

MARY & DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS AT ST. JIM'S!

(SEE THE GRAND STORY IN THIS ISSUE.)

The Penny **1½D** Popular

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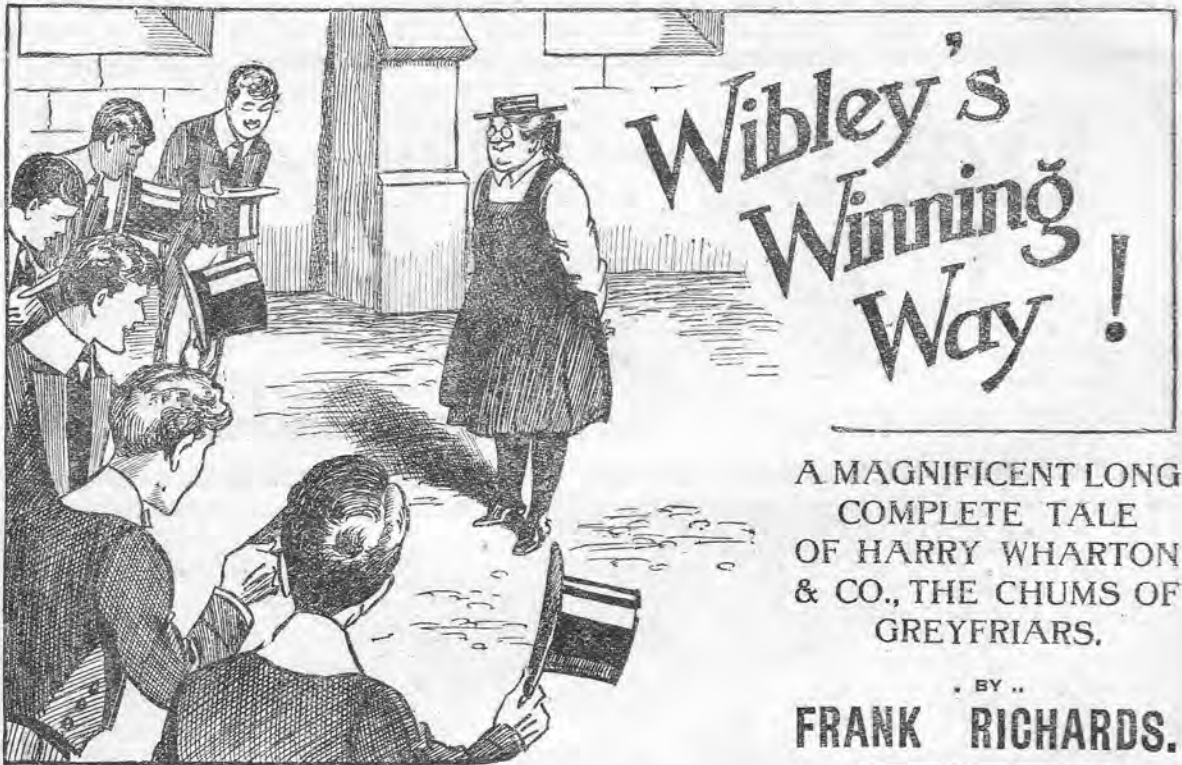
20 PAGES

3 COMPLETE SCHOOL STORIES AND GRAND CINEMA SERIAL.



BILLY BUNTER WALKS THE PLANK—AND COMES A CROPPER!

(An incident from the splendid tale of Greyfriars School in this issue).



Wibley's Winning Way!

A MAGNIFICENT LONG
COMPLETE TALE
OF HARRY WHARTON
& CO., THE CHUMS OF
GREYFRIARS.

BY ..

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Walking the Plank!

IT'S the absolute giddy limit!" declared Dennis Carr of the Remove. "The limit and the last straw rolled into one!" agreed Harry Wharton. "Fancy those beggars not turning up!"

Eleven fannelled figures were pacing to and fro in the Close of Greyfriars. They represented the Remove cricket team, and they were waiting for the visiting side—Highcliffe—to put in an appearance.

But the minutes passed, and there was no sign of Frank Courtenay & Co.

Presently Vernon-Smith turned on his heel, and strode away.

"Fod up with waiting!" he explained over his shoulder.

"Same here!" growled Squiff and Peter Todd and Dick Penfold simultaneously.

And they followed Vernon-Smith's example, and went into the building. They had no intention of frittering away their half-holiday, waiting for the Highcliffe cricketers to turn up.

Five minutes later Mark Linley went in, and the Remove eleven was depleted to six—the Famous Five and Dennis Carr.

"The match was fixed for two o'clock," growled Harry Wharton, "and it's now nearly three!"

"And no sign of Courtenay's crowd," said Frank Nugent. "I can't help thinking that something serious must have happened up at Highcliffe. We've never been let down like this before."

"Perhaps the esteemed Courtenay has been detainfully kept in?" suggested Hurree Singh.

"But it's hardly likely that the whole eleven would be detained," said Johnny Bull. "And even if they were, they could surely send a messenger to Greyfriars, to let us know how they were fixed."

And then Bob Cherry had a brain-wave.

"Let's telephone to Highcliffe," he said. "Old George won't mind us using the 'phone in the prefects' room."

"Old George" was intended to mean Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars. And he would have minded very much had he known that the telephone was being used without his permission.

But at that moment Wingate was taking part in a match on Big Side, and so the coast was clear.

Harry Wharton & Co. went along to the prefects' room.

Bob Cherry went to the telephone, and asked to be put through to Highcliffe, and the others gathered round, hoping to learn the why and the wherefore of Frank Courtenay & Co.'s non-appearance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That Highcliffe?"

The sour voice of Mr. Mobbs, one of the masters at the rival school, responded to Bob Cherry's breezy remark.

"This is Mr. Mobbs speaking. Who are you?"

"Cherry, of Greyfriars, sir."

"How dare you—a junior boy belonging to another school—call me up on the telephone!" barked Mr. Mobbs.

"It isn't you I want to speak to, sir—it's Frank Courtenay. If you wouldn't mind calling him to the phone—"

There was a snort from the other end of the wires, and Mr. Mobbs was understood to say that he wasn't an errand-boy.

"Sorry to trouble you, sir," said Bob Cherry, "but it's very important. If you will tell Courtenay—"

"Courtenay is out!" snapped Mr. Mobbs.

"Oh crumbs! Never mind! The Caterpillar will do, sir!"

"The—The Caterpillar?" gasped Mr. Mobbs.

"Yes—De Courcy, sir!"

"Both De Courcy and Courtenay are out!" was the curt reply. "And even if they were in I should not dream of converting myself into a special messenger on your behalf, Cherry. You are an impertinent young rascal!"

"My hat! I—"

Snap!

Mr. Mobbs had rung off.

"Anything doing, Bob?" asked Dennis Carr, as Bob Cherry replaced the receiver on its hooks.

"No. The amiable Mobbs tells me that Courtenay and the Caterpillar are both out. Then they are probably on the way here," said Wharton. "We'll wait a bit longer."

And the juniors did so. But they waited in vain. The Highcliffe team failed to put in an appearance.

"Cricket's off!" growled Johnny Bull, at length. "We can't fool about any longer."

"Next time I see Courtenay," said Harry Wharton grimly, "I shall have something to say to him! It's a bit too thick to cut the match without any explanation."

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were furious and indignant.

"Puzzle—what shall we do with our half-

holiday—or what's left of it?" growled Nugent.

"I vote we go over to Cliff House to tea," said Dennis Carr.

At this suggestion Harry Wharton & Co. brightened up considerably. But Johnny Bull's face soon clouded over again.

"How can we go and have tea with the girls when we haven't been invited?" he said.

"The last time Phyllis Howell was here she said we could go over to tea whenever we liked," replied Dennis Carr.

"By Jove, so she did!" said Bob Cherry. "Cliff House is the place for us, kiddies! Put me among the girls—those with the curly curls!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dennis Carr's suggestion would prevent the afternoon from being a complete "wash-out." The juniors thought so, anyway. And they went up to the Remove dormitory, and changed into their Sunday best.

Scrupulous care was taken in the selection of neckties, and so forth. Harry Wharton & Co. were not "nuttish" individuals, but on this occasion they were very thorough in the matter of their toilet. The girls had a habit of noticing little blemishes, such as ink-stained collars and muddy boots. And each junior resolved that his personal appearance should be beyond criticism.

Half an hour later, six resplendent and top-hatted juniors strolled down to the school gates.

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, saw them in the act of taking their departure, and he promptly scuttled after them.

"I say, you fellows! Wait for me! I'm coming along, you know!"

Harry Wharton & Co. disappeared into the roadway.

"Beasts!" panted Billy Bunter, quickening his pace. "They're either going to a wedding or a picnic. Good job I spotted them, or I should have been badly left!"

It always seemed an indisputable fact to Billy Bunter that if there was a feed of any sort under way, he ought to be in it. He took it for granted that he was the life and soul of any party; and the fact that he had repeatedly been warned to keep off the grass did not trouble him.

On this occasion the fat junior felt quite convinced that the Famous Five and Dennis Carr were on their way to a magnificent spread. They carried no tuck-hampers, but that made no difference. The tuck had prob-

ably been deposited in advance in some secluded retreat.

It was a scorching afternoon, and Billy Bunter's face resembled a boiled beetroot as he hurried in the wake of his schoolfellows.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not turn their heads, though they were perfectly aware of the fact that Bunter was on the trail.

"The porpoise is stalking us!" growled Johnny Bull. "We must shake him off somehow!"

"But how?" asked Nugent helplessly. "He'll guess that we're going to Cliff House."

Dennis Carr gave a chuckle.

"We'll go by a roundabout route," he said. "We'll strike off along the towing-path in the direction of Pegg, and we'll give the fat bouncer a four-mile walk."

"A four-mile gallop you mean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We'll run him to a standstill. That's the only way to get rid of Bunter!"

The juniors broke into a trot. Billy Bunter hailed them from the rear.

"I say, you fellows, wait for your old pal! Hang on a minute!"

But Harry Wharton & Co. continued their merry trot, and Bunter found it necessary to trot, too. The unaccustomed exercise caused him to puff and blow like a grampus, and the perspiration poured down his flabby cheeks.

But Billy Bunter was a very determined individual when there was a feed in prospect. And he managed to keep the juniors in sight as they sprinted along the towing-path.

Harry Wharton & Co. halted at length, and Billy Bunter gave a gasp of joy. He concluded that they were dead-beat—that within a couple of minutes he would succeed in catching up with them.

And then, to his dismay and chagrin, he saw Dennis Carr take a preliminary run, and clear the stream with a flying leap, landing safely amid the rushes on the opposite bank.

The Famous Five followed.

It was a big jump, but Harry Wharton & Co. were good athletes.

Billy Bunter wasn't an athlete at all. And he stood blinking in wrath and dismay at the juniors on the opposite bank.

"Beasts!" he yelled. "How do you think I'm going to get across?"

"Is that a conundrum, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry, deigning to notice the fat junior's existence at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glanced wildly up and down the bank.

There was no boat or bridge by means of which he could cross the river. There was a footbridge down by the boat-house, but the boat-house was nearly a mile away.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Dennis Carr, with a mock flourish of his hand.

"See you anon, when we come back from the feast!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—" spluttered Billy Bunter wrathfully.

And he measured the width of the river with his eye, as if he contemplated making the jump.

"Shouldn't advise you to try, porpoise!" said Johnny Bull, interpreting the fat junior's intentions. "The water's very wet at this part!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Bunter was goaded to fury at the prospect of not being able to participate in the feed. He took a preliminary run, and the juniors on the opposite bank watched him with bated breath.

"Get the lifebelts ready!" murmured Bob Cherry.

But none were needed, for as soon as Billy Bunter reached the edge of the river his courage oozed out at his finger-tips, and he stopped dead.

"Discretion is the better part of looking before you leap, as your English proverb has it!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" hooted Billy Bunter. "Come back!"

"Sorry, but we've got an appointment," said Harry Wharton. "If we hang about much longer, the rabbit-pie will be cold!"

The mention of rabbit-pie quickened Billy Bunter's determination to get across to the opposite bank somehow.

He gave a further glance round, and espied a plank of wood lying in the long grass.

Summoning all his strength, Billy Bunter lifted the plank, and hurled it across the river. It just reached from bank to bank.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not interfere. They felt that if Bunter was successful in

crossing the river, he deserved to join them, and to have a share in any feed that was going.

But the plank was a frail one. It might have supported a person of average weight. But Billy Bunter's weight was far above the average.

The fat junior was nearly half-way across when the plank collapsed—and so did Bunter! There was a wild yell of alarm, followed by a mighty splash. And the next moment Billy Bunter was seen to be wading in four feet of water.

Harry Wharton & Co. held their sides, laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Help, you rotters—help! I'm drowning!" shrieked Bunter.

"No such luck!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors knew that the river was not more than four feet deep at that part, otherwise they would of course have gone to Bunter's assistance. As it was, they played the part of lookers-on in Vienna. They watched the human porpoise wade to the bank—not the bank on which they stood, but the opposite one.

When at last Billy Bunter managed to scramble on to terra firma, he presented a weird and wonderful spectacle. His clothing was swollen, giving him the appearance of a kite-balloon. And long, slimy reeds were clinging to his neck.

"Poor old Bunter!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Didn't you know that bathing isn't allowed at this part of the river?"

"Better ramoose the ranch, before anybody spots you!" advised Dennis Carr.

Billy Bunter shook his fist at the grinning juniors, and turned away. He squelched along the towing-path, leaving behind him a trail of reeds and ooze.

And Harry Wharton & Co., having shaken off the unwelcome attentions of the Owl of the Remove, made a bee-line for Cliff House.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Forestalled!

"GOOD-AFTERNOON, Miss Bunter!" Six shining silk toppers were gracefully removed as the plump figure of Bessie Bunter came into view in the quadrangle of the girls' school.

Bessie rolled to a halt. She darted a keen look of inquiry at the Greyfriars juniors.

"What do you boys want here?" she demanded.

"We've come to tea," explained Bob Cherry politely.

"Who with—Miss Primrose?"

"My hat, no! I'd rather have tea with my aged grandmother!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Penelope Primrose was the principal of Cliff House School, and she was quite a good sort in her way. But she was inclined to be fussy and effusive, and Harry Wharton & Co. couldn't stand being called "Dear children," and treated as if they were still in the knickerbocker stage.

"Then who have you come to tea with?" asked Bessie Bunter curiously.

"With Miss Phyllis, Miss Marjorie, and Miss Clara," said Wharton.

Bessie gave a chuckle.

"I'm afraid you'll be unlucky!" she said.

"Why, how's that?" asked Nugent.

"Phyllis Howell's out, so is Marjorie Hazeldene, likewise Clara Trevlyn."

"Out!" echoed the juniors, in dismay.

Bessie nodded.

"They went out nearly an hour ago," she explained.

"By themselves?" inquired Dennis Carr.

"Of course not! They had a male escort!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked taken aback. And they looked still more so when Bessie Bunter told them that the "male escort" consisted of Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar, of Higbelfife!

"My only aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What awful nerve!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "Those Higbelfife bouncers have cut the cricket match, and come over here and poached on our preserves!"

"It's the absolute limit!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The extreme outside edge!" said Dennis Carr.

The Greyfriars juniors felt very strongly on the subject. They took a proprietary interest in Phyllis Howell, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Clara Trevlyn, a trio whose friendship they had long enjoyed.

And now they found, to their consternation

and fury, that they had been forestalled by their Higbelfife rivals, who had calmly cut the cricket match in order to take the Cliff House girls for a walk.

"Where have they gone, Miss Bunter?" inquired Harry Wharton at length.

"Picnicking somewhere on the seashore," answered Bessie vaguely. "And Phyllis Howell—the cat!—refused to let me join the party. I feel awfully cut up about it! But, never mind! Now that you boys have turned up, you can take me for a walk!"

"Oh, can we?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"It isn't often that I allow boys to take me out," continued Bessie, "but as you seem quite nice boys—neatly dressed, and all the rest of it—I'm going to give you the privilege."

Harry Wharton & Co. didn't look as if they regarded it as a privilege. They had taken Bessie Bunter for a walk once before, and the walk had terminated at the bunshop in the village. And Bessie had drained the place of all its cakes and pastries, besides draining the pockets of her unwilling hosts.

"We won't go very far," said Bessie. "It's too hot for a long tramp. We'll just pop into Friardale!"

"Sorry, Miss Bunter," muttered Harry Wharton, "but—ahem—the fact is, we've got an appointment!"

Bessie did not seem to hear.

"I'm quite ready," she said. "I shan't bother about a hat."

A deep groan escaped Bob Cherry. Bessie Bunter turned upon him quickly.

"Are you ill?" she asked, in some concern.

"Nunno!" stuttered Bob.

"Then why did you groan?"

"Did I groan? It—it must be the heat! It's simply scorching this afternoon!"

"It's nice and cool in the bunshop!" said Bessie cheerfully.

And Bob Cherry groaned again.

The juniors realised that there was no escape for them. They could not deal with Bessie as they had dealt with Billy. The plump Cliff House girl was determined to be entertained, and the chums of the Remove would have to entertain her. There was no way out.

As the party set out in the direction of Friardale, a muttered conversation took place between the Greyfriars juniors.

"How much tin have you got?" Wharton whispered hoarsely in Bob Cherry's ear.

"Not a giddy stiver!" replied Bob in an undertone.

"How about you, Franky?"

"Broke to the wide!" groaned Nugent.

"Johnny!"

"I've got twelve-and-six," muttered Johnny Bull, "but I wanted to get my bike mended out of that."

"Afraid your bike will have to wait, old man!" murmured Wharton. "What about you, Dennis? In funds?"

"I've got a ten-bob note," said Dennis Carr.

"Good! We shall need it—and several more besides, I'm thinking! How do you stand, Inky?"

"I have the quidful Fisher," said Hurree Singh in an undertone.

Bessie Bunter uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

"Why do you keep muttering, you boys?" she demanded. "Not holding a conspiracy, are you?"

"Ahem! We—we were just having a little confab!" stammered Wharton.

"Don't you know that it's very rude to speak under your breath when you're with a young lady?"

"Oh!"

Dennis Carr glanced up and down the road with a puzzled expression. He was evidently wondering where the young lady was!

There was no further conversation—whispered or otherwise—until Friardale was reached. Then Bessie Bunter headed straight for the bunshop.

"Come along!" she said briskly.

Like lambs being led to the slaughter, the six juniors followed.

Bessie made herself comfortable on the settee in the bunshop, and the orders she rapped out fairly threw the waitress into a flutter.

"I'll sample a rabbit-pie by way of a start," said Bessie. "And you can bring me some of those cream-buns—they look delicious! I think I'll have some doughnuts, too, and some chocolate eclairs, and a few maids of honour!"

Frank Nugent called faintly for help. But Bessie Bunter neither heard nor heeded. She had commenced operations on the rabbit-pie.

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—rather a curious thing to have for tea. But Bessie explained to the Greyfriars juniors that tea was the best meal of the day so far as she was concerned. And they quite believed her!

Harry Wharton & Co. contented themselves with ginger-beer and doughnuts. And they were careful not to overdo it, for they knew that they would need all their resources later on.

Bessie Bunter seemed to be trying to rival her plump brother. She made rapid inroads into the rabbit-pie, and then she tackled the pastries.

"Don't you think you'd better draw the line somewhere, Miss Bunter?" asked Dennis Carr at length.

"Eh?"

"You'll be making yourself ill if you go on at that rate!"

"None! Why, I haven't got into my stride yet!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"We're fairly in for it this afternoon, you fellows!" groaned Bob Cherry.

And the others nodded grimly. They bitterly regretted having paid that visit to Cliff House.

Bessie Bunter continued to go great guns. She was too short-sighted to notice the growing alarm in the expressions of her hosts.

"We shall have to stop her somehow," muttered Wharton, "or we shall never be able to meet the bill!"

"Time's getting on," remarked Johnny Bull by way of a hint. "We shall have to be moving!"

And Dennis Carr went so far as to rise from the table and don his topper.

But Bessie Bunter was blind and deaf to these hints. Having finished the cream-buns, she was about to beckon to the waitress when Harry Wharton intervened.

The captain of the Remove realised that hints, however broad, were completely wasted upon Bessie. And the only thing for it was to speak plainly to her, at the risk of giving offence.

So Wharton took the plunge.

"You've had enough, Miss Bunter!" he said firmly.

Bessie looked up sharply.

"I think I'm the best judge of that!" she exclaimed.

"We're not multi-millionaires," said Wharton. "We don't mind standing you a feed so long as you keep within reasonable limits. But if you go on at this rate you'll break the bank!"

"If it's not broken already!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bessie looked indignant.

"Why, you ought to be proud and pleased to stand me a little snack!" she said.

"A little snack!" gasped Dennis Carr. "Oh, help! If you call that a little snack, I shouldn't like to see you sit down to a square meal!"

"You are a nasty, rude boy!"

"So nasty and rude that I intend to buzz off," said Dennis. "I've had about enough of this!"

"We'll pay for what you've already consumed, Miss Bunter," said Johnny Bull, "but we won't be responsible for anything you have on top of that."

"Hear, hear!"

Bessie Bunter rose from the table at last. "I regard you as a set of mean and ill-mannered boys!" she exclaimed. "And I am sorry I asked you to take me out!"

"So are we!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The waitress presented the bill, which was not quite so bad as the juniors had anticipated. But it was quite bad enough.

Hurree Singh's "quidful Fisher," Johnny Bull's twelve-and-six, and Dennis Carr's ten shillings just covered the required amount.

The bill was paid, and Harry Wharton & Co. staggered out into the afternoon sunshine. They were feeling quite limp.

"You'll see me back to Cliff House, of course?" said Bessie Bunter.

"But surely you don't want to walk with a set of mean and ill-mannered boys?" said Frank Nugent, in surprise.

"Oh, you're not so bad!" conceded Bessie. "I'd rather walk back with you than go alone, anyway."

So the unhappy juniors piloted Bessie back to the girls' school, and it was with infinite relief that they parted from her in the gateway.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Dennis Carr. "We've got rid of that fat limpet at last!"

"And I've got rid of my twelve-and-six!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"And my quidful Fisher has gone sailing out into the west!" sighed Hurree Singh.

"Ripping half-holiday, isn't it?" said Bob

Cherry, with what the novelists call a mirthless laugh. "I haven't enjoyed myself so much for a long time!"

"It's been simply beastly! And it's all through those Highcliffe bouncers!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"We'll make them sit up for this!" said Johnny Bull savagely.

And the feelings which the Greyfriars juniors entertained towards Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar of Highcliffe were almost homicidal!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wibley to The Rescue.

"HERE they come!" said Bob Cherry suddenly.

A very merry party, consisting of Frank Courtenay, the Caterpillar, and the three Cliff House girls whom they had been entertaining came into sight round a bend in the road.

Harry Wharton & Co. halted.

"We can't very well go for the bouncers while the girls are with them," said Dennis Carr.

"No, but we can ask them what they mean by not turning up for the match!" said Wharton.

"Hallo," ejaculated the Caterpillar, when he came within speaking distance, "here's the top-hatted brigade! Where have you fellows been, begad—to a wedding?"

"Or a funeral?" inquired Frank Courtenay.

And the girls laughed.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not laugh. Six separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon the Highcliffe juniors. And if looks could have killed, Frank Courtenay and his chum would have expired there and then.

"What do you fellows mean by cutting the cricket-match?" demanded Wharton hotly.

"You gave us no alternative," replied Frank Courtenay.

"I don't understand you!"

"Then I'll make my meaning a little clearer. We waited till after three o'clock for your eleven to turn up, and you never came."

"What?"

There was a shout of astonishment from the Greyfriars fellows.

"Where—where did you wait?" gasped Wharton at length.

"At Highcliffe, of course!"

"But—but the match was ~~due~~ to be played at Greyfriars!"

Frank Courtenay looked flabbergasted.

"You didn't tell me that when you wrote arranging the fixture," he said.

"I thought you'd take it for granted."

"My dear fellow," drawled the Caterpillar, "we never take anything for granted at Highcliffe, barrin' the fact that we can lick you at any sort of sport!"

"You—you—"

Harry Wharton clenched his fists, and he would certainly have dashed one of them into the Caterpillar's face had the girls not been present.

"Don't get angry, Harry," said Phyllis Howell. "There seems to have been a misunderstanding. While you were waiting for Highcliffe to turn up, Highcliffe were waiting for you."

"You ought to have made it clear in your letter that the match was to be played at Greyfriars," said Marjorie Hazeldene.

Wharton dropped his hands to his sides.

"If these fellows had had an ounce of savvy," he said, "they'd have known where the match was to be played."

"We're not thought-readers, old chap," said Frank Courtenay. "I should advise you to be more explicit in future."

Wharton nearly choked.

"We frittered away the best part of the afternoon waiting for you fellows!" he said.

"It was your own fault!"

"Absolutely!" said the Caterpillar.

"Look here—"

"Come along, Harry!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"No use arguing with the bouncers."

"What have you fellows been doing?" inquired Clara Trevlyn, surveying the Greyfriars group.

"Treating Bessie Bunter!" groaned Dennis Carr.

Miss Clara chuckled.

"No wonder you're all in a bad temper!"

"We came over to Cliff House to have tea with you," said Nugent rather reproachfully, "and we found you'd gone out with these bouncers."

"They're not bouncers," said Marjorie Hazeldene, smiling. "They're awfully good sports!"

"And they've given us a grand time!" chimed in Phyllis Howell. "We had a picnic in one of the smugglers' caves. It was great!"

"Simply top-hole!" murmured the Caterpillar. "It's been a most exhilaratin' an' entertainin' afternoon!"

Harry Wharton & Co. simply writhed. But they were powerless to get their own back on the Highcliffers—just then, at any rate.

"We'll see you fellows later," said Bob Cherry, and his tone was full of meaning.

"Meanwhile, we must be getting along."

And the Greyfriars juniors raised their hats to the girls, directed a final glare at Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar, and went on their way.

They tramped back to Greyfriars in moody silence.

It had been a disastrous afternoon. The misunderstanding on the subject of the cricket-match was galling enough, and the fact that Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar had forestalled their rivals, and basked in the society of the Cliff House girls, was maddening.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Wibley of the Remove, as the six juniors came into the Common-room. "You fellows look pretty sick. What's happened?"

"We've been dished, diddled, and done by a couple of Highcliffe bouncers!" growled Dennis Carr.

Wibley looked interested, and so did the other juniors who had gathered round.

"Has there been a scrap?" inquired Dick Russell.

"No such luck!" grunted Bob Cherry. "I'd cheerfully have put the Caterpillar's nose out of joint if the girls hadn't been there!"

"And I'd have wiped up the ground with Courtenay!" said Harry Wharton.

"Faith, an' what have they done?" asked Mick Desmond.

"They deserted our pitch!" growled Johnny Bull. "They took Phyllis and Marjorie and Clara out for a picnic—"

"And we were obliged to entertain Bessie Bunter!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at!" said Wharton irritably. "We've got to get our own back on those Highcliffe bouncers somehow."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "They fairly scored over us this afternoon, and it's up to us to turn the tables."

"Why not waylay the bouncers somewhere on the road, and give 'em a jolly good hammering?" suggested Boissovier major.

"Too clumsy," was Dennis Carr's comment.

"After all, we've got no serious quarrel with Courtenay and the Caterpillar," said Harry Wharton.

"What! No serious quarrel—when they cut the cricket-match!" shouted Dick Russell.

"I'm afraid it was as much our fault as theirs—though, of course, we didn't admit as much. You see, I forgot to mention, in my letter to Courtenay, where the match was to be played. The result was that the Highcliffe fellows expected us to go there, while we were expecting them to come here."

"Bad management," said Skinner, shaking his head gravely. "High time we had a new skipper, I think."

"And it's high time you had a thick ear!" growled Bob Cherry. "You'll get one if you don't dry up!"

Skinner subsided. And then Wibley, who had been absorbed in thought for some moments, spoke.

"I've been thinking," he said.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked hopeful. When Wibley had been thinking there was generally trouble in store for the Remove's rivals.

"You've got a wheeze, Wib?" said Nugent eagerly.

Wibley nodded.

"Get it off your chest!" said Bob Cherry.

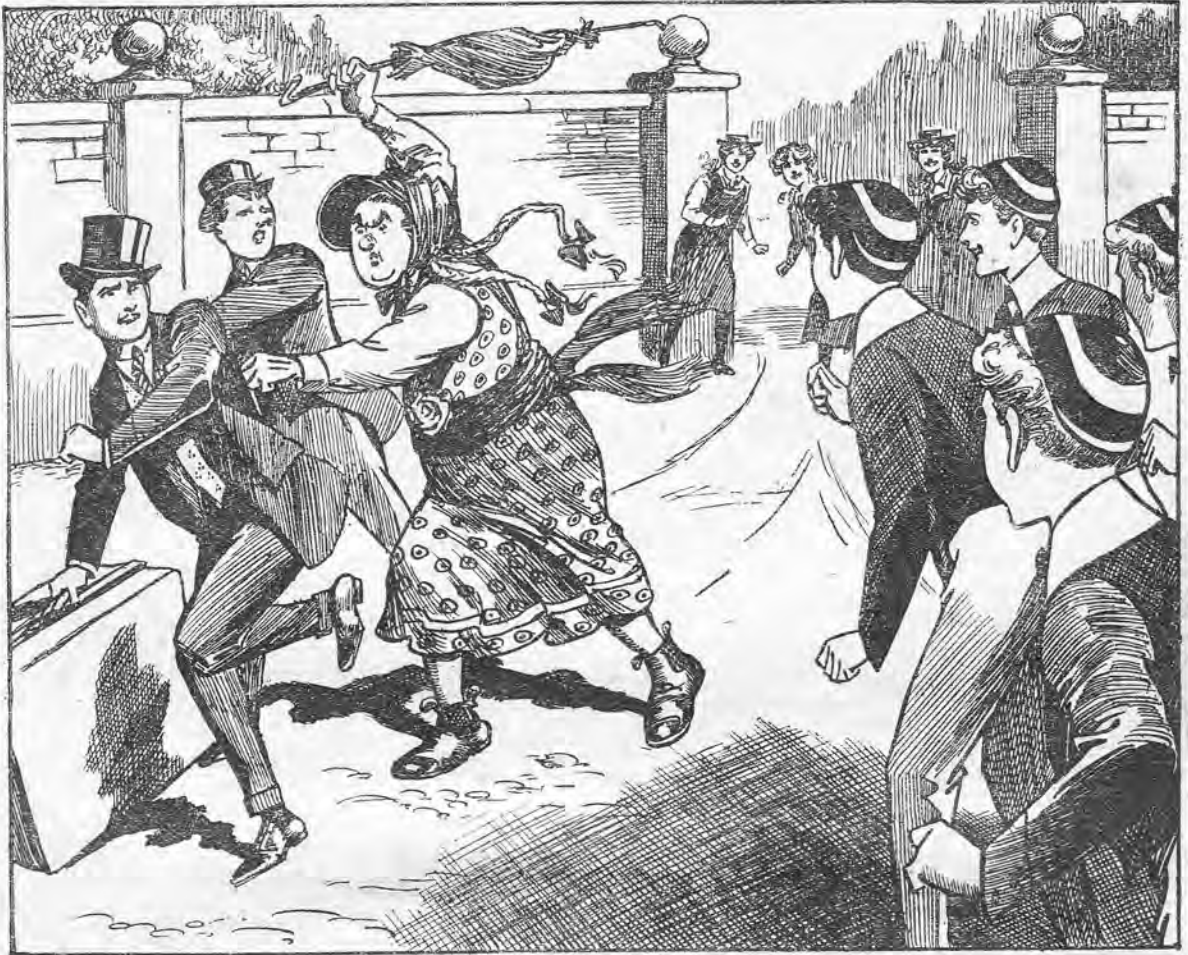
"I'd prefer not to shout it from the house-tops," said Wibley, "or some cad will be giving the show away. I'll tell just you fellows—with a flourish of his hand the speaker indicated the Famous Five and Dennis Carr—"and then it will go no further."

There was a chorus of protest from the fellows who were going to be left out of the secret, but Wibley did not heed it. He led Harry Wharton & Co. out into the passage where they waited, with rapt attention, for him to expound his "wheeze."

"I'll just give you fellows a rough outline of what I intend to do," said Wibley, "and if you think it isn't a workable stunt, you're only to say so. I propose to top up as a girl—a new girl, bound for Cliff House."

"My hat!"

"I shall put on the disguise to-morrow afternoon after lessons, and get on the train



"As I said before, you're a pair of lazy, good-for-nothing louts!" exclaimed Belinda Brown. "I'll teach you to slack like this!" Then, to the vast amusement of the Cliff House girls and Harry Wharton & Co., Belinda started to belabour Frank Courteney and the Caterpillar with her parasol. Whack, whack, whack! (See chapter 6.)

at Courtfield—the train that arrives at Friarsdale at five o'clock."

"But—but what's all this got to do with getting our own back on the Highcliffe fellows?" exclaimed Harry Wharton in amazement.

Wibley grinned.

"I shall ring up Frank Courtenay on the telephone, and pretend to be Miss Primrose, of Cliff House, speaking. I shall say that a new girl—a Miss Belinda Brown—is arriving at Friarsdale by the train that gets in at five. And I shall ask Courtenay and the Caterpillar to be good enough to meet Belinda at the station, and escort her to Cliff House."

"Great pip!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"They're bound to jump at it," Wibley went on. "They'll go to the station expecting to meet an awfully charming young damsel, and they'll meet—me! And I shall look about the loveliest freak you can possibly imagine! What's more, I shall lead those two fellows the very dickens of a dance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had tumbled at last to Wibley's wheeze, and they simply yelled. "Do you fellows like the stunt?" asked Wibley, with a grin.

"Like it!" echoed Bob Cherry. "Why, man, it's great!"

"Where's the feminine attire coming from?" inquired Nugent.

"From the old-clothes shop in Courtfield," said Wibley. "Old Lazarus has got stacks of it. And, of course, I shall have to doctor my complexion up a bit with paint and powder, and so forth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Belinda Brown!"

"Those Highcliffe bounders will look pretty sick by the time you've finished with them!"

"There's only one drawback," said Dennis Carr thoughtfully.

"What's that?" asked Wibley.

"We sha'n't be able to see the fun."

"Oh, yes, you will. You can stow yourselves in the waiting-room on Friarsdale Station and watch the dramatic meeting. And then, when Courtenay and the Caterpillar escort me to Cliff House, you can follow up behind."

"When Courtenay finds out who you are," said Johnny Bull, "his face will be worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the Caterpillar will want to turn into a butterfly, and buzz off!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

There was no doubt that Wibley's wheeze, if properly worked, would completely turn the tables on the Highcliffians.

Wibley was a very skilful actor, and the chums of the Remove relied upon him to play the part of Belinda Brown to perfection, thereby covering himself with glory and the two Highcliffe fellows with confusion!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Fixing Things Up!

TING-A-LING-LING!

The telephone-bell rang loudly in Mr. Mobbs' study at Highcliffe.

Mr. Mobbs was reclining in the armchair, enjoying a quiet pipe. He had been on the point of nodding off to sleep, when the bell rang so suddenly and violently that he shot up like a Jack-in-the-box, and his pipe clattered to the floor.

"Bless my soul! This telephone is a perpetual source of annoyance!" exclaimed the master of the Highcliffe Fourth.

Ting-a-ling-ling! Buzzzzzz!

"This is the third time I have been called

up during the last half-hour! I was summoned twice in error, and I have no doubt that this is a further mistake on the part of the operator. I will reprimand the—er—young person severely!"

So saying, Mr. Mobbs stepped to the telephone. He wrenched the receiver off its hooks, and barked into the transmitter.

"Madam, this is the third time I have been called up within the space of half an hour! Somebody wanted the grocery stores, and you put them through to me. Somebody else wanted the undertaker's, and again I was troubled. And now, I presume, you have made a further blunder. I would have you realise, madam, that my time is valuable. You are a careless, incompetent young woman!"

Mr. Mobbs paused. His vehement outburst had left him rather breathless.

A shrill feminine voice sounded over the wires.

"Is that Highcliffe School?"

"It is."

"Are you Mr. Mobbs speaking?"

"I am."

"Then I am astounded, Mr. Mobbs, at your rudeness and gross insolence!"

"W-w-what!" gasped the dismayed master. "Put me through to your headmaster. I desire to ask him if it is the usual thing for his subordinates to insult ladies on the telephone!"

Mr. Mobbs fairly gasped. The perspiration broke out on his brow.

"Really, madam—" he stuttered. "I—I—surely it is the telephone operator to whom I am speaking?"

"Sir, you are adding insult to injury! A telephone operator, forsooth! How dare you suggest—"

"Then who—what—" stammered the unfortunate Mr. Mobbs.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 79.

"I am Miss Primrose, the principal of Cliff House School!"

"Oh!"

Mr. Mobbs turned pale. And he was almost sagging at the knees.

"My—my dear Miss Primrose!"

"I am not your dear Miss Primrose! I am an insulted and indignant woman! I have been called careless and incompetent—I have been referred to as a telephone-operator! Put me through to Dr. Voysey!"

"I—I—"

"At once!" came the imperious command.

"My dear madam, I—I hasten to apologise!" faltered Mr. Mobbs. "I was not aware of your identity, I—I thought—"

"Very well, Mr. Mobbs. I will accept your apology on this occasion. But if you behave in such a rude and ungentlemanly manner again I shall be compelled to lay a complaint before your headmaster!"

Mr. Mobbs nearly choked. He came within an ace of making an unpleasant retort, but he pulled up in time, realising that it would not do. The headmaster of Highcliffe was on the best of terms with Miss Primrose, and he would be certain to take her part in the event of trouble. So Mr. Mobbs stifled his angry retort, and murmured instead:

"Is there anything I can do for you, madam?"

"Yes. I wish to speak to dear little Courtenay."

"To—to whom?" gasped Mr. Mobbs.

"To sweet little Franky. He is a member of your Form, I believe?"

"Dud-dud-do you mean Frank Courtenay?" stammered Mr. Mobbs.

"Yes. Find him at once, and ask him to come to the telephone!"

"Certainly, madam!" said Mr. Mobbs faintly.

And he rested the receiver on his desk, and stepped out into the passage.

Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar were strolling along, arm-in-arm, when Mr. Mobbs emerged.

"Hallo! Trouble brewin', Franky!" murmured De Courcy.

"Looks like it!" grunted Frank.

"Courtenay, you are wanted on the telephone!" said Mr. Mobbs. "Miss Primrose, of Cliff House, desires to speak to you."

Frank Courtenay looked surprised.

"Which 'phone, sir?" he asked.

"The one in my study."

Mr. Mobbs followed Frank Courtenay into the apartment. He was curious to know what Miss Primrose wanted with one of his pupils.

"Good-afternoon, ma'am!" said Frank, speaking into the transmitter.

"Is that dear little Franky?"

"The junior coloured to the roots of his hair."

"I—I'm Courtenay!" he stammered.

"The boy who helped to entertain three of my pupils yesterday afternoon by taking them for a delightful picnic?"

"Yes!" muttered Frank.

"That was very sweet of you! You are a generous and a chivalrous boy, and, because of that, I am going to ask you and your friend, De Courcy, to do me a favour."

"With—with pleasure, ma'am!" stammered Frank Courtenay, wondering what was coming.

"There is a new pupil coming to Cliff House this afternoon—a Miss Belinda Brown. She will arrive by the train which reaches Friar-dale at five o'clock, and I should like you and De Courcy to meet her at the station and escort her to this school."

Frank Courtenay grinned.

"Delighted, ma'am!" he said promptly.

"You will find Belinda a very charming and attractive girl, dear Frank. She will doubtless be hungry after her long journey, and if you could see your way to entertain her with refreshments before bringing her to Cliff House I shall be extremely grateful!"

"Rely on me, ma'am!"

"Thank you so much, my sweet child!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"It is immensely good of you to undertake to meet Belinda!"

"N-n-not at all!" gasped Frank Courtenay. And he rang off.

Mr. Mobbs, who had not been able to deduce much from the conversation, having heard only Frank Courtenay's stuttering remarks, turned inquiringly to the junior.

"What did Miss Primrose want with you, Courtenay?"

"She wants me to go along to the station with De Courcy and meet a new girl who is coming to Cliff House, sir."

Mr. Mobbs frowned.

"Really, Miss Primrose has no right to ask such favours of any boy here!" he snapped.

"And why should she select you and De Courcy?"

"Because we entertained three of the Cliff House girls yesterday, sir."

Mr. Mobbs' frown deepened.

"You would have been better employed in playing cricket, Courtenay!" he said.

"The match was off, sir, owing to a misunderstanding."

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Mobbs. "Perhaps, in the circumstances, you had better carry out Miss Primrose's wishes."

It struck Frank Courtenay, as he quitted the Form-master's study, as being very curious that Miss Primrose should select a couple of Highcliffe juniors to go to the station and meet the new girl. Why had she not detailed some of her own pupils for the task?

That was a conundrum to which the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth could find no answer.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Meeting the New Girl!

"FRANKY," drawled the Caterpillar, when his chum had told him of the telephone conversation with Miss Primrose, "we're in clover!"

Frank Courtenay grunted.

"I'm not so sure," he said. "We've got to meet and entertain Belinda Brown. If she happens to be a ripping sort, like Phyllis or Marjorie or Clara, it will be all right. But supposing Belinda turns out to be a second edition of Bessie Bunter?"

"The fates forbid!" said the Caterpillar fervently.

"Miss Primrose said Belinda was charming and attractive," said Courtenay, "so I expect it will be all serene."

"We've just got time to change before going down to the station," said the Caterpillar. "Better don our Sunday best, is 'pose?"

Frank Courtenay nodded, and the two chums went up to the dormitory.

Flip Derwent and Smithson met them on the stairs. They were attired in their cricket flannels.

"Playing cricket this afternoon, you fellows?" inquired Flip.

"No," said Frank Courtenay.

"You're not!" said Smithson, in surprise.

"What, might I ask, is the counter-attraction?"

"Belinda Brown," said the Caterpillar.

"Eh? Who the thump is Belinda Brown?"

"New girl, comin' to Cliff House, an' we're goin' to the station to meet her, at the special request of Miss Primrose."

"My hat!"

"Sounds interesting," said Flip Derwent.

"May we come along, too?"

"No. You can jolly well keep off the grass!" said Frank Courtenay. "Belinda won't mind an escort of two, but three or four will spoil the show."

"Oh, bless Belinda!" growled Smithson. "Hope she turns out to be a tartar! I'd sooner play cricket any day than cart new girls around!"

"Opportunity's a fine thing!" chuckled the Caterpillar.

Shortly afterwards a couple of immaculately-dressed youths sauntered out of gates. Both Courtenay and the Caterpillar had been at great pains with their toilet. They were anxious to make a favourable impression on Miss Belinda Brown.

"There's somethin' awfully fascinatin', Franky," said the Caterpillar, "in settin' forth to meet a young lady, an' not knowin' what she'll be like. I'm hopin' that Belinda will turn out to be a perfect peach—the sort of girl who drives even an unemotional fellow like me to poetry!"

The Caterpillar then declaimed the following touching lines:

"The brightness of her blinkin' eyes

Is brighter far than summer skies,

The curls that cluster round her head

Cause people to exclaim—"

"Nuff said!" growled Frank Courtenay.

And then he stopped short, with a startled expression on his face.

"Anythin' wrong, Franky?"

"I fancied I saw some Greyfriars fellows walking ahead of us. They seemed to disappear round that bend in the road."

"What of it?"

"Well, we shall look a precious pair of guys if they start japing us!" said Frank Courtenay. "Personally, I shouldn't care to go and meet Belinda after being ducked in a horse-pond, or something of that sort."

"Fear not!" said the Caterpillar. "If

those fellows start attackin' us, we'll each show 'em a clean pair of heels."

The Highcliffe juniors kept their eyes open as they proceeded. They half-expected a crowd of Greyfriars fellows to spring out at them from the hedge.

But nothing happened, and Frank Courtenay and his chum reached the station without mishap.

"You must have been mistaken, Franky," said the Caterpillar. "Couldn't have been the Greyfriars chaps you saw."

"I could swear—" began Frank.

"Shush! You mustn't start doin' that sort of thing!"

"Ass! I could swear I saw Wharton and Cherry and Carr disappearing round that bend in the road."

"Your imagination, dear boy!"

"Train's not signalled yet," said Courtenay, as they stepped on to the little platform.

"I'm not surprised," said the Caterpillar. "It's one of those creepy, crawly things that take about six hours to drift down from London. My experience of the five-o'clock train is that it never reaches Friar-dale till about a quarter to seven."

"Then why do they call it the five-o'clock train?"

"Formality, Franky—mere formality. Let's adjourn to the waitin'-room, an' beguile the time by playin' shove-ha'penny."

But the door of the waiting-room was found to be locked.

"Nothin' doin'," said the Caterpillar. "I expect the porters have locked themselves in, an' are enjoyin' a quiet nap."

Frank Courtenay was about to peep through the window and investigate, when his chum caught him by the arm.

"Strange though it may seem, Franky, the train's signalled! What's more, I can actually hear it approachin'. The fair Belinda will be with us in two ticks. Is my necktie straight?"

"It seems to have got round to your left ear!" chuckled Frank Courtenay.

"Then kindly adjust it, dear boy, in the absence of my valet."

Courtenay made the necessary adjustment, and the two chums waited, in rather agreeable apprehension, for the arrival of the train.

When, a moment later, it rumbled to a standstill, their eyes scanned the carriage doors.

They expected to see a charming, attractive young lady alight gracefully from a first-class compartment.

But their expectations were not realised.

Only two passengers alighted from the train. One was a very ancient female, who obviously was not the new girl.

And the other was a plump, ungainly, hideously ugly girl, who looked—as the Caterpillar expressed it afterwards—like nothing on earth!

"That—that surely can't be Belinda!" gasped Frank Courtenay.

"If it is," muttered the Caterpillar, "I shall feel like fallin' through the platform!"

It was from a third-class compartment that the plump girl had alighted. And she was an object of amusement to the porters and to the passengers who happened to be looking out of the windows.

"Bet she'd take the booby-prize in any beauty contest!" remarked one man.

"Yes, rather!"

"Jest look at 'er 'at'!"

"An' her feet! Jever see such feet!"

"An' that pegoliar growth in the middle of her face—"

"That ain't a growth, mate. It's 'er nose!"

"Oh gad!"

Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar heard these unflattering comments, and they looked very uneasy.

Surely this could not be Belinda Brown!

Surely this was not the "charming, attractive girl" mentioned by Miss Primrose!

"Shall we make a bolt for it?" muttered Frank Courtenay.

"Too late, dear boy," groaned the Caterpillar. "She's seen us!"

The train moved on, and the plump girl advanced towards the Highcliffe juniors. They lifted their "toppers" to her, and screwed their faces up into terrible contortions. They were trying to bestow agreeable smiles upon the young lady they had come to meet.

"Miss Primrose said she was sending a couple of guys to meet me," said the plump damsel, looking perfectly self-possessed, and speaking in shrill, high-pitched tones. "I take it you are the guys in question?"

"Are—are you Miss Belinda Brown?" stammered Frank Courtenay.

"That's me!"

"Carry me home to die!" groaned the Caterpillar.

"Carry me home to die!" groaned the Caterpillar.

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"Carry me home to die!" groaned the Caterpillar.

Belinda turned upon him sharply. "What did you say?" she demanded. "Got any luggage, Miss Brown?" asked the Caterpillar evasively. "Of course! That suit-case is mine." And Belinda pointed to an enormous green suit-case which had been dumped on to the platform. "We'll get the caddy to take it to Cliff House," said Frank Courtenay. "You'll do nothing of the sort!" retorted Belinda. "I have some very valuable belongings in that suit-case, and I want you to carry it to Cliff House between you, so that it will be under my observation all the time." "All serene!" said Frank Courtenay. And he picked up the suit-case, or, rather, he tried to pick it up, but the weight of it was altogether too much for him. "Jove, this is jolly heavy!" he panted. "Why, it's as light as a feather!" said Belinda. "I carried it myself from Limehouse to Charing Cross!" Then you must be a champion weight-lifter, Miss Brown!" gasped Frank Courtenay. "Come and give me a hand, Caterpillar." It was as much as the two juniors could do to lift that suit-case. Its weight was truly terrific. "Bah! You're a pair of weaklings!" was Belinda's cutting comment. "You can leave the case on the platform for a bit, and get me some tea at the buffet. I've got a shocking thirst!" With burning cheeks Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar escorted the far from beautiful Belinda to the refreshment buffet. They were conscious of the fact that the station-master, the booking-clerk, and the porters were laughing explosively, and for a brief second they fancied they saw a row of grinning faces pressed against the window of the waiting-room. "Oh dear!" moaned the Caterpillar. "This is awful!" "Don't keep muttering to yourself!" said Belinda. "It's an objectionable habit. I was hoping Miss Primrose would send a couple of really nice boys to meet me, instead of two chuckle-headed chumps like you!" The unhappy juniors fairly gasped. This was the first time they had ever been called chuckle-headed chumps by a member of the other sex. At the buffet the Caterpillar called in a faint voice for a cup of tea. "And I'll have half a dozen ham-sandwiches, I think, just to lay a foundation," chimed in Belinda. The tea was handed over, likewise the sandwiches, and Belinda Brown got busy. Whilst she munched the sandwiches and sipped her tea at intervals, Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar were able to take stock of her. And their imagination boggled at the thought of such a freakish frump becoming a pupil of Cliff House School. The majority of girls, no matter how plain, have at least one redeeming feature. But Belinda Brown had none. Her hair was tied in a couple of plaits, which dangled over her shoulders. "The brightness of her blinkin' eyes" was far from being brighter than summer skies. It was not even so bright as the Caterpillar's necktie. And her face— Words were indeed weak when it came to a description of Belinda's face. It was simply plastered with rouge and powder—evidently with the object of concealing its ugliness. Belinda sported a costume which might have passed muster at a fancy-dress ball, but as everyday apparel it was atrocious. And her boots! Even Coker of the Greyfriars Fifth hadn't such gigantic boots. They were more than a match for the elephantine footwear of Police-Constable Tozer! Round her waist Belinda wore a purple sash, to the front of which was pinned a massive red rose. The hat she wore might have been fashionable in the days of good Queen Bess, but it was obsolete, dead, and defunct now. Belinda attacked the sandwiches with a good appetite. The Highcliffe juniors ate nothing. They were already feeling fed-up! And against the window of the waiting-room, which commanded a view of the refreshment buffet the row of grinning faces still pressed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Well Done, Wibley!

"N OW," said Belinda Brown, when she had disposed of the sandwiches, "we'll adjourn to the bunshop." "Oh, will we?" murmured the Caterpillar to himself.

Belinda—alias Wibley of the Remove—had had no dinner, and was therefore feeling in fine form for polishing off a big feed. "Buck up," she said impatiently, "and bring my suit-case along!" "Can't you leave it here for a time, Miss Brown, and have it sent up to Cliff House later?" suggested Frank Courtenay. Belinda wagged an admonishing forefinger at the Highcliffe junior. "You are a lazy, good-for-nothing lout!" she said reprovingly. "My hat!" "You ought to be proud and pleased to carry my suit-case up to the school!" "So we are, begad!" said the Caterpillar. "As pleased as Punch!" But the expression on the speaker's face was almost homicidal. Belinda led the way from the station. Her escort followed behind, staggering beneath the weight of the suit-case. "Ticket, please, miss!" said the collector. Belinda handed over her ticket. It was extremely fortunate that the Highcliffe juniors did not see that ticket. It was marked "Courtfield to Friarale," and they would immediately have smelt a rat. Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar were almost dropping with fatigue by the time they reached the bunshop. They were only too glad to dump the suit-case on to the floor and sink into a couple of chairs. "What are you goin' to have, Miss Brown?" panted the Caterpillar. "A big dish of strawberries-and-cream!" said Belinda promptly. And her hosts groaned in a dismal duet. For their guest had selected the most expensive luxury in the shop. The strawberries-and-cream arrived, and Belinda "piled in" with relish. "Aren't you fellows going to have some?" she mumbled. "No, thanks," said Courtenay. "We—we don't feel hungry, somehow!" The row of grinning face which had appeared at the waiting-room window now appeared at the window of the bunshop. "Wib's going strong!" murmured Dennis Carr. "Ha, ha, ha!" "He said he'd lead those bounders the dickens of a dance, and he's keeping his word!" "This is where we get our own back!" said Johnny Bull. "It was because of those fellows that we had to treat Bessie Bunter yesterday. And now they've got to treat Belinda Brown!" "Wonder if Wib—I mean, Belinda—will be able to tackle another dish of strawberries and cream?" murmured Frank Nugent. "You bet!" said Wharton. Belinda Brown hadn't such a healthy appetite—or, rather, such an unhealthy one—as Bessie Bunter. But she was eating a far more expensive luxury than Bessie had eaten. And Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar resigned themselves to bidding a fond farewell to their store of pocket-money. "I've finished!" announced Belinda at last. "High time, I think!" muttered the Caterpillar. "What was that?" rapped out Belinda sharply. "Ahem! I asked if you'd like another drink, dear girl!" "Thanks for the kind thought," said Belinda. "I should! I'll have a ginger-beer, please, with a shilling ice in, to make it cool." When the bill was presented the faces of the Highcliffe juniors underwent weird contortions. "Feeling ill?" asked Belinda in concern. "Well, we—we're certainly a bit over-come!" muttered Frank Courtenay. "It must be the heat!" "Let's get out into the fresh air," said Belinda. "Excuse me a moment, while I powder my nose!" And she crossed over to the mirror and dabbed at her nose with a powder-puff. "A nose like that," muttered the Caterpillar savagely, "ought to be exterminated, instead of powdered!" The juniors paid the bill—they had just sufficient funds to meet it—and then they lurched out of the bunshop with the suit-case, and Belinda followed. She exchanged a sly wink with Bob Cherry, who had just darted into an adjoining doorway. But Courtenay and the Caterpillar were so engrossed with the suit-case they failed to notice Bob. And the remainder of the Greyfriars fellows were in safe ambush. Then the long and weary tramp to Cliff House began.

It was a nightmare journey to the two Highcliffe juniors, who groaned and grunted beneath their burden. Following up behind were Harry Wharton & Co. But neither Courtenay nor his chum was in a position to look round, and they were blissfully oblivious of the grinning Greyfriars party in the rear. "Oh dear!" gasped the Caterpillar. "I'm nearly droppin'!" "What on earth have you got in this suit-case, Miss Brown?" panted Frank Courtenay. "Don't be inquisitive!" said Belinda curiously. After what seemed an age, the gates of Cliff House came in sight. Phyllis Howell & Co. stood in the gateway, surveying Belinda Brown and her escort in blank astonishment. "You'll take my suit-case right into the school building!" commanded Belinda. "We jolly well won't!" growled Frank Courtenay, whose politeness had been strained to breaking-point. The Highcliffe juniors could not bear the thought of dragging that weighty suit-case across the quadrangle, with a giggling group of girls looking on. So they dumped it down in the gateway. Belinda Brown became aggressive. "As I said before, you're a pair of lazy, good-for-nothing louts!" she exclaimed. "I'll teach you to slack like this!" Whack, whack, whack! To the vast amusement of the onlookers, Belinda started belabouring the two juniors with her parasol. "Chuck it!" "Stop it!" Whack, whack, whack! "Ha, ha, ha!" Needless to state, that peal of laughter did not emanate from the two victims, but from the girls in the gateway, and from Harry Wharton & Co., who were coming up behind. Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar danced to and fro in wild anguish. And presently the parasol broke in two, and Belinda Brown, panting from her exertions, sat down on the suit-case. Having carried the jape to a successful conclusion, the "new girl" then wrenched off her hat, wig, and false eyebrows, and was revealed to the amazed onlookers as Wibley of the Remove! "Wibley!" The name burst simultaneously from the lips of Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar. "Spoofed, by gad!" "Collar him!" And the two juniors made a combined rush at the jasper. As they did so, however, six juniors—the Famous Five and Dennis Carr—came running up, and they grouped themselves in a solid phalanx in front of Wibley. The Highcliffians paused, breathing hard. After their strenuous exertions with the suit-case, they were hardly in a position to tackle seven juniors. The Greyfriars fellows were all smiles, and so were the Cliff House girls. And then a fresh peal of laughter rang out as Wibley removed himself from the suit-case and opened the lid, revealing a collection of bricks and stones! "Thanks so much for bringing my luggage along, you fellows!" he said, in his natural voice. "Ha, ha, ha!" Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar looked daggers at the almost hysterical Greyfriars juniors. "You—you—you—" they spluttered in chorus. "You had your innings yesterday," said Harry Wharton, "and we've had ours to-day!" "And I rather fancy," chimed in Dennis Carr, "that we've had the better of the argument!" "Ha, ha, ha!" The Caterpillar caught his chum by the arm. "This is no place for us, Franky," he murmured. "The girls are cacklin' these bounders are cacklin'; an' everybody will be cacklin' when the facts are known. We'll get our own back before long, never fear! Meanwhile, there's no sense in hangin' about here—the laughin'-stock of the community! We'll stagger!" And they staggered! THE END. (Another grand, long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "UNDER CANVAS!" by Frank Richards. Order your copy EARLY!)

LOOK OUT FOR A GRAND NEW SERIAL—COMING SHORTLY.



By NAT FAIRBANKS.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dick Tulliver, to escape being apprenticed to Wibbleswick & Co., a firm of drapers, by his uncle, makes his way to the country town of Dorminster. There he comes across the Western Super-Film Company, who are located in a ruined manor house, known as Wildfell Grange, which is reputed to be haunted. By a piece of luck, Dick is able to be of service to Mr. Halibut, the producer. Through the good offices of a friend named Harry Trent, who is working for the company, Dick is taken on in place of Archie Deen, the star actor, who has mysteriously disappeared. He is introduced to an actor-friend of Trent's named Biglow. Later, Dick has the misfortune to make a dangerous enemy of a hunchback dwarf, named Bernard Grimshaw.

One day Dick discovers a secret passage leading from Grimshaw's room, and out into the grounds by the lake. He has reasons to believe that it is frequently used by the dwarf. Dick falls in with an expedition of schoolboys, led by a Fallsdale boy, named Faulkner, who proposes to explore Wildfell Grange. The schoolboys are occupying a houseboat—the Gadfly—and Dick joins forces with them. Later, Dick discovers that the actors of the Western Super-Film Company have gone on strike, excited by Grimshaw. He finds the dwarf addressing the actors at the White Lion, in the village of Moggsleigh.

(Now read on.)

Dick Gathers Recruits!

DICK TULLIVER did not linger at the White Lion. He had seen quite enough of what was happening. Besides, he wanted to consult with Harry Trent before he got drawn into the trouble. He sympathized in a way with the company. Wildfell Grange, with its constant alarms at night, was certainly not an ideal place to sleep in. But, on the other hand, any movement with Bernard Grimshaw at the head possessed no attractions for Dick.

Accordingly, edging away from the crowd—who were far too excited to take any notice of him—he ran up the High Street, doubled round by the church, and in ten minutes' time he drew up at the gates of the Grange.

There was no one to be seen, but on entering the hall, he heard the strident voice of Mr. Halibut holding forth to someone on the floor above. Dick climbed the staircase, and, following the sound of the manager's voice, discovered him raging backwards and forwards between the door and the window of a small chamber overlooking the courtyard. His audience consisted of Biglow, who was attempting to soothe him, though apparently with very little success.

"Don't talk to me, Biglow, about these being worse misfortunes at sea!" Dick heard him storm. "How are we to get out of this confounded mess, that's what I want to know? In all my experience, I have never witnessed such a scene of degradation. A very little more will cause my cup of sorrow to overflow, and then—hang it, Biglow—I'll turn the whole thing up! I'll—"

In his anguished words for the moment failed THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 79.

him, and he was reduced to incoherent gasps. Recovering slightly, he continued:

"And Trent and that young Tulliver! Where are they? Where is the car? If they had the slightest consideration for my feelings, the smallest trait of nobility in their characters, the— Oh, you've turned up at last, Tulliver, have you? What's happened? Where's Trent? Where's the car? And the colonel, what did he say? You have allowed me to suffer all these hours of anguish—"

At that moment there was the loud hooting of a motor-horn outside. Biglow flew to the window.

"There's a car drawing up," he announced. "Yes; it's Harry Trent, and there's an elderly gentleman with him. No doubt it's Colonel Allingham—"

"Let me look!" bellowed Mr. Halibut, pushing him aside. "It is the colonel!" he cried, after a brief glance. "Biglow—all of you—stand by to support me. You'll bear witness that I did all I could to reason with the company. The colonel in moments of excitement is apt to—"

Mr. Halibut broke off and fingered his watch-chain nervously. He evidently stood in great awe of the colonel's temper.

They watched Colonel Allingham stride up the path, followed by Harry Trent, and then, as their footsteps echoed in the hall below, Mr. Halibut signed to Dick and Biglow to accompany him downstairs. The two parties drew up face to face at the foot.

"Well?" demanded the colonel.

It is a short word, but pronounced by Colonel Allingham it became possessed of extensive meaning.

"I regret to have to tell you, colonel, that the entire Western Super-Film Company, with the exception of those present, have vacated the house!" announced Mr. Halibut.

"Ha!" grunted the colonel.

"The point is," murmured Mr. Halibut, "are you prepared to give way?"

"Not an inch!" snapped the colonel.

"I don't mean give way altogether," said Mr. Halibut hastily. "Of course, you wouldn't do that! But on some small point—"

"There can be no small points!" boomed the colonel, suddenly taking charge of the entire conversation. "These quarters are adequate in every respect. The stories about ghosts and other supernatural matters which this young man"—indicating Trent—"has been telling me can be dismissed in one word—bosh! We live in the twentieth century. I believe, Mr. Halibut? Two and two makes four, and science explains everything. Confront me with the rebel members of the company for two minutes—that's all I ask—two minutes! Where are they to be found?"

"Down in the village—" began Mr. Halibut.

"At the White Lion," supplemented Dick.

The colonel wheeled round without another word, and marched out of the door. Mr. Halibut followed close on his heels, attempting to explain the tremendous efforts he had made to keep the spirit of insubordination in check. To all of which the colonel's only reply was to work variations on the word "bosh!" thereby hinting that had he been in command, instead of Mr. Halibut, things would never have come to the present pass.

"Let them go on by themselves," said Harry

Trent. "I've had four mortal hours of the colonel's company, and that's enough to last a lifetime!"

"What happened?" asked Dick.

"Oh, nothing happened in particular! The colonel started off by wanting to give me in charge as an accomplice of those burglars. Then when I'd convinced him to come with me, he organised a party to search the farm on the off-chance his old plate was hidden there. Then we spent a pleasant half-hour at the police-station interviewing the inspector, who didn't want to be interviewed, and in consequence slanged the colonel, who slanged him back. It's been a ghastly morning, Dick. And what's happened here?"

"Oh," said Biglow, "directly after breakfast the whole company packed up their traps and left. Most of us spent the morning in hunting for lodgings. Very few of us found any. I didn't for one! That means I shall have to sleep at the Grange if I want a roof over my head. And so will you two."

"Well, it's fine weather," returned Harry. "A night or so in the open won't hurt us. Will it, Dick?"

"Don't you worry about diggings," said Dick. "You've only got to join the army that's encamped in the backwaters—"

"What are you talking about?" laughed Harry.

"I'm perfectly serious," answered Dick. "They want recruits, too. They'll receive you and Biglow with open arms. Half a minute!" He broke off as they turned a corner, and his eye caught sight of a dozen cycles leaning against a wall which led up to a small confectioner's shop. "We've run into the other army!"

"Don't act the goat!" grumbled Biglow.

"I'm not," Dick assured him. "Inside that shop is an army. They're our enemies, Biglow. They won't know it yet awhile, but they soon will. The army we're going to join is, as I say, encamped in the backwaters. It's the biggest scream out!" chuckled Dick.

And he forthwith proceeded to explain the situation.

"Then they know nothing about the Western Super-Film Company having rented the Grange?" said Harry.

"My army doesn't," returned Dick. "But I expect by this time that little lot in the confectioner's have heard. But the main point is this. We want somewhere to sleep while this strike's on, and by joining the camping party we shall have the use of either their bell-tent or the houseboat."

At this point they came within sight of the White Lion.

There were no signs of the bustle and turmoil which Dick had left half an hour previously. There was not a soul to be seen anywhere. Indeed, it might have been Sunday, so deserted was the place.

"Where can they all have got to?" ejaculated Harry.

Dick gazed around in bewilderment. Suddenly his eyes rested on a shady corner close by the stable-yard. There was a bench planted against the wall, and on this bench sat a huddled figure of a man, evidently fast asleep. At his feet curled a shaggy-looking dog.

Dick recognised the man at once. It was old Sattlebee.

"He may be able to tell us where they've gone to," said Dick, pointing to the "rank and file."

"We'll rouse him up, then!" said Biglow promptly.

Biglow set about this task with much gusto, but almost immediately repented his zeal, for Snap, waking up and seeing his master being pounded vigorously in the ribs, leapt to the rescue, and seized upon Biglow's calf as a good vulnerable place to attack.

The result was a kind of pandemonium, for Dick and Harry retaliated upon Snap, who set up a howl of the most excruciating description, and this, combined with the groans and execrations of Biglow and the shouts of Dick and Harry, had the effect of waking up old Sattlebee. But it in no way disturbed him. He placidly took in the scene, then sat himself calmly down again and made himself comfortable. Snap, regarding this as a hint that he was no longer wanted, retired in good order, and in no way discomfited.

"Bother you, Dick!" exclaimed Biglow angrily. "Why couldn't we have left the old beggar where he was? If I once catch hold of that beastly dog I'll drown him! Look here—see what the brute has done!"

"Oh, you needn't make such a fuss about it!" returned Dick. "I should cut the piece out if I were you. There'd be no danger of hydrophobia then."

"Much obliged for the suggestion, but I haven't got more flesh than I know what to do with, so I shan't adopt it. I'll take the risk of hydrophobia."

In the meanwhile Harry had induced old Sattlebee to open his eyes. The "rank and file" gazed vaguely around, and then his eyes lighted on Dick.

"Why, if it ain't you, young master!" he mumbled.

Immediately afterwards he showed signs of going to sleep once more.

"Lipk here, Sattlebee," roared Dick in his ear. "I'll have you shot at dawn if you go to sleep again! Have you seen a crowd of people go off from here?"

"And a motor-car as well," added Biglow, "with two gentlemen inside?"

Sattlebee pondered for a time.

"Yes," he grunted. "They've gone to the camp."

"To the camp!" cried Dick, with a momentary vision of the Gaddy and the bell-tent being stretched to bursting point to accommodate the entire Western Super-Film Company.

"Ay," mumbled Sattlebee. "Th' old camp wot the chaps used to use when th' war were on."

"What camp's that?" asked Dick, greatly relieved.

"Milchington Camp," said Sattlebee. "A couple o' miles from here."

This seemed to be the extent of Sattlebee's knowledge. Accordingly, Harry announced his intention of making further inquiries inside the White Lion.

He returned in a few minutes.

"It's quite right," he said. "That's where they've gone. Milchington Camp is a collection of old Army huts that have been left standing! The landlady tells me the company went off about a quarter of an hour before Colonel Allingham and Mr. Halibut drove up in the car."

"Have they gone there as well?" asked Biglow.

"I expect so. The question is, shall we follow suit? What do you think, Dick?"

"I'd rather join those fellows on the back-water," said Dick. "You see," he explained, "I want to keep out of this row. I don't like Grimshaw, and I don't want to be on his side. On the other hand, I don't want to be different to the rest of the company. Then there's another point. The Grange will be probably deserted until the row blows over. Rather a good opportunity to do a quiet bit of exploring. Those chaps over at the back-water are keen on the job, and they could help us. I've got one or two little theories about the Grange that I'd like to test."

"Jove," cried Harry, "there's something in what you say. I'm with you, Dick. What do you think, Biglow?"

"I'm a bit old for active service," returned Biglow doubtfully. "However, my desire for adventure is just as youthful as ever. I will join you."

Dick happened to glance in Sattlebee's direction, and saw that he wasn't quite so sound asleep as he appeared to be. In other words, old Sattlebee had been listening.

Dick brought his hand down on his shoulders.

"Come on! Quick march!" he cried.

"You've got to come back to the camp with us."

Old Sattlebee broke into a gentle snore.

"Can't we leave him here?" whispered Harry.

Dick shook his head.

"Don't trust him!" he returned in a low tone.

Accordingly the three applied their united strength, Dick and Biglow dragging him by the arms, and Harry clutching at his legs.

Between them they set him on his feet.

"Talk about the difficulty of 'raising an army,'" grunted Biglow.

"Can't be helped," said Dick. "We must take him with us. Now, then, get him on the run!"

The turnings and twistings, the punchings and proddings to which Sattlebee had been subjected, to say nothing of his arms having been nearly twisted out of their sockets and his feet from his ankles, gradually induced him to get a move on. But the progress was slow and decidedly laborious, and when they

position of the celebrated young gentleman who attempted to teach his grandmother to suck eggs.

However, Harry and Biglow—carefully coached by Dick—solemnly entered into the spirit of the affair. On being presented to Faulkner they stiffly stood at attention in the most approved military fashion, and gravely addressed him as "general," with a salute thrown in to complete the picture. Dick nearly had convulsions.

"Any news of the other expedition?" asked Faulkner, when the inspection was over and the "army" stood easy.

"We saw them strongly entrenched in a confectioner's shop," reported Dick. "Judging by the sounds heard as we passed by, I should say there was a certain amount of liveliness on their front."

"Anything happening at the Grange?" inquired Templeton.

"Don't think so," returned Dick guardedly. "There soon will be," cut in Faulkner. "I've made up my mind to attack the place



Dick snatched the glasses from Faulkner, and rapidly surveyed the moving, hunched-up figure on the roof of the captured house-boat. "It's a dwarf, Harry!" he exclaimed. "Jove! You're right—it's Bernard Grimshaw!" (See page 10.)

arrived at where the dinghy was moored a halt was called.

"Phew! It's hot work!" gasped Harry, wiping his heated brow. "It'll mean two journeys, Dick. You'd better row him over, and then come back for us."

"Right-ho!" said Dick. "Lift him in."

But old Sattlebee at this point opened his eyes.

"Where's Snap?" he grunted. "I ain't a-goin' without Snap."

"Oh, yes, you are!" said Harry sternly.

"In you get!"

And a second or so later Dick was afloat with his unwilling cargo.

Marooned!

FAULKNER, the intrepid leader of the Fallowsdale Expeditionary Force, was a trifle overawed by the personality of Dick Tulliver's recruits. As Faulkner had only just celebrated his fifteenth birthday, and Harry Trent and Biglow were well on the road to thirty, the position seemed rather incongruous. Faulkner could not help wishing they had been nearer his own age. He could have ordered them about so much better. As it was, he felt rather in the

to-night. With Blogson's lot on the scene we can't afford to waste a moment. Still, I don't fancy Blogson will move forward until to-morrow. They haven't got the pluck to go there at night-time—"

The sudden barking of a dog arose in the distance. Old Sattlebee, who had resumed his interrupted slumber, immediately scrambled to his feet.

"That be Snap," he mumbled. "I'd know his bark in a thousand."

He made his way towards the water's edge.

"Halt!" commanded Faulkner.

Sattlebee, however, paid not the slightest attention. He burst out into the open, and gave vent to a shrill whistle.

"That dog will be the ruin of us," grunted Faulkner. "Sattlebee, come back, d'you hear? Look at him giving away our position! Plum—Templeton—collar him! Sattlebee—"

"Ay, it be Snap right enough!" they heard Sattlebee muttering.

Plum and Templeton rushed at him, and were just in time to prevent him from getting into the dinghy.

"You let me be!" roared the patriarch. "I'm a-goin' to fetch Snap."

"This is rank mutiny!" cried Faulkner. "Accompanied by Dick, Harry, and Biglow, he darted to the assistance of Plum and Templeton."

The spot where the dinghy was moored commanded a view of the distant bank of the river, and the towpath was clearly visible. On the towpath they could see a swiftly-moving object, and as the barking followed these movements, they knew this must be Snap. This in itself would not have mattered, but what did matter was the group of fellows they saw standing at the water's edge, gazing with great interest in the direction of the backwater.

"Men," ejaculated Faulkner, in a voice which made the welkin—whatever this useful article, which comes in so handy to writers of romance, may be—ring, "the enemy have discovered our retreat! Back under cover at once!"

This order was obeyed with military promptness, although Sattlebee rather delayed the movement. Once more hidden by the foliage of the trees, Faulkner proceeded to explain the situation.

"Everyone at Fallowsdale knows that wretched dog," he said. "Blosson, seeing him on the towpath, will guess at once that Sattlebee's somewhere about; and Sattlebee being here will instantly give them the clue that we're here as well."

"You ought never to have allowed Sattlebee to bring him," said Templeton.

"Well, it was a mistake," confessed Faulkner. "But, you see, all crack regiments have dogs. Look at the Welsh Fusiliers—"

"I thought there was a goat," said Dick.

"Eh? Well, now I come to remember, I think it was a goat. But that doesn't make any difference; the principle's the same. Still, Snap has told us properly. Those chaps will never rest until they've explored the backwater."

"What does it matter if they do?" asked Harry Trent. "It seems to me that would be the best thing that could happen. They don't know you have received reinforcements—they think there are only you three and Sattlebee—and as they number a dozen they'll imagine they can easily overcome you. Let them come over, and we'll capture the lot."

"That's a good idea," returned Faulkner approvingly. "Although twelve prisoners on our hands will be a bit of a nuisance. Prisoners are all very well if you can get a ransom; failing that, they are more bother than they're worth. However, time enough to consider that when we've collared them."

The first thing to do was to find out the enemy's intentions. To reach the island they would, of course, have to hire two or three boats. Were they doing this? Dick swarmed up the tallest of the trees and viewed the situation.

"They're chucking stones at the dog at present!" he called down.

Old Sattlebee immediately had to be attended to and forcibly held.

"They're moving off," announced Dick a minute or so later. "They're moving in the direction of the boathouse. I believe they are going to hire some boats. Yes, they're talking to the man who lets them out!"

Then followed a pause of some minutes.

"Prepare to receive boarders!" Dick sang out suddenly. "They're launching three boats!"

A hurried council of war was immediately held. Faulkner outlined an elaborate scheme of defence founded on the soundest military principles, but which was dropped in favour of a less spectacular, but more practical, plan suggested by Harry Trent.

What this plan was will be seen in due course.

From the time that Dick had spotted the enemy bargaining with the boatkeeper and the first appearance of the hostile craft, about ten minutes elapsed. During that period the island force, by superhuman efforts, had slipped the bell-tent and the rest of their belongings on to the Gaddy. The houseboat was then attached once more to the dinghy, and, with Biglow on board, slowly allowed to drift away from the island. Of course, the foe would see this, but they were hardly likely to interfere with an innocent-looking houseboat. As to associating either with their quarry, that was highly improbable.

So, lying in ambush, the Fallowsdale Expeditionary Force calmly awaited the coming of the enemy. Directly they landed the

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plan was to allow them to scatter into the interior of the island, and then to quietly creep down to the boats, cast them adrift, and make off to the mainland, leaving Blosson & Co. prisoners.

From their place of concealment they could see the Gaddy gliding placidly away, but the drift of the houseboat soon hid Biglow and the dinghy from view. The flotilla was fifty yards from the island when the three boats appeared in the backwater. Contrary to their expectations, the enemy's curiosity apparently was aroused. Anyway, the leading boat, instead of continuing straight for the island, suddenly altered its course, and cut across in the direction of the dinghy. The other two boats followed suit.

"I believe they smell a rat!" muttered Dick. "Bother it! I wish we could see what's happening!"

"Biglow's not much good if it comes to a row," said Harry uneasily. "I wish I'd gone in the dinghy myself."

For a couple of minutes nothing happened. Then they saw the Gaddy get moving once more. The enemy's boats shot out, but they were turning round. In other words, they were going away from the island!

"My hat!" ejaculated Harry. "They've

minds to be here for some time," he said. "And, that being so, we had better try and rig up some sort of shelter for the night."

"But surely we shall be able to get off before nightfall!" protested Dick.

"How?" asked Harry. "The river's practically deserted. We might shout ourselves hoarse before we attracted any attention."

"I could swim across," said Dick.

Harry shook his head.

"You might," he replied doubtfully. "The distance is not great, but the various currents are awfully strong. Then the weeds add another danger. The risk is not worth running."

Dick seemed to think it was.

During this conversation Faulkner had been regarding Dick and Harry with no very favourable looks. He broke in at this point.

"You seem to forget that I'm the leader of this expedition!" he growled.

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Templeton and Plum.

"Oh, don't chatter!" said Dick impatiently. "I want to think. This is a much more serious business than you kids imagine."

Faulkner could hardly hide his ears.

"Say that again!" he breathed, advancing a couple of paces.

"Now, then, no quarrelling!" said Harry Trent firmly. "We're in bad enough mess as it is, without fighting amongst ourselves! Dick Tulliver and I are far more capable of doing things than you chaps. If you're wise, you'll leave the matter in our hands. You saw that dwarf, didn't you?"

"Yes!" muttered Faulkner sullenly, his fist still clenched.

"He's hot stuff!" said Harry impressively. "We've had some dealings with him before now, and we know what we're talking about when we say that you fellows wouldn't stand an earthly against him. You want to get your boat back, don't you?"

"Of course we do!"

"Very well. We'll help you, but only on the understanding that you leave everything to us."

No one likes being deposed, and least of all a fellow of the type of Faulkner. But then he was in a hole. The capture of the Gaddy was a serious business. The houseboat had been lent him by his uncle, and there would be ructions if anything happened to the craft. The Gaddy must be recovered at all costs. Faulkner hadn't a ghost of a notion how to set about recovering it. On the other hand, these two fellows might succeed. Therefore he swallowed his pride, and agreed to let them take over the entire management.

The first thing to be done was to thoroughly explore the island, and see if there was any means of getting to one of the other islands, and so by degrees reaching the mainland. Ten minutes' walk round the edge of their prison showed them that there was little likelihood of escaping this way. There were many small islands, but they were all practically submerged. They discovered also that Harry Trent was right when he had said swimming was dangerous. The varied channels were choked with reeds, and woe-betide a swimmer who attempted to tackle these waters.

Fortune, however, had not entirely deserted them.

As they gazed across the swamp, young Plum directed their attention to a dark-looking object poking out between a clump of bulrushes forty or fifty yards distant.

"I believe it's some sort of a boat," he said.

"A boat!" said Dick impulsively. "I'll risk it, and swim out to it!"

In double-quick time he had thrown off his clothes and plunged in. With strong, vigorous strokes he glided through the water, battling successfully with the plant entanglements, and shortly arrived at his destination. Yes, Plum had been right; it was a boat. It was an old fishing-punt, moored to the bank by a long chain, attached to the stump of a dead willow-tree.

Dick hastily untied it, and, jumping on board—the craft, by the way, was very leaky, and had three inches of water in it—leaned over the side, and pushed vigorously against the willow-stump. The punt moved off until there was eight or nine feet of water between it and the bank.

So far, so good. If Dick had only had a punt-pole, it would have been as easy as A B C. But then that was just what he hadn't got. However, he discovered the lower joint of an old fishing-rod lying in the bottom of the punt, and with this he did the best he could.

(Continued on page 10.)



Dick's eyes rested on the figure of an old man sleeping on a bench in the shady corner of the stable, with a dog curled at his feet. He instantly recognised the man as old Sattlebee. (See page 8.)

captured the whole bag of tricks. Fancy a parcel of schoolboys doing a thing like this!"

"Fallowsdale fellows aren't to be sneezed at!" snapped Faulkner. "We three would have done just the same as Blosson's doing if we had the chance. Still," he added, "I must say I didn't think Blosson had it in him."

He pulled out his field-glasses and rapidly surveyed the captured houseboat and its attendant escort.

"Who's that on the roof of the Gaddy?" they heard him mutter. "That's not one of our chaps. Looks like a dwarf or something of—"

"A dwarf!" shouted Dick, snatching the glasses from Faulkner. "Jove, you're right!" he cried, after a hurried glance. "It is a dwarf! Harry, it's Bernard Grimshaw!"

Active Service!

THEY watched the Gaddy, with its escort, gradually vanish round the belt of trees that grew at the entrance of the backwater. When not a sign of it remained Harry Trent turned to Dick.

"It's pretty clear we must make up our

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL STORY OF ST. JIM'S.

★ Distinguished Visitors! ★



MARY AND DOUGLAS ARRIVE AT ST. JIM'S!

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Buck Finn's Wonderful News.

TOM MERRY, Manners, and Lowther, the chums of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, were strolling leisurely along the Shell passage arm-in-arm, when the door of one of the studies—No. 4—suddenly burst open with great violence, and a junior rushed out with a whoop, cannoning into the sedate three.

"Hurroo! It's bully!"
"Here, what are you at?" gasped Manners, who had received the full force of the concussion. "Why, it's Finn!"

"Buck Finn, you mad Yankee, what's biting you now?" grunted Lowther. "Why rush about like a mad bull?"

"Hurroo! It's bully, I tell you! Who-ooop!" yelled the American junior.

"Collar him!" said Tom Merry succinctly. The grasp of three pairs of hands was laid upon the exuberant Buck Finn.

"Bump him!" sang out Manners. Buck Finn struggled wildly.

"Hold on, you jays!" he yelled. "I've got noos—great noos! Jest you hold on—Wow!"

"We're holding on!" grinned Lowther. "One!"

"Bump!"
"Yow! Yurroo! You jays—"

"Bump!"
"Yarroo! Let up, you galoots! I tell you—"

"Bump!"
Buck Finn gasped and struggled wildly as he was bumped on the floor of the passage for the third time.

"That'll do!" grinned Tom Merry, releasing him so suddenly that he rolled on the floor.

"It's possible to hustle too much, Buck—in the Shell passage, at any rate! That'll be a lesson to you not to bump into your betters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Manners and Lowther.

"You silly galoots!" roared Buck Finn, struggling to his feet with a red and wrathful face. "You slab-sided jays! I've got some bully noos, I tell you!"

"Out with it, then!"
"Blest if I'll tell you fellers now!"

The Terrible Three made a movement as if to collar the American junior again. Buck Finn jumped back hastily.

"Waal, perhaps I will! I tell you, boys, this here will make me just the big noise in this shebang this afternoon!"

"Meaning?" said Tom Merry sweetly. "We don't speak American, you know, Finn! It isn't in the curriculum at St. Jim's!"

Buck Finn snorted.
"You Britishers are sure slow! When my visitors come this afternoon I shall be just cock of the walk in this school, and no mistake!"

"Tom Merry & Co. grinned.
"You're some Yank, Buck, and no mistake!"

said Lowther. "Who are your giddy visitors?"

"The two greatest Amurricans—no less!" said Buck Finn solemnly, almost reverently.

"What! Mr. Pussyfoot Johnson and Jack Dempsey?" queried Lowther humorously.

"No, you boob! Just Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford!"

"What!"

The Terrible Three simply jumped. Buck Finn had certainly startled them at last. They stared at him with wide-open eyes.

"Dud-do you mean to say—" stuttered Lowther.

Buck Finn nodded emphatically, highly pleased with the impression he had made.

"Yes, siree! Just that! Mr. Fairbanks knew my father in the States, and I have jest had a letter from him to say he's making a special journey down to St. Jim's to see me, and he's bringing Mary with him. They'll be here sometime this afternoon in their automobile. What do you think of that? Some stunt, I guess—eh?"

"By Jove!"

"Ripping!"

"Absolutely topping!"

There was a chorus of enthusiastic comments from the Terrible Three. Like most other people, they were ardent admirers of the great film stars, especially Monty Lowther, who was very keen on acting himself. The news that these famous people—

A Grand Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

the "world's sweetheart" and her husband—were actually coming to St. Jim's that afternoon seemed to them too good to be true.

"I guess I'm off to tell the Head!" said Buck Finn, with a grin. "Perhaps he'll want to receive 'em in state! So-long, you guys!"

And Buck Finn scudded off, feeling himself a very important person indeed.

The news spread like wildfire. A volley of cheering from the Rag, where the "kids" of the Second and Third Forms most did congregate, showed that the news had reached them, while it was rumoured that even the mighty men of the Sixth had, most of them, paid hasty visits to their rooms in order to smarten up their personal appearance in readiness for the distinguished visitors in the afternoon.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mary and Douglas Arrive.

IMEDIATELY after dinner Buck Finn, with a large flower stuck in his button-hole in honour of the occasion, made his way down to the school gates to wait for his famous visitors.

The whole of the junior school to a man followed a few paces behind Buck Finn!

The American junior surveyed the following crowd with indignation.

"I guess you guys can vamoose!" he called out. "I'm going down to the gates to meet my friends Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks!" This was a little piece of "swank" on the part of Master Finn, for he had never seen the famous stars, except on the films. "I guess I don't want a crowd of boobs hangin' round!"

There was a roar of many voices.
"Rats! We're coming!"

"We want to see Mary and Duggie!"

"What time are they coming?"

Buck Finn snorted, but he could not very well take any action against a crowd of well over a hundred boys. Evidently they did not intend to "vamoose!" In the background the quad could be seen crowded with seniors of the Fifth and Sixth Forms. They were too dignified to crowd round the gates, but they evidently did not mean to miss seeing the visitors. Figures could also be seen at the windows of the masters' studies. And Jack Blake declared that he could even see Dr. Holmes, the Head himself, peering from behind the curtains of his study window!

"It's a public welcome, that's what it is, Buck!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Even in this slow old country there's no law against looking at people! A cat may look at a king—even a cinema king, you know!"

For nearly an hour the school waited patiently.

Then there was a shout from Wally D'Arcy, who was scouting out in the road with his chums, Gibson and Jamison.

"Here comes a car!"

There was a rush for the gates, which old Taggles, the porter, tried in vain to stem.

The next moment a big touring car turned slowly in at the gates, through a lane of shouting, cheering boys. In the back of it were seated—Yes, it was they! Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks in the flesh, the two world-favourites whose features are familiar to millions of picture-goers all the world over! Here they were actually at St. Jim's!

The two stars looked somewhat surprised at their tumultuous reception. It is possible that they would have preferred a quieter one, but their faces showed no sign, if this was so. Their faces were lit up by the charming smiles so characteristic of them, and the boys cheered and cheered again.

Douglas stood up at last in the car, which had now come to a standstill.

"Say, boys!" he said, when he could make himself heard; and his broad, good-natured smile went to the boys' hearts. "This is real good of you! But I guess we expected to see one boy—not a couple of hundred! Can anyone tell me if Master Finn, of the U.S.A., is in this crowd?"

"Here he is, sir!"

Buck Finn was struggling through the crowd towards the car, his clothes suffering somewhat in the process. Many hands helped him on, and he reached the car at last, his hat on the back of his head, and the flower hanging limply from his button-hole.

"Here I am, I guess!" he gasped out, taking off his hat. "I'm Buck Finn, of America!"

Douglas Fairbanks laughed.

"Bully for you, boy! Shake! We've come a long way to see you, kid! Mary, this is young Finn!"

"How do you do, Miss—I mean, Mrs. Fairbanks?" gasped Finn, shaking hands with the famous stars in turn, with his head in a whirl.

"I'm right glad to see you!" said Mary in her sweet, musical voice. "We promised your poppa to look you up on this side the first chance we got, and here we are!"

"I—I'm real glad to see you, ma'am!" stammered Buck Finn. "Will you step down? I should like to show you over our school."

Mary made a comical little grimace, and Douglas laughed his hearty laugh.

"I guess we don't quite see how we're ever going to get out of the car with this crowd about!" he said, with a twinkle in his eye.

Tom Merry, who was standing in the crowd near the car, overheard the words. As captain of the junior school, he felt it was up to him to do something.

He sprang on to the step of the car, raising his cap to Mrs. Fairbanks as he did so.

"Excuse me a moment, ma'am!"

Then he held up his hand for silence.

"Hold on, you fellows!" he shouted. "Our distinguished visitors, whom we are all delighted to welcome to St. Jim's to-day—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

"Our visitors want to have a walk round with Buck Finn, to look at the school," went on Tom Merry. "We mustn't mob them, or what will they think of St. Jim's manners? We must all clear off now, and let them get out of the car."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Tommy!"

The crowd melted away like magic, and Tom Merry, with a flushed face, jumped down from the step of the car.

"That's done the trick, I guess," said Buck Finn, with great satisfaction.

Mary Pickford leaned over the side of the car and touched Tom Merry on the arm.

"That was very nice of you!" she said, with her winning smile. "What is your name?"

"Tom Merry, miss—I mean, ma'am!"

"Perhaps you would like to help Finn to show us round?"

"Thank you very much!" said Tom, flushing with pleasure.

"Then that's fixed!" said Douglas, helping Mary to alight from the big car. "Which way first, kid?"

"This way, sir!" sang out Buck Finn. "We'll stroll round the playing-fields first."

Piloted by the two juniors, who were envied by the entire school, the two great stars wandered round the fine old grounds, admiring the stately time-stained buildings and the noble elms.

Many curious and admiring glances followed them, but the school was evidently determined that, after the vociferous welcome they had received, they should be free to move about without being subjected to the mobbing which they had so often suffered.

At the senior nets some members of the First Eleven were just starting practice. Kildare was bowling to Rushden, and the little party halted to watch. Douglas Fairbanks looked on with great interest.

"Say, this cricket's sure a dandy game!" he said admiringly, as Rushden opened his

shoulders to a loose ball, and, with a mighty drive, sent it whizzing over the smooth turf.

"Like to have a knock, sir?" asked Rushden, who overheard the remark.

Douglas smiled.

"I guess I'm no cricketer, young fellow!"

"Go on, Douglas, see what you can do!"

said his wife, with an encouraging smile.

"Duggie's" smile broadened as, nothing loth, he strode to the wicket, and grasped the bat Rushden proffered him.

"This is real good of you!"

"Not at all, sir!"

Douglas stood at the wicket with his bat in the air, held in the manner of a baseball-bat.

"Ready, sir?" called out Kildare, with a smile.

"Sure!"

Kildare took a little run and sent down a gentle delivery. The film star watched it carefully, and then—

Clack!

The bat smote the ball with terrific force, and there was a gasp from the onlookers as the ball flew high in the air. Away it went, to fall with a thud a tremendous distance away. It was a terrific hit!

There was a cheer from the boys, of whom there was a crowd watching, from a respectful distance.

"Well hit, sir!"

"Bravo!"

Mary Pickford clapped her hands, and looked delighted.

"My hat! He must have a good eye, as well as terrific strength!" whispered Tom Merry to Buck Finn.

"You bet!" was the American youth's laconic reply.

Someone tossed the smiling Kildare another ball.

"Will you try another, sir?"

"Sure!"

Another ball came down the pitch—a little faster, and dead on the wicket. But Douglas was ready for it. Clack!

It followed its predecessor—hit clean out of the ground!

There was a yell.

"Another sixer!"

"Well hit indeed, sir!"

"Hurrah!"

Kildare handed another ball, with a smile on his face.

"Look out this time, sir!"

"I get you!" laughed Douglas.

"This time Kildare, the champion cricketer at St. Jim's, sent down his very best ball. It whizzed through the air with a wicked spin on it and a most deceptive swerve.

Douglas watched, and his bat flashed through the air in a terrific swipe—just a fraction too late!

The ball crashed into the wickets, and sent the balls flying.

Crash!

Douglas Fairbanks smiled more broadly than ever.

"Gee! I guess that was a dandy ball!" he exclaimed. "You had me beat there! I guess I must practise up some before I play any more cricket!"

He handed the bat back to the smiling

Rushden, and the little party moved on towards the old quad.

"You'll come in and have a cup of tea in my study, ma'am?" said Buck Finn anxiously. "It's all ready. I'll boil the kettle in a minute."

"Delighted! It's real good of you!" said Mary Pickford, with a charming smile.

"Oh, good! You'll come, Tom Merry?"

"What-ho!"

She entered the School House, and in the passage encountered Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, a dignified figure in cap and gown.

He nodded pleasantly to the juniors, and raised his mortar-board to Mary.

"Ah, Finn! I was coming out to welcome your visitors. Perhaps you will introduce me?"

Buck Finn did so, and the Head shook hands heartily with the two "stars."

"I am delighted to welcome two such distinguished artists to St. Jim's," said Dr. Holmes in his stately way. "I heard the cheering, and—ahem!—I trust my boys have not been too boisterous—"

"They have been just sweet!" cried Mary Pickford. "We have had a lovely time roaming round your beautiful old school. It's just grand! We've nothing like it in America, Dr. Holmes!"

The Head of St. Jim's looked extremely pleased. He was quite accustomed to listening to expressions of admiration from visitors who were at the beautiful old school for the first time. But the visitors were not all Mary Pickford's! The revered Head, who had never in his life seen either Mary or Douglas on the films, was, in fact, quite captivated by the unique charm of the fascinating little lady. He almost purred.

"You will—honour us by both taking a cup of tea in the drawing-room, I hope?" he said, with a gallant bow.

Mary shot a lightning glance at Buck Finn, and noted that youth's lengthening face. She guessed in a flash that he would be dreadfully disappointed if she accepted that invitation.

"Thank you so much!" she said sweetly. "But we have both accepted an invitation from Finn here to take tea in his study, if we may be allowed to do so?"

"Certainly! Of course!" said the Head. "You naturally wish to see as much of the boy as possible during your short visit, after having come so far to see him. I quite understand! Charmed to have met you—er—Mrs. Fairbanks, and you, too, sir!"

"I guess we're obliged to you, doctor!" said Douglas, as the stars shook hands with the Head and passed on up the stairs to the Shell passage, Finn leading the way.

"No wonder they call her 'the world's sweetheart'!" murmured Tom Merry, as he followed. "Even the Head's fallen in love with her!"

Buck Finn ushered his distinguished guests into the study he shared with James Lennox of the Shell. It was a small apartment, and the three juniors and their two guests were just able to sit down in it without being uncomfortably crowded.

The table was spread with a sumptuous tea, and the kettle was already boiling on the gas-stove down the passage. In anticipation of their arrival, Lennox had been getting busy, and he counted himself well rewarded by the charming things Mary said to him.

That tea was a very merry one, and for the juniors, at least, a memorable one.

The two famous stars chatted and laughed as unrestrainedly as if they were themselves schoolboys, thus confirming the reports that they were quite unspooled and unaffected by the world-wide fame they had gained.

After tea the study was invaded by numerous friends of Buck Finn, who looked in to see how the film favourites were getting on in the hope of being asked to stay.

The two guests of honour laughingly greeted them all, until the study and the passage outside the open door were simply crammed.

There were Manners and Lowther and Jack Blake, with his chums Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, Harry Noble, the Australian, with his chums Bernard Glyn and Clifton Dane.

Figgins & Co. came over from the New House to look in, of course. The juniors gave themselves over to hero-worship, and all was merry and bright.

Douglas Fairbanks was even persuaded to give some examples of his famous film faces. The expression on his good-natured, mobile face changed from moment to moment from despair to happiness, from hope to chagrin, from grief to eager anticipation. His hearty laugh rang out as the juniors attempted to express their admiration.

"I guess some of you boys will be going in for cinema-acting some day," he said, "and beat me all to a frazzle!"



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BUFFALO BILL

NUGGET

WEEKLY

The Great NEW All Story Paper.

"Yaas, wathah, sir!" spoke up Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with enthusiasm. "I wathah think I should be awfully good at cinema-actin' myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Really!" said Douglas, much amused. "Well, why not? Are you practising already?"

"Yaas, wathah! I can do the Charley Chaplin walk wippin' alweady, but there's not woom to show you in the studay!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There are one or two other stunts to learn as well, I guess!" said Douglas. "But you've got a 'picture-face' all right!"
"Bai Jove! Have I? That's wippin'!"

Arthur Augustus beamed through his eyeglass. In imagination, he could already see himself earning millions of dollars as a sort of super-Fairbanks. The great "Duggie" himself said he had the "picture-face"!

"Yes; I guess you'd be hard to beat in dude parts, sonny!"

"Dud-dude parts! Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. That was not quite what he had meant. But the juniors simply roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The expression on D'Arcy's face was a study.

"Well, I guess we must beat it, boys!" said Douglas at last, rising. "We're sure more than grateful for the bully time you have given us."

"We don't know how to thank you," said sweet Mary Pickford. "But I've been having a good talk with Buck Finn here, as you call him"—she smiled her sweet smile—"and I'm going to write out to his poppa right away, and tell him how lucky he is to have his son at a school like St. Jim's!"

"Hear, hear!"
"Hurray!"
"Good old Buck!"

The juniors—and a good many seniors, too—escorted the film favourites down to the car waiting at the gates in a body. The chauffeur was summoned from Taggles' lodge, where he had been provided with tea. Fortunately, he was a teetotaler, so that the gin and water which Taggles had offered him, incidentally, had been refused.

Mary Pickford and her stalwart husband shook hands with Buck Finn. After Douglas' hearty grip, the American junior found that a little folded-up piece of paper had been left in his hand.

As he touched it it crackled crisply. It was a river!

"Oh, I say—" began Buck Finn, flushing with surprise and pleasure.

"Sh! Not a word!" said big Douglas hastily. "Just a few dollars from a friend of your dad's."

Buck Finn gave him a grateful glance. The big man and his beautiful wife were smiling and shaking hands with the scores of juniors who were swarming round.

"There's the man who bowled me out!" laughed Douglas, catching sight of Kildare strolling past on the outskirts of the crowd. "I guess I must shake hands with him, to show there's no ill-feeling!"

He made his way through the throng, and shook hands heartily with the popular captain of St. Jim's, amidst cheers.

Kildare returned his grip warmly. "You ought to take up cricket, sir," he said, smiling. "With your eye and strength you'd beat Jessop hollow!"

Douglas laughed. "It's a bully game! I guess I'll take it up some day—when I've time!"

"You must bring a team down to St. Jim's and play us when you do," said Kildare.

"Bully for you, boy! That's a bet!" was Duggie's laughing rejoinder.

"Hurray!"

The two stars climbed into the big car. Before sinking into the deep cushions Mary took a last appreciative look round at the peaceful scene. She took in the picture of the velvet turf, bathed in sunshine, the stately old buildings and magnificent trees.

"It's just grand!" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "I just love England! Good-bye, boys!"

There was a roar.

"Good-bye!"

"Good luck!"

"Come again soon!"

"We've given us a grand welcome and a bully time! We shall always remember our friends at St. Jim's!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The big car moved off to a roar of cheer-

ing that startled the inhabitants of the neighbouring village of Rylcombe.

"Hurray! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The chauffeur threaded his way slowly through the surging throng of cheering boys. Mary waved her hand and Douglas waved his hat. Their faces were lit up with beaming smiles.

"Good-bye!"

The car buzzed through the gates at last, and down the Rylcombe road. And ever so far off Taggles cheered hoarsely, hat in hand, as it passed his lodge.

A last vision of waving hands, of the broadest, cheeriest smile in the world, and of the sweetest, most fascinating smile in the world! Then the big car was swallowed up in a cloud of dust, and St. Jim's had said good-bye to its distinguished visitors!

THE END.

(Another story of St. Jim's next week.)

STORYETTES!

A GOOD REASON.

An English officer, whose ship was stationed off the coast of Ceylon, went for a day's shooting, accompanied by his native servant. Coming to a particularly inviting river, the officer resolved to have a bathe, and asked the native to show him a place where there were no alligators.

The native took him to a pool close to the estuary. The officer enjoyed his swim, and whilst drying himself asked the native why there were not any alligators in that pool.

"Because, sah," replied the guide, "they plenty 'fraid of shark!"

DOGGY.

They were talking about dogs they had been the fortunate possessors of, and Smith, after listening to many stories of intelligent animals, told the following:

"I once had a dog, and its devotion to me was extraordinary. Why, one day he heard me say that I was rather hard up, so he went and died on the day before the renewal of his licence was due."

NOT QUITE RIGHT.

The vicar was just about to give out the banns of a marriage when he forget where he had put the book. However, he began, groping meanwhile for the lost volume.

"I publish the banns of marriage between—between—"

"Between the cushion and the seat!" whispered the vergier, in a voice loud enough to be heard throughout the church, suddenly realising what the vicar was looking for.

HISTORY REWRITTEN.

An extract from Tommy's essay:

"King Henry VIII. was the greatest widower that ever lived. He was born at Anno Domino, in the year 1096. He had 519 wives, not to mention children. The last was beheaded, and was afterwards executed. The second was revoked. She never smiled again. She said that the word 'Calais' would be engraved on her heart after death. Henry VIII. was succeeded on the throne by his great-grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, sometimes known as the 'Lady of the Lake.'"

And Tommy wondered why the prize did not fall to his lot!

ON THE INSTALMENT SYSTEM.

They were experts in many things, but chiefly in the art of bragging. At that moment they were discussing their own wonderful triumphs as vocalists.

"Why," said the American, looking at his companion through the smoke-rings from his cigar, "when I first sang in public the audience literally showered me with bouquets—flowers of every sort, size, and description. Bless you, there were enough of them to fill a flower-shop!"

"Faith, and I can beat that!" cried the Irishman. "The first time I sang was at an open-air concert, and, begorra, the audience were so delighted that they presented me with a house!"

"What?" cried the American. "They presented you with a house? Why, you must be off your head!"

"Not a bit of it!" replied Pat. "I tell you that they gave me a house. True," he added in a whisper, "they gave it to me brick at a time!"

A LITTLE TOO PREVIOUS!

A Short Story of St. Jim's.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"IF you please, Master Merry!"
Master Merry—otherwise Tom Merry of the Shell Form—at St. Jim's—gave a grunt, but made no other acknowledgment of the remark addressed to him.

Tom Merry was seated alone in his study, driving away at a Latin imposition that had to be delivered into the German master's study before supper-time. And Tom was not in the best humour over it.

For it was a nice sunny afternoon, and Tom would have preferred to be slogging a cricket-ball about on Little Side. His chums, Manners and Lowther, had offered to stay with him, but Tom had not allowed them to. He remained in alone, driving off the imposition at top speed. But two hundred lines out of the *Hiad* are not written in a few minutes, and Tom was still busy as the hands of the clock crept round to tea-time.

Toby, the School House page, had insinuated his shock-head in the doorway of the study, but the Shell fellow did not look up; he went on driving his pen as if his life depended on it.

"I say, Master Merry!"

Grunt!

"Master Merry!"

Grunt!

Toby grinned a little. He came into the study and tapped on the table.

Then Tom Merry looked up, and pointed to the door with his pen.

"Scoot!" he said briefly. "Fly!"

"Master Merry—"

"Sheer off!"

"Ye-es; but, I say—"

"Vamoose!" roared Tom Merry. "Levant! Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Yes; but—"

Tom Merry picked up a Latin dictionary and poised it in the air. Toby fled.

The hero of the Shell sat down at the table again, and his pen drove on with renewed vigour. Toby peered cautiously round the door.

"I say, Master Tom—"

Tom Merry looked up in great exasperation. "I've got a blessed impot to finish, you fathead!" he shouted. "Go and eat cake, you duffer!"

"Ye-es; but Master Noble says—"

"Tell Noble from me to go and chew cake!"

Toby chuckled. He was hardly likely to tell a pupil of St. Jim's that.

But it was hardly necessary, for Harry Noble himself had appeared at the end of the corridor. Toby heard him, and turned round to meet him.

"Have you given Tom Merry my message, Toby?" asked the Australian junior.

"Er—if you please, sir—"

"Right-ho! Then I'll tell him myself!" And Toby retreated down the passage.

Inside Study No. 10 Tom Merry was waiting behind the door with a cushion held aloft—in readiness for Toby when he stuck his head in again.

Harry Noble came along the passage and put his hand on the door.

"Come in, you silly ass!" Tom muttered.

"Just come in, and see what you'll get!"

Noble pushed open the door and walked in. Bliff!

Tom Merry's cushion descended with unerring aim. Noble went to the floor as if he had been poleaxed.

"My giddy aunt!" stuttered Tom Merry, when he saw who was lying in front of him. "I thought it was that clump Toby!"

"You crass maniac!" gasped Noble painfully. And he clasped the injured part affectionately.

"Awfully-sorry!" said Tom, looking rather sheepish. "I didn't know you were coming in."

"Well, you should be more careful in future!" snapped Noble, stalking out of the study in high dudgeon. "I was going to ask you to come to a tea-party in my study, but I'm jiggered if I do now!"

And he was gone!

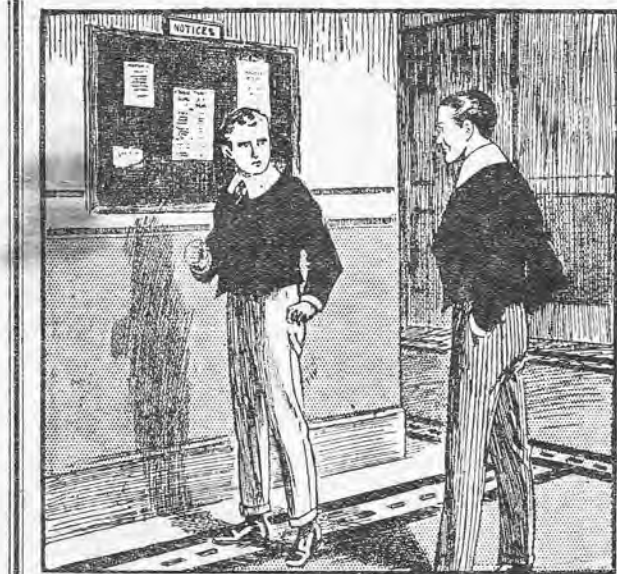
THE END.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 79.

TROUBLE FOR JIMMY!

A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE
SCHOOL STORY, DEALING WITH
THE ADVENTURES OF JIMMY
SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD.

By OWEN CONQUEST.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Mornington's Little Game.

WELL bowled, Mornington!" Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, shouted with great heartiness. A crowd of juniors joined in the shout.

There was practice on Big Side. As a rule, practice on Big Side did not draw much attention from the juniors, excepting the fellows who were called upon to fag at bowling for the seniors.

But there was quite a crowd looking on now. Mornington of the Fourth was bowling. He had offered his services as a fag at the nets, and Bulkeley of the Sixth had accepted them. And, to the astonishment of all observers—and of Bulkeley himself—the junior had taken the captain of Rookwood's wicket.

Bulkeley stared at the wicket. It was down; there was no doubt about that.

And Mornington, who was a slacker and a dandy, and supposed to be no cricketer—Mornington had taken it!

"Well, my hat!" said Bulkeley. There was quite a roar from the juniors. For old Bulkeley's wicket to be taken by a fellow in the Fourth was amazing. Mornington was not popular in his Form, but he was cheered loudly just then.

Jimmy Silver shouted as loudly as any, quite forgetful of the fact that he was on the worst of terms personally with Mornington.

"Must have been a fluke," said Lovell. Jimmy Silver shook his head. "No; it was jolly good bowling!" he said. "I'm a bowler, and I know. Wonders will never cease! That slacking ass has picked up wonderfully since he took to cricket!" "Best bowler in the Fourth, by gad!" said Townsend. "Rather puts your nose out of joint, Silver—what!"

Jimmy took no notice of that remark. Flynn fielded the ball, and tossed it back to Mornington. The junior caught it smartly. "Well bowled, young 'un!" Bulkeley called along the pitch. "Let's see if you can do that again!"

"Certainly!" said Mornington. The juniors watched him eagerly. For the slacker of the Fourth, the smoker and "Giddy Goat," to be showing form at cricket like this was astonishing. Nobody had ever expected it of Mornington.

Bulkeley went back to the wicket, and Mornington resumed bowling. The Rookwood captain's wicket did not fall again, but the bowling continued very good, and Bulkeley had all his work cut out to stop it.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on with undiminished interest.

Since Mornington had come back to Rookwood he had surprised Jimmy by taking up cricket with the greatest keenness.

He had shown that he had the makings of THE PINNY POPULAR.—No. 79.

a good player in him, though otherwise he was not much given to "playing the game." But Jimmy was astonished by the progress he had made.

"He would make a jolly good recruit for the Junior Eleven!" Jimmy remarked. "Only—only—"

He paused. "Only he's a swanking cad, and a decent fellow can't get on with him!" growled Lovell.

"Yes, exactly." "No room for that rotter in the Junior Eleven!" said Newcome decidedly. "Besides, he would want to run the whole show! You know his way!" Jimmy nodded.

"It's a pity, though," he remarked. "We want bowlers. He would be a rod in pickle for the Moderns to-morrow, if we could play him. But I suppose it wouldn't be any use!" "No fear!"

The practice ended, and Mornington came away. Townsend and Topham and Peele, the Nuts of the Fourth, gathered round to congratulate him.

Mornington was the only member of that select circle who was worth his salt on the playing-fields, and it was quite a new departure for him.

Jimmy Silver gave him a cordial slap on the shoulder.

"Jolly good, Mornington!" he said. "Blest if I ever expected you to turn out a cricketer like that!"

Mornington gave him a supercilious smile. "There may be some more surprises in store for you," he remarked.

"I hope so—may see you batting like Hobbs next," said Jimmy Silver good-naturedly. "Your bowling's first-rate, anyway!"

"I didn't expect you to admit it."

"Why not?" demanded Jimmy warmly. Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"Morny's toppin'—simply toppin'!" said Townsend. "He will go into the eleven now, of course!"

"Oh, of course!" said Peele.

Mornington looked at the captain of the Fourth with a mocking smile.

"Well, what do you say to that?" he asked. Jimmy hesitated.

"I'd like to play you," he said; "but I don't think it would do. We don't pull together, you know!"

"You mean that you're goin' to leave me out of the team because we don't agree personally?"

"No, I don't!" growled Jimmy, turning red.

"Nothing of the kind! I mean, if you want it in plain English, that you're a smoky, gambling, blackguardly rotter, and that isn't the kind of fellow for Rookwood juniors!"

And Jimmy Silver walked away, frowning.

"Nice manners!" smiled Townsend.

"I'm goin' into the team, all the same," said Mornington coolly. "I'm goin' to appeal to the committee!"

"Good egg!" said Townsend heartily. "Dashed if I thought you cared so much for cricket, Morny!"

"I don't care twopence for it!" "By gad! You've been faggin' at it ever since you came back to Rookwood!" said Townsend, in astonishment.

"I'm goin' to be a cricketer, because I'm goin' to be captain of the Fourth, and knock Jimmy Silver right out!" said Mornington. "Gettin' into the eleven is the first step. By the end of the term I shall be captain of the Fourth, and that gang will be nowhere!"

"Blest if I don't half think you'll do it, too!" said Peele admiringly. "Anyway, Silver can't leave you out of the team, after the way you've shown up to-day."

"I'll see that he doesn't!" said Mornington. And the Nuts of Rookwood went in to tea in great spirits. It really looked as if at last the "Giddy Goats" had a chance of keeping their end up against Jimmy Silver & Co.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Jimmy Silver Gives In!

JIMMY SILVER wore a thoughtful look that evening.

He was feeling a little worried.

Mornington's new devotion to cricket, and the form he had shown, had come as a surprise to most of the Classical Fourth, and to Jimmy most of all. If Mornington had chosen to make the best of himself he would become a man of mark in the Lower School. But, good cricketer as he had become, he was still the same insolent, supercilious "boulder"—still the same young blackguard who smoked cigarettes in his study, and laid bets on "geegees" with Joey Hook of Coombe. He was not the kind of fellow Jimmy Silver could have pulled with, even if Mornington had wanted to pull with Jimmy, which he evidently did not.

But personal likes and dislikes could not count in such a matter as selecting members of the Junior Eleven.

And Jimmy was considering whether he couldn't play him, after all.

The question was: Would Mornington keep his insolence within bounds, to the extent of playing a good game and taking orders from his captain, or would his ugly temper break out at an unpropitious moment?

Jimmy Silver, after careful thought, felt that it would not do. There would be friction at once, and friction in the team was fatal to good play. And Mornington would be quite capable of deliberately playing a "rotten" game if he were not allowed to have everything his own way and to act as cock of the walk.

So, after very careful consideration, the captain of the Fourth decided that it would not do, and he dismissed the matter from his mind.

It was brought back to his mind, however, before long.

Oswald and Flynn, who were on the cricket committee, looked into the end study during the evening, when the Fistical Four were doing their prep.

Jimmy Silver paused in his work to give them a friendly nod.

"Busy?" asked Oswald.

"Yes; but I'll take a rest. What is it?"

"About the cricket."

"You're in the team to-morrow. I've put the list up downstairs," said Jimmy.

Oswald nodded.

"What about Mornington?" he asked.

"Can't be did!"

"Sure, he's a good bowler, and we want bowlers," said Flynn. "I've licked him several tomes for bein' a cheeky spalpeen. But he can bowl intirely!"

"Do you mean to say that you've come here to ask me to put him into the team?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"What utter rot!" growled Lovell.

Oswald hesitated.

"The fact is, Mornington's been round talking to the members of the committee, Jimmy. And—and if it could be agreed, I think it would be a good idea to play him. We want to beat the Moderns."

"That's my idea intirely!" said Flynn.

Jimmy Silver frowned a little and looked at his chums.

"What do you fellows think?" he asked.

"Rot!" said Lovell.

"Well," remarked Raby slowly, "you see, Jimmy, he's a topping bowler. There's no denying that."

"I don't want to deny it!" said Jimmy gruffly.

"Of course not! I don't mean that. But the eleven wants bowlers. In a school match you can pick out Modern fellows for the team; but in a Classical match we've only got Classics, and we're not strong in bowlers. If you don't play him it will be put down as personal dislike."

Jimmy Silver granted.

"I don't like him, but that's not the reason," he said. "I never thought he would make a cricketer; but he can play cricket. I own that. But he's an insolent cad, and he would want to be cock of the walk on the field."

"You could soon put a stopper on that."

"Of course I could, but I don't want to be doing it in the middle of a match with the Moderns."

"But he may behave himself intirely," said Flynn. "He seems to be awfully keen on cricket now. And we do want to beat the Moderns, Jimmy!"

"I suppose the other fellows agree with you?"

"Bedad, I think they do!"

"Might give him a chance," suggested Newcome. "You're not bound to speak to the cad off the cricket-field, you know. No need to be chummy with him."

"I haven't any confidence in him!" growled Jimmy Silver. "He's as full of tricks as a monkey! But if the whole committee thinks he ought to be given a chance I'll give him one. It's a go!"

"Not against your own judgment," said Oswald.

"Oh, that's all right! I'll give him a chance. If he knows how to behave himself he will be worth while. If he doesn't, it may lose us the match. Still, it's worth a bit of risk to get a bowler like that in the team."

And the matter dropped.

After his prep was over Jimmy Silver made a change in the list that was posted up in the hall. Hooker's name was crossed out, and that of Mornington written over it, somewhat to Hooker's wrath. But Hooker was nowhere near Mornington's form, and the change met with general approval.

Mornington came along as Jimmy stepped back from the board, and he smiled as he saw what the captain of the Fourth had written.

"So you've made up your mind to do the decent thing!" he remarked.

Jimmy looked at him steadily.

"I don't want to quarrel with you, Mornington," he said, "but if you make another remark like that I'll punch your silly head!" Mornington sneered.

Jimmy walked away with a clouded brow. He had yielded against his better judgment in putting Mornington into the team, and he felt that trouble would come of it. And in that Jimmy was quite correct.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Traitor!

"YOU fellows comin' to watch the game?"

Mornington asked that question as he came out of the dining-room the next day after dinner with his nutty friends.

Townsend and Topham and Peele yawned in chorus. They did not care for cricket.

"Oh, yaas, we'll come!" said Townsend.

"Means wastin' an afternoon," remarked Topham. "We might have had a four at bridge in the study."

"So we might," said Peele. "This is rather a rotten wheeze of yours, takin' up cricket, Morny. Of course, we all want to see Jimmy Silver done in the eye. But—"

"But it's a bore," said Townsend.

"Horrid bore!" yawned Topham.

"It's the only way of putting that cad Silver in his place," said Mornington, "and the only way of gettin' him down off his perch. Things will be a bit better for our set all round."

"When?" murmured Peele.

"Besides, it's a good game," said Mornington. "Why don't you fellows take it up, too?"

"No jolly fear!"

"We could get the whole thing in our hands then."

"You're welcome to my share, dear boy! But we'll come an' watch you with pleasure. Jimmy Silver's face will be worth watching," chuckled Townsend. "It goes against the grain with him to put you in at all. What sort of a game are you goin' to play?"

"That depends. I'm goin' to show the school that Jimmy Silver isn't the only pebble on the beach, anyway."

Peele chortled.

"Don't stand any of his cheek," he said. "If he jaws you, old man, give him as good as he sends. Make him sing small."

"I mean to."

The Nuts decided that they would watch the match after all. The amiable Mornington evidently meant to give his captain all the trouble he could, and Townsend & Co. expected to see some fun.

They walked down to Little Side with Mornington, the latter in fannels, with his handsome, expensive bat under his arm. Jimmy Silver was already there, and he gave Mornington a curt nod. Mornington was the last of the team on the ground.

Jimmy tossed with Tommy Dodd, the Modern skipper, and won the toss. He elected to take the first innings.

"Lovell and Oswald!" he called out, while the Moderns went into the field.

Mornington tapped Jimmy on the shoulder.

"I suppose you're openin' the innings with me?" he remarked. And Townsend & Co. grinned at this first evidence that Morny was "goin' it."

Jimmy stared at him.

"Of course I'm not," he said. "You're last man in."

"Last man in—me!"

"Yes."

"I object."

"Oh, cheese it!" Jimmy Silver turned his back on Mornington. He had no politeness to waste upon the junior.

Mornington gritted his teeth. His swank had met with a deserved rebuff. But Mornington was not the fellow to take it quietly if he could help it.

Lovell and Oswald went in to open the innings, and Tommy Dodd went on to bowl. Mornington stood watching, with a scowling brow.

He loved the limelight, and he wanted to open the innings. It did not please his mind at all to come on with the tail of the team.

Oswald was down for 6 in the second over, and as he came off Mornington addressed Jimmy Silver again:

"I'm goin' in now," he said.

"Raby!" called out Jimmy.

"Look here, I tell you I'm not standin' here watchin' those duffers losin' their wickets!" said Mornington angrily.

"Shut up!"

Raby went to the wickets, grinning. Mornington was inclined to march on, in spite of his captain's orders; but Jimmy's look showed plainly enough that if he did that the lofty Morny would be yanked off by the neck. That was not the kind of exhibition Mornington wished to bestow on the Rookwood crowd, so he restrained himself.

He rejoined the Nuts, with a scowling brow.

"Too bad!" said Townsend sympathetically. "Of course, you can't expect Silver to give you a chance, really."

"It's goin' to cost him a wicket in the innings!" muttered Mornington savagely.

Townsend whistled.

"Better not let any of the fellows hear you say that," he observed.

"Well, you'll see."

The Classical innings lasted nearly an hour. Jimmy Silver was fourth man in, and he forgot all about Mornington. Jimmy knocked up 30 runs before he was bowled by Tommy Doyle, the total for the innings being 70 when the word came, "Last man in!"

Flynn was at the wickets when Mornington—last man in—was called upon to join him there.

"Buck up, and do your best," said Jimmy, as Mornington was going in. "Leave the batting to Flynn all you can. Keep the innings alive, you know."

"I'm not likely to do anything of the sort," said Mornington. "You'd better tell Flynn to keep the innings alive for me."

He walked on the field before Jimmy could reply, and the captain of the Fourth suppressed his feelings the best he could. Mornington had proved himself a good bowler, but he was not remarkable with the bat, and if he had chosen to devote himself to keeping the innings alive there was a good chance for Flynn to add to the score. But that was not the kind of game that suited Mornington. As a matter of fact, Mornington's wicket went down to the first ball.

Jimmy Silver gave a snort.

"The only duck's egg in the innings!" he growled.

"He will come out strong in the bowling," said Oswald.

Mornington came off, smiling, and paused to speak to Jimmy Silver in a low voice.

"I warned you not to send me in last, you know."

Jimmy started.

There was only one possible construction to be placed on Mornington's words. Jimmy drew a deep breath.

"Do you mean to say that you threw your wicket away?" he ejaculated.

"I don't mean to say anythin', except that I warned you not to send me in last."

And Mornington walked on.

Jimmy Silver clenched his hands, and unclenched them again. That was not the moment for dealing with his very peculiar recruit. But Jimmy Silver made up his mind then and there that this was the last time, as well as the first, that Mornington should play for Rookwood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mornington in the Limelight!

TOMMY DODD and Towle opened the innings for the Moderns. Jimmy Silver placed his men in the field, and went on to bowl the first over.

Tommy Dodd cut the ball away, and the batsmen ran. And a sudden shout rang over the cricket-field:

"Well caught!"

"Bravo, Mornington!"

The ball was in Mornington's hand, and he was holding it up. It was a very smart catch.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

"My only aunt!" said Tommy Dodd.

The Modern skipper carried out his bat with a lugubrious face, his innings cut short in the first over.

There were loud cheers for Mornington, especially from his friends the Nuts. Adolphus Smythe of the Shell clapped his hands loudly. All the Giddy Goats of Rookwood were backing Mornington heartily. They hoped fervently that he would succeed in putting Jimmy Silver's nose out of joint, as they expressed it.

Mornington had been no use at the wickets, but evidently he was a valuable recruit in the field. And he meant to show his value as much as he could, and make it difficult for Jimmy Silver to turn him out of the eleven. Jimmy knew that he had thrown his wicket away in the Classical innings, but the other fellows were not likely to believe it.

Tommy Cook came in, and the over finished. Mornington called to Jimmy as the field crossed over.

"Am I goin' to bowl?"

Jimmy tossed him the ball without a word. He was inclined to throw it at his head.

There was a buzz in the Classical crowd as Mornington went on to bowl. After the form he had shown against the seniors the previous day, the fellows expected great things of him.

And the dandy of the Fourth intended to

do his very best. He had a chance of the limelight now, and he was on his mettle.

Towle received the howling, and he was very much on the look-out. But at the third ball his stumps were down, and there was a loud cheer for Mornington.

"Jolly good, isn't he?" Oswald remarked to Jimmy Silver.

"He's a good bowler," said Jimmy grimly. "I shouldn't wonder if he does the hat-trick."

"Quite likely."

"He will be a rod in pickle for Greyfriars and St. Jim's," said Oswald, with rather a curious look at Jimmy's clouded face.

"He won't!"

"But after this you'll play him?"

Jimmy shook his head, but there was no time for more talk. Tommy Doyle went in to take Towle's place.

All eyes were fixed on Mornington.

The ball came down like a shot, and Tommy Doyle swiped for the place where he was certain it was. But it wasn't there, as the crash of the wicket warned Tommy the next moment.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" ejaculated Doyle.

"Out!"

"Bravo, Morny! Well bowled!"

The Moderns were looking rather grim. This bowling was as good as Jimmy Silver's at its best. And two bowlers like Jimmy Silver in the Classical team made matters look very dubious for the Moderns.

Lacy was next man in, and Lacy faced that deadly bowler with some nervousness. His nervousness was justified, for the first ball knocked his bails off. Then there was a roar.

"The hat-trick!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Morny!"

Mornington shot a triumphant glance at his skipper. His idea was that after that Jimmy Silver would find it very difficult to refuse him a regular place in the eleven.

Jimmy thought so, too, though it made no difference to his resolve. There was no room for traitors in Jimmy Silver's team.

"Bravo!" chorried Smythe of the Shell. "Rippin'! Toppin'! Hurrah!"

"My hat, they've got a good man there!" murmured Tommy Dodd. "Fancy that rotten slacker turning out like this! Man in!"

The Moderns were four down for nil, which was a bad beginning. But matters looked up in the next over, and the runs began to mount up. But the Moderns' luck was out. Jimmy Silver accounted for two more wickets and a catch in the field, and Mornington took two with his bowling.

The expressive face of Tommy Dodd grew longer and longer as he watched the procession to and from the wickets.

"All down for 30!" he said at last. "My only hat! What a score! You will have to buck up in the second innings, my sons!"

So far as the first innings was concerned, the Moderns were beaten to the wide. And everybody knew that it was very largely due to Mornington's bowling. Mornington had jumped into something like popularity with the Classical juniors. There was something in the fellow, after all, slacker and smoker and blackguard as he was. And the fellows who had over-persuaded Jimmy Silver to put him in the team felt extremely satisfied with themselves.

They did not know what Jimmy knew—that Mornington regarded the whole game as something centred about himself, and that he had never even dreamed of loyalty to his side. He aimed at putting Jimmy in the shade; but for the game itself he did not care twopenny. He had thrown his wicket away out of petty spite, careless of the result to his side. And it was quite probable that the loss of that wicket might mean the loss of the match.

"Am I goin' in last again?" Mornington asked, when the Classics were ready to begin their second innings.

Jimmy Silver nodded without speaking.

"You don't want to give me a chance to score—what!" sneered Mornington. "Is this a cricket-match, or is it got up to provide you with limelight, Silver?"

"Do you think that's the way to speak to your skipper on the cricket-field?" asked Jimmy.

"I'm askin' you a question."

"Well, I'll answer it. It's a cricket-match, and the last one you'll play in so long as I'm junior captain."

There was a buzz from the cricketers, and Mornington raised his eyebrows.

"This is what comes of takin' wickets and puttin' one's giddy skipper into the shade," he remarked.

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"Dash it all, Jimmy, Mornington's done jolly well," said Oswald, in surprise.

Jimmy knifed his brows.

"Mornington threw his wicket away in the first innings because I put him in last," he said.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Jones minor incredulously.

"He told me so!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mornington burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Anybody who likes to believe that can believe it!" he said scornfully. "It's hardly worth the trouble of denyin'!"

"You lying cad! Do you mean to deny it?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, his temper breaking out.

"I did nothing 'of the sort, an' you know it! I said nothin' of the sort, and you know that!" said Mornington deliberately.

"You must be mistaken, Jimmy," murmured Raby.

"He said so, I tell you, though he took care not to let anybody else hear," said Jimmy Silver; "and you all know he's cad enough!"

"Liar!" said Mornington calmly.

Jimmy Silver made a spring forward, but Lovell caught him by the shoulder.

"For goodness' sake, Jimmy, don't begin slogging now! The Moderns are waiting in the field!"

"Man in!" said Jimmy, in a choking voice.

"Lovell and Raby."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders, and turned away. Jimmy Silver stared at the field with a gloomy look.

Mornington had succeeded in putting him in the wrong.

Even his own chums hesitated to believe his statement; they were sure that he was mistaken. Why should Mornington say a thing one moment and deny it the next?

Jimmy Silver knew. It was because the rascal of Rookwood intended to cause trouble for him. After Mornington's admission that he had thrown away his wicket, Jimmy could not play him in the team again—that was certain. But Mornington denied making any such admission, and the rest concluded that Jimmy had mistaken him.

If Mornington was left out after the splendid form he had shown as a bowler, there would not be wanting many fellows to attribute it to one thing—that Jimmy, hitherto the champion bowler, was jealous of Mornington's form, and unwilling to give him a chance of outclassing the captain. And that, of course, was exactly what Mornington intended fellows should think.

Jimmy Silver was no fool; he was keen and alert, and had all his wits about him. But he felt a sense of helplessness in dealing with cunning of this kind. His brow was gloomy as he looked on.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Ordered Off the Field!

"MAN in!"

The Modern bowling was looking up. Three were down for 7 runs when Jimmy Silver went to the wicket. Jimmy made an effort, and dismissed troublesome thoughts from his mind.

His batting was first-class, and there were loud cheers for him. Mornington looked on, with a sneering smile.

Batsmen came and went, and Jimmy Silver was still at the wicket. Tommy Dodd's bowling accounted for three, but Jimmy was still going strong, and piling up runs. And when the call came for last man, Jimmy was still at the wickets, and in great form.

Last man in was Mornington, as before.

Jimmy's brows contracted as Mornington passed him on the way in. He caught the mocking gleam in Mornington's eyes.

Jimmy was in splendid form, and with a reliable bat at the other end he could have gone on scoring indefinitely. The Modern bowling could not touch him, and he gave no chances to the field.

Mornington was not a brilliant bat, but he could have kept the innings open for Jimmy if he had liked. So long as he kept his end up, Jimmy could have piled on runs. But it was useless to ask Mornington to do anything of the kind. Jimmy would be only too thankful if he did not throw his wicket away as he had done in the first innings.

Mornington was quite capable of it, if only for the purpose of bringing Jimmy's brilliant innings to a sudden end.

Mornington's look as he passed him told of intended mischief.

Jimmy gritted his teeth.

This was the kind of thing he had to expect, so long as Mornington was allowed to

play in the Junior Eleven. He could hardly be expected to go through it a second time. And yet to turn the traitor out of the team was to expose himself to general misunderstanding, and to cause general dissatisfaction. Mornington had him in a cleft-stick, as it were, and it was not a pleasant position.

There were 40 runs for the second innings, and after that mocking look from Mornington, Jimmy did not expect the number to be added to before the close. But he had not yet divined Mornington's real intention.

The dandy of the Fourth kept his wicket up till the end of the over, and, to Jimmy's relief, the bowling came to him again.

Apparently Mornington did not wish to turn his duck's egg into a pair of spectacles.

Jimmy concluded that "swank" had overcome malevolence in Mornington's breast, and he was glad of that, at least. He was safe for another over—or, at least, he believed he was.

The ball came down from Tommy Doyle, and Jimmy let himself go at it. The leather whizzed away, and Jimmy ran.

Mornington did not stir from his wicket.

Jimmy Silver was a third of the distance down the pitch before he realised that the other batsman did not intend to run.

"Run, you idiot!" he shouted.

"No chance!" called back Mornington coolly. "Get back to your wicket!"

Jimmy stopped, in helpless anger.

Then he turned and raced back to his wicket.

But that pause, short as it was, had been fatal. The ball was coming in from Tommy Dodd's hand, straight as a die.

Jimmy's bat touched the crease a second too late.

Crash!

"How's that?" sang out Tommy Dodd jubilantly.

"Out!"

It was out—there was no doubt about that. Jimmy Silver stood simply panting with rage for some moments. He knew that Mornington had deliberately allowed him to run himself out. He was tempted to lay his bat about the cool, calculating young rascal, who was grinning at him from the other end of the pitch.

"All down for 40!" granted Lovell. "I hoped you'd put on another dozen yet, Jimmy!"

He glanced curiously at Jimmy's face as the captain came off. "What's the matter?"

"That rotter—that cad—" panted Jimmy. Lovell nodded.

"Yes, my idea is that there was time for the run if he'd taken it," he said. "He thought there wasn't, I suppose."

"He knew there was."

"Oh, I say, Jimmy—"

"He threw my wicket away, just as he threw his own away in the first innings. That was his game."

"Oh, draw it mild, old chap!" murmured Lovell uneasily. "Even Mornington isn't such a rotten cad as that."

"Sure, it's off-side ye are, Jimmy!" said Flynn soothingly. "Keep yer temper. Morny isn't much of a bat, but—"

"He did it, I tell you."

Flynn shrugged his shoulders.

But Jimmy was too angry to care for the general disbelief. He knew what he knew, and he had had enough of Mornington's treachery. He strode up to him as he came lounging off the field.

"You can clear off!" he said.

Mornington looked at him, with an air of mild surprise.

"Clear off!" he repeated.

"Yes!"

"But the game isn't over yet," drawled Mornington. "The Moderns have another innings, you know."

"What the dickens—" began Oswald.

"Clear off, Mornington!" repeated Jimmy Silver. "I'm not playing you for the rest of the match! I'm fed up with you! I'll ask Dodd to let me put in a substitute for the rest."

Mornington's face became quite pale.

He had not expected that. Whatever Jimmy Silver thought, he had no proof, and Mornington had not dreamed that he would proceed to this length.

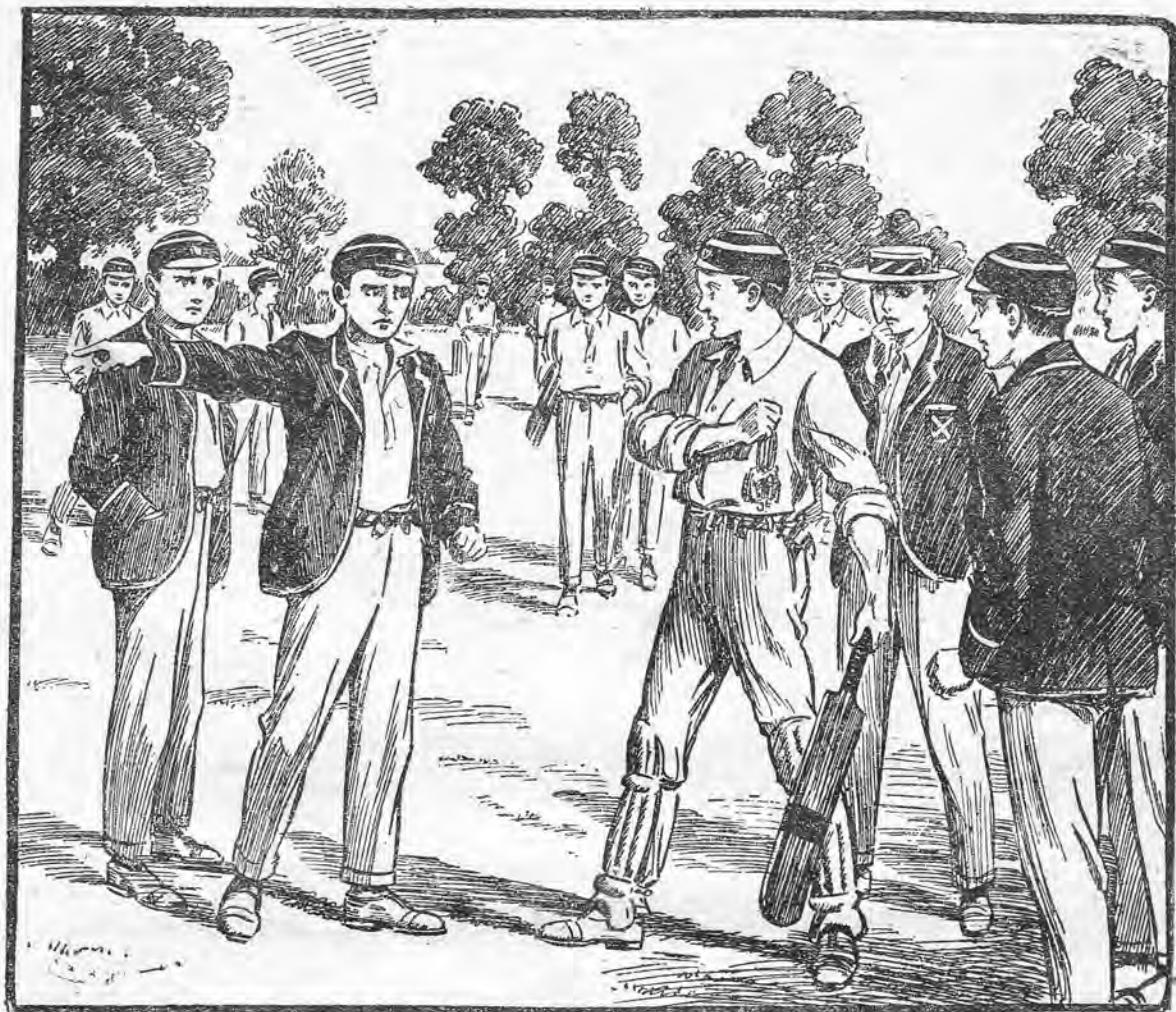
"You—you're ordering me off the field?" he stammered.

"Yes! Get out!"

"I say, Jimmy—" began Lovell, in dismay. Jimmy Silver turned on him fiercely.

"You saw what he did. He threw away his own wicket in one innings, and mine in the next. I've had enough of his trickery!"

"But I don't believe—"



Jimmy Silver strode up to Mornington as he came off the field. "Clear off, Mornington!" he said. "I'm not playing you for the rest of the match. I'll ask Dodd to let me put in a substitute for the rest." "I say, Jimmy——!" began Lovell in dismay. "You can't!" (See chapter 5).

"It's all rot!" said Jones minor. "You're in a temper, and that's the trouble."

"I'm not going to argue about it!" blazed out Jimmy Silver. "If the Form wants a new cricket captain I'm ready to resign. But so long as I'm captain that sneaking cad doesn't play for Rookwood again!"

Mornington's lips curved in a bitter smile.

"I'm not goin' off," he said. "My bowlin' wanted, and I'm goin' to bowl."

"You won't go?" said Jimmy between his teeth.

"No, I won't!"

"Then I'll see that you do!"

Jimmy Silver was hitting out the next moment. He had controlled his temper with great efforts all through the match, but it boiled over now. Mornington yelled as he caught Jimmy's left with his nose, and his right with his chin. He put up his hands and fought savagely.

With all his faults, the dandy of the Fourth did not want for pluck.

The rest of the cricketers looked on in dismay. The Moderns stared and grinned. It was rather a new thing on the Rookwood ground to see the cricket captain at fistcuffs with a member of his team.

"Shame!" howled Townsend. "Let him alone!"

"Order!"

"Shame!"

Crash!

Mornington went down on his back, and lay gasping. Jimmy Silver glared down at him.

"Will you go now?" he panted.

"No," gasped Mornington, "I won't!"

"Then I'll take you!"

Jimmy grasped the fallen junior by the collar, and, exerting his strength, fairly dragged him away, and pitched him outside

the ropes. He returned to the pavilion with a flushed face and glittering eyes.

There was general disapproval in the faces round him. But no one ventured upon a remark. Jimmy was in a mood to have quarrelled with his best chums just then.

Townsend picked up Mornington, and the latter limped away into the midst of the Nuts. He was not feeling inclined for any further fighting. Jimmy Silver was a hard bitter, and Mornington was looking and feeling considerably damaged.

In the study he bathed his eye, and blinked at the Nuts, who were dutifully trying not to smile.

"So that's the end of my cricketin'!" he said.

"Rotten!" said Townsend.

"More rotten for Jimmy Silver than for me, though, I think!" said Mornington.

"They'll lose the match."

"I hope so," said Peele charitably.

"And the other fellows will have somethin' to say about it, too," said Mornington, between his teeth. "I fancy Jimmy Silver will find he is up against somethin' bigger than he can tackle! Ow! My eye!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Rift in the Lute!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. went on to the field, Jimmy still looking flushed and disturbed.

The second innings of the Moderns opened. The Classical score was so far ahead that they had looked for a sweeping victory, but the prospect was considerably changed now. With Mornington gone from the field there was no doubt that the Moderns had a much better chance of equalising, and they were determined to make the most of it.

Neither did Jimmy Silver himself seem in his best form when he went on to bowl.

The angry scene outside the pavilion had had its effect on Jimmy as well as the mute disapproval of his followers.

Jimmy did his best; but Tommy Dodd's wicket was too strong for him, and there was no other bowler in the team who could touch it without great luck.

Mornington might have had the luck if he had been there. But the dandy of the Fourth was not there.

The wickets went down much more slowly than in the first innings, and the runs were piling up.

Tommy Dodd & Co. had a great deal of leeway to make up, and they grinned with glee as they made it up hand over fist.

Tommy Dodd's wicket went down at last from a smart throw-in from the field by Patrick O'Donovan Flynn. But the great Tommy had knocked up 40 runs off his own bat, while another 40 had been added by his successive partners. And the scores had tied.

The Classics had given up the idea of a victory now.

With the scores level, and three more Modern wickets to fall, there was no chance of a win for Jimmy Silver's team.

But the finish was very close. Jimmy Silver was bowling again, and two wickets fell in succession to Jimmy, who seemed at his best once more.

"Last man in!" was the word.

There could be no win, but the Classics hoped for a draw now. The Moderns wanted only 1 run to win, and if Jimmy Silver had been still bowling probably they would never have obtained it. But the over was finished, and Oswald went on for the next, and Towle knocked the ball away for a single. And a

roar from the Moderns announced the victory. Jimmy Silver was a good loser as a rule, but on this occasion his brow was gloomy as he came off the field.

After the first prospect of an overwhelming victory, the match had been lost. Mornington in the field would have made all the difference—Jimmy knew that, and all the team knew it. Jimmy did not blame himself for sending the traitor off, but he knew that his followers blamed him.

The Moderns were cheering gleefully.

Jimmy Silver walked away, with his bat under his arm, when all was over. It was late for tea, for the match had been hard and long. The Fistical Four gathered in the end study for a less cheery meal than usual.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome made no reference to what was evidently in their thoughts.

They were loyal to their leader, and they were quite prepared to back him up against the rest of the Fourth, if necessary; but it was with inward misgivings.

They disliked the slacker of the Fourth as much as Jimmy did, or more; but their view was that likes and dislikes had nothing to do with cricket, and they believed that Jimmy had allowed his aversion and contempt for Mornington to lead him into a serious fault.

It was Jimmy who referred to the matter first.

"You fellows think I was wrong to kick Mornington out?" he said abruptly.

"Ahem!" said Lovell.

"Oh, speak out!"

"Well, yes, I do think so," said Lovell. "The chap's a cad, but he can play cricket. We were licked because you sent him off!"

"We should have won hands down," said Raby. "The fellow's a rank rotter, personally, but there's no getting out of that, Jimmy!"

"Of course, you don't like him," remarked Newcome. "Nobody could. Even his own pals don't like him; but that's got nothing to do with cricket!"

Jimmy smiled rather bitterly.

"You're letting him lead you by the nose, like all the rest," he said. "That's exactly what he wants the fellows to think—that I threw away the match simply because I don't like him!"

"Well, you see—"

"You're a set of silly asses!" growled Jimmy. "What would you do, Lovell, if you were cricket captain, and a man threw away his wicket because he was put last in, and wasn't allowed to swank?"

"Kick him out, of course!"

"Well, that's what I did!"

"But Mornington says—"

"You know the fellow's a liar, don't you?"

"Well, yes. All the same, there's no proof that he chucked his wicket away!"

"He told me so as he came off!"

"He says he didn't."

"Can't you take my word?"

"Yes, yes; don't get ratty! But Mornington says he didn't say so, and you might very easily have misunderstood him!"

"And he ran me out in the second innings on purpose."

"He says he didn't. He's not much of a bat, anyway, and it might have been simply fathadness."

"I knew he was going to play a dirty trick when he went in. I could tell that by his look!"

"Well, I don't see how you could tell it by his look!" said Lovell, rather tartly. "You're not a thought-reader or a wizard, I suppose?"

"The fact is," said Raby, after a pause, "it looks like trouble. Mornington will expect to be played in the Greyfriars match next week, after the form he's shown, and all the club will expect it. And really, Jimmy, with a bowler like that we shall make hay of Greyfriars!"

Jimmy set his lips.

"He won't play!" he said.

"Well, if you put it like that—"

"I put it like this," said Jimmy quietly.

"If Mornington plays, he will have to be allowed to have his own way in everything. If he isn't allowed to open the innings, he may throw away his wicket out of spite. If he's wanted to stonewall, and give a better bat a chance to score, he won't do it. If he's got a down on any batsman, he will try to run him out. Even his bowling will depend on the humour he happens to be in; and if he takes offence at anything he will very likely bowl rottenly, and let Greyfriars score. That's not the kind of fellow we want in the Rookwood team."

"Not if you've got it right, certainly. But I can't believe that even Mornington is such a howling cad as that!"

"I know he is."

"Well, I don't agree with you."

"Then you're an ass!"

"Same to you!" said Lovell gruffly.

Jimmy controlled his temper with an effort. Disagreement in the end study was what the amiable Mornington was aiming at as much as anything else. In that, at least, he should not be successful, if Jimmy could help it.

"Well, we'll call the cricket committee together after tea," said Jimmy. "This matter had better be thrashed out. I know most of the fellows think that Mornington ought to be a fixture in the Junior Eleven. I don't mean him to play for Rookwood at all so long as I'm skipper. I don't want to over-rule the committee!"

"That's all right, then," said Newcome.

"Let the committee decide."

"I mean to. Only if they decide in Mornington's favour, I shall resign, as a matter of course."

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"I shan't captain the team if Mornington plays in it," said Jimmy quietly. "I'll play as a member if the new skipper chooses me. That's all. I can't undertake to captain a team with a traitor in the ranks. Tommy Dodd will make a good skipper!"

"A rotten Modern!" growled Lovell.

"Well, perhaps the club would like to select Mornington," said Jimmy sarcastically. "That's really the only position that would

suit him. I suppose he could be depended on not to play the traitor if he captained the team! But he would leave out all the fellows he had a down on—that's the sort of fellow he is. It wouldn't be much of a team then!"

"Of course, that's all rot!" said Lovell. "It's between you and Tommy Dodd. And I think you're an ass, Jimmy!"

In which opinion Raby and Newcome concurred.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mornington Wins!

JIMMY SILVER smiled satirically as he came into the Common-room that evening.

The looks of the other fellows showed what was in their thoughts.

Even his most devoted followers, like Oswald and Rawson, could not help thinking that Jimmy had taken up a very unreasonable stand. They were ready to back him up, like the Co., but they wished he would be a bit more reasonable.

Mornington and his friends were in the room, and they seemed to be in high feather.

They felt truly that they had Jimmy Silver at a disadvantage at last.

Either he had to play Mornington in the matches—at the cost of doubt and discomfort and constant worry to himself—or he had to leave him out, against the opinion of the whole club and the fellows generally, and pose as a fellow who was excluding a first-rate player from motives of personal antipathy.

In either case, Mornington & Co. felt that they had scored, and they congratulated themselves that Jimmy Silver's star was on the wane.

The loss of the match, which had been so near to victory, exasperated the Classics, and the defeat was wholly attributed to Jimmy Silver and his high-handed methods.

Jimmy had, in fact, played into Mornington's hands in the line he had taken, though when he reflected on it he could not see anything else that he could have done.

Mornington had a darkened eye, and his nose looked very swollen; but he was in high good-humour that evening.

He gave Jimmy Silver a triumphant look as the captain of the Fourth came into the Common-room.

There was a meeting of the cricket committee fixed for nine in the end study, and the three Tommies, who were members of the committee, came over from the Modern side to attend it.

Tommy Dodd was looking very thoughtful, and he spoke quietly to Jimmy in the Common-room.

"About Mornington?" he said.

To which Jimmy replied gruffly:

"Blow Mornington!"

"The fact is, that was a jolly queer proceeding on Little Side this afternoon!" said Tommy. "Not to put too fine a point on it, you'd have beaten us if you hadn't turned Mornington off the field."

"Perhaps."

"Not much perhaps about it. Now, as a rule, we don't want too many Classics in the eleven; it would be improved by a few more Moderns."

"Rats!"

"But we want to beat Greyfriars next week. If you like to put Mornington into the Junior School Eleven, Jimmy, we shan't raise any objection to your leaving a Modern chap out to make room for him, if you feel that way. I can't say fairer than that."

"I don't feel that way," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "I shan't play Mornington at any price!"

"Why the dickens not, when he's as good a man as any chap in the Lower Forms?"

"Because he would give the match away if the humour took him to do it! Because he's a disloyal rascal!"

"Well, I suppose you Classics know one another pretty well!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "But that's rather steep, you know! The fact is, if you leave Mornington out, after the ripping form he's shown, you'll have trouble with the committee!"

"I know that."

"Better give him a chance," urged Tommy Dodd. "I don't like the fellow—he's a swanking cad—but he bowls like a county champion!"

"And bats like a swindling scoundrel!"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"Well, that's my opinion. Would you play a fellow you thought that of?"

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"Of course not. But I think you're mistaken."

"You'll have a chance of seeing for yourself in the Greyfriars match, Tommy. If the committee don't agree with me, I'm going to resign, and you'll captain the team next Wednesday."

"I should play Mornington, I warn you!"

"I wish you joy of him!"

"Come along, you fellows!" called out Lovell.

And the members of the committee proceeded to the end study for the meeting.

Mornington grinned as they left the common-room.

"Looks like trouble for the magnificent Jimmy!" he remarked to his friends. "I fancy there's goin' to be a row!"

"Silver will have to play you or resign, old chap!" grinned Townsend.

Mornington nodded.

"Exactly my idea. I don't care which he does. I suppose it wouldn't be much use my puttin' up for captain yet?"

"Hardly," said Peele, laughing. "Besides, Silver won't resign as junior captain—only as far as the cricket's concerned. Tommy Dodd will be made cricket skipper in his place. He'll play you next week against Greyfriars. I hope you won't run him out!"

And the Nuts chuckled. They had a pretty clear idea of the true state of affairs, and they greatly admired the astuteness of the dandy of the Fourth.

Many of the fellows waited anxiously to hear the result of the deliberations in the end study. Tubby Mullin even scouted along the passage, and came back with the news that they were "going it" in the committee. Fellows in the passage could hear the murmur of voices, and could easily tell that there was disagreement.

When the door opened and the committee

came away, some of them were looking red and angry.

"Well, what's the verdict?" sang out Higgs of the Fourth.

"Silver's resigned!"

"Oh, good!" said Townsend.

"It isn't good, you silly ass!" said Tommy Dodd angrily. "Silver's an obstinate ass, but—"

"Who's going to skipper the team?" asked Rawson.

"I am."

"Well, that's second best," remarked Rawson.

Tommy Dodd grinned.

"Thanks! But Jimmy's going to play for Rookwood, so there's no harm done. Where's Mornington?"

"Here I am!" said Mornington. "What's wanted?"

Tommy Dodd looked at him rather curiously.

"I'm captaining the junior team next Wednesday. I shall want you to play for Rookwood."

"I'm your man!"

"You'll turn up for regular practice with the team," said Tommy Dodd.

"I'll stick to it like anything!" assured Mornington.

"Well, that's all right, then!"

And Tommy Dodd went his way, not dissatisfied. Jimmy Silver was a good skipper, but Tommy's opinion was that a Modern chap was a little better, especially if he—Tommy Dodd—was the Modern chap.

In the end study the Fistical Four were left alone after the departure of the rest of the committee.

Jimmy Silver was very quiet and calm, but his chums looked morose and dissatisfied.

They were not at all pleased at the cricket captaincy passing into the hands of a Modern.

"Do you want to know what I think, Jimmy?" demanded Lovell.

"Not particularly."

"I'll tell you, all the same! You're a thumping ass!"

"Thanks!"

"There's a rotten Modern skipper now—"

"I know that; but it's a Classical job. And if Tommy beats Greyfriars next week, and if he chose to call a new election for Form captain, he'd beat you all along the line!"

"Let him!"

"Oh, it's no good talking to you!" said Lovell, exasperated. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your silly nose!"

"Same here!" said Raby. "If ever a silly ass wanted his nose punched—"

"It's a come-down for this study!" growled Newcome. "You might have thought of the study, Jimmy!"

"No good arguing," said Jimmy Silver, "and no good rowing! Mornington would be as pleased as Punch if we started rowing one another. That's what he wants, only you duffers can't see it!"

"Oh, confound Mornington!" growled Lovell.

"Hear, hear!" said Jimmy.

And the matter dropped.

Jimmy Silver was no longer junior cricket captain of Rookwood, and all the Classics agreed that it was rotten, and that Jimmy Silver was a silly ass and an obstinate mule. But on the Modern side there was considerable satisfaction. All the Moderns agreed that the chances of beating Greyfriars were considerably enhanced. And among the Classics Mornington & Co., at least, were jubilant. Mornington had won the first round in the contest between the foes of the Fourth.

THE END.

(Another grand, long story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next week, entitled: "THE TRAITOR!" by Owen Conquest. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy of the PENNY POPULAR now!)

THE MYSTERY-MAKERS.

By NAT FAIRBANKS.

(Continued from page 20.)

Only those who have had any experience of punts know what perverse and cantankerous things they are. You really want to have eyes in the back of your head as well as in front to manage a punt; for, while you think you are directing one end of the thing nicely, the other end is obstinately doing just the reverse of what you want.

Consequently, Dick, having no pole, had all his work cut out to guide the punt in the direction he desired it to go, and it was fully twenty minutes before he safely navigated her to the spot where his companions stood.

"It's a fearful old crock!" he said, as he stepped ashore. "But we may be able to patch her up."

"Old Sattlebee's the chap for that job," said Faulkner.

Sattlebee, who, as usual, was standing by busily doing nothing, nodded his head in confirmation of Faulkner's statement.

"Ay," he observed gravely, "they do say as I be the handiest chap in Fallowdale."

"Oh!" snorted young Plum. "Do you remember when we had you to clean our eistern out, and you broke the ball-tap in doing it? The pater had to pay ten shillings to the plumber, besides having no end of things spoiled by the water overflowing."

"I don't think as it were my fault!" said Sattlebee, with much dignity. "Them ball-taps be always a-getting out of order, and—"

"There, there! That's enough of that!" interposed Harry. "We haven't got any time to talk about cisterns and ball-taps. Just cast your eye over the punt and see if you can do anything."

Sattlebee accordingly "cast an eye," and then cautiously advanced the opinion that he thought he could make a job of it. Under the critical eye of Dick and Harry, he forthwith proceeded to do so; and, really, considering he had no tools to work with, he didn't do so badly. Anyway, by the end of an hour

the punt was pronounced watertight. In the meantime the others had succeeded in fashioning a pole out of a branch of a tree they had pulled off. Therefore, there was nothing to prevent them from starting at once.

By this time it was nearly dark, which did not add to the security of their voyage; but everyone decided it was worth risking rather than remaining on the island for the night.

It was an impressive picture, with its forcible lights and deep, frowning shadows. There, in the midst of the punt, stood Dick and Harry; Faulkner and Templeton were seated at one end; Sattlebee, pole in hand, was at the other, preparing to shove out into the stream; and Plum was untying the rope which moored the punt to the bank.

At a signal from Harry, Plum cast off the mooring-rope and jumped on the punt, which began to move.

"And where be you a-goin' to land?" asked Sattlebee.

"I don't know yet," returned Harry. "It depends where they've taken the Gadfly. Make for the edge of the backwater. Perhaps we shall see a light that will give us a clue as to her whereabouts."

"We shall have a moon shortly," said Dick.

"So much the better. This is too much like a game of blind man's buff to suit me."

Presently they emerged from the backwaters and floated out into the main stream. They eagerly scanned ahead to see if any twinkle of light was visible. At first they saw nothing, but all at once, in between the trees on their right, there was a faint gleam.

"Steady!" whispered Harry. "I think we'll land here."

The punt gently bumped into the bank, and one by one they noiselessly stepped ashore. Sattlebee, however, remained by the punt, with strict injunctions to stop there until they returned.

Walking in Indian file, the little army cautiously penetrated into this unknown country, darkness all around them, and the enemy, perhaps of overwhelming strength, concealed somewhere close at hand. As they moved forward the light which had attracted their attention grew plainer.

Suddenly Harry Trent, who was leading, stopped. The second man, Templeton, not knowing this, came bolt upon him, and Faulkner behind followed suit. There was a squelching sound and a sensation of cold and damp about the ankles.

"Halt!" called out Harry. "We're in a beastly muddy place! We seem to have walked into some sort of a bog. Botlier it! My boots are full of water!"

"And so are mine!" grunted Templeton.

"It's beastly!"

"Oh, well," said Harry cheerily, "we must expect this sort of thing on active service. Now, are we all here? Dick, Faulkner, Plum, Templeton! Right! Move on!"

He had scarcely got the words out of his mouth before a sharp yap of a dog broke out on their right.

Faulkner struck his forehead.

"It's that brute Snap!" he groaned.

"Those fellows must have brought him over here."

"We must collar the animal at all costs!" said Dick. "Still, the dog being here shows we're on the right track. That light evidently is from the Gadfly. Here, Snap, Snap!" he called softly. "Come on, old boy! Good old boy!"

The expedition joined in this chorus of endearing terms, but the only effect it had was to make Snap bark louder than ever. He was evidently scampering about, for the barks were now in front, now on their right, and then moved over to the left.

"Shall I creep forward and make a reconnaissance?" suggested Dick.

"We'd better all go," said Harry. "If we separate we shall lose each other."

They stole along the ground for about twenty yards.

Suddenly Snap's bark ceased to ring out, but in its place arose the faint hum of voices.

They were in touch with the enemy's outposts!

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NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAMME:

"UNDER CANVAS!"

By Frank Richards.

Under this title, Frank Richards has written for next week, a story which will appeal irresistibly to every one of the many friends of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.

Through the breaking out of a measles epidemic among the lads of the Third, the school is closed down for a fortnight, and the boys take up their temporary quarters in a large camp, situated in a sunny corner of Woody Bay. It is sufficient to say that the story will abound in schoolboy pranks and "japes," and humorous situations generally. And my readers, I am confident, will vote it as more than up to the high standard which they expect from the PENNY POPULAR every week.

Another splendid instalment of our wonderful adventure serial, entitled:

"THE MYSTERY MAKERS!"

By Nat Fairbanks.

which will be found to contain exciting and interesting reading in plenty. The young actors of the Western Super-Film Company with Faulkner's Expedition make further progress in the solving of the mystery which surrounds Wildfell Grange.

A splendid long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., at Rookwood, is next on the list of the good things for next week, entitled:

"THE TRAITOR!"

By Owen Conquest.

The struggle between Valentine Mornington and Jimmy Silver, which is continued in this yarn, provides great reading for my chums, and I strongly advise them to be sure and order their copy of next week's PENNY POPULAR well in advance, to avoid any unnecessary disappointment.

There is also an extra-special feature in next week's issue, in the form of a specially written article on the joys and art of camping-out. Now is the time for a camping-out holiday, which for cheapness, healthfulness, and interest cannot be beaten. None of my chums should on any account miss this splendid illustrated article, which is entitled:

"THE LURE OF THE CAMP!"

By "White Fox."

A BIT OF FRENCH HISTORY.

A paragraph was sent in to me the other day about the French Marshal de Bassompierre. I used the little article, but it is hardly worth while writing of such a man as de Bassompierre merely from the point of view of one history-book. In a case such as this it is the interesting personality of the man that matters. The story of Bassompierre illuminates a whole chapter of the history of France, and we should have heard something of this, of the splendid company the marshal was, and of how he was playing chess with King Henry the Fourth in the Royal coach

the day in the summer of 1610 when Henry was murdered by Ravallac. The coach was going slowly down the Rue de la Feronnellerie in Paris when the assassin thrust his hand, holding a dagger, through the window. To the last Bassompierre was a favourite of the Great King.

POPULARITY MAD.

Have you noticed how the big crowd is always on the look-out for something to cheer at? It is so. There are people here and there who get puffed up because they think they are popular. It is only because the crowd must have something or somebody to cheer, just to work off steam, and those individuals happen to be handy. It is a mistake to translate the applause of a lot of folks as something lasting. The next hour the crowd will be roaring itself hoarse over somebody else, and insisting upon shaking hands with, or squeezing to death, almost, any guy who happens along. There is a certain supply of so-called popularity to be handed round, and the first comer gets it. That's all!

SUMMER AT THE SEA.

Everybody nearly likes to stay at an old-world fishing-village. It is there you meet quaint characters—not so quaint, perhaps, as W. S. Gilbert described in the poem:

"Twas on the shores that round our coast,
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone, on a piece of stone,
An elderly naval man."

But nobody wants to meet the person in question. Better the Ancient Mariner, who stopped one of three with his long yarn. You do meet strange, wise parties in the seaside places. They are full of old stories, and their observations on life are generally worth hearing.

Your Editor

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