

# JIMMY SILVER & CO. ARE COMING!

(See the Special Announcement on Page 8 of This Issue.)

## The Penny Popular

Week Ending  
April 7th, 1917.

No.  
235.

Three Complete Stories of—  
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JACK, SAM, & PETE—TOM MERRY & Co.



## Why are the Juniors Laughing?

(See the Grand Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. contained in this issue.)



# THE NEW SIXTH-FORMER!

A

Magnificent Long Complete  
School Tale, dealing with  
the Early Adventures of

**HARRY  
WHARTON  
AND CO.**  
OF  
**GREYFRIARS**

BY  
**FRANK  
RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### The New Sixth-Former.

"HAVE you seen him?"

"Who?"

"Him!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, of the Greyfriars Remove, were examining the football-ground, to see whether it would be humanly possible to play on it after the last few days' vile weather, when Bob Cherry came up, grinning almost from ear to ear, and propounded that query.

"Him!" said Wharton, looking puzzled. "There are a good many 'hims' at Greyfriars, I believe, Bob. Which particular 'him' are you referring to?"

"Is he a 'him' ancient or modern?" queried Nugent.

"Him!" repeated Bob Cherry. "There's only one him at present who is attracting particular attention, and that's—him!"

"But who is it?"

"The new chap in the Sixth."

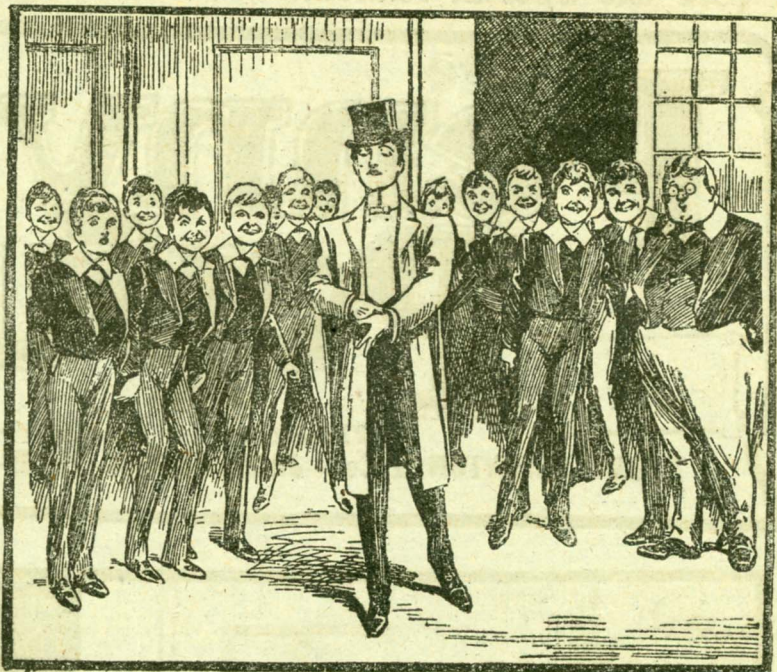
"Haven't noticed him," said Wharton carelessly. "Blessed if I can see what a new chap in the Sixth matters to us. A new chap in the Lower Fourth would matter. But how did a new chap come right into the Sixth, by the way?"

"Oh, of course he's been to another school before. I hear that he's great guns on Greek—as, of course, he would be, as he's a Greek himself. But you should see him—he's a ripper! There are some dressy fellows in the Fifth and Sixth, but Ionides—that's his name—knocks them all into a cocked hat. But you must come and see him for yourselves. He will surprise you."

"Well, we sha'n't get any footer," said Wharton; "the ground's too rotten. We may as well go in, Frank."

"Good! Follow the ball!"

Nugent, who had a ball under his arm, dropped it, and kicked it as it rose—a neat drop-kick that sent it a third of the way to the School House. The three



The new Six-former walked on haughtily between the two rows of grinning juniors.

juniors ran merrily after it, shouldering one another off the ball and keeping it going gaily.

"Look out!" shouted Bob Cherry suddenly.

Wharton and Nugent had overtaken the bounding ball together, and were kicking at the same moment, too busy just then to notice that two seniors were crossing their path.

The two were Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and a slim, dark-skinned fellow, dressed with the greatest elegance, and who carried himself with a somewhat mincing gait. He was an undeniably handsome fellow, though somewhat effeminate in appearance to a British eye, and at a glance it could be seen that he was a foreigner.

He held his nose well in the air, and there was a lurking suspicion of patronage in his manner as he looked about him. It was evident that the new fellow in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars had an excellent opinion of himself.

The contrast between the big, rugged Wingate and the slim, scented Greek was very striking, but it was all in Wingate's favour.

There was nothing effeminate about the captain of Greyfriars. He was showing the new fellow round the school, but it was not likely that he felt much fellowship towards him.

"That's the gym," he was saying. "We're rather proud of our gym here at Greyfriars. I don't know whether you go in for gymnastics much?"

"Not at all," said Ionides. "Gymnastics, I find, are a bore. I—"

It was at this moment that Wharton and Nugent kicked the ball. Their boots struck the ball together, and it flew up like a stone from a catapult, and then there was a terrific yell from Ionides.

"Oh! Yarooooooh!"

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "We've done it now!"

"Goal!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

The spinning leather had landed fairly upon the Greek's chin, and he was bowled over like a ninepin.

He sat down in the Close, and, as misfortunes never come singly, he sat down in the very place where the rain had collected in a deep puddle.

There was a sounding splash.

It was followed by a wail of anguish from Ionides. He was not much hurt; but he was simply smothered in mud, and his elegant clothes were a picture of uncleanness. There were splashes of muddy water on his dark face and on his previously spotless collar.

He hardly knew what had happened for the moment, and he sat in the puddle staring blankly. Wingate stared at him and grinned. He could not help it. It was rough on Heracles Ionides, but it was very funny; and the expression upon his face was the funniest of all.

Harry Wharton ran up, contrite enough, and determined not to laugh. Ionides ought to have seen the ball coming and dodged it, as Wingate would have done; but he had been carrying his nose too high in the air to think of anything of the sort.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry!" exclaimed Harry. "It was quite an accident. Let me help you up."

He gave his hand to the Greek. Ionides staggered to his feet. But the dazed look was gone from his face, and a glare of fury had replaced it. Effeminate and dandified, Ionides might be, but there was a passionate Southern strain in his nature. His black eyes were blazing with rage. He turned upon Wharton like a tiger, grasped him savagely, and commenced to strike him without mercy.

"Take that!" he hissed. "And that! I will teach you! It was a trick! It was done on purpose! Scoundrel, take that!"

Wharton was too much taken by surprise by the savage attack to resist for a moment. But he began to struggle furiously, and threw off the Greek. He



faced the new Sixth-Former with a blaze in his eyes.

"Hands off, confound you!" he exclaimed. "What the dickens do you mean?"

Ionides snapped his white teeth.

"Ah! I will thrash you! I will—" "Oh, hold on!" exclaimed Wingate, seizing the Greek by the arm. "We don't allow that sort of thing here, you know. You can't pitch into a junior like that!"

"I—I will kill him!"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Cut off, Wharton!"

Wharton was breathing hard. Although he was only in the Remove—the Lower Fourth—he was the finest athlete in the Lower Forms and he would not have been unwilling to take on the Greek, Sixth-Former as he was. He thought he could, at least, have given a good account of himself in a tussle with the over-dressed, scented fop. But the captain of Greyfriars pushed him away.

"Cut off!" he said crisply.

"Oh, very well!" said Harry; and he walked away. Nugent picked up the football and followed him. Bob Cherry chuckled as he joined them.

"Well, that's the new chap!" he remarked. "What do you think of him?"

Harry gritted his teeth.

"I think he's a cad and a bully!"

"Not far wrong, either. But did you ever see a chap dressed like that? And he uses scent—he reeks of it at a dozen yards off!"

"He will have to learn to keep his paws off the Remove, or there will be trouble for him at Greyfriars!" growled Harry.

And Wingate was speaking in the same strain to his new Form-fellow. The Greek, with a sullen face, was wiping the mud off his clothes with a cambric handkerchief.

"That sort of thing won't do, Ionides!" said Wingate, in his terse way. "What do you mean by going for a junior like a tiger-cat? You might easily have done him an injury, thumping his head like that. You'll have to learn to control your temper."

"I shall not take lessons from you!" snapped the Greek.

Wingate looked him up and down.

"I am the captain of this school," he said. "I dare say you don't know our customs much, but I warn you that the head of the Sixth expects to be listened to with respect, and to have his advice followed. You will take lessons from me if I choose to give 'em, and you won't give me any surly answers, or there will be trouble!" And the Greyfriars captain turned on his heel and strode away.

The Greek muttered something beneath his breath in his own language, and it was something very uncomplimentary to Greyfriars and all who dwelt therein.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Bully and the Remove.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. went into the junior Common-room, which was pretty full. Wun Lung and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were playing chess on a table near the fireplace. Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, was reading near them. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth were discussing some matter apparently of great interest, to judge by their excited looks and tones.

"Catch me standing it!" said Temple heatedly.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"No fear," chimed in Fry. "The chap's off his rocker!"

"Must be! Of course, it's all right to

fag the Remove! The Remove are only born to be fagged."

"But the Upper Fourth—well, my hat!"

"The chap's off his rocker; that's the only explanation. He only came yesterday afternoon, and he's started this already. The nerve!"

"The cheek!"

"He's a giddy Greek, and I suppose he's a sort of fish out of water here. But we're not going to stand any of his bosh, I can tell him."

"Rather not!"

And Temple, Dabney & Co. looked very determined. Harry Wharton and his chums exchanged glances. The new fellow in the Sixth had evidently been getting on the wrong side of the Upper as well as the Lower Fourth.

"Did they want to fag him, then?" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "And wouldn't he let them do it?"

Temple glared at him.

"Oh, you shut up!" he said. "Catch us fagging! The Upper Fourth never fags! That's for the Remove and the Third."

"Well, the Remove doesn't fag much," said Harry. "I've never fagged. But is it a fact that the Greek is trying to fag you?"

"Oh, rather!"

"Wanted me to run his errands," said Temple excitedly. "Me—captain of the Upper Fourth—told me to go down to the village, and spoke as if I were a dog! Why, I wouldn't have spoken to a Third Form kid as he spoke to me—and I'm captain of the Upper Fourth! Captain of the—"

"Yes, we know you're captain of the Upper Fourth," said Nugent soothingly. "Don't keep on like a gramophone with only one record, old chap. It strikes me that this Greek bouncer wants sitting on, hard."

"And what do you think he wanted me to fetch?" shrieked Temple. "You'd never guess in a month of Sundays."

"Well, what was it?"

"A bottle of Binker's Patent Face Wash," said Temple. "Fancy me—captain of the Upper Fourth—going into a shop and asking for a bottle of face wash. A bottle of face wash—face wash, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no laughing matter. Of course, I didn't go."

"And what did he say?"

"Blessed if I know! I haven't seen him since."

"Phew! He'll come to look for you."

"Let him," said Temple recklessly. "I don't care! I'm not going to fag, and I'm not going to fetch face wash for anybody! Dandified moucher! Fancy a fellow of more'n seventeen being such a silly ass! Face wash, you know! Face wash! Me, captain of the Upper Fourth, going into a shop and asking for face wash! I'm not going. He can come and look for me if he likes! I'll tell him—"

Temple broke off suddenly.

A lithe form had appeared in the doorway, and a dark face looked into the room. It was the face of Heracles Ionides. And a sudden silence fell upon the juniors.

Ionides glanced over the crowd of juniors, not understanding the hush that had fallen upon the room. His eyes fell upon Temple, and he beckoned to him. The captain of the Upper Fourth did not stir.

"Temple! Come here! Have you fetched what I sent you for?"

"No," said Temple, drawing a deep breath.

Ionides looked surprised.

"Why have you not fetched it?"

"You can't fag the Upper Fourth."

A very unpleasant expression came over the senior's face.

"Indeed! I am new to Greyfriars, but I asked Wingate, and he told me that all Forms below the Shell could be fagged," he said. "I think you are mistaken, my good Temple. I think I can fag you, and I shall fag you. I think you will get into trouble if you don't obey my orders, my good Temple."

There was something "catty" about the Greek's manner; something spiteful and hard, and yet effeminate. He came into the room.

"Then you have not been to the village at all?" he asked.

"No!" said Temple, between his teeth.

"And you are not going?"

"No. If you asked me to fetch a football, I would have gone, but I wouldn't go into a shop and ask for face wash for the Head himself!"

The Greek coloured a little.

"You will do as I tell you," he said, in a biting voice, "or you will suffer! I give you a chance to obey! Are you going?"

Temple was silent for a moment. The fellow was a foreigner, and he despised him. But to stand out against direct orders from a Sixth-Former was a bold undertaking. Every eye in the room was on Temple, and he felt that he could not retreat.

"No!" he said.

Ionides waited for no more. He grasped Temple and struck him savagely. There was a supple strength in the wiry Greek, and though Temple was a sturdy fellow, he had no chance. But Ionides had not to deal with him alone. In a second Dabney and Fry fastened on the senior, and he was dragged off.

"Easy does it!" said Dabney.

The Greek turned on the juniors like a tiger. A wave of the passionate rage he had shown towards Wharton in the Close seemed to sweep over him. He struck out with clenched fist, and Dabney rolled under the table, felled like a tree under the woodman's axe.

There was a cry of indignation from the juniors.

"Shame!"

Ionides took no notice of it. He was dealing a second crashing blow at Fry, when Harry Wharton sprang forward and struck up his arm. The Greek staggered with the force of his own blow as it met with no resistance, and nearly fell. Temple gave him a shove at the right moment, and he went reeling to the floor.

His fall was the signal for a general rush.

The juniors, angry and indignant, simply piled on him, and Ionides disappeared under a heap of arms and legs.

He gasped hoarsely under the juniors, struggling wildly and uttering furious threats; but they had him down, and they meant to keep him there. Dabney crawled out from under the table, looking dazed.

"Let me up! Let me up!" shrieked Ionides, and a string of savage threats followed. "Let me up!"

"What is all this?"

It was a cold, hard voice at the door. It sent a shiver through the juniors. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was looking in with glinting eyes.

The juniors scrambled off the Greek as if he had suddenly become red-hot.

"Is it possible that you have attacked a senior in this manner—and a new boy, too?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily.

"Ionides, I hope you are not hurt."

"I am hurt."

"It is disgraceful! Boys—"

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"If you please, sir—" began Harry Wharton.

"Silence, sir! I am very much surprised to see you helping in such a display of hooliganism," said Mr. Quelch. "Every boy concerned in this disgraceful affair will take a hundred lines."

"Oh, sir—"  
"Not a word!"

And Mr. Quelch marched off with a frowning brow. Ionides, too dusty and crumpled to think of pursuing the dispute with Temple any further, followed him. The juniors would have hissed him, but for the presence of the Form-master. They exchanged angry and rueful looks.

"The rotten bully!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose it looked rather bad to Quelch, but it was all the rotter's own fault."

"Yes, rather!"

"The rutherfordness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "I think we shall be upfully against the honourable rotter after this, my worthy chums."

Harry Wharton gritted his teeth.

"He will have to learn that he can't treat the juniors like this," he said.

"Why, he's a worse beast than Carberry, and he is bad enough. It's the Remove up against Ionides, and I think we'll make him sing small."

The Greek had certainly made a bad start as far as the Lower Forms were concerned. But he cared little for that. His face was dark with rage as he made his way to his study. He meant to obtain revenge on the juniors for the way they had treated him.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Ionides Uses His Authority.

"MARJORIE!" Two or three voices uttered the exclamation the next afternoon, as a graceful girlish figure crossed the Close towards the School House.

It was Hazeldene's sister. Two or three juniors ran towards her at once, raising their caps. Marjorie smiled sweetly at them. The girl's face was very fresh and fair, and looked a picture, surrounded by soft, white furs. Harry Wharton was the first to reach her side, but Bob Cherry was a good second.

"Is my brother here?" asked Marjorie.

"Yes, I'm here," said Hazeldene, coming up at that moment. "How are you, Marjorie? I'm awfully glad you've paid us a visit."

"Same here," said Bob Cherry. "Hallo, here comes Ionides! What the dickens does he want?"

The Greek was strolling towards them. Marjorie followed the glance of the juniors, and looked curiously at the new prefect of Greyfriars.

Ionides was dressed with the usual dainty care, his clothes immaculate, his collar as high and white as a collar could be, and his fingers sparkling with rings. His hair, which was beautifully curled, peeped out from under his silk hat.

A delicate perfume exhaled from him on all sides. The Greek used very expensive scents, but to the Greyfriars fellows a chap who used scent at all was immediately set down as a fop.

Ionides came up with his usual mincing manner, and raised his silk hat to Miss Hazeldene. The girl's bright, fresh looks had attracted his attention, and with his customary conceit he had decided to patronise her. As for the juniors, of them he thought nothing at

all. Fellows in the Remove would have to be careful how they dealt with a prefect.

"Good - afternoon!" he exclaimed.

"Your sister, I believe, Hazeldene?"

"Yes," said Hazeldene shortly.

"Introduce me, my dear fellow."

"Marjorie, this is Ionides of the Sixth," said Hazeldene reluctantly. He was inwardly chafing at the Greek's insolence; but Hazeldene was not of the stuff that heroes are made.

Marjorie bowed coldly.

"You are looking round Greyfriars?" said Ionides, with an agreeable smile.

"It will be a great pleasure to me to escort you, Miss Hazeldene."

"My brother is doing so," said Marjorie icily.

But Heracles Ionides was not to be abashed.

"Oh, I cannot leave you to the care of juniors!" he said. "You are too charming a young lady. Hazeldene, you have an imposition to do this afternoon."

"That's all right," said Hazeldene.

"Lots of time before tea."

"Nothing of the sort. You had better go and do it at once."

Hazeldene did not stir. The Greek looked at him with a glint in his eyes.

"Did you hear what I said, Hazeldene?"

"Yes."

"Then go."

Hazeldene hesitated, and glanced at his friends. Wharton was gritting his teeth. He disliked more than anything else a scene in the presence of a girl, but he felt that he could never submit to the Greek's insolence.

"Don't go!" he muttered.

The Greek glanced at Wharton with tightening lips.

"Go at once, Hazeldene!" said Ionides. "And you will go with him, Wharton! You will do fifty lines from Virgil for your impertinence!"

Wharton set his lips grimly and stood still. Wild horses would not have dragged him from that spot at that moment.

The Greek's dark face flushed with anger.

But before he could speak again Marjorie laid a timid hand on her brother's arm. The girl knew well enough that it was not safe for juniors to defy the authority of a Sixth Former.

"Please go," she murmured; "and you, too, Harry. Please do!"

Wharton swallowed his wrath.

"Very well, if you wish it," he said.

And Wharton and Hazeldene walked away. The Greek gave Bob Cherry and Nugent a significant look.

"You may go, too," he said.

The juniors looked rebellious, but a look from Marjorie decided them. They walked away with burning eyes and burning hearts.

Ionides smiled at the girl. He had an idea that he could make a great impression upon Marjorie.

But Marjorie's face was like stone.

"This is a very interesting old place," he remarked. "I will show you. But where are you going?"

"I am going to see Mrs. Locke."

"But I was going to show you—"

"Thank you, I won't trouble you."

And Marjorie walked quickly away.

The Greek hesitated for a moment, and then he strode quickly after her, and kept pace at her side.

Marjorie set her lips, and walked faster.

"But why do you leave me? I—"

Marjorie walked faster. Her desire to get away from him was so evident that the Greek's dark face became darker with rage. He passed his arm through hers, and the girl pulled it

away. But the Greek was holding it fast, and she could not release it.

Marjorie stopped and looked at him. "Let me go!" she said.

Ionides laughed.

They were under the trees, and there was no one to observe them at the moment.

The girl's heart beat fast.

"Let me go, or I will call out!" she panted.

He laughed again.

"Nonsense! I am not going to hurt you. Why should you be foolish? I—"

"Help!"

"Fool!" he muttered.

There was a pattering of feet under the trees. Harry Wharton came up breathlessly.

The Greek dropped Marjorie's arm, and laughed again uneasily.

Harry was springing forward with clenched fists, when the girl interposed.

"Don't be angry, Harry. It—it is all right."

"But I heard you call," cried Wharton.

"It is nothing. Let us go."

Wharton looked at the Greek with blazing eyes. Senior and prefect as he was, Ionides shrank from his gaze. But for the presence of Marjorie, Harry would have flung himself at the cad of the Sixth.

Ionides muttered something under his breath, and swung away.

Harry and Marjorie walked away together without speaking. The girl was looking very pale and troubled.

Harry left her at the door of the Head's house, without either having spoken again of the incident under the trees.

Marjorie went in, and Harry went in search of his chums, with his face set and his heart beating. From that moment it was war between Harry Wharton and the new prefect.

When the Remove came out of the dining-room after tea Ionides called to Bob Cherry.

The junior approached him unwillingly.

As Ionides had been made a prefect, it behoved the juniors to be more careful towards him. They sometimes had little scrapings with Carberry, but Carberry's character was pretty well known to most of the masters, and to some extent to the Head, and his influence with the powers that be was small.

It was different with Ionides. He had contrived to worm himself into the Head's good graces, and to keep on good terms with all the other masters. He was certain of backing from the authorities, and the Remove knew that, and they also knew he was a more serious antagonist than Carberry had ever been.

Besides, Carberry was merely ill-tempered, while the Greek was spiteful and malicious, and made it a point never to forget or forgive.

Bob Cherry would gladly have turned his back on the Greek, and walked away; but it would not have done. He walked slowly up to the senior, and waited for orders, inwardly chafing.

"I want you to go down to the village," said Ionides.

"We're not allowed to go out after locking-up!" growled Bob Cherry.

He was thinking of Marjorie Hazeldene, and that if he went out now he would not see her again before she left Greyfriars.

The Greek smiled maliciously.

"I will give you a pass out of bounds," he said.

As a prefect, it was in his power to do so, and Bob was fairly caught.

"I don't want to go."

"That has very little to do with the matter, I imagine," said Ionides



satirically. "I shall fag you juniors as much as I please, and you and your set especially, as a lesson to you for your insolence. I will teach you manners before I have done with you!"

"You may learn manners yourself," muttered Bob Cherry, under his breath. "You will go to Mr. Fraser, the chemist, and get me what is written on this card," said Ionides. "You will take great care of it, as it is expensive."

"Where's the money?" "You will not need any money, as I have an account with the chemist."

"Oh, all right!" grunted Bob. He took the card, and walked away. His grumpy look when he came into the hall with his cap and coat on attracted the attention of his chums.

"No good getting ready yet," said Harry. "Miss Marjorie isn't going for half an hour or more."

"I've got to go to the chemist's in the village for that Greek beast!"

"Hard cheese!"

"It's to get some filthy skin wash or something!" growled Bob Cherry. "Ionides is dining with the Head this evening, I hear, and he wants to look as much like a figure in a barber's window as possible!"

"Suppose you don't go?" said Hazel-dene.

Bob shook his head.

"It's no good bucking against a prefect. I've got to go. You'll tell Marjorie how it is, won't you?"

"Me helpee Chelly," said a soft voice, and Wun Lung grinned up at the discontented junior. "Suppose me go to village instead of Chelly? Savvy?"

"Good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"You're a good little bounder, Wun Lung! I suppose you could manage it? It's only going to the chemist and getting a bottle of filthy skin-wash, and bringing it home without busting it!"

"Me blingee safe."

"Good! Here's the card, and much obliged!"

And Wun Lung went off with the card in his hand, a wide grin upon his face, and a very humorous twinklé in his almond eyes.

imposition for this!" growled the prefect. "Have you got the bottle all right?"

"Me heavee it."

"Give it me, then. You've been a long time."

"Me hully quickee."

Wun Lung had been occupied ten minutes or so since re-entering Greyfriars after his return from the village, but he did not tell Ionides so. His look was innocent and deprecating; and even the new prefect did not bully him.

"Well, get out!" he said.

"Me savvy."

And Wun Lung left the study. In the passage he stopped, and doubled up in a paroxysm of laughter. No sound came from his lips, but he wriggled and squirmed in an ecstasy of mirth. He straightened up suddenly as Carberry came out of his study.

"Hallo, you young heathen," growled the prefect, "what trick have you been playing now?"

fuge in that answer it was no good trying to get anything out of him.

And not a word did Wun Lung say till Harry Wharton & Co. came in. Then, when Harry asked him what he was chuckling about, he expounded at last.

"Me gettee facee washee in Fliardale," he said.

"Well, we know that," said Bob Cherry. "And you took it straight to Ionides, didn't you?"

"Me takee; no takee st-aight."

"Do you mean you didn't take it to him at once."

The Chinese nodded.

"And why didn't you?"

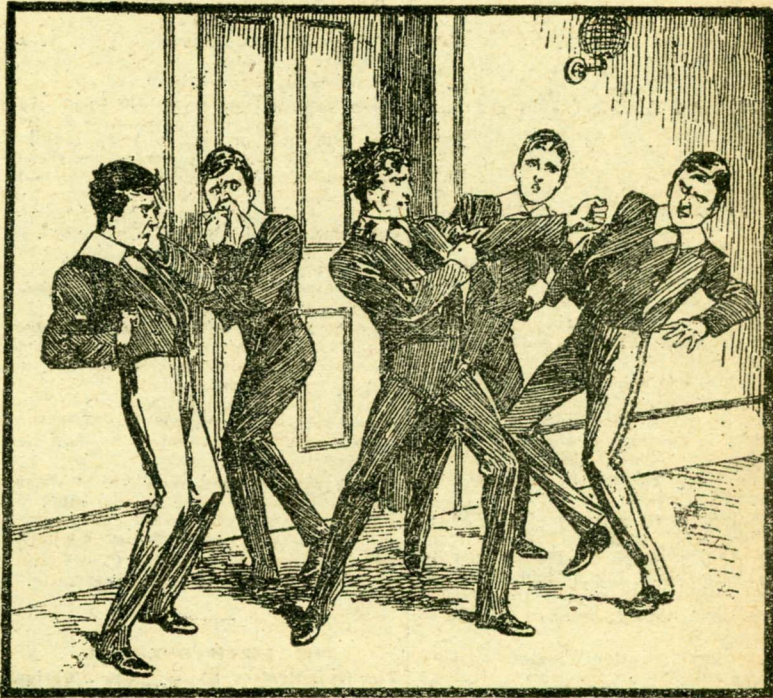
"Me openee bottle."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"You opened the bottle, you cheeky young beggar! What did you open it for?"

"Puttee somefin in."

The Removites who heard the words redoubled their attention. Wun Lung



"Ah! Take that—take that—take that!" roared the Greek, as he hit out right and left.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Improves the Skin Lotion.

THE Famous Four walked with Marjorie Hazeldene and her brother as far as the railway-station when the girl left Greyfriars. As they left the school gates they met Wun Lung returning from the village, and Bob Cherry called to him:

"Got the stuff, kid?"

"Me gottee."

"Good! Give it to Ionides, and tell him to go and eat coke!"

The Chinese grinned.

"Me givee; no tellae."

The little Celestial presented himself at the Sixth-Former's study. He tapped at the door and opened it, and there was a muttered exclamation in Greek. Hercules Ionides was there, standing before his dressing-table, and there was a packet of curling-pins on the table. The Greek had evidently been opening the packet when Wun Lung's tap came at the door.

The almond eyes of the little Celestial glimmered, but he gave no open sign of having observed anything. Ionides hastily thrust the packet of pins out of sight, and looked savagely at the Chinese junior.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"Me blingee bottle, me fetchee for Chelly."

"You went to the chemist's instead of Cherry?"

"Me go."

"I told him to go. I'll give him an

"No, savvy."

"What were you laughing at?"

"No, savvy."

"What's the joke, you heathen beast?"

"No, savvy."

"Oh, get along!" growled Carberry, and he took a running kick at the Celestial, which Wun Lung promptly dodged. Carberry's leg swept through the air, and he lost his balance, and sat down with a terrific bump and a gasp like escaping steam.

"My—my word! I'll pulverise him!"

But by the time Carberry was on his feet the Celestial had vanished.

Wun Lung returned to the Common-room, where he surprised the juniors by breaking out every few minutes into curious chuckles. But though many questions were asked he refused to explain what the joke was, his invariable answer to every query being: "No savvy." And when Wun Lung took re-

was the most irrepressible practical joker in the Form, and they began to realise that he had played a daring practical joke on the unpopular prefect.

"What did you put in?" demanded Hazeldene.

"Stainee."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You put a stain in the face-wash?"

Wun Lung grinned and chuckled. The Common-room was in a roar. Even Billy Bunter, worried as he was by his disappointment about the cold collation, burst into a snigger.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Wharton, laughing. "He'll find out what you've done when he comes to use the silly stuff."

"No findee. Chinee stainee, me makee sdee. No colour till used, and then it dly dalkee. When quite dly velly dalk. Savvy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors shrieked.



Wun Lung was something of a hand with chemicals, and they could easily credit that he could make a stain which would be colourless while in a liquid state, and would darken when it dried, whether on wood or on the human skin.

"My only hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Is that honest Injun, you young sweep? You're not pulling my leg?"

"Me no pullee leggee. All true."

"Then when Ionides puts the stuff on his face—"

"Allee light for quarter hour; then he turn darkee-geence."

"Ha, ha, ha! Fancy the dandy of the Sixth with a dark green complexion!"

"He's dining with the Head this evening!" yelled Nugent. And a fresh yell of merriment followed.

"Upon my word, it's almost too bad," gasped Harry, wiping away his tears. "I—I wonder if he's used it yet?"

"Must have," said Temple of the Upper Fourth, choking with laughter. "The Head dines at seven-thirty, and it's past seven now."

"Ionides will be going to his house any minute, then."

"Let's go and watch for him."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's the cheese."

The juniors crowded out. Ionides was most likely to leave the house and cross to the Head's private door when he went to dine with the doctor. The juniors crowded into the hall, and lined the walls to watch for him. Wingate, the captain of the school, came along, and stared at them inquiringly.

"What's the little game?" he demanded. "What are you youngsters up to? No good, I suppose."

"We're waiting for Ionides."

"And what are you waiting for Ionides for?"

"We hear he's been using a new face wash, and we want to see the effect."

"Don't be an ass, Cherry! Ionides doesn't use anything of the sort."

"That he does," said Hazeldene.

"Wun Lung fetched it for him from Friardale."

Wingate gave a sniff of disgust at the idea, and walked on. He shut the door of his study hard. He despised the effeminate Greek, but he had never suspected that Ionides used preparations for the skin, though he knew he scented his hair.

A few minutes after Wingate had gone Ionides came down the stairs. He saw the juniors in the hall, and scowled at them. There was nothing wrong with his complexion so far. Wun Lung had said that a certain time must elapse before the stain showed itself, and evidently it had not yet begun to work.

"It's all humbug, after all," muttered Bulstrode.

"No humbug. He turnee darkee-geence soonee."

The Greek stopped in the hall, and called to Bob Cherry. Bob came forward with affected reluctance. As a matter of fact, he was glad of a chance to delay Ionides while the Chinese's stain had time to work.

"Cherry, I told you to go to Friardale to the chemist, and you did not go."

"Sorry, Ionides. Wun Lung went instead," said Bob with unaccustomed meekness.

"You had no right to disregard my orders. You will take fifty lines of Virgil, and bring them to me before bed-time."

"Yes, Ionides."

"And now run upstairs and fetch my gloves. I have left them lying on my table."

"Yes, Ionides."

The Greek looked baffled. Bob's

meekness gave him no excuse for inflicting any further penalty. The junior scuttled to the stairs. Ionides stood in the lighted hall, and pulled out his cuffs.

He looked a handsome figure as he stood there. He was in evening clothes, which fitted his supple figure excellently. A diamond gleamed in his shirt-front, others in his sleeve-links. He had a light coat over his dress-clothes, and was wearing a silk topper.

His face, though dark, was very clear in the skin, his complexion being probably due in part to the cosmetics he used. His eyebrows probably owed something to the pencil. His complexion, though clear, was dark, and in the light of the hall it seemed to be growing darker.

The juniors watched him with almost painful interest. Ionides was a little puzzled to account for the interest they took in him, but he concluded that they were overcome by his magnificent appearance.

Bob Cherry came downstairs with the gloves, and the prefect put them on.

"My word," murmured Nugent, "it's working!"

It certainly was working.

The Greek's complexion was darkening visibly. The clear skin assumed a hue like buff leather, and it was rapidly growing darker. The most curious circumstance was that Ionides himself had not the faintest idea of it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, unable to contain himself any longer.

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

Ionides looked round with a glare. He did not know what the juniors were laughing at, and he was inclined to burst into one of his towering passions. But a quarter past seven rang out from the clock-tower, and he realised that he had no time to lose.

He walked on haughtily, between two rows of grinning juniors, and left the house. The Remove shrieked when he had gone.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton. "What will the Head say when he sees him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the wild yell of mirth followed Heracles Ionides into the Close, and gave him a feeling of vague uneasiness.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### The New Prefect Experiences a Series of Shocks.

HERACLES IONIDES knocked and rang, and the door was opened almost immediately by a maid-servant. Ionides was about to speak; but the light from the hall fell full upon his face, and the maid gazed at him in horror.

If he had been black, like a negro, or brown, like Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the maid might not have been so startled. But a man with a dark-green complexion was something quite outside her experience.

She gave him a horrified stare, and then uttered a shriek and fled, leaving the door wide open, and Ionides standing on the step petrified with amazement.

"What can be the matter?" muttered the Greek.

He heard the maid's shrieks die away in the distance. He stepped into the hall, and closed the door himself. He was amazed by the maid's conduct, but as he was not shown into the drawing-room, it only remained to show himself in.

"Oh, the awful sight!" It was the maid's voice from some region below. "Oh, it give me such a turn! I never did see such a thing! Oh, lor'!"

Ionides gritted his teeth. He stepped

to the drawing-room door, which was half open, pushed it, and entered.

Miss Molly, the Head's little daughter, was in the room, and she happened to be alone there.

She glanced up, and as she saw Ionides her doll went to the floor with a crash. Miss Molly burst into a wild shriek.

"What is the matter?" cried the bewildered Greek. "What is it? I will do you no harm! Bah! Do you not know me?"

But Miss Molly only shrieked and shrieked.

There was a door at the opposite end of the room, and as the Greek advanced towards her, the little girl fled frantically and disappeared, still shrieking.

Ionides stood panting. What was the cause of the terror of the maid and the little girl he could not imagine. He began to wonder whether they were mad or whether he was.

There was a step in the adjoining room, and Mrs. Locke looked through the communicating door. Her face was pale and startled, and she had evidently come to see what had frightened her child.

Ionides started towards her, and the electric light gleamed on his dark-green face, and Mrs. Locke uttered a scream of affright.

"Really——" began Ionides.

But the terrified lady did not stay to listen. She ran away, screaming for help, and, overcome by terror, fell upon a rug in a dead faint.

"They are all mad!" cried the Greek, snapping his white teeth with rage.

"They are mad, or it is a plot to insult me!"

Dr. Locke looked into the room. He had been attracted by the screams of Mrs. Locke as he was dressing for dinner, and he had come tearing down unfinished, with an old jacket round him. A very curious sight the doctor looked, too, as he dashed into the drawing-room.

"Who is it?" he cried. "How dare you— Oh—oh—oh!"

He broke off, gasping, as his eyes fell upon the dark-green face.

But Dr. Locke was a brave man. He kept his eyes upon Ionides, and backed away towards the grate. Then he suddenly stooped and possessed himself of the poker.

"Scoundrel!" he cried. "Villain! How dare you come here and frighten my child? Wretch, who are—what are you?"

Ionides panted.

"Do you not know me?" he cried. "Are you mad? Are they all mad?"

The doctor started.

"I seem to know your voice."

"I am Heracles Ionides of the Sixth."

"What!"

"I have never been so insulted——"

"Ionides!" cried the Head, dropping the poker with a clang into the grate.

"Is it possible? Is it conceivable that a prefect of the Sixth Form could play this silly, dastardly trick to frighten a woman and a child?"

"Sir——"

"It is inexcusable—inexpiable! I have been deceived in you! Instead of a studious scholar, you are a stupid practical joker—a ruffianly scoundrel, sir!"

"Dr. Locke——"

"Go!" thundered the Head, raising his hand and pointing to the door. "Go, and never enter my doors again! Begone!"

Heracles Ionides almost staggered in his bewildered amazement. He stared blankly at the infuriated doctor. Never had he seen the Head in such a rage—nor had anyone else, for that matter—and the Greek could not conceive what was the cause of the trouble.

He opened his lips to speak, but amazement held him dumb, and no words came



forth. The doctor pointed imperiously to the door.

"Begone!" he thundered.

"But—but—"

"Will you go, or shall I ring for my servant to eject you?" roared the Head.

Ionides gave a shriek of rage.

"I have never been so insulted! How dare you treat me like this? What have I done?"

"What have you done?" said Dr. Locke, in scathing accents. "You dare to stand there and ask me what you have done, after frightening my wife and child almost into hysterics by your mad trick!"

"I—I—I—a trick?"

"Do not bandy words with me, sir! Go!"

"I will not go!" screamed the Greek, quite losing control of himself now. "I will not go until you explain! You asked me to dine with you, and when I come, you insult me! I will be revenged!"

The Head touched a bell.

A scared-looking manservant came into the room, and eyed the dark-green visitor very gingerly. But for the Head's presence he would probably not have ventured to enter at all.

"John, turn Mr. Ionides out!"

The manservant gasped.

"Mr. Ionides!"

"Yes, it is Ionides, playing a foolish and dastardly trick!"

"I have played no trick!" the Greek screamed. "You are mad! You are all mad, or else this is a conspiracy! I refuse to go till you have explained! I tell you

"Go! You are no longer a prefect! More than that, you are no longer a member of the Greyfriars Sixth, sir—I expel you!" almost shouted the Head. "Now, sir, begone! Throw him out, John!"

"Certainly, sir!" said John.

The maid had told him of the unearthly visitant with a green skin, and John had been nervous; but now that he knew he had only a human boy to deal with, John was courageous enough. He advanced upon Ionides and grasped him by the shoulders.

"Outside!" he said laconically.

The Greek was beside himself with passion. He clenched his fist, and struck the man full in the face with such savage force that John reeled under the blow.

But John, though he wore a livery, had muscle and pluck. He reeled for a moment, and then he closed with the Greek. He jerked him from his feet, and dragged him towards the door.

Ionides, utterly losing his self-control, struggled furiously, rapping out savage oaths in Greek, and punching, kicking, and biting, and scratching.

"My heye!" gasped John. "What a wild cat! Hopen the door, Hemily!"

Emily, the maidservant, opened the door into the Close. John dragged the furiously-struggling Greek to the doorway, and flung him out.

Ionides rolled down the steps, and landed at the bottom with a grunt, and then picked himself up. Too furious to think of anything but revenge, the Greek dashed up the steps, and hurled himself at the manservant.

"Which I'm ready for you, sir!" murmured John.

And he let out his right, and Heracles Ionides rolled down the steps again. This time he did not charge back. But he groped in the dark for a stone, found one, and flung it with all his strength.

John gave a yell, and staggered into the hall. The stone had grazed his head, crashed past him, and shattered the glass of a picture.

Dr. Locke looked out at the door.

"You had better go, Ionides," he said quietly.

The Head's voice somewhat calmed the Greek. He realised that he was acting in the worst possible way for himself. He slunk away in the dusk, and the Head closed the door.

Ionides, his eyes gleaming, his chest heaving, strode back to the School House, and entered. Several juniors who had followed him in the Close had scuttled back to announce the fact that he had been ejected from the Head's house, and he found a delighted crowd of juniors waiting for him when he came in.

He gave them a tigerish look.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove. "Who's been chucked out on his neck?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greek made a savage rush at them. The juniors scattered, many of them yelling, as they received sounding cuffs.

Mr. Quelch came out of his study, and almost ran into the Greek. He started back in amazement.

"What—what—who—what is that, in heaven's name?"

"What, are you mad, too?" shrieked Ionides.

"Ionides! Boy! How dare you? How dare you play such an absurd trick?"

"You are mad—mad! They are all mad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry, from the distance. "What price our patent face-wash?"

Mr. Quelch started.

"Is it possible, Ionides, that you do not know what state your face is in?" he demanded.

The Greek stared at him.

"What do you mean? My face?"

"Look in the glass?" said the Remove-master sternly.

Ionides rushed to the glass over the hallstand.

He looked in, and staggered back as he saw his reflection in the mirror. He gazed at it dumbfounded. His expression was quite sufficient to show Mr. Quelch that it was no trick on his part, and that he had indeed been ignorant that his face was in such a state.

"Heavens!" gasped the Greek. "What can it be—what terrible disease?"

"It is no disease," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "Something has been painted on your face; yet how it could have been painted on without your knowledge passes my comprehension! Have you been asleep? This looks to me like a trick of the juniors."

"Asleep? No! It is not half an hour since I washed my face, and when I left my study I looked in the glass to adjust my tie, and there was nothing on my face then," said the Greek, perfectly bewildered.

"Then I cannot understand it. I suppose you do not use any preparation for the skin?"

"Ah!" cried Ionides. "That is it! It was the skin-lotion!"

"You—you use a skin-lotion!"

"Yes, for improving the complexion, and—"

"Then, I must say you are a fop and a fool, and you deserve what has happened to you!" said the Remove-master. "You might leave those things to the other sex. You have evidently used something containing a chemical which has changed colour, perhaps owing to something in the atmosphere."

"But—but I have used the same before, and— Ah, I understand now! They have opened the bottle, and played some trick with it!"

"Ha, ha!" The Remove-master burst into an involuntary laugh. "I should not be surprised, and I should not feel very sorry for you if such were the case. I should advise you to go and get your face cleaned, and to use no more skin-lotions in future. Your complexion will be well enough if you take plenty of open-air exercise."

And the Remove-master went into his study.

Heracles Ionides went upstairs to his own room, trembling with passion.

He guessed pretty accurately that he had been the victim of a joke among the juniors, and he was beginning to understand that, prefect as he was, he was not likely to have everything his own way in a combat with the Lower School.

Nor was he likely to remain a prefect much longer after what had happened! He could call on the doctor, and explain, but—

He washed and scrubbed his face desperately. But the stain, easy as it had been to put on, was difficult to get off.

For almost an hour the Greek laboured

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at the task, and when he at last desisted from sheer exhaustion, there were still very plain traces of the green stain clinging to his ears and under his chin, and his fingers were coloured in the process.

He looked in the glass at last, gasping with fatigue and rage. He dressed himself carefully for his visit of explanation to the Head.

When he came out of his study, there were a crowd of grinning juniors waiting to look at him, but Ionides allowed their grins and chuckles to pass unnoticed. He felt too used-up just then for a fresh row with the Remove.

He called on the Head. Dr. Locke allowed him to be admitted, and listened to his explanation coldly. He conceded that the Greek was not to blame for calling in such a curious state, and that he

could not be held responsible for the fright Mrs. Locke and little Miss Molly had received.

"But this would never have happened but for your absurd and effeminate use of a skin-lotion," said the Head. "Too much attention to beautifying the person is essentially unmanly. Apart from that, I cannot forget your conduct here. As you have been the victim of a trick, I exonerate you in part, and I shall not expel you, as I intended. I hold you excused so far; but nothing can excuse your conduct here. You ought to have left the house, right or wrong, when I told you to go. You cannot, under any circumstances, be pardoned for the violent assault upon my servant. Had the stone struck him, as you intended, it might have caused him serious injury."

"I am sorry—"

"I hope you are," said the Head grimly. "But sorrow is not quite sufficient to meet the case. A boy of such a savage and ungovernable temper is certainly not fit to hold in his hands the authority which belongs to a prefect!"

"But—"

"You are no longer a prefect. You may go!"

And Heracles Ionides went. And, with the exception of the Greek himself, there wasn't a soul in Greyfriars who was sorry that Ionides had lost his rank as a prefect. He had joined battle with the Remove, and the Remove had had the best of it—and the Remove rejoiced exceedingly.

THE END.

## THE GREAT DAY—APRIL 21st.

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The Famous Chums of Rookwood, Will Make Their Appearance in

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TELL ALL YOUR CHUMS ABOUT THIS GREAT ATTRACTION.

## BETWEEN OURSELVES

A Weekly Chat between The Editor and His Readers.

IN TWO WEEKS' TIME!

The time is drawing very near for Jimmy Silver & Co., the famous chums of Rookwood, to make their appearance in the "Penny Popular." As I told you last week, the Rookwood chums will be introduced into the issue of the "Penny Popular" dated April 21st. For the first time the "Penny Popular" will become an

ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER,

and will, I am confident, obtain wider popularity than ever.

I remember well that when I introduced the Harry Wharton tales in the "Penny Popular" I was simply inundated with letters from readers who had failed to secure copies of their favourite paper. They had gone to their newsagents for a copy in the ordinary way, and had been met with the words—"Sold out!"

Now, my chums, are you going to let this happen again? In the coming months it will become more difficult than ever for anybody to pick up chance copies of the "Penny Popular." There is only one way to ensure obtaining your copies, and that is by

ORDERING IN ADVANCE.

Don't think that next week will be time enough for you to order your copy of the "Penny Popular" containing the first Jimmy Silver story. If you wish to prevent disappointment, you simply must order your copy at once. A day's delay may mean that you will be too late to secure a copy.

Be warned in time, my chums. Fill up the order form on page 18 of this issue, and take it round to your newsagent at once. You will never regret doing so.

By the way, you might tell all your chums about the coming attraction in the "Penny Pop.," and persuade them, too, to place a regular order for the "Penny Popular" with their newsagent.

NEXT FRIDAY'S FINE STORIES!

No reader of the PENNY POPULAR will have cause to grumble at the stories due to appear in next Friday's issue of the PENNY POPULAR. First and foremost comes the story of the Greyfriars chums, which is entitled

"HARRY WHARTON'S PLUCK!"

Stormy times are prevailing at Greyfriars, and, believing there to be a wreck at sea, Harry Wharton & Co. break bounds, and go down to the seashore. Terrific seas are running, but Harry Wharton scorns all thought of personal danger, and performs as gallant a deed as has ever been performed by a Greyfriars junior.

Upon their return to Greyfriars the chums of the Remove are informed that the Head is summoning all the boys to the Hall, and are led to believe that it is for the purpose of flogging Harry Wharton. The chums are surprised to think that, after performing such a plucky deed, Harry Wharton is to be flogged. But they receive a great surprise when the Head addresses the meeting, as you will learn when you read this fine story in our next issue.

The splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co., the chums of St. Jim's, is entitled

"D'ARCY THE REPORTER!"

Arthur Augustus reports a meeting at Wayland Town Hall for "Tom Merry's Weekly." The report eventually appears in print, and soon afterwards Mr. Japp, the major of Wayland, visits D'Arcy, and accuses him of libel. There is great excitement in the school during Mr. Japp's visit, but there is greater excitement when D'Arcy learns the real identity of Mr. Japp.

The long, complete tale of Jack, Sam, and Pete in our next issue is entitled

"PETE'S MOTOR RIDE!"

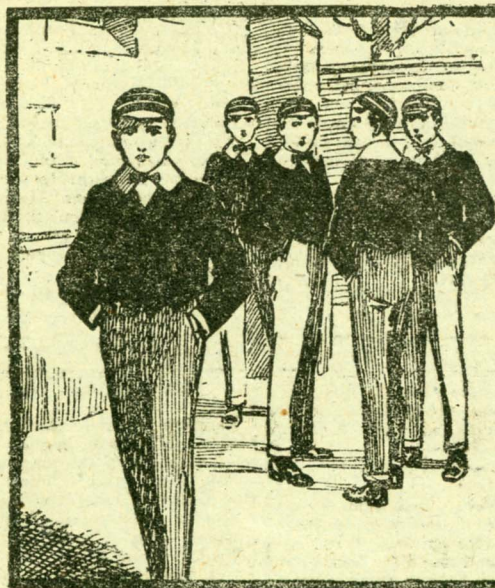
and, as you can imagine by the title, it is full of humorous incidents.

Don't forget that if you wish to avoid disappointment you must order your copy of the PENNY POPULAR in advance.

YOUR EDITOR.



# THE SCHOOLBOY SPY!



*A Magnificent Long  
Complete School Tale,  
dealing with the  
Early Adventures of  
TOM MERRY & CO.  
of St. Jim's.*

- BY -  
**MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Quite a Surprise.

"**I**NK, please," said Tom Merry.

"Here you are!"

"And some treacle."

"Here!"

"And a shovelful of soot!"

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

Tom Merry stirred industriously.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were very busy. Tom Merry, in his shirt-sleeves, with the sleeves rolled up, and a large ladle in his hand, was stirring at a weird-looking compound in a big basin. There were many ingredients in that compound, and Manners and Lowther were adding more as Tom Merry stirred away.

Red ink, and black ink, and treacle and soot were being steadily mixed up into a fearsome liquid.

"Anything else?" asked Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

Tom Merry looked thoughtful.

"What about a little pyro?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Manners, the amateur photographer of the School House. "It's a pity to waste it, as it costs money, but it's in a good cause. Here you are."

And he poured in the pyro.

Tom Merry stirred it up.

"Keep an eye on the window, Lowther," he remarked. "Don't show yourself, or Figgins will be on the alert. Tell me when you see him."

"Right-ho!" grinned Lowther.

And he stationed himself at the study window. It was getting dark in the quadrangle of St. Jim's, and the shadows of the old elms were very deep below. But there was light enough to see anybody who should come very close under the study windows.

Tom Merry stirred on.

There was a footstep in the passage, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth, looked into the study. He was about to speak, when he caught sight of Tom Merry and his mixture. He remained with his mouth half open in his astonishment, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye to take a closer survey.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "What is that, Tom Mewwy?"

"Our special mixture."

"But what is it made of?" asked D'Arcy, in amazement.

"Ink, soot, treacle, and pyro, with water ad lib."

"Bai Jove! What's it for?"

"Figgins."

"Eh?"

"Figgins, of the New House," said Tom Merry, stirring away. "I'm doing this specially for Figgins, out of sheer kindness."

Manners and Lowther chuckled.

"But what does Figgins want it for?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"That's the little joke. He doesn't want it."

"Oh!"

"You see," exclaimed Tom Merry, "Figgins doesn't want it, but he's going to get it. I'm doing this out of kindness. I dare say you are aware that Figgins & Co. have a weird idea that the New House is cock-house of St. Jim's—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"They've got to be cured of this idea somehow, and we're going to try to do it with this mixture. I've just had a tip from Mellish of the Fourth that Figgins is coming over here—"

"Bai Jove!"

"He's going to chuck a cracker in at the window, and give us a jump," explained Tom Merry. "But as we happen to know he's coming, we're getting ready for him. I think he will jump more than we do when he gets this on his napper!"

"Somebody's coming!" said Lowther, in a low voice from the window.

"Good!"

Tom Merry laid down the ladle, and took the basin of mixture in both hands, and stepped cautiously towards the window.

He rested the basin on the window-ledge, and looked out into the quad. It was very dusky in the quadrangle, especially where the shadows of the old elms fell. A dim figure appeared in view, coming along at a good stride under the study windows.

"There he is!" whispered Manners, who was peering out of one corner of the window. "That's Figgins—too tall for any other kid."

"Good!"

Tom Merry grasped the basin in readiness. The figure below came directly under the study window. Whether it was going to stop there or to pass on was not discovered, for Tom Merry did not wait to see. He tilted over the basin, and the contents shot out and downward in a swishing flood.

Swoop!

There was a **wo**, choking yell below, and the dim figure staggered against the School House wall. Tom Merry put the basin on the floor, and leaned out of the window and looked down, with a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha! How do you like the special mixture? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo!" came in a gurgle from below. "Oh! Ow! Grooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"Groo! Oh! What—what—Tom Merry! How dare you?"

Tom Merry jumped.

For the gasping voice that came from below was not the voice of Figgins of the Fourth, the great chief of the New House juniors.

It was the well-known voice of Kildare of the Sixth, the head prefect of the School House, and captain of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry gasped.

"Kildare!"

"Great Scott!"

The figure below, smothered and drenched with the special mixture, was gasping and gurgling in a suffocating manner. Tom Merry leaned out of the window and looked anxiously down. His first impulse had been to bolt; but that was evidently useless; Kildare knew who had hurled the mixture on him.

The captain of the school presented a shocking sight.

In the dusk, Tom Merry could not have made out his features; but he could make them out less than ever now, smothered as they were with ink and treacle and soot and pyro.

Kildare's face and collar and tie and



waiatcoat were smothered, and the cap was a mass of wetness and stickiness.

He gouged the mixture out of his eyes and nose and mouth and ears, and glared up at the horrified junior at the window above.

"Grool! T-T-Tom Merry!"

"I—I—I—"

"Did you throw this stuff over me?" roared the captain of St. Jim's.

"I—I—I—"

"You young villain! Did you?"

"I—I— Yes! No! Yes!"

"You young sweep!"

"It—it was all a mistake!" stammered Tom Merry. "You—you see, I—I didn't see you plainly, and I—I thought it was Figgins of the New House."

Kildare spluttered.

"So you were going to throw this muck over Figgins?"

"Well, you see—"

"And you've thrown it over me instead!" roared Kildare.

"I—I—I—"

"Go to my study!" shouted Kildare. "Go to my study, and wait for me there! Do you hear?"

"Ye-e-es!"

Kildare disappeared in the gloom. Probably he was going to clean himself, which was not likely to be an easy or rapid process. From the darkness under the elms there came the sound of a chuckle.

"You've done it now, Tom Merry!"

And Figgins of the Fourth looked up in the dark. Tom Merry glared at him.

"You ass! What did you come too late for? If you'd come a little sooner you'd have got it instead of Kildare."

Figgins yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You New House bounder!" roared Tom Merry, exasperated. "I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins, yelling with laughter, disappeared across the quadrangle. Tom Merry turned back into his study with a dissatisfied grunt. Monty Lowther and Manners looked at him in dismay.

"There'll be trouble now!" gasped Manners.

Tom Merry snorted.

"I suppose so. This means a licking. It's all Figgins' fault. Br-r-r-r-r!"

With that the captain of the Shell opened the study door and strode out.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### 'Honour Bright!'

**K**ILDARE'S study was not lighted when Tom Merry entered. The captain of the Shell did not feel entitled to light the gas in the head prefect's study, and he waited in the dusk, looking out into the shadowy quadrangle.

But Kildare did not come.

Doubtless he was busily engaged in cleaning the stuff from his face and hair, and it was likely to occupy him for a considerable time. It was doubtful, indeed, if the pyro would wash off at all. It would have to be left to wear off. Tom Merry could not help grinning a little as he thought of the piebald appearance the captain of St. Jim's would present for a day or two to come.

The darkness was deepening on St. Jim's. Tom Merry turned away from the window. Kildare had commanded him to wait in the study till he came, so Tom Merry could not leave. He threw himself into the Sixth-Former's armchair to wait.

Still Kildare did not come. Tom Merry had been half an hour in the dusky study, and he wondered whether he might venture to light the gas and borrow one of Kildare's books to pass the time away. He was bound to wait, but he was tired.

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of wasting time. But if Kildare came in and found the delinquent reading, he was likely to take that as an insult added to injury. It would be more judicious to assume a sad and repentant attitude.

Tom Merry wondered whether Kildare had forgotten all about telling him to wait in the study.

He yawned as he sat in the armchair waiting, in the deep dusk, and presently his eyes closed.

He had been playing a hard game of football that afternoon, and he was tired, and he nodded off to sleep as he sat in the easy-chair.

He did not quite realise that he was nodding off, and whether he quite slept or not he hardly knew. It seemed to him only a few seconds before the sound of voices fell upon his ears.

He started.

There was a light in the study; he blinked as it struck upon his opening eyes. For a moment he sat wondering where he was.

Voices were audible close to him; he recognised the tones of Kildare and of Langton of the Sixth, without following the sense of the words.

He sat upright in the chair.

He understood now.

He had fallen asleep; and Kildare and Langton had entered the study without seeing him. The armchair was drawn up facing the grate, and the high back of it prevented the two seniors from seeing Tom Merry. They were standing just inside the study, and the table was between them and the big chair.

Tom Merry had just realised it, and was about to rise to his feet, when Langton's voice came clearly and distinctly, with words that made him start.

"I must have five pounds, Kildare, or I shall be ruined. If you can't lend it to me, I don't know what to do."

Tom Merry bit his lip.

Langton would certainly never have uttered those words if he had known that any ears besides Kildare's were there to hear them. Quite unintentionally Tom Merry was playing the part of an eaves-dropper. His cheeks burned red at the thought. Before Kildare could answer Langton, the junior sprang to his feet.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "I—I—I—"

Kildare and Langton swung round towards him—the former frowning, and the latter turning white.

"I—I—I—" stammered Tom Merry.

Kildare gave him a furious look.

"Tom Merry, you have been listening!"

Tom Merry turned crimson.

The angry accusation brought the red flush of shame and indignation to his face. For a moment he could not speak. Kildare strode towards him. Langton, the prefect, stood with a pale face, his lips hard set.

"Tom Merry, how dare you!" exclaimed Kildare.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"I haven't been listening!" he exclaimed indignantly. "You ought to know me better than that, Kildare! You've no right to say so!"

Kildare gritted his teeth.

"What are you doing here, then?" he exclaimed angrily.

Tom Merry met his eyes steadily.

"You told me to come here and wait for you," he said. "I suppose you haven't forgotten. I've been waiting for you ever since."

"I did not see you when I came in!"

"I fell asleep," said Tom Merry. "I was in the chair here. You woke me up speaking. I've been here an hour or more."

Kildare looked at him hard.

"Then you haven't heard what Langton was saying to me?" he asked.

Tom Merry shifted uncomfortably.

"Only his last sentence," he said. "I heard that. I didn't hear what he was saying before that. I just heard voices as I woke up, that's all; but I don't know what you were saying."

"What did you hear me say, then?" asked Langton, in a low voice.

"You said you wanted five pounds, or you would be ruined," said Tom Merry, flushing again.

Langton made a hopeless gesture.

"It's all up now," he said. "It will be all over the school in half an hour."

"You've no right to say anything of the sort," said Tom Merry, his cheeks burning. "Do you think that I'm a sneak and a tell-tale?"

"You—you won't repeat—"

"Of course not!"

"Honour bright?" asked Kildare.

"Honour bright!" said Tom Merry quietly.

Kildare turned to Langton.

"It's all right," he said. "You can trust him, Langton. He will keep his word."

Langton looked dubiously at Tom Merry. He knew that the leader of the Shell was one of the most decent fellows at St. Jim's, and a fellow of his word. But to have his secret at the discretion of a junior was terrible for the Sixth-Former. But it certainly could not be helped. Tom Merry had surprised his secret, and he had no choice but to trust to the word of the Shell fellow.

"Very well," he said. "I—I trust you, Merry."

"You can trust me all right," said Tom Merry. "Even if Kildare hadn't asked me to promise, I shouldn't dream of repeating anything that I heard by accident—especially a serious matter that's no business of mine. I shan't say a word. And you ought to know that; you have always known me to be decent."

Langton nodded.

"It's all right," he said. "I know you're to be trusted. Look here, Tom Merry, as I've—I've no choice about trusting you, I'll explain a little—"

"No need. I'm not curious."

"I'm in a difficult position, through no fault of my own," said Langton, in an agitated voice. "That's why I've asked Kildare for help. That's all I need tell you. Now, I rely on you to keep the secret."

"I'm going to keep it."

"Good!" said Kildare. "Buzz off!"

Tom Merry hesitated.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" demanded the captain of St. Jim's.

"The licking!" said Tom Merry, with a grin. "That's why I came here, you know. I'd rather get it over at once, if you don't mind."

Kildare smiled.

"You jolly well deserve a licking," he said. "But under the circumstances I'll let you off. One good turn deserves another."

"Look here, Kildare, I shall keep the secret just the same, whether you lick me or not," said Tom Merry. "No need to let me off on that account."

"You young ass! Do you want to be licked?"

"No, I don't; but I don't want to be bought off," said Tom Merry sturdily.

"Well, that's all right. I'm going to let you off. Now, buzz out of my study, and don't go to sleep in my chair again, or you'll hear of it!"

"Thank you, Kildare."

Tom Merry quitted the study.

He was glad enough to escape the licking; but his face was anxious and worried as he went down the passage. He would much rather have taken the licking than have surprised Langton's secret. It was a worry upon his mind, partly from the



fact that he hated keeping secrets, and partly from his regard for Langton. Langton was the most popular prefect in the School House, next to Kildare, and Tom Merry was concerned to know that he was in trouble. It was known to some of the fellows—Tom Merry among the others—that Langton had once been mixed up with “rotten” associates, who had brought him into trouble, and very nearly into disgrace. Tom Merry wondered if the old associates whom he had thrown off were enforcing some old claim upon him, and trying to bring him back under their influence.

“Licked?”  
The sudden question broke in upon Tom Merry’s reflections as he reached the end of the Sixth Form passage. Mellish was waiting there, apparently for the satisfaction of ascertaining the extent of Tom Merry’s punishment. There was no love lost between Tom Merry and the sneak of the Fourth.

“No,” said Tom Merry curtly.  
Mellish looked astonished.  
“Not licked!” he exclaimed.  
“No!”  
“You don’t mean to say that Kildare let you off after slopping all that stuff over his napper!” exclaimed Mellish.  
“Yes, I do.”  
“Blessed if I understand it, then!” said Mellish, in amazement. “Did Langton get you off? I noticed that he went in with Kildare just now.”  
“No, he didn’t.”

“Well, I don’t understand it. Some more of Kildare’s rotten favouritism, I suppose,” said Mellish, with a sniff. “If I’d slopped that stuff over him, I should have been licked fast enough—or Levison, either.”

“Oh, shut up!”  
“Well, I think it’s rotten!”  
“Did you want me to be licked, you cad?” said Tom Merry. “Look here, if you say anything more against Kildare you’ll get a thick ear.”  
“Well, I don’t believe in favouritism.”

Biff!  
“Yaroo!”  
Tom Merry walked on, leaving Mellish leaning against the wall, holding his nose.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Langton’s Last Chance.

LANGTON of the Sixth stood silent in Kildare’s study after Tom Merry had left. His face was very pale, and he breathed hard. Kildare fixed his eyes upon the prefect’s face, with a mingling of compassion and impatience in his look.

“Buck up, Langton, old man!” he said. “You can trust Tom Merry. He won’t repeat a word of what he has heard here; I feel sure of that.”

Langton nodded.  
“It would be rotten if it got about the school!” he said.

“It won’t get about.”  
“Well, it’s no good worrying about it, I suppose,” said Langton. “It depends on Tom Merry whether he holds his tongue or not. Do you think he really heard only that one sentence, as he says?”

“I think he told the truth.”  
“I hope so. Well, it can’t be helped. To come back to the subject. Can you let me have the five quid?”

Kildare hesitated.  
“Look here, Langton!” he said abruptly. “Before I lend you any money, I want to have this matter settled up. It was understood that your connection with those rotters down in the town had ended for good. The Head understood that when he overlooked the matter, and pardoned you for having

played the giddy goat as you did! Excuse my speaking plainly; it’s the best thing in the long run!”

“I know that. Don’t mind me!”  
“Well, if you broke off with that set, as you promised to do, what do you want five quid to settle an old debt for?”

Langton’s lips quivered. The big, stalwart Sixth-Former, one of the strongest batsmen in the First Eleven, was looking downcast, nervous, uneasy under the steady gaze of the captain of St. Jim’s.

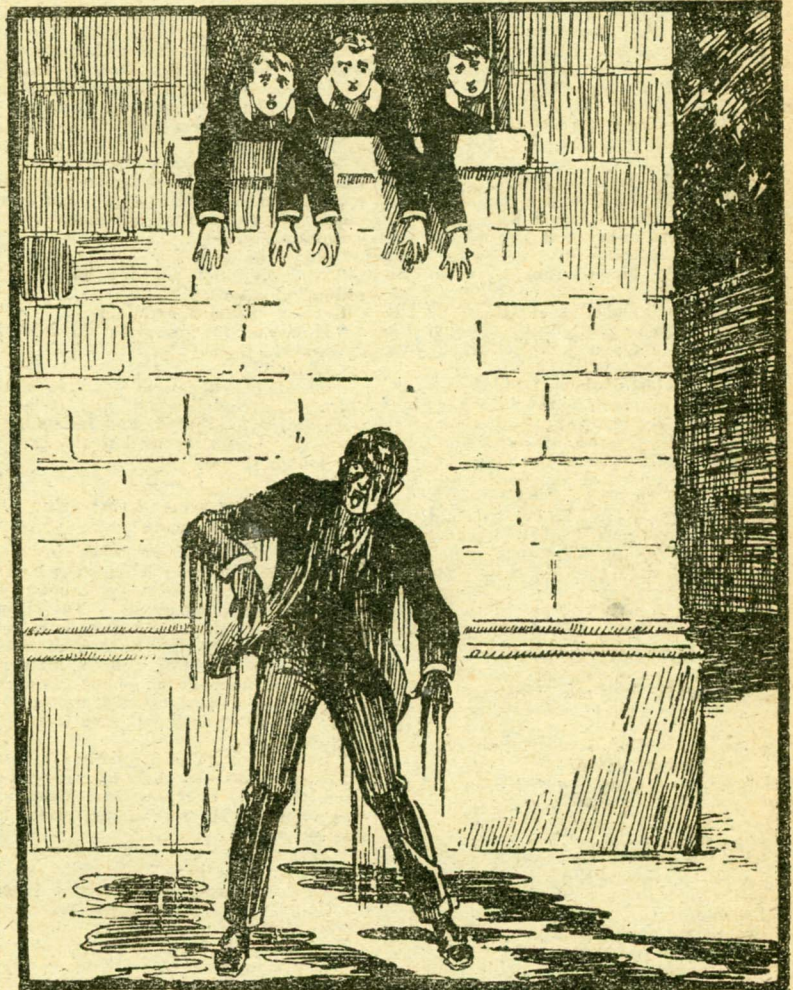
“They say these things never really end,” he said, with a sigh. “It’s easier to get into a scrape than to get out again. It’s true that I broke off with Joliffe and his set, and since my trouble with them

“Simons! The pawnbroker in Wayland?” exclaimed Kildare.

“Yes. He’s a moneylender as well as a pawnbroker. I borrowed the money of him to finish settling with those cads, on reasonable terms, as I thought; but—but it turns out that there was a clause in the paper I signed that I didn’t notice—I’m not much of a business man, anyway, and old Simons is as keen as a hawk—and I found that I owed him as much interest as principal!”

“The rotter!” exclaimed Kildare wrathfully.

“I’ve paid him everything I had, but there’s five quid more due to him,” said Langton heavily. “He’s offered to renew my paper—that means, to have the



The figure, smothered and drenched by the special mixture, gasped and gurgled in a suffocated manner. “Groo! Oh! What-what—Tom Merry! How dare you!” Tom Merry & Co. gasped. “It—it’s not Figgins! It’s Kildare!”

I’ve never seen or spoken to any of them. I hope you can take my word on that subject?”

“Yes. But now—”  
“It’s another man entirely. I owed those rotters money, and I’ve paid them up—every penny; but I borrowed money to do it!”

“Oh!” said Kildare.  
“I’ve managed pretty well,” said Langton. “I’ve had some big tips from my uncle, and some from my pater. They’ve all gone the same way—to clear off my debt to Simons!”

whole thing start over again, with interest piling up, to keep me under his thumb for good. I’m at the end of my resources now—everything’s gone—and if I don’t get five quid to finish with the cad to-day, I’m done in. I shall have to sign a fresh paper, and start the whole thing afresh, and—and I sha’n’t be able to meet his claims. It means that he’ll have me under his thumb all the time I’m at St. Jim’s. I’d rather chuck the whole thing than submit to that. I’d rather clear out of the school!”



Kildare nodded.

"But you are not bound to pay the old shark anything," he said. "You're a minor!"

Langton smiled bitterly.

"He knows that as well as I do; but he knows, too, that if he told the Head, or my pater, that I had had dealings with a moneylender, I should be ruined."

Kildare looked keenly at the prefect.

"Look here, Langton, you've told me all? You borrowed the money only to pay off your old debts to Joliffe and his set?"

"Yes."

"And five quid would clear you of Simons'?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll stand you the fiver," said Kildare. "You can let me have it back before the end of the term, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Langton. "In three weeks, I expect. But I want it to-day badly, so that I can tackle Simons before the date of my paper expires."

"Good, then!" said Kildare. "I've got a fiver that I was setting aside for my holiday next vacation, and I'll let you have it!"

Langton's eyes moistened.

"It's jolly good of you, Kildare!" he said. "I sha'n't forget this. I know I've no right to bring my troubles to you in this way, but—but there's no other fellow at St. Jim's I should care to tell about it!"

"That's all right," said Kildare. "I'm glad enough to lend you the money, if it will really get you quite clear of your difficulties."

"It's the last of them," said the prefect. "It's not my fault, either. Ever since that row over my going to Joliffe's, I've been keeping quite straight, and only trying to keep clear of the gang."

Kildare unlocked his desk, and took out a crisp, rustling five-pound note from an envelope. He laid it on the table.

The prefect picked up the banknote.

"Thank you, Kildare, old man!" he said. "I sha'n't forget this, I promise you. I'll return you the money this term, and I sha'n't forget the obligation as long as I live. I shall feel a new man when I've got rid of that old scrape for good!"

And he turned to the door.

There was a slight sound in the passage, and Langton stepped quickly towards the door, and opened it and glanced out.

The passage was empty.

"What's the row?" asked Kildare, looking at him in surprise.

"I thought I heard somebody," said Langton uneasily. "But there's nobody here. I suppose it was my fancy."

Kildare laughed slightly.

"Well, a listener couldn't have got to the end of the passage by the time you opened the door," he said. "You're all nerves to-day, Langton."

"I suppose I am," said Langton.

"Thank you again, Kildare. I'll go off to Wayland at once, and get this matter off my mind!"

"Good idea!" said Kildare.

Langton left the study, and went down the passage.

His footsteps died away; and then, a few minutes later, the door of the study next to Kildare's opened, and a face looked cautiously out.

It was the face of Percy Mellish, of the Fourth, the sneak of the School House.

Mellish was breathing fast.

"My word!" he murmured. "That was a narrow shave! If I hadn't popped into Darrel's study, or if Darrel had happened to be there—"

He shivered a little.

The passage was deserted now, and Mellish stepped out of Darrel's study, and

made his way as quickly as he could out of the Sixth-Form quarters. The junior's eyes were gleaming with excitement.

He went slowly up to the Fourth-Form passage, and into his own study. Levison, of the Fourth, was there. Levison was Mellish's study-mate, and his only friend—if the tie between them could be called friendship.

Levison looked curiously at the sneak of the School House as he came into the study, with a flush of suppressed excitement on his face.

"Anything up?" he asked.

Mellish closed the door carefully.

"Yes. I've found something out."

"Oh! What is it?"

"How do you feel towards Tom Merry?" asked Mellish.

Levison gritted his teeth.

"You know," he replied. "About the same as you do. I'd give a year's pocket-money to see him sacked from the school. Not that it's likely to happen. And if you've got some scheme on against him, you can leave me out. I've got to be jolly careful for a bit!"

Mellish grinned.

"Suppose there was a chance of getting him into Kildare's black books, and showing him up to the House as a liar and a sneak?" he exclaimed triumphantly.

Levison started.

"Rot!" he said.

"Well, it's not rot—it's as easy as rolling off a form!"

Levison looked incredulous.

"How are you going to do it?" he demanded.

"Listen!"

And Mellish began to speak in a low voice. Levison listened; and as he listened his eyes glinted, and he smiled a smile that boded no good to the hero of the School House.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Accused!

THE Sixth Form were in their places in their Form-room on the following morning when Dr. Holmes came in. The Head crossed to his desk, and gave a sudden start as he caught sight of a paper placed upon it, evidently intended for his eyes.

He stood for some moments gazing at the paper, and then picked it up.

He turned towards the Sixth with a clouded brow.

"Langton!" he said quietly.

Langton shivered a little. He knew from the Head's tone that something was coming. He rose in his place, his lips set.

"Yes, sir?"

"Please come here."

Langton crossed over to the Head. Dr. Holmes held out the paper.

"Read that," he said.

Langton looked at the paper. A sentence was written upon it in a large, backward hand, evidently disguised. It ran:

"How much money does Langton owe Simons the moneylender?"

That was all!

Langton's face went pale as he read it.

Dr. Holmes scanned the pale, troubled face of the prefect.

"I suppose that is simply a foolish prank of some junior, Langton?" he said, tearing the paper into halves and tossing them under his desk.

Langton was silent.

"I do not believe the charge that is contained in that wretched note, Langton," said the Head gently. "I only ask you in order that you may say that there is nothing in it."

"I can't say so, sir."

"Langton!"

The prefect stood silent and miserable. "Do you mean to say that you owe this man Simons money?" asked the Head, with a sterner ring in his voice.

"No, sir; not now."

"Then you have had dealings with him?"

Langton bowed his head.

"Yes, sir."

"I am astonished, Langton. You are a prefect, and you—" The Head paused. "But this is no place to speak of it. Come into my study after lessons."

"Yes, sir," said Langton duly.

He went back to his place.

Kildare gave him an inquiring look.

"He knows!" muttered Langton.

"The Head? How?"

"Someone wrote it on a slip of paper and left it on his desk."

"Oh!" muttered Kildare.

"It's all up!"

Langton relapsed into miserable silence.

He was absent-minded enough during the lessons that morning, but the Head, and Mr. Railton, after him, did not appear to notice it. When lessons were over, and the Sixth went out, Langton made his way with slow and heavy steps towards the Head's study.

The Shell were just out, and Langton paused as he passed the crowd of Shell fellows in the Form-room passage. He gave Tom Merry a bitter look.

"You have done your worst now, Merry," he said, in a low voice.

Tom Merry started.

"What do you mean, Langton?"

"The Head has been told."

"I did not tell him!" said Tom Merry fiercely.

"No; I think you would stop short of that," said Langton bitterly. "But someone has told him—I think I can guess whom; but it does not matter. It is all up with me now. I hope it will be a satisfaction to you to know that you have ruined me by breaking your word!"

Tom Merry was about to make a fierce retort, but the misery in Langton's white, drawn face disarmed him.

"Langton," he said earnestly, "can't you believe me? I swear that I never said a word—not a syllable has passed my lips about what I heard in Kildare's study."

"How did it get out, then?"

"I don't know. But I never said a word. Don't you believe me?"

"No, I don't!"

And Langton passed on.

Tom Merry remained standing where he was, very white. Kildare stopped as he passed. Langton had gone to the Head's study; and Kildare, full of concern for his friend, was pale with anger.

As the captain of St. Jim's stood before Tom Merry the juniors gathered round. They could see that it meant trouble. The Shell and the Fourth and the Third, fellows of both Houses, were nearly all there. Kildare looked over the swarm of juniors in the Form-room passage. He could not have wanted a bigger audience.

"I've got a few words to say, you fellows!" said Kildare, in a low, angry voice. "I want to tell you what Tom Merry has done. It isn't a thing I can punish him for, as captain of the school; but I hope there are decent fellows enough at St. Jim's to show him what they think of him for it."

"Kildare—"

"Hold your tongue, Tom Merry!" said the St. Jim's captain fiercely. "The fellows are going to know. They've a right to know the kind of fellow you are."



The Shell ought to know whom they've selected as their Form captain."

"Weahly, Kildare——"  
"Dash it all!" exclaimed Figgins of the Fourth. "There's some mistake, Kildare. It's no good telling us that Tom Merry's done anything rotten!"

"Wathah not!"  
"We sha'n't believe it," said Manners. "No fear!" said Lowther.  
"Suppose you let Kildare speak?" suggested Crooke sarcastically.

"I'm going to speak," said Kildare. "The whole school ought to know, so that they can treat Tom Merry as he deserves. Yesterday evening Langton came to my study to speak about a private matter; and Tom Merry was there, hidden out of sight in my easy-chair, and he heard what Langton said."

"Oh!"  
"He said he had fallen asleep there, while waiting for me——"

"I said what was true!" said Tom Merry.

"Don't interrupt me. I believed what he said then, and I asked him to promise not to repeat what he had heard Langton say to me. He promised—honour bright."

"I kept my word!"  
"The day after," said Kildare, "the story was all over the school. Langton and I had never spoken on the subject before—we have never spoken on it since. Nobody but Tom Merry knew a word about it. Langton, by no fault of his own, got mixed up with that rotten moneylender in Wayland. You fellows can take my word for it that in this matter Langton was not to blame. But he knew, and I knew, how it would tell against him if it were made public property, and we asked Tom Merry to keep the secret, and he promised. He gave his word—honour bright. You all know how he kept it. Nobody but Tom Merry could have told the story—and it was told."

"Bai Jove!"  
"Either he couldn't hold his tongue, or he had some score to pay off against a prefect, I suppose," said Kildare. "Anyway, he broke his word. And that's a pretty clear proof that he was speaking falsely when he said that he was asleep in the chair. I believe now that he was deliberately hiding there and listening. He is a spy and a tell-tale. Spying and telling tales don't come under the head of things juniors are caned for, and I'm not going to punish him. But I hope all the fellows of St. Jim's will show him what they think of his action."

Kildare strode away.  
Tom Merry stood almost stunned. He had never expected this—and from Kildare, the fellow he liked and respected more than any other senior at St. Jim's.

He looked round almost wildly. Dark glances were cast upon him from every side.

"So that's the story, is it?" said Crooke, with a sneering smile.

"Spy!"  
"Tell-tale!"  
"Cad!"

"Langton's a pretty rotter, from what Kildare says," said Levison, "but I think Tom Merry beats him hollow. And he founded the Tom Merry Legion of Honour, with the motto 'Honour Bright.' And he's broken his word!"  
"Shame!"

"Shut up!" said Monty Lowther fiercely.

Tom Merry tried to speak, but it seemed that the words would not come. And from the crowd of juniors in the passage came a torrent of hissing.

"Cad!"  
"Spy!"  
"Shame!"

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

## Wally Looks Into the Matter.

TOM MERRY'S usually sunny face was very clouded that afternoon. Although his own personal friends were rallying round him in the most loyal way, the rest of the fellows were decidedly unpleasant. It was very seldom that Crooke or Mellish or Levison had any following in their Forms, but they seemed to be taking the lead now.

It was the weight of Kildare's condemnation that told against Tom Merry. The captain's word was law, and if he declared that Tom Merry was a spy, and had broken his word, the whole School House was prepared to believe it.

There were whispering and mutterings in the Shell Form-room that afternoon, directed against the captain of the Form, which Tom Merry pretended not to hear.

After lessons were over the Terrible Three left the Form-room together. Monty Lowther and Manners linked arms with Tom Merry, as an outward and visible sign to the whole school that they were standing by their chum when he was down on his luck.

"Come down to the footer," said Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.  
"I—I'd rather not," he said, in a strained voice. "I don't want to mix with the fellows just now. It would only lead to unpleasantness."

"Oh, blow the fellows!" said Lowther.  
"Yes, blow 'em!" said Manners.  
There was a yell along the passage.

"Spy!"  
Tom Merry turned crimson.  
"You hear that?" he said bitterly.  
"That's what I'm going to get now, pretty thick. You fellows go out; I'll go into the study for a bit."

"Oh, I don't know that I want to go out," said Manners. "I've got some films to develop, too. I'll come up to the study."

"So will I," said Lowther. "I'll help you with the giddy films."

"Don't let me keep you in," said Tom Merry, in distress.

"Oh, rats!"  
And the Terrible Three went up to their study in the Shell passage.

"Spy!" yelled a voice after them on the stairs.

It came from Mellish of the Fourth. The Shell fellows turned round furiously, and Mellish fled downstairs three at a time. Unfortunately for him, he met Wally of the Third and Joe Frayne, who were coming up.

The two fags grasped him, and bumped him over on the stairs.

"Ow!" roared Mellish. "Lemme go!"

"Not just yet," said D'Arcy minor coolly. "I think you called out something just now to my respected friend Tommy."

"I heard him," said Frayne.  
"I—I didn't! I mean—let go!" yelled Mellish, in terror lest the fags should detain him until the Terrible Three reached the spot.

Wally glanced up the stairs to the Shell fellows on the landing.

"It's all serene," he called out. "You can leave him to us."

"Wotto!" chuckled Frayne.

The Terrible Three went on to their study. Wally sat on the chest of the Fourth-Former, pinning him down by sheer weight. Mellish struggled violently.

"Lemme go, you young cads!" he shouted.

"Not till you've begged pardon for being a cheeky kid," said Wally placidly.

"Are you going to say you're sorry?"  
"No! Oh!"

"Jump on his head, Frayne!"  
"Cert'nly!" grinned Frayne.  
"Oh! Keep off! Ow! I'm sorry!" shrieked Mellish.  
"Awfully sorry?"  
"Ow! Yes!"  
"Awfully, fearfully sorry?" demanded Wally.

"Yow! Yes!" gasped Mellish.  
"Anything you like! Lemme go!"  
"Good!" said Wally. "Always own up when you're in the wrong, you know. Roll him down the stairs, Joe, my son!"

"Wotto!"  
And the two fags rolled Mellish down the stairs, and he reached the bottom in a decidedly dusty and dishevelled state.

Wally and his chum chuckled, and continued on their way upstairs. They followed the Terrible Three into Tom Merry's study. Manners was already at work upon his films.

"Cheer up, Tommy, my infant!" said Wally cheerfully. "Not dead yet, you know. We're going to look into this matter."

Tom Merry smiled faintly. He had not very great hopes that Wally's looking into the matter would lead to any surprising results.

"Thank you!" he said.  
"The chaps are all silly asses," said Wally. "We're taking this matter up, ain't we, Joe?"

"We is!" grinned Frayne.

"Langton's an ass, and Kildare's an ass, and they're all asses," said Wally. "When you want real solid hoss-sense you have to come to the Third. Eh?"

"Wotto!" said Frayne. "Me and Wally knows you are all right, Master Tom. We know you wouldn't do anything rotten, whatever they say. We know that, Master Tom."

"Not so much of your Master Tom!" said Wally severely. "You'll make these Shell bounders swelled-headed, kid. Look here, Tom Merry, we're looking into the matter. You didn't repeat what you heard in Kildare's study, did you?"

"No!"  
"Then somebody else must have heard those two giddy goats jawing, and told the fearful tale?" suggested Wally.

"Don't cackle, young Frayne. This is a serious matter."

"Orlright, Master Wally."

"I suppose so," said Tom Merry. "Unless Kildare or Langton let it out, somebody else must have heard them."

"Kildare or Langton didn't let it out, you can bet your boots on that!" said Wally. "It was somebody played the spy; somebody who was very anxious to put it down to you, too. Was there anybody else in the study when you had that little nap?"

"Nobody."

"After you left, did they go on jawing?"

"I dare say they did."

"Then somebody might have heard them—suppose there was somebody with a special gift for investigating at key-holes—Levison or Mellish, for instance."

"I suppose it was something like that," said Tom Merry.

"Well, Kildare has said that they didn't talk of the matter again—so if they were overheard, it must have been on that occasion," said Wally. "Therefore, if another fellow played the spy on them, it must have been jolly soon after you left the study—before they left off jawing on the subject."

"Yes."

"When you left Kildare's quarters, then, did you see any other chap hanging about—any chap who'd be likely to listen?"

Tom Merry started.



"By Jove! Yes. Mellish was there!" Wally gave a chuckle of triumph. "Mellish! He's our bird, then." "Wotto!" said Joe Frayne. "You are sure you saw Mellish on the spot?" asked Wally, in a cross-examining manner, wagging his forefinger at the captain of the Shell.

"Quite sure. He knew I was going to Kildare's study for a licking, and he was waiting there to see me come out, licked. He was disappointed to find that I hadn't been licked, and I biffed him!"

"Aha! Now we're getting to it," said Wally shrewdly. "He was inquisitive, of course; he knew that Kildare must have had some awfully special reason for letting you off a licking, after you had slobbered that fearful stuff over his napper. He's an inquisitive beast; and we know he ain't above listening at keyholes; he's been caught at it. Did he know Langton was in the study?"

"Yes; he mentioned that he'd seen him go in," said Tom Merry, recollecting.

"Good—better and better!" said D'Arcy minor. "Didn't I tell you we were the proper persons to take up this giddy investigation, Joe?"

"You did, Master Wally," said Frayne gravely.

"Now, that's how I work it out," said Wally, tapping his finger on the study table. "Mellish was curious; he always is. He knew Langton and Kildare were jawing in the study. He wanted to know what awfully special reason Kildare had for letting you off. You hadn't told him, and he sniffed a mystery. So he buzzed along, and listened at the keyhole."

"Ear, 'ear!" said Frayne admiringly.

"Then, of course, he saw his chance; one up against you, and one up against Langton, by repeating the yarn up and down the school," said Wally. "What do you think of that, Tom Merry? Haven't I worked it out beautifully?"

"Rippingly!" said Tom Merry. "There's only one weak point; Mellish would deny having done anything of the sort, and you've got no proof."

"Ye-e-es, that's so," admitted Wally. "But it's something to know the facts. We can look for the proofs afterwards. Sherlock Holmes always got at the facts first. We're going to find the proofs, ain't we, young Frayne?"

"Wotto!" said Joe Frayne. "Certainly, Master Wally."

"Now, if Manners had only been along there with his camera," said Wally regretfully. "A snapshot of Mellish listening at Kildare's keyhole would have been a splendid proof. That's where Sherlock Holmes always got at the advantage; his proofs are made up to suit his theories. I suppose you didn't happen to be taking photographs in the Sixth Form passage about that time, Manners?"

"No," grinned Manners. "I didn't." "That's unfortunate. You might have been taking an interior, you know. You always were a careless ass," said Wally peevishly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Never mind," said D'Arcy minor, more cheerfully. "We've got to find some proofs, or to make some up. I'm going to clear this matter up. Come along, Watson—I mean young Frayne."

And the two fags quitted the study, Wally with his brows very much wrinkled, in a deep effort of thought.

"Looks to me as if that young beggar is on the track, though," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "I shouldn't wonder if he's worked it out all right."

"Very likely. But it can't be proved."

"No; I suppose not."

But that remained to be seen!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.  
Many Witnesses.

THE chums of Study No. 6 were in that famous apartment, working away at their preparation, when

Wally came in, kicking open the door in the free-and-easy manner which he cultivated, in spite of the admonitions of his major. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy fixed a severe glance upon him, which did not seem to abash him in the least.

"Weally, Wally—" said D'Arcy major.

"Don't you begin, Gus," said Wally appealingly. "I didn't come here for a sermon. I'm here on business."

"Do you see the door?" asked Jack Blake politely.

"Eh? Yes."

"Well, shut it after you."

Wally grinned.

"I'm not going yet," he said. "I've come here on business, not simply to enjoy your good manners."

There was a chuckle from the passage, betraying the fact that Joe Frayne was waiting outside for his chum.

"I'm looking into this affair of Tom Merry," Wally explained, in an airy way. "I'm going to make the facts known. A thing of this kind is rather above the weight of the Shell!"

Another chuckle from the passage.

"I want you fellows to help me," said Wally.

"Do you mean to say that you've found anything out?" demanded Blake.

"Yes."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "Vewy good! What have you discovered, deah boy?"

"The giddy culprit."

The Fourth-Formers stared.

"I don't quite catch on," said Blake.

"I don't expect you to," said Wally cheerfully. "They forgot the Fourth Form when brains were handed out. Well, it wasn't Tom Merry who yarned about Langton and his little games; it was another chap who listened at the door!"

"My hat!"

"I've spotted the giddy criminal, but I've got to prove it."

"Yes," said Blake sarcastically. "I dare say there will be a little bit of proof required. The Third Form isn't exactly an oracle!"

"I'm going to get the proof," said Wally. "And you fellows have got to help me. I want you as witnesses."

"Witnesses! How?"

"You see, I've got a scheme on to make the culprit confess," Wally explained. "But it's no good his confessing to me. He'd deny it afterwards."

"Yaas, vewy likely."

"But if you fellows and half a dozen more are hanging round, and you hear him—of course, without the rotter seeing you—he can't deny it afterwards, can he?" demanded Wally triumphantly.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"Do you mean that you want us to be there without the fellah knowin' it, Wally?"

"Just so."

"To listen to him confessin'?"

"Exactly!"

"Then I'm afraid it can't be done," said the swell of St. Jim's. "You would be puttin' us into the position of listeners, deah boy. Imposs!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wally impatiently.

"It's not eavesdropping in this case; it's getting evidence. Detectiv's do it!"

"I werged it as vewy wotten of them if they do!"

Wally snorted.

"Is it more rotten than leaving Tom Merry to be sniffed at, and called names, because of something he hasn't done?" he demanded.

"Well, no, that is wotten, too!"

"It's the only way to get the facts out," said Wally. "I don't say that it's a specially ripping kind of scheme; but there's no proof against the villain unless he owns up, and his owning up won't be any good unless it's done in the presence of witnesses. So there you are!"

"Yaas, that puts a wathah different complexion on the mattah," assented Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Howevah, I don't like the ideah!"

"Well, you can stay here and polish your silk hat!" growled Wally. "I suppose you other fellows will come?"

"Yes," said Blake, "if there's anything in it. I suppose this isn't one of your giddy Third-Form japes, is it?"

"No, ass! It's honest Injun," said Wally. "I tell you I've spotted the criminal, and it's up to us to nail him down. I'm going to interview him, with a dozen fellows within hearing. If he owns up, he's done in; if he doesn't, there's no harm done, and you fellows needn't show yourselves. If any of you can suggest a better way of clearing Tom Merry, I'm willing to follow your lead."

"I can't, for one," said Digby.

"Sure you're not on the wrong track, Wally?" asked Blake doubtfully.

"I know I'm not."

"Who's the fellow you suspect?"

"That's my secret, till it comes out," said Wally coolly. "I'm not giving it away. You fellows might jaw, and put the rotter on his guard!"

"Wally, Wally—"

"No time for talk," said Wally briskly. "I want you all to get into one of the Form-rooms—the Fourth Form-room will do, as there won't be anybody there. Get out of sight—in the cupboard, or behind old Lathom's desk, anything you like—so that the fellow won't see you when he comes in with me!"

Blake hesitated.

"Well, I don't mind doing it, if it's a chance of setting Tom Merry right with the fellows," he said.

"It's the only chance!" growled Wally.

"We'll do it, then. When?"

"Better get down there at once. I'm going round to tell some more of the fellows, so they'll join you there. If I keep you waiting a bit, it can't be helped. You'll know when I'm coming; I'll whistle in the passage."

"Good!"

And Wally, looking very important indeed, retired. The chums of Study No. 6 looked at one another, and grinned.

"Think there's anything in it?" asked Herries.

Jack Blake nodded.

"I shouldn't wonder," he said.

"Wally is a deep young beggar. But if he gets the rotter to own up in the presence of witnesses, I shall be pleased—and surprised. Still, we'll give him the chance. I'd do more than that to help get Tom Merry set right with the House!"

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"Yaas, wathah!"

The four chums left their study, and made their way to the Fourth Form-room on the ground floor. As they entered it, they found Kangaroo of the Shell, and Reilly of the Fourth, there. Kangaroo greeted them with a grin.

"Hallo! More giddy witnesses?" he asked.

"Yes. Did Wally send you here?"

"Yes. He's got some scheme for clearing Tom Merry, he says, and he's asked us to help," said Kangaroo. "I don't know whether there's anything in it, but we're giving the cheeky young beggar a show!"

"Faith, and it's worth the trouble, if anything comes of it!" remarked Reilly. "We've got to get out of sight when we're all here!"

"How many are coming?" asked Blake.

"Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther yet, I think."

A few minutes later the Terrible Three came in. They were followed by Figgins and Redfern of the New House.

"That's the lot!" said Tom Merry, with a nod to the assembled juniors. "I suppose all you fellows know what you're here for?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you don't like the bizney, you can clear off," said Tom Merry. "I don't want to drag any chap into it!"

"That's all right," said Kangaroo. "Let's give Wally a chance. There may be something in the scheme!"

"Yaas, wathah! I don't exactly approve of the ideah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; "but, undah the cires, I don't see that there's anythin' else to be done. But I weally can't say that I wholly like the ideah, you know!"

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his monocle upon Lowther.

"Did you say 'Wats!' to me, Lowthah?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then I shall have no wesource but to—"

"Order!" said Blake. "We haven't come here to see a dog-fight! Shut up!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"If Gussy's going to make a row, it won't do Wally's scheme any good," remarked Manners. "Better chuck him out!"

"I should uttably wcfuse to be chucked out!"

"Then be quiet!" said Blake. "Can't you get out of the limelight for once? You're dead in this act!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Time we got into cover," said Monty Lowther. "Some of you squeeze into the cupboard, and some behind the big desk. That will be all right!"

"Undah the cires, Lowthah—"

"No; under the desk," said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! Undah te cires, I shall let you off—"

"My hat! I'm not a gun!" said Lowther, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful ass! I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Let's get into cover!"

Arthur Augustus, after bestowing an indignant glare upon Monty Lowther, stalked away behind the Form-master's desk.

It was very dusky in the Form-room, only a glimmer of evening light coming in at the high windows. Blake and D'Arcy and Tom Merry found cover behind the high desk, and the other fellows crowded into the wall-cupboard,

where easels, blackboards, and other paraphernalia were kept. They drew the door almost shut behind them, leaving it an inch or two ajar for air—and to hear!

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "I don't like this!"

"You've said that before," said Blake. "Can't you put on a new record?"

"I'm not alludin' to the bizney, deah boy. I'm thinkin' of the knees of my twousahs!"

"Blow your silly trousers!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shurruup!"

"I'm afwaid I'm making my bags dustay. Pewwaps I had bettah get into the cupboard aftah all!"

"Hist! Shush!"

From the Form-room passage without came the sound of a tune whistled—very shrilly. It was the musical effort of Wally of the Third.

"Weally, you fellahs—"

ceeding to box the ears of the scamp of the Third.

"Look here, what do you want, young D'Arcy?" he demanded. "You said that you had something to say to me."

Wally nodded.

"Something important, I said," he replied. "So I have."

"Well, you can say it here, I suppose," growled Mellish.

"Yes, I can—if you want fellows to come along the passage and hear," said Wally cheerfully. "But you'd better step into the Form-room."

"Look here, what have you got to talk to me about?"

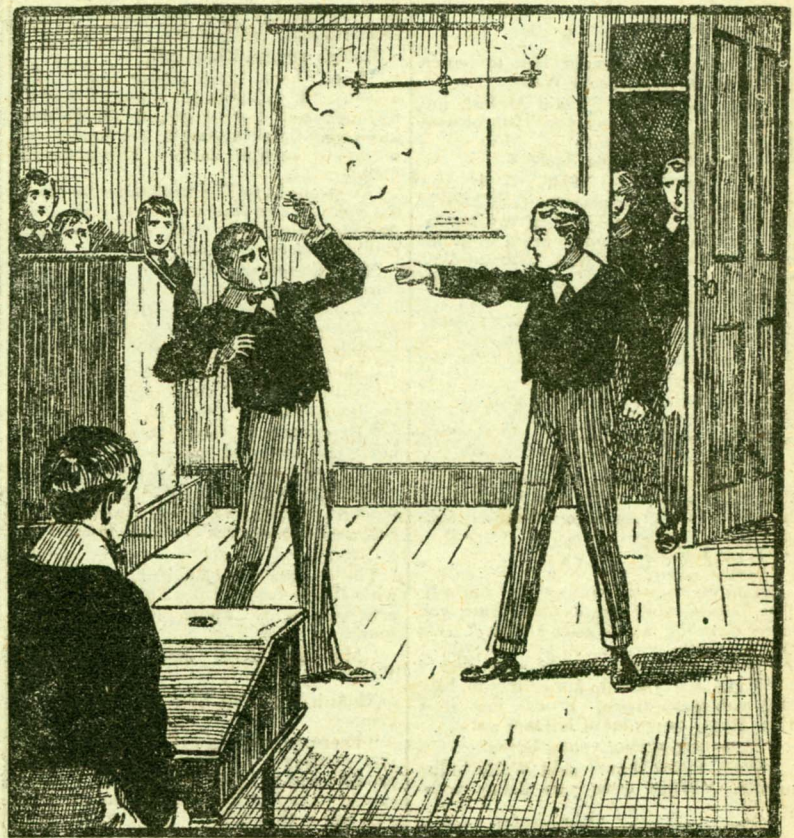
"About what happened yesterday evening."

Mellish started.

"About Tom Merry in Kildare's study, do you mean?" he asked.

"No; about you outside Kildare's study," said Wally coolly.

Mellish looked at him uneasily. He



"Gentlemen," called out Wally grimly, "kindly step into view, and behold our respected friend Mellish trying to bribe and corrupt a respectable youth!" Mellish gave a yell of terror, for, at Wally's words, the door of the wall-cupboard was flung open, and the concealed juniors rushed out; and Tom Merry & Co. rose into view from behind the Form-master's desk.

"Hush!" whispered Tom Merry.

"Yaas; but—"

Blake put his hand firmly over the mouth of his elegant chum, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy relapsed into silence. The Form-room door opened.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.  
The Wiles of Wally.

JUST step in here, Mellish!" Mellish of the Fourth hesitated. There was a tone of authority in D'Arcy minor's voice, which made Mellish inclined to box his ears—only it was not a safe pro-

no longer demurred, but stepped into the Form-room, which was usually deserted at that hour, and seemed deserted now. Wally followed him in and closed the door. They stood looking at one another in the deepening dusk, and the signs of inward uneasiness were easily visible in Percy Mellish's face.

"I suppose you know what I'm going to say, now?" said Wally. "The question is, whether I give you away or not. That depends."

"Look here," broke out the cad of the Fourth savagely, "don't beat about the bush. What have you got to say?"



"I'll tell you." Wally groped under his jacket, and took out a little pocket camera. "You know what this is, I suppose?"

"Yes; a rotten, cheap camera," said Mellish.

"It may be a cheap one, but it takes good photos," said Wally. "I've taken a lot of good snapshots with that camera."

"Blow your camera and your silly snapshots! I don't care about them. I didn't come here to hear you jaw photography," said Mellish irritably.

"I'm open to sell that camera," said Wally.

"I don't want to buy one."

"With the plates in it, too," said Wally. "Not unused plates, either—one of them has been used."

Mellish stared at him blankly.

"I begin to think you're going off your dot," he said, with a glance towards the door. "I suppose I don't want to buy up used plates, do I? What's the good of them?"

"To destroy."

"Eh?"

"I thought you might like to smash up the plate," explained Wally.

"Oh, you're dotty!" said Mellish impatiently. "If this is a joke, I'm blessed if I see where it comes in. I'm off!" He turned towards the door.

"Right-ho!" said Wally. "If you prefer me to sell the plate to Tom Merry, I dare say he will take it off my hands. Ho would be interested to see a snapshot of the Sixth Form passage, with a fellow about your size kneeling outside Kildare's door, with his ear to the keyhole."

It was a bold stroke on Wally's part; but it hit the mark. Mellish stopped dead, and then he turned round from the door, trembling in every limb.

"Wh-wh-what's that?" he gasped.

"Getting deaf?" asked Wally.

"Wh-what did you say?"

"You heard what I said."

"You—you've got a snap of the Sixth Form passage in that camera?" asked Mellish, who seemed to be breathing with difficulty.

"What-ho!"

"Taken when?"

"You can work that out for yourself. Try to remember the exact minute you were listening at Kildare's door," said Wally calmly.

"I—I wasn't—I—I didn't—"

"I can tell you the time, if you like, that you were there. It was just after Tom Merry came out of Kildare's study."

"You—you spying young hound—"

"Well, I like that!" said Wally indignantly. "What were you doing yourself?"

"You—you're a blackmailing young villain!" hissed Mellish. "You took that photograph to get money out of me!"

"Business is business, you know!" said

Wally. "I'm open to sell you this camera."

"With—the negative in it?"

"Certainly!"

"Three-and-six?" said Mellish, with a glance at the camera.

"Three-and-six!" exclaimed Wally, in astonishment. "Why, it cost me that!"

"You can get them for that anywhere, that kind," said Mellish, fumbling in his pocket. "I'm willing to give you the price of a new one."

"The price has gone up," said Wally calmly. "The price of that camera, containing my snapshot, is ten shillings."

"What?"

"Getting deaf again?" smiled Wally. "I should recommend an ear-trumpet, if you find it coming on you like this. Or you might see a doctor."

"You extortionate young villain!"

"Ten bob is cheap. I can't afford to take snaps for nothing. And a really good interior is worth money. You can keep the picture as a souvenir—you can keep it by you all your life, to remind you in your old age how you started in life as a criminal," said Wally.

Mellish snapped his teeth.

"Look here, you young cad!" he hissed. "If this gets out it means trouble for me; but I shall let all the fellows know about your trying to get money out of me to keep it dark. That's blackmail."

"You ought to like me better for that, old son. It's in your own line, you know. Are you going to buy this camera for ten shillings, or are you not?"

"I—I'll give you five."

"Ten bob is the price. A really effective picture of Mellish of the Fourth, in his favourite attitude, with his ear at a keyhole—"

grinned Wally. "Shut up!" said Mellish anxiously, breathing hard. "Anybody might pass the door and hear you, you young fool!"

"Everybody in the School House will hear me soon, if you don't come to terms," said the fog. "Now then!"

Mellish's eyes glittered. He made a sudden spring towards Wally, and snatched the camera from his hand.

Crash!

The camera descended upon the floor, with all the force of the Fourth-Former's arm behind it. There was a smashing sound.

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally.

Mellish regarded him with a sneering grin.

"There, you young cad! Now I'll give you nothing! What's become of your proofs now?" he exclaimed. "You should have taken the three-and-six while you had a chance!"

Wally laughed.

"Well, the camera isn't much good," he remarked. "But I'll take the ten bob

for what is left of it. Also the other negative."

Mellish started in dismay.

"The—the other negative!" he stammered.

"Custom of mine to take two snaps at any picture I'm very particular about," said Wally cheerfully. "You see, I guessed that you might do something of that sort. There was only one used plate in that camera, and it's gone to pot. The other is in my locker in the Third Form-room. Price ten bob, net."

"You—you awful young thief!" gasped Mellish. "Suppose I pay you for the negative, how do I know that you haven't got others?"

"You'll have to take my word for that," said Wally coolly. "Still, if you'd prefer to see the finished print hung up on the wall in the Common-room, for all the fellows to see—"

"Hold on! I—I haven't ten bob now. I'll give you five now and the rest to-morrow!" panted Mellish.

"Shell out!"

Mellish, with trembling fingers, extracted the shillings from his pocket. Wally struck a match, and lighted the Form-room gas.

"Gentlemen," he called out, "kindly step into view, and behold our respected friend Mellish trying to bribe and corrupt a respectable youth!"

Mellish gave a yell of terror. For, at Wally's words, the door of the wall-cupboard was flung open, and the concealed juniors rushed out; and Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy rose into view from behind the Form-master's desk.

They advanced upon the cad of the Fourth with grim looks.

#### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Brought to Book.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. surrounded the exposed plotter. Mellish did not make an effort to escape.

He knew that the game was up, and the chums of the School House were too many for him. He gazed at the accusing faces round him, and his jaw dropped with fear.

"So it was you!" said Tom Merry grimly.

The coins fell from Mellish's nerveless hand, and rattled upon the Form-room floor. He gasped painfully for breath.

"Bai Jove!"

"It was Mellish, then!" said Blake. "Listened outside Kildare's door! The awful cad! And then told the story and put it on Tom Merry!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I—I—" stammered Mellish. His voice died away. He could not deny what he had admitted in words in the hearing of all the juniors. He realised that he had been caught in a trap, and his brain was reeling with it.

(Continued on page 20.)

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## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

**Boppy Arrives—Leap-frog—Boppy's Wrath.**

**P**ETE, the negro lad, was very busy tidying up his employer's caravan. Not that Jimmy Travers, the circus proprietor, had asked him to do so, nor was it Pete's duty, but he had nothing else to do, and generally occupied his time by making Jimmy as comfortable as he conveniently could.

Ever since Jimmy had rescued him and his comrades, Jack and Sam, from what looked to them at the time certain starvation, Pete had never lost an opportunity of doing anything he could to assist the circus proprietor in any way.

Pete had become a great favourite with Jimmy, and had Jack and Sam possessed any jealous tendencies, they would certainly often have been jealous of their comrade, who frequently received invitations from Jimmy to dine with him in which they were not included.

But there was no jealousy about Jack and Sam, and they were glad for Pete's own sake that he had got on so well.

Rosamond, or the fair Rosamond, as she was generally called, was watching Pete's operations and chaffing him a little.

"You silly boy!" she exclaimed. "What's the good of dusting before you have swept the floor?"

"But look here, my dear," said Pete. "I wasn't going to sweep de floor!"

"It wants it, badly!"

"How do you know what it wants, when it ain't spoken a word to you?"

"You are the laziest boy I ever knew!"

"I know a girl dat ain't so mighty hard-working. She may be pretty enough, but dat's about all she's worth!"

"How dare you speak of me like that?"

"I didn't say I was speaking ob you, my dear. I said dis girl was pretty. Now you buzz off home, 'cos you ain't helping a bit! Go and talk to old Sammy."

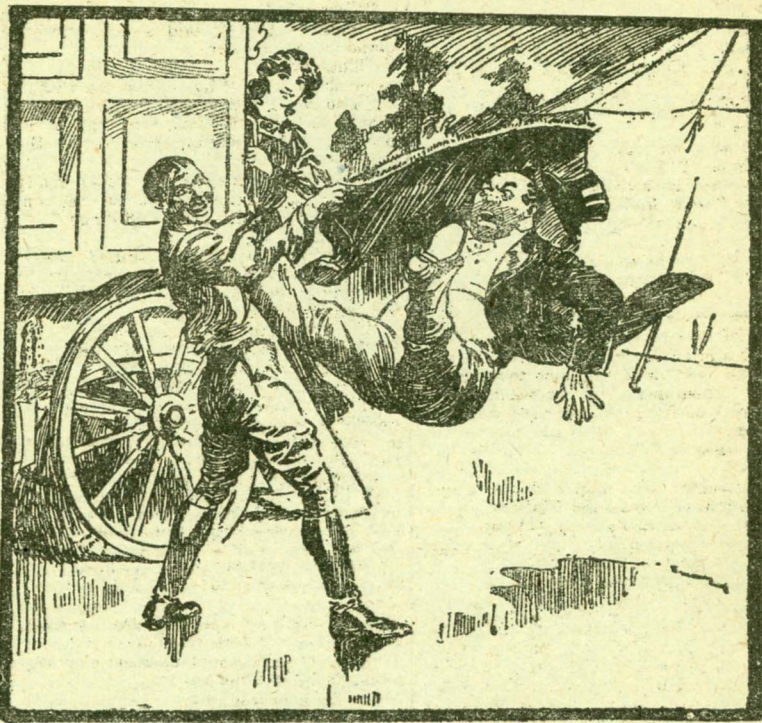
"I sha'n't!"

"If I'd had de bringing up ob you, my girl, I'd hab taught you different manners!" said Pete.

"A child like you to talk about bringing me up! I have a good mind to box your ears—you cheeky kid! Surely you are going to shake that mat? It is thick with mud!"

"Bery well. You take hold ob one end while I take hold ob de oder!"

"I shall have nothing to do with it.



Pete swung the mat backwards, catching Boppy a fearful smack on the face with it. It knocked his hat off, and Boppy landed in a very undignified position in the mud.

Beat it against the wheels of the caravan."

"I neber came across such a lazy girl in all my life. I'm sure your moder didn't use enough corporal punishment when you were young. Hi! Steady dere, my dear! I don't want any slaps. You hab nearly knocked my head off!"

"I'll shake you directly, you rude boy. Go on with your work. Here comes Boppy, the rival showman!"

"Dat man is always turning up when he ain't wanted. He ain't got de right to follow Jimmy about like he does and spoil his pitches," observed Pete, glancing at a stout man dressed in a frock-coat and wearing a tall silk hat. "I ain't taking any notice ob de man!"

Pete turned his back on the great Boppy, who was striding across the extremely muddy ground towards the caravan.

"You stand back, Rosamond," said Pete, "'cos I'm going to gib a mighty blow, and you are bound to get dusty! One—two—free—go!"

Pete swung the mat backwards, and caught Boppy a fearful smack in the face with it. It knocked his hat off, and sent him flying against the front wheel of the caravan. Then his feet shot into the air, and he sat in the mud.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "What's de man trying to do? He must tink he's an hippopotamus and wants to wallow in de mud. Get up, old hoss, else you will damp de seat ob your trousers!"

Boppy was not the sort of man to stand that treatment. He leapt to his feet, and, uttering a howl of fury, rushed at Pete.

The blow Boppy aimed at Pete's head with his stick would have done damage, had not Pete guarded it with the mat. Then he brought that mat down on the

top of the rival showman's head with a force that caused him to sit on his own tall hat and squash it flat in the mud.

Meanwhile, Rosamond, who could see that there was going to be some fun hurried away to find Jack and Sam. She speedily returned, accompanied by Pete's comrades, and they found Boppy still sitting in the mud, wild with anger, and threatening to be revenged.

"Should you tink he was tired, Jack?" inquired Pete, as the three approached.

"Perhaps he's stuck in the mud, and can't get up," suggested Jack.

"Or perhaps he's so comfortable that he doesn't want to get up," said Sam.

"I'll have you all put in prison!" roared the outraged Boppy.

"Let's have a game at leap-frog, old hoss," said Pete, dropping the mat and going over Boppy's head in fine style.

"Why, here comes Jimmy! I tink dis old hoss has come to see you, Jimmy, and we hab been passing de time by playing a little game ob leap-frog. He has been de frog; and I hab been de leap. Ain't he got into a drefful muddy state? I dunno what his moder will say to him when he gets home. I ain't at all sure dat it isn't your duty to chastise him, Rosamond!"

"James Travers!" hooted Boppy, struggling to his feet. "I hold you responsible for this—you dastardly villain!"

"All right, dear boy!" answered Jimmy. "Ha, ha, ha! You are in a shocking, awful state. I'll see your mother about it, and tell her it was not your fault. You need a brush, my dear fellow. I do not think I ever saw a man who needed a brush worse than you do. What was he trying to do, Pete?"

"He didn't tell me dat, exactly. Yah, yah, yah! De first I knew 'bout de man



was when he was sitting in de mud. Den he came at me and started sitting in de mud again. I tink he must imagine he is a mud-worm!"

"I will have the law on you, James Travers," declared Boppy. "I shall live to see you in prison, then I'll come and feed you through the bars of your gaol!"

"That's remarkably kind of you, my dear boy!" said Jimmy. "Be sure you bring something nice to eat!"

"Oh, you viper!"

"Quite so, dear boy! What is the matter with the man, boys?"

"I tink he must hab sunstroke or else hydrophobia!" said Pete. "Eber been bitten by a mad dog, Boppy?"

"I'll break your nigger's skull for you!" howled Boppy, making another rush at Pete, who delivered a blow in his chest that sat him down for the third time.

That blow was rather more than Boppy could stand. It knocked all the wind out of his body, and he was in a very gassy state when he rose again, while Jimmy, Rosamond, and Pete, and his comrades were roaring with laughter.

"He's a very persistent person," said Jack to the rest. "He must know that he's bound to get the worst of it every time, but he won't clear off."

"I don't think it's because he's persistent," said Sam. "It's because he lets his temper run away with his reason. If he was only calm enough to think things out properly, he would realise that the best thing he could do is to clear off."

"It's a wonder to me that a man like he can run a show at all," said Jack. "Anyway, it's not surprising that he can't make a very good thing of it."

"This infamy shall be punished with the utmost severity of the law!" groaned Boppy.

"I can manage de punishment without de help ob de law," said Pete. "You come at me, old hoss, as often as you like, and I'll bet you de first bite of a farden cake dat I knock you out each time!"

"You will not think it so funny when I have you before the magistrates to-morrow morning, I can tell you, you utter young rascal! I have been insulted and assaulted, and if there is any law in this land I will make you all suffer for it!"

"What right have you on these premises, dear boy?" inquired Jimmy.

"I have come here, fellow, to tell you that you are an infamous scoundrel!"

"Well, I have no objection to your doing that. You can come every day, or two and three times a day, to tell me that, if you like, and I will let Pete

meet you. He appears to understand how to deal with you!"

"He's easy 'nuff to deal wid Jimmy," said Pete. "All you hab to do is to take de upper hand wid him. He is as harmless as an old toad. It's only his personal appearance dat makes him look so drefful!"

"Do you want me to break your neck, you little villain?" demanded Boppy, advancing menacingly on Pete, who stood his ground and grinned at him.

"Well, I ain't at all particular, old hoss," answered Pete. "You can try it on if you like—especially if you don't mind sitting in de mud again. But to my mind you 'most too top-heavy to make a fighting-man. You don't seem firm enough on your pins. Should say you would make a better tumbler, or someting ob dat sort!"

"If you utter another word in my presence, you low brute of a nigger, I'll knock you down! Now, mind, I have warned you, and I mean every word that I say!"

"Dat's where it comes in, my poor old hoss. You mean what you say, but you can't do what you say, and, as you are frightened to try again, you tink it best to try and frighten me. But it won't come off, Boppy, boy. You don't look at all fierce, only remarkably funny wid all dat mud on you, and I'm inclined to tink dat when you wear dat topper you will look funnier still!"

"Suppose you go, Boppy?" suggested Jimmy. "You are not wanted here, and you only look ridiculous!"

"I shall go when I choose, you low-bred scoundrel!" yelled Boppy. "I have come here to tell you that you are a rogue and a vagabond!"

"Then, having told me, why not go? You are only wasting your time and my own!"

"I sha'n't go!"

"Very well, dear boy, then stay. Take a seat in the mud again; or, if that is too damp, you can sit on the wheel of the caravan. I suppose the silly creature got into your way, Pete?"

"Yes, Jimmy. I was just tidying up a little—"

"Well, you haven't tidied him up much. He will need a spade to get that slop off him!"

"I'll go and take out a summons against this young ruffian at once," declared Boppy. "I will have him in gaol before he is many days older; and I'll settle with you and these other two ruffians at the same time!"

At a matter of fact, Jack and Sam had done nothing but laugh, and they couldn't very well help that, considering the extraordinary spectacle Boppy presented when he was sitting on his own top hat in the mud.

The truth was, Boppy was furious

with everyone in Jimmy Travers' circus. He was furious because the circus existed at all. He considered that it was due to Jimmy that his show didn't pay; whereas, if he had had the best show, his would have been the bigger success.

"My dear old Boppy, farewell!" said Pete, as the infuriated man strode away. "I hab to tank you for a very enjoyable afternoon. You hab been most amusing—you hab, really, old hoss. If I was Jimmy, I should engage you to perform as a clown in de circus. You would make a capital clown, and would need no alteration in de way ob get-up. Your natural appearance would be de most laughable. Poor old hoss! He is cross, too! I wonder what makes him look so angry?"

"Mud, dear boy," answered Jimmy.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Summons—Ventriloquism—Pete Wins!

"**T**HINK he will summon us, Jimmy?"

"I'm afraid he won't, but I hope he will. It would be a grand advertisement to us, especially if we made him look a bigger idiot than he is in court. We would have Rosamond as a witness, and if she will only smile sweetly at the beaks they are bound to be on our side. The worst of her is she is such a perverse little jade— Oh, there you are, are you?"

"Yes, here I am, Jimmy, and I want to know how you dare talk like that in my presence? I shall make you invite me to tea this afternoon!"

"All right. You come, too, Pete. I'll let Rosamond make the tea. Women always make it better than men. They always pretend that they only put in about two spoonfuls, whereas they put in about ten. It's one of their playful ways!"

Jack and Sam departed to have tea on their own.

Jimmy's caravan would not hold more than three people comfortably, so they were not invited.

As a matter of fact, they liked to go into the town occasionally to tea, and they had Jimmy's permission to come and go pretty much as they pleased.

They didn't see as much of Pete in these days as formerly, and they often missed his cheerful company; but Jimmy had been so good to them all that they had no cause to complain.

Now, Boppy fully intended to have vengeance on Pete, so, finding he could not give him in custody, he served him with a summons for assault, and Jimmy took special care to let this be known all over the town, with the result that on

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the eventful morning the little court was crowded.

There were two or three cases of drunkenness to be dealt with, then Boppy's case was called on.

He had not gone to the expense of engaging a lawyer, but then, he flattered himself that he could conduct his case quite as well as any lawyer could.

Jimmy had wanted to engage a lawyer, feeling confident that the advertisement would well repay the cost, but Pete had insisted on defending himself; and when Jimmy pointed out that he did not know anything of the law, Pete said he would soon learn it.

The way Boppy put the case made it appear that Pete had struck him nearly senseless and then jumped on him, and he produced his clothes to show the result.

The magistrates—there were three on the bench, and their combined knowledge of the law was something very wonderful—frequently surprised their clerk; but when he pointed out to them the error of their ways, they invariably took his advice, which was about the wisest thing they could do.

"This is a very serious case," observed one of the old buffers. "Have you any questions to ask the prosecutor?"

"Two or free, my dear old hoss," answered Pete.

"What? What is that I hear? If you dare to address me like that again I will commit you for contempt of court!"

"Dat's only a friendly way I hab got ob speaking to people. De hoss is a mighty nice animal, and it is a great compliment to call a man a hoss. It ain't as if I had called you an ass!"

It took some time to stop the roars of laughter, but after a few threats to clear the court the usher succeeded in restoring order.

"You say I knocked you down, prisoner at de bar?" exclaimed Pete.

"He is the prosecutor."

"I know dat, but he ought to be de prisoner, and if he ain't a little more trooful I shouldn't wonder if he is de prisoner before dis case is ended! What did I knock you down wid?"

"In the first place, with a door-mat."

"Bery well. I was beating de mat, and you got behind it and got an accidental smack, which bowled you ober. He sat in de mud, gentlemen ob de Bench. After dat he got up and tried to hit me ober de head wid a stick!"

"It is false!"

"Bery well. I hab got a witness to prove it, and I will let de fair Rosamond gib her evidence!"

"That's done it!" said Sam to Jack. They were in the public quarters of the court.

Rosamond's appearance made an impression on the Bench; so it did on the clerk. She was dressed very neatly, and certainly looked charming. She told exactly what had happened, and Boppy was called to order for interrupting her. All the magistrates and the clerk asked her questions, and she smiled sweetly at them as she answered.

This made Boppy angry, and then Pete made use of his wonderful ventriloquial powers. He had got Boppy's voice so exactly that everyone in court believed it was that unfortunate man who was speaking.

"I have come to this court expecting to get justice," cried Boppy; and Pete made him add: "You rascally old buffers!"

"That's Pete!" whispered Jack to his comrade.

"Follow!" roared one of the great unpaid. "How dare—"

"Sit down, you bottle-nosed old idiot!"

"Why, this is the grossest contempt—"

"I never said that!" hooted Boppy. "I only thought it!" added Pete. "You are a lot of silly old women!"

Very little could be heard after this. Roars of laughter drowned Boppy's voice. The magistrates were shouting something, and Boppy, in his desperation, leapt on the Bench in order to explain that he was not the speaker. The magistrates appeared to think that he was a dangerous maniac, and, with one accord, they fled.

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pete. "We hab got another magistrate now!"

A constable seized the unfortunate Boppy, who explained matters as well as he could to him; and he, in his turn, explained them to the frightened magistrates, who presently returned, looking as dignified as was possible under the unfortunate circumstances.

"I reckon Pete'll get the best of this now," said Jack to Sam.

"Without a doubt," replied the latter. "Boppy has defeated himself by that little exhibition of violence. The magistrates will imagine that he's a raving lunatic now."

"Serve him right," replied Jack. "I have no sympathy with him, for being such an idiot as to make such a fuss as this."

The clerk appeared to be trying to choke himself by stuffing his handkerchief into his own mouth, and when one of the magistrates addressed him he found it an exceedingly hard task to refrain from laughter.

"Would you allow me to call my oder witness, gentlemen?" inquired Pete.

"There is no occasion to do so," answered the magistrate. "We are of opinion that the assault, if any, was committed by this exceedingly violent man, who would appear to be not in his

# WHY BE TOO FAT?

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sane senses. There can be no doubt that he has not spoken the truth, and we are of opinion that the young lady, who saw the whole affair, has given her evidence with perfect truth!"

"Quite so! Quite so!" exclaimed the other two, who did not want to be left out.

"Had the facts been stated in the first place, the summons would never have been issued. The summons is dismissed, with costs against the prosecutor," said the clerk.

"It is not justice!" declared Boppy. "I will take it to a higher court!"

"You cannot do anything of the kind," said the clerk. "It is a question whether you will not be prosecuted for perjury."

"I say I have not had justice!"

"You will be committed for contempt of court if you dare to make those remarks in this court!" cried one of the magistrates. "You forget in whose

presence you are. Order that man out of court, constable, after he has paid all the costs!"

Boppy was very furious, but he had an idea that resistance would only make matters worse, and he began to think that he might have got on better with a solicitor.

"It would have been better," said Sam to his companion, as they left the court, "if old Boppy had had sense enough at first to see that it was no good bringing a case like his to court."

"Yes," replied Jack; "if he had only allowed himself to cool down a bit before he took action, he would have seen that it was no use trying to summons Pete, when he could bring forward a witness who had seen the whole business."

"Oh, well," said Sam, "perhaps it will be a lesson to him. Anyway, I don't think we shall see any more of him for a time."

Jimmy was quite content with the way things had turned out.

"It's all right!" he exclaimed. "You run home, Rosamond. You are a capital witness. Come along, Pete! I am going to the paper office. We will work the little affair up into a splendid advertisement. They will do it for me, because I have let them have my printing; besides, I have an advertisement in the paper already. What appears in that paper will surprise you, so it will the people who read it; and they are certain to come to our show to have the pleasure of seeing you perform!"

"Jimmy, I am not going to run off home," said Rosamond.

"Then walk home, my good girl!"

"I sha'n't! I'm hungry, and you are going to give us a dinner before you bother about that stupid old advertisement!"

And Jimmy had to obey.  
THE END.

## THE SPY OF THE SCHOOL!

By Martin Clifford

(Continued from page 16.)

"It's cost me a camera!" said Wally regretfully. "But it was worth it."

"I'll buy you a new camera," said Tom Merry gratefully—"and a jolly good one. You were a deep little beggar, Wally."

"Yaas, wathah! I weward you as havin' twapped this awful wascal in a weally clewah way, Wally, deah boy."

"Well, I had to look into the matter," said Wally modestly. "You Shell fellows were hardly up to it, you know."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You can gas as much as you like after this, kid," he said.

"What are we going to do with Mellish?" asked Kangaroo, with a menacing glance at the cad of the Fourth.

"Bump him!"

"Frogs-march him!"

"Rag him baldheaded!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Collar him!"

Mellish staggered back against the door.

"I—I say—hands off!" he gasped. "It was only a—a joke! I was going to own up, all the time, you know. And—and Levison and Crooke knew the facts, too. They—they helped me fix this on Tom Merry, and—and—"

"Beautiful set of rotters!" said Monty Lowther. "We might have suspected something of the sort. Pah!"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry quietly. "He's got to go to Kildare and Langton, and own up before them. Then we can let the cad off. He's not worth soiling our hands on."

"Vewy twue, deah boy."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Blake.

"March him along!"

The juniors closed round Mellish. They took him by the arms, and marched him out of the Form-room. In the midst of the crowd he was marched along to the Sixth-Form passage, and up to the door of Kildare's study. Tom Merry knocked at the door, and opened it, and the crowd poured in.

Kildare jumped up in surprise.

"What do you want?" he exclaimed.

There were two other seniors in the study—Langton and Darrel. They stared at the juniors in surprise, and Langton's brow darkened at the sight of Tom Merry. Tom Merry met his glance fearlessly.

"We've got the giddy criminal!" explained Wally.

"What?"

"It's true!" said Blake. "Mellish has owned up that he listened outside your door yesterday evening, and heard you and Langton talking. Then he fixed it up with Crooke and Levison to give the story away, and pretend that it came from Tom Merry!"

"My hat!"

"He's owned up!" said Figgins. "The awful cad!"

"I—I remember thinking there was somebody at the door!" exclaimed Langton. "You remember, Kildare. But when I opened the door there was nobody there."

Kildare fixed a stern glance upon the trembling cad of the Fourth.

"Is this true, Mellish?" he demanded.

The question was hardly necessary. Mellish's looks were enough. The cad of the fourth cast a wild glance round him.

"I—I—," he stammered.

"He admitted it, and all of us heard him," said Tom Merry.

"I—I only did it for fun!" groaned Mellish. "And—and it was really Levison's idea, not mine. And—and Crooke backed me up. I—I only meant to give Tom Merry a bit of a whack, you know, because—because— But I was going to own up."

Kildare turned to Tom Merry.

"I beg your pardon, Merry!" he said. "I'm sorry I doubted you. My excuse is that I couldn't be expected to suspect anybody of being so base as this. Mellish is a bit outside my experience."

"Same here!" said Langton. "I'm sorry, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry's face was very bright now. "It's all right," he said. "I never broke my word, and I only wanted it to be established that I hadn't. I don't want to hurt that squirming cad. But I think you ought to tell all the fellows, Kildare, and set me right with them!"

"I shall, certainly!" said Kildare. "But why has Mellish admitted this? Is there any proof outside his own confession?"

"It was Wally's work, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"I had to look into the matter," explained Wally. "It was up to the Third to see it set right, you know. I worked

out that it was Mellish, and I made him own up in the presence of witnesses."

"The young cad was spying himself!" said Mellish spitefully. "He took a snap with a camera—"

"A snap of Mellish kneeling outside your door, and listening at the keyhole," said Herries. "Blessed if I know what you wanted to get up that scene in the Form-room for, young D'Arcy. The negative would have been enough, without Mellish confessing!"

Wally grinned.

"Only, you see, there isn't any negative!" he explained.

"Eh?"

"That was a little bit of spoof," said Wally coolly. "I didn't tell Mellish I had snapped him listening at Kildare's door. As I hadn't done it, I couldn't say so. But I dare say he concluded I had, from what I said to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish ground his teeth. He realised, a little too late, how completely he had been tricked.

"I'm glad this has been cleared up," said Kildare. "I'm sorry I doubted you, Tom Merry, and I'll take back what I said to you about it in public, too. You can leave Mellish here. I've got something to say to him."

And Tom Merry & Co. trooped out of the captain's study. Mellish would very gladly have followed them; but he had a painful interview to go through first. As Tom Merry & Co. went down the passage, the swishing of a cane was heard, and wild howls of anguish rang from Kildare's study.

Wally was the hero of the hour, and Tom Merry & Co. could not make enough of him. Wally was the guest of honour at a tremendous feed in Tom Merry's study, and the study was crammed with guests, who came from far and near to testify their repentance of having thought badly of the captain of the Shell, and to share in the feed.

Tom Merry was reinstated in the good opinion of the school, and was more popular than ever. And while the celebration was going on in Tom Merry's study, Mellish was alone in his room, aching from the terrific thrashing he had received from the captain of St. Jim's, and bitterly reflecting upon the truth of the old saying, that the way of the transgressor is hard.

And more bitter and lasting than the licking, was the scorn of all the St. Jim's fellows towards the exposed and disgraced Spy of the School.

THE END.