

READ ABOUT THE JAZZ BAND AT ST. JIM'S!

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The Penny **1½<sup>D</sup>**  
Popular

No. 16.  
New Series.

Week Ending  
May 10th, 1919.

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



**TOM MERRY & CO. START A JAZZ BAND!**

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's.)



### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Has Conscientious Scruples.

"BUNTER!"

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, was strolling down the Sixth Form passage at Greyfriars when he heard his name called.

The fat junior looked up, to see Carne of the Sixth beckoning to him from the door of his study.

"Yes, Carne; what—"

"Come here!" exclaimed Carne.

"Certainly, Carne," said the Owl of the Remove. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes," said Carne. "I want you to go down to the Golden Pig, and ask for the packet for Mr. Carne. They'll understand."

"But what's in the packet?" asked Bunter inquisitively.

"That's my business," replied the Sixth-Former. "Just ask for a packet for me. They'll understand all about it."

He handed the fat junior a two-shilling piece.

"I suppose the packet won't contain cigarettes?" asked Bunter.

"Supposing it does!" rapped out Carne.

"Oh, nothing," said Bunter hastily. "It's no business of mine, of course. You've a right to buy what you like. But, I say, you know, could you—er—lend me a couple of bob? I've got a postal-order coming by the last post to-night, but the tuckshop will be closed then, you know. If you could advance—"

"Get out!"

"A couple of bob—"

"Will you go?" roared Carne.

"But—but—"

"You can have a couple of the cigarettes when you bring them in," said Carne. "I'll give you twopenny for yourself as well."

"Thank you, Carne; but if you could lend me—"

The senior made a movement towards the fat junior, and Billy Bunter skipped out of the study. He grunted discontentedly.

"Mean beast!" he murmured.

He walked downstairs with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and a frown of deep thoughtfulness upon his fat brow.

A sudden slap on the shoulder woke him from his meditations, and he gasped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Thinking out a mathematical problem, Billy, or trying to get at a scheme for raising the wind?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Whence that pensive brow?" asked Bob Cherry, grinning.

"I—I was thinking—"

"Oh, I see! What made you start a new habit like that?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"But keep it up," said Bob encouragingly. "You'll find it hard at first, but you'll find it easier every time you do it, till at length—"

# THE FIRST ELEVEN!

A Splendid Long, Complete Tale, dealing with the Early Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Don't be an ass, Cherry! The fact is, I was turning over a question of right or wrong in my mind, and I don't quite know what to do."

"My hat! Here's Bunter bothering himself over moral questions!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "Here, you fellows, gather round! Bunter in the throes of a conscientious problem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"What's the matter, Bunty?"

asked Wharton. "Are you

trying to think out a scheme for paying off your debts?"

"My hat! Is he a giddy millionaire, then?"

asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows might advise me," said Bunter. "I don't want to do wrong."

"First time you've had any doubts on the subject?" said Nugent. "But go ahead! What's the giddy problem?"

"Suppose a chap wanted me to break the rules of the college—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Go on! This is getting interesting!"

"By making a secret excursion to the village—"

"Good! The plot thickens!"

"Go ahead, Bunter! You shut up, Bob!"

"Well, then, suppose I was asked to fetch in smokes for a senior—I won't name any names—"

Wharton's brow darkened.

"Has Carne asked you to do it?" he exclaimed.

"I don't want to mention any names!"

"Well, go ahead!"

"Ought I to go?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"That's the question on my mind. I said I'd go, in the heat of the moment—"

"You young sweep!"

"Well, you see, it's occurred to me that I oughtn't to go," said Billy Bunter. "Ought I to go when I said I would, when I know I oughtn't to go?"

"You oughtn't to go, and you sha'n't go!" said Harry Wharton. "If I catch you going I'll lick you with a cricket-stump!"

"Oh, really Wharton—"

"Mind, I mean it!"

"But—suppose Carne goes for me?" faltered Bunter. "Will you fellows stand by me? He's such a bullying beast, you know!"

"Of course we will," said Bob Cherry.

"That's all right!"

"Yes; but—"

"You can rely on us," said Wharton. "We stood by Smith, and he's a boulder and an outsider. If you want to do the decent thing, you may be sure you can rely upon us to help you. We're only too glad to see you acting decently for once!"

"Well, you see, I—I ought to ask you fellows to advise me."

"Well, you're not going; that's settled!"

"I sha'n't go," said Bunter.

"That's right!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Bravo, Bunter!"

And he gave the fat junior an appreciative slap on the back that knocked nearly all the breath out of the Owl's fat body.

### THE SECOND CHAPTER

Bunter in Distress.

CARNE put his head into the junior Common-room later in the evening, and looked round with a knitted brow. Most of the juniors who happened to be there glanced at him.

"Lost anything, Carne?" asked Skinner, with veiled impertinence.

Carne scowled at him.

"I'm looking for Bunter," he said. "He isn't here?"

"No," said Stott. "He's big enough to be seen."

"Saw him last in the tuckshop," grinned Skinner.

"Oh, if he comes in, tell him to come to my study."

"All right."

And Carne departed.

"What the dickens does he want with Bunter?" exclaimed Ogilvy. "He looks as though there might be trouble for Bunty."

"Oh, I know what it is," said Bob Cherry.

"Bunter was told to fetch cigarettes for him, and he wouldn't go."

"Oh, is that it?"

"And if Carne goes for him there'll be a row," added Bob.

And he walked away to Study No. 1 to see Harry Wharton. Wharton and Nugent had finished their prep when Bob arrived in the study.

"Bunter here?" asked Bob, looking round.

"No. Do you want him?"

"Not much!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But Carne does. He's looking for him, and he looks as if there's thunder in the air."

Harry Wharton's lips tightened.

"So he's after Bunter! All right; he'll have us to tackle as well."

"Hark!" exclaimed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh suddenly.

There was a sound of hurried footsteps in the corridor.

Billy Bunter came scuttling along like a frightened rabbit, and burst into the study, and slammed the door.

"I-I say, you fellows! Ow—oh!" he gasped.

"What's the matter, Billy?"

"Carne!" gasped the fat junior breathlessly.

"He's after me!"

"Oh, let him come!"

"Lock the door!"

"No; let the door alone!"

"Just remember what you promised me!" howled Bunter, in mortal terror, as a heavy footstep sounded in the passage. "You're going to stand by me."

"In front of you would be better!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Get behind us, Bunter!" said Wharton crisply; and the fat junior obeyed—only too gladly. He shivered into a corner.

The door of the study was flung open.

Carne's angry face looked into the room.

"Is Bunter here?" he demanded savagely, not for the moment seeing the fat junior crouching in the corner.

"Yes," said Harry quietly. "What do you want with him?"

"Come here, Bunter."

"I—I—"

"Come here!" roared Carne.

"Wharton, you—you said—"

"Stay where you are, Billy."

And Billy did.

Carne was trembling with anger.

"Will you come here, Bunter?" he said, between his teeth.

"I—I won't, you know. I—I'm sincerely sorry, but—but you see—"

"Shut up, Billy!"

"Oh, really—"

"Shut up!"

Bunter quavered into silence.

Carne made a furious step towards him.

Four determined juniors lined up in his path.

"Stand back, Carne," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You won't lay a finger on Bunter. We know all about your sending him for smokes, and we ordered him not to go—we



wouldn't let him go. If you want to row any body, you can row us."

"You interfering puppy!" shouted Carne, enraged at being placed in the position of being judged by a junior of the Lower Fourth. If you give me any of your impudence, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life."

Wharton's lips set hard. "You can begin as soon as you like," he said curtly. "There are four of us to tackle, if you do, you hulking rotter!"

"That young thief has taken my money!" exclaimed Carne furiously.

Wharton started.

"What!"

"I gave him money to fetch the— to fetch something for me, and he didn't go, and he has kept the money!" shouted Carne.

"I didn't know that."

"Well, you know it now; and now stand out of the way and let me give him the licking he's earned," said Carne, more quietly.

"Wait a bit!"

Wharton turned to the fat junior, with an expression that made Billy Bunter quake more than Carne's furious anger had done.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

"Ye-e-es, Wharton."

"Have you got Carne's money?"

"No, I haven't."

That was true enough, for the money had been expended in the tuckshop.

"The lying hound!" exclaimed Carne, in a rage. "I gave him a two-shilling piece, and he's got it now."

"Is that true, Bunter?"

"I haven't got a penny!" stammered Bunter. "You—you can search me, if you like. I haven't got any money."

"Did Carne give you any, though?"

"No; he refused to give me any, though I offered to repay it out of my postal-order, which is coming to-night for certain."

"He did not hand you any money at all?" asked Wharton, who knew the way Bunter could play round and round the truth without telling an outright lie, and yet managing all the time to convey a false impression.

"You said 'give' just now," mumbled Bunter. "He didn't give me any."

"Did you receive any money from him for any purpose whatever?"

"Well, there was a two-shilling piece."

"He handed you that to get the cigarettes?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Did you return it to him?"

"Not yet."

"Oh, I see! Well, give it to him now."

"I—I haven't any money till my postal-order comes."

Wharton's brows grew black.

"Do you mean to say that you've spent Carne's money, Bunter?"

"No!" howled Bunter, desperate at the thought that the chums were going to abandon him to Carne's tender mercies, as he knew that he richly deserved. "No. I—I borrowed it for a time. I'm going to return it this evening."

"How?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"You young rascal! The last post is in already."

"Well, in—in that case the letter will be here to-morrow morning at the latest," said Bunter. "I hope Carne doesn't think that I want to keep his rotten two shillings! I shall settle up as soon as ever I get the postal-order cashed in the morning."

Harry Wharton stepped aside.

"I've nothing more to say!" he exclaimed angrily. "You've taken Carne's money, and you deserve the biggest hiding he can give you!"

"Oh! Oh, really—"

"And I hope he'll lay it on well," said Nugent.

"The hopefulness is terrific!"

"You—you said you'd stand by me if I didn't fetch the cigarettes!" howled Bunter, in great alarm. "You—you promised—"

"You had deceived us."

"Well, you promised, and you ought to keep your promise!" wailed the unhappy Owl of the Remove. "Play the game, you know!"

"Well, I like that, from you!" said Bob Cherry.

Wharton snapped his teeth angrily.

"The fat cad cheated us out of that promise," he said. "Still, we made it, and we'll keep it. Carne was to blame in the first place for ever suggesting sending a junior for the cigarettes. You'll let him alone, Carne."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"You young hounds! Do you think I am going to be robbed, and—"

Wharton flung two shillings on the table. "There's your money, Carne. Take it, and go!"

"I'm going to lick that young thief," said Carne, pocketing the money as he spoke.

"You're not!"

Then the juniors and the seniors exchanged a glance. But the juniors did not quail, and they looked too dangerous to tackle. Carne bit his lip.

"Very well; look out, Bunter, that's all!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Carne—"

The senior stamped furiously out of the study. Then the Famous Four turned grimly to the shaking Owl of the Remove. Bunter smiled a sickly smile.

"I'm much obliged to you fellows—"

"Don't speak to me!" said Wharton sharply. "You're what Carne called you—a thief! You have spent his money, and you know you can't pay it!"

"But—but you've paid it, Wharton, so it's

have licked him, and let the matter drop, but now he was saving up his wrath, and he would probably make Bunter smart, in addition, for the humiliation he had had in backing down before the Famous Four.

Billy Bunter's reflections were not pleasant that evening.

He kept a keen look-out for Carne, but the senior did not appear to be looking for him again, and bedtime came, and Bunter was still safe.

He breathed more freely when the Remove went up to their dormitory.

"Shouldn't wonder if Carne pays you a visit to-night, Bunter," said Snoop maliciously.

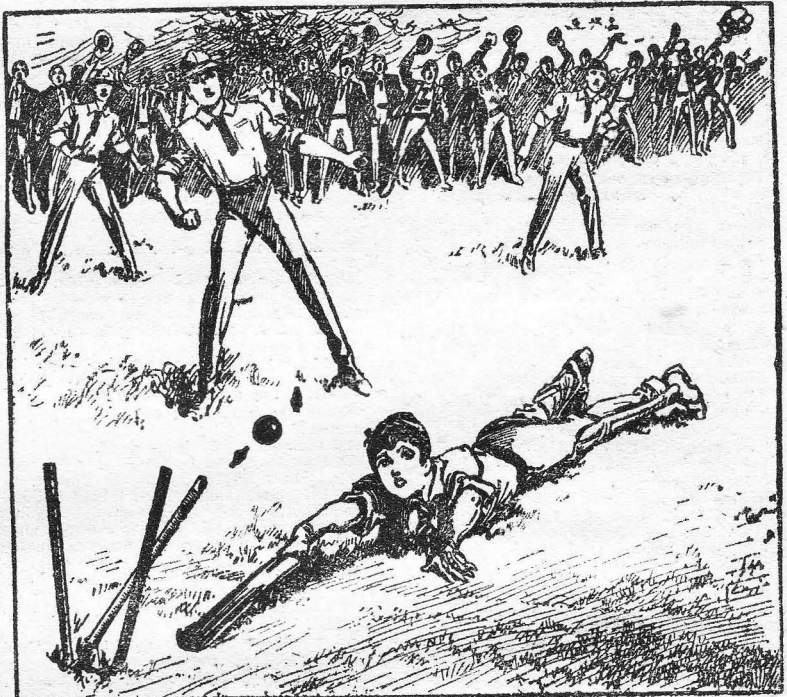
The fat junior started.

"Oh, really, Snoop—"

"Better stay awake and watch," said Bulstrode, with a grin.

"I—I think I will!" stammered Bunter. And he got into bed with the intention of staying awake, and fell asleep within five minutes. Bunter was almost as good as sleeping as at eating.

Carne did not, however, pay the Remove dormitory a visit. He had tried to score off



Harry Wharton, flinging himself down, just reached the crease with the end of his bat, when the ball crashed into the wicket. "Not out!" came from the umpire.

all right. It's not necessary for me to pay it now," said Bunter feebly.

"But if I had not—"

"But you have. What's the good of discussing 'it's'?" said Billy Bunter. "Better let the subject drop. I'm willing to if you are."

"Why, you young rascal—"

"I don't think you ought to call me names, Wharton, just because I have conscientious scruples, and can't do some things that other fellows don't mind doing in the least," said Bunter.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"If I wasn't pretty certain that Carne will get hold of you, and thrash you, I'd give you the licking of your life, this minute!" he said. "As it is, if you want me to keep my hands off you, you'd better get out of my sight!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Harry made a quick step towards him, and the fat junior scuttled out of the study, and his footsteps died away down the passage.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**  
**Bunter in Hot Water!**

THE Owl of the Remove had been saved for the present; but he knew well that Carne was only biding his time.

In fact, Bunter had probably made matters worse for himself, for Carne would

the juniors that way before, but it generally worked out to his undoing.

He let the matter pass for that night, and on the morning Billy Bunter hoped that his anger had had time to cool, and that the affair would be suffered to drop entirely.

Carne was very far from intending to pass it over.

Just before morning school Billy Bunter almost ran into him in the Close, and the senior reached out for him, and Bunter scuttled off just in time.

He dashed into the Remove Form-room, and remained there till lessons commenced, palpitating. He was paying dear for that two-shilling-piece.

Bunter was, for once, first in the Form-room that morning. And for once he was not looking forward to classes being dismissed. The thought of Carne waiting for him was a disturbing one.

His absent-mindedness in class was noticed by Mr. Quelch, and he was detained for half an hour after the others; but that punishment was the lightest that could have been meted out to the fat junior at that time. In the Form-room he was safe from Carne, at least.

The Remove went out, leaving Bunter sitting alone in the Form-room for the space of his detention.

When the half-hour had ticked away on the

Form-room clock, Billy Bunter was free to go, and he went. He blinked cautiously out of the Form-room before he left it, but the passage was clear. There was no sign of Carne.

At the end of the passage, however, he caught sight of the senior chatting with Ionides.

The Greek saw Bunter at the same moment, and muttered something to Carne. The senior turned his head.

He made a sign to Bunter to approach.

The fat junior hesitated.

"Come here, Bunter!" said Carne.

Bunter blinked round him helplessly. In the open hall he felt that Carne could not "go for" him, and he approached the senior in a gingerly way, a good deal like a cat.

Carne looked at him grimly.

"Go to my study and fetch me a paper that's on the table," he said.

Bunter breathed more freely.

"Oh, all right, Carne! I—I'm sincerely sorry about that affair yesterday."

"Never mind that! Go!"

"My postal-order didn't come this morning; there's been some delay in the post. It's bound to be here this evening, though, and I'll settle up."

"Get away!"

"Oh, really!"

Carne made an angry gesture, and Billy Bunter scuttled off to the Sixth Form passage. The two seniors followed him with quick steps.

Bunter entered Carne's study, and looked for the paper on the table.

He was glad enough to make his peace with the senior by performing a little errand like that.

There was no paper on the table, and Bunter blinked round the study for it.

He could not see it, and he was about to leave the study to tell Carne that he could not find it. But it was not so easy to leave the study.

As he turned towards the door the fat junior found the doorway blocked by Ionides and Carne.

He backed away in dismay.

"I—I say, you fellows, I can't find the paper!" he said nervously.

Carne laughed sardonically.

"Nothing surprising in that," he remarked. "You see, there wasn't any paper there."

"Oh, really!"

"Shut the door, will you, Ionides?" said Carne. "You might stay in the passage for a few minutes to see that nobody comes in."

The Greek grinned and nodded.

"Right you are, Carne!"

He closed the door, remaining outside.

Bunter made an attempt to wriggle towards the door, but wriggled away again as Carne made a grasp at him.

He dodged round the table, gasping with fear.

"I—I—I say, Carne—" he stammered.

He knew now that he had been tricked into entering the study, so that Carne could have him at his mercy, and his heart thumped as the senior picked up a cricket-stump.

Carne laughed unpleasantly.

"You're going through it now!" he said. "You offered to go to the village for me, and you stole my two shillings. Now you're going to pay for it!"

"Wharton has paid you, and—"

"Come here!"

Billy Bunter made a rush to the window, which was open. He had a wild hope of sighting a friend in the Close, and yelling for help.

As it happened, four or five juniors, coming up to the cricket-field, were passing within easy distance of the study windows, and Bunter's heart beat as he saw them.

"Wharton!" he yelled. "Rescue! Carne is—"

The next moment a fierce grasp whirled him away from the window, and the sash was jammed down.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Carne's Threat.

**H**ARRY WHARTON glanced up towards Carne's study window as he heard Bunter's shout. He saw the window jammed hastily down.

His eyes flashed.

"Bunter's in Carne's study!" he exclaimed. "Serve him right!" said Bob Cherry. "But I suppose we must look after him."

"You know what a brute Carne is!" said Harry. "Come on!"

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The juniors ran into the House.

In a few seconds they were in the Sixth-Form passage, and were running down to Carne's door. Ionides was leaning against the wall outside the study, and he smiled in his unpleasant, sardonic way at the sight of the excited juniors.

"You can't come in here!" he said.

Bunter's howls could be heard in the study.

"We are going in!" said Harry.

"Stand back, you cub!"

"Get out of the way, Ionides!" said Harry, as the senior stood before the door, his brow dark with anger. "Mind, we're going in!"

"Stand back!"

"Charge!" shouted Wharton.

The juniors rushed forward.

But Ionides' craven heart failed him as they charged. He would have been rolled over in the passage if he had stood his ground; but he did not stand it.

He stepped quickly aside, and the juniors reached the study door.

Wharton threw it open.

"Look out, Carne!" called in Ionides.

And he strolled down the passage, affecting an indifferent air.

The juniors rushed into the study.

Billy Bunter was sprawling face downwards across the table, and Carne was lashing him with the cricket-stump, and Bunter was howling wildly.

Wharton did not stop for words.

He ran straight at Carne, wrenched the stump from his hand, and flung it with a crash into the corner.

The senior turned upon him with blazing eyes.

In a moment they were gripping one another, and Wharton went to the floor under the weight and strength of the Sixth-Former.

But he did not let go, and Carne fell with him.

Billy Bunter squirmed off the table.

Although the licking had been soon interrupted, Bunter had suffered considerably, and the tears were streaming down his fat face.

"G-g-go for him!" he gasped. "Give him b-b-beans! The beast! He's b-b-broken my b-b-bones! I'm aching all over!"

"Collar the cad!" said Bob. "Get him off Wharton!"

And the senior was dragged off.

Wharton staggered to his feet.

"Cut!" said Nugent hastily to Bunter.

The fat junior did not need telling twice. He scuttled out of the study, running down the passage blindly, and rushed fairly into the arms of Wingate, who was coming along.

The captain of Greyfriars staggered back, and only saved himself from falling by throwing his arms round Billy Bunter and hugging him.

"Ow!" roared Bunter, thinking he had been captured by Ionides. "Yow! Leggo, you beast! Leggo, you rotten alien waster! Help!"

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Is it you, Wingate? I—I thought it was that Greek beast!"

"What the dickens are you racing about like that for, Bunter?" exclaimed Wingate, grasping the fat junior by the shoulder.

"Have you been playing tricks on Ionides?"

"N-no!"

"What's that row in Carne's study?"

"I—I—I don't know."

Wingate released the Owl of the Remove and strode into Carne's study. Bunter scuttled off breathlessly. He did not desire to figure in the explanations that would doubtless follow.

Carne had seized the cricket-stump again, and seemed about to hurl himself upon the juniors. They faced him resolutely. Carne was stuttering with rage.

Wingate gazed at the scene in astonishment.

"What's the row here?" he exclaimed.

Carne glared at him.

"Better put that stump down, Carne," said the Greyfriars captain quietly.

The senior hesitated a moment, and then laid the cricket-stump on the table. He was trying to calm himself.

"What's the trouble, Wharton? What are you doing in Carne's study?"

"He was bullying Bunter," said Harry in his quiet tones. "We came to interfere. He was licking Bunter with a stump."

Wingate's brow darkened.

"Carne—"

"And I'll lick him again," said Carne—and Wharton, too! That cub has laid hands on me—one of the Sixth! If you back up the juniors in that sort of thing, Wingate,

you can bet on it that you won't be captain of Greyfriars long!"

"Don't talk rot!" said Wingate irritably. "You had no right to thrash Bunter with a stump, whatever he had done; and you know it, Carne!"

"I'll do as I like!"

"What had Bunter done?"

"Never mind what he had done," said Carne, who did not care for the whole story to come out. "He checked me, anyway!"

"That was hardly enough for a whaling with a cricket-stump."

"Are you going to dictate to me?"

"Yes, in anything of that sort!" said Wingate gruffly. "I'm captain of Greyfriars, and I won't have any bullying. I dare say Bunter deserved a licking—he generally does—but you should draw a line."

He signed to the juniors to go.

Harry Wharton & Co. moved to the door. They had no desire to push the matter any further.

Carne made a step forward.

"That young cub has laid hands on me, I tell you, Wingate!" he exclaimed shrilly. "I'm going to lick him!"

Wingate shook his head.

"If you don't choose to tell me the facts, Carne—"

"Bunter has stolen money from me, and Wharton is backing him up!" said Carne savagely.

Wingate started.

"Impossible!"

"Ask him!"

"What do you say, Wharton?"

"I say it's a lie!" said Harry, with flashing eyes. "Carne gave Bunter money to fetch cigarettes from Friardale. I never meant to say a word about it, but I have to now, as Carne chooses."

"To fetch cigarettes?"

"Yes."

"After what you promised me, Carne?"

"You're not my father confessor, I suppose?" said Carne sullenly.

Wingate compressed his lips.

"Go on, Wharton."

"Well, you know what Bunter is with money," said Wharton. "Carne knows it, too, and he oughtn't to have trusted him. Bunter spent the money, intending to repay it afterwards, when—he had a postal-order. Of course, he ought to be licked. But I repaid Carne the money as soon as I heard of it."

"If you took the money, Carne, you should have let the matter drop," said Wingate. "You can't have it both ways. And you know jolly well the trouble you'd get into if it were known to the Head that you sent a junior for smokes. The best thing you can do is to let the matter drop at once. Bunter was a rotten rascal, but no worse than you were for tempting him!"

"I—I—"

"You kids had better go—"

"And—and you back up the juniors in checking the Sixth like this!" exclaimed Carne furiously. "You think I'm going to let Wharton go, after he has struck me?"

"The fault was yours, to begin with," said Wingate, looking worried. "What do you want?"

"I'm going to lick that cub!"

"You're not!"

"So you stand up for him?"

"Yes," said Wingate quietly. "If you hadn't acted like a cad in the first place the trouble would never have arisen."

Carne drew a deep breath.

"You stand up for Wharton?" he said.

"You back him up against me?"

"I don't know about backing him up, but certainly I'm not going to let you rag him, as you seem to have done with Bunter. If anybody wants a hiding, it seems to me that you want it yourself!" said Wingate angrily.

Carne set his teeth.

"Very well. You choose to back up the Remove against the Sixth, and you can go to the Remove for your recruits for the First Eleven, if you like!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Carne, his voice trembling with anger—"I mean that if you stand by Wharton, if you interfere with me now, you can look somewhere else for a bat for the Topham match on Saturday!"

The juniors looked at one another. Nugent whistled softly. Wingate's brow grew black, and he looked hard at Carne.

"You don't mean that, Carne?" he said.

"I do."

"You will be sorry for saying it presently. You kids can cut."

The juniors left the study.

"Mind," said Carne, I'm in earnest. If



you back up Wharton against me now I don't play in the eleven to-morrow." Wingate left him without a word.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Wingate Finds His Man.

WINGATE entered Carne's study again directly after dinner. There was a serious, determined expression on his face.

"Are you going to play to-morrow or not?" demanded Wingate.

"That depends," said Carne.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if you care to say you're sorry—"

"Sorry for what?"

"For interfering with me in my own study."

"For stopping you acting like a cad and a brute," commented Wingate. "Go on."

Carne flushed angrily.

"But it like that if you like. And if you like to let Wharton have his kicking—"

"It is not likely!"

"Then I stick to my word!"

"I shall not give way an atom on either point, Carne," said the Greyfriars captain.

"That's understood, to start with. Not an atom."

"Very well; you know the consequences."

"You refuse to play to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Carne defiantly.

"You are acting like a low-down cad."

Carne shrugged his shoulders.

"Mind," said Wingate, with a blaze in his eyes, "I don't ask you to play. I offer you the chance of playing, if you choose."

"Thank you for nothing."

"I want one word from you—yes or no. Are you playing in the eleven against Topham to-morrow?"

"No," said Carne.

"That's enough. You won't play to-morrow now, if you ask for it."

Carne sneered.

"I'm not likely to do that."

"Very well, you won't play; and you'll never play for Greyfriars again while I'm captain."

And without another word Wingate strode out of the study.

He went downstairs to the Remove passage. He was just entering Study No. 1 when Harry Wharton came out with a cricket-bat under his arm.

The Greyfriars captain nodded genially to the junior.

"Going down to practice?" he asked.

"Yes, Wingate."

"Good! I've been keeping an eye on you lately, Wharton. You're getting into good form. You batted splendidly against Fernleigh Juniors on Wednesday afternoon."

Harry coloured with pleasure.

"Thanks, Wingate!"

"Not a bit of it! Come down now; I want to see you bat. I've my reasons."

The juniors followed Wingate out, somewhat surprised. The Greyfriars captain took a deep interest in junior cricket, and helped the lads on in every way; but they were surprised, all the same, at the earnestness he showed now.

There were several members of the First Eleven on the ground when the chums of the Remove arrived.

"We're ready," Courtney remarked.

"Right-ho! I want to see Wharton practice a little before we begin."

The seniors stared at him.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed Smith major. "There isn't much time for watching fags at practice now, Wingate, is there?"

"You heard what I said."

"Oh, all right!" said Smith, shrugging his shoulders.

Wharton was quite as surprised as the seniors. But he knew how to obey, and he did not say a word against Wingate's orders.

"Get to the wicket, Wharton," said Wingate.

"Here?" said Harry, for they were on the senior ground, where the First Eleven had been about to begin practice.

"Yes."

Wharton obediently went to the wicket. Wingate tossed the ball to Courtney.

"See if you can get him out in an over," he said.

Courtney laughed.

"I'll try."

He walked down the pitch.

Harry Wharton, surprised as he was by the unaccountable behaviour of Wingate, took up his position, determined to do his best.

Splendid batsman as he was for a junior, he knew that it was quite a different matter facing senior bowling, especially Courtney's.

Courtney sent down a fast ball, and Wharton stopped it. Then a slow one, and he stopped that. Then a medium one, and that was stopped. Then a fast again, and Wharton let the willow go at it.

Smack! The ball went away down into the long-field, and a junior fielded it.

Wingate grinned.

"Good!" he ejaculated.

Courtney set his lips rather tightly as Morgan tossed the ball in to him. He did not like the idea of a junior standing up against his bowling.

"Finish the over," said Wingate.

Courtney finished it, and Wharton's wicket was still intact.

The Removites looked on in great glee, and a crowd of fellows were already gathering to look on, too.

Among them was Carne, who was curious to see what was going on.

"What the dickens is Wingate at, Loder?" he asked the prefect, who was with him. Loder shook his head.

"Blessed if I know!" he said. "He's always making a fuss of the young cubs, that's all. I don't see what the game is this time, though."

Wingate sent on bowler after bowler of the First Eleven to bowl against Harry Wharton.

The junior was in splendid form. He defended his wicket well, and it was hardly in danger once in a dozen overs.

Wingate looked on with a grin of satisfaction.

It was not till Wharton had lived through fourteen overs from the best bowlers in the Fifth and Sixth that he was caught out by Smith major—bowed and caught.

"Jolly good!" exclaimed Wingate. "We have chaps in the team who wouldn't put up a better show than that, Courtney."

"Quite so. But—"

"But what?" grinned Wingate.

"I don't see what you're getting at?" Wingate chuckled.

"Good! Go to the wicket."

"The wicket!"

"Yes; Wharton is going to bowl you."

"Oh, all right!" said Courtney resignedly, humouring his chum.

He carried his bat to the wicket, and Wingate tossed the ball to the junior.

"Try an over," he said.

"All right, Wingate."

And Wharton, who had not shown a sign of fatigue yet, went on to bowl.

He sent down some bowling that made Courtney realise the fact that all the good bowlers of the school were not in the Upper Forms.

Five times Courtney found that he had to look out to keep his wicket up, and the sixth time he looked out in vain.

The ball curled in under his bat, and there was a crack, and his middle stump and his balls went to grass.

"Phew!" said Courtney.

Wingate laughed.

"We're going to play now," he said; "Wharton will field."

"What the dickens—" began Smith major.

"Don't argue, old chap; do as I say."

And the perplexed Sixth-Formers obeyed.

They bowled and they batted, and Wharton was put in the slips to field.

And it was not long before he made a very good catch off Smith major's batting, wherewith Smith of the Sixth did not look overpleased.

Wingate clapped his hands.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed.

"What does he mean?" muttered Carne.

Loder shrugged his shoulders. Wingate signed to Harry Wharton to come to him, and the Removite, as much puzzled as anybody else, came up.

Wingate glanced round at the perplexed Sixth-Formers.

"I suppose you don't know what I've been driving at," he remarked. "I should think you might have guessed, though. We want a recruit for the First Eleven to-morrow, and we've found one."

Wharton's heart leaped into his mouth. Did Wingate mean—could he mean—? The junior's head swam for a moment.

"What!" yelled Carne.

And Courtney gasped.

"What! Wingate! What!"

"We've found the recruit we wanted."

"You've found him! Who?"

"Harry Wharton!"

The name was uttered in tones of amazement by seniors and juniors alike.

Wharton stood silent, his cheeks burning.

For a junior to be played in the First Eleven, into which Fifth and Sixth Formers competed to enter, was an unknown thing.

He was dazzled for the moment. The seniors stared at Wingate, and there was a chorus of amazement.

"Wharton!"

"A junior!"

"In the First Eleven!"

"Rot!"

"Look here, Wingate, old chap—"

"Dash it all—"

"My word!"

Carne strode forward angrily.

"Are you serious?" he exclaimed. "You're going to play a junior in the First Eleven, against a team like the Topham?"

"What the dickens has to do with you?" said Wingate coolly. "You're not in the eleven."

And Carne bit his lip hard.

"But really, Wingate—" began Courtney.

"I've chosen Wharton to fill the vacant place in the eleven," said Wingate quietly.

"But really—"

"You've chosen Wharton," said Smith major—"a junior in the Lower Fourth?"

"I've said so."

"But look here—"

"Hang it all, Wingate—"

"What do you say, Wharton?" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain. "You haven't spoken yet. You'd like to play for the First?"

Wharton's cheeks were red, his eyes gleaming.

"Yes, rather, Wingate," he said promptly.

"Of course I would. I'd give my little finger to play. But—"

"There are no 'buts' in the case."

"If you think I'm good enough, I suppose I am good enough," said Harry simply; "and I'll do my best."

"Bravo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurray!"

Wingate grinned.

"If you do your best, that's all right," said Wingate.

He turned to the seniors.

"Let's get some practice before it gets dark," he added.

Wingate nodded to Harry, who left the ground with his chums, and the seniors turned to practice. Harry Wharton & Co. went on towards the House.

Temple, Dabney & Co. came towards them, and stared at them. They stared and stared, as if that was all they came for.

"Well," said Bob cheerily, "you'll know us again."

"Not if you wash yourself," retorted Fry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," began Bob warmly.

"Well, we're looking," said Temple. "We're trying to make it out. Is it really possible that one of you Remove kids is going to have the cheek to play in the First Eleven?"

"Looks like it."

"Awful nerve, I call it."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Of course, it's a good idea to put a junior in the team," Temple observed; "but Wingate should have thought of the Upper Fourth."

"Oh, rather!"

"I'd have played with pleasure, or Dab—"

"Oh, rather!"

"But the pleasure would have been all on your side," said Nugent. "You must think of Wingate, too. He didn't want to throw the match away."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Blessed if I understand it!" growled Temple.

"There are lots of things you can't understand," grinned Bob. "There are more things in football and cricket, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

"And you're really going to play, Wharton?"

Harry laughed.

"Yes, really!"

"Well, it's like your cheek!"

"Better explain that to Wingate."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I hope you'll do well, anyway," said Temple suddenly. "It will be a big thing to have one of the Lower School in the match, though I really think Wingate might have remembered the Upper Fourth. Good luck!"

"Thanks!" said Harry.

And Temple, Dabney & Co. were not the only ones who wished Harry Wharton good luck in the difficult part he had to play.

The Remove were with him to a man, and the Upper Fourth, and the Second and Third, too.

"All the Lower School had resolved to turn up for the match and yell for their champion."

Billy Bunter, when he heard about it, showed some enthusiasm, too.

"Jolly good!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you'll be standing a feed to celebrate it, won't you, Wharton? I'll come!"

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## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

## The Topham Match.

THE Remove were early on the match-ground the next afternoon. Bob Cherry remarked that they didn't often have an opportunity of seeing a Removite play in the First Eleven, and that they had better make the most of it.

Which the whole Form resolved to do. Topham won the toss, and elected to bat first.

Jones and Hudson of Topham went in to open the innings, and Wingate led his merry men out, in spotless white, to field.

Wharton went into the slips, followed by a cheer from the Remove. The Remove were ready to yell at a moment's notice, for anything or nothing.

They had the best places round the field. Some of them were sitting on the roof of the pavilion, some perched on the branches of the old elms. Round the ropes seniors and juniors thronged, thick as blackberries.

It was a goodly audience. Topham fellows looked round at it, and grinned. The bigger the audience the better they liked it. They meant to give Greyfriars a good licking, and retire with half a dozen wickets to spare.

It was a single-innings match, and that was the only reason. Topham believed, why they would not lick Greyfriars by an innings.

Wingate gave Wharton one glance as the home team went out to field. Wharton was cool, calm, in the pink of condition, and apparently without nerves. And Wingate gave a nod of satisfaction.

Bowlers he was not in want of; but at fielding and batting, he verily believed, Harry Wharton would be quite as good as Carne could have been.

Carne was standing in the crowd with Loder and Ionides to watch the game. His face wore a decidedly unpleasant expression.

But for his own folly he might have been playing himself, and he bit his lips hard at the thought, with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness running riot in his breast.

But there was no help for it now, and he was left the poor consolation of hoping that his school would be defeated.

The beginning looked, too, as if Carne was likely to have his patriotic wish gratified.

Jones and Hudson piled up runs in a way that made the Topham fellows grin, as they lounged in front of the pavilion, and that made faces lengthen among the Greyfriars crowd.

The Topham score was thirty for no wicket in a quarter of an hour, and Carne turned to his companions with a sneer on his face.

"They'll declare in about an hour," he remarked.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Loder. "I—hallo, look! Well caught, by Jove!" he broke out involuntarily.

Jones had driven the ball into the slips, and it seemed no chance for a catch.

But a lithe figure had leapt into the air, and a hand swept over a head, and there was a soft sound, between a click and a kiss.

And the ball was in Harry Wharton's good right hand, and he held it up, flushed and excited, for the whole field to see, as his feet tramped into the turf again.

There was a wild roar from all Greyfriars. "Well caught! Oh, well caught!"

Jones' face was a study. He had been caught out—by a junior! The junior he had humorously referred to as a baby.

Wingate grinned with delight. He slapped Wharton on the back as the field crossed over.

"Good—jolly good, Wharton!" he said. "My hat! If you do nothing else in the match you justify my shoving you in. Good again!"

"I'm jolly glad, Wingate! It was touch and go!"

"It was splendid! Your Form ought to be proud of you, kid!"

And they were.

The Remove were yelling, cheering, and clapping their hands like madmen. Bob Cherry was surprised to see even Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, clapping and yelling away with the rest. Even the Bounder of Greyfriars had caught the infection.

The first wicket was down, and it was Jones of Topham—Jones the youthful Jessop—Jones, Topham's champion bat—who was out!

No wonder Greyfriars were delighted, and especially the Remove. For that lucky catch might mean the loss of fifty runs to the visitors. Jones mightn't have given another chance for a dozen overs.

Wharton's face was flushed, and his heart was beating, as he took his place again.

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He did not expect to be put on to bowl, but he was doing well in the field—very well—and the glances of the senior cricketers showed that they were changing their opinion, and coming round to Wingate's way of thinking. Courtney had given him an encouraging word, and North had smacked his shoulder eloquently.

He was proving that old Wingate had been right, and the knowledge of that was quite reward enough for the junior.

But the Topham batsmen were in fine form, and the runs piled up.

Fifty for two wickets, sixty for three, eighty-four for four! They seemed to be piling the runs up with the greatest of ease, and the Greyfriars fieldsmen were given leather-hunting galore to do.

Wingate wore a worried look.

"They're strong beasts, and no mistake," he confided to North, as the field crossed over once more. "The bowling doesn't seem to be able to touch them."

North nodded dolefully.

"No. As a matter of fact, Wingate, to tell the candid truth, they're a wee bit above our weight, you know."

Wingate grunted.

"Well, that's Job's comfort, anyway."

"Never mind, we'll give them a run for their money, old chap."

Wingate gave the ball to Blundell of the Fifth, and Blundell sent down an over. It enriched the Tophams by eleven runs.

Then Courtney bowled, and Topham were seven more to the good at the end of the over.

There was a shout from the Removites.

"Give Wharton the ball!"

"Let Wharton try!"

"Go it, Remove!"

Wingate glanced round with frown for a moment; then his face cleared, and he slapped his thigh with a sound like a pistol-shot.

"Blessed if I don't!" he exclaimed.

And the ball was tossed to Harry.

He caught it, and held it, not understanding for a moment.

Wingate pointed to the bowler's wicket.

"Try your luck!" he said.

Wharton drew a quick breath.

"You want me to bowl!"

"Yes, kid."

Wharton walked to his place without another word.

A burly Topham batsman—a big Sixth Form fellow with huge shoulders and long legs, grinned along the pitch at him. There was a chuckle in the crowd.

"Gulliver among the giants!" murmured Temple.

And there was a laugh.

"Never mind. Gulliver will make the giants hop, you see!" said Bob Cherry, with unbounded confidence.

And Bob Cherry was right. Never had Harry Wharton been in such splendid form. Never had he delivered such all-round excellent bowling.

The ball went down, and the batsman stopped it—just. He stopped it again—just. The third ball he did not stop.

It took his middle stump out of the ground as clean as a whistle, and there was a yell from all Greyfriars.

"How's that?"

"Out!" grinned the umpire.

And the big batsman carried out his bat. The field roared with cheering. Wingate's eyes were blazing with delight.

"Go it!" he muttered. "Oh, my hat! What a godsend that Carne was sulky, and made me put this kid in the team!"

Down went the ball again, to the new batsman, and that batsman simply glared at his wicket.

He did not quite know how it had come to pass; but the wicket was down, and the umpire's laconic "Out!" sounded his doom.

And the crowd yelled again.

"Well bowled!"

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Give us another!"

"Give us the hat-trick!"

The hat-trick Wharton could not give, the over finishing blank; but he had done wonderfully well. Topham were two more down, making a total of six for 102 runs.

And by this time the best of the Topham bats had fallen.

It was the tail of the innings that Greyfriars had to go through now, and they went through it with ease now that the back of the innings was broken.

At four o'clock Topham were all down for 150, and friends and foes fraternised over the tea-table, Greyfriars with high hopes now of victory.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

## Not Out!

"MAN in!"  
"Go it, Greyfriars!"  
"Play up!"  
Greyfriars' innings was opening. Courtney and Blundell went in first, and Jones of Topham bowled.

The crowd looked on anxiously. They had seen the Topham batting, and they realised that it was very good, and that Greyfriars had been lucky to get off so lightly.

If the Topham bowling was as good, the result of the match was very doubtful.

And Jones of Topham soon proved that his bowling was as good as his batting.

For at the very beginning of the innings he delighted his followers with the performance of the hat-trick—a performance Greyfriars had hoped for in vain from their own bowlers.

Courtney's wicket fell to his second ball, and then Bland's, and then Dodd's. And there were but two runs up to Greyfriars at the time.

Three down for two! No wonder faces looked blank in the crowd. Three down for two! Was there ever a more ghastly beginning to an innings?

And the Topham fellows grinned, and grinned more than ever when Blundell was caught out in the next over, without adding a run to the score.

Four down for three.

"Keeping on at the same rate means a total of about nine for the innings," said Carne to Loder, with a grin.

Loder nodded assent. But he was not looking pleased. Loder had few good qualities, but he did not want to see his school beaten.

There was a faint cheer from the crowd as Wingate was seen to go to the wickets.

"Good old Wingate! Go it!"

Wingate took his place, sixth man in, with North at the other end. Then things looked up a little for Greyfriars.

Wingate could always be depended upon to stand up for his side, and make things go. The runs piled up, and the wickets went down, but not Wingate's.

Harry Wharton watched from the pavilion. He was put down on the list as last man in, and it was right enough. But he was eager to get to the stumps and strike a blow for Greyfriars.

Forty for six wickets. The Topham fellows were assuming a jaunty look now. They regarded the match as being all over bar shouting.

Another wicket went down, caught out in the slips, with a score of 46. Then another, stumped by the wicket-keeper.

Eight wickets down.

The crowd looked sick.

"Game's up," said Bob Cherry gloomily. "May as well go in. Anybody coming for a game of marbles?"

"Wharton hasn't batted yet," said Nugent. Bob Cherry grunted.

"Wharton can't stay a rot like that."

"The rotfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "But while there is life, there is hopefulness, is not non-existent."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look! There goes another!"

Nine down for 50.

"Last man in," said Temple.

"Here's Wharton."

"Play up for Greyfriars!"

"Buck up, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton, looking very quiet and collected, came to join Wingate at the wickets.

He was last man in, and had the Greyfriars captain at the other end.

Wingate spoke to him as he passed.

"You see how it is, Wharton. There's not much chance, but do your best for the old school. They can't touch me easily, and if you keep your end up, there's a sporting chance of pulling the game out of the fire yet."

And Harry Wharton nodded and went to his wicket.

Jones went on to bowl against the youngster. Jones was grinning. He remembered that the junior had caught him out, and he thought that his turn had come now.

Never was a bowler more mistaken.

He delivered an over to Harry's wicket in his finest style, and the result made the Topham fellows open their eyes and the Greyfriars crowd yell.

A two, a four, a nought, then a four, and a two again, and then a three! Fifteen for the over, and the bowling still to Wharton for the next.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Jones. "Lucky



for us they didn't put any more kids in the team."

Wingate grinned gleefully.

"Keep it up, Wharton!" he called out.

"What-ho!" said Harry.

And the Remove yelled with delight.

Wingate, they knew, the Topham bowlers would never shift. Wingate was safe for "not out." It depended upon Wharton. If Wharton kept his end up, however slow the scoring was, the game would be pulled out of the fire.

Would he—could he? Against a senior team—good bowlers, good fieldsmen! But Harry Wharton was more than himself to-day—at the top of his form—playing like a Jessop, a Hayward, and a Grace rolled into one.

The next over gave him eight, and then Wingate had the bowling. Wingate put up ten. He could always be depended upon to improve the score.

Then they bowled to Wharton again. Jones bowled himself, and he put all he knew into the bowling. But he could not shift the junior.

The runs were piled on. There was a yell from Greyfriars when the score had passed the 100.

"Fifty wanted to tie," said Bob Cherry, on the roof of the pavilion. "Fifty-one to win, and Wharton will get them! What ass was that talking just now about going and playing marbles!"

Topham were putting their best efforts into it now. Never had the fielding been so alert; but they had no chances.

Once the crowd trembled as slip almost made a catch; but it was too hard, and the ball dropped.

Saved once more!

And the score was going up—not creepingly, but by leaps and bounds.

One hundred and forty!

"My hat!" said Jones. "They'll beat us yet! I'll get that kid out or bust something!"

And he bowled another over—with the result of nine runs to Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton had the bowling for the next over, with two runs to get to win!

And now the cheering had died away—the matter was too keen now for cheering. The crowd looked on with bated breath.

The bowler faced the batsman, and sent down a lightning ball. Wharton was all eyes. There was a flash of the bat, and the ball went on its journey.

And they ran! And they ran again—the run for victory—the run that was wanted to win; but there was a groan from Bob Cherry on the pavilion roof.

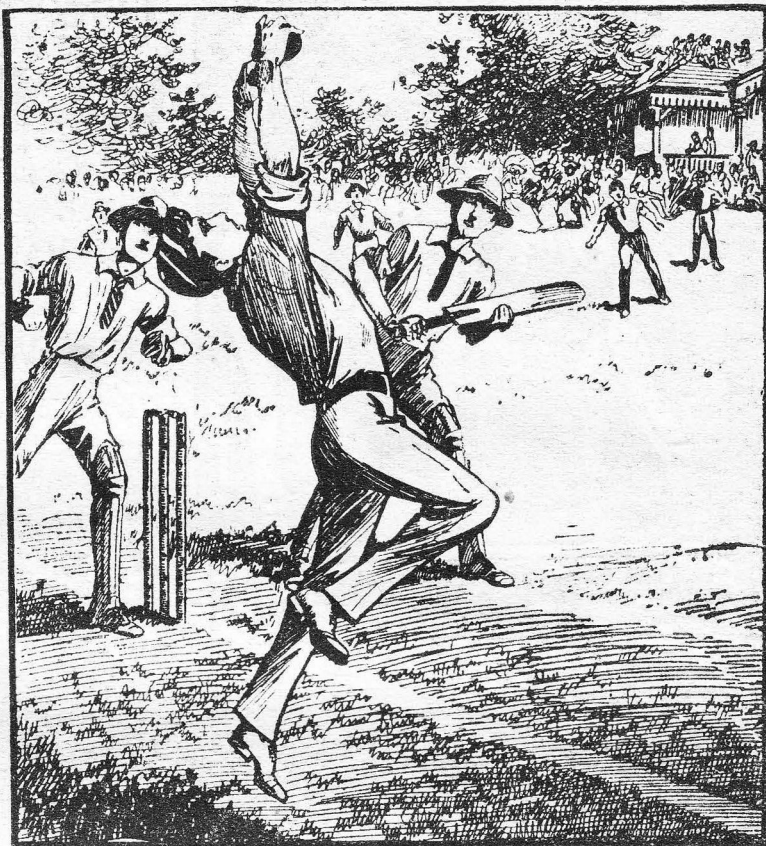
"Too late!"

It looked like it. Wingate had reached his end, and his bat was on the crease, but he had covered the ground more quickly than the junior.

Wharton was straining home; but the ball was coming in—not to the wicket-keeper, but in a straight line for the wicket—coming in from the hand of Jones, who never missed a throw-in!

Coming—coming. Greyfriars gasped! Wharton was flying—and his bat was out before him—would he do it!

Crash!



A lithe figure leaped into the air. There was a soft click, and the ball was clutched safely in Harry Wharton's right hand.

The wicket was down—and Wharton, flinging himself forward, had the end of his bat on the crease. Greyfriars trembled for the verdict; but the umpire shook his head. The bat had been there first, after all.

"Not out!"

The winning run had been taken, and Greyfriars was victorious.

Jones of Topham, defeated as he was, tapped Wharton on the shoulder, and shouted "Bravo, kid!"

Wharton could only gasp.

Wingate grasped his hand, and shook it as if he mistook it for a pump-handle, and Wharton gasped again.

But the Remove were not to be denied. They swarmed on the field.

They seized their champion, and, with wild yells and cheers, they bore him to the pavilion.

Wharton was set down at last with hardly a gasp left in him, but as happy as a prince. He had helped to win for Greyfriars, and that was all he wanted.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"  
"And now hurrah for Harry Wharton of the Remove!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah! Bravo!"  
And so ended the Topham match, and one of the greatest of days for Harry Wharton!

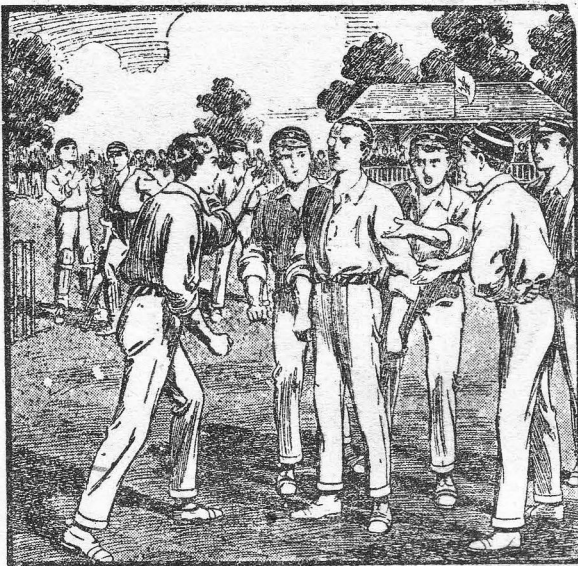
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"Look here, Smythey," said Lovell, in a tone of concentrated rage, "are you going to put a bowler on or not?"

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### The St. Jim's Match.

**J**IMMY SILVER & CO. of the Fourth Form at Rookwood were in a state of great expectation. It was the day of the great match against the juniors of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Lovell were playing for the Rookwood eleven. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Doyle, the leaders of the juniors on the Modern side, were also playing, which meant that there would be five good players on the side.

This was a concession which had been wrung from Adolphus Smythe, the captain of the junior cricket club at Rookwood, by main force.

For Smythe's idea was to play an eleven composed entirely of the "Giddy Goats"—as his select band of cronies loved to call themselves—irrespective of whether they could play cricket or not. This had led to disastrous results—from the cricket point of view—and Jimmy Silver & Co. had insisted on a few changes in the team. As it was, it contained six of the "Goats," including Adolphus himself, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were doubtful about the showing they would make against the St. Jim's eleven.

But that remained to be seen. For the present it was a glorious day, and Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking forward to the match.

Being comparatively a new boy at Rookwood, Jimmy Silver had never seen Tom Merry & Co., the heroes of St. Jim's, and he was looking forward very much to meeting them. But, above all, he was thinking about the match.

Upon the way that match turned out depended the prospects of Rookwood. For all the juniors agreed that, if there was one thing at Rookwood that really mattered, it was the Junior Sports Club.

Immediately dinner was over that day the Lower School crowded down to the playing-fields.

Smythe & Co. were there in all their glory, in spotless flannels, ready for the arrival of Tom Merry & Co. from St. Jim's. Adolphus Smythe hardly deigned a glance at the five members of his team who could play, and whom he had been forced to admit into the sacred band. The nutty members of the eleven kept to themselves—Smythe and Howard and Tracey and Selwyn of the Shell, and Topham and Townsend of the Fourth.

If personal elegance and carefully-parted hair could have won cricket matches, certainly Smythe & Co. would have had nothing to fear. Jimmy Silver's opinion was that they couldn't.

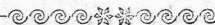
The St. Jim's brake arrived at last, and Jimmy Silver looked over the St. Jim's crowd with a keen eye. He could see at a glance that they were all good players. He noted

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the difference between the two cricket captains, too. Tom Merry, upstanding, alert, glowing with health; Smythe, lackadaisical and supercilious, his superciliousness just kept within the bounds of civility, and no more.

Smythe won the toss, and the home eleven batted first. Tom Merry led his team into the field, and the ball was tossed to a fat and cheerful-looking junior for the first over. Jimmy Silver watched him send down a trial ball, and judged his powers as a bowler. Jimmy was down for last man in. Smythe exercised all the powers of a captain, so far as his somewhat rebellious team allowed him.

Smythe opened the innings with Howard. He received the bowling of the fat Saint, and succeeded in stopping the ball twice. The third ball knocked his wicket over, and Smythe came off. Jimmy Silver gave him a deadly look.

"What price ducks' eggs, you fathead?" he asked.

Smythe put up his eyeglass and glanced at Silver.

"Next man in, Tracy!" said Smythe.

Tracy went to the wickets. The field was grinning. Jimmy Silver could see that the Saints had measure of the Rookwooders, and were regarding the whole match more or less of a joke, just as he remembered the Greyfriars fellows had done.

The fat bowler made hay of the wickets.

A long-legged fellow called Figgins relieved him in the second over, and accounted for two—Fatty Wynn had accounted for three already. Smythe's merry men had taken 4 runs so far. Five down for 4 was a score that was quite enough to make the visitors smile.

Then Lovell was at the wickets with Raby, and matters changed a little.

The Saints ceased to smile, and found that they had some leather-hunting to do. Easy catches no longer came their way, and the wickets were harder to hit than the wall of a barn.

But the bowling and the fielding were good, and the wickets went down slowly but surely. Raby fell, and Tommy Dodd took his place. The score was 40 when Tommy was caught out by Tom Merry, and Smythe called to Doyle to go in.

Jimmy Silver frowned angrily. He was last man, and Topham of the Fourth was paired with Topham, the biggest duffer in the team, and that meant that he would be "not out" for next to nothing.

Tommy Doyle was cleaned bowled by Fatty Wynn, and Topham went in. The bowling was now to Lovell. Lovell was caught out with the last ball of the over. The score was at 55.

"Next man in!" said Smythe, turning his eyeglass on Jimmy Silver.

Silver clenched his hands, and stood idly at the wicket while Topham received the bowling from Blake. Topham went at the second ball, and Jimmy Silver was "not out" for nil. The Rookwood innings had ended for 55.

Of that figure 4 had been taken by the nuts, and the rest by the unwelcome recruits

who had been "wedged" in. But Smythe seemed very well satisfied.

"Fifty-five, by gad!" he said to Tracy.

"I rather think we shall beat them—what?"

And Tracy nodded sagely, and said "Yaas."

### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

#### The Same Old Smythe.

**T**OM MERRY opened the St. Jim's innings with an elegant partner whom his comrades addressed as Gussy, and whose name, Jimmy Silver learned, was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He was as elegant a youth as any of the nuts of Rookwood, but he was a very different kind of cricketer, as he soon showed.

Smythe placed his men in the field, and put Howard on to bowl. Jimmy Silver opened his lips to speak, and closed them again. It appeared that Silver, the best bowler in the Lower School at Rookwood, was to be used only as a change bowler.

Tom Merry knocked Howard's bowling all over the field, and the batsmen crossed and recrossed. That over counted 10 for St. Jim's. When the field crossed over, Jimmy Silver fixed his eyes inquiringly upon Smythe.

Smythe seemed to be totally unaware of his existence.

"Go it, Tracy, old scout!" he said.

Tracy bowled the second over.

His bowling had no more effect on St. Jim's wickets than water on a duck.

Tom Merry or D'Arcy knocked it right and left, according to which was batting, as they ran mostly 3's.

In the third over Howard took the ball again. For several overs Howard and Tracy alternated. At last, when the field was changing over once more, Lovell yelled out to Adolphus Smythe:

"Put a bowler on, you fathead!"

But the great Adolphus went on his way, and made no sign.

The first wicket that fell was D'Arcy's—to a lucky catch by Jimmy Silver. St. Jim's had taken 50 runs by that time.

While the new batsman was coming in five infuriated fieldmen surrounded Adolphus Smythe.

"Look here, Smythey," said Lovell, in a tone of concentrated rage. "Are you going to put on a bowler, or are you not?"

"Get to your places!" said Smythe.

"Will you put Jimmy Silver on to bowl?" shrieked Lovell.

"No, I won't!"

"Will you put Raby on?"

"I'm quite satisfied with my bowlers, Lovell."

"Your bowlers! You're satisfied! You—you idiot! Will you put me on?"

"No!"

"Oh, my hat! We—we'll scrag you—"

"You'll get to your places!" said Smythe calmly. "You're keeping the bats waiting. If you don't know how to behave yourselves in the presence of a visiting team I shall leave you out of the team next match, by gad!"

Lovell doubled his fists, but Jimmy Silver dragged him away. The St. Jim's fellows were looking on in considerable surprise. In the presence of the Saints it was scarcely feasible to bring Smythe to his senses by means of a ragging.

"We've got to stand it!" muttered Jimmy Silver. "Look pleasant!"

"Are you slackers going to get to your



places?" drawled Smythe. "Buck up! I'll have no dawdlers in my team!"

The fieldsmen went to their places with feelings too deep for words.

The astute Adolphus had beaten them again.

All that Jimmy Silver & Co. could do was to watch for chances in the field, and the batsmen did not give them many chances.

However, Tom Merry was stumped at last, and Piggins was caught out; but by that time the score was 80. It mounted up and up. The infuriated chums gave Smythe imploring and threatening glances alternately; but Adolphus was blind to them equally. Howard and Tracy and Selwyn did all the bowling, excepting for an over or two delivered by the great Adolphus himself.

Wickets fell slowly. The score mounted up at a rate that was almost comic. St. Jim's were six down for 150, when Tom Merry decided to declare his innings at an end. There was little doubt that St. Jim's could have gone on batting till dark if they had liked.

Jimmy Silver had given up hope of winning the match by that time. Rookwood had made 55 in their first innings, and if they equalled that in their second, they were hopelessly beaten, and St. Jim's would not have to bat again. There was a pause in the proceedings for refreshments, and during that pause Jimmy Silver hurriedly consulted his chums, and they bore down on Smythe.

"Who's opening the innings?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"I am," said Smythe.

"With whom?"

"Howard."

"Well," said Jimmy Silver, "you're not! Understand that! You're not leaving me till last, to pair with that idiot Topham again! I'm opening the innings!"

"By gad!"

"With Tommy Dodd," added Silver.

"Who's captain of this team?" roared Smythe.

"You are—till we hold a meeting this evening!" growled Jimmy Silver. "But we're fed up! See? I'm going in first with Tommy Dodd! You show your nose on the field till I tell you, and I'll brain you with my bat!"

"You—you—you cheeky cad!" growled Smythe. "Do you think I'm going to be dictated to? Do you think—"

"By Jove, I'm not going to stand it, either!" said Howard. "I'm certainly going in to open the innings!"

"Do," said Jimmy Silver grimly, "and you'll get such a thundering hiding that you'll be glad to crawl off again!"

"Look here—" protested Smythe.

Jimmy Silver & Co. turned their backs on him. Smythe and Howard looked at one another in fury and dismay. For a member of the team to give orders to his captain in this manner was utterly unheard-of. But on reflection, Smythe decided to take it quietly.

Jimmy Silver's blood was at boiling-point, and Smythe did not want to astonish and amuse the St. Jim's team with the extraordinary sight of himself being kicked off the field by one of his own followers.

When the Saints were in the field again, Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd went on to open the innings, without so much as a look at Smythe.

Adolphus shrugged his shoulders.

Fortune smiled a little upon Rookwood now. Tommy Dodd was a mighty bat, and though Jimmy was better with bowling, he was reliable, and could be depended on to keep his end up at the wicket.

Quite forgetful of the feud between Classical and Modern, he devoted himself to stonewalling, to give Tommy Dodd every chance.

Even Fatty Wynn's bowling long failed to make any impression. The score was going up for Rookwood at last. It stood at 40 when Fatty Wynn at last succeeded in knocking Tommy Dodd's balls off.

Tommy Dodd came out, feeling pretty well satisfied. The match was a "goner," but at least they would show the visitors that Rookwood were not all duffers.

Smythe made a motion to go in, and the Modern juniors shoved him back without ceremony.

"Next man in, Tommy!" he said; and Tommy Doyle went in to join Jimmy Silver.

Anarchy was evidently reigning in the Rookwood junior team. But the team seemed all the better for it. Smythe had passed the limit.

The batsmen were keeping the field busy now. Jimmy Silver had done very well by the time Tom Merry caught him out.

Again Smythe made a motion to go in, and again he was shoved back, and Raby was

sent in. And when Doyle came out Lovell took his place.

The infuriated nuts glared and scowled and frowned, but it was no use. The five players were in the mood to mop up the ground with them if they raised objections. So they did not raise objections.

The score was at 90 when Lovell fell. "Now you blessed idiots can go on!" growled Jimmy Silver. "Only 5 wanted to lie, and make St. Jim's bat again; but I'll bet you won't get them."

Jimmy Silver was right; they did not get them. After Lovell came out it was a regular procession of falling wickets. Four runs were added, when the last wicket fell.

The total for the two innings was 149. There was no need for St. Jim's to bat again. They had won by an innings and 1 run.

"Hard luck!" said Tom Merry to Adolphus Smythe, when the last wicket was down. Smythe nodded.

"Yaas," he remarked. "I've had some trouble in my team. My mistake, playing Fourth-Form fags, you know. I sha'n't make that mistake another time. You've beaten us, by gad!"

Tom Merry & Co. departed in their brake, satisfied with their victory, but somewhat puzzled by that peculiar match. The difference in form among the players astonished them. Some of the Rookwood players were tip-top, the others duffers of the first water, as they could not help noticing.

But Jimmy Silver was determined that there should be a big change before the time came for the return match with St. Jim's.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Fall of the Mighty.

"A MEETING in the Common-room, Smythe."

Smythe carefully jammed his eyeglass into his eye and stared at Jimmy Silver, with the most disdainful expression he could assume.

"Sorry! Got an engagement!"

"You're coming to the meeting," said Jimmy Silver.

"Can't be did!"

"Come on!" roared Lovell.

"I tell you I won't! I—"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, having secured an arm each, marched Adolphus towards the School House. Adolphus wriggled, whereupon they cheerfully twisted his arms till he howled with pain; and after that he went like a lamb.

The Common-room was already crowded when they arrived.

Smythe having joined the meeting—by force majeure—the rest of the nuts turned up to stand by him. It was known that Smythe was to be called upon to resign, and the Giddy Goats were prepared to resist the deposition of their leader. Tommy Dodd had whipped up every Modern member of the club, and the Classics had turned up to the last man.

The Common-room was crowded.

"Everybody here?" asked Jimmy Silver, looking round.

"Every man-jack," said Lovell. "I've seen to it that all our chaps are here. And I believe all the Modern worms have wriggled in."

"You can bet we're all here!" said Tommy Dodd warmly. "I should think even you duffers are fed up with a Classical skipper by this time!"

"I don't recognise this meetin'!" roared Smythe.

"Shut up!"

"I'm goin' out—"

"Lock the door, Hooker!"

Hooker of the Fourth turned the key.

Jimmy Silver jumped on a chair to address the meeting. Smythe and the rest of the nuts drew together in a group, with indignant and angry faces.

"Gentlemen," said Jimmy Silver, "as members of the Junior Sports Club of Rookwood, you have been called together—"

"Hear, hear!"

"To consider the important question of a new election for the captaincy. I put it to the club that Smythe is called upon to resign, and that if he doesn't resign he be forthwith kicked out!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

Classicals and Moderns vied with one another in greeting that proposition with the wildest enthusiasm.

Adolphus Smythe's fate was sealed.

"Look here," shouted Smythe, "I warn you, you cheeky fags, if I'm not captain, I resign from the club altogether!"

"All the better for the club!" chirruped Tommy Dodd.

"And my friends will resign along with me!" said Smythe.

"Yaas, we back you up, Smythe," said Townsend.

"Let 'em resign, and be blowed!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Kick 'em out!"

"Well, we'll resign!" said Smythe savagely.

"That'll leave a Modern majority in the club. You chaps will get a Modern skipper, and I wish you joy of him. Come on, you fellows; let's leave 'em to their blessed election!"

Smythe & Co. made a movement towards the door.

Tommy Dodd and the Moderns exchanged looks of satisfaction. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another in consternation. This was not exactly what they wanted.

"Hold on, Smythe!" said Lovell, with more civility than he was accustomed to show to the dandy of the School.

"Thinkin' better of it?" sneered Smythe.

"Ahem! There's no reason why you should resign from the club, you know," said Jimmy Silver. "You don't want to chuck up cricket. With a bit more buking-up, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to play!"

"Yes; don't be a cad, Smythe!" urged Raby. "Stay here to vote Classical!"

"Oh, let him go!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "The sooner he clears out of the club, the better for the club!"

"That's all very well for you, you Modern bouncer. Will you agree to vote for me for skipper?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"No jolly fear!"

"We can't have a Modern skipper!"

"Rats! That's just what you want!"

"You Modern ass—"

"You Classical duffer—"

"Well, what's it going to be?" demanded Smythe triumphantly. "If I go I go, and my friends go with me. And you'll get a Modern cad for captain. I don't care!"

"Stay and vote Classical," urged Newcome.

"Rats!"

"You jolly well will!" said Jimmy Silver grimly. "You're still members of the club till your subscriptions run out. You'll stay and vote. Collar the cads!"

"Hands off!" roared Smythe, making for the door.

"Collar them!"

"Hold the rotten traitors!"

"Let 'em alone!" roared the Moderns. "Let 'em clear out! Let's have a fair vote!"

Smythe & Co. struggled for the door, but the Pistical Four were upon them. There were a dozen of the Giddy Goats, and their withdrawal would have left matters hopelessly in the hands of the Moderns. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not intend to stand that.

Each of the hapless nuts was promptly collared by a Classical junior, and held fast.

They resisted at first, but they soon left off resisting. Jimmy Silver & Co. did not handle them gently.

"Let's rescue the rotters," suggested Towle, of the Modern side. "They're not going to pack the meeting like that. Those fellows ain't going to vote, if they don't want to, Tommy Dodd!"

"Rats!" said Tommy Dodd. "We want to win the election, but fair play's a jewel. I tell you. Let the Classics alone!"

Tommy Dodd's word was law. The Moderns held back from the tussle, and Smythe & Co. were soon reduced to order.

The nuts, having been reduced to order, Jimmy Silver mounted the chair again to address the meeting. Smythe & Co. cast longing glances towards the door. But a crowd of Classics had their backs to it. There was no escape for the Giddy Goats.

Smythe drew aside with his comrades. He was almost stuttering with rage.

"Keep your eye on me, you chaps," he whispered. "Vote as I do!"

"That cad Silver will get in as captain," mumbled Howard. "There's one more Classical than Modern counting us!"

Smythe grinned in a really malignant way. "I've got a card up my sleeve for the beast!" he said, in a low voice. "You wait till the voting begins!"

"I don't see—" began Howard.

"We've got to vote!" growled Townsend.

"They'll scrag us if we don't!"

"Yes, ass, we've got to vote; but—"

"But what?"

"We'll make that cheeky cad sorry for it!"

"How?" demanded the nuts.

Smythe sank his voice to the lowest of whispers.

"Vote Modern!"

The nuts stared at their leader for a moment. Then they burst into a chuckle. Truly, Adolphus had a card up his sleeve for Jimmy Silver!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

## The New Captain.

**J**IMMY SILVER was addressing the meeting once more. Jimmy was in high feather. Smythe & Co., having been persuaded to stay and vote, there was a Classical majority of one, and that one vote was enough to carry the election.

Tommy Dodd realised that, too, and he was looking very grave. His regard for fair play had prevented him from interfering between Jimmy Silver and the rebellious Classical voters. But it looked as if he would have to pay dearly for it. His chums gave him reproachful looks. They wanted strict fair play, of course; but they wanted their candidate to win, too. They felt that Tommy Dodd had thrown away his chance—his last chance.

"Can't be helped," growled Tommy Dodd. "Fair play's a jewel, I keep on telling you. We don't want to win by a dodge!"

"But we want to win!" growled Towle.

"Perhaps some of the Classicals will vote for me," said Tommy Dodd hopefully. "They must know I'm a better man than that Classic ass Silver!"

"Catch 'em!" growled Cook.

"Gentlemen," Jimmy Silver was saying, "the post of captain now being vacant, an election will be held to fill it. All the electors being present and ready to vote, we will now proceed to business. Mr. Bootles not being available to do the counting, we shall have to do it ourselves. Lovell will propose the Classic candidate!"

"And, sure, I'll propose the Modern candidate," said Doyle.

"Hear, hear!"

Lovell forthwith proposed his friend Jimmy Silver, and was seconded by Raby, the proposing and seconding being greeted with Classic cheers and Modern howls and groans.

Then Doyle jumped up to propose Tommy Dodd, seconded by Cook, with the same kind of greeting—excepting that in this case the cheers proceeded from the Modern crowd, and the howls and groans from the Classicals.

"Jintlemen," went on Doyle, waving his hand for silence, "I have a few more worruds to say."

"Go it, Doyle!"—from the Moderns.

"Cut it short, you ass!"—from the Classicals.

"Jintlemen, you all know me frind Tommy Dodd. Sure, he's one of the best, and a broth av a bhoy intirely. Jintlemen—but sure I know yez too well to call ye jintlemen—"

"Cheese it!"

"Jintlemen, I had a few more worruds to say, but, sure, I've forgotten them—"

"Ring off!"

"Knock that duffer over!"

"But, jintlemen, I call upon you to save Rookwood from going to the dogs, by rallying round me frind Tommy Dodd; and I say, and I repeat— Yarooooooop!"

Somebody kicked the legs of the chair away at that point, and Tommy Doyle came to the floor with a loud bump and a louder yell. It was the end of his speech.

"Now that duffer's run off, we'll get on to

the counting," said Lovell. "Hands up for Jimmy Silver!"

"Hands up for Tommy Dodd!"

"Classicals first, you cheeky fatheads!"

"Moderns first, you Classic snobs!"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

Jimmy Silver produced his penny again, and the rivals of Rookwood tossed up for precedence. This time luck favoured Tommy Dodd.

Cook waved his hand.

"Hands up for Tommy Dodd!" he shouted.

Every Modern hand went up. And there was a whoop of joy from the Moderns as a dozen Classic hands went up also. They were the hands of Adolphus Smythe & Co., the Giddy Goats of Rookwood. Thus were the outraged nuts avenged their wrongs upon Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Hurrah!" roared Cook. "Count! Count!"

"Hold on!" bellowed Jimmy Silver, in alarm. "Hold on! Smythe, what are you up to? It's the Modern vote now!"

Smythe grinned.

"Yaas; I'm quite aware of that!" he assented.

"You—you—you're voting Modern!" hissed Jimmy Silver.

"Yaas!"

"Why, you—you cad! You villain—"

"Tain't allowed!" roared Lovell. "Scrag 'em!"

"Let 'em alone!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "Every chap has a right to vote as he likes. Of course, they know which is the better man!"

"Look here, Smythe—"

"I'm votin' Modern," said Smythe calmly.

"I think Tommy Dodd will make a better captain than Jimmy Silver."

"Hear, hear!" chorused the Moderns.

"Bravo, Smythe!"

"You traitor! You—you unspeakable rotter! You—you—" Jimmy Silver could hardly stammer for wrath. "You—you're backing up the enemy!"

"Eh?" said Smythe. "You wouldn't complain if some of the Moderns voted for you—"

"That's different, of course—"

"Smythe's right!" hooted Tommy Dodd.

"You back me up, Smythe! You're not such a silly howler as I always thought, by gum!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were stricken with dismay. To their innocent minds, such treachery on the part of the nuts had not seemed possible. They naturally expected Classicals to back up the Classic side, as ducks take to water. Had they not backed up Smythe themselves at the last election, and thus brought dire disaster on the Sports Club? The action of the turncoats completely took the wind out of their sails.

The Moderns proceeded jubilantly with the counting. The Fistical Four held a hurried consultation. But there was nothing to be done—for once even Jimmy Silver was beaten.

The nuts could be forced to vote, but they voted as they chose—to compel them to hold up their hands for the Classicals' candidate was not feasible, in the presence of the Moderns. Besides, it would have made the election null. Kicking them out would not

have improved matters, since it would have left the Moderns with a big majority.

The Classical chums looked at one another with sickly expressions.

The Moderns counted away in great glee. "Sixty-six!" shouted Tommy Cook. "Do you want to count, you Classic bounders?"

Jimmy Silver grunted. It was not much use counting. However, they counted. The result was forty-three for Jimmy Silver.

A dozen votes taken away from the Classic side, and added to the Modern side made all the difference, and Tommy Dodd's majority was tremendous.

The Common-room rang with Modern cheers.

"Licked to the wide!" said Lovell dispiritedly.

"Well, it's all the better for the cricket, anyway," said Jimmy Silver heroically. "I'd rather have Tommy Dodd than that fathead Smythe. Duddy, old man, congratulations!"

Tommy Dodd patted him on the back.

"It's all right, Silver, old man! The cricket club is going ahead now. Every chap who can play will have a chance—Classic as well as Modern. You can depend on me to do the fair thing, I think. Your four chaps are going into the eleven, for a start."

And the Fistical Four were somewhat comforted.

There were great rejoicings on the Modern side at Rookwood that evening.

Tommy Dodd was junior captain—a Modern had got in at last! All the Modern juniors were in great jubilation.

But in the end study, on the Classic side, the Fistical Four were looking very serious. They had succeeded in "booting" Adolphus Smythe, and the cricket prospects had brightened considerably. That was so much to the good. And on reflection they agreed that they preferred Tommy Dodd, Modern as he was, in that responsible position, to the ineffable Adolphus.

"But it's a whack in the eye for the Classic side, and for this study!" said Lovell.

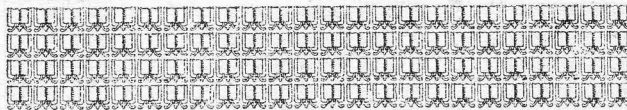
"Never mind," said Jimmy Silver. "Next term we'll have another go, and we'll get in a Classical skipper. And, meanwhile, we'll give the Giddy Goats a lesson about turning traitor and voting against their own side! Adolphus has asked for it, and now he's going to get it—where the chicken got the chopper!"

Adolphus did get it. The Giddy Goats were chucking over the excellent way they had "done" the Fistical Four, when the Fistical Four and a crowd of other exasperated Classicals called in on them. The scene that followed was painful—painful in the extreme.

Jimmy Silver & Co. departed somewhat consoled. They left Smythe's study, and Smythe and the nuts, looking as if a cyclone had struck them. Adolphus had "done" the Fistical Four; but Adolphus & Co., as they sorted themselves out, groaning, from the wreckage, could not help feeling that they had been still more completely and thoroughly "done."

THE END.

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# THE "JAZZ" AT ST. JIM'S!

A Grand Long, Complete Story  
of TOM MERRY & Co., the  
Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Too Much Jazz.

"FOR goodness' sake, cheese it!"  
Tom Merry made the appeal in a tone of exasperation.

He was trying to write lines at his study table, and as he had to finish fifty of Virgil before tea he had plenty to do. Manners was making toast, kneeling before the study fire with a very ruddy face. Monty Lowther was drumming on the table. And this drumming went incessantly to the same time—and the time was Jazz!

Tap-TAP-tap! Tap-tap! Tap-TAP-tap! Tap-tap!

Tom Merry had borne it patiently for quite a long time. The Jazz had reached St. Jim's—and Monty Lowther had been its most complete and hopeless victim. Monty Lowther said that he was musical—though nobody believed him. His musical tastes ran in the direction of banjos, bones, and rag-time.

Tap-TAP-tap! Tap-tap!  
"Cheese it!" roared Tom Merry.  
Monty Lowther grunted.

"I thought it would amuse you while you were working," he explained. "Jazz music is inspiring. It bucks you up!"

"It makes me tired!" growled Tom Merry. "I'm fed-up on Jazz music—especially yours. Your Jazz is jazzier than any other Jazz that was ever jazzed!"

And Tom Merry's pen drove on again, recapitulating the fatiguing adventures of the pious Æneas.

Monty Lowther moved away from the table. But the spirit was moving him, and in a few minutes he was tapping on the window-pane.

Tap-TAP-tap! Tap-tap!  
Tom Merry looked up from Virgil, and glared.

"If you don't chuck that row, Lowther, you'll get chucked! Savvy?"

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther. "It's a kind of thing you catch, like measles, and I've caught it. It's a jolly good thing, too. Talk about Beethoven! Beethoven never composed Jazz music! Look here, I've got an idea."

"Shurrup!"  
"It's a jolly good idea—"  
"Cheese it!"

"Never mind those lines. You can tell old Linton you hadn't time for them—he'll only double 'em!" said Lowther calmly. "This idea of mine—he was drumming on the table again as he spoke—tap-TAP-tap, tap-tap—is simply ripping! It will take the shine out of the New House for one thing; and it will give Study No. 6 the giddy kybosh. Listen to me—"

"It's simply syncopation," said Manners, looking up from the fire and the toast. Manners was really musical, and what he didn't know about minims and demi-semi-quavers wasn't worth knowing. "You see—"

"My idea is this—" resumed Monty Lowther. Tap-TAP-tap—tap-tap!

"And my idea is this!" said Tom Merry sulphurously. "If you don't shut up I'll lam you with a cricket-stump!"

"I've been thinking it out for quite a long time," said Lowther, with undiminished calmness. "Jazz is the thing nowadays. Everybody's doing it! I Jazz, thou Jazzest, he Jazzes—nous Jazzons, vous Jazzez—"

"Shurrup!"  
"Therefore," pursued Lowther, keeping a wary eye, however, upon his exasperated study-leader. "Therefore I've thought of a ripping scheme—"

Biff!

There was a cushion on Tom Merry's chair behind him. To grasp and hurl it at Monty Lowther was, as the novelist says, the work of a moment. It caught Monty Lowther fairly on the chin, fairly interrupting his explanation of his ripping scheme.

Bump!  
Lowther sat down on the study carpet. A cloud of dust rose therefrom, and a wild howl from Monty Lowther.

"Yaroo! Oh, you ass!"  
"Now shurrup!" said Tom Merry.

Whiz!  
The cushion came back unexpectedly. It did not hit Tom Merry, but it caught the inkpot, and hurled it over the sheet of impot paper stretched before the labouring junior, and there was a yell of wrath from Tom Merry. His repetition of the adventures of the pious Æneas had disappeared under a flood of ink. Those lines would never be seen by Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell—indeed, they would never again be seen by mortal eye.

"You frabjous ass!" roared Tom Merry. "Look what you've done!"

"Ha, ha! Sorry! I meant it for you! Ha, ha!"

"You ass!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry jumped up. He grasped the inky sheet in his hand and rushed at his study-mate. The inky imposition would not do for Mr. Linton, but it did very well for Monty Lowther. Tom Merry laid a violent grasp upon his study-mate, and dabbed the inky sheet upon his features, and Monty Lowther was transformed with startling suddenness into a real Jazz band minstrel.

"Ow!" gasped Lowther. "Stop! Yah! Oh! Groo!"

But Tom Merry did not stop it. He had his chum's head in chancery, and he rubbed the inky sheet over his face till it was rubbed into pieces. Monty Lowther roared and struggled.

"There!" gasped Tom Merry, as he released his chum. "Now you can go and wash, and give us a rest from your blessed Jazz music for a bit."

"Groooh!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry in his turn. Monty Lowther's face was crimson with rage, where it wasn't black with ink, and the mixture was very striking.

"You—you—your dummy!" gasped Lowther. "You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Peace, my infants—peace!" said Manners soothingly, interposing as Lowther rushed at his leader. "Peace, my children!"

"I'll—I'll slaughter him!" roared Lowther. "You can do anything you like excepting buzz Jazz music!" said Tom Merry affably.

"I'll—I'll—"  
"Go and get a wash!" suggested Manners. "Tea's ready!"

And Monty Lowther stamped out of the study, and slammed the door.

"My blessed impot's spoiled!" growled Tom Merry. "And I had thirty done. I sha'n't be able to take it in before tea-time now, and Linton will make it a hundred. I'm fed up to the chin with Jazz music!"

"Never mind—tea's ready! If you're not going to do lines, lay the table," said the practical Manners.

Tom Merry grunted, and laid the table. Tea was made, and there was a fragrant pile of toast ready when Lowther came back, washed and white again. He kicked the door open, and even then he could not help kicking in Jazztime.

Kick-KICK-kick—kick-kick!  
Then he came in.

"Tea's ready!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "You can help me do my lines after tea!"

"Rats!" said Lowther.  
But under the combined influence of tea and toast his good humour returned.

"I'll tell you my ripping idea, if you like," he said amiably.

Tom Merry held up a warning finger. "Is it anything to do with the Jazz?"

"Of course it is, fathead!"  
"Then you can keep it a dead secret. We're fed up—fed up to the neck! After tea you can go and tell Blake and D'Arcy in Study No. 6."

"Look here! You know there's a regatta at Abbotsford on Saturday—"

"Or you can take it over to the New House, and spring it on Figgins & Co."

"I tell you—"  
"Don't!"

Monty Lowther glared and consumed tea and toast. When tea was finished, he tapped idly on his cup with his spoon.

Tap-TAP-tap! Tap-tap!  
"Cheese it!" shouted Tom Merry. "There you go again!"

"Rats!" said Lowther. "Look here, my idea is simply stunning! Now that Jazz music is all the rage—"

"There'll be a rage here, if you don't shut up!"

"I was thinking—"  
"Rats!"

"What price a Jazz band, performing to the crowd at Abbotsford Regatta—"

"Bosh!"  
"We three could do it—and we might let Blake in—and Herries—"

"Piffle!"  
"It would be a regular scream!" said Lowther earnestly. "It would put the lid on Figgins & Co. have never thought of anything of the sort—"

"Too much sense!" said Tom Merry.  
"Look here!" roared Lowther. "Are you going to listen to me, you silly chumps, or are you not?"

"NOT!" said Tom Merry and Manners simultaneously.

Monty Lowther rose and snorted, and departed in disgust from the study, with a gesture that indicated that he was shaking the dust of that famous apartment from his feet. This time he did not return.

"Thank goodness!" said Tom Merry. "Now I can get my lines done! Wire in, Manners, old man, and make your fist as like mine as you can!"

And the chums of the Shell wired in. In the meantime Monty Lowther was going to and fro in the School House of St. Jim's, not seeking whom he might devour, but seeking some kindred spirit in whom to confide his ripping, stunning idea!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Whose Idea?

"WELL pulled, Figgins!"  
Figgins of the Fourth drew his skiff up to the landing-raft, and stepped out, his rugged face flushed and ruddy with exercise.

Raft and towing-path along the shining Ryll were crowded with St. Jim's fellows. Kerr and fatty Wynn, Figgy's chums in the New House, met him with slaps on the shoulder, and Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, called out a word of commendation.

Figgins was as good an oarsman as he was a batsman, or a forward on the Soccer field. There were few things that George Figgins could not do, and do well, out of doors, though in the Form-room Mr. Lathom, the

master of the Fourth at St. Jim's, confessed that Figgins was not one of his brightest pupils.

Figgins' honest face wore a look of pleasure as he walked up from the boathouse with his chums towards the school. Figgins had enjoyed his pull up the river, and he had pulled well. He knew that, and had easily beaten Cutts of the Fifth, who had been pulling back to the raft, and had put his beef into it simply to show Figgins that the Fourth were hopelessly outclassed by the Fifth. But Figgins had put his beef into it, too, and had simply walked away from Cutts, and the Fifth-Former was still on the river, frowning.

"Cutts is looking cross!" grinned Kerr. "Why, you simply left him standing, Figgy! One up for the New House—what?"

"Let's drop in at the tuckshop!" said Fatty Wynn. "Figgy must be thirsty after that pull."

"One for Figgy, and two for Fatty!" said Figgins cheerily. "Well, I could do with a ginger-pop. But I've got something to say to you chaps," he added, as they turned into the school shop, and Fatty Wynn sang out to Dame Taggles for three gingers.

"Say on, O King!" said Kerr, who, as chief member and stage-manager of the New House Junior Dramatic Society, sometimes dropped into Shakespearean language on everyday occasions.

"Can't jaw here," said Figgins. "Don't want the School House chaps to get on to it; and there's Levison listening already with his ears. Curious how that chap can't mind his own business."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Levison, of the Fourth.

"Buck up, Fatty!"

"I was thinking of having some tarts," said Fatty Wynn. "I'm hungry. I didn't have much for dinner. Old Ratty keeps his eye on me so much that I don't like to ask for more than three helpings of anything."

"Must be famished," said Figgins sympathetically.

"Well, I'm not famished, but jolly peckish," said Fatty Wynn. "You see, as we've been out, I've had nothing since dinner, excepting the cake and the doughnuts and some sandwiches I had in my pockets, and the cocoanut and the apples. Still, if you're pressed for time, I won't stay for the tarts!"

"Good! Come on!"

"I'll take them with me," added Fatty Wynn. "Put a dozen tarts in a bag for me, Mrs. Taggles, please—two-penny ones."

"Yes, Master Wynn."

And the chums of the New House turned to go, Fatty Wynn with the bag of tarts under his arm.

"Lowther's looking for you chaps," said Kangaroo, of the Shell, coming into the tuckshop, as the New House trio were going out.

"Let him look!" said Figgins cheerfully.

Figgins & Co. went into the New House. The brow of the great Figgins was wrinkled in thought, and the Co. could see that some idea was working in the brain of their leader. But Figgins did not speak till they were in the study. Fatty Wynn sat down with the bag of tarts on his knees, and the Co. prepared to listen.

"Well," said Kerr, "what is it? Raid on the School House? It's some time since we woke those fellows up over the way."

"Jolly good idea to raid 'em," said Fatty Wynn. "D'Arcy had a fiver yesterday, and he's standing royal feeds in Study No. 6. Might get some plunder—what!"

"Oh, you pile into the tarts, and shut up!" said Figgins. "I've got an idea, and I think it will be a score over the School House. But we shall have to keep it dark. It came into my head while I was pulling against Cutts of the Fifth. I beat him, didn't I?"

"Hands down!" said Kerr.

"And you two fellows pull jolly well!"

"True, O King!"

"And Redfern pulls a good oar, and so do Lawrence and Owen. That's six. And we could find a couple in the Shell for the eight."

"Eh?"

"It would be only fair to give the Shell a look in. Say Thompson and Murphy major," said Figgins thoughtfully.

"Got any idea of what you're talking about, Figgy?" asked Kerr pleasantly. "If you have you might explain to me."

"I want eight, of course."

"Eh?" said Fatty Wynn, looking up from the tarts.

"I want eight," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn looked distressed.

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"Sorry, Figgy, old man; you should have spoken before. Will seven do?"

"What?"

"There's only seven left," said Fatty Wynn. "I didn't know you wanted eight. You never did care much for tarts, you know. And I've done in five already."

"You ass!" said Figgins witheringly. "Do you think I want your silly tarts?"

"Well, if you don't, so much the better," said Fatty Wynn, much relieved. "You're welcome to them if you want them, though. But there's only seven. You said you wanted eight. Didn't he, Kerr?"

"Certainly he did!" grinned Kerr.

"Eight oarsmen, fathead!" roared Figgins.

"Oh!"

"That's the idea," said Figgins. "You chaps know that next Saturday the Abbotsford Regatta takes place. It's a regular kick-up, you know. Houseboats, launches, sports, rowing matches—quite a shine! There's an event for junior eights, and I heard to-day that Abbotsford School have had the check to enter an eight."

"But what on earth—"

"Well, it's up to St. Jim's to lick Abbotsford, I suppose," said Figgins, rather warmly. "We've never bothered our heads about the regatta before; but that's no reason why we shouldn't now. Abbotsford have never bothered about it before. You see, it's getting to be a bigger thing than it used to be. D'Arcy's governor—Lord Eastwood—is having a houseboat there. D'Arcy's cousin Ethel is going to be there—"

Figgins paused, and coloured a little, perhaps conscious of the fact that a slight grin passed simultaneously over the faces of Kerr and Wynn. Both of them thought they knew why Figgins had so suddenly thought of entering a St. Jim's junior eight at the Abbotsford Regatta.

"I don't see anything to grin at myself," said Figgins, rather crossly. "I'm thinking of upholding the honour of St. Jim's, while you chaps seem to be thinking of nothing but munching jam-tarts!"

Kerr was not munching jam-tarts, but he let it pass.

"Well, what's the idea exactly, Figgy?" he said soothingly.

"Why not a New House eight?" said Figgins boldly. "We can keep it a dead secret from the School House chaps, and slog in at rowing practice. We're getting ripping fine weather now, and we can spend every minute possible on the river. If we beat Abbotsford, it will be a lot of kudos for St. Jim's, and the New House will have done the trick. The School House chaps will tear their hair when they see us at the regatta in our eight-oar—what!"

"By Jove!" said Kerr, duly impressed.

"Jolly good idea!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "Isn't there a cup or something for the winners of the junior eights?"

"Yes; a silver cup."

"We could sell it, and stand a stunning feed—"

"You—you blessed porpoise!" howled Figgins. "Let me catch you selling a cup! You fat duffer! We'll hang it up in the House, and ask the School House fellows round to stare at it. That's what we'll do."

"If we get it," murmured Kerr.

"I suppose we can beat Abbotsford, can't we?" demanded Figgins. "Rylcombe Rowing Club and Wayland Dolphins have entered, too, but they're outsiders."

"Good scheme!" said Kerr heartily. "We'll enter, and we'll lick all comers! We'll hang the cup high in the high hall, and—"

"And gloat!" said Fatty Wynn.

There was a tap at the door, and Monty Lowther of the Shell came into the study. The New House trio did not look overpleased at the sight of the School House fellow. They were busy in the discussion of Figgins' new scheme. However, they were nothing if not polite, so Figgins asked Monty Lowther what the dickens he wanted.

"Just looked in to see you chaps," said Lowther cheerfully. "How are you getting on?"

"All serene!" growled Figgins.

"Not dead of indigestion yet?" asked Lowther, with a glance of affectionate solicitude at Fatty Wynn, who was at his tenth tart.

Fatty Wynn glared.

"If you've come over here to be funny—"

he began.

"I haven't," said Lowther hastily, as the New House Co. showed signs of hostility. "I came over here to tell you my new idea."

The New House Co. started. They were sus-

picious at once. Figgins had just propounded a new idea, and they suspected immediately that the same idea had occurred to Monty Lowther. Indeed, it was not improbable that it might occur to a good many fellows that it would be a good idea to enter an eight for the junior match at the regatta. But Figgins & Co. were "wrathful" at once. It was their idea—their very own—and they were prepared to sack the School House, and massacre all the inhabitants thereof before they would allow it to be bagged by their old rivals.

"Oh, you're dealing in new ideas, are you?" said Figgins.

Lowther nodded, with a bland smile.

"Exactly. It's a new, ripping A1, copper-bottomed, non-skidding, back-pedal, first-chop idea!" he said enthusiastically. "A regular double-back-action, gilt-edged, top-notch wheeze."

Figgins sniffed.

"And you came over to tell us?"

"Right first time," agreed Lowther.

"It didn't occur to you that perhaps we'd thought of it already, and were first in the field, and wouldn't allow any outsiders in?" demanded Figgins wrathfully.

"Well, no. One naturally doesn't expect to hear of any new ideas in this House, you know," said Monty Lowther innocently.

"Hold on," said Kerr, as Figgins glanced round for a cricket-stump. "Is it anything to do with a certain event next Saturday, Lowther?"

"Right again!" said Lowther. "I must say you chaps are getting brighter. I suppose you've heard of the Abbotsford Regatta?"

"The Regatta!" howled Figgins & Co. with one voice.

"Exactly."

"That's your idea—eh?"

"That's it! You see, the Abbotsford Regatta is a bigger thing than ever this year, and there will be a big crowd there. D'Arcy's governor will be there, and cousin Ethel, and us! Quite a crowd of toffs, in fact," said Lowther.

"You cheeky bounder!" said Figgins. "You're a day late. Your idea isn't a new idea, and we were already arranging it when you came in."

"Oh, rats!"

"I tell you it's so. You're going to keep your blessed School House paws off the Abbotsford Regatta!" howled Figgins. "We won't have it, so there!"

"More rats!" said Lowther. "I was going to let you chaps into the scheme on equal terms. You see, the idea is simply ripping, and it's never been thought of before at St. Jim's—"

"I know it hasn't, and I was jolly well the first chap to think of it—"

"Bosh! I told it to Tom Merry an hour ago, and then to Blake—"

"I thought of it more than an hour ago."

"My dear Figgy, you're dreaming! You can't think of things. You must have heard some School House chap speaking about it, and then you dreamed you thought of it. Don't you think that's likely?" suggested Lowther.

Figgins & Co. made a movement towards Monty Lowther. The Shell fellow backed towards the door.

"You're not going to bag our wheeze!" said Figgins. "Before you get out of the New House you're going to swear—"

"Couldn't! I've been too well brought up; and, besides, I don't know any words," said Lowther pleasantly.

"Swear that you won't try to work that idea—"

"Why, it's my own idea!" said Lowther indignantly.

"It's mine!" roared Figgins.

"Rats! It's mine!"

"Collar him!" shouted the exasperated Figgins. "We'll jolly soon show him whether it's his idea or not!"

Monty Lowther whipped out of the study, but the three were upon him in a twinkling. There was a wild and whirling struggle in the passage. From that wild struggle Monty Lowther emerged with his collar torn out, his hair ruffled, and his jacket split up the back, and covered with dust. He fed headlong down the passage, and descended the stairs three at a time, with Figgins & Co. whooping on his track. He dashed at top speed out of the New House, and the indignant juniors chased him two-thirds of the way to the School House, and only desisted at the sight of a crowd of School House fellows rushing to the rescue.



## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Quite a Difference.

"GREAT Scott! What's happened, Lowthah, dear boy?"  
 "Been in the wars?" asked Blake, of the Fourth.  
 "Or in an earthquake?" asked Tom Merry.  
 "Or in a cyclone!" suggested Manners.  
 Monty Lowther grunted. He could not speak for the moment; he was breathless. He leaned against the passage wall in the School House, and breathed hard. The Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers stared at him inquiringly. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth extracted an eyeglass from his waistcoat-pocket, and jammed it into his right eye, and fixed it upon the dusty and dishevelled junior as if he wanted to bore a hole in him by sheer fixity of gaze.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, at length. "You do look a week, Lowthah!"

"The New House kids have been chasing him," said Kangaroo of the Shell, coming in. "He's been over there, telling them some of his funny stories, perhaps, and naturally they got waxy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" gasped Monty Lowther. "I went over to tell Figgins & Co. my new, ripping idea, as you silly asses won't take it up."

"Yaas, upon the whole, Lowthah, as a musician, I cannot approve of Jazz music," said Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head.

"And I'm fed-up with it," said Jack Blake.

"Up to the chin!" said Tom Merry feelingly.

"Besides, it's a rotten idea," said Manners. "Figgins & Co. don't think so!" snapped Lowther.

"Taking it up, eh?" grinned Herries.

"They're taking it up, and taking it off me!" howled Lowther. "As soon as I started telling Figgins, he started telling me that he had thought of the same idea; and that was how we came to have a row. Figgins & Co. have got the same wheeze, and they're going to work it, and say they're going to keep us out of it."

"My hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"And there goes the last chance of the School House getting the kudos, owing to you silly chumps not backing me up," said Monty Lowther wrathfully. "Instead of the School House Jazz Band, it will be the New House Jazz Band, that will play at Abbotsford Regatta."

"All the worse for the Regatta," said Digby. "We shall be there, and if the Jazz band get ragged we'll lend a hand."

"Yaas, watahah!"

But Tom Merry was wrinkling his brows thoughtfully. The news that Figgins & Co. had taken up the same idea, and were going to work it, and keep the School House out of it, of course, put quite a new complexion on the matter. If Figgins & Co. intended to start a Jazz band, there was no reason why a School House Jazz band shouldn't start, too, and put Figgins & Co. into the shade. It was "up" to the School House to keep their old rivals from scoring, of course.

"That alters the case!" said Tom Merry, at last.

"You mean you're ready to back me up now it's too late," said Lowther, with a sniff.

"It isn't too late. If we're going to take a band to the regatta, we've got a week to practise in nearly, and in that time I suppose we can learn to chuck off such things as 'Me and My Gal,' and 'Buzz Buzz.' If Figgins & Co. are going to do it, it's up to us to cut them out. That makes a horse of quite another colour; besides, it was a School House wheeze."

"Of course it was," said Lowther. "I told Figgy he must have heard one of our chaps speaking of it, and dreamed that he thought of it himself. Then there was trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha! Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, looking round, "musicians wanted. All the fellows who possess musical instruments, and can make a row on them, are requested to step into my study this evening, and put their names down for the Lowther Jazz Band."

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll jolly soon show Figgins & Co. that they can't get ahead of us," said Tom Merry. "and if they turn up with a mouldy old band at the regatta, we'll play them off the giddy earth!"

"Yaas, watahah! Pewwaps it would be a good idea. Tom Mewwy, to vawvy our performance with some classic solos. I should be willin' to contribute some tennah solos

"We shan't need a tenor," said Monty

Lowther affably. "But we shall need a fiver for the expenses. That's where you come in."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Or, if you like, we'll have two fivers instead of a tenor," said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the first thing we'll do, when we get the band going, is to compose something for a Jazz dance, and play it under the window of the New House," said Lowther. "You chaps know I'm musical."

"Go hon!"

"I can compose standing on my head," said Lowther. "I'll turn out something catchy, with comic words about Figgins & Co. in it, and we'll soon have the whole school howling it!"

"Bai Jove, that's not weally a bad idea! But pewwaps you had better leave the music to me."

"And now I'll go and change my clobber, I think. I feel dusty."

"I was speaking, Lowthah—"

"Well, you can go on speaking while I go and change my clobber, can't you?" said Monty.

And he walked away to the Shell dormitory. Levison of the Fourth came up the passage.

"There's something going on over in the New House," he remarked. "Figgins & Co. were jawing about it in the tuckshop, and cleared out because I was there. I've just been over there now with a message from Knox to Sefton, and I saw a regular meeting going on in Figgins' study."

The juniors grinned.

"They're getting to business, already," chuckled Blake. "Never mind; they won't have much the start of us."

"Did you notice any musical instruments in the study, Levison?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Levison shook his head.

"No, they were talking about rowing, as far as I could make out."

"Rowing!" echoed the juniors.

"Yes. They're going to get a boat out early in the morning, before rising-bell, for practice on the river," said Levison. "I heard Figgins say that it was to be kept a strict secret, even from the other fellows in the House, so that we couldn't get a hint of it over on this side. They're going to do the practice unknown to us."

"Ha, ha! They might be going to rehearse an orchestra, far from the madding crowd," grinned Blake.

"Yaas, watahah!"

"An orchestra," said Levison, with a stare. "Figgins didn't say anything about any old orchestra."

"That's the little game, all the same," said Tom Merry. "I'm jolly glad we've got on to this! Figgins & Co. are going to take to early rising, to take a rise out of us. And they're not going to be the only early risers in the school to-morrow morning. I think some chaps about our size are going to rise early as well."

"My hat!" said Blake. "We'll catch them napping, and make them swear a solemn swear not to start a band at all!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg! We'll take a big party—you can come, if you like, Levison."

"Thanks! I'm not an early riser," grinned Levison.

"My dear Levison," said Arthur Augustus, "early to bed, and early to rise—"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Levison.

But there were plenty of volunteers for the expedition without Levison. Tom Merry had only asked him out of civility; he was not on good terms with the black sheep of the Fourth.

The School House juniors chuckled gleefully over the surprise they were preparing for Figgins & Co. on the following morning.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Lowther's Jazz Band.

PREPARATION being finished, the Terrible Three were ready for the meeting of the amateur musicians of the School House.

There was no time to be lost, of course, considering that their rivals were already "on the go," as they supposed, at least. If Figgins & Co., with deep duplicity, were going out on the river to practice secretly early in the morning, the School House fellows were bound to steal a march on them by starting over-night. Exactly what the other Shell fellows would say when a Jazz band started operations in Tom Merry's study was not known yet. It would be known as soon as the Jazz band started.

Monty Lowther had hurried through his

prep, and was busy upon a sheet of music-paper. Lowther had brought in a sheaf of paper ruled for music, obtaining the same from Mr. Flatt, the music master of St. Jim's.

Music was not in the regular curriculum of St. Jim's, but both Manners and Lowther were pupils of Mr. Flatt. Manners' taste ran in the direction of classical sonatas. Lowther had a strongly-developed taste for coon songs, Jazz dances, and bunny-hug music generally. They regarded each other's tastes with lofty scorn. Lowther would ask Manners scornfully whether Beethoven or Mozart could have composed a tango, a rabbit-crawl, or a Boston buster.

Manners would close his ears when Lowther began whistling or humming his favourite airs. It was agreed that Monty should conduct the new band, as it was his idea; but Manners appointed himself adviser-in-chief, and hoped to be able to introduce a little classic refinement.

Herries of the Fourth was the first to arrive. He brought his cornet. Herries' cornet was almost as much dreaded in the School House as Herries' bulldog, Towser. Herries was looking quite pleased. He would rather have performed the Toreador Song from "Carmen" on a cornet solo than lend the aid of his cornet in a Jazz band. But then, when Herries kindly offered that cornet solo, there was always an immediate rush to escape on the part of his auditors.

Herries was not one of those musicians whose fingers wander idly over the ivory keys when no one is present. He did not want any of his chords to be lost. He liked an audience when he played—and Lowther's Jazz Band was his first chance of getting one. So Herries put away the music of his famous cornet solo, and brought down his great soul to Jazz. It was a case of stooping to conquer.

"Here I am," said Herries, "and here's my cornet."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "The others will be here soon."

"I'll give you a bit before they come, if you like; just to show you how beautifully I've got it in tune," said Herries, preparing for business.

"Ahem! Better all start together—"

"Would you like the Toreador Song? I could do it from memory, excepting a bit here and there."

Without waiting for an answer, Herries started. The Terrible Three gazed at him. Manners drew behind Herries, out of politeness, before he put his fingers to his ears. Monty Lowther ceased to scribble on his music-paper. Tom Merry tried to smile.

Bang!

It was a terrific concussion on the other side of the study wall.

Gore's study was next door, and apparently Gore was not fond of cornet solos.

Herries played on cheerfully. Like the famous Macpherson Clongoketty Angus MacClan, his music was wayward and wild as the breeze, and wandered around into several keys. As Lowther said, it reminded him of Wagner, and Richard Strauss, and a steam crane out of order.

Bang! Bang!

Gore was growing emphatic. So was Herries. The study door was suddenly flung open, and George Gore appeared upon the threshold, his face aflame with wrath. He shook a furious fist at Herries and the Terrible Three.

"Are you going to stop that row?" he roared.

Herries could not speak. His face was crimson with exertion, and he looked as if he were trying to burst a boiler. But he glared at Gore. Gore raved.

"How is a chap to work with that frightful row going on?" he shrieked. "And if you must play something, what do you want to play a dead-march for?"

Herries stopped at that. It was too much. Gore was not musical, but there was no excuse for even Gore mistaking the Toreador Song for a dead march. It was an insult to the way Herries played it.

"You silly ass!" said Herries, in measured disdain. "That's the Toreador Song from 'Carmen.'"

"With variations by Herries," murmured Lowther.

"If you don't stop it, there will be a row!" yelled Gore.

"Right on the wicket," said Lowther, sotto voce. "So there will."

"I'm not going to stand it!" said Gore furiously. "Go and play that horrible thing in the woodshed, or on top of a mountain somewhere! You ought to learn to play in tune, too. Why don't you play in tune?"

Herries did not answer that question. As a musician he disdained to do so. But he laid down the cornet, and rushed at Gore, and smote him hip and thigh, and hurled him forth into the passage. That was the only possible reply to make to George Gore's criticism of his playing.

"Serve him right!" said Manners encouragingly. "If we can stand it, he can."

It was an unfortunate way of putting it. Herries glared at Manners.

"You silly ass—"

"Ordah, deah boys!" said a calm voice at the door. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in with Blake. "Ordah! I've brougth some music, Tom Mcwwy."

"I've been thinkin' that we'd better introduce a few classic solos," continued D'Arcy. "I shall be willin' to wendah half a dozen Italian awias—"

"But nobody else would be willing," said Monty Lowther. "Vocal gymnastics not required. Got any instrument?"

"Of course, I can play the violin."

"Good! Fiddles are the things. Fetch it, and you can chuck all this music away."

"Lowthah, you ass—"

"D'Arcy and Manners, violins," said Lowther, jotting it down on a scrap of paper; "Herries, cornet; Tom Merry, also violin. What have you got, Blake?"

"Flute," said Blake. "I'm willing to perform a series of flute obligatos—"

"We'll take the will for the deed," said Lowther blandly. "Blake flautist. Good! Kangy can play the banjo, and I can chime in with the bones. Of course, the banjo and bones are the instruments chiefly needed."

"Wats!"

"Bandsmen are not allowed to say 'Rats!' to their conductor!" said Monty Lowther severely. "Good! Here comes Kangy. Now, when you're ready, I've got a little bit of music here for you to rehearse. I'm just finishing writing out the parts."

"Your own composition?" asked Manners suspiciously.

"In a way, yes. You see," said Lowther, "being such a ripping musician—"

"Bow-wow!" was Blake's remark.

"Shut up, Blake! Being such a ripping musician," proceeded Lowther firmly, "I can see the possibilities of Jazz music in any composition. If I had time, I could turn the Kreutzer Sonata or Beethoven's Symphonies into Jazz music, and make them really popular—"

"You—you horrible Philistine!" gasped Manners.

"But I've taken something easier. Have you chaps ever heard of Verdi's opera, 'Il Trovatore'? Of course you have. It's ground out by every blessed orchestra in the kingdom, and done to giddy death! You know the Anvil Chorus?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, I've taken a bit out of the Anvil Chorus in 'Il Trovatore,' and turned it into Jazz music," explained Lowther. "Verdi wouldn't know it now—"

"I'll bet he wouldn't!"

"It's so much improved," said Lowther.

"If Verdi heard it—"

"Poor chap!"

"It would make him—"

"Ill!" suggested Manners.

"It would make him wish he'd lived in the days of Jazzing!" roared Lowther. "It's improved marvellously! Now, I've made up some words to suit it—a sort of rehearsal for Figgins & Co. We're going to rehearse the thing now, and as soon as we've got it in order we're going to serenade Figgins & Co. under the windows of the New House, and show 'em that the Lowther Jazz Band is really going strong, and that they've got no chance. See?"

That suggestion met with approval. The idea of serenading Figgins & Co. under the windows of the New House caught on at once. It would undoubtedly be "one in the eye" for the New House juniors, who were supposed to be working on the very same scheme of a Jazz band.

"Yaas, it's not a bad ideah, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Pwar hand out the music, and let's get to practice!"

Monty Lowther scribbled out the parts fast enough. While he was doing it the other fellows tuned up their instruments. Lowther looked up rather worriedly.

"I say, you chaps, I like Debussy's music as much as anybody, but don't play it while I'm writing out the parts!" he said.

"Ass! We're tuning up!" said Manners.

"Oh, my mistake!" said Lowther.

The parts were finished at last. Lowther handed them out to the instrumentalists,

and they hummed them over. Operatic music put into Jazz was something a little new, but it certainly sounded catchy enough. Manners sniffed, but the other fellows seemed satisfied. Arthur Augustus was a little puzzled. Lowther had picked up the true professional manner of writing the old notation—that is, to make it appear as if a number of flies had stepped into the ink and then crawled over the paper. However, Lowther explained patiently what the mysterious hieroglyphics were supposed to mean, and then the rehearsal started. Lowther thoughtfully locked the door. He had a suspicion that there would soon be a crowd of Shell fellows round the study with homicidal intentions. He was right.

As soon as the grunt of the cornet, the shriek of the flute, and the wall of the violins mingled with the ping-pong of the banjo and the clatter of the bones there came a terrific bang on the wall from Gore's side.

Bang, bang, bang!

The musicians played on, unheeding.

Bang, bang, bang!

Then at the door came thump, thump,

thump! Crash! And the voices yelled:

"Shut up!"

"Chuck it!"

"Go home!"

"Ring off!"

"Mercy!"

But Lowther's Jazz Band played on ruth-

lessly.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### A Jazz Serenade!

**T**HUMP, thump, thump! Bang!

Crash!

"Are you going to chuck it?"

"Go home! Go home!"

"Go back to Colney Hatch!"

But the Lowther Jazz Band, having got into full swing by this time, ground on at that variation of Verdi, which would have pleased Verdi very much—perhaps!

Lowther had taken a few catchy bars from the "Anvil Chorus" and put them into the "Tempo di Rag," as he called it, with words of his own composition, which the instrumentalists who were not using their mouths for other purposes sang as they played. The words, of course, were specially to impress upon Figgins & Co. the fact that the School House Jazz Band was "the" band, and all others spurious imitations.

But the crashing at the door and the study walls was growing terrible. The conductor of the Jazz band paused at last, and shouted through the door:

"Go away, you silly asses!"

"Stop that row!" came back a formidable roar.

"We're getting ready for a jape on the New House!"

"Sounds more like a frontal attack on the School House!" shouted Reilly, outside. "Be jabbers, it's worse than Donnybrook Fair intoirly!"

"Only a bit more," said Lowther. "Do shut up, or you'll have the prefects down on us!"

"If you don't shut up you'll have the roof down on us!" roared Gore.

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Lowther.

"Now, gentlemen, all together! Keep in time as much as you can. If you could make that cornet keep along with the rest, Herries, it would be an advantage."

"What!"

"Don't slack!" said Lowther. "It would sound much better if you didn't finish two bars after the others."

"Look here—"

"Kangy is doing the banjo a treat. Tommy, my son, would you mind going a bit slower with the fiddle—it's not a race, you know."

"Why, you ass!"

"And please, remember, Blake, that a flute is not supposed to be performing variations on the music while—"

"Why, you chump—"

"Only giving you a hint—"

"I wasn't performing variations!" roared Blake.

"Oh! I thought you were! Well, pile in again!"

And Monty Lowther raised the cricket-stump with which he was conducting.

The Lowther Jazz Band burst forth again, and the voices of the instrumentalists accompanied the instruments with great effect. There was a good deal of noise, and the orchestra, like Mr. Gilbert's celebrated piper, elicited something resembling a tune.

"That's all right," said the conductor, as

the attack on the door recommenced. "Better get over to the New House now, before those idiots bring the masters down on us."

"Yaas, wuthah!"

And the orchestra rose. Lowther unlocked the door and opened it, and beheld a hostile array in the passage. There was very nearly a rush, but Tom Merry waved back the excited juniors.

"Pax! Don't play the giddy ox! We're just going."

"Sure but are ye coming back?" demanded Reilly.

"Yes, of course, fathhead."

"We'll be waitin' for you in the quad," said Reilly darkly. "We'll scarp you, and smash up the instruments of torture."

"Good egg!" chorused the juniors.

"Look here," shouted Lowther. "This is the School House Jazz Band, and it's going to knock spots off the New House, you silly duffers."

"Might knock the chimney-pots off with that row!" snorted Gore.

"You'll promise not to practise indoors any more, or we'll rush you in the quad, and smash up the things!" said Reilly.

Lowther sniffed.

"Unmusical set of duffers! Still, we'll agree to that. The prefects would stop it sooner or later, anyway. We'll practise in the woodshed after this."

And then the amateur musicians were allowed to pass.

They marched out into the quadrangle, and as the news spread that Figgins & Co. were going to be serenaded quite a crowd gathered to follow them. The information that Figgins & Co. intended to borrow the wheeze of a Jazz band made the School House juniors, of course, highly indignant, and Reilly confessed that Figgins & Co. deserved to have Lowther's band play to them, or worse, if there was anything worse.

Quite an army marched across the quad in the dusk of the evening. There was a light gleaming from the window of Figgins' study, and the shadows of the New House trio could be seen, at work at their preparation probably.

The orchestra halted under Figgins' window.

Round them—those with more delicate ears keeping at a safe distance—the School House juniors gathered in a crowd.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus remarked.

"How are we goin' to see the music in the dark, Lowthah, deah boy?"

"My hat! Don't you know it by heart yet?" growled Lowther.

"I know the 'Anvil Chorus' by heart, of course; but your wotten variations are a different matter," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"Get a bike lantern, somebody."

Kerruish of the Fourth rushed off for a bike lantern. He offered to hold the light for the orchestra, announcing that he had tough ears, and could stand it.

Then the orchestra prepared for business. Preliminary wails from the violins, and snorts from the cornet, and squeaks from the flute, announced the presence of the Lowther Jazz Band, and Figgins opened his window in wonder. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn looked down on the crowd of School House fellows in amazement, and at the light gleaming upon the varied instruments of the orchestra.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Figgins. "What's the game?"

"It's a serenade," said Tom Merry.

"A which?"

"Serenade," said Monty Lowther. "This is where we make you understand that the wheeze is ours—ours only—and that the New House don't know anything about it."

"School House musicians!" said Kerr, with a shudder. "Friends, Romans, and countrymen, if you have ears, prepare to shut them now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go!" said Lowther.

The cricket-stump waved, and the Jazz band burst forth into melody.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Both Satisfied.

**F**IGGINS & Co. gazed down from the window.

The reader knows—although the School House fellows did not know—that there had been a slight misunderstanding in Monty Lowther's interview with Figgins & Co.

Figgins & Co. had never heard of the Jazz band before, and never dreamed of it; all their thoughts being given to their great scheme of having an eight in the race at the Abbotsford Regatta.

They stared blankly at the performers.



Louder and louder from the quadrangle came the blare and roar and shriek of the varied instruments.

Over and over again the orchestra played the same refrain, and the crowd roared it, with variations not intended by the composer.

"Well, my Aunt Jemima!" said Figgins.  
"What a ghastly row!" said Fatty Wynn.

Kerr burst into a chuckle.  
"So that's it!"

"That's what?" asked Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha! That's the wheeze Lowther came over to tell us about—and they're not on to the eight idea, after all!" grinned Kerr.

"They think we're going to borrow their silly Jazz band scheme. See?"

Figgins gasped.

"Oh, crumbs! Then they don't know after all—"

"Not a word! Ha, ha!"

"Oh, good egg!" said Figgins. "Blessed if I didn't nearly give it away myself when I was jawing Lowther. So this was his scheme."

"Yes, rather; ha, ha, ha!"

"Jazz band—eh? The Jazziest Jazz I've ever heard!" chuckled Figgins. "Let 'em rip! They can Jazz all the Jazz they like, so long as they don't get on to the eight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On the steps of the New House a crowd gathered of fellows belonging to that House. The wild sounds of revelry by night had drawn them to the spot.

"Clear off from here!" Redfern shouted.

"No straggling musicians allowed here."

"Call the police!"

"Turn the hose on them!"

"Charge, Chester, charge!" shouted Thompson, of the Shell.

A crowd of New House fellows came rushing out.

But they found the School House crowd quite ready for them.

While the orchestra played on, and the voices shouted out the taunting refrain, the other fellows stood round to keep off the enemy.

The rush of the New House juniors was stopped, and they were hurled and bundled back amid wild yells.

But more and more New House fellows came dashing on the scene, and there was soon a wild and whirling fight raging round the Jazz band.

And from the midst of the scrambling and struggling juniors the Jazz band blared away, the time growing raggeder and raggeder as the excitement rose.

Figgins & Co. had rushed down from the study now, and they led the enemy in their attack. A terrific rush broke up the orchestra at last, and the instrumentalists were scattered.

Then the music died away.

It was time!

Monteith and two or three other New House prefects had arrived on the scene, with canes in their hands.

They did not waste time talking. They rushed into the fray, and smote right and left, and the combatants parted with wild howls.

"Wetweat, deah boys!" called out Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The tussle was over; the School House fellows retreated towards their own House. And then Lowther got the band together again, and as they marched off they played the air over and over again in triumph.

All St. Jim's had heard their performance—they could hardly help hearing it—and so it was quite clear to all the school that the School House had originated that latest striking wheeze—a junior Jazz band.

And in the New House Figgins & Co. were chucking as they wiped off the traces of the combat in the quad.

The serenade had enlightened them, and they had the satisfaction of knowing that their great scheme for scoring at the Abbotsford Regatta was still a secret from their rivals.

"It was that bosh that Lowther came over to tell us!" chuckled Figgins. "And I nearly gave our game away, didn't I?"

"Jolly near!" said Kerr.

"And now they haven't a suspicion after all!"

"Not a suspicion!"

"Not a bit of it," grinned Redfern, "and we'll get in the practice early to-morrow morning, while they're asleep in their little beds—what!"

"Yes, rather! Mum's the word!"

"Not a syllable outside the House!" said Redfern. "They'll be astonished to see a New House Eight at the regatta. When we carry off the cup they can play a triumphal march for us on their Jazz band, if they like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the New House chums went to bed

extremely satisfied with themselves and things generally.

They would not have been so satisfied, perhaps, if they had seen Tom Merry, in the Shell dormitory in the School House, setting an alarm-clock for five in the morning.

Still convinced that the New House party were going out in the early hours of the morning to practise with a Jazz band, the School House juniors were determined to be up still earlier, and to catch Figgins & Co. in the act.

"It's the early bird that catches the worm, you know!" grinned Tom Merry as he set the alarm-clock.

"And the early worm that's caught!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle, "Figgins & Co. being the early worm in this case."

"We'll catch 'em napping, and make 'em swear honour bright to chuck up the idea of a Jazz band!" said Manners.

"That's the programme."

And with that programme mapped out the School House fellows turned in.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Capture from the Enemy.

FIGGINS sat up in bed as the early sunlight streamed into the high windows of the dormitory in the New House.

He took his watch from under the pillow and glanced at it. It was half-past five.

Figgins jumped out of bed.

It was a beautifully clear morning. Figgins looked out of the window, and noted the state of the weather with a chortle of satisfaction. Then he awakened his comrades.

The juniors went downstairs, finding nobody up, not even an early housemaid at that hour. They let themselves out of the house, and crossed the quadrangle in the keen, fresh morning air. Figgins drew in a deep breath of it joyously.

"Silly asses we are to stay in bed till rising-bell!" he exclaimed. "Why, it's simply ripping out here!"

"Yaw—aw—yes!" said Fatty Wynn. "Spiffing! Yaw-aw-aw!"

"We'll pull down to the island and back!" said Figgins. "Gates not open yet! We shall have to buzz over the wall! Come on!"

"We can stop at the island for a snack!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've got some sandwiches. Lucky I thought of getting them ready overnight, wasn't it?"

"Oh, frightfully lucky!" snorted Figgins. "It's a thing you would think of."

"Well, I don't believe in a chap risking his health by going hungry."

"Bow-wow! Get over that wall!"

The juniors dropped over the wall, and hurried down to the boathouse. Early as it was, the sun was glinting cheerily on the river, and early birds were twittering in the trees, and seeking for early worms.

Figgins had made arrangements the evening before with the boat-keeper, and Tomkins was up already, and had the New House eight-oar ready for them. The New House juniors ran it down into the water. Little did they dream—as a novelist would say—that hostile eyes were watching them from the cover of the trees at the back of the towing-path.

Tom Merry & Co. were on the scene.

"There they go!" chuckled Lowther. "Nine of them!"

"I don't see any musical instruments," remarked Tom Merry.

"May be hidden in the boat!"

"Listen! There's Figgins jawing!"

Figgins' voice came clearly on the fresh morning air from the river as he addressed his comrades in the eight-oar.

"Steady there! Don't pump yourselves out to begin with. Jameson, don't sit there like a sack of coke. If you're not wide awake yet, I've got a boat-hook here! Pull easy for the island. We shall have the current against us, coming back."

"Right-bo!"

And the eight-oar glided away down the shining Ryll.

"They're coming to the island!" said Monty Lowther. "Ten to one they've shoved the giddy instruments there all ready, so as not to have to carry them in and out of the house!"

"Yaas, watah!"

"We'll catch 'em on the island!" said Tom Merry. "By Jove, if they land we'll collar their boat, and leave 'em stranded. Then we can make terms with the bounders."

"Good business!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were a dozen of the School House

fellows, Shell and Fourth. They had the odds on their side in case of a "scrap." Tomkins, the boat-keeper, looked surprised as they marched down to the boathouse.

"You're up early, young gentlemen," said Tomkins.

"Yes; we're going to catch the early worms," said Lowther. "We'll have the Tub, as there is a crowd of us."

The Tub, a large boat, certainly not built for racing, but spacious enough to accommodate the numerous party, was run out into the water. Eight of the School House juniors took the oars, and they glided downstream. Tom Merry, who was steering, kept his eyes open for the New House skiff. He did not want to be sighted by the enemy. The bend in the wooded bank hid the New House boat from sight now.

Figgins & Co., being in their racing skiff, could have "walked" away from their pursuers if they had sighted them. Tom Merry did not want to come in sight until the enemy was landed on the island.

The Tub kept in the shadow of the trees along the bank, and Tom kept his eyes keenly open in advance of them.

Unconscious of the pursuit, Figgins & Co. pulled down the river for the island.

Figgins, who had constituted himself coach of the eight, did not spare himself the privileges of a coach, and slanged his men cheerily and emphatically.

"Put some more beef into it, Lawrence! Don't go to sleep, Owen! I say, Reddy, old man, this isn't a splashing competition. Have you ever heard of a thing called feathering, Thompson? When I want any crabs, Murphy, I'll let you know. Don't trouble to catch any now. There isn't time."

And so on.

Although it was their first practice together, the eight pulled very well in unison, and by the time the island was reached Figgins pronounced that, with some ricking into shape, which he was fully prepared to administer, they would do very well.

They ran the skiff into the reeds of the island, and jumped ashore, and Fatty Wynn produced an enormous packet of sandwiches.

The sandwiches were welcome. The keen morning air and the pull on the river had made the eight decidedly hungry.

They discussed the sandwiches and their prospects at the regatta at the same time. But all of a sudden Kerr gave a shout:

"School House cads!"

There was a steady sweep of oars, and the Tub came shooting up to the island.

The New House juniors, clustered on the bank, regarded Tom Merry & Co. with amazed and exasperated looks.

"They're on to it, after all!" gasped Figgins.

"Blessed asses, if they're out for practice!" said Redfern. "They can't be practising for an eight in the Tub, with a dozen fellows, half of 'em passengers."

"Perhaps they're just out for a morning spin, quite by chance," said Fatty Wynn hopefully.

Figgins nodded.

"We'll soon see!" he said.

And, putting his hands to his mouth, the chief of the New House juniors hailed the School House boat in stentorian tones.

"Hallo, there! What do you kids want?"

"Hallo! That you, Figgins?" called out Tom Merry.

"Yes. What are you up early for?"

"Early to bed, and early to rise, you know," said Tom Merry, standing up in the boat, as it rocked up to the New House skiff. And Monty Lowther chimed in:

"Early to bed and early to rise is the way to do Figgins & Co. in the eyes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, you keep out of our boat!" roared Figgins, scarcely believing his eyes, as he saw Tom Merry jump aboard the skiff and drag loose the painter.

The intentions of the School House party dawned on Figgins & Co. then. They made a wild rush down to the boat.

But the boat was loose, and a fellow in the Tub held the painter to tow it, and the School House oarsmen were pushing off.

Figgins made a wild spring ahead of the rest, and Lowther gave him a gentle push on the chest with an oar, and he disappeared into a bed of rushes.

Then the skiff rocked away on the water after the Tub.

Redfern leaped out desperately from the shore, and just landed on the skiff. He rolled into it, and Tom Merry collared him the next moment, and rolled him out. Necessarily he rolled into the water.

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Splash!

Reddy was a first-class swimmer, and it did not take him many seconds to get back to the island. He dragged himself, puffing, from the water, and shook a furious fist after the raiders. There was a yell of mocking laughter from the School House party. They laid upon their oars at a safe distance from the island, with the captured skiff in tow, and waved hands at the infuriated New House eight on the shore.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

#### Figgins Agrees!

**F**IGGINS brandished a big fist at the School House boat and its crew.

Tom Merry & Co. had caught the New House fellows napping, and had captured their boat, and the fellows on the island were at a loss. They could not get off unless their enemies chose, except by swimming, and the arm of the Ryll that separated the island from the shore was broad, and the water ran deep. And not more than half of the New House juniors could swim anything like the distance—indeed, one or two of them could not swim at all.

The enraged juniors held a hurried consultation on the island shore, while their victorious rivals chanted and chortled Lowther's Jazztime refrain.

"Let's swim off and scalp 'em!" growled Redfern.

"Seven against a dozen—and the dozen in the boat, with oars to push us off!" said Kerr. "Not good enough!"

"If you silly asses could swim—"

"Well, I can't swim any more than you can talk sense!" said Thompson of the Shell.

"Look here, you Shell duffer—"

"Look here, you cheeky fag—"

"Shut up!" roared Figgins. "There's no time to row here. Cheese it! How are we going to get at that boat?"

"Is that a conundrum?" snorted Thompson. "If it is, I give it up."

"Bedad, and we've got to swim or fly," said Murphy major. "I can't fly!"

Figgins grunted and turned away, and shouted to the fellows in the boat:

"Ahoy! You rotters!"

Tom Merry shouted back:

"Ahoy! You duffers!"

"Give us our boat!"

"When will you have it?" asked Monty Lowther politely. "Now, or when you can get it?"

"We'll make it pax, if you like," said Figgins generously.

"Go hon!"

"Look here, we want our boat!" yelled Redfern.

"This is where we impose conditions," said Tom Merry. "We've got you chaps in the trap, and you're staying there unless you come to terms."

"You can't keep us here to miss brekker, anyway!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

"Can't we?" chuckled Tom Merry. "You'll see!"

"Why, you—villain—"

Words failed Fatty Wynn. To Fatty Wynn's mind, making a fellow miss a meal was the very last word in iniquity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Fatty!" said Blake. "It will remind you of the time when you went on a hunger-strike, won't it? Keep an eye on him, you chaps; when he gets hungry he's dangerous."

"Look here, what terms do you want to make?" demanded Figgins. "We haven't got

any too much time to get in before brekker now."

"Good! You've got to promise, honour bright, to chuck up the wheeze."

"What?"

"You've got to get off the grass. You're to chuck up the scheme you've been scheming, and keep off the grass. That's the condition."

"Never!" roared Figgins.

"Then good-bye! We're going home," said Tom Merry. "We'll tow your boat after us, in case it should get lost. You'll find it in the bathhouse when you get back—if you ever do get back! Ta-ta!"

"Look here—"

"Can't stop! Good-bye! Give way, you chaps!"

The School House fellows dipped their oars. The Tub began to glide away up the river, with the New House eight-oar rocking in tow.

The New House fellows on the island watched it with furious eyes.

Kerr whispered hurriedly to his leader. A sudden grin overspread Figgins' face. He shouted to Tom Merry:

"Hold on! We'll make terms!"

"I thought you would. Back water!"

The boat stopped again.

"Name your terms," said Figgins. "We'll hear what they are, and see if we can agree to them. Pile in!"

"Good enough! In the first place, you've got to admit that the scheme for a Jazz band is a School House scheme, and all others spurious imitations."

"Admitted!"

"You've got to agree to let the wheeze alone, and not to start a rival band."

"Agreed!"

"If you go to Abbot's Regatta you're not to take any musical instruments with you, and not to give any sort of condition of a Jazz band performance."

The New House fellows smiled. It tickled them to see their rivals so utterly on the wrong track. But Figgins, with deep and wonderful artfulness, pretended to hesitate.

"I say, you're rather hard on us, you know."

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry. "We can't have two Jazz bands playing against one another at the regatta. We're the only original Jazz band, and we take the cake, also the biscuit. You'll have to agree!"

"And if we don't?" asked Figgins hypocritically.

"Then we shall have to leave you stranded. We shall be sorry, but we shall do it."

"Ygas, wathah! We shall be awfully sorry, Figgay, deah boy, but we shall do it wight enough. You will be stwanded."

"And if we promise?" said Figgins hesitatingly.

"Then we'll make it pax, and hand over your boat."

"Well, you've got us!" said Figgins, with an appearance of great frankness. "I suppose we shall have to toe the line."

"Looks like it," said Redfern, with a subdued chuckle.

"Is it agreed?" said Tom Merry. "No orchestra practice, no Jazz band, and the full admission that it's a School House wheeze, and ours only!"

"Yes."

"Honour bright?"

"Yes," said Figgins, with a great show of reluctance. "Honour bright!"

"You all say the same?"

"We all say the same," chorused the New House crew. "Honour bright!"

"Good egg! We take your word. Gentlemen, this is where we gloat!"

"Hurrah!"

"When you've done gloating, you might give us our boat," suggested Figgins.

"Here you are!"

The Tub pulled a little closer, and Tom Merry released the New House skiff, and sent it whizzing shoreward with a vigorous push. Figgins caught it as it bumped into the reefs.

The New House fellows gladly tumbled into the boat. Tom Merry & Co. watched them, expecting to see the suspected musical instruments brought into view. But none were to be seen when the New House eight pushed off.

"Hallo! Leaving your instruments of torture behind?" asked Lowther.

"Our what?"

"Didn't you have your instruments with you for practice?"

Figgins stared for a moment, and then he chuckled.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "We sha'n't bother about them now."

"No good, as we are barred from starting a Jazz band in opposition to you fellows," said Kerr solemnly.

"But will they be safe on the island?" said Manners.

"Oh, nobody will find 'em," said Figgins airily. Which was strictly true; anybody would have been very puzzled to find any musical instruments on that island belonging to Figgins & Co.

"Puh, you bounders!" added Figgins. "While we're here we may as well show these School House duffers how to row."

"Cheeky ass, we could row your heads off!" exclaimed Blake indignantly.

"Try!" suggested Figgins.

In the heat of the moment the School House fellows did try. But the Tub, with so many passengers aboard, had no chance against the eight-oar. Figgins & Co. walked away from the bigger boat, pausing every now and then to kiss their hands to the exasperated School House fellows. The New House crew reached the school bathhouse while Tom Merry & Co. were labouring against the current.

Figgins & Co. chortled joyfully as they jumped on the raft. They had been caught napping by their old rivals, certainly, but it had cost them nothing to escape from their predicament. They did not mind promising not to do what they had never had any intention of doing.

"The silly clumps!" chuckled Figgins. "They think we went out to practise a silly Jazz band. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And they haven't the slightest notion of what we really went out for!" grinned Kerr.

"Not the slightest!"

"They can pile in with their blessed Jazz band," said Redfern. "They can hip-pip, and take the cake as much as they want to. Any old thing, so long as they don't get on to the idea of sending an eight to the regatta."

"What-ho!"

And Figgins & Co. went into breakfast in great spirits.

The School House fellows came in a little later, but they were also in high spirits. They had warned off their supposed rivals, they had obtained a clear field for the School House Jazz Band, and they were satisfied. And not one of them suspected, so far, that they had been on the wrong track altogether, and that Figgins & Co.'s early morning expedition had nothing whatsoever to do with a Jazz band.

THE END.

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