

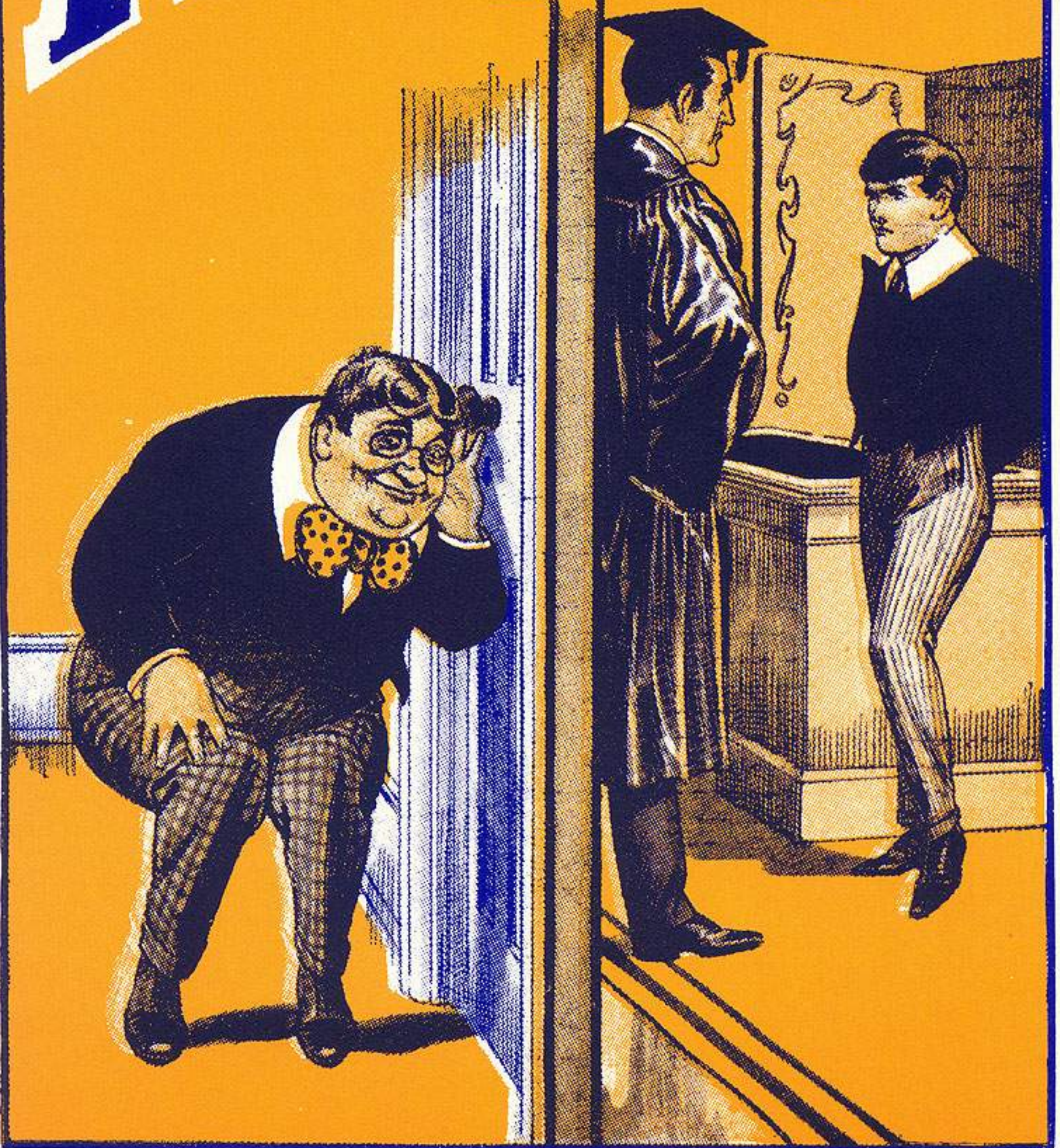
"THE BRUISER OF THE REMOVE!" This week's sensational school story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

No. 986. Vol. XXXI. Week Ending January 8th, 1927

The Magnet 2^o

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ENTER 1927.

SO it's happened! We have stepped off from the last bit of track owned by 1926, and got a footing in the New Year of 1927. Some people call a new year a terra incognita. I don't care if it is terra cotta or anything else so long as the newcomer is given a fair show. We start away with good wishes all round. Then we get down to brass tacks and business. Some fellows think they can leave things to the New Year, and that all will come out all right, but that is not the way to tackle the problem. This is a jolly old co-partnership affair, and don't forget it. You do your best by 1927, and it will do its best by you. In the ancient legends the New Year was represented by a cheery little nipper with a dinky smile of confidence, who hopped up the steps and rang the bell when the last stroke of midnight in the old year was heard. It is cricket to give the stranger a real good show. It is a time to stand by and see fair.

THE WORLD WENT VERY WELL THEN!

Here's a letter to hand from a champion stand-by supporter. He has taken the MAGNET since 1908. That was its first year. The twentieth anniversary will be rung off next season. It is something to think over with pleasure. Frank Richards has been turning out top-notch yarns of Greyfriars for close on two decades, and I can tell all my many friends up and down the world that the New Year running of the famous author will beat all the other piled-up records of the past.

A TIP IN TIME!

Good resolutions are on the menu. It's no good making a whole lot of these, and then chucking them overboard long before we have sailed out of January. The better way is to take a few—as in the stiff exams, and concentrate with blue fury on, say, playing the game for all you are worth, and giving any lame dog a friendly jolt over the awkward stile.

Next Monday's Programme:

"BOUND BY HONOUR!"

By Frank Richards.

You will enjoy the next long story in the series which features the Game Kid. Young Dury has not had the educational advantages of his Form-fellows, but his heart is as gold. And it's surprising to what lengths the Game Kid will go to serve Cedric Hilton, the dandy of the Fifth, who has given him a nod and a friendly smile on occasions. The Game Kid thinks the world of Cedric Hilton for that, and hero-worships him. Don't miss this dramatic story, chums.

"THE MYSTERY OF FLYING V RANCH!"

Look out, too, for the next stirring instalment of our Wild West detective story; it's full of thrills and exciting situations.

"BENEATH THE TIRANT'S HEAL!"

That's the title of the next screamingly funny story of Jack Jelly & Co., from the youthful pen of Dicky Nugent. If you are in need of a laugh this "short complete" will do the trick. Order your copy of the MAGNET early, chums.
Chin, chin!

YOUR EDITOR.

NOT WANTED AT GREYFRIARS! Knock-out blows gave the Game Kid a living when he fought in Huggins' Ring; but knock-out blows don't bring him popularity now that he is at a public school! His Form-fellows don't like his pugilistic ways, or his boast that he can take on the whole of the Remove and lick them!

The Bruiser of the Remove!



A Powerful Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, introducing Dick Dury, better known as the "Game Kid," of Bobby Huggins' Ring!

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The "Kid!"

"**H**A, ha, ha!" There was a sound of merriment in the Rag.

Dick Dury, the new junior of the Remove, had reached the door of that apartment and was about to enter. He stopped as that loud laugh fell upon his ears.

A good many of the Remove were in the Rag, and they seemed to be in a merry mood. The door was half-open, and Dury could see the crowd of laughing faces.

He hesitated, with the colour flushing in his cheeks.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry came along the passage and tapped the new junior on the shoulder. Bob was exuberantly cheerful, as he generally was. He gave the new fellow a genial grin.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?"

"Um!" said Dury.

"How do you like Greyfriars?"

"Um!"

"Change for the better, or for the worse?" asked Bob.

"Um!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"What does 'um' mean exactly?" he inquired. "I hope it doesn't mean that you're fed-up with Greyfriars, after being here only three or four days."

"Um!"

"Nobody been ragging you—what?" asked Bob, with a grin.

Dury grinned, too.

The rather remarkable new boy at Greyfriars had many difficulties to face, but ragging was not one of them. No fellow in the Remove—or in the Fourth or Fifth, for that matter—would have cared to undertake the task of handling the fellow who, before he came to Greyfriars, had been known as the "Game Kid" in Huggins' Boxing Ring.

"I've been 'ere more'n three or four days," said Dury. "You young gents 'ave only been back a few days, but I was 'ere a week afore that."

"I hope you like it better now we're back?"

"Um!"

"Must have been a bit solitary here in the vac, with all the fellows away," said Bob.

"Yes; but—" The Kid paused. "The 'Ead was very kind," he said.

"The Head's an old sport," said Bob. "One of the very best. Still, we're rather nice fellows in our way."

"You are," assented the Kid.

"Thanks!" said Bob gravely. "And my friends are not bad, you know. You get on all right with Wharton and Nugent and Bull and Inky?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And your study-mates, Ogilvy and Russell, are good chaps," said Bob.

"Um—yes!"

"Then what's the trouble?"

"Um!"

"Feel as if you miss the ring and the boxing and punching—what?"

"P'raps, a bit," confessed the Kid. "Still, it was very kind of the 'Ead to bring me 'ere and give me a chance in life. A bloke is bound to feel grateful. But—"

"But it's not all lavender?"

"Um!"

"Well, life isn't all lavender, anywhere and anyhow," said Bob. "What's the odds, so long as you're happy?"

"Um!"

"My dear chap, you're repeating yourself," said Bob, with a chuckle. "Come into the Rag. There seems to be some merry joke on."

Dury's flush deepened.

From the Rag came a continual chortle. Obviously there was some joke on; but the Kid did not seem anxious to learn what it was.

"Come on!" said Bob.

Bob was not chummy with the new junior; in fact, he hardly knew him. He had his own friends and occupations, and had not taken much heed of the one-time "Game Kid" hitherto. But the sight of anybody "down in the mouth" was enough to make Bob take a little trouble about him. And undoubtedly the Game Kid looked down in the mouth.

"I ain't going in!" muttered Dury.

"Why not?"

"Um!"

The Kid took refuge again in the non-committal monosyllable. Bob regarded him with surprise.

The Rag was used as a Common-room by the Greyfriars juniors, and the new fellow had as much right there as anyone else. Evidently he had come along to the door of the Rag with the intention of going in. Now, for reasons inexplicable to Bob, he seemed daunted, and did not want to enter. The Game Kid, who had walked into the roped ring many a time to face an opponent against whom no Greyfriars fellow could have stood, was daunted by the sight of a crowd of careless, laughing faces.

"Oh, come on!" said Bob. "There seems to be some screaming joke on, to judge by the way the fellows are cackling."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the Rag.

"P'raps I'm the joke," said Dury grimly.

"Eh?"

"I shouldn't wonder. Blokes 'ere ain't all like you, Master Cherry," said the Kid. "They make fun of a covey because he don't speak like other blokes. That there Skinner, and Bunter, and Snoop, and the rest. They'd fall down dead if I was to 'it them," added the Kid restively. "There ain't a feller among 'em what could put his 'ands up

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to me. But they make fun of a covey, all the same."

Bob's face became grave.

"It wouldn't be a fair fight between you and a Remove man," he said. "The odds are too heavy on you, after your training in the ring. You ought to put that right out of your head, Dury."

"The 'Ead's told me so," said Dury, rather sullenly. "I ain't 'it anybody, 'ave I? There would be a blinking ambulance wanted if I did. I've stood a lot of chipping and a lot of check, and I ain't give any covey my left. Once would be enough."

Bob Cherry smiled.

"My dear man, you can afford to take it easy," he said. "I believe you could knock out the best man in the Fifth, if you chose."

"Or the Sixth either, if you come to that," said the Kid coolly. "I've looked 'em over, and there ain't a man at Greyfriars what could stand up ag'in me for two rounds—not even that big bloke, Wingate, the captain of the school, as you call him!"

There was rather a boastful ring in the Kid's voice, which jarred a little on Bob Cherry.

But the matter was probably as he stated.

It was a strange enough state of affairs, and one which the Head had probably not contemplated when he placed the Kid in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars. The fact that there was a fag in the Lower Fourth who could, if he liked, knock out the captain of the school in a fistical encounter, was a fact that was likely to lead to some trouble. Boxing was almost the only thing the Kid could do and do well, and there was no doubt at all that he was a terrific fighting-man. And it was only to be expected that the queer new junior would be tempted to make much of the one thing that he could do, and in which no other Greyfriars fellow could equal him, or even approach him.

"They're laughing at a bloke now," went on the Kid resentfully; "but if I was to get rorty, they'd soon be laughing on the other side of their mugs. I wouldn't mind taking on seven or eight of them at once."

Bob's face grew graver.

"Dury, old man," he said, "that isn't the kind of talk that will go down at Greyfriars. A fellow oughtn't to swank."

"H'm!"

"Besides, what do a few cads and their silly chipping matter?" said Bob. "You're a better man than Skinner, any day in the week. If you break up the King's English a little, Skinner breaks half the rules of the school, and that's a much more serious matter."

"H'm!"

"As for Bunter—Bunter's dislike is a compliment to any fellow," said Bob. "I'm not a particular chap, but I should object very strongly if Bunter took a liking to me."

The Kid grinned.

"You don't want to be touchy, you know," said Bob comfortingly. "The fellows are cackling over some joke—but why the dickens should you jump to conclusions? I dare say they're cackling over the way Coker of the Fifth was playing footer yesterday."

"P'r'aps!"

"Don't be touchy, old bean, and come in and see," said Bob. And he linked his arm in the Game Kid's and marched Richard Dury into the Rag.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Skinner Asks For It!

"HERE he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the Rag as Dick Dury came in with Bob.

The Kid's rugged face crimsoned.

A dozen fellows were gathered round a notice that was stuck on the wall of the Rag; but they all turned their glances on the Kid as he came in, and there was a fresh burst of merriment.

Bob Cherry coloured uncomfortably.

It was not, after all, a case of sensitiveness on Dury's part. Obviously now the Game Kid was the "joke" over which the fellows were chortling. He had felt sure of that, though Bob had not.

"Here's the jolly old pug!" chuckled Stott.

"This way, Bill Sikes!" called out Skinner. "This will interest you!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

"What's the joke?" demanded Bob Cherry gruffly. He was a little uneasy at the sight of the dark, threatening look that had come over the Kid's rugged face.

Dick Dury had seemed to Harry Wharton & Co. a good-tempered, good-humoured sort of fellow. But the Famous Five, naturally, had not chipped him about his rather peculiar manners and customs, and his distinctly weird pronunciation. Other fellows in the Lower Fourth were not so particular. Some of them, from sheer thoughtlessness, made game of the queer new fellow, without meaning any harm, and never stopping to think that the queer fellow had sensitive feelings which might be wounded. And there were some, like Skinner & Co., who found entertainment in persecuting anybody or anything from sheer malicious ill-nature.

Such fellows were few in number, but they knew how to make themselves excessively unpleasant. And the Game Kid, who would have known how to handle Wingate of the Sixth with the gloves, certainly did not know how to keep his end up against sneering malice in a new world which was wholly strange to him.

It was no wonder, perhaps, that the Kid, feeling himself helpless against banter, allowed his resentful mind to dwell upon the fact that "once would be enough" if he used his left on any of the jeering fellows who seemed to him to be his enemies.

Bob Cherry stared angrily at the paper on the wall. It was written in capital letters, which gave no clue to the hand that had written it; but he had little doubt that it proceeded from Harold Skinner. It ran:

"LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED!

A large number of aspirates! Dropped at Greyfriars School by R. Dury, of the Remove.

Anyone finding same is requested to return them to the said R. Dury, who is badly in want of them."

"I suppose that's meant to be funny, Skinner?" growled Bob Cherry, with a glare at the humorist of the Remove.

"Probably!" assented Skinner.

"Well, I don't call it funny."

"Perhaps you haven't a sense of humour, dear man," suggested Skinner imperturbably. "Why, I've seen you look in the glass without laughing. That shows you don't appreciate what's really funny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky ass——"

"You needn't get your rag out, Bob Cherry," said Bolsover major. "It's not your H's that are being advertised for."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's too bad, though," said Ogilvy, though he was laughing. "I call this kind of joke rather rotten."

"Just like Skinner!" remarked Russell.

"Oh, just!" said Squiff of the Remove.

"My dear men," said Skinner blandly. "why put it down to me especially? I should imagine that it was Dury who put up that notice. It's his H's that have been dropped!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, choose it!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"Look 'ere——" began the Kid.

"There goes another!" exclaimed Skinner. "Did anybody hear it drop?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Look 'ere——" repeated the Kid, his eyes glinting under his darkened brows.

"There's another!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ogilvy's study must be fairly carpeted with H's!" said Skinner.

"Thick with 'em!" grinned Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick Dury stared round at the laughing faces, and made a sudden grasp at Harold Skinner.

His grip closed on Skinner's shoulder, and it felt like the clasp of an iron vice.

Skinner almost crumpled up in it.

He turned a red and furious face on the Kid.

"Let go!" he shouted. "Let go my shoulder, you hooligan!"

The Kid grinned at him—a rather savage grin. All his rugged good-humour had vanished now. He felt a good deal like a baited animal; and, like a baited animal, he was showing his teeth at his tormentors.

"You've asked for it!" he snapped.

"It was you put that there paper up on the wall, wasn't it—hey?"

"Find out!" snarled Skinner.

"That's why I'm asking you," said the Kid. "Was it you?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Dury!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Kid paid him no heed. His eyes were fixed, with a very unpleasant glint in them, on Skinner's furious face. Skinner was looking alarmed now, as well as furious. The grip on his shoulder seemed almost to crack the bone, and Skinner had an uncomfortable realisation of the fact that he was absolutely helpless in the hands of the fellow he had provoked. He felt, and knew, that the Kid could have pitched him across the Rag like an old sack if he had chosen.

"Let go!" panted Skinner. "Do you think you can handle fellows as you, like, you rotten brute, because you've been a prize-fighter? If you don't take your paws off me, I'll complain to Mr. Quelch!"

"You'll take that there paper down," said the Kid.

"I won't!"

"You will, you cheeky 'ound!"

"Oh, my hat! What language!" murmured Hazeldene.

"Take it down, Skinner," said Bob Cherry. "It's a rotten joke, and you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself. Take it down!"

"I won't!" howled Skinner. "Do you think I'm going to be ordered about by this dashed hooligan?"

"Ooligan now, am I?" said the Kid. "Orbright! You'll jolly well do what the 'ooligan tells you, or you'll be the wuss for it. Kim on!"

With a jerk of his powerful arm the



"Let Skinner go!" rapped out Bolsover. The Game Kid's eyes glittered and his hold on Skinner's arm tightened. "I've told you to shut up, Bolsover!" he said. "Let him go at once, or I'll make you!" roared Bolsover. "Why, the 'ole 'ot of you together couldn't make me!" said the Kid derisively. (See Chapter 2.)

Kid wrenched Skinner towards the wall where the paper was fixed. There was an angry murmur from the juniors, and they gathered round more closely. The Kid did not heed them.

"Take that paper down, you rotter!" he said.

"I—I won't!"

"I'll bang your 'ead on the wall till you do!"

"Leggo!" roared Skinner. "Rescue, you fellows!"

"Leave him go, you ruffian!" shouted Bolsover major.

"You shut up!" said the Kid tersely. "I ain't afraid of you, big as you are, nor of a dozen like you. Shut up! Are you taking that there paper down, Skinner?"

"No!" hissed Skinner.

"Then 'ere goes!"

Bang!

Skinner's head smote the wall just under the offending paper. It was a hard smite, and Skinner yelled with anguish.

"Yoooooogh!"

"Now are you taking it down?"

"Back up, you funks!" yelled Skinner.

"Are you going to let a Remove man be bullied by a dashed prize-fighter?"

Bang!

"Ow! Oh! Yooooop!"

Bolsover major shoved forward. The big, burly Remove was by no means sure that he was not a match for the new fellow, though he had his doubts. The bully of the Remove had eyed the Kid surlily many times in the few days since the opening of the term, very much incensed by the knowledge that there was a new chap in the Form whom he could not venture to bully or "chivvy." Now Bolsover was taking the chance, encouraged by the support of the crowd of juniors round him.

Skinner, certainly, had given the provocation; but the schoolboy boxer's heavy-handed methods were not at all liked.

"Go it, Bolsover!" said several voices.

"Let him go!" rapped out Bolsover.

"I've told you to shut up, you!" said the Kid.

"Let Skinner go at once, or I'll make you!"

The Kid laughed derisively.

"Why, the 'ole lot of you together couldn't make me," he said. "I'd mop up the whole crowd as soon as look at you, if I hadn't promised the 'Ead to keep out of rows. Better let a bloke alone."

"You won't keep out of a row if you don't let Skinner alone," said Bolsover major truculently.

"I say, you fellows, he's a funk!" squeaked Bunter.

Bang!

"That does it!" said Bolsover major, the Kid banged Skinner's head on the wall again. Skinner's yell rang through the Rag and far beyond it.

"That does it!" said Bolsover major, and he rushed at the Kid, grasped him, and dragged him away from Skinner.

Skinner staggered away, rubbing his head in anguish. He was hurt. For a moment the Kid, taken by surprise, went reeling in Bolsover's grasp, and the bully of the Remove spun him round and sent him sprawling.

The Kid went at full length on the floor of the Rag.

Bolsover major grinned down at him victoriously. There was a murmur of applause from the juniors. It seemed that there was, after all, a Greyfriars fellow who could handle the "prize-fighter."

Dick Dury scrambled to his feet, his face red, his jaw square, his eyes blazing. He came at Bolsover major with his

hands up, and the bully of the Remove stood on his defence. But before he reached Bolsover the Kid seemed to recollect himself, and he dropped his hands and unclenched them.

"You've asked for it, you!" he said thickly. "If you got what you've asked for you'd be sorry. But I ain't 'itting you."

And turning his back on the astonished Bolsover, the Kid took down the paper from the wall, crumpled it in his hand, and crossed over to the fire with it.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Knocked Out!

HARRY WHARTON came into the Rag, and looked about him in surprise. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came in with him. Prep was over in the Remove studies, and the Co. had come down to join Bob Cherry. They found an unexpected scene of excitement going on in the Rag.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Ow-ow! Wow!" was Skinner's remark, as he rubbed his head. His head felt considerably damaged.

"Don't you butt in here, Wharton," said Bolsover major loftily. "I'm handling this!"

"Bullying again?" asked Frank Nugent.

"You shut up!"

Bolsover major strode across to intercept Dury. The new junior had crumpled Skinner's offensive paper in his hand, and was about to toss it into the fire. The burly Remove intervened.

"Stop that!" he commanded.

Dury looked at him. His eyes were glancing, but he was keeping his temper in control.

"You butting in again?" he said. "You'd better 'op it. I don't want to 'urt you."

Bolsover major laughed scornfully.

All his doubts were resolved now; he believed that he was more than a match for the schoolboy boxer, and he strongly suspected that Dury was a funk. How else was he to account for the fact that the Kid had allowed himself to be thrown to the floor without retaliating? Bolsover major was a powerful fellow, and he had always used his strength recklessly and unscrupulously. He could not understand a fellow restraining himself simply because he was conscious of overpowering strength.

"Put that paper back!" he said.

"Wot?"

"You've no right to touch that paper!" said Bolsover major. "Put it back where you took it from!"

"You're a fool, you are!" said the Game Kid. "You keep on asking for it. You'll get it if you don't leave a bloke alone."

"Put that paper back on the wall!"

"Oh, stow it!" said the Kid.

Bolsover major made a step towards him. Harry Wharton stepped between, and pushed the bully of the Remove back.

"Let's hear the trouble," said the captain of the Remove quietly.

"I've told you not to butt in, Wharton!" snapped Bolsover.

"You can tell me till you're black in the face, but it won't make any difference," said Wharton coolly. "I happen to be captain of the Form, and you happen to be a beastly bully. Now, what's the trouble?"

"Dury's taken a paper down from the wall," said Snoop. "He's no right to take a notice down—unless he put it up, of course." And Sidney James Snoop chuckled, as did some of the other fellows.

Wharton looked puzzled.

"It's one of Skinner's rotten jokes," explained Bob Cherry. "Dury's quite right to chuck it in the fire."

"I say he sha'n't!" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, you can go and eat coke!" answered Bob.

"Let's see the paper," said Harry.

"Rot!" said the Kid. "I'm going to chuck it in the fire, and you ain't going to stop me, more than any other bloke."

Wharton coloured.

"That's one for his highness!" grinned Hazeldene.

"Don't be an ass, Dury," said Johnny Bull. "Wharton's captain of the Form. Show him the paper."

Dury hesitated, but he realised, apparently, that he was proceeding to quarrel with friends as well as foes, and changed his mind. He handed the crumpled paper to the captain of the Remove.

Wharton looked at it, and his brow darkened.

"A rotten, sneaking joke," he said. "I'm sorry this has happened, Dury. Chuck it in the fire, kid."

"I say, he sha'n't do anything of the sort!" roared Bolsover major.

"You cheese it, Bolsover!" said Wharton tersely. "Can't you ever be anything but a beastly bully? Get out of the way!"

"I won't!" hooted Bolsover.

"You will!"

The captain of the Remove gave

Bolsover major an unceremonious shove, and Bolsover had to yield ground. The Kid tossed the crumpled paper into the fire. Then, with a moody brow, he walked towards the door.

"You funk!" roared Bolsover major.

"Shut up, Bolsover!"

"Funk!" bawled the bully of the Remove. "You can handle Skinner, but you're jolly well afraid to handle me. Funk!"

The Kid turned back.

"Will you give a bloke a rest?" he snapped.

"I'll give you a licking," retorted Bolsover major, pushing back his cuffs.

"Come on, you hooligan!"

"I don't want to scrap with you," said the Kid, hesitating.

"I know you don't," agreed Bolsover major, with a sneer, "but you're jolly well going to, all the same."

"You silly ass," said Harry Wharton. "Dury could make rings round you."

He handled Coker of the Fifth his first day here, and Coker didn't come back to ask for any more."

"He can't handle me," sneered Bolsover major. "You can be as civil to him as you like, if you're afraid of him—"

"What!" ejaculated Wharton.

"But if that hooligan thinks he can carry on as he likes in the Remove, because he's been a prizefighter, he's mistaken," said Bolsover major, "and I'm jolly well going to lick him to make him understand it, see?"

"You cheeky cad—"

"Oh, ring off!"

Bolsover major strode up to the hesitating Kid.

"Put up your hands!" he said.

The Kid kept his hands down at his sides.

"You won't?"

"No, I won't!" muttered Dury.

"Then you'll take the coward's blow, you rotten funk!"

The Kid's eyes blazed.

"Give it him, Bolsover!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Ands off!" said the Kid between his teeth.

Bolsover major laughed mockingly, and struck full at the red, angry face of the Game Kid. Bolsover was quite confident now—over-confident, as a matter of fact.

The Kid's hand came up like lightning. Bolsover's blow was warded, and the burly Remove started back with a howl of pain, clasping his right wrist with his left hand. That sharp rap on the wrist had almost numbed him. The Kid grinned faintly.

"That enough?" he jeered.

Bolsover's reply was a spring at him. Bully as he was, Percy Bolsover had plenty of pluck. He sprang at the Kid, hitting out savagely. The next moment they were fighting.

The Remove fellows gathered round in a breathless crowd. Almost every fellow there hoped that Bolsover major would get the best of it. The bully of the Remove was far from popular, but he was a Remove man, standing up against this queer outsider. But in a few moments it was quite clear that Bolsover major, hefty as he was, had not the faintest chance of getting the best of it.

Heavy and hofty as he was, and hard and fast as he rushed at Dury, it was noticeable that the Game Kid did not recede an inch. His feet seemed rooted to the floor of the Rag. Neither did a single one of Bolsover's fierce blows reach his mocking, jeering face. For some moments he contented himself with barring off the fierce attack, and he did so with perfect ease. Then, all

of a sudden, his left came out, and Bolsover major went spinning backwards as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

Crash!

The bully of the Remove was on his back on the floor.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Great pip!"

"The great-pipfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurrce Janset Ram Singh.

The Kid dropped his hands with a grin, his manner indicating that he knew the fight was over.

The fight—such as it had been—certainly was over. Bolsover major lay helpless on the floor. He did not even attempt to rise. That one drive from the Game Kid's left had completely knocked him out. The juniors gathered round him with rather anxious faces.

"My hat!" murmured Harry Wharton, as he bent over Bolsover major. He had known well enough that the Game Kid was a dangerous fighting-man; he knew enough, from his looks, to be aware of that. And he knew, too, that the Kid could never have earned his daily bread in the boxing-ring unless he had been far and away superior to any Greyfriars junior in the fighting line. But Wharton had not looked for this. Bolsover major was as hopelessly knocked out by that one drive as if a mule had kicked him. He lay half stunned on the floor, breathing in spasms.

"You've hurt him, you brute!" muttered Snoop; and then Snoop jumped back hastily behind the other fellows as the Kid's eye turned dangerously on him.

"'Urt him, 'ave I?" jeered the Kid. "And what was he going to do to me if he could?"

"Prize ring stunts won't do here," said Peter Todd.

"Oh, he ain't 'urt!" said the Kid contemptuously. "He would have been 'urt if I'd hit him hard. You can lay to that."

Bob Cherry blinked at him.

"You don't call that hitting hard?" he asked.

The Kid laughed derisively.

"That? That was a tap!" he answered. "I've took a dozen like that in one round and never took any notice of them. My eye! You coveys are soft at this 'ere show!"

"Oh, are we?" snapped Bob, considerably nettled. The Greyfriars Remove considered themselves anything but soft.

"Soft as putty!" said the Kid. "Why, if I'd given that bloke my left in real earnest, it would 'ave lifted him across the room. I jest give him a tap to teach 'im manners."

"Oh crumbs!" said Vernon-Smith. "If that was a tap, I'd rather not know what it's like when you punch in earnest, Dury."

"Well, it was only a tap," said the Kid. "What's the bloke sprawling there for? Malingering, what?"

There was a gasp from Bolsover major. Malingering most certainly was not in Bolsover's line. He would have got on his feet if he could have done so, but he could not.

"You jeering rotter!" he panted. "You hulking prizefighter! I'm no match for you, but you're a rotter—a rotten brute and hooligan, and you ought to be kicked out of the school." And Bolsover major wound up with a groan, and pressed one hand to his chin, where the Kid's terrible blow had landed.

Dury made a stride towards him.

"Still calling me names?" he said savagely. "You ain't 'ad enough, 'cause I've let you off easy?"



"You jeering rotter!" panted Bolsover. "You hulking prize-fighter—you ought to be klicked out of the school." And Bolsover major wound up with a groan, and pressed one hand to his aching chin. Dury made a stride towards him. "Still calling me names!" he said savagely. "You ain't 'ad enough 'cause I've let you off easy?" (See Chapter 3.)

Bolsover made an effort to rise, but he sank back again helplessly. His head was spinning, his chin felt as if it was smashed. He was jarred from head to foot by the shock, and utterly spent. But his eyes blazed up at the schoolboy boxer.

"You rotter!" he gasped. "You rotter!"

"Better chuck that, Bolsover," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You asked for the trouble. Dury tried to keep out of it. He let you pitch him over—and it turns out that he can handle you like a baby. Better shut up. You were to blame."

"I don't claim to be able to handle a prizefighter," said Bolsover major painfully and bitterly. "He oughtn't to be let into a decent school—a brute and ruffian like that."

"That's enough!" said the Kid savagely. "You asked for it, and you ain't got 'arf what you asked for. Bullying and ragging a cove when you're as soft as putty! My eye! What would 'ave 'appened to you if I'd really 'it you? You ought to be in a girls' school, you ought."

Bolsover major panted with rage and shame. With the assistance of Skinner and Vernon-Smith he staggered to his feet, leaning heavily on both of them. With a last glare of defiance at the fellow who had defeated him so easily, the bully of the Remove staggered out of the Rag.

Dury glanced round him.

Almost every face there expressed dislike and contempt. Harry Wharton & Co. looked very sombre. Bolsover major had been utterly to blame; he had provoked the trouble in the most wanton way. But the sight of a Remove man crumpling up under a single blow was unpleasant enough to the other Removites, and if they could have forgiven that, they could not forgive the jeers of the victor. To be

told that they were soft as putty, and that they ought to be in a girls' school, was bitter hearing for the Remove, who prided themselves upon being a fighting Form. After all, there was little credit in the Kid's easy victory. A schoolboy was not supposed to be able to stand up against a pugilist trained in the boxing ring.

The Game Kid looked at the lowering faces, and the anger in his own face grew darker and darker. From his point of view he had been patient and forbearing—as indeed he had—he had been driven into using his strength, and now these fellows blamed him even for hitting in self-defence. All that was worst in the Kid came to the surface, as he stared at the condemning faces.

"Soft as putty!" he said jeeringly. "The 'ole lot of you—soft as putty!"

Wharton looked at him quietly.

"That will do, Dury!" he said.

"Oh, let him run on," said Hazeldene with a sneer. "This is jolly pleasant to listen to. What was the Head thinking of, letting him into Greyfriars at all?"

"Rotten shame!" said Snoop.

"Oh, cheese it, you fellows!" said the captain of the Remove. "After all, the chap tried to keep the peace. I suppose he wasn't called on to let Bolsover punch him, was he?"

"We don't want a prizefighter here," said Trevor.

"That's not for you to settle. Let the chap alone."

"Oh, I'll let him alone fast enough," sneered Trevor. "I'm not going to have anything to do with him, I know that!"

"No fear!" said several voices.

The Game Kid burst into a derisive, mocking laugh.

"Any bloke like to try it on, like that other bloke?" he asked tauntingly. "Two at a time, if you like—three or four at a time—I don't care! You're

very 'andy with your tongues—why not try your 'ands?"

"If you think that kind of thing will go down at Greyfriars, Dury—" began Johnny Bull hotly.

"Oh, can it!" said the Kid contemptuously. "Did I ask for any trouble? Didn't I try to keep clear of it? If I couldn't take care of myself, I'd be licked at this blessed minute. Plenty of blokes 'ere would pitch into me now if they dared. But they don't."

Wharton breathed hard.

The captain of the Remove had resolved to befriend the strange new junior as much as he could, and make his difficult way at Greyfriars easier for him. He was changing his resolve now. It was very hard to have to listen to bragging defiance like this; and to know, at the same time, that the braggart could easily make his words good.

"They don't dare!" jeered the Kid. "They can sneer at a bloke, and make rotten jokes about 'im. But there ain't a feller in the room what would care to stand up to my left and chanco it."

"Isn't there?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with a blaze in his eyes. "I'll jolly well stand up to it and chanco it!"

"Come on, then!" jeered the Kid.

"Stop it, Bob!" The captain of the Remove caught his chum by the arm and dragged him back. "Stop it! You haven't an earthly!"

"I don't care! He's not going to say that the Remove are afraid of him, prizefighter or not!" roared Bob. "Let me go!"

"Stop it, I tell you!"

"So they are afraid!" jeered the Kid. "A soft lot—funks all round, and as soft as a girls' school!"

Certainly, the unpleasant side of the Game Kid's nature was very unpleasant indeed.

"You hear him?" panted Bob. "I don't care if he smashes me—I'm going to stop his crowing if I can!"

"Oh, try it on!" taunted the Kid. "Try it on—any three of you at once! It's a lark to me!"

Bob Cherry dragged himself loose from Wharton, and rushed on. His eyes were blazing. Bob was the best fighting man in the Remove; even Bolsover major had had to take second place to him. There was a breathless buzz as the champion boxer of the Lower Fourth took up the challenge, and there was not a fellow in the Rag who would not have given a term's pocket-money to see the prizefighter go down under the attack.

But there was no chance of it, as the next few minutes showed.

The Kid gave ground for a moment under Bob's fierce attack, and a blow came home on his grinning, derisive face. But his hands came into play like lightning, and Bob's attack was nowhere.

Good boxer as he was, angry and determined as he was, Bob found that he could not get at the Kid. Dury stalled him off with the utmost ease, and Bob exhausted himself in vain in attack, with a feeling that he might as well have been attacking a stone wall. And all the time it was clear to the on-lookers that the Kid could have put in a knock-out blow if he had chosen to do so. Bob was almost as much at his mercy as Bolsover major had been.

But the Kid did not hit out.

He contented himself with keeping off Bob's attack, grinning at him derisively from behind the lightning-like fists that Bob could not pass, with all his efforts. Bob Cherry, the boxing champion of the Remove, was hopelessly outclassed. The fellows looked on with grim faces. As if to irritate them, and his opponent, more, the Kid let out a light tap here and there, tapping Bob's flushed and angry face whenever he chose—and any of the taps might have been a knock-out blow had the Kid so desired. A rather harder tap than usual drew a spurt of crimson from Bob's nose.

Bob Cherry panted for breath.

The Kid's mocking grin roused his deepest anger; all his friendly feelings for Dick Dury were gone now. He would have given worlds to send the prizefighter spinning along the floor. But it was not to be.

Bob Cherry dropped his hands at last and stepped back. The scene was growing ridiculous; he could not touch the Kid, and Dury was contemptuously sparing him.

"Ad enough?" grinned the Kid.

"Yes!" breathed Bob. "You're too good for me. Brag as much as you like; I can't stop you."

"Any more want a turn?" jeered the Kid, his scornful eyes straying round at the ring of grim faces.

There was only a sullen murmur from the Removites. It was useless for anyone else to try, where Bob Cherry had failed.

"Soft as putty, the lot of you!" taunted the Kid.

There was another murmur, and a movement among some of the fellows, as if they would close in on the prizefighter in a body. The Kid was not daunted. He grinned jeeringly.

"Come on, the 'ole mob!" he sneered. "There'll be some bunged-up eyes and a few missing teeth 'ere arterwards! Come on!"

"Dury, dear boy," came Lord Mauleverer's quiet voice. "Do you think that

this sort of thing is in the best taste? Only askin' a question."

The Kid glanced at him, and seemed for a moment disposed to give Mauly the benefit of his left. But he hesitated and coloured. The cool, quiet look of Lord Mauleverer disconcerted him.

"I never asked for trouble, did I?" he muttered defensively.

"Still, there's a limit, old bean," said his lordship placidly. "Aren't you gettin' over the limit?"

The Kid gave him a look, glanced at the lowering faces round him, and then turned and walked out of the Rag. And there was a general breath of relief among the juniors as they watched him go.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Fourth!

"GET out of this!"

Hilton, of the Fifth Form, coming along the Fifth Form passage towards the stairs, glanced round as he heard Horace Coker's voice. Horace Coker had a powerful voice; and at the present moment he was speaking with unusual emphasis.

At the end of the Fifth Form passage was a deep window-recess, where a big window looked out over the quadrangle. There were seats under the window, and in summer it was a pleasant lounging-place for the Fifth. In the winter it was dark and rather draughty and generally deserted. But someone was evidently there in the deep dusk; for Horace Coker stood facing the deep alcove, and he was addressing someone in booming tones of authority. Hilton glanced at him with a slightly cynical grin. Coker of the Fifth was by nature an authoritative fellow; he loved giving orders. Coker would have been quite shocked and pained had anyone called him a bully. But it was often quite difficult to draw any distinction between Coker's lofty authoritative and mere bullying.

"What's the trouble, Coker?" drawled Hilton.

Horace Coker glanced round at him. He glanced with strong disfavour. Between Hilton, the handsome, well-dressed dandy of the Fifth, and Horace Coker there was a striking contrast of looks. Coker, certainly, was not a dandy, and he did not give much attention to dress. Indeed, his chums, Potter and Greene, considered him slovenly. The big, rugged Horace had a lofty contempt for Cedric Hilton's good looks and good clothes. He had a still stronger contempt, which was more justified, for Hilton's manners and customs—Cedric Hilton being of a sporting turn of mind, much addicted to dropping into billiard-rooms, and backing "geegees" in secret.

Most of the Fifth knew that Hilton was booked for the "long jump" if the Head knew as much about him as his Form-fellows did; and Coker never troubled to conceal his contempt for a fellow who dabbled in racing and gambling. Coker's heart was all right, if—as Potter and Greene agreed—there wasn't much to be said for his head.

Coker gave a snort of contempt in reply to Hilton's drawling question. He was not disposed to waste his valuable time on a well-dressed lounge.

"Don't you butt in!" he answered.

Hilton smiled again.

"Bullyin' somebody, old bean?" he asked genially.

"If you call me a bully, Hilton—"

"Dear man, don't get your rag out," said Hilton. "I'm in a rotten bad temper myself. Is it a fag there? Let's bully him together."

"You silly ass!" snorted Coker.

He turned his back on Hilton, who laughed, and gave his attention again to a shadowy figure in the window-recess.

A junior was there, seated on the bench under the window, in a spot where no junior certainly had any business to be. Juniors were barred in the Fifth Form quarters. Why a junior should be lurking in that lonely, shadowy spot, far from all other fags, was a mystery. Coker naturally concluded that he was up to some mischief. Whether he was up to mischief or not, Coker was coming down heavy. Coker, as he often said, had a short way with fags.

"Get out of that!" repeated Coker. "Fags ain't allowed here, you cheeky young sweep! Get out of it!"

"I ain't doin' any 'arm 'ere, I suppose!" came a sullen voice from the shadows of the window alcove.

Hilton started.

"Good gad! Who's that?" he ejaculated. "Is it the boot boy there?"

"No, it isn't; it's that new kid in the Remove!" snorted Coker. "The kid who's been a prize-fighter."

"Oh, I've heard of him!" said Hilton.

"What are you sneaking about this passage for, Dury?" demanded Coker.

"I ain't doing any 'arm."

"Well, get out!"

From the shadowy alcove two glinting eyes looked from a pale and troubled face. Hilton looked in at the fag, and he could see, if Coker could not, the signs of distress in the youthful face.

"Let the kid alone, Coker," said Hilton.

"Mind your own bizney, Hilton!" roared Coker. "I tell you, fags ain't going to mooch about the Fifth Form passage!"

"Can't you let a bloke alone?" muttered Dury. "What 'arm am I doing, I'd like to know?"

"Get out!"

"Let him alone, I tell you, Coker!" Hilton, with all his faults, and their name was legion, was a good-natured fellow. "The kid's in some trouble. I suppose he's been licked, and he's got into a corner to blub. Let him alone."

"He's not going to blub here!" snorted Coker.

"I ain't blubbing!" exclaimed the kid. "Ketch me blubbing!"

"You'll jolly soon have something to blub for, if you don't clear!" roared Coker.

"Oh, can it!" said Dury. "I 'andled you the fust day of term, and I'll 'andle you agin fast enough if you give me too much of your chin. Let a bloke alone when he's doing no 'arm!"

Hilton laughed softly. He remembered having heard of Coker's encounter with the remarkable new junior on the first day of term. Coker of the Fifth had gone to the Remove passage to—as the juniors expressed it—throw his weight about. Dury had run him out of the Remove passage and rolled him down the Remove staircase. It was a remarkable performance for a junior, and it had caused a great deal of remark. It was probable that the recollection of that unfortunate episode made Horace Coker very keen to display, at Dury's expense, his celebrated short way with fags. Coker was a burly and reckless fellow; even Sixth Form men

treated Coker, as a rule, with some circumspection. Naturally he nourished wrath after being jerked about by the collar by a mere fag of the Lower Fourth.

"I've told you to get out, Dury!" said Horace Coker, breathing hard.

"And I've told you to can it!" said Dury.

"Are you going?"

"No, I ain't!"

"Then I'll jolly well thrash you!" roared Coker.

And Coker of the Fifth made a forward stride; only to swing back again, as Hilton grasped his arm.

"Chuck it, Coker!" said Hilton.

"Let go my arm."

"Chuck it, I tell you!" exclaimed the dandy of the Fifth impatiently. "What harm is the kid doin'?"

"If you don't let go my arm, Hilton, I'll mop up the passage with you!" roared Coker.

Hilton's handsome and somewhat weak face set hard. He was nothing like a match for Coker physically; but he was not a fellow to be talked to as Coker sometimes talked to Potter and Greene.

He shoved Coker back from the alcove.

"Get on with the moppin', then," he said coolly. "You're not goin' to bully that kid."

"Are you calling me a bully?" gasped Coker, in rage and indignation.

"Well, leave the fag alone."

"Leave him alone? I'm going to kick him out of the passage, and kick him all the way back to the Remove studies!" bawled Coker.

"You're jolly well not."

Hilton's slight and graceful figure was between Coker and the fag now. Certainly, he did not look as if he could stop a rush of the heavy, hefty Horace. But he was quite cool and determined.

"Are you shifting, Hilton?" demanded Coker.

"No!"

"I'll jolly soon shift you, then."

And Coker came on, with his big fists up. Cedric Hilton faced him coolly; though he was quite well aware that he had no chance against the muscular Coker. But as it happened, Hilton was not required to stop that heavy rush. A sturdy, stocky figure emerged from the dusky alcove, flashed past Hilton's elegant figure, and met Horace Coker half-way.

What happened next seemed like a miracle to Cedric Hilton, and like an earthquake to Horace Coker. Something that seemed like the hind hoof of a mule jammed on Coker's chest, and he dropped on his back with a bump that echoed along the Fifth Form passage from end to end.

"Wow!" gasped Coker.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Hilton, staring blankly.

The Game Kid grinned at the handsome Fifth-Former.

"Don't you mind 'im, sir," he said. "I can 'andle him and two of the likes of him."

"Good gad!" murmured Hilton again, almost more overcome by the Kid's weird language than by his amazing prowess.

Coker sat up.

"Wha-a-t was that?" he gasped. Horace Coker really did not seem quite to know what had struck him.

"Only little me," said the Kid. "You asked for it, didn't you? Lots more on tap if you want any more."

"By gad! That kid is a scorcher!" said Hilton, staring at the schoolboy

boxer. "Is that an arm you've got there, Dury, or a jolly old piston-rod?"

The Kid chuckled.

Horace Coker staggered to his feet. He leaned breathless against the wall of the passage. Coker had a deep and powerful chest; but there was an ache in it now, and he was quite knocked out. He stared in almost horrified amazement at the Kid. Dury, with his thick-set, stocky figure, his obvious muscular development, his bullet head and square jaw, looked strong—strong as a horse. Still, it was amazing where the strength had come from that had felled the biggest fellow in the Greyfriars Fifth like an ox.

"My hat!" breathed Coker. "Oh crumbs! My hat!"

Half a dozen of the Fifth had come out of their studies, drawn by the terrific crash of Coker's fall.

"What's the giddy trouble?" asked Blundell, the captain of the Fifth. "What's that fag doing here?"

"No 'arm!"

"Oh, my hat!" said the captain of the Fifth. "Well, harm or not, cut off. Fags can't hang about here."

The Kid looked sullen.

"I'm doing no 'arm. I s'pose a bloke can sit down under a winder if he likes."

"Ye gods!" murmured Fitzgerald of the Fifth.

"Cut off!" snapped Blundell.

The stocky figure did not move. Under his knitted brows, the Kid's eyes glinted at the Fifth-Formers.

Hilton touched the junior lightly on the shoulder.

"Better hook it, young 'un," he murmured. "These quarters belong to the Fifth Form, you know; and juniors aren't really supposed to mouch about here. Better cut."

"I'll go if you tell me, sir," said the Kid, with unexpected submission.

And he turned and walked away at once.

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"Wow!" was Coker's reply.

"Only Coker askin' for it," drawled Hilton. "Coker's always askin' for somethin', and generally gettin' it."

"Hallo, that's the young prize-fighter, isn't it?" asked Potter, staring at Richard Dury.

"Coker's just found that out!" smiled Hilton.

"You don't mean to say that that Remove fag has punched Coker?" demanded Bland.

"Just that!"

The Game Kid eyed the crowd of seniors warily. Potter and Greene grinned at one another. They seemed to find something entertaining in the fact that Horace Coker had been punched by a fag and evidently did not want any more. But the other Fifth-Formers looked grim. They had the dignity of a senior Form to consider.

"What's the fag doing here, anyhow?" asked Blundell, as Coker leaned heavily on the wall, gasping for breath.

"No 'arm!" said the Kid.

"No what?"

Cedric Hilton stared after him. From a good-natured impulse he had stepped in between the fag and the overbearing Coker. The matter would have passed from his mind in a few minutes; and certainly he had not supposed that it would make any impression on Dury's. But a kind word and a kind action, howsoever trifling, meant more to the hapless Kid than Hilton could have imagined. The Game Kid, who had knocked Horace Coker spinning without ceremony, obeyed Hilton's voice as if it were the voice of a master.

The dandy of the Fifth stared, and then he smiled with amusement, and strolled away.

Coker went to his study, quietly, without a word. Coker was in a state of astonishment from which he was not likely to recover in a hurry; also, Coker was hurt. For the rest of that evening Potter and Greene found Coker in a very unusually subdued mood; and Coker said nothing on the subject of

Dury of the Remove; giving not the slightest hint of any intention of seeking out that cheeky youth and thrashing him as he deserved. Coker of the Fifth, who hardly ever knew when he had had enough, realised, on the present occasion, that he had had a little too much. And it was quite clear that Coker of the Fifth did not want any more.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

And a Surprise for Wingate!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in the Remove dormitory when the Kid came in. Richard Dury was the last to arrive; the Remove had seen nothing of him since the shindy in the Rag.

The Kid gave a quick look round him as he entered, and saw only averted faces and curling lips. The gloomy expression settled more darkly on his rugged face.

Bolsover major gave him a black scowl, and turned his back. Bolsover's chin was quite a peculiar chin to the view. It was black-and-blue, and the bully of the Remove had an ache in his jaw that was like a dozen toothaches rolled into one.

Skinner and Snoop eyed the Kid, but were careful not to look too offensive. They felt a mingling of hatred and terror towards the fellow whom they had wantonly provoked, and who, under provocation, had developed a ruffianly side of his character that they had not looked for. They knew what to look for now; and not for worlds would they have quarrelled with the proprietor of that terrible "left." If there were ways of retaliation, Skinner & Co. were not likely to neglect them; but they did not want any open trouble—very much indeed they did not want it!

The Kid, however, gave little heed to Bolsover major or Skinner and his friends. He looked at Ogilvy and Russell, his study-mates; and both of them avoided his glance. He looked at Harry Wharton & Co., and the Famous Five did not seem to see him.

He breathed hard and deep.

But the angry, boastful spirit of the Rag was gone; the Kid was far from seeking more trouble. He was miserably conscious that he had lowered himself in the eyes of fellows he liked; that he had made them despise him after they had been friends to him. Lord Mauleverer's words, as much as anything else, had brought to the Kid a consciousness of his offence. Knocking a fellow out in a fight was one thing; boasting and jeering over a fallen enemy quite another.

The Kid could not quite see it as the Greyfriars fellows saw it; but he had a dim consciousness that he had put his foot into it in a way that was beyond repair. He was miserable, and at the same time resentful. He had not sought trouble—he had tried hard to avoid trouble. But when he had been driven to bay, and had lost his temper, he had acted in a way that disgusted the Greyfriars fellows, and he had a wretched feeling that their disgust was justified; that he was, in fact, what he would have called a "low covey" butting in among his betters.

Great and glorious had seemed the chance that the kind-hearted Head of Greyfriars had given him; but now, from the bottom of his heart, the Game Kid wished that he had never come to the school. He had not been wholly happy, perhaps, in his punching days in Bobby Huggins' Ring; but never, in

his worst days with the "old 'un," had he felt so acutely miserable as he felt now.

But the Kid had learned, in a hard school, not to show when he was hurt, and to take all that came with a grim equanimity.

He would have given worlds for a kind word from any of the Removites, even Skinner or Bolsover; but that feeling did not show in his face.

His rugged face hardened into a sneer; and as the Lower Fourth took no notice of him, he took none of them.

He sat on his bed and kicked off his boots; quiet and grim-faced; utterly alone in the midst of a crowd.

Wingate of the Sixth came in to put the lights out for the Remove. Bolsover major was sitting up in bed, rubbing his damaged chin; and the captain of Greyfriars noticed the damage at once. It was rather too conspicuous to escape even a casual eye.

"Bolsover!" rapped out the prefect.

"Yes, Wingate!" mumbled the burly Removite.

"What's happened to you?"

"Scrap!" muttered Bolsover.

The captain of Greyfriars came over to his bed, and stood staring at his discoloured face.

"You don't mean to say that you got damaged like that fighting, Bolsover?" he rapped out.

"Yes."

"With whom were you fighting, then?"

The question was hardly necessary; Wingate's eyes were already turning on the Game Kid. Bolsover major did not answer; bitter as he felt towards Dury, he did not want to complain to a prefect. But Wingate was not to be denied.

"Have you been fighting with Dury?"

"Yes," mumbled Bolsover.

Wingate came over to the Kid's bedside. Dury was in bed, and he looked up sullenly at the Sixth-Former's stern face.

"You did that, Dury?" asked Wingate very quietly.

"I give 'im a tap," said the Kid. "He asked for it—begged and prayed for it!"

Wingate knitted his brows.

"You young rascal! Do you think you can knock your Form-fellows about because you've been trained in the boxing-ring?"

"I never started it," muttered the Kid. "I wouldn't—I promised the 'Ead I wouldn't!"

"And that's how you keep your promise?"

The Kid looked savage and sulky.

"I was throwed about like a sack of coke," he said. "I let the covey do it, and never touched 'im. All the blokes know it!"

"The row wasn't Dury's fault, Wingate," put in Harry Wharton quietly. "He tried to steer clear of a row."

"Likely enough," said Wingate. "I suppose you started in to bully a new kid, Bolsover? I've licked you for it before!"

Bolsover major grunted.

"But that makes no difference," went on Wingate. "You could have handled Bolsover easily enough without disfiguring his face for weeks, Dury. You know perfectly well that you ought not to have hit like that."

"I never 'it him," said the Kid. "If I'd 'it him—what I call 'itting—he would be in a blooming orspital now!"

"What you call hitting, then, won't do for Greyfriars," said the Sixth-Former; "and what you call tapping

won't do, either. I hear that you've been kicking up a shindy in the Fifth Form passage this evening, and punching a Fifth Form man."

There was a movement of interest among the juniors. This was news to them.

"The bloke couldn't leave me alone!" muttered Dury. "What 'arm was I doin' a-setting by a winder?"

"What were you doing in the Fifth Form quarters at all?" snapped Wingate.

"I ain't wanted in my own quarters!" said the Kid bitterly. "All the coveys 'ave got a down on me, 'cause I wouldn't let that fool knock me about without tapping 'im! I jest got out of the way; and then that there Coker 'ad to come asking for trouble. But I wouldn't 'ave touched him, only—"

"Only what?"

"There was a bloke stood up for me, and Coker was goin' for him," said the Kid sullenly. "I wasn't going to see a gentleman bungee in the eye for giving me a civil word. A gentleman he is, too—the only one I've seed at this 'ere school, and chance it!"

Wingate of the Sixth stared at him.

"Well, you're a queer little beast, and no mistake," he said. "I suppose you've got your good points—you must have, or the Head would never have taken you up. You'll hear from your Form master to-morrow about what you've done to Bolsover, so I won't say any more about that. But I'm bound to warn you, Dury, that you're going the wrong way to work to get on in this school. You've got to bear in mind that your prize-ring stunts won't go down here. Keep clear of the Fifth—and don't let yourself be tempted to punch a senior again, for any reason. There is such a thing as discipline, though you mayn't have heard of it."

"Oh, go it!" said the Kid resignedly. "Jaw me as much as you like. I won't touch you!"

Wingate jumped.

It certainly had never crossed the mind of the captain of Greyfriars, the head prefect of the school, that this remarkable junior might "touch" him, or even had the colossal cheek to let such a thought cross his mind.

"You won't what?" he gasped.

"I won't 'it you, whatever you say," answered the Kid.

"Hit me!" said Wingate dazedly.

"'Ave respect for the prefects, the 'Ead says to me," said the Kid. "And I told 'im I would. You can lick me if you like, Wingate, and I won't lift a 'and. Think I couldn't chuck you across this 'ere dormitory if I wanted to? Course I could!"

"Good gad!"

"But I ain't going to. If you says you'll lick me, lick away!" said the Kid. "I'll keep my temper."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, and there was a faint chuckle from some of the Removites. The extraordinary expression on George Wingate's face rather entertained them.

Wingate breathed hard.

"I'm not going to lick you, Dury," he said at last; "I'll only caution you not to talk to a Sixth Form prefect in that strain. You may not find the other prefects so patient. And if it's the case, as it may be, that you could handle a Sixth-Former, don't ever let yourself be tempted to do it, for the first time you lay a finger on a prefect, you'll be kicked out of the school. That's all."

And Wingate of the Sixth put out the light in the Remove dormitory, and retired, still with an extraordinary expression on his face. The amazing new junior in the Lower Fourth was rather

too much for him; and Wingate could not help wondering whether Dr. Locke had fully considered all the possibilities when he admitted the youthful pugilist to the school. In Huggins' Ring the Game Kid was quite at home; at Greyfriars he was likely to resemble an eagle in a dovecot, or, rather, a wolf among sheep. Unless Richard Dury learned fast, there were likely to be hectic episodes in the career of the Game Kid at Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The High Hand!

MR. QUELCH noticed, of course, the state of Percy Bolsover's visage, in the Remove-room the following morning. A shocked and startled expression came over Mr.



"Asking for it, what?" gibed the Kid. "Well, you'll get what you're asking for and no error! 'Ere goes!" Ogilvy and Russell put up the best fight they knew, but the champion of Bobby Huggins' Ring walked over them with ease. Russell went spinning through the doorway and bumped down in the Remove passage, and Ogilvy was sent sprawling across him. "Come in and 'ave another dose!" said the Kid derisively. (See Chapter 6.)

Quelch's face at the sight; and the Kid, noting it, groaned inwardly.

He was "for it," he supposed; in trouble all round, owing to that luckless shindy in the Rag—unsought by him. All the Remove down on him, and the head prefect, and now his Form master. If only he had kept his temper, as he had kept it every day since term began, under the sneers and gibes of Skinner & Co.!

He had meant to keep it—meant to avoid trouble with the other fellows at almost any cost; to make friends at Greyfriars, and gradually to get on the same footing as the others.

He felt that the luck was bitterly against him, and not by his own fault; and the dark frown on the Remove master's face gave him a new feeling of hopeless wrong and resentment.

Did "blokes" really expect him to stand up like a punch-ball to be knocked about, without putting in his left? If they made all this fuss over a few bruises on a fellow's chin, what fuss would they make if he had hit Bolsover—really hit him? Nothing short of a

trial at the Old Bailey would have been adequate, the Kid sarcastically supposed.

Mr. Quelch, however, did not address the Kid in the Form-room. He put a few questions to Bolsover major, and elicited from him what had happened. Bolsover, to do him justice, was quite frank—admitting freely that he had started the trouble, and struck the first blow.

Bolsover was a bully, but he was no sneak; neither would he allow the Kid to think that he was afraid to own up to the truth.

Bolsover having made it clear that he was to blame for the trouble in the first place, why couldn't it drop? But all the Remove knew that it was not dropped, including the Kid.

Mr. Quelch said no more in the Form-room, but obviously intended to deal with the matter later, perhaps after reporting to the Head.

Billy Bunter whispered that the "bruiser" would be reported to the Head, and Dick Dury caught the whisper, and was deeply distressed thereby. The Head's opinion was very

important to him; rough and rugged as he was, perhaps with a strain of brutality in him even, the Kid was deeply grateful to the headmaster, and regarded him with awed veneration.

To be blackened in Dr. Locke's eyes was the unkindest cut of all.

He was not to blame—even Bolsover had admitted that. Apparently it was only the fact that he had hit the junior so hard that was held against him. Hard? Bolsover major certainly looked very queer with his black-and-blue chin; but the Kid had taken a dozen such knocks in the ring without flinching. Hard! The Game Kid's lip curled with contempt. They were a soft lot at Greyfriars, he told himself scornfully.

He was relieved for the moment that Mr. Quelch did not deal with him; but on reflection he was sorry that the Remove master did not "let him have it" at once, and get it over. Now he had it hanging over his head all day; and the added dread that Dr. Locke was to be told his bad conduct—bad in all

eyes but his own. The Kid was not happy that morning.

Dury, as usual, did not join in the Form work.

The one-time boxer was not able yet to work with the Remove. During the week before the opening of the term Dr. Locke had given him special tuition, and opened his eyes to some extent to what had to be done at Greyfriars. The Kid was keen, intelligent, painstaking; and he showed promise that pleased the kind old headmaster very much. But in so short a time, naturally, his progress was limited, though promising for the future. The Kid, therefore, did not join in the usual work of the Lower Fourth, but sat with the other fellows, sometimes to listen to the lesson, sometimes with a separate task to perform.

This, of course, added somewhat to Mr. Quelch's labours; but the Remove master, severe as he looked, had a kind heart, and was more than willing to do what he could for the forlorn lad. He was dubious about the success of the Head's experiment in placing Dury at Greyfriars at all; but he intended to do all in his power to make the experiment successful.

The Kid sat through the lessons, once or twice glancing in a rather forlorn way at fellows who had been kind to him before that unlucky outbreak in the Rag. Bob Cherry, meeting his eye, gave him a nod—and a faint smile. Bob was too good-natured to dream of bearing malice; and he always had a soft corner for any fellow down on his luck. He did not want to be hard on Dury. But the fellow had got on his nerves, there was no doubt about that; the jeering and gibing in the Rag was altogether too "thick." There was no disgrace in being defeated by a fellow trained in the boxing ring, and Bob easily forgave that; but it was not so easy to forgive or to forget the gibes of the victor.

When the Remove came out for morning break, the Kid shoved his hands deep in his pockets and tramped away down the corridor. Bolsover major scowled after him; Skinner sneered, and Billy Bunter gave a jeering fat cackle. Bob Cherry hesitated a moment or two, and then went after the Kid.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come and help us punt a footer about," he said, with rather forced geniality.

The Kid's face brightened for a moment. But it shadowed again, as he saw the expressions on several faces.

"You don't want me," he muttered.

"That's all right—join up," said Bob; and he went out into the quad with the rest.

The Kid followed slowly.

Harry Wharton & Co. punted the footer about, and half the Remove joined in with them; but the Kid hesitated, and finally walked away by himself. He was not wanted, he knew that; and the only fellow who spoke to him was the fellow he had made to look ridiculous in the Rag the evening before. He would have been glad of friendship from Bob; but he did not want his pity. There was a pride in the Game Kid that the Remove fellows did not think of suspecting.

He came in for third lesson by himself, and dropped into his place. After third lesson, he rather expected Mr. Quelch to speak to him when the Form were dismissed. But the Remove master dismissed him with the rest; the "jaw," as the Kid termed it, was still hanging over him. Doubtless Bunter was right, and the Remove master intended to let the Head deal with the

matter. It was a dispiriting thought to the Kid.

At tea-time that day, Dury came up to Study No. 3, which he shared with Russell and Ogilvy.

Hitherto, those two juniors had taken the Game Kid rather as a joke than as anything else. They found entertainment in his strange pronunciation, they smiled over some of his manners and customs, and they were cheerily civil to him in the study. That was changed now.

As the Kid came up to the study, he heard the voices of the two juniors through the doorway, the door being half-open.

"Tea-ing in hall, Oggy?"

"Well, I don't see why a fellow shouldn't tea in his own study," grunted Ogilvy.

"Not with that outsider."

"Well, no!"

"The fellow is the absolute limit."

"The very outside edge."

"Pretty thick, shoving him into our study. If he had any decency, he would tea in hall and let us alone."

"But he hasn't any, old bean."

"Well, I don't like tea-ing in Hall every day, and I don't like tea-ing with that bruiser, either," said Ogilvy. "We might fix it to have our tea half an hour early, and then leave him the study."

"Not a bad wheeze. Let's—"

The Kid had halted in the passage, his face flushed, and his heart beating painfully.

These were fellows who had been civil to him, almost friendly; fellows he had liked. This was what they thought of him.

It came into the Kid's mind that he would go down to tea in hall, and leave these fellows their study, as they did not want him. They seemed to expect that of him; they would consider that 'decent.' But a dogged anger rose in his breast. What had he done to them, to be treated in this way?

"So you don't want me 'ere?" he sneered.

Russell coloured uncomfortably; but Robert Donald Ogilvy looked coolly and quietly at the new junior.

"Right on the wicket!" he said, with a nod.

"Because I punched a bloke what was punching me?"

"Not at all," said Ogilvy icily. "If you want to know, it's because you're a bullying, bragging hooligan."

The Kid clenched his hand.

"Jest a tap with this 'ere, and what would 'appen to you?" he said thickly.

Ogilvy did not stir back an inch; his cool, contemptuous look became more contemptuous.

"Cut it all out," he said. "You could knock me sky-high—I haven't trained as a bruiser. Do you think you're going to make fellows afraid of you, because of that? What do you think any Remove man cares for your rotten threats? Go and eat coke!"

"You're asking for it, you are," said Dury.

Ogilvy laughed contemptuously.

"That sort of thing won't make fellows afraid of you, if that's what you want," he said. "It will only make them despise you."

"Oh! You despise a bloke, do you?"

"Certainly!"

"Hear, hear!" said Russell.

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The Kid eyed them, a good deal like an irritated bulldog.

"And I could take the pair of you, and knock your 'eads together till they cracked!" he said.

"Well, and what of that?" said Ogilvy, with cold scorn. "I could do the same to any two fags in the Second Form, if I were brute enough, and bully enough."

The Kid seemed a little struck by that remark. He unclenched his hand.

"I ain't asking for trouble, am I?" he said resentfully. "P'r'aps I let myself go a bit yesterday; didn't I try 'ard to keep that feller from scrapping with me? I only want a cove to be civil."

"You're not a chap it's easy to be civil to," answered Ogilvy. "Nearly every man in the Remove was down on Skinner for his sneaking trick yesterday. And, in return, you bullyragged the whole Form. Bob Cherry was standing up for you, and you treated him worst of all. You don't seem to care whether you quarrel with friend or enemy, when your beastly temper's up—and you've got the temper of a hooligan. That sort of thing isn't good enough for Greyfriars. You'll have to act a bit differently, if you want fellows to be civil to you."

The Kid stood silent.

"No need for rows in this study, anyhow," went on Ogilvy. "Though you make it hard for a chap to be civil—if a fellow gives you a civil word you're as likely as not to think he's afraid of your prize-ring stunts. Get that out of your head as soon as you can. You can frighten a funk like Bunter or Skinner—you can't frighten me, though I know quite well that you could knock out my front teeth. So could Coker of the Fifth, only he's not brute enough or idiot enough to think of it. We're not hooligans here."

The Kid's lips quivered. He was realising more and more how he had offended against the sense of good "form" in the Remove. He liked and respected the Scottish junior, and it was bitter to him to see the scorn in Ogilvy's face.

"Now about tea in the study," went on Ogilvy. "You've been put in this room, and it can't be helped. You're no friend of ours, and I don't suppose you want to be. Russell and I are going to have our tea early, and then leave you the study, if you want to tea here. That suit you?"

"No!" muttered the Kid.

"Then you can tea early, and we'll tea late," said Russell. "Is that all right?"

"No!" the Kid muttered again.

"Look here, what do you want then?" asked Ogilvy impatiently. "You can tea at the usual tea-time, and we'll leave you the room—I suppose I can't say fairer than that!"

The Kid's dogged look returned.

"You've tea'd with me up to now," he said.

"I know that."

"P'r'aps you don't like the way I put my knife in my mouth, when I 'appen to forget?" said the Kid angrily.

"As you ask me, no, I don't like it," said Ogilvy coolly. "But the reason why we won't tea with you is because we don't like you, and don't want to associate with you in any way. As you want it plain, there it is."

The Kid crimsoned.

But he restrained his rising anger, and moved away towards the study window, and stood for some minutes staring out into the dusky quad. Ogilvy and Russell waited for him to speak, but he did not speak. The Kid's rugged

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face was growing redder and redder; they could see that his ears were burning. The passionate temper which had broken out once before, was breaking out again, the two juniors could see that; but it only gave them a feeling of angry contempt. To be supposed to be afraid of this rank outsider's anger was a little too much for their patience.

"Oh, let's have tea and get out!" said Russell.

"Let's!" agreed Ogilvy.

The Game Kid turned round from the window. His jaw looked very square, and his eyes had a dangerous glint.

"You don't like me, and you don't want to associate with me, what?" he said, between his teeth. "You want me to get out of the study when you're 'ere—durn your blooming cheek. If you don't want to associate with me, I ain't asking you. But I ain't letting you stay 'ere, turning up your cheeky noses at me, and you can lay to that. Travel!"

"What?"

"Eh?"

The Kid pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he rapped.

"Get out of our own study?" ejaculated Ogilvy blankly.

"Jest that!" said the Kid, with grim coolness. "And sharp, too! If you don't go out on your feet, you'll go out on your neck, and you'll stay out till you learn to be civil to a covey. Got that?"

Ogilvy burst into an angry laugh.

"Why, you fool—"

"'Nuff said!" interrupted the Kid. "Going?"

"No!" roared Ogilvy.

"Then you'll be put!"

"You cheeky hooligan!" shouted Russell.

"Outside!" jeered the Kid.

The two juniors jumped together, and put up their hands, as the angry boxer advanced on them. Both of them were sturdy fellows; but they knew well enough that the Kid was more than a match for the two of them. But to go out of the study—their own study—at the order of this fellow was more than flesh and blood could stand.

"Asking for it, what?" giped the Kid. "Well, you'll get what you're asking for, and no error. 'Ere goes!"

The two Removites stood up to it gamely. But they did not stand up to it for more than a few seconds.

The champion of Bobby Huggins' Ring walked over them with ease. Russell went spinning through the doorway, and bumped down in the Remove passage. Robert Donald Ogilvy put up the best fight he knew, but he went spinning out after Russell, and sprawled across him in the passage.

The Kid grinned at them savagely from the doorway.

"Come in and 'ave another dose!" he giped.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Russell.

He scrambled up, and Ogilvy followed his example. They rushed fiercely at the grinning boxer in the doorway of No. 3.

The Kid's hands went up like lightning, and he let them have it, right and left. Russell and Ogilvy went sprawling again helplessly.

Dury laughed jeeringly.

"I'll 'it you next time!" he said.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled the excited voice of Billy Bunter along the Remove passage. "That hooligan is turning Russell and Ogilvy out of their study!"

Ogilvy picked himself up rather painfully.

"Shut up, Bunter!" he panted.

The Kid stepped back into the study

and slammed the door. Ogilvy and Russell looked at one another dubiously, and then went quietly down the passage. The matter was not at an end yet; but for the present, at least, the Game Kid was triumphant, and he was left in undisturbed possession of Study No. 3.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton Takes A Hand!

HARRY WHARTON tapped at the door of Study No. 3, and entered.

Dick Dury was sitting at the table to a solitary tea. A sardine, impaled on the point of a knife, was on its way to the Kid's mouth when the captain of the Remove looked in.

Dury glanced round, and coloured, and lowered his knife. Then, with a dogged look, he proceeded with his peculiar method of disposing of sardines. But Wharton did not appear to observe it. It was no business of his if

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the Kid ate with his knife, or with the fire-shovel and tongs for that matter.

"You want something?" asked the Kid surlily.

"Only a word or two, Dury," answered the captain of the Remove.

"Don't let me interrupt your tea."

"I don't mean to."

Wharton coughed.

"You know, I believe, that I am captain of the Remove?" he asked.

"I knows it."

"That's why I've looked in," said Wharton, as amicably as he could.

"You seem to have some trouble with your study-mates."

"Not a bit," answered the Kid coolly.

"They've started trouble with me, if that's what you mean."

"Well, it comes to much the same thing. I—I suppose you're not serious in turning them out of the study?"

"I jolly well am!" said the Kid emphatically. "They says as I'm not fit to associate with. Let 'em go and associate with somebody who's fit, then. I ain't asking for their company!"

"You can't turn a man out of his own room, Dury."

"Looks as if I can," grunted the Kid. "Let 'em come back, that's all, and see what will 'appen to them!"

Wharton looked at him steadily. He had been disposed, at first, to do any friendly offices he could for the Game Kid, and quite resolved that the new fellow should have fair play in the Remove. But the revelation of the peculiar inwardness of the boxer's character had chilled him very considerably. Certainly, he wished the fellow well; but he could not help feeling, as the rest of the Remove felt, that the Kid was out of place at Greyfriars.

The hapless Kid was accustomed to very rough-and-ready company, where a word was quickly followed by a blow, and where physical strength counted for more than anything else. In his own way, he was a good-hearted and well-meaning fellow; but his way was not the way of the Greyfriars Remove. His impression that he could punch his way through, as it were, was quite a mistaken impression, and it roused the ire of fellows who really wished him well. Even Bolsover major, the bully of the Lower School, had never dreamed of venturing upon such high-handed methods as seemed quite natural to the one-time boxer of Huggins' Ring.

Exactly how to deal with the fellow was rather a problem to Wharton. But he had to be dealt with somehow. The captain of the Form at Greyfriars was expected to keep some sort of law and order in the Form studies. As head of the Remove, Wharton's post was not by any means a sinecure. He had to deal with this matter, whether he liked it or not. And the fact that the Kid could have knocked him out with a single punch from his left, did not make the slightest difference though the Game Kid was unable to realise that.

Dury turned back to his sardines, turning his back on the captain of his Form, with a contemptuous indifference that brought a flush into Wharton's cheeks. But the captain of the Remove kept his temper.

"This won't do, Dury," he said, after a long pause.

"Won't it?" jeered the Kid. "Well, let 'em come back. You'll see how I'll 'andle them if they do. If a bloke can't be civil he must take what's going."

"Russell and Ogilvy have their prep for this evening," said Wharton patiently. "They have to work in this study, you know."

"Let 'em work somewhere else, then," said the Kid. "They ain't butting in 'ere!"

Wharton breathed hard.

"I'd like to talk to you reasonably, if you'd listen to reason, Dury," he said. "You've been badly treated by two or three fellows. That's no reason for rowing with the whole Form, is it?"

"Them coveys treated me like dirt," said the Kid sullenly. "They won't sit down at the table with me. What 'ave I done to them? They asked for trouble, and now they've got it. If they don't like it they can lump it!" He gave Wharton an angry stare. "I'm going to be jawed by the 'Ead for punching that 'ound Bolsover. Did I want to punch 'im? He throwed me about, and I never touched him till he drove me to it. Now I've got to be jawed by the 'Ead! I can tell you I'm fed-up. I ain't taking any lip from nobody now!"

"But—"

"Oh, give us a rest!" said the Kid rudely. "Them blokes ain't coming back to this study unless they wants to get 'urt, that's all."

(Continued on page 17.)

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A RIFT IN THE LOOT!

(Continued from previous page.)

The referee was a Greyfriars prefect, with weird and wonderful ideas on the subject of football. He couldn't have been familiar with the rules of the game, or he would never have sent Fowler off the field for a harmless but necessary fowl.

Fowler was tackled by a Greyfriars back, and he promptly swept his opponent's legs from under him.

"Good man!" shouted Jack Jolly. "That's the stuff to give 'em!"

And then, to the horror of the St. Sam's players, the referee blew his whistle, and pointed to the dressing-room.

"Get off the field, Fowler!" he said. "We don't allow those tatticks at Greyfriars!"

Fowler walked off, like a fellow in a dream. And St. Sam's, with only ten men, labored under a terrible handicap. Their forwards were all at sea, and Fowler was sorely missed.

There is no need to describe the game in detail. Jack Jolly's team, instead of returning to St. Sam's victorious, happy, and glorious, went home with their tails between their legs, Greyfriars having whacked them to the tune of ten goals to nothing.

When the eleven returned, covered with mud and chaggrin, they met with a hostile reception.

"Yah!"

"Call yourselves footballers?"

"Ten goals to nill!" said Merry scornfully. "It wasn't a match; it was a massaker! This is what comes of leaving me out of the team!"

"We done our best," said Bright, with a groan. "But we lost Fowler after five minnits' play, so what could you eggspert?"

There was quite an angry demonstration against Jack Jolly. He was told, in the plainest of plain language, that if St. Sam's lost their next match, he would be chucked out of the captincy, and a new skipper elected.

In these circumstances, Jack Jolly was despritley ankshus to win the next match—a home fixture against St. Bill's. He chose the same team which had

gone down against Greyfriars. Fowler was outside-left; Merry was still left outside!

But Merry had no intention of taking a back seat on this occasion. He plotted a deep, dark plot whereby he hoped to play in Fowler's place, and he confided his plans to his chum Bright.

"On the afternoon of the match," he said, "I shall kidnap Fowler! I shall arrange for a taxi to waylay him at the school gates. The taxi-driver—sootably bribed by me—will haul Fowler into the taxi by the scurf of his neck, and drive him away to the Pryery Ruins, where he will be locked in the secret chamber for the afternoon!"

"My hat!" eggscclaimed Bright. "Isn't that playing it a bit low, old man?"

Merry shrugged his sholders.

"I'm not konserned with the morality of the bizziness," he said. "I am only konserned with the St. Bill's match. I have made up my mind to play in Fowler's place."

"But Jack Jolly won't let you—"

"He won't know I'm playing," said Merry, with a grim chuckle. "You see, I'm going to disguise myself as Fowler. I've hired a woolly wig, and I've got some dark stane to make up my complexion. I'm the same hite and build as Fowler, so Jack Jolly won't have the slightest suspicion that there has been a change of eye-dentity. You'll keep this dark, won't you, Bright? Not a word to Jolly, or all my plans will come unstuck!"

Bright pledged himself to seecrassy, and between then and Saterdag Merry completed all his plans.

After dinner on Saterdag, when Fowler came out into the quad in his footer togs, he noticed a stationery taxicab outside the school gates. The driver was beckoning to him furiously, and Fowler sprinted up to see what the fellow wanted. No sooner had he done so, than he was seized by the collar, and bundled neck-and-crop into the cab. Then the driver pressed a button, and the car raced away down the road, and was gone before you could say, "I wonder why the taxi-driver grabbed old Fowler by the scurf of the neck and bundled him into the cab, and then drove away with him in such a misterious manner?"

Meanwhile, Merry was busy with his make-up. Standing before a cracked mirror in the woodshed, he stoned his face until it was the same chocklitt hue as Fowler's; then he donned the woolly wig, and surveyed himself in the mirror with grate satisfaction.

"Fowler to the life!" he chortled.

The door opened, and Bright came in. He gave a violent start when he caught sight of the fellow in the woodshed.

"Why, Fowler," he eggscclaimed, "I understood that you had been kidnaped!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm not Fowler, you ass—I'm Merry!"

"Grato Scott!" gasped Bright. "You're a giddy marvel at make-up, old man! Not even Sexton Blake himself would pennytrate that disguise!"

It was time for the kick-off, so Merry and Bright hurried away to the infants' playground. Jack Jolly and the others were waiting for them, and the St. Bill's team had arrived.

"Come on, Fowler!" cried Jack Jolly. "I shall eggspert you to do the hat-trick to-day! We've got a decent referee this time—not an iggnent fool who duzzent know the rules of the game. You can fowl as often as you like, without any fear of being sent off."

The boguss Fowler grinned, and lined up with the rest of the team.

It was a fast and thrilling game. The ground was knee-deep in mud, and resembled a quognire. But Merry was never happier than when mudlarking, and his form was a revelation. He farly revelled in the mud, and two glorious goals came from his boot before the game was ten minnits old.

"Good old Fowler!" said Jack Jolly gleefully. "What wonderful wisdom on my part, to play you instead of that awful duffer Merry!"

The boguss Fowler grinned a dusky grin, but made no reply.

St. Sam's found themselves three goals up at $\frac{1}{2}$ -time, and all three goals had been booted by the boy with the neegrow complexion and the woolly mop of hare.

In the second half Merry played the game of his life. He fed Jack Jolly with perfect passes, and all that Jack had to do was to tap the ball into the gaping net. The score rose by leaps and bounds, until players and specked-taters alike lost count.

When the final wissle blew, Jack Jolly and the St. Bill's skipper, drenched with mud, gripped hands warmly.

"Congrats!" said the St. Bill's skipper. "It was the cleanest game I've ever played in!"

"Same hear!" said Jack Jolly, shaking the mud off his jersey.

Then he turned to Fowler—or, rather, the fellow he thought was Fowler.

"After your wonderful display," said Jack Jolly, "you can consider yourself a permanent member of the St. Sam's team. I sollunly prommis that you shall play in every match, right up to the end of the seezon!"

"Thanks!" was the grinning reply. "But it will be rather ruff on poor old Fowler."

Jack Jolly stared. "Ruff on Fowler! What do you mean?"

And then came the drammatick day-noo-mong.

Merry dipped his hangkerchief into a pool of muddy water, and rubbed hard at his face. At the same instant he wiped off his woolly wig, and stood revealed as Merry of the Fourth!

Jack Jolly staggered as if he had seen a ghost. His eyes were farly starting out of their sockitts.

"Merry!" he cried, in blank amazement.

It was a tense moment, and Bright looked on ankshusly. How would Jack Jolly take it?

Jack took it like the true sportsman he was.

"This beats me!" he said. "I can't think how you wangled it, Merry. But never again shall I say that you are a duffer at footer. You won the match for us, and saved me from being chucked out of the captincy. I freely forgive you for cutting me in the quad the other day; my arm has quite heeled. Shall we shake, and let bygones be bygones?"

For a fraction of a second Merry hezzitated. Then their hands met in a crushing grip, and Bright danced the Charleston in his delite.

The rift in the loot was heeled at last; and once again all was Jolly and Merry and Bright!

THE END.

(Look out for another scrumingly funny yarn by Dicky Nugent next week, chums, entitled: "Benceth, The Tirant's Heal!" It will raise laughs from beginning to end.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

"This won't be allowed."
"Who won't allow it?" jeered the Kid. "You, p'r'aps?"
"I," assented Wharton quietly. "As captain of the Form I have to chip in."
The Kid laughed derisively.
"You'll 'andle me, p'r'aps?"
"You will certainly be handled if you keep this up," said Harry. "I don't want to have to report to the Form master if I can help it. We always try to keep the masters out of any trouble, if we can. But you must know that if this is reported to Mr. Quelch he will order you to leave your study-mates unmolested in their own study."

"P'r'aps he'll order them to be civil to a covey."
"That's a different matter," Wharton tried to explain. "Fellows associate with whom they please. If your study-mates don't choose to speak to you they're within their rights. You needn't speak to them if you don't choose. But you can't turn them out of the room any more than they could turn you out. Can't you see that?"

The Kid's face grew more sullen and dogged.

"It's rather a disadvantage to you to be so hefty with your hands," said Harry. "I'm afraid it's got into your head a little. Come, Dury, be a reasonable chap. You needn't have anything whatever to do with your study-mates; but you mustn't take it on yourself to turn them out of their own study."

"I've turned 'em out, and I'm keeping 'em out!" said the Kid stubbornly.

"Then we shall have to deal with the matter," he said.

"And 'ow?" jeered the Kid.

"Much more simply than you seem to think," said the captain of the Remove. "You're quite mistaken in supposing that you can do as you choose because you've been trained in the prize-ring. Russell and Ogilvy will come into this study for their prep."

"They won't!"

"They will!" said Wharton calmly. "And if you interfere with them the whole Form will take it up, and you will get a Remove ragging."

"Will I?" said the Kid, his eyes gleaming. "There'll be some smashed noses and some teeth knocked out, I fancy."

"You'd better put that fancy out of your head, then," said Wharton coldly. "If you knocked out a fellow's teeth, Dury, you would be turned out of the school the same day. We do a good bit of scrapping in the Remove, but we stop short of that, and you've got to stop short of it."

"Got to?" repeated the Kid fiercely.

"Yes, got to," said Harry. "I'm warning you for your own good. No fellow here is a match for a prize-fighter, but that doesn't mean that you can bully your way along, not by long chalks. You'll never get any decent fellow to give way an inch to you because you can knock him out. Goodness knows where you picked up such ideas; but I tell you plainly that they

won't do for Greyfriars. If you carry on this game you'll get a Form ragging, and it won't be pleasant. Think it over, kid, and stop playing the giddy ox."

With that the captain of the Remove left the study. He closed the door after him, leaving the Game Kid to his meditations.

There were a dozen or more of the Removeites in the passage, and they were buzzing with excitement.

The Game Kid's high-handed proceedings had roused the wrath of the whole Form. Even Bunter and Skinner and Snoop shared in the general indignation, though they were not likely, perhaps, to share in the ragging if it came about.

But there were plenty of fellows ready and eager to "rag" the bruiser, regardless of his terrible "left."

The Kid's idea that he could "carry on" in the Remove passage like the champion bruiser of a slum, roused the deepest ire of all the Removeites.

"Well, are we going for him?" demanded Bolsover major.

Wharton shook his head.

"Why not?" demanded Bolsover.

"Are we going to let him walk over us, Wharton?" asked Hazeldene.

"No. I've put it to him plainly, and given him time to think it over," said the captain of the Remove. "I dare say he will see sense and come round. If he doesn't, we give him a Form ragging."

"Good!" said Johnny Bull.

"You're going jolly easy with him," sneered Skinner. "Not in a hurry to lay hands on him—what?"

"I don't expect to see you on the scene at all, Skinner, when hands are laid on him," answered Wharton contemptuously. "I'm jolly certain that your hands will never be laid on him."

There was a laugh at Skinner's expense, and the cad of the Remove scowled.

"I suppose I shall join up with the rest," he grunted.

"Most likely to have a pressing engagement somewhere else," said Bob Cherry. "Cut it out, Skinner; we all know you."

"I say, you fellows, I think that rotter ought to be ragged at once," squeaked Billy Bunter.

"You do?" asked Bob.

"Yes, I jolly well do," said Bunter emphatically. "Looks to me as if you've got cold feet."

"Right-ho!" said Bob. "You can begin the rag, Bunter. This way!"

Bob Cherry caught the Owl of the Remove by the collar and swung him towards the door of Study No. 3. Bunter gave a terrified yelp.

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"This way for the ragging," said Bob cheerily. "You begin it, Bunter."

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Skinner's eager and anxious to back you up."

Skinner walked away rather quickly.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going to touch the brute. He's not fit for a gentleman to lay hands on."

"But he may be fit for you to lay hands on, all the same," chuckled Bob.

"Beast! Leggo!"

"Open the study door, Franky, and I'll pitch Bunter in to begin the ragging."

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter tore himself away from Bob's grasp and fled for the Remove staircase. A roar of laughter followed him.

The Owl of the Remove had succeeded in introducing a little comic relief into a serious situation.

"I'm ready to begin, if you fellows are," growled Bolsover major.

"Prep at half-past seven," said the captain of the Remove. "We give the kid till half-past seven to make up his mind. We don't want a shindy if it can be helped. And you can shut up, anyhow, Bolsover. It was your rotten bullying that started the trouble."

"Look here—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wharton unceremoniously.

And he walked back to Study No. 1, leaving Bolsover major scowling.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

"WHAT the thump's a fellow goin' to do?"

The Game Kid started. That low voice, muttering in the gloom under the elms, reached his ears like a whisper from the night.

Dury had gone out of the House in the deep winter dusk, and was "mooching" under the leafless old elms in a black and bitter mood. The Kid's intentions had been good. He had meant to do well at Greyfriars; he had been prepared to be good friends with every fellow at Greyfriars, from the head of the Sixth to the smallest fag of the Second.

During his week at the school in vacation time he had looked forward to the return of the Greyfriars crowd with mingled hope and uneasiness. And for the first few days of term he had done fairly well. If matters had gone wrong it was not his fault—in the first place, at least. But for the tattling of Billy Bunter the school would never have known that he had been a boxer in the ring at all. He had wanted to keep it dark, and he had restrained any desire to "show off" his prowess. It was not by his fault that things had gone wrong—but they had gone very wrong indeed. He was an outcast in his Form, disliked by all the Remove, disliked by fellows he had liked.

He had played his trump card reluctantly. He felt that he had been driven to the use of force. If he had overdone it whose fault was that?

But he realised dimly that he was in a new world now where physical force counted for something—for a good deal, in fact—but not for nearly so much as in the world he had left. In the old days in Huggins' Ring even the "old 'un" himself had to keep a wary eye open for the Kid's left if the Kid was provoked.

Among his rough acquaintances the Game Kid's prowess had been greatly respected. Now he was in a new world. Lord Mauleverer, for instance, a fellow who might have fallen dead if the Kid had hit him as he could have hit, had not the slightest fear of him, and would have laughed with amusement at the bare idea of fearing him. It was puzzling to the hapless Kid. Strength and courage and determination were good, but they were not all. There were other things to be considered, and the Kid was only beginning to perceive them.

His triumphs left a bitter taste in his mouth. It was strange enough, to his ideas, that a fellow whom he could knock out with a single blow should despise him. It was strange, and it perplexed him. He felt that he was amongst strangers and enemies. Greyfriars was very different from Bobby Huggins' Ring. Here, he could not answer a mocking look with an angry

blow. A fellow who could not stand up to him for ten seconds, had the "neck" to despise him, and the neck to show it. But at least, he told himself angrily and savagely, he would play his trump card for all it was worth—if he could not keep his end up with words he could keep it up with his hands, and he would.

And yet, all the time, hooligan as the Removites considered him, the Kid was feeling his isolation deeply. His nature was expansive and friendly, and he would have given worlds to be among friends instead of foes.

He was thinking blackly, bitterly, savagely, as he moved about restlessly under the shadowy elms, when that mutter of words from the darkness fell upon his ears. He started, and stood quite still. Faint as the voice was—the voice of a fellow who believed himself alone, talking to himself—the Kid recognised the cultivated tones of Hilton of the Fifth.

There was another fellow under the dark trees—a fellow in trouble like himself, though undoubtedly some different sort of trouble. The handsome, elegant, polished Fifth-Former was not likely to lack friends at Greyfriars, whatever else he might lack.

The Kid stood very still. Hilton's act of careless kindness the previous evening had touched the Kid strangely. The Kid was a rough diamond—very rough, but a true diamond. Cedric Hilton was certainly anything but rough—but he was not a diamond by any means. But to the eyes of the Game Kid, the dandy of the Fifth represented all that was admirable in existence. And that god among fellows, as the Kid regarded him, had been kind—had taken notice of the unhappy youth who was despised and disliked by all with whom he came in contact.

Probably Cedric Hilton had already forgotten the existence of the queer junior whom he had carelessly befriended for a moment. But the Kid had not forgotten.

"It's the giddy finish!" went on the muttering voice from the shadows. "The game's up with a vengeance! Well, I've asked for it. I suppose I needn't grouse." There was a note of cynical mockery in the muttering voice, but the tone changed the next moment. "Good gad! What am I goin' to do—what am I goin' to do?" It was almost a groan.

The Kid moved forward in the shadows. His benefactor was in trouble—in black trouble, to judge by his words. It wrung the Kid's heart to hear him.

"Master Hilton!" he whispered. A shadowy figure moved suddenly. "What—what—who's that?"

"Only me, sir."

A white face peered at the Kid in the deep shadows. He caught the glint of angry, startled eyes.

"You young rascal! What are you doing out of your House?" Hilton of the Fifth peered more closely at the junior. "Oh, it's you, young Dury!"

"Yes, sir," said the Kid humbly. "You startled me," said Hilton, speaking calmly with an effort. "I thought I was alone here. You ought to be in your House at this hour."

"I 'eard you, sir." Hilton set his lips. "You heard—what?"

"Only a few words, sir," said the Kid, "but I knowed from what you was saying that you're up agin it, sir."

Hilton was silent for a moment, then he laughed.

"My dear kid, I have a bad habit of

talking to myself sometimes," he drawled. "I didn't know there was a fag mouchin' about here. Cut off!"

"You was kind to me yesterday, sir," said the Kid. "I ain't a fool, sir—I knows you're up agin it. If there was anything a bloke could do, sir—"

"You young ass," said Hilton, laughing again, "I'm not up agin it, as you so elegantly express it. And if I was, it would be no business of a Remove fag, I suppose. Cut off, and don't be cheeky."

"I never meant to be cheeky, sir," said the Kid earnestly. "Crimes! I wouldn't be cheeky to a young gentleman like you, sir. I'd cut off my 'and first."

"Oh, gad!" said Hilton. "You're rather a character, aren't you, Dury?"

"I don't know what you mean by that, sir," said the Kid quietly, "but I do know that if I could do anything to 'elp you, sir, I'd be willing to jump into the river to do it. And don't be afraid of me talking about 'earing you say what you did, sir. I knows 'ow to keep a close mouth."

"Oh, gad!" repeated Hilton. "Course, I ain't a bloke fit for you to speak to, sir," said the Kid. "I knows that. But I knows you're up agin it, sir, and if there was anything I could do to 'elp, you'd only 'ave to give it a name, sir."

"You're a good little kid," said the Fifth-Former, half laughing, but touched at the same time. "I wish some of my own friends were as keen to help me as you are, Dury. But there's nothing you can do, thanks—except keep your mouth shut about hearing me talkin' like an ass."

"I'll do that, sir," said the Kid. "I ain't one to chatter. Look 'ere, sir, nobody can see or 'ear us—you needn't be ashamed of speakin' to me, like I was one of your friends. Don't you be afraid I'll take the liberty of speakin' to you agin, sir. I'm rough, but I ain't that sort. P'r'aps I could 'elp, sir."

"You young ass!" "P'r'aps it's like my cheek to say so, sir," said the Kid humbly. "If it was some bloke has done you down, sir, you've only got to say the word and I'll shape him for the 'ospital."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Hilton, and he laughed again. "You're a character and no mistake, Dury. I believe you'd do it, too."

"You believe me, sir, I would." "But I don't want anybody shaped for hospital," chuckled Hilton. "That wouldn't help me out of my scrape, Dury."

"P'r'aps there's something else, sir, that a covey could do," urged the Kid. "Course, a gentleman like you wouldn't be 'ard up for money. It ain't that! I wish it was."

"You wish it was? That's kind of you."

"I mean, I could 'elp if it was that," said the Kid wistfully. "But, of course, it ain't that."

Hilton peered at him again. "You're a queer little blighter, Dury," he said. "But I'm sure you mean well. But your bobs and half-crowns wouldn't be any use to me, kid. You couldn't lend me twenty pounds." He laughed.

"I could, sir, easy!"

"What!"

"Easy and willing, sir," said the Kid eagerly. "If it's that, sir, you let me 'elp you out. I'd take it as a favour, sir, and you bet I'd never say a word and never take the liberty of speaking to you, sir, where your friends could see. You trust me, sir."

"You mean to say that you, a Remove fag, could raise twenty pounds, and would be idiot enough to lend it to me?" ejaculated Hilton.

The Game Kid chuckled. "I ain't been long in the Remove, sir," he answered. "I was in 'Uggins' Ring afore that; and you can bet that I made the old 'un whack out my share. I've got the dibs, sir."

"You've got twenty pounds?"

"More'n that, sir, in my box, and more still in the Post Office bank," said the Kid.

"Great Scott!"

There was a long silence. Hilton of the Fifth peered strangely at the Kid. Hilton was up against it, more sorely and severely than the schoolboy boxer could have imagined. His recent speculations on the elusive "geegees" had ended in a crash that left the sportsman of the Fifth face to face with ruin. He owed money among his friends that he could not pay; he had exhausted his credit in the Fifth. He owed money outside the school that he could not pay, but that he had to pay if he was to save himself from exposure and expulsion from Greyfriars. In the gloom under the elms, the Fifth Form sportsman had been thinking out the situation; and the result of his reflections was that the game was up.

And now— One careless, thoughtless act of good-natured kindness had brought him a friend in need.

"Great Scott!" repeated Hilton. "If—if you mean that, Dury—"

"I mean it, sir," said the Kid eagerly. "Let me cut in and fetch the dibs, sir, and I'll be 'appy and thankful if you'll take them, sir."

"You're a young ass! I may not be able to pay up for weeks—perhaps not this term at all."

"What does that matter?"

"Oh gad!" said Hilton. "It would matter a lot to my friends in the Fifth if I asked them for a loan. You're the queerest little beggar I've ever struck, and no mistake."

"Let it go at that, sir, only let me 'elp you out," said the Kid.

"I—I can't! There's a limit; I can't borrow money from a fag," muttered Cedric Hilton, shaking his head. "I can't! There's a limit."

"Oh, sir!" "But—but—it's the sack!" muttered Hilton miserably.

The Kid started in horror.

"The sack for you, sir! You don't mean that."

"I do!" said Hilton grimly.

"Oh, my eye! The push for you, sir!" said the amazed Kid. "I should think the 'Ead was proud to 'ave you in the school, sir."

"Oh gad! You'll be the death of me, I think," said Hilton, breaking into a laugh. "Look here, Dury, if—if you mean it, I—I'll say yes. I'll square somehow—'pon my honour! I've got down so jolly low that I can't afford to be too particular. But—not a word." He peered anxiously at the Kid's face in the shadows. "I can trust you? By gad, if it should get out that I raised a loan in the Lower Fourth—"

"Not a syllable, sir," said the Kid. "You trust me, sir. Shall I cut in and get the dibs, sir?"

There was a long pause.

"Yes!" said Hilton, at last.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the Kid, as if it were he that received the obligation. And with a joyous face the Game Kid cut across towards the lighted House, leaving Hilton of the Fifth

acing under the shadowy trees, his feelings a mingling of shame and intense relief that he had escaped the ruin that had seemed about to overwhelm him utterly.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

No Ragging!

"HERE he comes!"
"Now, then—"
"Here's the giddy bruiser!"
"I say, you fellows, here he comes!" squeaked Billy Bunter, blinking out of the doorway of Study No. 7.

The Remove passage, outside Study No. 3, was crowded with fellows when the Game Kid came along from the stairs. Inside Study No. 3, Ogilvy and Russell had taken up their stand. Outside, the Removites swarmed, ready to deal with the Game Kid if he sought to "carry on" as he had started. Harry Wharton & Co. were there in full force; the captain of the Remove was prepared to put his foot down, and to put it down hard. He still hoped that the Kid would see reason, and retreat from an untenable position before it came to an actual tussle. But if the Kid did not see reason, there was going to be a "ragging" that would be rather a record in the Lower Fourth.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! The jolly old prize-fighter looks no end bucked," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Looking forward to a scrap with all the Remove, perhaps," grinned Squiff.

Dick Dury came along the passage towards his study hurriedly.

Undoubtedly his rugged face was very bright.

The Removites were not likely to guess the reason. That the black sheep of the Fifth had condescended to accept help from him; and that to render help to Cedric Hilton made the guileless Kid as happy as a prince, nobody was likely to guess. It was difficult, therefore, to account for his sunny looks as he hurried up the passage towards Study No. 3. But all the fellows could see that he looked, as Bob expressed it, no end bucked.

The Kid glanced at the war-like crowd of juniors, not understanding for the moment. In his keen interest in his kind friend's affairs, he had forgotten his own.

He reached Study No. 3 and threw the door open. Ogilvy and Russell exchanged a quick glance and breathed hard. They were ready for war.

But war, as it happened, was the last thing that the Game Kid was thinking of then. He had come to the study to get something out of his desk, and he was neither thinking nor caring for anybody in the Lower Fourth.

He glanced at the two juniors and grinned, and crossed over to his desk—a handsome oak desk, which Dr. Locke had given him when he came to the school. He felt in his pocket for a key.

"You coveys back again, what?" grinned the Kid.

"We've come back to our study," said Ogilvy shortly.

"And all them coveys outside ready to 'andle me if I kick you out?" chuckled the Kid.

"You can do as you like, if you want a Form ragging," said Russell, with a curl of the lip.

The Kid chuckled.

"Bless your little 'earts," he said; "I ain't touching you. I reckon I ain't caring what the Form could do; if you think I'm scared, you can blame well think so. What does it matter to me?"

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Stay 'ere if you want, and be blowed to you!"

"If you're going to behave yourself, that's all we want," said Ogilvy icily. "Keep to yourself and leave us alone, and there needn't be any trouble."

"I'll leave you alone fast enough," said the Kid scornfully. "I don't care a rap whether there's trouble or not; but I ain't bothering my 'ead about a mob of fags. I got something else to think of. Go and eat coke, the lot of you!"

The key clicked in the desk, and the Kid opened it. He kept between the desk and the juniors, so that they should not see him taking out the money. From a little box in the desk the Kid drew four five-pound notes, and slipped them into his pocket without Ogilvy and Russell observing them. Then he re-locked the desk.

Harry Wharton & Co. eyed him rather uncertainly as he came out of Study No. 3. The Kid gave them a sarcastic grin.

"Waiting for me?" he asked.

"Waiting to see how the cat jumps," explained Bob Cherry, with a cheery grin.

"I'm glad there's not to be any trouble, Dury," said Harry Wharton frankly.

"I jolly well knew a Form ragging would bring the brute to his senses!" growled Bolsover major.

The Kid's eyes glittered.

"You're bound to keep on asking for it, ain't you, you Bolsover?" he said threateningly.

"Can't you shut up, Bolsover?" rapped out the captain of the Remove. "There needn't have been any trouble at all but for your rotten bullying. I can tell you that if you keep on asking Dury for a row, you'll be left to stand it on your own; and you know what that means!"

Dick Dury turned away and went towards the stairs. From the doorway of Study No. 7, Billy Bunter blinked after him through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, are you letting him off?" squeaked Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yah!"

"For goodness' sake, ring off, you fat idiot!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"Sha'n't!" retorted Bunter. "You're jolly well funky of the brute, that's what's the matter with you!"

"Dury!" called out Wharton.

The Kid had reached the landing at the end of the passage. He stopped and looked back.

"What do you want?"

"Bunter wants to see you," said Harry. "Bunter doesn't want to let you off. He's waiting for you in Study No. 7."

There was a yell of alarm from Bunter.

"I ain't!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dury grinned, and went down the Remove staircase. Bunter slammed the door of Study No. 7, and turned the key in the lock.

Bob Cherry thumped on the door.

"Ow! Go away, you beast!" howled Bunter. "I ain't waiting for you! I don't want to rag you! I don't, really! I—I like you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob grinned, and thumped on the door again. Evidently William George Bunter was under the impression that it was the Game Kid who was thumping at Study No. 7. There was a locked door between, but behind that locked door William George fairly squirmed with terror.

"Ow! Go away!" he gasped.

"Don't you want to see Dury?" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"No—nunno! Oh dear! Go away!" Thump! Thump!

"Make him go away, you fellows!" howled Bunter. "I—I was against a ragging all the time! I say, Dury, old chap, I—I was going to stand up for

you, you know, and--and protect you! I was, really!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you open that door, Bunter?" chortled Peter Todd.

"Ow! No!"

"I want to come in for prep, you silly owl!"

"Make that beast go away first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "He's gone, fathhead."

"Oh dear! Sure he's gone?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of Study No. 7 was unlocked, and Bunter blinked out cautiously at a crowd of laughing faces. He was immensely relieved to find that the Game Kid was not in sight. His courage returned as soon as he was sure of that.

"If you fellows think I'm afraid of that beastly bruiser—" he began.

"Oh, my hat! Aren't you?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Certainly not! He's taken jolly good care to clear off before I came out of my study," said Bunter loftily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Oh, really, you fellows!"

"Suppose he's only stepped into the next study, and is just waiting for your door to open?" suggested Bob.

"Eh, what?"

"This way, Dury!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, crikey!"

Bunter bolted back into his study like a fat rabbit into its burrow. He slammed the door; but Peter Todd's boot was in the way, and the door did not shut. Bunter shoved frantically at the door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Lemme get this door shut, you beast! Keep him off! Ow! Wow! Help!" roared Bunter.

Peter Todd chuckled, and shoved the door wide open. Bunter scuttled round the study table.

"I—I say, Peter, keep him off! I say, you fellows, keep that awful beast off! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's gone, long ago, you fat funk!" roared Peter.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"But I'll call him back, if you like."

"Beast!"

Peter Todd sat down to prep. The rest of the Removites went to their studies, most of them glad that the "ragging" was off. Harry Wharton & Co. did not in the least share Bolsover's opinion that it was the threat of a ragging that had brought the Game Kid to his senses. They were glad that he had decided to do the sensible thing, but they were rather puzzled to account for his change of spirit. Certainly they were not likely to guess the true cause—that the Kid, infinitely "bucked" by the kindness of the fellow he liked and admired most of all in Greyfriars, had no room in his simple heart just then for resentment or rancour. Dick Dury's rugged face was bright as he slipped out of the House into the dusky shadows of the quad, and sought the sportsman of the Fifth under the dark elms.

"Ere, sir," he whispered.

Hilton of the Fifth was waiting. Something crisp that rustled softly was shoved into his hand.

The Fifth-Former flushed crimson. He had fallen low enough—he could not follow his chosen sporting way of life without falling low. But taking help in money from a fag of the Lower Fourth was beyond what Cedric Hilton

had always regarded as the limit. But necessity knows no law, and Hilton was well aware that it was a choice between that humiliation and the "long jump." He was ashamed, but his mind was made up.

"Thank you, young 'un," he muttered. "I—I sha'n't forget this. I—I can rely on you to keep mum?"

"You bet, sir!" said the Kid.

"If—if I can do anythin' for you, any time—" Hilton muttered. "You're helpin' me more than you understand, kid. If you ever find yourself in any trouble that a Fifth-Form man can help you out of, come to me."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the Kid. "But I ain't going to worrit you, sir. I ain't the covey to take advantage 'cause you're kind to me, sir. You forget all about it, Master Hilton."

And the Kid, with a delicacy of feeling few would have suspected him of, vanished into the dark quad, leaving Hilton to himself.

"Good gad!" the sportsman of the Fifth murmured. "Good gad! That young ruffian—that uncouth young hooligan—he's saved my neck, and he's a better man than I am, ruffian as he is! By gad, I'll be a friend to him, if I can, while he's at Greyfriars!"

And the sportsman of the Fifth was sincere in that, though whether the friendship of a black sheep like Cedric Hilton was likely to do the Game Kid any good was quite another matter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Another Chance!

MR. QUELCH stopped his busy pen as a knock came at his study door.

"Come in!"

It was the Game Kid who entered the Remove master's study. He came in very quietly with a very subdued expression on his rugged features. Mr. Quelch gave him a sharp glance.

"You should be at your preparation now, Dury," he said.

"I know, sir," answered the Kid. "But I wanted to speak to you, sir, if—if you don't mind."

"You may speak," said the Remove master briefly.

"It's about that there Bolsover, sir," said the Kid. "Some of the fellers think you're going to put it to the 'Ead, sir."

"To—to what? Oh! Certainly I intend to consult with Dr. Locke on that subject, Dury. I shall see the Head this evening, and shall mention it."

The Kid's lip quivered.

"If you wouldn't mind 'andling me yourself, sir," he said humbly, "I don't mind 'ow 'ard you lay it on, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I never meant to 'urt the bloke much, sir," said Dury earnestly. "I wouldn't 'ave touched him if I could 'ave 'elped it, as he told you hisself, sir. The 'Ead's been very kind to me, sir, and p'r'aps he would think as how I wasn't doing my best, if he was to 'ear complaints, sir. I don't mind taking anything as you give me, sir."

Mr. Quelch eyed the peculiar new junior very curiously.

"The matter is serious, Dury," he said. "I am well aware that you were provoked by Bolsover, and I should have punished him severely for his conduct had you not used him so very roughly already. You had every right to defend yourself. But you had no

right to inflict so severe an injury upon a Form-fellow; you could have defended yourself without that. I have made some inquiries on the matter, and it is obvious to me that Bolsover could not have hurt you at all, yet you allowed yourself to strike him in a way that has disfigured him for weeks. Such incidents cannot be allowed to occur at this school, and I will tell you frankly, Dury, that I intended to recommend Dr. Locke to send you away."

"Oh, sir!"

The distress in the Kid's face touched Mr. Quelch.

"If you care so much for the headmaster's good opinion, Dury—"

"I does, sir," said the Kid earnestly, "I wouldn't like 'im to think me ungrateful, arter all he's done. Jest because I 'elped him, as any covey would have done, when some tramps was robbing him, sir, he took me up, and put me 'ere in this school; and I give you my davy, sir, I was tryin' 'ard to play up. I promised the 'Ead that I wouldn't take any advantage, sir, of 'aving been a boxer in the ring, if there was any rowing. And I ain't, sir! Why, sir, if I'd give that bloke my left in earnest—" The Kid paused, and grinned faintly.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"But I knows, sir, as how you look at it, and I knows it won't do," said the Kid. "Some of the blokes jeer at a covey, 'cause he doesn't speak the same as other coveys. It gets a bloke's rag out."

"Oh!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

"But if you won't mention this 'ere to the 'Ead, sir, I'll do anything you like," said the Kid eagerly. "I'll never give a covey even a tap again, if you tell me not, sir."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips. Odd as this new fellow was, strangely out of place as he seemed in Mr. Quelch's Form at Greyfriars, there was something in his rough character that touched the Remove master. The Game Kid's faults were chiefly those of training, or want of training; his heart, after all, was in the right place, though his aspirates were not.

"I am very glad, Dury, to see that you respect Dr. Locke's opinion," said the Remove master at last. "If you really mean this, I shall certainly consider it my duty to give you another chance. If I can rely upon you never to allow such an incident to occur in the future, I think I need not mention this matter to Dr. Locke at all."

The Kid's face brightened wonderfully.

"Oh, sir! I'll do anything you say."

"I advise you, then, to keep out of all quarrels," said Mr. Quelch. "After what has occurred, it is extremely unlikely that any boy will willingly enter into a quarrel with you. If there is any more fighting, I cannot doubt that it will be your fault, Dury."

"There won't be any more, sir—I won't fight any bloke in the school, not if he pulls my nose, sir."

Mr. Quelch repressed a smile.

"Very well, Dury—I will take your word," he said. "The incident is now closed. You may go, my boy."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Kid went. He opened the Form-master's door to depart, and uttered a sharp exclamation as he fairly walked into a fat figure outside. Billy Bunter jumped back.

"Ow! Keep off!" he gasped.

"Listening at the keyhole, was you?" said the Kid in contempt. "That's a Greyfriars custom I've got to learn yet, I s'pose?"

"Bunter!" came Mr. Quelch's voice.



The door of Study No. 7 was unlocked and Billy Bunter blinked out cautiously at a crowd of laughing faces. "If you fellows think I'm afraid of that beastly bruiser Dury—" he began. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removees. "Oh, really, you fellows—" "Suppose he's only stepped into the next study and is just waiting for you to open the door," said Bob Cherry. "Oh, erkey!" gasped Bunter, and he bolted back into his study like a fat rabbit. (See Chapter 9.)

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Step into my study."

Billy Bunter rolled into the Form-master's study, in a state of great apprehension. His apprehensions intensified, as he saw that Mr. Quelch was selecting a cane.

"What were you doing outside my study door, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"I warn you to speak truthfully, Bunter."

"I—I wasn't listening, sir," gasped Bunter. "I wouldn't, you know. I—I had stopped to—to tie up my shoe-lace, sir. That—that's how Dury came to butt into me, sir."

"How dare you listen at my study door, Bunter?"

"I—I wasn't, sir—I mean, I didn't—I—I—I was only waiting to see Dury licked, sir," wailed Bunter. "I—I thought he had come here to be licked, sir! Oh, dear!"

Mr. Quelch understood at last.

"You fancied that Dury was here for punishment, Bunter, and you took a totally unwarrantable interest in the matter."

"I—I thought the beast was getting it hot, sir! I mean, I thought he was going to get it hot, sir. All the fellows would be glad to see him licked," mumbled Bunter.

"You are a young rascal, Bunter."

"I, sir!" ejaculated the Owl of the Remove. "You—you mean Dury, sir?"

"Bend over that chair, Bunter."

"Oh, dear!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Cease making those ridiculous noises at once, Bunter."

"Yow-ow! I—I mean, yes, sir!" gasped the fat junior, repressing the ridiculous noises with an effort. That hefty application of Mr. Quelch's cane to Bunter's tight trousers was a matter that it was difficult to pass over in silence!

"Now leave my study, Bunter."

"Oh, dear! Yes, sir!"

Billy Bunter limped away.

In the corridor he passed Richard Dury, who grinned at him.

"Had it 'ot?" he inquired.

"Ow! Ow!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said the Kid contemptuously. "Listening at a keyhole, by gum! If that's good enough for Greyfriars, it wouldn't 'ave been good enough for 'Uggins' Ring."

The Kid swung away—and several Remove fellows, who had heard his remark, exchanged rather uncomfortable looks.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "It hadn't occurred to me that Greyfriars didn't quite come up to the standard of Huggins' Ring, you men."

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"You fat rotter!"

"Oh, really, Squiff—"

"Letting the Form down, to that rank outsider," snapped Squiff. "You jolly well want kicking."

"Good egg!" said Bob. "Let's all kick together! Stand steady, Bunter—"

now, when I say three! One—two—Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was gone.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Temple!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE, of the Fourth Form, leaned back in his chair, and crossed one elegantly-trousered leg over the other. Upon the classic brow of Cecil Reginald was an unusual shade of thought. Dabney and Fry, his study-mates, observed it; but they did not inquire of Cecil Reginald what was working in his aristocratic brain. They were devoting their attention to tea in the study, and were not particularly interested in Cecil Reginald's cogitations, whatever they were.

But they had to have it, so to speak. As they did not inquire into Cecil Reginald's cogitations, Temple of the Fourth proceeded to enlighten them without inquiry.

"I think it's up to me," Temple remarked.

"Which?" asked Fry carelessly.

"Those Remove kids—" went on Temple.

"Oh, the Remove again!" said Fry, suppressing a yawn. "All right, old bean—we're going to beat them in the Form match—we're goin' to walk all over them at Soccer." And, under his breath, Edward Fry added: "Perhaps!"

"I wasn't goin' to talk about the footer, as it happens," said Cecil Reginald Temple calmly.

Fry did not say: "Thank goodness!" He only looked it.

"There's another matter," pursued Cecil Reginald, with the calm air of superiority that sometimes made his best friends desire to kick him, "I think it's up to me, as head of the Lower School."

"Oh!" said Fry.

"Although these cheeky Remove eads don't admit it, I suppose there's no question, in this study, that I am junior captain of the school?" said Temple, raising his eyebrows.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney loyally.

Fry devoted his attention to cake. He did not want an argument with Cecil Reginald on the subject of Cecil Reginald's lofty claims. After all, if Temple chose to call himself junior captain, where was the harm? He could have called himself the Great Panjandrums, if he had liked, and it would not have hurt anybody. So Fry gave Cecil Reginald his head.

"This term," went on Temple, in the same lofty strain, "we're certainly goin' to beat the Remove at footer. It's up to us to put those fags in their proper place in games. We beat them last term—"

"Hem!"

"What do you mean by 'hem' precisely, Fry?" asked Temple, with an icy look at his study-mate.

"Well, we don't beat them often, do we?" said Fry. "And on that occasion there were certain circumstances—"

"We beat them," said Temple calmly. "This term we're goin' to beat them more. But, as I said, it wasn't football I was goin' to speak of. You men may have heard that there's a new kid in the Remove."

"Prize-fighting chap," said Dabney.

"That's the man."

Fry regarded the captain of the Fourth rather curiously. All Greyfriars had, of course, heard of the peculiar new fellow in the Remove. But it would have been like Temple to affect ignorance on that point. Cecil Reginald generally adopted an attitude of lofty indifference towards Lower Forms, and might have been supposed to be almost completely ignorant of their existence. Fry wondered what was coming.

"I've noticed the young ruffian," went on Temple. "Commonplace-lookin' little boulder, named—named—now what is his name?"

Temple knew the name perfectly well; but his lofty attitude was coming to the fore. It was beneath his dignity to remember the name of a new kid in the Lower Fourth.

"Dury," suggested Fry.

"That's it—Dury, or Drury, or somethin'," assented Temple. "I don't usually take much notice of what goes on among the fags, as you know. But I hear that this new kid, Dooley, has caused no end of a rumpus in the Remove. There's a story that he was in the boxing ring before he came here—a rather steep story, but there may be somethin' in it, because he really seems, from what I hear, to have scared the fags badly. Nobody in the Remove seems able to stand up to him, and I hear that he swanks along the Remove passage like a giddy little tin god."

"He was a boxer right enough," said Fry. "I've heard that he licked Bol-sover major. There's talk about his punching a Fifth Form man—Coker, I believe."

Temple raised his eyebrows again.

"Gas, most likely," he remarked.

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"Anyhow, they seem to let him pretty severely alone in the Remove," said Fry. "Nobody wants the gloves on with him."

"Exactly. That's why I was thinkin' it was up to me."

"Eh?"

"As junior captain—"

"Oh dear!"

"What did you say, Fry?"

"I said 'Go on,' old chap," said Fry affably. "You're awfully interestin'."

"What's up to you as 'junior captain, besides lickin' the Remove at footer?"

"Puttin' that young ruffian in his place," said Temple calmly. "I'm not much given to scrappin'—rather below a fellow's dignity. But you men know that I can box a little, what?"

"A little," assented Fry.

"What?"

"I mean a lot," said Fry hastily.

"No end of a giddy boxer. But you're not going to box with young Dury, I suppose?"

"Just that!"

"Oh, my only Aunt Sempronia!" ejaculated Fry, staring at the captain of the Fourth in amazement and dismay.

"I don't want to hurt the kid, of course," said Temple magnanimously.

"Hurt him?" murmured Fry.

"Hurt that bruiser! Oh, my hat!"

"I don't want to hurt him—he's nothin' to me. But as head of the Lower School, I feel it's up to me to take a hand," said Temple, with negligent calmness.

"From what I hear, he seems to be terrifyin' the fags, and I feel that it's up to me to chip in."

Fry blinked at him. He had heard a great deal about the schoolboy boxer, and he hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry at the idea of the elegant Cecil Reginald standing up to the Game Kid's fists. How much would be left of Cecil Reginald, after one round, was quite a problem. But it was certain that what was left would have to be carried away to the school hospital.

Temple did not see it.

Cecil Reginald Temple never did see anything he did not want to see. He never could see that at football; he hadn't the remotest chance of beating the Remove, unless by some fluke. He could not see that his boxing, which was rather elegant than effective, did not make him a dangerous fighting-man. He had—or thought he had—a conviction that if he chose to exert himself, he could walk over any fighting-man in the Remove. There were many things that Cecil Reginald Temple could not see; but what he could see was, the glory that would accrue to him if he licked, and put in his place, the new fellow who was monarch of all he surveyed in the Remove, in the fistical line. After Temple had done that, the most rebellious Removite could not refuse to admit the great superiority of Cecil Reginald Temple.

True, he had not done it yet!

Unheeding the amazed dismay in the face of Edward Fry, the captain of the Fourth rose from his chair.

"If you men have finished tea we'll go and look for the kid," he said carelessly.

"Temple, old man"—Fry's voice was almost beseeching—"don't do it! For goodness' sake, old chap, don't play the goat to that extent! I tell you the kid is a boxer—"

"So am I," said Temple.

"But he's a bruiser—he's a holy terror—"

"What utter rot!" drawled Temple.

"He may have boxed in a booth—I dare say he has—but he will hardly be able to stand up to a Greyfriars man of

my standin'. I've said that it's up to me. I'm not goin' to hurt the kid—"

"Hurt him! Oh crumbs!"

"I'm going to lick him, really for his own good," said Temple. "There's no doubt that he's cheeky; and the fags have a right to expect a man in my position to protect them. Come on!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Temple, old man—" implored Fry.

Cecil Reginald Temple did not heed. He walked elegantly from the study; and his comrades followed him, Dabney rather doubtful, and Fry not doubtful at all.

The three Fourth-Formers walked along to the Rag.

"Dooley here?" asked Temple.

"Who the thump's Dooley?" asked Hazeldene of the Remove.

"That new kid—"

"If you mean Dury, he's not here. You'll find him in his study if you want him. What the thump do you want Dury for?"

"I'm goin' to lick him!"

Hazel stared for a moment, then burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Contemptuously indifferent to Hazel's merriment, Temple of the Fourth turned away, and his comrades followed him up to the Remove passage. Every junior in the Rag followed on, chuckling. They were quite keen to see the elegant Temple tackle the redoubtable Game Kid.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's on?" called out Bob Cherry as they arrived in the Remove quarters.

"Temple's comin' to lick Dury!" roared Hazeldene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cecil, old man—" breathed Fry.

"Cheese it, old chap!"

There was a general chortle along the Remove passage. Skinner threw open the door of Study No. 3.

"You're wanted, Dury!" he shouted.

The Game Kid was alone in the study. He was having his tea in solitude, Ogilvy and Russell keeping out. His face was clouded, and he gave Harold Skinner a far from amiable look.

"What's wanted?" he grunted.

"Chap lookin' for you," grinned Skinner. "It's a scrap."

"I'm not going to scrap!" growled the Kid.

"Man after your scalp!" yelled Snoop. "Come out, Dury! Here's Temple of the Fourth looking for you."

Temple, progressing majestically up the Remove passage, reached the open doorway of Study No. 3. He looked in at the Game Kid, who stared at him grimly.

"You're Dooley, what?" drawled Temple.

"I'm Dury!" growled the Game Kid.

"Step out into the passage, will you?"

"No, I won't! You 'ook it!"

Temple smiled genially.

"I'm not goin' to hurt you, Dooley," he said reassuringly.

"Urt me! You!" ejaculated the Kid.

"But you seem to have been puttin' on a lot of airs, and that won't do in a new kid in a fag Form," said Temple.

"I hear that you're a terrific fightin' man. Well, come out into the passage and let's see. I warn you that if you don't come I shall come in to you."

Harry Wharton arrived on the scene.

"Chuck this, Temple!" he said tersely.

(Continued on page 23.)

THE MASKED RIDERS! Although he has been rescued from the hands of a gang of murderous gunmen Ferrers Locke discovers that his masked "rescuers" are the emissaries of the mysterious Wolf! And this means that a worse fate awaits him!

The MYSTERY of FLYING V RANCH!



A Powerful New Story of Wild West and Detective Adventure.

The End of the Fight!

AN hour dragged by, and Ferrers Locke kept a solitary vigil in the outer room. From the rear came the almost incessant bark of revolver fire. The attackers had left but few across the street and had concentrated on the rear. Suddenly Jonas dashed into the room. One glance at his face told Ferrers Locke that something was amiss.

"They've set the building on fire!" snapped the lawyer. "There's a blank wall which we could not cover with our fire. They've piled straw against it. We're trapped!"

As Jonas spoke the detective was conscious of a pungent smell and a faint crackling which was not gun fire. He knew that any attempt to sally forth into the open would be met with a fusillade of bullets.

"Looks like a case of being either burned to death or being shot!" he remarked grimly.

"The relief party cannot possibly get here in time," said Jonas. "Can you suggest anything?"

"Yes," replied Ferrers Locke steadily. "We'll stay here till we're forced out by the fire, then we'll finish it in the street."

"H'm! We have not an earthly chance!"

"No. I agree with you there."

The fire increased in volume till its roar could be plainly heard in the outer office. Caister, with Jack, clumped into the room. Ferrers Locke noted that the rancher was very pale.

"We're right up against it, Mr. Henderson!" drawled the latter.

The detective nodded.

"Shall we wait or do you prefer to walk out now?" he asked.

"No chance of locking ourselves in the gaol?"

"None at all. We'd be roasted to death!"

"Th' skunks have stopped shooting," went on Caister. He glanced out through the shattered glass of the window and added: "Gosh snakes, th' whole crowd's c'lected in front here!"

"Yes, waiting for 'us to come out,"

remarked Ferrers Locke. "Well, gentlemen, which is it going to be? Do we walk out now or wait till we're driven out by the heat?"

Already the room was becoming unpleasantly hot and swirls of blinding smoke were drifting in.

"Us'll follow you, sheriff," said Caister. "Reckon that goes, gents!"

"Yes," agreed Jonas and Jack.

"Well, I think we cannot do better than to walk out now," replied the detective grimly. "The relief party cannot be here for hours yet, so as it's death

either way I think we'd better show those fellows that we aren't scared of it."

"We'll at least drop with our guns in our hands," asserted the little lawyer valiantly.

Caister glanced again out of the window.

"Yessir! We'll sure drop! Ev'ry blamed cuss has his gun trained on th' door!" he said tersely.

He broke off in a fit of coughing as the swirling smoke eddied with renewed intensity.

"Well, gentlemen, it's little use waiting," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "Caister, I would like a word with you alone."

Caister glanced at him sharply.

"Sure!" he agreed.

The detective moved away from the window and the big rancher followed.

"Guess I know what you want, Mr. Henderson," he said, an eager note in his voice. "You said this morning that you'd get th' Wolf in a week. You're gonna tell me who that hombre is, hey? Reckon us goes west and he lives. Mighty tough endin', Mr. Henderson!"

"I cannot tell you who the Wolf is, Caister," replied Ferrers Locke. "I can but tell you my theory as to his identity."

"Waal, I'm sure listenin', Mr. Henderson. Fire right ahead!"

The detective smiled grimly.

"It is only the nearness to certain death that makes me speak," he said. "Otherwise I would have preferred to have gradually forged the links in the chain of evidence which would have brought this monster to justice, before the ranchers' court!"

Caister nodded quickly.

"Yes, sheriff. I get that!" he said eagerly. "But his name? Tell me th' name of th' coyote!"

Before the detective could reply there came a startled shout from the little lawyer who was squinting through the window.

"Gosh snakes!" he cried. "Hyar! Look hyar!"

Ferrers Locke sprang for the window.

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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous Baker Street detective, and his clever young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, take up quarters in Texas to investigate the mysterious raids made upon the cattle ranches in the neighbourhood of Wolf Point. A card bearing a wolf's head, with bared fangs, left at the scene of each outrage, is the only clue the detective has to work on. He has hardly been at Wolf Point five minutes, however, before an attempt is made on his life.

MAT DUKE, the sheriff, saves the situation, but in so doing is himself fatally shot by a person unknown. Following a second attempt on the detective's life, Drake rushes in with the news that the Wolf is raiding the Flying V outfit. Locke and the other ranchers hasten to the scene only to find the Wolf has fled, leaving many casualties. At the instigation of

SILAS CAISTER and two other wealthy ranchers, Locke is asked to take on the job of Sheriff of Wolf Point. This he does under the assumed name of **HENDERSON**. Before very long, however, his attention is brought to the fact that a shooting affray has taken place at the Silver Dollar Saloon, a gambling den run by **MONTY EARL**, and that an attempt has been made upon the life of

KID, one of the Flying V hands. The sheriff ascertains the facts and arrests **KILLER KLAUSTER**, whom he imprisons. Fearing certain information might leak out, Earl visits the gaol with a proposition to put before the new sheriff. The conversation is interrupted, however, by the sudden appearance of the Wolf, who shoots Earl. The sheriff is accused of the murder, and in consequence is forced to barricade his rooms against an attack by a mob of gunmen led by

PANZALES, Earl's secretary and manager.

(Now read on.)

The gang of gunmen outside were scattering in a frenzied dash for cover. There was nothing to account for their action, but the detective dived for the door.

"Come on!" he snapped. "This is our one chance!"

He wrenched it open and stepped outside, followed by Jonas, Caister, and Jack. He glanced up the street, then stiffened.

Tearing grimly towards them at full gallop was a party of men. They rode in silence, their guns in their hands. In front of them rode a tall man on a big-boned, bay horse. But what riveted Locke's attention was that every man was masked. A thought sprang into his mind, and simultaneously Caister voiced it.

"The Wolf!" he whispered huskily. "The Wolf!"

A rattle of firing broke out from the houses opposite as the masked party swept past. The latter returned it with vigour, but kept on, save for two who reeled in their saddles and dropped to the ground, to be dragged a few yards by the stirrups.

Then, with one accord, they reined in their horses in front of Ferrers Locke and his companions.

"We want th' sheriff!" said the leader harshly.

"Yes," replied the detective steadily.

"Come easy, wi'out drawin' a gun, and yore pards go free. Us drills th' fore of yuh at th' fust move!"

Ferrers Locke knew that resistance was hopeless. The crackling, burning building was behind him. An armed party of more than a dozen men were in front of him, and, emerging slowly from cover and watching the scene curiously, were Panzales' toughs.

"I'll come with you!" he said quietly.

"No!" shouted Jack, springing forward. "No!"

"Leave this to me, my lad!" said Ferrers Locke sternly. "It is the only way!"

"But, sir! You're going to your death!"

"He shore is!" grunted the masked leader savagely. "A bullet's too good for him, cuss him fer an interfering dawg!"

One of his men had got hold of the reins of one of the riderless horses.

"Put up yore gun, sheriff, an' git up on that there hoss!" commanded the leader.

Caister stood biting his nails in impotent fury. Jonas was pale, but he kept his hand away from his gun holster.

"Steady, lad!" he murmured to Jack. "Leave sheriff alone!"

Slowly Ferrers Locke stepped forward, every gun covering him. Slowly, deliberately he hoisted himself into the saddle of the waiting horse. One of the masked men leant forward and tied his hands securely behind his back.

"Now, git Panzales!" gritted the leader. "These two skunks die t'gether! They'll die slow!"

The Threat!

At the word of command half a dozen of the masked gang wheeled their horses and moved across the street towards Panzales' men.

"We want Panzales!" snapped one of them gruffly.

"He ain't hyar! He lit out soon's he seed yuh comin'!" growled one of the gunmen.

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"Is thasso? Waal, get this! If any of yuh coyotes starts a-gunnin', us'll clean up th' town!"

Jack was watching the scene in astonishment. The masked gang were heavily outnumbered, yet Panzales' men made no effort to shoot them down.

"Them fellers is scared of the Wolf and what he stands fer!" grunted Caister in a low voice. "Reckon they don't know jest what he has behind him. That skunk ses as how they'll clean up th' town. I'm figgerin' he could 'most do it, and them hombres knows it!"

He relapsed into silence as the masked leader shouted:

"S'arch them buildin's! If he ain't thar, then git right after him! Bring him in!"

Jack was torn between a desire to risk a shot at the leader and his own common sense which whispered prudence. He knew that, even should his shot be successful, it would be followed the next instant by the deaths of himself, Caister, and Jonas. It could not help Locke, either, in any way. He caught the detective's eye, and the latter cast him a reassuring look.

"Caister!" barked the leader harshly. "Reckon I said long ago thet some day I would git yuh! I'm lettin' yuh go free jest now 'cos I kin come fer yuh when I'm ready! As fer th' kid an' that shrimp of a lawyer, guess they jest don't amount to nuthin'! Caister, I'm aimin' to give yuh one chance! Git out o' th' cattle country, and take them snivellin' skunks, Peters an' Jefferson, wi' yuh! I'll giv' yuh jest twelve hours. If you ain't quit by then, by gosh, you'll croak!"

"Git thet? I means it! Yuh talked big about th' law, Caister. Waal, this is th' on'y law what'll rule in Wolf Point—masked law! Lynch law, th' law what acts wi' guns, and ropes wi' runnin' nooses! Yuh cain't beat me, Caister, an' yore dandy Britisher sheriff is gonna realise thet in a mighty painful way!"

He broke off as, from one of the wooden buildings, his searchers appeared, dragging a screaming, terrified Panzales.

"Let me go!" shrieked the Mexican. "Let me go! Sacramento! Let me go!"

He threw himself on his knees in the dust at the feet of the leader's horse.

"I'll run with you!" he screamed. "Wolf, Wolf, I'll run with you! It was not me! It was Earl's scheme! I tell you it was not me! He said—"

"Stop yore tongue, weevil, or, by cripes, I'll cut it out!" snapped the leader harshly. "I'm wise to yuh, yuh sneakin', thievin' desert rat! Earl got his las' night! Yo're gonna uncover this hyar mail coach hold-up loot, an' then, by gosh, yo're gonna die 'long wi' th' Britisher!"

He jerked out an order. In a moment the howling Mexican's mouth was gagged by a dirty handkerchief. He was hoisted to the back of the other riderless horse. Two men picked up the bodies of the dead raiders, and laid them across the front of their saddles.

"Remember Caister! Jest twelve hours!" the leader snarled. "Git out, an' yuh'll live! Stop, an' yuh'll die!"

He turned to the crowd of gunmen and barked:

"Remember, Caister is my meat! Any of you skunks aimin' to still carry on this hyar fight, what I interrupted, he'd shore better think again!"

With that, he wheeled his horse. The next moment the masked gang were galloping up the streets towards the

open country. And in their midst, a close prisoner, rode Ferrers Locke.

On the Trail!

"WAAAL," drawled Caister, turning to the lawyer, "I reckons us can get a plumb cooler spot than this! The blamed building's gonna fall in any minute!"

The flames had now reached the outer office, and, even as he spoke, the roof fell in, sending a cloud of sparks swirling skywards.

"What are we going to do?" demanded Jack urgently. "We've got to rescue him!"

"Yes," chipped in the little lawyer, "we'll ride out and meet the Flying V boys, or some of your boys, Caister. They should be on their way by now."

"Suro!" nodded Caister. He turned to the disgruntled gunmen and snapped: "Waal, you 'lowed yourselves to be led by th' nose by a feller like Panzales! Much good it's done you! That Wolf's a skunk, but, by heck, he's more'n a man than the whole b'iling of you put t'gether!"

Bereft of their leader, the mob did not know how to act. If one of them had had the nerve to have pulled a gun, then Jack, Caister, and Jonas would have enjoyed extremely short shrift. But Caister's undoubted personality dominated them for the moment, and they contented themselves with glaring at him in surly silence.

"Come on!" continued the rancher to Jack and the lawyer. "Us'll hike along to Smither's stable an' get three cayuses!"

Without interference from the others, they set off quickly down the street towards the stables. Ten minutes later, having commandeered three horses from the deserted stables, they were riding at full gallop towards the Flying V.

"Shouldn't one of us attempt to trail this gang?" suggested Jack, as they cleared the straggling buildings and emerged on open country.

"No, son!" snapped Caister decisively. "That feller'll sure leave a few of his men back 'long his trail! He'll reckon on us followin' him, and if us does, without a posse, it'll on'y mean a bullet through yore head from ambush."

"I'll risk that!" said Jack grimly.

Caister looked at him and smiled.

"Yes, I guess you would, son!" he drawled. "But I reckons I knows more'n you about this game, an' I guess I'm kinda responsible for you now! Say, you ain't gotta chance in a thousand of gettin' near that hombre. Nope! You wait for a posse."

With rebellion in his heart, Jack rode onwards. Half an hour later a swirling cloud of dust marked the approach of a body of horsemen. They came rapidly nearer, and Jack recognised the wiry figure of Spud, riding grimly ahead of the others.

They dashed up and reined in their mounts.

"Yo're safe!" snapped Spud, then added quickly: "Where's sheriff?"

"The Wolf's got him!" replied Jack. In a few brief, clipped sentences he told what had happened.

"Gosh!" breathed Spud. "Ol' Smithers reached us nigh all in! Alf made fer th' Caister ranch! Say, let's get on! Which way them hombres headin'?"

"Towards th' hills!" snapped Caister. "You pushin' on?"

"Yep! Reckon yuh best get yo're lads, Caister, an' come arunnin'! Us'll pick up th' trail where us can!"



"Put up yore gun, sheriff, an' git up on that there boss!" commanded the masked leader. Slowly Ferrers Locke stepped forward, every gun covering him. (See page 24.)

He jerked out a word to the dozen cowboys who were with him, and, clapping spurs in their horses, they shot off, heading towards the distant, low-lying range of hills.

Jack wheeled his horse and started after them.

"Kid, where're you going?" shouted Caister.

"I'm going with them!" replied Jack grimly.

Caister turned to the little lawyer with a grin.

"Reckon there's sound stuff in that lad!" he remarked. "He's hed a real bad time yet he's still game!"

"Yes!" assented Jonas. "He's true blue, that kid. Say, you and me parts here! I'm an old man, and I'm pushing on to the Flying V! I'm about all in!"

"You do jest that, Jonas," assented Caister sympathetically. "I'll get in touch with my fellers and us'll follow Spud."

"What about you're twelve hours to quit?"

"I'm stickin'!" replied Caister sternly. "He don't scare me!"

The Wolves' Lair!

WHEN Ferrers Locke's captors were a quarter of a mile out of Wolf Point they halted their horses and both the detective and Panzales were blindfolded. Then, the prisoners' mounts being guided by

lead reins in the hands of two of the gang, the party swept onwards at full gallop.

For hours they rode, and the detective sensed that dusk was deepening into night. His horse continually stumbled and the pace had slackened appreciably. It was not difficult to tell that they were passing over hard, rough ground, and steadily climbing.

They rode in silence save for an occasional grunted remark from one man to another. On they pressed, and more than once Ferrers Locke reeled in the saddle through sheer weariness and exhaustion.

He knew that somewhere behind Jack would be following with the Flying V outfit, but even if the trail were visible on the hard ground it would be impossible to follow it after dusk.

If the leader intended pushing on all through the night then the Flying V outfit would be at least six hours behind when dawn came.

For what seemed an interminable age Ferrers Locke rode on, swaying and jolting in the saddle. The thongs which bound his wrists were cutting into the flesh. Then, with a tingle of anticipation, he heard the voice of the leader rasp out the word:

"Dismount!"

His horse was reined in and he was pulled from the saddle. The bandage was roughly removed from his eyes. The gang had halted in a stony, dry

water course. On each side towered up into the night the rugged walls of the draw, and above them, in a cloudless sky, swung a brilliant moon.

"Light a fire, boss?" drawled one of the men, whilst the rest tethered their horses as best they could.

"Nope, fool! Us'll feed cold an' dross down for'n hour!" snarled the leader.

He crossed to where Ferrers Locke stood and surveyed him grimly from behind his mask.

"So!" he said softly. "Reckon yo're plumb up 'gainst it, Mister Ferrers Henderson Locke!"

"Is that so?" drawled the detective coolly. "I'll admit it looks like your call!"

"Yep! An' I'm dealin' th' cyard o' death! Kin yuh beat it?"

"I'll say so!"

The masked man stared at him in silence, then he said gratingly:

"Gosh, whata tough guy yuh'd hev made! Yuh've gotten a pretty nerve, Slick Henderson!"

"Slick?" repeated Ferrers Locke questioningly.

The other laughed harshly.

"Yep, I said it! Reckon them coyotes way back in Wolf Point shore tacked that onta yore fake name after yuh beat Klauster to th' draw! Say, where is Klauster?"

"He's dead!"

"Geo! Waal, I ain't sheddin' no tears, Slick Henderson, fer he warn't

no pal o' mine, cuss him fer a sneak-in', flea-bitten dawg!"

"You're a fool!" said the detective tersely. "He died a death you'll never die!"

Smack!

The masked man struck him full across the mouth with his hand, and snarled:

"What yuh mean?"

"I mean he died like a man!" snapped Ferrers Locke.

"Meanin'?"

"Oh, nothing! Get on with the business and cut the cackle!"

The detective was most certainly not going to satisfy the fellow's curiosity as to the manner of Klauster's death.

"Yep! I'll shore cut th' cackle, mister!" snarled the leader. "Yo're gonna die, but us'll try Panzales fust, jest to let yuh ses that it ain't no pleasant death! I'll laff to see yuh squirm when that skunk hollers!"

He stalked away to where Panzales was crouching by his horse.

"Waal, yuh yaller-livered greaser!" was his greeting. "Whar did Earl cache that thar loot what yuh and him got in th' mail hold-up?"

A crafty look sprang into the Mexican's eyes.

"I'll tell you," he babbled eagerly, "but I make a bargain!"

The other laughed harshly.

"Fergit it!" he snapped. "Yo're shore makin' no bargains, greaser! If yuh don't come across right now, by heck, I'll cut yore blamed tongue right out! Get this! A rotten sack of mails or two don't cut no ice wi' me! Tell now, or I'll cut yore blamed tongue out!"

He pulled a long hunting knife from a sheath at his belt, and one or two of his gang drifted idly near to watch the sport.

"I'll tell!" howled Panzales. "I'll tell, Wolf! I run with you, hev? You take me in? You'll do that? I'll speak right now, but you'll let me in with your crowd! Earl was no good! He was——"

"Shet right up!" growled the leader. "Whar yuh cache that loot?"

"In a draw about one hundred yards up Pinto Creek!" babbled the Mexican. "You'll find it there! You can't mistake the spot. It's five yards beyond a fallen, dead tree!"

"Shore?"

"Yes, yes! I swear it!"

"H'm! Guess yo're in sich a scare yo're tellin' th' truth!"

"I am! I swear I am!"

The leader nodded and surveyed Panzales in silence for a moment. Then he said softly:

"Waal, it shore don't signify either way. If she's thar, that's dandy! If she ain't, waal, yuh won't mind! Nossir, it'll not worry yuh none!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean's yore hittin' th' trail fer th' great divide, greaser! Yore snivellin', snake's soul's shore gonna say a blamed long farewell to yore yaller-livered body!"

At a signal from him two of the men stepped forward and seized the Mexican. Two others grabbed Ferrers Locke, and he and Panzales were hurried into the shadows of the wall of the valley.

The leader lit a shaded hurricane lamp, and, with a heave of his shoulder, rolled aside a boulder, which Locke saw had completely hidden the narrow mouth of a cave. He and Panzales were thrust into the aperture, the leader stumbling on in front.

A foul, fetid odour drifted from the farther recesses of the cave, and Ferrers Locke's lips set grimly. Then from somewhere, seemingly in the bowels of the earth, rose a long-drawn howl.

Panzales struggled desperately, but his captors urged him remorselessly onwards. Again came the wail. It rose to a shrill, high-pitched note, then died sobbingly away.

A turn in the cave brought the fetid smell with almost overpowering strength, and, peering ahead, Ferrers Locke saw that the masked leader had come to a

halt by what, dimly seen in the light of the hurricane lamp, looked like some stout hurdling let into the wall.

"Waal, guess yuh've shore gotten a welcome!" drawled the man, as Ferrers Locke and Panzales were brought to a standstill in front of him. "Yessir, they've shore smelt th' greaser!"

Something crashed violently against the other side of the stout fencing, which the detective was able to see had been constructed to shut off a recess, of unknown dimensions, in the side of the cave.

"What do you mean, curse you?" screamed Panzales. "What is that? What is behind there?"

"The wolf, Panzales!" laughed the other. "Least I'm aimin' to say thar's two of 'em! Us lost one t'other night! Slick Henderson, hyar, can mebbe's say jest how it happened, but reckon that pore brute's gonna be shore revenged t'night!"

He paused, then resumed icily:

"Panzales, yore gonna dio right now! Yuh an' Earl reckoned to pull a few hold-ups an' shootin's in th' dark an' lay that it shore was th' Wolf! Pore fools! Reckon us was wise to that game! Say, us has ears ev'rywhar, an' our fangs is blamed long! Reckon yuh've larn'd that too late now, Panzales! Waal, I'm gonna giv' yuh a chanst! I'm gonna giv' yuh a knife, an' I'm gonna put yuh behind that thar fence! Thar's a couple of real blamed hungry wolves thar! Jest see how long yuh can keep 'em from tearing yore throat out a yuh!"

"You devil!" shrieked Panzales.

He got no further. A hand was clapped over his mouth, and another one severed the bonds of his wrists. One of the men stood by a little wicket door, braced heavily with iron. Panzales was pushed towards it. From behind the fencing came deep-throated snarls. Then the wicket gate was whipped open. A knife was thrust into Panzales' nerveless hand. A quick push and the gate slammed shut behind him. The whole

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incident had happened with incredible swiftness. Panzales was in the lair of the wolves.

Ferrers Locke, pale-faced, tight-lipped, stood silent. He could do nothing. His hands were still bound tightly behind him. To his ears there came a wicked, hideous snarling. Then a long-drawn shriek of agony and terror. Suddenly, on a high note, it choked and was still.

"He ain't lasted long!" gritted the masked leader. "Let 'em tear him, then it's yore turn, Slick Henderson!"

He paused, then hissed: "Hark at 'em! Hark at th' fang of the wolf crunchin' th' bones of that yaller greaser! The Wolf's fang strikes an' kills, Slick Henderson!"

"Yes," replied Ferrers Locke quietly, "so it seems! But even a wolf's fangs can be drawn!"

"Waal, reckon yuh won't live to see it!" snarled the other. "An' thar ain't no man livin' what'll draw th' fangs of this hyar Wolf of Texas! Lemme jest tell yuh that! Yore goin' in behind that fence! Right now, mister!"

The detective nodded, although every muscle in his body tensed.

"Better let me go in with my hands tied!" he taunted. "You'll feel safer then!"

"Naw! Yore blamed nerve shore gives you some mighty high falutin' ideas!" snarled the leader. "Yuh goes in same as Panzales, wi' yore hands untied!"

Ferrers Locke's heart thrilled exultantly as he realised that his bluff had succeeded.

"Git me right," went on the other. "Tain't no chance of life I'm figgerin' on handin' yuh! It's jest to sorta prolong th' agony as th' school books hev it! Git me?"

"I get you exactly!" replied the detective politely. "Your candid remarks are a real pleasure to listen to after the hypocritical stuff I've heard in Wolf Point!"

"Yuh talks fine and dandy!" sneered the other. "Guess I'm real sorry I cain't sit around lis'enin' all night! It shore would be mighty improvin'!"

"You've said it," drawled Ferrers Locke. "But come on! Guess I'd rather face a wolf than talk to a skunk!"

The leader's breath whistled in through his clenched teeth, and he took a menacing step forward.

"Meanin' me?" he gritted. "Yes! But I'm sorry! I shouldn't have called you a skunk! It's a mighty big insult to the skunk!" drawled Ferrers Locke.

One of the men laughed rumblingly, and with a shout of rage the leader wheeled on him.

"Laff, yuh coyote, an', by cripes, yuh'll swing!" he bellowed. "Put this blamed Britisher t'other side of that fence! Us'll see how long his cussed sass'll stand in thar!"

Ferrers Locke was seized and propelled towards the little wicket gate. His body relaxed and he stood limply whilst a knife sawed at his thongs. But his fists were pressed close together, his wrists straining outwards. He felt the thongs part, and the knife was thrust into his hand. The man, standing at the gate, swung it open.

(In spite of the danger Ferrers Locke is prepared to face his terrible ordeal unflinchingly. Make no mistake about reading next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful detective story by ordering your MAGNET well in advance.)

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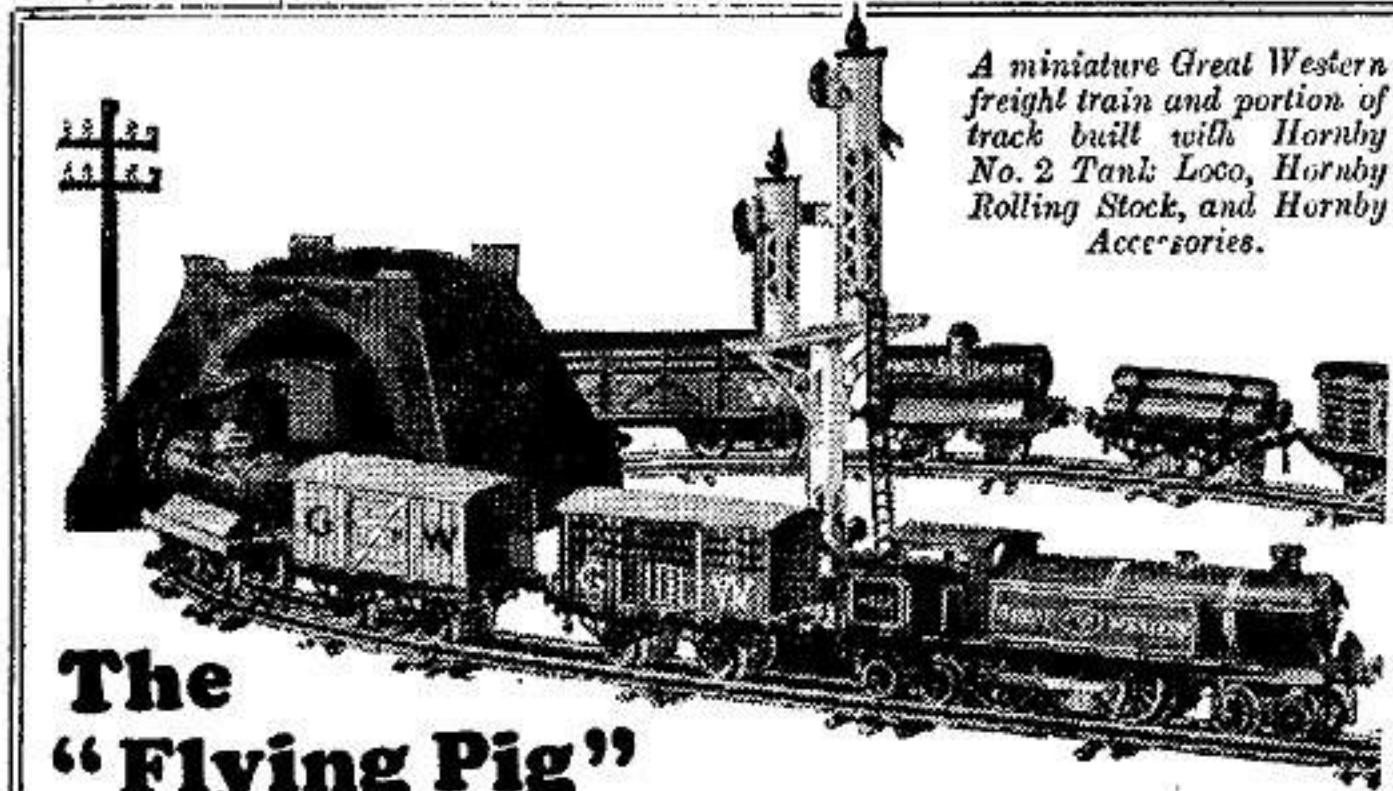
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HORNBY TRAINS

"THE BRUISER OF THE REMOVE!"

(Continued from page 22.)

"Mind your own bizney, dear man," said Temple calmly. "I'm goin' to lick that cheeky kid."

Wharton laughed impatiently.

"Don't be an ass! You couldn't lick one of his little fingers. You'd fall down dead if he hit you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cecil Reginald Temple flushed.

"The kid may terrify you Remove men," he said sarcastically. "In fact, that's why I'm goin' to lick him—I think it's up to me. I'm not goin' to hurt him—only put the cheeky little beggar in his place."

"You silly ass!"

"That's enough! Are you comin' out, Dooley?"

"No, I ain't!" growled the Kid. "You 'op it while you're safe."

"Then I'll come in."

And the captain of the Fourth walked into Study No. 3.

The Remove fellows looked on breathlessly. Temple of the Fourth, though he was quite unaware of it, might almost as well have walked into a lion's cage to defy the lion. Dabney looked very serious, and Fry almost groaned. But Cecil Reginald did not seem troubled by doubts. Still less was he troubled by doubts when the Game Kid backed away round the study table.

"Gloves or knuckles, dear man," asked Temple.

"You silly idjit—"

"I'm waitin' for you."

The Game Kid eyed him as a half-tamed wolfhound might have eyed a cheeky Pom. But he did not clench his hands, and as Temple followed him round the study table, he backed off

again. The Remove fellows crammed the doorway stared in amazement. That the fellow who had handled Coker of the Fifth could be funky of the elegant Fourth-Former seemed impossible. But certainly it looked like it.

On the Game Kid's mind was the promise he had made to Mr. Quelch—the knowledge that if he damaged another Greyfriars fellow as he had damaged Bolsover major, the gates of Greyfriars would close behind him. He had promised his Form master that he would not fight any "bloke" in the school. Certainly neither he nor his Form master had supposed that any bloke would come hunting for trouble like this. But there it was! The Game Kid, with all his faults, was the slave of his word.

He backed round the table again, his rugged face growing redder and redder, his eyes glinting under his knitted brows.

Temple of the Fourth followed him up, under the astonished stares of the Removites.

"Here we go round the mulberry bush!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Dury, are you goin' to stand your ground and put up your hands, or not?" demanded Temple.

"No, I ain't!"

"I'm not goin' to hurt you, you young ass!"

"Oh, you're a fool, you are," said the Kid, "but I ain't goin' to touch you! 'Op it!"

Temple of the Fourth grasped the table, and jerked it aside. Then he closed in on the Game Kid. Dury backed into a corner of the study under the amazed stares of the crowd at the doorway.

"Now, you young sweep—" said Temple.

"'Ands off!" roared the Kid.

Tap!

It was quite a light tap on the Kid's nose. Temple, as he had magnanimously declared, did not want to hurt him. But the Remove fellows caught their breath, expecting to see Temple hurled across the study by one drive of the Kid's terrible left.

But it did not happen.

The Game Kid gasped for breath—a tremble of rage ran through him, but he did not lift a hand.

Temple stepped back, smiling.

"That will do," he drawled. "Come on, you men—we're wastin' time here."

Temple of the Fourth walked down the Remove passage between Fry and Dabney, who regarded him with great admiration. Temple had triumphed—and great was his triumph. The Game Kid slammed his door, shutting out the amazed, buzzing crowd of Removites. Cecil Reginald Temple strolled away, his lofty nose in the air.

"Who'd have thought it?" gasped Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

Cecil Reginald Temple smiled the superior smile of the fellow who knew!

"I thought it!" he said calmly.

That evening Cecil Reginald Temple was a great man in the Fourth Form. Even the doubting Fry had to admit what a great man he was. And the Removites could only wonder.

THE END.

(Temple may crow, but the Game Kid, with all his faults, is a slave of his word! He has pledged himself not to fight, and he is determined to keep his promise. Be sure you read: "Bound By Honour!" the next story in this splendid series by Frank Richards.)

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Or Did in the Foot!

An Amusing Story of Jack Jolly, Merry, and Bright, the Chery Chums of St. Sam's.

JACK JOLLY sat in his study, with a thoughtful expression on his face and a leaky fountain-pen in his fist. There was a blob of ink on his nose, and a smudge on each cheek. On the table in front of him was a list of names. There were ten names in all, and an eleventh remained to be added, to complete the St. Sam's eleven for the next match—an "away" fixture with Greyfriars.

Jack Jolly lingered long over the last name. He was on the horns of a dilemma. There were two candidates for the last place—Jack's chum Merry, and a fellow named Fowler, who had come on by leaps and bounds as a footballer. He was such a brilliant ankle-tapper, and so smart at fowling an opponent when the referee's back was turned, that Jack Jolly was reluctant to leave him out.

As for Merry, he had always played in the eleven up till now. But his form in recent matches had been simply awful. He hadn't been able to put a foot right, and his shooting had been awfully feeble. Moreover, he seemed to have forgotten the art of fowling an opponent cleanly and cleverly.

Jack Jolly was torn between duty and friendship. Merry was his boozum pal; Fowler was a fellow whom he regarded with scorn and despision. Personal likes and dislikes, however, ought never to way with a football captain; and Jack Jolly knew it. His duty was to pick the best player, whatever weather they were friends or foes. Sanity must not be allowed to enter into it at all.

And so, after a fierce mental conflict, Jack Jolly made up his mind to do the square thing. And Fowler's name went down on the list as the eleventh man.

"That's that!" said Jack Jolly, blotting the list with his coat-sleeve. "Merry won't like being left out; but there it is. What I have wrote, I have wrote!"

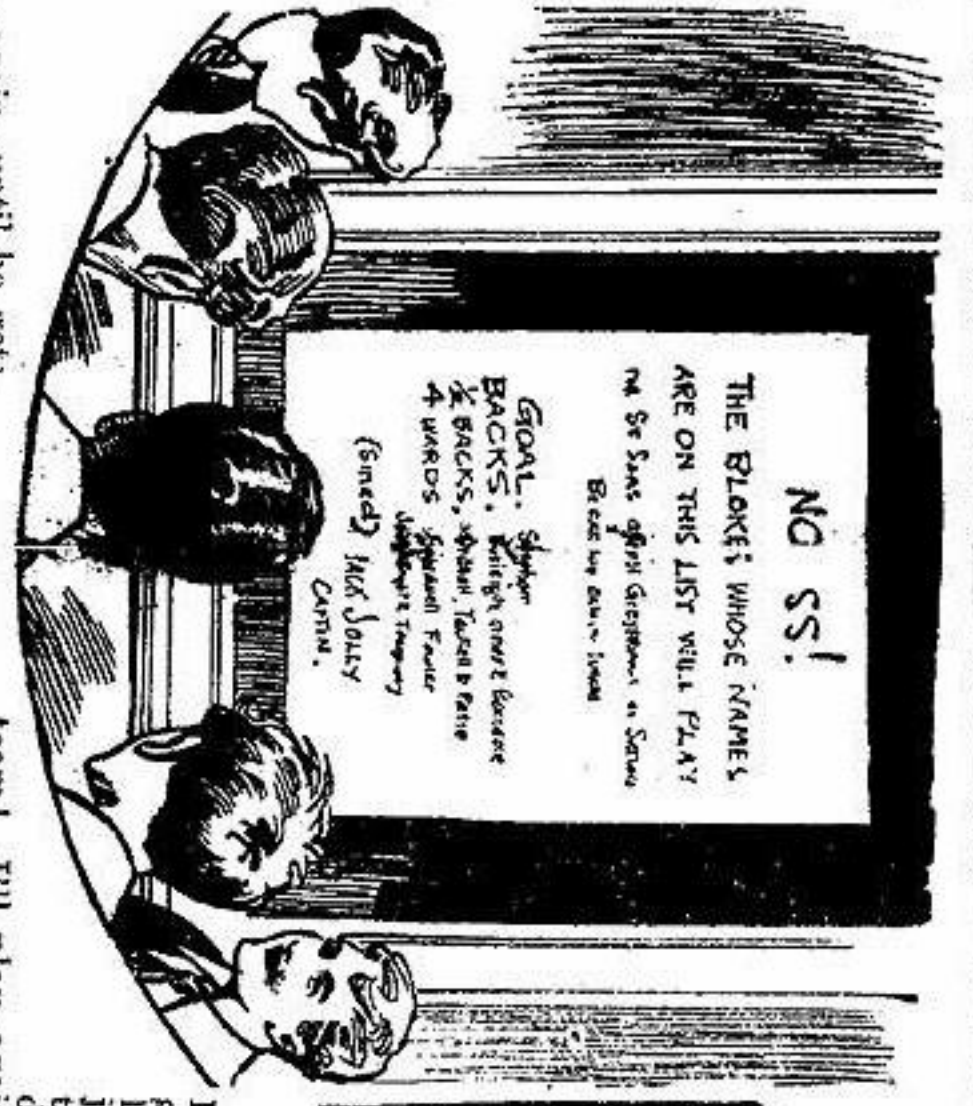
So saying, Jack Jolly rose to his feet, and made his way to the hall, where he placed the list on the notiss-board, for all the world to see. Then, with a sigh, he went back to his study.

Merry and Bright, coming in a few minutes later from a game of leap-frog in the quad, saw a crowd of fellows gathered round the notiss-board.

"Hallo! What's up?" asked Bright.

"It's only the team for the Greyfriars match," said Merry. "We shall be in it, as usual."

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"Of course! Still, I'd like to have a look at the team."

The two chums strolled up to the notiss-board, elbowing their school-fellows aside, so as to get a close scrutiny.

The blokes whose names are on this here list will play for St. Sam's against Greyfriars on Saturday. Break leaves directly after lunch: Backs, Burleigh minor and Barnard; 4-backs, Dribbell, Tackell, and Passe; 4-forwards, Speedwell, Fowler, Jolly, Bright, and Yearaway. (Signed) Jack Jolly, Captain.

Jack Jolly was seated on the coal-skuttle, looking very worried and uncomfortable. He had done what he thought right; he had put duty before friendship; he had mustered the best eleven he could get together, without fear or favor. But he could tell, from the egged way that Merry rushed into the study, that there were brakers ahead.

"Jack Jolly!" Merry's voice was tense with commotion. "I've just seen the list of players for the Greyfriars match. Where do I come in?"

"You don't," said Jack Jolly shortly.

"You stay out!"

"But—but I've always played at outside-left!"

"And now you must play at being left outside!" said Jack Jolly. "I'm sorry, old chap, but you must admit that your form has been awfully feeble lately!"

"I didn't want to drop you," went on Jack Jolly. "I know how it hurts a fellow when he gets dropped. On current form Fowler is a better man than you."

Merry's eyes blazed.

"I have done the right thing," continued Jack Jolly, "and I hope you will take it like a sportsman, and not dash your teeth and tare your hair."

Merry's eyes were on fire.

"You rotter!" he cried, his voice horse with rage. "Is this how you treat your best pal—a fellow who has stood by you through thick and thin, through ruff and smooth, through fair and foul?"

Jack Jolly jumped up from the coal-skuttle.

"Who are you calling a rotter?" he demanded.

All that Jack Jolly had to do was to scoop Merry's passes and tap the ball into the gaping net.



Dicky Nugent.

The Breach between Jack Jolly and Merry had grown wider and wider, and now, in the sunny quadrangle, they came face to face.

The next minute, Jack Jolly's study was the scene of a wild and whirling scrap. Jack Jolly was furious with Merry, and Merry was furious with Jack Jolly, and Bright was furious with each other of them. So they all set about the pair of them. The table heeled over like a ship in distress; the chairs went flying; and the ornaments were swept off the mantelpiece. And the three fellows who had been such fast friends were at death-grips on the floor, their arms going like windmills, and their legs thrashing the air.

Such was the scene of pieces and tranquility which greeted the gaze of Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, when he burst into the study.

"My boys," cried the Form master, "what is the meaning of this wild hoarse-play? Sort yourselves out at once, and follo me to my study!"

The three juniors scrambled to their feet, exchanging glances of mutual hostility. Jack Jolly's nasal piano was

"You, of course! If you think I'm going to take this like a lam, you're jolly well mistaken! I won't be dropped from the team! I'll play against Greyfriars on Saturday!"

"You won't!"

"I will!"

"No, you won't!"

"Yes, I will!"

"No, you jolly well won't!"

"Yes, I jolly well will!"

"No, you jolly well won't!"

"Yes, I jolly well will!"

During this heated exchange of compliments Jack Jolly and Merry had come closer and closer to each other, till Jack Jolly's chin was thrust defiantly into Merry's face, and vice versa.

Bright, who was odd man out in this stormy duel, looked on in grate alarm. It was unheard-of—it was almost without precedent—for Jack Jolly and Merry, the David and Jonathan of St. Sam's, to be at each other's throats like this. "They had been friends from time immemorial; they had never had a cross-word; eggesep of the puzzle variety. But their friendship was being sorely strained now—strained to breaking-point!"

"You rotter!" hissed Jack Jolly.

"You cad!" panted Merry.

"You villan!" roared Jack Jolly.

"You skoundrel!" roared Merry.

"You lying thoeft!" thundered Jack Jolly.

"You poysons reptile!" bellowed Merry.

It really began to look as if the friendship between Jack Jolly and Merry was slightly in jeopardy. Having exhausted all their terms of endearment, they proceeded from words to blows.

Jack Jolly lashed out with his left, and Merry let drive with his right; and the horrified Bright, taking upon himself the roll of peacemaker, rushed in between the combatants, and suffered the usual fate of peacemakers. He took Jack Jolly's left on one side of his nut, and Merry's right on the other.

"Yarooo!" roared Bright.

His head was singing, and he saw stars and consternations.

Whipping off his woolly wig the junior stood revealed as Merry of the Fourth; Jack Jolly staggered as if he had seen a ghost.

crimson, and the blind died his hanger-cheef. Merry's right eye had put up the shutters; and Bright's face looked as if it had been under a steam-roller.

"You have turned this study into a battlefield!" cried Mr. Lickham. It was a grim procession that made its way to the Form master's study.

As if the juniors had not suffered enough already, Mr. Lickham proceeded to chastise them without mercy. He did tremendous execution with his cane; and when Jack Jolly & Co. crawled out of his study, scrood up with anguish, they felt that life was not worth living.

It was Saturday morning—the day of the Greyfriars match. The January sunshine beeft down fiercely upon the sweltering quad-range of St. Sam's.

II

The breach between Jack Jolly and Merry had grown wider and wider, and now, in the sunny quadrangle, they came face to face.

Bright, from the study window, watched them with an anxious heart. Were they going to shake hands and be friends again, and let the dead past bury its dead? Or would they fly at each other's throats, as on a previous occasion?

They halted within a foot of each other. Then, slowly and deliberately, Merry pulled out his pocket-knife, and opened the glittering blade. Bright, craning his head out of the window, looked on as if spellbound.

Then, with a sudden, swift movement, Merry caught hold of Jack Jolly's arm, and pushed back his cuff. He then gave him a slight jab in the forearm with his penknife.

"Ow!" gasped the astonished Jack Jolly.

Merry shut his knife with a snap, and restored it to his pocket. Then, with his nose tilted scornfully in the air, he swung on his heel and stalked away.

Bright gave a hollow groan. There could be no mistaking the meaning of Tom Merry's action.

It was the cut—the cut direct! Fortunately for Jack Jolly it was only a slight scratch. Some fellows had been known to cut each other dead!

From that time onwards no word passed between Jack Jolly and Merry—eggesep at the dinner-table, where they sat opposite each other. And then their conversation was limited to such formalities as "Pass the salt!" and "Sly over the pepper!" And when Merry was about to pass the sauce, Jack Jolly said grimly: "I won't take any sauce from you!"

After dinner, the St. Jim's team left by break for Greyfriars. Fowler of the Fourth went with them instead of Merry. Fowler was a very dusky-faced youth, with a mop of woolly hair, which was in tight curls. There was a touch of the negro about him, and fellows whispered—behind his back—that he was a cast. But, whatever his pedigree, there could be no doubt that Fowler was a fine footballer.

Jack Jolly had high hopes of leading his team to victory. He knew that Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars were hard nuts to crack on their own ground; but he was confident that the man he had chosen would prove effective nut-cracker.

But a lass! A cool and maline Fate brooded over the fortunes of the St. Sam's team that afternoon.

When the game was only five minutes old, they lost the services of Fowler.

(Continued on next page.)

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