

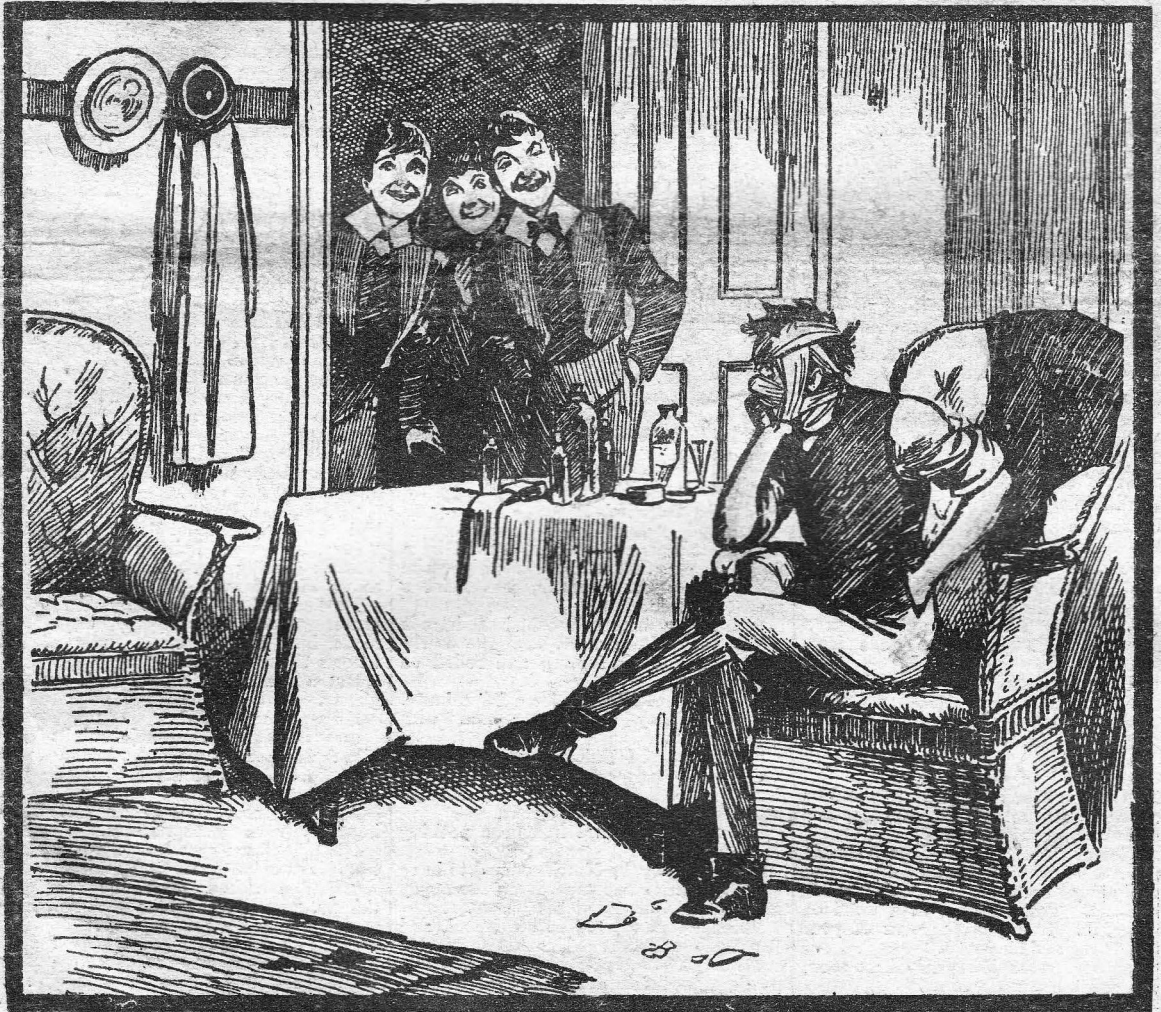
THE FADDIST FORM-MASTER!

(See the Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in this Issue.)

The Penny Popular

No.
261.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JIMMY SILVER & Co.—TOM MERRY & Co.



BULLY BULSTRODE IN THE WARS!

(An Amusing Incident from the Grand Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. contained in this Issue.)

THE FADDIST FORM-MASTER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Early Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Licked!

MARK LINLEY stood leaning on the chapel railings under the shade of the ancient elms of Greyfriars.

There was a cloud upon his face, and his lips were tight set. In that quiet spot the Lancashire lad had fought out a battle with himself.

And in spite of the black cloud of suspicion that hung over him, in spite of the troubles that were thickening on all sides, the "scholarship boy" had determined to remain at Greyfriars, and to face the music to the bitter end.

"I'll fight it out!"

That was Mark Linley's resolve.

Let the Remove condemn him on suspicion—let the whole Form make up its mind that he was guilty of the thefts in the dormitory.

Let even Harry Wharton & Co., his firmest friends, fall away from him! Still he would not flinch.

In the pale, set face of the boy was a determination beyond his years: the resolve of one who dared to do or die!

He started suddenly from the gloomy reverie into which he had fallen.

A shout from the distance rang in his ears.

"There he is!"

Mark Linley looked up quickly.

There was a rush of feet.

A crowd of Removites, with Bulstrode, the bully of the Form at their head, rushed up and surrounded him.

He did not flinch.

"So this is where you have been hiding yourself?" said Bulstrode insolently.

"I have not been hiding myself," said Mark contemptuously. "You know that well enough, Bulstrode."

"Well, I've found you. You've got to make good your words in the dormitory."

Mark looked at him quietly.

Bulstrode mistook his quietness, and he went on in the same insolent tone, and in a more blustering manner.

"A lot of us have had things stolen in the dorm. You go out early with a yarn about going for an early swim, and hide the things. You lash out at a word on the subject. I've got the mark of your knuckles on my face now."

"You'll have another mark there soon, if you don't leave me alone."

Bulstrode laughed.

"Well, I'm not going to leave you alone, my pippin. You remember what you have said to me—are you ready to make it good?"

"Quite ready."

"Blessed if I know whether I ought to fight with a rotten thief," said Bulstrode.

"It's a beastly disgrace—oh!"

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He reeled under a fist that crashed on his mouth.

Mark Linley's blood was up, and he had struck out fiercely, his eyes blazing. He had warned the Remove that a blow would be his answer to every taunt on that subject, and he was keeping his word.

He tore off his jacket and pushed back his cuffs, and faced the bully of the Remove.

"Now come on," he said, between his teeth.

And Bulstrode came on quickly enough.

Bully as he might be, and sometimes cad, Bulstrode had plenty of courage, and he was in too great a rage at the present moment to care if he was hurt.

He attacked Linley savagely, but he was met with a defence that baffled him all along the line.

His blows, heavy enough to have felled the Lancashire lad if they had reached home, were guarded, and time and again the fists of Mark Linley crashed upon his face.

And the Lancashire lad, not content with defence, attacked in his turn, as Bulstrode recoiled, dealing forceful blow after blow.

"My hat!" said Skinner. "I never thought Linley had form like this!"

"Nor I," said Stott. "Bulstrode's in for it."

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode was doing his best.

But the Lancashire lad, inspired by a fierce anger that seemed to give him double his usual strength, was twice a match for him.

His heavy blows knocked Bulstrode right and left, and at last the burly Removite lost his footing and rolled on the ground.

He lay there blinking for a full minute.

Mark Linley stood over him with blazing eyes.

"Oh!" gasped Bulstrode.

On a previous occasion he had fallen foul of the lad from Lancashire, and had had the worst of the combat.

But that experience had been nothing like this.

The lad from the North seemed to have the strength of two men, from the angry indignation that filled his breast.

Skinner lent a hand to his friend, and Bulstrode was dragged to his feet. He rubbed his nose, from which the red was flowing, and felt over his eye, already closing and purple.

"Done?" asked Skinner.

Bulstrode ground his teeth savagely.

"No; hang you!"

"You'd better—"

"Shut up!"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders, and gave it up. It was no business of his if Bulstrode chose to go on after he was plainly knocked out.

"I am satisfied if you are!" said Mark Linley quietly.

Bulstrode faced him with a savage sneer on his bruised face.

"But I am not satisfied," he said. "I am going to lick you, you—you thief!"

Linley's eyes glinted.

"Come on, then."

And again they went at it, hammer and tongs.

Linley's guard was a little less careful now, but his attack was terrible.

Bulstrode got in a few blows that left their mark, but the punishment he received was incomparably more serious than that he inflicted.

His face was battered and blue—his nose bleeding—his eyes half-closed—and he was reeling with weakness as he continued the fight.

Yet with savage obstinacy he held out to the very end.

Blow after blow crashed upon him, but still he faced it, till at last a terrible right-hander sent him fairly flying.

He crashed on the ground, with a groan, and lay there, unable to move.

Skinner ran to him.

"How do you feel, Bulstrode?"

"Oh, hang him—hang you!"

"Are you going on?"

"No!"

"He's done," said Skinner. "My hat! What a whack that was! It would have knocked over a cart-horse!"

"Faith, and Bulstrode looks as if he'd had enough," said Micky Desmond.

"Sure, he'll want helping home."

Mark Linley looked round on the crowd of juniors.

He had defeated the bully of the Remove, whose overbearing ways had made him obnoxious to many of the fellows there present.

But not a single cordial look met his glance.

He was condemned.

The defeat of Bulstrode might save him from open interference, but that was all! In the eyes of the Remove he was a thief!

Bulstrode staggered to his feet, leaning heavily on Skinner's arm.

His half-closed eyes turned venomously towards the lad from Lancashire.

"You've licked me," he muttered thickly, "but I don't take back a word—you're a thief—a rotten thief!"

Mark compressed his lips.

"It's safe for you to say that now," he said. "Let any fellow who is able to fight say that word, and I shall know how to answer it."

His glance flashed over the crowd.

But no one spoke.

The lad from Lancashire slowly put on his jacket, without a helping hand, and turned away from the spot. As he walked away, a loud and prolonged hiss followed him. His pale cheeks flushed crimson, but he did not look back.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
An Unwelcome Arrival.

"MR. CHESHAM!"
Bob Cherry uttered the words.

The Famous Four were looking out of the window of the junior Common-room at Greyfriars.

A gentleman had alighted from the station cab, and was about to enter the house, and the juniors had a full view of him.

It was Mr. Chesham. Once before, on a never-to-be-forgotten occasion, Mr. Chesham had taken the Remove in the absence of Mr. Quelch, their own Form-master.

There had been trouble; much trouble. For Mr. Chesham was a faddist of the faddists, and the Remove had a strong objection to patent medicines of all sorts. They hated to be considered ill, and hated still more to be doctored for their supposed illnesses.

Mr. Chesham was a kind-hearted, considerate gentleman in all matters not appertaining to the health. When he began to look after a fellow's health, that fellow began to find life a weary burden.

"Yes, there he is!" said Frank Nugent. "It's the old original Chesham-bird, and no mistake!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

There was something of a cloud on his face. He knew that, as captain of the Remove, he was expected to take the lead in asserting the rights of the Form, and keeping the faddist master within limits.

Yet Mr. Quelch, before leaving the school, had exacted a promise from the young Remove captain to keep order as much as he could, and do his best to make things go smoothly in the Form-room. Mr. Quelch had had his misgivings when he went.

"There'll be trouble," said Bob Cherry, watching Mr. Chesham from the window. "Look at that black bag in his hand! I'll bet it contains medicines!"

"Pills and powders, most likely," said Nugent.

"The likeliness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The esteemed rotten Chesham is bringing his honourable rubbish back with him to dose us medicinefully."

"We're not going to stand it."

"Not much."

"The not-much-fulness is terrific!"

"What do you say, Wharton?" demanded Bob Cherry excitedly. "Are we going to take this lying down?"

Wharton looked troubled, and did not immediately answer.

"Look here," said Bob, growing more excited still. "We've been divided a lot lately. It's been Study No 13 against No. 1, but so long as the Chesham ass worries us, we're going to stick together and make it hot for him."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent heartily.

"The hear-hearfulness is great!"

"Now, Wharton, what do you say?"

"I don't quite know," said Wharton doubtfully. "Of course, it's a good idea to stick together for the rights of the Form."

"I should say so!"

"I also am of that esteemed opinion."

"But we don't want a row if we can help it. Quelch made me promise to do my best before he left."

"That's all very well."

"Well, we don't want to look for trouble," said Wharton mildly. "Let's wait till Chesham kicks over the traces before we jump on him."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Well, I suppose we can agree to that much."

And that was settled; but no one had

any faith that Mr. Chesham would have tact enough to keep within the traces. And if there was trouble, Study No. 1 would be expected to take the lead.

Of late the Famous Four had been somewhat divided. Bob Cherry had been shifted along to the end study in the Remove passage—No. 13. But an "accident" in that study had rendered it uninhabitable for a time, and Bob was back in his own quarters again for the past week.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "What's this?"
He stared at Bulstrode, who had just entered the room.

Bulstrode had bathed his face after the encounter with Mark Linley behind the chapel, but he had not been able to remove the terrible traces of the Lancashire lad's heavy blows.

The chums of the Remove looked at him.

"What's happened?" exclaimed Nugent.

Bulstrode gave a growl.

Cherry drily. "He'll give you some of what Bulstrode's had."

"Well, you know very well——"

"I know he isn't a thief."

"Are you fellows sticking to him?"

"We are," said Harry angrily. "We stick to him through thick and thin. We know jolly well he isn't a thief."

"You'll be standing out against the whole Form, then. There's not another fellow in the Remove, outside your study, who stands by him."

"That doesn't make any difference to us," said Nugent. "We know what we're doing. You chaps with your poor little brains ought to be glad to follow our lead."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

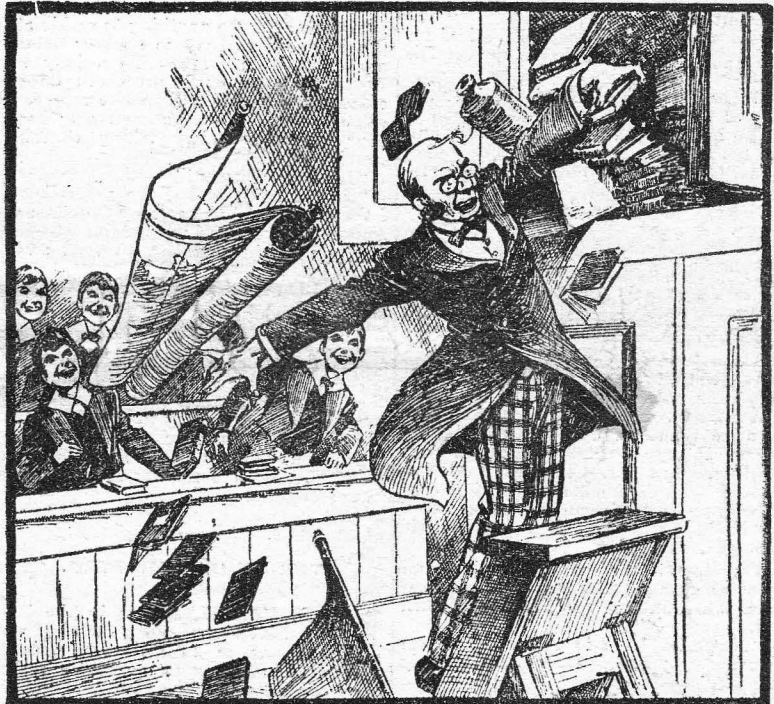
"But really, you fellows——"

"Ahem!"

"My hat; Chesham!" muttered Nugent.

Mr. Chesham had entered the Common-room.

There were a good many boys present,



In his search for Billy Bunter's ventriloquial voice, the angry master whirled and hurled all the rubbish out of the way, and through the clouds of dust he was coughing and peering into the dark cupboard.

"Mind your own business!"
And he swung savagely away.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! Do you know all about it, as usual, Bunter?"

"I saw the fight," said Bunter.

"Linley gave Bulstrode an awful licking!"

"Mark Linley—eh?"

"Yes. Bulstrode called him a thief, and they had it out behind the chapel. It was a fearful licking!"

"Must have been, to judge by Bulstrode's chivvy. Serve him jolly well right, too, if that's what Linley licked him for!"

"Oh, I suppose you're not going to stand up for Linley!" exclaimed Skinner, entering the room. "He's a thief!"

"Better tell him so; not me," said Bob

a shower of rain having driven them in from the Close, and they saluted the new Form-master respectfully enough.

But there were gleams in many eyes that boded no good to Mr. Chesham when he took the Remove in the Form-room that afternoon.

The new master greeted the boys with a kindly smile.

"I am glad to be back among you, my boys," he said genially.

He paused, as if expecting a reply; and Harry Wharton coloured uncomfortably. He could not possibly feel glad that Mr. Chesham was back among them, and so it would be hypocritical to say that he did. Yet he was far from wishing to be discourteous to the new Form-master.

There was an uncomfortable silence. Mr. Chesham reddened a little.

"Ahem! I trust that any little friction there may have been in the past has been quite forgotten," he said, looking round.

It was Wharton's place, as captain of the Remove, to reply, and he did so.

"I hope so, sir," he said.

"Very good. I shall take the class in the Remove-room this afternoon, and I trust you will give me cause to make a good report to Mr. Quelch on his return."

"I—I trust so, sir."

"That is the right spirit, my boy. I am sure we shall pull together very well," said Mr. Chesham. "By the way, I consider it my duty as your Form-master to look after any little personal ailments you may be afflicted with. I have a great deal of experience in that line. If any of you feel ill or at all indisposed, I shall be only too glad to place my experience at your service."

Wharton's heart sank.

It was very kindly put, but it meant only one thing—that Mr. Chesham was beginning again. There was a faint murmur in the room.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Chesham suddenly. "Dear me! Who—what is that?"

He had caught sight of the battered face of Bulstrode.

The bully of the Remove scowled, and did not reply.

Mr. Chesham advanced hastily towards him.

"Boy! Good gracious! What has happened to your face?"

Bulstrode granted.

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! But it is battered—absolutely battered! One of your eyes is closed; the other nearly so. Your nose is bleeding!"

"Is it?"

"Certainly! Your mouth is also out. What has happened to you?"

A gentleman of a more practical turn of mind than Mr. Chesham would have known at once that Bulstrode had been fighting. But Mr. Chesham was of a dreamy turn of mind, and practical considerations very seldom entered his head.

"Nothing!" mumbled Bulstrode savagely.

The Removites were all grinning, and wondering how Mr. Chesham's investigations into Bulstrode's injuries would turn out.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Chesham sharply. "Your face is seriously injured."

"I—I knocked it, sir."

"You knocked it against something?"

"Yes, sir."

Bulstrode did not add that it was a clenched fist he had knocked his face against. Mr. Chesham ought really to have seen that for himself.

"Dear me! You must have knocked it very hard!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Something must be done for it at once."

"It's—it's all right, sir."

"Nonsense—absolute nonsense! What have you done for it so far?"

"I—I've bathed it, sir."

"Very good for a beginning. You must, however, rub it carefully with an ointment I will give you, and then bathe it in a decoction of herbs. I will provide you with all that is necessary. Follow me!"

"If you please, sir—"

"Follow me, Bulstrode!"

And Bulstrode gritting his teeth, followed Mr. Chesham from the room.

The Removites looked at one another. Some were grinning; some were looking annoyed and angry, some apprehensive.

"He's beginning!" said Russell.

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"He's begun!" said Ogilvy.

"Bulstrode's catching it first," growled Bob Cherry. "Serve him right, for that matter! He's no right to go round with a chivvy like that, spoiling the view! But who's turn will it be next?"

"Might be anybody's!"

"We're not going to stand it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Faith, and let's rag the baste in class this afternoon, and show him that we're not going to stand anything, anyhow!" proposed Micky Desmond excitedly.

"Hurrah!"

"Hold on!" said Wharton. "Keep the peace as long as you can. Quelch has sort of put us on our honour."

"Rats! He has no right to do anything of the sort!"

"Bosh!"

"Rubbish!"

"I say, you fellows, he may start cutting down the grub! You remember what he did last time. And now we're having all our tin stolen in the dormitory of a night we can't afford to buy things at the tuckshop. It will be serious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It's jolly bad to have to swallow patent medicines, I know, but it's a jolly lot worse to have one's grub cut down, especially if you're a chap like me—of a delicate constitution, and can only keep your strength up by taking constant nourishment."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I sha'n't shut up! I say, you fellows, I think we ought to begin on Chesham at once, and make him understand that—Oh, you horrid bounders, to walk away while I'm talking to you!"

And Billy Bunter, finding that he was standing alone, and that his sweetness was being wasted on the desert air, took the advice often tendered him, and "shut up."

But there were a good many juniors in the Form of Bunter's opinion. Most of the Remove were ready to "go for" the obnoxious Form-master without waiting for him to show the cloven hoof.

It looked as if there was to be trouble in the Remove-room!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Class.

MR. CHESHAM was in the Remove-room when the Form came in to afternoon school.

There was an agreeable smile upon his face, which with any other master would have meant an easy time for the boys; but with Mr. Chesham it probably meant mischief.

Bulstrode did not enter with the Form. He had not been seen since the new master marched him off from the Common-room.

Doubtless he was still carrying out the master's instructions with regard to his face, which had been so badly damaged by the "accident."

Mr. Chesham glanced at Mark Linley as the boys went to their places. The signs of battle on Mark's face were not so evident as in Bulstrode's case, but they were plain enough to be seen.

The Form-master signed to Linley to come out before the class.

Mark obeyed.

"Have you met with an accident?" asked Mr. Chesham.

"No, sir."

"Your face looks like it."

Mark was silent.

"What is your name? You are a new boy, I think, since I was here?"

"Yes, sir. My name is Linley."

"Well, Linley, what is the matter with your face?"

"I have been fighting, sir."

Mr. Chesham started. That simple explanation had not occurred to his mind.

"Dear me; it is very wrong to fight!" he exclaimed, shaking his head. "If this had occurred after my coming here, Linley, I should have punished you; but I shall take no notice of it, under the circumstances. But I cannot have your face in that state. Have you done anything for it?"

"Only bathed it, sir."

"Quite insufficient. Go to my room, and bring me the large red bottle with a white label you will find on my dressing-table."

"Yes, sir."

And Mark left the Form-room.

"My hat, Linley's in for it!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I suppose Bulstrode's still smudging his chivvy with ointment. Serve him jolly well right; but I'm sorry for Linley."

"I say, you fellows—"

"You are talking in class," said Mr. Chesham, in a tone of mild reproof: "that is not permitted. Let me see, I think the first lesson is English history?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good; we will— Ah, you have not been long, Linley! Give me the bottle."

Mark handed over the red bottle with the white label, and turned to go back to his place. The Form-master called to him.

"Stay a moment, Linley. You are not fit to attend classes with your face in that dreadful state!"

"I feel fit, sir."

"That is nothing to do with it. You must allow me to be the judge," said Mr. Chesham severely. "You will miss lessons this afternoon, and spend the time in attending to these facial injuries."

"If you please, sir—"

"You will take a tablespoonful and a half of this liquid, and mix it with a quantity of water equal to ten parts of the liquid. You will stir this carefully in a basin for ten minutes, until the admixture is thoroughly complete."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Then you will dip a fragment of cloth or sponge into the decoction, and rub your face with it."

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"You will keep up a gentle but continuous rubbing for two hours. At the end of that time you will report to me."

Mark Linley was silent. He might make the mixture as directed, and he might rub his face with it; but he was extremely unlikely to keep up a gentle and continuous rubbing for two hours.

"You may go, Linley," said Mr. Chesham, handing the bottle back to Mark. "If you cannot find a tablespoon, you can calculate the amount by the divisions on the bottle. Each division is equal to a tablespoon. I trust that the worst of your injuries will be quite cured by this evening. You may go!"

And Linley went.

Then lessons began. Mr. Chesham was a very able master so far as mental attainments went, but he did not seem to have the gift of handling boys.

There was a great deal of "rotting" in the Remove, and Mr. Chesham never seemed to catch on to it.

Skinner was the worst offender. He affected never to have heard of King John, much to Mr. Chesham's astonishment. Mr. Chesham took everything

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with the most deadly seriousness, and Skinner's ignorance astounded him.

"Skinner! You—you have never heard of King John?" he gasped.

Skinner wagged his head slowly. "The name seems familiar, sir," he said. "Was he a relation of John o' Groats, sir?"

The Remove chuckled. "Mr. Chesham cast a severe glance round the class.

"Really, my boys, this is not a subject for amusement," he said. "Skinner's ignorance is astounding—positively and absolutely astounding. I am shocked—amazed."

"I've heard the name before, sir," said Skinner brightly. "Now I come to think of it, wasn't he the chap who said, 'Honey swarkey mally pong'?"

"Who said—what—what?"

"Honey swarkey mally pong."

"I—I do not understand, Skinner.

That sounds to me like—like Esperanto or Hindustanee. What does it mean?"

"Evil to him who evil thinks, sir."

"What—what?"

"It's French, sir."

"French?"

"Yes, sir."

"Say—say it again."

"Honey swarkey mally pong," said Skinner proudly.

Mr. Chesham gasped.

"Oh, I think I understand! You mean 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'?"

"Yes, sir. Honey swarkey mally pong."

"It was not King John who said that, Skinner, as you ought to know very well."

"Was he the chap who let the cakes

burn, sir?"

"That was King Alfred, Skinner."

"So it was! I remember now! Oh, I know, sir! King John was the chap who had his head cut off by Cromwell after the battle of Waterloo."

"This was too much for Mr. Chesham.

"Skinner, you will take a hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir."

"You will write 'King John succeeded his brother Richard in 1199,' one hundred times."

"Yes, sir."

Then Mr. Chesham let Skinner alone. Ogilvy was called sharply to order for talking to Russell, and was questioned severely. Ogilvy's eyes glimmered, and though he was one of the keenest boys in the Form, he showed an ignorance of English history that was as surprising as Skinner's.

Asked about King John, he pronounced that that sovereign had had a successful reign, and was taken to task.

"Ogilvy, I am surprised at this ignorance from you!" said Mr. Chesham.

"You must know that King John was forced by the barons to sign Magna Charta against his will?"

"Yes, sir."

"That he was defeated by Philip Augustus?"

"Yes, sir."

"That he was engaged in an unsuccessful war when he died?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what do you mean, Ogilvy, by asserting that King John had a successful reign?"

"You said so, sir."

Mr. Chesham was taken aback.

"I—I said so?"

"Yes, sir. You told Skinner that King John succeeded in 1199," said Ogilvy, with a look of the most perfect innocence.

Mr. Chesham breathed hard through his nose. The Remove could hardly restrain themselves from bursting into a roar.

"Ogilvy! I meant that John suc-

ceeded to the throne—that he became the next king after Richard I."

"Oh, sir! I see, sir! You did not say so before, sir."

"Do you understand now, Ogilvy?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you so much, sir!"

Mr. Chesham left Ogilvy to digest the interesting information he had received.

As a matter of fact, Ogilvy knew very nearly as much about the reign of King John as Mr. Chesham did.

The new master was no more successful in other directions. He found the Remove a remarkably stupid class, and before the end of the afternoon he grew extremely irritated, and told them so.

The Remove received his censures with great outward meekness, but with glittering eyes. They had not done with Mr. Chesham yet.

"How's that for a beginning?" grinned Skinner as the class went out.

"If we keep it up, we shall turn his hair grey in a few days. He was tapping his forehead all the afternoon, as if he were getting a screw loose already."

"It's hardly fair to start first, you know," said Wharton.

"Rats! We didn't start first. Hasn't he started on Bulstrode—and on Linley, too, for that matter? Though it doesn't matter about Linley."

And Wharton was silent. Mr. Chesham had indeed "begun it," though he had not gone very far as yet. But there was more to come!

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott made their way to Bulstrode's study. They opened the door, and burst into a roar of laughter as they caught sight of the bully sitting in the chair, his head heavily bandaged.

"My hat!" exclaimed Skinner. "What a sight!"

"I'll sight you!" roared Bulstrode, in a bad temper. "Clear out of here. I want to be alone!"

"I should jolly well think you do, with a face like that!" said Skinner. "Come on, you chaps. Let's get downstairs."

And the "chaps" went!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Misses His Breakfast.

MR. CHESHAM glanced at his pupils as they took their places at the breakfast-table the next morning.

"Boys," he said, "whenever any of you require medicine, or medical attention of any sort, be sure to come to me at once. In the case of indigestion I have an infallible cure. Do you suffer from indigestion, Cherry?"

"Oh, no, sir. Not in the least, sir."

"Do you suffer from indigestion, Bunter?"

"Not in the slightest, sir."

"Is there any boy present who suffers from indigestion?"

There was a general chorus of disclaimers. The digestion of the Remove seemed to be remarkably good.

"Ah! Perhaps some of you will suffer from it another time," said Mr. Chesham.

"In that case, pray let me know at once."

"Certainly, sir."

"This medicine that I speak of is my own invention. I tried it with every success upon my favourite dog. I first gave him a large amount of mixed items of food, to cause him a severe attack of indigestion, and then administered the medicine," said Mr. Chesham. "The effect was wonderful."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes. He took the medicine quite willingly, and it cured him at once."

"How splendid, sir. Have you brought him to Greyfriars, sir?"

"No; he died shortly afterwards. Bunter, you are drinking your tea hot."

"A-a-a-a-am I, sir?"

"You are!"

"I'm—I'm sincerely sorry, sir."

Mr. Chesham felt in his waistcoat-pocket.

"Take this pilule, Bunter," he said.

"Swallow it immediately. It will correct the effect of the hot tea upon the system."

Bunter took the pill in his hand, with a very dubious expression on his fat face.

He didn't like pills.

"Take it," said Mr. Chesham encouragingly.

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Come, take it! Swallow it at once!"

"D-does it taste nasty, sir?"

"Not at all—nothing to speak of."

"I—I'd rather not take it, sir, if you don't mind."

"But I do mind, Bunter. It is for your own good. If it were for my good it would be a different matter. You must take it. I insist!"

Bunter put the pill into his mouth.

He would have done wisely to make an effort to swallow it at once—always the safest course when taking pills. But Bunter never had any nerve.

He let it rest in his mouth, and licked it with his tongue, all the time wearing a decidedly unhappy expression.

The full flavour of that pill made itself perceptible in about a minute; and Bunter's expression became poignant.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Ow! I'm being poisoned! Yow!"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"I'm being poisoned! Ow! Ow!"

"Nonsense! You should have swallowed the pill whole. The taste is a little bitter, but in the course of time you would come to actually like it."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"I forbid you to make that absurd noise at the breakfast-table, Bunter!"

"Yow, yow!"

Billy Bunter jumped up, and, regardless of the presence of the Form-master, and the amazed stares from the other tables, he commenced to eject the remains of the pill.

"Bunter!"

"Groo—yaroooh—ow!"

"Leave the room at once, Bunter! Do you hear me?"

"Yow—wow—ow—wow!"

"Leave the room instantly. You shall not finish your breakfast after this disgusting exhibition. Go, sir!"

And Bunter tottered from the room, to wash his mouth out under the nearest bath-tap.

Mr. Chesham sat down again, looking very annoyed and indignant. The Removees were looking indignant, too. Nobody cared very much for Bunter; but the whole Form thought it rough that he should be done out of his breakfast in this manner.

The meal finished in silence. But the Removees were making up their minds that Mr. Chesham wanted ragging a little more, and even Harry Wharton was roused now. He had promised Mr. Quelch to do his best, and he had done his best. But the faddist Form-master was going altogether too far, and Harry had to think of his duty to the Form, as well as to the Form-master.

When the Remove left the tables and gathered in the Hall, there were dark looks among them.

"I think that about caps the stack," said Bulstrode.

"Of course it doesn't matter about Bunter," said Skinner. "But it might have happened to any one of us. That's the point you've got to remember."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter! How do you feel?"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 261.

"Rotten!" said Billy Bunter. "If there's much more of this I shall run away from the school. I've been nearly poisoned, and I've had to miss half my breakfast. Can flesh and blood be expected to stand it?"

"Hardly," said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Not your flesh and blood, anyway!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! You see, it's specially unfortunate just now," said Bunter pathetically. "I was expecting a postal-order this morning; but there's been some delay in the post, and I'm actually stony. Otherwise I could stand myself a feed in the tuckshop, and make up for my lost meal. I say, you fellows, could one of you lend me a couple of bob until my postal-order comes?"

"It may be for years, it may be for ever," sang Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Harry Wharton felt in his pockets. "It's a time for all true friends of liberty to rally," grinned Bob Cherry. "Here you are, Bunter, a boblet."

"Thank you, Cherry. I think you were feeling in your pockets, Wharton."

"Yes; but it's all right now."

"Oh, hand over what you were going to lend me. You needn't let Cherry's bob interfere with your loan. Be businesslike, you know. The matters are quite distinct, and I shall enter them on separate leaves of my pocket-book."

Harry Wharton laughed, and tossed over a shilling.

"Thank you very much, Wharton. Will you have this out of my next postal-order, or out of the first cheque I get for doing photographic work for the Press?"

"It doesn't matter which, Bunt." "I'd rather you say. Anyway, I'll put it down to the account."

"Certainly; that's important," said Harry, laughing.

"Did you say you wanted to lend me a shilling, Nugent?"

"No; I didn't."

"Ah! It was you, then, Ogilvy?"

"No, it wasn't," said Ogilvy, walking away.

And Bunter grunted, and took his way to the tuckshop, where Mrs. Mimble supplied him with tuck to the exact value of two shillings. But there was a considerable quantity to be obtained for that sum, with judicious management, and when Bunter came out of the tuckshop his face was full of satisfaction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Merry Morning.

THE Remove was very quiet and grim as they came into the Form-room for morning lessons.

Mr. Chesham was at his desk, his face beaming.

He was pretty well satisfied with himself and his management of the Form, so far, and he was planning new schemes for bringing the juniors into a state of bounding health.

His cordial smile showed that he meant mischief, and the Removites hardened their hearts against him.

However, Mr. Chesham was unfortunate from the beginning. The quietness of the Remove encouraged him. His previous experience with them had not led him to expect them to be so quiet under his rule, and he flattered himself that by patience and the force of reason he had overcome them. He deceived himself!

But, encouraged by the submissive manners of the Remove, he proceeded to take up a considerable portion of the time supposed to be devoted to geography by a lecture on the subject of the earliest

symptoms of a cold, and the best method of treatment.

The Remove had no love for geography; but still less love had they for anything in the way of illnesses or talk thereof; and they soon showed their restiveness.

"And if these preliminary measures fail to arrest the progress of the cold," went on Mr. Chesham, "the only recourse is to go immediately to bed, and take four grams of the pink powder for cantankerous colds, and—"

"Cheese it!"

Mr. Chesham did "cheese it." So utterly amazed was he by that demand in his own class-room.

The class almost held their breath. They knew, of course, that it was the Owl of the Remove at work; but Mr. Chesham had no suspicion of the sort.

The Form-master gazed about him. He glared at the class, and the class kept their eyes fixed upon their desks. It was some moments before Mr. Chesham found his voice.

"Who was that?"

He gasped out the words.

There was no reply.

The voice had been like anybody's but Bunter's, and there was no chance of the amateur ventriloquist being discovered unless he were given away, which was not likely to happen.

"Who spoke?"

Silence!

"Very well," said Mr. Chesham. "Some boy has been impertinent. I shall discover that boy. When I discover him he will be sent in to the headmaster to be caned. We will now proceed."

"Ring off!"

Mr. Chesham jumped.

"What?"

The Remove grinned.

The voice had come from a different direction, but exactly what direction the new master of the Remove did not know.

"I—I cannot understand this!" he gasped. "Who made that most insolent remark to me?"

No one enlightened him.

The Form-master breathed hard through his nose. He looked up and down the class, vainly seeking someone upon whom he could wreak his wrath with any show of justice.

But there was no one! He simply could not guess who had spoken, and the tones of the voice gave him no clue.

"Boys, you are laughing!"

The grins faded away.

"There is nothing comic in this impertinence to a Form-master."

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

"That's all you know," he murmured.

"We will now resume—"

"Silly jossler!"

"What?"

"Frabjous ass!"

Mr. Chesham swung round.

He thought he had caught the direction of the voice that time, and he was almost certain that it proceeded from a large cupboard in the corner of the Remove-room. In that cupboard were kept easels and books and other paraphernalia sometimes required in the instruction of the Remove.

It flashed into Mr. Chesham's mind at once that some practical joker had hidden himself in the cupboard, with the intention of ragging the master during morning lessons.

"Ah, I think I have found the insolent young rascal!" he ejaculated.

And he ran across the class-room towards the cupboard.

The Removites grinned at one another. Mr. Chesham was welcome to come to his heart's content any practical joker whom he should find in that cupboard.

The Remove-master pulled at the handle.

The door remained fast. Mr. Chesham turned an angry face towards the grinning class, and the grinning faces immediately assumed expressions of almost preternatural solemnity.

"Is this door locked, Wharton?"

"I think so, sir."

"Is it usually kept locked?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the key?"

"Mr. Quelch always keeps it in his desk, sir."

"There is a boy hidden in this cupboard!" said Mr. Chesham angrily. "If the key is in the desk here, he must have been locked in from outside."

"Yes, sir."

"In that case, he must have a confederate here. I shall find him, and punish him severely."

"Keep your wool on, old Whiskers!"

Mr. Chesham let go the handle of the cupboard door, and almost danced with rage.

"I—I will make an example of that boy!" he stuttered.

He rushed towards the desk, and sought through it for the key. He was not many minutes in finding it, and then he rushed back towards the cupboard.

The key grated into the lock, and there was a click, and Mr. Chesham threw the door wide open. Then he gave a jump.

Within was a collection of rolled-up maps, easels, blackboards, and boxes. There was no sign of a human being.

Mr. Chesham gazed into the cupboard open-mouthed. But he saw nothing but lumber there. Merely that, and nothing more.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Up the Chimney!

MR. CHESHAM gazed into the cupboard, and the Remove gazed at Mr. Chesham. The expression upon the Form-master's face was too funny, and the Removites could not resist it. There was a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham was so astounded that he did not even notice it. He stood staring into the cupboard. He rubbed his forehead in a thoughtful way.

"Upon my soul!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham turned round furiously, and the juniors fell into silence. The look upon Mr. Chesham's face showed that he was becoming seriously angry.

"Will you be silent?"

The laughter died away. But in the silence that followed came a still, small voice from the cupboard.

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham jumped.

"Yah!"

"Upon my word!"

The Form-master stared into the cupboard again in blank astonishment.

"Someone is hidden in here," he said savagely. "He must be a— a diminutive person to be hidden among these things. Come out at once, boy!"

"Yah!"

"Will you obey me?"

"Rate!"

Mr. Chesham turned crimson with rage, and, without wasting more time in words, he began to drag the things out of the cupboard.

In a minute or less there was a disorderly heap on the floor and the cupboard was almost clear; but the owner of the still, small voice had not come to light.

Mr. Chesham pressed his hand to his brow.

What did it mean? Was it a dream or were his senses wandering?

"Yah!"

He started violently. There was a shelf along the top of the cupboard inside, which could only be reached by means of a pair of steps which were kept in the cupboard. The shelf was crammed with boxes, atlases, and disused books and other impedimenta. Mr. Chesham stared at the mass.

"Yah!"

Yes, there was no mistake, the impertinent exclamation came from amid the lumber on that shelf.

Mr. Chesham dragged the steps into position, and mounted upon them.

The Remove fairly gasped.

They had hardly ventured to hope that the Form-master could be fooled to such an extent as this.

When that lumber, some of which had not been disturbed for whole terms, was dragged out into the light they could imagine what the state of the vicinity of the cupboard would be like.

Was it possible that the exasperated Form-master was going so far?

Their doubts on that point were soon resolved. Mr. Chesham peered into the mass of lumber on the shelf.

"Boy!" he almost hooted.

"Yah!"

"Boy! Come out!"

"Yah!"

"I know you're hidden there! Come out at once!"

"Yah!"

The reiteration of that absurd monosyllable exasperated the already angry master almost beyond bounds.

He laid violent hands upon the packed-up lumber, and dragged it out from its dusty resting-place. Books and maps and boxes and instruments came down in a dusty shower upon the floor of the room.

In a few moments the angry master had whirled and hurled all the rubbish out of the way, and through the clouds of dust he was coughing and peering at the shelf.

It was unoccupied. No one was there!

Mr. Chesham almost fell off the steps in his astonishment. He had distinctly heard a human voice, and yet no one was there. Either his eyes or his ears had deceived him.

He descended to the floor, and sneezed the dust from his nose, and rubbed it from his eyelids, and stared.

What did it all mean?

"I am the subject of a delusion, the victim of a fearful hallucination," he murmured. "I remember now that I only took three instead of four of the terra-cotta tabloids after breakfast."

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham whirled round.

The voice came from the fireplace, and as there was no fire, the suspicion naturally crossed his mind that the troublesome practical joker was hidden in the recesses of the huge, wide chimney.

There was plenty of room there for anyone to hide, as a matter of fact, if anyone had wished to do so.

Mr. Chesham drew a breath of relief.

It was not a hallucination after all—it was not a fearful delusion resulting from having missed one of his usual allowance of tabloids.

The joker was hidden in the chimney, and he had been deceived as to the direction of the voice; instead of proceeding from the corner cupboard, as he imagined, it had proceeded from the chimney.

Mr. Chesham rushed to the grate.

He put his head over the grate, and blinked up the chimney, and shouted to the supposed delinquent there.

"Boy! Come down!"

"Yah!"

There was no doubt this time. The

voice proceeded from the chimney. Mr. Chesham's eyes glinted.

He meant to exact a severe penalty for all this ridiculous fooling.

The Remove, no longer able to restrain themselves, were roaring with laughter. But Mr. Chesham paid them no attention now. He was on the track of vengeance.

He put his head under the chimney.

"Boy!" he shouted.

"Yah!"

"Will you come down?"

"Yah!"

"Come down this instant!"

Several flecks of soot, dislodged by the Form-master's thundering voice, came down, and Mr. Chesham sneezed. But the supposed boy did not come down.

Mr. Chesham reached up the chimney with the pointer, and poked.

But apparently it did not reach the practical joker, for nothing was heard from him but a repetition of that irritating monosyllable.

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham threw prudence to the winds. He leaned under the grate, so

Mr. Chesham was smothered from head to foot.

His face was black, his eyes rolled and blinked through blackness, his mouth was black and choked, his nose was sneezing away as if worked by steam.

His aspect was so utterly absurd that the juniors could not have restrained their mirth if their very lives had depended upon it.

The whole Form-room rang with their laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

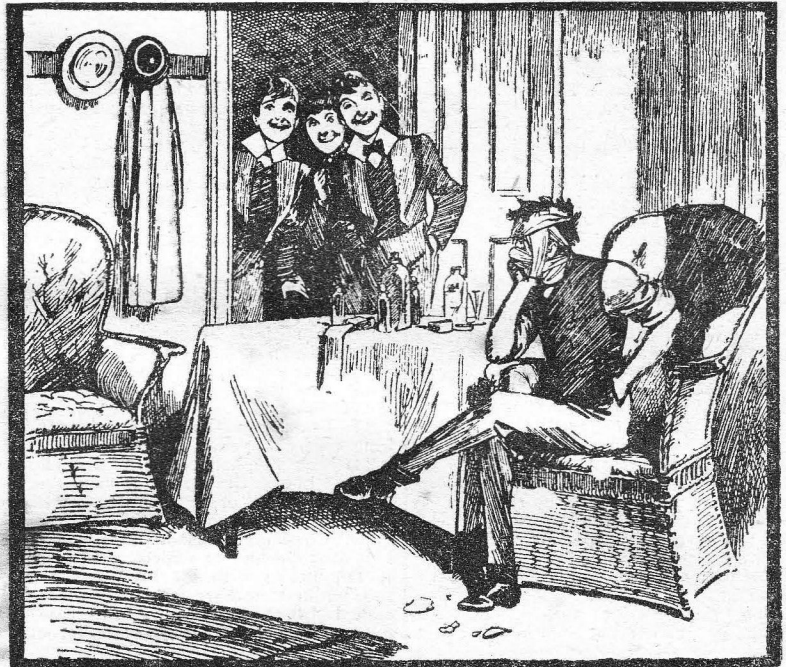
THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Victory!

"HA, ha, ha!" Mr. Chesham staggered away from the fireplace. He was blinded, choked, smothered, infuriated. He waved his hands and wagged his head, and tried to speak, but his words came forth only in a confused mumble.

The Remove simply roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"



"My hat! What a sight!" gasped Skinner, as he entered the study, to find Bulstrode sitting in an easy-chair, his head heavily bandaged.

as to reach as high as possible with the pointer, thrust his arm up the chimney to its full extent, and thrashed the brickwork.

If a boy had been there, he would certainly have been brought down by those drastic measures. Unfortunately for the new Form-master, there was no boy there; but there was plenty of soot.

And the soot came down with a rush. There was a sudden and formidable yell from the chimney-place, and Mr. Chesham withdrew his head.

A roar went up from the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They could not help it.

Even Mark Linley's troubled face was convulsed with merriment like the rest.

For a dozen pounds of soot or more had descended like an avalanche upon the head and shoulders of the Form-master.

"My only hat! Hold me!"

"The funniffulness is terrific!"

"Boys!" Mr. Chesham's voice came mumbled as from the depths of caverns of soot. "Boys! I command this brutal merriment to cease!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The author of this outrage shall be terribly punished. I will report the whole matter to the Head!" almost shrieked Mr. Chesham.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is a class of ruffians—of hooligans—of pigs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham glared furiously at the Remove. When he was allowed to have his own way, and his curious little manners and customs were not objected to, he was a good-tempered man. But just now he looked the reverse of good-tempered.

He looked as if it needed but little more to drive him to homicide.

"Boys! I command you—"

"Yes, sir—ha, ha, ha!—all right."

"This is outrageous—disgraceful!"

"Sorry, sir—ha, ha, ha!"

"The wretched boy who has hurled this soot down upon me shall suffer for his unexampled insolence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I go to the headmaster now, to report this unparalleled outrage. A prefect will be sent to take charge of you for the rest of the morning. I am not in a fit state to do so. I gladly leave an unruly class."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham ground his teeth, and rushed from the room.

He left the Remove in a roar.

They roared, and roared, till the Form-room rang again. Their merriment was unrestrained. In the exuberance of his spirits, Bob Cherry sprang into the middle of the room and executed a waltz.

The rest, infected by his jubilation, speedily joined him, and in a few minutes the Remove, with only two or three exceptions, were celebrating their victory over the faddist Form-master in terpsichorean wise.

"Come to my arms, my Bunter of many charms!" sobbed Bob Cherry, dragging the fat junior from his place, in spite of his resistance.

"Ow! Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come on! Trip the light fantastic too—"

"Ow! I'm short of breath—"

"Rats! Stick it out!"

"Ow, ow! Yow!"

But Bunter's expostulations were of no avail. Bob Cherry meant to waltz with him, and waltz he did, in spite of the fat junior's objections.

Meanwhile, the Form-master, too excited to reflect what a sensation his peculiar state was likely to make in the school, rushed down the passage.

The outrage to which he had been subjected was amazing, unparalleled. Mr. Chesham firmly believed that a boy hidden in the chimney had hurled an avalanche of soot down upon him.

He rushed away to report his wrongs and to demand redress of the Head.

Wingate of the Sixth met him in the passage, early out from classes. Wingate gave a jump as he saw him.

"M-m-m-m-y only hat! W-w-what's that?"

The Form-master rushed on, and Wingate, recovering from his first

startled surprise, caught him by the shoulder.

"Who are you? What does this mean?"

"Let me go!"

"Mr. Chesham?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Great Scott! What has happened?"

"An outrage! An unparalleled outrage!" gasped and spluttered the Form-master. "Let me see—you are a prefect—will you take the Remove temporarily?"

"Take the Remove?"

"Yes; till I have seen the Head."

And Mr. Chesham rushed on in a whirlwind of soot, leaving Wingate staring after him in blank amazement for some moments. The captain of Greyfriars made his way to the Remove-room.

Mr. Chesham rushed on to the Head's presence, which happened then to be the Sixth Form-room, where the Head was taking that Form in Greek. Wingate was out early, but the others were there, busy with the doctor.

Mr. Chesham hurled open the door, and hurled himself in, with a cloud and a strong smell of soot.

There was a general exclamation.

"Hallo!"

"What's that?"

"A lunatic!"

"My hat!"

Dr. Locke turned round, and stared at the strange and awe-inspiring figure in amazement and dismay.

"Bless my soul! What—what—"

"It's a lunatic!" exclaimed Loder, jumping up. "We'll protect you, sir!"

"Boy, I am not a lunatic! I—"

"Mr. Chesham!" ejaculated the amazed Head, recognising the voice of the new Form-master. "Mr. Chesham! What does this mean?"

"An outrage, sir—a terrible outrage—"

"Dear me! It is soot!"

"Yes sir! Soot! I—"

"This is a curious state in which to come into the Sixth Form class-room, Mr. Chesham."

"I—I—do you think I am like this from choice?" yelled Mr. Chesham.

"I think you had better go and clean yourself before the matter is discussed," said the Head drily. "I wonder that did not occur to you."

Mr. Chesham gurgled. This was the sympathy he had to expect. He glared at Dr. Locke with his blackened face, and without another word turned and rushed from the room. He made a straight line for the nearest bath-room.

Meanwhile, Wingate had entered the Remove-room.

He found the Remove celebrating their victory over the obnoxious Form-master more like a tribe of Red Indians than a Form of English schoolboys.

"Stop that row!"

Wingate's sharp voice cut like a knife into the din, and the celebration ceased on the instant.

The juniors went back to their places, and the Greyfriars captain eyed them grimly. He did not fully understand, of course, what was the matter; but he knew pretty well that the Remove had, somehow, been making matters hot for the faddist Form-master—of course, with the utmost possible innocence on their part.

"Well, you young rascals," he said, "what have you been doing?"

"Nothing," said Wharton promptly.

"How did Mr. Chesham become so sooty?"

"He put his head under the chimney, and raked it with a pointer."

"Why?"

"Hadn't you better ask him, Wingate?"

Wingate could not help laughing.

"Very well," he said, "it's no business of mine, I suppose."

And till the morning classes were dismissed the Remove broke out every few minutes into bursts of chuckling, which the captain of Greyfriars could not suppress.

When they went out into the Close, half of them hugged Bunter, and the fat ventriloquist felt that he was a great man. He proposed a feed, and it was agreed that he should have it, and he did.

The Head inquired into the affair; but it was proved to his satisfaction that no boy had any trace of soot on his clothes, and that it was extremely improbable that anybody had been in the chimney. He attributed the whole matter to a strange fancy on the part of Mr. Chesham, and nobody was punished.

The Remove were hopeful that the affair might end in ridding them of the faddist. It did not come to that; but they had scored a victory, and they confidently predicted that the faddist would lie low after that—and but for the dark shadow that hung upon the name of Mark Linley, there would have been no care in the hearts of his staunch chums.

THE END.

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D'ARCY'S DODGE!

By
Martin
Clifford

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Quite a Good Idea.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, wore a particularly bright smile. He was trying on neckties before the big glass, which had been imported into Study No. 6 at D'Arcy's own expense.

He looked round at Blake and smiled. "Hallo, Blake, deah boy!" he said. "I'm glad you've come in. I've got an ideah for this aftahnoon!"

The chums of the Fourth did not seem much impressed. Blake kicked a cushion across the study and Herries sat down in the armchair and stamped on the fender. Digby looked out of the window and whistled.

"I've got a wippin' ideah for the aftahnoon!" repeated Arthur Augustus, with emphasis.

"That what you were grinning about?" asked Blake.

"I was not aware that I was gwinnin', deah boy. Pewwaps a smile—"

"Well, what's the rotten ideah?" asked Blake discontentedly. "Anything's better than nothing! Get it off your chest!"

"It is not a wotten ideah!"

"Didn't you say it was yours?"

"Yaas."

"Well, that settles whether it's a rotten one or not."

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake! I have an ideah that is weally wippin'!"

"Huh!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligent weply, Blake. Howevah, I will come to the point. Have you heard about the new hotel in Wayland?"

"Yes," said Blake. "I know a new hotel's been opened there; quite a swag-gah place. But what on earth—"

"Look at that card on the table!" said D'Arcy.

Blake picked up the card and looked at it. It was evidently an advertisement of the new swagger hotel in Wayland market town.

"Hotel Royal, Wayland," mumbled Blake. "Electric light; rooms with private bath-rooms; terrace overlooking the river; afternoon tea a speciality; interpreter always on duty in the hotel; on parle Francais; Man spricht Deutsch; si parla Italiana. What on earth has this got to do with us, Gussy?"

"Gussy's governor's got shares in it, perhaps," suggested Digby.

"Weally, Digby—"

"Well, what is the ideah?" asked Blake. "Has it got anything to do with this hotel?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Explain then, you ass!"

"I refuse to be called an ass!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Pway do not make unintelligible noises, deah boy! Do you see what it says on the card?"

"Interpreter kept tame on the premises," said Blake.

"I do not mean that."

"Private bath-rooms," said Blake.

"Do you want to go there and bath?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Then what is it, dummy?"

"Tewwace overlookin' the wivah," said D'Arcy. "Aftahnoon tea a speciality. The new hotel is the swag-gahest place for miles wound. My ideah is to take a few friends, and go there and have a wippin' feed."

The faces of the juniors brightened up at once.

"Now you're talking!" said Herries.

"Fancy old Gussy talking sense like that!" said Digby admiringly.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Jolly good ideah!" said Blake. "I suppose we come under the list of your friends, Gussy? Might ask Tom Merry, too. But the place will be frightfully expensive! I've seen those blessed swagger hotels before! They charge you if you breathe, and charge you double if you don't!"

D'Arcy nodded.

"Yaas, it will be deah; but this is goin' to be a wippin' excursion, deah boys. The fact is, I've had a wemittance fwom my govahnah, and anothah fwom my Aunt Adelina, and they both awwived by the same post. That was what weally put the ideah into my head. I've got two fivahs!"

"Hurrah!"

"And I wathah think that will see us through, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, trying on a tenth necktie.

"What do you think?"

"Think? Why, it's simply a ripping wheeze!" exclaimed Blake, rushing at his elegant chum and hugging him ecstas-tically.

"Ow!" roared D'Arcy. "Mind my collah!"

"Phew! Never mind your collah!"

"Mind my necktie, you duffah! Ow!" Arthur Augustus jerked himself away.

"You awful ass! I shall have to change my collah now; you have wumped it! Pway don't play the gid-day goat! Now, when will you chaps be ready to start for Wayland? I've only got to settle on a necktie, so I shall be weady in about half an hour."

Blake chuckled.

"You won't have to wait for us," he said. "I'll go and gather in Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, and one or two others if you like."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake left the study in great spirits. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had really delivered himself of a good ideah at last.

Herries and Digby went away in search of clean collars for the occasion, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left alone to try on the rest of his neckties.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Woe to the Conquered!

"**H**IST!"

"Hallo—"

"Hist!"

"Well, I'm histing! What's the matter?"

"Shush, you ass!" said Gordon Gay. "It's the giddy foe!"

A crowd of youths in Grammar-School caps were gathered round Gordon Gay on the footpath in Rylecombe Wood. They were juniors of Rylcombe Grammar School, the deadly rivals of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's.

Gordon Gay's blue eyes gleamed.

"Quite a party of them!" he grinned. "This is where we come in, you chaps! This is where we get level for the raid those bounders made upon us the other day! Cover!"

"Good egg!" said Frank Monk.

"Cover—quick!"

The Grammarians rushed into cover. Thick bushes grew along either side of the footpath, and there was plenty of cover for the Grammarian juniors.

In less than a minute they were out of sight, and waiting for the enemy to appear. Gordon Gay kept a wary watch upon the path.

"Not a sound!" he whispered. "Wait till I give the signal!"

"Can you see them?" whispered Monk.

Gay chuckled.

"Yes; a regular gang of them—eleven or twelve!"

"Never mind. We shall be two to one."

"They've all got their best bibs and tuckers on, too!" said Gay, peering through the bushes at the advancing party from St. Jim's. "Gussy's a picture. Where on earth are they going, I wonder? Mind you're ready when I give the word!"

"What-ho!"

"Collar the bounders, and capture their hats and things!" said Gay. "They look like a Sunday-school out for a walk. Something's on, I suppose."

"More than they guess!" grinned Wootton major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush! They'll hear you!"

"All right. I'm 'shushing!"

The Grammarians waited.

Down the footpath, cheerful and unsuspectious, came Arthur Augustus and his little party. The St. Jim's fellows had, as Gay remarked, their best bibs and tuckers on.

All of them were resplendent in beautiful shiny toppers and clean collars, and their boots were polished, and their jackets were brushed. It was evident that some function of unusual importance was on.

"Tea at the vicarage, very likely," murmured Gordon Gay. "They won't

feel like tea at the vicarage when we've done with them!"

And the Grammarians chuckled softly.

The Saints came up unobtrusively; and they were almost abreast of the ambush when Gordon Gay gave the signal.

"Coo-ey!"

Then forth rushed the Grammarians.

"Look out!" yelled Jack Blake.

"Line up, St. Jim's!" shouted Tom Merry.

But it was too late.

The Grammarians, nearly twenty of them, fairly rushed the St. Jim's fellows off their feet. There was a wild and whirling fight on the footpath; but the odds were too great. The St. Jim's juniors rolled over under the charge of the Grammarians, or went crashing into the bushes. Tom Merry rolled on the ground, lovingly embraced by Gordon Gay, and Blake fell with Frank Monk sprawling over him.

"Buck up, deah boys!" yelled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, forgetting, in the excitement of combat, the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. "Give the boundahs socks!"

"Buck up!"

"Sock it to 'em!"

"Down with the Grammar cads!"

"Yah!"

Biff! Biff! Biff! Bump!

"Hurrah!" roared Frank Monk.

He sat up, on Jack Blake's chest, and surveyed the field of combat.

The St. Jim's fellows were all down now, with Grammarians sitting on them, one or two to each of the hapless members of the "little party."

"Are you going to surrender?" grinned Gordon Gay.

"No!" roared Blake.

"Wathah not!"

"Then we shall have to tie you up. Mont Blong, go round and take up their hankies and tie their wrists up."

The French junior chuckled.

"Zat is ze idea, n'est-ce-pas?" he said.

"I zink zat I tie zem up so zat zey not get away in ze hurry, isn't it?"

Tom Merry & Co. began to struggle again. But it was in vain; and one after another they were tied up with their own handkerchiefs. Then the victorious Grammarians released them. The Saints struggled to their feet, looking decidedly dishevelled, and glared at their conquerors.

"To the victors the spoils!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Collect up their toppers and neckties, and their collars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Tom Merry. "We're going—"

"Yaas, wathah; we're goin'—"

"You're going home without your hats or collars or neckties," grinned Gordon Gay, "unless you admit that the Grammar School is top dog."

"Never!"

"Wathah not, you wottah!"

"No fear!"

"Then we take the spoils of war!"

And the grinning Grammarians deprived their prisoners of their collars and neckties, and gathered up the toppers, which had all fallen off in the struggle, and crowded away down the footpath with their booty.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another in dismay.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This wathah knocks our little partay on the head, I think. We can't go to the Hotel Royal without our hats and collars!"

"Blessed lot of ragamuffins we look!" growled Blake, tugging at his wrists.

"Ow! Blessed if I wouldn't rather go to the Hotel Royal than back to St. Jim's looking like this!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 261.

"Ow! The beasts!"

"The rotters!"

The Saints struggled with the bonds upon their wrists, and said things—emphatic things—about the Grammarians. It did not take them very long to get their hands loose, but by that time the Grammarians were far away.

Rumpled and dishevelled, and hatless and tieless and collarless, it was evident that the little party could not go to Wayland.

There was nothing for it but to return to St. Jim's; and they had to make up their minds to it.

It was a disconsolate party that arrived half an hour later at the gates of the old school. There was a yell as they entered the quadrangle.

A howl of laughter followed the hapless little party to the doors of the School House. They were glad to hide their blushes within the ancient walls of that building.

Half an hour later the Rylecombe carrier stopped at St. Jim's with a huge box addressed to Tom Merry. It was opened in the junior common-room, and a yell of laughter went up as the spoils of war

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were revealed—a collection of torn collars and ties, and a number of decidedly battered silk hats.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Wrong Nose.

THE whole School House chuckled over the misadventures of the "little party," whose great feed at the Hotel Royal had not come off.

"You ought to have taken me with you," Levison remarked. "I shouldn't have walked into an ambush like that, you know."

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "When is the feed coming off, after all?" asked Levison.

"Pway mind your own bizney!" "Better choose a time when the Grammar chaps are at home, and— Oh!"

A cushion, deftly hurled by Jack Blake, sent Levison spinning out into the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, that was wathah funnay—Owp!"

The cushion came back into the study, and it caught Arthur Augustus D'Arcy

under the chin. The swell of St. Jim's sat down in the fender with a crash. Levison chuckled, and beat a retreat.

D'Arcy jumped up in a rage, and ran to the door. But Levison was gone. The swell of the Fourth turned back into the study, breathing hard.

"The cheekay wottahs! Here come some more of them!"

"Oh, lock the door!" said Blake. "I'm fed up!"

Herries slammed the study door, and locked it. There was a tap on the door outside, and Gore of the Shell called through the keyhole:

"You chaps had better take me next time! I'll look after you!"

"Go away, you silly duffah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who goes out to a feed, and comes home without his necktie and his hat?" demanded Gore.

"You silly chump!"

Gore hammered on the door. Blake stepped to the door quietly, and unlocked it without a sound, and threw it suddenly open. He had a cushion in his hand, and he delivered a sudden swipe before Gore knew what was happening. The Shell fellow gave a wild roar, and tumbled over.

Blake closed the door again and locked it. They heard Gore saying things in the passage, and then he retired growling.

D'Arcy chuckled.

"That's a good idea!" he remarked. "The next time anybody knocks at the door I'll open it suddenly and dot him on the nose. Then they'll stop comin'."

"Good egg!"

Tap!

It was a knock at the door again. D'Arcy made his chums a sign to be quiet, and stepped on tiptoe to the door.

The handle was tried, and then there was a tap again.

"Quiet, you chaps!" said Arthur Augustus softly. "I'll give the wottah a surprise!"

The juniors grinned in anticipation.

Tap!

D'Arcy turned the key back softly with infinite caution. Then he threw the door open, and rushed out, hitting furiously as he did so.

Biff, biff!

Crash!

"Ow!"

"Bai Jove! Oh, my hat! Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Herries and Digby. "Who is it, Gussy?"

"Oh, cwumbs! It's Mr. Lathom!"

The juniors rushed to the door.

Little Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, lay on the linoleum in the passage, on his back, gasping.

His spectacles had fallen off, and he was holding his nose with one hand, and a thin stream of red trickled through his fingers.

The juniors gazed at him, frozen with horror.

D'Arcy was quite pale.

He had smitten his Form-master on the nose before he saw whom it was.

"Oh, cwumbs!" murmured D'Arcy, in utter dismay. "Who'd have thought it? Bai Jove!"

"Oh!" groaned Mr. Lathom, who was quite dazed. "Ow! My—my nose! Oh!"

He groped for his glasses.

"D'Arcy! You—you have struck your Form-master! You—you unspcakable young ruffian! Good heavens!"

"I—I—I—"

"Follow me, sir!" shrieked Mr. Lathom. "Follow me to the Head! You shall be expelled from the school, sir—you shall be flogged, sir! You—you dreadful young ruffian! Good heavens! Follow me!"

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Not a word! Follow me!"

And Mr. Lathom, breathless with pain and fury, rushed away, his gown whisking behind him in the breeze he made in his rapid progress down the passage.

He did not look back for D'Arcy; he had no doubt that the junior was following him.

But D'Arcy did not follow him.

The swell of the Fourth seemed rooted to the floor.

He had smitten the Form-master in mistake, it was true; but how was he to convince Mr. Lathom of that?

He had certainly smitten very hastily, without looking at whom he was smiting.

And even if he proved that it was a mistake, the fact would remain that he had knocked down his Form-master!

Knocked down his Form-master!

The awful words seemed to freeze his blood.

For such an act there was only one possible punishment—a severe flogging, and instant expulsion from the school!

D'Arcy gasped.

"Oh, dear!" he groaned. "I—I say, you chaps—"

"You—you've done it now!" gasped Herries. "Oh, Gussy, you've put your foot in it this time, and no mistake!"

"I—I didn't know—"

"You'll have to explain," said Blake. "We'll come with you—"

D'Arcy shivered.

"I—I can't face the Head, and say I've knocked down my Form-master!" he groaned. "Oh, bai Jove, was there evah such wotten luck?"

"W-w-what's going to be done?" murmured Digby.

"Gussy, you must go—"

"I—I can't go!"

"But—but—"

"I can't! I—I think I'd better keep out of sight a bit till Mr. Lathom has calmed down," gasped D'Arcy.

"That might be a good idea," said Blake. "Keep out of sight a bit, and we'll try to explain. After all, it was an accident."

Arthur Augustus scuttled along the passage to the upper stairs, and went up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

His chums remained overwhelmed with dismay.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Unparalleled!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, simply jumped as Mr. Lathom rushed into his study.

The master of the Fourth was generally a quiet little man, very subdued in his manners, and of an equable temper.

But he did not look quiet or subdued now, neither was his temper in the slightest degree equable.

He came into the Head's study like a whirlwind, holding his hand to his nose, and panting for breath.

Dr. Holmes stared at him in amazement.

"Goodness gracious! What has happened, Mr. Lathom?" he ejaculated.

"I—I have been assaulted, sir!" roared the master of the Fourth. "I have been struck by a junior!"

"Good heavens!"

"Look at my nose, sir! It is bleeding! Look!" shrieked Mr. Lathom.

He drew his crimsoned fingers away.

The Head looked at his nose in horror.

The nose was not a pretty object at that moment. It seemed to have swollen several sizes larger already, and it was red—very red! There was a steady stream of "claret" oozing from it, and Mr. Lathom's collar was stained with crimson spots.

"Good heavens!" repeated the Head.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Lathom,

that a boy of this school has struck you—actually struck you upon the nose?"

"Yes, sir!" bellowed Mr. Lathom.

"It is—is amazing! I—I can scarcely credit it! Are you sure that—that there is no mistake?"

"Mistake, sir! Look at my nose!"

"It—it looks dreadful!" gasped the Head. "You have certainly received a blow. And—and one of the juniors struck the blow?"

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

"It is unthinkable—unspeakable—unbelievable! The wretched boy shall be made an example of!" exclaimed the Head, his anger rising at the bare idea of such an act of rebellion. "A Form-master struck in my school! I can scarcely believe that I am not dreaming! Who was the boy—the wretched criminal, Mr. Lathom?"

"D'Arcy of the Fourth, sir—a boy of my Form. I have ordered him to follow me here."

The Head jumped again.

the School House page, appeared in the doorway. He blinked at the Fourth-Form master in amazement. He had never seen a Form-master mopping his nose with a crimsoned handkerchief before.

"Ask Master Kildare to step here, please, at once," said the Head.

"Yessir!" said Toby.

He gave Mr. Lathom another amazed stare and retired.

Kildare of the Sixth entered the study in a couple of minutes.

"I have sent for you, Kildare, to bring D'Arcy here," said the Head. "Mr. Lathom has ordered him here, but he has not come. Kindly fetch him here—by force if necessary."

"Certainly, sir," said the prefect.

And he retired in amazement.

Mr. Lathom held his handkerchief to his nose, breathing hard and sniffing. His fury was not in the least abated.

Ten minutes passed. The Head paced the study in great agitation, while Mr. Lathom sniffed into his hand-



A figure lay huddled on the ground at his feet—and a cart was up-ended in the shed, but that was all. There was no trace of a lurking enemy. D'Arcy felt greatly relieved. He struck a second match, and bent down to examine the unconscious man.

"D'Arcy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"He shall be flogged and expelled from the school!" said the Head sternly. "Even that punishment is inadequate. But it is the most I can inflict."

Mr. Lathom mopped his nose with his handkerchief.

The Head glanced to the door; there was no sign of the culprit.

"D'Arcy does not appear to be coming," he remarked.

"I ordered him to follow me here, sir."

"Ahem! After so outrageous an act of insubordination he may hesitate to obey the order," said Dr. Holmes.

"Then pray send for him, sir."

Dr. Holmes touched the bell. Toby,

kerchief. The Head was distressed and extremely angry. In all his career as headmaster at St. Jim's such a deplorable act of insubordination had never occurred.

Some of the St. Jim's fellows were a little wild and unruly, certainly. Prefects had been known to be roughly handled by insubordinate juniors. But for a Form-master to be knocked down by a boy in his own Form!

It was a quarter of an hour before Kildare came back.

He came alone.

Dr. Holmes looked sharply at the captain of St. Jim's as he entered the study.

"Where is D'Arcy, Kildare?" he asked.

"I don't know, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you cannot find him?"

"Just so, sir. I fancy he has hidden himself away somewhere. He is not to be found."

The Head frowned darkly.

"I dare say he is dreading the result of his wicked action!" he exclaimed. "I am not surprised at that, Kildare. But he must be found."

"I have asked all the prefects to look for him, sir."

"Very good!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Out into the Wide World!

BAI JOVE! This is about the wottenest fix I have evah been in, I think!"

Thus Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy.

He paused upon the dark road, as he spoke his thoughts aloud.

The swell of the Fourth had run away from the school.

But what was he to do now.

Go home?

But his people certainly wouldn't be expecting him home—especially at that hour of the night. By the time he arrived at Eastwood House, all his people would be in bed and asleep; and D'Arcy had a natural disinclination to wake them up in the middle of the night with the news that he had run away from the school.

He felt that it would be better in every way for the news to reach them from the headmaster at St. Jim's.

Then he could make his appearance and explain, when the ice had been broken.

But—suppose his father determined to send him back to the school to take his punishment! It was quite possible; Lord Eastwood was a stickler for discipline. And D'Arcy felt that he would suffer anything rather than that.

Besides, to go home in disgrace—it would be a bitter pill to swallow.

"I'm jollay well not goin' home!" said Arthur Augustus at last; that was the outcome of his reflections on the subject.

But if he did not go home, what was he to do? With home and St. Jim's closed to him, where in the wide world was he to lay his head.

"I'll write to the Head and explain, and write to the govannah so that he won't be anxious about me," D'Arcy murmured. "But—but I'm not goin' home—and I'm not goin' back to St. Jim's to be flogged and sacked! No feah!"

His mind was quite made up on those points.

It only remained to decide what to do.

He was well provided with money; he still had the two fivers which were to have been expended in that gorgeous feed at the Hotel Royal which had never come off—that feed which was the beginning of his troubles, and which would never take place now!

He could easily make ten pounds last him a few days; and he had some smaller money—gold and silver—as well.

D'Arcy had not had much experience at fending for himself, but he felt that it was quite possible to live on a pound a day—perhaps less. He had heard of people who lived on less than that. He had, therefore, enough to last him for nearly a fortnight! And in that fortnight—

He would have to look for work!

The only question was—what kind of work could he do? He had a good education, and could speak French—

public-school French—perhaps not quite the French of France. He was weak in maths—but then, fellows did not get jobs as mathematicians, he knew that.

He could draw—if he drew a horse, it was evidently an animal, even if not easily recognisable as a horse. When Herries drew a horse, fellows asked him whether it was meant for a washstand or a group of elm trees. But upon the whole, he scarcely felt fitted to seek immediately a berth as black-and-white artist.

"Bai Jove!" reflected Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "public schools don't teach you much in the way of earnin' a livin', when you get fairly up against it, as I am now. The only thing I know at all well is languages—but chaps don't get paid for w'itin' Latin verses, and I couldn't get a bob an hour for talkin' French! Might get a job someweha as interpwetah, pewwaps—if there was one goin'." But—

He did not know much about the employment market; but he knew that interpreters were not wanted in crowds.

What was he going to do?

In the midst of his reflections it came on to rain; and he decided upon an immediate move for shelter.

He pushed up the collar of his overcoat about his ears, and jammed his eyeglass a little tighter into his eye, and marched on, facing the world.

He peered to and fro in the dark lane, and wondered where he was. A signpost caught his eye, and he struck a match and read it.

"Wayland—one mile."

He looked round for shelter, and espied a shed close by the lane under the trees. He groped his way into it, and was glad to hear the rain pattering upon the roof instead of upon his topper.

"Bai Jove, this is bettah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. Suddenly he started. There was another sound in the shed, beside the pattering of the rain upon the thatch overhead. He caught a sound of deep and stertorous breathing. There was someone else in the shed.

He listened intently. He moved, and his foot touched something soft, and he gave a little cry. He knew that he had touched a body—whether human or animal he did not know.

"Bai Jove, w—who is there?" called out Arthur Augustus, in a shaking voice. There was no reply.

"Who was it?"

Silence, save for that laboured, painful breathing.

With a curious flutter at his heart, the swell of St. Jim's stooped down in the darkness, and felt with his hand for the body. His fingers touched a coat—it was a human being who lay upon the floor of the shed. D'Arcy caught hold of the coat and gave it a shake.

"Who are you?" he asked.

No answer.

"Bai Jove, I wish he would speak! Are you hurt?"

Grim silence.

D'Arcy felt his very flesh creep. He groped for the face of the unknown, and his fingers touched it, and passed over the unseen features. He felt a thick moustache under his fingers, and breath on his hand.

Still the man did not speak.

"G-g-goodness gwacious," murmured the junior, now thoroughly alarmed, "the—the poor chap must be hurt, or—or murdered! Bai Jove! I say, deah fellow, I wish you would speak, you know! Who are you? What are you doin' here?"

But no reply came from the man who lay at his feet.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Interpreter.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY struck a match. A figure lay huddled on the ground at his feet, and a cart was up-ended in the shed; but that was all. There was no trace of a lurking enemy.

D'Arcy felt greatly relieved. He struck a second match, and bent down to examine the unconscious man. He was a small fellow, not much larger than D'Arcy, though he had a thick moustache. His face was very red, and a cap with gold lace upon it lay at his side.

D'Arcy started a little as he saw the cap. It was shaped like those that commissionaires wear, and on the front, in gold letters, was the word "Interpreter."

Something also struck D'Arcy very much as he stooped over the insensible man. It was a strong odour of spirits.

The match went out.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rose to his feet, with a sniff of disgust.

"Dwunk, bai Jove!" he murmured.

"It's a lie!" said a voice unexpectedly.

D'Arcy's examination had apparently disturbed the intoxicated man at last. The junior heard him dragging himself into a sitting posture.

"It's a lie!" he repeated. "I ain't drunk!"

"Weally, my deah fellow—"

"It's a lie, Mr. Pawker!"

"My name is not Pawkah, deah boy!"

"That's another!"

"Weally, you know—"

"You can sack me if you like," went on the voice in the darkness. "You won't get another interpreter in a hurry, at eighteen bob a week and his grub. Don't you think it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Lot of use for an interpreter here!" went on the voice scornfully. "How many foreigners do you have here? Half a dozen French commercial travellers a year. Yah!"

"My dear fellow—"

"It's swank, that's what it is! You shove interpreter on the advertisements—ici on parle Francois! Pah! Si parla Italian! Bosh! Man spricht Deutsch! Piffle! Tea on the terrace! Rubbish!"

"Gweat Scott!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in bewilderment.

"Sack me if you like!" continued the voice. "I'm not drunk! I've had a drop, and that's all! You hear me? I'm practically a teetotaler!"

"This is weally vevy remarkable," murmured the swell of St. Jim's.

"All right, I'm sacked!" said the voice. "Don't pile it on! I'm goin'! I won't stay in your blessed hotel another minute! Bah!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hotel Royal, indeed!" said the voice scornfully. "Hotel Rats!"

Then the gentleman who was not drunk relapsed into indistinct mutterings, and finally went off to sleep again.

Arthur Augustus understood at last.

He remembered the advertisement of the new hotel in Wayland.

There was an interpreter mentioned in that gorgeous advertisement. Truly, an interpreter was not likely to have very much to do in an hotel in a town like Wayland.

French commercial travellers sometimes came there, and an occasional Belgian scientist to examine the antiquities in the neighbourhood—that was all.

But the new hotel was quite up to date in everything—electric light, lift, interpreter—the whole bag of tricks. And if there was not much for the interpreter to do, at all events, Mr. Pawker,

the hotel proprietor, did not err on the side of paying him too heavily—to judge by the words of the gentleman who was not drunk.

"Silly ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He's got a job, and he's lost it through dinkin' filthy wubbish; and I can't get a job! I wegard him as a silly ass!"

And there is no doubt that the swell of St. Jim's was quite right upon that point. The interpreter of the Royal Hotel had evidently been the worse for drink when on duty, and his employer had sacked him—probably not missing his services very much.

Arthur Augustus' concern for his companion in the shed vanished now that he found the man was merely intoxicated.

The junior looked out into the road again. The rain was coming down in torrents, and it was evidently impossible to venture out.

The only alternative was to pass the night in the shed.

That the junior prepared to do. After all, it would save the price of a night's lodging. And in his present circumstances it behoved the swell of St. Jim's to be economical. He might need all his supply of money before he secured a job.

There was a heap of straw close by the cart in the shed, and Arthur Augustus, after carefully removing his topper, crawled into the straw to sleep.

He pulled a heap of straw over him, and found himself quite warm. What the time was he did not know; but it was certainly late, and, as soon as he was warm and comfortable in the straw, he dropped off to sleep.

The swell of St. Jim's slept as soundly in the straw as he had been accustomed to do in his bed in the Fourth-Form dormitory at St. Jim's.

When he awoke, the sun was shining in at the door of the shed, and the rain had ceased.

Arthur Augustus started up. He rubbed his eyes, wondering for the moment where he was. A yawn fell upon his ears. On the floor of the shed, the man in the gold-laced cap was sitting up, and rubbing his eyes, and blinking at D'Arcy.

"Good-mornin'!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Hallo! What you doing here?" said the other.

"I've been sleeping heah," said D'Arcy.

The man blinked at him.

"You're a schoolboy," he said.

"Yaas."

"What are you doing out of school, then?"

"I've left."

"Left—eh?" said the man, rubbing his eyes. "Oh, so have I! I left my job! And where I'm going to get any breakfast is more than I can say! Got the price of a breakfast about you?"

"Yaas."

"Then share with a fellow in distress," said the man. "I want something to drink—I mean eat. I've got the push."

"Can't you go back to your work?"

The man chuckled.

"No fear!" he said emphatically. "Old Pawker would boot me out if I did. I was a little bit squiffy, and I told a French customer that we didn't want any Frongos there. It was the whisky that did it."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy look thoughtfully at the man sitting on the floor. There was a gleam in D'Arcy's eyes.

He was looking for a job; and this man had just lost one. The job he had lost must evidently be still unfilled. And, in turning over his various qualifications,

Arthur Augustus had considered that the role that would suit him best would be that of an interpreter.

Was it a chance?

"I say," said D'Arcy slowly, "you were interpuweth at the Hotel Woyal, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was."

"And you can't get the job back?"

"Not going to try."

"Would you have any objection to my twyin' for it?"

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yaas!"

"My only uncle!"

And the gentleman in the gold-braided cap stared harder than ever.

Arthur Augustus did not see at all why the man should invoke his avuncular relative in this astounding way. There was surely nothing surprising in a fellow looking for a job!

"Never mind your uncle, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "You've done with the job yourself, I understand?"

"Oh, yes—or rather the job's done with me!"

"Of course, I am quite aware that it is contwawy to etiquette among workin' chaps for a fellow to take anothah fellow's job," said D'Arcy. "It's just the same as a doctah takin' anothah doctah's patient, or a dog takin' anothah dog's bone. Of course, I should not think of doin' anythin' of the sort. But if you are weally finished with the job, I should like to have a twy for it."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cacklin' at?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Excuse me," he said, "I'm taken that way sometimes when I wake up in the morning. I get it from my greatgrandfather. Look here, I'm thirsty—I mean hungry. If you could stand a hard-working chap half-a-crown—"

"My deah chap, I am lookin' for work myself," said D'Arcy. "If you could help me to get the job, I should be vewy pleased to make it worth your while."

The late interpreter of the Hotel Royal appeared struck by reflection.

"That's not a bad idea," he said.

"Look here, the pay's eighteen bob a week, and you have to find your own uniform."

"Yaas."

"But you get your keep—not too gorgeous—and any amount of good advice from old Pawker thrown in."

"Yaas."

"You have to know three languages—English. I suppose you know English—"

"Yaas, you ass!"

"And French—"

"Oh, yaas, my Fwench is first chop."

"And Italian—"

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"Well, I know some Italian," he said.

"You see, I am a tenor, and I sing songs in Italian. I can pwonounce it all wight."

The late interpreter grinned.

"I haven't seen any Italians in Wayland, excepting an organ-grinder, since I've been there," he remarked, "so you're not likely to be called upon for Italian very much. Si parla Italiana looks well in the ads.; but it's not really wanted."

"That's all wight, then."

"And then you have to make yourself useful—help to keep accounts, and take messages, and listen to Mr. Pawker telling you about his early days when he was a waiter in Paris."

"I shouldn't mind that."

"Well, then, you're the man for the job," said the interpreter heartily, "and I'll tell you what—I'll sell you my uniform at half-price, and that will save you a lot of money to start with."

D'Arcy looked, and felt, very grateful.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin' of you, Mr.—"

"Snooker," said the interpreter, "that's my name—William Percy Snooker. The fact is, I've taken a liking to you, and really, I sha'n't want my uniform till I get another job. It will be rather large for you, but that doesn't matter—you're rather slight to be an interpreter, and it will make you look bigger."

"That's all wight."

"You see, if you went and applied for the job in Ettons, they wouldn't listen to you," said Mr. Snooker. "They'd think you were a runaway schoolboy."

D'Arcy coloured.

"Thank you vewy much," he said. "How much shall I give you for the clothes?"

Mr. Snooker reflected.

"Half-price," he said. "I want to do the fair thing. Half-price—that's eight pounds."

D'Arcy looked surprised. He would not have imagined, by the look of them, that Mr. Snooker's clothes had cost eight pounds in the first place, or anything like it. He shook his head somewhat sadly.

"Don't you think they're worth it?" demanded Mr. Snooker.

"It isn't that, deah boy; of course, I take your word for that," said D'Arcy simply; and then Mr. Snooker blushed, for some reason. "But I can't afford it. You see, I've only got between twelve and thirteen pounds to last me till I get a job, and I might not get this one even with the uniform."

"Fair's fair," said Mr. Snooker. "I'll be reasonable. You hand me a five-pau' note, and the uniform's yours."

"You are vewy good."

"Not at all," said Mr. Snooker. "If it's a go, I'll take you home to my lodgin' now, and we can change. You can throw in your own clothes as a make-weight, if you like—I could raise something on them with my uncle."

"Bai Jove! Would your uncle weally lend you money for my clothes?" asked D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"Uncle Solomons—three brass balls—vat I do for you shentlemans," explained Mr. Snooker.

"Oh, I see—a pawnbwokah."

"That's it. Now, come along. I'm thirsty—ahem!—I mean hungry."

"Good!"

And Arthur Augustus, carefully polishing his silk hat on his sleeve, put it on his head, and followed William Percy Snooker out of the shed into the morning sunshine.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Arthur Augustus—Interpreter.

AT length, having donned Mr. Snooker's clothes, Arthur Augustus presented himself at the Hotel Royal, and applied to be taken on as an interpreter. He gave his name as Robinson, realising that if his real name was known it would lead to disaster.

Mr. Pawker proved to be a most affable gentleman, and he listened very intently as D'Arcy explained his qualifications for the job. He was, in fact, so satisfied that he engaged the swell of St. Jim's, and guaranteed to pay him five shillings a week!

Arthur Augustus could almost have jumped for joy when he found he was accepted. Admitted, five shillings a week was not a princely salary, but as board and lodging was supplied with it, he really considered he would be quite well off.

The swell of St. Jim's expressed his willingness to start work at once, and

Mr. Pawker informed him that if he went out into the hall he would soon find something to do.

D'Arcy went, and as he entered the hall he came across Roberts, the lift boy, hurrying in with a bag in each hand.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Roberts, looking at Arthur Augustus. "You the new interpreter?"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Here's a job for you, then. An Italian johnny coming in here. You'd better talk to him."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's, and he stood motionless.

Italian! However could he talk to anybody in that language? If it had been French, he might have made himself understood. But Italian! Why, a few words of an Italian song were the most he knew!

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What uttably wotten luck! I don't suppose they have an Italian here once in the blue moon, and one must dwoop in now—just because I've got the job of interpweter. It's uttably wotten!"

He was moving away, when Mr. Pawker called to him.

"Interpreter! Robinson!"

"Yaas?"

"You'll be wanted—Italian gentleman just coming in."

"Yaas."

Arthur Augustus disappeared as he said the last "yaas."

The little foreign gentleman came into the spacious vestibule of the hotel. He was so covered up with wrappings that only part of his face was to be seen, and his black eyes twinkling behind his spectacles. Mr. Pawker advanced to meet him with a manner of great empressment.

The Italian gentleman nodded to him. "Buona sera," he said politely.

"Bony Sarah!" repeated Mr. Pawker affably. "Excuse me, sir, I don't speak Italian myself, but I've got an interpreter here."

He looked round.

"Interpreter!"

No reply.

"Interpreter!"

The interpreter had vanished.

"Where is the interpreter? Fetch him at once!"

"He was 'ere a moment ago, sir," said a man named Plummer, looking about him.

"Just a minute, sir. The interpreter will be back in a moment," said Mr. Pawker, speaking just as if his meaning would be clear to his guest, although it was perfectly evident that the stranger knew no English.

The Italian gentleman rolled his eyes behind his glasses.

"Si Parla Italiana, qui!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Pawker, who knew what those words meant, as he had them inserted in his advertisements. "The interpreter will be here in a moment. Find that beast of an interpreter! Do you hear, Plummer? How dare he go off duty without permission!"

"Non importa niente," said the guest. "Una camera per la notte—e tutto."

"Oh, great Scott, how does he expect anybody to understand that lingo?" groaned Mr. Pawker. "I'll skin that interpreter! Interpreter!"

"Ain't to be seen, sir!" said Plummer, coming back.

"I'll sack him! I'll fire him! I'll kick him out! I don't pay him to keep out of sight, when I've got foreign guests here!" gasped Mr. Pawker.

"Una camera!" repeated the Italian gentleman impatiently. "Sono stanco!"

"He wants a camera!" said Mr. Pawker, in amazement.

The Italian gentleman caught the word "camera" in Mr. Pawker's speech, the rest of it being unintelligible to him. He nodded quickly.

"That right?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"A camera?"

"Si, si, una camera, signore."

"Must mean that there's a camera among his bags, sir," said Plummer.

"I ain't seen one. Only bags and trunks, sir."

"Might have left it in the train," said Mr. Pawker. "Go and look for that interpreter, some of you! Find him, and bring him here! Tell him I'll sack him! You have lost a camera?" he added, turning to the Italian gentleman, who was showing great signs of impatience.

The signor nodded emphatically at the word camera. Mr. Pawker was in blissful ignorance of the fact that the word simply meant a "room" in Italian, and he attached the English meaning to the word.

"Did you leave it in the train?" asked Mr. Pawker.

The guest looked puzzled.

"Train!" he repeated. "Il treno! Che volete dire?"

"Oh, crumbs! Did you leave the camera in the train, or perhaps at the station, sir?"

"Non capisco niente!" exclaimed the foreign gentleman impatiently. "Una camera—una camera! Capisce!"

"Go and inquire for the camera at the station, Plummer! I'll show the gentleman to his room," said Mr. Pawker.

"I'll kill that interpreter! The villain! The scoundrel! This way, sir! The camera will be all right. It will be kept at the lost property office, if the porter doesn't find it, sir. This way! Pray follow me! Here is the lift!"

The guest seemed satisfied now. He stepped into the lift, and, as he disappeared upwards, the interpreter appeared from behind a door at the end of the hall.

He was gasping, but relieved.

All the same, he had a very unpleasant ten minutes with Mr. Pawker. As soon as the latter found his interpreter, Mr. Pawker told him plainly what he thought of him for being out of the way when he was wanted. Mr. Pawker did not measure his words, and the flow of his eloquence was something wonderful. He did not leave off till he was out of breath.

"Bai Jove!" was all Arthur Augustus said.

Mr. Pawker waved his fat fist in the air.

"I'd sack you!" he shouted. "I'd boot you out, as I did the other rotter, only I want you to interpret to Signor Orezzi presently! Do you hear?"

"Yaas."

"Mind you're in sight when you're wanted, or there will be trouble! Got that?"

"Yaas."

"Then don't you forget it! What do you suppose I pay you for, if I've got to talk Italian to my clientele myself?" demanded Mr. Pawker.

"I'm sure I don't know," said D'Arcy meekly.

"The gentleman's lost a camera, and we couldn't get particulars, because you were skulking somewhere instead of attending to business!" exclaimed Mr. Pawker. "Mind you're on the spot this afternoon, that's all! If you're not, it's the boot!"

"Yaas."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went away feeling dismayed, and looking forward with great uneasiness to the ordeal of the afternoon.

An hour or so later he came face to face with Mr. Plummer, and, seeing an angry

look in the latter's face, he backed away slightly.

"Nice mess you got us into, Mr. Interpreter!" he growled.

"Sowwy, deah boy," said D'Arcy politely. "What's the mattah?"

Mr. Plummer grunted angrily.

"I've had a fool's dance round the station inquiring for a camera!" he growled. "And the old ass can't 'ave lost one at all, from what they say. Ain't going to bother my 'ead about it any more—I can tell you that straight!"

"I wouldn't, deah boy."

"Don't you disappear agin," said the porter warningly. "There'll be the push for you if you do. Pawker was wild about it."

"Yaas, he told me so," said D'Arcy ruefully.

"He'll do worse'n tell you so next time!" growled Plummer. "And so will I, if you gimme the job of torkin' to a bloomin' Eytalian!"

"Has Signor Orezzi come down from his room yet?" asked D'Arcy.

"No. You're to answer his bell when he rings," said Plummer. "Nobody else in the show can understand his lingo. You're to see what he wants for tea."

"Yaas."

"No. 68, when he rings," said Plummer.

"Thank you, Plummah!"

Plummer growled, and turned away. D'Arcy had his meal below stairs, waiting in great anxiety for No. 68 to ring. He had to go through the ordeal, and he had to trust to luck; but he could not help feeling uneasy.

He had thought it an excellent "dodge" to earn his living as an hotel interpreter. But the "dodge" was proving somewhat other than a sinecure for him.

No. 68 rang at last, and Arthur Augustus slowly and reluctantly took his way up to the apartment of the Italian gentleman.

He paused in the hall, debating in his mind whether he should pursue his way, or bolt from the hotel, without claiming the salary already due to him for his labours as interpreter. As luck would have it, Mr. Pawker bore down upon him at that moment. He wagged a fat forefinger at the dismayed interpreter.

"No. 68 is ringing," he said. "Answer the bell, and see what he wants."

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy.

And he mounted the stairs. He tapped at the door of No. 68 with a beating heart. A voice replied from the interior:

"Entrate!"

D'Arcy opened the door and entered.

The Italian gentleman was sitting in a chair.

"Interpreter!" he said.

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy. "I mean, si, signore."

"Ah! e buono!"

"Yaas, sir! What do you want? Che volete?" asked D'Arcy.

The Italian gentleman looked at him stiffly. D'Arcy had asked the question in good Italian—what did he want? But considering his position as hotel interpreter, and the old gentleman's as guest, he should have adopted the polite form of address, in the third person—*Che vuole Lei?* But Arthur Augustus was only too glad to get the question out at all, without bothering about subtle distinctions.

"Cafe latte," said the Italian gentleman, "ed il pane e burro."

"Oh, deah!"

"Pane e burro," repeated the Italian, "e cafe latte."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Capite?" demanded the signor irritably.

"Yaas. Cafe—that's coffee. What on earth is pahnay?" murmured D'Arcy. "I

dare say he means bwead-and-buttah. I know these foworeignahs have nothim' but bwead-and-buttah for tea as a wule. Lemme see—you vant coffee and bwead-and-buttah?"

"Subito!" snapped Signor Orezzi.
 "Eh?"
 "Subito!"
 "Is that something to eat?"
 "Subito!" shrieked Signor Orezzi.
 "Oh, bai Jove, non ho subito!" said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "We haven't any left. There was a great demand for it yestahday, and we haven't a sewap left in the house. Is there anything else?"

"Cafe latte, subito."
 "Che cosa e subito?" asked D'Arcy.
 "E qualchecoso di mangiare?"

The Italian gentleman stared at him. Evidently he understood the question as to whether "subito" was something to eat. He burst into a sudden roar of laughter.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy; and he laughed, too. He laughed out of politeness, not quite seeing where the joke came in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" echoed D'Arcy politely.

"Siete interprete?" demanded the Italian gentleman, pointing to D'Arcy's cap, which he held in his hand.

Arthur Augustus nodded.
 "Si, signore, sono interprete," he assured.

"Interprete! Ha, ha! E domandate si subito e qualchecoso di mangiare!" roared the Italian gentleman. "Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy rubbed his nose thoughtfully. It was evident that "subito" was not something to eat, at all events.

"E qualchecoso di bere?" he ventured.

The Italian gentleman simply shrieked. It was unnecessary for him to answer. Evidently "subito" was not something to drink.

"Bai Jove, if it isn't anything to eat or dwink, what does he want it for?" murmured D'Arcy, in perplexity.

"Interprete," giggled the signor, "non e vero."

D'Arcy knew that that meant that it was not true that he was an interpreter. Evidently the signor had found him out.

"Non parlate Italiana, voi," said the signor severely.

"Si, si," said D'Arcy. "La donna e mobile."

"Ecco!" gasped the Italian gentleman. "I don't notice any echo," said D'Arcy, puzzled.

"Per bacco!"

"Qual pium' al vento," said D'Arcy.
 "Muta d'accento, e di pensier!"

"E una aria!" gasped the Italian gentleman. "Perche?"

D'Arcy groaned: It was clear that the words of a song would not do for Signor Orezzi.

"Ecco," said the Italian gentleman.
 "Voglio déjeuner—capite?"

"Si, si, signore!"

"Cafe latte, ed il pane, e burro, subito. Tout de suite," added the traveller in French; and then D'Arcy understood.

He knew that "tout de suite" meant "at once," and evidently "subito" meant the same thing. He understood now why the Italian gentleman had laughed when he asked whether it was something to eat or drink. Signor Orezzi only meant that he wanted coffee and rolls and butter for his tea, and that he wanted them at once.

"Si, si, signore!" gasped D'Arcy. "All right—I mean buono! Subito—all sereno!"

And he escaped from the room. As he closed the door he heard the Italian gentleman chuckling, and repeating the

word "interprete" in the midst of his chuckles.

Arthur Augustus descended, and gave the order for the Italian gentleman's meal with a great deal of dignity, thereby greatly impressing the staff in the regions below, as it proved that he did really and truly understand Italian.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
 The Return of the Wanderer.

THE interpreter of the Hotel Royal, Wayland, would gladly have avoided further interviews with the Italian gentleman. But it was not to be. About an hour later there was a call for him.

"Interpreter!"
 "Here I am!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Che volete? What do you want, Plummah?"

"The Eyetalian's in the bureau!" growled Plummer. "He's drivin' Mr. Pawker nigh raving; and you're wanted."

"Bai Jove!"
 With lagging footsteps Arthur Augustus went into the bureau. Mr. Pawker

"Si, si! Ma dove e il telefono?" demanded Signor Orezzi.

"He wants the telephone, sir," said D'Arcy.

"Well, he can have that," said Mr. Pawker. "Don't see why he can't say telephone, instead of telefony. What does he want with the telephone?"

"Vuole parlare in telefono, sir," said D'Arcy.

The signor grinned again.

"Si, si! Diteme il numero della scuola del dottore Olmes."

"Eh?"
 "Il numero della scuola."

"Squaller," murmured Mr. Pawker. "Who's a squaller? Is he talking about me, Robinson?"

"No," said D'Arcy. "Scuola means school in Italian."

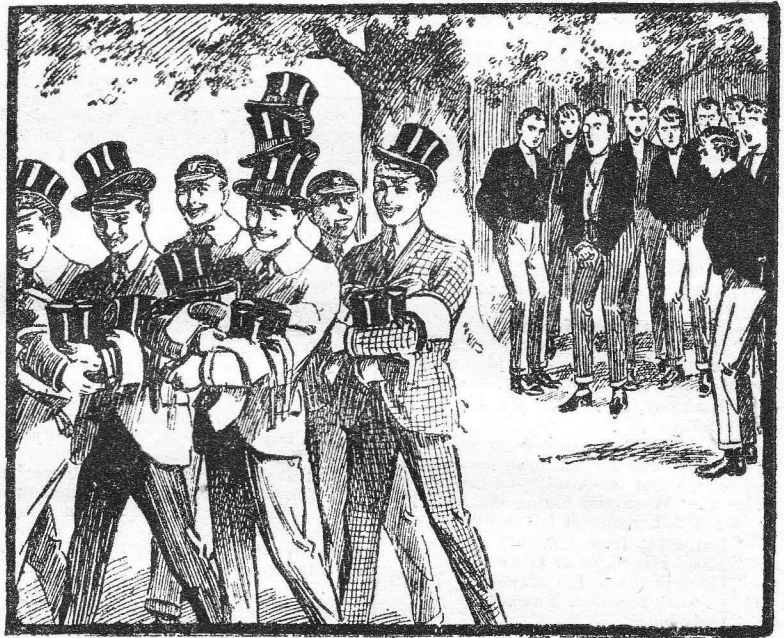
"School? He ain't going to school at his time of life!"

"Il numero," repeated the Italian gentleman.

"Quel numero?" asked D'Arcy.

"Della scuola del dottore Olmes," D'Arcy jumped.

"Holmes!"
 "Si, si, si!" rapped out the Italian



The grinning Grammarians deprived their prisoners of their collars and neckties, and gathered up the toppers which had fallen off in the struggle, and crowded away down the footpath with their booty. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another in dismay.

was nodding and smiling to the Italian gentleman, who was talking in fluent Italian, much to the mystification of the hotel proprietor. Mr. Pawker gasped with relief as D'Arcy came in.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been? He wants something. Ask him what he wants. I suppose he's inquiring after that camera he lost in the train; but blessed if I can make head or tail of it! Speak to him!"

"Buon giorno, signor," said D'Arcy. He could say good-morning most successfully.

"Buon giorno," replied Signor Orezzi; and he grinned as he looked at the interpreter. "Ah, ecco! Interprete! Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently the signor remembered the interpreter's question that morning as to whether "subito" was something to eat. "Ahem!" said D'Arcy. "Il tempo e buono, signor."

gentleman, delighted at being understood.

D'Arcy stared blankly at him. The "scuola" that the foreigner wanted was evidently St. Jim's. "Il dottore Olmes" could be none other than Dr. Holmes, the reverend Head of St. Jim's.

"He wants to telephone to Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, Mr. Pawker," said Arthur Augustus, gasping.

"Is that all?" said Mr. Pawker. "Well, you can get the number out of the book, and put him through. I hope Dr. Holmes will understand him. It's more than I can."

"Capite?" demanded the signor.

"Si, si, signore,"
 "Buono!"

Arthur Augustus knew Dr. Holmes' telephone number. He rang up the exchange, and asked to be put on to St.

Jim's, and handed the receiver to Signor Orezzi.

"Grazie," said the gentleman.

He talked rapidly into the receiver. D'Arcy tried to follow what he said, but it was in vain. But evidently Dr. Holmes at the other end of the wire, understood, for the replies the signor received seemed to be satisfactory.

Arthur Augustus listened in amazement. He knew that Dr. Holmes sometimes received visits from foreign scientists and literary gentlemen, and that the Head spoke Italian like a native.

Doubtless Signor Orezzi intended to visit St. Jim's, and had put up at the Hotel Royal in Wayland for the purpose. The sooner he departed for the "scuola" the better the interpreter of the Hotel Royal would be pleased.

Signor Orezzi hung up the receiver with a beaming smile.

"All sereno?" asked D'Arcy.

The signor grinned.

"E buono," he said.

The Italian gentleman spent the next hour or two in the smoking-room, smoking strong cigars, and not bothering the interpreter.

He was still there when there was the buzz of a motor-car in the street outside. Mr. Plummer swung open the big double doors as a gentleman in a silk hat descended from the car, and mounted the hotel steps.

The gentleman entered, and came face to face with the interpreter of the Hotel Royal.

He gasped.

"D'Arcy!"

"Doctah Holmes!"

Retreat was impossible.

The Head of St. Jim's and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared blankly at one another.

Mr. Pawker came forward.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the Head of St. Jim's. "Mr. Pawker, what is that boy doing here?"

"That boy, sir?" said Mr. Pawker, in surprise.

"Yes. He ran away from my school yesterday, and he has been searched for since without success!" exclaimed the Head. "Were you hiding him here?"

Mr. Pawker almost fell down.

"Ran away from school!" he gasped.

"Yes. His name is D'Arcy—"

"He gave me the name of Robinson!" exclaimed Mr. Pawker.

"Dear me!"

"He came here in those clothes, asking for a job as interpreter," said Mr. Pawker. "I must say he's given satisfaction. B-b-but I've never seen a schoolboy with a moustache before, sir. There must be some mistake."

"The moustache is false," said the Head.

D'Arcy's face was crimson.

"I—I—I am sowwy, sir," he stammered. "As I had left St. Jim's, I—I had to earn my livin', sir, and I got a job here. It is quite imposs for me to return to St. Jim's and be expelled, sir. A D'Arcy could not submit to such a degwedation—"

"You foolish boy!" said Dr. Holmes, smiling. "The whole matter has been explained. The night you ran away we knew that the assault upon Mr. Lathom was an accident, and I had no intention of expelling you."

"Bai Jove!"

"Ah, caro amico!" exclaimed the Italian gentleman, rushing out of the smoking-room and shaking hands with Dr. Holmes with both hands. Then he glanced at D'Arcy, and chuckled. "Ah, buon interprete! Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Holmes laughed. He was very angry with D'Arcy for running away from St. Jim's, but the unexpected discovering of the missing junior greatly relieved his mind. And the discovery of him acting as interpreter in an hotel was very funny.

"It is very fortunate that I came in my car to take my old friend Signor Orezzi to St. Jim's," said Dr. Holmes. "You will have the kindness to get into the car also, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir," said the swell of St. Jim's meekly.

"Take that ridiculous moustache from your face."

"Yaas, sir." D'Arcy removed the moustache. "I am quite willin' to come back and take my gwuel, sir, if I am not to be expelled."

"Of course you are not to be expelled. I shall leave your punishment to Mr. Lathom. He has been anxious about you."

"I am sowwy, sir."

"Well, this beats Banagher!" exclaimed the astounded Mr. Pawker. "I shall have to engage another interpreter, I suppose."

"I twust you will get an equally satisfactory one, sir," said D'Arcy. "Pway allow me to apologise for leavin' you so suddenly. I will not ask for any salary—I shall not require it. I am vevy glad to have given satisfaction."

And D'Arcy, still in his interpreter's uniform, climbed into the car and drove away with Dr. Holmes and Signor Orezzi, stared after in blank astonishment by Mr. Plummer, the porter, and the lift-boy.

The St. Jim's fellows had been dismissed from morning lessons when the car arrived at the old school.

Tom Merry was the first to catch sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he gave a yell.

"Here he is!"

"Great Scott!"

"What's he doing in those clothes?"

Arthur Augustus descended from the car. Dr. Holmes and Signor Orezzi went

into the house, and D'Arcy was surrounded by a crowd of inquiring juniors.

Questions poured in on him from all sides.

"Pway excusa me, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "I should pwefer to change my clothes before I tell you about it. I do not feel at ease in this wig-out."

Tom Merry and Blake caught hold of the swell of St. Jim's, and jammed him against the wall, and held him there by main force till he had explained where he had been and what he had been doing.

His explanation was received with exclamations of amazement and yells of laughter.

Tom Merry wiped his eyes.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "You take the cake, Gussy! Interpreter! Oh, my Aunt Maria!"

D'Arcy escaped into the house and changed his clothes. When he came down from the dormitory he was once more the elegant swell of St. Jim's, and he felt pleased at the change.

He went at once to Mr. Lathom's study. The Fourth Form-master looked very severely at D'Arcy.

"So you have come back!" he said.

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy meekly.

"Dr. Holmes tells me that you know it was a mistake, sir, and I twust you will accept my most humble and sincere apologies for that awful mistake, sir. I am vevy, vevy sowwy."

"Well, well, D'Arcy, as you are sorry—"

"Awfly sowwy, sir; and—and I'm weady to take my lickin', sir. I didn't wun away to get out of a lickin', but because I thought I should be expelled, sir."

Mr. Lathom smiled.

"As you are sorry, we shall say no more about it," he said. "But I hope you will be a little more careful in the future, D'Arcy, and that you will never again do anything so foolish as running away from school."

"Oh, sir!" gasped D'Arcy. "You are a bwick, sir—a weal bwick!"

And so Mr. Lathom dismissed him.

"Not licked?" asked Blake, in the passage.

"No; Mr. Lathom is a weal bwick, deah boy. He has forgiven me," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

"Ici on parle Francais!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Man spricht Deutsch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus laughed, too. He could afford to laugh now that he had escaped so well from a very bad scrape.

"It's all wight, deah boys," he said. "and on Satahday aftahnoon I hope that you will do me the honah to join me in that little feed at the Hotel Woyal, aftah all. It's comin' off, all the same!"

And it did—and it was a great success!

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Raby's Birthday.

OCTOBER the tenth is next week," exclaimed Raby suddenly one evening as he was seated in the end study at Rookwood with his chums, Jimmy Silver, Lovell and Newcome.

The Classical juniors were reading, and not one of them took the slightest notice of Raby's remark.

"October the tenth—next week!" he said again meditatively.

"What's that ass mumbling about?" exclaimed Lovell, looking up.

Neither Jimmy Silver nor Newcome raised their heads, and Lovell bent over his book once more.

There was silence for the space of about two minutes, then Raby commenced to speak again.

"October the— Ow!"

He broke off suddenly, for Jimmy Silver's book had descended upon his worthy head with a crash.

"Now shut up!" exclaimed the leader of the Fistical Four.

"I wasn't speaking to you," replied Raby ruefully, rubbing his head vigorously.

"Well, if you want to talk to yourself buzz off into the quad," retorted Jimmy Silver. "Nobody in here wants to listen to you!"

"I only said it was October the tenth."

"Shut up, fathead! Who cares?"

"All right, then, if you don't want a feed—"

"Eh? What about October the tenth and a feed?"

At the mention of the magic word "feed," the members of the Fistical Four sat up and began to take notice.

"Come on! Let's have it!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, closing his book and throwing it down on the table.

"I've a good mind to say no more about it now," said Raby in an injured tone. "You don't deserve to—"

"You'd better say some more about it," declared Jimmy Silver emphatically, "or you'll get a thumping for interrupting us for nothing!"

"Well, as I was saying," remarked Raby, "October the tenth is next—"

"We've heard that before!" snapped Lovell impatiently. "Besides, we should have known October the tenth was next week, even if you hadn't mentioned it."

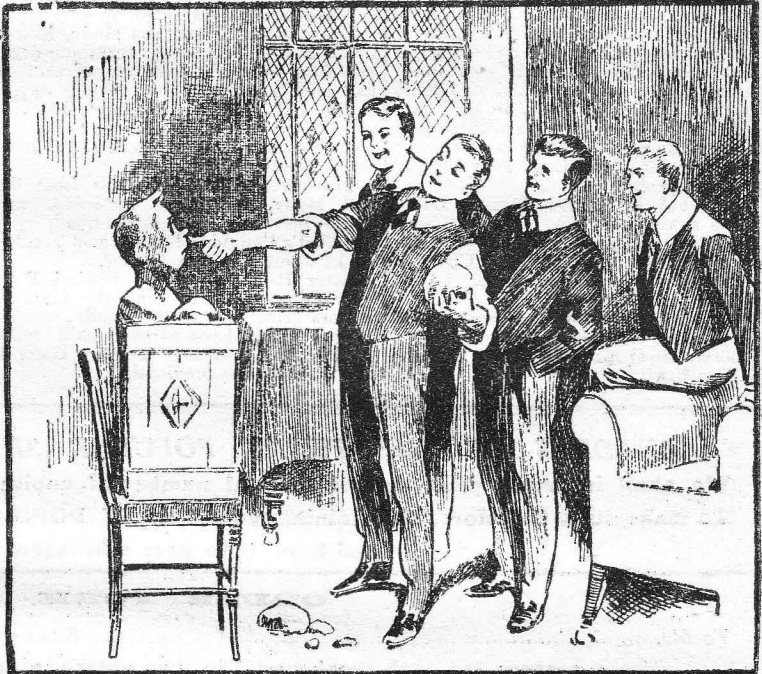
"Well, it's October the tenth—and my birthday!"

"My hat!" muttered Newcome. "He's made all this fuss over telling us that October the tenth is his giddy birthday!"

"Wait a minute, ass, till I've finished," said Raby, glaring at Newcome.

"Come on, then," urged Jimmy Silver. "What's this about a feed?"

"I had thought about suggesting a dormitory feed, at my expense, to celebrate the occasion," replied Raby loftily. "Oh!"



"I think that'll do," said Jimmy Silver. "Just another touch for the nose, and then I've finished."

"In that case," remarked Lovell, "we apologise for jumping on you."

"Exactly," added Jimmy Silver; "but you might have got it out a little quicker. We'll overlook that, in the circumstances, though."

"It's certainly a very good idea of yours," said Newcome agreeably, "and I add my regrets to those of the others."

"Oh, turn it off!" exclaimed Raby. "The question is, do you want the feed?"

"Rather!"

"What-ho!"

"Let's talk it over quietly," suggested Jimmy Silver, who, with the other members of the Fistical Four, was quite prepared to give the reading a miss for the pleasure of discussing a prospective feed. "Let's have your ideas on the subject."

"Well, I thought we might get in a supply of grub, and store it in the dormitory in readiness for the occasion," said Raby.

"Jolly good wheeze!" declared Jimmy Silver.

"He's a smarter chap than you'd take him to be at first glance," said Lovell, turning to Newcome.

"What's that?" asked Raby sharply.

"Oh, I was only saying that you are a smart chap for good wheezes," explained Lovell hastily.

"Then I suppose you'll want us to help

you get in the stuff," said Jimmy Silver pleasantly.

"Yes; but we've got to decide where to store it first," replied Raby.

"You can have my locker, with pleasure," suggested Newcome amiably.

"We should want the key as well," replied Raby drily.

"Are you meaning to suggest that I should wolf the grub before the night of the feed?" asked Newcome warmly.

"Not at all, but—"

"Peace, infants!" cried Jimmy Silver.

"We can transfer the clothes from one of the lockers, and distribute them among the other three for the time being, so as to leave it free for the grub," continued Raby.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "As it's your feed, Raby, we'll have your locker and you can mind the key."

"Right-ho!" agreed Raby. "That completes the scheme, then."

The Fistical Four retired that night on very good terms with themselves, and full of their latest wheeze. A feed was always a great event; if it was held under unusual conditions, so much the better.

Two days before Raby's birthday, the Fistical Four sallied forth to commence laying in the provisions.

"We can get fruit and stuff like that today," said Jimmy Silver, "because it

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will keep all right; then we sha'n't have so much shopping to do to-morrow."

The juniors walked into Coombe, where they purchased apples, plums, bananas, and nuts, and so forth. Then they returned to Rookwood pretty well laden.

They reached the dormitory with their purchases, congratulating themselves on the fact that they had met no one. They had not seen three dim figures lurking in a shaded corner of the quad.

Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern chums of the Fourth, and the rivals of the Fistical Four, had watched Jimmy Silver & Co. hurry towards the school doors laden with bags and packages.

"I wonder what in the dickens those fatheads are up to now?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, as the Classical juniors disappeared through the door.

"It's a dead cert there's a wheeze on," declared Tommy Cook, "by the way they were hurrying; and they were bunged up with parcels."

"I've got it!" cried Tommy Dodd. "It's a study feed!"

"Well, I suppose they can have a study feed if they like," said Tommy Cook.

"Certainly; but we ought to be there."

"Oh, we're sure to get an invitation!" said Tommy Cook sarcastically.

Tommy Dodd made no reply. He was thinking hard.

morning Tommy Dodd & Co. hastened up to Fistical Four's study, entered, and closed the door.

"Now for it!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, making for the cupboard straight away.

To his surprise, the door was unlocked. He pulled it open quickly, and received a shock. There were no signs of food of any kind.

The faces of the Modern chums fell as they peered over Tommy Dodd's shoulder.

"What have they done with the giddy grub?" asked Tommy Cook perplexedly.

"Goodness only knows!"

They hunted round the study, looked in the desks, and turned everything over, but there was no trace of the parcels they had seen brought in the previous day.

"Done!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd.

"Absolutely!" said Tommy Cook.

"Without a shadow of a doubt!" muttered Tommy Doyle.

The three chums withdrew from the end study completely mystified, and made their way down to the quad.

"That's the giddy limit!" said Tommy Dodd when they got outside.

Later they passed the Fistical Four just going into class, and the Classical juniors grinned at them broadly.

They would have grinned still more broadly had they seen Tommy Dodd & Co. a short time previously.

quad, where they stood for a few minutes discussing what they had just seen.

They were about to move away when the Fistical Four emerged from the school door. They walked towards Tommy Dodd & Co., grinned as they passed, and continued on their way.

The Modern chums watched them disappear through the gates, then Tommy Dodd turned to his chums.

"Now's our chance!" he exclaimed. "They don't know we saw them going in just now."

"But supposing they come back suddenly?" suggested Tommy Cook anxiously.

"Oh, we must chance that!" replied Tommy Dodd. "I expect they've gone for a walk, though."

"Funny thing," he added, "but I've just come over quite peckish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come to think of it, I'm a bit hungry myself," remarked Tommy Cook.

"Faith, an' it's the same here," said Tommy Doyle. "Must be catching!"

"Well, we'll just go and see if we can find something to eat," said Tommy Dodd. "I think the end study would be a likely place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Modern chums, led by Tommy Dodd, hurried up the stairs to the study of Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Ah!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd as he

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"We sha'n't get an invitation," he said at length; "but there's no reason why we shouldn't have some of the grub."

"What d'ye mean?"

"Why, the feed can't be for to-day because it's too late now," said Tommy Dodd, "so it must be for to-morrow. I'll just try and find out for certain if it is a feed, and if so we'll buzz up to their study directly after breakfast to-morrow morning and help ourselves."

"Good egg!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. walked across the quad and entered the school door. The Fistical Four were just coming down the stairs, and they were talking excitedly in low tones.

Tommy Dodd just caught the word "feed" before the Classical juniors turned the corner.

"That settles it," said Tommy Dodd a moment later. "Raby was just saying something about a feed."

"To-morrow morning we make a raid on their study for grub; then," said Tommy Cook.

"That's the idea. We'll hurry over our breakfasts, and buzz up there before those rotters have finished!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thus planning, the Modern chums retired to their study.

As soon as breakfast was over the next

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Feed.

AT the close of the day's work Tommy Dodd & Co. received another surprise. They had decided to keep a sharp eye on the Fistical Four, with a view to obtaining more information about the Classical chums' plans.

Once more they spotted Jimmy Silver & Co. coming across the quad, this time from the direction of the tuckshop. Each of them had their arms pressed tightly against their coats, which were bulging out, and in their hands they carried paper bags, evidently containing cakes of some description.

The Moderns hastily hid themselves, and immediately the Classical chums had passed into the school Tommy Dodd uttered a sharp command.

"Come on, kids! We'll follow them this time, and see where they're storing all this stuff."

They were soon hot upon the track of the Fistical Four, and reached the top of the stairs in time to see them entering the study.

"Well, that lot's gone in there, anyway," declared Tommy Dodd as they withdrew. "There's no doubt about that, because we've seen 'em going in with it."

They descended once more to the

closed the door. "The cupboard's locked this time!"

"I'm afraid we shall have to break the lock," said Tommy Cook, with mock concern.

"That would be a pity," agreed Tommy Dodd. "I've got a few keys here, though," he continued. "Perhaps one of 'em would fit."

He fumbled in his pocket, and produced a bunch of keys, which he began endeavouring, one by one, to fit into the keyhole of the cupboard.

Suddenly, with a click, the lock flew back.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Tommy Cook, as his chum pulled open the cupboard door.

"Ah, here we are!" cried Tommy Dodd, as he handed out a couple of paper bags.

"And something to drink as well!" exclaimed Tommy Cook, as his eye fell on a row of bottles of ginger-pop.

"There's ripping cream-buns and jam puffs in here!" said Tommy Doyle joyfully, as he delved into one of the paper bags.

As a matter of fact, the pastries were extra. Most of the provisions for the feed had been procured earlier in the day, and taken straight up to the dormitory.

The drink, however, had been forgotten, and when Jimmy Silver & Co.

had gone over to the tuckshop later for it they had seen the fresh new cream-buns and jam-puffs, and could not resist the temptation to procure a supply for their forthcoming feed.

"Now, you'd better bunk down, and see if all's clear," said Tommy Dodd, turning to Tommy Cook. "Then we'll load up, and cart this stuff off to our own study."

Tommy Cook hurried out, and returned a minute later, to report that there was not a soul about.

Tommy Dodd hastily scribbled a note, which read as follows:

"Thanks for the feed.—TOMMY DODD & Co."

This he placed in the cupboard where the purloined provisions had reposed, and unlocked the door.

Loading themselves up, the Modern chums hastened to their own study, where they regaled themselves right royally.

The Fistical Four returned to Rookwood only just in time for call-over, and consequently had no opportunity to remove the luxuries which they blissfully imagined were still stored in their study.

It was decided, therefore, that a couple of them should go down and fetch the things after lights out.

The Fistical Four retired full of excitement in anticipation of the coming event.

Bulkeley entered the dormitory soon afterwards, to see that all was in order, and in a short time silence brooded over Rookwood School.

About half an hour later Raby sat up in his bed.

"You chaps awake?" he asked, in a stage whisper.

"Rather!" was the husky reply from three of the beds around him.

"Come on, then," he murmured. "We'd better start!"

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Newcome sat up. The light from a full moon was streaming in at the windows, making the dormitory almost as light as day.

"Wake those other kids up," said Jimmy Silver to Lovell and Newcome, "while I help Raby to get the grub out."

The two juniors succeeded, after some difficulty, in getting grunts from one or two of the beds.

"It's a feed!" said Lovell huskily, shaking Hooker. "Get up!"

"What's a feed?" murmured Hooker, opening his eyes.

"We've got a feed ready here," said Newcome, "and we want you chaps to come in."

By this time several others of the Classical juniors were turning over in their beds, and making growling inquiries as to what was on.

At last they began to sit up one by one, and were not long in catching on to the idea, as they saw Jimmy Silver and Raby passing backwards and forwards with parcels between the latter's bed and locker.

The packages of provisions were opened out in the middle of Raby's bed in readiness for the feast.

There were ham sandwiches, beef sandwiches, a large pork pie, cakes, and the fruit and nuts.

"Come on, kids!" exclaimed Raby. "I'm giving this feed to celebrate my birthday. Pile in!"

The Classical juniors began jumping out of their beds and scrambling for good places on the edge of Raby's.

"This is an awfully spiffing idea of yours, Raby," said Topham.

"Hear, hear!" agreed Townsend. "For a few minutes after that no one spoke. All were too busy eating.

"What about a drink?" said Hooker

at length. "The ham in these sandwiches is jolly salt."

"Just what I was thinking," remarked Jones minor.

"We've got some drink down in the study," said Raby, "and some extra-special cream buns and jam-puffs."

"Well, fetch up the drink, anyway," said Hooker. "I can't eat another crumb till I've had something to drink."

Lovell and Newcome were despatched for the ginger-pop and the pastries.

They were not absent long. In a few minutes the dormitory door was quietly opened, and they entered, but were empty-handed!

"What the merry dickens—" began Raby.

"My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. Lovell advanced towards his chums, and held out a slip of paper to Jimmy.

"That's all there was in the cupboard," he said. "There's no sign of drink or grub."

"Nothing to drink?" growled Townsend. "Don't think much of this for a feed."

"Rotten!" exclaimed Hooker. "Fancy waking fellows up for a show like this!" grumbled Topham.

Jimmy Silver read the note which Lovell had handed to him in low tones: "Thanks for the feed.—Tommy Dodd & Co."

"Those Modern kids have scored off you again," said Hooker contemptuously. "But I wish you'd found it out before you woke us up."

"Done!" muttered Raby fiercely. "Oh, yes, you're done right enough!" said Jones minor. "I'm going back to bed; I'm too thirsty to eat any more. I reckon it's a dud feed."

"Same here," agreed Hooker, moving away.

"The rotters!" howled Jimmy Silver, still holding the note in his hand.

"Can't be helped," said Lovell philosophically. "We're absolutely done brown by those Modern asses!"

"It's mucked up the whole business," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm as thirsty as a fish myself!"

"We'll have a drink out of the water-jugs, and put the rest of the stuff away till to-morrow," said Raby resignedly.

"We'll make those fatheads sit up for this!" murmured Jimmy Silver vindictively.

The feed was voted a failure by the four chums, who by this time were the only ones out of bed.

Then they, too, retired, muttering threats of vengeance upon the Modern chums.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The "Ghost."

THE next morning the Fistical Four arose with their feelings toward Tommy Dodd & Co. in no way calmed. Their tempers were not improved, either, by the taunts and jibes of the other members of the dormitory.

Having decided to hold a council of war after morning classes, Jimmy Silver & Co. made their way downstairs.

"One of those asses must have had a key to fit our cupboard," said Jimmy Silver, as he and his chums entered the end study.

"Yes," said Lovell. "The cupboard was locked all right when we came down last night."

"Well, between now and midday," said Jimmy, "just try and think of a wheeze for getting even with those bounders."

"Rather!" Nothing was seen of the Modern

chums, and the Fistical Four trooped into class.

They were unable to concentrate on their work that morning quite in the usual way, for their thoughts were full of plans for revenge.

It was Wednesday and a half-holiday at Rookwood, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were heartily thankful, when morning classes were over, that they had finished work for the day.

After dinner they retired to their study to consider a scheme for taking Tommy Dodd & Co. down a peg.

"I think I've got hold of a very good notion," said Jimmy Silver eagerly, as soon as they had closed the door.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Lovell. "Let's have it, then," said Raby. "I can't get over those rotters mucking up our feed like they have."

"Well, my idea is this," began Jimmy. "We'll make out we're going to have another feed to make up for last night. We'll let 'em hear us talking about it, as though we didn't know they were listening."

"Yes, go on!" urged Raby.

"You chaps know," continued Jimmy Silver, "that I'm very good at clay-modelling. Well, my idea is to get hold of a big chunk of clay, and make a bust of Tommy Dodd."

"Yes," said Raby excitedly. "What then?"

"Let them think we're storing grub in the cupboard," continued the leader of the Classical chums; "but instead of putting grub in there we'll borrow a high stool from one of the rooms, set the bust on top of it, and hang a white sheet round the shoulders, so that it drops down and covers the stool."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're a marvel, Jimmy!" cried Lovell enthusiastically.

"When that's done," resumed Jimmy, "we'll take the shelves out of the cupboard—they're all movable ones, you know—and stand the whole thing inside and lock the door."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When Tommy Dodd & Co. come to help themselves to the grub again, they'll get the fright of their lives. We'll hide ourselves in here, and jump out on 'em and give 'em a good wiping-up afterwards!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a rattling good wheeze," said Lovell, "if we can pull it off all right."

"There's no reason why we shouldn't," said Jimmy confidently as they left the study.

It did not take the Fistical Four long to put the first part of their scheme into action.

A short distance from Rookwood they espied Tommy Dodd & Co. lying on the grass behind a hedge, reading. They gave no sign that they had seen them, but seated themselves on a gate close by, and began eagerly to discuss plans for another feed.

After about ten minutes Jimmy Silver & Co. continued on their way, leaving the Modern chums excitedly congratulating themselves that they had once more scored over the Fistical Four.

Returning to Rookwood, Jimmy Silver surreptitiously purloined a huge chunk of clay from the art-room.

This he conveyed to the end study, and, locking the door, he commenced work on the bust of Tommy Dodd.

He stood an old box on a chair, and, aided by encouraging remarks from his three chums, who stood looking on, he soon modelled a rough outline.

Then he began working more carefully

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upon it, adding lines here and there in real artistic style.

At last he stood away from his work a little and surveyed it critically. "I think that'll do," he said. "Just another touch for the nose, and then I've finished."

He gave the nose an upward tilt as he spoke, and the chums roared with laughter.

"Now for the stool!" said Jimmy.

"Here it is!" said Lovell.

The high stool was brought forward and the model placed upon it. Then the whole lot was covered by a sheet which was hung from the shoulders of the bust.

The finished effect was weird and wonderful, and calculated to shock the stoutest heart coming upon it suddenly.

Next the shelves were removed from the cupboard and carefully concealed, and Tommy Dodd's "ghost" was placed into position.

The cupboard door was locked, and the juniors set about clearing up the study.

"So far so good!" said Jimmy Silver, in self-satisfied tones.

"I'll bet we make those asses sit up this time!" exclaimed Lovell eagerly.

The next day the Fistical Four were seen as before carrying bags and packages from the direction of the tuckshop. This time, however, the contents were demolished as soon as they reached the study.

"Won't they be mad!" said Tommy Cook to his chums in the quad. "Fancy doing 'em the same way twice!"

"We haven't done 'em yet," cautioned Tommy Dodd.

"We shall, though," returned Tommy Cook, "because they haven't dreamt that we heard the whole giddy arrangement behind that hedge."

"We'll carry out the raid after tea," said Tommy Dodd. "Things will be quieter then."

Everything worked perfectly.

The Fistical Four had counted on Tommy Dodd & Co. choosing the dusk for the carrying out of their plan, and accordingly hid themselves in their prearranged places round the study, when at length they spotted the Modern chums coming towards the school door.

A few minutes later they heard whisperings outside their study door, and shortly afterwards it was opened and a head thrust into the room.

Jimmy Silver, from his place of concealment, could just make out that it was Tommy Dodd's.

The Modern chums had chosen a time when there was only just about sufficient light to see.

In another moment the dim form of the leader of the Moderns entered the study, leaving the door ajar.

Tommy Dodd made straight for the

cupboard, fumbling in his pocket as he went.

Then he produced a key, which he fitted into the lock of the cupboard. The Fistical Four heard it turn with a click, and Jimmy Silver was just able to see Tommy Dodd opening the door.

Suddenly a piercing yell rent the air.

"Ow! Murder!"

With a dash Tommy Dodd made for the door, yelling as he went. As he reached it Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle pushed it open to enter.

The light was bad, and Tommy Dodd could not see clearly, with the result that he cannoned into it with terrific force.

"Yarough! Ow!"

"What the dickens——" began Tommy Cook.

"A ghost!" screamed Tommy Dodd, rushing out of the study.

When he had run some distance up the corridor he paused for breath. The shock he had received and the collision with the door had almost completely winded him.

The Fistical Four could plainly hear the voices of the Modern chums from their hiding-places, and they remained perfectly still, knowing that the intruders would return to investigate.

"Where's the ghost?" they heard Tommy Cook ask.

"In—in the cupboard!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

"There's no such thing as ghosts!" snapped Tommy Cook impatiently. "I thought you had more pluck than that!"

"You go and see, then!" growled Tommy Dodd.

"I will, too!" retorted Cook.

He started towards the study door once more, and then turned.

"We'd better all go and investigate," he said.

"Afraid to go alone, I suppose!" said Tommy Dodd.

"I'll come!" volunteered Tommy Doyle.

And, followed by Tommy Dodd, the two made their way once more into the study.

Pulling an electric torch from his pocket, Tommy Cook advanced towards the cupboard and pulled open the door.

The light from the torch flashed out and revealed the ghost in all its glory.

"There you are!" exclaimed Tommy Cook to Tommy Dodd, who was lurking in the doorway ready to run. "There's your ghost!"

Tommy Dodd recovered from the effects of the shock remarkably quickly when he found that his chums did not make a dash for the door.

Tommy Cook was flashing his electric torch up and down the arrangement inside the cupboard.

Tommy Doyle lifted the sheet and revealed the stool underneath.

"They've done us properly this time!" he said, with a laugh. "I say, that head isn't at all unlike old Doddy's!"

"Well, I'll soon destroy the likeness!" grunted Tommy Dodd. "I'll just give myself a punch on the nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He stepped back in order to land out with full force at the model, and he was about to strike a mighty blow at the "ghost" when a sudden interruption occurred.

"At 'em, kids!" cried Jimmy Silver, rushing from his hiding-place.

With a yell the other three juniors dashed out, and in a moment a fierce struggle was in progress.

Tommy Dodd was borne to the floor with a crash, and Jimmy Silver sat on his chest.

"Ow! Gerroff! I'm choking!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm sitting on his chest, and he says he's choking!" cried Jimmy Lovell soon had Tommy Cook on his back, then he followed Jimmy Silver's example and sat on him.

Newcome and Raby were bumping Tommy Doyle unmercifully.

"Ow! Yarooogh! Ow, ow!"

His screams were so loud that Jimmy Silver began to fear that some more of the Moderns would be attracted to the rescue.

"That'll do for him!" he said to his chums.

Tommy Doyle was released, and went scuttling out of the study like a rat.

Jimmy Silver grabbed the feet of Tommy Dodd and dragged him along the floor to the door. He was deposited in the corridor like a shot from a gun, and Jimmy turned to assist Lovell, who was again struggling with Tommy Cook.

He was soon dealt with, and pitched out into the corridor, shouting at the Fistical Four as he went.

"I feel better now we've had our own back on the rotters!" said Raby, as the door was shut.

"Hear, hear!" agreed Lovell.

"I don't think they'll bone things out of our cupboard again in a hurry!" observed Jimmy Silver, straightening his tie.

Meanwhile Tommy Dodd & Co. were sympathising with each other in the privacy of their own study.

They agreed that the second raid on the Fistical Four's cupboard had not proved quite so successful as the first, and they were bound to admit that Jimmy Silver & Co. had exacted an adequate revenge.

"They've done us absolutely!" said Tommy Dodd, who was not likely to forget in a hurry the "ghost" of the end study.

THE END.

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