

# THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE!

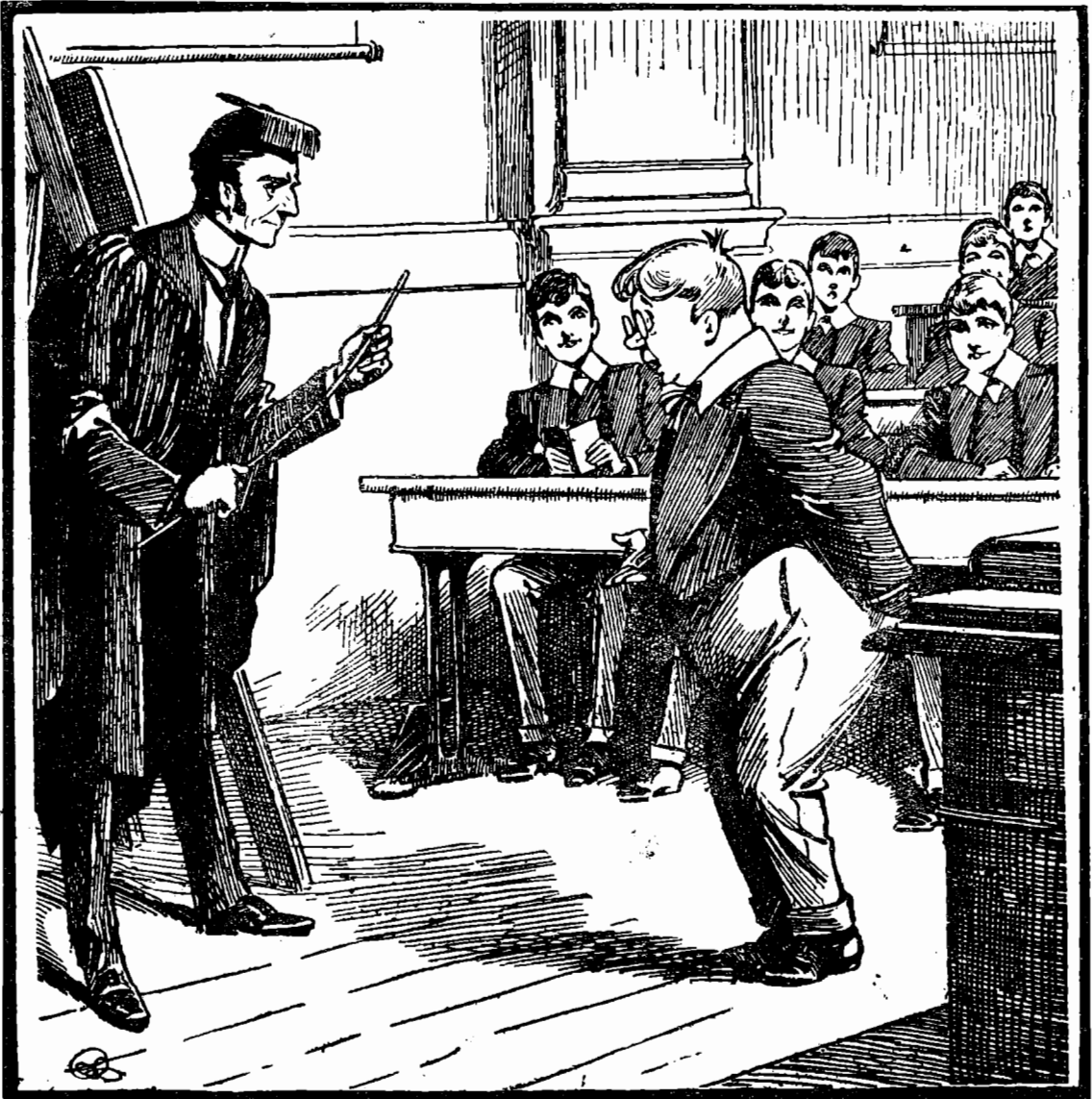
(See Inside for the Splendid Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.)

# The Penny Popular

Week Ending  
January 5th, 1918.

No.  
274.

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



## A WHACKING FOR BUNTER!

An Incident from the Grand Long Complete  
Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., contained in  
This Issue. 5/1/18

# THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Give me the spade, Billy," said Harry Wharton. "It makes me ill to see you fellows—"  
"I'd sooner do it myself!"

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter the Treasure-Hunter.

"Do you fellows happen to know—"  
"The ground's too mucky for footer," said Harry Wharton, looking out of the window of Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.  
"Do you fellows—"  
"What price some practice in the gym?" asked Frank Nugent.  
"That's a good idea!"  
"The goodness of the esteemed idea is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
"I say, you fellows, do you happen to know—"  
"Well, let's get along to the gym, then," said Wharton. "I'll get into the passage and whistle for Bob Cherry."  
"Right-ho!"  
"I say, Wharton—"  
"Mark Linley and Tom Brown can come, too, and we'll get through the half-holiday somehow, and rats to the weather!" Harry remarked.  
"I say, you fellows— I say, Wharton—"  
"Hallo! Did you speak, Bunter?" Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at Wharton through his big spectacles.  
"You jolly well know I did! I've been trying to make my voice heard for the last half-hour while you've been jawing!"  
"And the voice of the porpoise was heard in the land," murmured Frank Nugent, addressing nobody in particular.  
Bunter blinked at him.  
"Oh, really, Nugent—"  
"Well, whistle for Bob, if you're going to," said Nugent. "Otherwise, let Bunter take a run along the passage and tell him. A little run will give him an appetite. You know how little he eats."  
"I say, you fellows, do let me speak! It's

awfully important! It may mean this study rolling in wealth!"  
"Go on!"  
"Another blessed scheme for getting rich quick!" groaned Nugent. "Well, I suppose we've got to listen to it? Go ahead!"  
Wharton took out his watch.  
"We'll give him three minutes," he said.  
"That's right! Three-minute rounds, and a five-bar rest," said Nugent. "Make the most of it, Bunter!"  
"Oh, really, you fellows—"  
"Get ahead!"  
"Well, I was going to ask you, do any of you happen to know—"  
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said a cheery voice, as Bob Cherry of the Remove put his head into the study. "What are you chaps doing this afternoon, besides blessing the weather?"  
"Oh, really, Cherry—"  
"We're going into the gym."  
"I say, you fellows—"  
"How awfully long-winded you are, Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton. "Are you ever coming to the point? You've only got two minutes now."  
"How can a chap speak if you keep on interrupting him?" said Bunter, with a glare of indignation. "Look here, do any of you fellows happen to know—"  
"Sorry I interrupted you," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Still, what's done can't be undone, so let Bunter remain interrupted, and let us buzz off."  
"Look here—"  
"Will you get on with the washing, Bunter, or will you not?"  
"I—I—I— Look here, do any of you fellows happen to know—"  
"I believe I've heard you say that before."  
"Do you happen to know of any place where you can exchange old coins—pieces of eight, and so on—for modern money?" said Bunter. "It's important."  
The chums of the Remove stood round

Billy Bunter, and stared at him. There was a momentary silence in the study.

Billy Bunter was frequently surprising his chums, but he had never surprised them more than by that particular question.

The fat junior, evidently pleased with the impression he had made, swelled visibly, and blinked at the juniors.

"Well?" he said.

"Old coins!" said Nugent.

"Pieces of eight!" murmured Wharton.

"Exactly! You see, I don't want a lot of public fuss made about the matter, or the Government will come swooping down and collar a lot of the tin. You know what our blessed Government is—it's not safe to be rich in these days; you have to pay as much in taxes as if you were poor! I'm going to keep it awfully dark about the treasure."

"The—the what?"

"The treasure."

"What treasure?"

"The Greyfriars treasure."

"You don't mean to say you've found it?" yelled Bob Cherry, in great excitement.

"Well, not exactly found it."

"You fellows coming out?" said Tom Brown, of New Zealand, coming into the study. "Hallo! What is this—a tea-fight, or a council of war?"

"Neither," said Wharton, laughing. "Bunter is telling us about the Greyfriars treasure. It seems he's on the track."

The New Zealand junior looked puzzled.

"The Greyfriars treasure!" he ejaculated. "What on earth's that?"

"Oh, you're a new chap, and I dare say you haven't heard of it! There's supposed to be a treasure hidden somewhere in the crypt under the ruined chapel," explained Wharton. "They say it was hidden there by the monks at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. Another tale is that some Cavaliers shoved it there to keep it out of the hands of Cromwell's soldiers. Some give us a yarn that a miser buried it, and died afterwards without saying where it was. There's only one point the yarns agree upon, and that is that there's a treasure buried under the old chapel. Fellows have hunted for it on half-holidays on and off for the last hundred years or so, I believe, but it hasn't turned up."

"It will turn up jolly soon!" said Billy Bunter.

"How do you know?" asked Tom.

"I'm going to look for it."

"Ha, ha, ha! I remember now hearing that it was with a yarn about a buried treasure that Wun Lung got Buletrode into the crypt the other day, and locked him up there," said Tom Brown.

"Yes; same treasure," said Wharton, laughing.

"I'm going to look for it this afternoon," said Bunter. "You see, a lot of chaps have looked for it, I know; but, then, I don't suppose there was a chap among them with a really keen and intelligent brain. I'm going to concentrate all my brain power on the matter, and—discover the treasure!"

"Well, if you concentrate it hard enough something is bound to happen," said Bob Cherry. "Mind you don't turn it on too hard, though, and burst the brain-box! There would be a flood, and—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Have you got a clue to the treasure?" asked Tom Brown.

"Well, no; not exactly a clue!"

"What chance have you of finding it, then?"

"Well, I'm going to look for it, you know, and by concentrating my brain power—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Brown—"

"You young ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in disgust. "Do you mean to say you're trying to find out how to dispose of old coins and pieces of eight before you've even begun to look for the treasure?"

"Well, you see, there's nothing like being prepared. Suppose I come in this afternoon with my pockets bulging with gold pieces? Mrs. Mimble won't take Spanish doubloons and pieces of eight at the tuckshop, and I may have to wait for hours before I even get a feed out of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you fellows, do you know of any place where old money is exchanged for banknotes? If you do, I might as well send them a wire—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hang it all, he's had six minutes instead

of three!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, glancing at his watch. "Come on, kids!"  
 "I say, you fellows—"  
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Linley! Come on, Linley, and let's get some practice in the gym!"  
 "I say, you fellows—"  
 But the fellows were gone.  
 Billy Bunter blinked after them with his fat face red with indignation.  
 "You'll jolly well sing to another tune when I come in with my pockets bulging with doubloons and pieces of eight!" he muttered. "And I jolly well won't share out a cent—so there! Blessed if I know how I stand the rotten jealousy that exists in this study!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Refuses a Good Offer.

HARRY WILARTON glanced at the fat junior several times during the classes the next afternoon.  
 There was certainly something on Bunter's mind.  
 He was never a bright scholar, and he usually tried the Form-master's patience severely, and he was the despair of the mathematics-master, and of Monsieur Charpentier.

But this afternoon his wits seemed to be wool-gathering with a vengeance.  
 He misunderstood the simplest matters, gave random answers to the simplest questions, remained in a brown study after the Form-master had spoken to him three times, and upon the whole showed plainly that, like the dying gladiator, "his eyes were with his heart, and that was far away."

Mr. Quelch was not the kind of master to be bothered by absent-minded beggars.  
 He gave Billy Bunter a steadily increasing quantity of lines, and when that failed of effect, he tried the pointer.  
 A rap on the knuckles brought the fat junior back to this world with a howl.

He blinked at Bob Cherry, whom he suspected of having played a joke on him, not observing the Form-master just behind him.  
 "You ass!" he gasped.  
 "Oh?"  
 "You silly ass!"

Bob made a wild grimace to warn Bunter that he was characterising the Remove-master in that way, but Bunter was too short-sighted and preoccupied to see or understand.

"You frabjous idiot!" he gasped, rubbing his knuckles. "Only a dangerous lunatic would rap a chap suddenly on the knuckles." And then the whole class gasped, too.

Mr. Quelch turned purple.  
 He laid a strong grasp on Bunter's collar at the back, and lifted him from his seat. Billy Bunter wriggled in his grip.

"Ow! Leggo! You idiot!"  
 "Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.  
 "What!"

Billy Bunter jumped almost out of his skin.

For the first time it dawned upon him that it was the master of the Remove whom he had been talking to so freely.

His jaw dropped, and he blinked at Mr. Quelch through his spectacles like a dying fish.

"Oh, sir!"  
 "Bunter! How dare you?"  
 "I'm s-s-sincerely s-s-sorry, sir," spluttered Bunter. "I didn't know it was you, sir."  
 "Bunter!"

"How was I to know you would play a silly trick like that, sir—I mean—"  
 "Bunter! Stand out!"  
 "If you please, sir—"  
 "Stand out at once!"  
 "Oh, very well, sir; but—"  
 "Not a word!"

Billy Bunter reluctantly went out before the class.

Mr. Quelch selected a strong cane from his desk, with a grim and extremely business-like expression upon his face.

The fat junior eyed him nervously.  
 "Bunter! You have been most inattentive and careless this afternoon."  
 "I'm sincerely sorry, sir, but—"  
 "You have paid no attention whatever to your lessons."  
 "Yes, sir; but I—I was—"  
 "You have no excuse to make, Bunter."  
 "I—I was thinking of something more important, sir," stammered Billy Bunter.  
 "That is to say, I—I mean—"  
 Mr. Quelch's brow was like thunder.  
 "Hold out your hand, Bunter!"  
 "If you please, sir—"  
 "Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"I—I'd rather not, if you d-d-d-don't mind, sir. I—I'd rather tell you what I've been thinking about, sir, if you don't mind, and you'd see how awfully important it was, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him curiously.  
 "I do not understand you, Bunter."  
 "You see, sir—"  
 "If you are in trouble of any sort, Bunter, and it is weighing on your mind, I could make some allowances for you," said Mr. Quelch more kindly.  
 "Yes, sir. You see—"  
 "In a word, what is the matter with you, Bunter?"  
 "I—I—I—"  
 "If you have no explanation to offer, hold out your hand."  
 "It's an awfully important matter, sir."  
 "What is it?"  
 "The—the matter I've been turning over in my mind, sir," said Bunter, with an eye upon the cane—a very wary eye.  
 "Explain yourself at once."  
 Bunter blinked towards the grinning class.  
 "I don't want to tell everybody, sir. It's—it's an awfully important matter, very private and confidential."  
 Mr. Quelch wrinkled his brows. He began

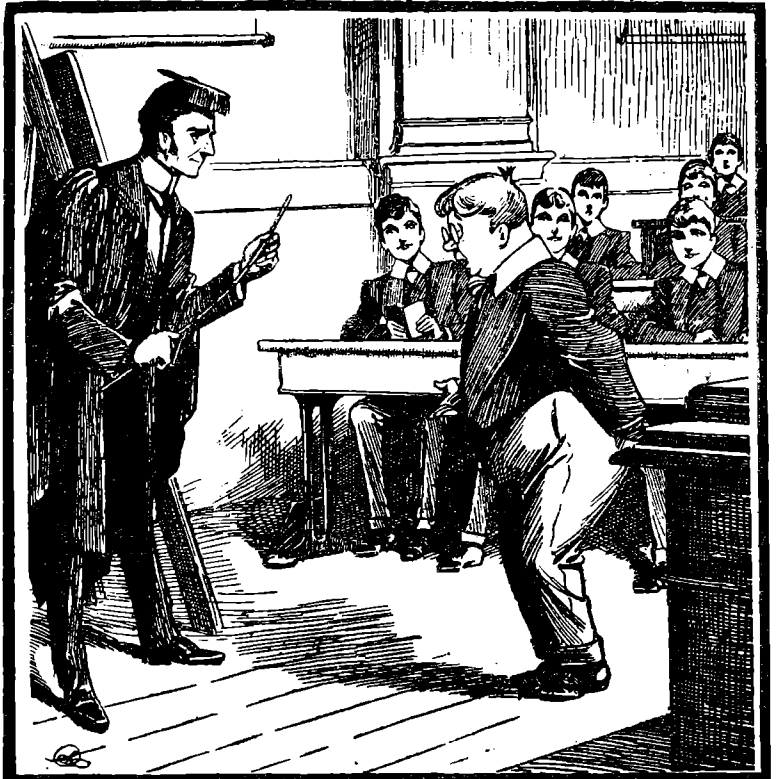
—it's hidden in the crypt under the of chapel," said Bunter. "I've got a clue to it."  
 "Bunter!"

"That's what I was thinking about, sir. think you'll agree that it was more important than blessed Latin."

"Bunter!"  
 "If you like to go halves with me, sir, w could both get awfully rich—"  
 "Bunter!"  
 "It's a jolly good offer, sir, don't you thin so?"

Mr. Quelch found his voice at last.  
 "Hold out your hand, Bunter!"  
 The fat junior started back, and stared at the Form-master in dismay. He had imagined that he was getting on swimmingly with Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir—"  
 "Hold out your hand!" thundered the Remove-master. "I sometimes suspect Bunter, that you are weak in the head. A other times it seems to me that you are the most impertinent boy in Greyfriars."  
 "Oh, sir!"  
 "Hold out your hand at once!"  
 Billy Bunter cast a wild blink around him but there was no escape. He had to hold out



"Hold out your hand, Bunter!" The fat junior started back, and stared at the Form-master in dismay. "Hold out your hand!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

to think that the fat junior might be in some real trouble—bad news from home, or something of that sort. He signed to the Owl of the Remove to follow him to the desk, out of hearing of the class unless voices were raised.

"Now, Bunter, explain yourself," he said.  
 "Certainly, sir. With pleasure."  
 "Well, go on."

"I was thinking about a big scheme, sir. I—I shouldn't mind going halves with you, sir," said Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stood petrified.  
 "You see, sir," said Bunter, encouraged by the silence of the Form-master, and too short-sighted to read the expression of his face—"you see, sir, it's a splendid scheme, and I've got a clue."  
 "A clue!"  
 "Yes, sir."  
 "What do you mean? Are you mad?"  
 "Certainly not, sir. I've got a clue—a clue to the Greyfriars treasure, you know."  
 "The—the what!"  
 "You know about the Greyfriars treasure,

his hand, and then the other, and he received a cut on each that made him jump.

Then Mr. Quelch shook a severe forefinger at him.  
 "Go back to your place, Bunter, and do not venture to talk such nonsense to me again, or I shall punish you severely."  
 "Ow!"  
 "Don't make those ridiculous noises, Bunter."  
 "No, sir! Ow!"  
 "Go back to your place at once."  
 "Yes, sir. Ow!"

And Billy Bunter squirmed back to his place in class.

For the rest of the afternoon, he rubbed his hands and muttered, and thought less of the vast wealth that was to fall to him as soon as he found an opportunity of digging it up. Mr. Quelch passed him over lightly after that.

When lessons were over, and the Lower Fourth crowded out, Bob Cherry gave the fat junior a slap on the back.

"Hard cheese, Bunty!" he exclaimed sympathetically.

"Oh!"

"Why, what's the matter now?"

"You've kn-n-nocked all the breath out of me, you ass!"

"Never mind; you're going to roll in wealth soon," said Bob. "I suppose you've discovered some clues to the treasure, haven't you?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"That's telling!"

"Phew! You don't mean to say you really have a clue!"

"I don't mean to say anything," grunted Bunter.

And he rolled away, leaving Bob Cherry staring.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### On the Track of the Treasure.

"WHAT'S the matter with Bunter?"

"Oh, he's on the track of the giddy treasure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Study No. 1 did not take William George Bunter very seriously.

Billy was taking himself seriously enough. He went about for the rest of that day in a brown study, thinking and making plans, and putting on such an air of mystery that the dullest observer could see perfectly plainly that great schemes were working in his mind.

If anybody had taken the treasure seriously, and imagined for a moment that there might be anything in Bunter's schemes, the fat junior would have given himself away hopelessly.

But Bunter was quite safe, because even if the Greyfriars treasure existed, nobody believed for a moment that Bunter would ever discover it, or a clue to it.

The chums of Study No. 1 took the whole matter as a joke.

Billy Bunter came into the study at tea-time, and found the juniors at tea, and for once Bunter was late for a meal.

He blinked at the grinning faces that greeted him.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Nothing for you!" said Nugent. "There weren't enough eggs to go round, and you weren't here to fetch any more."

"Oh, it's all right, I'll have the cake."

And Bunter took the whole cake from the plate, and began to eat it.

The juniors stared at him blankly.

"This cake will be enough for me," said Bunter. "It's a three-pound one, I think."

"Put that cake down, you—you wolf!"

"I suppose I am to have something? Look here, you fellows, I've been thinking it out," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "I've made up my mind to let you fellows—"

"Put that cake down!"

"Oh, all right! You might give a fellow a chance to get a bite. I haven't had anything in my mouth for hours. I've decided to let you fellows into it."

"Into your mouth?" ejaculated Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent, of course not! I mean, into the scheme."

"What scheme?"

"About the treasure."

"Oh, get off the treasure!" said Nugent.

"We're getting fed up with that."

"But I've got a clue—"

"Rats!"

"A real clue, made by the old monks when they buried the Spanish doubloons and the pieces of eight."

"Ha, ha, ha! What on earth were monks doing with doubloons and pieces of eight?" shouted Nugent. "You're getting the yarns mixed."

"Well, that's only a detail. There's a treasure, wherever it came from, and whoever buried it," said Bunter. "I know now exactly where it's buried."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a sign made in the ground where it was put."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've found it."

The juniors yelled with laughter.

It was not difficult for them to guess that someone had played a trick upon Bunter, and they had not the faintest expectation of finding anything in his clue but a joke of some humorous junior.

Billy Bunter blinked at them with glowering indignation.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"I've got a real clue—the real thing, with no doubt about the matter. You see—"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's as safe as houses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm willing to let you fellows have a share if you help me to dig it up," said Bunter.

"We shall have to go darkly, at dead of night, or we may be surprised."

Harry Wharton wiped his eyes.

"Better go masked as well, I suppose," gurgled Nugent. "And don't forget your trusty revolver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Oh, Bunter, you're too funny for words!"

"The funnifulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific."

"It's a jolly good offer," growled Bunter indignantly. "If you don't help me to dig up the treasure, I jolly well sha'n't share it with you."

"Never mind; we'll manage on our pocket-money. We'll agree not to be envious when we see you rolling in wealth."

"Look here, Bunter, somebody's been japing you."

"That's enough, Wharton. I know what I know."

"But what do you know?"

"If you like to help me dig up the treasure—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, all right, I'll leave you out of it!" growled Bunter. And he stamped out of the study and slammed the door.

The juniors yelled with laughter.

"My hat! Bunter is getting funnier and funnier!" grinned Nugent. "Phew! The fat oyster's taken the cake with him, though."

Billy Bunter carried that cake to a safe corner, and there he consumed it almost to the last crumb. He always declared that his brain worked more quickly when he was eating, though there were fellows who asserted that it never worked at all.

While he was demolishing the cake, Bunter thought out a scheme for safely disposing of the treasure.

He waited anxiously for night.

During the evening Bunter was not much in evidence.

As a matter of fact, he was scouting. He took a pick from one place, and a spade from another, and placed them in readiness near the old chapel.

Then he calmly took possession of Bob Cherry's acetylene bicycle lantern, and charged it with carbide of calcium, and placed it ready with a box of matches near the pick and spade.

All was in readiness then for the treasure hunt.

Billy Bunter waited feverishly for night, when he was to steal quietly out of the dormitory and dig up the buried treasure.

His fat face was full of excitement when the Remove went up to bed.

Temple, Dabney & Co. met him on the stairs, and they grinned as they read the suppressed eagerness in the fat junior's face.

Temple tapped him on the shoulder.

"Clues working all right, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter.

"There's nothing in that yarn."

"Haven't you been hunting for the treasure this evening?"

"Oh, no! I'm not thinking of looking for it to-night at all, and I haven't got a spade or anything ready."

And Billy Bunter hurried on.

Temple, Dabney & Co. chuckled.

"He's going out to-night, then, to dig in the crypt," grinned Temple. "I only hope the Study No. 1 bouncers go with him, that's all. We'll never let them hear the end of it!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove went to bed, but they did not all go to sleep. Billy Bunter lay in a state of suppressed excitement, longing to hear serene snoring round him, so that he could steal unobserved from the dormitory.

The Removees were soon asleep, with two exceptions. Billy Bunter sat up in bed and listened intently.

The dormitory was very quiet.

The fat junior stepped out of bed, and hastily donned his clothes. Then a voice in the gloom made him jump. It was Harry Wharton's.

"Is that you moving about, Bunter?"

"Oh! You—you startled me, Wharton. Ye-e-es."

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Look here, you young ass, get back into bed, and don't be a duffer."

"I'm going out," said Bunter. "I suppose I can go out if I like? If you were a decent chap, and stood by a fellow in your own study, you'd come with me."

"I shall go with you if you go," said Harry, getting out of bed. "You will get into some mischief otherwise. But you'd better get into bed again."

"I'm going to dig up the treasure."

"You young ass!"

"Well, you'll jolly well see if you come with me, Wharton."

"Oh, I'll come!"

And they left the dormitory together.

Wharton, of course, had not the slightest faith in Bunter, but he did not want the fat junior to go out alone. Billy was certain to get into some kind of trouble, and Wharton had somehow dropped into the habit of looking after the Owl of the Remove.

As they went quietly downstairs there was a faint sound from the direction of the Upper Fourth dormitory. Wharton paused, and looked back.

"What was that, Billy?"

"What? I didn't hear anything."

"Oh, all right! Come on!"

And they went on. Three shadowy figures loomed up in the gloom when they were gone, and there were three separate suppressed chuckles.

"Wharton's there," muttered Temple. "I recognised his voice."

"Oh, rather!"

"Wharton and Bunter; the others, perhaps, I don't know. Let's follow them."

"Oh, rather!"

And the Upper Fourth trio, silent as ghosts in their socks, followed on the track of the two Removees.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Darkly at Dead of Night.

"WHERE are you going, Billy?"

"Into the crypt."

"The crypt—under the chapel?"

"Yes; the treasure's there."

"You ass!"

"Well, seeing's believing, and you'll soon see. Careful how you go down the steps here. I've got a spade here, and—"

Crash!

"Yarrah!"

"What are you making that row for, Wharton?"

"You frajulous duffer!" groaned Harry, rubbing his shin. "I've found the spade, that's all. Why couldn't you tell me it was there?"

"Well, I did tell you, and—"

"I've barked my shin, you ass!"

"Never mind! Don't make a fuss about a little pain, for goodness' sake! I—"

Ow! Yarrah!"

"What's up?"

"I—I've fallen over the spade."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I'm hurt!"

"Never mind. Don't make a fuss over a little pain, you know, for goodness' sake!"

"I'm hurt! Ow! I think my leg's broke!"

"Then it's no good going on. I'll go back to the dorm."

"Here, I say—Wharton—it's all right—I can get up. Lend me a hand."

"Oh, all right!"

Harry Wharton caught hold of the fat junior by the ears, and helped him up. Billy Bunter yelled.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You asked me to help you."

"Ow! Yow! Yah!"

"Haven't you got a lantern here?" demanded Wharton, as Bunter rubbed his ears and growled.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Where is it?"

"On the step, unless you've kicked it off."

Harry Wharton groped for the lantern, and found it, and turned on the water tap. The carbide of calcium began to give off its fragrant perfume, and in a minute or so he had the lantern alight, with its bright white

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"All right. We'll go back for the treasure to-morrow."

"You can if you like, but I jolly well sha'n't!" growled Wharton. "There isn't any treasure, any more than there is a ghost. Let's get in."

The two juniors clambered into the window they had left open, and made their way to the Remove dormitory. They reached it without mishap, and Wharton pushed open the door.

All was dark and silent within. "Quiet, Bunter!" muttered Harry, as the fat junior bumped up against the doorpost.

"If you wake Quelch—"

"Ow!"

"Oh, shut up!"

Harry stepped into the dark dormitory. His foot caught in something, and he went flying, and rolled over on the floor.

"Oh!"

"Quiet, Wharton! Oh!"

Billy Bunter caught his foot, and rolled over, too.

He kicked against Harry, who gasped and sat up dazedly.

"What on earth—"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Who the—"

"Grooh!"

"Some idiotic ass has tied a string across the doorway—"

There was a chuckle from the dark passage.

"This is where we smile," murmured the soft voice of Temple of the Upper Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in suppressed laughter from the passage.

Wharton groped for the string, and dragged it up. Then he rose to his feet, a gleam of wrath and vengeance in his eyes.

"We smile!" murmured Temple. "Oh, the giddy treasure-hunters! How many doubloons did you find, Wharton?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How many pieces of eight?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And to think," murmured Temple, "that I made that mysterious mark in the ground myself with a trowel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And that the ghost of the vault was old Fry with a sheet over his head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think all Greyfriars will smile to-morrow! Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton made a rush in the direction of the voice, and hit out. He gave a sharp yell as his knuckles crashed on the closing door.

"Oh! Oh!"

There was a soft chuckle from without, and the heroes of the Upper Fourth retired.

Harry Wharton sucked his knuckles.

"Bunter, you ass!"

"Ow!"

"I suppose you know now how the mark came there, and how much treasure there is?"

"The beasts!"

"And to think they were watching us while we were digging!" ejaculated Wharton, in disgust. "Oh, I could kick myself!"

"The rotters! But—"

"Oh, you fat duffer!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a voice from Bob Cherry's bed. "What's the row? What are you chaps doing out of bed? Is this a midnight conversation?"

"Wharton's been looking for the abbot's treasure," said Billy Bunter. "A chap played ghost in the crypt, and scared him."

"What!" gasped Wharton.

He ran away like anything. Bunter slipped off his boots. "I'm jolly well not going treasure-hunting with Wharton any more. Besides, I believe it's all rot. There isn't any treasure at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, of all the worms!" ejaculated Wharton. "I'll come and look after you again when you're playing the giddy ox—I don't think!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Oh, shut up, and go to bed!"

And Harry Wharton turned in. The next morning, when he came down, he had a feeling that the last had not been heard of that nocturnal treasure-hunt.

And the feeling was fully justified. Temple, Dabney & Co. had confided the story to almost everybody, and almost everybody was grinning and chuckling over it.

Billy Bunter gave his own version of the story—by which it appeared that he had gone with Wharton to look for the treasure, and had acted a most heroic part when the ghost appeared, and would certainly have

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caught the ghost in the act had he not been dragged away by Harry.

Wharton swallowed his wrath as well as he could. The Upper Fourth had the best of it, and it seemed that it would be a long time before the Fourth-Formers would cease from chuckling and Study No. 1 would be at rest.

"We've got to get level somehow," Harry Wharton growled, that evening. "Anybody got an idea?"

"Blessed if I have," said Nugent.

"The blessedness is terrific also in my worthy case," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bob Cherry looked into Study No. 1.

"I say, you chaps, I've got a wheeze!"

"Good! Go ahead!"

And Bob Cherry unfolded his wheeze, and by the chuckles with which it was greeted, it certainly seemed to be a good one.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### A Wonderful Find.

TEMPLE, Dabney & Co. had scored, and they did not seem to tire of relating the circumstances of their scoring to everyone who would listen. They narrated the history of the clue, and of the treasure-hunt, till everybody outside the Upper Fourth was bored to tears with the whole matter. But in the Upper Fourth there was an incessant chortling.

The Fourth-Formers went down to the crypt to look at the hole Wharton had excavated overnight, and they grinned and chuckled over it.

Nearly everybody in the Upper Fourth went down to look at it some time during the day, and came back in convulsions at the idea that Wharton had dug so deep in search of an imaginary treasure.

Temple pointed out the exact spot to whoever wished to see it, and explained all the circumstances, and related the whole story to every victim he could find.

He was holding forth on the subject, by the light of a bicycle lantern in the crypt, when suddenly Fry uttered an exclamation.

Fry was pointing out the exact dimensions of the excavations to Scott and Turner of the Upper Fourth, while Temple explained to them how he had taken in the Removites. And something suddenly caught Fry's eye.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

Temple stopped in the middle of a graphic description.

"What's the row, Fry?"

"Look there!"

"What is it?"

"Look—only look!" breathed Fry excitedly. Temple, in surprise, turned the lantern light full into the hole.

From the dark earth a fragment of wood showed itself—evidently the corner of a box barely uncovered by the excavation.

So little of the box was showing that it was not surprising that it had escaped previous observation, in spite of the number of fellows who had inspected the place.

Temple stared at it.

"What on earth's that?"

"Looks like a box," said Scott.

"It jolly well is a box. But—"

"How on earth did it get there?"

"Why, Wharton would have dug it up if he had gone on for another few minutes!" exclaimed Fry excitedly.

"By Jove!"

"My only hat!" said Turner. "This is a find! How on earth did a box come to be buried here, I'd like to know!"

Temple was pale with excitement.

"Blessed if I had the faintest idea that there was anything buried here when I put that ass Bunter on the track!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"But there is something, you see."

"Yes, rather."

"It's a box!" said Temple. "Is it possible that—that—" He paused, his face flushed with excitement. "Great Scott, you chaps, it might be the treasure!"

"The treasure!"

"Why not? Everybody believes that the Greyfriars treasure is really buried somewhere about the school, and there's a blessed document in the school library about it, if one could get at it. Suppose we've found it?"

"Pshaw!"

"We're jolly well going to see, anyway!" exclaimed Temple. "Mind, not a word! We'll keep this dark till we know. We'll have the box out!"

"Who's got a spade?"

"You cut off and borrow one of Gosling,

Turner. Mind nobody sees you bringing it here, you know."

"Right you are!" said Turner.

He ran out of the crypt. He dashed from the ruined chapel, and off to the school porter's lodge, at top speed.

Five juniors, who were lying low among the masses of fallen masonry, watched him go. They were the chums of the Remove.

And Bob Cherry chuckled.

"What do you think that means, Wharton?"

Wharton laughed.

"They've discovered the treasure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific, my worthy chums."

"Wait and see," remarked Tom Brown sagely. "Wait and see if he comes back with a pick or a spade. That will settle it."

"Yes, rather!"

And the Removites waited and watched.

In about three minutes Turner came tearing back through the dusk, and under his arm he carried a spade.

He disappeared down the steps into the crypt.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Treasure Trove!

"HERE he is!"

"What a time you've been gone, Turner!"

"I buzzed off as fast as I could!" gasped Turner, breathlessly. "I haven't been long, you know. I had to tip Gosling a tanner to get the spade, too. I had to be jolly careful not to let the Remove kids see me."

"Did they see you?"

"No. I nearly ran into Bulstrode, but I dodged him, and nobody else saw me at all," said Turner. "It's all right!"

"Jolly good!"

Temple took the spade, and stepped into the excavation. Fry held the lantern to show his leader a light while the digging proceeded.

"Now, then, go it!" he exclaimed.

Scott and Turner looked on eagerly. Dabney came into the crypt to look for his chums, and when he was informed of the find, he was as eager as the rest. Temple made mighty strokes with the spade, and the earth flew up in chunks.

Bang! Bang!

The spade crashed on the box again and again.

"Mind you don't bust it!" said Fry anxiously. "If it's crammed full of doubloons or banknotes, we—"

"Banknotes, you ass!" said Dabney. "They didn't have any banknotes in those days. The box will be full of pieces of eight or gold crowns, if anything."

Temple began to perspire freely. He worked and worked, and the earth grew higher round the feet of the Fourth-Formers standing round the excavation.

"Hard work—eh?" said Dabney sympathetically.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Temple. "It's not so hard, though, as it might be. The earth seems to be looser round the box than it is in other places."

"That's lucky!"

"Here, you take a turn with the spade, Fry, old chap, and I'll hold the lantern!"

"Right you are!"

Temple clambered out of the excavation, and Fry took his place. The box was almost wholly uncovered now. Fry dug for quite five minutes, and then he threw down the spade.

"My hat, this is hard work!" he gasped. "I say, I think we could yank the thing out now if all you fellows laid hold of it."

"Good! Let's try!"

"Jump down, then!"

The five Fourth-Formers surrounded the chest, and laid hold of it as well as they could. The earth had been well cleared away from it now.

"All together!" said Temple.

"Right-ho!"

"Go it!"

And the Fourth-Formers dragged at the chest.

"It's coming!"

"Hurrah!"

"Crumbs! It's jolly heavy!"

"All the better, considering what's in it."

"Yes, rather!"

The chest was dragged out of the excavation. It was certainly very heavy. There was a slight clinking sound within as it was bumped down on the ground.

That sound was music to the ears of the juniors.

"You hear that, kids?"

"Yes; it's gold!"

"What luck!"

"Wharton will be ready to kick himself when he hears about this," grinned Temple. "Let's see if we can open the box."

"It's locked!"

"Hang it!"

The Fourth-Formers stood round the box, fingering it eagerly. There was a lock to it, and that lock was fast. The keyhole was crammed with soil. That could be got away easily enough, but the key was another matter.

"We shall have to smash it open!" exclaimed Fry.

"Bang it with the spade!"

Temple shook his head.

"We'll get it to my study. I can force the lock there. It's no good banging it with the spade. It would take ages to smash in solid oak like that; and, besides, we don't want to smash it."

"How are we to get it to the study?" said Dabney.

"Carry it. We can't expect it to walk."

"Oh, don't be funny! I mean, those Remove kids will very likely spot us, and—"

"Well, I don't care if they do, now. The box is ours. We've dug it up," said Temple. "We should have to carry away the contents, anyway, and we may as well take them in the box."

"Good! Let's hurry up, then!"

"Take a hand."

Temple, Dabney, and Fry raised the box between them. It was heavy, but the three sturdy juniors carried it easily enough. They bore it up the steps from the crypt, and Scott and Turner followed.

They reached the School House before they encountered any members of the rival Form. There, at the door, Harry Wharton & Co. greeted them with a stare.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What have you got there?"

"Mind your own business!" said Temple loftily. "It's ours, anyway. We found it, and dug it up, and it's ours."

"But what is it?"

"Can't you see? It's a box."

"Anything in it?"

"Oh, only gold and silver and things," said Temple, with exaggerated carelessness.

"My hat!"

"Then it's the Greyfriars treasure?" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"Yes, rather!"

"Phew! Great Scott! Here, you fellows, Temple & Co. have discovered the Greyfriars treasure!" shouted the New Zealand junior.

"Phew!"

Quite a procession gathered round the Fourth-Formers as they bore the valuable chest into the house. The Removes made no attempt to interfere. Temple had rather anticipated an attempted raid upon the chest, but Harry Wharton & Co. did not

show the slightest desire to dispute the ownership of it.

Up the stairs to the Upper Fourth passage went the victorious treasure-hunters, with half the Fourth Form and the Remove at their heels.

The chest was carried into Temple's study, and laid solemnly on the table, and there it was surrounded by Temple, Dabney & Co., and as many of their Form-fellows as could cram themselves into the room. Harry Wharton and his friends contented themselves with a place in the doorway.

"Now, then, let's get it open!" exclaimed Turner eagerly.

"All in good time," said Temple, assuming a calmness he was far from feeling. "There's no hurry."

"Hang it! I tell you—"

"Oh, keep cool!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Keep cool! Here's your chisel, Temple; you ought to be able to get it open with that."

"Good! I'll try. Give me the hammer."

"Here you are!"

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Temple placed the chisel to enter between the lid and the box, and drove it home with sharp blows of the hammer. It was the simplest way of forcing the lock.

The crowded juniors watched him breathlessly. Fellows were cramming in the passage in eager anticipation of what was to be revealed by the opening of the chest. There was a sudden commotion in the passage, and an indignant voice was heard.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Stop shoving, Bunter!"

"But I say—"

"Keep back there! There's no room—especially for a porpoise."

"Look here, you chaps, they say Temple has discovered the Greyfriars treasure—dug it up in the crypt."

"So he has!"

"Well, it's mine."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it's mine!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"I found it. I was digging it up when that ass played ghost and frightened me away—I mean frightened Wharton away. The treasure's mine, and I'm going to have it."

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"I won't! I—"

"Bundle him downstairs!"

There were suffocated yells as the fat junior was rolled away, with no gentle hand. The juniors were crowded in the passage to see what was to be seen, and no one was inclined to yield his place to Billy Bunter. Bunter was rolled away, and left gasping at the end of the passage.

Meanwhile, Temple's blows were telling on the chest. The chisel was driven home, and the strain put on the lock suddenly snapped it. It was old and in a weak condition. It parted with a sudden loud snap. There was a gasp of anticipation in the study.

The lid was open.

Temple took hold of it to raise it, draw-

ing a deep breath as he did so. The chums of the Remove in the doorway grinned at one another.

"Now we shall see what we shall see!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Open it, Temple!" shouted a dozen voices anxiously.

The captain of the Upper Fourth raised the lid of the chest.

A score of eager eyes peered into it.

Then there was a gasp.

The oaken chest was full—full to the brim! But it was not crammed with gold ingots and pieces of eight and Spanish doubloons.

Far from that!

It was full of flint stones and fragments of old iron and wood; and the musical clinks which had delighted the ears of the discoverers had evidently been caused by the stones and metal fragments clinking together.

Temple, Dabney & Co. stared into the chest, dumbfounded.

"My only hat!" gasped Scott.

"Crumbs!" said Turner. "They must have been mad—those blessed monks—to bury a lot of scrap iron like that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton.

"The monks didn't bury it—we did!"

"What!"

"Ho, ho, ho! It's a jape, you see—ha, ha, ha! That blessed old chest has knocked about the lumber-room upstairs for dog's ages!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

Temple, Dabney & Co. blinked at the chest, and blinked at Bob Cherry. The truth dawned upon their minds. It was a jape—a jape of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. rocked with laughter in the doorway.

In the passage, Fourth-Formers and Removes yelled in chorus. The utter absurdity of the situation—of the great discovery turning out to be a jape—of the chest of treasure containing nothing but stones and scrap iron—tickled all alike!

One tremendous yell of laughter swept along the passage.

Temple turned furiously upon Harry Wharton.

"You—you beasts!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give them socks!" yelled Fry.

"Oh, rather!"

And the infuriated treasure-hunters rushed towards Harry Wharton & Co., but the crowd was too thick to reach them—and the Remove chums staggered away, almost helpless with laughter, leaving the hapless treasure-seekers foaming with rage.

Upstairs, the door of Temple's study was heard to slam violently. A fresh roar of laughter from the juniors followed the slam.

What Temple, Dabney & Co. did with the treasure did not transpire. But if, at any time, anyone wished to provoke the Upper Fourth chums to personal violence, he had only to whisper the words *The Greyfriars Treasure!*

THE END.

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

is entitled:

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# A HELPING HAND!

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Early Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Great Fall.

"WHAT'S the matter with old Bootles?" whispered Jimmy Silver to his chum Lovell one morning in class.

"Goodness knows!" returned Lovell. "Looks a bit glum, doesn't he?"

Raby and Newcome, who, with Jimmy Silver and Lovell, comprised the Fistical Four of the Fourth Form at Rookwood School, were also at that moment commenting on the anxious appearance of their master.

"Must have had some bad news, I should think," whispered Newcome.

"He certainly looks rather worried over something," whispered Raby.

"Raby!" snapped Mr. Bootles suddenly.

"Yes, sir!"

"I've spoken to you once before this morning about whispering in class!" said the master sharply. "You will take a hundred lines, and please do not make it necessary for me to have to reprove you again."

"His temper seems to have suffered as well," whispered Raby to his neighbour immediately Mr. Bootles' back was turned.

"Something's upset him, that's a dead cert," answered Newcome.

The rest of the Form took the hint from Mr. Bootles' pre-emptory treatment of Raby, and resolved to mind their p's and q's.

"They could see that 'lines' was to be the order of the day for offenders against discipline, and thenceforward there was no more trouble.

"He's properly had the rats to-day," said Jimmy Silver to his chums as they made their way to the end study for tea, after classes were finished for the day.

"Expect he'll be all right to-morrow," said Lovell hopefully. "Perhaps he's queer."

Mr. Bootles had his "off" days. He was a man who did not enjoy the best of health, and his harshness was often due to the fact that he was feeling far from well.

The juniors, therefore, consoled themselves with the thought that all would be well on the morrow.

It was evident to them when they assembled in class the next morning, however, that Mr. Bootles was no better. In fact, the worried expression on his face proved quite clearly that he was a great deal worse.

Their conclusion proved to be correct, for during the interval between morning and afternoon classes, Raby saw the Head stop Mr. Bootles in the passage.

It was evident that he asked the master a question, for as the junior passed he heard him say, "Things are very bad indeed."

Raby reported this to his chums, whose feelings towards Mr. Bootles at once became sympathetic.

"I knew he'd got some trouble on his mind," said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, I thought so, too," replied Lovell, "because he's not often so ratty two days in succession."

"Well, look here," said Jimmy Silver; "we'll work like niggers this afternoon, and not give him any trouble."

"That's the sporty thing to do," agreed Lovell. "We don't want to be cads and make things worse for him."

Thus the Fistical Four trooped into class for the afternoon, firmly resolved to show their sympathy with Mr. Bootles by putting on their best behaviour.

The Classical master appeared to grow more troubled and preoccupied as the day went on, and at times his thoughts seemed to be a very long way from the business in hand.

Jimmy Silver & Co. remarked this with growing concern, and they became quite anxious for afternoon classes to end for their master's sake alone.

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At last they were dismissed, and Mr. Bootles walked wearily along the corridor towards his room.

"He's been a lot worse to-day," said Jimmy Silver. "I wish we could do something for him."

"Hear, hear!"

"The only thing we can do, as far as I can see," said Lovell, "is to stick to our work so that we don't give him any extra trouble."

"There's another thing we might do, though!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver eagerly.

"What's that?"

"Well, I suggest that we call a meeting of the Form, and put it to 'em that old Bootles is very upset about something—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up, ass, and wait till I've finished! Then we'll appeal to 'em to put their backs into their work to-morrow, and save him all the trouble they can!"

"Good!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Right-ho!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll whip up all the kids after tea, and hold the meeting at once."

Thus, an hour later, practically the whole of the Fourth Form was assembled in the Classical Common-room, and Jimmy Silver, mounted on a chair, put the proposal before the juniors.

The suggestion was well received, and approved by all, and then the members of the Classical Fourth scuttled away to put extra work into their prep, with a view to making the idea a success.

The next morning was a bitterly cold one.

Snow had fallen during the whole of the previous evening, followed by a sharp frost, and in the quad the snow was frozen hard, and icicles hung from the gutters and pipes around the school.

The Fistical Four had soon cleared a long passage in the snow, and a thin layer of ice was revealed beneath.

In a very short time an excellent slide was formed, along which the four stalwart juniors were gliding with great delight.

The slide was gradually increased in length until it was almost level with a corner of the building.

The four Classical chums became so keen and excited in their amusement, that they failed to notice the figure of Mr. Bootles come strolling round the corner of the school.

The master's head was bent over a letter which he was reading, and he paid no heed as to where he was walking, neither did he appear to hear the sounds of mirth proceeding from the merry quartette of juniors.

Newcome and Raby had just completed a particularly graceful glide, at the end of which Raby had gone down on his face on the slide with Newcome sitting on his back, when Mr. Bootles stepped on to the slide.

Not till then did the Fistical Four become aware of his presence. There was no time to utter a warning; Mr. Bootles was already gliding towards the two juniors who were sprawled across the ice.

His gown fluttered in the breeze behind him, and he threw out his arms, and his right leg shot out before him in his efforts to regain his balance, but it was no use.

A second later he collided with Newcome and Raby, and, with a gasp, he sat down with a bang upon the slide.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell found it difficult to conceal their mirth as they hurried forward to assist Mr. Bootles to rise.

"Hope you're not hurt, sir?" grinned Jimmy, as the master staggered up.

"Er—no—that is, I don't think so," murmured Mr. Bootles. "But—er—really, you know, this is very dangerous!"

"We didn't see you coming, sir, or we

should have shouted out to you," responded Jimmy Silver.

"Ah, yes, quite so," remarked Mr. Bootles; "but I was thinking of you boys. I am really afraid you will be breaking your legs."

The master of the Classical Fourth was a very placid individual in the ordinary way, and seemed to take his own severe shaking-up very mildly.

Meanwhile, Lovell had turned to gather up the things which Mr. Bootles had dropped in his fall. He picked up his hat, and was stooping to pick up the letter which had fallen from his fingers, when a sentence in it struck his eye. The words were: "We must have money now."

Lovell gasped with astonishment. Then financial troubles must be the reason for the master's worried expression during the past two or three days, he reasoned.

Then he grabbed up the letter, flushing at the thought that he had read something which was not intended for him.

Not one of the Fistical Four would ever have thought of intentionally reading anyone else's correspondence, but somehow or other Lovell had involuntarily read these words.

The sentence seemed to stand out from the rest of the letter and flash into his eye as he stooped to pick it up.

It was certain that Lovell had not been guilty of prying into that which did not concern him; he simply could not help seeing the words.

In a moment the bell rang for classes, and Lovell returned the master's property, and, together, Mr. Bootles and the juniors entered the school.

Lovell had no time to impart his discovery to the rest of the Fistical Four before class; in fact, he half doubted whether he ought to mention it at all, considering that he had obtained his information quite accidentally.

However, feeling certain that he had probed the mystery of Mr. Bootles' trouble, he made up his mind to tell the others as soon as possible.

The Fourth Form juniors stuck to the agreement to work like niggers in class, and Mr. Bootles, in spite of his obvious worry, did not fail to note the improvement in his pupils' conduct.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### An Auction Sale.

IMMEDIATELY after morning classes Lovell led his chums off to the end study, and there informed them of what he had seen in Mr. Bootles' letter that morning.

"I never thought of money troubles," admitted Jimmy Silver, when Lovell had finished.

"Nor I," said Lovell. "But there's no doubt that's what it is."

"I should have thought the Head would have given him a hand," said Raby. "From what I heard the other day, he must know about it."

"I'll tell you what we might do," said Jimmy Silver contemptuously.

"What's the wheeze, then?" asked Lovell.

"Why not an auction sale?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Auction sale, fatheads! Don't you know what an auction sale is?"

"Of course we do. But what's that to do with old Bootles' trouble?" queried Raby.

"Why, to raise money."

"What, and give it to him?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Not exactly give it to him," replied Jimmy Silver; "but we can send it anonymously through the post."



Lovell, Newcome, and Raby considered the suggestion for some minutes in silence, then Lovell spoke again.

"It's not at all a bad idea," he said. "But what are we going to sell?"

"Oh, we can rake up several things!" said Jimmy Silver confidently.

"Things that are no good, I suppose?" remarked Raby.

"Not necessarily," replied the Classical captain. "For instance, I've got a fairly decent pair of skates that I don't want now, because my pater sent me a new pair a fortnight ago."

"Just the things!" said Lovell. "Sell like hot cakes while this frost lasts."

"Then there's that old football. We've done with that now, and I dare say some Second Form kid would like it."

"True, O king!"

"We'll let one or two more of 'em into the secret," said Jimmy Silver, "so that we can get enough things to sell."

"Don't tell 'em how we found out about old Bootles, though," put in Lovell.

"All right; we needn't. We can just tell 'em we got to know that he's worried by financial troubles."

"Yes; that's all right."

"We'd better not let the rest of the Form know what we're holding the sale for," went on Jimmy, "or it might get back to old Bootles. We'll say it's for a charity."

So the Fistical Four at once left the study to seek out Hooker and Jones minor and two or three other juniors.

These fellows were invited to the end study "to discuss a matter of importance," where the scheme was put before them.

They were all quite keen on the idea, and speedily thought of a number of articles which they generously offered to put under the hammer.

By the time the Fourth-Formers trooped into classes for the afternoon it was all arranged that the various articles should be collected together immediately after tea, and that the sale should take place that evening.

The Fistical Four hurried over their tea that afternoon, and almost as soon as they had finished Hooker and Jones minor entered the end study bearing a varied assortment of articles of more or less value.

"Chuck 'em down there for the moment," said Jimmy Silver, pointing to a clear space on the floor by the cupboard.

"We'd better rake our things out now," said Lovell, rising from the table.

Each member of the Fistical Four promptly delved into his own particular and private receptacle, and the jumbled collections of personal belongings were turned over in bundles, sending forth clouds of dust from the cupboards.

Cricket-bats, boots, and skates, fishing-rods, old books, and empty jam-jars, all were mixed up together in untidy heaps.

At last, after much exertion and wallowing in dust and dirt, the Fistical Four arose from their task, having sorted out quite a number of articles for sale.

When the whole lot were piled together there was a considerable quantity of property to be disposed of.

"Not a bad show," said Jimmy Silver, as he looked upon the heap. "But I'm afraid there's not enough. You see, if we're going to send anything to Bootles, we must make it, at any rate, a fairly moderate sum. It's no good sending about ten bob."

Consequently Newcome and Raby were despatched to endeavour to collect additional articles from generously-disposed juniors towards the sale.

They were also instructed to inform all whom they met that the sale would commence in the Fourth Form class-room in half an hour.

Very soon the two boys returned to the end study, having acquired several more contributions, and Jimmy Silver pronounced the result satisfactory.

Thereupon the eager Classics commenced to transport the goods to the Fourth Class-room.

They had just carried in the last lots when the juniors commenced to troop in for the sale.

The idea had caught on in the school, and the stream of prospective purchasers which soon poured in showed that considerable interest had been aroused.

Most of those present hadn't the faintest idea why the auction was being held, and to what, or whom, the proceeds were going.

That, however, was a question of quite minor importance. They were there for the fun of the thing partly, but more particu-

larly with the object of picking up something cheap.

"Now, gentlemen!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, mounting the table and standing among the articles which were to be sold. A chair stood before him on the table to serve as a desk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Silver!"

"What price the auctioneer?"

"If those asses in the corner will kindly shut their mouths, we'll proceed with the wash—that is, we'll get on with the sale!"

There was a sudden struggle in the corner as a few of the "asses" attempted to push their way towards the table; but their efforts were nipped in the bud by half a dozen other juniors who were anxious for the sale to continue.

"Now, we have here," cried Jimmy Silver, "a very fine pair of skates, slightly rusty, but none the worse for that!"

He held up the old skates as he spoke.

"Who's going to make first bid?"

It would be impossible to state who was the first bidder, for immediately there were yells from all parts of the room at once:

"Tanner!"

"Ninence!"

"A bob!"

Jimmy Silver held up his hammer for

"Phew!" whistled several prospective purchasers.

"Come into a fortune, Raby?" piped a thin voice from somewhere in the heart of the crowd.

"No. But you'll come into a thick ear if you're not careful, young fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Going to Raby at half-a-crown!" shouted the auctioneer.

And immediately the hammer descended upon the seat of the chair with a thud.

"Gone!"

The skates were passed over to Raby, who handed up his half-crown.

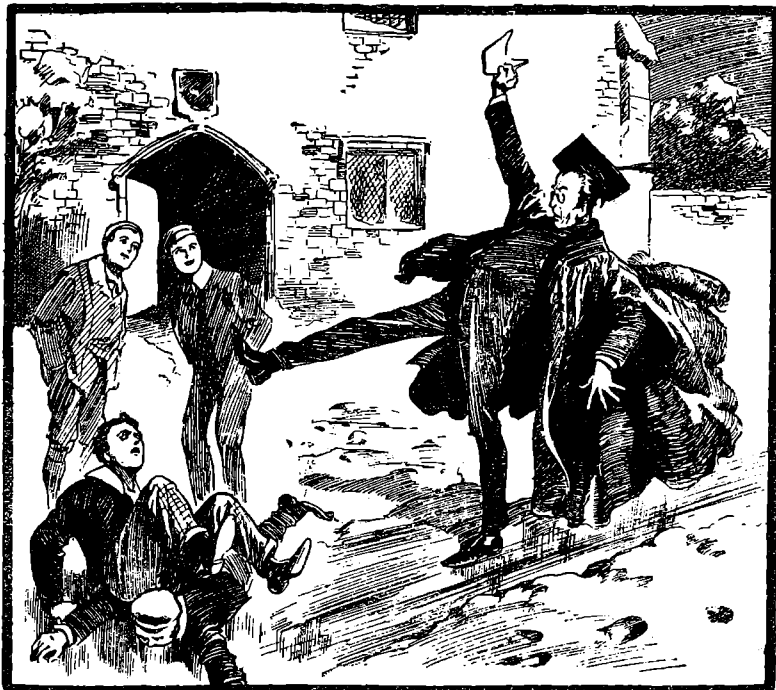
Raby was at once surrounded by a swarm of juniors, most of whom passed adverse criticism on the quality of the skates and endeavoured to impress him with an idea that he had been "done."

But Raby knew that they had cost seven-and-six only the previous season, and had already had a "ko" on them, so he knew he had value for his money.

Jimmy Silver had to use both hands to remove the "hammer-head" from the seat of the chair, for the lump of clay had stuck fast.

Then, shouting for silence, he held up a cricket-bat and demanded a bid.

The response this time was not by any



Mr. Bootles threw out his arms in an effort to save himself; but it was no use. The next moment he sat down with a bang on the slide.

silence. The hammer, by the way, consisted of a huge lump of clay stuck on the end of a ruler.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "this sale is not being held to provide an entertainment for a lot of silly fatheads; it's being held for charitable purposes!"

"Yah-hoo!"

"Sit down! Sit down!"

"Knock him down!"

Jimmy Silver paid no heed to the interruptions, but went on:

"Unless you chaps are going to make sensible offers the sale is clean off at once. Now then, a pair of skates! What offers?"

"Two bob!" cried the voice of a Third-Former.

This was rather in the way of a challenge to some of the juniors of the Fourth, and immediately a Fourth-Former yelled:

"Two-and-threepence!"

"Ah! We're getting on!" shouted Jimmy Silver, brandishing the ruler with the knob of clay. "Anybody going more?"

There was silence for a moment. Then Raby made a bid.

"Half-a-crown!" he cried,

means as spontaneous as in the case of the skates.

Cricket-bats were thoroughly out of season just now, and taunts and jibes were hurled at the devoted head of the auctioneer for being "mug enough," as someone remarked, as to put one up for sale.

However, Jimmy Silver was not in the least perturbed by the display of hostile feeling, and firmly demanded an offer before he would pass on to the next article.

While he waited a group of very small boys over by the wall were engaged in a very earnest discussion.

As a rule, Second and Third Formers were not admitted to Fourth Form affairs; but on the present occasion Jimmy Silver had decreed that all who cared to should enter, as it was necessary to sell out.

The leader of the Fistical Four had remarked previously that he very much doubted whether there was enough "filthy lucre" in the whole of the Fourth Form to sell the articles at respectable prices.

"Now then!" he cried. "Who's going to make an offer?"

"Two shillings!" piped a falsetto voice from the group of Second-Formers.

"Good!" responded the auctioneer breezily. "You are an example to your elders!"

There were loud outbursts of dissent at this remark, during which Jimmy Silver was heard through the noise asking for any further bids.

"Silence! Any more offers?"

"No!"

"Rats!"

"Large rats!"

The hammer once more descended upon the seat of the chair with a dull thud.

"The bat is yours, young Fisher!" said the auctioneer, in a very patronising tone. "And a jolly good bargain it is, too!"

The Second-Former squeezed through the throng, and advanced to the table and received the article and handed up the two shillings, one-and-sixpence of which was in coppers.

A little band of small juniors had agreed to buy the bat between them, and the various contributions had been small, mostly made up in coppers.

The sale proceeded smoothly now for some time, except once, when the lump of clay flew off the end of the ruler when Jimmy Silver was brandishing it above his head.

It descended with a severe bill on the side of a Third-Former's head, causing great confusion and consternation for some few minutes.

After being thrown around the room from one to another for about ten minutes, Jimmy Silver received it back with considerable force on his chest.

The business then continued, and a fishing-rod was sold at a good price, also a bird-cage, which had last been used for keeping white mice in.

Jimmy Silver's pocket was now bulging with money, and he realised with considerable satisfaction that the affair was proving most successful.

There were, however, still some half-dozen articles to be disposed of when the auction sale came to a sudden end.

The door opened, and Mr. Bootles stood in the entrance!

He stared over his glasses, and gave a gasp of astonishment as he beheld the extraordinary scene before him.

The smaller juniors quickly took their departure, slipping out under the master's arm. Jimmy Silver had immediately jumped down from the table, and was busying himself in collecting up the remaining articles as though he were unaware of Mr. Bootles' proximity.

"What ever is all this?" asked the master at last.

"Only just a little amateur theatricals," answered Lovell hastily, as he lifted the chair down from the table.

"Ah, yes, I see!" replied Mr. Bootles. "But these—er—rehearsals should not be held in a Form-room, you know."

"Sorry, sir," put in Jimmy Silver. "But we thought you wouldn't mind."

Mr. Bootles thought of the good conduct and loyalty of his boys in class that day, and it served them in good stead.

"Ah, no—well, I'll overlook it this time, but please do not break the rules again."

"Oh, no, sir, certainly not," responded half a dozen voices at once.

And having gathered up all their belongings, the rest of the juniors—being all Fourth-Formers, the others having made their escape—fled out.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Result.

THE remaining few articles were disposed of by hand-to-hand bartering, and the Fistical Four, with Hooker and Jones minor, locked themselves in the end study to count the proceeds of the sale.

After ten minutes of counting and re-counting it was ascertained that a sum of £4 had been raised.

"I reckon that's jolly good!" declared Lovell.

"Hear, hear!" chorused the others.

"Well, what about sending it off?" asked Hooker, in a business-like tone.

"First of all," said Jimmy Silver, "we must get it changed into notes."

"That can be done at the post-office," said Lovell.

"Quite so. Then I suggest putting it in an envelope, folded between a sheet of blank notepaper, and I'll address the envelope, in

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disguised writing, of course, and we'll post it at Coombe."

"That's the idea!"

"Well, to-morrow being Wednesday and a half-holiday, we'll hurry over our dinner and go down to the village directly after."

"Right-ho!"

"Good egg!"

These arrangements completed, the juniors had set about prep in earnest, as bedtime was fast approaching.

The next afternoon found the six juniors in the post-office at Coombe, where the £4 were soon changed into notes.

Jimmy Silver had addressed and stamped the envelope to Mr. Bootles before starting out, so it was only necessary to enclose the notes and fasten down the envelope, which, after a consultation, it was decided to register.

That done, they filed out of the post-office, and, leaving the village behind them, set out upon the journey to the school, delighted and satisfied with what they had done.

"S'pose he won't get it to-night?" said Raby.

"No; it's too late now. He'll get it first post in the morning," replied Jimmy.

"P'raps he'll look a bit more cheerful to-morrow," remarked Newcome. "I know I should if I received four quid through the post like that."

"Ha, ha!"

"I don't suppose four quid'll settle all his worries," said Raby; "but, all the same, every little helps."

The next morning Newcome was told off to get downstairs early to watch for the post-man, and see whether the school porter signed for the registered letter which had been despatched for Mr. Bootles from Coombe the previous afternoon.

The rest of the Fistical Four were just coming downstairs when Newcome rushed in excitedly and informed them that it had arrived, and had gone up to the masters' room with the rest of the letters.

"Good!" said Lovell.

"Hope he won't find out where it came from!" said Raby.

The juniors were still discussing the matter when the bell rang for classes, and they trooped in, eager to discover whether the receipt of their £4 had worked any improvement in Mr. Bootles' demeanour.

To their delight and joy the master soon appeared, looking more cheerful than they had seen him for a week past.

His breezy "Good-morning, boys!" also gave evidence to the fact that he felt a great deal better.

The Fistical Four exchanged significant glances and winks, and felt tremendously pleased with themselves.

Throughout that day Mr. Bootles continued to regain his ordinary calm demeanour, and by the end of the afternoon he was quite his old self once more.

The Fistical Four were discussing the success of their idea at teatime, and generally congratulating themselves, when a small junior came in with the message that Mr. Bootles would like to see Silver as soon as he had finished his tea.

"All right!" said Jimmy, and the messenger departed.

The Classical chums looked at each other questioningly, and no one spoke for a minute or two.

"What's the meaning of that?" asked Lovell, at length.

"Goodness only knows!" replied Jimmy Silver. "Hope nothing's gone wrong over the giddy business."

"Oh, very likely it's nothing to do with that at all," said Newcome reassuringly.

Jimmy Silver hastily finished his tea, and departed, in a very uneasy frame of mind, for Mr. Bootles' study.

The master looked up and smiled as he entered.

"Ah, Silver," he exclaimed pleasantly, "er—just sit down for a minute, will you?"

Jimmy Silver sat down, conscious that he was blushing to the roots of his hair.

Mr. Bootles, though very quiet and placid, was an exceedingly "cute man, and noticed Jimmy's confusion.

"I received this morning," went on the master, "a registered envelope containing four pounds."

"Did you, sir?" stammered Jimmy, very embarrassed, but trying to appear surprised.

"Yes," said Mr. Bootles, "and what was still more strange, there was no note or message in the envelope to indicate who had sent it."

The leader of the Fistical Four shuffled in his seat, and looked anywhere but in the master's face.

"I have—er—examined the writing on the envelope very carefully, however," continued Mr. Bootles, "and it seems to me that I recognise one or two little peculiarities which only you, as far as I know, possess."

Jimmy Silver was now feeling exceedingly uncomfortable, and only muttered "Oh!"

"Er—did you—er—by any chance send the money?" asked Mr. Bootles suddenly.

Faced with a definite and straightforward question in this way, Jimmy Silver felt that there was nothing for it but to own up, and he nodded his head.

He felt, however, as though he were owning up to a crime instead of admitting that he had been the leader in what was meant to be a kind action.

The master observed Jimmy's confusion and embarrassment, and his next question was asked very gently.

"What was the reason for it?"

Jimmy Silver hesitated, trying to think of what to say, and at last he decided to make a clean breast of the whole business.

He could see no way out of it.

So he told the whole story, relating how Lovell had quite accidentally seen the words in the letter, and how he and his chums had wished to show their sympathy with Mr. Bootles in a practical manner.

The master smiled kindly at Jimmy Silver as he concluded his explanation.

"I cannot tell you, Silver, how much I appreciate this generous action on the part of you and your chums," he said quietly. "I can only say that I am really proud of you all."

"Er—well—we hope it has been of some use," stammered Jimmy Silver very confusedly.

"It has been of great use inasmuch as it has demonstrated your loyalty to me," answered Mr. Bootles; "but, as a matter of fact, my anxiety during the past few days has not been due to financial difficulties."

Jimmy Silver jumped in his chair, and stared at the master.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Mr. Bootles smiled at the junior.

"The letter which Lovell picked up in the quadrangle," he said, "was from a friend of mine, who with two or three other gentlemen, spends his spare time in making crutches and other necessary appliances for wounded soldiers."

Jimmy continued to stare, not having yet recovered from the shock of finding that he and his chums had made a ridiculous blunder.

"He was telling me of his work in that letter," continued the master, "and of the urgent need of funds to buy materials for carrying it on."

"Oh!" exclaimed the leader of the Fistical Four once more.

"My trouble," said Mr. Bootles, "has been due to the fact that a cripple brother, of whom I am very fond, met with an accident some days ago, and has since been lying between life and death. Only this morning did I receive news that he is now out of danger."

"I'm very pleased to hear it, sir," said Jimmy Silver.

"Thank you, my boy. So I will return the money," went on Mr. Bootles, opening a drawer in his desk.

"Oh, if you wouldn't mind, sir, I would like you to send it to your friend to help on the business of the crutches," suggested Jimmy eagerly. "I know all the other fellows would say the same."

"That is exceedingly good of you," said Mr. Bootles, "and on behalf of my friend and myself I thank you and your friends most sincerely. I will send off the money at once."

Jimmy Silver rose to go, anxious to join his chums and explain what had happened.

Mr. Bootles held out his hand to Jimmy Silver, and once more thanked him, and the leader of the Fourth Form hurried to the end study.

Jimmy hastily recorded the interview and the surprise he had received.

Everyone endorsed his suggestion of sending the £4 to Mr. Bootles' friend, and thus ended the mystery of their master's trouble.

THE END.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co.

is entitled:

"THE ROOKWOOD JAPERS!"

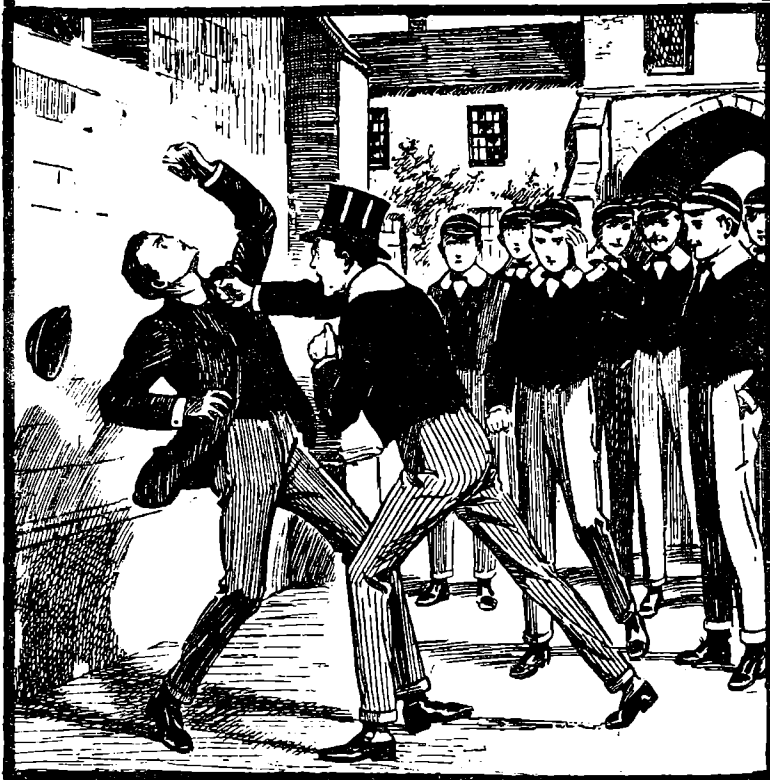
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# HIS FALSE POSITION!

*A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Early Adventures of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.*

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



Like an arrow from a bow Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dashed at the prefect, hitting out, and his fist crashed into Monteith's face. The New House prefect gave one gasp, and then fell heavily to the ground.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Knocked Down.

**Y**AROOOH! Leggo!" It was the voice of D'Arcy minor of the Third Form—Wally, the younger brother of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. That cheerful youth was twisting in a most uncomfortable way, the cause being the grip of a finger and thumb upon his ear. The finger and thumb belonged to Monteith, the obnoxious prefect of the New House.

Wally wriggled in the grasp of the senior, who looked down upon him with angry brows. Jameson and Gibson, Wally's chums in the Third, stood aside, glaring, but unable to interfere.

For a Third Form fag to interfere with a prefect was unknown and impossible. But interference from a prefect of the rival House was always bitterly resented by a School House junior.

"Leggo!" roared Wally.

"You young cad—"

"Yow! Leggo my ear, you beast!"

Monteith did not let go. Instead of that, he compressed his grip until it seemed to the unfortunate fag that his ear was in the clutch of an iron vice.

"I'll teach you to buzz your muddy footer at me!" said Monteith, between his set lips. "This is some more of your School House impudence!"

"Ow! I didn't," howled Wally. "I didn't see you coming!"

"You lying young rascal!"

"I'm not lying!" said Wally fiercely. "And you're a rotten cad to say so! Ow!"

"Take that—"

"I didn't see you coming; and besides, the footer didn't touch you," said Wally. "You can't say that it did!"

"You meant it for my head!"

"I didn't!"

"It missed me by about an inch," said Monteith. "I know very well what you meant, you cheeky young sweep!"

"Leggo!"

"Take that—and that!"

"Yowp!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy happened to be in Study No. 6, and hearing the sound of his minor's voice raised in anguish, he opened the window and leaned out. He shouted down to the New House prefect:

"Monteith, let my minah go instantly!"

Monteith looked up in sheer amazement.

"Hallo! Is that you, you saucy cad?" he exclaimed.

"Let Wally go at once, you bwute, or I'll come down to you!"

Monteith burst into a laugh. The idea of a junior of the Fourth Form coming down to him struck him as comical.

"Come down, you young cad!" he said.

"I'll give you a hiding, too!"

"Bai Jove!"

Monteith, as if to tempt the swell of St. Jim's to his doom, began to box Wally's ears right and left. Wally roared and struggled. D'Arcy, crimson with indignation and rage, rushed across the study to the door, and dashed out of the room. His footsteps rang along the passage and down the stairs.

He entered the quadrangle, and made straight for where Monteith was still bullying D'Arcy minor.

"Let him go!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Stand back, you young fool!"

D'Arcy's eyes blazed.

"If you stike my minah once more, Monteith, I shall go for you!"

Smack—smack!

D'Arcy kept his word.

Like an arrow from a bow he dashed at the prefect, hitting out, and his fists crashed together in Monteith's face.

Monteith gave one gasp, and fell heavily to the ground.

"Great Scott!"

"Phew!"

A crowd of fellows had seen Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's desperate action. The sight of a prefect falling to the ground under the hammering fists of a junior, was a sight seldom or never seen at St. Jim's before.

Monteith was hurt; but he was more astonished than hurt.

He lay on the ground, gasping, barely able to realise for a moment that he had actually been knocked down by a Fourth-Former.

Wally staggered away, his ears burning, his head swimming. D'Arcy steadied him with a hand upon his shoulder.

"Get behind me, Wally!"

"Rats!" gasped Wally. "If he goes for you, I'm going to lend a hand."

"Weally, Wally—"

"What is this?"

It was a sharp, stern voice. Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, arrived upon the scene at the same moment as Tom Merry & Co. Kildare's handsome face was very stern, and his eyes were flashing. His usual good-humoured look was quite gone. He stared at the fallen prefect, and then gave him a hand to rise.

Silence fell upon the crowd of juniors.

They hardly dared to think what would happen now.

"Monteith, what is it?"

Monteith staggered on his feet, standing unsteadily. There was a bruise on the side of his nose, and his left eye was closing. D'Arcy had hit very hard. And there was plenty of weight and strength in the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Monteith's face was white with rage.

"Where is he?" he muttered.

"Who?"

"That whelp—D'Arcy!"

"You don't mean to say that D'Arcy knocked you down?"

Monteith snarled.

"Didn't you see it? I'll smash him—I'll smash the young hound—"

"Hold on, Monteith, old man!" said Kildare quietly. "You can't fight a kid in the Fourth Form. It would be too ridiculous. If D'Arcy has done this, he will be punished for it. You can trust me to keep the juniors of my House in order."

Monteith paused.

"Very well," he said, between his teeth. "So long as he's punished, and made an example of, that's all right."

Kildare turned to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's had subdued his excitement now, and he was a little pale. He had had time to realise the seriousness of what he had done. But he did not lose courage. His clear blue eyes met Kildare's angry gaze without finching.

"You have struck a prefect, D'Arcy," said Kildare, in a hard voice.

"Yaas, watahah!"

"Have you any excuse to make?"

"He was bullyin' my minah!"

"Whatever Monteith was doing, you know that you have no right to strike a prefect, D'Arcy," said Kildare sternly.

"Wally, Kildare—"

"I shall leave it to the Head to decide upon your punishment," said the captain of St. Jim's. "If he decides upon a flogging, it will be no more than you deserve."

"Bai Jove!"

"Come! I suppose you are satisfied to leave it at that, Monteith?"

The New House prefect nodded.

"Yes, I am satisfied."

"Good! Come, D'Arcy!"

"Very well, Kildare," said D'Arcy quietly.

Without another word he followed the captain of St. Jim's from the spot. The crowd of juniors stood silent and dismayed.

Monteith turned away. There was a spiteful smile upon his face; he was satisfied with the extent of D'Arcy's punishment. At

the least it would be a severe caning, and condemnation from the Head—whose opinion D'Arcy respected very much.

The look upon Monteith's face did not escape the juniors.

Tom Merry hissed.

In a moment it was taken up by the whole crowd—New House fellows as well as School House:

"Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!"

Monteith turned a furious face upon the crowd.

"You young rascals—"

"Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!"

The prefect clenched his hands. He was inclined to rush upon the crowd of juniors, hitting out, but a saving remnant of common-sense warned him that he would make himself ridiculous by doing so—and he would undoubtedly be roughly handled, too. There was safety in numbers; and all the juniors could not be caned at once, and if Monteith had charged that crowd, it was certain that he would have been bumped over in the quad.

"Cad!"

"Bully!"

"Rotter!"

"Yah!"

"Hiss-s-s-s-s!"

Monteith set his lips, and strode away—and the hissing of the juniors followed him to the very door of the New House.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Facing the Music.

**D**R. HOLMES' quiet voice bade Kildare enter as he tapped at the study door. Kildare opened the door, and signed to D'Arcy to enter first.

The swell of St. Jim's, with a troubled face but a firm step, passed into the study, and Kildare followed him in and closed the door. Dr. Holmes glanced at the two boys, the senior and the junior, laid down his pen, and his kind face became grave. He could see that something very unusual had happened.

"What is the matter, Kildare?"

"I have to report D'Arcy, sir, for striking a prefect."

"Goodness gracious!"

"He knocked Monteith down in the quadrangle, sir. I thought I had better leave the matter with you to deal with."

"Quite right, Kildare. It is a serious matter."

Kildare quitted the study, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy alone with the Head. The swell of St. Jim's stood very firmly upon his feet, his eyes fixed on the carpet.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir."

"You do not deny what Kildare has stated?"

"No, sir."

"You have actually knocked a prefect down?"

"Yaas, sir."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"I suppose you know that your punishment for such an act will be very severe," he said. "I cannot pass it over, if I would."

"I suppose so, sir."

"What was your reason for committing this unheard-of action, D'Arcy? You have always had a good reputation in the House hitherto, I believe."

"He was bullyin' my minah, sir, and I intahfered."

"You interfered with a prefect engaged in administering punishment to a junior of the Third Form?" exclaimed Dr. Holmes sternly.

"Yaas, sir."

"You must know that that was wrong, D'Arcy."

The junior was silent.

"And it was only your opinion that Monteith was carrying the punishment to excess, I suppose?" went on the Head.

"Any of the fellows would say so, sir."

"Juniors, I suppose?"

"Well, yaas!"

"Juniors are very liable to be mistaken as to the amount of punishment they deserve," said the Head very drily. "Under any circumstances, D'Arcy, nothing can justify a boy in the Fourth Form knocking down a prefect. The thing is utterly unheard-of, and discipline must be maintained. I am doubtful whether I ought not to flog you in public, but upon the whole I shall administer a severe caning instead."

D'Arcy set his lips.

"Vewy well, sir," he said.

Dr. Holmes rose to his feet. He selected a cane, with a very grave expression upon his face. Dr. Holmes did not like adminis-

tering punishment, a fact the boys knew very well; but he did not shrink from what he considered his duty.

As for D'Arcy, he could hardly say whether he thought he ought to be punished or not. Undoubtedly discipline had to be maintained in the school, and juniors could not be allowed to strike prefects, themselves being the judges of whether they were justified in doing so.

But it was hard upon the swell of St. Jim's; and in D'Arcy's heart, usually full of kindness and good feeling, a very bitter feeling towards Monteith was growing up.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

D'Arcy held out his hand quietly. Dr. Holmes was not a believer in the efficacy of the rod, as a rule. But on some occasions he was severe, and this was one of them.

D'Arcy was soundly caned.

He endured the caning without a murmur, although the pain of it made his face go white, and brought a hard, strained look into his eyes.

When it was over, Dr. Holmes laid down the cane.

"You may go, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, sir," said D'Arcy quietly. And he quitted the study.

Tom Merry & Co. were waiting for him in the passage.

"Had it bad?" asked Blake sympathetically.

"Yaas," said D'Arcy, with a catch in his breath.

"It's a rotten shame," said Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"It's a wotten shame," he said. "Not for the Head, though—I suppose he had to cane me, undah the cires."

"Well, yes; but—"

"It's all Monteith's fault, the wotten cad!"

"We'll make him sit up for it!" said Blake vengefully. "I don't know how, but we will."

"I will, wathah," said D'Arcy, with a click of the teeth.

Tom Merry looked rather unasily into the set, white face of the Fourth-Former.

"Hold on, Gussy!" he said. "What are you thinking of doing, old man?"

D'Arcy did not reply.

"Gussy, what idea have you got in your head?"

"None, at pwsent," said D'Arcy; "but I am goin' o punish that wotten cad Monteith, somehow. He's a weptile, and ought to be cwashed."

"Hear, hear!"

"Mind how you go for him," said Monty Lowther. "You see, a prefect has the upper hand, and you don't want to give him a chance of going for you again."

D'Arcy did not reply.

He went up to his study, and was not seen again till afternoon school. When the Fourth Form were going to their Form-room for afternoon lessons, Figgins & Co. of the New House joined D'Arcy in the Form-room passage.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the Fourth were always the champions of the New House in their little rows with the School House juniors. But they liked their head prefect as little as the School House fellows did.

"I'm sorry!" said Figgins. "I've heard about it, Gussy. Monteith is a beast."

"Thank you vewy much, Figgy, deah boy." "It was rotten!" said Kerr. "Monteith's been frightfully touchy lately. We've had lots of trouble with him ourselves."

"Yes," said Patty Wynn, with a sigh, "he collared a pork-pie of mine yesterday."

"It's a beastly shame, Gussy!" said Figgins. "If I were in the Sixth I'd give him a hiding! But this is one of the things juniors have to put up with."

"I'm not goin' to put up with it!"

Figgins stared.

"I don't see what you can do," he remarked.

Arthur Augustus did not reply, and the Fourth-Formers went into their class-room. During afternoon classes D'Arcy's face was very pale and set, and he went through his work almost like one in a dream.

It was evident that he was thinking of his wrongs, and of the punishment he intended to mete out, in some as yet unknown manner, to the head prefect of the New House.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### A Licking for Levison.

"FAG!"

It was Monteith who called. Levison of the Fourth looked round and walked quickly away.

It was the day after the trouble between

Monteith and D'Arcy, and in the clear, keen winter's morning a good many of the School House juniors were out in the quad, punting a ball about before breakfast.

Levison, who seldom joined in any healthy exercises of that sort, was lounging about the quad, with his hands in his pockets, when Monteith called to him. Monteith had come out of the gym, and Levison happened to be near the door of that building.

"Fag! Levison, come here!"

Levison panted.

"Come here at once, Levison! Do you hear?"

Levison gritted his teeth, and turned back. He did not dare to resist an open order like this, and it was no longer possible to pretend not to hear. He came slowly and reluctantly towards Monteith, with a very sulky expression on his face.

"What do you want?" he asked surlily.

"I want a fag."

"You've no right to fag me. Oh!"

Smack!

Levison reeled under the smack of Monteith's open hand. He clapped his hand to his ear, and stood looking at Monteith with glittering eyes.

"You bully!" he muttered under his breath.

"What? What did you say, Levison?"

"Nothing," said Levison sullenly.

"Go to my study in the New House!" said Monteith angrily. "Fetch my coat. You'll find it hanging on the door. Bring it to me here!"

"All right!"

Levison walked away to the New House. Monteith returned into the gym, and then Levison's pace slackened down. He was greatly inclined to go into the School House and neglect the errand altogether. But he thought of Wally's punishment, and decided that he had better do as Monteith told him. He entered the New House, and the first person he met was Mr. Ratcliff, the House-master of the New House. Mr. Ratcliff frowned at him.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

"If you please, sir—" began Levison.

Mr. Ratcliff pointed to the door.

"Go out at once!" he said. "You have no right in this House, Levison, and I am determined to put down the House quarrels that are continually going on, at least so far as this House is concerned." Mr. Ratcliff may keep the School House in the state of a bear-garden if he pleases, but I will have nothing of the sort here. Take fifty lines!"

"But, sir—"

"Go!"

"I came here to—"

"A hundred lines, Levison; and I shall mention your impertinence to your House-master!" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "Now leave the House at once, or I shall cane you. Not another word!"

There was no choice for Levison; he had to go. With a very dubious expression upon his face, the junior crossed the quad again. He had to tell Monteith that he was not allowed to enter and fetch the coat, and he was very doubtful about how Monteith would take it.

Again he was tempted to beat a retreat into the School House, but again came the reflection that Monteith would not forget, and that he was bound to meet the prefect again in the course of the day. He went into the gym.

Monteith was talking to Knox of the Sixth, a School House prefect. He looked towards Levison as the latter entered the gym.

"Where's my coat?" he demanded.

"I haven't got it," said Levison sullenly.

"I sent you for it!" snapped Monteith.

"Yes, but—"

"You haven't brought it?"

"No; because—"

"Come here!"

Levison backed away.

"Look here, Monteith!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't get your coat. Mr. Ratcliff—"

"Don't tell me any lies!" said Monteith.

"I know perfectly well why you haven't got the coat. Come here!"

"I'd lick the young cad if I were you, Monteith!" said Knox; and he strolled out of the gym.

"I'm going to," said Monteith.

Levison panted.

"Look here, Monteith! Mr. Ratcliff stopped me. He wouldn't let me—"

"Don't tell lies!" said the prefect harshly.

"But I tell you—"

"I know your reputation," said the prefect, truly enough. "You are the worst liar in the School House, excepting Mellish, perhaps. But you don't deceive me, you young fool. I know your little game; you don't want to fag."

And he caught Levison by the collar.

The cad of the Fourth struggled. "Let me go!" he yelled. "I tell you—Oh, oh, oh!"  
 Smack, smack, smack!  
 Levison yelled as Monteith boxed his ears savagely. Levison never could bear pain. He struggled in vain in the powerful grasp of the prefect. Hardly knowing what he was doing, he kicked out savagely, and his boot caught the prefect on the shin.  
 Monteith gave a yell of anguish.  
 A kick on the shin is painful at any time, and Levison had kicked hard. He made an attempt to wrench himself away, but in spite of the pain in his shin Monteith held him fast.

"You young ruffian!" the prefect gasped. "I'll make you sorry for that!"  
 "Let me go!" yelled Levison.  
 "Yes, I'll let you go when I've thrashed you!" said the New House prefect between his teeth.

And he did thrash Levison, with a savage force that made the junior writhe and twist and kick furiously. But Monteith took care not to get any more of the kicks, and he thrashed Levison till his arm ached.

Then he flung him away from him and strode from the gymnasium.  
 He limped a little as he went. There was a big bruise on his shin, and he was still suffering excruciating pain.

Levison lay where Monteith had flung him, dazed and white, and almost sobbing. It was but seldom that tears were seen in Levison's eyes, but they were there now.  
 "Oh!" he gasped. "Oh, the brute—the brute!"

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
 D'Arcy Declines.**

**B**LESSED if I like it!" Jack Blake made that remark. School was over, and the Terrible Three had paused in the passage to chat with Blake & Co. of the Fourth. Tea was the subject under discussion, and it was admittedly a most important subject.

Tom Merry had had a remittance from his old governess, Miss Priscilla Pawcett. Digby had had a postal-order from his "pater." The idea had occurred to them to combine resources, and have a tea of unusual magnitude that evening.

The grand question was, whether it should take place in Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage, or in Study No. 6—and whether Figgins & Co. of the New House should be invited.

Jack Blake had been unusually silent. As a rule, he had no difficulty whatever in contributing his fair share to a conversation. But now he was silent, and his glance had followed the retreating form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the latter went upstairs. Then he broke silence with the remark that he was blessed if he liked it.

All eyes turned upon him at once.  
 "If you don't like the idea, you've only got to say so," remarked Tom Merry, a little huffily. "I thought it would be a good wheeze to stand the feed together."

"Oh, I was thinking about Gussy!" said Blake. "Blow tea!"

"Oh, blow Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "I was thinking about tea."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's getting serious," said Blake, "and I'm blessed if I like it."

"Blessed if you like what?" asked Tom Merry, perplexed.

"Haven't you noticed Gussy?"  
 "Not specially. Has he got a new neck-tie?"

"Don't be an ass!"  
 "A fancy waistcoat, then?"

"Fathead! He's got something on his mind," said Blake. "He's still thinking about that row with Monteith yesterday."

"Oh, he'll get over that!" said Manners. Blake shook his head.

"That's just it," he said. "He doesn't show any signs of getting over it, and that's what I'm worried about. He's hardly spoken to-day; and he's been quite snappish, and that's not like Gussy. It's weighing on his mind. You know what a stickler he is for his precious dignity. He can't get over having been caned by the Head, because of Monteith. I'm sure he's got some blessed dotty idea in his napper for getting even with Monteith, but he won't say a word on the subject. It worries me."

Tom Merry looked grave.

"We'll make him have a jolly tea, and cheer him up," he said. "Look here, you fellows, go and get in the grub, and take it to my study, and Dig can cut across and

fetch Figgins & Co. We'll have Kangaroo, Lumley-Lumley, and young Reilly, and make a jolly party of it. And Blake and I will bring Gussy, whether he likes it or not."

"Good egg!" said Digby.  
 "I don't believe he'll come," said Blake. "And if we have tea in Study No. 6, he'll go out. I don't half like the frame of mind he's got into."

"Let's go and see him."  
 "Well, that won't do any harm, I suppose," said Blake.

And Tom Merry and Blake went up to the Fourth Form passage, while the other fellows went upon their various errands of gathering in the guests and the provisions for the feed in Tom Merry's study.

Tom Merry and Blake went into Study No. 6. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was standing at the window looking out into the wintry dusk of the quadrangle, and so absorbed in gloomy thoughts that he did not hear the two juniors enter.

And we—we want you to sing a tenor solo after tea."

"Even that did not move D'Arcy. "Thank you vewy much," he said. "But weally, deah boys, I do not feel at all in form for singin'. I'd weally wathah not come."

"Look here," said Tom Merry seriously. "What's up with you? It's not right or healthy to mope like this. Shake it off!"

"I'll shake it off when I've punished Monteith," said D'Arcy.

"What are you thinking of doing?"  
 No reply.

"You've got a scheme?"  
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Tell us what it is."  
 The swell of the School House did not speak.

"Look here, Gussy, we'll help you and back you up!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We can't say any fairer than that. You can rely on us."



"I—I can hardly believe that you mean to go without giving me away," muttered Levison. "I suppose you mean it? I know you do! I wish I could save you! I wish— But what's the good of wishing? If I say a word I shall have to go in your place! I can't face it! But—but—I'd like you to say that you forgive what I've done, D'Arcy, before you go."

Blake coughed loudly.

"Ahem!"

D'Arcy did not turn his head.

"Ahem-m-m!" coughed Tom Merry.

The swell of the Fourth could not help hearing that. He turned his head, and nodded to the two juniors, but his face did not relax.

"Coming to tea in my study, Gussy?" said Tom Merry jovially.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"No. Pway excuse me, deah boy."

"But it's tea-time."  
 "I am not hungry."

"Rot!" said Blake bluntly. "You must be. Who ever heard of a real human boy who wasn't hungry at tea-time?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Besides, we want you to come," said Blake. "Tom Merry and Dig are standing this feed between them. Kangy and Reilly and Lumley are coming, and Figgins & Co.

"I'm not goin' to dwag anybody else into it. Look here, deah boys, I wish you'd leave me alone for a bit," said D'Arcy abruptly. "I don't feel inclined for company just now, and that's the twuth. Pway wethire."

Blake and Tom Merry exchanged a hopeless glance, and left the study. They knew from experience of old how useless it was to argue with the swell of St. Jim's when he had made up his mind. D'Arcy had a certain quality in his nature which he called firmness, but which the other fellows called obstinacy.

"Blessed if I like it!" said Blake again, as they went down the passage. "When Gussy gets into that sort of temper you never know what's going to happen. I don't always quite understand Gussy. I hope he's not thinking of anything that will get him into trouble with the Head. I shall jolly well keep an eye on him, I think."

"You'd better," said Tom Merry. "And the subject was dropped, but it left Jack Blake considerably uneasy about his chum.

Arthur Augustus remained alone in the Fourth Form study. He had not lighted the gas, and the dusk had fallen thickly.

There was a step at the door, and someone came in, but in the growing darkness D'Arcy could not see who it was.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Me."

"Levison?"

"Yes," said Levison, closing the door, and coming forward in the gloom. "What are you in the dark for, D'Arcy?"

"I pwefer it."

"I want to speak to you, D'Arcy." Levison's voice was low, and had a strange sound in it like the hissing of a snake. "I've had some trouble with Monteith to-day. He picked on me, and gave me an awful licking—for nothing!"

"The wottah!"

"Will you help me?" muttered Levison. "I've got a scheme for making the rotter smart for what he's done, and I want someone to help me. You've got just as much up against him as I have, and you're game, I think."

"I'm game enough," said D'Arcy quietly.

"But—"

"I've got a good idea," said Levison between his teeth. "Monteith has taken to having a sprint round the quad of a night now to keep himself in form for footer. He always follows exactly the same way—I've seen him a lot of times—round by the clock-tower, you know, and down the path alongside the Head's garden. It will be pretty dark to-night, and a couple of us could wait for him there—"

"Weally—"

"A cord tied across the path would bring him down," said Levison between his teeth. "We could have a couple of cricket-stumps with us. In the dark he'd never see who hit him, and we could keep our mouths shut afterwards. I—"

"Look here—"

"I shouldn't care to do it alone," said Levison; "and Mellish is too cowardly. If you care to help me, we'll make Monteith sorry he touched either of us."

"You cad!"

"What!"

D'Arcy's eyes were gleaming. "You dare to pwoopose to me to attack a fellah in the dark and hit him when he's down!" he exclaimed angrily. "You are an uttah cad!"

Levison gritted his teeth.

"I suppose we can't go for a prefect openly!" he said sullenly. "I don't want to be expelled from the school, if you do!"

"Expelled or not, I shall go for him openly!" said D'Arcy. "And if he were ten times as great a bwute, I wouldn't hit him in the dark!"

"Say you're afraid, and have done with it!" sneered Levison.

"I am not afraid, you wottah! But—"

"Well, what I've said to you is in confidence," said Levison, backing away a little. "You won't repeat it?"

"Of course I won't, you wottah!"

"Not a word—honour bright?"

"Honah bwight! Now get out of my studdy!" said Arthur Augustus. "You make me sick!"

And Levison got out!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Levison's Revenge.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY started. He was crossing the dark and deserted quad when suddenly there came a sharp cry.

The cry came from the direction of the path along the wall of the Head's garden, and in a flash there came back into D'Arcy's mind what Levison had said to him.

Had Levison been foolish enough—

The thought did not finish in his mind. There was another sharp cry of pain from the darkness, and D'Arcy ran towards the spot.

He ran into a shadowy figure that was running from the path, and he stopped, with a breathless ejaculation:

"Levison!"

"Silence!" muttered Levison thickly, and his eyes were gleaming strangely in the gloom. "Hold your tongue, for goodness sake!"

"What have you done?"

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"You know."

"You've hit him—down—"

"No—no!" muttered Levison hastily. "On my word, I haven't touched him! He—he's only bumped over on the cord!"

"Oh!" said D'Arcy, in relief.

"But—but you know what it will mean if it's known I did it!" Levison muttered. "Not a word about seeing me here, D'Arcy! Remember, you promised to keep mum!"

"Vewy well!" said D'Arcy. "But—"

"Promise!"

"I pwomise!"

"Good!"

Levison disappeared into the shadows.

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

It was no business of his to succour Monteith, the bully whom he had been planning to punish. But—

Monteith was calling out in pain. What did it mean? If he had been running hard when he caught his foot in the cord across the path, he might have had a nasty fall; he might even have broken a limb. D'Arcy's kind heart could feel no malice or resentment, with a thought like that in his mind. He ran quickly towards the spot.

The gloom was thick under the trees that grew over the wall of the Head's garden. Leafless as the trees were, they shut out the faint glimmer of the moon, and there were no stars.

"Help! Oh!"

Then there was a groan.

"Bai Jove!" muttered D'Arcy. "He must be hurt! Levison is a silly ass! The chap's leg might be broken. Bai Jove!"

He stumbled over a fallen form in the path by the wall—a form that was painfully rising. There was a cry again, and then a pair of hands clutched at the swell of St. Jim's in the darkness, and grasped him.

"I've got you!"

"Monteith!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah—it is I! What has happened?"

"You young villain!" said Monteith thickly. "You know what you've done! Help! Help!" He raised his voice, and shouted.

Arthur Augustus struggled in the grasp of the prefect.

"Let me go, you wottah!"

"Help!"

"I came here to help you!"

"Hold your lying tongue! Help!" shouted Monteith.

Lights were dancing in the quadrangle row. Monteith's cries had reached half the ears in St. Jim's, and fellows were pouring out into the quadrangle.

Kildare's voice could be heard ringing in the distance.

"What's the matter? Where are you?"

"Here!" shouted Monteith.

The captain of St. Jim's came striding up. There was a crowd of seniors and juniors behind him, and with them came Tom Merry & Co. Fatty Wynn still had a half-finished tart in his hand.

D'Arcy wrenched himself away from the prefect.

"You uttah wottah!" he gasped. "I—I—"

"Stop him!" shouted Monteith.

"Stop who?"

"D'Arcy!"

"D'Arcy, stop!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Stop here!"

"Vewy well, but—"

Kildare flashed the lamp upon Monteith. Two or three more fellows had bicycle lanterns, and Lumley-Lumley had a pocket electric-lamp. The light gleamed upon the prefect, and a cry of horror rose from the whole crowd.

Monteith was in running clothes. He had been taking a sprint round the path in the dark, when he stumbled over the cord stretched across the path. The cord was there, and close to it was a quantity of broken glass. Monteith had crashed down upon the broken glass, and his hands and knees were badly torn, and there were gashes on his face. His scanty garb, in many places, was stained with blood.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Kildare, agast.

"Oh!" murmured Blake. "Gussy, what have you done?"

Arthur Augustus whirled round upon Blake. His eyes blazed with anger.

"Blake, do you think I did that?"

"I—I don't know! Who did?"

D'Arcy was about to speak. The name of Levison was upon his lips. But he remembered his promise.

He had had no idea of this when he had given his word to Levison:

But he had given it.

A promise was a promise, and if he broke it, the cad of the Fourth would be expelled from St. Jim's for this villainous act of revenge.

He could not break his word.

The unuttered words died upon D'Arcy's lips.

"Well?" said Blake.

D'Arcy was silent.

Kildare's hand dropped with an iron grip on D'Arcy's shoulder.

"Did you do it, D'Arcy?"

"No, Kildare."

"He's lying," said Monteith fiercely. "He's lying! He actually fell over me as I was getting up, and I seized him, or he'd have run."

"There's blood on D'Arcy's hands," said Mellish.

It was true enough.

Monteith's hands were bleeding profusely, and a great deal of the blood had been transferred to D'Arcy in their struggle.

The fellows gazed at it in horror.

To their minds it seemed like conclusive proof.

"Good heavens!" muttered Kangaroo.

"Oh, D'Arcy!"

"It's horrible!" said Figgins, in a low voice. "He must have been mad."

D'Arcy gave a cry.

"I didn't do it! Do you think I should play a wotten cowardly twick like that? You must be mad, I think!"

"Who did then?" sneered Monteith.

D'Arcy did not speak.

"You were here?" said Kildare.

"I was walkin' undah the twees, when I heard Monteith call out."

"Liar!" said Monteith.

"You wottah!"

"Silence, D'Arcy. What did you do when you heard Monteith cry out?"

"I came here to help him."

"You came here to help Monteith?" said Kildare grimly.

"Yaas."

"You knew it was Monteith, then?"

"Yaas."

"How did you know it?"

The crowd listened breathlessly.

Now, indeed, did D'Arcy know that it was Monteith who had fallen over the stretched cord? The cry Monteith had given, that cry of pain, might have been uttered by anybody at St. Jim's. It was not till after D'Arcy was in his grasp that he shouted for help, and his voice could be recognised.

"I heard Monteith's cry. I did not know it was Monteith. How did you know it was, D'Arcy?" asked Kildare.

D'Arcy was silent.

"You know, because you knew that the cord was to be stretched across the path there, with the broken glass for him to fall on?" said Kildare harshly.

"No, no—not the glass. I never knew that."

"I'm afraid you won't get anybody to believe that," said the captain of St. Jim's drily. "You couldn't have known it was Monteith tumbling down here, unless you knew that the trap was laid for him."

"Plain enough," said Knox.

"I knew it," said D'Arcy. "I didn't know about the glass, but the wope—yes, I knew a chap thought of doin' it. I didn't know he'd done it."

"And you came to help Monteith?"

"Yaas."

"It's a lie!" said Monteith fiercely. "It's a lie! He was close here when I came by. I saw a shadow move by the wall just before I fell over the rope, and came down on the glass. He was here."

"The fellow who did it was here, you mean," said Jack Blake, speaking up for his chum, though in a doubtful and hesitating way.

"Someone was here, at all events, then," said Kildare quietly. "If it was some other fellow, he must have run off, and passed quite close to D'Arcy, if D'Arcy was running up at the same time. Did you see anybody, D'Arcy?"

"It was dark," said Tom Merry.

Kildare took no notice of the remark. He had seen that D'Arcy's face had grown very pale and strained.

"Did you see anybody, D'Arcy?" he repeated.

The junior did not answer.

"Will you speak?"

"Yaas, I did," muttered D'Arcy.

"Who was it?"

No reply.

"Who was it, D'Arcy?"

"I—I can't tell you."

"Why not?"

"I pwomised not to!"

There was a long pause.

D'Arcy stood erect, defiant.

There was condemnation in almost every face now.

Hardly a fellow there but believed that the explanation, made at the last moment by the swell of St. Jim's, was a mere subterfuge, a dodge adopted because there was no real explanation to give.

It was easy to say that he had promised not to reveal the identity of the fellow who had played that trick upon Monteith.

But it was not so easy for fellows to believe him.

Kildare's face grew very hard and stern.

"You saw the fellow, then, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Yaas."

"And you promised not to give him away?"

"Yaas."

"And then you came to 'help Monteith'?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And you expect us to believe that?" said the captain of St. Jim's contemptuously.

"Certainly!" said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I expect my word to be taken."

"I think you will be disappointed, then," said Kildare drily. "I think the yarn is a little bit too thick. Go into the House. This matter is for the Head to decide. Monteith, you'd better get those cuts seen to at once. Let me help you."

"Thanks, Kildare!"

Monteith moved away towards the New House, leaning on Kildare's arm.

The crowd broke up.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away towards the School House, feeling like a fellow in the grip of a torturing dream.

There was a suspicion in every face round him—suspicion or condemnation.

Even his own chums were silent.

Jack Blake, as a rule, would have stood by D'Arcy through thick and thin, and would have hit out promptly at anyone who suggested that the swell of St. Jim's was capable of any mean or cowardly action.

But now he felt overwhelmed.

What was he to think?

Monteith had been buried upon the broken glass by the hidden cord, and D'Arcy had been upon the spot.

D'Arcy, as all the House knew, had been mentally elaborating some scheme for avenging the injuries he had received from the New House prefect. He had refused to reveal what it was. He had said that he would not drag other fellows into it.

Was this the scheme?

How could the fellows doubt?

D'Arcy had always been believed incapable of a cruel or base action, but D'Arcy had not been himself lately.

His wrongs had preyed upon his mind, and he had been excitable, strangely sullen, almost feverish of late.

In that miserable frame of mind had he done this wretched thing?

Blake felt his heart as heavy as lead.

Was it possible to doubt it?

The explanation the swell of St. Jim's had given was too feeble. True, D'Arcy had always been supposed to be incapable of a falsehood. But, faced with the sudden realisation of what he had done, and with the prospect of being expelled from the school in disgrace, had he not lied?

It was only too probable.

The terrible weight of evidence was against the swell of St. Jim's, and he felt it himself, and his head bowed a little as he walked into the School House.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the hall.

But no one spoke to D'Arcy.

He went slowly and quietly up to his own study, and no voice was raised to address him as he went.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Waiting for the Verdict!

D'ARCY had been taken in to see the Head.

The news was soon over the whole school.

New House fellows and School House fellows gathered in the passage, waiting for Arthur Augustus to come out of the Head's study.

What would the verdict be?

There was only one possible verdict, in the general opinion of the St. Jim's fellows. D'Arcy's guilt was as clear as daylight. He would be expelled. The only question was whether he would be flogged as well.

And most of the fellows considered that he deserved it.

Monteith had gone to bed in the New House, and the doctor from Rylcombe had attended his injuries.

Even his own chums hesitated to credit it.

Tom Merry & Co. were in a very unpleasant position. They wanted to stand by Arthur Augustus, but it seemed impossible to do so without appearing to justify what had been done. And they could not do that.

Yet it was a great shock to them to think that the swell of St. Jim's might be expelled.

There was a sudden movement in the crowd, a buzz of deep-drawn breath. The handle of the Head's door had turned.

The door opened. Another buzz. D'Arcy appeared in the doorway erect, collected, with pale cheeks, but firm lips and steady eyes.

He came out and closed the door behind him, and walked down the passage, the juniors standing back to give him room to pass.

Blake pressed forward.

"Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus looked at him.

"Well?" he said.

"What's the verdict, Gussy?"

Tom Merry laid a hand on D'Arcy's arm.

"Are you sacked?"

D'Arcy raised his head high.

"Yaas."

The juniors fell back. They had expected it; they could hardly have dreamed of anything else; but it was a terrible shock to them.

"Sacked?" repeated Blake.

"Yaas."

"Oh!"

"I am expelled from St. Jim's," said D'Arcy quietly. "I explained to the Head that I was innocent, and that I had nothin' to do with the mattah. He did not believe me. I am expelled from St. Jim's, and I am to leave by the first twain in the mornin'. That's all."

"It's a shame—a rotten shame!" almost sobbed Wally.

"Sacked!" repeated Blake dazedly.

Arthur Augustus walked down the passage, and the crowd were left to discuss the matter. D'Arcy's head was high and his step was firm.

He might be guilty—all the school believed him guilty—but one who was perfectly innocent could not have carried himself more proudly and bravely.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had no more to say; but the school soon knew the details of what had passed in the Head's study.

Expelled!

It was a terrible word, and it rang unpleasantly in the ears of the juniors. It meant so much to a lad. A fellow who had been expelled from a public school, especially on such a charge, could hardly hope to obtain admittance to any other school of good standing. It meant a stain upon his name for life.

Yet, if he was guilty, he deserved it.

No one questioned that; and in spite of Wally's vehement championship, and Blake's lingering hope, all St. Jim's had made up its mind upon that subject.

Arthur Augustus did not appear in the Common-room again. He went up to the dormitory to pack his boxes. The swell of St. Jim's had plenty of packing to do, and he was to leave the school by the first train in the morning.

He wondered whether his old chums would come up to help him pack. He hoped that they would not. Something wet was on his lashes as he bent over his boxes.

Packing was a miserable task; it was like saying farewell a hundred times to the old scenes he loved so well. This waistcoat he had worn when Cousin Ethel came to tea in the study; that topper had figured on another important occasion; he had first worn his green-and-black necktie to tea with the Head—and so on.

Everything, as he packed it in the boxes, had some association attached to it that made a lump rise in his throat as he thought of it.

The dormitory door opened.

A junior came in with white cheeks and staring eyes. It was Levison. D'Arcy looked at him grimly, without a word.

Yet even he could feel a twinge of pity for the wretched junior.

Levison dared not own up what he had done. If he wanted to, he dared not. To face expulsion—he had not the courage! He simply could not do it! Bad Levison undoubtedly was—bad at heart. But he was not heartless; he was not without feelings.

He felt how much he was wronging D'Arcy; he felt, dimly, how nobly D'Arcy was repaying his meanness and cowardice. Levison's heart was heavy, and his conscience was torn with remorse and fear; and perhaps remorse predominated.

He looked at the open boxes and at the

scattered property of the swell of St. Jim's, and for some moments he could not speak.

"You're really going?" he gasped at last.

D'Arcy nodded.

"You're sacked?"

"Yaas."

"And—you're really going—without—without giving me away?"

Levison's tone and look showed that he could hardly believe it yet.

"I gave you my word," said D'Arcy simply.

Levison choked.

"I—I'd own up if I dared!" he muttered.

"I'm a beast—a rotten beast—I know I am, D'Arcy! I—I'd never have believed that there was such a decent chap in the world as you are! I—I'd own up, but I can't! I dare not!"

"It's all wight."

"It's isn't all right!" groaned Levison. "Do you think I'm such a rotter as to let you go like this, without—without feeling what a frightful worm I am? I—I'd go to the Head at once, and—and tell him, only—"

"I don't expect you to, Levison."

Levison laughed bitterly.

"You know I haven't the pluck!" he muttered. "If—if it were only a caning, or even a flogging; but I daren't go home. I daren't face my people and tell 'em I've been sacked! I couldn't do it!"

"It's all wight," said D'Arcy again.

"And—and you don't bear any malice?" muttered Levison.

D'Arcy was silent.

"I'm a fool to ask that, of course," said Levison wretchedly. "I know how you must hate me, of course you must!"

"I don't hate you, Levison," said D'Arcy, after a pause. "You had no wight to get that pwomise out of me you know that. I shouldn't have given you my word if I had known what a howwible thing you meant to do. If you were a decent chap, you'd release me from my pwomise now."

"And—and then you'd tell?" muttered Levison.

"I—I don't know. I suppose so. You ought to tell; any decent chap would own up, undah the cires. But a decent chap would never have done as you did."

"You don't know how he treated me."

"Yaas, I know it well enough; but that's no excuse. It was a beastly, dirty, cowardly twick! But it's no good talkin'. You don't mean to own up."

"I darent!"

"It's all wight."

D'Arcy turned to his packing again. He carefully smoothed out waistcoats and folded them. Levison watched him for some minutes in silence.

"Can I help you?" he asked at last.

"No, thanks."

"And you really mean to go, without giving me away?"

"I've said so."

"I—I can hardly believe it!" muttered Levison. "I suppose you mean it? I know you do! I wish I could save you. I wish — But what's the good of wishing? If I say a word I shall have to go in your place. I can't face it! But—but I—I'd like you to say that you forgive what I've done, D'Arcy, before you go."

There was a long pause.

"Vewy well," said D'Arcy, with an effort. "I forgive you, if that's what you want. Twy to be a more decent chap in the future, Levison."

"I—I will!" muttered Levison.

He left the dormitory. Arthur Augustus went on with his packing.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### The Final Chance.

AFTER breakfast the school will assemble in Hall.

That was the notice pinned up on the notice-board in the School House. There was another to the same effect in the New House.

"It's a chance for Gussy, then," said Blake.

The chums looked round for the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy came downstairs with his overcoat on.

"I am goin', you fellahs," he said.

"Not yet," said Blake. "Look at that!"

He pointed to the notice on the board.

Arthur Augustus read it.

"That has nothin' to do with me," he said. "I don't belong to St. Jim's now. And if I go into Hall with the Form I shall lose the twain."

"Blow the train!"

Mr. Ralton came out of his study. "All boys into Hall!" he said briefly. "Am I to go, Mr. Waitton?" "Certainly, D'Arcy!" "Vewy well, sir!" "Come on!" said Blake, linking arms with the swell of St. Jim's.

Follows were crowding into Big Hall from all sides. The juniors were marshalled in Forms, and frowning prefects walked up and down to see that they were in order. The hall was crowded, and curiosity reigned supreme.

The general impression was that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was to be expelled in public after all, though all the school had supposed otherwise hitherto.

Figgins & Co. gave Arthur Augustus a sympathetic look as he came in and took his place in the ranks of the Fourth.

"I'm sorry, Gussy," whispered Figgins; "and I don't believe a word of it, now I've had time to think it over."

"Thank you vewy much, Figgay, deah boy!"

"Silence, you juniors!" shouted Knox. There was still a buzz in the crowded hall. The Head had not yet entered. Arthur Augustus stood very erect in his place in the Fourth. Most eyes were turned in his direction, and the swell of St. Jim's bore the general scrutiny without faltering.

The buzz in the hall died away.

The Head had entered. Dr. Holmes stood at the upper end of the hall, upon the raised dais, an imposing figure in his gown.

He surveyed the assembled school, silent, breathless, waiting for him to speak. When he spoke his deep, clear voice rolled through the hall:

"Boys, you are all aware of the outrage that was committed yesterday, of the dastardly attack made upon a prefect. You are all aware that D'Arcy major of the Fourth Form has been sentenced to be expelled from the school, because the evidence made it clear to every reasonable mind that he was guilty."

A slight murmur. Wally, wedged among the Third, hung on the words of the Head.

What was he going to say? "But," resumed the Head slowly and quietly, "in order that even the culprit may not say that a stone was left unturned in order to establish the truth beyond all possible doubt, I have now ordered the school to be assembled, and I have something to say to all present. The statement of D'Arcy of the Fourth Form is that the outrage was committed by some other boy, whose name he knows, but which he promised in a hasty moment not to reveal. If this statement is true, that other boy—and the guilty party—is here present, and is restrained from speaking out by a cowardly fear of the consequences of his cowardly action."

Another murmur.

"In order that not a chance may be left untried, I now make an offer to that boy—if that boy is not merely a figment of the real culprit's imagination. If any boy here present, with the exception of Arthur D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, was the author of the outrage perpetrated upon Monteith of the Sixth, let him come forward and speak out. If he does so, I undertake that he shall not be punished for what he has done."

"He shall not be expelled, he shall not be flogged, he shall not be caned. He shall come and speak freely, and he shall go freely, and the matter shall be buried in oblivion. I make this offer because I will leave no chance untried. If this offer is refused, I think that even the condemned culprit cannot further maintain his innocence. If, therefore, any boy present, other than D'Arcy of the Fourth, has anything to tell me, let him stand forward and speak. What I have promised I will perform. I pledge my word."

There was a breathless silence.

The school was astounded. For some moments a pin might have been heard to drop in the great hall of St. Jim's.

Dr. Holmes waited.

The silence was growing painful, oppressive. Surely, surely if any fellow other than D'Arcy had done that wretched thing he would take advantage of the Head's offer and own up!

If he had a rag of decency left he must be willing to prevent so fearful an injustice

at the mere cost of speaking out, unpunished. Common prudence, too, should urge him to do so, for there was always danger of the truth being discovered; and the truth discovered meant relentless punishment for him, all the more relentless because he had allowed an innocent lad to suffer in his place.

The whole school waited. Dr. Holmes stood like a statue. He did not expect an answer, but he felt it his duty to make this last effort to place the matter beyond doubt.

There was a sudden sound in the breathless silence of the hall—a sound of shuffling feet, as someone moved.

Every eye swept round towards the sound. A junior dragged himself, unwillingly, as it were, from the ranks of the Fourth.

With deadly pale face the wretched boy staggered out into public view.

There was a murmur.

"Who's that?"

"A junior—a Fourth Form kid."

"It's Levison!"

Knox, the prefect, made an angry gesture to Levison.

"Get back into your place!" he exclaimed, not understanding.

Levison made no reply.

He moved slowly up the Hall, and every eye in the great assembly was fixed upon him.

Jack Blake gripped the arm of his chum.

"Gussy—Gussy!"

D'Arcy looked at him.

"Was it," murmured Blake—"was it—"

Arthur Augustus set his lips.

"Let him speak!" he said.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "And I never guessed! Kick me when we get out of this, Blake!"

"I will!" said Blake simply.

Levison walked staggeringly up the hall. Dr. Holmes' gaze was fixed upon him as he advanced.

Levison stopped at last before the Head.

"Well, Levison?"

The Head's voice was like ice.

He knew what was coming, and he was glad—glad that he had taken this course, and saved himself from inflicting a terrible wrong upon an innocent lad.

"What have you to say, Levison?"

"I—I did it, sir."

"You perpetrated that outrage upon Monteith?"

Levison gasped.

"Yes, sir."

"You placed the cord across the path, and the broken glass for him to fall upon?" the Head asked, his voice vibrating with scorn.

"Yes, sir."

"Why?"

"Because he bullied me, sir," said Levison, with a flash of spirit. "He beat me like a dog!"

Monteith coloured uncomfortably. He remembered that scene in the gym, and he understood that, badly as he had suffered, he had brought it upon himself.

"Indeed!" said the Head. "Is this true? It is a rule of the college that School House boys are under the orders of their House prefects. Did you take it upon yourself to administer punishment to Levison, Monteith?"

"I may have punished him, sir," stammered Monteith.

"For what?"

"He may have refused to fag for me—"

"You have no right to fag School House boys. You know that very well."

Monteith bit his lip, and was silent.

"He fagged me, sir," said Levison, with a glance of hatred at the bandaged prefect.

"He sent me for his coat, and Mr. Ratcliff ordered me out of the New House before I could get it. Monteith wouldn't believe me, and he licked me for not getting the coat. Then I made up my mind to punish him."

There was a murmur in the hall.

"Silence!" said the Head. "All this may be very true, Levison, though you are known to be an untruthful boy, and I cannot, therefore, attach full weight to any statement you may make. But even if it is true, it does not excuse such a wanton and barbarous attack as you made upon Monteith. Nothing could possibly excuse that."

"I—I was excited, sir, and—and I was sorry afterwards."

"I hope that is the case, Levison. And is it a fact, then, that D'Arcy was induced to make this promise to keep your secret?"

"Yes, sir. He didn't know what I'd done; he thought Monteith had had a tumble, that was all!" muttered Levison. "I'd have owned up, only—only—"

"You had not the courage to tell the truth," said the Head sternly.

Levison hung his head.

"I am glad that the truth is established now, at all events," said the Head, after a pause. "You have been guilty of a base and wicked action, Levison, for which I should expel you instantly from the school, if I had not pledged my word otherwise. The excuses you make for your conduct do not weigh at all. However much you were wronged, it was base and cruel to do as you did. The only atonement you could have made was to have owned your guilt—and that you have not done till assured of being unpunished. I cannot express the scorn I feel for your conduct, Levison. But I shall keep my word with you—you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!" faltered Levison.

And slowly he turned and left the crowded hall.

"D'Arcy!" said the Head.

"Yaas, sir!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with his face very bright, stepped out of the ranks of the Fourth. He advanced towards the Head with a firm step. There was a cheer in the hall; the fellows simply roared.

"Good old Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

The doctor held up his hand.

"Silence!"

The shouting died down.

"D'Arcy, you have narrowly escaped suffering a great injustice. With the evidence as it was, I cannot blame myself for having condemned you. But I am more than glad that the truth has been established, and I am sorry you should have been suspected. There is no stain upon you now—you are exonerated—you will remain at the school, and I say before the whole college that I consider you a credit to St. Jim's."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You have a high sense of honour, which would be a credit to any boy and any school," said the Head. "I warn you to be more careful, in future, about making rash and ill-considered promises. You should always reflect before you pass your word; for the word once passed cannot honourably be broken. That is all, D'Arcy."

And the Head shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's, and left the hall.

There was a roar.

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

Tom Merry & Co. made a rush. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was surrounded by enthusiastic friends. In the joy of the moment he could forgive them all their doubts. Tom Merry was shaking his right hand, Digby his left. Wally was thumping him on the back, and Blake was digging him joyfully in the ribs. Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Bravo!" roared Figgins. "Three cheers for good old Gussy!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

And Arthur Augustus was rushed out of Big Hall in the midst of a wildly enthusiastic crowd. Kildare shook him by the hand; and even Monteith had the grace to mutter that he was sorry. In the joy of the moment, the fellows could forgive even Levison; in fact, the cad of the Fourth was almost popular, for having spoken out at the last moment and saved the swell of St. Jim's.

"It's all right, deah boys—it's all right," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm quite willin' to ova-look your bein' a set of silly asses; I'm sure you can't help it."

"Look here—" began Blake.

"Peace, my infants," said Tom Merry.

"Mustn't spoil the present happy state of affairs by rowing."

And, needless to say, the state of affairs was not spoiled.

THE END.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. is entitled "THEIR DISHONOURABLE CHUM!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD. Please Order your copy of the PENNY POPULAR in advance!