

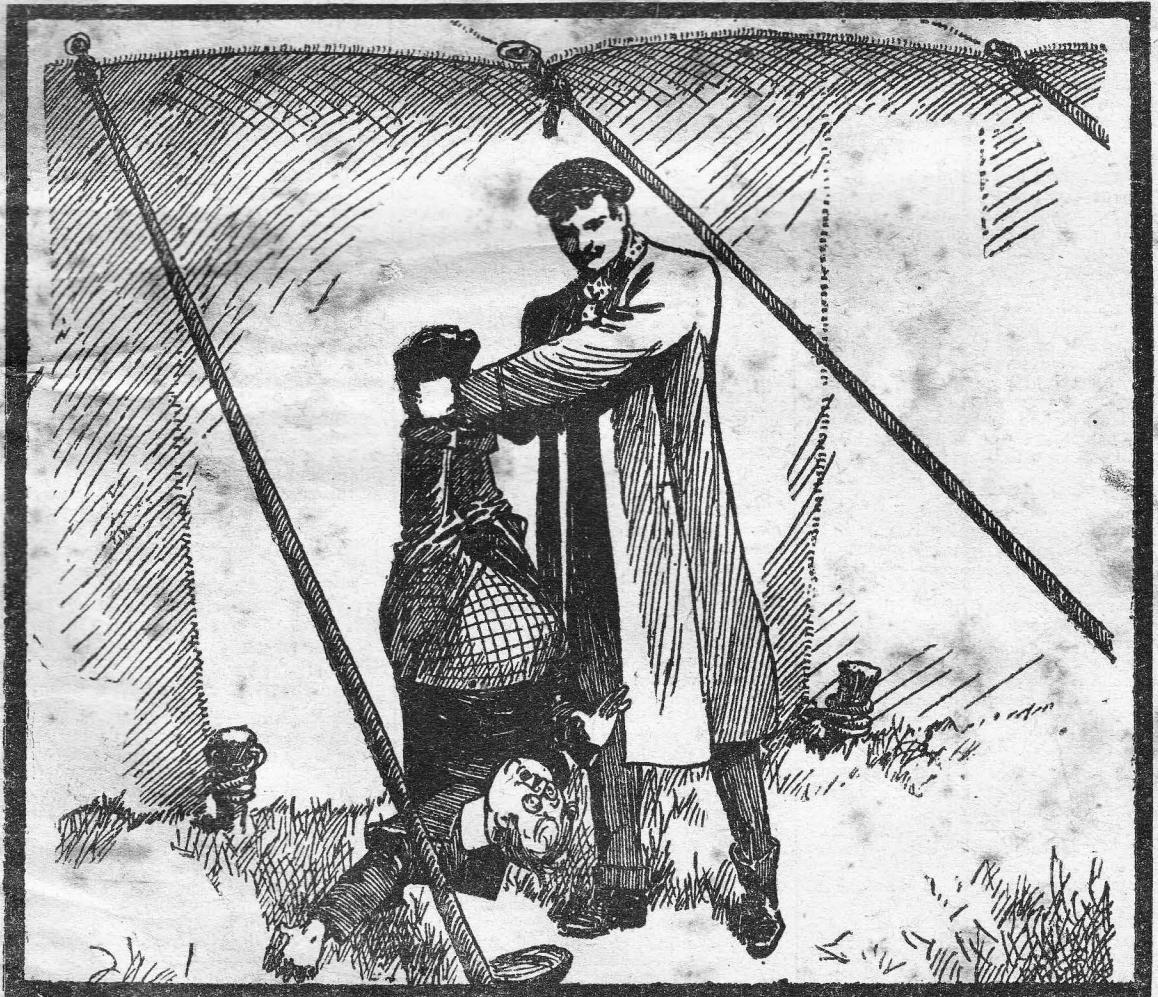
# THE CIRCUS AT GREYFRIARS!

*A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.*

## The Penny Popular

No.  
264.

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



## CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

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

# THE CIRCUS AT GREYFRIARS!

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

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Limit.

"I SAY, you fellows, there's news!" Billy Bunter made that announcement at the top of his voice as he rushed into Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter was excited, and he apparently expected his announcement to cause equal excitement in Study No. 1. But, if so, he was disappointed.

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were there, and they were talking football. Not one of them turned his head, or looked at Bunter, or gave any outward and visible sign of having heard the fat junior's exclamation.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles, and repeated his words, crescendo:

"I say, you fellows, there's news!"

"About the inside-right," said Harry Wharton, continuing his remarks to Nugent and Hurree Singh. "I was thinking of Desmond. What do you fellows think?"

"I say, give him a trial," said Nugent.

"The trialfulness," said Hurree Singh, in his elegant English, "appears to my esteemed self to be the proper caper."

"I say, you fellows—"

"I was thinking of putting Tom Brown in the forward line, too, on Saturday. He's picked up Soccer wonderfully for a chap who's played Rugger all his life till he came to England."

"Good idea!"

"I say, Wharton—"

"There's not much doubt about Morgan and Ogilvy for the backs."

"The doubtfulness is nil."

"Look here, you fellows—"

"As for the halves—"

"I say, you fellows," shrieked Bunter, "don't you pretend you can't hear me! You can hear me jolly well!"

"As for the halves, what about giving Hazeldene a chance at centre? He—"

Billy Bunter rushed up to Wharton, caught him by the sleeve, and gave him a wrench, Harry, with his attention thus forcibly drawn to the fat junior, looked down at him.

Bunter blinked at him with almost speechless indignation.

"You—you—you—" he stuttered.

Nugent pointed to the door. Bunter blinked in the direction of the outstretched finger, and then blinked at Nugent.

"What do you mean, Nugent?"

"Outside!"

"But—"

"Outside!"

"I say, you fellows—" spluttered Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton seriously, "you'd better travel! I suppose you must dig in this study, but the less we see of you, the better we shall like it. You've passed the limit at last, and we can't stand you!"

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"That's it," said Frank Nugent. "You were always a worm, Bunter; but you've passed the worm limit, and we're done with you!"

"The wormfulness of the esteemed Bunter is great, and the donefulness is terrific!" remarked the dusky junior from India's palmy shores.

Bunter blinked at them.

"What's the matter?"

"Y— know jolly well what's the matter!" said Wharton warmly. "You have always been the biggest fool in the Remove, and the worst rotter, except Snoop—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But so long as you kept within the limit we stood you. We put up with your silly photography, and your bothersome ventriloquism; but when you took to playing the amateur detective, that was too much! Of course, there's no objection to your making a fool of yourself in any way you please, as it's a free country. But a chap who reads another chap's letters isn't the kind of chap I want to talk to, and that's plain English!"

"But—but, you know, I have splendid abilities as a detective," said Bunter. "I—I didn't read Brown's letters in my—my private capacity, you know. I read them as—as an amateur detective!"

"As a mean rotter, you mean!"

"Besides, that's an old story!" said Bunter indignantly. "I suppose you chaps are not going to rake all that up again?"

"Why, it only happened yesterday!"

"Well, I've got news," said Bunter, changing the subject. "I suppose you want to hear the news, you fellows?"

"No, we don't!"

"The fact is, Bunter, we're going to give you a lesson!" said Wharton. "You have acted like a mean worm, and you don't seem able to realise it. We're going to make you realise it! You're cut by the study until the end of the week."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I don't want to be hard on you, because I really think you're such an ass that you hardly know right from wrong," said Wharton. "But it's necessary to draw the line somewhere. The fellows have all got hold of the story, and Bulstrode and his lot are making a great cackle over it. They say this is the study where fellows open other chaps' letters."

"I'm sincerely sorry; but as an amateur detective—"

"You've got to stop that rot, too!" said Wharton, frowning. "Keep off the grass! If you say the word detective again in this study you'll be biffed. We've decided on that. Every time you speak that blessed word, we bump you!"

"But as a detective—"

"There he goes again!"

"Bump him!"

"Ow! Oh, really— I— Help! Yah! Ow!"

Three strong pairs of hands grasped

the Owl of the Remove, and he was bumped down in a sitting posture on the carpet with a mighty bump.

The bump knocked all the breath out of him—he never had much—and he remained sitting there, staring dazedly at the chums of the Remove.

"You—you—you beasts!" he gasped.

"I—I—I—"

"Shut up!—Keep off the grass!"

"But—but I've got news!"

"Blow your news!"

Bunter staggered to his feet. He dusted his trousers, and blinked at the chums, and put his big spectacles straight.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, I—I've got news. I hope you're not going to keep this rot up. I wanted one of you to lend me some tin for the circus—"

"Circus!"

"Yes; that's the news. There's a circus come to Greyfriars."

"Well, that's news, anyway!" said Nugent. "But is it true?"

"Of course it is, Nugent. They're giving a performance this evening on Friar-dale Common, and, by the Head's permission, every chap who's got any tin will go. I haven't any, unfortunately, as I have run out of cash, and I have been disappointed about a postal-order, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I had a postal-order coming this morning, but there has been a delay in the post. If one of you fellows will stand me five bob—"

"Five rats!"

"Well, one bob, then."

"Not a tanner!" said Wharton firmly. "We're going to give you a lesson, as I said! You're cut by the study until the end of the week. No more loans, no more free feeds, no more anything—except bumping. Talking to you's no good. We'll see what severe measures will do!"

"But, I say—"

"You've said enough. I'm sorry about the circus, but a chap must stick to his word. You've got to have your lesson. Still, I don't want you to miss the circus. I can't break my resolution on the subject. But Wun Lung will lend you a bob."

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Nuff said. Outside!"

"I'm jolly well going to stay in my own study if I want to!"

"Very well! We'll get out, then!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. left the study. Bunter blinked after them in dismay. He had tried the patience of his study-mates many times, and very far; but always he had been able to squirm into their good graces again somehow.

This time, as Wharton said, he seemed to have really passed the limit.

It was rather a gloomy outlook for the Owl of the Remove.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

## Bunter is Barred.

THE coming of the circus caused considerable excitement at Greyfriars.

Directly tea was finished, the Greyfriars juniors put on their coats to go down to the circus. They found a big crowd setting out from the school.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth were there, with a crowd of Fourth-Formers. Blundell and Bland of the Fifth could be seen, going out with a half-shamefaced, half-bored expression—wholly assumed—for they were as keen to see the circus as the youngest and inkiest fag in the Third or Second Form. Towering over the other fellows could be seen the broad shoulders of Wingate, the skipper of Greyfriars.

As Harry Wharton & Co. went out, a fat figure stepped in their way, in the glimmer of light from the School House door. It was Bunter, of course.

Harry Wharton frowned at him.

"Why don't you clear off, Bunter? Haven't we told you you're barred?"

"But I want to go to the circus."

Tom Brown fished in his pocket.

"Here you are, you porpoise! Now buzz off and be quiet!"

Bunter blinked at the New Zealand junior.

"Thank you, Brown! I'm sincerely sorry you got shown up the other day through my being such a splendid detective—Oh!"

Bump!

The chums of the Remove were keeping their word; at the mention of "detective" they bumped the fat junior with hearty good will.

Then they walked on, leaving him gasping on the ground, in the way of the rest of the fellows who were pouring out of the house.

Bulstrode came along with Skinner and Stott, and stumbled over him.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Skinner. "What's that?"

"It's that worm Bunter."

"Give him a kick."

"Oh!" roared Bunter, as Bulstrode's heavy boot biffed on him. "Ow! Yah! Yaroo!"

He scrambled up wrathfully. Bulstrode and his friends walked on, laughing, and Bunter bumped blindly into Carberry of the Sixth.

The prefect gave him a savage push that sent him rolling on the ground again, and Billy Bunter squirmed away furiously.

"The—the beasts!" he murmured. "Everybody's against me at this school, because they're jealous of my good looks and my cleverness. The rotters! I feel awfully hungry. I wonder if I could wriggle in under the canvas if I spent this bob on some grub? My system needs keeping up."

Bunter had to pass the school shop on his way out, and the sight of it was enough to decide him. He walked in, and five minutes later he came out—a little fatter, perhaps, but the shilling was gone.

"I—I wonder if I shall be able to creep in under the canvas?" murmured Bunter, giving the matter serious thought rather late in the day.

He followed in the track of the crowd from Greyfriars.

In the distance, on Friardale Common, could be seen the glare of naphtha lights, and heard the strains of a band.

The band was not one of the best, and the music was not classical; but it answered the purpose of attracting to Signor Tomsonio's Circus people within a wide radius.

Dr. Locke, at Greyfriars, closed his window a little more tightly, but the

boys did not mind it; in fact, they liked it.

Billy Bunter was the last to arrive in the circus field.

The flaring naphtha lamps made the field almost as light as by day, and he could distinctly see the huge circus tent, and the caravans camped near it, and the canvas stables in which the animals were bestowed.

Most of the crowd had gone in, but many were arriving, although the performance had now commenced.

Country people from all sides, and villagers from Friardale and Lindale, as well as the boys from Greyfriars, poured into the huge tent.

There were girls, too—girls from the village, and girls from Cliff House, the seaside school presided over by Miss Penelope Primrose.

Bunter joined the crowd at the entrance, and managed to dodge in the crush past the first man, who was giving out ten discs in exchange for the entrance money. But the second man,

and Billy Bunter went on another tack.

He skirted round the tent, towards the staff entrance at the other side, and, selecting a spot that seemed to be unwatched, he tried to squirm in under the edge of the canvas.

He might have succeeded in that; but, as a matter of fact, there were eyes on him all the time, though he had been too short-sighted to notice it.

A big, stalwart fellow with a good-natured face was watching him, with considerable astonishment in his looks.

He uttered a sharp exclamation as Bunter's intentions were put beyond doubt by his squirming under the canvas.

"My hat!" said the big gentleman to himself.

He strode to the spot, and, stooping down, picked Bunter up by his ankles. The fat junior gave a horrified gasp.

"Ow, ow! Leggo!"

But Samson, the Strong Man, did not let go.



The Greyfriars juniors gazed at the Queen of the Ring in admiration as she cantered gracefully round the ring on her splendid black Arab.

who received the discs at the opening of the tent, stopped him.

"You haven't paid!" he exclaimed.

"I—I—"

"Where's your disc?"

"I—I haven't one."

"You young cheat! Get out!"

"You—you low brute!" gasped

Bunter. "You—you dare to call me a cheat! I'm a gentleman, you low cad!"

The man seized him by the shoulder and swung him away.

"You won't come in here without paying!" he said.

Bunter moved disconsolately away.

He was so bent upon getting into the tent, that he had not even stopped to reflect whether it was honest or not to enter without paying. Reflections of this sort did not trouble the Owl of the Remove very much.

But there was clearly no getting in at the entrance without paying for admis-

sion, and Billy Bunter was a good weight, but Samson lifted him up as if he had been a bag of feathers.

Bunter came out from under the canvas wrong end upwards, his ankles in the Strong Man's grip, and his head in the grass, his jacket curling about his ears.

"Ow!" he roared. "Leggo!"

Samson grinned, and sent him rolling over in the grass.

"You young thief!" he said. "You were trying to get in!"

"I—I wasn't! I—I mean—"

"Clear off!"

"Look here—"

"Clear off, I tell you!"

The big man drew back his foot, and Bunter hastily cleared away. In the darkness under the trees, on the edge of the field, he stopped, and shook his fist towards the tent.

"Beasts!" he muttered. "I'll get even with you somehow. You rotten, low beasts, to insult me like this!"

Bunter felt that he had been insulted twice by the circus people, without stopping to reflect that they were entitled to payment for their show.

It was enough for Bunter to be disappointed, for him to nurse spite and revenge, and he never stopped to consider whether he was in the wrong.

"I'll make 'em squirm!" he muttered, as he blinked towards the tent. "My word! What a joke it would be to let the animals loose—the monkeys, and horses, and other beasts! It'd take 'em a week to get 'em together again!"

And the fat junior's eyes glinted behind his spectacles at the idea.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. At the Circus.

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. paid for admission at the door, and entered the big tent with the crowd of Greystrippers fellows and village folk.

The big tent was ablaze with light, and filling fast. The juniors tobogganed and leap-frogged over the seats, scrambling for good places.

Harry Wharton uttered a sudden exclamation as he caught sight of two graceful forms in the crowd, and he plunged towards them, followed by a roar of protest from fellows whose feet he trod upon, or whose shins he knocked against in his haste.

"Miss Marjorie!"

Marjorie Hazeldene looked round with a smile. She was with Miss Clara Trevelyn.

"So glad to see you here!" said Harry, as he raised his cap. "Come this way; I'll get you a good seat. Hallo, Hazeldene! Your sister's here!"

"Good!" said Hazeldene.

"Thank you!" said Marjorie, who was, as a matter of fact, a little nervous in the thick crowd, and was glad of the assistance of Harry's strong arm.

Wharton piloted the girls to front seats, and they sat down, amid the chums of the Remove. Miss Clara's eyes twinkled.

"Isn't Bunter with you?" she asked.

Harry looked round.

"Not with us," he said; "but he was coming. He doesn't seem to be here, though."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"He's blued the tin again in the tuck-shop, I'll bet my hat!"

Marjorie laughed.

"I'm sorry if Bunter misses it. Perhaps he will come in later. What a curious fellow that clown is!"

The curious fellow was the original Joey Pye. He was turning somersaults in the ring at present, to the accompaniment of the braying of the band.

Signor Tomsonio—known in private life as Dick Thompson—was in the ring, too, in a silk hat and a wonderful waistcoat, with a whip in his hand.

He cracked the whip, and Joey Pye straightened up.

"Bless my heart, if my young friends ain't here!" exclaimed Mr. Pye, taking off his paper cap with a bow to the Removites.

Nugent waved his hand, laughing.

"I like that chap!" he remarked. "What a jolly chivvy he has! I've heard all his blessed wheezes before, but he has a funny way with him."

"I want to see the tigers," remarked Bob Cherry. "Is it one of the early turns?"

"No; there's bareback riding first."

"Ah! The Queen of the Ring," grinned Nugent. "My hat! Here she comes! What a stunning girl!"

"What-ho!" said Tom Brown.

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Miss Clotilde, the girl rider, came into the ring mounted upon a big black Arab. She was a girl of Marjorie's age, as supple and graceful as she was beautiful, and that was saying a good deal.

Her riding was perfection itself, and Harry Wharton, who knew something about riding, gazed at her admiringly as she cantered round the ring.

Marjorie's eyes were sparkling. "What a sweet girl!" she exclaimed. "And how beautiful she rides!"

As if she knew she was being spoken of, Clotilde glanced up as she passed the place where the Greystrippers party sat, and smiled a little.

"Bravo!" said Nugent.

Three more horses came galloping into the ring, and went round and round in company with the black Arab.

The girl rider rose to her feet upon the Arab with a quick, supple movement.

Her long, clinging dress of white floated about her, only gathered at the waist with a sash, that made her look even younger than she was.

The boys gazed at her with great admiration.

First upon one horse, and then upon another and another, the girl galloped round the ring, passing over banners and through balloons with perfect ease and grace.

If she had missed her footing in coming down, she would have been trampled under the heavy hoofs; but the danger seemed to make no difference to her.

The flush in her cheeks, the sparkle in her eyes, showed how she enjoyed her work.

"Bravo!" shouted the juniors.

"Hurrah!"

And Marjorie and Clara clapped their hands enthusiastically.

Miss Clotilde, with a happy, flushed face, rode out of the ring at last amid a perfect hurricane of applause.

A lad, in red velvet and spangles, at the staff entrance gave her a smile as she rode past him.

It was Jack Talbot, billed on the signor's posters as Jungle Jack, the King of the Tigers.

"Well done, Clotilde!" he exclaimed.

"Bravo!" thundered the audience.

There was a murmur as a huge iron cage was trundled into the arena.

"The tigers!" said Bob Cherry.

The boy tiger-tamer walked in beside the cage. The juniors looked admiringly at his well-set-up figure, his splendidly developed limbs.

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"That chap's fit, if you like. Look at him!"

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Tom Brown.

"He can't be much older than we are, either."

"Give him a cheer to start with," said Nugent.

"Hurrah!"

Jack Talbot smiled as the schoolboys cheered, and walked to the cage.

Within it two huge tigers were moving restlessly to and fro. They were named Julius and Julia.

There was a deep breath among the audience as the cage door was opened, and Jack Talbot entered.

"My hat!" said Wharton. "That chap has a nerve!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The nervefulness of the esteemed youth is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "There are old shikarees in my country who would not care to face those esteemed beasts in the cage."

The juniors watched Jack's every movement.

They were almost spellbound as he put Julius and Julia through their tricks, and showed his absolute mastery of the powerful beasts.

The turn brought out thunders of applause, as it always did; and the signor grinned with satisfaction, as he always did when he heard the public shout.

"They like it, Joey," he confided to the mirth-merchant—"they like it! That's what I like about the British public—when they like a thing they ain't above saying so. Now, there's no mistaking that yell, is there?"

And the original Joey Pye agreed that there wasn't.

Carson, the acrobat, was the next turn.

He was a dark, handsome fellow, and his performance on the trapeze was a splendid one, showing amazing activity and boundless nerve.

The Greystrippers fellows cheered him heartily.

Carson was still on the trapeze, and the crowd watching him intently, when a circus hand came hastily into the ring, ran towards the signor, and spoke to him in a low voice.

Signor Tomsonio turned deadly pale.

"What! Impossible!"

"It's true, sir!"

"But—but impossible!"

"Mr. Talbot sent me to warn you, sir."

The signor clenched his hands.

"Good heavens!"

Half the audience were looking at the fat signor now.

The agitation in his face was too plain to pass unnoticed, and the spectators knew at once that something had gone wrong.

"There's trouble in the camp!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Look at that chap's chivvy! It's as white as a sheet, where the paint isn't on it."

"Something's up!"

Marjorie changed colour.

"Can it be the tiger—?"

Her voice faltered.

"My hat! I hope not!"

"Listen! He's going to speak!"

The signor cleared his throat with an effort.

"Ladies and gentlemen—"

There was a loud buzz. Carson slid down the rope from the trapeze; but no eyes were upon him now. There were no "hands" for the acrobat.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I beg of you to be calm—"

Then there were shrieks.

"Pray keep your seats!"

Before the signor could say more there was a deep, reverberating roar from without. It struck terror to every heart.

In an instant the great tent was the scene of wild confusion.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. In Terror.

**L**ADIES and gentlemen—

"Oh!"

"Help!"

"The tigers!"

Signor Tomsonio waved his hands helplessly.

"Keep your seats—keep your seats!"

"Help!"

"Run for it!"

"Oh, oh!"

"Keep your seats! The tigers are not here!"

But there was a wild scramble for the exits.

The juniors were on their feet now, and several of them were joining in the rush, when Harry Wharton's voice rang out:

"Hold on! Don't be cowards! Stick it out! Keep cool!"

"Right you are!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Keep cool! Stand where you are!"

Harry Wharton & Co. set the example of keeping cool.

There was no sight of the tiger in the great, lighted tent; and, as a matter of fact, there was more danger outside than inside, at present.

The signor bellowed that out to the crowd, and it had some effect upon them, and the example of the Greyfriars fellows added to it.

Wingate and the Sixth-Formers with him were keeping their seats, and Harry Wharton's example made most of the juniors do the same.

The tumult still raged, but with less noise and confusion.

"Calm yourselves!" shouted Signor Tomsonio. "You are safe here!"

Marjorie was deadly pale, but calm. Clara was wringing her hands.

Harry pressed Marjorie's hand. "Courage!" he whispered. "There's no danger—yet!"

The girl nodded without speaking. The crowd was pouring out of the tent, but sufficient order had been restored to stop any danger of crushing or trampling.

After that roar from the tiger, no further sound had been heard from him, and the inference was that he had gone.

Signor Tomsonio wrung his hands as he thought of it.

The damage a loose tiger on the countryside might do was endless, and in his mind's eye the signor already saw a lengthy bill for damages, even if there were no fatalities.

"Now we'd better go," said Wingate, when the crowd had almost cleared off. "May as well get back to Greyfriars."

"I shall jolly well lock my door to-night," said Blundell.

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, I dare say they'll soon have the tiger again!" said Wingate. "Come on! Keep close, you juniors."

They moved towards the exit from the tent.

The crowd was streaming off in various directions, the idea of everyone being to place as great a distance between himself and the common as possible.

Outside the tent, in the glare of the naphtha-lamps, Wharton stopped.

"We're coming back to Cliff House with you, Marjorie," he said.

"But—but you have no permission to—"

"Oh, we shall be excused under the circumstances!" said Harry. "We can't let you go back alone, anyway."

"I—I shall feel much safer with you."

Cliff House was only a few minutes' walk from the common. The Greyfriars juniors gathered in a body round the Cliff House girls, and walked with them to the school. They did not run, but their walking was certainly very rapid.

The matter was serious enough. Exactly how savage the escaped tiger might be they did not know, but it would be terribly dangerous to meet him in the lanes.

The circus men were now searching in all directions, with guns and lanterns; but apparently they had yet discovered nothing of the beast.

Cliff House was reached in a few minutes.

Miss Penelope shrieked when she learned that there was a tiger loose, and she wished the Greyfriars juniors to accept the shelter of Cliff House until the morning, but Harry shook his head.

He felt that it was necessary to get back to Greyfriars, whatever the risk. If they remained absent, they would be searched for. The Head might even conclude that they had fallen victims to the escaped tiger.

They hastily said good-bye to Marjorie and her friends, and hurried away towards Greyfriars, leaving the girls full of the keenest anxiety.

The precautions Miss Prinrose took

before going to bed that night were endless; but none of the girls was inclined to smile at them. The danger was too real!

Harry Wharton & Co. went back by way of Friardale Common to discover at the circus whether the escaped tiger had been captured yet.

They found Mr. Quelch there, and the Remove-master, who was breathless with his run from Greyfriars, uttered an exclamation of relief when he saw them.

"Ah, you are safe, then, my boys?"

"Yes, sir. We thought we ought to see the girls to safety, sir," said Harry.

"Quite right, Wharton—quite right. I learned from Bunter that the tigers had escaped, and came here immediately. I am glad to find that no one has been hurt. Keep with me."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch hurried towards Signor Tomsonio. The signor seemed to be almost beside himself. Jungle Jack had just come back from a fruitless search.

"You haven't seen him, Jack?"

"No, sir," said the circus lad. "We've got the tigress, though. Julia is safe in her cage again. We found her under a caravan."

THE END OF THE TALE

HARRY WHARTON & CO.

Entitled:

"PONSONBY'S PAL!"

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"Good luck!" said the signor. "But Julius?"

"He hasn't been seen."

"How could he have got loose?" exclaimed the signor. "Surely you saw to the fastenings of the door after you left the cage, Jack?"

Talbot nodded.

"I'm afraid there's been foul play, sir," he said.

"Foul play!"

"Yes; somebody deliberately let the tigers loose."

"What?"

"There's no doubt about it, signor!" chimed in Joey Pye. "The door was unbarred, and the door of the monkeys' cage, in the same tent, was unfastened, too! The monkeys are gone as well as the tigers!"

"Smelowiski's monkeys!"

"That's it! Somebody's let the lot out!"

Signor Tomsonio gasped.

"But—but—but who could have done it? What villain—?"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Jack Talbot, between his teeth.

"But the first business is to recapture Julius."

Mr. Quelch broke in: "Pray allow me a word, sir. I understand there is still one of the tigers at liberty?"

"Yes, sir," said Talbot respectfully, with a look at the Form-master.

"Is it a dangerous animal?"

Talbot hesitated.

"Pray tell me exactly how matters stand," said Mr. Quelch. "Precautions will have to be taken at the school."

"Well, Julius isn't exactly dangerous," said Talbot slowly. "He's all right as long as he's not angered. He's not likely to attack anybody first, but if anybody snaps a gun at him, it may make him wild. And if we don't recapture him before he gets hungry, he will make havoc in the farmyards, I think."

"And when he has once tasted blood?"

said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I can't say! I hope we shall capture him before then."

"This is terrible!" said the Form-master. "How long is it since he was fed?"

"Oh, that's all right, luckily! They are always fed after the performance, and it isn't half an hour since he had a big meal," said Talbot.

"That is fortunate. Will you please send us word as soon as you have found the tiger, if you find him?"

"Rely upon that, sir," said the signor.

"Thank you. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And Mr. Quelch and the boys hurried their steps towards Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton would willingly have stayed to help the circus men in the search for the tiger, but he knew it was no use asking permission for anything of the sort.

They reached Greyfriars without an alarm, and before any of the boys went to bed a party of masters and prefects went round the house, carefully examining the fastenings of the doors and windows.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
A Visitor.

AFTER morning school next day most of the juniors of Greyfriars would have been very glad to go down to the circus and help Signor Tomsonio and his men to look for Julius.

And as the Head guessed that such would be their wish, he had cautioned the prefects to keep a very keen lookout; with the result that Bob Cherry was yanked back by the leg from the top of a wall, and Tom Brown was headed off in the doctor's garden and turned back, and several other fellows found themselves in trouble, too.

"It's no good," said Nugent. "The Head thinks there would be danger—"

"Well, I suppose there would," said Wharton, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh expressed the opinion that the dangerousness would be terrific.

"Yes, but we're not afraid of danger, are we?"

"Oh, no!"

"And we should be jolly useful in hunting the tiger," said Bob Cherry discontentedly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It would be great fun," he said; "but I don't see where the use would come in. I dare say they can manage it alone."

Jack Talbot, the young tiger-tamer, looked in to tell the Greyfriars authorities that the tiger had not been captured yet, but that nothing of a tragic nature had happened so far.

"Have they discovered who let the animals loose?" asked Harry, speaking to the circus lad as he was leaving.

"No. I suppose no fellow at Greyfriars would play such a trick?"

Then Talbot departed. He left Wharton looking very thoughtful.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Harry. "Surely they don't suspect a Greyfriars fellow of playing the giddy goat in that way?"

"I should say not."

"Oh, it's impossible!" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly. "It was rotten cheek to hint such a thing. As if one of us would—would—what are you staring at me like that for, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton's eyes were fixed sternly upon the fat junior. Bunter's very eagerness had given him away.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-es. What—"

"Did you loose the animals?"

"I? Oh, really, Wharton—"

Harry's grip dropped upon the fat junior's shoulder like the grip of a vice. Billy Bunter wriggled uneasily.

"Did you do it, Billy?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I—I—How—"

"Then you did?"

Under Wharton's accusing eyes the powers of lying seemed to desert Billy Bunter. He began to whimper.

"I—I only meant to let out the monkeys," he murmured. "I—I was insulted at the circus, and I was going to let out the monkeys for a joke. How was I to know that the silly asses had shoved the tigers' cage in the same tent?"

"You young fool!"

"Oh! Oh, really, I—I—I didn't know, you know! Don't you give me away, Wharton! I—I should be expelled!"

"And serve you jolly well right!" said Harry wrathfully. "Somebody may be killed, for all you know, through your stupid caddishness!"

"They insulted me—"

"I suppose you were trying to sneak in without paying?" said Harry scornfully.

"Well, I hadn't any tin, and—"

"Oh, shut up! I ought to march straight to the Head now, and tell him what you've done!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ow! Don't! You can't be a sneak! I—I—"

"No, I won't," said Wharton savagely. "but, mind this, if any harm comes of the tigers being loose, you'll have to own up! There may be an inquest before this matter's over, for all you know, and then the police will get on the job!"

Billy Bunter almost fainted.

"The police! Oh, oh, oh!"

"You—you dummy! You'll have to own up! I'll jolly well make you! But it wouldn't do any good now, and if no harm comes of it, I'll keep it dark."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

But Wharton strode away contemptuously without listening.

Bunter was in about the most uncomfortable state of mind that he had ever experienced. He was afraid that the escaped tiger might get into Greyfriars somehow, and now he was still more afraid that there might be some tragedy, and that he might be arrested for letting the animals loose.

He sincerely wished he had never tried to revenge himself upon the circus folk, and he would have given his little finger to undo the night's work.

But it was too late now.

He was still palpitating at dinner-time, and it was remarked that he ate a very light dinner—a circumstance so unusual for Bunter that the whole Form noticed it. They all put it down to his dread of the tiger.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 264.

Wharton was keeping his own counsel, for the present, at least.

The Remove went into afternoon school, still thinking of the circus and of the escaped Julius. But fear of the tiger weighed little with them now. He had not found his way to Greyfriars yet, and they did not think that he would do so.

They soon dropped into the usual mood, and the tiger was forgotten as they ground their painful way through deponent verbs.

It was about the middle of the afternoon, when Gosling, the porter, glanced out of his lodge at the school gates, just to be sure that they were still secure. Instead of standing open as usual in the daytime, they were locked, and Gosling had been expressly commanded by the Head to keep them so.

Gosling gave a jump.

Through the iron bars of the gates he had a view of a considerable portion of the road, and the ditch, and the trees beyond.

From those trees, looking across the ditch into the road, appeared a face.

It was a face that froze Gosling's blood with fear, though there was a tall iron gate between them.

For the head that came out of the thicket was the head of a huge tiger!

"My—my 'at!" stuttered Gosling.

He stared dazedly at the terrible apparition.

The head and neck of the tiger emerged further from the thicket, and then part of the huge striped body.

The animal looked up and down the road, and then, apparently reassured, came right out into view—a splendid creature, huge, powerful, beautiful, but terrible.

"Ow! 'Elp!" gasped Gosling.

There was a sound of clattering hoofs on the road—a cart was approaching. The tiger turned towards the sound, and sniffed the air.

Then he ran quickly towards the iron gates.

There was a crash as he bumped against them; but the gates would have withstood the rush of an elephant. The tiger growled, and drew back.

Between the level top of the gates and the arched stone above, was a considerable space, and the animal's quick eye had noted it. The beautiful body crouched back—a quiver ran through it—and, with a sudden, lissome movement, the tiger sprang.

Gosling gave a gasp of inarticulate terror.

The tiger leaped the gate.

The porter dashed back into his lodge, slammed the door, and locked and bolted it, slammed the window shut, bolted into his bed-room, and locked the door, and crawled under the bed, and lay there palpitating.

Julius, the tiger, stalked into the Greyfriars quadrangle.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Julius Takes a Fancy to Bunter.

**J**ULIUS did not appear to be in a bad temper. Julius was very fond of Jack Talbot, his master and tamer, and most of his savage proclivities had been eradicated.

Unless he was attacked, or unless he was hungry, Julius would probably do no harm; but the sight of a huge tiger stalking in the quadrangle was not a reassuring one. One of the maids first saw him, and fled shrieking.

Then there was the flight of the gardener, who caught sight of him. He barricaded himself in the garden shed.

By this time the alarm was spreading. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, glanced out of the Form-room window to see what the disturbance was about, and saw—Julius!

He was standing on a form to look out of the window. He nearly fell off as he saw the tiger.

"My—my goodness!" he gasped.

"The—the tiger!"

"The tiger!"

The terrible word ran through the Fifth Form like lightning.

"Oh!" gasped Blundell. "Lock the door! Pile up the forms!"

Mr. Prout's eyes gleamed. He was a sportsman, but at Greyfriars he seldom had a chance of killing anything.

He thought of the unused guns in his study, and felt warlike ardour rising within him. It was big game at last.

"Stop a minute!" he exclaimed. "I will go and get my gun. You boys barricade yourselves in the room after I have gone."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Prout slipped out of the room, and then the Fifth piled forms against the door.

The door of the School House was open, and Mr. Prout glanced towards it as he entered the broad, flagged passage.

Then he gave a gasp.

Upon the steps of the house stood a terrible form with bristling whiskers, looking into the house, not a dozen yards from the master of the Fifth.

It was the tiger!

"Oh!" spluttered Mr. Prout, and he ran.

There was a growl from Julius, and he came in.

Mr. Prout reached his study, and banged the door after him, and hastily took down a gun from the wall. It was the same gun that he had used on a famous occasion when, mistaking a kite made by Wun Lung, the Chinese, for a new variety of bird, he had brought it down with great success.

Julius came as far as Mr. Prout's door, banged his head against it, and passed on. At the end of the passage there were fresh shrieks and running, and Julius turned back. He bumped against the door of the Remove Form-room, in which he heard the murmur of voices.

Deep in deponent verbs, the Remove so far knew nothing whatever of the arrival of the tiger.

Mr. Quelch looked round with a glance of annoyance as he heard the bump on the door.

"Dear me!"

He went on with the deponent verbs, but the next minute there came another bump. The Remove-master was exasperated.

"Bunter, open the door, and see who is making that noise."

"Yes, sir!" blinked Bunter.

He rose from the form, and crossed to the door, and opened it carelessly enough. Julius looked at him.

Bunter staggered away.

He had not the nerve to close the door again; he left it wide open, and staggered away with a face like chalk, almost fainting.

Mr. Quelch looked round irritably, and stood petrified as he saw the tiger.

Julius looked into the room.

"Good heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton.

The Removites sat motionless, as if turned to stone. Terror held them spellbound.

"Upon my—my word!" murmured Mr. Quelch feebly.

Julius, the tiger, stalked into the room.

The Remove-master, even at that terrible moment, did not lose either his courage or his presence of mind.

"Remain quite still, boys," he said, in a low, anxious voice—"quite still! Not a word, not a movement!"

So long as the tiger was not provoked, the chances were that he would not attack them. He was not looking

hostile at present. But a single unlucky movement might cause him to spring, a lash of the terrible claws, and if the monster once tasted blood— Mr. Quelch felt himself sick at the thought.

Julius glanced round the class, sitting like statues, and seemed a little puzzled. His glare turned upon Billy Bunter, who had backed away with palsied limbs, till he had backed against the blackboard easel, and could back no further.

There Bunter stood spellbound. Julius moved towards him. Bunter's lips moved. He seemed to try to speak, to call for help, but the sounds died on his tongue. He was speechless with horror. This was the beast he had let loose from its cage for a spiteful trick.

Julius came closer, Bunter backed away foolishly, for in doing so he pushed over the easel, and the blackboard fell to the floor with a crash.

In the dead silence of the class-room the crash rang like thunder. Julius, startled, leaped back, and gave a growl.

Bunter, shaking like a jelly, stumbled over the easel, and fell. He rolled on the floor, and lay there mumbling, too scared to move.

He almost fainted as a great muzzle came snuffing over him. In his mind's eye he saw himself in the red jaws of the tiger.

His senses were whirling, and it was a mercy for the fat junior that terror overcame him, and he swooned.

Julius was snuffing him over. In the cage in Tomsonio's Circus Julius was accustomed to carry Talbot round the cage, holding the boy tamer's belt in his teeth.

Some resemblance of his arena performance seemed to be in the tiger's mind now. His jaws gripped, not upon Bunter, but upon Bunter's clothing, and the fat junior was dragged from the floor in the tiger's teeth.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Quelch. He did not stir. He could not hurt the tiger with bare hands, and any hostile movement now might be instantly fatal to Bunter. The good-humour of a tiger is always uncertain.

Julius trotted round the room with Bunter. The juniors watched him with fascinated eyes.

"My hat!" said Wharton. "He's going through the circus tricks, with Bunter instead of that chap Talbot. Do you see?"

"He—he can't be so savage, then," said Nugent, with a gasp of relief.

"Not now—he's all right—but goodness knows how long it will last. One of us ought to slip out and warn them at the circus. I'll go."

Wharton was near the door. He exchanged a glance with Mr. Quelch, who nodded. Harry rose from his place and quietly slipped from the room.

He darted down the passage and out into the sunny Close.

"Talbot!" The circus lad was running towards him from the direction of the gates. Wharton looked at him in amazement.

"How did you get in?" Jack laughed.

"Climbed the gates. We learn to climb in the circus, you know. No one came to the gate when I rang. Has the tiger been here?"

"Yes—yes!"

"I thought so. I tracked him in the wood as far as the school, and lost him on the road. I was afraid he was here."

"He's in our Form-room."

"By George!"

"I was just coming to warn you," gasped Wharton. "I cut out of the class-room. He hasn't done any harm yet."

but he's got Bunter in his jaws, trotting round the room with him the same as he does with you in the cage."

Jack Talbot drew a quick breath. "Thank Heaven there's no harm done! Show me the way."

They had been hurrying towards the house while speaking. They ran in, and Wharton led the way to the Remove class-room.

"But you are unarmed," he said dubiously.

"That's all right. A weapon wouldn't be of much use against Julius at close quarters," said Talbot. "Besides, he will obey me."

Wharton said no more. They entered the Remove-room.

Julius had dropped Bunter now, and the fat junior lay just where he had fallen, inert, in a dead faint.

For Mr. Prout, gun in hand, had entered the Form-room.

Julius, the tiger, was bristling now, and his tail was lashing his ribs as he glared at the master of the Fifth.

Jack Talbot sprang forward.

"Hold!"

Jack's grasp completely spoiled Mr. Prout's aim, and he did not fire, but looked round angrily at the interrupter.

"Boy, how—" "Stop! I am the tiger's master. He will obey me. If you fire there will be death here—death to you and the rest. Don't you understand?"

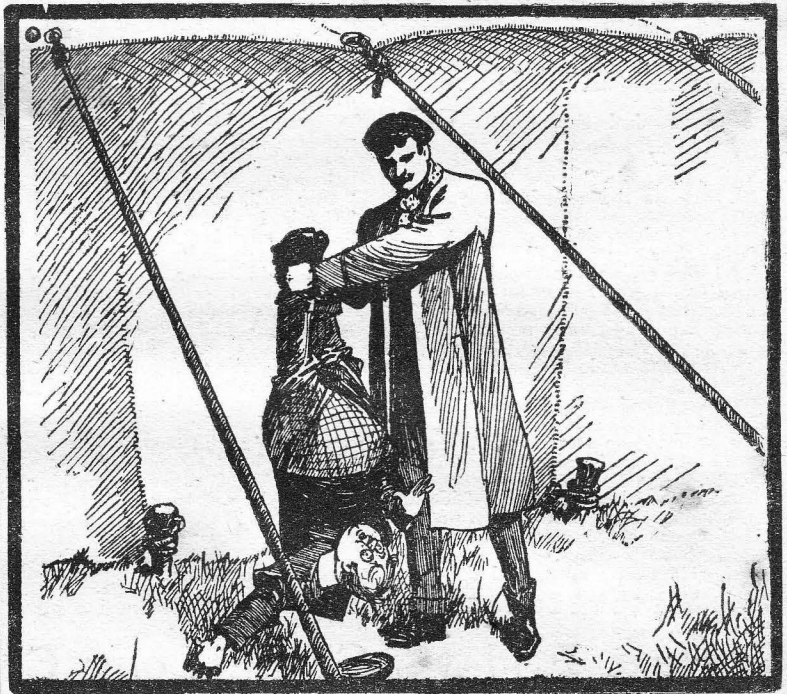
Without giving Mr. Prout time to reply, Jack strode towards the tiger. He had placed himself fairly between the animal and the warlike Mr. Prout, and so it was impossible now for the master to fire.

Mr. Prout sniffed. He had more faith in his gun than in the persuasive powers of the tiger-tamer. However, he lowered his weapon, letting the butt clump on the floor.

Jack Talbot strode towards the tiger.

Julius ceased to crouch, and he straightened up as his young master came towards him. The threatened spring was averted.

"Julius!"



"Ow! Yow! Leggo!" yelled Billy Bunter, as the strong man held him up by his ankles. "You young thief!" exclaimed Samson. "You were trying to get in without paying!"

"Stop!" he exclaimed, in agony. "Don't fire! Hold!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.  
Exit Julius.

TALBOT caught the Fifth Form-master by the arm.

Mr. Prout, who was brave enough, though certainly wanting in discretion in this case, had levelled his gun at Julius.

Julius had abandoned Bunter, and turned his attention to the Fifth Form-master, and already he was crouching.

Talbot knew what that meant, if Mr. Prout did not.

The chances were that Mr. Prout's shot would superficially wound the tiger, and then Julius, excited to rage, would become once more the savage monster of the Indian jungles.

Jack laid his hand upon the tiger's huge head.

The boys watched him in amazed admiration.

"There's pluck for you!" said Bob Cherry, in an undertone. "Blessed if I should care to do that!"

Jack had eyes only for the tiger.

Master of the animal as he was, he knew the uncertainty of the feline temper, and that Julius, too, had tasted freedom.

It was by no means certain that the tiger would obey him now; but Jack did not allow any doubt to appear in his look or voice. The tiger, with an animal's keen instinct for fear in its master, would have detected it at once, and would then have become unmanageable.

"Julius! Allez!"

At the familiar word of the ring Julius

shifted uncomfortably. Jack took a firm grip of the studded collar round the tiger's neck, and led him towards the door.

Julius moved slowly and unwillingly. "Allez!" exclaimed Jack sharply.

Julius' movements quickened. He cast a glance at Mr. Prout, and growled, and the Fifth Form-master turned a little pale.

But Jack's strong grip drew him on, and he passed out of the room, and there was a general gasp of relief as he disappeared into the passage.

"Dear me," gasped Mr. Quelch—"dear me! I—I would not go through this again for—anything! Keep your seats, boys!"

Several fellows were peeping round corners in the passage. At the sight of the tiger they promptly vanished.

Jack Talbot smiled. He marched Julius out into the Close, and down to the gates. But the gates were locked, and he had to knock at Gosling's lodge for the keys.

Gosling stepped out of the lodge, and caught a full view of Julius standing there, with Talbot's hand upon his collar.

Gosling stared at Julius a second, his knees bumping together; and then, with a single bound, he was back in his lodge, and the door was slammed in Mr. Quelch's face.

The astonished Form-master rapped on it.

"Gosling!"

"Ye-e-e-es, sir?"

"Come out and unlock the gates at once!"

"The t-t-t-tiger, sir!"

"He will not hurt you!"

"Which I ain't going to risk it," murmured Gosling. "I—I'm sorry, sir, but the key have got jammed in the lock somehow, and I—I can't hopen this 'ere door agin, sir."

Mr. Quelch made a gesture of impatience.

"Throw your bunch of keys out of the window, Gosling, and I will unlock the gates myself!" he exclaimed.

"Suttinly, sir!" said Gosling, with alacrity.

The bunch of keys dropped outside the lodge. Mr. Quelch picked them up and strode down to the gates, followed by Jack Talbot and Julius.

The gate swung open, and the tiger

and the tiger-tamer passed out into the road. Julius was quite docile now.

"Good-bye!" said Mr. Quelch, holding out his hand. "You are a brave lad—a very brave lad! Thank Heaven no damage has been done!"

And Jack Talbot shook hands with the Remove-master of Greyfriars, and went his way, and marched Julius back to Friardale Common, and did not let go of his collar till he was safe in his cage again.

Signor Tomsonio gave a grunt of relief as the cage door closed upon the tiger.

Meanwhile, in the Remove-room at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton and some of the others were bringing Billy Bunter round.

The fat junior had had a terrible fright, and his faint seemed an obstinate one. They unfastened his collar, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and dashed cold water over his face.

Then he opened his eyes at last, and blinked at them.

"Oh! O-o-oh! The tiger!"

And he went off again.

He was carried up to the Remove dormitory, laid on his bed, and the chums of the Remove remained with him, and looked after him. He came to, and sat up, streaming with cold water and shivering.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—Ow! The tiger!"

"He's gone," said Harry Wharton reassuringly.

"Gone?"

"Yes; quite gone."

"Has he been caught?"

"Yes; and taken away. He's at the circus by this time."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He recovered his courage a little, and blinked through the water that streamed over his face, and groped for his spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, it was awful!"

"The awfulness must have been terrific!"

"I was seized in his jaws, you know, and streaming with blood—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. The wonder is that I wasn't torn to pieces!" said Bunter irritably.

"Perhaps. But you weren't bitten at all. He only took hold of your togs," explained Bob Cherry.

"I felt his teeth meet in my—"

"Imagination!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You're not hurt, old chap," said Wharton reassuringly; "only frightened."

"Oh, really, Wharton! Of course, I wasn't frightened. I've read about its being best to keep quite still when a wild animal's got hold of you, and while he was holding me in his jaws I never moved. It was wonderful presence of mind."

"Why, you'd fainted!"

"Oh, no; I fainted afterwards. It was wonderful presence of mind on my part."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I don't expect you fellows to do me justice. You never do. I suppose I cannot show wonderful presence of mind without exciting jealousy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Wharton. "You can call it presence of mind if you like. It's jolly lucky for you matters were no worse; and as you've had a lesson, we won't keep you barred, as we intended to. You can have tea with us in the study this evening, and eat as much as you like."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Lessons are over for to-day—thank Julius the tiger for that. Get up and dry yourself; you're simply mopped with water."

Bunter squirmed off the bed. He mopped off the water, and changed his collar, which was soaked. He did not say anything more about his wonderful presence of mind. But if his claim to heroism was not admitted, he was admitted to a feed, and that was of even more importance to the fat junior.

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly hungry, you know," he remarked. "I hope there's going to be a decent spread."

And there was. The juniors felt that Bunter deserved something after his terrifying experience in the Form-room, and they fed him royally.

For a long time the Owl of the Remove remembered that feed which followed the visit of the circus at Greyfriars.

THE END.

## Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

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# THE PREFECTS' FEUD!

By  
Martin  
Clifford

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Rival Prefects.

**T**AP!  
Figgins & Co., of the New House at St. Jim's, were in their study, gasping and groaning in chorus, when the tap came at the door. The three were looking very white and worried.

"Come in!" said Figgins feebly. The door opened, and Jack Blake of the School House walked in. The three stared at him in astonishment. Boys of one House were not allowed in the other as a rule, and it was not exactly safe for the chief of the School House juniors to venture into the enemy's camp in this manner. But Blake had come on a pacific errand.

"Pax!" exclaimed he, as he entered. "I—" Then he broke off, staring at the three. "What on earth's the matter? Been fighting, you giddy cuckoos?"

"No," said Figgins. "Our beastly prefect, Monteith, has been laying it on."

"The beast!" said Blake sympathetically.

"Who are you calling a beast?" replied Figgins, quick to resent any slight to his House, from the feeling of esprit-de-corps, though at that moment he hated Monteith like poison. "Just you leave Monteith alone, you bounder!"

"All right," said Blake. "I only came over to tell you not to forget to turn out for footer practice this afternoon. We've got to get fit for the Greyfriars match on Saturday week, you know."

"We sha'n't forget," said Figgins. "Thanks for coming, though. But you'd better cut it. If Monteith sees you on this side he will go for you."

"That's all serene. Ta-ta!" Blake nodded to the suffering three, and walked out of the study. In spite of his careless words, he took very great care not to be spotted by Monteith, for he knew that the prefect would "go for" him if he got the chance.

Luck, however, was against him, for as he crossed the hall Monteith came out of Mr. Ratcliff's study, face to face with the School House junior. The prefect smiled disagreeably, and, closing the door, came towards Blake.

"What are you doing in this House?" he asked.

Blake eyed him warily. "I came to speak to Figgins," he said. "You know that boys of one House are not allowed to enter the other?"

"That's because they row. I didn't come here to row, but just to speak to old Figg," answered Blake meekly.

"That makes no difference, and I have only your word for it. You are one of the cheekiest and noisiest of the School House juniors!"

"My word is good enough, I suppose?" retorted Blake, with spirit. "I'm not in

the habit of telling lies, whoever else may be!"

Monteith gritted his teeth savagely. He found Blake's coolness and fearlessness very hard to bear.

"Come into my study."

"What for?" asked Jack.

Monteith did not trouble to answer the question. He made a grab at Jack, who promptly dodged and eluded him. The next moment the junior was out of the New House, clearing the steps with a single bound, and sprinting across the quadrangle.

There was a rapid beat of footsteps behind him. He looked over his shoulder, and, to his dismay, saw the prefect in full pursuit.

"Hallo!" muttered Blake. "Here's a go!"

He had not expected the prefect to take the matter up like this. He sprinted for all he was worth, but the senior was quickly running him down. Blake had only one chance, and he took it. It was an old trick, but it worked.

He heard the prefect close behind him, and suddenly threw himself down upon the ground. Right over him Monteith went sprawling, with a wild yell.

Blake was upon his feet in a flash, and he darted into the School House.

Monteith picked himself up more slowly. He was severely shaken, and his hands were bruised and hurt, and he was in a towering passion. He strode into the School House, and made straight for Kildare's quarters.

The captain of St. Jim's was there, and he was alone. He stared as the New House captain came striding into his room without the preliminary of knocking.

"Hallo, Monteith! Anything the matter?"

"Yes," snarled Monteith, who was always at loggerheads with the good-natured Kildare. "Don't pretend to be so innocent. You must have seen it all from your window, if you yourself didn't set that young rascal on to do it!"

Kildare rose to his feet and looked him steadily in the eyes. There had been no love lost lately between these two—the handsome, sturdy captain of St. Jim's and the sour prefect of the New House.

Kildare always made every effort to keep the peace, but Monteith seemed determined to attribute his patience to weakness, and was made only the more insolent by it.

"I don't know what you are talking about, Monteith," said Kildare quietly.

"Will you be kind enough to explain?"

"I have been tripped up in the quad by Blake."

"Do you mean to say that he did that deliberately, without provocation?"

"I was following him, to punish him

for entering the New House without leave."

"I quite understand," said Kildare, still quietly, but with a note of contempt in his voice that made the prefect wince.

"You picked up a flimsy excuse to punish him, because he's in the School House, which isn't his fault. But you know as well as I do that you have no right to punish the juniors of the School House. You ought to have complained to me, and you know it. I never interfere with your side."

"You mean to say that he is not to be punished?" hissed Monteith. "I expected you to take his part. But I warn you that the affair will not end here. Are you going to cane him for tripping me up?"

The bullying tone adopted by the prefect was very hard for Kildare to bear, but he controlled his temper, and answered quietly:

"No; you had no right to touch him."

"Very well. I'll take my complaint to higher quarters, then."

"You can do as you like," replied the captain of St. Jim's disdainfully.

Monteith gave him a bitter look, and strode savagely from the study. He went straight to Mr. Railton's room. The Housemaster was just coming out. He stopped and looked inquiringly at Monteith.

"Do you want to speak to me, Monteith?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I am compelled to complain of the conduct of one of the juniors of the School House," said the prefect.

A look of displeasure crossed the Housemaster's face.

"You should go to Kildare."

"I have done so, but he refuses to take the matter up."

"Indeed," said Mr. Railton sharply. "What is your complaint?"

"Blake entered the New House without permission. I was following him to the School House to complain to Kildare, and he tripped me up—me, a prefect!"

"That is a serious matter. You may be assured that I will look into it."

"Thank you, sir! Of course, my only desire is to have discipline properly maintained. I have no personal feeling in the matter."

"You may trust me to do justice to your motives," said the Housemaster drily.

Monteith winced a little. He did not exactly like Mr. Railton's tone. Still, he was satisfied that he had made trouble for Kildare. As he left the School House he saw the Housemaster enter the captain's study, and he went away feeling content.

What passed at the interview, of course, Monteith did not know; but when he saw Kildare shortly afterwards

the captain of St. Jim's was looking very gloomy.

Mr. Raiton was touchy upon the question of the discipline of his House, and no doubt he had been annoyed, and had spoken to Kildare a good deal more sharply than the latter deserved. Monteith felt pretty sure of it, and, knowing how extremely sensitive the Irish lad was, he felt that he had scored pretty well this time.

He half expected Kildare to utter some hot words when they met; but the captain had perfect control of his temper. He did not even look at Monteith.

The prefect shrugged his shoulders. He knew that the captain's indifference was only assumed. He had scored this time, and he knew it; and the meanness of his method did not trouble his conscience in the least. Things of that kind came very easily to the prefect of the New House.

But Nemesis was upon his track, if he had only known it!

### THE SECOND CHAPTER. An Attack in the Dark.

**M**ONTEITH wheeled his bike through the quad in the darkness. The hour was late, and the prefect, who had been out for a long spin, had let himself in with a key, for at St. Jim's the two head prefects had keys as well as the masters.

There was no thought of danger at that moment in Monteith's mind. He knew the way to the bike-shed as well in the dark as in the daylight, and he whistled quietly to himself as he wheeled his machine along.

Some days had elapsed since his altercation with Kildare, and the prefect, who had looked for some kind of retaliation on the part of the captain of St. Jim's, had been disappointed.

Kildare seemed determined to let the matter drop.

But Monteith, always suspicious, and knowing well what he would have done himself, was more inclined to believe that Kildare was only biding his time, and intended "to get his own back" at a convenient opportunity, by hook or by crook.

But he was not thinking of that now, but of supper in his study, and bed, for he had been out a couple of hours, and was both hungry and tired.

The lamp on his machine gleamed ahead as he wheeled it along, and as he afterwards realised, served to warn ambushed foes that he was coming.

He opened the door, resting his bicycle against the wall for the moment; and then he gave a sudden startled yell as he was seized by hands that reached out of the darkness and dragged him to the ground.

Before he could struggle or cry out again he was down, and a slip-knot was passed over his head and tightened about his body, pinning his arms to his side.

He began to wrestle and wriggle, but he was taken at too great a disadvantage, and almost before he knew it another noose tightened about his legs, fastening them together, and he was helpless.

The sudden attack, and the complete success of it, had dazed him, and his heart quailed within his breast. But Monteith soon realised that he could not be in actual danger; his assailants must belong to St. Jim's, and this was only a trick that was being played upon him.

As he comprehended that, his terror changed to rage.

"Let me go!" he hissed. "I know who you are, and I'll make you suffer for this! Let me go, I tell you!"

There was no reply. His assailants, of

whom there appeared to be two, had uttered no word during the attack, made no sound save a hurried breathing.

Without speaking, they now proceeded to render more secure the bonds upon the prefect's limbs, and his wriggles and struggles availed him nothing.

He began to shout for help, but he had only time to utter one shout. A handkerchief was thrust into his mouth, stifling his cries and almost choking him, and he gurgled and gasped into silence.

"Gr—gr—groo—"

Then silence. And still his assailants did not speak. He wondered furiously what they were going to do next. Who were they? Why were they doing this?

The enraged prefect had little doubt upon the point. He could see nothing of them, hear nothing but their breathing, but he was certain that one at least was a tall fellow; and, besides, it was absurd to suppose that any junior would dare to make such an attack upon a prefect.

No; it was a couple of seniors from the School House who had assailed him, and he was quite certain that one of them was Kildare. It was ludicrous to think so, but Monteith was beyond himself with rage, and he judged others by himself.

This was the revenge of the captain of St. Jim's. Doubtless he hoped to effect it without discovery being made of the part he had taken in the outrage; but let him wait till the morrow, Monteith reflected savagely.

Fresh cords were placed round him, and he was tied up to something hard; and he guessed that he was being lashed to one of the bicycle-stands to prevent him from wriggling his way out of the shed.

He could make no resistance, he could only submit passively and register inward vows of vengeance.

There was a shuffling of feet, the sound of a closing door. He was alone. He felt a chill at his heart.

Did they mean to leave him alone there all night? The thought was terrifying. He knew that no one was likely to come to the bike-shed at that hour, nor was anyone likely to stay up for him. He would not be missed until the morning. He could make no sound, he could not wriggle himself free.

Unless his captors took pity upon him he was doomed to pass eight or nine hours there in the cold and solitude and darkness, with the cords cramping his limbs.

How could he endure it?

At that moment, with the terrible prospect before him, he would have forgiven his captors freely if they would only have returned and released him. But that, evidently, they had no intention of doing.

Could they really mean to leave him there till morning? He felt a sickening conviction upon that point. They could not return and release him without exposing themselves to discovery. They would leave his release to others, for the sake of their own security.

He groaned in anguish of spirit, and only a faint gurgle passed the gag.

Boom! It was the hour striking from the clock-tower. Eleven more strokes followed. Midnight! Monteith writhed and groaned in the cold and darkness.

Then, if never before, he repented of past ill deeds. For, whoever his assailants were, this would not have happened if he had made himself respected and not hated. But it was too late to think of that.

His punishment was upon him, and he had to bear it as best he could, comforted only by the hope of vengeance on the morrow.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Monteith's Vow.

**H**ALLO—hallo!"

Darrel, a Sixth-Form senior, belonging to the School House, uttered the exclamation.

It was morning, but the hour was yet early. Darrel was up with the dawn, intending to get his bike out and go for a spin, the morning being clear and bright, though cold. He had come down to the bicycle-shed, and the first object that caught his eye was Monteith's bicycle leaning against the wall outside.

"Hallo!" said Darrel. "There's something up. That's Monteith's jigger. How the dickens did he come to leave it outside the shed?"

Considerably puzzled and mystified, Darrel opened the door of the shed and entered. A wriggling object on the floor made a gurgling sound, and at once attracted his attention. Darrel gave a jump.

It was not very light in the shed, but he could see that the object was a fellow tied hand and foot, and fastened also to a bicycle-stand and gagged with a handkerchief.

"Monteith, by Jove!"

Monteith groaned and gurgled.

Darrel, amazed as he was, did not waste time. He bent over Monteith and extracted the gag from his numbed mouth, and then began to untie the cords. Monteith gasped.

"Thanks! I'm nearly dead. Oh, somebody shall pay for this!"

"How did you get like this?" demanded Darrel, in wonder. "Who tied you up?"

"I don't know."

"How long have you been here?"

"All night."

"All night? My hat!"

"I'll make him suffer for it! I've a suspicion who it was!" gasped the prefect. "If it's true, I'll have him kicked out of St. Jim's! The beast! I'm nearly dead with cold and cramp. Go easy with that cord! Where's the handkerchief?"

"What handkerchief?"

"The one that was in my mouth. It was shoved in by the chap who collared me here in the dark. There were two of them. Give it to me."

"I don't know," said Darrel dubiously. "He wouldn't be such a mug as to give himself away by using his own handkerchief, I imagine. Here it is. My Aunt Matilda!"

He stared at the handkerchief in dismay. Monteith's eye followed him, and fastened upon the monogram in the corner of the handkerchief, which was in a very dirty and muddy state. The prefect's eyes gleamed.

"It's Kildare's!"

"Yes; and that only proves what I said, that the fellow didn't use his own handkerchief," said Darrel, recovering from his astonishment.

Monteith smiled unpleasantly.

"Where was he to get anybody else's from?" he demanded. "I suspected that it was Kildare all along."

"But it's all rot! As if Kildare would play a trick like that!"

"We'll see what he has to say about it!" replied Monteith grimly.

"Do you mean that you are going to accuse him?"

"Yes, certainly I do."

"You'd better be careful what you are about. He—"

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it!"

"Oh, all right! If you choose to make a fool of yourself, it's no business of mine."

And Darrel turned and strode out of the shed. The School House senior was

in reality somewhat uneasy. He did not believe that Kildare had done the deed, yet the finding of the handkerchief was certainly strange. Darrel was Kildare's closest chum, and believed in him implicitly. He gave up the idea of a spin that morning, and went straight to Kildare's room. Monteith, looking white and haggard and very vindictive, went off more slowly to the New House.

Kildare was up when Darrel knocked at his door, and his cheery voice bade the senior come in. The captain was fastening his collar. He looked round inquiringly at Darrel.

"Hallo! You're an early bird. What are you looking glum about?"

"Was I looking glum?" said Darrel. "The fact is, Kildare, there's been a beastly unpleasant happening. I suppose you don't know that Monteith was surprised in the bike-shed last night, bound and gagged, and left there till this morning?"

"No, Darrel."

"I thought not," said Darrel, with a breath of relief. "But he was gagged with your handkerchief, old chap, and he swears it was you that did it!"

"My handkerchief! I lost one yesterday, after a spin on my bike."

"Then somebody picked it up and used it to gag Monteith with."

"I say, Darrel, this is a serious business! Monteith is not the kind of chap to take this lying down, and there will be an inquiry," said Kildare gravely. "He has made himself pretty obnoxious to most of our House; but I never imagined a School House fellow would play such a trick. But it must have been some of our side."

"I suppose so."

"It will have to be looked into."

"Yes, and the sooner the better, before that cad makes capital out of it. Of course, he's been badly treated, but he's jolly glad of an excuse for going for the School House."

"I'll go over and see him," said Kildare, after a pause. "It is ridiculous that he should think I was one of his assailants. I'm not on good terms with the fellow, but he ought to know that if I hit him I should hit him fairly, not in the dark. I'd better have a talk with him before he drags the masters into it."

And Kildare a few minutes later walked over to the New House, and, entering, made his way to the prefect's quarters.

"Come in!" growled a surly voice, as Kildare tapped.

Monteith stared at the captain as he entered, and scowled savagely.

"What do you want here?"

"I have come to speak to you, Monteith," said Kildare quietly. "I hear from Darrel that you suspect me of having had a hand in the outrage you have suffered."

"I know you had," said Monteith.

"You are mistaken. I assure you—"

"Prove it, then. If it wasn't you, which of the School House fellows was it?"

"I shall make strict inquiry. If it is a practical joke of the juniors—"

Monteith interrupted him.

"It wasn't. There were two of them, and one at least was a big fellow. They were seniors, and not juniors at all. You can't shove it off on the youngsters."

Kildare flushed scarlet.

"Then you believe I was there?"

"I know you were."

"Then there's nothing more to be said. I give you my word of honour that I knew nothing whatever about the affair until Darrel told me ten minutes ago."

"I don't believe you!"

"Very well; there will be an investigation."

"I shall demand one!"

"You needn't trouble. As you have chosen to accuse me, I shall demand it myself!"

And Kildare walked away. The prefect scowled after him bitterly. He was cramped and aching all over, but there was a malicious satisfaction in his haggard face.

"It's my chance at last," he said to himself. "I'll bring him down over this affair. He has delivered himself into my hands at last."

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Head's Sentence.

**A**N hour later the whole school was assembled in Hall by order of the Head, and a thrill went through every boy there when Dr. Holmes entered, an awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown.

The doctor's face was very stern as he looked over the assembly with a flashing glance, and began to speak in clear, hard tones.

"An extraordinary outrage was perpe-

minute; but it became quite clear that no one intended to stand forward and confess, and he went on, in a still sterner voice:

"Very well. The cowardly assaulters having refused to confess, the matter will proceed to a strict and searching investigation; and I may say now that every boy concerned in the outrage will be expelled from the school!"

A sort of shiver went through the assembly.

"Monteith!" The prefect stepped out of the ranks of the Sixth. "Kindly state what you know upon this subject."

"I know very little, sir. Of course, it was too dark for me to see the faces of the fellows who collared me, and they took care not to speak. I am certain that one at least of them was a senior."

"From his size?"

"Yes, sir."

"There are several big boys in the Lower Forms."

"Not in the School House, sir—not big enough to be taken for a senior, even in the dark."



Blake heard the prefect close behind him, and suddenly threw himself down upon the ground. It was an old trick, but it worked. Right over him Monteith went sprawling, with a wild yell.

trated within the walls of St. James' last night," began the Head. "A prefect of the New House was seized and bound in a most brutal manner, and fastened to a bicycle-stand, where he remained until he was released this morning."

He paused to give his words effect, but the boys, who had heard all about it, were not very much impressed so far. The Head went on:

"I call upon the boys who were guilty of this outrage to stand forward and confess to their fault, and in that case I will deal with them as leniently as I can, though, of course, I shall have no option but to inflict severe punishment."

Another pause. The generous offer of severe punishment as the reward of open confession did not appear to appeal to the culprits' sporting instincts.

"No takers!" murmured Blake.

And Herries and Digby suppressed a giggle. The doctor waited for a full

"That is true."

"And then the handkerchief that was forced into my mouth, sir, belonged to Kildare."

It was out now, and the boys of St. Jim's held their breath.

"Kildare!" The captain of St. Jim's stepped forward. "How do you account for your handkerchief being used to gag Monteith?"

"I lost a handkerchief yesterday, sir," said Kildare, in a clear, calm voice. "I have no doubt it was the same one."

"Where did you lose it?"

"I don't know exactly; but some time when I was with my bike."

"Then it might have been in the bicycle-shed?" said the doctor.

"Quite likely, sir."

"It was very soiled and muddy, sir," struck in Darrel. "I noticed by its look that it had been trodden on."

"Thank you, Darrel! I may take it, Kildare, that you know nothing at all about this outrage?"

"No more than is known to the rest of the school, sir."

There was a pause. The inquiry had come to an impasse, and all wondered what would be the Head's way out of it. Things looked suspicious against Kildare; but his frank answers had completely cleared him of suspicion in the eyes of the School House.

With the New House boys it was different. Some of their rivals had been guilty of the outrage, and Kildare was the only one to whom the finger of suspicion pointed. That was enough for them.

"We are left in doubt," said Dr. Holmes slowly. "It appears to be the impression among a section of my boys that the outrage may safely be attributed to some inmates of the School House, owing to the absurd rivalry which has of late been so rampant between the two Houses. I cannot admit that as proved. All we know for certain is this—that two boys, including at least one senior, attacked a prefect in a barbarous way. I must refuse, without further evidence, to attach the guilt to either House. It rests upon the whole school to discover the culprit, and until it is done"—here the doctor paused, and the school hung on his words—"until it is done, a stigma rests upon the school, and the punishment must in common fairness fall upon all alike."

There was a murmur.

"Until the culprit is discovered," went on the Head, raising his voice a little, "the usual half-holidays will be cancelled. If I see any reason to change my mind, you will be informed; but I do not think that is likely to be the case."

A bombshell would not have startled and dismayed the boys more. It was not till the doctor's rustling gown had rustled out of the hall that the assembly recovered from their consternation. Then a chorus of disapproval and rage broke out.

"Gated till we find them out!"

"Both half-holidays stopped!"

"Shame!"

"What becomes of the football fixtures?"

"Shame!"

"Shame!"

The masters tried to restore silence and order, but for a time they were unsuccessful. The whole school was wild with indignation, and especially the New House. Not a boy of that House but that was certain that the culprits, whoever they were, belonged to the School House side.

Upon this point the School House boys themselves had very uneasy doubts, though they were all ready to maintain the innocence of Kildare himself. To punish the whole school was bad enough, but to punish both houses, when the offenders were certainly in the School House, was unspeakable.

So the New House fellows declared, in no uncertain voice. Their last shred of doubt as to Kildare's guilt had vanished now. They were too angry to doubt it any longer. It was not logical, but very natural.

"Confess, Kildare!"

"Confess, you bounder!"

"Make a clean breast of it!"

Kildare walked to the door, apparently not hearing the cries. Some of the excited New House fellows appeared to be about to make a rush for him, but the School House closed up round their captain. The Hall was emptied in great disorder, everybody talking excitedly, and nobody taking the trouble to listen.

"What a set of silly asses!" exclaimed

Tom Merry in disgust, as a group of New House boys passed him, loudly denouncing Kildare. "As if our captain would have had anything to do with such a trick! We can't say anything to the senior chaps; but we'll look out for Figgins & Co. after lessons, and see what they have to say about it."

"What-ho!" exclaimed Manners and Lowther.

And when the Shell were released from class, Tom Merry and his chums fairly went on the war-path. They had expected to find Figgins & Co. loud in their wrath, but they were surprised and disappointed.

Figgins & Co. seemed to have been attacked by a new and phenomenal fit of industry, and remained in their study at work.

Disappointed here, Tom Merry found plenty of work to do in other quarters, for the main body of the New House juniors were holding an indignation meeting in the quadrangle.

"This is where we come in," said Tom Merry.

His voice called the School House juniors together, and they bore down upon the indignation meeting, and their onslaught changed it into a battle.

The New House were by no means "backward in coming forward," and they gave the School House pretty nearly as good as they received from them, and the uproar became terrific, till three or four prefects sallied out with their canes, and the youthful heroes were dispersed.

But that day, except when lessons claimed the boys, it was difficult to find a quiet corner about St. Jim's in which a couple of combatants were not fighting it out to their mutual satisfaction.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. A Stormy Committee Meeting.

ST. JIM'S showed no sign of settling down into its old quiet. True, the fighting between the juniors came to an end, after a plentiful distribution of black eyes, swollen noses, and thick ears. But the feeling between the two Houses was more strained than it had ever been before in the history of St. Jim's.

The Head's sentence seriously interfered with the life of the college on the side of the sports. There were a good many fixtures coming off shortly, and if the half-holidays were stopped there was no resource but to write and cancel the matches.

It may be imagined how the football committee and the school generally viewed this prospect.

"What's to be done about the Redclyffe match?" asked Darrel, when he and Kildare met some time later. "The Head seems to have made up his mind, and it's not the slightest use remonstrating with him. But the situation can't last much longer without open war between the two Houses."

"I don't know what's to be done. It seems hopeless to try to discover who served Monteith like that. With certain expulsion hanging over the culprit, we can't expect him to confess."

"Well, it would be expecting a lot."

"It's Friday now. I shall have to write to Redclyffe cancelling the match for to-morrow unless something turns up."

Darrel shook his head.

"Nothing can turn up in time. There will be a row in committee to-night, Kildare."

"I'm afraid so."

"Why not scratch the meeting? The New House members are certain to make themselves obnoxious, and there's really nothing to discuss. We've got to cancel

the match to-morrow, and it can't be helped."

"They would say I was afraid to face them."

"Well, perhaps they would."

Kildare compressed his lips.

"We'd better have the meeting. I know there will be a row, but I can face it."

The prospect was not a pleasant one to Kildare.

There was almost as many New House fellows as School House fellows on the football committee, and they were certain to make things unpleasant, in their firm belief that Kildare was the cause of the present state of affairs.

Already the seniors of the two Houses were scarcely on speaking terms, and both sides expected the meeting that evening to bring matters to a head.

Their anticipations were realised.

The committee met in a room in the School House, and when the New House members came over there were some hisses among the juniors who watched them come in.

There would have been a greater demonstration but for Tom Merry, who kept the youngsters of the School House within bounds.

"Honour the stranger that is within thy gates," he said severely. "You must not be rude to even a pig like Monteith, or say rude things to a hopeless waster like Sefton, while they're, so to speak, our guests. Let there be peace—in other words, keep your heads shut, or I'll lam you!"

And there was peace, and the New House seniors passed on to the committee, scowling defiantly round them as they went.

Kildare came in a few moments after them, and as he entered the committee-room the New House members looked flushed, but remained perfectly composed.

He stood up and looked at Monteith and his companions.

"Before we get to business," he said, "I should like to say a few words. Monteith, I believe, is still under the impression that I had a hand in the affair of the other night. That impression is shared by a good many in the New House—"

"By all!" interrupted Monteith.

Kildare bit his lip.

"Very well, by all, then. What I want to say is this. I have denied all knowledge of the affair. Now, I give you my word of honour that I am innocent. Has any one of you ever known me break my word or tell a lie?"

"I don't know," drawled Monteith. "I haven't taken the trouble to note all your words; but in this instance I certainly believe you are telling a lie. Now, don't get excited. You asked for it, and that's my plain opinion."

Kildare controlled himself with an effort.

"Very well," he said. "I won't give you my opinion of you, Monteith; you wouldn't like to hear it. I can only say I am innocent, and that I should expect an honourable fellow to take my word."

"Your word is not good enough!" replied the prefect insolently. "The proofs are against you, you see."

"It's no good arguing it," said Kildare, taking no further notice of the prefect. "What are we to say to the Redclyffe fellows? The match cannot take place to-morrow."

"It will have to be cancelled," said Monteith; "and they will crow over us, and say that we are afraid of them."

"Of course they will!" Sefton remarked. "That's only to be expected. It's no good asking them for another date, for, unless Kildare confesses, the

Head's sentence will last to the end of the term."

Kildare flushed with anger, and there came a gleam into his eyes that made Sefton wish he had not spoken. The captain rapped upon the table.

"I have already said," he exclaimed, "that I have nothing to confess! That matter is closed so far as this meeting is concerned. Any further reference to it I shall take as a personal insult, and shall close the meeting."

Monteith shrugged his shoulders. "You can do as you like, of course. I, for one, don't see what use the meeting is going to be, as there's nothing to be done. We can't meet Redclyffe, and it's useless, as Sefton says, to ask them to make another date, as we're not sure that we shall be able to meet them then. The fixture will have to be scratched."

"That is my opinion, and, if you are all agreed, I will write the letter to the Redclyffe skipper."

There was evidently nothing else to be done, and Kildare drew pen and paper towards him. But Monteith was not finished yet.

"What reason are you going to give?" he asked. "You can't say we are all kept in school like naughty infants, and mustn't go out to play."

"It doesn't matter much what we say," remarked Sefton. "In any case, they will set it down to an attack of funk."

"Owing to circumstances' would do," suggested Rushden.

Kildare nodded.

"It is not necessary to go into particulars," he said. "It is impossible for us to keep the engagement, owing to unforeseen circumstances. Regrets, etc. I suppose that will do?"

"I suppose it's as good as anything," said Monteith ungraciously.

The letter was written.

Then Monteith, who had been exchanging whispers with Sefton and Webb, the New House Sixth-Formers, rose to his feet.

"Kildare commenced by saying a few words," he said. "I don't see why I shouldn't finish by doing the same. I want to make an appeal to you School House fellows, in the name of the school as a whole."

There was a grim silence.

"Whoever it was did that dirty trick the other night, we all want him discovered," said Monteith. "There isn't much doubt that both the ruffians belonged to the School House. Why don't you find them out? You have had some days to do it in, and you haven't done it. You don't like the attitude the New House takes on the matter. Why don't you bring the guilty parties to light, then? You can't blame us if we think that you are shielding them, because you care less for the school than for the School House. That's what I want to say. You School House chaps get into the habit of talking as if you were specially concerned for the honour of St. Jim's. It's you who are smirching that honour now. Shut up, and let me finish! Some of your fellows did it, and are too cowardly to confess. You know that as well as I do. Until they confess let's have a rest from your talk about the good of the school, and the honour of the school, and the rest of it! It makes me tired!"

Monteith was scolding, and the School House fellows had nothing to say.

"That's all," said Monteith; "except that, if it wasn't Kildare, it's his duty to find out who it was. And if his talk about standing together for the sake of the school isn't all gas, he'll do it!"

"I have done my best," said Kildare quietly. "There is no clue."

Monteith laughed.

"I don't know what you call a clue," he said. "It doesn't require a Sherlock Holmes to find one here. What about the handkerchief that was stuffed into my mouth? I fancy that was clue enough."

Kildare rose to his feet.

"You are coming back to the old subject," he said. "I don't want a row with you, Monteith, so as there's nothing more to be done, the meeting may as well end. Good-night!"

He walked towards the door.

Monteith burst into a taunting laugh. He was too reckless to understand the captain of St. Jim's, or to appreciate his motives, and he did not know what a strict command Kildare was keeping over himself.

"Wait a bit!" he exclaimed. "There's one more point to be settled. What about future meetings? Are we to keep up the solemn farce of committee meetings, to decide each time that there's only a letter of excuse to be written?"

"Have you anything else to suggest?"

"Yes."

"Go on, then!"

"I suggest," said Monteith, emboldened by Kildare's quietness, which he wholly misunderstood—"I suggest that you play the man, Kildare, and own up like a decent fellow, and have done with this humbug! Now—"

Kildare walked to the door again. The contemptuous indifference of his manner was too much for Monteith.

"And if you haven't the manliness to do it," he hissed, "I suggest that you shall be cut by every decent fellow in the school, and ragged until you do! I—"

He got no further. Kildare's patience might have held out, but the other School House fellows were not made of such stern stuff.

A back-handed slap from Rushden smote Monteith full upon the mouth, and stopped his utterance abruptly. The prefect reeled back in surprise and rage.

In a second everyone was on his feet, and School House and New House glared at each other like tigers about to spring.

Monteith, choking with fury, leaped at Rushden with clenched fist, and the School House senior was quite ready for him; but a sudden grip upon the prefect's collar swung him back. It was the grip of Kildare's hand.

Monteith glared furiously into the pale, calm face of the captain of St. Jim's.

"Let me go!" he hissed.

And beside himself with rage, he struck Kildare full in the face.

The hot temper of the Irish lad boiled over at last.

His grip tightened upon Monteith like a vice, and the prefect was dragged to the door as helplessly as if he had been an infant, and flung bodily out into the corridor.

He was reeling and staggering along, till he fell with a crash, and lay gasping.

Kildare turned back into the room. His eyes were flashing fire.

"You'd better go, Sefton and Webb," he said, "and take Monteith with you! If he wants to go any further, he's only got to say so! I've stood about as much as I intend to stand from him and from all of you!"

Webb was looking warlike, but Sefton, anxious to escape, drew him away; and they joined the dazed and enraged prefect in the corridor.

Monteith was furious, and inclined to rush back into the committee-room, and seek conclusions on the spot.

They forced him away, however, and the trio returned to the New House.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Captain Against Prefect.

THE same evening a fag from the New House brought over a note from Monteith to Kildare. It was brief, but to the point:

"After what has happened, there are only two alternatives for you to choose from. You will either send me a written apology, or meet me at Newstead's Barn to-morrow at one.

"JAMES MONTEITH."

Kildare bit his lip. He had known the challenge was coming, and, after what had happened, it was impossible for him to decline it. He wrote a still more laconic reply on the back of the note:

"I shall not apologise.—E. K."

The fag took the note back to Monteith, who was awaiting the reply in the study, with three or four other New House seniors. The fag was dismissed, and Monteith opened the envelope. He read the captain's reply aloud.

"That settles it!" said Webb. "He will meet you."

Monteith nodded. He didn't particularly like the prospect of meeting the finest athlete at St. Jim's in single combat, but there was no getting out of it without showing the white feather.

Kildare, he also believed, would never fight.

Public opinion in his House had forced him to send the challenge; but he felt pretty certain—indeed, had no doubt—that Kildare would stand upon his dignity, as captain of the school, and refuse to accept it. He had not done so, and the fight was bound to come off.

Well, there was a chance of a victory that would cover the prefect with glory; and even at the worst, the fight would be certain to get Kildare into hot water if it came out, as Monteith meant that it should.

For a captain of St. Jim's to fight a prefect was unheard of, and the doctor would be terribly incensed when he heard.

"Yes, that settles it," agreed Monteith. "I'm not sorry it's come to this. Of course, it's a disgraceful affair, between the two head prefects of the school; but I've never had a chance of getting my own back for the trick Kildare played me that night."

"I suppose there's no doubt Kildare did it?" hesitated Webb.

"No, there isn't!" Monteith snapped.

"I mean, he looked uncommonly sincere when he said he knew nothing about it to-night; and that other thing, he said was true—none of us ever knew him tell a cram."

"Rats! Anyway, it was some School House cads, and he's shielding them."

"Yes, I suppose it comes to that."

"Of course it does!" growled Monteith. "Anyway, we're going to meet, and I shall do my best to lick him. If I get licked I can stand it."

"We shall have to be careful to keep it from the doctor's ears," remarked Webb. "There would be a beastly row if it came out."

"I don't see how it can come out."

At the same time, Monteith fully intended that it should come out. A careless word dropped in the presence of his fag was sufficient. The fight would not be without witnesses.

The next day—Saturday—matters were worse instead of better at St. Jim's. The boys of the rival Houses did not speak—and usually scowled—when they met, either in class or out of it.

The masters took no notice, though they saw well enough what was going on.

Even the doctor could not help noticing the bitterness that was rampant.

Perhaps it occurred to the Head then that his way of dealing with the matter had not been the most judicious possible; but if so, he could not very well retreat, and so he affected to see nothing, and went his way, and made no sign.

After school, Tom Merry and Blake and their chums were keenly on the look-out. One of them kept watch without ceasing upon Kildare, taking the duty in turns. The usual half-holiday being rescinded, lessons were to recommence in the afternoon.

Now, Tom Merry was certain that the anticipated fight would not take place within the precincts of St. Jim's, and equally certain that the combatants would not go abroad after dark for the meeting.

He, therefore, sagely deduced that if they fought that day at all, the fight would come off in the middle of the day. He was right; and he knew it when Digby came racing in with the news that he had seen Kildare and Darrel go down to the gates.

"They're off!" said Tom Merry, jumping up. "Here's Blake & Co.! Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

And the seven juniors were soon hot on the track. Blake spotted the two seniors just outside the gates, and the seven followed cautiously in the wake of Kildare and Darrel.

They took excellent care not to allow the seniors to see them, and this was not difficult, for the captain and his chum were thinking of anything but the juniors.

"They're going to Newstead's Barn," said Herries suddenly, as Kildare and Darrel left the lane by a stile. "What do you say to cutting across the fields and getting there first?"

"Jolly good idea!" said Tom Merry.

And the seven did so at once. They quickly arrived at the barn, and as it would not have been judicious to allow their presence to be known, they climbed upon the roof. From this coign of vantage they would be able to view all the proceedings, themselves unobserved.

Five minutes later Kildare arrived, with Darrel. The two stopped by the barn. It was a quiet and solitary place, shaded by trees—the ideal spot for such an encounter. The two seniors stood waiting; Kildare's face was clouded. Darrel looked at him curiously more than once.

"If it was anybody but you, Kildare, I shouldn't know what to think," he said presently. "You look as if you were going to a funeral."

Kildare smiled faintly.

"I don't feel very cheerful, Darrel. This is a beastly affair."

"Monteith deserves all you can give him."

"I know he does, and more; but don't you see that this places me in his hands? This is really what he has aimed at. I have allowed him to provoke me into a row. I ought to have kept my temper."

"You kept it too long as it was. Any other fellow would have wiped up the ground with the cad long ago!"

"Still, it's different with the captain of the school. It's wrong for me to fight, but I couldn't refuse the challenge after throwing him out of the room. If it comes to the doctor's ears, what shall I have to say for myself?"

"But it won't. Even Monteith wouldn't be cad enough to tell, I suppose."

"These things have a way of getting out," said Kildare. "Well, never mind;

it can't be helped now. Here comes Monteith!"

Monteith, with Sefton and Webb, was coming through the trees. The greeting of the two parties was of the curtest, and they immediately came to business. Preliminaries were quickly arranged. Webb took out his watch to act as timekeeper.

"Three-minute rounds and one-minute rests," he said, "and fight till one is licked. Is that satisfactory? Then fall to."

The combatants faced each other. Brave and stalwart Kildare looked as he stepped up to the line. Monteith did not cut quite so fine a figure. However, he managed to make a pretty good show of spirit, and the fight commenced.

The first round was lacking in liveliness; the foemen were taking each other's measure. In the second round Kildare began to press, and his boxing was seen to be superior to Monteith's. His blows came home again and again, while the prefect hardly touched him, and Monteith was looking dazed at the end of the round.

In the third, Monteith succeeded in getting home a right-hander which made Kildare stagger; but as he followed it up, Kildare countered, and put in a splendid upper-cut with his left, which sent the prefect flying.

"Bravo!"

The group of seniors turned their heads at the sudden shout, and discerned the group of juniors on the roof of the barn. It was Blake, who had thus unintentionally betrayed his presence, but he was by no means abashed when he saw that he was discovered.

"It's all right!" he called out coolly. "We've only come to see fair play. You can get on, my pippins! Good old School House!"

"Yah!" came a counter-yell. "School House cads! New House is cock-house!"

The School House juniors stared. The shout came from a tree near the barn, and now that their attention was drawn towards it they discerned three figures among the bare branches—the lanky form of Figgins on a lower branch, and the "Co." on a higher one.

"Hallo! Are you there?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come to see your captain licked?"

"No, yours!" replied Wynn.

Kildare frowned at the rival juniors. "You'd better be off, all of you!" he exclaimed.

"Time!" said Webb.

And the fourth round commenced, and the juniors were forgotten. Both the seniors were warming to their work now, and heavy blows were given and received on both sides. But all along Kildare had the best of it.

Physically the two might be equal, but the captain's wind was sounder, and there was no question but that he was pluckier and more resolute.

When he really began to receive punishment, in fact, Monteith would gladly have thrown up the sponge, and it was only for the sake of appearances that he kept on.

His efforts were mainly devoted to self-defence, and his attacking was feeble, and such tactics could only end one way in the long run.

At last, in the sixth round, a tremendous drive from Kildare sent him with a crash to the ground, and at the call of "Time!" he only blinked and groaned. Kildare stood waiting for him to come on.

"Buck up!" said Webb, in a whisper. "Look at those kids looking on and grinning! For the honour of the New House, you know!"

Monteith gritted his teeth. The honour of the New House did not seem

so important to him just then as escaping from Kildare's knock-down blows; but it was the penalty of greatness. He was captain of the New House, and as such he was expected to fight till he dropped.

He rose, with Sefton's assistance, and faced Kildare again, with as good a grace as he could muster.

"Time!" called Webb.

At it again the adversaries went, hammer and tongs. Monteith, spiteful and enraged, did his best, and he got in some stinging blows; but the round ended in a right-hander from Kildare, and the prefect went down again with a crash. Sefton tried to raise him, but he pushed him away.

"Buck up!" said Webb.

"Hang you!" gasped Monteith. "I'm done! If you want any more, take it yourself!"

"Done?" Remember the honour of the New House!"

"Blow the honour of the New House! Shut up!"

Kildare looked at the fallen prefect steadily.

"I am quite satisfied, if you are, Monteith," he said, "and I am perfectly willing to take your hand in friendship, if you will admit that you were mistaken about that matter."

Monteith scowled sayagely.

"I am not likely to admit that I am mistaken, when I know I am not!" he snarled. "As for friendship, keep it for those that value it!"

Kildare turned away. Darrel helped him on with his coat, and Sefton did the same for the prefect. Monteith had been licked—hopelessly licked—but the School House juniors on the roof of the barn made no sound, out of a chivalrous respect for a fallen foe; and the New House youngsters in the tree looked at each other glumly.

"Those kids will chatter," said Darrel. "It's unlucky. The affair is bound to get out now."

Tom Merry heard the remark, and he flushed with indignation.

"Here, I say, Darrel, cheese it!" he exclaimed. "Who's certain to chatter, I'd like to know? You don't know what you are talking about!"

"Do you mean that you will be able to hold your tongues?"

"Why, of course! And so will Figgins & Co."

"It's no good," said Kildare quietly. "Look there!"

He nodded towards a fence at some little distance, which was crowned with a row of heads—a dozen of them—all belonging to New House juniors.

Darrel's brow darkened.

"It looks to me as if all the New House had been let into the secret!" he exclaimed hotly.

Monteith gave a sneering laugh.

"Is that meant for me?" he exclaimed. "What about your own brats? There are at least seven of them on the spot, I believe."

"Don't argue!" said Kildare. "Come along, old chap! It can't be helped now!"

The chums walked away together.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### The Captaincy Vacant.

THE next day was Sunday, and a quiet one at St. Jim's. The storm held off. But on Monday it burst. Kildare received a message asking him curtly to come to the Headmaster's study.

"It's come," he said to Darrel.

"Well, it's no use complaining."

And his head was very erect as he walked to the dreaded apartment. He had done nothing to be ashamed of; he was only the victim of unfortunate cir-

cumstances, and of the cunning of an unscrupulous enemy, and he did not fear to look the doctor or any other person in the face with his fearless, Irish eyes.

"Come in!" said the doctor coldly. He looked at the captain of St. Jim's with a stern glance as he entered the room. "A very painful matter has come to my notice, Kildare," he went on, in the same uncompromising tone. "I am informed that you have so far forgotten the dignity of your position in the school, and the confidence placed in you, as to enter into a fight, and with a prefect."

"Yes, sir."  
The frank admission seemed to puzzle the doctor.

"It is true, then?"  
"It is true that I have had a fight with Monteith."

"Why?"  
"It was over that old affair, sir. He persists in believing me guilty. I do not mean to cast the blame upon him. Believing as he does, it is natural, I suppose, that he should bear malice. That was the reason."

"But you should have refused to fight. With what justice can you stop the fighting among the juniors if you indulge in it yourself?"

"About that other affair?" resumed the doctor. "Nothing has come to fight. I need not say that, as captain of the school, you should be better able to form an opinion, and to make an investigation among the boys, than myself. I have, in fact, relied upon you, and nothing has come of it."

"I have done my best."  
"No doubt; but your failure has given colour to the suspicion that you had a hand in it."

"Do you believe that, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Not at all! But the suspicion remains; and, as I have said, it gains ground. So long as it exists, you must see for yourself that the situation is awkward in the extreme, as you hold the position of captain of the school."

"I understand, sir," said Kildare quietly. "You wish me to resign?"

"I did not say so. I have pointed out the facts as they stand, and I leave you to act according to your judgment."

"Very well, sir, I will resign."  
"I cannot deny that I consider it the wisest step you could take, Kildare. When your name is cleared of suspicion, the case will be altered. I have no more to say."

Kildare left the study in a very depressed mood. Darrel met him in the corridor.

"Well?"  
"I have resigned!"  
"And the doctor has accepted it?"  
"Yes."

"Rotten!" said Darrel.  
Blake was coming along the corridor. He stopped, and stared open-mouthed at the two seniors.

"Hallo! What's that?" he exclaimed. "Are you off your rocker, Kildare? Resigned! What do you mean by it?"

"Shut up!" said Darrel.  
But Kildare gave the boy a nod and a smile. Blake's evident concern rather touched him, and he could forgive the junior's way of expressing himself.

"Yes; I have resigned the captaincy," he said. "All St. Jim's will know it soon, as I am going to put it on the notice-board."

"But you'll tell us why, Kildare, won't you?"

"That's no secret. It's because the chaps haven't been found out who used Monteith so badly that night in the bike-shed. The New House believe me guilty, and will until the right parties

are discovered, which may be never. Things will go on more smoothly under a new captain."

And Kildare walked away, leaving Blake dumbfounded. The junior hurried off to Study No. 6. He burst into it like a whirlwind, making Herries and Digby jump in alarm.

"I say, you chaps, what do you think?"

"What's the news, you howling wild Indian?"

"Kildare's resigned!"

"Done what?"

"Resigned the captaincy. And now, you mark my words if Cad Monteith doesn't have a try for it!" said Blake.

"We must stop that!" said Herries decidedly.

"Rather!" agreed Digby. "Fancy that cad as captain of St. Jim's!"

The trio left their study. They found a crowd round the notice-board in the hall. There was a brief notice on it, in Kildare's handwriting, on a sheet of paper.

It stated that, owing to the mystery still surrounding the affair of the bike-shed, and the suspicions entertained by a section of the school, the captain of

me in as captain when the election comes off."

"Right you are, Monty! We'll work it. I hardly expected the thing to pan out like this, though. We are in luck!"

The other New House seniors were of the same mind. Monteith would be their candidate, and they were determined, by hook or by crook, to carry the election of the head prefect of the New House when the date came round for appointing the new captain of St. Jim's.

#### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

##### Figgins Ups.

"MONTEITH!"  
Jack Blake calmly put his head in at the door of the study where Monteith sat in consultation with half a dozen New House seniors, discussing the pros and cons of his candidature for the captaincy. Monteith looked at him with a scowl.

"What do you want here, you cheeky brat?"

He reached for a cane. "Keep your wool on, old fellow," said Blake. "I didn't want to come into your measly old casual ward of a house; but the Head has sent me with a note."

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St. Jim's had deemed it advisable to resign his post.

A new election for captain would be held at some date and time to be specified by the Head.

The School House read the notice with dismay. A new election! Then, as likely as not, some New House cad would get in as captain.

That would be a blow from which the college of St. Jim's would never recover—at least, so declared the youngsters of the School House.

Very different views were held in the rival House. The news was received "over the way" with unmixed satisfaction.

Monteith's eyes gleamed when he heard it. This was what he had been working for a long time, and now almost unexpectedly success had come to him. It was a success more complete than he had dared to hope for, and he was proportionately jubilant.

"Now's our chance!" he said to Sefton. "Now's our chance to run a candidate, and get the post of captain for the New House. That will be a take-down for them. Sefton, you simply must get

"Give it to me." Blake handed it over. Monteith looked at it in wonder. "What on earth can the Head want with me? It can't be about the fight at this time of day." His expression deepened when he read the note. "He wants me to go over on an important matter. So long, you chaps! I dare say I shall be back soon."

Blake had already gone. The prefect walked across the quadrangle, wondering. He entered the School House, and went straight to the doctor's study. He passed a group of juniors, and caught a word or two that puzzled him.

"I don't know what's the matter with old Figgy," Blake was saying. "He looked as pale as a ghost when he came in. I don't know what he can want with the doctor; but if he's in Queer Street, you chaps, we've got to back him up. He's a good sort, old Figgy is, though he does belong to that measly New House; and if anybody don't agree with me I'm ready to fight him at once!"

As this generous offer was not accepted, it seemed to be unanimously agreed that Figgy should be backed up.

Somewhat puzzled, Monteith passed on and knocked at the doctor's door. The deep voice of the principal bade him enter, and he started on seeing that two others were already present—Kildare and Figgins.

Figgins was looking white and wretched, but there was an unusual firmness about his face, and his form was held very erect.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Monteith wonderingly.

"Yes," said the doctor. "I have heard a very strange story, and I have sent for you and Kildare in order that it may be repeated in your presence."

Kildare and Monteith exchanged glances. It was evident that neither knew what was coming. The doctor, looking very troubled, made a sign to Figgins.

"This unhappy boy has made a startling confession," he said. "Proceed Figgins. You adhere to your statement?"

"Yes, sir. It was I who attacked Monteith in the bike-shed that night."

Monteith gave a jump, and Kildare started. The doctor's keen eye was upon the prefect's face.

"You had no suspicion of this, Monteith?"

"Absolutely none, sir!"

The doctor gave a breath of relief.

"I am glad of that. I was sure that you would not shield a boy of your own House at the expense of casting suspicion upon an innocent person. Proceed, Figgins."

"I did it," said Figgins doggedly. "I'm not sorry for it; only as it's turned out. I know you're going to expel me, sir, so I may as well speak out. I never had any idea that suspicion would fall upon anybody in particular. I never intended it to. I meant to use a duster, or something, for a gag, and, feeling about in the dark, I must have picked up Kildare's handkerchief. I didn't know it was his, and never knew it till the next day, when all the boys were talking about it."

"Who was your companion?" asked the Head.

Figgins was silent.

"I will not press that question," said Dr. Holmes, kindly enough. "But I must have a little further explanation, Figgins. I understand that you have kept silent all this time, in spite of a pricking conscience. Why have you spoken out now?"

"Because I couldn't stand it. It was Kildare losing the captaincy through me that helped me to make up my mind. I hope that's all over now?"

"Yes," said the Head quietly; "that's all over now. Kildare will, I am sure, accede to my request, and remain captain of St. Jim's."

"If you wish it, sir," said Kildare.

"I do wish it."

"Then, I withdraw my resignation, sir."

Monteith's lips came together in a tight line.

"And now, Figgins," resumed the doctor, "since you have told me so much, you may as well tell the rest. What were your motives for this unparalleled out-

rage? What caused you to inflict such a cruel trick upon your prefect?"

Figgins hesitated to speak.

"Speak freely," said Dr. Holmes.

"Had your guilt been discovered by another, Figgins, I should have expelled you at once. Your voluntary confession places the matter on a different footing. I shall consider the matter very carefully, and show you as much mercy as is consistent with my duty as a reward for taking this honourable course. I hope it will not be necessary for me to expel you."

Figgins brightened up.

"Thank you, sir!" he muttered, with tears glistening on his eyelashes. "If—if you would let me off that, I could stand the rest."

"We shall see. Why did you attack Monteith?"

Still the junior hesitated. Precarious as his position was, schoolboy honour and custom were strong, and he could not bring himself to "sneak" upon his prefect.

"Come, come!" said the doctor, not unkindly. "I must insist upon an answer. You do not wish me to believe that your action was unprovoked?"

"No, sir!" said Figgins.

And then he stopped again. The Head looked at Monteith.

"Have you any explanation to offer, Monteith?"

The prefect's brain had worked rapidly during this strange interview. He had been utterly taken by surprise at first, but now he had had time to think, he realised that his position was worse than Kildare's had been before the revelation.

If Figgins chose to speak out, and to call witnesses to prove his words, the doctor would hear a tale of thorough brutality, and Monteith would not long retain his position as head prefect of the New House.

Figgins' hesitation gave the prefect a chance, and he took it.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly. "I think I can explain it. I had occasion to punish Figgins shortly before that occurrence somewhat severely. I may have been too severe, though that was not my intention. I don't know how you will receive what I am going to say, sir, but I should like to make an appeal to you."

"Make it, by all means."

"I should like you to pardon Figgins. As the party who suffered by his action, sir," said the prefect. "I have a sort of right to ask it. I am sure he never meant to act as badly as he did."

"We didn't mean to," said Figgins.

"We meant to tell someone, and have you released, but we couldn't without giving ourselves away, and—"

"So I think, sir," went on Monteith, "a good thrashing will meet the case, if you are willing to rescind the sentence of expulsion."

"Quite so," said the doctor. "I will deal with you later, Figgins. You may go!"

Figgins left the study.

"And now," went on the Head, "I cannot say how glad I am this affair is cleared up. You will acknowledge, Mon-

teith, that you were very unjust to Kildare. You see that it was a very tall junior, whom you were certain was a senior, and the culprits belonged to your own House, and not to the School House at all. I think you will see that you should apologise to Kildare for your unjust suspicions."

Monteith coloured.

"I am sorry, Kildare," he said, in a low voice.

Kildare nodded.

"That's all right," he said, cordially enough. "This has cleared the air a bit, and I hope we shall pull together better in future."

"I hope so, too," said the doctor. "One word more, Monteith. I'm afraid you have been too severe with your juniors, and I hope you will make it a point to temper justice with a little more mercy in future. Good-night!"

The two prefects left the Head's study together.

Figgins was called into Monteith's study next day, and received a very severe thrashing, which he bore almost without a murmur. After the awful anticipation of expulsion, a thrashing, however severe, seemed cheap in comparison.

When it was all over, Monteith astonished the junior beyond measure by asking his pardon for the way in which he had been persecuting him and his chums lately.

"I have been unjust, I know," finished Monteith gravely. "but I think you will find things a bit different after this. I've fixed matters up with Kildare, and we're going to pull together in future. That's all!"

"I'm jolly glad to hear it, Monteith!" exclaimed Figgins. And, stiff and sore as he was from the thrashing Monteith had just given him, the junior shook hands heartily enough with the prefect.

The clearing of Kildare's name from all suspicion was rather a blow to the New House fellows, who had so loudly and confidently asserted his guilt. But, upon reflection, the best of them went over to the School House and asked the captain's pardon.

Figgins' revelation had come like a bombshell to the juniors of his own House, and they were inclined to rag him pretty severely. But the long-limbed chief of the New House was quite able to defend himself, and the "Co." stood by him faithfully, and so the symptoms of mutiny were stamped out. And, at the same time, Figgins had jumped into popularity in the rival House.

The reason of this feud with the head prefect of his House was well known, and his coming forward to clear Kildare was an action the School House boys could admire and appreciate.

But Figgins did not allow his head to be turned by the congratulations that were showered upon him in the School House. He had had a lesson, as well as Monteith; and it was a long time before the juniors of St. Jim's forgot all about the Prefects' Feud!

THE END.

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## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Knowles' Prisoner.

**B**ANG! Bump! Biff!  
"Who the dickens is making that unearthly row?"

Knowles, a most unpopular prefect at Rookwood School, asked the question of Beaumont, an equally unpopular prefect, just when they were in the midst of a very important discussion as to how much money they should put on Bluebell—a horse which was to run in a forthcoming race.

The discussion was taking place in Knowles' study when the interruption occurred.

Knowles was a Modern, and Beaumont was a Classical, but they were both unscrupulous characters and bullies.

"Some of your little beasts again!" said Beaumont contemptuously. "They're always kicking up a row somewhere!"

Knowles ignored the remark and strode towards the door.

"I'll soon settle 'em!" he muttered viciously.

Some of the Modern juniors, among whom were Tommy Dodd & Co., were scuffling about at the end of the corridor and bumping against a door as they swayed to and fro.

As Knowles stepped out into the corridor, followed by Beaumont, one of the juniors shouted a warning and the whole crowd made a run for it.

Knowles and Beaumont set off in pursuit.

They had just turned the corner when Jimmy Silver came into the corridor from the other end.

He was bringing a note from Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, to Knowles' study regarding a prefects' meeting.

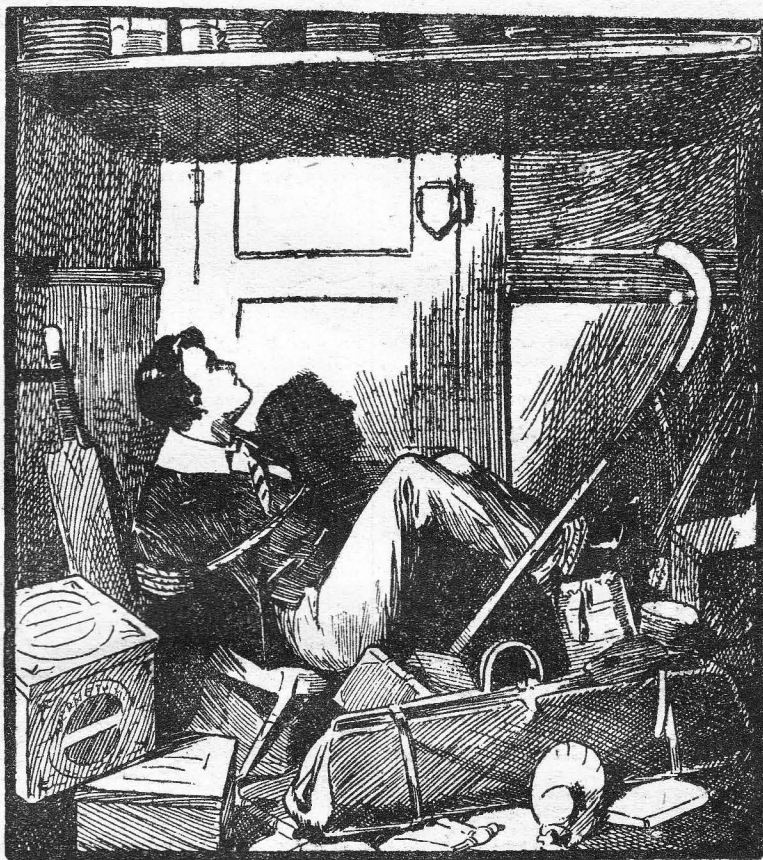
Finding the door wide open, he entered and placed the note on Knowles' table, which was littered with sporting-papers, betting-slips, and moneylenders' accounts.

He turned to leave the study, and had just reached the door when Knowles and Beaumont returned from their unsuccessful pursuit of the Fourth-Form juniors.

Knowles was a quick-tempered fellow, and the fact that the disturbing juniors had made their escape had aroused his anger.

"Hallo!" he growled at Jimmy Silver. "What are you doing here?"

"I have just left a note on your



From his position in the cupboard Jimmy Silver could plainly hear voices on the other side of the door. The voices belonged to Townsend and Topham. What were they doing in Knowles' study?

table, from Bulkeley," said the leader of the Fistical Four quietly.

"I don't want any of your nasty, smirking little ways," sneered Knowles, barring Jimmy's passage from the study. "You've been spying!"

Jimmy Silver's face flushed with anger, and he threw back his head.

"Excuse me, Knowles," he said, "but I'm not in the habit of prying into other people's business!"

"I don't want any of your impertinence," snarled Knowles, pushing Jimmy back into the study. "You've been spying!"

Knowles measured everybody's character by his own standard of conduct, and as his eye fell upon the littered table, it seemed inconceivable to him that anyone should fail to make use of such incriminating evidence as was displayed there.

"I tell you I have not been spying," exclaimed Jimmy Silver defiantly, "and I am not interested in any of your beastly affairs!"

"Don't you give me any of your cheek, you little rotter!" cried Knowles angrily, taking a step towards the Classical junior.

"He is a cheeky little hound," said

Beaumont, who shared Knowles' fear that Jimmy may have looked over the papers on the table.

"What shall I do with him?" asked Knowles. "Give him a licking?"

"That won't break the spirit of a little beast like he is," replied Beaumont. "Tie him up and lock him in the cupboard!"

"You wouldn't dare!" cried Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, wouldn't I?" sneered Knowles, opening the cupboard door and dragging out a length of rope that had been used for tying up a trunk.

Jimmy Silver was a trifle alarmed at this and made a dash for the door. But Beaumont grabbed out and clutched his arm, giving it a twist that almost made the unfortunate junior cry out.

"No you don't!" exclaimed the bully. "We'll teach you a lesson, and make you a little more respectful to your superiors!"

He dragged Jimmy towards the table as he spoke, and Knowles clutched his other arm.

"Come here, you little brute!" he hissed. "We've had enough of your humbug!"

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Jimmy Silver was dragged on to the table, and, despite his frantic struggles, was soon bound hand and foot with the stout rope.

"Open the cupboard-door, Beaumont," said Knowles, "and then catch hold of his feet."

The cupboard was a fairly large one, and the floor of it was strewn with a number of articles which had been carelessly thrown in by Knowles.

The two bullying prefects did not trouble to clear any space for the unfortunate leader of the Fistical Four, but pitched him in on top of the untidy mass of sporting implements.

Moreover, he was pitched in none too gently, with the result that he received more than one severe bruise that would remain with him for some time to come.

Then the cupboard-door was slammed and locked, and Jimmy Silver was a helpless prisoner.

"You beastly rotters!" he yelled, as he heard the key turned.

But the cads outside only chuckled, causing Jimmy to boil with rage at his helpless position.

He thought of yelling at the top of his voice, but he realised that it was impossible for his own chums to hear him, and he would probably only attract the attention of Bulkeley, or some other prefect, and he desired to get even with Knowles in his own way at some future time.

A few minutes later he heard Knowles and Beaumont leave the study, after turning out the gas, which he observed through the disappearance of the tiny line of light which had penetrated under the bottom of the cupboard-door.

Then all was silence!

Jimmy Silver strained his ears for some time for any sound of footsteps in the corridor outside, but for a time all was quiet.

At length, however, the sound of voices could be plainly heard in the study.

The voices were those of Topham and Townsend, the nuts of the Fourth.

Jimmy was somewhat surprised, for though they were known to be "sporty" characters, he had not thought them sufficiently chummy with Knowles to pay him private visits to his study.

Jimmy soon gathered that Knowles was absent from the study, and that the nuts were waiting for his return.

"I wish I hadn't listened to that howling rotter!" said the voice of Topham.

"Same here," rejoined Townsend. "But we've dropped into it now, and we've got to see it through."

"He's absolutely led us into this mess," said Topham. "He assured us that the horse was a dead cert, and persuaded us to back it!"

"He may have been honest enough about it," replied Townsend, "but where he's such a rotter is that he won't give us time to pay up what we owe."

"I don't think there's any honesty in him at all," grunted Topham. "I reckon he knew the beastly horse wasn't going to win, and thought there was a good chance of making money out of us."

"Probably you're right," answered Townsend. "I expect he's in a mess with somebody himself, and wants money to pay up his own accounts at once."

"He's going to do goodness knows what if we don't pay by to-morrow midday," said Topham; "and there's absolutely no chance of raising the wind before then. My people are away, so I can't write to them; and if I did, I shouldn't get anything."

"Same here," replied Townsend. "I only had my allowance last week, so

it's absolutely no good writing home for more."

"What the dickens are we going to do?" asked Topham desperately.

"Give it up," said Townsend. "But it's no use waiting here. The rotter doesn't seem to be coming."

Every word of the conversation came clearly and distinctly to Jimmy Silver, locked in the cupboard, and he realised at once what had happened.

He probably knew Knowles better than Topham and Townsend, and he could see that they had been led into a trap by the unscrupulous Modern prefect.

Then he heard the study door shut, and knew that they had gone.

About a quarter of an hour later Knowles returned to his study, and after lighting the gas, flung open the door of the cupboard, and dragged Jimmy Silver out by his feet.

Jimmy glared defiantly at the prefect, but said not a word.

Knowles cut the rope which was binding the junior's arms and legs, and dragged him to his feet. The leader of the Classical Fourth had to clutch a chair when he was first on his feet, to prevent himself from falling.

His legs were numbed and aching from the effects of being tied so long, but he endeavoured to hide the signs of his soreness from the bully.

"Now perhaps you'll stop spying on me!" snarled Knowles.

"I didn't spy on you!" snapped Jimmy Silver.

"Don't answer me back!" cried Knowles. "I'll give you a good hiding into the bargain if you say another word! Outside!"

Jimmy thought discretion the better part of valour, and took his departure. He didn't feel in a mood to stand up to the bully just at that moment, but he inwardly resolved on getting his own back at the first opportunity.

He made his way at once to the end study, where he found his chums, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, debating seriously as to what had happened to their leader.

"Where in the merry dickens have you been?" said Lovell, as he entered the study.

Jimmy Silver related what had occurred, and his chums expressed their opinion of Knowles in words that would have aroused that gentleman's temper in a very short time had he heard them.

"The beastly rotter!" exclaimed Lovell. "We'll make him pay for this!"

"Hear, hear!" said Newcome and Raby.

"That isn't all, though!" said Jimmy Silver quickly.

Then he related the facts of Topham and Townsend's visit to the prefect's study, and what he had heard.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lovell, when he had finished. "They've got into a nice mess this time!"

"Well, they ought to have known better than to have anything to do with a rotten cad like Knowles," said Raby. "Everyone knows what he is."

"That's true," said Lovell. "But Topham and Townsend are such asses that anybody could get round them."

"Anyway," said Jimmy Silver, "they're evidently going to get it in the

neck if they don't pay up by to-morrow midday."

"Serve 'em right, too!" growled Lovell.

"But——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Lovell's expressive snort brought Jimmy Silver's protests to an end. Lovell did not feel so sympathetic towards the nuts of the Fourth as did the Classical captain.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Suspicious.

THE next morning after breakfast the Fistical Four were in the end study, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the letters. The post was late that morning, much to the annoyance of Newcome, who was expecting his allowance of pocket-money from home.

As a matter of fact, he was hoping for more than his usual allowance, for he had written asking for extra, as he wished to buy new tyres for his bicycle.

Just when their patience was almost exhausted, the letters arrived, and Newcome eagerly pounced on his share.

The epistle he expected from home was there, but, what was more important still, the money he required was enclosed.

Newcome's eyes glistened. "A fiver!" he exclaimed excitedly. "A real brand-new fiver! By Jove! This is topping!"

"Clang, clang!" It was the bell for morning lessons. "Hang it!" muttered Newcome. "I haven't had time to read the pater's letter."

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Raby were already moving towards the study door, so Newcome hastily pushed the letter and the crisp fiver into the top draw of his desk, and followed his chums towards the class-room.

It was Wednesday and a half-holiday at Rookwood, and Newcome made up his mind to go and buy his new tyres that afternoon.

Topham and Townsend were in their usual places, and there were no signs on their faces that they were in any way worried by the fact that midday was approaching, when, as Jimmy Silver knew, they had got to square up with Knowles.

After classes the Fistical Four made their way straight to the dining-hall. On the way they passed Hooker, Jones minor, and several other Fourth-Formers sauntering in the same direction.

"Topham seems to be in funds," Jimmy Silver heard Hooker say, as he and his chums hastened on.

A moment later they came upon Topham and Townsend looking as cheerful as a couple of sandboys. Topham was jingling money in his pocket.

"Those two silly asses seem to have got over their difficulties somehow," remarked Jimmy Silver, as he and his chums passed into the dining-hall. "They're a bit more cheerful now than they were last night."

"Suppose they've raised the wind somehow," suggested Newcome. "Looks like it."

Immediately after dinner the Fistical Four retired to the end study, and Newcome at once hurried over to his desk to take out his money and the letter from home.

He pulled open the drawer, but the letter and the fiver were gone!

Then he dragged the drawer out further, but there was no sign of the papers he had pushed in before he went into classes.

He began frantically to turn out his pockets, though he knew that he would not find his property there.

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"I say, you chaps," he exclaimed suddenly, "I've lost that fiver! I put it in this drawer this morning, and now it's gone!"

"Must have made a mistake, kid," said Jimmy Silver. "If you'd put it there this morning, it'd be there now."

"But I tell you I did, fathead!" yelled Newcome. "I ought to know, didn't I?"

"Well, where's it got to?"

"That's the question," said Newcome.

Jimmy Silver, with Raby and Lovell, commenced turning over papers on Newcome's desk.

"Where did you say you put it?"

asked Jimmy Silver.

"In that drawer," replied Newcome, indicating the one in which he had placed the letter and notes.

Jimmy pulled it out almost to its full extent. The drawer was crammed with papers and books and all sorts of rubbish, which he hastily turned over, but without success.

The fiver had mysteriously disappeared!

"Hallo, what's the matter?"

The juniors looked up from their search, to see the figure of Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, framed in the doorway.

"Newcome's lost a fiver!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Don't waste my time," said Bulkeley quickly. "You've got some idea about this missing money, and I want to know what it is immediately."

Jimmy Silver hung his head, looking very confused and embarrassed, but he made no reply to Bulkeley's demand.

"Very well, then," said the prefect, "you'll come with me at once to my study."

Without further words he turned and made his way from the end study, followed by Jimmy Silver.

"My hat!" muttered Lovell. "That's done it!"

Some moments previously the other members of the Fistical Four had realised what their leader had been about to say when he remembered the presence of the captain of the school.

They had realised just as quickly, too, that to tell Bulkeley their suspicions would be to "let on" about the betting transactions between Knowles, Topham, and Townsend, also the incident of the cupboard.

It was dead against the principles of all decent juniors at Rookwood to "let on" about another; hence Jimmy Silver's refusal to explain to Bulkeley.

Meanwhile, as the captain of the school was passing along the corridor, followed by the unfortunate leader of the

his ear from the keyhole. He was very pleased with himself at that moment.

It was perfectly clear to him that the chums of the end study suspected Topham and Townsend of stealing Newcome's money, and Leggett quickly came to the erroneous conclusion that Jimmy Silver had imparted his suspicions to Bulkeley.

He hastened out to the quad to impart his information to the rest of the Fourth Form.

Most of the juniors had heard about the arrival of Newcome's fiver that morning, and Leggett succeeded in creating a great sensation as he spread the news around that it was missing, and that the Fistical Four suspected Topham and Townsend of having stolen it.

Leggett was not popular with any of the Rookwood juniors, but they were ready to listen to him when he had such interesting information to impart.

The cad of the Fourth was just telling his story to Tommy Dodd & Co., when he saw Topham and Townsend emerging from the tuckshop.

He left the Modern chums at once, and hastened towards the nuts of the Fourth.

Topham and Townsend turned off in the opposite direction when they saw Leggett approaching. They had no more respect for the cad of the Fourth

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"Lost it?" said Bulkeley, looking puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"I had a five-pound note from my people this morning, and I put it in this drawer," explained Newcome. "Now it's gone!"

Bulkeley strode forward and pulled out the drawer as the others had done.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea if you cleared this place up a bit," he said, noting the muddle.

He turned over the papers on the desk, but, of course, with no success.

"Well, it must be here somewhere," he continued. "It can't have been stolen."

"Ah, I know—" began Jimmy Silver, but pulled up sharply.

"What do you know?" asked Bulkeley, turning to the leader of the Fistical Four.

"Er—er—I—I—"

"Come on; out with it!" exclaimed Bulkeley sharply.

"Er—er—it's quite a mistake, Bulkeley!" stammered Jimmy.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver had suddenly recalled the fact that Topham and Townsend were in funds, and, remembering the conversation which had passed between the two nuts the previous evening, he could not suppress an exclamation as suspicion flashed through his brain.

Fistical Four, Leggett, the cad of the Fourth, had slouched by.

He gave an evil little sneer as he saw Jimmy Silver being led to the captain's study, and he could see by the expression on Jimmy's face that there was "something on."

He continued on his way until he came to the end study, and, hearing the voices of Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, he pulled up.

Leggett had no scruples in regard to eavesdropping, nor indeed any other form of caddishness.

Thinking that there might be an opportunity of obtaining some useful information, he glued his ear to the keyhole of the end study, and listened intently.

"This is an absolute mess-up!" he heard Lovell say in despairing tones.

"Well, I reckon Topham and Townsend know something about my cash," said Newcome emphatically.

"It jolly well looks like it," admitted Lovell. "The rotters were absolutely dead broke last night, without any prospect of getting cash from anywhere."

"And now they're in funds, and my fiver has gone!" added Newcome.

A malicious grin spread over the features of Leggett outside as he removed

than the rest of the Form, and they didn't mind letting him know it.

Leggett, however, was not thin-skinned, and advanced towards them, and opened his remarks by saying that he had valuable information for them on a subject which concerned them very deeply.

"Let's have it, then!" snapped Topham.

"Well," began Leggett casually, "Newcome's lost his pocket-money!"

"What the dickens is that to do with us?" cried Townsend angrily. "If that's your 'valuable information,' you can go to Jericho with it!"

"I haven't finished yet," said Leggett blandly, knowing that the second half of his little recital would probably interest them a little more.

"Out with it, quick, then!" snapped Topham. "We don't want to be seen talking to a beastly little rotter like you!"

Leggett only grinned.

"Well, as a matter of fact," he said slowly, "the Fistical Four suspect you of stealing Newcome's money!"

"Wh-what?"

"Us? The—the—"

"It's quite true," said Leggett, grinning with satisfaction at the reception of his news.

"Who—who told you that?" gasped Townsend, glaring with anger at the cad of the Fourth.

"Silver!" replied Leggett.

"We'll see about this!" yelled Topham, rushing towards the school door, followed by Townsend.

Leggett watched them go, and rubbed his hands with glee. There was nothing which gave him more pleasure than to stir up a row in the school, and he knew that he had succeeded in doing so this time.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Mystery Solved.

MEANWHILE, Jimmy Silver had been urged and prompted by Bulkeley to impart what he knew or suspected in regard to Newcome's loss.

He stubbornly refused to say a word, and at last Bulkeley almost lost patience. "Look here, then!" he said. "I'll give you one hour to go and think it over. If at the end of that time you still refuse to speak, I shall use stronger measures to make you."

Jimmy Silver had left the captain's study thoroughly determined that he would not tell Bulkeley of his suspicions.

"What about it?" exclaimed Lovell eagerly as Jimmy entered the end study once more.

"Nothing!" answered the Classical leader promptly.

"Of course, it was Topham and Townsend you were thinking about?"

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver; "and Bulkeley's done his best to worm it out of me, but I haven't told."

"What did Bulkeley say, then?" asked Raby.

"He's given me an hour to think it over, and if I don't tell him then, I'm going to get a licking."

"Well, it's a beastly muddle," remarked Newcome; "and what am I going to do without my money?"

"Oh, blow your money!" snapped Lovell. "You should have taken more care of it."

"But I thought——"

"You've got yourself to blame for leaving it about!"

"It ought to have been safe——"

The door suddenly burst open, and Topham and Townsend dashed in.

"Ah, here are the rotters!" exclaimed Townsend breathlessly.

"What's this about our stealing Newcome's money?" yelled Topham, striding towards Jimmy Silver.

For a moment the Fistical Four were completely taken aback, but Jimmy soon recovered himself.

"Who said you had stolen Newcome's money?" he demanded, glaring at Topham.

"You did!" cried Topham.

"That's a lie!" retorted Jimmy sharply.

"You told Leggett that you suspected us!" howled Townsend.

"What? I—I told Leggett!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no laughing matter!" cried Topham. "I want an explanation and an apology from you."

"But I haven't even seen Leggett," said Jimmy Silver. "Besides, he'd be the last person in the world that I should tell any suspicions to."

"Come off it!" sneered Topham. "He's just been and told us about it!"

"Are you insinuating that I'm telling lies?" yelled Jimmy Silver angrily.

"Well, if you're not——"

"Hallo! What's all this row about?"

The juniors swung round, and beheld Bulkeley standing in the doorway.

"That's done it!" murmured Lovell.

"Silver's told Leggett that we stole Newcome's money!" blurted out Topham.

"I haven't!" cried Jimmy Silver.

"So that's it!" said Bulkeley. "We'll just clear this little matter up!"

"I haven't said anything——" began Jimmy again, when the captain of Rookwood silenced him.

"Just bring Leggett here, Raby," he said quietly.

Raby immediately left the study in search of the cad of the Fourth.

In a few moments he returned, followed by Leggett, who looked very crestfallen. He had not anticipated a turn of events such as this.

"Now, then," said Bulkeley, at once addressing Leggett, "did Silver tell you that Topham and Townsend had stolen Newcome's money?"

"Er—er—well——" began Leggett confusedly.

"I want a straightforward answer," said Bulkeley sharply. "Yes or no?"

"Well, you see, Bulkeley," stammered Leggett. "It—it was just—just a little joke!"

Topham and Townsend started in amazement. They would have liked to fly at Leggett in that moment.

"I don't appreciate the joke!" snapped the prefect. "Where did you receive the information that these fellows suspected Topham and Townsend of theft?"

"Well," replied Leggett, looking extremely embarrassed, "I was passing the door of this study about half an hour ago, and—and I—I heard them say so."

The Fistical Four glanced at one another meaningly. They realised immediately that Leggett had been listening at the keyhole.

"You can go to my study at once!" said Bulkeley, "and wait there until I come!"

"But, Bulkeley——" began Leggett nervously.

"Not another word!" snapped the prefect. "Go at once!"

Leggett turned and left the study.

When the door had closed, Bulkeley faced Topham and Townsend again.

"There is something in this little affair that I can't quite understand," he said.

"Why should these fellows suspect you of robbery?"

"Can't say, Bulkeley," replied Topham, shrugging his shoulders. "I admit we've been hard up recently, and that we're in funds to-day. But I assure you we didn't pinch it. If you want proof as to where the money came from, you can have it."

As he spoke, he pulled from his pocket a letter, which he handed to the prefect. Bulkeley took it, and commenced to read.

Before he had finished there came an interruption in the form of a sudden whoop from Newcome.

"I've got it!" he yelled.

He waved in his hand the "fiver" he had received that morning.

During the interview with Leggett Newcome had been feeling considerably embarrassed, inasmuch as that his money being lost, he felt that he was the centre of the trouble.

He had turned to his desk, and busied himself in turning over paper, etc., and then had pulled out the drawer. In his confusion he had pulled at it so viciously, that it came right out, and the five-pound note and the letter fluttered to the floor.

They had been caught up at the back owing to the drawer being so crammed.

Bulkeley stared at Newcome for a moment, thinking that he had taken leave of his senses, for the Classical junior was jumping about like an acrobat in his delight.

The rest of the juniors looked from one to the other questioningly. Then Bulkeley spoke.

"This seems to me to be a lot of nonsense," he said, somewhat impatiently.

"It certainly does, Bulkeley," said Topham. "As you can see from that letter, I received a ten-pound note this morning from my uncle in Australia."

"And Newcome received five pounds from home, which he lost through carelessness," added the prefect.

"But what about Leggett——" began Townsend, when Bulkeley interrupted him.

"I presume, Silver," he said, turning to the leader of the Fistical Four, "that what you refused to tell me had some bearing on this matter?"

Jimmy Silver coloured up, but made no reply.

"However," continued the prefect, "in the circumstances, I will press the matter no further."

Bulkeley was very astute and far-seeing, and probably saw through the whole thing.

"There is no evidence," he went on, addressing Topham and Townsend, "that Silver or any of his chums suspected you of stealing Newcome's money. Leggett has declared it to be a joke on his part, and as the five-pound note has turned up, the matter is ended."

Topham and Townsend left the end study looking none too pleased, but they recognised that there was nothing more to be said.

"In future, Newcome," said Bulkeley, as he turned to leave the study, "keep your desk in better order, so that any repetition of this occurrence may be avoided."

"That was a near thing!" said Lovell, when the prefect had gone.

"Yes!" growled Jimmy Silver. "All through you and your beastly money, Newcome!"

"If you hadn't found it when you did," said Lovell, "the whole business would have come out, including the little affair of Knowles and the cupboard."

"Then there'd have been a proper bust-up," remarked Raby.

"Oh, well," said Newcome placidly, "it's all ended up all right, and it wasn't my fault that the fiver slipped down the back of the drawer!"

"Yes, it was," retorted Jimmy Silver; "through not keeping it tidy. Now clear it out at once!"

"But I——"

"If you don't do it now, this minute," threatened Jimmy, "we'll bump you!"

"Hear, hear!"

Newcome thought he had better not argue the point any further, so he set about his task there and then. The mystery of the fiver was a mystery no longer!

THE END.

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