

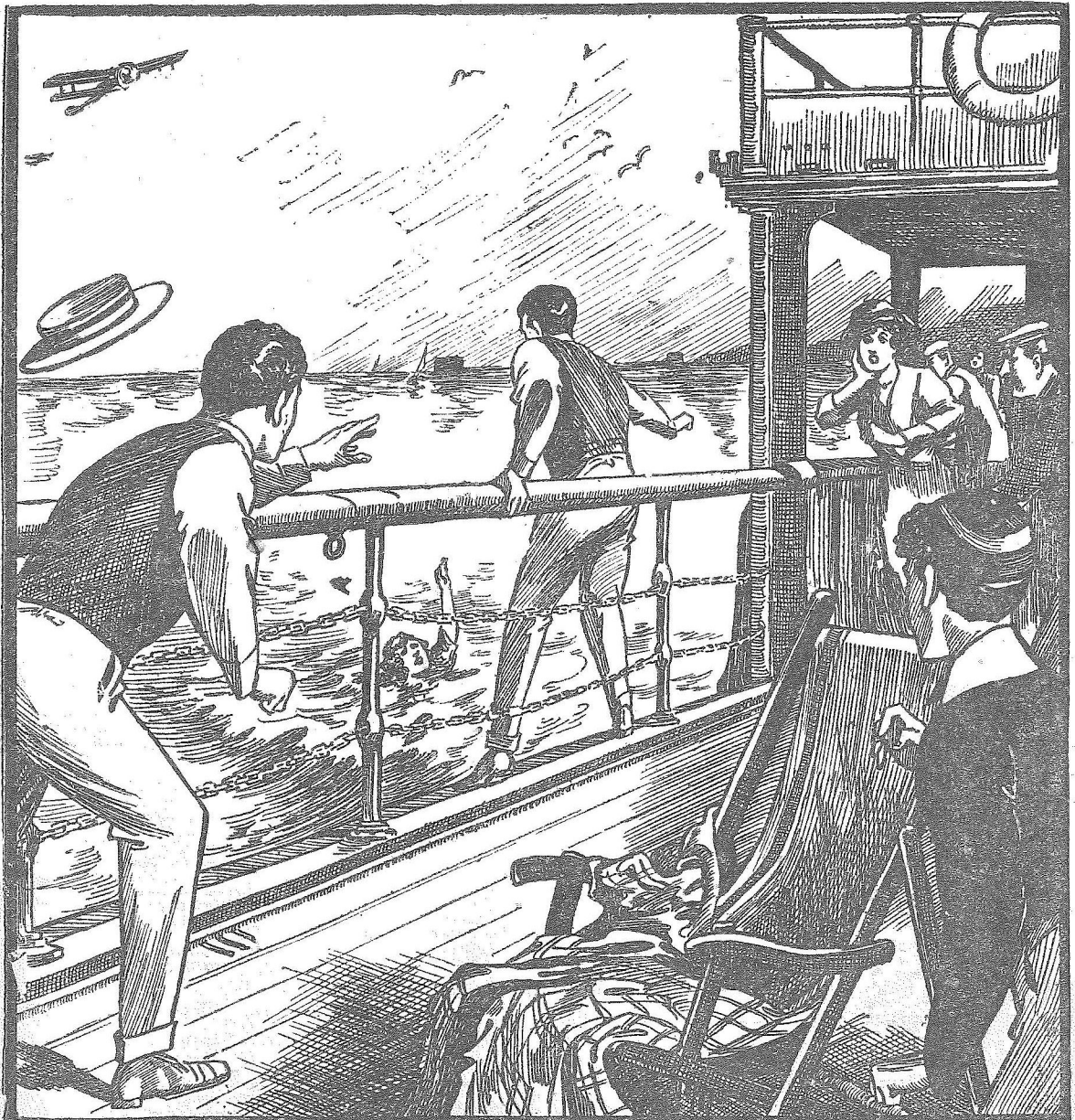
**HARMSWORTH'S NEW ATLAS. NOW ON SALE.**

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Week Ending  
June 28th, 1919.

No. 23.  
New Series.

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



**VERNON-SMITH TO THE RESCUE!**

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of Greyfriars in this issue.)



A Splendid New Story, dealing with the Adventures of HARRY WHARTON & Co. of Greyfriars.  
By FRANK RICHARDS.

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Throwing Out the Challenge!

**G**ENTLEMEN—"Hear, hear!" "On the ball!" Vernon-Smith, of the Greyfriars Remove, was mounted on a form in the Rag, addressing his valiant henchmen.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton and Bulstrode were present; likewise Ogilvy and Morgan and Wibley; and the three Dicks—Russell, Penfold, and Rake. Hazeldene and Tom Redwing were there, too.

The occasion was one of great importance, as Vernon-Smith proceeded to announce.

"Gentlemen of the Remove! We have been called upon to show the world—" "Hear, hear!" "That the present generation of schoolboys are not weaklings—" "Rather not!" "But keen sportsmen—every bit as good as their great-grandfathers—" "Better!" "I agree with the gentleman on my right," said Vernon-Smith. "We can put up a better show than any of our merry ancestors did in their youth! We can lick the generations of the past into a cocked hat!" "Every time!" said Peter Todd.

"We have already given the critics a taste of our quality," continued the Bounder. "We've been to Surrey, and we've been to Essex, and we've not come empty away!" "No giddy fear!" "And now we're going to pay a visit to Glorious Devon—" "Hurrah!" "To the county of Drake and Shakespeare—" "You ass!" said Wibley. "Shakespeare wasn't born in Devon!" "Dry up!" said the Bounder sternly. "We're going to the county of Draks and—"

"Make it George Robey!" said Dick Rake. "Ha, ha, ha!" "We're going to Devonshire, anyway," said Vernon-Smith. "And we've got to do even better than we've done before. Instead of being content with sharing the spoils, we've got to trounce Devon—put it across them properly!" "That's the ticket!"

"It's time we did something more than just hold our own," the Bounder went on. "We must try and lick Devon at cricket and swimming and running; and Dick Russell must bag the boxing."

"Trust Dick for that!" said Donald Ogilvy. "When do we start?" asked Dick Penfold. "Train leaves Eriardale at seven-thirty in the morning."

"Oh, crumbs! Why not make it in the middle of the night?" growled Hazeldene. "It's a long, long way to go," said the

Bounder. "Hallo, Trotter!" he added, as the school page came into the Rag. "What's wanted?"

"You are, Master Smith. Which the 'Ead wants to see you in 'is study."

"My hat!" Vernon-Smith looked grave, and so did some of the others.

A summons from the Head might mean trouble. Only a fortnight before, Vernon-Smith & Co. had got into hot water, with the result that their tour had been cancelled.

Were they to meet with a similar fate now? "Hope it's all right, Smithy!" said Peter Todd anxiously.

"We shall soon see," said the Bounder, and he went off to the Head's study.

A glance at Dr. Locke's face, told the Bounder that nothing was amiss. The Head was smiling.

"Come in, Vernon-Smith! I have sent for you to tell you that the tour to Devonshire cannot take place."

The Bounder's face fell.

After his rousing speech in the Rag—after all the strenuous practice which had been indulged in of late, the tour to Devon was off.

The Head saw the look of disappointment on Vernon-Smith's face, and he hastened to reassure him.

"I do not mean to infer that you will not proceed on tour, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh!"

"The Devon tour must be postponed, and you will be required to go to the Isle of Wight, instead."

A load slipped from Vernon-Smith's mind. He had no objection to the Devon tour being suspended so long as there was something to take its place.

The Head picked up the copy of the "Isle of Wight Chimes" which lay at his elbow and passed it to the junior.

"I should like you to read the paragraph I have marked, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder cast his eye over the paragraph, which ran as follows:

#### "SCHOOLBOY SPORTSMEN.

#### "STIRRING SCENES AT SOUTHSEA.

"A party of Greyfriars juniors visited Southsea last week, in order to take part in a series of sporting contests against a representative team of Hampshire boys.

"The sports aroused keen local interest, and the Greyfriars boys rendered a very good account of themselves.

"Whilst we have no desire to throw stones at the display of the Hampshire party, we venture to assert that the Isle of Wight could put into the field a team which the Greyfriars juniors would find it difficult—if not impossible—to conquer.

"We throw out a challenge to the headmaster of Greyfriars to send one of his touring-parties to this island; and we will go so

far as to say that not only will they be crushed, but crushed completely."

"My hat!" muttered the Bounder. "What is your opinion of that paragraph, Vernon-Smith?"

"I think the fellow who wrote it is talking through his hat, sir."

"You do not agree that the Isle of Wight could produce a team superior to your own?"

"Most certainly I don't, sir!"

"In that case," said the Head, "I think this challenge should be taken up at once. Instead of proceeding to Devonshire your party will go to the Isle of Wight, and give the lie to this over-confident newspaper assertion."

"Delighted, sir!"

"Then I will give you full details this evening, Vernon-Smith. That is all."

The Bounder emerged from the Head's study with a light step.

"Licked?" asked Peter Todd.

"No."

"Gated?"

"No."

"Lectured?"

"No."

"Well, what the thunder happened? The Head hasn't given you the O.B.E., by any chance?"

"The latest orders are," said Vernon-Smith, "that we proceed to put the kybosh on the Isle of Wight fellows."

"Oh!"

"What about Devon?" asked Dick Russell.

"Devon's indefinitely postponed. It's an Isle of Wight team that we've got to slaughter. One of their blessed newspapers pretends that if we met them, we shouldn't win a single giddy event. Well, we're going to prove otherwise!"

"Yes, rather!"

"What awful check!" said Bulstrode. "If we can hold our own against Surrey and Essex, we can surely wipe up the ground with a moudu little Island!"

"Don't be too sure," said Dick Russell. "My home's in Hampshire, and I know the Isle of Wight like a book. The fellows there are awfully hot stuff at sport. They're taught cricket from the cradle. You can take it from me that the Isle of Wight team will take some whacking."

"Oh, we shall manage it all serene!" said Peter Todd confidently. "What do you say, Dutton?"

"Eh?"

"Don't you think we shall put it across the Isle of Wight?"

"No fear! Who wants to cross a stile at night?"

"Oh crumbs! Wight, fathead—Wight!"

"Am I, by Jove?" said Dutton indignantly. "I'll jolly soon show you whether I'm tight or not! As if a bottle of ginger-pop at Mrs. Mibble's would make me tight!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Peter. "Explain to

him, Smithy, for goodness' sake! I shall burst a blood-vessel in a minute!"

"Look here, Dutton!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Don't you think we can lick a team of Isle of Wight fellows?"

"Never!" said Tom Dutton.

"What!"

"I can never hear a chap when he bellows. Speak slowly and softly, and then I might hear you!"

"Oh, help!" groaned Vernon-Smith.

And he, like Peter Todd, gave it up.

Later in the day, the Head sent for Vernon-Smith.

"I have been in telephonic communication with the Isle of Wight authorities, Vernon-Smith—"

"Yes, sir?"

"And they are delighted that we have accepted the challenge which appeared in their local paper. The sports will be held at Ventnor, to which place you will proceed tomorrow morning, in charge of Gwynne."

"Oh, good!" murmured the Bounder.

"I wish you all possible success, Vernon-Smith."

"Thank you, sir!"

The Head returned to his work, and Vernon-Smith to his own study, where the final arrangements were made for the forthcoming Sports Tournament with the boys of the Isle of Wight.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Bravo, the Bounder!

"NOW we're off!" said Peter Todd.

"Yes, rather!"

The prehistoric guard at Friar-dale Station waved his prehistoric flag, and the train—which was happily more modern—moved out of the little station.

"It's a long journey, kids," said Gwynne. "We've got to change at Courfield, and again at London; and then there's the boat trip at the other end."

"To say nothing of the Isle of Wight Railway!" grunted Dick Russell.

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Gwynne.

"Isn't it, though? Just you wait and see."

Gwynne smiled.

"Well, we shall get to Ventnor by three o'clock, in time for the cricket-match," he said. "That's all that matters."

London was reached in record time.

"We've got an hour on our hands," said Gwynne. "What shall we do?"

"Feed!" said Bulstrode promptly.

"Hear, hear!"

"There's a buffet here, on Waterloo Station," said Gwynne.

"Yes," said Dick Rake, with a shudder. "And the last lot of sandwiches I had there were served up complete with beards and side-whiskers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know a good place for a feed," said Peter Todd. "Fall in and follow me!"

And Gwynne, raising no objection, Peter Todd led the party over Waterloo Bridge and into the Strand.

"If you're thinking of dining at the Hotel Cecil," said Vernon-Smith, "you'll have a rude shock, Toddy. It won't be used as an hotel again for centuries. The limpets have dug themselves in, you see."

"But the war ended months ago."

"True, O King! And now they've got a Director of Peace Operations, with a staff of about two thousand underlings!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wasn't thinking of the Hotel Cecil, though," said Peter Todd. "Simpson's is the show we're making for. They do you well at Simpson's."

"They do you at a good many other places, too!" said Hazeldene.

"Ass! I didn't mean they swindle you. They serve up a topping feed."

Peter Todd was right.

The juniors trooped into Simpson's, and the hungry were filled with good things.

"Don't overdo it, you fellows!" said Vernon-Smith warningly. "We don't want to put a team of bilious dufers into the field this afternoon!"

The feed over, the party returned to Waterloo, and boarded the Portsmouth train. Bulstrode pulled out a copy of the "Boys' Friend," and Elliott and Morgan and Wilbey looked over his shoulder.

Dick Penfold started on a contribution for "The Greyfriars' Herald," and most of the others dozed off to sleep. The hot sunshine streaming in through the windows of the carriage had a slumberous effect.

Portsmouth Harbour was reached at length, and the juniors promptly boarded their steamer.

"How long does it take to cross?" asked Ogilvy.

"Forty minutes or so," said Dick Russell.

"That means we shall have an hour to get from Ryde to Ventnor," said Gwynne.

"And we'll never do it!" said Russell.

"What! You mean to say we sha'n't travel a dozen miles in an hour?"

Russell chuckled.

"You don't know the Isle of Wight Railway yet," he said. "I do. I've had some."

The boat crossing was excellent. The wide waters of the Solent lay sparkling and still.

Overhead a number of seaplanes were in flight.

"This is gorgeous!" said Vernon-Smith. "Wish I could have a swim!"

Vernon-Smith had his desire much sooner than he anticipated.

A little girl was playing on the side of the steamer.

Her mother, who sat a short distance away, had repeatedly warned her to be careful.

"That kid will be over the side in a minute," said Peter Todd.

Gwynne stepped forward quickly, to pull the little girl back into safety. She was already wriggling underneath the ropes, apparently unconscious of the fact that she was in danger.

But Gwynne was too late. The girl, turning suddenly on hearing her mother's voice, lost her balance, and disappeared over the side.

There was a splash—followed by a rush on the part of the passengers to the spot from which the girl had fallen.

The steamer was travelling at a fair speed by this time.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter Todd. "Poor kid, she'll be drowned!"

Gwynne whipped off his coat on the instant. But Vernon-Smith forestalled him.

Poising himself for a brief second on the edge of the deck, the Bounder dived into the sea.

The churning waters closed over his head, and the hearts of his schoolfellows were in their mouths as they watched him.

But the Bounder was not in any difficulties. When he reappeared on the surface, it was seen that the small girl was held safely in his grasp.

Meanwhile, the alarm having been given, the skipper rang down to the engine-room, the propellers were reversed, and the steamer backed towards rescuer and rescued.

A length of rope came whizzing down, and Vernon-Smith made the end secure beneath the little girl's arms.

"Buck up, kid!" he said. "There's nothing to be afraid of now. They'll have you on deck in a jiffy!"

The rope was hauled up by willing hands, and the distracted mother came forward to reclaim her little girl.

Then the rope was lowered for the second time, and Vernon-Smith, rather breathless, but none the worse for his experience, rejoined his schoolfellows.

"Well done, kid!" said Gwynne approvingly.

And Peter Todd and the others, heedless of the Bounder's swamped condition, surged forward to signify their admiration for his pluck.

"Oh, give it a rest!" said Vernon-Smith. "Anybody would think I'd won the giddy V.C.!"

"You deserve to!" said Bulstrode.

"Rats! It was as simple as pie to fish the kid out. There's nothing to make a song about!"

And then the Bounder, observing the mother of the little girl coming towards him, promptly dived below into the cabin.

"Blessed if I can understand why they're making all this fuss!" he murmured.

Down in the cabin the Bounder exchanged his drenched Etons for his cricket flannels. He did not reappear on deck until the steamer arrived at Ryde Pier.

Although he loved the limelight as a rule, Vernon-Smith did not consider that he had achieved anything remarkable on this occasion.

His life had not been in danger, for he was quite at home in the water; and he failed to see why he should be hailed as a conquering hero.

The grateful parent was still searching, with her eyes, for the fellow who had saved the life of her little daughter.

But Vernon-Smith hid himself behind Gwynne's tall form, where he was safe from recognition.

As the Greyfriars party stepped on to the pier, and made their way to the station close by, Gwynne glanced at his watch.

"We've got a good hour," he said. "We shall be in ample time for the cricket-match."

Dick Russell chuckled.

Gwynne did not know the shortcomings of the Isle of Wight Railway.

Dick Russell did.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Trouble in the Train!

"THERE'S the train!" said Peter Todd. "Come along, kids!"

A very ancient train stood in the station platform at Ryde. A very ancient porter stumbled on an equally ancient trolley on the platform; and a very ancient lady thrust a hatchet-like face out of one of the carriage windows.

"Porter! I say, porter!"

Shoo!

The prehistoric porter was deep in slumber. "Man!" cried the old lady, in a shrill falsetto. "Fellow! Hauling out!"

And she tickled the porter in the ribs with her parasol.

The porter shot up with a jerk.

"Wot's up?" he asked, blinking round.

"What time does this train start?" demanded the aggrieved lady.

"Dunno, mum, an' don't care!"

And the porter shuffled off out of the range of the parasol, and resigned himself to slumber once more.

"Dear me!" said the old lady. "How very annoying! Come here, child!"

The latter remark was addressed to Peter Todd, who, however, had no idea that he was being spoken to.

"Obey me, child!"

Peter Todd spun round as the point of the parasol prodded him in the back.

"Ow!"

"I am addressing you, infant!" snapped the old lady.

"Oh crumbs!"

"What time does this train start?"

"I don't know!" growled Peter Todd. "But I should say it would start as soon as all the objectionable passengers have been chucked out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars juniors roared. Pat Gwynne, however, began to look worried.

At least ten minutes had elapsed, and the train showed no signs of moving.

A crowd of people—mostly holiday-makers—had clambered into the carriage; but, with the exception of the old lady, they showed no signs of impatience. Apparently, they regarded the delay as quite the usual thing.

Vernon-Smith & Co. took their bags and baggage along to the luggage-van.

Then they entered an empty compartment in the front of the train.

"Ten more minutes passed."

"This is the giddy limit!" said Gwynne, frowning.

"Told you what would happen," said Dick Russell.

Gwynne thrust his head impatiently out of the carriage window.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man—save the slumbering porter, who was basking in the heat of the July afternoon.

"I've a good mind to write and complain to the company about this!" snorted Gwynne.

And then he settled himself in one of the corner seats and dozed off to sleep.

"Oh dear!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "The Isle of Wight team will think we're never coming!"

"Cheer up!" said Dick Russell. "We sha'n't be more than an hour late!"

"An hour! My only aunt!"

"I think I'll write a poem about this merry railway," said Dick Penfold. "I can't guarantee it will be a good advertisement for them, though."

And the amateur poet took out his notebook and scribbled away industriously.

After what seemed an age, a doddering, decrepit figure shuffled along the platform. A green flag was in his hand.

"My hat!" muttered Bulstrode. "It's the guard!"

"We sha'n't be long now, surely!" said Hazeldene.

At that moment the old lady with the parasol approached the guard. She appeared to be greatly agitated.

"Guard!"

"Yes, mum?"

"I have just made the terrible discovery that I have left my purse at home! Will you hold up the train while I go and recover it?"

"With the greatest of pleasure, mum!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 23.

The Greyfriars juniors stared at each other blankly.

The lady's cool request and the guard's ready consent fairly staggered them.

"Get a move on, guard!" shouted Peter Todd, when he had recovered his breath.

"Eh?"

"Buck up, old top! We ought to be in Ventnor by now!"

The guard snorted.

"Young rips!" he growled. "Which I won't stand none of your impudence—"

"We've been waiting here over twenty minutes!" growled Peter.

"Well, I 'ope you'll 'ave to wait another twenty!"

With which Parthian shot the guard retired to the refreshment buffet.

The juniors began to wish they had walked to Ventnor.

It would have made them late, of course, but not nearly so late as the train journey would make them.

Some time later the tourists were startled by a considerable commotion on the platform.

"What on earth—" began Vernon-Smith. The old lady had returned.

Clutching her purse tightly in her hand, she boarded the train; and the guard, flourishing his green flag wildly above his head, was exclaiming:

"Take your seats, please!"

The porter, rousing himself from his slumbers, added to the general confusion by shouting:

"All stations to Ventnor! Brading, Sandown, Shanklin, Wroxall—"

"Here, I say!" exclaimed Tom Dutton, sitting up with a start. "We're in the wrong train, you fellows!"

"What?"

"That porter's just yelled out 'Vaux-hall!'"

"Wroxall, you ass!" said Peter Todd.

"So have you!" retorted Dutton.

"Eh?"

"So have you got plenty of gas! You'd jaw a donkey's hind leg off!"

"Oh crumbs!"

The guard continued to flourish his flag, and the prehistoric train, with a great deal of bumping and lurching, moved out of the station.

Vernon-Smith sprang feverishly towards the communication-cord, and pulled it—hard!

"You prize idiot!" exclaimed Dick Rake, aghast. "What did you want to do that for?"

The Bouncer chuckled.

Slowly the train jolted to a standstill.

A moment later the angry countenance of the guard appeared at the carriage-window.

"I say, guard," said Vernon-Smith cheerfully, "isn't there a mistake somewhere? The train was moving!"

"Wot!"

"This train was actually on the go! And at top-speed, too!"

"You—you—" spluttered the guard.

"Pause, my dear man, and reflect on the terrible danger to the passengers, to say nothing of any stray cows that may be on the line!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

The guard's face was a study.

"I'll 'ave the lor on yer for this 'ere!" he said darkly.

Vernon-Smith looked up with an air of pained surprise.

"I was doing you a good turn," he said reproachfully. "Think of the terrible accidents which might have happened if I hadn't had the presence of mind to stop the train!"

The guard snorted.

"You'll 'ear more of this!" he barked, and hobbled furiously back to his van.

The train jerked forward again, stopped for about ten minutes at the Ryde Esplanade station, and then continued on its snail-like journey.

"How's the poem going, Pen?" asked Wibley.

Penfold looked up, with a smile.

"It's finished," he said.

The juniors crowded round to read it.

Then they commenced to chant it, in such loud tones that Gwynne stirred uneasily in his sleep.

"I know a merry isle,  
Far, far away;  
Where the railway makes you smile—  
Two miles a day!

Oh, you should see the fun  
When the train begins to run!  
By Jove, it takes the bun!

Two miles a day!

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 23.

"Hark! The guard has shouted 'Right!'  
Now we're away!  
Dashing through the Isle of Wight—  
Two miles a day!  
Gathering flowers by the bunch,  
Pausing to partake of lunch,  
Singing gaily as we munch—  
Two miles a day!"

That merry refrain floated from the carriage-window, causing considerable amusement among the passengers.

The only person who wasn't amused was the guard.

When the train stopped at Brading he communicated with the police at Ventnor, instructing them to send a constable to meet the hilarious Greyfriars juniors, and to take into custody the boy who had pulled the communication-cord without good and sufficient cause.

The train continued on its way at the leisurely pace for which it was notorious.

Just before Sandown was reached Wibley leaned out of the carriage-window, and, by means of a comb and tissue-paper, played the "Dead March in Saul."

The only effect this had upon the engine-driver was to make him go slower than ever.

"I should think that blessed driver must have been an undertaker before he took on this job!" said Peter Todd. "He seems to think he's following a hearse!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sandown, with its forts and barracks, was reached at length. And then the train crawled on to Shanklin.

"Only two more stations!" said Dick Russell cheerfully.

Vernon-Smith groaned.

"I feel like letting off a collection of jumping-crackers behind that blessed engine-driver!" he growled.

"You've done quite enough damage already, Smithy," said Hazeldene. "There will be the dickens to pay when we get to Ventnor!"

"When! I've given up all hope of ever getting there!"

As the train jolted out of Shanklin Station Gwynne awoke with a start.

"My hat!" he murmured drowsily. "Where are we?"

Then, glancing at his watch, he added:

"Why, it's half-past three!"

Dick Russell grinned.

"I was right, you see!" he said. "And there's several miles to go yet, besides the journey from Ventnor Station to the cricket-ground."

Gwynne groaned.

"We seem to have gone back to the Stone Age!" he said. "This train is the limit and the last straw rolled into one!"

At Wroxall the train was held up for a considerable time. Something seemed to have gone wrong with the works.

"I vote we go behind and push!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At last, however, the train moved on again.

It was soon swallowed up in a long, dark tunnel, and when it emerged into the bright sunshine again the tourists were greeted with the welcome word:

"Ventnor!"

"At last!" yawned Vernon-Smith. "My hat! What a nightmare journey! If we ever have to cross the island again we'll resort to the more speedy method of walking!"

"Yes, rather!"

Tired and travel-stained, the party tumbled out of the carriage.

Just as they were leaving the station a hand fell upon Vernon-Smith's shoulder.

The Bouncer spun round.

"This is the young rascal wot pulled the cord!" said the guard. "Take 'im along to the police-station, Billings!"

"What-ho!" said a portly constable, stepping up to Vernon-Smith.

"What the thump—" began the Bouncer. Then he paused, utterly dumbfounded.

The arm of the law had Vernon-Smith in its grasp!

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### A Race for Freedom!

"MY only aunt!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith.

Gwynne glared at the policeman.

"What's all this rot?" he asked sharply.

"I've 'ad orders to place this young cub under arrest!" said the constable.

"Don't be absurd! What's he been doing, anyway?"

"He's pulled the communication-cord without cause, an' he's liable to be fined pretty 'eavy."

Gwynne gave a start.

"Did you pull the communication-cord, Smith?"

"Certainly!" grinned the Bouncer.

"Why?"

"To warn the guard that the train was on the move! I thought there must have been something wrong."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly young ass!" said Gwynne, scarcely knowing whether to be angry or amused. "A pretty mess you've landed yourself into now!"

He turned to the constable, and endeavoured to slip a couple of half-crowns into his hand.

"Call it square!" he murmured.

But the portly constable wasn't having any.

"Bribery an' corruption!" he said sternly. "Wot I says is this 'ere—nothin' is goin' to turn me from my dooty!"

"My hat!"

Vernon-Smith looked at Gwynne.

"You carry on," he said. "Never mind about me. The Isle of Wight team will be nearly fed-up with waiting by this time. You fellows go along to the ground, and rely on me to turn up as soon as I can."

"It seems the best plan," said Gwynne.

"But I wish you hadn't got into this scrape."

"Don't be alarmed on my account," said the Bouncer.

Gwynne and the others chartered the char-a-banc which was waiting outside the station and drove away to the ground.

"You come along o' me!" said the constable, scowling at Vernon-Smith.

"All right, old sport!" said the Bouncer meekly. "Lead the way!"

The stout policeman marched off with ponderous steps in the direction of the local police-station.

Vernon-Smith trotted meekly by his side.

Not for one moment did the Bouncer intend to submit to the indignity of the court proceedings.

Although he pretended to be submissive, he was casting about in his mind for a means of escape.

If he could only give this portly constable the slip, all would be well.

The straggling High Street of Ventnor was thronged with holiday-makers, many of whom stared in surprise at the Greyfriars junior and his escort.

Suddenly the Bouncer decided upon his plan of campaign.

Turning swiftly, he sped away before his captor could even faintly realise what was happening.

Straight as an arrow Vernon-Smith sped on his course.

His brain was working swiftly.

A good many people had joined in the chase by this time; and cries of "Stop thief!" echoed along the High Street.

The Bouncer was no fool.

Good runner though he was, he realised that, with a pack of wolves at his heels, so to speak, he must eventually be overhauled.

Vernon-Smith smiled grimly.

Dodging swiftly round the next corner, he came upon a tailoring establishment, at the entrance to which stood a dummy figure.

With a deft movement of his fingers the Bouncer wrenched the placard off the dummy, and transferred it to his own chest.

Then he stood as stiff as a statue outside the tailor's shop, with the card displayed to view, bearing the words:

"CRICKET FLANNELS . . . THIS STYLE  
2 GUINEAS!"

The crowd had seen the junior dodge round the corner, and they followed hot on the trail.

Not for one moment did they suspect that the dummy figure outside the tailor's shop was the quarry they sought.

Vernon-Smith held his breath, and stood rigid.

The crowd—including P.-c. Billings—came thundering past.

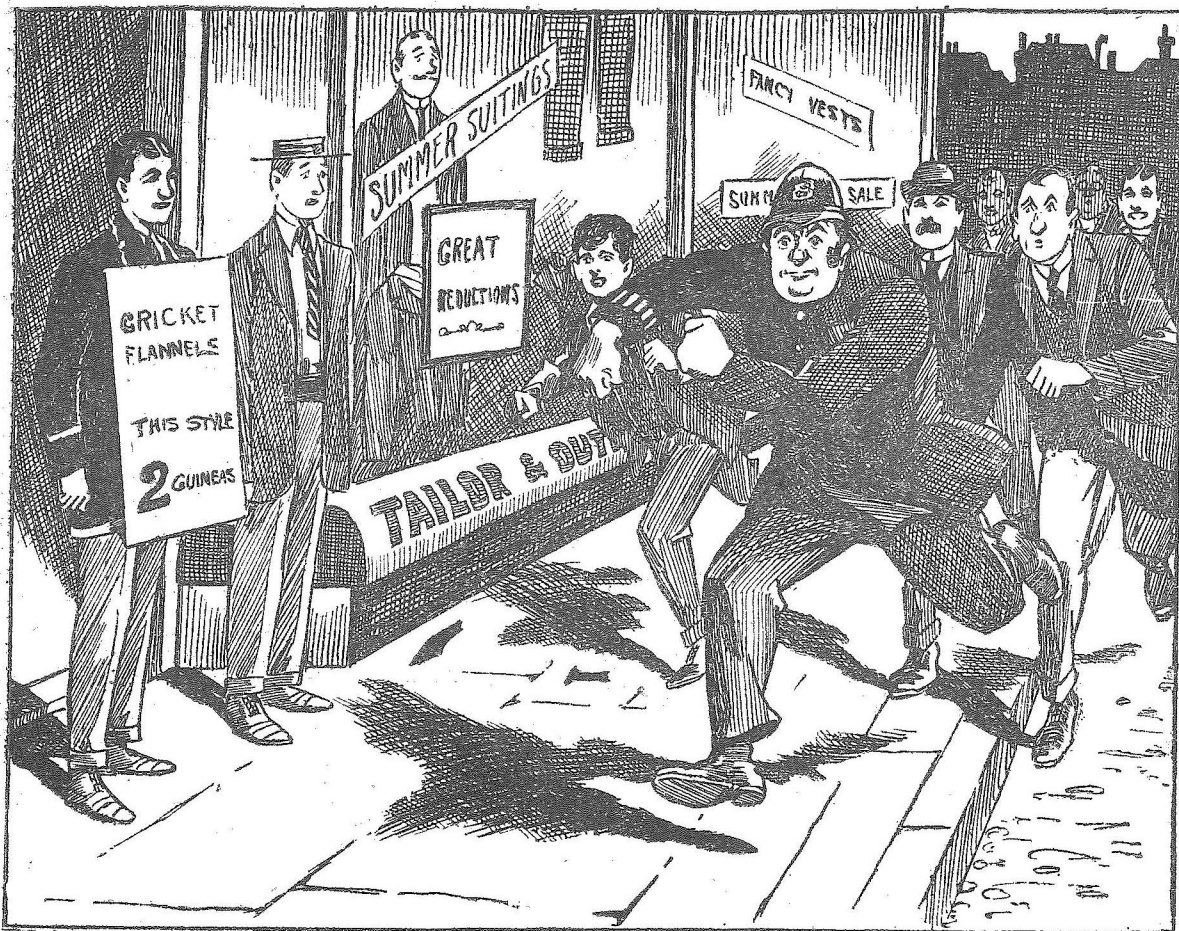
"Stop, thief!" rang out the cry.

The Bouncer remained motionless until the crowd had vanished down the street.

Then, jerking off the placard, he stroiled coolly away in the opposite direction.

He had effectually shaken off his pursuers!

"My hat!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "That was a close shave! I'd better be getting along to the cricket-ground or they will be starting the match without me."



Vernon-Smith stood as stiff as a statue outside the tailor's shop. The crowd—including P.-c. Billings—came thundering past. "Stop thief!" rang out the cry. (See Chapter 4.)

A cheery-faced youth directed the Bounder to the ground, which was situated between Ventnor and St. Lawrence.

"Hallo!" said Gwynne, in surprise, as Vernon-Smith came up. "What's happened?"

Vernon-Smith explained how he had given his pursuers the slip.

Gwynne smiled. "You're a young ass, all the same!" said the senior of Greyfriars. "There will be the dickens of a row if this comes to the Head's ears! You ought not to have touched that communication-cord."

"Couldn't resist it, Gwynne."

"Well, I'll admit you had very strong provocation. But never mind that now. Here's Hilary, the skipper of the Isle of Wight team."

A good-looking youth stepped forward and shook hands cordially with the Bounder.

"Pleased to meet you!" said Vernon-Smith. "And we shall be pleased to beat you, too!"

Hilary smiled. "You'll find that this sleepy old island isn't quite a back number," he said. "We know how to play cricket."

"I can quite believe you," said the Bounder, as his eye roved over the sturdy, athletic figures of the other members of the Isle of Wight eleven.

"Shall we toss?" asked Hilary.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

Hilary spun the coin, and Vernon-Smith called correctly.

"Come along, Toddy!" he said. "Cricket's rather tame after my recent adventures, but I'll do my best."

And Peter Todd and his skipper went in to open the innings.

Beyond a few local reporters, there were practically no spectators.

But this did not deter the players from putting up a good game.

The Isle of Wight bowlers were in great form.

Hilary himself and a wizard named Lancaster made short work of the Greyfriars wickets.

Vernon-Smith stayed long enough to scrape together a dozen runs; and towards the end of the innings Russell and Ogilvy made a plucky stand; but the total was only 60.

"These beggars are going to give us a rare tussle!" said Peter Todd.

"Looks like it," agreed the Bounder. "Still, if we work like niggers in the field we shall hold our own all serene."

Vernon-Smith and Penfold shared the bowling.

Apart from Hilary, the Isle of Wight boys were strangely ill-at-ease.

The wickets went down like ninepins, and the home team were dismissed for precisely the same total as that of their opponents—60.

A tea interval followed.

No refreshments were provided on the ground, so the Greyfriars juniors strolled into the town.

Vernon-Smith's keen eyes were on the alert. He did not wish to be recognised by P.-c. Billings or by any of his pursuers of a few hours previously.

There was a very nice restaurant in the High Street, and the juniors did justice to an excellent tea. Then they returned to the cricket-ground.

The Friars expected to do great deeds in their second innings, but they were disappointed.

Hilary was a bowler only to be compared with Hurree Singh, of Greyfriars. And Hurree Singh, unfortunately, was not a member of Vernon-Smith's party. He was, at the present moment, grinding out Latin verbs under the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch.

The Remove's second innings yielded only 39 runs.

"This is awful!" groaned Bulstrode. "Blessed if I can make it out!" said Vernon-Smith. "We put up a much better show against Surrey and Essex!"

The Isle of Wight boys were grinning. They evidently imagined that they had the game well in hand.

Vernon-Smith tossed the ball to Penfold. "Make the best of a bad job!" he said.

A grim look came over Penfold's face.

Hilary and Lancaster came in to bat, looking as if they would knock off the necessary number of runs between them.

But when Penfold's first ball made a ghastly mess of Hilary's wicket, the Isle of Wight fellows grew less optimistic.

The man who followed on shared the same fate as Hilary.

"Good man, Pen!" said Peter Todd. "That's the way to treat 'em! Send 'em back with their tails between their legs!"

Wickets fell with delightful frequency; but Lancaster stayed in, and he managed to score pretty freely.

Ten went up on the telegraph-board, followed in due course by twenty and thirty.

By this time quite a respectable crowd had collected on the ground.

The match was in the balance now. Penfold had tired himself; but Vernon-Smith was bowling with deadly skill.

When the last Isle of Wight batsman sauntered on to the pitch, only two runs were required to give the home side the victory.

It was a tense moment as the batsman took his stand.

"Settle him, Smithy!" muttered Hazeldene. All eyes were on the Bounder as he prepared to take his run.

The batsman crouched low, ready to receive the oncoming ball.

But it never came.

Just as Vernon-Smith got into his stride, a sudden shout arose.

"That's 'im! That's the feller!"  
The Bounder stopped short.  
Striding on to the pitch came P.-c. Billings and another constable.  
"Oh crumbe!" gasped Vernon-Smith.  
"Got yer, you young rip!" said Mr. Billings. "You gave me the slip before, but you won't get the chance agen! Gimme a 'and with 'im Bert!"  
And the two constables laid violent hands upon Vernon-Smith, and proceeded to march him off the field, to the surprise and consternation of the crowd.  
"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Gwynne, running up. "If you've got an arrest to make, let it stand over for five minutes. We're just finishing an important match!"  
"Sorry, young gent," said P.-c. Billings, "but it can't be done. This young rascalion must be took to the station at once!"  
"Oh, come off!" said Vernon-Smith. "Any-one would think I was a dashed criminal!"  
"You pulled that there communication-cord and—"  
"Yes; and I'll pull your long nose, if you're not jolly careful!"  
"My eye!"  
"No—your nose! What are you making such a fuss about, old pimple-face?"  
P.-c. Billings nearly choked.  
"Bring 'im along, Bert!" he said, in a strangled voice.  
And Vernon-Smith was hustled away in the grasp of his captors.  
Despite his cool manner, the Bounder was feeling rather sick.  
He did not want the name of Greyfriars to be dragged through the police-court. Neither did he wish all the future tours to be cancelled by the Head, as a result of his thoughtless action.  
Slipping his hand into his pocket, Vernon-Smith brought forth a couple of rustling fivers.  
"Take one each, and call it quits!" he said.  
P.-c. Billings wavered.  
Fivers seldom came his way, and his eyes glistened at the sight of Vernon-Smith's tempting bribe.  
But he was a stickler for law and order.  
With a great effort, he turned his eyes away from the banknotes, and said:  
"Dooty is dooty. You're not gin' to wriggle out of this affair, young shaver!"  
The Bounder began to feel seriously alarmed.  
There was no way of escape this time.  
The penalty imposed for the improper use of the communication-cord was a fine not exceeding five pounds.  
Vernon-Smith would have paid such a sum cheerfully; but the thought of the Court proceedings coming to the notice of Dr. Locke made him very uneasy.  
But help was at hand. And when it came, it came from a totally unexpected quarter.  
Just as escort and prisoner reached the exit of the cricket-ground, a woman caught up with them.  
"John," she exclaimed, seizing P.-c. Billings by the arm, "what—what are you doing to that boy?"  
"Takin' 'im along to the lock-up, my dear!" said the constable grimly.  
"But—but that's the young gentleman who saved our little girl's life this morning!"  
"Eh?"  
"I told you about him—how he dived off the steamer, and rescued Doris. Surely you're not going to get such a plucky young gent into trouble?"  
P.-c. Billings released Vernon-Smith at once. His comrade did likewise.  
A great load slipped from the Bounder's mind.  
Thanks to the timely intervention of the constable's wife he was saved.  
"Sir," said Mr. Billings, as soon as he could find his voice, "I—I dunno 'ow to thank you for—"  
"Don't try!" said the Bounder cheerfully. "But you—you risked your life—"  
"Rats! The whole thing was as simple as pie. Your little girl happened to tumble into the water, and I fished her out, as any other fellow would have done. It was nothing—nothing at all!"  
But the police-constable seemed to think otherwise.  
He seized Vernon-Smith's hand and wrung it as if it were a pump-handle.  
"You're a very gallant young gentleman!" said Mrs. Billings. "I tried to thank you on the steamer, but you went and hid yourself. I should like to thank you now!"  
"That's all right, ma'am!" said the Bounder, flushing.  
"Of course," said Mr. Billings, "I shouldn't

think of takin' you along to the station after this. I'm sorry I interrupted your cricket-match, sir. And as for the guard on that train, I know 'im well, and I'll soon make things all right with him. Don't you worry, sir."  
"You're a sport!" said Vernon-Smith.  
He raised his cap to Mrs. Billings, and hurried back to the cricket-ground.  
"What's happened now?" asked Gwynne.  
Vernon-Smith breathlessly explained the situation, and Gwynne looked even more relieved than the Bounder.  
"What a wonderful stroke of luck!" he said. "I felt certain you'd get into hot water, Smith. It was jolly fortunate that Mrs. Billings happened to be on the ground."  
"Yes, rather!"  
Vernon-Smith went back to the bowling-croase.  
His recent escape acted as a spur to his bowling. He sent down the best ball he knew.  
The batsman swiped at it, and—more by accident than design—managed to hit it.  
But Vernon-Smith was waiting for it.  
He shot out his right hand, and—  
Smack!  
The ball reposed safely in his palm.  
"Hurrah!"  
"Well caught, sir!"  
The match was over and won.  
Despite their weariness, and the misadventures which had befallen their skipper, the Greyfriars Remove had defeated the boys of the Isle of Wight by 1 run!  
"A close thing!" said Hilary, as the field-men came in.  
"Too close to be comfortable," said Peter Todd. "I thought it was all up with us more than once. However, we've won—and we'll try to repeat the performance in the rest of the contests!"  
"You'll try," grinned Lancaster; "and that's about as far as you'll get!"  
To which Peter Todd replied with the time-honoured maxim:  
"Wait and see!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables.

JACK HILARY speedily became very chummy with the Greyfriars juniors.  
He called on them at their hotel—the Metropole—early next morning, and volunteered to show them the sights of Ventnor.  
Vernon-Smith & Co. had fallen in love with the little seaside town at first sight.  
Its situation was most romantic, the houses being built one above another, in hanging terraces, on shelves of rock which rose from the rugged shore to the side of a high chalk down.  
"Fifty years ago," said Hilary, as he conducted the Greyfriars juniors along the promenade. "Ventnor was a tiny fishing hamlet. My pater often jabs about it. There were a few thatched cottages on the shore—plus a wayside inn called the Crab and Lobster."  
"Pity Loder of the Sixth didn't live here then," said Peter Todd. "That would have suited him down to the ground!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Is Loder a blade, then?" asked Hilary.  
"He's a blade, a dog, and a goer rolled into one!" said Vernon-Smith.  
"I know that sort," said Hilary. "Luckily we haven't many of them on the island. Our fellows keep themselves pretty fit, as a rule."  
"Judging by the way they played cricket yesterday, I can quite believe you," said Vernon-Smith. "You gave us a jolly good run for our money."  
"By the way," said Dick Penfold, "what do you call that steep hill over yonder?"  
"That's Boniface Down," said Hilary. "Care to climb it?"  
"Rather!"  
Fresh and fit after a good night's sleep, the juniors entered upon the climb with zest. The ascent was made from a path near Trinity Church.  
It was a stiff climb, but the juniors were well rewarded when they gained the summit.  
Away in the distance stretched a broad expanse of ocean, and the town of Ventnor, nestling below, presented a most enchanting picture.  
"How ripping!" said Dick Rake. "You'll have to write a poem on this, Pen!"  
"Wish I could," said Penfold ruefully. "I can only do comic stuff, though. It would take a giddy Byron to describe a scene like this."  
The juniors wandered for miles across the broad face of the Down, and then they descended, at Bulstrode's request, for light

refreshment. Bulstrode was more concerned with his inner man than with the scenery.  
Hilary glanced at his watch.  
"Swimming races take place in an hour," he said. "Shouldn't advise you to gorge to much."  
"Thanks for the tip," said Dick Rake. "I was just going to order a dozen doughnuts and a fat plum-cake."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
When the juniors strolled down to the beach they found the conditions ideal.  
The tide was in, covering the ridge of rocks which, at low tide, formed a menace to bathers.  
Sailing-boats, rowing-boats, and Rob Roy canoes bobbed up and down on the sparkling waves; and the famous motor-launch owned by Messrs. Spencer & Sons was about to embark with its cargo of happy passengers.  
The crowd on the beach was enormous.  
All through the war Ventnor had been neglected by holiday-makers. But it was different now.  
Young men and maidens, old men and children, were basking on the beach in the bright summer sunshine.  
"Better have a trial swim, you fellows," said Vernon-Smith.  
And the Greyfriars juniors, availing themselves of a row of bathing-tents, prepared for their plunge.  
The water was warm—of a warmth almost equal to that of the blue Mediterranean.  
Vernon-Smith & Co. swam out to the end of the pier and back, and felt satisfied that they were in good trim.  
As they emerged from the water half a dozen boys entered the sea with a merry splash. Then they swam straight out, as if they had designs upon reaching the distant horizon.  
"My hat! Those fellows can swim like ducks!" said Peter Todd. "Just look at them!"  
The six swimmers, keeping together in line, were soon out beyond the end of the pier.  
The Greyfriars juniors stood watching them from the beach.  
"Aren't they going to turn back?" asked Bulstrode.  
"Doesn't look like it," said Vernon-Smith. "My only aunt! They look as if they mean to swim the giddy Channel!"  
The swimmers soon became mere specks on the distant sea. After a time they were not visible at all.  
"The silly asses!" said Gwynne, looking grave. "They seem to forget that they've got to come all the way back—and against the tide, too!"  
"Don't be alarmed," chimed in Hilary, coming up at that moment. "This is an everyday performance on the part of those fellows!"  
"But—but who are they?"  
Hilary laughed.  
"You'll know who they are before long," he said. "They're members of the Isle of Wight team."  
"My hat!"  
Vernon-Smith & Co. exchanged gloomy glances.  
It had not occurred to them that their opponents, who had lived all their lives on an island, were, by the very nature of things, strong swimmers.  
"Looks as if we're booked for a series of lickings," murmured the Bounder.  
And his followers agreed with him.  
The six swimmers returned at length.  
They emerged from the water as fresh as daisies, and stretched their dripping limbs on the beach, in the bright sunshine.  
Shortly afterwards the swimming sports commenced.  
Never had the Greyfriars juniors felt so hopelessly out of it.  
They were beaten at every twist and turn. Not a single race went to the Friars.  
Vernon-Smith put up a game and determined fight in the long-distance swim, only to finish second to Hilary.  
Glad enough were the Greyfriars fellows to retire to the privacy of their bathing-tents.  
They felt their humiliation keenly.  
They had been as pignims against giants.  
Every race, without exception, had been won by their opponents.  
It began to look as if the writer of that challenge in the "Isle of Wight Climber" knew what he was talking about.  
"Cheer up, kid!" said Gwynne, when Vernon-Smith, clad in his flannels, emerged from the tent. "You won the cricket-match, you know, and there's no reason why you shouldn't carry off the remaining events."  
But, like Rachel of old, Vernon-Smith mourned, and would not be comforted.

The cheery optimism with which he had started on the tour had evaporated.

When the juniors got back to the Metropole, a telegraph-boy met them at the entrance to the Winter Garden.

"Master Vernon-Smith?" he inquired.

"Here," said the Bounder.

He opened the telegram, glanced at it, and gave a grunt.

The wire ran thus:

"How are things going?—WHARTON."

To which Vernon-Smith replied, with characteristic promptness:

"Rottenly!—VERNON-SMITH."

For once in a way, the Bounder had a bad attack of the blues.

The failure of the Friars in the swimming races had hit him hard.

He had overlooked the fact that the darkest hour heralds the approach of dawn, and that, though heaviness may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Rousing Finish!

61 **W**HO'S for an early morning dip?" Peter Todd sat up in bed and addressed the three Dicks—Russell, Rake, and Penfold—who shared his room.

The early morning sunshine streamed in at the windows, heralding the advent of a perfect day.

"After what happened yesterday," said Dick Rake, "I swore I shouldn't swim another stroke in my natural! But how can a fellow resist it on a morning like this?"

The juniors tumbled out of bed, and garbed themselves in flannel trousers and sweaters. They were joined in the corridor by Vernon-Smith and the others.

The dip was delightful.

The sea was in a rough-and-tumble mood. It was a glorious sensation to rise on the swell of a giant wave and then plunge into a seething valley of foam.

"Now, if we'd been natives of this blessed island," panted the Bounder, "we should have put up a much better show yesterday. If I were a Ventnor fellow, I should live in the water all the summer."

"Hear, hear!" said Dick Russell. "This is ripping!"

"It'll do your muscles good, old scout," said Peter Todd. "You're boxing against Hilary, you know."

"And mind you don't come a cropper, like you did against that Essex fellow," said Ogilvy.

Russell chuckled, and, turning on his back, allowed himself to float at the will of the waves.

"I was feeling off-colour before," he said. "I'm as fit as a fiddle now. If I don't lick Hilary, I'll give up boxing, and take to keeping white mice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boxing contest took place in the open air, on some level ground at the top of the Undercliff.

Gloves were provided, of course; and it was fortunate for Hilary that this was so, or his handsome countenance would have been damaged pretty considerably.

As it was, Dick Russell had the best of the bout all the way.

Hilary was scientific, but he was slow. He lacked Russell's lightning footwork, and he missed too many opportunities.

The Isle of Wight representative went to the grass in the third round; nor did he attempt to rise.

He had shot his bolt. And Gwynne counted him out, to the accompaniment of loud applause from the Greyfriars fellows.

Vernon-Smith brightened up.

His fit of the blues was over, leaving him confident and cheerful.

"If we can only win all the other events," he said, "it will be topping!"

"Smithy's not greedy," said Peter Todd.

"But he likes a lot!" chuckled Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The running races were held on the recreation-ground.

Spurred on by sound advice from Gwynne, the Greyfriars juniors did well from the outset.

The Isle of Wight boys were better swimmers than runners. They never lost heart; but they were outclassed throughout.

The table of events, with results, ran as follows:

Winner.

100 Yards ...	H. Vernon-Smith.
Hurdle Race ...	P. Todd.
Quarter Mile ...	H. Vernon-Smith.
Tug-of-War ...	Greyfriars.
High Jump ...	R. Penfold.
Long Jump ...	G. Bulstrode.

A sweeping list of successes, indeed! The Marathon Race was yet to come.

It was not the usual long course, owing to the hilly nature of the roads around Ventnor.

"If we can only bag the Marathon," said Vernon-Smith. "Everything in the garden will be lovely!"

An Isle of Wight boy named Harper made all the running; but towards the finish he was rapidly overhauled by Dick Rake, who won in a canter, as the sporting scribes say, by half a dozen yards.

Vernon-Smith & Co. returned to their hotel in high feather.

Their tour to the Isle of Wight had, contrary

to expectation, proved the most successful tour of all.

The cricket-match, the boxing contest, the running races, had all been won by the Friars; and the only feather in the cap of the local sportsmen was the winning of the swimming races.

Jack Hilary's face had a wistful expression as he shook hands with the tourists.

"Wish I could go to Greyfriars," he said. "You fellows are real hot stuff at sport. We had no idea you were such Trojans."

"We were lucky," said Vernon-Smith. "That cricket-match, for instance. We licked you by a single run. There was nothing in it, really. And after all, you made us look pretty small in the swimming races."

"That's the only thing we can console ourselves with," said Hilary. "Well, good-bye, you fellows!"

"Make it 'Au revoir,'" said Peter Todd. "This is our first trip to the Isle of Wight, but I hope it won't be the last."

Vernon-Smith & Co. took the news of their triumph to Greyfriars.

There was no need for them to tell their victories by word of mouth.

On leaving Ventnor, they had procured the latest copy of the "Isle of Wight Chimes," which contained the following paragraph:

"AN APOLOGY TO GREYFRIARS!

"We hinted in this paper last week that a junior team from Greyfriars would be put to shame by an Isle of Wight team.

"We take back that suggestion, in view of recent events.

"Only this week, a Grayfriars party came, saw, and conquered.

"From first to last their performance was splendid, and although they were outclassed in the swimming contests, they won every other event.

"We freely express our apology for the statements which appeared last week, and at the same time heartily congratulate the Greyfriars boys on their well-deserved success."

That paragraph found its way into the Head's study; and Dr. Locke was delighted.

Fellows from all Forms flocked in to congratulate Vernon-Smith.

"It might have ended jolly differently," reflected the Bounder. "If I hadn't been lucky enough to fish that kid out of the water, The Head would have come down like a thousand of bricks if I had been summoned. Still, all's well that ends well."

And the Greyfriars tourists were more than satisfied with the result of their tournament with those sterling and sportsmanlike Sons of the South!

THE END.

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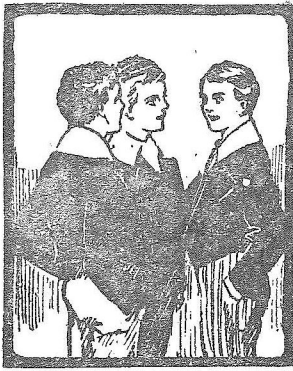
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# REFORMING GOWER!

A New Long, Complete Story  
of JIMMY SILVER & Co., the  
Chums of Rookwood.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bad for Peele & Co.

"HERE we are, kids!" Jimmy Silver, leader of the Classical House at Rookwood, nodded towards the door of the village tuckshop. Raby, Lovell, and Newcome were with him.

The four juniors looked hot. They had walked fairly quickly from Rookwood to the tuckshop. Ices were not provided by Sergeant Kettle, who kept the school tuckshop, but the village tuckshop had them. And the hot weather literally called for ices!

Raby licked his lips in keen anticipation. "My hat!" he said. "I can just go a couple of ices!"

"Leave some for the chaps who will come after us," said Jimmy Silver. "We're first to-day, but we may be last to-morrow, you know."

"What difference does that make?" demanded Raby.

"All the difference, fathead! If Tommy Dodd got here first to-morrow, and remembered we'd scoffed all the ices to-day, then they'd do the same to-morrow. Savvy?"

Raby, Newcome, and Lovell looked perplexed.

"I, for one, don't savvy at all!" growled Newcome. "It's too jolly hot to work that little lot out, Jimmy, my son."

And he pushed open the door of the shop and walked up to the counter, followed by his chums.

But they were not the first Rookwood fellows who had reached the shop. Peele, Lattrey, and Gower, the sneaks of the Fourth, were there before them.

But Peele & Co. were not partaking of ices. They had glasses before them, filled with ginger-beer, and there were cigarettes between their fingers.

Jimmy Silver & Co. spotted them at once, and Jimmy Silver's face flushed.

He strode across the little shop and faced Peele & Co. with blazing eyes.

"You rotten outsiders!" he said hotly. "What the dickens do you mean by it?"

Gower looked at Peele and smiled.

"What do you mean by it, Peele?" he demanded.

"Yes—what do you mean by it, Gower?"

"Same to you, Lattrey!"

Jimmy Silver's fists clenched.

"Shut that rot!" he snapped tersely. "Do you call it decent to smoke in a public place?"

"I don't know. What do you think, Peele?"

"I don't know. What is your opinion, Lattrey?"

"My opinion is that Silver's an interfering little Eric!" sneered Lattrey.

Jimmy Silver did not waste any more time in words. He signed to Raby, Newcome, and Lovell.

"These bounders are trying to be funny," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "They're disgracing the name of the school by smoking in a public place, and I think it's up to us to teach them that cads don't prosper!"

"What—ho!"

Peele & Co. rose to their feet in alarm. They had come up against Jimmy Silver & Co. on more than one occasion, and they had not come off best.

"Look here, don't rot!" said Peele hastily. "What has—"

"Kicking up a row in a public place is just as bad as smoking, Silver!" said Gower hastily.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 23.

"Rats! We're going to correct you, and my advice is—don't make a fuss, because you are going through it!" said Jimmy Silver.

Peele & Co. looked at each other in alarm, and hurriedly dropped their cigarettes and stamped upon them.

"I say, Silver—"

"You're not allowed to say anything!" interrupted Silver curtly. "Come on!"

"But—"

Raby, Newcome, and Lovell seized Lattrey and Peele, and Jimmy Silver grasped Gower.

"Back to Rookwood!" said Jimmy Silver. Raby looked at the ice-tab and licked his lips.

"Jimmy! What about having an ice first?" he asked lamely.

Jimmy Silver shook his head firmly. "Personal desires must be set aside," he said. "It's up to us to teach these cads that behaving like cads in public is bad for the good name of Rookwood."

"Yes—but—"

"Why should we spoil our afternoon for the cads?" demanded Newcome wrathfully. "Let's take them to the back and give them a thumping good bumping!"

Silver hesitated. He glanced towards the ices, and he wavered. After all, they could "correct" Peele & Co. just as well there as at Rookwood.

The other members of the famous Co. saw their leader weakening, and Peele & Co. began to feel distinctly uncomfortable.

"Well, lug them round to the back!" said Jimmy Silver.

Peele & Co. made no effort to escape. Probably they recognised the uselessness of it. Jimmy Silver & Co. were trained athletes, fit as fiddles, and would have made short work of the unfit sneaks who spoiled their health by smoking.

They went quietly with Jimmy Silver & Co. to the back of the tuckshop, their faces showing alarm.

"Now," said Jimmy Silver solemnly, "before we bump you, just let me give you cads a word of advice. It is naughty to be a cad—"

"Or a worm—"

"Shut up, Newcome! I'm—I'm the magistrate, not you! It is no good just telling you cads what is decent and what is not unless we enforce it by bumping you."

"Oh, bump away, and be hanged to you!" growled Gower.

"Anything to oblige!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "Collar Gower, Newcome, and we'll start the ball rolling!"

Gower was collared in the powerful grasp of the two juniors, and he was bumped on the hard ground with no little force. Peele and Lattrey looked on, and shifted their feet uneasily.

"Ow! Stoppit, you fatheads— Yow! Bullies—"

Gower roared each time he met the ground. "We're bumping away!" said Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle. "Tell us when you're satisfied."

"Ow! I'm more than satisfied now!" howled Gower. "Yooow! Oh dear!"

Jimmy Silver and Newcome dropped Gower to the ground, and he lay there, howling.

The two juniors were red and perspiring. Bumping the cads was hot work.

"Now you two bump Peele!" said Jimmy Silver, wiping his brow.

Raby and Lovell shook their heads.

"No, you're doing it nicely, Jimmy," said Raby. "Isn't he Gower?"

"Yow!" roared Gower. "Which might have meant anything.

"There you are, Jimmy!"

"Rats! You two bump Peele, and we'll

bump Lattrey—he's a lighter worm than Peele!"

"Look here, Silver—"

"Rats! Collar them!"

And, despite the exertion that was necessary, Jimmy Silver proceeded with the work of "correcting" Peele & Co., and by the time they had finished the sneaks felt very sorry for themselves.

Jimmy Silver looked at them as they sat on the ground, dusty and dishevelled.

"That's about half as much as you'll get the next time we catch you playing the giddy goat!" he said curtly.

"Come on, we've wasted enough time on these bounders!" snapped Newcome. "All the ices will be gone, if we don't hurry up!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. left Peele & Co. to pick themselves up, and returned to the tuckshop.

They found there was already a crowd of Rookwood fellows enjoying ices, and they experienced some difficulty in getting one for themselves. They got some at last, and sat down at a table.

Raby looked up after he had finished his first, and smiled complacently.

"That's top-hole!" he said. "I think bumping Peele & Co. gave me a thirst for ices, you chaps. Going to have another one?"

"What—ho!" assented the Co.

And Raby took the four glasses and waited his turn to be served.

He had just secured the ices when Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle came into the shop.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were in the Modern House at Rookwood, and there existed a rivalry between them and Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Classics which usually led to rows whenever they met.

Raby hurried to the table at which Jimmy Silver & Co. were sitting, and placed the ices before his chums before he looked aggressively at Tommy Dodd & Co.

But Tommy Dodd waved his hand.

"Pax!" he said lightly. "You can eat your ices in peace."

Jimmy Silver glared.

"You couldn't make it other than peaceful!" he said.

"We don't want to, my son. It's too hot to rag you to-day; we've just been bumping three of your chaps, as a matter of fact, and it's too warm a job!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. started.

"You cheeky asses!" said Silver. "You've been bumping three of our chaps, have you?"

"Certainly. We don't believe in letting cads spoil the good name of Rookwood!"

"Eh!"

"Peele & Co. were walking towards the school, smoking cigarettes as coolly as you like. We had to stop and impress upon them that it is bad for juniors to smoke."

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "We bumped them for the same rotten trick—they were smoking in here."

"They ought to be sacked!" growled Lovell disgustedly.

Tommy Dodd & Co. secured their ices, and brought them to the same table as the Classical Co. occupied.

As Tommy Dodd said, it was too hot for rags.

The juniors talked cricket whilst they consumed ices, and Peele & Co. were forgotten for the time.

But as they walked slowly back to Rookwood Jimmy Silver's face held a very serious expression, Raby was quick to notice the change.

"What's up, Jimmy?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver hesitated.



"Well, as a matter of fact, I was thinking of Peele & Co.," he said slowly. "The awful cads! I'm jolly glad old Tommy Dodd & Co. bumped them!"

"So are we all. But that's no cause for you to look as if you'd lost a bob and found three-pence."

"I'm thinking of reforming them," went on Jimmy Silver, with a frown.

The juniors stopped suddenly, and stared at the Classical leader.

"Eh? Reform Peele?"

"Certainly—and Gower and Lattrey!" said Silver firmly.

"Can't he did! Why—?"

"It can be done—and it's going to be done! The only way is to make them promise—"

"Shucks! Their promises—"

"Let me finish, kid, and you'll understand. Walk on, we're standing like a lot of freaks out for a sun-bath!"

And the juniors, much interested, walked on whilst Jimmy Silver explained his plan to reform Peele & Co.

The juniors' faces lightened as he proceeded, and when he had finished they were chuckling delightedly. Jimmy Silver's plan appealed to them, but whether it would appeal to Peele & Co. was quite a different matter.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Gower—Fag!

"GOWER!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. poked their heads into the Common-room after tea that same afternoon, and shouted out the name!

There was no reply.

"Anybody seen Gower?" shouted Jimmy Silver cheerfully.

"What's he wanted for?"

Jimmy Silver chuckled as the question was asked in what can only be described as a hoarse whisper.

"Come on, Gower, my son!" said Jimmy Silver, with a laugh. "You needn't try and disguise your voice—come on! There's four nice fellows waiting to take you to a nice comfortable place."

Gower, who was sitting behind a crowd of juniors, stood up at that.

"Well, what do you want me for?" he demanded.

Without a word, Jimmy Silver & Co. went up to him, and took him gently, but firmly, by the arms.

"You're going to change studies," said Jimmy Silver calmly.

Gower jumped in amazement.

"Change studies!" he repeated. "Are you off your rocker?"

"Not a little tiny bit," replied Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "We've taken a sudden fancy for your company—that's all!"

The juniors looked on, laughing at the amazed expression on Gower's face.

"But—but—" began Gower.

"There's no buts, my buck," said Newcome. "You're going to be a member of the noble and illustrious Co. known as Jimmy Silver & Co.!"

"But I don't want to—"

"He has said enough, my brethren," said Jimmy Silver solemnly. "The new member of the Co. must not speak to his leader without permission."

"Rats!" said Gower, with a sniff. "I'm not coming!"

But he was wrong, for Jimmy Silver & Co. very firmly led him out of the Common-room to the end study. He struggled for a few yards, but gave it up.

When they reached the study, Jimmy Silver courteously pointed to an armchair, and solemnly bowed again.

"Pray be seated," he said politely.

"Look here—"

Raby gave him a push, and he sat down suddenly. He stopped there, glowering.

"Now you are duly appointed fag to this study," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "Your duties—"

"Fag!" hooted Gower, jumping to his feet. "Precisely," said Jimmy Silver, and his bantering tone changed to one of anger.

"You're a bounder, Gower, and we're going to reform you, or—"

"Die in the attempt!" murmured Lovell.

"Exactly. You were smoking in the tuck-shop, then you were bumped, and it didn't do you any good. So now we're going to try other ways and means."

"Rats!" howled Gower excitedly. "I'm not—"

"That is not the way to speak to your masters," said Lovell wearily. "I think the correction should begin, Jimmy."

Jimmy Silver nodded, and Arthur Edward Lovell went to a cupboard and took from it a small cane.

Gower eyed him in alarm, and went almost white with rage.

"Wh-what's that for?" he stuttered.

"You—every time you answer back or fail to do as you're told!" said Lovell quietly.

Gower's lip curled in a sneer.

"So the little Erics have taken to bullying, have they?" he murmured. "I thought—"

Jimmy Silver put his hand over the cad's mouth, and effectively stopped him saying more.

"That's enough!" he said curtly. "If you'd rather have the gloves on with me, you can!"

Gower almost shuddered at the mere thought. Only a few weeks before, Jimmy Silver's name had rang through the whole country as victor of Tide, a well-known boxer whom he had beaten in the Ring, London, after having run away from Rookwood.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked surlily.

"You're to move into this study pro tem," said Jimmy Silver. "And you are going to fag for us. You are also going in for cricket and swimming, because manly sports help to turn a cad into some semblance of a man."

"Anything else?" asked Gower sarcastically.

"Swish!"

Lovell brought the cane down with a stinging cut across Gower's shoulders, and the unfortunate sneak howled.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"That's for being cheeky!" snapped Lovell.

"We're going to reform you, my son, if it takes a year."

"Or a dozen canes!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! Oh, you bullies—"

"Come on, then, have the gloves on!" suggested Jimmy Silver, frowning.

"Yow! I won't—I will—"

"Then start by clearing away the tea-things," said Raby. "Then you can clean the windows, and after that you may be allowed to go down to the nets for a few minutes."

"Ow! You rot—nunno—it's all right!" stammered Gower.

And he set to work to clear the table of the cups and saucers and plates. He wriggled his shoulders uncomfortably at intervals, and muttered something incoherently every time he did so.

It was perhaps as well that Jimmy Silver & Co. could be deaf when occasion demanded it.

It was a bitter blow to the boastful junior to act as fag to a Fourth-Former. If Jimmy Silver & Co. had been members of the Sixth, he would not have minded—but fagging for Fourth-Formers!

Gower washed up the dirty plates and other crockery under the watchful eyes of his "correctors," a bitter, sneering expression on his face.

"Finished?" asked Jimmy Silver, when Gower had put the last plate away.

Gower nodded.

"Well, I'm waiting for your answer!" snapped Jimmy Silver.

"Y-y-yes!" stuttered Gower, choking with rage.

"Then you can clean the windows!" said Newcome. "That's the next part of the programme."

"I'll be hanged if I do!" howled Gower. "I'm—"

"You'll be whacked if you don't!" said Lovell humorously. "Going to do it?"

"No!"

"Swish!"

Down came the cane, and Gower howled again.

"Yow! I won't! Yow-ow! Yes, I will—stop it!"

And Gower snatched up the cloth with which he had washed up the dirty crockery, rushed to the window, and proceeded to rub the glass as if his life depended on his quickness.

Jimmy Silver looked uncomfortable for a moment, and leaned towards his chums.

"Do you think we're going it a bit stiff?" he murmured.

Raby, Lovell, and Newcome shook their heads.

"No," said Raby firmly. "The cad has done his best to disgrace the Form and the school by smoking in public places, and he'll have to learn to be decent. If the correction doesn't suit him—"

"It apparently doesn't!"

"Well, he should be decent. It's his own fault!"

And Jimmy Silver nodded again. It was Gower's fault, and he deserved all he got.

The cad of the Classical Fourth finished cleaning the window, and his brow was wet

with perspiration—as much with restraining his rage as with the exertion.

"Now you have finished work for the time being," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll adjourn to the playing-fields."

"I don't want to play cricket!" said Gower surlily. "I want to go back to my study."

"This is your study—for a time," said Jimmy Silver. "And cricket is part of your training. You'll find it more pleasant than getting licked for not cleaning up properly."

Gower walked out of the study without further word, and Jimmy Silver & Co. followed him, chuckling.

Five minutes later, and the Classical juniors were looking on in surprise as Gower took off his coat, and proceeded to field the ball, bowled by Raby and batted by Jimmy Silver.

Whether by accident or design, Raby's bowling that evening was of the kind that is called "easy stuff." Jimmy Silver, on the other hand, seemed to be in great form, and he sent the ball out into the playing-fields time after time.

Gower fielded the first three or four without saying anything likely to bring the anger of his "correctors" about his head. But when an exceptionally hard hit sent the ball whirling towards the gates that separated the playing-fields from the quadrangle, Gower did not hurry so much.

"After it!" roared Lovell. "Run, you rotter—run!"

Gower broke into a trot, but hardly increased his pace by doing so.

"Run!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "You'll get licked if that ball isn't back mighty quickly!"

Gower trotted on for another twenty yards, then he suddenly broke into a run. Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled.

"We're taming him already!" said Raby. "He'll be quite decent by the time we've finished with him!"

"Rather! I'm glad we've took to reforming Gower now," chuckled Newcome.

Gower reached the ball, and picked it up. But he did not throw it towards the nets.

With all the force he could muster, he sent it flying over the gates into the quadrangle.

Then he turned round, and very faintly there came to Jimmy Silver & Co.'s ears the words he shouted as he faced them again.

"Yah! Fetch it yourselves!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood rooted to the ground as Gower ran for the gates, flung them open, and disappeared.

"Well!" gasped Newcome. "The cheeky ass!"

"The—the rotter—cad—worm!" stuttered Lovell.

"After him!" said Jimmy Silver curtly. "Can't have the cad jumping over the traces like this!"

Jimmy Silver flung down his bat, and, followed by his chums, ran for the gates.

There was no trace of Gower, though they spent half an hour searching every corner of the Classical House. The Fistical Four were angry when they left the nets, but their failure to find the cad of the Fourth increased their anger to rage.

"We'll pulverise him!" growled Raby. "We'll—"

"Wait till he goes up to bed!" said Jimmy Silver darkly.

"I never heard of such cheek!" said Newcome wrathfully. "Fancy breaking away from his kind teachers like that!"

"He won't do it again!" murmured Lovell. "He won't like our patent treatment for cheeky patients!"

But Gower kept out of the way. He probably realised what it would mean if the irate juniors caught him.

Bulkeley, the captain of the School, ushered the juniors to bed four minutes after Jimmy Silver & Co. had given up the search, and for once the Fistical Four were quite eager to go.

They were the first to reach the dormitory, and almost before another junior had put in an appearance they had flung their jackets on to their beds.

Peele was the first junior to follow them into the dormitory.

"Where's Gower?" asked Jimmy Silver curtly.

"Don't know!" snapped Peele. "I'm not his keeper!"

"No; but we'll be yours when we've turned Gower into a decent fellow," replied Jimmy Silver curtly.

Peele stared, but did not question the four juniors.

He looked very penny as he was undressing.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 23.

for bed. Perhaps Gower had told him the form Jimmy Silver & Co.'s "correction" was taking.

The juniors crowded into the dormitory, but there was no sign of Gower.

"Where's he got to?" whispered Jimmy Silver.

Raby, Newcome, and Lovell could find no answer to that question, and when Bulkeley came in to turn out the lights, Jimmy Silver & Co. were reluctantly compelled to go to bed without exacting summary vengeance upon Gower.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Gower's Promise!

"RABY!" Jimmy Silver uttered the name softly as he shook his sleeping chum at six o'clock the next morning. Raby opened his eyes dreamily.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"Come on—get out of that bed, my son. Gower is asleep in his own bed—must have come back after everybody else had gone to sleep."

Raby yawned.

"Can't you leave it till after rising-bell?" he suggested. "We—we don't want to be too hard on the chap, you know!"

Jimmy Silver, by way of reply, caught hold of the sheets on which Raby was lying, and gave them a sharp tug, lifting them slightly as he did so.

Raby shot out of bed, and landed on the floor with a bump.

"Ow! Wharrer you at, fathead?" he shouted. "Do you take me for Gower?"

"No; I take you for a silly, lazy ass!" said Jimmy Silver tersely. "Gower is going down to the baths, and you chaps are coming with him!"

Raby muttered something about clumps, and rose to his feet.

In less than five minutes Jimmy Silver & Co. had pulled on their trousers, and wrapped towels round their shoulders. Then they went to Gower's bed.

Jimmy Silver shook him.

"Gower!"

Gower opened his eyes, looked dully into Silver's for a moment, and then promptly lugged over again.

"Heave him out!" said Jimmy Silver shortly.

The four juniors seized the sheets of Gower's bed, and the next instant Gower was sitting on the floor, gazing in bewilderment at the chuckling juniors.

"Get up, my son!" said Newcome cheerfully. "You're coming for a swim!"

"I'm not—I don't believe in cold baths in the early morning!" exclaimed Gower angrily. "They do you more harm than good!"

"That's unfortunate, because you're going down!" snapped Lovell. "We are like Phipps, the boot-boy—we 'old with them there baths!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And there's a little account that requires setting up between you and ourselves!" said Raby darkly. "We looked for you last night and—"

Gower interrupted him with a chuckle.

"But you didn't find me—what?"

"No; but we've got you now. Get up, you cad, and slip your bags on!"

"Rats!"

"Eh?"

"Rats!"

Gower repeated the word coolly, and showed no intention of getting up from the floor.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another in surprise. Their patience was no better for the treatment already meted out.

"Get the water-jug!" said Jimmy Silver shortly.

Lovell ran to obey, and Gower hastily jumped to his feet.

"Here, hold on!" he said hurriedly.

"What's the little game?"

"We're going to soak you, my son," said Jimmy Silver. "Then we're going to carry you down to the baths and chuck you in!"

"You—you—"

"Wish I'd got that cane!" murmured Raby.

Gower shuddered slightly, and before Lovell had got back to them with the jug of water Gower was slipping on his trousers.

"You're getting on!" said Jimmy Silver, as he led the way down to the baths. "We shall be quite proud of our little Gower soon. Who'd have thought you would take to swimming before rising-bell?"

Gower muttered something indistinguishable, and walked sullenly out of the Classical House to the swimming-baths.

Raby, Lovell, and Newcome were in the water in a very quick time, but Jimmy Silver waited for Gower.

The cad of the Fourth stopped on the edge of the baths, peering down at the cold water.

"I say, Silver—"

"No talking; this is lesson-time for you!" said Jimmy Silver.

"But, look here—"

"Rats!"

And Jimmy Silver pushed Gower into the water, who disappeared with a splash. Jimmy Silver dived neatly into the water the next moment, and the two juniors came to the surface together.

But whereas Jimmy Silver was smiling and chuckling as he shook the water from his eyes, Gower was gasping and spluttering when his head appeared above the water.

"Isn't it nice?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle.

"Gug-gug—gug!"

"Is it? Good! Down you go again!"

Jimmy Silver pushed the luckless junior under the water again, and Raby, Newcome, and Lovell chuckled.

"That's the stuff to give him, Jimmy!" sang out Lovell.

Gower came to the surface again, and splashed about wildly, trying to find a foothold.

Jimmy Silver swam towards him, caught him by the arm, and pulled him to shallower water.

Gower found his feet, and stood up, goug-ing the water from his eyes.

"Grooogh! Gug-gug—it's c-c-cold!" he gasped.

"Just the very thing for you, my son!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "You can get out when you like now!"

Gower was very quick to take advantage

of that kind offer, and splashed his way to the side, and pulled himself out of the water.

Jimmy Silver had taken the precaution to lock the door of the baths, and had no fear that Gower would get away. So he and his chums stayed in the water a little longer.

Gower was dressed when they eventually left the water, and he sat down and waited for them to dress. He had seen Jimmy Silver lock the door, and realised the uselessness of trying to get away.

He shivered slightly as he sat down, and Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"Cold?"

"Yes."

"You'll soon be warm—you're going to have a mile run round the playing-fields in a minute!"

"Look here—"

"Rats! Don't answer back!"

The Fistical Four dressed, and Jimmy Silver unlocked the door of the baths.

"Now run!" commanded Jimmy Silver.

Gower hesitated to obey, but Newcome and Lovell caught his arm, and dragged him into a run.

Round the playing-fields, round the quadrangle, and back into the House, and Gower was perspiring freely, despite the early hour of the morning.

He went up to the dormitory with Jimmy Silver & Co., and sullenly dressed himself. Peele and Lattrey stared as he went in, but did not venture to make any remark. They left their chum to look after himself.

That the exercise did Gower good was obvious from the amount of food he consumed at breakfast. For the first time since he had come to Rookwood, perhaps, Gower thoroughly enjoyed his breakfast.

Jimmy Silver & Co. took him off to their study after the meal, and Gower sat heavily down in the armchair.

"You've the boots to clean," said Jimmy Silver softly.

Gower stared, flushed, and looked down at the floor.

"What do you want me to do to get away from this?" he asked nervously.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another in triumph.

"You're to go down on your knees—"

"Eh?"

"And on your knees you're to promise to be a good boy in future and not disgrace Rookwood any more!"

For a moment Gower hesitated, then, almost tearfully, he sank to his knees, and with rage rendering his words almost incoherent, he made the required promise.

"You may go, and remember; if you go back to your old habits, you'll get it hotter than this little lot!" said Jimmy Silver.

And Gower, hanging his head, and with bitter hatred and rage in his breast, walked from the study.

Jimmy Silver had succeeded in securing a promise from the cad of the Fourth—it remained to be seen for how long he would keep it.

"I'll bet he goes wrong again!" said Lovell quietly.

Jimmy Silver frowned, and shook his head.

But time was to prove Lovell right.

THE END.



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# KILDARE'S FEUD!

A Magnificent New, Long Complete School Tale of TOM MERRY & Co. at St. Jim's.

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MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### At Odds with Mr. Selby.

**C**OME back! D'Arcy minor, I tell you, come back!" It was Mr. Selby, the master of the Third Form at St. Jim's, who howled these words, brandishing a cane as he howled them.

Wally D'Arcy, younger brother of the great Arthur Augustus, halted, but he did not come back.

D'Arcy minor was rather a young scamp—that much must be admitted.

He was often in mischief, and he had led others into mischief. He and his chums gave Mr. Selby quite a lot of trouble.

But with it all he was a decent young scamp. He did not lie, and he was incapable of meanness. Nearly everybody at St. Jim's liked Wally. But Mr. Selby hated him.

"I tell you I didn't do it, and I don't know who did, sir," said Wally now. "I don't make a fuss about being caned when I've done anything—you know that well enough. But I'm jolly well not going to have that cane laid about my back for something I never did!"

It was flat rebellion, of course; and yet it would be hard to say that Wally was altogether unjustified.

Mr. Selby had found the inkpot on his desk upset, and papers badly blotted. Wally chanced to be near, though he knew nothing about it. Mr. Selby would have suspected guilt on the part of any member of his Form whom he had found near; but in the case of Wally he did not merely suspect—he was sure.

"You will come here at once, D'Arcy minor!" he snapped now.

Wally shifted from one foot to the other, but that did not take him any nearer the irate master.

He knew that not to go back was a breach of discipline. But to go back was to be punished for a fault that was none of his, and Wally could not see himself doing it.

Mr. Selby took a stride or two towards him.

Wally stood his ground, chin up, face flaming red defiance.

The master halted, lashing with his cane at the air. He was seething with wrath.

"Do you refuse to come here, D'Arcy minor?" he roared.

"Yes, I do refuse, unless you're going to inquire about who spilled the ink before you get on to me for it!" retorted Wally. "I've said I didn't do it, and I don't lie."

Mr. Selby lost all control of himself, and leaped at Wally with tigerish ferocity.

Twice the cane lashed around Wally's back. It rose and fell again, but it was not Wally whom it struck the third time.

Arthur Augustus appeared on a sudden round the corner of the corridor, and jumped forward to the defence of his minor.

The cane struck Gussy—hard. His eyes blazed, and his hands clenched.

"Weally, Mr. Selby—"

"How dare you interfere, D'Arcy?" howled the master.

"I consider that I have a right to interfere when I find you knockin' my minah about in this—"

"Oh, chuck it, Gus, you silly ass! What do you want to come poking your nose into other people's bizney for?" snorted Wally.

"I've told you heaps of times that I can keep my end up without your help."

"I have no doubt of that, Wally; but I know my duty, an'—"

"Retire at once, D'Arcy major!" thundered Mr. Selby.

"I absolutely wefuse to wetiah, sir! As I have already said—"

The cane descended again, and this time the stroke was meant for Gussy.

It fell upon his arm, and at once his fists went up. He had almost as completely forgotten himself as had Mr. Selby.

Wally fairly groaned. It was bad enough that this trouble should have fallen upon him; it was worse that his brother should be mixing himself up in it.

Mr. Selby, even in his best temper—which was not remarkably amiable—could not tolerate interference. And he was in one of his worst tempers now.

"Chuck it, Gus, do!" pleaded Wally. "You can't—"

"Do you dare to adopt that attitude to me, boy?" rasped Mr. Selby.

"If you imagine that I am afraid of you, you are vewy gwoosly mistaken!" answered Arthur Augustus hotly. "I nevah feah cowards!"

"What? You call me— Oh, take that!"

The Form-master lashed right at Gussy's face.

The cane left a long, red weal where it fell, and Gussy started back in pain and amazement.

"Mr. Selby!"

It was Eric Kildare, captain of St. Jim's, who spoke, and his clear voice vibrated with scorn.

"Kildare! I—"

"I saw what you did. I'm not going to mince my words. It was the act of a bully—of a man with no control over his temper—of a man who has no right to be in the position you occupy!"

Kildare's honest rage was at white heat. He was fond of Gussy—of Wally also. The hot Irish blood in him was always roused by injustice and tyranny. At that moment he cared nothing for Mr. Selby's authority—nothing for anyone's.

All three boys were more or less in the wrong, yet no fair mind would have condemned any one of them.

For Mr. Selby was far more in the wrong than they. They were rebels against authority, but he was using authority in an absolutely unjustifiable manner.

"I am amazed—astounded—almost dumb-founded, Kildare! That you should presume to address me in this way before two juniors—that you should imagine for one single moment that your office as captain can entitle you to treat with abominable disrespect a Form-master—a man old enough to be your father—all this fairly shocks me!"

And Mr. Selby glared at Kildare, and fingered the cane in a manner which suggested that he would dearly have loved to lay it about the skipper.

But, however much he might have liked to do that, he had not the courage to attempt it. He could not meet steadily the anger and contempt in Kildare's fine eyes.

"Look at D'Arcy's face!" said the skipper scornfully. "I don't know in the least what all this is about, and I really don't much care. To my thinking, nothing could possibly justify that!"

And he pointed towards the noble countenance of Gussy, where the weal of Mr. Selby's cane showed a dark-red against the lighter hue of a pink flush of rage and chagrin.

It might be curious that neither D'Arcy major nor D'Arcy minor welcomed Kildare's championship. But so it was.

This was not due to ingratitude. It was rather that neither wanted the gentler, generous skipper to involve himself in trouble with Mr. Selby.

That gentleman's control over a Sixth-Former was of the slightest. But, as a master, he necessarily carried weight above any senior boy, even the captain of the school. And it occurred to both Gussy and his minor that it might be possible for Mr. Selby to make matters uncomfortable for the big fellow they both liked so well.

Kildare did not appear to think of that at all. He smiled when Mr. Selby said angrily:

"I have a very great mind to report your impertinence to Dr. Holmes, Kildare!"

But the smile was a bitter one, that made his sunny face almost unrecognisable, and there was contempt in his voice as he replied:

"I was just going to suggest that, Mr. Selby. I think an investigation into the whole of this affair by the Head would be quite a good thing. But I object to the word 'impertinence.' I have not been impertinent to you."

"The words you used—a boy to a master! Good gracious! What can you call it but sheer impertinence?"

"I did not speak as boy to master, but as one man to another! If you choose to insist upon our relative positions at St. Jim's you have the right to do so, I admit. But the only effective way in which you can do it is by the report you suggest. And I tell you this plainly, Mr. Selby! I do not believe you dare face the Head with any such report! If you can summon up sufficient hardihood to do so, I shall have pleasure in explaining to Dr. Holmes the cause of what you call my 'impertinence.'"

And with that Kildare swung round and walked away.

But he had only gone a few paces before he turned.

"Better come with me, D'Arcy major," he said. "That face of yours wants some attention."

Gussy would not have left his minor to the tender mercies of Mr. Selby, though he was well aware that Wally resented strongly any imputation on his ability to keep up his end.

But the Form-master was already stalking away, swinging his cane, and muttering.

He had apparently forgotten all about Wally.

"Go on, Gus!" said Wally. "I say, you and Kildare are both silly asses to butt in; but—it was jolly decent of you both, for all that!"

And Wally bolted, as if ashamed of having spoken civilly and gratefully to his major for once.

Arthur Augustus followed Kildare up to his study on the Sixth Form passage.

The Sixth slept in their studies, and each of these rooms contained a washstand, camouflaged in some way during the daytime in most cases.

Kildare poured out water, took a sponge, and bathed the weal on the Fourth-Former's face with real gentleness.

"It won't do much to get the mark out, D'Arcy, old fellow," he said. "But it may ease the smart a little. I'm not asking what you did to get it. I don't feel that that concerns me. Whatever you did Selby had no right to treat you like this, and I'm prepared to maintain that before the Head, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Prime Minister!"

"Thanks awfully, Kildare!" replied Gussy. "I think, in justice to myself, I should make it clear that I was only protectin' my minah from the disgustin' brutality of that tyant."

"Well, I'm not sure that young Wally needs much protection, and I am pretty sure that he isn't likely to be precisely overflowing with gratitude. But I can't blame you," said Kildare.

"I say, you know, Kildare, I do hope old Selby won't make things wuff for you on account of this affiah!" Gussy said.

"What can he do to hurt me?" snapped Kildare.

The skipper might be right as to the Third Form-master's powerlessness to do him any damage; but Gussy, as he went, was sure that if the chance came Mr. Selby's way, he would not let it slip.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Mr. Selby is Not Popular.

**D**O you mean to tell me that he struck you across the face like that?" growled Jack Blake, the head of Study No. 6, Fourth Form.

Herries and Digby, who shared that apartment with Blake and Gussy, looked with sympathy and indignation at their chum's injured countenance.

"I have already told you so, Blake," replied Gussy.

"It must smart, old chap!" said Digby sympathetically.

"I do not care greatly about the smart. What hurts me is that I should have to submit to so degwadin' a blow, an' be unable to exact the wopah reparation for my wounded honah!" answered Gussy.

Then he sank into the armchair, and hid his face in his hands.

Blake and Herries and Digby looked at one another, feeling very uneasy.

Not one of the three would have taken that blow quite in the same way as Arthur Augustus took it. They would have been angry; they might have meditated vengeance; but they would not have talked about their wounded honour, or have felt themselves disgraced.

But they knew that the feeling of disgrace was very real and painful to Gussy.

It would hardly be too much to say that each of the three felt that he would rather have had that blow himself than have had Gussy take it.

"We'll get even with the old ruffian!" snapped Blake.

"Rather!" said Dig warmly.

"He's beyond the giddy limit!" growled Herries.

Arthur Augustus spoke without removing his hands from his face.

"I beg, dear boys, that you will refrain from any such attempt!" he said wearily. "I vey much feah that Kildare has already involved himself in twouble on my account; an' I do not wish anyone else whatever to suffah for me."

"It's old Selby who's going to suffer, not us. Confound the old hunks!" growled Herries.

"How did Kildare get mixed up in it?" asked Blake.

"He saw the blow stwuck, an' he told Selbay vey plainly indeed what he thought of him for it," replied Arthur Augustus.

"Good for him!" exclaimed Digby.

"I am afraid that it will not be at all good for him in the long run, Dig! Selbay is a vengeful old beast!"

"Oh, but he can't do anything to Kildare!" said Blake confidently.

Gussy doubted. He was quite worried about Kildare—almost as much as he was worried about the injury to his honour—or, rather, to his pride.

"Gustavus," said Blake, "you're all wrong. If there's any injury to anyone's honour, it's to Selby's, and even to talk about Selby's honour sounds pretty silly. You might as well talk of Baggy Trimble's! You have nothing at all to be ashamed of."

But Gussy could not see it in that light, and

he went out disconsolate, leaving his chums behind him to concert reprisals against the Third Form tyrant.

Meanwhile, in the domain where the sway of that tyrant was most fully felt and most completely hated—the Third Form room—Wally was explaining to his chums what had happened.

"The old Hun wouldn't believe me!" he said hotly. "I didn't know who spit the ink; I don't know now, matter of that!"

"Young Butt did it!" said Reggie Manners. "It was quite an accident. But Selby never would have believed that, and Buttercup did a bunk. I don't blame him."

"I don't, either," agreed Wally. "But it's pretty rotten for any Form to be saddled with a master like Selby, who's got no more notion of fair play than—than—oh, than an old cow!"

"Not so much!" said Hobbs.

"I say, though; it's rough about your major, Wally!" said Frank Levison.

"Well, I might say it served him right for butting in!" replied Wally. "But I won't. Old Gus isn't half a bad sort, though he is a soft, silly ass. And I don't think so badly of him for butting in on my account, because Kildare did the same thing on his, and everyone knows that Kildare don't often go far wrong."

"Kildare's a brick!" said Curly Gibson.

"An' so say all of us!" Joe Frayne said.

"Question is, what are we going to do to get even with the old beast? We aren't going to put up with this sort of thing from him much longer!" said Jameson, the one New House fag among the seven.

"Oh, he didn't hurt me a lot!" said Wally.

"He did your major, though!" Frank Levison said.

"Yes, he did; and I'm game to get home on him for that. But I can't stop to talk about it just now; I've got to see to Kildare's tea," replied Wally.

The rest had similar duties to perform for their various fagmasters; and they dispersed. But the mind of each of the septet was busy with schemes to get even with Mr. Selby.

Wally found Darrel with Kildare, and the two seniors had evidently been talking about the affair.

"I rather fancy that Selby will find himself called upon to resign if this sort of thing goes on much longer," Darrel was saying.

"He was in the black books over that Levison minor bizney, though it was hushed up more or less. It's an open secret that he was brutally unjust to the kid."

"Ahem!" coughed Wally.

Wally fancied that the two seniors would not care to have him overhear what they were saying. Wherefore Wally coughed.

He was wrong, it appeared, for Kildare said at once:

"We were discussing the trouble half an hour ago, young 'un. How did it arise?"

"Buttercup spilt ink over Selby's desk—it was an accident, though," Wally answered.

"Selby made up his mind it was me who did it, and came after me with a cane. Called to me to come back; but it sounded a bit too much like, 'Dilly, dilly, come and be killed!' I wasn't having any, not that way. So he came after me some more, and I didn't feel like bolting from the beggar. Then Gussy barked up, and got it in the neck. And then you came along, Kildare, so you know the rest!"

"I'm! Strikes me you'd better go carefully with that gentleman, kid," said Darrel.

"It's no go!" replied Wally. "Not a scrap of use thinking you can keep on the right side of the old Hun just by behaving yourself. And I'm not so jolly keen on being a saint, either."

"I've noticed that," Kildare said drily.

Then Wally went about the important business of getting tea for the two prefects, and the conversation dropped.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Kildare's Cousin.

**I**T'S all ready, Kildare!" said Wally.

The skipper and his chum drew their chairs to the table, and Wally departed.

"Now, what's the trouble, Eric?" asked Darrel.

"It isn't exactly trouble—at least, it isn't my trouble," replied Kildare. "And I don't know that I should have told anyone—even you—but that I want advice."

"You've come to the right shop," said Darrel. "My superior brand of wisdom is well known, and always on tap."

"I don't care about your wisdom, if any!"

Kildare rejoined, smiling. "It counts for more to be sure of your sympathy."

"That you may always rely upon, old man," Darrel said.

"Did I ever tell you about my cousin—the one who ran away from home?"

"You don't mean Micky, do you? Never heard that he did that, but shouldn't be particularly surprised at anything he did. Erratic pup, Micky, though one of the best."

"Not Micky; this is a girl. She belongs to my mother's side of the family. Had a craze for the stage, and bolted because her people wouldn't let her go for it."

"I see; like lots more. Did you know her, well?"

"Oh, yes! She's some years older than I am, but we were vey chummy. Well, she bolted, and for quite a long time no one knew where she had got to. Nobody who matters knows now—except me!"

"Do you mean that you've kept up communications with her?"

"No, George. But I've found her!"

"Where?"

"She's playing a part in a revue thing—'Lights Down,' or some such title—at the Wayland Empire this week."

Kildare reddened a little as he said that. The Wayland Empire was not a music-hall of the highest type, and it was plain that he did not care to think of his pretty cousin there.

"Well, she would hardly appear to have progressed far on her road of stage fame," Darrel replied.

There was no sarcasm in his tone, but Kildare winced at the words.

"I feel that," he said. "I'm sure she had no notion of anything so small as an unimportant part in a third-rate revue at a tenth-rate provincial music-hall. But she's proud, and she wouldn't go back home and confess failure."

"You've seen her, I suppose?"

"No, I haven't. Only her portrait, with others, outside the Empire. And that was by the merest chance. I don't often glance at the place. I've no particular use for the usual music-hall twaddle; but I rather cotton to revues, and I'd seen this one billed."

"She's not playing in her own name, I take it?"

"No. Her name is Nina Dalgleish, but on the bills she figures as Nora Graeme."

"You haven't seen her, Eric, and the lady whose portrait you have seen doesn't bear her name. Are you absolutely sure of the identification?" said Darrel.

"There can't be any mistake. It's Nina, right enough. And I must see her, of course. Equally, of course, I can't give her away; and I don't think there's any chance of persuading her to go back home. Altogether, I don't quite know what to do about it. I don't even know how to get at her!"

"That ought to be easy enough," Darrel replied. "The man at the stage-door—"

"Would he? That's one of the things I hate about the whole bizney. If any howling cad can get the address of a girl for half-a-crown or so, the girls must get a lot of persecution. And Nina—oh, she's self-reliant, and able to take care of herself, and all that! But she's never been used to that kind of thing."

"I wasn't going to suggest that you should get the address from the fellow," said Darrel.

"What, then?"

"Write a note to her, and ask the fellow to deliver it when she comes along. You needn't go to the Empire except to deliver the note. The place is out of bounds, of course."

The St. Jim's authorities did not at all approve of the Empire at any time, and quite lately it had been put out of bounds for the whole school, owing to an escapade on the part of three or four of the black sheep among the juniors.

"Yes, there's that in it," Kildare said. "I forgot that when I stopped to look at the photos, I suppose I was breaking rules then. Well, I've got to break them again, and that's all there is to it. And I'm going to see the show at least once. I want to see the sort of thing Nina's doing, though I don't expect to like seeing her do it."

"You hadn't thought of asking me to go with you, by any chance?" said Darrel.

"Matter of fact, I had thought of it, but—"

"I'll come!"

"I say, old top—"

"I'll come, I tell you. See here, Kildare, neither of us is the sort of fellow who gets any change out of breaking rules simply because they are rules. Without being Pharisees, we know that we have a decent



"You can have the tickets, and welcome," said Mr. Weeks. "Thanks very much," said Kildare, as the tickets changed hands. (See Chapter 3).

standard to live up to. But this is a very special case. You can't explain matters to the Head or Bailton, I suppose, and get special permission?"

"I could, but I should hate it!"

"I understand. So should I in your place. Well, I always count on you through thick and thin for anything that one fellow can do for another. And I shouldn't do that without being willing to stand by you, as I know you are to stand by me. So I mean to come."

"Thanks, old man! I won't say 'Don't come!' for I shouldn't mean it."

"No good saying it, anyway. I mean to come, unless you tell me I'm butting in. Nothing but that would choke me off."

Kildare looked at his watch.

"We might go over this evening," he said.

Considerable latitude was allowed the Sixth at St. Jim's. They had preparation to do, naturally, but they were not tied down to stated hours for it, and it was nothing out of the way for any prefect to spend an evening out.

Kildare and Darrell got their bikes and started off. As they mounted at the gates Mr. Selby passed in, and scowled blackly at Kildare.

"Doesn't look at all pleasant," remarked Darrell. "He would do you a nasty turn if he could, my boy."

"I don't doubt it. But I really don't see how he can do it. By the way, I suppose it's true that he caught out Racke and that crowd of young blackguards, and got the Empire put on the black list?"

"I believe it's correct. But the place was really on the black list, before that. By the way, Eric, I'll discreetly retire if you can get at your cousin for a talk."

"You won't, old fellow! There's no need at all for that."

"You're not even the least little bit in the world in love with her?"

Kildare laughed—a ringing, heart-whole laugh.

"I should have blushed if I'd been asked that question when I was about fifteen," he answered frankly. "I fancied myself so then. Nina was eighteen or more, and no end nice, and she was particularly nice to me. She never treated me like a kid, and I thought myself quite the man. But I know better now. I'd do anything for Nina, but I'm not in love with her."

"That's all right, then," said Darrell. "It would rather complicate things if you were."

They rode fast over the moor in the glorious summer evening, and reached Wayland some time before the second performance at the Empire was due to start.

Long queues were waiting outside the doors for the cheaper seats, and Kildare was told upon inquiry that all the more expensive ones had been booked in advance.

The two seniors looked at one another when they heard that.

They did not fancy waiting in a queue for a long time in the heat, and there seemed no other way.

But just then a tradesman in the town, whom Kildare knew slightly, came up and spoke to the girl at the box-office.

"Yes, Mr. Weeks," she said, "I can take your tickets back if you like. But I can't exchange them for seats either to-morrow or Wednesday; we're booked full up for both days."

"Well, the missus and I simply can't come to-night, so if you will take them back, Miss Spedwell—"

"There is no need to trouble the young lady at all in the matter, if you are willing to dispose of your tickets to me, Mr. Weeks," Kildare said in his clear, well-bred voice.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Kildare, is it?" returned Weeks. "I didn't see you, though it isn't more than half an hour ago I was thinking of you. Those boots you ordered came along this afternoon, and a pair for

one of the St. Jim's masters, too. You can have the tickets, and welcome, and I hope you'll enjoy the show. They do say that it's the best thing they've had at the Empire this year, though I'm not sure that's saying a lot."

Mr. Weeks was a talkative man, interested in everyone else's business, though he did not neglect his own. It did not occur to Kildare that this trait of his was likely to have any effect upon his own fortunes, but so it was to prove.

"Thanks, very much," said Kildare. The tickets changed hands, and the two prefects passed on, and were ushered into seats in the third row from the footlights.

Mr. Weeks went back to his shop. He had had an impatient note from the master at St. Jim's who was awaiting the arrival of boots ordered only that morning; and the master in question happened to be Mr. Selby.

It crossed the mind of Mr. Weeks that it would be as well to let Mr. Selby know at once that the boots had arrived. So he rang up St. Jim's, and was speedily in communication with the tyrant of the Third.

"Your boots have come, sir," he said, after the usual preliminaries.

"It is really about time they did come, Weeks," answered the acid voice of the St. Jim's master.

"Don't I know it, sir? But it's not my fault, truly. No man is more anxious to oblige his customers than Walter Weeks. I'd go out of my way to do it any time. And, as it happened, I had a chance of doing a St. Jim's young gentleman—or, rather, two St. Jim's young gentlemen—a service to-night, though perhaps it's hardly worth mentioning."

Mr. Selby, the receiver to one ear, pricked up the other. Only a senior could legitimately be at Wayland during the evening, and the Third Form-master remembered to have seen Kildare and Darrell start out.

"Indeed?" he said interrogatively. Mr. Weeks, dearly loving a gossip, even over the phone, replied:

"I happened to meet Mr. Kildare and another of your elder young gentlemen at the Empire booking-office. They were just being turned away—every seat in the best part of the house taken. But I let them have two tickets I happened to have, and made them quite happy."

"Ah! Very interesting, I'm sure, Weeks," returned Mr. Selby coldly. "Good-night to you!"

He hung up the receiver, and rubbed his hands in unholy joy.

He had never dreamed of getting the chance of such a handle against Kildare as this.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### A Row.

"HOW do you do, Selby?" said Mr. Ratcliff, of the New House, with cold politeness.

There was no love lost between these two—possibly because they were too much like to get on well together.

"I have just learned, Ratcliff, that two St. Jim's seniors are at the Empire Music-Hall at Wayland this evening," said the master of the Third, in tones that trembled with suppressed excitement.

"Have you? It is very wrong of them. I trust neither belongs to my House," returned Mr. Ratcliff.

"No. Kildare is one of them."

"I am not surprised. I have never entertained the high opinion of Kildare that Holmes and Railton appear to hold."

"And Darrel is the other."

At that Mr. Ratcliff's face changed, and his fingers bent nervously upon the table before him.

He hated Darrel. He had no just cause for it. Darrel had behaved generously to him. But it is not safe to be generous to men of the type of Messrs. Selby and Ratcliff. They are quite capable of hating anyone for putting them under an obligation.

Mr. Selby knew that old story, and he played upon his knowledge with some cunning.

"I feel myself concerned in this matter, Ratcliff," he said. "As you are aware, I caught out some of the juniors visiting that place of ill fame. That fact naturally gives me an interest in the matter which possibly you do not share. But I knew you to be zealous for discipline and the good name of St. Jim's, whereas Linton and Lathom always appear to me lukewarm as concerns anything of the kind; and Railton would overlook anything that young Kildare did."

"You suggest, Selby—"

"That you should accompany me to Wayland, if it will not be troubling you too greatly."

"I can hardly refuse a request such as that," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"I will ring up for a trap from Rylcombe," said the Third Form-master. "There is no train that quite suits us. We might walk to meet the trap."

They started out within ten minutes, both no end keen and no end spiteful.

The revue at the Empire was in full swing, and the packed audience were roaring applause when the two masters reached the vestibule.

"I will get tickets, Ratcliff," said Mr. Selby. "No doubt you, like myself, dislike and disapprove of entertainments of this kind. But I think you will agree with me that it is necessary we should witness it, if only that we may judge for ourselves of its character—which I expect to be anything but high."

Mr. Ratcliff merely grunted.

"But, really," Mr. Ratcliff heard his colleague say to the girl in the box-office, "it is quite absurd to say that we cannot enter! This is, I believe, a place of public entertainment!"

"Sounds as if it was to-night, doesn't it?" replied the girl, with a smile which Mr. Selby considered a cheeky grin. "They seem to like it. But it's no use my taking your money. There isn't even standing-room anywhere in the house."

"Nonsense!" breathed Mr. Ratcliff in the ear of Mr. Selby. "Tell her that we simply insist upon admittance! It is not as members of the general public as are here, you know."

"My good young woman, we really must go in," said Mr. Selby. "We have a duty to perform."

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"You—you're not plain-clothes' police, are you?" asked Miss Spedwell, looking rather alarmed.

"Pooh! Pish! Pshaw! Nothing of the sort!" replied Mr. Selby; while Mr. Ratcliff looked like a ruffled turkey-cock.

"It is not a very striking testimony to the character of this place that apparently visits from the plain-clothes' police are among the things expected here," said the master of the New House unpleasantly.

The girl tossed her head.

"That sort of talk won't get you in," she said. "I must send for the manager, I suppose, as I can't convince you. Robert, fetch Mr. Gee!"

An attendant went off at once, and the two masters waited between anger and nervousness. They did not like the turn affairs had taken, but they were not disposed to give in.

Mr. Gee came—a florid individual of the bumptious type.

"What's this I hear?" he said, taking an immense cigar out of his mouth and throwing all around him an aroma of whisky and tobacco.

"These gentlemen insist on going in," said Miss Spedwell.

"They may insist till they go green in the face," said Mr. Gee politely. "There's no room for them."

"But, my good sir, you do not understand the situation," said Mr. Selby crossly. "We are not here in the capacity of ordinary visitors. We have come to fetch out two seniors from St. James' School who have no right to be here."

"Has anyone been let in to-night without paying, Katie dear?" asked Mr. Gee.

"No, Mr. Gee," answered the girl, tossing her head.

"Then the two young blades from St. Jim's have as good a right here as anyone else, and I don't see what the two old birds from the same show have to complain about."

Mr. Selby glared at Mr. Gee. Mr. Ratcliff did likewise. Mr. Gee, however, seemed quite unperturbed by the double glare. He folded his big arms, cocked his cigar at a defiant angle in his mouth, and stared at the two masters as if he meant to stare them out of countenance.

"You do not understand!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Oh, don't I? Very kind of you to enlighten my ignorance, I'm sure!" replied Mr. Gee.

"This place—"

"I am under the impression that I was explaining, Selby!"

"That's right, old dears! Both of you gabble at once. I'm dead sure to be put wise in no time then!" said the affable Mr. Gee, winking at the girl.

"Will you leave this to me, Ratcliff?"

"I see no sufficient reason for doing so, Mr. Selby. You desired my company hither, and I refused to be thrust into the background, more especially as my authority is senior to yours!"

"That's right, old gamebirds! Go it! I'll hold your coats when it comes to punching!" chortled the manager.

"You low fellow!" roared Mr. Ratcliff.

"What! Low feller, am I?" snorted Mr. Gee.

"This place has been—"

"Put out of bounds by—"

"The St. James' authorities. It is—"

Thus far the two masters had got, breaking in upon one another to get their explanation made even to so small an extent.

They were allowed to get no farther. Mr. Gee was bristling with rage now.

"Get out of this, quick!" he hooted. "Put out of bounds, has it? Not good enough for you sanctimonious, long-faced old kangaroos, ain't it? And you think that I'd help you to catch two young sportsmen who hold different views, do you? Just you get out, or I'll kick you out!"

"This person has been drinking, Mr. Ratcliff!" said Mr. Selby, in his severest tones.

"You are right, Mr. Selby. Considering the importance of our mission, I am not sure that we ought to invoke the aid of the police."

It was the merest bluff, of course; and neither of the two masters had the slightest chance of bluffing successfully the manager of the Wayland Empire.

But he was furious at the attempt.

"Put these two old skinshankers out, Robert!" he roared.

The attendant advanced, grinning.

"You dare to lay a finger on me!" snorted Mr. Selby.

"Or on me!" rasped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Don't fool round with fingers, Robert."

Take your number elevans to them!" howled Mr. Gee.

"I say, sir, there will be trouble, you know!" said the girl warningly. "I dare say they will go quietly if they are asked."

"We shall do nothing of the sort!"

"It would be a dereliction of duty on our part to—"

"There's going to be no what-d'ye-callum of duty on my part, anyway!" shouted the manager. "I'm boss here, and I won't have loafers about the place! Out with them, Robert, or take a week's notice!"

"Out you go, an' you, too!" bawled Robert, clutching at the pair.

They shrank from him.

"Fellow, how dare you?" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff.

"Let me warn you— Yoooop!" exclaimed Mr. Selby.

Robert, anxious at the prospect of the sack, had completely lost patience. He had Mr. Selby by the collar, and had only just missed getting his colleague.

At this moment the swing-door which led into the auditorium was pushed open from inside, and Kildare and Darrel emerged.

"Out with you!" shouted Robert. And he gave Mr. Selby a lusty shove that sent him floundering on hands and knees.

"I say, you know, that won't do!" snapped Kildare.

"Oh, won't it?" sneered Mr. Gee. "Perhaps you'll think differently, my lord, when you hear that these are two cops in plain clothes from your school come to run you in for having the wickedness to patronise this haunt of sin?"

"We are not going to have them touched by you or any of your men," said Darrel quietly.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### Flat Defiance!

KILDARE and Darrel were glad that the revue constituted practically the whole programme for the evening.

It began with a scene which represented Puccinadilly Circus in war-time, with lights subdued to war-time standard; and in this first scene "Miss Nora Graeme" did not figure.

She had a title-role, though her part was not among the most important. Kildare watched eagerly for her to come up, and was plainly impatient when the curtain went down without his seeing her.

But the second scene—the Brighton front at sunset—brought her very speedily upon the stage.

"There she is!" breathed Kildare, in the ear of Darrel.

"She's a charming girl!" answered Darrel. There was no doubt about that. Nina Dalgleish, with her wealth of Titian red hair, needed no wig, and the aids of grease-paint and the like were sparingly employed by her.

She had a song to sing, and she sang it very sweetly and effectively. It had a catchy chorus, and, after the first verse, the lads in the gallery were on to it. As they roared it out, her eyes swept the auditorium.

"She's seen you!" said Darrel.

Nina Dalgleish had given a start, and a sudden light of glad recognition had flooded her face. Then that face changed, and she looked almost frightened.

She had been delighted for the moment to see her cousin Eric—there could be no doubt about that. But next moment she had remembered what his seeing her might mean.

It was not wonderful that she should recognise him at once. She knew that he was at St. Jim's, only a few miles from Wayland; and the handsome, clean-cut face of Kildare was the kind of face apt to stand out from those around it.

Miss Graeme went on with her song. At the end of it there was a dance by the chorus, and then she vanished from the stage, and two comic characters came on. What followed was really funny. It made the audience roar with laughter. But Kildare scarcely heard a word of it.

The curtain fell again, and before it went up for the third scene an attendant made her way to Kildare and slipped a note into his hand.

He had just time to read the few words the note contained before the lights were lowered again.

"Dear Eric,—So you have found me out. But I know you won't give me away—we were always good friends, you and I. Come round to the stage-door at about ten o'clock, and I will meet you there."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"Yours, NINA."

"She wants me to see her at the stage-door, George," said Kildare.

"Oh, yes! I expected that!" replied Darrel. Now Kildare could settle down to some interest in the stage. There was nothing in the least objectionable in "Lights Down!" He was glad to note that. Nina's people could hardly have minded much her appearance in such a piece—frotty and empty enough, but clean and really humorous—apart from their dislike to her figuring on the stage at all.

Kildare was possibly the least interested of all the hundreds there in the play as such. To him the play was not the thing; all that he waited for was the appearances of Nora Graeme.

Watching him now and then, Darrel wondered whether the boyish love which his chum had confessed so frankly as a thing past and dead had not reawakened into life. One fact was obvious—Kildare was very fond of his pretty cousin.

"About time I cleared out," he said, after a bit.

"It's only a quarter-to yet," answered Darrel, glancing at his watch.

"I don't want to keep her waiting. You needn't come, old fellow!"

"Oh, I'm going when you do! But I promise I won't butt in."

They got up when the curtain fell again. It was plain that the revue would not be over by ten; but no doubt Nina Dalgeish was aware that at that hour she would have time for a brief interview with her cousin.

Then, making their way out, they ran full into the trouble in which Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby had managed to involve themselves.

Mr. Gee snorted when Darrel said that he and his comrade fully intended to stand between the two masters and any violence offered them.

That was understandable, for Mr. Gee was very wrathful, and he felt that the St. Jim's seniors ought rather to be on his side than that of the sour pair of kill-joys.

But there seemed no sufficient reason for the snort which Mr. Ratcliff vented or for the sneer upon the unpleasant countenance of Mr. Selby.

The Third Form master had quickly picked himself up. He moved a step or two now, and made as if to lay a hand on the sleeve of Kildare.

Kildare drew back, flushing hotly.

"You two young gents may consider yourselves under arrest," jeered Mr. Gee. "Cells and C.B. after that is yours, I rather fancy."

"I don't care to discuss that or anything with you!" replied Kildare, with cool hauteur.

"You will have no opportunity for discussion!" snapped Mr. Selby. "You will both return with Mr. Ratcliff and myself at once, and answer to the Head for this fragrant defiance of rules!"

Kildare looked him straight in the face.

"I shall do nothing of the kind, sir!" he said resolutely. "You will report me if you choose, and I have no doubt that you will choose to do so. But I do not admit that you have over me any such authority as justifies the demand that I should allow you to take me back as if I had been guilty of some criminal action!"

It was for himself only that Kildare spoke; but he had complete certainty that Darrel would be with him.

And Darrel was.

"I agree with Kildare," he said quietly. "We do not deny having been guilty of a breach of rules. We may or may not be able to convince Dr. Holmes and Mr. Ratcliff that we had sufficient excuse; but we do not intend to offer—"

"If you have any excuse at all, I insist upon hearing it, Darrel!" said Mr. Ratcliff, in his most acid tones.

Darrel did not reply.

"Come on, Kildare!" he said. And he took his chum's arm.

"Better take these two old bags of bones with you," said Mr. Gee politely. "The dust-cart won't call to-night, and I can't have them around till morning!"

The two prefects did not answer that. The masters only answered it by looks of concentrated wrath.

Kildare and Darrel passed out of the vestibule, and Mr. Selby and Mr. Ratcliff followed them.

It was not exactly an agreeable situation for Kildare. In a few minutes his cousin would be at the stage door to see him, and he did not want the masters to spy upon their meeting. But it seemed likely that Mr. Selby and Mr. Ratcliff would prove by no means easy to get rid of.

Darrel made an attempt to come to the rescue.

"Come as far as the corner of the street, and then dodge back while I hurry on, Eric," he whispered. "If we've any luck they may follow me."

It was the best he could do for his chum; and a few months earlier the dodge might have been worked. But the streets of Wayland were better lighted now.

They were round the corner only three or four yards in advance of the two sleuth-hounds. Kildare, hating the necessity for such a stratagem, stepped back into a doorway. Darrel increased his pace, and passed on.

It was no go! A few words between the two masters—words which Kildare did not catch—and Mr. Ratcliff hurried on after Darrel, while Mr. Selby halted.

Kildare came out at once.

"Are you spying upon me, sir?" he asked. "Spying? The very suggestion of such a thing is flagrant impertinence, Kildare!" snapped the master.

"Is it of any use at all to speak to you as one gentleman to another?" asked Kildare. His hot Irish blood was up. The prefects of St. Jim's were not used to being dogged in this manner; and the fact that he was actually breaking rules did not help Kildare to endure it with patience.

"I decline to discuss anything with you on terms of equality!" rasped Mr. Selby.

"As there is no reason to suppose that you have the feelings of a gentleman, I can see that that would be difficult!" returned Kildare. "But I will speak out plainly, whether you like it or not. I am about to meet a lady, and I have no wish for your company!"

"What! You tell me to my face that you have the audacity to make appointments with painted Jezebels!" hissed the master.

"Be careful, or you may get hurt! There is no question of painted Jezebels, and I will not allow any lady of my acquaintance to be called by names of that sort! It is true that the appointment I have is with a girl who is playing in the revue here to-night; but she is entitled to as much respect as any lady in all the land!"

"Pshaw! That is absurd! A boyish infatuation is it!"

"I have already warned you to be careful, Mr. Selby! You may say what you please about me, but I will not have that lady traduced!"

The anger in Kildare's voice had its effect upon Mr. Selby, who was no hero at the best.

He choked down the words he had been about to speak, and it was in a milder tone that he said:

"You must surely see for yourself, Kildare, that I cannot allow—"

"I don't; for I don't see what concern you can possibly have in the matter!" snapped the Captain of St. Jim's.

"I refuse to allow—"

"You aren't asked! And if I find you dogging me it will be the worse for you!"

And with that Kildare swung round and walked quickly away.

But he had only a few yards to go. Mr. Selby stood irresolute for a matter of half a minute or so, and then followed him.

Miss Dalgeish was already waiting at the stage door, wrapped in a rain-coat.

"Oh, Eric!" she said, and she took both of his hands in hers. "No, you mustn't kiss me—I'm all made-up, you know!"

"I'll risk that, Nina!" replied Kildare readily.

And his face was close to hers when the harsh tones of Mr. Selby's voice broke in upon their ears.

"Really! Good gracious me! I am shocked—astounded—disgusted! Kildare, depart at once, and leave me to reason with this misguided young woman, who, I am sure, does not—"

"Clear off! Get out! Go, if you want to go alive!" cried Kildare hotly.

He turned furiously upon the master, hands clenched, eyes blazing.

"I must insist—Ow! You dare! Yow!" Kildare's strong hands had seized Mr. Selby by the collar, and that gentleman found himself being treated much as a rat is treated by a terrier. His teeth fairly rattled as Kildare shook him.

"Now will you go?" snapped the skipper, releasing him.

Mr. Selby staggered back, breathing hard.

"You shall repent for this!" he hissed.

"Oh, I dare say there will be as much trouble as you can make out of it," answered

Kildare contemptuously. "But I can't see any limit to the trouble there may be if you don't clear out, for I'm dashed if I can stand any more from you!"

"Very well—very well, indeed! Dr. Holmes shall hear of this at once!"

And Mr. Selby stamped off, fuming.

"Eric, I'm getting you into trouble," said the girl anxiously. "And the worst of it is that it isn't a bit worth while. I can only stay another half-minute, or I shall miss my cue. I oughtn't to have asked you to come round here at all. But I didn't dream of anything like this; and it was so good, so very good, to see a home face again—especially yours! For we were always such good pals, Eric, you and I!"

"Never mind about that old sweep!" replied Kildare. "If you can't stay now I must see you to-morrow—that's all. Meet me on the bridge at half-past twelve, will you?"

"I'll be there, dear boy. And—and—do try to propitiate that extremely unpleasant person if it's anyway possible!"

"I don't think it is. Hang old Selby! I'd fond of St. Jim's; but I'd sooner chuck the place altogether than have to submit to being badly ragged and dogged by him. Must you really go? Good-night, Nina."

"Good-night, Eric! Don't—remember the paint! I'll be there at twelve-thirty sharp," answered the girl.

Neither she nor Kildare guessed that Mr. Selby had halted near enough to hear that appointment made, though it was by no means a feeling of confidence in the master's sense of honour that kept Kildare from suspecting the fact.

But Mr. Selby heard, and he was not in the least likely to forget. He stole away through the gloom now, and when Kildare next saw him he had joined Mr. Ratcliff under a lamp some fifteen yards or so from the door of the Empire.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Conspiracies Clash.

DARREL came up to Kildare.

"Well, old man?" he said, with a touch of anxiety.

Kildare shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm sorry that you've been dragged into this, George," he said.

"I wasn't dragged in," answered Darrel quietly. "And I'm not exactly sorry to be in it, as you are in it!"

"I can tell you one thing," Kildare said savagely. "I'm not going to be marched back by those two! I'll give the pair of them the hottest time they've ever had in their lives before I'll stand that!"

"And I'm with you there. I've already told Ratcliff that we refuse to recognise either his authority or Selby's. Of course, in the long run we're bound to be hard up against the fact that the Head must take action on any report they lay. But never mind that now. Let's be getting on."

They strode past the two masters without a glance, and more for the place where they had put up their bikes.

Messrs. Ratcliff and Selby glared at one another.

Even when they were hunting in couples those two could not feel any mutual liking or respect.

"You appear to have allowed yourself to be defied by Kildare, Mr. Selby!" said the New House master.

"May I ask whether you had any greater success in your attempts to reduce Darrel to discipline, Mr. Ratcliff?" sneered his colleague.

"At least I did not allow him to meet a brazen hussy—"

"Which was due solely to the fact that there was no brazen hussy for him to meet, I take it. Ha, ha!"

"If you feel inclined to laugh—"

"I do not, Ratcliff! I take the very gravest view of the conduct of those two."

"So do I. I consider it is high time St. Jim's saw the last of them both."

The two soured men looked at one another again. Each thought the other looking very spiteful, and each was glad to see that look.

"Ah, for once we agree, Ratcliff!" said Mr. Selby. "In the interests of discipline and the school generally, I am sure that you are right. And I have something to tell you that may possibly lead to—er—to—er—the bringing about of what we both consider to be for the best."

Mr. Ratcliff listened eagerly as they walked together to the stable-yard of the Wayland Arms, to get their horse and trap.

The two prefects reached St. Jim's more than half an hour before the masters.

They had no inclination to go to bed at once. In spite of what Kildare might say as to his preferring to leave the old school rather than submit to Mr. Selby's authority, the skipper was worried—more, perhaps, on Darrel's account than on his own.

So they sat and talked over matters in Kildare's study, and, as was only natural, the skipper's wrath cooled somewhat.

"It was rather a pity you handled him, Eric," said Darrel.

"You're less hot-headed than I am, George. What do you think I had better do? I'm not going to apologise to Selby, of course; and I mean to meet Nina to-morrow. It's necessary I should."

"And, of course, you won't explain to him?"

"I can't. It's not my secret."

"You won't apologise, and you won't explain; and yet on the whole I think it might be quite a useful thing for you to see Selby to-night, do you know?"

"What on earth for?" asked Kildare.

"To find out what he intends to do. See here, old man—Selby's a funk. He can't be quite easy in his own mind about his little games to-night. We are very distinctly not Mr. Selby's concern; and his spying on us was quite superfluous. You needn't tell him that; but I think if he finds you still putting a bold front on it, he may be choked off taking any action, whereas if he does not see you again, it's possible he may be as enough to fancy you're frightened, and that would encourage him."

"I believe you're right," said Kildare. "I'll go now."

He went. But Mr. Selby was not in his study. He had not yet returned.

Kildare passed on upstairs. On the way he saw a gleam of light from beneath the door of Mr. Selby's bed-room.

"No harm in catching him there," he told himself. And he knocked at the door.

It had not been fastened, and it swung slowly open at his tap.

A glance revealed the fact that Mr. Selby was not there.

But it also revealed more.

From beneath the bed protruded a slippered foot and part of a pyjamaed leg.

Kildare seized the leg, and hauled forth D'Arcy minor.

"Hallo!" said the skipper sharply.

"Hallo, Kildare!" replied Wally, rather sheepishly.

"What are you doing here?"

"Nothing, Kildare."

"Oh, come off it, you young rip! I'm not to be taken in quite so easily as that. It wasn't for nothing you came here."

"Of course it wasn't," admitted Wally.

"But I haven't done anything. Honest Injun, I haven't!"

"You will take a hundred lines," he said. "Now cut!"

Wally departed. Kildare was about to follow him when his eyes caught something which lay on the floor.

It was a handkerchief, and he picked it up. A name was marked in one corner—the name of "George Herries."

Kildare was puzzled. If Herries had been there, he felt sure that Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy major had also been.

But he had found Wally there, and he was quite certain that Wally's visit was made quite independently of that made by the chums of No. 6. Very seldom indeed did Fourth and Third Forms join forces.

"It's no odds to me, though," muttered Kildare. "I think I'll go. I don't care about waiting for Selby here."

He had just stepped outside the door, leaving the light on, when he heard footsteps in the next passage, and a moment later Mr. Selby came round the corner.

Kildare stood still where he was till the master came up.

Mr. Selby stared at him in pronouncedly hostile fashion.

"I wanted to see you, sir," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Oh, indeed! You have come, I presume, to apologise?"

"I want to know what you intend to do," answered Kildare.

He did his best to keep any note of defiance out of his voice, but there was certainly nothing very conciliatory in it.

"I shall not tell you, Kildare."

"Very well, sir! I suppose I might have expected that answer."

And Kildare turned to go.

"One moment?" rapped out Mr. Selby. "Are you responsible for that?"

He pointed to the bed.

"For what?" asked Kildare, entirely failing for the moment to understand.

But then he saw that the bed was not in a normal condition. When Mr. Selby, with a dramatic gesture, whipped down the clothes, he was not surprised to see a first-rate apple-pie bed.

There were wet sponges in it, and hair-brushes, and nettles, and thorny twigs. Altogether it was just the kind of bed that a large majority of the people under the roof of St. Jim's would have liked to think of Mr. Selby's lying upon.

"I am surprised—astounded—at you, Kildare!" snapped the master.

"If you imagine me guilty of a childish trick like that," returned Kildare, "I must say I'm rather surprised at you, sir."

"Then you did not do it?"

"I most certainly did not!"

"Have you any idea who did?"

Kildare thought of Herries' handkerchief, and felt that he had quite a definite idea as to who had done the thing.

"I have a suspicion," he admitted.

"Have you seen anyone here?" snapped Mr. Selby.

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"I really don't care to say, sir, as I don't in the least believe that the junior I saw as responsible for what has been done."

"Ha! A boy in my Form, of course?"

"I would rather not say."

"Kildare, it would be very much more fitting that you should attend to the disciplinary duties confided to you than that you should waste your time at Wayland in—"

But I will say no more about that. I expect you to punish the junior or juniors who did this. Do you hear?"

He pointed to the bed as he spoke.

"Very well, sir," replied Kildare.

"You will punish them to-morrow morning, and report to me, Kildare," said the master, almost triumphantly.

"Very well, sir," Kildare said again.

He went.

"The Hunnish old tyrant!" he murmured. "If he can get me sacked or deposed, he will, and he'd enjoy having my last act of authority as captain the punishment of kids that I like. He can always get at young Wally and the rest on some excuse, so he loses nothing. Well, I'm not keen on punishing Blake & Co; but the young rascals deserve it, and they'll have to go through with it!"

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Disappointment for Mr. Selby.

"D'ARCY minor!"

"Yes, Kildare."

"Tell Blake, Herries, Digby, and your brother that I want to see them in my study."

"Right-ho!"

Wally shot off.

A few minutes later Blake & Co. appeared.

It was the morning after the Wayland affair, and breakfast was just over.

The four came, all looking rather surprised; Arthur Augustus far more so than his chums.

"You were in Mr. Selby's bed-room last night, you four!" said Kildare.

"Bai Jove! You are entirely mistaken, Kildare, I assure you! We were not—"

"Speak for yourself, Gussy!" struck in Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake; do you mean to tell me that you—"

"That's enough, D'Arcy! You can stand aside. It's plain to me that you were not in it. But you were, Blake, I gather?"

"I was, Kildare."

"And you, Herries—your handkerchief was found there. You'd better take it. Were you there, Digby?"

"Yes, Kildare."

None of the three seemed to take the charge against them very seriously.

But Arthur Augustus was shocked. He fidgeted with his monocle, pursed up his lips, shifted from one foot to the other, and cast baleful glances at his chums.

"You made an apple-pie bed?" said Kildare, questioningly.

"Yes, we did!" replied Blake, grinning.

"Weally, Blake! I am uttahnly disgusted with—"

"Oh, drp up, D'Arcy! Childish trick, B don't you think?" said the skipper.

"Depends on how you look at it, Kildare. I don't suppose the dodge would be quite your line, but—"

"I should dashed well think not! below even the Fourth! What did you call for?"

"To please dear old Selby, of course," answered Dig solemnly.

"The old hunks had marked Gussy's face—there's the mark now!" said Blake. "We got to get even with him some way, and wasn't worth while doing anything we could be sacked for, was it?"

"Weally, Blake! Upon my word an honest I told you quite distinctly that I declined to—"

"Rats! We didn't take any notice of it, ass! But Gussy wasn't in it, Kildare."

"I am satisfied as to that. Hold out your hand, Blake!"

"I say, Kildare, how is it you're punished for this?"

"At Mr. Selby's special order, my son. That's blessed queer! I didn't think, and he were a bit chummy."

"We are not. But I'm not going to discuss that with you. Hold out your hand!"

Blake obeyed, and took three sharp cuffs without wincing.

"I'd rather take it from you than Selby anyway, Kildare," he said.

"Herries!"

"All serene, Kildare! I say, I was a bit of an ass to drop my hanky—eh?"

"You were," replied Kildare.

He operated upon Herries, and then upon Digby. After that Arthur Augustus held out his hand.

"What's that for?" demanded Kildare.

"Same as the west, dear boy."

"But you weren't in it, you young chump."

"I fail to see that that fact is of a great importance. I—"

"Hook it, you young duffer!"

And D'Arcy went, unswished, telling his chums as he went how very wrong their conduct had been.

Kildare went straight to Mr. Selby.

"I have punished the offenders, sir," he said.

"Ah! When did you punish them, Kildare?"

"I have just come from doing so."

"But that is impossible! For the past ten minutes I have been watching D'Arcy minor, Levison minor, and some others, from this window."

"No doubt, sir. But they were not the offenders."

"Do you mean to tell me that none of them was in my room last night?" rasped Mr. Selby.

"As to that, one of them was there—"

"Ah! D'Arcy minor, of course!"

"Yes. But he had nothing to do with the apple—with what was done to your bed."

"You are easily taken in, Kildare!"

"I have D'Arcy minor's word for it, and I consider that good enough."

Mr. Selby glared.

"Who were the culprits?"

"Blake, Herries, and Digby."

"And not D'Arcy major?"

"He had nothing to do with it."

"I can hardly credit that, Kildare."

"I know it to be true, sir."

"Ah! I do not think much of your methods of discipline or your discrimination, Kildare."

Kildare did not think much of Mr. Selby's, and he came near to saying so. But he checked the retort. It would have been a trifle cheap, at best.

"This will probably have been your last act of authority here, Kildare."

"That remains to be seen, sir."

"Ah! Yes, we shall see—we shall see. There goes the bell for classes. That is all just now, Kildare."

The captain strode, fuming, to the Sixth Form-room.

It was evident that Mr. Selby had not reported him yet. It was possible that he had no intention of reporting. It was certain that he wanted to make his youthful enemy uncomfortable and anxious.

Kildare had not desired a feud with Mr. Selby, but he was in for one, and he meant to keep his end up as long as possible. How he did that, and what came of it all, another story must tell.

THE END.