE, Headmaster of Rookwood School and governor of the precincts thereof, do hereby order and command that the wearing of gaudily coloured jerkins by the boys of this institution do hereby cease. Plain jerkins only are to be worn; and the prefects are hereby enjoined to see that this my command be diligently carried out. Any boy who abuses same will be brought to the whipping-stool."

(NOTE.—Although the prefect system had not at this time been officially introduced into our public schools, the appointment of prefects had already taken place at Rookwood. This step was rendered necessary by the Great Rebellion of 1820, when the masters, who were mostly gentlemen of advanced years, found it impossible to preserve order.—Ed.)

ROOKWOOD RIDDLES

Compiled by Jimmy Silver

Why is that fearful chatterbox, Tommy Dodd, like an alarm-clock?

Because once he is "wound up" there is no stopping him!

* * *

Why would Tubby Muffin love to be in the Rookwood footer team?

Because he knows that the forwards are "well fed"

* * *

Why is Hanson of the Fifth a fellow of no worth?

Because he's such a "priceless" ass!

* * *

What is the difference between Tubby Muffin spreading butter and Mr. Manders giving somebody a licking?

No difference. They both "lay it on thick"!

* * *

Why would the school sergeant, on a hot day, be useful at a study tea-table?

Because he would be a "steaming Kettle"!

* * *

Why is Lattrey of the Fourth like a ladle?

Because he's generally "in the soup."

* * *

What is the difference between a Third-Former and Carthew of the Sixth?

One smokes herrings—the other smokes fags!

* * *

What is the difference between an expiring baronet and a conceited Modern bounder?

One views his heirs—the other airs his views.



The Mystery of the Priory!

By Owen Conquest.

Illustrated by G.W. Wakefield!

A GRAND, COMPLETE STORY OF AN AMAZING HOLIDAY ADVENTURE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER Breaking up at Rookwood!

THERE was a cheery buzz of voices and hurrying of footsteps in Rookwood School.

Rookwood was breaking up for the Christmas holidays.

Brake after brake had rolled away to the station laden with Rookwood fellows and their belongings.

But the old quadrangle was still buzzing with merry voices.

Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth Form had not departed yet. A brake, crowded with juniors, was starting, and a dozen voices from it hailed the Fistical Four as they stood on the steps of the School House.

"Room for yez, Jimmy!" sang out Flynn.

"Jump in!" said Dick Oswald. "You fellows will lose the train!"

"Come on, Jimmy!"

"Coming later!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily.

The brake rolled off.

Jimmy Silver's chums—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—looked at him inquiringly.

"Why don't we get off?" demanded

Lovell. "We don't want to go in the next brake with Smythe and his crowd."

"And we don't want to catch the next train," said Raby.

"What are you up to, Jimmy?" asked Newcome. "What the dickens are we hanging about for?"

"I've got an idea——" began Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, blow your ideas!" said Lovell. "Let's catch the train!"

"There goes Smythe!" said Raby. "Merry Christmas, Smythey! And go easy on the smokes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Adolphus Smythe of the Shell did not deign to reply to Raby's humorous remark. He walked on loftily.

"There's something on your back, Smythey!" called out Newcome.

Adolphus spun round.

"Is there?" he exclaimed anxiously.

"Yes, rather!"

"Brush it off, there's a good chap!"

Adolphus was very concerned about his clothes.

"I don't think I could," said Newcome doubtfully. "You'd better keep it there, Smythey."

"By gad!" Adolphus nearly gave himself a crick in the neck by trying to look over his shoulder. "What is it there?"

"Only your overcoat," said Newcome sweetly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smythe gave the playful Fourth-Former an expressive look, and walked on with a sniff.

The Fistical Four chuckled.

"Let's get off," urged Lovell. "Those bounders will crowd the train from end to end, Jimmy."

"I tell you I've got an idea," said Jimmy Silver. "Look here, it isn't a long run to my home, and we shall be in pretty early, anyway. Suppose we walk to Latcham?"

"What the merry thunder do you want to walk to Latcham for?" exclaimed Lovell, in astonishment. "It's miles!"

"Well, don't be a slacker, you know. We can easily get a train at Latcham a bit later. The bags have gone on."

"But what do you want to get a train at Latcham for, when we can get the train here at Coombe?" bellowed Lovell.

"Lend me your ears, my son. My uncle's there."

"Bless your uncle!"

"You remember my Uncle John?"

"Yes; shocking bounder," said Lovell.

"Well, he was a bit of a bounder," agreed Jimmy; "but he turned over a new leaf when he went into the Army."

"Has he become a field-marshal yet?" grinned Raby.

"No; he's still Private Silver. Now, why shouldn't we walk over to Latcham, drop in at the barracks and see him?" said Jimmy.

"We can catch a later train. I want to ask him to come down to the Priory for Christmas if he can get off. He's quite made it up with my pater since he went into the Army, and he ought to come if he can get leave. What do you say?"

"Oh, I don't mind!" yawned Lovell. "I can see that you mean to walk to Latcham, anyway."

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"Well, a walk won't hurt you," he said. "We can shy some snowballs at Tommy Dodd & Co., too, in the lane."

"Good!"

The Fistical Four went in for their coats.

They came out, and started for the gates in a cheery mood. A fresh brake was departing, laden with juniors belonging to the Modern side at Rookwood. The four Classics followed it out of the gates.

"Good-bye, you Classical duffers!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "Make up your minds to be licked next term!"

"Make up your minds to be licked now!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

The grinning Classics stooped by the roadside for snowballs. Snow was piled up against the hedges.

"Look out!" exclaimed Tommy Cook.

"Don't you shy at us, you Classical beasts!" roared Doyle.

"Buck up, driver!"

Tommy Dodd shook his fist at the Classical juniors.

There was no ammunition in the brake, and the Moderns had to receive the fire without returning it.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were good shots.

Four snowballs whizzed through the air at the same moment.

Tommy Dodd, and Cook, and Doyle, and Towle received them, and there was a roar of wrath as the missiles smote them and broke.

"Yaroo!"

"Grooch!"

"Oh, you rotters!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. clutched up more snow; and pursued the brake along the road. A volley whizzed into the vehicle from behind, smashing among the furious Moderns.

"Stop the blessed brake!" shouted Tommy Dodd, as a snowball burst under his chin. "We'll get down and scalp them!"

The brake halted.

Tommy Dodd & Co. poured down into the road, breathing wrath and vengeance.

"Go for 'em!" roared Tommy.

"This is where we slide!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four dodged through the hedge as the Moderns rushed down upon them. They trotted away across the snowy field.

"After them!" roared Doyle.

"Fathead! The brake's waiting!" growled

Tommy Dodd, shaking his fist after the Classics. "Come on!"

Jimmy Silver waved his hand across the field at the baffled Moderns. A general shaking of fists replied, and Tommy Dodd & Co. scrambled back into the brake and rolled on to Coombe.

Much cheered by that victory over the Modern juniors, the Fistical Four tramped away across the fields, heading for the barracks at Latcham.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

A Shock for Jimmy Silver!

JIMMY SILVER whistled cheerily as he tramped on over the powdery snow on the moor. He was in great spirits that day. Lovell and Raby and Newcome, his best chums, were going home with him for the vacation, and the chums of Rookwood were looking forward to a good time.

Later in the vac. there were to be visitors—Harry Wharton and his friends from Greyfriars and Tom Merry & Co. from St. Jim's—and the Rookwooders looked forward to some footer when the numerous guests were assembled at the Priory. D'Arcy of St. Jim's, too, was to bring his Cousin Ethel; and Jimmy's Cousin Phyllis would be there.

The Priory, Mr. Silver's residence, was an interesting place, too; and Jimmy's chums looked forward to exploring it. It was an

ancient monastic establishment, turned into a country residence, with ancient oak-panelled rooms, echoing corridors, secret passages, and, as Jimmy solemnly assured his chums, a Christmas ghost. The Co. took the ghost with a grain of salt—a very large grain.

"What about that giddy ghost you were telling us of, Jimmy?" said Lovell, as the juniors tramped on cheerily. "What is it like?"

Jimmy Silver's merry face became serious at once.

"Like a spook, of course," he said. "What would you expect a ghost to be like?"

"Fathead! I mean, whose ghost is it?"

"The prior's of course! The house used to be a priory, but it was sold up hundreds of years ago. My grand father bought it before I was born. I was

brought up there, so I ought to know about the ghost," said Jimmy. "My Uncle John went hunting it one Christmas, when I was a kid——"

"The chap who's Private Silver now?"

"Yes."

"When you were a kid!" said Raby sarcastically. "What are you now?"

"Bow-wow!"

"Did you see the ghost?" asked Newcome.

"Well, we didn't exactly see it," admitted



"There's something on your back, Smythey!" called out Newcome.

"Is there?" exclaimed Smythe, anxiously. "Brush it off, there's a good chap." (See page 228)

Jimmy Silver. "But it could be heard quite plainly."

"Groaned, of course, and dragged chains?" grinned Lovell.

"Groaned!" said Jimmy. "Uncle John got after it, and he found there was a secret passage, and he explored it. He said the groan was made by the wind getting into the passage. That would account for the ghost only walking at Christmas when the weather's rough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But lots of people have seen it, only you can't exactly get hold of anybody who has. People know of people who've seen it, you know. The old prior walks about at Christmas bearing a candle in his hand—a grim, dark figure, awfully terrifying!"

"Well, we'll have a look for it," said Lovell. "We'll explore the secret passages, anyway. Is the place full of 'em?"

"There are two," said Jimmy. "I shouldn't wonder if there are more that have never been found. They used to make 'em at the time the priory was built. They always needed some dodge for escaping in bad times. I can't exactly promise you there'll be a ghost——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But the secret passages are there, right enough."

"We'll explore them," said Lovell, "and I'll undertake to eat all the ghosts we find there."

"Hallo, there's the barracks!" exclaimed Newcome.

Latham barracks was in sight.

The Fistical Four, quite fresh after their long walk, came up to the barracks cheerily, and Jimmy spoke to the sentry at the gate.

The man in khaki looked at him curiously.

"I've got a relation here," said Jimmy. "Would it be possible for me to see him?"

"That depends," said the sentry good-naturedly. "Who is it?"

"Private Silver, of the Hallamshire Regiment."

The sentry gave a start and eyed Jimmy keenly.

"You're a relation of Private Silver?" he asked.

"Yes; his nephew."

"And you want to see him?"

"Yes; if it's allowed."

"Oh!" said the man in khaki.

He seemed to reflect for a moment or two.

"You know him?" asked Jimmy.

"Oh, yes, I know him!" The man grinned.

"Wait here a few minutes and I'll speak to my officer."

The sentry called to another soldier, who took his place at the gate, and disappeared into the barracks.

The juniors looked at one another.

They could not help seeing that the man's manner was very peculiar, and that he had been surprised and startled when Private Silver was asked for.

"Something's up!" murmured Lovell.

"I say, Jimmy, your uncle hasn't been getting into trouble, has he?"

Jimmy's brow clouded.

"Not that I know of," he said.

"He was a bit of a scorcher before he went into the Army."

"That's all over," said Jimmy quietly.

"He's been a good soldier. There's nothing against him now. But—but that does look queer."

The juniors waited, Jimmy in a somewhat uneasy mood.

There had been a good deal against John Silver in his early days. He had been a scapegrace and a rolling stone, and he had certainly gathered no moss. He had tired out the patience of his brother, Jimmy's father, and Mr. Silver had washed his hands of him. But the scapegrace of the family had redeemed himself by going into the Army. From the hour he donned the King's uniform there had been no whisper against him.

Jimmy had believed that the shadowy past was buried for ever, that Private Silver's course was all plain sailing now.

Had something transpired, after all? Had the scapegrace's old recklessness revived and caused him fresh trouble?

Jimmy's brow was clouded.

The juniors waited a good quarter of an hour, and then a young man in a lieutenant's uniform came out. He gave the juniors a sharp look.

"Which of you was askin' for Private Silver?" he rapped out.

"I was!" said Jimmy.

"Do you know where he is?"

Jimmy stared.

"Isn't he here?" he exclaimed. "I understood that he was stationed here?"

The officer looked grim.

"He isn't here," he said curtly. "If you know anything about the man, it's your duty to tell me!"

"I don't know anything about him except that I supposed him to be here," said Jimmy, in dismay. "Is anything wrong?"

"You did not know that he had deserted?"

Jimmy staggered back.

"Deserted?" he panted.

"He committed a theft, and deserted after being placed under arrest," said the officer, not unkindly. "He has been gone two days. I am sorry, my lad!"

He turned back.

Jimmy Silver stood rooted to the ground, his face white. Lovell & Co. did not speak. They felt for their chum at that moment more deeply than words could have told.

Jimmy found his voice at last.

"A thief and a deserter!" he muttered huskily. "My uncle!"

"Poor old Jimmy!" said Lovell softly. "Come on, old son. Don't think about it! He's broken out again! It's not your fault!"

Jimmy Silver groaned.

He turned away without another word, his face very white. The chums of Rookwood did not speak as they walked into Latcham and made their way to the railway station.

Jimmy Silver had received a shock it was not easy to recover from.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Cousin Phyllis!

JIMMY SILVER sat silent, in a corner seat, as the train ran out of Latcham.

Lovell & Co. did not speak.

They gave their study-leader time to recover from the shock he had received. Jimmy Silver looked white and troubled.

He had started from Rookwood School in the highest of spirits, looking forward to a happy vacation at home in company with his chums.

The cheery horizon had been clouded now.

Jimmy had taken it for granted that his uncle, scapegrace as he was, had reformed. He had had good rea-

son for thinking so. He remembered how Private Silver had dragged him from the river on one occasion, and probably saved his life. Surely the man who had risked life itself for him deserved to be trusted?

And he had broken out again. The old recklessness of the scapegrace had gained the upper hand. Theft and desertion! The bitter shame of it was a heavy blow to Jimmy Silver.

"Don't think about it, Jimmy," said



"Which of you was askin' for Private Silver?" rapped out the young lieutenant.

"I was!" said Jimmy.

"You did not know that he had deserted?"

"Deserted!" panted the junior, staggering back. (See this page)

Lovell, at last. "It can't be helped, you know. The poor brute may have got at the drink again, you know."

"He gave that up when he went into the Army," said Jimmy.

"It may have been too strong for him. Besides," added Lovell, as a new thought struck him, "there may be some mistake. He mayn't have done it!"

Jimmy brightened a little.

He had not thought of that.

"Mistakes do happen," remarked Raby, willing to give what comfort he could. "Your uncle may be innocent, Jimmy."

"It's possible," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "But—but, even if he's innocent of the theft, there's no doubt about the desertion. He's gone."

"Bunked to get out of it, when he was suspected," said Newcome. "If he was innocent, Jimmy, he couldn't be expected to stay to be punished."

Jimmy shook his head.

"It's rotten to desert!" he said.

The train rushed on, and Jimmy's face gradually cleared. He realised that it was "up" to him to look a little more cheerful, as he was taking his chums home for the holiday. His family troubles could not be allowed to darken the Christmas vacation for his friends.

But it was not easy to turn his thoughts from the wretched fugitive.

Where was John Silver now?

A fleeing fugitive, hunted for far and wide, that was certain. There might have been a mistake in the accusation against him—Jimmy hoped so, at least—but he was a deserter; he was guilty of a military crime. He would be searched for, hunted for—there was no rest for him. Where was he? Hiding in some obscure corner—doubtless in want—perhaps starving.

What resources had he? Jimmy wondered whether he would go home, to Mr. Silver's house, to seek help.

Jimmy's father was not likely to shelter a deserter. If John Silver sought help there, he would seek in vain.

His brother stood by him for many years, but had washed his hands of him at last. He

had given him one more chance when he entered the Army. Now that he had broken out again, he had nothing but cold condemnation to expect from Mr. Silver.

Where was he—where would he be that Christmastide?

Jimmy strove to dismiss the matter from his mind at last, and chatted with his chums about the coming holiday, and the footer match that was to be fixed up with the St. Jim's and Greyfriars' fellows when they came.

The train stopped at Lexham at last, and the four juniors of Rookwood alighted.

"Phyllis, by Jove!" exclaimed Jimmy, as a bright-faced, bright-eyed girl came across the platform towards them, smiling.

"I came to meet you, Jimmy," said Cousin Phyllis. "You missed your train, so I waited for the next, you careless boy."

"Awfully sorry, Phyllis," said Jimmy, colouring. "I didn't know. You know these chaps, Phyllis?"

"Yes. I remember tea in the study at Rookwood," said Phyllis, laughing, as she shook hands with the Co. "The trap is outside, and I'm going to drive you home."

Jimmy wondered whether Phyllis had heard of Uncle John's disaster. He did not mention the visit to Latcham barracks. If Phyllis did not know what had happened to her uncle, there was no need to cloud her happiness by telling her.

The four juniors clambered into the trap, and Phyllis took the reins.

"Hallo, you've been shopping in Lexham," remarked Jimmy, as he glanced at a little pile of parcels in the trap.

Phyllis looked round quickly.

"Yes, I had to get some things, Jimmy," she said. "Don't sit on my parcels, there's a good boy."

"By Jove, are you standing somebody a feed, Miss Phyllis?" grinned Raby, looking at the parcels.

Phyllis coloured.

She did not reply to the question, however, but gave all her attention to the horse. It was a pleasant drive through the country lanes, powdered with snow, to Jimmy Silver's home.

Lovell & Co. looked about them with interest as the Priory came in sight.

The ancient building had been converted into a modern country house, but it still bore its old name.

The grey old walls, that had withstood the storms of six or seven centuries, rose amid the trees, leafless now and white with snow. The trap followed a drive between rows of ancient oaks and beeches, under the branches of which the old monks had walked in days that were long past. On the east side of the rambling buildings a grey old tower rose against the sky.

"What a jolly old place!" said Newcome. "Looks as if there might be a cheery Christmas ghost there, by Jove!"

"There is a ghost!" said Phyllis, laughing. "Nobody has seen it, but most of the country people believe in it."

"Have you heard him groaning?" asked Lovell. "Jimmy says he groans."

"Ha, ha!"

"I think it is the wind in the passages that groans," said Phyllis, with a smile. "On windy nights it is quite distinct."

"Good!" said Lovell.

"Jimmy's going to show us the secret passages, and we're going to hunt the ghost."

The girl turned.

"You're going to what?" she exclaimed.

"Hunt the ghost," said Lovell, with a laugh.

"It will be fun."

"But—but—"

Lovell looked at the girl's startled face curiously.

"You don't believe in ghosts, surely, Miss Phyllis?" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"Oh, no!" said Phyllis hastily.

"That's a ripping old tower," said Raby. "Something like our old tower at Rookwood. Good view from the top, I should think."

"Nobody ever goes there," said Phyllis. "It's not quite safe. That part of the house isn't inhabited."

"Oh, we'll go there," said Lovell. "We may find the ghost there. Just the place for him. Hallo, there's somebody there now!"

"Surely not!" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, rather! Look!"

Lovell pointed to the

tower.

In the distance a figure could be seen for a moment on the summit of the tower. It disappeared from sight the next moment.

"Somebody exploring the place," said Jimmy Silver. "By Jove, you've dropped your whip, Phyllis. I'll get it for you!"

Jimmy jumped down from the trap and fielded the whip. Phyllis thanked him with a smile.

"Here we are," said Jimmy Silver.

And the Fistical Four entered the Priory with Phyllis.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Little too Hasty!

MR. SILVER greeted his son's guests cordially.

Jimmy's father had met Jimmy's chums at

Rookwood, and learned to like them. Lovell & Co. felt quite at home with the kind old

gentleman. Jimmy's mater was equally cordial to the three. Jimmy marched them off to



"It sounds hollow," said Lovell, rapping on the panelled wall. Rap! Rap! And then he jumped back, startled. "Great Scott! I—I rapped, and there was a rap back!" (See opposite page)

their quarters. Two rooms adjoining Jimmy's own had been prepared for the Rookwood juniors, and, as the rooms communicated, the Fistical Four were together as they had been in the Fourth-Form dormitory at Rookwood.

"Jolly comfy quarters!" said Lovell approvingly. "You're a lucky dog, Jimmy Silver." He glanced round the panelled walls. "Jolly old place, this—jolly old. Any of the secret passages here?"

Jimmy laughed.

"Not in these rooms, that I know of. There's a secret door in the library. I'll show it to you, presently."

"Might be one here, all the same," said Lovell, tapping the wall with his knuckles. "I shouldn't wonder if there's lots you haven't found out. These old places are full of 'em. How jolly for a mysterious panel to open, and a merry old phantom to come groaning in in the middle of the night!"

"Yow!" said Raby. "Don't be so creepy, you ass!"

"It sounds hollow," said Lovell, rapping on the hard wall.

Rap! Rap!

Lovell jumped back, startled.

"Great Scott! Did you hear that?"

"Eh? What?" asked Jimmy, looking round.

Lovell was staring blankly at the oaken panel he had rapped.

"I—I rapped it!" he gasped. "And—and there was a rap back!"

"What?"

"An answering rap on the other side," gasped Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Lovell, warmly, as his chums burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha! It was the echo, you duffer!"

"Rats! I tell you——"

"Nerves, old chap!" said Raby, chuckling. "Don't think about the ghost, or you'll be hearing spirit-rapping!"

"You silly ass!"

"It must have been the echo," said Jimmy Silver. "Rap again!"

Lovell rapped hard on the panel with his knuckles. But there was no sound in response.

"Well, I'm sure I heard a rap last time," he said, regarding the oaken wall with a somewhat uneasy look.

"Imagination, old chap," said Newcome. "Never mind spirit-rapping now. Mrs. Silver said tea would be ready when we came down. Get a move on."

Lovell turned from the panel, evidently still a little uneasy in his mind.

"I suppose it was imagination," he said at last. "But—but it sounded just like a rap on the other side of the wall. What's on the other side, Jimmy?"

"Nothing," said Jimmy Silver. "That wall's about six or eight feet thick. It's an outer wall. There's a stone platform on the other side, leading to the old tower, that's all. You couldn't hear a rap through that thickness."

Jimmy Silver left his chums removing the stains of travel, and hurried downstairs. He was anxious to see his father and ask him if he had news of Private Silver.

He found the old gentleman in the library, a handsome, oak-panelled apartment looking out over the park.

There was a wrinkle in Mr. Silver's brow, but he smiled as he saw his son.

"Father," said Jimmy, coming to the point at once, "have you heard anything about Uncle John?"

Mr. Silver gave a start.

"So you have heard, Jimmy? Has he written to you?"

"No, dad. I called at Latcham Barracks to-day on the way home, to see him, and—and they told me——"

"I did not intend to tell you, Jimmy," said his father gravely. "Your uncle has falsified his promises, and has brought disgrace again upon his name—and, worse than that, upon the uniform he wore. He is a fugitive now."

"Has—has he been here?"

"Here? He would not be likely to come here, Jimmy. He would not be foolish enough to expect me to shelter a deserter."

"Then you don't know what's become of him, dad?"

Mr. Silver shook his head.

"I know nothing of him, Jimmy. The

police called here yesterday to inquire if I knew anything of him, as he was wanted on the double charge of theft and desertion. That was the first news I received. I knew nothing of him, and could tell them nothing."

"But—but—" Jimmy faltered, "isn't it possible, dad, that—that there's some mistake? I'm sure uncle meant to go straight."

"I think he did, Jimmy," said Mr. Silver quietly. "He kept straight for a long time. But I suppose the orderly life was too much for him. He was always wild and reckless. I fear that there is no mistake in the matter."

"Has he confessed, father?"

"No. I learned that when he was arrested he protested his innocence."

"Then—then——"

"But the matter was investigated, Jimmy. I learned that there had been a series of thefts in the barracks, and a watch was kept. The thief was not seen, but a watch stolen from an officer was found in John Silver's greatcoat pocket. A good deal of money had been taken also, but that was not found. It is supposed to have been sent away, and doubtless he is living upon it now. At all events, he didn't stay to face his court-martial, but deserted."

"He would have been found guilty, then, you think?"

"Undoubtedly. He had taken a hundred pounds in banknotes, as well as other things. The thefts had been going on for some time, and the evidence seems clear enough."

"He—he may have cleared because he thought he hadn't a chance——"

"If you find it in your heart to believe in your uncle still, my boy, do so by all means," said Mr. Silver, with a slight smile.

"But you don't believe in him, dad?"

"I cannot, Jimmy."

"Does Phyllis know?" asked Jimmy, after a pause.

"No. I thought it best not to trouble her with the knowledge. The less said about such a disgraceful affair the better. You will not tell her?"

"Not a word," said Jimmy. "My chums know; but I'll give them the tip not to speak about it to Phyllis."

"That is all right. We'll keep quiet."

Lovell looked in.

"Come on, Jimmy; tea's ready."

Jimmy followed his chum. The Rookwood juniors had expected to see the bright face of Cousin Phyllis at the tea-table; but Jimmy's fair cousin was not there. After tea, the Rookwooders were keen to begin the exploration of the secret passage, which appealed to their imaginations very much.

"You will not find the ghost in the daytime," said Mrs. Silver, with a smile, when she heard the juniors' intention.

"Might find his tracks," said

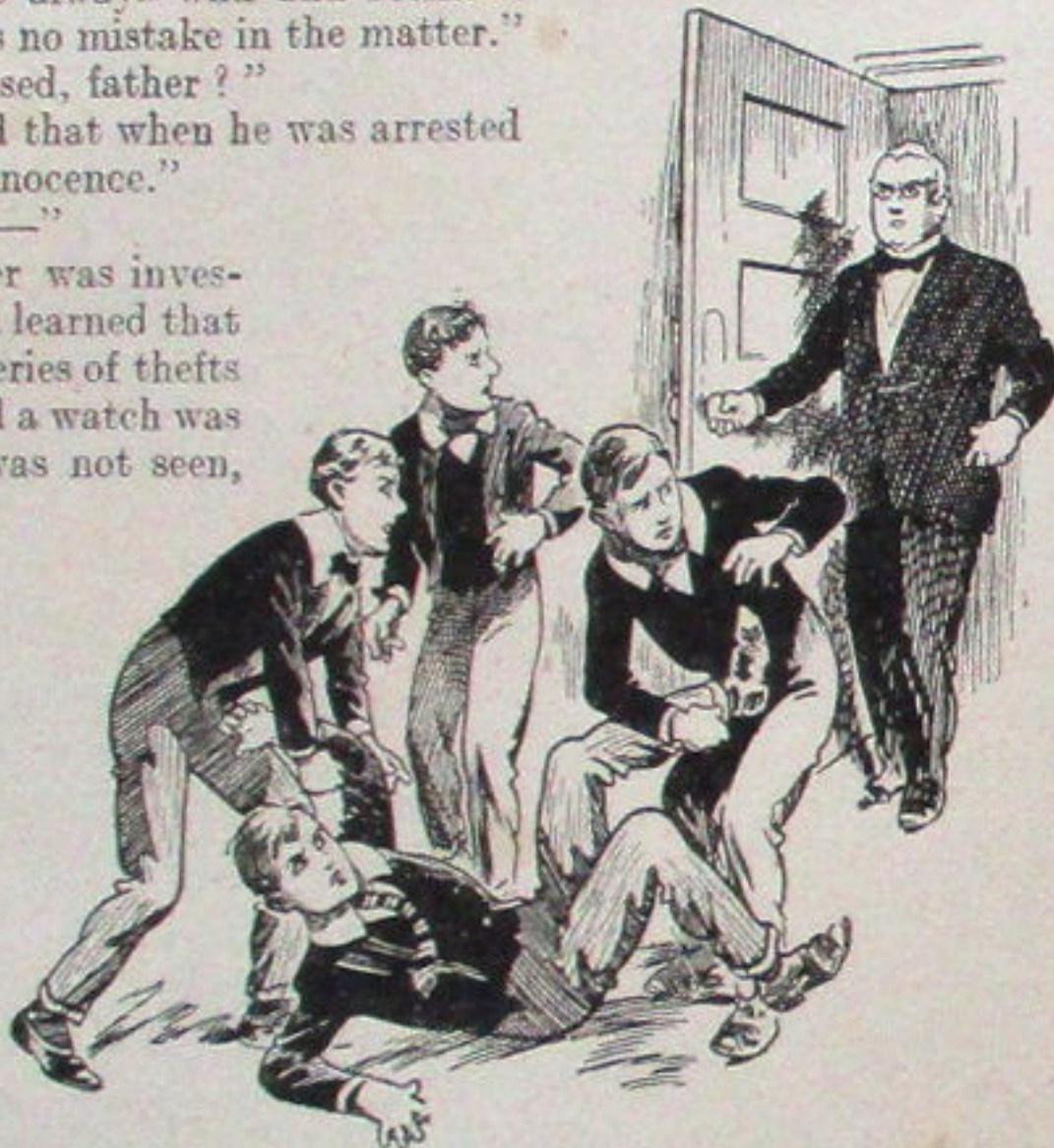
Lovell, laughing. "We're boy scouts, you know."

Mrs. Silver laughed, and Jimmy led his chums away to the library. Mr. Silver had gone out, and the Fistical Four had the room to themselves.

"Now, where's the giddy door?" said Lovell.

"Let's see if we can find it," said Raby. "I'll bet you I'll spot it."

"Try!" said Jimmy, with a grin.



"Bump him!" said Lovell.

Bump! "Yoooop! You silly chumps!"

"My dear boys," said a mild voice, as Mr. Silver entered the room. "Is that a new game?" (See page 238)

The three juniors started a search. They examined and tapped upon the panelled walls, and scanned the bookcases with which half the wall-space was covered. But after a quarter of an hour's search they gave it up.

"Show it to us, you grinning ass, Jimmy," grunted Lovell.

"Here you are," said Jimmy.

He stepped to a panel in the centre of the wall, and felt over it.

"Does that move?" asked Lovell.

"Yes."

"I've tried all over it."

"You have to press the spring," explained Jimmy. "Here you are. It's hidden in the cornice here. See?"

"I see. Go ahead!"

Jimmy pressed the hidden spring.

The panel did not move.

"Well?" said three voices together.

Jimmy looked astonished.

"My hat! It's got jammed somehow. It won't open!"

"Did it ever open?" said Lovell suspiciously. "Have you been pulling our leg, you funny ass?"

"Fathead!" growled Jimmy. "I tell you it opens as easy as anything."

"It doesn't seem to."

"I tell you I've been through it, lots of times," howled Jimmy, glaring at the three doubting Thomases. "There's a passage in the thickness of the wall, leading down to the vaults, and another branching off leading to the old tower. I went through them with my uncle when I was a kid, and I looked into them last vac, too. The door opened all right then."

"Well, open it," grinned Newcome.

Jimmy jammed on the spring.

He felt a slight movement under his finger, but that was all.

"The panel ought to spring open," he said. "It always did! It's jolly queer. But—but it won't open now."

"Keep it up," grinned Lovell. "You've been pulling our legs!"

"You silly ass!"

Lovell took out his watch.

"We'll give you one minute to open the weird panel," he remarked. "I'll time you.

If it isn't open in one minute we give you a bumping."

"Look here——"

"Ten seconds!" said Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it does open!" roared Jimmy.

"It's opened lots of times."

"Twenty seconds!"

"Better get on with opening it," chortled Raby. "You're jolly well going to be bumped if it doesn't open, Jimmy. You can't be allowed to play these little jokes on your old pals."

"You frabjous ass!"

"Are you always as polite as that to visitors?" chuckled Newcome.

"Fifty seconds!" said Lovell grimly.

Jimmy pressed desperately on the spring. But the panel in the open wall remained immovable.

Lovell snapped his watch shut

"The minute's up!"

"Look here——"

Lovell slid his watch back into his pocket, and the three juniors advanced on the captain of the Rookwood Fourth.

"Now, look here, you asses!" said Jimmy, leaving the troublesome panel, and facing round. "I tell you——"

"Bump him!"

"I say! Yaroooh! Leggo!" roared Jimmy Silver.

But his guests did not let go. They collared their host, and he was swept off the floor.

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow! You silly chumps!"

Bump!

"My dear boys!" said a mild voice.

The juniors spun round, reddening, and Jimmy Silver sat on the floor and gasped. Mr. Silver had entered the library.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

"Nothing Doing!"

"AHEM!" stuttered Lovell.

"H'm!" murmured Raby.

"Oh!" ejaculated Newcome.

Jimmy Silver gasped. He could not find words just then.

Mr. Silver, to the relief of the three, did not look angry. But he looked very much surprised, and regarded the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood curiously.

"Is that a new game?" he asked.

"Ahem!"

"The silly duffers!" gasped Jimmy Silver, finding his voice at last.

"I hope you have not been quarrelling already," said Mr. Silver, raising his eyebrows a little.

Lovell & Co. turned crimson at the suggestion.

"Oh, no!" ejaculated Lovell. "Only—only—"

"Exactly," said Raby. "Only—ahem—"

"Only playing the silly ox, dad," said Jimmy Silver, scrambling to his feet. "I was going to show them the secret panel, and—"

"Jimmy was spoofing his old pals, sir," explained Newcome. "So we just bumped him for his own good!"

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy. "I

wasn't spoofing. The panel does open!"

"Oh, you were showing them the secret panel?" said Mr. Silver, with a smile.

"Yes; and it wouldn't open, and the silly duffers thought I was spoofing them," growled Jimmy.

Lovell stared.

"Is there really a secret panel, then?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Mr. Silver. "You have been a little hasty."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"We take back that bumping, Jimmy," said Newcome.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you open it, dad?" asked Jimmy.

"The blessed thing won't open for some reason!"

"That is very odd," replied his father. "It usually opens quite easily."

Mr. Silver approached the panel, and the juniors looked on curiously. The old gentleman touched the spring, but the panel did not move.

Jimmy's father looked perplexed.

"It is extraordinary!" he said. "It certainly does not open. It has not been opened for a long time, and perhaps the springs have jammed somehow. Yet it has certainly

been in working order for a very long time."

He pressed the spring again, but it was useless. The secret panel remained immovable.

"Nothing doing," remarked Raby.

"No go," said Lovell.

"The ghost may be there holding it," grinned Newcome.

Mr. Silver laughed.

"It certainly will not open," he said.



An irreverent youth of Wayland had hurled a snowball which sent Arthur Augustus's gleaming topper flying. Arthur Augustus glared round in search of the delinquent. (See page 240)

"It must have become jammed somehow. I am sorry for your disappointment, if you wished to explore the secret passage."

"Isn't there another entrance, sir?" asked Lovell.

"It is quite possible that one exists, or, indeed, probable, but it has never been found," said Mr. Silver.

"It would be easier to find from the other side," remarked Raby. "Might be easy to find from the secret passage."

"Only we can't get into that passage without finding it first, fathead!" said Lovell. "Now we sha'n't be able to track down the ghost."

The juniors left the library, considerably disappointed.

It was really exasperating that the secret spring, which had worked without fail for centuries, should have jammed at this special time when they were keen to explore the secret recesses of the priory.

"What a rotten sell!" growled Lovell. "It's just as if the ghost knew we were after him, and meant to disappoint us. Rotten!"

Cousin Phyllis met them in the hall.

Her bright eyes scanned the four frowning faces curiously.

"Is anything wrong, Jimmy?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing much!" said Jimmy Silver. "The blessed panel won't open for some reason, and I was going to show these chaps the secret passages."

"It will not open?"

"No. Jammed somehow, I suppose."

"Then you will have to give up the exploration?"

"No jolly fear!" said Lovell emphatically.

"We'll jolly well find another way of getting in! There must be other ways. I say, Jimmy, I suppose there isn't anybody playing a little game on us, is there?"

Phyllis started.

"Why should you think so?" she exclaimed.

"Well, if some practical joker was having a game with us that would explain," said Lovell. "Jolly queer the thing should get jammed now, after working for hundreds of years without a hitch. And there's that rapping I heard in Jimmy's room!"

"Imagination, fathead!" said Raby.

"What was that?" asked Cousin Phyllis quickly.

Lovell explained, and the girl listened with intent interest.

"I dare say the secret passage runs behind that wall," concluded Lovell. "Is there a practical joker in the house, Jimmy?"

"Well, the pater and mater wouldn't be playing practical jokes," said Jimmy, laughing.

"I don't mean them, fathead!"

"Or Phyllis," chuckled Jimmy.

Phyllis coloured.

"Of course not, ass!" said Lovell. "Don't be a funny duffer!"

"Well, there isn't anybody else, excepting the servants. And I don't suppose they've got much time for practical joking in secret passages."

"What about the johnny we saw on the tower when we came in?" said Lovell.

"Who was he?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Jimmy. "Somebody looking over the tower, I suppose. It wasn't the pater."

"Can you get into the tower from outside?"

"Oh, yes! It's partly in ruins."

"Some stranger, then, perhaps," said Lovell. "Like his cheek, if it was. But look here, Jimmy, you said that secret passage led to the tower."

"Yes."

"Then there's a way of getting out into the tower from it?"

"Of course!"

"Well, where you can get out, you can get in," said Lovell. "Fathead not to think of that before. Let's go and try."

"Good egg!" said Jimmy. "You coming, Phyllis?"

The girl nodded, and she accompanied the juniors across the gardens to the doorway of the old tower. The door had long gone, and the stone steps within were in a somewhat shaky condition.

"You have to be jolly careful here," said Jimmy. "Hardly safe for you, Phyllis."

"I will wait," said the girl. "Tell me if you discover anything."

"Yes, rather!"

Jimmy Silver led the way up the spiral stone stairs, the juniors following him, treading very cautiously. Jimmy stopped at last in a little room with loophole windows.

"Here you are!" he said.

"Well, where's the place?" asked Lovell, looking round. "I don't see it."

Jimmy placed his hand upon one of the large blocks of stone that formed the wall.

"That stone turns on its centre," he explained. "There's a pivot in it. I suppose it opens from outside. I've never tried."

He pressed on the stone.

But it did not move.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome added their efforts. But the stone was as immovable as the thick wall round it.

The juniors gave it up at last in disgust.

"Rotten sell!" growled Lovell. "I'm fed up! Blessed if I think much of your giddy secret passages and things, Jimmy Silver!"

Jimmy laughed, and they descended again. Phyllis met them with an inquiring look.

"N.G.," said Lovell. "The blessed thing won't open!"

"The river's frozen hard," said Phyllis. "Do you care for skating?"

"What-ho! We've brought our skates," said Lovell eagerly.

In a few minutes the Fistical Four were skating on the smooth ice with Miss Phyllis, and they forgot all about their disappointment.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Tom Merry and Co. Arrive!

"BUCK up, Gussy!"

"Wats!"

"Look here——"

"Wubbish!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's spoke emphatically.

Arthur Augustus was not usually emphatic.

But the present occasion was an occasion that required emphasis. For once, Arthur Augustus's manners had lost the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Six juniors of St. Jim's were howling to Arthur Augustus to hurry up, in the old High Street of Wayland town. St. Jim's had broken up that day, and seven juniors were

going to Jimmy Silver's place instead of going home. They were D'Arcy, Blake, Herries and Digby, of the Fourth, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell.

And Monty Lowther had suggested stopping at Wayland to see the pictures on the cinema—a suggestion his chums had agreed to, as there was lots of time to catch the second train for Lexham. And they had stayed rather longer than they had intended seeing the pictures, and there was just time for a run to the station when they came out. And an irreverent youth of Wayland had hurled a snowball which sent Arthur Augustus's gleaming topper flying.

Hence the trouble.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy fielded his topper, jammed his celebrated eyeglass into his eye, and glared round in search of the delinquent.

In reply to the urgings of his comrades, Arthur Augustus answered:

"Look at my toppah!"

"Blow your topper!" roared Jack Blake. "The train goes in four minutes!"

"Come on, Gussy!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! There he is!"

The youth who had hurled the snowball was grinning from a corner. Arthur Augustus caught sight of him, and rushed towards him, his muddy topper in one hand, and the other fist clenched hard.

"Come back!" roared Tom Merry.

"Gussy!" shrieked Manners. "The train——"

"The train!" bellowed Herries.

"The train!" bawled Digby.

"The train!" shrieked Blake.

The swell of St. Jim's did not heed. He was rushing on the grinning snowballer for vengeance. The chums of St. Jim's rushed after him to haul him back. And the grinning youth ceased grinning and took to flight as the whole party came tearing towards him.

Arthur Augustus sped on his track, and Tom Merry & Co. sped on Arthur Augustus's track, and they went down Wayland High Street as if they were on the cinder-path.

The cheery youth who was the cause of all the trouble vanished round a corner, and Arthur Augustus stopped at the corner pant-

CUTTING A FINE FIGURE!



To face page 240]

BILLY BUNTER DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF ON THE ICE!

ing. His chums overtook him, panting, too. The chase had only lasted five minutes. But they were now a quarter of a mile from the station, and it was a minute past the time for the express to leave.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The young wascal seems to have disappeared, deah boys. I was goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'."

"You frabjous ass!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"You burbling cuckoo——"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"We've lost the train!" roared Herries.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that. Look at my toppah!"

"I've a jolly good mind to jump on your topper," howled Manners. "The train's gone

—the last direct train—and Jimmy Silver will be expecting us before dark."

"Bai Jove, that's wathah unforch!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, I dare say there will be anothah twain. Pway don't get excited!"

"You cheerful idiot——"

"I wefuse to be called a cheerful idiot, Lowthah!"

"Why can't you refuse to be one?" howled Digby.

"I wegard that wemark as personal, Dig!"

"Bump him!" growled Herries.

Arthur Augustus backed away in alarm.

"I wefuse to be bumped! The pavement is feahfully mudday. Pway, don't make me start the Chwistmas holidays by givin' you a feahful thwashin' all wound!"

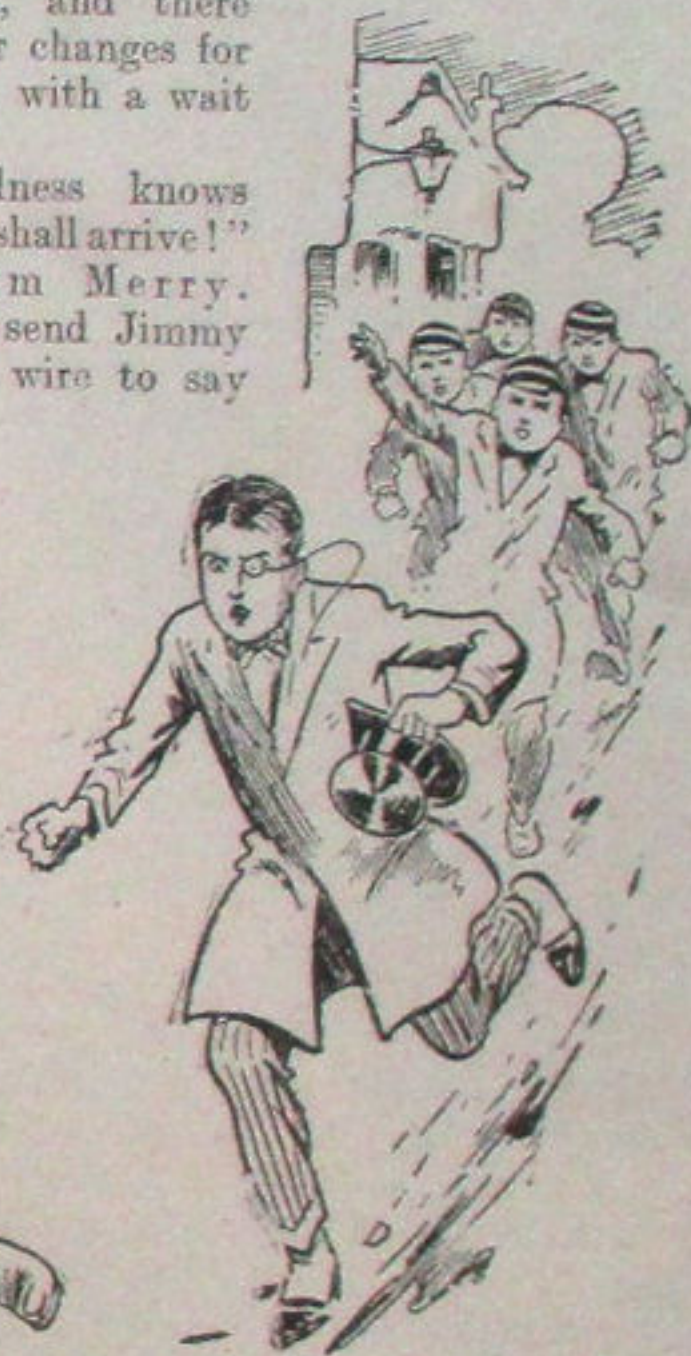
"Let's get to the station," said Tom Merry, "the train may have been delayed.

If not, I'm blessed if I know how we shall get to Lexham Priory!"

The wrathful party took their way back to the station, Arthur Augustus rubbing his topper as he went. But Tom Merry's hope was ill-founded. The express had long gone. The next train was in half an hour, and there were four changes for Lexham, with a wait at each.

"Goodness knows when we shall arrive!" said Tom Merry. "Better send Jimmy Silver a wire to say

Arthur Augustus caught sight of the youth who had hurled the snowball at him, and rushed towards him, his muddy topper in one hand and the other fist clenched hard. "Come back!" roared Tom Merry. (See opposite page)



we're late. Can't be helped."

"All that fathead's fault!" growled Manners.

"I wefuse to be called a fat-head, Mannahs!"

Tom Merry & Co. waited for the train, filling in the time by telling Arthur Augustus what they thought of him. The train came in at last, and the juniors took their seats in it.

"It's all wight," Arthur Augustus announced as the train started.

"All wrong, you mean," growled Digby. "We shall arrive in the middle of the night at this rate."

"I was not thinkin' of that, Dig. I was alludin' to my toppah. I have got it quite clean at last, and it's all wight!"

And Arthur Augustus smiled a contented smile, while his comrades looked as if they would eat him.

Tom Merry had sent the wire, but he had been told that delivery could not be guaranteed at an early hour. It was a chance whether Jimmy Silver would receive it before midnight. He would wonder why they did not come, and would probably conclude that they had put it off for some reason till next day. They would, no doubt, arrive after the Silver household had gone to bed—a very uncomfortable prospect. So during the journey they further acquainted Arthur Augustus with what they thought of him.

Four changes, and four long waits, crawling in local trains, did not make a pleasant journey. It was the last local that landed them at Lexham at eleven o'clock. They came out of the station in the winter darkness, and soon ascertained that there was no conveyance to the Priory. Apparently the telegram had not yet reached Jimmy Silver.

"Well, we've got to hoof it," growled Blake. "What the dickens will they think of us, arriving at midnight? We had better explain that it's owing to Gussy being born potty!"

"I wefuse to allow you to say anythin' of the sort, you uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

The juniors knew the direction, and they started for the Priory, tramping along under a light fall of snow.

The Priory came in sight at last, and they passed the gate, and tramped up the drive to the house.

Every window was in darkness.

"Gone to bed, of course," grunted Herries. "They don't expect us till to-morrow now."

"Blessed if I like ringing 'em up," said Tom Merry uneasily.

"Well, we can't camp in the park!" said Lowther.

"Bai Jove, wathah not!"

"Hallo, there's a light!"

A flickering light gleamed out suddenly from a dark window. The juniors paused and fixed their eyes upon it.

"Thank goodness, they're not all gone to bed!" said Tom Merry in relief. "That's the library, I think. There's somebody up. Hallo, the light's gone."

The window was suddenly dark again.

The juniors went on to the door, and Tom Merry pulled at the bell.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Arthur Augustus is Suspicious!

JIMMY Silver sat up in bed.

"Hallo!" he murmured drowsily.

"What the merry dickens is that?"

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

"The bell, by Jove! Those bounders have come, after all."

Jimmy Silver slipped out of bed and turned on the light. He hurried on a pair of slippers and a dressing-gown—one of his home luxuries. Lovell sat up in the other bed.

"What's the row?"

"Somebody ringing," said Jimmy. "Must be the St. Jim's chaps. I'd given them up for to-day."

"I'll come down with you," said Lovell.

"Shove this coat on, old chap."

Jimmy Silver and Lovell descended the stairs. Jimmy unchained the big door and blinked out into the wind and snow. Outside, seven juniors with their collars turned up were grouped.

"Awfully sorry," said Tom Merry, colouring. "It's too bad to fetch you down like this!"

"So it's you!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Bai Jove, we owe you an apology, Silvah, deah boy! These fellahs lost the twain, and we've had a feahful journey."

"You lost it," said Herries in sulphurous tones.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Our champion idiot lost it!" said Blake.

"That is hardly a complimentawy way of alludin' to Tom Mewwy, Blake——"

"Fathead!"

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"Well, trot in," he said. "Better late than never."

"You didn't get the wire?"

"No; I thought you'd left it till to-morrow for some reason. Never mind, your rooms are ready—the mater's seen to that—and I'll jolly soon get you some supper," said Jimmy, as the juniors crowded in.

"Don't mench, deah boy!"

"Don't trouble," said Tom quickly, "we—ahem—aren't hungry."

"Rats! You must be. Look here, Lovell will take you up to your rooms and I'll scout round the pantry," said Jimmy cheerily. "I'll bring up what I find. No need to wake the house."

"You're awfully good."

"Weally, we cannot sufficiently apologise——"

"Bow-wow!" said Jimmy.

"Everybody in bed?" asked Lowther.

"Yes, rather. It's past twelve."

"We thought somebody would be up when we saw a light in the library," said Tom. Jimmy stared.

"You saw a light where?"

"In a ground-floor room—the library, I think."

"My hat! Everybody's in bed," said Jimmy. "If you saw a light in the library, that wants looking into. Come this way."

Jimmy led the way, and the St. Jim's fellows followed him.

"Bai Jove, it must have been a burglah, deah boys!" said D'Arcy in a whisper. "We have arrived just in time to pwevent Mr. Silvah fwom bein' wobbed."

"Bow-wow!" murmured Blake. "Somebody came down for something, that's all."

They followed Jimmy into the library.

Jimmy Silver switched on the electric light. The great apartment was quite deserted.

"Nobody here," said Jimmy Silver. "Sure you weren't mistaken about the light?"

"It wasn't the electric light," said Tom. "It flickered, like a candle, and it only just showed through the blinds."

"Jolly queer!" said Jimmy. "If anybody came down, they ought to be here; it could only have been a few minutes ago."

"Pwobably a burglah, deah boy."

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"We'll look round at the doors and windows, if you like," he said.

"I wegard that as a good ideah, deah boy."

They left the library, and Mr. Silver's voice called down from the stairs.

"All serene, dad!" called back Jimmy. "The St. Jim's chaps; they lost their train, and got in late. I'm looking after them."

"Pway don't come down, deah sir!"

"Jimmy will take care of you," said Mr. Silver. "Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, Mr. Silver!"

Mr. Silver, like a sensible man, went back to bed. Jimmy and Lovell were quite equal to taking care of the guests.

The juniors made a round of the house, but all the doors and windows were secure.

"Must have been mistaken about that light," said Lovell. "The fire in the library isn't quite out, and it may have flashed up."

"Well, it might have," said Tom Merry. "I certainly thought it was a candle."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, it seems all serene," said Lovell, with a yawn. "This way to your quarters!"

"Pewwaps it is a burglah."

"Oh, rats! I—I mean, let's get upstairs."

"I will keep watch to-night, if you like, Silvah, deah boy."

"Not at all," said Jimmy, laughing.

"Didn't you tell us you have secwet passages and things heah, deah boy?" said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps the burglah has hidden in the secret passage."

"As it happens, the secret passage can't be got into—the door's jammed," said Jimmy. "We found that out to-day."

"Oh, bai Jove! However, I feel convinced that it was a burglah."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther. "Let's get up to bed; I'm tired."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Come on!" said Lovell.

The tired juniors followed Lovell upstairs, Arthur Augustus giving a final suspicious glance round. The swell of St. Jim's evidently was not satisfied in his mind.

Lovell showed them into a large, lofty room, half the size of a dormitory at St. Jim's, where seven beds were arranged in a row.

"Jimmy thought you'd like to be together," said Lovell.

"Wippin', deah boy!"



A flickering light gleamed out suddenly from a dark window. The juniors paused and fixed their eyes upon it. "Thank goodness they've not all gone to bed!" said Tom Merry. "That's the library, I think. There's somebody up."
(See page 242)

The St. Jim's juniors peeled off coats and mufflers, and began unpacking their bags.

Jimmy Silver arrived in a few minutes with a large tray, laden with bread-and-butter, cheese, and ham, cake, and biscuits.

"The best I can do," he remarked.

"That's topping!" said "Come to think of it, we're a

Lovell stirred the fire in the wide, old-fashioned grate, and threw some logs on it. Tom Merry. "bit peckish."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You get back to bed," said Tom.

"Oh, I'm not so very sleepy!" said Jimmy Silver, who was, as a matter of fact, nearly yawning his head off.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Buzz off to bed!" he said. "We shall be in in two ticks."

"Well, if you're all right——"

"Wight as wain, deah boy!"

"Then, good-night!"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell went back to bed, not sorry to get there. Tom Merry & Co were left to enjoy their improvised supper over the fire. They made a rapid inroad upon the tray.

"Well, I feel better now," remarked Herries, as he began taking his boots off. "Jimmy has taken this very decently. All Gussy's fault."

"Wats! As a mattah of fact, deah boys, I wegard it as wathah fortunate that we dwopped in at this late houah. Otherwise, we should not have spotted that burglah."

"Eh! What burglar?"

"It was a burglah in the libwawy, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am quite suah of that."

"Rats!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligible wemark, Tom Mewwy. I am quite suah that it was a burglah, and that he is hidin' some-whah, and I am goin' to keep watch to-night. I wegard that as a dutay towards our kind host, Mr. Silvah."

"Don't you think Jimmy Silver's the best judge whether that's necessary?" inquired Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus shook his head sagely.

"Not at all, Lowthah. Jimmay Silvah is a wippin' chap, but wathah lackin' in tact and judgment."

"Well, I'm tired; I'm going to bed," yawned Blake.

"Yaas, that's a good ideah. You fellahs would only be in the way," agreed Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to be awf'ly cautious."

"Fathead!" growled Manners. "You're not going wandering about Mr. Silver's house in the middle of the night?"

"Certainly not. I am goin' to station myself in the libwawy, and keep watch. I am quite suah that that wascal is hidden there somewhah."

"What rascal, you ass?"

"The burglah."

"You frabjous chump!" said Blake. "There isn't a burglar."

"I wefuse to be called a fwabjous chump!"

"What will they think when they find you asleep in the morning?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"I shall not go to sleep in the libwawy, you ass! I am goin' to keep watch!"

"Bow-wow!"

Tom Merry & Co turned in. They were tired and sleepy. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sleepy, too, certainly; but Arthur Augustus had a powerful sense of duty. He was convinced that there was a burglar, and he thought with satisfaction of the gratitude of the whole household in the morning when he had "nailed" the intruder.

Jimmy Silver would admit that he was a fellow of tact and judgment, Mr. Silver would shake him by the hand fervently, Cousin Phyllis would give him a glance of her bright eyes. Indeed, it was the thought of Cousin Phyllis' bright eyes that spurred Arthur Augustus on more than anything else. It was some time since Arthur Augustus had met that young lady, but he had not forgotten her bright eyes.

"Why don't you turn in, fathead?" asked Blake.

"I am not goin' to turn in."

"You're not going down, image!"

"I am goin' down. I wegard it as a dutay."

"Fathead!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus turned out the light and quitted the room. He had changed his boots for soft slippers, realising that it would not do to risk awakening anybody—in which case he might be taken for a burglar himself!

Blake gave an expressive snort.

"Ass!" he remarked.

And he went to sleep, and Tom Merry & Co. followed his example, without the slightest expectation of being aroused by the alarm of burglars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Startling Discovery!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY pushed open the big, heavy door of the library softly and cautiously. He was very careful not to make a sound.

The great room was in darkness. Only a faint glimmer on the blinds came from the direction of the windows.

The swell of St. Jim's picked his way cautiously into the room.

The idea was firmly rooted in his mind that the light the juniors had seen in the library had been in the hands of a housebreaker.

The rascal was concealed somewhere, and when the household were asleep he would creep forth to do his nefarious work. That was Gussy's belief. And, instead of finding a sleeping household at his mercy, he would find Arthur Augustus wide awake and on the watch, and his little game would be nipped in the bud. In that good cause, D'Arcy did not mind losing his night's rest.

He groped his way to the big palm he had noticed in the corner of the room, and crept behind it. The thick bunch of fronds quite hid him there. There he waited.

He waited patiently.

It was cold, and he rather wished he had thought of bringing his overcoat. But he did not falter.

A quarter of an hour passed, and Arthur Augustus began to nod a little in spite of himself.

A sudden sound startled him into broad wakefulness.

Click!

Arthur Augustus rubbed his eyes.

In the darkness he could see nothing. But he could hear. There was a faint sound in the big, silent room, as of a dress brushing.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

He had expected it—quite expected it, yet it startled him, and his heart was beating in great thumps.

There was someone else in the room now, and that someone had not entered by the door. Evidently the someone had been hiding behind the secret panel, which Jimmy Silver believed to be jammed and unworkable.

A minute passed silently. Just as if he could read the someone's thoughts, D'Arcy knew that the intruder was listening to make sure that no one was at hand before he turned on the light.

The St. Jim's junior waited in grim silence. Scratch!

It was a match striking.

There was a flicker of the lighted match, a guttering of a candlewick, and then the steady flame of a candle.

Arthur Augustus peered through the fronds of the big palm.

He intended to be very cautious—to choose his own moment for giving the alarm. But what he saw as he gazed on the candlelight overcame all his caution.

It was a small, white hand that held the candlestick.

The light shone upon—not a masked or bearded face, as Arthur Augustus had expected.

It shone upon a fair, girlish face, framed in dark hair.

Arthur Augustus stood frozen for a moment, dumbfounded.

Then he gasped:

"Gweat Scott!"

His startled exclamation echoed through the silent room.

The girl holding the candle was crossing to the door. At the sound of D'Arcy's voice she spun round with a little cry.

"Bai Jove!" stuttered D'Arcy. "Miss Phyllis!"

It was Jimmy Silver's cousin!

The girl's face was deadly pale, her eyes wide and startled.

"Who—who is there?" she panted. "Jimmy?"

Arthur Augustus stepped out of his place of concealment.

"Pway don't be alarmed, Miss Phyllis——"

"Oh!"

"It is not Jimmay; it is I, deah gal. I am sowwy I startled you," said Arthur Augustus in dismay. "I—I was watchin' for a burglah, you know——"

The girl pressed her hands to her heart. It was evident that she had received a very painful shock.

Her dark eyes searched D'Arcy's concerned face.

"Who—who are you?"

"Don't you wemembah me, Miss Phyllis—D'Arcy of St. Jim's?" said Arthur Augustus, a little reproachfully.

"Yes, yes; I remember now. But—but how——"

"We aw-wived wathah late, owin' to that ass Low-thah stayin' at a cinemah," said Arthur Augustus. "We saw a light heah, and I supposed it was a burglah, so I came down to keep watch. I am awfly sowwy I startled you, Miss Phyllis!"

"Oh!"

The girl's face was crimson now in the candlelight.

Arthur Augustus looked at her.

The swell of St. Jim's was neither inquisitive nor suspicious, but he could not help thinking it extraordinary that Miss Phyllis should be there. Evidently it was the girl who had shown the light the St. Jim's fellows had seen through the blind. Evidently she had slipped behind the secret panel to escape discovery.

Why?

What was Phyllis doing there?

It was amazing. Arthur Augustus felt almost as if his head were turning round with astonishment.

The girl read his thoughts easily enough, and her colour deepened and deepened.

"I am awfly sowwy!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pway excuse me for makin' this feahful blundah, deah gal! I—I—I—did not guess——"

Phyllis's lips moved tremulously.

"Of course you could not guess," she said, in a low voice. "But—but you are very much surprised, of course, to—to see me here?"

"Yaas, wathah!" confessed Arthur Augustus. "But it is no bizney of mine, of course."

"I—I—I cannot explain——"

"Pway do not suppose that I wequest any explanation, deah gal! I know how to mind my own bizney! I was taught that, deah gal!"

Phyllis smiled slightly.

"But—but you must think it very strange——"

"Not at all, Miss Phyllis," said Arthur Augustus bravely. "I—I suppose you have been explorin' the secwet passages——"



The light shone—not upon a masked or bearded face, as Arthur Augustus had expected. It shone upon a fair, girlish face framed in dark hair. "Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus. (See opposite page)

He paused.

"May I ask you not to mention this to anyone?" asked Phyllis quietly.

"Of course, I shall not say a word!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am only sowwy that I have—have——"

"Good-night!"

"Good-night, Miss Phyllis!" said D'Arcy dazedly.

The girl left the library. Arthur Augustus followed like a fellow in a dream. Phyllis blew the candle out in the hall and vanished. Arthur Augustus took his way back to his quarters in a dazed frame of mind. Evidently there was no burglar to be watched for, and the best thing to do was to go to bed. He sincerely wished he had gone to bed in the first place. The astounding discovery in the library had quite thrown him off his balance.

There was a grunt from Blake's bed as the Swell of St. Jim's turned in.

"Hallo! Is that you, fathead?"

"Wats!"

"Found any merry burglars?" asked Blake, with a sleepy chuckle.

"No."

"Found anything?"

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus went to bed.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Phyllis's Secret!

JIMMY SILVER'S guests appeared to a late breakfast in the morning.

Cousin Phyllis did not come down to breakfast.

Tom Merry & Co. were a little disappointed not to meet her, only Arthur Augustus being aware why the girl was not down.

And Arthur Augustus did not say a word.

His promise of silence to Cousin Phyllis had to be kept, and the more he thought about the matter—he could not help thinking about it—the more puzzled he was. He would gladly have allowed the whole matter to be forgotten, but the fact that he had kept watch for a burglar was too good a joke to be missed, and his chums related it to Jimmy Silver & Co. at the breakfast-table.

The Rookwood juniors chortled gleefully over it.

"How long did you stay down?" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

Arthur Augustus coloured.

"Only about half an hour, deah boy."

"That wasn't giving the burglar a fair chance," remarked Lovell. "If he was hiding in the chimney, it might have taken him longer than that to get out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lovell——"

"And you didn't find anything at all?" grinned Raby.

"Pway pass the toast, deah boy."

"Not even a mouse?" asked Raby.

"I did not see any mice, Waby."

"Too bad!" grinned Monty Lowther. "I thought we should find you asleep on the floor in the morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am sure it was very courageous of D'Arcy to keep watch for the burglar," said Mrs. Silver kindly.

"Thank you, madam!"

"And I am sure D'Arcy would have given a good account of himself if there had been a burglar," said Mr. Silver, smiling. "It is rather fortunate that there was not, however."

"See anything of the ghost?" asked Raby.

"Nothin', deah boy."

"Hallo! Is there a ghost here?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather; a phantom prior who groans behind the wainscot!" said Lovell. "He glides through the secret panels, and so on, doesn't he, Jimmy?"

"He does—he do!" said Jimmy Silver. "I suppose nobody came gliding through the secret panel while you were on the watch, D'Arcy?"

D'Arcy's face crimsoned.

"Weally, you know——" he stammered.

Jimmy regarded him rather curiously. He could not see why his playful question should cause such evident confusion on D'Arcy's part.

"Hallo, hallo!" said Lovell, grinning. "He did see something, after all! Was that why you chuckled keeping watch, D'Arcy?"

"I—I——"

"People often see ghosts in the dark!" chuckled Raby. "Ha, ha! D'Arcy saw a shadow move and bunked——"

"Did you, Gussy?" chortled Blake.

"Wats!"

The subject was so plainly distasteful to Arthur Augustus that the juniors let it drop at last, and ceased to chip him. After breakfast, Lovell proposed having another "go" at the secret panel, to show it to the St. Jim's fellows.

"I'm afraid it's no go," said Jimmy Silver. "It was jammed yesterday, but we'll try."

Arthur Augustus felt very uncomfortable as he went with the party. That the panel was not "jammed," he knew, because Miss Phyllis had opened it the night before. Was it the girl who fastened it, not desiring, for some reason, that the secret passage should be explored by Jimmy Silver's guests?

There was little doubt that such was the case. But what could possibly be Phyllis's motive?

That the girl could be playing practical jokes like a fag at school was simply inconceivable.

What was her secret?

Arthur Augustus told himself that it was no business of his, and tried not to think of it. But, in spite of himself, he found himself incessantly thinking of it.

Jimmy Silver tried the panel, but it was fast.

"Nothing doing!" he announced.

"Bai Jove! Won't it open, Silvah?"

"No; it's jammed."

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus.

"Pewwaps it is fastened."

"There isn't any fastening on this side," said Jimmy Silver. "There's a bolt on the inner side, in the secret passage; but, of course, it can't be bolted, as nobody's there."

"Good gwacious!"

Arthur Augustus almost fell down.

He turned away to hide his confusion.

Jimmy Silver's answer let in a flood of light upon his perplexed mind.

The panel was bolted!

It could not be bolted from the side of the library. It had been fastened on the other side. By whom?

After Miss Phyllis had come through the secret door the previous night, the panel had been bolted behind her. By whom?

Someone!

Who, then, was there? Who—what was it that Jimmy Silver's pretty cousin had gone down to see at midnight?

D'Arcy felt his brain in a whirl.

One thought drove itself into his mind. Whoever had bolted that panel after Miss Phyllis was still there, hidden in the secret recesses of the mysterious old Priory.

What could it mean?

The juniors went out to skate in the morning, and Miss Phyllis joined them on the frozen river. She gave D'Arcy one quick look, and that was all. Arthur Augustus had the pleasure of skating with her, and he drew her away from the rest of the party.

"May I speak to you, Miss Phyllis?" he asked, when they were out of hearing of Jimmy Silver & Co.

The girl laughed.

"Certainly!"

"I twust you will excuse me," said D'Arcy, flushing crimson, "but—but as an oldah chap and a fellah of tact and judgment, I feel bound to speak, deah girl. I—I—"

"Please go on," said Phyllis quietly.

"Jimmy thinks that panel in the libwawy is jammed. Of course, it isn't, because you—you passed through it last night."

"Yes."

"And—and so it can only be bolted on the othah side, and that is why it does not open." Phyllis's face paled.

"Yes?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"I—I—excuse me, deah gal, but—but that pwoves that somebody is there! There is some person in the secwet place, who fastened the panel aftah you!"

The girl was silent. Her very lips had gone pale.

"I can't help thinkin'," went on Arthur Augustus uncomfortably, "that—that someone has induced you to let him hide there, Miss Phyllis, and so he must be some wottah to be doin' such a thing, and—and pewwaps you would like me to take him in hand and deal with him. I don't undahstand the mattah at all, but it looks to me as if you are in some sewape, and I should like to help you. I look aftah my Cousiu Ethel a gweat deal, you know," added Arthur Augustus,

apparently as a hint that he was quite an old hand at looking after distressed young ladies.

Phyllis smiled tremulously.

"You are a good, kind boy," she said softly, "but—but I can't tell you anything! I can only ask you to say nothing about it, and I am sure I can trust you. I am forced to keep a secret, much against my will, and that is all I can tell you."

"I am afraid you are being imposed upon by some unscrupulous person."

"No, no!"

"Very well. I felt bound to offer you my assistance if you required it," said Arthur Augustus. "I will not mention the matter again, but please remember that I am always at your service if you require me."

"Thank you," said Phyllis tremulously.

They skated back towards the house.

"Coming to the station?" called out Tom Merry. "Cousin Ethel's coming by the next train in."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And quite a little army marched to the station to meet Cousin Ethel and escort her to the Priory.

Arthur Augustus, concerned as he was about Phyllis, did not mention the matter again; neither did Phyllis. In spite of the girl's strange secret, she was quite cheerful and smiling; and Jimmy Silver, though he thought sometimes of his fugitive uncle, was a cheery host. Christmas passed merrily

enough at the Priory. A few days later Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars were to arrive, an event that was looked forward to keenly by Jimmy Silver and his little party.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Bunter is not Left!



Arthur Augustus had the pleasure of skating with Phyllis, and he drew her away from the rest of the party.

"May I speak to you, Miss Phyllis?" he asked, when they were out of hearing of Jimmy Silver and Co. (See page 249)

ver's place in the holidays, when Billy Bunter chipped in. The fat junior blinked indignantly at the Co.

"I say, you fellows——"

"We ought to be able to get some footer there," Bob Cherry remarked. "There'll be four Rookwood chaps."

"And seven from St. Jim's, I hear," said Johnny Bull.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Er-r-r!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, were chatting over the supper-table at Wharton Lodge. The Famous Five of Greyfriars were there for the Christmas holidays, and Billy Bunter was with them. Not that William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, found his company yearned after; but Bunter had decided to come, and he had come.

The Famous Five were chatting over the forthcoming visit to Jimmy Silver's

"And Cousin Ethel," remarked Nugent. "I don't know whether she plays footer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Cousin Phyllis," said Wharton. "She may be a footballer. Anyway, there's eleven of them, and five of us."

"Six!" howled Billy Bunter.

"The sixfulness is not correct, my esteemed Bunter," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The worthy fat Bunter is not an esteemed footballer."

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I could play your head off," he said loftily. "In fact, with me in the team, we could play that lot on our own—a side of six instead of eleven. In that case, I should expect Wharton to ask me to captain the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at."

"Is Bunter going?" asked Bob Cherry.

"It doesn't seem quite the fair thing to plant him on Jimmy Silver."

"Why, you fathead——"

"Well, I don't know," said Wharton dubiously. "Jimmy Silver didn't know Bunter was with us when he asked us. Bunter visited him at Rookwood, and Silver was quite fed up with him. He mayn't take it kindly if we bring Bunter."

"If you think you're going to leave me behind, Wharton——" began Billy Bunter indignantly.

"You can stay here and tuck into the grub," said Johnny Bull. "That's all you want, isn't it?"

"Oh, really, Bull! I shall go to Silver's place, of course. In fact, I should be missed if I didn't," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Ethel and Phyllis would miss me a lot, you know. Girls rather take to me."

"You silly fat duffer!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I don't know that I specially care about going," said Bunter. "But I'm not going to disappoint the girls when they're looking forward to seeing me. A chap who's popular with girls is bound to take some notice of them. Yaroo! What silly idiot chucked that egg-shell at me?"

"I did!" said Bob Cherry, in sulphurous

tones. "And if you don't shut your silly head you'll have an egg next!"

"Yow! Wow! If this is the way you look after your guests, Wharton——"

"Oh, dry up, there's a good chap!" said Harry Wharton. "I suppose if Bunter wants to come he'd better come, though goodness knows how they'll stand him."

Billy Bunter snorted and went on with his supper. He was quite determined not to be left out of the merry party at Lexham Priory.

"We start by the nine train in the morning," added Harry. "You'll have to be down sharp at eight, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Wharton! Of course, you can catch a later train."

"Rats!"

"Look here, I'm not coming down early in the morning. We ain't at Greyfriars now, you ass!"

"Bow-wow!"

Bunter snorted again, and rolled away to bed. Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle.

"Look here, it's rough on Jimmy Silver to plant Bunter on him, especially as he hasn't asked him," he remarked.

"Blessed if I know what to do with him!" said Harry. "I didn't ask him, but he's here all the same."

"Well, suppose we leave him snoozing in the morning, and start! That will settle it. He never comes down till ten."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, that's fair. I've told him what time the train goes, and if he doesn't choose to be down in time, that's his look out. You're a giddy genius, Bob!"

"He doesn't know where Silver's place is, so he can't track us down," chortled Johnny Bull. "Your uncle can stand him here, Harry. The colonel's a real brick, and Miss Wharton is awfully patient with him. They can stand him better than we can."

And the Famous Five went to bed, sincerely hoping that William George Bunter would oversleep himself, as usual, in the morning.

Promptly as usual the Famous Five were down to breakfast the next morning. Billy Bunter had been called, and he had snorted

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

An Unexpected Discovery!

BILLY BUNTER sat and pumped in breath for some minutes.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him expressively.

Mr. Bleazer sat, mumbling and scowling, in the corner.

"I say, you fellows, wasn't that lucky?" grinned Bunter, when he had recovered his breath. "Jolly nearly missed it!"

"I don't see where the luck comes in," growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull!"

"I thought you were still asleep, you fat owl," grunted Bob Cherry.

Bunter chuckled.

"You see, I happened to remember that Colonel Wharton was going to Latcham on business this morning," he explained airily. "No need to catch that early train, as there was room for one in the colonel's car. I asked him to give me a lift, and he

took me to Latcham when he went, and there you are. You didn't know I knew the time you changed trains, did you?"

"No, you fat bouncer!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Perhaps you thought I was left behind."

The Co. laughed; they could not help it. While they had supposed that Bunter was

left behind safe in the arms of Morpheus, the fat junior had simply been taking an extra snooze, relying on getting a lift in Colonel Wharton's car to Latcham. There was room for one passenger in the little car, and Bunter had calmly decided to be that passenger.

"Jolly lucky, I call it," said Bunter. "Might have missed going, you know. And

the girls would have been disappointed. He, he, he! You fellows needn't expect to monopolise Ethel and Phyllis like you do Marjorie; I jolly well sha'n't stand it. I warn you of that. I—I say—wharrer marrer?" roared Bunter suddenly.

Mr. Bleazer had sat for some time in silence, glaring at Bunter. In his muddled brain there was evidently a sense of injury. The big man in khaki at Latcham had overawed the intoxicated rascal, but there were only schoolboys on the scene now. Mr. Bleazer decided that his time had come. He lurched across the carriage and grasped Bunter.

He just roared.

"Leggo! Rescue, you fellows!"

"What the thunder are you at!" exclaimed Wharton. "Get into your seat, man, or you'll be put there!"

"Shoved into me, he did!" roared Mr. Bleazer. "Me, a 'ard-workin' man! Knocked me fair hover! I'll smash the fat bouncer, I will!"



"Who yer shoving?" roared the rough fellow, turning furiously on the fat junior. "I—I say, sorry, you know!" gasped Bunter. "Yaroooh! Leggo!" The man had seized him by a fat ear and was twisting it. "Yow-yow! Rescue!" roared Bunter. (See opposite page)

and turned over; merely that and nothing more.

"Is not Bunter going with you?" Colonel Wharton asked, at breakfast, as the Greyfriars juniors were finishing their meal.

"He doesn't seem to care about it," said Harry. "Do you mind if we leave him here, uncle?"

"Not at all."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time we were off!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter had not put in an appearance.

The Famous Five bade good-bye to the colonel and Miss Wharton, and took their bags. They were walking to the station, a mile distant. They looked back as they reached the road, but there was no sign of Bunter.

In cheery spirits they started for the village.

"The fat bouncer won't come down till ten," grinned Johnny Bull. "Then he'll gorge, and won't mind a bit so long as the grub lasts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors half expected to see the fat Removite pattering along the road after them on the way to the station. But he did not appear, and they reached the station. The train came in.

"We change at Latham," remarked Harry Wharton, as they sat down in the carriage. "That's only about ten miles from Rookwood, I believe. No sign of Bunter."

"Good egg!"

The train started. Billy Bunter was probably still sleeping the sleep of the just at Wharton Lodge. Through the snowy winter morning the train rushed on, and the Greyfriars juniors, chatting cheerily, forgot all about William George Bunter.

"Latham!" said Harry Wharton, at last.

The Greyfriars party alighted from the train, and crossed the platform. The other train was in, but there was a long wait before it started. They secured an empty carriage. There were a good many men in khaki in the station from the neighbouring barracks.

"Dashed long wait here!" yawned Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! My hat!"

"Bunter!" yelled Nugent.

"Great Pip! Bunter!"

The fat figure of the Owl of the Remove

suddenly appeared on the platform. Billy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles, evidently in search of the Famous Five.

"How on earth did he get here?" groaned Bob.

"He was bound to turn up like an esteemed bad penny," grinned Harce Jamset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter caught sight of the juniors in the waiting train, and a grin overspread his fat face. He waved a fat hand, and started towards them at a run. The guard was slamming the doors now, ready to start.

Bunter put on a spurt.

A man with a lurching gait was coming down the platform, blinking at the carriages. He was a rough-looking customer, and plainly the worse for drink. He stopped at the door of the juniors' carriage, just as Bunter came panting up. The Owl of the Remove butted fairly into him, unable to stop in time.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Who yer shoving?" roared the rough fellow, turning furiously on the fat junior.

"I—I say, sorry, you know!" gasped Bunter. "Yaroooh! Leggo!"

The man had seized him by a fat ear, and was twisting it.

"Yow-wow! Rescue!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton jumped out of the carriage.

"Let him go at once!" he rapped out.

A big sergeant in khaki strode up.

"Enough of that, Bleazer!" he snapped.

Mr. Bleazer released Bunter suddenly. He was not in khaki, but evidently he was in awe of the big sergeant. Wharton guessed that he was a civilian employed about Latham barracks, probably in the canteen.

"All right, sergeant," mumbled the man. "The young 'ound run into me——"

"Don't let's have any more of it!" snapped the sergeant, with a look of disgust at the intoxicated man.

Mr. Bleazer stepped into the carriage without another word. He scowled at the juniors, and plumped down in a corner seat.

"Right away!" shouted the guard.

Bunter scrambled in. He stumbled over Mr. Bleazer's legs, which were outstretched across the carriage, and the man uttered an angry oath. Wharton pulled Bunter in, and the door slammed, and the train started.

"Let him alone at once, or you'll get hurt!" snapped Wharton.

"Yaroo! Rescue!" yelled Bunter frantically.

Mr. Bleazer was jamming his head against the back of the seat in the most reckless way, and Bunter was hurt.

Harry Wharton & Co. promptly laid hands upon the ruffian.

Mr. Bleazer was dragged off Bunter, and bumped down in the bottom of the carriage.

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Bunter. "He's drunk! Keep him off!"

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Mr. Bleazer.

"You'll do very well there," said Bob Cherry, jamming his foot on the prostrate man's chest. "You can cool down on the floor, my pippin."

Bleazer struggled savagely, but the five juniors of Greyfriars were rather too many for him. He was pinned down and he could not rise.

"I'll out yer for this!" he gasped.

"Bow-wow!"

A torrent of bad language came from Mr. Bleazer, which Bob Cherry promptly stopped by jamming his boot on the abusive mouth. Mr. Bleazer spluttered, and relapsed into silence.

"Will you lemme gerrup?" he mumbled at last.

"Are you going to keep the peace?"

"I'm goin' to out yer!" yelled Mr. Bleazer.

"I don't quite know what it's like to be outed," said Wharton. "But I'd rather not. You can stay there!"

And Mr. Bleazer stayed there. Whenever he made an attempt to rise a heavy boot jamed him down again, and he remained in a recumbent, if not comfortable, position on the floor, till the train steamed into Lexham, and stopped.

There the Greyfriars juniors had to let him get up.

"No larks, mind!" said Bob, as he removed his foot.

Mr. Bleazer gave him an evil look.

The juniors jumped out of the carriage, and Mr. Bleazer jumped after them. Between fury and drink, Mr. Bleazer was in a boiling state. The moment he was on the platform

he made a jump at Bob Cherry and grasped him.

"Now, you young 'ound!" he hissed.

"Yow-ow! Help!" spluttered Bob.

The juniors grasped Mr. Bleazer and dragged him off. Bob was dragged down to the platform with him. They rolled over in a struggling heap, and there was a crowd of porters and passengers round at once.

"Police!" yelled Bunter, dodging out of the way of the combatants.

"Wot's all this 'ere?"

It was the voice of authority. A policeman came up. Mr. Bleazer was fighting like a lunatic, and the juniors had their hands full to hold him and keep him from doing serious damage.

"The rotter's drunk!" panted Wharton. "Collar him!"

The constable laid his hand on Mr. Bleazer, and was promptly "dotted" in the eye by that irate gentleman. That was enough for him. He collared the drunken ruffian in a very vigorous way, and they struggled.

"My eye!" ejaculated the constable. "Lend me a hand with him, young gents!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We'll help you to get him to the station, if you like!"

"Kim along, my tulip. You're in custody!"

Mr. Bleazer did not seem to realise that he was in custody. The potations, in which he had indulged not wisely but too well, were raging in his head, and he was quite beside himself. He fought furiously with the policeman, and the juniors lent their aid, as in duty bound, to the officer of the law. Among them, the intoxicated rascal was hustled out of the station into the road.

"Help me to get him to the station, young gents!" panted the constable.

"You bet!"

"I say, you fellows, we shall be late for dinner!"

"Shut up, you fat bounder!"

Down the street ran Mr. Bleazer, still fighting, and he was still resisting furiously as he was run into the police-station.

There two or three constables collared him, and he was run into a cell before he knew what was happening to him.

Harry Wharton & Co. had to stay to answer the questions of the inspector-in-charge. They could only say that he had got into the train at Latcham, and had been fighting drunk, as Bob Cherry expressed it.

One of the constables who had taken the ruffian into the cell came back with a packet in his hand.

"We found this on him, sir!"

"By gad!" said the inspector. "Banknotes!"

"Hidden under his weskit, sir, and sewn in," said the constable, with a grin. "It stuck out where his weskit was torn in the row."

The inspector glanced sharply at the juniors.

"You say this man got in at Latcham?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Did he come from the barracks?"

"I think so," said Harry. "I noticed a sergeant at the station telling him to be quiet."

"By gad!"

The inspector was examining the wad of banknotes. He ran over a list he took from his desk. The juniors watched him in wonder. They could see that there was at least a hundred pounds there, and it was quite certain that Mr. Bleazer had not come by such a sum honestly. They could not suppose that his wages were paid in bundles of fivers.

The rascal's violent outbreak had been the cause of the detection of a theft, that was clear.

"By gad, what a stroke of luck!" smiled the inspector. "The numbers are the same!"

"The notes were missing, sir?" asked Harry.

The inspector nodded.

"Yes; I had to go over to Latcham a week ago about this case. A soldier was suspected of the theft. A stolen watch was found on him, but the banknotes were missing. It's pretty clear who was the thief now, and that scoundrel must have slipped the watch into an innocent man's pocket, to throw suspicion off himself."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Wharton.

"You young gentlemen have done a good

day's work," smiled the inspector. "This means clearing an innocent man, as well as recovering stolen property."

"I'm jolly glad of it!" said Bob, rubbing his nose where Mr. Bleazer's fist had fallen with dire effect. "I don't mind this nose now."

And the juniors took their leave, greatly elated. They walked in very cheerful spirits from the police-station to Lexham Priory—only Billy Bunter grumbling all the time that they would be late for dinner.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

News for Jimmy Silver!

"Bai Jove! Heah they are!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were punting a football about when the Greyfriars fellows arrived. Both Rookwood and St. Jim's fellows looked rather curiously at Harry Wharton & Co., who bore very visible signs of the struggle with Mr. Bleazer.

"Railway accident?" grinned Lovell.

"Run your nose on a motor-car, Cherry?" asked Blake sympathetically.

"We got into a dust-up," explained Wharton, colouring. "A boozey rascal in the train cut up rusty, you know. Not our fault."

"Bai Jove, that was wathah wuff!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I twust you gave him a feahful thwashin'."

"Well, he got rather handled," said Harry, laughing.

"Come in and wash off the gore," smiled Jimmy Silver.

The Famous Five gladly followed him. Billy Bunter had not suffered in the combat, and he did not need washing. He proceeded to make himself agreeable to Cousin Ethel and Phyllis.

"Jolly glad to see you, you know!" said Bunter affably. "I made it a point to come over. I knew D'Arcy would be here, and I couldn't disappoint an old pal. How do you do, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his celebrated monocle upon Bunter, with a look that ought to have frozen the fat junior, but didn't.

"I am vewy well, thank you!" he replied frigidly.

Bunter gave him a playful poke in the ribs. "Oh, good gwacious!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He proceeded to beat a prompt retreat. He found William George Bunter quite intolerable at close quarters.

Harry Wharton and Co. were none the worse for their adventure, and in the afternoon they joined the skating-party on the river. Billy Bunter distinguished himself on the skates—spending a considerable amount of time hopping on one leg, and the rest on his back, till he gave it up in disgust.

He decided to talk to Ethel and Phyllis on the bank instead. To his surprise, Ethel and Phyllis somehow seemed to keep out of his way and the only fellow who appeared to be willing to endure the delights of Bunter's conversation was Jimmy Silver, who felt that it was up to him as host.

Bunter referred to his visit to Rookwood, and told Jimmy that he would look in again next term.

Jimmy could rely on that. At which Jimmy Silver suppressed a dismal groan.

"We've got rather a treat in store for you chaps," remarked Jimmy Silver, when the numerous party came in to supper. "There's going to be a ghost hunt—we left it till you came. D'Arcy saw a ghost the other night——"



Mr. Bleazer was dragged off Bunter and bumped down in the bottom of the carriage. "Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Bunter. "Keep him off!" "Lemme gerrup!" roared Mr. Bleazer. "You'll do very well there!" said Bob Cherry. (See page 254)

"Bai Jove! I did not see a ghost, Silvah, deah boy!"

"What did you bolt off to bed for, then, instead of keeping watch?" chuckled Blake.

"I had my weasons for not keepin' watch, Blake."

"Well, what reasons?" asked Lovell.

"I—I—I decided to go to bed——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy is awfully secretive about what happened that night," grinned Tom Merry. "He was scared at something, and bunked——"

"I was not scared, Tom Mewwy."

"Then why did you bunk?"

"Wats!"

"I am sure D'Arcy was not scared," said Phyllis quickly.

Arthur Augustus gave Phyllis a grateful look.

"Thank you vevy much, deah gal," he said. "I wegard all those fellahs as uttah asses."

"But it seems that you went down to keep watch, Arthur," said Cousin Ethel, smiling, "and you went back to bed in-

stead. Were you sleepy?"

"N-n-not exactly."

"Behold, he blushes," chuckled Monty Lowther. "Never mind, Gussy—we're going to hunt the ghost and lay him."

"That's the idea," said Jimmy Silver. "The ghost is supposed to walk at midnight, and the library is his happy hunting-ground."

The old prior is supposed to have been killed in that room. If you fellows feel inclined to stay up, we're going to watch for him to-night."

"Bai Jove!"

"Gussy doesn't want to!" grinned Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Gussy can go to bed," said Tom Merry.

"We're going to hunt the giddy ghost."

"What larks!" said Bob Cherry. "We're on, of course."

"The giddy rendezvous is midnight in the library," said Jimmy Silver. "Will you stay down, Phyllis, and you, Miss Cleveland?"

"Certainly!" said Cousin Ethel, smiling.

Phyllis did not speak.

Her face had changed colour. Most of the juniors noticed it, though only Arthur Augustus D'Arcy knew the reason.

"You're not scared, Phyllis?" exclaimed Jimmy, in wonder.

"No, no!"

"You'd rather not stay down?"

"Yes, if Ethel does," stammered Phyllis.

"Don't be scared," said Billy Bunter encouragingly. "I shall be there, you know."

Phyllis did not seem to hear.

"Jolly good idea for Bunter to be there," said Bob. "One glance at Bunter's chivvy ought to be enough to lay any self-respecting ghost."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, you beast——"

Phyllis was very silent at supper. Cousin Ethel glanced at her two or three times, wondering what was the cause of her friend's sudden strange preoccupation. Arthur Augustus knew, and he was in a state of keen distress. After supper he contrived to draw Jimmy Silver aside, with a mysterious manner that made the Rookwood Fourth-Former stare.

"Pway excuse me, Silvab——" began Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, don't mench," said Jimmy, in surprise. "Anything up?"

"Yaas, wathah! You are goin' to watch for the ghost to-night?"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes; we kept it till the whole party were here," he said. "It's fun, you know. But you needn't stay down, unless you like, of course."

"I twust you do not think I believe in ghosts, Silvab. But—but if you will allow me to offah you a word of advice——"

"Any charge?" asked Jimmy humorously.

"No, you duffah."

"Then go ahead."

"I should wecommend you not to stay up to-night in the libwawy."

Jimmy Silver stared.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"It would be bettah not, deah boy."

"But why?"

"I weally cannot explain that, but undah the cires——"

"What cires?"

"Oh, the—the cires, you know. Undah the cires it would be bettah not to watch for the ghost. I twust you will take my advice. You can wely on me as a fellah of tact and judgment, you know."

Jimmy Silver regarded the swell of St. Jim's in blank astonishment.

"Blessed if I see what you are driving at," he said. "Do you mean to say that you did see something in the library the other night?"

"Nevah mind that, deah boy!"

"Then you did?" exclaimed Jimmy, in utter wonder.

"Pway don't inquiah, deah boy. But I weally twust that you will take my advice and go to bed as usual to-night."

Jimmy shook his head.

"Sorry. But the fellows are looking forward to it. It's fun. You can go to bed, you know."

"Wats! I shall stay up if the othahs do."

Evidently there was nothing doing. The whole Christmas party was looking forward to watching for the ghost of the Priory, though they did not expect anything to come of it. Still, there was some fun in staying up late and hearing the midnight chimes, and telling ghost stories.

Owing to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's peculiar mysteriousness, the juniors concluded that he had seen, or fancied he had seen, something on the night of his vigil, and that added to the interest of the ghost hunt.

Jimmy Silver joined Phyllis and Ethel, whom Billy Bunter had cornered, as it were. Bunter was relating the combat with the

ruffian in the train from Latcham, and, according to Bunter's account, there was only one fellow in the Greyfriars party who had really handled the rascal in a plucky way—that one being William George Bunter.

"How lucky for you to go through such a struggle without getting even a mark," said Miss Phyllis, with a smile. "And poor Bob has a swollen nose."

Billy Bunter did not detect the sarcasm in that remark.

"Yes, wasn't it?" he said fatuously. "I handled him rather well, you know. But the other fellows helped me a bit—I will say that. As a matter of fact, I had my suspicions of that chap from the very start," said Bunter sagely. "He turned out to be a burglar, you know!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Cousin Ethel, excitedly.

"Bow-wow!" said Lovell unceremoniously. "Not too thick, old chap, you know."

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the Rookwood junior.

"Oh, really, Lovell! I tell you they found hundreds of pounds in banknotes on him at the station."

"Not millions?" asked Blake, laughing.

"You can ask Wharton if you like," said Bunter warmly. "The inspector specially complimented me about it. He said I had helped to clear an innocent man—a soldier boy at Latcham—so there!"

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, with interest.

"It's a fact," said Bob Cherry, chiming in. "Bunter hadn't anything to do with it."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's the fact that the man turned out to be a thief, and a lot of stolen banknotes were found on him," said Bob. "The inspector had the numbers, as he had been to Latcham Barracks about the thefts a week or so ago."

Jimmy Silver changed colour.

His heart was beating hard, as a wild, sudden hope leaped up in his breast. It seemed too good to be true, yet——

"The man came from Latcham Barracks?" he exclaimed.

"Yes. I think he was employed there."

"A civilian employed in the canteen, I think," said Wharton. "Chap named Bleazer."

"How much was it in banknotes?"

"A hundred quid."

"One hundred pounds?" muttered Jimmy Silver.

"The inspector told us that a soldier had been suspected and accused," said Bob. "That awful rascal had slipped some of the loot into his coat-pocket—a watch, I think. He kept the banknotes."

"My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

To the astonishment of the juniors he dashed out of the room without another word.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry in amazement. "What's the matter with Jimmy?"

"Knows the soldier chap, perhaps," said Lovell, with a grin. "This is jolly good news for old Jimmy, I think."

Jimmy Silver dashed away to the library, where he found his father. Mr. Silver looked at the excited junior in astonishment as he burst in.

"Jimmy! What——"

"Oh, dad!" Jimmy panted breathlessly.

"I've just heard news about uncle!"

"What?"

Jimmy Silver explained breathlessly. His father listened with deep attention, his brow very grave.

"Of course, it mayn't be Uncle John," said Jimmy. "But it sounds like it, doesn't it, dad? You know a stolen watch was found in his coat, and the banknotes were missing—a hundred pounds. It must be the same affair, dad."

Mr. Silver rose to his feet.

"Heaven grant that it is the case, Jimmy! Your uncle may be innocent, after all. I shall go to Latcham at once, and see the commanding officer."

"Oh, good! What luck, dad! All through the Greyfriars chaps coming here!"

Five minutes later a buzzing car was bearing Mr. Silver away through the winter night. And Jimmy rejoined his friends in great spirits.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

The Ghost of the Priory!

"TIME!" said Tom Merry.

And there was a laugh.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were gathered in the old library, round the log fire that blazed on the wide old hearth. Mr. Silver was still absent at Latcham, and Jimmy's mater had retired; but Phyllis and Ethel stayed down. Billy Bunter, on second thoughts, had gone to bed.

Midnight had chimed out now—the hour when, according to the legend, the ghost of the Priory was timed to walk—hence Tom Merry's remark.

The juniors had been telling ghost stories to pass the time, with the result that some of them were already in a somewhat creepy state. Phyllis was looking quite pale.

"Midnight!" said Jimmy Silver.

"'Tis now the witching hour of night, when churchyards yawn, according to Shakespeare," remarked Monty Lowther. "No wonder they yawn, at this time of night."

But Monty Lowther's little joke only elicited a feeble grin. Somehow, the juniors were in a subdued mood. Outside, the wind was wailing through the leafless trees, and strange sounds were heard in the recesses of the old

house. As they sat round the glowing logs, the juniors glanced towards the secret panel, and their glances were not wholly easy. Lovell had related how he had rapped on the wall in Jimmy Silver's room the day he came to the Priory, and an answering rap had come—or so he had fancied.

"Of course, it was the ghost," said Bob Cherry, with a faint grin. "Give him another trial now. If he's got any manners, he's bound to answer."

"Ha, ha!"

"By Jove, so I will!" exclaimed Lovell, jumping up.

He crossed to the secret panel and raised his hand, and then hesitated a moment. Phyllis started to her feet.

"Don't!" she exclaimed.

But Lovell's knuckles had already rapped sharply on the panel.

Rap! Rap!
The juniors listened tensely.

There was a sudden catching of breathing as

from behind the secret panel came sharply:
Rap! Rap!

Jimmy Silver & Co. sprang to their feet.

Lovell started back from the panel, his ruddy face growing pale. He looked round with startled eyes.

"You—you heard that!" he breathed.

"Bai Jove!"

"Somebody's there!" exclaimed Harry



Bunter proceeded to make himself agreeable to Cousin Ethel and Phyllis. "Jolly glad to see you, you know!" said Bunter affably. "How do you do, Gussy?" and Bunter gave a playful dig in the ribs to the Swell of St. Jim's. "Oh, good gwacious!" gasped Arthur Augustus. (See page 256)

Wharton. "It was quite distinct! Hark!"

Rap! Rap!

In the dead silence the rapping from the other side of the secret panel came clearly and distinctly.

Click!

It was a faint sound of a bolt being pushed back on the other side of the panel.

The juniors stood rooted to the floor.

"It—it's coming!" muttered Blake.

Click!

The panel opened.

"Good heavens! What——"

Phyllis sprang up with a cry.

"Don't! Don't——"

"Phyllis!" exclaimed Ethel.

Every face was white now.

The secret panel, as if of its own accord, had opened, and the black orifice in the wall was disclosed.

A figure stood there.

The light gleamed upon a pale, startled face.

But it was not a ghostly face.

It was a human face of flesh and blood, and as Jimmy Silver's eyes fell upon it, he gave a sudden cry.

"Uncle John!"

Phyllis gave a low moan.

"Uncle!" she murmured. "Oh, heavens! Now all is lost!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Light at Last!

JIMMY SILVER rushed forward. He caught the startled, hesitating figure by the arm, and Private Silver, of the Hallamshire Regiment, was dragged into the room.

"Uncle!" said Jimmy Silver, like a fellow in a dream. "You—you here!"

"Private Silver!" stammered Lovell.

"The deserter!"

"Deserter!" murmured Arthur Augustus, understanding at last. "Bai Jove, it was your uncle all the time, Miss Phyllis."

John Silver pulled himself together. He was evidently astounded by the sight of the numerous party in the library, and he had been taken quite aback. His face was pale and worn.

"Yes, Jimmy," he said in a broken voice.

"I'm here. I—I'm sorry you've found me. I'll go! But—but don't blame Phyllis for

befriending me. She believed in my innocence if no one else did."

"Phyllis!" ejaculated Jimmy. "Phyllis knew!"

"She was my only friend," said the outcast miserably.

"But—but what on earth does it all mean?" exclaimed Tom Merry in utter amazement.

"This is my uncle," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "He enlisted in the Hallamshire Regiment. He was suspected of a theft at Latham barracks, and was placed under arrest—and deserted. I suppose he has been hiding here."

"Oh!"

"I was innocent," said John Silver proudly. "They found a stolen watch in my greatcoat. It must have been placed there by the thief, who kept the valuable part of the plunder. I would not stay to be condemned and turned out of the Army in disgrace. I fled. I had no refuge. I came here. I threw myself on my niece's mercy and she befriended me. Heaven bless her for it!"

"I knew he was innocent," said Phyllis bravely. "I hid him in the old tower. I was afraid to let Mr. Silver know. I hoped the truth would come out. I prayed that it would. Jimmy, you can't betray your uncle. You must keep the secret—all of you. D'Arcy knows already."

"D'Arcy does!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah."

"D'Arcy found me here when he was keeping watch," said Phyllis, with a faint smile. "I came down every night to see my uncle, and to take him food. I used to purchase it in the village."

"I remember. You had a lot in the trap the day we came home."

"Yes. And—and Uncle John found a moving panel in your room, Jimmy, and I used to go there to speak to him. I rapped on the wall, and he answered. That is how Lovell heard."

"By gad!" said Lovell.

"But after you came home, I couldn't go there, and I had to use the panel here in the library, and that could only be done at night. I was here the night Tom Merry and his friends

came—and D'Arcy found me. I had to hide behind the panel when you reached the library, and I came out when all was quiet, as I thought—but D'Arcy kept the secret."

"Father will have to know!" said Jimmy.

"Your father knows already, Jimmy," said the voice of Mr. Silver.

Jimmy spun round.

The library door had opened, and Mr. Silver stood on the threshold.

The outcast raised his head.

"You have found me, Brother James," he said bitterly. "Well, I shall not trouble you long—I am going!"

"You are going—with me," said Mr. Silver.

"I have heard all, and I do not blame you, Phyllis, my dear girl. Brother John, I did not believe you were innocent, and I beg your pardon."

"You—you believe now?" stammered John Silver.

"Your innocence is proved."

"What?"

"I have just returned from Latcham barracks," said Mr. Silver. "The real thief has been arrested, and the stolen notes found upon him and identified. He has since confessed all. Your honour is cleared, John, and your commanding officer is prepared to overlook your flight, under the circumstances, on the condition that you rejoin your regiment at once. I never dreamed that I should find you here, but"—Jimmy's father held out his hand to his brother—"thank heaven I have found you. The car is ready. Come with me to Latcham."

The outcast could not speak. He pressed his brother's hand in silence. The tears were running down Phyllis' face.

"Bai Jove! I wegard this as vevy lucky all wound," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hurrah!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Private Silver rejoined his regiment, his name cleared, his honour unstained. The mystery of the Priory was a mystery no longer. Needless to say, John Silver's good fortune caused much rejoicing among Jimmy Silver and his chums, and it would have been difficult to find within the three kingdoms a happier crowd than Jimmy Silver's Christmas party.

THE END

Sports and Sportsmen

No. 12.—PILLOW FIGHTING



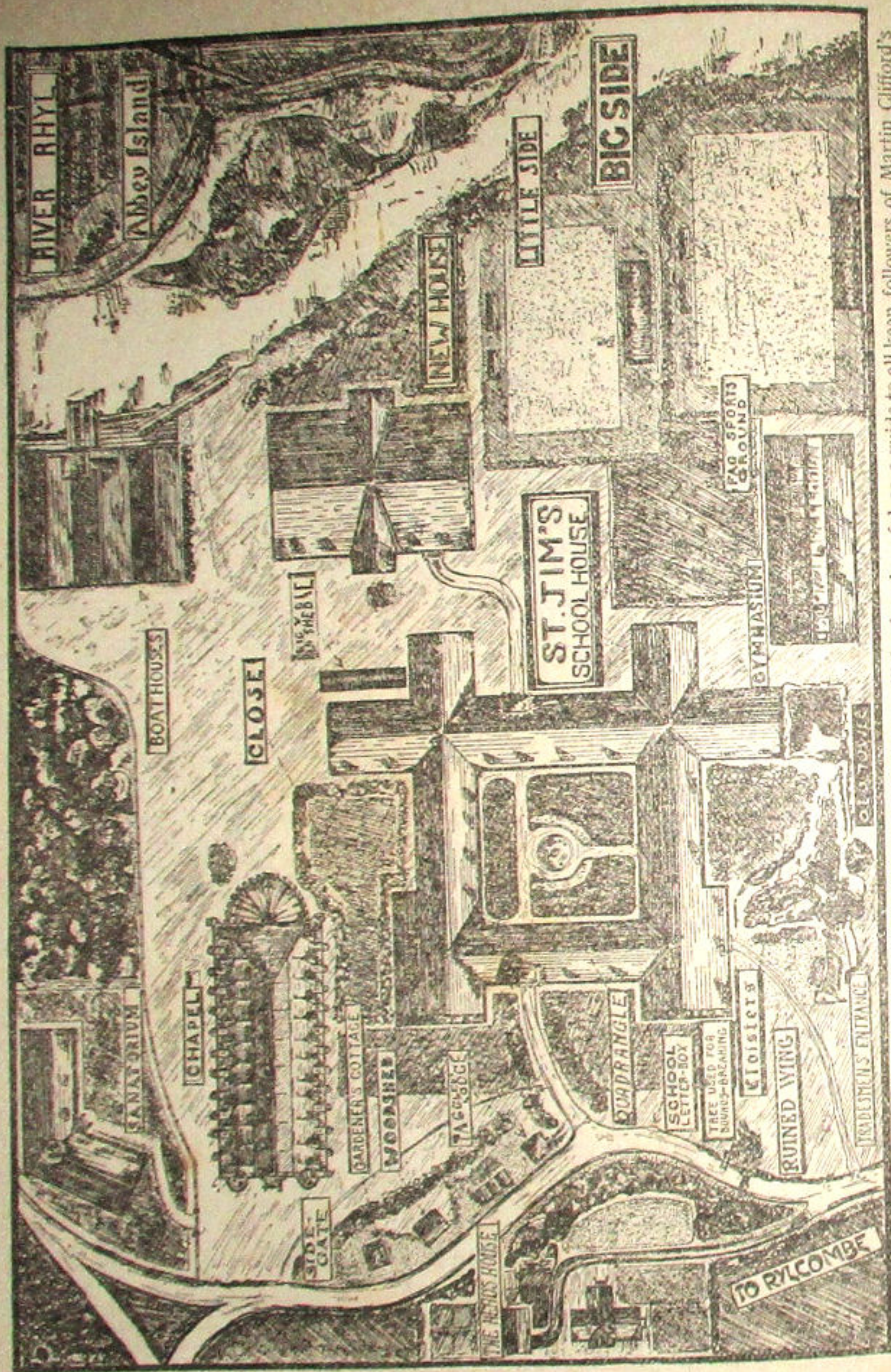
A fast and furious sport is this,
In which all juniors revel;
With clarion shouts of warlike bliss
Their pillows they will level
Against the foes who, in the night,
Invade their sleeping quarters.
A grim, exciting pillow fight
Will always gain supporters.

Removites launch a midnight war
On Temple and on Coker;
In the delightful days of yore
They'd use a club, or poker.
But now, new methods are revealed,
They seize the bulging pillow,
And wield it just as they would wield
In summer time, the willow.

The fight continues fast and fierce,
And no one will surrender;
Attackers vainly try to pierce
The ranks of the defender.
Then suddenly the shouts and cheers
Diminish into silence;
A master on the scene appears,
And cries, "What means this violence?"

The pillow fight, to our regret,
Thus ends with "no decision."
And every warrior has to sweat
Upon an imposition.
But every fellow will agree
The game was worth the candle.
Here's to the next delightful spree
When pillows we will handle.

A Bird's-eye View of St. Jim's



This plan of the famous old school and its immediate surroundings will be found useful as a guide to all keen followers of Martin Clifford's wonderful stories of Tom Merry & Co. and the other schoolboy heroes who have made St. Jim's probably the best-known school in the world.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. JIM'S

BRIEF PEN-PICTURES OF SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR CHARACTERS AT ST. JIM'S, COMPILED BY THE EDITOR OF THE "GEM" LIBRARY IN CONJUNCTION WITH MR. MARTIN CLIFFORD

HEADMASTER: RICHARD HOLMES, D.D., M.A.

There are two Houses at St. Jim's: New House and School House. The latter is the old building, and has considerably the larger number of occupants. The School House is under the care of MR. VICTOR RAILTON, and the New House is presided over by MR. RATCLIFF.

Some important members of the School Staff are:
HOUSE DAME (School House): MRS. MIMMS.
HOUSE DAME (New House): Mrs. Kenwigg.
NURSE: MARIE RIVERS.
PORTER AND LODGE-KEEPER: EPHRAIM TAGGLES.
PAGE: TOBY MARSH.
TUCK-SHOP PROPRIETRESS: MARTHA TAGGLES.

SIXTH FORM

FORM-MASTER: MR. RAILTON.

SCHOOL HOUSE

ERIC KILDARE.—The captain of the School, captain of boxing, and skipper of both footer and cricket elevens. He leads the way in sports, and sets a brilliant example to all the other boys. He possesses a cordial manner which makes him very popular in the School House and New House alike, and he is, of course, Irish to the core. (Study No. 7.)

BAKER, STANLEY.—A prefect and one of the tallest fellows in the Sixth Form. Formerly belonged to the New House, and palled with Monteith. He changed over at the wish of his parents, and—as far as is known—has not yet rued having done so. Baker has a singularly nice manner, is voted all right by the fags, and is an intimate chum of Kildare. (Study No. 11.)

DARREL, GEORGE BRUCE RICHARD.—Another decent fellow with a popularity almost equal to that of Kildare. George is able to claim first place as the chum of the skipper, and is always found to be on good terms with the best fellows in the Sixth. A prefect. (Study No. 13.)

JONES, HORACE ANSTRUTHER.—A good-hearted fellow, with a minor in the School House Fourth. Jones is a large fellow, heavily built, well up in all manner of sports, and a formidable person with his fists. (Study No. 1.)

KNOX, GERALD.—A prefect, a black sheep, and in

all probability the worst and most detested fellow in the school. Spends his days in listless idleness and cowardly bullying, and his nights in breaking bounds. A proper bad-egg, and no good whatever as a sportsman. (Study No. 3.)

LANGTON, HERBERT OSWALD.—A prefect, somewhat weak in character, but a great sportsman, and all right when he cares to keep good company. Excels particularly at bowling, and may one day make a name for himself. (Study No. 2.)

MULVANEY, PATRICK.—Has a minor in the School House Fourth who is a little better-known than himself. Mulvaney major is a fellow of eighteen. Although only about three years older than Michael, he has none of the younger boy's lighter ways, and is generally termed "an old fogey." Comes from Dublin. (Study No. 6.)

NORTH, JOHN.—A prefect, and a fellow who has had considerable experience beyond that of the ordinary fellow of his age. He has travelled extensively, and is chiefly known because of his kind and considerate manner in dealing with the fags. (Study No. 5.)

RUSHDEN, PHILIP.—A prefect chum of Kildare's, and one of the leading lights of the Sixth. Secretarial work, and assisting in the concerts and affairs of the Sixth, appeal to this fellow. He is also the editor of the Sixth Form Magazine, and one of the best sportsmen St. Jim's could show. (Study No. 12.)

NEW HOUSE

GRAY, ALBERT THEODORE.—A New House prefect, and a pal of James Monteith. (Study No. 3.)

HALL, HAROLD.—A tall senior, of whom very little is known. He is said to be self-opinionated, but is decent enough to the fags. (Study No. 4.)

HARRINGTON, DOUGLAS.—Harrington has a very large allowance of money, and is exceedingly generous. He treats younger boys almost as an equal, and is called "soft" on account of it by a few. The fact remains that he is one of the best-liked seniors in the school, and has succeeded in creating for himself a personality which is envied by more than one. (Study No. 7.)

MONTEITH, JAMES GARSTON.—Head prefect of the New House, and second in command to Eric Kildare. In the days before Tom Merry and the popular heroes of the Shell were appearing in the stories, Monteith was one of the leading lights of St. Jim's. He was a bully and a bounder, and he was a sworn

enemy of both New House and School House juniors. To-day Monteith is no longer a bully. He is strangely quiet and austere. He is rather cold and selfish in temperament, but quite straight-going. (Study No. 5.)

WEBB, GEORGE.—A prefect, and the only fellow with whom Monteith chums to any extent. Decent in character and manner, and liked and respected in consequence. (Study No. 6.)

FIFTH FORM

FORM-MASTER: HORACE RATCLIFF, M.A.

CUTTS, GERALD.—The leader of the smart set of the Fifth at St. Jim's. Prides himself upon being doggish, and, as the result of having well-lined pockets, thinks he can ape the man about town. Cutts is a merciless bully to the fags, and is detested as much as Knox by the decent fellows. He owns a motor-cycle, and causes trouble on all sides with it. Cutts, with his study-mates, Gilmore and St. Leger, frequently indulge in little "sprees" after dark. He also shows a chummy attitude towards Aubrey Racke of the Shell. (Study No. 15.)

GILMORE, PHILIP REVEL.—A bosom pal and study-mate of Cutts, and a fellow much after his pattern. (Study No. 15.)

LEFEVRE, PHILIP.—The popular captain of the St. Jim's Fifth, and undoubtedly the nicest fellow in the Form. So popular is he with the juniors that his principal occupation at the school seems to be acting as referee or umpire for their matches. (Study No. 6.)

PRYE, HERBERT.—Cousin of a boy named Albert Prye, who was dismissed from St. Jim's in disgrace several years ago. A dark-haired, sullen individual, who rarely comes from the obscurity in which he dwells into the limelight—but might do so one day. (Study No. 11.)

SMITH, WILLIAM WADE.—One of the rank and file. Has a brother in the School House Fourth. (Study No. 1.)

ST. LEGER, ARTHUR UMPHREVILLE.—Best described as a chum of Cutts and Gilmore. It is to be feared he is more than a little of a snob. (Study No. 15.)

SHELL

FORM-MASTER: LESLE M. LINTON, M.A.

MERRY, TOM.—Junior Captain of St. Jim's, and leading character in all the yarns in the "Gem" Library. A fine, genuine specimen of the very best type of British boyhood. Plucky, straightforward, and fond of fun. Athletic and clever enough, without being a genius. A born leader, and a boy whose whole nature is always marked with courage and cheerfulness. Was brought up by his aunt, Miss Priscilla Fawcett. (Study No. 10.)

GLAMPE.—Belongs to the New House Shell. A snob and a pretty thorough rotter. Usually chums with Chowle, and occasionally obtains admission to the swell parties organised by Aubrey Racke & Co.

CROOKE, GEORGE GERALD.—One of the worst fellows at St. Jim's. Would be considerably more dangerous if he possessed more courage. Distantly related to Reginald Talbot through his uncle, Colonel

Lyndon. He hates Tom Merry, Talbot, Levison, and every fellow who is anything like decent.

DANE, CLIFTON.—A half-breed. His mother was a Red Indian, and her father was leader of the tribe of Huron. Dane is called a Canadian, and taken all round he is a jolly good sort. He is the fastest ice-skater St. Jim's could show, and possesses a pair of fists which have earned him a considerable amount of respect. (Study No. 11.)

FINN, BUCK.—The fellow from the wild and woolly West. Fond of "big talk" and "hot-air," but has never yet been known to figure as a hero. (Study No. 4.)

GORE, GEORGE.—Of old a bully and a rotter, who chummed with Crooke and Mellish. Gore has altered somewhat now. His chum is Talbot, and though he has still retained some of his bullying tendencies, he is a much nicer fellow in every respect. He is burly and strong, and always ready to fight for his House when occasion demands. (Study No. 9.)

GLYN, BERNARD.—Glyn is the lad from Liverpool. His father's country residence is in close proximity to St. Jim's. Bernard has a pretty sister of twenty-five, named Edith, and she is greatly admired by many of the boys at St. Jim's. Glyn's father is very rich, and an extremely hospitable man. Bernard has made himself famous through having developed unusual talent as an inventive genius. (Study No. 11.)

GRUNDY, GEORGE ALFRED.—He burst upon St. Jim's like a hurricane after having received the sack from Redcliffe College, in Kent, for "whopping a prefect." The recipient of some "whacking big tips" from his uncle Grundy. An over-grown fellow, wooden-headed, dense, and conceited to a ridiculous degree. Believes himself good at everything, but is in reality an absolute wash-out. Good old Grundy! (Study No. 3.)

GUNN, WILLIAM CUTHBERT.—One of the liegemen of the great Grundy. Has an admirable taste for good reading, and is fairly good at sports. (Study No. 3.)

JIMSON, FREDERICK.—A good sort. (Study No. 1.)

LOWTHER, MONTAGUE.—One of the Terrible Three, and the leading bright spark in the junior school. Never lacks pluck, and always looks upon the bright side of things. Has dramatic ability, and has turned it to account in many impersonations. (Study No. 10.)

LENNOX, JAMES.—The study-mate of Buck Finn, and the brother of a very pretty sister. (Study No. 4.)

LUCAS, MATTHEW.—The stable companion of Harry Frere. Nothing wrong in the records about Lucas. (Study No. 2.)

MANNERS, HARRY.—One of the Terrible Three. Far more quiet and studious than Tom Merry or Monty Lowther, and greatly inclined towards books and mathematics. A capable photographer, a fairly good athlete, and a boy with a heart of gold. (Study No. 10.)

NOBLE, HARRY.—Better known to his chums as "Kangaroo." Hails from Victoria, in Australia. One of the very best. Study-mate and chum to Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn. One of the best junior sportsmen at St. Jim's. (Study No. 11.)

RACKE, "AUBREY"—otherwise "Young Moneybags."—The son of an ostentatious profiteer, who



Kit Wildrake



Miss Priscilla Fawcett



A. A. D'Arcy



William Gunn



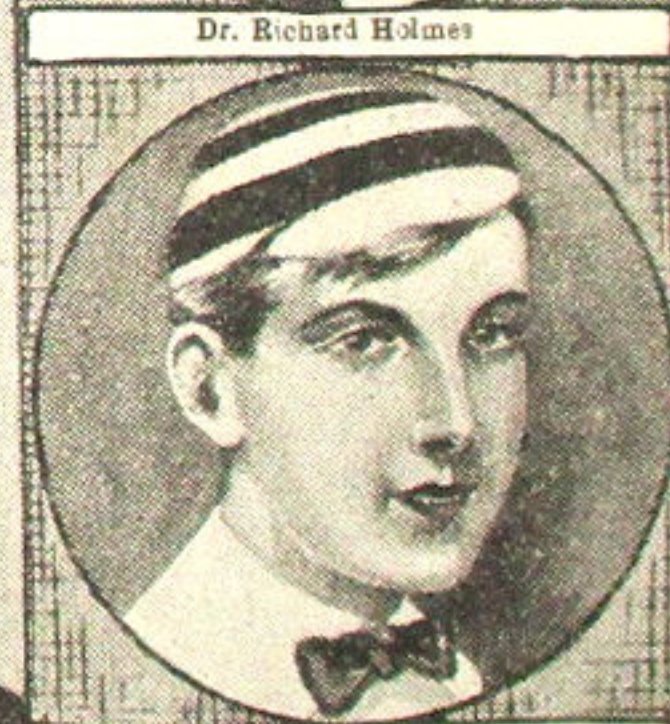
Dr. Richard Holmes



Koumi Rao



E'err Lawrence



Dick Redfern



Leslie Owen

has made millions at the expense of poor people. Purse-proud, snobbish, cunning and unscrupulous. The leader of a fast set, and far more dangerous than Crooke, or any of the rest of the nuts, because he harbours malice, is revengeful, more reckless, and less cowardly.

SCROPE, LUKE.—A very mean, dingy fellow. A toady and disciple of Racke, but less harmful because he is an arrant funk. Possesses few good points, has very little money, and heartily dislikes sports. (Study No. 5.)

SKIMPOLE, HERBERT.—The study-mate of Talbot and Gore. Has some ability, but dissipates it on ridiculous subjects. Has never yet made an invention which will work as he intended it to, and all his study serves only to fill his head with stupid notions. Has learned to use his fists a bit, under the instruction of Reginald Talbot. (Study No. 9.)

TALBOT, REGINALD.—A fellow who has learned many lessons which his form-mates have yet to learn. He is naturally somewhat older than his years. His father, when he lived, was known as Captain Crow, and he was the leader of the "Angel Alley Gang." His place was taken by John Rivers, whose daughter, Marie, is Talbot's best friend and the nurse in the school sanatorium. Reginald was a great chum to Tom Merry, after that junior stood by him through his terrible crisis. He is also a great friend of Ernest Levison. (Study No. 9.)

WILKINS, GEORGE.—The other chum of George Alfred Grundy, and fairly useful on the playing-fields. (Study No. 3.)

FOURTH FORM

FORM-MASTER: PHILIP G. LATHOM, B.A.

BLAKE, JOHN.—Yorkshire by birth and breeding. If Jack were given his due, he would be in Tom Merry's place. Mr. Martin Clifford's first yarn opened with "Jack Blake of St. Jim's," and for well over a year Jack continued as the central character of St. Jim's. His feud against Figgins & Co. was one of the funniest ever written, from the leadership point of view. If there were a captain to the Fourth Form, Blake would assuredly be that person. As there isn't, he has to be regarded as the leader of Study No. 6. Jack has an elder brother named Frank. (Study No. 6.)

BROOKE, RICHARD.—The scholarship boy and only day-boy at St. Jim's. He has a pretty sister, can write verse and compose music, and is a good sportsman.

CARDEW, RALPH RECKNESS.—The grandson of old Lord Reckness, and related to both George Durrance and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. A "good, bad boy," who is a very queer mixture all through. Delights in chipping Grundy, and pulling the gentle leg of Gussy. He is always sarcastic, and usually tired. (Study No. 9.)

CROWLE, CYRIL.—A New House rotter, and companion of Clampe.

CLIVE.—From South Africa. Study-mate and chum to Cardew and Levison. Of the two, perhaps Clive prefers Levison as a chum, for Cardew's peculiar customs—barely understandable by even fellows like

Kerr, Talbot, and Levison himself—are quite beyond his frank, open nature.

D'ARCY, ARTHUR AUGUSTUS.—The great Gussy! Second son of the Earl of Eastwood. An exquisite, who spends far too much time and money on dress. He is a slave to convention, and keeps a wardrobe many times larger than that of the most dressy senior. Gussy has a difficulty in pronouncing the letter "r." Some think it is affectation on his part, but in reality Gussy cannot help doing it any more than a person can help stuttering. He prides himself on being a fellow of tact and judgment, and is always trying to live up to the tradition of his noble name. His minor in the Third Form is exactly his opposite in many ways. (Study No. 6.)

DIGBY, ROBERT ARTHUR.—One of the chums who share Study No. 6. Somewhat quieter than Blake and Herries, and with a manner rather like that of Manners. Dig forms the fourth of the quartet who first made Study No. 6 their habitation. He is rather dense at class-work, but on subjects dealing with football he could pass with flying colours. A capable sportsman.

DURRANCE, GEORGE.—A relative of Cardew's. The son of a sea-captain, and a firm, resolute fellow who makes an excellent study-mate for Lumley-Lumley. (Study No. 1.)

FIGGINS, GEORGE.—The mighty chief of the junior New House, and the acknowledged captain of the New House juniors. Long, lanky, sinewy-legged, and extremely wiry. A clever leader who depends upon his chum Kerr for finesse. Cherishes a deep and devout admiration for D'Arcy's cousin, Ethel. (Study No. 4.)

HAMMOND, HARRY HORACE.—The cockney son of a millionaire whose father made a million out of the hat-trade. He hails from Bethnal Green Road, and still finds a difficulty with his aspirates. A cheery individual, on the whole, who helps to make one of a party of four. (Study No. 5.)

HERRIES, GEORGE.—A burly fellow, who owns a bulldog named Towser. Of the two, perhaps, the bulldog is the better-known character. Herries is chiefly renowned for the size of his pedal extremities. He is also keen on music. (Study No. 6.)

JULIAN, RICHARD.—A Jew, and a decent chap. Shares an apartment with Hammond, Reilly and Kerruish, and is generally taken to be the leader of the four. (Study No. 5.)

JONES, EDWIN ALFRED.—Jones minor, who has an elder brother in the Sixth. (Study No. 8.)

KERR, GEORGE FRANCIS.—A Scot from the Highlands, level-headed and perhaps the best impersonator at St. Jim's. Good at sports, and a real detective, and a clever peacemaker. Closely attached to Figgins and Wynn. (Study No. 4.)

KERRUISH, ERIC.—From the Isle of Man, and a decent sort. (Study No. 5.)

LAWRENCE, EDGAR.—A scholarship boy, and a pal of Redfern's. (Study No. 5.)

LEVISON, ERNEST.—Levison major—has a minor in the Third. Was formerly at Greyfriars, where he received the sack, and two years afterwards came to St. Jim's. A thorough black sheep in the old days, but now quite straight. Shrewd and crafty, with a



Patrick Reilly

George Figgins

Bernard Glyn

Frank Levison

Harry Manners

Ernest Levison

Ralph R. Cardew

Jack Blake

Harry Hammond

knowledge beyond his years. Always plucky, and a splendid bowler. Has a pretty sister, named Doris. She is a nice girl, and Ralph Cardew shows a marked admiration for her. (Study No. 9.)

LUMLEY-LUMLEY, JERROLD.—The son of a South American canned-meat millionaire. Called the "Outsider" when he first came to St. Jim's, but has long since lived that name down, until it is now but a memory.

MELLISH, PERCY.—One of the "rotters." Generally plays the toady, spy, and sneak. Shares his apartment with Kit Wildrake and Baggy Trimble. (Study No. 2.)

MULVANEY, MICHAEL.—Irish and very mischievous. Has a brother in the Sixth. (Study No. 4.)

REILLY, PATRICK.—From Belfast in Ulster. Has a rather well-developed sense of humour. (Study No. 5.)

RAO, KOUMI.—The Jam of Blundelpore. An Indian boy with an Oriental manner, hard for the Western mind to fathom. (Study No. 1.)

REDFERN, RICHARD.—The leading scholarship boy of the junior New House. A good journalist, and nailing good at sports. (Study No. 5.)

TOMPKINS, CLARENCE YORK.—Not a bad fellow, but rather "potty" in his notions. (Study No. 4.)

TRIMBLE, BAGLEY.—Known to posterity as "Baggy." A braggart, a glutton, a coward and a sneak. Annexes other people's letters, and borrows anything that takes his fancy—often without the knowledge of the owners. Is disgustingly lazy, but always very amusing. (Study No. 2.)

WILDRAKE, KIT.—The Cowboy of St. Jim's. Hails from Boot Leg Ranch in British Columbia. A splendid boy in every way. Brave, almost to the degree of being a dare-devil, and undoubtedly the cleverest junior in the saddle at St. Jim's. (Study No. 2.)

WYNN, DAVID LLEWELLYN.—A fellow of the very best type. A huge eater, and always fond of grub. But can practise self-denial at a pinch, and is usually

brimful of generous instincts. A splendid custodian, and a tip-top bowler. Hails from Wales, and is a credit to the gallant little Principality. (Study No. 4, New House.)

THIRD FORM

FORM-MASTER : HENRY SELBY, M.A.

The chief members of this form are as follows :

D'ARCY, WALTER ADOLPHUS.—The minor of Arthur Augustus, and the third son of the Earl of Eastwood. The leader of the fag tribe, inky-fingered, boisterous and full of fun.

FRAYNE, JOE.—Formerly a waif in the London streets. An honest, decent kid, greatly indebted to Tom Merry, who rescued him and brought him to St. Jim's.

GIBSON.—A youngster known as "Curly," but his real name is Stanley.

JAMESON, ERNEST.—A New House fag, but a member of Wally's gang.

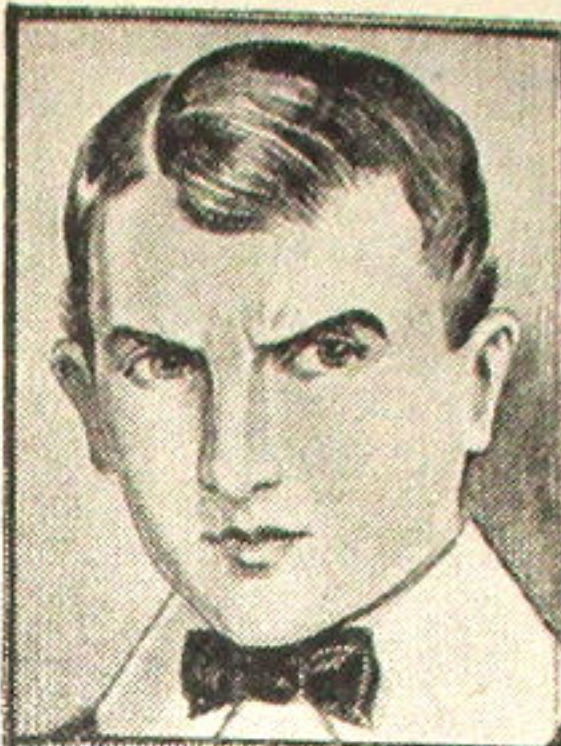
LEVISON, FRANK.—A decent kid, and the younger brother of Ernest and Doris. Has a great affection for Wally D'Arcy, and his brother's chums Cardew and Clive. Absolutely straight, without being at all priggish, and in all is as good a fellow as St. Jim's holds.

MANNERS, REGINALD.—A spoiled child; reckless, pig-headed, and a continual nuisance to his elder brother, Harry. Refuses flatly to be told, instructed, or advised. If he is so, he immediately shows his perverse nature by going and doing what has been forbidden. The least willing to acknowledge Wally's leadership, and more often than not carrying on in his own selfish manner.

PIGGOTT, REUBEN.—The merry blade of the Third. Older than some of the rest, a sworn enemy of Wally & Co., and generally toadying to Racke and Clampe of the Shell.



— THE END —



George Alfred Grundy



George Gore



Monty Lowther



Jerrold Lumley-Lumley



George Herries



Robert Arthur Digby



Reginald Talbot



Gerald Knox



Harry Noble

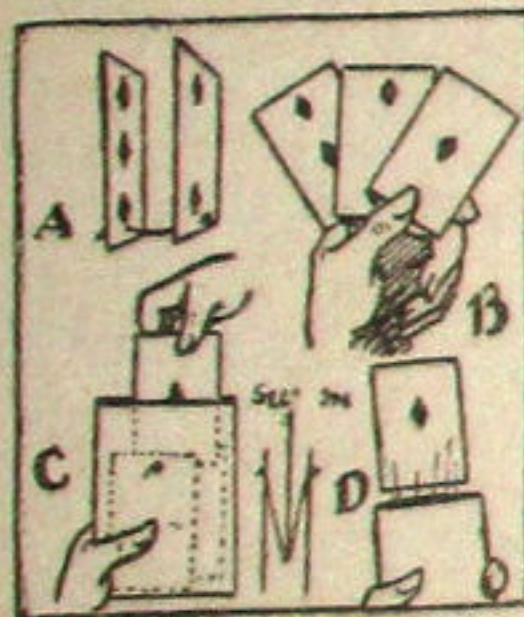
TRY THESE TRICKS

Simple Little Tricks Which Any Boy or Girl Can Quickly Learn

No. 1—The Magic Cards

FOR this splendid trick you will want three cards—say, the ace, two, and three of diamonds. Through the two latter cards thread a small piece of elastic, as shown by diagram A. Next obtain an envelope which will contain the cards.

To perform the trick hold the three cards



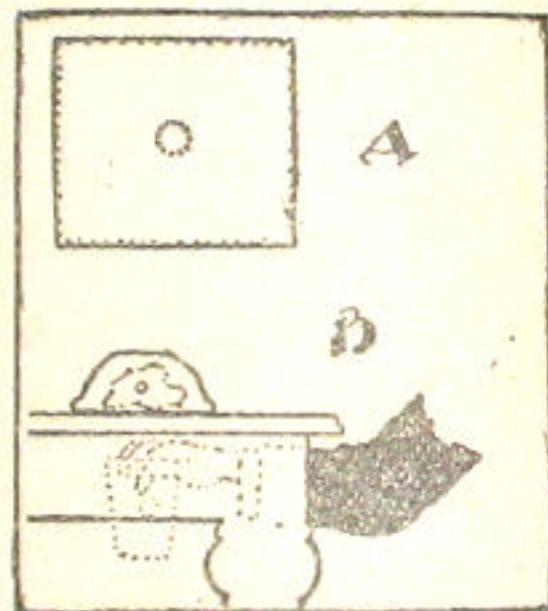
No. 1

as shown at B, thus letting your audience see them clearly—but, of course, concealing the elastic with your thumb. Place the two and three of diamonds into the envelope, with the elastic end up. Then slip the ace between the two, pressing down the elastic. When you have done this, ask one of your chums to name a card. If he calls for the ace, take off the pressure you have been maintaining on the envelope with your finger and thumb. The result will be that the ace will jump up. With practice you can also work either of the other cards to the surface if they are asked for just so long as you know in which position the two and three of diamonds are in the envelope. In the event of the two of diamonds being named, keep the pressure of your finger and thumb on the ace and the three, so that the other card can work its way out of the envelope. By holding the two and the ace the three-spot will come out.

No. 2—A Fine Coin Trick

BEFORE you can attempt to perform this trick you must get two handkerchiefs and sew them together by the edges. Before you have quite completed the sewing, place a penny between the two handkerchiefs, and then safely enclose it with a few final stitches. In the diagram A the dotted circle represents the penny between the handkerchiefs, and the dotted lines round the edge of the square, stitches.

Now to perform the trick, borrow a penny from a member of your audience and ask him to mark it. Pretend to place it in the centre of the handker-



No. 2

chief, but instead, keep the penny in the palm of your hand. Then hold up the handkerchief by the penny which is enclosed, and get your chums to feel it to make sure it is there. Fold up the handkerchief and place it under a basin upon the table. Next hold a glass tumbler beneath the table and tell your audience you will pass the penny from the handkerchief through the table into the glass. Then let the penny you hold in the same hand as the glass fall with a tinkling sound into the tumbler. Bring the glass into view and take from it the penny—which will be found to be the marked coin. Next take away the basin and flick the handkerchief to show it apparently empty.

No. 3—Removing the Paper

THIS is a good little trick which you can learn to perform in a very few minutes. Take a sheet of paper and place it at the edge of the table, and then get a tumblerful of water and place it one inch and a half from the edge of the table, on top of the paper. The paper should protrude about seven or eight inches over the edge of the table.

Can you get that sheet of paper into your hands without touching the glass or upsetting the water?

No? Then this is how it is done.

Hold the edge of the paper between the first finger and thumb of the left hand, draw it taut, and hold your right hand in the position shown in the diagram. Then, bringing the hand down smartly, but keeping the left hand steady, hit the paper in the manner shown by the arrow in the sketch. The paper will slip from under the glass, and the tumbler will remain on the table.



No. 3

Readers are advised to practice this with an enamel cup, or something that will not break should an accidental movement draw it from the table. But you should be able to do it first time.

No. 4—A Neat Catch

TAKE four kings and four jacks from a pack of cards and spread them face upwards on the table. Then, turning to your audience, say:

“Now, if you were a medical officer in the Army, and these men were recruits appearing before you, which of them would you pass for service?”

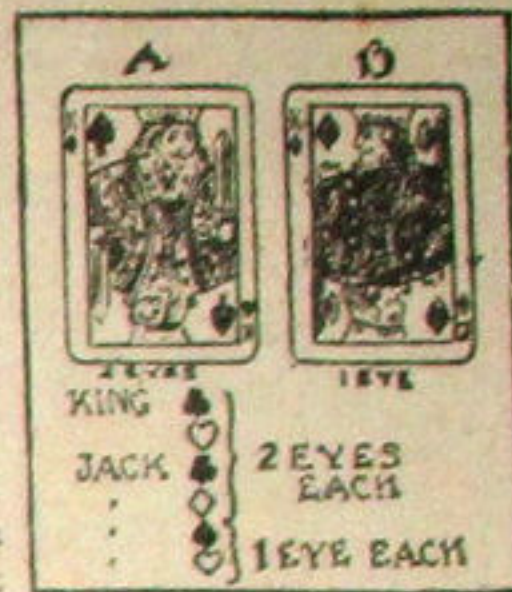
When your friends have given up the problem, throw aside those cards which are depicted in profile, such as that indicated at B.

“Those are the ones I should turn down.”

“Why?” your audience will ask.

“Because, you will observe, they have only one eye!”

Naturally, all such cards as that shown at A would be passed for service, as they have two sound optics.

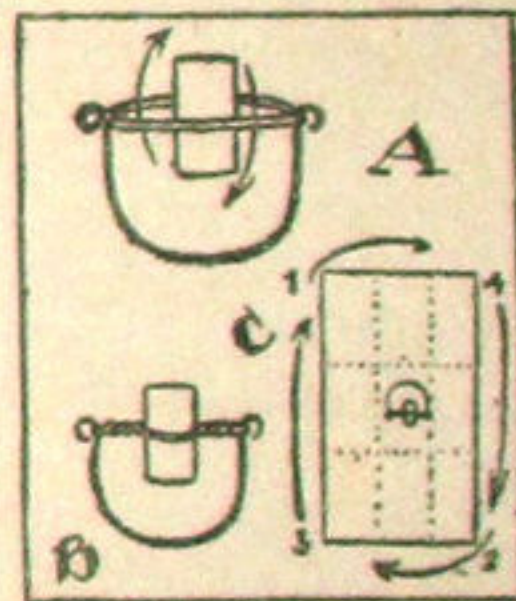


No. 4

No. 5—The Captive “Moth”

HERE is another amusing catch you can try on your friends. Get a stout piece of wire and bend to the shape shown by the heavy line in diagram A, making two loops at the ends. Through these loops pass an elastic band (also see A), and through the elastic put a thick piece of card. Wind the card round and round in the elastic, as shown at B.

Now place the whole thing in a stout piece of paper, keeping your finger on it so that the elastic does not unwind. Wrap the paper



No. 5

up in folds, as indicated by Fig. C. Then offer the packet to a friend, and ask him “what he thinks of the moth you have caught.” As your chum unwraps the paper he will be astonished by a sudden whir, just as though a moth were fluttering its wings against the paper.

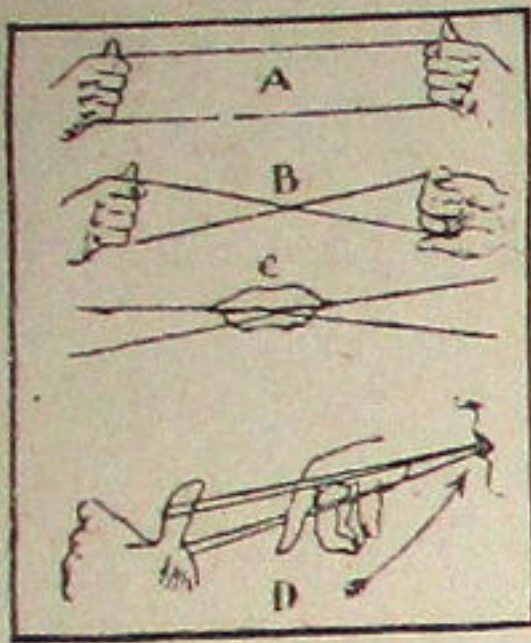
Have You Heard this Riddle?

Q. Which of the feathered tribe would be supposed to lift the heaviest weight?

A. The crane.

No. 6—A String Trick

TAKE a piece of string, tie the ends together, and hold it as shown in the sketch and marked A. The sketch is giving the front view. The next thing to do is to twist the



No. 6

string in the manner indicated by B. This is done by simply turning the left wrist away from the body. Put the cross-piece in your mouth, as shown in C, and as you do it turn your wrist back again to its original position. Grip the cross-piece with the teeth, as indicated by D, and put your forefinger in between the loops. Pull the string away from your mouth, and you will find that it does not get caught in your fingers, as your audience suppose. It is best to run your finger towards your mouth the same time as you let go with your teeth.

No. 7—A Good Coin Trick

THIS is perhaps one of the neatest coin tricks ever invented. My chums, however, must try the trick over by themselves—stand before a mirror and perform it!—because you must not make a mistake when you first perform before an audience. That would spoil the trick.

Everybody knows how to "palm" a coin—that is to say, conceal it in one hand so that onlookers cannot see it. Well, palm a small coin—say a threepenny-piece—in your left hand and hold another in your right hand.

Tell your friends you are going to make it come out of your elbow. Bend your arm so

that your right hand is pointing upwards, and is near your collar, and move your left hand towards your right elbow. You just drop the coin from your right hand between your neck and collar, show your friends the one you had in your left hand, and show them the empty right hand. They will be smart if they guess where the coin really went.

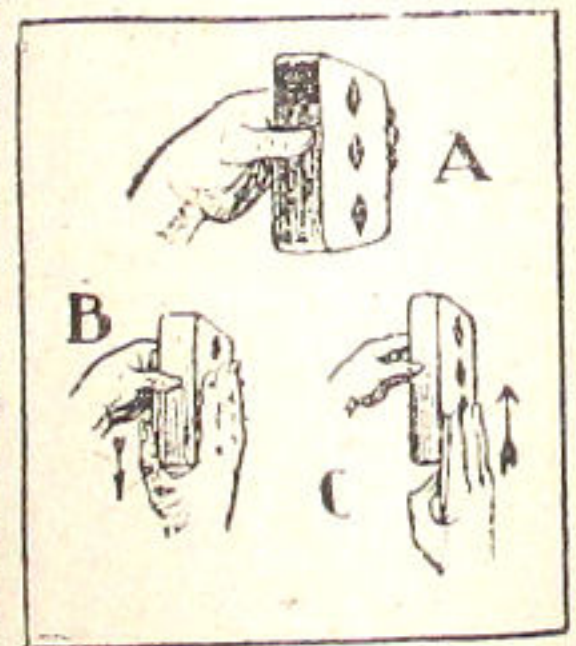
No. 8—Changing the Card

THIS little card trick is not very difficult, but it is a case where the quickness of the hand deceives the eye.

Take a pack of cards, and hold them with the left hand, as shown in the sketch, and marked A. The trick is to change the card shown by just passing your hand down it. This is how it is done.

If you look at the sketch marked B, you will notice that the thumb of the right hand is used to pull down the card at the back of the pack. The arrow shows the card coming down.

Now in C you have to pass the card quickly to the palm of your hand with your thumb, and press it against the front of the pack. Here, again, the arrow is showing the direction the fingers must take when you have the card from the back of the pack against the palm of your hand. The card

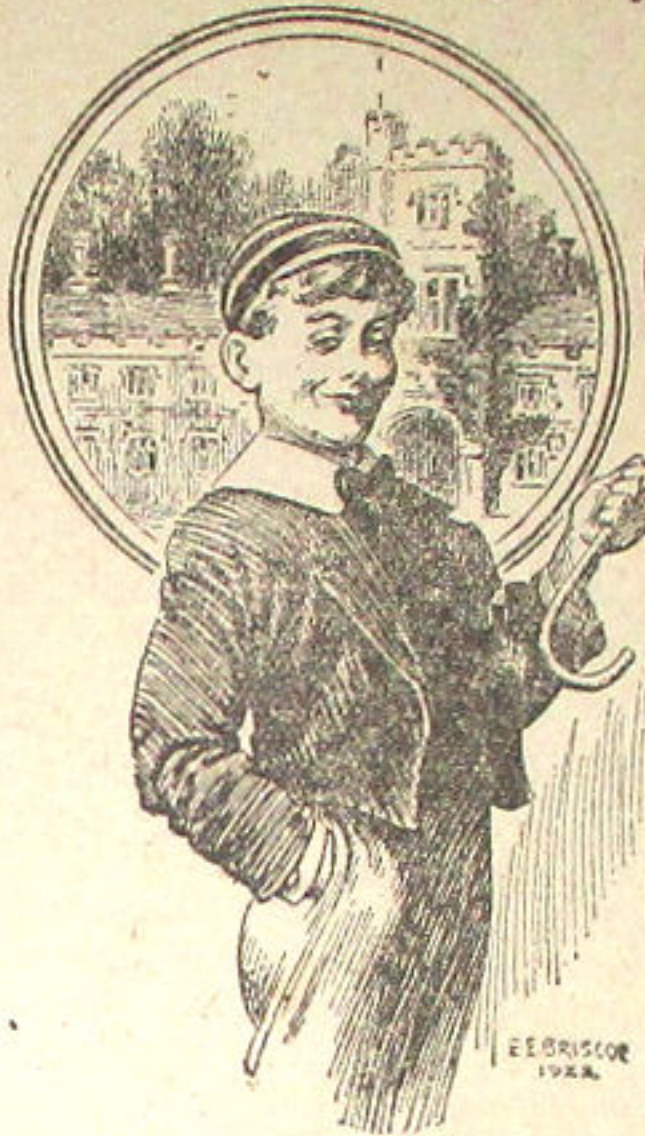


No. 8

that was originally in front is thus changed to the second card, whilst the one that was at the back has come to the front. Practice before you perform.



A Specially Exciting Story of School Life.



Captain of St. Jim's!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete
Story of Tom Merry & Co., the
Famous Juniors of St. Jim's

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Illustrated by E. E. Briscoe

THE FIRST CHAPTER

The Unexpected Happens!

"THERE'S somethin' goin' on, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's imparted that information with a sage shake of the head.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were talking footer, but they politely left off as Arthur Augustus made his remark. The swell of the Fourth Form was looking very serious indeed.

"Well, what's the news?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm afwaid it's somethin' sewious."

"Your tailor sent his bill in?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Wats!"

"Or has the order gone forth that juniors' collars are to be limited to a height of six inches——"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Nothing happened to your monocle, I hope?" asked Lowther, with an expression of real concern.

"Pway, don't be an ass, Lowthah," said

D'Arcy, with some asperity. "I wish you could be sewious at a time, and on a sewious subject. It's somethin' to do with old Kildare."

"Kildare!"

The Terrible Three were interested at once. Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was the idol of the Lower School. Certainly, he sometimes came down rather heavily on the chums of the Shell; but not more than half as often as they deserved. And, although he had a really "hefty" way of laying on the cane when he used it, the Terrible Three never faltered in their loyalty to old Kildare.

"What's happened?" asked Manners.

"In the first place a telegwam awwived——"

"That's happened before, and no bones broken," Monty Lowther remarked. "I've had telegrams myself."

"Pway don't talk wot, Lowthah. Kildare looked fwightfully wowwied when he wead the telegwam, and Levison says he heard him say 'My poor uncle!'"

"His uncle!" said Lowther reflectively.

"Ah, that lets in light on the matter! 'Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle!' as Hamlet

remarks. Kildare has been putting his Sunday topper up the spout, and that wire was from his 'uncle' to remind him that the ticket was up! Poor old Kildare!"

"You uthah ass, it could not have been that kind of uncle. Aftah that, Kildare went at once to the Head."

"What did he say to the Head?"

"How should I know, you duffah?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Didn't Levison hear anything? Couldn't he get anywhere near the keyhole?"

"I weally do not know; and in any case I should wefuse to listen to anythin' heard at a keyhole," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"But, aftah that, Kildare huwwied like anythin' to his study, and started packin'."

"Packing!" exclaimed the Terrible Three in a breath.

"Yaas; Levison says he's packin' his bags."

"Keyhole again!" grinned Manners.

"But what is he packing his bags for?" said Lowther, with a perplexed look. "Is he going somewhere where he will require a change of trousers?"

"You silly duffah!" exclaimed D'Arcy, exasperated. "When I say his bags, I do not mean his bags, I mean his bags, you ass!"

"Lucid, I must say!" commented Lowther.

"Levison says he is packing two bags——"

"A pair of bags?" suggested Lowther.

"Two twavellin' bags!" howled Arthur Augustus. "Twavellin' bags, you duffah. Not twucks—twavellin' bags! That looks as if he is goin' away. That's why I say there's somethin' sewious goin' on. I suppose even you silly asses would wegard it as sewious if old Kildare cleared off."

"By Jove! I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "But why should he be going? If he's had bad news——"

"I weally think it's up to us to go to him and expwess our sympathy," said Arthur Augustus; "that's what I was thinkin' of. At the same time, we can ask him what's on, you know."

Jack Blake of the Fourth came down the passage with Digby and Herries—all three of them looking rather excited.

"You fellows hear?" asked Blake.

"They say Kildare's leaving," said Digby.

"Levison says——" began Herries.

"Yes, we've just heard from D'Arcy that he's packing his trousers!" said Lowther.

"His bags!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Same thing. I suppose when a chap starts packing his trousers, it means that something serious has happened," went on Lowther, imperturbably. "Let's go and ask him."

"Rather a cheek, don't you think?" said Blake.

Lowther nodded calmly.

"Certainly; but we're famous for our cheek. Come on!"

And Monty Lowther led the way towards Kildare's study. In spite of his humorous remarks, Lowther was as concerned as the others at the idea that old Kildare might have had bad news. But he could not resist the temptation to pull the aristocratic leg of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

There was a group of juniors in the passage outside Kildare's study, talking somewhat excitedly. Evidently the news had spread. Levison was the centre of the group, and he was the object of interest. Levison, as usual, had gained information by applying to the keyhole.

"He looks awfully cut up," said Levison, "and he's shoving the things anyway into his bags. He's going—that's a cert."

"If he goes for good, there will be a new captain wanted for St. Jim's!" remarked Gore of the Shell.

"Chance for Knox!" observed Mellish.

"Or Cutts of the Fifth!" said another. "Cutts came very near putting up for election last time, you know."

"Oh, rats; a Fifth-former!" sniffed Reilly of the Fourth. "We're not going to have a Fifth Form chap for captain of the school—especially Cutts."

The next moment Reilly gave a yell, as a finger and thumb closed like a vice upon his ear. Gerald Cutts of the Fifth Form had come down the passage in time to hear his observation.

"What's that, Reilly?" said Cutts pleasantly, as he compressed his grip upon the junior's ear. "Taking my name in vain, eh?"

"Ow!" yelled Reilly. "Leggo, you beast!"

I said we wouldn't have you for captain of the school at any price, and we won't intoirely! Yow-ow!"

Cutts gave his ear another twist, and smiled genially and walked on. Reilly looked after him with a sulphurous expression.

"The baste!" he said, rubbing his ear. "The bullyin' baste!"

"Well, you asked for it," grinned Levison. "Why shouldn't Cutts be captain of the school? I think it would be a pleasant change after Kildare."

"You're a rotter," growled Jack Blake. "You'd like another rotter to be captain of the school, of course. Shut up!"

"Look here——"

"Shut up!" roared Blake.

And Levison considered it more judicious to shut up.

"But Kildare isn't gone yet," remarked Tom Merry.

"You're rather previous in settling the point. Let's speak to Kildare."

"I was wondahin' whethah we should be justified aftah all, in wowwyin' Kildare at a time like this——"

"Go on wondering, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther genially, and he knocked at Kildare's door.

"Come in!"

Lowther opened the door, and the chums of the School House crowded in. There were certainly many signs of departure in Kildare's study. Two large travelling bags were wide open, half-packed, and all sorts of articles were strewn on the chairs, the table, and the floor. Kildare, in his shirt-sleeves, was looking red

and hurried, as he jammed article after article into the bags.

"Excuse us, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "We are wathah concerned about you. May we venchah to inquiah whethah you have had any bad news?"

"Yes," said Kildare, concisely.

"Awf'ly sowwy!"

"Very sorry, Kildare," said Tom Merry; "but you are not leaving?"

"My uncle in Ireland is ill," said Kildare quietly. "It may be very serious. I'm going at once; I'm catching the next train at Rylcombe."

"But you're coming back!" exclaimed Tom in dismay.

"Yes, I'm coming back, but I don't know when. It may be a week or two — or months," said Kildare. "It all depends."

"Oh, crumbs! How are we going to get on without you, Kildare?"

Kildare smiled.

"I dare say the school will run on without me, Merry. Of course, there will have to be an election for a new cap-

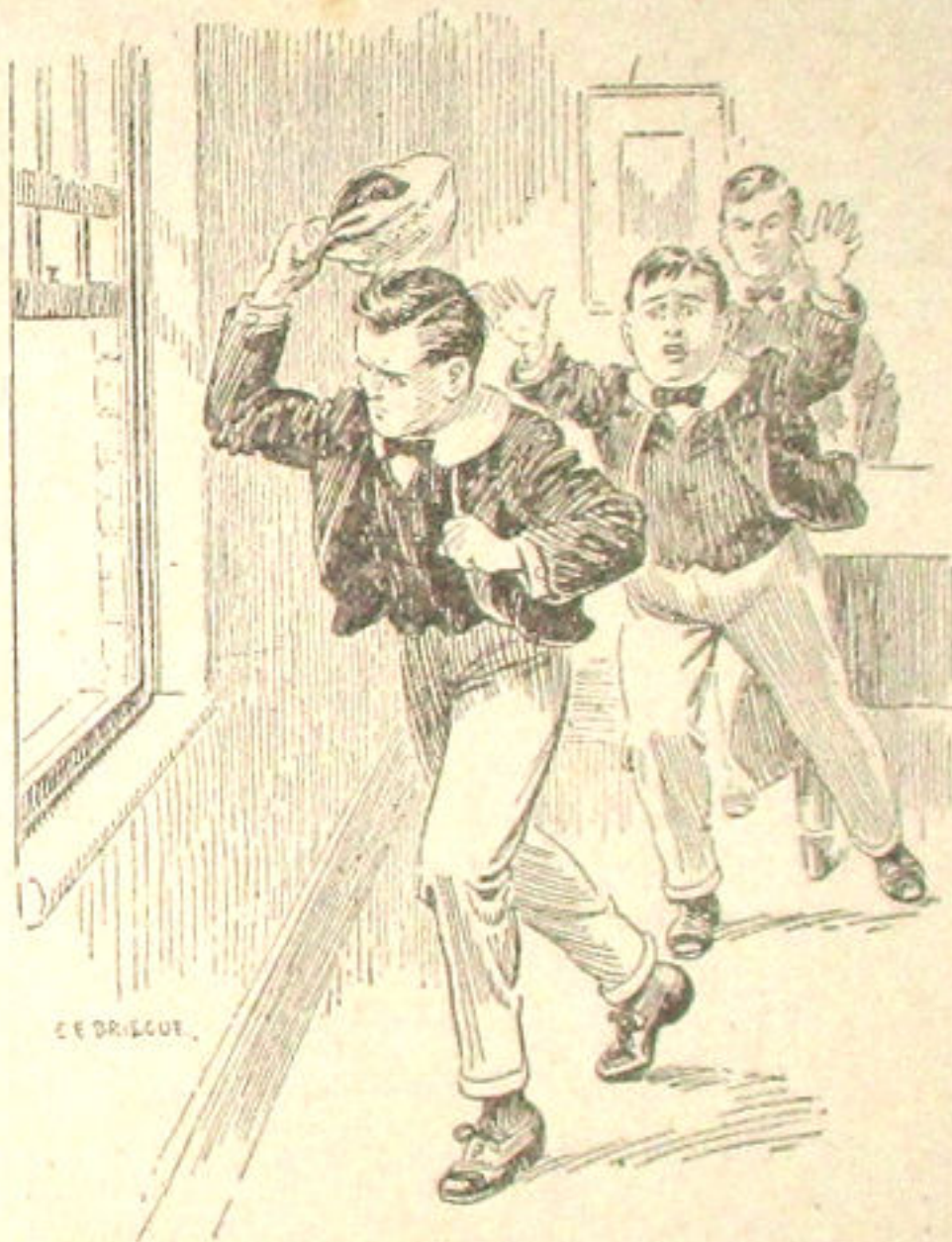
tain. I hope you kids will vote for the right man."

"Oh, you can rely on that!" said Blake promptly. "We'll take jolly good care that a School House chap gets in, and that it isn't left to a New House bounder."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Depend on that, Kildare!"

"I didn't mean exactly that," said Kildare, laughing. "The right man might be a New House fellow."



Figgins grabbed Fatty Wynn's bag of tarts and hurled it out of the window. (See page 276)

"Oh, imposs., deah boy!"

"It's up to the School House, of course," said Manners.

"We'll keep the rotters out!" said Blake confidently. "I'll put up for captain myself, rather than let a New House rotter sneak in!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, you'll have to settle for yourselves," said Kildare. "Buzz off now, will you! I'm rather busy."

"Can't we help you pack?" asked Blake.

"Thanks! I can manage."

And Kildare, who had not ceased packing while he spoke, turned away, as a very plain hint to the juniors that their presence was not required. Tom Merry & Co. left the study, and closed the door.

"Well, that's news, and no mistake!" said Tom, with a whistle. "There's going to be some excitement now. An election for a new captain will buck things up."

"Yaas, wathah! You chaps wemembah that I put up for captain once——"

"We remember!" agreed Blake. "But if you start being funny like that again, we shall take you into a corner and suffocate you!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Weally, you fellahs——"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "Gentlemen, we're going to give old Kildare a send-off, and then we'll meet in committee and decide upon our candidate."

"Hear, hear!"

And when Kildare started for the station, with his bags, in the trap driven by Taggles, more than half the school gathered at the gates to see him off, and sent a thunderous cheer after him. And when he had gone one great question was debated in every corner of the old school with the keenest interest, one question that interested everybody, from the head prefect to the smallest and inkiest fag in the Lower School, the question as to who was to take old Kildare's place as captain of St. Jim's!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Crisis!

FIGGINS of the Fourth rushed into his study in the New House at St. Jim's, his face blazing with excitement.

Kerr and Wynn were there, looking quite calm and sedate, as if nothing unusual were happening.

Kerr was working out some weird problem in mathematics, and did not even look up as Figgins rushed in. Kerr did that kind of thing for pleasure. He was built that way. Fatty Wynn was demolishing a bag of tarts, which was his way of taking pleasure. That was the way he was built.

"Have you heard?" gasped Figgins.

No reply. Kerr was deep in his problem, and Fatty Wynn had his mouth full of jam tart. Reply was impossible under the circumstances.

Figgins snorted.

"Wake up, you silly asses!" he shrieked. "Talk about Julius Cæsar fiddling while Rome was burning——"

That woke Kerr up. He looked up from his problem.

"It was Nero, you ass!" he said.

Then he looked down again, and resumed his mental labours.

"I don't care whether it was Nero or Julius Cæsar, or—or Lloyd George!" howled Figgins. "Wake up! Put that rot away!"

And the excited and energetic Figgins jerked the paper away from the table before Kerr, and tossed it into the study fire, and then grabbed Fatty Wynn's bag of tarts, and hurled it out of the window.

Both juniors were upon their feet in a second.

"You ass!" yelled Kerr.

"You silly chump!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Shut up!" shouted Figgins. "Can't you understand? I tell you this is the chance of a lifetime for the New House to score, and here you sit eating mathematics and working out tarts—I mean, eating tarts and working out filthy mathematics!"

"What's happened?"

"Don't I keep on telling you?" howled Figgins. "It's our big chance—the chance of a giddy lifetime!"

"You haven't told us anything so far," remarked Kerr.

"I think I'll buzz out and look for my

tarts," said Fatty Wynn, making for the door. "I'll hear your news when I come in, Figgy."

Figgins grasped his fat chum by the shoulder, whirled him away from the door, and plumped him into the armchair with a concussion that shook the whole study.

"You'll hear it now, fathead!" he roared.

"Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Groogh! Ow!"

"Has anything happened?" asked Kerr, interested at last.

It was not like Figgins to be so wildly excited over nothing.

"Anything happened?" hooted Figgins. "If you hadn't been sticking here in the study like a pair of—of—of Chinese mandarins, you'd have heard. The New House might go to the giddy bow-wows, and the School House score all along the line for all you'd care, so long as you had plenty of filthy tarts and disgusting mathematics."

"Those tarts were prime!" said Fatty Wynn warmly. "Mrs. Taggles made 'em fresh to-day, and they were twopenny ones."

"Cheese it! If you say tarts again I'll bump you on the floor!" said the indignant Figgins.

"But those tarts—— Oh! Ow! Yaroooh!"

Figgins was as good as his word. He grasped the fat Fourth-former, hauled him out of the armchair, and bumped him on the hearthrug. Fatty Wynn roared.

"Ow, ow, ow! You silly ass! Yow-ow!"

"There!" panted Figgins. "Now perhaps you'll listen, and stop talking about tarts. I tell you this is the time of our lives, the time to get a New House chap as captain of St. Jim's."

"What!"

"News to you, of course," snorted Figgins.

"You don't know that Kildare has gone——"

"Kildare gone!" ejaculated Kerr.

"Kildare gone!" gasped Fatty Wynn, as he scrambled up, and, in his astonishment, forbore to rush upon Figgins and hammer him in return for the bumping on the hearthrug.

"Of course you didn't know. So long as you have plenty of filthy——"

"Oh, ring off, and tell us the news!" said Kerr. "What has Kildare gone for?"

"His aunt, or something, is ill in Ireland, or Scotland, or somewhere," said Figgins,

rather vaguely. "He's gone, and he'll be a long time away. Perhaps won't come back at all."

"Sorry for that."

"Yes, yes; I'm sorry, too. But this is a time to be up and doing! Don't you see, this is where we get a New House chap in as captain of the school!" said Figgins excitedly. "It's the chance of our lives. Don't you see? We'll put up Monteith, or Baker, or somebody as candidate. It doesn't matter whom, so long as the New House scores."

"Is there going to be an election?"

"Haven't I told you so fifty times?" demanded Figgins. "Of course there is! And what do you think, those School House rotters are scheming already to get a School House chap in as captain. I call it disgusting! Old Kildare hardly out of the place, and they're laying plans to get a chap of their House into his shoes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr.

Figgins glared at him.

"What are you cackling at, you image?"

"Aren't you planning to get a chap of our House into his shoes, then?" grinned Kerr.

"That's different, of course, quite different. I suppose you'll agree that the School House isn't going to have a walk-over in this election," said Figgins hotly.

"Yes, rather!"

"New House hasn't much chance," said Fatty Wynn, with a shake of the head. "There are nearly twice as many fellows in the School House, and the rotters will stick together like glue to keep us out."

"Yes, that's like them!" growled Figgins. "Tom Merry & Co. are always up against Blake & Co., but they'll stick together as thick as thieves to keep the election in the School House. I call it disgusting the way they do it. Still, if we all stand together over here, and vote as one man, we may pull it off. United we stand, divided we fall, you know, and every fellow must back up his own House. What are you grinning at, Kerr, you blithering ass!"

"Oh, nothing!" said Kerr blandly. "I agree with you. We've got to get a New House candidate, and get him in. New House for ever!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Peaceful Visit!

"Hear, hear!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "And if there's more than one candidate on the School House side the vote will be split, and we shall have a look in."

"That's just it," said Figgins eagerly. "I've heard already that two School House chaps are going to put up—Knox of the Sixth and Cutts of the Fifth. They'll divide the vote in the House, while we shall vote solid for one man."

"Cutts has a good many friends in this House," Kerr remarked thoughtfully. "A lot of the New House seniors are in his set."

"If any New House chap votes against his House he'll be ragged and hanged, drawn, and quartered!" said Figgins darkly. "Senior or junior, no chap is going to be allowed to go back on his House. That's settled. Why, it's dog's ages since a New House chap was captain of St. Jim's. Those rotters over the way claim to be cock-House because they always elect a School House chap captain. We're going to alter all that this time. This is where we come in!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co. heartily.

"In fact, I was thinking that we might call on Tom Merry, and put it to him as a man and a brother," said Figgins. "Nobody wants a cad like Knox or Cutts as captain of the school. We could point out to Tom Merry that our man—Monteith—is just the man that's wanted."

"We could point it out," agreed Kerr, "but I don't feel sure that you'd get Tom Merry to see it."

"He's on fighting terms with both Knox and Cutts," said Figgins.

"That wouldn't make any difference when it's a question of backing up his own House against this side," said Kerr sagely.

"Well, it ought to," said Figgins warmly.

"Perhaps it ought, but it won't. You'll see——"

Kerr was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Oh, come in!" rapped out Figgins.

The door opened, and the Terrible Three came in. Figgins & Co. looked at them rather grimly. They had come just in time for Figgins to put it to Tom Merry as a man and a brother, as he expressed it.

"**A**HEM!" said Tom Merry. "Well?" demanded Figgins. "Ahem!"

"Got a cold?" asked Kerr, with concern.

"A cold? No!"

"Then what are you coughing about?"

"Ahem!"

"Don't hurry," said Figgins kindly. "There's lots of time—though you might get your vocal exercises over before you pay a visit. But take your time."

Tom Merry coloured a little.

"Ahem! You see, we've come to speak to you chaps on a rather important matter. The fact is, Figgy, I've come to talk sense to you."

"Rather a change, eh?" said Figgins.

"Look here——" began Tom Merry warmly. But Manners touched him on the arm, and he coughed again, and became exceedingly polite. "The fact is, Figgy—ahem——"

"Go it!" said Figgins encouragingly. "Only I'm afraid you'll wear out the inside of your neck at this rate. But don't mind me."

"You know Kildare has gone——"

"I saw him off."

"And we're going to have a new election for captain——"

"I suppose so."

"It's admitted on all hands," continued Tom Merry, "that the captain of St. Jim's is always selected from the School House."

"Is it?" said Figgins grimly.

"Oh, yes! Now, I've come to talk to you like an uncle," said Tom Merry. "It occurred to me—ahem!—that you fellows might have got some wild idea into your heads of putting up a New House chap for captain."

"Barely possible, ain't it?" said Figgins sarcastically.

"My idea," went on Tom, "is that we should all stand together—all St. Jim's as one man, you know, on this question. Union is strength. United we stand, divided we come a mucker. The whole school ought to stand shoulder to shoulder at a time like this, and elect the right candidate, irrespective of the House he belongs to."

Figgins thawed visibly.

"Now you're talking hoss-sense!" he exclaimed heartily. "I agree with you all along the line. That's just what I think."

"Oh, good!"

"I was only just saying to Kerr that I was going to suggest that very thing to you," said Figgins. "You've got a lot of influence with the kids on the other side, and lots of them will follow your lead. You do the right thing, and we'll get the right man in in old Kildare's place."

"Figgy, you're a jolly sensible chap!" said Tom Merry admiringly. "I must say I never expected you to take such a sensible view of the case."

"I never expected it of you, for that matter," said Figgins. "We seem to be in agreement. The right man has got to get in, and blow what House he belongs to!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Terrible Three unanimously.

"And you'll vote for our man?" asked Figgins.

"Eh?"

"Our candidate——"

"But you haven't one," said Lowther.

"We're going to have one."

"Not a New House chap!"

"Yes, a New House chap, of course!" said Figgins warmly. "Haven't you just said that the right man has got to get elected, irrespective of his House?"

"Ye-es; but, of course, he's going to be a School House chap," said Tom Merry. "That's understood."

Figgins snorted.

"Oh, rats! There you go again! Our

opinion is that it's time a New House chap was captain of the school, and we're going to get our head prefect, Monteith, to put up. What have you got to say against Monteith?"

"Oh, nothing, except—except that he isn't the right man."

"Why isn't he?" demanded Figgins.

"Ahem! We've got a lot of better fellows on our side—Darrel, or Rushden, or Langton——"

"Bosh! Monteith's the man!"

"Now look here, Figgy! This is a time for all St. Jim's to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, and——"

"And elect your man?" sniffed Figgins.

"Well, yes, I suppose it comes to that," admitted Tom Merry.

"I want to put this to you, as a reasonable chap."

"I was going to talk to you as a reasonable chap, but it doesn't seem much good," said Figgins. "You chaps have a weird idea in your heads that the School House is cock-House of St. Jim's——"

"Well, isn't it?" demanded the Terrible Three, with one voice.

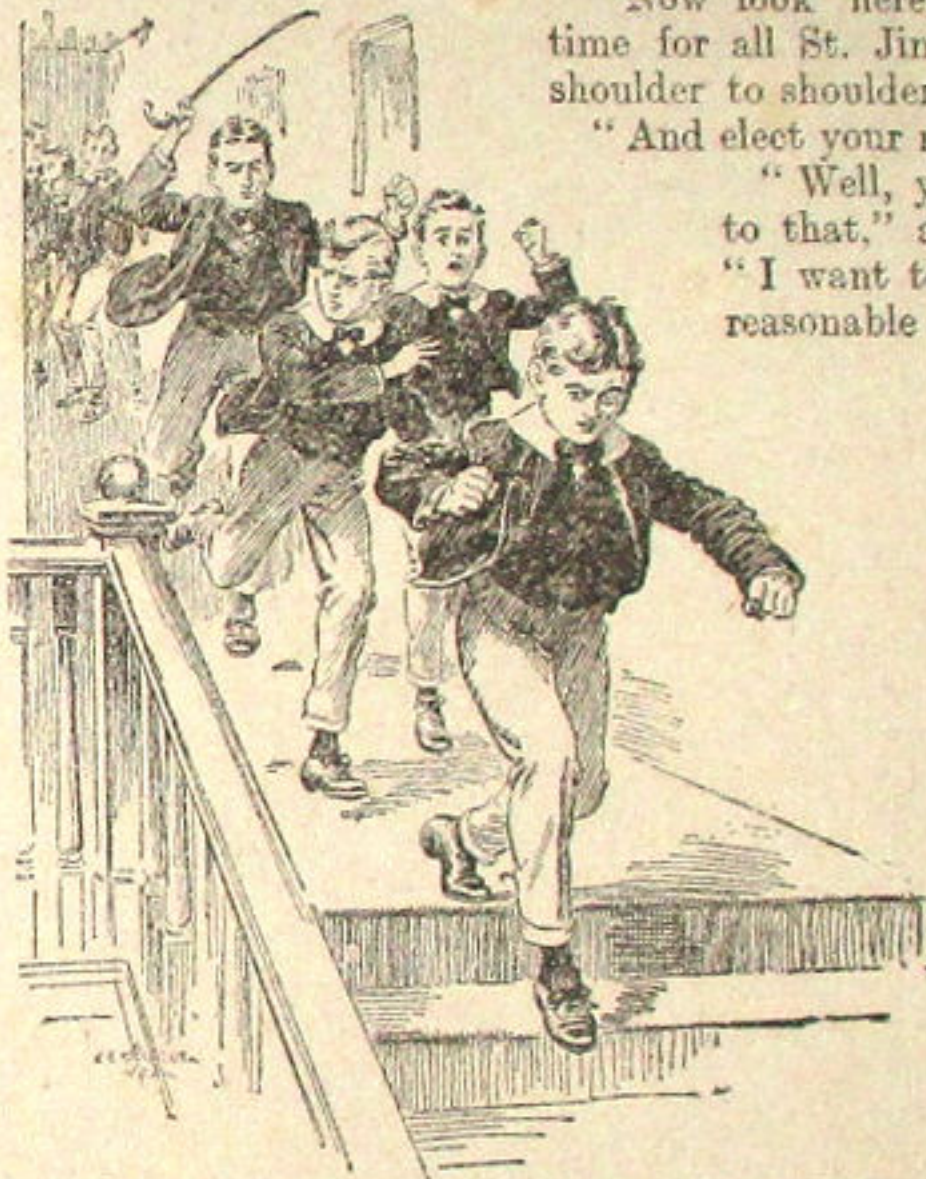
"Oh, don't be funny!" said Figgins crossly. "Besides, what candidates have you got? Knox of the Sixth—a rotten bully—and Cutts

of the Fifth—a beastly blackguard! You know as well as I do that Cutts is a gambler, and a regular black sheep. Nice kind of a captain for St. Jim's, I must say!"

"We don't want either Knox or Cutts," said Tom Merry promptly. "There will be a better man put up. There hasn't been time yet."

"And the better man will belong to this House," said Figgins.

"Rats!"



The Terrible Three ran for the stairs, with Monteith behind them, still lashing out with his cane. (See page 281)

"If Figgins cannot take the matter seriously——" began Manners.

"It's you silly asses who're not taking it seriously!" hooted Figgins. "We won't have Knox or Cutts at any price!"

"But what about Darrel or Langton?"

"Blow Darrel or Langton!"

"Besides, they won't put up, most likely," said Kerr. "Darrel's working for an examination now, and he won't have the time, and Langton never shoves himself forward in anything. All the good men are on our side—Monteith, or Baker, or Webb——"

"Hot!"

"You've got two candidates," said Figgins, "and they're the rottenest you could scrape up, even in that old casual ward you call a House. You can't say that either Knox or Cutts would make a good captain of the school."

"Admitted," said Tom Merry.

"Then you'll vote for our man!"

"No fear! Must be a School House chap!"

"I suppose I was an ass to think for a moment that you could talk sense," said Figgins disdainfully. "You'd rather have a cad like Cutts, or a bully like Knox, than a really decent man from this side."

"Well, your Monteith is rather a bully, if you come to that. You've had plenty of rows with him yourself," said Lowther.

"One forgets little personal differences at a time like this," said Figgins loftily.

"Then we can forget our little personal differences with Cutts of the Fifth."

"That's different."

"How is it different?" demanded Lowther.

"No good talking sense to a silly ass!" said Figgins. "There's none so blind as those who won't see. Any silly chump could see at once that Monteith is the right man."

"That accounts for your seeing it, I suppose!" Lowther remarked reflectively.

And Tom Merry and Manners chuckled.

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Monty Lowther, you've come to the right shop!" said Figgins darkly. "In fact, if you fellows are going to play the giddy ox over this section, it wouldn't be a bad idea to start by giving you a jolly good walloping all round."

"Might knock some sense into them," assented Kerr.

The Terrible Three looked warlike at once. They, too, were exasperated by their rivals' obstinate view of the case.

"We came here on a peaceable errand," said Tom Merry warmly. "But we're quite ready to wipe up the study with you chaps, if you come to that."

"Pile in, then!" said Figgins defiantly. "Here's the study, and here's us!"

"Look here——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"For two pins I'd wipe up the floor with you, Figgins!" roared Tom Merry.

Figgins promptly searched on the mantelpiece, found two pins, and extended them to the captain of the Shell.

"There you are!" he snorted.

"You silly ass!"

"You burbling chump!"

No more was said. Tom Merry's left arm was embracing Figgins's neck the next moment, and his right was very busy. Both Figgins's hands were busy. And in less time than it takes to tell, as a novelist would put it, Kerr and Wynn and Manners and Lowther were mixed up in a wild and whirling tussle.

Tramp—tramp—tramp!

"Ow, you rotter!"

"Groo! You lathead!"

"Yow-ow! School House cad! Yow!"

"New House rotter! Groo!"

"Chuck the cads out!" roared Figgins.

Manners went out first, and landed in the passage with a bump. But it was Figgins who followed him, chucked out of his own study. Kerr and Lowther came whirling out together, and stumbled over Figgins and Manners, and made a wild and wriggling heap in the passage. Tom Merry and Fatty Wynn staggered out after them—chucking one another out. The uproar in the passage was terrific, and the excited juniors did not hear steps upon the stairs.

Monteith of the Sixth, the head prefect of the New House, came up the stairs three at a time, with a cane in his hand.

He did not stop to talk. There was no need for words. Action was required, and the prefect's actions were prompt and emphatic.

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

"Yow-ow! Ow! Yarocoo!"

SHOULDER HIGH!



To face page 281

CHAIRING THE NEW CAPTAIN!

The combatants separated suddenly. Figgins & Co. bolted back into their study, and slammed the door. The Terrible Three ran for the stairs, with Monteith behind them, still lashing out with the cane.

Tom Merry and his chums were feeling decidedly ill-used by the time they escaped from the New House and fled across the quadrangle. Monteith grinned at them from the doorway.

"And that's the rotter Figgins wants us to vote for!" growled Monty Lowther, as they dodged into the School House.

"Catch us voting for him!" sniffed Manners.

"Blessed if I wouldn't rather have Cutts!" grunted Tom Merry.

"Seems to me we've had cuts—too many of them," said Lowther.

"Oh, don't be funny now!"

And in Figgins's study in the New House the Co. were rubbing their injuries, and grumbling with emphasis.

"Monteith is rather a handy beast with the cane," Figgins remarked.

"Rotten!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "I got three!"

"And I got two!" growled Kerr. "Blessed if I haven't half a mind to vote for a School House man after all."

But Figgins shook his head.

"We're going to vote for Monteith, if he skins us!" he said. "It's up to the New House."

And the Co. grunted and agreed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

A Most Important Meeting!

"THREE giddy candidates!" Jack Blake remarked.

It was the morning.

The previous evening the St. Jim's fellows had discussed the question of the vacant captaincy in all its bearings.

The School House fellows were almost unanimously of opinion that the new captain must be a School House chap. They really felt that the stars in their courses would object to anything else. That was a rule as firmly fixed as the solar system, or the laws of Medes and Persians.

The New House fellows, on the other hand,

were perfectly unanimous in declaring that the time had come for a change, and that it was high time the New House had a look in.

A popular candidate on the School House side, standing alone, would have been assured of an easy victory, for the School House had nearly twice as many occupants as the smaller House over the way.

But it had to be admitted that neither Knox nor Cutts was popular.

Also, the candidates split the vote.

With the School House divided between the two, the New House had an excellent chance of getting their man in—especially as many School House fellows in the senior Forms undoubtedly preferred Monteith to either Knox or Cutts.

Cutts, the dandy of the Fifth, was popular with a certain set, but he was a black sheep, and all the more thoughtful fellows were against him. Knox was a bully, and very much disliked in the Lower School.

Monteith of the New House had his faults, but he was a good footballer, a good captain of his House, and he had a great deal of influence. He was likely to make a better captain of the school than either of the others. As Tom Merry remarked, if he had only been in the School House there wouldn't have been any doubt about the election; they'd have plumped for Monteith, and left both Cutts and Knox out in the cold.

As it was, the matter was in great doubt.

After morning lessons, Tom Merry called a meeting in the junior common-room to discuss the election. The meeting was well attended. Most of the juniors looked to Tom Merry to give them a lead.

"The question is, are we going to vote for a cad like Cutts, or a brute like Knox, or let a New House chap romp home?" said Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

"It's wathah a difficult mattah," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked thoughtfully. "We don't want that boundah Cutts, and we don't want that bwute Knox—but above all, we don't want a New House fellah."

"Hear, hear!"

"Seems no way out of it," said Jack Blake; "but we can't let the New House man get in, that's a dead cert."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gentlemen——" began Tom Merry.

There was a buzz of talk, and Monty Lowther rapped on the table.

"Silence for the chair!" he shouted.

"Who's the chair?" demanded Blake.

"I'm chairman of this meeting——"

"Who made you chairman?" a dozen voices inquired at once.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Order! Gentlemen, Tom Merry will now address the meeting——"

"I have some wemarks to make myself, Lowthah——"

"You can go out into the passage and make them, D'Arcy. Tom Merry will now address the honourable meeting——"

"I wefuse to go out into the beastly passage and make my wemarks——"

"Order!"

"I wefuse to ordah——"

"Chuck that heckler out!" shouted Lowther. "Blessed if he isn't worse than a blessed suffragette. Boot him out!"

"You wottah——"

"Silence!" shouted Manners. "Pile in, Tommy!"

"Gentlemen! I——"

"I was goin' to say—— Ow-yow! Leggo, Mannahs, you silly ass, or I shall stwike you."

"Order!"

"Yes, shut up a bit, Gussy," said Blake. "You can have your whack after Tom Merry's finished!"

"Wats! Let Tom Mewwy have his whack aftah I am finished."

"But you never are finished, you know," remarked Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, I considah——"

"Silence!"

The united efforts of Blake and Herries and Digby reduced Arthur Augustus to indignant silence at last, and Tom Merry proceeded:

"Gentlemen, we have now reached an important and unequalled crisis in the history of St. Jim's——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Correct!"

"Silence!"

"The good old school is in danger of falling

from its high estate, and, in plain English, of sliding off to the giddy bow-wows."

"Is that plain English?" said Blake, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"We are in danger," resumed Tom Merry, "of getting a New House chap as captain of the school. Gentlemen, that calamity must be warded off! Such a state of things must never come to pass. Every fellow must buck up and keep the New House man out. Is any here who would give his own House the go-by, and let in a rotter from over the way? If any, speak, for him have I offended!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Give Shakespeare a rest, and come down to business," implored Blake.

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"Well, that's a good word!" murmured Blake.

"Behold, at this crisis in our history, there is a split in the House. Two candidates have put up to divide the vote. And it must be admitted, that neither candidate possesses the confidence of this House."

"Vewy twue——"

"Yes, rather; pair of rotters."

"I guess that's so," said Lumley-Lumley; "but any old thing is better than having a New House man."

"Yaas, wathah! That would be the howlin' limit."

"Gentlemen, there is therefore only one thing to be done——"

"Pile in!"

"What's the wheeze?"

"There must be another candidate found."

"Oh!" said the meeting in surprise.

"We must discover a candidate more acceptable to the feelings of this House," said Tom Merry, firmly. "Some more respectable and respected person must be made to come forward, and then Knox and Cutts will get the marble eye."

"Hear, hear!"

"Pway allow me to speak——"

"Order! Silence! Shut up!"

"I insist upon sayin' a word——"

"Boot him out!"

"I wefuse to be booted out. I have a candidate to suggest."

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"I weally wegard myself as a wight and pwopah person to be skippah of this coll. I have the honour to pwopose myself for the suf-wages of this hon-ouwable meetin'," said the swell of the Fourth, with dignity.

"Order!"

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"Kick him out!" roared the meeting.

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"Old Kildare was the right sort!"

"Good old Kildare!" chorused the meeting.

"Unless the Lower School bucks up, I fear there will be a worse come in his place," said Tom Merry. "Gentlemen, I suggest a deputation of the Lower School to wait upon a proper candidate, and make him come forward. Darrel of the Sixth is our man."

"Bravo!"

"Darrel is hiding his light under a bushel at present. But this isn't a time for him to blush unseen and waste his sweetness on the desert air. At this crisis in our history he has got to come forward, and if he won't come he's got to be made."

"Hurray!"

"Gentlemen, I appoint myself chairman of a deputation——"

"Like your cheek!" said Blake.

"I select Lowther, Manners, Blake, Kangaroo, Herries, Digby, Reilly, and Lumley-Lumley as members of the deputation——"

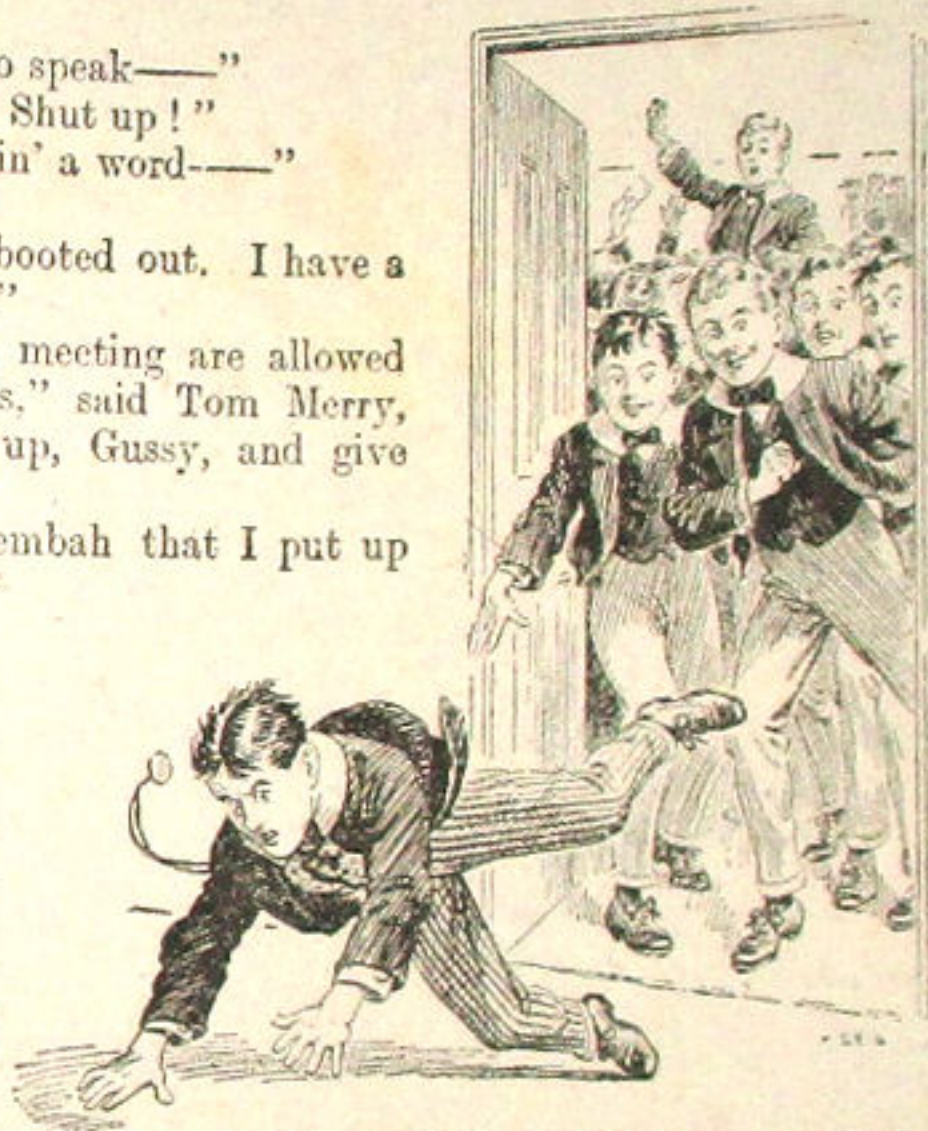
"Good egg!" said all the juniors named, with hearty concurrence.

"At a time like this, with the fate of the old school trembling in the balance, it's no time for Darrel to do the thinking of disgusting examinations."

"Shame!"

"It's up to us to point out his duty to him and see that he does it. Gentlemen, the deputation will now accompany me to Darrel's study, and all the other fellows can come along and stay in the passage, and cheer when I give the signal."

"Good egg!"



Business was interrupted for a few moments while Arthur Augustus was deposited in the passage. (See this page)

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gentlemen——" began Tom Merry.

There was a buzz of talk, and Monty Lowther rapped on the table.

"Silence for the chair!" he shouted.

"Who's the chair?" demanded Blake.

"I'm chairman of this meeting——"

"Who made you chairman?" a dozen voices inquired at once.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Order! Gentlemen, Tom Merry will now address the meeting——"

"I have some wemarks to make myself, Lowthah——"

"You can go out into the passage and make them, D'Arcy. Tom Merry will now address the honourable meeting——"

"I wefuse to go out into the beastly passage and make my wemarks——"

"Order!"

"I wefuse to ordah——"

"Chuck that heckler out!" shouted Lowther. "Blessed if he isn't worse than a blessed suffragette. Boot him out!"

"You wottah——"

"Silence!" shouted Manners. "Pile in, Tommy!"

"Gentlemen! I——"

"I was goin' to say—— Ow-yow! Leggo, Mannahs, you silly ass, or I shall stwike you."

"Order!"

"Yes, shut up a bit, Gussy," said Blake. "You can have your whack after Tom Merry's finished!"

"Wats! Let Tom Mewwy have his whack aftah I am finished."

"But you never are finished, you know," remarked Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, I considah——"

"Silence!"

The united efforts of Blake and Herries and Digby reduced Arthur Augustus to indignant silence at last, and Tom Merry proceeded:

"Gentlemen, we have now reached an important and unequalled crisis in the history of St. Jim's——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Correct!"

"Silence!"

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from its high estate, and, in plain English, of sliding off to the giddy bow-wows."

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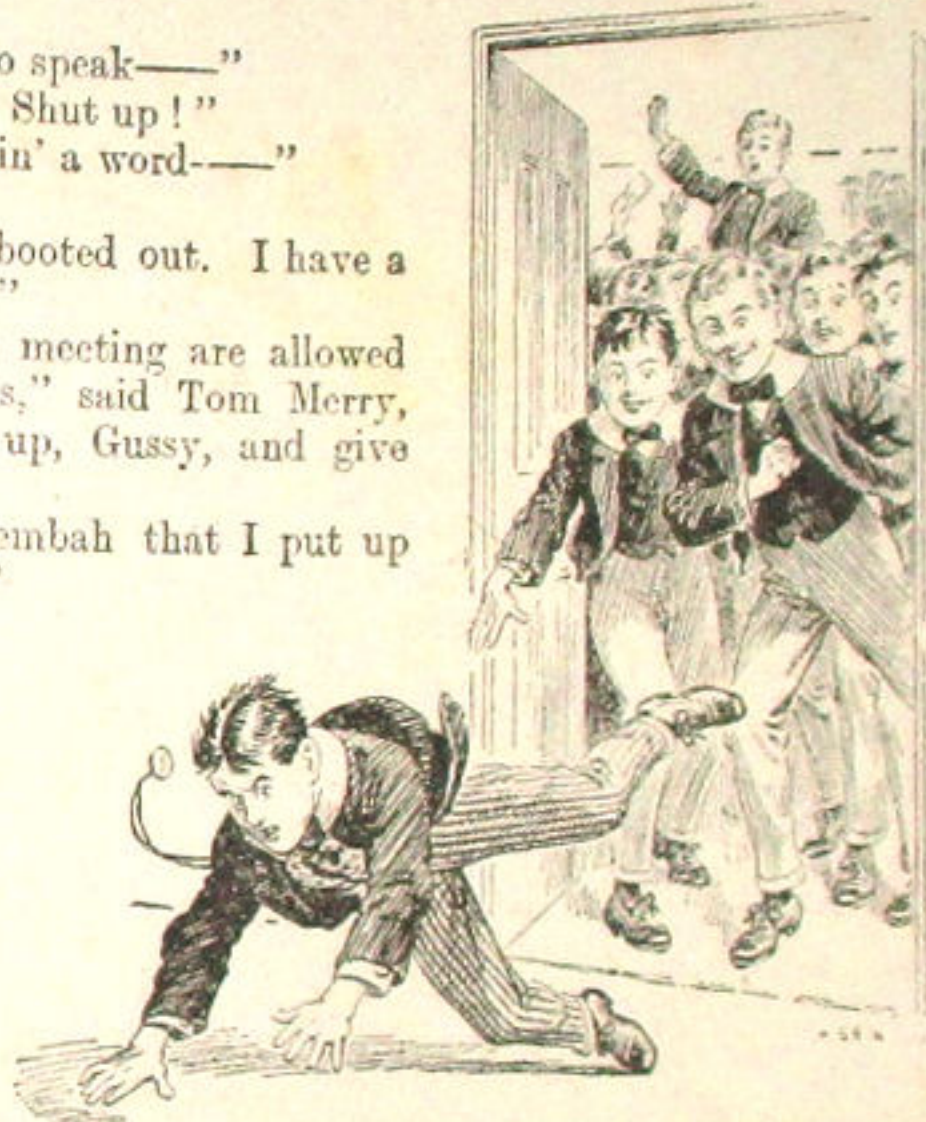
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"And as there is no time like the present, I vote that we strike the iron while it is hot, and get to Darrel at once. He's in his study now, swotting over some filthy exam. or other. Let's have him out."

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry's proposal was carried unanimously. The captain of the Shell marched off, followed by the deputation; and the rest of the meeting marched after them like an army. And in a few minutes the Sixth Form passage was swarmed, and buzzing like a hive of bees.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

No Luck!

KNOX of the Sixth looked out of his study doorway.

Knox's face was unusually amiable.

As a rule, Knox was what the juniors described as a beastly bully, and if he found a junior within reach of his hand, that was generally sufficient reason for Knox to cuff him. That little habit of Knox's did not endear him to the Lower School.

But Knox the bully, and Knox the candidate for the captaincy, were two quite different persons. Knox was very keen to get in as captain of the school. And he knew that he had not the slightest chance of getting in unless he could ingratiate himself with the juniors and obtain their votes.

So Knox twisted his unpleasing countenance into an unaccustomed grin as he looked at the juniors in the Sixth Form passage.

"Hallo, what are you kids after?" he asked.

Blake winked at his comrades. He could not resist the opportunity of pulling the leg of the unpopular prefect.

"We're a deputation," he said, gravely.

"Oh, are you?" said Knox, amiably.

"About the election, I suppose?"

"That's it. We've come to see the Sixth Form candidate."

"Oh, good!" said Knox.

"We want to impress upon him that he's going to get all our votes, and that it's his duty to keep all rival candidates out," explained Blake.

Knox nodded with satisfaction.

"That's right," he said. "You back up the Sixth Form candidate. It's simply ridicu-

lous for Cutts to put up for election. There never was a Fifth-former captain of St. Jim's that I know of."

"That's what we all say," remarked Monty Lowther, entering into Blake's little joke. "Cutts is simply out of it."

"Certainly!" said Knox.

"Like his cheek to put up, don't you think so, Knox?"

"Decidedly."

"Besides, he isn't the kind of captain we want."

"Of course he isn't," agreed Knox.

"What we want is a really straight, out-and-out fellow—a chap one can rely on—a fellow who's as good as his word, and can always be depended on to play the game," said Manners.

Knox grinned again; a little uneasily. That description did not apply to him, and he knew it, and he was surprised to hear Manners speak like that. But it had not yet occurred to him that the deputation had come to the Sixth Form quarters to see anybody but himself.

"Ye-es, exactly," said Knox.

"You approve of our views, Knox, I hope?" asked Blake solemnly.

"Most certainly," said Knox.

"Then you'll come with us to ask Darrel to put up?" said Blake, innocently.

Knox's jaw dropped.

"Darrel!" he ejaculated.

"Yes; we want Darrel to put up as a candidate—that's what we've come here for," Blake explained, apparently not noticing the change in the Sixth-former's face.

Knox's teeth gritted together, and his eyes gleamed with fury.

"You—you've come here to ask Darrel to put up?" he shouted.

"Yes; didn't you know?" said Blake, with angelic innocence.

"You—you young rotter!"

"Why, just now you said you agreed with us, and approved!" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment. "There seems to be no pleasing you, Knox."

"You—you—I thought—I mean——"

"Won't you come with us to ask Darrel to put up?"

"No, I won't!" roared Knox. "Get out of this passage at once. How dare you fags crowd round the senior studies like this?"

"But we've come to——"

"Clear off at once!"

There was a howl of laughter from the crowd of juniors. Knox's change of attitude, as soon as he discovered that the deputation was for Darrel and not for himself, was very striking. But the juniors did not mean to be ordered off. They had come there to interview Darrel, and they meant to interview Darrel.

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry, with great politeness, as Knox repeated his angry order. "We're here on business, you know, and we're not going just yet."

"I order you to clear off!" shouted Knox.

"You're not a prefect now, you know," said Blake, coolly. "The Head sacked you from that, after you went to the races."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We take orders only from prefects," said Monty Lowther. "You are a bad boy, Knox, and we don't take any notice of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't clear out of this passage, I'll come and boot you out!" roared Knox, furiously.

"Well, if you can boot fifty chaps out, you're welcome to try it on," said Jack Blake, laughing. "I fancy somebody will get hurt, and I suspect that it won't be us. But come and begin the booting, Knoxey."

Knox did not come and begin the booting. Since he had been deprived of his prefectship by the Head his authority was gone; and as for using force, the juniors were rather too many for that to be successful. So Knox went back into his study and slammed the door forcibly, and the juniors chuckled with glee.

"This is where Knoxey takes a back seat," Blake remarked. "Now let's get on with the washing. Have old Darrel out."

Tom Merry thumped at Darrel's door, and opened it. Darrel of the Sixth was seated at the table, with books and papers round him. He did not look pleased at the intrusion as the junior deputation marched into his study.

"Hallo, what do you young shavers want?" said Darrel, which was not encouraging for a beginning. But Tom Merry did not falter.

"We want you, Darrel!" he said directly.

"Eh, what's that?"

"You're wanted to put up as captain of St. Jim's in the election now pending. We're a deputation from the Lower School, and we've come to ask you."

Tom Merry made a signal to the crowd in the passage, and there was a roar of cheering at once.

"Hurray!"

"Darrel captain! Hurray!"

Darrel of the Sixth smiled, and shook his head and said:

"Sorry! I've decided not to stand."

"Yes, we know that," said Tom Merry. "But we want you to alter your decision, you see."

"Sorry!"

"You admit, Darrel, that it won't do to let in rotters like Knox and Cutts——"

"You mustn't talk of seniors like that, unless you're looking for a thick ear," said Darrel, frowning. "But if you're not satisfied with Knox and Cutts, there's another candidate—a really good man—Monteith of the New House."

"Oh, rats!"

"What?" exclaimed Darrel, rising. Darrel was a Sixth-former and a prefect, and he was not accustomed to such rejoinders to his remarks.

"Ahem! I don't mean rats!" said Tom Merry hastily. "That was a slip of the tongue. What I mean is, that we can't have a New House bounder as captain of the school."

"Monteith's just fitted for the post," said Darrel. "I'm going to vote for him myself."

"You are?" gasped the juniors.

"Certainly! I think he's the best man."

"But he's a New House chap!" howled the deputation.

"What about that?"

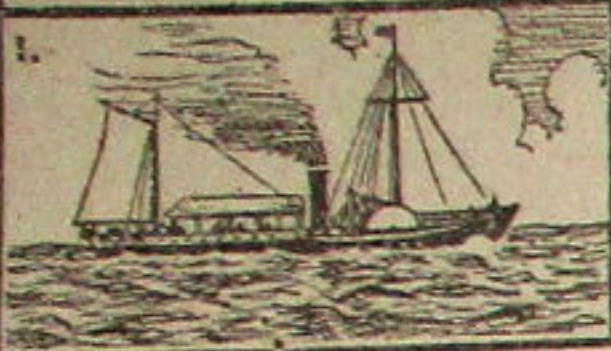
"Well, it's up to the School House, you know."

"Nonsense."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Vote for Monteith," said Darrel. "He's the right man, in my opinion. And I think it's time the New House had a show, too. The school captain has always been elected from this House. Turn about is fair play."

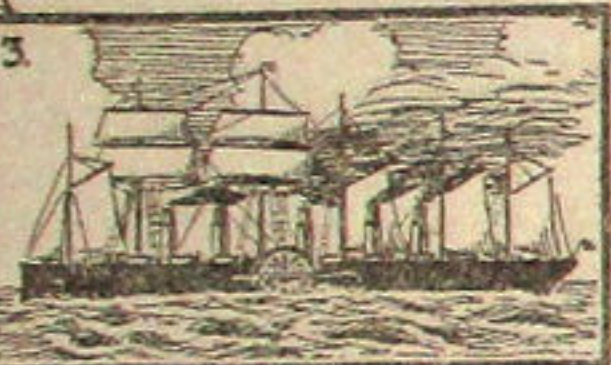
The Development of the Steamship.



The first real attempt at steam navigation took place about the year 1780, when experiments were being carried out in England, France, and America, but the original successful steamboat must be accredited to Robert Fulton. After many failures and disappointments he at last constructed the Clermont (see Fig. 1). This was undoubtedly the first boat driven by steam that was of any practical use. She made her trial trip in 1807 and was only 133 ft. in length. What a midget when compared with the present-day Atlantic liners!

One of the first two steamships to cross the Atlantic (they both arrived in America on the same day—April 23, 1838) was the Great Western, shown in Fig. 2. This boat was 212 feet long, registered 1,349 tons, and took 14 days for the trip.

From this date onwards shipbuilding went ahead by leaps and bounds, and it is an interesting fact that from the very first, right up to the present day, the world's finest boats have always been on the Trans-Atlantic services.



The first Atlantic company to be founded was the famous Cunard Co. Their original vessels were the Britannia, Arcadia, Columbia, and Caledonia, all paddle steamers with an average speed of 8½ knots. Perhaps the most celebrated present-day "Cunarders" are the Mauretania, Aquitania, and Berengaria. The Mauretania at one time was the fastest ocean passenger steamer afloat, and held all the Atlantic records. The Berengaria was the German ship Imperator. She has a tonnage of 52,000, and a length well over 900 feet.

Before leaving paddle steamers we must mention the colossal Great Eastern (Fig. 3), which had five funnels and six masts, and the Scotia (Fig. 4). The Scotia was built in 1832, and was the last great ocean-going paddle steamer. She was the finest boat of her time, and made the Atlantic crossing in 8 days 22 hours. Her length was 367 feet, and she was of 3,871 tons burden.

After this, screw propellers were exclusively used for steamship propulsion, and remain in use to-day, although of course the engines have improved vastly.

The year 1874 saw the beginning of what has proved an unbroken and hotly sustained contest for the leading

place in the race across the Atlantic.

The leading Trans-Atlantic companies to-day are the Cunard and White Star, and the floating hotels run by these lines are marvels of luxury, speed, and size.

Space forbids mention of more than one of these palaces, but the following particulars relating to R.M.S. Majestic (Fig. 5), are full of interest, especially when compared with Robert Fulton's little Clermont.

The Majestic is the largest vessel in the world. She has a length over all of 956 feet, a breadth of 100 feet, a gross tonnage of 56,000, and a displacement of 46,000 tons when loaded to her marks.

The turbine machinery will develop a maximum of 100,000 h.p., boilers cover an area of about 5 acres, and her average speed is 23 knots. She has one anchor weighing 15 tons and four of 10 tons each. There are 450 fire alarms and three wireless stations, the largest of which is capable of maintaining permanent connection with both America and Britain during the whole of the voyage.

The Majestic carries about 4,000 passengers and has a magnificent swimming-bath that can be supplied with about 125 tons of warm sea water in the short time of 25 minutes.

The world is now witnessing a revolution in shipping. Oil as a fuel for ships is now firmly established. The Majestic burns oil. The principal economy effected in the use of oil fuel is that a ship can carry sufficient fuel for the return journey, as against one journey only with coal.

The machinery and boiler plant of the Majestic is the largest ever installed on a passenger vessel.

To provide for the feeding of the population of this floating town, the foodstuffs carried for one voyage only include about 25,000 lb. of fresh meat, 48,000 eggs, 26,000 lb. of vegetables, and 31,000 lb. of milk.

The weight of fuel, water, provisions, baggage, mail, passengers, and crew constitutes nearly the whole deadweight capacity of the vessel. There is, therefore, not much room for cargo, but the Majestic is essentially a passenger vessel, and a truly wonderful example of the shipbuilders' art she is, too.

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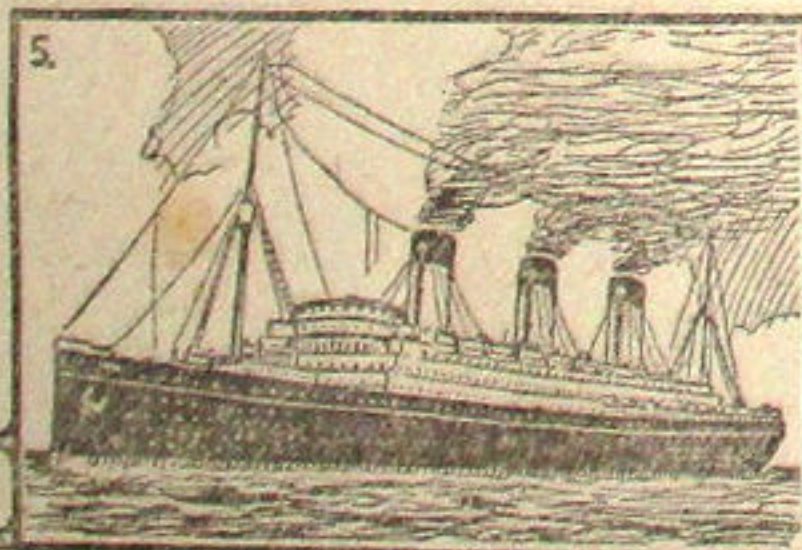
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"Thou, too, Brutus!" said Monty Lowther, rationally.

"Ob, draw it mild, Darrel," said Tom Merry, in indignant expostulation. "Surely you can see that we simply must get a School House chap in?"

"I don't see it at all."

"You're not going back on your own House, are you, Darrel?" howled Blake.

"Stuff!" said Darrel. "Why shouldn't a New House chap be captain? You can't expect the Sixth to take notice of your blessed fag rows."

The deputation gazed at Darrel in speechless indignation. Their great warfare with the New House described as "fag rows!" The terrific importance of getting a School House fellow elected as captain regarded as nonsense! They could scarcely believe their ears. As Blake said afterwards, more in sorrow than in anger, he never would have believed it of old Darrel. The only possible explanation was that Darrel had been working too hard for that blessed exam., and had gone off his chump.

"Well," said Tom Merry at last, in almost tragic tones. "I never expected you to speak like this, Darrel. If you can't see the importance of having a School House chap as captain of St. Jim's, there's no more to be said."

"Quite so," said Darrel. "Close the door after you, will you?"

It was dismissal with a vengeance. Tom Merry had said that there was no more to be said, but he had intended to say a good deal more, all the same. But Darrel stood with his hand on the open door, and there was nothing for it but to go. The deputation filed slowly and sorrowfully out of the study.

"Well," said Gore, in the passage; "is this where we cheer?"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Tom Merry. "Shut your silly head!"

And he led his followers sorrowfully away.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Declined with Thanks!

LANGTON of the Sixth was on the footer ground, chatting with Rushden, when he noticed quite an army of juniors marching up to him. Langton glanced at

them in surprise, and Rushden whistled. The two Sixth-formers waited for the army to come up. Tom Merry and his chums were in the lead, and more than fifty School House juniors brought up the rear. And they were all looking very serious.

"Hallo, what is it—house on fire?" asked Langton.

"Ahem! No. We're a deputation," Tom Merry explained.

"My hat!"

"We've come to speak to you, Langton."

"Pile in!" said Langton genially. "No extra charge!"

"We've talked it over," said Tom Merry, with a wave of the hand towards his supporters, "and we have decided that you are not the kind of fellow to let the old school go to the dogs, if you can help it."

Langton looked astonished.

"Certainly not!" he agreed. "If I see St. Jim's on the move in the direction of the bow-wows I will hold it back with both hands. Any signs of it?"

The deputation looked a little uncomfortable. It was such an awfully serious matter that they really wished old Langton wouldn't take it in this humorous way.

"The fact is," said Tom Merry, after a brief pause, "there's going to be an election for a new captain, now Kildare's hooked it."

"I believe I've heard something of it," assented Langton.

"There are three candidates—one of them a New House chap, and the others two awful rotters; the whole crowd quite impossible," Tom Merry explained. "We want you to come to the rescue, Langton."

"We want you to put up as skipper," said Blake.

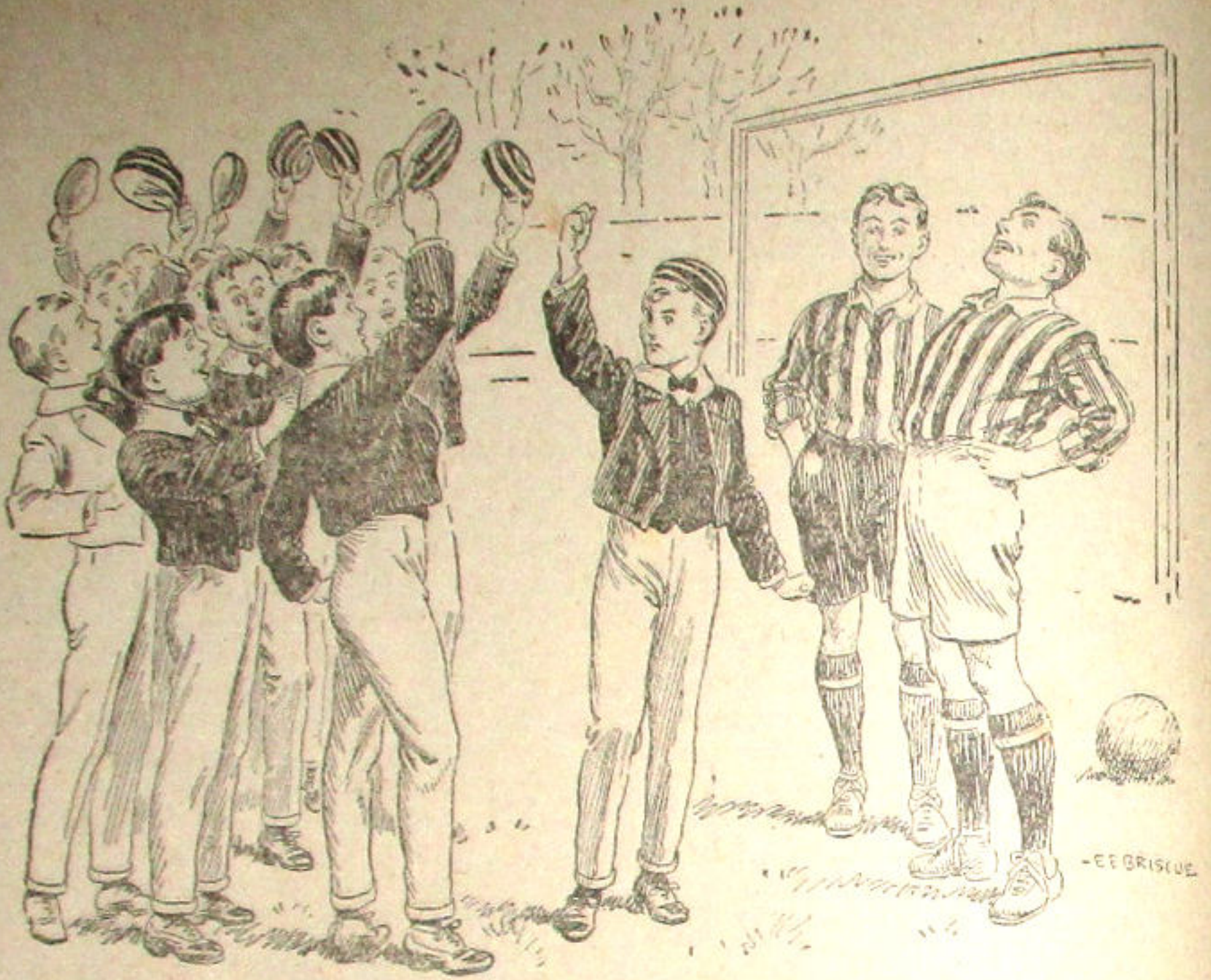
Tom Merry raised his hand as a signal to his followers, and they burst into a cheer, as previously arranged.

"Langton captain! Hurray!"

Langton stared at them.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "You may as well save your breath. There are three candidates already, and I don't want to stand in their light. I haven't the slightest intention of putting up as captain."

"Never mind standing in their light," said



Rushden broke into a roar of laughter. The situation seemed to strike him as funny. He put his hands to his sides, and yelled. (See opposite page)

Tom Merry. "That's what we want you to do. You know Knox is no good as captain."
 "Well?"
 "And Cutts is in the Fifth. Now you'll admit that we don't want a captain out of any Form but the top Form in the school."
 "Yes, I do think that," agreed Langton.
 "Good! And Monteith is a New House chap, so he's barred. You see, some other chap must put up. You're the man!"
 And the crowd cheered again.
 "Langton for captain! Hurray!"
 "But I'm not going to put up," said Langton calmly. "I'm not ambitious, and I think Monteith's a good man. Personally, I'm going to vote for Monteith."
 "What about the prestige of the School House?" demanded Blake hotly.
 "Oh, the juniors can look after that," said

Langton genially. "It will be quite safe in your hands."
 The deputation looked a little sheepish.
 "We're not going to have the New House man at any price," said Tom Merry flatly. "We'd rather have even Cutts of the Fifth. You ought to put up, Langton."
 "Thanks, no!"
 "We're a deputation!"
 "You've told me that before."
 "And we've come to put it to you as a decent chap."
 "Oh, cut off!"
 "It's your duty——"
 "Stuff——"
 "Very well," said the chairman of the deputation, with dignity. "There are others! If you don't want to be captain of St. Jim's, Langton, there are other fellows who do!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Find 'em, then, and give me a rest," yawned Langton.

Tom Merry turned to Rushden, who was listening with a grin on his face. All the deputation and the crowd turned to Rushden, too, giving Langton the cold shoulder, which did not seem, however, to worry Langton very much.

"Rushden," said Tom Merry, "as a good footballer, you are just the chap to be captain of St. Jim's."

"I!" ejaculated Rushden, in surprise.

"Yes, you! We're a deputation of the Lower School——"

"My hat!"

"And we request you to stand for election!"

Tom Merry raised his hand to the crowd, and they burst into a ringing cheer once more.

"Rushden for captain! Hurray!"

Rushden broke into a roar of laughter. The situation seemed to strike him as funny. He put his hands to his sides, and yelled.

"Ha, ha, hā!"

Tom Merry regarded him indignantly. The crowd looked restive and wrathful.

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Tom.

"Well, it struck me as humorous," said Rushden. "Thanks awfully for your good opinion, and for giving me the second offer after Langton; but I'm really not looking out for glory. Declined with thanks."

"Now, look here, Rushden——"

"'Nuff said!" yawned Rushden. "Buzz off!"

And he walked away with Langton, to put an end to the interview, leaving the deputation standing where they were, and looking decidedly wrathful and very disappointed.

"Well, this beats the band!" said Monty Lowther. "All the blessed Sixth have grown very modest all of a sudden, and want to hide their giddy illumination under a bushel."

"They don't want to stand in Monteith's way," growled Blake. "That's what it is. As for the prestige of the House they don't care twopence for it. Disgusting, I call it!"

And the disappointed deputation walked away, and the crowd broke up. Evidently there was nothing doing.

Arthur Augustus met the angry and excited deputation as they came into the School House. His eyeglass gleamed at them inquiringly.

"Well, has it gone all wight?" he asked.

"No," growled Blake.

"Won't the Sixth-Form boundahs stand?"

"They won't!"

"Then you will have to come back to my proposition," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "You had better resolve to elect me as captain of St. Jim's, and—— Yah! Oh! Yawoooooh!"

The deputation were fed up. If Langton hadn't been a Sixth-former and a prefect they would have bumped him on the footer ground. D'Arcy wasn't either a Sixth-former or a prefect, and he had happened along just in time to provide the angry deputation with a victim. They seized the swell of St. Jim's, and, in disregard of his yells of protest, bumped him in the doorway, and rolled him down the steps.

Then, somewhat relieved in their feelings, they went their way, leaving the swell of the Fourth in a dazed and dishevelled and breathless state at the foot of the School House steps.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

A Sporting Offer!

GERALD CUTTS of the Fifth Form came along after lessons that day, and looked into Knox's study. Knox of the Sixth was sitting at his table with a pencil in his hand and a paper before him. Cutts grinned as he noted that the paper contained a list of names. The Sixth-former was evidently going over the list of his possible supporters in the forthcoming election.

Knox scowled and hid the paper with his hand as he saw Cutts looking in.

"It's a common custom to knock at a door before shoving oneself into another fellow's room," he remarked.

"Oh, we needn't stand on ceremony with one another," said Cutts, coming into the study, and closing the door after him. "We're pals, you know."

"Not much like an old pal, setting up against me in this election," growled Knox. "I never expected it of you."

"It's the unexpected that always happens, you know," said Cutts pleasantly. "It's the election I've come to speak to you about."

"Are you going to stand down, then?"

Cutts laughed.

"Not much."

"Then I don't see that there's anything to be said."

"I do. You know Monteith is putting up on the other side, and he will get a lot of support in this House. Most of the Sixth will plump for him. They don't want a Fifth-former to be captain, and they don't want you, Knoxey."

"They may have to have me, whether they want me or not!" snapped Knox.

"We're splitting the vote on this side," resumed Cutts. "It looks to me as if the New House man will get in if we keep it up like this."

"Stand out, then!"

"I might as well ask you to stand out."

"You can if you like," said Knox grimly.

"Can't we come to some arrangement?" Cutts asked. "Look here, we're both sportsmen. Will you toss for it?"

Knox stared at him blankly.

"Toss up for it!" he repeated.

"Exactly! We can't both get in as captain, that's a dead cert, and if we remain rivals for the House vote we shall most likely both get left, and the New House candidate will romp home. I'm willing to toss up for it—a single chuck or best two out of three."

"Well, my hat! You ass!"

"I think it's a fair offer. You've as much chance as I have, and it would be a sporting way of settling the point," said Cutts.

Knox felt in his pocket for his double-headed penny, and failing to find it there, he shook his head.

"I don't believe in settling things that way," he said. "I'm going to stand for the election, and get in if I can. I think I've got a pretty good chance. You're really out of it being in the Fifth. The captain of St. Jim's has always been a Sixth-former."

"And a prefect," added Cutts. "You're not a prefect now."

"I shall get round the Head to give that back to me when I'm elected. Anyway, that's not essential. I can be elected without being

a prefect. It was your fault I lost it. Your rotten scheme of an afternoon at the races!" growled Knox.

"Considering that you're in the Head's black books just at present, I fancy he won't be very pleased at your candidature."

"I don't care whether he is or not. He can't interfere. It's always understood that the fellows elect whomsoever they please as captain of the school."

"Yes; they elected a junior once," grinned Cutts. "The Head would have interfered, though, I think, if the kid hadn't got out of his own accord."

"He can't interfere with me. He might with you."

"Oh, rats! You won't come to an amicable arrangement, then?"

"I won't toss up for it, if that's what you mean. I think the idea's idiotic."

"You're not a sport," said Cutts, with a shake of the head. "Now, look here, Knox, I want very much to get in as captain, and if you don't split the vote I think I shall win it hands down. What will you take to stand out?"

"What will I take?" said Knox, in wonder.

"Yes. I'm in funds now. I had good luck over my last little speculation on the Turf. Will you take a tenner to stand out?"

"Keep your beastly money!" said Knox, with a flush.

"I'll see that you become vice-captain," said Cutts, unheeding. "I'll make you my right-hand man if you back me up. We'll change everything when we get the thing into our hands. I'll make it easy for you to pay off your old grudges against Tom Merry and his friends, and we'll have a regular high old time. Lots of fellows have been very restive under Kildare's rule. They'll be glad of a change. In a week or two we'll make such a change that Kildare won't know the school if he comes back. I've got all sorts of plans in my head. You back me up——"

"You back me up, if you come to that," said Knox. "Go and tackle Monteith. He may be willing to stand aside to oblige you, I don't think. Offer him a ten-pound note to stand out—if you want to leave the New House on your neck."

PROMINENT JUNIOR FOOTBALLERS AT ST. JIM'S CAUGHT BY THE CAMERA!



Top Row, reading from left to right: Jack Blake, Fatty Wynn, George Kerr. 2nd Row: Ernest Levison, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Harry Noble, Monty Lowther. 3rd Row: George Figgins, Richard Redfern, Reginald Talbot. Bottom Row: Harry Manners, Tom Merry, Robert Digby and George Herries. (291)

"I don't know," said Cutts thoughtfully. "Monteith is Kildare's other self now, but he used to be one of the boys. We were very thick together once, and he knew what it was to go on the razzle after lights out. I'll go and have a little talk with him about old times. If he'd stand aside and get me the New House vote I should beat you hollow, Knox!"

"You're welcome to try!" growled Knox.

"Thanks, I will!"

Cutts of the Fifth swung out of the study. He crossed the quadrangle towards the New House with a thoughtful brow. He had a pleasant smile or a cheery nod, however, for everyone he met. He was fully alive to the value of every vote. And Cutts, blackguard as he undoubtedly was, was popular in a way. He was rich, handsome, well-dressed, and the leader of fashion in the Middle School. Many fellows were anxious to get into Cutts's "set." Not to know Cutts was to be oneself unknown, as it were. It was an honour that was much appreciated to be asked on a "Sunday walk" with Cutts of the Fifth. And the stories that were whispered about Gerald Cutts made him a sort of mysterious and romantic figure in the eyes of many of the juniors. There was something very impressive, in a way, in the whispered rumours that Cutts "kept it up" at night with a card-playing set in the village, that he gave bridge parties in his study with the door locked, and kept a box of cigars in his locker. A fellow who ran daily the risk of being expelled from the school must possess plenty of courage and nerve, and there was no doubt that Cutts did not know the meaning of the word fear. And, reckless and dissipated as he was in the hidden portion of his life, outwardly he was frank and genial, a generous fellow with his money, and a first-class footballer and cricketer. There were a large number of fellows, especially in the Fifth Form, who considered that Cutts would make a first-rate successor to Kildare in the captaincy of St. Jim's.

That was Cutts's great ambition, and if he succeeded there was certain to be a big change after the Kildare regime. Kildare had kept down the fast set in the Upper School with an iron hand; but under Cutts's leadership they would have everything their own way.

And to be captain of the school while still in the Fifth Form—it was a distinction that was worth a struggle.

Cutts entered the New House, and he grinned as he heard a loud buzz of voices from the common-room at the end of the passage. He guessed that an election meeting was going on. Both Houses were in a buzz of excitement over it. He could hear Figgins's voice addressing the juniors, and he caught his own name.

"Plenty of canvassing, that's the watch-word!" Figgins was saying. "We've got to point out to all the School House fellows that they simply must vote for our man, or else they'll be landed with a bully like Knox or a blackguard like Cutts."

"Hear, hear!"

Cutts grinned, and went on to Monteith's study, and knocked at the door. There was a buzz of voices in the prefect's study also. Monteith called out to the newcomer to enter, and Cutts went in. Baker and Gray and Webb, of the Sixth, all New House fellows, were with the prefect, and they were evidently talking over the election.

"Hallo! One of the giddy rival candidates!" said Baker, as Cutts came in.

"I hope I'm not interrupting," said Cutts smoothly. "I wanted to have a few words with Monteith; but another time——"

"Oh, that's all right," said Baker, rising. "We're only jawing over the election. Give you a look in later, Monty."

"Right!" said Monteith.

The three seniors sauntered out of the study. Monteith looked inquiringly at Cutts. He did not know what the younger School House candidate could want with him.

"Squat down!" he said. "What is it? Are you going to resign from the election?"

"Not much!"

"What is it, then?"

"You see, we're landed in a three-cornered contest," Cutts remarked, coming to business at once. "We've got an overwhelming vote on our side, but it's split."

"All the better for me," remarked Monteith.

"Yes. Though I don't think you'll get in, all the same."

Monteith shrugged his shoulders.

"Most of the Sixth are for me," he said. "Darrel and Langton and Rushden have been over to tell me that they are going to vote for me, and a lot of your fellows will follow their lead."

"I've come over to propose an arrangement," said Cutts.

"Go ahead!"

"You used to be rather a sport, Monty. It's not so very long since we used to go down to the little parties at the Green Man together, and I haven't forgotten that there used to be sounds of revelry by night in your study."

The New House prefect frowned.

"That's all over," he said quietly. "That's quite finished with. I chucked that kind of thing for good some time back."

"Honest Injun!"

"Yes, honest Injun."

"I wish you joy of your good resolutions," said Cutts, with a yawn. "By the way, I made thirty quid on the races last week."

"How much did you lose the week before, and the week before that?" asked the prefect sarcastically.

Cutts did not reply to the question.

"If you weren't so dead set on your new resolutions, I could give you a tip——"

"Will you have the kindness to remember that you're talking to a prefect, Cutts?" said Monteith, with a gleam in his eyes. "I'll treat what you've just said as said in confidence, only don't talk like that any more. If I become captain of St. Jim's, I shall put my foot down on all that kind of thing. Any

senior discovered mixed up in betting will be reported to the Head, and sacked."

"Satan rebuking sin!" grinned Cutts.

"You can put it how you like, but I'm going to carry on Kildare's work just where he left it off if I can. The fellows know it, and that's why they're backing me up."

"Then it's not much good my making you a sporting offer?" said Cutts.

"Oh, you can make it."

"Will you toss up which of us withdraws from the election? Chap who loses stands out and does his best to back up the other party."

Monteith laughed.

"I'm not likely to settle a matter of this kind on the toss of a coin," he said. "No, I won't do anything of the kind."

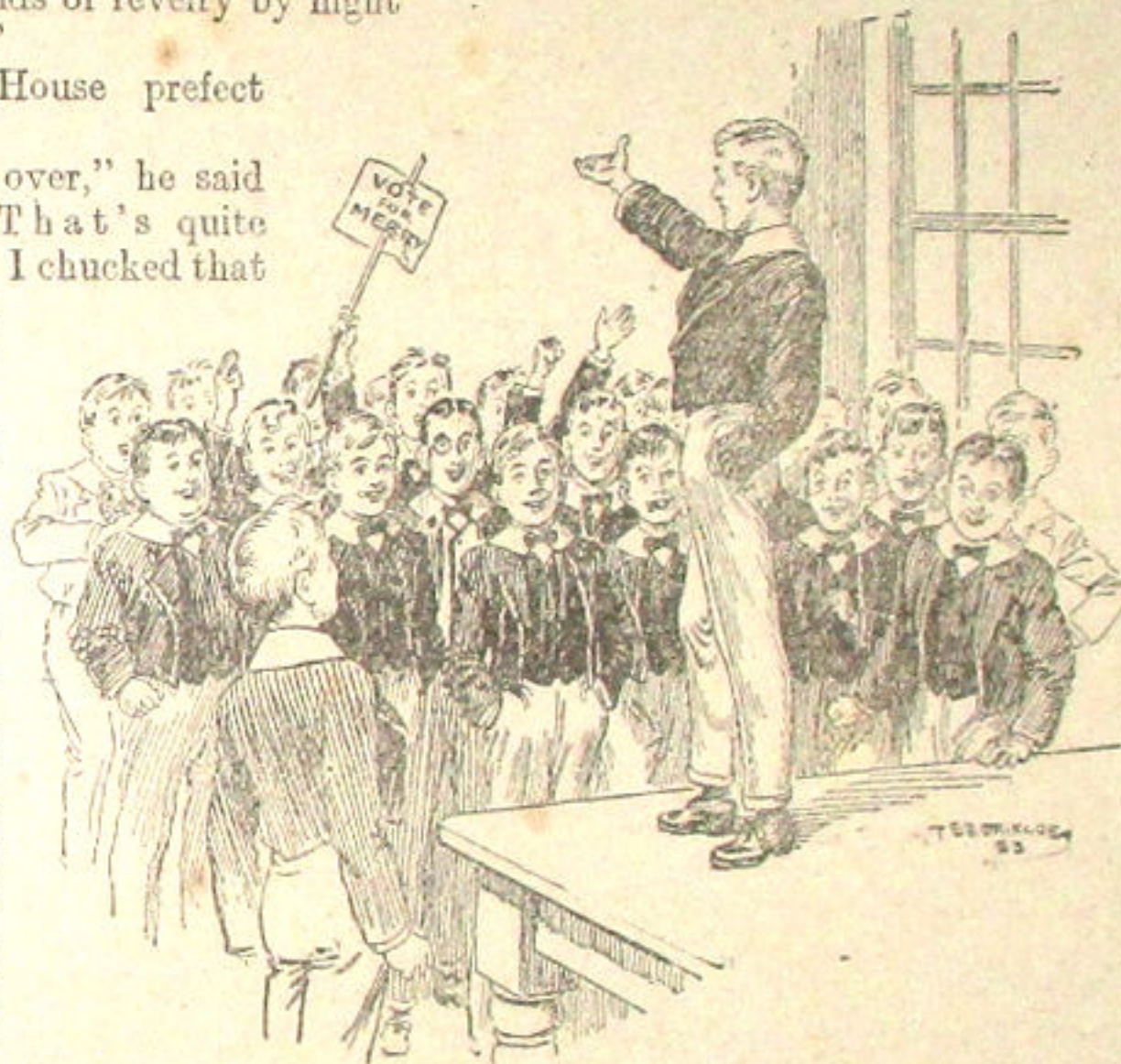
"You won't get in as captain," said Cutts between his teeth. "That's a fair and sporting offer, and if you had any of the sport in you, you'd accept."

"Then we'll take it that I haven't. Good-bye!"

"I'm not done yet. I'll make it impossible for you to get in as captain if you refuse my offer."

"And how will you do that?" asked Monteith contemptuously.

"Some of the things you have forgotten might be revived," said Cutts meaningly. "You were never so careful in covering up your tracks as I was. Bits of paper with your name on them may still be in existence."



"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry. "Why shouldn't a junior be captain of St. Jim's?" (See page 311)

"What!"

"If the Head knew about your little games of old, I fancy he would come down pretty heavy on your candidature."

Monteith looked fixedly at the Fifth-former.

"Do you know what you're doing?" he asked.

"Talking business," said Cutts.

"It's what people would call blackmail."

"Call it what you like. If you don't meet me fair and square, you'll find me a dangerous enemy," said Cutts. "I'm willing to settle the matter like a sportsman, and you refuse. Then look out for trouble. The offer's still open." Cutts took a shilling from his waistcoat pocket. "Now, then, be a sport—head or tail! If you guess right, I'll stand out of the election and back you all along the line. If you're wrong, you stand out and back me up. Call!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort!"

"Then look out for squalls!" said Cutts, returning the coin to his pocket.

Monteith made no reply; but he rose, crossed to the door, and threw it open. Baker and Webb and Gray were talking in a group in the passage, and Monteith called to them.

"Will you fellows come here a minute?"

"Certainly!" said Baker.

And the three seniors, somewhat surprised by Monteith's look, came back to the study.

Cutts had risen to his feet, looking a little alarmed.

Monteith did not seem to notice him.

"Cutts has just made me an offer, and I want you fellows to hear it," said the New House prefect. "He offers to toss up which stands out of the election. If I refuse, he is going to try to rake up some old stories to disgrace me with the Head and put a stopper on my candidature. That's his programme."

"My hat!" said Baker.

"The filthy cad!" said Webb.

"Kick him out of the House!" said Gray.

The three Sixth-formers came towards Cutts, who faced them with glittering eyes. He had not expected for a moment that Monteith would have the nerve to give him away in this manner, and even the cool and astute blackguard of the Fifth was a little at a loss.

"You needn't trouble to kick me out," he said calmly. "I'm going. Monteith has exaggerated a little."

"I've repeated exactly what you said," said Monteith, "and I defy you to do your worst. I won't make any terms with you."

"Shall we chuck him out, Monteith?" asked Baker. "The cad can't come here and insult our captain, and get off scot-free. He ought to go out on his neck."

"Keep your hands off!" said Cutts disdainfully. "There isn't a fellow in the New House who could chuck me out!"

"By Jove! I'll jolly soon show you!" exclaimed Baker.

He made a spring at Cutts. Baker was a bigger fellow than the Fifth-former, but Cutts was a master of the boxer's art, and he was as quick as lightning. His right came out in a flashing upper-cut, and Baker rolled over on the floor, feeling as if his jaw had been knocked through the top of his head. Gray had advanced at the same moment—just in time to get Cutts's left in the eye, and he sat down on the floor with a gasp. Cutts made a leap for the door and gained the passage.

"Ta-ta!" he said, with perfect coolness.

And he walked down the passage rather quickly, and strolled into the quadrangle whistling.

Before half an hour had passed the affray in Monteith's study was the talk of the school.

Jameson of the Third had seen it from the passage, and he had told his chum, Wally D'Arcy, and D'Arcy minor told the School House generally.

The cause of the trouble was not known, but the trouble itself was discussed in every study with great interest and breathless excitement.

The story grew at each repetition.

Ere long, all the School House firmly believed that Cutts of the Fifth had gone over to have a friendly talk with the New House candidate, and that he had been set on by Monteith and his friends, and that he had licked four or five of them in a stand-up fight, and then walked out of the house as cool as a cucumber, nobody daring to lay a finger on him. Needless to say, Cutts's popularity in his own House went up with a bound in consequence.

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET



THE GREAT MAN OF THE FIFTH

By HORACE COKER

A's ADMIRATION, which I always gain
Except from the fellows who think I'm
insane!

B is for BLUNDELL, our skipper, you see;
But I'd make a better, I think you'll agree.

C's COKER MINOR, my swotting young
brother,
I'm thanking my stars that I haven't
another!

D is for DOMINOES, wonderful game,
The championship of the Fifth I can claim.

E is for ENGLAND, the land of my birth,
But one of these days I'll possess all the
earth!

F is the FIFTH, a magnificent Form,
And I'm its *real* leader, in study and dorm.

G is for GREENE, he belongs to my
study,
And ruins my rugs when his boots are all
muddy.

H is for HILTON, who once tried to be
The head of the Fifth, what an insult to
me!

I's INSPIRATION, I'm getting it now,
A cooling ice-towel has been tied round my
brow.

J's for my JUDGMENT, it never goes wrong,
I give sound advice to the weak and the
strong.

K's for the KNOWLEDGE I often display
When difficult problems are put in my
way.

L is for LANGUAGES: German and
Spanish

I speak like a native. I also know Danish.
M's for my MOTOR-BIKE, ripping
machine!

And goodly to look at —whenever it's
clean!

N is for NICKNAME, I've got quite a few,
But they're never uttered while I am on
view!

O is for ORGAN, of nasal variety.
My own is a beauty—it shines in society!

P is for POTTER, a comic old chump,
Though others admire him, he gives me the
hump!

Q's for the QUERY, "Is Coker insane?"
The answer is "No; he's a wonderful
brain!"

R's for ROMANCE: though I'm only six-
teen

I've fallen in love with a sweet Fairy Queen.

S is for SILENCE, I never observe it,
But jaw all the time, and my comrades
deserve it!

T's for my TALENTS, I have quite a lot.
You all must agree I'm the Man on the
Spot!

U is for UMPIRE, he wears a white coat,
And when he says "Out!" he quite gets my
goat!

V is for VALOUR, of course I possess it.
I'm really a hero, not many would guess it!

W's for WHARTON, a cheeky young fag,
Who writes horrid things about ME in his
rag!

X is a letter which baffles me, quite.
I can't find a word though I've swotted all
night!

Y is for YAWN: if you read all these
rhymes

You'll do it yourself some dozens of times!

Z is for ZERO: your spirits will drop
Down below it, for Coker has now got to
stop!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Figgins Works the Oracle!

Even Tom Merry & Co. felt some of their opposition to Cutts melt away at that thrilling account of how he had stood up for the honour of his House in the lions' den, as it were.

"The beggar is plucky, there's no mistake about that!" Tom Merry observed. "If he wasn't such a rotter, I wouldn't ask for a better captain."

"Fancy licking a whole gang of them!" chuckled Blake. "Cutts knows how to stand up for his own House, at any rate."

"I dare say the yarn's a bit exaggerated."

"Well, I saw Gray of the Sixth, and he's got an eye as black as the ace of spades," said Monty Lowther. "No doubt about his eye."

"And young Jameson says that Baker can't talk, his jaw's so bad," remarked Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Cutts only went over for a friendly talk, when they jumped on him," remarked Manners. "It was a rotten thing to do."

"Well, we haven't heard Monteith's account, you know," Tom Merry remarked cautiously.

"There's no doubt there was trouble," said Blake, "and I suppose Cutts couldn't have started it on his own accord, with four or five fellows against him."

"No, that's reasonable."

"Yaas, wathah! They're up against the School House candidate, of course," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I weally think I shall give Cutts my vote, deah boys, for standin' up for the honour of the House in that wippin' way."

"Well, I think I'd rather have Cutts than Monteith," confessed Tom Merry, "and certainly rather than Knox."

"Oh, Yaas; Knox is out of it, anyway!"

"We've got to make our choice among them," remarked Kangaroo, the Cornstalk junior. "We can't get another candidate on this side."

"We don't want any of them," growled Blake. "But Cutts seems the best of the bunch. If we must have one of them, let it be Cutts."

The juniors assented, but there was no enthusiasm. They did not want Gerald Cutts for captain of St. Jim's.

TOM MERRY & Co. were in a dilemma, and that day and the next there might have been observed unusual clouds of thoughtfulness upon their youthful brows.

It was a peculiar and really difficult situation.

Saturday had been fixed for the election, and on that day a new captain had to be selected for St. Jim's. The juniors had hoped to hear from Kildare that he was returning. But though news had been received from the old captain of St. Jim's, it was to the effect that his uncle was no better, and that he was going to remain with him—probably for a very considerable time. Kildare's return, therefore, being out of the question, the election would proceed.

On Saturday a new captain would come into his post, and who was it to be?

On previous similar occasions, Tom Merry & Co. had had a candidate to back up, and they had backed him up right heartily.

But the present situation was out of the common. There were three candidates, of all of whom they disapproved most intensely.

They had the keenest possible interest in the election, and yet they felt that they could not vote for any of the candidates.

To remain away from the election and not vote at all, was one resource, but that would leave the school on its way to the bow-wows. Suppose the New House man got in? It was quite likely, especially with the School House vote split; more than ever likely if a number of School House fellows refrained from voting at all.

And the Co. confessed that, rather than have a New House captain, they'd prefer Gerald Cutts of the Fifth—or even Knox at a pinch.

Yet it was difficult to make up their minds to vote for Cutts or Knox. Both the School House candidates were "rotters," there was no denying that. Monteith had his faults, but he was better than either of them.

Tom Merry's idea of getting another School House candidate to put up had been an excellent one—it had only one drawback—that it would not work.

The School House seniors were satisfied with Monteith as a candidate; many of them really thinking that it was time the New House had a show; others backing up Monteith because it was guessed that Kildare had wished them to do so when he left.

The disastrous result of electing a New House fellow to the captaincy did not seem at all apparent to the seniors, though the juniors never forgot it for a moment.

"We simply must get another candidate to put up!" Tom Merry declared. "If the Sixth won't take it on, we might tackle the Fifth. If Cutts has the cheek to put himself forward there may be other Fifth-formers with just as much nerve. Suppose we try old Lefevre—he's not a bad sort."

"Rather an ass," said Monty Lowther.

"Well, King Log is better than King Stork," said Tom. "Better have an ass like Lefevre than a rotter like Cutts!"

"Yes, that's true," remarked Manners. "But I hear that Lefevre is backing Cutts up. Nearly all the Fifth are for Cutts. They're as pleased as Punch at the idea of a Fifth-former getting in as captain of the school."

"It's no go," said Kangaroo. "Lefevre is going round canvassing for votes for Cutts. He was jawing to me to-day. He can't go back on his own man."

"That settles it, then. Where are we going to dig up a candidate?" demanded Tom Merry in despair. "Here's the captaincy of a good old school going begging, and nobody will take the trouble to pick it up."

"It's a rotten position," said Blake. "It looks to me as if we shall have to make our choice among the three of them."

"I have already made a suggestion, deah boys——"

"Shut up!" roared the juniors all together. They were quite fed-up with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's suggestion of himself as a possible captain.

The study door opened, and George Figgins looked in upon the anxious conclave. Tom Merry & Co. glared at Figgins.

"Well, what do you want, you New House waster?" growled Blake. "Come to tell us your man has withdrawn?"

"No fear!" said Figgins promptly. "I've

come to talk to you. The election is pretty close now, and it's time you fellows made up your minds."

"We've made 'em up," grunted Tom Merry. "We're not going to let in a New House man at any price."

Figgins nodded.

"We're solid for Monteith, over the way," he said, "and nearly all the Sixth-formers in the School House are for our man, and some of the Fifth. We've got a jolly good chance, so long as your vote is split over here."

"Oh, rats!"

"What I'm afraid of is that Knox and Cutts will come to some arrangement," said Figgins. "They're a pair of rotters!"

"Oh, cheese it! And let our candidates alone!" growled Blake, which was rather cool, considering the opinions he had himself expressed of the candidates in question.

"I want you fellows to look at it sensibly," said Figgins calmly. "This is a matter affecting the whole school. Cutts came over the other day and made a row with our man."

"Licked half a dozen of your fellows off his own bat!" grinned Blake.

"Oh, rot! Do you know what the cause of the row was?"

"No. I suppose they started ragging him."

"They didn't," said Figgins quietly. "The row started because Cutts tried to threaten our man. First, he offered to toss up with him which should retire from the election, and as Monteith refused, he threatened to rake up some old stories to discredit him with the Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"How do you know?" asked Tom Merry.

"It's got out," said Figgins. "Monteith called in three or four seniors, and told them what Cutts had said in Cutts's presence; then the row started. It's the talk of the House now. Between ourselves, it's pretty well suspected that once upon a time Monteith wasn't quite up to the mark, like he is now. There used to be trouble between him and Kildare about it. But he's straight as a die now. All you fellows will admit that."

"Oh, he's straight enough, I believe!" admitted Tom Merry.

"And Cutts isn't," said Figgins. "What do you think of the kind of fellow who'd use such a dodge for getting a rival out of the electon?"

"Rotten!"

"Caddish!"

"Just like Cutts."

"Wank outsiders!"

"And that's the fellow you're going to vote for," said Figgins. "You'll keep out a really decent chap like Monteith because he belongs to our House, and you'll let in a blackmailing rotter like Cutts!"

Tom Merry shifted uneasily in his seat.

"We're not sure we're going to vote for Cutts," he said.

"Knox, then—is he any better?"

"Oh, we sha'n't vote for Knox at any price—he's quite outside the limit!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then it's Cutts or nobody," said Figgins. "Now, look here, I've been thinking this over. It's all very well to stand up for one's own House; but I tell you candidly, if Cutts were our man and Monteith your man, I'd vote for your man, and blow his House."

"Honest Injun?" said Blake.

"Honour bright!" said Figgins solemnly.

"What's going to become of the school with a rotten outsider like Cutts for captain?"

"But—but——"

"I think you fellows ought to vote for Monteith, the only decent candidate," said Figgins. "I'd do it in your place—honour bright!"

The juniors looked at one another. Figgys's manner was very grave and serious, and they knew that he meant what he said. And they could not help admitting that there was something in his arguments.

"Now, what do you say?" asked Figgins persuasively.

"Well, after what you've told us we won't vote for Cutts," said Tom Merry, looking round. "I think that's agreed."

"Yes, rather."

"And—and perhaps we'll vote for Monteith," said Tom, taking the plunge. "I—I think we can say that unless another School House candidate puts up in time, we'll vote for your man, and chance it."

And the meeting nodded assent.

Figgins's face

immediately brightened up.

"That's the tune!" he exclaimed. "You won't be sorry for it. You'll find that Monteith will give the School House fair play. Darrel's satisfied about that, so I should think you may be. You'll vote for Monteith?"

There was a long pause. Figgys's earnestness had made a deep impression upon the juniors; and he had only voiced, too, thoughts



The deputation, somewhat relieved in their feelings, went their way, leaving the swell of the Fourth dazed and dishevelled and in a breathless state, at the foot of the School House steps. (See page 289)

that had been lurking in their own minds. And they felt, too, a sort of glow in making such a generous concession to the rival House.

"Yes!" said Tom Merry & Co. at last.

"Good egg!" said Figgins heartily.

"It's understood that if a decent School House candidate puts up, we vote for him," said Tom Merry, "otherwise we back up your man."

"That's good enough," said Figgins.

And he departed, to carry the good news back to the New House. There it was received with the keenest satisfaction. There was no doubt now as to Monteith's success. For Tom Merry & Co. would carry the bulk of the School House juniors with them, and both Knox and Cutts were certain to be left out in the cold. And the New House rejoiced at the prospect.

When Figgins had gone, the chums of the School House looked at one another rather glumly.

"I suppose it's the only thing to be done," said Blake.

"There is weally an alternative, deah boy."

"Oh, rats!"

"After all, we'll give Monteith a trial," said Tom Merry generously, "and old Figgy is a good sort, too, and he's pleased as Punch about it."

"But a New House chap captain of St. Jim's!" grunted Herries. "I don't like the idea."

"Can't be helped. Better than Knox or Cutts."

And the juniors admitted that this was the case. But they did not like it; and they looked forward to the election with feelings of anything but enthusiasm.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Rogues in Council!

LEVISON of the Fourth came into Gerald Cutts's study with a curious expression on his face. Levison was Cutts's right-hand man in the election, and he kept the Fifth-form candidate informed of the state of feeling among the junior electors. He formed the head of a committee of canvassers who were seeking votes for Cutts, and he had had a certain amount of success. Cutts was taking the election very seriously, and bending all his

energies to the task of getting in as captain of St. Jim's.

Cutts was looking very cheerful just now. He had been comparing notes with Knox, and lists of supporters, and he had convinced the Sixth-former that he had very little chance of getting in. By standing for election, Knox would only split the House vote and jeopardise Cutts's chances. And Cutts made that clear to him, and he knew that Knox was very likely to withdraw altogether, if it was made worth his while.

"Hallo, what's happened now?" asked Cutts, noticing the expression upon the face of the cad of the Fourth at once.

"Trouble," said Levison. "I've just heard that Tom Merry & Co. have gone over to the enemy."

Cutts frowned.

"Which means——"

"They're going to vote for Monteith," said Levison. "Figgins has talked them over somehow, and two-thirds of the juniors of this House will vote the way Tom Merry votes. That's a cert. He has a lot of influence."

"I know he has, hang him!" said Cutts, gritting his teeth. "I never expected this. What about loyalty to the House?"

Levison grinned.

"They don't want you at any price," he explained. "They'd rather have a New House chap or any old thing."

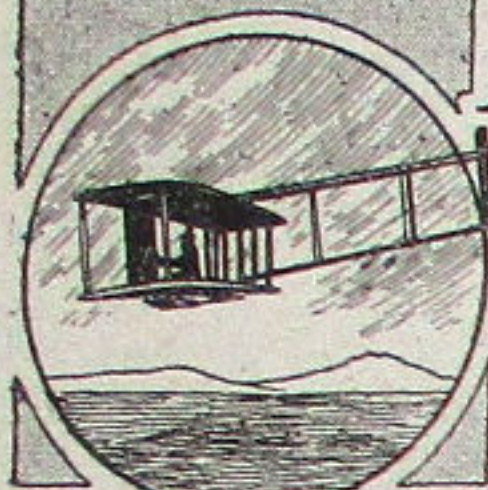
"Don't be cheeky, you rat!" growled Cutts. "Well, I shall put a spoke in their wheel, if that's the little game. If Knox stood out, I should beat Monteith at the polls, and I can arrange it with Knox. But this news changes it all. Monteith will have to stand out now."

Levison whistled.

"But will he?" he asked.

"He will be made to; then Knox can stay in to keep up appearances. I don't specially want a walk-over. Monteith will get it in the neck, that's all. I've got the plan cut and dried. I've made ready, you see, in case it was necessary; and it is necessary now, and he will stand out so late before the election that his party won't have much time to replace him with another man. Besides, the School House won't vote for any fellow

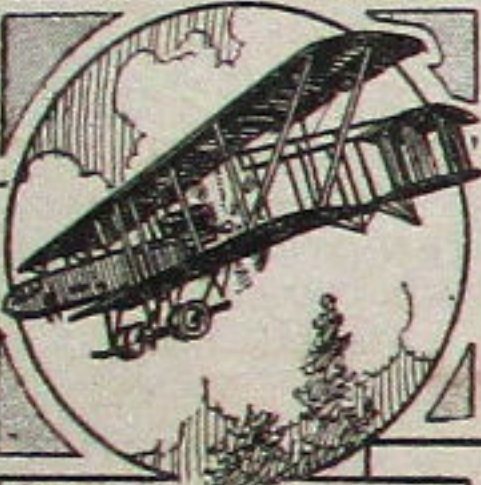
The Development of the AEROPLANE.



1. Wright Glider.



3. Bleriot Monoplane.



5. Grahame-White Biplane.



Although so short a period has elapsed since man first flew in an aeroplane, progress has been so amazingly swift that the pioneer machines are as great a curiosity in the flying world as Stephenson's "Rocket" is in the railway world.

The famous Wright brothers were the first to perfect a machine that would actually fly, but at the time the whole world jeered, and said it was impossible. Little did people think that in a few years flying would seriously compete with rail and motor as a means of travel and transport.

The first aeroplanes were engineless gliders, and our first sketch shows one of the Wright brothers on a machine of this type in 1902.

At first, progress was very slow, but in the year 1908 flying began to develop in earnest.

About this time Bleriot, A. V. Roe, the late S. F. Cody, Henry Farman, and other men now famous, put up some remarkable flights on what, to-day, would be regarded as very unsafe and crude machines.

Sketch No. 2 illustrates one of the celebrated Farman biplanes, and No. 3 is a picture of Bleriot's wonderful monoplane. It was in this machine that the famous Frenchman flew the Channel on July 13, 1909.

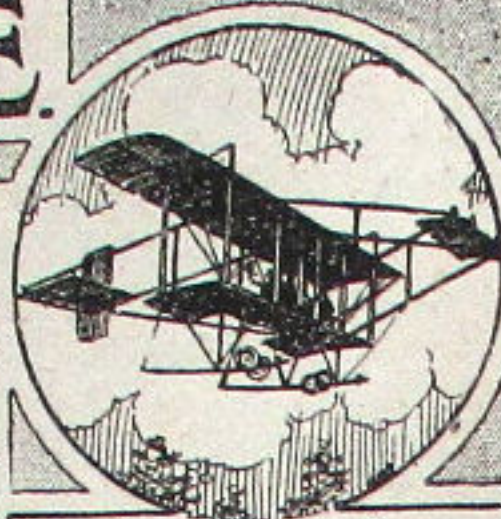
Illustration No. 4 shows the Caudron biplane, built by the Caudron brothers in 1912. This was the first biplane to "loop the loop."

No. 5 is a sketch of the Grahame-White 5-seater, passenger-carrying biplane. In its test it carried ten in addition to the pilot. It was made in 1913 and much used at Hendon for passenger flights.

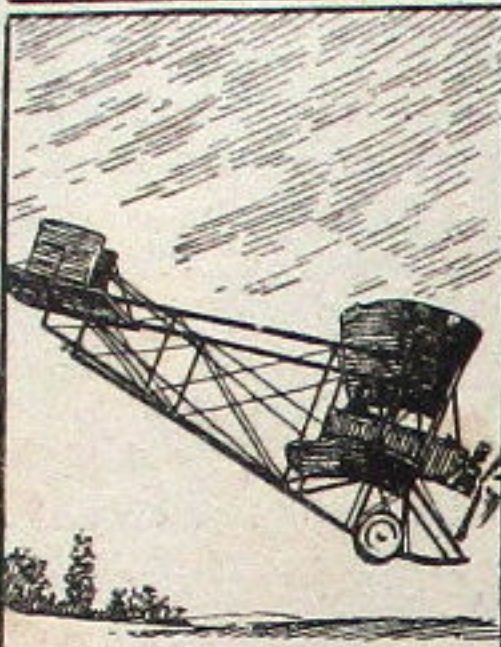
The great war came along in 1914 and did more for progress in aviation than probably 25 years of ordinary experimenting would have done. So many types of machines were invented and used that it is obviously impossible to show them in the space of one page, but sketch No. 6 shows an Airco machine on the daily London-Paris route.

One cannot omit mention of the wonderful performance of the Vickers-Vimy aeroplane shown in our last illustration. This was the machine piloted by the late Captain Sir John Alcock across the Atlantic—a distance of two thousand miles in 16 hours!

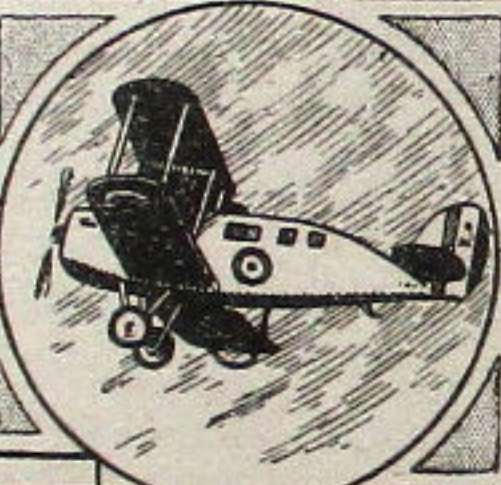
If flying progresses as rapidly in the future as it has in the past we shall soon see the day when it will be as common an occurrence to pay our visits by aeroplane as it is to take a motor trip to-day!



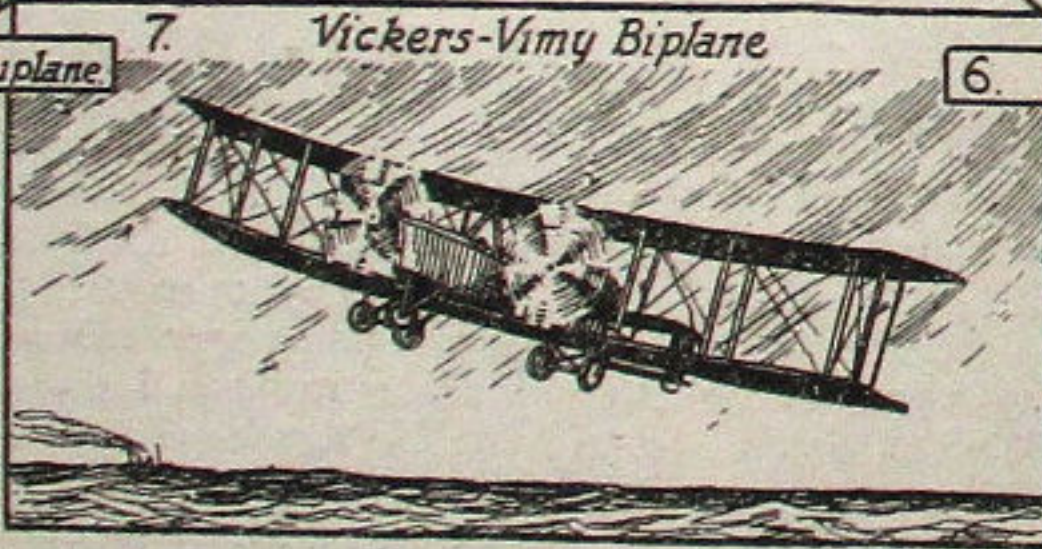
2. Farman Biplane.



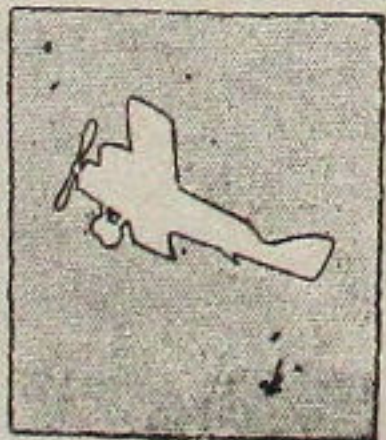
4. Caudron Biplane



6. Airco Biplane



7. Vickers-Vimy Biplane



they put up in Monteith's place. His withdrawal will break their party right up, I think."

"Not much doubt about that," said Levison. "But how on earth are you going to get him to withdraw? I never saw a fellow so dead-set on anything as Monteith is on this election. He's much keener than he was when he contested it with Kildare."

"I've got a way, and you are going to help me."

"I'll do anything I can, of course," said Levison. "I'm on your side, Cutts. You know how to make it worth a fellow's while to back you up."

Cutts smiled sneeringly for a second.

"Exactly," he said. "Now, you've heard the stories some of the fellows tell about Monteith—it was before your time here, but you must have heard."

"I've heard some things from Mellish," said Levison. "Monteith used to be one of the boys, I understand."

"Just so. He used to go the pace more than I did," said Cutts.

"Then he must have gone it hot!"

"He did, and he hasn't as much sense in his head as I have in my little finger!" said Cutts. "I never put anything on paper, but Monteith used to. He thought nothing of sending a note to Joliffe, the landlord of the Green Man, in his own hand. He would send notes to bookmakers about putting money on horses."

"The silly ass!" said Levison contemptuously. "I wonder why they didn't blackmail him."

"He was blackmailed, and I understand it cost him a pretty penny to get some of his paper back," said Cutts. "Kildare helped him."

"Oh, I see!"

"But very likely some of those bits of paper are still in existence," said Cutts. "Monteith can't know whether they are or not."

"No, but——"

"And if one were sent to the Head—say, a note in Monteith's hand fixing up a meeting at the Green Man——"

"Cutts!"

"Well?" said Cutts savagely, "why not?"

"That would be playing it horribly low down!" faltered Levison. "You were in the same game with Monteith at that time; now you'd give him away!"

"Are you going to start preaching to me, you young rascal?"

"N-no; but—but how am I going to help you?" said Levison sullenly. "I don't like the scheme, and I can't see how I can help."

"You're the only fellow who can help. That note of Monteith's to Joliffe—it happens that I can't lay hands on it. I've asked Joliffe, but he says he never kept any of the papers. I think he doesn't care about betraying Monteith, or he may be speaking the truth: I don't know. But the paper's got to be found."

"Well, I can't find it," said Levison.

"Yes, you can!"

"I don't understand——"

"That paper," said Cutts slowly, "is worth a couple of quid to me. I'll hand over two notes as soon as you bring it to me."

"But—but——"

"Oh, don't pretend to be a fool!" said Cutts irritably. "You make half-crowns by writing out impositions for fellows, because you can imitate handwriting so well, it can't be detected."

Levison turned pale.

"You—you don't want me to—to——"

"I want you to bring me that note from Monteith to Joliffe, fixing up a meeting at the Green Man," said Cutts grimly. "I don't care how or where you get it."

"But—but suppose it came out——"

"How could it come out? Monteith couldn't possibly smell a rat. He knows that some of his old notes may still be in existence; in fact I told him that I could lay hands on one of them. If it's a spoof note, he won't know it. He'll think, naturally, that it was got from Joliffe."

"I—I suppose he would——"

"I can tell you almost word for word a note that I saw in Joliffe's place once, written to him by Monteith," said Cutts. "Joliffe chucked it into the fire after reading it, I remember, but Monteith doesn't know that."

I can give you the wording; I've got a good memory."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it's all in the game," he said. "I'm hard-up, and when a fellow's hard-up, he can't afford to be too particular. Is the note worth five quid to you, Cutts?"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Cutts.

"Then I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to find it," said Levison coolly.

Gerald Cutts glared at him.

"If you begin haggling with me, you greedy young scoundrel——"

"I'm on the make, same as you are!" said Levison, with another shrug of his thin shoulders. "There's a certain amount of risk, and it's a dirty, caddish thing to do, anyway! I'm not going to do it for nothing! You've done very well out of the races lately. I saw several fivers in your pocket-book yesterday!"

"I've a jolly good mind to——" began Cutts, laying his hand on a ruler.

Levison did not flinch.

"If you touch me with that ruler, I'll go straight to Darrel and tell him what you've said to me!" said the junior, between his teeth.

Cutts laid down the ruler. For some moments he stared at the cad of the Fourth, Levison meeting his stare with cool effrontery.

"Well, it's a go!" said Cutts at last.

He felt that he had met his match in his precious supporter.

"Five quid?" said Levison.

"Yes," said Cutts reluctantly.

"Cash down?" said Levison.

"Look here——"

"Cash down, or it's no go!"

Cutts set his teeth hard. He opened his pocket-book, took out a crisp five-pound note, and passed it to the Fourth Former.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

The Shadow of the Past!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, sat in his study with a letter in his hand, and a wrinkle of deep and painful thought on his brow. The letter—a half-sheet of impot paper with a few lines scrawled on it—had evidently just arrived

by the post. The doctor had read it several times, and then touched the bell and sent Toby to call Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House. He was waiting for the arrival of the Housemaster now.

The door opened and Mr. Railton came in.

"You sent for me, sir?"

The doctor nodded.

"I want to ask your advice about this, Mr. Railton. Pray read it."

The Housemaster, in some surprise, took the letter and glanced at it. Then he uttered an exclamation.

"You know the writing, Mr. Railton?"

"I think I have seen it before, sir."

"Whose writing do you think it is?"

"Monteith's, sir."

"And it is signed 'J. M.'?" said the Head.

"I am afraid this was written by Monteith of the Sixth, sir. But may I ask how it came into your hands?"

"I have just received it by post," said the Head, indicating an envelope that lay on his desk. "It was sent anonymously. The envelope contained nothing but that note, and by the postmark it was posted in Rylcombe."

"Anonymously!" said Mr. Railton, with a frown.

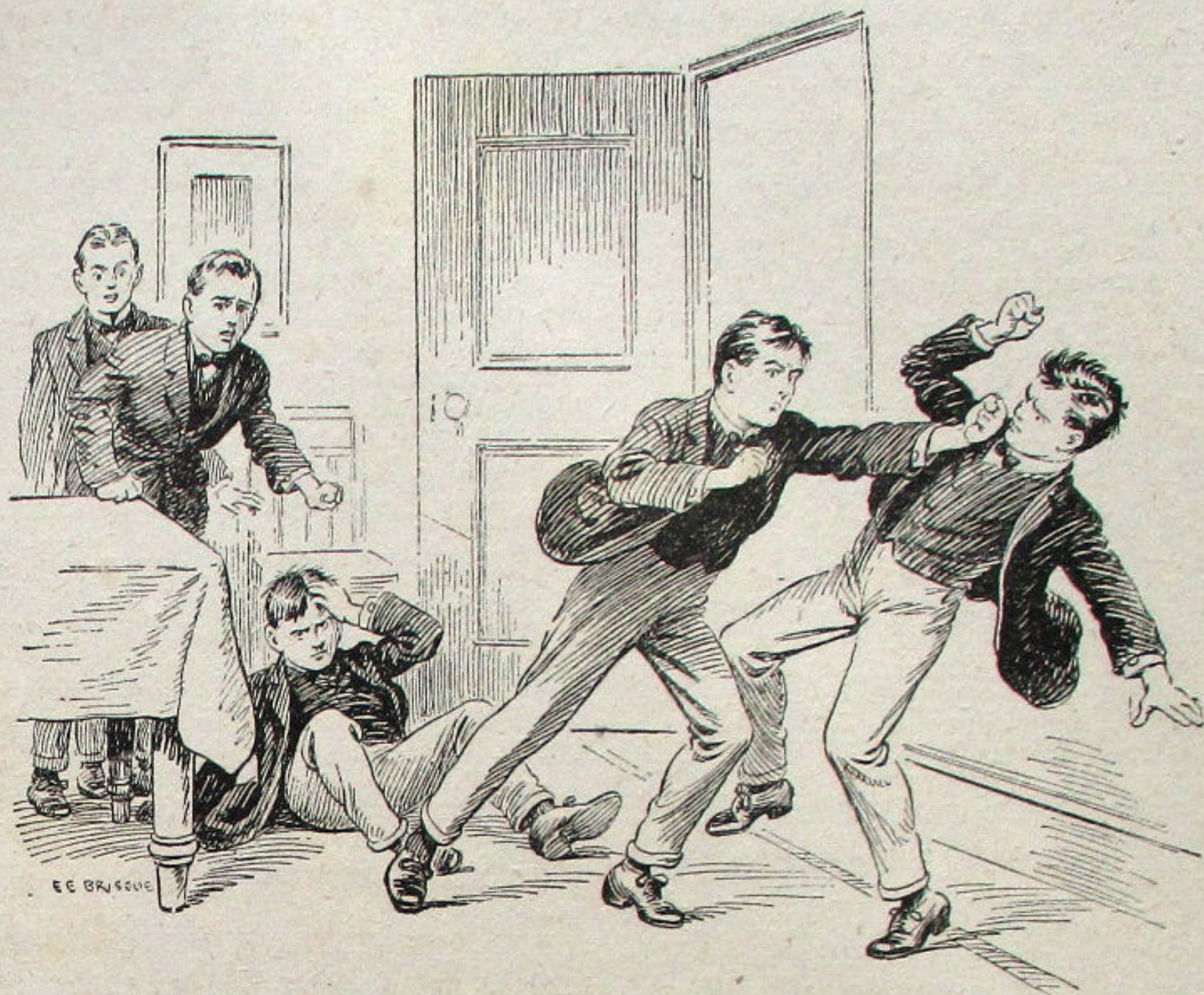
"Yes. Of an ordinary anonymous letter I should not, of course, take any notice; but this is different. Someone has evidently come into possession of that note, and sent it to me to open my eyes as to Monteith's conduct."

"Perhaps this man Joliffe himself—there may have been some dispute, and he has revenged himself by betraying Monteith to you."

"It is possible."

"Or perhaps it has been done by someone desirous of injuring Monteith's chances in the pending election for captain of the school," said Mr. Railton thoughtfully. "The election takes place to-morrow, and there is a great deal of feeling on the subject."

"In that case, whoever sent it to me may have been actuated by a sense of duty. In the light of that letter, Monteith is certainly not a fit person to become captain of the school!"



Baker rolled on the floor. Gray advanced at the same moment—just in time to get Cutts's left in the face. (See page 294)

“Most decidedly not!”

“I do not know the writing on the envelope,” said the Head. “It appears to me to be a disguised hand, but that is of little moment. It does not matter very much who sent it to me. The question is, what to do in the matter now?”

“Monteith must be allowed to make what explanation he can.”

“Undoubtedly, and the sooner the better. Will you send for him, Mr. Railton; or, better still, fetch him here? I wish you to be present.”

“Very well, sir.”

And Mr. Railton left the study.

Monteith was at practice on the football ground when Mr. Railton found him. A group

of juniors were watching the practice, and Jack Blake was remarking, perhaps a little grudgingly, that Monteith was really in splendid form. So far as the winter game was concerned, there could be no doubt that Monteith would make a worthy successor to Kildare.

“I suppose we shall have to have him!” said Blake, with a sigh. “It will be a come-down for the School House, but there you are!”

“Que faire!” said Digby sagely, in his best French.

“Oh, keep that for the Form-room!” said Blake, with a snort. “It’s a rotten position, but I suppose electing Monteith is the best way out of it.”

"Hallo! What does Railton want?" said Tom Merry. "He's calling Monteith, and looking as grave as a giddy judge!"

"Somethin's up!" said Arthur Augustus. Monteith had come to the ropes as Mr. Railton called to him.

"Am I wanted, sir?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mr. Railton. "The Head wishes to see you, Monteith."

"Anything important, sir?" asked Monteith, surprised by the gravity of the Housemaster's manner.

"Very important, Monteith."

"I'll come at once, sir."

And Monteith threw on an overcoat and muffler, and, without stopping to change, he followed the Housemaster from the field. The juniors, who had heard the remarks exchanged between the two, regarded one another curiously.

"Looks like trouble for Monteith," Lowther remarked.

"Oh, rot!" said Figgins uneasily. "Can't be anything about the election. I know the Head must look on our man as the best man for the job."

But Figgins was feeling uneasy. Until the election was over, he could not feel safe about his candidate. Monteith was feeling uneasy, too; he hardly knew why, as he followed the Housemaster to the Head's study. Mr. Railton's gravity had a disquieting effect upon him. He did not ask the Housemaster any questions, however, but accompanied him in silence, and they entered the Head's room.

Dr. Holmes's expression increased Monteith's inward alarm. He knew now that something untoward had happened as soon as he saw the doctor's face.

"I have sent for you, Monteith, on a most unpleasant matter," began the Head.

"What is wrong, sir?"

"Read that letter!"

Monteith glanced at the letter, and for a moment the room seemed to reel about him. He understood now. For this is what he read in his own handwriting:

"Dear Joliffe,—I shall be down at eleven to-night as usual. Get Banks there if you can

I want to ask him about the chances of Bonny Boy for the Leicestershire.—Yours,
"J. M."

Monteith's face went white as a sheet.

He felt the Head's stern, grave glance upon him, and he strove to recover himself. But he could not. The sudden blow had knocked him over. He could only clutch the tell-tale paper, which crumpled in his hand, and stare at the floor.

There was a long silence, and the Head's deep voice broke it at last.

"Well, Monteith?"

The prefect licked his dry lips.

"I am waiting for your explanation, Monteith."

"I—I——" Monteith's voice trailed away miserably.

"That letter is in your hand, Monteith."

"Yes, sir," groaned the prefect.

"You admit it?"

"Yes."

"Joliffe is the name of the landlord of a low public-house in Rylcombe, I believe?"

"Yes."

"You wrote that letter to him?"

"Yes."

"That is all I need to ask," said the Head drily.

"I—I—I can explain, sir. I—I—— This is an old letter, a very old letter," said Monteith. "It was written long ago—long ago!"

"How long ago?"

"I—I don't exactly know. It's not dated, but it—it was at least two terms ago, sir," muttered Monteith. "I—I used to play the giddy ox, I admit it. I was a fool. But—but it was all over long ago. I got myself into trouble, and Kildare helped me out, like the brick he was. I promised him to get clear of that gang, and I kept my word."

"Then Kildare knew?"

"He knew, sir."

"It was his duty as head prefect of the school to acquaint me with your conduct," said the Head sternly.

"He would have told you, sir, only he knew I'd keep my word," said Monteith miserably. "I'd been a fool, but I stopped it."

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

THE SLACKER

By LORD MAULEVERER



A's the **ARMCHAIR**, where from earliest dawn

Till late in the evenin', I nestle an' yawn.

B's for the **BOOT** which is hurled by Bob Cherry

To rouse me from slumber; a heartless trick, very.

C's for the **CUSHIONS**, on which I recline,
They're soft an' invitin', with dainty design.

D's for the **DRUDGERY** fellows go through
When tearin' about on the footer field.
Groo!

E's for the **ENERGY**, really amazin',
That other chaps show, while "your humble" is lazin'.

F's for the **FIVERS**—they all come in handy
For lightin' the gas or for wrappin' up candy.

G's for the **GIRLS**, an' with rapture I'm mad
When off to Cliff House to adore 'em,
begad!

H is the "**HERALD**": it makes a chap blub
To see midnight oil bein' burned by the tub!

I is for **INKY**, as black as can be.
The way he gets goals is a marvel to me!

J's for the **JAPERS**, who won't let me rest.
Bob Cherry, for one, is a nerve-rackin' pest.

K is for **KNOWLEDGE**, by Quelchy possessed.

But lessons are loathsome; I'd much rather rest.

L is my **LOUNGE-SUIT**, of neat navy blue:
The fellows admire it; the damsels do, too.
M's for **MYSELF**, of the line of Mauleverer;
There isn't a chap who is smarter or cleverer.

N's for my **NECKTIE**: it's right for a fellow
To sport one with green stripes, an' splashes
of yellow.

O is for **OVID**, a stupid old fool
Who should be abolished straightway from
the school.

P's for the **PILLOWS** I pile up at night;
The raggers may rag, but I slumber all right.

Q's for the **QUEEN** of Cliff House; she's a
maiden

Named Phyllis, who fills me with rapture
love-laden.

R's the **RELIEF**, so refreshin' and splendid,
That comes when the lessons in Form-room
are ended.

S, gentle reader, is **SPATS**; I avow,
The chap who's deficient should buy a pair
now.

T's for my **TROUSERS**, of heather and grey;
I keep 'em turned up in the orthodox way.

U's for the **UNCLE** who whacks out the
cash,

Enablin' his nephew to cut quite a dash!

V's for the **VIGOUR** which Bob Cherry
shows

In dottin' me hard on my aquiline nose!

W's for **WORK**, which is stiff, an' no error!
It weighs down my mind with a feelin' of
terror.

X is for '**XERCISE**, out in the Close.

Kind fellows, oh, save me from takin' a dose!

Y's for the **YAWNS** which I always give
way to,

From sunrise to sunset, at work an' at play,
too.

Z's for the **ZEST** with which bounders *will*
jaw,

When a chap's feelin' drowsy an' wants
to—Yaw-aw!

It's been over and past long ago. I've never had anything to do with those rotters since, on my honour."

The Head looked at him very hard.

"I am glad to believe that," he said. "But that does not alter the fact that you, a prefect, acted in the way indicated by that letter. You say it was long ago, and I believe you. You say you have led a straight life since Kildare helped you out of the matter. I believe that, too. I shall not think of punishing you, Monteith, for a wrong done so long ago, and since repented. But you must see as well as I do, that you are not a fit person to become captain of the school."

Monteith bowed his head.

"That punishment at least, cannot be spared you," said the Head. "If you are sincerely repentant for having done wrong, you will be willing to face that. You must resign from your candidature."

"Must I, sir?"

"You must!" said the Head sternly.

"Very well, sir."

"Nothing more will be said about the matter then," said the Head. "I shall not deprive you of your prefectship. I shall not make this public."

"Thank you, sir."

"That is all, Monteith. I shall expect you to make your resignation as a candidate for the captaincy public to-day."

A glitter shot into Monteith's eyes.

"And what about Cutts, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Cutts!" said the Head, puzzled. "What has Cutts to do with this?"

"Didn't Cutts give you this letter, sir?" asked Monteith, in astonishment. "I understood——"

"Cutts did not give it to me. I have no reason to suppose that he knows anything about the matter. The letter came to me anonymously by post."

"Oh, he's very deep!" said Monteith bitterly. "It was sent to you by Cutts, sir."

"Indeed? That would make no difference, however."

"Cutts was as bad as I was, or worse," the prefect exclaimed. "He was in with me, with Joliffe and his gang. If I'm not fit to be

captain of the school, what about Cutts? I gave up that kind of thing. Cutts keeps it up!"

"You accuse Cutts——"

"Yes, I do."

"Have you any proof to offer for your statements?" asked the Head coldly.

"Proof!" repeated the prefect.

"Yes. You can hardly expect me to take your bare statement against Cutts without proof of any kind."

"I—I haven't any proof, of course. I don't suppose Cutts ever put anything down in black and white, and if he did I couldn't get it from Joliffe. He's up against me ever since I refused to have anything more to do with him. Of course, I can't prove it, but it's true."

"I decline to believe such a thing of Cutts, or of anyone else, without the strongest and clearest proof."

"I—I knew this was going to happen. Cutts told me the other day that if I stood for the election he would work some trick of this kind."

"Did anyone hear him say so?"

"No-no; but I told some fellows immediately afterwards, and they——"

"It all rests on your bare word apparently," said the Head dryly. "The word of a boy who, as it now appears, has deceived me and abused my confidence. You can scarcely expect me to attach any importance to what you say on that subject, Monteith. You had better say no more. You may go."

And Monteith went.

The Head sighed, and tossed the letter into the fire. It was consumed in a moment.

"That ends the matter," he said. "You agree with me that I could take no other step, Mr. Railton?"

"Quite so, sir. There was nothing else to be done. In the light of that letter, it would have been impossible to allow Monteith to become captain of the school."

"I am sorry, too, and painfully shocked," said the Head. "I had confidence in Monteith. This is a most unpleasant surprise to me, and I do not think I have been hard upon him. His disappointment in the election will be his punishment, and it is not too

heavy a punishment, I think. It is a wretched business altogether. As for his accusation against Cutts, it would be wrong to attach the slightest importance to it. I am afraid he spoke out in the bitterness of his disappointment, without stopping to think."

And Mr. Railton nodded. He took the same view. Gerald Cutts had played his cards very well indeed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Brought to Book!

"HALLO, Monteith! What's the matter?" Darrel of the Sixth asked the question in alarm, as he met Monteith, after his departure from the Head's study. Monteith's face was white, and his eyes were burning. He was striding on swiftly, and almost ran into Darrel. The senior stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

"What's happened, old man?"

Monteith stopped and burst into a bitter laugh. Tom Merry & Co. had just come in from the footer-ground, and they, too, looked at the New House prefect in surprise. Several other fellows had gathered round. Monteith was the centre of a crowd in a couple of minutes. He did not seem to notice it.

"What's happened?" he repeated. "Nothing. Only I'm not standing for the election to-morrow, after all. That's all."

"Not standing!" exclaimed Darrel, in amazement.

"No."

"Why not?"

"The Head's ordered me to withdraw."

"My hat? Why?"

"Cutts has worked it."

"Cutts!" exclaimed several voices.

"Cutts!" said Darrel. "What rot! How could Cutts possibly make the Head order you to withdraw? You're dreaming!"

"He has let the Head know something about me—something that's old and done with, as he knows jolly well," said Monteith. "A rotten old story dead and done with long ago!"

"You mean he has slandered you?"

"Yes."

"But if he's told lies they can be disproved."

Monteith laughed bitterly.

"It doesn't happen to be lies, it happens to be the truth," he said.

"Oh!"

"An old yarn about my being mixed up in betting, and so forth," said Monteith. "You know about it, Kildare consulted you when he helped me out. You know I've been as straight as a die ever since."

"I know," said Darrel.

"But Cutts has fished out an old letter in my handwriting from somewhere, and sent it anonymously to the Head," said the New House prefect. "What do you think of that for an election dodge?"

"Rotten!"

"Shame!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Distinctly caddish, I call it!"

Monteith looked round, seeming to notice the juniors for the first time. His face was almost haggard.

"Well, you've got rid of the New House now!" he exclaimed bitterly. "You can have your Cutts for captain now, and I wish you joy of him."

"We don't want Cutts!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly. "We had already fixed it up with Figgins to vote for you, Monteith. We'd rather have you than Cutts any day, though you're a New House bounder—I mean, chap."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm going to see Cutts now," said Monteith, between his teeth. "He came and made a row in my study the other day. One good turn deserves another."

He strode away in the direction of the Fifth Form passage. Darrel hurried after him.

"Monteith, it's not much good making a row!"

"I'm going to lick Cutts. He's not going to get off scot-free after playing me a trick like this."

"Are you sure he——"

"Of course I'm sure! I don't think he'll have the cheek to deny it—even Cutts."

Monteith strode on, and Darrel hesitated. The juniors followed Monteith like an army. Their sympathy was all with him. For once they forgot House rivalry. Cutts had played the game low down, and they would have

liked nothing better than to see him licked by the New House prefect.

Monteith reached Cutts's door, and threw it violently open without knocking. Cutts was in his room, with Gilmore of the Fifth, his study-mate. Both of them jumped up as the white and furious prefect strode in.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" Cutts exclaimed.

Smack!

Monteith's open hand across his face was the reply.

Cutts staggered back, his cheeks going pale, with a red mark across the skin where the New House prefect's hand had fallen.

"Bravo!" chirruped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from the passage. "Go for the wottah!"

"Now, you cad, come on," said Monteith, throwing off his coat and muffler. "You've swindled me out of the captaincy, and now you're going to pay for it!"

"I'll come on fast enough!" said Cutts, recovering his coolness.

"There isn't a fellow in the New House I can't lick. I think I showed you that the other day. But first, I'd like to have some

faint idea what the trouble is about."

"You know well enough, you cad!"

Cutts shrugged his shoulders.

"If it's the election——"

"You know it is!"

"So we're to fight because we're rival candidates?" asked Cutts. "Hadn't we better call Knox in, in that case, and make a three-cornered scrap of it? Knox is a candidate, too, you know."

There was a laugh from some of the fellows

in the passage. Cutts's coolness tickled them.

"I don't want to bandy words with you," said Monteith, his eyes burning. "I'm here to thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"Oh, good!" said Cutts calmly. "But isn't that rather a primitive way of settling an election? What have you got your rag out so suddenly for? Do you know, Darrel?"

Darrel looked keenly at the Fifth-former.

"The Head has got hold of some old paper in Monteith's hand," he said. "Monteith thinks you sent it to him."

"Oh, I see! Quite a mistake, of course!"

"You didn't do it?"

"I hope no one here suspects me of playing such a dirty trick?" said Cutts, looking round with an expression of virtuous indignation. "If I had, Monteith would be right to be ratty about it. But I haven't."

"Who did then?" said Monteith.

"How should I know? If it's something you wrote to Joliffe or Banks, they may have sent it to the Head. They don't like the way you chucked them. But if you suspect that it

was a rival candidate, why not suspect Knox as much as me? He knew all about your little games, you know."

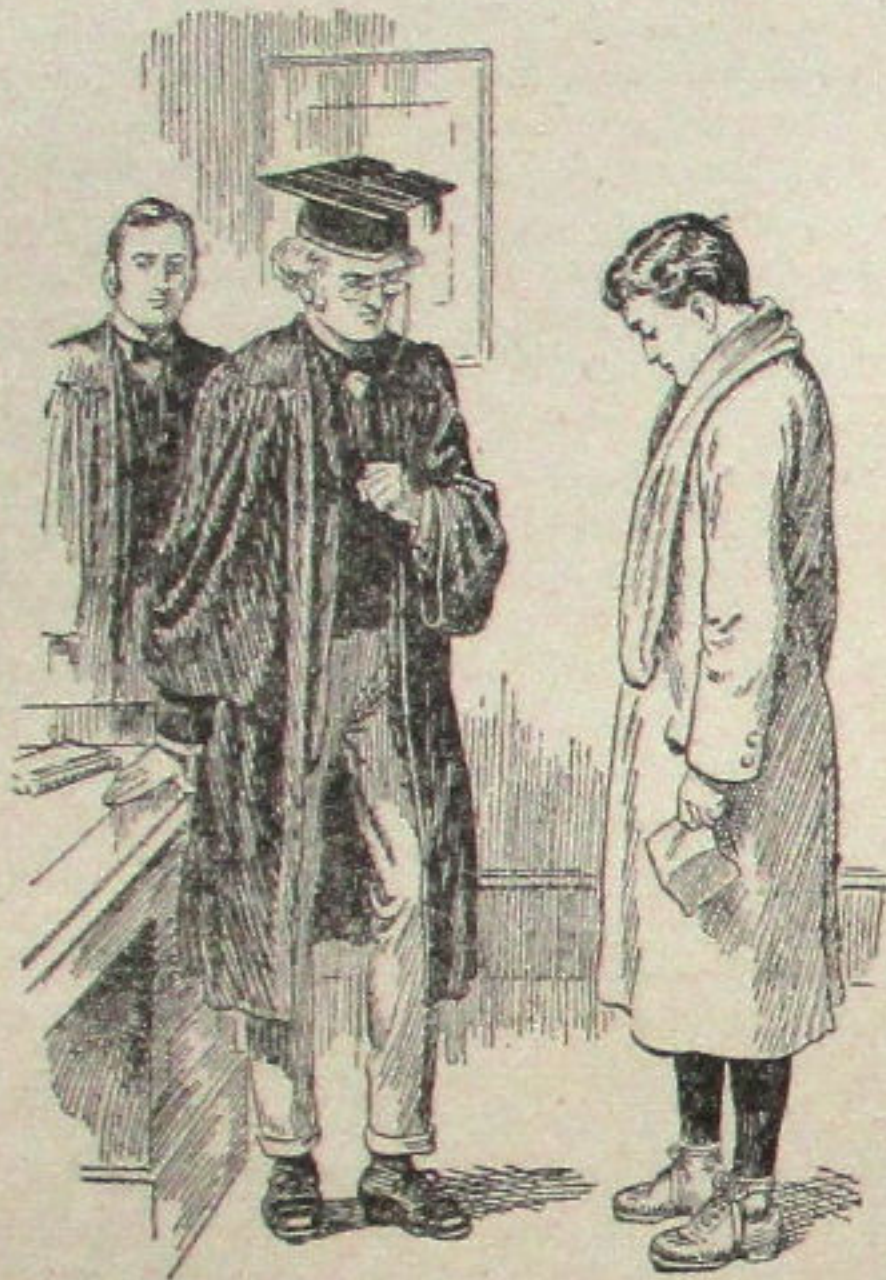
"Bai Jove! There's somethin' in that!"

Monteith set his lips.

"I know it was you!" he said. "You threatened me with it the other day unless I should withdraw."

Cutts shook his head.

"You misunderstood me," he said. "I merely meant to ask you whether you con-



Monteith's face went white. He felt the Head's stern, grave glance upon him. (See page 304)

sidered yourself a fit person to be captain of the school, considering the kind of fellow you are. I said the Head wouldn't think you a fit person if he knew. Apparently I was quite right, as it turns out. As for threatening you, that's all rot. Such a thought never even crossed my mind. I thought that in common decency you ought not to want to be captain of St. Jim's. That's all."

"You liar!"

Monteith did not waste further words upon the Fifth-former. He rushed upon him, hitting out furiously. The other fellows cleared back to give them room. Cutts had barely time to throw off his jacket, when the Sixth-former was upon him. From all sides fellows came crowding along the passage to see the struggle. A fight between a Fifth-former and a prefect of the Sixth was naturally very rare, and it caused tremendous excitement. A throng of fellows—seniors and juniors—crammed themselves into the passage, struggling towards the doorway.

But Tom Merry & Co. held front seats, so to speak. They were wedged in the doorway, and they refused to budge. They had what Lowther described afterwards as a splendid view of the fun.

But it was not fun for the combatants.

Both the seniors were powerful fellows, both good boxers, and both plucky. At any other time Cutts, with his imperturbable coolness, would probably have got the better of the fight. But Monteith was so furious that he did not care for the punishment he received. He took without heed the most terrific drives, and came on without a pause, and all the time his fists were hammering on Cutts.

Darrel walked away. He could not stop the fight, as Monteith was a prefect, but he felt that he ought not to witness it. But nobody else was unwilling to witness it. There was a struggle for places, in fact, while the two seniors were tramping to and fro in the study, hammering one another furiously.

There were no rounds in that fight. The two savagely angry foes fought on to a finish, and it was Cutts who finished first. He was fairly knocked out by the fierce onslaught of the indignant prefect of the New House.

Crash!

The Fifth-former went down at last, and lay on the study carpet, gasping. His eyes were half closed, his nose seemed swollen to double its usual size, his mouth was cut and bleeding. He was evidently "done."

Gilmore of the Fifth bent over him.

"You can't go on," he muttered.

Cutts shook his head feebly.

Monteith glared down at the Fifth-former, his anger still unappeased. He was showing severe signs of the conflict himself.

"You're done, you cad!"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Cutts, cool still, in spite of his exhausted state. "You have knocked me out. I'll try you again another time."

"Well, you've had your punishment, and if the fellows are rotten enough to make you captain of St. Jim's, why, they'll deserve to have such a captain as you'll make!" said Monteith bitterly.

And he strode from the study and returned to his own House.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

A Really Stunning Idea!

THERE was a meeting in Tom Merry's study after the row.

The juniors were in a state of perplexity. The late happening had knocked all their plans to the winds. They had settled on Monteith at last as their candidate, and that solution of the problem, though far from satisfactory, had at all events settled the question. Now it was all unsettled again. There was a notice on the board in the hall that Monteith's candidature had been withdrawn.

That finished Monteith.

The contest for the captaincy remained now between Cutts and Knox, unless a fresh candidate should come forward at the eleventh hour.

"And Cutts is quite impossible!" said Tom Merry firmly. "He can deny it till he's black in the face, but we all know that he played that rotten trick on Monteith."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"After that, we can't stand him," said Blake.

"Imposs!"

"Some other New House chap may take Monteith's place," said Kangaroo. "We're not bound to vote for him, though. We gave in about Monteith, but we sha'n't do the same again for another of them."

"No fear."

"Not much chance of that either," said Monty Lowther. "The New House are awfully indignant about Monteith's being ordered to withdraw his name. Nobody else will take his place; they won't hear of it. I heard it from Figgins, Baker and Webb and Gray have all refused to stand, though Monteith asked them."

"Right enough too," said Tom Merry. "I dare say most of the New House fellows won't vote at all. And Cutts has a big majority on this side. I reckon he'll get a third more than Knox, at least."

"Then Cutts is going to be captain," said Blake gloomily, "after playing that mean trick. It's rotten!"

"Disgustin', deah boys. I'm afwaid you'll have to come back to my pwoposition, aftah all," said D'Arcy, with a wise shake of the head.

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Most of the seniors will be for Knox, and a crowd of juniors for Cutts," said Tom Merry. "If there were a pin to choose between them, we could turn the scale. But——"

"They're a pair of rotters!" growled Manners.

"Monteith was a man, after all. But he's out of it now. Hallo, Figgy!"

Figgins came into the study, looking very glum. The School House juniors gave him sympathetic glances. They knew what a blow it was to Figgins, the fact that Monteith had been "done" out of his chance.

"What are you going to do?" asked Figgins. "About the election, I mean?"

"Blessed if we know. Your man's out of it."

"He is," said Figgins bitterly, "and that cad Cutts has done him out of it. I think you ought to be ashamed of yourselves if you let Cutts become captain of the school, after that."

"What can we do?" said Digby. "We

don't want Cutts, but there's only Knox up against him now. And I don't think Knox has an earthly."

"I've got an idea," said Figgins quietly. "I've been talking it over with Kerr and Wynn, and they agree with me."

"Go ahead, Figgy."

"You were going to back our man up, and one good turn deserves another," said Figgins. "We're ready to back up the School House now, as there isn't a New House candidate. Anybody but Cutts."

"But none of the Sixth——"

"Blow the Sixth!" said Figgins. "I'm fed up with the Sixth!"

"But none of the Fifth will stand against Cutts. They're all backing him up to a man," said Lowther.

"Blow the Fifth!"

"Then what——"

"What price the Shell?" said Figgins.

"What!"

"My hat!"

"If a Fifth-former can become captain of the school, why not a junior?" said Figgins steadily. "The Shell is only one Form below the Fifth, anyway. That's my idea. If Tom Merry chooses to put up for captain, I'll answer for all the New House junior votes."

"I?" exclaimed Tom Merry in amazement.

"Yes, you!"

"Great Scott! I—captain of St. Jim's!"

"You'd make a better captain than Cutts, any day!"

"Well, that wouldn't be hard," admitted Tom Merry. "I couldn't make a worse one, that's a cert. But——"

"The Head would never allow it," said Manners.

"He can't interfere. You remember once there was an election, and D'Arcy put up. He was elected all right."

"Yaas, wathah! And I considah——"

"But that was only a lark," said Monty Lowther.

"Yes; but the Head didn't interfere. And he won't interfere this time. You put your name up, Tom Merry, and we'll plump for you. Every chap in the New House will vote for you, if only to get even with Cutts!" said

Figgins savagely. "What we want to do is to keep Cutts of the Fifth out."

"I see!" said Tom Merry slowly.

"All your friends will back you up, and most of the juniors will follow suit. They will be awfully taken with the idea of having a junior captain of the school," said Figgins eagerly. "You will simply romp home. I shouldn't wonder if you poll four or five times as many votes as Knox and Cutts put together."

"I considah——"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Blake. "It's the only way, Tommy. Of course, the captain ought really to be selected from the Fourth Form——"

"Yaas, wathah; and I considah——"

"And I should make a jolly good captain, too," continued Blake. "But I waive my claims. Who says Tom Merry for captain?"

There was a shout from the meeting at once. As soon as they had recovered from their astonishment at Figgy's audacious suggestion they received the idea with enthusiasm. It was the very thing. Cutts would be defeated, and good old Tom Merry would be captain of the school. There wouldn't be a New House captain, and St. Jim's would be saved from all danger of going to the bow-wows. There was a ringing cheer that echoed the whole length of the Shell passage.

"Hurray! Tom Merry captain! Hurray!"

Tom Merry hesitated. The suggestion had taken him completely by surprise, and he had his doubts. But the idea of being captain of the school even for a time was, naturally, a very attractive one. His eyes began to sparkle.

"Well, if you fellows think so——"

"We do—we do!"

"I considah——"

"Hurray! Tom Merry captain! Hurray!"

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus in a burst of generosity. "Yaas, and I will back you up, deah boy. I weally considah that I have a bettah claim, especially as the captain of the school wequires to be a fellah of tact and judgment. But I withdwaw my claims, and I will back you up like anythin'. Huwway!"

"Then we'll put it to the fellows," said Tom Merry. "Let's get down to the common-room, and we'll see how they take it."

And the meeting adjourned to the common-room.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

The New Candidate!

"GENTLEMEN——"

"Pile in!"

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry stood on the table in the junior common-room in the School House. The room was crowded with the Shell, the Fourth, and the Third. News of the meeting had gone round, and the fellows had swarmed in to attend it. Figgins & Co. were there, too, with a crowd of new House juniors.

"Gentlemen," resumed Tom Merry, "Monteith has withdrawn his candidature. We are all sorry to hear it."

"Hear, hear!" from the New House contingent.

"Two candidates are left—Knox and Cutts!"

Groans.

"Knox is a rotten bully, and we don't want him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Cutts played a dirty trick in giving Monteith away to the Head, for we all know he did it, whatever he says."

Groans for Cutts.

"It is necessary, therefore, to put up a new man to save the good old school from going to the dogs!"

"Bravo!"

"Figgins of the New House has suggested me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gentlemen, why shouldn't a junior be captain of St. Jim's?"

"Echo answers why," said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, echo would answah St. Jim's to that wemark," said Arthur Augustus.

"Echo always answahs the last word, you know."

"We've got to show Cutts what we think of his knavish tricks," went on Tom Merry. "And I really think I should make a pretty decent captain for the school."

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" grinned Gore.

"Order!"

"Under my rule," said Merry, growing enthusiastic, "St. Jim's will flourish like the bay-tree beside running waters. There will be liberty, equality, and fraternity—freedom for all, combined with respect to authority—every chap will do just as he likes, and discipline will be firmly enforced."

"Hear, hear!"

"It will be my aim to carry on the good work commenced by the late lamented Kildare——"

"Good old Kildare!"

"I shall do my best to keep up the football and cricket traditions of the old school—more especially by a judicious mixture of juniors among seniors in the First Eleven——"

Frantic cheering.

"I shall use my influence with the Head to get a certain number of juniors made into prefects, to keep the Sixth in order——"

Wild applause.

"In a word, everything will go rippingly, if you decide to elect me captain of St. Jim's, I promise to stand up for the rights of the juniors."

"Hurray!"

"If the Sixth cut up rusty, they'll get it in the neck."

"Down with the Sixth!"

"Fagging will be abolished——"

"Bravo!"

"Bullying will be put down with a firm hand——"

"Hear, hear!"



Monteith's open hand fell across Cutts's face. Cutts staggered back, his cheeks going pale. "Now you cad, come on," exclaimed Monteith. (See page 308)

"And—and all will be calm and bright," said Tom Merry in conclusion. "Gentlemen, hands up for myself as captain of St. Jim's."

A forest of hands went up.

There was no doubt that the candidature of Tom Merry of the Shell was popular in the extreme—at least, with the Lower School.

Tom Merry glanced with a sparkling eye over the crowded and enthusiastic meeting. There were enough fellows present to elect him, if it came to that.

"Gentlemen, I thank you——"

"Hear, hear!"

"I will now proceed to put a notice on the board, announcing my candidature. All of you can come with me."

"What-ho!"

And Tom Merry jumped down off the table, and led his excited and enthusiastic followers to the notice-board in the hall. Monty Lowther found a pencil, and Manners a sheet of paper torn from a pocket-pook, and Tom Merry wrote out the notice and pinned it on the board. It ran:

"Thomas Merry, of the Shell Form, has the honour of announcing himself

as a candidate for the captaincy of St. Jim's now vacant. He appeals for the suffrages of all St. Jim's fellows, School House and New House alike. Roll up!"

"Hurray!" roared the crowd.

"What's all that dashed noise about?" exclaimed Knox of the Sixth, pushing his way angrily through the crowd. "What rot are you putting on the board, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry looked defiantly at the bully of the Sixth.

"I'm putting up my election notice," he said calmly.

"Your what?" ejaculated Knox, staggered.

"My election notice."

"What do you mean, you young idiot?" said the senior harshly.

"I'm standing for captain of St. Jim's."

"You!"

"Me—I mean I," said Tom Merry coolly. "and I fancy I'm going to pull it off, Knox. I'm backed up by both Houses."

"You silly young ass!" exclaimed Knox furiously. "Take that idiotic paper off the board at once. Do you hear?"

"I hear!" said Tom, with a nod.

"Take it down!"

"Rats!"

"What!" yelled Knox.

"Getting deaf?" asked Tom Merry pleasantly. "I said rats! R-A-T-S—rats! However, I'll say it again if you didn't quite catch it. Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wats, Knoxey, deah boy! You wun off. You've no wight to interfeah with the free and independent electahs of St. Jim's!"

"If you don't take that paper down, I'll take it down, and liek you!" shouted Knox.

"You've no right to touch it, and you won't be allowed to."

The senior gave a snort of fury, and made a grasp at the paper on the board. But the juniors were ready for him. They weren't afraid of Knox. Hands grasped the unpopular bully of the Sixth on all sides, and he was whirled away from the notice-board before he knew what was happening.

"Bump him!" yelled Blake.

"Hurray! Bump him!"

"Let me go!" shrieked Knox, hitting out wildly.

"Yow-ow! My nose—ow——"

"Gweat Scott! My eye——"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Knox roared as he was bumped on the floor—hard. Darrel came out of his study with a cane in his hand.

"It's all right, Darrel," said Tom Merry

reassuringly. "We're only bumping Knox. He wanted to take down the election notice of a rival candidate. That's not allowed, is it?"

"Certainly not," said Darrel.

Knox tore himself free, looking very dishevelled. His collar was torn, and his jacket split at the back.

"That young hound Merry is setting up as a candidate!" he hooted. "Are we going to have the election turned into a silly joke?"

Darrel started.

"Merry! You're not such an ass——"

"I'm standing for captain!" said Tom Merry sturdily. "A respectable and influential party of electors have done me the honour to select me as their candidate——"

"Tom Merry captain! Hurray!"

"You young duffers!" said Darrel, and he went back to his study laughing. Knox tramped off, gritting his teeth. He made no further attempt to remove the notice from the board. The electors were evidently not to be trifled with.

"Darrel seems to take it as a joke," said Tom Merry a little uncomfortably. "I don't see anything to laugh at myself."

"He laughs best who laughs last," said Blake sagely. "The Sixth won't laugh when you romp home at the election as captain of St. Jim's."

"Wathah not!"

"I wonder how the Head will take it!" murmured Manners.

Most of the fellows were wondering, too, how the Head would take it. But the general opinion was that he couldn't interfere. From time immemorial the St. Jim's fellows had possessed the right of electing their own captain without interference. It was a custom, certainly, for the captain of the school to be in the Sixth, and to be a prefect. But it was not a rule.

Besides, there had been no interference with the candidature of Knox and Cutts—and Knox wasn't a prefect, and Cutts wasn't in the Sixth. Without gross inconsistency, the Head couldn't interfere with Tom Merry on those grounds. He mightn't like it, Tom admitted; but then, by acting as a really capable and first-class captain, he would soon

convince the Head that it was all right. That was the way Tom Merry looked at it.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Railton imparted the news to the Head soon after the notice was put on the board. The Housemaster was half-smiling as he imparted it.

Dr. Holmes could not help smiling too.

"Bless my soul!" he said. "The boy cannot be in earnest."

"I fear that he is very much in earnest, sir."

"But the others—they will not be so foolish as to elect a junior captain of the school, I am sure."

"I trust not, but——"

"I do not see how I can interfere," said the Head thoughtfully. "I do not want to give the juniors the impression that they are treated with injustice. I think I shall leave it to the good sense of the boys."

Which he did.

Only the boys did not have exactly the same idea of "good sense" as the Head had, and so they were keenly and enthusiastically determined to bring their candidate in—and their candidate was Tom Merry!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Foiled at the Finish!

ELECTION day!

There was almost breathless excitement in the old school.

Had the contest remained among Cutts, Knox, and Monteith, the excitement would have been nothing like it. But a junior was standing for the captaincy—and that made all the difference.

Of four candidates, one—Monteith—had withdrawn, and the other three were going to the poll—at all events, it was supposed so. But Knox and Cutts had had a talk together, and doubtless the Fifth-former had made it worth Knox's while to give him a free run, for on Saturday afternoon it was known that the Sixth Form candidate had followed Monteith's example, and withdrawn.

Knox had realised, undoubtedly, that he had no chance. Cutts's followers far outnumbered his, to say nothing of the crowd that supported Tom Merry. If both the seniors had stood, both would have been hopelessly beaten,

but with one withdrawn, the other still had a chance.

Knox and his friends were supporting Cutts now; and Gerald Cutts hoped to pull it off. The juniors were determined that he shouldn't. Canvassing had been going on briskly on both sides.

In the New House, Figgins & Co. were indefatigable in Tom Merry's cause. Tom's generous backing of Monteith had touched their hearts; and, besides that, they were eager to get even with Cutts. Not a fellow in the New House would dream of voting for Cutts. Even some of the seniors intended to vote for Tom Merry, to mark their displeasure at the exclusion of their own candidate.

Some of them, indeed, were of the opinion that, if a junior were elected to the captaincy, the Head would rescind his order, and allow Monteith to take the post after all. For a junior captain was really unthinkable as a permanency—to senior minds, at least. The juniors saw nothing unthinkable about it.

The contest rested now between Tom Merry and Cutts, and though the Fifth-former still had hopes, Tom Merry had ample confidence.

A large number of the seniors did not mean to vote at all, but the juniors intended to roll up in great force for their men. And almost all the juniors of both Houses were for Tom Merry.

The election was fixed for four o'clock in the afternoon, in the big hall of the School House.

Long before four o'clock the hall was crowded.

Tom Merry's backers whipped in the voters from all quarters, from the gym. and the footer ground and the river and the studies. Not a fellow who possessed a vote was allowed to be anywhere but in Big Hall.

Mr. Railton and Mr. Lathom were tellers on the important occasion, and a little before four o'clock they came in.

Both of them were looking very grave. They did not like Cutts or his candidature, but they hoped sincerely that he would be elected. A junior as captain of the school was a new departure, of which the masters were not likely to approve.

Cheers greeted the appearance of the two masters.

"Now we sha'n't be long, deah boys," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, we'll have a celebvation when we've elected Tom Mewwy captain. I still considah that I should weally make a bettah captain, you know, but I'm backing up old Tommy."

"It will be a gidly walk over!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Look at Cutts! He doesn't look very jolly, does he?"

"Wathah not!"

"He knows he's going to get it in the neck," said Tom Merry. "Now, who's going to propose me?"

"Bettah leave that to me, deah boy. I will put it vevy nicely."

"Right-ho! Pile in!"

Four o'clock struck. Mr. Railton raised his hand for silence, and the buzz of voices died away in the crowded hall.

"My boys," said the Housemaster, in his deep voice, "you are met to elect a new captain for the school, in the place of Kildare, whose departure we all regret."

Mr. Railton was interrupted by cheers for Kildare. Then he resumed:

"I understand that there are two candidates. I trust that the boys of St. Jim's will make a wise selection, and not commit themselves to a reckless innovation."

"That's up against you, Tom Merry," whispered Levison.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "Railton means that we're to vote for the right candidate, and the right candidate is Tom Merry."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Knox is up!" grinned Kangaroo. "Go it, Knox."

Knox rose to propose his friend, Gerald Cutts, of the Fifth Form, as captain of St. Jim's. There were cheers from a section of the assembly.

Tom Merry & Co. looked round them, and they were satisfied that not more than a third of the fellows present were cheering for Cutts. Quite a hundred fellows were absent from the Hall, fellows who would not vote for a junior, and who did not choose to vote for Cutts.

"Now, Gussy!" said Blake.

Arthur Augustus came gracefully forward.

"Gentlemen of St. Jim's——"

"Hurray!" came a roar, which completely put in the shade the late cheering for Cutts. "Go it, Gussy!"

"Gentlemen, I have the honour to pwopose my esteemed fwiend, Tom Mewwy, for the post of captain of St. Jim's!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I need not dilate upon the eminent qualities of my fwiend, Tom Mewwy. You all know him."

Cheers!

"You knew him for a good man and twue—kindest fwiend and noblest foe—a chap who's as stwaight as a die, and always plays the game."

"Hurray!"

"Mr. Wailton, the majowity of votes bein' evidently in favour of my fwiend Tom Mewwy, I claim to have my fwiend Tom Mewwy declared captain of St. Jim's."

"I demand a show of hands!" said Cutts, between his teeth. Cutts was pale with rage; he had little hope left now.

He had played his cards well—too well, perhaps. Cunning as he had been, his schemes had toppled over at last, like a house of cards; he was foiled at the finish. The unexpected had happened, for the candidature of a junior was certainly one of the most unexpected things that could have been thought of. And Cutts of the Fifth saw his castles in the air fading away.

"Hands up for Cutts of the Fifth!" said Mr. Railton.

Hands went up on all sides, and they were carefully counted, and then Mr. Railton and the Fourth Form-Master compared notes as to the total. A note was made of the number, and then a show of hands for Tom Merry was called for.

To the most casual glance it was evident that the number was far greater.

But the counting was gone through carefully. Then there was a hush of silence, as Mr. Railton stood up to make the announcement of the result. The excitement was breathless.

"Votes for Cutts of the Fifth—eighty-five."

"Oh!"

"Votes for Tom Merry of the Shell—two hundred and thirty."

"Hurray!"

"Tom Merry of the Shell is declared to be duly elected captain of the school!" said Mr. Railton, with quite a queer expression upon his face.

"Hip, hip, hurray!"

Cutts of the Fifth drove his hands deep into his pockets, and strode from the hall, his face white with rage. But few regarded Cutts of the Fifth. A wildly excited and enthusiastic crowd surrounded Tom Merry, and raised him shoulder-high, and bore him round Big Hall in triumph, and the old rafters rang with cheers for Tom Merry, Captain of St. Jim's.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Unprecedented!

ST. JIM'S was in a state of excitement.

A stranger looking in on the old school that Saturday afternoon would have wondered what was on. It was only too evident that something was "on."

The Lower School was in a state of extraordinary exuberance. Junior fellows clapped one another on the back when they met, or shook hands, or burst into cheering without any apparent rhyme or reason.

The senior fellows, it might have been noticed, did not seem to share in the general exuberance. They looked serious and solemn.

Whatever was "on," it was evidently some-

thing that pleased the Lower School very greatly, and was not regarded with favourable eyes by the Upper School.

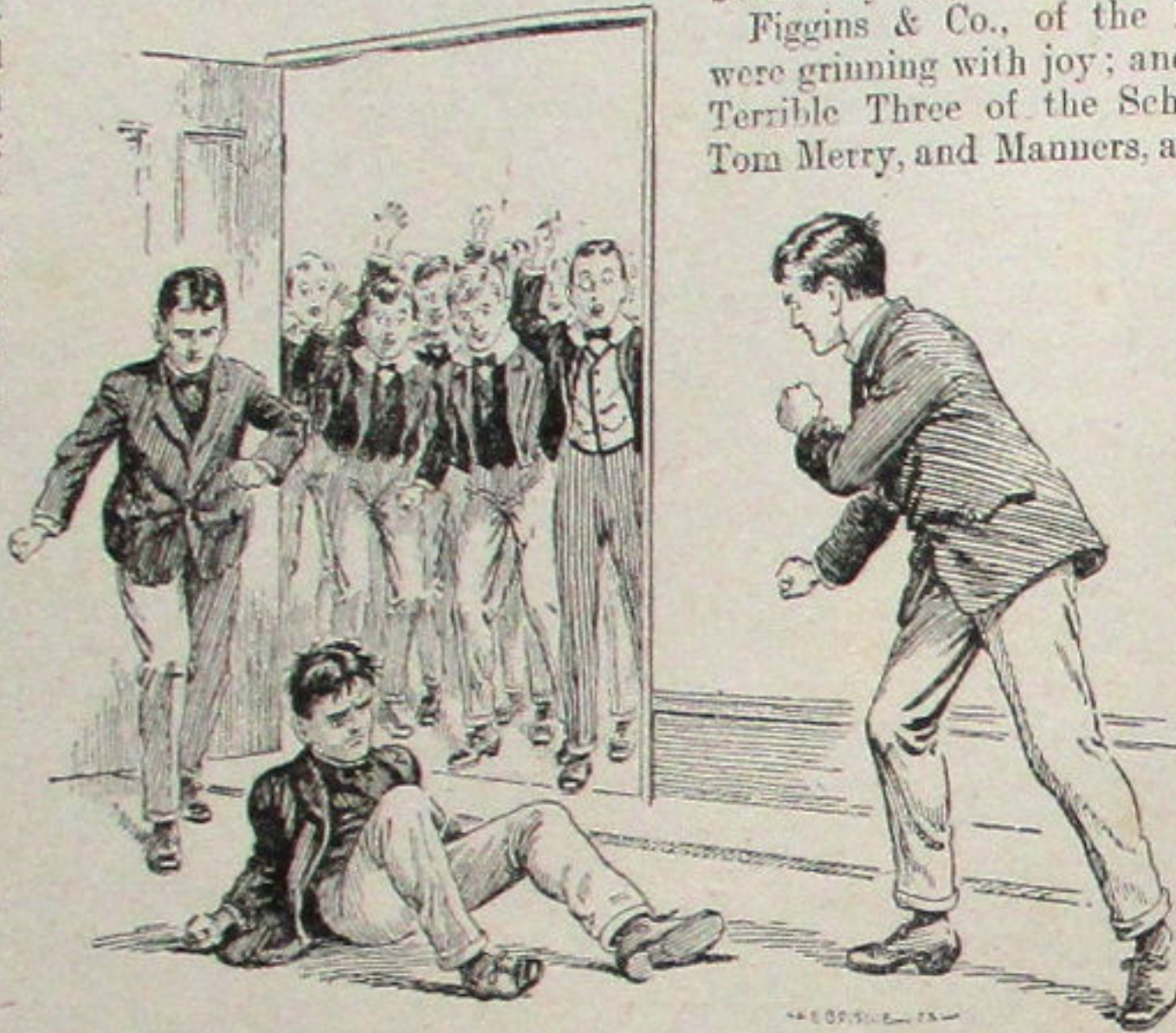
In the Shell passage in the School House there was a terrific crowd, all of them noisy, and all of them joyous. Tom Merry's study was crowded.

Tom Merry was holding a reception.

Juniors of both Houses—School House and New House—came in swarms. The rivalry between the two houses of St. Jim's seemed to be entirely suspended.

Figgins & Co., of the New House, were grinning with joy; and so were the Terrible Three of the School House—Tom Merry, and Manners, and Lowther.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form wore an unusually expansive smile, though he was so squeezed by the crowd in Tom Merry's study that his elegant clothes were in very great danger of being sadly crumpled.



Crash! The Fifth-former went down at last, and lay on the study carpet gasping. Monteith glanced down at him, his anger still unappeased. (See page 309)

"It's simply wippin'!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy declared for the twentieth time at least. "I wegard it as simply wippin', deah boys!"

"Gorgeous!" said Jack Blake.

"Topping!" chimed in Figgins of the New House.

And all the fellows crammed in the study and the passage burst into a cheer:

"Hurrah! Hip-pip—hurrah!"

The din in the Shell passage must have been heard all over the School House, and on most occasions it would have caused some exas-

perated prefect to come along with a cane. But just now the prefects seemed to be keeping off the grass, so to speak.

Tom Merry himself was looking very elated. It was natural, under the circumstances. Naturally, too, he was holding a reception of the electors, and every fellow who had voted for him came to the reception, with the result that the study and the whole passage were crammed with an uproarious throng.

Refreshments had been provided on a generous scale. The Co. had gladly clubbed together to their last sixpence to celebrate that unique and never-to-be-forgotten occasion.

The fellows in the study, lucky to be on the spot, demolished the things with great heartiness, and passed out helpings to their less fortunate comrades in the passage.

Fatty Wynn of the New House stood on the table, tucking into a huge pie, his plump face shining like a full moon. There was no room to sit down. There wasn't very much room to stand, for that matter.

Every now and then the feed and talk were interrupted by bursts of cheering. On election days the fellows were entitled to make a row if they liked. They took full advantage of the privilege.

Besides, now that Tom Merry was captain of the school, they could do as they liked; the new captain would see them through.

And they wanted the seniors to hear them rejoice. They wanted the prefects to understand that there was a new regime now.

In fact, they wouldn't have been sorry to see some interfering prefect come along. Under the orders of the captain of the school, they would have been justified in ejecting the said prefect "on his neck." And to eject a prefect on his neck would have been bliss to the juniors.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"We shall have Darrel or somebody along here soon, if we don't put the soft pedal on," Kangaroo of the Shell remarked.

"Let 'em all come!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We'll jollay soon show them that we don't care a wap for them!"

"What-ho!"

"Prefects have no right to interfere with

the captain of the school," said Tom Merry seriously. "I've been going over the Ordinances of the School——"

"The which?" ejaculated Figgins.

"The ordinances!" said Tom Merry.

"They're in a book in the library—the laws of the school, you know, that even the Head has to respect. I've copied out the ordinances that affect the captain of the school, and I know my rights. I'm going to live up to them. I'm sure all you fellows will back me up in exercising my proper authority."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a shout from the crowded passage:

"Here comes Darrel!"

"A blessed prefect!"

"Who are you shoving, Darrel?"

"You get off! We don't want any of the Sixth here!"

"Get out!"

Tom Merry struggled to the door and looked out into the passage. Darrel of the Sixth, with a very red face, was pushing his way through the throng amid roars of protest and indignation. He was making his way to the study, but it was slow work.

Tom Merry waved his hand to his excited backers.

"Let Darrel pass, you fellows!" he called out.

"We don't want any prefects!" howled the crowd.

"Darrel's a good sort. Let him come in. If Knox comes along you can chuck him out—or Cutts—on my authority."

"Hear, hear!"

Darrel squeezed through, and arrived in the study in a somewhat breathless and dishevelled state. Darrel was a very popular fellow, only second in that respect to old Kildare himself, the captain of St. Jim's, who had left suddenly, and whose place as captain Tom Merry had taken.

But, popular or not, Darrel couldn't be allowed to interfere with the rights and duties of the new captain. That wasn't to be thought of for a moment.

"You kids must make less noise!"

Darrel gasped. "Do you know you can be heard over the whole House and across the quadrangle?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom Merry calmly.

"Well, you've got to shut up!"

"Rats!"

"What!" shouted the prefect, grasping his cane.

Tom Merry raised his hand warningly.

"Put that cane down, Darrel!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Don't you know that I'm captain of the school?" demanded Tom Merry. "Listen to this: Bye-law No. 67 of the Ordinances of St. James's Collegiate School. 'The captain of the school, by virtue of his position, takes precedence of all prefects, who are under his directions.' Got that, Darrel?"

"You—you cheeky young ass——"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry sternly. "No slanging. Listen to this: Bye-law No. 79. 'Any disrespect to constituted authority shall be punished by flogging, detention, or caning upon the hands, as may be deemed fit and suitable.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at," said Tom Merry, looking round severely. "This is a serious matter. I don't want to flog you, Darrel——"

"What!"

"Or detain you—or cane you upon the hands——"

"Wha-a-at!" stuttered the Sixth-former.

"But I must insist upon proper respect for constituted authority. Kindly lay down that cane at once!"

"You—you——"

"Take that cane away from Darrel!" said Tom Merry.

The cane was whipped out of the prefect's hand in a second. Darrel clenched his fists, but unnumbered fists were clenched round him at once.

"Take it calmly, Darrel, old man," said Tom Merry. "We don't want to hurt you——"

"Hurt me!" spluttered the prefect. "I'm deaming, I suppose. I must be dreaming."

"Kindly return to your study, Darrel, and

consider yourself detained there for one hour," said Tom Merry.

Darrel stood transfixed.

"Do you hear me, Darrel?"

"I—I hear you! I'll thrash you!"

"Remove that insubordinate person," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Throw him out!"

"Hurray!"

Darrel wondered whether he was on his head or his heels. Hands grasped him on all sides, and he was hustled out of the study. In the passage the crowd hustled him on. He was breathless, his collar was torn, and his jacket split up the back by the time he reached the stairs. He went back to his study in a dazed state. In Tom Merry's study, and the parts adjoining, the celebration continued with undiminished din.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

A Difficult Situation!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, sat in his study, with a worried brow.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, was with him, and he, too, was looking decidedly worried.

The state of things at the old school was extraordinary—it was a state that could not possibly be allowed to continue, and yet there did not seem to be any ready means by which it could be put an end to.

A junior captain of the school!

It was unthinkable.

But what was to be done? Without what everybody in the Lower School would have considered an utterly unjustifiable and tyrannical exercise of authority, the Head could not quash the result of the election. He shrank from taking such a step as ordering Tom Merry to resign the captaincy to which he had been elected.

But unless Tom Merry was directly commanded to do so by the Head, it was plain that he wouldn't even think of resigning. He was quite satisfied with himself as captain of the school.

"It is an unheard-of state of affairs," the Doctor said, with a troubled frown. "Of course, it is impossible to allow it to continue."

"Impossible!" agreed Mr. Railton.

"Yet it seems equally impossible to interfere."

"It would certainly be difficult."

"I confess, Mr. Railton, that I really do not know what is to be done under such extraordinary circumstances."

Mr. Railton nodded. He did not know either.

"It is very unfortunate," he agreed.

"There were four candidates—Monteith and Knox of the Sixth, Cutts of the Fifth, and Tom Merry of the Shell. Unfortunately, it is the junior who has been elected."

"Of course, I could not foresee that contingency when I directed Monteith to withdraw from his candidature," the Head remarked.

"I had no alternative, when it was revealed to me that at one time he had been mixed up in disgraceful proceedings with a set of betting men."

"Quite so," agreed the Housemaster. "But the juniors had a suspicion that it was Cutts of the Fifth who made that revelation to you, in order to spoil Monteith's chances for the election, and they all turned against him at once."

"It is possible, of course, that they were right."

"Probably. And as Knox withdrew also—I think by some arrangement with Cutts—only the two remained; and Cutts became so extremely unpopular, Tom Merry was elected by an overwhelming majority. It is not as if the majority had been small. In that case a new election might be considered. But the majority was more than a hundred; and a new election would certainly have the same result."

The Head drummed on the table with his fingers.

"But a junior captain of the school, Mr. Railton! It is impossible!"

"It is certainly very awkward."

"The captain of the school has authority over the prefects, and, of course, should be a prefect himself."

"But neither Knox nor Cutts was a prefect, and they were allowed to stand. I fear it is too late to raise that point, sir."

"Of course, this is an entirely unexpected

turn of events, and one that could not be prepared for," said the Head. "But something must be done. All the seniors, for instance, will be against the new captain; they cannot be expected to obey a junior—though, by the rules, they are bound to obey the captain of the school."

"They will certainly ignore a junior captain."

"Which will lead to great friction and dispute."

"I fear so."

"But what am I to do? If I order the junior to resign, and make a new law on the subject, all the Lower School will regard it as an act of tyranny. And, to a certain extent, they would be right."

"It would undoubtedly make a very bad impression."

"Yet what is to be done? Something should be done before the matter has gone too far and caused trouble that will not be easily suppressed."

"I quite agree with you, sir. Perhaps an appeal to the good sense of the junior may have some effect. He might listen to you, sir, or to me."

"I will leave it in your hands, Mr. Railton," said the Head, looking relieved. "Pray see what you can do in the matter. I trust that Tom Merry will have sufficient good sense to listen to you. After all, he is a sensible lad."

"I will do my best, sir."

"And perhaps it would be as well to lose no time," said the Head. "The affair cannot be put an end to too soon."

"Quite so. I will see Merry at once."

And Mr. Railton left the Head's study.

His brow was very thoughtful as he went towards the stairs. He could hear the din of the celebration in the junior quarters. It was true that Tom Merry was a sensible lad—quite true; but the Housemaster knew that the junior's point of view might not coincide with his own. However, he determined to do his best to bring Tom Merry to reason.

There was a buzz in the Shell passage as Mr. Railton came upstairs. The juniors respectfully made way for the Housemaster. It was not very easy to make way, in that tremendous crowd, but they contrived to allow Mr.

Railton to pass. The Housemaster reached the crammed study, and the din died away as he looked in.

"Come in, sir," said Tom Merry cordially. "It's very kind of you to come to congratulate me, sir."

The juniors grinned. They guessed easily enough that the Housemaster had not come there to congratulate the newly elected captain of the school.

Mr. Railton coughed.

"Ahem! I came to speak to you, Merry."

"Yes, sir."

"But — ahem! — I think a more private occasion —"

"Oh, pile in, sir — I mean, go on! These chaps don't mind. In fact, sir, if it's anything about the captaincy, I'd rather they heard it, too. You see, I'm forming my pals into a committee to help me run things, now I'm captain. I'm rather young to be captain of a school like St. Jim's."

added Tom Merry, with becoming modesty.

"Yaas, I'm goin' to act as advisah to Tom Mewwy, sir. He wequires the assistance of a fellah of tact and judgment."

"Speak out, sir," said Jack Blake encouragingly. "The managing committee will be very pleased to hear you, sir."

"Yaas, sir, we wegard you as a fwieend as well as a Housemastah," said Arthur Augustus graciously.

"The fact is," said Mr. Railton, "this election has had a most unexpected and absurd result, Merry."

Tom Merry looked surprised.

"Unexpected, sir, perhaps; but I don't see how it can be considered an absurd result, when the best candidate was elected."

"Hear, hear!"

"You see, sir, Monteith was ordered to get out, by the Head himself, because Cutts gave him away about some ancient history or other. And, naturally, the fellows weren't going to vote for a sneak like Cutts."

"No fear!" said Figgins emphatically.

"He dished our man, and so we dished him!"

"As for Knox, he wasn't a suitable chap, anyway, and he never had an earthly," said Tom Merry.

"It was between Cutts and me; and I think I can say, without swanking, that I'm the better man of the two."

"Hear — hear!"

"Bwavo!"

"Ahem! But it is quite impossible for a junior to be captain of the school," said

Mr. Railton. "In the first place, the senior boys will not pay you any regard."

"They're bound to, sir, by the rules."

"I am afraid they will disregard the rules, under the circumstances."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"They won't be allowed to disregard the rules, sir. I'm going to keep the Sixth in order."

"What!"

"I sha'n't be a tyrant, of course, but I shall exercise authority with a firm hand," said Tom calmly. "All the juniors will back me up."



"Bump him if he resists," said Tom Merry calmly. Knox did resist. He struggled like a lunatic, but the juniors were too many for him. (See page 324)

"Yes, rather!"

"Huwway!"

"The Sixth will have to toe the line, and I'll soon make 'em see that," said Tom cheerfully. "Don't you worry about that, sir. It will be all right."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Railton, far from assured on that point. "Then there is the fact that you are a junior, and not a prefect, Merry. The captain of the school has always been head prefect."

"The Head can make me a prefect if he likes, sir."

"Jolly good wheeze!" said Monty Lowther heartily.

"Good egg!" said Blake. "You might suggest that to the Head, sir. Then there won't be any more difficulties on that point."

"And the captain of the school is head of the games," said Mr. Railton, his brow growing more worried. "I suppose you are not thinking of undertaking to captain the First Eleven, and direct the sports, Merry?"

"That's just what I am thinking of, sir," said Tom Merry, at once. "I fancy I should do it better than Cutts, for instance."

"Cutts is a senior——"

"I know he is, sir; but, as a junior myself, naturally I sort of feel that a junior could run things better than a senior. All the fellows here agree with me."

"Yes, rather!"

"What-ho!"

"I'm going to do my best to carry on Kildare's work where he left it off, sir," said Tom Merry. "I don't say I shall be as good a captain as old Kildare was. He was a chap in a thousand. But a fellow can't do more than his best."

"Besides, I'm to be advisah-in-chief——"

"To come to the point, Merry," said Mr. Railton, plunging into business at last. "I'm afraid this election cannot be allowed to stand."

There was a loud buzz at once. Even respect for the Housemaster could not repress that demonstration of indignation.

"Oh, really, sir!" exclaimed Tom Merry warmly. "I don't see that! The result of an open and fair election must be allowed to stand."

"In this case, under the peculiar circumstances, I think the Head will order the result to be set aside—unless you anticipate him by resigning, Merry."

"Impossible, sir! The Head can't do it!"

"What!"

"Listen to this, sir," said Tom Merry, referring at once to his collection of valuable extracts from the Ordinances of the School. "By-law No. 98. In case of misconduct of any kind on the part of the captain of the school, the Headmaster shall have the right and power to dismiss him from his post, but otherwise the free choice of the electors shall be ratified, and shall be considered inviolable."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "That hits the wight nail wight on the head."

"You see, sir, that settles it," said Tom Merry. Mr. Railton's face was a study. "The Head can't dismiss me excepting for misconduct—and I'm not the kind of chap to misconduct myself in any way. In fact, I'm going to be jolly careful. I'm sure Dr. Holmes wouldn't transgress his authority in that way—but if he did, I should have to appeal to the Board of Governors."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Railton compressed his lips.

"So you refuse to listen to my advice, Merry——"

"Not at all, sir. But the captain of a big school like St. Jim's must be supposed to be capable of forming an opinion for himself, don't you think so, sir?"

"In a word, you refuse to resign from this ridiculous position to which you have so unfortunately been elected?" the Housemaster exclaimed tartly.

"I shouldn't put it like that, sir. But I certainly feel it my duty to live up to the position to which my schoolfellows have elected me, and to do my duty by them and by St. Jim's!" said Tom Merry.

"Then I have nothing more to say."

And the Housemaster quitted the study.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That looks as if the powahs that be don't quite like the way things are goin', deah boys!"

"They can lump it, then," said Tom Merry emphatically. "One thing's jolly certain——"

I'm captain of St. Jim's, and I'm going to remain captain!"

And there was a roar of applause and approval.

"Hurrah! Hip-pip-hurrah!"

And that roar accompanied the Housemaster as he went downstairs.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

The New Captain!

WHAT was going to happen was a mystery so far.

Tom Merry of the Shell was captain of St. Jim's, but that he could be allowed to remain captain seemed impossible to the seniors, at least.

Many of the juniors, too, expected the chopper to come down, as Monty Lowther put it.

But it did not come down.

Whether the Head, as well as Tom Merry, had been looking up the bye-laws of the school, or whether he was simply hesitating in doubt—whatever the reason, the fiat did not go forth for the junior to stand out of the captaincy.

On Monday Tom Merry was still captain of St. Jim's, and showed every intention of sticking to his post and living up to it.

The Sixth Form had held a council on the subject in the privacy of the prefect's room; and although the result was not known to the juniors, they guessed easily enough that the top Form of the school had decided to be "up against" the new regime.

That, of course, was only to be expected.

The Sixth and the Fifth would "kick," but however hard they kicked, they could not kick Tom Merry out of the captaincy, and that was the important point.

It was known that Cutts of the Fifth was especially furious. It was not only his defeat in the election, but his defeat at the hands of a junior that rankled in the breast of the black sheep of the Fifth. He had outwitted Monteith of the New House, he had bought off Knox of the Sixth, and he had been beaten at the finish by a Shell fellow!

It was no wonder that Cutts was furious, but Tom Merry & Co. did not care twopence for his fury. The new captain of St. Jim's felt quite equal to dealing with the Fifth-

former if he turned rusty. Gerald Cutts could scheme revenge as much as he liked; the captain of St. Jim's went on his way unregarding.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, looked at Tom Merry in a somewhat peculiar way, when he came into the Form-room on Monday morning.

It was the first time Mr. Linton had had a captain of the school in his class.

Tom Merry was, in fact, the cynosure of all eyes at this time. His old enemies, Gore and Crooke and Levison and Mellish, were remarkably civil to him. However short a time his command might last, while it lasted he had it in his power to make things very warm for them if he liked; and they knew it. Not that Tom Merry was in the least likely to act the bully. But he did not mean to stand any nonsense, and he made that plain from the start.

The opposition of the seniors was counterbalanced by the support of the Lower School. There was hardly a junior in either House who was not prepared to back Tom Merry up through thick and thin.

Curiously enough the new captain was as popular in the New House as in his own House. The New House candidate had been "dished" by Cutts. And the New House fellows had rejoiced in "dishing" Cutts, in his turn, by voting for Tom Merry. And having elected Tom Merry, they were prepared to stand by him.

The new reign, therefore, was inaugurated by an unusual peacefulness between the juniors of the rival Houses, though how long that would last was a question.

For the present, however, the barometer was set fair, so to speak.

Figgins announced in the New House that he was backing up Tom Merry, and that he would punch the head of any other fellow who didn't back him up, and Figgy's argument was considered conclusive.

The juniors felt that Tom Merry was one of themselves, and that it was up to them to support him against the seniors, and they felt a natural rejoicing at the idea of "giving the Sixth a fall."

Tom Merry, as captain of St. Jim's, found

that he had a good many new duties on his hands. In standing for election, he had made many promises in the exuberance of the moment. He might have forgotten them—as candidates sometimes do after election—but the other fellows did not intend to let him forget them.

Wally—D'Arcy minor of the Third—brought to his recollection the fact that he had promised to abolish fagging. That was to be one of the reforms under the new regime. Knox's fag reminded him that he had undertaken to stamp out bullying—Knox's fag having had great experience of that. All the junior footballers remembered—and mentioned—the circumstance that he had agreed to play junior members in the First Eleven.

That was rather a pressing matter. On Wednesday one of the last fixtures of the football season was to take place—the match with the First Eleven of Rylcombe Grammar School. As captain of St. Jim's, Tom Merry was football skipper, and he would naturally take the command. And something like forty or fifty juniors were looking forward to places in the team. Unless Tom Merry decided on something like the old-fashioned Rugby game, with half a hundred a side, it was difficult to see how he was to satisfy all claimants. The way of the new captain of St. Jim's evidently did not lie through beds of roses. But Tom Merry faced all his difficulties calmly and courageously. And so far the juniors were united in backing him up against all comers.

Knox of the Sixth was the first of the seniors to fall foul of the new captain. Knox had loudly announced that he regarded the election as "rot," and that he hadn't the slightest intention of taking any notice of the cheeky Shell kid. Some of the juniors wanted Tom to drop on Knox at once, under Rule 79 of the Ordinances of St. Jim's, which forbade disrespect towards the captain of the school. But Tom Merry left it till Knox proceeded from words to actions.

After lessons on Monday, while Tom was chatting with a group of his supporters on the footer-ground, discussing the coming First Eleven match, Wally of the Third dashed up in great excitement.

"Where's Tom Merry?" he shouted.
"Where's the skipper?"

"Here I am," said Tom Merry. "What's wanted, kid?"

"Kid!" said Wally, forgetting Rule 79 for a moment. "Whom are you calling a kid? Kid yourself and be blowed!"

"None of your cheek!" said Tom Merry, frowning. "I'm carrying an ash-plant now, to keep cheeky kids in order. Look out!"

And indeed Tom Merry had taken to carrying that symbol of authority, which he was certainly entitled to use as captain of the school.

"Yaas, tweat your skippah with pwopah wespect, Wally," said Arthur Augustus. "I expect my minah to set a pwopah example to the othah fags, you know."

"Oh, rats!" said Wally.

"Wally, you young wascal——"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" implored Wally. "Tom Merry, you're wanted. You're captain of St. Jim's, ain't you? And you promised to put down bullying."

"Who's bullying whom?" asked Tom.

"Knox. He's licking young Curly in his study!" howled Wally. "Curly's my chum, and that beast Knox isn't going to lick him!"

"What has Curly done?"

"What does it matter what he's done?" howled Wally. "Ain't you going to keep your blessed election promises, and put down bullying? Knox is licking him with a cricket-stump!"

"I must inquire into this!" said Tom Merry, in a stately way. "I shall go to Knox's study at once. Some of you fellows had better come, in case there's trouble."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll back you up!"

Tom Merry walked off towards the School House, with quite an army at his back. The juniors were very keen to try conclusions with the worst bully in the school, and this was the first time they had had the chance of doing so under the lead of a captain of the school. Judging by the looks of the juniors, it might have been predicted that there was a high old time in store for Knox of the Sixth.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Tom Merry Exercises His Authority!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

That Knox was putting in a good deal of energy with the cricket-stump was evident, from the howls of anguish that proceeded from his study as Tom Merry & Co. came up the Sixth Form passage.

"Yow-ow-ow! You beast, Knox! I'll tell Tom Merry! Ow!"

Knox's angry voice could be heard in reply as the army neared the door of the study.

"You'll tell Tom Merry, will you? Take that! Tell him, too, that I'll give him some of the same if I have any of his cheek! Take that—and that—and that!"

Whack—whack—whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You hear him?" yelled Wally.

Tom Merry threw open

the door of Knox's study, and strode in. Knox had Curly Gibson by the collar, and was larruping him with energy and a cricket-stump. He paused in the castigation, however, to glare furiously at Tom Merry and the excited juniors at his back.

"Get out of my study!" he snapped.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"The captain of the school has a right to enter any study, to put down malpractices of any kind," he replied. "I refer you to By-law No. 45—"

"You cheeky young cad! If you don't get out, I'll boot you out!" roared Knox.

"Put down that stump!"

"What!"

"You hear me?" said Tom Merry sternly.

"I don't allow bullying."

"You—you—you don't allow!" spluttered Knox.

"Exactly."

"You—you—"

"Are you going to put down that stump, or are you not?"

"Not!" shrieked Knox.

"Take that stump away from him, you fellows!" ordered the captain of St. Jim's.

"You bet!"

"What-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors were only too keen to obey. They swarmed at

Knox. The bully of the Sixth whirled the stump above his head. His face was crimson with rage.

"Stand back, or I'll brain you!" he shouted.

"I wefuse to be bwained, and I wefuse to stand back!"

"Collar him!"

"Down with the bully!"

There was no telling what Knox might have done, but Tom Merry chipped in with his ash-plant, and knocked the stump out of Knox's hand. The next moment the bully of the Sixth was struggling in the grasp of the juniors.

"Bump him if he resists," said Tom Merry calmly.

Knox did resist. He was struggling like a lunatic, but the juniors were too many for



"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "hands up for myself as captain of St. Jim's." (See page 312)

him; they simply swarmed over him. Knox was whirled off his feet, and bumped on the floor with a concussion that shook the study.

"Sit on him, two or three of you!"

They sat upon Knox.

"This insubordination will do you no good, Knox," said Tom Merry loftily. "Resistance to constituted authority has to be put down with a strong hand. I shall now proceed to inquire into this matter. You have been thrashing young Gibson in a brutal manner."

"Ow! He's half killed me!" groaned Curly.

"I'll finish him, too!" yelled Knox.

"Shurrup!" said Blake, pressing his boot gently but firmly on the mouth of the floored bully. "You talk too much, Knox."

"Groooooogh!"

"Yaas; keep the wottah quiet. He weally deafens me, you know. Your voice is weally not at all pleasant to listen to, Knox, deah boy."

"Gerrrooogh!"

"Now, Curly, let me see whether he's hurt you," said Tom Merry. "Take your jacket off."

"I'm half flayed!" gasped Curly.

"Let's see."

Curly Gibson stripped off his jacket and shirt. There were livid marks across his back where he had been thrashed, and there was a buzz of indignation from the juniors at the sight.

"You hound!" said Tom Merry, fixing his blazing eyes upon Knox. "You ought to be boiled in oil!"

"Boiling in oil for bullies isn't in the by-laws, is it?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Monty! Don't be funny now. This is serious!"

"It's going to be serious for Knox!" growled Wally.

"You shut up, too! Don't you jaw when your captain is talking. Knox, kindly explain what you were licking Curly for. I'm going to judge this case on its merits. Take your boot off his mouth, Blake."

"Certainly!" said Blake.

He removed his boot, and Knox recovered his voice, but did not explain why he had been

licking Curly Gibson. Instead of that, he burst into a torrent of language that would have done credit—or discredit—to an intoxicated bargee.

"Stop him!" said Tom.

Blake's boot came into use again. Knox's voice died away in a suffocated growl.

"Bad language is punished by flogging or caning, according to circumstances—see Rule No. 33," said Tom Merry. "Is there a cane in this study?"

"Here's one," said Digby.

"Good! Knox will sit up and hold out his hand. You hear, Knox? You won't? Very well. Cane him across the shoulders."

Knox was jammed face downwards on the carpet. Then Digby started off with the cane. The bellows of Knox resembled those of a maddened bull. But Digby did not cease to lash till Tom Merry held up his hand at the twelfth stroke.

"'Nuff!"

"I'm not tired yet!" panted Digby. "I could go on, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is enough for bad language," said Tom Merry. "We must be just, but not vindictive. Now, Knox, will you have the great kindness to explain why you were licking Curly?"

"Groooooogh!"

"Every time he doesn't answer, Dig, give him another cut."

"Oh, rather!" said Digby.

Whack!

"Stop it!" shrieked Knox. "I—I'll answer. I licked him for burning my toast and cheeking me. Ow!"

"You thrashed a kid in that brutal manner for burning your toast, you brute?"

"He's my fag, ain't he?" howled Knox.

"You won't have a fag in future. For your present misconduct, you are deprived of the right of fagging anybody. I order that, as captain of St. Jim's."

"Bravo!"

"And you will receive twelve cuts with the cane for bullying and ill-treating Curly Gibson. If you are tired, Dig, Herries can lay them on."

"Give me the cane," said Herries, at once.

"Oh, I'm not tired!" said Dig. "Leave it to me."

"Pile in," said Tom Merry. "I'll say when."

Digby "piled in." Knox roared and squirmed under the heavy lashes of the cane. Digby put so much energy into the last cut that the cane broke in two. Knox's uproar was heard the length of the passage, and beyond. Voices could be heard in the passage now, and the door of the study was hurled open. Darrel and Rushden and several other Sixth-formers thrust their way in.

"Rescue!" half sobbed Knox. "These young scoundrels are ragging me!"

"How dare you come here?" exclaimed Darrel, angrily. "How dare you lay hands on a Sixth-former?"

"I'm acting by my authority as captain of the school."

"Don't talk rot! Get out of this study!"

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah; wats, and many of them, Dawwel, deah boy!"

"I order you, as a prefect, to get out of this room!" roared Darrel.

"I refuse, as captain of St. Jim's, to do anything of the kind," retorted Tom Merry, with perfect coolness.

"Throw the cheeky young beggars out," said Langton of the Sixth.

"Better not try it!" said Manners. "You'll go out on your necks yourselves if you do. We're all backing up the captain of the school."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Order!" said Tom Merry, calmly. "I trust you'll have too much good sense to interfere with the captain of the school in the execution of his duty. Darrel?" Tom Merry's flow of language was unusually impressive, as befitted his new and exalted station. "If it is necessary to use force I shall use force, and I shall call up all the juniors to help me enforce my commands, if necessary."

"Do you mean to say that you're trying to make a riot in the school?" exclaimed Rushden.

"You are making the riot."

"Us! Why——"

"If you don't clear out of this study at once I shall call in Mr. Railton," said Darrel, compressing his lips.

"Call him, and be blowed!"

"I mean it, you young idiot!"

"And I mean it, too, you old idiot!" said Tom Merry, independently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"D'Arcy minor, go and ask Mr. Railton if he will kindly step here."

Wally did not stir.

"Do you hear me?" exclaimed Darrel angrily.

"I hear you," said Wally, cheerfully, "but I don't take orders from any of the Sixth. Fagging is abolished. I'll take orders from my captain. My captain's Tom Merry."

"Quite right!" said Tom approvingly. "Darrel, I object to your giving orders in my presence. It savours of disrespect."

Darrel gasped. He could do nothing else.

"However, we'll have Mr. Railton on the scene, if you want him," said Tom Merry.

"I'm not afraid to act openly. Wally, will you cut along and call Mr. Railton? Tell him that the captain of the school will be glad if he can step here for a few minutes."

"Right-ho!" grinned Wally.

And he cut off.

Then there was a pause in the study as the crowd of fellows waited for the arrival of the Housemaster.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

Quite Justified!

TOM MERRY waited with perfect calmness. Some of the juniors were feeling uneasy, not quite knowing what view the Housemaster might take of the matter, but Tom Merry did not share their uneasiness. He was acting within his rights as captain of the school. What was there to be uneasy about? Mr. Railton, as a Housemaster, was bound to back up the captain of the school in the exercise of his just authority. That was how Tom Merry looked at it.

Knox stood gasping and groaning, and rubbing his injuries. His eyes were gleaming with malice. He felt sure that he would be avenged as soon as the Housemaster arrived upon the scene.

The heavy tread of the Housemaster was heard in the passage at last. Mr. Railton's form appeared in the doorway. His face was grave.

"I am wanted here, I understand?" he exclaimed.

"You are, sir," said Darrel. "I—I——"

"Hold on, Darrel!" said Tom Merry, steadily. "It's for the captain of the school to speak."

"You young rascal——"

"Silence!"

"Why, I—I—I——" stuttered Darrel.

"Silence! Mr. Railton, I report to you what has happened as captain of the school reporting to his Housemaster," said Tom Merry, with dignity.

"Play up, Tommy!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"What has happened?" asked Mr. Railton, quietly.

"Knox has been discovered in the act of bullying and thrashing a Third Form boy in a very brutal way. I have administered punishment to him, as was my right and duty. Darrel has interfered, but I am sure that Darrel will apologise for chipping in when he has had time to think calmly about it. I excuse him!"

"You—you—you excuse me?" stuttered Darrel. "Oh, this beats everything!"

"They've been ragging me, sir!" howled Knox. "The whole crowd of them piled on me."

"The juniors obeyed my orders, as captain," said Tom Merry. "They were bound to do so by Rule No. 23."

"Very important to stick to the wules, sir," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"So long as I am captain of St. Jim's I shall make it a point to put down bullying with a firm hand, sir," continued Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"

"If these young cads are to be allowed to invade a Sixth Form study, and rag the seniors, sir——" began Knox, passionately.

Mr. Railton pursed his lips.

"Show him your back, Curly," sang out Wally.

"Yes, I want Mr. Railton to see that I was bound to interfere, since the prefects have thought fit to report this matter," said Tom Merry, with dignity. "Go it, Curly."

"Oh, all right!" said Curly.

And his shirt came off again.

Mr. Railton gazed at the deep marks made by the thrashing Knox had inflicted upon the fag, and uttered an exclamation of anger and indignation.

"Did you do that, Knox?" he exclaimed, fixing his eyes upon the bully of the Sixth.

Knox bit his lip. The matter was not turning out so well for him, after all.

"I licked him, sir," he admitted.

"You made those marks?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Then you have acted in a brutal manner!" said Mr. Railton, sharply. "You had no right to use a fag in that way. If you had not already been discharged from your duties as a prefect, Knox, I should report this matter to the Head. You are certainly not fit to hold any authority at all. Darrel, I trust that you do not uphold Knox in treating a boy of the Third Form in this way?"

Darrel flushed uncomfortably. Certainly he disliked Knox's methods as much as anybody could, and his feelings towards the bully of the Sixth at that moment were anything but amiable.

"No, sir," he said. "I had not seen that. I suppose someone ought to have interfered."

"I should think so!" the Housemaster exclaimed. "And it seems that the prefects did not interfere, and yet they find fault with Merry for doing so."

The Sixth-formers exchanged glances, and so did the juniors. The glances of the latter expressed satisfaction. Tom Merry's exercise of authority was evidently justified in the eyes of the Housemaster.

"Merry has certainly done right in interfering in this matter," said Mr. Railton. "Knox appears to have been punished—certainly not more severely than he deserved, otherwise I should punish him myself."

"Bwavo!" chirruped Arthur Augustus.

"Silence!" said the Housemaster, frowning. "Knox, if you are guilty of such conduct again I shall report it to the Head, and suggest that you be sent away from this school. Tom Merry, you know that I do not approve of your holding the captaincy of St. Jim's, but in this matter you have acted quite rightly."

"Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Railton strode out of the study.

There was a brief silence. The Housemaster had delivered his judgment, and he had delivered it in favour of Tom Merry.

There was nothing more to be said.

Darrel and the other seniors followed the Housemaster without a word. Then Tom Merry spoke, severely:

"Are you satisfied, Knox?"

Knox ground his teeth.

"I'll make you smart for this yet!" he muttered.

"Silence!"

"You—
you—"

"Dwy up, Knox. You mustn't threaten the captain of the school; it's against all the wules," said D'Arcy chidingly.

"You have been punished, Knox," said Tom Merry, wagging his forefinger at the bully of the Sixth. "The matter is now closed. You will not, however, be allowed to have a fag again, so long as I am captain of the school. Kindly remember that."

"Hear, hear!"

"Wally, you will please tell the Third and Second that they are not allowed to fag for Knox. Any fellow fagging for Knox will be licked!"

Wally chortled joyously.

"That's all right!" he said. "I'll tell 'em. I say, skipper, can we wreck the study before we go?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Order, you young bounder! Gentlemen, our business here is now finished. I thank you for supporting me in the exercise of my just authority as captain of the school."

"Don't mench, deah boy! You can always wely on us."

"Yes, rather."

And Tom Merry walked off, followed by the juniors in a grinning and very hilarious crowd, leaving Knox alone in his study—very sore in body and in mind.



Hands grasped the unpopular bully of the Sixth on all sides and he was whirled away from the notice-board. (See page 313)

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

A Message to
the Sixth!

DARREL'S study, in the Sixth-Form passage, was crowded.

It was a meeting of the seniors.

Half the Sixth were there, and Monteith and Baker of the New House

had come over to the meeting.

The happenings in Knox's study had excited the Sixth Form tremendously.

They had met, with Darrel as chairman, to discuss the unprecedented situation, and decide what was to be done.

Several of the Fifth Form had come to the meeting, too, prominent among them being Gerald Cutts.

Cutts was known to be an extremely clever

and "deep" fellow, and the others expected that he would be able to give some good advice upon the difficult situation.

It was only too evident that something had to be done.

Knox's bullying conduct had unfortunately placed the seniors in the wrong, when the late occurrence was brought to the notice of the Housemaster. But for that Tom Merry's captaincy might have been brought to a sudden termination. As it was, his position was stronger than ever. He had now received the official approval of the Housemaster, and that strengthened his hands very much.

Most of the seniors disapproved of Knox and all his works; but they were very sore over the victory of the juniors.

If a junior was to run the show, as Rushden remarked, the Sixth might as well go out of business altogether. But how were they to get rid of the junior skipper? That was the worrying question to which they could find no answer.

Darrel addressed the excited meeting in a few words. Darrel was very much in earnest about it.

"There's no need to say much," he said. "You fellows all know what a rotten state things are in. A kid in the Shell is captain of the school. It's ridiculous, but there doesn't seem any way of getting rid of him. If he allowed the seniors to advise him, and run the show for him, it wouldn't be so bad. But he means to be independent, and run things according to his own ideas—the ideas of the Lower School. It's impossible, of course. What's to be done? Knox's playing the fool has given him a chance to start on us and he's taken his chance. There will be lots more trouble soon. On Wednesday we're playing one of the most important football fixtures of the season. Tom Merry intends to captain the First Eleven."

"He wouldn't have the nerve!" said Rushden aghast.

"He has said so!" replied Darrel. "And he's going to put some juniors in the team."

"It can't be allowed!" exclaimed Monteith.

"It's out of the question."

"The Grammarians will walk over them!"

"It will be a defeat for St. Jim's!"

"It's impossible!"

Darrel shrugged his shoulders as he listened to the indignant exclamations of the seniors. They all agreed in their view of the case. But nobody seemed to have anything of a definite and business-like nature to suggest.

"The question is, what's to be done?" said Darrel.

"Give the young idiot a sound licking," suggested Lefevre of the Fifth. "That's what I say—wallop him black and blue!"

"No good. The juniors will stand by him, and it would simply mean a riot. He's acting within his rights as captain of the school."

"Captain of Colney Hatch!" growled Baker. "The whole thing's ridiculous!"

"Utterly absurd!" said Monteith.

"If anybody's got anything to suggest——" said Darrel again.

"I have!" said Cutts.

"Go ahead, Cutts!"

And all eyes turned upon Cutts of the Fifth. There was a general feeling that Cutts of the Fifth would be able to sever the Gordian knot, if anybody could.

"We can postpone the match with the Grammar School, or scratch it altogether," said Cutts quietly. "Darrel's secretary—he's only got to write to them, and tell them that, owing to unforeseen circumstances, we sha'n't be able to play the match on Wednesday. Nothing need be said to the kids about it. Simply scratch the match, and they can go on laying their plans just the same—till Wednesday, when the Grammarians won't arrive."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Darrel grinned. It was a simple way out of the difficulty, but it had not occurred to him. The seniors all chuckled over it. For Tom Merry to remodel the First Eleven for a match on Wednesday, and then for the opposing team to fail to turn up, would be a screaming joke on the junior captain of St. Jim's.

"Hold on," said Baker. "The secretary isn't empowered to scratch matches without consulting the captain, you know."

"I don't recognise that Shell kid as captain of St. Jim's," said Darrel. "I have decided to take no notice of his election."

"Quite so!" agreed the others.

"I'll write and scratch the match," said Darrel. "That's settled! That'll see us over this week, as far as footer's concerned."

"And they can remodel the team and get all ready," grinned Cutts. "Not a word to Tom Merry, of course, or he will be writing to the Grammar School, too!"

"Not a syllable!" chuckled Monteith.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The senior meeting roared with laughter. They anticipated with great glee the looks of the junior captain when the Grammarian team failed to arrive.

There was a tap at the door of the study, and it opened, and the cool and cheeky countenance of Wally of the Third looked in.

"Get out, you fag!" Langton exclaimed.

"I've got a message from the captain of the school," said Wally calmly. "Not so much noise in this study!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"There's too much noise here," said Wally imperturbably. "Tom Merry doesn't want to interfere with you, so long as you keep within limits, but he can't have so much noise in the Sixth-Form passage. That's his message!"

The seniors stared blankly at the fag.

That a Shell fellow should send a message to the Sixth, commanding them to make less noise, took their breath away.

"You—you cheeky little imp!" gasped Monteith.

"That's the captain's message!" said Wally calmly. "Not so much noise."

And he slammed the door and walked away whistling.

The seniors looked at one another.

"Well, that takes the cake!" exclaimed Rushden. "The awful cheek of it! Orders from the Shell to the Sixth! My only aunt!"

"It's not to be stood!" gasped Langton.
"I won't stand it!"

"It's intolerable!"

"Let's make a fearful row!" suggested Lefevre. "That's what I say—let's raise Cain, and see what the cheeky young blighter will do."

Darrel shook his head quickly.

"We can't act like a gang of cheeky fags!" he exclaimed. "It's beneath the dignity of the Sixth to enter into a controversy with a

Shell kid. Besides, there's no getting out of it—the captain of the school has the right to send such an order if he chooses, and we were making rather a row, you know."

"But—but it's intolerable."

"We've got to get rid of the young cad somehow," growled Cutts. "Anyway, we've settled him for the Grammar School match on Wednesday; that's some satisfaction."

It was the only satisfaction the exasperated seniors had.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

Not Easy!

"MADE up the list?"

Monty Lowther asked the question.

It was Tuesday, the day before the Grammar School senior match, and Tom Merry sat at his study table with a pencil and paper. His youthful brow was corrugated with thought.

He had about forty names on the paper before him, and he had been crossing them out one after another, trying to reduce the list to manageable proportions.

"I've more than made it up," said Tom ruefully, looking up from his task. "The trouble is to cut it down. Lots of the fellows expect to play in the Grammarian match tomorrow. Of course, I must play, as captain of St. Jim's."

"Of course!" assented Manners and Lowther at once.

"I have heard from Darrel that all the Sixth refuse to play under a junior captain," said Tom.

"All the better," said Lowther at once. "That makes all the more room for juniors in the First Eleven."

"Yes; but a senior eleven composed wholly of juniors will be rather—rather a novelty," said Tom Merry. "I don't know what the Grammarians will think, playing the same team that their junior eleven meets."

"Let 'em think what they like. We'll lick 'em, and that will give them something to think about!"

"But can we lick them?" said Tom. "After all, they're seniors, and a good team. They used to give old Kildare and his eleven a tussle!"

"Oh, we'll lick 'em!" said Lowther; "and if we don't, it will be the fault of the seniors for standing out, and we can't help it!"

"I'm willing to play six seniors out of eleven players," said Tom. "I think that's a good enough concession to the Sixth."

"I should jolly well say so!"

"But Darrel doesn't see it—and the others don't. They won't be satisfied with anything but a Sixth-Former captaining the team, which is——"

"Rot!"

"Exactly—rot!" agreed Tom. "Not to be thought of for a moment. I've got to consider my personal dignity as captain of the school."

"Well, if the seniors are understudying Achilles, and sulking in their tents, the team will have to be all juniors, that's all," said Manners. "After all, you've got plenty of players to choose from, Tommy."

"Oh, plenty!" said Tom. "Too many, in fact. You see, such a blessed lot of the fellows expect to be put in. You two chaps ought to be in, as—as members of this study."

Manners and Lowther nodded emphatically.

"That goes without saying," assented Lowther.

"Quite so!" agreed Manners.

"Then Study No. 6 expects to go in, all four of them."

"That's rather a cheek!"

"Awful nerve!"

"Then Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Glyn all expect places."

"Better put in Kangy and give the others the go-by."

"Then there's the New House chaps. After the splendid way Figgins & Co. backed me up in the election I can't very well leave them out."

"Well, I suppose there ought to be one or two of the New House," admitted Monty Lowther rather grudgingly. "Say Figgins."

"Figgy says we can't possibly beat Fatty Wynn as goalkeeper, and he's really right, you know. Fatty keeps goal like a cherub."

"Yes, I suppose Wynn had better go in."

"And then Kerr——"

"Oh, never mind Kerr!"

"And then there's Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, all good men, and they all backed us up like Trojans over the election."

"You can't put the whole blessed New House into the eleven," said Lowther warmly.

"Then, besides the New House chaps, there are the fags."

"The fags!" said Manners and Lowther together.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes; the Third Form stood by me over the election, you know. Young Wally wants to go into the team——"

"Oh, rats!"

"He says he'll be satisfied with three places for the Third—himself and young Frayne and Jameson."

"Cheeky young beggar!" said Lowther. "I suppose the Second Form will be wanting places next."

"Well, they haven't asked for any so far, thank goodness!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Of course, we can't play fags of the Third, either."

"Of course we can't."

"The team must be made up of the oldest fellows possible, if the seniors intend to sulk."

"All Shell fellows would be best," agreed Manners.

"Only, you see——"

"Well, put in Figgins, Fatty Wynn, and Blake, and make up the rest from the Shell." Monty Lowther suggested.

"Then there will be a row."

"Let there be. I suppose you expect some rows before you've been captain of St. Jim's long? Besides, what's life without a row every now and then?"

"Ahem! Only, you see, if the juniors don't stand together the seniors will get the upper hand over us. It's only by the Lower School being solid behind me that I can keep my ground. If they could make out that the school is dissatisfied with me as captain all round, the Head would chip in."

"Jolly difficult bizney, I admit," assented Lowther. "There's something in that. But you can't play more than eleven chaps in a Soccer team; that's a dead cert."

"And the other fifty or so will get their backs up," Manners remarked.

There was a tap at the door, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth came in. He grinned at the Terrible Three in a very genial manner.

"I heah that the seniahs are standin' out of the match to-morrow," he remarked.

"That's so," said Tom.

"I wegard it as weally a stwoke of good luck. It would have been wathah wuff to push them out, but as they are standin' out of their own accord it will give us a good opportunity of showin' what the juniahs can do."

"Or what they can't do."

"Oh, that will be all wight! I intend to play the game of my life to-morrow," said Arthur Augustus confidently.

The chums of the Shell exchanged glances. The difficulties were beginning.

"Ahem!" said Tom Merry. "Speaking about the match to-morrow—ahem—"

"I suppose you'll have to play a New House chap or two?" Arthur Augustus remarked. "Figgin's and Fatty Wynn and pewwaps Weddy. Are you fellahs playin'?"

The Terrible Three glared at him. Were they playing! Were they playing, indeed!

"We are!" said Tom briefly.

"That's thwee," said D'Arcy. "Our study makes it seven, as there's four of us, and I pwesume you'll put in Kangawoo; then thwee New House chaps will make up the team."

"The fact is——"

"Oh, don't wun away with the ideah that I'm twyin' to wun the show!" said Arthur

Augustus generously. "I'm only givin' you advice, you know, as a sort of expert. You can't do bettah than take advice fwom a fellah of tact and judgment."

"The fact is——"

"Of course, I shouldn't pwesume to dictate in the least how the team is to be composed, so long as Study No. 6 is shoved in."

"The fact——"

"We're all in wippin' form, and we're goin'

to give the Gwamma-wians the kybosh, you know. We've beaten the Gwammah School juniahs often enough, so why shouldn't we beat the beastly seniahs? What?"

"The fact is, I'm afraid your study won't be able to go in."

"Eh!"

"Can't play the lot of you," Tom Merry explained.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy carefully and calmly extracted his eyeglass from his waistcoat pocket, jammed it into his eye, and fixed a freezing and withering glance upon the captain of St. Jim's.

"Pway wepeat that wemark, Tom Mewwy!" he said, with crushing dignity. "I am not at all suah that I have undahstood you awight."

"Can't put in all four of you."

"And why not?"

"Only eleven players wanted, and as we're meeting a senior team we want the oldest fellows possible. Must be mostly Shell chaps, you see."

"I don't see at all."

"Well, I'm sorry for that. I see myself, and that's really enough, isn't it?"

"I do not wegard it as enough; not at all,



Cutts of the Fifth drove his hands deep into his pockets, and strode from the hall, his face white with rage. (See page 316)

Tom Mewwy. In fact, I wathah think that Studay No. 6 will wefuse to be left out."

"I shall be playing one of you——"

"Well, of course, in that case, I will do my best to make Hewwies and Dig. and Blake take it weasonably——"

"The one I shall be playing is Blake."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"And you're going to take it like a sport, Gussy, and back me up all the same," said Tom Merry. "We've got to stand together against the seniors, you know."

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I am certainly weady to back you up against the seniahs, or anybody, deah boy, in all weasonable things. But when I see you delibewately awwangin' to thwow away an important match, I must beg leave to pause and considah."

"Now, look here, Gussy——" began the Terrible Three together.

Arthur Augustus waved his hand in a lofty manner.

"It's no good talkin' wot to me, Tom Mewwy. I will go and consult Blake and the othahs about it, and we will see what is to be done. The best thing I can think of is for you to wesign the captaincy into my hands."

"Fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Unless you play the game I shall wefuse to wecognise you as captain of St. Jim's. I thought, of course, that you were goin' to do the sensible thing. If you persist in playin' the giddy ox, I cannot wegard you as a suitable captain for the school."

"Chump!"

"I will not entab into a slangin' match with you," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I may wemark that I am disappointed in you, Tom Mewwy—extwemely disappointed. That is all. I will now wetire."

"Time you did!" growled Lowther.

"I will weturn——"

"Oh, don't trouble about that!"

Slam!

The study door closed, and the swell of the School House was gone. The chums of the Shell exchanged glances.

"Trouble!" groaned Tom Merry.

"Looks nke it. Can't be helped," said Lowther. "After all, if we beat the Gram-marians to-morrow that will rally the fellows round us again."

"If we beat them?"

"I mean, when we beat them," said Lowther. "We must beat them! Now get that blessed list done, and let's stick it up in the hall, and then the fellows will know where they stand, and they'll know it's no good talking."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry, not very cheerfully.

And the list was finished at last, after much mental effort on the part of the Terrible Three, and was duly posted up on the notice-board in the School House, where it was read by the juniors with the keenest interest and with many signs of an approaching tempest.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

The New House Cuts Up Rusty!

"NEW HOUSE Bounders!"

"What's the row?"

"Looks like a blessed raid!"

It did.

Quite an army of New House juniors came marching into the School House, with faces that were grave and determined.

There were Figgins and Kerr and Wynn, the famous Co.; and Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, and Pratt and Diggs, and Thompson of the Shell.

They looked neither to right nor to left, but marched for the stairs, and made their way up to the Shell passage in state.

Such an invasion at any other time would probably have led to a "rag"; but just now the juniors of the rival Houses were on terms of peace, so Figgins and his party were allowed to pass unchallenged.

They marched down the Shell passage, and stopped at Tom Merry's study door. Upon that door George Figgins bestowed a heavy thump.

"Come in!" called out Tom Merry's voice in somewhat weary tones.

Figgins opened the door, and the army marched in. The Terrible Three were doing their preparation, but they suspended that labour as the New House crowd appeared.

They knew that the long-foreseen trouble was coming.

But Tom Merry worked up an affable smile for his visitors.

"Hallo, glad to see you!" he said, very heartily. "How do you do—ahem?"

"We've come on bizney," said Figgins grimly.

"Something to do with me as captain of the school?" asked Tom Merry amiably.

"All right. Go ahead! Always willing to hear you."

Figgins grunted.

"You've put up a silly list on the notice-board," he remarked.

"I've put up a list," agreed Tom Merry.

"I suppose it's a sort of joke?"

"No; it's quite serious."

"I've read the names," said Figgins.

"Yes; they were put up there to be read, you know," said Tom mildly.

"Merry, Manners, Lowther, Noble, Dane, Glyn, Thompson, Figgins, Wynn, Blake, Herries!" enumerated Figgins solemnly.

"That's right."

"That's three New House, and eight School House."

"Quite so."

"That's what we've come to talk to you about," said Redfern.

"Nothing to talk about," said Tom Merry.

"The matter's settled."

"Then it had better be unsettled again, and jolly quick," said Kerr. "You can't deal with the New House in this way."

"No fear!"

"Or with the Fourth!" said Lawrence.

"Only four of the Fourth, and seven of the Shell!"

"Rotten!"

"Out of the question."

"If that's the way you're going to run things, Tom Merry, it seems to me there was a big mistake made at the election."

"That's what I was thinking."

"Same here."

"Yes, rather."

"Well, I don't know about playing any more of the Fourth," remarked Thompson of the Shell; "but certainly there must be some more chaps of our House in the team, either

Fourth or Shell. I think we can leave that point to Merry."

"Thank you!" said Tom sarcastically.

"Not at all," said Thompson; "so long as you play the game, we recognise that you are captain of St. Jim's. But our House has got to have a show."

"Yes, rather! You bet!"

"I'll help you revise the list, if you like, Tom Merry," Figgins suggested generously.

"Thanks; it doesn't need revising."

"We don't want to cause any trouble, especially at a time when the seniors are only waiting for a chance to jump on us. For that reason, we're ready to make really big concessions. We shall be satisfied with six New House chaps in the eleven."

"Ahem!"

"As cock-house of St. Jim's, we ought to have more, but——"

"As what?"

"Cock-house of St. Jim's," said Figgins firmly.

"Rats!"

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

Figgins's brow began to grow wrathful. After practically electing the captain of the school, Figgins & Co. felt that they were entitled to a show. But it wasn't merely that. They had a serious conviction that the eleven wouldn't be any good without themselves in it. And they didn't want the new régime to start with a serious defeat at footer. It was necessary, therefore, for Tom Merry to see reason from a New House point of view. The difficulty was that he saw reason from a School House point of view, which made all the difference.

"Now, look here, we came here for a friendly talk," said Figgins. "We're willing to give you any amount of advice to save you from coming a mucker in this matter."

"There isn't a chap here who isn't willing to advise you, Tom Merry," said Redfern reproachfully.

"I'm sure we all agree with that," said Kerr. "You're perfectly welcome to our advice on any point."

"Any point whatever," said Fatty Wynn heartily.

"I'm not looking for advice, as a matter of fact," Tom Merry explained. "If I wanted to be advised, there are plenty of silly asses in my own House with yards of it all ready for me."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Figgins, with a magnanimous air. "For the sake of peace, and to keep shoulder to shoulder, and so on, we'll be satisfied with five New House chaps in the eleven. That's risking losing the match, I know, but we want to pull together at a time like this."

"It wouldn't be risking it," said Monty Lowther sweetly. "It would be giving it away."

"Look here——" roared Figgins.

"Yes, look here——"

"What I think is——"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "I'm sorry I can't meet your wishes in this matter. As captain of St. Jim's, it's my duty to pick out the best eleven possible to beat the Grammar School. I've done it."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Piffle!"

"Tommy-rot!"

"And as captain of St. Jim's, I cannot allow myself to be dictated to by juniors," said Tom Merry with great dignity.

"Juniors!" yelled Redfern. "And what are you, pray? Have they shoved you into the Sixth Form all of a sudden, by any chance?"

"I am captain of St. Jim's, Redfern, and I request you to speak more respectfully to your captain."

"Then the sooner St. Jim's gets a new skipper the better," said Redfern.

"Hear, hear!"

"This interview is now over," said Tom Merry.

"Then you decline to talk sense?" demanded Figgins. "You won't do the only sensible thing? You won't take advice from fellows who know?"

"What I have said, I have said!" retorted Tom Merry firmly.

"What you have said is blithering piffle, and you know it."

"Gentlemen, there is the door."

"Bust the door!"

"If you prefer the window as a means of exit——"

"I'd like to see the chap who could put me out of the window, or the door either!" said Figgins truculently.

"You will kindly retire from my study, and please learn better manners before you call on your captain again."

Figgins looked round at his followers.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," he said, "I think we're all agreed. We backed up this School House bouncer to keep that cad Cutts out of the captaincy. We agreed to back the silly duffer up like men and brothers. But we can't back him up in throwing away football matches and making St. Jim's a guy. This is where we draw a line."

"Hear, hear!"

"Unless, therefore, Tom Merry stops playing the giddy ox, we don't back him up any more."

"Hear, hear!"

"We can't be parties to throwing away matches and things of that sort. It's our duty to draw a line. You understand that, Tom Merry?"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry warmly. "What I understand is that if you don't clear off, you'll be booted out."

"Get on with the booting, then!" said Figgins grimly.

"Wreck the blessed study as a warning to them," suggested Owen.

"Hurrah!"

Tempers were very excited by that time on both sides. It needed only a word, and the word had been spoken. The New House juniors were looking very dangerous; and at that moment Manners gave Figgins a gentle push towards the door. The next moment Manners was lying on his back on the carpet, and in one more moment the Terrible Three and the New House crowd were mixed up in a wild and whirling struggle.

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER

Keeping Order!

"KICK them out!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"Down with the School House!"

"Pitch the table over!"
 "Hurray! Wreck the blessed place!"
 Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp!
 "Ow, ow! My eye!"
 "Rescue, School House!"

There was a rush of feet in the passage. A crowd of School House juniors had gathered there in anticipation of trouble as raised voices were heard from Tom Merry's study. At the sounds of conflict and the shout for rescue they rushed in.

The study was crammed with fighting juniors.

There wasn't much room for a big crowd to struggle in the study. In a few minutes the room was a wreck. The furniture was hurled in all directions, and struggling juniors rolled on the floor and on one another.

More and more School House fellows rushed upon the scene, and the New House invaders were extracted from the room one by one and rushed away, struggling and yelling, each in the grasp of two or three self-constituted chuckers-out.

Along the passage and down the stairs they went, roaring and wriggling, and one by one they were hurled forth from the School House into the quadrangle.

It was a House row now, with a vengeance.

In the excitement of the moment all the excellent intentions of the juniors were for-

gotten, and they remembered only that they were School House and New House, ancient rivals and foes.

Darrel of the Sixth came on the scene as the last of the invaders were sent rolling down the School House steps into the dusky quad.

His face was very angry.

"Are you going to stop this confounded row?" he shouted.

Tom Merry turned upon him. Tom was excited, and he was not inclined to take any nonsense from anybody at that moment.

"We shall suit ourselves about that," he exclaimed, "and I'll thank you to speak more civilly to your captain, Darrel."

"You—you cheeky young scamp—"

Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Go back to your study, Darrel!"

"What!"

roared the Sixth Former.

"Go back to your study at once."

"Why—why, you—you——"

"I order you to go back to your study."

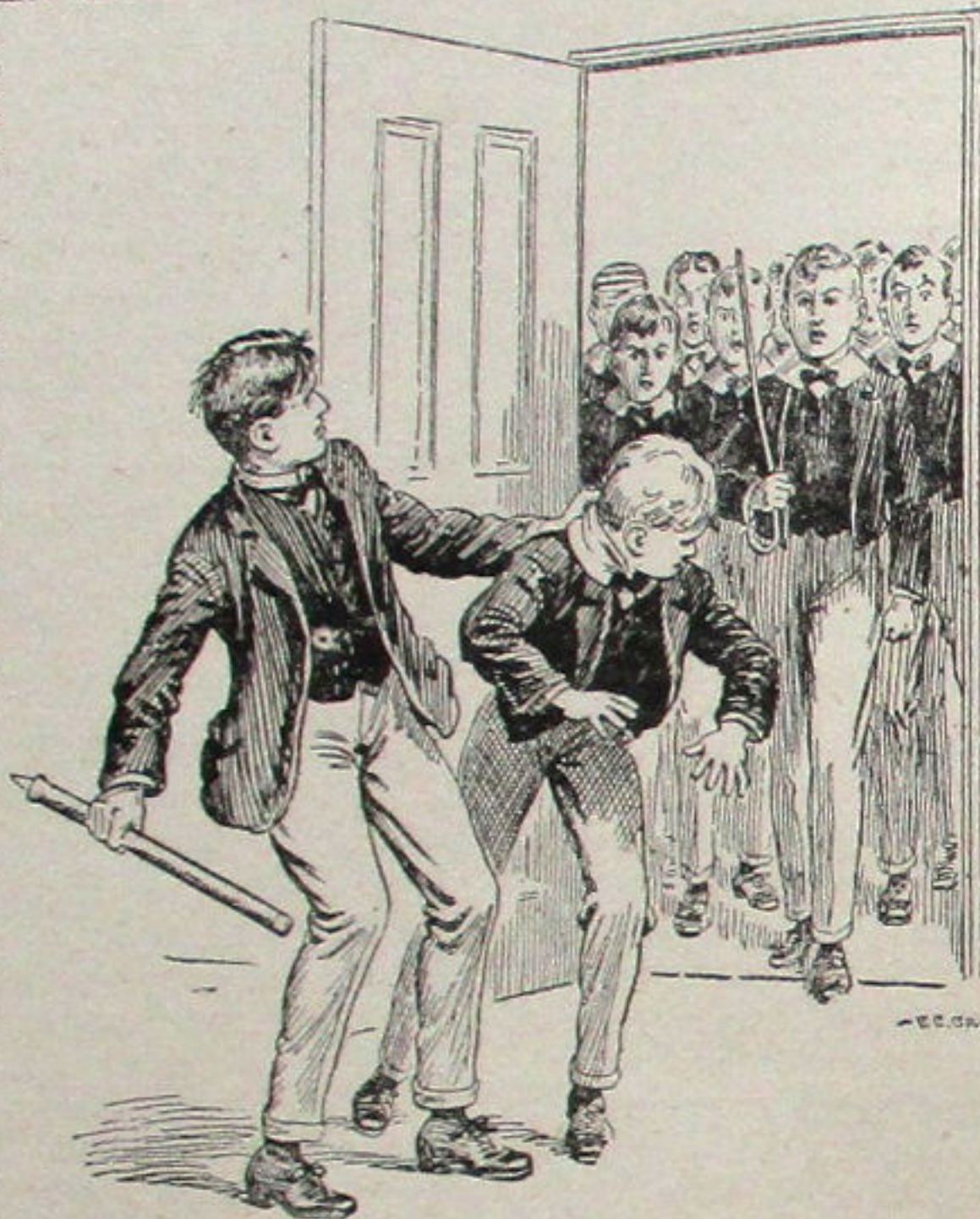
"You—you—you order me!" spluttered Darrel.

"Yes; and if you don't go you'll be put!"

"Put!" shrieked Darrel.

"Yes, and at once, too."

That was enough for Darrel of the Sixth. He made a jump at Tom Merry, and grasped



Tom Merry threw open the door of Knox's study, and strode in. Knox had Curly Gibson by the collar, and was larruping him with a cricket stump. (See page 324).

him. It would have gone hard with the captain of St. Jim's at that moment but for his faithful followers. His New House backers were gone, breathing vengeance and fury, but the School House juniors were still loyal.

"Back up!" yelled Monty Lowther, as he rushed at Darrel.

A dozen other fellows rushed at the prefect at the same moment.

Darrel was whirled away from Tom Merry, whipped off his feet, and rushed back to his study, and tossed in like a sack of coke.

He sprawled on the floor, breathless and enraged, and Lowther slammed the study door.

"That settles Darrel!" chuckled Lowther.

"Hurray!"

"I'll keep order in this House!" panted Tom Merry. "I'll have order kept if we have to have a row every five minutes!"

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Railton, who had been with the Head, came upon the scene just after the sudden disappearance of Darrel. The excited voices died away at the appearance of the House-master.

"What is this riot about?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"There isn't any riot, sir," said Tom Merry steadily. "I have had to use somewhat severe measures with one of the Sixth, that is all, sir."

"We can't allow them to cheek our captain, sir," said Kangaroo.

Mr. Railton seemed about to say something exceedingly emphatic, but he changed his mind, and walked away to his study.

Tom Merry hurried to the notice-board, with a crowd of juniors behind him. He took out a pencil to make some alterations in the football list.

There was a cheer as he drew the pencil through the New House names on the list.

"Gentlemen," said the captain of St. Jim's, "after the insubordinate conduct of Figgins & Co. it is impossible to play any New House fellows to-morrow."

"Bravo!"

"I have therefore scratched Thompson,

Figgins, and Wynn. I shall play Digby, Reilly, and D'Arcy instead."

"Hear, hear!"

"Perfectly wippin' ideah, deah boy!"

"Good egg!" said Jack Blake heartily.

"That lets in the whole of Study No. 6, and I must say you're not such an ass as I was thinking, Tom Merry. I think you make a jolly good captain of the school."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Do you?" hooted Gore of the Shell.

"Well, I don't. I think there ought to be more Shell fellows in the team. I think it's silly rot to cram in Fourth Form fags in this way. I consider that Tom Merry's a silly ass. I think——"

"Shut up, Gore!"

"Rats! I'm going to give my opinion, for what it's worth."

"That's nix!" said Blake. "Dry up!"

"Yaas, wing off, Goah, deah boy! You make me tiahed."

"I think that Tom Merry is playing the giddy ox. I think——"

"Order!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, rats!"

"Go back to your study, Gore, and consider yourself detained for one hour!" said Tom.

"Detained!" shrieked Gore.

"Yes, certainly."

"By—by you!"

"Yes, by me."

Gore burst into a roar of scornful laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Detained by a Shell kid! Oh, don't be funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going back to your study as ordered by your captain?" demanded Tom Merry, raising the hand of command.

"No, I'm jolly well not! I——"

"Take Gore to his study!" said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Look here, I—— Hands off! I'll punch your nose! I—I—— Ow! Yow!"

Gore's voice died away in gasps as he was rushed away by five or six juniors, and pitched headlong into his study.

The Terrible Three returned to their own quarters. Their quarters required some renovating before they could get on with their preparation. There was a somewhat humorous

expression on Monty Lowther's face as he sat down to work at last.

"Not all plain sailing, is it?" he remarked.

Tom Merry dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. The nose of the captain of the school ought to have been a sacred object, but it had been punched hard!

"No!" agreed Tom. "But we're going to keep order. I suppose it was bound to come to a row sooner or later with those New House kids. They were bound to kick over the traces. We shall teach them manners in time."

"Ahem! I hope so!"

"Anyway, I'm going to keep on in the way I've started," said Tom. "I'm captain of St. Jim's, and St. Jim's is going to toe the line. That's flat!"

And the Terrible Three settled down to work, only pausing every now and then to dab a nose or caress a discoloured eye.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

A Match That Did Not Come Off!

ON the following morning there was only one topic in the School House at St. Jim's.

It was the Grammar School match of the afternoon.

The seniors having retired, like Achilles, to sulk in their tents, so to speak, and the New House fellows having been scratched off the list, the match was left to Tom Merry & Co. It was an entirely School House affair, and an affair of the juniors.

Tom Merry & Co., on their own, were to meet and defeat the Grammarians—if they could.

As they generally found it difficult enough to keep their end up against Gordon Gay & Co., the juniors of the Grammar School, it might have been supposed that their chances against the senior eleven would be slight.

But they were very sanguine.

Not the least suspicion did they have, so far, of the step that had been taken by the seniors, especially by Darrel, as secretary of the football club.

That the match had already been scratched by Darrel, and that the Grammarians would

not arrive at all, never entered their minds. The seniors had kept their own counsel on that point.

So the junior eleven were full of keen anticipations for the afternoon—anticipations that were destined to be disappointed most severely.

After dinner the School House fellows began to gather on the football ground. As it was a senior match, they gathered on Big Side.

The seniors were conspicuous by their absence. Some of them grinned as they saw the juniors gathering for the match that would not come off, but otherwise they took no notice of Tom Merry & Co. at all.

Figgins & Co., however, turned up in great force.

The truce between the rival Houses was at an end. The lion and the lamb no longer lay in peace.

Figgins & Co. had come to see the School House junior team wiped off the ground by the Grammarians, and to condole with one another over the disgrace that the School House was bringing upon St. Jim's.

They greeted Tom Merry's eleven with a deep groan.

The eleven looked very fit and well in their red shirts as they came out on the field and started punting a footer about.

But the remarks of the New House spectators were not complimentary. They passed their remarks in loud tones for the footballers to hear. Figgins & Co. were very much on the warpath now.

"It's going to be the joke of the season!" Redfern remarked. "Blessed if I know whether to laugh or to weep a weep!"

"I say, Gussy, you've forgotten your eyeglass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Grammarians don't seem to be hurrying themselves," Thompson of the Shell remarked presently, looking at his watch. "Time they were here."

"Time for the circus to begin!" said Fatty Wynn.

"This is where the fun ought to start," said Figgins. "But where are the Grammarians? I wonder if they've heard?"

"Heard what, you silly asses?" demanded Tom Merry, turning round at last upon the New House fellows.

"Heard that they're expected to play a parcel of silly duffers!" explained Figgins. "If they have, they mayn't come, you know."

"They mayn't have such a taste for comedy in football as you kids have," Kerr suggested.

"A screaming joke, if they don't come!" grinned Owen. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the New House crowd.

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry crossly. "Of course they're coming!"

"Well, they ain't here yet."

"Sister Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?" piped Redfern.

And the New House juniors roared again.

Tom Merry & Co. looked rather anxiously at the clock-tower.

The Grammarians were certainly late. Kick-off was timed for three o'clock, and it was already turned three. It was certainly very odd that the team from the Grammar School should be so unpunctual. Blake cut down to the gates to look for the Grammarian brake, but he returned with the news that there was no sign of it.

Tom Merry & Co. ceased punting about the footer, and gathered in a group to talk the matter over. Their brows were growing anxious. They hardly knew what to make of the Grammarians' failure to appear. If the team didn't turn up, evidently the match would not come off, and then they knew what a howl of laughter there would be from all the school, especially the New House.

Figgins & Co. were already chuckling with great enjoyment. As Figgins said, it was the very best thing that could have happened, if the Grammar School team didn't come. It would be a lesson to those cheeky School House kids, and it would save St. Jim's from the disgrace of recording an overwhelming defeat. From the New House point of view, it was the best of all possible things that could have happened.

But the School House view was different. The looks of the junior footballers grew

glummer and glummer as the big hand crawled round the dial on the clock in the tower.

"Half-past three," said Monty Lowther. "They're frightfully late!"

"Feahfully late, deah boy!"

"I can't understand it," said Tom Merry, his brow wrinkled in puzzled thought. "Why ain't they here? Yorke isn't the kind of silly ass to be half an hour late for a footer match. It isn't as if they had to come a long way by train."

"Is it possible——" began Herries doubtfully.

"Is what possible, ass?"

"I mean, suppose they have heard that they've got to play a junior team, and—and don't choose to come?"

"Oh, rot!"

"Figgins thinks so."

"Blow Figgins!"

"They wouldn't tweek us with such wotten diswespect," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "It would be wotten bad form! They would send us a note, at least."

"Of course they would!" said Tom Merry. "It can't be that."

"Then what the deuce is it?" said Blake. "Hallo, Wally! Is there any sign of the silly goats?"

Wally had just come up from the gates. He shook his head.

"I've been as far as the corner," he said. "No signs of them."

"Suppose we send them a telegwam?" suggested Arthur Augustus.

"They must have started already, if they're coming at all," said Digby.

"Yaas; but if they're not comin'——"

"It's nearer to go to the Grammar School than to the telegraph office," said Manners. "One of us might cut over on a bike."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"If they don't choose to come, we're not going to go hunting them!" he said. "We've got to consider our dignity as the St. Jim's first eleven!"

"Yaas, wathah! We're the first eleven now, you know. We're bound to considah our personal dig. in the mattah!"

"Then what on earth's to be done?" exclaimed Kangaroo.

"Nearly a quarter to four!" said Clifton Dane.

"Bai Jove, it's wotten! Look at those New House boundahs cacklin'!"

Blake cast a wrathful glance towards Figgins & Co. The New House fellows undoubtedly were cackling. They seemed to be enjoying the afternoon famously.

"Let's clear those cads off the ground, anyway!" Blake exclaimed.

"Good! Let's go for them!"

"Sure, it will pass the time, anyway!" Reilly remarked.

"No rags now," said Tom Merry. "It's not a time for it. Let the beasts cackle. But I wish I knew what we'd better do. It's ridiculous to stand here like this."

"Yaas, wathah; quite widiculous!"

"There must have been some trick played," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "Yorke wouldn't do a mean thing like this without letting us know."

"What price the telephone?" asked Manners.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "The Grammar School is on the telephone, and we can use the 'phone in the prefects' room."

"Ahem!" said Bernard Glyn dubiously. "This isn't exactly the time for asking the prefects favours, is it?"

"No favour about it! The captain of the school has a right to use the prefects' room and the telephone as much as he pleases."

"Good! I forgot that."

"You fellows may as well come with me, though, in case there's any rot," said Tom Merry, as an afterthought.

And the footballers put on their coats and mufflers, and walked in a body off the ground.

Loud yells from the New House contingent followed them.

"Ain't you going to play?"

"You've forgotten the match, haven't you?"

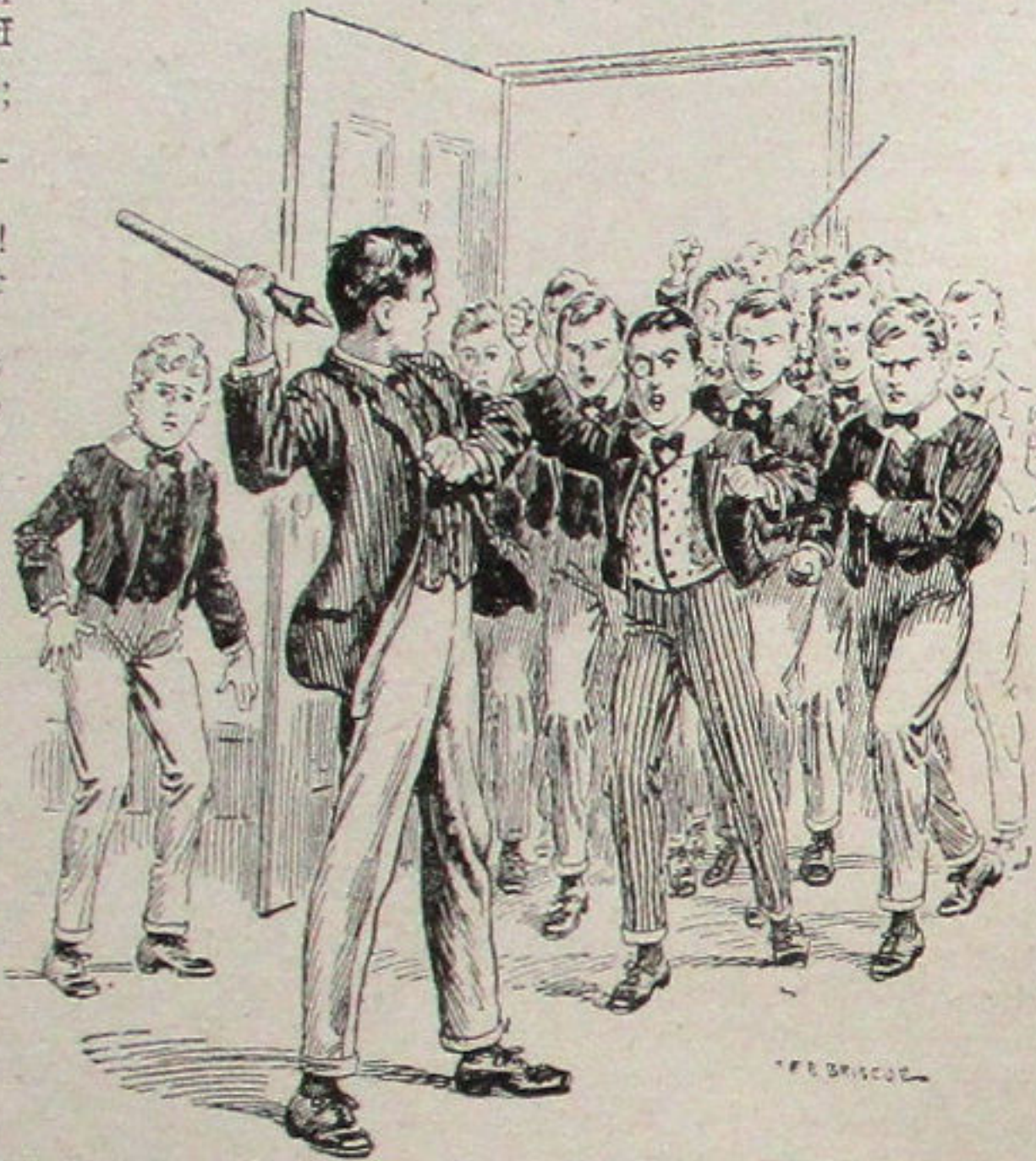
"Going to play marbles instead? That will be more in your line, won't it?"

"Ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on with lofty

heads, disdaining to take the least notice of their old rivals; but their cheeks were burning.

They felt keenly the absurd side of the matter. The most crushing defeat at the hands of the Grammarians would not have been so ridiculous as this. They were glad enough to get inside the School House, leaving Figgins & Co. in possession of the field, laughing like hyenas.



The bully of the Sixth whirled the stump above his head. "Stand back!" he shouted. (See page 324)

THE TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

Pure Cheek !

TOM MERRY threw open the door of the prefects' room and strode in, with his followers at his heels.

The prefects' room was a tremendously sacred apartment. It was devoted to the use of the prefects solely, common or garden members of the Sixth only being tolerated there by favour. The Fifth did not use the room, and as for juniors, mere juniors could not possibly enter it except for fagging purposes, or when some good-natured great person allowed them to use the telephone there.

But Tom Merry & Co. marched in now as if the place belonged to them.

At the big window overlooking the quadrangle several prefects were standing in a group, chatting and smiling. They turned and bestowed freezing stares upon Tom Merry & Co., ceasing to smile as if by magic.

"What do you kids want here?" exclaimed Darrel.

"Silence!"

"Look herē——" Rushden exclaimed hotly.

Tom Merry pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Get outside! I'm captain of the School, and I want this room for a bit. I don't want you fellows bothering me here. Travel off!"

"Yaas, wathah! Hop it, deah boys!"

The prefects stared at the juniors, looking as if they would eat them. For prefects to be ordered out of the prefects' room by a junior was quite the limit—in fact, it was miles past the limit. It was unbelievable, incredible, impossible; but there it was! Tom Merry did not intend to let the seniors overhear his talk on the telephone. He knew there would be a chorus of chuckles as it went on, and he was in a mood just now to give the Sixth all the trouble they wanted.

"You cheeky sweep——" Langton was beginning.

But Tom Merry interrupted him sharply without the least ceremony.

"Outside! If you don't go, you'll be put! See those fellows out of the room, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come on!" said Kangaroo.

"Kick them out!"

The juniors advanced to the attack. The prefects exchanged helpless glances. To be involved in an undignified scrimmage with the juniors, and finally ejected by force—for the odds were too great for them—would never do. Darrel settled the matter by walking out of the room, and the others followed him. Jack Blake slammed the door after them victoriously.

"Bai Jove, we're teachin' the Sixth mannahs alweady!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, with a chuckle. "The boundahs are learnin' to toe the giddy line!"

"Now pile in with the 'phone!" said Blake.

Tom Merry took up the receiver. He called up the exchange, and was put on to the Grammar School at Rylcombe in a few minutes.

"Through?" asked Blake.

"Yes." Tom Merry spoke through the 'phone: "Is that Rylcombe Grammar School?"

"Yes," came the reply. "Who is that?"

"This is St. Jim's. Tom Merry speaking. Is Yorke of the Sixth there?"

"I will call him, sir. Hold on."

"Right."

Tom Merry waited. Yorke of the Sixth, the Grammar School footer captain, was evidently at home. The Grammarian team had not yet started for St. Jim's, and it was close on four o'clock. Clearly, they did not intend to play, as it was too late now for them to reach St. Jim's and play the match before dark.

Tom Merry's brows knitted darkly as he waited. Something must have happened to cause the Grammarians to act in this unaccountable way; he was sure of that, and he was about to learn what it was. And if it was a trick on the part of anybody belonging to St. Jim's, that anybody would feel the full weight of the wrath of the captain of the school. Tom Merry was determined upon that.

Yorke's voice came through the telephone at last:

"Hallo!"

"Hallo! Is that Yorke — Grammar School?"

"Yes. What's wanted?"

"This is St. Jim's—captain of the school speaking!"

"Yes?"

"You didn't turn up for the match to-day. I want an explanation!"

"What!"

"Why didn't you turn up this afternoon?"

"Who's speaking?"

"Tom Merry—captain of St. Jim's!"

"Look here, if this is a jape——"

"It's not a jape. I've been elected captain of the school!"

"My only hat!"

"We expected you for the match to-day. You didn't come."

"The match was scratched."

"What!"

"We had a letter from your secretary, Darrel, scratching the match, owing to unavoidable circumstances."

"From Darrel?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Yes, your secretary. Wasn't it in order?"

"No, it wasn't. It was a rotten trick!"

"Oh, crumbs! Of course, we didn't know that. We answered the letter. Isn't Darrel your secretary now?"

"Ye-es; but never mind. Darrel scratched the match?"

"Yes."

"All right. We only wanted to know. Sorry to bother you. Of course, it's too late for you to come over now?"

"Well, yes, rather!"

"Sorry. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Tom Merry hung up the receiver. Then he turned to his companions with blazing eyes.

They had not heard what the Grammarian skipper said, but they had heard all that Tom Merry had said, so they were fully enlightened. Their looks were grim and threatening.

They understood now only too clearly. Darrel, the secretary of the senior football club, had taken it upon himself to scratch the match, deliberately ignoring the authority of Tom Merry as captain of St. Jim's.

"Well," said Blake, with a deep breath, "this beats the band."

"Rotten!"

"Dished and done!"

"Scratched by Jove!"

"And Darrel's done it!" said Blake, in a tone more of sorrow than of anger. "I always thought Darrel was a decent chap."

"Yaas, I shouldn't have suspected old Dawwel of playin' a wotten twick like this!" said Arthur Augustus, with a sad shake of the head.

"It's because the blessed Sixth have got their blessed backs up," said Manners. "And we had better show them they can't do these things."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why, it's an awful cheek," said Lowther

"Fancy scratching a match without consulting the captain or any of the team!"

"They don't look on Tommy as the captain, or us as the team, you see," Digby remarked.

"Then they've got to learn to," said Tom Merry grimly.

"Hear, hear!"

"Darrel's done this, and Darrel's got to undo it."

"H'm! I don't quite see how that's going to be worked," said Blake thoughtfully. "It's too late for the Grammarians to play us now."

"They can play the match another day—their first vacant date," said Tom. "Darrel, as secretary, will write to them and explain, and ask them to."

"I fancy he'll refuse to act as secretary, then."

"Refusals won't be allowed. He's taken it upon himself to write once, and now he's got to write again."

"But if he won't?"

"If he won't, he'll be made."

"But how?"

"I shall order him to do so, as captain of the school and head of the sports!" said Tom Merry, with dignity.

"Ahem! But he won't, all the same."

"Then we shall use force. A licking will do him good!"

Blake gasped.

"A licking! Darrel!"

"I suppose Darrel can be licked as well as anybody else?" said Tom, with asperity.

"I—I—I don't know about licking a prefect."

"Well, I do. If we stand this, we may as well chuck the whole thing up. If the Sixth are to be allowed to scratch First Eleven matches, what's the good of our being the First Eleven at all?"

"Not much, certainly," agreed Blake.

"And they'll be doing it too," said Lowther. "I shouldn't wonder if Darrel has written to other clubs already, scratching matches."

"The cheeky beast!"

"The fwightful wottah!"

"It's got to be nipped in the bud," Tom Merry declared. "I suppose all you fellows are ready to back me up in enforcing discipline?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then come on," said Tom Merry. "We're going to see Darrel!"

"Hurrah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. marched off in great dudgeon to see Darrel.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH CHAPTER

Caned by the Captain!

DARREL of the Sixth had retired to his study, after his inglorious retreat from the prefects' room.

Darrel was not in a good temper.

The late happenings at St. Jim's had exasperated him, and that morning he had received a letter from Kildare, informing him that there was no immediate prospect of the return of the old captain of the school.

Apparently, the reign of the junior captain was to continue, and things were to go from bad to worse, unless the Head interfered. And as yet the Head had given no sign.

Perhaps he was waiting for the school to get "fed up" with their junior captain before he came down with the mailed hand of authority. Probably he would not have long to wait.

The New House juniors had already fallen away from their allegiance, and the School House had already showed signs of division. After a time only Tom Merry's personal

friends, probably, would be standing by him, and then an act of authority on the part of the Head would be generally popular, and would not appear in the light of an injustice.

But, so far, the Head had not appeared to notice that anything was amiss. Whatever he thought of the new state of affairs, he kept his own counsel so far as the boys were concerned.

Darrel was usually a very good-tempered fellow, but his voice was quite snappish as he rapped out "Come in!" in answer to a knock at his door.

Tom Merry & Co. came in.

The juniors were still in their coats and mufflers, over their footer garb. They had not lost any time in coming to see Darrel.

Eleven sturdy fellows crowded into the study, and Darrel rose to his feet, with an angry frown upon his brow.

"Get out of my study!" he exclaimed. "I'm fed up with your nonsense! Get out at once!"

"All in?" said Tom Merry, without heeding Darrel.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry turned the key in the lock. Then he turned round and faced the angry Sixth-Former.

"We've come here on business, Darrel——"

"Will you get out?" shouted Darrel.

"No, we won't!"

"Then I'll——"

"You'll shut up and listen to what I've got to say, or there'll be trouble!" said Tom Merry determinedly.

"Heaps of twouble, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Pway listen to weason, Dawwel, and don't play the giddy ox!"

"We don't want to hurt you," Monty Lowther explained. "We like you all right, Darrel, only we can't allow you to kick over the traces."

"That's how it stands, Darrel."

"I have nothing to say to you," said Darrel, biting his lips. "I refused to recognise Tom Merry as captain of St. Jim's. You know that!"

"Then-you've got to be taught to toe the line," said Tom.

Darrel laughed angrily.

"I have just been on the telephone," went on the captain of the school. "I rang up Yorke at the Grammar School, to ask why they hadn't been over to-day."

A smile flickered over Darrel's face for a moment.

"Well?" he said.

"York explained," said Tom Merry. "You wrote to him as secretary and scratched the match for this afternoon."

Darrel nodded.

"Well, as you choose to write as secretary, you're to write as secretary again," said Tom. "You'll tell Yorke it was a mistake, or tell him you were playing the giddy ox, just as you like, and ask him to fix up the match for another date."

"I certainly shall do nothing of the kind," said Darrel.

"You will!"

"Nonsense!"

"Do you refuse?"

"Most decidedly!"

"Very well, then you'll be licked for your cheek in interfering in matters that concern the First Eleven, you being no longer a member of the eleven."

"Licked!" said Darrel faintly.

"That's what I said."

"Is this your idea of a joke?" asked Darrel, unable to believe that the junior captain was in earnest.

"You'll jolly soon find that it isn't a joke. Give me that cane, Gussy."

Arthur Augustus picked up the prefect's cane from the table, and handed it to Tom Merry. Tom swished it in the air, in quite the manner of a Form-master.

"Hold out your hand, Darrel!" he said.

"Wh-a-at!"

"Getting deaf? I'm going to cane you, and I told you to hold out your hand."

Darrel stared at Tom Merry as if his eyes would start out of his head. It evidently wasn't a joke; none of the juniors laughed, or even smiled. They were all looking as serious as judges.

"M-m-my hand!" stuttered Darrel.

"Yes."

"Not your foot, you know," murmured Monty Lowther, who could never repress his troublesome sense of humour for long. "It's the cane, you know, not the bastinado. Put out your little paw."

"And buck up!" said Tom Merry.

Darrel breathed hard through his nose.

"It can't be possible that you're lunatic enough to think that you can cane a prefect," he stammered.

"I am going to cane you, unless you immediately write that letter

to the Grammar School, and apologise for your unwarranted interference."

"You—you—you—"

"Will you write the letter?"

"No, you young idiot!"

"Will you hold out your hand?"

"No, you fool!"

"Then it will be held out for you," said Tom Merry. "Collar him!"

It seemed like a dream to Darrel; it really seemed that it couldn't possibly be anything but a dream. But the hands that grasped him, and dragged him before Tom Merry, were



"Put that cane down, Darrel!" "Wh-a-at!" gasped the prefect. "Don't you know I'm captain of the school?" said Tom Merry. (See page 318)

real enough. Darrel was so overcome with astonishment and rage that for the moment he did not even resist.

"Put his paw out for him," said Tom Merry.

Then Darrel began to struggle. The Sixth-Former was a powerful fellow, and he could probably have accounted for any three or four of the juniors. But eight or nine of them at once were too many for him.

He swayed to and fro in the midst of a clinging throng of them, and went over, sprawling on the floor of the study, with the juniors sprawling over him.

"Sit on him!" panted Blake.

"Sit on his beastly head, deah boys."

"Jump on his legs!"

"Hold him!"

"Let me go!" roared Darrel. "Rescue, Sixth! Rescue!"

"No good yelling," said Tom Merry calmly. "The door's locked. The Sixth can't get in. Besides, I shouldn't allow them to interfere."

"Help! Rescue!"

"Hallo! What's the row in there?" called out Rushden's voice from the passage as the handle of the door was tried on the outside.

"Nothing that concerns you," said Tom Merry. "Buzz off!"

"Eh! What's going on?"

"Go to your study at once, Rushden!"

"You young idiot——"

"Go to your study and stay there, or I shall cane you!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"Never mind that duffer!" said Blake.

"Get on with the washing. Are you going to keep still, Darrel, old fellow?"

"No!" roared Darrel, struggling violently. "Rushden, bring the fellows here—these rotten fags are ragging me!"

"Right-ho!" shouted back Rushden. And his footsteps could be heard hurrying away down the passage. Blake whistled softly.

"There's going to be a glorious rumpus with the Sixth now," he said. "I shouldn't wonder if they bust in the door."

"Let them!" said Tom Merry. "For the last time, Darrel, are you going to write that letter to the Grammar School, as directed by your captain?"

"No!" shrieked Darrel.

"Hold out his hand, if he won't hold it out himself," said Tom. "I'm going to give him three on each hand, as a warning."

"Hear, hear!"

Darrel was still struggling, but his struggles were unavailing. Five or six juniors held him round the body, as he sat on the carpet; and a couple stood on his legs. His right arm was held as in a vice; his left arm was forcibly extended, and his hand was forcibly held out for the cane.

"Open your hand, Darrel!"

"I won't!"

"You'll get it across the knuckles then!"

"Hang you!"

Swish! The cane came down, and it came across Darrel's clenched hand, and there was a yell of pain from the prefect. He writhed and struggled in the grasp of the juniors; but he could not get loose, and neither could he withdraw his hand.

"Better open your hand now," said Tom Merry grimly. "You're going to have six cuts, and it hurts less on the palm. I've been there, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, don't be a silly, obstinate ass, Dawwel, deah boy!"

Swish! Darrel opened his hand now; as he was going to be caned, he felt that it was more sensible to have it in the least painful way. Swish again!

"Now the other hand!" said Tom Merry, authoritatively.

Darrel's other hand was forced out. Thrice the cane came down upon it with a heavy and sounding swish.

The prefect was white with rage.

"And now you've been caned," said Tom Merry calmly, "you'll apologise for your interference in the business of the First Eleven, or I shall give you lines!"

"Hang you!"

"Very well; you will take five hundred lines of Virgil, Darrel; and you will bring them to my study this evening, or I shall cane you again."

Bump! Bump! It was a loud concussion at the door. Rushden had returned with a party of the Sixth.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER

The Vials of Wrath!

TOM MERRY unlocked the study door. The punishment of Darrel had been finished—unless he refused to do his lines—as was very probable indeed. In that case there would be another caning for him in the evening. But, for the present, Tom Merry's duty was done. He opened the study door, therefore, and revealed a crowd of angry seniors in the passage outside.

Darrel struggled to his feet. He was stuttering with rage.

"What have they been doing?" exclaimed Langton.

"Ragging me!" stuttered Darrel. "Collar the young cads! Thrash them—thrash them within an inch of their lives!"

"What-ho!"

"Stand back!" exclaimed Tom Merry sternly. "As captain of the school——"

"I'll captain of the school you!" growled Rushden.

The seniors rushed upon Tom Merry & Co. There was a dozen of them, and they had, of course, all the advantage on their side. There was a wild scrimmage in the study; the juniors put up a desperate fight. But the powerful seniors made short work of them. They were rushed and kicked out of the study, bundled along the passage in the roughest possible manner, and kicked out of it.

In the next corridor eleven breathless and dishevelled juniors sprawled at full length, feeling as if they had been smitten suddenly by a particularly powerful hurricane.

The seniors retired and left them there.

Tom Merry was the first to sit up. He felt his head to ascertain if it was still on his shoulders, and gasped.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ow, bai Jove!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Look at my clobber, deah boys! My clothes are uttably wuined!"

"Ow! My nose!"

"Groooh! My eye!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Faith, and it's kilt intirely I am!"

The juniors staggered up. Other fellows were gathering round, seeming to take rather

a humorous than a sympathetic view of the case.

"Bitten off more than you could chew, eh?" Levison of the Fourth inquired.

"Looks like a giddy captain of the school, doesn't he?" Gore wanted to know.

"Who handled you like this?" asked Kerruish.

"Darrel and the Seniors!" gasped Tom Merry. "But they're going to have a lesson about it. Call up the fellows."

"What's the little game now?" asked Blake.

"All School House juniors to meet here in a quarter of an hour," said Tom Merry, panting. "The Sixth have got to be brought to their senses. We are going to rag the Sixth Form passage from end to end."

"Bai Jove!"

"Hurrah!"

"Pass the word round," said Tom Merry. "I'm going to bathe my eye."

"It needs it," grinned Gore.

"Both yours will need it if you don't ring off," said Tom Merry. "Get the fellows here—every kid in the House, mind."

And the badly-used eleven went up to their dormitories to change and bathe their injuries, while the word passed round for the gathering of the clans, as it were.

There were many groans as the juniors bathed darkened eyes and swollen noses; but they had one consolation, and that was the thought of the heavy punishment that was to fall upon the Sixth.

Seniors, and big fellows as they were, the Sixth Form, of course, would have no chance in a pitched battle with the juniors, who outnumbered them immensely. It was only a question of starting on them. Under ordinary circumstances such a proceeding would have been impossible and undreamt of, but the circumstances were not ordinary.

Tom Merry, a junior, was captain of St. Jim's, and the juniors were bound to obey their captain's orders. The Sixth were the rebels. Ragging the Sixth was now the only means of restoring order and discipline, according to the ideas of the captain of the school. And his intention was to rag the Sixth so effectually and thoroughly that they

would toe the line without giving any further trouble. It was a case for the mailed fist, as Monty Lowther remarked; and Tom Merry intended that the mailed fist should come down heavily.

"Ready?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Quite ready!"

"Follow your leader then!"

And Tom led the way downstairs to the wide flagged corridor where the juniors had already gathered at the word of command. A hundred fellows were already there, all of them eager and excited. To "go for" the Sixth, under the orders of the captain of the school—which, of course, secured them from punishment at the hands of the masters—was a great joy to the Lower School.

Shell and Fourth, Third and Second, had turned up in great force. Some of them had brought pillows from the dormitories, some of them had cricket-stumps or knotted stockings, in case weapons should be wanted.

Tom Merry ran a gleaming eye over the numerous and eager force.

"Gentlemen, it's up to us to teach the Sixth to toe the line, and obey the orders of the captain of the school. Are you all ready to back me up?"

There was a roar.

"Yes. Back up!"

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

"Lead on, Macduff!"

"Follow me!" shouted Tom Merry.

And, with another excited roar, the army of juniors marched into the Sixth-Form passage. The Sixth were mostly indoors now for tea, and some of them came out of their studies at the sound of the uproar, to see what on earth the matter was. They stared at the sight of the swarming juniors.

"What is it now?" gasped Langton.

"You'll see!" said Tom Merry. "Darrel's study first, you fellows. Darrel was the worst of them, and we'll start by making an example of him."

"Hear, hear!"

Kangaroo kicked Darrel's door open.

Darrel was at tea with Rushden, both of them looking decidedly glum as they discussed the parlous state into which things in general

at St. Jim's had drifted since old Kildare went away.

They jumped up angrily as the juniors swarmed in, but Tom Merry & Co. did not waste a word of explanation. They started business at once.

"Over with the table!" said Tom.

Crash!

The table, seized by half a dozen hands, was hurled bodily into the fender. There was a terrific crashing and smashing of crockery-ware. Darrel and Rushden gave a simultaneous roar of rage.

They rushed at the invaders, but they were collared and tossed out of the way without the slightest ceremony.

"Pitch them into the passage!" said Tom Merry.

"Out they go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump, bump!

Darrel and Rushden rolled along the passage. The juniors proceeded to wreck the study in a thoroughly workmanlike manner. Tom Merry intended that it should be a lesson never to be forgotten by the Sixth; and certainly it was likely to be remembered. There was crash on crash as the furniture went flying in all directions. Crash on crash answered from the other studies, where other raggers were already busily at work. Yells from the raided seniors sounded along with the crashing of furniture and the break of crockery.

In the Sixth-Form passage senior after senior sprawled, gasping with rage, as he was tossed out of his study by the invaders.

After them came chairs and carpets, tables and books and bed-clothes, all sorts and conditions of things. The juniors were doing their work conscientiously.

The din was terrific.

Cutts of the Fifth came along to see what was the matter, and he was greeted with a shower of missiles, and fled again immediately. He fled in the direction of the Head's study. Mr. Railton was out that afternoon, or he would have been on the scene before. Cutts of the Fifth rushed into the Head's study with the startling news that the juniors had all gone mad and were wrecking the House.

Meanwhile, the ragging went on unabated.



"Pitch them into the passage!" said Tom Merry. "Out they go!" Bump! Bump! There was crash on crash, as the Sixth-Formers' furniture went flying in all directions. (See previous page

The excitement grew, and the damage done was greater than had been originally intended, as is generally the case in a riot.

In the midst of the wild uproar there was a sudden shout from the passage.

"Cave!"

"The Head!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Here comes the Head! Blessed if I hadn't

quite forgotten that there was such a thing as a Head!"

"Bai Jove! There'll be a wow now!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Nothing to be afraid of," said Tom Merry, with undiminished calmness. "You are acting under my orders as captain of the school—in keeping order here."

"Keeping order!" murmured Blake, sur-

veying the strewn passage. "Keeping order! Oh, my hat!"

The Head advanced majestically. Tom Merry stepped to meet him, picking his way among chairs and carpets and broken cups and saucers and books turned inside-out. And there was a breathless hush.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER

How it Ended!

DR. HOLMES looked round him, as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

Certainly no such scene had ever met his reverend gaze before within the precincts of the old school.

The Sixth-Form passage looked as if a horde of Huns and Vandals had descended upon it, and done their very worst.

In the midst of the wreckage stood juniors in crowds, dusty and flushed and excited, and seniors stuttering with rage.

"Boys!" gasped the Head. "Boys! Have you taken leave of your senses? What does this mean? I demand to know who is responsible for this riot!"

"It isn't a riot, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Wathah not, sir."

"We are keeping order, sir," the captain of St. Jim's explained.

"Keeping order!" stammered the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you mean, Merry?"

"The Sixth have refused to recognise my authority as captain of the school, sir," said Tom Merry steadily. "They have acted with disrespect and violence towards me on the occasion of my caning Darrel for insubordination."

"Wank insubordination, sir!"

"Caning Darrel!" gasped Dr. Holmes. "You caning a prefect!"

"In the execution of my duty, sir, as captain of the school."

"Merry!"

"The Sixth chipped in, and as captain of St. Jim's I had no alternative but to administer a severe lesson to them, to keep order. After this they will understand better."

"Merry! If you intend to be impertinent——"

"Not at all, sir. I have done my duty as captain of the school. I hope I shall always do so, so long as I remain captain."

"Bwavo!"

"So this is your idea of your duty as captain of the school, and your idea of keeping order in this House?" said the Head.

"A fellow can only do his best, sir."

"And is this your best?"

"Certainly!"

"Then I fear, Merry, that some alteration will have to be made. You will kindly follow me to my study. You other juniors will go to your own quarters at once, and stay there."

Tom Merry held his head high as he followed Dr. Holmes to his study. He had acted within his rights, he considered, and he had nothing to fear.

In the study, the Head was silent for a full minute, regarding thoughtfully the handsome face of the junior.

"Merry," he said, at last, "I am not angry with you. I think you have acted from a sense of irresponsibility, natural in a very young lad placed in a position for which he is not fitted. But this cannot continue."

"I hope the Sixth will see reason now, sir."

"I am afraid they will never see the reason of submitting to the authority of a junior," said Dr. Holmes, with a shake of the head. "I have not interfered hitherto. Merry, I hesitated to do so, because you were elected by a majority of the voters in the school."

"A very large majority, sir. Cutts was a very bad second."

"Quite so. But it cannot continue, Merry."

"What cannot continue, sir?"

"Your captaincy of St. Jim's."

Tom Merry's lips tightened.

"The fellows won't think it just, sir, to override a free and independent election," he said. "They had the right to elect me if they chose."

"I do not dispute that, Merry. On future occasions some new rules will be made on that subject. For the present, Merry, I fear that I cannot allow you to hold a post which is only suitable for a senior. But,"—the Head's voice was very gentle—"Merry, I do not wish to appear to act harshly."

"I am sure of that, sir."

"I prefer to make an appeal to you, to your good sense and right feeling, my boy," said the Head.

"Oh!" murmured Tom Merry.

"I think you should resign, and allow the captaincy to go to the senior candidate—Cutts of the Fifth. It is understood that when Kildare returns he will resume the captaincy of the school; and I hope it will not be for long that he remains absent. Meanwhile I ask you as a personal favour to myself to resign."

Tom Merry was silent.

"Come, Merry," said the Head. "I am sure that the duties of this unaccustomed position have interfered with your usual amusements and occupations. You will probably not be sorry, upon the whole, to be rid of the trouble and responsibility. Come, now, will you do as I ask?"

Tom Merry heaved a little sigh,

"Very well, sir."

"You resign?"

"If you wish it, sir."

"I do wish it," said the Head.

"Then I resign the position of captain of St. Jim's, sir."

"Thank you very much, Merry," said the Head gravely.

"If there's going to be another election, sir——"

"I do not think we need have the excitement and disturbance of another election," said the Head, very hastily. "For the time that Kildare remains absent, Cutts of the Fifth will fill the post very well. I understand that he is acceptable to the Sixth. After what has happened they will be glad to have a senior for captain, at all events. As you resign, the captaincy goes to the next candidate. I am very much obliged to you, Merry, for relieving me in this way, and I shall not forget it. Now you may go! Kindly put a notice on the board to the effect that you have resigned."

"Very well, sir."

And the Head shook hands with Tom Merry and dismissed him.

Tom's brow was very thoughtful as he walked away from the study. After all, he was not wholly sorry that his brief period of authority as captain of the school had come

to a termination. It had brought him very little but trouble; and possibly he had had an inward feeling himself that in the long run it would not do.

His chums met him in the passage with anxious looks.

"Well?" said a dozen voices together.

"The Head asked me to resign," said Tom Merry quietly. "I've done it. I'm going to post it up on the board."

Monty Lowther grinned a little.

"Well, that's over," he remarked. "After all, it was fun while it lasted."

"Yaas, wathah. We have given the seniahs a wippin' time, at all events. If there is anothah election, I shall put up!"

"There isn't going to be another election," said Tom Merry. "The captaincy goes to Cutts of the Fifth!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"I wish the fellows joy of him when they get him," said Tom. "Blessed if I think I'm quite sorry it's over."

And Tom Merry posted up a notice on the board, to the effect that he resigned the captaincy—a notice that was read with mixed feelings by the juniors, and with pure joy by the seniors.

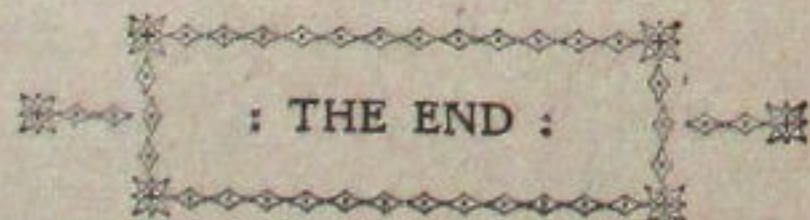
A little later, Darrel of the Sixth dropped into Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three looked at him rather grimly. But Darrel was good-humoured and friendly. He held out his hand to Tom Merry.

"I think you've done the right thing, kid," he said, "and I've looked in to tell you that I don't bear you any malice for what's happened. Well, suppose we let bygones be bygones, and start afresh. What do you say?"

Tom Merry smiled, and shook hands cordially enough with Darrel.

"Right-ho!" he said. "It's a go!"

And so—after a time of excitement such as the old school had seldom or never seen before—ended the reign of Tom Merry as captain of St. Jim's.



The Riders of the Plains

The Story of the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada

By PERCY LONGHURST

THERE is a glamour, a sense of romance and adventure, of wonderful and out-of-the-way exploits and experiences, attaching to the mere name of the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada, that cannot fail to capture the imagination of the adventurously inclined—and that means most of us who haven't grown too old to be thrilled by tales of daring courage and enterprise.

I have known scores of the "Riders of the Plains," have been with them, worked with them, listened to them (but for an unfortunate want of a couple of inches or so of stature I'd have been one of them), and it is easy for me to understand how and why it is this body of men—the finest body of its kind throughout the world—has gained the reputation it owns, and why the mere thought of them and the work they do—and have done—stirs the imagination.

Their work to-day may not be so exciting as it was twenty-odd years and more ago, but still there is much in it that appeals to the young fellow with a sound, strong body, a love of the unusual, and preferring a free, out-of-door life to being herded in an office or factory.

Excitement! It's true enough that the men of the Police to-day aren't called upon to quiet hostile outbreaks amongst the Indian tribes, to take over and run a country considerably bigger than the whole of Great Britain, as they did in the Yukon Territory when came the big gold strike in the Klondyke in 1898, but there's still excitement to be found.

What do you think of a single policeman (it's not so long ago since it happened) being sent to bring down into civilisation a poor

chap, a clergyman, whom existence in one of the wildest and most desolate parts of the great Northland, nearly a thousand miles away from the nearest town, had driven insane?

Imagine that fellow starting off with his companion—who wasn't willing to go, and objected vigorously—for a seven-hundred-miles drive with a dog-sled and team, in the middle of winter, with the temperature at anything in the neighbourhood of fifty degrees below zero. Imagine him travelling hour after hour with the poor lunatic, camping at night with him in a big hole dug in the snow, wrapped in their blankets before a blazing pine wood fire; watching him, talking to him, keeping him quiet, taking care that the unfortunate man didn't do either himself or his companion an injury.

Think what that journey means, making forty miles a day over the frozen snow; suddenly turning from trying to kindle a fire to find that the lunatic had possessed himself of an axe, and evidently intended using it on his guardian's head; of chasing the man across the white waste, struggling with him for possession of the weapon; of being compelled to tie him up to prevent a further occurrence of the kind; of trying to save not only himself but his charge from frostbite, snowstorms, and blizzards! Yet that's one of the jobs that Constable Pedley had to perform, and he got his man safely to the end of the trip, too, with no more hurt than a frost-bitten big toe.

What do you think of being sent on a mission through a country known only by wandering bands of Indians to try and capture an Indian murderer—sent alone, mind you;

a trip that lasted nine months, alone nearly all the time; finding food where it might be obtained by rifle shot or snare; facing thirty or forty red men, who were determined that they would not give up the murderer—and getting the better of them all and every other difficulty into the bargain, and coming back from the trip with the culprit in safe charge.

That doesn't look as though the adventurous and exciting side of the North-West Mounted Policeman's life had departed, does it? Yet these are by no means isolated examples of what the Police are called upon to do.

In khaki jacket and blue breeches, "Stetson" hat and high brown boots (in winter he has a fur outfit and moccasins), armed with rifle and six-shooter, mounted on a good horse, the Mounted Policeman patrols the wide plains, keeping an eye on everything. There is hardly an happening in which he is not, or likely to be, concerned. His "beat" may be several hundred miles in length—as extensive as the whole of England itself. He is the representative of the law—often the law itself—and others realise it as well as he does himself.

It is a grand life, of freedom and responsibility; of enjoyment and unswerving devotion to duty. But it isn't always a picnic. That little trip of Constable Pedley's was no pleasure trip, eh? Winter brings the worst time. The cold and the snow and the blizzards can't be allowed to interfere with duty. The policeman has to turn out all the same, and he can never be sure that he'll get back to his post alive. There's the horror of getting lost (and don't run away with the notion that it's only the tenderfoot who loses himself in the great wilds; old hands of thirty years' experience are just as liable should a great storm happen); of snow blindness; of cold

such as we in England can't form any idea of. There is the possibility of accidents to his horse. No, it's not all honey.

It's a hard, though a grand, life, and it isn't too well paid, either—not well enough paid, so many think. What would the average worker think of a wage of six shillings a day? But the Mounted Policeman doesn't grouse—or strike. To a large extent he's his own master. He has to obey orders, of course, but the manner of carrying them out is left a whole lot to himself. For a chap of the right type the life has many compensations.

And here's a yarn (not a made-up one but something that actually happened) that tells you what type of fellow is wanted in the Police—and that the force gets.

A constable was sent to arrest a red man who was wanted for the killing of a squaw. His tribe was known to believe that he was justified in committing the crime, and their assistance to him against the law was confidently expected by the commanding officer of the post. Yet he sent but a single man to effect the arrest—which indicates the officer's confidence.

In due course the constable located the encampment of the tribe, only to be told by the chief that the man wanted was not there, which was found correct when the policeman came to search the tepees. No one could or would say where the man had fled.

Nothing daunted, the constable took up the trail, and, after several weeks of tracking, trailed the fugitive to a lonely shack set in a clearing in a great wood. But he wasn't quite sure, so, hiding amid the brush, he sat down to watch the cabin. After many hours' watching he saw an Indian stealthily make his way to the shack. For a few minutes he waited, then, just as he was about to follow,



The mounted policeman patrols the wide plains, keeping an eye on everything.

a second red man made his appearance, disappearing into the shack. One of the two was the man wanted.

Did the mounted policeman hesitate? Not much! That kind of thing isn't the way of the police. With the utmost care—for he knew well enough the Indian wouldn't hesitate to shoot did he catch a glimpse of the uniform—he made his way to the open doorway of the cabin, and stepped in.

And then what happened?

Well, no one knows exactly; but from what was related to me by one of a patrol that by chance came upon the cabin about thirty hours after their comrade's having entered it, I guess you'll be able to form a fairly correct notion for yourselves. This is what the patrol found.

Close by the empty fireplace lay a dead red man, shot in two places. He wasn't the criminal. *That* one was lying against one of the cabin walls, a long knife in his hand, very much alive, quite unhurt. Don't forget that it's a point of honour amongst the police to take their prisoners alive and unhurt if in any way possible.

Propped against the wall opposite the red man was the constable, and half way across the floor to where he lay was a trail of blood. He had a six-shooter in his right hand, and his forefinger was on the trigger. He looked half dead, but even as his comrades entered the hut his eyes did not leave the red man. On the floor between them was his carbine, still loaded, and a single-barreled rifle that had been discharged. His left arm was broken, he had two knife-wounds, and a wound from a rifle bullet in his back. He hadn't eaten for two days; he hadn't closed his eyes in sleep throughout the previous night. He was just about played out. But, although shot in the back while struggling with the second Indian, whom he had ultimately killed, desperately wounded as he was, he had contrived virtually to take his prisoner—and keep him.

What would have happened but for the arrival of the patrol can only be left to the imagination. For my part, I believe that,

somehow or other, the constable would have done his full duty.

To-day there is not much chance of the R.N.W.M. policeman having any fighting with the Indians to do, for the red men are settling down into farmers, cattle breeders, and the like; but though the chance is not a big one, it still remains. There are tens of thousands of square miles in Canada in much the same condition as they were a hundred years ago, and the wandering red men who pass to and fro have altered but very little. They know little of the white man and his laws; they know the police—whom they fear and respect—are few in number and widely scattered; and their habits and thoughts have altered but little. There is still a chance of the adventurously minded policeman getting all the excitement he wants. One can never tell what may happen.

Meanwhile, the policeman goes his way, taking rides of a few hundred miles as a matter of course; settling disputes here, making inquiries there if anything goes wrong; keeping an alert eye for forest or prairie fires in the summer and autumn, ready to investigate cases of horse or cattle rustling; very capable and determined, very confident and self-reliant. His next job may be to ride across to the next section and find out who it is that is smuggling alcohol into the country, or to take a thousand-mile journey to the Eskimos of the furthestmost North.

He must be prepared to act as policeman, explorer, dog-driver, woodsman, surveyor, blacksmith, and mail carrier. He is supposed to know a bit of everything, from doctoring a sick horse to building a winter house, or prescribing the proper medicine for an Indian papoose that is ill.

If you want any help, be sure he'll do his best for you, no matter what your need. But don't do anything you ought not to do, because no matter how much he may like you, no matter who or how important you are, there's going to be nothing that will interfere with his doing his duty. "In the King's Name" the Royal North-West Mounted Policeman will see his own brother in gaol if necessary.



"Billy Bunter is working industriously on 'Billy Bunter's Weekly.'"

THE GREYFRIARS GHOST!

*A Play in Verse for Amateur
Actors*

(NOTE.—This play may be performed by readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, without fee or licence, on condition that the words, "By permission of the Editor of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL," appear on each programme.)

Characters :

HARRY WHARTON	} The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove.
BOB CHERRY ..	
FRANK NUGENT	
JOHNNY BULL ..	
HURREE SINGH ..	
BILLY BUNTER ..	The fat boy of the Remove.
PETER TODD ..	Leader of No. 7 Study.
ALONZO TODD ..	The Duffer of the Remove.
TOM DUTTON ..	A deaf junior.
THE GHOST ..	Impersonated by Harold Skinner.

ACT I.

SCENE.—No. 7 Study in the Remove Passage.

(PETER TODD, ALONZO TODD, and TOM DUTTON are doing their "prep," and BILLY BUNTER is working industriously on his amateur magazine—"Billy Bunter's Weekly.")

BUNTER :

Say, Toddy, how do you spell "cricket?"
It starts with "c"?

PETER TODD :

Right on the wicket!

BUNTER :

And is there, please, an "a" in "leather?"

PETER TODD :

You are a nuisance, altogether!

BUNTER :

Oh, really! Can't I ask quite meekly
If you will help me with my "Weekly"?

PETER TODD :

I've got no patience with you, Billy
You're absolutely soft and silly.
How can I do my prep. in peace?
Let all these futile questions cease!

BUNTER :

Dutton, is there an "a" in "leather"?

DUTTON :

Eh? What was that about the weather?

BUNTER :

I didn't ask about the weather.
I said, "Is there an 'a' in 'leather'?"

DUTTON :

Speak up, speak up, my little man!
Speak up as loudly as you can.
Although not deaf (Todd, stop your
sneering)

I'm just a trifle hard of hearing!

BUNTER :

Is there an "a" in "leather," chump?

DUTTON :

Oh, no, I haven't got the hump!

BUNTER :

I didn't ask you if you had!

DUTTON :

What's that? Do you suggest I'm mad?

BUNTER (*aside*) :

The fellow's deafness makes me groan!
My kingdom for a megaphone!

ALONZO TODD :

Dear Bunter, let me help you, pray.
In the word "leather" there's an "t".

BUNTER :

I'm much obliged to you for that.
How many "t's" are there in "bat"?

ALONZO TODD :

Why, there is only one, dear Bunter—

BUNTER :

And how do you spell "leather-hunter"?

PETER TODD :

Here, porpoise! let your questions wait.
How can a fellow concentrate?
And, look! you've splashed a pint of
ink

Over my Latin verbs, I think!

BUNTER :

I'm really very sorry, Toddy—

PETER TODD (*aside*) :

Enough to ruffle anybody!

BUNTER :

I want a study of my own.

PETER TODD :

You'd have one, too, if I had known
You meant to run your "Weekly" here,
And make a mess, which I've to clear!

BUNTER :

Why not clear out, my scraggy friend?

PETER TODD (*jumping to his feet*) :

Such insults, Owl, must swiftly end!

BUNTER :

Why not move into Number One?
With Wharton you would have great fun!

PETER TODD :

You think I'm going to shift for you?
A thing I should be mad to do!

ALONZO TODD :

Hush, hush, my comrades, do not quarrel!
I know a story with a moral.
Two naughty schoolboys fought one day;
One smote the other, sad to say,
And dealt him such a stunning blow
That he was maimed for life, you know!
My Uncle Benjamin impressed—

PETER TODD :

Oh, please give Uncle Ben a rest!

ALONZO TODD :

My Uncle Ben impressed on me
The dire results of enmity.
He says that we should love each other,
You must treat Bunter as a brother.
Now, kiss him nicely. If you can't—

PETER TODD :

I'd rather kiss my aged aunt!

BUNTER (*pushing back his cuffs*) :

Look here, if Peter wants to fight,
I'll put him through the mill all right!
I'll give him a tremendous lamming!
Toddy, you needn't think I'm shamming!

PETER TODD :

You! Why, you couldn't hurt a fly!

BUNTER :

I'll hurt a Todd, though. Mind your eye!
(BILLY BUNTER *advances upon PETER TODD, then stops short suddenly, with a look of terror. GHOST appears in doorway. BUNTER is facing it. His companions have their backs to it.*)

PETER TODD :

Why, you are showing funk already!

BUNTER :

Oh, dear! I wish my nerves were steady.
I fear they must be in a poor way:
I see a phantom in the doorway!

(*All eyes are turned towards the door. Juniors start back in alarm. The GHOST, with a sheet tied round its head, and two slits so that it can see, stands motionless.*)

PETER TODD :

Great jumping crackers! Who—what is
it?

GHOST :

I come to pay my ghostly visit!

DUTTON :

Are you a thing of flesh and blood?

GHOST :

You don't suppose I'm made of mud?

BUNTER (*in terror*) :

Oh, help! I've got a sinking feeling!
Support me, Toddy, I am reeling!

ALONZO TODD :

Strange apparition, clad in white,
What is your mission here this night?

GHOST :

Of Greyfriars School I am the Ghost—

PETER TODD :

It's someone having us on toast!

GHOST :

Nay, talk not thus, my foolish friend.
From lofty clouds did I descend,
To view the scenes of early youth;
Long years have passed since then, in
truth.

And now I come to cast my spell
On those who in this study dwell.

BUNTER :

Toddy, the Thing will do us harm!
My knees are knocking with alarm.
I feel as if I'm going to swoon—

PETER TODD :

Brace yourself up, you silly coon!

GHOST :

I fain would speak
with Peter Todd,
Alonzo, too, whose
ways are odd.

I also would have
speech with Dut-
ton,

And Bunter, too—
the greedy glutton!

(GHOST advances a
short distance into
the room. BILLY
BUNTER backs away in
alarm.)

BUNTER :

Oh, Toddy! get a
cricket stump,

And give the beastly ghost a clump!

It's coming, see, in my direction!

PETER TODD (*grimly*):

I'll try and hasten its ejection.

(PETER picks up a cushion, and hurls it with
all his force at the GHOST. He misses; but the
GHOST swiftly glides away, and is lost to sight.)

DUTTON :

My nerves are thoroughly upset!

ALONZO TODD :

It was a sight I'll ne'er forget!

(BILLY BUNTER, uttering a feeble moan,
collapses on the floor, and lies motionless.)

PETER TODD :

Why, Bunter's fainted clean away!

ALONZO TODD :

With shock and terror, I should say!

PETER TODD :

I'll see if I can bring him to.

Lend me a pin, Alonzo, do!

ALONZO produces a pin from the lapel of his
coat and hands it to PETER, who sticks it into
BUNTER'S calf. A piercing yell echoes through
the study.)

PETER TODD :

I fancied that would do the trick!

BUNTER (*scrambling to his feet*):

You rotter! That's a bit too thick!

DUTTON :

That Ghost of Greyfriars puzzles me.

Who ever could the fellow be?

It couldn't be a genuine spook

Or it would not have slung its hook.

PETER TODD :

It was a jape on
some one's part,
But, Jove, it gave
me quite a start!

ALONZO TODD :

I hope it doesn't
come again.

Such sights as that
would turn my
brain!

BUNTER :

I think we'd better
lock the door,

And then it can't
come any more!

PETER TODD :

A ghost can get
through door or wall,

But that was not a ghost at all!

BUNTER :

It was! I'm jolly sure of it:

That's why I had a fainting fit!

PETER TODD :

You weak-kneed funk! You would
collapse

At nothing—wouldn't he, you chaps?

ALONZO TODD :

Our portly friend could not be made

A dashing hero, I'm afraid.

BUNTER :

How dare you speak of me like that,

You weak, anæmic, skinny rat?

I've got more pluck than all the Todds.

I'd fight against no end of odds!



Billy Bunter advances upon Peter Todd, then
stops short suddenly, with a look of terror.
A Ghost appears in the doorway.

PETER TODD :

Yet when the Ghost of Greyfriars comes
You holler "Rescue!" to your chums!

BUNTER :

Well, anyway, the ghost has gone,
And so I think I'll carry on!

(BUNTER sits down at the table, and busies himself with his "Weekly." The other occupants of the study resume their prep. For a moment there is silence. Then—enter GHOST.)

GHOST :

The Ghost of Greyfriars reappears
To haunt the scenes of early years!

PETER TODD :

Now, Bunter, here's your chance to show
How full of pluck you are, you know!
This puts your courage to the test:

Eject the ghost—
we'll give you
best!

(GHOST advances upon BUNTER. The fat junior, seized with panic, rushes from the room, knocking furniture over, and causing a general commotion.)

BUNTER (in flight) :

This is no place for
me, you chaps.
I'll see you later on
—perhaps!

(Exit BUNTER, with
GHOST in hot pursuit after him.)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—No. 1 Study in the Remove Passage.

(THE FAMOUS FIVE are seated round the table. HARRY WHARTON is engaged in compiling the team for the next Form match.)

WHARTON :

Bulstrode, in goal, I think will suit—

CHERRY :

I fancy Hazeldene, old fruit!

WHARTON :

Well, what about Tom Brown at back,
And Nugent leading the attack?

NUGENT :

That is a very wise suggestion! (Laughter.)

BULL :

Where's Wharton playing? That's the
question!

WHARTON :

I'll operate upon the wing
In partnership with Hurree Singh.
It's not my usual place, I know,
But still, we'll just see how we go.
It ought to prove a great success—

HURREE SINGH :

Yes, we shall bag the goalfulness!

WHARTON :

Now, who shall play at centre-half?

CHERRY :

Bunter, I think—

NUGENT :

Don't make us laugh!

WHARTON :

The mere suggestion
makes one sob.

You shall be centre
half-back, Bob!

(Enter BUNTER, looking very much scared and startled.)

CHERRY :

Hallo, hallo, hallo!
Here's Billy!

What do you mop
your face for, silly?

BUNTER :

I've just had an ex-
citing fight

With a fierce ghost, at dead of night!

WHARTON :

Now, Bunter, don't be asinine:
The clock has only just struck nine!
How can it be the dead of night,
When all our lamps are burning
bright?

BUNTER :

Well, anyway, I met a ghost,
It would have scared and startled
most;
But, being a courageous chap,
And ever ready for a scrap,
I dealt the ghost an awful blow,
And knocked it off its legs, you know!

CHERRY :

You sent it sprawling? I should smile!
A ghost would make you run a mile!



Bunter enters No. 1 Study, scared and startled

BUNTER :
I hit it with a fearful thud :
I really think that I drew blood !

BULL :
You can't draw blood from any ghost.
It seems you're having us on toast !

BUNTER :
I know you fellows think it odd,
But Peter and Alonzo Todd,
The moment that the spook appeared
Took to their heels, and disappeared !
They left the ghost for me to fight !
I put it on his back all right.

HURREE SINGH :
The worthy Bunter's telling lies——

WHARTON :
A fact we fully realise !

BUNTER :
In all my life, I've
never lied——

NUGENT :
You couldn't, Bunty,
if you tried !

BUNTER :
The Ghost of Greyfriars stalked
about,
With one fierce blow
I knocked it out.
I smote with vigour
and with vim,
Just as I box when
in the gym !

The phantom gave one piercing wail——

CHERRY :
Tell us another fairy tale !

BUNTER :
I tell you, I attacked it, Cherry——

BULL :
A nice, romantic fable——very !

HURREE SINGH :
Our portly friend deserves a bumping,
A licking, and a thorough thumping !

WHARTON (*rising*) :
Let's give it to him, here and now !

BUNTER :
Stand back, you beast ! Don't touch me——
Ow !

CHERRY (*gripping BUNTER by the collar*) :
Now tell us, on your solemn word,
Was it a ghost you saw and heard ?

BUNTER :
I tell you, Cherry, honour bright,
A ghost I saw this very night !
Its head was covered in a sheet
And what it said I can't repeat.
But it was certainly a ghost——

NUGENT :
Or some one having you on toast !

CHERRY (*releasing BUNTER*) :
I don't think it's a fairy tale
Because the porpoise looks so pale !

BUNTER :
Do you suggest that I'm afraid ?
If so, a sad mistake you've made !
I know each one of you's a funk,
At spectres you would swiftly bunk !
Your lips would part in gaping terror,

You'd have the wind
up, and no error !
But as for Bunter,
W.G.

A fearless, gallant
youth is he.

No ghost can ever
frighten *him*
Nor make him shake
in every limb.

Wharton, if you had
seen that sight
You would have fled
into the night !

Cherry, if you had
seen it, too,

I doubt if you'd know what to do !
Nugent, if you had seen this ghost
You'd rush in terror to the coast !
Bull, if it came before you now,
You'd yell to me for help, I vow !
Inky, you'd find it most uncanny,
And growl at it in Hindustani !
But I—the bravest of the brave,
Would like a hero bold behave !
I'd pulverise the Thing, you know,
And dash it to destruction——*Oh !*

(BUNTER *breaks off with an exclamation of
terror. Enter GHOST.*)

GHOST :
Pray cease your puny prattling, silly
fool !
I am the Ghost of Greyfriars School !



The Famous Five arm themselves with cricket
stumps, and advance upon the Ghost.

(ALL jump up to their feet. THE FAMOUS FIVE glare defiantly at the GHOST, but BUNTER takes refuge behind JOHNNY BULL.)

WHARTON :

Now, Bunter, come and prove your pluck!

Attack the Ghost—we wish you luck!

BUNTER :

Ahem! I don't think I will try.

I've got a heart attack, that's why!

CHERRY :

You said you'd dash it to destruction!

BUNTER :

That was a somewhat false deduction.

(Laughter.)

BULL :

You'd pulverise the Thing, you said.

BUNTER :

Yes—but I think I've lost my head!

NUGENT :

Why, don't you fight it, here and now?

BUNTER :

Oh, really, I—I don't know how!

GHOST :

I come to cast my deadly spell
On those who in this study dwell!

I come, in robes of solemn white,
To fill their hearts with fear and fright.

CHERRY :

I don't believe you *are* a ghost!

WHARTON :

He seems more human, Bob, than most!

GHOST :

I am the Ghost of Greyfriars School!

BULL :

I guess your nerve is pretty cool!

BUNTER :

Drive it away, you fellows—quick!

I don't believe this is a trick.

It is a spectre, sure enough;

Give it a kick, and then a cuff!

GHOST :

Whoever lays his hand on me—

WHARTON :

We're game to try it, as you'll see!

NUGENT :

Let's pick up cricket stumps, you fellows.

Hit it, and then see if it bellows!

(THE FAMOUS FIVE arm themselves with cricket stumps, and advance upon the GHOST. The latter tries to flee, but JOHNNY BULL puts

his back to the door and prevents its exit. The cricket stumps descend upon the GHOST.)

GHOST :

Yow-ow! You'll smother me with bruises!

WHARTON :

Let him clear, kids, if he chooses!

(The GHOST breaks away. CHERRY goes forward and tears away the sheet, and Skinner of the Remove stands revealed.)

NUGENT :

It's Skinner, having us on toast!

BUNTER (becoming suddenly brave) :

I knew it couldn't be a ghost!

WHARTON :

Skinner! I do not like such jokes!

SKINNER :

I only did it for a hoax!

CHERRY :

You did your best to scare us silly.

SKINNER :

The only chap I scared was Billy!

BUNTER :

Why, I'm a lion-hearted chap,

That's ever eager for a scrap.

And, if these fellows hadn't rushed you,
I should have battered you and crushed
you!

BULL (advancing upon BUNTER) :

You awful fibber! Out you go!

BUNTER :

I say, hold on! I mean—leggo!

CHERRY :

Let's roll the silly porpoise out!

HURREE SINGH :

He merits it, without a doubt!

(BILLY BUNTER is rolled over and over towards the door, and five boots speed his departure.)

BUNTER (from without) :

You've punctured all my ribs, you fellows!

I'm gasping like a pair of bellows!

I'm really very badly hurt,

And now I'm rolling in the dirt!

NUGENT :

Roll on, thou podgy porpoise roll!

CHERRY :

I kicked him twice, and scored a goal!

(Laughter)

WHARTON :

And now, let's deal with Master Skinner
He'll find he hasn't backed a winner!

SKINNER :
Don't be too hard on me, you chaps !
You'll let me off this time, perhaps ?

BULL :
Over the table with him, Harry !
Give him six strokes, and do not tarry !

SKINNER :
Against such treatment I appeal !

WHARTON :
My cricket stump you'll shortly feel !
(SKINNER, loudly protesting, is placed in a
convenient position across the table, and
WHARTON administers six strokes with the
cricket stump.)

WHARTON :
Whack ! That is wallop numero one !

CHERRY :
Skinner no longer thinks it fun !

WHARTON :
Whack ! I've delivered number two !

SKINNER :
You rotters ! Let me go ! Yaroooo !

WHARTON :
Whack ! How is that for number three ?

NUGENT :
Skinner enjoys it, I can see !

WHARTON :
Whack ! There we go with number four !

BULL :
Unlike young Twist, he'll want no more !

WHARTON :
Whack ! Number five has now descended !

CHERRY :
And Skinner wishes it was ended !

WHARTON :
Whack ! That completes the dose, I
think !

NUGENT :
Now, shall we smear his face with ink ?

WHARTON :
No, no ; I think he's had enough.
A further dose would be too rough.
Now, Master Ghost, you can depart,
And take these words of mine to heart :
If you should play this prank again
Your punishment will give you pain
Compared with which, your present
troubles
Will be as light and airy bubbles !
You understand me, do you not ?
For future japes you'll catch it hot !

SKINNER !
I'll never do it any more.
Oh, crumbs, I'm feeling jolly sore !
So-long, you chaps ; I'm going now——
(Moves towards the exit.)

CHERRY :
The Ghost of Greyfriars makes his bow !

CURTAIN.

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" READERS

For the benefit of new readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, who have met our famous schoolboy heroes for the first time in the preceding pages, it should be mentioned that the adventures of these ever-popular characters are followed week by week by hundreds of thousands of my reader-chums in the pages of the companion papers. Harry Wharton, and all the jolly crowd of Greyfriars boys, appears in every issue of the "Magnet" ; Tom Merry and his chums of St. Jim's in the "Gem" ; and Jimmy Silver and his merry men of Rookwood in the "Boys' Friend" ; while the "Popular" is unique in that it contains every week complete stories of all three of the world-famous schools, with the added attraction of "Billy Bunter's Weekly"—the funniest schoolboy journal in the world—inset as a four-page supplement.

I never heard yet of the boy or girl who did not, after reading for the first time a story of one of the famous schools, demand more ! It was to meet this universal demand for "more" that the series of school-story papers enumerated above was built up. The companion papers, therefore, provide a ready means whereby HOLIDAY ANNUAL readers may keep in touch with their favourite characters, pending the issue of next year's ANNUAL !

THE EDITOR.

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