

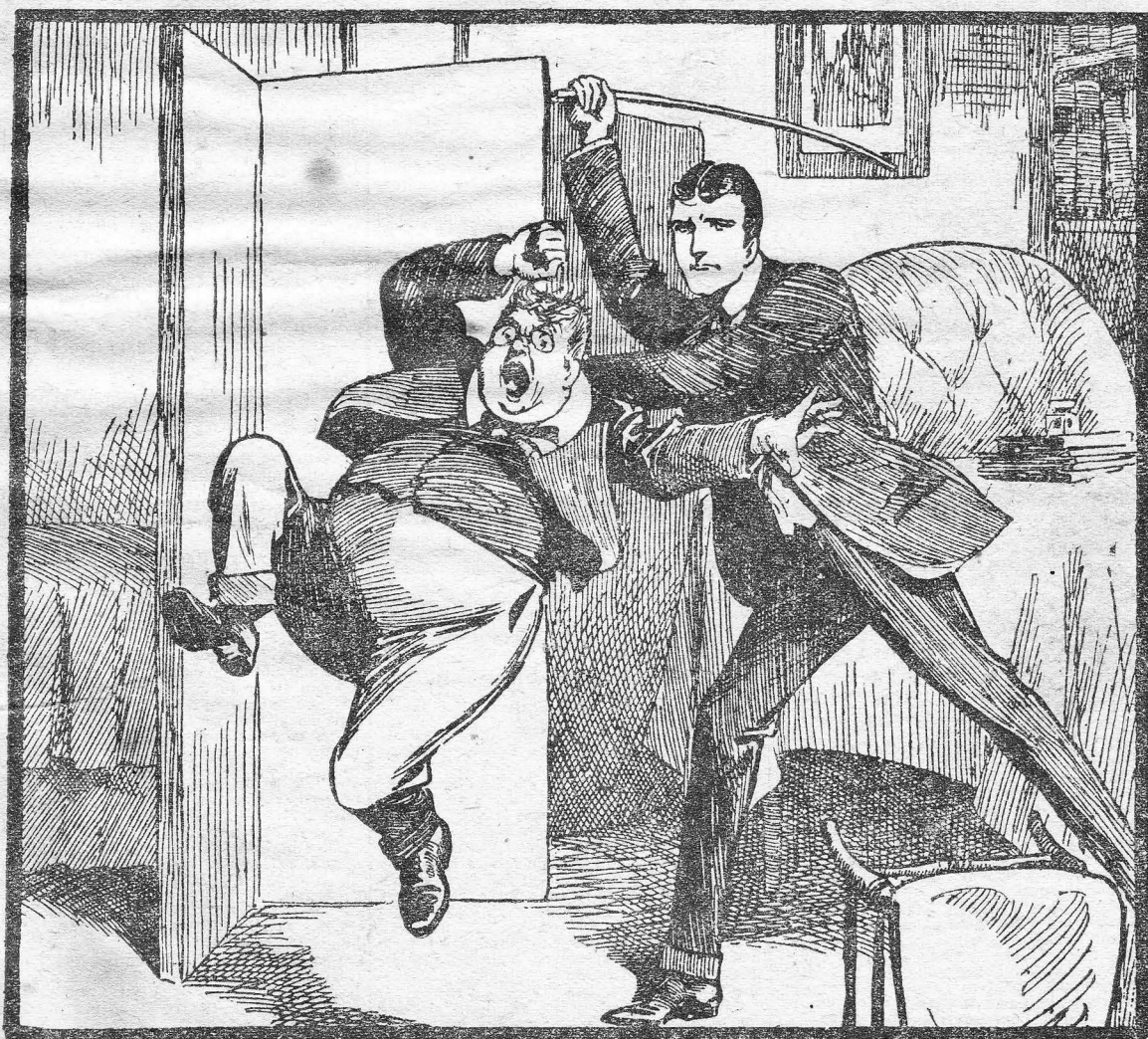
3 LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES!

The
Penny Popular

Week Ending
February 16th, 1918.

No.
280.

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



A PAINFUL TIME FOR BUNTER!

(An Exciting Scene from the Grand Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
contained in this Issue.)

16/2/18

THE SCAPEGRACE OF THE SECOND!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Absent!

"H AS anybody seen Nugent minor?"

That question was being asked all over Greyfriars.

Dicky Nugent had gone out with Carberry, Carne, and Loder of the Sixth. The seniors had lured the youngster to the Waterside Inn, and had persuaded him to play cards for money.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove had chipped in, and by means of his ventriloquism Billy Bunter had led the Sixth-Formers to believe that the Head was in the vicinity of the Waterside Inn.

Carberry, Carne, and Loder had immediately made themselves scarce. Dicky Nugent, also, had made himself scarce, but whereas the Sixth-Formers had returned to Greyfriars, Nugent minor had failed to put in an appearance.

Although they had searched high and low for the missing fag, the Removites had met with no success.

No one supposed for a moment that anything had happened to Nugent minor—anything in the shape of an accident.

It was quite clear that he was keeping away from the school of his own accord.

And the chums of the Remove discussed the matter gloomily enough as the time drew near for call-over.

"It's rotten," said Harry Wharton. "Who could guess that the young ass would play the giddy ox in this way?"

Nugent shook his head.

"It's all right; you fellows couldn't guess. It can't be helped. Of course, he thought it was really the Head who discovered him, and he's afraid to return to the school and face the music."

"I suppose so."

"I don't wonder at it, come to think of it," said Bob Cherry. "Carberry & Co. were scared out of their wits, and young Dick must have been scared, too. But then what's his game in staying out? He knows he must return some time."

"He can't have run away from school, surely!" exclaimed Mark Linley.

Nugent started.

"I shouldn't wonder. He's a young ass, and accustomed to having his own way in everything at home," he said bitterly. "I shouldn't be surprised in the least."

Harry Wharton's brows wrinkled.

"Then you think he means to stay out, Frank?"

"Yes."

"We shall have to look for him."

"I suppose so—Hallo! There's the bell for call-over!"

The chums hurried down to the school hall. They had some faint hope of discovering Nugent minor among the Second-Formers, but the hope was speedily dissipated.

Dick Nugent was not in his usual place.

There was no sign of him in the ranks of the Second Form, and some of the fags were looking excited, evidently having missed him and discussed what could have caused him to cut call-over.

Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, was taking the call-over, and when Nugent minor failed to answer to his name, he marked him down as absent.

The Famous Four left the Hall with glum brows.

"The young ass means to stay out!" said Bob Cherry. "That's clear as daylight! What are we to do?"

"Find him!" said Harry.

"And bring him back by force?"

"Yes, if necessary. But when we explain that it was a joke at the inn, and not the Head at all, he will be willing to come back."

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"But where are we to look for him?"

"That's the puzzle."

"The puzzleness is terrific."

"Nugent!"

Frank Nugent started as the voice of Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, fell upon his ears. Mr. Quelch was standing in the doorway of his study, with a clouded brow. Frank hastened towards him.

"Yes, sir. You called me."

"Do you know where your brother is?"

Frank coloured.

"No, sir."

"He has missed call-over."

"Yes, sir."

"The Head wishes to see him."

Frank started.

"The Head, sir!"

"Yes, Dr. Locke wishes to see him very particularly—a most important matter. Have you any idea where he is to be found?"

Frank shook his head.

"I don't think so, sir."

Mr. Quelch's brow grew very grave.

"It appears, then, that Nugent minor is deliberately absenting himself from the school," he said.

"I—I hope not, sir," faltered Nugent.

"Well, he must be found. The Head wishes to see him at the earliest possible moment. I may as well tell you that it is a very serious matter, Nugent. I think you had better go and look for your brother. You may take your friends with you, and I will give you a pass out of the gates."

"Thank you, sir."

"And when you find him," said Mr. Quelch, with some emphasis, "tell him that he had better return to the school at once—that it will be better for him."

"Yes, sir."

The Form-master wrote out the pass, and Nugent took it, and hurried back to his chums.

He explained to them, and they immediately fetched their caps and coats, and left the School House in a body. The Form-master's pass enabled them to go out and look for the missing fag without breaking bounds. The chums of the Remove were looking troubled as they crossed the dusky Close.

But where should they look for Nugent minor? That was the question!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Cash in Advance.

C ARBERRY was sitting in his study with Carne and Loder, smoking cigarettes.

There was a tap at the door.

In an instant the cigarettes were thrown into the fire, and Carne was waving a newspaper to and fro to dissipate the smoke. The Smart Set of Greyfriars broke the rules with impunity as a rule, but they were always in terror of the axe, so to speak. If it should be a master coming to the study, there might be trouble.

But it was not a master.

Carberry opened the door, and a fat form and a pair of big spectacles loomed up in the dusky passage before him.

It was Billy Bunter.

Carberry scowled. He had been started for nothing, and his natural impulse was to make the Owl of the Remove smart for it.

"What do you want?" he snarled.

Bunter blinked at him nervously.

"I—I want to speak to you, Carberry."

"Come in, then."

Billy Bunter entered the study. Carberry opened the door, and placed himself in the way of Bunter's retreat to it. Then he signed to Loder to throw him a cane that was lying on the table.

Bunter blinked round him uneasily.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Where will you have it?" asked Carberry, taking the cane in his hand, and making it sing in the air.

"I—I'd rather not have it at all, th-thank you," stammered Billy Bunter. "You—you see, I—I came here on an important matter—awfully important."

"Come here," said Carberry, as the fat junior retreated round the table.

"I—I'd rather stay here, thank you. Look here, Carberry, you'd better let me alone, I can tell you!"

"What do you mean, you fat cub?"

"I—I came here on business, I thought you might like to cash a postal-order for me."

"Eh?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow, and it can't be for less than a pound," said Billy Bunter. "I thought you fellows might like to cash it in advance."

"You cheeky young ass!" exclaimed Carberry, in blank astonishment. "Do you mean to say you've had the nerve to come here to cadge of the Sixth?"

"Oh, really, Carberry, I don't think you ought to call it 'cadging'! I simply want you to cash a postal-order in advance, and you can decline if you like. But I really think that one good turn deserves another."

"One good turn!" repeated the prefect.

"What are you driving at?"

"Well, I was thinking of helping you to keep it dark about being at the Waterside Inn this afternoon!"

Carberry's brows contracted.

"There's no need to keep it dark," he said steadily. "We went there to fetch away a junior who was playing cards with a set of low betting-men, and I have already explained that to the Head."

Billy Bunter stared.

"M-m-my only hat! Have you—have you really put it like that to the Head? I—I should never have thought of anything like that!"

"You saw us after we had left the inn," said Loder. "I suppose you jumped to the conclusion that we had gone there to gamble, or something of that sort?"

"But I saw you through the window."

"What!"

"You were playing cards for money, and smoking and drinking."

"You lying cub!" said Carberry savagely. "If you dare to say a word like that in the school, I'll skin you!"

"Of course, I shouldn't say a word about a chap who was going to cash a postal-order for me," said Bunter, blinking at him. "If you like to oblige me in that small matter, of course, you can depend upon me to be friendly."

The three seniors stared blankly at Bunter. They had always regarded him as fat, lazy, stupid, greedy—but that he had this depth of cunning in his nature, they had never suspected.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Loder.

"The cheeky cub!" growled Carne. "Kick him out, Carberry!"

But Carberry did not move.

He knew at once that the fat junior must be telling the truth—that he must have seen what passed in the room at the Waterside Inn overlooking the river.

If Bunter told his tale at the present juncture, it would certainly have the effect of spoiling the plot the three rascals had laid to save themselves at the expense of Nugent minor.

Bunter must be kept silent, for a day or two, at least.

If he spoke afterwards, the fact that he had kept silent so long would discredit his evidence, and he could hardly confess that he

had been guilty of what virtually amounted to blackmail.

Carberry drew his lips tighter. "How much do you want?" he said slowly. "Oh, really, Carberry, that is a curious way of putting it! I don't want you to give me anything."

The prefect gritted his teeth. "I should like you, as a personal favour, to cash a postal-order for me," said Bunter. "There isn't the smallest risk, you see, because the order is coming by the first post to-morrow morning, and you can have it as soon as it arrives."

"How much?" "Well, I expect the postal-order will be for a pound, but it might be more. Suppose you give me two pounds, and take the postal-order, whatever amount it is for? I think that's a fair offer, as you stand to gain a great deal if it happens to be for a large amount."

"I will give you a pound," said Carberry. "Well, I dare say I could make that do," said Bunter. "Of course, I should prefer the full amount of the postal-order, as I am rather short of tin. But I suppose I could make a pound do for the present."

"I had a postal-order to-day," said Carberry, with a wicked gleam in his eyes. "You can have it if you like."

"Oh, all right! I can cash it at Mrs. Mibble's."

"Very well." Carberry went to his desk, and took out a postal-order for a pound. It was quite blank, no name having been filled in upon it.

"There you are, Bunter!" Bunter's round eyes glistened behind his spectacles. He could hardly believe in his good luck. The utter meanness of the action

"Can't you see?" "Blessed if I can! You've wasted a pound on that young cub, but as soon as he's blued the money he will be back here for more. You can't give him a pound a day, I suppose?"

"No; hardly. It hits me hard, parting with that, but it was worth it. And, of course, you fellows will stand your whack."

"I don't know about that." "If it keeps him quiet for a day or two it will be all right," said Carne slowly. "But you know Bunter. He will be back here to-morrow at the latest—perhaps to-night—for more. That pound won't last long when he begins to cat, and perhaps to stand feeds to the other young cads."

"I know that." "Then why—"

"That's why I gave him the postal-order. That order wasn't sent to me. I bought it in Friardale to-day to send to a bookmaker by post. Don't you see? When Bunter has disposed of that order he's in my power. He can't say I gave it to him without confessing that he was blackmailing me—"

"Ah!" "And I should deny it, too. He has taken my postal-order, filled in his name on it, and cashed it. I can prove by the number that it was mine. If Bunter ventures to give us an atom of trouble after this I'll have him up before the Head for stealing my postal-order, and have him expelled as a thief, too!"

Loder and Carne stared at the prefect. "Well, you've got a head!" said Loder admiringly.

"By Jove, yes!" said Carne. "The fat

them horribly. I want to keep all this away from mother if I can."

"Well, if he's there we'll have him." "Come on, then!"

The five Removites hurried up the road towards the river, and followed the towing-path to the Waterside Inn.

They came in sight of the lights of the inn, gleaming through the trees and dancing on the rolling waters of the Sark.

As they drew near the building the sound of a loud chorus came ringing through the quiet of the night.

There was evidently a merry company gathered at the Waterside Inn.

Bargemen from up the river, fishermen from Pegg, and all kinds of characters gathered at the Waterside of an evening, and there were ample reasons for the Head's placing it out of bounds for the boys of Greyfriars.

The juniors stopped on the towing-path outside the inn.

There was the building before them, but where were they to look for Nugent minor? "Suppose we go in and ask for him?" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose the landlord will have to give us some answer."

"Not if he's hiding the kid there," said Nugent.

"Let's scout round first, anyway," said Harry Wharton. "Young Nugent will probably be in fear of being searched for, and he may have hidden himself in the barns, or in some unlikely corner. That's where we ought to look for him."

"Good!"

"The goodness is terrific."

The chums entered the inn yard, and,

NUMBER 10.
THE "PENNY POPULAR"
PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 11 NEXT FRIDAY.
GRIMES, BERNARD GLYN,
CLIFTON DANE.



1. ERNEST LEVISON,
2. PERCY MELLISH,
3. GEORGE CROOKE.

he was guilty of never seemed to enter his mind at all.

His fat fingers fastened upon the postal-order.

"Was this sent to you, Carberry?" he asked.

"Yes." "The name isn't filled in." "All the better, as it happens. You can fill in your own name, and then nobody will know that I gave you the postal-order."

"Good! That's a good dodge!" "Here's a pen," said Carberry.

He dipped a pen in the ink, and handed it to Bunter. Loder and Carne watched him in astonishment. They could not make Carberry out at all just now.

"Thanks!" blinked the fat junior. He filled in the postal-order to himself, "William George Bunter," blotted it, and put the order in his pocket. He was eager to go now. Money always burnt in his pocket, and he was already thinking of the tuckshop and unlimited tarts.

"I'm much obliged to you, Carberry," he said; "and I'll do as much for you some time."

And the Owl of the Remove quitted the study. Carberry carefully closed the door behind him, and turned to his companions with a wicked glitter in his eyes.

Loder burst out at once: "What on earth's the game, Carberry?" Carberry shrugged his shoulders.

young fool is in our hands as soon as he's disposed of the postal-order!"

"And that will be within five minutes, I expect."

And in that, at least, Carberry was right.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Search.

"WHERE shall we look for him?" It was Frank Nugent who asked the question, in a hopeless tone.

Where were they to look for Nugent minor?

The five juniors stood in the dusty road outside the school gates, and they did not know in which direction to turn their footsteps. Dick Nugent was deliberately keeping away from the school. But where was he staying? Had he taken the train for his home—as was quite possible? Was he lurking near Greyfriars—afraid to show himself—perhaps in the wood or the thickets?

It was a troublesome problem. "We'd better look in at the Waterside first," said Harry briskly. "I think it's quite possible that he's there, and that we shall find him."

"I hope so," said Nugent fervently. "If he stays away overnight the Head will have to let my people know, and it will worry

avoiding the lighted and noisy building, they made for the outbuildings behind the inn.

In that range of unlighted sheds it was quite possible that Nugent minor had hidden himself from the expected search.

The junior, at all events, would hardly be taking a part in the uproarious jollity of the company assembled at the inn.

Harry Wharton paused in the dark doorway of the barn and looked in.

Nugent had brought a lantern with him, and he now lighted it, and flashed the light into the barn.

Bob Cherry uttered a sharp exclamation. "Look!"

A youthful form was stretched upon a heap of straw, asleep.

The round, boyish face was resting upon one arm, and the curly hair drooped over it. The face looked tired and worn. Even in sleep the boy was troubled.

It was Nugent minor!

"Dick!" muttered Nugent. "Poor kid!" said Wharton. "He looks as if he had been through it, and no mistake!"

Nugent advanced towards the sleeper. He stretched out his hand, and shook Nugent minor gently by the shoulder. Dick started into broad wakefulness.

He stared in a startled, terrified way at his brother, and blinked his eyes in the lantern-light.



"Keep off!" muttered Dicky Nugent wildly. "Keep off! I won't be taken back to Greyfriars, I tell you!"

"What—what—"

"Dick!"

"It's you, Frank?"

"Yes; I've come to take you back—"

Dick Nugent sprang to his feet. His face was white, and his eyes flashing. Recollection had returned in a moment.

"Take me back!"

"Yes. I—"

"I won't come! I won't come!"

"Listen to me—"

"I won't come! You want to see me fogged and expelled, I suppose! I won't come back to Greyfriars!"

"But—"

"I won't!"

"It's all a mistake. Let me explain. I—"

Stop him!"

Without listening to his brother, Dick Nugent made a wild rush to the door to escape.

Harry Wharton grasped him, and received a right-hander on the chest that sent him staggering.

In a moment more the junior was out of the barn, and running hard.

Wharton gasped for breath.

"He's gone!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Nugent bit his lips.

"The young fool! He thinks we've come to take him back to be punished! After him!"

"Come on!"

Mark Linley was already close on the track of the running fag. The others ran after him, and the sound of Dick's quick footfalls in the darkness guided them.

Wharton was half afraid that the fag would rush into the inn, and seek safety among the rascals there gathered; but he did not. That would have meant a rough time for the chums of Greyfriars. But, fortunately, the fag took another course.

He dodged through the inn yard, leaped a low fence, and ran swiftly towards the river. "After him!" panted Nugent.

The Removites ran hard.

Mark Linley was ahead, and overhauling the fugitive rapidly. Dick Nugent turned on the brink of the river and cast a desperate look behind.

The outstretched hand of the Lancashire lad was close behind him.

"Keep off!" muttered Dick wildly. "Keep off! I won't be taken back, I tell you!"

"It's all a mistake!" panted Mark. "You're not—"

"Keep off, or I'll jump into the water!"

"I tell you—"

"Collar him!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Nugent minor set his teeth hard and sprang out into the river.

Splash!

The five juniors halted on the bank, staring in blank dismay at the dark waters. For a moment they were dumbfounded.

"The young ass!" exclaimed Harry.

Splash!

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 280.

It was Mark Linley who was in the water now. The Lancashire lad remembered, what had escaped the others for the moment, that they were near the dangerous pool, and that Dick's reckless action had placed his life in peril.

"Linley!"

"He's in!"

"Good heavens!"

The boys strained their eyes over the dark water. Where was Dick Nugent—where was the Lancashire lad?

"Linley!"

Nugent threw off his jacket. Wharton grasped him by the arm.

"Hold on, Frank! It's too late now!"

Linley's got him, or—"

He did not finish.

The moon was showing a silver edge over the trees. If it would but shine out a little clearer!

"Linley! Mark Linley!"

There was a gleam of silver on the water. Bob Cherry gave a shout.

"Look!"

In the gleam of the moon two heads were seen on the silvery water, and Nugent minor was in the grasp of Mark Linley!

The Lancashire lad was struggling towards the shore.

Frank Nugent plunged into the water, and in a few seconds reached his side.

"Dick!"

But Nugent minor made neither sound nor motion as his brother grasped him. He was insensible.

The chums of the Remove reached down to them and dragged them out through the crackling rushes.

Mark Linley gasped for breath as he shook the water from his clothes.

"Heaven bless you, Linley!" panted Frank.

Then he bent over his brother, who lay still and silent where they had laid him. A horrible fear for a moment tugged at Frank Nugent's heart.

But Dick Nugent was living.

He was breathing, and the colour was already returning to his cheeks. A load was lifted from Frank's heart as he saw it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Painful Surprise for Bunter.

CARBERRY threw his cigarette into the fire, and looked round as his study door opened. The cad of the Sixth was alone. Loder and Carne were gone. Billy Bunter came into the study without knocking, and closed the door after him. There was a half-nervous, half-impudent look about Billy Bunter that Carberry understood perfectly well.

The fat junior stopped with the table between him and the prefect, and blinked across it at Carberry in a doubtful sort of way.

"Well?" said Carberry.

"Well," said Bunter, "I—I thought I'd give you a look in, Carberry, to—to see if—you had a sovereign to spare."

"A sovereign!"

"Yes. I've got another postal-order coming to-morrow, as well as the one I mentioned to you—it simply can't fail to arrive—in fact, I'm expecting the two by the same post. I suppose you'd have no objection to cashing it for me in advance?"

Carberry rose to his feet.

There was a spiteful gleam in his eyes, which Billy Bunter was too shortsighted and too preoccupied to see.

The cad of Greyfriars crossed to his desk, and Billy Bunter blinked after him, fully believing that he had gone there for the money.

"A postal-order would do, Carberry," he said. "Either that or cash; I really don't mind which. I— Oh! Hallo! Oh!"

Carberry had taken, not a postal-order, but a cane from his desk.

He strode swiftly over towards the fat junior, and seized him by the back of the collar with his left hand, and brought the cane into play with his right.

The cane lashed and rang upon Billy Bunter's portly form, and he skipped and howled like a dervish.

"Ow, ow, ow! Help! Yow! Groc! Oh, oh, oh!"

Carberry compressed his grip so as to check Bunter's cries by tightening his collar, and the howls died away into stifled stutters.

And still the cane rose and fell.

All the spite he had been compelled to suppress was bubbling up now and finding an outlet.

Billy Bunter was not getting what he expected in Carberry's study, but he was certainly getting what he deserved, and more.

The fat junior struggled and choked and gasped.

He would have given all the feeds he had ever enjoyed, or ever expected to enjoy, to get away from that stinging, lashing cane.

But there was no escape for him.

Carberry lashed and lashed until his arm was tired, and then he flung the fat junior from him, and hurled the cane into a corner.

"There!" exclaimed Carberry, panting for breath. "That's a lesson for you, you black-mailing young thief!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Now get out of my study!"

"Ow! Yow!"

Carberry sat down, breathing heavily. His exertions had tired him. Billy Bunter staggered to his feet. He was wriggling and squirming with pain, and tears were chasing each other down his fat cheeks.

"Ow, ow! You—you beast!" he gasped.

"I'll go straight to the Head!"

The prefect gave a sneering laugh.

"Go, then!"

"I—I'll tell him about your smoking and drinking at the Waterside Inn! I'll have you expelled from Greyfriars, you cowardly beast!" blubbered Billy Bunter.

Carberry laughed again.

"You had better explain to him about the postal-order at the same time, Bunter, or somebody else will be in danger of being expelled."

"Eh?"

"I had a postal-order for a pound in my study," said Carberry deliberately. "I had bought it to send to someone, and it wasn't filled in with a name. I have missed that postal-order."

"You—you gave it to me."

"Gave it to you?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"My dear pospouse, you're dreaming! I've given you nothing—nothing except a thrashing; and I expect I shall give you a few more of them!"

Bunter backed hastily towards the door. "Just another word before you go," said Carberry. "I have missed a postal-order from my study, and I had taken the number."

"You—you gave—"

"So long as you don't give me any trouble I sha'n't say anything about missing that postal-order, Bunter."

Billy Bunter stared at the prefect with wide-open eyes. He did not fully understand as yet how completely he had placed himself in the power of the cad of Greyfriars.

"But if you say a word about me, or cause me any kind of trouble," went on Carberry significantly, "then I shall inquire about that postal-order. I have the number, and can easily prove that it belonged to me—and I shall, of course, deny having given it to anybody."

"Oh!"
 "Do you understand?"
 "Ye-ees!" gasped Bunter.
 "Now get out of my study, and don't let me see you again in a hurry!"
 Billy Bunter left the study without another word.
 Even his obtuse brain had grasped the situation at last, and he realized that he was in a dangerous position.
 His scheme for raising money was at an end, and if, with his usual loquaciousness, he allowed a word to slip regarding Carberry and the visit to the Waterside Inn, it would bring down the vengeance of the prefect upon him.
 Bunter felt as if he had escaped from the den of a wild beast as he stepped into the passage and hurried away.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Nugent Minor's Return.

NUGENT MINOR opened his eyes. He stared wildly up at the faces looking down upon him. He was very white in the gleam of the moonlight.
 "Wh-what has happened?" he gasped.
 Wharton looked at him sternly.
 "You've had a narrow escape, that's all, and you owe your life to Mark Linley, who risked his to save you."
 "Not so bad as that," said Mark, with a smile. "I don't think I was in any danger."
 "Anybody would have been in danger so near the Pool."
 "Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "We ought really to give young Nugent a good hiding, but I suppose we shall have to let him off."
 "The supposedfulness is terrific!"
 "Let me go!" muttered Dick Nugent.
 "What do you want to take me back for? I started back to school, after—after the Head found me there, but—but I didn't dare to show up. I was going to cut it, but I had no money."
 "It's all a mistake," said Nugent. "You think the Head found you at the Waterside Inn with Carberry and his set."
 "Yes. He spoke to me through the window. It was after Wharton came."
 "It was a jape."
 "What?"
 "We made Bunter imitate the Head's voice, to scare those cads and break up the party," explained Nugent. "The Head knows nothing about it."
 Nugent minor gave a gasp.
 "The Head knows nothing about it?"
 "Nothing at all."
 "Then—then I—"
 "You've been scared about nothing," said Bob Cherry. "The best thing you can do now is to hurry back to Greyfriars, and take a licking for missing call-over."
 Nugent minor rose to his feet.
 "I don't mind a licking," he said. "It wasn't that I was afraid of. But to be expelled from the school—"
 "Well, it's all over now," said Nugent. "Come back and get some dry things on, or you'll catch your death of cold!"
 "You, too, Linley," said Harry, "better get a run back to Greyfriars."
 "Right you are!"
 "I suppose I was missed at call-over?" said Dick, as the juniors turned up the towing-path towards the school.
 "Yes."
 "And you fellows came out to look for me?"
 "Yes. Mr. Quelch sent us. The Head wants to see you!"
 Dick started.
 "The Head wants to see me! Then he knows something?"
 "It must be about missing the call-over, I suppose."
 "That's a matter for the Form-master. The Head wouldn't bother himself about a little thing like that."
 "Well, I don't know what it is, but I don't suppose it's anything serious."
 Dick Nugent halted.
 "Look here, I suppose this is honest injun?" he remarked. "You're not gammoning me to get me to go back quietly to the school?"
 Nugent flushed red.
 "Can't you take my word?" he demanded.
 "Well, yes; but—"
 "I tell you the Head was nowhere near the Waterside Inn this afternoon, and it was a ventriloquial jape, your hearing his voice."
 "Oh, all right! But I don't see what he wants to see me for so particularly, in that case!" said Dick sulkily.
 "Well, you'll soon see."
 Dick Nugent hesitated. He was half

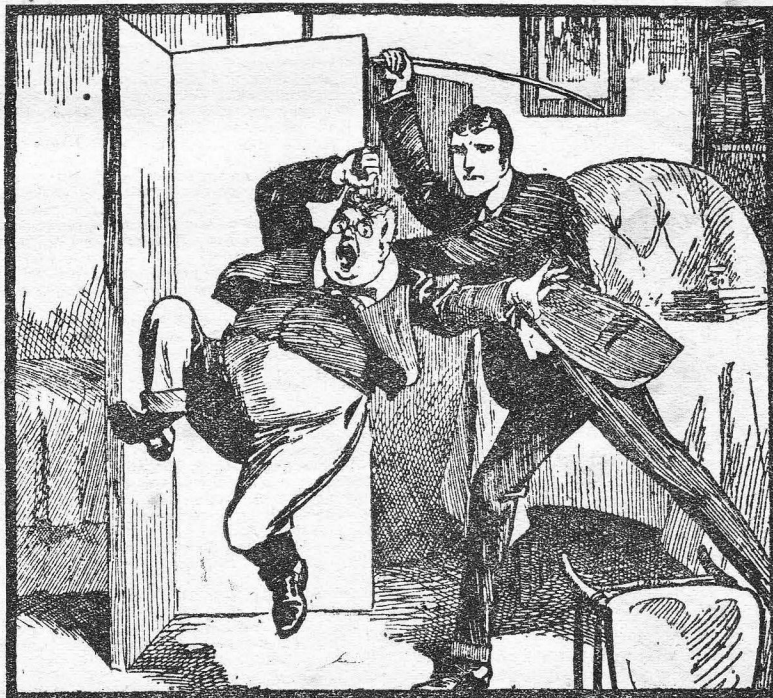
inclined to refuse to return to Greyfriars until matters were more certain. But the Removites were round him now, and he had no choice in the matter.
 Harry Wharton & Co. had their eyes upon him, and were certainly not inclined to allow him to escape.
 Dick realised it, and he tramped on doggedly towards Greyfriars. There was no help for it now, and he had to face the music, whatever it was.
 The juniors reached the school at last. Gosling grunted as he admitted them.
 "Nice goings hon—I don't think!" he remarked. "I know what I would do if I was the 'Ead. I would lick you all till you couldn't walk, that's wot I'd do! Wot I says is this 'ere, why should a 'ard-working man be dragged out of his lodge at this time of night, and away from his—"
 "Gin!" suggested Bob Cherry.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Wot I says is this 'ere—"
 But the Removites did not wait to hear what Gosling had to say. They went in, and Frank Nugent led his minor to the Head's study.
 Nugent minor tapped, and entered.
 Dr. Locke was alone in the room.
 He turned his chair a little, and looked fixedly at the fag as he came in, with a drooping head and flushed face.
 Dick Nugent stood before him, his eyes on the carpet.
 "You have returned!" said Dr. Locke.
 "Yes, sir."
 "I hear that you returned of your own accord, when you were found by the Remove lads?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "You absented yourself, I suppose, from a fear of the consequences of your action in visiting a disreputable place?" said the Head.
 Dick started.
 Frank had assured him that it was not the Head who had spoken to him at the Waterside Inn, and that Dr. Locke knew nothing of his visit there. But the Head's words showed that he knew all about it.
 The fag stood silent, and troubled.
 Exactly how much the Head knew he could not guess, and he did not dare to speak for fear of making a blunder.
 "I am waiting for your answer, Nugent minor."
 "Yes, sir."
 "You do not deny having been to the Waterside Inn?"
 "No, sir."

"You knew it was out of bounds?"
 "Yes, sir."
 Dr. Locke leaned forward a little towards him.
 "Did you go alone to the inn, or was somebody else with you—someone from this school?"
 Dick's lips were closed.
 "Answer me, Nugent minor."
 The lad did not speak.
 A slight smile crossed the doctor's face.
 "Do you not see, Nugent minor, that it is useless to remain silent?" he said. "If you went alone to the inn, you would naturally tell me so. Your silence only proves that you had a companion or companions."
 Dick flushed.
 "I was not alone, sir."
 "Very good! Who was with you?"
 Dick's face set obstinately. He might be flogged, or he might be expelled, but he would never reply to that question.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Requires Help.

I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Oh, shut up, Bunter!"
 Harry Wharton & Co. were standing in the passage, waiting for Nugent minor to come out of the Head's study. Frank Nugent was too anxious about his brother to leave the spot, and his chums remained with him, concerned for him if not so much for his minor.
 Billy Bunter had been looking for them, and his fat face lightened a little as he caught sight of the group of juniors in the passage.
 He came up with his rolling gait, and gave Harry Wharton a dig in the ribs with his knuckles to notify his arrival.
 But the chums of the Remove were in no mood to be bothered by Billy Bunter.
 "I say—"
 "Get out!" growled Bob Cherry. "No time for your babble now. Get away!"
 "The get-awayfulness is terrific."
 "I'm in a fearful fix," said Bunter tearfully. "I say, you fellows, you might stand by a chap in your own study. I suppose you don't want me to be expelled from Greyfriars?"
 Harry Wharton turned and looked at him.
 "What do you mean?" he demanded. "Is this some more of your rot?"
 "No, it isn't."



The cane lashed and rang upon Billy Bunter's portly person, and he skipped and howled like a dervish.

"What have you done, then?"

"Nothing. Only fallen into a trap laid for me by a beastly rotter!" said Bunter. "I hope you chaps will believe that I didn't steal the postal-order?"

Wharton started.

"What's that?"

"Carberry gave it to me. I swear he gave it to me, and handed me the pen to fill in my name on it, too."

"What are you talking about?"

"The postal-order."

"What postal-order, ass?"

"The one I cashed for the feed. You fellows might have had some if you had been in, only you were gone off about that young ass, Nugent. Carberry gave the postal-order to me to cash in advance to one that I'm receiving to-morrow, and now he says he'll accuse me of stealing it, you know."

Harry Wharton took the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him.

"Now tell me plainly what you mean!" he exclaimed.

"Ow! Don't shake me like that! You—you'll make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken you'll jolly well have to pay for them!"

"Will you explain, you fat young duffer?"

"I'm trying to as fast as I can. I told Carberry I had a postal-order coming to-morrow morning, and he offered to cash it for me in advance."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I mentioned to him that I wouldn't tell anybody about seeing him at the Waterside Inn, you know."

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"You young cad! You mean you extorted money from him—blackmailed him?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I don't think you ought to accuse me of a thing like that. I really don't know why you chaps are always running me down."

"He gave you a postal-order?"

"Yes, for a pound. Then I asked him to lend me some more—"

"You greedy young rotter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! And then he said he hadn't given me the postal-order, and he knew the number, and if I said a word about him he would accuse me of having stolen it. Now you see how the matter stands."

"Serve you right!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"What have you done with the postal-order Carberry gave you?"

"I cashed it with Mrs. Mimble."

"You must get it back."

"She won't give it to me."

"I suppose she won't without its value. Do you want to swindle her as well as blackmail Carberry, you unscrupulous young rascal?"

"Look here, I don't think you ought to call me names just because I've got into a fix. I don't think it's chummy."

"Only a young blackguard would get into such a fix," said Harry angrily. "I suppose I have got to get you out of it, as usual."

"If you like to lend me a pound—"

"I haven't the money. I shall have to get the postal-order back from Mrs. Mimble on tick."

Billy Bunter's face cleared at once.

"That's all right, Wharton. She'll trust you. Look here! You can get the postal-order back, as she trusts you. You might as well get a feed at the same time. I don't mind coming and helping you to carry the things—"

Bunter stopped suddenly as Harry, quite out of patience, boxed his ears. He staggered away with a howl, and Harry walked away. Billy Bunter blinked at the grim-faced Removites in almost speechless indignation.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Accuser and Accused.

THERE was silence in the Head's study. Dr. Locke looked fixedly at the fag standing before him, and Nugent minor's eyes were on the carpet.

The boy knew how much he was risking by his silence, and his face was uneasy and troubled.

But the obstinate lines about his mouth showed that he was determined.

Whatever happened, Nugent minor did not mean to betray the seniors who had led him into the scrape.

"I am waiting for your answer, Nugent minor."

Dick Nugent was silent.

"You refuse to reply?"

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"I—I—"

"You did not go alone to the Waterside Inn?"

"No, sir."

"You had a companion—more than one, perhaps?"

"Yes-es, sir."

"You refuse to name them?"

Dick Nugent raised his eyes to the doctor's face at last.

"I—I can't, sir."

"Why cannot you?"

"I—I—it would be caddish—rotten! I—I can't."

The doctor's face softened a little.

"I can respect your motives, Nugent minor, but it is your duty to speak out when you are questioned by your headmaster."

The fag's lips closed again.

"Very well," said the Head quietly, and he touched a bell. "I shall obtain the information from another source. I have no doubt." He glanced up as a servant answered the bell. "Please send Master Carberry to me."

Nugent minor stared at the Head. Did Dr. Locke then, know that Carberry had been there? In that case, why his questions? The fag felt as if he were enveloped in some strange mystery—in a maze in which he could discover no path. Silence was his refuge.

In a couple of minutes Carberry entered the study. His face was a little pale, and he carefully avoided looking at Nugent minor. Kascal as he was, the cad of the Sixth felt some compunction, and he did not desire to meet Dick's eyes when his treachery was revealed.

"Carberry, Nugent minor has returned, as you see. It appears that when he went to the Waterside Inn he was not alone. I have a strong suspicion that he was led into this wretched business by some lad older than himself, who should have known better. From a mistaken sense of honour, he persists in keeping silent, and will not name his companions. Now, when you went to the inn to look for him, did you not see anything of them?"

Carberry shook his head.

"No, sir. I saw only Nugent minor."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

Nugent minor's jaw dropped.

He was so astounded that he could only stare blankly at the cad of Greyfriars. It seemed to him as if his head were turning round.

What did it all mean?

The fag could not grasp the facts for the moment. He understood that Carberry—Carberry, of all people—was appearing in the light of his accuser—that was all.

"I wish very much to discover who it was that accompanied Nugent minor to the inn," said Dr. Locke. "I feel convinced that it was an older lad, more deserving of punishment."

"I fancy there is a mistake, sir. I did not see anyone else there."

"Nugent minor has admitted that there was someone else, but refuses to give the name."

"I can offer no suggestion, sir."

"Once more, Nugent, answer my question," said the Head. "This is not a time to keep silence. If you were a little more accustomed to school life you would know that I am being very patient with you. The prefect who discovered you at the inn unfortunately did not see who your companions were, but I must have their names."

Dick Nugent gasped for breath.

"He—he discovered me?" he stammered.

"Certainly."

"I—I broke off. He could not speak. He could only stare and gasp helplessly, and for the moment the figure of the false friend, the treacherous tempter, danced before his eyes."

Carberry tightened his lips. The tug-of-war was coming, he knew—it was his word now against the fag's—and he was a prefect—he was unaccused—he had had the first blow. He had little doubt of the result.

The Head was looking very curiously at Nugent minor. He could see that there was more in this than had as yet met his eyes.

"What is the matter with you, Nugent minor?" he asked quietly.

Dick found his voice.

"Did you say he discovered me at the inn, sir?" he panted.

"Yes."

"Did he report me to you?"

"Yes, very properly. It was his duty as a prefect."

"And—and but for him you would not—not have known that I had been there at all," stammered Nugent minor.

"No, probably not."

"Oh, the cad—the cur!"

The words burst passionately from the fag.

Dr. Locke knitted his brows.

"Silence, Nugent! How dare you!"

"He—he told you?"

"It was Carberry's duty to tell me. It is a prefect's duty to report matters of the kind to the headmaster, as you ought to be aware."

"He told you I was there!" shrieked Dick Nugent. "Did he tell you he was there himself—that I went with him?"

"What?"

"It was Carberry that I went with!" shouted the fag. "He has turned on me—given me away! I went there with Carberry!"

"Impossible!"

"I did—I did! He knows it! Look at him!"

Carberry controlled his features well.

"Of course, this is sheer nonsense, sir," he said. "You know that I should not be likely to go to such a place except to fulfil my duty as a prefect."

"You need not defend yourself, Carberry. This accusation is too utterly wild and unfounded to have the slightest weight with me."

"It's the truth—the truth!"

"Silence, Nugent minor. You should be ashamed to utter these reckless falsehoods about a prefect who has only done his duty in reporting your transgression to me."

"He took me there!"

"I do not believe you for one moment!"

"I tell you he took me there, and deserted me like a coward when he thought that you had found him out!"

"Enough!"

"You—you won't believe me! I—I can prove it!" cried the boy.

"Nonsense!"

"Wharton knows! Wharton was there—Wharton saw them!" said Dick, with a gleam in his eyes. "Wharton came there to fetch me away, and he saw Carberry in the inn playing cards!"

The Head started, and Carberry drew a quick, deep breath.

"Of course, sir, you know the terms I am on with Wharton," he said. "If Wharton should back up Nugent minor's story, it would simply show that they had planned it between them."

"I hardly believe that Wharton is capable of such a thing, Carberry; but it is certainly very unfortunate that he should be called as a witness. However—"

The Head was interrupted by a tap at the door.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Expelled!

HARRY WHARTON came up the passage with a crumpled postal-order in his hand. Billy Bunter blinked at him, and caught sight of the postal-order, and gave a gasp of relief.

"You've got it, Wharton?"

"Yes. I've promised Mrs. Mimble the money next week," said Harry. "It means all my week's pocket-money, and a tip my uncle promised me, too. Blessed if I know what I should do for, either, for a thankless young scoundrel."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, you young thief! Do you fellows know where Carberry is? I looked into his study for him as I came back, and he wasn't there."

"He's just been sent for," said Mark Linley. "He passed us a few minutes ago. He's gone into the Head's study."

"Phew! Then the Head knows he was at the inn with Nugent minor, as sure as a gun. Have Loder and Carne gone in?"

"No."

"Then it means squalls for Carberry and Nugent minor. If the young ass had listened to me, and left those blackguards when I asked him—"

"Cave!" whispered Nugent.

Harry Wharton broke off.

But it was too late.

Mr. Quelch was coming round the corner of the passage, and his expression showed that he had heard what Wharton said. He was going to the Head's study, but he halted and faced the juniors, with the evident intention of knowing something more of the matter.

"What were you saying, Wharton?"

Harry turned crimson.

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Do you know anything of this affair at the Waterside Inn?"

Wharton was silent and troubled.

"I gather from your words," said Mr. Quelch, "that Nugent minor was not alone in his wrongdoing?"

"That is true, sir."
"You do not, perhaps, fully understand what has happened," said Mr. Quelch. "Carberry has reported, as a prefect, that he found Nugent minor at the inn. Nugent minor will be punished for that. If he had any companions—especially if he was led into it by an older lad—that would make his punishment lighter."

The Removites stood petrified.
"Carberry reported him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yes."
"But Carberry was the chap who took him there!"

"Are you sure of that, Cherry?"
"We all saw him, sir. Look here, Wharton, it's time to speak out. If Carberry sneaks about Nugent minor, we ought to tell the facts. We can't shut up and let a chap be expelled because a false hound has turned on him."

"Cherry!"
"It's the truth, sir! He's a false hound!" cried Bob Cherry indignantly. "It was Carberry who took Nugent minor to the inn, and made him play cards and play the silly ass generally, and we're all witnesses to prove it."

The Remove-master looked at them silently for a moment.

"Follow me!" he said abruptly.
He walked along to the Head's study, and the juniors followed him. Harry Wharton's brows were knitted. He felt that it was, as Bob Cherry had said, the time to speak out now. They could not let Nugent minor fall a helpless victim to the treachery of the false-hearted tempter.

Mr. Quelch tapped at the Head's door.
"Come in!" came Dr. Locke's deep voice.
The Head looked surprised as the Remove-master entered, followed by the juniors. He glanced at them questioningly.

"These boys can throw some further light upon the matter, I think, sir," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

"Ah! I was about to send for Wharton. But the others—what do they know about the matter?"

"They were all there, sir," said Harry. "Carberry's cheek grew paler."
"Wharton, tell me frankly all you know," said the Head. "Carberry reported Nugent minor to me, and declares that Loder and Carne will bear out his statements. Have you anything to say on the subject?"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Harry, with a glance of scorn at the cad of the Sixth. "Nugent minor did go to the inn to play the fool, but he was led into it by Carberry and Loder and Carne. Nugent knew his minor was gone there, and he would have gone to fetch him away, but he was detained, and he asked me to go. I went with these fellows, and we found the rotters—I mean, we found Carberry and the others playing cards there. I tried to persuade Nugent minor to leave, and they threw me out."

"That's true," said Nugent minor.
"You state this on your word of honour, Wharton?" said Dr. Locke, with a harassed look.

"Yes, sir."
"There is no possibility of a mistake?"
"None, sir. I should not have said a word if Carberry had not turned on Nugent minor in this way. It would have been sneaking."

The doctor's face was deeply troubled.
He could not help recognising the ring of truth in Harry Wharton's voice, but if Harry's tale was true, what kind of a fellow was Carberry, the prefect?

"Do you others bear out Wharton's statement?" he asked, almost helplessly.

"Yes, sir!" said the Removites, with one voice.

"You are all sure of the facts?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"The surefulness is terrific."

"And you, Carberry—"

"I deny the whole thing, sir," said Carberry grimly. "It's a string of lies from beginning to end. All the school knows the terms these juniors are on with me, and it's a plot among them to ruin me if they can."

"I can hardly think so, but—"
"It appears to be Carberry's word against the statement of the juniors," said Mr. Quelch, in his incisive way. "But perhaps Carberry has witnesses to call."

"Ah, yes," said the Head eagerly; "Loder and Carne were there! They went with Carberry to fetch Nugent minor."
"I will go and fetch them!" exclaimed Carberry, stepping towards the door.

Mr. Quelch stepped quickly in his path.
"You will do nothing of the sort," he said. "Loder and Carne can come here and tell their story without any preparation."

"Really, sir—"
"I will fetch them myself, and you can remain here," said Mr. Quelch, and he glanced at the doctor, who nodded.

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch!"
Mr. Quelch returned in a few minutes. Loder came into the study with him, and Carne remained outside.

"I think it would be advisable to hear the evidence separately, sir," said the Remove-master. "That will remove any suspicion of comparing notes. Of course, if they tell the exact truth, the stories will exactly agree."

"Certainly!" said the Head.

He turned towards Loder. Loder was looking pale and scared, and he cast a frightened look towards Carberry. But Mr. Quelch placed his portly form so that Loder could not catch the eye of the Greyfriars cad.

"Pray tell me all you know about this matter, Loder," said the Head, turning his fixed gaze upon the senior.

"Wh-what matter, sir?"
"This affair of Nugent minor at the Waterside Inn. Tell me exactly what happened from the beginning—why, and how you went to the inn, and what occurred there."

Loder licked his dry lips.
"I—I—I—"

He stammered, hesitated, and stopped.
"Go on, Loder!"

"I—I—I—"
"Speak out!"

"Tell the Head—" began Carberry; but Mr. Quelch whipped round on him like a flash.

"Silence, Carberry!"
The prefect gnawed his lip.

Loder looked helplessly from Carberry to Mr. Quelch, and from Mr. Quelch to the Head. Dr. Locke's face was growing harder. This hesitation could only mean one thing, and Dr. Locke was beginning to see clearer now.

"Speak, Loder—at once!"

"If you please, sir—"

"You hear me?"

"Wh-what has Carberry said, sir?"

"Never mind what Carberry has said. Tell me your version of the matter."

"I—I—I—"

"I order you to speak at once!"

"I—I can't help it, Carberry," almost groaned Loder; "I don't know what to say. I—I—I'm sorry I went to the inn, sir. I—I never meant any harm. It was just a little game of nap—no harm in it."

"Oh, you cur!" burst out Carberry bitterly.

"I—I can't help it. I don't know what to say. It's all up now."

"Call in Carne," said the Head sternly.

Carne was called in. He looked round quickly, and noted Carberry's furious face, and Loder's look of hang-dog misery. He, too, was equally at a loss what to say.

"Tell me your version of the story, Carne," said Dr. Locke. "Before you commit yourself to any statement, however, I warn you that

Loder has confessed to going to the Waterside Inn to play cards there."

Carne turned pale.

"I suppose it's all up now, sir," he stammered. "I—I—I'm sorry! It sha'n't happen again, sir. I—I was a fool, I suppose. I hope you'll overlook it this time."

"Then you confess?"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"What have you to say now, Carberry?"

"It's all—it's all a plot, sir," said the prefect thickly. "I don't know why these chaps have turned on me. It's a plot. As for those juniors, they all hate me, and one of them is a thief, too."

"What do you mean?"

"Bunter—he has stolen a postal-order from my study—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"That is another lie of Carberry's," said Harry Wharton quietly. "He gave Bunter a postal-order, and induced him to fill it in and cash it, so as to get him in his power, because he thought Bunter might betray him about being at the inn. Here is the postal-order—I have just got it back from Mrs. Mimble, to give it to Carberry."

"After what has happened, Carberry, you cannot expect me to take your word upon any matter," said the Head sternly.

"You can take it upon this, at all events," said Carberry recklessly. "Bunter black-mailed me, because he knew I had been at the inn. I can see that the game is up now. I suppose I shall be expelled. I don't care. I gave Bunter the postal-order under threats; it was blackmail, the same as fellows are sent to prison for."

"Oh, really, sir!" stammered Bunter. "That's not quite true, sir. I told Carberry that I had a postal-order coming to-morrow, sir, and he offered to cash it in advance."

"I cannot believe that, Bunter."

"I—I also said that one good turn deserved another, sir, but—but, of course, I didn't want Carberry to lend me any money unless he felt inclined, sir."

"I think I see how the facts are, Bunter. If I did not think that you are too stupid to realise the wickedness of your conduct, I should expel you from Greyfriars," said the Head sternly. "As it is, I shall flog you soundly—"

"Oh, really, sir!"

"And expel Carberry. You may go!"

The juniors left the study quietly.

Billy Bunter was groaning to himself.

Carberry went out with a hard, set face. The juniors would not look at him. Bitter enemy as Carberry had been to them, they would not appear to triumph over him now that his punishment had come—and so terrible a punishment.

The next morning Billy Bunter was duly flogged, and he received very little sympathy. All who knew anything of the facts agreed that he fully deserved it, as undoubtedly he did.

Carberry was expelled. There was no public expulsion; he was spared that. He left Greyfriars quietly by the early morning train; and his shadow never darkened the doors of the old school again. And though some felt sorry for him, it could not be denied that he had been wholly an influence for evil in the school, and that Greyfriars was well rid of him.

And Nugent minor?

Even upon his obstinacy the lesson had not been lost. He had learned the value of such friends as he had chosen for himself, and he had been sobered by his own narrow escape.

From that day Frank Nugent found a change in his younger brother—a change that promised to be permanent now that he was no longer under the influence of the cad of Greyfriars.

THE END.

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THE PREFECTS' FEUD!

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Rival Prefects.

"MODERN bounders!"
"Classical asses!"
A most exciting scene was taking place in the quadrangle of Rookwood.

Quite a dozen juniors were engaged in a battle royal, and blows were exchanged with great frequency.

The voices of the combatants rent the air. Many fistic combats had taken place between the Modern and Classical juniors, but never one like this.

Jimmy Silver was holding Tommy Dodd in a tight embrace, and pommelling away at his head for all he was worth.

Newcome was struggling on the ground with Tommy Doyle, whilst Raby and Lovell of the Classical side were exchanging blows with their rivals, Tommy Cook and Towle.

Several other juniors were engaged in a like manner.

All of them were shouting at the top of their voices.

"Back up, Classics!" roared Jimmy Silver excitedly. "Give 'em socks! Show the Modern rotters that we're top side at Rookwood!"

"Yah! Classical cads!" shrieked Tommy Cook, who had succeeded in sending Lovell to the ground from a straight left. "The Modern side is top side! Hurrah! Hurr—Yow! Ow! Yarooogh!"

Newcome had planted his fist in Tommy Cook's eye with disastrous results to the Modern junior.

Tommy Cook went to the ground, and there was a roar of laughter from the Classics.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The din was now something terrific. It was a half-holiday at Rookwood, and consequently most of the masters and prefects had gone out for a few hours.

Otherwise, the noise would have been bound to have attracted instant attention.

The fight, however, was not to go on uninterrupted.

The noise had been heard by Beaumont, the bullying Classical prefect, who had been indulging in a quiet smoke and a game of cards in his study with several other seniors.

The violent din in the quad had prevented the prefects from hearing one another's voices.

This fact had had a bad effect on Beaumont's temper.

He had consequently picked up a cane, and, storming with rage, left his study with the intention of making the juniors suffer for their misdeeds.

Not being able to see through brick walls, the excited juniors had not observed the bullying prefect leave his study.

As he entered the hall, however, Newcome had caught sight of him through the open door.

The sight of the prefect's cane told the Classical junior what was about to happen.

"Cave!" he shouted warningly.

The sound of shuffling feet and the excited voices drowned the Classical junior's warning cry.

"Shut up, you fellows!" bellowed Newcome concernedly. "Here comes Beaumont!"

This time Lovell and Raby and Towle and Lacy heard the Classical junior's cry, and they dropped out of the fight immediately.

The rest, however, continued to battle for mastery, and thus they neither saw nor heard the approach of the bullying prefect.

Beaumont was fairly spluttering with uncontrollable anger.

He gripped his cane tightly, and next moment he was in the thick of the struggling combatants.

"Swish! Swish! Swish!"
With all the force at his command, the prefect brought his cane down on the juniors.

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Beaumont was in too savage a temper to trouble where the cane landed.

All he was concerned about was the inflicting of severe punishment on the combatants. Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd were locked in a fierce embrace on the ground, when Beaumont caught sight of them, and lashed out savagely with his cane.

"Swish! Swish!"
Right on the juniors' face and head the cane landed.

In an instant they separated, and their hands shot to their heads.

"I'll teach you young villains to kick up a row!" stormed the prefect angrily.

"Yow! My face! Grooogh!" yelled Jimmy Silver, struggling to his feet.

"My head! Yow! Yarooogh!" shrieked Tommy Dodd, holding his head, which was throbbing with pain.

"Hang your heads!" growled Beaumont between his teeth. "I'll give you another one if you don't behave yourself!"

"I say, Beaumont," said Newcome, who had so far escaped scot free. "This is a bit too thick! You've no right to lash a fellow across the face."

"Eh? What—what—?"
Beaumont was white with temper, and the words choked in his mouth. He strode towards the Classical junior, his face evil and cruel.

"You have the impudence to argue with me!" he raved. "I'll—I'll—"

"You'll do nothing of the kind!"

Beaumont turned round quickly, as his arm was held in a strong grip. His eyes flashed as he observed that the new-comer was Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood.

"Drop that cane, Beaumont!" exclaimed the captain commandingly, keeping a tight hold of the prefect's arm.

"I sha'n't!" bellowed Beaumont.

"You will, and at once, too!"

"I won't! I—Ow! Yow! You're twisting my arm!"

"I know I am," remarked Bulkeley calmly. "I'm going to make you drop that cane. Ah! That's right!" Beaumont had dropped the cane. Bulkeley picked it up, and broke it across his knee. "Now, Beaumont, perhaps you will give me an explanation!"

"What do you mean?"

"What I say!" said the captain emphatically. "Why were you handling these juniors in such a brutal manner?"

"I—I—I—" spluttered Beaumont, almost speechless.

"Look at Silver's face," cried Bulkeley indignantly. "Look at Dodd's head!"

There was a red line across Jimmy Silver's face where the prefect's cane had landed, and a big bump was already rising on Tommy Dodd's head.

There was, however, no sign of regretfulness on Beaumont's face.

He glared at Bulkeley savagely.

"Serves them jolly well right!" he exclaimed. "They shouldn't have been kicking up such a row, then I shouldn't have had occasion to punish them."

"Punish them?" echoed Bulkeley. "Surely you don't call this punishment? This is sheer brutality! You had no right to cane juniors in such a manner. A hundred lines would—"

"Rubbish!" Beaumont's lips curved sneeringly. "That's not my idea of punishment. I've treated the young cads as they deserved. For two pins I'd give them some more."

"You won't," said Bulkeley, with a frown.

"I—I— What right have you to interfere?" snapped Beaumont.

"Every right!" declared the captain stubbornly. "I will not allow you to treat the juniors so brutally. You're a brute, Beaumont—a low-down brute!"

"What—what—?"

"I'm ashamed of you—ashamed to think that you belong to the Classical side!"

Smack!

Beaumont's temper had passed control, and he had landed his fist full in Bulkeley's face.

The captain of the school staggered backwards.

Jimmy Silver gasped.

"My giddy aunt!" he muttered. "That's done it with a vengeance! I shouldn't like to be in Beaumont's shoes now."

"Nor I," agreed Tommy Dodd. "I hope Bulkeley socks into the cad. I— My hat! He's not going to touch him!"

Instead of returning the blow he had received, Bulkeley thrust his hands into his pockets, and turned to the expectant juniors.

"You kids had better clear," he said, to the juniors' surprise.

"But—but aren't you going to pile into the rotter?" asked Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"That is no business of yours, Silver," said Bulkeley coldly. "Now then, clear!"

The juniors cleared at once, thoroughly amazed at the captain's action.

Meanwhile, Beaumont, his temper having calmed down somewhat, was making his way towards the House.

The next instant Bulkeley had caught up with him, and clutched him by the arm.

"A word with you, Beaumont," he said quietly.

"A thousand if you like," said the prefect sarcastically.

"I don't want as many as that," replied Bulkeley icily. "But, look here, you've struck me before those juniors."

"You asked for it!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the captain. "You allowed your temper to get the better of you, and you've got to suffer for it. You'll have to meet me in a stand-up fight!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"Very well," replied Bulkeley calmly. "If you refuse, I shall be compelled to report your brutality to the Head. Now, then, which is it to be?"

Beaumont remained deep in thought for a moment or two. Then he laughed arrogantly.

"I shall be only too pleased to give you a whacking," he said, with a sneer. "But—but we can't fight in the gym."

"No," said Bulkeley. "There's an old barn in the woods on the way to Coombe that will answer the purpose."

"Oh, good!" said Beaumont loftily. "I shall be delighted to oblige. And when would you like the affair to come off?"

"Saturday afternoon at three o'clock," replied Bulkeley firmly. "By the way, you need have no fear that the juniors will blab about the way you treated them. I'll see to that!"

"I don't mind if they do," remarked Beaumont, with a confident air. "I was perfectly justified in what I did."

"That's entirely a matter of opinion," said Bulkeley. "Remember; three o'clock on Saturday."

"I sha'n't forget," replied Beaumont. And with that he walked into the House.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Great Fight.

"SILVER!"
Webb of the Third bawled out the name as he came along the Fourth Form passage.

He popped his head round the door of the end study.

"Silver!" he bawled.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver, looking up from a book he was reading. "What the dickens do you want, young Webb?"

"I don't want anything," replied the Third-Former, with a grin. "But Bulkeley wants to see you in his study at once!"

"Oh!"

"He's looking pretty wild," remarked Webb. "Should advise you to put a few books in your trousers."

"Cheeky young fag!" snorted Lovell. "Well, if you Fourth-Formers will misbehave yourselves—"

"Clear off, young Webb!" said Jimmy Silver, striding towards the door. "If you want a thick ear—"

But the Third-Former did not want a thick ear. He took to his heels quickly, and was soon lost to view down the passage.

Jimmy Silver left the end study, and made for the captain's quarters.

Tap! The Classical captain tapped on the door of Bulkeley's study.

"Come in!" Jimmy Silver entered with a sheepish expression on his face, wondering for what purpose the captain of the school had sent for him.

Bulkeley grinned good-naturedly. "You needn't look so scared, Silver," he said kindly. "I'm not going to whack you!"

"Oh!" "I want to talk to you about that affair this afternoon," went on the captain.

"Right-ho, Bulkeley, old man!" "How's your face?"

"Bit better, thanks, Bulkeley. Rather sore, you know."

"H'm!" muttered Bulkeley, biting his lip. "I'm not surprised. But, look here, are you specially anxious that the masters should know about the affair?"

Jimmy Silver thought for a moment.

"Not exactly," he replied, at length. "Only

"Only you think Beaumont ought to be punished," concluded Bulkeley.

"Yes." "Well, Beaumont's going to be punished all right," explained the captain of Rookwood. "I've arranged to fight him at the old barn in the woods on Saturday afternoon."

"Oh, good!" "That is in return for the blow which he gave me this afternoon," went on Bulkeley.

"You see, if it comes out about the way he treated you fellows, I shall have to explain about him striking me. That will mean a rare old shindy. Personally, I would rather it was avoided. I'd much rather settle the matter personally."

"Rather!" replied Jimmy Silver promptly. "I'd much sooner you gave Beaumont a jolly good hiding. It would be much better than letting the Head settle the matter. He'd only give the rotter a lecture, and then it would be done with. As it is, you'll make him sit up!"

The captain laughed. "Well, I shall do my best," he said. "Of course, Silver, I rely upon you to keep the matter to yourselves. If I remember rightly there was only Dodd of the Modern side who bore signs of Beaumont's brutality."

"I'll explain the matter to 'old Duddy,'" said Jimmy Silver willingly. "I'm sure he'll keep mum if I put it to him nicely."

"Very well," replied Bulkeley. Jimmy Silver left the captain's study, and after explaining the matter to his chums he wended his way to the Modern juniors' study, and put the matter before them.

Tommy Dodd fell in with the suggestion, and thus it came about that when Mr. Manders inquired the reason for the bump on Tommy Dodd's head, the latter replied to the effect that he must have had it knocked in some way.

Mr. Manders was rather credulous as to the truth of the statement; but Tommy Dodd refused to open out, and the Modern master had to be satisfied with the reply he received.

Jimmy Silver was questioned in a like manner by Mr. Bootles, but the Classical master was not such a suspicious person as Mr. Manders, and he accepted Jimmy Silver's explanation.

The Fistical Four and Tommy Dodd & Co. looked anxiously forward to Saturday afternoon.

They were the only juniors who were aware of the coming fight between the rival seniors.

They came to witness the fistic encounter by hook or by crook.

Directly after dinner on Saturday afternoon seven juniors left the school for an unknown destination.

They made straight for the old barn, and hid themselves in the woods.

Right on three o'clock Beaumont strode up alone, and a minute later Bulkeley entered the barn with his chum Neville.

"Haven't you brought a second with you, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley.

"I didn't want one," replied Beaumont

suavely. "I can manage quite well without."

He did not explain that all his cronies had refused to back him up, and that they were at the present moment at the Bird in Hand, indulging in a game of cards with Joey Hook and his followers.

Bulkeley had brought a bag with him. He opened it, and drew forth a pair of boxing-gloves.

"Put them away!" exclaimed Beaumont, with a sneer.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm not a kid," answered the bullying prefect. "I don't want gloves. Bare fists are more in my line."

"Oh, very well," replied Bulkeley. "If you insist—"

"I do." Bulkeley slipped off his coat and turned up his sleeves.

Beaumont did the same, and soon the two seniors were facing one another in the centre of the barn.

"What about rounds?" asked Neville, taking out his watch.

"Hang rounds!" growled Beaumont. "We'll fight on until one or the other drops!"

"Very well."

For a moment or two complete silence reigned in the barn. Then: "Time!"

Thud! The bullying prefect crashed to the floor. Neville had counted "seven" before Beaumont rose to his feet again.

"You rotter!" he raved, glaring evilly at the calm captain. "I'll— Yow! Ow, ow, ow! Yaroooooh!"

Once again Bulkeley scored. Beaumont reeled backwards, but recovered himself in time.

His temper was completely out of control now. He swung his arms windmill fashion, and, muttering beneath his breath, he endeavoured to send Bulkeley to the floor.

But Beaumont had reckoned without the captain's skill.

Bulkeley, with the ease of a champion, knocked the prefect's blows aside, and then—

Smack! Thud! Smack!

Three times in quick succession Bulkeley's fists landed on Beaumont's face and body.

With a grunt, the latter's hands dropped to his side, and he sank limply to the floor.

Neville counted, but he might just as well have saved himself the trouble.

Beaumont was beaten to the wide!

"Good old Bulkeley!" sang out Jimmy Silver from the roof of the barn. "Well played, old man!"

Bulkeley gazed upwards in surprise.



Three times in quick succession Bulkeley's fists landed on Beaumont's face and body, causing him to drop his hands to his side, and fall limply to the floor.

Bulkeley held out his hand to Beaumont, but the latter knocked it aside, and shot his left at Bulkeley's head.

The captain of Rookwood ducked, and, turning quickly, he managed to land his fist full in Beaumont's face.

At the same moment the faces of Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver appeared through a gap in the roof of the barn.

The seniors, however, failed to notice the juniors' presence.

The combat continued, and grew fiercer and fiercer.

There was a look of calm determination in Bulkeley's face, and a straight left between the eyes caused Beaumont to wince and to grind his teeth in rage.

Beaumont knew how to use his fists, and would probably have made a good fighter if only he could have learned to control his temper.

But Beaumont could not control his temper. Another blow between the eyes sent him to the floor. He rose quickly to his feet, however, and, in a fearful rage, he hurled himself at his opponent.

Bulkeley stood as firm as a rock. He met Beaumont's rush cleverly, and swinging out his strong left, he bowled Beaumont completely over.

"Silver—Dodd!" he exclaimed. "What

"It's all right, Bulkeley!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "We're going now!"

And they went.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Bowling Out the Bully.

DIRECTLY the fight was over the Fistical Four and Tommy Dodd & Co. returned to Rookwood.

It was a fine afternoon, and there being no football match on they decided to get their bicycles out and to ride as far as Latcham and back.

In high-spirits, they started off at a steady pace.

They were just passing through Coombe, when they observed Beaumont making straight for the Bird in Hand.

"Suppose he's going to drown his sorrows in drink," propounded Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The cyclists soon left the village behind, and they forgot all about the prefect in their enthusiasm for the cycle ride.

Meanwhile, Beaumont had gone into the

dingy bar-parlour of the disreputable public-house.

Knowles and Catesby and Frampton of the Modern side at Rookwood were already there, and they gave Beaumont a significant glance as the latter entered.

Joey Hook, the rascally bookmaker, who was also seated at the table, surveyed the bullying prefect critically.

"I say, Mister Beaumont," he said, "you bin trying to fight a brick wall?"

"No, I haven't."

"What's the matter, then? Met with a haccident?"

"No!" growled Beaumont disconsolately. "Don't ask questions. What are you playing?"

"Banker," replied Joey Hook suavely. "Goin' to join us?"

"Might as well."

Beaumont sat down at the table. Knowles & Co. did not bring up the subject of the fight. A glance at Beaumont's bruised and disagreeable-looking face told them plainly enough who had been the victor.

Beaumont lighted a cigarette, and the game of cards continued.

For two hours they played, and by that time Beaumont had won as much as ten shillings.

Knowles and Frampton and Catesby had also won a trifle each.

Joey Hook and his pals had lost. Joey Hook did not like losing, and he showed it only too plainly when Knowles suggested to his fellow-prefects that it was time they returned to Rookwood.

"You ain't going yet, surely, Mister Knowles!" whined Joey Hook.

"Must!" replied Knowles. "There's a football committee meeting at half-past six that I must attend."

"Bosh! That can wait!"

"The trouble is that it can't wait!" said Knowles with emphasis.

The bookmaker turned to Catesby and Frampton.

"You young gentlemen are going to stay, surely?" he asked.

"Can't be done!" replied Catesby promptly. "Mustn't miss the footer meeting!"

Joey Hook pulled a grimace.

"Well, this is nice, ain't it?" he growled. "You win a poor fellow's money, and then you clear hoff!" He faced the bullying prefect. "What about you, Mister Beaumont?" he asked.

"Oh, I'll stay!" replied Beaumont. "I'm glad to say I'm not on any blessed football committee!"

"Oh, good!" said Joey Hook. "I'm pleased to see that one of you is a bit of a sportsman!"

Knowles and Catesby and Frampton left the disreputable inn and set out for Rookwood.

Beaumont continued to play with Joey Hook and his cronies.

The bullying prefect quickly forgot the terrific drubbing he had received at Bulkeley's hands that afternoon in the excitement of the game.

He won time after time, and at the end of another hour he had won no less than two pounds.

The heaviest loser was a man named Broggs. He was a bad loser, too. He lost his temper, and played in a most reckless manner.

His recklessness, however, did not improve matters in the least, and when at length Beaumont stated that the time had arrived for him to depart, Broggs was several pounds out of pocket.

"I'm sorry to leave you, gentlemen," said Beaumont apologetically; "but I must get

back now. There'll be trouble if I get in late."

"That ain't fair!" growled Broggs dismally. "I'm out of pocket, and—"

Beaumont grinned. "Hard lines, Broggs!" he said. "Never mind, I shall be here again next Wednesday. You'll be able to have your revenge then."

Mr. Broggs growled. Beaumont left the inn, and strolled back towards the school through the woods.

It was getting dark, and the prefect walked at a quick pace.

Suddenly he heard the sound of fast running footsteps in his rear. He turned round quickly, to see the man Broggs rushing towards him.

Beaumont pulled up short. "What's the matter?" he asked as the man approached.

"I'll show you what's the matter!" growled Mr. Broggs savagely. "I want my two quid back!"

"Don't be a fool!" exclaimed Beaumont. "I'm not going to give it back to you. I won it fairly, and—"

"Fairly be hanged! I want my money!" "Oh, rot!"

Mr. Broggs clenched his hands tightly. "Are you going to shell out?" he demanded. "No!"

Smack! Out shot the rascal's fist. It landed full between Beaumont's eyes, and he fell to the ground.

It was a savage blow, and it was made all the worse by the fact that the man wore a ring, which contained a sharp-headed stone.

The stone dug deeply into Beaumont's head, and besides partly stunning him caused the blood to flow.

In an instant the man had bent down beside the prefect and extracted two one-pound notes from the Sixth-Former's pocket.

With an exultant grin, he rose to his feet and dashed off.

Beaumont scrambled up and shook his fist at the man. Then he dabbed his forehead, which was bleeding profusely, with his handkerchief.

"The scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "The blessed—!" He broke off suddenly, and his face lighted up considerably. "Bulkeley shall suffer for this!" he growled. "I'll make him sit up! The Head shall see my face, and—Ha, ha, ha!"

Laughing to himself, Beaumont turned on his heel, and set off once again towards the school.

He little knew that not fifty yards away seven tired and perspiring juniors were standing by the side of their bicycles, lighting their lamps.

He did not know either that they had heard his threat, and that they were discussing the ways and means of defeating his foul project.

He would hardly have been so confident of the success of his scheme could he have seen the Fourth-Form juniors running in pursuit of Mr. Broggs.

Beaumont at length reached the school, and made his way straight to the Head's study.

Dr. Chisholm listened intently to the amazing statement which the Sixth-Former made.

"Dear me!" said the Head at length. "You assert that Bulkeley wore a sharp-pointed ring in order to do you an injury?"

"I can conclude nothing else, sir," said Beaumont craftily. "I quite realise that we should not have fought, but I did think Bulkeley would have fought fair!"

"Ahem! You are quite right, Beaumont," said the Head quietly. "You should not have fought; but—but I could have excused an

ordinary bout of fisticuffs. This is extraordinary, however—very extraordinary. That is a terrible gash on your forehead. I cannot understand it. I will send for Bulkeley, and hear his explanation."

The Head rang for the pageboy at once, and sent him in quest of Bulkeley.

Five minutes later the captain of Rookwood entered the study, and he started back in surprise when he saw the gash on Beaumont's forehead.

"I understand you fought with Beaumont this afternoon, Bulkeley," said the Head.

"That is quite correct, sir," replied the captain grimly.

Dr. Chisholm coughed. "May I ask for what purpose you wore a ring containing a pointed stone?"

"I—I did not wear a ring at all!" declared Bulkeley firmly.

"Then how do you account for that wound on Beaumont's forehead?"

"Good heavens!" gasped Bulkeley. "I did not do that! I—"

Bulkeley broke off suddenly, for the sound of footsteps, and a coarse voice raised in protest, could be plainly heard in the passage.

The next moment the door of the Head's study was unceremoniously thrown open, and in rushed Jimmy Silver and his chums.

In the grasp of the excited juniors was the rascally Mr. Broggs.

"Dear me!" muttered the Head. "What—"

"I beg your pardon, sir!" said Jimmy Silver apologetically. "But we've brought this scoundrel here as witness."

"Whatever do you mean, Silver?" rapped out the Head.

"Has Beaumont told you, sir?"

"What Beaumont has told me has nothing to do with you, Silver!" exclaimed the Head frigidly. "This disgraceful behaviour on your part shall be punished most severely. I—"

"I want to tell you, sir," said Jimmy Silver quickly, "that it was not old Bulkeley who made that gash on Beaumont's head. It was this man here! We all saw him do it—every one of us!"

"Good heavens!" gasped the Head. "I do not understand—"

"Excuse me, guv'nor," said Mr. Broggs. "What the kid ses is quite correct. It was I who gave him that blow, and, what's more, I'll give him another one if he's not careful!"

Beaumont started back nervously. "You struck him?" asked the Head.

"Yes," muttered Mr. Broggs. "Never mind why. I don't suppose he'd like you to know. At any rate, I'm not going to tell."

The Head turned to the shaking prefect. "Is this true, Beaumont?" he asked.

Beaumont did not reply.

"Your guilt is written plainly in your face," went on Dr. Chisholm. "You have deliberately schemed to get your Form-fellow into trouble. I am disgusted with you! I shall keep a keen eye on you in the future, and shall deal most severely with you if you transgress in this manner again." He faced Mr. Broggs. "You may go," he said coldly. "I am very glad you have been instrumental in preventing the success of such a cunning plot."

Mr. Broggs went, and so did the Fourth-Formers.

After they had gone Dr. Chisholm had several words to say to Bulkeley concerning the inadvisability of settling disagreements by means of fisticuffs. Bulkeley listened quietly to every word, and, although he knew that he had acted unwisely, he felt that he had only treated the bullying prefect as he deserved.

THE END.

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— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mad Dog!

WESCUPE!"

"Hullo!"

"Wescue! Oh, cwumbers!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell at St. Jim's, stopped in sheer astonishment.

They were strolling round the School House, intending to visit the shed where Monty Lowther kept his white rabbits, when the sudden yell burst upon their ears. They were in no doubt as to who was calling. There was only one voice at St. Jim's with that beautiful accent.

"D'Arcy's in trouble—" began Tom Merry.

"Sounds like it!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Here he comes!"

"Yawooh! Wescue!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, came flying round the corner of the old School House.

The aristocratic repose for which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was famous was decidedly conspicuous by its absence on this occasion.

His hat had fallen off, his eyeglass was streaming wildly behind him at the end of its cord, and his face was flushed crimson with excitement and exertion.

He came round the house like a runaway motor-car, and dashed right into the Terrible Three without even seeing them.

"Look out!" roared Manners.

"Oh, you ass!"

D'Arcy grasped wildly at Tom Merry to save himself from falling. He caught hold of Tom Merry's hair with one hand, and of his ear with the other, and hung on. Tom Merry roared with pain.

"Leggo! Yow! You frabjous ass, leggo!"

"Wun, deah boys!"

"What?"

"Wun! Wun!"

And D'Arcy, having recovered his balance, released Tom Merry's hair and ear, and started off again. The Terrible Three seized hold of him.

"What's the matter?" yelled Lowther. "Figgins & Co. after you?"

"Ow! No! Wun—wun like anythin'!" gasped D'Arcy.

"But what?"

"It's the bulldog!"

"Herries' bulldog?"

"Yaas. He's gone mad and bwooken loose, and he's aftah me. Look—there he comes. Wun—wun like anythin'!" shrieked D'Arcy.

Gr-r-r-r-r!

Round the corner of the School House came the bulldog, with jaws open, and foam upon them, and bloodshot eyes glaring in search of a victim.

Herries' bulldog, Towser, was generally a tame old beast, as the juniors said, and he was never known to bite anybody that let him alone—excepting sometimes a playful nip, which Herries said was only his way.

But the juniors had never seen him like this

before. Whether the bulldog was rabid or not, the juniors certainly had reason to believe that he was, from his looks. He was rushing right at them, and it was not surprising that the Terrible Three, after one look, joined D'Arcy in his wild rush for safety.

"Wun! Wun!"

Gr-r-r-r!

The juniors dashed wildly for the House door. Towser dashed on their track; and there was little doubt now that he would have bitten, if he had come up with them. And Towser had tremendous jaws.

Blake and Digby, D'Arcy's study-mates, were on the steps of the School House. They were talking football with Kangaroo of the Shell and Reilly of the Fourth. They stared blankly at Tom Merry & Co. as they came tearing up the steps.

"Hullo, what's the trouble?" demanded Blake. "Is it the New House bounders, or a German invasion, or what?"

"Mad dog!"

"What?"

"Mad dog!" roared Manners. "Get inside—quick!"

"Great Scott!"

"Mad as a hatah, deah boys! Wun—wun—wun!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The juniors dashed into the house. The sight of the bulldog with its foaming jaws was enough for them. And the thought of hydrophobia sent a chill to their very hearts.

They scrambled in, and all dragged together at the big oaken door. The door was huge and heavy, and no easy thing to move; but the juniors united their efforts, and it was swung to with a terrific clang that rang through the School House.

Outside, Towser scrambled up the steps, snarling and growling.

Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, came out of the study with a frowning brow.

The big door of the School House was always kept wide open on fine days, and the House-master's impression was that mischievous juniors had closed it with that terrific slam from a mistaken sense of humour.

"Boys! What have you—how dare you—"

"Mad dog, sir!"

"What?"

"Herries' bulldog has gone mad, sir, and he's loose in the quadrangle!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Railton rushed to the hall window. Outside, in the sunny quadrangle, the bulldog could be seen. His foam-flecked jaws were terrifying to behold, and his bloodshot eyes seemed to flame. Mr. Railton shivered at the sight.

"Good heavens!" he repeated. "This—is terrible! How fortunate that you got into the House. Hurry round and see that all doors are closed, and warn boys not to go out into the quadrangle."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Unfortunately, there are many boys out of doors. And— Good heavens! The Head!"

Mr. Railton's face became almost frozen with horror.

The dignified and stately form of the Head could be seen approaching the School House. Dr. Holmes had been over to the New House to see Mr. Ratcliff, the master of that House. He was crossing the quad again with his slow and stately motion, a reverend and awe-inspiring figure—thinking probably of Greek roots, or some subject equally fascinating, and certainly not at all of mad dogs.

Mr. Railton ran to the door and tore it open again. Mad dog or no mad dog, the House-master would not leave the Head alone in his peril. He grasped an umbrella from the stand, the only weapon that was handy.

Gr-r-r-r-r!

That remark from Towser first made the Head aware of his presence.

The old doctor halted suddenly, all considerations of Greek roots vanishing from his mind. He stood rooted to the ground, his eyes fixed upon the bulldog as if he were dreaming the horrible sight.

But it was unfortunately no nightmare. Towser, mad or sane, ought to have respected the reverend Head of St. Jim's. But he didn't! He hurtled right at the doctor; and the doctor, with a shriek of terror, fled.

No one had ever seen the grave and reverend Head of St. Jim's sprint before. They would as soon have thought of seeing a garden-roller sprint. But he sprinted now with a speed that showed that he had not quite forgotten the practice on the cinder-path in the far-off days of his youth. He gathered his gown round him and ran.

And Towser ran, too. The sight of a man running will always make a dog run, and perhaps that was Towser's reason—if he had any reason. At all events, he ran, with a horrid growl that sent chills down the doctor's spine.

"Oh, dear!" gasped the Head. "Help! Bless my soul! The dog is mad! Mad! Oh, dear! I shall be bitten and inoculated with rabies! Dreadful! Oh!"

"This 'ere way, sir!" yelled Taggles, the porter.

The porter's lodge was the nearest refuge. Taggles heroically held the door open till the Head dashed in, and then closed it before Towser could come up. The Head sank upon a chair, almost fainting with excitement and exhaustion.

"Good heavens!" he stuttered. "Thank you, Taggles! You have saved my life, my good man! How did that dreadful dog get into the quadrangle? In future the gates must be kept closed in case of mad dogs!"

Taggles snorted.

"That there dog belongs to St. Jim's, sir," he said.

"What! Belongs to the school?"

"It's Master 'Erries' dog, sir," said

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Taggles. "Master 'Erries of the Fourth Form, sir."

"Bless my soul! Now I come to think of it, I have seen the dog before," said the Head. "I remember punishing Herries for bringing him into the School House. Oh, dear! The horrible creature must be destroyed at once!"

"Ye-e-es!" said Taggles. "'Twon't be so easy, sir. There ain't many pussons want to face a mad bulldog, sir—and look at them jaws!"

"Bless my soul!"

"He could bite your leg in 'arf with them jaws, sir," said Taggles.

"Oh, dear!"

Taggles watched from the window, prudently keeping the door shut. Towser, the bulldog, was in undisputed possession of the quadrangle.

Fellows on the playing-fields had taken the alarm from the yell on all sides of "Mad dog!" and they had taken refuge in the pavilion, and locked themselves in.

Other fellows had crowded into the New House, School House and New House boys both making for the nearest shelter. Mr. Railton had hurried back into the School House as soon as he saw that the Head was safe in the porter's lodge.

Mr. Railton was a brave man—but hydrophobia was no joke. A man who did not fear death might well fear madness.

Towser rumped to and fro in the quadrangle, furious.

Tom Merry & Co. watched him, fascinated, from the windows of the School House.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's frightful! I always said that that beastly bulldog had no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs. But I nevah expected him to turn out like this! He's a frightfully mad—perfectly wabid. Where is that ass Hewwies?"

"Where's Herries?"

"Herries, old man, where are you?"

"Here he is!"

Herries of the Fourth had been in the Fourth-room, doing lines, and grinding so hard over his impositions that he had not taken the alarm. Three or four fellows dragged him out to see what his bulldog was doing.

Herries came out in a decidedly bad temper. "Love me, love my dog" was a fixed creed with Herries. In his eyes Towser, like the King in the British Constitution, could do no wrong. He snorted as a roar greeted him:

"Herries, you ass, your bulldog—"

"He's gone mad!"

"He's chased the Head across the quad!"

"He's raging!"

"He's raving!"

"You'll be scragged for this!"

"And you will deserve to be scragged, deah boy. I have frequently remarked to you that that wotten bulldog ought to be sent away to a beastly home."

"Silly asses!" said Herries.

"He's mad—mad as a hatter! Where are you going?" roared Tom Merry, as Herries put his hand on the door.

"Didn't you say Towser's broken loose?" demanded Herries.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm going to take him back to his kennel."

"You're what—what—what?" yelled the juniors.

"Going to take him back to his kennel," said Herries calmly. "There will be trouble if he gets into the Head's flower-beds. There was last time."

"You can't go out! He'll bite you!"

"Rot! Towser won't bite me."

"He vevy neably bit me, Hewwies—"

"Rats! Towser is jolly particular what he eats, I can tell you!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You can't go out—you sha'n't!" yelled Blake, grasping his chum by the arm. "Towser's got hydrophobia, and he'll bite you. He won't know you, as he's mad."

"Towser isn't the one that's mad," growled Herries. "I think the whole school has gone dotty. Towser's all right."

"Stay in here, you ass! Mr. Railton has gone for his gun."

Herries seemed petrified for a moment.

"His gun!" he roared.

"Yes. You have to shoot mad dogs, you know."

"It's the only way, Hewwies, deah boy."

Herries gave a roar like a bull in a state of extreme exasperation.

"Let anybody try to shoot my bulldog,"

that's all! I'll smash him into little bits, master or not! Let anybody try—"

"Shut up, you ass! Railton will hear you."

"I don't care!"

Herries dragged the door open, and ran out on the steps.

"Collar him!" shouted Tom Merry. "He mustn't go—it'll be his death! Collar the silly cuckoo—quick!"

The juniors dashed at Herries. But Herries ran down the steps, and sped across the quad, straight to where Towser sat, with glaring eyes and foaming jaws!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Head Comes Down Heavy.

"TOWSER! Towsy, old boy!"

The juniors halted, gazing on in horror. They were in instant expectation of seeing the devoted

Herries bitten by the mad dog, and the idea almost paralysed them. How was Towser to know his master, if he was mad? Jack Blake groaned in horror.

"Herries! He's done for—oh!"

"Towsy, old fellow!"

Herries had reached the bulldog. He was holding him and fondling him, and Towser, instead of biting him, snuggled his big nose against Herries' waistcoat and mumbled affectionately. Herries stroked him, and patted him, and rumped him, and Towser showed not the least inclination to bite him.

The juniors gazed at the dog and his master in wonder.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in amazement. "He isn't mad at all, deah boys—or else it's a sudden and remarkable vewewy."

Towser evidently was not mad. A mad dog would not have snuggled up to his master in that way, and licked his hand. The juniors approached rather gingerly. Herries looked round at them with a frowning brow.

"What silly ass said Towser was mad?" he demanded.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"It was Gussy gave the alarm," said Tom Merry. "He was chasing Gussy, and he looked mad enough. Dash it all, Herries, he chased the Head across the quad! He'd have bitten him if Dr. Holmes hadn't got into the porter's lodge."

"The Head must have been looking at him, then," said Herries, with a grunt. "Towser doesn't like being looked at; it worries him."

"He chased us, too," said Monty Lowther. "I dare say your face worried him," said Herries tartly.

"Why, your silly ass—"

"Somebody's let him loose," said Herries. "and somebody must have been tormenting him, to make him in such a state. He was so excited, he didn't know what he was doing. You know Brooke caught Levison tormenting him once. I shouldn't wonder if the cad has been doing it again. My hat, if he has, I'll—"

"Here comes the Head!"

Dr. Holmes had seen Herries capture the raging bulldog, with horror and fear for what would happen to the junior. But when Towser was quiet it was clear that he had not been mad at all, but only wildly excited and ferocious.

The Head left the porter's lodge, and advanced upon the scene. His face was flushed, and his eyes gleaming. It was not often that the kind old Head of St. Jim's was angry, but he was angry now. He had torn across the quad under the eyes of the whole school, and he knew that he had looked utterly undignified, if not ridiculous.

There would be chucking remarks in all the studies about the way the Head had sprinted with Herries' bulldog after him. The mere thought of the ridicule made Dr. Holmes turn hot and cold all over. He had never been so incensed as he was now, as he bore down upon Herries.

"Herries! That is your dog?"

"Yes, sir," said Herries, with a grip on Towser's collar, and soothing his huge favourite. Towser seemed to get restive at sight of the doctor, as though he had a strong desire to set his teeth in those august calves.

"I understood," said the Head, "that the animal was suffering from rabies. Is it not the case, Herries?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Then there is no possible excuse for this—this ferocious outbreak," said the Head sternly. "There has been trouble about that dog before, Herries. I have done wrong in

allowing such a ferocious creature to be kept in the school. The dog must either be destroyed or sent away from the school immediately. Take it back to the kennel and chain it up, Herries. I shall expect it to be removed from St. Jim's within one hour. If it remains after that time, I shall give orders for it to be instantly destroyed!"

Herries stared blankly at the Head.

"Destroyed!" he stuttered. "My bulldog—Towsy—destroyed!"

"Undoubtedly, Herries."

"D-d-do you mean killed, sir?"

"Certainly I mean killed, Herries."

"My old Towsy! Why, he's as harmless as a baby!" said Herries. "He's as gentle as a dove, sir. Obedient as—a lamb, sir. Does everything I tell him. He'll eat anything, sir, and he's very fond of boys—"

Some of the juniors chuckled. Herries was a little confused, and he was certainly putting it in a way that might be misunderstood.

"No more, Herries! Take him away!"

"But—but I can't send him away from the school, sir!" stammered Herries. "What am I to do without old Towser?"

"Cannot!" thundered the Head.

"I—I mean I'd rather not, sir."

"Herries, that ferocious animal is a public danger." Dr. Holmes raised his hand sternly. "If he is not gone from the school in one hour, he will be shot! I shall give orders to that effect."

"Oh, sir!"

"Enough!"

"But—but I say, sir—"

"That will do, Herries."

And the Head swept away. Fellows were gathering round on all sides now, now that it was known that Towser was not mad, and that Herries had a grasp on his collar. Herries had succeeded in soothing his favourite into quietness. There was sympathy in a good many faces. The affection of Herries for his bulldog was well known, though not many fellows beside Herries could see any grounds for it.

"It's rough," said Kangaroo of the Shell, "but he'll have to go, Herries. You can't expect the Head to be chased across the quad by a giddy bulldog."

"Wahah not!"

"It's all Gussy's fault," growled Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, in surprise and indignation. "I fail to see how you make that out."

"You said he was mad, you chump!"

"He came wushin' at me suddenly, with his howwible jaws open," said D'Arcy, appealing to all present. "His mouth was foam'n' howwibly, and his eyes glaw'n'. Of course, I natuwallly came to the conclusion that he was mad. I wan for it."

"And we ran for it," said Tom Merry, grinning. "Mad or not, Towser was in an awful state, and he would have bitten anybody he could have got near. You saw the state he was in yourself, Herries."

Herries snorted.

"Yes, but you ought to have known he wasn't rabid. I knew he wasn't. Poor old Towser! He was upset. Somebody's been tormenting him. That's the only way to account for it. And I won't send him away from St. Jim's. Nobody else will take care of him as I do. They'll feed him on something that doesn't agree with him, very likely. Suppose he were to bite somebody who was in rotten bad health, and get blood-poisoning! He might. I'm jolly well not going to risk it. The Head will have to come round."

"I'm afraid he won't," said Blake.

"No fear!"

"Oh, rats!" said Herries. "Look here, Towser's chain's broken. You know what a jolly strong chain it was—you can see for yourself. What sort of a tug must he have given to break it? He must have been tormented by somebody, and wanted to get at him badly. I shouldn't wonder if it was Levison again. You know the dirty cad Levison is cruel to animals. I've seen him catapulting Mrs. Mimms' cat before now. It ain't Towser that ought to be destroyed—it's Levison. The Head can have him shot if he likes. He's jolly well not going to have my bulldog shot!"

And Herries seized tight hold of the fragment of chain, and led Towser, quite quiet now, round the School House, followed by most of the juniors.

Behind the School House, and near the woodshed, was a large shed where the juniors kept their pets, and which was known at St. Jim's as the "menagerie."

Many of the fellows had pets, and they were not allowed to have them in the Houses. That shed had been specially constructed for

the purpose, and there was plenty of room for cages galore.

Tom Merry uttered a sudden exclamation as they came in sight of the shed. On the roof a junior was crouched, with a pallor of fear in his face, and wild eyes. It was Levison of the Fourth, and it was evident that he had taken refuge there to escape from the bulldog.

"Levison!" exclaimed Tom Merry. Levison glared down at them. "Take that dog away, Herries!" he roared. "Oh, you're there, are you?" said Herries, looking up at him furiously. "What have you been doing to Towser, Levison, you—your rotter?"

"I—I haven't been doing anything to him!" panted Levison. "I saw him loose, and bolted up here to get out of his way. He's not safe."

"I must remark that Levison is quite white there. That beast has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs, Hewwies."

"Chain him up!" growled Levison. "I don't want to stay here all the evening."

"You rotter! I know you've been worrying him," said Herries.

"I tell you I haven't!"

"What were you doing here at all?"

"I came here to see my white mice. Then that beast went for me—"

"I don't believe a word of it," said Herries grimly.

"Look here, Herries—"

"I believe you've been tormenting Towser. I'm going to chain him up, but I'm going to put on a long chain, so that he can reach you if you get down."

"You—you rotter!"

"Look at the way Towser is looking at him," said Herries. "Just look at his face, you fellows. Doesn't that show that Levison has been hurting him?"

"Looks like it," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And, indeed, at the sight of Levison the bulldog's savage excitement seemed to be returning. His eyes glared, and he showed his teeth, and he made a vain effort to spring away from Herries in the direction of the shed. Levison turned white, though he was safe on the roof of the shed, out of the bulldog's reach.

Herries entered the shed, and returned in a minute with a long, strong chain. He fastened one end to Towser's collar, and the other to a staple in the wall.

The bulldog was secure now, and could not get loose, the new chain being too thick for the strongest dog to break. But he had ample room to keep guard over Levison.

The cad of the Fourth could not descend from the roof without getting within reach of Towser's teeth. And Towser's look was sufficient to indicate what would happen then!

Levison ground his teeth with rage.

"Will you take that dog away, Herries?" he yelled.

"No, I won't."

"I'll complain to the Head!"

"That won't hurt much; he can't be more down on Towser than he is, thanks to you, you cad! You can stay there, as you've got there."

"I won't stay here! I won't—"

"Get down then, if you like to risk it," said Herries. And he walked away.

Levison panted.

"You fellows! Take that bulldog into the shed—"

"Rats!" said the fellows all together.

"Hold him while I get away!"

"No fear!"

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass severely upon Levison. "The evidence is not conclusive, Levison, but the presumption is that you have been tormentin' Towser. We know you are capable of such wascally conduct, because Bwooke found you doin' it one day. You can remain there. If it comes on to wain, as is vewy probable, you will get wet, and if you catch cold it will serve you right. The Head has ordained Towser to be sent away. I can't say I am sowwy myself, as the beast has no respect for a fellow's best twousahs, but it is wuff on Hewwies. You are a wottah, Levison. Remain there and be hanged, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away, and the rest of the juniors followed, grinning. No one wanted to help Levison, and no one had any sympathy to waste upon him.

It was pretty clear that he had been gratifying his cruel propensities by tormenting Towser, not thinking that the dog would

break his chain, and he deserved to be punished. Levison was left alone, watching the bulldog—and the bulldog watched Levison.

Towser lay down, quietly enough, and closed his eyes as if asleep; but whenever Levison made a movement, Towser opened one eye. And Levison decided not to risk a descent from the roof of the shed. The results would have been too painful.

Needless to say that when at length Levison was allowed to get down from his perilous position, he was not in a very pleasant mood. But he had only suffered a little so far for his misdeed; he was to suffer far more ere long.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
An Indignation Meeting.

"ROTTER!"

"Beastly!"

"We won't stand it!"

A wildly-excited crowd had gathered before the notice-board in the School House. There, in the handwriting of the Head of St. Jim's, was the notice—the decree of fate.

"Notice to the School.—Owing to the trouble caused by pets kept by junior boys, all such pets are ordered to be sent away

school kept pets of some sort or another. And their indignation was at boiling-point at this crushing decree.

For once St. Jim's was united. School House and New House agreed that it was not to be stood. Gore and Mellish and Crooke, and other "outsiders," were at one with Tom Merry & Co. They all had pets.

"We won't stand it!" roared Kangaroo of the Shell. "I'm not going to send away my white rabbits!"

"I'm not going to part with my white mice!" yelled Gore.

"And what about my parrot?" howled Kerruish.

"And my spaniel!"

"And my canary!"

"It's rotten!"

"Outrageous!"

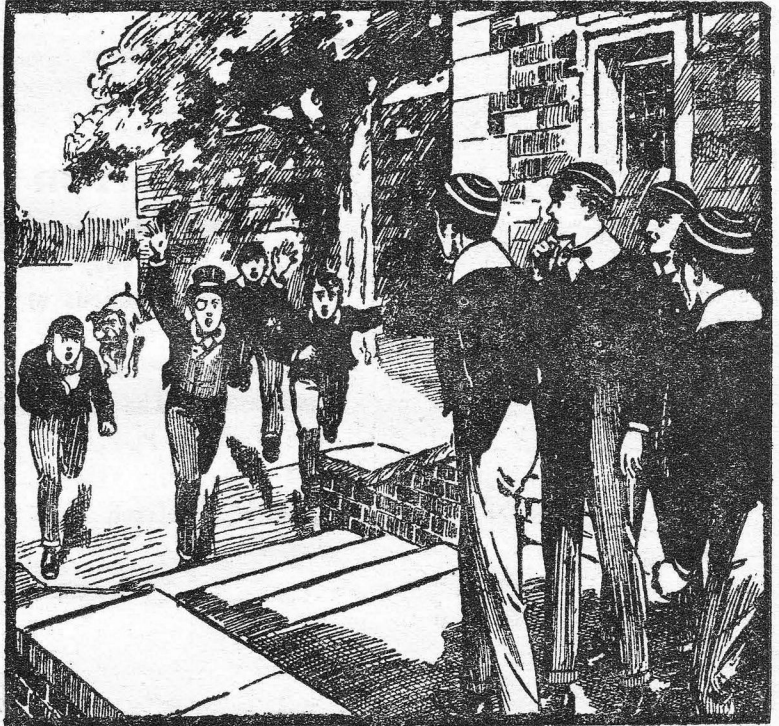
"It's the limit!"

"Let's go to the Head!" howled Gore. "We'll go in a deputation—the whole giddy Lower School! They're not going to shift my white mice!"

"Jollay good ideah! I'm perfectly willin' to be the chairman of the deputation—"

"Oh, come off!"

"Weally, Goah, what is required for the



The juniors dashed wildly for the House door, with Towser fast on their track. "Hallo, what's the trouble?" demanded Blake, who was standing on the steps. "Mad dog!" gasped the pursued juniors. "Look out!"

from the School before twelve o'clock tomorrow morning. No junior boys will in future be permitted to keep pets of any description whatever.—J. Holmes, Headmaster."

The senior boys who saw the notice grinned for the most part. Some of them were sympathetic. But no one was surprised. After the Head had been chased by Herries' bulldog, it was not surprising that a general and unsparing decree had gone forth against all pets whatsoever.

It would not have been quite just to exclude some pets rather than others. The Head had been just with a vengeance. He had excluded the whole show!

All pets to be sent away from St. Jim's on the following morning!

Not only Towser and Pongo, but the white rabbits, and the white mice, and the parrots, and the canaries!

It was overwhelming! More than half the junior boys in the

chairman of a deputation is a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Yes, and that bars you out!" growled Gore. "And if all pets are to be sent away, Study No. 6 will have to part with their pet lunatic!"

"You uttah wottah, Goah! I wufuse to be chawactewised as a pet lunatic!"

"Let's all go together!" shouted Tom Merry. "Some of you run over and fetch Figgins & Co. The deputation ought to represent both Houses."

"Hear, hear!"

"Every blessed fellow ought to go!" said Mellish of the Fourth. Mellish of the Fourth kept pets himself, not because he was fond of them, but because he made little profits by selling them to other fellows. "Where's Levison? Levison ought to come; he can jaw to the Head better than any of you."

"Levison's on the roof of the menagerie, and he's been there an hour," said Herries; "and he's going to stop there!"

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"What on earth's keeping him there?" demanded Mellish in astonishment.

"My bulldog's watching him."
"Oh!"
"Levison started all this trouble by tormenting Towser," said Herries. "If Towser hadn't been worried he wouldn't have broken his chain, and wouldn't have got loose. The Head's down on Towser because of Levison, and I think we'd better tell him. If he wants to send anybody away, he'd better send Levison. I think—"

"Here comes Figgins!"
"Coming to see the Head, Figgy?" asked Tom Merry.
"What-ho!" said Figgins emphatically. "Fancy having to send away my poor little bunny-rabbit! No fear! I was thinking of bringing over my rabbit to show the Head. What do you think of the idea?"
"Ahem! Better not—"

"But he's such a jolly little beggar!" said Figgins. "When he sits up and strokes his ears it makes you die of laughing. If the Head saw him I think it would touch his heart. I don't think he'd have the heart to send him away if he saw him sitting up and—"

"He'll stroke your ears and make you sit up if you take rabbits into his study!" said Monty Lowther.

"Rabbits are barred," said Tom Merry. "I don't suppose the Head will be over-pleased to see us without the rabbits. Come on!"

"Leave the talkin' to me, deah boys!"
"You want to talk?" demanded Tom Merry.
"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then stay here. You can talk without doing any harm. There's no telling what you may do if you start talking to the Head."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
"Come on, you fellows!"
"You are intewwuptin' me, Tom Mewwy—"

"I shall interrupt you a lot if you begin talking to the Head. You fellows keep an eye on him, and tread on his feet if he begins."

"I wofuse to have my feet twodden on!"
"Follow your leader!" said Tom Merry.

And the whole crowd of juniors followed Tom Merry of the Shell to the Head's study. Knox the prefect met them in the passage.

"Clear out of here!" he exclaimed. "How dare you approach the Head's study—a disorderly crowd! How dare you? Yah! Oh, yah! Oh!"

Knox was shoved aside, and he rolled over. Prefect or not, the juniors were in no mood to be bothered by Knox. The Sixth-Former sat on the floor and gasped, and the juniors swarmed on, some of them treading on Knox's legs by accident as they passed. Tom Merry knocked at the study door and opened it. An avalanche of juniors invaded the study.

Dr. Holmes started up from his seat. Tom Merry & Co. swarmed in breathlessly.

"Boys, what does this mean? What does this mean, I say?"

"If you please, sir—"
"Leave my study at once, all of you!"
"Weally, Doctah Holmes—"

"We want to speak to you, sir," said Tom Merry respectfully. "It's about the pets, sir. It has come out that the bulldog had been tormented by a rotter—ahem!—by a boy, sir, and that was how he came to break his chain—"

"Indeed! What boy was it?"
Tom Merry hesitated. It occurred to him, rather late in the day, that it would be sneaking to give Levison away to the Head.

Cruelty to animals was an offence the Head would always have punished severely.

"Well, Merry?"
"I—I don't want to give the chap away, sir, but—we all know it—"

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Have you proof?"
"Well, no, sir—"

"Does the boy in question admit it?"
"Nunno, sir."
"Then how do you know?"

"Ahem! We do know, sir—don't we, you chaps?"
"Yes, sir! We all know it!"
"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

The Head made an impatient gesture.

"If this is the case, it is another reason why the pets should be sent away, if there are boys here who cannot be trusted to treat animals with common humanity!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, sir!"
That was an unexpected view of the case.

"That's all right, sir," said Herries. "We're going to make an example of the cad, sir, so

that he won't do it again. We're going to pulverise him, sir—"

"We're going to smash him—"
"We're going to scrag him, sir!"

"What? What? I forbid you to touch the boy! How dare you utter threats of violence in my presence?" the Head exclaimed angrily.

"Oh, crumbs, on the wrong tack again!" murmured Blake.

"Bettah leave it to me, deah boys. Ow! What uttah wottah was it twod on my foot?" wailed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"There have been outrageous scenes in the school to-day!" said the Head, breathing hard. "I have been attacked by a bulldog!"

"But, sir—"
"The matter is now ended, Merry."
"If you please, sir—"

"Say no more, Figgins."
"Weally, Doctah Holmes—"
"Silence!"

"But—but it's awfully hard to have to part with our pets, sir!" said Figgins. "If you could see my bunny-rabbit, sir—the way he sits up and strokes his ears—"

"You may go!"
"We'll all promise to look after the pets, and see that they don't get loose any more, sir, and—and—"

"Leave my study!"
"You—you won't let them off, sir?"
"Certainly not! And any boy who does not leave my study immediately will be caned!" said the Head angrily.

"Oh!"
The juniors crowded out of the study.

YOUR EDITOR

will always be pleased to hear from you, and to have your opinions of the stories in this paper. Address your communications to "The Editor, The PENNY POPULAR, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

There was no help for it. The Head's command had gone forth; the pets had got to go!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Exodus.

THE next morning Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to obey orders, with grim and savage looks.

There seemed to be no help for it. The Head's command that the pets were to be taken away was direct and emphatic, and without open rebellion in the school it could not be disobeyed.

Directly after lessons cages after cages were carried into the big van that was waiting to take the pets away. Kennels and boxes followed.

Mr. Raitton had made arrangements for the pets to be taken care of in Rylcombe for the present, till they were ultimately disposed of. But their owners did not want to part with them.

Some of the fags were seen in tears as they put their rabbits and white mice into the van.

Some of the animals gave some trouble. Towser showed his teeth at the sight of Pongo, and Pongo yelped defiance.

"Keep that blessed mongrel away from my bulldog, young D'Arcy," said Herries crossly.

"You know Towser doesn't like him."
Wally snorted.

"Keep your rotten bulldog away from my terrier," he said.

Then it was Herries' turn to snort.

"Do you call that a terrier?" he demanded.

"Yes, I do, ass! What do you call it?" demanded D'Arcy minor warmly.

"Some sort of a rotten mongrel," said

Herries. "Blessed if I believe it's a dog at all, from its looks."

"You silly ass!"
Gr-r-r-r!

Row-wow! Grrrrrrrrr!
Towser made a leap, and the chain was dragged from Herries' hand. With a rush the bulldog was upon Pongo.

"Stop 'em!" yelled Wally.
"Go it, Towser!"
"Go it, Pongo!"

Towser and Pongo were both in the van, rolling over in dire conflict.

Cages and boxes were knocked right and left by the struggling animals, and there was a terrific din. The monkey was squalling, the parrots yelling, the dogs barking, and all sorts and conditions of animals and birds were uttering all sorts and varieties of noises.

Wally threw himself upon the fighting dogs, and tried to rescue Pongo. Herries grasped his bulldog's collar and strove to drag him off. The uproar was deafening. Mr. Raitton came hurrying to the spot.

"What is this dreadful noise about?" he exclaimed. "Keep those dogs quiet!"

"Get 'em out of the van!" yelled Clifton Dane. "You've knocked my cage over—look at my parrot. Poor old Polly!"

Screech, screech! from Polly.

Herries dragged Towser into his kennel by main force, and chained him up. Pongo was disposed of in another kennel and chained. With the width of the van between them, the two dogs snarled at one another. But the scared animals and birds were not to be quieted. The uproar continued.

Mr. Raitton cast a worried look into the van.

"Are they all here?" he exclaimed.

"Yah! Whiskers! Get your hair cut!"
Mr. Raitton turned crimson.

"Who was that? How dare you address me—"

"Yah! Old Funny-face!"
"What—what—"
"Go home! Go home! Go and eat coke! Screech!"

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

Mr. Raitton gasped. He could see now that it was the parrot who was addressing those disrespectful remarks to him.

"Dear me!" he gasped. "I—"
"It's my parrot, sir," said Clifton Dane.

"He doesn't know you're a House-master, sir. Of course, he wouldn't say that to you if he did."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I suppose he does not," said Mr. Raitton, with a frown at the Canadian junior. "But you should not teach your parrot to say such ridiculous things, Dane."

"Screech! Britons never shall be slaves!" shrieked the parrot. "Hurrah! I want some rum hot! Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, came down to the van. Unlike his fellow House-master, Mr. Ratcliff was distinctly pleased. He was glad to have all the pets sent away; indeed, he would have been glad to have all the boys sent away, too, if the school could have been carried on without any.

"Ah, I trust we shall now soon be relieved of these wretched pests," said the New House master. "It is high time—high time, I consider."

"Yah! Go and chop chips! Get your hair cut!" said the parrot.

"What?" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Funny-face! Funny-face! Oh, my eye, what a nose!"

Mr. Ratcliff turned scarlet.

The juniors yelled with laughter, and Mr. Raitton could not help smiling.

"It is only the parrot, Mr. Ratcliff," he explained.

"It is—is outrageous!" said the New House master angrily. "Certainly it is high time the wretched creatures were sent away, if they are taught such—such vulgarity!"

"He, he, he! Here's old Ratty! Look at old Ratty!" yelled the parrot.

Clifton Dane turned red then. He had taught his parrot to say all sorts of things, very amusing to the juniors, but hardly likely to be gratifying to Mr. Ratcliff. He had never expected Mr. Ratcliff to form part of Polly's audience.

"What—what is the wretched bird saying?" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yah! Old Ratty! He, he, he! Old sneak! Yah!"

"Good heavens!"
"Go and bury yourself! Go home! Go and eat coke! He, he, he!"

"This—is this beyond all bounds!" panted Mr. Ratcliff. "To whom does that wretched and disgusting bird belong?"

"It's mine, if you please, sir," said Clifton Dane meekly.

"Did you teach it to say those things, Dane?"

"I—I suppose he picked 'em up from me, sir," admitted the Canadian junior.

"You have dared to teach a bird to say those things about a House-master?" Mr. Ratcliff thundered.

"About a House-master, sir?"

"Yes. That parrot was directly referring to me!"

"He hasn't mentioned any names, sir," said Clifton Dane, looking astonished. "How do you know he means you by Old Sneak and Funny-face, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Ratcliff gasped. He reached out and boxed Clifton Dane's ears. There was a shriek from the parrot.

"Hurrah! Pile in—pile in! Go for him—go for him! Give him beans! Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think all are in now," said Mr. Raitlon, trying not to laugh. "Driver, you know where to take them. Pray go."

"Yessir!"

"Good-bye, boys! Hurrah!" yelled the parrot. "Keep your pecker up! Keep her moving! Who cares for old Ratty? Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Screech! Yah! Old sneak! Old sneak! Old sneak! Yah! Hurrah!"

And the van rolled away, with the parrot still screeching.

"I shall report this to the Head!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff. "It is outrageous—disgraceful—dastardly!"

And the incensed House-master stalked away, with his gown fluttering in the wind in his haste.

"My hat!" said Blake. "Old Ratty got it in the neck that time! He knows what we think of him! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors laughed loud and long.

Mr. Ratcliff had indeed been treated to an unexpected revelation of the estimation in which he was held by the St. Jim's juniors. But the laughter soon died away.

The pets were gone, and the juniors visited the "menagerie," and looked at the empty places with heavy hearts. Some of the fags were "blubbing," as it was expressed in the Lower Forms.

Tom Merry & Co. did not blub. They were angry and indignant.

"Look here," said Tom Merry. "There's only one thing to be done."

"What's that?"

"Well," continued the captain of the Shell, "it's pretty plain that Levison is the whole cause of the trouble."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There's no doubt it was he who tormented Tower. Only a cad like Levison would think of doing such a thing!"

"Quite so."

"My idea is to compel him to confess to the Head. If we leave it too long, our pets will be jolly well destroyed, and—"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I weally think we had better act at once!"

"Come on, then!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
A Little Persuasion.

LEVISON was in his study. The juniors found him there, and the smell of tobacco as they opened the study door showed that the cad of the Fourth was at home.

Levison was seated in the armchair, with his feet upon the table, smoking a cigarette, and several cigarette stumps lay in the fender. He did not take it from his mouth as Tom Merry & Co. came in. He stared insolently at them through a blue haze of smoke.

Tom Merry snorted, and Arthur Augustus coughed. Tom Merry strode right over to Levison, jerked his cigarette from his mouth, and threw it on the floor, and put his heel on it. Levison jumped up with an exclamation of rage.

"You interfering cad—"

"Tom Merry gave him a rough push on the chest, which made him sit down in the armchair again quite suddenly.

"Shut up!" he said. "We've come to have a jolly serious talk with you. We know that you tormented Tower, and caused all the trouble. You're going to own up to the Head."

"I'm jolly well not!"

"We give you an opportunity of doing it of your own free will!"

"Rats!"

"That's your answer?"

"Yes."

"Right! This is where the persuasion begins. Lay him across the table, you fellows, and I'll put in some whacks with this stump. He's got feelings of some sort, better or worse, and we'll appeal to all of 'em, if we break a stump over him."

"Hear, hear!"

Levison made a wild spring for the door; but the study was crowded with juniors now, and Levison had no chance to escape. Blake and Lowther and Figgins and Redfern seized him, and the cad of the Fourth, struggling wildly, was whirled across the table, and held face downwards there, still resisting and yelling.

Then Tom Merry raised the cricket-stump. There was a terrific yell from Levison as it descended.

"Whack!"

"Yaroo!"

"Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!"

"Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh! Ow!"

"Say when!" said Tom Merry grimly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroo! Ow! Help! You rotters! Yah! Lemme alone! Help!"

"Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!"

"Whack!"

"The truth, mind!" said Tom Merry.

"I—I didn't mean to hit him!" moaned Levison. "And I didn't think the beast could break his chain— Ow!"

"Jolly sure of that!" grunted Herries. "You wouldn't have dared to touch him, you funk, if you'd have thought poor old Tower had a chance of getting at you!"

"What did you do?" demanded Blake.

"I—I only tickled him with a pin in the end of a stick," said Levison, gasping. "He wasn't really hurt, only—"

"You rotter!" roared Herries. "You—you stuck pins in my bulldog! You stuck pins in Tower! I'll—"

"Hold him!" said Tom Merry.

"Let me get at him!" yelled Herries, as the juniors dragged him back. "I'll smash him! I'll pulverise him! Stuck pins in Tower! The cowardly beast! I'll slaughter him! Let him go, Blake, or I'll punch your silly head! I tell you I'm going to smash him!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Let me go, you idiots! I'm going to—"

"Shut up!" said Tom Merry. "Levison's had a licking, and he's going to own up. The

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"Oh, help! Stop it! Chuck it! Yah! Oh!"

"You've only got to say when you want me to leave off," said Tom Merry, pausing to take breath. "You're going to be thrashed till you own up!"

"I didn't touch Tower!" shrieked Levison, almost sobbing with pain and rage.

"Liar!" said Herries grimly. "We know you did! We know that Brooke caught you once tormenting him, didn't you, Brooke?"

"Yes, I did, and jolly well thumped him," said Brooke of the Fourth; "and you all know how he tried to get even with me, and nearly got sacked from St. Jim's for his rotten trick. If he didn't do it this time, he did it then, and so he deserves the licking, anyway!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Are you going to own up, Levison?"

"No!" yelled Levison.

"Whack, whack, whack, whack!"

"Ow, ow! Stop it, you fiend! I'll own up—
—Yow—ow!"

Tom Merry ceased the castigation. Levison was squirming wildly in the grasp of the four juniors, and tears of pain ran down his face. He had never had a thrashing like that before, though he had deserved dozens

of them, but you can let him alone. He's been licked, and if he owns up to the Head that will make it square."

"I tell you—"

"Oh, sit on him, somebody!"

Herries was held back from Levison by main force. Levison slid off the table now, and he was looking very white. If Tower's master had succeeded in getting at him just then the cad of the Fourth would have had reason to be sorry for himself.

"Shut up, Herries!" said Blake. "It all depends on Levison whether Tower comes back, you know. Are you ready to go to the Head, Levison?"

"I—I can't!" stammered Levison. "If I told the Head he'd expel me. You know how he is on cruelty to animals, as he would call it—"

"What do you call it yourself, you cad?"

"Well, I didn't really hurt him—"

"You must have hurt him a lot, to make him so excited," said Blake. "You tortured him—that's what it amounts to—like a cruel beast, as you are. A chap who would hurt a dog is capable of anything. I jolly well wish the Head would sack you! Anyway, you're going to own up and chance it."

"I—I can't—"

"Lay him over the table again!" said Tom Merry quietly.

Levison backed away in terror. "Let me alone! I—I can't go to the Head now—he's in his room—"

"Mr. Railton will do."

"He's taking the Sixth this afternoon—" "The Sixth can go and chop chips. If you're ready, we'll take you to Mr. Railton at once. If you're not ready, we'll lick you till you are. Now—"

"Hands off, you beasts! I'll go!" "Mind," said Tom Merry warningly, "we shall all be with you when you own up. If you don't make it fair and square, we shall settle with you afterwards. What you've had will be nothing to it. I give you my word, if you don't make it square with Railton you shall be licked till you can't stand!"

"Yaas, wathah!" "I'll do it!" growled Levison sullenly. "Then come on!"

And Levison left the study in the midst of a crowd of juniors.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

All's Well that Ends Well.

MR. RAILTON was busy with the Sixth when there was a tramp of feet outside and a knock at the door. The door opened, and the School House master looked round, and stared at the crowd of juniors who appeared in view. The Housemaster's face grew very stern. For the moment he concluded that the strikers intended to invade the sacred precincts of the Sixth Form.

"Go!" he exclaimed, striding towards the door. "How dare you come here?"

"If you please, sir—" said Tom Merry. "How dare you!"

"Levison wants to speak to you, sir. He wants to confess."

Mr. Railton's expression changed. He could see now that it was not an invasion. He stepped out into the corridor and closed the door. His eyes were fixed upon the cad of the Fourth, but Levison was careful not to meet them.

"What is this?" he asked. "Levison's ready to own up that he caused all the trouble, sir!" said Figgins.

"I am ready to hear you, Levison," said the Housemaster coldly.

"I—I—I was to blame, sir," said Levison, seeking for words. "I—I've been thinking it over, sir, and—I want to own up. I feel that it is my duty to clear up the trouble if I can, sir."

"Very well. Go on!"

"It—it was my fault that Towser broke out, sir. I didn't hurt him—I mean, I didn't mean to hurt him. I was just having a little game with him, sir, but he got excited—"

"You mean that you were tormenting the bulldog to such an extent that he became enraged, and broke his chain?" said Mr. Railton.

"Well, ye-e-es, sir!" said Levison helplessly.

"You were guilty of a cowardly action, Levison. A boy who torments dumb animals is a criminal. In consequence of your rascally conduct, Levison, the poor animal might have been shot."

"I am very sorry, sir."

"You have caused a great deal of trouble,

Levison, by an act of cowardly cruelty. I suppose you know that you will be severely punished for this?"

"As—as I'm owning up, sir, I—I thought you might look over it, and—"

"I cannot look over such an offence as cruelty to animals, Levison. You did not know that your act would have such consequences as it has had, but you knew that you were guilty of wicked conduct. And you must have tormented the poor animal in a very cruel way to throw him into such a state of excitement, and to cause him so great an effort as to break his chain. You are a thoroughly bad boy, Levison, and I can promise you that you will be soundly flogged."

Mr. Railton turned to the juniors. "I will explain the matter to Dr. Holmes," he said. "Now go back to your Form-rooms."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Railton went at once to the Head's house, and the juniors retired.

In ten minutes they were all in their Form-rooms.

An unexpected calm had descended upon St. Jim's.

After last lesson the boys were dismissed as usual, and they came swarming out of the Form-rooms, anxious for news.

A shout from Wally of the Third announced that there was a new notice on the board. The juniors crowded round to read it. The notice was in Mr. Railton's hand, and it brought tidings of great joy to the readers. It ran:

"It having transpired that the recent outbreak was caused by an act of cruelty on the part of one boy, who has now confessed, the headmaster has consented to rescind his order for the exclusion of the junior boys' pets from the school."

"Three cheers for the Head!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Hurrah! Hip, pip, hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah! The Head's a bwick! Huwvah!"

And there was satisfaction in all faces. "It's up to us to apologise, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

"Hear, hear!"

"Of course, we shall apologise to the Head," said Tom Merry. "It's the least we can do. And the pets are coming back."

"Hurrah!"

"And here they come!" shouted Figgins.

There was a rush to the door. The van was in sight. Mr. Railton had evidently telephoned an order when he put the notice on the board ready to meet the eyes of the juniors when they were dismissed from classes.

There was an uproar from the van as the juniors surrounded it. The barking Pongo and the growling of Towser, mingled with the squalling and shrieking and screeching of the other animals and birds.

But it was music to the ears of the juniors. Herries dragged out his bulldog and fondled him, almost with tears in his eyes. Pongo snuggled into D'Arcy minor's pocket, whimpering with joy.

Reilly captured his monkey, taking care to keep a tight hold on him. Clifton Dane took out his cage with the parrot in it, and Polly screamed an ear-splitting welcome to her master.

"Hurrah! Polly wants sugar! Old Ratty! Old sneak! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the Head!"

All eyes turned on the doorway of the School House. The Head had come down, and the juniors' hearts smote them as they saw how pale and worn he looked.

Arthur Augustus set the example. He advanced towards the Head, taking off his silk hat in his graceful fashion.

"Eway allow me to apologise most humbly for my recent conduct, Dr. Holmes," he said, "and also to thank you for your great kindness in allowin' us to have our pets back to the school!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We all apologise, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"All of us, sir!"

"We're sorry!"

"Vewy sowwy indeed, sir!"

"I accept your assurance upon that point," said the Head. "The matter is ended now."

"Hurrah! Good old boy! Good old boy! The Head's a brick—the Head's a brick—the Head's a brick!"

Dr. Holmes looked round in astonishment. It was very flattering, no doubt, to be regarded as a "brick" by his boys, but it was "cheeky," to say the least of it, for anyone to address him in that manner.

"Good old sport!" went on the shrill voice, as Clifton Dane vainly tried to quiet his parrot. "Old sport! Polly wants sugar—Polly wants sugar! Go and eat coke!"

"There was a yell of laughter.

"Dear me!" said the Head in amazement. "Who—What is that—"

"It is the parrot, sir!" said Mr. Railton, laughing in spite of himself.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

The parrot screamed again.

"Hurrah! Give 'em beans, boys! Pile in—pile in! Polly wants sugar! Levison's a rotter—Levison's a rotter! Go home!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Polly wants sugar! Poor Polly—poor old Polly! Hurrah! The Head's a brick! Give him some sugar! He's a brick!"

The Head laughed heartily.

"Please take the animals away," he said. "I must observe that that parrot is a very clever bird. Whom does he belong to?"

"He's mine, sir," said Clifton Dane.

"Did you teach him to say those things?"

The Canadian junior coloured.

"Well, sir, I—I suppose he picked them up through hearing the fellows talk in my study. He picks up things very quickly, sir."

"In your study!" said the Head. "I understood that the pets were not allowed in the House, Dane!"

"Oh, my hat!" said the junior in dismay. "I—I mean, my goodness, sir! I—I—"

The Head smiled.

"There is no harm in having a parrot in your study sometimes, Dane," he said kindly; "and I give you permission to do so. I am afraid dogs and monkeys cannot be allowed in the studies, but a parrot can do no harm."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"Hurrah!" screamed the parrot. "Give him some sugar! The Head's a brick! Give him some sugar, boys! Pull his whiskers! Hurrah!"

The Head retreated into the House laughing. The trouble was over, and, as all the fellows agreed, all was well that ended well!

THE END.

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