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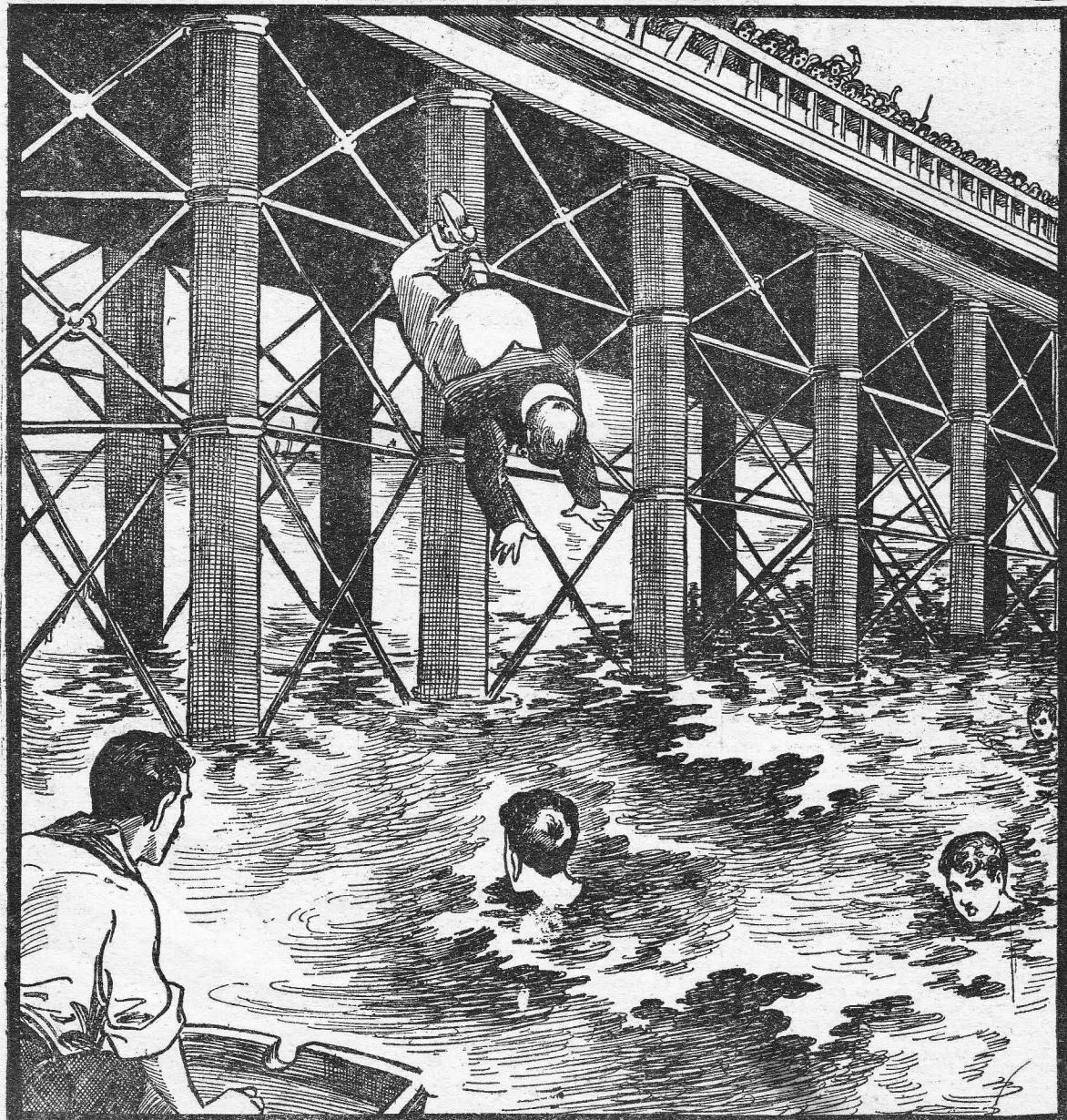
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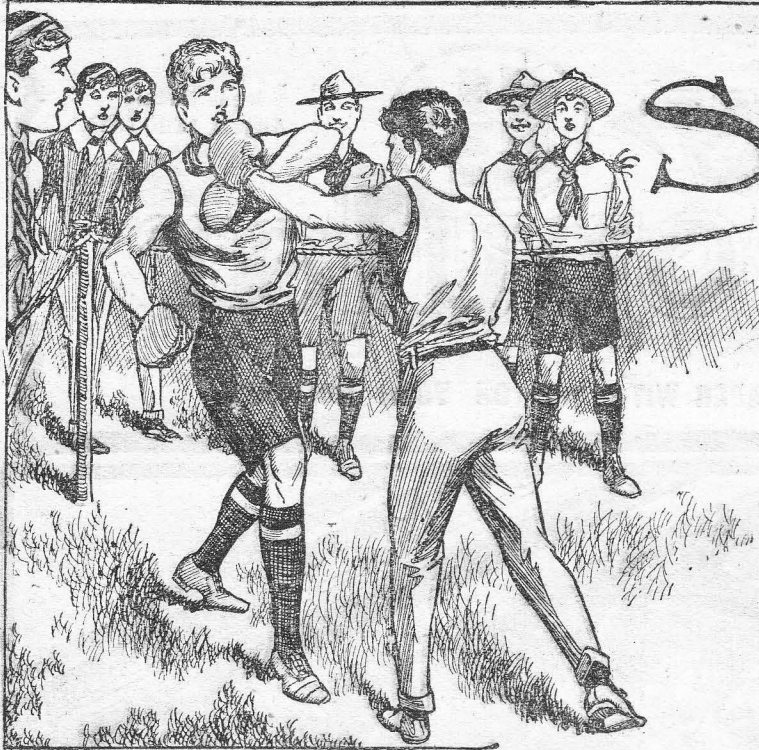
20 PAGES

TAKE THIS PAPER WITH YOU ON YOUR HOLIDAYS.



BUNTER'S HIGH DIVE — NOT ACCORDING TO THE PROGRAMME!

(A Startling Incident in the Grand School Story, "SCHOOLBOYS AND SCOUTS!")



Schoolboys and Scouts!

A Magnificent, Long,
Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.
at the Greyfriars Camp.

BY ..

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Midnight Capture!

LETTER for Master Nugent!" The postman was passing through the Remove lines in the Greyfriars camp delivering letters. He halted outside No. 1 tent, and thrust a letter through the flap. Frank Nugent pounced upon it at once.

"Remittance, Franky?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"No such luck," said Nugent ruefully. "Judging by the writing on the envelope, this is from my minor, at Greyfriars. If it's true that you can tell people's character by their handwriting, then my minor's a clumsy, untidy little ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's he got to say for himself?" asked Johnny Bull.

Frank Nugent ripped open the envelope, read the ill-spelt effusion within, and passed it on to his chums.

This is what they saw:

"The Sannytoryum,

"Greyfriars.

"Dear Frank,—I hope you are quite well as it leaves me at present with these beastly German measles. I think Bolsover minor ought to be shott for katching such a silly complaint and passing it on to others—don't you?"

"We are having a very thin time hear in the sanny. The matron feeds us on grool three times a day. Grool! But we sha'n't be hear much longer, thank goodness! The doctker came this morning, and he says I show a cleen bill of helth."

"What sort of time are you having in camp? Jolly ripping, I guess! I've told Bolsover minor that as soon as we are aloud out of bed I shal dott him on the boko for being such a chump as to contract German measles and infect Tubb and Pagett and Gatty and Myers and myself. He says he couldn't help getting the beastly rash, but I told him that it was a very rash thing to do! (This is a joke, but I ekspekt you and your pais will be too dense to see it!)"

"Dear Frank, will you please send me a Ave hobb, bekaws I have run out of tsekett-menney, and the 1st thing I mean to do when I get out of this whole is to have a ripping feed at the bunshopp in the villidge."

"I trusted you will do this. Let brotherly love kontinew, you no!"

"Now I must stopp as I have to take my grool by remaining

"Your affeckshunate brother,
"Dicky."

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled when they read that missive.

The spelling—the appeal for five shillings—the threat to pulverise Bolsover minor—all were characteristic of Dicky Nugent.

The tag was furious at having contracted German measles. He would have given anything to have been able to go to camp with the other fellows.

"Poor little beggar!" said Frank Nugent. "I can quite believe that he's having a thin time in the sanny."

"Send him the five bob, and let him drown his sorrows in ginger-pop!" said Johnny Bull. Nugent nodded.

"I'll send it as soon as we've finished our council of war," he said.

No. 1 tent in the Remove lines had been allotted to Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. Those two were the rightful occupants. But the whole of the Famous Five made the tent their headquarters.

They had assembled there now, in the cool of the summer evening, to discuss an important plan of campaign. And the campaign was to be directed against Jimmy Brown & Co., the Boy Scouts who occupied the rival camp at Woody Bay.

Patrol-Leader Jimmy Brown was a very enterprising, fun-loving sort of fellow; and he had already carried out several "wheezes" at the expense of the Greyfriars Remove. He and his followers had bombarded Harry Wharton & Co. with peashooters during morning lessons in the meadow which adjoined the camp. And the Scouts had also put the "kybosh" on a concert which the Remove had intended to give, and had got up one of their own.

Not content with these two triumphs, Jimmy Brown & Co. had essayed a further jape on the Removites.

Armed with bottles of red and black ink and a number of feathers, they had broken into the Greyfriars camp during the night, with the intention of inking the faces and putting feathers in the hair of Harry Wharton & Co.

This little scheme, however, had slightly miscarried.

Owing to the intense darkness, the scouts had been unable to distinguish the faces of their victims, with the result that they had

smeard the faces of Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch, and had transformed those two gentlemen into a combination of Red Indians and Christy Minstrels!

Harry Wharton & Co. considered that it was high time something was done to check the merry antics of Jimmy Brown & Co., who seemed to be scoring all along the line. And the Famous Five had assembled in No. 1 tent to discuss the situation.

"According to Nugent minor's letter," said Wharton, "we sha'n't be here much longer. We shall have to fold our tents, like the Arabs, and silently steal away to Greyfriars. But before we go we simply must get quits with those bounders!"

"Absolutely!" said Bob Cherry. "We must turn the tables on them somehow," said Johnny Bull. "But how?"

"We could raidfully invade their camp," suggested Hurree Singh.

Wharton shook his head.

"What could five of us do against a whole troop of scouts?" he said.

"We could get the whole Form to back us up," said Nugent.

"True. But even then we should be badly outnumbered."

Bob Cherry raised his hand.

"Shush, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

"What on earth are you 'shushing' about?" demanded Wharton, in astonishment.

"If there's absolute quiet for one moment, so that you can't even hear an acid-drop, I shall be able to get a brain-wave!" said Bob.

"Br-r-r!"

Bob's chums evidently had little faith in his ability to evolve staggering, sensational "wheezes." They went on talking. And they were still talking when Wingate of the Sixth poked his head through the flap of the tent.

"Bed-time, you kids!" he said.

"Bed-time," echoed Johnny Bull, "in the middle of the afternoon?"

Wingate laughed.

"It's a quarter to nine," he said, "and, according to the camp regulations, all juniors are to be in bed by nine."

"Bust the camp regulations!" growled Nugent.

"They're made to be observed," said Wingate. "But if you kids don't feel like turning in just yet, I can find you a job."

"Oh, good!"

"You all know what happened last night. Somebody broke into the camp and played a practical joke on two of the masters. The

Head has, therefore, decided, in order to prevent any further raids, to post sentries round the camp all night.

"My hat!"
"If you kids would care to take on the job, you're welcome." Wingate went on. "You will be relieved at eleven o'clock by a number of Shell fellows; and they'll be relieved, in turn, two hours later."

The Famous Five jumped at the opportunity of keeping guard. They reflected that in the event of a further night-raid by Jimmy Brown & Co., they would be able to lay the scouts by the heels.

"We'll take on the job, Wingate," said Harry Wharton promptly.

"Like a shot!" said Bob Cherry.
"But we shall want some help," said Frank Nugent. "Any objection to Carr and Linley and Vernon-Smith keeping us company?"

"Not a bit," said Wingate.
"Are you going to distribute loaded revolvers among the sentries, Wingate?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Don't talk rot! If you see anybody breaking into camp, you can easily give the alarm. All you've got to do is to rouse the nearest prefect."

After issuing a few instructions to the newly-appointed sentries, Wingate withdrew.

The Famous Five then routed out Dennis Carr and Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith from their respective tents.

"What's the little game?" asked Dennis Carr.

"We're on sentry-go till eleven o'clock," explained Wharton.

"Oh, good!"

"And there's quite a sporting chance that we shall be able to capture Jimmy Brown's gang. They're pretty certain to be planning another raid on our camp to-night."

"Then they'll be unlucky!" chuckled Vernon-Smith. "Better spread out round the field, hadn't we?"

The sentries posted themselves at intervals beside the hedge which skirted the camp. And then they waited, with eyes and ears on the alert for every sight and sound.

An hour passed, and there were no developments.

It was a moonless night. No light was visible, save a subdued glow from the marquee which was occupied by the Head.

By the light of a reading-lamp Doctor Locke was studying the works of Horace.

The masters and prefects had retired for the night. Their tents were in darkness, and deep silence reigned in the Greyfriars encampment.

A further half-hour passed, and the sentries began to feel weary and "fed-up." They despaired of getting to grips with the scouts from the other camp.

Boom!
A distant clock began to strike eleven, and simultaneously Bob Cherry, who was stationed in a corner of the field, heard a crackling noise close at hand.

Peering through the darkness, Bob distinguished the head and shoulders of a Boy Scout protruding through a gap in the hedge. And he heard Patrol-Leader Jimmy Brown mutter, in a low tone:

"Come on, you fellows! The coast is clear."
Bob Cherry threw himself full length in the long grass, so that he could not be seen. Then he waited until the invaders had crawled through the gap in the hedge, and were inside the camp.

There were four of them in all—Jimmy Brown, Jack Hardy, Kid Lennox, and Tommy Towers. These four had been responsible for the raid on the previous night.

Suddenly Bob Cherry leapt to his feet, and gave the alarm.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Jimmy Brown, in dismay. "We're spotted!"

"There's only one of them," muttered Jack Hardy.

"Collar him!"
"Gag him!"

The scouts made a combined rush at Bob Cherry. But before they could grapple with him the rest of the sentries came running up.

"Good!"
Jimmy Brown & Co. were caught at last—like rats in a trap. But they had no thought of tame submission. They lined up shoulder to shoulder as the sentries approached them. And they hit out right and left.

But the odds were, proportionately, two to one against them, and they stood no chance whatever against the doughty fighting-men of the Remove.

Bob Cherry "grassed" Jimmy Brown with

a straight left, and Harry Wharton promptly sat on the patrol-leader's chest.

Dennis Carr, after a fierce hand-to-hand fight with Jack Hardy, got the better of him, and pinned him to the ground. And Kid Lennox and Tommy Towers, although they fought valiantly, were no match for the remainder of the Removites.

Within two minutes the four scouts were down, and they were not in a position to rise.

Then there was a patter of running feet, and Hobson & Co. of the Shell arrived on the scene.

"What the thump—" began Hobson, in amazement.

"We've collared the giddy raiders!" said Vernon-Smith. "There are four of 'em."

"My hat!"

"Would you Shell-fish mind going along to the store-tent?" asked Harry Wharton.

"What for?"

"Four sacks and four lengths of rope."

Hobson chuckled.

"With pleasure!" he said.

And the Shell fellows departed on their mission.

Whilst they were gone Jimmy Brown & Co. made frantic efforts to escape.

But the Removites were complete masters of the situation, and they did not attempt to conceal the fact.

"You're fairly caught this time, my sons!" said Dennis Carr.

"Geroff me chest!" gasped Jack Hardy.

"You'll think twice in future before you decide to raid our camp!" said Harry Wharton.

"Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Jimmy Brown, who was in imminent danger of suffocation.

"Those Shell-fish are a jolly long time," said Frank Nugent. "Oh, here they are! Got the sacks, you fellows?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And the rope?"

"Yes."

"What are you going to do, you bounders?" asked Tommy Towers in alarm.

"You'll soon see!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The sacks were then thrust over the respective heads of Jimmy Brown & Co. The arms of the victims were pinned to their sides, and the sacks were secured round their bodies by means of the rope.

"Now," said Harry Wharton, when the last rope had been drawn tight, "you can jolly well find your way back to your own kennels!"

A guttural protest came from within the sack which enveloped Jimmy Brown.

"Groo! We can't see, you rotters!"

"Being scouts, you ought to be able to feel your way under any conditions," said Dennis Carr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll give you a start," said Bob Cherry generously.

And he escorted Jimmy Brown to the gap in the hedge, and bundled him through it headfirst.

The other three scouts were bundled through in turn.

"It will take 'em hours and hours to get back to their camp!" chuckled Hobson of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the darkness of the lane the four sack-covered figures stumbled and staggered, and collided with each other. And from inside the sacks came muffled lamentations.

"Hurrah!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "We've scored over those bounders at last!"

"They won't raid us again in a hurry," said Harry Wharton.

"Now that we have disposefully got rid of our ludicrous and scoultful enemies," said Hurree Singh, "we will adjournfully retire to bed."

Harry Wharton & Co. withdrew from the scene of their triumph, leaving the Shell fellows to keep guard.

There were no further invasions of the Greyfriars camp that night.

It took Jimmy Brown & Co. the best part of a couple of hours to regain their own quarters. With their hands pinned to their sides, they were unable to extricate themselves from the sacks.

Even their scouting instinct failed to guide them aright, for they proceeded about a couple of miles in the wrong direction.

When they eventually gained their camp they managed to rouse some of their comrades, who untied the lengths of rope, and wrenched the sacks from the heads of the victims.

"What the dickens have you fellows been up to?" inquired one of the scouts, in wonder.
"Ow! Japing the Greyfriars bounders!" gasped Jimmy Brown.

"My hat! I should say that the boot was on the other foot!"

"The beggars collared us when we were in the act of breaking into their camp," said Jack Hardy.

"Didn't you resist?"

"Of course; but we were up against terrific odds."

"Wharton & Co. have got the better of us at last," said Jimmy Brown, as he started to undress. "But are we downhearted?"

"No!" exclaimed the others, in chorus.

All the same, it was in a far from pleasant humour that they retired for the night—or, rather, what was left of it.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Challenge!

"MY only aunt!"
"What awful freaks!"
"They can't play cricket for toffee!"

These exclamations were made, respectively, by Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent.

It was the morning after Jimmy Brown & Co.'s unsuccessful raid on the Greyfriars encampment. The Famous Five had been down to the sea for a bathe, and on their way back they halted on the outskirts of the scouts' camp, and peered over the hedge.

There was great activity in the camp.

Stumps had been pitched on a level stretch of green at a convenient distance from the tents, and Jimmy Brown was batting.

Kid Lennox was bowling, and to the Famous Five his deliveries seemed quite simple. But they seemed anything but simple to Patrol-Leader Jimmy Brown, whose wicket was wrecked twice in quick succession.

"They call that cricket," said Johnny Bull, with a snort.

"Lennox seems to think he's playing marbles, and Jimmy Brown appears to be digging the soil!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Boy Scouts heard the laughter of their rivals, but they pretended to be quite indifferent to it.

All the same, the fact that five grinning faces appeared over the top of the hedge had a marked effect upon their play.

"These puny weaklings," said Bob Cherry, "wouldn't stand an earthly against the Greyfriars Remove!"

"Why, we should simply make shavings of them!" said Johnny Bull.

"And send them home with the tailfulness between the legfulness!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With burning cheeks the scouts went on playing.

"Shall I buzz the ball at those bounders, Jimmy?" murmured Kid Lennox, when the laughter of the Greyfriars juniors had become almost unbearable.

"No," replied Jimmy Brown. "Don't take any notice of those laughing hyenas!"

And he took guard once more at the wicket.

"How did you fellows get on last night?" inquired Harry Wharton.

No reply.

"How many muddy ditches did you tumble into before you found your camp?" asked Nugent.

Silence—save for the sound of bat meeting ball.

"You bounders will admit that you were fairly trapped last night!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

No answer.

"Like a set of Egyptian mummies, aren't they?" said Bob Cherry. "Expect they're feeling too much ashamed of themselves to talk."

"They're too absorbed in their game of hop-scotch," said Nugent. "My hat! Did you ever see such a sorry exhibition in your life?"

Jimmy Brown had just uprooted a large lump of turf with his bat. He completely missed the ball, which ambled past and hit the middle stump with just sufficient force to knock the balls off.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is better than a pantomime!"

"Wonder how much they charge for admission to the ground?"

Jimmy Brown could stand the taunts of

the Greyfriars fellows no longer. He spun round furiously.

"Buzz off, you rotters!"

"Rats!"

"Blest if I know why you want to hang round here cackling!"

"We simply can't help it, old top!" said Bob Cherry. "There are two things which would make a cat laugh!"

"Eh—what do you mean?"

"Your face, and your cricket! Your face is a standing joke, and your cricket beats a comic opera!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," shouted Jimmy Brown wrathfully, "are you trying to pretend that we can't play cricket?"

"No pretence about it," said Wharton. "You can't!"

Tommy Towers sprang forward.

"We'll challenge you Greyfriars boobies to a game—when and where you like!" he hooted.

"Better apply to the fags," said Johnny Bull. "They may be able to give you a fixture. But you can't possibly play the Remove. It would be far too one-sided!"

"You mean that we should lick you by an innings and unlimited runs?" said Jack Hardy.

"No; it would be on the other foot bootfully," murmured Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Brown & Co. glared at the laughing juniors.

"We'll undertake to wipe up the ground with you at cricket," said the scout leader.

"And at swimming," added Kid Lennox.

"Likewise at running," said Jack Hardy.

"And at any other sport you care to name!" chimed in Tommy Towers.

Harry Wharton turned to his chums.

"Shall we take 'em seriously, you fellows?" he asked.

"You'd better!" advised Jimmy Brown.

"Because, if you don't, the word will go round that you're too funky to accept our challenge."

After a brief conference with the other members of the Famous Five, Harry Wharton addressed the scout leader.

"All serene!" he said. "We'll take you on."

"At cricket and swimming and running?"

"Yes; and at anything else you like."

"Good!"

"Will three o'clock this afternoon suit you for the cricket-match?" inquired Wharton.

"Down to the ground!"

"We'll regard that as settled, then. And we'll hold the remainder of the sports tomorrow."

"And the camp that wins most events will be entitled to call themselves top dogs," said Tommy Towers.

"Oh, absolutely!"

Jimmy Brown & Co. went on with their cricket practice, and the Famous Five returned to their own camp.

Morning lessons had finished at eleven, and it was now nearly dinner-time. An appetising odour came from the dining-marquees. And Billy Bunter was hovering in the vicinity, as if he intended to waylay one of the cooks.

"Let's go and have some ginger-pop at the tuck-tent," suggested Bob Cherry.

In the canteen, over which Mrs. Mimble presided, a party of Removites were planning an afternoon excursion along the coast.

"Afraid you'll have to postpone your little ramble," said Wharton.

"Why?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"We're playing cricket this afternoon against the scouts."

"Oh, good!"

"They've challenged us to meet them at all sorts of sports," said Bob Cherry. "We shan't be here much longer. And we might as well put the kybosh on Jimmy Brown & Co. before we go."

"Yes, rather!"

The scouts' challenge circulated swiftly through the Remove, and there was considerable excitement.

Harry Wharton, as captain of the cricket eleven, was simply bombarded with applications for places in the team.

"You'll play me, of course, Wharton?" said Squiff.

"And me?"

"Ditto me?"

"Faith, au' if ye won't give me a show, I'll laugher ye, entirely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton waved the crowd back.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 82.

"Team will be posted up on the camp notice-board after dinner," he said briefly.

And the clamouring, seething mob were compelled to possess their souls in patience.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Near Thing!

ELEVEN members of the Remove Form were in a highly-satisfied frame of mind after dinner. They were the eleven whose names appeared on the notice-board.

Among the other fellows in the Form there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But Harry Wharton spoke honeyed words to the disappointed ones, and he urged them to turn out and cheer the Remove on to victory.

The match was to be played in the meadow adjoining the camp. The ground was inclined to be bumpy in places. It was not nearly so nicely rolled as the playing-pitch at Greyfriars. But, as Bob Cherry pointed out, it would be the same for both sides.

Jimmy Brown & Co. arrived shortly after dinner. To the surprise of the Removites they had not changed into flannels.

"Why haven't you fellows changed?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Not necessary, dear boy," said Jimmy Brown. "We should lick you easily enough, even if we wore heavy suits of mail."

"Or if we played blindfolded!" cackled Jack Hardy.

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton looked grim.

"We shall see," he said, as he spun the coin.

"Heads!" said Jimmy Brown.

"It's tails," said the captain of the Remove.

"We'll bat first."

"And if you're not all out in half an hour, I'm a Dutchman!" was Jimmy Brown's comment.

A special marquee had been erected to serve as a pavilion. Refreshments were obtainable within, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry fortified themselves with strawberry-ices prior to opening the Remove innings.

Quite a crowd of Greyfriars fellows had turned out to see the match.

Even Coker & Co. of the Fifth had condescended to honour the event with their presence.

The umpires were Wingate of the Sixth, and Scoutmaster Walters.

Harry Wharton took first knock, to the bowling of Kid Lennox.

The captain of the Remove had seen Lennox bowling that morning, and he prepared to receive a slow, simple delivery.

When the ball came, however, it whizzed along with the velocity of a bullet, and the batsman's off-stump was missed by the merest fraction of an inch.

"Phew! Look out, Harry!" called Bob Cherry from the other end of the pitch.

After that narrow escape Wharton kept his eyes open. He found that Kid Lennox was a bowler who varied his deliveries, sending down fast balls and slow "googlies" by turns.

Once he had played himself in, Harry Wharton showed the bowling no mercy. He despatched the ball twice in succession to the boundary; and then he lifted it into the marquee, where it descended with a "plop" on to the knees of Billy Bunter, who was reclining in a deck-chair sampling a strawberry-ice.

The Owl of the Remove jumped to his feet in alarm.

"Yaroooh! It's raining cricket-balls!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Those fellows are going strong," said Frank Nugent, raising a glass of ginger-beer to his lips. "Here's power to their elbow!"

Bob Cherry followed Harry Wharton's example, and hit out lustily.

Runs came thick and fast, and the figures on the scoring-board grew and grew. It seemed pretty evident that Jimmy Brown & Co. were booked for a licking, and a tremendous licking at that.

"Fifty up!" chortled Johnny Bull, at length.

"And the first pair still in," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm beginning to think that some of us won't get an innings."

In desperation, Jimmy Brown tried a couple of fresh bowlers. But this only had the effect of increasing the rate of scoring.

Boundaries were as plentiful as leaves in Vallombrosa. There were leg-hits and cuts galore, and terrific drives.

The scouts were beginning to regret their folly in not changing into flannels. Their

scouting equipment was fairly cool, but flannels would have been much cooler.

"These bounders look as if they're going to stay at the wickets till sunset!" growled Jimmy Brown.

"Let's have another shot at bowling," said Kid Lennox. "I'll shift the beggars somehow!"

And at last the partnership of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry was dissolved.

Bob ran out to a tempting ball from Kid Lennox, missed it, and was stumped before he could get back to his crease.

A volley of cheering greeted Bob Cherry as he came off. He had made fifty of the eighty runs which had been scored.

"I'll take your bat, I think, Bob," said Mark Linley, who was next in. "It's bound to bring me luck."

"The bowling's dead easy, Marky," said Bob, as he handed over the bat. "If you don't make at least fifty, you'll deserve to be flayed alive!"

Mark Linley made his fifty all right. Then he was struck on the forehead by a fast, rising ball, and had to retire. He declared that he would soon be fit again, and meanwhile his place at the wicket was taken by Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton was still batting. He was a dozen runs short of his century.

"Three boundaries will do the trick," remarked Vernon-Smith. "Wharton's in topping form, and no mistake!"

The three boundaries were scored in the next over. And then a storm of cheering burst from the spectators.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Well played, sir!"

Billy Bunter popped his head out of the marquee.

"What's all the rumpus about, you fellows?" he inquired.

"Wharton's made his century!" said Dennis Carr. "Hurrah!"

"If only he'd had the sense to shove me in the side, there would have been a couple of centuries!" said Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With the total score standing at 240 Harry Wharton declared the innings closed.

"Sorry most of you fellows won't be able to have an innings," he said when he came back to the marquee. "But there would be no sense in piling up a lot of unnecessary runs. The Scouts won't get within a mile of our total!"

"No jolly fear?"

An interval for tea followed. Jimmy Brown & Co. were only too glad of that interval. They had done so much leather-chasing that they were nearly dropping with fatigue.

"How d'you feel, Jimmy?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Whew!"

"Still confident of winning?" asked Nugent.

"Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pass the jam-tarts this way," panted Tommy Towers. "I can never bat well unless I lay a solid foundation."

"I think it was jolly silly of you to declare, Wharton," said Kid Lennox.

"Why?"

"We shall get 240 all right."

"Not in a thousand giddy years!" said Dennis Carr. "You're more likely to get eleven duck's-eggs!"

"Yes, rather!"

But there was a nasty shock in store for the Greyfriars cricketers.

Fortified by rest and refreshment, the scouts batted in great style. And runs came at an alarming rate.

Jimmy Brown rattled up twenty in a few minutes, and then he was caught on the boundary-line by Mark Linley.

But Tommy Towers continued to hit out vigorously. The fastest deliveries of Hurree Singh, the Remove's crack bowler, had no terrors for him. And he was loyally backed up by Jack Hardy.

The hundred was reached in record time. And only one wicket down!

"This is awful!" groaned Harry Wharton.

The Remove skipper looked worried to the verge of distraction. He had declared the Greyfriars innings closed at 240, thinking that the Remove had the match in safe keeping. And now the Scouts were piling up runs at a terrific rate, and, moreover, they seemed to be quite confident of victory.

"If it wasn't for the fact that you made a century, Wharton," said Dennis Carr, "we'd jolly well bump you for declaring too soon."

"Hear, hear!" said Peter Todd. "You



Billy Bunter's face resembled a boiled beetroot. He was fagged out; and he would have thrown up the sponge had not a voice close at hand exclaimed: "There's a whole rabbit-pie for you if Greyfriars wins!" So he tightened his grip on the rope. (See page 7.)

ought to have waited until we'd put together about four hundred."

"It's easy to be wise after the event!" grunted Wharton. "How did I know that these fellows were a set of giddy Jessops?"

"They've got to be skittled out somehow," said Vernon-Smith, "or it will be a tragedy." "Better try your hand at skittling them out, then," said Wharton.

And Vernon-Smith did. His first ball caused Jack Hardy's middle stump to perform revolutions.

"Bravo, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "We shall beat the beggars yet!"

Wickets fell fairly frequently after this. But it seemed that the mischief had been done.

When the last of the Scouts went in only three runs were needed to give Jimmy Brown & Co. the victory.

The Removites hoped that the last man in would be a nervous type of player, and that he would be beaten by his first ball.

But this hope was speedily shattered. For the last man walked on to the playing-pitch alert and confident.

Vernon-Smith was bowling, and he sent down a real beauty. The batsman stopped it dead.

The second ball was even better than its predecessor, and the batsman got his bat to it in the nick of time.

The third ball pitched short. And there was a gasp of dismay from Harry Wharton &

Co. as the batsman, grinning confidently, ran out to swipe it.

Crack! The ball was met fairly and squarely by the face of the bat, and away it sped—away and away, as if its destination was somewhere over the hedge.

But it got no farther than Dennis Carr's upraised hand.

Leaping high in the air, Dennis brought off a magnificent catch. And the match was over, and won by the Greyfriars Remove!

The batsman seemed dazed. He had quite intended that the ball should go over the hedge, and it seemed incredible that it had been intercepted, and held, by one of the fieldsmen.

Yet such was the case. And the cheering which greeted Dennis Carr's great effort could be heard down on the beach of Woody Bay.

Harry Wharton mopped his perspiring brow as he came off the field.

"Jove, that was a near thing!" he panted. "I made sure we had lost."

"Same here," said Jimmy Brown. "Your man Carr's a marvel! You'll have to erect a monument to him, or something, when you get back to Greyfriars. Not one fellow in a thousand would have held that catch!"

"Well, we've lost the first event," said Tommy Towers resignedly; "but methinks there will be a different tale to tell to-morrow."

"Hear, hear!" said Jack Hardy. "We shall win the other events hands down!"

To which Harry Wharton & Co. made retort with the ancient and classic monosyllable:

"Rats!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunters' High Diving Display.

"TUMBLE out, you fellows!" Harry Wharton thrust his head through the flap of No. 13 tent in the Remove lines, and rapped out that sharp injunction.

The four occupants of the tent—Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Singh, and Wua Lung—stirred in their beds and awoke. It was dark as pitch until Bob Cherry brought his electric-torch into action.

The rays of the torch fell full upon Harry Wharton's face.

"Why, it's you, Harry! What the thump do you want here at this time of night?"

"Are Jimmy Brown & Co. on the warpath?" inquired Mark Linley, sitting up in bed.

"No," was the reply.

"Then what—?"

"We've arranged to go for a dip, so that we shall be in trim for the swimming contest in the morning," explained Wharton.

"A dip—at midnight?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"My hat!"

"I've roused Nugent and Carr and Johnny Bull and Smithy," Wharton went on. "They think it's a top-hole wheeze!"

"Dashed if I do!" grunted Bob Cherry. "You must be potty to want to go swimming on a night like this. There's no moon, and there's not a star in the sky."

"All the better," said Wharton. "We shall be able to break out of camp without being spotted."

"Oh, you're potty!" said Bob, in disgust. "We can easily practise in the morning."

"We shall need more than one practice if we're to lick the Scouts," said the captain of the Remove. "I've seen them bathing down at the bay, and they're top-hole swimmers. If we put in a good long swim now, and another in the morning, we shall stand a chance; but if there's any slacking—"

"Eh? Who's slacking?" growled Mark Linley.

"If you don't come—"

"Oh, we'll come all right!" said Bob Cherry. "But it's a mad idea, all the same."

"The pottiness of the ludicrous wheeze is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

Three of the juniors turned out and started to dress. The fourth—Wun Lung—curled himself up afresh between the blankets.

"Coming along, Wun Lung?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Me no savvy," was the drowsy reply.

"You won't be swimming for the Remove to-morrow. Still, it will be a bit of sport for you," said Wharton persuasively.

"Me no savvy!"

"Oh, all right. Stay where you are!" growled Wharton. "Ready, you fellows?"

"Give us a chance!" protested Bob Cherry, fumbling about in the darkness.

"You needn't fog up elaborately in Etons and silk topers," said the captain of the Remove. "Flannels will do. And put a jerk in it, for goodness' sake!"

The juniors were soon ready. They stepped out of the tent, and were joined outside by the remainder of the midnight excursionists.

"All here?" asked Vernon-Smith softly.

Harry Wharton replied in the affirmative.

"We shall have to go carefully," said Dennis Carr. "I believe Coker & Co. are on sentry-duty to-night."

"In that case we can make as much row as we like!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "Coker wouldn't hear anything short of an earthquake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Armed with towels and costumes, the juniors stole softly towards the camp exit.

Sprawling in the long grass, close to the gate, was Coker of the Fifth.

Coker was lying on his back, with upraised knees, slumbering placidly. He evidently imagined that a sentry was privileged to take forty winks whenever he chose.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood looking down on the sleeping sentry for a moment. Then they wiped their boots on him and quitted the camp.

They went very warily, for they knew that

if they were caught out of bounds at that hour there would be ructions.

Camp discipline was much less strict than the discipline at Greyfriars. At the same time, the Head would be hardly likely to approve of nocturnal excursions of this sort.

Before the juniors had proceeded a hundred yards in the direction of the shore there was a sound of approaching footsteps in the lane.

"Into the hedge—quick!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

The others promptly obeyed.

No sooner were they concealed in their prickly ambush than a tall form loomed up in the darkness of the lane and went striding past the spot.

Bob Cherry clutched Harry Wharton by the arm.

"That was Loder!" he muttered.

"Yes."

"He's been out on the razzle, I suppose!"

"I dare say there's a White Horse, or a Red Lion, or a Dum Cow somewhere in the district," murmured Frank Nugent.

When the footsteps of the prefect had died away in the direction of the camp the juniors came out of their places of concealment.

"Good job Loder didn't spot us!" said Dennis Carr.

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went on their way. They did not halt again until they reached the sandy shore of Woody Bay. Then they slipped off their garments and plunged fearlessly into the dark waters.

It was a novel, almost an uncanny experience swimming in the darkness.

The juniors could distinguish the dark outline of the pier and of the rocks, and that was all.

"Better not go too far out in case of accidents," said Vernon-Smith.

The swimmers kept together in a cluster, and ventured out as far as the end of the pier.

This was quite a good swim. And by the time the juniors returned to the shore, after having battled their way against a powerful current, they felt that they had had about enough.

"Another practice in the morning," said Harry Wharton, towelling himself vigorously, "and we shall be as fit as fiddles!"

"We ought to be able to put the kybosh on Jimmy Brown & Co., anyway," said Bob Cherry.

Having dried and dressed themselves, the adventurers started on their homeward journey.

They got back to the camp without mishap. Coker of the Fifth was still lying asleep in the grass.

"If this merchant was in the Army," said Johnny Bull, giving the slumbering Fifth-Former a gentle prod with his boot, "he'd be shot!"

"My dear ass," said Dennis Carr, "as if any self-respecting army would recruit Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving Coker in the arms of Morpheus, the juniors passed on.

A subdued glow of light shone through the canvas of one of the tents. It was Loder's. Harry Wharton & Co. gave it a wide berth and made their way to their own quarters by a roundabout route. Their absence had not been discovered by the authorities, and they turned in in high spirits.

Next morning they rose with the lark, feeling none the worse for their midnight swim.

Excitement rose almost to fever-pitch in the Remove on the subject of the forthcoming swimming contest.

Even Billy Bunter was excited. And that was remarkable, for the fat junior rarely evinced any interest in the athletic affairs of the Form.

Morning lessons seemed interminable. But the welcome word of dismissal came at last, and the members of the Remove proceeded in full force to Woody Bay.

Jimmy Brown & Co. were already on the scene. They were reclining at full length on the sand in their bathing-costumes, enjoying a sun-bath. Evidently they had been putting in some preliminary practice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed the stentorian voice of Bob Cherry. "Ready for the fray, you fellows?"

Jimmy Brown bounded to his feet at once. "Yes, rather!" he said.

"What's the course going to be?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"From here to the end of the pier."

"I see."

"Of course, if that's too much for you—"

"Rats!" said Wharton, with a smile. "We'll make it to the end of the pier and back, if you like."

"We jolly well won't!" chimed in Tommy Towers. "Nuff's as good as a feast."

"There's a rope out yonder," remarked Jimmy Brown, pointing out to sea. "It's fixed from the end of the pier to the judge's boat. The first fellow to touch it wins the race for his side."

Wharton nodded.

"Who's the judge?" he asked.

"Our scoutmaster. And his verdict will be final."

"Of course!"

There were no less than nine Greyfriars fellows taking part in the race.

The Famous Five were competing, as a matter of course. And the other four were Vernon-Smith, Mark Linley, Dennis Carr, and Peter Todd.

Five minutes later the rival swimmers lined up on the sandy beach.

A big crowd witnessed the start of the great race from the shore, and a still bigger crowd swarmed on the pier and shouted messages of advice and encouragement to the swimmers below.

"Come along Greyfriars!"

"Buck up, the scouts!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"Put your beef into it, Jimmy!"

At the commencement of the race the swimmers were all in a bunch. But presently they began to sort themselves out.

Hurree Singh, of Greyfriars, took the lead with his speedy side-stroke, and close behind him, striking out strongly, came Harry Wharton and Jimmy Brown.

"It's Inky's race!" yelled Billy Bunter, who was watching the event from the end of the pier.

"Don't lean too far over that railing, porpoise," said Bolsover major, "or you'll be losing your spectacles!"

"Rats! Pick it up, Inky!"

But Hurree Singh was dropping right behind. He had set too strenuous a pace at the outset, and both Harry Wharton and Jimmy Brown overhauled him.

The race resolved itself into a neck-and-neck struggle between the leader of the scouts and the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

The crowd on the pier was waving and beckoning and shouting frantically.

"Now, Wharton!"

"Now, Jimmy!"

"A dozen more strokes will do the trick!"

"Spurt—spurt, for goodness' sake!"

Excitement had risen to a high pitch. Billy Bunter, curiously enough, was the most excited onlooker of all.

Skinner declared that the fat junior must have backed Greyfriars to win, and those who watched Bunter swinging his arms about like a windmill in a hurricane were inclined to agree with Skinner.

The race was nearly over now.

Harry Wharton made a desperate final spurt and forged ahead of Jimmy Brown.

"Bravo!" yelled Billy Bunter, his face glowing with excitement. "Good old Wharton! You've got him fairly whacked! You—"

Crash!

Splash!

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The crash was caused by the sudden collapse of the wooden railing, against which Billy Bunter had been leaning heavily.

And the splash was caused by the fat junior, who—quite intentionally, of course—took a high dive from the pier into the sea.

There was a gasp of alarm from the eyewitnesses of the calamity.

It was feared that the Owl of the Remove might be dashed upon the rocks. But Billy Bunter landed fairly and squarely into the sea just as Harry Wharton was about to grasp the outstretched rope and win the big race.

On hearing that mighty splash close behind him, Wharton spun round quickly in the water.

He expected to see a porpoise, but not a human porpoise. And when he caught sight of his plump schoolfellow struggling frantically in the water he uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Billy Bunter, who had already swallowed about a pint of seawater. "Help! Rescue! Save me!"

Harry Wharton promptly grasped the Owl of the Remove round the waist.

"Don't struggle," he muttered, "or you'll have the pair of us under!"

Meanwhile, Jimmy Brown had completed his swim. And he had won the race.

There was a great commotion among the crowd on the pier. The Boy Scouts cheered loudly, delighted at Jimmy Brown's unexpected triumph. But several of the Greyfriars fellows protested that it wasn't fair—that Harry Wharton would have won easily, had he not been called upon to go to Billy Bunter's assistance.

The captain of the Remove managed to support the fat junior until the scoutmaster arrived on the scene in his boat.

And then Billy Bunter, his garments drenched, his spectacles missing, and with wet wisps of hair straggling over his forehead, was hauled into the boat, and conveyed to the shore.

When he crawled out on to terra firma the Owl of the Remove fully expected to receive the sympathy of his schoolfellows. But his expectations were not realised!

"Bunter, you ass—"

"Bunter, you chump—"

"Bunter, you imbecile—"

"You've lost us the race!"

"Why couldn't you have postponed your high-diving stunt till afterwards?"

Billy Bunter stood blinking at the indignant throng.

"Oh, really, you fellows," he protested feebly. "I wanted Wharton to win!"

"And he lost, thanks to you!" growled Dick Russell.

"You deserve to be flayed alive!" snapped Ogilvy.

Shortly afterwards, the swimmers emerged from the water.

"Look here, Wharton," said Jimmy Brown, "in view of what happened, the race ought not to count. We'll have a fresh contest."

The captain of the Remove shook his head. "That's quite all right," he said.

"It isn't all right! You'd have won if it hadn't been for Bunter."

"I ought to have gone on, and left Bunter's rescue to one of the fellows coming up behind."

After further discussion on the subject, it was decided that the result of the race should stand.

It was rough luck on Greyfriars. And the feelings which Billy Bunter's schoolfellows entertained towards him were almost homicidal.

But Harry Wharton & Co. consoled themselves with the reflection that in the remaining events, which were to take place after dinner, they would more than hold their own.

Billy Bunter hurried back to the camp to change his clothes. He hurried because he was wet and uncomfortable, and also because he realised that if he lingered on the shore he would receive a severe bumping.

His schoolfellows did not approve of Billy Bunter's high-diving exploits!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Makes Amends!

ATER dinner there were signs of great activity in the Greyfriars camp.

Four boxing contests had been arranged between the rival sportsmen that day.

Harry Wharton was to tackle Jimmy Brown, Dennis Carr was to meet Jack Hardy, Bob Cherry was to face Kid Lennox, and

Vernon-Smith was to administer the knock-out to Tommy Towers, if possible.

The winner of each of these contests would secure a point for his side.

Practically all Greyfriars turned out to see the sport, and the scouts brought over an enormous band of supporters.

A ring was formed in an open space away from the tents. And Wingate of the Sixth, who was one of the judges, rapped out the names of the first pair:

"Wharton! Brown!"

"Hurrah!"

There were loud cheers for both combatants as they stepped into the grassy arena.

Harry Wharton was more sturdily-built than his opponent. But Jimmy Brown was slightly the taller of the two, and he possessed a longer reach.

"There will be six rounds," Wingate announced. "And if there is no knock-out by the end of that time, the verdict will be awarded on points. Are you ready, you two?"

The boxers nodded.

"Time!"

The opening round was contested at a fierce pace.

Harry Wharton hit out with vigour and confidence. But he found that he had met more than his match in Jimmy Brown, who was quite an expert at the noble art.

"Harry will have all his work cut out," remarked Bob Cherry, looking out anxiously.

Vernon-Smith, who was standing at Bob's elbow, nodded.

"I'm sorry to have to say so," he said, "but Brown's the better man. Jove! Look at that!"

Harry Wharton was down, felled by a smashing straight left. And only the call of "Time!" saved him from an early defeat.

During the interval Frank Nugent sponged his chum's face. And Wharton was quite himself again when he went up for the second round.

Then the Greyfriars representative succeeded in getting some of his own back.

Jimmy Brown staggered from a terrific punch on the nose, and the water rushed to his eyes. He stood still, blinking in a dazed and uncertain fashion.

Then did the Greyfriars juniors call upon their leader to go in and win.

"Now's your chance, Wharton!"

"Polish him off!"

But Jimmy Brown had no intention of being polished off just yet. Heavy blows were rained upon him by his opponent; but he refused to be overthrown.

The second round was all Wharton. So was the third. Likewise the Fourth. But Jimmy Brown resolutely refused to take the knock-out.

In the interval between the fourth and fifth rounds Frank Nugent noticed that his chum was looking worn and fagged.

"Feeling groggy, old man?" he murmured.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Between you and me," he said, "I'm done!"

"Oh, you don't say that!"

"But it's true. I haven't an ounce of energy left."

"Neither has Brown. You'll settle his hash in the next round, all right."

But Wharton shook his head.

Not often did the captain of the Remove admit that he was "whacked." But on this occasion he had fought himself to a standstill. And the fact that Jimmy Brown was in little better case did not afford him much consolation.

"Time!" rapped out Wingate.

For the fifth time scout and schoolboy stood face to face in the ring.

In this round Jimmy Brown fought with the strength of despair. He rained blow after blow upon his opponent, and he hustled him round the ring.

Had any one of those blows had sufficient force behind it, Harry Wharton would have gone down for the count. As it was, he just managed to keep going.

Wharton survived the fifth round, and he survived the sixth and last. But in both rounds Jimmy Brown had done the lion's share of the fighting, and it came as no great surprise when the judges awarded the verdict to the scout leader on points.

The defeat of Harry Wharton, although not crushing, meant that Greyfriars had lost a valuable point. And there was great anxiety in the ranks of the Remove.

That anxiety was soon lessened, however, by Dennis Carr.

Dennis was called upon to face Jack Hardy, and the fight lasted exactly ten seconds. At the end of that time Hardy went down.

A smashing straight left caught him between the eyes, and finished his chance. He failed to rise, and Greyfriars, in the person of Dennis Carr, had succeeded in levelling things up once more.

It was generally imagined that the third bout, between Bob Cherry and Kid Lennox, would be too one-sided to prove interesting.

Kid Lennox, however, put up a very plucky fight, and he went the whole of the six rounds. But Bob Cherry gained the verdict on points.

"This is where we go ahead!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

But the Friars did not keep their lead long.

In the last of the boxing bouts Tommy Towers created a staggering surprise by defeating Vernon-Smith. And it was a very thorough defeat, too—the boulder of Greyfriars being outpointed at every turn.

Jimmy Brown & Co. were very pleased with the way things were going. They had scored three points, having won the swimming race and two of the boxing contests.

Greyfriars had scored three points, too. They had won the cricket match and two of the boxing bouts.

But the Boy Scouts felt confident that in the running races, which were now about to take place, they would outclass their opponents.

And then began a ding-dong tussle, which would never be forgotten, either by those who took part in it or those who merely looked on.

The hundred yards race provided a breathless and a thrilling finish. Jimmy Brown won it, defeating Hurree Singh of Greyfriars by inches only.

The scouts then went farther ahead, Kid Lennox winning the high jump in grand style.

Harry Wharton held a brief consultation with the other members of the Famous Five.

"This is awful!" he exclaimed. "Those boulders are beating us at every turn!"

"My dear fellow," said Bob Cherry, "when it comes to the long jump and the half-mile, they won't stand an earthly!"

And they didn't. For Bob himself won both these events.

The points were now equal again, and the excitement was intense.

An obstacle race was the next item on the programme. And the obstacles which had to be surmounted were many and various.

There were hurdles which had to be cleared. There were ladders, through the rungs of which the competitors had to squeeze themselves. And there was a greasy pole which had to be walked. Those who tumbled off in the process had to start afresh.

Hurree Singh, who was as agile as a monkey, carried everything before him in this event. And he looked a certain winner—until he came to the greasy pole. He got half-way across, and then overbalanced, to the dismay of the Greyfriars supporters.

Tommy Towers was following up behind, and he managed to cross the pole at the first time of asking. He was challenged near the finish by Vernon-Smith, who had gained ground rapidly. But Tommy Towers put in a brilliant spurt at the finish, and he won the obstacle race by a bare yard.

"We've fallen behind again," said Bob Cherry. "Never mind! We'll make amends in the mile."

The mile was the stiffest race of all, and it was also the most exciting.

There were a dozen runners—six scouts and six Greyfriars fellows. And they got off the mark in great style when Wingate discharged the pistol.

Jimmy Brown was the first to take the lead. And his partisans urged him on with shouts of encouragement. Not that he needed much urging. He was speeding along like a hare, and not even the fleetest of the Greyfriars runners could catch him.

"Jimmy!"

"Go it, Jimmy!"

"You've got 'em groggy!"

And in response to these cries came shouts of:

"Buck up, Greyfriars!"

"Put your beef into it!"

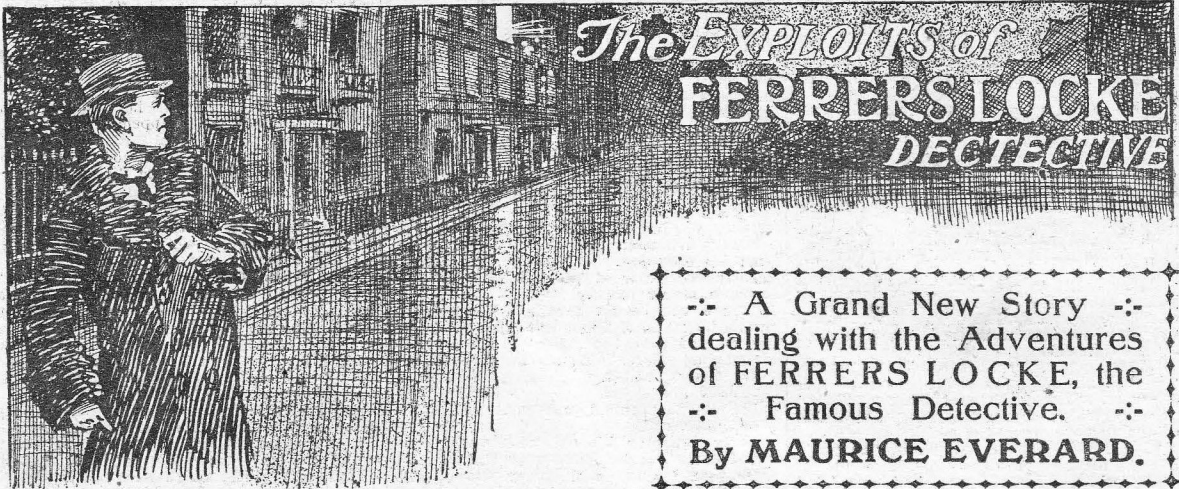
The course was three times round the camp. And when he was within ten yards of the tape, with the other runners far behind, Jimmy Brown suddenly threw up his hands and pitched forward in the grass. He was "done."

He sat up, dazed by the din and the shouting. He realised that only a trifling distance of ten yards lay between him and victory.

(Continued on page 10.)

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 82.

A THRILLING NEW STORY OF A FAMOUS DETECTIVE.



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Famous Detective.
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Locke is Faced with an Alarming Mystery.

HALF-PAST seven o'clock on a black February night. A striking-looking man hurrying out of a main-line station stopped opposite the post-office, and for a moment watched the tide of human traffic flowing ceaselessly to restaurant and theatreland. For him the day's work was never done. Every hour brought work to Ferrers Locke, the detective. Yet, just back from a case in Paris, he hoped to-night might bring respite and rest. During the few moments that he stood waiting for a taxi to draw up more than one curious passer-by turned to look at the arresting figure, already famous among the people of two continents.

Arrived at his flat in Maida Vale, he mounted two flights of stairs to his suite of apartments. Throwing his soft-felt hat and fur-lined coat on to a chesterfield, he switched on the lights and passed into an inner room.

Everything was in perfect order, the fire made up and free from untidiness; not a sign of litter anywhere. A small pile of letters lay on the flap of his desk. Tobacco-jar, pipes, and several boxes of cigarettes showed his devotion to nicotine.

He took the pile of letters and bent over them. It was now as he stooped that one became aware of the bearing of the man; tall and big, with a soldierly alertness that belied the curious, half-somnolent light in the deep-set eyes searching the envelopes.

They might be interesting him but little, yet of every one he noticed the postmark, the date of posting, and read in each separate handwriting the character of the person who had penned it.

In all there were seventeen. Sixteen he put on one side, one alone he balanced thoughtfully on his fingers. The jerkiness of the superscription, the broken characters, and the slurred letters told of the writer's nervousness and unnatural haste.

"More work!" he laughed shortly, turning the envelope over and observing the richness of the paper. He swung round in his revolving-chair towards the fire.

This was what he read:

"20, Baysdown Road, Regent's Park,
February, 13th, 19—

"Dear Sir,—I need not apologise for troubling you, because I want your assistance. It is a case of life or death—my death, unless you can help me and save me. Let me say straight away that money is no object. My signature below speaks for itself.

"You may know of me as a wealthy man. I must tell you my story to make sure you will take up my case.

"Ten years ago I was an impoverished director of a diamond-mine near Kimberley. Six years later found me a multi-millionaire. My wealth has brought me no happiness. I have ruined my life by killing a man in self-defence. It does not matter now what was the nature of the quarrel between Boris Stephanoff and me. But, as a result of that quarrel Boris Stephanoff met his death in Jeffersburg, South Africa, two years ago.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 82.

From that day his brother, Ivan Stephanoff, has been out on the blood trail after me. He is determined to take my life in revenge for his brother's."

Locke turned back the letter and read the first part again. After a moment he went on:

"Ivan Stephanoff's one-time friendship for me turned in a moment of time to fierce, insensate hate—hate that has followed me across the world.

"I have fled before it appalled, but my end is sealed. Stephanoff will never rest until the debt of blood is wiped out, till my life has atoned for his brother's. He has sworn to kill me, and since he made his vow my life has been a living hell. I cannot tell you where I have been to escape his vengeance, for he has dogged me ceaselessly. Terror seized me. I fled. Neither money nor the law has availed. He follows on my trail, tracking me to a doom which grows in horror because of its relentless certainty. Any hour, any minute, we may come face to face. A dagger-thrust, a pistol-shot, may have reached me even before you read these lines. Three months ago, in Moorsheadabad, he attempted to poison me. I escaped, and left for Europe. Until four weeks ago, I neither saw nor heard of him. I had hopes he was dead. Then one night—to be exact, on Wednesday, January 14th last—at a masked ball in Vienna, he shot at me, but missed, and took to flight. Then he traced me to Brussels, where he made yet another attempt, but again failed. In fear I fled to London, but he has found me once more.

"Strange indeed for a man to confess it, but my existence has become a hideous nightmare, a monster of horror gnawing into my brain, and growing. When and how will it end?

"I am distraught, distracted from fear. I write to you. The very effort consoles me, for I believe you alone can help. And yet—Good Heaven, the fear comes upon me now! He may be in this room even as I sit here. My brain reels. I feel his fingers on my throat choking me. Bah! I am a coward, nothing more. You will understand. I beg of you, come at once. Every moment adds to my fear of death.

"MARCUS HANNAFORD."

Deliberately Locke folded up the extravagant letter, placed it in his pocket-book, and glanced at the timepiece on the mantel.

The hands of the lantern clock pointed to twenty minutes to nine when he picked up his hat and stick and passed into the outer room.

He scribbled a few directions to his assistant, Baker, and hurried down the stairs. Twenty odd minutes later he turned into Baysdown Road. The night was black and blustering, no vestige of stars or moon, but there was a biting wind that drove passers-by hurriedly to the warmth and shelter of their homes.

Curiously the detective glanced at the houses along one side, big places with a suggestion of comfort and luxury behind the somewhat faded exteriors. He continued the

task of scanning the numbers, rapidly approaching the one he sought.

The wind lulled an ominous hush that made itself felt. Then whip-like came the sharp crack of a pistol-shot. A swelling volume of sound died away to the tinkle of glass. It was so unexpected that for the moment location seemed impossible, but a subconscious sense of direction urged Locke on, till he found himself standing immediately below a bullet-shattered window. There was a light in the room above. No hurrying feet disturbed the silence. The number on the fanlight over the door was 20.

The detective sped upstairs, his mind on Hannaford. The thin fingers gripped an automatic pistol. Both the stairway and the landing were fairly lighted, and, hastening along the latter, he took in the fact of a half-open door on the right, apparently a bedroom in darkness, and another, through which shone rose-red rays, open at the far end. The former he instinctively drew to, turned the key in the lock, and sped on down the corridor.

"That's the room," he conjectured—"the one at the end."

His footsteps were noiseless on the rich carpet, and his eyes fixed on the open door. By the time he reached it the black tube glinted in his hand.

For an instant he stood on the threshold, his face grim and pale, his eyes narrowing.

Horribly distinct in the warm light a human form lay, stretched face downwards on the floor. A bluish hole in the temple stood out horribly dark against the marbled skin; a trickle of blood gathered in a quickly wandering patch in the thick pile of the carpet.

One hand, nervously twitching, still grasped a smoking pistol, while on the far side of the room by the window a second weapon lay, a tiny spiral of smoke fast vanishing, and dominating the tragedy, a tall young man, his back turned to the detective as he bent over the slain man.

Seconds only had passed since the firing of the shot; one act in the drama was done. The certain had fallen, and now rose on the next.

"Drop your hands to your sides, straighten up, and face me!"

A resolute threat, a quiet compelling in its unexpectedness and swift deliberation. At Locke's command the stooping figure straightened out and swung round with a gasp of terror.

"He's dead!" he cried. "Stone dead!"

The hard lines about Locke's mouth did not soften.

"I am sorry," he said coldly. "but it is my duty to keep you here until the police arrive."

At mention of the police the young man moved towards him, placing a trembling hand on the detective's arm.

"The police! No, for the love of Heaven, not the police! You don't think I—I committed this murder? You don't suspect me—and you won't hand me over to the police?"

His words were spoken at a rapid rate with extraordinary earnestness, and as he saw the stern look in Locke's grey eyes he shrank back.

Locke sighed, but shook his head. "I am a private detective, and, not being a police-officer, have really no authority for questioning you as to whether you are innocent or guilty. All the same, my duty is plain."

While he spoke he was bending over the still form stretched out full in the light of the electric chandelier.

"Dead!" he repeated, and looked up to find the young man's eyes fixed on him in terror. Locke thought he was going to faint.

"Half a minute! You mustn't go off like that!" he cried, putting down the pistol. He sprang up just in time to catch him. "Sit there a moment. I'll get you some water."

"No, no! I want nothing—only to go! You suspect me—think I am guilty of shooting that man. I swear I've done no wrong! If only you would let me go—let me leave now before it is too late! Later—yes, tomorrow—I would come and tell you everything, and prove to you I am innocent!"

"I can do nothing," the detective said doggedly. "Murder has clearly been done. Scotland Yard must be told. You must sit here!"

He went to the telephone and was about to lift up the receiver. In a flash the youth's hand reached out and snatched up the detective's revolver.

"If you ring that bell," he cried, darting to the door, putting his back against it, and pointing the weapon to his forehead, "I shall kill myself!"

Who Fired the Fatal Shot?

LOCKE remained motionless, the telephone-receiver poised in his hand, half-raised to his ear. His steely glance took in the other's resolution.

"Put that pistol down!" he said sternly. He eyed Locke defiantly, all fear gone in a moment of desperation.

"I won't! If you mean to give me into custody, I shall shoot myself!"

"Then the obvious conclusion would be that you killed this man."

"I didn't do it!" His voice rose angrily. "For the last time, will you believe me and let me go?"

The grimness in Locke's face melted. "I can't let you go—just yet, at any rate. But I do believe you, because by your own action you have turned the suspicion of guilt away from you. Put down the pistol! If you tried, you couldn't fire it; the trigger is fixed by safety-lock. I left it on the table purposely, knowing, if you had done this thing, your first and natural impulse as soon as my back was turned would be to snatch up that weapon, shoot me, and escape. All the same, you are in a desperate plight!"

He put the pistol down. "I shall never forget your kindness," he whispered. "You will let me go now?"

Locke was busy taking in the details of the tragedy.

"For your own sake, I daren't," he replied. "Murder has been done. This poor fellow has been shot. You are found in the room bending over him, even before the life is out of his body. The weapon with which the fatal shot was fired lay close to your hand. What else will your going look like but guilty flight?"

The other came and stood by him as he bent over the dead man.

"But you believe me innocent? If I am arrested, how can I clear myself?"

The detective looked up.

"Frankly, I see no way at present. That is why I don't want you to take any step which might fix this crime more firmly upon you. It is only a matter of moments before the murder must be made known to the police. If you go now, the conclusion is obvious. Before twenty-four hours were gone you would be arrested."

"Is there nothing I can do?"

"Nothing, except give such reason for your being here as shall gain you the benefit of the doubt in this terrible affair. Tell me your name."

"John Hay."

"Why did you come here to-night?" He flung the question at him, all the time making swift notes and sketches of the scene of the tragedy. Every word he uttered, too, went down, though Hay could not have guessed it by the way his keen eyes took in everything.

"Please, don't ask me. I couldn't possibly tell you," he replied miserably. "There are

some things a fellow can't tell, even to save his own life."

The man was submerged in the detective.

"Maybe," he cut in shortly, "but I am trying to help you out of your predicament. Will you be frank with me? I daren't let any more time slip by."

He walked to the door, unlocked it, and picked up the telephone.

"The way to the street is open, Hay. If you are guiltless, for the belief and hope I have in your innocence, I warn you not to go."

Between them lay the dead body of Marcus Hannaford, his face greying visibly as the red stain widened on the carpet.

"You are doing your best to help me. I shall never forget. Is there nothing I can do?" he said again.

"Nothing but to tell the truth and face the consequences. You are innocent, you say. What are the consequences to an innocent man?"

"I'm not thinking of myself—" he began, but broke off swiftly.

"Ah, I see!"

forced him into the chair by the desk on which the telephone stood. Then he put his cryptic notes into Hay's hands.

"Appear busy writing, and don't say a word," he whispered, and straightened up just as a man in a dressing-gown appeared in the doorway.

"Is the trouble here?" he asked. "Good heavens, man, what's happened?" his glance resting on the rigid form.

"Murder, I fear. Will you help me by fetching a policeman? I am Ferrers Locke."

"Locke, the detective?"

"Yes. I am telephoning to Scotland Yard." He picked up the instrument. "If you will fetch a constable I will keep watch here."

The stranger smothered an oath.

"A devilish nuisance, this sort of thing!" he muttered selfishly. "My name's Donaldson. I occupy the flat over this. When the pistol went off I was in bed on doctor's orders, but hearing voices, I dressed and came down."

Locke caught the sudden pallor that mounted into John Hay's cheeks.



Ferrers Locke went to the telephone, and was about to lift up the receiver. "If you ring," cried the youth, darting to the door and putting his back against it, "I shall kill myself!" (See this page.)

At last Locke had found the clue to his terror. He was trying to shield someone.

"Was anyone else beside you here when the murder was committed?"

Hay's eyes flashed with unshakable resolution.

"I heard the shot fired, that is all. When I came into the room Hannaford was lying on his face. I saw no one."

"No one passed you on the stairs?"

"You would have seen if they had. You must have come up the stairs almost on my heels."

Locke nodded.

"That is true. I was only a few yards from the front door when the pistol went off. I saw no one come out." His manner became more grave. "That is the awkward part for you. Clearly, it will be asked, if you didn't murder this man, who did?"

"We are going in circles. What do you propose doing?" he asked resignedly.

For answer Locke held up a warning hand.

"Hark! I fear the matter will be taken out of my hands."

On the floor above a door slammed, and slippers feet descended the stairs.

Locke seized the young fellow's arm and

"Well, Mr. Donaldson, I'm sure the police will trouble you as little as possible. You might, however, remember exactly the time when you heard the report of the pistol. Your evidence will be valuable. And a policeman, if you please!"

He spoke into the telephone just as the door closed.

"Hallo, Scotland Yard! Is that Scotland Yard? Thank you! I want to speak to Sir Kenneth Moseley. Ferrers Locke speaking." After a moment's silence: "Is that you, Sir Kenneth?"

Hay stiffened as Locke briefly told of his discovery. Seconds ticked by, and still no mention of him. Was the detective indeed going to leave him out—to shield him perhaps at the risk of his own reputation?

He rose, and while he still held the instrument, laid his hand on his wrist.

"You must not, Mr. Locke—you must not keep my name back any longer," he whispered.

Locke stared, amazed.

A few moments ago he dreaded facing the police. Now for his sake he was offering voluntarily to surrender himself. Still, he

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continued his hurried recital of the discovery, but Hay's name did not figure in it.

When he put the instrument down John Hay faced him resolutely.

"Though I threw myself on your mercy and begged your help, I didn't ask you to imperil yourself. You are trying to hide up my part in this affair because you are sorry for me."

"And what of that?" he asked quickly. "You have convinced me, I hardly know how, of your innocence. If I can save you, I shall do so."

"You are very generous."

"I feel for you," he said. "The rest is my affair, not yours. Mr. Hay"—his voice fell to a low whisper—"I don't deny there is danger for both of us in what I am about to do, but I see no other hope of your winning free. The constable is coming. In ten minutes half the detective force of Scotland Yard will be here. You must say nothing, except that I sent you here with a message to Marcus Hannaford, telling him I would call on him without fail to-night. You came and discovered him dead only a few seconds before I arrived; in fact, I was close behind you as you came up the stairs."

"Which is the truth!" Hay exclaimed fervently. "What else?"

"No time now to explain; leave everything in my hands. Do you write shorthand? Good! Then take down what I dictate."

He resumed his examination of the place, dictating the while: "Fatal shot fired at three minutes past nine. Murdered man's and assassin's revolvers both discharged practically simultaneously, as only one report heard. When we arrived on scene of crime murderer"—Hay's hand trembled as he wrote the last word, and the pencil slipped from his fingers, but Locke went inexorably on—"had made good his escape. Position of body, face downwards on the carpet, eight feet from desk, head towards open door of inner apartment, a bed-room, the passage door of which was open when I arrived, but locked by me as I went by. As no one passed us on stairs, assassin could not have escaped that way—Ah, constable, I'm glad you've come. A crime has been committed only a few moments ago. You've seen no suspicious characters about, I suppose?"

"None, sir," replied the policeman, as he entered the room. "Baysdown Road is on my beat. I was just patrolling it when this gentleman here"—pointing to Donaldson—"fetched me along. Have you notified the Yard, Mr. Locke?"

"Certainly! Don't touch either weapon until Sir Kenneth arrives."

Police-constable Thwaitely stood aside, making notes and talking in a low voice to Mr. Donaldson about the terrible nature of the affair.

Hay, in the intervals when Locke did not throw a word at him, watched in amaze the coolness with which the detective went about his work. His eyes and hands were everywhere, subjecting to the closest scrutiny the waste-paper basket—unnoticed by Thwaitely—and even the long-dead ashes in the grate.

The Rival Detectives.

AT twenty-seven minutes past nine the Assistant Commissioner of Police himself was on the scene, accompanied, among others, by Detective-Inspector Barkleigh Fox, an astute officer whom Locke had had as rival in many a puzzling case.

Sir Kenneth Moseley, grim and alert, shook Locke by the hand. Barkleigh Fox merely inclined his sleek dark head in formal recognition.

Sir Kenneth remained near the door, eyeing everything. Locke gave him a minute to finish his survey, and dictated a few broken sentences to Hay. The tension was terrible. So far neither of the newcomers appeared to take the slightest notice of the younger man's presence.

The Commissioner was the first to speak.

"Well, Locke, what do you make of it?" he asked tensely. "And who was the first on the scene of the crime?" surveying Police-constable Thwaitely narrowly.

"My secretary, Sir Kenneth, a fraction of a second before me," Locke responded briskly. "Had I arrived half an hour earlier the tragedy might have been averted. Read that!"

He put Marcus Hannaford's letter into the other's hand.

"H'm! A vengeance trail, I see. Any trace of this fellow Stephanoff?"

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"Not the slightest. He has vanished utterly!"

Sir Kenneth scribbled something on a slip of paper which he handed to one of his men, who disappeared with it.

"When did you receive this letter—Marcus Hannaford's request for your help and protection?"

"It arrived at my flat yesterday morning. I got it to-night on my return from Paris. Not taking the matter quite so seriously as poor Hannaford did, and being at the moment engaged, I despatched Mr. Hay here with a message to the effect that I would call on Mr. Hannaford later in the evening. I got here much sooner than I expected—a few yards behind Mr. Hay, in fact, who heard the shot fired when he was ascending the first flight of stairs."

Barkleigh Fox was on hands and knees, noting the bore of the pistol that lay near the door separating the two rooms.

"You must have heard two shots fired, Locke. Hannaford's weapon and this small one have both been discharged."

"I heard only one. You, too, heard only one, Hay, didn't you?"

Hay strove hard to appear collected, but the consciousness of Detective Fox's small dark eyes fixed on him proved very disconcerting.

"I heard only one, Mr. Locke," he said, putting down the notebook and facing the two men squarely.

Sir Kenneth looked puzzled.

"That pistol over there"—pointing to the bed-room door—"what do you make of it?"

Locke smiled grimly.

"I am not inclined to give any opinion yet, Sir Kenneth, except that undoubtedly the fatal shot was fired from it. Mr. Hannaford still holds a pistol with an unusually big bore. The bullet which killed him was shot from a small-calibre weapon. I imagine, when the autopsy comes, the bullet in his head will be found to coincide with similar bullets in the undischarged chambers of the smaller revolver lying near the broken window."

"What was the state of affairs, Locke, when you and—er—your secretary"—the Commissioner seemed to linger somewhat curiously on the word "secretary"—"entered the room?"

"Both weapons were still smoking, showing that each had been discharged less than a minute before we saw them."

"Have you ever noticed how long smoke will hang about the muzzle of a discharged revolver?"

"Yes. In still atmosphere from twenty-seven to thirty-eight or thirty-nine seconds. I have seen a pistol-barrel smoke fifty seconds after being discharged, but that was in an absolutely shut-up room."

"What do you call this, then?" Fox interposed.

"The shot fired by Mr. Hannaford—I presume in self-defence, or subconsciously as he fell back with the murderer's bullet in his head—must have shattered the small window yonder. There would be a certain disturbance of the still air caused by the draught; consequently, the two weapons may have been discharged within twelve or fifteen seconds of our arrival."

"In which case the murderer can have had only a quarter of a minute's start of you."

Fox's tones were openly challenging.

"That is so," Locke admitted coolly. "But as no one passed me in the street or on the stairs, and as this gentleman, who lives on the floor above, informs me there is no back way out of these flats, I confess I am puzzled to know how and just when Ivan Stephanoff got away."

(There will be another grand instalment of this magnificent adventure serial next week. Tell all your friends about it.)

Are you reading
Michael Poole's Grand
School Stories of Dickie
Dexter & Co., at St. Katie's?

THEY ARE APPEARING
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Everyone is talking about them!

SCHOOLBOYS and SCOUTS!

(Continued from page 7.)

And then, with a herculean effort, he scrambled to his feet.

But that effort came too late.

A feet-footed figure came speeding past, and breasted the tape before Jimmy Brown had been able to struggle half-way across the intervening space.

And then a mighty rear went up.

"Hurrah!"

"Wharton's won!"

"Greyfriars for ever!"

Beaten by Jimmy Brown in the boxing contest, Harry Wharton had turned the tables on his rival in the mile race. He had run a well-judged race, and finished first.

Wingate of the Sixth consulted a list he held in his hand, and, as soon as he could make himself heard, he announced:

"The two sides are level, in the matter of points. The final event—the tug-of-war—will decide the issue!"

At this juncture Billy Bunter elbowed his way towards the rope which was being prepared in readiness.

The Owl of the Remove had taken no part in the sports hitherto. He was not an athlete. But his weight in a tug-of-war contest was invaluable; and Wharton wisely decided to include him in the Greyfriars side.

There were to be three pulls; but the contest did not start for at least ten minutes. Masters and prefects and judges had all their work cut out to keep the crowd back.

When at last the spectators were forced back out of range, the gruelling contest began.

Billy Bunter lay back on the rope, and pulled like a Trojan. And it was largely due to the fat junior's efforts that Greyfriars won the first pull.

Jimmy Brown rallied his men.

"If we lose the next pull, we're done!" he exclaimed.

The scouts threw heart and soul into the effort, and they had the satisfaction of hauling their opponents over the line.

And now came the final pull—the pull which was to decide the issue.

The fellows on both sides were on the verge of exhaustion. But they summoned all their strength for that last desperate effort.

Urged on by their respective supporters, they lay back and tugged with all their might.

Greyfriars gave ground for a foot or two, and it looked as if they would be beaten.

Billy Bunter's face resembled a boiled beetroot. He was fagged out, and he would probably have thrown up the sponge had not a voice close at hand exclaimed:

"There's a whole rabbit-pie for you if Greyfriars win, Bunty!"

The mention of a rabbit-pie stimulated Billy Bunter to fresh efforts. He tightened his grip on the rope and pulled tenaciously.

The rest of the Greyfriars team pulled hard at the same time, with one strong, concerted effort, which the scouts could not withstand.

And then, after a moment of tense, breathless anxiety, Jimmy Brown & Co. came sprawling over the line—baffled and beaten!

In the Greyfriars camp that evening a magnificent spread was held. Victors and vanquished sat down to it together.

The sports had proved very exciting and immensely popular, and Harry Wharton & Co. had triumphed over the scouts from the rival camp.

But it had been no walk-over. From start to finish it had been a stern, dour struggle. And Billy Bunter, who had lost Greyfriars the swimming race by diving off the pier at the wrong moment, had made ample amends in the tug-of-war.

Billy Bunter occupied the place of honour—of course! And his appetite was in excellent trim—of course!

It was a very merry gathering. And Harry Wharton & Co., elated though they were at their splendid success, did not forget to drink the health of Jimmy Brown and his fellow-scouts, who had proved themselves to be doughty rivals and sportsmen true!

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled, "GETTING QUITS WITH GREYFRIARS!" Make a joint of ordering your copy early!)

THE LUCK OF THE LEVISOONS!

A Short Complete Story of St. Jim's. : : By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Talisman.

"MANY happy returns of the day, Ernest!"

"Thanks, Franky, old man!"

Thus Frank Levison, of the Third Form at St. Jim's, greeted his elder brother Ernest, of the Fourth Form at the same ancient foundation, on the morning of the latter's birthday.

It was just after breakfast, and morning school would begin in about twenty minutes.

The brothers Levison strolled out into the old quadrangle in company, Ernest with several letters and packages in his hand.

"Got a good post—eh?" said his brother, with a grin. "I suppose there's a remittance from father there?"

Ernest turned over a small package about the size of an ordinary matchbox.

"This has come from father," he said, in a puzzled voice. "Blest if I can guess what it is! But there's a letter from him, too. Let's see what he says."

Levison major opened one of the letters, and scanned it. As he did so his expression became more puzzled still.

"Just listen to this!" he exclaimed, when he had finished it. "Blest if it doesn't beat the band!"

He began to read:

"Dear Ernest,—

"I am sending you a £1 note in honour of your birthday, with my love and best wishes. I am also sending, in another parcel, something which you will doubtless be surprised to get. It is an old Hebrew ring, set with a curiously-carved green stone, which came to light yesterday in a corner of the old bureau which belonged to your grandfather. I have not seen it for many years, but I remember being told the story of it. Our family used to call it "The Luck of the Levisons," and the story runs that if worn by the eldest son of our house it is a talisman that will bring him good fortune whenever he is in need of it. In various misfortunes which befel them, the family appear to have lost faith in the "luck," which was put away in the old bureau. But as it happened to turn up yesterday, I thought I would send it to you, as the eldest son of the house. You might give its luck-bringing qualities another trial. My love to Franky and yourself.

YOUR LOVING FATHER."

"My hat!" said Levison minor, as his brother finished reading this missive. "That's a corker, if you like! Let's look at the ring, Ernest!"

Levison major unwrapped the parcel, and the brothers looked curiously at the ring it contained.

The ring itself was a narrow silver band, and the curious green stone with which it was set was quite small and delicately carved in a quaint old pattern.

Levison slipped it on to his finger.

"Well, I'll give it a trial, anyway, as the dad suggests," he said, with a laugh. "I'll slip it on when I want a bit of extra luck."

"What'll the fellows say about it, I wonder?" said Levison minor musingly.

"Better not say anything about it," said Ernest. "The chaps would only chip me if they heard the story. We'll keep that a secret. I shan't wear the ring all the time, of course—just slip it on when I think it might do some good. Probably no one will notice it. Chaps at St. Jim's aren't supposed to wear rings, of course."

"Well, let me know what happens when you give it a trial," said Frank. "If there's anything in it—"

"If there's anything in it we'll have some fun," said Ernest, with a grin. "Why, with a real talisman I might do anything, even"—his brow clouded for a moment—"even get back to Greyfriars!"

Frank Levison was silent. In the past his brother Ernest had been a member of the Fourth Form at Greyfriars School; but he was very wild in those days, and his behaviour had led to his being removed from the school. He was lucky enough to get into St. Jim's, where he was very happy. But

his dearest wish since his reformation was to get back to Greyfriars before his school days were over, and wipe out the disgrace which clouded his name there.

"Well, it's time for lessons, nearly," said Levison minor, after a pause. "What are you doing this afternoon?"

"Cricket," said Ernest. "Tom Merry is trying me in the team for the School House against the New House. It's jolly decent of him, as I have been badly off my form lately. I'm going to play up like anything. If I don't do well I sha'n't get another chance of playing in the team this season. I know that. Besides, Doris is coming over this afternoon—at least, she says in her letter she will cycle over if she can get permission."

"Oh, good! I can look after her while you're playing," said Frank. "Hallo, there's the bell! I must buzz off, or old Selby'll give it to me hot."

He dashed off to morning school, and Ernest, taking off the ring and thrusting it into his waistcoat-pocket, went into class in a thoughtful mood.

What between thinking of the curious ring and of his sister Doris, Levison's morning almost ended in disaster. But upon mild little Mr. Lathom threatening to detain him for the whole afternoon if he showed any further sign of inattention to his lessons Levison managed to pull himself together and emerge from the ordeal without further damage than an imposition of fifty lines.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Levison's Luck,

"FEELING fit, Levison?"

Thus Tom Merry, the cheery captain of the School House team, as Levison came out of the Fourth Form dormitory after dinner in his flannels.

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Levison. "I'm going to play up this afternoon, I can tell you, Tom Merry! We shall beat them!"

"Good man! I hope we shall!" said Tom Merry. "But Figgins has got a jolly good team together, you know. It's Fatty Wynn's bowling I am afraid of. If our chaps can only stand up to that, we shall beat them!"

Levison nodded thoughtfully. Fatty Wynn, the stout Welsh member of the famous New House Co., was a demon bowler, and when he was in form there were few junior batsmen who could stand up to him with much hope of success. And he was known to be in great form just at present. Figgins & Co. were openly looking forward to seeing their fat chum "make hay" of the School House wickets in this afternoon's match. Levison knew that Tom Merry's evident doubts were only too likely to be justified. If only he, Levison, could make a really good stand against the demon Welshman! Levison knew that if he could, he would be hailed as the hero of the match, and his position in the School House junior team would be assured for the rest of the season. His lips tightened as he went into his study to get his bat and pads. He was quite determined that, if he failed, it would not be for lack of trying.

Cardew, his study-mate, looked up as he entered.

"Good luck, old man! You'll have to play up this afternoon."

"I mean to!" said Levison grimly.

He made his way down to the pavilion on the junior ground, where the cricketers were gathered. Figgins & Co. were in high spirits, and the New House were quite evidently anticipating a victory.

"Your men all here?" asked Figgins of Tom Merry. "May as well get on with the washing."

Tom Merry glanced round.

"Reilly's not here, but he will be in a minute. Let's toss for innings."

"No hurry, I suppose, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn casually. "It's only twenty-five past two. I just want to—to—"

"To what?" said Figgins grimly.

"Well, to—to run over to the tuckshop!" said Fatty Wynn defiantly. "I'm hungry!"

"Rats!" said Figgins firmly. "Let me catch you going over to the tuckshop, my fat puppin! You've got to bowl this afternoon—and bowl like an angel!"

"But I tell you I'm hungry!" said Fatty Wynn piteously. "You wouldn't let me have any more pudding at dinner, you know. I can bowl better if I have a snack—"

"No fear!" said Figgins, drawing his arm through his fat chum's. "No stuffing till we've beaten these School House bouncers! Then we'll have a jolly good feed!"

"Oh, really, Figgy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Heads or tails?" said Tom Merry, with a grin.

"Tails!"

The coin spun, and fell to the grass.

"Tails it is!" said Tom. "What are you going to do?"

"We'll bat first!" said Figgins.

"Right-ho! Out you come, chaps!"

And the School House cricketers trooped on to the field.

Tom Merry took the first over. Redfern and Kerr were the first men in for the New House, Kerr taking the bowling first.

The runs came merrily, Kerr especially showing great form. Tom Merry at one end and Dick Brooke at the other sent down their best deliveries, but twenty runs were scored before either batsman gave a chance.

Then Kerr, playing forward, misjudged the pace of a ball from Tom Merry. The ball shot up in the air towards cover-point. Cover-point was Ernest Levison. Burning to distinguish himself, he dashed forward too eagerly. Over-running the ball, he clutched at it, caught it, and promptly dropped it again.

There were shouts from the ropes—groans from the School House, and cheers from the New House.

Levison turned crimson with mortification. He caught a very expressive look from Tom Merry, but the junior skipper did not utter a word of reproach. He could see that it was through over-eagerness that the fieldsman had failed.

After this let-off Kerr went on scoring freely. Redfern was dismissed at last, with 17 to his credit. Figgins, the next batsman, made another stand, but was finally caught in the slips by D'Arcy for 21. By this time Kerr had made 30, and the New House score stood at 70 for two wickets. Their supporters were in high feather.

Tom Merry, who had made several changes in the bowling, took the ball again himself, looking very determined. This would not do at all. He proceeded to send down a deadly over, in the course of which two New House wickets fell. Things began to look better. Noble, the Australian junior bowled "googlies" from the other end, which puzzled the batsmen mightily, only Kerr being able to score off them. The hundred went up just before the seventh wicket fell. The next batsman added 5, before Noble bowled him. Owen then joined Kerr, and they took the score to 125 before Owen was caught in the long field by Monty Lowther. Koumi Rao, the Indian junior, was last man in, and kept his wicket up until Kerr, running out to hit, was smartly stumped. The total New House score was 145, of which Kerr had made 76 off his own bat. He received a great ovation from the New House supporters.

As they walked in from the field, Levison approached Tom Merry.

"Awfully sorry about that catch!" he muttered.

"Couldn't be helped!" said Tom, as cheerily as he could. "It was an expensive mistake, as it happened, but you were over-keen, that's all. We shall have our work out to beat their score against the bowling of Fatty Wynn and Koumi Rao, I'm thinking!"

"Who's going in first?" said Levison, after a pause.

"Blake and Noble. How do you feel about batting? I was thinking of putting you in about half-way down the list."

Levison was silent a moment. He put his

hand into his pocket, and felt there the ring he had received that morning. "The Luck of the Levisons."

"Why not try it now?"
"Look here, Tom Merry!" he blurted out, flushing. "Will you let me go in first with Noble?"

Tom Merry looked at him in some surprise. He noted keenly Levison's flushed face and his air of suppressed excitement. And Levison was such a cool fellow as a rule.

"I suppose you have a special reason for asking this, Levison?" he said quietly.

"Yes. I—I can't tell you just what it is, but I feel—"

"Right," said Tom coolly. "You can open the innings with Noble."

"Thanks!" gasped Levison.

Tom looked at him curiously as he hurried off to a shady corner of the ground, where his sister Doris was sitting with Frank Levison and Cardew. The junior skipper did not regret the impulse that had led him to accede to Levison's unusual request. He could see that Levison had something on his mind, and above all was anxious to distinguish himself in the match. And unless someone on the School House side played a quite exceptionally good innings, Tom knew that the New House would win. Fatty Wynn and Kouni Rao were, when in form, the most deadly pair of junior bowlers at St. Jim's. Some members of his team, Tom decided, would have to play the innings of their lives if the School House were to win. It was just as likely to be Levison as another. Anyway, he had given him his chance. And it was not long before Tom Merry was thanking his lucky stars that he had done so.

After a chat with his sister, Ernest Levison hurried to the pavilion and donned his pads. There was some surprise in the team when it was known that he was going in first.

"What's the game, Tommy?" inquired Jack Blake jocularly. "Levison been lending you money, or what?"

"Who's skipper of this team?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Oh, all right! What's the betting he gets out first ball?"

Levison heard, and looked grim. He slipped on his batting-gloves, which quite concealed the ring from view. Then he walked to the wicket with Noble.

Noble was one of the best junior bats at St. Jim's, and had made some very fine scores this season. But to-day he obviously was not comfortable with the bowling. Both the bowlers were making the ball swerve and break in a way that would puzzle any batsman. Noble appeared nervous, and was soon in difficulties. Levison, to everyone's surprise, seemed quite at his ease. He was perfectly cool and collected, and batted with confidence.

Noble was clean bowled when he had made 5. Jack Blake followed him in—and out again. D'Arcy and Lowther and Manners and Reilly failed to stop the rot. But Levison was batting magnificently. After the sixth wicket went down Tom Merry came in. He walked straight up to Levison.

"I'm going to try and stay here while you get the runs, Levison," he whispered. "I sha'n't try to score—I can see that you are on the ball, so I'm going to leave it to you."

Levison nodded.

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry was as good as his word. He kept his bat down, and refused to hit out at even the most tempting balls. Levison, on the other hand, hit out at everything. It was an amazing partnership—perhaps the most amazing that had ever been seen on the junior cricket-ground at St. Jim's.

Levison, as Jack Blake put it, was batting like an angel. No bowling came amiss to him, and Fatty Wynn exhausted all his wiles in vain against him. The score mounted up and up, and just before six-thirty, Levison made the winning hit—a boundary—which brought the School House score to 147!

Levison had scored 120 of these off his own bat. The School House had won by four wickets and two runs.

The ovation that Levison received from the enthusiastic School House juniors was a record one. Even the New House fellows were constrained to cheer him. He was carried shoulder-high to the pavilion, and again all the way to the School House. He finally escaped, much ruffled, from the hands of his admirers, and was able to join his brother and sister.

(Continued at foot of Col. 2.)

THE PENNY POPULAR—No. 82.

A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASSED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, "THE PENNY POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

FOR NEXT WEEK:

Our programme of splendid stories for next Friday includes:

"GETTING QUITS WITH GREYFRIARS!"

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Another splendid complete story of the rivalry between the rival campers, Harry Wharton & Co. and Jimmy Brown & Co., in which the latter makes a supreme effort to "down" their friends the enemy. You will enjoy this splendid holiday story.

The second instalment of our powerful new detective serial.

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"JIMMY SILVER & CO.'S VISITOR!"

By Owen Conquest.

A grand story of the Rookwood Chums, and of the exasperating experiences which result from their efforts to entertain an uninvited guest.

PRAISE FOR THE AUTHOR.

It is not every author who gets complimented. I am glad to see, though, that the readers who appreciate the stories of Mr. Michael Poole are legion. Letters about his work reach me by every post. Mr. Poole is one of the old, experienced hands at the game, and the other night he told me some of his adventures in Italy when he was with the Army.

Mr. Poole's account of his travels in out-of-the-way parts of the boot-heel kingdom was most interesting. You may understand something about the beautiful Italian language, but that little knowledge is not much help in country districts where the inhabitants have a jolly language of their own. There is something very quaint and original, too, about the local train in Italy. It does pretty much as it likes, and it is often so small that you can lose it in a double sense, for, as likely as not, you overlook it altogether if the vegetation is dense.

CARDEW'S CRITICS.

Since Ralph Reckness Cardew came to the Fourth at St. Jim's the clever fellow has caused any amount of interest. You either like Cardew, or you do the other thing. There is no half-way house. Some readers abuse him up hill and down dale. They consider him a snob and an ass. But, at any

Doris Levison greeted him with a proud smile.

"It was splendid, Ernest!" she said. "Just wonderful! And how your schoolfellows cheered you! You're the hero of the hour!"

"Hero! I should just think he is!" exclaimed Frank, clapping his brother on the back. "Good old Ernie! A hundred and twenty, not out, against the best junior bowling at St. Jim's! How ever did you do it, old chap?"

"Have you forgotten!" whispered Ernest. "I tried it this afternoon for the first time!"

"Tried it?" repeated Frank Levison, puzzled. "Yes—'The Luck of the Levisons!' It was that that did it!"

THE END.

rate, though Cardew may be an ass, he is not a silly ass. He shows brain, even when he seems most frivolous, and, as a matter of fact, he offers a type of English character which is not nearly as rare as is made out. Cardew's "sarc" is pungent, and his sense of humour often enough provokes bad feeling, for there are many who cannot take a joke against themselves; they are bad losers, and, therefore, poor sportsmen, and these victims attack the grandson of Lord Reckness with blunt ferocity quite unjustified. Cardew is by way of regarding the world from a lofty standpoint. But he has shown genuine feeling when wanted. He is far more interesting than scores of fellows, not so much because he is haughtily contemptuous of any display of feeling—most chaps are built that way—but for the reason that he is deeper. Cardew pretends to be languid and indifferent, but, actually, he is a thinker, and frequently he has shown the qualities of a statesman, young as he is. I was drawn into making these remarks because of a letter from Miss Joyce W. Gatland. She thinks highly of Cardew; also she has a special word for "Chat," and says, "Don't leave it out, will you?" I have no intention of doing so, but "Chat" is not really a feature of the paper—only just one of those extra things which sort of happen, being merely the accompaniment to the rest.

CARRY ON.

There is some considerable magic in the command. But a crowd of fellows fail to act up to it. They get fogged by the noise of the passing day. They are apt to forget in the confusion and the shouting that their job is just to carry on with their special duty. That is the one and only way to help set matters right. There is really no other known method. It is the fashion to exaggerate trouble and to go round shouting with the thoughtless, but it is a rotten system. Just carry on!

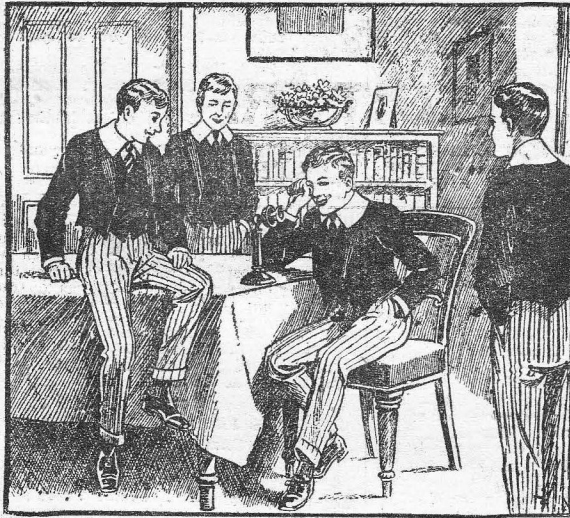
AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY.

A friend of mine, who, very wisely, has gone to live in the country, has made a discovery in the old house which he took in a remote part of Sussex. The place is an ancient farmhouse, and has been neglected for years. It has been done up, of course, and in the process many curious facts came to light. The building turns out to have a history. For long years it had been used as a farmhouse. The rooms were patched up, and so forth, but behind the plaster walls there was stonework, also fine carving, quaint old inglenooks, and traces of artistic finish, which have all been hidden for ages under rubbish. It is worth while taking a second look at some of the farmhouses in the southern counties. Often underneath the shabbiest and most tumbledown exterior you will come upon bits of a historic mansion, as in the case mentioned.

"THE SILENCE."

"The new serial in the 'Magnet,' 'The Silence,' is tres bon, but not understanding the meaning of this phrase, I will go further, and say it is weally wippin'!" Thus Gunner Will Pitt, who writes from Burscough, Lancs. Much obliged. "The Silence" is great, and treats of a subject which has a big fascination all its own. Pity everybody does not take a tip from the meaning title. A shade more silence—if silence runs in shades—would not be a bad thing. Lots of folks speak, and wish they had not!

Your Editor



THE ROOKWOOD PLOTTERS!

THE BULLY'S LESSON!

A SPLENDID, LONG, COMPLETE TALE, DEALING WITH THE ADVENTURES OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Uncle James Takes a Hand!

JONES MINOR of the Fourth was looking blue.

Judging by Jones minor's expression, most of the troubles in the world had settled suddenly upon the youthful shoulders of Jones.

Jimmy Silver, coming out of the end study with his bat under his arm that fine afternoon, paused as he saw Jones minor and his worried looks. Jimmy Silver was cheery as usual. Jimmy was generally the liveliest and cheeriest young gentleman within the walls of Rookwood School.

He gave Sidney Herbert Jones a playful dig in the ribs with the business end of the bat. "Keep smiling!" he said.

"Yow-wow! Fathead!" roared Jones.

"What's the trouble?"

"Yow-wow! You've jolly nearly punctured my ribs, you dufter!"

"Oh, never mind your ribs!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "I mean, what's the trouble generally? Are you understudying a moulting fowl, or is there something the matter? If there is, tell your Uncle James!"

Jones minor rubbed his ribs.

"It's that beast Beaumont," he said. "Beaumont of the Sixth, you know. I'm the beast's fag, you know. Br-r-r!"

"And he wants you to fag on a half-holiday?" said Jimmy sympathetically. "Such is life, dear boy! Keep smiling!"

"Tain't that, ass! I don't mind fagging for the beast, if you come to that. But Beaumont's uncle is coming to see him this afternoon—"

"Well, he doesn't want you to entertain his uncle, I suppose?" grinned Jimmy Silver. "I've heard of Beaumont's uncle—a tremendous big gun—Sir Somebody Something with half the alphabet after his name. Beaumont won't want you to talk to his uncle."

"Fathead! He wants an extra-special tea!" "Chance for you to show what a splendid fag you are!"

"Silly ass!" roared Jones. "That ain't the trouble. Beaumont's told me to get an extra-special feed ready for his uncle and him, and he hasn't given me any money!"

"Ask him for it, then!"

"I have, and he hit me with a cricket-stump!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've only got eightpence," said Jones minor lugubriously. "And I don't want to spend it on Beaumont. And it wouldn't be enough. Look here, I'm not going to stand it! Why should a chap go up and down the Fourth Form borrowing cash to stand a feed to a beastly Sixth-Former—what?"

"Oh!" said Jimmy Silver.

"And if there isn't a ripping tea I shall get skinned!" said Jones minor. "You know how that beast Beaumont goes for a chap—twists your arms, and that kind of thing. I've a jolly good mind to go to Mr. Bootles.

Only—only Beaumont's a prefect, and he's a fibbing beast, and he would deny it all, and I should have him down on me for ever and ever, and—and—"

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Leave Bootles out of it!" he said. "Sneaking won't do any good!"

"Well, what's a chap going to do?" exclaimed Jones minor warmly. "Beaumont's always up to some beastly Prussian dodge. I told my major in the Fifth, and he told me to go and eat coke!"

"No good bothering your major. Your major can't back up against a Sixth-Form prefect!"

"Well, it's rotten! I want my eighteenth-pence," said Jones minor. "And, besides, it ain't enough for Beaumont. The beast don't care where I get the tin. It will cost six bob at least for the kind of feed he wants, and if it isn't all right I shall get licked! Bulkeley would put the stopper on if I told Bulkeley, but he couldn't stop the beast twisting my arms every day for the rest of the term. What's a chap going to do—eh?"

Jimmy Silver reflected. He was due on the cricket-ground for practice; Lovell and Raby and Newcome were waiting for him there. But in his capacity as Uncle James to the Classical Fourth, Jimmy Silver felt that it was up to him to help Jones minor in his difficulty. Jimmy had a clear idea of the duties, as well as the rights, of captain of the Form.

"Something ought to be done," growled Jones minor. "It's too thick, you know. My belief is that Beaumont has lost all his tin bragging. I know jolly well he plays cards—I've seen 'em in his study, fagging there. Serve him jolly well right if I told about him!"

"And got licked for slandering a prefect, and cut by the Fourth for sneaking!" said Jimmy Silver. "Not much catch in that!"

"Well, I'm not going to stand it! You ought to do something—you're Form-captain, ain't you?" said Jones minor sulkily. Jimmy nodded.

"Keep smiling!" he said. "I'm going to take it in hand. Beaumont is a beast all round, and it's time he was called to order. Let's go and see him!"

And he led the way to the Sixth-Form corridor, followed very dubiously by Jones minor.

"Hallo, here you are!" exclaimed Lovell of the Fourth, coming up. "Why the dickens don't you come, Jimmy? We're waiting for you!"

"Can't come just yet! I've to see to Beaumont. The beast is sticking Jones for a tea, and I'm going to remonstratate with him and point out the error of his ways," explained Jimmy.

"You shrieking ass!" yelled Lovell.

"Beaumont'll skin you!"

"Can't be helped! Come on, Jones!"

Jimmy Silver marched on, leaving Lovell

staring. He tapped at Beaumont's door and marched in, followed by Jones, who looked as if he would rather have been anywhere else at that moment.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

N. G.!

BEAUMONT of the Sixth stared at the two juniors.

He was standing before the glass, arranging his tie. Arthur Beaumont was a good deal of a dandy, as well as a very great deal of a blackguard. And he was dressing very carefully to meet his distinguished uncle at the station. The prefect had great expectations from that uncle, and Sir Charles Beaumont was a guest whom he delighted to honour. Sir Charles was a somewhat crusty old gentleman; but if manipulated in the right way his visit might be worth a "fiver" to his dutiful nephew. And a fiver would have come in very handy to the sporting Sixth-Former, who had had what he called brutal luck with the geegees of late.

"What the dickens do you fags want?" Beaumont snapped, as he turned round from the glass.

"Just a little heart-to-heart talk, Beaumont," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "You want Jones to get your tea, I understand—something extra-special?"

"Yes; I've told Jones—nothing to do with you, Silver!"

"Yes; it's got a lot to do with me as captain of the Fourth and Uncle James generally!" explained Jimmy Silver coolly. "It seems that you've omitted to supply Jones with the necessary cash for getting the feed. Jones thinks he can do it on six bob."

Beaumont pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said laconically.

"I—I say, Silver—" murmured Jones uselessly.

Jimmy Silver stood his ground without turning a hair. The look on Beaumont's face, however, made him feel glad that he had his bat with him. He suspected that he would need that bat for self-defence before the interview was over.

"You see, Beaumont, it can't be did," said Jimmy calmly. "I can't see Jones imposed on in this way."

"What!"

"Jones is under my wing, you see. Now, Jones is ready to fag, but not to pay your expenses. I sha'n't allow him to do that."

"Why, you—you—"

"That's how the matter stands, Beaumont. If you're short of tin I'll lend you a few bob if it comes to that, on your I O U."

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Jones, in terror.

Beaumont strode to the table, and picked up a cane.

"So you've been complaining to Silver, Jones!" he said menacingly.

"Nunno! I—I—"

"Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, you ass, Silver!" groaned Jones minor. Jimmy Silver pushed Jones back. His eyes were glittering now.

"You can't come the prefect in a matter like this, Beaumont," he said quietly. "You're not going to cane Jones."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Jones is standing up for his rights—or I'm standing up for them for him," said Jimmy. "That's how the matter stands—yaroooooh!" Apparently the Sixth-Former was not willing to listen to reason. He made a sudden jump at Jimmy Silver, and the cane came down with a heavy lash.

Jimmy Silver roared.

Jones minor promptly dodged out of the study.

"You cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Beaumont. "Coming to my study and cheekin' me, by gad! I'll give you a lesson!" Lash, lash, lash!

Biff!

The cricket-bat crashed on Beaumont's chest, and the Sixth-Former staggered back. Jimmy Silver grasped the cane handle of the bat with both hands, and flourished it.

"Keep off, you rotter—"

"Groogh!"

"Hands off!"

Beaumont made a rush at him. The bat clumped fairly on his chest again. Jimmy Silver's fighting-blood was up. He was standing up for the rights of the Fourth, as Uncle James was bound to do. For Beaumont to use his authority as a prefect to back up his bullying was quite intolerable, according to Jimmy Silver's ideas.

Unfortunately, Beaumont had force on his side, and he was quite a Prussian in his opinions.

Jimmy Silver got in only one drive with the bat. It was a good drive, and it made Beaumont gasp. But then the powerful senior's grasp was upon him, and the bat was wrenched away and hurled into the passage. Then Beaumont's left hand closed on Jimmy's collar, whilst his right wielded the cane.

Swish, swish, swish!

Jimmy Silver roared and wriggled.

Lovell looked in at the door.

"Chuck that, Beaumont!" he shouted.

Lash, lash, lash!

Then a powerful twist of the senior's arm sent Jimmy Silver spinning into the passage, and he crashed into Arthur Edward Lovell, and sent him spinning. The chums of the Fourth rolled on the floor together.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Yow-woop!"

Beaumont glared at them from the doorway.

"Clear off, or I'll come out to you!" he shouted.

"Oh dear!"

"Yah!"

Beaumont strode out into the passage, gripping the cane. But Lovell and Jimmy Silver did not wait. They scrambled up and ran. There was no arguing with a prefect's cane at close quarters.

"Jones!" roared Beaumont.

Jones minor came in fear and trembling.

"Ye-es, Beaumont," he stammered.

"Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Wow-ow-ow!"

"Do you want any more?"

"Groogh! Nunno, please, Beaumont!"

"Is my tea going to be ready when I come in?"

"Ye-es—yes, certainly!"

Beaumont tossed the cane on the table.

"Mind it is!" he said. "I'll tan you if it isn't! Get out!"

Jones minor got out.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver is Mysterious!

"YOU'LL have to lend me six bob for Beaumont's tea!"

Thus said Sidney Herbert Jones as he came face to face with Jimmy Silver in the quadrangle. Jimmy Silver snorted.

"No jolly fear!" he said.

"But I shall have to get tea for the other," said Jones. "You must stand by a pal—"

Jimmy Silver held up his hand.

"Look here," he said. "You're not going to get tea for Beaumont on those terms!"

"You silly ass, haven't you had enough yet?" snorted Jones. "I've got to!"

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"You won't! I'll order a Form licking for you if you do," said Jimmy Silver sternly. "Beaumont is a Hun, and it's against the law to give in to a Hun. I've told you that if Beaumont didn't come to reason, I'd do your fagging for you this afternoon. You can leave it to me."

"Well, that's all very well," said Jones minor. "But if Beaumont ain't satisfied, I shall get the licking all the same."

"You can tell Beaumont I'm fagging for him," Tell him I've had a good remittance, too."

"I—I say that's jolly decent of you, Silver and—and I take back what I said about your being a howling idiot," said Jones minor repentantly. "And he went back into the House in much improved spirits."

Lovell and Raby and Newcome stared blankly at their leader.

"What the merry dickens are you driving at, Jimmy?" exclaimed Newcome. "You're not going to fag for Beaumont?"

Jimmy nodded.

"What about the cricket?"

"Cricket can stand over for once; it isn't a match, anyway. It's a question of standing up for the rights of the Fourth."

"How the thunder are you going to do that by fagging for Beaumont?" demanded Lovell.

"By the way I'm going to fag for him."

"Oh, I—I say, Beaumont is a rather dangerous beast to play larks on!" said Raby dubiously.

"So am I," said Jimmy Silver coolly. "But Beaumont has licked me. He's going to pay for that, and for being a rotten bully!"

"That's all very well; but—"

"Cave! Here comes the beast!" muttered Raby.

Beaumont of the Sixth came out of the School House, and he grinned as he came towards the Fistical Four. Jimmy Silver's wiggles seemed to amuse him. The captain of the Fourth had not got over the licking yet.

"Jones tells me you want to fag for me this afternoon, Silver."

"Yes, please, Beaumont," said Jimmy meekly.

"Well, I don't mind. Jones is a mucky little ass, anyway. Your licking seems to have done you good!" said the bully of the Sixth, laughing.

"Yes, lots, Beaumont, please."

Jimmy's chums stared at him. They could not understand him in the least.

"Well, I'm going out," said Beaumont. "I shall be out all the afternoon, but I shall get back with my uncle about five o'clock. You're to have tea ready at five sharp, and a good tea. I want something extra special!"

"Yes, Beaumont."

"If there isn't a first-class spread, what you've had is nothing to what you'll get," said Beaumont.

"I'll see that there's plenty," said Jimmy Silver, with Quaker-like meekness.

"Well, that's all right."

Beaumont walked on, smiling. He flattered himself that he knew how to deal with unruly fags, and that his dramatic measures had had a good effect upon Jimmy Silver.

When he had gone the Co. turned on Jimmy Silver furiously.

"What the dickens do you mean?" demanded Lovell. "Why, even Leggett wouldn't be such a meek-and-mild worm as you were with that bullying cad!"

"I'm going to fag for him, and I wanted him to agree to it."

"But look here—"

"I'm going to see that there's plenty for tea when he comes in with his uncle," said Jimmy.

"You silly ass! Is that what you've given up cricket for?"

"Yes."

"Then you're a silly owl, and we'll jolly well bump you!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly. "You're letting the end study down!"

"Fatehead!"

"Well, what's the little game, then? We want your remittance for our own tea, not for Beaumont's!"

"Oh, you're a duffer!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Can't you trust your Uncle James? My remittance is going to stay in my trousers pocket, so far as that cad is concerned. I'm going to have plenty of stuff in his study—more than he wants. I'm not going to pay for it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Beaumont has authorised me to get stuff

for his tea," said Jimmy Silver. "I haven't said I'm going to pay for it, have I?"

"But—but what?"

"Oh, come on! I've got to give the orders!"

"That isn't the way to the tuckshop!" howled Lovell, as Jimmy Silver started for the School House.

"I'm not going to give orders in the tuckshop!"

"Where the merry thunder are you going to give them, then?"

"In Bootles' study."

"Bub-Bub-Bootles' study!" babbled Lovell. "Yes, Bootles has gone out; you saw him!"

Raby tapped his forehead.

"Mad!" he said. "Quite off! Better give an order for a strait-jacket while you're about it, Jimmy!"

"Oh, follow your uncle, and don't jaw!" said Jimmy Silver.

He led the way, and the Co., in blank amazement, followed him. It was to the study of Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, that he led them.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Jimmy Carries Out Instructions!

JIMMY SILVER walked cheerfully into the Form-master's study, and Lovell and Raby and Newcome followed him in.

The master of the Fourth had gone out for the afternoon, so that usually dreaded apartment was quite safe for the heroes of the Fourth. But what Jimmy Silver intended to do there was a great mystery to his chums. They were more than half inclined to believe that their Uncle Jimmy was wandering in his mind.

Jimmy locked the door when the Fistical Four were within the study.

"Mustn't chance being interrupted," he remarked, in response to the wondering stare of the juniors.

"But what are you going to do here?" shrieked Lovell.

"Give my orders for Beaumont's feed!"

"You howling ass—"

"Shush! Do you want all Rookwood to know that you're trespassing in your Form-master's study, you ass?"

"Look here—"

"I'm bound to order grub for Beaumont—plenty of it. Haven't I told him I would?" demanded Jimmy Silver. "Besides, his uncle's coming—a very special uncle—Sir Somebody Something or other. Sir Somebody is going to find Beaumont's study well provided—a land flowing with milk and honey. Now shut up while I telephone!"

"Tut-tut-telephone!" stuttered Lovell.

"Yes, ass! What do you think I've come for?"

"Oh, I—I see!"

"Time you did!" said Jimmy Silver witheringly.

Jimmy crossed to the telephone, and opened the directory. Juniors who were good were sometimes allowed to use Mr. Bootles' telephone on very special occasions. Juniors who weren't good sometimes used it on occasions when Mr. Bootles was away.

Mr. Bootles, who was a very methodical gentleman, kept a precise list of the calls he made, and he was sometimes exasperated to find that the account from the Telephone Department did not exactly agree with his own account.

This sometimes led Mr. Bootles to make bitter remarks on the subject of Governmental inefficiency and incompetence. Probably some members of the Fourth Form could have explained how it was that Mr. Bootles was charged for more calls than he ever made.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome watched Jimmy in wonder. They could guess that a "wheeze" was coming, but they could not see it yet. Their backs were up at the idea of fagging for the Sixth-Form bully to the extent of providing him with an extra-special feed at their own expense.

But Jimmy Silver was quite calm about it. Jimmy Silver's active brain had already decided on a plan of campaign.

He took up the receiver, his chums watching him in silence.

"Coombe one-0-one!" said Jimmy into the transmitter.

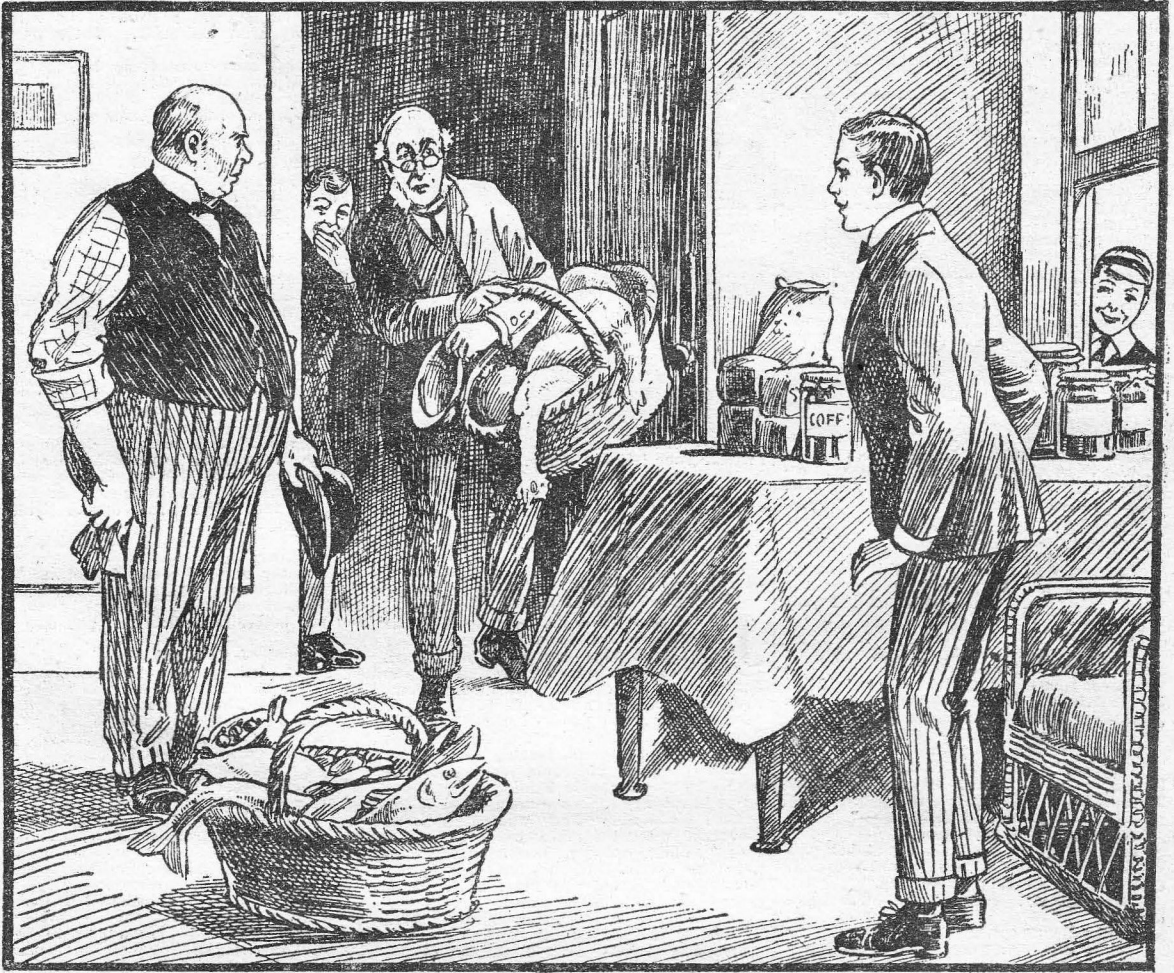
"That's the grocer," said Lovell. "You howling ass, Jimmy, if you order stuff by telephone you'll have to pay for it!"

"Dry up, old chap!"

"But look here—"

"Shut up! I've got my number!" Jimmy devoted his attention to the receiver. "Is that Coombe one-0-one? Chunkers' Stores?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Chunkers speaking."



The fishmonger, as he turned to the door, was confronted by a man with a basket on his arm. "Mr. Beaumont's study?" asked the new-comer. "I've brought the poultry sir—three pounds seventeen to pay, please." (See page 17.)

"This is Rookwood School. Can you send me some things this afternoon?"

"H'm! Who's it for, sir?"
Jimmy Silver grimaced. If it was a good order from Dr. Chisholm or a master, Mr. Chunkers would find it possible to deliver the goods. If it was some fellow who wanted a tin of pineapple, he wouldn't. Jimmy Silver understood. But Jimmy was prepared to give a good order—a very good order.

"Beaumont of the Sixth," he replied. "You know the name, of course?"

"Oh, yes, sir! What's wanted?"
"Rather a lot of things, but only on condition that they're delivered at five o'clock, or very soon after. Sir Charles Beaumont is coming to tea, and I want something extra special. The order will come to about three pounds!"

"Three what?" gasped Lovell.
"My boy's just come in, sir," came back Mr. Chunkers' reply very cordially. "I shall be very pleased to deliver the goods, sir!"

"Very good! Here's the list! Six whole pineapples, very best quality; three tins of corned beef—good, not American; a dozen tins of sardines; three two-pound cakes, currant, seed, and sultana. Got that?"

"Yes, sir; taking it down, sir!"
"A soda syphon, and a dozen bottles of lemonade, a pound of Brazil nuts, three pound jars of raspberry, strawberry, and greengage jam—"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Raby.
"A large tin of biscuits, three pounds of marmalade, six tins of potted rabbit," went on Jimmy Silver recklessly.

"Yes, sir!"
"A dozen tins of condensed milk, six tins of cocoa, a couple of pounds of—of—of mixed peel, two pounds of bacon, cut in rashers,

three dozen new-laid eggs—mind, the very best—"

"Certainly, sir!"
"Six tins of—of prawns, a jar of jelly, a pound of milk chocolate, three pounds of preserved ginger, a jar of honey—"

"You howling ass!" breathed Lovell. "It's coming to quids and quids! Where are you going to get the money?"

Jimmy Silver did not heed. He proceeded to enumerate more items, all of which were faithfully taken down by Mr. Chunkers at the other end of the wire.

"Is that all, sir?" asked Mr. Chunkers, in a silky voice.
Seldom had Mr. Chunkers bagged an order like that.

"Yes, that's all. Send the bill with the goods, addressed to Arthur Beaumont, and tell the man to wait for the money."
"Certainly, sir!"

"Mind, I do not want to run an account. I have a great objection to an account. I want the goods paid for on delivery."

"I'll see to it, sir!"
"And they must come at five or soon after—not before five, as I shall not be on the spot—"

"I'll arrange it, sir!"
"Thank you, Mr. Chunkers! I rely on you."

And Jimmy Silver rang off.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Good Orders!

"YOU—you—you howling ass!" gasped Lovell and Raby and Newcome in a breath.

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely.
"Who's going to pay for that cargo?" demanded Lovell.

"Eh? Beaumont, I suppose."
"Beaumont!"

"Certainly! I'm ordering them for him, and they'll be delivered to him. Who should pay for them, I'd like to know?"

"But—but he won't—"

"I think he'll have to!" said Jimmy calmly. "Mr. Chunkers won't have the trouble of sending that cargo up to Rookwood for nothing. I'm pretty certain that when his man has fagged up here with that load on a hot afternoon he won't fag back with the same load."

"You funny ass!" gasped Raby. "It means an awful row! Beaumont will declare he never ordered them, and it will come out that you telephoned."

Jimmy Silver looked surprised.

"I shan't conceal the fact that I telephoned," he said.

"You—you won't!"

"Certainly not, as I'm acting under Beaumont's orders!"

"B-b-Beaumont's orders!" ejaculated Newcome.

"Yes. Hasn't he ordered me to get him a spread, best quality, regardless of expense? I'm doing it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I don't see how Beaumont can complain," said Jimmy. "If he complains of me to Mr. Bottles, I shall simply explain that Beaumont gave me instructions to get him an extra special tea. He did, didn't he?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"And as for ordering the goods for Beaumont to pay for, that can't be avoided, as Beaumont left me no money to pay for them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he meant you to pay for the grub out of your own pocket!" yelled Raby.

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders. "Of course, Beaumont can explain that to Mr. Bootles or the Head if he likes," he said. "Personally, I think Beaumont won't care to mention it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, my hat! What a lark!" gurgled Lovell. "Why, the silly ass has shoved himself right into your hands! You're ordering all that stuff by his express orders! Ha, ha!"

"Exactly!"
Jimmy Silver proceeded to look through the telephone directory again, while his chums sat on Mr. Bootles' table and gurgled with merriment.

"Haven't you finished yet?" exclaimed Lovell, as Jimmy took up the receiver again.

"No fear! This is going to be a feast for the gods!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Number, please?" came the voice from the Exchange.
"Coombe, one-two!"
"That's the giddy fishmonger!" Jimmy explained to his chums. "Mr. Chunks is sending some tinned fish, but I think Beaumont ought to have some fresh fish, too. Hallo! Is that Coombe, one-two?"

"Yes."
"Mr. Slipp's?"
"Yes."

"Can you send me some fish this afternoon—soon after five—say, half-past five at the latest? Beaumont, Rookwood School. I want two hundred oysters—"

"Great pip!" gasped Lovell.
"And a whole cod—"
The juniors shrieked.

"Three pounds of Scotch salmon! Mind it's Scotch! Must be the very best! The price doesn't matter particularly!"
"Certainly, sir!"
"And six pounds of winkles!"
"Winkles!" stuttered Lovell. "Beaumont, the dandy—and winkles! Oh, my only Uncle Thomas!"

"And three pounds of shrimps—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Can you let me have the lot at half-past five, Mr. Slipp, for a very special occasion? Send the bill for cash on delivery."

"Certainly, sir! Rely on me. The name is—"

"Arthur Beaumont, Sixth Form."
"You're sure you want a whole cod, sir?"
"Ahem! Perhaps a half would do—not less than half!"

"Very good, sir!"
"Can I rely on getting them by half-past five? It's a very special occasion—a sort of spread for a distinguished party."
"Half-past five, sharp, sir! And the bill with them?"

"That's it! Thank you!"
Jimmy rang off again. The Co. were reduced almost to hysterics by this time. The thought of that consignment of fish arriving in Beaumont's study while his titled and distinguished uncle was there quite overcame them.

But Jimmy Silver was not done yet. He was turning over the pages of the telephone directory.

"For goodness' sake, chuck it!" stuttered Lovell. "We don't want all the goods in Coombe brought up to Rookwood this afternoon."

"Beaumont said it was to be an extra special spread," replied Jimmy Silver calmly. "As a good fag, I'm bound to carry out the instructions of my fag-master. Do you fellows think I'm overdoing it?"

"Overdoing it! Ha, ha, ha!"
"Coombe double-three!" said Jimmy into the receiver.

"Who's Coombe, double-three?" asked Raby.

"The poulterer."
"Oh crumbs!"
"Hallo! Is that Mr. Skinner? This is Rookwood School. Can you send me some fowls this afternoon?"

"Yessir!"
"I want them particularly by half-past five or soon after. Six of the best Surrey fowls, and a couple of ducks!"

"Ten bob each, by gum!" breathed Lovell.

"Certainly, sir!" came on the telephone. "To whom are they to be delivered, sir?"
"Master Arthur Beaumont, Sixth Form, Rookwood School. They're for a very special occasion—standing a big feed, you know; and they mustn't be later than half-past five, or they're no use to me. They have

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to be—ahem!—handed over to the cook in good time!"

"I understand, sir. Shall I send the bill with them?"

That question was put very politely, but it was clear that Mr. Skinner would not have sent the fowls without the bill.

"Certainly! And instruct your man to wait for the money. I do not wish to run an account; in fact, it is against the school rules to do so."

"Depend on me, sir."
"Thank you!"

Jimmy Silver rang off, and turned to the telephone directory again. But his chums swooped down on him, and dragged him away by main force.

"That's enough!" gasped Lovell. "You've stuck Beaumont for about ten or fifteen pounds already! Enough's as good as a giddy feast!"

"Well, perhaps that will do," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "Beaumont said it was to be a good spread, but I dare say he won't think I've ordered too little."

"Too little! Ha, ha!"
Jimmy Silver unlocked the door, and the Fistical Four left the study, almost weeping. Never had Mr. Bootles' telephone been so useful. There was no doubt that the bully of the Sixth would have a tremendous spread in his study that afternoon. Whether it would please him was another matter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Plenty of Tuck!

JIMMY SILVER & Co. went down to the cricket with clear consciences. They felt that they had done their best. If Beaumont wasn't pleased at the way Jimmy Silver had carried out his instructions, that was Beaumont's look-out.

Jones minor had gone on the river with Rawson and Hooker. Jones minor had been very pleased to leave his fagging in the hands of Jimmy Silver. He could really not have left it in more capable hands.

But about five o'clock Jimmy Silver & Co. quitted Little Side. They wanted to be on the scene when the goods began to arrive. Jimmy's liberal orders on Beaumont's account had been confined to a select few in the Fourth, and Oswald and Flynn and two or three others were in the secret.

Towards five o'clock the juniors posted themselves to look out for the arrivals.

Five was striking when Beaumont of the Sixth was seen to enter at the gates, accompanied by an old gentleman with a white moustache and a purple complexion. This was evidently Sir Charles, the distinguished visitor upon whose account Jimmy Silver had taken so much trouble.

Jimmy Silver & Co. scuttled behind the beeches as Beaumont and his uncle crossed the quadrangle. They did not want to catch the Sixth-Form bully's eye at that moment.

"Beaumont will expect to find tea ready in his study," murmured Lovell. "The goods haven't arrived yet."

"The first lot can't be long now; it's turned five. I say, that old johnnie doesn't look like a chap to appreciate a joke, does he—even a good one?"

"He doesn't—he don't!" grinned Oswald.

"Well, it's Beaumont's look-out. He can't say that I haven't ordered enough to please a hungry Hun."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Beaumont of the Sixth conducted his uncle into the house. The dandy of the Sixth was treating the old gentleman with exquisite politeness and attention. Beaumont had every hope that the visit would materialise in a fiver; and a fiver was worth while. Sir Charles had a somewhat crusty temper, and his nephew had to be very careful with him. But there was compensation in a handsome tip for the waste of an afternoon. That was how the affectionate nephew regarded it.

Mr. Bootles had just come in, and Beaumont introduced Sir Charles, and the baronet stayed a few minutes chatting to the Fourth-Form master in the hall. Then the prefect conducted him to the Sixth-Form corridor.

"This is my study, uncle. I'm so glad to be able to show it to you," said Beaumont, overflowing with affectionate solicitude. "It's really kind of you to have paid me a visit at last. I've made some little preparations for you. I've been looking forward so long to your having tea in the study, you know. I hope you won't be disappointed."

"Not at all, my boy—not at all," said Sir Charles affably. "Quite a pleasure, by gad! Reminds me of my own schooldays. Jolly little room, by gad!"

Beaumont started a little as he entered the study after his uncle. There was no sign of tea.

His teeth came together hard. He had distinctly ordered Jimmy Silver to have the spread ready at five—an extra special spread. And the table was not even laid.

"The young villain!" muttered Beaumont. "I'll skin him—I'll scalp him—"

"What did you say, Arthur?"
"N-n-nothing! Sit down, uncle, will you?" armchair while I—I call my fag? I'll wing his neck!"

"Eh?"
"N-n-nothing! Sit down, uncle, will you?" Sir Charles sat down.

"As a matter of fact, I am a little hungry," he said graciously. "Why, what's the matter, Arthur? Have you got the toothache?"

"Toothache! Nunno!"

"Well, don't grit your teeth like that; it sets mine on edge."

"C-c-certainly, uncle. I didn't mean—"

"Very cosy little quarters," said the baronet, more graciously.

He broke off as a voice was heard in the passage. It was the voice of Mr. Bootles.

"Bless my soul! What is this—what? Why are you bringing that basket here, my lad? You should deliver goods to the housekeeper!"

"This 'ere is for Master Beaumont, sir—a special order, sir."

"Bless my soul! I really do not see what Master Beaumont wants with such a large consignment of goods. However, I suppose you had better take them in. You may proceed."

Beaumont of the Sixth stared at the door as a burly lad appeared there, with a huge basket on his arm. The lad was a powerful country fellow, but he seemed to have plenty to do to negotiate the basket.

"Master Beaumont 'ere?" he asked.

"I'm Beaumont. What do you want?"
"The goods from Chunks', sir."

"The—the what?"
"From Chunks', sir. And mortal 'eavy, sir," said Mr. Chunks' messenger. "Werry 'eavy, in this 'ot weather, sir. Shall I put 'em 'ere?"

"Some of your little preparations, Arthur—what!" chuckled the baronet.

"Nunno! Ye-es!" stammered Beaumont.

"I—I did not order—I mean— Who told you to bring those goods here, boy?"

"Mr. Chunks, sir."
"Who—who ordered them?"

"You, sir. Ordered this afternoon, to be sent up by five—very special, sir. And 'ere they are, and mortal 'eavy!"

The grocer's lad began to unpack the basket, Beaumont watching him as if mesmerised. His uncle's eyes opened wide. Beaumont had told him that he had made some little preparations. But these preparations could hardly be called little.

Tins of pineapple, of corned beef, sardines, and rabbit were piled on the study table, with jars of jam, boxes of biscuits, cakes, bottles, pofs, tins, jars, and all sorts and conditions of things.

A pyramid was gradually formed on the table, till there was scarcely room for anything more.

Having landed his cargo, so to speak, the grocer's lad paused, and breathed hard, and mopped his brow with a handkerchief.

"An 'ere's the bill," he said.

"The—the—the bill!" stammered Beaumont.

"Yessir. Three pounds fifteen shillings, sir."

"Eh?"
"And, please, I'm to wait for the money, sir."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Money Wanted.

BEAUMONT gasped. He could no more have paid three pounds fifteen shillings that afternoon than he could have paid three thousand pounds.

He blinked at the grocer's lad, and blinked at the huge piles of merchandise, and blinked at his uncle, whose expression was growing very peculiar.

"Three pounds fifteen, sir. Shall I receipt the bill?"

"You needn't trouble!" snapped Beaumont. "I think Mr. Chunks must be out of his senses. I did not order those goods, and I'm certainly not going to pay for them!"

"Hey?"
"You can take them back!"
"Take them back! I've carried that there

basket near a mile, sir, in this 'ere 'ot weather!"

"I tell you I never ordered them!" roared Beaumont.

"And I tell you you did!" retorted the messenger. "I was there meself when Mr. Chunkers took down the order."

"You lying hound—"

"Arthur!"

"Ye-e-es, uncle!"

"That is not language to use in my presence!" said the baronet stiffly.

"I-I beg your pardon, uncle; but—but—"

"If you have ordered these goods, Arthur, you must pay for them."

"But—but I haven't—"

"Nonsense!" said the baronet decisively. "They are delivered to you by name. I see that the bill is made out in your name. Is it possible, Arthur, that you have been so reckless as to order goods you cannot pay for?"

"Nunno! I-I never—"

"Or am I to understand, sir, that you ordered these goods to be delivered during my visit, to bamboozle me, sir, into paying for them?"

"Oh crumbs! I-I-I mean—"

"Pay the lad at once!"

"I-I can't! I—"

"I ain't going without the money, I knows that!" said Mr. Chunkers' young man stolidly. "Not if I 'ave to wait 'ere all night, I ain't!"

"You young scoundrel—"

"Silence!" thundered Sir Charles. "I am surprised at you, Arthur—shocked, disgusted, by gad!"

"But, uncle, I didn't! I never—I-I—"

"Enough! I presume, sir, that you have indulged in this wanton and improvident extravagance with the idea of entertaining me. Perhaps you thought, sir, that I had an inordinate appetite for potted rabbit and tinned pineapples and cake and biscuits and chocolate. As you have recklessly ordered these goods on my account, and you cannot pay for them, I will settle the bill. But I do not thank you for this childish extravagance—quite the contrary. And I am sorry to see, Arthur, that a nephew of mine can be guilty of prevarication."

"But I—I—I—" stammered the unhappy Beaumont.

"Enough!"

Sir Charles took out his purse, and threw the money on the table.

"There is your money! Receipt the bill! Take this shilling for yourself."

"Thank you kindly, sir!"

Mr. Chunkers' young man left the study with his basket, quite satisfied. Sir Charles fixed a basilisk eye on the unhappy Rookwood.

"I am surprised at you, Arthur! You may make the best use you can of that ridiculous mountain of goods. I shall not stay to partake of them. Your conduct has shocked and disgusted me. I shall take my leave at this moment. Pah!"

"But, uncle, I-I assure you—"

"I regard myself, sir, as having been the victim of a trick—an unworthy trick!" thundered the baronet. "I have paid your bill—"

The baronet broke off as a man with a shiny complexion and a fishy smell and a huge basket appeared in the doorway of the study.

"Master Beaumont, sir?"

"What do you want?" yelled Beaumont.

"The fish, sir!"

"The what?"

"The fish, sir, from Slipp's."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fish and Fowl!

"FISH," gasped Beaumont—"f-fish from—from Slipp's!"

Sir Charles snorted.

"So this is some more of your extravagance, Arthur!"

"I haven't ordered any fish!" yelled Beaumont.

The man from the fishmonger's looked surprised.

"P'raps you ain't the right young gentleman, sir. Master Silver told me this was Master Beaumont's study—"

"This is Master Beaumont's study, and this is Master Beaumont!" broke in the baronet. "May I ask what you have in that basket?"

"Oysters, sir, and winkles, and 'arf a cod, sir, and salmon!"

"Good heavens!"

"I didn't order it!" shrieked Beaumont.

"I think you are out of your senses, Arthur. What possessed you to order half a cod, and—and winkles? Do you think I eat winkles, sir?" shouted Sir Charles.

"No, no! I—I—"

"Four pounds ten to pay, sir," said the fishmonger.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Shall I make out the receipt, sir?"

"I won't pay it!" yelled Beaumont. "I didn't order any fish, or oysters, or—or winkles. Take them away!"

"Wot!"

"Take all that stuff out of my study at once!"

The fishmonger looked dangerous.

"I don't understand this 'ere," he said. "If this 'ere bill ain't paid on the nail, I'm going straight to your 'eadmaster, young man!"

"I should recommend you to do so!" snorted Sir Charles. "I should assuredly recommend you to do so. If you think, nephew, that you can bamboozle me, sir, into paying bill after bill, I can assure you, most emphatically, that you are mistaken. I leave you to your own devices, sir!"

And the baronet, in great wrath, stamped out of the study.

Beaumont sank helplessly into a chair. He was almost overcome. The fishmonger was looking at him grimly, and there was evidently no help to be had from his uncle. A fishy hand held out a fishy bill to the unhappy prefect.

In the quadrangle, a group of merry juniors grinned as the angry and disgusted baronet came striding out. Sir Charles did not glance at them. He strode away directly to the gates. His visit to his nephew had cost him three pounds fifteen, and Sir Charles could hardly be blamed for supposing that his nephew had tricked him into paying for large supplies for his study. But Sir Charles did not mean to pay any more. Beaumont was left to his own devices in dealing with the fishmonger.

"Hallo, the giddy guest is departing!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Surely he must have been satisfied with the amount of tuck provided!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beaumont seems to have satisfied the grocer somehow. I wonder how he's getting on with the fishmonger?"

The juniors chuckled hysterically. They were near Beaumont's study window, which was open. They soon discovered how he was getting on with the fishmonger. Beaumont's voice could be heard, raised almost to a shriek.

"Take it away! I tell you I didn't order it, and I'm not going to pay for it. I couldn't if I wanted to. Take the rubbish away!"

"I ain't moving them goods, sir. I'm waiting for the money."

"I won't pay a cent!"

"Then I'm goin' to your 'eadmaster!"

"Go, and be hanged!"

Beaumont was white with rage and chagrin. His uncle's visit had been "mucked up" with a vengeance. The expected tip had not been forthcoming, and the propitiation of the old gentleman might be a difficult task. Certainly, he had enough groceries laid in to last him for rest of the term, if that was any comfort.

But the fishmonger remained to be dealt with. He had set down his basket, and evidently did not intend to move it.

The fishmonger was angry—that was natural enough—at getting such a reception, after toiling a mile with a basket on a hot afternoon. He looked very much inclined to lay his fishy hands on Beaumont of the Sixth.

"Young swindler!" said the fishmonger. "That's wot you are! I s'pose you reckoned I'd leave the goods without the money—wot!—and then we could whistle for it. Well, I give you a minute to pay this 'ere bill!"

"Hang you! Get out!"

"Then I'm goin' to your 'eadmaster! Hallo!" The fishmonger, as he turned to the door, was confronted by a man with a basket on his arm.

"Master Beaumont's study?" asked the newcomer.

Beaumont glared at him furiously.

"You—you—what do you want?"

"The poultry, sir!"

"Poultry!" shrieked the unhappy Beaumont.

"Yes, sir; the fowls and ducks."

"Ful-fuf-fowls and ducks!"

"Yessy. Six Surrey fowls and two ducks. Three pounds seventeen to pay, please."

"Get out!" roared Beaumont.

"Hey?"

"I haven't ordered any fowls, or—or ducks. I won't take them! I won't pay for them! Go to thunder!"

The poultryer's man looked astounded, as well he might.

"You're Master Beaumont?" he asked.

"Yes, you fool!"

"Then there ain't no mistake. And I ain't leaving them fowls without the money, neither!"

"I won't pay a cent!" yelled Beaumont. "It's a swindle! Has everybody in Coombe gone mad?"

"Another swindle!" hooted the fishmonger. "He's a regular sharper, mate! He's ordered this 'ere fish, and he don't want to pay for it."

"He'll pay for these 'ere fowls, or there'll be trouble!" said the poultryer's man. "My gun'vor told me to be careful, seeing as the goods was ordered by a young gentleman at school."

"Take your rotten rubbish away!" hooted Beaumont.

"Them's best Surrey fowls, and they ain't rotten rubbish, and if you don't and over three pounds seventeen, I'm going to your headmaster!"

"Go and hang yourself!"

"Come alonger me, mate," said the fishmonger. "We'll soon bring the young swindler to his senses!"

The two men left the study together, evidently with the intention of seeking the Head of Rookwood, and presenting their bills to him.

Beaumont of the Sixth remained in the study—with the groceries, the fish, and the fowls.

The bully of the Sixth hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. Unless the tradesmen of Coombe had gone suddenly mad that afternoon, he could not account for the extraordinary delivery of goods in his study.

A few minutes later Mr. Bootles looked in with a grim brow.

"Beaumont! You are wanted in the Head's study! Follow me!"

And Beaumont followed him, in a dazed state.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Guileless Jimmy!

DR. CHISHOLM eyed Beaumont sternly as he followed Mr. Bootles into the study. The fishmonger and the poultryer were there, both looking angry, and looking strangely out of place in that severe apartment.

"Beaumont!"—the Head's voice was sharp and cutting—"kindly explain what this means. It appears that you have ordered a large quantity of goods you cannot or will not pay for."

"Nothing of the sort, sir," said Beaumont desperately. "I can't imagine why the things have been delivered to me—"

"Beaumont!"

"It's true, sir. I never ordered them."

"There must be some mistake," said the Head, frowning. "You are sure you were directed to deliver these goods to Master Beaumont at this school?"

"Ere's the name on the bill, sir."

"And look at this, sir."

"You assure me you did not order the goods, Beaumont?"

"On my word, sir."

"Then I must inquire further. Can you assert that Master Beaumont ordered the goods, personally or in writing?" asked the Head.

"It was by telephone, sir," said the fishmonger. "I was present while Mr. Slipp took down the order."

"Did you telephone an order, Beaumont?"

"Certainly not, sir! I've been out all the afternoon. I—I think I see now, sir. Somebody must have used my name on the telephone," gasped Beaumont.

"That is possible, of course, though it would be a very curious proceeding—"

"Jimmy Silver!" howled Beaumont suddenly. "I see it now."

"What?"

"It was Silver, sir—Silver of the Fourth!" almost shouted Beaumont. "It's plain enough now. I licked him for being cheeky, and he's done this out of revenge."

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"Have you any proof of your assertion, Beaumont?"
 "I know it was Silver, sir. I'm sure of it. I—I ordered him to get my tea ready while I was out, and he's done this—"
 "Silver shall be questioned. Mr. Bootles, may I request you to call Silver here. He is in your Form."
 "Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Bootles whisked out of the study, and returned in a few minutes with Jimmy Silver. The captain of the Fourth did not look alarmed. He was quite calm and cheerful, and he bestowed a friendly nod on the infuriated Beaumont.

"Silver," said the Head, fixing his eyes on Jimmy's innocent face, "I have sent for you to ask you a question. Did you order a large quantity of goods by telephone, to be delivered to Beaumont this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy promptly.
 "I knew it!" howled Beaumont.
 "Silence! Did you use Beaumont's name on the telephone, Silver?" asked the Head, his brows setting grimly.

"Yes, sir."
 "And why, Silver, did you play such an unhard-of-trick?"

"Trick, sir!" repeated Silver, in surprise. "It wasn't a trick, sir—ahem!—it was only what Beaumont told me."
 "Beaumont told you!" exclaimed the Head.
 "Certainly, sir."

"It's a lie!" shouted Beaumont.
 "Silence! This matter must be thrashed out. Kindly tell me the whole particulars, Silver!"

"Yes, sir. Beaumont told me to have tea ready in his study—a very extra special spread, sir, as his uncle was coming. I'm bound to fag for Beaumont, sir, if he orders me, as a prefect in the Sixth—"

"Yes, yes. But he did not tell you to order these goods?"

"He left the matter to my discretion, sir," said Jimmy blandly. "As it was a very special occasion, I took the liberty of using Mr. Bootles' telephone. There was no other way of ordering extra special goods in time."
 Beaumont's face was a study.

"Beaumont did not tell me exactly how much to order, sir," went on Jimmy calmly. "I may have overdone it a little. I'm not an expert caterer, of course, though I hope I shall always do my best for a prefect. As Beaumont had authorised me to make purchases for him, I was entitled to order the goods in his name. I didn't want them myself, of course—they were for Beaumont."

"That is correct," said the Head; "but you must have been well aware that whatever money Beaumont handed you to procure his tea would not be sufficient to cover these very extraordinary orders?"

"But Beaumont didn't give me any money, sir," said Jimmy cheerfully.

The Head's brow darkened.
 "Did you intend Silver to order goods for you on credit, Beaumont?" he demanded.

"N-n-no, sir."
 "Yet you did not give him any money to pay for the goods he was to order for you?"
 "I—I—I forgot."

"You should not have forgotten, Beaumont. It appears, then, that you ordered your fag to procure you a meal of unusual proportions, and did not provide him with the money to purchase the articles required. Naturally, a thoughtless junior would conclude that you intended him to order the goods for you to pay for on delivery, or on credit. What else could he conclude?"

Beaumont nearly choked.
 He did not dare to explain to the Head that he had expected his fag to provide for him out of his own pocket.

"Silver appears to have acted as you might have expected him to act, as he was bound to conclude that you desired him to order goods in your name," said the Head. "He appears to have ordered huge quantities in a reckless manner, doubtless from your having told him that you required something very special. You should not trust a careless junior in such matters, Beaumont."

"I—I didn't—"
 "It appears that you did. You have acted with flagrant carelessness," said the Head severely. "You may go, Silver. I do not hold you to blame."

"Thank you, sir."
 Jimmy Silver left the study. As he left he heard the Head's next words:
 "You authorised Silver to order goods in your name, Beaumont. You are called upon to pay these accounts."

"I—I—I—"
 "As you are probably not prepared to meet such sums, I will pay them myself, and the bills will be sent to your father. As you probably have no use for such a quantity of goods, you may take them to the house-keeper, and an allowance will be made for such as can be used. You may go; and I trust this will be a lesson to you."

Beaumont of the Sixth left the study without replying. He could not reply. His feelings were too deep to be expressed in words.

Jimmy Silver had always been in the Sixth Form bully's black books; and he was more so than ever now. But the cheery Jimmy did not mind. The whole Fourth howled over the story of how he had fagged for Beaumont, and the Sixth Form chuckled over it when it reached their ears, and it was long before his Form-fellows allowed Beaumont to hear the end of it. Jimmy Silver was never called upon to fag for Beaumont again. He was really much more capable than Beaumont's fag—but the bully of the Sixth preferred Jones minor.

THE END.

(Another grand story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "JIMMY SILVER & CO.'S VISITOR!" Order your copy EARLY.)



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TALES TO TELL!

NOT LIKELY.

Two tramps were crossing a river one day, when they saw a notice which read: "£5 will be given to anybody saving life from this bridge!"

"You jump in, Bill, and I'll come and rescue you," said one.

"Right-ho!" said the other. "And we can share the quids!"

Accordingly one of the tramps plunged in the river, and began to yell for help.

Mick, safe on the bridge, turned to his friend struggling in the water, and, with an excited countenance, called out:

"Sorry, Bill; but I've just seen a notice that says twenty pounds will be paid for a dead body!"

FOWL PLAY.

She laid the still, white form beside those which had gone before. No sigh, no sob, forced its way from her heart, throbbing as if it would burst. Suddenly a cry broke the stillness of the place, one single, heart-breaking shriek, then silence. Another cry, more silence, except for a guttural murmur, which seemed to well up from her very soul. She left the place.

She would lay another egg to-morrow.

"THE EVER OPEN DOOR!"

The poet was desperate. He must have seen, or he would never have risked going to see the editor. But, desperate as he was, he stumbled up the editorial stairs, and into the editor's presence, with a large and fearful assortment of selected sonnets, poetical phantasms, and verses of all sorts and species.

"Is there," he began—"is there a good opening in your office for a really first-class poet?"

"There is, sir," said the editor sternly.
 "Then here I am," said the poet. "Where's the opening?"

"Behind you, sir!" said the editor grimly, as he pointed to the door, which was being held open by the office-boy, who ushered the visitor out.

THE TROUT AND THE TALL HAT!

Richard Jefferies told a good story about a trout he saw in a brook near London. There was a reedy pond close by, and for some reason or another, the pond had a traditional fame for fish, though it contained nothing better than small eels and a few roach. Anglers flocked to the pond, and left the brook alone. Jefferies, who never missed anything, saw a large trout under the bridge which spanned the brook, and he knew scores of fishermen would be after it if the fact were known. He liked to watch that trout, but whenever he saw anybody coming along he would snatch off his hat to give the trout warning and make it scuttle off. It scuttled. The least shadow on the surface of the water sent it gliding back into the darkness. Many folks who passed that way were en route to the City, and wore top-hats. The shadow of the topper gave the trout warning when Jefferies was not there. The great naturalist does not say whether the fish was ever caught. Probably not. It may be lurking under the old bridge still.



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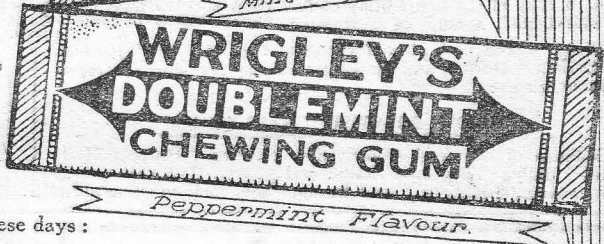
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