

NUGENT MINOR!

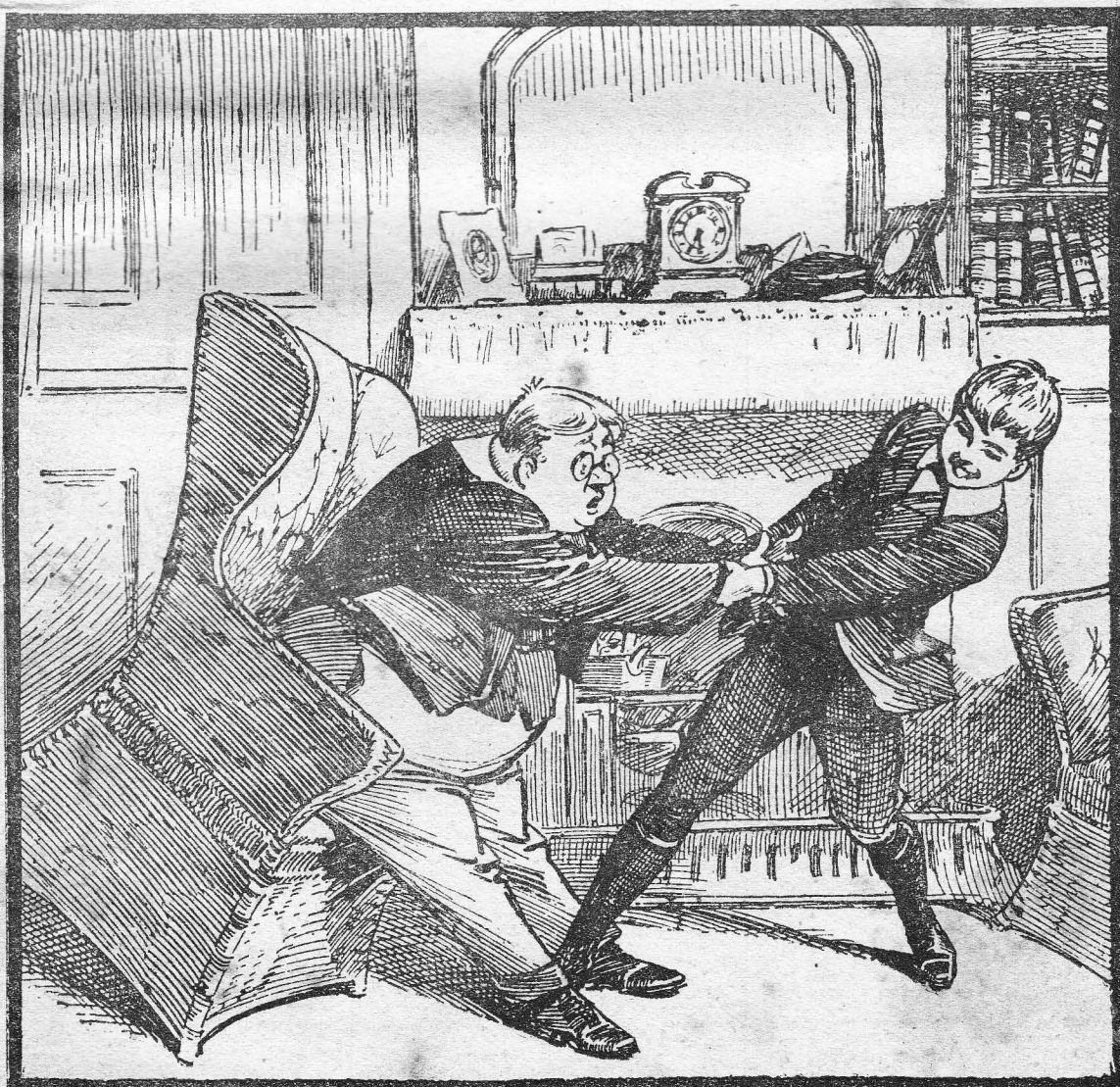
(See inside for the Grand Story dealing with the Arrival of Dicky Nugent at Greyfriars.)

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



STUCK TO THE CHAIR!

A HUMOROUS SCENE FROM THE MAGNIFICENT
LONG COMPLETE TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.
CONTAINED IN THIS ISSUE. 12/1/18

NUGENT MINOR!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Expected Minor.

NUGENT!"

"Hallo!"

"You're coming down to the footer?"

Bob Cherry was looking in at the door of Study No. 1. Bob was in football garb, with a coat thrown round him, and a considerable length of bare leg showing under the coat. He had a football under his arm.

Frank Nugent, who was sitting on the table in the study, with a letter in his hand, looked round and shook his head.

Bob stared at him.

"Can't!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "What do you mean by can't? We're playing the Upper Fourth this afternoon, and I suppose you don't want the Remove to be licked? We want you at outside-right, and you've got to play. Come on!"

"Can't!"

"You can moon over your blessed billets-doux another time!" said Bob wrathfully. "Get off that table before I yank you off!"

"Can't! This is a letter from home—"

"Oh!" said Bob, his expression changing.

"Not bad news, I hope?"

Nugent grinned.

"That's according. I've got a minor coming to Greyfriars. You've heard me speak about young Dicky. He's coming here."

"Well, let him come! Let 'em all come! I don't see that that's any reason for missing the footer."

"He's coming this afternoon. The mater wants me to make much of the young noodle, so that he won't miss home, you know. I shall have to give up the afternoon to it. No good doing these things by halves."

"Look here," said Bob thoughtfully, "I'll tell you what. Sit him down on the footer ground to watch the match. How could he want anything better than that for a half-holiday?"

"I don't know when he's coming, either." Nugent shook his head. "He may be along any time in the afternoon. There's one thing you can always be sure of about young Dicky—he will turn up in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and get into mischief of some sort."

"Nice for his major. Well, if you won't come, you won't!"

And Bob Cherry marched off down the passage.

Frank Nugent looked at the letter again. It had arrived at Greyfriars that morning, and that had been the first intimation he had received that his young brother was coming to the school.

The matter had been mooted at home before, he knew, but his mother had been loth to part with little Dicky. Dicky was a spoiled lad, wilful and troublesome, and his mother's darling. He caused Frank all sorts of bother during the holidays, but Frank was very fond of him all the same. But Dicky at Greyfriars—that was another matter!

A dark-complexioned face glimmered in at the doorway, and a dark-complexioned finger beckoned to Nugent.

"The esteemed Wharton wishes you to arrivefully appear upon the footer ground, my worthy chum," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "And you have not yet changefully donned your honourable football shorts and esteemed boots."

"The same what?"

"The same idea. I hear that Nugent isn't

playing. I shall be quite willing to take the position of outside-right for the match this afternoon."

Wharton stared at him, and then burst into a laugh. The idea of the little fat, unwieldy Owl of the Remove in a Form match was distinctly amusing.

Billy Bunter blinked at him with an irritated air.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he exclaimed. "I suppose that's what you were thinking of?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"What was it, then?"

"Nugent is playing. We shall have to deprive ourselves of your valuable services, Billy. Of course, we know the use you would be in the match."

"Well, I rather fancy myself as a winger, you know."

"The fancifulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific. We should certainly win, because our worthy opponents would suffer too much from the laughfulness to be able to kick the ball."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"No, I'm not looking for recruits, Billy," said Wharton, with a laugh. "I was looking for you, though. Nugent has a minor coming this afternoon. Now, will you wait for the kid—look out for him, you know, and—"

"Really, Wharton, I'm afraid I shall be too busy this afternoon to look after kids," said Bunter, with dignity.

"And take him to the tuckshop—"

"Eh?" said Bunter, showing a keener interest in the matter.

"And stand him a feed—"

"Ah!"

"And then bring him down to watch the footer."

"I should be very pleased to stand him a feed, Wharton, but I've been disappointed about a postal-order, you know. I'm stony."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You young ass! Of course we're standing the tin!"

"Now you're talking!" said Bunter. "Of course, I shall be sincerely pleased to look after Nugent minor. Nugent's a chap I like, though he never can understand that a chap with a healthy appetite requires enough grub to eat. I'll take charge of Nugent minor with pleasure. Hand me over a sovereign, and—"

"I'll hand you half-a-crown."

"Oh, really, Wharton! It's no good being mean, you know. Besides, the kid will be feeling lonely, the first day he's at Greyfriars, and there's nothing like a good feed to cure that lonely feeling. Better make it a sovereign."

"Do you think I'm made of money, you young duffer? Half-a-crown will stand a very good feed for two, and if you don't like to take it on, I'll look for somebody else."

"Of course I shall be glad to oblige you, Wharton!"

"Well, here's the half-crown," said Wharton, tossing the coin to Billy Bunter. "Mind, you're to wait for Nugent minor, and not blue the tin till he comes."

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"If you think I'm not to be trusted with half-a-crown, Wharton—"

"Well, do as I tell you. Hallo, here's Frank!"

Nugent came out of the House. He tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"Mind you don't miss my minor," he said.

"He's a chap just like me in looks, only younger—nearly thirteen. He'll be going

playing. I shall be quite willing to take the position of outside-right for the match this afternoon."

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"Well, do as I tell you. Hallo, here's Frank!"

Nugent came out of the House. He tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"Mind you don't miss my minor," he said.

"He's a chap just like me in looks, only younger—nearly thirteen. He'll be going

into the Second Form here. Wait about the gate, and you're bound not to miss him."

"All right."

"And mind you don't blue the cash with-out him."

"Oh, really, Nugent!"

"If you do I'll give you the licking of your life—remember that!" said Nugent impressively. And he walked on with Wharton and Hurree Singh, leaving the fat junior blinking indignantly.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nugent Minor Arrives at Greyfriars.

THAT must be Nugent minor!"

It was Billy Bunter who uttered the words. He was standing at the gates of Greyfriars, looking out into the road, and slowly munching milk-chocolate—the remnant of the feed he had spent the half-crown upon.

A boy was coming up the road; but the short-sighted junior did not see him until he was quite close at hand.

Then even the Owl of the Remove could not fail to recognise the likeness to Frank Nugent.

The lad was a couple of years or so younger than Nugent, and he had the same handsome face, the same blue eyes; but the face was both weaker and more wilful in expression.

A stranger could have seen at a glance that the boy was the spoiled child of a fond mother, and that he was accustomed to having his own way, and very petulant when he did not get it.

He looked a little tired, doubtless owing to the walk from the village after a long

"Where's your box?"

"They're going to send it on."

"Oh!" Bunter's interest in the box ceased. There might or might not be eatables in it, but in any case the box was out of reach for the present. "I suppose you're tired?"

"Yes."

"And hungry?"

"Yes," said Dick Nugent sullenly.

"Good! I mean, a friend of mine wants to stand you a feed you see. By the way—ahem!—I can be frank under the circumstances—I've been disappointed about a postal-order, or I should jump at standing you a feed myself."

"I don't want a feed."

"Ahem! Well, I'm a bit short of cash, but I've got a postal-order coming by the first post in the morning. Could you lend me a few bob off it?"

"No!"

"Oh, really—"

"I'd better see my brother. Where's the footer field?"

"Come this way," said Bunter.

Dick Nugent gave him a dubious glance, and then followed him into the Close.

Bunter led the way to the tuckshop, and Dick followed him in. He looked about him in surprise.

"I want to see my brother!" he exclaimed.

"All right. You sit down here and have a lemon-squash, and I'll tell him."

"Oh, all right!"

Dick Nugent sat down on one of the little chairs, and Mrs. Mible provided the lemon-squash, and Billy Bunter hurried away.

A minute later he was pulling at Bulstrode's sleeve.

The second half of the football match had

directions only made him feel more solitary himself.

He was anxious to see his brother, and he was disappointed when he saw that the newcomers were strangers.

But Bulstrode came up to him at once with a friendly air.

Snoop did not exactly know what Bulstrode's game was, but he was willing to follow the bully's lead in everything.

That the Remove bully meant to be really kind to the new boy was impossible, and Snoop would have smiled at the idea.

"Hallo! You're young Nugent, I suppose?" said Bulstrode genially.

"Yes," said Dick.

"Your brother's busy—playing footer," said Bulstrode. "I'm going to look after you a bit. Of course, you can't expect a chap in the Remove to cut a footer match because he's got a minor coming to the school."

Nugent minor's eyes gleamed resentfully.

"I think he might have spared me a minute," he said.

"Oh, I'm going to look after you!"

"Are you a friend of my brother's?"

Bulstrode chuckled.

"Yes, rather! We're awfully close chums—ain't we, Snoop?"

"What-ho!" said Snoop.

"You come along with me, young 'un," said Bulstrode, slipping his arm through Dicky Nugent's. "I'll show you round a bit. I dare say you're tired?"

"Yes, a little."

"Then come up to my study, and we'll have tea and a jaw—and something else. Smoke?"

Nugent minor looked at him in surprise.

"Smoke! No!"

"Oh, I see! You're a ninny—eh?"

NUMBER 5.
THE "PENNY POPULAR"
PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 6 NEXT FRIDAY.
Owen, Lawrence, Redfern.



1. Cousin Ethel
2. Dr. Holmes
3. Eric Kildare

railway journey, as he halted at the gates of Greyfriars.

"I say, is this Greyfriars?" he asked, speaking to Bunter, in a voice that was very like Frank Nugent's, but softer and more musical.

Bunter blinked at him in a friendly way.

"Yes!" he said. "I suppose you're Nugent minor?"

"I'm Dick Nugent."

"Nugent's young brother. Good! I was looking for you."

The new boy looked at Bunter.

He did not seem particularly impressed by the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh!" he said.

"Yes, rather! Nugent asked me to. I'm Nugent's chum, you know."

"Oh!"

"We're great friends," said Bunter. "In the same study, you know."

"Oh! Where's my brother?"

"He's playing footer, and he asked me to meet you, as he had something else to do."

A flash came into Dick Nugent's eyes.

Bunter's way of putting it was certainly rather unfortunate.

"I thought somebody would be at the station," said Dick.

"Yes. I dare say it was too much trouble for Nugent to come," said Bunter agreeably.

"I would have come if I'd known your train. Have you walked?"

"Yes."

long commenced, and Bulstrode was watching it keenly.

He glanced down irritably at Bunter.

"Let me alone, confound you!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! You told me—"

Bulstrode's expression changed.

"Has young Nugent come?"

"Yes."

"Oh! Where is he?"

"In the tuckshop."

"Good! Come on, Snoop!"

And Bulstrode and Snoop walked away from the football field.

Bunter hurried after them, his little fat legs going like clockwork to keep pace with Bulstrode's stride.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You buzz off!" said Bulstrode angrily.

"You're not wanted!"

"Oh, really—"

"Get out!"

"Under the circumstances, Bulstrode, I shall refuse to come to the tuckshop with you," said Bunter, with dignity.

Bulstrode grunted, and strode on with Snoop.

They reached Mrs. Mible's little shop, and found the new junior finishing his lemon-squash.

Dick Nugent looked up eagerly as they came in.

He was feeling a natural sense of loneliness on his first day at the big school, and the very number of the boys he saw in all

"No, I'm not. My father said I mustn't smoke here. He said boys got into rows for it at Greyfriars."

"So they do, if they tell the masters," grinned Bulstrode; "but we keep mum, you see. Bless your soul, Carberry, the prefect, smokes himself in his study, and makes the fags fetch him cigarettes from Friardale."

Dick's eyes opened wide.

"Does he really?"

"Yes, rather! Come along, and don't be a chump."

Nugent minor accompanied Bulstrode from the shop.

As they crossed the Close towards the School House, Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, met them. He stopped.

"A new boy, Bulstrode?"

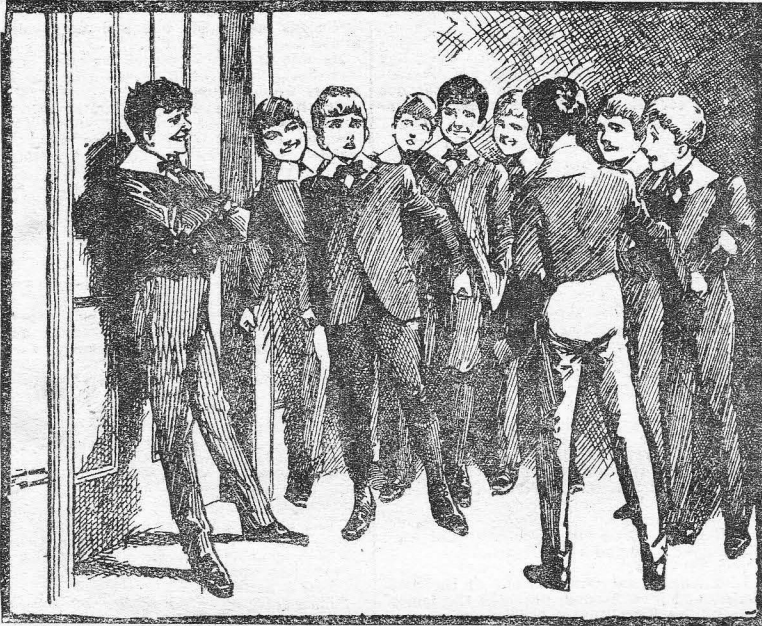
"Yes, sir," said Bulstrode, very civilly.

"It's Nugent's young brother, sir. I'm looking after him a bit, as Nugent's playing footer this afternoon."

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch. "That is very kind of you, Bulstrode." And he passed on.

Bulstrode exchanged a wink with Snoop. In a couple of minutes they were in Bulstrode's study, and the Remove bully closed the door.

Bulstrode shared that study with Hazeldene and Tom Brown of New Zealand, and as both of them were playing in the Form match, there was no danger of interruption.



"Let me get out!" shouted Nugent minor, looking round upon the grinning faces. Some of them were quite cruel in expression, too, especially Gatty's. It dawned upon Dick Nugent's mind that he had fallen among foes.

"Now then, Snoop, get tea!" said Bulstrode.

"Right you are!" said Snoop.

The door opened, and a pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out!" roared Bulstrode.

"But—but I say, Bulstrode, if you're going to have a feed, you'll want me to help, you know! I'll do the cooking—"

"Rats!"

"And light the fire. I like lighting fires." Bulstrode hesitated a moment.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "You can make yourself useful for your grub, if you like."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! That's not a nice way of putting it, you know."

"Oh, shut up!"

"It's only your little joke, I know—"

"Will you light that fire?"

"Oh, certainly, with pleasure!"

And the Owl of the Remove set to work.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Dangerous Acquaintance.

NUGENT MINOR sat in Bulstrode's armchair, with a decidedly discontented expression upon his face.

He was receiving an amount of attention unheard of in the case of any boy coming into the Second Form at Greyfriars—a Form considered as infants by the Remove, and with whom the Remove as a rule had nothing to do.

He did not suspect, so far, that Bulstrode had any ulterior purpose to serve—he was not likely to suspect that yet.

"You can see the footer field from the window here," he remarked. "Like to look? I'll point your brother out to you."

Dick Nugent rose, and crossed to the window.

It was an inspiring sight, the active figures on the football field in stern struggle for the mastery, amid a cheering crowd.

But it only brought a dark look to Dick Nugent's face.

"There's your brother, kid—he's on the ball now."

"Yes, I can see him."

"He seems to be having a good time—eh? He's great at footer!"

"Mother said he would meet me this afternoon, and look after me my first day here," said the boy, his lower lip quivering a little.

Bulstrode laughed.

"Oh, he's too busy, you know!"

"He oughtn't to be too busy!" said Dick

passionately. "And I'll jolly well tell him so when I see him!"

"Well, you're a kid with spirit, anyway," said Bulstrode. "But I suppose you'll be pretty well under the thumb of your major?"

Nugent minor's eyes flashed.

"You will see that I'm not!"

"Good for you!" said Bulstrode. "Tea will be ready in a few minutes now. Have a cigarette while you're waiting?"

Dick Nugent hesitated for a moment.

"Of course, if you're afraid of what your major will say, don't do it," said Bulstrode. "I don't want to get you into a row with your brother."

Dick bit his lip.

"My brother's got nothing to do with it. He's not my master. I'll have the smoke with pleasure."

"Here you are, then!"

Bulstrode unlocked his desk, and took out a cigarette-case. He opened it, and displayed a row of cigarettes, and selected one himself.

"Smoke, Snoopey?"

"Thanks! I will!"

Snoop selected a cigarette, and lighted up with Bulstrode. Dick Nugent followed his example.

"Smoke, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked round from the fire.

"Er—no, thanks, Bulstrode."

"Oh, don't be a spoony!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode, it isn't that, you know! But you see, I don't want to do anything to spoil my appetite, you know." Billy Bunter hastened to explain. "Smoking spoils the appetite, and I want to keep mine all right on an occasion like this."

"Oh, get on with the cooking, porpoise!" A smell of poaching eggs mingled with the odour of tobacco. To the nostrils of the boys it was by far the pleasanter smell of the two, but they would not have confessed to that for worlds.

"Like the smokes?" asked Bulstrode.

"Ripping!" said Snoop.

"Oh, jolly good!" said Nugent minor, puffing away. "Spiffing!"

"Hallo! The game's over!" said Snoop, glancing out of the window a little later. "The Remove are yelling like mad, so I suppose Wharton's lot have won."

"I don't care much."

"Nor I. But, I say, hadn't we better throw the fags away? You know what the fellows—"

"Perhaps you're right," said Bulstrode, flinging his cigarette into the fire.

Snoop and Dick Nugent followed suit.

At length there came a tap on the door.

"Come in!" said Bulstrode, with a grin. The door opened, and Frank Nugent entered. He sniffed a little quickly as he caught the odour of tobacco, and looked round.

"Russell says he saw my young brother come here," he said. "Oh, here you are, Dicky! I'm glad to see you at Greyfriars!"

"So glad that you left it to somebody else to meet him!" sneered Bulstrode.

Nugent coloured.

"That's not your business, Bulstrode! Come on, Dicky! I was playing footer. I asked Bunter to explain to you. It was an important match—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Nugent minor.

"You're coming with me?"

"Nugent minor's going to have tea with me," said Bulstrode.

And Dick Nugent nodded.

"I'm going to have tea here," he said.

Nugent looked perplexed.

"I want you to meet my friends," he said. "We were going to get up a bit of a feed in our study to celebrate your coming."

"We're doing that," said Bulstrode.

Nugent turned upon him holy.

"Hang you, Bulstrode! What's your little game?"

"I haven't any little game," said the Remove bully airily. "I saw the chap come in, and I thought his major might have looked after him a bit—"

"You know I had to play!"

"Lots of fellows would have taken your place."

"I sha'n't argue that with you, Bulstrode. There's one thing I know jolly well, and that is that you don't mean my minor any good!"

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"If your minor likes to be ordered out of the study by you, I don't care," he said. "But if he's got the spirit of a mouse, he'll stay."

"I'm going to stay!" said Nugent minor. "Dick, old chap, I want you to come," said Nugent.

"Why can't you leave me alone?" said Dick irritably. "I'm all right here, I suppose. They are standing me a feed, and I'm hungry!"

"We've got a feed going on in Number One."

"Well, I've promised."

Nugent stood perplexed. He fully understood Bulstrode's motives in chumming up with a Second Form fag like this, but he felt it was useless to attempt to explain to his minor. At a hint that he was being taken care of Nugent minor would have flamed up at once.

"I wish you'd come, Dick!"

"He won't come!" said Bulstrode. "You can go back to Wharton. If you couldn't cut a footer match for your minor, you can't expect him to cut his friends for you."

"I'm not speaking to you!"

"Well, this is my study, and I suppose I can say what I like in it!" said Bulstrode. "Serve up that grub, Bunter!"

"I'm serving it up, Bulstrode. Those eggs are done to a turn—"

"So you're feeding here, too!" exclaimed Nugent scornfully.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I suppose you don't expect me to refuse when a chap offers to stand me a feed?"

"Hardly!"

"I never really get enough to eat, and you fellows keep me awfully short. I've got a delicate constitution, and I have to keep it up with plenty of good grub. I'm not likely to refuse Bulstrode's invite. You chaps can get your own tea."

"And leave us to have ours," drawled Bulstrode. "I'm looking after Nugent minor at present. You can't force him to leave my study if he doesn't want to. He's not the kind of kid to be bullied, I take it."

Dick Nugent's eye flashed.

"I won't go," he said. "Look here, Frank, you've left me alone long enough—you can keep it up a bit longer!"

"I couldn't get away, Dick."

Dick's lip curled.

"You couldn't, or you wouldn't," he said. "I don't care! I didn't want you to. I only want to be left alone. Bulstrode has been very decent to me, anyway."

"He doesn't mean you well, This—"

"Oh, rats!"

Frank's eye gleamed for a moment.

"Look here, kid, you'd better come with me!" he exclaimed. "These fellows have

been smoking here, and that's against the rules of the coll."

"I've been smoking myself," said Nugent minor coolly.

His major gave a start.

"You've been smoking?"

"Yes. Why shouldn't I?"

"You did this, Bulstrode, you cad!" exclaimed Frank, turning furiously on the bully of the Remove.

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you the kid's nurse?" he asked.

"Tea's ready!" said Billy Bunter.

Dick Nugent pulled his chair up to the table.

Bunter had lighted the gas, and the tea-table looked very cheerful, the whole study bright and cosy in the firelight.

Nugent stood in the doorway with a gloomy face.

"Are you coming, Dick?" he said at last.

Dick shook his head irritably.

"No; I'm not!"

Nugent said no more.

He shut the door and walked away, his brows wrinkled gloomily, and his hands thrust deep and hard into his pockets.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Sticks to His Own Study.

"ANYTHING up?"
 "What's wrong?"
 "Wherefore the extreme worryfulness of the honourable Nugent's esteemed brow?"

The three questions were fired at Frank Nugent as he came into Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

There was a decidedly worried look upon Frank Nugent's face, and his three chums looked at him in some surprise. He had left them in good spirits enough ten minutes before.

"Found your minor?" asked Wharton.

Nugent nodded.

"He's all right, I suppose?"

"No."

"Phew! What's the trouble?"

"I don't know that there's anything to bother about," said Nugent slowly. "But—well, young Dick's chummed up with Bulstrode."

"Bulstrode!"

"Yes; and he's having tea in his study now. They've been smoking, too."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"What is Bulstrode's little game, then?" he exclaimed. "What does he mean by chumming up with a Second Form fag? He was far more likely to bully him."

Nugent smiled bitterly.

"Oh, it's one up against us, of course!"

"But why not speak to him, and tell him to come here?" asked Bob Cherry, who had come into No. 1 to tea, and to make the acquaintance of Nugent minor. "I suppose your minor will do as you tell him, or take your advice, anyway?"

Nugent shook his head.

"He won't."

"Have you asked him?"

"Yes."

"And he won't come?"

"That's it."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"If I had a minor who wouldn't go, do you think I'd wallop him—yes, what-ho!" he murmured, in parody of an old song.

"The wallopfulness should be terrific!"

"No good," said Nugent. "Dicky expected me to be waiting round for him—and I didn't even know what train he was coming by. I might have cut the footer match for nothing. I wish I had cut it now."

"Nonsense!" said Wharton quickly. "You're wrong; you couldn't cut it. Your minor ought to understand; if he won't understand, make him!"

"I can't start his career at Greyfriars with a licking on the first afternoon, I suppose," said Nugent. "Besides, you don't know Dicky. He's a spoiled kid. He's always been looked after and made much of. He expects the same here."

"He'll be disappointed, then."

"Yes; but Bulstrode is fooling him, and making much of him, just as he expected, you see, and filling his silly head with false ideas. I'm afraid there was trouble in store for Dick, in any case; but with Bulstrode making a fool of him, he's bound to run up against rocks. Well, I suppose it can't be helped; I've done all I can."

"Let's have tea!" said Bob Cherry, as the only practical suggestion to be made under the circumstances.

And Nugent grinned, and jammed the kettle on the fire.

It was not so cheery a tea as the juniors intended it to be, although they had laid in an unusual supply of good things in honour of Nugent's minor.

Nugent was worried, and his chums sympathised with him; and then, there was the prospect of trouble ahead for Dick Nugent. From what they had heard of him, so far, the juniors could not help thinking that a few lickings would do him good; but they felt concerned on Frank's account. Frank Nugent was the kindest-hearted and best-natured boy at Greyfriars, and he felt a thing of this kind more keenly than any of the others would have done.

The chums of the Remove had almost finished tea when the door was cautiously opened, and a fat face and a pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"I say, you fellows—," began Billy Bunter, in an ingratiating voice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Tubby!"

"I say, you fellows, I hope you haven't absolutely cleared the table," said Bunter, blinking round discontentedly. "I might as well have stayed with Bulstrode."

"Quite as well."

"Are they jam-tarts your side of the table, Bob Cherry?"

"See!" said Bob. "Shall I pass them over?"

"Yes, please. Ow! Wow!"

Bob Cherry passed over the jam-tarts, deftly planting one on Bunter's nose and another on his chin.

"Any more?" he asked.

"Ow! Beast!"

"Well, you asked me to pass them!"

Bunter mopped the jam off his fat face.

"I think you're a beast, Cherry. I think Wharton ought to kick you out of the study, for treating one of his own study-mates like this."

"My dear Bunt, if I kick anybody out of the study, it will be a certain fat porpoise!" said Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Well, I think I'll get along," said Bob Cherry, as Bunter started on ham and bread-and-butter. "I've paid in my time to see the animals fed at the Zoo, but it isn't a thing you want to see twice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bob Cherry crossed to the door.

There he paused, and, taking a tube of

seccotine from the shelf, he squeezed out the whole of its contents upon the seat of the armchair.

It was Bunter's habit to slide into that chair after a meal, and keep possession of it.

The chair had been purchased by a whip-round among the chums, excepting Bunter, so perhaps the fat junior thought it was a fair division for Harry Wharton & Co. to purchase the armchair and himself to use it. At all events, it never seemed to cross his mind that anybody else might like it.

Nugent grinned faintly as he saw Bob's action. It was too late to stop him, for the sake of the chair, so he said nothing.

Billy Bunter cleared off all that was left eatable on the table, and it was with a somewhat slow and heavy motion that he finally rose. He had travelled through a very good meal in Bulstrode's study before coming to No. 1.

"You haven't had enough!" said Wharton anxiously. "There's still the crockery, and then you might start on the tablecloth."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Or the coals, or the coke!"

"I don't see why you fellows should always be joking about my appetite," said Bunter. "I don't eat much, as a rule! I'm not greedy, but I like enough! I always think that enough's as good as a feast. I think I'll take a rest now."

And he sank into the armchair.

The juniors grinned, and quitted the study.

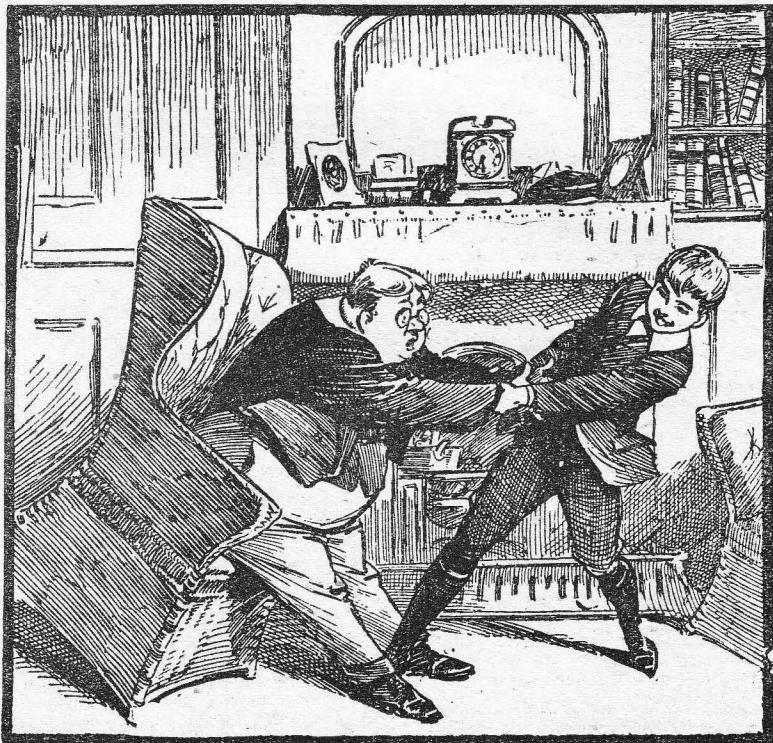
Billy Bunter soon dropped off to sleep; indeed, some of the Removites said that he always went into a comatose state like a boa-constrictor after a meal.

How long he slept he did not know, but he was awakened at last by the sound of a door opening. The study was in darkness. Bunter blinked at the faint, red glow of the dying fire, and tried to rise from the chair.

But he could not rise.

The seccotine had quite hardened by this time, and the seat of his nether garments was stuck fast to the seat of the chair.

In amazement in finding himself, as it were, held down by an unseen hand, Billy Bunter strove to tear himself away from his chair; but in vain. He could not rise, and his efforts only resulted in dragging the big chair off the rear castors for a moment. Then it crashed down again, and Bunter collapsed into it, gasping.



"Go on, Nugent, pull!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I'm stuck to the chair!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Bunter.

NUGENT MINOR paused in the corridor after leaving Bulstrode's study. He was feeling a little dismayed and uneasy.

A junior was coming down from Study No. 13, at the end, and he was a junior of such a peculiar appearance that Dick Nugent looked at him with great interest. His curious complexion, his pigtail, and his clothes showed that he was a native of the Flowery Land.

He looked at Nugent minor, and smiled a bland smile as he passed, and Dick was encouraged to speak to him.

"I say!" he exclaimed. "You speak English, I suppose?"

"The little Chinese stopped, and grinned.

"Me speakee lipping," he said.

"Blessed if I know what that means!"

"Me Wun Lung."

"Wun Lung!" said Nugent minor. "You don't mean to say that's your name?"

Wun Lung nodded.

"That my name, allee light. Velly good name in China."

"Do you know my major?"

"No savvy."

"His name's Nugent—Frank Nugent."

Wun Lung smiled intelligently.

"Me savvy. Flank Nugent—velly good chap. You biotheel?"

"Yes, he's my major. Where's his study?"

Wun Lung pointed to the next to Bulstrode's.

"That studee," he said. "Studee No. 1. You savvy?"

"Thanks!"

Wun Lung nodded, and went on his way, and Nugent minor knocked at the door of Study No. 1. There was no answer to his rap, and he opened the door. All was dark within.

Nugent minor made an irritable movement. His brother was evidently absent from his room, but as the boy turned away he heard a noise in the study, which showed that someone was there.

It was a crash as of a chair falling down, and then a voice followed, in gasping tones:

"Ow—ow! I say, you fellows—"

Nugent minor stared into the gloom of the study. All the light he could see was a faint red glow from the dying fire in the grate.

"Hallo," he said. "Who's there?"

"I—I say, you fellows— Oh, I—I don't know what's the matter! I can't get up—I'm stuck to the chair, or else my spine is fractured! Light the gas, will you?"

Nugent minor groped his way into the study. He felt in his pockets for a match, and scratched it on the wall, and lighted the gas.

The light shone upon a most curious scene. Billy Bunter was sprawling in the arm-chair, gasping like a newly-landed fish, and blinking in blank amazement through his big spectacles. Nugent minor stared at him.

"What on earth are you doing?" he exclaimed, recognising Bunter.

"I—I can't get up!"

"Why not?"

"I—I don't know!" gasped Bunter. "Something's wrong, somehow! Gimme a hand, will you, and tug hard, and perhaps I can get out."

"Blessed if I can see why you can't get up!"

"Oh, lend me a hand, and don't jaw!" said Bunter.

He held out both his fat hands. Nugent minor grasped them, and gave a tremendous tug.

Billy Bunter gave a howl.

"Ow! Not so hard, fathead!"

"You told me to pull," grinned Dick Nugent.

"Ow!"

Bunter's feet were on the floor, and Nugent minor was dragging him forward. The arm-chair jerked off the floor again, hanging on to Bunter.

"Ow—ow—ow!"

There was a rending sound, and Bunter's garments parted, and the chair crashed on the floor.

"Oh—oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent minor. "You were stuck to the chair!"

Bunter blinked round at the big fragment of cloth adhering to the seat of the arm-chair.

"Oh—oh, really, so I was! I—I don't know how it came about. I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

"Ha, ha, ha! You'd better go and change your things," chuckled Dick Nugent. "You'll find it rather draughty going about like that."

"Oh, dear! Somebody will have to pay for these trousers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter twisted round to get a view of the torn place. It was very extensive. The fat junior blinked indignantly at the chuckling fag.

"I say, Nugent minor, go and get me some other trucks from the dormitory."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give you a licking if you don't stop that row!" roared Bunter. "You confoundedly cheeky fag!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter swung his hand round to box Dick Nugent's ears. Nugent minor easily knocked it aside, and quitted the study, still laughing almost hysterically.

"Here, I say, come back! Beast! How on earth am I to get to the dormitory to change?" gasped Bunter, in dismay. "Hang it! I wonder who played that trick on me? I—I shall have to get changed. Anybody might come in."

He went to the door, and paused. Suppose he met Mrs. Kebble, or—horror of horrors!—the Head's wife?

It would never do.

He looked round the study in the wild hope that a coat or a covering of some sort might have been left there, which he could don to hide that patch of tell-tale white.

But there was nothing—nothing but the tablecloth.

There was no help for it. Bunter took the tablecloth, and wrapped it round him, a good deal like a Red Indian wrapping himself in his blanket, and left the study.

He hoped to steal quietly up to the dormitory unobserved; but he had no such good fortune. The hysterical laughter of Nugent minor had attracted attention, and a dozen fellows were looking out of their studies.

The effect can be imagined when the fat junior came stalking along in the tablecloth, gracefully draped round his stout person.

One wild yell of laughter rang from end to end of the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter, very red and very indignant, stalked on, the end of the tablecloth trailing on the linoleum behind him.

Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung looked out of the end study, and yelled at the sight.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Is it the ghost of Greyfriars?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or the White Chief of the Blackneck Indians."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Velly funnee. What you tinkee? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" growled Bunter. "Get out of the way! Why can't you let a chap pass, Skinner, eh? I want to get up to the dormitory."

"But what's the matter?" exclaimed Sneop. "What are you trotting round in a blessed tablecloth for?"

"Mind your own business!"

And Billy Bunter mounted upon the dormitory stairs. Ogilvy stepped behind him, and jerked at the tablecloth.

It unrolled, and came away from the fat person of Billy Bunter—and the secret was revealed. There was a fresh roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter bolted up the stairs, followed by fresh yells. He came down in ten minutes, in a new pair of trousers, looking very red and indignant, and was greeted with shrieks of merriment.

"Well, Bunter does take the cake!" grinned Bob Cherry, in No. 13. "He told a yarn about sticking to his own study, and I thought I'd help him stick to the arm-chair at least. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the whole of the Remove roared over it with the exception of Billy Bunter. Bunter glowered and sulked. But nobody minded Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In the Second Form.

GATTY, of the Second Form, came into the Second Form-room with a portentous frown upon his face.

"Anything wrong, Gatty?" asked Myers.

"No!" grunted Gatty.

"Oh!"

Gatty pushed a small fag out of a chair by

the Form-room fire, and sat down himself. His frown grew more portentous, and the disappointed Second-Former did not venture to make the slightest objection to that tyrannical and high-handed proceeding. He was only too glad to escape getting a cuff in exchange for his chair.

"There's a new kid here," said Gatty. "Haven't seen him," said Myers. "Not in our Form?"

"Yes."

"Name?"

"Nugent."

"Nugent II., or Nugent minor?" asked Myers, with interest. "I've heard that Nugent of the Remove has a young brother at home."

"Nugent minor."

"Then it's Nugent's brother."

"That's it."

"When did he come?"

"This afternoon, during the footer match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth."

"Odd that we haven't seen him," said Todd.

Gatty smote his knee with his open palm with a crack like a pistol-shot.

"It's easy enough to explain that," he said. "Young Nugent has been toadying to the Remove—crawling to the Lower Fourth."

"The cad!"

"The worm!"

"He doesn't seem to know that the Second Form at Greyfriars exists," said Gatty, with growing wrath. "He doesn't know that we don't allow fags to crawl to the Lower Fourth. My hat! We shall have the Remove fagging us soon."

"He ought to be taught a lesson," said Myers solemnly.

"Let's look for him," suggested Todd.

"Well, that's a good idea," said Gatty, rising again. "He was having tea, and smoking in Bulstrode's study when I heard of him, and he can't be there all this time, I should think. Let's go and scout for him, and bring him here, and explain to him the proper position of a new boy in the Second Form."

"What-ho!"

The Second-Formers, ripe enough for mischief, and accustomed to following the lead of Gatty, entered into the plan with great zest.

A dozen of them followed Gatty and Myers and Todd from the Form-room in search of the delinquent who had been guilty of the heinous sin of crawling to fellows in a higher Form.

As luck would have it, they came upon Nugent minor as he came away from the Remove passage to look for his brother.

Nugent, as it happened, was in the gym with Harry Wharton, and Dick had not yet succeeded in finding him.

The fags surrounded the new boy in a twinkling. They knew at once, of course, that this must be Nugent minor.

The new boy glanced at them without alarm. He did not know the intention of Gatty & Co. yet.

"I say," he exclaimed, "have you seen Nugent of the Remove?"

"Yes!" said Gatty grimly.

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes."

"Where, then?"

"In the gym."

"Where is that?"

"Come along," said Gatty sweetly, linking his arm in Nugent minor's; "I'll show you where you're to go."

"Thanks," said Nugent minor, wondering a little at Gatty's effusiveness, and at the chuckles of the other fellows. "Is that the way?"

"Come on."

The grinning fags marched the new boy straight to the Second Form-room. Nugent minor looked round him in amazement as he entered it. He did not know much about Form-rooms, but he knew that this could not be a gymnasium.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Is this a joke? I—"

He made for the door. Gatty slammed it shut, and put his foot against it. Then he grinned in the face of Nugent minor.

"Not just yet," he remarked.

"Let me get out."

"Not much."

Nugent minor looked round wonderingly upon the grinning faces. Some of them were quite cruel in expression, too, especially Gatty's. It dawned upon Dick Nugent's mind that he had fallen amongst foes.

But he was not afraid. A passionate anger rose in his breast—the anger of one who had

always been petted and coaxed, and had had hitherto no experience of bullying.

"What's the game?" he exclaimed hotly. "What do you mean?" "Don't you ask questions," said Gatty loftily. "I'm the captain of the Form—the Second Form at Greyfriars—and I'm boss here. You understand that?"

"I don't understand anything of the sort." Gatty's brow lowered.

"Well, I shall have to teach you, then. It's for me to ask questions, Nugent minor, not for you. Your name's Nugent?"

"Yes," said Dick gloweringly.

"You're coming into the Second Form here?"

"Yes, I suppose so." "We're the Second Form."

"I don't care who you are." "Cheeky young cub," said Myers. "Punch his head!"

Nugent minor clenched his hands. "You'd better not!" he exclaimed. Gatty laughed.

"I suppose you would lick me," he remarked, towering over the new boy. And the Second Form shouted with merriment.

Nugent minor cast a longing glance towards the door.

"No, you can't get out yet," said Gatty. "You've got to go through it first. You've been crawling to Upper Form fellows, and currying favour with Bulstrode, the worst bully in the Remove—a Form we don't approve of, anyway."

"Hear, hear!"

"I haven't!" Bulstrode asked me to tea."

"It's all the same. Now, you've got to go down on your knees, and beg the pardon of the Second Form for having had tea with the Remove."

"I won't!"

"You won't! Do you know who you are talking to?"

"I don't know and I don't care! I won't beg anybody's pardon. Let me out of this room. You're a set of cads!"

"Phew!" said Todd.

"Good!" said Gatty, unmoved. "Collar him!"

"Look here—"

"Nuff said. Collar the young cad!"

A dozen hands seized Nugent minor. He struggled desperately, but he was powerless against so many. He struck out furiously, and kicked and scratched in his passionate rage, and Todd staggered away with a swelling nose, and Myers wore a red streak down his cheek.

Myers jammed his handkerchief to the scratch.

"Blessed wildcat!" he exclaimed. "Look at this!"

"Down him!"

"Sit on him!"

Nugent minor was borne to the floor under the weight of a dozen juniors. He still struggled like a wildcat under them.

"Nice boy," said Gatty. "His people must love to have him with them in the family circle—I don't think. Got him tight?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Yank him up!"

Nugent minor was yanked up in the grip of so many hands that he could not move a limb. Angry faces were looking at him, and he returned their looks with defiant anger.

"You cads!" he yelled. "Lemme me alone!"

"The frog's-march first," said Gatty meditatively. "After that, we'll see. Give it him twice round the room."

"Hear, hear!"

And round the long Form-room went Nugent minor.

"Help!" yelled Dick Nugent.

The fags laughed and hooted; but, as it happened, the cry was heard—and answered.

There was a slam as the door was thrown open, and Frank Nugent looked into the room.

The fags halted in dismay. "Nugent major!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Foes with the Form.

FRANK NUGENT took in the scene at a glance.

He strode into the midst of the startled fags, and gave Gatty a shove that sent him reeling to one side, and Myers a push that sent him reeling to the other. Then he dropped Todd with a thump on the chest.

The other fags released Nugent minor, and crowded back.

Nugent caught his young brother by the arm, and dragged him to the door.

"Come on, Dicky—quick!"

"Collar them!" shrieked Gatty. And he led a furious rush.

The Second Form crowded round Nugent like locusts. He hit out in earnest now, and three or four fags rolled over, but they were too many.

Fighting desperately, Nugent was borne down by the rush, and Dick went down with him, and over both of them swarmed the victorious Second Form.

"Sit on them!" roared Gatty.

"Rescue, Rescue!" shouted Nugent at the top of his voice. "Wharton! Inky! Rescue! Rescue!"

The cry was not unheard.

Three or four Removites, among them Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, came in at the doorway, and, without stopping to ask questions, rushed into the conflict.

Then the tables were turned.

The fags were hurled right and left before the doughty blows of the Removites, and Nugent and Dick were promptly rescued.

But Gatty & Co. rallied, and Harry Wharton thought it only prudent to hurry the rescued ones to the passage, and get them away.

A volley of yells and mocking jeers followed them from the Second Form-room.

"Yah!"

"Cad!"

"Worm!"

Most of the remarks seemed to be hurled at Nugent minor, though he hardly realised it at the moment. He was too breathless and confused to realise anything clearly.

The rescuers hurried them down the passage, and halted out of sight of the door of the Form-room, which was crammed with jeering fags.

"What on earth have you been rowing with the Babes for, Frank?" exclaimed Harry Wharton in astonishment.

Nugent gasped for breath, and mopped his damaged nose with his handkerchief.

"They were ragging young Dick."

"Oh, I see!"

"Have they hurt you, Dicky?" said Nugent, turning anxiously to his young brother.

"Yes," said Dick sullenly. "It doesn't matter."

"I came in the instant I heard you calling."

"It's all right."

"How did you come to fall foul of them?" asked Nugent, with a worried look. He realised what a bad beginning his minor had made in getting on with his Form.

"They accused me of crawling to the Remove."

"Oh! On account of that feed with Bulstrode, I suppose?"

"I suppose so."

"It's awkward," said Frank, after a pause.

"You see, they're your Form; you've got to

live with them, sleep in their dormitory to-night."

Nugent minor looked alarmed. "Have I? Can't I sleep somewhere else?"

"No; it's impossible."

"I suppose I could come with you?"

Nugent shook his head.

"No; the Forms have separate dormitories."

"Look here, I'm jolly well not going to be shut up with that crew!" exclaimed Nugent minor hotly. "I haven't come here to be bullied!"

"Well, it's not my fault. They all hate Bulstrode, because he's such a beastly bully, and your chumming up with him was very unfortunate. They naturally think that you're going to sneak to Bulstrode. You shouldn't have done it."

"How was I to know?"

"Well, I asked you to come away from his study."

"If you had met me when I came I shouldn't have gone there. But I'll go there if I like. Bulstrode is the only fellow here who has treated me decently, anyhow!" exclaimed Dick Nugent passionately.

"Bulstrode can't protect you from the Second Form, and he wouldn't take the trouble if he could," said Nugent quietly.

"I shall speak to the Head."

"What do you mean? That's sneaking!"

"Well, I'm not going to be frog's-marched in the dormitory to-night, as well as in the Form-room this evening!" said Dick hotly.

"I don't see why I should stand it!"

"You must make it up with the Second Form somehow," said Nugent slowly. "You can let them know that you're not going to toady to Bulstrode, you see; and—and I suppose you have something to eat in your box? Mother will have shoved in something good."

"Yes, there's a good feed."

"Good! You can stand a feed to all the Second Form, after lights out, and make your peace with them that way. They'll chum up to anybody for a feed."

"I don't want to make my peace with them!" said Dick Nugent between his teeth.

"They've jumped on me like this for nothing. I won't go an inch out of my way to get into their good graces!"

"Do you want to be cut by your Form?"

"I don't care!"

"Don't you understand, Dick, I can't always be at hand to protect you. I—"

Dick flushed crimson.

"I jolly well don't want you to protect me! I can take care of myself!"

And he thrust his hands deep into his trousers' pockets and walked down the passage.

Nugent called after him.

"Dick!"

But Nugent minor did not turn his head.

Harry Wharton pressed his chum's arm as Dick Nugent disappeared round a corner of the passage.

Nugent glanced at him miserably.

"Don't bother, Frank. It can't be helped."

"He's been spoiled at home, you know," said Frank wretchedly. "He can't understand. If he begins with the Second Form like this, why, they'll make his life a misery to him. A fellow can't live on fighting terms with his Form."

"He'll come to his senses in time," said Mark Linley.

Nugent nodded and strolled slowly away. He was feeling very despondent. It seemed impossible to get on good terms with his younger brother, or to make Dick Nugent understand what was necessary at Greyfriars.

Frank Nugent was to have all his work cut out in future to look after his erring minor!

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The New Classical!

"WHAT on earth are you messing about with?" Raby addressed the question to Jimmy Silver.

"Having a little game," replied Jimmy.

"I should think you are!" growled Newcome. "You're making our table in a fine mess!"

"And look at my books, you juggins!" growled Lovell. "You put another spot of that black mess on my Latin grammar and you'll go out of the door!"

"Peace, my infants," said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "Don't interrupt me when there's great work afoot."

"Great work!" howled Lovell, as a mass of the inky concoction which Jimmy Silver was stirring in a saucer spurted out, and covered the contents of page 49 of his Latin grammar. "Pitch him out of the study! He's not fit to be in a decent place!"

As he spoke, Lovell made a rush at his study-mate, and Raby and Newcome followed.

Jimmy Silver sprang back against the wall, raising the saucerful of black stuff threateningly.

"You asses seem to think that I'm doing this for my own amusement," he protested.

"Well, if you're doing it for ours we'll soon let you know our idea of your rotten jokes!" fumed Lovell.

"He can't help it, I suppose," said Raby pityingly. "It's the old thing—back to nature. Pigs back to their sties."

Jimmy Silver continued to smile at his exasperated chums.

"If you'll give me time to explain things," he said, "you'll see that the mess on the floor is a blessing in disguise. It's going to make those funny faces of yours expand into broad and horrible grins. You're going to—"

"Dotty!" said Raby, touching his head significantly. "Better put him outside before he gets any worse."

Jimmy Silver raised the saucer still more threateningly, and the three paused.

They did not want to be smothered in the black concoction, and Jimmy Silver seemed quite prepared to carry out his threat.

"Perhaps you'll listen now!" said Jimmy, as they hung back. "If you jugginses don't let me get on with this we shall be too late!"

"Too late for what?" growled Lovell, viewing the results of his chum's labours up to date.

"Tommy Dodd & Co.," said Jimmy, with a grin. "I've been preparing this for their benefit. That's why I don't want to waste it."

"Oh!" said the three, their expressions changing.

"Ink is good enough for them," said Raby, after a thoughtful pause.

"Plenty good enough," agreed Silver. "But we can't get them to rub ink on their faces of their own free will."

"And are they going to rub that stuff on?" asked Lovell, blinking.

"Tommy Dodd is," said Jimmy Silver. "You see, I happened to overhear a stunt which they're going to work on us. I wasn't eavesdropping, but the bounders simply spouted it out before I knew they were there."

"Well?"

"And Tommy Dodd is going to black his face this afternoon, and make out that he's a new boy, or something like that."

"Go on!"

"Then the other two Tommies, you see," Silver explained, "will put on their best bows, and lead him across here by the hand. They're going to bring him round, and intro-

duce him to us as a new Classical junior, and explain that they've just prevented him from knocking someone down, and giving the House a bad name."

"O-ho!" said Lovell, with a grin.

"According to their plan, we shall invite the new fellow to tea," proceeded Jimmy Silver. "Then, of course, he sits down, calls us Massa Lovell, and Massa Raby, and that sort of thing, and behaves like a pig. We sit there and writhe, and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle grin, and make remarks about being glad that they ain't Classics."

"Do they?" muttered Lovell.

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Well, that's their plan," he said. "They're going to work a first-class hoax on us with this black boy, and then volunteer to take him for a walk. After that, of course, the black boy disappears, according to the arrangements made at present."

"And what are you going to do?" asked Newcome.

"Well, that's what I've been doing all the afternoon," said Jimmy Silver. "It's a simple little rag, and I don't see why they shouldn't work it if it pleases them. Only I've pinched their grease-paint, and I'm making up some stuff like it with ink and boot-polish. Tommy Dodd won't half give someone a black look when he tries to wash it off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good wheeze!" said Lovell, laughing. "Get on with it, Jimmy. We'll make it pax while you manufacture the grease-paint. Don't make more mess than you can help."

Jimmy Silver resumed his work unmolested. He added some soot to the mixture in the saucer until he had a good stiff paste, and then compared it with a tin of preparation which he drew from his pocket.

"Looks just the same now," said Raby, examining the two.

"It ought to pass muster," said Jimmy Silver. "Quick! Empty their tin, and then I'll fill it up with this stuff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The change was effected in a couple of minutes, and the preparation which Jimmy Silver had made was carefully placed in the tin.

"You'll just have time to put it back in their study, Jimmy," said Lovell. "I saw them going out this afternoon, and I don't think that they've come back yet."

"Right you are! Be back in a minute." Jimmy Silver hurried along the passage, and made his way to the Modern side of Rookwood School.

He was relieved not to meet anyone, for most likely awkward questions would be asked as to what he was doing over there.

There was no reply to his tap at the door of the study shared by the three Tommies, and he entered.

Everything was just as they had left it. Jimmy Silver grinned, and, replacing the grease-paint tin on the mantelpiece, tiptoed out of the room, and returned to the famous end study in the Fourth Form passage on the Classical side.

"See anything of them?" asked Raby.

"Not a sign. I put the tin back on the mantelpiece, and they won't guess that it's been touched, unless they're jolly cute."

Lovell & Co. laughed.

"Then the only thing for us to do," said Lovell, "is to wait. I suppose they'll come across here with their black boy in time for tea. Shall we kick him out right away?"

"No," said Raby. "Let's give the Colonial chum a good tea."

"What?"

"Why not?" asked Raby innocently. "We'll even give him a special sugar-basin. And, as we're short of sugar, we'd better grind up some Epsom salts, and fill it with that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I'll cook a little dainty for him!" grinned Newcome. "I don't suppose he'll be able to eat it, but that will be his fault."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Preparations were quickly made for the reception of the black junior, and a good programme had been arranged by the time there came a discreet knock on the door, and Tommy Cook looked into the study.

"Hallo! What's up?" asked Lovell.

"Pax!" said Tommy Doyle. "You see, Silver, we've brought you a visitor."

"What?"

Tommy Cook and Tommy Dodd led a nervous-looking youth into the room.

His face was jet black, and so were his hands. And with the thick, red lips and rolling, white eyes, the Fistical Four would never have recognised the features of Tommy Dodd under the paint if they had not been expecting the rag.

"Who on earth is the dark gentleman?" asked Jimmy Silver seriously.

"This is a fellow we picked up in the town," said Tommy Cook, looking severely at the coloured boy. "Behaving in a shocking manner, and wearing a school cap. We chipped in, and took charge of him. It seems that he's a new Classical junior."

"Oh?" asked Lovell coldly.

"So we brought him round to see you, you see," said Tommy Doyle. "Of course, we shouldn't have a nigger in our House. It's a good thing that he has Classical tastes. But we thought you'd like to have a word with him before he gets the place into disgrace."

"Certainly," said Jimmy Silver cordially.

"You'll all stay to tea, won't you?"

"With pleasure," said Tommy Cook.

"What's dat?" asked the black boy.

"We've asked you to stay and have tea," said Jimmy Silver.

"Ya! Dat's all right. I tink I'll begin now," said the new-comer.

"Sit down, all of you, then," said Jimmy Silver. "We're rather short of grub, as we weren't expecting visitors; but I'll get out some more crocks."

The three Moderns sat down.

Jimmy Silver poured out the tea, and passed a sugar-basin to the black boy.

"Help yourself," he said.

"I should tink I would!" muttered the other. "I'm velly hungry. Bring me something to eat."

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle exchanged glances.

"Soon be a Classical, won't he?" whispered Tommy Cook.

"Eh? What's that?" demanded Lovell sharply.

"Going to be a fine day, I think," said Tommy Cook blandly. "It will be if it doesn't rain."

"Shouldn't be at all surprised!" grunted Lovell. "I—"

He was interrupted by a splutter from the black youth. He looked round to see Tommy Dodd bang his cup into his saucer.

"What's the matter?" asked Raby.

"Groooogh!" muttered the black youth.

"Anything wrong?" asked Newcome interestedly.

"De tea am nasty," said the black youth, rising hastily. "Go somewhere else!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Fistical Four.

Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle also rose.

"I—I tink we'd better go," said Tommy Cook feebly. "We're expecting some chaps ourselves, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Fistical Four again.

Tommy Dodd & Co. made for the door.

They had an unpleasant feeling that the Fistical Four had been pulling their legs.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Half-caste!

"I— I can't get this stuff off!" Thus Tommy Dodd. He had been washing his face for five minutes to remove the black, but so far had not succeeded in doing anything with it. "What?" gasped Tommy Cook. "It won't come off!" growled Tommy Dodd, rubbing his face again. "Use more soap!" suggested Tommy Doyle. "I've got the box here. It says it will come off with soap and water." The bogus black junior continued to rub his face for another five minutes. Then he turned round and faced his chums. "How's that?" he asked. "As bad as ever," said Tommy Doyle. "Why don't you rub hard?" "I am doing that!" howled Tommy Dodd. "I've nearly rubbed the skin off my chivvy. Isn't it shifting at all?" "No!" "M-m-my hat!" The three chums exchanged glances blankly. "Those Classical bounders seemed highly tickled at something," said Tommy Cook at length. "I believe they knew all about the jape. Anyway, it went pretty rottenly. I was glad to get out." "They put salts or something in the tea!" growled Tommy Doyle. "And they seemed highly amused when we left them. I—" "What about my face?" howled Tommy Dodd. "Perhaps that amused them," speculated Doyle seriously. "It is certainly funny enough. It would make a cat—" "Ass! I don't mean that! How on earth am I going to get this black stuff off?" "Goodness knows!" "But I must do something!" howled Tommy Dodd furiously. "I can't go down to school like this in the morning!" "My hat! Ha, ha, ha! No!" "Nothing to laugh about!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Nothing at all—ha, ha, ha!—to laugh about!" "Then shut up!" growled the leader of the three Moderns. "I only did the make-up bit because I'm the best actor. It's up to you to help me with this!" "Wash it again!" Tommy Dodd turned to the basin, and recommenced operations. As he was doing so, Doyle suddenly gave vent to a little whistle of amazement. "Come to think of it," he said, "I saw a saucer of black stuff standing in their study." "You did?" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Yes. Give me the tin." He took the tin which should have contained the grease-paint, and sniffed it curiously. "No wonder you can't get your face clean, Tommy," he said slowly. "This ain't the stuff at all. Someone's played a joke on you. This is their own concoction!" "What?" "You've been sold a pup," said Doyle. "You'll be a black man for the rest of your life. Oh, my only aunt! What a blessed disgrace to the House. You'll have to turn Classical, Tommy!" Tommy Dodd flushed beneath the black paint. "Y-y-y-you m-m-m-mean that—" "I don't suppose it will come off," said Doyle. "They've been warned about what we were going to do, and they made up some grease-paint of their own. You ought to have nipped it when you put it on!" "Well, I like that!" hooted Tommy Dodd. "Do you mean to say that I'm never going to get this wretched stuff off?" "You might have another try!" said Tommy Cook. Tommy Dodd tried again, and once again. But the black refused to come off. The Fistical Four met Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle when they came down for supper. "Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver brightly. "Where's Massa Dodd?" The two Moderns glared, and passed on without saying a word. "I thought you said you wouldn't have a nigger in your House!" called Lovell. But he received no reply. Tommy Dodd, however, did not appear at supper. His face was still black, and his expression Hunnish. The little scheme had recoiled on himself with unpleasant and annoying results. He got up early the following morning, and started washing long before the usual hour. Then he rubbed himself with grease.

But he had not spared the paint in order to get a good effect, and he was reaping the results now. He went down to breakfast looking like a mulatto. He had not been there more than a couple of minutes before Knowles, the head prefect of the Modern side, spotted him. "Dodd!" he rapped. "Come over here!" Tommy Dodd went across to the senior table, looking very crestfallen. But there was no escape for him. "What is the matter with your face and hands, Dodd?" asked Knowles acidly. "Surely you have not come down without washing?" "My hat, no!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "I've been washing all the night!" "Then what on earth have you been doing to yourself?" "I blacked my face last night, Knowles," said Dodd humbly. "I was rehearsing for— for amateur theatricals. And I can't get the beastly stuff off again." "You did it yourself?" demanded Knowles. Tommy Dodd nodded. "I shall have to report you to Mr. Manders at once," said Knowles. "It is perfectly disgraceful to appear in such a state. Can't you get the stuff off?" "Think I should come down like this if I could, Knowles?" Dodd growled.

He was in the act of bathing his face in an odorous but efficient liquid, which Mr. Manders, the science-master, had mixed up for him. "I've got it!" he exclaimed. "Got what?" asked Cook lazily. "A top-notch stunt for getting even with those Classical bounders." "What colour are you going to paint yourself this time?" inquired Doyle. "I'm not going to paint myself at all!" snapped Dodd. "Well, you're certainly not going to paint me!" said Tommy Cook emphatically. "Think of another number!" "Ass!" snorted the leader of the Co. "This stunt has got nothing to do with paint." "Good! Proceed, fair one!" "Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Tommy Doyle. Dodd certainly did not look by any means fair even then, and his expression, if nothing else, was dark. "You know the old house we discovered the other day?" "Yes. The empty one?" "That's it," said Tommy Dodd. "Well, the Classics often go out that way for a walk. Suppose we got out there one night about dusk, and waited till they came along. It's supposed to be haunted, you know, but that's all bunkum. No one has seen a real ghost there. Well, if we showed some lights

"It's burglars or coiners!" whispered Tommy Doyle, as heavy steps sounded on the stairs.



"You'll probably be gated until you do get clean!" snapped the prefect. "Come this way!" Mr. Manders, who was the senior master of the Modern side, scowled even more heavily than Knowles when his eyes lit upon the unfortunate junior, and, in a breezy interview, gated him until he had cleaned his face, and gave him five hundred lines to write when he was not washing his face. Tommy Dodd was the joke of the school for a couple of days after that. The discomfiture of the Moderns was complete. But Tommy Dodd & Co. puzzled their brains for a further opportunity of taking a rise out of Jimmy Silver & Co. that would serve as a set-off for their own plight. It was Tommy Dodd himself who first hit upon the wheeze.

in there as they were coming along we could lure them into the place, and then give 'em a ghost show." "Ha, ha, ha!" "What do you think of the wheeze?" "All right," said Tommy Cook. "How are you going to manage about the lights, though?" "Well, for some reason, they've left the gas still laid on to the house, so we could easily light that up. The Classics would be sure to come in. They'd scent some mystery at once." "But they'd know ghosts can't light the gas, juggins!" "I don't suppose they'd stop to think of that," argued Tommy Dodd. "Anyway, if we got them in the place we should give 'em a pretty good scare from the landing up the top of the stairs, and then pelt 'em with stuff if they tried to come up." "We could do that," agreed Tommy Cook. "How about trying it to-morrow night? I expect they'll be going out for one of their usual training walks. Will your face be clean then, Tommy Dodd?" "Yes!" grunted that worthy. "And your lines finished?" "Yes!" howled Tommy Dodd. "Then," said Tommy Cook, "to-morrow night it shall be!"

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Through the Attic!

"QUITE a decent evening to be out," observed Lovell, as the Fistical Four swung along the road which led back to Rookwood School.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver.

There was another pause as the juniors walked on.

"Getting pretty dark, isn't it?" said Raby. Jimmy Silver nodded.

"What's up with you, you dummy?" growled Newcome, looking across at him. "You haven't spoken a word for an hour."

"I was thinking," said Jimmy Silver, "that Tommy Dodd & Co. have kept pretty quiet. They're bound to try and get their revenge. We must look out for squalls."

"Yes, I suppose we must," said Lovell. "They'll be doing something ingenious. By the way, Tommy Dodd gets out again to-night, doesn't he? He's got the art decorations off his face at last."

"He'll be out all right," said Raby. "Why—Hallo! Look at the old house!"

The chums had got to the point where the road turned, and the old, disused house which Tommy Dodd had spoken of hovered in sight.

To-night it seemed different at once, for there was a faint light showing from one of the windows.

"Wonder who it is?" asked Lovell.

"Spooks!" laughed Jimmy Silver.

"Rubbish! Spooks don't light the gas. There must be someone in there!"

"New tenant," said Newcome.

"That's hardly likely," said Jimmy Silver. "The place has been empty for a long while. No one could move into it without having a good spring-clean first."

"Well, let's go in and see," said Raby. "There's four of us, and people nowadays might use old houses for anything. It's just as well to have a look."

"Wait a minute," said Jimmy Silver. "I thought I saw a couple of faces looking out of the window just now. There! The light's gone out! What does it mean?"

"Crooks, perhaps," said Raby.

"No fear!" said Jimmy Silver. "Tommy Dodd & Co. more likely."

"Think so?"

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver. "Look here, we'll go into the house, but not through the usual way—that's the back door. Whoever it is may have rigged up a booby-trap for us. Let's climb up the ivy, and get in through the attic window. It's always open."

"Right-ho!"

The Fistical Four fell in with the suggestion at once, and, cautiously approaching the front of the old house, clambered up the ivy which reached from the ground to the top of the house.

Jimmy Silver led the way, testing the ivy at every movement before he advanced. But it was strong enough to bear his weight, and all four reached the attic easily.

Then, moving very cautiously, they made their way down a small flight of stairs, and reached the top landing.

There was a landing just below, and from it came the cautious sound of whispered conversation.

"Hist!" said Lovell, as they lined up along the balustrade.

Tommy Dodd's voice could be heard distinctly.

"Wonder when those Classical worms are coming?" he speculated.

"They're a long while," said Tommy Cook. "They spotted the light, I know, for I saw Raby point."

Lovell nudged Raby. Raby grinned silently.

In the dim light below he could make out the ghostly shapes of three white figures.

It was quite evident now exactly what form the return jape of Tommy Dodd & Co. had been designed to take.

They moved about without making a sound, evidently having taken off their boots to keep silent.

Ten minutes passed, and the three Tommies grew more unsettled. Tommy Doyle commenced shivering.

"It's jolly chilly without a coat or waist-coat," he said. "These sheets ain't half clammy brutes!"

"It all adds to the effect," said Tommy Dodd comfortably.

Another five minutes passed, and still nothing happened.

"Rotten idea this!" growled Tommy Cook. "Let's get our coats and boots on again. I shall be covered with chilblains."

There was the subdued sound of shuffling feet, and the three white figures disappeared into the darkness of a doorway which opened off the landing.

Then the accident happened. They had not been gone half a minute when Lovell sneezed.

"What was—that?" asked the voice of Tommy Dodd, and shuffling feet sounded on the lower landing again.

The Fistical Four kept silence. They could imagine now that the trio were getting uneasy. A minute slipped by, and then Tommy Doyle spoke.

"I'm going to light the gas," he said. "It will be quite safe here. It won't show out through any of the windows."

Matches rattled in his hand. Tommy Cook, at the same moment, produced a box of his own, but dropped them in the excitement.

He was still groping for them when the gas lit up.

Jimmy Silver, however, had formed a plan quickly, and, in a few brief words, explained it to the others.

The Fistical Four grinned, and, as the gas lit, suddenly stamped their feet, and started to make a tremendous commotion.

"There's spies dahn there, Bill!" said Jimmy Silver hoarsely.

"Yus!" answered Lovell. "Hi, there, you young rips! Come 'ere! Wotcher mean by it?"

The Fistical Four were still hidden in the darkness.

They saw the three Tommies turn startled eyes in their direction, and Tommy Cook promptly gave up his search for the matches and sprang to his feet.

"It's burglars, or coiners!" whispered Tommy Doyle.

Heavy steps sounded on the stairs.

"Let me 'it 'em with this club!" growled Raby, making a tremendous noise.

"We must catch 'em and lock 'em up!" thundered Newcome. "They'll split if—"

"Quick!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "This way!"

He led the way down the stairs in his stocking feet, and the other two followed.

Their nerves were on edge by the long wait in the darkness, and they did not stop

to think anything about the identity of the men at the top.

Jimmy Silver & Co. followed, with loud shouts and much noise, and they heard the three dash along the passage and slam the back door.

Then they pulled up, and, returning to the landing, laughed at the discomfiture of the Modern juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gave them a bit of a shock," said Jimmy Silver, recovering at length. "My hat! How they ran!"

"Properly taken in!" gasped Raby. "I say, let's complete the joke."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, they're mouching round in their stockings, and they haven't got their coats on. Let's pinch them, and take 'em back to the school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And arrange 'em neatly in their study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better be quick," said Jimmy Silver. "They'll soon get over their shock, and come back to investigate!"

The Fistical Four nipped into the little back room where the three had disguised themselves as ghosts, and found the three pairs of coats and boots without any difficulty.

Then they made their way back to the top of the house just as they heard the cautious voices of the returning juniors.

"Don't believe it was burglars at all!" said Tommy Dodd. "It was those Classical cads! They've jolly well taken a rise out of us!"

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver, leading the way up the stairs. "Down the ivy again!"

The Fistical Four made their way to the attic, and then descended from the house in the same manner in which they had entered.

They reached the ground just as there sounded an excited yell from Tommy Dodd, and, looking up, they saw the Modern junior leaning out of the window which they had just left.

"There they are!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "And they've pinched our clobber! After them!"

The Fistical Four waved their hands.

"Good-bye!" sang out Jimmy Silver. "See you later!"

And, swinging into a good pace, he led the way back to Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd & Co. arrived back at Rookwood half an hour later.

The journey back had been a miserable one to do without boots or coats. They reached the school in a state bordering on fury.

Jimmy Silver grinned at them as they came in the door.

They were clutching the folded sheets under their arms, and scowling in a manner which would have done credit to Huns.

"Have a nice time?" asked Jimmy Silver genially.

Tommy Dodd & Co. scowled, and said not a word.

They made their way silently to their study, and there, arranged neatly on the floor, were the three coats and three pairs of boots.

Tommy Dodd & Co. exchanged silent glances, and pounced on their own garments.

The rag had been turned on themselves with a vengeance, but they did not take it very cheerfully! THE END.

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



The St. Jim's juniors charged, and a volley of snowballs poured into the already-disordered ranks of the Grammarians, when the cheery voice of Gordon Gay rang out as he held up the white flag. "Pax! We surrender!" "Cease fire, St. Jim's!" cried Tom Merry.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Great Idea.

"WHEN the idea came to me—"
"When I thought of the wheeze—"

Manners glared back again. Tom Merry banged on the table of Study No. 6 with a ruler.

"Peace, you asses!" he exclaimed. "It doesn't matter whose idea it is; it's a ripping one—"

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Oh, ring off, Gussy!"
"I refuse to wing off, Tom Mewwy—"

"Then ring off Gussy, instead," grinned Monty Lowther. "Let's get on with the washing. You aren't an old cackling hen, Gussy."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, jammed his famous monocle into his eye and viewed Lowther through it with a withering stare.

"Weally, Lowther—"
"Yes, really, kid. Of course, you may have been misled into thinking you are a cackling old hen, but you aren't, really. Some old hens are jolly clever things. We've got one at home."

"I uttahly wufese to listen to your widiculous wubbish, you wottah!"

"Oh, well, if you want to go on thinking you're a cackling old hen—"
"You uttah ass!"

"Peace!" yelled Tom Merry, to make himself heard above the discussion. "This is a business meeting, to discuss an important matter!"

"Yes, get on with it, kids!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"As I was saying, when the idea came to me—"

"When the idea occurred to me—"

Digby and Manners rose to their feet. There were heated expressions on their faces. "Oh, rats!" shouted Tom Merry. "We've already decided it doesn't matter whose idea it is."

"No, wathah not, deah boys. Onlay bonah where honah is due. And, as a mattah of fact, the ideah flashed across my bwain before evah Digbay or Mannahs thought of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You shrieking ass, Gussy—"

"No, Gussy isn't a shrieking ass," said Monty Lowther. "He won't be called anything but a cackling old hen. Gussy's getting jolly particular nowadays."

"You uttah ass!"

Tom Merry banged on the table again with the ruler. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, had been invited to Study No. 6 by Jack Blake, Digby, Herries, and Arthur Augustus, in order to discuss a very important matter. There was not a great deal of time before the bell for preparation would ring.

Tom Merry faced the situation firmly. "The suggestion before the meeting is that the School House juniors organise winter sports at St. Jim's—"

"Yaas, wathah! On the same lines wintah sports are won in Switzerland. My bwothah is pwesident of a club there, and the sports are absolutely wippin'. My bwothah wemarked in his last lettah—"

"Is he an old hen, too?"

"You waggin' duffah, Lowthah—"

"Well, I only thought, Gussy—"

"Dry up!" cried Tom Merry desperately. "Of course winter sports are ripping. For once in a way, there's some topping snow on the ground, and that feld by Rylcombe Lane was simply made for ski-running."

"Rather!"

"And there's a peice toboggan-run by the church."

"Bai Jove, yes! And we can conclude the sports with a wippin' fancy-dwess carnival on the ice, deah boys."

"That's what I thought," said Digby.

"Exactly my idea," said Manners.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, deah boys, pway don't waste pwecious time!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "We must pwess on with the biznay wapidly. As I was wemarking, my bwothah—"

"Perhaps you're right, Gussy."

"Wight? Yaas, of course. But in what way, Lowthah?"

"That you are a cackling old hen, after all."

"You hopeless duffah! I uttahly wufese—"

"To have it doubted?" finished the humorist of the Shell. "Well, I don't mind. You certainly have brought cackling to a fine art—"

Tom Merry almost broke his ruler in a third attempt to keep the meeting to the point. The hero of the Shell was in deadly earnest over the latest wheeze at St. Jim's.

The idea of holding organised winter sports was certainly a good one, for nothing like it had been held at the old school before. Of course, there had been skating and tobogganing in the past, but never a real, organised sports meeting—a sort of sports day on the snow and ice.

"And, of course, there will be pwizes, deah boys. My bwothah will be pleased to pwesent a wippin' pwize for ski-ing."

"Hooray!"

"Good old Gussy's brother!"

"Rather!" agreed Lowther heartily. "I always have said it would be a pity to slay Gussy."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Yes, Gussy, you know I have. I look upon Gussy not only as a cackling old hen, but the one that lays the golden egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You awful wottah!"

"What I propose," said Jack Blake desperately, "is that three afternoons are set apart for the winter sports. Of course, there will be no footer on Saturday, the ground being a foot under snow, so we can have the winter sports instead."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good egg!"

"Say toboggan races first, from half-past two to three—"

"Ski-ing next—"

"And the ice carnival in the evening," added Tom Merry, "with the skating races just before tea."

"Bai Jove! It will be wattling!"

"Eh?"

"Wattling, deah boy."

Monty Lowther shook his head.

"No, Gussy, you aren't playing the game."

"Gweat Scott!"

"No, old chap. Our old hen at home never says anything like that. Perhaps you aren't a Cochih China, though?"

"I uttahly wufese to be chawactahwised as a Cochih China!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I don't want to administrah a fwithful thwashin', but, weally, Lowthah, you are vewy twyin'."

"I'm sorry, kid."

"Yaas, wathah! And as you apologise—"

"Only too happy, if not happier," conceded Lowther, with feeling. "Of course, when I look at you more closely I see that you are not a Cochih China."

"You uttah ass!"

"In fact, you are nothing like a Cochih China."

"No, wathah not—I mean, don't be so widiculous."

"My hat! Can't you see it when you look at him? I must have had my eyes shut! It's written all over him!"

"Bai Jove! What is the mattah, deah boy?"

"That you haven't a single point of a Cochih China, Gussy," said Lowther sadly. "You are only an ordinary long-legged Plymouth Rock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gussy went pink with indignation. He jumped to his feet, but Herries and Manners pulled him down to his chair again.

Tom Merry was hastily turning over the pages of a little book published by the Public School Winter Sports Club of Switzerland. The pages were intensely interesting.

There was a thrill about the lengths of

some of the famous ski jumps, and fifty miles an hour was mentioned as possible on some of the famous Alpine toboggan runs. Tom Merry and Jack Blake were fascinated by the reproduced photographs on the pages.

"My hat, I must get some new films for my camera!"

"Bai Jove! I shall wequire a new suit!"
"We shall have to send to London for skis, kids," said Tom Merry. "Can you run on skis, Gussy?"

"I don't know, deah boy. I've nevah twied—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Hewwies, I fail to see any weason for wibald laughtah!"

"My aunt! I have tried to ski, kid, that's all."

"Weally!"

"Oh, it's quite simple, kid! You strap the things on to your feet, then you fall. I fell about five hundred times in two hours."

"Gweat Scott! Howevah, my bwother is quite a good ski wunner, so I shall soon pick it up. Mattahs like ski-ing wun in the family, deah boy."

"I don't think!"

"Then it's settled?" asked Tom Merry.
"On Saturday afternoon we hold the winter sports?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And as the idea was mine—"

"As I thought of the wheeze—"

"I ought to be president—"

"I should be president!"

Arthur Augustus stared from Digby to Manners, and back again. He held up this hand loftily.

"Weally, Digbay! Bai Jove, Mannahs! I have already told you my bwother is pwesident of a club in Switzerland, and these mattahs wun in the family like anythin'. I uttably wufuse to be ovahtooked in the mattah of the pwesidency! We must have a wealible fellow as pwesident."

"Yes, there is that."

"I am glad you agree with me, Tom Mewwy, deah boy. But not only must our pwesident be wealible, he must also be a born organisah."

"Hear, hear!"

"Thank you, Tom Mewwy! The family of D'Arcy must have been famous as organisahs evah since the time of William the Conquerwah. It wuns in the family. But even a wealible organisah does not complete the qualifications of a perfect pwesident, deah boy. He must be more than that, bai Jove!"

"A long-legged, Plymouth Rock?"

"You wottah, Lowthah! You unspeakable wottah! As I was about to wemark when I was wudely intewwupted, our pwesident must be a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Hear, hear!"

"Rather—a regular, long-legged Plymouth Rock, in fact!"

"You shwiekin' duffah, Lowthah! A fellow of tact and judgment. Our pwesident must also be stwong chawactered, and able to gwasp a situation like a flash of lightnin', bai Jove!"

"Grasp a flash of lightnin', Gussy?"

"No, you widuculous ass! He must be pwepared to take wisks—"

"Eh?"

"Wisks, Hewwies, deah boy."

"Hear, hear!"

"And he must be able to lend an air of dignity to the pwocceedings, bai Jove!"

"Rather!"

"He must also—"

"Exactly!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Well put, Gussy. In fact, our president must be an all round good sort—the right man in the right place."

"Bai Jove, yaas, that is it! Our pwesident must be the wight man in the wight place, and when the mattah is put to the vote—"

"Eh?"

"Put to the vote, Tom Mewwy, deah boy."
"Oh, there's no need to do that, Gussy!" answered the hero of the Shell pleasantly. "The matter is settled."

"Bai Jove! You have already decided in your own minds—"

"Rather!" said Tom Merry. "And I think we have the right man in the right place, old chap."

"Bai Jove, it is wippin' of you to say that! It will be a solemn dutay of my life, deah boy—"

"To back me up in the wheeze," finished Tom Merry. "Good! You see, it rested between Jack Blake and myself who was to be president, so we tossed up. I won, just before you came in."

"You wottah!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 275.

"You can be official skate-cleaner, though."
"I uttably wufuse to be official skate-cleanah—"

"Well, go on being a Plymouth Rock!" suggested Lowther. "It's not a bad thing to be except when you moult. Do you often moult, Gussy?"

"You widuculous ass! You w'etched wottah! You uttah waggah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wise to a point of ordah—"

"Go hon!"

"I wufuse to—don't be widuculous—"

"Dry up!" interrupted Tom Merry crisply.

"I wufuse—"

"Gag him!" rapped out Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus was promptly gagged, and Tom Merry was elected president. This done, the juniors went into the subject of the Winter Sports meeting.

By the time the meeting disbanded many agreements had been come to, and there seemed every prospect of the sports turning out a huge success.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Selby's Double.

"I SAY, will the coast be clear?"

"Rather!"

"All the St. Jim's juniors will be at prep, of course," chuckled Gordon Gay, of Rylcombe Grammar School. "Don't make a row, though, in case any of the prefects are in the quadrangle."

"Got the bag, Monkey?"

"Rather!"

Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and Wootton major halted beneath the snow-capped walls of St. Jim's. Their subdued chuckles were the only sounds to be heard in the darkness as Frank Monk opened the small portmanteau he had carried all the way from the Grammar School.

Gordon Gay clambered up the wall, and peered cautiously down into the snow-covered quadrangle.

"Yes, it seems deserted enough."

"Of course it's deserted, ass!"

"All you've got to do is to make up, and carry the thing through," grinned Frank Monk. "Mind you fasten the notice up on the gymnasium door, kid."

"Rather!"

"It's a ripping idea," added Frank Monk. "Ever since I saw that article in the 'Rylcombe Gazette' on winter sports—"

"Ever since I saw it, you mean—"

"No, I don't, Wootton major—"

"Oh, rats!" laughed Gordon Gay. "Ever since we all saw the article we've made up our minds to bone the field by Rylcombe Lane for ski-ing, and the lane by the church for tobogganing, and the pond for skating. Good!"

"Won't the St. Jim's kids be fed up about it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Talking and chortling in whispers, the three Grammar School fellows took an ancient and somewhat moth-eaten master's gown from the bag. Gordon Gay viewed it with doubt.

"Hope I don't meet the real Selby, anyway—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay had a gift for making up.

With the few properties of a gown, a wig, and a little grease-paint the Grammar School junior had done wonders.

A sofa cushion, suitably arranged, gave his well-built, athletic young figure the necessary roundness which lent dignity to Mr. Selby's form, and the long gown seemed to add inches to his height.

There was no doubt about it, Gordon Gay would have passed muster as Mr. Selby, the Third Form-master of St. Jim's, in a far more searching light than was likely to be met with in the quadrangle.

Wootton major was enthusiastic.

"Ripping!"

"You might be Selby's twin brother, kid."

"Well, I'm not."

"No, but you look it," exclaimed Wootton major. "There's nothing in the world to prevent you going into the coll itself, and giving Tom Merry fifty lines—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay looked doubtful as he climbed up the wall again.

Going into the college itself might mean serious trouble, as it had done once before when he had impersonated Dr. Holmes.

"I don't think I'll do that, kids."

"Well, hang about until prep is over," laughed Frank Monk. "Some of the kids are bound to come out for a run."

"Mind you give Tom Merry an impot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you got the notice all right?"
Gordon Gay nodded, and dropped down into the quadrangle. His boots did not make the slightest sound in the thick, dry snow.

He scudded hard for the gymnasium. The college clock had just chimed, so there was not much time to waste. Preparation at St. Jim's must be nearly over by now.

Gordon Gay fumbled with a slip of paper and four drawing-pins in the darkness, and chuckled silently to himself. He pinned the notice in the exact centre of the gymnasium door.

He stopped as he pushed in the last of the drawing-pins.

A startled exclamation had sounded across the quadrangle.

"Bai Jove!"

Gordon Gay bent down in the shadow of the gymnasium wall, and stared blankly across the snow-covered quadrangle.

The elegant form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was running recklessly about in the snow.

"Come here, you wascal! Bai Jove, you boundah!"

Gordon Gay's stare became blanker. Arthur Augustus suddenly wheeled round to the right, only to turn again with equal suddenness.

The swell of St. Jim's was running a zig-zag course, without any apparent motive. Gordon Gay was thunderstruck.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

"Mr. Selby" Comes to Grief.

"MY only Aunt Jane!"
Tom Merry stared across the quadrangle in astonishment.

Preparation was just over, and the Terrible Three of the Shell had come out for a breath of fresh air. They stood enjoying the fresh air without realising it.

"It's Gussy—"

"Rushing about like a raving lunatic!"

"Gussy, you ass!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Off your rocker?"

"No, wathah not! Pway help me capture the little wascal. Bai Jove, it can wun like anythin', deah boys!"

Tom Merry started again. He had caught sight of a small four-footed animal a few yards in front of Arthur Augustus. As Arthur Augustus had said, it could run. At a guess Tom Merry would have said it could have given the swell of St. Jim's about fifty yards in a hundred, and then beaten him.

"It's a cat!" gasped Manners.

"Gussy is chasing cats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On the ball, kids!" chuckled Tom Merry.

"Look out there on the left wing! Come on, Figgins & Co.!"

"And here's Jack Blake!"

"And Kangaroo!"

"Altogether, chaps!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Gussy is having a private cat hunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus dashed past, and the other juniors raced after him. The swell of St. Jim's was breathless and gasping.

"Pway close wound, deah boys!"

"Even a Plymouth Rock will turn at last," chuckled Lowther. "Has the old mouser been eating your corn, Gussy?"

"You ass! Bai Jove, there he is!"

"Hooray!"

"Now we have him!"

The juniors stampeded towards the gymnasium, Arthur Augustus leading the way. The small, four-footed animal was running splendidly.

"Get out of my way, Jack Blake! Get out of my way, Tom Merry!"

"Ass!"

"Duffer!"

Arthur Augustus spurted desperately. The others followed closely on his heels.

"There he is, bai Jove!"

"Hooray!"

"Come on, Clifton Danc! Gussy's chasing cats!"

"Wot! Uttah wot, Mannahs, you ass!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pway let me pass, Hawwy Noble. It's a wabbit—a long-haired wabbit I bought fwm Jackson for Cousin Ethel. He's gone wound the gym, bai Jove!"

"Yes, rather!"

"On the ball, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus scudded at a great pace for the gymnasium corner. He was certain he had seen the small four-footed animal dart round the corner.

"Pway wush wound the other way—cut the little wascal off, deah boys!"

"Altogether, kids!"

A sudden warning rang out from Figgins.

"Look out, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"
 "Gussy, you ass!"
 "It's all wight, Mannahs. If we wun like anythin—"
 Figgins & Co. gave vent to a combined yell of warning. The New House juniors were slightly to the right of Arthur Augustus, and they could see round the corner of the gymnasium.

The swell of St. Jim's was less fortunate. He could see the gymnasium corner distinctly enough, but that was all. What was round the corner was veiled from his eyes.

"Gussy!"
 "Stop!"
 "You shrieking ass!"
 Arthur Augustus' only reply was to increase his speed with another desperate spurt. He made for the gymnasium corner at a really fine turn of speed.

Figgins & Co. gasped in horror. A portly and gowned form was approaching Arthur Augustus from round the corner, and the thick mantle of snow obliterated all sound of footsteps.

The portly and gowned form was walking slowly to meet Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's was hastening to the interview at about a hundred yards in twelve seconds.

Figgins & Co. stopped dead.
 "Gussy!" yelled Kerr.
 "Yaas, wathah! I have him now, deah boys! The little wascal is cornahed, bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"
 Arthur Augustus had rounded the fatal corner.

For a fraction of a second his eyes rested on the portly—or, rather, sofa-cushion chest—of Mr. Selby. About a yard separated the two at the time.

"Bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"
 Arthur Augustus had sufficient time to utter a hopelessly late warning, then he dived into the convex chest in front of him. The owner of the chest flung its arms round Arthur Augustus' neck.

They remained in each other's embrace for less than a second, for Mr. Selby's double staggered backward. He made a last despairing clutch at nothing in particular, then thudded down in the snow.

Arthur Augustus thudded down on his chest.
 "Gweat Scott—"
 "You shrieking ass—gerrup—get off my chest—o-oh—"

A large portion of icy snow found its way down the supposed Mr. Selby's neck, and Mr. Selby's elbow caught Arthur Augustus on the bridge of his aristocratic nose.

"O-oh—my onlay toppah—o-oh!"
 "Let me get up, ass—"
 "My nose—it's w'eked for life—"
 "Get up!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "You raving jabberwock—"

"O-oh! Bai Jove—o-oh—"
 Jack Blake dashed up in alarm. He caught Arthur Augustus by the arm.

"Run for it, Gussy! There'll be an awful row!"
 "Yaas, wathah—"
 "Scud like greased lightning—"

"Bai Jove, yaas, but I must explain mattahs—"
 "Rats!"
 "No, weally; I must apologise, deah boy."
 Jack Blake, wheeled round.

"Digby! Herries!"
 There was no need to repeat the summons. Digby and Herries came up at a run. Without a word they caught the swell of St. Jim's by his arms.

Before he had grasped what had happened, Arthur Augustus was being rushed across the quadrangle at a fine pace. Tom Merry and the other juniors disappeared in all directions.

In the school doorway Arthur Augustus recovered slightly from the shock.
 "Gweat Scott, I must huwwy back, deah boys—"

"Rats!"
 "No, weally, I must return instantly and explain mattahs. I wegwet to say I nevah even helped Mr. Selby to his feet, bai Jove!"
 "Well, there, no need now—"
 "You don't think he's still wallowing in the snow, do you, ass?"

"No, I pwsume he has already wisen to his feet. Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus doubtfully. "However, I ought to bwush the snow f'rom his gown, deah boy."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You'll be scalped if you do, kid."
 "Wats, Digbay?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "As a reasonable man, Mr. Selby—"

"He isn't a reasonable man, Gussy."
 "Then I shall weason with him, deah boy. I wegwet to say that I was a little to

blame for the accident. Of course, I cannot help regarding Mr. Selbay as unwise for not gettin' out of my way—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"But when I explain—"
 "Better wait until he's cooled down a bit, kid," chuckled Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus looked doubtfully at the chief of Study No. 6. There was something to be said in favour of Jack Blake's suggestion.

"Perhaps it would be bettah for all partays to wait, deah boys. By to-morrow aftahnoon—"

"Better leave it altogether, Gussy."
 "No, weally. It would be uttally impos for me to leave the pwessin' mattah longah than to-morrow aftahnoon."

"Rats! Hallo, Kangaroo has caught the rabbit all right!"
 Herries stopped speaking. A tall, portly form was leaning out of the window, and an irritable, authoritative voice broke in upon the Fourth Form junior's remark.

"Boys, you mustn't talk beneath this

Master of Arts gown, and carrying a sofa cushion, scrambled over the quadrangle wall. His movements suggested extreme weariness as he dropped into the road. Frank Monk and Wootton major met him in suppressed excitement.

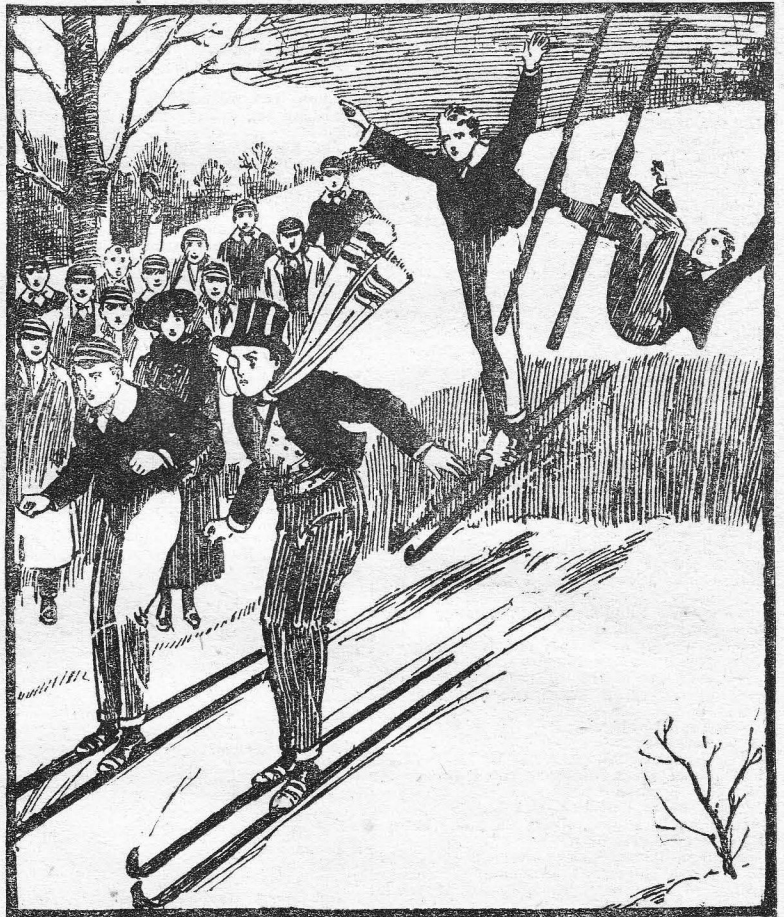
The dishevelled individual tossed the sofa cushion in Frank Monk's bag and ripped off the tattered gown.

"Of all the rotten wheezes—"
 "What happened, kid?"
 "We didn't dare to climb up on the wall."
 "Did you give Tom Merry an impot?"

"Rats!" snapped Gordon Gay.
 "Jack Blake, then?"
 "Piffle!"
 "Figgins, then," said Frank Monk in disappointment.

"Ass!" groaned Gordon Gay. "Shrieking duffers. Put a cold key down my back, someone; my nose is bleeding."

And for the next five minutes, Gordon Gay, the horn mimic, leaned over the fence and dyed the previously spotless mantle of snow a vivid scarlet.



"Go it!" The skimmers sped over the hard snow like flashes of lightning. D'Arcy and Herries passed the post together, followed home by Bernard Glyn, while Kerr came a cropper at the jump.

window!" the voice exclaimed. "You had better come in."
 "Selby!" gasped Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "How on earth did he get round here so quickly?"
 "I weally don't know, Digbay," said Arthur Augustus in some relief. "The important mattah is that he doesn't appear to be vevy wuffed."

"N-no."
 "I say—"
 "Jolly funny, isn't it?" exclaimed Jack Blake suspiciously. "He must have done a giddy sprint and no mistake."

And still wondering, Jack Blake led the way to Study No. 6. As he opened the door, a well-built form arrayed in a tattered

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
 Making Plans.

HA, ha, ha!"
 Figgins chuckled loudly. Kerr, the Scots junior of the New House, was almost doubled up with mirth.

"Wasn't it great?"
 "Ripping!"
 "The way Gussy biffed into him!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

The three had just gained their study in the precincts of the New House of St. Jim's. They had been running hard. Kerr, with national caution, had refused to consider Fatty Wynn's proposal to go and help "Mr.

Selby" to his feet after the accident by the gymnasium.

Figgins dropped into an easy-chair by the fire with a cheery laugh.

"Serves Gussy right, anyway."

"Rather!"

"For being such an ass," went on Figgins.

"Gussy's an awful ass."

"Frightful," agreed Kerr. "I say, we haven't any too much time, Figgy."

"No, that's a fact," exclaimed the leader of the New House juniors. "Let's get to business."

"What about having something to eat first, old chap? Just a trifling snack, you know; say a couple of pork pies—"

"Rats, Fatty Wynn!"

"And a bath bun or two—"

"Rot!"

"With perhaps three or four apples to finish up with," pleaded Fatty Wynn. "I haven't had anything since we had those buns after prep, and—"

"Rats—piffle—bunkum!" exclaimed Figgins.

"We've got heaps of work to do before dorny bell goes. I've read the article on winter sports which my uncle, Major Figgins, wrote for the 'Rylcombe Gazette,' again, and it's simply a topping idea."

"Great!"

"Well, let's have just a couple of slices of cake each—"

"Of course, Saturday afternoon is the day for the sports."

"Rather!"

"Won't the School House duffers feel sick?"

"Absolutely spoofed!" laughed Figgins.

"What I propose is that we rig up a jolly strong snow fort at the top of Rylcombe Lane so as to protect the field; that'll be all for skiing—"

"Good egg!"

"And another fort lower down to guard the pond."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, we'll let the School House kids join in," went on Figgins, with a chuckle; "but they'll have to come as our guests."

"Rather!"

"I say, Figgy, it's running a risk to leave that cake in the cupboard any longer!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "It'll go stale."

"Ass!"

"The skis we've ordered will be down the day after to-morrow."

"Rather!"

"Jolly good idea having them sent to the railway-station. We can slip down and get them before breakfast on Thursday morning, after having put up the snow forts in Rylcombe Lane," went on Kerr. "The School House duffers won't hear a word about it."

"Ripping!"

"The only thing now is to arrange about the prizes for the races."

"That ought to be easy enough."

"Rather!" agreed Figgins heartily.

"Merely the matter of raising the wind," said Kerr. "How much can you run to, Figgy?"

"Not much, old chap."

"A sovereign?"

Figgins felt in his pockets. He had to feel in three of them before he could answer at all.

"No," he said at last. "A bob."

"My hat! I was relying on you, Fatty, have you got anything?"

"Only a bar of butter-scotch!" exclaimed the Welsh junior, brightening. "There's plenty of cake here, though; and if you'll pass me a knife—"

"Ass!"

Kerr ran his hand anxiously through his own pockets. At first he was unsuccessful, then unearthed a sixpence and a French penny.

"You oughtn't to have bought those skis, Figgins."

"What did you want to buy those skates for, Kerr?"

The juniors looked at one another in dismay. Winter sports without prizes would fall rather flat.

Figgins rose to his feet doubtfully.

"We shall have to have a Form whip-round, that's all," he exclaimed, "and—and hope for the best. It'll be rotten if we have to go and borrow money from Gussy."

"Horrid—"

Kerr stopped speaking, and glanced meaningly at Figgins. Someone was rattling at the study door.

Fatty Wynn turned the key.

"Hallo, Tom Merry! Come in and have a snack of cake! These fellows have lost their appetites, but I'll sit down at the table with you, old chap!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 275.

Tom Merry laughed cheerily.

"No, we haven't come for grub, kid. The fact is—"

"The fact is—"

"Exactly—the fact is—"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther looked at one another. Tom Merry cleared his throat.

"The fact is," he repeated carelessly, "we are rather stony!"

"Broke, in fact—"

"Busted, to speak plainly."

"And we thought you three might be able to come to the rescue," added Tom Merry. "Two or three pounds will do."

"Go hon!"

"Well, one pound would help," compromised the hero of the Shell. "We want the money for a very important matter—must have it, in fact."

"What for?"

"Oh, merely a—"

"Yes, that's it," helped Manners. "We've already been the round of the New House Form—"

"What?" shrieked Figgins.

"The round of your Form," went on Tom Merry, in surprise, "and the fellows played the game rippingly. We've skinned them of every cent they could spare."

"What?"

"You—you rotters!"

"Bump the asses!" yelled Figgins. "Collar them!"

The New House juniors rushed across the study. Tom Merry & Co. retreated.

The noise was causing other study doors along that passage to open. Tom Merry hesitated.

Then, in common consent, the Terrible Three of the Shell scudded along the corridor, the money they had borrowed from the New House Fourth Form jingling loudly in their pockets as they ran.

Figgins & Co. ran wildly after them. Figgins' long legs carried him over the ground at a tremendous pace. He was even overhauling Tom Merry when Manners uttered a warning shout:

"Pax, you kids!"

"Pax be blowed!"

"No, dry up!" cried Manners. "There's the telephone-bell."

And the juniors stopped running. Tom Merry darted into the telephone-box.

The other juniors crowded round. "Hallo! By Jove, is that you, Cousin Ethel? Oh, ripping!"

Figgins forgot all about the serious lack of funds. He pushed past Manners and Kerr in great excitement.

"What does she want, Tom Merry?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, of course, Cousin Ethel! You're coming down to St. Jim's, you say?"

"Merry, ask if she's all right!" exclaimed Figgins. "You ass! Why didn't you ask if she is all right?"

There was a burring sound as Tom Merry hung up the receiver. He turned on Figgins with a laugh.

"No need to ask her anything, kid. She's coming to Rylcombe."

"Hooray!"

"And she hopes Gussy will have the rabbit ready for her."

"Rather!"

"We'll bump Gussy for a whole afternoon if he hasn't."

"My hat! I hope she stays over Saturday!" exclaimed Figgins.

Tom Merry started.

"Why?" he asked.

"Oh—oh, because it will be jolly decent to have her here, of course!" hastened to explain Figgins. "I say, I must clear now."

The New House three went off at a great pace. They had forgotten all about the intended bumping of their School House rivals.

Figgins led the way to Jackson's room. Jackson was the New House authority on rabbits, and he had really a fine collection, the pick of the bunch being a beautiful white-haired doe.

Figgins rapped on the door. There was the determined expression upon his face which told of a firm decision to make a bargain with the rabbit-keeper.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Gussy Apologises.

"PWAY excuse me, sir!"

Mr. Selby stopped in his walk to his study. Arthur Augustus barred his way politely.

As a matter of fact, the swell of St. Jim's had meant to leave apologising to the Third

Form-master for the accident by the gymnasium until the following afternoon. But his conscience was pricking him; he felt that an interview of that sort ought not to be delayed on any account.

The chance meeting with Mr. Selby in the corridor settled the point.

"I trust I shall not be detaining you, sir?"

"Of course you will be detaining me!" said Mr. Selby irritably. "Do you imagine I stand about in draughty corridors for no reason?"

"No, wathah not—"

"If you have anything to say to me, say it quickly, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove, yaas! I will admit wight at the start, sir, that I wan wathah wapidly wound the cornah."

"What?"

"Wan wathah wapidly wound the cornah, sir."

"You ran rather rapidly round the corner?" gasped Mr. Selby.

"Yaas, wathah, sir. In fact, I might say I wushed wound it."

"Good heavens, boy, what are you talking about?"

"The cornah, sir—the one I wushed wound," said Arthur Augustus, a good deal flustered. "It was weally impos for me to see wound the cornah until I had already wushed wound it. I trust you will admit, sir, that there was vewy little time for one to prevent the accident."

"Good gwacious, D'Arcy—"

"It did flash through my bwain, sir, that I might have moved wapidly to the wight."

"W-what?"

"To the wight, sir. It was uttably impos for me to step to the left because the gym wall was in the wotten—in the wetchd way. If, howevah—"

"D'Arcy, what in the world are you raving about?" exclaimed Mr. Selby angrily.

"Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"No, wathah not, sir. Perhaps it is difficult to explain clearly, but I trust you will realise that if the blame is mine, I was not quite a fwee agent in the mattah. It was uttably impos for me to stop."

"Stop—stop what?"

"Wunnin', sir, or, wathah, wushin'. Directly I caught sight of a form in front of me I tried to stop. I wewget, sir, that you were not able to move to the wight, or wathah, to your left; but we have agreed that there was vewy little time—"

"We have agreed nothing, D'Arcy," said the exasperated Third Form-master. "If this is meant for impertinence—"

"Gweat Scott, sir!"

"Is it, boy?"

"Good gwacious, no, Mr. Selbay! I trust I have nevah been impertinent to a respected mastah of St. Jim's. If my wegettable action in wushing wound the cornah appeas as wude, I apologise, sir."

"Why in the world should your running round a corner appear as rude, boy?"

"Bai Jove, that is wemarkably weasonable of you, sir!"

"Reasonable?" cried Mr. Selby, in amazement.

"Yaas, wemarkably weasonable. Many mastahs might wegard my action in the light of—of wecklessness, sir. Pewhaps it was weckless to wush wound—"

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Selby. "I will not listen to another word of your ridiculous nonsense!"

"Bai Jove!"

"If you dare to mention again—"

"Gweat Scott, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "That is wippin' of you, if I may use the word—wweally wippin' in the extweme!"

"Allow me to pass, boy!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I knew instantly that you would accept my explanation; but I should like to wemark that—that if you had appeared rather wuffed, sir, one could hardly wondah. In futuah when I wum wound cornahs—"

Mr. Selby strode on in mixture of amazement and anger. Arthur Augustus looked after him in mild surprise.

"Bai Jove, a gweat change has come ovah Mr. Selbay!" the swell of St. Jim's mused. "The respected Form-mastah of the Third has altahed wondahfully. I—I weally can hardly undahstand the gweat change."

Arthur Augustus walked on, still puzzling over the notoriously irritable Mr. Selby's extraordinary mildness.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"My hat!"
"Look!" yelled Jack Blake.
"Of all the cheek!"
A crowd of juniors stopped dead in front of the gymnasium. Pinned to the gymnasium door was the Grammar School notice.

Gordon Gay, in the disguise of Mr. Selby, had taken great pains to pin the notice in as prominent a position as possible. The St. Jim's juniors looked at it with staring eyes. The brief message ran:

"To the St. Jim's Junior Bounders.

"This is to give notice that they will only be allowed on the field by Rylcombe Lane, on the pond and the use of the lane by the church, for toboggans, on Saturday afternoon, as guests of the Grammar School.

"Requests for permission to be politely worded and addressed to either of the under-named.

"(Signed) GORDON GAY,
FRANK MONK."

"The hopeless spoofers—"

"The cheeky asses—"

School House and New House juniors spoke together in the excitement of the moment. Arthur Augustus tore the message down in a hurry.

"Bai Jove! The Gwammah School bounders must have heard about my ideah for wunnin' wintah sports at St. Jim's—"

"Ass—"

"Weally, Jack Blake—"

"Double ass!" cried the chief of Study No. 6, glancing at Figgins hastily.

Figgins was staring at Arthur Augustus.

"What did you say, Gussy?"

"That—"

"Duffer!" hissed Jack Blake. "The New House kids aren't to know about the winter sports, you shrieking, gibbering, asinine—"

"What did you say, Gussy?"

"I-bai Jove—oh, nothin' of any importance, deah boy!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgins stared at one another. Tom Merry grinned a little.

"No good beating about the bush now," he said. "As a matter of fact, Figgy, we have planned—"

"Pway let me explain the mattah, deah boys," interrupted Arthur Augustus. "We juniors of the School House have decided to win some wippin' wintah sports—"

"The New House are running wintah sports, you mean—"

"What uttah wot, Figgy—"

"Rather!" exclaimed Digby, with great warmth. "My idea to run wintah sports—"

"Mine, you mean—"

"No, I don't, Herries!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It seems the New House and the School House have both had the same idea!" he exclaimed. "I suppose we all read the article on winter sports in the 'Rylcombe Gazette'—"

"Yaas, wathah—"

"But as we thought of the idea first, of course the New House will withdraw—"

"Of course the School House will withdraw—"

"Rats!"

"More rats!"

The friendly rivals from the two Houses gazed at each other. Arthur Augustus looked puzzled for a moment or two.

"Bai Jove, how wemarkably funny, deah boys! However, there is a way out of the difficulty—"

"The New House must back out, of course—"

"The School House will have to climb down—"

"No; wathah not, deah boys. I should uttably wufuse to allow the School House to climb down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway, don't intewwupt, Hewwies. The only thing is that we must combine, bai Jove! As my bwothah is pwesentin' a cup for the ski waces—"

"And my uncle is giving a pot for the skating—"

"Good, Figgins!"

"Yaas, wathah! I consider it is wippin' of Majah Figgins to offah a pwize, bai Jove!"

"What do you kids say?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I've been elected president, but—"

"We can soon alter that," said Figgins cheerfully.

"Have two presidents."

"Yaas, wathah, Kerr. I must say that is a wippin' ideah, and I am quite pwepared to

act as pwesident in company with Tom Mewwy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins hesitated for a moment, to glance at Kerr and Fatty Wynn; Tom Merry looked at Jack Blake and the other School House juniors.

"Shall we make it pax, Figgy?"

"Rather!" said the leader of the New House juniors heartily. "It's St. Jim's against the Grammar School asses!"

"Hooray!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Kerr. "I suppose you came into the New House to borrow money for the prizes, Tom Merry?"

"Rather!"

"We thought of charging you so much for each entry for the races," added Jack Blake; "then we shall be able to pay back the fellows we've borrowed from."

"We were going to do the same thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyway, let's go and hold a meeting!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We've got an awful lot to arrange, and we'll show you New House kids what prizes we've got for the races so far."

"Yes, that's it!"

"Kerr, slip along, and get the New House prizes—"

"Right-ho, Figgins!"

Kerr brought in the prizes, and then the juniors combined their efforts to make the coming sports meeting a tremendous success.

Cousin Ethel arrived the next day, and naturally the juniors were pleased. They were more pleased, however, when they learned that she intended staying over Saturday.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Winter Sports.

"Bai Jove! Nothin' could be bettah, deah boys!"

"Ripping!"

The chums of Study No. 6 rushed from the dining-room the moment the meal was over that Saturday afternoon. Skates had to be fetched from studies, the long, unwieldy skis brought from the bicycle shed, and the huge portmanteau of prizes brought downstairs.

The juniors started off in great spirits. They hard with the arrangements for the winter sports during the last few days. Rivalry had been forgotten. Figgins and Jack Blake had worked together as whole-heartedly as Tom Merry and Kerr. Even the seniors could not have made more thorough plans.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were waiting for the Fourth-Formers in the quadrangle. Figgins & Co. were already coming from the New House.

The juniors started off in great spirits. They knew there would be friction with the Grammar School fellows, but they were in the mood for friction. A snowball fight would be just the thing to begin the excitement.

"We shall have to run, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah, or those Gwammah School bounders will have time to waise a snow fort!"

"Cram on the pace, kids!"

Tom Merry led the way. The juniors raced hard through the snow.

"There they are!"

"There're the Grammar School asses!"

"St. Jim's rotters!"

The rival forces were rushing to meet each other in the narrow Rylcombe Lane. Snowballs were being made as the juniors ran.

A huge snowball left Frank Monk's hand and broke into a fine powder in Arthur Augustus' face. A fine shot by Jack Blake obliterated most of Carboy's pleasant features. The rivals were in great form.

Fatty Wynn's sturdy arm was not allowed to rest for a single instant. He was the champion bowler of the St. Jim's junior cricket eleven, and a splendid shot with a snowball.

He caught Gordon Gay in the face three times in succession.

The Grammar School fellows wavered. Fatty Wynn had deprived them of Gordon Gay's leadership for the moment. Tom Merry took every possible advantage of the wavering.

"Charge all together—now!"

With a great rush the St. Jim's juniors bore down the lane. It was a regular British charge.

A volley of snowballs poured into the Grammar School ranks. The Grammarians broke up in disorder. Some were forced to retreat, then the cheery, laughing voice of Gordon Gay rang out, as he held up a handkerchief tied to the end of a stick.

"Pax, Merry! We surrender!"

"All right, you boulder! Cease fire, St. Jim's!" cried Tom Merry.

Not another snowball was thrown, and with a laugh Gordon Gay came to meet Tom Merry.

"You've beaten us this time!" he said. "You chaps were coming down the lane, and we had to charge up—"

"Yes, that's it. We've won the field, and the church lane, and the pond for our winter sports!"

"Of course, if you—"

"Good!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Had you chaps any prizes for the events?"

"Prizes? No; we hadn't thought of that."

"Good again! We've got a ripping lot, and it'll cost you fellows sixpence a head to enter for each event. We are all going to pay that."

"My hat! Do you mean it, Merry?" exclaimed Gordon Gay.

"Of course he does!" laughed Figgins. "Here's the giddy programme of events."

Gordon Gay took the programme quietly. "By Jove, this is decent of you kids! I hope you haven't brought a feed with you?"

"Good gracious, no!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "We forgot all about that."

Gordon Gay laughed. "That's all right, then, because we've got a tremendous amount of grub," he said. "We meant to invite you chaps. We'll have a fine spread after the sports."

"Hurrah!"

The juniors hurried through the last few preparations. The prizes were spread out on view, and the ski race arranged.

There would have to be three heats for this because there were not enough skis to go round. The first heat started amidst great excitement.

Eight or nine juniors started from the top of the steep field, and the race would be won by the junior who first jumped over the snow mound at the bottom of the field. There were roars of laughter as the fellows started.

"Gweat Scott! Fway get out of my way, Hewwies."

"Rats! My aunt!"

At the word of command Herries had pushed off with his long stick, and the skis strapped to his feet carried him along at a tremendous pace for a few yards. Then he screwed round.

Arthur Augustus skied towards him like an express train.

"Get out of the way, you ass!"

In the unaccountable way skis have, the pair strapped to Arthur Augustus' feet stopped dead. Arthur Augustus, or rather, the top portion of him, went on.

Herries saw his own danger and struggled to get out of the way. He was too late.

Arthur Augustus dived into his chest with a gasp.

Herries staggered backward, then he thudded down in the snow, and Digby seemed to make a hopeless attempt to ski over both of them.

However, the fallen ones soon picked themselves up again—they were by no means out of the race yet.

"Ass! You—you—"

A sudden yell rang out from behind. Skimpole was coming along at a tremendous pace.

"Dear me! Stop me! Someone stop me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He was almost level with Jack Blake and Frank Monk when his luck came to an end. A deep hollow, which he ought to have jumped, loomed up in front of him, and Professor Balmcyrumpet omits to explain in any of his works how to jump on skis.

Skimpole hoped for the best, and didn't jump at all.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But for his nobbly forehead and the ends of his skis, Skimpole had disappeared in the snow-filled hollow. He blinked at the shrieking juniors.

"Dear me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My aunt, look at Jack Blake!"

The chief of Study No. 6 was going in great style. He and Frank Monk were absolutely level.

Tom Merry, who was judge for this event, got ready.

Together the two juniors sprang into the air. Both cleared the snow mound splendidly, then both sped on like lightning.

Tom Merry flung up his hand.

"Blake wins—by less than a foot."

"Hurrah!"

"They're both in the final, anyway."

"Rather! Hard luck, Digby!"

Digby grinned.

He finished the race a very good third, being only a few yards behind Frank Monk.

D'Arcy and Herries passed the post together, followed home by Bernard Glyn, while Kerr came a cropper at the jump.

The second heat was rather a runaway affair for Gordon Gay, Tom Merry having a fall. But the hero of the Shell was on his feet in no time, and came in an easy second.

Figgins won the third heat in great style, with Wootton major second, so the final would be a very representative one.

But before that the toboggan event had to be decided, and Cousin Ethel arrived just in time for the start.

The juniors crowded round her. "Awfully good of you to come, Cousin Ethel."

Cousin Ethel laughed as she shook hands with her chums. She looked extremely pretty in her thick fur coat and muff.

By common consent Cousin Ethel was made judge of all future events, and Figgins helped her to the bottom of the lane by the church. The lane was really a footpath through a very steep field, so all the toboggans could start at once.

The junior events had to be decided next, and Wally won the ski race in great style, and Jameson the toboggan event. Curly Gibson grinned to himself.

The Third Form skating race had yet to be decided, and Curly Gibson was good on skates.

After the Third Form toboggan, the final of the ski race for the older juniors had to be decided. The fellows who had been knocked out in the heats lined the course.

"Tom Merry will win!"

"Wot! Jack Blake, you mean!"

"Rats! Gordon Gay, of course!"

The six juniors—Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Frank Monk, Gordon Gay, Figgins, and Wootton major lined up in grim earnest.

Cousin Ethel waited expectantly.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. On the Ice.

"GO!" Digby rapped out the word, and the six juniors pushed off. A ski race is over in a flash. It is like the hundred yards flat race, but it is a very exciting event to watch.

Cousin Ethel felt a thrill run through her as the juniors flashed down the field.

Wootton major and Jack Blake were unlucky enough to fall half-way down the course; then the others took the jump together, and went past their girl chum like flashes of light.

"Who won?"

"Tom Merry!"

"Gordon Gay!"

"No, Figgins!" said Cousin Ethel.

The chief of the New House went a slight pinkish hue, but he was grinning broadly. He would rather have won the ski race than all the other races put together, especially with Cousin Ethel acting as judge.

A move was at once made to the pond, and skates were donned.

Curly Gibson made no mistake in the Third Form event. He beat Wally by a good yard, and Wally was the first to congratulate him.

The fags lined up to watch the race between the older juniors. It was likely to be a very close race indeed.

The pond was a long one, and the race was from one end to the other. It was impossible to say who stood the best chance.

Wally started the race with a cheery shout, and the blades of the juniors' skates rang out on the ice.

Gordon Gay and Jack Blake started ahead in a dead straight line.

Tom Merry was only a foot or so behind, though. He was skating with quick, steady strides. He was closing up the gap between himself with almost every stroke.

"Go on, Merry!"

"Buck up, Blake!"

"My hat!"

The race seemed over almost as soon as it had commenced.

Jack Blake had passed Gordon Gay.

The chief of Study No. 6 had almost reached the finishing line when Tom Merry flashed past him.

The hero of the Shell had beaten Jack Blake by a few inches.

Jack Blake laughed cheerfully.

"Good for you, young Merry!"

"Hard luck, young Blake!"

Gordon Gay skated up, with a laugh.

"That's the toboggan race for the St. Jim's School House Fourth," he said. "The ski race for the New House, and the skating event for your Shell Form. We'll see who'll get the prize for the best fancy dress at the carnival this evening."

"Yes, we'll see!" grinned Frank Monk. "You St. Jim's asses go on skating while we get tea."

"Right-ho, duffer!"

Cousin Ethel had to skate round the pond with each of her chums, and when Gordon Gay came down to the ice again she was breathless.

"Tea is ready, Miss Cleveland. Ready, you chaps?"

"Rather!"

Skates were taken off, and Gordon Gay led the way back to the field where the ski-running had taken place. Wally D'Arcy gave vent to a shout of delight.

A huge bonfire blazed away in the centre of the field.

All round it little tables had been placed by the Grammar School juniors, and the tables were simply laden with eatables. Fatty Wynn ran most of the way up the hill at sight of the tables.

Tom Merry dropped his hand on Gordon Gay's shoulder.

"By Jove, this is ripping, old chap!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for the Grammar School duffers!"

Tom Merry's call for cheers were given again and again. Then the juniors crowded round Cousin Ethel, plates in hand.

Fatty Wynn's face was wreathed in smiles. Even he could not have arranged a better spread.

After tea the rival juniors separated. The fancy-dress carnival was to commence at seven o'clock.

There was a great deal to do though, so there was no time to waste. The fire was banked up, and Cousin Ethel promised to be at the pond again exactly at seven.

She arrived punctually with her hostess from Rylcombe, and her pretty face lightened up with pleasure. The St. Jim's juniors had fixed Chinese lanterns all round the pond, and every junior on the ice was in fancy-dress, and carrying a lantern.

Cousin Ethel herself was in a pretty Japanese fancy-dress costume, and Arthur Augustus skated up at a great pace as she hurried up to the pond.

Figgins, as a bold Hussar, was too quick for the swell of the Fourth.

"Let me put your skates on, Cousin Ethel."

"Bai Jove—"

"No; I was here first, Gussy—I mean, Shakespeare!"

"You ass, I'm dressed as Fwancis Dwake!"

"Sorry, kid!" said Figgins in a low voice.

"I—I say, doesn't Cousin Ethel look ripping?"

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove, there's Selbay!"

Figgins looked startled for a moment. Mr. Selby was skating very gingerly by the edge of the pond. He had his arms stretched out on each side of him, as if expecting a fall at any moment.

He nodded with unusual friendliness to the juniors.

"I hope you don't object to my being on the pond, Figgins?"

"No, sir; of course not!"

"I—I am not very used to skating like this."

"No, wathah not, sir!" said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "I'll take you wound in a minute or two if you like, sir."

"Thank you, D'Arcy; thank you very much!"

The master of the Third skated on.

Tom Merry looked at him in astonishment. Mr. Selby greeted him with quite a pleasant nod.

"Delightful sensation skating is, to be sure! Delightful! Are you supposed to be William the Conqueror?"

"No; a Red Indian, sir," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Yes, of course. I cannot see very well in this flickering light. Is that you, Skimpole?"

"Yes, sir. Do you consider my make-up as Lord Nelson will win the prize? If so, I mean to sell it, because I badly want the second volume of Professor Balmcrumpet's work on—Dear me, he has skated away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Selby's presence on the pond threatened to overshadow the juniors' noisy fun at first.

But Mr. Selby appeared to be in one of his most pleasant moods.

He skated slowly and awkwardly amongst the juniors. Arthur Augustus skated up to him politely.

"Pway let me take you wound, sir."

"Ah, thanks, D'Arcy. Er—you will be very careful."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway crosso hands like this, sir, and—Gweat Scott!"

Mr. Selby's awkwardness seemed to disappear suddenly. He darted off with Arthur Augustus at a terrific pace. The juniors stared in amazement.

Wally suddenly skated after them with a shout:

"What asses we are! It's not Selby—"

"Rather not!"

"It's Gordon Gay, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Frank Monk, in the guise of an able-bodied seaman. "Who wins the prize for the best costume, Cousin Ethel?"

The pretty girl chum looked at Gordon Gay in astonishment. His present disguise was not in the least like the rough-and-ready disguise he had donned for his journey into the St. Jim's quadrangle. He was wonderfully made up this time.

An enormously high pair of skates gave him the necessary height, and he had used grease paint with the skill of an artist.

Cousin Ethel looked at him doubtfully.

"If that really is Gordon Gay he wins the prize!" she said decidedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grammar School wins!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"I considah Gordon Gay is a pwince of spoofoah. Deah boys, as so many of us have won pwizes, bai Jove, there is an extwaw pwize for Cousin Ethel from Studay No. 6—"

"From the Shell, you mean?"

"From the New House more likely."

Arthur Augustus waved his hand.

"Fwom St. Jim's, then, deah boys. Cousin Ethel, pway skate with me to the bank for a moment!"

The juniors moved in a body towards the bank. Tom Merry and Figgins looked puzzled. They skated away in opposite directions, without noticing each other.

They came back again, carrying a basket each.

Arthur Augustus had a third basket, which he was opening in a leisurely manner.

"Cousin Ethel, I twust you will accept—"

"Cousin Ethel, this is the best one I could get—"

"Cousin Ethel, I got this from Jackson for you—"

Arthur Augustus, Tom Merry, and Figgins spoke at once. Each of them had opened his respective basket, and in each of the baskets there was a beautiful white rabbit.

Cousin Ethel looked at the three long-haired little animals in great excitement. Tom Merry, Arthur Augustus, and Figgins exchanged glances of dismay.

"You—you had better choose one out of the three, Cousin Ethel."

"I couldn't possibly, Figgins!" exclaimed Cousin Ethel delightedly. "May I have them all?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Of course, Cousin Ethel!"

The girl chum laughed quietly.

"Thank you!" was all she said; but the way she stroked the rabbits made their donors grin pleasantly.

Half an hour later the Winter Sports at St. Jim's came to an end, as Cousin Ethel presented the prizes. There had not been a hitch from first to last.

"Absolutely wippin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, when the juniors found themselves back at the old school. "A wattlin' affair altogether!"

And Blake, Digby, and Herries nodded their heads in agreement.

THE END.

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