

SCHOOL STORIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The Penny **1½^d**
Popular

Week Ending
April 26th, 1919.

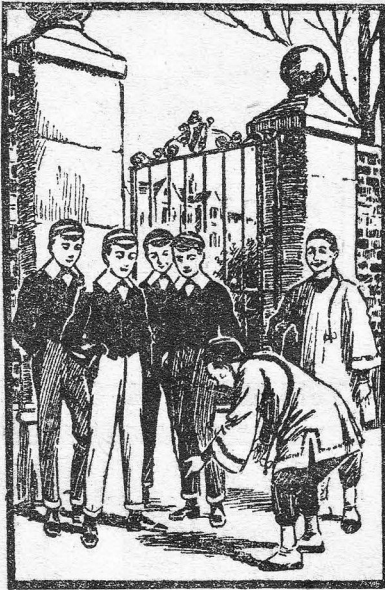
No. 14.
New Series.

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



EASTER EGGS FOR
THE BULLIES!

(An Amusing Scene in the Splendid Long, Complete School Tale in this Issue.)



"Velly nicee day," said Hop Hi affably, as he met the grinning juniors at the school gates. "Me glad to see handsome young gentlemen of the second toim."

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Causes Excitement.

LOOK!"

"Great Scott!"

"He's off his giddy rocker!"

"My hat!"

"My only Aunt Sempronia!"

The juniors, gathering outside Study No. 13 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, were excited, and no wonder.

No wonder their startled exclamations formed a sort of chorus in the passage, and drew other fellows to the spot from far and near.

Bob Cherry had been the first to make the astounding discovery.

Bob Cherry had the honour of sharing Study No. 13 in the Remove with Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, and Wun Lung, the little junior, who hailed from the far-off Flowery Land.

Wun Lung, the Chinese, had many peculiar ways. And his smile, like that of the famous Ah Sin, was generally childlike and bland.

He was seldom excited. In the most trying situations he would preserve an Oriental imperturbability.

So it was no wonder that Bob Cherry started back in amazement as he opened the door of the study and stared in blankly instead of entering, and invoked his only Aunt Sempronia.

And when his exclamation drew Bulstrode and Skinner and the rest to the spot, it was equally surprising that they should stare and exclaim as Bob Cherry did.

For the scene they looked upon was remarkable.

Wun Lung, the Chinese, was alone in the study. He was not seated curled up in the armchair, as he generally was when he was there.

He was not practising tricks with a pack of cards—a favourite amusement of his. He was not at work—a thing he seldom did if he could help it.

He was dancing!

He was dancing upon the centre of the study table, a wild and irregular, and yet graceful dancing, and at the same time he was chanting what appeared to be some sort of a song of triumph, to judge by his tone.

It sounded something like this:

"Ka, kay, ko, ko, ko! Fi! Fo! Ko, ko, ko!"

He seemed quite oblivious of the fact that the study door had opened, and that astonished eyes were glaring at him.

He danced with a curious rattle of his feet on the bare table, and every now and then a book or some other article would go shooting off as it was knocked by his feet.

He had not taken the trouble to clear the

WUN LUNG, MINOR!

A Magnificent Long, Complete Story, dealing with the Early Adventures of HARRY WHARTON & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The News.

OW! Oh!"

Wun Lung sat where he had fallen, apparently dazed.

The juniors crowded into the study and surrounded him, and the little Chinese blinked at them with dazed eyes.

"Ow! Me hultee!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully. "If you weren't hurt, I'd jolly soon hurt you! You've smashed up the table!"

"Ow! Bonee achee!"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Serve you right! What have you busted that table for?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ow!"

"What were you dancing about?"

"Yow!"

"You ass!"

"You chump!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"What does it all mean?"

"Yaroo!"

"Are you mad?"

"No. Bulstrode madde. Chinee allee light."

"Why, you cheeky ass—"

"Bulstrode goee cat cokee!"

"Why, I—"

Harry Wharton pushed back the bully of the Remove as he was about to lay a violent hand upon Wun Lung's pigtail. Bulstrode stared at him.

"Keep your paws to yourself, Wharton!"

"None of that, Bulstrode!"

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Harry sharply. "Look here, Wun Lung, what have you been playing the giddy ox for?"

"No savvy."

"What's all this rot about?" exclaimed Nugent.

"No savvy."

"What were you dancing for, I mean?" said Wharton.

The little Chinese grinned.

"Oh! Me savvy!"

"Well, what was it about?"

"Chinee dance because Chinee happy."

"And what do you mean by being happy in my study, if it takes you like that?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Who's going to mend that table?"

"No savvy."

"You young heathen—"

"But what were you specially happy about, Wun Lung?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Wun Lung happy because his blutchee comee to Gleyfiars."

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

"Your brother!"

"Another Chinee!"

Bulstrode snorted.

"Blessed home for aliens, that's what they're turning this school into!" he exclaimed. "First Inky, then Wun Lung, and now another blessed Chinaman. Ugh!"

"Oh, shut up, Bulstrode!"

"Your brother's really coming to Greyfriars, kid?" asked Wharton.

The little Chinese nodded. He gave Bulstrode a rather unpleasant look. There was no love lost between the little Celestial and the bully of the Lower School.

"What's his name?" asked Nugent.

"Hop Hi."

"My only hat!"

"What a name!"

table before he started his terpsichorean exercises.

"Ko, ko, ko!"

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" said Bob Cherry yet again. "Of course he's mad!"

"Mad as a giddy hatter!" said Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove. "What he wants is a straight waistcoat!"

"And sharp," said Skinner.

"Ko, ko, ko!"

"I say, Wun Lung—"

"Wun Lung, old man—"

"Chuck it—"

"What's the matter?"

"Are you dotty?"

Wun Lung did not reply or look roud. He danced on, still chanting that mysterious refrain, punctuating it with chuckles expressive of great satisfaction.

"What on earth's the matter here?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, coming down the passage with Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, his study-mates in Study No. 1. "What's the crowd about?"

"It's Wun Lung."

"He's mad!"

"Mad as a hatter!"

"Look at him!"

"Just look!"

Harry Wharton & Co. elbowed their way through the crowd of juniors to the study door. They looked in at Wun Lung, and stared blankly.

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

"The great pipfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Wun Lung is certainly off his honourable rocker!"

"Ko, ko, ko!"

"Wun Lung, you ass!"

"Cheese it!"

"Ko, ko, ko!"

"What does that sing-song mean, I wonder?"

"Oh, he's mad!"

"Wun Lung! Are you dotty?"

Clatter, clatter, clatter! went the nimble feet.

"Ko, ko, ko!" chanted the triumphant voice. The little Chinese might have been a savage dancing in triumph over the body of a slain enemy by his looks and tone.

The crowd in the passage thickened.

Nearly all the Remove were gathered there now, for it was the hour of tea, and most of the juniors were indoors.

And the row going on at the end of the passage naturally attracted them all there.

Harry Wharton was thinking of forcibly stopping the Chinese and making him explain, when suddenly the dance came to an unexpected termination.

The study tables at Greyfriars were made strong enough for use by reckless juniors; but they were not meant to be danced upon.

There was an ominous groan from the table, and Harry Wharton shouted a warning to the little Celestial.

But Wun Lung did not heed; besides, the warning came too late.

Clatter, clatter!

Crash!

The study table collapsed.

Wun Lung's chant broke off, and was changed for a wild yell, as the table crashed down on its collapsing legs, and he sat down with a bump upon the ruins.

"Ow!"

“What a giddy patronymic!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Namee allee light!” said Wun Lung, a little offended. “Hop Hi nice boy. What you tinkee? Me lonely in England, you see. Mostee boy nice to Wun Lung, but not likee Chinese, you savvy. Me glad Hop Hi comee.”

“Of course,” said Harry Wharton. “I’m glad, too. When is he coming?”

“To-morrow.”

“Good! Look here, we’ll give him a reception,” said Frank Nugent. “We don’t have a Chinese kid come to school every term.”

“Good egg!” said Harry Wharton heartily. “Right-ho!” said Bob Cherry, a little dubiously. “But no more dancing in the study, Wun Lung. The furniture won’t stand it.”

“Ko, ho, ho!”

“My hat! He’s beginning again!”

“Cheese it!”

“Ko, ho, ho! Ki, ki, ki! Ko, ko, ki!”

“What does that mean, you chump?”

“Meanee Wun Lung happee.”

“Well, you won’t make anybody else happy with a row like that!” exclaimed Skinner. “You’d better chuck it!”

“Ko, ko, ko!”

“My word! I can’t stand it!”

There was a general exodus from the study. The shrill and monotonous chant of the Chinese was decidedly trying to the ear.

“Ko, ko, ko, ko!”

“Cheese it, Wun Lung!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “You’ve got to help me mend this blessed table now you’ve finished your celebrations.”

“Ko, ko, ko!”

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study rather hurriedly. They could stand most kinds of noise, but that Chinese chant was a little too much for them at close quarters.

Bob Cherry glanced at his Chinese chum. “Chuck that row, Wun Lung.”

“Ki, ki, ki!”

“Ring off, you ass!”

“Ko, ki, ko!”

“Look here! My only hat! If he isn’t dancing again!” exclaimed Bob Cherry, aghast.

Wun Lung was hopping round the broken table in a mazy dance. The sturdy junior dodged out of his way.

“Stop it!” he roared.

“Me happee!”

“Well, you can be happy without turning the study into a blessed bear-garden. Chuck it, do you hear?”

“No savvy!”

“Stop that giddy goatng!”

“No savvy!”

“Then I’ll stop you!” roared Bob Cherry wrathfully; and he rushed at Wun Lung. The little Chinese caught him in his arms, and danced him round.

Bob Cherry was much bigger and much stronger than the little Chinese, but Wun Lung had a curious knack with him, and he was not always to be mastered by a fellow twice his size.

Bob Cherry, in spite of himself, was whirled round and round the study, in a wild dance that made his head swim.

“Leggo!” he roared. “Stop it! Chuck it! Yah!”

“Ko, ko, ko!”

“Lemme go!”

“Ki, ki, ki!”

Bob Cherry made a desperate wrench, and went flying through the doorway backwards as he tore himself away.

He sat down in the passage with a bump, and glared into the study.

The wildly-excited Chinese was dancing round the table and chanting shrilly.

“Ko, ko, ko! Ko, ko, ki!”

Bob staggered to his feet.

“Well, my only hat!” he murmured.

And he went down the passage, leaving Wun Lung with the study to himself till he should have danced off the first flush of his enthusiasm.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Unwelcome Companions.

WUN LUNG wore a cheerful smile that next morning.

That day Wun Lung minor was to arrive at Greyfriars, and the little Chinese was looking forward to the arrival of his minor with great delight.

So were a great many of the Remove, to say nothing of the Second Form.

It was a half-holiday that day, and Wun Lung was to go down to the station to meet his minor immediately after dinner.

After morning school he arrayed himself to go out, and many a grinning face watched

him descend the stairs and trot out into the Close.

Harry Wharton & Co. were going out to cricket practice, but they stopped to speak to Wun Lung as he left the House.

“What’s the time of young Hop Hi’s train?” asked Bob Cherry.

“Half-fee-pastee two!”

“Then you’ve got lots of time to walk down,” said Bob, with a glance at the clock in the tower. “I’d like to walk down with you, but I’ve got to go to the cricket.”

“Allee light!”

“Got plenty of tin, Wun Lung?” asked Harry Wharton. “You may need some—and I’m in funds to-day, if you want any.”

Wun Lung grinned.

“Gottee much plente, tankee!”

“Let’s see young Hop Hi when you bring him in,” said Nugent. “And, look here, if there’s any rot from any of the fellows, let us know. We’ll jolly soon jump on them!”

“Tankee—tankee!”

“The jumpfunee will be terrifie!” said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

“Tankee muehee!”

And Wun Lung trotted down to the gates. Harry Wharton cast a doubtful glance after him, and then walked towards the cricket-ground with his chums.

“I wish some of us were going with him,” he said; “but we’ve arranged the cricket practice now, and we can’t put the fellows off!”

“That’s so.”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “Here’s Linley and young Frozen Mutton, and they’re going out.”

Mark Linley and Tom Brown, the junior from New Zealand, were crossing towards the gates. They nodded cheerfully to the Famous Four.

“Going out?” asked Harry.

“Yes; down to the village, about Brown’s new cricket-bat,” said Linley.

“Good! Wun Lung’s going down to the station to meet his minor. I can’t see Bulstrode about anywhere. You might keep an eye open for Wun Lung.”

Mark Linley nodded.

“I understand! We’re going by way of the river, but we’ll have a look in at the station while we’re in the village.”

“What-ho!” said Tom Brown. “If there are any tricks played on the giddy Chinese, we’ll take a hand in the game!”

And Harry Wharton felt more easy in his mind as he went to the nets.

Wun Lung left the school gates, and took the lane to the village, and walked along quickly with his trotting stride.

His peculiar little Oriental face was glowing with anticipation.

Kind as most of the fellows at Greyfriars were to him, the little Chinese was alone there, in a sense—a stranger in a strange land.

The arrival of one of his own race and kindred was a great event to him.

He had reached the bend in the lane, where the footpath branched off through the wood towards the priory, when he observed three figures seated in a row upon the top bar of the stile at the end of the footpath.

They were Bulstrode, Skinner, and Snoop. Wun Lung glanced at them uneasily out of the corners of his almond eyes, and passed on more quickly, pretending not to notice them.

Bulstrode grinned at his companions, and they slipped through the stile, and strode after the Chinese.

The latter quickened his pace, but the three juniors were on a level with him in a minute or two.

“Hallo, kid!” said Bulstrode affably. “Going to meet the train?”

“Yes, Bulstrode.”

“Good! We’ll come with you!”

Wun Lung looked uneasy.

“Allee lightee!” he said. “No wantee trouble, Bulstrode! Goee alone!”

Bulstrode’s brow darkened.

“Do you mean that you don’t want us to come?” he demanded.

“N-n-no!”

“What do you mean, then?”

“Allee light!”

“We’re coming, anyway!” said Snoop. “Why, we wouldn’t miss this for anything!”

“We want to give Hop Hi a friendly reception!” remarked Skinner.

“Exactly!” agreed Bulstrode. “We don’t have a giddy Chinese arrive at Greyfriars every day, and naturally we want to make the most of it.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Wun Lung walked on, with dismay in his face.

There was certainly no getting rid of Bul-

strode & Co.; they evidently intended to stick to him like leeches.

And that they intended to play some ill-natured trick on the arrival of Hop Hi was equally certain.

Wun Lung was greatly troubled as he went on.

The three cads of the Remove grinned at one another, and kept pace with him. They entered the village together.

Wun Lung paused as they passed Uncle Clegg’s tuckshop. A familiar figure was lounging outside—that of William George Bunter, of the Remove.

Bunter blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles.

“I say, you fellows—”

“Unkee Cleggee, nicee talts,” Wun Lung remarked eagerly. “S’pooze you goee in, Bulstrode, and me standee feedee.”

“Good!” said Bulstrode. “Come on!”

“Me goee to station.”

Bulstrode chuckled.

“You jolly well don’t get rid of us that way, kid,” he remarked.

“No savvy.”

“We’re going to stick to you, you see.”

“No savvy.”

“I say, you fellows,” said Bunter. “Uncle Clegg has got in some fresh tarts, and they’re better than Mrs. Mimble’s. Would you care to sample them?”

“Are you going to stand treat?”

“Well, I’d like to, awfully, but I’ve been disappointed about a postal-order. If one of you chaps like to lend me a couple of bob till to-morrow morning, when I’m expecting my postal-order to come—”

“Oh, go and eat coke!”

“Oh, really, Bulstrode—”

The bully of the Remove strode on, leaving Bunter to address his remonstrance to the desert air.

Wun Lung glanced back at the tuckshop. “Nicee talts!” he urged.

“Rats!”

“Me tinkee—”

“Bosh!”

And the little Celestial gave it up. There was no getting rid of Bulstrode & Co. They arrived at the station, with ten minutes to spare before the train came in. The Greyfriars boys were well known at the station, and they had free access to the platform.

They strolled there to wait for the train.

“Ten minutes!” yawned Bulstrode, glancing at the clock, and then strolling into the little stuffy waiting-room. “What do you mean, Wun Lung, by bringing us here so early?”

“Like his cheek!” said Skinner.

“Bump him!” said Snoop, who was always prepared to bully anybody when the odds were greatly on his side.

“Jolly good idea!”

Wun Lung retreated in alarm.

“No bumpee!” he exclaimed. “Allee light. S’pooze you waitee, me goee gettee talts, and eatee while you waitee.”

“Well, that’s a good idea!” said Bulstrode, more amiably. “Cut off!”

“Me lunee fastee.”

Wun Lung left the little waiting-room, and closed the door after him. Bulstrode called out to the little Chinese.

“Leave that door open!”

Wun Lung did not reply, but clicked the door shut.

“Leave that door open!” called out Bulstrode again. “It’s jolly stuffy in here. Don’t you hear me, you young ass?”

Whether Wun Lung heard or not, he did not answer.

“Go and open that door, Snoop.”

“Yes, Bulstrode,” said the sneak of the Remove meekly.

He went to the door and turned the handle. The door did not budge.

He pulled at it hard, but still it did not move.

Snoop looked puzzled.

“It’s got jammed somehow.”

“Bosh!” said Bulstrode. “Open it!”

“I can’t.”

“If I have to come and help you, you’ll be sorry.”

Snoop tugged at the door.

“I can’t help it,” he gasped; “it won’t come open. Wun Lung must have locked it on the outside.”

“Rats! There’s never a key in that lock.”

“Well, it’s fastened.”

“Rot! Open it, I tell you!”

“I can’t.”

Bulstrode scowled, and rose to his feet. He came over and pushed Snoop roughly out of the way, and grasped the handle of the door himself, and tugged.

The door did not move.

"There, what did I tell you?" exclaimed Snoop.
"Oh, shut up!"
Bulstrode tugged again; but the door was fast.

It was not locked, for it yielded a trifle each time it was tugged. But it was certainly fastened on the outside.

It did not take Bulstrode long to guess how it was fastened.

A length of whiplcord had been looped on the handle, and fastened to some firm object outside the waiting-room.

Until the cord was removed, the three juniors were prisoners in the room.

Bulstrode stamped with rage. He could hardly credit the fact that Wun Lung had dared to play this trick upon him, the bully of the Remove.

"My hat!" said Skinner. "We're prisoners!"
Bulstrode snapped his teeth.

"I'll make that Chinese worm wriggle for this!"

"Blessed if I see how you're going to do it, when you're fastened up in here."

Bulstrode did not reply, but went to the little window which looked out on the platform.

The window was too small for him to think of getting through it. He looked out through the glass.

Wun Lung was standing on the platform. Bulstrode tapped on the glass of the window. The little Chinese turned his head.

"Let us out!" roared Bulstrode.

Wun Lung chuckled.

"Do you hear? Let us out of this, you yellow little imp!"

Wun Lung did not reply, except by an expressive gesture.

He placed the thumb of his right hand to his nose, and extended the fingers. Then he placed the thumb of his left hand to the little finger of his right, and extended the fingers of his left hand.

In that expressive attitude he stood and grinned at the furious bully of the Remove.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Shut Up!

SKINNER chuckled softly, and Bulstrode turned a savage look upon him. Skinner became serious at once. He didn't like Bulstrode's look.

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Bulstrode.

"Oh, nothing!"
"Well, shut up, then!"

Bulstrode turned to the window again. He opened the lower sash, and put his head out.

There was hardly room for his burly shoulders to follow.

"Wun Lung!" he shouted.

The Chinese grinned.

"Will you unfasten that door?"

"No savvy."

"Let us out of this stuffy hole."

"No savvy."

"I'll break every bone in your body!" roared Bulstrode.

"No savvy."

"Will you open that door?"

"No savvy."

Bulstrode simply gasped with rage.

"You heathen imp," he shouted. "I'll—I'll squash you! Wait till I get hold of you! I'll pulverise you!"

"No savvy."

"Look here, we've got to get out of here somehow," said Bulstrode, gasping with fury, "and I'll simply smash up that heathen when I do!"

"When you do," said Skinner.

"We shall have to get through the window."

"Too small."

"Well, Snoop's very slim, and he can get through."

"I'll try," said Snoop.

"Come on, then—quick! The train will be in a few minutes now, and then the young beast will get away."

Snoop came to the little window and put his head out.

Wun Lung grinned at him and came over towards the window.

His little round pigtailed head was just on a level with the window.

With calm deliberation he drew a long, sharp pin from the folds of his loose garments and held it up to view.

"Snoopee no gettee out," he remarked.

"Look here, you heathen—"

"Wun Lung stickee pin in Snoop. What you tinkee?"

"I—I don't think the window's large

enough. Bulstrode," faltered Snoop; "I—I couldn't get my shoulders through."

"You'll jolly well have to!" retorted the Remove bully. "Get out!"

"I—I can't."

"Then I'll help you!"

"Hold on, I—I'll try!" gasped the wretched Snoop.

"Buck up, then!"

Snoop squeezed his shoulders through the window.

Wun Lung reached up with the pin, and Snoop squeezed back just in time to escape a lunge.

He knocked the back of his head on the sash, and gave a yell of agony.

"Ow!"

"Clumsy doit!" growled Bulstrode.

"Ow! I'm hurt!"

"Serve you right!"

"Is that all you've got to say?" shrieked Snoop, dancing and rubbing the back of his head. "Then you can get out of the blessed window yourself! I'm jolly well not going to try again!"

Bulstrode clenched his fists.

"You can get out of the window, or you can take a licking," he said, "I don't care which; but it's one or the other!"

"Look here, Bulstrode, I won't—"

The bully of the Remove advanced upon him, and Snoop retreated towards the window.

He was between Scylla and Charybdis, so to speak, and had the choice only of two evils.

"Hold on, Bulstrode, I—I—"

"Are you going?" demanded the Remove bully threateningly.

"I—I—I'll try!"

Snoop squeezed his shoulders out of the window again.

Wun Lung brandished the pin, and seemed to be selecting the spot he should plunge it into.

Snoop turned cold all over.

"Lemme get out, Wun Lung, old chap," he gasped, in a furtive whisper. "I'll cut out of the station, honour bright!"

Wun Lung hesitated a moment, and then grinned. He was not afraid of Snoop.

Although the smaller of the two, Wun Lung had heaps of pluck, and his knowledge of jiu-jitsu rendered him much more than a match for the sneak of the Remove.

He resolved to risk it.

He gave a quick nod of assent.

Snoop squirmed through the window with some difficulty, and rolled out on the platform.

He gasped with pain, and scrambled up.

"Now, then, unfasten the door!" shouted Bulstrode.

Wun Lung made a plunge at Snoop with the pin.

The Remove sneak ran along the platform at top speed, and Wun Lung chuckled.

Bulstrode put his head out of the window and roared:

"Snoop! Snoop! Come back! I'll lick you! Snoop!"

But Snoop did not heed.

He had had enough of Bulstrode for one afternoon.

He vanished out of the doorway at the end of the platform.

Bulstrode simply gasped. Skinner indulged in a soft chuckle.

The outcome of Bulstrode's efforts so far seemed humorous to Skinner.

The Remove bully turned on him with a savage scowl.

"You can get out of the window, Skinner!"

"No fear!" said Skinner promptly.

"I'll jolly well lick you, if you don't!"

"Well, I won't!"

Bulstrode wasted no more time in words.

He wanted somebody to wreak his fury upon, and Skinner was the only available person.

He ran at Skinner, hitting out, and the practical joker of the Remove was knocked all round the waiting-room.

He staggered to and fro, and finally collapsed in a heap on the floor.

There he lay gasping, and Bulstrode stood over him with glowering face and clenched fists.

"Get up!"

"Ow!"

"Get up, you worm!"

"Yow!"

"Will you get out of the window, then?"

"I—I—I'll try!" gasped Skinner.

"Then look sharp!" growled Bulstrode.

Skinner staggered to his feet.

He was feeling very much damaged, and did not want any further fisticuffs with Bulstrode.

He put his head out of the window, and squeezed his shoulders through.

"Now, then, Wun Lung—"
"Skinee goee back."
"Look here— Ow!"

The pin pricked into Skinner's arm, and he jerked himself back, and his head banged on the window-sash.

He gave a wild yell.

"Yaroo!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bulstrode. "Get out!"

"Ow! Ow!"

Bulstrode shoved him from behind. Skinner came half out of the window.

The little Chinese's face set grimly. He jabbed again and again with the pin, and Skinner writhed with anguish.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" he yelled. "Lemme get in, Bulstrode! The beast is puncturing me all over! Ow! Yow! Groo! Yaroo!"

"Stick to it!"

It was easy enough for Bulstrode to stand behind and shove Skinner on, and say "Stick to it!"

It was not so easy for Skinner to do the sticking to it.

"Lemme go!" he gasped.

"Oh, rats!"

Jab—jab—jab! Yell—yell—yell!

Skinner kicked out backwards at Bulstrode desperately. He had had enough and to spare.

Bulstrode gave a fiendish yell as Skinner's heel caught him on the shin, and he reeled away from the window, gasping with pain.

Skinner squeezed himself back, and landed in the room again.

Wun Lung chuckled.

There was a whistle down the line, and the train rolled into the station.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Hop Hi Arrives.

WUN LUNG turned to the train at once.

But Bulstrode and Skinner were not in a condition to renew their attack on the window.

Bulstrode was sitting down, nursing his shin and groaning, and Skinner was rubbing a dozen wounds.

The train stopped alongside the platform, and Wun Lung looked along the line of carriages anxiously for his brother.

A queer little yellow face looked out of a window, and a pair of bright black almond eyes peered and twinkled.

Wun Lung uttered an exclamation as he caught their glance.

"Hop Hi!"

He ran towards the carriage. Bulstrode rose to his feet in the waiting-room with a groan. He scowled fiercely at Skinner.

"You coward!" he snarled. "Why didn't you get out?"

"Oh, go and hang yourself!" retorted Skinner. "I'm punctured all over! Why couldn't you try yourself?"

"The train's in now."

"I don't care!"

"There's the new kid getting out."

"Blow the new kid!"

"If we don't get out now the jape's up."

"Blow the jape! I've had enough of it!" groaned Skinner. "I'm punctured!"

"You're a rotten coward!"

"Rats!"

Bulstrode looked savagely out of the window. He saw a diminutive Chinese alight from the train and embrace Wun Lung effusively.

This was evidently Hop Hi.

He was an exact repetition of Wun Lung, only on a smaller scale, and looked about two years younger.

He had the same sinuous figure, in the same loose garments; the same almond eyes and pigtail and yellowish-olive complexion, the same Mongolian features, and the same smile that was "child-like and bland."

He had, too, the same innocent and trustful expression, but by experience of Wun Lung, Bulstrode knew how much that was probably worth.

Several other passengers had alighted from the train, and the Friardale porter had come along the platform, looking as if he had been aroused from an afternoon nap by the arrival of the train, as no doubt he had.

Bulstrode called to him from the window.

"Here, porter!"

The porter stared at him drowsily, and went on slamming the doors of the carriages.

"Come here, fellow!" shouted Bulstrode.

The train rolled out of the station.

Then the sleepy porter condescended to pay some attention to Bulstrode.

Possibly he was not particularly pleased by Bulstrode's mode of address.

"Yessir!"
 "Open that door!"
 "Eh?"
 "Open that door!" roared Bulstrode.
 The porter blinked at him.
 "Which door, zur?"
 "That door—the waiting-room door!" bawled Bulstrode. "Can't you see? Haven't you any eyes in your silly head?"
 The porter blinked at the door.
 He saw that the handle was tied on the outside, and a slow grin came over his face.
 Bulstrode raved from the window.
 "Will you open that door at once, porter? I'll report you to the stationmaster! I'll have you sacked!"
 "Yessir!"
 "I'll have you kicked out of your job?" roared Bulstrode.
 "Thanky, sir!"
 "Will you open that door?"
 "Tain't in my dooty to unfasten doors," said the porter stolidly. "Which I'd like to oblige a perlitte young gent, but—"
 "You—you fool! Open the door!" yelled Bulstrode, as he saw Wun Lung and his minor walking quickly down the platform towards the exit.
 "That's not the way to make him open the door, you ass!" grunted Skinner. "Let me speak to him. I say, porter—"
 "Mind your own business, Skinner!"
 "Oh, all right; have it your own way!" said Skinner, shrugging his shoulders. "I don't care! You won't get out, that's all!"
 "Porter!" yelled Bulstrode, as that official walked away. "Porter!"
 The Friardale porter seemed to be affected with a sudden deafness. He walked on without turning his head.
 It did not occur to Bulstrode that a railway porter had feelings to be hurt like any other person.
 The indignant porter would not have opened that door then if Bulstrode had tipped him liberally.
 He went his way, growling to himself, and Bulstrode raved and shook his fist from the window in vain.
 "I told you so!" growled Skinner.
 "Oh, shut up!"
 "Well, didn't I?" demanded Skinner.
 "If you want a thick ear you're going the right way to get one," said Bulstrode, between his teeth. "Wun Lung's gone now; you can get out of the window!"
 Skinner looked dubiously at Bulstrode. In his present mood the Remove bully was not safe to argue with.
 Skinner squeezed out of the window, and dropped upon the platform.
 "Now open the door—quick!" said Bulstrode.
 Skinner was greatly inclined to walk away and leave the Remove bully a prisoner in the waiting-room, but thoughts of the consequences later restrained him; and he was anxious, too, to punish Wun Lung, which could not be done without Bulstrode's assistance.
 The Remove bully came out on the platform breathing fury.
 "Now we'll have a look for those alien cads!" he exclaimed. "They can't be gone far yet."
 "Right-ho!" said Skinner.
 They ran towards the station exit. The form of the porter barred the way, and with a decidedly unpleasant grin he held out his hand for the tickets.
 Bulstrode stared at him.
 "Let us pass; you fool!"
 "Tickets, please!"
 "Eh?"
 "Tickets, please!"
 "What do you mean?"
 "Tickets, please!"
 "You know we haven't any tickets!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "We came on the platform to meet a train. You saw us."
 "Tickets, please!"
 "You—you idiot!"
 "Young gents 'ave no right to enter the platform without tickets!" said the porter stolidly. "It's trespassing. Tickets, please, or fare, or I'll call a policeman and give you in charge for attempting to swindle the company!"
 Bulstrode glared at him. His rudeness to the porter was being paid for now; the man was quite in earnest.
 "Pay him the blessed fare!" said Skinner. "It's only twopence from the next station on the line!"
 "I—I won't! It's a swindle!"
 "Oh, I'm a swindler as well as a fool, am I?" said the porter unpleasantly. "Werry good! But you don't go till you've paid your fare."
 "I'll give you twopence, but—"

"You won't give me twopence," said the porter grimly. "You'll pay your fare from the junction—that's a shilling each."
 "Why, you—you thief!"
 "A shilling each, please! Twopence is the fare from the next station. Did you get in at the next station?"
 "You know we didn't—"
 "Then you'll pay from the junction!"
 Bulstrode and Skinner looked at one another in silent wrath.
 The porter certainly had the whip-hand of them.
 There was no help for it, and each of the juniors drew a shilling from his pocket and handed it to the porter.
 "We'll jolly well have a receipt for it, though!" said Skinner.

"Yes."
 "No plenty good," said Hop Hi. "S'pose we lun?"
 Wun Lung shook his head. He knew that it was of no use running. He drew his minor towards the tuckshop.
 "Gettee inside," he said.
 "Allee light!"
 The Chinese juniors hurried into the tuckshop. Bulstrode and Skinner slowed down, panting. Their victims were safe now!
 "Got 'em!" said Bulstrode, with much satisfaction.
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Now we'll make 'em sit up!"
 "What-ho!" said Skinner. "I'll teach the young beast to puncture me all over!"
 "Come in!"



The crowd in the passage thickened. They looked at Wun Lung, and stared blankly. He was dancing upon the centre of his study table. "Ka, kay, ko, ko, ko!" he was chanting.

The porter grinned, and gave them the receipt. Then they stamped out of the station, with only one consolation in prospect—that of "taking it out" of Wun Lung and Wun Lung minor.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
 Cheap Eggs.

"THERE they are!"
 Bulstrode uttered the exclamation as he caught sight of Wun Lung and Hop Hi in the village street.
 They had reached the tuckshop kept by Uncle Clegg, one of the last shops in the street.
 The two Chinese were walking quickly. Wun Lung knowing well enough that Bulstrode would not be very long in getting out of the waiting-room.
 And Wun Lung did not want to come to close quarters with Bulstrode.
 But the two Removees had run hard from the station, and they overtook Wun Lung and Hop Hi at the tuckshop.
 Wun Lung looked round nervously as he heard the pounding footsteps: Bulstrode and Skinner were bearing down upon him at top speed.
 Hop Hi looked round, too.
 "Whatee mattel?" he asked.
 "Beastee bullee," replied Wun Lung anxiously.
 Hop Hi nodded intelligently.
 "Lickee?" he asked.

And they walked towards the tuckshop. There was no hurry now. Their intended victims could not escape.
 Uncle Clegg came into the shop as the Chinese came in. He grinned affably enough at Wun Lung.
 Wun Lung had a larger allowance than any other junior at Greyfriars, not excepting even the Nabob of Bhanipur.
 He spent it royally, too, and the village tuckshop came in for a good share of it. Uncle Clegg was always glad to see Wun Lung.
 Wun Lung laid a sovereign on the counter.
 "Me wantee eggs, plenty muchee eggs, and soda-watel," he said.
 Uncle Clegg stared.
 Eggs and soda-water in large quantities made a rather unusual order; but a junior who had a sovereign to spend could order what he liked in Uncle Clegg's little shop.
 "Certainly, Master Wun Lung. Beautiful new laid eggs, twopence each—"
 "Me no wantee new-laid eggs."
 "Fresh eggs, ten a shilling—"
 "No wantee flesh eggs."
 "There's the ordinary kind, fourteen a shilling," said Uncle Clegg.
 "Me wantee velly old eggs, velly old-smelly."
 Uncle Clegg gasped.
 He had heard that the Chinese had some peculiar tastes in diet, but he had never dreamed that even a Chinaman could possibly

prefer old and mouldy eggs to new, fresh ones.

"Just as you like," he said. "Take 'em out of that box there—that box behind the others. They're pretty old—I've had 'em in for weeks—and they're not English, anyway. You can 'ave 'em for eighteen a shilling."

"Tankee muchee."

Wun Lung grabbed out the eggs in handfuls, and filled his minor's hands with them, and piled them on the counter.

By that time Bulstrode and Skinner were looking in at the door. Bulstrode grinned unpleasantly.

"So you're here, you heathen beast!"

"Me hehe, Bulstrode."

"I suppose you know you're going to have a licking?"

"No savvy."

"I'm going to lick you, you Chinese worm!"

"No savvy."

"Come on, Skinner! You collar the new beast, while I lick Wun Lung! We'll jolly well smash those eggs over them, too!"

"What-ho!" grinned Skinner.

And they came into the shop with grim looks. Wun Lung exchanged a quick glance with his minor.

"Chuckee, chuckee!" he murmured.

"Allee light!"

And the two Chinese began to hurl the eggs.

Uncle Clegg grinned. He understood now why the Chinese wanted smelly eggs, and cheap ones. They were not for eating purposes.

The first egg caught Bulstrode on the nose, and burst there. The Remove bully staggered back with a yell.

The next moment an egg smashed under Skinner's chin, and squelched over him. Skinner reeled against the door.

"Ow!"

"Oooch!"

"Groo!"

"Proof!"

Smash, smash, smash!

Wun Lung major and minor pelted away with the eggs at express speed. Their aim was good, though the eggs were not.

Squelch, squelch, squelch!

Bulstrode and Skinner simply staggered. They had not expected anything like this.

The eggs smashed all over them—they were blinded, choked, suffocated.

"Go it!" panted Wun Lung.

"Ha, ha! Muchee good!"

"Ow!" gasped Skinner, staggering out of the doorway. "I'm done! Stop it, you young fiends! Yow! Ow! Gerrooh!"

Bulstrode rushed blindly at the Chinese.

An egg caught him in the right eye, and another in the left, and another under the chin, and a fourth on the nose.

Bulstrode gasped and spluttered, and reeled against a big box of eggs, and sat down violently in it.

There was a yell from Uncle Clegg.

Bulstrode had sat down in his best six a shilling!

And the havoc the burly form of the Remove bully wrought in the box of eggs was, as Hurree Singh would have said, terrific.

"You young villain!" roared Uncle Clegg. "You'll pay for them eggs! Do you hear? You'll pay for them!"

"Yarrah!"

Wun Lung seized a siphon of soda-water from the counter and turned it upon the bully of the Remove, as he struggled in the egg-box.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-wow-ow!"

A steady stream of soda-water played upon the Remove bully, and it washed some of the egg stickiness from his face, but without much comfort to Bulstrode.

He struggled furiously out of the egg-box. "I—I'll smash you!" he panted.

"Lunnee!" gasped Wun Lung.

The two Chinese dodged out of the shop. Skinner was scraping the eggs and eggshells off his face and clothes outside, and he made no attempt to stop them.

Bulstrode, streaming with broken eggs, made a rush after them, but Uncle Clegg had whipped out from behind the counter, and he grasped the Remove bully by the shoulder.

"Lemme go!" yelled Bulstrode.

"No, you don't!" said Uncle Clegg grimly. "You've smashed them eggs, and you'll pay for them eggs! Sixteen shillings, please!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Then I'll come up to the school and complain to your 'eadmaster!"

"You old fool!"

"That's enough!" said Uncle Clegg. "We'll see wot Dr. Locke has to say about bullying."

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little boys, and smashing up a poor man's stock!"

"Don't be an idiot! I'll pay you for the rotten eggs!"

"They wasn't rotten eggs—they was six a shilling!"

"Here, take that!" yelled Bulstrode, slamming a handful of silver on the counter. "Do you think I can't pay, you old fool! Now get out of the way!"

Uncle Clegg let him go, and Bulstrode rushed from the shop, vowing vengeance on Wun Lung and his minor.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Feeding the Brutes.

"LOOK!"

"Behold!"

"See, they come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At the gates of Greyfriars a group of Second Form fags watched and waited. Dicky Nugent, Gatty, and Todd were there.

There were five or six more fags with them. They were waiting for the arrival of Wun Lung and Wun Lung minor.

When the two Chinese juniors came in sight there was a general grin and chuckle among the Second-Formers.

"Here they come!"

"Here's the new kid!"

"Here's the blessed heathen!"

"Velly nicee day," said Hop Hi affably.

"Me glad see handsome young gentlemen of Second Form!"

The handsome young gentlemen of the Second Form grinned.

"My hat!"

"Soft sawder!"

"Pile it on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Me velly glad see handsome young gentlemen," said Hop Hi, with a beaming smile. "Nicee walm day—velly plenty thilsty."

"Spooce handsome young gentlemen comee dinkee ginjee-pop with Hop Hi?"

"Well, that's a jolly good idea," said Todd. "Not bad," agreed Gatty.

"Nicee ginjee-pop, nicee talts," said Hop Hi. "Hop Hi pleasee stondee tleat to nice handsome young gentlemen."

Dicky Nugent chuckled. "Blessed if he isn't a more agreeable worm than his major!" he exclaimed. "But it's a warm afternoon, and it's a good thing. This way to the tuckshop."

And the Second-Formers swarmed off towards Mrs. Mimbble's little establishment. Wun Lung and Hop Hi went with them in the midst of the crowd.

A dusty junior came in from the road, and followed them.

It was Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter was thirsty, and, of course, hungry.

It was evident that there was a treat going on, and Bunter didn't care if it was being stood by a Second Form fag, or a First Form babe, for that matter, so long as he was allowed to share in it.

"I say, you fellows—" he began, entering the tuckshop in the wake of the Second Form crowd.

He was interrupted by a general yell. "Get out!"

"Turn that Remove rotter out!"

"Outside!"

"Oh, really, I say, you fellows—"

"Outside, Fatty!"

And Bunter was hustled out of the tuckshop.

Wun Lung was the only Removite the fags were inclined to stand. Wun Lung was giving generous orders to Mrs. Mimbble.

OUT ON MONDAY.

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"Thlee dozen of ginjee-pop, please, Mrs. Mimbble, and six dozen of jam-talts."

"My hat!"

"He's a giddy millionaire."

"Go it, Wun Lung!"

"He's a brick!"

"So is the new kid!"

"Yes, rather!"

"This is ripping ginjee-pop!"

"And the tarts—lovely!"

"Spiffing!"

The Second-Formers tucked in. More of the Form, attracted by the news that a feast was in progress, crowded into the tuckshop. The little shop was soon full up to its fullest capacity.

Dicky Nugent sat on the counter, with a bottle of ginjee-pop beside him, a foaming glass in his hand, and a plate of tarts on his knees. The other fags were sitting or standing, and all wiring in for all they were worth.

And all new-comers of the Second Form were welcome.

The supply of tuck was unlimited. Wun Lung had probably heard of the old maxim—"Feed the brute." And he was feeding the brutes, so to speak, right royally.

Hop Hi beamed upon the crowd. And the crowd beamed back again at Hop Hi.

A fellow who could stand a feed like this, Chinese or not, heathen or not, was not a fellow to be ragged.

"You're a brick, Hop Hi!" said Todd, slapping the new fag on the back. "You may be a giddy heathen, but you're a brick!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Me likee muchee handsome gentleman in Second Form!" said Hop Hi, beaming.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Me likee comee Gleyfials. Pellars handsome young gentlemen helpee Hop Hi takee grub in dolmitoly to reedee aftel lights out. What you tinkee?"

"What-ho!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

There was no doubt that the young gentlemen would. And when the Second Form crowded out of the tuckshop, Hop Hi was walking with his arms linked quite affectionately in Gatty's and Dicky Nugent's.

As for ragging, such a thought would have been scouted by the whole of the Second Form to a man.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Making It Pay.

HARRY WHARTON came towards the house with his cricket-bat under his arm and a glow of colour in his healthy cheeks.

Cricket practice was over for the afternoon, and the chums of the Remove were thinking of tea.

Near the door they met the Second Form crowd, and they stared a little at the sight of the new fag and the excellent terms he appeared to be on with the Second Form leaders.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "How's he done it? I'll bet anything that they intended to give him a warm reception."

"I'm jolly sure they did!" agreed Wharton. "It's Wun Lung's doing, somehow!"

"I'm jolly sure they did!" agreed Wharton. "It's Wun Lung's doing, somehow!"

Frank Nugent. "That blessed young heathen is as deep as a well. He's managed it."

"I suppose he has; I don't know how."

"The deepfulness of the esteemed Wun Lung is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Here he is; let us ask him requestfully to explain."

Wun Lung grinned as the Removites stopped him.

The Second Form were going in, Nugent minor and Gatty showing Hop Hi round the school in the most cordial and hospitable manner.

"How did you do it, kid?" asked Wharton. The little Chinese laughed in his peculiar silent laugh.

"Wun Lung tinkee tinkee," he explained. "Good dodge. Feedee Second Form up to chinee, ptee in good tempel. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wun Lung gotee lotee cashee," explained the little Chinese. "Spencee any amount to makee allee light for Hop Hi. You savvy?"

"Good!" said Harry, laughing. "It's a case of feeding the brute. Well, it's worth it, and I'm jolly glad young Hop Hi has started so well with his Form."

"Me glad, awfully beastly jolly."

And Wun Lung glided away grinning.

The Remove chums went up to their study laughing.

Whether the present haleyon weather in the Second Form would last was a question; but there was no doubt that Hop Hi had started well, and that was a very great point.

Bulstrode and Skinner came in a little later, and a crowd of Removites stared at them as they came into the Remove passage.

They had scraped off as much of the eggs as they could, but they were still pretty well smothered with yolk, and the smell of those eggs clung lovingly round them.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the matter? What have you kids been doing with yourselves? You want disinfecting!"

"Have you seen Wun Lung?" demanded Bulstrode.

"Yes; he's come in."

"I'm going to smash him!"

"Ha, ha! He's responsible for your egg condition?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop your rotten cackling!" said Bulstrode savagely. "I'll make that Chinese wriggle for this, I tell you!"

"You won't!" said Harry Wharton.

Bulstrode did not reply to that, but stamped up to the dormitory to get his clothes changed.

All the fellows chuckled over the story of the eggs, and even when Bulstrode had got rid of the smell of them—which was not soon—he was continually reminded of the incident by the remarks and chuckles of the Removites.

He was soon in a state of mind bordering on frenzy, for Bulstrode, like many persons who play ill-natured tricks, could not take it quietly when a joke was turned against himself.

The only consolation he had was the prospect of licking Snoop for deserting him at the station; and with that amicable intention he looked for Snoop.

But the sneak of the Remove had no desire to meet Bulstrode, and he kept out of the way.

He could not do so all the evening, however, and Bulstrode ran him to earth at last in a corner of the Common-room.

Bulstrode's eyes gleamed as he caught sight of him. Snoop rose to his feet, looking very nervous.

"I hope you—you got out of the waiting-room all right, Bulstrode," he said.

"I did—no thanks to you!" said Bulstrode.

"I—I had to go, you know."

"Yes; and now you have to take a licking for it," said Bulstrode.

Snoop cast a longing glance towards the door. Bulstrode moved to cut him off from it, and stretched out his hand.

Snoop dodged.

"Lemme alone!" he gasped.

"I'm jolly well going to—"

At that moment Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry entered the Common-room. Snoop, with a gasp of relief, rushed towards them. Bulstrode rushed after him.

"Stop, you young cad!"

Snoop dodged behind Harry Wharton.

Bulstrode hit out at him, and Harry caught the blow on his shoulder.

Wharton uttered an angry exclamation.

"What on earth do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"Sorry! I was hitting at Snoop."

"You'd better be a little more careful whom you hit at."

"Come out from behind Wharton, you cad!" roared Bulstrode.

"I—I won't!" stammered Snoop. "I—I say, Wharton, keep him off! You—you ought to put down bullying, as—as Form captain."

Wharton's lip curled.

"He—he's going for me because I wouldn't help him rag young Hop Hi," said Snoop, dodging round Wharton again, as Bulstrode made for him.

"Oh, I see! Ow!" roared Wharton, as he caught another drive intended for Snoop. "You frajvous ass, if you hit me again you'll get hurt!"

"Get out of the way, then!"

"Rats!"

"Keep him off!" gasped Snoop.

"Come here, you young cad!"

"I—I won't!"

Bulstrode hit out again, and Wharton caught the drive in his ribs.

Perhaps it was not so very much of an accident. Wharton's patience was exhausted.

He had warned Bulstrode, and now he proceeded to more active measures.

His right fist shot out, and Bulstrode caught the hard knuckles on his chin, and went backwards as if he had been shot.

He crashed on the floor with a sounding bump.

"He, he, he!" giggled Snoop. "Serve him right!"

"Sit on him," suggested Bob Cherry, as Bulstrode lay dazed. "Make him make it pax, you know."

Snoop caught at the idea.

In a moment he was sitting astride of Bulstrode, pinning him down to the floor. Strong

as Bulstrode was, he was now at so great a disadvantage that he was at Snoop's mercy. "Get off!" he roared, struggling.

"I jolly well won't!" said Snoop.

"You worm! I—I'll smash you!"

"Make it pax."

"I won't! I'm going to lick you!"

"Then I'll jolly well keep you here till bed-time!" said Snoop.

The fellows standing round roared with laughter. Bulstrode struggled furiously, but in vain.

Snoop had him tight. No helping hand was offered. The chums of Study No. 1 saw to that.

It was between Bulstrode and Snoop, and as Snoop was not hitting him when he was down, it was nobody's business to interfere.

Bulstrode almost choked with rage.

"Will you make it pax?" said Snoop.

"N—ye-e-es! Yes!"

"It's pax?"

"Yes!" panted Bulstrode.

Snoop rose, and Bulstrode staggered to his feet. The Remove bully was dishevelled and dusty, and in so great a fury that he had completely lost control of himself.

"Pax" was sacred, even among the most reckless fellows; but even "pax" did not restrain Bulstrode at that moment. He reached out at Snoop.

There was a yell at once.

"Cad!"

"Stop that, Bulstrode!" exclaimed Wharton. "You've made it pax. Don't be a worm."

"Mind your own business, Wharton!" said Bulstrode fiercely. "I—"

"Cad!"

"Hands off!"

Bulstrode glared defiance, but he had gone too far this time.

A score of hands seized him, and he was dragged to the door of the Common-room and flung out into the passage.

Even his old friends were against him now, when he had broken the most sacred pledge of schoolboy honour.

"Outside!"

"Cad!"

"Kick him out!"

And Bulstrode fell in a heap in the passage. He scrambled up, and charged madly back, only to be hurled forth again by the excited Removites.

This time he did not return. He limped away, sore and savage. He did not attempt to break the pax after that; but in his mind he saved up vows of vengeance for Hop Hi, the innocent cause of his discomfiture.

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Very Rough.

KNOWLES of the Sixth strode into the junior Common-room at Rookwood, with a black frown upon his brow and a stout ashplant in his hand. Knowles looked wrathful, and really it was not surprising. A very little sufficed to make Knowles wrathful; and a very great deal was going on in the junior Common-room.

It had started as an argument. Tommy Dodd & Co. had come over from the Modern side to argue a certain important matter with the Classical juniors. The Common-room being on the Classical side, the Modern juniors hardly ever came there, excepting when they were looking for trouble. They had their own "den" in the Modern wing. On this occasion, as it happened, they were not looking for trouble. But they had found it.

Nearly all the Rookwood juniors, Modern and Classical, were dissatisfied with the junior sports captain. It was agreed on all hands that Smythe of the Shell was no good. Tommy Dodd knew what was wanted. A new election, and a general rallying of Classical and Modern juniors to elect him, Tommy Dodd—that was Tommy's idea.

The Classics didn't see it. Jimmy Silver had his own ideas about what was wanted. A new election, and a general rallying of Moderns and Classics, to elect him, Jimmy Silver—that was his idea.

But Jimmy Silver was accommodating. He conceded that the case might be met by the election of one of his pals—Lovell or Raby or Newcome. He felt that he could not say fairer than that. As for the election of a Modern cad, that was absurd on the face of it, and he put it to Tommy Dodd as a sensible chap.

Then the band began to play, so to speak. Voices rose crescendo, and from words the rival juniors of Rookwood proceeded to actions.

Both sides had really intended that the matter should be argued out peacefully and calmly—quite calmly. But somehow or other, after ten minutes or so, Jimmy Silver had Tommy Dodd's head in chancery, and Lovell was rolling on the floor with Tommy Cook, and Newcome and Tommy Doyle were staggering about in a loving embrace, and Raby and Towle were hammering one another, and a dozen other excited juniors were shouting, punching, trampling, pom-melling, and generally raising Cain.

Then Knowles dropped in. "You young hooligans!" roared Knowles. "Stop that row at once!" Knowles advanced into the Common-room, gripping his ashplant.

"You young ruffians!" he said. "Do you know that you can be heard all over the place? Now, then, who started this?"

That was just like Knowles, too. The heroes of the Fourth had no intention whatever of accusing one another, and they simply blinked at Knowles.

"Sort of started by itself, I think, Knowles," ventured Tommy Dodd.

"We—we were only having a bit of an argument, Knowles," said Cook.

"Only talking about the cricket prospects," added Jimmy Silver. "We—we got a little excited, perhaps."

"I've no doubt you were the ringleader," said Knowles, with a glare at Silver. "Well, I'm going to cane you all round. Now, then, one at a time!"

"I say, Knowles—"

"You first, Dodd!"

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Tommy Dodd grunted, and came to take his medicine. It was very bitter medicine.

Knowles gave him three on each hand. "You next, Doyle!" said Knowles, closing his thin lips tightly.

Tommy Doyle went through it with a wry face. He suffered more severely than Tommy Dodd. Then came Tommy Cook's turn, and he wriggled with anguish. The three Tommies groaned in chorus.

Knowles was getting his hand in by this time. The rest of the Modern juniors took their punishment one after another. When he had disposed of the last of them the prefect turned on Jimmy Silver.

"You next, Silver!" Jimmy Silver laughed. "You're dreaming, Knowles!" he said pleasantly. "You can't cane the Classical side."

Knowles set his teeth. He was exceeding his authority as a prefect of the Modern side in inflicting canings on Classical juniors. But that was one of Knowles' little ways. And he had a special "down" on Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Will you come here, Silver?" "No, I won't!"

Knowles strode towards him, gripping the ashplant. He strode right at Jimmy Silver and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Let go!" roared Silver.

"Mind your own business, Knowles!"

"Clear off, you cad!"

Whack, whack, whack!

The ashplant came down across Jimmy Silver's shoulders with terrific vim. Knowles had completely lost his temper.

"Collar him, you duffers!" yelled Jimmy Silver, struggling furiously in the grasp of the big Sixth-Former.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome rushed on Knowles. He was dragged back and the ashplant torn from his hand. Raby tossed it out of the window into the quad. Knowles uttered a howl of rage and used his fists. Jimmy Silver went flying, and Lovell pitched across him, and then Raby and Newcome felt their heads being knocked together, and then Knowles pitched them over the two juniors on the floor.

Then the prefect strode out of the room. Jimmy Silver & Co. sat up dazedly. They were feeling hurt.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Silver. "The beast! The awful beast!"

"The horrible ruffian!" stuttered Lovell, clasping his nose with both hands. "The beastly prize-fighter. Oh dear!"

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Groo—booh—yow!"

There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the Common-room. And for once Classics and Moderns were quite in accord. Their own little disagreements were completely forgotten. The Fistical Four and the three Tommies vied with one another in breathing vengeance upon the bully of the Sixth.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Done in the Dark.

BULKELEY of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, was having a talk with Knowles, who had come across to see him that evening. Knowles' temper was still a little "edgewise" from the happenings of the afternoon. The defiance of his authority by the Classical juniors irritated him.

Certainly they had been pretty severely punished for it. But he was still irritated. Moreover, he knew that he might be called to account.

When he received Bulkeley's message asking him to come over he had no doubt whatever that Jimmy Silver & Co. had complained to their captain, and that Bulkeley wanted to see him about it. So Knowles had come over in a warlike humour.

But he was mistaken; the Fistical Four had not complained. Badly as Knowles had used them, they were not the kind to tell tales.

Bulkeley wanted to talk about the cricket. For ten minutes the two talked together, and then Knowles left the study, and went out into the darkness of the quadrangle.

He strode under the old beeches.

A sudden footstep under the heavy shadows of the trees made him pause and peer about him.

Even as he stopped there came a sudden rush of feet.

Knowles started.

"What—who— Oh!"

He had no time for more.

Hands grasped him on all sides, and an open bag was dragged over his head and jerked tight round his neck.

The astounded prefect struck out furiously on all sides at random, but the surprise was so sudden that he was down on the ground in a few seconds, still struggling. He shouted savagely, but the bag muffled his voice.

A knee was planted on his chest, and he felt the grip of a pair of hands on each of his wrists.

He struggled wildly, but he was helpless. He could tell that, but he had not caught the faintest glimpse of them in the darkness.

"You young hounds! Help! Help!"

But the thick bag drowned his cries, and a hand jammed it tighter over his mouth, almost choking him with dust.

He felt a slip-knot placed over his right wrist and drawn tight. Then his hands were dragged together, and, in spite of his resistance, the cord was twisted tightly round the wrists and knotted.

His hands being secured, his unknown captors turned their attention to his feet. His ankles were bound tightly together—several hands going to work deliberately, with the evident intention of making a secure job of it.

Then a cord was passed round the bag, fastening it round his neck.

Knowles was almost suffocated by this time. Probably he would have been quite suffocated, but a knife was slit across the bag, making an opening before his mouth sufficient to admit air. He opened his mouth to shout, but his captors evidently expected that, for a muddy chunk of turf was promptly jammed through the slit in the bag, and Knowles sputtered and gurgled instead of yelling.

There was a pause in the proceedings, and he heard faintly a murmur of voices—only the faintest murmur, which did not enable him to distinguish them.

Not that he had much doubt as to who they were. He was convinced that they were Jimmy Silver & Co. At least three or four pairs of hands had been busy upon him, and he was assured that they belonged to the Classical chums. He was as certain of that as if he could see them.

He lay panting and gasping, wondering furiously what his assailants were about to do. He soon discovered.

He was seized and raised from the ground, and this time he was certain that four pairs of hands were at work, for each of his arms and legs gave a hold to a different bearer. Four of them—the Classical chums of the Fourth, of course. Knowles inwardly resolved that they should pay dearly for it.

But what were they going to do? They couldn't intend to leave him like that. It was getting late in the evening; it would be bedtime soon. They could not intend to leave him out of doors.

He was alarmed now as well as enraged. He did not know what direction he was being carried in, but two or three times he bumped against a wall or a tree, and he knew that his captors were skirting the quadrangle, keeping in the shadows out of danger of lighted windows.

He was bumped down at last. He felt rough and stony ground under him. Not a word came from his assailants, but he heard a sound of retreating footsteps.

They were gone! The unfortunate prefect began to shout, but the bag muffled his cries.

Where was he? Had the young rascals set him down at a distance from the school buildings? If he did not make his voice heard, he was destined to pass the night there. The thought of it made him shudder.

No answer came to his cries. He lay there, panting, blind with rage. It was some time before the thought came to him to use his teeth on the bag. He succeeded in getting the edge of the slit between his teeth, and gnawed at it desperately.

The opening was soon enlarged, and he breathed more freely. Then he began to shout for help again, and his voice rang through the ruins, and echoed away over the old quadrangle of Rookwood.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Accused.

JIMMY SILVER sat up in bed, in the Fourth Form dormitory on the Classical side.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and the Fourth had been in bed for some time, and most of them had fallen asleep.

The Fistical Four, however, were still wakeful—for two reasons. They were still feeling the effects of that extremely painful "scrap" with Knowles in the Common-room, and they were plotting and scheming schemes for making the bully of the Sixth sorry for himself.

How exactly to make Knowles sorry for himself was a very difficult question, but it had to be answered somehow. The Classical Four did not mean to take their great wrongs lying down.

Jimmy Silver had been listening for some minutes, but not to the remarks of his comrades. He sat up at last.

"You fellows hear something?" he asked.

"I hear Hooker snoring," said Lovell.

"Pathead! Something outside, I mean! Listen!"

"Oh, rot!"

"Listen, I tell you—"

The juniors listened. Faintly through the silence of the night a cry came, as if from a great distance.

"Help!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "It's somebody calling for help!"

Jimmy Silver was out of bed in a moment.

He bent his head to listen, and as the cry came again he ascertained the direction.

The big windows at one end of the dormitory looked towards the old abbey ruins. It was from this direction the cry came.

"Help!"

Jimmy Silver jumped down.

"It's somebody in the ruins, calling for help," he said. "Nobody else seems to have heard it yet. Better go and tell Bulkeley."

"Yes, rather; we'll all come."

The four chums bundled into their clothes at top speed. Then they and two or three of their Form-mates dashed down the stairs four at a time, and sped away to Bulkeley's study.

Jimmy Silver bumped on the door, and opened it at once. There was an exclamation of wrathful astonishment in the study.

Bulkeley and Neville, and Price of the Sixth were there discussing the cricket prospects, and the prospect of trouble with the Modern side over the cricket. They jumped up, staring blankly at the juniors as they appeared in the doorway.

"You young sweeps!" exclaimed Bulkeley.

"What are you doing out of your dormitory?"

"There's somebody—"

"What?"

"Somebody's calling for help in the ruins!"

panted Jimmy Silver.

"Stuff!" said Neville.

Bulkeley looked at the junior in amazement.

"Is this a lark?" he grunted.

"Honest Injun, Bulkeley!"

"Somebody in the ruins calling for help!" repeated Price. "What utter rot! How could anybody get into the ruins after the gates are locked?"

"We heard it," said Lovell.

"How could you hear it?"

"Through the dorm window," said Jimmy Silver. "We hadn't gone to sleep."

"Well, you ought to have gone to sleep!" said Bulkeley. "More likely you went to sleep and dreamed it. Still, we'd better look, you fellows. If there's nobody in the ruins, these young jackanapes will be licked all round!"

"Well, I like that!" said Jimmy Silver indignantly. "After we've taken the trouble to come and tell you!"

"Go back to your dormitory," said Bulkeley. "Come on, you chaps! Better see if there's anything in it."

Neville and Price assented, and the three seniors hurried out of the house. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

"Knowles, by gum! Let's hope he's broken his neck!" said Newcome charitably. They ran into the ruins.

It was densely dark there, and they could see nothing but the rugged shapes of the old masses of masonry rising dimly on all sides.

"Where are you?" shouted Bulkeley.

"Here!"

"All right! We're coming! I can't see you. What's happened?"

"I'm tied up," ejaculated Bulkeley. He bumped into Jimmy Silver as he tried to find the direction of the voice. "Hallo! What are you fags doing here?"

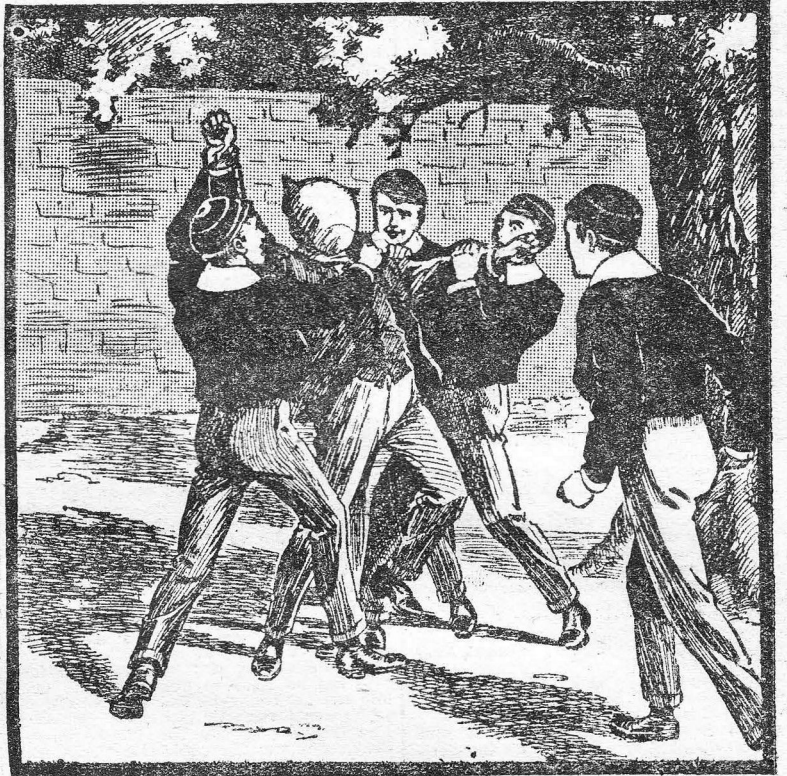
"We've come to help, please!"

Bulkeley groaned.

"Well, hunt for him then, as you're here," he said.

"What-ho! We'll soon find him."

Neville was coming with the lantern. The light gleamed through the night as he came running up. But before he arrived the Modern prefect was found. Jimmy Silver



There was a sudden rush of feet in the darkness, and hands grasped the prefect on all sides. An open bag was dragged over his head and jerked tight round his neck. "You young hounds!" yelled Knowles. "Help! Help!" (See page 9.)

"Back to the dorm?" murmured Raby. Silver shook his head.

"We're going to see what's the matter," he said. "Dash it all, we gave the alarm, didn't we? They've no right to shove us out of it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Newcome. "We might as well see the whole business through now we've started on it."

Jimmy Silver ran out of the house after the seniors, and his chums followed him. They were intensely curious to know what was the cause of the alarm, and they felt that they were entitled to assist in the investigations.

Out in the open air the cries could be heard more plainly.

"Help, help!"

"By Jove, it's right enough!" exclaimed Bulkeley. "Dash it! How dark it is! We'd better get a lantern. Get a lamp from the bike-shed, Neville, there's a good chap, and come after me!"

"Right-ho!"

Bulkeley and Price rushed away towards the ruins, and the juniors followed them, unnoticed in the dark. There was a pause of silence, and then the faint voice was heard calling again. It became louder as they drew near the old abbey.

"That's Knowles' toot!" whispered Lovell.

stumbled over something in the dark, and there was a yell.

"Yow!"

"Hallo! Here he is, Bulkeley!"

"Light this way!" called out the captain of Rookwood.

"Coming!"

Neville came up with the lighted lantern, panting. The searchers gathered round Knowles of the Sixth, as the light gleamed upon him. Bulkeley's eyes almost started from his head as he saw the prefect, bound hand and foot, with the bag fastened over his head.

"Great Scott! Is—is that you, Knowles?"

"Yes!" howled Knowles. "Get me loose, can't you?"

"I've got a knife," said Jimmy Silver.

"You young hound!" panted Knowles.

"Eh! What?"

"Don't come near me, you little beast! I'll have you sacked for this!"

"Wandering in his mind, I suppose," said Jimmy Silver, in great astonishment. "Blessed if I know what you're talking about, Knowles!"

"You young liar!"

"Oh, crumbs! What is he burbling about, Bulkeley?"

"Cut him loose!" said the captain of Rookwood brusquely.

Jimmy Silver obeyed. He soon whipped through the cords, and Knowles was freed, and the bag was dragged from his head. He staggered to his feet, his face red and inflamed with rage.

He made a blow at Jimmy Silver, and Silver promptly dodged back.

"What's the matter with him?" Silver exclaimed, in amazement.

"Hold on, Knowles," said Bulkeley. "There's nothing to go for that kid about. It was he who heard you calling, or we shouldn't have known you were here."

"Yes, I suppose the young villain didn't dare leave me here all night!" panted Knowles.

"What! Do you accuse Silver—"

"Yes, I do!" roared Knowles furiously. "I was collared in the quad after leaving you, and I've been here ever since. They tied me up and dragged me here. Those four young scoundrels!"

"My word!" stuttered Lovell.

"Hold on, Knowles!" said Bulkeley quietly. "This will have to be gone into. Do you say that you are certain these juniors assaulted you in this way?"

"Yes, I do!" howled Knowles.

"And we deny it," said Jimmy Silver. "It's a lie!"

"You hear him?" panted Knowles.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Bulkeley. "If you were collared in the dark, Knowles, are you quite sure you recognised them?"

"How could I recognise them, when a bag was put over my head first thing?" shouted Knowles.

"Then you didn't recognise them?"

"I didn't see them; but I knew who they were all the time."

"You guessed, you mean," said Bulkeley.

"There wasn't much guessing required. They did this because I licked them this afternoon."

"You had no right to lick them," said Bulkeley coldly.

"So you are backing them up, after what they've done?"

"If they've done this, they'll be flogged or expelled," said Bulkeley quietly. "But it's got to be proved first!"

"Oh, I expect that from you!" sneered Knowles. "Luckily, it doesn't rest with you. I'm going to the Head!"

Knowles, dusty and muddy and ruffled, strode furiously away, making directly for the School House. He evidently did not mean to lose any time in seeing the Head. Bulkeley bent a scathing glance upon the juniors.

"Do you kids give me your word that you know nothing about this?" he asked.

"Honour bright!" said the Fistical Four, with one voice.

There was sincerity and truth in the faces of the juniors, and it was almost impossible to doubt their assertion.

"Must have been Classical chaps," muttered Neville, voicing the captain's thoughts.

Bulkeley nodded, and walked away to the House. Jimmy Silver & Co. followed, in a very disturbed frame of mind.

"Go back to your dormitory, you fags," said Bulkeley. "The Head will want to see you."

And the four chums returned to their dormitory.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Lie.

LOVELL lighted the gas in the dormitory, and the Co. proceeded to finish dressing. Most of the Fourth had awakened, and questions were showered upon the four juniors. The story of the discovery of Knowles in the ruins, bound hand and foot, made the Classical Fourth gasp.

"Blessed if I see how they had the nerve to do it!" said Townsend, the dandy of the Fourth. "Why, you may be sacked for this, you duffers!"

"Us!" exclaimed Raby.

"Yes, you. Didn't you say Knowles has gone to tell the Head you did it?"

"Yes, he has; but we didn't do it."

"Gammon!" said Townsend.

The exasperated Jimmy Silver yanked the dandy of the Fourth out of bed, and bumped him on the floor.

Townsend roared as he came down in a tangle of bedclothes. Jimmy Silver grasped his ears, and knocked his head on the floor.

"Now do you believe me, you fathead?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Can you take my word now—what?"

"Yurroooh! Yes! Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulkeley looked in at the door. "Stop that row!" he said angrily. "You four are wanted in the Head's study at once. This isn't a time for ragging, Silver. You're in trouble enough already!"

"I don't see that I'm in trouble," said Jimmy Silver. "If Knowles accuses us of collaring him, Knowles is telling lies. It isn't a mistake—it's a lie!"

"You can tell all that to the Head!" growled Bulkeley. "Come with me!"

The four juniors followed him from the dormitory, leaving the Fourth in a buzz of excitement, and Townsend rubbing his head and mumbling.

Dr. Chisholm was looking sterner than they had ever known him look before. The dark frown upon his brow made them feel glummer than ever. Knowles had had the advantage of telling his story first. The prefect, a little calmer now, but dusty and muddy as when he had left the ruins, was standing by the Head's table. He gave the juniors a bitter look as they came in.

Dr. Chisholm made a sign to the juniors to approach his table. They came up, and stood in a row before him.

"You know why I sent for you?" said the Head, in a hard voice.

"Yes, sir."

"A most outrageous assault has been committed upon Knowles—an outrage unheard-of in the history of Rookwood!" said the Head sternly. "He accuses you!"

"I know he does, sir," said Jimmy Silver.

"You deny it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You assure me that you know nothing whatever about the matter?" asked the Head, searching their faces with his keen eyes.

"Nothing whatever, sir."

"It appears that you first heard Knowles calling for help. How did that come about, if you knew nothing of his situation?"

"We hadn't gone to sleep, sir," Jimmy Silver explained.

"You had not gone to sleep—so late?"

"We—were talking, sir. We often jaw—I mean chat—a bit before we go to sleep," said Jimmy Silver, "and the window of the dorm is towards the ruins. That's how we happened to hear him, and we came down at once and told Bulkeley. We didn't know it was Knowles then."

"Knowles tells me that he punished you this afternoon, and that you have acted thus from a feeling of revenge."

"He bullied us, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "He has no right to punish us. He came into our Common-room and bullied us!"

"It would certainly be more judicious, Knowles, if you left the juniors on the Classical side to the Classical prefects," said the Head parenthetically.

Knowles bit his lip.

"No Classical prefects had taken the trouble to see to the matter, sir," he replied. "I found the Common-room turned into a bear-garden. A dozen or more juniors were fighting."

"Knowles is always interfering with us, too," burst out Lovell. "He never will let us alone. Nobody on this side can stand him!"

"That will do, Lovell," said the Head drily. "By showing your personal animus against Knowles in this manner, you are adding weight to his accusation!"

"Oh!" murmured Lovell.

His outburst certainly had not improved matters.

"This is a very serious matter," said the Head. "The matter could not very well be more serious. I should be sorry to think that four Rookwood boys could stand before me and utter falsehoods. You are convinced, Knowles, that the persons who assaulted you were these four boys?"

"Quite, sir. There is not the slightest doubt of it in my mind."

"You did not see them?"

"I did not see them, sir, but I heard Silver," said Knowles, after a hesitation so brief as to be imperceptible.

"You heard him, Knowles?"

"Yes, sir, and recognised his voice!" said Knowles deliberately.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

JIMMY SILVER started violently. The Head's face had become as hard as iron now. Even Bulkeley looked very grim. Indeed, even Lovell and Raby and Newcome gave their chum startled glances.

Dr. Chisholm bent his frowning brows upon Jimmy Silver.

"You hear, Silver?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Jimmy. "I—I heard what Knowles said."

"What have you to say?"

Jimmy Silver's eyes blazed. He pulled himself together, his face flushing crimson with rage and excitement.

His voice rang through the study as he answered:

"I say that that's a lie, sir!"

Bulkeley's hand dropped on his shoulder.

"Quiet! Remember where you are!"

Jimmy Silver tried to pull himself together.

"I—I'm sorry, sir," he stammered. "I—I— But it isn't true, sir! He didn't hear my voice! He couldn't have, when I wasn't there!"

"I am afraid that I am bound to accept Knowles' statement," said the Head coldly. "The only question is as to your accomplices. Were they these boys?"

"You—you believe I—I did it, sir?" stammered Jimmy Silver, aghast.

"Undoubtedly."

"But I—I didn't, sir—I didn't! I—I—"

"Silence!"

Jimmy Silver's frenzied voice died away. There was condemnation in the doctor's face.

For a moment or two there was grim silence in the study. Bulkeley broke it.

"May I say a word, sir?"

"Certainly, Bulkeley."

"Knowles was assaulted after paying a visit to my study, sir. He left me about eight o'clock. It must have been within a few minutes that he was seized in the quadrangle."

"It was," said Knowles, wondering what the captain of Rookwood was driving at.

"Very well. Where were you at eight o'clock, Silver?"

"In my study—the end study, Bulkeley," said Jimmy.

"What were you doing?"

"Preparation. We're always doing prep at eight o'clock."

"Then you were not alone?"

"No fear! My study-mates were all there—these three chaps."

"That we were!" exclaimed Lovell, with a breath of relief.

"That hardly improves matters for the young rascals!" said Knowles, with a bitter smile. "There was no doubt that those three helped Silver in his assault on me. He would not be likely to leave them out of it. Of course, they had this story arranged ready for an inquiry."

"We've told the truth, sir," said Lovell stubbornly. "We were all in the end study together doing our prep!"

"Take them away, Bulkeley," said the Head icily. "To-morrow morning I shall deal with them. Knowles, I am deeply sorry for what has happened to you—it is unheard-of—but you may rest assured that the offenders will be severely punished."

"Dr. Chisholm—" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

The Head made a gesture.

"Silence! To-morrow morning, after prayers, you will be flogged, in the presence of the whole school. Go back to your dormitory!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stumbled out of the study. They were overwhelmed. The captain of Rookwood conducted them back to the Fourth-Form dormitory in grim silence. They found the Fourth in a buzz of excitement.

"Turn in," said Bulkeley, very quietly.

The Fistical Four turned in, and Bulkeley put out the light and retired, considerably puzzled and perplexed in his mind.

Jimmy Silver & Co. slept at last, and dreamed of a stern face and a switching birch. The star of the Fistical Four was certainly not in the ascendant.

THE END.

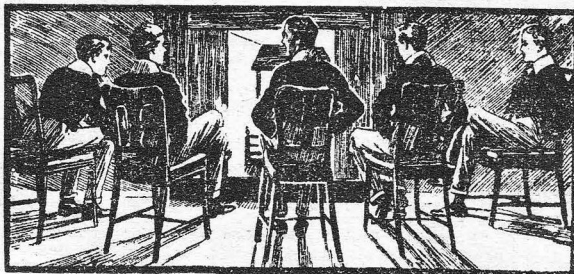
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of Tom Merry &
Co., the Chums
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By
MARTIN
CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fatty's Fiver.

FATTY WYNN'S plump face was illuminated by a beatific smile. Fatty Wynn, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, was always a good-tempered fellow. He was always cheerful, excepting when funds were very low and there was nothing to eat between meals. On such occasions as that Fatty Wynn's full-moon visage would be overcast. But, as a rule, he could be depended upon for good-temper, good-humour, and an unlimited supply of the milk of human kindness.

But his plump face had seldom beamed as it did now.

Judging by Fatty Wynn's expression as he emerged from the New House with Figgins and Kerr, his inseparable chums, everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Indeed, he looked so beatific that Tom Merry & Co., crossing the quad on their way to the School House, stopped to look at him. Usually there was war between New House and School House at St. Jim's. But Fatty Wynn was too happy to think of warfare then. He was in a mood to have embraced his worst enemy—if he had had one.

"Come on, you chaps!" he exclaimed genially.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked at him. They had never seen the Falstaff of the New House brimming over with such delightful good-humour.

"Whither bound, oh, fairest and fattest of porpoises?" asked Monty Lowther politely. "Tuckshop!" said Fatty Wynn. "Come along, and call all the fellows you meet! It's my treat!"

"Come into a fortune?" asked Tom Merry. "Or has your Aunt Jemima sent you a postal-order for one-and-six?" asked Lowther.

"Or have you found a five-shilling-piece in somebody's pocket?" Manners wanted to know.

Fatty Wynn sniffed.

"One-and-six be blowed! It's a fiver!"

"A what?"

"A which?"

"A who?"

The Terrible Three of the School House uttered those surprised exclamations in chorus. Fivers were not common in the Lower Forms at St. Jim's. True, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth, sometimes had fivers from his pater; but then D'Arcy's pater was a noble earl, and was popularly supposed to be rolling in fivers and tenners. It was an event for any other fellow to have a whole gorgeous fiver—an event which other fellows were always willing to help him celebrate in an appropriate manner.

"A fiver!" repeated Fatty Wynn. "Five-pound note, you know," he added innocently, as if to enlighten the School House fellows if they did not happen to know what a fiver was.

The Terrible Three smiled.

"Yes, I believe I know that a fiver is a five-pound note," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "Made of paper, isn't it—printed on, or something—"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've got a fiver—it's from my uncle. Kerr's going to help me write a letter thanking him presently. I don't often get a fiver—in fact, it's the first I've had since I've been at St. Jim's. I'm going to blow it!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Terrible Three. And Monty Lowther rushed at Fatty Wynn, and hugged him.

"Come to my waistcoat, my chubby angel!"

sobbed Lowther. "Let me fold you to my watchchain and weep!"

"Leggo, you silly ass!" roared Fatty Wynn, struggling in the embrace of the exuberant Lowther. "Don't play the giddy goat! The bell will be going for classes soon!"

"No time to lose!" said Figgins. "Come on! Hallo, Reddy, Lawrence, Owen! Come on! Walk up! Fatty Wynn's got a fiver, and it's his treat!"

"Hurrah!"

Escorted by quite a crowd of enthusiastic friends, Fatty Wynn rolled on to the tuckshop. Figgins and Kerr walked with their arms linked in Fatty Wynn's, and the Terrible Three marched behind them. Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, of the New House, fell into line.

As the news spread, fellows came from far and near. Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy, of the School House, arrived first, and Kangaroo, of the Shell, followed, and Glyn and Dane and Thompson and Reilly and Kerruish and Ray and Gore and Skimpole—in fact, as the poet says: "Warriors more than I can name!"

It was near time for afternoon classes. But afternoon classes were not to be thought of just then. Afternoon classes, indeed! Afternoon classes, when Fatty Wynn had a fiver, and it was Fatty Wynn's treat. It would be like Nero fiddling when Rome was burning. School House and New House were of one accord, and they backed Fatty Wynn up as one man.

Dame Taggles, who kept the little tuckshop in the corner of Big Quad, looked a little alarmed as the army marched in. For a moment she thought it was a rag, and that the exuberant juniors had come to sack the tuckshop. But her fears were quickly relieved. Fatty Wynn threw down the crisp, rustling fiver on the counter with the air of a prince.

"Change that, Mrs. Taggles, will you?"

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Taggles. "Certainly, Master Wynn!"

Fatty Wynn waved a fat hand.

"Walk up, you fellows, and give your orders, will you?"

Would they?

The little shop was crammed. Outside, the crowd was thickening. There was, as Monty Lowther said, standing room only, and there was not enough of that. Orders rolled in upon Mrs. Taggles—seldom had there been such a rush of custom. The good dame was kept busy with incessant demands.

"Ginger-beer!"

"Jam-tarts!"

"Lemonade!"

"Cake, cake, cake!"

"Dough-nuts!"

"Any old thing, but buck up!"

Fatty Wynn was already busy. He had helped himself to a large pie, and had started upon it with a keen appetite. It wasn't very long since he had had dinner. But, as Fatty would have said, he had only had three helpings of everything at dinner, so he was quite ready for another feed. The pie was large, and the pie was good. It was growing rapidly smaller now.

A dozen fellows were drinking Fatty Wynn's health at once, in ginger-beer, lemonade, sherbet, currant-wine, or some other liquid form of refreshment. Fatty Wynn grinned upon them all good-humouredly. He was too busy to speak.

"Fatty, old man," said Blake, of the Fourth, "you're a prince! Mine's ginger-beer, please! You're a giddy emperor! Thanks! I must pat you on the back, Fatty!"

Smack!

"Ger-r-r-ro-o-ogh!"

Blake's enthusiastic pat on the back came at an unfortunate moment. Fatty Wynn's mouth was full, and he choked. Perhaps the pat was somewhat hard, the School House junior being carried away by his enthusiasm. "Gro-o-o-o-o-ogh!"

"Catch him—he's suffocating!"

"Thump him on the back!"

"Poor old Fatty—it's apoplexy!"

"Fatty degeneration of the head!" said Monty Lowther sadly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wow-wow-wow-wo-o-oh!" gasped Fatty Wynn, as several juniors patted him on the back at once, to help him get his breath. Their efforts seemed to have quite an opposite effect to that intended. Fatty Wynn struggled away from his rescuers, crimson in the face, and gasping.

"Ow! Chuckit! Stoppit! Grooh! Leave off, you silly asses! You're busting my blessed backbone! Gro-o-ogh!"

"Feel better, dear boy?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically.

"Gro-o-oh!"

"I don't mind givin' you another thump, dear boy—"

"I'll jolly well punch your head if you do," stuttered Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, old chap—"

"Hallo, there goes the blessed bell!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Thanks a'ily, Wynn, dear boy! Bettah cut it now!"

The crowd began to melt. Fellows outside the shop had to go away unsatisfied. But Fatty Wynn had not finished the pie yet. Figgins shook him.

"Come on, Fatty!"

"Can't!"

"Bell's stopped!" said Kerr.

"Blow the bell!"

"You'll be late!" bawled Figgins.

"Look here, I'm going to finish my pie!" roared Fatty Wynn indignantly. "I haven't had time to have a mouthful. I'm not going to famish all the afternoon, you silly asses! You cut off, and tell old Lathom I'm busy—tell him I'm ill—tell him I'm dead—tell him anything you like! Yah!"

Figgins and Kerr grinned, and laid violent hands upon Fatty Wynn, and yanked him away from the counter.

"Come on, Fatty! Mrs. Taggles will give you your change after lessons. Come on!"

"Look here—"

"This way!"

"Lemme get something to put in my pocket, anyway!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Hold on a sec. Keep that pie for me, Mrs. Taggles—I'll take this toffee with me. All right, you beasts, I'm coming!"

And Fatty Wynn shoved a huge chunk of toffee into his pocket, and then his chums rushed him out of the tuckshop, and across the quadrangle to the School House, and the fat Fourth-Former, in a breathless and almost dizzy state, was rushed into the Fourth Form-room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Trouble in the Form-room.

M R. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, looked at Figgins & Co. over his glasses as they came in—late. The rest of the Fourth Form were in their places. Mr. Lathom was a mild little gentleman, with a mild little glance, and a mild little voice. He shook his head at Figgins & Co. more in sorrow than in anger.

"You are—er—late!" said Mr. Lathom. "So sorry, sir!" said Figgins. "We ran all the way—"

"Simply scudded, sir!" said Kerr.
 "I stopped a minute to finish something very important, sir!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Indeed! An imposition, I presume?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"Ahem! No—not an impost, sir."

"Ah! You were performing some task—"

"N-n-not exactly, sir."

"Then what was it you stopped to finish, Wynn?" demanded Mr. Lathom, raising his eyebrows.

"A—a pie, sir."

"What?"

"A pie, sir!" stammered Fatty Wynn.

"But I didn't finish it, sir. These two duffers—"

"I mean Figgy and Kerr—yanked me off before I could finish!"

Some of the Fourth Form smiled, and so did the Form-master.

"You may go to your places," he said.

And the chums of the New House went to their places. Figgy and Kerr were glad enough to escape without lines, but Fatty Wynn was not contented. He was thinking of the pie.

Schubert's Unfinished Symphony would have seemed a trifling matter to Fatty Wynn in comparison with his unfinished pie.

The pie, it was true, was beyond his reach until lessons were over; but the thought of it haunted Fatty Wynn, and made him feel hungry.

He whispered to Figgy that he was famished, and that he doubted whether he wouldn't faint before the Fourth were dismissed. But Figgy only grinned, and did not show the least sympathy.

"I say, Blake, have you got anything about you a chap could eat?" Fatty Wynn whispered to the chief of Study No. 6.

Jack Blake looked round sympathetically. Mr. Lathom was busy with the blackboard just then.

"Peckish?" asked Blake.

"Famished!" said Fatty Wynn pathetically.

"Yes, you must be," said Blake, with a nod. "I can see that you are growing visibly thinner, and gradually fading away!"

"Got anything a chap could eat?" repeated Fatty Wynn, taking no notice of Jack's pleasantry.

"Well, yes, if you care to eat it."

"Hand it over—I'll eat it right enough. I've only got some toffee in my pocket, and I can't break it without attracting attention. Hand it over!"

"I don't know that my little lot is particularly tasty," said Blake thoughtfully.

"Never mind! So long as a chap can eat it—"

"Oh, you can eat it all right, if you like!"

"Hand it over, then!"

Blake fumbled in his pocket, and produced something which he pressed into the palm of Fatty Wynn, stretched out under the desk to receive it. Fatty Wynn opened his hand and looked at it eagerly, and found that it was a chunk of cobbler's wax.

The fat Fourth-Former glared at Blake, but Blake's head was turned now, and the back of his curly head was quite impervious to Fatty Wynn's ferocious glare. It was true enough that Wynn could have eaten the gift if he liked; but he did not like.

He looked round in despair. He tossed a paper ball to attract the attention of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the next Form.

The pellet caught the swell of St. Jim's on the cheek, and he started in surprise, and uttered an ejaculation.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, you fathead!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn knew that D'Arcy had a cake of milk chocolate in his pocket—he had seen him slip it there. After lessons, Fatty Wynn would be willing to hand him half a dozen milk-chocolates in exchange for that piece now. A bird in hand was worth a whole flock in the bush to Fatty Wynn when he was hungry.

But Arthur Augustus evidently did not understand that the missile was intended to draw his attention as a friendly signal. He was very much astonished. Mr. Lathom heard his ejaculation, and looked round.

"You must not talk in class, D'Arcy!" said Mr. Lathom mildly.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but I was vewy much surprised. Somethin' stwuck me on the cheek, sir!" said D'Arcy.

"Indeed!"

"Yaas, it was most surpris'n. I suppose it must have been a fwagment of plastah from the ceiling, sir," said Arthur Augustus, jamming his eyeglass into his eye and looking intently upward.

"Well, well, never mind!" said Mr. Lathom. And he continued dabbing fearsome angles on the blackboard.

Fatty Wynn waited a few moments, rolling

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up another paper pellet in his fingers. When Mr. Lathom's back was turned again, he projected the pellet skillfully at D'Arcy, and caught him neatly on the side of his aristocratic nose.

Arthur Augustus gave quite a jump.

"Great Scott!"

Mr. Lathom came towards the Form, looking almost irritable. He turned his spectacles very severely upon the swell of the Fourth.

"D'Arcy, I cannot allow these absurd ejaculations! You must keep order in class or I shall be compelled to punish you! It is ridiculous!"

"Somethin' stwuck me on the nose, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"But I felt it, sir. I feah that the ceilin' is in a dangewous state," said Arthur Augustus. "A fwagment stwuck me on the side of the nose, sir—"

"Nonsense! Probably some boy is throwing paper pellets at you," said Mr. Lathom.

"Pray be more orderly, my boys!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

Arthur Augustus looked round him suspiciously. Some of the Fourth-Formers were grinning.

Fatty Wynn was in despair. Several other fellows in the Fourth had eatables about them, but, after the disaster with D'Arcy, Fatty Wynn did not feel inclined to endeavour to obtain possession of them. And he was getting hungrier and hungrier.

There was nothing for it but to eat the toffee; and the toffee was in a substantial chunk, and could not be broken without attracting the attention of the Form-master. It was much too thick and solid to be bitten through—at least, until it had been sucked for a considerable time.

Fatty Wynn debated the matter in his mind all through the lesson, and during the following lesson he resolved to risk it.

Mr. Lathom was taking the Fourth Form upon a personally-conducted tour amid the antiquities of that most interesting city—Rome. Mr. Lathom was quite eloquent on that subject.

Fatty popped the chunk of toffee into his mouth, and gurgled over it with delight. It bulged out his cheek as if he had had a terrific attack of toothache; but he kept his head down, and the burly Herries was in front of him, so he had some cover from observation. He hoped that he would not be called upon to answer any questions. If he had to stand up the swelling of his cheek would show at once, unless he swallowed the huge chunk whole, which he could not do without imminent danger of a fatality.

Perhaps the incident of the milk-chocolate made Mr. Lathom keep an unusually sharp eye on Fatty Wynn. He rapped out the fat Fourth-Former's name:

"Wynn!"

"Yes, sir!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

"Stand up!"

Fatty Wynn had to obey. He knew that he had to get rid of the toffee, and he could not eject it from his mouth under the eye of the Form-master. He made a desperate effort to bite it through.

Wynn had good strong teeth. He drove them right through the chunk of toffee; but, to his dismay, he found that they would not come out again. They had met in the middle of that obstinate chunk, and were fixed there, stuck too fast to be withdrawn.

Fatty Wynn would have gasped with horror, but he could not gasp now. If he had not been able to breathe through his nose, he would have been in imminent danger of suffocation. He stood up. The toffee was not visible now, but he could no more have spoken than he could have flown across the Form-room.

Mr. Lathom eyed him very severely.

"Wynn, I fear you are not paying attention to the lessons!"

Fatty Wynn was silent.

"Kindly tell me," said Mr. Lathom severely, "the name of the King of Rome who was driven into exile."

Fatty Wynn knew all about Tarquin, but he could not say so. He could not say anything.

Mr. Lathom looked surprised as the junior stood crimson and silent.

"Wynn!"

No reply.

Fatty Wynn made a desperate struggle with the toffee; but it was in vain. His jaws were as firmly locked as if they were in the fatal grip of lockjaw. He could only stare in dismay at his angry Form-master.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room. Mr. Lathom was quite red now. A refusal to reply by a junior was disrespectful, unheard-of. It would have been

surprising enough in a reckless fellow like Lumley-Lumley, or a sulky boy like Levison; but it was amazing in Fatty Wynn.

"Will you answer me, Wynn?"

Silence!

"Very well," said Mr. Lathom, greatly incensed, "I shall cane you, Wynn. Stand out here!"

Fatty Wynn, in utter dismay, advanced before the class. Mr. Lathom took up his cane. The kind little gentleman did not like punishing the boys, and he hesitated before he told Wynn to hold out his hand.

"What is the meaning of this conduct, Wynn?" he asked. "You are not a wickedly disrespectful boy as a rule. What is the meaning of this? Answer me!"

Fatty Wynn made a wild effort, in vain. His jaws were firmly fixed, and would not come asunder. His eyes rolled wildly as he made the effort, and Mr. Lathom was quite startled.

"How dare you make faces at me, Wynn?" he exclaimed angrily.

No reply.

"I give you one more opportunity of explaining yourself," said Mr. Lathom.

Silence!

"Then hold out your hand!"

Fatty Wynn held out his hand and grunted as the cane descended. He could grunt, but that was the sum total of his vocal powers at that moment.

"Now go back to your place," said Mr. Lathom. "I am sorry to cane you, but you have left me no other resource. Your conduct is amazing—unparalleled! I am shocked at you, Wynn! Have you not the grace to say that you are sorry?"

Fatty Wynn was sorry enough, and he would gladly have said so, if he had had the power; but he hadn't. He could only roll his eyes at the Form-master, and that seemed to make Mr. Lathom angrier than ever.

"You are incorrigible, Wynn!" exclaimed the Form-master. "You will be detained for two hours after lessons, and will occupy the time in writing out Latin verbs, giving the complete tenses of each verb. Go to your place!"

Fatty Wynn went to his place, silent, and overwhelmed with dismay. Detained for two hours after lessons. Alas for the unfinished pie!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tom Merry to the Rescue.

TOM MERRY & Co. met the Fourth Form as they came out. The Shell fellows were quite ready to resume the interrupted feed at the tuckshop, and to back up Fatty Wynn of the Fourth until his five-pound note had vanished. But Fatty Wynn was not among the juniors who came streaming out of the Fourth-Form room.

"Hallo! Where's Fatty?" asked Tom Merry.

"Detained!" said Figgy.

"Poor old Fatty! How long?"

"Two hours."

"He'll be dead by that time!" said Figgy, grinning. "But it's no joke for Fatty. He's got detained for two hours. He will be thinking of the pie all the time."

"Couldn't we sneak it into the Form-room to him?" suggested Tom Merry. "Lathom is going out this afternoon. He goes over to the vicarage to tea to-day, you know. He won't be on the look-out."

"Good egg!" said Figgy heartily. "That's a good idea. Unless Lathom asks some beastly prefect to keep an eye on Fatty," he added.

"If he does, we'll dodge the prefect somehow," said Manners. "Fatty is blowing his fever like a nobleman, and we're bound to stand by him in the hour of need. He shall have his pie in the Form-room if—"

"Shush!" whispered Blake.

But it was too late; Mr. Lathom, coming out of the Fourth-Form-room, had heard what Manners said. He did not speak; but he gave Manners a glance, and passed on towards the Fifth-Form-room. The chums of the School House looked at one another in dismay. The scheme was discovered now.

The Fifth-Form were not yet out, but they came out a few moments later. Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the Fifth, and Housemaster of the New House, followed the seniors into the passage, and Mr. Lathom stopped him. Mr. Ratcliff was looking as serious and sour as usual. He was not a good-tempered man. One of the chief worries of Mr. Ratcliff's life was that, being master of a senior Form, he could not use the cane in the Form-room. He could make the Fifth-Formers writhe with a sarcastic and biting tongue, but he could not

came them. He made up for it, however, by dealing with the juniors of his House.

He nodded to Mr. Lathom, and was passing on, when the Fourth Form-master detained him.

"A word, Mr. Ratcliff!" said the little Form-master.

"Certainly!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"I have had to detain a member of my Form!" said Mr. Lathom, his brow clouding over again at the remembrance of Fatty Wynn's supposed disrespect. "A boy who belongs to your House, Mr. Ratcliff."

The New House master looked more cordial at once. Punishment was a matter that appealed to him, and made him quite interested.

"Indeed! Figgins or Redfern, I suppose?"

"No, Wynn! He has been guilty of the greatest disrespect, and I was compelled to cane him," said Mr. Lathom. "I have never experienced such disrespect in my Form—never! It was really outrageous! I have detained him for two hours. I have to go out this afternoon, Mr. Ratcliff, and I understand that some of the juniors intend to convey catables to Wynn after I am gone." And Mr. Lathom cast a wrathful glance towards the group of juniors in the passage.

Mr. Ratcliff smiled genially.

"I will see that nothing of the kind happens, Mr. Lathom," he said. "I will certainly take the matter under my supervision, with pleasure!"

Mr. Ratcliff spoke quite truly there. It was a pleasure to have a hand in punishing anybody.

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Fourth Form master. "That is what I was about to ask. I trust I am not a severe master; but really Wynn's conduct was outrageous, and calculated to bring his Form-master into contempt with the Form. I really think that he deserves his punishment."

"I am sure of it!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "You may rely upon me."

"Thank you very much!"

And Mr. Lathom departed.

Mr. Ratcliff, instead of going over to his own House, as usual after lessons were finished, went into the Fourth Form room. Fatty Wynn was sitting at his desk there, looking very glum. He had been slowly negotiating the toffee, and had succeeded in getting his teeth free at last. But there was still a chunk of the toffee left in his mouth, which he was sucking.

Mr. Ratcliff glanced at him with a sour smile.

"I hear that you have been disrespectful to your Form-master, Wynn!"

"I am sorry, sir!" said Fatty.

"I have no doubt you are—now that you are detained!" said the New House master disagreeably. "I shall see that your detention is not interfered with. Your friends will not be allowed to convey disgusting and indigestible eatables to you, as I find is their intention. Bless my soul—you are eating something now! Wynn, you are a most disgusting boy!"

"Oh, sir!"

"You are always eating," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You have more helpings at meals than any other boy. You hold, I believe, orgies of greed in your study. It would do you good, Wynn, to be placed on bread and water in the punishment-room."

Fatty Wynn did not reply to that. The mere thought of it made him turn cold all over.

"What are you eating?" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Toffee, sir!" faltered Fatty Wynn.

"Go to the grate immediately, and eject it!"

Fatty Wynn went disconsolately to the grate and ejected the remains of the toffee. He gave the diminished chunk a mournful look and returned to his place. Fatty Wynn's luck was out that day. Mr. Lathom had been unusually severe with him—but the little finger of Mr. Ratcliff was heavier than the right hand of Mr. Lathom. Now that he had fallen into the clutches of his House-master, Fatty Wynn gave up all hope. When Mr. Ratcliff had a victim at his mercy, he was very much like a cat with a mouse.

"You will now do your work," resumed Mr. Ratcliff, when the toffee had been disposed of. "I cannot remain with you, Wynn, as I have other matters to attend to." Fatty Wynn's face unconsciously brightened up, but it fell again as Mr. Ratcliff went on sourly: "But I shall look in from time to time, and see that you are working, and that you have not been supplied with disgusting stuff from the tuckshop. I have suggested to

the Head to close that totally unnecessary establishment, but he has not seen fit to take my advice. However, I shall do my best to eradicate the greed from your nature, Wynn."

Fatty Wynn did not speak, and the House-master left the Form-room, closing the door behind him. Fatty Wynn shook a fist at the door, and then turned wearily to his work. Writing out Latin conjugations while a feed was waiting him in the tuckshop was weary work, and Fatty Wynn groaned over it. He had hoped to be able to dodge out of the Form-room after Mr. Lathom was gone out, but Mr. Ratcliff's intervention had nipped that scheme in the bud, Fatty Wynn groaned and scribbled verbs.

Mr. Ratcliff strode away from the Fourth Form-room, frowning at the group of juniors in the passage as he went. Tom Merry & Co. watched him go. But he did not go over to the New House. He made his way to the school library, an apartment which was situated in the great pile of the School House.

"Well, he's gone!" said Tom Merry. "Lathom's asked him to keep an eye on the Form-room, I suppose. But—"

"We can dodge him!" said Lowther.

"Ware rats!" said Blake uneasily. "If he spots us—"

"We must wisk it for the sake of poor old Fatty!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have a wathah good ideah!"

"Boil it!" said Monty Lowther disrespectfully.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"We can get something into the Form-room," said Kerr. "It's rough on Fatty. He's standing a feed like a giddy prince, and they've barred him off from grub till six o'clock. It's up to us to help him."

"Yaas, wathah! I have an ideah—"

"We'll manage it somehow," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I was wemarkin' that I had an ideah—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!" said all the juniors together.

"I wufese to wing off! I have a wippin' ideah! Watty may come lookin' into the place at any time, and if he catches us theah, theah will be a wow. I have a wippin' ideah for throwin' dust in his eyes."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Tom Merry resignedly.

"Get it, over."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Buck up!" roared Blake.

"I am buckin' up, deah boy; but if you keep on intewwuptin' me I shall weally nevah get to the point. To wesome. You wemem-bah that Kerr disguised himself as Tom Mewwy's uncle the othah day, and he took us all in—"

"What on earth has that to do with it?" roared Tom Merry.

"That's the ideah! Suppose I disguise myself as Kildare—"

"What!"

"Kildare of the Sixth! Kildare is a pwe-fect. A pwe-fect has a wight to go in and speak to a juniah who is detained. If Mr. Watefliff found Kildare there he could not say anythin'. Suppose I disguise myself and go there with some gwub—"

"You—you—you unmeasured, illimitable ass!" said Tom Merry. "Kildare is about a foot taller than you are, for one thing."

"Bah Jove! That would be wathah a difficulty," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "That would want thinkin' out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go up to the study and think it out!" urged Blake. "We'll think out something else down here."

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"You will make a muckah of it if I'm not with you," he said. "Pewwaps it's no good my disguishin' myself as Kildare, on second thoughts. Suppose I disguise myself as Doctah Holmes—"

"Why not as King George the Fifth?" suggested Monty Lowther. "Ratty couldn't argue with either of them if he found them in the Form-room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally Lowthah—"

"Or you could disguise yourself as a sane person!" exclaimed Lowther, as if struck with a sudden and really brilliant idea. "Nobody would recognise you then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Shut up, Gussy!" roared Blake. "While the grass is growing the cow's starving. While you're talking rot, Fatty is pinning for his pie."

"I'm not talkin' wot, you ass—"

"I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry, "some of you can keep watch for Ratty, and I'll buzz into the Form-room with the pie under my jacket."

"Better let me do it," said Figgins. "No reason why a School House chap should run the risk."

"Less risk for a School House chap," explained Tom Merry. "Ratty would have to report me to my own House-master—and Ration wouldn't be so rough on me as Ratty would be on you."

"Bah Jove, that's vevy twue!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But you had better leave it to me, Tom Mewwy. A delicate mattah like this requires a fellow of tact and judgment!"

"Kerr can buzz off and get the pie," said Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!" said Kerr. And he buzzed off at once.

The juniors kept a keen eye open for Mr. Ratcliff. They knew that the sour-tempered Housemaster would be glad to catch them if he could. But there was no sign of "Ratty" returning from the library. Blake posted himself in the library passage, to whistle if the big oak door opened—but it did not open.

Kerr returned with the pie, and Tom Merry slipped it—as well as he could—under his Eton jacket. Then the juniors cleared off, to await the result at a distance. The pie was wrapped in paper, but there was a slight trickle of gravy from within. Blake was still on the watch in the library passage, but he had given no signal.

The coast seemed clear, and Tom Merry boldly entered the Fourth Form-room. Fatty Wynn looked up, expecting to see Mr. Ratcliff. His fat face lighted up at the sight of Tom Merry of the Shell.

"Here you are, Fatty!"

"What is it?" asked the fat Fourth-Former eagerly.

"Your pie!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Shove it under your desk, in case Ratty comes in— Oh!"

"Merry!"

It was the sharp, acid voice of Mr. Horace Ratcliff. Tom Merry spun round, not knowing where the voice had come from for a moment. He had closed the Form-room door after him, and it was still closed.

"Merry!"

The voice came from the open window. Framed in the window were the head and shoulders of the New House master—and he was looking in, with his eyes fixed upon Tom Merry and the pie.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Catching It!

TOM MERRY gazed blankly at the New House master. He had supposed Mr. Horace Ratcliff to be still in the library, as Blake had given no signal of alarm.

It was some moments before he realised the duplicity of the New House master.

Mr. Ratcliff must have left the library by the door that led into the Head's house, instead of in the usual way.

From the Head's house he had let himself out into the quadrangle, and had walked round to the windows of the Fourth Form-room.

How long he had been standing at the window looking in neither of the juniors knew, as Fatty Wynn was sitting with his back to the window.

But undoubtedly Mr. Ratcliff had been there when Tom Merry entered the Form-room. He had seen the Shell fellow enter, and had heard every word he had spoken to Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry was deprived of the power of speech for a moment. Anger and indignation were in his face. He had broken a rule, certainly, in bringing a pie to a junior under detention in the Form-room. If a master or prefect found him out he expected to be punished. But masters and prefects were expected to "play the game." Mr. Ratcliff had not played the game. He had played the spy.

No other master at St. Jim's, nor any prefect excepting Knox, would have been guilty of the meanness of sneaking round by an unexpected way and watching an unsuspecting junior through a window.

Mr. Ratcliff had done it, however, and he did not look at all ashamed of himself. He was looking pleased—as pleased as a cat might look when a long-expected mouse falls into its claws at last.

Tom Merry looked at Mr. Ratcliff, and Mr. Ratcliff looked at Tom Merry. The thin lips of the Housemaster curled in a grim smile.

"What is that you have in your hand, Merry?" he demanded through the window.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"You know it is a pie, sir, as you were

listening to what I said!" he replied recklessly. He was too angry to be careful what he said.

"Merry!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "You are impertinent!"

Tom Merry did not reply to that. As a matter of fact, he had intended to be what Mr. Ratcliff called impertinent.

"I shall report your conduct and your language to your Housemaster!" said Mr. Ratcliff, his voice trembling with anger. "Wynn, I shall deal differently with you!"

Fatty Wynn made a hopeless gesture. He was in for it now.

"Leave this Form-room instantly, Merry, and go to your Housemaster's study! Take that pie with you! I shall join you there!"

"Very well!"

Tom Merry gave Fatty Wynn a hopeless glance, and quitted the Form-room. There was no help for it.

"As for you, Wynn," said Mr. Ratcliff, "you will remain here until the time of your detention has expired, and then you will immediately report yourself in my study."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff strode away.

Tom Merry had left the Form-room, with the pie in his hand, Jack Blake met him in the passage, and stared at the pie.

"Didn't you give it to Fatty?" he asked.

"Ratty caught me!"

"Ratty!" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment. "He's still in the library, isn't he? The door hasn't opened, anyway."

Tom Merry smiled bitterly.

"He must have sneaked out of the other door into the Head's House to catch us. He was at the window when I went in."

Blake jumped.

"Oh, my hat! The mean cad! He ought to be scragged!"

"Scragging's too good for him!" growled Tom Merry. "I've got to take this pie to Raiton. Ratty's coming to complain. Nice, isn't it?"

And he walked away to the Housemaster's study. He found Mr. Ratcliff there. Mr. Raiton, the master of the School House, was frowning. The New House master was pouring forth the tale of the uncommon wickedness of Tom Merry. He was only too glad of an opportunity of getting Tom Merry's Housemaster "down" on him.

Mr. Ratcliff did not approve of Mr. Raiton's lenient methods with his boys, and he interfered with them as much as he dared. Mr. Raiton was, as a matter of fact, "fed up" with Ratty's complaints; but in this instance he could not decline to take notice of it. Hence his frown of annoyance as Tom Merry came in, pie in hand.

"Merry, Mr. Ratcliff tells me that you have taken eatables into the Form-room to a New House boy under detention!"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"He does not deny it!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"I should not be likely to deny what is true!" said Tom Merry sharply.

"I quite believe that," said Mr. Raiton. "But you know you have done wrong, Merry. Mr. Ratcliff also tells me that you were impertinent to him when he discovered you."

"Grossly impertinent!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"I don't see how I was impertinent in stating a fact, sir," said Tom Merry. "Mr. Ratcliff asked me what was in this paper. He had already heard me tell Wynn that it was a pie, as he was listening at the window. I did not know he was there till he spoke."

Mr. Raiton coughed, and the New House master turned crimson.

"Is this the way you allow your junior boys to speak to a Housemaster?" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff thickly.

"Silence, Merry!"

"Well, he was listening, sir. He will not say that he was not listening—will you, Mr. Ratcliff?" asked Tom Merry innocently.

The New House master almost choked. He caught up a cane from the table.

"Pray leave this to me, Mr. Ratcliff!" said the School House master sharply. "I allow no one to deal with my boys in my House but myself."

The New House master gave him a bitter look. There was no love lost between the two Housemasters. Indeed, there had been an occasion when Mr. Raiton had very nearly pitched his colleague neck and crop out of his study. Mr. Ratcliff did not care to provoke him too far, and he threw down the cane.

"The boy is insolent, and you encourage him!" he snarled.

"That is not correct. I am going to punish him," said Mr. Raiton. "You know very

well you should not say such things to Mr. Ratcliff, Merry. Hold out your hand!"

And Tom Merry was caned. It was a stiff caning, too, but he bore it with grim silence, not a sound passing his lips.

"You may go!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

"May I take the pie, sir?" asked Tom.

"Oh, certainly!"

Tom Merry quitted the study. His hands were aching, but his anger was not directed against his Housemaster. It was Ratty he longed to be even with. Mr. Raiton had had no resource but to punish him.

Mr. Ratcliff strode away to his own House. Tom Merry's scornful words had cut him deeply—deeper than a cane could cut. He boxed Redfern's ears as he entered his House, and then went to his study. At six o'clock he was there—waiting for Fatty Wynn.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fatty's Raid!

WHEN six o'clock sounded, and Fatty Wynn came out of the Form-room, he found a crowd of his friends waiting for him. School House and

New House fellows alike were full of sympathy, and ready to follow Fatty Wynn to the tuckshop. Fatty's plump face was lugubrious.

"Wherefore that solemn brow, my infant?" asked Monty Lowther, slapping him on the back. "Come and wire in, my fat tulip!"

"Can't!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Bai Jove! You haven't lost your appetite, dear boy!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"No fear! Ratty says I'm to go to his study the moment I come out of the Form-room," groaned Fatty. "He'll be keeping an eye on the tuckshop, you can bet! I've got to go and report myself to the beast!"

"Oh, rotten!"

"Take this before you go," said Tom Merry, and he held out the pie wrapped in the newspaper.

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"Oh, good!"

The fat Fourth-Former retired into the window-recess and travelled through the remainder of the pie at top speed. He was finished by five minutes past six. There was a gleam of resolution in his eyes.

"I'm jolly well going to the tuckshop!" he announced. "That has only whetted my appetite. I'm going, and I'll chance Ratty!"

"Better buzz off and see Ratty first," said Figgins uneasily.

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"He might detain me. He may have heard that I've got a fiver, and want to blow it. You know what a spying beast he is. I'm not going to risk it. Come on!"

And Fatty Wynn marched off to the tuckshop. The crowd of juniors followed him there.

In a few minutes the feed was resumed, and was in full swing. Fatty Wynn, with his mouth full, gave Mrs. Taggles instructions for a particularly large and tasty pie which was to be delivered in Figgins' study in time for supper.

Fatty had hardly travelled through a dozen tarts, however, when a shadow darkened the door of the tuckshop, and there was a grunt of dismay from the juniors. The New House master strode in with rustling gown.

"Wynn!" he thundered.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Did I not order you to report yourself in my study as soon as your detention had expired?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff.

"I—I was just coming, sir."

"You will go there at once—at once, do you hear?"

Fatty Wynn rolled out of the tuckshop. Mr. Ratcliff, with a dark glance at the crowd of juniors, followed him. He could guess the remarks that would be made after he was gone. They were made, and they were not complimentary to Mr. Horace Ratcliff.

In his study, Mr. Ratcliff fixed a stern glance upon the fat Fourth-Former. Even Fatty Wynn's cheerful, plump face was looking a little sulky now. Mr. Ratcliff could have made a cherub sulky, given the opportunity.

"Wynn!"

"Yes, sir!" grunted Fatty.

"Don't answer me in that disrespectful manner, Wynn!" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "While under detention in the Form-room, you have had disgusting eatables conveyed to you. What have you to say for yourself?"

"I was hungry, sir."

"Nonsense! You are greedy, Wynn—

atrociously greedy! You have more helpings at meal-times than any other boy, even than older boys; I have noticed it. You eat between meals—you frequently gorge yourself, sir. There is no other word for it—you gorge yourself in your study."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Don't contradict me, Wynn! You gorge yourself, and I think your health will suffer. I am determined to put a stop to this. Unless you change your ways, I shall feel compelled to order your detention for a time in the punishment-room, upon a diet of bread and water."

Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed; but he said nothing.

"For a time, at least," said Mr. Ratcliff, "I shall place the tuckshop out of bounds for you, Wynn!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Fatty, in dismay.

"Don't interrupt me with ridiculous exclamations, Wynn. I shall also take care that you do not celebrate orgies of greed in your study. I shall make it a point to visit your study from time to time, in fact."

Fatty set his teeth. He had a wild desire to pick up a cushion and biff Mr. Ratcliff, but fortunately he restrained himself.

"If you please, sir, I've had a good-sized remittance to-day," he said meekly. "I was celebrating a bit, that's all, sir. I don't have a five-pound note every day, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you were expending a five-pound note in food?" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, aghast.

"Well, it was a treat for a lot of us, sir."

"Disgusting! I shall take care that nothing of the sort happens again. You will take two hundred lines, Wynn, and will proceed immediately to your study and write them out. You will not go to the tuckshop again. Now leave my study."

Fatty Wynn went without a word.

His friends waited for him in the tuckshop in vain.

Figgins and Kerr found him in the study when they came in, writing out lines.

Fatty Wynn looked up as his chums entered, glowering.

"Lines?" asked Figgins.

"Two hundred."

"Rotten!"

"I shall biff him some day!" said Fatty Wynn wildly. "I know I shall! Lines—and the tuckshop out of bounds!"

"The cad!"

"I'll biff him one of these days, if I get sacked for it!" said Fatty Wynn, picking up a cricket-stump and making wild passes in the air. "I'd give a term's pocket-money to give him just one good order!"

"So would we all!" grinned Figgins. "I've brought you your change, Fatty—here you are: sixteen-and-ninence—and the pie will be delivered here in time for supper."

"Old Ratty says there are to be no more orgies in the study!" snorted Wynn.

"Oh, he can't stop us from having supper in the study!" said Kerr. "Even Ratty can't do that! There's a giddy limit even to Ratty."

"I don't know. He was ratty because Tom Merry said he was listening at the Form-room window—and so he was listening, and spying, too, blow him!" said Fatty Wynn.

And the fat Fourth-Former ground out his lines with a darkened brow.

But Fatty Wynn bucked up again a little later in the evening, when the pie was delivered.

It was a large pie, it was a beautiful pie, and it was done to a turn. It was smoking hot, and the crust was beautifully browned. When Fatty Wynn jabbed a pen into the crust a savoury steam rose from the aperture. Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened. At that moment he was at peace with all the world, even with Horace Ratcliff.

The Co. sat down to supper with cheerful looks. Fatty Wynn was beginning to carve the pie, and had taken out one section, when the study door opened. Mr. Ratcliff came in, without knocking; a little way he had that did not endear him to the juniors.

He fixed a grim look upon the pie on the table, and on the dismayed faces of the Co.

"I thought so!" he said. "Did I not tell you that the tuckshop was out of bounds for you, Wynn?"

"I haven't been there, sir," said Fatty.

"Then how did that enormous pie come here?"

"It was delivered, sir."

"We're allowed to have pies for our supper, sir," said Kerr.

"To whom does that pie belong?"

"All of us, sir."

"Who has paid for it?"

"Wynn, sir," said Figgins reluctantly. "So I supposed. It is a trick to escape from my command. Wynn, take that pie to my study immediately. It will be confiscated."

"Wha-a-at!" stuttered Fatty Wynn. "M-m-my pie! Kik-kik-confiscated!" "Yes! Confiscated!" said Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "It shall be used for dinner tomorrow for the Fourth Form. I will put a stop to this disgusting gormandising, Wynn, or I will know the reason why! Take it to my study immediately!"

Fatty Wynn closed his teeth hard. But Figgins and Kerr gave him imploring looks. Matters could only be made worse by defying the Housemaster. Fatty Wynn, controlling his fury with difficulty, rose to his feet, and lifted up the huge pie and carried it out of the study. Under Mr. Ratcliff's greenish eyes it was carried down to the Housemaster's study, and Wynn placed it on the table there.

Without a word he departed. His feelings were too deep for words!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Ratcliff Gets the Pie.

TOM MERRY came over to Figgins & Co. just before bedtime. The captain of the Shell had important matters to discuss with the Co. concerning the coming football season. But he did not find the New House chums in a humour to discuss even football.

They were not in their study. Fatty Wynn was seated on the stairs, whence he could watch Mr. Ratcliff's study door. Figgins and Kerr leaned against the wall near him; and so Tom Merry found them.

"What's up?" Tom asked, in surprise. "Fatty looks like a cat watching a hole for a rat."

"Exactly what he is!" grinned Figgins. "Ratty has confiscated his pie," explained Kerr. "He's thinking of getting it back. It will only cause more trouble. But he is an obstinate ass!"

"I'm going to have my pie," growled Fatty Wynn. "Ratty has no right to confiscate it. We were going to have supper in my study when he swooped down. He's got it in there now. As soon as he clears out of his study I'm going to have it, even if he catches me. He won't be able to get it back when I've eaten it, anyway!"

"Hard cheese!" said Tom sympathetically. "I came over here to talk cricket."

"Oh, blow cricket!" said Fatty; and that remark from the champion junior wicket-keeper of St. Jim's was enough to show how deeply the feelings of Fatty Wynn were stirred.

"You'll get it in the neck if you raid your Housemaster's study, Fatty, old man," said Tom Merry persuasively.

"I don't care!" "It might mean a flogging."

"Let it!" "He's an obstinate ass when he's made up his mind!" growled Figgins. "Of course, I don't blame Fatty for being waxy, but it's no good butting at a stone wall. All these blessed Welshmen are the same. They never know when to give in."

"I'm not going to give in," said Fatty Wynn, in a sulphurous voice. "I'm going to have my pie!"

"Suppose Ratty doesn't come out—" "Then I'll raid his study after lights out," said Fatty. "But I think he's going to old Flatt's room to jaw—he often does in the evening. Hallo, there's his blessed door opening now—lie low!"

The juniors crept back into the shadow of the staircase. Mr. Ratcliff came out of his study, tapped at the door of Mr. Flatt, the music-master of St. Jim's, and entered. He disappeared from sight, and Fatty Wynn rose to his feet.

"I'm going to chance it now!" he said. "Fatty, old man—"

"I'm going! You fellows stay here."

"We'll come with you, if you're bound to risk it," said Figgins.

"Don't! Easier for one to scud off than three—and I can carry the pie all right," said Fatty Wynn. "You'll be in the way. Keep here."

And Fatty Wynn went downstairs, leaving Figgins and Kerr and Tom Merry in a very uneasy frame of mind. The fat Fourth-Former's hot Welsh blood was fairly up now, and when he was in his present mood it was useless to argue with him. Wynn was easily the best-tempered junior at St. Jim's; but injustice rankled in his breast, and wild

horses would not have dragged him back when he had made up his mind to go on.

The three juniors watched him over the banisters. Even if Fatty succeeded in getting clear with the pie, there would be trouble afterwards when Mr. Ratcliff discovered that it was gone. But it was very doubtful if he would get clear. Mr. Ratcliff might come out of the music-master's study at any moment. And, even as the three juniors thought of it, he came.

Figgins groaned under his breath. "There comes Ratty!"

Wynn was still in the Housemaster's study. He had found the study dark, Mr. Ratcliff having turned off the light when he left it. Fatty did not venture to put on the light, but he groped round for the pie. He knocked over an ink-bottle, and heard the ink swish over Mr. Ratcliff's papers, but he was too busy to take notice of a trifle like that. The pie was there—and Fatty Wynn's grasp closed over it. It was cold now, but through the crust came a very appetising smell of the rich gravy.

Fatty Wynn was starting for the door with the pie in his hands, when he heard a whistle from the staircase. Figgins had risked giving the signal.

The whistle meant that Mr. Ratcliff was coming. Fatty Wynn made a rush to get out of the study.

He made that rush just as Mr. Ratcliff reached the doorway.

The Housemaster, a little surprised to see his door wide open, when he remembered closing it after him, paused.

As he paused Fatty Wynn came bolting out at top speed.

There was a terrific collision. The fat Fourth-Former rushed right into the Housemaster, and Mr. Ratcliff crashed on the floor, and Fatty Wynn and the pie rolled over him.

"Bump! Crash!" "Oh, good heavens! Help!" "Yaroo!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Tom Merry on the staircase. "Fatty's done it now!"

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff. "Grooh! Ow, ow!"

Fatty Wynn rolled off the Housemaster. The piedish was inverted over Mr. Ratcliff's face, and the crust was smashed on his nose. Gravy and pieces of beef and kidney rolled thickly over the Housemaster's countenance. He was almost choked by the rush of rich gravy into his mouth as he opened it to yell.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Groogh! Help! Oh!"

Mr. Ratcliff sat up on the floor, blindly, and the piedish crashed down and broke. With a face streaming with thick brown gravy, the Housemaster stared and blinked round him. There was a rush of startled fellows from all sides at the uproar.

"Great Scott! What has happened, sir?" exclaimed Monteith, the head prefect of the New House, nearly stumbling over Mr. Ratcliff as he rushed to the spot.

"Seize that junior!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "It is Wynn! He has assaulted me—he has hurled me to the floor!"

"I—I—it was an accident, sir!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "I didn't see you."

"Don't tell falsehoods, Wynn!" "I'm not telling falsehoods," shouted Fatty Wynn furiously, "and you know I'm not!"

"Shut up, you young ass!" whispered Monteith.

"Wynn!" yelled Mr. Ratcliff.

"Do you think I should have wasted my pie like that if I could have helped it?" roared Fatty.

Mr. Ratcliff staggered to his feet. The fellows in the passage chuckled; they could not help it. The gravy, smothering his face and collar, gave the Housemaster a very peculiar appearance. But the furious look he cast about him caused the chuckling to die away very suddenly.

"Wynn, you came to my study to take away the pie I had confiscated!"

"Yes, I did!"

"You dare—you dare say so?"

"You asked me," said Wynn. "Do you want me to tell you lies?"

"You—you insolent young rascal!"

"You shouldn't have taken the pie!" said Fatty Wynn. "You had no right to, and you know you hadn't!"

The New House fellows gasped. The Housemaster had certainly never been talked to like that before. But Fatty Wynn was

furious, and did not care in the least what he said.

"You'd like me to tell lies about it, too, so that you could be down on me," went on the reckless junior. "But I'm jolly well not going to, so there!"

"Cheese it!" whispered Monteith.

"Sha'n't! I came here for my pie because I had a right to; and Mr. Ratcliff knows it! I'd say so to the Head himself!"

Mr. Ratcliff gasped for breath. He was so taken aback by that unexpected defiance that he could hardly find his voice.

"Wynn!" he stuttered. "Wynn, you—you—"

"Oh, I know you're going to lick me!" said Fatty Wynn. "I don't care. You'll find some excuse or other, anyway!"

"Take him away!" said Mr. Ratcliff hoarsely. "Take him away, Monteith, and lock him up in the punishment-room, and bring me the key!"

"Very well, sir. Come along, Wynn!"

And Fatty Wynn was marched off, with Monteith's hand upon his shoulder. Mr. Ratcliff walked away unsteadily to clean off the pie.

Figgins and Kerr regarded one another in utter dismay. Tom Merry was as concerned as Fatty Wynn's own chums.

"Well, he's done it now," said Figgins—"fairly done it!"

"Fancy slanging old Ratty!" groaned Kerr. "Well, he stood up to the cad jolly well!"

said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I thought Fatty had it in him! Poor old Fatty!"

It was evidently impossible to discuss football that evening, and Tom Merry left the New House. He took the news of Fatty Wynn's disaster over to the School House, and the fellows there grinned gleefully at the story of how Fatty Wynn had "slanged" his Housemaster.

"But it isn't a laughin' matter for poor old Fatty!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "Watty will be fidgetfully down on him, dear boys. He'll keep him in the punishment-room on bread and watah, now he's got a good excuse, in case the Head hears about it."

And all the School House fellows agreed that it was "hard cheese" on Fatty Wynn as indeed it was.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fatty Wynn's Resolve.

FATTY WYNN was alone. Monteith had led him to the punishment-room and locked him in, and had taken the key to Mr. Ratcliff. Fatty Wynn was left to his own reflections.

And his reflections were not pleasant. The detention-room in the New House was a small apartment, with a little barred window, looking out on a blank wall. It had a bare floor, and a little iron bed in the corner, and a few articles of furniture. It was a grim and comfortless apartment, very dusky in the daytime, owing to the window being overshadowed by another building. The gas was burning now, glimmering on the bare floor and the scanty furniture.

It was very seldom that the room was used. When the New House had been added to the great pile of St. Jim's a hundred years before, the room had been in demand—they were grim old days of heavy punishments and incessant floggings. The room still existed, and Mr. Ratcliff would have used it oftener but for the decided opinion of the Head upon the subject. The old days of detention on a bread-and-water diet were over, and Mr. Ratcliff regretted them.

Fatty Wynn walked to and fro in the little room, growling. He was very much annoyed, and he was very angry. His feed had been lost, and he was hungry. He wondered whether he would be allowed to have any supper; and that was a more important question for Fatty Wynn than anything that might have happened afterwards. After the way he had "slanged" Mr. Ratcliff, the probability was that he would be taken before the Head, and perhaps flogged. But the pressing and immediate question was supper.

There was a slight tap at the door, and a whispering voice at the keyhole.

"Fatty!"

The fat Fourth-Former hurried to the door. He knew Figgins's voice.

"Hallo, Figg!"

"All serene there, Fatty?"

"Oh, jolly comfortable!" said Fatty Wynn, with a grunt. "It's jolly ripping in this

blessed den—I don't think! How's old Ratty?"

Figgins chuckled.

"He's in his bed-room now, cleaning off the pie."

"My pie!" said Wynn. "What a rotten waste! Steak and kidney—and much gravy! All wasted on his silly chivvy!"

"He's sure to come and see you soon, Fatty. Be careful how you jaw to him. It's no good slanging a Housemaster, you know."

"He hadn't any right to take my pie!"

"Of course he hadn't," agreed Figgins soothingly. "But it can't be helped, you know; and you don't want to risk getting sacked, you know. Ratty persists that you biffed the pie into his chivvy on purpose."

"As if I'd have wasted it like that!" growled Fatty Wynn.

"Be diplomatic with him, Fatty," urged Figgins through the keyhole. "It wouldn't be a joke to be kept here for twenty-four hours on bread and water."

Fatty Wynn shuddered.

"He couldn't do it," he said. "I can't miss classes!"

"Ratty wouldn't care for that if he got his back up. All he cares about is having a good excuse to give the Head, if the Head should hear of it and make an inquiry."

"I jolly well sha'n't eat his bread and blessed water!" growled Fatty Wynn. "If they try to keep me here and starve me, I'll jolly well go on strike, like a Suffragette—hunger-strike, you know."

There was a chuckle outside the door. Figgins could not help being tickled at the idea of Fatty Wynn going on a hunger-strike if there was food within reach. Fatty Wynn heard the chuckle, and he grew wrathful.

"Do you think I couldn't do it?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes; of course you could if you liked," said Figgins. "But—but it would be better to soothe Ratty and get out, wouldn't it?"

"Blow Ratty!"

"If they keep you here over to-morrow, Fatty, I'll see if I can get you something to eat," whispered Figgins. "I may not be able to come and jaw to you again, so I'll tell you now. Kerr's keeping watch at the end of the passage this minute, and he's going to whistle if anybody comes along. Ratty would like to catch me here. Your window looks out on the entry next to the museum, Fatty."

"Yes," said Fatty.

"It's barred across, isn't it?"

"Yes; two bars."

"But you could pull anything up with a cord?"

"I haven't a cord."

"I can get you one in to-morrow. You'll have to let down a string from the window, and I'll tie the cord to it, and you can pull it up."

"But I haven't a string long enough," said Fatty Wynn. "It's forty feet if it's an inch."

"Make one!" said Figgins. "You can tear up your hanky into threads, and join them together, and make a string strong enough to pull up a cord. When you have a cord you can pull up anything. When you hear somebody whistling 'Bill Bailey' down below you'll know I'm there."

"Right-ho, Figg! If they try to starve me out you can get me some grub. I'll lower the change of my fiver on the cord," said Fatty Wynn.

There was a soft whistle in the passage.

"Good-night, Fatty!" whispered Figgins through the keyhole.

And he fled.

Fatty Wynn sat down on the Windsor chair, the only chair in the room, and waited for the enemy. A couple of minutes later the door was unlocked, and Mr. Horace Ratcliff entered the room. Fatty rose to his feet.

The Housemaster was looking pale, and very sour and bitter. He had had a painful shock in the collision with Fatty Wynn in the doorway of his study. He had not recovered from it yet, and his temper did not seem likely to recover from it at all. His eyes glinted as he fastened them upon Fatty Wynn.

"I trust, Wynn, that you have had time to realise the full heinousness of your conduct," he said in a harsh, grating voice.

Fatty Wynn did not reply.

"You and the two other juniors in your study have always been the worst-behaved juniors in the House," said Mr. Ratcliff, "but you have now gone beyond all bounds. You were disrespectful to your Form-master in class this afternoon—"

"I didn't mean to be, sir," said Fatty Wynn.

"Silence! Mr. Lathom complained that your conduct was outrageous, and very properly mentioned it to me, your Housemaster. You had indigestible food smuggled to you in the Form-room while under detention. You directly disobeyed my commands in getting a huge pie from the tuckshop. You attempted to take it from my study after it had been confiscated, and you rushed into me, and broke the pie upon my face, sir, either by accident or design."

"It was an accident, sir."

"It was not an accident that you were running out of the study with the pie in your hands, I suppose," said Mr. Ratcliff, raising his voice harshly. "Your conduct has been heinous, Wynn, and it is all due to your disgusting greediness—your insatiable desire to eat when you cannot possibly be hungry."

Fatty Wynn reddened. It was a tender point with him. He had a healthy appetite—an extremely healthy appetite—and he wasn't ashamed of it. He did not like to be called greedy. As he had often explained, he was not greedy, but he liked a lot.

"I am determined to cure this loathsome trait in your character," resumed Mr. Ratcliff. "I regard it as an important duty. For this purpose, Wynn, I shall confine you to this room for twenty-four hours upon a diet of bread and water."

Wynn's jaw dropped.

"When you emerge from this room, you will perhaps have learned, by forcible abstinence, to control your appetite," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"But I can't miss my lessons, sir!" faltered Fatty.

"I shall explain to Mr. Lathom."

Mr. Ratcliff turned to the door as a tap came on it, and opened it. The house-page brought in a tray with a plate of dry bread and a jug of water and a cup on it. He gave Fatty Wynn a commiserating look, and set the tray on the table. Then he brought in bed-clothes, and proceeded to make the bed.

Fatty Wynn watched these preparations with a heavy heart.

He did not much mind sleeping in the punishment-room instead of the Fourth-Form dormitory. Fatty Wynn was a good sleeper, and he could have slept soundly enough behind a haystack or under a railway arch. It was all the same to him, so long as he had plenty of sleep. It was the supper that worried him.

To declare a hunger-strike like a Suffragette seemed a really ripping idea, and he felt that if he did so Mr. Ratcliff would probably not venture to leave him without solid food for twenty-four hours.

But a hunger-strike meant going hungry, and that was the one prospect before which the fat Fourth-Former's fortitude failed.

But he looked at the dry chunks of bread, and reflected that it would not need very much self-denial to decline to touch them.

He came to a resolve, and as the page left the room, having finished his work there, and Mr. Ratcliff turned to follow him, Fatty Wynn spoke.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well?" said Mr. Ratcliff, turning a frowning glance upon him.

"I can't possibly live a whole day on bread and water, sir!"

Mr. Ratcliff smiled grimly.

"We shall see, Wynn."

"But it's impossible, sir!"

"I think not. At all events, the next twenty-four hours will show," said the New House master grimly.

"Very well, sir; then I must tell you that I shall decline to touch the bread!" said Fatty Wynn firmly.

"Indeed!"

"I mean it, sir! I shall have a hunger-strike!"

"You are at liberty to please yourself about that, Wynn," said Mr. Ratcliff drily. And he quitted the room, and turned the key in the lock after him.

Fatty Wynn shook his fat fist at the door after the Housemaster, and then looked glumly at the tray on the table. The dry bread was not tempting, certainly. But Fatty Wynn's appetite was keen. He was hungry—very hungry. The thought of going without food for twenty-four hours made him hungrier. He had heard that hunger-strikers stilled the worst pangs of hunger by drinking water, and Fatty Wynn tried it.

He drank from the jug a deep draught, but it only made him feel the hungrier. During the next half-hour he finished the jug of water. By that time he was in a mood to eat anything. He began to crumble the bread with his fingers, and eat little bits.

But he would not give way—he told himself firmly that he wouldn't. Mr. Ratcliff should see in the morning that he was as good as his word. He had declared a hunger-strike, and he was going to stick to it. When the room was visited in the morning they should find the bread untouched. Poor Fatty was nibbling at it all the time that these heroic thoughts were passing through his mind, and after a time he was quite surprised to see that half the bread was gone.

"May as well finish it now!" he murmured. "After all, perhaps it would be better to begin the hunger-strike to-morrow."

And the rest of the bread vanished in a twinkling, and then Fatty went to bed. So commenced Fatty's hunger-strike.

THE END.

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