

THE GREYFRIARS  
**HOLIDAY**  
1926 **ANNUAL** 1926  
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS



**WELL IN FRONT!**



Frontispiece

THE CHARGE !

The 1926 GREYFRIARS  
**HOLIDAY**  
**ANNUAL**

This Book Belongs to:—

*Reggie McDonald*



# The Editor to His Friends

'The task of compiling this, the seventh volume of the Greyfriars' "Holiday Annual" was rendered a pleasant one from the first by the knowledge of the overwhelming success of its immediate predecessor. This book—unique among Annuals in its character and in its success—has steadily gained in popularity year by year, until it now holds undoubted pride of place in the affections of countless thousands of boys and girls—and of large numbers of their mothers and fathers, too.

THE HOLIDAY-ANNUAL is the great rallying-ground for all the popular schoolboy characters of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood—the schools which the jolly Companion Papers have made world-famous. All the busy year round Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry and his chums, and "Uncle" Jimmy Silver & Co. are actively occupied in the weekly pages of the "Magnet," the "Gem," and the "Boys' Friend," and the "Popular." But once a year they are, as it were, all found under one roof, in company with many other favourite characters, in the HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

In this way the "H.A." represents not one book, but a legion. It is to many the Open-Sesame to the splendid tales of school life in which the Companion Papers specialise. It is the guide to Greyfriars for those who have not as yet made friends with Billy Bunter and the rest of the jolly crowd of Remove juniors. It introduces newcomers to Tom Merry, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, to Jimmy Silver and Lovell.

To old-established readers of the Companion Papers, the ANNUAL is, of course, an absolute necessity. The very names of the authors who have written the stories are sufficient to cause a preliminary thrill of delightful anticipation—Frank Richards, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest—that famous trio!—P. G. Wodehouse, Michael Poole, Gordon Wallace; these and many more have given of their best in the volume that lies before you.

The clean humour and absorbing interest of the school stories are varied, as in previous years, by the wholesome thrills of real-life adventure tales. "Billy Bunter's Annual," a feast of fun, has again been included, and an innovation that will be appreciated is an index arranged at the end of the book.

To all my countless reader-friends, old and new, I extend a cheery greeting, together with a special word of thanks to the former for the support they have accorded me in such generous measure.

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,  
FARRINGTON STREET,  
LONDON, E.C.4.



*Introducing all the leading characters at the world-famous school*

OPENING SPEECH

BY THE

MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES.

HARRY WHARTON:

**R**EADERS of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL,—  
We thought it would be a capital idea to organise a special Concert for your benefit. The majority of you are already well acquainted with us; but new readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL will be introduced to us here and now.

My four special chums—BOB CHERRY, FRANK NUGENT, JOHNNY BULL, and HURREE SINGH—will now join me in chanting the Opening Chorus. Fortunately, no bricks can be thrown at us, because we are performing to an unseen audience!

OPENING CHORUS

BY THE

FAMOUS FIVE OF THE  
GREYFRIARS REMOVE:

Oh, we are the Famous Five,  
The merriest fellows alive!

We romp and revel from morn till night,  
In jokes and japes we take delight,  
Our motto is "Always Merry and  
Bright,"

For we are the Famous Five!

In sunny or stormy weather  
We always stand together.  
Shoulder to shoulder, heads held high,  
Ever resolved to do or die,  
Meeting reverses without a sigh,  
For we are the Famous Five!

We stand before you now,  
And gracefully make our bow.

We hope you will all enjoy the Show  
(If not, you must write and tell us so!)  
Good luck be yours wherever you go—  
The wish of the Famous Five!

BILLY BUNTER (the Fat Boy of Greyfriars):  
I say, Wharton! I don't think much of that as an Opening Chorus. You'd better let me sing a song. I've got one all ready. It's a ripping song. It will make the audience sit up and take notice!



"I sit and gobble with fork and spoon  
From the rise of sun to the set of moon;  
Gobble and gobble as best I may,  
And I gobble as I sing a joyful lay."

HARRY WHARTON: Why, you fat duffer, you can't sing for toffee!

BILLY BUNTER: Can't I? You offer me a tin of toffee, and see!

HARRY WHARTON: Well, my chums, Bunter seems determined to inflict a song on you. Try and bear it with fortitude. Bunter, as you probably know, is the champion gorger of Greyfriars. His motto is "Eat not to live, but live to eat." He once consumed a whole rabbit pie, a dish of pastries, and a bunch of bananas at one sitting. Talk about exceeding the feed limit! Go ahead with your song, Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER:

I sit and gobble with fork and spoon  
From the rise of sun to the set of moon;  
Gobble and gobble as best I may,  
Gobble all night, and gobble all day,  
And I gobble as I sing a joyful lay.  
The more I gobble, the more I need,  
I'm always in form for a first-rate feed.  
The better the feed, the broader my grin,

I never say "No" to a good tuck-in!  
All eating contests I easily win.

Sausages, saveloys, puddings and pies,  
Delicious doughnuts, I never despise.  
Why, then, worry, I always say,  
My postal order will come some day,  
And I'll feast and feed in my well-known way!

I sit and gobble with fork and spoon  
From the rise of sun to the set of moon;  
Gobble and gobble in Mimble's shop,  
Stuffing and stuffing, with never a stop,  
And one of these days I shall go off pop!

HARRY WHARTON: Have you finished, Bunter?

BILLY BUNTER: Not quite! My brother Sammy wishes to join me in a duet. Sammy's a smart singer, and with two wonderful warblers going at the same time, the audience will be thrilled! They'll get up on their feet like so many Oliver Twists, and howl for more!

HARRY WHARTON: Nonsense! You can think yourself lucky that you're performing to an invisible audience, or they'd pelt you off the platform.

BILLY BUNTER: Oh, really, Wharton! You're only jealous because you haven't got a sweet, melodious voice like mine. Sammy and me are going ahead, anyway. Step forward, Sammy, and make your bow!

DUET BY BILLY AND SAMMY BUNTER:

We are the Bunter Brothers,  
As plump as plump can be;  
A stunning feed is what we need,  
But we lack the £ s. d.  
We haunt the Greyfriars tuckshop  
At morning, noon and night;  
To dine and wine would be divine—  
Alack! the money's tight!

We are a charming couple,  
Without a trace of pride;  
Although we spring from a Saxon King  
Upon our mater's side.  
Our pater is a broker  
In famous London Town;

He deals in shares, and "bulls" and  
"bears,"

And does the public down!

Lord Bunter—that's our uncle,

Who lives at Bunter Manor,  
Will shortly send, for us to spend,  
A P.O. for a "tanner."

We'll "blue" it at the tuckshop,

The ginger-pop will flow;  
Yes, when it comes, we'll treat our chums,  
A-gorging we will go!

We are the finest fellows

You possibly could meet;  
"A perfect pair!" they all declare,  
Yet none will stand us treat.

They pass into the tuckshop,  
Feast to their hearts' content;  
And leave us here, to peep and peer,  
And wail a wild lament!

HARRY WHARTON: What a mournful  
ending! Hope we're not going to have  
any more lamentations. Concerts are  
meant to cheer people up, not to make them  
down in the dumps. Will somebody give us  
a good, rousing song?

BOLSOVER MAJOR: I'm your man!

HARRY WHARTON: Good! Ladies and  
gentlemen, allow me to introduce Percy  
Bolsover. He's the ugliest fellow in the Grey-  
friars Remove. Being a pugilist by pro-  
fession, he has a somewhat battered appear-  
ance. He'd take the booby prize at any  
Male Beauty Contest. Don't scowl at me  
like that, Bolsover! Let us listen to your  
booming bass voice.

BOLSOVER MAJOR:

When I was a kid I used to be  
At a kindergarten near the sea.  
'Twas there I learned to battle and brawl,  
And to punch and pummel a punching-ball!

I punched that ball so successfully  
That all my pals thought the world of me.  
I hammered that ball so heartily  
That now I am the Wonder of the World, you  
see!

Both Latin and Greek I never could stick,  
And I had no head for arithmetic.  
At hazarding dates I was centuries out,  
But my fists were ever ready for a boxing  
bout.

I boxed so well, from the age of three,  
That the "Great White Hope" they labelled  
me.

I fought my foes so ferociously  
That now I am the Wonder of the World, you  
see!

The years went by, and I then was sent  
To Greyfriars School, on the coast of Kent.  
I fought the fags, and ignored their cries,  
I punched their noses and I blacked their  
eyes!

I punched their noses so persistently  
That they fled like rabbits at the sight of me.  
And I blacked their eyes so brutally  
That now I am the Wonder of the World, you  
see!

I conquered Cherry, and I battled with  
Brown,



"Fag! Fag! Fag!  
I've got it on the brain.  
Fag! Fag! Fag!  
It's driving me insane."



"I fought my foes so ferociously  
That now I'm the Wonder of the World, you see!"

And I won high praise and great renown.  
My opponents quailed at my fierce attacks,  
I sent them flying, and they whimpered  
"Pax!"

There isn't a man who's a match for me,  
From the prefects down to the fags, you see.  
I'm not conceited, you'll all agree,  
And yet I am the Wonder of the World,  
you see!

Now, schoolboys all, whoever you may be,  
If you want to climb to the top of the tree.  
If you wish to become a boxer bold,  
The way to success I will now unfold.

Just model yourselves, my lads, on me,  
And you all may be giants of the ring, you  
see.  
Be as daring, dashing, and brave as me,  
And you all may be Wonders of the World,  
you see!

HARRY WHARTON: I forgot to mention  
just now that modesty was not Bolsover's  
strong point. He imagines he is cock of the

walk, and ruler of the roost, and king of the  
castle, and all the rest of it. He can certainly  
use his fists against harmless, inoffensive fags,  
but when he comes up against a good fighting  
man like Bob Cherry he invariably meets his  
Waterloo. I will now call upon some mem-  
ber of the fag fraternity to give us a song.  
Don't all speak at once!

SCORE OF SHRILL VOICES: I'll sing, Wharton!

HARRY WHARTON: We can't have you all  
singing at once, or you'll raise the roof and  
scare the audience away. Let the leader of  
the fag tribe come forward and sing a song of  
sixpence, or a song of sorrow, or anything he  
fancies.

DICKY NUGENT: I've got a song of sorrow  
that will bring scalding tears to the eyes of  
the audience. Hope they've brought their  
buckets with them.

HARRY WHARTON: They've brought bou-  
quets—not buckets. The more sorrowful your  
song, Dicky, the louder they'll laugh. Go  
ahead, my infant!

DICKY NUGENT:  
Before I came to Greyfriars School  
I thought the life was bliss;

I little dreamed I'd have  
to work  
And slog and slave  
like this.  
But now I'd dearly love  
to find  
Some soothing, shel-  
tered nest,  
Where the prefects  
cease from troubl-  
ing,  
And the weary are at  
rest!

"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
I've got it on the  
brain.

"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
It's driving me insane.  
Here and there, and  
everywhere

My weary steps I drag,  
With voices booming in my ear:  
"Fag! Fag! Fag!"

I light the fires, and sweep the floors,  
And make my master's toast;  
And woe betide me if he finds  
I'm absent from my post!  
His ashplant whistles through the air  
And tans my tender hide;  
No bigger tyrant you would find  
In all the country wide!

"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
I've got it on the brain.  
"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
It's driving me insane.

I bear my troubles manfully,  
I'll never strike my flag;  
But how I hate that haunting voice:  
"Fag! Fag! Fag!"

The day will come when I shall be.  
A prefect proud and haughty;  
I'll have a fag to slave for me,  
And tan him when he's naughty.  
But meanwhile, I must play my part  
With energy and vigour;  
My master's standing over me—  
A fierce, forbidding figure!



"The day will come when I shall be  
A prefect proud and haughty;  
I'll have a fag to slave for me,  
And tan him when he's naughty."

"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
I've got it on the brain.  
"Fag! Fag! Fag!"  
It's driving me insane.  
I'm absolutely worked to  
death,  
And life's a dreary drag,  
Because of that sten-  
torian shout:  
"Fag! Fag! Fag!"

HARRY WHARTON:  
Poor old Dicky! Verily,  
one half of the world never  
knows how much the  
other half suffers.

GEORGE WINGATE  
(Captain of Greyfriars):  
Pardon me, but fags  
aren't the only sufferers.  
How many people would

care to be the captain of a public school,  
I wonder? It isn't a bed of roses by any  
means.

HARRY WHARTON: I'll cheerfully swap  
places with you, Wingate, old man, and take  
over the captaincy!

GEORGE WINGATE: You'll do nothing of  
the sort! However, I should like the audience  
to hear something of a captain's woes and  
worries. May I sing?

HARRY WHARTON: Certainly—so long as  
there's no risk of your breaking a blood-vessel!

GEORGE WINGATE:  
The woes of a skipper are many,  
His pleasures remarkably few;  
Some say that he shouldn't have any.

What is a poor skipper to do?  
There is never an end to his functions,  
Yet he has to look happy—not sad;  
If he shows any frowns or compunctions,  
They say that his conduct's too bad!

He's captain of footer and cricket,  
And leader of this and of that;  
He feels that he simply can't stick it—  
He's worried by every young brat.  
"Please, Wingate, we want some late passes!"  
"We're wanting a ref. for our match!"  
"We want you to take boxing classes!"  
"I've brought you my fifty lines—catch!"

I envy each light-hearted nipper  
 Who hasn't a care in the world ;  
 But oh, how I hate to be skipper !  
 Into whirlpools of worry I'm hurled.  
 My life is an incessant hustle ;  
 I'm sure it will drive me insane !  
 For the hurry and flurry and bustle  
 Are sufficient to turn a chap's brain !

HARRY WHARTON : Let us pause and shed  
 a few silent tears on behalf of our skipper.  
 We had no idea, Wingate, that you carried  
 the weight of the world on your shoulders.  
 I shall not repeat my offer to swap places  
 with you.

GEORGE WINGATE : I should think not !  
 You'd soon be driven into the asylum if you  
 had my worries and responsibilities.

HARRY WHARTON : I notice that certain  
 members of our concert-party are beginning  
 to doze off to sleep. If somebody will kindly  
 stick a pin in them, perhaps they will pull  
 themselves together and favour us with  
 a song.

HAROLD SKINNER (after being rudely awak-  
 ened by BOB CHERRY) : My chums, Sidney  
 Snoop and William Stott will join me in a  
 little ditty of my own composing.

HARRY WHARTON : Fancy you composing a  
 ditty ! The only composing you ever do,  
 as a rule, is to compose yourself to slumber.  
 Carry on with the good work, my dozey  
 friends !

SKINNER, SNOOP, AND STOTT :

We're Skinner and  
 Snoop and Stott,  
 A thoroughly lazy lot !  
 We don't believe in  
 playing games ;  
 We've no ambitions  
 and no aims,  
 And every slacker  
 honours the  
 names  
 Of Skinner and Snoop  
 and Stott !

That hateful thing called  
 WORK

We always shun and  
 shirk.



"Why, Mauleverer's fast asleep ! Insert a pin in  
 his noble calf, and see what happens !"

We have no use for Latin and Greek,  
 And consequently, twice a week,  
 We're lammed and lectured by the  
 "Beak,"

For we are at war with Work !

We're Skinner and Snoop and Stott,  
 And we frequently catch it hot.

They march us down to the football  
 ground,  
 And make us hustle and bustle around.  
 No slacker slackers ever were found  
 Than Skinner and Snoop and Stott !

HARRY WHARTON : Yes, we have a short  
 way with slackers. But I can't agree that  
 Skinner & Co. are the slackest slackers  
 who ever slacked. What about his languid  
 lordship, Mauleverer ? Why, he's fast asleep !  
 Where's that pin, Bob ? Insert it into his  
 noble calf, and see what happens !

(Wild yell from LORD MAULEVERER as the  
 pin pierces his flesh.)

HARRY WHARTON : Come along, Mauly !  
 It's very rude to go to sleep during a concert.  
 The audience is waiting for you to sing a song,  
 my dear old Rip van Winkle !

LORD MAULEVERER : I can't sing, begad !  
 It's too much fag. It's all right for fearfully  
 energetic fellows like yourself, but you might  
 leave a born-tired nobleman in peace !

HARRY WHARTON : Sorry to hear you find  
 it impossible to perform feats of energy,  
 such as lifting up your voice !, But we must

insist. Our concert will  
 not be complete with-  
 out a song from our  
 champion slacker.

LORD MAULEVERER  
 (resignedly) : Oh, very  
 well ! I'll try an' muster  
 the energy to give you a  
 parody on "Asleep in  
 the Deep."

Stormy the night, and  
 the window-panes  
 Quiver and shiver and  
 shake !

Most of the fellows sit  
 up in bed,

Startled and wide-awake !  
But Mauly will sleep till the break of day,  
Dreaming the golden hours away.  
Though danger's near,  
He knows no fear ;  
Under the blankets his limbs disappear.

Loudly the bell in the school tower rings,  
Bidding us list to the warning it brings.  
Slackers, beware ! Slackers, beware !  
Danger is near thee, beware—beware !  
Beware ! Beware !  
Many, 'tis said, have been blown out  
of bed,  
So beware ! beware !

What of the dawn, when the storm is o'er ?  
There is no trace or sign !  
Still you can hear my melodious snore  
Up till the hour of nine.  
Breakfast is waiting down below ;  
Others have gone to it long ago.  
But Mauly stays—  
You know his ways.  
His methods of rising are painfully slow !

Loudly the bell in the school tower rings,  
Bidding us list to the warning it brings.  
Slackers, beware ! Slackers, beware !  
Lessons are starting, beware ! beware !  
Beware ! Beware !

Those who rise late will be flogged, sure as fate,  
So beware ! beware !

HARRY WHARTON : Bravo, Mauly ! You rose to the occasion in great style. Ladies and gentlemen, we should very much like to extend our programme, but we know that you want to delve into the pages which follow. Coker of the Fifth wanted to sing to you, but he has a voice like a ship's siren, so you may congratulate yourselves on a lucky escape ! Hobson of the Shell and Temple of the Upper Fourth were also anxious to sing, but you'll probably have enough of them later on. The Greyfriars Concert Party will now render the Final Chorus.

Ring down the curtain ; we must say " Au revoir ! "  
Glad to have met those who've not seen us before.  
Our labours begin, though our concert is ended ;  
We hope that your verdict, dear friends, will be " Splendid ! "

Ring down the curtain and let us away !  
We'll meet again in the pages which follow this lay ;  
To fun, japes, and jollity now we will go,  
So " Cheer-oh, everybody ! Cheer-oh, cheerio ! "



# Billy Bunter Cuts a Dash!



If Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars knew that Billy Bunter had borrowed his cherished motor-cycle, his wrath would be great indeed! You can see that by the expression on his face—if you can find it!

# GREYFRIARS GOSSIP

Some interesting and amusing facts  
concerning Greyfriars and its Scholars

:: By BOB CHERRY ::

"W<sup>H</sup>Y is Greyfriars School like a cup of cold tea?" asked Tom Brown, who is always popping conundrums at people. I gave it up, and Brown smilingly enlightened me. "Because," he said, "it's been standing a long time!"

The old school has certainly weathered the storms of centuries. One part of it dates back to the Tudor period. It makes a fellow feel rather awed to think of all the generations of schoolboys that have passed through Greyfriars. Time, the ever-rolling stream, has borne them away on its swift current. But the old school still stands, and will survive for many years yet. One might appropriately say of our historic edifice, "No hungry generations tread thee down!"

One of the oldest portions of Greyfriars is the ivy-covered tuckshop, standing beneath the old elms, in a corner of the Close. I don't know if the tuckshop has its ghost or not. At all events, it is "haunted" daily-by Billy Bunter!

The place which always has a grim fascination for me is the punishment-room. This is a cold and cheerless apartment, in which many

an unhappy youth doomed to expulsion has passed his last night at Greyfriars. The names of many of these victims have been carved on the walls, for future generations to see.

Some of the prisoners have not allowed their sense of humour to desert them, even in such unpleasant circumstances. For example,

a fellow named Gunn, who was expelled some years ago, hacked the following verse on the wall:

"My name is Gunn,  
No wrong I've done,  
Yet here I brood in  
sorrow.  
Doomed to await  
A Gunn's sad fate—  
They're 'firing' me  
to-morrow!"

Coming from places to personalities, Greyfriars possesses a Bull and a Fish amongst its scholars. The Bull can bellow,

too, on occasion! You should have heard him the other day, when he discovered that Billy Bunter had purloined his plum cake! As for the Fish, it hails from the other side of the "herring pond," and is constantly being "baited" by its schoolfellows!

Bolsover Major doesn't believe in wearing gloves in winter. In order to keep warm, he invariably has a fight on his hands!



The Tuckshop is "haunted" daily  
by Billy Bunter



# Sport Snapshots!



A. VERNON SMITH  
Sports Editor of  
"The Greyfriars Herald"

## CRICKET

GREYFRIARS has again had a splendidly successful season. Never has cricket been played with such zest and enthusiasm. The Clerk of the Weather has interfered with a few games, but on the whole he has behaved quite well.

THE First Eleven, under the capable captaincy of big-hearted George Wingate, won fifteen matches out of twenty. Only one match was lost, and the remainder were drawn. Wingate and his chum Gwynne played like giants, and covered themselves with glory.

THE Greyfriars Remove cannot show quite so good a record. However, we won fourteen games out of twenty-two, which is highly satisfactory. On two occasions we were fortunate to snatch victory by a single run!

HARRY WHARTON is at the head of the batting list, with an average of 44. He scored four centuries during the season, his 120 (not out) against Rookwood being a masterly achievement. The runs were made against the clock, Greyfriars bringing off a sensational victory on the stroke of time.



Hurree Singh tops the bowling list; on a wicket that suits him he is practically unplayable.

HURREE SINGH, the dusky junior from India's coral strand, tops the bowling list. He took exactly one hundred wickets, at a cost of six runs apiece. "Inky" is certainly a deadly bowler, and on a wicket that suits him he is practically unplayable.

THE Remove cricket funds are in a very healthy state. Frank Nugent, the Hon. Treasurer, reports that there is a balance in hand of twelve pounds. If Billy Bunter were Treasurer, he would suggest "bluening" the balance on a feed at the tuckshop!

## FOOTBALL

THIS ever-popular game is "going great guns" at Greyfriars. Everybody plays it—the majority from choice, the minority under compulsion. It is great fun to see the slackers being forcibly marched down to the footer ground on a Saturday afternoon.

PERHAPS the greatest game seen on the school ground last season was that between "Past" and "Present"—the Old Boys of Greyfriars and the school First Eleven. A tremendous struggle was witnessed, the "Present" winning an exciting game by 3 goals to 2. Wingate was the hero of the

match, scoring all three goals for the present generation.

THE Remove Eleven came through the season with flying colours. Our biggest victory was against "the lads of the village," whom we routed to the tune of 10-0. On that happy occasion—happy for us, at all events!—Frank Nugent scored five goals. The village goalie had a gruelling time, and he was mightily relieved when the final whistle rang out.

### MISCELLANEOUS

BOB CHERRY again won the Boxing Championship of the Remove, after a terrific tussle with his chum Harry Wharton. Those two had fought their way to the final—and what a final it was! It lasted nine rounds, and then Bob Cherry administered the fateful "knock-out."

MONTY NEWLAND won the Chess Championship of the Remove. Harry Wharton won the Swimming Championship, and Johnny Bull the Sculling Championship. Billy Bunter "walked over" in the Eating Championship, being unchallenged!

THE annual Marathon Race was won by Mark Linley, whose pluck and endurance made him a very fine long-distance runner. He beat Redwing, the second man home, by two yards, in an exciting finish.

ALONZO TODD won the Ludo Championship of the Lower School after a terrific struggle against Dicky Nugent of the Second,

who had played himself into the final. Both the players were trembling with excitement as "Home" loomed nearer with every fresh throw of the dice. Alonzo remarked to me that "there was nothing in it." I quite agreed with him, for Ludo holds no attractions for me. Perspiration was streaming from the gentle Duffer's face when he wanted three moves for Home. With a shaking hand he rattled the dice-box. Would it bring him the coveted trophy—I'm not quite sure what the trophy is, or if there is one—or would it send him back several more squares? To look at Alonzo's face one would imagine that life or death rested

on the throw of that dice. Anyway, he turned up a three and promptly moved his disc Home. If Alonzo continues to take Ludo so seriously it's quite on the cards that he'll be moved into a "Home" at no distant date.



It is great fun to see the slackers being forcibly marched down to the footer ground on a Saturday afternoon.

GEORGE TUBB, of the Third, holds the distinguished title of Champion Marble Shooter. He also merits the distinction of being one of the dirtiest and cheekiest fags in the Lower School. Still, that's by the way. I don't know what goes with Tubb's title. My recollections of marbles tell me that I got more kicks than halpence for wearing the "knees" out of my trousers. Still, if Tubb's satisfied, that's everything.

HORACE COKER, of the Fifth, has been admitted on all sides as the Champion Chump of Greyfriars. This hardly entitles him to be mentioned in "Sport Snapshots," although it's rare sport pulling his leg.

# MY "HISTORY OF GREYFRIARS"

By Mr. H. H. QUELCH, M.A.

(Master of the Greyfriars Remove)

THE fact that I am engaged in writing a complete and comprehensive History of Greyfriars, from the time of its inception down to the present day, has been seized upon by schoolboy humorists as a tremendous joke.

In Harry Wharton's schoolboy journal, "The Greyfriars' Herald," I have from time to time seen sarcastic references to my "History." One writer declares that I have already written ten thousand chapters, and that a further ten thousand remain to be written—if I live long enough!

Another writer likens my History of Greyfriars to Tennyson's "Brook," because it "goes on for ever."

Yet another writer says that since I commenced my colossal task of writing the school's history, no less than six typewriters have broken down under the strain of over-work!

I am not angry with those who poke fun at my labours. Their criticisms are good-natured, I know, and I can therefore afford to smile.

But I would remind my schoolboy critics that Rome was not built in a day. Neither can an exhaustive history of a public school be written in a week. It is a task of great magnitude, and it involves a tremendous amount of research work. I have spent many hours in the school library, going through old records, and extracting valuable information from them, in order to make my History as complete as possible. Nobody wants to read a mere skeleton of a history. A full and concise record is required; and several years of strenuous desk-work will be necessary before I can write "Finis" to my History of Greyfriars.



Mr. Quelch at work on his famous "History of Greyfriars."

Of course, it is a labour of love. One does not do this sort of thing as a self-inflicted penance. I love Greyfriars—every stick and stone of it—and I could wish for no better hobby than the compiling of its history. I am too old for cricket and football; I do not play bowls because it induces backache; I am too staid a person to play ping-pong and similar games, and I therefore spend my leisure hours at my typewriter, tackling my formidable task.

"And what will be the good of it all?" I can imagine some folk saying. "When the History of Greyfriars is finished—if ever it is finished!—who will want to read it? Nobody except the antiquarians. It won't be like a thrilling work of fiction, or a 'best seller.' It will remain, forlorn and forsaken on people's bookshelves, musty and cobwebbed with disuse."

My answer is that the History of Greyfriars is not being written for the masses, but for the understanding few. If only half a dozen people find pleasure from its perusal, I shall rest content, knowing that the labour has not been in vain.



"I could say me A B C backwards afore I reached the age of nine," said Gosling. "A proper star turn, I was!"

It was a summer evening; old Gosling's work was done. And he before his parlour door was sitting in the sun.

Sounds quite poetic, doesn't it? Matter of fact, it was quite a poetic sort of evening, with the golden sun sinking in the what's-a-name, and the gentle zephyrs blowing across the thingummy-bob.

I gave Gosling good-evening, and seated myself beside him, and struck up a conversation.

"Where were you educated, Gossy?" I asked, "I've often wondered. You're not an Old Boy of Greyfriars, I suppose?"

"No, I ain't," grunted Gosling.

"Eton?" I hazarded.

"Eh? Eaten wot? Which it ain't supper-time yet, Master Brown."

"Eton's a public school," I explained. "Are you an Old Etonian?"

Gosling grunted a denial.

"Then you're an Old Harrovian, perhaps, or a Carthusian, or a Wykehamist?"

Gosling eyed me with suspicion.

"Don't you accuse me of bein' none of them things!" he said. "Which I'm an 'ard-workin' an' respectable man as ever was! As for my eddication, I never went to none of yer swell schools."

"You had a private tutor, perchance?"

# GOSLING'S SCHOOLDAYS

An Amusing Chat with the Celebrated Porter of Greyfriars

By TOM BROWN

"No. I was eddicated, Mr. Brown, in me native village—Little-Clacton-in-the-Wold. Wot's more, I was the brainiest scholard in the school!"

"In that case, I suppose there were only two pupils—yourself and the Village Idiot?" I suggested.

Gosling glared.

"There were fifty pupils," he said, "an' I was the star turn, so to speak. It didn't take me long to master the three R's—Readin', 'Ritin', and 'Rithmetic. I could say me A B C backwards, an' count up to ninety-nine, afore I reached the age of—"

"Ninety-nine?" I queried.

"No!" said Gosling, waxing indignant.

"Nine!"

"Then you were an infant prodigy, Gossy," I said solemnly.

"I dunno wot that means, an' I don't care," said Gosling. "I know I was as brainy in them days as the 'Ead is now. An' I'm still as brainy as ever. I'm wastin' me time and talents 'ere, foolin' around doin' menial work. Which I ought to be a Cabinet Minister!"

At the mere thought of William Gosling directing the destinies of the nation, I burst out laughing.

"Himpudent young rascal!" roared Gosling. "You've bin a-pullin' of my leg all the time! Jest you go along orf out of it, or I'll lay my broom across yer shoulders!"

Not wishing to be belaboured by Gosling's brawny arm, I promptly scuttled away to safety.

# The Midnight Feast!



"GOOD-NIGHT, you kids!" the prefect cries.  
"Good-night!" the Lower Fourth replies.  
Then, when we hear his distant tread,  
With one accord we bound from bed!

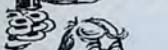


Candles are lighted here and there,  
And cheery voices fill the air.  
"Now for the merry midnight feast!  
And then our joy will be increased."



"I say, you chaps!" cries Billy Bunter,  
"I feel as hungry as a hunter.  
Ten tarts was all I had for tea,  
And that's a trifling snack, to me!"

We sit on Bunter in our wrath.  
Then spread a snow-white tablecloth.  
Or, strictly speaking, it's a sheet;  
As tablecloths they're hard to beat!



A glorious hamper greets our gaze;  
We gather round a bike-lamp's rays;  
And then proceed to feast and feed:  
"Eat, drink, be merry!" is our creed.



Who dreads the pangs of indigestion?  
We laugh to scorn the bare suggestion!  
And what if nightmares crown our folly?  
Away with gloom and melancholy!

The puddings, pastries, and the pies,  
All disappear before our eyes.  
Then comes a warning of disaster:  
"Look out, you chaps! I hear a master!"

Swiftly we spring between the sheets,  
And every heart with tension beats.  
A tall, stern figure fills the door,  
And then departs; we breathe once more!





# Bunter in Bankruptcy!

By Tom Brown

*An Amusing Story  
of Greyfriars.*

## NOTICE!

A meeting of the creditors of WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER will be held in the Junior Common-room at 8 o'clock. The debtor will be publicly examined as to his means, and every effort will be made to induce him to settle up.

(Signed) PETER TODD,  
Official Receiver in Bankruptcy.

**T**HAT rather grim announcement—grim so far as William George Bunter was concerned—attracted quite a crowd of fellows to the notice-board.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is a new stunt of Toddy's. He's going to make Bunter square up his debts."

"He'll have a job!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter will plead poverty."

"But the creditors will demand their pound of flesh," said Nugent. "If they can't get it in cash, they'll take it out of Bunter's fat hide!"

"We certainly will!" growled Johnny Bull. "I happen to be one of Bunter's creditors. In a moment of weakness I lent him tuppence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fat and ludicrous Bunter owes me a

bobful shilling," said Hurree Singh. "I advancefully lent it to him last term."

"You can say good-bye to that bob, Inky," said Bob Cherry. "It's lost and gone for ever, like the fair Clementine. Personally, I'm not a creditor of Bunter's—I've got too much sense to lend him money—but I shall toddle along to the meeting. It will be great fun, to hear Toddy cross-examine Bunter as to his means."

"Yes, rather!"

Quite a lot of fellows declared their intention of going to the meeting. Most of them were creditors of Billy Bunter. As a rule, they had hardened their hearts, like Pharaoh of old, when Bunter requested a little loan. But there had been moments of weakness, as Johnny Bull expressed it, when they had put their hands in their pockets and befriended the impecunious Bunter.

Harry Wharton had once lent Bunter a shilling, for the purpose of getting rid of Mark Linley who had lent the fat junior six on the express understanding that it be paid back when Bunter's postal arrived. But that postal order was I end of the world. Its arrival was being predicted, but it never came!

Bolsover major had lent Bunter halfpence. Such a trifling transaction have been forgotten by most fellows. Bolsover hadn't forgotten. He had been "broke" at the moment, and had to go to the meeting and reclaim his halfpence.

Fisher T. Fish, the cute Transatlantic junior, had lent Bunter a bad shilling. He now intended to reclaim a good one! But Fisher T. Fish—like the rest of Bunter's creditors—was likely to be unlucky.

Shortly before eight o'clock, a steady stream of fellows wended their way to the Junior Common-room.

Peter Todd was already there, seated at the big desk, and looking very officious and important.

When the first stroke of eight boomed from the clock-tower, all Bunter's creditors were present; and also a good many fellows who were not creditors, but mere "lookers-on in Vienna."

But there was one notable absentee. William George Bunter was missing.

"Where's Bunter?" inquired a score of voices.

"Skulking in some corner, I expect," said Peter Todd. "Go and find him, somebody!"

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull promptly set out on the track of the missing debtor. They went first of all to Bunter's study, but drew blank. Then they explored the tuckshop, and the gym, and the library, in turn. But there was no sign of Bunter.

"He can't have gone out of gates," said Bob Cherry. "Let's try the box-room."

At first glance, the box-room appeared to be untenanted. But a sound of quick breathing behind a large trunk caused Bob Cherry

to make a sudden dart in that direction. Bob's hand grasped the fugitive by the collar, and Billy Bunter was hauled into view.

"Got you, my fat tulip!" said Bob. "Are you coming quietly, or shall we frog-march you to the Common-room?"

"Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I'm not coming!"

Bunter pleaded and protested as he was whirled to the door.



"Leggo, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "I'm not coming!" But Billy Bunter protested in vain.

"I say, you fellows, hold on—I mean, leggo! Don't take me in front of that mob in the Common-room. Goodness knows what they'll do to me! They make out I owe them money, but that's all rot. I don't owe anybody anything—honest Injun!"

But it was useless for Bunter to pose as the Village Blacksmith, who "looked the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man."

"You owe me tuppence!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "And

there's about two dozen creditors, besides myself. They mean to have your money or your life. Come on!"

Bunter "came on"—unwillingly enough—until he reached the Common-room. He was bundled into a chair; and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull stationed themselves on either side of him, and acted as warders.

Peter Todd, in his capacity of Official Receiver, promptly got to business.



All eyes were on Bunter as he tore open the envelope. And then—wonder of wonders—a postal order fluttered out. A postal order for ten shillings! "Well, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Who said the age of miracles was past?"

"William George Bunter!" he said sternly. "I understand you have filed a petition in bankruptcy."

"What rot!" said Bunter. "How could I file a petition, when I don't possess a file?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" rapped out Peter Todd. "You have filed a petition in bankruptcy, and a meeting of your creditors has been duly

called. I now propose to examine you as to your means. Your total debts, I might mention, amount to nine-and-tence. You have borrowed various sums from various persons at various times, and you have never paid back a penny. Now, please understand that I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What are your present means?"

"Nix!" said Bunter briefly.

"Have you any banknotes about you?"

"Wish I had!"

"Do you own any private property?"

"Well, I'm the heir to my pater's vast estates—"

"Cut it short! Have you any property, here at Greyfriars, that your creditors can distrain upon?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Turn out your pockets!" commanded Peter.

Billy Bunter obeyed. And a surprising collection of articles was brought into view. There was a penknife, and a lawn-tennis ball, and a mouth-organ, and a packet of chewing gum, and a fountain pen, and a silver pencil.

"Gentlemen!" said Peter Todd, addressing the creditors, "you are in luck's way! The debtor has no cash, but he seems to possess quite a lot of property, which I will proceed to share amongst you."

"But it's not Bunter's!" hooted Johnny Bull. "That penknife belongs to me!"

"Faith, an' that's my mouth-organ!" yelled Micky Desmond.

"And my tennis-ball!" roared Redwing, rising up in wrath.

"I guess the fat clam has sneaked my chewing gum!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

There were also claimants to the fountain pen and the silver pencil. Apparently, Bunter had borrowed all these articles—without their owners' permission!

Peter Todd frowned, and ordered that the borrowed property should be immediately restored to its owners. Then he turned again to Bunter.

"Have you nothing to offer your creditors, in cash or in kind?"

"You know I haven't, Toddy! But I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Tell me the old, old story!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"And when it comes," continued Bunter, "I'll square up with all my creditors. Matter of fact, I'm expecting a remittance by to-night's post, from one of my titled relations."

A storm of derisive remarks greeted Billy Bunter's statement. Nobody had any belief in his postal order, nor in his titled relations.

"Well, gentlemen," said Peter Todd, with a sigh, "it looks as if you'll have to go empty away. Debtor has no means, either in cash or in kind."

"Then we'll take it out of his hide!" roared Bolsover major. "We'll give him such a record bumping that he'll never try to borrow money again!"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter had passed through the stages of uneasiness and alarm to that of positive panic. He glanced wildly around him, but there was no loophole of escape.

If only something would happen now, at the eleventh hour, to rescue him from his unhappy plight! If only the Head would come in, or Mr. Quelch—

And then came the dramatic moment of deliverance!

The door of the Common-room burst open, and Sammy Bunter rolled in.

"I say, Billy!" exclaimed the fat fag, "here's a letter for you! I found it in the rack."

"Hold on a minute, you chaps," said Peter Todd, "give him a chance to read his letter."

All eyes were on Bunter as he tore open the envelope. And then—wonder of wonders—a postal order fluttered out! A postal order for ten shillings!

The stupefied silence was at last broken by Bob Cherry.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Who said that the age of miracles was past? A postal order for ten bob! Bunter can cash this in the morning, and square up with his creditors. If he doesn't—"

Next morning, the postal order was duly cashed, and Bunter's creditors received their just due.

All that was left for Bunter was the princely sum of twopence, with which he procured one solitary jam tart.

There was weeping and gnashing of teeth on the part of the fat junior. But he had this consolation. For a short time, at least, he could look the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man—or boy, either!

THE END

# A Page of Portraits



## Popular Favourites at Greyfriars



- ① Harry Wharton  
 ② Bob Cherry, ③ Frank Nugent,  
 ④ Hurree Singh, ⑤ Billy Bunter,  
 ⑥ Johnny Bull ⑦ Lord Mauleverer,  
 ⑧ Dicky Nugent. ⑨ Dick Penfold ⑩ Mark Linley

# ZOO "FILM STARS"



## AN ENTERTAINING ARTICLE

by LESLIE G. MAINLAND ("Uncle Leslie" of 2 L O)

It is not the books which are the most fascinating part of the Zoo's library (though some might quarrel with this remark), but a stack of cases which look like cake-tins.

These hold the "volumes" which go to form the Zoological Society's "film library." This was started soon after the war, with some thousands of feet of films presented by Mr. F. Martin Duncan, who is the librarian, and it grows as interesting zoological events are recorded with the cinema camera. So, as rare creatures spend their often too short lives in the Gardens, a permanent record is obtained showing what they looked like, and illustrating their own special movements and habits. Some of the nearly extinct creatures may never reach the Zoo again, but after they have died out it will still be quite easy to "call up their ghosts" and make them walk in the darkness on the magical white screen.

Already it is possible to cause the ghost of the Ghost Fox to appear and pass before your eyes as he was in life, and he was believed to have been wiped out by cattle-ranchers until this one specimen turned up to prove that he still existed. The animal died after a few weeks, but the film had been made before his last illness. It shows this queer leggy creature in his most peculiar feeding position. He could not pick anything up from the floor of his cage without sprawling out his forelegs so as to bring his head nearer

the ground, a sequel to his short neck. (The Giraffe has to do much the same sort of thing, you may remember.)

### The Eight-Armed Death.

Some of the first films presented by Mr. Martin Duncan were taken by him at the Plymouth Marine Biological Laboratory, and show some of the habits of various queer sea creatures. You can see the Lesser Octopus assassinate a crab. It is a real creepy film drama, and the average cinema manager would love to describe it as "The Eight-Armed Death, a Tragedy of the Underseas Underworld." Even a coldly-scientific audience feels its "grip" (as they call it in the film world). You see the armour-plated victim in a glass tank awaiting his fate. As the film whirrs onwards the crab does nothing in particular, but you still have a feeling that *something* is going to happen, although there is no appropriate music to give you fair warning.

Then there is a shadow which turns out to be the assassin, who enters the scene *backwards*. (This is not done to make the crab think that he is going in the other direction, but because the water-valve used by the murderer to move himself from place to place is so fixed that it drives the body first with the arms streaming out behind.)

Next, the octopus opens out into a kind of deadly umbrella and sinks slowly down. Just before the "eight-armed death" settles

# SOME ANIMAL

# FILM ACTORS



THE OCTOPUS  
the "Eight-Armed Death"  
of a Film-Drama



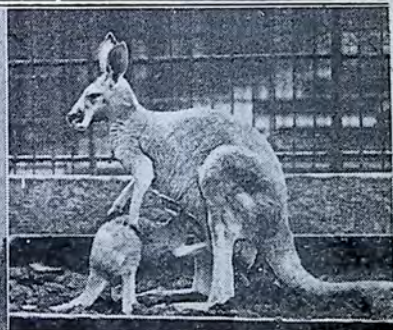
THE CRESTED  
PENGUIN



JOHN DANIEL,  
the famous Gorilla



THE GHOST FOX,  
an animal now believed to be extinct



A MOTHER KANGAROO  
photographed with her baby

upon the unlucky crab, you see one of the tentacles whip outwards and downwards until the tip slides under the edge of the victim's shell. There is a little flick, and the crab is lying on his back. Then the octopus does his murdering at his leisure. The crab is helpless, and in the centre of the attacker's arms is a horny beak which gets to work after some convulsive heaving and tightening of the suckered arms.

#### The Crab's Toilette.

A most beautiful film in the series shows the Spider Crab decking himself out after a fight. To disguise himself from his enemies this creature covers his shell with bits of any "sea vegetation" which may be growing anywhere near his home. If he lives in a seaweedy spot, he sticks little bits on his back and legs until he is more or less hidden. Should he dwell among sponges, then sponges are clearly the right thing to wear. Should he happen to be clothed in sea-weed when you place him in a world of sponges, he at once gets worried, throws away his old suit, and starts dressing himself in a new outfit. The picture shows a crab who lives in a seaweed forest. In a "scrap" with a friend some of his disguise has been torn off (just like a burglar who has lost a false beard while escaping). He is seen with bits of seaweed in his mouth, which he is gluing into the right places.

Then there is a film record of the Crested Penguins who came to the Zoo with their enormous appetites, lived there a little, and died. They were really great when faced with a few plump fresh herrings. They are smallish birds, but you can see one eat five fish, one after the other. Then there is a thoughtful moment. The spirit is willing, but the flesh has its limits. There is a very fine herring still waiting—you see it on the film—but is there any room for it? At last the penguin has a brain-wave. He breaks out into a comic little fumble-footed dance with the idea of shaking down the other five fish. After he has landed heavily on his heels six or seven times the impossible has been accomplished, and there is room for one more, after all.

#### Prawns at Football.

Another moving picture, of all things, shows a group of Prawns playing football. Into their glass tank some little bits of chopped fish are dropped, and these are used as the balls. A prawn is seen to swim up to one of these and "punt" it away with a fore-leg. Then another joins in the sport, and yet another, until the game becomes quite fast and furious. It is believed to be something very like playfulness, for the prawn, when hungry, can take its food in a very ordinary fashion, and there seems to be no other reason than sport for the game.

There is a very vivid record of a famous Zoo glutton in the collection of films—a Spanish Toad who, on his day, could gobble up seventy-five meal-worms at a sitting. He was a real film "star," for he had a fine gift of facial expression. You see him "registering" alertness, then there is the "got him" look, and at last there is the bloated leer of after-dinner self-satisfaction.

No camera has yet captured the actual movements of that toad's tongue in the act of feeding. You see him bend forward over a group of ten meal-worms, there is a kind of flash, "and then there are nine." Experiments with a "slow motion" camera taking 250 pictures a second failed to show what the tongue actually does; indeed, you only saw the tongue in four of the pictures, which means that the toad swallowed the worm in just under a *sixtieth of a second*. One day, it is hoped that the action of the tongue will be captured and the problem solved.

#### Microscope Films.

Some of the Zoo's films have been taken under the microscope. One shows a "close-up" of the Star-fish using its little suckers as feet. It enables the creature to climb up a rock, or to murder an oyster by wrapping itself round the shell and then exerting that steady drag which overcomes the resistance of the victim until it opens to let in death.

Another film shows how the Hermit Crab goes "house-hunting." You see the evicted soft-bodied thing seeking shelter. Two whelk-shells are given him from which to choose, and he makes a very thorough inspection,

feeling inside them with his claws. Then he selects the bigger "house," and goes in tail first, feeling that he can now defy Fate.

#### Why the Keeper Stopped.

The boxing Kangaroo has been taken "in action," and you can admire the fine foot and tail work he uses when assaulting his keeper. During the bout when the picture was made the beast landed a beautifully-timed double kick on the man's waistcoat while the machine was running. There was some more film left, but the man very firmly stated that he would "let it go at that," and "call it a day." He did not appear to have the real spirit that makes our film heroes what they are. Still, has Mr. William Hart yet faced a kangaroo's kick?

The late lamented "John Daniel," the famous gorilla who died in America, has a splendid film recording his movements when feeding and playing. One section shows him drumming on his chest with open hands, the signal for battle among the full-grown males of his kind. When this fact was first mentioned by Du Chailu, the old-time naturalist was laughed at, but long after his death he has been proved to have been right all the time.

#### Patience Pays.

There are many other wonderful things in the "cake-tins" at the Zoo, and the films are the result of a great deal of very patient work. The "stars" don't always pose in the best positions for being photographed, you know, and often the camera-man has to wait many hours until the "star" is showing that little peculiarity which the man with the cinematograph camera wants to put on record.

It is a wonderful library of films, and when our great-grandchildren ask our grandchildren, "Daddy, what was a horse like?" they will, no doubt, be taken to the Zoo, where they will be able to see for themselves.

What a pity the dodo and the sabre-toothed tiger died out too soon!

THE END.

## Famous Fellows in Fiction



HARRY WHARTON

The fame of Wharton I extol,

A great and gallant leader,

Whose grit and courage thrill the soul

Of every ANNUAL reader.

In school and sport he stands supreme

And wins our admiration;

Of many a clever "stunt" and scheme

He is the inspiration.

The founder of the Famous Five

Is frank and fearless—very.

In healthy sport he'll always strive

With Nugent, Bull, and Cherry.

He values all this loyal band,

Especially the gay Bob;

And he is proud to grasp the hand

Of Hurree Singh, the Nabob.

Like every other fellow here

He's had his share of troubles;

His pluck has made them disappear

And burst like airy bubbles.

To shield the weak and face the strong

Is Wharton's great ambition;

He stands erect when things go wrong,

And never makes submission.

Then give three cheers, and three times three

For this fine son of Britain!

A sportsman to the core is he.

Long may his praise be written!

Of schoolboys he's the reigning king,

Far-famed in many nations;

And Wharton's name and fame will ring

Adown the generations!

# HOW PILLINGSHOT SCORED!

By P. G. Wodehouse



## THE FIRST CHAPTER The Blow Falls!

PILLINGSHOT was annoyed. He was disgusted, mortified; no other word for it. He had no objection, of course, to Mr. Mellish saying that his work during the term, and especially his Livy, had been disgraceful. A master has the right to say that sort of thing if he likes. It is one of the perquisites of the position. But when he went on to observe without a touch of shame that there would be an examination in the Livy as far as they had gone in it on the following Saturday, Pillsingshot felt that he exceeded. It was not playing the game.

There were the examinations at the end of term. Those were fair enough. You knew exactly when they were coming, and could make your arrangements accordingly. But to spring an examination on you in the middle of the term out of a blue sky, as it were, was underhand and unsportsmanlike, and would not do at all. Pillsingshot wished that he could put his foot down. He would have liked to have stalked up to Mr. Mellish's desk, fixed him with a blazing eye, and remarked, "Sir, withdraw that remark. Cancel that statement instantly, or—!" or words to that effect.

What he did say was: "Oo, si-i-r!!"

"Yes," said Mr. Mellish, not troubling to

Mr. Mellish thought that he had Pillsingshot nicely caught—but he hadn't!

conceal his triumph at Pillsingshot's reception of the news, "there will be a Livy examination next Saturday. And"—(he almost intoned this last observation)—"anybody who does not get fifty per cent., Pillsingshot, fifty per cent., will be severely punished. Very severely punished, Pillsingshot."

After which the lesson had proceeded.

"Yes, it is rather low, isn't it?" said Pillsingshot's friend, Parker, as poor Pillsingshot came to the end of a stirring dissertation on the rights of the citizen, with special reference to mid-term Livy examinations, "that's the worst of Mellish. He always has you somehow."

"But what am I to do?" raved Pillsingshot.

"I should advise you to swot it up before Saturday," said Parker.

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Pillsingshot irritably.

What was the good of friends if they could only make idiotic suggestions like that?

He retired brooding to his house.

The day was Wednesday. There were only two more days, therefore, in which to prepare a quarter of a book of Livy. It couldn't be done. The thing was not possible.

In the house he met Smythe.

"What are you going to do about it?" he inquired. Smythe was top of the form, and if he didn't know how to grapple with a crisis of this sort, who could know?

"If you'll kindly explain," said Smythe, "what the dickens you are talking about, I might be able to tell you."

Pillsingshot explained, with unwonted

politeness, that "it" meant the Livy examination.

"Oh," said Smythe airily, "that! I'm just going to skim through it in case I've forgotten any of it. Then I shall read up the notes carefully. And then, if I have time, I shall have a look at the history of the period. I should advise you to do that, too."

"Oh, don't be a goat," said Pillingshot.

And he retired, brooding as before.

That afternoon he spent industriously copying out the fourth book of the *Æneid*. At the beginning of the week he had had a slight disagreement with M. Gerard, the French master.

Pillingshot's views on behaviour and deportment during French lessons did not coincide with those of M. Gerard. Pillingshot's idea of a French lesson was something between a pantomime rally and a scrum at football. To him there was something wonderfully entertaining in the process of "barging" the end man off the edge of the form, and upsetting his books over him. M. Gerard, however, had a poor sense of humour. He had warned the humorist twice, and on the thing happening a third time suggested that he should go into extra lesson on the ensuing Wednesday.

So Pillingshot went, and copied out Virgil.

He emerged from the room of detention at a quarter past four. As he came out into the grounds he espied in the middle distance somebody being carried on a stretcher in the direction of the School House. At the same moment Parker loomed in sight, walking swiftly towards the school shop, his mobile features shining with the rapt expression of one who sees much ginger beer in the near future.

"Hullo, Parker," said Pillingshot, "who's the corpse?"

"What, haven't you heard?" said Parker. "Oh no, of course, you were in extra. It's young Brown. He's stunned or something."

"How did it happen?"

"That rotter, Babington, in Daere's. Simply slamming about, you know, getting his eye in before going in, and Brown walked slap into one of his drives. Got him on the side of the head."

"Much hurt?"

"Oh, no, I don't think so. Keep him out of school for about a week."

"Lucky beast. Wish somebody would come and hit me on the head. Come and hit me on the head, Parker."

"Come and have an ice," said Parker. "Right ho," said Pillingshot.

Of his peculiarities that whatever the hour or the state of the weather he was always equal to consuming an ice. This was probably due to genius. He had an infinite capacity



"Yes," said Mr. Mellish, "cent of marks in the Livy severely punished!" P staggering!

body who  
punish  
at gro  
(See C

for taking pains. Scarcely was he outside the promised ice when another misfortune came upon him. Scott, of the first eleven, entered the shop. Pillingshot liked Scott, but he was not blind to certain flaws in the latter's character. For one thing, he was too energetic. For another, he could not keep his energy to himself. He was always making Pillingshot do things. And Pillingshot's notion of the ideal life was complete *dolce far niente*.

"Ginger beer, please," said Scott, with parched lips. He had been bowling at the nets, and the day was hot. "Hallo! Pillingshot, you young slacker, why aren't you changed? Been bunking half-holiday games? You'd better reform, young man."

"I've been in extra," said Pillingshot with dignity.

"How many times does that make this term? You're going for the record, aren't you? Jolly sporting of you. Bit slow in there, wasn't it? 'Nother ginger beer, please."

"Just a bit," said Pillingshot.

"I thought so. And now you're dying for some excitement. Of course you are. Well, cut over to the house and change, and then come back and field at the nets. Yorke is going to bowl me some of his celebrated slow tosh, and I'm going to show him exactly how Hobbs does it when he's in form."

Scott was the biggest hitter in the school. Mr. Yorke was one of the masters. He bowled slow leg-breaks, mostly half-volleys and long hops. Pillingshot had a sort of instinctive idea that fielding out in the deep with Mr. Yorke bowling and Scott batting would not contribute largely to the gaiety of his afternoon. Fielding deep at the nets meant that you stood in the middle of the football field, where there was no telling what a ball would do if it came at you along the ground. If you were lucky, you escaped without injury. Generally, however, the ball bumped and deprived you of wind or teeth, according to the height to which it rose. He began politely, but firmly, to excuse himself.

"Don't talk rot," said Scott complainingly. "You must have some exercise, or you'll go getting fat. Think what a blow it would

be to your family, Pillingshot, if you lost your figure. Buck up! If you're back here in a quarter of an hour, you shall have another ice. A large ice, Pillingshot, price sixpence. Think of it!"

The word "ice," as has been remarked before, touched chords in Pillingshot's nature to which he never turned a deaf ear. Within the prescribed quarter of an hour he was back again, changed.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Pillingshot's Brain-Wave

"HERE's the ice," said Scott. "I've been keeping it warm for you. Shovel it down. I want it be starting for the nets. Quicker, man, quicker! Don't roll it round your tongue. Go for it! Finished? That's right. Come on!"

Pillingshot had not finished, but Scott so evidently believed he had that it would have been unkind to have mentioned the fact. He followed the smiter to the nets.

If Pillingshot had passed the earlier part of the afternoon in a sedentary fashion, he made up for it now. Scott was in fine form, and Pillingshot noticed with no small interest that, while he invariably hit Mr. Yorke's deliveries a quarter of a mile or so, he never hit two balls in succession in the same direction. As soon as the panting fieldsman had sprinted to one side of the football ground and returned the ball, there was a beautiful musical plonk and the ball soared to the very opposite quarter of the field. It was a fine exhibition of hitting, but Pillingshot felt that he would have enjoyed it more if he could have watched it from a deck-chair.

"You're coming on as a deep field, young Pillingshot," said Scott, as he took off his pads. "You've got a knack of stopping them with your stomach, which the best first-class fields never have. You ought to give lessons at it. Now we'll go and have some tea."

If Pillingshot had had a more intimate acquaintance with the classics, he would have observed at this point, "Timeo Danaos," and made a last dash for liberty in the direction of the shop. But he was deceived

by the specious nature of Scott's remark. Visions rose before his eyes of sitting back in one of Scott's armchairs, watching a fag toasting muffins, which he would eventually despatch with languid enjoyment. So he followed Scott to his study. The classical paralleled to his situation is the well-known case of the oysters. They, too, were eager for the treat.

They had reached the study, and Pillingshot was about to fling himself with a sigh of relief into the most comfortable chair, when Scott unmasked his batteries.



Pillingshot saw someone being carried on a stretcher towards the School House. "It's young Brown," Parker told him. "Got stunned or something. It'll keep him out of school for about a week. "Wish someone would stun me!" exclaimed Pillingshot. "Come and hit me on the head, Parker." (See Chapter I.)

"Oh, by the way," he said, with a coolness which, to Pillingshot, appeared simply brazen, "I'm afraid my fag won't be here to-day. The young crock's gone and got mumps or the plague, or something. So would you mind just lighting that stove? It'll be rather warm, but that won't matter. There are some muffins in the cupboard. You might weigh in with them. You'll find the toasting-fork on the wall somewhere. It's hanging up. Got it? Good man. Fire away!"

And Scott collected five cushions, two chairs, and a tin of mixed biscuits, and made himself comfortable. Pillingshot, with feelings too deep for words, did as he was requested. There was something remarkable about the way Scott could always get people to do

things for him. He seemed to take everything for granted. If he had had occasion to hire an assassin to make away with the Sultan of Turkey, he would have said:

"Oh, I say, you might run over to Constantinople and kill the Sultan, will you, there's a good chap? Don't be long."

And he would then have taken a seat and waited, without the least doubt in his mind that the thing would be carried through as desired.

Pillingshot had just finished toasting the muffins, when the door opened, and Venables, of Merevale's, came in.

"I thought I heard you say something about tea this afternoon, Scott," said Venables. "I just looked in on the chance. Good man!



Fancy muffins at this time of year! Do you happen to know what the thermometer is in the shade?"

"Take a seat," said Scott. "I attribute my entire success in life to the fact that I never find it too hot to eat muffins. Do you know Pillingshot? One of the hottest fieldsmen in the school. At least, he was

just now. He's probably cooled off since then. Venables—Pillingshot, and vice-versa. Buck up with the tea, Pillingshot! What, ready? Good man! Now we might almost begin."

"Beastly thing, that accident of young Brown's, wasn't it?" said Scott. "Chaps oughtn't to go slamming about like that with the field full of fellows. I suppose he won't be right by next Saturday?"

"Not a chance. Why? Oh, yes, I forgot! He was to have scored for the team at Windybury, wasn't he?"

"Who are you going to get now?"

Venables was captain of the St. Austin's team. The match next Saturday was at Windybury, on the latter's ground.

"I haven't settled," said Venables. "But it's easy to get somebody. Scoring isn't one of those things which only one chap in a hundred understands."

Then Pillingshot had an idea—a great, luminous idea.

"May I score?" he asked, and waited trembling with apprehension lest the request should be refused.

"All right," said Venables. "I don't see any reason why you shouldn't. We have to catch the eight-fourteen at the station. Don't you go missing it, or anything."

"Rather not," said Pillingshot. "Not much!"

\* \* \*

On Saturday morning, at exactly 9.15, Mr. Mellish distributed the Livy papers. When he arrived at Pillingshot's seat and found it empty, an expression passed over his face like unto that of the baffled villain in melodrama.

"Where is Pillingshot?" he demanded tragically. "Where is he?"

"He's gone with the team to Windybury, sir," said Parker, struggling to conceal a large size in grins. "He's going to score."

"No," said Mr. Mellish sadly to himself; "he has scored."

THE END

## A GIANT AIRSHIP AT REST

AIRSHIPS have to be handled in an entirely different way from aeroplanes. Until recently, when an airship came down, it had to be housed in a huge hangar, which was a very expensive thing to build and to maintain. In addition, a small army of men was required to hold the airship down and to run it into its shed.

Now, however, all this has been done away with by the introduction of mooring masts; an idea which is so simple in principle that it is surprising no one ever thought of it before. A mooring mast is nothing more than its name implies—a mast to which an airship is moored.

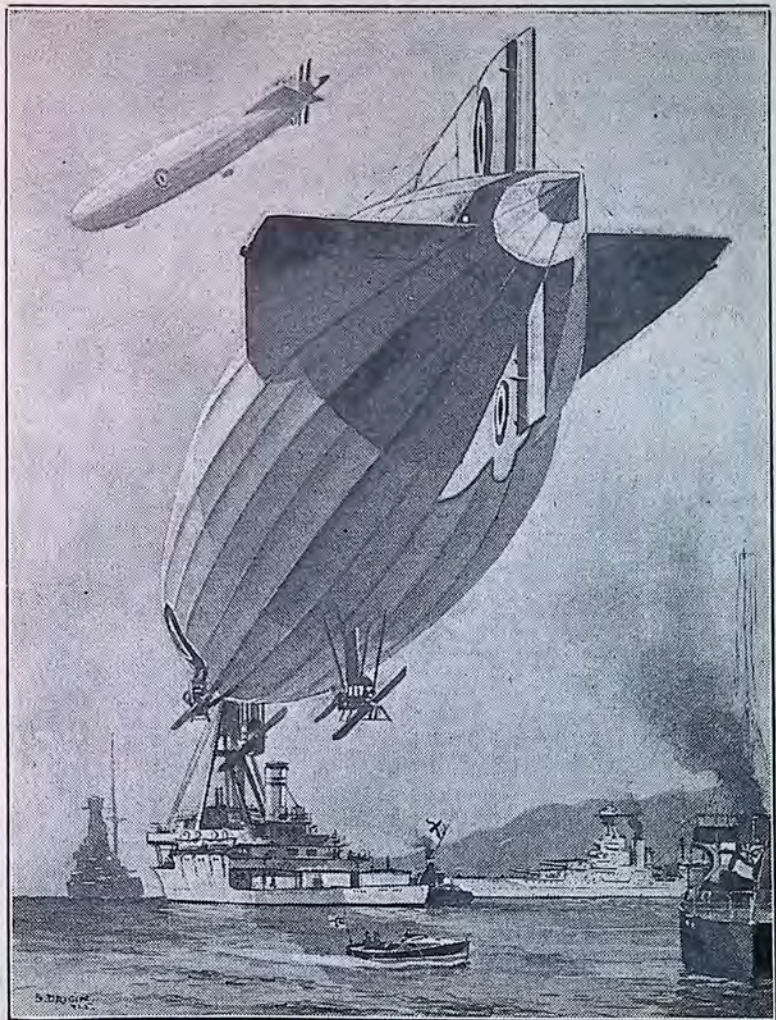
Chains from the nose of the craft attach it to the revolving top of the mast; from this top a covered-in gangway is run so that passengers may step out of the airship, and descend by lifts to the ground. In the same way, fuel and cargo may be placed in the vessel.

These masts are cheap and easy to construct, and they now make the range of an airship world wide, because the mooring masts may be built on the deck of a ship just as well as on the land. In war-time, when an airship cannot get back to its base to undergo repairs or to have its fuel tanks replenished, it can come down in mid-ocean and be moored in the fashion shown in the picture opposite.

The warship is a monitor of the "Humber" type, and the air vessel of one of the improved "R" type. As will be seen, the mast has simply been built on to the monitor, which automatically becomes a floating fuel station, carrying everything that the airship can possibly require.

Such masts can be installed upon almost any type of ship. This means that the air vessel is able to travel to places where it might be impossible to instal mooring masts on land owing to lack of time, difficulties of transport or other reasons.

Mooring masts, either on ships at sea or on land, mean that an airship need never actually come down out of the air and that, despite its enormous size, the craft becomes almost as easy to handle as an aeroplane.



A British "R" type Airship Moored at Sea.

# My Brother!

By  
Sammy  
Bunter



Who struts about in pomp and pride,  
Rolls like a tub from side to side,  
And cuffs my head if I decide?

My Brother!

Who always eats enough for four,  
And then, like Twist, goes up for more?  
Who samples pastries by the score?

My Brother!

Whose "ANNUAL" makes the whole world laugh,  
Because it's full of jest and chaff?  
Who has four fat subs. on his staff?

My Brother!

Who makes me burn the midnight oil,  
Torments and taunts me while I toil,  
But never lets me share the spoil?

My Brother!

Who thinks himself a sportsman fine,  
A hero, dashing and divine,  
Yet never shows such skill as mine?

My Brother!

Who, when he gets a postal-order,  
Guards it as grimly as a warder?  
Won't even let me see the border?

My Brother!

Who shows no brotherly affection,  
Raises his fist for my inspection,  
Then punches me? (I've no protection!)

My Brother!

But who, though often in disgrace,  
Will rise to an exalted place,  
Because he's of the Bunter race?

My Brother!





The famous tea-clipper, "Cutty Sark."

SAILING ships may be divided roughly into two classes—the large sailing ships, all of whose sails, except their triangular head-sails, stay-sails and mizzen, are square and carried athwart the mast, and the fore-and-aft rigged craft—the schooners, yachts, brigs, barques, etc. These carry peaked head-sails and triangular mainsails and all the other modern variations of the old-fashioned square sail.

By the end of the 17th century the sailing ship had reached a stage in development which altered but little until the close of the 18th century.

At that time the French stood superior to any European power in the art of ship-building. But the English were not slow to avail themselves of any opportunity of studying the lines and construction of the foreign ships. Whenever they could capture a crack French man-o'-war it was fairly certain that within the next few years an English man-o'-war, based on the lines of the foreigner, would be launched.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE SAILING SHIP

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The story of the most beautiful  
craft that ever roved the seven seas

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The success of the American frigates during the unhappy war with the United States in 1812 created a wave of enthusiasm among the British naval authorities for frigates. Many big ships were converted into frigate shape, and the sight of frigates of such unusual size first gave the Americans the idea of utilising large vessels for commercial purposes. Thus the way was paved for the coming of the clippers.

Gradually throughout the centuries the English had been acquiring bigger and bigger ships for the purpose of carrying merchandise. The discovery of the West Indies, of North America and of the Newfoundland fisheries, and, subsequently, the founding of the East India Company had, step by step, developed the ships which were used for commerce. The East and West Indian trade had been specially favourable to the encouragement of merchant shipping.

At the beginning of the 19th century the largest and finest merchant ships on the seas belonged to the East India Company which, owning an exceedingly valuable and profitable monopoly, could afford to build its ships well and strongly. The old East Indiamen with their lofty tiers of sails were much finer in their lines and easier to handle than the vessels of the Royal Navy of this time. But their bluff, rounded bows necessarily made them slower than was really good for trade.

Very soon there appeared on the seas ships



An American frigate, of the type which proved so successful in the American War of 1812.

with a clipper bow that cleft the waves, instead of hitting them and retarding the passage of the hull through the water. These were invented by the Americans, who proceeded to improve their ships still further by modifying the design of the stern, so that instead of holding the dead water the ship slid through it cleanly and with a minimum of resistance.

Furthermore, they lengthened their ships considerably, which gave them an opportunity of adding another mast and of carrying more sails. The sails were also improved in cut, and were no longer mere bags to hold the wind.

The object of the Americans was to sail every other craft off the seas and to capture the carrying trade of the world.

They very nearly succeeded, but the English shipbuilders awoke to the danger just in time, and started to build clippers which were to eclipse even the splendid American flyers. From the English shipyards some of the finest sailing ships the world has ever seen were launched during the 'fifties.

They were built of teak planking, with iron frames and enormous spars. A few years later we started to build our sailing ships of iron, partly on account of a shortage of English oak, partly because iron meant a saving of about a third on the weight of the hull, but mainly because, as ships became longer, the wood lacked the necessary structural strength.

Curiously enough the China tea trade had an enormous effect upon the sailing ship. Tea cannot be left too long in the hold of a ship, or it quickly loses its delicate flavour and quality. This fact, and the desire of the London merchants to obtain the first portion of the new tea crop at the earliest possible moment, made a quick passage a matter of great importance. Speed meant money. Enormous prices were held out as an inducement, and the keenest rivalry existed between different ships on the race home from the East.

For a few years the Americans had the best of the competition, but before the end of the 'fifties the China tea trade had been won by the British clippers. The rivalry did not

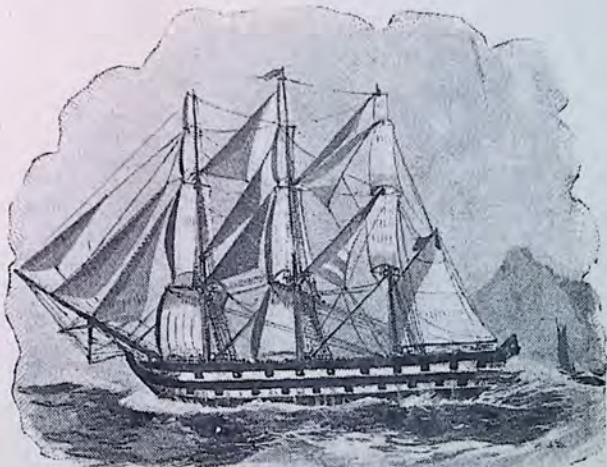
diminish, however, but continued between ship and ship, skipper and skipper, and ship-owner and shipowner. This fine spirit gave a tremendous incentive to the development of the sailing ship, and these clipper races will remain famous for ever for the skill and sporting instinct of their crews which led them to break record after record.

The two fastest clippers ever built were the "Sir Lancelot" and the "Thermopylae." The "Thermopylae" had a marvellous capacity for speed. In one day she made a run of 350 knots, an average of 16 miles an hour, whilst the "Sir Lancelot" broke all records by making a voyage from China to the Thames in 89 days. But perhaps the most famous of all was the "Cutty Sark," which ran home from Shanghai in 122 days without her rudder, which had been carried away in a terrific storm. This gallant and beautiful ship is still in existence.

The most important of all the fore and aft rigged sailing ships is the schooner, which some folk imagine is merely a cutter with

another mast and sails added. But the schooner originated quite independently. The first one was built by the Dutch settlers in Massachusetts in the United States; the port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, is still famous to-day for the finest schooners and schooner sailors that ever roamed the seas.

For a century and a half the Americans went on building and improving the design and rig of their beautiful vessels, giving them greater draught and speed, larger spars, a vast square measurement of canvas, and sometimes as many as seven masts. In 1852 the schooner yacht "America" sailed across the Atlantic and won the special cup offered by the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes. In the race around the Isle of Wight, the "America" beat the English yachts and cutters so overwhelmingly that thereafter all yachts and cutters were built upon the same lines as the American schooners—with sails laced to the spars to set flatter and hold a better wind. In spite of all our efforts we have never been able to win the Cup back from the Americans.



The East Indiamen were the largest and finest merchant ships on the seas at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

# Borrowed Horses

A STORY OF THE  
OLD SMUGGLING DAYS

*By Richard Holt*



## THE FIRST CHAPTER The Decoyed Dragoons

DICK HARNETT rubbed the big lanthorn with unnecessary vigour.

"I feel mighty cross about it, Bob," he said to his cousin, engaged on a similar task at the other end of the bench. "Just as we going to set those rabbit snares, along comes father and slings all these dirty old lanthorns at us to clean."

He pinched a tallow candle into position in the horn lanthorn with a deft hand. Ever since he could toddle Dick had been lantern-boy to his father, a Kentish fisherman, of whom it was rumoured that much of his profit came from other sources than his net. But, in those golden days of King George the Third, to make a little money by cheating the revenue was an accomplishment to be applauded, although it was dangerous to be caught in its performance.

Bob agreed with his cousin, but he struck a hopeful note.

"Rabbits will keep another night, Dick," he said. "You know your father can't want these lanterns for fishing. If they're bringing the tea and kegs of spirits ashore to-night, maybe he would let us join in the fun."

Dick sniffed contemptuously.

"Here comes father," he said, "you'd better ask him; I've tried him often enough."

Old Thomas Harnett was a seaman of the best stock; from the top of his red stocking cap to the sole of his porpoise-hide thigh boots he was every inch a sailor. He had been trained in the hardest school for a seaman. The narrow, short seas that beat on the treacherous banks of the Goodwins had been his bitter experience, and made him a man trusted by his comrades—and cordially disliked by the officers of His Majesty's Excise.

The old sailor's keen blue eyes took in the boys at their work, and he nodded grim approval.

"Say, Uncle," began Bob, "we were wondering, if you were busy to-night, whether Dick and I could help you."

For a moment the old man's eyes flared, then they twinkled.

"What course are you steering, sonny?" he asked. "Is it at fishing you are wanting to help?"

"Oh no," laughed Bob, "it wouldn't be fishing you are wanting all these lanterns for. We were thinking, Dick and I, that if you were running a cargo ashore to-night we'd like to be there and have some fun."

At the mention of the word cargo the old seaman's face hardened; he reached forward and gripped the scared Bob with a clutch of steel.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded, in a low voice. "So far as you're concerned, it's for fish'n we're wanting those lanterns. Get on wi' them, and not another word from either of you, or I'll rope's-end you both and hand you over to the press gang in the morn."

There was no mistaking the anger in his voice; both boys rubbed their lanterns as if their lives depended upon it. The fisherman's stern manner relaxed a little.

"There's a lot o' things ye'll larn as you gets older, b'ys," he said in a more kindly tone. "At present you are too young to know about these things. When I'm in a heavy sea, I don't hang to a light kedge anchor."

He stumped away in his big boots, and the two boys glanced at each other.

"Is he running a cargo, think you, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I can't say," replied Dick. "Anyways, he won't tell us anything, and as good as says we are too young to be trusted, or—"

"Look, there is old Uncle Silas coming down the cliff road! Seems he's found life good somewhere," interrupted Bob, and he pointed along the road that led to the cove. Along the chalky track rolled a cheery little fisherman; his round red face was puckered into a perpetual grin; every few yards he would stop, slap his thigh, and burst into uncontrollable laughter. His peals of mirth echoed back from the cliff-face, and Thomas Harnett turned in his tracks to see what was happening.

"Hi, Silas, what ails ye," he cried. "You can't be sober, man!"

"Oh, ay, skipper," laughed Silas, "'tis sober I am, and as dry as a herrin' barrel wi' laughing. An' so would ye be, skipper, if ye saw them. The gauger hisself and twenty bold dragoons all gone riding over to the other side of the marshes, twenty miles away, to catch you there to-night as you runs a cargo of tea and spirits ashore."

And the little man laughed himself into fresh paroxysms of mirth.

Even Tom Harnett's face broadened.

"You've spread the tale well, then, Silas," he said. "Our trick has worked, and the Exciseman and his soldiers are twenty miles away for to-night. That's good, just as we planned things out!"

"Faith, and it will be mighty cold hiding in them dykes to-night over there!" laughed Uncle Silas.

"I'm sure of that," agreed the chief

smuggler. "Now you run up to Tremayne's farm and let him know that his stable doors are to be left unlocked to-night. We'll be wanting his horses for carrying the cargo. Get away at once—and not a word to a soul!"

Uncle Silas nodded. It was quite the usual proceeding. During the hundreds of times that Thomas Harnett might have met his neighbour, Farmer Tremayne, such a subject as smuggling was never mentioned.

But often, on receipt of a message that it would be unwise to lock his stable doors, the farmer had come down in the morning to find his horses tired and covered with mud—and hidden in the corn bin would be a keg of brandy or a parcel of tea.

As Uncle Silas went back inland to take the message to the farmer, Dick grinned at his companion.

"Not much doubt about what's happening to-night, is there, Bob?" he said. "I've always been asleep when they've run cargoes before; this time I'm not missing any of it."

"Neither am I!" replied Bob.



The boys saw a tiny point of light flash seawards out of the velvet softness of the night. Three times it flashed, then came an answering signal from the smugglers' lantern on the beach below. (See Chapter 2)

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Dick's Strategy.

THAT night, up in their little attic bedroom, Dick and Bob lay curled in their blankets, waiting for the time to arrive when they should slip out. The big pear tree that brushed their window made it an easy matter to get out, but below them they could hear Thomas Harnett as he moved about. Then they heard him go, shut his cottage door, and, as his feet crunched on the shingle of the road outside, both boys slipped silently out of the window.

There was no doubt as to where they should go to see the smugglers at work; there was only one beach along that coast, and by tacit understanding both made for the cliffs overlooking the landing.

In case they should be met they made a long detour to get to their observation post, across two fields of stubble and through a copse of stunted oaks. Then the roar of the sea came up to them, and they found themselves looking down upon a black beach with the white line of the breakers outlining the water edge.

Bob was frankly disappointed.

"We might 've stayed in bed for all we can see," he whispered, staring into the darkness of the deserted beach.

"Have patience!" muttered Dick. "I can hear men down there."

And almost before he had finished speaking a tiny point of light flashed seawards out of the velvet softness of the night. Three times it flashed, then below them the boys saw a lantern give an answering signal.

"Here comes the froggie with his cargo!" muttered Dick delightedly. "They were his signals we saw!"

There was the movement of men over the shingle beach, and dim figures stood at the water edge staring into the darkness. A few minutes later the sound of muffled oars came up to the ears of the waiting boys, followed by the grate of a boat's keel on the beach. Then the waiting men dashed into the water, and with suppressed grunts lifted a heavily loaded galley shoreward.

Nobody said a word: except for the creaking of the oars and the lap of the water against

the side of the boat, everything was carried out in absolute silence. Every man knew what he had to do. With his six-foot ash pole over his shoulder and a keg of spirit or a parcel of tea at each end, he staggered up the beach to unload his burden in a cave, and return at once to repeat his performance.

"And the gauger is waiting twenty miles away to see them do that," chuckled Dick.

In about an hour's time the last of the cargo had been carried ashore, and Dick saw his father leave the last boat and tramp up the beach.

It was still very dark, and the chief smuggler gave his orders about breakfasting.

"Then we'll get up to Tremayne's for the horses in two hours' time," he instructed. "It will be dawn then."

"We'd better be getting back," whispered Dick to his cousin. "As it gets lighter we might be seen, and I reckon father would grow handy with the rope's-end then."

The mere thought of such a thing made Bob shudder; bending low they ran back from the cliff's edge into the shelter of the oak spinney. Resting there a moment to gain their breath, they crossed the stubble fields and dropped over the hedge into the road.

It was a sunken road, and Bob was the first over into it. But as he touched the ground he gave a cry of alarm. It was too late to stop Dick, who was just behind, and both boys found themselves staring at a group of dragoons who were sitting by the roadside, resting their horses.

It did not require a second glance on the part of the boys to recognize them as the soldiers supposed to be twenty miles away.

"Hi, here are some young jackanapes who'll tell us our way!" cried one of the dragoons.

"I warrant they've been robbin' hen-roosts!" said another soldier. "Born thievin', they are, in these parts!"

Both Dick and Bob turned to run, but the soldiers were too quick for them; they were grabbed and held prisoners as a man in the blue uniform of the Excise came towards them.

He struck Dick under the chin to make him look up.

"Who are you?" he demanded.  
"Dick Harnett," replied the boy.  
"Son of Thomas Harnett, eh?"  
Dick nodded.

The excise man rubbed his hands with glee.  
"Good hunting!" he exclaimed. "We've caught the cub, and later on we shall catch the old fox. Ha, ha, he thought we were well over the other side of the marshes, I know! But I am too old a fish to jump at a made-up fly like that. Come, young Harnett, you shall help us in the cause of His Majesty's Customs. We would find Tremayne's farm—lead us on!"

Dick had no alternative but to do as he was told. A big dragoon pricked him in the calf of his leg with the point of his sword, and Dick moved forward.

"Methinks that Farmer Tremayne will be in bed and asleep, sir," he said to the excise man.

"Then it's a rude awakening he will have," replied the gauger. "I warrant that his horses stand ready harnessed in the stables."

Dick looked at Bob; they both knew how true the excise man's remark was. What could they do? In two hours, when the light was stronger, the smugglers would be coming along and fall into the trap.

At the farm the excise man set his dragoons about the house. Then he thumped upon the door, and the farmer's nightcapped head was thrust out of the upper window.

"Who may you be, disturbing honest folk of a night?" he cried angrily.

"Come down and open your yard," said the excise man. "In the King's name, I command you!"

"In truth I will," he cried. "There has been some ruffians in my stable this night—gentlemen that were running a cargo I reckon—who would punish me sore if I stopped them. I would you had come before, Mister Excise man."

He clattered down the stairs and flung open the door; the gauger and his dragoons swaggered into the kitchen, leaving their horses steaming outside. A few minutes later the sergeant followed them, and reported

six horses in the stable with their harness on.

"Just as I thought," said the excise man, in a self-satisfied tone. "That old ruffian Harnett thought to send us on a wildgoose chase across the marshes; we only pretended we had gone, and now I trow he will walk right into our trap if we only wait with patience."

"And serve him just right!" echoed



Bob and Dick turned to run, but the burly dragoons were too quick for them; they were prisoners ere they had covered a dozen yards. (See Chapter 2)

Farmer Tremayne snuggled. "Come now, Mister Exciseman, I warrant you and your friends are cold. I will make something hot—a goodly brew of punch, to warm you after your wanderings. Come, you boys!" he cried to Dick and Bob. "Lend me a hand with this fire!"

In reply, the dragoon who still held the boys loosed them, and they went and helped the farmer stir the dying embers of the fire into a blaze.

As the twigs crackled the old farmer bent his head over to Dick.

"You must get away, b'y, somehowsees, and tell your feyther," he muttered.

It was a great relief to the boys to hear him speak so; it meant that the old man was playing a part after all.

"Drat it," he muttered a few moments later, "the water bucket is empty. Hi, you boys, get away to the spring and bring back the water."

The ruse worked quite well. With studied sullenness Dick and Bob picked up the leather buckets and slouched out of the kitchen. In the outhouse, though, Dick stopped in front of a shelf of lanterns.

"I'm faking a lantern, Farmer Tremayne," he cried. "'Tis plaguery dark down those fields!"

"I don't care what ye do," snapped back the farmer, "s'long as you hurry."

But to Bob's surprise, Dick did not content himself with one lantern. He lit four of them.

"Quick, hide them under your coat, Bob, and come along," he whispered.

The startled Bob did as he was told, and hurried out. But Dick did not leave the yard. He ran to the cow-byre and roused into wakefulness four of the sleeping cattle.

Snorting and gasping they were driven out of their shed. Dick looked anxiously towards the lighted kitchen, but there was no sign that the cattle had roused any suspicions.

"What are you going to do, Dick?" asked Bob anxiously.

"Hush!" said Dick. "Just do as I tell you." He held up his hand and both the boys listened. The voice of the exciseman came out of the open door.

"I reckon old Thomas Harnett will get transportation," he was saying in his chirpy manner, "and the rest about five years apiece."

"And a very good thing, too," mumbled old Tremayne. "They are a scurvy lot, and a trouble to honest folk, with their night walkings."

"Did you hear that, Bob?" muttered Dick. "We've got to save father and the others. We can't go and warn them, or we'll be missed, and the dragoons will follow. Now; those lanterns have given me an idea!"

He hooked a lighted lantern on to a horn of each of the four cattle and drove them down the yard out on to the marshes.

"Don't let them get too close, Bob," he said. "Let them keep a good way from each other and trail across the dyke-lands."

They had no trouble in getting the cattle to move as they desired. The unusual condition, and the flicker of the lantern just below their horns, sent them plunging out into the night.

In a few moments they were flickers of light over the marshes. Simulating terror, Dick rushed back into the kitchen.

"Ain't ye got that water, b'y?" demanded the indignant farmer.

Dick pretended to be stricken with fear.

"I—I c-can't," he gasped. "The gentlemen, out there, they are passing by. They will drop me in the dykes."

"In truth, what ails the lad?" asked the exciseman pettishly. "Come, speak up, what say you?"

"He means that the gentlemen are going by," said Bob. "We saw the lights outside on the marshes."

"Eh, what's this?" cried the gauger, and he jumped up and ran outside with the dragoons.

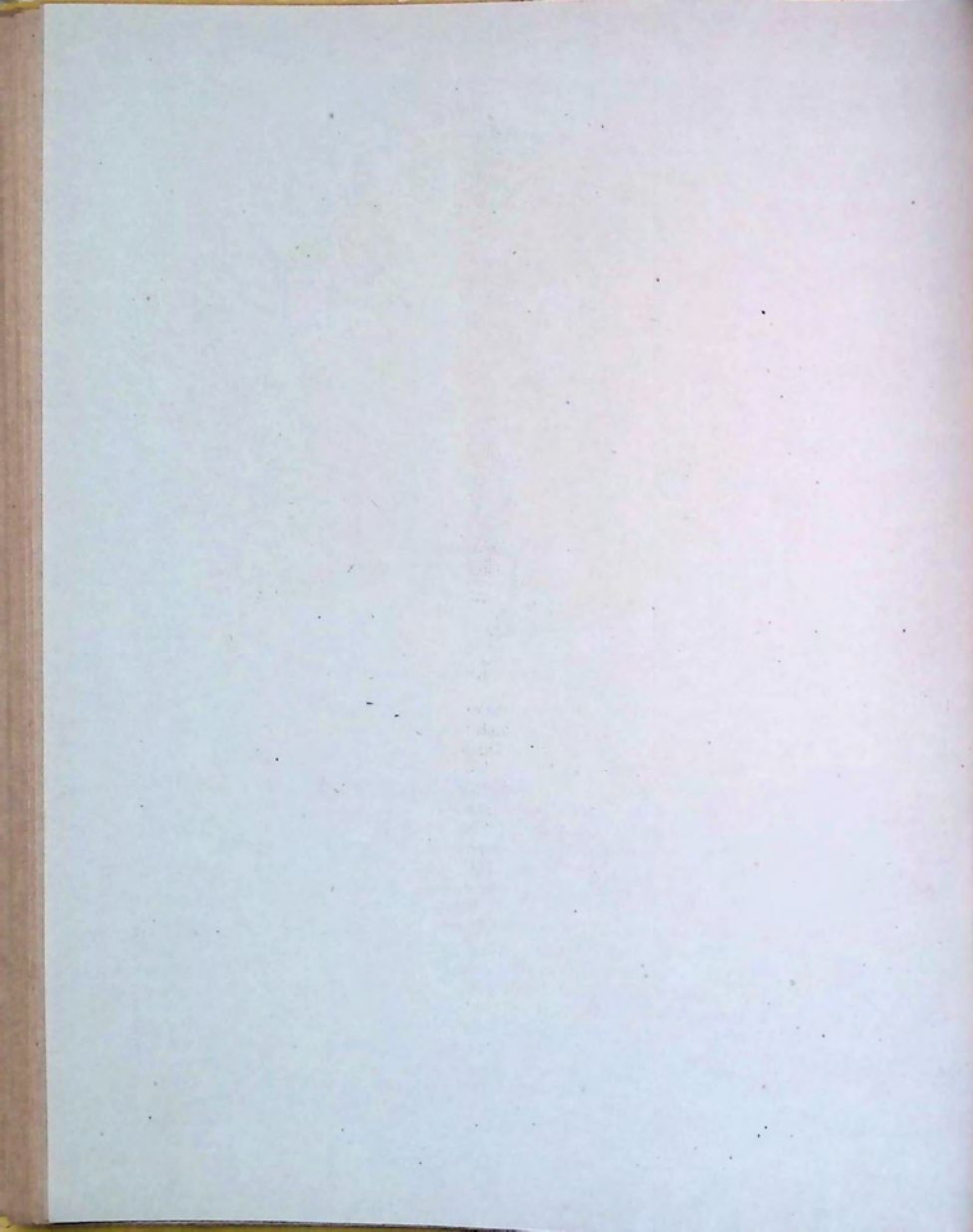
There, in a straggling row, across the distant marshes, trailed four flickering lights. They bobbed and danced just as lights carried by packhorses would move.

"'Tis the gentlemen!" cried old Tremayne, using the name employed by all the country folk in referring to smugglers. "It's they, for sure!"



To face page 40

**RUNNING A CONTRABAND CARGO!**



"After them, boys!" cried the exciseman. "We'll stop their little capers!"

But the farmer laid a restraining hand upon the little man.

"Ye'll have to go on foot," he said. "No horses can cross the marshes except in daylight."

"Then on foot we will follow them!" cried the other. "Come along, men, the hot punch can wait!"

And he plunged forward into the darkness, followed more reluctantly by the soldiers as they left their horses behind.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Turning the Tables.

As soon as they had disappeared the farmer turned to the boys, and they both burst out laughing at the disappointment in his face.

"I'm afeard they'll be caught after all, b'ys," he said sadly.

"They are only your old cows with some lanterns tied to their horns!" chuckled Dick.

"Well, I'm danged," said the old man, and he glowed with delight. "What an idea! Aye, 'tis a chip o' the ol' block you be, Dick. I almos' forgie ye for robbin' my orchard last week."

He stood and gurgled with delight. Below them they could hear the dragoons splashing about in the marshes, and the shrill voice of



The boys drove the scared cattle—each bearing a lantern on its horn—plunging out into the darkness of the marshes. (See Chapter 2)

the exciseman urging them on, while the four lanterns twinkled farther and farther into the distance.

"Will you be gettin' along an' warnin' your feyther?" asked the farmer.

But Dick had a better idea.

"No," he said decisively, "why shouldn't they carry their cargo inland after all?"

He grabbed the nearest horse of the dragoons and clambered into the saddle.

"We can't borrow your horses to carry the stuff, Master Tremayne," he said. "That would look as if you were in the business, so we will borrow half a dozen of His Majesty the King's!"

He grabbed the reins of two other of the horses and walked them down the road, followed by Bob with three more. The rest Farmer Tremayne, with sundry smacks on their broad flanks, drove into the marsh.

"There be good feedin' there," he chuckled.



The dragoons went racing away into the night—chasing the flickering lights which showed far out on the marshes. (See Chapter 2.)

"I reckon them sojers 'll have a main hard job catchin' them again."

But Dick and his cousin were trotting down the road towards the sea.

"Whatever will Uncle say?" asked Bob, as he jerked up and down in the big military saddle.

"I wish it was light so we could see his face when he sees us," laughed Dick. "We'll tell him we're the light anchor he wouldn't hang to."

They did not meet a soul all the way to the cove; it was like a dead village they passed through, but just as they moved down the sloping track to the beach a voice called out of the darkness.

"Who goes there?"

"Friends!" cried Dick, as boldly as he could.

"Then stand fast till we have a squint at you," came back the voice. And a minute later a lantern on the end of a smuggler's "bat" was thrust into his face.

"Why, it's young Dick Harnett!" cried his challenger.

Under the light of the lantern Dick peered down and recognised Uncle Silas. But the old man's face was stern and hard.

"What are you doing here along?" he demanded.

"I want to see father at once. I have news for him," said Dick. "The exciseman is out with dragoons!"

At the mention of such news there was the movement of many men from among the rocks; they surged round the boys, all asking questions. Then Thomas Harnett pushed his way among them.

"What are ye doin' here, b'y?" he asked angrily of Dick.

"We've come to

warn you the gauger and the dragoons are out after you."

"But they are twenty miles away!" retorted the smuggler.

"They're not; they're out on the marshes now," said Dick.

"Ay, that they be," chimed in Bob. "Chasing lanterns fixed to cows' horns, thinking it is you."

The puzzled smuggler looked at them both; then he noticed their horses.

"I don't know what you mean," he said, "but these are dragoon horses you're riding?"

"Yes, we brought them down for ye to carry your stuff inland, father," said Dick.

"The dragoons have gone afoot into the marshes, and we daren't bring down Master Tremayne's animals."

A light began to break upon the old smuggler.

"You ain't such a dolt as I thought you, Dick!" he said. "I'll hear the tale later. Here, men, get the cargo aboard; we won't wait for dawn. And you, boys, you'd better get back to your blankets."

A trifle disappointed, Dick and his companion slipped out of their saddles to the

ground and made their way slowly home in the dark.

As they were undressing Bob suddenly cried "Listen, Dick!"

And craning their necks they heard the shuffle of muffled hoofs. Like dim wraiths there passed along the white road below a string of horses and men, carrying tubs and parcels, bound inland by their secret paths across the marshland.

It was about three hours after dawn that a mud-bedraggled exciseman, with a tired and angry troop of dragoons, came up out of the marshes, driving four frightened cows.

"Hi, there, what might be your game?" cried old Tremayne, "those cattle must have been missing from their stalls all night."

"Take them, then; they're the will o' the wisps we've been chasing, tumbling in and out of dykes after them, just to find them with lanterns tied to their horns!"

"Why who could 'a' done that, now?" asked the old farmer in mock innocence.

"Those infernal smugglers, Harnett and his gang," spluttered the little exciseman. "I'll be even with them yet, and—" but he never finished. A roar of anger had gone up from the sergeant of the dragoons.

"Where are our horses?" he cried.

It was while the old farmer was trying to pacify him by explaining that they must have stampeded into the marshes that Thomas Harnett came round the corner with Dick and Bob. The old fisherman carried a creel of fresh-caught fish, and Dick and Bob were loaded up with wet nets. The whole outfit had been borrowed from another fisherman, but, as Dick remarked, "The ganger won't know that. Beside he is so covered with mud as I saw him coming across the dyke that he won't be able to see clearly."

"What's that, sojer? Lost some noses?" asked Dick's father in greeting.

The sergeant glared at him.

"I reck'n you know something about them," he snapped.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I does, sojer," drawled the old fisherman. "We just passed half a dozen o' your beasts coming up the road now. But they're main tired and just covered with mud."

The dragoon waited for no more. He ran down the road followed by some of his comrades. What the fisherman had said was quite true. Half a dozen of their horses, including the sergeant's mount, were listlessly walking up the road, too tired even to nibble the grass by the road edge. They were covered with mud and travel-stained, utterly exhausted and dejected.

"What ever ails them?" cried the sergeant. But he knew directly he reached his own horse. Across his brown saddle was a dark stain. One of the spirit legs had been



"Friend!" called Dick, in answer to the smuggler's challenge, and a moment later his face was being scanned by a grim-featured man who stared in amazement at the soldiers' horses which the boy was leading. (See Chapter 3.)

leaking, and there was no disguising the smell of raw spirit.

"Why, the scoundrels have been using our horses—the Government horses—to carry their contraband inland!" cried the excise-man.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," said the old fisherman. "They is that darin' these days they'll do anything!"

The gauger was beaten—and he knew it. It was a sad and weary party that trickled

out of the village an hour or two later. But up on the drying ground on the cliff top, where the brown nets were being pegged out, old Thomas Harnett looked across at his son and nephew.

"I don't know whether to rope's-end you for disobeying orders," he said, "or to let you help me in running future cargoes."

Then his eyes twinkled.

"Perhaps you had better come next time. You is both handy in borrowing horses."

THE END

## QUITE SIMPLE!



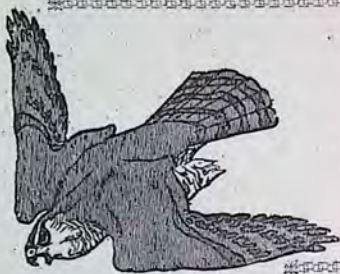
FOOTBALLER: Your church clock is all wrong. How ever do you know the time?

VILLAGER: Well, it's like this. When the hands point to ten minutes to five, and the old clock strikes seven, we all knows in these parts that it's two o'clock.

# Billy Bunter Caricatured!



The fat junior is a great "character" at Greyfriars, and the merry Removites often have a little fun at his expense in the Form-room, before Mr. Quelch arrives to take lessons!



# BELON THE :: HAWK

A Nature Story

By CLIVE R. FENN

A FIERCE enough fellow was Belon the Hawk when abroad, but as mild as milk in his own home. His wife, whose name was Fratilla, generally preferred to have her own way, and everybody was accustomed to sing small when in her presence. Fratilla insisted on taking a battered old crow's nest with all the fittings as a home for the season.

Belon said he would have been better pleased with a belfry. He declared a belfry was safer, and much healthier; but his wife gained the day, also the crow's nest, and this was really a most serious and unwelcome circumstance for Greenside Village. The crows who had built the nest had done the work remarkably well, and the village had not minded a bit the proximity of crows which, though untidy birds and rather dismal companions, are not specially dangerous.

The crow's nest was safe and lofty, being situated in an inaccessible fork of a very

ancient oak, and here the hawk family lived in security. Belon was quite willing to admit that his wife's choice was a good one, but it was otherwise down in the village, where a number of inhabitants came to dread the sound of the hawk's note.

Belon was mighty proud of the fact that his voice was much like that of the king of birds, the swooping eagle. It was not so really, but it was his weakness to think it. Yet his note was shrill and piercing enough to strike terror into the hearts of the hens and ducks of the poultry yards down below in the village.

"They are grumbling no end," said Belon to his wife one day when he swept back home, bearing a plump little duckling which had hardly learned to waddle, being too fluffy and young.

"Hawks must live," was Fratilla's snappy reply. That was where some of the victims



of the hawk's depredations joined issue with the enemy. Why should a hawk live? The village had been happy enough before; it was not at all happy now. You never knew what would happen, and when this state of uncertainty prevails nerves are apt to get frayed at the edges. Many a good dame trembled for her brood, for day after day Belon, the relentless hawk, was descried flying overhead, his keen gaze on the cluster of little red cottages in the valley beneath.

There had been trouble before in the place, of course. The elder birds well remembered the frightful commotion when a boisterous company of magpies had stormed the headquarters of a harmless missel-thrush, a much-respected resident. The green and gold kingfishers down by the waterside shook their heads together; they did not like the business of the hawk. It gave the village a bad name. There were plenty of tiny watervoles Belon could have had

for the asking—which, of course, is merely a way of speaking, for it does not mean it would have been any use asking the water vole whether he cared to leave his cosy home at the foot of the alder, and furnish a supper for a hawk.

Now, it has to be remembered that all that countryside had long been regarded as a sanctuary for birds. It was not merely that the tiny chickens and the ducklings pecking

round the farmyards were in constant danger; smaller creatures than they were in deadly peril. The whole peace of the place had gone.

The rooks in their parliament house in the towering elms and beeches of Halyard Park bitterly resented the intrusion. Until that crow's nest had been leased by the hawks they had been the aristocrats of the district. Problems were brought before them, and these difficulties were debated in full assembly with much clatter.

"I move," said one rook, "that these hawks be turned out."

Another speaker tried to be funny, and said he did not care about the claws, but he was promptly ruled out of order. A letter from a blackbird complaining about the state of affairs was laid on the chairman's table. There it was likely to remain. The tragic business went on. Small feathers, saddening traces of disaster, were seen every day. Greenside Village was no



Belon had the voice and speed of a swooping eagle, and many fell victim to his claws.

longer a bird sanctuary—but at last Belon went too far.

Mr. Septimus Miller, who lived at the Grange, loved birds. His garden was a green lawn of wonderful beauty. The cedars surrounding this part of his property were renowned. Mr. Miller was elderly and a student. He used to write learned treatises about birds. He knew all their ways and habits, and as he owned some hundreds of acres and would

never have a bird shot, not even at seed time, or when the blackbirds gobbled up all the strawberries long before they were ripe, it may be imagined that the district was pretty thickly populated with birds. Cats were driven away into the next parish.

Mr. Miller had troops of cheery water wag-tails hopping round his terrace; martins and swifts were numerous; the sparrows were as plentiful as the apples in the orchard. As time went on the old bird lover said that the hawks must go. He was not a sportsman, not in the sense that he went out to shoot birds, but he kept a gun.

"These hawks must go," he said, as he watched for Belon day after day.

The hawk saw him right enough, and told Fratilla.

"I am beginning to think this place is unhealthy," he said.

"Coward!" retorted his wife scornfully. "You are afraid. That man can't shoot for nuts."

That was true enough but, all the same, the bad day came for Belon. He was flying steadily back home with more plunder when he heard a sound which resembled a small clap of thunder. It was terrific, and it did not end there. Came a second report, and one of his wings jarred. It was as though he were an aircraft and a plane had been clipped. The hawk stiffened his wings and flew on, but a third shot caused him to pitch badly, and drop a score of feet. It was only air concussion: he recovered himself, and, wheeling in a half-circle, regained his home.

"That's enough for me, we are going," he said to Fratilla.

For once he had his way.

THE END.

## THREE FAMOUS GREYFRIARS CHARACTERS



CaptainARRY Wharton



Billy Bunter



Alonzo Todd



# How to make the most of a Camping Holiday

By A. G. BARRALET

HAVING decided that a real holiday in the open is what you want, the next thing to decide upon is where you will spend it.

I am told, but you must check it for yourselves, that no parish in England is more than 80 miles from the sea; therefore, wherever we live a seaside camp is a possibility. Don't forget, however, that mountains, lakes, forests, moors, and even the flat marsh-country possess charms of their own.

I like a wooded, hilly country myself, with a stream hard by, and one or two quaint little towns and historical buildings in the vicinity which I can explore during my stay; but I don't set myself up as a judge. Let us say the vote has been taken and the spot fixed. Now we must secure the actual site, settle what tents and kit we shall require, and decide whether we shall "hike," "bike," or go down by train or motor.

As for the site, suppose two of us run down one week-end and make inquiries. The "super" at the local police-station is always a good man to get hold of. He knows the people who have suitable land available, and can always help us with distances and other topographical information. The clergy and ministers of all denominations are generally very willing to help; so, too, is the post-master, and it will be an extraordinary thing indeed if our two emissaries cannot find a squire, a farmer, an inn-keeper, or a small-holder to offer us a picturesque little corner

where we can pitch a few tents and light a fire.

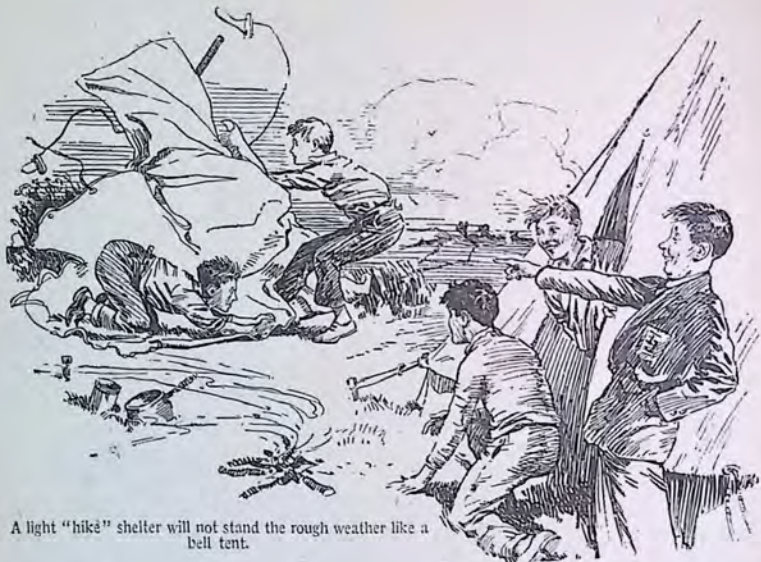
Don't forget the important question of water-supply, and while our fellows are on the spot they may as well make a note of the shop-keepers, nearest doctor, telephone, and all those other useful details which would earn a boy scout his Pathfinder's badge.

The location settled, we can spend the intervening weeks or months in pleasurable anticipation and intelligent preparation. For instance, shall we make it a "permanent" camp, and explore the country round about from that centre, or shall we do a bit of "hiking" and travel as "light" as possible?

For myself, I like the old-fashioned bell-tent, pitched in a sylvan nook whence I can make excursions afoot or awheel, north, south, east and west, or remain luxuriously at ease under the trees; whereas a "trek" or "hike" means constant packing and unpacking, and the shouldering of heavy loads which becomes uncommonly like hard work on a hot day, and decidedly uncomfortable on a wet one.

In a stationary camp one fireplace will suffice for the length of our stay; we gradually find places for our pots and pans and stores, and there is a sense of being "at home"; but a "hike" means hours spent in getting on the move, and digging oneself in again. And say what you will, a light "hike shelter" won't stand the rough weather like a bell-tent.

Of course, it is pleasant to travel through the country, but "hiking" and camping are



A light "hike" shelter will not stand the rough weather like a bell tent.

really different propositions, and you must have the question out among yourselves.

Above all, we must find out all we can concerning the tiny corner of the earth where we are to spend our holiday when the eagerly expected time comes round.

The ruined castle, the village church, the inn, the family up at the "Hall," the "dew-pond," the moat round the farmer's house, the tumulus, the adjacent woods—all have their tale to tell, and there are free libraries in town which we can ransack in the winter evenings.

We shall find all sorts of familiar things awaiting us at our camping site if we care to make their acquaintance beforehand. Rocks and stones, birds, flowers, the little creatures that live in the burrows, ay, the very insects, will speak to us if we have learnt something of their language.

What clothes shall we wear? The oldest

and most comfortable, with a reserve of more "respectable" garments for special occasions. Camping is said to be a grand opportunity for taking a sun-bath, but rain and mud baths are not unknown in such situations, and a change and a sufficiency of warm clothing is a wise precaution.

Beware of cold nights. There is nothing more miserable than scanty bed-clothing in the chilly "small hours."

We can rough out a daily programme of games and expeditions before the start, and apportion the work so that every man may know his job on his arrival. By all means take the camera, and the old "push-bike" will be wonderfully useful.

Now let us consider a few hints for running the camp itself, trite enough, no doubt, to old campaigners, but worth mentioning, just to refresh our memories.

If you are camping at any place for the

first time the owner should be given the opportunity of selecting the site, and should it appear unsuitable, offer alternative suggestions.

It is desirable to pitch at a reasonable distance from the house, and, once settled down, trouble your host and his servants as little as possible.

A way should *never* be forced through hedge or fence. If it be necessary to pass through fields of growing crops keep to the paths or as close to the hedges as you can.

If you find a gate closed, see that you close it again after you have passed through. Burn all the refuse that will burn, and bury the rest. The camp site, especially in front of the tent door, should be free from all litter. The washing-up and personal ablutions should be performed at the rear of the tent, and the soiled water disposed of well away from the camp, otherwise the ground near the tents will become sodden and malodorous.

If hay or straw be used for bedding it is a good plan to have a bag made which can be filled and emptied in the barn. This saves making a mess about the field. Never strike the tent till the hay and straw has been removed, otherwise it will blow in all directions.

If you obtain eggs, milk, and butter from the house, don't go for them at "any old time." Arrange when they are to be fetched, and pay your camp accounts, as far as possible, on the spot. This will save the possibility of disputes afterwards. See that your fire is so placed that there is no chance of igniting the undergrowth, the hedge, or overhanging boughs. "Damp down" before turning in for the night, and remember that a good cooking fire is a very different thing from a bonfire.

If you borrow any implements or utensils from the farmer, be careful to return them punctually and in good condition. As regards your own kit, make an inventory before you start for camp, and re-check it when you pack up.

Before you leave, see that the ground is as tidy as you found it, if not tidier, and make a

point of thanking your host and all the local people who have helped to make things run smoothly.

Two words of warning.

If you go bathing in local waters ascertain beforehand whether there are any particular dangers to be avoided, and if you use an oil stove for cooking don't set your clothes or your tent alight.

The fellow who lives in rural surroundings may think that camping would not greatly appeal to himself; but what about a camp ten or fifteen miles out of London?

Instead of going boating and bathing and fishing, he might see the sights of our wonderful capital.

If the idea appeals to him, there are plenty of delightful spots in Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, Bucks, Herts and Essex which would fill all requirements.

There are plenty of railways, 'buses and trams which would swiftly run himself and his chums into the city—and London is simply teeming with places of interest.

Of course, this idea applies equally well to any other of our big towns.

So, you see, a camping holiday can satisfy the desires of a country lad quite as well as those of the fellow who is eager to get away from the city in which he lives. Because, apart from the sheer pleasures of sleeping under canvas and "roughing it," the success of such a holiday depends upon the way one's leisure is spent.

Some fellows enjoy open-air pastimes, others like rooting out the historic associations of their immediate environment; still others prefer exploring ruins and old castles, and there are very many who would appreciate a cheap and care-free lodging in the open—with all London to wander in during the day-time.

However you spend your time, you will certainly find a good book a pleasant companion—and don't forget to write home! Camping is fraught with terrors for nervous friends, and it is just as well to let them know that you are having "the time of your life."

THE END



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Pretty Hopeless Search.

ARIZONA JIM, famous all over the Western states of America as an Indian agent—also as a helper of lame dogs over stiles—breathed delicately on his monocle. Then he adjusted it into his eye to his full satisfaction. After which he smiled, and held out a brown but excellently manicured hand.

"Any pal of Left-Hand Britton's is sure of a shake from me," he said. "You'll be British, too, I take it?"

The stranger grinned. He was a sizeable youngster—perhaps nineteen years old. Arizona Jim was fairly tall, and had a good width of shoulder—though he dressed in a dandified fashion that was calculated to disguise the muscularity of his form. But this youngster whom Left-Hand Britton had brought along to be introduced was taller and broader. There was a certain hardness about the stranger's jaw, too, which Arizona liked to see in a man. It spoke of character.

"Thanks," said Frank Fletcher. "I've heard a lot about you, and Lord Crichton here"—he glanced at Left-Hand Britton—"has told me the best part of it in the short time I've known him."

"Say," said a tall, lanky, lantern-jawed fellow, dressed very much to the cowboy pattern; and there was a decided earnestness in his tone, "while Left-Hand was talkin' about Arizona here, did he by any chance tell ye how bad I was? Wal, I wanter say I'm the baddest man ever. Yep. I guess there never was any feller so bad. I'm a wolf. I howl sometimes. Hear me. Ow-ow-ool!"

They were sitting in the smoke-room of an hotel in Apache, which was the name of a cow-town in southern Wyoming. It was a well-built hotel, but the howl that Arizona Jim's "bad-man" partner emitted almost lifted the roof from it. It also fetched a Chinese waiter in, in a hurry. This yellow individual also did not know, apparently, how "bad" Phil Hicks was, for, as Phil sat there in his chair, howling like the wild wolf he claimed to be, the celestial just stared at him with his almond eyes, and rubbed his hands together in a puzzled manner.

"Yep," Bad Phil went on, ending his howling, "I'm so bad that if any thief, murderer, incendiary, rustler, or real-estate dealer said 'Shucks!' to me, I'd jest chew him up small an' spit the pieces out. That's how bad I am." After which he quietened down, and began to roll a cigarette.

"You wantee doctor man for your pard?"

asked the Chinese waiter, addressing Arizona Jim.

Bad Phil Hicks, at that, broke out again in another place. He flashed one of his two guns this time. The Chinaman jumped two feet in the air in his surprise and alarm. The revolver exploded, and a bullet bored a neat hole in the floor-board close to the Chink's felt-slipped feet. The Chinaman jumped again.

"Ow-ool! I'm bad!" yelled Phil. "Beat it, or I'll use ye the same as the estate dealer, etcetera! Hup! Maybe so—" But the Chinaman fled ignominiously. He, evidently, believed that the really harmless Phil Hicks was every bit as bad as he wanted people to think he was.

Arizona Jim smiled indulgently at the hotel-keeper who, his face full of alarm, came in immediately afterwards.



Bad Phil Hicks flashed his gun and sent a bullet sizzling into the floor-boards bare inches from the scared Chinaman's slipped feet. "Ow-ool! I'm a real bad man!" yelled Phil as he fired. (See Chapter 1.)

"All right, pard," he said. "Phil will pay for the damaged floor. He's got to work off his high spirits sometimes—otherwise, he'll sure burst! I'll be responsible for him, though."

"I'm bad—" Phil Hicks began to tell the hotel-man the whole thing over again.

Arizona Jim ordered him to be silent, however; and Phil Hicks was never "bad" enough to disregard the orders of his chief.

"Now that business is over," said Arizona Jim, turning to the highly-amused Frank Fletcher again, "I'd like to say again that I'm always pleased to meet a pal of Jack Britton's—his lordship, I mean, though we don't count much on lords in this country."

Fletcher laughed.

"I knew Britton two years ago," he said. "I'm not green to the West, by any means. Anyway, I've worked in Canada a long time."

I was mighty glad to meet my old pal."

"He's got a great yarn to tell, too," said Left-Hand Britton smiling. "As soon as I heard it, I thought you'd like to hear it, too, Arizona. You might be able to help him, too. You're always ready to help decent people."

Arizona Jim lifted his eyebrows at Fletcher. "Don't see how you can help me, Arizona," said Fletcher. "I am just looking for a man—and I've got to find him in six months."

"Name?" asked Arizona Jim promptly.

"Hinkson," said Fletcher promptly. "Used to be heavy-weight boxing champion of Western Canada."

"Boxing?" asked Bad Phil Hicks. "Say, I ain't great on boxin', but when it comes to bein' real bad—"

"I've got to find Hinkson," said Fletcher, "and fight him—also beat him—in six months' time. That's all. But I can't get on his track at all. He's vanished from the ring entirely."

"Hinkson—a boxer," said Arizona Jim thoughtfully. "No, I'm not sure I know him. I may have heard of him when he was boxing. But—you must be a hefty youngster, who'll set out to beat an ex-heavy-weight champion at his own trade!" he added. Yet he eyed Fletcher over admiringly. Arizona Jim could weigh up a man better, perhaps, than most people.

"Tell Arizona the whole yarn," said Left-Hand Britton. "It's interesting, even if Arizona mayn't be able to help."

"Oh," said Fletcher, "it's just—well, it's a foolish story, really. Three years ago, against the wishes of my only relative—a very rich uncle—I came out to Canada. My uncle wanted me to go into his business, which was city work, and I hated it. Uncle was fed up about it. He was also fed up because I was so mad-keen on boxing in those days."

"Business before pleasure, eh?" laughed Arizona Jim.

"He always believed in business and never any pleasure," said Fletcher. "Anyway, after about three years' knocking about and doing no good for myself, I pocketed my pride and asked my uncle if he'd advance me enough capital to buy a bit of a ranch out West, so I could start and be something useful.

Of course, I offered to pay him back in yearly instalments."

"And he refused, of course?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Not quite. But he evidently had a great old brain-wave. He always was a cynical old chap. Never believed I was much good at boxing. He said he would buy me the finest ranch that was for sale in Canada or the States—even if it cost a hundred thousand dollars—if I were to prove to him that I'd met and fought, and beaten, Hinkson, the heavy-weight champion of Western Canada—as my uncle thought he was then."

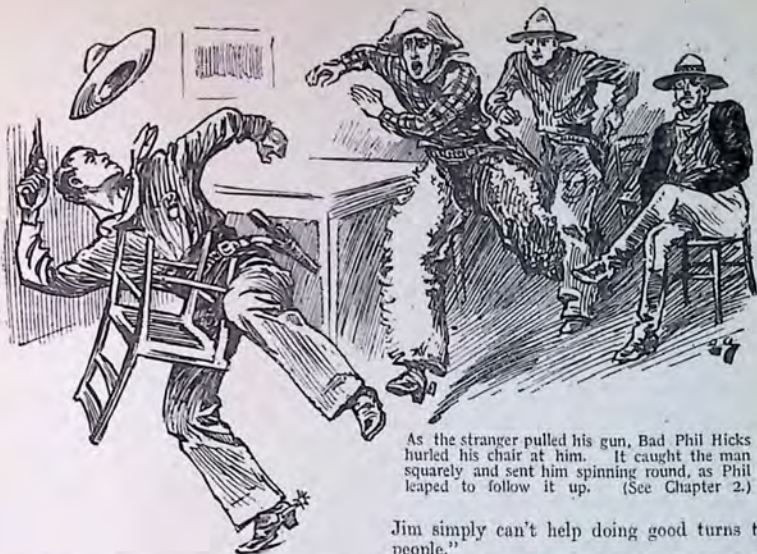
"How did yer uncle know who was champ o' Western Canada?" Bad Phil Hicks wanted to know. "Gee! Couldn't I be bad for a ranch worth a hundred thousand simoleons!"

"Oh, he evidently saw the name in an old boxing paper I'd left behind at home, and picked on it as being good enough for his purpose. Of course, Uncle Seth never imagines I could do a job like that. He thinks his money's safe enough. The worst of it is, time's getting short; I've only six months left; been looking for Hinkson for six months. Perhaps you don't know it, but Hinkson, about a year ago, vanished entirely, under suspicious circumstances. The police up in Canada think he'd something to do with a big bank-robbery that took place in Regina. Well, Hinkson threw away his championship, and just disappeared. That's where the hard part comes in—to find out where the man is. After then, maybe, I could get him to consent to meet me. Maybe I'd have to offer him a good stake, he being a pro., but I know darned well I'd fight like the deuce—just so I could give my uncle one in the eye and make him buy me a ranch!"

"A man who makes conditions like that deserves to be landed," said Arizona Jim heartily, "especially if he can afford it."

"My uncle's worth over a million British pounds," said Fletcher simply, "and he's got nobody to leave the cash to. He won't leave it to me, I know. But I'd like to tear the price of the Double-Five Ranch out of him. However—"

"I'm only sorry, lad," said Arizona Jim, "that I don't know where to lay my hands on



As the stranger pulled his gun, Bad Phil Hicks hurled his chair at him. It caught the man squarely and sent him spinning round, as Phil leaped to follow it up. (See Chapter 2.)

Hinkson. If, as you say, he vanished so suddenly and has kept out of sight for so long, he's either dead, in prison, or living under another name. Now, my pards and I knock about a good deal, and we meet many strange people. Well, if we do happen to hear of Hinkson, we'll certainly let you know. You must leave us an address we can write or wire to."

"You're very decent," said Fletcher. "As you say, you get about a lot while you're doing your work. I've got to stop at certain places to earn my living. But I intend to keep on trying till the next six months are up."

"You needn't thank me," said Arizona Jim, simply. "You're Left Hand Britton's pal. Britton is one of my two pards, who've already done enough for me to put me into their debt for life, and—"

"Rot," said Britton, quickly. "It's the other way about, Fletcher, old chap. Arizona

Jim simply can't help doing good turns to people."

"Jest the same as I can't help bein' right bad," said Phil Hicks. "But what Arizona says goes. We'll jest look around for that Hinkson hombre. An', ef we find him, I hopes I sees the fight." He felt Fletcher's biceps critically. He seemed satisfied with them. "But it ain't muscle as makes a feller as bad as me," he said. "It's just plumb cussedness as does that. Say, hear me howl again!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Man with the Medal

THREE or four weeks later Arizona Jim and his pards sat in the smoke-room of another hotel, in another town—also in another State. They were in Colorado now, and Arizona Jim was working in his capacity of Indian agent for the Indian Department at Washington.

"Think there's soon goin' to be a chance to be right bad?" asked Phil Hicks, as he rolled

himself a cigarette. "Gee! We do shore seem to've struck a mild patch right here."

"Wait and see," said Arizona Jim, smiling. "Anyway, we're a deal nearer Tough Smallwood's gang here than we were last night."

"Wal," said Phil Hicks, "I jest wanter meet that Tough Smallwood, an' then he'll l'arn as he can't go murderin' redskins with impunity—not while I'm around."

It was a fact that Arizona Jim and his pard were on the trail of a very notorious outlaw, the leader of a gang of rustlers, train-robbers, and worse. Not that Arizona Jim was employed by any county or state to do the work of the sheriffs. Arizona Jim, personally, had nothing to say about Smallwood and his gang as a gang. It was the fact that Smallwood himself had murdered a Crowfoot Indian a month before that Arizona was interested in. For Arizona's work was to look after the Indians of the States. He had the responsibility of seeing that the red men got a square deal from the whites. Which is why he was kept so constantly busy at the task he loved.

He wanted Smallwood, because he had killed an Indian. All Indians to Arizona Jim were his children. Even the bad ones got a square deal from that very influential agent. Many an injustice would have been suffered by the redskins but for the watchfulness and swift justice of the man who was above mere sheriffs of counties in his influence. Even governors of states respected that dandified Indian agent.

So, though the sheriffs were supposed to see to it that Smallwood and his gang committed no more crimes, Arizona had set himself the task of assuring vengeance for the death of that Crowfoot Indian whom Smallwood had killed. Justice, as understood by the Indians, demanded it. It would give the Crowfoot's people little satisfaction to know that Smallwood had been hanged for rustling; they wanted him to pay for the death of one of their kind.

So, here in Cactus City, Colorado, Arizona Jim camped down for one night only, after wandering about the state for many days. And, so faultless was the Indian agent in his trailing of men, that he knew he would very

soon have the chance of meeting Smallwood and arresting him.

"When we see Smallwood," said Arizona Jim, "you can be just as bad as you like, lad. But don't kill him, whatever you do. See?"

"Yep," said Phil Hicks. "I won't be so bad as all that. Now—— Hallo! 'Evenin', stranger!"

A youngish man had walked into the smoke-room. Just inside the doorway he stood and looked about the room. He favoured the three occupants of it with a cool stare.

He was a fairly big man, of, perhaps, twenty-seven years of age. He was dressed roughly, and carried two guns at his belt. There was a bulkiness about the shoulders that denoted great strength; yet he did not look to be the fittest man in that room, by any means.

He carried—something of a rarity amongst the men Arizona Jim met with in his travels—a gold-watch-chain, which apparently kept a watch secure in the pocket of his shirt. From this chain dangled a pendant of gold. It looked like some sort of medal.

"Good-night," grunted this fellow. "Say, I jest wanter know—where's the sheriff of this burg?"

"Best find out at his office," said Arizona Jim. "Why?"

"'Cause," said the other, with a grin, "I don't like sheriffs—that's why. Say—what the Sam Hill are ye starin' at?"

"You—and your watch-chain," said Arizona Jim coolly.

The man started, and eyed the dandified Indian agent more closely. His hands went to the guns that swung at his hip.

"Say—what's the big wheeze?" he asked. "Guess—say, air ye sheriffs, or suthin'?"

"Nope," said Bad Phil Hicks, and came to his feet. His eyes began to sparkle. "Guess we're some better'n sheriffs, son, and——"

"Say—up with 'em!" shouted the stranger. He flashed a gun in a trice. But before he could get it rightly sighted on any one of the party Phil Hicks went "bad." Here was a chance such as the would-be "bad" man always loved.

Hicks picked up the chair upon which he had sat, gave a howl, and hurled the article of



Phil reared his well-trained horse, and the animal came down with all its weight on Smallwood's mount, sending the man headlong from the saddle. (See Chapter 2.)

furniture straight at the gunman. It caught the big fellow on the shoulder, with such a force that he was spun around. And, even as the chair was flying, Bad Phil sprang forward, and with a lusty kick, sent his drawn gun flying through the air.

"I'm bad—right bad!" howled Hicks. "Say, this is a great old howlin' night for me!"

"Look out!" shouted Left-Hand Britton at this point, for the big stranger had recovered himself somewhat, and was reaching for his other gun. But Britton sprang forward also, and caught the weapon by the butt. A moment later the fellow was unarmed, and knew he had made a very big mistake. For he found himself confronted by two guns in the hands of Britton and Phil Hicks. Arizona Jim, knowing the efficiency of his partners, just sat there coolly, breathing on his monocle, smiling quietly.

"So that's the end of your outbreak, pard, is it?" he asked. "I guess I don't know why you should launch out like that. We've

nothing against you—that I know of. Ah, you've dropped something!"

The gold medal that had dangled at the end of the man's watch-chain had come off in the short, sharp struggle.

He stooped to pick it up, and its owner began to do the same. But Phil Hicks gave a howl, and the fellow jerked his hands towards the ceiling again. Apparently, he thought more of those two levelled guns than he thought of his trinket.

Arizona gave the medal a single glance, then handed it over to its owner, bowing gracefully as he did so. His manner puzzled the stranger considerably, but he took the medal, and slipped it into one of the pockets of his chaps.

"No," said the Indian agent, "I've got nothing against you, my lad. So, Phil, let him put his hands down. But don't get too jumpy, my friend, with us. We're rather used to tackling emergencies."

"Wal," said the other, with a jerky laugh, "I thought ye were sheriffs or suthin' o'

the kind. Howso, I s'pose I better beat it."

"What's your name?" asked Arizona Jim.

"Jenkinson," was the reply, which came quite pat. "An' yourn?"

"My own business," said Arizona Jim sharply. "Anyway, you can go now—but don't get fresh again with strangers. They don't all like it. Where are you making for? Looking for a job?"

"Yep—but not with you," was the reply. "Say, I'll not be forgettin' this way youse fellers double-crossed me. There's things I don't like, neither." With which he swaggered out jauntily, or as jauntily as was possible in the circumstances.

"Jack," said Arizona sharply, "you're a first-class trailer. Keep your eye on that fellow, and don't let him see you're doing it. Tell me where he fetches up, will you?"

Left-Hand Britton did not ask for any reasons why. He was always ready to obey his beloved chief and partner implicitly, whatever Arizona Jim wanted doing. Accordingly, he slipped out of the hotel at once, and saw the figure of the blusterful stranger vanishing up the street.

Three hours later, Britton came back with his report.

"He mounted," the youngster announced, "and rode out of town, heading eastwards. I got my horse out and followed him. He rode to the Madre Mountains, and, well in a canyon, he struck a camp full of men. I got close enough to see what he did and heard what he said.

"Seemed a pretty secret sort of place, and took a bit of getting to it," went on Britton. "Looked a permanent sort of an affair, too. Plenty of horses about, and stores galore. A few cattle were grazing near by. Well, Jenkinson went there, and I heard him talking to a fellow who seemed to be a sort of boss there."

"Describe that boss," said Arizona Jim. And Britton began a close description of the man, who appeared to be a smallish fellow, of about forty, with a long knife-scar on his cheek. "Saw that scar in the light of a

camp fire," he said, "Well. Jenkinson seemed to ask for work. The boss of this camp wanted to know how Jenkinson had found him out there. I didn't get Jenkinson's reply. But Jenkinson said he was wanted by police and sheriffs all over the continent, and had got sick of trying to go straight. Would the boss give him a job?"

"That camp is Tough Smallwood's," said Arizona Jim. "In carrying out my orders so well, my boy, you've helped us to bring off the job that brought us here. And so Smallwood's so near as that, is he? And our pal Jenkinson wants a job as rustler and train-robber, eh?"

"Said he wanted a job and a place where he could be safe from the sheriffs," said Britton. "I say, I wish I'd known that that was Smallwood's place. I'd have had a shot at arresting Smallwood myself."

"Perhaps as well you didn't heard the lion in that particular den," smiled Arizona Jim. "You're quick on the draw—but I don't want you shot yet. No, lad; we'll do this thing cannyly."

But he went out forthwith and saddled up his horse. His partners did the same thing, and Phil Hicks began to chortle to himself, for it looked to him just then as though, before long, he were going to have a chance to be bad again.

Left-Hand Britton led the way. Straight for the Madre Mountains they all rode, and less than an hour and a half later they all drew rein, as they entered the canyon in which Britton had said he had found Smallwood's outlaw camp.

"Now, I think we might dismount and go the rest of the way on foot," said Arizona. "Our horses might start their whinnying—Hallo! Somebody coming!"

There was a high wall of sheer rock at either hand of them, and the moon cast a strong shadow into the gulch in which they were. Into this shadow they turned their horses. They could hear the sound of trotting horses, also the voices of talking men; the sounds grew louder every second.

In half a minute two horsemen came level with the hidden three. The moonlight fell full

upon their faces. One was easily recognisable as Jenkinson. The other was not known to either Bad Phil Hicks or Britton—until Arizona Jim spoke softly.

"That's Smallwood," he said. "Now, Phil—as bad as you like!"

The two horsemen were exactly abreast of them when Phil Hicks whipped a gun out. He gave out no howl then. But he spurred his horse right at the pair near him.

These two drew rein sharply, and exclamations broke from them. But the thing was over in a few seconds. For Phil Hicks just blazed away a couple of rounds of ammunition, then lifted his horse so that the well-trained creature reared almost upright, then came down with all its weight on the withers of the animal Smallwood was riding. And Britton, gun in left hand, rode up to Jenkinson and presented his weapon at him.

Smallwood, with a yell, came to earth, his horse almost on top of him. Before he could arise, Arizona Jim had dismounted, and, with a couple of clicks, had clapped a pair of steel handcuffs upon his wrists.

"Gee! Hadn't hardly time to be bad!" panted Phil Hicks, as he looked down on the outlaws' leader. "And—"

"Shut up, Phil," said Arizona. "Catch Smallwood's horse. We want to get out of here as quick as we can, in case others have heard the row."

Smallwood's horse was easily caught, and

its owner was made to mount. Smallwood—a mean-looking rat of a man—obeyed grumbly.

"I've got you for the murder of a Crowfoot Indian back in Wyoming," Arizona Jim said. "So you needn't worry about what the local sheriff will do to you. Understand that?"

He eyed Jenkinson, who was disarmed now, and sitting dejectedly on his horse. Smallwood began to make explanations.

"Guess I ain't done nothin', boss," he said. "I'll allow I was thinkin' o' going off to rob a bank with—"

"Shut up," said Arizona Jim sharply.

"I'll talk to you later, my friend. I'll be wanting you."

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

Stage-managed by  
Arizona Jim!

"It's this way," said Arizona Jim, and a humorous little smile quirked his firm, handsome lips. "There's a fellow here in my charge who wants teaching a severe lesson. So I've called on you to teach it him. Now will you oblige me?"

"Well," said Frank Fletcher, looking rather puzzled, "of

course, as you're a friend of Britton's, I'll do anything for you, Arizona. But—"

"We caught a bad rustler and murderer last week," said Arizona, "and with him was a young fellow who, maybe, isn't too bad at heart. But he was just on the brink of turning rustler himself. Now this fellow, I can plainly



Fletcher thumped a capable left fist to Jenkinson's ear, and the pair were going at it hammer and tongs ere Arizona Jim could interfere. (See Chapter 13.)

see, has been an athlete of sorts at one time, and has only gone to seed because he's—well, he's at a loose end. I have it in my mind that if he came up against a real live athlete he would be reminded of what he used to be himself. So what I want you to do with this fellow is to pick a quarrel with him, and fight it out, either gloves or bare knuckles."

"Well, I'm dashed!" said Fletcher, and eyed Bad Phil Hicks and Left-Hand Britton in amazement. "And you wired for me to come all this way just for that?"

"I did," said Arizona Jim, "just for that. You see, it's a hobby of mine, helping lame dogs over stiles, and here's a lame dog wants helping over one. I think a fairly good hiding at the hands of an expert would serve to bring that fellow, Jenkinson, up with a jerk. Then he might turn over a new leaf and become some sort of a man."

"Which," Left-Hand Britton murmured to himself, grinning quietly, "is about the most unconvincing yarn I've ever known Arizona Jim to tell. But we'll let it go at that."

"Oh, well," said Fletcher, with a shrug, "I hate fighting fellows I've got no grudge against. But if, as you say, it might do him a bit of good—well, where is he?"

"I've got him in the calaboose here," said Arizona Jim. "He thinks he's under arrest for being in partnership with Smallwood. He doesn't know what's going to happen to him, either, and—well, he's got his nerves on such an edge that I'm sure he'll fight if he's got half an excuse. So make him fight!"

"Show me where he is," said Fletcher, feeling his biceps.

Arizona Jim led the way to the calaboose of this Colorado town, and, inside, Fletcher was ushered in to a cell-like apartment, which was furnished very plainly, with a table, a stool, and a bunk-bed. Upon the bunk a young man was lying—Jenkinson.

He came to his feet when he saw who his visitors were. He seemed to be in an evil humour.

"Say," he shouted, "I want to know what's goin' to happen to me. Ye can't keep a free man penned up in jail without tryin' him. I do know that much about the law. Yet I been shut up here four days—"

"Shut up, you fool!" said Frank Fletcher curtly.

"Eh?" asked Jenkinson, starting. "Talkin' to me, ye boob?"

"Yes," said Fletcher. "I'm talking to you—a fool who can't keep straight without—"

He ducked the next moment, for Jenkinson had lashed out furiously at him with the only weapon left to him—a capable left fist.

There was no doubt about what Frank Fletcher did in return. He countered, and caught Jenkinson a resounding thump on the ear.

At that, Arizona Jim thrust his dandily-dressed form between the two, and there was a sweet smile on his face.

"Outside for this work," he said. "There's a yard at the back of the jail. I guess the sheriff won't mind if we use it for a minute or two. Oh, you two quarrelsome boys!"

There were quiet, mysterious smiles on the faces of Left-Hand Britton and Bad Phil Hicks as the amazed Jenkinson, followed by the firm-lipped Frank Fletcher, was led outside. There was a sizeable courtyard at the back of the calaboose. And they, the five of them, had it all to themselves.

"You want me to fight this boob?" asked Jenkinson, eyeing the clean-looking Fletcher with marked disavour. "Why?"

"To teach you a lesson and some manners," said Arizona Jim. "You need them! Now, don't be a mad hat. After that fight you're going to be given a day's start of the sheriffs, and that'll give you a chance to dodge. So fight. If you don't, by heck, I'll have you up as an accomplice of Smallwood's. And the judge'll believe me."

"Oh, all right," said Jenkinson. But he seemed quieter in his manner now. He tore his shirt off over his head, and spat into his hands. Frank Fletcher, at Arizona Jim's suggestion, also stripped to the waist. In a few moments both were ready for the fray.

It was a good fight. Both Left-Hand Britton and Bad Phil Hicks enjoyed every second of it—perhaps Arizona Jim did, too, though he never said so. It was the sort of fight Left-Hand Britton had often read about. It was a genuine set-to with the raw 'uns.

Frank Fletcher was by far the fitter fellow

of the two. There was something rather short-winded and flabby about Jenkinson; probably the man had been smoking too many cigarettes prior to his arrest. But, from the start, it was apparent that Jenkinson was no mean exponent of the noble art.

The way he threw himself into position told the spectators much about his ability. The way he snugged his chin into the hollow of his left shoulder betrayed the fact that he knew how to put up a good guard. The way he held his left ready to strike at any instant, his feet set ready to advance, retire, side-step one way or the other, all told Frank Fletcher, himself a boxer of merit, that he would have a handful of work to do, to oblige his eccentric friend, Arizona Jim.

There were three full rounds of it. Left-Hand Britton kept time, while Arizona Jim constituted himself referee. Arizona Jim soon showed that he knew more than a little about boxing, and twice he had to check Jenkinson for work that was anything but square and above-board. Jenkinson tried the favourite American stunt of boring into his opponent closely, then suddenly jerking up his head, in the hope of catching him under the chin and shaking him badly in that manner. But, though but an amateur boxer, Frank Fletcher was wise to that, as he was wise to other shady tricks, and, at the end of the first round, there was little to choose between the two as to the way in which they had stood the gruelling each had given and received.

Half-way through the second round, however, the question of fitness began to tell. Too many cigarettes—perhaps too much bootlegged whisky, too—had left their mark on Jenkinson. He began to breathe shortly; his chest rose and fell labor-

iously. He began, further, to pant out abusive remarks to his antagonist; another American habit amongst boxers. But he could not "rattle" Frank with his offensiveness. All through it, Fletcher kept cool, and just boxed.

"Guess I want to hear from ye," panted Jenkinson, after Fletcher had boxed defensively for a while, in order to avoid a series of whirlwind blows that the other sent in, having lashed himself up for the moment to a state of almost savage ferocity.

"You shall," said Fletcher, and, with a stiff, straight left, jolted Jenkinson in the ribs—a blow that fetched a red patch up on his chest, and which made him gasp. "And again," he added; this time it was an uppercut that caught the other on the point.

For the first time in the fight a fighter went to the ground. The man to fall was Jenkinson. Before he had come to his feet, even while the referee was counting Jenkinson out, Left-Hand Britton announced



Jenkinson lay on the floor, dead to the world, a long time after he had been counted out. "Well done lad!" exclaimed Arizona Jim as he gripped Fletcher's hand.

that this, the second round, was at an end.

The third opened hotly. Jenkinson wasted his failing strength in a mad attempt to get Fletcher down and out quickly. For Jenkinson had it working at the back of his mind that he would return to that cell for trial if he lost the fight; though there was no such arrangement as that.

He spoilt himself by his ferocity. Fletcher kept cool, and, though he did not try for any knock-out at first, he sent in several jolting punches which left Jenkinson distinctly the worse for wear.

It was after the round had been in progress two minutes and forty seconds that Fletcher saw his chance. Jenkinson was rocking on his feet, was longing for the call of time. Fletcher fainted at the man's heart. Jenkinson dropped his guard to meet it; then he received a crashing blow fairly on the chin, which jerked his head back with a click. The man groaned; his knees gave way beneath him. He slid to the floor, and was there, dead to the world, for a long time after he had been counted out.

"Well done, lad!" said Arizona Jim, holding out his hand. "I'm sure you've done what I wanted you to do. Now, wait till he's able to sit up and take notice. I want him to talk to you."

Soon Jenkinson, a limp man, was sitting up. He seemed dazed and quite unable to believe that he had been soundly thrashed. Further, he did not seem very clear in the head at first.

"Gosh!" he said. "A boob like that—beats me—me—Huh!"

Fletcher held out his hand frankly.

"No hard feelings?" he said. "Hope I didn't hurt you too much?"

"Guess ye hurt me some. But—Gosh! Say, boss"—he addressed Arizona Jim—"where did you find this one? He'd oughter be champ at his weight. He'd oughter—"

"Now, listen here, Jenkinson," said Arizona Jim, interrupting. "I want you to tell Fletcher here exactly who you are. I know, of course. That medal told me. If you'll speak up, I'm sure it'll be worth a thousand dollars for you. That'll be enough capital to give you a good start, so that you can keep out of rustlers' hands."

"What—a thousand bucks?" asked Jenkinson. "Ye say ye know who I am? Then—Wal, then, ye'll tell 'em in Canada?"

"I've nothing to do with Canada," said Arizona Jim, shortly. "The Canadians can look after their own affairs. You're in the States now. It may be—But tell Fletcher who you are!"

"I'm Hinkson, o' course," said the boxer slowly. "Guess I never did rob that bank at Regina—though the Mounted said I did. Howso—"

"You're Hinkson—ex-heavy-weight champion of Western Canada?" gasped Frank Fletcher. "I can't believe it."

But he had to. Further, he had to believe something else—that he had in every respect earned the finest ranch his wealthy uncle could buy for him. There were three responsible witnesses who drew up and signed a document to that effect.

"But—why didn't you tell me at first?" asked Fletcher.

"You might not have fought so well if you'd known really whom you were up against," said the Indian agent. "There are such things as nerves, and you never know when they're going to let you down. So I practised a little mild deception, to get you to fight."

"Then I owe the Double-Five Ranch to you?" said Fletcher, huskily. "My hat! But I believe you're right. I don't suppose I should have fought so well if I'd known."

"So, I think, if you'll accept the loan till things have been fixed up for you, I'll lend you a thousand dollars to give to Hinkson," said Arizona Jim. "He's earned it. You can repay me when you've got your ranch in working order. And Hinkson can clear out. I shan't trouble him again. Hinkson—keep straight, lad. It pays better. And if the Canadian authorities do get on your trail, it won't be my doing."

Hinkson blinked. He also was coming out of this affair well—thanks to Arizona Jim.

"Yep," said Phil Hicks, "it's all right to be bad, Hinkson, so long's ye're decently bad, without no vice in it. I'm bad myself—maybe ye've heard that. I'm so bad that—Howso, I won't go into no more details."

THE END



# FATTY HOLDS THE FORT!

A FOOTBALL BALLAD  
By JACK BLAKE



WHEN Fatty Wynn is guarding goal,  
You hear the shouts like thunder roll.  
There's only one "Welsh Wizard" now,  
That's Fatty Wynn, we all avow.

High shots, low shots,  
The forwards fire them in!  
Swift shots, slow shots,  
He saves with a cheery grin.  
Swerving shots, and dropping shots,  
Teasing shots, and topping shots,  
And the sort that take some stopping shots—  
Are gallantly saved by Wynn!

Although as plump as Baggy Trimble,  
He's far more active, blithe, and nimble.  
Between the posts he'll dart and dance,  
It's great to see him pounce and prance!

Smart shots, strong shots,  
The forwards fire them in,  
Lofty shots, long shots,  
He saves with a cheery grin.  
Cunning shots, and curling shots,  
Twisting shots, and twirling shots,  
Whizzing shots, and whirling shots,  
Are gallantly saved by Wynn!

Our goalie plays a glorious game,  
And schoolboy sportsmen sing his fame,  
He holds the fort, and never fails.  
Some day he'll surely play for Wales!

Meek shots, mild shots,  
The forwards send them in;  
Weak shots, wild shots,  
He saves with a cheery grin.  
Gallant shots, and glorious shots,  
Mighty, meritorious shots,  
Thrilling but non-victorious shots—  
Are gallantly saved by Wynn!



# DRIVING A DOG TEAM



An old hand lets you into the secret

How would you like to try your hand at driving a team of sled-dogs—four, six, or eight thick-coated, bushy-tailed Huskies or Malamutes?

I have no doubt you would tackle the job with enthusiasm; and I am able to promise you that you would find it somewhat exciting. Whether you'd care to *have* to do it, hour after hour, and day after day, sometimes in the teeth of bitter, razor-edged winds, or with a snowstorm tumbling down atop of you, is quite another thing.

Handling a team of Huskies is not the simplest of jobs; the driving of them is not entirely a pleasant recreation. For they have their own notions; they're big and strong, weighing up to one hundred pounds; they're full of perversity and cunning as a tree full of monkeys; and they're more willing and ready for a fight than any Irishman. Any time, any place, full or hungry, tired out or fresh, a Husky is never too-anything not to be ready to tumble into a fight at a second's notice.

To begin with, sled dogs aren't driven in the same way as driving a horse. The driver has no reins. All his driving is done with his voice, and a heavy, cutting whip. Reins the

Husky wouldn't understand; he hasn't been used to them. But he does know what a whip is made for. And he's not always afraid of that.

He is harnessed by leather or deer-hide thongs, fastened to a sort of collar and chest harness; and sometimes these thongs are made fast to one long rope made fast to the sled, sometimes to the harness of the dog behind. The rear dog, of course, has his harness fastened to the sled. When he isn't pulling, whenever a brief halt is made for a rest, or to place the capsized sled right way up, or to tie on a load that has worked slack, or while his driver is looking for a lost trail, the sled dog seizes the opportunity to turn about and assault the dog nearest to him. And you can imagine what sort of a muddle he and his mates will make of their harness and fastenings in a very short time.

The resulting tangle is rather worse than a fishing-line that has become tangled up.

And perhaps you can imagine—but no, you can't!—just what it means to unravel the tangle when the cold is so great that the mercury in the thermometer has gone down to forty or fifty degrees below zero—seventy or eighty degrees



The driver runs ahead of his team, beating down the soft, loose snow.

below freezing-point—and you have thick, fingerless mitts covering your hands, and if you take the mitts off—and you will have to do that—your bare hands get numb with cold in a very few seconds.

Yes, there are few dull times when driving a sled.

The driver, you know, doesn't always get himself carried along by the dogs; the cold is so great in Alaska and the Canadian North-West, in winter, that such standing still on the sled is anything but a joy. The driver must be moving to keep from being frozen. So most times he is running along behind the sled, or alongside the team, shouting, cheering, encouraging, or reviling the Huskies, and cracking his whip.

That is, when the snow is frozen hard, or the trail lies over smooth, level ice, such as a big lake or river; but when the trail is soft, as it is after a big fall of snow, and the snow hasn't had time to pack or get frozen solid, then driving is no joke. The driver then runs on ahead of his team, beating down the soft, loose snow under his snowshoes, so as to make it hard enough for the team not to sink into it. This is called "breaking trail," and I can assure you it is mighty hard work. It's terrible work when the driver is alone—perhaps the most fatiguing work there is: I know of nothing harder. But it has to be done. With the dogs sinking up to their bellies in the snow, progress would be impossible.

When there are two or more men, one goes ahead to break trail. This he keeps up for a while, then has a rest, dropping behind to ease his aching muscles while another man "breaks trail." So they will take it in turns.

As there are no reins to guide the team, the guiding is done by the voice. When you want a team to go to the right, you bellow "Gee!" When you want the leading Husky to turn to the left, you yell "Haw!" And the dogs understand just as a horse does when you tell him to "Gee up!" But you don't say "Gee up!" to a Husky when you want him

to improve his pace or make a start. You say "Mush!" This is a corruption of the French word "Marche!" meaning "Walk" or "Get on!" The Indians altered it to "Mush," and all white dog drivers have taken to the word.

The average sled dog is a demon to fight; he is not an obedient animal, and there are mighty few that you can make friends with and pet as an English dog; they don't understand and are suspicious. He is cunning as a fox and nearly as intractable as a wolf; but he has his good points—lots of them. And, anyway, in the Frozen North you could not



Frozen fish are warmed and thrown to the dogs—one to each of them.

get on without him. Without him, all transport, all carriage of more goods than a man could pack on his shoulders, would be impossible. Which means that existence would not be possible.

The sled dog has activity, strength, and staying power almost incredible. And the great majority of them are workers. Let them understand it is a real master driving them, and they'll go on pulling their courageous hearts out, hour after hour, though they may be wearied to death; though they may have empty stomachs and small prospect of grub—(good dogs will work without a bite to eat for three or four days)—even though the rough,

sharp ice has gashed their feet to such an extent that every step means a blood-stain on the ice.

Yes, they have big hearts; and "Never say die" is their motto.

Again, they're not particular what they eat. Meat they love. Also they like fish—frozen dried salmon or whitefish is their usual winter food; but if they can't get fish they will eat boiled beans and rice or tallow, or bacon, or—just anything. Poor brutes!

Once a day, when on the trail, a team is fed, and that is always at the end of the day, when the journey for the day is ended. If fed at breakfast, the Huskies will not pull at all. So all day they have to work on an empty stomach, thinking of the meal awaiting them.

When camp is made, which is just before night begins to fall—say three o'clock in the afternoon—the first thing is to build a fire. Then the dogs are fed. Their frozen fish are warmed and thrown to them, one fish to each dog. And the quickness with which that fish disappears would do credit to a conjurer. His fish swallowed, the Husky looks about for

something more—the stealing of his meat from another dog who has been a bit slow of swallowing. Then the fight begins, and the fighters have to be banged over the head with a pole to quiet them. When quite certain there's nothing more to be had—and the wise driver hangs up out of reach or hides his stock of grub—the Husky coils down to sleep, his big tail covering him like a garment.

But he won't sleep all night, depend upon that. Sometimes in the night you'll waken to find him prowling about; and often he will waken you with his dismal howling, for he never barks.

And next morning, no matter how long and hard the previous day's work has been, no matter how wakeful the Husky has been overnight, he'll be as full of fight and mischief as ever.

But you'll respect him, all the same, since it may be that your life depends upon his courage, his endurance, and his wonderful intelligence; and you'll forgive him his faults.

Oh, yes, I think you would like trying to drive a dog team.

## MORE FAMOUS GREYFRIARS CHARACTERS



Percy Kipps



Bully Bolover



Cheery Bob Cherry



An unusual story of Greyfriars School,  
specially written for "The Holiday Annual"

**By FRANK RICHARDS**

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Painful for Parkinson!

PARKINSON, of the Remove, groaned.

He couldn't help it!

He just groaned.

There were plenty of fellows on Little Side at Greyfriars; but nobody heeded Parkinson. Their eyes were fixed on the football field, where Harry Wharton & Co. were going through a final practice—the match with Rookwood School being due on the morrow.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in great form.

They needed to be, to play Rookwood. And they were. And Remove fellows crowded on Little Side to cheer them.

Parkinson did not cheer.

As already stated, he groaned.

Had anyone heeded Parkinson, that one might have wondered why he groaned. But nobody ever heeded Parkinson.

Harry Wharton had just put in the pill, with a really wonderful kick, and the Remove fellows, glad to see their captain in such form, gave him an enthusiastic yell.

Parkinson contributed a dismal groan.

It was not that Parkinson was not keen on footer, and not keen to see his side win when Rookwood came along. He was keen on both. He was glad to see that the Remove eleven looked like a winning team—glad to see that Harry Wharton was great at centre-forward, that Bob Cherry was a mighty man in the half-way line, and Squiff a tower of strength in goal. There was no envy in Parkinson's heart.

He was as keen on soccer as any fellow in the Remove. He would have given a term's pocket-money to have performed the kick Wharton had just performed—and a year of his life to have been selected for the Rookwood match.

Like so many hapless mortals in this imperfect universe, Parkinson had fixed his hopes on the unattainable.

Heart and soul, he was a footballer. But his body did not, so to speak, play up. The spirit was more than willing, but the flesh was decidedly weak.

He was rather new to Greyfriars; but since he had arrived at the old school, no fellow had been more regular and assiduous at games practice. He did not play at it; he worked at it. If assiduity, keenness, enthusiasm, concentration of mind on a single object, could have made him a footballer, the trick would have been done. Unfortunately, they couldn't.

Some fellows are born clumsy. Parkinson was one of them.

It was something, for Parkinson, if his foot actually touched the leather when he kicked at it. But if he did, the leather never went in the desired direction. It might go in any other direction—but never in the one planned by Parkinson.

His football added to the gaiety of existence in the Remove. Nothing else came of it. Indeed, since Parkinson had arrived, fellows said that Coker of the Fifth was no longer the biggest ass at Greyfriars, so far as football was concerned.

It was hard cheese! If Parkinson had not cared so much for the game, it would not have mattered. But he did care for it, passionately. There was nothing—simply nothing—he would not have given, to become a good footballer. And he could not even become a bad one. He was no footballer at all.

Had the treasures of Golconda been in his possession, he would have handed them over, cheerfully, without a second thought, in exchange for a place in the Remove eleven.

That is why he groaned as he watched the cheery Removites at football. If only he could have done these things——! If only he could have seen his name in the list posted up in the Rag!

But he couldn't!

Between Parkinson and the Remove eleven there was a great gulf fixed—never to be bridged.

There were many things that Parkinson could do. His construe was the best in the Remove, and generally called forth commendation from Mr. Quelch, his form-master. His French was as good as Monsieur Charpentier's own. At German he was a whale. Remove fellows almost shuddered to see him reading German as if it were English. Mathematics to him were a trifle light as air. That he would always be a wonderful man in class, that he would be mentioned with pride to visitors to the school, that he would gather prizes like leaves in Vallambrosa, that he would bag a Balliol scholarship—all these things were assured, and did not comfort Parkinson in the least. He had set his mind on other things—which were unattainable.

Therefore Parkinson groaned, as he watched the Remove footballers, and the groan came from the bottom of Parkinson's heart.

He drove his hands deep into his pockets at last, and tramped away. It was useless to watch what he could never hope to share—it was like the tortures of Tantalus—just as his slogging and games practice was like the unavailing labour of Sisypheus!

He tramped away moodily to the House, and loafed about with his hands in his pockets doleful and gloomy.

Presently the Remove footballers came tramping into the changing-room, merry and bright, with a buzz of cheery voices. Parkinson hung about the changing-room. It was a general gathering-place for the football fraternity, and therefore Parkinson liked it. Sometimes he ventured a remark, as a contribution to the "football-jaw" that went on in the changing-room. His remarks were always received with merriment. Parkinson and football really were like oil and water, and could never mix.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry slapped Parkinson on the shoulder with a mighty slap that made Parkinson stagger. "Cheer up, old bean."

"Ow!" gasped Parkinson.

He rubbed his shoulder.

"What's the merry trouble, old man?" asked Bob. Bob never could tolerate a gloomy face. His own was always bright.

"Oh! Nothing!" groaned Parkinson.



"There is something you can do for me," said Parkinson. "Play me in the Rockwood match to-morrow!" The fellows in the changing room burst into a roar of laughter. "Play you! Oh, my hat! Play you—ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter I.)

"Got a pain?"

"No."

"You look as if you were going to your own funeral, old chap."

"I almost wish I were!" mumbled Parkinson dismally.

"My hat! That sounds no end jolly," said Harry Wharton, staring at him. "Is anything the matter?"

"Yes."

"Give it a name, old scout," said Frank Nugent cheerily.

"Go it!" said Johnny Bull encouragingly.

"Confide the terrific trouble to our esteemed selves, my excellent and ridiculous Parkinson," urged Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

All the Famous Five were sympathetic. They liked Parkinson—he was a nobody, but he was a good-natured and inoffensive no-

body. Besides, it would have been ungrateful not to like him. His football furnished them with a good deal of merriment.

"Anything a chap can do?" asked Harry Wharton. He was really concerned by the dismal woe in Parkinson's long face.

"Well, yes. You could."

"I!" exclaimed the captain of the Removet.

"Yes—only you."

"Well, my hat! Give it a name, then," said Harry Wharton. "I'll do anything I can. What can I do?"

Parkinson gasped.

"Play me in the Rockwood match to-morrow."

Harry Wharton jumped.

Then he stared.

Then he burst into a roar, which was echoed from end to end of the changing room.

"Play you! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody wanted to hurt Parkinson's feelings. Everybody liked old Parkinson, and laughed at him genially. But the idea of Parkinson in the Rookwood match was too much for them. They yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Fan me, somebody!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, old man," gasped Harry Wharton.

"Sorry! But you shouldn't be so funny, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Parkinson eyed the Remove footballers gloomily. It was not a laughing matter from his point of view. Certainly, he had not expected the captain of the Remove to accede to his extraordinary request. But this irresistible outburst of mirth dejected him. It seemed like the final funeral knell of the hopes he had still nourished.

He turned and walked out of the changing-room. A roar of laughter followed him.

Parkinson turned in the doorway.

"Look here——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can chortle!" hooted Parkinson desperately. "But I'm going to pull it off yet, somehow. I'm going to be a footballer, and some day you'll be jolly glad to get me to play for the Remove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is Parky's funny day!" gasped Peter Todd. "Go it, Parky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Parkinson walked away with the merriment of the Remove footballers ringing in his ears.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Man in the Grey Coat.

Parkinson went slowly up the Remove staircase, and slowly along the Remove passage to his study.

He entered the study and slammed the door.

The winter dusk was falling thick, and Parkinson put on the light and threw himself into the armchair before the fire, which was burning low.

It was unusually quiet in the Remove passage. Most of the fellows were downstairs in the Rag, most of them discussing football and the Rookwood match. Nobody was thinking of Parkinson, that was certain. The hapless fellow, whose football ambitions were a source of woe to himself and of merriment to others, did not linger in the memory of the Removeites. He had been laughed at and forgotten.

He stretched out his feet to the fire, and relieved his feelings with another groan, which echoed eerily in the study.

He was feeling fed up—fed up to the very chin! On the table beside him were his books—some of them books that would have made the Remove fellows' heads ache simply to look at them. Parkinson glanced at them with loathing.

Why was it that he could do all the things he didn't want to, and couldn't do the one thing he did want to do?

It seemed unfair.

All Mr. Quelch's commendations in the form-room he would have exchanged for one cheer on the football field. Just once to hear the Remove fellows yell: "Well played, Parkinson!"

But it could never be. He was a trier. He had tried hard! Nothing had come of it—nothing ever could come of it! Everything was possible excepting the one thing he wanted. That was barred.

He tired of dismal reflections at last, and stretched out his hand for a book. He was not in a humour for study. He picked up a book to read, and opened it idly.

It was a book in German, and would have been hard enough study for any other fellow in the Remove. But it was light reading to Parkinson. As it happened, it was the old tale of Chamisso, the story of Peter Schlemihl, the shadowless man.

Reading was a great resource to Parkinson. Reading, he could forget his worries and his troubles, more or less.

And it was an interesting story, a German romance written in the days when Germans were romantic, and had not yet developed Hunnishness.

Parkinson found himself quite interested in poor Peter, and the dark and mysterious



"Ink is useless to me," said the Man in the Grey Coat. "My bonds are signed in another fluid—blood!" "Oh!" gasped Parkinson. (See Chapter 3).

Man in the Grey Coat, who offered Peter the treasures of the earth in return for signing away his soul.

Of course, it was a fabulous tale: no demon ever did walk the earth in the guise of a man in a grey coat, seeking the souls of poor sinners.

Nevertheless, it was a good story; and Parkinson found himself keenly interested in the trials and struggles of Peter Schlemihl, persecuted by the Man in Grey, with his mysterious parchment, and his pen dipped in blood, and his offers of untold treasures in return for Peter's signature.

He dropped the book on his knee at last, and sat staring at the fire.

Parkinson was an imaginative fellow: he could imagine it all.

Peter Schlemihl had been right in refusing to sign the deadly parchment, and bargain

away his soul for the treasures of the earth. But the offer of the gratification of every desire must have been a powerful temptation.

Parkinson found himself wondering and supposing and imagining.

Suppose, for instance, it was not a fable, and the Man in the Grey Coat really walked the earth, like a lion seeking whom he might devour. Suppose he put in an appearance at Greyfriars, and offered Parkinson, not the treasures of the earth, but great distinction as a footballer—a place in the eleven; that would have been Parkinson's weak spot—his Achilles' heel where he might have been touched.

Suppose—

Parkinson allowed his fancy to roam.

Suppose—only suppose—it had been possible, and that the Man in Grey had appeared

at his elbow, parchment and pen in hand, with his insinuating address, offering Parkinson his heart's desire, in return for that trifle of a signature?

What would Parkinson have replied?

Really, he wondered.

To become, at one jump, a wonderful footballer; to be chosen amid wild acclaim to play for Greyfriars; to kick goals right and left, and be borne off the field on the shoulders of a hurrahing crowd. His heart beat fast at the bare thought of it, and his eyes flashed. That would be worth something—worth a lot of risk.

Really, had the Man in Grey had a real existence, and had he appeared in Parkinson's study at that moment, the Remove fellow could hardly have answered for himself! He was not at all sure that he would have imitated Peter Schlemihl's firmness in rejecting the insinuating offers of the Man in the Grey Coat. He would have wished to do so, of course. But could he have done so?

He was not at all sure.

He stared at the glimmering fire, allowing his fancy to play with such weird thoughts. Perhaps it was fortunate for Parkinson that the story was only a fable, and that such things were not possible. And yet—

How silent it was in the Remove passage. Generally that passage was rather noisy—in fact, very noisy! It was very silent now. Parkinson could hear no sound, and he was growing drowsy, and the fire was a red blur before his eyes. If it had been possible—if the Man in the Grey Coat had appeared at his elbow—what would he have done? He wondered and wondered.

Suddenly he gave a start.

The light was on in the study—the room should have been fully illuminated. But it was growing dusky—the light seemed to be burning dim and blue.

And suddenly Parkinson became conscious of the fact that he was no longer alone in the study.

It was not his study mate, Trevor, who had come in, he knew that. Trevor always came in noisily, with a bang of the door: and Parkinson had not even heard the door open. He did not even hear a footfall. Yet he knew

—he was strangely and acutely aware—that there was someone beside himself in the room.

He felt a slight shudder run through him.

He had been wishing—yes, actually wishing—that the Man in the Grey Coat would appear to him, and offer him the fulfilment of his ambition at the price of a word written on a parchment. Was it possible? Could such things be true? Had the mysterious Man in Grey, conscious of his unspoken wish, glided into his presence from the realm of shadows?

It was impossible, of course—absurd! Parkinson tried to laugh. But he found that he could not laugh—he could not speak. He was thrilling from head to foot, with a strange terror, in that mysterious and eerie presence which he realised now was in the room.

In the bluish shadow that now filled the study he was conscious of a form before his eyes. A shabby, elderly man, dressed in an old grey coat, stood in Parkinson's study.

Parkinson trembled from head to foot.

It was true, then! It was possible! It was not a fable! He rubbed his eyes with shaking fingers, and looked again. It was no deception. The Man in the Grey Coat stood before him.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Sign!

"GOOD-EVENING, Master Parkinson."

The strange visitor bowed politely to Parkinson of the Lower Fourth, over the old grey hat he held in his hand.

His voice was thin and reedy, very civil in tone; indeed respectful, deferential.

Parkinson was not much accustomed to deference, and he could not help being rather pleased.

There was something in the quiet, matter-of-fact greeting, too, that had a reassuring effect.

After all, this could not be the man in grey who had so sorely tempted Peter Schlemihl. He looked like anything but a demon in disguise. An old clothes merchant of the shabby-genteel variety would have been a better description.

The old codger had wandered into Greyfriars somehow, and got into Parkinson's

study—no doubt he was going to ask where he was, or the way out. That was a more probable explanation than that he was the Enemy of Mankind seeking to entrap Parkinson into an unholy compact.

Parkinson was reassured. His hair no longer rose on his scalp, but he was conscious of a feeling of disappointment, too. For if it had been the Man in Grey of Chamisso's romance, he could have had the fulfilment of his ambition for the asking, at a price, it was true; but was there, after all, any price he was not prepared to pay for a football triumph?

"Oh, good-evening," answered Parkinson, in an off-hand manner. "How the deuce did you get in here, old 'un?"

"Did you not call me?"

Parkinson started again.

Had his unspoken wish been regarded as a call? Was his first surmise correct, then, and was this the tempting demon?

Surely it was impossible!

But everything seemed so strange now, so odd and eerie, in that peculiar bluish light that pervaded the room, that Parkinson felt that really he would have been astonished at nothing.

"Look here, who are you?" he demanded sharply.

The elderly man smiled.

"Your friend in need," he answered.

"If you deal in old clothes," said Parkinson, "you've come in at the wrong door. Better cut."

Once more he started.

"I—I say, what's that in your hand?"

"Merely a parchment."

"A—a—a parchment!" murmured Parkinson, and his heart beat very fast.

"That is all."

"And—and that in your other hand?"

The elderly man had laid his old hat on the table.

"Merely a pen."

"A—a—a pen!" Again a thrill of superstitious fear ran through Parkinson. "Parchment—and a pen!" He tried to be humorous, to hide his terror. "Any ink about?"

"Ink would be useless to me," said the Man in the Grey Coat. "My bonds are signed in another fluid."

"In—in—in what?" breathed Parkinson. The reply came in a whisper.

"Blood!"

"Oh!" panted Parkinson.

It was true, then! It was the tempting demon come there to tempt him to his undoing. To offer him—what?

Or was it a trick—some jape of that fool Wibley, for example—Wibley dressed up like the horrible magician in the story of Schlemihl? Was it? Well, that was soon put to the test.

Parkinson glided his hand behind him and gripped a cushion.

Whiz!

The cushion flew straight at the thin, sallow face of the Man in the Grey Coat.

For a second the meagre features were blotted out from sight. The cushion whizzed on, crashed against the study wall, and dropped to the floor. The Man in the Grey Coat stood where he had stood, unmoved. The whizzing cushion had passed right through him.

Parkinson's hair rose again.

He had no further doubts now. His visitant was a visitant from another world; he was not of the earth, earthly.

That was clear.

"Do you guess now whom I am, Master Parkinson?" asked the Man in the Grey Coat, with a pale, meagre smile.

"Yes," said Parkinson hoarsely.

"Have you anything to ask me?"

Parkinson drew a deep, deep breath.

"What can you offer me?" he asked.

Already he was dallying with the tempter and the temptation.

But there was something reassuring, almost ridiculously so, in this thin, meagre, elderly man, with his shabby old grey coat. His manner, too, was so deferential and insinuating that it was hard to feel alarm. If, indeed, he were a phantom, he seemed at least a very harmless and propitiatory one—one who need not inspire dread.

"Anything you ask."

"Do you know what I want?"

"I know, and your wish shall be granted," said the Man in the Grey Coat. "Your ambition shall be realised. To-morrow——"



With all his strength, Parkinson flung the cushion at the thin, sallow face of the Man in the Grey Coat—and the whizzing cushion appeared to pass right through him! (See Chapter 3.)

"To-morrow!" breathed Parkinson.

"Your name shall appear in the Rookwood list."

"Honest Injun?" gasped Parkinson.

"You will play in the match. You will kick more goals than have ever been kicked in a football match before."

"Oh, draw it mild," said Parkinson. "I can't kick goals! I told the fellows that some day they'd be glad to play me. It was all swank. I can't kick goals! I can hardly kick a cat—if I wanted to."

"You shall count your goals by the dozen, if you choose," said the Man in the Grey Coat, calmly.

"But—but——"

"I will give you your heart's desire. A

score never equalled before in the Association game——"

"Oh!" breathed Parkinson.

"Thundering cheers for Parkinson——"

"Ah!"

"A triumphant procession from the field—shoulder-high——"

Parkinson's eyes danced.

It was the glorious vision of which he had often dreamed. Often he had dreamed it, but never dreamed that it would ever materialise. But now—the power was in this grey-coated man's hands. He was going to use it on his—Parkinson's—behalf! For the moment, the ambitious junior forgot that there would be a price to pay for all this. Human beings do not deal with demons for

nothing. But he forgot that circumstance, in his dazzling vision of glory.

"Shall it be so?" asked the Man in the Grey Coat, in his insinuating voice. "Say the word, Master Parkinson! What I promise I can perform."

"Done!" gasped Parkinson, without even stopping to think. He was not going to part with that glorious vision if he could help it.

"Very good!" The thin hand came forward with the parchment in it. "Merely as a business precaution—I am a business-like man—let us make a written note of it. You sign here."

Parkinson shrank back.

He had forgotten, but he remembered now. And a sudden glitter that came into the dull eyes of the man in grey startled him.

"I—I can't!" he stammered.

"Why not?" asked the old man smoothly.

"I—I—I know who you are, you know," said Parkinson, shrinking. "You're an awfully bad hat, you know. I—I say, do you notice a smell of sulphur?"

"Not at all."

"Seems to me I notice it," said Parkinson uneasily, "and—and I don't like the look in your eye. I—I think we'll call it off, and—and you'd better go."

The Man in the Grey Coat laughed.

"Your heart's desire, Master Parkinson—in return for scratching your initials on this piece of parchment? Is it much to ask?"

"Well, no—but—"

"Merely a record of the transaction," urged the man in grey, his eyes shining again for a second.

"Is—is—is that all?"

"That is all! Your initials—and to-morrow you play football for your school amid wild cheers—"

"Gimme the pen."

The pen was in Parkinson's fingers as he spoke. It seemed to leap there of its own accord, as if by magic.

"Where's the ink?"

Parkinson looked round, but could not see his own ink-pot. All seemed so strange in his study now, almost uncanny. In the bluish shadows there were flickers as of tiny flames, and there was a distinct smell of sulphur.

"Your arm——" It was a murmur from the Man in the Grey Coat. "A slight prick will be enough—it will not hurt you—"

"Oh, I remember—ink won't do—" Parkinson hesitated a second. It is well said that he who hesitates is lost. So it was with Parkinson.

Visions of the morrow's amazing triumph danced before his dazzled brain. The fellows who had laughed at him in the changing-room. What would they say, when his score against Rookwood ran up to a total never before known in the Association game! He jabbed the pen-nib into his arm, and the point came away reddened. A moment more, and he had scratched his initials on the parchment, in crimson, and the thing was done.

Crash!

Was it a thunderclap!

It seemed to Parkinson that it was the loudest thunderclap he had ever heard. It shook the study, and echoed with deafening sound. For a second all was dark.

Then the room cleared—the shadows, the blue light and the flickering flame-points, were gone—the light burned as usual, in Parkinson's study in the Remove passage; he looked round, and all was normal. There was the fire, dying low; there were his books—there was "Peter Schlemihl" on his knee—he was alone: the Man in the Grey Coat had vanished. Had it all been a dream?

The study door opened, and Trevor of the Remove came in.

He looked at Parkinson, and sniffed. Then he looked round the study and sniffed again.

"What the thump have you been burning here?" he demanded.

"Burning?" repeated Parkinson, with a guilty start.

"Yes! You taking up chemistry?" asked Trevor.

"N-n-no."

"If you do, you'll jolly well have to change into another study," said Trevor, "but if you haven't, what have you been up to? Making fireworks?"

"N-n-no."

"Well, somebody's been burning sulphur here, I know that! It's jolly thick," said

Trevor, indignantly, and he went out of the study and slammed the door.

Parkinson was left alone again, but with a beating heart. It was true, then—he knew it was true; Trevor had noticed the smell of sulphur left behind by his unearthly visitor. Parkinson trembled. What had he done?

But it was too late to think of that. What he had done, he had done, and it was irrevocable now. He hardly knew whether he regretted it. And then he thought of the intoxicating triumph of the morrow, and knew that he did not regret it.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Amazing

“PARKINSON!”

“Impossible!”

“Bosh!”

“I say, you fellows, it’s too thick!”

“There it is, though!”

There it was!

In Harry Wharton’s handwriting, in the football list posted on the door of the Rag, appeared the name of Albert Parkinson.

It was Wednesday morning, in the break between second and third lessons. At breakfast-time Parkinson’s name had not been there; the list had been complete. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had seen his name there, down to play at inside-right. Every fellow in the Remove, from the Bounder himself to Parkinson, had seen his name there.

Now it was gone.

In the place of Smith’s name, the name of Albert Parkinson was written, in the well-known “fist” of the captain of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith stared at it, scarcely able to believe his eyes. Had he been dropped for any other fellow, it would not have incensed the Bounder so much. But to be dropped for Parkinson—Parkinson!—that was the limit! It was, as Bolsover major remarked, the very outside edge!

“Is Wharton potty?” asked Tom Brown, in wonder.

“Potty isn’t the word, if he plays Parkinson,” said Squiff. “He’s a dangerous lunatic—nothing more or less.”

“It’s a joke—a giddy jape!”

“It must be!”

“Let’s ask Wharton what he means.

There was a rush to seek the captain of the Remove. He was strolling in the quadrangle with—Parkinson!

Parkinson, who was nobody in particular—less than nobody when it came to football—was walking arm-in-arm with the captain of the form, and holding his head very high.

They were talking football!

“Beat them!” Wharton was saying. “My dear chap, we shall beat Rookwood all right—now we’ve got you!”

Parkinson smiled. The effect of those words on the Removites as they came crowding up was remarkable.

“Hallo, anything up, you fellows?” asked Wharton.

“I should jolly well say so!” gasped Bob Cherry. “Football matches ain’t a proper subject for japing, Harry.”

“Who’s been japing?”

“You have—unless you are really thinking of playing Parkinson—”

“I’m not thinking of it—I’ve decided on it,” said Wharton warmly. “I’m not likely to leave out the best man at Greyfriars.”

“The—the—the what?”

“That ass—”

“That chump—”

“That frabjous fozzler—”

The Remove fellows simply spluttered. They gazed at Wharton, and they gazed at Parkinson. What did it all mean?

“Oh, cut it out!” said the captain of the Remove. “Sorry to drop you at the last minute like this, Smithy, old man—but football’s football, and a better man having turned up—”

“A—a—a better man!” stuttered the Bounder.

“That’s how it is, old scout.”

“Who’s the better man?” yelled the Bounder.

“Parkinson!”

“Pi-pip-Parkinson! Oh, my hat!”

“You’re not serious?” hawled Bob Cherry.

“Sober as a judge, old chap!” said the captain of the Remove, raising his eyebrows.

“Why?”

“Why!” gasped Bob. “He asks why?”

"The whyfulness is terrific!" stuttered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Don't you know he's a frumptions foozler?" shrieked Johnny Bull. "Only yesterday you said so yourself."

"Yesterday isn't to-day, old man."

"Get a pip! Has Parkinson suddenly turned into a wonderful footballer overnight?"

Wharton paused. He seemed for the moment, a little perplexed himself. He had to admit that his comrades had a right to be surprised. Yet he was quite sure of his own firm belief in Parkinson.

"What's made you change your mind about the idiot?" bawled Bob Cherry.

Wharton rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I can quite explain that," he said frankly. "It flashed into my mind quite suddenly that Parkinson was the man!"

"Let it flash out again, then," growled Squiff, "and the sooner the better."

"Parkinson's the man, I tell you," said Wharton warmly. "Don't I know anything about footer? Have I ever let you down? Did you ever know me play a dud in a School match?"

"Well, no; but you're starting now."

"Rats!"

"Parkinson's no good!" roared the Bounder. "Leave me out for any other fellow you like—but not Parkinson! Not that bumbler!"

"Parkinson plays. He's going to win for us."

"Are you potty?"

"Wandering in your mind?"

Parkinson merely smiled. He knew how it was that the idea of playing him had flashed into Wharton's brain. He wondered whether

Wharton had noticed a smell of sulphur at the time.

"Look here, you chaps!" said Parkinson, and his old timid manner was quite gone; he spoke with cool and easy assurance.

"I'm the man you want—"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Ring off!"

"I'll prove it to you," said Parkinson



The astounded juniors found Parkinson strolling arm in arm with the Captain of the Remove. "Yes, Parkinson is playing against Rookwood this afternoon," Wharton said in answer to their startled queries. (See Chapter 4.)

coolly. "Like to see me take a kick, to show what I can do? Chuck that ball over here, Temple."

Temple & Co. of the Fourth were punting a ball about. It was not like Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth Form, to obey the careless behest of a Remove fellow. But something seemed to impel him to obey, and he

punted the ball across to Parkinson without a word.

Parkinson stopped it with his foot. Instead of missing it by a yard or two, as the fellows naturally expected, he stopped it.

"Now, look here," he said to the staring and glaring Removites, "I'll show you a kick! See me send this ball over the clock-tower."

"Oh, don't be an ass!", said Bob Cherry.

"Fathead!"

"Piffler!"

The clock tower was sixty or seventy feet high. It stood a good three hundred yards from the spot where the excited juniors had surrounded Parkinson and the captain of the Remove. It was, of course, an impossible kick. But Parkinson seemed prepared to take it.

"Oh, don't play the goat," said Johnny Bull.

"Think I can't do it?" smiled Parkinson.

"I know you can't, ass! You'd know it too, if you weren't nine-tenths potty and one-tenth idiot."

"If I don't do it," said Parkinson, "I stand out of the Rookwood match this afternoon."

"Oh, good!"

"We'll keep you to that!"

"Go it, Parky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Parkinson lounged to the ball, and kicked in a careless sort of way. The juniors expected the leather to glide a few feet and stop in any direction but that of the clock tower. Amazing to relate, the ball rose true as a die, and flew—and flew—and flew—till it was difficult to follow it with the eye. Right over the clock tower it flew, and vanished.

The whole crowd gasped.

There was silence—a long silence! There was something uncanny about this—something most decidedly queer! Parkinson smiled genially.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"What did I tell you fellows?" grinned Wharton. "Isn't Parkinson the man—isn't he a rod in pickle for Rookwood?"

There was no answer. The crowd broke up in silent amazement; and no voice was raised again on the subject of Parkinson's inclusion.

(Continued on page 79.)



Parkinson kicked in a careless sort of way, and the ball rose true as a die. Right over the clock tower it flew, and vanished! The whole crowd gasped! (See Chapter 4.)

About dinner time, Temple of the Fourth came in, with the football—he said that he had picked it up a quarter of a mile away. Comment was superfluous. Unless there was black magic in it, Parkinson was the most wonderful kick that ever kicked a footer. When Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, arrived at Greyfriars that afternoon to play the Remove, Parkinson went down to Little Side with Harry Wharton & Co., as a matter of course. And all the Removites who were not in the eleven rolled down after them, to see the game—above all, to see Parkinson play! Fellows of other forms, who had seen or heard of that amazing lift over the clock tower, came along too—even Wingate of the Sixth came, to stare at Parkinson. There was an unprecedented gathering on Little Side that afternoon for the Rookwood match.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### The Rookwood Match

**J**IMMY SILVER & Co., of Rookwood School, looked in fine fettle.

Rookwood always sent out good footballers, either senior or junior, and Jimmy Silver and his men were accustomed to giving a good account of themselves.

The Rookwood match, indeed, was one of the biggest of the Greyfriars junior fixtures, equalling the St. Jim's and Highcliffe matches in importance. To be picked out to play against Rookwood was a great distinction.

That was one reason why Parkinson had been so terribly keen on it. After he had played Rookwood—successfully—nobody would possibly be able to say that he was not a footballer.

And he was going to play successfully. There was no doubt on that point. The

Man in the Grey Coat had taken care of that. Black magic or white magic, any old magic, Parkinson didn't care now. He was reckless of everything but football fame.

The mere sight of the pink-and-white of the Rookwooders had an inspiring effect on him: like—as the poet puts it, “the impatient steed of war, who sniffs the battle from afar!”

That day the pink-and-white of Rookwood was destined to go down hopelessly before the blue-and-white of Greyfriars. On that point there was no doubt—no possible probable shadow of doubt, no probable doubt whatever. For the power of the Man in the Grey Coat was unbounded—that day Parkinson was to be a terrific footballer, and to kick as many goals as he liked—and he was certain to like to kick a good many.

Jimmy Silver & Co., if they had only known it, hadn't an earthly—not the ghost of an earthly.

Not knowing it, however, they looked very merry and bright, and seemed to think that they were going to win.

Parkinson, as a matter of fact, was going to win. Harry Wharton & Co., for once, were going to be simply passengers in their own team. It was an amazing, a thrilling thought to Parkinson. As for the price he had to pay for all this, he tried not to think of it, and he succeeded fairly well.

The remembrance of the crimson signature on the parchment gave him a sort of cold feeling down his spine. But he drove away that remembrance. He was going to win for Greyfriars, at his favourite game, amid wild and exuberant applause; it was going to be a case of Eclipse first and the rest nowhere. That was a compensation.

He looked over the Rookwooders, and was glad to see that they looked a good crowd. The better they were, the more distinction would he gain by beating them. He did not want to beat “duds.” But that was all right; there were no duds in Jimmy Silver's eleven. Every man in it was quite equal to his business.

Harry Wharton greeted the Rookwood skipper cheerily. It was a fine, clear, cold afternoon, ideal weather for football. Everybody concerned seemed to be anticipating the game in great spirits.

Even the Remove players had given up bewailing the fact that Parkinson was in their ranks. That astonishing kick over the clock-tower had convinced them, while it staggered them. A fellow who could do that could do anything.

Parkinson, obviously, was a dark horse. He had "come out" suddenly and unexpectedly. But he had come out.

"You haven't met Parkinson, I think," Wharton remarked, as he chatted with Jimmy Silver and his friends. "New man here, and I don't mind telling you he's a rod in pickle for you."

Jimmy Silver shook hands with Parkinson, and smiled.

"Our inside-right," said Wharton. "Wonderful man! I really think I ought to tell you that much."

"Thanks," smiled Jimmy Silver.

Arthur Edward Lovell, of Rookwood, grinned. Mornington closed one eye at Erroll, and Conroy and Tommy Dodd and other fellows smiled.

The fact was, Parkinson did not look like a wonderful footballer.

His person was weedy, and in football rig it looked scantier and weedier than ever. His forehead was imposing, certainly. His powerful brain almost bulged with Greek, and German, and mathematics. But these acquirements, of course, did not show on the outside. Moreover, even if they had been visible to the eye, they would not have been of much use in Soccer.

On his looks, Parkinson would not have been taken for a man great at games. The Rookwooders almost thought that Wharton was pulling their leg, as he gave them that good-natured warning to look out for Parkinson. Still, as he was in the Greyfriars team, he had to be taken more or less seriously.

Parkinson noticed the smiles of the Rookwooders, and smiled himself.

Before very long they would be doing anything but smiling. He was well aware of that.

Jimmy Silver won the toss, and gave Greyfriars the kick-off. As the footballers went to their places, Arthur Edward Lovell murmured to Jimmy Silver:

"They must be short of men here to play that."

Lovell actually alluded to Parkinson as "that."

Jimmy grinned.

"He doesn't impress me," he agreed.

"Looks as if he would break, if he were pushed," remarked Mornington. "There's Smithy standing out. Wharton's left him out to play that—that—that—I don't know what to call him."

"It's odd," said Jimmy.

"Beats me!" assented Lovell.

"We shall be a man ahead in this game," observed Tommy Dodd. "I'll touch that chap with my little finger, to begin with, and crumple him up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Parkinson, in the Remove ranks, somehow seemed to hear all this. All his senses were strangely acute that day, doubtless owing to the unearthly influence of the Man in the Grey Coat.

He grinned cheerily.

"There's a surprise in store for those Rookwood chaps," he remarked to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, his neighbour on the right.

The dusky junior eyed him dubiously.

"Let us hope that the surprisefulness will be terrific," he said.

"You can bet your socks on that!" said Parkinson.

He glanced round the field.

The crowd outside the ropes was thick, and growing thicker. All the Remove were present, even Lord Mauleverer had come along, and Billy Bunter had resisted the fascinations of the tuck-shop. Even Skinner & Co. were, for once, keenly interested in football.

Head and shoulders over the crowd, Parkinson saw Wingate of the Sixth, and captain of the school. He knew that Wingate's eyes were upon him. And there were Coker and Potter and Greene and many more of the Fifth; and Hobson and his friends of the Shell, and Temple, Dabney & Co., and a whole crowd of the Fourth.

Seldom, or never, had a junior match at Greyfriars had so distinguished and numerous an audience.

And they were all interested in Parkinson.

Elation swelled in his breast. He seemed to be treading on air. It was worth something to experience this. Whether it was worth the price he had to pay, Parkinson had ceased to consider. He gave himself up wholly to the joy of the hour.

Gwynne of the Sixth was acting as referee. The sides lined up, and Gwynne blew the whistle.

The ball rolled. And then began the greatest game ever played at Greyfriars—a game that exceeded the wildest anticipations of every fellow present.

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Parkinson astonishes the Natives.

"On the ball!" "Play up, Greyfriars!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. got away very quickly. Pink and white came up the field in great style.

Squiff, in goal, was besieged.

But Johnny Bull and Mark Linley, at back, got the ball away, and a hefty kick from Johnny sent it to midfield.

Then came Parkinson's chance.

He was after the ball, and fellows who stared at him did not even see his feet touch the ground, so amazing was his pace.

Tommy Dodd, inside right of the Rookwood team, had declared that he would touch "that" with his little finger and crumple him up. Parkinson, in his lightning rush, came across from the Greyfriars right wing, and Tommy Dodd, falling back to defend, came in contact with him.

Tommy Dodd of Rookwood had met many a charge in his time. But never had he encountered a charge like this.

He had never been charged by a five-ton lorry in full career. Had he been, this would have reminded him of it.

Without even knowing how it had happened, or what had happened, in fact, Tommy

Dodd found himself lying on the ground six yards from Parkinson.

Parkinson was on the ball.

He was taking it up the field on his lonesome own.

The rest of the Greyfriars forwards were nowhere. The Rookwood backs closed in to stop Parkinson.

They were Tommy Doyle and Towle, of the Rookwood Fourth. Humanly speaking, they would have stopped Parkinson. Both of them were bigger and heavier than Parkinson, and

they were right in his path. That this weedy fellow could deal with both of them at once seemed impossible. They even grinned, as he came right at them with amazing speed. Rawson in goal behind them grinned, too. Rawson did not think that he would be wanted, but he was ready in case of need.

It was the unexpected, the undreamt-of, that happened.

Right and left reeled Doyle and Towle, as Parkinson came spinning through. They sprawled, and Rawson jumped, as the leather whizzed in.



"This is Parkinson," said Wharton as he introduced him to the Rookwood Captain. "He's a really wonderful inside-right." (See Chapter 5.)

Rawson's hand actually touched the leather. But, as if endowed with volition of its own the ball wound away from his clutching fingers, and landed in the net.

"Goal!"

It was a wild yell from the Greyfriars crowd; a yell of amazement and wonder and glee.

"Goal! Parkinson! Parkinson! Well kicked, sir!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Good old Parkinson!"

Parkinson breathed deep with joy and pride. It was the dream come true; it was all he had ever hoped for, realised at last. Parkinson, the goal-getter, was wildly cheered on the Greyfriars ground. His name was shouted far and wide.

"Parkinson! Parkinson!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Oh, good man!"

"Well kicked, Parkinson!"

Rawson of Rookwood, with an extraordinary expression on his face, tossed out the ball.

He could scarcely believe it. But it had happened. Jimmy Silver gazed at Parkinson; Arthur Edward Lovell blinked at him. All the Rookwooders exchanged surprised glances.

What sort of a fellow was this, who scattered Rookwooders like chaff before the wind, and kicked impossible goals in this style? Evidently they had not been right to judge by appearances.

Harry Wharton clapped Parkinson on the shoulder, as they walked back to the centre of the field.

"Keep that up, old man!" he said.

Parkinson smiled.

"I will!" he said.

And he did!

Rookwood kicked off, and tried to get going. But before they knew where they were, so to speak, Parkinson had robbed them of the ball, and was taking it home to the visitors' goal. Halves could not touch him, backs crumpled up before him, Rawson though he performed almost like an acrobat, could not reach the ball that bounded in.

"Goal!"

The Greyfriars crowd had scarcely recovered

breath after yelling for the first goal. Now they had to yell for the second.

Two minutes later they had to yell for the third. To do justice to Parkinson, they needed their second wind.

Wingate of the Sixth stared at Parkinson, and turned to Loder, who stood by him in the crowd.

"That's a man for the First Eleven!" he said.

"A Remove fag!" ejaculated Loder.

"Fag or not, he's the best kick at goal I've ever seen, and he plays for Greyfriars in the next match!" said Wingate.

Joy irradiated the face of Parkinson. Somehow, distant as he was, he heard it all. His ambition had been to play for his Form. Now, already, he was picked to play for the Greyfriars First Eleven—on his merits! His cup of joy was full.

The game went on. The Greyfriars crowd grew hoarse with shouting and cheering, goal after goal.

Harry Wharton, Hurree Singh, and other fellows who were usually depended upon to score, seemed nowhere.

It was Parkinson's game.

Goal after goal, and every one from Parkinson! Gwynne was almost staggering with astonishment, when he blew the whistle for the interval.

"Fifteen to nil!" he murmured to himself. "Is this a giddy dream? Fifteen goals to nil! Oh, my hat!"

Really, it seemed like a dream, even to Parkinson.

In the interval, his comrades surrounded him, wildly enthusiastic. They congratulated him, they smacked him on the back. Parkinson was the hero of the hour.

Was this the same fellow who had been laughed at in the changing room—the fellow whose desire to play in the Rookwood match had sent the Remove fellows into roars of laughter? He did not feel like the same fellow. Deeply did Parkinson drink of the intoxicating cup of triumph, in these happy moments.

"You fellows grumbled when I put Parkinson in!" grinned Wharton. "What do you say now?"

"It was a stroke of genius, old chap!" said Bob Cherry.

"It was great!"

"The greatfulness was terrific."

"Feeling a bit tired, Parky old man?" asked the captain of the Remove.

Parkinson laughed.

"Tired? No fear!"

And indeed, Parkinson was as fresh as paint. So were the rest of the team, for that matter, but that was not surprising, for they really had had very little to do. But Parkinson had exerted himself all the time; yet he showed no sign of fatigue. It was one more of the wonders of that wonderful day.

"Feel up to taking a few more goals, what?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather. As many as you like."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Make it up to fifty!" chuckled Squiff.

"Done!"

"Touch wood!" grinned Bob.

"My dear chap, leave it to me!" said Parkinson, serenely.

And when the whistle blew, and the Remove fellows went back into the field, they really were quite prepared to see Parkinson make the total up to half a hundred. After what had happened, nothing from Parkinson would have surprised them.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Hero of the Hour

"GOAL!"

The first minute of the second half had elapsed. And the sixteenth goal was on record.

"Goal! Parkinson!"

"Oh, good man!"

"Bravo, Parkinson!"

Dismay had fallen upon Rookwood. Jimmy Silver, whose favourite maxim was "Keep smiling," forgot to smile.

Really it seemed futile to play up against form like this. It was not that Rookwood were playing badly—not at all. They were at the top of their form—every Rookwooder there was playing the game of his life.

But it was useless. Tottenham Hotspur or Aston Villa could not have played Parkinson that day. Corinthians would have gone down before him like corn before the sickle. Unless there was magic in it, it was past understanding. But there it was: there was Parkinson, fresh as paint, showing no sign of fatigue after his terrific exertions, scoring away at the rate almost of a goal to two minutes.

Goal after goal; till the mounting total was



Parkinson sent the Rookwood backs flying, then he sent the ball humming beyond the goalie's clutching fingers into the net. He had scored in the first minute! (See Chapter 6.)

dazzling—goals at soccer mounting up like runs at cricket!

The Greyfriars fellows were hoarse and busky with cheering. But after a time, the cheering died down.

Something strange, something uncanny, struck the watching, breathless crowd, as they gazed at the lightning figure of Parkinson—here, there, and everywhere, playing the game



Amidst the plaudits of the cheering crowd Parkinson was borne off the field on the shoulders of the Greyfriars team. "Bravo, Parkinson! Good old Parkinson!" they yelled. (See Chapter 7.)

Skinner caught the general enthusiasm and yelled. Wingate of the Sixth forced a way through the hurrahing mob, and shook hands with Parkinson, in sight of all Greyfriars.

"First eleven match on Saturday—you'll be wanted, Parkinson," said the captain of Greyfriars.

That was the climax!

A Remove fellow in the First Eleven—and that Remove fellow Parkinson! It was a day of miracles.

"Hurrah! Parkinson! Parkinson! Bravo!"

Breathless, giddy, elated, dizzy with happiness, Parkinson was set down at last.

And after that there were celebrations—a feast of the gods in the Rag, crammed with enthusiastic admirers of Parkinson;

Parkinson's health drunk in lemonade and ginger beer and ginger wine, with almost unending cheers for Parkinson. The cheers were still ringing in Parkinson's burning ears when he got away at last and went to his study, his cup of happiness full to the very brim.

And then——!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### Very Lucky for Parkinson

PARKINSON shuddered.

"I know you're there!" he said in a low voice.

There had been no sound in the study; but Parkinson knew that the Man in the Grey Coat had come for him.

The light was burning with that strange bluish shadow, making the whole room strange, eerie, uncanny, and in the atmosphere was that faint smell of sulphur that Parkinson remembered. No sound; but he felt the presence—the dread presence of the Man in the Grey Coat, who had given him his heart's desire, and had now returned to demand the price.

Vague, shadowy, the figure of the man in grey loomed up before Parkinson's eyes, in the eerie shadows of the room. It grew in distinctness; it stood defined, clear. But the Man in the Grey Coat was no longer humble, deferential, insinuating. His pallid face was wrinkled in a hideous, triumphant grin; his eyes burned like heated bronze, and seemed to scorch Parkinson; his lip was curled in a sardonic sneer.

Parkinson sat and trembled.

What had he done? He had had his triumph, he had enjoyed it to the full—to the very dregs he had drunk the cup of success. After the feast, the reckoning—and the reckoning had come.

"Slave!"

Parkinson started.

But it was true; the crimson signature on the fatal parchment had made him the slave of this mocking fiend.

"Slave! Rise and follow your master!"

Parkinson panted.

"Not yet! Not yet!"

An invisible power seemed dragging at the unhappy Parkinson. He clung in desperation to the arms of the chair.

"Where?" he breathed.

Again the demon laughed. Flame flashed from his eyes; his breath on Parkinson's cheek was scorching, like the breath of a furnace.

"Follow!"

A hand, of which the clutching fingers, that looked like talons, were outlined in flickering flames, grasped at Parkinson. Wildly, desperately he clung to the chair—he shouted, he shrieked—he fought madly—he struggled with frantic strength—

\* \* \*

"Ow! You silly ass!"

"What's the matter with him?"

"Potty, I should think!"

"Nightmare!"

"The silly owl went to sleep with his silly head hanging down——"

"Wake up, you clump!"

"Parkinson, you ass——!"

Parkinson stared round him wildly. The bluish light had vanished, the strange shadows were gone; the study had its normal aspect, and the Man in the Grey Coat had disappeared. Trevor, his study-mate, was grasping him—half a dozen other Remove fellows were in the room, or staring in at the doorway. Parkinson panted and gasped, and stared at them wildly.

"Has he gone?"

"Has who gone?" asked Harry Wharton.

"He—him—that man in the grey coat——!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's still dreaming!" said Bob Cherry.

"Dreaming!" gasped Parkinson.

Wharton laughed.

"You went to sleep in your chair, old chap, and you seem to have had a corker of a nightmare. Trevor was quite scared when he came in and found you struggling and groaning, and called us——"

"Made us jump, too," said Nugent.

"What on earth were you dreaming about, Parkinson?"

"Dreaming!" repeated Parkinson.

Trevor picked up a book that had fallen to the fender, and had been scorched by the fire, and was still smoking. It was "Peter Schlemihl."

"German!" sniffed Trevor. "Enough to make a fellow dream giddy nightmares."

"Did you see him?" gasped Parkinson.

"See whom?"

"Him! The demon——"

"Oh, my hat! This seems to have been some nightmare!" said Bob Cherry. "It's all right, Parky, you've only been dreaming! Were you reading about jolly old demons when you went to sleep?"

"Yes—I—I——" Parkinson tried to pull himself together. His brain was still in a whirl. "You—you didn't see him——?"



Parkinson trembled as he gazed into the leering, sardonic features of the Man in the Grey Coat. He clung in terror to the arm of his chair, then fought with a mad desperation as the man's talon-like fingers came out to grip him. (See Chapter 8.)

"Ha. ha! No! You're not quite awake yet! Shouldn't go to sleep with your head hanging down."

Parkinson rubbed his eyes. Apparently he had been asleep—in fact, it was clear that he had been asleep. Had he only dreamed the presence of the Man in the Grey Coat? Was he not, after all, to pay the terrible price of his amazing success at soccer? His head grew lighter at the thought, but he still felt strange and confused.

"Then he wasn't here—I—I see—" he stammered. "It's all right, you fellows. I dare say I got a bit excited over the match, and—and—"

"Eh! What match?"

"The Rookwood match, of course."

The juniors stared at him, quite strangely, and exchanged glances. Parkinson forced a laugh.

"It's all right! Don't worry! I'm a bit dizzy—we rather kept it up in the Rag, you know, after the game—"

"Eh?"

"You won't think twice about playing me in the next fixture, Wharton, what?" smiled Parkinson.

"Twice!" said Wharton. "More than twice, I fancy, Parkinson. The next fixture is the Rookwood match to-morrow, and you've already done your funny turn by asking to be played in it. Don't make the same joke twice."

Parkinson stared at him blankly. He looked round the study at a circle of wondering faces. Slowly, but surely, as the mists of sleep cleared away, he comprehended. He had not only dreamed that the Man in the Grey Coat had come for him. He had dreamed the whole thing. The Man in the Grey Coat had no existence outside the pages of "Peter Schlemihl," and he never had appeared to Parkinson in the study—he never had offered him the fatal parchment to sign—Parkinson had not, after all, sold himself to the evil one to realise his heart's desire. The Rookwood match had not yet been played—and when it was played Parkinson of the Remove had no earthly chance of playing in it.

"Oh!" said Parkinson.

He understood now! His face crimsoned.

"I say, are you ill, Parky?" asked Bob Cherry. "You seem jolly queer!"

Parkinson stammered.

"I—I—I've been dreaming—an awful dream!" he gasped. "I—I—dreamt I'd played in the Rookwood match——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And—and scored fifty goals——"

"Great Scott!"

"And—and"—Parkinson's voice trembled—"and—and it was—was only a dream, and—and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fifty goals! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove fellows cleared out of Parkinson's study, roaring with laughter. Parkinson was left alone again. He picked up "Peter Schlemihl," and hurled the volume

across the study with a crash. He looked at the clock—it was scarcely an hour since the fellows had been laughing at him in the changing-room. In dreamland events move swiftly.

In the mists and shadows of sleep, he had enjoyed his triumph; waking, he was never likely to experience anything of the kind. Bitter disappointment was his first feeling. But reflection followed, and as he remembered the Man in the Grey Coat, the burning eyes, the demoniac voice, he shuddered. If it had been real——

Luckily for Parkinson it had not been real.



The following day Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, arrived at Greyfriars for the football match.

Harry Wharton & Co. played them, and played them hard.

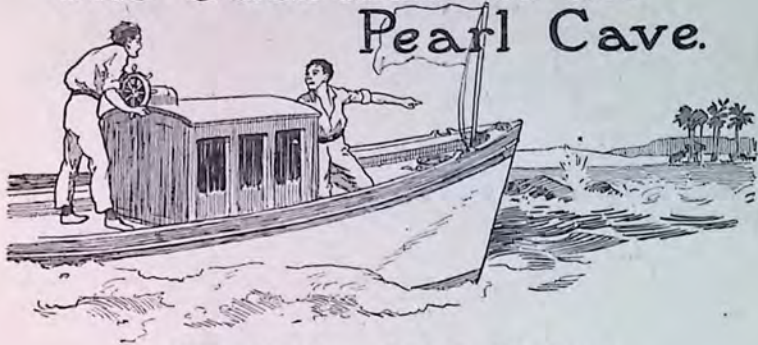
It was a good game, and Greyfriars remained the victors by three goals to two.

Parkinson watched the game with a strange

expression on his face. Nobody noticed it, however—nobody ever did notice Parkinson. He was thinking of the visionary game in which he had scored such amazing—visionary—triumphs. This game was a good game, but nothing like that—not to be compared with that!

Parkinson was not in it—Parkinson was an unregarded spectator. Football triumphs were not for him; but not for him, either, was the iron clutch of the Man in the Grey Coat. And upon the whole he was satisfied that the whole thing, from beginning to end, had been a nightmare, was—and he realised it—lucky for Parkinson!

# The Guardian of the Pearl Cave.



## A Dramatic Story of the Pacific Ocean By EDMUND BURTON

### THE FIRST CHAPTER

#### The Man on the Sand

THE big sea-going motor-boat churned slowly past the low-lying reef, a ripple of sparkling blue water curling from her bows.

A lithe figure, clad in cool white, lolled lazily at the wheel; whilst another, somewhat stouter of build, squatted close to the door of the comfortable little cabin, dreamily fanning himself in the hot air.

Presently the latter shifted his position slightly and pointed to a wide break in the coral wall. The smoother water of a quiet, palm-fringed lagoon showed just beyond.

"She'd easily pass through there. Shall we go in?" he said. "It's infernally warm, and those trees look inviting."

Dick Andrews nodded briefly—it was really too hot even to talk much—and spun the wheel round a couple of points. The motor-launch passed through the gap, entering the "dead" water on the far side.

Andrews and his companion, Bob Ferguson, were in business at Suva, in the Fijis, but both had recently been on the sick list, which neces-

sitated a prolonged holiday in order to recuperate; and, having saved a fair amount, they decided that a lengthy cruise among the many islands scattered about that part of the Pacific would be as good a way to kill time as any other. Thus, the vote being carried without opposition from either party, they had hired this roomy motor-boat, and, as can well be imagined, were enjoying themselves to the full.

Ferguson stood erect as the craft crawled across the lagoon, eagerly scanning the strip of silvery strand for a promising mooring-place. Then he suddenly uttered a surprised exclamation, which caused his companion to look up quickly.

"What's the matter?"

For answer Bob pointed ahead, and Dick's own eyes opened wide. The body of a man—apparently dead—was stretched on the sand, whilst a rough native boat was lying, half in and half out of the water, a few yards away.

They succeeded in mooring their own craft and sprang ashore, hurrying along the beach. The man—an islander—was *not* dead, but plainly in a bad way; for his body, principally

his arms and legs, showed numerous raw wounds—nasty, jagged “pecks,” they seemed to be, such as would be inflicted by the beak of some large bird of prey. A European, injured as he was and lying there in that broiling sunshine, could not have survived for long; but the native, born and bred in those latitudes, presently rewarded their ministrations by slowly opening his eyes.

Both had a smattering of many of the Pacific dialects, and gradually obtained some idea of what had taken place. The man was a professional pearl-diver, and had been operating in the neighbourhood, eventually discovering a deep hollow—a kind of cavern—under the lagoon’s bank, where mother-of-

pearl oysters lay spread thickly about the entrance—a great bed, so far untouched by anyone.

Delighted with his find, he had dived several times, until at length attacked without warning by some strange foes—great hairy things, armed with sharp claws, which accounted for his wounds; but the like of which he had never seen before. They had come from the farthestmost recesses of the submerged cave, and he had barely managed to escape with his life. . . . The man shuddered slightly as he pointed to a heap of oysters lying on the sand, where he had evidently cast them ere overcome by his injuries. Some were already opened by the fierce heat of the sun,



Bob pointed ahead, and Dick's eyes opened wide. The body of a man was stretched on the sand, whilst a native boat was lying a few yards away. (See Chapter 1.)

and most of these contained a magnificent pearl.

The two whites exchanged glances, their adventurous spirits strangely roused by the tale. If the rest of that oyster-bed was as rich as these specimens—well, it meant money, to say nothing of the promise of some excitement.

"Look here!" said Andrews, quick to form a decision. "We'll run this fellow back to Suva, have him properly doctored, and then get him to accompany us here. He'll show us where the spot is, though I'll bet he won't go down again himself. He's had a bad scare."

"Then you'll go down? We know nothing about diving—"

"You may not, but *I* do!" cut in the other. "Back home, I was pretty thick with a diver who was employed locally, and he showed me the ropes. I was down two or three times myself on the quiet, as a matter of fact, and it's not so difficult when you once get used to it—especially in moderately shallow water, such as this near the lagoon's rim. We'll get a diving-suit and pump at Suva; you'll be able to work the pump all right when I show you how—and—and— Well, I guess it's too good a chance to be missed. Are you game?"

Bob hesitated, but finally nodded assent.

"All right!" he said. "If you're satisfied that you can manage, I suppose *I* should be. But what about those—those— Oh, whatever beastly things attacked this chap? They'll—"

"My good fellow," interrupted Andrews, "you forget that 'this chap' was attired only in his bare skin, whereas *I'll* be toggled up in a rough rubber diving-suit. What's more, I know now what to look out for—he didn't."

It is wonderful how barriers can be broken down when one is bent upon attaining a certain object. The run back to Suva was accomplished in record time, and the pearl-diver properly attended to; but though grateful to them for their assistance, the man, as Dick had more than half-expected, flatly refused to go down again himself into the lagoon, no matter what riches lay there. But he agreed, on promise of a substantial share of whatever profits might accrue, to accom-

pany them back and point out the exact spot where he had originally dived.

During the time the native was recovering sufficiently to make the second trip, a reliable diving-suit was obtained and the necessary pump fitted into the motor-boat. The prolonged holiday was at last drawing to a close, and both whites were somewhat on tenter-hooks, fearing that there would not be time to carry out the project in view, but at length all was ready. They put to sea again, accompanied this time by a more cheerful being than the semi-conscious wreck of humanity they had found stretched on the coral strand, and eventually anchored the launch at a certain point in the lagoon which the islander indicated.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Mystery Eyes

THE thick circular glass was screwed home in front of the helmet, and Bob Ferguson slowly turned the pump-crank, the native paying out life-line and air-tube as Dick sank over the side. The water was not too deep, and consequently he was able to see his way quite easily, aided by the strong sunlight which filtered through from overhead.

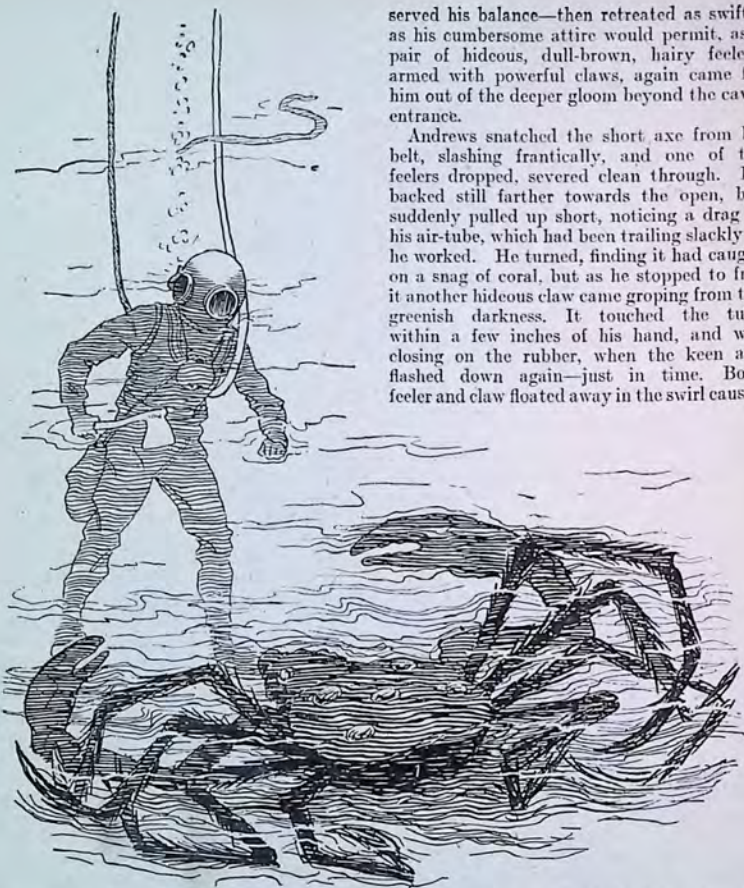
He took a few steps, quickly becoming used to his new element, and pushed forward towards the rim of the lagoon, which just here shelved very steeply and was mainly coral rock.

The islander's instructions had been explicit—so clear, indeed, that Andrews soon discovered a dark opening just ahead, round the entrance of which, and apparently continuing inside, thousands of promising pearl oysters lay spread like a carpet of shell.

He gathered several, placing them in a bag he carried at his waist; but as he progressed he noticed that the better-nourished ones seemed to lie right inside the cave itself.

He stepped gingerly forward, the native's story prompting him to use caution, despite his anxiety to gather the best specimens, but nothing disturbed the still water save the slight swirl made by his own movements.

Here, stooping, he added to his store, securing several fine bivalves, and was about to return in order to unload his bag when,



served his balance—then retreated as swiftly as his cumbersome attire would permit, as a pair of hideous, dull-brown, hairy feelers, armed with powerful claws, again came for him out of the deeper gloom beyond the cave-entrance.

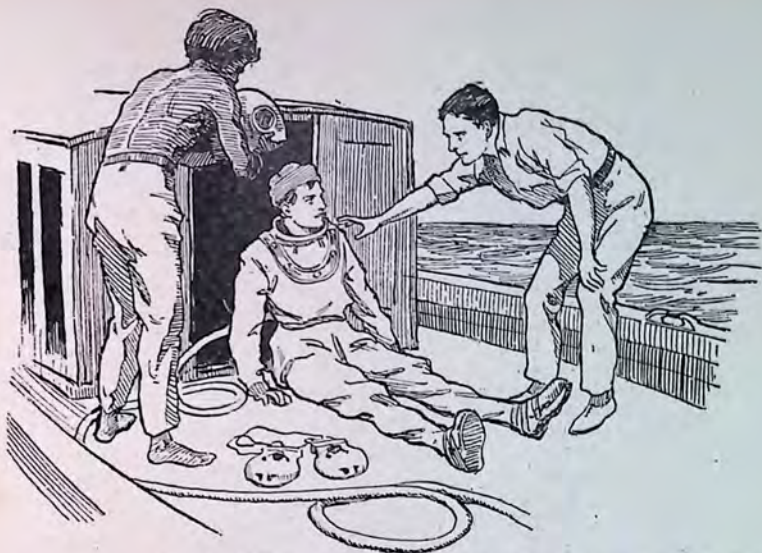
Andrews snatched the short axe from his belt, slashing frantically, and one of the feelers dropped, severed clean through. He backed still farther towards the open, but suddenly pulled up short, noticing a drag at his air-tube, which had been trailing slackly as he worked. He turned, finding it had caught on a snag of coral, but as he stopped to free it another hideous claw came groping from the greenish darkness. It touched the tube within a few inches of his hand, and was closing on the rubber, when the keen axe flashed down again—just in time. Both feeler and claw floated away in the swirl caused

Dick Andrews snatched the short axe from his belt, slashing frantically, and one of the feelers dropped, severed clean through! (See this page.)

without any warning, he felt something tug sharply at the tough rubber with which his legs were covered. He moved quickly, stumbled sideways, but fortunately pre-

by the swift passage of the blade, and whatever had possessed them drew back into the deepest recesses of the cavern.

Then, the perspiration pouring down his



"You're looking a bit white about the gills, old man," said Bob, when the heavy copper dome was removed. "Did you find anything queer?" (See this page.)

face despite the cool element he was immersed in, Dick freed the air-pipe and tugged hard at his life-line. A few minutes later he was aboard the motor-boat, with the native unscrewing his helmet.

"You're looking a bit white about the gills, old man," said Bob, when the heavy copper dome was removed. "Did you find anything queer?"

Andrews unhitched the bag of oysters, and emptied it on the floor-boards.

"I found these," he replied, "and other things. I guess we'll have to try 'the cure.'"

"The cure" was a small square water-tight box, to which a coil of insulated wire was attached. It had been included in the outfit at the last moment—an afterthought of Dick's.

"You—you're not going down again, are you?" asked Ferguson. "You saw some-

thing more than pearl oysters, I'll swear, from the look of you just now. You got a scare?"

Andrews was swiftly uncoiling the long wire, the free end of which he presently attached to a small square of wood containing a single push-button. He looked up with a confident grin.

"If I did, I'm over it now," he said, "and I jolly well *am* going down again! There's to much good stuff there to leave behind!"

"But what else did you see, man? What was it attacked this chap—?"

"I dunno exactly, except that they possessed very nasty feelers and infernally useful claws—ugh!—but that's all I could see of 'em. However, *this* should do the trick. Put on my hat for me, 'Cherry Blossom,' and Bob, keep your big feet off that push-button till I give three jerks on the line, or it's only odd bits of us they'll be picking up in Suva!"

he added grimly, motioning the native to replace his helmet.

Presently, whilst Ferguson turned his attention to the pump again, his friend once more disappeared over the side, bearing the square box with him. In a few minutes Dick had reached the cave-mouth, but this time he ventured a little farther in and deposited his burden on the sandy bottom. Then he beat a hasty retreat, until he was practically beneath the keel of the motor-launch, and gave three sharp tugs on his life-line.

The sound of a muffled concussion seemed to penetrate the thick copper of Andrews' helmet, and the water some yards in front became suddenly clouded; then, as it slowly cleared, he went forward again.

Hundreds of the best oysters, torn from their rich bed inside, were scattered round the cave-mouth, about which the water was still violently disturbed. The gap itself had been practically choked with sand and shattered rock, yet a fair-sized passage still remained; and even as Dick looked, an uncanny object floated sluggishly out, gradually sinking to the bottom, where it lay motionless—a thing whose dull-brown, hairy body, and long legs, two of which possessed claws like huge pincers at the end, might have delighted the heart of a naturalist—but nobody else!

"A spider crab!" breathed Andrews to himself. "But what a size! Ugh! It's no wonder that chap above was badly hacked!"

He turned away with a shudder, passing round the body of the thing, and waited for a little while, but no more came from the gap.

Then he started to gather the oysters, making several journeys to and from the motor-launch, until quite a rich cargo lay heaped on the floor-boards. But finally, the anchor was hauled up and the homeward cruise commenced, the native squatting contentedly on a small mountain of mother-of-pearl.

Andrews and his chum are not in business at Suva now; they are globe-trotting elsewhere, and their holiday is likely to be prolonged indefinitely. For when the proceeds of the expedition came to be realised it was found that it would no longer be necessary for them to work for their living.

But even now Dick Andrews detests the bare mention of a spider crab—especially a large one!

As for "Cherry Blossom," who made the discovery of the pearls—and had first encountered the guardian of the cave—he remained with the chums. Money was no good to him, and judging by his expressions he could not have bought anything which would make him more contented than he was as Dick and Bob's servant, refusing payment even for that service.

THE END.



An uncanny object floated out of the cave, gradually sinking to the bottom. "A spider crab!" breathed Andrews. "But what a size!" (See this page.)

# MY DANCING PARTNERS

by  
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY



I DANCED with Gwunday at the Ball  
(I wish I'd nevah danced at all!)  
For Gwunday is a chumsay fellah—  
Twod on my toes, an' made me bellah!  
I told the chump, in language plain,  
I'd nevah dance with him again!

I then enjoyed a dance with Mewwy,  
He is a gwaceful dancah—vewy!  
But soon he played a foolish antic  
Which made me absolutely fwantic!  
He whirled me wound at such a pace  
That I pitched forward on my face!

Then, foolishly, I danced with Twimble,  
A youth who's anythin' but nimble.  
He tumbled here, he stumbled there,  
'Chargin' an' bargain' ewewywhere!  
An' when he twod on my pet corn  
I left him, lonely an' forlorn!

With Fatty Wynn I twied to waltz,  
His movements, though, were full of faults.  
You've heard of bulls in china shops?  
Well, that's how Wynn behaves at "hops."  
He left me sitting on the floor;  
I stwuggled up, an' danced with Gore.

Gore simply gwabbed me wound the waist,  
An' off we went, in feahful haste.  
With Blake an' Digby we collided,  
An' all the lookahs-on dewided.  
"Go easy, Gussy!" they exclaimed.  
My noble cheeks with fuvwy flamed.

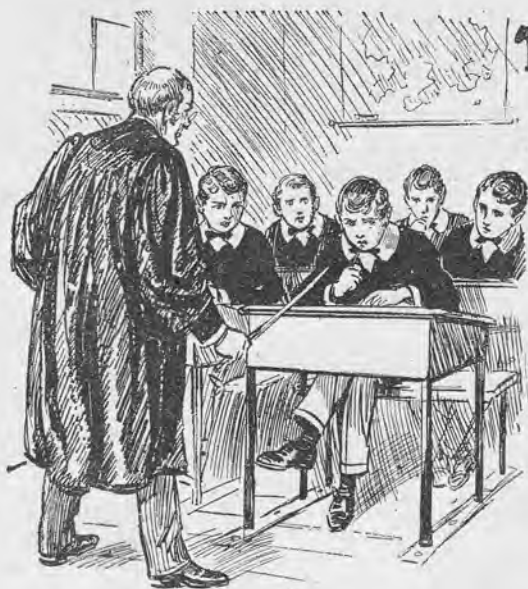
I danced with Cardew an' with Clive  
(A wondah I am still alive!)  
'Twas such a bustle and a hustle,  
I'm stiff an' sore in ewewy muscle!  
Next time they hold a Ball or Fête,  
I'll dance alone, in solemn state!



# THE SCIENTIST OF ST. JIM'S!

*The Story of a School-  
boy's Amazing Invention*

By MARTIN CLIFFORD



Bernard Glyn was in a brown study—deep, deep in thought. “Glyn!” thundered the master of the Shell. “Do you hear?”  
“Shut up,” answered Glyn, “you’re worrying me.”

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### The Limit!

“GLYN!”  
Mr. Linton’s voice was not loud, but deep.

Every fellow in the Shell Form-room at St Jim’s heard it distinctly, with the exception, apparently, of the fellow addressed.

Bernard Glyn did not seem to hear.

He was looking straight at his form-master, his eyes were fixed on Mr. Linton with a concentrated attention which was rather unusual. Mr. Linton had supposed, for some time, that Glyn was deeply interested in his observations—weighty observations on the subject of deponent verbs. He was rather surprised, and perhaps a little flattered, by that deep and concentrated attention.

But there were fellows in the Shell who knew Glyn better. They knew some of the ways of the inventor of St. Jim’s. Kangaroo and Dane, his study-mates, especially knew.

They knew what that concentrated stare

meant. It meant that the thoughts of Bernard Glyn were far away. They knew by that rapt look on his face that the schoolboy inventor had quite forgotten even that he was in the form-room, that he was oblivious that class was going on, that he ignored even the important existence of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell.

Mr. Linton did not know it yet, but he was learning.

“Glyn!”

Three times had Mr. Linton pronounced that name. Now he pronounced it for the fourth time, and his voice was a little louder and much deeper.

Still Glyn did not answer. Still his thoughtful eyes remained fixed on Mr. Linton, in that steady disconcerting stare.

Tom Merry cautiously reached out his foot under the desk to kick Glyn, as a tip.

He kicked him gently.

But it was of no avail. Bernard Glyn did not even heed a hack on the leg.

He was in a brown study—in deep, deep thought.

“GLYN!”

Mr. Linton’s voice was growing really terrible. Kangaroo and Dane looked alarmed. Monty Lowther grinned, Racke chuckled. Most of the Shell fellows stared. They were more or less used to the queer ways of the genius of St. Jim’s. But really this time Bernard Glyn seemed to be going over the limit.

“Do you hear me, Glyn?” exclaimed Mr. Linton, in tones of intense exasperation.

It seemed that Glyn didn't. If he heard, he followed the example of the celebrated gladiator, and heeded not.

"Glyn, old man!" murmured Manners.

"Glyn, you ass!" breathed Tom Merry.

Mr. Linton's face had grown red. Now it was growing purple. He stepped back to his high desk and picked up a cane. Glyn appeared to be in a trance, and Mr. Linton appeared to be going to wake him up by rather drastic measures.

Then Glyn stirred suddenly.

He ceased to stare at Mr. Linton. He grabbed a pocket-book from one pocket and a stump of pencil from the other. With the latter he began to scribble strange figures on the former; his face, bent over his sudden calculations, was bright with enthusiasm.

Apparently he was oblivious of everything else. Some weird and wonderful idea was in his inventive brain, some new stunt that had gripped his mind to the exclusion of all else.

Headless, in fact unconscious, of his surroundings, Glyn of the Shell worked at his strange figures with feverish energy. Weird-looking hieroglyphics grew on the page under the rapid tattoo of his pencil.

"Look out, you chump!" gasped Kangaroo.

Glyn did not look up. He did not even look up. Mr. Linton, with a gleam in his eyes and a cane in his hand, towered over the schoolboy inventor's desk.

"Glyn!" he roared.

Then Bernard Glyn seemed to hear him, for he threw out an impatient chiding hand.

"Shut up!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Shut up!"

The Shell gasped as one man. Mr. Linton stood transfixed, rooted to the floor, the cane motionless as if frozen to his hand.

He had been told to shut up—in his own form-room—by a member of his Form!

In his petrified amazement he actually did shut up.

The Shell gazed on spellbound.

Mr. Linton recovered. He swept the cane into the air.

"Glyn!"

"Shut up! You're worrying me."

"Are you aware whom you are addressing, Glyn?" thundered the master of the Shell.

"SHUT UP!" yelled Glyn.

Whack!

The cane came down, and most of the Shell fellows thought that it was about time it did.

Glyn gave a wild yell.

That hefty lash of the cane across his bent shoulders effectually roused him.

He started up, passing his hand across his brow, like a fellow waking from sleep.

"Ow! What—what—" he stuttered.

"Glyn! How dare you?"

"Look here! I've got it."

"What do you mean, Glyn? Are you out of your senses?"

"I've got it!" gasped Glyn. "There's no mistake now. Just the little bit that was beating me—the question of transmission, you know."

"Transmission?" repeated Mr. Linton dazedly.

"That's what got me beat—the transmission of the electric energy in sufficient force. Now I've got it!"

"Glyn! You have not been listening to me. Bless my soul! What are you doing, Glyn?"

Glyn had returned to the figures in his pocket-book. With a feverishly excited face, he was scribbling and calculating. His face was alight with triumph. Some knotty point that had baffled him, apparently, had become suddenly clear—that was what he had been thinking out—instead of listening to his form-master's weighty remarks on the subject of deponent verbs.

"Glyn! Do you want me to send you to the head-master for a flogging?" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

"Shut up!"

That was more than enough! It did it! Mr. Linton grasped Glyn of the Shell by the collar with his left hand, and fairly hooked him out before the class. Holding him by the collar with his left, the master of the Shell laid on the cane with his right.

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

"Oh, my hat! Yarooooooooop!"

Whack! whack! whack!

Bernard Glyn fairly danced as the flexible

cane played round him. Mr. Linton seemed to think that he was beating a carpet.

"Ow! Leggo! Stoppit! Oh, my hat! Yoooooop!" roared Glyn, quite alive to his surroundings now.

Whack! whack! whack! whack!

"There!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Now——"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Mr. Linton released the inventive genius of St. Jim's. Glyn staggered against the desk, gasping for breath. The form-master picked up the pocket-book.

"I—I say—that's mine—give it me——!" gasped Bernard Glyn.

The master of the Shell deliberately jammed the pocket-book into the waste-paper basket.

"That rubbish is confiscated, Glyn! Go back to your place!"

"My pocket-book——"

"Do you hear me?"

"My formula——"

"Glyn!"

"My calculations——"

The exasperated Mr. Linton brought his cane into play again.

Whack! whack! whack!

"Yaroooh!"

"Now will you go to your seat?" demanded the irate master.

Bernard Glyn jumped back to his place.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Rather Alarming!

TOM MERRY & Co. were smiling when the Shell came out after morning class.

But Bernard Glyn did not smile. Mr. Linton had used the cane not wisely but too well, in Glyn's opinion, and the school-boy inventor was still feeling a considerable number

of aches and pains. That, however, did not affect him so much as the loss of his pocket-book. That loss, seemingly, was a very serious one. The book contained Glyn's wonderful calculations— weird stacks of figures that meant nothing to anyone but Bernard Glyn. In the passage. Glyn stopped near the door of the form-room while most of the Shell streamed out into the sunny quadrangle.

"Still feeling it, old chap?" asked Tom Merry, with a smile.

"Ow! Yes! What was the matter with Linton this morning?" asked Glyn. "Had you fellows been worrying him, or anything?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you think you worried him a bit?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"I know he worried me," growled Glyn.



"Glyn, you duffer, let us in!" roared Dane and Kangaroo as they thumped on the door. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus from behind them. "I should weally recommend you fellows to give him a fearful thwashing. He's locked you out of your study, bai Jove!" (See Chapter 3.)

"I came jolly near talking some plain English to him, I know that!"

"I think you did!" chuckled Manners. "You told him to shut up, anyhow. I thought his hair would stand on end—what's left of it!"

"Come on, Glyn!" called out Kangaroo. Glyn was posted against the wall, leaning there, and watching the doorway of the form-room.

"I'm not coming out," said Glyn.

"You're not sticking in the passage, I suppose?" asked Clifton Dane.

"I've got to get my pocket-book, ass!"

"Linton's confiscated it, fathead!"

"It's got my calculations in it, burbler! I've got to get it back!"

Kangaroo and Dane exchanged alarmed glances. They were really concerned for their chum. With all Glyn's weird and sometimes worrying ways, they liked him, and they were anxious for him. Often and often they ragged him in the study, when his inventive powers made life almost intolerable there. But they did not want to see him ragged by Mr. Linton—that was a serious matter. The Terrible Three also stopped, as they heard Glyn's answer.

"Look here, you ass, you can't get that pocket-book back!" said Tom Merry. "Chuck up the idea, Glyn."

"Fathead!"

"Linton has let you off easily," said Tom. "Lots of masters would have sent you to the Head for a flogging. If you get his back up any more, you're booked for the Head."

"Rats!"

"Look here, Glyn," raged Talbot of the Shell.

Glyn did not heed. He moved a little nearer to the open doorway of the form-room. Mr. Linton had remained in the room after dismissing his class, busy with some papers at his desk. He now made a movement as if he were going; and the juniors guessed that, as soon as he was gone, Glyn intended to raid the pocket-book from the waste-paper basket.

Through the half-open doorway Glyn watched his form-master eagerly. Mr. Linton turned from his desk towards the door, having finished arranging his papers. Then he

turned round and rustled across to the waste-paper basket, and stooped over it. Glyn saw him pick up the pocket-book.

"Oh, my hat!"

The form-master slipped the confiscated book into his pocket, and left the form-room. Glyn almost jumped into his path.

"Mr. Linton—sir——"

"Well, Glyn," said the master of the Shell, in a rumbling voice.

"My pocket-book, sir. Can I have it back now?" gasped Glyn.

"Certainly not, Glyn! I am going to destroy it, as a warning to you not to introduce extraneous matters into the form-room during class."

"Oh, sir! I—I——"

Mr. Linton rustled on, leaving Glyn staring after him in dismay. The other juniors grinned. They did not attach to Glyn's abstruse calculations the importance that Glyn attached to them.

"All U P now," said Kangaroo. "Come on, Glyn."

"I want my pocket-book."

"You silly ass! What does it matter, anyway? Only some more of your rot, you know," said Kangaroo. "What is it now—another invention of indelible ink that washes off——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or a giddy aeroplane that won't fly, or a jolly old helicopter that won't rise?" chuckled Kangaroo. "Or even a ray that turns everyone green?"

"Or is it the transmutation of metals again, with millions and billions of pounds at stake?" chuckled Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"More important than that," snapped Glyn. "This is the greatest—the very greatest—invention of modern times."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Linton doesn't know the risk he's running," said Glyn darkly. "Suppose I were an unscrupulous fellow—suppose I were disposed to use the tremendous power this invention puts into my hands—he would look pretty small then. Of course, I shouldn't do anything of the sort—human life is sacred——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I should spare his life——"

"His life?" yelled the juniors.

"Yes. But he really ought not to exasperate a fellow like this, who could blot him out with a touch of the finger if he chose——"

"Bub-bub-blot him out!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Like a grasshopper," said Glyn, "squash him like a fly! Obliterate him altogether."

Kangaroo tapped his forehead significantly.

"It's come at last!" said the Cornstalk junior. "Poor old Glyn! We'd better let his people know, so that they can have a doctor to him."

"I believe they make lunatic asylums very comfortable now," said Monty Lowther.

"That's lucky for you, Glyn."

Glyn snorted.

"I'm speaking quite seriously. I should simply have to turn my ray on him, and he would be reduced to a little heap of ashes."

"Your ray!" said Tom, staring.

"My death ray!"

"Oh, my hat! Is that the latest?"

"That's it," said Glyn, "there was a lot in the papers a short time ago about the Death Ray. Well, I've been looking into it. I had jolly nearly solved the problem, but there was just one point that baffled me. It flashed into my mind this morning, in class—and now I've got it. It's simple—quite simple! Fancy that ass Linton thinking a fellow could waste time on Latin verbs when he was solving the problem of the death ray. I've done it!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared at Bernard Glyn. That he was a dabbler in wireless, that some of his performances in that direction were rather wonderful, they knew well enough. He had built his own wireless installation with his own hands, and it was quite an imposing installation. Being the son of a millionaire, Glyn was not short of that useful article—cash; and on his inventive stunts he spent money right and left.

Glyn had done some startling things with wireless. He had made bells ring in unexpected places, where bells had no business to be. He claimed that he could stop a fellow's watch by means of an electric shock

transmitted on the Hertzian waves—though it was true that demonstrations of this had not exactly "come off." His colour ray had been demonstrated with disastrous results.

Still, there was no doubt that his knowledge of the subject was very deep: and that he was a remarkably clever and inventive fellow. That he would effect great things some day all his friends believed.

"You mean to say that you've got hold of the death ray?" exclaimed Tom Merry, at last.

"I do!"

"But—but——"

"It's simple—and, of course, it was bound to come," said Glyn. "It's merely a question of the wireless transmission of electric energy—and the solution might occur any minute to any fellow who dabbles in wireless. The wonder is that it hasn't been generally discovered already. It will be the last weapon used in war, of course—it will abolish war, and most likely the human race along with it——"

"Oh, my hat! That will interfere with our cricket fixtures rather seriously."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not really a laughing matter," said Glyn soberly. "With the electric ray, a man can kill you at a distance of a hundred miles—you simply get obliterated. An army on the march could be blotted out of existence by a man in another country. People talk about air raids in the next war! Piffle! In the next war London will be set on fire by a man sitting in a laboratory in Berlin."

"Great pip!"

"It could have been done in the last war, if they'd had scientific men at the top, instead of silly old military generals," said Glyn. "I've no doubt that in the next war, when a German chap turns the death ray on London, the War Office will order out the cavalry," Glyn sniffed. "Still, with the Glyn Ray, we shall be able to give them as good as they send. While they're blotting out Pimlico and Putney, I shall be blotting out Potsdam."

"From your study at St. Jim's?" grinned Manners.

"Certainly."

"Well, I'm jolly glad Linton has collared



"Trimble!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as the cloth was jerked aside, revealing Baggy Trimble crouched under the table, the missing cake clasped in his fat arms. Around the cake was the cartridge paper which bore Glyn's missing plan. (See Chapter 4.)

your stuff," said Kangaroo. "I'm willing to chance it in the next war—but I'm blessed if I like chancing it in the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it's all right," said Glyn calmly. "I can do the calculations again—it only means loss of time. In a couple of days I shall have the formula worked out again from A to Z, and then I shall produce the death ray all right. You fellows needn't be nervous—there's practically no risk."

"Only practical?"

"Well, you see, there's always an element of risk. Electric power is a tremendous thing—it might get out of hand."

"Oh! Might it?" ejaculated Kangaroo.

"It might! Besides, there are still undis-

covered waves in the atmosphere—all the discoveries, so far, are only on the fringe of the real thing. When the death ray is let loose it's not at all impossible that it might spread on an undiscovered wave, and land on the wrong party. For instance, suppose I was standing in the doorway of No. 11 Study, and wanted to obliterate a fellow coming along the passage——"

"What a jolly supposition!" said Monty Lowther.

"It's barely possible," went on Glyn, unheeding, "that the death ray might stray into the study, and wipe out you chaps——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"But, of course, the danger's not really great—and after all, one's bound to take some

risks in making big inventions," said Glyn. "I shall be as careful as possible. But I'm wasting time—I must get on to my work."

Bernard Glyn hurried away. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another. They hardly knew whether to laugh or to be unusually serious.

That such a discovery would be made some day was fairly certain. That Glyn was just the fellow to make it seemed probable enough. And the idea of a death ray in the Shell passage, in the School-House of St. Jim's, was rather disconcerting.

"Think there's anything in it?" asked Tom Merry, at last.

"Blessed if I know," said Kangaroo, rubbing his nose. "Glyn believes all he says, and he's jolly clever. He's made a lot of inventions that have come off."

"And a lot that haven't," said Dane.

"Let's hope that this won't," said Tom Merry, laughing. "A death ray may be jolly useful in the next war; but I'm blessed if I like the idea of one in the next study."

And the juniors went out into the sunny quad—where they soon forgot Bernard Glyn and his ray. But in No. 11 Study in the Shell, Bernard Glyn was working away at his formula with gleaming eyes and fevered brow—and he did not come down to dinner till Kangaroo and Dane went up to the study and dragged him away by main force.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Locked Out!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form, came along to No. 11 in the Shell soon after classes that day. Arthur Augustus, like most of the Lower fellows in the School-House, had heard by that time of the new stunt in No. 11. The death ray, the Glyn ray, Glyn's latest—it was talked of by these various titles, and with great interest by many of the juniors. There was some laughter, and there was some scoffing. It was difficult to believe that Bernard Glyn, of the Shell, held in his boyish hands a power that could, if exercised, blot St. Jim's off the face of the earth, and the rest of the county of Sussex along with it. It was really hard to credit that Glyn of the Shell could, if he liked,

stalk through the kingdom like Death on a pale horse, casting destruction on all sides. As Blake of the Fourth remarked, that wanted some swallowing.

That the progress of wireless discovery would lead to such things was not only probable, but doubtless inevitable—in the long run. Somebody, somehow, sometime, would "get there." But somehow or other it was not easy to believe that Glyn had "got there."

Levison of the Fourth recalled some of Glyn's previous inventions—such as his discovery of the transmutation of metals, which had turned out to be moonshine. Manners reminded the fellows of Glyn's indelible ink, which would do anything but remain indelible. Lowther recalled the Glyn model airship, which had refused to rise. All remembered his recent Colour Ray, which had turned its victims first green and then blue. Glyn's inventions had been many and various, and all the fellows had reminiscences of them—generally of a comic nature.

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, being Glyn's close chums and great admirers, felt called upon to defend him. Certainly, they often found Glyn's stunts intolerable in the study. It was hard to be driven forth from their own quarters by the fearful smells of Glyn's chemicals. It was irritating to be locked out of their study when their presence would have interrupted Glyn's abstruse calculations. Often and often they had lost patience with him, and had ragged him. Nevertheless they admired him greatly, and were deeply impressed with his cleverness and knowledge. So they took the death ray more seriously than the other fellows did.

Kangaroo pointed out that, though Glyn had often come a "mucker" in his stunts, he was generally successful in matters electrical. Had he not, on one occasion, set the school in a roar by making an electric bell ring in Mr. Ratcliff's hat? Had not dozens of fellows yelled on sitting down in his electric arm-chair and getting shocks? Hadn't he built a wireless set on which he produced splendid results? If any fellow ever discovered the genuine death ray, Kangaroo declared that Glyn would be the chap, and Dane agreed with him.

So Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth had come along to No. 11 after classes, to see Glyn at work, and ascertain whether there was "anything" in it. Gussy was not perhaps, fully qualified to be the judge of scientific experiments; but that trifling detail did not occur to him. What he did not know about wireless would have filled whole volumes to overflowing, but his interest at least was keen, if his knowledge was not great.

Arthur Augustus tapped at the door of No. 11. He heard a movement in the study, and supposed that Glynn was there.

No voice bade him "Come in!" so Arthur Augustus turned the handle of the door. At the same moment the key was turned in the lock on the inside.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's flushed pink. Really, it was not flattering to have a door locked in one's face in this manner.

"I wegard that as uttably wude of Glyn," murmured Arthur Augustus. "But pewwaps he does not know it is I. Glyn, deah boy!" he called out.

No reply.

"It was I who knocked at your doah, Glyn." Silence.

"Weally, Glyn——"

There was a slight movement in the study, but no answer. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pink flush deepened to red.

"I wegard you as a wude beast, Glyn!" he called out. "I look upon you as uttably wantin' in good mannaahs! Do you heah?"

There was a faint, suppressed chuckle in the study, but that was all. Arthur Augustus breathed hard and deep.

"I considah you no bettah than a Hun, Glyn!" he shouted. "Do you heah? You have the mannaahs of a Pwussian Hun."

Still there was no reply, and the swell of St. Jim's, in great indignation, retired, resisting the impulse to kick at the door, which was a natural impulse in the circumstances, but unworthy of the caste of Vere de Vere.

Just as Arthur Augustus turned away, Kangaroo and Clifton Dane came along the passage.

"Hallo, what's the matter with you, Gussy?" asked Harry Noble cheerfully. "Why that frowning phiz?"

"Weally, Kangay, I scarcely like to have my countenance referred to as a phiz——"

"Dial, then," said Noble, laughing. "Why that scowling dial?"

"I wegard dial as a more howwid word than phiz, Kangawooh. And I was not awah that I was scowlin'. I was feelin' vewy much annoyed at Glyn's wotten wude conduct in lockin' the studay door in my vewy face. I wegard him as a wude Hun."

"Locked the study door, has he?" said Kangaroo. "He'll jolly well have to unlock it, then! I want my bat!"

"And I want mine!" said Dane. "And Glyn ought to come down to the nets, as Tom Merry's going to play him in the Form match."

Kangaroo thumped at the door.

"Let us in, Glyn, you fathead!" he called out.

There was no answer from within the study.

"He's there," said Dane. "I can hear him moving. Glyn, you ass, we're fed up with your rot. Open this door at once!"

"He wufused to answah me!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard him as a fellow of no mannaahs at all. I was goin' to ask him about his invention, you know, and tell him whethah there was anythin' in it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows——"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane thumped and thumped on the study door. Such an energetic note of expression was, perhaps, unworthy of the caste of Vere de Vere, as Gussy thought; but the two Shell fellows were not so particular on such points as Gussy. They were ready to thump on the door till Glyn opened it, and then to thump Glyn for having kept them waiting.

Thump! Thump! Bang!

Tom Merry looked out of the next study.

"You fellows trying to bring down the house?" he asked.

"We're trying to make that ass Glyn let us in," said Kangaroo. "He's locked us out, the silly ass! Glyn, you chump, open the door!"



"Kick him out!" yelled the juniors. "I—I'd rather stay to tea with you fellows!" gasped Baggy Trimble. "I—I—yoooooop!" Kangaroo's boot caught Trimble fairly, and sent him staggering between the two rows of juniors—running the gauntlet. (See Chapter 4.)

"Glyn, you duffer, let us in!" roared Dane. "Bai Jove! I should weally wecommend you fellows to give him a feahful thwashin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I should like to see Blake or Hewwies or Dig lock me out of my stoday, bai Jove! I wegard it as feahfully cheekay!"

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Manners and Lowther came out of No. 10 and joined Tom Merry in the passage, looking on with interest. Talbot of the Shell came out of No. 9, with Gore and Skimpole. Several other fellows came out, drawn to the scene by the din that rang along the Shell passage.

Still the door of No. 11 did not open.

Kangaroo and Dane were getting rather excited and exasperated by this time; the rest of the fellows were grinning. This was quite an old game of Bernard Glyn's—it was nothing new to see his study-mates locked out of their quarters.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Bang! Bang!

"What the dickens are you kicking up that row for?" exclaimed a voice, as a Shell fellow came hurrying up the passage.

"Glyn!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Bai Jove! Glyn!"

"Then who's in the study?" roared Kangaroo, in astonishment,

"Eh! Nobody's in the study, I suppose," said Glyn.

Arthur Augustus stared at Bernard Glyn, through his celebrated eyeglass, in amazement. He had taken it for granted that Glyn was in the study, when the key had been turned in the lock.

Evidently he had taken too much for granted. Glyn, certainly, had not been in the study, since here he was and evidently had only just come upstairs.

"Somebody's in there, Glyn," exclaimed Gussy. "The doah was locked wight in my face. I thought it was you. I weally beg your pardon, Glyn. I should weally not have supposed that you would lock a door in a fellow's face."

"I jolly well should, if you came butting in when I was busy," retorted Bernard Glyn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Glyn, you wottah—"

Glyn shoved through the crowd of juniors, with anxiety in his face. He tried the door of No. 11.

"It's locked," he exclaimed. "There's really somebody in the study. My hat! My invention! My invention!"

And Glyn thumped furiously on the door of No. 11.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Baggy the Bolshevik!

**T**OM MERRY & Co. looked on, grinning. The crowd was thickening in the Shell passage now.

Blake and Herries and Dig had come along from No. 6, and Levison and Co. from No. 9 in the Fourth. Wildrake and Mellish, Julian and Hammond and Kerruish, Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn came along, attracted by the uproar and excitement. A dozen other fellows followed in their footsteps; the passage swarmed on either side of the door of No. 11.

There was keen interest and curiosity among the juniors now. Somebody was in the study, and that somebody had locked the door to keep out D'Arcy. It was not one of the three fellows to whom the study belonged; they were all outside the study. So the identity of the somebody was a rather interesting question.

Bernard Glyn was wildly excited. He thumped and kicked on the door in intense exasperation and alarm.

"My invention!" he gasped. "That's what he's after! Oh, my hat! I'll smash him! Open this door, you villain! Keep round, you fellows, in case he makes a rush! Let me in, you scoundrel!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Blake. "Do you think it's somebody after your giddy invention, Glyn?"

"Of course it is, fathead! What else could he want?"

"Weally, Glyn—"

"Some of you go down and guard the window; he may try to escape from the window!" gasped Glyn. "I left my formula on the table—the whole secret of my invention of the death ray. It's worth a million pounds, at the very least!"

"You wouldn't take twopence for it?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get a chair—a bench—or something, and we'll smash in the door!" howled Glyn.

"You silly ass!" roared Tom Merry. "Do you think it's a burglar in the study?"

"Of course it is. He's after my invention. Very likely a German spy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lowther. "German spies are out-of-date now, fathead! You're behind the times, Glyn."

"Might be a Bolshevik spy," said Glyn.

"That's better," agreed Lowther. "More up-to-date, at least."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you fellows get something to smash this door in?" roared Glyn.

"No jolly fear!" chuckled Kangaroo. "You're not going to break up the happy home, Glyn. Besides, if it's a Bolshevik after your giddy invention, he's welcome to take it back to Russia, and I hope he'll blow up all the other Bolshies with it."

"He'll escape by the window, if we give him time!" gasped Glyn. "Look here, we're going to get this door open before he bolts. Shut up, you cackling dummies; I tell you it's serious!"

Glyn rushed away, leaving the juniors roaring with laughter. That somebody was

in the study was clear—somebody who had no business there. But nobody excepting Glyn was likely to believe that some secret emissary had penetrated into St. Jim's to steal the secret of the death ray.

"Bai Jove! Glyn is weally a funny ass!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who the thump can be in the study?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Some New House chap larking, perhaps."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Or Baggy Trimble after a cake!" suggested Cardew of the Fourth. "Was there anythin' in the cupboard, Noble?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There was a cake——"

"That settles it. The giddy secret spy isn't after the invention; he's after the cake, and he belongs to the Fourth Form," said Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, here's Glyn! Oh, my hat!"

Glyn came tearing back with a big hammer in his hand. Glyn evidently regarded the matter as serious, if not desperate.

He crashed the hammer on the lock of the study door.

"Look out!" yelled Kangaroo. "Stop that, you dangerous ass!"

Crash! crash! crash!

"Glyn, you dummy——"

Crash! crash!

Locks on study doors were not planned to resist assaults of that vigorous kind. The lock groaned and creaked and broke.

Crash! crash!

The door of No. 11 flew open.

Bernard Glyn rushed into the study, hammer in hand, with a wildly excited face. Had there been a hairy, horrid Russian Bolshevik in the study at that moment, undoubtedly Glyn would have smitten him with the hammer. Fortunately for the Bolshevik, he wasn't there! Indeed, the study seemed to be empty. The cupboard door was wide open, but Glyn did not even glance at the cupboard. He wasn't thinking about cakes. He glanced at the window, and the window was open, too. He glanced

at the table and gave a formidable yell.

"It's gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"My plan—my diagram!" stuttered Glyn.

He pointed despairingly to the table. He stuttered incoherent words of wrath and desperation. The juniors gathered that he had left on the study table a great sheet of cartridge paper on which he had been drawing the diagrams of the machine—the terrible machine that was to scatter death rays in the next war—perhaps.

And it was gone!

Kangaroo looked into the study cupboard. Like the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard's, it was bare.

"The cake's gone!" shouted Kangaroo.

Glyn did not even hear him.

He rushed to the window and looked out. Thick ivy clung to the ancient walls of the School-house below the window, but there was no sign of a climber on the ivy.

"That's the way he went," gasped Glyn, "and he's got my diagrams with him—the whole secret of the death ray!"

"It's all wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus comfortingly. "Aftah all, you know, there was pwobably nothin' in it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!"

"Weally, Glyn——"

Bernard Glyn rushed from the study. Apparently he still nourished a hope of cutting off the escape of the purloiner of the death ray.

"Well, my hat!" said Kangaroo. "The rubbish really seems to be gone. But who had the cake?"

Cardew chuckled.

"I fancy Baggy had the cake, and I'm pretty certain that Baggy never climbed down from the window. He's got only one neck, and he thinks too much of it to risk it—not that it's worth anythin'. What about lookin' under the table?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Trimble!" roared Tom Merry, as Cardew pulled the study table aside; a fat figure was revealed crouching there.

"Baggy!" shouted Blake.

"Ow! I'm not here—I mean——"

"He's got the cake!" roared Kangaroo.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mystery of the missing diagram was explained now, as well as the other mystery of the missing cake.

In Baggy Trimble's fat clutches there was a large object—evidently a cake—and it was wrapped in a large sheet of cartridge paper!

Baggy had annexed that sheet to wrap up the purloined cake, preparatory to conveying it from the study, and evidently had been interrupted, when about to leave, by the arrival of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the door!

The juniors roared.

Baggy, caught in the study with the purloined cake in his fat hands, had locked the door just in time, doubtless hoping that the caller would depart, and give him a chance to escape later.

Instead of which, Baggy had been besieged in the study, and had simply not dared to open the door to the wrathful applicants for admission.

Kangaroo jerked the parcel away from the fat Fourth-former. He unrolled the cartridge paper, and revealed the cake. It was nearly all there—only a gap in it showed where Baggy had taken a hurried and rather extensive bite.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we've got the cake," said Clifton Dane, "and we've got Glyn's jolly old diagrams, if they matter. Baggy, you fat villain——"

"I—I say, I—I wasn't going to take that

cake away!" gasped Trimble. "I—I—I was going to—to—to——"

"Kick him out!"

"Yaas, wathah! You are an uttah wepwobate, Twimble, and you deserve to be wagged."

"Look here, you know, I—I——"

"Form up in the passage," said Tom Merry. "Every fellow is to kick Trimble as he passes."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh! I—I say, Tom, old chap——"

"Start!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

The laughing juniors formed up on either side of the Shell passage, in a double row; Baggy Trimble blinked out of the study and lingered.

"I—I say, I'd rather stay to tea with you fellows!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going?" asked Kangaroo, swinging back his right foot.

"I—I—yoooo-ooooop!"

Kangaroo's boot started Trimble. He staggered out of the study, and Dane's boot

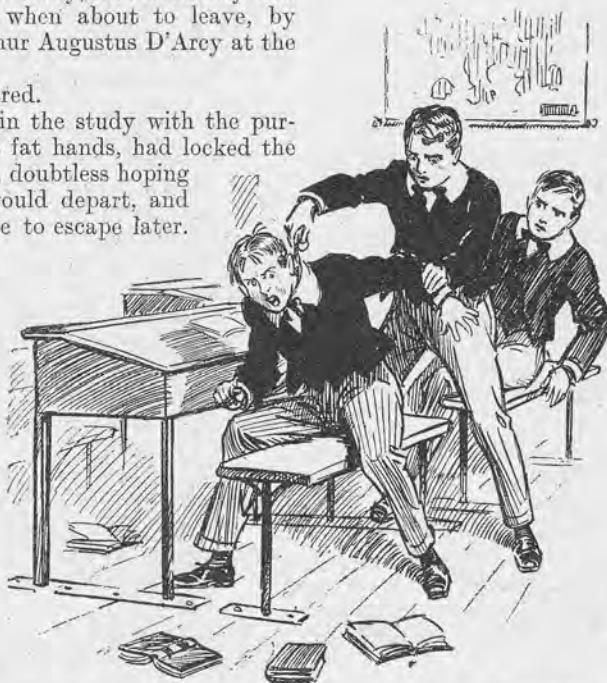
caught him as he went. Then the hapless purloiner of cakes ran for his fat life.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him jip!"

"Pile in!"

Baggy Trimble desperately ran the gauntlet. Never had a study raid cost the fat Baggy so dear. Every junior as he flew past kicked,



"You little beast!" Wally D'Arcy exclaimed. "I saw you kill that poor little sparrow with this!" And he jammed the broken remnant of the catapult down Piggott's neck. (See Chapter 5.)

and most of the kicks landed on Baggy's fat person somewhere. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy delivered quite a hefty kick, which, however, unfortunately caught Jack Blake on the shin as Baggy flew by. There was a wild roar from Blake.

"Ow! wow! ow!"

"Bai Jove! What are you makin' that wow for, Blake?" asked Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass on his chum in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly owl!" shrieked Blake. "You've kicked my shin—ow—ow—wow! You burbling jabberwock! You potty bandersnatch—ow—ow!"

"Even if I have kicked your shin by accident, Blake, there is no weason for you to forget your mannaahs," said Arthur Augustus severely. "I am sowwy to see that a little pain causes you to lose the wepose of mannaah, Blake, that ewewy fellow ought to cultivate."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Blake.

Words failed Blake. He felt that it was a time for action. He let out his own foot, with energy, and there was a terrific impact between boot-leather and a pair of beautifully cut trousers. And then there was a roar from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yawoooooop! You uttah ass! You feahful wuffian—yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A little pain seems to make you forget your repose of manner, old man!" grinned Blake.

"You uttah wuffian! Oh, cwikey—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble had vanished. The rest of the fellows cleared off, laughing; only Arthur Augustus addressing Jack Blake in a strain of wrathful indignation as he went.

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane set the table for tea. The half-hour they had intended to put in at the nets had elapsed, owing to the siege of No. 11 Study. The cake, so fortunately rescued from Baggy Trimble, graced the tea-table, and Glyn's sheet of cartridge paper, covered with weird-looking drawings, was thrown into the armchair. The chums of the Shell had nearly finished tea when Bernard Glyn came in, looking weary and worn and almost wild-eyed.

"Too late!" he said bitterly.

"Well, you're rather late; but we've left you some of the cake," said Kangaroo, misunderstanding.

"You silly owl! Do you think I was talking about tea?" hooted Glyn. "That villain has got clear with my diagrams."

"Oh, my hat!" Kangaroo winked across the table at Dane. "Didn't you catch him?"

"No; he's clean gone. He's got my secret. I suppose I'd better ask Mr. Railton to telephone to the police at once."

"Great pip!" gasped Kangaroo. "Nunno, I—I think I wouldn't do that in a hurry."

"There's not a second to lose, you ass! Only the trouble is, Mr. Railton mightn't realise how serious it is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses! If you had any sense you'd advise me, in a frightful crisis like this! Think I'd better go to Mr. Railton, or to the Head?" hooted Glyn.

"Leave 'em both out, and come to your old pal, Kangy," said the Cornstalk junior, with a chuckle. "The fact is, Glyn, while you were gone, we caught the villain and got back the giddy documents."

"What?" gasped Glyn.

"Look!"

Kangaroo pointed to the armchair. Glyn, with a whoop of joy, pounced upon his precious diagrams.

"You saw the villain, then?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes! We saw him!"

"Was it a German?"

"Great pip! A sort of a Hun, that's all."

"A Russian Bolshevik?"

"Nunno! Trimble, of the Fourth."

"Trimble!" gasped Bernard Glyn. "Trimble! Mean to say that a St. Jim's chap was put up to steal my plans?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Kangaroo. "Not quite! You see, Trimble had bagged the cake, and he took that sheet of paper to wrap it in. We found him under the table, see?"

Glyn stared at him blankly. Kangaroo and Dane yelled with laughter. The expression on the schoolboy inventor's face was really too much for them.

"Oh!" said Glyn, at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up cackling!" said Glyn crossly.

But it was quite some time before Glyn's comrades left off cackling.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Going Strong !

TOM MERRY & Co. had not very much attention to bestow on Bernard Glyn during the following days. There was glorious summer weather, there were cricket matches, there were exams. coming along, there were the junior eights, there were all sorts and conditions of things to fill up the time and attention of the youthful heroes of St. Jim's. But these matters, important to all other fellows in the Lower School, passed by Bernard Glyn like the idle wind, which he regarded not.

Glyn, for days, was deep in diagrams.

His name was down for the Form match ; but Glyn was hardly aware of it. Like a careless Gallio, he cared for none of these things.

His latest invention engrossed his whole time and thought.

He lived and moved, and had his being, at present, in thoughts and dreams of wireless gadgets.

Naturally, this interfered considerably with his form work. Mr. Linton grew more and more cross with him. In class, Glyn would go off into a day-dream, from which he had to be rudely awakened with the pointer. Prep. he shockingly neglected. Put on to construe, he would hand out a translation worthy of Trimble of the Fourth, or Grundy of the Shell. Lines fell on Bernard Glyn like leaves in celebrated Vallambrosa—detentions multiplied, and canings were not infrequent.

But he went on his way regardless.

Sheet after sheet of expensive paper was covered with mysterious drawings in No. 11 Study, till Glyn had the whole thing complete. Then it only remained to reduce theory to practice.

The machine had to be built.

Building it in the study was, of course, impracticable. Many a model had Glyn manufactured there ; but this was a more serious enterprise. In the Lab. he had no chance ;

he wanted a place to himself. He had serious thoughts of asking the Head's permission to have a workshop erected somewhere in the grounds. What Dr. Holmes would have said, at the suggestion of a hut with a corrugated iron roof standing in the school grounds, can hardly be imagined. Fortunately, Glyn stopped short of that. By bribery and corruption Taggles was induced to give him space in the wood-shed, and a key to the same. The wood-shed became Glyn's workshop.

Every hour that he was not required in the form-room or the dormitory, Glyn spent in his new quarters, out of sight of his school-fellows, and for the most part out of mind also.

Kangaroo and Dane sometimes gave him a look-in, but generally he declined to admit even his chums. Conversation distracted his thoughts. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy offered to help, but his offer was declined almost rudely. Fellows would gather round the wood-shed sometimes, to stare in at the window, till Glyn hung canvas over the window inside, and shut off the view.

In the study he scarcely spoke to his comrades ; at meals, he hardly noticed what he ate. Playful fellows could put sugar on his potatoes, and salt into his tea, without Glyn even noticing it.

The wood-shed was stacked with his paraphernalia and his gadgets. All sorts of contrivances might have been seen there, of which only Glyn knew the names and the uses.

It was fortunate for the schoolboy inventor that he had a rich and indulgent father, who encouraged him in his inventive enterprises. Certainly the bills he ran up would have startled most fellows' fathers.

His chums were really getting a little anxious about him. They were also getting a little anxious about his invention. There were many scoffers ; but Kangaroo and Dane were not among them. They had a startling proof one day that there was " something in it."

One afternoon they came along to the wood-shed to see how Glyn was getting on. The door was locked as usual, and there was no answer to their thumping, so they went round to the window, and tapped on the glass.

Then Kangaroo noticed a dead sparrow lying under the window. He noticed it, but did not take any particular heed of it. He tapped on the glass, and Glyn's voice came at last from within.

"Go away!"

"Won't you let us in, old fellow?" asked Kangaroo.

"Oh, it's you! Well, if you value your lives, you chaps, you'd better clear off from that window!"

"What?"

"I'm trying the death ray, on a small scale. You utter idiots, to come fooling about when I'm turning on the ray!"

"Look here, Glyn—"

"Luckily, I've turned it off," said Glyn. "If you'd stood at that window five minutes ago, you'd have got it right in the neck. It might have killed you. Get going."

Kangaroo started, and glanced down at the dead sparrow. Clifton Dane gave him a startled look.

"My hat!" murmured the Cornstalk.

"Look here, Glyn," said Kangaroo, in a subdued voice, "do you mean to say that you have been turning an electric current loose through this dashed window?"

"Yes."

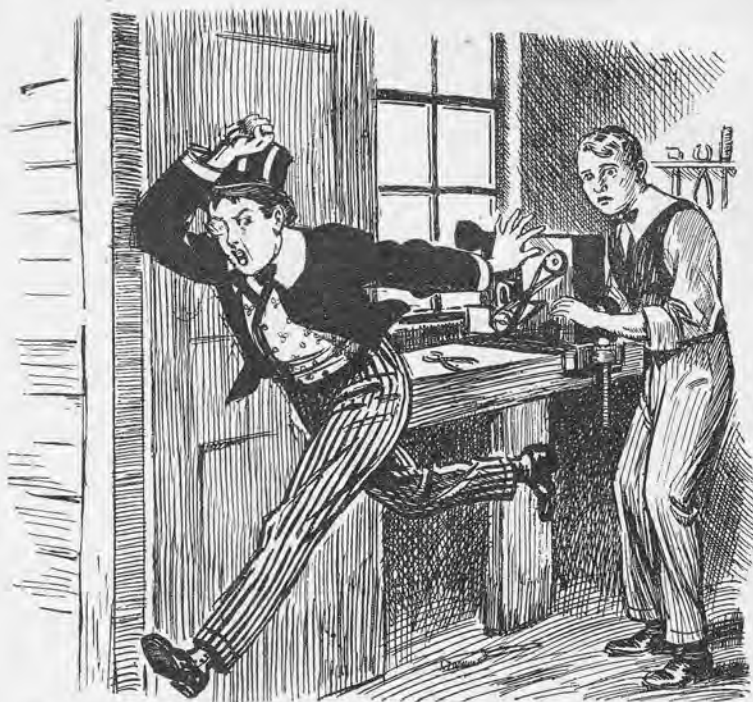
"Can you really do it?"

"Ass!"

"There's a bird lying dead under the window."

"What?"

The canvas within was torn aside, and the



For a moment the swell of St. Jim's seemed petrified as he saw Glyn's finger resting on the fatal knob of the Death Ray machine. "Now," said Glyn, "I'm just ready to—" But the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was already vanishing through the door of the wood-shed. (See Chapter 6.)

window sash raised. Glyn's pale, eager face looked out.

Kangaroo pointed down to the dead sparrow. The schoolboy inventor's eyes glistened.

"Poor little beast," he said. "I suppose it had rested on the window-sill and got the current. Of course, it was powerful enough to kill a bird instantly."

The two Shell fellows stared at him.

"You reckless ass," said Kangaroo. "Suppose some fellow had been standing by the window—"

"He would have got a shock!" grinned Bernard Glyn. "Haven't I warned fellows not to come fooling around my workshop? But, of course, I didn't put on the full power of the machine. If I had it would have wiped out the School House."

"You seem to have killed that poor little sparrow."

"I'm sorry for that, but it couldn't be helped." Glyn rubbed his hands. He was really sorry for the unfortunate sparrow; but this proof of the efficacy of his ray bucked him very much. "Of course, I wouldn't be beast enough to experiment on living things, but without doing so, a fellow is rather handicapped. Shove the poor little thing away somewhere, will you, and don't jaw about it—fellows might get scared."

Glyn went back to his work. Kangaroo silently picked up the dead sparrow, and it was dropped into a dustbin. Then the chums of the Shell walked away in very deep thought, silently. The death of the hapless sparrow had given them plenty of food for thought, on the subject of Glyn's amazing invention.

"There's something in it, Dane," said the Cornstalk, at last.

"Looks like it," agreed Dane.

"It's frightfully dangerous, if so."

"No doubt about that. Glyn's too jolly keen and enthusiastic. The silly ass might blow himself into little pieces. Might do anything, if he's really got hold of a dashed electric ray that he can turn on like a garden-hose when he likes."

"The sparrow was dead," said Kangaroo. "I—I suppose—there can't be any doubt. Glyn was sure, anyhow."

Dane nodded, and the two dropped the discussion, but both of them were very thoughtful that day. When Glyn came in to tea, his face was pale and tired, but very bright. Evidently he possessed a full and fixed belief in his "latest."

Probably all three of the thoughtful Shell fellows would have taken a rather different view of the matter had they overheard a little talk that went on in the Third Form room just before prep. D'Arcy minor—otherwise Wally of the Third—was chatting with Reggie Manners and Frank Levison, when Piggott of the Third came in. Wally rose at once and marched across to Piggott, and that rather disreputable fag backed away from him in alarm.

"Give your catapult to me," said Wally, dictatorially.

"My what?" asked Reuben Piggott.

"Catapult, you nasty little rotter," said Wally of the Third. "I saw you plugging stones at the sparrows this afternoon. Haven't I told you I'd punch your head if I saw you do it again?"

"Mind your own bizney!" said Piggott.

"Are you giving me that catapult?"

"No!" growled Piggott.

Actions followed, instead of words. D'Arcy minor was monarch of all he surveyed in the Third Form at St. Jim's, and he proceeded to make Reuben Piggott realise that that was so. Under the desks, in the dust, with his head in chancery, and his nose streaming red, Reuben Piggott agreed to give up the catapult. Wally, leaving him for dead as it were, under the desks, rose with the catapult in his hand.

"Little beast!" he said severely. "I saw you hit a sparrow with this—it dropped somewhere near the wood-shed. I've a jolly good mind to plug something at you with it, to show you what it feels like."

"Ow-ow-ow!" said Piggott, rubbing his damaged nose.

"If you were a sparrow," said Wally, "how would you like a sneaking little beast plugging stones at you with a catapult?"

"Yow-ow-ow!" Piggott sat up, dusty and rather dazed, and dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. He did not trouble to think how he would have liked to be catapulted, had he been a sparrow. The state of his nose gave him enough to think about, without indulging in imaginative flights of that kind.

"Anyhow, I'll jolly well smash this up!" said Wally.

And he did—and on second thoughts, he jammed the fragments down Piggott's back.

Reuben Piggott was still engaged in uneasy attempts to extract those fragments, when Mr. Selby came in to take the Third at prep.

This little scene, in the Third Form room, remained quite unknown to the Shell fellows, of course. The Shell never knew or wanted to know what went on in the fag form-room. Yet some knowledge of it certainly would

have changed the views, in No. 11 in the Shell, of the destructive power of the death ray.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### D'Arcy is Not Taking Any!

"D'Arcy, old man!"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"You offered to help me the other day."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy beamed on Glyn of the Shell. His whole aristocratic face and his celebrated eyeglass beamed together. He was distinctly pleased.

"Yaas, and I am weady now," he answered.

"Good man! The fact is, I want some help in a rather advanced experiment," said Glyn. "You don't mind?"

"I am vewy flattahed, deah boy."

"Come along to my workshop, then."

"Yaas, wathah."

Arthur Augustus walked cheerily along with Glyn of the Shell. He was very pleased and flattered. Certainly, Glyn had hitherto refused all his offers of assistance, not very politely. He had seemed to imply that the aristocratic brain of Arthur Augustus was not quite up to the standard of intelligence required for his scientific work. Arthur Augustus had really been a little annoyed. But he was already ready to forgive a repentant sinner. Evidently Glyn had thought better of it, and realised that Gussy's noble intellect was just what he wanted. So the swell of St. Jim's trotted along with him very brightly.

"Hallo, where are you off to, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, as he passed the two juniors on his way to the nets.

"I am goin' to help Glyn with his scientific expewiments, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, my hat! Better come down to the cricket."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked on with Glyn. But he halted suddenly.

"Pewhaps I had better change into some

old clobbah, Glyn," he said. "I believe that scientific expewimentin' wathah mucks up a fellow's clothes, doesn't it?"

"That's all right—you won't touch anything," said Glyn.

"Oh! You do not want me to handle the—the contwaptions, or whatevah you call them?"

"Not at all."

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus, walking on again. "If you wequiah only advice and intellectual assistance, there is no need for me to change my clobbah."

"You'd have to change your intellect for that, though," grunted Bernard Glyn.

"What?"

"All right—come on," said Glyn hastily.

"Weally, Glyn——!"

"I want a fellow with some pluck, who's not afraid to run a little risk," explained Glyn. "That's all."

Arthur Augustus was placated at once.

"Wight-ho," he said. "I twust I have plenty of pluck, and certainly I do not mind wunnin' a little wisk, deah boy."

"Of course, the risk's not really great. But there's a chance—just a chance——"

"That's all wight."

"I knew you wouldn't be scared," said Glyn. "You see, a fellow making advanced experiments in electrical gadgets has a lot of handicaps. He can't get chaps to take risks. How are you to know whether a certain dose of E.M.F. would kill a man, for instance, unless you can get a man to stand up to it and put it to the test? Working a thing out in theory is all very well—but actual practice is the thing. But you might go round for weeks looking for a man who'd take his part in an experiment like that without finding him."

"Bai Jove! I should say so."

"It's a bit disheartening," said Glyn.

Arthur Augustus paused, and looked rather fixedly at Glyn of the shell.

"I twust," he said, very distinctly, "I twust, Glyn, that you are not askin' me to weceive a fatal electwic shock, to show whethah it is fatal or not? With every desiah to help you, I should feel bound to

wefuse to take part in such an expewiment, bai Jove."

"It isn't that, fathead. I was only putting a case."

"Oh, all wight, then."

Arthur Augustus, however, was feeling a little uneasy as he arrived at the wood-shed

the special request of his father. When damage happened to be done, Mr. Glyn always paid for it cheerfully, and without a question. Nevertheless, Gussy could not help thinking that, had Dr. Holmes heard of the death ray, a stopper would have been put on this especial enterprise. Certainly, the

Head was not likely to guess what was on.

Gussy turned his eyeglass with great interest on the various objects around him, which he did not understand in the very least. He was deeply interested, though a little inwardly uneasy.

"What is this peculiah-lookin' thing on the bench, Glyn?" he asked.

"That's the Death Machine."

"The—the what?"

"The sender," explained Glyn. "You can call it the transmitter, if you like. It sends out the ray when the current is on."

"I don't see the wiah."

"There is no wire, ass! The electric ray goes out on the

Hertzian waves—wireless waves, like the Marconi concerts—the 2 L O. That's my great discovery—the transmission of electric power on ether waves."

"Bai Jove! What would happen if I pwessed this knob, Glyn?"

"It would turn on the power."

"And what then?"

"The ray would be directed with full force on any object in front of the sending machine."

"That would be the School-house, behind the twees. And what would happen then?"



Tom Merry & Co. piled on to the youthful inventor and dragged him out of the woodshed. "You're going to play cricket," chuckled Monty Lowther. "Touch him up with the bat, Talbot!" (See Chapter 7.)

with the schoolboy inventor. Glyn's big dynamo was throbbing away, and Arthur Augustus regarded it rather dubiously. He wondered just how dangerous Glyn's gadgets might be, and he wondered, too, whether the Head would have allowed all this, had Dr. Holmes chanced to look into the wood-shed and observe what was on. That Glyn was conducting electrical experiments there was well known, but the extent and object of them certainly were not known. Glyn was an easy first in the science class, and he was specially indulged in his scientific pursuits, by

"Only that the School House would be reduced to dust and ashes before you could wink your eye," said Glyn carelessly.

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Gweat pip!"

His slim fingers had been hovering over the fatal knob. He jerked them away as if the knob had suddenly become red-hot.

"Bai Jove! I—I twust that that feafhul thing cannot get turned on by accident, Glyn."

"Not unless a fellow came in and sat on it," said Glyn, with a laugh. "Of course, I can regulate the power I send out. I can send out thousands of volts, if I like—enough to wipe out the House. I can send out enough to give all the fellows electric shocks within a radius of a hundred yards, or enough to kill a sparrow. But never mind that. I want you to stand in front of the machine——"

"Eh?"

"In front of the machine. I suppose you know, D'Arcy, that electricity is still rather an unknown thing; there are mysteries in it still undiscovered? For instance, a certain power will give a fellow a shock. A stronger power will electrocute him, dead as a door-nail. But, as it happens, a still stronger power may pass through him without harming him. That's one of the puzzles of the thing. Now, I'm going to turn on a certain force——"

"What-a-at?"

"You're not in front of the machine. This way."

Arthur Augustus seemed inclined to linger where he was, on the safe side of the death-transmitter. But Glyn, without even noticing his hesitation, pulled him into position.

"That's right," he said. "Stand there."

"Yaa-a-a-as."

"The power I'm going to turn on is exactly twice as strong as the current required to electrocute you."

"Is—is—is it?"

"Yes. But it won't hurt you; that is to say, it's practically certain that it won't! Of course, there's an element of risk, as I told you. You don't mind that?"

Glyn did not wait for an answer. He busied himself with his machine, never even noticing the extraordinary expression

that was growing on the aristocratic face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

For a moment or two the swell of St. Jim's seemed petrified.

Glyn's finger was on the fatal knob. Then Gussy woke to life, as it were, and moved quite suddenly.

"Now——" Glyn stared round. "Where are you going, D'Arcy? I'm just ready——"

The elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was already vanishing through the doorway of the wood-shed. Glyn stared after him in amazement and annoyance.

"D'Arcy!" he bawled. "You ass! Where are you going?"

Arthur Augustus did not pause to explain where he was going.

He went!

Certainly, if Arthur Augustus had put on a similar speed at the school sports, he would have won the hundred yards, hands down.

The death ray itself could hardly have covered the distance to the School House in a shorter time than Arthur Augustus.

He vanished.

"The silly owl!" exclaimed Glyn wrathfully. "It seems as if I shall never get a chap to see me through this experiment. Kanga and Dane have both refused, and now that silly ass—it's rotten!"

Glyn gave a snort of disgust.

If that interesting experiment was to be carried out, it was clear that he would have to look further for help. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, at all events, was not taking any!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### From the Sublime to the Ridiculous

TOM MERRY tapped Glyn on the shoulder the following day, after dinner. It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and cricket occupied the thoughts of most of the St. Jim's juniors. It did not even enter Bernard Glyn's thoughts, however. He had quite forgotten that he was down to play in the Form match between the Shell and the Fourth that afternoon—if, indeed, the fact had ever penetrated into his preoccupied mind. He stared at the captain of the Shell

# A GUY FAWKES' DAY RAG AT ST. JIM'S !



To face page 121.

“Guy! Guy! Here's Another Guy!”

## Squire v. Schoolboys!

### *An Amazing Incident in the History of St. Jim's*

GUY FAWKES' DAY was celebrated with great gusto in "the good old days," when the exploits of the notorious Guido were still fresh in the memory.

On the opposite page our artist depicts a scene in the reign of Charles the Second. A human "guy" is being borne triumphantly into the school quadrangle.

The unfortunate "guy" was Squire Pillinger, a local landowner who had for some time past been at war with the St. Jim's scholars. He was an irascible old fellow, and was eternally making complaints to the Head in connection with schoolboy trespassers on his land. He used to insist that the culprits should be flogged in his presence, and he would survey the "executions" with a grin of malevolent satisfaction. This, naturally, did not endear Squire Pillinger to the St. Jim's fellows!

A feud sprang up between squire and schoolboys, and on the Fifth of November, 1666, the St. Jim's fellows captured their hated foe, and trussed him to a farm-cart, in which he was conveyed to the school. A placard, bearing the inscription, "YE GUY," was fastened in front of the squire's portly person, and his progress to St. Jim's was watched by a curious crowd of country-folk.

On his arrival at St. Jim's, the unfortunate squire was "ducked" in the school fountain; and so drastic was his punishment that he deemed it prudent to give the St. Jim's fellows a wide berth in the future.

The Head was aware of the rowdy scenes which had been enacted on Guy Fawkes' Day, but as the whole school was concerned in the outrage, and there was difficulty in discovering the ringleaders, the Head took no action in the matter—to the infinite relief of all concerned!

(Continued from page 120.)

absent-mindedly, his thoughts far away—doubtless wandering in space borne on Hertzian waves.

"Cricket, old man," said Tom genially.

"Eh?"

"Stumps pitched at two."

"Are you playing cricket?" asked Glyn indifferently. "Speaking of cricket, I was going to ask you if you'd mind my testing my machine on Little Side this afternoon? You could put off your match, I suppose?"

"What?"

"I've got the thing all ready for the final test. I want to be careful, of course, that no lives are lost," said Glyn. "Fellows' parents would kick up a fuss, and all that. Besides, it would be rather unfeeling. I'm thinking of destroying the junior cricket pavilion."

Tom Merry blinked at him.

"You're thinking of destroying our pavilion?" he asked, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Yes, blotting it out with my ray, you know. Being a detached building, in the playing-fields, it can be done without any damage resulting—damage to the school, I mean. Do you mind?"

"Do I mind?" gasped Tom. "Well, yes, just a little—only a few! Not that I believe your jolly old ray would destroy a bunny rabbit. But as there might possibly be something in it, you're jolly well not going to turn it on our pav.—see?"

"I call that selfish."

"You can call it what you like, old bean," grinned Tom Merry. "If you damage our pav. I can tell you that there will be a silly idiot seriously damaged soon afterwards, so seriously damaged that he won't know his own features in the glass. Catch on?"

"It's always like that," said Glyn bitterly. "Selfishness and stupidity in the way of scientific progress. It's enough to make a fellow, with irresistible power in his hands, quite reckless. What's to prevent me from wiping out one of the Houses if I choose?"

"Well, you can begin on the New House, if you like," chuckled Tom Merry. "I've always told Figgins & Co. that St. Jim's would be greatly improved if the New House went to pot."



A low, buzzing sound came from the Death Ray machine, and the fags, fairly frightened now, streamed out of the door. Glyn stood clutching his hair outside the window. "It's all up with St. Jim's!" he panted. "It's pointed straight at the School House—in a few seconds the building will go!" (See Chapter 9.)

"I'm speaking seriously," grunted Glyn. "Look here, my father would pay for all the damage done, of course."

"He would have to pay your hospital expenses, too," said Tom. "Cut it out, old man, and go and change."

"Change. What for?"

"You're playing in the Shell team this afternoon."

Glyn snorted.

"Do you think I've got time for cricket? Don't be an ass."

"I don't think I'm the ass of us two," said Tom cheerily. "Mind, you're down to play, and you're wanted. You can chuck up wireless for one day."

"Fathead!"

Bernard Glyn turned away, his brow corrugated with thought. He was certainly not thinking about cricket.

He was thinking about his wonderful invention, which now required only to be put to a serious test. The dead sparrow under the window of his workshop had proved the efficacy of this ray—to Glyn, at least, who did not know the true history of that tragedy.

Glyn was a humane fellow, and he would never have dreamed of experimenting on living things. Scientific enthusiast as he was, he could not humbug himself into a belief that the pursuit of scientific discovery could justify cruelty to animals. The sparrow had been killed by accident—or so Glyn believed,

knowing nothing about the catapult of Reuben Piggott of the Third. But these humane considerations were, of course, a handicap.

His death ray, some day, was to be used to destroy whole armies on the march, vast cities with all their inhabitants, as soon as it should please some feather-headed statesman to begin a new war. In the meantime, he could not conscientiously use it to destroy a rabbit. But it could at all events be tested and proved on buildings, and so Glyn had thought of the junior cricket pavilion. And now it seemed that there were objections even to that!

Bernard Glyn walked away to his workshop. He was busy there when several Shell fellows in flannels looked in. He was sitting at the bench deeply engrossed in papers covered with weird figures.

"Ready?" asked Tom Merry.

Glyn glanced round.

"Do you think old Linton has destroyed it?" he asked.

"Eh—what?"

"My pocket-book."

"What pocket-book?" asked Tom blankly. Everybody but Glyn had forgotten that affair in the Shell Form-room of two or three weeks before.

"You silly ass! You know Mr. Linton bagged my pocket-book in the Form-room one day."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Oh, yes, I remember now. Most likely he burned it. Why?"

"I'm not absolutely sure that I've got the formula right the second time. It's practically certain, but I'd like to see the original. But if that old ass has done away with it—"

"Never mind that now, old chap. It doesn't matter, anyhow," said Tom Merry comfortingly. "Are you ready?"

"Ready for what?" asked Glyn irritably.

"Cricket."

"Oh, blow cricket!"

"Come on, old chap," said Kangaroo.

"Rats!"

"We're waiting for you," said Clifton Dane.

"Wait somewhere else, then," snapped Glyn.

"You're not coming?" asked the captain of the Shell.

"No, you ass!"

"Collar him!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here—" roared Glyn.

The cricketers promptly collared the scientific genius of the Shell. Death rays might be of the greatest importance, but in the eyes of the Shell fellows cricket matches came first. They collared Bernard Glyn and jerked him out of the wood-shed, struggling and protesting.

"I'm not going!" he bellowed.

"Yes you are, old top," chuckled Monty Lowther. "Kim on."

"You silly chump!"

"This way!" grinned Manners.

"Oh, you asses—you dummies! Think I'm going to fiddle while Rome's burning!" gasped Glyn.

"Get a move on. Touch him with that bat, Talbot."

"Yaroooh! Let me lock up the shed, anyhow!" yelled Glyn as he was marched away by a laughing crowd.

"Oh, the shed's all right. Nobody will raid the wood-shed—there isn't a cake there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"You've got to change yet, and the Fourth are waiting. Come on."

"I tell you I won't."

"Bump him!"

"Yoooooop! I'll come."

And Glyn went. Much against the grain, he played in the Shell team—which he regarded as fiddling while Rome burned, like Nero of old. But there was no denying his Form fellows—their methods were altogether too persuasive to be denied. So Bernard Glyn played cricket, and the death ray was given an enforced rest. It was a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous, in the view of Bernard Glyn—while it seemed quite the reverse to the other fellows.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER A Chance for Wally & Co.

"THEY call that cricket!"

Wally of the Third made that remark in very disparaging tones, as Bernard Glyn's wicket went down to a ball from Fatty Wynn of the Fourth.

"Not our style," remarked Manners minor.

"And these chaps refuse to play the Third!" said Frank Levison. "How many runs has Glyn of the Shell made?"

"A jolly old duck's egg."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally & Co., the heroes of the Third, were honouring the Shell-Fourth match with their presence, for a time. Levison minor was interested, as his brother, Ernest Levison, was playing in the Fourth Form team. Manners minor was very mildly interested on account of his brother, Manners of the Shell, playing in Tom Merry's eleven. Wally of the Third had a brotherly desire to encourage his major, the great Arthur Augustus, with a brotherly yell or two if he knocked up any runs. Hobbs and Joe Frayne and Curly Gibson had come along with the three minors to view the cricket—and to contribute disparaging remarks.

All the fags agreed that the game was not up to Third Form style. And indeed Glyn's play, taken as a sample, rather justified their opinion.

Glyn's thoughts were elsewhere.

His wicket went down first ball. He was seventh to bat of the Shell team, and Dane took his place. Then Bernard Glyn came back to the pavilion—that pavilion on which he had desired to test the powers of the death ray and joined Tom Merry & Co.

Wally of the Third and his comrades grinned at him, desirous of letting him know what the Third thought of his style of cricket.

Glyn did not even see them. Probably, anyhow, the opinion of the Third would not have worried him very much.

"Tom Merry," he said abruptly, "I'm out—"

"I can see that," said the captain of the Shell rather gruffly. "You haven't done much for the side, I must say."

"Well, I did my best," said Glyn. "I wouldn't let you down if I could help it. But I'm out now, and you won't want me to bowl. Besides, there's some more wickets to go down. So I may as well clear off."

"Rot! You'll be wanted on the field."

"But the Shell innings isn't over—"

"It's petering out now—"

"You can play a substitute in the field—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Tom Merry, I want to get on with my real work—"

"Lines to do?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I mean my invention. You don't want to keep me here, Tom Merry."

"You're in the team," grunted Tom, crossly. "For goodness' sake, give your silly rot a rest for once. Dry up."

"Well, let me cut off and lock up the shed," said Glyn. "Some silly ass may get in there monkeying around with my things."

"Nobody's interested in them but you," said Tom. "Look here, Glyn, if you get off the field, you'll get deep in some piffling, scientific bosh, and you'll forget all about cricket. Stay where you are."

"Dash it all, Glyn," said Kangaroo. "You're playing for the Form, old man. Stick it out."

"Oh, all right," said Glyn resignedly. "Thank goodness it's only a single-innings match, anyhow."

"There goes Dane's wicket! Levison's got it."

"Well bowled, Levison!"

"Bravo!" yelled Levison minor.

Levison of the Fourth was bowling well for his Form. His over finished the Shell innings, and the Fourth Form prepared to take their turn at the wickets. Bernard Glyn went into the field with the rest of the Shell fellows.

"What's up?" asked Frank Levison, as Wally of the Third pulled at his arm. "Leggo! I want to see them bat."

"Come on."

"Well, what's on?" asked Frank.

"Didn't you hear what that ass Glyn told Tom Merry?" whispered D'Arcy minor. "He's left the wood-shed unlocked, and a fellow can get in and have a look at his gadgets."

"Jolly good idea," said Reggie Manners. "The cheeky rotter kicked me when I went in the other day. As if a fellow can't go into the wood-shed! Actually kicked me!"

"Come on, Franky. I want to see his bag of tricks," urged Wally.

"I want to see my major bat," said Frank.

"Oh, rot! I'm going to miss seeing my major bat," said Wally, crossly.

"Your major's batting isn't worth seeing—mine is," retorted Frank.

"Why, you cheeky young sweep——"

"Oh, give Franky his head," said Manners minor. "You know he's potty about his silly major. Plenty of time after Levison has batted."

Wally of the Third assented, and the fags sat on the grass to watch the cricket till Levison major's turn at the wickets was over. Levison of the Fourth was fifth on the batting list; but, as it happened, he was in great form that afternoon, and he stayed on while four other Fourth Form batsmen came and went. Then he was dismissed by Talbot of the Shell, and Cardew took his place.

Wally of the Third jumped up.

"Come on, Franky. You've seen your major do his stunts—not that they were worth seeing——"

"He's twenty-five," hooted Frank.

"Well, what's that?"

"Just five times as many as your major, anyhow."

"If you fellows are going to rag about your majors, we shan't see Glyn's gadgets before the game's over," said Reggie Manners. "They're eight down already. Come on—blessed if I want to watch my major muff catches, though you two seem keen on seeing your majors lose wickets."

"Yes, come on," said Joe Frayne. "Shut up and come on."

"I'm ready," said Levison minor.

And the heroes of the Third trooped off the field, and took their way round to the woodshed that was now Glyn's workshop. Wildrake of the Fourth, who was watching the cricket near at hand, called out to them. He had heard the talk of the fags.

"You young beggars had better keep clear of Glyn's gadgets. You'll be giving yourselves shocks."

"Bow-wow!" retorted Wally, over his shoulder. And the fags marched off, leaving Wildrake grinning.

## Famous Fellows in Fiction



ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

A splendid swell we now behold,  
The one and only Gussy;  
His craze for dress is uncontrolled,  
On fashions he is fussy.  
His tailor gives him perfect cuts,  
His "toppers" are the latest;  
Of all the noble band of "Nuts"  
Our Gussy is the greatest!

His ties are dazzling to the view,  
His purple socks are striking;  
And waistcoats of canary hue  
Are greatly to his liking.  
Young ladies he may chance to meet  
He frequently impresses,  
When he salutes them in the street  
And views their dainty dresses.

Although a dandy, he'll excel  
In sport and recreation;  
His football form, we know full well,  
Is quite a revelation.  
He often kicks the winning goal  
With straight shots or with swervers,  
And hears the shouts like thunder roll  
From all the keen observers!

His noble leg is often pulled  
By japers gay and dashing;  
When bluffed, bamboozled, or befooled,  
He vows a "feahful thwashing."  
Always to play a manly part  
Is Gussy's great endeavour;  
We love him for his hero's heart,  
And wish him joy for ever!

It was a quarter of an hour later that the last Fourth Form wicket went down, to a catch by Bernard Glyn in the slips—his only contribution to the Shell victory, which was won by a single run. The cricketers came off, and Wildrake called to Glyn of the Shell.

"Anything liable to damage in your pesky old workshop, Glyn?"

The schoolboy inventor glanced round quickly.

"Yes—lots! Why?"

Wildrake grinned.

"Then I guess you'd better hustle round lively," he said. "The Third have gone to explore."

"What!" yelled Glyn.

"Bai Jove! If there is anythin' dangevous there, Glyn, you ought to have locked up the place," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, severely.

"Didn't I want to?" howled Glyn. "Didn't a set of silly asses yank me away—oh, my hat! Are you sure, Wildrake? When did they go?"

"About a quarter of an hour ago," said the Canadian junior. "Young D'Arcy and Manners and some more. I reckoned I'd give you the tip in case they might do some damage."

"Damage!" gasped Glyn. "If they touch the wireless transmitter, they may—may—good heavens! They may all be killed—and a hundred other fellows as well!"

"What?" roared Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"I guess that sounds rather thick," drawled Wildrake.

"Weally, Glyn——"

"You silly ass, why didn't you call me off the field?" howled Glyn. "But there's not a second to lose," Bernard Glyn, with a white, horrified face, raced off the cricket-field.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

"If there's anything in it——" ejaculated Tom.

"I—I rather think there is!" said Kangaroo, "I think——"

"Come on!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the whole crowd of cricketers, and a crowd of other fellows, rushed after Bernard

Glyn. "If there was anything in it"—the thought was appalling. A set of careless, thoughtless fags "monkeying" about with a fearful machine that could scatter death and destruction for miles around—it was unnerving to think of it.

If there was anything in it—it was a big "if." Yet the possibility existed. Indeed, to Kangaroo and Dane, remembering the dead sparrow, it seemed more probable than not. And Glyn's horrified look showed that he at least fully believed in the danger.

It was with beating hearts and startled faces that Tom Merry & Co. raced after Glyn of the Shell, and when they overtook him they found him hammering furiously at the door of the wood-shed.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not Quite "It."

WALLY of the Third had slammed the door just in time.

For fifteen happy minutes the heroes of the Third had been exploring the forbidden recesses of Glyn's workshop. Often and often they had wished to explore it: chiefly, perhaps, because it was forbidden; it was a sort of Bluebeard's chamber that piqued their curiosity. They sorted and rooted among Glyn's weird contrivances, and they stared at his diagrams, and blinked at his scribbled formulæ, and upset and disturbed a good many things—and while they were thus happily occupied, Wally spotted Bernard Glyn heading for the shed at a frantic pace, with wildly excited countenance.

"Here comes the jolly old inventor!" grinned Wally. "Looks as if he's on the war-path!"

And D'Arcy minor slammed the door and locked it just as Glyn came panting breathlessly up.

"Open this door!" shrieked Glyn.

"Any hurry?" yawned Wally.

"Don't touch my things."

"Why not?"

"You young ass! Your lives may depend on it!" roared Glyn, "Don't touch a single thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fags. Judging by the manner in which they greeted Glyn's

warning, they were not believers in the deadliness of his death ray.

Glyn hammered at the door.

"Let me in! Let me in at once."

"All serene," chuckled Wally. "There isn't any cake here, so far as I can see—and if there was, we wouldn't bag it like Trimble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang! bang! bang!

"Let me in!" shrieked Glyn.

Tom Merry & Co. arrived with a rush. They were relieved to see that, so far at least, no visible damage had been done. The laughter from within the wood-shed indicated that Wally & Co. were still alive—in fact, very much alive.

Glyn rushed round to the window. The lower sash was open, and he jerked away the canvas within, and put in his head.

"You young villains!" he gasped.

"Oh, draw it mild," said Levison minor, "we're only looking round, you know. No harm done."

"Don't touch that machine on the bench."

"Why not?" asked Reggie Manners.

"That's the death-transmitter."

"My only aunt Jane!" chuckled Wally.

"Is that the jolly old gadget you're going to blow up the universe with?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fags gathered round the "gadget." Reggie Manners tripped over the thick insulated wire that ran from it under the bench, and stumbled. Glyn gave a yell of alarm at the window.

"Don't touch it! Let me in at once."

"Oh, let's see the jolly old gadget," said Wally coolly. "Then we'll let you in if you'll make it pax. Not otherwise."

Glyn groaned.

Round him at the window Tom Merry & Co. gathered with serious faces. They could not help being impressed by the horror in the schoolboy inventor's face.

"What's this jolly old knob on it, Glyn?" asked Wally, touching the fatal knob with the top of a grubby forefinger.

"Stop!" gasped Glyn.

"What?"

"If you press that knob you turn on the current."

"Then does it play a tune?" asked Reggie Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mad young ass!" said Glyn hoarsely. "If the current's turned on it sends out the death ray, and everything in front of the machine will be wiped out of existence."

"Wally, let it alone, deah boy," gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Don't touch it, Wally!" shouted Tom Merry.

Wally of the Third drew back his finger, startled. But at the same moment Hobbs, pressing forward to look, stumbled over a trailing wire, and pitched heavily against Wally's back. D'Arcy minor was pitched forward over the bench, and he fell right on top of the fatal knob.

Glyn gave a husky howl.

"He's done it!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

There was a low buzzing sound in the wood-shed. The fags, fairly frightened now, rushed for the door, tore it open, and streamed out with startled faces. Glyn stood clutching at his hair.

Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder.

"Glyn, what's going to happen?"

"It's all up with St. Jim's!" panted Glyn.

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"Keep out of the line of it. It's fatal! Keep back!"

"Bai Jove!"

"That machine was pointing directly towards the School House," said Bernard Glyn hoarsely. "The death ray is turned on now—in less than a few seconds the House will go."

"Great Scott!"

Glyn staggered against the wall, overcome with horror. Tom Merry & Co. stood in a frozen group, staring towards the School House, of which the old grey walls and sunlit windows were visible over the trees at a short distance.

The death ray was in operation. Those old grey walls were to crumble before their eyes, those sunlit windows to be blotted out, that grey old tower to come down crushing in horrid ruin! And the Head and the House-

master and the scores of fellows who were within the House——

The juniors stood frozen. There was no time for action, in a few seconds the catastrophe was due.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy faintly.

Bernard Glyn groaned.

With fascinated eyes the juniors watched the House. Glyn fixed horrified eyes on it, watching for the crumbling of the ancient stones, the crashing of the old red chimney-pots.

Seconds passed. Minutes followed them.

The walls did not crumble! The chimney-pots did not crash! The old windows still gleamed back the sunset serenely. The grey old tower still lifted its summit to the blue sky.

Tom Merry gave a gasp.

"Glyn, you ass——"

"It doesn't work!" panted Kangaroo.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove! Glyn, you cwass ass——"

Glyn passed his hands across his eyes. He seemed unable to believe in his own vision. The School House still stood there where it had stood for centuries—immune, apparently, to the deadliness of the death ray.

"It does work," said Glyn. "It must work. It cannot fail! The power is turned on—the full power—powerful enough to wipe out the Tower of London! And—and it's been tested."

"Rats!" snorted Blake of the Fourth. "The power may be there, but your jolly old transmitter doesn't transmit. Rats!"

"It does—it must—it has——"

"We found a dead sparrow under that very window," said Kangaroo. "It had been killed by the death ray only last Friday."

"Last Friday!" hooted Wally. "Ten to one it was the sparrow that cad Piggott killed with his catapult."

"Wh-a-t?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bernard Glyn.

Still the School House stood, and by this time even Bernard Glyn had to realise that it was going to stand. Something evidently was wanting in the transmitter of destruction, some trifling detail that had not been worked out. Bernard Glyn gave a sudden howl.

"It's old Linton's fault."

"Eh? What's old Linton's fault?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"The silly ass bagged my pocket-book, and I didn't get it quite right the second time. I had it all right that day in the Form-room. I know that. Now it's gone wrong, and it's all Linton's fault."

"All Linton's fault that you haven't knocked St. Jim's sky-high?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yes, yes—the ass—the silly ass!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as a fault on the wight side."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared Tom Merry. "If you ever had the secret, which I don't believe for a moment, it's a jolly good thing that you've lost it. Do you want to knock the school to smithereens, you born dummy?"

"Blow the school!" howled Glyn. "What the dickens does that matter compared with the cause of science, compared with——"

"Oh, bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah, wag the silly ass, deah boys. If evah a howlin' ass asked to be wagged that howlin' ass is askin for it."

"Look here—oh, my hat!"

Bump! bump! bump! bump!

When Tom Merry & Co. walked away they were laughing, and quite relieved of any apprehension on the score of Glyn's latest. They left Bernard Glyn to sort himself out in a breathless state.

Bernard Glyn did not admit that he had failed.

But he was not impervious to the howls of laughter that greeted every reference to his death ray. He ceased soon to refer to it.

In all St. Jim's there remained only one believer in the death ray, and that one was Glyn of the Shell.

Bernard Glyn still worked at his experiments, and still dreamed of the future day when his death ray would wipe out armies on the march and crumple up great cities, and sink enormous fleets. But the rest of St. Jim's were doubting Thomases, and Tom Merry & Co. chuckled loud and long over Bernard Glyn's death ray.

THE END



# MY DANCING PARTNERS

by

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY



I DANCED with Gwunday at the Ball  
(I wish I'd nevah danced at all !)  
For Gwunday is a clumsy fellah—  
Twod on my toes, an' made me bellah !  
I told the chump, in language plain,  
I'd nevah dance with him again !

I then enjoyed a dance with Mewwy,  
He is a gwaceful dancah—vewy !  
But soon he played a foolish antic  
Which made me absolutely fwantic !  
He whirled me wound at such a pace  
That I pitched forward on my face !

Then, foolishly, I danced with Twimble,  
A youth who's anythin' but nimble.  
He tumbled here, he stumbled there,  
Chargin' an' bargin' ewewywhere !  
An' when he twod on my pet corn  
I left him, lonely an' forlorn !

With Fatty Wynn I twied to waltz,  
His movements, though, were full of faults.  
You've heard of bulls in china shops ?  
Well, that's how Wynn behaves at " hops."  
He left me sitting on the floor ;  
I stwuggled up, an' danced with Gore.

Gore simply gwabbed me wound the waist,  
An' off we went, in feahful haste.  
With Blake an' Digby we collided,  
An' all the lookahs-on dewided.  
" Go easy, Gussy ! " they exclaimed.  
My noble cheeks with fuwy flamed.

I danced with Cardew an' with Clive  
(A wondah I am still alive !)  
'Twas such a bustle and a hustle,  
I'm stiff an' sore in ewevy muscle !  
Next time they hold a Ball or Fête,  
I'll dance alone, in solemn state !





# ST. JIM'S SIDELIGHTS

*Specially contributed to THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL by Tom Merry, the popular Captain of the Shell Form at St. Jim's*

**S**T. JIM'S is situated in the heart of Sussex, a magnificent county whose glories have been sung by many poets, ancient and modern. Rudyard Kipling has written:

"Each to his choice, but I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground, in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!"

**BUT** the St. Jim's fellows see very little of the sea. In this respect we are less fortunate than Greyfriars, which stands practically on the coast. How ripping it must be to tumble out of bed on a summer morning and enjoy an early morning dip in the briny! However, we have the River Rhyl running close to the school, and it is a watery paradise for boaters and bathers.

**TALKING** about bathing, Mr. Horace Ratcliff ought to be an excellent swimmer. The unpopular tyrant of the New House is seldom without his cane, and he is an expert at "making strokes"!

**FATTY WYNN**, the plump Falstaff of the New House, has created a record in the

gorging line. He went into his study one day and, after "bolting" the door, he proceeded to "devour" *THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL*! This is not a subject for "scoffing," boys and girls!

**SKIMPOLE** of the Shell can claim to have gone one better than this. He has been known to "digest" the complete works of his favourite author, Professor Balmypumplet!

**GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY'S** initials form the word "Gag," which is exactly what Grundy needs to keep him from blowing his own trumpet so frequently!

**ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY**, the elegant aristocrat of the Fourth, ought to join



Mr. Ratcliff is an expert at "making strokes"!



After "bolting" the door, Fatty Wynn proceeded to "devour" THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

the Army when he leaves St. Jim's. He is so particular about "right dress"!

CARDEW of the Fourth—cool, handsome, and debonair—has a curious trick of omitting his final "g's" when speaking. Droppin' one's final letters may be jolly amusin' an' entertainin', an' all that, but it's sheer laziness, to my way of thinkin'!

GERALD KNOX, the bullying prefect, was heard to remark the other day that his favourite dinner was steak-and-kidney pie. We should have thought it would have been "bully" beef!

TOBY, the page, whose numerous duties include the cleaning of the fellows' shoes each morning, was unable to perform that duty this morning owing to the fact that the housekeeper had forgotten to order a fresh supply of polish. We always did say that Toby was a good fellow, but he lacked "polish"!

NAMES are funny things. We have a fellow at St. Jim's named Prye, who does nothing of the sort; we have a Dane who is a Canadian; a Clampe that is never used in a workshop; a Baker who doesn't bake; a Cook who doesn't cook; a St. Leger that is never seen on a racecourse (at least, we hope not); a Finn that doesn't belong to a fish; and a Brooke who neither "babbles" nor

"goes on for ever." Verily, we are a strange mixture at St. Jim's!

GEORGE KERR of the New House is a canny Scot, and has a wonderfully shrewd head. He is great at putting two and two together, and has solved many small mysteries at St. Jim's. He hopes to be a detective when he grows up, so that the Kerr of to-day may be the sleuth-hound of to-morrow!

GEORGE HERRIES of the Fourth still persists in playing his cornet in the School House—usually while the other fellows are trying to do their prep. As a rule, the sufferers manage to bottle up their wrath, but the general feeling is that there will be an explosion some day!

IT IS claimed for Towser that he caught the biggest rat at St. Jim's. We presume this refers to Mellish, to whom Towser became "attached" when the ead of the Fourth was breaking bounds one dark night.



There will be an explosion some day!



# ST JIM'S SPORTS & SPORTSMEN

By ERIC KILDARE

(Captain of Games)



## CRICKET

WE have just brought an interesting season to a triumphant conclusion. It has been a great season for St. Jim's, both senior and junior elevens having performed many noteworthy feats.

DARRELL of the Sixth was our star performer. Playing against Abbotsford in a two days' match, he batted the whole of the first day, and compiled the wonderful score of 214. Only once previously has a double century been made in St. Jim's cricket. This was in 1914, when R. V. Mason put together the mammoth score of 226 not out.

JUNIOR cricket has flourished exceedingly. Tom Merry has a positive genius for leadership, and his eleven is a very happy family. Every man Jack plays his

hardest. Greyfriars, Rookwood, and Highcliffe all had to surrender to the St. Jim's junior eleven on our own ground, though the three rival schools had their revenge later.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, having scored a century in the last match of the season, was presented with a silver wrist-watch, suitably inscribed, by his school-fellows. The presentation was a very pleasant function, and D'Arcy—to whom it came as a big surprise—made his shortest recorded speech. As a rule, he talks for twenty minutes without stopping, but on this occasion he

simply said: "Weally, deah boys, I don't know how to thank you! I am knocked all of a heap by this amazin' genewosity. Clean bowled ovah, bai Jove!" And then he sank back into his seat.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was presented with a silver wrist-watch.

FATTY WYNN is proving as deadly and destructive a bowler as ever. It is amazing how so plump a fellow manages to bowl all the afternoon in the blazing sun and

finish as fresh as paint. I questioned Wynn on the matter, and he informed me that he always fortifies himself with jam-tarts and ginger-beer at the school tuckshop prior to each match!

## FOOTBALL

THERE were several sensational happenings during the last football season. Mr. Horace Ratcliff, who has made several attempts to get the game banned, on the grounds that it is "rough and ungentelemanly," made yet another effort. But the Head, who was a great sportsman in his youth, refused to listen to the persuasions of the kill-joy house-master, and football will go merrily on as before. If the game was banned, I verily believe the school would go on strike!

TWO "runaway" victories were gained during the season. The senior eleven defeated Wayland Wanderers by 12 goals to 1, and Tom Merry's eleven had a 9-0 win against Rylcombe Grammar School. Such scoring is more suggestive of cricket than of football!

THE annual match between the School and the Old Boys was played in a blinding snowstorm. It was an amazing game. The "veterans" were leading by 3 goals to 1 at half-time, but the School rallied strongly in the second half and pulled the game out of the fire. The final score was 5-4 in our favour.

## MISCELLANEOUS

THE senior boxing championship was won by Darrell—the "Fighting Prefect," as he is called—and Tom Merry again demonstrated

his prowess by defeating Dick Redfern in the final for the junior championship. There has been quite a "boom" in boxing of late, and Mr. Railton, who organised the boxing tournament at St. Jim's, takes the keenest interest in the sport.

St. Jim's cannot claim to be in the front rank of schools in regard to swimming.

It is true that most of the fellows, juniors and seniors, are able to swim, but that's about all that can be said.

Unlike their rivals at Greyfriars they are minus a covered swimming-bath, and as the river bathing-place is not suitable all the year round—except to such hardy fellows as Tom Merry, Blake, Lowther, and George Figgins—we are severely handicapped by limited opportunities for practice.

Of course, during the summer months the River Rhyl is packed to excess.

The annual school swimming sports is always an interesting event, and no doubt some of the feats performed on these occasions would put even Harry Wharton & Co. in the shade.

We show a certain amount of brilliance in tennis also. Ralph Reckness Cardew is undoubtedly the best junior player, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a very near second.

We carried off most of the honours in the junior events. The seniors did not fare so badly either.

However, we come very much to the fore so far as running is concerned. Tom Merry and Talbot are usually selected as the "hares" in the cross-country runs, and they invariably leave the "pack" standing, as it were.



The match between the School and the Old Boys was played in a blinding snowstorm.



Purple with rage, and with his collar and tie streaming loose, the house-master sprang out of the cab and dashed up the steps towards the Head

**B**AI JOVE! There's somethin' wadically wrong, deah boys!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—the Terrible Three of the Shell—who had been chatting with D'Arcy in the quadrangle, looked very grave.

There certainly appeared to be something radically wrong.

A telegraph boy had just arrived at St. Jim's. He had a telegram for the Head, and Dr. Holmes had leaned from his study window and taken the wire. The juniors saw him open the telegram at the study window, and then give a violent start and turn pale. The flimsy message had fluttered from his hand, and it lay on the flagstones, within a few yards of where the juniors were standing.

# A FALSE ALARM!

An Amusing Story of  
St. Jim's

By **DICK REDFERN**

The Head made no effort to retrieve the telegram. He withdrew into his study, and closed the window.

"Bad news for the Head!" muttered Manners.

"Looks like it," assented Tom Merry.

"The old bird seemed very cut up," said Monty Lowther. "He was so jolly agitated that he dropped the telegram."

"Better pick it up and take it into his study, I suppose," said Tom Merry. And he stepped forward and picked up the wire.

Tom had no intention of reading the message. It was no business of his. And yet, as he picked up the wire, the written words seemed to leap at him.

It was a terse, dramatic message, and it made Tom Merry jump.

"Dr. Holmes, St. James's College, Rylcombe.—I die this evening at Burchester.—Ratcliff."

No wonder the Head had been startled. No wonder the telegram had fallen from his nerveless fingers.

Tom Merry was startled also. He stood rooted to the ground in amazement.

"What's up, Tommy?" asked Manners breathlessly.

"I—I've seen the message," was the muttered reply. "I couldn't help seeing it. The telegram is from old Ratty. And what do you think it says? 'I die this evening at Burchester!'"

"Great Scott!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors exchanged startled glances.

It looked as if a tragedy were about to be enacted.

Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the senior house-master at St. Jim's, had gone over to Burchester for the day. His aged aunt had recently died, and Mr. Ratcliff had gone to her solicitors in order to hear the will read. It was rumoured that the house-master had great expectations of inheriting a small fortune. And now came this tragic telegram—a message, it seemed, of despair and determination.

"I die this evening at Burchester!"

Arthur Augustus broke the long pause which followed.

"Good gwacious!" he gasped. "This—this is tewwible, deah boys! Looks as if Watty is contemplatin' suicide."

Tom Merry nodded.

"It would seem as if he had been cut out of his aunt's will, and terribly upset in consequence," he said. "And he's wired to the Head, saying that he intends to—to take his life."

This seemed to be the only satisfactory explanation of Mr. Ratcliff's amazing telegram. Furious and embittered at having been cut out of the will, he had resolved to commit suicide.

Tom Merry & Co. were alarmed and distressed. They had no love for Mr. Horace Ratcliff. He was a tyrant of the worst type. They had often said that St. Jim's would be well rid of him. But they recoiled from the thought of suicide, which was a grim and ghastly business. They pictured to themselves what a terrible sensation there would be at St. Jim's, when the news came through that Mr. Ratcliff had shot himself in Burchester, or thrown himself under a train, or taken a fatal dose of poison.

But it was not too late to save the house-master from his mad folly. He did not propose to make away with himself until the evening; and it was now early afternoon. Surely the Head would send someone to Burchester, to prevent Mr. Ratcliff from carrying out his insane resolve?

Tom Merry took the telegram to the Head's study. He tapped on the door and entered.

"Excuse me, sir," said Tom, "but you dropped this telegram just now."

The Head was looking very troubled.

"Thank you, Merry," he said, taking the telegram.

The captain of the Shell paused in the doorway.

"I—I didn't mean to pry, sir," he said, "but I couldn't help seeing that message from Ratty—I mean, Mr. Ratcliff. Do—do you really think he intends to take his life, sir?"

"I scarcely know what to think, Merry," said the Head. "It is not possible that the telegram is a hoax, sent by some stupid practical joker. No boy would play a jest of such a grim nature. On the other hand, it seems inconceivable that Mr. Ratcliff should intend to take his life. He has never shown the slightest suicidal tendencies."

"Is there anything we can do, sir?" asked Tom Merry.

Dr. Holmes shook his head.

"Fortunately, there is time to save Mr. Ratcliff, if indeed he contemplates suicide. I will send Mr. Railton to Burchester at once."

Tom Merry quitted the Head's study, and rejoined his chums in the quad.

"The Head's sending Railton over to Burchester, to bring Ratty to reason," he said.

"But I don't see why we shouldn't go over ourselves. Burchester's a fairly big place, and Railton might have a job to find Ratty. If we come across him ourselves, we'll collar him, and force him into a taxi, and bring him straight to St. Jim's. We won't give him a chance to do himself any harm."

"That seems quite an excellent wheeze, deah boy, said Arthur Augustus. "If I wemembah wightly, there is a twain to Burchestah at thwee o'clock. We've no time to lose."

The four juniors hurried down to the railway station. As they clambered into the train, they noticed Mr. Railton boarding it a few carriages along. But he failed to see the juniors.

It was a fairly long run to Burchester, and the train crawled along like a tortoise on wheels. But at last it drew up at the station of the market town.

Mr. Railton was among the first to alight.



The juniors gripped the arms of the spluttering and protesting Mr. Ratcliff and urged him towards the door. "We don't want to make a scene if we can avoid it, sir," said Tom Merry.

The juniors saw him give up his ticket and hurry with rapid strides through the booking hall.

Tom Merry & Co. left the station at a more leisurely pace. And then the hunt for Mr. Ratcliff began.

The juniors went first of all to the solicitor's office where the will had been read. They were informed that Mr. Ratcliff had called there that morning, and had departed some time since.

They then called at the house of Mr. Ratcliff's deceased aunt. But the house-master was not there.

"We shall have to comb the streets," said Tom Merry. "Come on!"

The St. Jim's juniors made an exhaustive tour of the narrow cobbled streets. They went through Cheap Street, which was in reality the dearest shopping thoroughfare in

the town. They went through Market Street, where there was no market; and through Broad Street, which was so narrow that two motor vehicles could not pass. They scoured the side turnings and the alley-ways; but there was no sign of Mr. Horace Ratcliff.

The policeman on point duty could give the juniors no assistance. He had not seen a person answering to the description of the St. Jim's house-master.

Tom Merry & Co. were both hungry and footsore by the time seven o'clock came. And their quest had proved unsuccessful. Whether Mr. Railton had had any luck they did not know.

Was it possible that Mr. Ratcliff had already carried out his intention?

The juniors shuddered uneasily at the thought.

But the "Burchester Evening Mail" was on

sale in the streets, and there were no raucous shouts of, "Sensational Suicide in Burchester! Paper!" Everything seemed perfectly normal.

"We'd better get some grub, I think," said Tom Merry, at length.

"The Cafe Royal's the best place," said Manners. "Here we are!"

And he led the way to a brilliantly lighted restaurant.

No sooner had the juniors entered, than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a sudden shout. "Watty!"

Mr. Ratcliff had been run to earth at last. He was seated at one of the little tables and partaking of dinner. He did not look like a man who was about to take his own life. Indeed, he seemed very much in love with life at the moment. He was eating a savoury omelette, and there was a goblet of wine at his elbow.

But the juniors remembered the telegram. "Fetch a taxi—quickly!" muttered Tom Merry, in Monty Lowther's ear.

Lowther hurried away, and then, at Tom Merry's signal, the others approached Mr. Ratcliff. The house-master looked up from his plate in astonishment.

"Are you comin' quietly, Mr. Watchif?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"W-w-what?"

"We don't want to make a scene if it can be avoided, sir," said Tom Merry. "We are going to take you back to St. Jim's."

Mr. Ratcliff sprang to his feet.

"Merry!" he thundered. "How dare you address me in that manner? Have you suddenly taken leave of your senses?"

"This way, sir!" said Tom, firmly. And he grasped one of Mr. Ratcliff's arms, while Manners seized the other. Arthur Augustus settled the bill, with the intention of collecting the money from Mr. Ratcliff later.

Spluttering and protesting, the house-master was hustled out of the restaurant, and bundled into the taxi which had drawn up outside.

Mr. Ratcliff was almost inarticulate with rage. He threatened the juniors with all sorts of pains and penalties, but they took no heed. They were bent on getting him back to St. Jim's before he could do himself any harm.

The Terrible Three guarded Mr. Ratcliff inside the vehicle, and Arthur Augustus rode in front with the driver.

Mr. Ratcliff proved a tiresome prisoner, and Tom Merry & Co. had all their work cut out to hold him down. He was extremely violent; and the juniors were not sorry when the taxi-cab drew up in the dusky quadrangle of St. Jim's.

The Head was standing in the school gateway, chatting with Mr. Railton, who had returned from Burchester without being able to find Mr. Ratcliff.

When the taxi halted, Mr. Ratcliff literally tore himself away from his captors.

Purple with rage, and with his collar and tie streaming loose, he sprang out of the vehicle, and almost ran full tilt into the Head.

"Sir!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "I have been grossly assaulted by four boys belonging to the School House! They attacked me in a Burchester restaurant, and brought me here by force in a taxi-cab! It—it is outrageous! Such conduct warrants instant expulsion!"

"Pray control yourself, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Head. "The drastic action of these boys was fully justifiable, in the circumstances. I am astonished, Mr. Ratcliff, that you should for a single moment contemplate such a step as suicide."

Mr. Ratcliff nearly fell down.

"Suicide?" he almost shrieked.

The Head nodded.

"I received your telegram stating that you intended to die in Burchester this evening; and I may say that I have suffered considerable anxiety on your account."

Mr. Ratcliff looked utterly bewildered. It was some time before he found his voice again.

"That telegram, sir, was wrongly transmitted," he said. "I need hardly say that I had not the slightest intention of committing suicide. When I left for Burchester this morning, I told you I should be back at five o'clock. But I found it impossible to return at that hour; so I stayed in the town, and wired you I should dine there this evening."

"Dine?" gasped the Head.

"Yes, sir—dine! In transmitting the telegram some careless post-office official omitted a letter, with the result that the word

'die' appeared in the message, instead of 'dine.'

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, in amazement. "Fancy a stupid error of that sort giving rise to all this worry and trouble. I shall reprimand the post-office authorities severely."

"And so shall I!" snorted Mr. Ratcliff. "My dinner has been rudely interrupted; I have been roughly handled by these young rascals; and, in short, I have suffered great inconvenience and annoyance. I consider that these boys ought to be punished for assaulting me as they did."

"They thought they were handling a would-be suicide, and therefore there is every excuse for their conduct," said the Head. "I should not dream of punishing them."

Mr. Horace Ratcliff gave another furious snort, and stalked away towards the building. And Tom Merry & Co. gazed after his retreating figure with a chuckle.

THE END

## Snapped In His Corner!



A glimpse of Tom Merry "between rounds" in the Junior Boxing Finals at St. Jim's.

## Famous Fellows in Fiction



*Tubby Muffin*

You've heard of Bunter, W. G.,  
So plump, and far from nimble;  
And doubtless you've devoured with glee  
The deeds of Wynn and Trimble.  
On feasts and banquets they are mad—  
In fact, they're always stuffin';  
And so is that amazing lad,  
The portly Tubby Muffin!

Perched high upon the tuckshop stool  
You'll nearly always find him;  
With pies and pastries, as a rule,  
Before him and behind him.  
Large quantities of grub "on tick"  
He'll get from Sergeant Kettle,  
Unless that veteran is quick  
And promptly on his mettle!

He is a member of the staff  
Of Billy Bunter's journal;  
His stories make a million laugh  
And give them pains internal.  
He thinks he's equal to such men  
As Wells and Rudyard Kipling;  
Unconscious humour from his pen  
Provokes both roars and rippling!

And yet, for all his quaint displays  
Which make us burst our buttons,  
He has no mean or vicious ways  
Like certain other gluttons.  
Although at present very dense,  
And quite an ignoramus,  
Some day he may acquire some sense,  
And find himself quite famous!

# MY BLISSFUL DREAM

BY  
**BAGGY TRIMBLE**



To dream of tuck, some people say,  
Means that a hamper's on the way.  
I dreamed of tuck; but I regret  
No hamper has arrived as yet!

Grand visions came before my eyes  
Of cherry cakes and rabbit pies.  
Then I saw clearly, in my dream,  
A dish of strawberries and cream.

I saw a wonderful York ham,  
Surrounded by large pots of jam.  
A tuckshop window I espied,  
With stacks of glorious grub inside!

A fine roast chicken met my gaze,  
I blinked at it in great amaze.  
A Christmas pudding, huge and steaming,  
Confronted me as I lay dreaming.

A knife and fork before me lay,  
I pounced upon them right away.  
Then I exclaimed, in joy and wonder,  
"I'll have a topping feed, by thunder!"

I seemed to fancy I was starving,  
The rabbit pie I started carving.  
Never was pie so much enjoyed,  
It promptly cured my aching void!

The good things vanished in a trice—  
It was a gorgers' paradise!  
The Christmas pudding, and the chick,  
Were both demolished in a tick.

Then suddenly the vision vanished,  
And all my blissful dreams were banished.  
D'Arcy and Blake my form were shaking:  
'Twas rising-bell—a rude awaking!



# SWIMMING FOR BOYS

With Hints on Life-Saving

By SID G. HEDGES

(Hon. Instructor and Silver Medallist of the Royal Life-Saving Society.)

**S**PEED swimming has rarely any practical value; and the many boys who spend all their time at swimming baths in taking headers and doing ten or twenty-yard sprints, have little chance of ever becoming real swimmers.

Overarm, trudgeon, crawl—these strokes should never be attempted until the learner has a thorough familiarity with breast- and back-stroke swimming, and with all the recognised methods of life-saving.

The good swimmer is he who feels perfectly at ease in the water; who can rest without clambering ashore; who is never disturbed by chance collisions or rough water, and who moves with the least expenditure of energy, allowing the water to do its full share in keeping him afloat.

Breast-stroke must first be thoroughly mastered by the learner. The great secret of this stroke is to remember that the arm and leg movements consist each of three parts.

The hands, to begin, are drawn up under the chin, back to back, so that the thumbs are touching. Palms must be cupped, and fingers held together. On *one* they are thrust forward until the arms are straight in front of the head, and the width of the shoulders apart. For *two* the arms are swept round, parallel with the surface of the water, until they are in line with each other, at right-angles to the sides of the body. The third movement brings them again to the preliminary position.

The legs are drawn up under the body, knees spread flatly apart. On *one* the feet are kicked out,

until the legs resemble the blades of a pair of scissors—as wide open as possible. On *two* the “scissor-blades” are swept in together, keeping, of course, quite straight. On *three* the legs are once more drawn up.

The proper combining of arms and legs is rather difficult. At the point where the arms are straight and together they should pause a moment to allow the body to glide. Similarly, when the legs are together, they too should remain a moment. Legs and arms are drawn up and kicked out together, but the remaining movements do not coincide.

Of all styles, back-swimming is most important. It is the necessary preliminary to most life-saving methods, and is the foundation of very much fancy and scientific swimming—which is the field of the swimming expert.

The one unpardonable sin in back-swimming is a “sitting position,” that is, with the middle of the body dropped, and the head raised. It is absolutely essential that the body be always straight and as near the surface of the water as possible. Fig. 1 illustrates this correct position.

It is an advantage to be able to float, but it is not a necessary preliminary to back-swimming. The arms, in most life-saving methods, are not used for swimming, so that the learner needs chiefly to study swimming by legs only.

In this style the hands may be kept at the sides, as in the illustration; folded across the chest; or held on the hips. The head must be kept back so that the ears are immersed; the chest should protrude above the surface;



Fig. 1.—Here is shown the correct position for “back-swimming.”

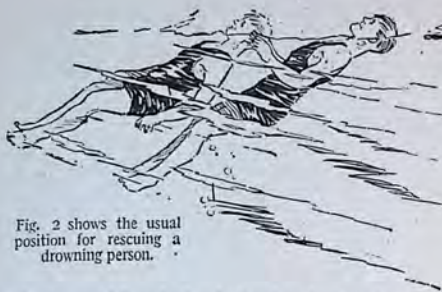


Fig. 2 shows the usual position for rescuing a drowning person.

and the middle of the body be almost awash.

The kick is exactly the same as that of breast-stroke, the other way up. The importance of flattening the knees will now be obvious. Unless they are spread apart they will come right out of the water and so sink the hips.

The three parts of the kick must never be blurred; it is the sweeping together of the straight limbs that is the chief propelling movement.

When a hundred yards can be swum comfortably, on breast or back, life-saving practice may be commenced.

In the most common type of rescue the rescuer swims on his back, holds the drowning person in a similar position, and thus tows him. Fig. 2 illustrates this.

There are various modes of towing suitable for special circumstances.

A drowning person may be unconscious and so passive; he may be struggling and difficult to manage; or he may be calm and completely obedient.

In the case of an unconscious person the method shown in Fig. 2 should be used: the palms of the hands should cover the subject's ears; one's elbows be pressed closely to one's sides; and the elbows should be bent.

The rescuer, obviously, will not be able to swim in an ideal position, as in Fig. 1,

but he should keep as near to it as possible.

In performing a rescue the drowning person's head must, at all costs, be held clear of the water.

If the drowning one be struggling, he must be seized by the arms just above the elbows, and towed as in the former style. His arms will be dragged up in line with his shoulders and, if held firmly, he will be quite powerless.

Should the arms be difficult to hold, the rescuer should thrust his hands beneath the armpits of the other, and bring his hands up until he can place his thumbs on the drowning person's shoulders, with fingers spread on his chest. The rescuer's elbows must then be lifted outwards, raising the other's arms.

In each of these three styles the positions are about as in Fig. 2, but in the second and third method the drowning person is drawn up closer, so as to be almost on top of the rescuer—in the third method his shoulders are actually held against the rescuer's chest, whose leg kick may consequently be hampered by the drowning one's feet.

Shorter, quicker kicks than for ordinary back-swimming are necessary.

Should the person to be rescued be quite calm and obedient—as an experienced swimmer with cramp may often be—a much simpler style of rescue may be adopted.

This is shown in Fig. 3.

The subject floats on his back, forcing himself upward by pressing downwards on his rescuer's shoulders. His arms are kept quite rigid—this is most important—his head



Fig. 3. Here is illustrated an alternative position for rescue work.

held back; his chest awash, and his feet together.

The rescuer is thus able to swim an ordinary breast-stroke, pushing the drowning person before him.

To be clutched by a drowning person may be a serious thing, unless one is familiar with the proper manner of releasing oneself. The young swimmer is advised to study the method taught by the Royal Life Saving Society. This society hold examinations for various grades of proficiency, and every boy should aim at securing their world-famous certificates. Full particulars can be obtained from 8, Bayley Street, Bedford Square, London, W.

Often a drowning person sinks to the bottom of the water and the rescuer is faced with the problem of getting him from a depth of perhaps six or ten feet.

Unless one is proficient in surface-diving this is almost impossible.

Fig. 4 illustrates a correct surface-dive, by which a depth of ten feet may be reached with ease.

One should swim along by breast-stroke, taking a few deep breaths to clear and fill the lungs. Then the head is depressed, and a downward breast-stroke pull is taken with the arms, until the top part of the body points downwards, as nearly vertical as necessary, as in the illustration. Next, the legs, together, are raised out of the water until the body is again straight—as shown by the dotted lines. The weight of the limbs out of the water will cause the body to dart downwards, without any splash.

The hands are held beyond the head, thumbs hooked, as in an ordinary dive. On coming to the surface it is only necessary to tilt the hands upwards, and throw the head back. A couple of breast-stroke

kicks will help one, however, to come up more quickly.

Surface diving for tin plates, towels, or stones should be much practised. Eyes, of course, should always be open under water.

In bringing up an unconscious person from the bottom, his shoulders should be firmly gripped. The rescuer will then bring his feet down, and push off from the bottom, bringing up his burden in a position ready to be towed ashore.

The competent life-saver must know something of artificial respiration—the Schafer method, as taught by the Royal Life-Saving Society, is best.

No one should ever bathe until at least two hours have elapsed since the last meal.

The proper time to leave the water is just when one feels in a healthy glow; to wait until one gets chilly spoils all the benefits of the bathe, and puts one in danger of an attack of cramp.

It is never safe to bathe from unfamiliar, unfrequented spots, for un-

known, dangerous currents may exist. And the wise swimmer, if bathing alone, will not swim far unless someone else is at hand, in case of emergency.

This applies in particular to sea-bathing, where currents may carry a swimmer very swiftly out to sea, carrying him beyond help before he realises that he is in danger.

Nothing will so help the learner to become a competent, all-round swimmer as constant practice of the life-saving methods. And no other exercise offers so much delight and scope for skill and art as swimming.

THE END

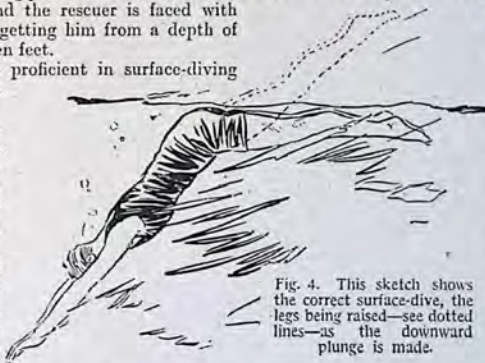
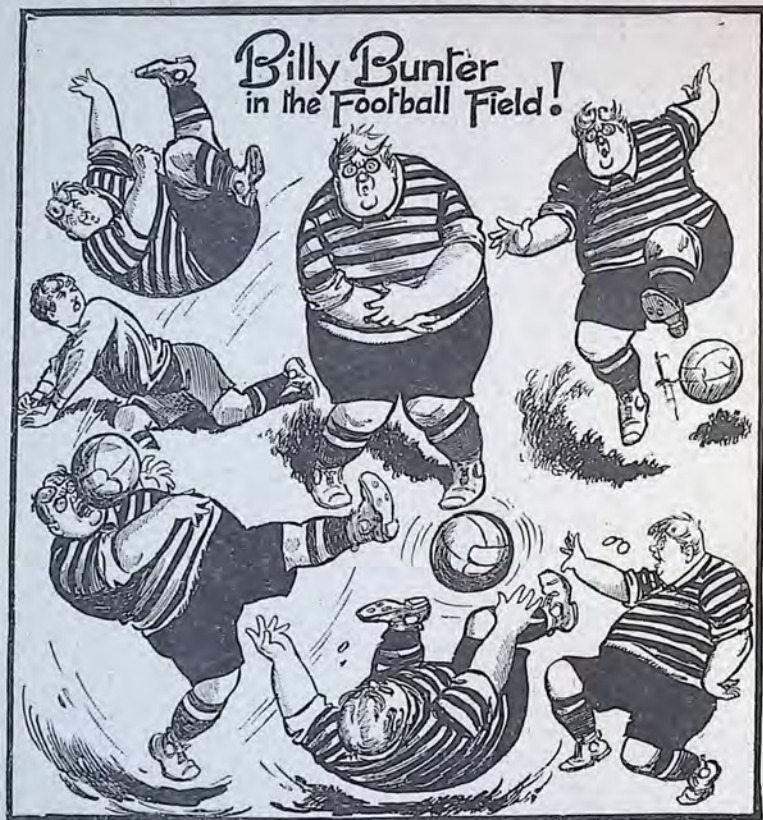


Fig. 4. This sketch shows the correct surface-dive, the legs being raised—see dotted lines—as the downward plunge is made.

## THE GREAT WILLIAM GEORGE AT PLAY!



When Billy Bunter, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, takes the field, the spectators are treated to "football extraordinary"! He has a style of play that is all his own, and at times is inclined to throw his weight about—bowling over friend and foe with great impartiality! It is perhaps fortunate for the other players that Billy Bunter suffers from shortness of breath, and in consequence is usually removed from the field in a state of collapse long before half-time!

# LINCOLN BECK'S FAREWELL!

(B)

Michael Poole

A STORY OF  
ST. KATIE'S SCHOOL



## THE FIRST CHAPTER The Old-Timers

**A**LTHOUGH this story is chiefly concerned with Lincoln Beck of the *Transitus* Form at St. Katie's School, and of the packet of trouble he struck over the Governors' Annual Meeting, Linky himself hadn't anything at all to do with the beginning.

It begins rightly one dull November evening at the residence of Mr. John Frayne, who, besides being M.P. for Dulchester, was the father-in-law of Mr. Roger Blunt, headmaster of St. Katie's, and also the father of Margery Frayne, who was a great pal of Lincoln Beck, Dicky Dexter, Jimmy Curtis, and Washington Beck.

There was quite a pleasant party gathered in the big lounge. On the following day the Annual Meeting of the Governors of St. Katherine's School would take place. The Governors' Annual was quite a different thing, of course, from Speech Day or Founders' Day, or Sports Day, and there wasn't really a great deal of fuss over it.

Still, you wouldn't expect the whole crowd of governors to gather together at the old school without taking the chance of handing out a lot of good advice to the lads of

Katie's. At six o'clock to-morrow evening, after the governors had had their meeting, the whole school gathered in Big Hall, and they listened to what the pots had to tell them about being good, or getting on, or climbing life's ladder of success, or anything of that sort.

Two or three of the governors who didn't live in the district were staying with Mr. Frayne, and Roger Blunt and his wife had drifted over to the house to have tea with them, and so had one or two other important people. There was Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hubert Rawson, a little meek-looking fellow when he hadn't got his uniform on, but with a sixty horse-power voice which could go at terrific speed when the Admiral got wound up.

And there was Lord Velwood, General Margetts, Sir Thomas Birdlip, and one or two others, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Frayne, and Mr. and Mrs. Roger Blunt, and—Margery Frayne!

"I remember when I was a boy at school—ah, ah, ah!" boomed Admiral Rawson, and told them the story of a wild and giddy joke he'd played in the days of his youth. General Margetts capped it with a story which showed that lads who were going in for the army in those days were even wilder than future admirals.

But you know what it is when some of these old lads get together! If any of the Katie's boys had done any of the things the governors reckoned they'd done, there would

have been a most terrific row, and somebody would have got the sack. But they talked as though they were jolly brave fellows, and kept saying that lads nowadays hadn't the spirit or the pluck they used to have.

Margery Frayne was the only one apparently who began to get a bit fed up with the yarns. She tried to butt in and tell them a few of the things which had happened at her school, just to show them that it wasn't the boys of forty years ago who had all the pluck and sport.

"When I was at St. Agatha's," Margery began, "three of us arranged one night—"

"My dear Margery!" Mrs. Roger Blunt, who was, of course, Margery's elder sister, interrupted promptly. "I'm afraid your childish pranks were not very amusing!"

Why do older, married sisters always want to tick off their younger sisters? Margery writhed, but she didn't give in.

"We had a most terrific lark one night," she began again, ignoring her sister. But this time Jolly Roger himself butted in.

"Did you eat an extra bar of chocolate, Margery?" he asked, laughingly. He meant to be funny, of course, but it upset Margery a bit more.

"It was a most gorgeous joke," Margery said quickly, and made up her mind to go through with her story. "After lights out—"

"Someone let loose a white mouse? Ah, ah, ah!" Admiral Rawson chuckled. "You know, I often think it's a pity in many ways that our girls' schools are so namby-pamby these days. I should like to see girls brought up to be as sporting and full of fun as boys used to be. Stop 'em from all this nonsense of powdering their faces, and patting their hair, and worrying over the latest fashions. Ridiculous nonsense! You can't imagine a girl playing a jolly joke such as I remember we played once. It would be about the winter of 'seventy-eight—"

The Admiral was going ahead full steam, forty knots an hour, and nothing short of a fifteen-inch naval gun would have stopped him. The story was really quite fatheaded, but the way the Admiral told it certainly made everybody laugh. Roger laughed with

the best of them, though it's dead certain that if anybody had tried that trick on at St. Katie's they would have been for the high jump pretty quickly.

"I think the joke we played was really better—" Margery began before the laughter had died down.

"Margery!" Mrs. Roger Blunt spoke quite sternly now. "Little girls should be seen and not heard. You were just saying. General—?"

General Margetts began then. Margery was squashed. Nobody wanted to hear her story of a really top-hole joke. They thought girls were feeble, giggling kids who couldn't do the wonderful things these ancient heroes had done when they were lads. And the worst part of all was the way Nancy, her sister, had squashed Margery, instead of sticking up for her.

"My goodness!" Margery said to herself. "If only I could think of something to make these moth-eaten fossils sit up! If I could get some little scheme to make Nancy realise she can't treat me as an infant in arms these days! Something I could tell them about long afterwards, and make them wish— Oh, my goodness!"

Margery didn't attempt to tell her story again. She listened to the others, their tales, their talk of to-morrow's meeting, and the speeches they were going to make to the boys.

There was usually something special to record at the school meeting. Some fellow had won a big open prize, or been awarded a medal, or there was a presentation to some master because he was leaving or taking up a headship somewhere.

To-morrow there was rather an unusual presentation. It was to Mrs. Roger Blunt, because she'd worked so hard and done so much for the hospital fund. They'd had a gala day at St. Katie's School, which had been a great success, and there'd been lots of other things as well.

Lord Velwood and General Margetts, who were big men on the hospital committee, thought it would be very nice if just a few of them showed how much they appreciated Mrs. Blunt by giving her quite a nice-looking silver casket, and after some talk about it

they came to the conclusion that, as it was also a compliment to the school, it would be the right thing to make the presentation before the whole school.

So to-morrow, beside the Governors, there would be a little mob of the hospital committee, and Lord Velwood would make the presentation and say a few kind words about Mrs. Blunt and also about the school. And Mrs. Blunt would have to stand up and say she didn't really deserve it because everybody had worked; but she felt that the gift was as much to the school as to herself. Loud applause; another little speech by General Margetts; song, "Forty Years On" by everybody; speech by Jolly Roger to say what a fine fellow Lord Velwood was; more applause; speech by Lord Velwood; more applause; National Anthem—and the Governors' Annual Meeting was over for another year.

It wasn't the sort of programme that excited Linky Beck very much!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Margery Takes a Hand.

AT five o'clock on the afternoon of the Governors' meeting Linky was sitting in Study 7 all alone. The others had pushed off for a time to wash their little hands and faces and make themselves look pretty for the gathering in Big Hall at six o'clock. But Linky felt tired, so he lay on the couch in the gloaming.

The door opened rather stealthily and quietly. In the dim light it was difficult to make out at first whether it was a fellow or a ghost, but then Linky grasped the fact that

it was a real person, dressed in a long, light macintosh and wearing a school cap which didn't seem to fit properly.

"Hullo? Want anybody?" Linky rose lazily and tried to identify the intruder.

"Sh! Where are the others, Linky? Don't make a noise, but it's all right—it's Margery Frayne! I thought I'd pass all right in these things and this light. I say, Linky, can we get down to Big Hall without anyone noticing us? I mean—

You know there's a presentation to-night? I've just got to put the thing on the table, you know!"

"Right-o!" Linky was grinning cheerfully because it seemed so funny to see Margery standing there in that rig-out. Mind you, old Roger would have played merry war if he'd seen her, but Linky wasn't worrying about that.

Margery had a box under her arm, and it was wrapped in brown paper. Linky offered to carry it for her, but she wouldn't let it go.

"I want to put it there without being seen, if possible," she explained. "You see, Lord Velwood—he's making the presentation, you know. Do we go this way?"

Margery didn't explain anything at all really, but Linky grasped the fact that Lord Velwood wanted the parcel put on the table on the platform so that it would be ready for him when the right time came. And, of course, you could quite understand why Margery didn't want anyone to recognise her.

She couldn't have chosen a better time than this. In ten or twenty minutes the school would be blazing with light, but it



"Margery!" exclaimed Mrs. Roger Blunt sternly. "Little girls should be seen and not heard!" And Margery's attempt to tell the stunning joke was squashed. (See Chapter I.)

was just that time of day when you feel it's a bit too early to light up and yet it's getting too dark to do anything.

They passed one or two people in the corridors, but in the main entrance hall there wasn't a soul about, unless it was Butt, the porter, who was just getting ready to switch on the lights in his little glass-windowed office at the far end of the entrance hall.

Linky and Margery didn't notice him, however, but slipped quietly into the now gloomy Big Hall. On the platform at the far end stood the table, which was already decorated with flowers, and there was a carafe of water and two glasses, several sheets of paper for the chairman, and also a flattish wooden box, about a foot square and three or four inches deep.

"Ah!" Margery seemed tensely excited about something. "Is there anywhere we can put this?"

She had handed the paper-covered parcel to Linky for a moment, and now picked up

the wooden box. The table was covered to-day with a small dark-covered cloth, which Margery lifted for a moment and looked beneath the table.

"There's a ledge here!" she whispered, and promptly slipped the polished wooden box under the table. It was one of these rather ornamental tables, and it had a flat bar about five inches wide running lengthwise across the centre from the two carved supports at the end.

"That's lucky! Topping place!" Margery said. "Cut the string, Linky, and slip the brown paper off! Quick! I don't want to be seen!"

Linky was gently amused by the whole performance, of course. So far as he could make out the box which was revealed when he took off the paper was exactly the same as the one Margery had slipped on the under-shelf of the table, or at all events there was precious little difference. It was fastened at the front by two brass hooks in the way that most boxes of this sort are secured.

But as Margery put it on the table in the same position as the box she had removed Linky noticed that along the sides of this second box a lot of little holes had been bored. He was just wondering what they were for when Margery interrupted his thoughts.

"Now we'll get out!" she commanded. "Keep quite close to me if anyone passes us, Linky! Lord Velwood—I mean, no one must know I've been here."

They got out of Big Hall quite safely, with Linky still pushing the brown paper which he had taken from the box into his pocket. Not a soul did they meet in the entrance hall, but the lights were switched on even as they walked through.

"It's lucky," Margery gasped when they were in the quad. "Can I get out by the drive? Will anyone stop me? You come to the end of the drive with me, Linky, and if anyone does meet us they'll think I'm one of the boys."

There wasn't any difficulty at all in Margery leaving by the main entrance to the school.

"But why did you have to change the boxes?" Linky asked. "And aren't you



Linky stared in amazement as Margery stepped through the doorway. She was wearing a St. Katie's cap and a long mackintosh. (See Chapter 2.)

coming to the show to-night? Mean to say——

"No, I'm not coming!" Margery answered decisively. "And don't breathe a word to a living soul about my going into Big Hall, or about that box, will you?"

"Sure!" Linky agreed. "Nobody saw us, anyway. But what's the——"

"You can tell Dickie Dexter and Jimmy Curtis and Washy that you've seen me," Margery conceded. "But they mustn't say anything about it either. But I'd like them to guess— You'll tell me all about the meeting later on, won't you? It ought to be quite interesting!"

Following Linky's advice, Margery slipped past the porter's lodge at the gates quite easily. Then Linky strolled back and up to Study 7, where he took the brown paper from his pocket. He noticed that this was carefully perforated with many holes, just as the box had been.

Just as he was flinging this paper into the waste basket, Dexter, Curtis and Washy Beck came in.

"About time we got down to Big Hall, isn't it?" Curtis suggested. "What have you been doing, Linky?"

"You'd be surprised!" Linky smiled. "Margery's been here! Fact! Said I could tell you, but you mustn't tell anyone else. Been on some little job for Lord Velwood. Couldn't make out who it was when she crept in here. She's bolted now, because she isn't coming to the meeting. She's a first-class brick, and if she lived in America——"

The Kid asked a few questions, but Linky didn't know anything more. He could only repeat that nobody was supposed to know she'd been to the school.

Ten minutes later they'd all forgotten about the queer visit of Margery Frayne. There was a cheery row in Big Hall, and there was quite a lot of fun going until the pots began to come in. Then the row died down a bit, though the visitors in the front row and the distinguished mob on the platform made a fair old buzz among themselves.

Now Lord Velwood was on his feet and the noise died away while he told them how pleased the Governors were with themselves,



Lifting the cloth, Margery slipped the polished wooden box on to a ledge beneath the table.  
(See Chapter 2.)

with the masters, the boys, and the whole world generally. After that Jolly Roger said a piece, and then the Admiral got up and gave his well-known imitation of a destroyer in action.

Then they had a little song just to let the boys exercise their lungs. When that was finished Lord Velwood had another innings. He wanted to tell them all about the Hospital, and how they'd made quite a lot of money this year, chiefly because Mrs. Roger Blunt had taken the job in hand. He knew that the boys of the school had also helped her, and he was sure that they would all be pleased about the little presentation which it was his proud privilege to make this night.

"In presenting this—ah—small, but—ah—I trust, this suitable, token of—ah—the esteem——" Lord Velwood said, and slipped back the catches of the box which was on the table in front of him. He meant to open it gently and then draw forth the silver casket which was reposing within—at least he thought it was!

He was looking at the audience even when he lifted the top of the wooden box. The next second there was a little scream from

some lady sitting on the platform, and Admiral Rawson was jumping to his feet!

As Lord Velwood opened the box about half-a-dozen white mice began to hop out on to the table. Then one of them got too near the edge and toppled off, but promptly began to run about the platform.

If there was one thing more than another Mrs. Roger Blunt couldn't stick it was white mice. And one of the little brutes was actually running towards her!

"Oh!" she cried, and jumped up, just as Roger made a swift grab for the thing. General Margetts was trying his hand at the job of catching those on the table, but they were nippy little fellows and they hopped off. Lord Velwood was stammering and stuttering and trying to look impressive and angry all in the same moment.

The visitors in front were laughing at the humour of the thing, and the lads at the back were standing on forms trying to get a clear view of the performance on the platform. The truth flashed like wireless round the Hall.

"White mice! Mice! Nothing in the box but white mice! What a lark!"

One of the mice had tumbled off the platform and was scooting across the Hall floor. Two or three of the Sixth jumped up and started a hunt, but only succeeded in startling the little fellow so much that he tried to dodge into the darkness.

But the real fun was on the platform, where Admiral Rawson, being one of the boys of the bull-dog breed, showed what a hero can do in an emergency. He made a grab at one of the mice as it dodged under the table, but he slipped and bumped his head against the fairly heavy piece of furniture just hard enough to send it toppling over.

"There's another box!" Someone spotted the second box which had been dislodged from the shelf beneath the table, and they picked it up. Opening it, the real silver casket was discovered quite safe and sound inside.

But the hunt for the mice was going on. The trouble was that as soon as they collared one and stuck it back in the box, another one that had been captured a moment or two before hopped out again and kept the score just about level.

Away at the back of the hall it rather looked as though a riot had broken out. One of the little mice had managed to get so far, and he was giving more sport than an old fox would have done. Jolly Roger soon put a stop to that, and when he cried out "Silence!" even old people shivered a bit.

But five of the mice were recaptured, and the box closed. Lord Velwood looked very red and angry as he opened the proper box. The cloth on the table was wet with the water which had flowed from the vase, and the flowers were pretty hopelessly disarranged.

"I—ah—very much regret—some boy's extremely ill-timed practical joke!" Lord Velwood jerked out. "Most discourteous and inappropriate. I am sure that—ah—the Headmaster will discover the boy or boys who are responsible for this—ah—most ill-considered jest, and—ah—I need not assure him that the Governors will support him in any—ah—action he may take!"

"Hear, hear!" said Admiral Rawson and General Margetts, and nodded to Roger. "Find the boy—expel him!"

As a matter of fact Roger was feeling pretty sick about this performance himself. There were jokes and jokes, but he didn't like the idea that any boy in the school was keen on making the Head's wife look foolish at a moment when a very pleasant and kind compliment was being paid her. And before the Governors, too! There was no room at St. Katie's for that kind of boy!

Lord Velwood handled the matter pretty well, however, and the silver casket was duly presented to Mrs. Roger Blunt, though one couldn't help feeling a bit sorry for her when she had to say "Thank you!" and try to add something kind about the boys who'd helped her. One boy in the school, if not more, hadn't helped her in the least!

Still, once the incident had passed and died down, everything passed off quite nicely, despite the silly practical joke with the white mice. Roger hadn't much time for making enquiry that night, because he was entertaining some of the Governors to dinner.

He managed, however, to see Butt, the porter, and questioned him. Butt had

actually taken the right box from Roger himself at a quarter to five and placed it on the table in the Big Hall. Therefore, at ten to five the right box was in its place. But at ten to six the change had been made. Had Butt seen anyone enter Big Hall during that hour?

"Yes, sir. I remember now, sir," Butt answered quite steadily. "It would be about twenty-past five, and I was in my office when

I saw two boys enter Big Hall. One of them I recognised as the elder Beck. The other was a smaller boy, and I think he had rather a lot of fair hair, sir, but he was wearing a cap and a big mackintosh, sir, and he was carrying a brown paper parcel."

"Did you recognise this second boy?" Roger asked.

"No, sir. I'm sorry, sir, but— No, sir, I couldn't see his face. He seemed to keep very close to the bigger boy, and it struck me he was trying to hide. I—I'm sorry I didn't ask them what they were doing, sir, but there wasn't anything against them going into Big Hall just then, sir."

"No, no, there wasn't!" Roger agreed. "And you are quite sure that one of the boys was Beck major?"

"I'm quite sure of that, sir. I saw the two come out, and now I come to think of it, sir, I'm sure they were anxious not to be seen. The smaller boy had his collar well up, but Beck turned just as I switched on the lights in the entrance hall. I'll swear it was the elder Beck, sir!"

"Very good, Butt!" Roger said, and after a few more questions, dismissed the porter.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Jolly Roger On the Track

ROGER ran through the names of all the smallish, fair-haired boys in the school who would be likely to join Beck in a prank of that kind. The most obvious was Richard Dexter of the *Transitus*, Beck's own particular chum.

That was why almost as soon as morning school had begun the next day Dexter had a

summons to the Beck's study. The Kid had talked over the amazing jest of the evening performance with his chums, but of course it had never entered his mind that Margery Frayne or Lincoln Beck could be connected with it, because all that Linky had said was that she was on some job for Lord Velwood.

Linky had had horrible suspicions, but he never said a word even to his own chums. In fact, he rather wished he hadn't even told them that Margery had been. But why on earth should Margery want to play a trick of that kind? Linky couldn't quite grip it all, but the only thing he knew was that

at all costs he'd got to keep the news of Margery's visit quite secret.

Roger didn't waste much time in getting to the point with Dexter.

"Ah, Dexter," he began, and the Kid could see that he was wearing his well-known Wellington-Napoleon ice-cold steel glitter in his eyes. "I want to get at the truth of a certain matter, and you will be well-advised to answer my questions very carefully, and without any attempt to deceive me. Tell me exactly what part you took in that white-mice hoax last evening!"

"I, sir?" Dexter stared at the Head in



As Lord Velwood opened the box, half a dozen white mice dropped out on to the table. Mrs. Roger Blunt screamed. (See Chapter 2.)



"Now, Dexter!" said the Head, icily. "Tell me exactly what part you took in that white-mice hoax last evening?" (See Chapter 3.)

amazement. "I took no part whatever, sir! I know nothing about it at all, sir."

"Did you not go into Big Hall at about twenty past five last evening, Dexter?"

"No, sir! It would be just on six o'clock when I went in with several others, sir. I had not been in before then, sir, since morning prayers."

"Ah!" Roger debated with himself for a brief period. He had known Dexter for quite a long time, and though there had been lots of little disagreements between them, he was dead certain on one thing. Dexter would never tell a lie to shield himself.

"Whom were you with, Dexter, at twenty past five last night?" Roger asked, much more calmly now.

"There were several of us, sir," Dexter answered, and was obviously trying to recall just what he was doing at that time. "But I know I was with Curtis and Beck minor, sir, and I think Brown and Frensham—"

"I see!" Roger had become quite mild. "Was Beck major there, too?"

Dexter suddenly felt he was on dangerous ground, and funny little suspicions jumped into his mind.

"I—I don't just remember, sir," he answered. "At least, I wouldn't like to be sure, sir."

"No. All right, Dexter. Will you give me your word of honour that you know absolutely nothing whatever about the manner in which these white mice came to be there?"

"Yes, sir," Dexter answered promptly.

"Very good. Thank you very much, Dexter. You may go now." Roger smiled quite kindly upon the Kid. "I am quite satisfied with what you have told me."

Dexter went. It was twenty minutes before another message came to the Trans. Form-room to command the presence of Beck major in the Head's study. Meantime, Butt had brought to the Head a crumpled-up piece of brown paper, with many holes carefully perforated in it. It had been used for covering a box just about the size of the one which had contained the white mice. More, on the inside was a label addressed to Mr. J. Roskillen, the livestock dealer in Dulchester.

"And you found that in Study 7?" Roger asked; and smiled grimly. It would not be a difficult matter to get the truth from Mr. Roskillen as to which boy from the school had recently purchased white mice.

Roger adopted exactly the same attitude towards Linky Beck as he had done towards Dexter.

"What part did you play in that white-mice hoax last evening, Beck?" Roger rapped out, after the first warning.

"I don't know anything about it, sir," Beck said without flinching, but rather sorrowfully.

"I want to warn you, Beck, that it will be better to tell the full truth," Roger warned him again; but Linky merely smiled a bit wearily. "You have had a hand in this hoax? You knew that it was going to be played?"

"I did not, sir," Beck said quite calmly. "I didn't know anything about it till it happened, sir. That is the truth, sir."

Roger looked fixedly at him, and was inclined to believe him.

"Did you or did you not go into the Big Hall at twenty past five last evening, Beck?" Roger rapped out; and then he saw the little look of fear which crept into Linky's eyes.

"Yes, sir," he admitted.

"Ah! Did another boy go with you, Beck?"

"No, sir," Linky answered; because, of course, it wasn't another boy. And, rather foolishly as it turned out, Linky clung to that straw.

"But if I tell you that you were actually seen to enter Big Hall with another boy at five-twenty last night, will you dare to contradict me, Beck?"

"I—I—no, sir," Beck admitted.

Roger began to get angry then. But he got angrier before he was through. He had thought that Beck had quite got over the foolish idea that he could lead Roger astray, and had come to be as straightforward and frank as Dexter or Curtis. But now he simply contradicted himself and landed himself into a hopeless mess under Roger's cross-examination.

He didn't know anything about the hoax first of all, and he hadn't gone into the Big Hall with another boy. Then he admitted that he had gone in with someone else, and that the other person was carrying a box. Then he said he didn't know anything about the white mice, but afterwards admitted that he had taken the paper off the box and stuffed it into his pocket. He didn't mean to play any trick, but he practically admitted that he'd placed the box with the white mice in on the table, and that he knew the other box was on the shelf under the table.

"You are simply playing with the truth, Beck!" Roger rapped out at last. "Who was the other boy with you? Answer me. I shall find out quite easily if you don't."

"I—there wasn't another—I mean, sir, I'm very sorry, but I can't tell you the name, sir."

"Very good." Roger spoke in that icy tone of his which meant that he was really mad. "It is now half-past ten, Beck. I will give you until half-past four this afternoon. If you refuse to make a clean breast of the whole thing—tell me exactly the part you played and the part played by your companion—you will leave this school by the first train possible. You quite understand? The full truth—or expulsion?"

"Yes, sir," Beck said sorrowfully; and wandered forth.

He never even went back to his Form-room, but as the Head had summoned him no one worried much about that. But Linky Beck was slowly gathering together his personal belongings and making preparations to quit St. Katie's.

He was like that, was Linky. You might say that he wasn't really worrying at all, though he did feel regretful at the idea of being turned out in this way. Still, there it was. He hadn't the faintest intention of telling Roger any more than he had done. In fact, he was rather sorry that he'd said so much. The best plan would be to dodge seeing Roger again, and clear out before half-past four. Roger had said "The full truth—or expulsion." And it was expulsion for Linky.

"Better drop him a little note," Linky decided. "It's hard luck, but I don't blame old Roger really. I'll buzz back and see Margery some time later when all the fuss has died down."

When his chums came in to Study 7 they were surprised to find Linky calmly packing his "grip," as he called it, and moving all his personal belongings from the study.

"What's the giddy idea?" the Kid asked in surprise.

"It's come, Kid," Linky bleated gently.

"Poor old Linky's got the boot at last. It's



"What's the idea?" asked the Kid in surprise, as he saw Beck packing his "grip." "I'm just quitting—that's all," answered Linky. (See Chapter 3.)

me for the long, lone trail this journey for sure. I gotta be out of Katie's before four-thirty this very afternoon, or there'll be a terrific fireworks display by Jolly Roger. The full truth, or quit, says Roger. And I'm just quitting. That's all."

"But why? What's the row?" the Kid gasped. "I mean—Oh, my hat!—were you mixed up in that white mice affair last night? But how?"

Jimmy Curtis and Washy Beck were asking questions, and Linky smiled sadly on them all.

"Circumstantial evidence, my little playmates," he murmured. "You're not old enough to understand what it means, but there's many a man been shot for less—"

"Look here," said the Kid suddenly, "Margery came here last night when we were out—"

"Sh!" Linky held up a warning finger. "Forget I mentioned that, children! If you breathe a word, I'll come back and haunt you. No; forget it. Coming to the station to see me off? There's a slow train at three-fifty, and we'll drift down and have some pies at Dawson's—"

They talked and argued with him, but to no purpose. Nothing could be done. They'd only make it worse by interfering, and if they dared try and see Margery Frayne about it, Linky would pulverise their little faces for certain before he went away. He was quitting Katie's. Finish! Salute and farewell!

But the Kid and Jimmy Curtis had a pretty clear notion of what had happened. Margery had come along and got Linky to help her. Linky didn't know what he was doing, really, but for some reason it was imperative that no one should guess that Margery had any part in the hoax. Unfortunately, Linky had been spotted, and had to admit that he'd taken some part; and Roger had told him to quit, unless he would give the name of his companion.

"It's rotten luck!" the Kid agreed with Curtis. "But what can we do? We can't go and ask Margery to give herself away, even if that would do any good, and I doubt it.

But we ought to give old Linky a jolly good send-off. What do you think?"

Curtis didn't think; he got going immediately. Inside forty minutes some fifty fellows knew that Linky Beck, hero of a hundred mighty larks, had been sacked. He hadn't really played that hoax last night, but he was mixed up in it, and—well, one could give a little hint without mentioning names, really, and most fellows somehow grasped the fact that Linky had got the sack just because he wouldn't give away the truth—which was that it was the Head's wife's own sister who'd worked the giddy hoax!

"What rotten luck!" fellows said admiringly. "But he's a sport, is old Beck! Rather! We'll join in any giddy send-off. Oh, if he's got the boot, we'll see he has a jolly decent funeral! Look here, we'll go and bag old Simpson's cab right now. Roger isn't in the house. I saw him push off in a frightful sweat just after lunch."

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

##### Linky's "Funeral"

As a matter of fact, Roger had gone to interview Mr. Roskillen of Dulchester, the man who sold white mice and doves and rabbits and green parrots and love-birds. Mr. Roskillen shook his head when Roger began questioning.

"I haven't sold any white mice to any boys from your school, sir," he assured Roger. "I'll go further and say I haven't sold any white mice to any boys in the past three months."

Roger questioned him, even explained about the hoax last night, and about the paper found in one of the boys' rooms. Mr. Roskillen began to smile then.

"Ah, yes, sir! But I shouldn't blame any of the boys, if I were you, sir. Let me see, sir, didn't you marry a Miss Frayne? Of course, sir! Well, I might have sold some white mice to Mr. Frayne, or somebody like that, sir. Sorry I can't tell you anything more, sir, but I fancy you'll find the first clue at Mr. Frayne's house, sir. Good-day, sir!"

So Roger went off to the Fraynes' house, because he couldn't get anything more out

of Roskillen, who said he wasn't going to interfere in family matters. Roger reached the Fraynes about a quarter to three. Margery saw him come, but she dodged off because she didn't like the look in his eye.

Mr. Frayne was absolutely staggered at the suggestion that he'd ever bought white mice, or that the affair last night was a family matter.

"Never heard such nonsense in my life!" he declared. "Ah! Excuse me, Roger. The telephone."

But the call was an urgent one for Miss Margery Frayne, and, after some hunting, Margery came forth and answered it. The two men could hear her excited cries into the telephone in a short time.

"What? A funeral? Dulchester station at twenty to four? Oh, I see! But—oh, my goodness! No, wait, Jimmy! What's that? Expelled because of the white mice last night? Oh, Jimmy, but he didn't know a thing! It's most horribly unfair. I don't care; Roger Blunt is a sneak! It's the kind of thing he would do. Oh, you always stick up for him! I say it's unfair. He can't find out himself, and he wants to make Linky tell about me. Yes, of course I did it! Yes, I'll come, but—Are you there, Jimmy? Oh, blow!"

Then she hung up the receiver and came dashing into the study where Roger and her father had been calmly listening to all she'd said.

"What's this, Margery?" Mr. Frayne jumped to his feet as his daughter entered. "Do I understand that you had something to do with that disgraceful hoax last night? I never imagined that a daughter of mine—"

Margery was one of those girls who never do just the thing the other person expects her to do. She rather surprised her father and Roger now by becoming quite calm and gently amused.

"Dear old daddy!" Margery said, in kind and gentle tones. "The night before last you thought it most frightfully funny when Admiral Rawson told his tale about letting loose twenty rats, and everybody wept with joy when General Margetts related how funny it was when he freed half-a-dozen little snakes, and you all laughed—"

"That's quite different!" Mr. Frayne interrupted.

"Of course it is," Margery said gently, and then gave quite a life-like imitation of Admiral Rawson. "Oh, what a great pity it is that girls don't have the same keen sense of jolly fun that boys used to have in my day! Namby - pamby creatures they are! Couldn't play a joke! And even Roger suggested that the most daring thing I'd ever do would be to eat

another bar of chocolate. Nancy wouldn't let me speak at all. Well, was my little joke as funny as Admiral Rawson's?"

"Ah!" said Roger. "So you induced Beck to assist you in that little affair?"

"Beck didn't know a thing," Margery said, in a tired voice. "You don't think I'd drag him into a joke of that sort? It was entirely my own idea, and I did it. I persuaded Lincoln Beck to walk with me so that everybody would think I was a Katie's boy. And somebody sneaked, I suppose, and you've expelled him! I shall write to all the papers and to Mr. Beck and to all the governors, and just tell them what I think about men's sense of honour and justice and humour."



"I haven't sold any white mice to boys from your school for three months," said Mr. Roskillen bluntly. (See Chapter 4.)

Oh, my goodness! When I think of the way they laughed at their own jokes—but don't they get upset when someone does the same thing on them? And you've expelled Beck, and he's going by the slow train this afternoon, and the school are turning out to give him a proper funeral, because they're all proud of him! And I'm going to dash down to the station now, and I shall tell everybody! Good-bye!"

"One minute, Margery!" Roger had jumped to his feet now, and there was a little smile twinkling round his eyes. "Beck has not been expelled. I gave him until four-thirty this afternoon in the hope that I should solve the mystery myself. He seems to have anticipated the final verdict. He's going by the three-fifty, is he? Is your car available, Mr. Frayne? We can do it easily."

Five minutes later the three of them were in the car and whizzing down to Dulchester Station. It's a pity they didn't get an earlier start, because they'd missed the most impressive part of the procession. They just caught up the tail end as it entered the station yard just on three-thirty.

Smithy, the captain of Katie's, had heard the story, and just at first he wasn't quite sure what to do. Then, when he grasped the fact that Linky was really innocent, he decided that it was a top-hole opportunity of showing the school how to play the game. Linky had played the game, and he should go out with flying colours, but without any whimpering.

"Right-o! It's dead certain that Beck's getting the boot because he won't divulge the real culprit?" Smithy asked Jimmy Curtis. "That's good enough! Full musical honours! You've got Simpson's cab? We must get two or three more. No cars! It isn't dignified! Where's young Howe? We'll soon fix this up!"

In less than ten minutes everything was in hand. Boys were dashing down to Dulchester to get yards and yards of black ribbon and to buy talking tommies and any other musical instruments which would help the good work.

It was years and years since there'd been a "funeral" to a fellow who'd got the sack

from Katie's, and the older fellows, who dimly remembered that great affair, were dead keen on another, just as the younger ones were equally keen on being in to-day's show.

By three-fifteen practically the whole school was gathered in a side street near the top end of Dulchester High Street. Black ribbon was being cut into suitable lengths, and they were putting great bows about their necks. The drivers' whips—there were five cabs now, because the Sixth had rolled up in force—were also decorated.

"Up you get, Linky!" Smithy commanded, and he clambered after him on to the roof of the cab.

Curtis and Dickie Dexter would ride inside until they reached the station.

The bobbies on duty in Dulchester had a shock when they saw the procession, because they'd never been warned to expect anything special to-day. But five cabs, each with two or three boys sprawling on the top, and other boys leaning through the windows below, were followed by a pretty orderly crowd of boys who were singing or playing weird musical instruments.

"There's a long, long trail a-winding  
Unto the land of my dreams,  
Where the nightingales are singing,  
And the white road gleams——"

Smithy had given the order for this song, because it struck him as being jolly appropriate to sing to one who was going out on the long, lone trail. But as they wound into the big station yard and the last sad notes wailed away, the word was passed down to switch over to "Forty Years On When Afar and Asunder, Parted are those who are singing to-day," and as everybody knew that backwards, they let it rip in great style.

The noble citizens of Dulchester had been a bit staggered by the procession at first, and they joined up, asking questions.

"What's it for? Who's it for?" they asked. "Has somebody won something?"

"No; it's a funeral! Fellow's got the boot—sacked—because he wouldn't sneak. We're giving him a send-off."



With Lincoln Beck perched forlornly on the roof of the first cab, the "funeral" procession wound towards the station.  
(See Chapter 4.)

"Follow up! Follow up! Follow up!"

The cabs are drawn up now quite close to the station entrance, and there was old Linky standing up on the top of the leading one with a gorgeous grin on his bright young face. Oh, but this was a proud moment in Linky's life! If there was anything he liked more than the next thing, it was to be right in the lime-light, with a chance to make a speech and be the giddy hero of the moment.

And there was a first-class crowd packing the station yard now. People who'd been drifting on a joy-ride through Dulchester had turned round to see what the fun was; there were half a dozen cars squeezed in at the back, so that nobody noticed particularly the big closed car which had crawled in right at the very back just as Linky held up his hand.

"Gentlemen of St. Katie's!" Linky bawled out, and felt like a twin brother of Mark Anthony. "Standing here at this sad but joyous moment of my life—standing here as a humble but proud citizen of that great republic beyond the seas, the United States of America, I want to say that, though the bolt has fallen, the big boot has jerked forward,

and soon I shall be going forth on the long, lone trail, leaving my happy boyhood days behind me. I want to say that I am a proud man at this moment. I am proud that during this past year——"

Oh, Linky could say his piece very nicely! Probably he'd have gone on a lot longer, but Smithy pulled him back when the mob began to cheer, and Linky just stood by Smithy's side, blinking and grinning gladly. Somehow, he had a vague idea that away at the back Jolly Roger was peering forth from a big car, but just at present Linky was too happy to care twopence. As a matter of fact, he rather hoped Roger was there!

"Gentlemen," Smithy yelled out, "the time grows short. Soon the ancient tin kettle which drags the three-fifty over the iron rails will be creeping into the station. Before we part with our noble friend, let us cheer him on his way by singing 'Bonny Linky's noo awa' to the tune of 'Bonnie Charlie.' Band, please!"

Smithy had a jolly good idea of the right stuff to sing at a ceremony of this sort. The talking-tommies buzzed and the air was filled with voices singing: "Bonnie Linky's noo

awa', Safely o'er the friendly main—" And when they came to the refrain: "Will ye no' come back again, Will ye no' come back again? Better lo'ed ye canna be, Will ye no' come back again?" it seemed frightfully pathetic in a jolly cheerful sort of way, if you know what I mean?

Linky yelled out for all he was worth: "I will, boys! I'll be coming back to this old burg! And it'll be pork pies at Dawsons—"

"Hear, hear!" they cried, just as Smithy bent down from the top of the cab, because someone was calling his name in a fiercely commanding manner.

It was Roger! Smithy gasped just a bit when he realised that the Head himself was standing right by the cab!

But Roger was grinning a little bit himself, though he had to shout out to make himself heard. A shrill whistle had sounded from somewhere afar, and already fellows were yelling out: "Here's the train! The train! Good-bye, Linky! Good-bye, old son! Three cheers for Linky Beck! Hip, hip—Hooray!"

"Tell Beck he is not to go!" Roger simply shrieked it out. "He was told to see me at four-thirty. He will return to the School because I have learned the truth. He was not responsible for that hoax. Disperse the crowd in an orderly fashion, Smith!"

Roger himself quietly slipped back into the mob then, but other fellows became aware of the fact that the Head was present, and it rather put a damper on the cheering.

Smithy, of course, was a bit staggered at first, but he was the sort of lad who quickly

gets a grip of things. He managed to yell the truth into Linky's ear, and then he held up his hand for silence in the crowd just as the train came puffing into the station behind them.

"Gentlemen!" Smithy yelled out. "The funeral is postponed—No, cancelled completely! Beck is innocent! We shall return to the School in our own time and in orderly manner. Three cheers for Beck!"

They cheered; they laughed; then they cheered again, and began to laugh still more. It had been a great ceremony, and after all, there wasn't anything really pathetic about it, because Beck hadn't got the boot! Reprieved at the last moment! Quite the sort of thing you sometimes read about in books, and it absolutely put the gilt edging on a jolly fine rag. And nobody could get into a row over this, because even the Beak himself had had to come to tell Beck he wasn't sacked!

The motor cars sounded their horns and there was quite a fierce row in the station-yard as the

crowd began to wander forth again—to Dawsons', where they make the pork-pies, to Millers' where they have a topping soda-fountain, or even to the Cloisters, where they do the thing in first-class style.

It took Smithy and Beck and their pals some time to get clear, because they had to arrange a few details with the cabmen. (Just casually, it may be added that it was Mr. Cyrus Beck, Linky's father, who eventually paid for the lot!) But the big closed car belonging to Mr. Frayne, M.P. for Dulchester, was still



Margery came dashing across the road, her eyes shining with excitement. "Oh, Linky! Wasn't it splendid!" she exclaimed. (See Chapter 4.)

standing there when Smith and Beck, Dickie Dexter, Jimmy Curtis, Washy Beck, and one or two others, wandered out, though they couldn't see who was sitting inside.

Then someone suddenly dashed across and hailed Lincoln Beck. It was Margery Frayne.

"Oh, Linky! Wasn't it splendid? You made a topping speech! Oh, how do you do, Captain Smith? You know who really did put the white mice in that box? I did! And you wouldn't blame me one little bit if you'd heard the tales some of the Governors told about the tricks they played when they were boys! I'd like to tell you——"

"Come and have tea with us, Margery!" Linky suggested, because he really felt that there ought to be some sort of celebration over this. "We're going to the Cloisters——"

"I'll come!" Margery said. "I'd better not go through the town with you, because some of these weird people would start talking again about what they did when they were young! I know them! They were ever such a lot better, or a lot worse, than we could ever be. But I'm coming to the Cloisters!"

And she did. It was a first-rate little party which gathered there to celebrate Linky's farewell and return. Mr. Roger Blunt had drifted back in the car with Mr. Frayne, and you can take it for granted that they had really enjoyed the show just as much as anybody else! Jolly Roger wasn't afraid that this sort of thing would upset the bright lads under his care, because he'd soon bring them back to earth again, if they got any wrong notions that life at Katie's was just one excitement after another!

When the morrow came the joke about the white mice, and the glorious rag which had taken place over the great send-off to Lincoln Beck, had both taken their rightful place in the history of things which had happened. There was no fuss, no excitement. Even Linky's final interview with Roger over the affair was quite a tame, quiet affair.

Linky was gently ticked off, quietly crushed back into his proper place. He wasn't a giddy hero or anything. He was just Beck major of the Transitus form of St. Katie's! That was Jolly Roger's little way!

THE END

## Famous Fellows in Fiction



*Billy Bunter*

The fattest fellow in his Form  
Is portly Billy Bunter;  
In spite of feeds in hall and "dorm."  
He's hungry as a hunter.  
He never gets enough to eat,  
He hastens to inform us;  
And yet, when schoolmates stand him treat,  
His appetite's enormous!

His "country seat" is Bunter Court,  
A large and stately mansion,  
According to his own report,  
Which suffers from expansion!  
He boasts of belted earls and lords  
To whom he is related;  
The Bunter Crest is two cross-swords  
We've heard it freely stated!

Our porpoise is a journalist  
Of mighty reputation;  
His WEEKLY never should be missed,  
It's crowded with sensation.  
His spelling is a work of art,  
It differs far from Dutton's;  
His "Essay on a Stale Jam Tart"  
Will make you burst your buttons!

He follows on a fellow's trail  
As grimly as a warder,  
And unto him unfolds a tale  
About a postal-order.  
"I wish you'd lend me eighteenpence!"  
He'll say, in tones of pleading;  
But if you've any common-sense,  
You'll walk away unheeding!



By ALFRED EDGAR

## A burst dam—a racing car—and a death-defying dash to save a town!

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Avalanche

"YOU can see all the way from the far end of Black Gill right to Ross Dam," said Tom Burrows, as he steadied himself against the wind, one hand gripping the side of the stone cairn.

"I don't care how far you can see," came the growling answer from his chum, Jim Hart. "If I let go of this cairn I'll get blown away! Seen all you want to see? If you have, we'll start climbin' down—although I'm blessed if I know how we're going to. I can hardly make anything out with this rain in my eyes!"

"Sha'n't be a minute, I just want to look down the Gill," said Tom, as he slipped a pair of field-glasses from his case, and focussed them on the misty depths below.

The big stone cairn, in the shelter of which the chums were standing, was built on what seemed to be the verge of a precipitous drop into the dark ugliness of Black Gill—two thousand feet below them!

They were standing on top of Gill Scaw, and the vista of the wild Cumberland

mountains stretching about them was shrouded in writhing mist and pelting rain. The wind was whistling around the cairn, whipping at their waterproofs and stinging them with its chilliness.

But of these discomforts Tom Burrows felt nothing. His glasses swept from the dull, grey stretch which marked the tumbling waters of Ross Dam to the far end of Black Gill—and he grunted with satisfaction as he saw that the Gill was clear.

Because at any moment the southern wall of Ross Dam might burst before the pressure of the millions of tons of water behind it. The most desperate efforts to stop the breakage had been just sufficient to hold the water—but there was more bad weather in the sky, and the reservoir engineers knew that another storm would mean the bursting of the dam.

Tom was one of these engineers, and he had climbed up Gill Fell in order to make certain that when the dam burst, its waters would flood safely away along Black Gill, at the end of which they would augment a natural lake.

That this should happen was essential.

If Black Gill were blocked, the flood would be checked, and would take an alternative route down Ross Vale to the Cumberland town of Rossthwaite.

The reservoir normally held something like seven thousand million gallons, and, under the abnormal flooding, this had been increased by nearly half as much again—the rush of waters through Ross George would mean that the town would be wiped away as though it had never been in existence—and the people with it.

There was, of course, the possibility that the dam would not burst, but that chance was very remote.

Because he was a junior engineer at the works, Tom was doing what he could to ensure the safety of Rossthwaite. He had persuaded Jim to climb Gill Fell with him and, as his glasses swept the valley below, he picked out the red bulk of the car by which they had reached the foot of the fell.

"I can see your 'bus down there!" he called to his chum.

"I'll be jolly glad when I get back to it!" growled Jim. "I don't mind tellin' you that I'm scared of the climb down!"

Tom glanced at him, and he chuckled a little. It was queer to hear Jim admitting that he was scared of anything because, young as he was, he had gained a name as one of the most daring drivers that had ever used a racing track.

Jim Hart was a speedman—some folk said he was a madman, from the way he drove! He had driven on nearly every racing track in Europe, and he was as keen on motors as was Tom on his own special branch of engineering.

Jim had been spending a few days with his old school chum at Rossthwaite, and, although he was grouching and grumbling at the weather, the wind and the wild fells over which they had climbed, he was actually enjoying himself hugely.

For a moment or so, Tom gazed down at the red car below them. Even through

the powerful glasses it looked small, so distant was it. The machine was one of Jim's racing cars—long, low, and immensely fast. It was the only spot of colour in the whole of Black Gill—and was certainly the first machine of its kind that had ever climbed along the narrow sheep-path on which it stood.

At last Tom lowered his glasses and turned to say something to Jim; instead he remained staring past his chum, then an awed: "Gosh!" broke from his lips. Jim turned, and he, too, stood spellbound at the sight which met his gaze.

Black clouds were surging from out the



Forked lightning streaked from out the black clouds and the very rock split asunder. Enormous masses heaved out and came slamming downwards. (See Chapter 1.)

misty greyness of the sky, sweeping low over the summits of the fells. Lightning seared and lashed across the sable murk, and above the whine of the wind they heard the crashing roar of thunder.

At their height, it had the appearance of a storm sweeping along the ground. The mighty clouds were thick and heavy with rain; the fells would be streaming with water under the storm—and that would mean the bursting of the dam!

"We're in for it now!" gasped Jim.

"Better shift before it breaks on us!" Tom answered. "Black Gill is clear enough, so if the dam goes everything'll be all right, and—"

"So long as it doesn't go before we get the car clear!" Jim broke in.

"Phew! I never thought of that!" Tom exclaimed. "If she goes before we get clear of the Gill we shall be nicely caught!"

They were almost flattened to the ground by the wind as they left the shelter of the cairn, and then they went slipping and sliding over the coarse, lank grass, sloshing through little tarns and stumbling over the rocky outcrop, bent to the wind and rain.

Water streamed from them in little rivulets, and soon both were gasping with their efforts. In a little while they had dropped from the upper level to easier going, and then began the long, dangerous descent to Black Gill.

On the other side of the valley was a sheer wall of rock, towering to an enormous height, part of it actually overhanging the Gill. It was a stupendous sight, and the smooth, sheer stretches of rain-soaked rock reflected the vivid flashes of lightning with mirror-like intensity.

The chums had completed half the descent ere the storm actually broke.

By this time they were partly sheltered by the fell, and missed the full force of the wind and water; for all that it was only by straining muscles and sinews that they managed to keep moving.

"Looks as though that lot could fall on top of us!" gasped Jim, nodding to the opposite wall of Black Gill.

"It'd squash your car if it did drop," Tom answered him with a grin. "But it's been like that for hundreds of years, so it—"

Phew!" His exclamation was almost drowned in a crackling roll of thunder which seemed to sound right above their heads, and with the roll the rain came down in a solid wall.

They struggled on. If the dam broke before they reached the Gill they were likely to be stranded on the fells, because that ten thousand million gallons of water which the dam held back would just about fill Black Gill; it would certainly make it impassable.

Up above them the storm fiends were venting their spleen on the scaw tops and the heights. Lightning slashed in sabres of fire, searing the clouds, running along the ground, wrecking the blackness of the sky with blazing cuts.

The thunder rolled in wild crescendo, echoing back from the mighty rock wall on the opposite side of Black Gill, almost stunning the fiercely clambering pair by its shock and roar.

It seemed to them that the centre of the storm was swinging above their heads. Dazzling lightning lit the depths of the Gill as they climbed downwards.

They saw a forked tongue streak through mid air, bringing them both to a halt with their hands across their eyes, half blinded by the brilliance of it. They straightened as the thunder rolled mightily, deafened and half-stunned. And then—

It seemed to them that the very sky burst. From out an eye-searing heart of white fire behind the black clouds, forked lightning slashed in a hundred darting branches. They saw it streak down to the top of the black wall before them, saw it run and play around the rock, striking into the solid mass, and bathing everything in bluish glare.

The opposite side of Black Gill and the cloud above was scored by lurid streaks of awful light, and with it came a staggering bellow of thunder that rocked the senses and dazed the minds of the two lone spectators.

And as they swayed precariously on the slippery grass down which they were climbing, they saw the very rock opposite them split asunder!

Slowly, as though prised by unseen giant fingers, a cavity appeared, shearing from top



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A RACE FOR LIFE WITH THE FLOOD!



to bottom. Enormous masses of rock heaved outwards, hefting into midair ere they came slamming down, then the whole wall of rock seemed to disintegrate.

Gargantuan masses that must have weighed thousands of tons were flung the width of the Gill, striking the ground below the crouching clumps and making the earth shudder and tremble. Small rocks and huge stones whistled and hummed about them, crashing home on the outcrop to the shelter of which they sprang.

For minutes they remained there until the fellside ceased to tremble and the roar of falling rock ceased, then they looked out.

There was no wall of rock facing them now. It had vanished, and the torrential rain was beating down the dust and earth which filled the air.

"Wiped out!" exclaimed Tom. "Struck by lightning!"

"And my car's under that lot," Jim answered.

"Under——"

Tom broke off. When he spoke again there was a strange, vibrant note to his voice. "The Gill is blocked—look!"

Black Gill was blocked from side to side and to a height of hundreds of feet by the collapse of the rock wall.

"The dam—if it should burst, the water won't get away down here," Tom went on. "It'll flood down Ross Vale, and—and——"

"Wipe out the town," supplemented Jim. "But it hasn't burst yet."

"It will, though, with all this rain. We shall have to—do something. Come on."

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Forlorn Hope.

SIDE by side they scrambled on down the slope of the fell. Every few yards their progress was all but barred by masses of rock tossed clear across the breadth of the Gill, and a dozen times their stumbling feet started small avalanches which drove the loose shale and rock fragments into the blackness below.

"Not much hope for—the car," said Jim as they moved.

"We left it over to the left," Tom answered. "Maybe it missed the rock and——"

"Not much hope of that," Jim answered. "The best old 'bus I ever had has gone west."

The rain, the half light from the clouded sky, and the thrashing wind made their climb difficult, but soon they were moving along the mass of freshly fallen rock, and a little later they made for the sheep-track which ran along the bottom of the Gill, reaching it at a



A giant boulder thundered to earth, narrowly missing the leaping shape of the great racing car. (See Chapter 2.)

point clear of the collapsed wall.

"The car was along this way," said Tom.

In half a minute they were picking a path through masses of rock which towered high above their heads, stumbling over loose fragments, and trying not to lose direction amidst the distorted ground about them.

It looked hopeless to expect the machine to have escaped. Ere they reached the place where they had left it, the sheep-track was blotted out under the rock.

"We'll find it flat as a pancake," muttered

Jim. "There'll be a fifty-ton rock across the scuttle, and a— Hallo!"

He checked as they turned a butte of rock. Ahead of them was the solid mass of the fallen wall, and the lightning flashes showed two mighty pinnaces of rock leaning one against the other—between their bases was the big red car.

"Mind, in case anything slips!" warned Tom as they approached.

Closer examination showed the car to be comparatively unharmed. If either of those pinnaces had touched it, it would have been smashed flat. As it was, they had hit one another, and the metal bodywork of the machine was scarred and dented by the impact of fragments which had resulted from the rocky collision.

They pulled the machine by hand from its shelter. Clear of danger, Jim inspected it quickly, while Tom cleared the seats and the cockpit of pieces of rock.

"Seems to be all right," Jim called exultantly above the bellow of the storm. "I'll start her up, we may be able to pick a road through this."

He grabbed the starting handle, and the powerful engine responded sweetly.

"If we get clear, run up to the dam," called Tom, as Jim scrambled to his place behind the wheel.

"If the dam busts it'll be good-night for us," answered Jim cheerfully. "Thought we were going to warn Rossthwaite?"

"Afterwards. I've got an idea—you know Ross Gorge?"

"Yes," called Jim. He knew it for the bottle-neck to Ross Vale, after which the valley broadened out, with the town beyond.

"There's dynamite in the dam-house," Tom said quickly. "If we could get it, charge one of the walls at Ross Gorge and—"

"And blow her down, block the valley, just like the lightning's blocked this one, eh?" asked Jim quickly. "Bright idea, Tom. Chancy work, but it might save the town; it'll hold some of the water back, anyhow. Sit tight."

The mighty engine under the long bonnet of the racing car roared as the red machine rolled forward.

Tom was never quite sure of what happened during the next half-minute. He was almost blinded by the glare of incessant lightning and the whip of stinging rain; he was tossed like a cork in a whirlpool as the car lurched and staggered over the piles of broken rock, he was all but deafened by the thunder and the stammering roar of the car's exhaust, echoing back from the tottering rocks all around.

Twice great masses of rock thundered to earth near the car; shaken from their freshly-found positions by the vibration of the thunder and weakened by the streams of water which now came cascading down the slopes from above.

A third giant rock almost hit them. Jim saw it tottering. If it fell it would block their path. He accelerated violently and the machine jumped forward with a roar of defiance. For the fraction of a second it looked as though the rock must catch and crush them. Tom shrank in his seat; he saw Jim's hands twist deftly on the wheel—then they were clear, and the rock slammed down at the very tail of the car, the thunder of its impact vibrating through the whole fabric of the machine.

Seconds later, and they were thundering away along the sheep-track, going all out, and with streams of spray shooting from the threshing wheels.

It was less than half a mile to the dam, and Jim drove all he knew. It meant death if the dam burst, but there was the chance of bringing off Tom's scheme and saving the town. That was worth all the hazard.

So along that rough-marked sheep-track the red machine showed its paces, its wide-mouthed exhaust streaking lurid flame and its chattering bellow rivalling the thunder.

In something under a minute they shot like a red flash past the entrance to Ross Vale; a few moments later the black wall of Ross Dam loomed up before them.

The centre of the wall was thick with great buttresses of concrete—reinforcements that were unfinished and which might have been successful but for the rains which had flooded the Cumberland hills.

From the centre of these buttresses water

was pouring in a great stream, hissing through the fracture, which was weakening with every passing second.

Defly Jim swung the car round to face away from the dam; he left the engine running as he followed his companion to the ground.

"Up to the shed!" shouted Tom above the tumult which surged about them. "Don't think she'll go just yet."

He led the way up a long flight of stone steps, which brought them to a stone building on the very edge of the great dam wall.

Now they were able to look out across the threshing waters of the artificial lake. The wind lashed the dark surface to mountainous waves, the crests of which were lit by the flashes of lightning. The whole grey space was an inferno of swirling, tortured water—raging strength that threatened the safety of the township at the other end of Ross Vale.

On the far side, bulking blacker than the blackness of the stormy sky, was Blair Fell, Matterdale Scaw, and Brendreth Pikes—great hills which poured their accumulations of water into the over-filled dam, putting greater and greater pressure on the hissing fracture almost beneath the feet of the chums.

Grim and vicious loomed the bulk of these heights, seeming to lean over in the storm-light, as though watching the battling waters below.

By force and fall, torrent and burn, they sent their water flooding down, bent upon the final fracture of the ramparts of the dam.

The chums permitted themselves no time to stare at this scene. In a dozen strides, Tom was wrenching at the fastenings of the near-by door; soon it slammed behind them, and the change to quietude after the bruit of the storm made both of them gasp.

There was sufficient light for them to see by, and Tom wrenched open the doors of a cupboard in the wall.

"Here's the battery, Jim! Catch hold!" And he passed to his chum a heavy, square box, with a bar handle at the top. To one side of the box was attached a big, thick coil of wire.

Jim lifted down three round packets of dynamite, strapping them swiftly together. Right into the heart of them he dropped a copper fulminate of mercury detonator, whipped it to the ends of the battery coil wire, and then grinned at his chum.

"O.K., Jim! Mighty dangerous way to have to carry this; we'll be liable to blow ourselves up with it in the car and——"

"It's either that or drowning," Jim broke in. "I don't like the look of things outside—we'd better be shifting, eh?"

"Yes, come on! Drive to the far side of Ross Gorge. There's an old slate-quarry there, and I'll dump this lot down one of the passages. We've three hundred yards of flex, so we can explode the packet in safety."

He was wrapping battery and dynamite in a waterproof sheet as he spoke; a few seconds later they were breasting the storm outside and making for the steps and the car



The penned waters broke the weakened rampart and surged in fierce pursuit of the car, flooding it to the wheel-hubs as it roared forward. See Chapter 3.)

## THE THIRD CHAPTER

### A Race for Life

AFTER the calm of the stone building, it seemed as though the storm was doubled in intensity at their coming. Lightning flickered about the jagged heads of Brandreth Pikes and played on the slopes of Blair Fell, while the rain slashed the stonework which they trod, and the dam wall quivered under the mighty thrust of the millions of tons of water which it was holding back.

"Matter o'—minutes!" roared Tom, as they reached the steps, and the two of them plunged downwards to where the big red racer awaited them.

Water from the fracture in the wall was washing the wheels. The fiercely hissing stream had grown in volume in the short time that they had been absent. Even as they reached the car, a buttress cracked and gave—vanishing like smoke as a white spume of water gushed out in a mighty roar.

It was the beginning of the end.

"Quick!" yelled Tom, and the two flung themselves to the car.

Defly Jim wriggled to the wet seat behind the wheel, and Tom clambered over the side, hugging his perilous burden—it wanted only a sharp knock to blow them and the car to oblivion.

"Right!" he shouted—and his word was drowned by a terrific smashing sound from behind them.

He turned his head, to see buttresses break and fall, while the edge of the dam wall above them rocked over.

"Get away—she's going!"

Water was hissing and dragging at the under part of the big car as it surged forward; the burning exhaust-pipe hissed and made steam as it slapped into the stream—and behind, the giant wall of the dam dissolved like sugar before the waters that thundered on to its weakened fabric.

In a smother of spray the red machine leaped from the spot, and as it gathered speed the penned water finally broke the rampart and came tumbling in fierce pursuit.

Tom looked over his shoulder to see a solid

wall of water bearing down on them. He saw great masses of masonry tossed high from the heaving, foaming flood; spray and spume blotted out the sky—the whole world changed to a welter of fierce, angry water that was dropping down on them.

Flooded to the wheel-hubs, the racing car roared forward—thirty yards behind was a wall of water which gained every moment. If it reached them it would lift the machine and whirl it away, just as it was lifting and whirling things a thousand times heavier.

The water chased down on them—and even as it seemed to Tom that it must swamp them, the car drew away. They had reached the widened part of the road, where Ross Vale branched from Black Gill, and in the open space the water lost some of its force.

Two hundred yards farther on, and they entered Ross Vale. It was a narrow, sunken road, with the slopes on either side gradually closing in and becoming more vertical as the vale narrowed to the gorge.

And now Jim let the car all out.

The water would flood to the blockage in Black Gill, and then, thwarted, it would change direction and its whole force would come sweeping down Ross Vale. Before that happened, they had got to reach the old quarry and explode the charge of dynamite—doing in the gorge what the lightning had done in Black Gill a little time before.

It was a question of seconds. Jim knew that. He'd got to run a better race than any he had ever run on the Continental speedways.

If they failed, Rossthwaite would be flooded; unsuspecting townsmen would die in the swirling waters that would storm the town—trapped, helpless, and with no chance of escape.

Jim's foot went down on the accelerator, and with all the strength of his sinewy arm he held the great car to its course. It leaped and rocked madly on the rutted, uneven road, bumped and lurched from side to side as it tore forward with terrific speed.

A yard-long flame tongued from the exhaust, challenging the storm-glare, while its bellowing roar hurled defiance to the raging waters that surged in grim, terrible pursuit.

Jim's eyes were half-closed to the slash and sting of the fierce rain; his jaw was grim-set and every nerve and muscle in his body was keyed and strained to hurl the great car onwards.

The threshing wheels slammed fountains of wet earth behind, spray shot out as the machine dashed through road-wide pools—it roared on, a mad mass of mechanism that embodied the very spirit of that awful storm.

The walls of the vale seemed to lift and rush to meet them.

"There's a track on the right!" Tom had to shout with all his might to make his chum hear. "You'll see it—pull up there!" A moment later, and he yelled: "There it is—brake! Slow up!"

He was scrambling from his seat as Jim brought the car to a skidding halt. He reached the ground, fumbled for a moment or so with the waterproof wrapping; then—

"I've got the dynamite. You hang on to the battery and let out the wire. For the love o' Mike don't touch the plunger—or you'll blow me up. I'm goin' to dump it inside that shaft there!" and he pointed to a gaping opening a score of yards away.

He was off, then, stumbling and slipping on the track.

Jim glanced over his shoulder. Away up the Vale he could see the wall of water leaping forward. Black Gill had been filled; the flood was commencing the assault on the town.

Could they get away in time? Scrambling, slipping, sliding, hugging his perilous burden, Tom made his way towards the old quarry; then he vanished inside.

Jim paid out more and more of the twin flex, casting glances over his shoulder the while at the water that came rushing down.

He could see it flooding the narrow, sunken road—a roaring wall that would give them no chance if it caught them!

The wire ceased to run out.

He saw Tom dart from the black shaft-mouth and come racing down the track.

Now the advance of the water was all about them, with the mass of it not far behind.

"Come on!" Jim roared.

Tom fell, rolled half a dozen yards, scrambled up, then made a leap for the car. He tumbled into the cockpit as

Jim let in the clutch and the machine started.

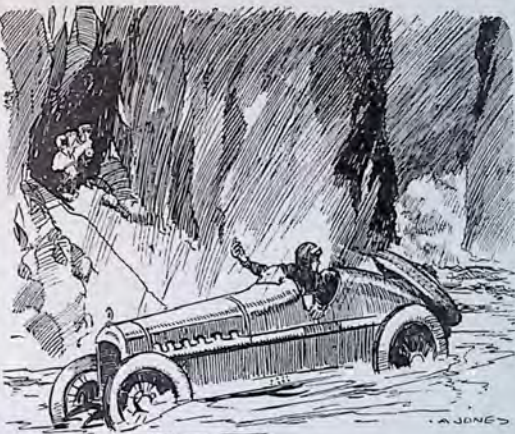
"Steady! Steady!" yelled Tom. "Mind the wire!" He was working wildly on the battery as Jim slowed the car.

A hundred yards they went—then the racing water caught them and lifted the rounded tail of the machine; for a second the back wheels spun wildly.

"Let her go! We'll be swamped!" Jim shouted.

"Better that than crushed!" Tom answered him. "Must get clear!"

Water canted the machine sideways, and Jim fought to straighten the car.



"Come on!" yelled Jim, and his pal made a stumbling rush to gain the car ere the wall of advancing water swooped down. (See this page.)

"Sit tight!" bawled Tom.

From the corners of his eyes Jim saw his chum's hand slam down on the plunger of the battery.

"Right! Get out of it, an'—"

Tom's words were clipped short by a stupendous roar which came from behind them. A mighty gout of vivid flame slashed from the side of Ross Gorge. Huge masses of rock surged outwards, and then were blotted from sight by vast clouds of smoke.

The surging water behind the car seemed to make one last effort to overwhelm the chums. It lifted the car clean from the ground, slewing it round, playing with it, and then as suddenly dumping it again as Jim throttled down—a moment afterwards and the machine was resting in the middle of a shallow stream.

"Blocked it!" gasped Tom. "Look."

Jim turned, to see the smoke wafting away before the wind, disclosing piled masses of rock where previously there had been nothing but the narrow road—rock which held back the force of the flood.

Presently Jim pulled the machine to the side of the track and clear of the water, then they went back and climbed the side of the newly-fallen rock.

Beyond it what had been a valley was now a lake, its surface rippled and broken by the breeze of the passing storm.

Above, the cloud-wrack chased across the sky and a shaft of weak sunlight came streaking down, lighting up the rest of the gorge and glinting the wet, red roof-tops of the town beyond.

The chums shook hands in mutual congratulation, and as they did so they saw that the sun was shining on the car below them.

Its red body was battered and dented in a hundred places; its paintwork was scratched and scored; the wheels dripped water and the tail was caked in mud. But in the quietude which followed the storm, the sound of the still-running engine rolled out with a satisfied purr—as though the red car, too, was looking down on the town which it had saved, and was content.

THE END

## Famous Fellows in Fiction



### JIMMY SILVER

The leader of the "Fistic Four"

Has many keen supporters;  
His fame has spread from shore to shore,  
Even to distant quarters.  
He typifies the British race,  
Supreme and self-reliant;  
Right fearlessly his foes he'll face—  
He'd even fight a giant!

He's famous for his sunny smile  
Of boyish animation;  
That smile's a fixture all the while  
In any situation.  
No matter if the outlook's bright  
Or if it's dark and stormy,  
He gaily tells us, "I'm all right,  
No blows of Fate will floor me!"

His comrades of the Classic Side  
Would feel quite lost without him;  
His virtues cannot be denied.  
There's nothing mean about him.  
He always strives to play the game  
In the true sporting manner;  
'Tis every decent fellow's aim  
To fight beneath his banner.

The merry pranks that Jimmy plays,  
The fistic fights he wages,  
The exploits of his schoolboy days,  
Are written in these pages.  
They certainly will thrill the heart  
Of every ANNUAL reader;  
For Jimmy plays a hero's part—  
A lion-hearted leader!



# How not to Enjoy cycling

Some things to avoid if  
you would make the most  
of your excursions awheel

By PERCY LONGHURST

**H**ow do you treat your bicycle? Do you keep it clean from dust and grit, and oil it frequently—have a look at the chain now and again to make sure it isn't clogged with filth—glance occasionally at the state of the tyres? If you don't, you are failing to get the best out of your machine.

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast" is a good old saying; and you should be merciful to your beast—even though it is made of metal instead of flesh and blood.

Some fellows regard bikes simply as a means of saving 'bus and railway fares. Others seem to look upon them as a means for the performing of weird and fantastic gymnastic tricks; and it really doesn't do a bike any good to slide off the saddle and ride astride the top bar of the frame, all one's weight on the pedals. Still, others consider their metal steed as the medium by which they can obtain fine, healthy exercise, recreation, and pleasure combined. Into which of these groups do you come?

Properly used, a bike will give an endless amount of real pleasure and profit, to the great benefit of health and pocket. But to obtain this benefit it is necessary not only to take proper care of

the bike, but to learn to ride properly.

Learning to ride isn't very difficult. Learning to ride badly is a whole lot easier. The worst of it is that the rider doesn't know that his bad riding is not good for him. He sees others riding badly, and he copies them. Why, I can't tell you.

Tearing along the road on a machine fitted with dropped handle-bars (which were meant only for racing bikes, on which everything

in the way of comfort has to be sacrificed to speed), nose almost touching the steering post, mouth open (so that all the dust going about can be breathed into the lungs), body arched almost as much as an angry cat's, legs driving furiously—that is bad riding, for it gives mighty little pleasure and is no benefit to the health.

The ordinary cyclist's intention when he goes out for a "pleasure" ride is not to make the outing a race against time, or it ought not to be. A race of any kind is some sort of pleasure,



A couple of hours' foot-slogging through the rain, just because you've left your tool-bag at home, isn't very enjoyable.

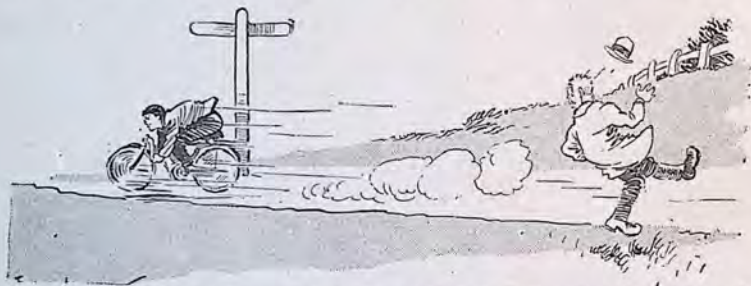
but there's also an awful lot of hard work in it; and when you take out your bike for a pleasure run, you don't start with the intention of having a spell of hard work.

You've seen a squadron of cavalry dash by, every trooper upright in his saddle, body swaying easily from the hips, and I'm quite sure they make a fine sight. But I'm equally sure you would not think they looked so well if every man was bent forward, lying on, almost riding on, the neck of his charger (as some jockeys ride), face buried in the animal's mane. Well, there's just as much difference between a proper and an improper seat on a bike saddle.

For the spine to be bent like a bow, and kept thus, is not good for it. And how can it be possible for deep, health-giving breaths of the fresh country air to be inhaled if the chest is cramped and contracted? And I'm

Companionship on a cycle run adds to its enjoyment, but a lot depends on the companion; and I've come to the conclusion that an elder brother is not always the ideal pal. You may be half a dozen years younger—a fact he is apt to forget—but, naturally, you're not going to show the white feather when he sets the pace, with the result that you are liable to be taken further and faster than is altogether good for you. Fatigue is a cause of many a cycling accident. Overtired, muscles wearied, the rider gets careless; his brain isn't so alert, his judgment weakens; he becomes more willing to "chance a risk," not from over-confidence, but from the sheer indifference that comes with too great tiredness. When in that condition, one will go on, but the pleasure has vanished.

Much of the pleasure of a cycle run depends upon one's ability to deal with emergencies,



Where is the pleasure in scorching along, getting your mouth and eyes, nostrils and throat caked with dust?

very certain there is no pleasure in getting the lips and mouth caked with dust, dust in the eyes, dust in the nostrils, and a dry throat, that all the mineral water you can afford won't moisten. Is there any pleasure in that?

With your eyes glued to the road, how many pleasure-giving sights are you going to see? Dust or mud or tar paving you can see any day in the week; but you'll see little else unless you're willing to cycle in the easy, upright position that gives the maximum of useful physical exercise combined with enjoyment.

for accidents and misfortunes will happen even to the most careful. To come to grief, and to find out that one is in for a couple of hours' foot slogging, perhaps with a head wind, a heavy road, and rain coming down, and all because one has happened to leave a spanner at home, is anything but cheerful. Mem: don't start out with an empty tool-bag.

One more tip. When out for a long pleasure run, never mind how hot and thirsty a day it is, don't be continually getting off to drink ginger beer or lemonade, or eat chocolate. You'll only get thirstier.

# Pulling Carthew's Leg!



*A rollicking Story of  
Jimmy Silver & Co.  
of Rookwood School*

By  
**OWEN CONQUEST**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER Cricket First!

"**B**BETTER go in!" said Jimmy Silver judiciously.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave an impatient snort.

Raby and Newcome hesitated.

The words of "Uncle James" of Rookwood were words of wisdom. For the Fistical Four of the Fourth had lines to do—a hundred lines each—and those lines had to be handed in by tea-time. And it was Carthew of the Sixth to whom the lines had to be handed, and Carthew was a prefect who was not to be trifled with.

So undoubtedly Jimmy Silver's advice was good.

But—there was a but!

For the sun was shining down most pleasantly on the green cricket-field, dotted with white-clad figures, and Lovell & Co. didn't want to go into a stuffy study and write lines. They did not want to one little bit. On the other hand, they wanted to play cricket.

"Better go in!" repeated Jimmy Silver, with serene wisdom. "You see, we've got the lines to do—"

"You can please yourself," said Lovell. "I'm playing cricket! It would be a sin and a

shame to waste weather like this sticking indoors. Come on!"

Lovell stalked away, and Raby and Newcome looked doubtfully at their study-leader.

"May as well stick it out, if Lovell does!" said Raby.

"Can't desert him," remarked Newcome. "One in, all in!"

Jimmy Silver gave a grunt.

"Chance it, then," he said. "After all, Carthew can only double the lines. Let's stick to the cricket."

"Hear, hear!"

And the Fistical Four, dismissing Carthew of the Sixth from their minds—for the present at least—joined Mornington and Erroll and the rest of the cricketers, and were soon enjoying themselves in their own way. Peele and Gower of the Fourth, who were loafing idly about the cricket-field without any desire to handle bat or ball, exchanged a grin. They had heard the discussion of the Fistical Four.

"Those silly asses are booked for a row!" Gower remarked. "Carthew never loses a chance of being down on them, and now they're asking for trouble."

Cyril Peele nodded, with a smile. He was not displeased at the idea of trouble falling upon the chums of the end study.

"I hope they'll get all they ask for!" he remarked charitably. "Silver collared my cigarettes the other day, and shoved them down the back of my neck——"

"Cheeky cad!" said Gower.

"I'd have licked him for his confounded cheek, only——only——"

"Only you couldn't!" suggested Gower sweetly.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Peele.

There was a shout from the pavilion.

"Peele! Gower!" It was Jimmy Silver's voice.

The two slackers looked round.

"Hallo!" called back Peele.

"Playing cricket?"

"Rats! No!"

"We're making up sides for a little game before tea," said Jimmy Silver, coming towards them. "Play up, you fellows, we're short. Lots of the chaps are out of gates!"

Peele sneered.

"You never ask me to play when it's a question of a match!" he said.

"Naturally, as you can't play for toffee!" answered Jimmy Silver.

"Well, if I can't play for toffee, you don't want me now," said Peele sourly.

"Quite different, old bird!" said Jimmy good-humouredly. "Any fellow can play in a pick-up game. Come on, now!"

"Rats!"

"Shan't!" said Gower.

"Oh, kick those slackers off the field!" exclaimed Lovell. "We don't want them lounging through the game!"

Jimmy Silver eyed the two black sheep of the Fourth.

"Try to please me this time," he said sweetly. "For instance, if you don't play, I shall take you by the nose like this——"

"Yurrrggh!"

"And squeeze it——like this——"

"Grooooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the cricketers, as Cyril Peele danced, with Jimmy Silver's finger and thumb gripping his nose. Even Gower grinned.

"Leggo!" shrieked Peele.

"Will you play now?"

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Good man!" said Jimmy Silver approvingly. "Come on!"

And Peele came on—and played. But, judging from the expression on his face, he was not enjoying that game of cricket.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

Something like a Scheme!

"STOP!"

"After them!"

"Hook it!" muttered Peele desperately.

Two flying figures were racing away from the cricket-field before the "pick-up" game had been in progress a quarter of an hour.

Peele and Gower were "fed"—in fact, more than fed. They had only been looking for a chance to bolt, and now they had found it, and they were bolting. They started off at a run together at the same moment, and they put on a burst of speed that really did them credit.

Jimmy Silver was at the wicket, and Morny was bowling to him, and they were too busy to heed. But three or four fieldsmen started after the fugitives.

Peele and Gower headed direct for the School House. The pursuers did not follow them far, however. Their shouts were intended chiefly to scare the two slackers, and they had that effect. Peele and Gower came pelting into the House at breathless speed, and they crashed into Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, who was coming towards the door.

Mr. Dalton staggered back.

"What——" he ejaculated.

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

The young form-master gripped the juniors each by the collar, and steadied them. He frowned down upon the breathless pair, looking greatly inclined to knock their heads together.

"What do you mean by rushing into me like that?" he exclaimed, wrathfully.

"Ow! They're after us!" spluttered Gower.

"Those beasts!" panted Peele. "It's a rag!"

"Who are after you?" snapped Mr. Dalton.

Peele jerked his head towards the open



"Now, will you play?" demanded Jimmy Silver, as he squeezed Peele's nose between thumb and forefinger. "Yow-ow! Yes!" gasped Peele, amidst a roar of laughter from the fellows around. (See Chapter 1.)

doorway. Mr. Dalton looked out. In the distance two or three juniors could be seen strolling in a leisurely way back to the cricket-field. They had not followed the terrified slackers within fifty yards of the School House.

Peele gritted his teeth with rage.

"I—I thought they were after us!" he stammered.

"Pah!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

He released the two gasping juniors.

"You will take fifty lines each!" he said.

"Go to your study and write them out at once!"

"Ow! Yes, sir!"

The two juniors escaped upstairs.

They went breathlessly into the first study, and Peele threw himself into a chair. He groped in his pocket for a cigarette, to comfort himself—Peele being in the habit of comforting himself in that manner.

"Chuck that, you ass!" granted Gower. "You'll make the study smell of smoke!"

"Who cares?" growled Peele.

"Well, I do! If Dalton comes nosing in, and smells the smoke——"

"Hang Dalton!"

"He's a good deal more wide-eyed than old Bootles was," said Gower. "I'm not taking any chances with him!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Peele.

He smoked his cigarette through sullenly, but he did not light another. The black sheep of the Fourth had already found that it was a risky business to smoke in the studies since their new form-master had taken control. Gower, with an angry face, waved a newspaper to clear off the rings of blue smoke.

Cyril Peele uttered a sudden exclamation.

"My hat!"

"Well, what have you got on now?" growled Gower.

"What a stunt!" exclaimed Peele, his eyes glittering. "Dicky Dalton is awfully down on smoking in the studies——"

"More fool you for smoking here!"

Peele jumped up.

"Those rotters are sticking out at cricket, and Carthew will come to their study at tea-time for their lines!" he exclaimed.

"What the thump——"

"Suppose he found they'd been smoking there?" exclaimed Peele. "What price that, old bean?"

Cuthbert Gower stared.

"He won't!" he said. "They never smoke, that goody-goody crowd. They're down on it!"

"Oh, you're dense!" said Peele contemptuously. "You don't catch on! I've got a whole box of fags in the drawer, and I'm dying for a good smoke. Come along to the end study."

"What on earth for?" demanded Gower.

"For a smoke, of course!"

"You utter ass! Jimmy Silver would scalp you if he found you smoking in his quarters!"

"He won't find me!" said Peele, with an evil grin. "He's too jolly busy at cricket, and everybody's out of doors. It's as safe as houses. Carthew is goin' to find their study reekin' with smoke and strewn with cigarette-ends. Catch on?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Gower.

He burst into a chuckle.

"I'm game! Come on!"

The two young rascals emerged from the study. The Fourth Form passage was clear; the summer weather had tempted all, or nearly all, of the Classical Fourth out of doors after

lessons. In a minute or less Peele and Gower had scuttled along to the end study.

Peele threw the door open.

The study, sacred to the Fistical Four, was vacant. Jimmy Silver & Co. were busy at cricket, and likely to remain so for some time to come. It was, as Peele had said, as safe as houses.

The two slackers stepped in, and Peele closed the door.

A minute more, and two cigarettes were going strong, and the two young rascals grinned at one another through the smoke.

Peele had twenty cigarettes in his packet, which was quite a good supply, and which was more than the two Giddy Goats could negotiate, although Peele stated that he was "dying" for a smoke.

They smoked away industriously.

In a short time the study was drifting with cigarette-smoke, and cigarette-ends adorned the carpet and the fender.

By that time it certainly looked as if the owners of the study had been indulging lately in a very orgy of smoking, strictly forbidden by all the rules of Rookwood School.

At his fourth cigarette, however, Cuthbert Gower seemed to "hang fire." Peele pushed the box towards him, but Gower hesitated.

"No good overdoin' it," he remarked.

Peele sniffed.

"Be a man!" he said, scornfully.

Gower felt more like being sick, but he was not proof against the taunt. He lighted a fifth cigarette, with many inward misgivings. Peele was already at his sixth.

Gower was a long time smoking that cigarette. He had a curious feeling, as though the foundations of the universe were shifting a little.

"Like 'em?" asked Peele.

"Oh, rippin'!" gasped Gower. "Groooh!"

"What's the matter?"

"N-n-nothin'."

"Have another!"

"I—I—I haven't finished this yet."

Peele threw down his sixth cigarette-end, and lighted a seventh fag. He was tougher inside than his chum and had had more practice at this peculiar pastime. But he was beginning to feel some qualms. He was

smoking fast, and Gower was smoking slowly, when the study door suddenly opened, and the two young rascals jumped to their feet in dire alarm. For a moment they thought that they were caught by the sudden return of the Fistical Four. They could have cried with relief when they saw that the new arrival was only Tubby Muffin.

The fat Classical coughed as he put his head into the study and caught the thick smoke.

"Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Tubby.

He blinked through the smoke at Peele and Gower.

"My hat! You fellows smoking here!" he ejaculated.

"What'll Jimmy Silver say?"

"You spying fat brute!" hissed Gower. "What do you want?"

"I came in to see if Jimmy Silver was in to tea yet," answered Tubby. "I suppose I can come in if I like, Gower."

"You fat rotter—"

Peele made his chum a sign to be silent. The two schemers were at the mercy of Reginald Muffin's tongue now.

"Come in and have a smoke, Muffin, old chap," said Peele, smoothly.

"I—I say, Jimmy will kick up a row—" Muffin hesitated.

"He won't know. He's at cricket, and won't be in yet."

"Oh, all right!" said Tubby.

He rolled into the study and closed the door, and cheerfully accepted a smoke from Peele's packet.

He winked cheerfully at the other two juniors. Tubby rather fancied himself as a "dog" and a "goer," though it was not often

that he was admitted to the honourable society of the Giddy Goats of Rookwood.

"Prime, ain't they?" he remarked.

"Glad you like 'em!" said Peele affably.

He would gladly have kicked Reginald Muffin the whole length of the Fourth Form passage. But evidently that was not feasible. Tubby Muffin knew too much, and he had to be conciliated.

"Have another, Gower?"

"No, I won't!" said Gower, whose complexion was assuming a very curious shade in art greens. "I—I—I'm off!"

"Oh, stick it out!"

"Groooogh!"

Gower left the study hastily. It really looked as if Cuthbert Gower had not, after all, enjoyed his smoke.

Peele finished his cigarette and threw away the end, and put the remainder of the packet into his pocket. Tubby Muffin blinked at him.

"Oh, don't give in yet, Peele, old bean!" he said. "I'm just beginning to enjoy this."

"Better cut before Silver comes in, fat head!"

answered Peele. "Come on!"

He piloted Muffin out of the study and closed the door.

"Keep this dark, Muffin!" he said impressively. "If Silver knew you'd been smoking in his study he'd raise your scalp! Not a word, mind!"

"Not a syllable!" chuckled Muffin.

And he rolled away, feeling every inch a "goer" and a "dog." Peele walked away to his study, satisfied in his mind, though not quite at ease inside. He grinned at Gower as he went in.



At full speed the two slackers raced into the School House, to crash headlong into Mr. Dalton, Master of the Fourth. (See Chapter 2.)

"All serene!" he remarked.

"Groooh!"

"Feeling bad?"

"Ooooooh! You silly idiot!" moaned Gower. "I—I'd wring your neck, only I—I'm afraid to move. Grooogh! Ooooooooh!"

Undoubtedly Cuthbert Gower had not enjoyed his smoke!

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Accused!

A CROWD of ruddy and cheery youths came rather noisily up the staircase, in great spirits. Jimmy Silver & Co. had finished cricket, and they were ready for tea—quite ready. As for Carthew of the Sixth, they had forgotten all about him; there were so many more important matters than Carthew to be thought of.

But they were reminded of his existence as they came up the stairs. A sharp, unpleasant voice was heard calling.

"Silver! Lovell!"

"Hallo, there's Carthew tootling after you, Jimmy!" said Conroy.

"Let him tootle!" answered Jimmy cheerily.

And turning a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer, he went on with his chums to the end study.

"Silver!" bawled Carthew from the lower hall.

Still the Fistical Four were deaf. They wanted their tea; and they wanted to leave Carthew till afterwards. But Carthew of the Sixth was not to be left.

He came up the big staircase in pursuit, with a wrathful face. Jimmy Silver threw open the door of the end study.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated, as the atmosphere smote him almost like a blow in the face.

The window was shut, and the door had been shut, so there was still plenty of tobacco smoke about. And there were at least a dozen cigarette-ends in full view.

Jimmy Silver stared round the study.

"What on earth—" he exclaimed.

"Some rotter's been smoking here!" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell in great wrath.

"Awful cheek!" exclaimed Raby.

"By Jove!" said Jimmy Silver. "I'll find out the merry smoker who's been turning our study into a tap-room—"

Putty Grace called from the passage:

"Carthew's coming, you fellows!"

"Oh, let him come!" sighed Jimmy Silver. "Carthew seems like the giddy poor—always with us."

There was a heavy footstep outside, and Mark Carthew of the Sixth loomed up in the doorway.

"Silver! Your lines were to be handed in by tea-time— Why, what—what— You young rascals!"

Carthew sniffed.

He sniffed, he snorted, and he stared. And a gleam of unholy joy came into his narrow eyes.

He had caught his old enemies of the Fourth at last! The study was reeking with smoke—evidence strong enough to convince the most doubting. True, Carthew, although eager to "catch out" the end study at all times, had never really suspected them of bad habits like this. The discovery was a surprise to him as well as a pleasure. But there could be no doubt about it now—he had the evidence of his eyes, not to mention his nose.

"You horrid, dissipated young rascals!" he exclaimed. "Precious fine goings-on in this study, and found out by chance, too! If I hadn't come here for your lines, I should never have known!"

"Never have known what?" demanded Jimmy Silver, not for a moment realising that he and his chums were already found guilty of the smoke.

Carthew waved his hand.

"This!" he replied. "Smoking, you young scoundrels!"

Jimmy's eyes flashed.

"We've not smoked—"

"What do you take us for?" roared Lovell indignantly. "We've just found out that some rotter's been smoking in this study while we were at the cricket."

Carthew laughed.

"I rather think that's a little too thin," he remarked. "You may as well own up now you're found out!"



Gower and Peele whipped their cigarettes from their mouths and started up in alarm as the door crashed open, and Tubby Muffin stumbled in. "Hello, you chaps!" he exclaimed in surprise. "What are you doing here—smoking in Jimmy Silver's study?" (See Chapter 2.)

"I tell you——"

"That's enough!" interrupted Carthew.

"You've been smoking, the whole crowd of you, and a regular orgy you must have made of it. Cigarette-ends all over the place——"

"There's a dozen fellows can prove that we've been at the cricket for the last hour!" howled Raby.

"And what were you doing before that?" sneered Carthew.

"We were in the study after lessons," said Jimmy Silver. "Only for a little while——"

"Long enough to make beasts of yourselves with smoking, apparently," said Carthew, with great enjoyment.

"We haven't——"

"If you're going on telling lies, you can

tell them to Mr. Dalton, not to me," said Carthew coolly. "Follow me."

The Fistical Four exchanged glances of dismay.

"I tell you, Carthew——" began Jimmy Silver.

"You needn't tell me any lies, Silver."

"I'm not telling you any lies, you cad!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver fiercely. "Nobody here has been smoking. Some cad——"

"Keep all that for Mr. Dalton," said Carthew gloatingly.

It was really the chance of a lifetime for Carthew. Mr. Dalton, the new master of the Fourth, did not like him, and had spoken quite plainly on the subject of Carthew's bullying proclivities. Many a report taken

to the form-master by Carthew had been pool-pooled by Mr. Dalton, who had no desire whatever to make mountains out of molehills. But this time, Carthew felt, Mr. Dalton would be bound to "sit up and take notice." In Carthew's sour opinion, he favoured the Fistical Four; and this time he would have to be down on his favourites. For there was no denying the evidence of the smoke in the study, and Jimmy Silver's explanation was much too lame.

"Follow me!" snapped Carthew. "I shall take you to your form-master at once! I fancy you won't get off so easily as usual, this time."

He strode from the study.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Lovell. "I—I say, Jimmy, who could have done this dirty trick? This will land us into hot water with Dicky Dalton! He—he mayn't believe us——"

"It's rotten!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Are you coming?" shouted Carthew, from the passage.

"Oh, we're coming!" snapped Jimmy.

And the Fistical Four followed the bully of the Sixth, in a very dismal mood. Carthew felt that he had them on the hip; and Jimmy Silver & Co. could not help feeling so, too. They were very doubtful indeed about Mr. Dalton's reception of their explanation; and kind as Dicky always was, there was no doubt that if he believed them guilty he would come down on them with a heavy hand. Mr. Dalton was kind, but he had a very strict sense of duty.

Carthew, with four hapless juniors at his heels, tapped at the door of the Fourth Form-master's study.

"Come in!" said the deep voice of Mr. Richard Dalton.

Carthew composed his grinning face into an expression of gravity suited to the serious occasion, and entered. Jimmy Silver & Co. followed him in in dismal silence.

Mr. Dalton appeared to be busy with a mass of papers, but he turned from his task and fixed his eyes upon his visitors.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"I have to report these juniors, sir——" began Carthew.

A momentary frown appeared on Mr.

Dalton's face. It indicated that he was getting a little tired of Carthew and his unending reports. Carthew noted it, and smiled inwardly.

"It is a very serious matter, sir," he pursued. "I have just been to their study to ask for lines which have not been handed in, and I found the room reeking—simply reeking—with tobacco smoke. It is a wonder, indeed, that the disgusting young rascals are not ill from the excessive amount they must have smoked."

"They do not look ill!" said Mr. Dalton sharply.

Carthew realised that he had not made a good point there, and he went on rather hastily:

"The study reeks with smoke, sir, and cigarette-ends and matches are scattered all over the room. Perhaps you would care to step there, sir, and see for yourself?"

"I shall certainly do so," said Mr. Dalton drily. "But I will question these boys first. What have you to say, Silver?"

"We haven't been smoking, sir," answered Jimmy.

"Never have, sir!" chorused the Co.

"They would lie, of course!" remarked Carthew parenthetically.

Mr. Dalton gave him a cold look.

"I see no reason to suppose that these boys would lie, Carthew," he said. "On the contrary, I have always found them extremely truthful and straightforward. However, I shall undoubtedly investigate the matter, and will proceed to the study at once. Follow me, my boys!"

And Carthew and his victims marched back to the end study at the heels of the master of the Fourth.

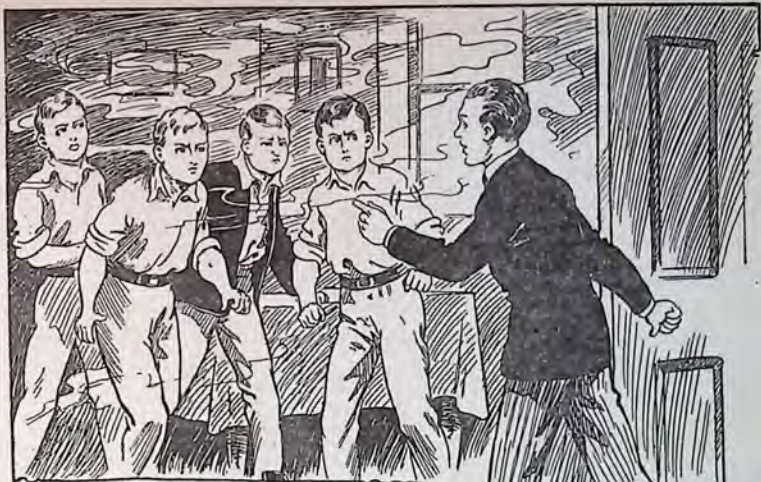
## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Dicky's Way!

"SHOCKING!"

That was Mr. Dalton's exclamation as he put his head into the end study in the Fourth.

Half a dozen juniors were gathered round the doorway, staring into the room, surprised and curious at the state of it. They made way respectfully for the form-master.



A gleam of unholy joy showed in Carthew's eyes as he sniffed the thick atmosphere. "You've been smoking!" he rapped. "We haven't!" Jimmy answered indignantly. (See Chapter 3.)

Mr. Dalton's face set very grimly. His look did not comfort the Fistical Four.

"Very shocking, sir!" said Carthew. "I was shocked when I found it out. I may say, however, that I have always suspected these boys of something of the sort. My opinion of them has always been a low one."

Mr. Dalton did not seem to hear that observation. He fixed his eyes, with a very penetrating look, upon Jimmy Silver & Co.

"What explanation do you give of this, Silver?" he asked quietly. "You have denied smoking here, yet it is plain that several persons, at least, have been smoking in this room this afternoon."

"We've been down at cricket, sir," said Jimmy. "There was no smoke in the study when we left it."

"Then you state that some other persons have been smoking here during your absence?"

"Yes, sir, that's the only explanation."

Carthew sneered. He did not believe a word

of that explanation, but Mr. Dalton looked very thoughtful.

"That some boys in my Form are addicted to smoking in secret I have already learned," he said. "But I fail to see why anyone should smoke in your study, Silver, without your knowledge or permission. If they did not care to do so in their own rooms, safer quarters than this might easily be found."

The Co. were silent.

It seemed to them that they read condemnation in Mr. Dalton's look and tone, and they had a feeling of being caught in the toils.

"Have you any idea of who may have smoked here, Silver?"

Jimmy opened his lips, but closed them again. His thoughts ran at once to Peele and Gower. But it was only a suspicion, and, in any case, he could not have spoken. Even to save himself, he did not feel disposed to act the part of a "sneak."

"You have a suspicion, Silver?" asked Mr.

Dalton; whose keen eyes read a good idea more in Jimmy's face than the juniors supposed.

"Ye-es, sir," stammered Jimmy.

"How long were you at the cricket?"

"About an hour, sir; we'd just come in—"

"You can prove this?"

"There were a dozen other fellows on the ground."

"Lots of us, sir," called out Mornington, from the passage.

"Very good!" said Mr. Dalton. He gave a slight sniff at the atmosphere of the study.

"I should imagine that the smoking was more recent than an hour ago."

Carthew's eyes glittered.

"I should hardly think so, sir," he ventured.

"It seems pretty plain that they were smoking here before they went down to the cricket. You see, the window was closed, and—"

"I see," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "If it proves, Silver, that I have been deceived in you, and that you are addicted to breaking the strict rules of the school, I shall report you to the Head for a flogging. But we shall see. Mornington!"

"Yes, sir," said Morny.

"Kindly go along the passage, and call the whole of the Classical Fourth out of their studies."

"Certainly, sir."

Carthew knitted his brows. He could see no object in this at all; but he had a suspicion that Mr. Dalton had some idea of letting his "favourites" off. In a few minutes all the Classical Fourth were in the passage, with two exceptions. Mr. Dalton's keen eye ran over them.

"Where are Gower and Muffin?" he asked.

"Gower's in my study, sir," mumbled Peele reluctantly. "He—he's not feeling very well, just now, sir."

Mr. Dalton smiled grimly.

"Well or ill, I require Gower here," he said.

"Mornington, bring Gower here immediately."

"Yes, sir."

"Grace, you will fetch Muffin; he belongs to your study."

"Certainly, sir."

The juniors waited in silence and wonder. Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged glances. That

"Dicky" was driving at something they knew; but they could not guess what it was. But their hopes were rising.

Mornington came along the passage with Gower. That unhappy youth was looking very pale. He seemed to have a strong disinclination, too, to meet his form-master's eye.

"You do not seem well, Gower," said Mr. Dalton.

"Nunno, sir," mumbled Gower.

"Have you been smoking?"

Gower jumped.

"S-s-smoking! Nunno, sir! Never smoked in my life, sir."

"Groooogh! Yaroooooh! Leggo! Rotter Yooop! Oooooooch!"

Terrific yells came from Study No. 2, from the doorway of which Putty Grace was propelling Reginald Muffin, with a grip on his collar. Muffin was resisting feebly.

"Grooogh! Don't I keep on telling you I can't move?" he wailed. "I shall be ill in a minute—grooooooch—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "Muffin!"

"Ow! Groooogh! Yes, sir!"

"Are you ill?"

"Yes, sir! Awfully! I—I feel very bad, sir," gasped Muffin. "I—I hope you'll excuse me from lessons to-morrow, sir. Oooooooch!"

"Have you been smoking?"

"Oh, no, sir! I never do; don't like it, sir!"

"Then why is there a smell of tobacco about your clothes, Muffin?" asked the form-master, in a grinding voice.

"Oh dear! Is there?" moaned Muffin.

"I—I never thought of that, sir."

"And why is there a smell of tobacco about your clothes, Gower?"

Gower groaned. He was in no state to undergo a strict examination, when his unhappy inside was in a state similar to that of Vesuvius in its most active moments.

"It is perfectly plain to me that both of you have been smoking," said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"Oh dear, no, sir!" gasped Tubby Muffin,

"and—and please, sir, I'm not ill."

"What?"

"I—I don't feel ill at all, sir," gasped Muffin eagerly. "Quite all right, sir; fresh as a fiddle—I mean fit as a fiddle, strong as a lion, sir! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you think I've been smoking, you're quite mistaken, sir," pursued Tubby. "I wish I hadn't now——"

"What?"

"I—I mean I never did, sir, and Peele and Gower can tell you the same. I told them distinctly that I wouldn't—not in Jimmy Silver's study, sir. Didn't I, Peele?"

The hopeful Tubby blinked at Cyril Peele for confirmation. But all he received in reply from Peele was a scowl like unto that of a demon in a pantomime.

"So you smoked with Peele and Gower in Silver's study, Muffin?" said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"Nunno, sir, I—I'm just telling you I didn't!" gasped Muffin. "Quite the contrary, sir! I said to Peele—'What will Jimmy say?' I simply went into the end study to tea, sir—I mean to see if the chaps had come in—I—I really mean to say, sir, that I never went into the end study at all. I wouldn't, of course, without being invited."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Classical Fourth.

"M-m-may I go now, sir?" asked Tubby Muffin hopefully. "I—I'm feeling a bit queer, sir—that is to say, I'm feeling as right as rain, sir——"

"Peele, Gower, and Muffin will follow me to my study!" said Mr. Dalton, in a deep voice. "Silver, you and your friends are completely exonerated by Muffin's confession and——"

"But I haven't confessed anything, sir," yelled Muffin, in alarm. "I'm denying the whole thing, sir; from start to finish."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Carthew, you will see now that you have made a mistake," said Mr. Dalton drily. "Peele, Gower, Muffin, follow me!"

Mr. Dalton strode away down the passage; and the three hapless smokers followed him, in the lowest possible spirits. Jimmy Silver turned a beaming smile upon his chums.

"Isn't he a corker?" he exclaimed.

"Isn't old Dicky the real goods? Fancy his nosing it all out like that, and bagging them! Good old Dicky!"

In great spirits the Fistical Four went into their study. Carthew of the Sixth seemed rooted to the floor. The innocence of the Fistical Four was clear enough; and Carthew, as a dutiful prefect, ought to have been, pleased that justice was done, but did not seem pleased somehow. He seemed quite the reverse, in fact, as he strode after the Fistical Four.

"You've got off this time!" he said bitterly. "Mr. Dalton's screened you, as usual. I might have expected that——"

"Why, you know as well as we do, now, that we never smoked here," exclaimed Jimmy Silver angrily. "You——"

"Wait till I catch you again!" said Carthew, between his teeth. "I won't take you to Dalton next time. I'll take you to the Head! Just wait!"

And with that Carthew strode savagely from the study, and slammed the door after him.

"His nibs seems to be waxy!" yawned Lovell. "Now, what about tea? I wonder how Peele & Co. are getting on with Dicky? Enjoying the interview—I rather don't think!"

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful as he sat down to tea. There was a gleam in his eyes, under his knitted brows; a gleam his chums knew well in the eyes of Uncle James.

"Well, what is it?" asked Lovell.

"Carthew's going to bowl us out again, if he can, in wicked, dissipated ways, and take us to the Head!" said Jimmy, with a chuckle.

"He won't have any luck!" grinned Lovell.

"Ha, ha! Poor old Carthew never does have much luck with this study."

"I think dear old Carthew will keep an eagle eye on us, and that it will be as easy as falling off a form to pull dear old Carthew's leg!" said Jimmy Silver. "And if I don't make dear old Carthew wish he'd never heard of this study, you can use my head for footer. I'm going to have a big think——"

"And I'm going to have a big tea," said Lovell. "Pass the sardines."

And the Fistical Four settled down cheerily to tea, while downstairs three unhappy youths limped out of Mr. Dalton's study,



Wailing and moaning feebly, Tubby was pushed before Mr. Dalton. "Grooooo! I do feel ill!" he gasped. "Muffin! Have you been smoking?" demanded the form-master. (See Chapter 4.)

wringing their hands; having made once more the ancient discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### A Non-smoker!

"JIMMY!"  
"You thumpin' ass!"  
"What the dickens——"

Lovell and Raby and Newcome uttered those ejaculations in a sort of chorus.

They stared at Jimmy Silver. They were astounded.

The Fistical Four were strolling in the quadrangle at Rookwood. They were in full view of the study windows of Mr. Dalton, the master of their Form—the Fourth. And they were in full view of Carthew of the Sixth, who was coming along from the School House, and who scowled blackly at the sight of the cheery quartette.

And at that moment, in open quad, Jimmy Silver drew a cigar from his pocket and put it in his mouth.

It was really amazing.

Certainly there were fellows at Rookwood who smoked in strict secrecy. Strict secrecy was needed, for the Head was very severe upon that subject. But a surreptitious cigarette in a study or a box-room was very different from a cigar in the quadrangle. Indeed, the most reckless of the "Giddy Goats" of Rookwood never ventured on cigars. It would have led to too much trouble with the "central powers."

And Jimmy Silver never smoked at all, of course. And here he was with a big cigar in his mouth, as cool as a cucumber, in full view of his master's windows, of a prefect, and of a couple of score of fellows of various Forms.

"You shriekin' ass!" hissed Lovell. "Put that rubbish out of sight! Can't you see Carthew?"

"I see him!" assented Jimmy.

"And he sees you!" ejaculated Raby. "You howlin' chump, Jimmy! You'll be landed now, and serve you jolly well right! What do you want muckin' about with a filthy cigar?"

"This cigar is all right," answered Jimmy Silver calmly. "Best cigar I've ever tasted!"

"You silly owl!"

"You horrid fathead!"

"Chuck it away!" breathed Lovell.

"No fear. This cigar cost fourpence!" said Jimmy Silver warmly. "Catch me chucking away a fourpenny cigar! Got a match?"

Carthew of the Sixth came up, almost breathless, in so great a hurry was he to catch Jimmy Silver in the act, as it were. His eyes were gleaming. Only a few days before Carthew had reported the Fistical Four to their form-master for smoking in their study, and it had turned out that they were not guilty. Carthew had been annoyed and exasperated, and ever since he had been looking for another chance. Now, evidently, he had found it.

"Silver!" he thundered.

Jimmy looked round innocently.

The big cigar was still in his mouth, and

fifty pairs of eyes had seen it. But as he met the prefect's glare Jimmy jerked it out, and put his hands behind him with the cigar in it.

"Yes, Carthew?" he said meekly.

"You are smoking—here in the quad—smoking a cigar!" exclaimed Carthew, as much astonished as pleased.

It was a real pleasure to the bully of the Sixth to catch Jimmy Silver "out" like this, but he was astonished. The utter recklessness of Jimmy's proceeding was amazing.

"S-s-smoking?" stammered Jimmy. "I—I wasn't smoking, Carthew!"

"You can tell the Head that!" grinned Carthew. "Come with me at once!"

"Silver!"

It was Mr. Dalton's voice.

The master of the Fourth had thrown up his window, only a few yards from the spot, and was leaning out.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"Is that a real cigar?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

Carthew jumped.

"Hand it up to me, Silver."

Jimmy Silver cheerfully handed up the cigar to Mr. Dalton. The form-master looked at it, and an involuntary smile crossed his lips. Carthew blinked at it.

Now that he saw it closely and more clearly, he became aware that the cigar was made of chocolate.

Jimmy Silver's amazing "recklessness" was explained now.

Lovell & Co. burst into a chortle. They realise that "Uncle James" of Rookwood had expended the sum of fourpence on a chocolate cigar for the special purpose of pulling Carthew's leg. He had waited till Carthew came by to produce that cigar, and the bully of the Sixth had fallen blindly into the trap.

There was a loud chuckle from the crowd of juniors round the master's window. Carthew looked almost green.

"What were you going to do with this cigar, Silver?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Eat it, sir," answered Jimmy demurely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Oh!" gasped Carthew.

"Please may I have it, sir?" asked Jimmy, in his meekest manner. "I—I really wasn't going to smoke that cigar, sir. You—you can't smoke chocolate cigars, sir. They—they won't draw, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You may certainly have it," said Mr Dalton, handing it back. "Carthew, you will understand now, probably, that it was wiser not to take the matter before the Head. If you had exercised a little more intelligence, Carthew, you would have known that this junior was playing a prank. It occurred to me at once when I saw him from my window."

With that, Mr. Dalton shut down his window and retired from the scene. Carthew fixed his eyes on Jimmy Silver with an expression in them that a Hun might have envied.

"You—you—you——" he stuttered.

Jimmy Silver calmly bit off the end of the



Carthew almost fell over himself in his hurry to reach Jimmy. "Silver!" he thundered, pointing to the cigar. "You are smoking—here in the quad—smoking a cigar!" (See Chapter 5.)

cigar under Carthew's furious eyes. The strictest non-smoker could not have objected to biting off the end of that cigar.

Carthew made a savage stride towards him. The Fistical Four drew together, as if ready for battle.

"Stop that, now, Carthew!" said Bulkeley curtly. "The kid's done nothing."

Carthew gave an angry grunt, and strode savagely away. Bulkeley's advice was good, but the bully of the Sixth had no intention of heeding it. Judging others by himself, he did not believe in the decency of the Fistical Four, and he still hoped to "catch them out."

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked away in a merry mood, and the famous cigar was divided into four equal parts with the aid of a pocket-knife, and disposed of on the spot. It had served its purpose.

"But Carthew is a sticker!" said Jimmy. "He will try again. We'll give him another chance when I've thought it out. The dear boy believes we're black sheep of his own merry hue, and he won't be happy till he can report us to the Head for smoking, or backing horses, or something. The smoke stunt is worked out, I think. Perhaps we'll give him a chance of catching us squiffy next."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four, as they sauntered cheerily in the sunny quad, discussed a plan of campaign; and from their explosive chuckles it might have been guessed that another plot was being plotted for the especial benefit of Carthew of the Sixth.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### Uncle James has a Big Idea!

JIMMY SILVER & Co. went in cheerily to lessons that afternoon. They passed Carthew of the Sixth in the corridor, and the prefect scowled at them.

Jimmy answered his scowl with a sweet smile.

The feud between the Sixth Form bully and the end study was growing bitter on Carthew's side, though the Fistical Four managed to keep their good temper.

But they were wrathful, all the same. Carthew persisted in thinking, or in professing

to think, that the end study was not above suspicion.

To be considered in the same light as fellows like Peele and Gower was very exasperating to the Co. Cyril Peele's dingy blackguardism was not in their line at all, and they did not like the suspicion.

The more Carthew's bitter dislike made him suspect them and yearn to catch them out, the more they were determined to make Carthew sorry for himself.

Mr. Dalton gave the Fistical Four a glance as they came in. The master of the Fourth rather liked the cheery Co. He couldn't help liking them, and they liked him.

He was quite well aware that Carthew's suspicions were utterly without foundation, and that Jimmy Silver & Co. were exactly what they appeared to be—frank and healthy schoolboys, perhaps a little reckless and careless, but with no serious faults of character at all.

Lessons proceeded amicably in the Fourth Form room. Nearly all the Fourth pulled well with their master. Only slackers like Peele and Gower and Tubby Muffin dreaded Mr. Dalton's eye.

After lessons, Jimmy Silver paused at the master's desk as he went out. Mr. Dalton looked up.

"If you please, sir—" began Jimmy.

"Well, Silver?"

"Our study's getting a bit shabby, sir," said Jimmy. "The paint's been a good bit knocked about, what with fencing and—and other things—"

"Such as ragging and horse-play," suggested Mr. Dalton.

"Ahem! We—we think it's about time the study had a new coat of paint, sir."

"No doubt it will be seen to, as usual, during the vacation, Silver," said Mr. Dalton.

"Yes, sir; but we thought we'd like to try our hand ourselves," said Jimmy eagerly.

"If there's no objection, sir, could we paint the woodwork in the study—out of lesson-time, of course?"

Mr. Dalton regarded him thoughtfully.

"Paint is very expensive now, Silver, and I doubt whether it would be provided—"

"We want to buy the paint ourselves, sir."

said Jimmy. "We only need some paint and boiled oil and turpentine, and—and I've had a remittance from home, sir, which will cover it. I want the study to look nice when my father comes next week, sir."

"There is no objection, Silver," said Mr. Dalton kindly. "I am, indeed, glad to see you desire to make your study look nice. Certainly you have my permission."

"Thank you, sir!"

Jimmy Silver passed on, and rejoined his chums in the corridor.

"All serene, old beans!" he said gleefully. "Dicky's given his permission to paint the study."

"Paint the study!" exclaimed Mornington. "What the merry thump do you want to paint your study for?"

"Make it look nice," explained Jimmy.

Mornington looked at him suspiciously.

"Come off!" he remarked. "What's the stunt? You're not looking out for work, I suppose, and it's jolly hard work."

"My dear chap," said Jimmy, "the end study is the place where fellows work. We're famous for it. Get a move on, you chaps. We've got to make up a list of the various mucks we shall want."

The Pistical Four proceeded to their study, leaving Valentine Mornington rather puzzled. Certainly junior studies generally showed signs of wear and tear towards the end of the term. But Morny had never heard of a fellow wanting to paint his own study before.

Any amount of shabbiness was preferable to that hefty job in the general opinion. The Rookwood fellows were quite content to leave the painting to the painters.

Arthur Edward Lovell seemed a little puzzled as Jimmy sat at the study table, with a pencil and paper, making out a list.

"I don't quite catch on!" Lovell remarked.

"You wouldn't, old chap."

"Look here, Jimmy, you cheeky owl—"

"One pound of paint," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "Timnings, in Coombe, charges eighteenpence a pound for paint, and eighteenpence is—oh—one-and-six, so we shall have to make a pound of it do."

"Waste, I call it!" said Lovell. "The paint in this study will jolly well do for me.

Besides, how far will a pound of paint go? It won't do even the window-sashes."

"We're only going to touch up the worst places," explained Jimmy. "We can't paint the whole bag of tricks. Too expensive. But we must have some paint, to keep up appearances."

"I don't see—"

"Half a pint of boiled oil," said Jimmy, scribbling it down.

"What the thump's boiled oil?"

"I think it's linseed oil, boiled. I know that painter chaps use it, anyhow, and it sounds workmanlike."

"But—"

"Three pints of turpentine," said Jimmy.

"You owl!" roared Raby. "I don't know much about painting, but if you put three pints of turpentine to a pound of paint you'll just about drown it."

"It will be sticky," said Newcome, shaking his head, "or it'll come off on our clothes, or something."

Jimmy Silver gave his chums a pitying look.

"You don't catch on," he said compassionately. "We're going to paint the study—some of it—but that's camouflage. What we're really out for is to catch Carthew, or to let Carthew catch us, which comes to the same thing."

Lovell brightened up.

"Oh, I see! Make him sit in the paint, or something."

"Dear old bean, you wouldn't take a prize in a brain show," said Jimmy. "In this study you'd better leave the thinking to your Uncle James."

"Look here—"

"The paint and the boiled oil," said Jimmy, with laboured patience, "are just to keep up appearances—camouflage, in fact. What we really want is three pints of turpentine—or turps, I think painters call it—in three nice big bottles."

"What on earth for?" shrieked Lovell.

"Carthew."

"I don't see—"

"Naturally. I suppose you've looked in at Timmings', in Coombe, sometimes, as we pass the blessed shop a dozen times a week—more or less. Timmings sells paint and things—"



Carthew eyed the juniors suspiciously as he heard the clinking of glass from the bag. (See Chapter 7.)

"I know that, ass!"

"The price of bottles," said Jimmy, "has risen."

"Bub-bub-bottles?" said Lovell dazedly.

"Yes, bottles."

"What on earth's that got to do with it?"

"Lots! Go to Timmings for a bottle of turpentine, and what do you think he will give it you in?"

"A—a bottle, I suppose."

"Exactly—any old bottle. Generally an old gin-bottle."

"A—a gin-bottle?"

"Yes. Sometimes a whisky-bottle, and sometimes a rum-bottle. But he mostly uses gin-bottles. I fancy Mr. Timmings has a taste for gin, and he uses them in his shop. Now, he might give us any old bottle; but when we go for our turpentine we are going to request specially to have it in gin-bottles, with the old labels left on."

"Oh!"

"If Timmings hasn't them in stock we'll wait. We're in no hurry. Y'ever notice the colour of turpentine?"

"Not specially."

"Y'ever notice the colour of gin?"

"I've seen old Mack's gin-bottle—the time we put gum into it."

"Well, my infant," said Jimmy Silver, "there's been serious accidents owing to people putting turps in gin-bottles and not taking the labels off. The colour's much the same. Anybody seeing a gin-bottle full of turps, and not knowing the facts, would take it for a bottle of gin. And if a spying cad—fellow like Carthew, frinstance—saw such things in this study——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lovell, catching on suddenly.

There was a merry chorus of laughter in the end study. Tubby Muffin looked in inquisitively.

"I say, what's the joke, you fellows?" he inquired.

"You are, fat old bean!" said Jimmy Silver calmly.

Tubby Muffin sniffed and rolled away in disgust. In the end study the Fistical Four chortled jocosely.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER At Last!

CARTHEW of the Sixth was suspicious.

It was several days since Jimmy Silver's talk with his chums in the end study, and during those few days Carthew had given a great deal of attention to the four. It was surprising, indeed, how much time Carthew found to devote to these youths that he did not like. His hope of catching them out sometimes grew faint, but it never quite failed.

Sometimes, indeed, he wondered whether he was quite on the wrong track, and whether Jimmy Silver & Co. were just what they appeared to be, and hadn't any shady secrets at all.

But he hoped for the best—or, rather, for the worst.

His opinions of others were coloured by his own shady nature, and he never really

thought well of anybody. So he was not likely to think well, if he could help it, of fellows he disliked.

Sooner or later he was going to surprise the four in some serious infraction of the school laws—the more serious the better. Until that happened he could only live in hope.

And now he was not only suspicious, but he felt that he had the most reasonable and solid grounds for suspicion.

It was Wednesday, and a half-holiday. Jimmy Silver & Co. had walked down to Coombe, and Carthew's eyes had fallen on them when they returned. Jimmy was carrying a bag, which gave a clink as of glasses in Carthew's hearing as he passed. Then Jimmy had given Carthew a startled look, and hurried into the School House with an air of flurry.

Carthew was wasting his afternoon, as a matter of fact, in hunting the Fistical Four. Perhaps they knew it. But just now they seemed very anxious to get out of sight.

The bully of the Sixth strolled into the School House after them, and debated in his mind whether he should follow them to their study.

It was suspicious, in the first place, that the four should be in their study at all on a glorious afternoon, when all the other fellows, or nearly all, were at cricket. And what was it that had clinked in the bag? A bottle of pickles might have clinked against a jar of jam, certainly. But pickles and jam could be bought at the sergeant's little shop behind the beeches. There was no need to carry such things up from Coombe on a hot afternoon. But—certainly it couldn't be smokes! Smokes didn't clink when they knocked together in a bag. But what was it? A hope, rather than a suspicion, dawned in Carthew's breast. Every step on the downward path was easier than the last. Was it possible that from cheeking prefects, and smoking, these young rascals had fallen to darker vices—such as drinking?

That was too good to be true, for that meant the instant "sack" from Rookwood in case of discovery, and the prospect of getting the Fistical Four expelled was too entrancing a vision.

Still, there was no doubt that something—such as a bottle—had clinked; no doubt that Jimmy Silver had looked flurried and scuttled away like one guilty!

Carthew ascended the staircase at last. As he came near the corner of the Fourth Form passage he heard Tubby Muffin's voice.

"What have you got in the bag, Jimmy? Tuck?"

"No, you fat guzzler!"

"Well, what is it? Can't a fellow look?"

"You can look if you keep it awfully dark."

Carthew stopped. His tread was stealthy, and he was sure that the juniors had not heard him.

A moment later there was a startled exclamation from Muffin.



Carthew's hand dropped on Tubby Muffin's shoulder with a grip of iron. "What was in Silver's bag?" he asked in a low voice. (See Chapter 7.)

"Booze!"

"Shush!"

"I—I say, Jimmy, you're not going to drink that awful muck, are you?" gasped Muffin.

"Of course not, ass!"

"Then what have you got it for?"

"Never mind; buzz off, fatty! You ask too many questions."

"I say, if the Head knew——"

"Shut up! Kick him, Lovell!"

"Yaroooh!"

Retreating footsteps were heard as Tubby Muffin came round the corner and almost ran into Carthew. The Fistical Four were going on cheerily to their study.

Carthew dropped his hand on Muffin's shoulder with a grip of iron, and the fat Classical squeaked.

"Wow!"

"What was in Silver's bag?" asked Carthew, in a low voice.

"I—I——"

"You saw it?"

"Ye-es!"

"Tell me what it was!"

"I—I'm not going to sneak, even if they are boozing beasts! I—I mean—— Yow-ow-ow! Leggo my ear! Wow-wow!"

"What was it?" hissed Carthew.

"Yow-ow-ow! Only some bottles of gin! Yow-ow!"

"Cut off!" said Carthew.

Tubby Muffin cut off quickly enough, rubbing his fat ear. He was anxious to get out of the reach of Carthew's finger and thumb.

Carthew stepped round the corner and glanced along the Fourth Form passage. The passage was empty; the weather had tempted everybody out of doors on that glorious afternoon. It was exactly the opportunity for a set of young rascals with depraved tastes to indulge in an orgy. Carthew could have no doubt now, only—only—Not only was it too good to be true, but really seemed incredible in itself. The blackest of black sheep at Rookwood had surely never descended to the level of gin-drinking! Even Carthew could not believe it without the clearest proof.

He heard a click at the other end of the passage. The door of the end study had been locked inside.

Carthew breathed quickly.

Why had those four young rascals locked themselves in their study, when summer skies and sunshine called them out of doors?

The suspicious prefect trod softly along the passage.

He had to make sure.

He had put his foot in it more than once; he had not forgotten the chocolate cigar. It was barely possible—more than barely, if Carthew had only known it—that the juniors had known he was watching them; that they had clinked two old ginger-beer bottles on purpose; that they had put Tubby Muffin up to giving him false information—anything, in fact, was more than probable than gin-drinking in a Rookwood study.

Carthew had to be very careful; all the more because if he could bring a successful accusation against the four, their disgrace and ruin was certain and inevitable. Nothing was to be left to chance.

With great caution, Mark Carthew trod along the passage, making scarcely a sound. He was not aware that at the keyhole of the end study a keen ear was listening very intently for precisely those faint, stealthy sounds of creeping feet.

He reached the door and stopped. He stood listening.

There were sounds in the study—sounds that could only have been made by glasses clinking against a bottle.

Carthew's eyes glittered.

Incredible as it was, too good to be true as it was, it was growing a certainty now. But he continued to listen.

"I—I say, isn't it a bit too strong, Jimmy?"

That was the voice of Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Well, it's a bit strong," said Jimmy Silver. "But I suppose we want something stronger than water!"

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"It will make the study smell a bit," said Raby. "A fellow coming in will niff it at once."



"Boys!" thundered the Head. "When Carthew made his report I was sure he must have made some terrible mistake—but I can believe the evidence of my own eyes. You will be sent away from Rookwood this very evening!" (See Chapter 8.)

"Nobody will come in."

"Carthew might be spying about."

"We passed him in the quad. He's out of doors."

Carthew smiled. Every word uttered in the study was distinctly audible to him as he stood outside the door. The Fistical Four really seemed bent on betraying themselves into the hands of their old enemy.

"I'll spill some eucalyptus," continued Jimmy Silver. "That will drown the smell, you know."

"Good egg!"

"Now then, go it, you fellows!"

There was a gurgling sound.

Any other prefect at Rookwood who had supposed that juniors were drinking in a study would have chipped in instantly. Not so Carthew. Carthew preferred to wait till some of the spirit had been consumed;

then the state of the juniors would be an incontrovertible proof of their guilt. Carthew felt that he held his old enemies in the hollow of his hand. He was not going to risk failure by being in a hurry.

"I—I say—hic!—it's awfully strong——"

"Don't fall over, you ass!"

"Grooh!"

There was a sound of someone falling heavily into a chair. Carthew's eyes glittered.

Bump! Another junior, apparently, had sprawled on the carpet. There was a sound of feet staggering to and fro, and a clink.

Carthew felt that it had gone far enough. He gave a sudden thump on the door.

"Let me in, Silver!"

"Hi!"

"Do you hear me?"

"Who' zat?" came in blurred tones.

"Carthew! Let me in at once!"

"Cert'nly, ole f'ler!"

Staggering feet approached the door, and it was unlocked. Carthew strode into the study, his eyes blazing with triumph.

"Now, you young rascal——"

Jimmy Silver gazed at him dully, and sank into a chair. Lovell and Raby were sitting with their eyes closed; Newcome was curled up on the rug, without motion. On the table stood an empty bottle—a gin-bottle, with a label on it bearing the words "Best Gin." On the floor, in the corner, stood two other bottles, full of a pale liquid. Carthew did not need telling what that liquid was. The labels on the bottles were plain enough to read yards away.

His eyes fairly gloated over the chums of the Fourth.

"Caught!" he said.

"Eh?"

"This means the sack for you!" said Carthew gloatingly. "The merry sack! Do you understand, you young rascals?"

"Wharrer say?"

"Just wait a bit!" grinned Carthew.

He put the key on the outside of the lock, left the study, and turned the key. His victims were safe now. Then Carthew hurried away to the Head's study. He was not going to Mr. Dalton. Mr. Dalton could learn what had happened to his favourites when he found that the Head had expelled them from Rookwood School. Carthew chuckled at the thought. That would be a "facer" for Mr. Richard Dalton, and a handsome repayment for his contemptuous manner towards the worthy Carthew! The bully of the Sixth seemed to be walking on air, as he approached Dr. Chisholm's study.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### Before the Beak!

"NONSENSE!"

That was Dr. Chisholm's remark when Carthew made his amazing report.

Carthew flushed.

"I saw them with my own eyes, sir——"

"It is impossible!" exclaimed the Head.

"Rookwood boys—addicted to drink! I cannot believe it, Carthew! You are under some strange delusion!"

"Will you step to the study, sir, and see them?" said Carthew. "All four seem to me to be under the influence of drink, and certainly there are three bottles of gin in the study—one empty and two full."

"Good heavens!" said the Head aghast.

He rose hastily and followed Carthew out. Undoubtedly the matter needed full and instant investigation. With a very agitated manner, Dr. Chisholm rustled away to the Fourth Form passage. Dignified old gentleman as he was, he was almost running as he went towards the end study. Carthew found it hard to keep his face grave and composed; he had a strong impulse to grin. They arrived together at Jimmy Silver's door.

"It is locked!" said the Head.

"I have the key, sir! I thought it better to lock them in in their present state!"

"Yes, yes! Unlock the door at once!"

Carthew turned the key, and threw the door open. His eyes gloated in. He fully expected to see the Fistical Four stretched about the study as he had left them.

He stared blankly.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were gathered round the table, with absolutely no sign of intoxication about them. Jimmy was softening a brush in turpentine, and Raby and Newcome were looking on cheerily.

The four juniors stood respectfully to attention as the Head swept in.

Carthew blinked.

The recovery of the four had been remarkable. But the three tell-tale bottles were there—all on the table now, and one that had been full was half-empty! And the tell-tale labels stared the Head in the face!

"Boys!" thundered the Head.

"Yes, sir!"

"What—what are you doing?"

"We're just going to paint the study, sir," said Jimmy Silver respectfully. "Mr. Dalton gave us permission, sir, and we've bought the paint ourselves."

"Carthew informed me that——"

"There is the gin, sir," said Carthew. "They've been drinking more since I left. Both these bottles were full. They've got the paint here to drown the smell of spirits, I think, sir."



Jimmy Silver & Co. threw themselves on the floor and fairly howled with laughter "Poor old Carthew! Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 8.)

"Silver! Have you been drinking?"

"Not since dinner, sir."

"What! You drank at dinner——"

"Yes, sir. I always have a glass of water with my dinner——"

"I was not referring to water, Silver. You have bottles of—of intoxicating liquor in this study. What are these bottles, sir?" thundered the Head.

"Gin bottles, sir!"

"Silver! You dare to confess—though I can trust the evidence of my own eyes! When Carthew made his report, I was sure that he must have made some terrible mistake. But now, shameless that you are, you shall be sent away from Rookwood this very evening——"

"What for, sir?"

"Have we done anything wrong, sir?" asked Lovell.

"Boy!" gasped the Head.

"Mr. Dalton told us we might paint the

study, sir," said Jimmy Silver, innocently.

"We've got the turpentine to mix the paint and to clean the brushes, sir."

"T-t-turpentine!"

"Yes, sir."

The Head's face was a study for a moment.

"Is it turpentine in those bottles, Silver?" he asked in an altered voice.

Carthew felt quite sick.

"Yes, sir," answered Jimmy Silver cheerily.

"Mr. Timmings always sells his oils in old gin bottles, sir. They're cheap."

The Head stood quite still and silent. Carthew would have fled, if he had dared to move.

Once more he realised that the Fistical Four had pulled his egregious leg—and this time he had dragged the Head into it!

"Turpentine!" repeated the Head in a faint voice. "Take the corks out of the bottles, Silver, so that I can—can smell the

liquid. It—it looks very much like an—an intoxicating fluid."

"Certainly, sir!"

Jimmy Silver dutifully removed the corks. He wondered whether the reverend Head of Rookwood knew the smell of gin! At all events, Dr. Chisholm knew the smell of turpentine, and one sniff satisfied him.

He threw a terrible look upon Carthew.

"So, Carthew, you have accused these perfectly innocent boys of the disgusting vice of drinking, because, with their form-master's permission, they had painter's materials here to paint their study."

His voice was like the rumble of thunder. The hapless Carthew's knees knocked together.

"I—I thought——" he mumbled faintly.

"You thought!" thundered the Head. "I scarcely believe that you are capable of thinking, Carthew. You have brought me here—you have wasted my time—you—you — And you stated—you explicitly stated, sir, that you had seen these juniors under the influence of drink ten minutes ago in the study. Did you suppose that they had been drinking turpentine?"

"I—I thought—they—I——" stuttered Carthew.

"Silver, I am sorry that for one moment I allowed Carthew's ridiculous mistake to influence me. Carthew, follow me! I have to speak to you very seriously, sir, in my study!"

"May we go on painting the study, sir?" asked Jimmy Silver demurely.

"Certainly, my boy—certainly! I am glad to see you so harmlessly and industriously occupied."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"Come, Carthew!" said the Head in a grinding voice.

Carthew limped away after the Head, with a dreadful sinking feeling. The juniors gravely watched him go. But their gravity only lasted till the Head was out of the Fourth Form passage. Then Jimmy Silver closed the study door, and looked at his chums. And a wild yell of laughter rang through the end study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Carthew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And—abandoning paint and turpentine—Jimmy Silver & Co. fairly threw themselves on the carpet, and kicked up their heels in a paroxysm of merriment. And at tea-time the whole Fourth Form had heard the story, and were roaring over it.

Carthew was quite pale when he limped out of the Head's study after the Head had had a "very serious talk" with him. It had been rather a lengthy talk, and rather an emphatic talk, and Carthew had not enjoyed it. He almost crawled away when it was over.

And it dawned upon Carthew that he would do wisely to let the end study alone after that. He was really quite afraid of making another catch. His catches were a little too unfortunate.

The end study did not, perhaps, look much better when the amateur painters had finished painting it. But the Fistical Four felt that their time and money had not been wasted. Carthew was giving them a much-needed rest; and nearly all Rookwood was chortling over the story of how they had succeeded in pulling Carthew's leg!



THE END

## FULL INSIDE!



Even William George Bunter's capacity has its limits, and in the above study by Mr. Chapman, Billy appears to have reached—or even passed—the safety limit! Judging by the contented expression on his face, however, Billy appears to have no fears for the future! The question is, whose pie was it?



# A Matter of Temperature

A Short Story of the Yukon

OUTSIDE Alec Stewart's saloon at Cudahy there was dead silence, the stillness of frozen desolation such as the Yukon district presents when the temperature is floating between thirty and forty below zero, not freezing-point; but within the long, solidly-built timber shack there was neither silence, cold, nor freshness of atmosphere. Good luck exhilarates, but the worst of bad luck cannot keep under for long the average miner's exuberance of spirits, and he loves to hear the sound of his own voice. Two almost red-hot stoves made the saloon so hot that more than one man had shed his outer garments, while it was with difficulty one could distinguish those sitting or standing at the far end of the room, so thick was the atmosphere with the fumes of "myrtle plug" or strong "twist."

Supplies of grub might be short, the cold so intense that for the time being all panning was held up; but the owners of the claims on Forty Mile, Coal Creek, Clinton, and Sourdough flatly refused to be depressed.

With one exception. Tom Parsons, a short, broad-built man, with a pug nose and a cast in his left eye, had little or nothing to say. Spoken to by the other miners or jollied by the saloon keeper, he answered only in monosyllables. Leaning heavily against the bar, he stared moodily at nothing, sucking at an empty pipe. By no means a bad-tempered or taciturn fellow as a rule, his obvious depression of spirits seemed unaccountable. He had two claims, one at Clinton and a second at Glacier; and as no miner's luck was ever a secret from his fellow gold seekers, every one in the room was aware that, until

the cold had stopped operations, Parsons had been getting first-rate returns from his daily washings.

"What in thunder's wrong with ye, old son?" a miner named Evarts at length inquired of the lugubrious Parsons. "Look about as happy an' comfortable as a man in bed with a skunk."

Parsons stirred himself.

"Gottor go out," he replied heavily.

"Why?"

"Grub!" answered Parsons tersely.

"Waal, yer ain't no worse off 'n the rest of th' boys," another man said consolingly. "We're all short."

"Mebbe; but I ain't takin' no risks. I means goin' out," Parsons declared doggedly. "Sell off my truck an' quit!" he added.

Stewart, busy behind the bar, turned quickly.

"What d'ye say, man Parsons? Quittin'?"

"That's me. Had one winter starvin' in this blamed country, and I don't mean standin' for another. Ain't got much ter get rid of, an' when it's gone I'm quittin'."

Stewart leaned across the bar and whispered in the ear of the dejected miner two words.

"Candles—ile?"

His Scots blood was guarantee enough that the saloon keeper was a keen hand at a bargain; and in Parsons' decision to get away from the mining camp, Stewart saw the opportunity of a possible and profitable speculation. With only three or four hours out of the twenty-four being daylight, means of illumination are at a high premium. Moreover,

Stewart was well aware that there was a serious shortage of both coal, oil, and candles at Fort Cudahy and the adjacent Forty Mile. In a few weeks' time both these necessary commodities were going to jump in price. Here was a chance of a profitable deal.

"He—none; candles—jest a few," replied Parsons in a low, uninterested voice.

An hour later he shambled from the saloon, to pick his way across the slippery, uneven ground to the shack perched twenty feet above the smooth white ribbon of ice that was Clinton Creek.

The following forenoon, as he was preparing breakfast by the light of a tall, guttering candle stuck in the mouth of an empty whisky bottle, the door of the shack was shoved open, and in came Alec Stewart.

"About those candles, Parsons," began the saloon keeper without any preliminary. "What about a trade now, if ye're not takin' them all along with ye. I'm no that well fixed up as I'd like to be, an' since ye're goin' out ye'll not be wantin' to drag along more'n ye can help. I'll take them candles, and it's a bigger price I'll be givin' than any of th' other fellers will."

Parsons, who looked even more depressed and miserable than the evening before, muttered something to the effect that Stewart might as well have the candles as any other son-of-a-gun.

"Sure. How many ye got?"

"Jest a few, I told you."

"Let's have a squint at 'em, man."

"Candles are worth money—

going to be worth a whole lot more," observed Parsons. "Grub?" He looked up, long knife in one hand, a slab of fat bacon in the other.

"I've had breakfast."

"I ain't. Mind, I ain't jest *givin'* them candles away."

"I ain't said that ye're a fool, man Parsons," Stewart remarked pleasantly. "Where are they?"

Parsons, bending over the frypan, jerked a stubby thumb to the far end of the sixteen-foot shack, where a partly open candle box occupied a corner in company with half a dozen empty condensed milk tins, odd boots, a Winchester, a collection of odorous rags, a half-emptied sack of flour, and a few other odds and ends.

Stewart stepped briskly across, dug out a candle and looked at it, not forgetting to make certain that it was supplied with a wick; he made a rough mental calculation of the number left in the box.

"Like this one burnin' here?" he inquired, indicating the cabin's source of illumination.

Parsons, his mouth full, made a noise that the saloon keeper correctly translated as "Jes' like 'em."

"What's yer figger, man?" he demanded crisply.

Parsons left off eating, to sit for some seconds in deep thought.

"Candles 's sca'ce," he observed slowly. "They'll be sca'cer later on. Reckon, Alec, them candles. 'll cost ye half a dollar apiece."

"Half a dollar!" shouted Stewart excitedly,



"I ain't said that ye're a fool, man Parsons," Stewart remarked pleasantly. "Where are them candles?"



"To thunder with yer profit!" shouted an impatient miner. "How much?" "A dollar a candle, boys!" said Stewart promptly.

his face going a rich red. "Man, ye're joking."

"I'm not," answered Parsons, truthfully, if his face were an index of his feelings. "Half a dollar," he repeated. "Reckon they're cheap, too."

"It's an outrage!" asserted the scandalised saloon owner.

"Take 'em or leave 'em," rejoined Parsons indifferently. "I ain't havin' t' haul away such a lot o' truck that a few candles, more or less, 'll make sech a difference."

Stewart thought for half a minute.

"Come man, be reasonable," he advised.

"Twenty-five cents."

"Half dollar," the miner said stolidly.

"Then you'll be makin' a handsome profit."

Stewart knew that. If his calculations were correct, the available stock would be used up before the new year was many weeks forward, and, the only man with candles to sell, it would be a cold day if he weren't able to get a clear dollar apiece for every one he had to dispose of. But he made one more effort.

"Forty cents, man Parsons," he said.

"And I'll take all ye have, throwin' in th' risk of any bein' broken."

Parsons shook his head.

"Half dollar," he said again, depressed but stubborn.

"Ye'd break up yer mither's coffin t' sell for kindlin', Tom Parsons, an' that ye would," Stewart cried bitterly. "Ye're a hard man. But I'll pay ye th' half dollar. Is this all ye got?"

"There's mebbe a few more somewhere," replied the miner carelessly.

He got up and rummaged here and there, bringing five full boxes to light, each containing ten pounds of candles at eight to the pound.

He lent a hand at carrying the boxes to the saloon, where they were stored away in a cupboard of divers contents and composite perfumes; and the next day he loaded up a sled and took leave of Cudahy and its denizens. Stewart wished him a pleasant journey.

The long-headed Scot proved correct in his surmise. Less than a month after Parsons' departure, Cudahy began to consider very seriously the shortage in illuminating power. Confined to their shacks by the bitter cold, the miners could not pass the whole twenty-four hours in sleeping, and sitting around in the darkness of the Arctic winter was still more undesirable. Those lucky enough to possess kerosene or candles beyond their own needs rose grandly to the occasion, and extorted unheard of sums from less fortunate comrades. Presently the rumour got about

that Alec Stewart had a store of candles laid by, and a noisy deputation came to interview him. He grudgingly admitted that he might have rather more than he could use.

"Hand 'em out, then. What's th' figger for them?" demanded the spokesman of the deputation.

"A dollar a candle, boys," Stewart said promptly.

"Fetch 'em out."

"That's for now—th' first box. I'm no sayin' that when th' second box is opened two dollars won't be——"

"Where—are—them—candles?"

Without haste Stewart turned to the store and threw open the door, letting out a wave of blended odours of a sickly potency that attracted the attention of the by no means delicate olfactory organs of his impatient customers. On the table he laid a greasy, sticky, smelly candle box.

"No, no, boys; it's a dollar a time, remember," he cried, fending off a hasty grab at the box. "Beauties, too, an' well worth it."

He ripped off the lid, and a score of eager eyes were turned on the contents of the box. Thence they were lifted to the blank face of the dumb saloon-keeper.

Save for a number of wicks, some thick stains, and a few spoonfuls of a semi-white, sticky, Swiss-milk like compound, the box was empty.

For a half minute there was dead silence. Then came an abrupt and deafening clamour of laughter, hoots, and

yells, followed by a howl of dismay and anger from Stewart that might have been heard at Dawson. The floor of the saloon rocked under the stamping feet of the bellowing, choking, side-splitting miners.

"Sufferin' Caesar, Alec!" spluttered Pat James, when he could find the breath. "Them ca-ca—ha, ha, ha!—candles! Where'd ye buy 'em. Tell us for th' love of Mike!"

"Tom Patsons. Before he went out," stammered Stewart.

"Gone out! Tom Parsons! But he ain't gone out!" shouted Joe Collins. "Why, I saw Tom not four days back, workin' up at his claim at Glacier. He was pannin' out twenty-five a day."

"Boys," Stewart's sad voice matched his face, though he was trying hard to smile. "Th' joke's on me."

It was. There was no need to look inside the other boxes. Like the first, they had been filled by the ingenious Mr. Parsons with a mixture of condensed milk, flour, and water, which, with the aid of candle moulds and wicks, had been converted into so near a resemblance to candles that while they remained frozen the deception of the saloon keeper was easily to be understood.

"It's sure no wonder Tom was that down in th' mouth before he 'went out,'" declared Joe Collins. "He was considerin', Alec, th' disappointment that was comin' to ye." Stewart grinned.

"It's a bonnie actor is Tom Parsons; but maybe if we have another deal together it'll be me that has the laugh."

THE END



Save for a number of wicks, some thick stains, and a few spoonfuls of Swiss milk, the box was empty. "Boys," said Stewart. "The joke's on me!"



*A Rousing Story of Daring Adventure  
Amongst the Matabele of Southern Rhodesia*

**THE FIRST CHAPTER**

**The Rising of the Mafuta**

"I TELL you I don't like it, my lad. Even our own fellows seem restless. There may be something in the yarns about Mafuta."

Old Samuel Crum broke off, and twisted in his saddle towards his nephew, Dennis Hodson, who was riding alongside.

Dusk was falling, the swift, wonderful dusk of Southern Rhodesia. On all sides the stunted mimosa trees threw long shadows on the red sand.

Behind the two horsemen half a dozen nearly naked Matabele drove a small herd of cattle, the pattering hoofs stirring up clouds of dust.

"What have you heard, uncle?" laughed Dennis, closing his heels on the sides of his big-striding, bay horse. "I can't follow all you say when you jabber away to the natives. I know Mafuta's the boss chief of this country, but I guess he's just an ordinary——"

"He ain't ordinary!" cut in old Crum,

tugging fiercely at his grizzled moustache. "See here! You know the Matabele are an offshoot of the Zulus? Yes? Well, Mafuta declares he's a direct descendant of the Zulu King, Cetewayo. And he's stirring up trouble. I learnt that at the kraal we passed this morning. He swears he's going to wipe out the whites. The storm may burst at any moment!"

Dennis whistled.

"What about it, uncle?" he asked, after a pause. "We're miles from any white settlement. D'you reckon we've got time to buy any more cattle?"

"No. T'aint worth the risk," replied the elder man. "I intended to buy some more beasts from Kali—Kali's a brother of Mafuta, and we're not far from his kraal now. But we won't stop. We'll slip past in the dark and head straight back for Buluwayo. If we're attacked, we'll lose all we've got."

Swinging round, old Crum called out to the native followers to make more speed.

Hoarse, guttural shouts, somewhat defiant,

made answer. But the black men urged the beasts to a trot. They weren't ripe for rebellion—yet.

Samuel Crum was an old-timer. He knew natives thoroughly. But his nephew Dennis had only been a few months in Rhodesia. On leaving school, the lad had come out to join his uncle, who owned a big ranch not far from Bulawayo.

When old man Crum wanted fresh stock, he took some farm hands and rode miles into the bush, buying cattle from isolated native kraals. Having got all he wanted, he drove them home. It is the best way of getting beasts cheaply.

Dennis, since he had come out, always went with his uncle. They usually did a roaring trade. But this time they found the headmen of kraals surly, demanding huge prices. Also old Crum had picked up news of an intended rising—hence his anxiety.

"How far off d'you reckon Kali's kraal, uncle?" Dennis queried suddenly. "I've never been to it."

"About a mile from here, neevy. I'd like to give it a wider berth. But we must stick to the trail. If we go round through the bush some of our stuff'll stray. I guess we won't camp till near midnight."

"Buck up, you!" the old man cried to his shouting herders. "And make less noise! D'you hear me?"

At a shambling trot the cattle were driven up a rough slope. The track was stony, and uncle and nephew rode amongst the beasts, urging them onwards.

They gained the summit of the rise, whence they could now look over a sea of boundless scrub. Then something happened.

Like shadows a number of black warriors slid from the bush just ahead. They formed up in a line, barring the way. They were grimly silent; and the last rays of the dying sun glinted red on spear blades.

"The deuce!" growled old Crum into his beard. "This looks like trouble."

Then he spurred forward, Dennis at his side. The cattle, seeing the sinister line ahead, bunched together and halted.

"Who are you?" roared Samuel Crum,

in Matabele. "Get out! By whose orders do you bar the way?"

"We come from Kali, white man," cried a stalwart savage who seemed to be the leader. "He heard that the baas Crum, with his nephew, was in this region, buying cattle. Chief Kali, brother of the mighty Mafuta, is offended that the baas has not visited his kraal."

"Tell your chief," shouted the old rancher promptly, "that I have sufficient cattle. I will visit him next time—"

"Not next time, white man," retorted the leader of the warriors threateningly. "Now!"

"Ah!" murmured the others in sullen chorus. "Not next time—now!"

Dennis, his blue eyes blazing, dropped his hand to his pistol holster. His uncle checked him with a gesture; then again faced the Matabele.

"What if I refuse?" he bellowed.

"Then our orders are to slay you both and seize your cattle."

Then followed a fateful pause. A rash movement might lead to disaster.

"We'd best go with these ruffians, Dennis," the elder man growled at length. "If we try to break through we'll lose the cattle. And I guess we can bluff Kali—buy a few head and then move on. He wouldn't dare kill us in cold blood—not before Mafuta gives the signal for the rising."

"Right you are, uncle," answered Dennis. "You ought to know how to handle the bouncer."

"Well, white man?" burst out a rough voice impatiently. "Comest thou?"

"Yes. Lead on!"

Instantly a dozen of the Matabele ran forward to dash round the flanks of the cattle and start the herd moving.

With warriors in front of them, and their cattle pressed close on their rear, old Crum and Dennis rode in grim silence. Ten minutes later they swung out of the main track, to strike into one heading due north.

The night shut down. A million stars glittered in the purple sky. From the surrounding bush came the sounds of beasts of prey. The cattle, urged on behind their owners, bellowed uneasily.



"And what if I refuse to come with you?" demanded Old Crum. "Then our orders are to slay you both and seize your cattle," answered the stalwart leader of the band. (See Chapter 1.)

Of a sudden, straining his eyes, Dennis could see the black, rounded roofs of huts thrusting up above the thorn trees. To the lad's ears came the murmur of many voices.

"Kali's kraal, nevvv," announced old Crum. "I ain't going to stand any nonsense from him. The high hand's the only thing that goes down with a savage."

Then they passed through a gap in a ragged fence and found themselves in the centre of the large native village. The ruddy lights of torches, held high by bronze warriors grouped amongst the huts, illuminated the savage scene. The cattle had been halted outside the palisade.

Old Crum made straight at a knot of men standing by the door of the largest hut. He reined in his horse, then addressed himself to a muscular native who towered above his fellows.

"Hail Kali, brother of Mafuta!" he cried. "What means this outrage?"

"Outrage, white man!" replied Kali, speaking in his own dialect. "I understand not. I had news that baas Crum and his

nephew sought cattle in my territory. I thought they must have forgotten me. Therefore I sent an invitation——"

"You sent soldiers with orders to slay us and seize our cattle if we refused to come!" thundered the old rancher, his beard bristling.

"Nay!" lied the big-built chief, with a flash of white teeth. "My warriors shall be punished for exceeding instructions. I gave no such orders. I desire to sell cattle, not steal them. I have many beasts, but little money."

"We do not wish to buy!" old Crum snapped. "Already we have enough. Having paid our respects to the chief, I and my nephew will now depart."

Kali folded his thick arms on his broad, naked chest. He looked up from under heavy lids.

"Baas Crum has not yet seen my cattle," he said harshly. "They are fine beasts—none finer. Enter my hut and we will discuss their price."

Dennis shot a glance at his uncle.

"It would be like shoving our heads in a

non's mouth, wouldn't it?" the lad whispered. "Tell the bouncer to—"

"We'll have to chance it," growled old Crum. "We couldn't get off without a fight. But I don't think this scoundrel would dare start an attack without orders from Mafuta. Best have a buck and try to bluff—"

"Art afraid, baas?" interrupted Kali.

"Afraid of what?" bellowed the old man. "Of entering the chief's hut? Ho, ho! That is a good jest!"

He swung himself out of his saddle. Dennis followed suit. Both felt that their pistols were loose in their holsters. Then, leaving their horses with the reins trailing, they stamped after the chief into the big hut. By far the best course was to show a bold front.

Within, on the earthen floor, the red embers of a dying fire gave a sullen glow. The air was heavy with wood smoke.

Kali seated himself cross-legged on a skin mat. He motioned his unwilling visitors to two others. A couple of armed warriors slid into the hut and ranged themselves up behind their chief.

"We have had many deals, baas," began Kali, his head on one side. "How came you not to visit me this time? I feel affronted. Are my cattle not as good as other men's?"

"Does a wise man buy more cattle than he needs, chief?" replied old Crum, answering one question with another—native fashion.

"That depends," sparred Kali. "Are not two good oxen to be preferred to four poor ones?"

Thus it went on, old Crum striving to bring the interview to an end, declaring himself willing to buy a few beasts, but anxious to be home before rain swelled the rivers. Kali seemed to be merely wasting time.

All the while, young Dennis kept his ears strained. He was listening to the sounds outside. The kraal was seething with activity. There was a hum of voices.

All at once, while his uncle and the chief tossed questions back and forth, Dennis thought he caught a new note. A moment later he was certain of it. A few words reached him. Now he knew that their fate was sealed unless he acted swiftly.

His face expressionless, the lad turned to his uncle.

"Uncle," he breathed in English, "a runner has just come in. I heard what he said. Mafuta has risen!"

Not even by the twitch of an eyelid did old Crum betray his dismay. He merely nodded, then doubled his great fists.

A second later the hut was filled with conflict.

Leaping to his feet, the old man crashed his bunched knuckles to the chief's jaw. Kali's bullet head snicked back—the brother of Mafuta sprawled in a huddled heap.

Across the senseless body sprang Dennis.

The two Matabele who had entered with their chief were, for the instant, too amazed to move. Just as the nearest recovered and whipped up his assegai, Dennis let drive at him.

With a bull-like roar the fellow doubled up.

"That'll settle you!" cried Dennis, as he lunged out his revolver and brought the butt thudding down on the woolly head. With a groan the man sank to his knees.

But it was touch and go. Even as Dennis jumped, he saw his uncle duck to dodge a blow with a club from the other soldier. Then old Crum's fist slugged into the thick neck.

Down went the second warrior.

"To the horses, lad!" cried the old man.

"It's our one chance!"

Gripping his nephew by the arm, he thrust him from the hut.

The pair charged out into a kraal now humming like a hornets' nest. Brandished torches gave a red glare. The air was rent with whoops and whistles.

Three yelling men came running forward. They were bringing to their chief the news of Mafuta's bidding to rise and slay the whites. But at the sight of two levelled revolvers they fell back.

"Quick, Dennis!" roared old Crum. "Get mounted! The horses will bolt in—"

Then uncle and nephew made a blind dash for their mounts, to hurl themselves into the saddle and spur full tilt for the kraal exit. Savages, howling, sprang to stop them.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

From two revolvers leapt darts of flame, and thunderous reports woke the echoes. The bullets were purposely aimed high. But the fusillade startled the savages. They scattered.

Out into the dark night swept old Crum and his nephew. From behind came a furious clamour, a din like that of a raging volcano.

The Matabele were in hot pursuit.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Doomed Laager

WITH the wind whistling in their ears, the two fugitives plunged into the maze of bush. Above

the pounding tattoo of their horses' hoofs, they could hear the strident whistles and yells of the pursuers.

"We've lost the cattle, nevy!" shouted old Crum. "Our men joined the rebels. But we've saved our skins. Get On! Don't spare your horse!"

Dennis wasn't sparing his horse—a matchless thoroughbred called Wildfire. The lad was merely holding him in, to make certain of not leaving his uncle behind.

But old Crum, too, was well mounted. And stride for stride, hoof-beat for hoofbeat, the two horses raced through the scrub. The riders flattened under branches, sat back when their mounts leapt jagged boulders

At last the sounds of pursuit grew faint, then died away. The Matabele had been out-distanced. Dennis drew rein.

"Where are we making for, uncle?" the lad panted. "The farm—or Buluwayo?"

"Neither," answered the old man as he pulled up, his mount's flanks heaving. "There's a white settlement at Kentjana—about ten miles due south. They may not have heard of the rising. We'll hike straight

there and warn the folk. The whole country'll be alive with savages before dawn."

Away in the dark night-sky glittered the Southern Cross. It hung low above the horizon. Taking his direction by these stars, old Crum headed south.

For a full hour nephew and uncle pounded through the scrub. They rattled over stony ridges, thudded through the deep sand of dry river beds. Jackals fled at their approach. Night birds shot up, screaming.

Gradually the bush thinned. Thorn trees gave place to plantations of tall mealies.



Old Crum crashed his bunched knuckles to the chief's jaw; an instant later Dennis dashed at the two Matabele behind. (See Chapter 1.)

Threading through the mealies, the fugitives suddenly sighted the black outlines of dim buildings.

"Hello! Hello, there!" called out old Crum.

There was no reply. The wind soughed drearily through the mealie stalks. Somewhere out on the veldt a hyena howled his mournful dirge.

"They must be sound asleep, uncle," suggested Dennis. "Let's shout together!"

"Whoop! Hi-yah!"

As one, the two voices tore the silence. But





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RUNNING THE GAUNTLET!

no answering shout came back. Not even a dog barked. A chill ran down Dennis's spine. Could it be that there were none to answer?

Full of forebodings, the old rancher and his nephew rode up to the nearest house. They flung themselves from their saddles and dashed into the verandah.

"What's this?" gasped Dennis, stooping swiftly and snatching something up. "A broken spear! Uncle, there's been a fight!"

Old Crum sucked in his breath, nodded swiftly, then burst open a door. His nephew at his heels, he hurled himself into a little room.

It was in wild disorder. Boxes had been overturned. Cupboard doors swung idly on creaking hinges. On the floor lay several cartridges, the brass cases twinkling in the pale moonlight that filtered through a broken window.

Then followed a rapid search of other rooms. All told the same tale.

"It's plain what happened!" cried old Crum, swinging round on his nephew. "Some other kraal must have got Mafuta's signal before the news reached Kali's. The ruffians promptly attacked this place—"

"But they must have been beaten off," broke in Dennis. "Or surely they'd have burnt the house?"

"Right, lad!" answered the elder man. "I guess the white folk gave the savages more than they bargained for. But they obviously feared another attack. So they packed up all they could, and cleared out. Come on. We'll search the other houses."

It was the work of an instant for the two fugitives to dart from the deserted dwelling, leap into their saddles, and spur for the next homestead.

But again their shouts met with no response. Again the stamp of their feet echoed hollowly on bare boards. The second house told the same tale of headlong flight as did the first.

"Well, the folk got away!" panted Dennis. "It seems they had a jolly tough fight, but obviously no one was killed."

"Except a brace of savages!" said the lad's uncle grimly. "And I reckon more savages'll soon cast up to plunder. We'd best

hike off before that happens. The settlers must ha' made tracks for Buluwayo. Maybe we'll catch 'em up."

Mounted once more, Dennis and his uncle pounded through the moonlit night. But now they rode cautiously, drawn pistols in their right hands.

Plainly, the news of Mafuta's rising had spread with astounding rapidity. The whole country must be swarming with armed savages, flocking to join their ruthless chief. Warriors might be lurking behind every dark clump of bush.

Only stopping twice to breathe their horses, the fugitives rode hour after hour. They listened anxiously for sounds of pattering feet, for distant war chants.

They heard nothing. But the strain began to tell on the elder man. More than once he swayed in his saddle. Dennis had a double anxiety.

At last the eastern sky paled. It grew pink, then red. A few moments later the flaming sun heaved above the rugged horizon. Like countless diamonds the dewdrops sparkled on grass and thorn bush.

"Look, uncle!" cried Dennis, pointing. "Smoke! And I can hear oxen and—yes, English voices."

Old Crum followed his nephew's pointing finger. He could see a spiral of blue smoke, swirling above the bush before them. To the ears of both came the lowing of oxen, also shouts in English.

"It's a camp!" yelled the old man. "It must be the settlers driven from Kentjana! Why the deuce have they stopped here? Mafuta's impis will wipe them out!"

Both galloped on through the intervening strip of bush, to burst out in sight of the camp.

Evidently the settlers had gone into laager. They had drawn their wagons up in a big circle, end on and locked together. From within the circle of hooded vehicles came sounds of bustle and activity. The settlers were preparing for defence.

As old Crum and Dennis whirled from the bush, a burly, black-bearded horseman sighted them. With a shout he spurred forward, to throw his mount back on its haunches as he came alongside.



Dennis and his companion rode furiously out of the kraal, with a horde of fiercely howling savages racing in pursuit. (See Chapter 1.)

"Why, Crum," he shouted, "I'm glad to see you! And this lad's your neevy? Good! Two more to help defend the camp!"

"But what are you at, Johnson?" roared old Crum, gripping the other man's horny hand. "Why have you stopped? You'll —"

"We had to," exclaimed Johnson. "Our oxen are dead-beat after the all-night trek. They can't haul the wagons another yard. And we've women and children with us, so we can't ride on. But we've news that a big police force—under Major Mitchell—is on its way from Bulawayo. It should be here by dusk."

"I hope it will!" cried old Crum. "The whole country's swarming."

Then he swiftly related how he and his nephew had been robbed of the cattle, barely escaping with their lives from Kali's kraal.

"Afterwards," the old man ended, "we made for your homesteads at Kentjana, meaning to warn you folk. But we found you'd been attacked and cleared out."

"Yes," growled Johnson, "about forty Matabele tried to rush us at dusk, but we were ready and gave 'em beans. However, it was too risky to stop, so we trekked directly

after the scrap. But come into camp; both of you look all in."

Old Crum was certainly dead-beat. The strain and the long ride had been too much for a man of his age. Dennis was aching in every limb. But a hearty breakfast in the settlers' camp, and a short sleep, set the hardy lad on his legs again.

The scorching day was spent in throwing up earthworks outside the ring of wagons. Scouts rode into the bush, but returned to report that no savages were close.

The settlers were in good spirits. Some time in the afternoon the police were bound to arrive.

But as the sun sank in the west, and still the police did not come, anxiety spread through the camp. Yet now, though the oxen had recovered, the settlers daren't move. To trek through savage country at night with laden wagons would be courting disaster.

Just as dusk was falling came news of calamity.

A sentry outside barked a challenge.

"Friend!" shouted a dust-grimed native, who had just staggered from the surrounding bush. "Where be baas Johnson? Quick!"

Reeling with exhaustion, the fellow was helped in to the camp. Johnson, instantly summoned, recognised him. It was a Mashona

native the camp boss had sent out to spy in the morning.

"Baas," gasped the Mashona, his lungs labouring, "the police have been attacked! They beat off the attack and are now coming on! But they are still far off! And between them and this camp lies Mafuta with an impi! Mafuta is well hidden! The police, knowing nothing, will——"

The Mashona's voice trailed off; he staggered. He would have fallen had not young Dennis, standing alongside, seized the fellow's arm.

"Why didn't you warn the police?" thundered Johnson.

"Baas, I tried to; but the Matabele fill the land. Twice I was sighted and hunted. And how could I break through the impi of Mafuta? Wow, the great chief himself is there."

As he finished the Mashona collapsed utterly. Then the settlers gaped blankly at each other. Old Crum swore into his greying beard. Dennis clenched his fists and his chest heaved.

For there seemed little hope. Doubtless, during the night, Kali's men would fall on the camp. Nor would the relief force arrive in time.

Mafuta himself lay in wait with a powerful regiment, ready and eager to eat up Major Mitchell's police.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Thoroughbreds!

DENNIS broke the strained silence.

"See here, Mr. Johnson," he cried, "there's only one thing for it. Someone must ride round Mafuta's impi. The police must be warned of the trap. I'll go."

The burly Johnson swung round, bringing one great hand slamming down on Dennis's shoulder.

"Good lad!" he shouted. "There's the right stuff in you, but the thing's impossible. Between us and the police the bush will be alive with Matabele. No horse could get through."

"You don't know Wildfire," protested Dennis. "He's a thoroughbred and as fast

as the wind. Ain't that right, uncle?" the lad ended.

"Sure thing," nodded old Crum. "Wildfire can show his heels to any horse in Rhodesia. But to get through infested bush is ——"

There broke in a clamour of voices. Each settler volunteered to go. But Dennis stuck to his guns. He pointed out that all the men from Kentjana had wives and children dependent on them. He, Dennis, had no one.

"I will go!" the youngster insisted, and he spun round on his heel and raced towards his horse.

"Stop him!" bawled a dozen men. "It's rank madness for a boy to try!"

But Dennis had clapped on his saddle, tightened the girths, and vaulted on to Wildfire's back. He thundered across the camp, his bay thoroughbred arching its shining back.

"What's the best way?" he shouted, pulling up a yard from the camp boss.

"Follow the trail due east," cried Johnson, seeing that there was no holding Dennis. "The police are bound to come by it. If you fall in with stray Matabele, ride for your life. They'll give no quarter. When you sight Mafuta's impi bear round to southward; you'll find better going south than north."

"Right!" yelled Dennis. "So-long, you fellows! See you again to-morrow."

Waving his hand to his uncle, the youngster clapped in his spurs. Then, amidst a storm of cheers, he swept out of the laager and headed for the dark bush.

The last rays of the sun melted from the sky as Dennis vanished down the trail in a wild scurry of dust.

Wildfire's hoofs drummed on the dry earth as the great horse settled down to his stride, a drifting, gliding stretch.

The bush slipped past like an endless screen. Boulders loomed up, came abreast, and were dropped behind. On raced Wildfire, flinging the miles from beneath his pounding hoofs.

"You wonder horse!" gasped Dennis, slapping his mount's outstretched neck. "But you'll need all your speed. You carry many lives on your back this night."

Presently arose a thin, crescent moon. It

cast its pale beams over the bush. Twisted thorn trees cast evil shadows athwart the track. Dennis stared down at his own black shadow that ever bobbed beside him.

Time passed. Jackals moaned somewhere up the slopes of stony kopjes. They yapped defiance at the solitary horseman thudding past.

Dennis raced on, up the slopes of ridges, down the further sides, in and out of sandy kloofs. On the lad depended not only the lives of the settlers in camp, but also the safety of the police force advancing to its doom.

Nearing midnight, Dennis drew rein in a hollow. He swung himself to the ground. Tough as Wildfire was, the horse was beginning to feel the strain. His broad chest was wide-flecked with foam, and his red coat was grimed with dust and sweat.

"Just a short breather, old horse," whispered Dennis. "Then on again. We've got to run till we drop."

While Wildfire fought for his wind, Dennis strained his ears. The surrounding bush was dark and silent. Overhead the moon swam in a black, velvety sky.

Of a sudden, Dennis' quick ears caught something. Came the rattle of the hafts of assegais on hide shields, the shuffling patter of many naked feet.

"Heavens!" breathed Dennis. "Here's more Matabele coming up behind. I'm between Mafuta and his reinforcements."

He sprang into his saddle and struck home his spurs. Wildfire leapt forward, hoofs volleying on rocky ground. There was a roar behind. The lad had been seen, and the Matabele came surging forward.

For a hundred yards Dennis' heart was in his mouth. A couple of light assegais whizzed past his head. But Wildfire, terrified by the increasing uproar, was going all out. The next slight of spears fell short.

Dennis glanced over his shoulder, to see dark, rushing forms that were dropping behind at every stride. The lad shook his fist and yelled defiance. But now he knew he was shut in. Mafuta lay in front, the reinforcements behind.

If the first part of the ride had been hard, the second was harder.

Time and again the lad had to slow down over rough going. Twice he almost collided with savage bands. He had to quit the trail and take to the bush. Precious

hours were lost. Dawn found Wildfire, his eyes bulging and his flanks heaving, scrambling up a scrub-clad ridge. Dennis looked haggard, and his clothes had been ripped by huge thorns.

"The police can't be far off," gasped the lad. "Another spurt, Wildfire. We'll beat the savages yet."

Then they crested the rise, and Dennis could see down over a wide valley. He drew rein, shading his eyes with his hand against



A dust-grimed native staggered out of the gathering gloom of the night; he was reeling from exhaustion and he brought dire news. (See Chapter 2.)

the direct rays of the rising sun. In the background reared up a line of blue kopjes. The floor of the valley seemed covered with stunted scrub and dried yellow grass. As his gaze swept the scrub, Dennis suddenly drew in his breath.

What were those tufts of black feathers showing here and there in the tall grass? Dennis leaned forward in his saddle, his eyes round with dismay.

Yes, there were thousands—stretching from north to south in a vast, bow formation. They were the ostrich plumes on the tops of six-foot shields.

Dennis was looking down on Mafuta's hidden impi. It was most cunningly concealed. Even from the summit of the ridge the lad could scarcely pick out the warriors. No one approaching from the front could spot the trap.

"Can I get round?" breathed the lad. "Will there be time? Mafuta must know the police are close, or he wouldn't have laid his ambush."

Just then a far-off glint caught Dennis's eye. It was repeated again and again. The rays of the sun were flashing on rifle barrels.

"The police!" exclaimed Dennis, as several khaki dots were revealed. "And only a mile away. Here they come. There's no time to get round the impi. I must get through. Wildfire—one last dash!"

Dennis reached the lower slopes. Now he could see the black bent backs of crouching Matabele, could catch the sinister shimmer of broad-bladed assegais in the grass.

He gathered Wildfire for a rush, then clapped home his spurs. Forward shot Wildfire like a red thunderbolt.

There was a wild rattling amongst loose stones. A sudden pounding of hoofs. The nearest Matabele whipped round, consternation on their ferocious faces.

Dennis, tight-lipped, his blue eyes ablaze, crashed into the rear of the line.

It seemed to the lad that black, yelling forms sprang up all about him. He caught a swift glimpse of up-flung spears, cavernous mouths, and rolling eyeballs. He was deafened by bloodthirsty roars of rage.

A spear shaved his cheek. Another tore through his coat beneath his armpit.

The steep slopes seemed to give Wildfire wings. For a split second Dennis was in the storm centre. Then he was through and away, flattened on his horse's neck, assegais whistling round his head.

But the sudden uproar had warned the police. They could see the horseman flying towards them. They saw leaping forms bounding in pursuit.

In five seconds the khaki force had extended to a line, to drop prone, rifles to shoulders. Dennis whirled through the line, making for the commander and shouting his warning at the top of his voice.

"Sutu! Usutu!"

It was the old Zulu war-cry. The Matabele, kin to the Zulus, used the same dread shout, and adopted the same formation. They rose in one huge semi-circle, the horns of the impi curving inwards like a bending bow.

Mafuta had given the signal to charge. He knew that the white lad's dash had ruined his ambush.

As the Matabele poured down in a black wave, shields tossing, spears glinting, rang out a crash of musketry.

Down crashed the first wave of the Matabele, head over heels amongst the rocks. The second poured over them—to melt away before the withering fire.

The savages halted, wavered, then broke and fled.

"They run! After 'em!"

At the shouted command, the police rose with a ringing cheer and charged in pursuit. It was a rout. Mafuta's power was broken. And the great chief himself was found amongst the slain.

After the fighting the commander of the police force sought out Dennis.

"You saved us, my lad!" he cried. "If you hadn't ridden slick through that impi we'd have been trapped and overwhelmed. I shall report your action to the Government."

Major Mitchell kept his promise. The losses of old Crum and his nephew were all made good—in recognition of Dennis' gallantry.

THE END

# The Dentist's Chair!

By TOM BROWN.

MY mind goes back to ancient days—  
The Spanish Inquisition ;  
Upon the rack the victim pays,  
The price of his sedition.  
His pangs, however, can't compare  
With tortures of the dentist's chair !

To Mr. Wrench, of Courtfield Town,  
A monster fierce and ruthless,  
I went ; and, sure as my name's Brown,  
He left me nearly toothless !  
I roared and raved, and tore my hair,  
When struggling in the dentist's chair !

" Will you have gas ? " the monster said.  
" It makes the ordeal nicer."  
I resolutely shook my head :  
" Such things I never try, sir ! "  
Gas would have deepened my despair  
When quaking in the dentist's chair !

The grinning demon then unpacked  
A cruel pair of tweezers.  
I paled and trembled, for I lacked  
The courage that was Cæsar's.  
'Twas like a nightmare sitting there  
And shivering in the dentist's chair !

Deep down, the demon dentist dug,  
With brutal force he acted,  
Then gave a most terrific tug—  
I yelled like one distracted !  
" It's out ! " he cried. I gave a glare,  
Collapsing in the dentist's chair !

When I arrive at man's estate  
I'll never be apprenticed  
To a vocation that I hate—  
That of a surgeon dentist.  
Such sights and scenes I could not bear—  
A plague upon the dentist's chair !



# The funny side of Swimming



*It is not necessary to be an  
all-round expert before you  
can do swimming tricks*

**T**HIS is an aspect of swimming which can confidently be recommended to all. It is linked with Ornamental and Trick swimming and is really an immense aid to general efficiency—apart from the fun and amusement to be got from it.

In itself, the learning of swimming tricks is good, because it greatly increases self-confidence. It is by no means necessary that you should become an all-round expert swimmer before trying to teach yourself some of the fancy tricks in the water. If you know how to float, you can learn one simple trick in a very short time. It is called:

## THE ROLLING LOG

**T**o those who can't swim at all, this trick is something of a mystery, so little is the exertion needed by the performer to roll himself over and over while in the water.

First of all get into the correct floating position, head well back, arms fully extended—beyond the head. And here let me say a word about breathing while floating. *Don't* breathe deeply, and take a long time over breathing out. The

lungs should have some air in them all the time. It makes floating easier. Take in the air by short breaths, and exhale similarly. Don't try to breathe in until you have settled into a comfortable position, as the face usually sinks a little at first.

Having got into position, lock the thumbs together. Keeping the arms and legs quite still, but exerting the muscles of the side, bear down on, say, the right while lifting the left. You'll turn over all right; then, before sinking much, reverse your exertion, bearing down on the left side and trying to raise the right; you will then complete a circle in the water, coming face upwards again.

Of course, you are not going to do this perfectly the first time you try. It is best at the commencement to make your trial in fairly shallow water—where you can find a footing if required. Do the turning slowly—

as slowly as you can. Don't get flurried. Don't unloose your hands or bend your legs, or double up your body. The turn is much more easily made than you'd suppose, and it won't take many trials before you get the hang of it and discover



You may not pull a trick off perfectly first time—but keep on trying.

that it is quite possible to continue turning, at quite a fast rate, just like a log being rolled over and over.

### "DOG" PADDLING

**H**AVE you ever noticed how a dog swims?

He doesn't require any teaching, either. You can learn to swim in the same fashion, though it may take you a while to learn the knack of it.

Start by getting into position for the breast stroke. Here the arms don't work in unison with the legs but separately and alternately. Left arm and right leg work together right arm with left leg. Keeping the palm down, the arm goes forward to three-quarter reach, but instead of being taken out to the side as in the breast stroke, it comes down through the water and in to the body describing a circle. As it completes its stroke, the other arm starts. The movement of the legs is almost identical with that of bicycling—and the splashing is great!

### SOMERSAULTING

**L**IKE many another trick, there's nothing particularly difficult, even clever, about this; what you need chiefly is confidence. First of all, though, you do need to know how to tread water—a most useful accomplishment. It is a matter of balance and confidence, and the arms need not be used at all. The head must be kept well back, as that prevents the lips sinking below the surface. The action of the legs is very similar to that of "marking time" somewhat quickly. If you like, keep the arms fully extended sideways and horizontal, palms down; this is actually the position of the arms when about to try the forward somersault. Come into the upright position, bend the head sharply forward and, as the arms make a forcible downward stroke, forcing the body to go forward, curve the back, keeping it curved until, perhaps to your surprise, you find yourself rising and coming into the original starting position.

You may try this a dozen times and without success; then, quite suddenly and, apparently, without your doing anything at all

different, you discover that you have succeeded perfectly. Thereafter, it is all plain sailing. Once having the knack, you will never lose it. And you will find yourself able to turn several somersaults in quick succession.

Turning backwards heels over head is not more difficult. You just reverse the process. Starting from same position as above, throw back the head—don't open your mouth—curve the back, and bend your knees well under you. Put a spring into the movement, and, your hands making a quick, strong stroke at the same time, you'll find yourself spinning over without any trouble.

### SPINNING THE TOP

**T**HIS is another funny trick which requires a previous knowledge of treading water. Get into comfortable



Have you ever noticed how a dog swims? You can learn in the same fashion.

position as described, then bend knees and bring them up close to your chest. Without hesitation, start the arms working, alternately. Put plenty of force into the strokes, which are made, of course, parallel with surface of water, the hands being turned so as to get the maximum of resistance against the water. The movement of arm is backward, the following stroke being forward, and so alternately. The arms never leave the water, but are brought back after each stroke, hand turned so that palm lies downward, and so offering no resistance against the water.

# BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL



## HOW THE HEAD KEPT GOAL!

A "knock-out" incident from the powerful, pulsating story of a school footer match, by Dicky Nugent—insi Ja.

# Editorial



By

**WILLIAM GEORGE  
BUNTER**

**MY DEAR READERS,**

Once again it is my pleasure and privilege to place before you an intellectual feast of fun and fiction.

This is rather high-flown language to use at the commencement of my Editorial. But, between ourselves, I "lifted" that sentence out of a weekly paper, because it struck me as being very appropriate and applicable.

It is twelve months since you have had the pleasure of reading **BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL**. Twelve long months you have waited and worried, and fumed and fretted, for another issue to appear. But all things come to those who wait; and here we are again, as large as life and twice as patchy, as Bob Cherry would say.

While you have been waiting, we have been working. Quite a long time ago, I called a conference of my Editorial Staff, which consists of Fatty Wynn, Baggy Trimble, Tubby Muffin, and my miper Sammy. I took the chair, but it collapsed, so I had to take another one. Then I addressed my stalwart sub-editors as follows:

"Gentlemen! I have called you here to discuss the publication of the 1926 issue of **BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL**. But before we discuss business, let us discuss a jolly good feed!"

This suggestion was cheered to the echo, so we started our conference with a jolly good tuck-in. When we had dined and vined—it was only ginger-wine we had—I we put our heads together and planned a really tip-top edition of my **ANNUAL**. The frocks of our labors are now in your hands, and it is for you to judge whether we have scored a bootseye, like we did last year.

All my sub-editors have contributed to this issue, and I have again been fortunate enough to secure, at gratis expense, a story from the inspired pen of that wonderful boy orther, **Dick Nugent**. I can now fold my arms, and lean back in my editorial chair with a sigh of contempt, conscious that, despite the fickleness of the Clark of the Whether, I shall have brought a ray of sunshine into many a home.

Your plump pal,

**BILLY BUNTER.**



By **Sammy Bunter**

"**FAG!**" That word is howled and bellowed by hooligan prefects at Greyfriars, from the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof. As the famous song says, "All day long I hear you calling."

I don't know who first interjuiced fagging into our public schools; but the rotter ought to have been burned at the stake. Why should the sons of gentlemen—refined little fellows like me!—have to play the part of domestic servants, butlers, waiters, valets, and cooks rolled into one? Why should we have to wait hand and foot on the big fellows in the Sixth? It isn't fair!

I have often heard a party of my fellow fags singing "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves!" Yet they are chained and bound to slavery. They sing in one breath that they will never be slaves, and in the next breath they shout, "Coming, Loder!" or "All right, Wingate!" The miserable little loads! Why don't they rise up in rebellion, and refuse to fag for their superiors?

If they want a leader, I'm their man! Being a descendant of such mighty leaders as Julius Seizer and Alfred the Grate, I am better qualified to run a rebellion than any fellow at Greyfriars.

I appeal to all my fellow-fags to burst the bonds of slavery, and to enlist under my banner! Down with the tyrants under whose heels we have squirmed so long! Down with fagging! Down with croolty and hoolyning!

"United we stand, divided we fall!" Let us have no trayers or blacklegs. Let us all stand together, shoulder to shoulder, for the good of the cause! Let us march boldly into battle, and show those big, hulking broods in the Sixth that we mean business!

This is a call to arms, and I shall egg-spect all members of the fag tribe to rally round, and support me in my crusade against fagging. Let them follow boldly in my footsteps; and then, by the time next year's **HOLIDAY ANNUAL** is published, fagging will be a thing of the past. And that hateful shout of "FAG!" will no longer boom down the corridors of Greyfriars. Follow your leader, boys! The time is ripe for the rebellion, and I am ready for the fray!



By

**TUBBY MUFFIN  
(of Rookwood)**

**W**HENEVER a fellow is taken queer with severe eternal panes, the doctor generally says to him:

"My boy, you have been eating too much!" Then, turning to the matron, he says: "Put this boy on a diet of milk and gruel for a week!"

Does it never occur to the doctor that the severe eternal panes may be due to under-feeding?

Take that terrible tetcher called Indigestion, a complaint which first started in India some centuries ago. You can get Indigestion through eating too little, as well as through eating too much.

It is a grate mistake, therefore, for the doctor to assume that because a fellow is rolling about in aggrery, he has eaten more than is good for him. It is often just the reverse. This is what the doctor ought to say:

"Bless my sole, the boy is starving! He must be put on a diet of ten solid meals a day for a week!"

It is ridiculous to say that we eat too much. The human body is like an engine that wants constant feeding. If you tried to run a steam train without feeding it with fuel, it wouldn't go. On the same principle, if you want a fellow to be fit and healthy, and to play his proper part in life, you must feed him with fuel in the form of rabbit pies, cakes, tarts, and pastries.

I have watched some fellows at the breakfast-table at Rookwood, and their puny appetites have amazed me. They peek at their food, and are content with a rasher of bacon and a couple of fried eggs. They call that a satisfying meal, and then they wonder why they come over queer about mid-day and fall down in a faint owing to sheer fizzle weakness!

Brir—!

Why are there so many unhappy marriages nowadays? Why are the Remorse Courts filled to overflowing? Simply because housewives will not observe that eggshell maxin, "Feed the Brood!" They starve their husbands, and therefore starve their affection.

Do we eat too much? Preposterous! Our present diet ought to be dubbed and trebled!



# When The Head Kept Goal!

A Thrilling Story of a School Football Match.

Told by DICKEY NUGENT.

**B**URLEIGH of the Sixth sat in his study at St. Sam's darnin' his footer stockings and knittin' his brows.

Burleigh was kaptin of the First Eleven, and he wore, in addition to his togs, a worried look.

It was just like old Stopham, the St. Sam's goalie, to go and contract hooping-kolf on the eve of the grate match against the Purple Croosaders. Why couldn't he have postponed his flinex until after the match?

There was nobody else in the Sixth who could take the place of Stopham. Sammy Stopham was a masterpiece. He was a perfect marvel. No matter how many shots reigned in upon him when he held the fort, he could always be relied upon to stopham. And it was a treat to see Stopham stopham, too! Even the Head would sometimes stopham minnute or two on the ground and gaze in admiration at the St. Sam's goalie.

And Stopham was now in the sick bay, and he was likely to stopham month there! Hence the worried look of Burleigh of the Sixth.

Suddenly there was a tap on the door, and the Head swept in with rustling gown.

"Hello, Burleigh!" he said. "I just dropped into have a jaw with you about to-morrow's match."

"Won't you take a chair, sir?" said Burleigh.

"No, thanks! I once had a pal who was sent to prizon for taking a chair. It's a nasty, theevin' habit."

"What I mean is, won't you sit down, sir?"

"No, Burleigh; I can't stand sittin' down. I'm a man of action. Now, with regard to this match—"

"Yes, sir?"

"Cut out the 'sir,' my dear old head," said the Head with a smile.

"I'm off duty now. I haven't come here in my official capacity. Now, I presume you want a goalkeeper to take the place of Stopham? How will I do?"

Burleigh stared.

"I've no wish to be disrespectful, sir," he said. "But you—why, you couldn't keep goal for toffy! You're too fat, for one thing; and, for another, you're feelin' the strain of what they call Ann O'Dominil! I suppose she's an Irishwoman?"

The Head frowned.

"You are very good, Burleigh! A man is not too old at seventy, and as for being fat, why, some of our finest goalkeepers are as fat as Christmas turkeys! I reckon I'm just the man to take Stopham's place,

and you'd better agree to let me do so, or it will be my paneful duty to expel you—to kick you out on your neck!"

Burleigh turned pall.

"You can play, sir, with the greatest of pleasure!" he said hastily.

"Right-o, Burleigh! What time's the kick-off, old scout?"

"Two-thirty, sir."

"I'll be there," said the Head, moving to the door. "T-t-t-t!"

"Toodle-oo!" said Burleigh; adding, under his breath: "I shan't bless you if you let about a dozen goals through to-morrow afternoon!"

St. Sam's had a big surprize next day when the Head turned out to keep goal in all the glory of a canary-culled sweater.

In an absent-minded moment the Head had put his mortar-board on, and this, together with his flowing beard, gave him rather a comical appearance. But nobody dared to laff. Some of the fellows on the touch-line were inwardly jestin', but they managed to keep their faces straight.

Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, was the referee. He lined up the teams and fired the pistol, and the game commenced.

The Purple Croosaders had a fine side. Like quivers from an arrow, they darted towards the St. Sam's goal. Their senter-forward received a perfect pass when he was standing on the goal-line, and all he had to do was to tap the ball into the net. But before he could do so the Head punched him with grate violence on the nose, and he went down in a heap.

"Fowl!" roared the Purple Croosaders.

"He biffed Bill Briggs on the bokin'!"

"We demand a free penalty kick!"

Mr. Lickham came running up. The Head looked at him grimly.



When the final pistol-shot rang out, the Head was carried sholder-high from the field.

"Was that a fowl, Lickham?" he demanded.

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Mr. Lickham.

He knew what would happen if he said otherwise. He would be asked to tender his resignation.

The game was resumed, and the Croosaders were soon swarming round the St. Sam's goal once more. But the Head, for all his three-score years and ten, was as lively as a jumping cracker. He saved no end of shots, and whenever the opposing forwards got to close quarters he sent them sprawling with his fists. Once, when he made a grate save by turning a dubble summersalt, he gave Jones minor a hundred lincs for not clapping.

At half-time there was no score, but when the second half started it was easy to see that the Croosaders were out for blind. They set up a strong attack, and even the Head was beaten at last. The ball eluded his frantic clutch and crashed into the net.

"Goal!"

The Head frowned darkly. "Who dares to say that was a goal?" he demanded. "Hi, Lickham: you're the referee! Was that a goal, or was it not?"

"Not!" said Mr. Lickham hastily.

"I saved that shot, didn't I?"

"Yes, yes, sir—of course!"

"Good for you!" said the Head.

"Now we'll get on with the washin'!"

The game looked like petering out in a goalless draw. But five minnits from time the Head gained possession of the ball and started to run with it down the field.

"Fowl!" roared the Croosaders. "The goalie n't aloud to do that!"

The Head ran on, unheeding. He ran the whole length of the field, and finished up by budding ball and goalkeeper and himself into the net.

"GOAL!"

"Hoory!"

The St. Sam's fellows went mad with delight. Perhaps they were thinking of Jones minor's fate at not clapping.

"Bravo, sir!"

"Goal!"

It was the only goal of the match, and when the final pistol-shot rang out the Head was carried sholder-high from the field. He was beemin' all over his dial, and humming the strains of "See the Konkering Hero Comes!"

THE END



## Locked in the Tuckshop!

By BAGGY THOMAS  
(H. St. J. M.)

ONE corner of the tuckshop at St. Jim's is curtained off from the rest of the establishment. It's a cosy little corner, with a chair and a small table, where a fellow can sit and enjoy his jam-tarts and ginger-pop in peace.

I was sitting there one evening—without refreshments, unfortunately—for I was "broke"—when I happened to doze off to sleep.

How long I slept I don't know, but when I opened my eyes I found myself in total darkness.

I started up from my seat in a panic. Where was I? What had happened? And then I realised the joyful truth. I was locked in the tuckshop!

Dame Taggles had put up the

shutters, and locked up the place, little dreaming that I was asleep in the corner.

What a blissful thing it is to be locked in a tuckshop for the night! The darkness suddenly lost its terrors, when I realised that I was surrounded by piles and piles of tempting tuck.

It was the clock in the school tower, striking the hour of eleven. No doubt my absence from the Fourth Form dormitory had caused quite a sensation. Probably search-parties had been sent out to find me. But, of course, nobody would dream that I had been locked in the tuckshop. And it wasn't likely that I was going to yell for help. After all, I had nothing to be afraid of; I

shouldn't starve, anyway. Why, there was enough food around me to feed a whole regiment.

I groped around for some matches, and lit the gas. The shutters completely covered the window, so there was no danger of the light being seen from outside. Then I wandered round the tuckshop, helping myself to whatever I fancied, and keeping a record of what I consumed, so that I could pay for it at some distant date.

Oh, it was a wonderful experience! Unlimited tuck! Stacks and stacks of it! I stuffed till I could stuff no more! And then I distinguished the light, and rolled back to my corner-seat, and slept until daybreak.

Dame Taggles nearly had a fit when she found me there in the morning. I handed her the list of what I had consumed, and the bill came to twenty two quids. The dame demanded immediate settlement, but this was impossible, so she reported me to the Head. The bill was sent to my pater for payment, and he stopped my allowance of pocket-munny for the rest of the term. I felt very sore about it; but it will be a long, long time before I forget that blissful night when I was locked in the tuckshop!

## Pages from a Cricketers Diary!



By ALONZO TODD  
(The Duffer of Greyfriars)



A SWARM of fags rushed up to me. And said, "We want a referee." Being a very willing sort, I said I'd supervise their sport.

The game of kick-and-rush began. And Tubb secured the ball and ran. He took a shot with all his force. Then said to me, "A goal, of course?"

I resolutely shook my head. "Off-side! It doesn't count!" I said. Then came a roar that made me deaf, and they began to mob the ref!

They rushed at me with one accord. "Hands off!" I earnestly implored. But Tubb's eleven were out for blood: They promptly rolled me in the mud.

They rolled me in the miry pool, And then pursued me to the school. Breathless, bewildered, drenched, and muddy.

I sought the safety of my study. The next time fags come up to me And murmur, "Will you referee?" I'll give them a decided "Nay!" My answer will be, "Not to-day!"

THE END

MONDAY.—This morning I received a communication from my worthy and esteemed Uncle Benjamin, urging me to take up cricket as a pastime. "You will find it highly beneficial to your physical well-being," he wrote. Accordingly, I have joined the Remove Cricket Club, and propose to attend practice to-morrow.

TUESDAY.—Oh, dear! I had no idea that cricket was such a perilous pastime. I batted at the nets, and every ball I missed—and I missed about nine out of ten—gave me a sounding smack on some portion of my anatomy. I also felled a ball with my nose, and that organ is now swollen to twice its normal size!

WEDNESDAY.—To-day I begged Wharton to let me play for the Remove against Rookwood. He very kindly put my name down on the list as fifteenth reserve. However, my services were not called upon.

THURSDAY.—Once again I participated in the practice, but on this occasion I had the good sense to wear a suit of armour, which I borrowed from the school museum. Consequently, I escaped a repetition of the dreadful bumps and bruises I received on Tuesday.

FRIDAY.—Wharton tells me that I may play for the Remove to-morrow against Highcliffe. I am in the seventh heaven of delight! How pleased my dear Uncle Benjamin will be if I compile a century!

SATURDAY.—Terrible tragedy. Bowled first ball! And before the ball hit the wicket it came into violent and painful contact with my eye. Cricket is a barbarous sport. I shall refuse to play again, and I have written to Uncle Benjamin to this effect. From henceforth, I shall concentrate all my energies on winning the Ludo championship.



# Going To Press!

By Billy Bunter

"BUNTER!" said Wingate of the Sixth, meeting me on the stairs as I came down one morning. "You are wanted—"

"By the perlice?" I asked, in fear and tremor.

"No. You are wanted on the tellyphone in the prefects' room, by the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

"Thanks, Wingate!" I said. And I scuttled away to the prefects' room. Glooming the receiver to my ear, I spoke into the mouthpiece.

"Hallo! Billy Bunter at this end. Is that the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL?"

"Yes!" came the reply. "Look hear, Bunter. I am just going to press with the 1926 edition. You promised to let me have an issue of 'Billy Bunter's Annual' for inclusion in the larger Annual; but not a line of 'copy' has turned up. What about it?"

"I must apologise for the delay, sir," I said. "But the fact is, I've been queer. I've been in the sanny for the past fortnight, suffering from semmy-stavation. However, I'll collect all the contributions to-day, and post my Annual to you to-morrow, without fail."

"Good!" said the Editor. And he rang off. I realised that there was no time to be lost. I had already reserved contributions from Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble and Tubby Mudlin; but there were several more pages to fill. I resigned myself to a busy day.

When the bell rang for morning lessons, I went into the Remove Form-room with the rest of the fellows; but instead of taking my seat, I remained standing in front of the class until Mr. Quelch came in.

"Good-morning, sir!" I said. "I trusted you are in the pink, as it leaves me at prezant. Look hear, sir, I want you to let me off lessons for the day. I've sumthing more important than Greek and Latin to think about. I've got to get 'Billy Bunter's Annual' ready for press."

Mr. Quelch fixed me with a fierce frown.

"Go and sit down Bunter!" he thundered. "I should not dream of giving you the day off. How dare you assert that your ridiculous schoolboy jernal is more important than lessons?"

"But, sir—" "Be seated!" roared Mr. Quelch. So I rolled dismally to my place, and realised that I should have to compress all my work into the short space of a single afternoon. It was a half-holiday, thank goodness!

Before I commenced my editorial labors, I had a jolly good dinner. Littery men can't work on an empty stomach. I had several portions of stake-and-kidney pie, followed by six fat and juicy apple-dumplings. Having laid a good foundation, so to speak, I felt in fine form for my task. Outside the door of my editorial ranktum—Number Seven Study—I placed the following notice:

"BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL" is now being prepared. All contributions gratefully reserved."

Most of them were gratefully reserved. At any rate, the grate reserved them, for they were unfit for publication.

It's surprising how few talented orthers we have at Greyfriars. Nobody seems to have mastered the ruddyments of writing. As for spelling, why, I can say, without fear of contradiction, that I'm the only fellow in the Form who is able to spell korrekctly.

All through the afternoon, a steady stream of orthers and artists poured into my ranktum. With my ample form wedged in the editorial chair, I sat in judgment on their contributions.

Alonso Todd brought me a "Dixie to a Dying Duck," which was altogether too sad and sollum for my liking. It started like this:

"One last quack, one final flutter From the duck-pond cap be heard; Melancholy words we mutter: Fare thee well, expring bird!"

Fancy trying to cheer up the readers of "Billy Bunter's Annual" with balderdash like that!

Skinner also brought me a contribution about a duck. It was a "duck" I got at cricket. Just like Skinner to write about a fellow's failures instead of his successes. I hurled the offending article into the passage, and sent Skinner sprawling after it!

Then Bolsover major brought me a boxing article, but I told him it lacked "punch."

"Take it away and berry it!" I said curtly. "I shouldn't dream of publishing such piffle."

Bolsover was simply furious. He rushed at me with lowered head, like a bull, and threatened to knock my head off. But I didn't lose my head. I simply seized Bolsover by the scruff of the neck, and sent him whirling through the doorway, with my boot behind him.

Then Iob Cherry came in, with a column of Greyfriars' Gossip. I thought I had better accept it, because I happened to owe Cherry five bob, and it's always a good plan to keep on the right side of your creditors.

In between the interruptions, I managed to scribble my Editorial, which is always the finest feature in the Annual.

My miner Sammy, gave me a helping hand and we worked solidly until post-time. Then I crammed all the contributions into an envelope, together with a brief note to the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

"Dear Sir,—Please find herewith the issue of 'Billy Bunter's Annual' for 1926. I hope you will let me hav: a fat check by return of post.—Yours sincerely,

"BILLY BUNTER."

The Editor is hartless beast. He hasn't sent me that fat check. He hasn't sent me so much as a sixpenny postle-order. Until he pays up, I shall resolutely refuse to supply him with any more issues of the finest schoolboy jernal in the world!





# Popular Punishment!

By FATTY WYNN  
(of St. Jim's)

I SEE in the newspapers that they are improving our prison system.

In the olden days, a prisoner was cast into a gloomy dungeon at Newgate, or at the old Fleet Prison, and more or less abandoned to his fate. The damp floors were over-run with rats, and the conditions were as dark and depressing as you can imagine.

Nowadays, well-behaved prisoners have many privileges. They have good food, and concerts, and books to read. It seems to me that a prison is rapidly becoming "a home away from home." The punishment of imprisonment is much more pleasant than it used to be.

Now, why don't they improve the

methods of punishment at our public schools? With the onward march of civilisation, birch-rods and canes ought to be swept away. They are old-fashioned and out-of-date—relics of the barbarous past, when people used to be whipped and then put in the pillory or the stocks.

The awarding of impositions is another form of punishment that ought to be "scrapped!" Where is the sense in scribbling a line of Latin about five hundred times? It is a useless sort of task, and a wicked waste of time.

Instead of giving a fellow an imposition, he ought to be made to do some useful and creative sort of work. Why not sentence him to two hours' hard labour in the school kitchen,

helping to make—and devour!—puddings and pies? That would be far more sensible.

Again, instead of detaining a fellow in the Form-room on a half-holiday, why not detain him in the school tuck shop? How I should love to hear my Form-master say: "Wynn! You have been guilty of inattention all the morning! You will spend the whole of the afternoon in the school shop; and if I find any jam-tarts or pastries uneaten at the end of your detention, I shall cane you!"

There is plenty of room for improvement in our system of punishment; and I commend these suggestions to the Head-master of St. Jim's, in the hope that he will adopt them without delay.



## Greyfriars' Gossip!

By Bob Cherry

SKINNER of the Remove was asked the other day if he came from Sheffield. "No," he replied. "What makes you think that?" "Well," said his questioner, "I always understood you were a Blade!"

COCKER of the Fifth must be very fond of riding. When out-of-doors he rides his motor-bike, and when at Greyfriars he rides the high horse!

BILLY BUNTER is no believer in baths. At the same time, he is always getting into hot water!

LORD MAULEVERER, the drowsy slacker of the Remove, declares that Homer is a "nodding" acquaintance of his!

HURREE SINGH, the Nabob of Bhandpur, is the most sunny-tempered of fellows, and yet he is always "looking black!"

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, hasn't a reputation for reading, yet he is always "tapping" his typewriter!

HOP HI, the Chinese fag in the Second, ought to do well in the high-jumping contest at the fags' sports. Crowds of fellows will applaud when they see Hop HI hop high!

MR. PROUT, in his younger day, is reputed to have shot scores of wild beasts. But if a lion suddenly appeared in the Close at Greyfriars, Mr Prout would probably shoot his bolt!

## Answers to Korrespondents!

"A LOVER OF FAT BOYS" (Worthing).—Glad you consider my little jernal to be the finest feature in THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL. Lots of shrood judges—including myself—are of the same opinion!

R. H. G. (Manchester).—What! Never heard of my Weekly? It is published in the famous paper. "The Popular"; and it's the most popular feature the popular "Popular" has ever had!

HALF-BACK" (Harrow).—You are quite right. The Remove would never have won the Bunter Cup without my valeable servises.

R. M. L. (Putney).—Who is the best boxer in the Greyfriars Remove? Well, modesty prevents the mentioning his name, but I will give you a clue as to his identity. His initials are W. G., and he is the fattest fellow in the Form!

(Many replies to HOLIDAY ANNUAL readers are unavoidably held over for a few years.)



## Our Editor

UNDER the elm trees in the Close, Our "Chief" is seen to stand;

With smears of jam upon his face,  
And tarts in either hand.  
Humbly we grovel at his feet,  
And quake at his command.

His hair is nondescript in hue,  
His face is like a can;  
There's never been a plumper youth,  
Not since the world began.  
He glances furtively around  
For the oweth every man!

Week in, week out, from morn till night,

He haunts the tuck shop door;  
Entreating all the passers-by  
To feed the starving poor.

A dish of pastries he'll consume  
And then cry out for more!

He goes each evening to his "den"

And publishes his paper;  
Wisdom flows freely from his pen,  
He burns the midnight taper.

And interruptions often come  
From some mysterious japer!

Toiling, rejoicing, howrowing,  
Onward through life he goes;  
And when his postal order comes  
His face with rapture glows.

But when the postman cometh not  
He wildly walls his woes!

## A QUESTION OF "WEIGHT"—AND SEE!



Ignorant people at Greyfriars reckon Bob Cherry's the best boxer in the Remove. But they're wrong. Modesty forbids my mentioning the name of the Remove Boxing Champion. But you can see who he is from the picture above. That massive, powerful-looking fellow on the right. He's just describing a feint with his left. His opponent is his brother Sammy Bunter, of the Second—another haspulant after fistic onners. Sammy's shortly going to describe a "feint"—he's fairly asking for the knock-out. After all, a chap must keep his young brother in his place, mustn't he?

W.G.B.



#### BILLY BUNTER.

My life has been so crowded with adventures that it's a difficult matter to say which was the most thrilling. I've been in peril on the sea; I've been shut up in a burning building; I've run away from school about a dozen times; I've travelled all over the world; and as a kid I fell into the clutches of kidnappers. How many fellows can boast of such a crop of adventures as this? Several times I have been in the shadow of death, but I have always cheated it. I was once adrift in an open boat, and a fierce storm came along and capsized my frail craft. But although I was about ten miles out to sea, I managed to swim ashore. On another occasion, when I was trapped in a burning building, I jumped from a top-story window, and escaped without injury. I always fall on my feet! If I attempted to describe all my thrilling adventures, I should fill this issue and a good many more besides. Nobody can say that I lead a calm, placid sort of existence. My life is one giddy whirl of adventure!

#### ALONZO TODD:

My most thrilling adventure occurred this summer. I was paddling at Pegz, when a huge wave came along, and carried me some inches out to sea. Picture my terrible plight, dear readers! I was floundering in three feet of water, and no help was at hand. However, the dauntless spirit of my ancestors, which I have inherited, stood me in

good stead. Summoning all my strength and courage, I contrived to scramble ashore. But I confess I was badly shaken up for some days afterwards. Just imagine what would have happened to me had I not made that supreme effort. I might have been devoured by a shark, or cut to pieces by a passing liner, or dashed to a terrible doom on the rocks. When I wrote and told Uncle Benjamin of my hairbreadth escape, he was truly horrified!

#### SAMMY BUNTER:

I was with my brother Billy in all the thrilling adventures he mentions above; but whereas he was in a positive panic, I was cool, calm, and collected. It was only through my courage that we both came through alive; so Billy has much to thank me for, if he only realised it—the ungrateful beast!

#### FELIX (The Kitchen Cat):

My biggest adventure was when I was nearly run down in the Close by Coker's motor-bike. Having been run over on eight previous occasions, that would have been my last "life." I had to make a wild dash for safety; and as it was, the front wheel passed over the tip of my tail, causing me acute agony. Coker ought never to be allowed to run amok in the Close. The safety of the cat community ought to

be considered. My mother came to a violent and tragic end as a result of Coker's roadhogging; and I have a feeling that I shall be the next victim!

#### MR. PAUL PROUT:

My amazing adventures in the Rocky Mountains will shortly be published, in twenty volumes, by Messrs. Cook & Bull, Ltd. Price two guineas. I sincerely trust that all Greyfriars boys will purchase this wonderful work. (Can I have a set of volumes free, please, sir, so that I can review them in the columns of my WEEKLY?—Ed.)

#### DICK PENFOLD:

I feel very much regret to state I've no adventures to relate. I've never sailed the briny seas, and braved the battle and the breeze. I'm not a chap like Billy Bunter—a passionate adventure-hunter. I've not been trapped in burning schools, or chased by savage, snorting bulls. I've not been flattened by a train, nor fallen from an aeroplane. Being a humble bard, I fear I've had a very tame career!

#### HORACE COKER:

I'm just going to set out on my biggest adventure. I'm going to see if I can scorch up to town on my motor bike in half an hour. If I do that I shall brake the speed record.—(And probably "brake" your neck.—Ed.)





*Dick Penfold's motto is "Greyfriars First," and his loyalty gives the School victory in the greatest Football Match of the Season*

*By FRANK RICHARDS*

#### THE FIRST CHAPTER

##### To Play or Not to Play?

**H**ARRY WHARTON was excited. His chums were excited. All Greyfriars, in fact, was excited.

It had to be something sensational to send a wave of excitement through the school. And something really sensational had happened.

The Remove eleven had fought its way into the final for the Public Schools' Challenge Cup.

It had been a hard fight and a grim fight; but the Remove footballers, ably skippered by Harry Wharton, had overcome all obstacles. In the first round of the competition they had beaten Claremont School by 2-0. In the second round they had met and defeated their near rivals of Highcliff. In the third round they had vanquished St. Jim's—after two drawn games—and now, having beaten St. Clive's in the semi-final, they had reached the last stage of all—the final.

Hence Harry Wharton's excitement. Hence the excitement of his chums, and the wave of excitement which had swept through the school.

There was a happy flush on Wharton's face as he stepped briskly along the Remove passage.

The captain of the Remove halted outside the door of Dick Penfold's study, and drummed upon it with his knuckles.

"Come in!"

Wharton stepped inside. Dick Penfold, the scholarship boy, whose father was a cobbler in the village, was alone in the study. He was reclining in the armchair, with his feet resting on another chair. He appeared to be deep in thought, and not very pleased at the interruption.

"Hallo, Wharton!" he said, looking up. But there was a lack of warmth and welcome in his tone.

"I've brought you some good news, Pen," said Wharton, with a smile. "I've put you down to play in the final."

Most fellows would have purred with pleasure on hearing such good news. It was regarded as a high honour to get into the Remove eleven. The Remove were rich in football talent, and a fellow had to be something of a genius before he could qualify for the eleven.

Dick Penfold received the news without emotion. He did not leap to his feet, and execute a "jazz" on the study carpet. Neither did he throw his arms round Wharton's neck, and bubble over with gratitude. He sat unmoved.

"You're playing at inside-right," Wharton went on. "You've shown rattling good form lately, and I can't possibly leave you out. You'll make an ideal partner for Smithy, on the right wing."

Penfold was silent. Harry Wharton regarded him in surprise.

"Don't sit there like a graven image!" he said. "Aren't you feeling awfully, fearfully knocked?"

"Not at all!"

"Eh?"

"It would be ripping to play in the final, but—"

"What are you 'butting' about?" demanded Wharton.

"I—I'm afraid I shan't be able to play."

Harry Wharton blinked at the speaker in astonishment. Many fellows would cheerfully have sacrificed a term's pocket-money for the privilege of playing for the Remove in the final. It was the burning ambition of practically every fellow in the Form, to play in the final and receive a gold medal, suitably inscribed.

"My only aunt!" gasped Wharton. "What's the matter with you, Pen? You're feeling quite fit, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Sound in wind and limb, and all that sort of thing?"

Penfold nodded.

"Then why do you say you won't be able to play?"

"Lend me your ears, and I'll explain. In the ordinary way, there's nothing I should like better than to play for the Remove in the final. But if I play, it means I shall have to go into strict training with the rest of you, and that would take up all my spare time."

"Of course!"

"Well, there's another big event coming off, two days after the football final. I'm referring to the Governors' Exam. The prize is fifty pounds, and I've set my heart on winning it."

"Oh!"

"Now, if a fellow wants to win an exam., he's got to train for it. And if a fellow wants to shine in an important footer match, he's got to train for that, as well. He can't do both. If he goes in for the exam., he must let the footer slide; and if he goes in for the footer, he must drop out of the exam."

Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"I see your point," he said. "You'd like to play in the final, and you'd also like to win the Governors' Exam. And you can't do both. If you go into training for footer, you'll have no time for swotting; and if you go in for the exam., you'll have to let the footer slide."

"That's so."

"Then why not give the exam. a miss?"

"Wish I could," said Penfold wistfully.

"But the fact is—I'll be quite frank with you, Wharton—I want the money. Fifty pounds would be a godsend to me just now."

Harry Wharton became sympathetic at once. He knew that Dick Penfold was often "up against it" financially. Scholarship boys had rather a hard time of it at Greyfriars. It was a perpetual struggle to make ends meet. And Penfold had a harder time of it than the others, for his people were desperately poor, and he was always putting his hand in his pocket in order to help them.

"I'm sorry, Pen," said Wharton, quietly.

"I quite understand. I suppose your pater's fallen on lean times again?"

"No, it isn't that. The pater's joggling along quite comfortably. Matter of fact, I want this fifty pounds for myself. I'm broke to the wide, and, unlike Billy Bunter, I'm not living in daily expectation of a postal-order!"

Penfold smiled faintly as he spoke. Billy Bunter's postal-order, which was always expected but never arrived, was a standing joke with the Greyfriars juniors.

"I've been broke before to-day, and I'm quite used to the experience," Penfold went on. "But it isn't a happy state to be in. Being broke is the first step to getting into debt—and that sort of thing gives me sleepless nights. I've got my footer sub. to pay—and various other subs—and I want some



The study door opened with startling suddenness. Billy Bunter happened to be standing in the line of fire, and the door crashed into him with terrific impact. "Yaroop!" roared Bunter. (See Chapter 2.)

new togs. My bike wants repairing, too. As I said before, fifty pounds would be a godsend to me just now."

Harry Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought.

"Couldn't you raise some cash by writing poetry?" he suggested. "You're quite a dab at stringing rhymes together."

Penfold shook his head.

"My luck's dead out, at the moment," he said. "I can generally manage to pick up a few half-guineas by sending verses to the papers, but the last few poems I've sent have all come back to me. 'The editor regrets—' You know the style of thing. Poets are like footballers. They strike a bad patch occasionally. I've been a bit worried lately, and a fellow can't write good stuff when he's worried."

There was a long silence in the study.

Dick Penfold was in a dilemma. He wanted to play for the Remove in the Cup-final; he also wanted to win the fifty pounds awarded in the Governors' Exam. He could not do both. If he decided to play for the Remove he would need to be fighting fit on the day of the match. And a hard spell of swotting would not make him fit for football.

Penfold had to choose between school and self. If he decided to play in the final the school would benefit. If he decided to enter for the exam, he himself would benefit to the extent of fifty pounds. For Penfold was a brilliant scholar, and if he swotted hard for the Governors' Exam, he knew he would win it.

It was Wharton who broke the long silence.

"Have you definitely made up your mind which you're going to do, Pen?"

"No, I must think it over. I've got to

make my choice, I know, but it can't be done in five minutes."

"Well, try and let me know by tea-time. If you decide not to play, I shall have to see about a substitute. But I hope you'll see your way clear to turn out for the Remove."

So saying, Wharton withdrew, leaving Dick Penfold to wrestle with the problem.

To play or not to play? That was the question!

What an honour it would be to help Greyfriars to win the Public Schools' Challenge Cup! Perhaps to score the winning goal for his side! It was a prospect which set Dick Penfold's heart beating faster than usual.

Then there was the other side of the picture. If he played in the Cup-final, good-bye to his dreams of winning the fifty pounds! He would fail hopelessly in the Governors' Exam., for Dick Russell and Monty Newland were sweating furiously for it, and they would be bound to beat him, for he would have made no preparation.

Dick Penfold tramped to and fro in his study, trying to arrive at a decision.

There could be no compromise. He could not both eat his cake and have it. The Cup-final, or the Governors' Exam—which was it to be?

Backwards and forwards the junior tramped till he seemed likely to make a pathway in the carpet.

"It's a fair poser, and no mistake!" he muttered. "The more I think of it the harder it is to come to a decision. But I've got to decide. It isn't fair to Wharton to keep him waiting."

Crouching outside the door, with his ear glued to the keyhole, was Billy Bunter. It was a pleasant little habit of Bunter's to treat keyholes as if they were telephone receivers, and to absorb all the conversations that came from within junior studies.

Presently he heard Dick Penfold speak again.

"I'll swot for the exam.! After all, I've got to raise some money somehow. Wharton will have to find somebody to take my place in the Cup-final."

Even as he spoke Penfold felt that he was acting wrongly—that he was putting himself

before school. And his decision began to waver, even as he uttered it.

But Billy Bunter wasn't to know that Penfold was wavering. He quite thought that Pen had definitely decided to swot for the exam., in preference to playing for the Remove.

Giving a low chuckle of satisfaction, Bunter removed his ear from the keyhole and rolled away to Harry Wharton's study.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Ready for the Fray!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter's piping voice broke in upon the conversation in No. 1 Study.

The Famous Five of the Remove were at tea, and the sight of the good things upon the table made Billy Bunter's mouth water. There was a large fruity cake, surmounted by almonds. There was a glass dish on which a number of fat, sugary doughnuts nestled against each other. There was also a tempting array of assorted pastries. For a moment, in fact, Billy Bunter was like the lady in Wordsworth's poem—"breathless with adoration."

But only for a moment. Johnny Bull caught up a cushion, and Bob Cherry armed himself with a loaf, and Frank Nugent pointed grimly to the door. These actions were significant. They said, as clearly as words could have done:

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

The fat junior backed away a step.

"Clear out, or I fire!" growled Johnny Bull, posing the cushion in readiness.

"Oh, really, Bull—— Don't be a beast! I haven't come to cadge a feed——"

Bob Cherry sank back in his chair in a simulated swoon.

"Fan me, somebody!" he murmured. "Our prize porker doesn't want feeding! Wonders will never cease!"

Harry Wharton glared at the plump intruder.

"State your business, and quit!" he said tersely.

"Ahem! I dropped in to see you about the Cup-final, Wharton."

"Well, what about it?"

"Penfold's decided not to play——"

"What! How do you know?"

"He told me so himself," said Bunter glibly. "I'm quite a stout pal of Penfold's!"

"Very stout!" murmured Bob Cherry, gazing at Bunter's ample form.

"Oh, dry up, Cherry! Penfold and me have no secrets from each other. I dropped into his study just now, and he said: 'Hallo,

Bunt, old boy! I find I shan't be able to play in the Cup-final. I've made up my mind to swot for the Governors' Exam. So you'd better play for the Remove in my place.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter greeted Bunter's statement. The idea of the fat, ungainly Owl of the Remove playing in the Cup-final was altogether too rich.

Bunter blinked wrathfully at the hilarious juniors.

"Nothing to cackle at, that I can see," he said. "You're like a lot of broody hens! It's only right that I should play in Penfold's place. I've been kept out of the team too long. I can't think how you managed to get so far as the final without my help."

"Why, you—you——!" stammered Wharton.

"Is there any reason why I shouldn't play for the Remove?" demanded Bunter.

There were ample reasons, judging by the replies that were hurled at Bunter's head.

"You can't kickfully kick——" said Hurree Singh.

"And you can't shootfully shoot!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"And you can't passfully pass!" grinned Nugent.

"And you can't runfully run!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"And, in a nutshell, you can't playfully play!" concluded Harry Wharton. "Run away and pick flowers!"

But Billy Bunter lingered.

"Who are you going to play in Penfold's place?" he asked.

"Anybody but you!" said the captain of the Remove. "Besides, I'm not certain yet that Penfold isn't playing."

"But he told me he wasn't——"

"I can't believe you."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I've never knowingly told a fib in my life——"

"Good old Georgie Washington!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door opened with startling suddenness. Billy Bunter happened to be



Bulstrode threw himself forward at full length, and snatched the ball from Maxwell's toes, averting what had seemed a certain goal. (See Chapter 3.)

standing in the line of fire, so to speak, and the door crashed into him with a terrific impact.

"Yarooooop!" roared Bunter. "Why didn't you knock, you rotter? You've been and broken my back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was Dick Penfold who entered. He ignored Bunter, and turned to Harry Wharton.

The shadow of doubt and indecision had passed from Penfold's face. He had taken the plunge, for better or worse, and had made up his mind once and for all.

"Well, I've thrashed out the giddy problem, Wharton," he said.

"And you've decided——?"

"To play in the Cup-final."

"Hurrah!"

The Famous Five cheered in chorus. They were naturally delighted at Penfold's decision, for it meant that the Remove would be at full strength for the all-important match.

"That's splendid!" said Harry Wharton. "I guessed Bunter was fibbing. He says you told him you had decided not to play."

"Why, I've never mentioned the matter to Bunter at all!"

"Oh, really, Penfold——" began Bunter feebly.

"Kick the fat fabricator out!" growled Johnny Bull.

The juniors rose to their feet with one accord. Several hefty boots clumped together on the rear of Billy Bunter's plump person, and he was precipitated through the doorway and into the passage beyond. He landed on the linoleum with a bump and a roar, and the door was slammed in his face. That was the end of Billy Bunter's aspirations to play in the Cup-final!

Harry Wharton placed a chair for Dick Penfold.

"Sit down and pile in!" he said cheerily. "I can recommend this cake. Its fine, fruity flavour is a dream and a delight!"

"You're getting quite poetical in your old age!" said Dick Penfold, as he seated himself at the table. "I feel just in the mood for a jolly good feed, now that I've solved that blessed problem."

"It's the last orgy we shall have," said Bob Cherry. "We're starting a course of

special training to-morrow morning. Cakes and pastries will be strictly taboo. So you've decided not to sit for the Governors' Exam., Pen?"

"Oh, I shall sit for it," was the reply. "Just as a matter of form, you know. I've no earthly chance of winning. The honours will go to Dick Russell or Monty Newland. They've got their noses to the grindstone, and they're swotting like the merry dickens!"

"Jolly decent of you to put the team first, and to sacrifice your chances of winning the fifty pounds," said Harry Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

"Pen's a brick!"

"The brickfulness is terrific!" chimed in Hurree Singh.

Dick Penfold smiled.

"Spare my blushes!" he said. "Dash it all, it was the only thing to do. I shouldn't have been happy if I'd done otherwise."

"But you wanted the money badly——" began Nugent.

"I shall have to go on wanting, that's all. I'd rather win the cup-tie gold medal than a dozen exams!"

"Well spoken!" said Johnny Bull.

Tea in No. 1 Study proceeded merrily. The juniors tucked in with keen appetites, for they realised that it was the last feed of its kind that they would have, until the Cup-final was fought and won.

A period of strenuous training was about to be entered upon—cross-country runs, footer practice, and gymnasium work.

The Cup-final was to be staged in London, on the famous Chelsea ground, and Harry Wharton was anxious that every member of his eleven should be at concert-pitch on the great day.

The Remove footballers threw themselves heart and soul into their training. There was no slacking; indeed, there was no room for slackers in the eleven.

Grandcourt, the school which was to meet the Friars in the final, was a great power in the land. They had simply walked through to the final, whereas Greyfriars had had to fight every inch of the way. Grandcourt had won all their matches in hollow fashion. Greyfriars, on the other hand, had been in some

tight corners, and had several times snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat.

It really looked as if the fast and dashing Grandcourt eleven would have a "walk-over" in the final. But football is a game of surprises, and matches which look "dead certs" on paper have a habit of confounding the prophets.

At all events, Harry Wharton & Co. were resolved to fight tooth-and-nail for the Public Schools' Challenge Cup. Greyfriars had won the Cup three times—in 1895, 1896, and 1901; and they were desperately keen on adding to their laurels.

When at last the great day dawned, the Remove eleven showed a clean bill of health. Every fellow was fighting fit. Every fellow was determined to deserve well of his school. And the most determined of all was Dick Penfold, who had sacrificed self for the sake of the school.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Pluck of Dick Penfold!

"HERE they come!"

"Good old Greyfriars!"

"Hurrah!"

The great ground at Stamford Bridge,

where many an English Cup Final had been staged, presented an animated appearance.

Thousands of schoolboys had poured in from all parts of the country to see the great duel between Grandcourt and Greyfriars. Hundreds of grown-ups were there, also. The stands were packed by an enthusiastic multitude.

All Greyfriars was present to a man. Even Billy Bunter, although piqued at not getting

a place in the Remove eleven, had turned up in his Sunday best—to see Harry Wharton's eleven licked into a cocked hat, as he expressed it.

Blue- and- white rosettes, representing the Greyfriars' colours, were everywhere in evidence. And the Grandcourt colours—black and gold—were also well in the picture.

Greyfriars came out first into the playing arena, and they received a mighty ovation.

Harry Wharton & Co. felt strangely subdued as they trotted on to the pitch. They felt overawed by the sea of faces which surrounded them. They were not accustomed to playing before such a huge concourse of people. But this stage-fright would soon pass. Once the ball was kicked off they would be blind and deaf to all external conditions.



Dick Penfold gained possession of the ball, but he was sent reeling by a powerful shoulder charge. (See Chapter 3.)

Bulstrode, wearing a green sweater, took up his position in goal, and the others bombarded him with shots, by way of preliminary practice.

Then Grandcourt came out—a tall, finely-built set of fellows, footballers every inch of them. It was not difficult to understand how they had reached the final so easily.

"Play up, Grandcourt!"

"On the ball!"

"Good old Maxwell!"

Maxwell was the Grandcourt skipper. He advanced towards the centre of the pitch, and Harry Wharton did likewise. Maxwell seemed to tower over Wharton, though he could not have been much older.

The rival captains shook hands cordially, first with each other, and then with the referee. Then the coin was spun.

Wharton won the toss, but there was no advantage to be gained thereby.

Another burst of cheering rent the air as the teams lined up.

The Greyfriars sprinted smartly to their positions. The Grandcourt players dawdled leisurely. But they didn't dawdle when the whistle went. Their forwards raced down the field, passing the ball from man to man with perfect judgment.

"Go along, Grandcourt!"

"That's the style!"

"Shoot, Maxwell!"

The Greyfriars defence was in a tangle. Maxwell cleverly tricked Tom Brown, then he beat Johnny Bull for pace, and had the goal at his mercy.

Zipp!

The ball went whizzing in. Bulstrode, in goal, caught it, though the force of it nearly winded him. Had he been a fragile youth, he would have been knocked backwards into the net. As it was, he just managed to keep his footing, and slung the ball clear. Tom Brown trapped it, and punted it up the field with a mighty kick.

The Greyfriars onlookers made audible murmurs of relief.

Presently the murmuring swelled into a roar. The 'Friars were attacking! Vernon-Smith raced away on the right, and he and Dick Penfold indulged in a brilliant bout of

passing. They were tackled by sturdy defenders, but they fought their way through. Eventually, from a dozen yards out, Dick Penfold fired in a great shot.

The goalie plunged at the ball, and beat it out. But it came back to Penfold in boomerang fashion, and Pen made no mistake. He promptly planted it into the net.

"Goal!"

The Greyfriars supporters were delirious with delight. School caps and silk toppers went whirling in the air, their owners indifferent to whether they recovered them or not.

"Hurrah!"

"First blood, by Jove!"

"Played, Penfold!"

The scholarship junior flushed with pleasure. In that moment of his triumph, he did not regret having been loyal to his school. His fellow players surged around him with their congratulations.

It was a dour struggle, after that. Grandcourt pressed hotly, and the 'Friars defence was severely tested.

Johnny Bull and Tom Brown tackled well, and kicked a faultless length. But they could not stop Maxwell, who was a rare forager, putting the ball in just before the interval.

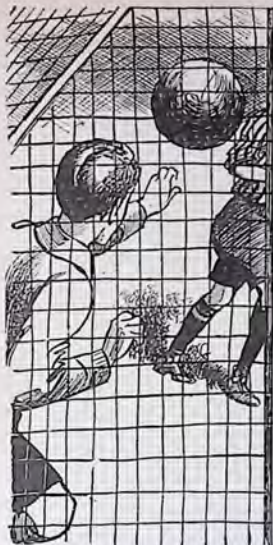
Half-time: Greyfriars 1, Grandcourt 1.

The "breather" was very welcome to the players, for the pace had been a cracker.

Play was keener than ever on the resumption. Grandcourt had reshuffled their team, and they meant business. Their forwards swarmed round the Greyfriars goal like flies round a honeypot. Fortunately for the 'Friars, Bulstrode was bang on top of his form. Some of his saves were sensational. On one occasion he threw himself forward at full length, and snatched the ball from Maxwell's toes, averting what had seemed a certain goal.

It was all Grandcourt, at this stage. They played magnificently, and their shots were dead on the target. Once, with Bulstrode out of goal, Tom Brown headed away from under the bar—a narrow escape for the 'Friars!

After twenty minutes' fruitless attacking,



Penfold drove the ball goalwards with all his power. The goalie grabbed at the flying sphere, but he grabbed in vain. It was the winning goal. (See Chapter 3.)

the inevitable goal came. Grandcourt forced a corner on the left. The ball was perfectly placed, and Maxwell leapt into the air like a panther, and headed the sphere over Bulstrode's shoulder into the net.

That was number two for Grandcourt, and they thoroughly deserved it on the run of the play.

"Buck up, Greyfriars!"

"What's become of the forwards?"

The forwards had, indeed, faded right out of the picture. They had dropped back to help the overworked defenders. But now they made a great rally. Harry Wharton led the line with rare dash, and the Grandcourt goalie, who had been tramping to and fro to keep his circulation up, was no longer in the ranks of the unemployed. He got warm sooner than he expected!

First Wharton, and then Nugent, sent in powerful drives, which were successfully dealt

with. Then Vernon-Smith fired in a dangerous cross-shot, which the goalie just managed to divert round the post.

From the ensuing corner-kick, Wharton had wretched luck with a "header," the ball striking the cross-bar, and coming away with a patch of white on it.

The 'Friars kept pegging away, and a fierce "pile-driver" from Bob Cherry went only inches wide.

Dick Penfold now gained possession, but he was sent reeling by a powerful shoulder charge, and he damaged his right wrist in falling. It was a bad sprain, and the referee stopped the game for a few moments.

Penfold was very white and shaken, but he refused to leave the field. He was thankful that it was his wrist and not his ankle which had been damaged.

"Carry on," he muttered. "Never mind about me."

"But your wrist, old chap—" began Harry Wharton.

"It would take more than a sprained wrist to make me throw up the sponge."

The game was resumed in ding-dong fashion. Grandcourt made a raid on the Greyfriars goal, but nothing came of it. Then the 'Friars took up the running once more.

Time was fleeting fast, and it was a case of "now or never."

Harry Wharton & Co. went all out for the equaliser, but it was not until the last minute that their valiant efforts were rewarded. Hurree Singh hit the cross-bar with a rasping shot, and Harry Wharton leapt at the ball on the rebound, and headed it in grandly.

"Goal!"

Once again the Greyfriars supporters went into ecstasies.

There was no further scoring, and "extra time" was ordered—fifteen minutes each way.

The 'Friars were tired and leg-weary by this time: Grandcourt had lasted out better. They set up a spirited and sustained attack, but Bulstrode held the fort like a hero.

The first fifteen minutes sped by without any addition to the score.

During the final stage of all, the 'Friars made one solitary attack. Only one, but it was enough.

Hurree Singh passed to Nugent, who deftly touched the ball to Wharton. Harry was bowled over by a burly back, but whilst on the ground he managed to get his foot to the ball, and tricked it along to Penfold. Pen feinted as if to pass the ball to Vernon-Smith; instead of which, he spun round suddenly, and drove the ball goalwards with all his power.

The goulie grabbed at the flying sphere, but

he grabbed in vain. The ball crashed past him into the net.

Pandemonium broke loose on the ground. The Greyfriars partisans seemed to have lost their heads. They came surging on to the playing-pitch—for the final whistle rang out at that moment—and Dick Penfold, the match-winner, was in danger of being torn limb from limb by his exuberant school-fellows.

There are some days which stand out from all others—days which are blazoned in red letters in the calendar of sport—days which the onward march of Father Time will never eradicate from the memory.

This was Penfold's day.

Not long afterwards, Dick Penfold found himself the richer by fifty pounds, and all his financial troubles were over.

No one was more surprised than Penfold himself when his name was posted up as the winner of the Governors' Exam. He had sat for the exam., and he had done his best with the bewildering maze of difficult questions. But he had been painfully conscious of the fact that he had done no preliminary swotting.

He had expected either Dick Russell or Monty Newland to carry off the honours. But Russell finished seventh, and Newland gave an inglorious exhibition.

Dick Penfold was acclaimed the winner, and for days he walked about like a fellow in a dream.

Long afterwards, a suspicion came into his mind that Russell and Newland, having heard that he was in dire need of cash, had deliberately failed in the exam., so that he might win it. Dick Penfold taxed them with having done so, but they neither denied nor admitted it. From which, the reader may safely be left to draw his own conclusions.

THE END

# A SEASIDE ADVENTURE !



What Came of a Summer Day-Dream !



The "Flying Scotsman" starting off on its journey through the garden.

# A Flying Scotsman In the Garden

By W. J. Bassett-Lowke,  
M. Inst. Loco. E.

WE all have read about the "Flying Dutchman," the shadowy ship which sailed the Southern Seas. Then there was its namesake on the "Great Western," an old broad-gauge train to the West of England. The "Flying Scotsman," however, reminds us of the huge railway engine exhibited at Wembley last year. This magnificent locomotive now has its counterpart in miniature in a garden railway on the Surrey downs.

Laid to 3½ in. gauge, this tiny railway has for its express traffic the beautiful model of the famous London and North-Eastern "Pacific" type engine, the largest and most powerful class of locomotive in this country. The "Pacific" type is so called because it has six coupled driving wheels, a four wheeled bogie at the front end, and another pair of small wheels at the rear under the large wide "Wootten" firebox.

Only the London and North Eastern Railway owns "Pacific" engines. The Great Western Company tried this type of engine some years ago, but did not make a satisfactory job of it, and have lately broken up the only one they built. The North Eastern, however, seem to have achieved success and continue to add to their fleet of these wonderful machines. The Northampton-built model is equally successful and will pull a model train of 350 lbs.—which would represent a

train of 600 tons—with ease at scale speeds of 100 miles per hour.

This model is one-sixteenth full size and was designed by Mr. Henry Greenly with an exterior outline exactly the same as the original Wembley Exhibition locomotives. The inside is, of course, modified to make it a practical working engine. However, it burns real coal, and the water is fed to the boiler with a miniature injector. No pumping by hand is required. All that the driver does is to turn on the water and then the steam, a very tiny jet of which automatically forces the feed water into the boiler.

The model, which will attain a speed of nearly six miles per hour, has an automatic device for cutting off the steam at the end of the journey. To catch an engine weighing over seventy pounds at six miles per hour would be a difficult proceeding.

The engine has driving wheels 5 ins. in diameter and, with the tender, measures 5 ft. in length and 10½ ins. in height.

The cylinders are 1 in. in diameter and have a stroke of 1½ ins. The valve gear is all outside—quite the latest style in British locomotives. The tender runs on eight wheels and carries a supply of water and coal sufficient for a run of nearly a mile. This distance in the model, of course, represents about 160 miles, from King's Cross to Doncaster, in the real thing, so it will be seen that for efficiency

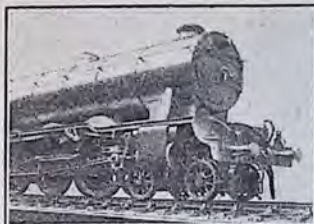
the model is quite equal to the full size machine.

Twenty-five years ago there were hardly any working model locomotives. Owing to the recent great interest taken in the working details of model locomotives, both in design and construction it is nowadays possible to build faithful models of any type of railway engine, which will exhibit

all the characteristics of the original. A shunting engine or a goods locomotive will pull heavy loads at low speeds, while a model express engine such as is illustrated here will haul a fast train in quite a realistic manner.

Stoking a model with coal is great fun. It is not everyone's opportunity to obtain a trip on the footplate of a locomotive, but driving an engine like the Haslemere model "Flying Scotsman" is the nearest approach to the real thing.

The track is laid with perfect model permanent way, bull-headed rails as used on all our British main line railways, with metal chairs and wooden keys. The coaches are made of wood with metal bogies having real springs over the axle-boxes, spring buffers,



This picture shows details of the outside valve-gear of the model

and model screw couplings. The line is also equipped with models of various types of wagons.

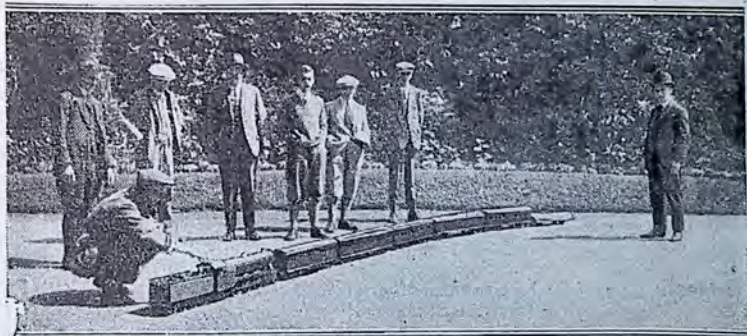
The locomotive itself is a really fine piece of work. Its exterior is an exact replica of the real "Flying Scotsman," and some idea of the perfection of detail may be gained from the close-up picture at the top of this page.

But for the fact that you know that it is a photograph of the model, you might quite easily take it for the real thing.

At the foot of this page is a photograph showing the model in its Surrey garden, with its scale-model train.

The relative size of the engine and coaches is clearly shown against the interested group standing about it.

Not many boys can hope to own such a magnificent miniature railway, but the ordinary indoor model line of modest dimensions gives the young enthusiast just as much fun and satisfaction. It should be remembered also, that a model railway instructs as well as it amuses the boy of a mechanical turn of mind. Fathers, please note!



The track is a perfect model of that used on the British main-line railways, and the actual size of the garden "Flying Scotsman" can be clearly seen in the photograph

## A MODERN KNAVE OF HEARTS!



Billy Bunter, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, has a special weakness for tarts! He has an unerring "nose" for them, and can usually track them down, however carefully they may be concealed. Once he has discovered them, Billy does not waste time wondering whom they belong to—he just wires in! At tart eating, Billy Bunter has the Knave of Hearts beaten hollow!

# SNOW BOUND



The Chums of the School in the Backwoods featured in a rousing Story of the Canadian Wild.

By *MARTIN CLIFFORD*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

Christmas Eve

JINGLE, jingle!

The sleigh bells rang merrily through the frosty air.

The early dusk of the Canadian winter had closed in, and the stars, as they came out one by one, glittered like points of fire in a sky of steel.

Round the Lawless Ranch the plains lay white under a winding sheet of snow. There had been a heavy fall for several days, and light flakes were still fluttering down in the starlight of Christmas Eve.

Frank Richards looked out of the doorway of the ranch-house and drew his fur collar closer about his neck.

"Here's the sleigh," he said cheerily.

Bob Lawless followed him out. The big sleigh, with its three steaming horses, was ready. Rancher Lawless stood in the doorway and glanced rather uneasily at the sky.

"I guess there's more coming down," he said. "You'll have to be careful, Bob. I hardly think you ought to go."

"But we've promised to call for the Lawrences, popper," said Bob Lawless, "and Molly will be waiting."

"And we've got to call for Beaulero coming back," said Frank Richards. "We can't leave them in the lurch, uncle."

Mr. Lawless nodded.

"I know you're a careful driver, Bob," he said. "Look out for drifts and don't take risks."

"Nary a risk," said Bob cheerily. "Safe as houses, popper! Haven't I driven a sleigh from here to Fraser in mid-winter?"

"Well, off you go!" said the rancher, still rather dubiously. "If it wasn't for the dance at the mission——"

"But it is!" said Bob brightly. "The big dance of the year, popper, and Molly waiting in her glad-rags. Think of that!"

The rancher laughed.

"Well, take care, that's all," he said.  
"Off with you!"

The chums of Cedar Creek climbed into the sleigh, and Bob Lawless took the "ribbons."

Thick rugs were wrapped round them, in addition to fur coats and fur caps that covered head and ears, and left little more than the nose visible.

Billy Cook was holding the horses. He let go at a signal from Bob. The whip cracked, the bells jingled, and the sleigh was off.

Out on the smooth snow the sleigh glided, gathering speed as it went.

The rich grassland was deep under snow, which stretched for miles on all sides. In the distance leafless frosty trees loomed shadows.

Clatter, clatter! Jingle!

"Ripping, isn't it, Franky?" remarked Bob Lawless, when the ranch-house had vanished behind and the sleigh was skirting the timber on its way to the upper valley.

"Topping!" answered Frank.

"The popper's a bit of a weather prophet, but I guess he's off the mark this time," said Bob. "The snow's slacking off. A few flakes like this won't hurt even Molly."

"No fear!"

"There's the Cherub's shebang," said Bob, pointing with his whip, as a light gleamed out across the snow.

The sleigh ran within a hundred yards of the Beauclerc cabin. Frank and Bob were to call for their chum, Vere Beauclerc, and his cousin, Algy, on their way back from the Lawrences' homestead. It was a great occasion at the mission—the dance on Christmas Eve, when Mr. and Mrs. Smiley entertained all the young folk of the section, and the boys and girls of Cedar Creek School turned up in great force.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Frank suddenly.  
"There's Beau!"

A fur-clad figure was running towards the sleigh through the snow from the direction of the remittance-man's cabin.

Bob Lawless pulled in his horses.

Vere Beauclerc came up, panting.

"Coming along?" asked Frank.

"You're going over to the Lawrences?" asked Beauclerc.

"Yes, to call for Molly and Tom."

"Father says the weather's likely to be thick to-night," said Beauclerc. "He doesn't seem to think it quite safe——"

"Just what popper seemed to think," said Bob cheerily. "But he's let us come, all the same. You come along with us, Cherub!"

"If you're going, I certainly will."

"Jump in, then!"

"I thought I'd tell you what father said," remarked Beauclerc. "But he said that if Mr. Lawless let you go, I could go, too. If you fellows come a cropper, I'd rather be with you."

"No coppers this journey. Ready?"

And Bob cracked his whip again, and the sleigh rolled on.

"Jolly glad you're with us, Beau!" said Frank Richards. "Where's Algy?"

Beauclerc laughed.

"Sorting out some beautiful evening clothes that he brought from England," he answered. "He's going to turn up at the dance in style."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Algy!" chuckled Bob. "His evening clobber will make a sensation at the mission dance, as much as his top-hat did at Cedar Creek. All the girls will want to dance with Algy. I guess we shall be left out in the cold!"

And Bob drove on merrily.

The Thompson River, frozen fast and hard as iron, was left on the right, and the sleigh bells jingled cheerily through the main street of Thompson, past the "Press" office and the Occidental Hotel and Gunten's store and the Red Dog.

Then out on the north side of the town by an invisible track that Bob Lawless followed without a fault.

Lights gleamed ahead at last—the lights of the Lawrence farmstead.

With a jingle of bells and a fusillade of whip-cracks, Bob Lawless drove up to the farm-house and stopped his steaming team.

There was no need to knock. The farmhouse



Bob Lawless made a sudden slash with his whip—caught Keno Kit full in the face. The ruffian reeled in his saddle, then pitched backwards to the snow. (See Chapter 2.)

door flew open at the sound of the sleigh bells, and ruddy firelight gleamed out into the snow.

Molly and Tom Lawrence were ready.

Molly's pretty face showed prettier than ever among her furs as she came out to the sleigh. Kate Dawson came with her, and brother Tom followed. The sleigh was large, but it was well filled. But there was still a corner for Algy if that elegant youth was ready when the sleigh passed the Beauclercs' cabin en route to the Mission Hall.

"Hustle along!" called out Bob. "Can't keep the horses standing! Now, then, all aboard?"

"Buck up, Molly!" said Tom Lawrence. "Give Frank a shove!"

"Lots of room," said Frank Richards, laughing. "Here's your cloak, Molly. Here's your rug, Kate. Now, then, Tom; squeeze in!"

Tom Lawrence squeezed in next to Kate Dawson. Old Mr. Lawrence tucked rugs round the young people, and Bob's whip cracked again.

"Off!"

And the sleigh whirled away through the flakes.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Held Up!

"**M**ORE SNOW!" remarked Beauclerc.

The light, fluttering flakes had thickened, and snow was coming down more heavily, as the sleigh glided back through the main street of Thompson town. A fat figure appeared, and waved a furl-gloved hand at the sleigh, and yelled:

"Stop for me!"

"Chunky Todgers!"

"Give us a lift, Bob!" roared Chunky Todgers.

Again the sleigh halted.

"Roll in, Chunky! You'll have to let Algy sit on your head when he gets in. The more the merrier!"

"I say, it's jolly cold, ain't it?" gasped Chunky Todgers. "Give a chap room! I've got a bag here. Mind you don't drop it, Franky!"

"What on earth are you taking a bag for?" demanded Tom Lawrence.

Chunky gave a fat wink.

"Grub!" he answered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's refreshments at the mission dance, you fat clam," said Bob Lawless. "Old Smiley always does us well."

"I guess there ain't refreshments going and coming back, though," answered Chunky Todgers sagely. "I haven't got much——"

"It only weighs about a ton!" remarked Frank Richards.

"Well, there's a ham, and some corncakes, and a pudding, and some sausages and things," said Chunky. "It's nearly an hour since I ate anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was hungry last time I went, I know that," said Chunky Todgers warmly. "You give me my bag."

And the bag reposed on Chunky's fat knees as the sleigh rattled and jingled on again.

The snow thickened as the party turned out of Thompson, and glided along by the frozen river. Thick clouds were blotting out the stars now, and Bob Lawless glanced once or twice anxiously at the sky. It was pretty clear that Mr. Lawless' foreboding had been well-founded, and that there was a heavy fall coming on. But the rancher's son had driven through heavy snowfall before.

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Tom Lawrence, as the sleigh turned from the river, and struck across the plains for the three-mile run to the Mission Hall.

"What's which?" asked Frank.

"We're being followed!"

"My hat!"

Frank Richards looked back.

The snow-clouds were blotting out the stars, and a dim twilight reigned on the plains. Through the dimness a form was seen—the figure of a cloaked horseman, looming up eerily.

"Silly jay, to be riding in this!" said Chunky Todgers. "What the thunder is he following us for?"

"Lost the track, and using the sleigh as a guide, perhaps," said Frank Richards.

"I guess that's it."

As the sleigh ran on, the little party looked back several times at the lonely rider in the mist and snow.

"He's overtaking us," said Beauclerc presently.

With a thudding in the snow the horseman came alongside the dashing sleigh, and a hoarse voice shouted:

"Stop!"

Bob Lawless did not stop, but he glanced round.

"What's the trouble?" he called back.

"Stop!"

"Stop be blowed!" answered Bob, with more force than elegance. "Go and chop chips, whoever you are!"

"Stop!" shouted the horseman again. "Do you want me to drop your leader?"

There was a glitter of steel in the faint light as the horseman's hand came from under his cloak.

Molly Lawrence gave a cry.

"My hat! It's a thief!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "He's trying to hold us up. My only hat!"

"It's Keno Kit, of the Red Dog," said Vere Beauclerc quietly. "Are you going to stop, Bob?"

Bob Lawless set his teeth.

"Nary a stop!" he said tersely.

The whip cracked and the reins shook, and the team galloped on. For the moment the horseman was left behind. But the school-boys and schoolgirls, peering anxiously back, saw the dim figure riding furiously through the falling flakes.

Crack!

Through the frosty air and the jingling of the sleigh-bells came the sudden report of the revolver.

The bullet sped through the air high over the sleigh. It was a threat—so far.

Bob Lawless drove on savagely.

It was a race now.

Keno Kit, as the man was called, was one of the loafers of the Red Dog Saloon in Thompson; and no doubt he had expended his last cent in tanglefoot, or in the game of euchre, at the Red Dog, and was "out" to make a "raise" by any means that came to hand.

The desperate ruffian was reckless of consequences.

Probably he was celebrating Christmas in his own way by a "bender" at the Red Dog, and his dollars had run out, and he was desperate. His object was to go "through the Christmas party in the sleigh"—perhaps to steal the horses and sleigh, which were worth a very large sum.

It was evident that he meant business, at all events.

He drove on his horse savagely with whip and spur, and drew alongside the sleigh again at last.

His hard face was flushed with rage. He rode beside the trampling team, and flourished his revolver at the schoolboy driver.

"Halt!" he shouted.

Bob Lawless did not reply.

He made a sudden lash with the whip, and caught the ruffian full across the face.

There was a wild yell from Keno Kit as he reeled backward in the saddle.

His horse stumbled in the snow and went over, and the ruffian landed on his back.

"Bravo!" shouted Frank Richards.

Bob Lawless drove on furiously.

It was less than a mile to the Beaulercs' cabin, whither the highwayman would scarcely dare to follow. Keno Kit scrambled out of the snow, pouring out a string of savage oaths.

Crack, crack, crack!

He was firing recklessly after the sleigh.

There was a sudden whinny of pain from the leader, and he went plunging wildly into the drift, dragging the other horses down with him.

The next instant the sleigh was on its side, and the occupants were rolling into the snow.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### In Deadly Peril

BOb Lawless scrambled up, and rushed to the kicking, plunging horses. His first thought was for them. Frank Richards and Beaulerc helped the two girls to their feet.

"He's coming!" yelled Chunky Todgers.

Through the snow, now falling in thick masses, came the horseman, riding furiously, his horse knee-deep in snow, churning it up as he rushed.

"Look out!"

Chunky Todgers' bag had burst open by the overturned sleigh, and packets of "grub" and a stone bottle had rolled into the snow. Frank Richards spotted the stone bottle and caught it up.

"Look out!" yelled Chunky. "That's my peppermint!"

But Frank Richards did not heed. Chunky Todgers' supply of peppermint was not an important matter at that moment.

As Keno Kit came plunging up through the snow, Frank Richards hurled the stone bottle with a deadly aim.

The ruffian received the missile full on his brutal, stubbly face, and it struck him like a bullet.

He gave a gasping howl, and pitched off his horse.

"On to him!" panted Beaulerc.

Bob Lawless was too busy with the horses to help, but the other fellows rushed at the fallen ruffian. They knew that their only chance was to tackle him before he rose.

Vere Beaulerc was the first to reach him, and he hurled himself upon the dazed ruffian.

Keno Kit, who was making a dizzy effort to rise, was flung back, with Beaulerc's knee on his chest.

The next moment the other fellows were upon him.

The ruffian sank into the snow under a shower of blows. Tom Lawrence grabbed away his revolver, and the butt of the weapon crashed on Keno Kit's head.

The horse, frightened by the fracas, was dashing away through the snow, with trailing reins and dangling stirrups. Keno Kit squirmed in the snow, struggling feebly and howling for mercy.

"Give me the shooter, Lawrence." Vere Beaulerc grasped the revolver. "Now, you scoundrel, hoof it!"

He jammed the muzzle to Keno Kit's ear. "Let up!" gasped the ruffian. "I guess I give in. Let up!"

"Get out, you rascal!" said Frank.

Keno Kit staggered up.

There was no fight left in him, and Beaulerc's finger was on the trigger of the revolver and his look showed that he was quite ready to shoot.

Keno Kit staggered away dazedly on the track of his runaway horse, and the snow and the twilight swallowed him up in a few moments.

"I guess we're clear of him," panted Lawrence. "Cheer up, Molly, it's all right!"

"We'll be going again in a few minutes," said Frank.

"I say, where's that bottle?" howled Chunky Todgers. "Look here, Richards, my peppermint's lost!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Why couldn't you chuck something else at him!" demanded Todgers indignantly. "Look here, you help me look for that bottle—it's tramped in the snow somewhere—Yaroooooh!"

Frank Richards took the fat and wrathful Chunky by the collar, and sat him down in the snow.

Then he ran to help Bob Lawless.

During the tussle with Keno Kit, Bob had succeeded in cutting free the injured horse, and getting the other two upon their feet.

The schoolboys gathered round the sleigh to set it right.

Bob Lawless' face was very grave as he examined it.

"Anything up?" asked Lawrence.

"One of the runners is smashed," answered Bob quietly.

"Phew!"

"I guess it can't be moved."

"Oh!"

"We're only a mile or so from my home," said Beaulerc. "We can get help there—"

Bob Lawless looked at the falling snow.

The whole sky was blotted out now. Snow was coming down in great masses, and piling up round the sleigh and the horses. The injured horse, already at the point of death, was covered with it. The chums of Cedar Creek looked at one another with serious faces.

The sleigh was hopelessly wrecked, and only two horses remained, and the snow-storm was fairly coming on now.

"Hang the man!" muttered Bob, between his teeth. "We should have been close to the cabin by this time, and I guess it would have been too thick for us to get on to the Mission. But now—"

He broke off.

"Can't we walk to the cabin?" asked Molly Lawrence, in a low voice.

Bob did not answer.

Well he knew that it was impossible to cross the plain on foot and live.

"There are the horses!" muttered Frank.

"Keno Kit's done for, if he doesn't find his horse," said Lawrence.

"Serve him right!" muttered Bob. "He's the cause of all this! Most likely he'll be under six feet of snow by the morning. But we—"

"We can't stay here!" whispered Kate Dawson.

Chunky Todgers came up with a stone bottle in his hand and a cheery smile on his fat visage.

"I've found it!" he announced.

"Found what?" snapped Bob.

"My peppermint!"

"You silly chump!"

"Oh, I say! I was afraid Frank had broken the bottle, biffing it at the bulldozer," said Chunky. "But it's all right! I say, what are you all looking so jolly serious about? Is my grub lost?"

"Oh, dry up, for goodness' sake!" said Bob crossly. "You fellows, you can see the snow—nobody could get through that on foot. Look how it's coming down. There's the two horses, but—"

He stared into the shadows.

"Two of us could go for help on the horses," said Beaulerc.

Bob Lawless nodded.

"After this blow is over!" he said. "Get into the sleigh now—it's all the shelter we've got!"

It was almost a blizzard that was raging on the plains now. An icy wind from the frozen slopes of the Rockies came across the flats like a knife-edge, and heavy flakes whirled in it.

The dead horse was hidden from sight now; the two remaining animals shivered and whimpered. On horse or on foot, it was impossible to get through the snowstorm. Molly and Kate were wrapped in rugs in the sleigh, their faces very pale now. Bob Lawless and Frank covered up the horses with cloths as well as they could, and followed their companions into the slanting sleigh. Thicker and thicker the snow came down, and its level rose higher and higher round the wrecked sleigh.

There was a grunt from Chunky Todgers as he drove his teeth into a corncake. Whatever might betide, Chunky Todgers was not likely to lose his appetite.

Bob Lawless uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Stop that!"

"Eh! Stop what?" ejaculated Chunky.

"Stop gorging, you fat clam. We may want every ounce of that!"

"Oh, I say!"

Bob Lawless took the bag away from the fat Chunky, who blinked at him speechlessly. A chill fell upon the party in the sleigh. Up to that moment they had not looked at the situation as serious—it was too terrible to realise. But they realised it now. They were snow-bound on the open plain, and if help was long delayed, it was the shadow of death that hung over them!

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER

##### Snow Bound.

**T**HICKER and thicker the snow came down. Black darkness, broken, only by the glimmer of the snow, enwrapped the sleigh.

Kate Dawson was crying softly; but Molly was calm, though very quiet. The blizzard was growing fiercer, and even a well-found sleigh, with an experienced driver, could not have won through the storm then. For the Cedar Creek party there was nothing to do but to wait—and hope!

Frank Richards & Co. thought of the Mission Hall—of the rafters hung with lanterns and holly, of the light feet pattering to the strains of the wheezy Mission piano

and the fiddler from Kamloops. The dance at the Mission was in progress by that time, though the rough weather would have made the attendance unusually thin. And within a few miles of the merry scene, here they lay—snow-bound and in grim peril.

The night grew older.

Still the snow was coming down, thickly, heavily. It was round the sleigh like a sea of white, several feet deep. The horses were almost buried in it as they shivered under their coverings. There was nothing to do but to wait—and waiting was dreary.

Sleep came to their help at last.

Molly Lawrence, with her head resting on Frank's shoulder, slept peacefully, and gradually the others dozed.

Chunky Todgers, after in vain endeavouring to reclaim his provisions, resigned himself to slumber—the next best thing in Chunky's opinion.

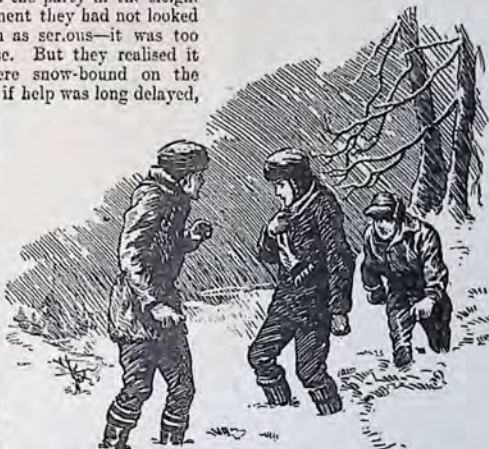
Frank Richards was the last to sleep.

It was warm enough in the closely-packed sleigh under the thick fur cloaks and rugs. It was not till the dim morning sun was glimmering through the snowflakes that the Cedar Creek party awoke.

Bob Lawless rubbed his eyes and looked round him.

The wind had fallen, and the snow was coming down lightly. The blizzard had passed off in the night.

The two horses were no longer to be seen.



"I—I'm done!" Frank gasped, as he staggered in the deep snow.  
"I guess it's the same with me," Bob Lawless muttered. "We—  
we can't win through!"  
"Heaven help us!" muttered Beauclerc. (See Chapter 4.)

The bitter cold had been too much for them, and they had sunk in the snow and lay frozen like iron under the spotless covering.

Round the sleigh was a sea of snow and mist which blotted the sight at a distance of a few yards.

Bob Lawless rose to his feet and stepped from the sleigh upon the frozen body of a horse with a foot of snow over it.

Molly opened her eyes.

"I say!" Chunky Todgers was awake now. "I say, isn't it lucky I brought some grub with me? I'm awfully hungry. You give me my grub, Bob Lawless. I'll whack it out with you fellows, of course!"

"Shurrup!" grunted Bob.

"But, I say, I'm hungry!"

"Dry up!"

Chunky Todgers gave a snort of indignation. As a matter of fact, Chunky was not the only member of the party who was hungry.

"Christmas morning!" said Beaulclere, with a shiver.

"What will our people be thinking?" muttered Lawrence.

"It is useless to think of that."

"They'll be searching for us, anyhow," said Lawrence. "What the thunder are we going to do, Bob? Where are the horses?"

Bob pointed to the snow.

"Oh! We—we can't get away, then?"

"I guess a horse couldn't get through these drifts, anyhow."

"We're lauded," said Frank Richards, as cheerfully as he could. "We've got to make the best of it!"

"I'm not afraid!" murmured Molly.

"Nothing to be afraid of," said Bob sturdily. "We—we've only got to get help."

"That's all," murmured Frank.

"I've been snowbound before," said Kate. "But that was in a cabin, with fire and food and shelter. But here——"

She shivered.

"We've got food," said Bob cheerfully.

"Thanks to Chunky for that. I guess it's lucky he's such a greedy clam!"

"Look here——" began Chunky hotly.

"There's enough in Chunky's bag to last

us a couple of days on strict rations," said Bob. "We may as well begin now."

"Strict rations!" murmured Chunky. "Oh, dear!"

"Lucky we gave you a lift, Chunky!" grinned Bob.

"Ye-es, isn't it?" said Todgers, rather doubtfully, however.

Bob Lawless examined the supplies and handed out the rations. It was a frugal breakfast, but it made the snowbound party feel better. Chunky Todgers sighed deeply when Bob wrapped the remainder of the provisions in the bag. His eyes followed them mournfully. Chunky was a good fellow, and was quite willing to "whack" out his supply; but he really considered it would have been wiser to whack it out more liberally, and trust to luck for the morrow.

Bob Lawless was leader, however, and Bob was not in the habit of trusting to luck for the morrow.

"I say, Bob," murmured Chunky, "I've got an idea——"

"Well?"

"Suppose we finish up the grub now?" suggested Chunky. "It—it will give us strength, you know, to—to—to——"

"Let me catch you trying to finish up the grub!" growled Bob. "Dry up, Chunky, and go to sleep!"

"Well, I may as well, I guess," said Chunky. "I can bear hunger better when I'm asleep."

And Chunky's melodious snore was soon heard again.

While Chunky was snoring, Frank Richards and Co. held a consultation outside the sleigh.

"We've got to get help," said Bob quietly.

"They're searching for us, of course, already; but they don't know where to look by miles. Two of us had better try to get through this."

Frank Richards gave an almost hopeless look at the sea of snow.

"I know what you're thinking—it's as good as going to a funeral!" said Bob. "It can't be helped; the girls have got to be saved somehow. It's about a mile to Beaulclere's shebang, and if we can struggle through, we're all O.K. I'm going!"

"I'm coming with you, then!" said Frank.

"And I," said Beauclerc quietly.

"Count me in," said Tom Lawrence.

Bob smiled faintly.

"No good all going," he said. "Besides, somebody's got to take care of the girls while we're gone. You'd better stay, Lawrence, as you're Molly's brother. Chunky stays, anyway. We three'll try it."

Frank Richards turned back to the sleigh, and Molly's eyes met his anxiously.

"We're going for help, Molly," said Frank quietly. "Most likely we shall be back before long. Don't worry."

"You cannot get through," whispered Molly.

"We're going to try. Keep in the sleigh, and keep warm. Tom and Chunky will clear away some of the snow here so that you'll have room to move. Keep your pecker up!"

"Oh, Frank!"

"Good-bye, Molly! You'll see us again soon!"

And the three chums of Cedar Creek prepared for the desperate venture.

Bob Lawless led the way, through the clinging mist that hung over the plain, and his comrades followed him unquestioningly. The snow was like a soft barrier that had to be tramped and pushed aside to allow progress to be made, and it was heavy work.

As the three schoolboys proceeded, they left a deep gully in the snow-carpet behind them.

"You're sure of the way, Bob?" Frank Richards asked at last.

His Canadian cousin gave him rather a grim look.

"Almost!" he answered briefly.

They tramped on.

Taking it in turns to lead and force a way through the snow, the three chums pressed on.

They could not see the sun, but a wintry light glimmered faintly through the thick, hanging mists.

Fatigue drew upon them, as they fought their way onward; but with fierce determination they stuck to their task.

For two hours or more they struggled on; and still the snow was thick about them, and the mist closed suffocatingly in upon them.

Frank Richards stopped at last.

"I—I can't keep on, Bob," he gasped. "I—I'm done!"



Algy Beauclerc's eyeglass glittered as he pulled the steaming sleigh-horses to a stop. "Found you—what?" he said to the worn, spent chums. "The blessed tenderfoot!" gasped Bob Lawless. "Who'd have thought he could even handle a sleigh?" (See Chapter 5.)

Bob Lawless breathed hard.

"I guess it's the same with me," he muttered. "We haven't done a quarter of a mile yet. We—we can't win through!"

"Heaven help us!" muttered Beauclerc.

The three schoolboys sat in the snow, too exhausted almost to speak.

Hope was dying in their breasts.

But they did not think of returning. To crawl back through the gully they had made in the snow, and to let the girls know, by their

return, that they had failed, and that there was no hope, was impossible. Somehow, they would contrive to keep on—when they had rested. But in their hearts they knew that there was no keeping on for them.

And it was Christmas Day!

Frank Richards thought of old Christmases—of the merry season in his earlier years in the Old Country. He thought of his sister and his father, far away, little dreaming that he was snow-bound and doomed on that Christmas Day. He struggled to his feet at last.

"We've got to try again!" he muttered.

Crack!

Suddenly through the silence of the mists came an echoing report—the report of a rifle!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Algy to the Rescue!

FRANK RICHARDS & Co. started, and stared through the mists. The report died away in a thousand echoes round them. They looked at one another blankly.

"A rifle!" breathed Bob Lawless. "It's somebody——"

"A signal, perhaps," muttered Beauclerc. "If they are searching for us, it may be a signal——"

"Shout!" said Frank.

The mist was full of echoes, and they could hardly define the direction from which the shot rang.

"Help!"

The three schoolboys shouted together with all the strength they could muster.

Crack!

As if in answer, came a second report.

Beauclerc uttered an exclamation.

"The revolver!"

He felt in his pocket hastily. He still had the revolver that had been taken from Keno Kit.

"Good!" exclaimed Bob joyfully.

"They'll hear that——"

"There are two cartridges in it," said Beauclerc.

"Let them go!"

Vere Beauclerc pointed the revolver into the air and pulled the trigger twice in rapid succession.

Crack! Crack!

The reports rang loudly across the snow.

Then the chums listened.

Had the signal been heard? Had it been understood?

Bob Lawless grasped Frank's arm suddenly squeezing it in his excitement.

"Listen!" he breathed.

"Bells!" shouted Frank. "Sleigh bells!"

Jingle, jingle!

Never had the merry sound of sleigh-bells sounded so musically in the ears of the chums of Cedar Creek.

Jingle, jingle, tinkle, tinkle!

"This way!" shouted Bob.

"Help, help!"

Through the mists the heads of two steaming horses loomed up, plunging through the snow.

"Look out!"

"By gad! Here they are!"

It was the voice of Algernon Beauclerc—the dandy of Cedar Creek. The horses plunged to a halt, and the bells ceased to jingle. The three chums crushed through the snow towards the sleigh.

"Algy!" shouted Beauclerc.

An eyeglass glittered from the sleigh. Algy was alone in it, handling the reins. A rifle lay beside him.

"Hallo, you fellows!" said Cousin Algy, cheerily. "Glad to see you! Merry Christmas, by gad!"

"That blessed tenderfoot!" stuttered Bob Lawless. "Who'd have thought he could even handle a sleigh? By gum!"

Algy grinned.

"Found you—what?" he asked. "Where have you been, eh?"

"Snow-bound."

"Yaas, I thought so. No end of a row goin' on at the ranch!" yawned Algernon.

"Your pater's out in a sleigh, Bob, and the cattlemen are searchin', and my Uncle Beauclerc is with them, and Old Man Lawrence—no end of a big fuss. I offered my services, and what do you think they said? Better stay at home and keep my feet warm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I didn't!" grinned Algy. "I trotted down to Thompson, and hired a sleigh and a gun, and here I am. My idea to pop off the rifle every now and then as a signal, you know. You heard it—what?"

# A "HOLD-UP" IN THE FROZEN WEST!



To face page 240.

Brought Down!





The chums missed the dance at the Mission, but there were dances enough to follow at the ranch, and the boys of Cedar Creek enjoyed themselves immensely—especially Chunky, although he was generally too busy to dance! (See this page.)

"Yes, and we were jolly glad to hear it!" gasped Frank.

"Yaas, I suppose so! But where are the others?"

"Left with the sleigh—we were going for help!" said Bob.

"You've found help, old top! Let's go and round up the rest of the giddy party," said Algernon. "You can drive if you like. These gees are a bit skittish, and they've made my arms ache. Hungry? I've no end of stuff in the sleigh!"

"Well, my hat!" said Frank.

The three schoolboys clambered in, and Bob took the reins. With light hearts they drove back to the wrecked sleigh, and the jingle of the bells told Molly and her companions that help was coming. Progress was slow through the heavy snow, but the snow-drawn camp was in sight at last.

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom Lawrence as Algy's sleigh came plunging up.

"Bravo!" yelled Chunky Todgers. "Have you got any grub?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Algy touched his fur cap to Molly and Kate, whose faces were very bright now.

"Merry Christmas!" he said politely. "Can I help you to change carriages? Then we'll move on."

Chunky Todgers' mouth was full, and his jaws were busy when the whole party were crammed into Algy's sleigh; the whip cracked, and they rolled away to a merry jingle of bells.

Christmas Day was cheery enough, after all, at the Lawless Ranch. The dance at the Mission had been missed by Frank Richards and Co., but there were dances enough to follow at the ranch during the Christmas festivities, and Molly and Kate, and the chums of Cedar Creek, enjoyed themselves immensely; and Chunky Todgers, though he did not worry much about dancing, found plenty of enjoyment in a way he liked better, and for weeks afterwards Chunky's face wore an ecstatic expression when he referred to the Christmas pudding.

THE END.



# GRUNDY'S GREAT IDEA!

*A Story of the Amateur  
Detective of St. Jim's*

By  
**MARTIN CLIFFORD**

The Head's stern gaze was fixed on Tom Merry as the Captain of the Shell read the contents of the amazing anonymous letter. (See Chapter 2)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER Trouble for Somebody!

**O**UTRAGEOUS!" Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked round quickly as they heard that sharp, angry exclamation.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were studying the notice-board in the hall when Mr. Linton's voice fell upon their ears.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had an open letter in his hand. The juniors had noticed him taking it from the postman a few minutes before.

Mr. Linton had stopped near the doorway to slit open the letter.

He was reading it now, with a face pale from anger, and eyes glittering under knitted brows.

"Shocking!"

Tom Merry & Co. could not help looking at him. Mr. Linton was a very quiet, reserved, and self-contained gentleman as a rule. It was but seldom that he betrayed emotion of any kind.

But he was evidently very much disturbed now.

"My hat!" murmured Monty. "Something's up, my infants! Two to one it's a dunning letter!"

But Tom Merry and Manners did not grin at Lowther's little joke. Judging by the expression on the Form-master's face, it was no time for jokes.

What there could be in the letter to produce such an effect upon this quiet, cold Form-master was a mystery. It was no business of the juniors', of course; but they could not help feeling surprised.

Mr. Linton finished reading the letter, and crumpled it in his hand.

"Outrageous!" he repeated. "Shocking! Infamous!"

He looked round him, and saw the surprised faces of the Terrible Three. With the letter crumpled in his hand, he strode towards them.

"Do you know anything of this?" he exclaimed.

"Of—of what, sir?" ejaculated Tom Merry, utterly astonished.

"This letter—this outrageous letter!"

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Manners.

Mr. Linton looked at them angrily and searchingly, his hand gripping the offending letter till his finger-tips were white.

"You know nothing of it?" he snapped.

"No, sir!" said Tom, in wonder. "How

should we know anything about your letter?"

"Someone must know—someone in this school—doubtless in my Form!" rapped out Mr. Linton. "You are head of the Form, Merry—"

He broke off.

"However, it shall be examined into. The culprit shall suffer for it. Bless my soul, I have never heard of such a thing! Outrageous! Shocking! Infamous! Unheard-of! Unprecedented!"

And after that series of startling ejaculations the master of the Shell strode away, with rustling gown, towards the Head's study.

The Terrible Three exchanged glances of wonder. Monty Lowther tapped his forehead in a significant way.

"Fairly off his crummet!" he murmured.

"Wandering in his mind!" said Manners. "What the merry thunder should we know about his letter?"

Racke of the Shell came along the passage, and stopped to speak.

"Anything the matter with Linton?" he asked.

"Off his rocker, I think," said Lowther.

"He's just passed me, looking like a Hun," said Racke. "He's gone to the Head. It means trouble for somebody. He had a letter in his fist. You chaps been playing a joke on him?"

"No, fathead! Linton isn't a man to be joked with!"

"Well, it's queer," said Racke. "He seemed awfully upset. You're such a giddy humorist, Lowther—"

"Not guilty!" grinned Lowther. "I don't give Linton any of my humour. Too jolly dangerous!"

"Bai Jove, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus D'Are, of the Fourth Form, came from the direction of the Head's study. "What's the mattah with Mr. Linton?"

"Dotty!"

"Weally, Lowthah, that is hardly a respectful way to speak of your Form-mastah! Somethin' is w'ong. I was in the Head's study, when he came wushin' in without even knockin' at the door."

"He seems upset about a letter he's just

had," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I know why!"

"The Head was surprised," said Arthur Augustus. "He told me to cleah off—not in those words, of course—so I cleahed off. Linton is simply wagin' about somethin'!"

"It's jolly queer!" said Racke. "I don't see what there could be in the letter to send Linton on the rampage like that."

"Yaas, he is on the wampage, and no mistake! It's vewy queeah!"

"A dunning letter, most likely," said Lowther. "Perhaps it's to remind him that he hasn't paid the last instalment on something—"

"You uttah ass!"

Several other fellows had observed Mr. Linton's extraordinary behaviour, and they joined the group discussing it.

But, unless the master of the Shell was off his rocker, as Monty Lowther suggested, there seemed to be no explanation.

"It's a joke of some sort on him," said Racke. "I shouldn't like to be the joker if Linton spots him. Rather awkward just now to have a reputation as a merry humorist."

"Ba Jove! Surely you haven't been playin' a twick on your Form-mastah, Lowthah! I should wegard that as vewy bad form."

"I've already told Racke that I haven't," said Lowther, with an angry glance at the cad of the Shell. "If you can't take my word, Racke—"

Racke shrugged his narrow shoulders.

"The question is, whether Linton will take your word," he said.

"Linton will take my word, right enough—which is more than he would do with yours!" said Lowther, disdainfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Yes, that's a fact," chimed in Grundy of the Shell. "You're known to be such a thundering Prussian, Racke."

"Oh, rats!" growled Racke.

"Did you say 'rats' to me?" inquired George Alfred Grundy, pushing back his cuffs.

"Oh, shut up, Grundy!" said Tom Merry. "Don't begin scrapping here! There's going to be trouble for somebody!"

"I don't allow anybody to say rats to me! I never stand any rat," said Grundy. "I'll trouble you to put up your hands, Racke, you smoky, sneaking worm!"

"You don't allow anybody to say rats to you?" asked Monty Lowther, interposing.

"No, I don't."

"You lick 'em if they do?"

"Yes!" said Grundy, with great emphasis.

"Good! Rats!"

"What?"

"Rats!" said Lowther cheerfully.

"Rats!" chimed in Tom Merry and Manners, grinning.

"Yaas, wathah—wats!" chortled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Rats!" said Blake of the Fourth.

"Rats!" howled every other fellow present, in chorus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

George Alfred Grundy looked round him. The great Grundy had a way of looking upon himself as a sort of privileged person, though upon what grounds nobody had ever been able to discover. And now his lordly pronouncement that nobody was allowed to say "rats" to him was followed by a general chorus of "Rats!"

"You silly asses——" began Grundy, rather taken aback.

"Rats!"

"Look here——"

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get on with the licking," said Monty Lowther encouragingly. "There's only seven—eight—ten of us here, and we're all waiting. Take us all at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to lick the lot of you!" roared Grundy. "If you say rats to me again——"

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy made a jump at Lowther. At the same moment everybody made a jump at Grundy. Bump!

The great George Alfred smote the floor with a resounding bump, and roared. His lofty person was handled without the slightest ceremony.

"Better give him another," said Monty Lowther. "Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Linton came rushing down the passage with a frowning brow. The juniors crowded back from the sprawling Grundy.

"Cease this at once!" snapped Mr. Linton. "Merry, kindly follow me into Dr. Holmes' study."

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry followed his Form-master, wondering what was wanted, and feeling a little uneasy.

Trouble was evidently in store for somebody, and it looked now as if that somebody was Tom Merry.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### By Whose Hand?

DR. HOLMES was looking very grave and severe when Tom Merry entered the study at the heels of the Form-master.

On the desk before the doctor lay the letter. Tom Merry's eyes turned upon it at once. How that letter could concern him or any other St. Jim's fellow he could not guess. But it was easy to see that it was in connection



Angrily, Mr. Linton gripped the offending letter as he glared at the Terrible Three. "Do you know anything of this?" he demanded. (See Chapter I.)

with that mysterious letter that he had been sent for.

"Merry!" The Head's voice was deep and stern. "You are aware that Mr. Linton has received a—er—a letter this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

"Do you know anything about that letter?"

"I have already told Mr. Linton that I do not, sir."

"Do not suppose, Merry, that I suspect you of having any concern in this matter. I am questioning you simply because you are captain of your Form."

Tom Merry was glad to hear that.

"You may look at the letter, Merry. The author of it must be discovered. Perhaps, after reading the letter, you may be able to let in some light on the matter?"

In utter wonder, Tom Merry took up the letter from the desk, at a sign from the Head. There was silence in the study while he read it. His face changed as he read, for the letter ran:

"Mr. Linton.—Everybody is fed-up with you. It's high time you retired. Why doesn't the Head give you the sack? He ought to!—Yours truly,

"RATS."

Tom Merry gasped. That anyone should have the audacity to write such a letter to a Form-master was astounding!

Naturally, the writer had not signed his name. Neither, evidently, had he written the precious epistle in his ordinary handwriting. The writing was carefully disguised, sloping backwards.

Tom Merry had never seen it before, and he had a pretty clear general idea of every fist in the Form he belonged to.

No wonder Mr. Linton had been disturbed when he received that astonishing letter. It was enough to make any Form-master's hair stand on end.

Tom could guess that it was some member of the Shell who had written the anonymous letter; some young rascal who owed his master a grudge, and had taken this method of paying it.

Certainly it must have been a St. Jim's fellow, and almost certainly one of the Shell.

There was no reason why a fellow in any other Form should bear a grudge towards the Shell master.

Tom laid the letter quietly on the desk when he had read it.

Both the Head and Mr. Linton were watching him. Tom realised it, and the colour crept into his cheeks.

"What is your opinion of that letter, Merry?"

"It's rotten, sir," said Tom.

"Ahem!" The Head coughed. "Quite so."

"It's a rotten, caddish trick!" said Tom. "Nobody in the Shell thinks like that about Mr. Linton. We all respect him."

"Thank you, Merry," said Mr. Linton.

"But some member of your Form, Merry, must have written that letter in order to insult his Form-master in a safe way."

"I—I suppose so, sir," admitted Tom. "I can only say it was some rotten cad, sir, and we should all be down on it if we knew him!"

"You do not know the handwriting?"

"I've never seen it before, sir. I think it's disguised."

The Head smiled.

"It is very plainly disguised," he said. "If you could tell me anything as to the authorship of this letter, Merry, it would be your duty to do so. It is an insult and an outrage."

"I don't know anything about it, sir."

"Very well, Merry; you may go."

Tom left the study.

His face was rather grim as he came down the passage. The crowd of juniors at the corner met him with inquiring looks.

"Well, what's the wow, deah boy?"

"Licked?"

"What's on?"

"It's a rotten trick on Mr. Linton!" said Tom. "Somebody here has written him an anonymous letter, insulting him."

"Bai Jove!"

"What a rotten trick!" exclaimed Grundy. "Somebody in the Shell, do you mean?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I wegard that as a wotten, caddish twick!" said Arthur Augustus. "Only a

mean, cwawlin wottah would w'ite an anonymous lettah!"

"Nobody in the Fourth would do it," remarked Digby.

"Wathah not!"

"Rot!" exclaimed Grundy, at once. "My idea is that it was most likely a chap in the Fourth!"

"Wats!"

"Fathead!"

"Levison, or Mellish, perhaps," said Grundy.

"Nobody in my form would do it; I'm convinced of that. This matter ought to be taken up. Of course, old Linton is rather a trial——"

"Shurrup, you ass!" muttered Tom Merry, spotting Mr. Linton at that moment coming away from the Head's study.

Grundy's back was towards the Form-master, and he did not see him. Grundy was not a fellow to shut up when he was told—not Grundy!

"Don't you jaw at me, Merry! I

say, old Linton is rather a trial, and a chap gets fed-up with him at times; but writing an anonymous letter is a dirty, mean trick, and only a rotten cad would do it!"

"Grundy!"

George Alfred spun round at his Form-master's voice.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "Yes, sir!"

"Did you write that letter, Grundy?"

Grundy jumped.

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you, Grundy."

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Grundy,

indignantly. "Haven't I just said what I think of an anonymous letter-writer?"

"You have made use of a disrespectful expression towards me!"

"I—I didn't know you were listening, sir!"

"What!"

"I—I mean, I didn't see you coming," stammered Grundy. "I—I didn't exactly mean fed-up, sir; only a way of speaking—ahem! I—I——"

"You must find some other way of speaking of your Form-master, Grundy! You will take five hundred lines, and remain in this afternoon to write them out!"

"Oh! What for, sir?"

"For speaking disrespectfully of your Form-master, Grundy!" thundered Mr. Linton.

And he passed on, frowning.

Grundy blinked after him.

"Well, I like that!" he gasped.

"Fancy giving me five hundred lines when I was standing up for him, you

know! Ain't it just like Linton?"

"I regard you as an ass, Gwunday!"

"Five hundred lines!" growled Grundy.

"And I was going to play footer this afternoon! Just think of it! Five hundred lines! My hat!"

"Did you write the letter?" grinned Racke.

"Why, you rotten cad——. Here, lemme get at him!"

Racke beat a hasty retreat. He did not want to argue the matter out with George Alfred Grundy.

The crowd broke up, discussing the matter.



Grundy pushed back his cuffs as he scowled at Racke. "Did you say 'rats' to me?" he inquired, in a war-like tone. (See Chapter 1.)

Tom Merry & Co. headed for the football ground. But footer practice was destined to be interrupted that afternoon. About a quarter of an hour later the order went forth for the Shell to assemble in their Form-room.

Kildare and Darrel and Langton and other prefects shepherded the juniors into the School House. The story of the anonymous letter had spread, and most of the juniors knew what was coming.

The whole of the Shell, School House, and New House fellows were together, assembled in the Form-room. There was little doubt that the culprit was among the assembled juniors, but which one was the culprit was a deep mystery.

Some of the fellows suspected Lowther, whose sense of humour was not always restrained within due bounds. The Terrible Three were inclined to suspect Racke or Crooke or Clampe, whom they regarded as caddish enough to write an anonymous letter.

Some of the juniors, however, declared that the offender was not in the Shell at all, but that the letter had been written by a fellow in another Form altogether, in a spirit of mischief. Grundy was quite sure of it. When Grundy had an idea in his head, a surgical operation would have been required to get it out again. But on this occasion there were a good many who agreed with Grundy. Wilkins and Gunn, his faithful followers, agreed as a matter of course, to save argument. But Talbot and Kangaroo, and Clifton Dane and Glyn, and some more, held the same opinion. They did not like to think that an anonymous cad was a member of their Form.

There was a deep silence in the Form-room when the Head entered. Dr. Holmes' expression showed how deeply his anger had been stirred by the insult to the master of the Shell. There was no doubt that condign punishment awaited the culprit in the event of discovery.

"My boys, are you aware of what has occurred?" said the Head. "An insulting letter has been sent to Mr. Linton, doubtless by a boy in this Form. The culprit is here. I command him to step forth."

Nobody stepped forward. Some of the juniors grinned a little, in spite of the seriousness of the situation. The Head could hardly have expected that command to be obeyed.

"Very well," said Dr. Holmes, after a brief pause. "Merry, take this letter. Every boy present will make a copy of it, and bring the copy to me, signed with his name."

For some minutes the Shell fellows were busy with pen and ink. Tom Merry collected the copies of the letter and laid them upon the Form-master's desk. The Head examined them one by one, comparing them with the original, the juniors waiting in grim silence.

The examination ended, and the Head's expression showed that he had discovered nothing. The writing of the anonymous letter had been too carefully disguised.

Dr. Holmes collected the papers.

"No one here has a confession to make?" he asked.

Silence.

"Very well. The culprit must be discovered, and he will receive a public and severe flogging. I shall sent at once for a handwriting expert from London, as the only means to discover the truth. You may go!"

The Head left the Form-room, taking the papers with him.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "That looks like business!"

"Tremble, villain, that hast within thee undiscovered crimes, unwhipped of justice!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Bow-wow!" said Racke. "What's the good of a handwriting expert? They don't know anything!"

"Well, chaps have been sent to prison on the evidence of handwriting experts," remarked Kangaroo.

"I dare say they have—while the guilty parties went loose," grinned Racke. "Handwriting experts are spoofers."

"Well, I rather agree with Racke for once," remarked Grundy. "Experts are silly asses as a rule. Somebody a bit keener than an expert is wanted for this job, and I dare say somebody will turn up."

And with that mysterious remark, Grundy



"Old Linton is rather a trial, and we get fed-up with him at times," announced Grundy emphatically, and an instant later he almost jumped out of his skin as he heard Mr. Linton's voice from behind him.

"Grundy! Did I hear you make use of a disrespectful expression towards me?" (See Chapter 2.)

of the Shell walked away, a deep and thoughtful frown upon his brow. And Tom Merry & Co. went down to the football ground and dismissed the matter from their minds.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

**Grundy Takes the Matter in Hand!**

"**H**ARD lines, old chap!"

"Very hard cheese!"

Wilkins and Gunn were sympathetic.

The great Grundy had to stay in his study that fine frosty afternoon, and grind out five hundred lines for his incautious remarks concerning Mr. Linton. It had not pleased Mr. Linton at all to hear that Grundy sometimes got fed up with him, and regarded him as a trial.

"I'd do some of the lines," said Wilkins generously, "only old Linton is so jolly keen. He'd spot my fist at once."

"Same here," remarked Gunn.

"We'll look in on you presently, Grundy."

"Don't go," said Grundy.

"Ahem! We were thinking of footer."

"I want you."

"Look here, we can't sit about the study like hens, watching you do lines, you know," said Gunn.

"I'm not going to do any lines," explained Grundy. "Levison of the Fourth will do them at one-and-six a hundred. I can afford it, I suppose?"

"Oh, I see!"

"I've asked him to come here— Oh, here he is!"

Levison of the Fourth entered the study, and nodded to the Shell fellows. Levison's peculiar gift of imitating handwriting had got him into trouble sometimes; but at other times it was a source of income to him. Fellows who had plenty of money—like Grundy—were quite willing to get their lines done at eighteenpence a hundred, and the needy Fourth-Former was glad of the chance of turning an honest penny in that peculiar way.

"Here you are," said Grundy. "Five hundred lines, Levison. I suppose you've got time to do them?"

"Certainly. That's seven-and-six."

Grundy tossed three half-crowns upon the table, and Levison picked them up.

"Give us a sample of your fist," he said.

Grundy scrawled a couple of lines upon a sheet of imput paper.

"By the way, I suppose you didn't write that letter to Linton?" he asked.

"No. Did you?"

"You cheeky ass—"

"Well, you asked me," said Levison.

"That's different. You're the sort of worm to do a thing like that," said Grundy, "and you're so clever at disguising your hand, too."

"Well, I can't say as much for you. You're not jolly clever at anything," said Levison. And he left the study, grinning.

Wilkins and Gunn grinned too.

"I don't see anything to snigger at in Levison's cheek!" growled Grundy.

"Ahem! No. Coming out, old chap?" asked Wilkins. "Might as well get down to the footer, as Levison's doing your lines."

"Something else on," explained Grundy.

"Of course, old Linton is a bit of a Hun in some ways. But I don't believe in disrespect to a Form-master. I think it's bad form."

"Well, if you think so, that settles it," remarked Wilkins, closing one eye at Gunn.

"Exactly!" assented Grundy. "The chap who wrote that anonymous letter was a sneaking cad. I don't believe it was anybody in the Shell."

"Looks as if it was, though."

"Somebody Linton has been going for," remarked Gunn. "He was ragging Crooke and Racke yesterday, I remember, no end, for missing prep. Racke was caned. And Clampe was licked the other day for having cigarettes in his pockets. Some chap Lintoo has been going for—"

"Rot!"

"Look here, I don't think it's rot. I think—"

"Rot!" repeated Grundy. "Linton goes for me more than for anybody else. If you go to work on those lines, you'll work out that it was I who wrote the letter, and that's silly rot! See?"

"Oh!" said Grundy's chums, rather taken aback.

"Why, only yesterday Linton was jawing me blind about my construe," said Grundy.

"He was ratty because I hadn't done my prep. I told him plainly that I hadn't had time, and that only seemed to make him more waxy. He's rather an unreasonable old merchant. Now, I've got the honour of the Form at heart, and I'm going to prove that it wasn't a Shell fellow who wrote that letter."

"But suppose it was?"

"I've already said it wasn't."

"But how do you know it wasn't?" demanded Gunn.

"There's such a thing as intuition," explained Grundy.

"Into which?"

"Intuition, fathead! I've satisfied myself that it wasn't a Shell chap. I can depend on my own judgment, I suppose? My idea is that it was some cad in another Form. Perhaps Linton has trod on his toes some time. Linton is a bit of a cough-drop sometimes, you know. For the honour of the Form, I'm going to find out who it was, and show him up. I regard it as being up to me."

"Oh! I—I see."

"But what about the giddy expert? Can't you leave it to him?"

"Experts are mostly fools, if not spoofers," said Grundy. "Why, if they spring a handwriting expert on us, he may find out that the letter was written by some chap who never wrote it at all. Handwriting experts are a

danger to the public. He may find out that you wrote that letter, Gunn."

"I!" ejaculated Gunn. "But I didn't!"

"I know you didn't. But the expert may think that you did. Or Wilkins, or me, or Merry, or anybody. You see, the Head will pay him a fee for his services, and he's bound to do something to earn the money; and, besides, he won't like to confess to a failure. So you may depend upon it that he'll find the chap who did it, and very likely it will be a chap who didn't do it at all."

"What a cheery prospect!"

"So, you see, it's up to any fellow who has a bit more brains than the average chap to find out the guilty party before the expert begins his rot. That's me!"

"Oh, that's you, is it?" gasped Wilkins.

"Me all over," said Grundy calmly. "I flatter myself that I'm a bit brainier than most chaps in this school. I don't brag of it; it just happens, that's all."

"You—you don't brag of it!" stuttered Wilkins.

"Not at all. No swank about me. I might just as well brag because I happen to be a better footballer than you or Gunny—"

"You happen to be what?" yelled Gunn.

"Don't yell at me, Gunny! Now, I'm going to take up the matter and see it through, and you chaps can help me," said Grundy graciously. "You remember I did some detective bizney once—finding Manners' camera when it was lost—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy jumped up wrathfully as his chums burst involuntarily into a roar.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"N-n-nothing!" gasped Wilkins. "Quite right, Grundy, old scout; I remember. And you're going to detect the anonymous letter-writer, the same as you did the chap who hid Manners' camera?"

"That's it. I don't mind showing you chaps my method—"

"Your—your method?"

"My method," said Grundy. "First of all, there's the process of elimination."

Wilkins and Gunn looked at one another.

"That means that you eliminate the fellow who couldn't have done it," explained Grundy. "I eliminate the Shell. I'm sure that nobody in my Form played a dirty trick like that; and for the honour of the Form I'm going to prove it. Now, as it wasn't a Shell fellow, it was somebody else."

"Go hon!" murmured Wilkins.

"I eliminate the fags next. They never have anything to do with Linton, and a kid in the Third or Second wouldn't think of a caddish trick like that."

"Hadh't you better eliminate the rest of the school while you're about it?" asked Wilkins.

"Don't be a funny ass, George Wilkins! Having eliminated the Shell and the fag Forms, that leaves us the Fourth and the seniors. It's unlikely that it was a chap in the Fifth or Sixth; not impossible, mind, but unlikely. So we'll begin work on the Fourth."

"I think I'd rather begin work on footer."

"We start on the Fourth," said Grundy, unheeding. "First of all, I've got to have the letter. I saw it in the Form-room when I copied it out, but that was only for a minute or so. There may be finger-marks on it—"

"Did you take hold of it in the Form-room?"

"Eh! Yes."

"Then very likely there are finger-marks on it."

"I may as well warn you, Wilkins, that if you start being funny on a serious subject, there'll be a row in this study!" said Grundy daskly. "Now, you fellows stay here while I go and get the letter."

"You're going to the Head for that letter?"

"Of course. I need it for my investigations."

"And—and you're going to tell the Head that?"

"Certainly!"

Grundy left the study. Wilkins and Gunn regarded one another speechlessly for a moment or two.

"Well, this beats it!" said Wilkins, at last. "I say, Gunny, are we going to waste a ripping afternoon watching Grundy play the giddy ox?"



"Have you come here to confess, Grundy?"

Grundy jumped.

"Confess! My hat! Oh, no, sir! Not at all. 'Tain't that."

"Then what do you want?"

"I should like to have the letter, sir."

"What? What do you mean?"

"I'm going to find out who wrote it, sir," explained Grundy. "I regard that as my duty, for the honour of the Shell."

"Indeed?"

"Exactly, sir! I hope to be able to get a clue from the letter itself——"

"A—a clue?"

"That's it, sir; perhaps finger-prints, or something. I'm rather a keen chap, sir, and I'm pretty certain I shall find out the rotter. May I have the letter, sir?"

"You may not have the letter, Grundy! I intend to place it in the hands of the expert, who arrives to-morrow."

"Of course, sir, I should take every care of it."

"Possibly," said the Head, drily.

"May I see it, then, sir, if I mayn't have it?"

The Head was looking very intently at Grundy. Naturally he knew nothing of Grundy's mighty brain-powers, which had led the Shell fellow to take up the matter; Grundy had never exhibited any unusual intellectual powers; rather the reverse, indeed. To the Head, this seemed a barefaced attempt to get at the incriminating letter, for the purpose of destroying it before it could reach the hands of the expert gentleman; which meant, of course, that Grundy was the writer of it. George Alfred little

The Head collected the papers bearing the writing of every member of the Form. "I shall send at once for a handwriting expert from London," he said. (See Chapter 2.)

"No jolly fear!" said Gunn emphatically.

"Let's get down to footer."

"You bet!"

And they went.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Under Suspicion

"Come in!" said Dr. Holmes, as a tap came at his door.

The Head was thinking over the mysterious affair of the anonymous letter when Grundy of the Shell arrived. The affair had disturbed the Head very much. It was a painful shock to him to find that there was any boy in the school who was audacious and disrespectful enough to insult his Form-master in that underhand way. He did not look pleased at the sight of George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy came in full of confidence. George Alfred lacked many things, perhaps; but he had never lacked confidence in himself.

"Excuse me, sir!" said Grundy. "It's about that anonymous letter, sir."

The Head fixed his eyes upon him.

knew what suspicions he was laying himself open to.

"You may see it," said the Head, at last. "There!"

Grundy took the letter and examined it carefully. The Head watched him equally carefully. There was little doubt left in his mind as to the identity of the guilty party. Grundy's keen interest in the letter seemed to him to have but one possible explanation.

"I should like to take this with me, sir," ventured Grundy.

"Very probably. You will, however, do nothing of the sort!"

"Oh! May I see the envelope it came in, sir?"

"For what reason?"

"I want to see when it was posted, sir. There may be a clue in that."

"You may see the envelope, Grundy," said the Head grimly.

Grundy took the envelope and examined it minutely. It was addressed in the same back-sloping hand as the letter; and the postmark was "Rylcombe," the date that of the previous day, Tuesday, and the hour of collection 9.30.

"Posted last night, sir," said Grundy, making a note in a big pocket-book.

"Undoubtedly," said the Head. "Were you absent from the school last night, Grundy?"

"I, sir? Oh, no!"

"Did you give this letter to someone else to post for you?"

"I, sir?" said Grundy dazedly. "I never saw the letter, sir, till you showed it to all of us in the Form-room this afternoon!"

"I trust you will be able to prove as much, Grundy. Your conduct is very suspicious."

"M-m-my conduct suspicious?" gasped Grundy.

"Yes. I cannot believe that you were guilty of merely folly and impertinence in coming here, Grundy; I fear that you had a deeper motive. However, I shall leave the matter over till Mr. Spother arrives. You may go!"

Grundy left the study, almost dazed. The Head suspected him! Him, of all fellows! What possible grounds could the Head have

for suspecting him? Grundy couldn't see any.

"Well," murmured Grundy, as he went down the passage, "of all the silly idiots——"

It is much to be feared that Grundy was alluding to his headmaster in those disrespectful terms.

"What do you think?" he began, as he entered his study. Then he stopped. Wilkins and Gunn were not there.

Grundy gave an impatient snort. He looked from the window, and saw Wilkins and Gunn busy on Little Side with the footballers.

"Talk about fiddling while Rome's burning!" murmured Grundy bitterly. "Playing footer, when I've told them I want them! Well, my hat!"

Levison of the Fourth came into the study with a bundle of impot paper, which he placed on the table.

"There you are!" he said.

"Thanks! Hold on a minute, Levison."

"Hallo! What's up?" answered Levison, pausing in the doorway.

"Were you out of bounds last evening before nine-thirty?"

Levison stared.

"I want to know," said Grundy.

"Lemme see," Levison reflected. "Yes; I had a little run. I went up to town——"

"To town?" ejaculated Grundy.

"Yes; and had a theatre, and a champagne supper afterwards at the Savoy. I got home at four in the morning. Ta-ta!"

Levison walked away, leaving Grundy staring. After a little reflection, however, it dawned upon Grundy's powerful brain that the playful Levison had been pulling his leg.

"Cheeky rotter!" muttered Grundy. "This looks rather black against Levison—prevaricating when I ask him a plain question. I think it was most likely Levison; he's that sort of chap. But I'm going into it thoroughly—very thoroughly. Fancy the Head suspecting me! But I'll jolly soon show him he's mistaken."

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Grundy Sees it All!

"**B**AT Jove, heah's Gwunday!"

There was a general grin as Grundy arrived on the football ground. Wilkins and Gunn were to blame. They considered that

Grundy's new effort in the detective line was too good a joke to keep, so they had generously taken everybody else into it to share their entertainment.

"Found the assassin yet, Grundy?" asked Jack Blake affably.

Grundy stared.

"I'm not looking for an assassin, you young ass! I'm hunting for that anonymous letter-writer. And I've got a clue—several clues, in fact."

"From the bloodstains?" asked Herries.

"Have you found the weapon the crime was committed with?" questioned Digby, with owl-like gravity.

Grundy looked puzzled. It always took Grundy a considerable time to discover when anybody was making fun of him.

"You don't seem to understand," he said.

"This isn't a murder case. It's about that anonymous letter—"

"Did anybody hear the report of the pistol?" asked Julian of the Fourth.

"There wasn't a pistol in the matter."

"What about the body, then?"

"Yes, have you found the body?" asked Blake. "You can't establish the crime without finding the body. That's law."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "I weally twust you will be able to find the body, Gwunday. Have you looked in the dorn?"

"And in the waterbutt?" asked Kerruish.

"And under Linton's desk?" asked Reilly.

Grundy looked bewildered.

"There isn't a body in the case, you young asses!" he laboured to explain. "It's simply a matter of an anonymous letter, written by some chap in the Fourth."

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Blake.

"I've taken up the matter, and by my methods I have eliminated the other Forms. It was some kid in the Fourth."

"Some what, you cheeky ass?"

"Kid!" said Grundy.

"I wufuse to be called a kid, Gwunday! I wegard you as an impertinent duffah!"

"Don't prevaricate, D'Arcy."

"What?" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"I've come here to question you, and I warn you not to prevaricate."

"Bai Jove! Will you hold my eyeglass, Blake, while I give that howlin' ass a feahful thwashin'?"

"Oh, cheese that!" said Grundy. "This begins to look rather suspicious to me, D'Arcy. Where were you last evening?"

"Where—where was I?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, you." Grundy pointed an accusing finger at the swell of St. Jim's. "Mind, I'm not accusing you yet."

"Accusin' me! Gweat Scott!"

"But I require particulars of your movements last evening. Did you post a letter in Rylcombe for the nine-thirty collection?"

"I wufuse to weply to your impertinent questions, you uttah ass!"

"You admit it?"

"No, you cwass ass!"

"Do you deny it?"

"Wathah not! I don't deny anythin', you howlin' chump!"

Grundy made a note in his notebook, Arthur Augustus looking at him the while as if he would eat him. Other fellows were gathering round now, to look on, with grinning faces. George Alfred Grundy pursuing his investigations was a sight worth seeing.

"Blake!" rapped out Grundy, when he had made his note.

"Hallo!" said Blake.

"Are you aware whether D'Arcy went out of gates last evening?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, did he, or did he not?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"Of course it isn't, you young ass! You don't seem to have any sense," said Grundy impatiently. "I require to know whether D'Arcy went out of gates to post a letter? Did he or did he not?"

"Oh, I see! You want me to answer?"

"Yes, at once, you young duffer!"

"Because one rode a horse—"

"Eh?"

"And the other rhododendron."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy stared blankly at Blake, whose face was quite serious.

"Isn't that the answer?" asked Blake.

"The—the answer! What do you mean?"

"If that one's wrong, I'll try another. Because the dog-rose when he saw the cow-slip," said Blake cheerfully.

"You silly young ass!" roared Grundy.

"Wrong again?" asked Blake. "My dear chap, I'll keep it up as long as you do. Because one chalks the walks, and the other walks his chalks."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, delighted at the expression on Grundy's face.

"More prevarication!" said Grundy fiercely. "I can see that you are backing up D'Arcy. That makes it pretty clear. I suppose it's no good asking you, Digby, if D'Arcy went out of gates last night?"

"No good at all," grinned Dig.

"Or you, Herries? Do you know anything about it?"

"I know I'd dot your silly eye if you say that Gussy wrote that rotten letter, you potty chump!" grunted Herries.

"Prevarication all round!" said Grundy, closing his notebook with a snap.

"I think I've worked it out pretty clearly. I rather suspected Levison at first, but it's pretty clear now that it was D'Arcy. A fellow doesn't prevaricate unless he's got something to hide." "If you accuse me of pwevarication, you astoundin' ass—" began Arthur Augustus sulphurously.

"Come with me!" said Grundy magisterially.

"Eh?"

"I'm going to take you to the Head."

"Tut-tut-take me to the Head," stammered Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, now I've found you out. Come on!"

Grundy dropped a heavy hand on the shoulder of the dazed swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus simply blinked at him.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Mad as a hattah! The poor fellah ought to be undah westwaint!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you coming quietly?" demanded Grundy.

"Bai Jove, no feah! If you do not wemove your paw at once, Gwunday, I shall have no wesome but to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Come on!"

Here, hands off, you cheeky fags!" yelled Grundy, as a crowd of the Fourth closed in on him. "Don't you dare to interfere with— Yaroooh! Hands off, I say! Yah! Oh—oh, jiminy!"

"You've been funny long enough," grinned Blake, as the crowd of juniors swept George Alfred Grundy off his feet. "Frog's-march, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take him in, and lock him in his study!" chuckled Reilly. "Sure, the gossoon isn't safe to be let loose!"

"All hands on deck!" roared Blake.

All hands were laid upon the struggling Grundy. Grundy was struggling with all his strength, in a fury of rage and indignation. After discovering the guilty party in such a masterly manner, Grundy had rather expected admiration; certainly he had not expected the frog's-march. But the frog's-march was what he received. His only comfort was the



"This begins to look rather suspicious to me," said Grundy, as he pointed an accusing finger at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Where were you last evening?" (See Chapter 5.)

reflection that geniuses generally are misunderstood and misjudged by the many-headed multitude. But that reflection did not afford him much comfort at the moment. He went towards the School House in the grasp of a dozen pairs of hands, his arms and legs flying wildly, and his head occasionally tapping on the hard, unsympathetic quadrangle.

With yells of laughter, Grundy of the Shell was rushed up to the House. It was somewhat unfortunate that Mr. Railton stepped out of the House just as the merry juniors reached the steps. The procession halted suddenly.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the House-master. "What does this mean? What are you doing? Release Grundy at once!"

George Alfred Grundy was dropped like a hot potato. He gave a roar as he landed on terra-firma. Grundy's head was hard, but terra-firma seemed a little harder.

"Yaroo!"

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Railton, frowning.

"Only—only a little game, sir," stammered Blake. "Grundy's been—ahem!—playing the giddy ox, and we were—ahem!—taking him home."

"The uttah ass, sir——"

"What!"

"I—I mean the feahful clump, sir, thinks that I wote that wotten lettah to Mr. Linton, sir, so we gave him the fwog's-march, sir!"

"Indeed! Grundy, get up at once!"

Grundy was getting up, gasping.

"I'm sorry to have to accuse D'Arcy, sir," he spluttered; "but I feel it my duty to remove suspicion, sir, from innocent chaps. There's no telling whom that expert will pick on when he gets here. I feel it my duty, sir—grooh!—to report that D'Arcy wrote that anonymous letter, sir!"

"And what proof have you, Grundy, of this statement?" said Mr. Railton sternly, motioning the indignant Arthur Augustus to be silent.

"I've worked it out, sir. The letter was posted in Rylcombe last evening, and D'Arcy was out of gates——"

"Were you out of gates, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"He prevaricated when I questioned him!" hooted Grundy.

"I did not pwevawicate, you uttah ass! I refused to answah the widiculous questions of a howlin' idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please!" said Mr. Railton. "If you have no other grounds for your statement, Grundy——"

"It's proved that it was somebody in the Fourth, sir."

"Indeed! How?"

"Because it wasn't anybody in the Shell, sir!"

"And how do you know that?"

"Oh, I'm sure of it!" said Grundy confidently. "My judgment, sir—I may say that my judgment's never at fault!"

"Grundy, you have made a foolish and wicked accusation against a perfectly innocent person!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Grundy in astonishment.

"You must be more careful, Grundy! In order to impress the necessity for care upon your mind, you may follow me to my study!"

"Wha-a-at for, sir?"

"To be caned, sirrah!"

"M-m-me caned!" said Grundy dazedly.

"Yes. Follow me at once!"

Grundy followed the House-master like a fellow in a dream, leaving the Fourth-Formers grinning. Although a great man had once declared that England expected every man to do his duty, this was what Grundy got for doing his duty. It was enough to discourage any fellow less determined than George Alfred Grundy.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### Sticking to It

RACKE of the Shell met Grundy as he came away from the House-master's study, rubbing his hands. Grundy was in a bad temper. The licking did not hurt him very much—Grundy was hard as nails. But the injustice and misunderstanding did. He felt bitterly—as he had felt a good many times before—that there was nobody at St. Jim's who really understood him. It had been

just the same at Redclyffe, his previous school—nobody had really understood Grundy.

Racke looked sympathetic. As Racke of the Shell did not care two pins for anybody in the wide world but his own-precious self, anybody but Grundy might have guessed that Racke had a motive for pretending sympathy. But Grundy did not guess it—he was not quick at guessing. Sympathy was grateful and comforting to George Alfred at that moment.

"Too bad," said Racke. "I couldn't help admiring the way you dealt with the matter, Grundy. Railton didn't seem to see it, though."

Grundy smiled bitterly.

"Railton isn't a bad sort in his way," he said. "A chap can overlook a lot, considering that he got winged fighting the Huns. Otherwise, I think I should have dotted him on the nose this time—I do, really! He's a horn fool, Racke! He doesn't understand me in the least!"

"It's too bad! And you had worked it out that it was D'Arcy of the Fourth who wrote that letter."

"Well, on the whole, I don't exactly say it was D'Arcy, as he denies having been out of gates last evening. You see, he prevaricated when I questioned him—that was what made me suspicious. It may or may not have been D'Arcy—certainly, it was somebody in the Fourth. Did you see any Fourth Form kid out of gates last evening, Racke?"

Racke started.

"I? I wasn't out!" he said.

"Yes you were! Don't you remember? Crooke bunked you up over the wall soon after calling-over—I came along when he was doing it!"

Racke drew a sharp, quick breath.

"I—I remember! You needn't mention that to anybody, Grundy. Fellows might jump to the conclusion that—that—"

"I sha'n't mention it, of course. I know it wasn't you wrote to Linton."

"You—you know that?"

"Certainly; it wasn't a Shell chap! Upon the whole, I rather think it was Levison of the Fourth. He's that sort!"

"I shouldn't wonder," assented Racke, his

eyes gleaming curiously. "I suppose you haven't got any proofs against Levison yet?"

"I've got the matter in hand!" said Grundy loftily.

"Er—yes! I understand you've got the letter from the Head—that letter old Linton got to-day?"

"No; the Head wouldn't give it to me for some reason. I could see that he suspected me," said Grundy, more in sorrow than in anger. "Me, you know! I suppose he thought I'd written the letter, and got scared about the handwriting expert seeing it, and wanted to get rid of it. Me, you know!"

"The expert is pretty certain to spot the writer, don't you think?" said Racke.

"I don't believe in those dashed experts!" replied Grundy.

"Still, he might."

"Oh, he might, of course! More likely to spot the wrong chap, in my opinion. People have been sent to chokey on experts' evidence!" said Grundy scornfully.

"I suppose the Head wouldn't part with the letter till the expert's seen it. I—I don't suppose the chap who wrote it foresaw about an expert being sent for. It—it's rather a queer sort of thing for the Head to do," muttered Racke.

"Just the thing he would do, instead of leaving it in my hands!" sneered Grundy.

"And so the Head's got the letter, not Linton?"

"The Head's got it," assented Grundy.

"You saw it in his study?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I suppose he keeps it in a safe place? Did you see?"

"He put it back in his desk," said Grundy. "Are you thinking that I might take it, all the same? I wouldn't do that."

"No. I suppose the desk's kept locked?"

"Not that desk. I mean the desk he writes on," said Grundy—"not the big one he locks. He put it in the drawer—the writing-table, you know. But I shouldn't think of taking it without permission."

"He doesn't lock the drawer of the writing-table," said Racke. "I've noticed that. He doesn't keep important things in that."

"All the same, I shouldn't think of routing

among his things," said Grundy. "Thanks for the tip, but that isn't in my line. I'm going to pursue my investigations without the letter."

And Grundy went his way. Racke glanced after him with a very peculiar expression. It had not dawned upon Grundy's powerful brain that the cad of the Shell had been pumping him for information.

When Grundy came into the Common-room that evening he was greeted by a general chortle.

"Who's guilty now, Grundy?" asked Gore.

"Never mind who!" said Grundy loftily. "I'm working up the case. I fancy I shall have the party before that expert chap arrives."

"Isn't it Gussy?" grinned Gore.

"I'm not sure. But I know one thing—it was a chap in the Fourth!"

Grundy was quite convinced of that. The frog's-march in the quad would have convinced him, if there had been nothing else.

"Which of us, Great Judge?" asked Julian.

"You'll know jolly soon!"

"You blithering ass!" said Tom Merry. "It's plain enough that it was a Shell chap. And I don't envy him when the expert gets to work to-morrow."

Racke looked up.

"You think the expert will spot the handwriting?" he asked.

"I suppose so; that's what he's for."

"Looks like a fair catch for the fellow who did it, then," remarked Racke carelessly.

"Yaas, wathah; and a jolly good thing, too!" said Arthur Augustus. "It was vewy deep of the Head to think of sendin' for a handwritin' expert—vewy!"

Grundy snorted.

"The expert's no good. He's only going to see Shell chaps' handwriting, and the chap who did it is in the Fourth!"

"Grundy wants another frog's-march!" remarked Blake. "All hands on deck!"

"Ha, ha! Collar him!"

Grundy executed a strategic retreat from the Common-room just in time. Wilkins and Gunn found him in his study at bedtime,

cogitating upon the knotty problem he had set himself to solve.

"Got him yet?" asked Wilkins facetiously.

"Wait and see," replied Grundy mysteriously.

And Wilkins and Gunn chuckled on their way to the dormitory. They were content to wait and see, convinced that all they would see would be George Alfred Grundy playing the giddy ox.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Gussy's Great Wheeze!

"I HAVE an ideah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that announcement in the Fourth Form dormitory when the juniors were turning in.

To Arthur Augustus' surprise there was no outburst of enthusiasm. There was not even a reply. The Fourth Formers went on taking their boots off quite sedately.

"I made a remark, Blake," said Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"Did you?" yawned Blake.

"Yaas."

"Well, don't make any more, there's a good chap."

"I wegard you as a wude ass, Blake. I wepeat that I have an ideah!"

"Whose?" asked Julian.

"My own, of course, you duffah! Any of you fellahs feelin' inclined to get up to-night an' jape Gwunday?"

"Too jolly cold," said Blake. "Better go to sleep."

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort! I considah—"

"Shush! Here's Darrel!"

Arthur Augustus shushed as the prefect came into the dormitory. Darrel of the Sixth saw lights out when the juniors had turned in. But when the door had closed behind Darrel, Arthur Augustus sat up in bed.

"Pway, don't go to sleep yet, deah boys! I have an ideah for pullin' Gwunday's silly leg."

"Oh, rats! Good-night!"

"It is a wipping ideah, Blake!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I do not regard that as an intelligent remark, Blake! Gwunday has been cheeky



"You have made a foolish and wicked accusation against a perfectly innocent person!" said Mr. Railton, as he looked down at the scared and dishevelled Grundy. "Follow me to my study."  
"Wha-a-at for, sir?" "To be caned!" answered Mr. Railton. (See Chapter 5.)

ass enough to suppose that I wote that wotten letter to old Linton. I wegard it as bein' up to me to make Gwunday sit up. The silly ass is playin' the detective, and I am goin' to give him somethin' to detect. See?"

"No; I don't see," mumbled Blake sleepily.

"I am going to visit the Shell dorm, when all those boundahs are asleep, and play a twick on Gwunday. As he is so awf'ly clevah at detectin' things, I think it would be wathah amusin' to set him detectin' who took his clobbah away an' hid them in the box-room—what?"

Blake gave a sleepy chuckle.

"Wathah a wippin' ideah—what?" chortled Arthur Augustus.

"Topping!"

"You can come if you like, deah boy."

Blake yawned portentously.

"It's jolly cold," he said. "You can tell me all about it in the morning. That will be just as good."

"Don't be a slackah, Blake!"

Snore!

"Would you like to have a hand in that wippin' jape on Gwunday, Hewwies?"

Snore!

"What about you, Dig?"

Snore!

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and laid his head on the pillow. Evidently, ripping as the jape was, nobody wanted to leave his bed on a bitter winter night to carry it out. But Arthur Augustus was determined. Grundy's absurd accusation had made the swell of St. Jim's wrath, and he felt that one good turn deserved another.

Arthur Augustus settled down to sleep, intending to awaken at eleven sharp. As a matter of fact, midnight was striking when his eyes opened again.

He sat up at once and rubbed his eyes.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Is that eleven or twelve? I wathah think I have overslept myself."

He shivered a little. It was very cold. For a moment or two he thought of giving up that joke on Grundy, ripping as it was. But the anticipation of being chortled at in the morning stiffened his resolution. He slipped out of bed and hurried on his clothes and a

pair of slippers. Then he approached Blake's bed and shook Blake by the shoulder.

Jack Blake came out of the land of dreams with a start, and blinked round into the darkness.

"Wha-a-at's that?" he stuttered.

"Don't be alarmed, deah boy! It's only I," said Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "If you would care to come with me aftah all——"

"You frabious ass——"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Go back to bed, fathead, and let a chap sleep!"

"I will let you sleep if you choose to be a slackah, Blake; but I am not goin' back to bed. I am goin' to jape Gwunday."

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

Arthur Augustus left his chum to repose, and turned to Digby's bed. Dig woke up suddenly. Arthur Augustus meant to pull him by the shoulder, but in the darkness he caught Dig's nose by mistake.

"Goooooch!" was Dig's awakening remark. "What's that? Groogh!"

"Bai Jove! Is that your nose, Dig?"

"Gurrrg! You silly ass!" came in sulphurous tones from Digby. "What are you pulling a chap's nose for in the middle of the night, you howling chump!"

"I wefuse to be called a howlin' chump, Dig!"

"Go away, fathead!"

"Weally, Dig, I was only wakin' you up to ask you—pway don't go to sleep, Dig—to ask you if you'd like to come with me and jape Gwunday——"

"Go away!" hissed Dig.

"Wouldn't you like to come, deah boy?"

"No, ass! No, fathead! No, jabberwock!"

"I wegard those expwessions as oppwobious, Dig, and I wefuse to discuss the mattah any furthah!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

Robert Arthur Digby snorted and turned over. Arthur Augustus crossed over to Herries' bed.

"Hewwies, old man——"

"Hallo!" grunted Herries, waking up.

"What silly idiot is that?"

"Weally, Hewwies, it is—I——"

"Knew it was some silly idiot! Go away!"

"If you call me a silly idiot, Hewwies——"

"Shut up!"

"Hewwies, if you would care to come with me and jape Gwunday——"

"Come a little nearer, will you?" asked Herries, blinking into the darkness, and taking a business-like grip on his pillow.

"Certainly, deah boy. What—— Ya-wooooooh!"

There was a yell in the dormitory, and Arthur Augustus sat down with surprising suddenness as Herries' pillow landed on his noble nose.

"Now, come and have another!" said Herries.

"Yawwoh! You uttah ass——"

"You'll have the prefects here soon, Gussy, you chump!" growled Blake. "Why can't you keep quiet?"

"That uttah wottah, Hewwies, has struck me with a pillow! I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'!" panted Arthur Augustus.

"Come on!" snorted Herries. "I've got the bolster ready!"

"I wegard you as a wottah, Hewwies!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"For goodness' sake, shut up!" came Dick Julian's voice. "You're waking the whole blessed dormitory!"

"Julian, deah boy, would you care to come with me and jape Gwunday, and set an example to these wotten slackahs?"

Snore!

"Bai Jove, you have gone to sleep vewy suddenly, Julian! Clive, are you awake? Clive, deah boy——"

"No; I'm fast asleep, old chap," replied the South African junior promptly, and there was a chuckle in the dormitory.

"Weally, Clive——"

"Will you go back to bed, Gussy, or shall I get up to you?" asked Jack Blake.

"I wefuse to go back to bed, Blake; and if you get up to me, as you express it, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'! Kewwuish, would you care to——"

Snore!

"Weilly, old chap, if you would care to——"

Snore!

"Oh, wats! I wegard you as a set of

slackahs!" said Arthur Augustus, in disgust, and he trod away softly to the door. Evidently he was to set out on his voyage alone. And the Fourth-Formers chuckled and settled down to sleep.

Arthur Augustus left the dormitory very cautiously, and closed the door behind him. The passage was pitchy dark. There was not a light in the whole building. The last door had closed for the night.

"Bai Jove, it's feahfully dark!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I twust I shall not wun into anythin'——"

He groped his way along the passage. Fortunately, he knew every inch of the old School House. His slippers made no sound as he trod softly along towards the Shell dormitory.

Suddenly he stopped.

From the direction of the stairs there came a sound as if a stair had creaked under a foot-fall, and then a slight bumping noise.

Then there was a muttered, suppressed exclamation.

Arthur Augustus stood stock-still.

His heart thumped wildly.

There was somebody on the stairs—somebody creeping about silently in the dense darkness.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus under his breath. "Burglars!"

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Arthur Augustus Frustrates a Knavish Trick

BURGLARS!

Arthur Augustus's heart thrilled at the thought. It was the only possible explanation. Certainly, some other junior might have been out of bed on a japing expedition like himself, but such a japer would not go downstairs. And the unknown was on the stairs.

Arthur Augustus listened intently.

Whoever was on the stairs had bumped on a corner of the banisters in the dark. As he strained his ears he heard a faint sound, and he knew that the unseen one was feeling his way downstairs by the banisters.

"A wotten burglah, of course!" murmured Arthur Augustus, recovering himself after the

first startled moment. "Pwobably he has got to the Head's studay for the safe. Or—or powwaps it is some wottah like Cwooke or Wacke goin' to bweak bounds."

He paused.

His first impulse was to call Mr. Railton and give the alarm; but if the mysterious night-walker turned out to be one of the blades of the School House, that would certainly not do. Racke or Crooke was unlikely to go downstairs to get out—the box-room window was an easier exit. And even the blackest of black sheep was hardly likely to be breaking bounds after midnight.

But it was possible, and Arthur Augustus did not want to betray even a rank outsider like Racke or Crooke to punishment. He felt that it was necessary to be cautious.

But it was easily put to the proof. A burglar, certainly, would head for the room where the safe was. Arthur Augustus, on tiptoe and in dead silence, made for the stairs, quite forgetting his intended jape on Grundy of the Shell. He was very careful not to bump into the banisters. Slowly, silently he trod down the stairs, and his ears strained to listen.

There was a faint sound below, and he knew it came from the wide corridor upon which Dr. Holmes' study opened.

"It must be a burglah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "He is makin' for the Head's studay, the wottah!"

He reached the lower corridor. A door opened softly. The unknown had gone into the Head's study.

Arthur Augustus trod softly along the passage. He heard a match scratch, and there was a glimmer of light from the open room.

"Bai Jove, that's queeah!" murmured the junior. It was queer that a burglar should strike matches.

He reached the open door, and, keeping carefully out of sight, peered in.

A figure in pyjamas was standing by the Head's writing-table, with a match burning in his fingers.

The drawer in the table had been pulled out, and the figure was bending over it, scanning the contents.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard with wrath.

Evidently it was not a burglar. It was a junior in pyjamas, and D'Arcy recognised the loud pattern of the pyjamas. He had seen those striking garments before. It was Racke of the Shell who was rummaging in the drawer.

"The utter wottah!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

The match went out.

Arthur Augustus strode into the study and turned on the electric switch. The room was flooded with light.

Racke of the Shell spun round with a gasp of terror.

There was a letter in his hand—a letter he had taken from the drawer of the table. Arthur Augustus did not need telling what letter it was.

"You—D'Arcy!" stammered Racke, in breathless relief. For a moment he had feared that it was the Head.

The swell of St. Jim's regarded him scornfully.

"You uttah cad!"

"Hang you!" muttered Racke. "What are you spying on me for?"

"I am not spyin', you uttah wascal!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"I thought at first it was a burglah!"

"Don't shout, you idiot!" hissed Racke.

"Do you want to wake the house?"

"Weally, Wacke, I am quite indifferwent on that point."

"Turn out the light——"

"Wats!"

"It may be seen!" gasped Racke, in an agony of apprehension.

"I wefuse to turn out the light, Wacke! You have taken a lettah fwom the Head's dwawah. You are a sneakin' thief!"

"You—you don't understand! Shut the door!" panted Racke. "If we're found here——"

"I wefuse to shut the door, Wacke!"

"The—the light may be seen——"

"Possibly," assented Arthur Augustus, calmly. "You have stolen a lettah belongin' to Dr. Holmes, Wacke——"

"I—I haven't! It's nothing—you don't understand——"

"I undahstand perfectly well, Wacke."



D'Arcy saw a pyjama-clad figure standing by the Head's writing-table, a match burning in his fingers. A drawer had been pulled out, and the figure was bending over it, searching the contents. (See Chapter 8.)

That is the lettah to Mr. Linton, and you are takin' it away."

"I—I——"

"I undahstand, you scoundwel!" pursued Arthur Augustus, with rising indignation. "You wote that lettah to Mr. Linton."

"I—I——"

Racke gave the swell of St. Jim's a savage look.

"Well, you are not goin' to steal it!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to allow anythin' of the sort. Aftah postin' a lettah, Wacke, it is no longah your pwoperty. Wep lace that lettah at once!"

Racke's hand closed convulsively on the letter.

"I'm going to burn it, you fool!"

"You are goin' to do nothin' of the sort. Wacke! For one thing, there will be a feahful wov if the Head misses it, and somebody will be blamed for it. And I wefuse to allow a theft to be committed. I should wegard myself as a partay to it, undah the cires. And—— Oh, you uttah wottah!"

Arthur Augustus broke off. He made a stride forward, and picked up a handkerchief that lay on the floor. There was a monogram in the corner of the handkerchief, with the letters "M. L."

Racke shrank back from the look on D'Arcy's face.

"You fwightful beast!" panted Arthur Augustus. "You bwought this heah. You were goin' to leave Lowthah's handkerchief heah so that he would be suspected!"

"I—I——"

"Bai Jove! I think I ought to call the Head at once——"

"You ass!" panted Racke. "Dry up, I tell you! I—I should get the sack! I—I——"

"Yaas, wathah! And you ought to get it, you uttah wascal! Put that lettah back in the dwawah, Wacke, or I will shout out at once for the Head!"

"You—you fool! I—I——"

Racke panted with terror and rage. At the moment some wakeful eye might detect the light in the study, and all would be discovered. And if the swell of the Fourth carried out his threat, there was no

doubt of the discovery. Racke shivered at the idea.

"You—you can take the handkerchief away!" he stammered. "It—it was only meant as a joke!"

"Liah!"

"But—but I'm going to take the letter——"

Arthur Augustus stepped to the door, and opened his lips to shout. Racke gave a gasp of terror.

"Quiet—quiet! I'll do as you say. Quiet!"

"I'll give you one second, then."

The letter dropped from Racke's trembling fingers into the drawer. Arthur Augustus crossed the room to him, and closed the drawer.

"Now get out, you cad!" he said.

Racke gave him a look of hatred.

"Look here, D'Arcy——"

"Get out!"

"It isn't your business! You——"

"Do you want me to thwow you out of this study on your neck, Wacke?"

Racke clenched his fists convulsively, and moved towards the door. Arthur Augustus followed him out of the study. He changed the key to the outside of the lock.

"What are you doing?" muttered Racke, eyeing him with eyes of hatred.

"I am goin' to lock the door, you thief!"

"Oh, hang you—hang you!"

"I wathah think you are more likely to be hanged than I, Wacke, some day."

Arthur Augustus turned off the switch, closed the door, and locked it. Racke heard him withdraw the key from the lock.

"Oh hang you, you meddling fool!"

"If you apply anothah oppwobwious expression to me, Wacke, I will turn on the light, and give you a feahful thwashin' on the spot!"

Racke muttered something indistinctly, and moved away. Arthur Augustus followed him upstairs. The cad of the Shell went back to his dormitory, his object in leaving it quite frustrated. The Head's study was locked now, and the key in D'Arcy's possession, and there was nothing more to be done.

Arthur Augustus returned to the Fourth Form dormitory. After what had happened,

he did not feel inclined to carry out the intended jape on the great Grundy.

"Hallo!" came Blake's sleepy voice. "Is that you, fathead?"

"I refuse to be called a fathead, Blake!"

"What have you done with Grundy's clobber?"

"Nothin'."

"Then you haven't been and gone and done it, after all, duffer?"

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus went back to bed, and slept, with the key under his pillow. But the swell of the Fourth was up before rising-bell in the morning. He scuttled downstairs before anyone else was about, and unlocked the Head's study, and replaced the key on the inside. And he sauntered about the corridor till the housemaids came down, when it was too late for Racke to make any further attempt on the study.

At breakfast Racke gave him a bitter look, to which Arthur Augustus responded with a glance of withering contempt.

After breakfast he joined the Terrible Three in the quadrangle.

"Have you lost your handkerchief, Lowtah, deah boy?" he asked.

Monty Lowther's hand went to his pocket.

"By Jove! Yes."

"Heah it is."

"Thanks!"

"I picked it up, you know," explained Arthur Augustus. And he walked away, without explaining where he had picked it up.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### Grundy Is Called In

"THAT must be the merry expert!"

Morning lessons were over, and the juniors had come out of the Form-rooms, when the stranger arrived at the School House. The Terrible Three regarded him with some interest. They knew that the handwriting expert from London was expected at the school that morning, and they had no doubt that this was Mr. Spother.

He was a tall, thin gentleman, with gold-rimmed glasses perched upon the bridge of a long, thin nose. He had the manner of a gentleman who realised that he was a person

of some consequence. As Monty Lowther remarked, he was evidently no "small potatoes" in his own eyes.

Toby showed him in to the Head's study, and a dozen fellows questioned Toby as he came away. From Toby it was learned that the gentleman was, indeed, Mr. Spother. Mr. Linton was seen going to the Head's study immediately afterwards.

"Now the circus is going to begin!" remarked Monty Lowther. "I suppose you really haven't left anything for the chap to do, Grundy—what?"

"Well, I haven't exactly finished the case," said Grundy. "I've worked it down pretty narrowly, however. It was either Levison or Mellish."

"Why, you silly ass!" ejaculated Levison of the Fourth.

"You howling idiot!" said Mellish.

Grundy gave them a lofty look.

"No good trying to wriggle out of it!" he said. "I've practically got you nailed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle, Tom Merry——"

"Thanks! I will! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom.

"Upon the whole, it looks blackest against Levison," said Grundy.

"You shrieking idiot!" said Levison.

"Any evidence?" grinned Blake.

"Lots. Levison is so jolly clever disguising his hand—that's a very strong point. Then he's the kind of worm who would do such a thing as writing an anonymous letter——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I've traced it out that he was late for calling-over on Tuesday night," went on Grundy. "That looks very suspicious. Of course, he was down in Rylcombe, posting the letter."

"I was helping my minor with his Latin, you howling ass, and forgot the time!"

"Perhaps your minor will bear witness, when you're had up before the Head!" sneered Grundy.

"Oh, go and eat coke, you dangerous lunatic!"

Levison strode away angrily.

"Gwunday, I wegard you as an uttah

ass!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It was not Levison who wrote that lettah to Mr. Linton."

"Do you mean that you confess, D'Arcy?" demanded Grundy.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, come away!" said Wilkins, seizing his chum by the arm. "You're getting dangerous, Grundy. You'll be suspecting me next."

"I might," said Grundy, calmly. "Only you're in the Shell, and I know it wasn't a Shell chap."

"Then we're safe!" grinned Manners. "It's something to be safe, at least, when Grundy starts as a detective!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! As a mattah of fact, it was a Shell chap, and I twust he will be discovahed," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard him as an uttah cad!"

Racke joined the swell of the Fourth as he went into the quadrangle. Racke was looking pale and harassed. He received a glance of withering contempt from D'Arcy as he came hesitatingly to him.

"Don't speak to me, you wottah!"

"Look here, D'Arcy——"

"I wefuse to have anythin' to say to you, Wacke!"

"Look here, I—I don't want you to say anything about last night," muttered Racke, huskily. "You know what they would think——"

"I know what they would know, you mean," said Arthur Augustus scornfully. "But you need not be afraid that I shall betway you, Wacke. I am not a sneak."

"You won't say anything?" muttered Racke.

"Certainly I shall say nothin'. I should wefuse to sneak even about such a cwawlin', cwingin' worm as you, Wacke!"

Racke drew a deep breath of relief. He did not understand or share Arthur Augustus' scruples of honour; but he knew that D'Arcy's word was as good as his bond. He was safe in that direction, at least.

"But I wefuse to have anythin' to do with you, Wacke! You will oblige me by keepin' your distance. I wegard you as a wottah!"

Racke moved away, scowling.

"Bai Jove! I can't stand that chap!" said Arthur Augustus, as he joined Blake and Herries and Dig. "He makes me quite ill, you know. It's wathah disgusting to have to keep his wotten secrets!"

"Whose secrets?" demanded Blake.

"That wottah Wacke's."

"What the dicken's secrets of Racke's are you keeping?"

"I am afraid I cannot answah that question, Blake, as I have told Wacke that I will say nothin'," said Arthur Augustus, cautiously.

His chums stared at him.

"Off your rocker?" asked Herries.

"Pway don't make wude wemarks, Hew-wies!"

"If you've getting mixed up with Racke, and keeping his shady secrets, it's time we took you in hand," said Digby. "Now, what's the secret?"

"I feah that I cannot reweal that, Dig. You see, it is a secwet. I cannot betway even a wottah like Wacke."

"Oh!" said Blake, comprehending. "You bowled him out last night, I suppose. Found him breaking bounds when you were out of the dormitory—what?"

"He was not bwakin' bounds, Blake."

"Then you did find him?"

"I feah I cannot weply to that question, Blake. I do not intend to mention to anyone, even my own pals, that I found Wacke out of his dorm last night."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Herries and Digby.

Arthur Augustus put his eyeglass up, and surveyed his hilarious chums frigidly.

"I fail to see any cause for wibald mewwiment," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as cacklin' duffahs, deah boys!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away with his noble nose in the air.

Meanwhile, the juniors were discussing the expert, who was still shut up with the Head and Mr. Linton, doubtless examining the various fists of the Shell fellows.

Grundy was of opinion that he wouldn't discover anything. In fact, he couldn't, as the Head was only showing him specimens of Shell handwriting, and it was absolutely certain—according to Grundy—that the anonymous letter-writer was in the Fourth. Grundy had not yet decided whether the culprit was Levison or Mellish, but he admitted that it looked blackest against Levison.

Grundy was holding forth on this subject to a grinning group of juniors, when Mr. Linton looked out of the School House, with a grim brow.

"Grundy!"

His voice was hard as iron. Grundy looked round.

"Follow me to the Head's study at once!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Grundy, brightly. "I suppose the expert wishes to consult me, sir."

"To—to what?" ejaculated the master of the Shell.

"To consult me, sir. I have been investigating the matter, sir, and I think I could render very valuable assistance."

"If this is effrontery, Grundy, it will not serve you. Follow me at once!" snapped Mr. Linton.

Grundy, considerably surprised at his Form-master's manner, followed him. He left the juniors looking very queerly at one another.

"You can see what that means!" said Manners. "Surely it couldn't have been Grundy, after all?"

"Rot!" said Wilkins.

"You can see what Linton thinks."

"Grundy!" said Tom Merry. "It can't have been poor old Grundy!"

Grundy of the Shell, as he followed his Form-master, did not seem to have the slightest suspicion what he was wanted for. But the other fellows knew what Mr. Linton's look and tone meant. Grundy was in for it!

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### Very Expert!

MR. SPOTTER had been very busy in the Head's study for some time.

Dr. Holmes greeted the somewhat pompous gentleman cordially, and explained the circumstances to him. Mr. Linton joined

in with a word or two, and the famous expert was soon in possession of the facts.

"As there seems no doubt in my mind that the anonymous letter was written by a member of Mr. Linton's Form, I have collected specimens of the handwriting of every boy in the Shell," said the Head. "They are here."

"Very good, sir," said Mr. Spotter.

"As you see, the writing of the anonymous letter is disguised——"

"That is easily apparent."

"I have compared it with the handwritings of all the Shell boys, but I cannot trace the slightest resemblance."

Mr. Spotter smiled a superior smile.

"That is quite natural," he said. "The trained eye of an expert, however, is quite a different matter. What appears to you difficult, if not impossible, sir, is child's play to me."

The Head coughed. Mr. Spotter's confidence in his powers was unbounded, and the Head could only hope that it was well-founded.

"I should like you to examine this paper first," continued the Head, taking up Grundy's copy of the anonymous letter. "The boy—Grundy—who wrote this paper has laid himself open to very grave suspicion, by an attempt to obtain possession of the letter."

Mr. Spotter nodded, with a very wise look.

"Was the boy aware that you had sent for me?" he asked.

"Yes; I had informed them all of my intention."

"Then he knew what to expect," smiled Mr. Spotter. "Doubtless it seemed to him the only resource, to obtain possession of the letter and destroy it. Of course, when writing it, he had not foreseen this step on your part."

"That is certainly how it appeared to me," said the Head. "But an examination of the handwriting will put the matter to the test."

"Undoubtedly."

Mr. Spotter, seated at the writing-table, proceeded to make the examination, the two masters watching him in silence. The anonymous letter which Arthur Augustus had so narrowly rescued the previous night lay before him on the table. Mr. Spotter had studied it

very closely. He compared it with Grundy's copy, and was observed to nod his head very solemnly. Then he went through the rest of the papers, examining and comparing each one closely.

The examination was not a brief task, and the Head was conscious that it was getting very close to lunch-time; but he did not venture to interrupt the great London expert.

Having examined all the papers in turn, Mr. Spother came back to Grundy's copy, and spent another five minutes upon it. He extracted a microscope from a pocket, and examined both letters again by its aid. There was deep silence in the study.

Mr. Spother turned to the Head at last.

"I have done!" he said.

"You have ascertained——"

"The anonymous letter was written by the person who wrote this," said Mr. Spother, laying his finger upon Grundy's copy of the letter.

"Grundy!" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"His name is Grundy?" said Mr. Spother. "Ah, yes, I see it is written on the paper!"

"And—there is no doubt upon the matter?" asked the Head.

Mr. Spother regarded him with a look of pained surprise.

"Doubt?" he repeated, as if he could scarcely believe his pompous ears.

The Head coloured slightly.

"I—I beg your pardon, Mr. Spother! Of course, there is no doubt, if you assure me that such is the result of your examination."

"My opinion is not usually questioned

sir," said Mr. Spother, with chilling dignity. "I am accustomed to giving evidence in courts of law. Men's liberties, and even lives have depended upon the accuracy of my expert evidence. I should scarcely be likely to make a mistake."

"I am sure I beg your pardon; I did not mean to imply a doubt," said the Head hastily. It was evident that the great man was offended. "But—but to my eye—untrained,

of course—there is not the remotest resemblance between this writing and that of Grundy."

Mr. Spother condescended to smile slightly—very slightly.

"My dear sir, the lack of resemblance is one variety of proof that it was written by the same hand."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"In disguising his hand, the writer has carefully avoided every familiar attribute of his own natural calligraphy."

"Ah! Quite so—quite so!"

"But under a microscopical examination, sir, certain resemblances appear, which have escaped your observation. In

certain slight details, the writer has been unable to avoid betraying himself. It is upon such details, sir, that the expert must inevitably rest his theory. I will amplify. You see the tail of the 'g' in the word 'high,' in the original letter. It occurs again in the word 'give,' and again in the word 'ought.' The writer has sloped the letter backwards, like the rest. But compare it with the tail of the 'g' in the boy Grundy's copy. The down-stroke, though differently sloped, is exactly similar—a point



Gussy stared in amazement after Racke's retreating figure. "Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "I weally believe that fellow's the limit. I do, weally!" (See Chapter 12.)

which naturally eluded the observation of an inexperienced boy. But upon that detail, sir, I should have no hesitation in swearing an affidavit that Grundy was the writer of the letter, even if his life were at stake before a judge and jury."

"I accept your conclusion without the slightest hesitation, of course," said the Head. "I am not well versed in such matters myself. Grundy, then, is the guilty party."

"I am quite prepared, sir, to stake my reputation upon what I have asserted!"

"Then there is no more to be said."

"Quite so," assented Mr. Linton. "Grundy is certainly not the boy I should have been inclined to suspect. But it is a fact that I had occasion to punish him severely on Tuesday, and there is no doubt, of course, that this letter was written from a spirit of revenge."

"Will you call Grundy here, Mr. Linton?"

"Certainly, sir!"

The master of the Shell left the study. Mr. Spother rose to his feet.

"My business here is concluded," he remarked.

"And I thank you very sincerely," said the Head. "You have enabled justice to be done, sir, in a matter that baffled me completely."

"My profession is to serve the ends of justice, sir," said Mr. Spother, quite gracious again now. "If you prefer—ahem!—to send on your cheque—"

"One moment, sir."

The Head took his cheque-book from his desk, and Mr. Spother left the study with his cheque in his pocket-book. Mr. Spother's fee was a somewhat heavy one, being in proportion to his celebrity; but the Head felt that it was more than worth it, to clear up an unpleasant mystery and visit punishment upon the right shoulders.

Mr. Linton arrived with Grundy as the expert gentleman left the study. Grundy came in with a very cheery and confident manner.

The grim, stern look of the Head abashed him a little, however. Grundy blinked at the Head. Inwardly he wondered why the old gentleman was looking at him like a gargoyle.

"You—you sent for me, sir?" said Grundy.

"Yes, Grundy."

"If I can be of any assistance, sir——"

"Of—of any assistance?"

"Yes, sir. I am quite willing to collaborate with the expert, if necessary. I have no doubt—no doubt whatever—that I should be of the greatest service——"

"Cease this impertinent nonsense at once, Grundy!" said the Head sternly.

"Eh? I—I beg your pardon, sir."

"You have been sent for, Grundy, to receive your sentence!"

"Mum-mum-my sentence, sir?" stammered the astonished Grundy.

"Yes, sir!" thundered the Head. "Your guilt is proved!"

"Mum-mum-my gig-gig-guilt!" stuttered Grundy. "Wha-a-at have I done, sir?"

Dr. Holmes pointed to the anonymous letter.

"You wrote that infamous, insulting letter to your Form-master, Grundy!"

Grundy staggered.

"I did?" he gasped.

"Yes, you!"

"B-b-but I didn't, sir!" Grundy managed to articulate. "I've got my suspicions about some fellows——"

"You wrote that letter, Grundy! Doubtless you did not anticipate when you wrote it that I should employ a celebrated handwriting expert to detect the writer. But no trouble or expense was too great, in order to place the guilt upon the guilty person's shoulders. I was quite aware, Grundy, when you visited this room yesterday, that your audacious attempt to gain possession of the letter was dictated by a fear of the expert's examination of it——"

"N-n-not at all, sir!"

"In any case, Grundy, the matter is now proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. I trust you will not add falsehoods to your guilt."

"But—but I didn't do it, sir!" yelled Grundy, in utter dismay. "The expert must be a silly fool, sir——"

"What?" thundered the Head.

"Why, he must be a howling idiot!" exclaimed Grundy indignantly. "Do you

mean to say, sir, that he's found out it was my hand——"

"Precisely!"

"But it wasn't, sir! I swear it wasn't! The man's a silly ass! All experts are silly asses, sir!"

"Enough! Grundy, you are sentenced to be flogged!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Silence! The school will be assembled in Hall before afternoon lessons, and you will be flogged in the presence of all your school-fellows. You may go for, the present, Grundy!"

Grundy stood rooted to the floor.

"But—but—but——" he choked.

"Go!"

"But—I say—I——"

Mr. Linton took Grundy by the collar, and led him from the study. Grundy went like a fellow in a dream.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### The Only Way!

"GWUNDAY!"

"Old Grundy!"

"That ass!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The news spread like wildfire. Grundy of the Shell had been adjudged guilty of writing the anonymous letter to Mr. Linton; Grundy of the Shell was to receive a public flogging for the offence.

The juniors were astonished. Wilkins and Gunn were quite dismayed. Old Grundy! It was incredible.

Grundy was every sort of an ass, known and unknown. That was admitted even by his best chums. But Grundy, with all his faults, had never been known to play a dirty trick, or a mean trick, or a cowardly trick. And such a trick as writing an anonymous letter of abuse was undoubtedly dirty, mean, and cowardly. The fellows could scarcely believe their ears. But the expert evidence of the celebrated scientific gentleman, Mr. Spother, settled the matter. The man upon whose skill lives and liberties had depended in courts of law, was not likely to have made a mistake. Grundy had done it! Grundy must have done it!

"So that was why he was playing detective?" Racke remarked sneeringly. "That was why he said it wasn't a Shell chap!"

"Looks like it now," said Mellish.

"And that was why he was trying to fix it on some chap in the Fourth!" sneered Levi-son. "Jolly deep of Grundy, I must say! I thought he was simply playing the fool, as usual. I didn't know he was so deep."

"I—I suppose that expert knows what he's talking about," said Talbot of the Shell, with knitted brows. The crowd were discussing it in the quad in great excitement after dinner.

"I suppose he does, Talbot," said Tom Merry. "He's an expert. Experts see a lot of things other people don't see."

"And if they don't see 'em, they imagine 'em," grinned Monty Lowther. "I know how much I'd listen to a handwriting expert if I were a judge."

"But—but the man couldn't be fool enough to make a mistake!" exclaimed Tom, aghast. "Why, it might be a more serious matter than a flogging!"

"I thought he looked a self-sufficient sort of bounder," said Talbot quietly. "I can't believe that Grundy did it. It's all rot to say he's been spoofing all this time. He's a born fool, but he's not a rotter!"

"I know he didn't do it!" shouted Wilkins.

"Of course he didn't!" said Gunn, almost tearfully. "Old Grundy play a dirty trick like that? He'd play any fool trick you like, but never a dirty trick!"

"Well, it's settled, anyway, that he did it," remarked Blake.

"Gwunday!" Arthur Augustus was repeating dazedly. "Gwunday! Bai Jove, Gwunday!"

"Yes, it is a surprise," said Dig. "But there's no need for you to look so worried, old scout. You're not going to be flogged."

"Gwunday is not goin' to be flogged, eithah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "Gwunday did not do it!"

"The expert's proved it," said Herries.

"The expert is an utter ass, Hewwies!"

Herries chuckled.

"I dare say he is, Gussy; and Grundy must

have been an ass to write that letter to Linton. He might have known it would come out."

"He did not write it, Hewwies."

"How do you know, fathead?"

"I do know, Hewwies! I am quite suah of it!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Where is Wacke? I want to speak to Wacke!"

Racke had left the crowd, feeling very satisfied. If Grundy of the Shell was flogged for that insulting letter to Mr. Linton, there was no further inquiry for anybody to fear. Grundy's punishment, too, was rather gratifying to Racke personally. Racke was what Grundy called a smoky cad; and Grundy, who was convinced that it was his lofty duty to bring other fellows up in the way they should go, had sometimes been rather heavy-handed with the cad of the Shell. Having his cigarettes stuffed down his back had not pleased Aubrey Racke at all.

Grundy had gone to his study, quite overcome. In the midst of his wonderful investigations the matter had been settled without his assistance, and it had been settled that he was the guilty party. Grundy, had, quite unintentionally, laboured to draw suspicion upon himself, and certainly he had succeeded.

The unfortunate Shell fellow was quite overcome. He sat in the armchair in his study blinking before him dazedly. He was adjudged guilty—on the evidence of an expert gentleman, whose assertion could not be doubted. It was amazing, stunning, flabbergasting! And he was going to be flogged!

Before the school went in to afternoon lessons he was to be hoisted in Big Hall, and flogged before St. Jim's!

He, George Alfred Grundy!

It was incredible, but it was only too true. Grundy wondered whether he was dreaming. It seemed like a bad dream.

Wilkins and Gunn came into the study looking very downcast. They often found George Alfred Grundy trying. There were

many rows in Grundy's study. But now that he was down on his luck, Wilkins and Gunn forgot their many little troubles with Grundy, and they were all indignant sympathy.

"Grundy, old chap," faltered Wilkins. "I

—I say, this is rotten!"

"Beastly shame!" mumbled Gunn.

Grundy looked at them with staring eyes.

"You chaps know I didn't do it?" he said.

"Of—of course you didn't, Grundy."

"The Head's an ass!" said Grundy.

"Fancy believing an expert's evidence! I

wouldn't hang a Hun on an expert's evidence.

And I was getting on with the case rippingly

too. By this evening I

expect I should have settled whether it was Levison or Mellish——"

"Ahem! I—I wish you hadn't taken it up, old chap," said Wilkins. "Most of the fellows think you were doing that to throw it on somebody else."

"They think that, do they?" ejaculated Grundy. "Now, I put it to you, am I that kind of a rotter?"

"No, you ain't, old fellow. You're only a born idiot," said Wilkins comfortingly. "You were bound to bring suspicion on yourself. It wouldn't be you if you hadn't!"



The burly Grundy was knocking Levison's head against the tree, and with every bump he exclaimed: "Now then, own up!"

(See Chapter 12.)

"What?" yelled Grundy.

"I—I mean it's very unfortunate, as it's happened," said Wilkins hastily. "But your own pals don't believe you did it, Grundy, old man. We stick to you."

"Like glue," said Gunn.

Wilkins and Gunn rather expected an outburst of grateful emotion from Grundy. But George Alfred only nodded.

"Of course," he said, "you chaps ain't very bright, but you can see that I didn't do it. Fancy the Head not being able to see it, when you chaps can."

"Oh!" said Wilkins and Gunn together. Evidently there was to be no outburst of gratitude from Grundy.

"It beats me hollow," said Grundy. "Fancy anybody thinking I could do such a thing! Only a rotten Hun would write an anonymous letter. And the Head's going to give me a flogging—me, you know!" Even yet Grundy could scarcely believe it. "I don't mind that so much. I ain't soft. But fancy fellows thinking I'd do such a thing! What's the time now?"

"Quarter to two, old chap."

"And the flogging's fixed for two," said Grundy. "Not much time for me to find out the right party, and prove it. But I'm going to try."

"But—but you can't, you know."

"I don't know," said Grundy. "A chap of my abilities is never really beaten. It was Levison or Mellish—the question is, which?"

"I—I say, it must have been a Shell chap, you know."

"Don't talk rot, George Wilkins! I've said already that it wasn't a Shell chap. Upon the whole, I consider it was Levison. Come with me!"

"Where—where are you going?"

"I'm going to make Levison own up. Same as I did when he hid Manners' camera, and I had the job of finding it. There's no time for finesse, you know. I can't complete the case as I intended; it will be necessary to come down heavy," Grundy explained.

"But—but what are you going to do?" gasped Gunn.

"I'm going to hammer Levison till he

owns up," said Grundy. "It's the only way. It may seem a little high-handed——"

"My hat! I should rather think so!"

"But you can see for yourselves that it's the only way, can't you?"

"But—but suppose Levison didn't do it?" howled Wilkins.

"He did; I've told you so already. Come on!"

Grundy strode from the study, quite brisk again now. He hadn't much time left, but a quarter of an hour was lots of time to a fellow of Grundy's abilities. Wilkins and Gunn followed him in an almost dazed state. It was safe to say that no other fellow in Grundy's situation would have acted as Grundy was doing. Grundy was always original. Though the skies had fallen, Grundy would still have been Grundy.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### A Painful Predicament

"WACKE, you uttah wottah!"

Arthur Augustus had found Racke of the Shell at last. Racke had been seeking to avoid the interview, but the swell of St. Jim's ran him down in a secluded corner of the quadrangle. Arthur Augustus was fairly trembling with excitement and indignation.

"What do you want?" growled Racke, with a savage look.

"Gwunday's goin' to be flogged for w'itir' that lettah——"

"Serve him right!"

"Bai Jove! You know he didn't w'ite it."

"The expert says he did," grinned Racke.

"The expert is a silly ass!"

"You'd better tell the Head so. No good coming and telling me."

"You w'ote that lettah to Mr. Linton, Wacke!"

Racke shrugged his shoulders

"Wacke, you know you are the wottah who w'ote that wotten lettah! You twied to get it out of the Head's study and burn it last night. You admitted it, then."

"I wasn't in the Head's study last night," said Racke. "You're dreaming! I was in

my bed. And whether I was or not, you promised to say nothing about it."

"I am quite awah of that, Wacke. I pwomised wathah washly not to wefer to you. I did not foresee this."

"Well, a promise is a promise."

"Weally, Wacke—"

"And if you're going to break your word, remember that you've got to prove what you say," said Racke, between his teeth. "I shall deny it all."

"You can hardly deny the twuth, Wacke, I pwesume?"

"You'll see, you fool!"

"I will pass ovah that oppwobwious expwession, Wacke. There is no time to thwash you. I am quite awah that I cannot bwack-a pwomise, but that does not make any diffewence. You cannot allow poor old Gwunday to be flogged for what you know you did. You are goin' to own up."

"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at Racke, his eye gleaming behind his eyeglass. That the outsider of the Shell would remain silent while another fellow took his punishment seemed incredible to Gussy's simple mind at first, but that was very evidently Racke's intention.

"Is it possible, Wacke, that you are not goin' to own up?"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" growled Racke. "Do you think I want to be flogged?"

"You cannot let Gwunday be flogged, and disgwaced, too, for what you did!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Then I expect you to wesease me fwom the pwomise I made you, Wacke, as it was made undah a misappwewehension."

"You mean, you're goin' to break your promise?" sneered Racke. "Well, if you do, I shall deny the whole yarn, and you can't prove it."

And he walked away towards the School House. The prefects were shepherding the juniors into Big Hall now, and every fellow had to be present. The swell of the Fourth stared after him in almost incredulous disgust.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "I weally believe that fellah is the limit; I do, weally!"

"Come on, Gussy!" shouted Blake across the quad.

"I'm comin', deah boy!"

There was a sudden sound of yelling from under the elm-trees in the quad. Kildare of the Sixth came out of the School House.

"Where is Grundy? My hat!"

Kildare dashed across towards the elms. Grundy was there. Levison of the Fourth was wriggling in his powerful grasp, and Grundy was knocking his head against the trunk of a tree. Levison minor of the Third was dragging at Grundy with both hands to help his major, but he had no effect upon the burly Grundy. Wilkins and Gunn stood looking on helplessly.

"Grundy!" shouted Kildare.

Grundy glanced round.

"All serene, Kildare!" he said. "Don't interrupt; I'm getting the truth out of him. Now then, own up, Levison!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Levison. "Leggo!"

"Bai Jove! What are you waggin' Levison for, Gwunday?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, dragging the Shell fellow by the shoulder.

"Keep off, and yank that silly fag away!" gasped Grundy. "I'm getting the truth out of Levison."

"Yarook! Help!" raved Levison.

The astounded Kildare seized Grundy by the collar and wrenched him away from his hapless victim. Levison reeled against the tree, his face crimson with rage.

"Leggo!" shouted Grundy, struggling.

But even Grundy was not much use in the grasp of the stalwart captain of St. Jim's. Kildare held him easily.

"This isn't a time for bullying, Grundy!" said Kildare sternly. "You're to come in now for your flogging."

"I'm not bullying!" spluttered Grundy indignantly. "I'm getting at the truth. Levison wrote that anonymous letter, you know."

"What?"

"I've not had time to complete the case properly, so I'm getting the truth out of him this way. I wish you wouldn't interfere. Another bang or two and he would have owned up. Leggo!"

"You silly idiot!" shrieked Levison, rubbing his head savagely. "I'm coming to see you flogged. I shall enjoy it."

"Bai Jove, you are a howlin' idiot, Grundy!"

"Let me go, Kildare! Will you let me go?"

Kildare did not reply, but he marched Grundy away to the School House with a grip of iron on his collar. It was useless for Grundy to wriggle; he had to go. Still expostulating frantically, he disappeared into the building with the captain of St. Jim's.

"Well, of all the howling asses!" said Tom Merry. "Grundy really does take the cake! But it looks as if he didn't do it, all the same, you fellows."

"Into Hall, you kids!" called out Darrel of the Sixth.

Fellows were streaming into Hall now from all sides. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went with the rest, sorely troubled in his mind. He had promised Racke not to betray him, and with Arthur Augustus a promise was a promise not to be broken. He could not, as he would have put it, act like a Prussian. But if he kept his thoughtless promise to Racke, Grundy was to be flogged for what D'Arcy knew Racke had done. It was a painful predicament for Arthur Augustus.

Racke's action the previous night was conclusive proof. Certainly he had had no cause to fear the evidence of the expert, as it had turned out. But Racke had not known that the celebrated expert was a solemn donkey, and he had betrayed himself to Arthur Augustus, who could not betray him. But if Racke did not choose to own up, how could Arthur Augustus stand by and see an innocent fellow flogged? It was a predicament Gussy could see no way out of.

Big Hall was crowded with fellows, seniors and juniors, ranked in their Forms. There was a subdued buzz of voices.

Taggles, the porter, was there, ready to do his painful duty. Upon a table lay the big cane the instrument of punishment. Grundy stood by the table, Kildare close by him. Grundy



With the cane in his hand, the Head turned and looked in the direction of the commotion at the back of the hall—

was so excited that there was no telling what he might do, and a prefect's aid might be needed. There was a hush as the upper door in the Hall opened, and the Head came in with a very grave face.

Arthur Augustus glanced across at Racke, standing cool and quiet among the Shell fellows. Racke did not meet his eyes.

Dr. Holmes took up the cane.

"Grundy!" he said sternly.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Grundy.

"You are about to be flogged for a rascally, detestable, and cowardly insult to your Form-master. I trust the lesson will not be lost upon you. Taggles, take up Master Grundy!"

"Yes, sir."

Taggles advanced to do his duty. Grundy sprang back, putting up his fists.

"Hands off!" he shouted.

"Grundy!" thundered the Head.

"I'm not going to be flogged!" roared Grundy. "I tell you I didn't do it—never thought of such a thing. If you'd give me time I'd find out the fellow who did it. I'm not going to be flogged for nothing!"

"Another word, Grundy, and I will expel

you from the school instead of administering a flogging!" thundered Dr. Holmes. "Taggles take this boy up at once!"

Grundy dropped his hands. The Head was in deadly earnest. Grundy did not want to be sacked from St. Jim's.

Taggles grasped him, unresisting, and hoisted him. There was a dead silence in the Hall as the Head raised the cane. It was broken by a sudden shout.

"Stop!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form rushed forward.

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Arthur Augustus speaks out!

"D'ARCY!"

"Gussy! Come back, you fat-head!"

"Gussy, you ass!"

Arthur Augustus did not heed. He strode right up the Hall, looking neither to the right nor to the left. The doctor, astounded, stood with the raised cane in his hand, as if turned to stone.

"Go back to your place, D'Arcy!" rapped out Mr. Railton sharply.

Still the swell of the Fourth did not heed. He arrived breathless.

"If you please, Dr. Holmes——"

"Boy!" gasped the Head. "How dare you? How dare you interrupt these proceedings, I say? Kildare, take that junior

aside. He shall be punished after Grundy!"

"I feel bound to speak, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "Gwundy did not w'ite that wotten lettah to Mr. Linton, and I know who did!"

"By gum!" ejaculated Grundy.

Dr. Holmes looked fixedly at Arthur Augustus. He motioned to Kildare to stand back. There was a buzz of amazement in the crowded Hall, but it died away as Dr. Holmes raised his hand for silence.

"D'Arcy! As you have made such a statement I am bound to listen to you. You state that you know who wrote that insulting letter to Mr. Linton, and that it was not Grundy?"

"Yaas, sir!"

"If you are speaking idly, D'Arcy, your punishment will be very severe."

"I am not speakin' idly, sir!"

"Then kindly tell me at once what you know about the matter."

Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath. Between the necessity of keeping his promise to Racke of the Shell, and the equal necessity of saving Grundy from undeserved punishment, he was upon delicate ground. But Arthur Augustus had unbounded reliance upon his own tact and judgment.

"I found out the twuth by accident last night, sir!"

"Then why did you not inform me or your House-master before?"

D'Arcy raised his head proudly.

"I am not a sneak, sir!"

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Blake.

"Ahem! But, now——"

"And aftahwards, sir, the wottah—I mean the chap—asked me to pwomise not to give him away, and, without thinkin', I pwomised. But I can pwove that it was not Gwundy."

"I am waiting for you to do so, D'Arcy," said the Head grimly. "You may put Master Grundy down for the moment, Taggles!"

Grundy slid down to his feet. Taggles was not sorry for the relief; Grundy was no light weight.

"I was out of the dorm last night, sir!"



—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was pushing through the assembled juniors. "Stop!" he shouted.

"Stop!" (See this page.)

"Indeed, and what were you doing out of the dormitory?"

"Of course, sir, I am mentionin' that in confidence."

"Wha-a-at!"

"I was goin' to jape Gwundy, sir, because he is such a widdleous ass. But I am aware that it is against the wules to leave the dormitory at midnight. But I am simply mentionin' that circumstance, sir, for the sake of justice. Undah the circs, sir, I expect you to tweek that revelation as confidential."

"As—as—as confidential!" ejaculated the Head, looking at Arthur Augustus as if he would eat him. "A confidence between a junior of the Fourth Form and his Headmaster!"

"No, sir!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "Between one gentleman and another, sir!"

A pin might have been heard to drop in Big Hall. The expression upon the Head's face was extraordinary for a moment.

The juniors held their breath. But the expected storm did not burst. There was something in D'Arcy's frank and quite dignified manner that disarmed the Head.

"We will pass over the matter of your being out of your dormitory at forbidden hours, D'Arcy," said the Head at last. "That is of no moment now."

"Yaas, sir, I expected that," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Well, sir, while I was out of the dorm I heard somebody movin' about, and I thought that pewwaps it was a burglah. But I could not vewy well give the alarm, as I thought also that it might be some chap pwowlin' wound for somethin'. So I followed him to find out pweicely what was up, sir, and I followed him to your study."

"To—to my study! Last night!"

"Yaas, sir. He was fumblein' in the dwawah of your w'ing-table, with a match, and I turned on the light and cornahed him. He had taken that lettah out of your dwawah to destwoy it. So I knew, of course, that he was the chap who had w'itten the lettah, and he was afraid of the expert seeing it when he came. In fact, he admitted it. I w'efused to allow him to do anythin' of the sort, and I made him weplace the lettah, and I locked

your door on the outside, sir, and took away the key, so that he could not go back and do it, aftah all."

"That is a very extraordinary statement, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, isn't it, sir? I got down wathah early to unlock the door, and put the key back, sir, of course, as I did not want anythin' to be known about the mattah."

"Who was the boy you saw in my study, D'Arcy?"

"It was not Gwundy, sir!"

"No jolly fear," said Grundy. "I never went out of the dorm last night. I know that!"

"You need not speak, Grundy. D'Arcy, what was the name of the boy who attempted to purlin the latter from my study last night?"

"I am sowwy I cannot tell you, sir. I wathah washly pwomised him not to give him away. You would not wecommend me to bweak a pwomise, sir!"

The Head coughed.

"You had no right to make such a promise, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir. I feel that myself! But I did make the pwomise, and the ntah wottah w'efuses to welease me from it, and he w'efuses to own up, sir!"

"To what Form did this boy belong, D'Arcy?"

"The Shell, sir?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Grundy.

"Will you be silent, Grundy?" The Head paused, looking very curiously at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "D'Arcy, if I did not know you to be a truthful and honourable lad, I should suppose that you had invented this story to save Grundy from punishment. As it is, I believe you."

"Yaas, sir. Of course! I expect you to take my word."

Dr. Holmes coughed again, and Mr. Railton turned his head away to hide a smile. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was almost too much for him. But it was so evident that the Honourable Arthur Augustus had told the exact truth that the most suspicious of headmasters could scarcely have entertained a doubt. The Head was in a curious position. As he

fully believed D'Arcy's statement he could scarcely proceed with Grundy's punishment, in spite of the valuable evidence of the handwriting expert. Neither could the reverend gentleman very well recommend the junior to break a promise. He stood for some moments in deep thought.

"You may go, D'Arcy," he said. "You may also go, Grundy. The school is dismissed. The matter will be inquired into further."

The St. Jim's fellows streamed out of Hall. Arthur Augustus was immediately surrounded by a curious crowd in the corridor. Grundy pushed his way through them.

"D'Arcy, I'm much obliged to you for speaking up!" he began.

"Pway don't mench, deah boy!"

"You're sure it was a Shell chap you saw in the Head's study?"

"Wathah!"

"That's jolly odd! I'd worked it out that it was a Fourth Form chap who wrote the letter!" said Grundy, looking puzzled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at. I've had a jolly narrow escape!" said Grundy. "It was jolly lucky D'Arcy got up to jape me last night, and I'm not going to lick him for it!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm not!" said Grundy magnanimously.

"You uttah ass!"

"You'd better look for the chap in the Shell now, Grundy," grinned Tom Merry. "Which of us was it, Sherlock Holmes?"

"You think I can't spot him?" said

Grundy. "Well, that's just where I come in. I've got the cad! Upon the whole, I should have worked it out in the long run that he was in the Shell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In fact, now I come to think of it, I had a—sort of idea all along that he was a Shell chap!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wilkins.

"Don't interrupt me, Wilkins! I may say,

I had practically worked it out that it was a Shell fellow. And I know who it was, too. I know who sneaked out of bounds on Tuesday evening. It was Racke. I saw him. Now I know why he was pumping me to find out just where the letter was in the Head's study, after I'd been there. And I've a jolly good mind to go to Railton—"

"Mr. Railton is here," said a deep voice.

"Oh, my hat!"

The House-master had come out of Hall as

Grundy's loud voice resounded. A sudden silence fell upon the juniors. Racke was pale as death.

"Racke, you were out of bounds on Tuesday evening, it appears?"

"No, sir," panted Racke.

"I jolly well saw you!" roared Grundy. "Crooke was helping you over the wall. You asked me not to mention it. And——"

"Crooke, come forward!"

Crooke came forward, flushed and uneasy. "Did Racke go out of bounds on Tuesday evening, Crooke?"



"Gentlemen!" roared Blake. "I vote we give him the frog's march round the quad!" "Yes, wather!" agreed D'Arcy. The guilty junior was pounced upon, and in a very short time he was being trundled along amidst a horde of yelling, laughing members of the Shell. (See Chapter 13.)

"I saw him, sir," exclaimed Grundy. "I mentioned it to Wilkins at the time. Didn't I, Wilkins? I said the rotter ought to be scragged!"

"You did, old chap," said Wilkins.

"Silence! Answer me, Crooke!"

Crooke gave his confederate a helpless look. It was not easy to tell the lie direct under Mr. Railton's searching eyes.

"I—I didn't know what Racke was going for, sir," faltered Crooke. "I—I never knew anything about the letter. I—I guessed afterwards; but—but I didn't know. I swear I had nothing to do with it, sir!"

"That will do. Racke, you went out of school bounds on Tuesday evening, the time the letter was posted to Mr. Linton. You have denied doing so."

"I—I went out, sir," muttered Racke. "But I—I had nothing to do with the letter. I—I swear I hadn't!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus involuntarily. Racke's powers as a liar took his breath away.

Mr. Railton glanced at him for a moment.

"Have you anything to say, D'Arcy?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Racke, there is no proof at present that you are the guilty party, but I warn you that you are under very grave suspicion. The matter will be investigated most thoroughly."

Mr. Railton passed on.

"There's not much doubt about it now," said Tom Merry, his lip curling as he looked at

Racke's scared face. "It was Racke, Gussy!"

"I pwomised him not to tell the Head, Tom Mewwy, and I am not suah whethah I should be justified in tellin' you, deah boy, so, upon the whole, I will say nothin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen," said Blake, "Racke did it, and he's a crawling, cringing cur. I vote that we give him the frog's-march round the quad."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard that as the pwopah capah, undah the cires."

And Racke of the Shell experienced the joys of the frog's-march, and he was very dusty and dishevelled when he escaped at last. But his greatest fear was that that was not the worst. There was little doubt in anyone's mind of Racke's guilt, but complete proof was lacking; and the Head was not inclined to put the matter in the hands of a self-satisfied expert again. So Racke's mind was set at rest, though he was left with an uncomfortable feeling that the eye of authority was upon him, and that it behoved him to tread warily.

As for Grundy, he was, of course, completely cleared, and in a very short time Grundy was quite convinced that he had been cleared by his own remarkable abilities as an amateur Sherlock Holmes. And he held forth upon the subject in the study to such length that Wilkins and Gunn came near to wishing that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hadn't chipped in, and George Alfred had got his flogging.


THE



END



There is very little Biliy Bunter cannot do, in his own opinion, at least. He particularly "fancies himself" on the cricket field, where, as Bob Cherry says, his play is distinctly of the "fancy" variety! Above, Mr. Chapman has caught him in a number of typical attitudes.



# Rookwood Reflections!

*By Jimmy Silver.*

## POTTED PARS CONCERNING THE FAMOUS HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL

**R**OOKWOOD is one of the oldest schools in Hampshire—though not so old as the famous Winchester College. The Classical Side is the original part of the building, the Modern Side having been added in fairly recent years. The Modern Side is, in fact, merely a side-show. You see, I happen to be a Classical!

**DOCTOR CHISHOLM** is Head Cook and Bottle-washer—if I may use such an undignified expression—at Rookwood. It has been said that he rules with a rod of iron, but that's all tommy-rot. He rules with a rod of birch-twigs!

**MR. "DICKY" DALTON** is the master of the Fourth Form. He always commands respect, and is quite a decent sort so long as we respect commands!

**IF** a ballot were taken to discover who was the most popular fellow at Rookwood, George Bulkeley, our

genial, athletic skipper, would top the list. Bulkeley is a real good type of sportsman, and we are very struck with him—and by him, sometimes, but only on rare occasions!

AT the bottom of the poll you would find Mark Carthew, a bullying prefect, and the rankest of rank outsiders. I sincerely hope Carthew is not a reader of **THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL**. If he is, he will come across these remarks, and then poor "Silver" will become the victim of a "tanner"!

**TUBBY MUFFIN**, the fat fellow of the Fourth, is not exactly a miser, but he knows how to "stow away" tuck! When you come to consider the enormous feeds he consumes, it's a wonder that Tubby himself is not "laid up"!

**MACK**, the school porter, is quite a character at Rookwood. He always has



Dr. Chisholm rules Rookwood with a rod of birch-twigs!



## WHEN QUEEN ANNE REIGNED!



To face page 281.

Rookwood to the Rescue!

a grievance, and his surly face is only illumined by a smile once a year. That is on the day we break up for the Christmas holidays. Mack then has visions of handsome "tips," and he addresses us all as "young gents" instead of the customary "young warmints"!

MR. ROGER MANDERS has charge of the Modern Side. He is not a nice person to know. A wag once pinned the following verse on the door of his study:—

"Within, you'll find a second Nero,  
Who makes you spirits sink to zero.  
His name is Mr. Roger Manders,  
He greets his guests with stinging  
'handers'!"



With visions of handsome tips, old Mack addresses us all as "young gents!"

MR. OWEN CONQUEST, who chronicles all our adventures and misadventures for the benefit of a vast schoolboy public, has been invited to spend a week at Rookwood whenever he feels disposed. He will indeed be a welcome guest, and all Rookwood is keenly looking forward to the great man's arrival.

## Foiling the Footpads!

A Stirring Scene at Rookwood School in the Reign of Queen Anne.

FOOTPADS flourished in all parts of the country a couple of centuries ago.

And the district around Rookwood School, in Hampshire, was a happy hunting-ground for these "gentlemen of the road."

The evening of December 13th, 1705, was made memorable by a remarkable episode. Snow lay deep in meadow and lane when Sir Josiah Bancroft, a governor of Rookwood, was on his way to visit the school. When within sight of their destination the coach party was suddenly waylaid by four armed ruffians.

Sir Josiah had his wife and daughter with him in the coach; and the passengers would undoubtedly have been deprived of all their valuables, and perhaps suffered personal injury, had not the alarm been given by a Rookwood junior, who witnessed the "hold-up" from his study window.

Armed with clubs, the Rookwood fellows rushed to the rescue of the hapless governor. They came swarming out of gates, pelting at top speed through the snow in the direction of the coach.

The footpads, terrified at the spectacle of that horde of advancing schoolboys, deemed discretion the better part of valour and promptly fled.

Sir Josiah Bancroft is seen in the picture, shaking his fist after the retreating figures. In his relief at having been extricated from his perilous plight, Sir Josiah rewarded his rescuers' by prevailing upon the Head to grant the school a whole holiday—a concession which was greatly appreciated by the Rookwood fellows, who spent a thoroughly happy day snow-fighting and tobogganning!

# A Review of Rookwood Sport!

By George Bulkeley.

(Captain of Games.)



## CRICKET.

**A** MARKED improvement has been shown this season by all the Rookwood Elevens. This has been due to the coaching of a well-known ex-county player, who has a knack of getting the best out of his pupils. The First Eleven has won seventy-five per cent. of its games; and the Junior Eleven has fared almost as creditably.

I HAVE acted as umpire in several of the junior matches, and I was much impressed by the brilliant form of several of the youngsters. Jimmy Silver and Teddy Grace were the star performers with the bat; and Mornington is a deadly bowler when he chooses to exert himself.

THE most remarkable match of the season was that between our Junior Eleven and the Greyfriars Remove. Jimmy Silver's team batted first, and scored 200 runs. This seemed a formidable total, but Greyfriars set about the Rookwood bowling in such a determined fashion that they scored

160 for the loss of only three wickets! Then came a sensational collapse. Mornington was put on to bowl, and he skittled our the Greyfriars batsmen like rabbits. In a tensely-exciting finish, Rookwood gained the verdict by one run!

A MOST amusing match was played between a Masters' Eleven and a Boys' Eleven. The Head played for the Masters, and in spite of his years he showed that his hand had lost none of its cunning. He scored a dozen runs before his middle stump was sent spinning. Mr. Roger Manders, who had been persuaded by his colleagues to play, got a "duck's-egg" in each innings, and the expression on his face was simply Hunnish! The boys eventually won the match in a canter, so to speak.

## FOOTBALL.

WE did not fare quite so well in football as in former seasons. Our failures were not due to any lack of enthusiasm, but in many cases sheer bad luck was responsible.



I have acted as umpire in several of the junior matches.

In the senior match against Greyfriars, our fellows were attacking for three-parts of the game, but nothing came off for them. Greyfriars, in a sudden breakaway, scored, and it was the only goal of the match. Their skipper agreed afterwards that it was an extremely lucky victory.

IN the fight for the Public Schools Cup—always a thrilling affair—we managed to get as far as the semi-final. Once again Greyfriars were our opponents, and once again we had to bite the dust; but on this occasion the better side won. The last time we won the Cup was in 1913, so I think it is high time we repeated the performance!

SEVERAL matches were lost owing to players being on the sick-list. Why is it that the 'flu germ always chooses to get busy on the eve of an important match? It is most exasperating. However, we hope to make amends next season for the shortcomings of the last one. Come what may, Rookwood will always take for its motto the ringing words of Newbolt: "Play up! Play up! And play the game!"

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

SO far as "the noble art of self-defence" is concerned, we have had a highly successful year. We sent representatives to Aldershot to take part in the Public Schools Boxing Tournament, and our fellows performed splendidly, young Algy Silver winning the Fly-weight Championship, and his cousin Jimmy being runner-up in the Light-weights.

THE annual Boat Race between the three big schools was won by Rookwood after a dour struggle, our crew defeating Greyfriars in a thrilling finish by a quarter of a length.

ON the cinder track, as in recent years, we did well this summer. Neville of the Sixth and Jimmy Silver represented us in the Open Ten-Mile Cross-Country Race of the Letcham

Athletic Club, and proved once again that they are indeed splendid runners. In a fine finish Neville was beaten by two yards by the crack of the Letcham Club, whilst young Silver, coming on fast towards the end, was a very good third. Silver, however, had the satisfaction of winning the School's five-mile handicap race the following week when, to my disgust, he beat me comfortably by a dozen-yards, Neville being third, a yard behind me. All Rookwood has now come to the conclusion, and rightly so, in my opinion, that the captain of the Fourth is our champion long distance runner.



The Head scored a dozen before his middle stump was sent spinning.

OUR shooting competitions proved very interesting. The senior events were keenly contested, after a dead heat with Knowles, of Mr. Manders' House, that I secured the victory. The junior competition was a scream, for Cuffy, of the Modern side, and Muffin, of the Classics, were trembling all the while they held their rifles. As it was, they both failed to get a shot on the target in a dozen rounds! Teddy Grace furnished a surprise by defeating Silver and Mornington by one point.

THE END

# Tubby Muffin's Birthday!

By  
Teddy Grace

An Amusing Complete  
Story of  
Rookwood School.



FIBBERS should have good memories. Otherwise, the consequences of their fibbing are likely to prove very painful. Which is precisely what happened in the case of Reginald—alias “Tubby”—Muffin, of the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

Tubby awoke one morning in a state of great excitement. As a rule, he lingered in bed long after the rising-bell had clanged its harsh summons. But on this particular morning he bounded out of bed before the bell-ringer had properly got into his stride.

“I say, you fellows,” said Tubby, “you might wish a chap many happy returns! It’s my birthday, you know.”

“Which birthday?” asked Jimmy Silver.

“Eh? My fifteenth, of course.”

“The fifteenth birthday you’ve had this year, do you mean?” asked Lovell.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, really, Lovell— The fact is, I’m fifteen to-day, and I’m going down to see what the postman’s brought for me. I expect I shall be simply snowed under with parcels and presents.”

“Rats!”

Tubby Muffin washed and dressed in record time. His wash was merely a “cat-lick,” and he scrambled into his clothes instead of putting them on properly. Then, whilst his Form-fellows were performing their ablutions

in a more leisurely manner, Tubby hurried downstairs. His destination was the post-rack in the hall.

There is a proverb which runs: “Blessed is he that expecteth nothing; for he shall not be disappointed.” Whether Tubby Muffin honestly expected anything or not, there was nothing for him in the post-rack. Tubby blinked at the contents of the various pigeon-holes and turned away in disgust. There was a letter for Jimmy Silver, and a couple for Kit Erroll, and a whole heap for Mornington. And on the top of the rack was a hamper. But it was not addressed to Tubby Muffin. Conroy was the lucky one.

“Nothing doing!” growled Tubby. And he rolled disconsolately away.

When Jimmy Silver & Co. trooped out into the bright morning sunshine, they saw their plump schoolfellow strolling dejectedly beneath the old beeches.

“Hallo, Tubby!” sang out Newcombe. “Where are all those parcels and presents you were expecting?”

Tubby Muffin made a grimace.

“They haven’t turned up,” he growled.

“You don’t mean to say that all your relations, titled and otherwise, have forgotten your birthday?” said Jimmy Silver with a grin.

“No, I don’t suppose they’ve forgotten. I

jogged their memories by writing to them the day before yesterday, and reminding them that it was my birthday to-day. Nothing's come by the first post; but there's a mid-day mail to come and another at tea-time. I'll see what turns up then."

But the only thing that turned up at mid-day and at tea-time was Tubby Muffin's nose—in disgust. For on neither occasion did the postman bring him anything—not even a birthday greeting card.

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled at Tubby's misfortunes, and he called them heartless beasts.

"How would you fellows like it if your relations went and forgot your birthdays?" he growled.

"We shouldn't like it a little bit," said Jimmy Silver. "But then, it isn't your birthday. It's no use trying to spoof us, Tubby. We know you of old."

"Oh, really, Silver! When a fellow has a birthday and nobody sends him anything, it's up to his pals to stand him a feed at the tuckshop."

"Quite so," assented Jimmy. "But then we're not your pals, you see. So-long, Tubby!"

And Jimmy and his chums strolled away, smiling.

"Beasts!" yelled Tubby Muffin, flourishing a fat fist at the backs of his school-fellows.

The fat junior was almost weeping with rage and chagrin. He had hoped, by "kidding" Jimmy Silver & Co. that it was his birthday, to get a free feed out of them. But the chums of the Fourth were wise in their generation. They knew Tubby only too well.

Tubby sat down on a bench under one of the beeches, looking the picture of misery. He was feeling acutely hungry, and he lacked the wherewithal to obtain a feed at the tuckshop. True, there was tea in hall to be had. But tea in hall was the last desperate resort of famished schoolboys. It consisted of very weak tea and a few slabs of bread and margarine.

Tubby Muffin was seated on the bench, nursing his head in his hands, and nursing his grievances at the same time, when Mr. Dalton came along.

"Dicky" Dalton, as he was popularly called, was Tubby's Form-master. He bore down upon the fat junior and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"What is wrong, my boy?" he asked kindly. "You seem very distressed about something."

Tubby Muffin burst into tears. They were of the crocodile variety—turned on to order.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Dalton soothingly. "What is the trouble, Muffin?"

"It—it's my birthday, sir!" wailed Tubby.

Mr. Dalton looked surprised.

"Your birthday, Muffin? But surely that is an occasion for rejoicing and not for lamentation?"

Tubby Muffin dabbed at his eyes with a not overclean handkerchief.

"You don't understand, sir," he sobbed.

"All my people seem to have overlooked the fact that it's my birthday to-day. I was expecting a tuck-hamper and a lot of presents, and no end of letters and birthday cards. But I've not had a single thing! And, to make matters worse, my pals in the Fourth won't stand me a feed!"



"Dear me! You seem very distressed!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton when he saw Tubby's "crocodile" tears. "What is wrong?"

"It's my birthday, sir," wailed Tubby, dabbing his eyes.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Dalton.

The Form-master felt really sorry for Tubby Muffin. He was quite deceived by Tubby's crocodile tears. Tubby was an excellent play-actor at times; and his play-acting at this juncture was perfection.

"Cheer up, my boy!" said Mr. Dalton. "I quite understand how you feel about things, and I will do what I can to minimise your disappointment. Would you care to come and have tea with me in my study?"

Tubby Muffin brightened up on the instant. He thrust his handkerchief into his pocket, and beamed gratefully upon Mr. Dalton.

"Thanks awfully, sir!" he said.

It was quite a novel experience, and quite an honour into the bargain, for a junior to be invited to tea by his Form-master. Tubby had visions of a magnificent spread in Mr. Dalton's study; and he was transported into the seventh heaven of delight.

"My table is already laid for tea," said Mr. Dalton, "but I will procure some special cakes for the occasion. Step this way, Muffin."

The kindly Form-master led the way to the tuckshop. Tubby Muffin trotted cheerfully in his wake, feeling as proud as a peacock with two tails. There were several juniors looking on, and Tubby glanced at them in triumph, as if to say, "Don't you wish you were in my shoes? I'm going to have tea with Dicky Dalton!"

Mr. Dalton made quite a lot of purchases at the school shop, including an iced cake and a large bag of assorted pastries. He knew that Tubby Muffin had an enormous



It was a real birthday present that Tubby got this time—four stinging cuts on each hand!

appetite, and he was prepared to pander to it on this special occasion.

Five minutes later, master and junior sat facing each other across the former's table.

Mr. Dalton poured out the tea and waited on his plump guest.

It was all a delightful dream to Tubby Muffin. Many a time and oft he had been caned by Mr. Dalton in that same study. But this was the first occasion on which he had been treated as a guest of honour.

"Don't wait, my boy!" said Mr. Dalton good-humouredly.

And Tubby didn't. He pitched into the good things with great zest.

The cake was delicious, but Tubby was too busy to say so. He champed away contentedly, his host looking on with an indulgent smile.

When Tubby Muffin had launched his offensive on that cake there were very few crumbs left to tell the tale. Tubby then got busy on the pastries, pausing from time to time to drain his tea-cup, which Mr. Dalton repeatedly replenished.

Even Tubby's illimitable appetite was appeased at last. He leaned back in his chair with his hands clasped in the region of his lower waistcoat button.

"I trust you have enjoyed your tea, Muffin?" said Mr. Dalton pleasantly.

"Finest feed I've had for many a long day, sir!" answered Tubby with enthusiasm.

"By the way, Muffin, I have not wished you many happy returns of the day. I will do so now."

Mr. Dalton shook hands with his guest. Then he loaded his favourite briar, and chatted

with Tubby for half an hour before dismissing him.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in the corridor when Tubby Muffin emerged from the Form-master's study. Tubby walked past them with upturned nose, and with an air of lofty superiority. Having been invited to tea by his Form-master, he considered himself much higher in the social scale than fellows like Jimmy Silver. Tubby ignored their very existence and passed on, leaving the chums of the Fourth gasping.

That wonderful spread in Mr. Dalton's study lingered in Tubby Muffin's memory for a while, but not for very long. After a fortnight had elapsed he had forgotten all about it.

One evening, Tubby rolled into Mr. Dalton's study with an impot. which he had been awarded for inattention in class. He handed over the lines, and was in the act of taking his departure when Mr. Dalton called him back.

"One moment, Muffin! That is a very bright neck-tie which you are wearing."

"Yessir! It's a birthday present from my Aunt Clara, sir. It came this morning. Would you like to see the rest of my presents, sir?"

And before Mr. Dalton could reply Tubby was turning out his pockets.

"This tortoiseshell penknife is from my Uncle Jack, sir. Cousin Peter sent me this mouth-organ. And what do you think of this water-pistol, sir? Isn't it a beauty?"

Mr. Dalton looked very grim. The thunder-clouds gathered on his brow.

"Am I to understand, Muffin," he said, in ominous tones, "that it is your birthday to-day?"

"That's so, sir," answered Tubby.

"Then you have grossly deceived me!" thundered the Form-master. "About a fortnight ago you represented to me that it was your birthday, and that you had been neglected by your relations. I therefore took compassion upon you, and invited you to tea."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Tubby Muffin's jaw dropped. Until this moment he had quite forgotten that feed in the Form-master's study. But Mr. Dalton had not forgotten. He had a better memory than Tubby.

Mr. Dalton picked up a cane.

"You have lied to me, Muffin," he said sternly. "You obtained sympathy and kindness by false pretences."

"Oh, really, sir—I—I—it isn't my birthday to-day, sir. It was a fortnight ago. All these presents were hung up in the post, and they've only just arrived!"

Mr. Dalton frowned.

"Do not pile falsehood upon falsehood, Muffin! You have behaved abominably, and I shall cane you. Hold out your hand!"

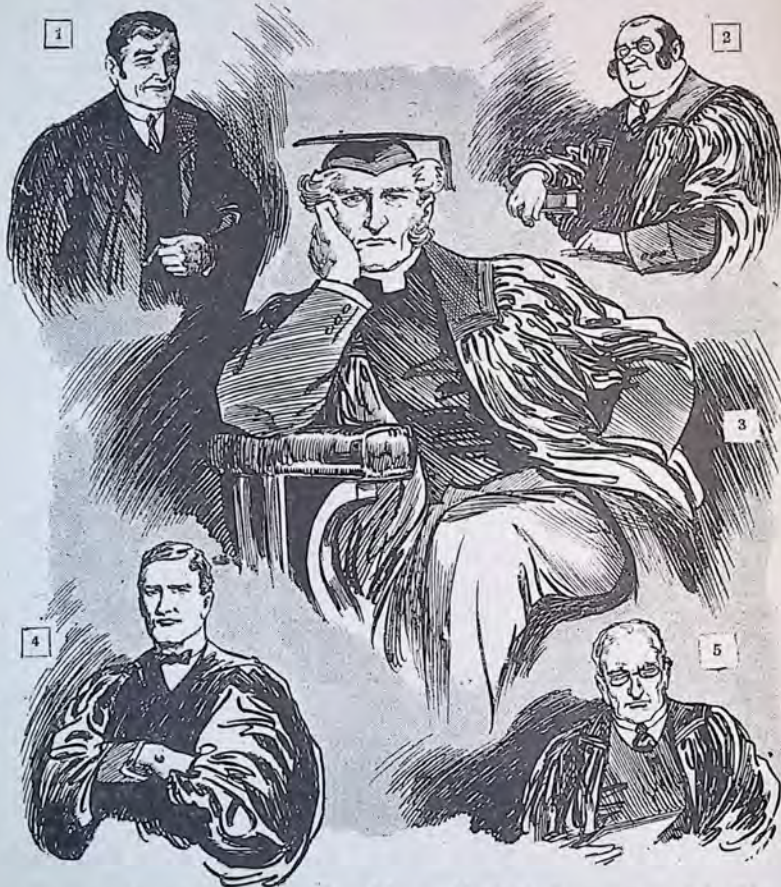
Those who chanced to be passing the open window of Mr. Dalton's study a moment later, were startled to hear sounds suggestive of somebody being put to the torture. Wild wails of anguish rang out on the evening air.

Four stinging cuts on each palm formed the birthday present of Mr. Dalton to Tubby Muffin!

THE END.



## RULERS OF GREYFRIARS.



No. 1. Mr. Quelch, the Remove Form Master. No. 2. Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth Form. No. 3. Dr. Locke, the Headmaster. No. 4. Mr. Lascelles, Mathematics Master. No. 5. Mr. Hacker, Master of the Shell Form.



# The Form-Master's Substitute!

By

FRANK RICHARDS



A Long Story of the Famous Chums of Greyfriars School, telling of an Amazing Impersonation by Wibley, of the Remove Form.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

In the Hands of the Phillistines!

**H**ERE comes the giddy victim!" Four juniors halted on the white, dusty road that ran from Courtfield to Greyfriars School. The four were Ponsonby & Co. of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

The four grinned as they looked along the road. From the direction of Courtfield a cyclist was coming, and from a distance the Highcliffians recognised the Greyfriars cap he wore. As he came nearer they recognised his face as that of Wibley, of the Greyfriars Remove.

The cyclist was heavily laden. He had two bundles tied on his bike—one fore and one aft, so to speak—and he had another bundle in his hand. He rode with the other hand on the handlebars, and he was riding slowly.

"Looks as if he's been shopping," grinned Ponsonby, "and I fancy he did not expect to meet little us on the road."

"What on earth can he have in those bundles?" said Gadsby. "Can't be tuck—a consignment of that extent."

"We'll see soon," remarked Ponsonby. "Don't let him get by."

"No fear!"

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

The four Highcliffe fellows strung themselves out across the road. The heavily-laden cyclist was not likely to get by easily.

They grinned as they watched him. Ponsonby & Co. were on fighting terms with the Greyfriars Remove, especially with Harry Wharton & Co.—"The Famous Five." Wibley was not a member of that select circle, but he was a Removite, and the nuts of Highcliffe regarded him as fair game. And as he was alone, and the nuts were four to one, it looked as if they had a very easy thing on hand. Ponsonby was a very cautious general, and he always preferred to have the odds on his side.

Wibley of the Remove came on more slowly as he observed the Highcliffians in the road,

evidently intending to stop him. But, making up his mind to make a dash for it, he put on speed as he came closer, and whizzed along as fast as he could with his burden.

"Here, look out!" exclaimed Monson, in alarm. "The beast'll run us down!"

"Stop him!" shouted Ponsonby.

"Catch him with your stick, Pon!"

Ponsonby had a stick with a hooked handle hanging on his arm. He caught it by the end and made a catch at the cycle with it. Wibley's front wheel was hooked as he rode by, and the bicycle came swinging round. It was a dangerous trick to play, for the rider might have had a very nasty fall, but Ponsonby did not stop to think about that. He had stopped the cyclist, and that was all he cared about.

The stick was wrenched from his hand, but the bike came swinging round, and it curled up. Wibley went spinning into the road, and the machine crashed down on the ground.

Wibley's bundle went flying. The four Highcliffians were upon him before he could gain his feet. The Greyfriars junior lay dazed in the dust, and Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour promptly collared him, and pinned him there.

"Nailed!" grinned Ponsonby.

"Oh!" gasped Wibley. "Ow! You silly rotters, you might have broken my neck—Yow! Gerroff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pitch his bike into the ditch," said Gadsby.

"Have those bundles open!"

"Let those bundles alone!" shouted Wibley, in alarm.

Ponsonby opened his penknife, and cut the cord, and tore the bundles open. The Highcliffians stared as the bundles came to light.

There were clothes of various kinds, and several beards, moustaches, and wigs. They could guess now that Wibley had been shopping at Mr. Lazarus's, in Courtfield, and was taking home supplies for the Remove Dramatic Society. As a matter of fact, Harry Wharton & Co. were planning a new play, and Wibley, who was the best actor in the Remove, and had been elected stage-manager, had been entrusted with the task of obtaining the necessary "props."

Quite a considerable little sum had been expended by Wibley at Mr. Lazarus's shop, and the valuable "properties" represented a good part of the funds of the Remove Dramatic Society. Wibley was justly alarmed as Ponsonby dragged them out into the dust. The Highcliffians never cared how much damage they did when they were on the warpath against their old enemies of Greyfriars.

"Props!" grinned Ponsonby. "My hat! What little game are you Greyfriars duffers playing now. Wibley?"

"You let those things alone!" shouted Wibley. "They're for our new play. I've just laid out three pounds ten on them."

"Sheer waste, I fancy," said Ponsonby. "These props won't be much use by the time they get to Greyfriars."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the nuts.

"You can tell Wharton I've done this for the licking I owe him, Wibley," grinned Ponsonby.

"I wish Wharton were here," panted Wibley. "You rotters! I'll lick you all myself, one after another, if you'll give me fair play."

"Jam his head on the ground if he's cheeky, Gaddy."

Bump!

"Yow!" yelled the unfortunate Wibley. "Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby picked up the fallen bike, and wheeled it to the deep, flowing ditch by the side of the road, and pitched it in. Wibley watched him with his eyes burning with wrath.

"That's Wharton's bike!" he gasped. "He lent it to me."

"All the better," said Ponsonby. "Why didn't you tell me that before, and I'd have cut the tyres first. However, it will want some cleaning when it's been fished out."

"Pitch him in after it," said Monson.

Ponsonby shook his head.

"No, we'll send him home to Greyfriars on foot, with his properties tied round his neck. The bike can stay there and soak. Yank him up!"

Wibley was jerked to his feet, powerless in the grasp of the four Highcliffe fellows. He



Ponsonby stuck the handle of his stick in the front wheel of the bicycle and brought the machine crashing to the ground. Wibley came with it, and the four Highcliffians were on him before he could gain his feet. (See Chapter 1.)

knew that he was "in" for a ragging, and he set his teeth to go through it. He cast a longing glance up the road, but there was no sign of any of his schoolfellows. He was quite at the mercy of the nuts of Highcliffe.

"Tie his hands," said Ponsonby.

Wibley struggled furiously, but his hands were drawn together behind him, and tied. His own necktie was dragged off for the purpose.

While three pairs of hands held him, Ponsonby proceeded to tie the "properties" round his neck, draping him all round with them. Wibley's aspect was soon very peculiar, with frock-coats, waistcoats, long trousers, beards, moustaches, and wigs hanging all round him. The Highcliffians yelled with laughter.

"Now duck him," said Ponsonby—"duck the whole lot together!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you rotters!" panted Wibley.

"Yank him along!"

The chuckling Highcliffians dragged Wibley towards the ditch, resisting as hard as he could. There was a sudden whir of bicycles on the road, and round the bend came five cyclists at a high speed.

Wibley burst into a yell as he saw them coming.

"Rescue, Greyfriars!"

Harry Wharton & Co. took in the situation at a glance. The five cyclists were Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh—the Famous Five of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Highcliffe cads! Go for 'em!"

"Run!" yelled Varasour.

And he started. Wibley was instantly released, and the four heroes of Highcliffe ran for their lives.

"Run them down!" rapped out Wharton.

"Ha, ha! You bet!"

Ponsonby & Co. were running their hardest. But it was not much use to run with rapid cyclists after them. The Famous Five swept down on them in a twinkling. They shot ahead of the Highcliffians, and jumped off, letting their bikes run whither they would, and in an instant more they were piling on Ponsonby & Co. The tables were turned with a vengeance.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### Mr. Mobbs is Shocked!

"Gor the cads!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Bring 'em along!"

Ponsonby & Co., struggling feebly in the grasp of the Famous Five, were rushed back to where Wibley was standing. Wibley was grinning now.

"Let us go, you cads!" wailed Vavasour. "We give you best!"

"Hold the rotters!" said Harry Wharton.

"Where's my bike, Wibley?"

"They've pitched it in the ditch."

"My hat!"

Wharton frowned darkly. It was a dirty trick to damage the bicycle, and not at all according to the laws of war as practised by the Greyfriars fellows.

"Jolly lucky we came along," said Wharton. "I thought we'd come and meet you, and help you carry the things, so I borrowed Squiff's bike, and we came."

"In the nickfulness of time!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"They were going to shove me in the ditch after the bike, with all the props," said Wibley.

"The whole lot would have been ruined. I'm jolly glad you came along. Untie my hands, Bob."

"I'll cut it——"

"Don't cut it, ass; it's my necktie!"

Bob Cherry grinned, and untied the necktie. Wibley began to remove the adornments Ponsonby had provided him with. The four Highcliffians were looking sullen and apprehensive.

"You've put my bike in the ditch," said Wharton sternly.

"It—it slipped in!" gasped Ponsonby. "Well, now you're going to slip in and get it out."

"Wha-a-t!"

"And buck up, all of you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby & Co. gazed at the ditch in dismay. It was a wide, deep ditch, filled to the brim by a recent rainfall. The bike had completely disappeared under the water, and could not be seen, the water being muddy.

To descend into the ditch and grope in the mud for the bike was a task that was most disagreeable. It meant a thorough ducking.

"Good egg!" grinned Wibley. "They were going to chuck me in. They can see what it's like."

"We—we were only joking!" stammered Gadsby.

"Well, I'm not joking," said Wharton grimly. "Go in for that bike."

"I—I can hook it out with my stick," said Ponsonby.

"You won't! You'll go in for it."

"We shall get muddy and wet!" wailed Vavasour.

"Exactly!" said Wharton. "You'll get in the same state as the bike. That's what I want. It may keep you from playing such a dirty trick another time."

"I—I won't!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Shove 'em in!" he said.

"Leggo—oh—ah—help—yooop!" spluttered Gadsby, as he went whirling towards the ditch.

Splash!

Gadsby disappeared. Then, one after another, the Highcliffians went whirling in.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

"Fall in, and follow me!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Four tousled, streaming heads appeared above the flowing ditch, four pairs of shoulders thick with ooze and slime. The water was nearly four feet deep. Four streaming, furious faces glared at the Greyfriars juniors in the road.

"I'm waiting for that bike," said Wharton.

"Grooooooh!"

"Let us out, you beasts!"

"The bike first."

Ponsonby scrambled desperately out, and Bob Cherry's heavy boot pushed on his chest, and hurled him back again. There was another heavy splash, and a splutter.

"Gerrooooooggh!"

"Oh, dear!" moaned Vavasour. "Think of the state of my clothes! Oh, my word! Lemme out! Oh, oh, oh!"

"Hand out the bike!"

The drenched Highcliffians snarled with rage. To stoop in the muddy water, and grope four feet down for the unseen bike, was not agreeable. But it was the only way of getting out. Ponsonby had just made up his mind to it, when a figure appeared on the road—a little, skinny man in a tight, black frock-coat and silk hat, with an umbrella in his hand. It was Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe. Ponsonby gave a desperate shout.

"Mr. Mobbs! Help!"

The little Form-master started, and came up in great wonder. His eyes almost started from his head at the sight of the four streaming juniors in the ditch. Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Highcliffe Fourth, was not a severe master to Ponsonby & Co. They were a rich set of fellows, and they had wealthy connections, from whom Mr. Mobbs hoped and expected all sorts of things. Mr. Mobbs was a born toady, and he toadied to Ponsonby & Co. without limit.

To Mr. Mobbs's mind, there was something very like sacrilege in laying rough hands upon the nephew of an earl, and the cousin of a marquis. He was simply horrified at the sight of Ponsonby in the ditch.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. His thin, meagre face was quite pale with horror, and his little skinny beard seemed to bristle with wrath. "What—what is this? Ponsonby, my dear boy—my dear Vavasour—"

"Help us, sir!" spluttered Vavasour.

"We're catching cold," wailed Monson.

"Come out; come out at once from that dreadful ditch!"

Ponsonby & Co. came wading out, but the Famous Five promptly chipped in. They did not want any trouble with Mr. Mobbs, but

they did not intend to let Ponsonby & Co. escape.

Splash! Splash!

Mr. Mobbs could scarcely believe his eyes, as the elegant nuts of Highcliffe—no longer elegant, alas!—were hurled back into the ditch under his very eyes.

"Grooooooh!"

"What—what?" shrieked Mr. Mobbs. "You—you young hooligans! You ruffians! You dastards! How dare you?"

"Keep your wool on, cocky!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "They've shoved a bike of ours in the ditch, and they're in there to fetch it out. And they're not coming out till they've handed it over!"

"Let them get out immediately!"

"Sorry, sir," said Wharton quietly. "We want that bike! They put it in, and it's their own fault!"

"Did you put this young scoundrel's bicycle into the ditch, Ponsonby?"

"No, sir! It fell in!"

"My hat! What a whopper!" ejaculated Wibley.

"Wibley was riding it, sir, and he dismounted so clumsily that it rolled into the ditch," said Ponsonby. "We came up to offer to help him get it out, and then these cads piled on us suddenly."

The Greyfriars juniors stared blankly at Ponsonby. They had always known that that cheerful youth had no particular regard for the truth. But the facility with which he rolled out astounding falsehoods now simply amazed them.

"Great pip!" said Bob Cherry faintly.

"Talk about Ananias! He was a fool to this chap!"

"A German Chancellor couldn't keep his end up with Ponsonby," said Johnny Bull.

"Come out, Ponsonby," said Mr. Mobbs. "I believe your statement, of course. It was like you—like your gentlemanly way—to offer assistance to these ungrateful and brutal young ruffians."

"Not so much of that, please, Mr. Mobbs," said Harry Wharton quietly, but with a glint in his eyes. "We don't like being called names like that!"

"Silence, you insolent hooligan!"

"Do you want to follow those cads into the ditch, Mr. Mobbs?"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"Because," said Wharton, between his teeth, "if you call us names again, you'll go in after them!"

"Bub-bub-bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Mobbs, aghast. But he did not call the Greyfriars juniors any more names. "You—you—ahem!—I command you to allow those young gentlemen to come out of the ditch at once!"

"When they've handed out my bike; not before."

"I command you!" shouted Mr. Mobbs, drawing himself up to his full height, which was not much more than that of the juniors.

"You can command till you're black in the face," said Johnny Bull. "But it won't make any difference. We don't take orders from you."

Mr. Mobbs panted with rage.

"My dear boys, come out at once, and if these—if these boys attempt to molest you, I will chastise them!" he exclaimed.

And Mr. Mobbs grasped his umbrella in a very warlike manner.

"Keep them in, you chaps," said Wharton coolly. "I'll look after Mr. Mobbs."

The captain of the Remove planted himself directly in front of the Highcliffe form-master. Boy as he was, Harry Wharton could easily have knocked out the little Form-master, if his sense of the fitness of things had allowed him to strike a man so much older than himself. He did not intend to do that, but he intended to keep Mr. Mobbs from interfering.

"Stand aside, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton did not move.

"I shall strike you!" shouted Mr. Mobbs, brandishing his umbrella.

"You had better not, Mr. Mobbs!"

But the angry Mr. Mobbs did not listen to the voice of reason. He made a swipe at the captain of the Remove with the umbrella. Wharton caught it in his hand, jerked it away, and tossed it far across the hedge with a swing of his strong arm.

"B-b-bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Mobbs.

Ponsonby & Co. had made another attempt

to scramble out, but the Greyfriars juniors shoved them back without ceremony. There was no escape for the heroes of Highcliffe.

Mr. Mobbs made one more effort. He rushed upon Wharton and grasped him by the shoulders, and strove to drag him aside. Wharton grasped him in turn and held him in a grip of steel.

"B-b-bless my soul!" stuttered Mr. Mobbs.

He had caught a Tartar. Wriggle as he would, he could not escape from the grasp of the sturdy junior. Bob Cherry gave a chirrup of delight.

"Pitch him in!" he yelled.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Trouble Ahead!

HARRY WHARTON did not pitch Mr. Mobbs in. Bob Cherry's excited suggestion passed unheeded. Mr. Mobbs certainly was asking for it, but a certain amount of respect was due to his position, if not to himself.

But Wharton's grasp did not relax. He held Mr. Mobbs back, and the Highcliffe master struggled in vain.

"Release me instantly!" shrieked Mr. Mobbs.

"Are you going to interfere?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Then I shall hold you!"

"Bless my soul! Release me! Good heavens, I—I will not be drawn into a vulgar scuffle with a schoolboy. I will not interfere!"

"Good!"

Wharton released Mr. Mobbs, who staggered away breathlessly. Mr. Mobbs never took any care to keep himself fit, and he was feeling quite breathless and exhausted from that brief contest.

"Ponsonby," he stuttered, "you—you had better hand out the bicycle. You must yield to force, but I will see that justice is done later. I shall proceed to Greyfriars, and complain to Dr. Locke, and this ruffianly insolence will be punished. But for the present——"

Ponsonby & Co. were already groping in the mud for the bike. They had realised that there was no help to be expected from Mr. Mobbs. The Greyfriars juniors were not to be awed by a Form-master—not one of Mr. Mobbs's kind.

With many splashes and gasps and splutters the Highcliffians succeeded in dragging up the bicycle from the bed of mud into which it had sunk. They pushed it out furiously over the bank.

"There's your rotten bike!" hissed Ponsonby. "Now let us out!"

"You can come out," said Wharton.

He picked up the bike. It was coated with mud, and the cleaning of it would be a long and difficult process. He was greatly inclined to keep the Highcliffians there to clean it on the spot, but he conceded that point. The cads of Highcliffe had been sufficiently punished.

They looked dragged objects as they came out into the road, streaming with water, and squelching mud from their boots.

There was a whiff of extremely unpleasant odour from the mud they had dragged up from the bottom of the ditch.

"Keep your distance, please," said Bob Cherry. "You don't smell nice, Pon-

sonby. You nuts are always so highly scented."

Ponsonby ground his teeth.

"I'll make you pay for this!" he snarled.

"Bow-wow! Sheer off!"

"They shall be condignly punished," said Mr. Mobbs. "Come with me, my boys, and I will let Dr. Voysey see you exactly as you are. Then I shall take a complaint to Dr. Locke at Greyfriars. I shall demand the expulsion of these boys!"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry.

"Cherry, you—you insolent——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Do you want to go in?"

"I decline to say another word to you, Cherry! Come with me, my dear lads!"

And Mr. Mobbs led his flock away towards Highcliffe.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"There's going to be trouble," he remarked.

"The troublefulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "Mobbsy will come and worry the honoured Head, and then there will be the lickfulness!"

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Let him complain," he said shortly. "If he does we shall explain to the



Wibley's assailants dragged him towards the ditch—just as Harry Wharton & Co. came dashing round the bend on their bicycles.

"Rescue, Greyfriars!" yelled Wibley. (See Chapter 1.)

Head and Dr. Locke will see justice done."

"You never know," murmured Bob. "Headmasters don't look at things as we do. The Head mayn't think we were entitled to send those cads in for the bike."

"Can't be helped."

The juniors scraped down the muddy bike with handfuls of grass, cleaning it sufficiently for Wibley to ride it home.

They did not feel very cheerful as they rode back to Greyfriars.

The unending "scrap" and rows between the juniors of the two schools had sometimes made Dr. Locke very angry, and he was sometimes severe on that subject.

He was annoyed whenever Mr. Mobbs came over with a complaint, as was natural, and Mr. Mobbs never lost an opportunity.

Harry Wharton & Co. assuredly felt justified in handling the cads of Highcliffe as they had done, but there was no telling how the Head would look at it. Dr. Locke did not see eye to eye with the heroes of the Lower Fourth.

But it could not be helped now; neither did they regret their drastic handling of Ponsonby & Co. They had plenty of courage to face the music if trouble was to follow.

That trouble would follow there was little doubt. Ponsonby would do his worst, they knew that, and he had very much influence with his Form-master, and through him with Dr. Voysey, the Head of Highcliffe. There had always been bad blood between Ponsonby and the Famous Five, but the dandy of Highcliffe was more bitter than ever of late, owing to the fact that some of the fellows in his own form at Highcliffe were on friendly terms with Greyfriars. Frank Courtenay had become captain of the Highcliffe Fourth, and Ponsonby was not of nearly such account there as he had been, and Courtenay had revived the cricket fixture with Greyfriars, and generally did his best to make the rival juniors pull together. Against anything of that kind Ponsonby & Co. had set their faces very determinedly.

Harry Wharton & Co. reached Greyfriars, and wheeled in their machines, and for some time afterwards they were busy in cleaning

Wharton's bike. Then they went in to tea in No. 1 Study.

A good many members of the Remove were waiting for them there. It was a meeting of the Remove Dramatic Society in No. 1 Study at tea-time.

"Got the props?" asked Peter Todd.

"Yes, they had a narrow escape," said Wharton. "We'll have them out after tea."

The Removites breathed indignation at the story of Ponsonby's raid. The narrow escape of the "props" angered them. Three pounds ten shillings was a considerable sum to the Remove Dramatic Society.

"The rotters!" said Squiff, the Australian junior. "But, I say, if you cheeked Mobby like that he's bound to come over about it."

"The Head will be in a wax," remarked Mark Linley.

"Can't be helped."

"Mobby will pitch him a yarn," said Vernon-Smith. "He'll make out that Ponsonby & Co. were innocent little doves. You can't prove that they were going to duck Wib, as they didn't have time to duck him, and you can't deny that you did duck them. Looks like a licking."

"If we get licked we'll pass it on to Ponsonby later. I know that!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, blow Ponsonby and Mobby, and all Highcliffe!" said Wibley. "Let's see about the props. I'm going to try my Mobby rig."

Tea being cleared away, the amateur actors proceeded to examine the "props," newly purchased by their stage-manager and utility man. Wibley stripped off his Etons, and donned a black frock-coat and black trousers, a high collar, and a black tie. The juniors grinned as they watched him proceed to make up his face before the glass.

Before Wibley had come to Greyfriars Harry Wharton had been the leading spirit of the junior theatrical society. But Wharton had cheerfully and willingly yielded first place to Wibley.

Wibley was a born actor. His gift of impersonation was wonderful. He was not exactly a handsome youth, but his face was very useful for theatricals, for he had the gift of twisting it into almost any expression he

liked, and when he made himself up he owed more to his mobile features than to grease-paint or disguise.

The latest play designed by the Remove players was a comedy dealing with a public school, and a Form-master had to appear in it—a comic Form-master, whose business was to supply the funny turn. Wibley had had the brilliant idea of caricaturing Mr. Mobbs, of Highcliffe. As Wibley remarked, Nature must have intended Mr. Mobbs as a standing joke, to judge by his looks. With elevators in his boots, Wibley easily made himself the same height as the little Mr. Mobbs. With a few skilful touches to his face, and his queer command of his features, he turned himself into the very likeness of the Highcliffe Form-master.

He had Mr. Mobbs's hollow cheeks, his heavy brows, his tight mouth, his straggling wisp of beard, his high cheek-bones—every detail was perfect when he had finished his make-up—and the juniors looked on with great admiration. They could almost have believed that Mr. Mobbs himself was standing before them.

"Blessed if I know how he does it!" said Bob Cherry. "It's ripping, Wibby. Mr. Knobbs will be a top-hole part."

"Might have some of the Highcliffe chaps over to see it," grinned Squiff. "They'll



"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs as he saw the muddy, bedraggled figures in the ditch. "What—what is this?" "Help us, sir!" wailed Vavasour. The Removites on the bank only chuckled. (See Chapter 2.)

recognise Mr. Knobbs in the comedy as Mr. Mobbs of real life."

"My dear boy," said Wibley, in the somewhat squeaky voice of Mr. Mobbs. "How is your honoured father! I trust you remembered me to his lordship—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Topping!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's Mobby to the life."

"There'd be a row if he knew we were borrowing his good looks for our comedy," grinned Tom Brown.

"Oh, he's fair game," said Wibley. "A man shouldn't have a face like that if he doesn't want it imitated."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and Billy Bunter's fat face and big glasses glimmered in. The Owl of the Remove was grinning.

"I say, you fellows, he's come! Why—what——!" Bunter staggered as he blinked at the disguised Wibley. "Oh, dear! I—I—I—I—how did he get here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's Wib, you fathead," said Johnny Bull.

Bunter gasped.

"Oh, dear! You gave me such a turn, Wibley, you thumping idiot! I've just seen Mobby in the Close, and when I saw you here——"

"Mobby here?"

"Better get those things off, Wib," said Wharton hastily. "We shall all be wanted in the Head's study pretty soon."

"What-ho!"

And Wibley stripped off his disguise rapidly, and resumed his ordinary aspect, in readiness for the expected call to the Head's study.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Ponsonby Declines to Play the Game!

"By gad, what a merry gang!"

De Courcy of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, otherwise known as the Caterpillar, made that remark as he elevated his eyebrows in lazy surprise.

Frank Courtenay, who was chatting with the Caterpillar in the Highcliffe quad, stared at the "merry" party that came in at the gates.

It was in a sarcastic spirit that the Caterpillar characterised them as merry. They did not look very merry.

Mr. Mobbs, who strode in ahead, was red with anger, and his little eyes were glinting, and his nose, always red, was almost crimson, an effect that excitement had upon him. After him came Ponsonby, and Gadsby, and Monson, and Vavasour, dripping with water and reeking with mud.

They squelched their way unhappily towards the House, followed by curious looks and smiles from all sides.

"Somebody's been lookin' for trouble, and

findin' it," yawned the Caterpillar. "Mobby is waxy. Look at his beak."

Courtenay grinned.

"It certainly looks as if there's been trouble," he remarked. "A row with the Greyfriars chaps, perhaps."

"And Ponsonby has got wet," said the Caterpillar. "Pon, old man, what has happened? What induced you to spoil your clothes in that dreadful way?"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth and strode on without replying. The other muddy nuts scowled at Courtenay and the Caterpillar, and went on without a word. They were not in a humour to talk to the friends of Harry Wharton & Co. But Mr. Mobbs paused, and answered.

"My dear De Courcy, I am not surprised that you are shocked at this dreadful sight," he said. "Ponsonby and his friends have been hurled into a muddy ditch by a band of young ruffians."

"Horrid, sir!" said the Caterpillar sympathetically. "Did they get into a row with the bargemen?"

"No. The young ruffians belonged to Greyfriars School."

"By gad!"

"They were boys with whom, De Courcy, I am sorry to say, you have been friendly. I trust you will now see the advisability of leaving them severely alone. The same applies to you, Courtenay."

"I suppose poor old Pon didn't provoke them in any way, sir?" said the Caterpillar urbanely, before Courtenay could reply.

"Not in the least," said Mr. Mobbs. "That adds to the heinousness of their conduct. A Greyfriars boy, one Wibley, had an accident with his bicycle, and Ponsonby ran up to assist him, and was then treated in this outrageous manner."

"Does Ponsonby say so, sir?" exclaimed Frank Courtenay.

"Certainly he does."

"But you did not see it, sir?"

"I did not," said Mr. Mobbs. "But I trust Ponsonby's account implicitly. I have had experience myself of the ruffianly insolence of Wharton and his friends."

"Ponsonby couldn't have told you the

facts, sir," said Courtenay. "Wharton wouldn't have treated him like that if he hadn't asked for it."

"That will do, Courtenay," said Mr. Mobbs, frowning. "I am shocked and disgusted to hear you utter a word in defence of those young rascals. I am about to take measures to visit condign punishment upon them. Dr. Voysey will send a very severe complaint to Greyfriars, by me. You should be glad to know that this assault upon your Form-fellows will be severely punished."

"I know that Ponsonby must have asked for it," said Courtenay.

"My dear Franky," said the Caterpillar, "the good Pon was as gentle as a cooing-dove. I'm sure of it. He seems to have allowed himself to be chucked into a ditch without resisting. Could a peaceful chap do more than that?"

"Ponsonby would not deign to grapple with those young ruffians," said Mr. Mobbs. "He has a proper sense of dignity."

"Yaas," said the Caterpillar. "He must have looked awfully dignified in the ditch. I wish I could have seen him there, by gad!"

Mr. Mobbs gave the Caterpillar a sharp look and walked on. He followed the muddy nuts into the House.

"Lucky my uncle's an earl," muttered the Caterpillar. "If Smithson or Jones minor had talked to Mobby like that he'd have got two on each hand. What are you wrinkling your classic brow for, Franky?"

Courtenay frowned.

"I don't know the rights of this," he said. "But I know Pon has lied, and I'm pretty sure Mobbs knows he's lied, only he's glad to

have a handle against the Greyfriars chaps."

"Yaas, that's a cert. He knows that Pon wasn't brought up on the lines of the lamented George Washington," assented the Caterpillar.

"Now he's going over to Greyfriars complaining," said Courtenay, with a gleam in his eyes. "It's sickening. It makes us all look cads and funks. The Greyfriars chaps never complain to a master. Pon's played them a lot of dirty tricks, and they take it quietly, and never make a row to drag the



Billy Bunter staggered as he saw the disguised Wibley. "Oh, dear! 1-1-1—How did he get here? 1—I've just seen him in the Close!" (See Chapter 3.)

masters into it. It's up against Higheliffe, the way Pon drags Mobby into his rows."

"Yaas, the noble Pon isn't very particular."

"It ought to be stopped. I know very well he asked for it before he got it, and he

ought to have grit enough to take it without whining."

"That's not our good Pon's way."

"Those fellows may get licked for this."

"Yaas; that's Pon's little game."

Courtenay bit his lip.

"And the Greyfriars fellows will think we're all a crowd of sneaks," he said. "I think those rotters might consider our good name a little."

The Caterpillar shrugged his shoulders.

"Come on!" said Courtenay suddenly.

"Whither, my lord?"

"Let's go and see Ponsonby. If we put it to him plainly he may do the decent thing."

"Certainly!" said the Caterpillar urbanely.

"Let's go and talk to him. It would be awfully interestin' to see Ponsonby do anything decent. I haven't much faith in it, but we'll try."

Ponsonby & Co. were in the Fourth-Form dormitory, cleaning themselves and changing their clothes. Drury and Merton and Tunstall, and several more of the noble society of nuts, were there with them, sympathising. The four muddy heroes were in vile tempers, their only solace being the prospect of the punishment that was to fall upon their enemies at Greyfriars.

They stared angrily at the Caterpillar and Courtenay as the two chums came in. The Caterpillar was smiling blandly, with his usual imperturbable humour, but Frank Courtenay looked troubled and somewhat "ratty."

"What do you want, confound you?" exclaimed Ponsonby.

"Just a word with you!" said Courtenay.

"You've had some trouble with Wharton it seems——"

"And he's going to get some soon!" snarled Ponsonby.

"You mean that Mobby is going over to Greyfriars, complaining as usual?"

"Yes."

"Doesn't it strike you as being jolly mean to get them a licking? They never play that kind of thing on you."

"Mobby wouldn't lick us if they did," said Gadsby.

"It's sneaking," said Courtenay.

"Have you come here to tell us that?" sneered Ponsonby. "Well, I'll tell you in

return that we're going to get them the worst licking we can, a flogging very likely."

"You know what they think of us for this kind of meanness and sneaking?" said Courtenay hotly. "If you asked Mobby, he'd let the matter drop."

"Go and eat coke!"

The Caterpillar sighed.

"You see how it is, Franky. Pon is too dignified to lick those cheeky Greyfriars chaps, that's where it is."

Some of the nuts grinned at this remark, and Ponsonby scowled. Courtenay compressed his lips, and strode out of the dormitory, and the Caterpillar lounged after him, with his hands in his pocket.

"It's rotten!" growled Courtenay, as they went downstairs. "It's caddish!"

"Can't be helped, my son. Let's go and have tea."

Courtenay's face was gloomy at the tea table in No. 3 Study. He felt keenly the humiliation that was brought upon the Form and the school by Ponsonby's methods of "getting his own back" upon his rivals at Greyfriars; but, as De Courcy had remarked, Ponsonby was not particular.

A little later, from the study window, they saw the meagre figure of Mr. Mobbs crossing towards the gates. After an interview with Dr. Voysey, the Fourth Form-master was on his way to Greyfriars. Courtenay clenched his hands as he saw him go.

"I've a jolly good mind to give Ponsonby a thundering good hiding!" he said.

"I dare say Wharton will give him one," said the Caterpillar comfortingly. "It's rotten, but it can't be helped. Come and help me with my beastly 'Virgil.'"

But the cloud did not leave Courtenay's brow. He was wondering what was going on at Greyfriars, and it worried him.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER

### Going Through It!

MR. MOBBS was shown into the Head's study at Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke received him with his usual courtesy, though he sighed a little when Mr. Mobbs was announced. Dr. Locke did

not like Mr. Mobbs, and he did not like listening to complaints.

"Pray take a seat, Mr. Mobbs," said the Head. "I am—ahem!—glad to see you. I trust there has been no more friction—ahem!—between the boys."

"I should not have called otherwise, sir," said Mr. Mobbs disgracefully, his eyes glinting through his glasses. "I have a very serious complaint to make."

"Dear me!"

"Several boys in my Form at Highcliffe have been brutally assaulted and hurled into a muddy ditch by certain boys belonging to this school, one of whom treated me—me—with personal violence."

"Is it possible?"

"If you will send for the boys, Dr. Locke, I will make my statement in their presence. They will not, I venture to think, deny it."

"Their names, please?"

"Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, Wibley, and the Indian boy."

Dr. Locke rang, and sent Trotter for Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, Wibley, and the Indian boy. Those youths were expecting the summons, and they came at once to the Head's study.

The Head looked at the six juniors as they filed in. Mr. Mobbs regarded them with angry animosity.

"These are the boys, Dr. Locke," he said.

"It was Wharton who assaulted me. All of them were parties to the assault upon Ponsonby and his friends. I will tell you exactly what occurred. The boy Wibley had an accident with his bicycle—"

"I didn't, sir," said Wibley promptly.

"Let Mr. Mobbs finish, please!" said Dr. Locke.

"Very well, sir."

"Wibley had an accident with his bicycle, which slipped into a ditch. Ponsonby and his friends, seeing the mishap, came up to render assistance. These other boys then arrived upon the spot and assaulted them. Taking a cowardly advantage of being in greater numbers, they threw Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour into the ditch, drenching them and covering them with mud. I came up, and Wharton seized me in

a ruffianly manner and prevented me from going to their aid. They kept my boys in the ditch for some time before allowing them to get out. Their clothes are ruined. Wharton hurled my umbrella into the fields, and I have not yet recovered it."

Dr. Locke's brow grew very stern.

"Is that all, Mr. Mobbs?"

"That is all, sir; and enough, too, I think!" snapped Mr. Mobbs.

"What have you to say?" asked the Head, fixing his eyes upon the culprits.

"Only that it isn't true, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Hardly a word of it, sir," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"The untruthfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!"

Mr. Mobbs crimsoned with rage.

"Dr. Locke, if you allow these boys to cavil doubt upon my statements—"

"I must hear what the boys say in their defence, Mr. Mobbs. Wibley, kindly tell me what happened, in the first place."

"Certainly, sir!" said Wibley. "I was riding home from Courtyard with some things I'd just bought from Lazarus's. The Highcliffe cads—"

"What?"

"I mean, Ponsonby and his set, sir, stopped me, collared me, and pitched Wharton's bike into the ditch. It was Wharton's bike I was riding. Then they were going to pitch me in after it, when these chaps came up and stopped them."

"Mr. Mobbs wasn't there then, sir," said Johnny Bull. "He doesn't know what happened, only from what Ponsonby told him."

"Do you deny that you threw Ponsonby and his friends into the ditch?" asked the Head, looking very worried.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Harry. "We made them go in to fetch my bike out. It was in four feet of water. They wouldn't go in for it, so they were chucked in—I mean, thrown in."

"And we let them come out as soon as they handed the bike out," said Nugent.

"And the esteemed Mr. Mobbs wished to interfere, and Wharton persuaded him not to," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.



At the head of the four streaming, muddy figures Mr. Mobbs marched in at the gates; his little eyes were glinting and his nose was very red. There was trouble brewing for Wharton & Co. (See Chapter 4.)

"You persuaded him, Wharton?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Mr. Mobbs says that you assaulted him. How did you persuade him?"

"I—ahem!—I held him, sir."

Dr. Locke frowned.

"You laid hands upon Mr. Mobbs, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"That was very wrong. You must know that that was disrespectful, Wharton, to a man of Mr. Mobbs's age, and in his position."

Wharton was silent. He did not see that he was to blame, but he felt that the Head must take a different view. For a junior to collar a Form-master and hold him forcibly was not a matter the Head of Greyfriars could approve of, whatever provocation the junior

might have received.

"You observe, Mr. Mobbs, that these boys give a different account from that which you appear to have received from Ponsonby?"

"I trust Ponsonby's word absolutely, sir."

"I prefer to give credence to my own boys, naturally, especially as I know them to be truthful," said the Head dryly. "However, as the occurrence had no witnesses, we will let that pass. Wharton, was there no other method of recovering the bicycle, other than by sending the Highcliffe boys into the ditch to grope for it?"

"Well, yes, sir. I suppose it could have been dragged out with a stick."

"Then why did you put them in the ditch?"

"We thought they deserved it, sir, after pitching the bike in."

Dr. Locke coughed.

"It was a very lawless proceeding, Wharton. Even if Ponsonby threw the bicycle deliberately into the water,

that was not so serious a matter as throwing the boys themselves in."

"They were going to pitch Wib. in, sir."

"We stopped them just in time," added Johnny Bull. "Wib. would have been in the next minute if we hadn't come up."

"That is false!" said Mr. Mobbs.

"It is not false!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly.

"Control yourself, Wharton, please. It appears that the Highcliffe boys did not actually throw Wibley into the ditch, although they threatened to do so?"

"Well, yes."

"As there were other means of recovering the bicycle, I must conclude that you threw those boys into the ditch simply as a punishment?"

"Partly—yes, sir."

"Then it was a most unjustifiable act," said the Head. "Still more unjustifiable was it to use force against a gentleman in Mr. Mobbs's position when he wished to go to their help. Although Mr. Mobbs does not belong to your school, he is in the same position as your own Form-master, and should have been treated with respect. I cannot possibly excuse this, and so far I regard Mr. Mobbs's complaint as fully justified. If a Greyfriars master should be treated so disrespectfully by Highcliffe boys, I should expect Dr. Voysey to make full reparation."

The juniors were silent. It was the view they had really expected the Head to take, and they could hardly blame him.

"I shall therefore punish you severely," said the Head, taking up his cane. "I believe that the trouble was originally caused by the Highcliffe boys, but when Mr. Mobbs arrived upon the scene you should have obeyed him. I shall therefore cane you all in the presence of Mr. Mobbs!"

Mr. Mobbs rubbed his skinny hands.

He was anticipating a pleasant scene—pleasant for him, though not for the unlucky Removites.

"You first, Wharton!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Harry Wharton took his punishment quietly, only the glint in his eyes betraying his feelings.

One after another, the six juniors took the same punishment, Mr. Mobbs looking on with quite a genial expression now.

Then the Head dismissed them.

"You will report this to Dr. Voysey, Mr. Mobbs. And I may add that I consider it merely just, that Dr. Voysey should punish Ponsonby for having, in the first place, caused the whole trouble."

"Ponsonby's explanation on that point has fully satisfied Dr. Voysey," replied Mr. Mobbs coolly. "There is no call for punishment in his case."

And Mr. Mobbs departed, leaving the Head of Greyfriars frowning.

There was much chuckling among the nuts

of Highcliffe when Mr. Mobbs returned, and they learned of the scene in the Head's study at Greyfriars. Ponsonby & Co. felt that they had scored at the finish.

But it was not the finish yet.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER

### Squiff's Scheme!

No. 1 Study in the Remove passage was a scene of woe.

Six juniors there were, rubbing their hands, growling, grunting, and saying things.

Each of the delinquents had received four cuts, and they had been laid on very hard. Their palms felt, as Bob Cherry expressed it, as if they had been toasted.

Even more bitter than the severe caning was the feeling that their punishment had been unjust.

They did not blame the Head. He could hardly have taken any other view of the matter than the one he had taken. The chums of the Remove were kind enough to make allowances for the Head, and they excused him.

But they did not excuse Ponsonby or Mr. Mobbs. They had an intense longing to make things warm for the nuts of Highcliffe and their Form-master.

"We don't get a chance against those cads," said Bob Cherry dolorously. "When they get it in the neck, they sneak every time. We could go over to Highcliffe, and give them a licking all round; but it would only mean another licking for us from the Head—perhaps a flogging next time."

Wharton's eyes glittered.

"All the same, we're going to make these cads smart for this!" he exclaimed.

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent feebly.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific; but the painfulness in my esteemed hands is also great," remarked Hurree Singh sadly.

"Wow-wow-wow-wow!" That was Wibley's contribution to the discussion.

"You can't deal with rotters who don't play the game," said Johnny Bull. "We never sneak about them. They sneak all the time. Yow-ow!"

"Wow-ow-ow!" said Wibley.

Harry Wharton wrinkled his brows angrily. He was simply yearning to make Ponsonby & Co. suffer for their sins. But the prospect of another licking from the Head was not agreeable.

Squiff looked into the study. Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was very sympathetic.

"Been through it?" he asked.

have. Can't you think of another wheeze like that?"

The junior from New South Wales grinned. His great jape on the Highcliffe fellows had never been forgotten. When he had been a newcomer at Greyfriars the Australian junior had presented himself at Highcliffe as a new boy, and played the part for a whole day, much to the discomfort of Ponsonby & Co. But that, as Bob Cherry observed, was a little game that couldn't be played twice.

"Well, I certainly couldn't go there as a new kid again," grinned Squiff. "But if I had Wib's gift of making up, there's another game I could play—a regular scorer. But I couldn't do it."

Wibley looked up. "What is it?" he asked. "Couldn't I do it?"

"Well, it would want a lot of nerve," said Squiff.

Wibley snorted.

"Do you think I haven't as much nerve as you, you—you kangaroo?"

"Bet you you haven't," said Squiff coolly. "You see, we grow a special brand of nerve in New South Wales, and you—"

"Oh, come off!"

said Johnny Bull. "What's the idea? If there's anything in it, we'll make Wib do it!"

"I shouldn't want making, fathead!" growled Wibley. "You show me how I can pass this on to Ponsonby, and I'll jump at it."



"I shall have to punish you all in front of Mr. Mobbs," said the Head, as he lifted his cane—and Mr. Mobbs rubbed his hands in anticipation of a pleasant scene. (See Chapter 5.)

"Yow! Yes."

"Poor old Wib! You look doubled up!" said the Australian junior.

"Wow!" said Wibley.

"Can't you think of a way of making those rotters sit up, Squiff?" said Nugent. "You did them in the eye once, when you were new

"Go it, Squiff!" said the Famous Five encouragingly.

The chums of the Remove had great faith in the sagacity of Sampson Quincey Ilfley Field.

"Well," said Squiff, "I thought of it, and thought it out; and if I were an actor like Wib, and could wriggle my features about as he does, I'd go in for it. But I know I couldn't do it. I should be bowled out at once. Wib could do it, if he's got the nerve."

"Oh, rats!" said Wibley. "My nerve's all right. Cut the cackle, and come to the horses!"

"Well, it came into my head when I was watching you make up as Knobbs, for our comedy," said Squiff.

"What the dickens has our comedy to do with it?" snorted Wibley. "I don't feel very comic just now. Blow the comedy!"

"We planned that comic character in the comedy on the lines of our friend Mobby," pursued Squiff. "You can make yourself up exactly like him."

"Of course I can," said Wibley. "Like his blessed twin. But what are you getting at?"

"Well, that's the idea."

"Blessed if I see it!"

"Make it a bit clearer," said Bob Cherry.

"I may be dense, but I don't see the point."

"Yes, you are a bit dense," assented Squiff.

"Why, you silly ass—"

"However, to come to the point, suppose Wib should put on his rig as Mr. Knobbs in the comedy—"

"Well?"

"And instead of playing Mr. Knobbs in our play here, suppose he should go to Highcliffe, and play Mr. Mobbs?"

"What!" howled the juniors.

"That's the wheeze—if Wib's got the nerve. I'd do it like a shot if I could play the part; but I couldn't. It wants a born actor, with an elastic chivvy, like Wib's."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You thumping ass!" roared Wibley.

"And what would Mobby say when his double turned up at Highcliffe?"

"He wouldn't say anything."

"Why wouldn't he, fathead?"

"Because he wouldn't be there."

"And why wouldn't he be there?" demanded Bob.

"Because he would be kept away."

"Oh!"

"That would be our part in the little game," explained Squiff. "We could get a tip from Courtenay or the Caterpillar about Mr. Mobbs's personal customs, and nail him some time when he's outside the walls of Highcliffe."

"Great Scott!"

"Kidnap him!" gasped Nugent.

"Well, no: just persuade him to take a little walk, say, to the old Priory, and to stay there for the best part of a day," said Squiff.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"But—but—but he'd rush here to the Head at once, as soon as he was let loose!" exclaimed Wharton, aghast. "We might get sacked for it."

"We jolly well should get sacked!" said Bob.

"Yes, if Mobby knew us!" assented Squiff.

"But he wouldn't know us. Suppose he goes out after dark—he must do so sometimes—well, he's collared by a gang of footpads with bags over their heads. They rush him off and tell him they're going to hold him to ransom—"

"My sainted aunt!"

"They shove him into the old priory, and tie him up. They leave him there, thinking the ruffians are going to keep him prisoner till he's ransomed. When it suits us a Greyfriars chap happens along, finds him, and lets him loose. Not before it suits us to let him be loose, of course."

"Oh, dear! Are there any more at home like you?" gasped Bob Cherry. "You might have the nerve to do it, Squiffy, but Wib—"

"I've got plenty of nerve," said Wibley.

"But—but suppose Mobby should get away, and come back to Highcliffe while I was there?"

"He wouldn't."

"He might," said Wibley.

"Well, you'd have to cut for it. But he wouldn't."

"It—it's too thick," said Harry Wharton.

"It's a tremendous idea, but it's too big an order for Wibby."

"Besides, Wibby's disguise might not stand the strain of being seen in the daylight, at close quarters," said Johnny Bull.

Wibley sniffed disdainfully.

"Why, you duffer, I could play Mobby so that Mobby himself wouldn't know whether it was himself or not!" he exclaimed.

"I think Wib could do it," said Squiff. "He'll make up all right. When he's made up as Knobbs for the comedy we might take him for Mobby—Bunter did take him for Mobbs, you know. The question is, whether Wibby could carry out the game at Highcliffe. It would need a lot of nerve."

"I've got nerve enough," growled Wibley. "You leave my nerve alone. If you fellows will undertake to keep Mobby off the grass, I'll undertake to play his part at Highcliffe."

Bob Cherry rubbed his hands.

"What a wheeze! Why, you can cane Ponsonby & Co.——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And give 'em lines——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And set 'em all sorts of things to do. I say, Wibby, I suppose you couldn't make me up for the part?" said Bob.

"Fathead! You couldn't do it," said Wibley. "I could do it, and I'll jolly well show you whether I've got nerve enough!"

"Is it a go?" asked Squiff.

And all the juniors replied with one voice: "It's a go!"

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## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

### Not in the Know!

**B**ILLY BUNTER was very curious. He was on tenterhooks.

There was something on in the Remove, Bunter was certain of that. Knowing that something was on, the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars naturally wanted to know all about it. But whatever it was, it was being kept very dark.

Bunter was what Bob Cherry called a key-hole expert, but, even with his unusual gifts in that line, he could not get on to the secret. His curiosity was aroused to burning-point.

But it was in vain that he asked questions. He questioned Wharton, whose reply was monosyllabic, consisting merely of the word "Rats." He asked Johnny Bull, who replied with a grunt. He asked Bob Cherry, who sat him down on the floor of the Remove passage with a terrific bump.

After that, Billy Bunter asked no more questions. But he still wanted to know. Here and there he had caught a word. He had heard Squiff say something to Nugent about "the priory." He had heard Wharton mention that Courtenay would be able to tell them something.

That was the full extent of his information for a time, and he strove in vain to puzzle it out. The old priory was a place for picnics, and the Owl of the Remove could only conclude that the Famous Five were planning an al fresco feed, from which he, William George Bunter, was to be excluded. If there was to be a picnic, Billy Bunter was determined that he would be present—that was a foregone conclusion. He waited quite anxiously for Courtenay to visit Greyfriars again.

When Courtenay dropped in the next day, with the Caterpillar, Billy Bunter contrived to be within hearing distance while they were chatting with the chums of the Remove. But they did not talk about picnics.

Indeed, it seemed to the inquisitive Owl that their conversation was really not worth the trouble of listening to.

Courtenay expressed his regret about the licking the Greyfriars fellows had had, and expressed very forcibly his contempt for Ponsonby's sneaking. Then the talk ran on Mr. Mobbs.

Why the Famous Five cared a button about Mr. Mobbs and his personal habits the Owl of the Remove could not guess. But they evidently did.

They seemed quite interested in Mr. Mobbs. They asked a number of questions about him—exactly where his room was at Highcliffe, about the hours when he took his Form, and especially about the times when he took his little walks abroad.

Courtenay was considerably puzzled, but he answered the questions, telling all he knew of Mr. Mobbs's manners and customs. Per-

haps he suspected that the Famous Five had a rod in pickle for Mr. Mobbs; but if that was the case, Courtenay had no objection to make, so long as he was not wanted to help. He could not very well have taken a hand in ragging his own Form-master, but he saw no reason why the Removites should not avenge their wrongs if they saw fit.

The talk took place in the tuck-shop, and Billy Bunter, listening just outside the door, sniffed with annoyance. They were not talking about anything he wanted to know. The picnic was not mentioned, neither was there the slightest reference to the priory in the wood.

But he heard Bob Cherry chuckle when he mentioned Mr. Mobbs's habit of taking a little constitutional, by his doctor's orders, before breakfast. It appeared that Mr. Mobbs usually walked a quarter of a mile and back again. Wibley was heard to remark, "That's good!" Squiff said, "Topping!"

Billy Bunter gave it up, and strolled away in disgust.

After Courtenay had gone there was a confabulation in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five were there, and Squiff, and Vernon-Smith, and Peter Todd, and Tom Brown.

Evidently these youths had been taken into the mysterious secret. Billy Bunter bristled with indignation at being left out of it, and he felt quite justified in applying his ear to the study keyhole.

"Any morning will do," he heard Wharton say. "Of course, Courtenay can't be told till afterwards. We don't want to risk getting him into trouble."

"True, O King!" said Bob Cherry.

"We shall have to miss brekker that morning," said Squiff.

"That will mean lines, but we can stand it," said Nugent.

"But what about Wib? He will want a day's leave. How on earth is Wibley going to get a day's leave?" said Vernon-Smith.

"It's got to be worked somehow," said Wharton.

"Better pick a day that's a half-holiday," said Wibley.

"Then it will be only a question of getting a morning off."

"Yes, that's a good idea."

"I can work it," said Wibley. "I'll write to my people and get them to ask the Head to give me next Wednesday a whole day instead of a half. They'll do it, and the Head can't refuse."



Bob Cherry whipped open the door, and Billy Bunter shot headlong into the room. "The spying cad!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Scrag him!" (See Chapter 7.)

"He won't know what you want leave for," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!" said Bob suddenly.

He stepped quickly to the door, and flung it open. Billy Bunter, taken quite by surprise, rolled headlong into the study.

There was a shout of wrath from the juniors.

"Bunter!"

"The spying cad!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Scrag him!"

"Yow! Ow! I say, you fellows, I wasn't listening," howled Bunter, groping for his spectacles. "I haven't heard a word. I don't know anything about your getting up a picnic."

"A what?" ejaculated Wharton.

Billy Bunter scrambled up, barely dodging Bob Cherry's boot.

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming!"

"Coming! Where?"

"To that picnic," said Bunter, blinking at them. "I'll stand my whack; you needn't be afraid of that. I'm expecting a postal-order next Wednesday."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked angrily at the juniors. It was evident to them that the Owl of the Remove was not on the track. Billy Bunter's thoughts naturally ran upon eating and drinking, and his suspicion was that a feed was being planned.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm coming!"

"Your mistake!" said Peter Todd. "You're not coming—you're going!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter went—with Peter's boot behind him. Peter dribbled him down the passage to the stairs, and Bunter went down the stairs by himself, without further aid. He rolled down, and ran for his life.

"Jolly narrow escape," said Todd, as he returned to the study. "The fat bounder might have heard the whole thing, and then it would have been all out!"

Billy Bunter did not return to the keyhole. He was anxious to keep at a safe distance from No. 1 Study just then, and the con-

fabulation went on without the Owl of the Remove getting any further information. The belief remained fixed in his mind that a picnic was being planned, and to that the chums of the Remove had no objection.

The scheme was schemed and the plot was plotted. Every day Wibley practised the part of Mr. Mobbs, with the door locked, and the juniors had to admit that there was simply no telling him from the real Mr. Mobbs. And Wib's letter to his people had the desired result. His pater asked the Head for a whole holiday for him on the following Wednesday, instead of the usual half, and Dr. Locke consented.

The Head probably supposed that Wibley would be visiting his people that day. It was not judicious to enlighten the Head as to exactly what Wibley would be doing that day. The Head's sense of humour, as Wibley observed, was too limited for that.

Squiff had another excellent idea—he tackled Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, one day when that gentleman was in a specially genial mood, and obtained permission for some of the fellows to see Wibley off on Wednesday morning. Mr. Quelch willingly gave that permission, on the understanding that they were back in time for first lesson. There was no reason why they should not breakfast on sandwiches while seeing Wibley off, if they liked.

Mr. Quelch, naturally, had not the slightest suspicion of where they were seeing Wibley "off" to.

Before Wednesday came round every point had been satisfactorily settled, and every preparation had been made.

The juniors had kindly arranged to handle Mr. Mobbs as gently as possible. But, after all the wrongs they had suffered at that gentleman's hands, he could not complain if he was put to some inconvenience, and it would not worry them if he did. If Wibley of the Remove was to play his part for a day at Highcliffe, it was obviously necessary for Mr. Mobbs to disappear for that day. And as Bob Cherry put it, Mobbs had been asking for trouble for a long time. Now he was going to get it.

When the Remove turned out at the clang

of the rising-bell on Wednesday morning, Billy Bunter blinked reproachfully at the Famous Five.

"I know all about it," he announced.

"About which?" asked Bob.

"I know the little game, and I think it's rotten!"

"Go hon!"

"You're going to picnic this afternoon with Wibley's people," said Bunter. "That's what he's asked for leave for. And if Wibley chooses to leave out an old pal I can only say that I'm disgusted!"

And the chums of the Remove, chuckling over Bunter's misapprehension, hurried out of the dormitory, and wheeled out their bicycles—to see Wibley off.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

### The Kidnappers!

MR. MOBBS looked a little less sour than usual.

The influence of that soft, sweet, balmy summer's morning was not lost, even upon Mr. Mobbs. A gentle breeze from the sea stirred the leaves, in the thick green woods, as the Highcliffe master walked down the foot-path: the rising sun streamed warmth from a sky of cloudless blue.

Mr. Mobbs almost smiled, as all Nature smiled round him. Besides, his thoughts were pleasant. He was going to cane Smithson of the Fourth after breakfast, and he expected a word or two, and perhaps a handshake, from Ponsonby's uncle, the earl, when that noble gentleman visited Highcliffe a few days later in the week. Mr. Mobbs was looking forward to that visit. If the noble earl honoured him with two fingers to shake Mr. Mobbs's cup of happiness would be full.

The Highcliffe master was thinking of anything but danger. If anyone had warned him that the green, thick wood-sheltered ruffianly footpads that soft summer morning he would have laughed at the idea.

But there was danger for Mr. Mobbs in the shady wood. He was getting a nice appetite for his breakfast, but that breakfast was

destined never to be eaten. Mr. Mobbs had reached the end of his little walk; his constitutional always took him exactly half a mile. He turned to take breath before he retraced his steps to Highcliffe, and then, like a bolt from the blue, came danger.

Four figures emerged from the thick trees close to him, and directly in his path. Mr. Mobbs gazed at them in utter amazement.

They wore thick, heavy boots, and large, shabby coats that covered them from head to foot, warm as the morning was. But more curious than that was the fact that their heads were covered with large bags, drawn down and tied under the chin. Holes had been cut in the bags for sight and respiration, but of their features not a glimpse could be seen.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Mobbs.

"'Ere 'e is, Bill!" said a deep, hoarse, husky voice, proceeding in muffled tones from under one of the inverted bags.

"That's 'im, Sam!"

"Collar 'im!"

"Got yer pistol, 'andy, Tadger?"

"Wot to!"

Those dreadful exclamations almost froze Mr. Mobbs's blood in his veins. He was evidently in the presence of armed and desperate footpads. The four ruffians were no taller than himself, but they were four to one, and Mr. Mobbs never thought of resistance. He was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

"My—my good fellows——" he stammered.

"Don't give us no trouble!" hissed the leader of the gang. "We'd carve yer into strips as soon as look at yer ugly mug, savvy?"

"Goodness gracious!"

"Lag 'im!"

The four ruffians closed round Mr. Mobbs and "lagged" him. He trembled like an aspen as their grasp fastened upon his exceedingly slim arms.

"Got 'im!"

"My—my good men," murmured Mr. Mobbs, "I—I have very little money about me, but—but——"

"We ain't arter yer rhino!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Mobbs, who was

very glad to hear it. "Pray what do you want, then?"

"We want you!"

"You—you want me?"

"Yus! You're a prisoner!"

"Goodness gracious!"

"You're goin' to be 'eld to ransom, Dr. Voysey."

"Dr. Voysey! But I am not Dr. Voysey!" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs, in great agitation. "I am a Form-master at Highcliffe. My name is Mobbs—Eugenio Mobbs!"

"Don't tell you us no bloomin' lies, or you'll git a swipe on the jore," said the leader of the kidnappers. "We knows yer. We bin watchin' for yer. And somebody's goin' to pay pretty 'igh for you. I reckon the 'Ead of 'ighcliffe will be a wallyble prisoner!"

"But—but my good man, I am not the Head of Highcliffe." Even in his alarm and agitation, Mr. Mobbs felt a little flattered at being taken for the Head of Highcliffe. "If you have seen Dr. Voysey——"

"We ain't got no time to jore; we knows you!" said the leader. "Are you comin' quiet, or do you want a rap on the napper?"

"I—I will come quietly!" gasped Mr. Mobbs, casting a wild glance round him. "But I—I assure you——"

"'Old yer row!"

Mr. Mobbs shuddered as a thick stick was shaken under his nose. He "held his row" promptly. He was quite at the mercy of the rustians. They proceeded to tie his hands behind his back, and then he was scientifically gagged with his own handkerchief. Then a thick cloth was drawn over his eyes, and he was securely blindfolded.

The Highcliffe master submitted like a lamb. A struggle would have been useless against such odds, even if he had been inclined to put up a fight, which was not the case.

Bound and gagged and blindfolded, Mr. Mobbs was hurried away into the wood by his kidnappers.

Whither they were taking him he had not the remotest idea. That the footpads took him for the Head of Highcliffe, that they had kidnapped him to hold him to ransom, was all he knew. His brain was in a whirl. Mr. Mobbs, though really a very tame and timid

little gentleman, was accustomed to relating deeds of derring-do in his youthful years, and according to his own account he had been known, in his college days, as "Wild Mobbs," and had been a regular swashbuckler. But his swashbuckling days, if they had ever existed, were over now. Mr. Mobbs was more like a lamb than a swashbuckler in the hands of these desperate outcasts.

He stumbled and trampled on in the midst of his captors, stumbling over roots as he caught his feet in them, his heart thumping with apprehension. Savage grunts from his captors, whenever he stumbled, sent thrills of terror through him, and every moment he half expected to feel a cudgel descending upon his head.

The kidnappers were apparently following very lonely and secluded paths, and at times they pushed a way through thicket and bramble, as Mr. Mobbs discovered very easily by the thorns that scratched him in his passage.

It seemed to the dazed and miserable Mr. Mobbs that he had covered a dozen miles by the time they came to a halt. Probably it was only a mile or two, but Mr. Mobbs was not a good walker.

He felt stone flags under his feet now; he was no longer in the wood. Where was he? Somewhere in Kent, that was all he knew.

There was a low whistle, evidently a signal. Then footsteps on the stones. A low murmur of voices, and Mr. Mobbs distinguished the words, "Better knock 'im on the bloomin' 'ead!"

He shuddered.

"Gentlemen," he stammered, "I—I beg of you, do not be violent. I—I will make no resistance. I assure you——"

"'Old yer row!"

Mr. Mobbs shuddered into silence.

"Drag 'im in!"

The prisoner was marched off again. He felt himself being taken down stone steps, and a clammy air smote upon him. He was taken into an apartment—he realised that, although he could not see. The blindfolding cloth was suddenly taken from his eyes, and he blinked round him dazedly. His four captors were standing round him, dark



Four strange figures emerged from the trees and confronted Mr. Mobbs. "Bless my soul!" he ejaculated, as he stopped. They closed round him and breathed bloodcurdling threats as they gripped his arms; in a few moments he was blindfolded and gagged. Then they hurried him into the depths of the wood. (See Chapter 8.)

and threatening; no one else was in sight.

Mr. Mobbs was in a small stone cell, evidently underground. The walls were bare, but there were old sacks on the floor, and a log of wood which could serve as a chair. A loaf and a stone jug of water were close at hand. It was plain that some little preparation had been made for the reception of the prisoner.

"Where am I?" gasped Mr. Mobbs.

"Old yer row!"

"Oh, dear!"

"'Ere you are, in the 'eadquarters of the Black Gang," said the leader, in his hoarse, savage voice. "'Ere you stay till yore ransom is paid. We're goin' to 'ave a 'undred quid for you, or else—" He finished with a threatening gesture.

"Mum-mum-my dear sir," stuttered Mr. Mobbs, "I assure you—"

"Shut up! Mind—you try to get out of this, and you'll be knocked on the bloomin' 'ead afore you can say 'four ale.' You understand?"

"Oh, dear! Yes!"

"Hevery day," resumed the footpad, "you'll 'ave a loaf of bread and a jug of water until your ransom is paid."

"Goodness gracious!"

"Untie 'is 'ands, Bill, He can't git outer this. Blessed if I ain't 'arf a mind to knock 'im on the 'ead now!"

"I beg you—"

"'Old yer row! Come on, mates!"

The four ruffians quitted the room, and a heavy stone rolled into the place of the doorway. Mr. Mobbs started as he watched it. The ruffians had left an old smoky lantern burning in the cell, which dimly illumined Mr. Mobbs's prison. The unfortunate Form-master uttered an exclamation as he saw the stone door close. He knew where he was now. He had heard of that secret place under the ruins of the old priory of Friardale—indeed, he had once explored it with a party of juniors on a half-holiday. His heart sank. He knew where he was, but he knew that there was no possibility of opening that pivot stone from the inside of the cell. He was a helpless prisoner.

What would they think at Highcliffe when he did not turn up there? What would

Dr. Voysey say when he heard of the demand for ransom? How ever would he get out of this dreadful scrape? What an awful calamity! And when these fearful ruffians learned that he was not really the Head of Highcliffe, and that there was little or no ransom to be expected for so unimportant a person as an under-master, what would they do with him?

Mr. Mobbs sat down on the log and almost wept.

Meanwhile, the ruffianly footpads had reascended the stairs and emerged into the ruins of the priory. Several fellows in Etons met them there, grinning. And the ruffianly four stripped off their coats and their bags, and their big boots, and revealed schoolboy attire, and the faces of Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Squiff, and Johnny Bull. If Mr. Mobbs could have only seen them then his terrible fears would have been dissipated at once. But he could not see them.

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I didn't nearly give it away half a dozen times! Wasn't his face a picture?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Held to ransom!" chuckled Squiff. "Oh, my hat! Poor old Mobby! As if anybody would ransom him for tuppence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Greyfriars yelled with laughter. The first part of the scheme had worked like a charm. Mr. Mobbs was a safe prisoner for the day; and certainly he would never dream of connecting his capture with the cheerful juniors of Greyfriars. He was quite convinced that he was in the hands of a desperate gang of ruffians who intended to hold him to ransom.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Now, Wibby, it's your go."

"I'm nearly ready," said Wibby.

Wibby was making himself up with the aid of a glass stuck on the shattered wall of the old priory. The juniors watched him, chuckling. His resemblance to the captured Mr. Mobbs was growing every moment. While the real Mr. Mobbs was pacing the narrow limits of his cell, in the light of the smoky lantern, the spoof Mr. Mobbs was rapidly preparing to take his place. And so well was Wibby's artistic work done that when he was

finished the juniors could hardly believe that it was not the real Mr. Mobbs who stood before them.

Mr. Mobbs the Second blinked at them through his glasses.

"It is time for you juniors to get back," he squeaked, in Mr. Mobbs's voice. "What are you doing here at this time in the morning? Kindly get to your Form-rooms at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co., chuckling gleefully, rode back to Greyfriars on their bikes; and the new Mr. Mobbs took his way to Highcliffe for the great adventure.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

Mr. Mobbs on the Warpath I

"MOBBY don't seem to be here," remarked the Caterpillar.

The Highcliffe Fourth were at breakfast.

The place usually taken by Mr. Mobbs at the head of the Fourth Form table was vacant.

Mr. Mobbs was so punctual and regular in his habits that his absence from the breakfast-table excited considerable surprise and comment among the juniors. They were still more surprised when he failed to arrive for breakfast at all.

"Must be seedy," said Courtenay, as the juniors walked out into the quad.

"He went out as usual this mornin'," said the Caterpillar; "watched him trottin' out at the gates. I hope no dreadful accident has happened to Mobby. What should we do without our Mobby, by gad!"

"Oh, he'll turn up like the bad penny!"

Courtenay was right. Just before the bell rang for morning classes, a meagre figure in a black frock-coat came in at the gates.

"There he is," remarked the Caterpillar. "I was hopin' there'd been an accident. Our luck's out!"

"Good-morning, sir!" said Ponsonby, as the little Form-master came hurrying up.

"Good-morning, Ponsonby!"

"You did not come in to brekker, sir," said Gadsby.

"No, Gadsby. For once in a way I have breakfasted out of doors. But it is time you were in your Form-room."

The bell began to ring.

Mr. Mobbs the Second went into the house and paused at the stairs. It was necessary for him to put on his gown to take the Fourth. He had to find his room. He called to Ponsonby.

"Ponsonby!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Kindly go to my room for my gown."

Ponsonby frowned a little. He did not like fagging, even for a master. But he obeyed. He started upstairs, and Mr. Mobbs the Second followed him and watched him go into Mr. Mobbs's room. He followed him in.

"You may go to your Form-room, Ponsonby."

"Yes!" snapped Ponsonby.

The Fourth Form-master turned on him.

"Yes, what?" he exclaimed.

"Eh?" ejaculated Ponsonby, in astonishment.

It was the first time Mr. Mobbs had ever spoken sharply to him.

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, sir," growled Ponsonby.

"Kindly remember that you are speaking to your master, Ponsonby. I do not allow impertinence."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Don't utter ridiculous exclamations, Ponsonby. Take fifty lines."

"Lines!" howled Ponsonby.

"Yes! Now go to your Form-room."

"I say, Mr. Mobbs—"

"Not a word! Go!"

Ponsonby went, like a fellow in a dream. Was this sharp, snappish master Mr. Mobbs, the toady and tuft-hunter, who had always seemed almost to worship the ground upon which the earl's nephew trod? Much as they profited by Mr. Mobbs's meanness and toadyism the nuts of Highcliffe had always despised him for it, and sneered among themselves at his want of dignity. It seemed that Mr. Mobbs had determined to assert his dignity at last—with a vengeance.

Cecil Ponsonby's face was sullen as he came into the Form-room. He dropped into his



Ponsonby lounged from his seat with his hands in his pockets. Mr. Mobbs glared at him. "Take your hands out of your pockets!" he rasped. (See Chapter 9.)

place, and Gadsby and Monson gave him inquiring looks.

"Anythin' up?" asked Gadsby.

"That worm Mobby seems to be on the war-path this mornin'," growled Ponsonby. "If I get any of his cheek there'll be trouble."

"Mobby! Why, what's the matter with Mobby?" asked Monson, in surprise.

Mr. Mobbs came into the Form-room, rustling in his gown. There was a buzz of conversation going on among Ponsonby and his friends. It was not at all unusual, for Mr. Mobbs generally let the nuts do as they liked. But this morning it appeared that there was a spirit of reform in the air.

The Form-master rapped on his desk with his cane.

"Silence!" he snapped.

Ponsonby deliberately went on speaking to

Gadsby. He was deeply incensed by this sudden change in Mr. Mobbs, and he intended to show the toady that he could not play fast and loose with so considerable a personage as Cecil Ponsonby. The murmur of his voice was perfectly audible in the otherwise silent room.

"Ponsonby!" rapped out Mr. Mobbs.

"Hallo!" said Ponsonby.

That impertinent reply made the Fourth stare. There was a limit, even in dealing with Mr. Mobbs.

"Draw it mild, you ass," whispered Vava-sour. "He's ratty this mornin'."

"I don't care if he's ratty."

"Ponsonby, stand up!"

Ponsonby lounged to his feet.

"You have addressed me very disrespectfully, Ponsonby," said Mr. Mobbs, peering at him over his glasses.

"Really, sir?"

"You are an impertinent young rascal, Ponsonby."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Gadsby.

"Indeed, sir!" said Ponsonby, with cool insolence.

"Come out here, Ponsonby."

"What for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you."

Ponsonby gave a jump.

"Cane me! Me?" he ejaculated.

"Certainly. Come here at once."

"Oh, by gad!" murmured the Caterpillar to his chum. "The worm has turned—the

giddy worm is bucking up at last! Bravo, Mobby!"

"Blessed if I understand it," muttered Courtenay, greatly puzzled. "Mobby won't be asked home to Pon's place next vac, that's a cert."

"He's riskin' it, the noble hero. He's got the courage of a lion, along with the brains of an ass," said the Caterpillar.

"Silence in class!"

"Oh, by gad!"

"You are talking, De Courey?"

"Yaas, sir."

"I will maintain order in this class. If you break the rules of the Form-room again, De Courey, I shall punish you. Ponsonby, come here at once."

Ponsonby hesitated. He seemed inclined to defy the authority of his Form-master, but he hesitated. After all, if Mr. Mobbs chose to assert his authority, he had it all in his own hands. He had never chosen to assert it with regard to Ponsonby & Co., and the sudden change enraged the chief of the nuts; but if he insisted upon being obeyed, he had to be obeyed.

"Are you coming, Ponsonby?"

Ponsonby decided to go. He lounged out before the class with his hands in his trousers' pockets, looking as insolent as possible.

"Take your hands out of your pockets immediately, Ponsonby."

Ponsonby obeyed.

"Now hold out your hand."

"Really, Mr. Mobbs—"

"Don't argue with me!" Mr. Mobbs picked up a cane from his desk. "Hold out your hand at once, you impertinent young rascal."

"By gad!" grinned the Caterpillar. "Fairly on the warpath. What on earth has come over Mobby, Franky?"

"Blessed if I know."

Ponsonby was holding out his hand in a very gingerly way. It was a new experience to him to be caned, and he did not like it. His breast was full of rage and bitterness. Was this the obsequious master who had always considered him, favoured him, and protected him? What was causing the subservient Mr.

Mobbs to change like this, with such startling suddenness?

Swish!

The cane came down through the air with a cut that would certainly have made Ponsonby jump if he had received it on his palm. But he did not receive it there. He jerked back his hand suddenly, instinctively. The cane, meeting with no resistance, swept downwards and came with a loud crack on the master's own shin.

Crack!

"Yaroooh!" shrieked Mr. Mobbs, in anguish. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, my hat! Yowp! Oh, you blithering cuckoo! Oh! Ow!"

The Fourth Form simply gasped. Those exceedingly boyish expressions from their Form-master astonished them.

Mr. Mobbs dropped the cane and danced on one leg, clasping the other leg with both hands.

"Ow! ow! ow! Yow! Yooop!"

Ponsonby grinned. But his grin faded away as Mr. Mobbs clutched up the cane again, and made a jump at him. Ponsonby was seized by the collar, swung round, and then the cane came down across his shoulders. It was Ponsonby's turn to yell, and he yelled with all the force of his lungs.

Whack! whack! whack!

"Oh! Oh! Ah! Ow! Oh!"

Ponsonby struggled in the grasp of the Form-master. But the cane rose and fell with terrific force.

The nuts were all on their feet now. They were astounded, and they were angry. What the deuce did Mobby mean by cutting up rusty like this? What was the matter with the little beast?

"There!" gasped the little master, throwing Ponsonby away from him. "Now go back to your place, Ponsonby."

"Ow! ow! ow!"

"Go back to your place at once!"

Ponsonby crawled back to his place. It was the severest thrashing he had had since he had been at Highcliffe. He dropped into his seat, gasping, and breathing fury.

"By gad!" stammered Vavasour. "He

FANCY!



must be mad, absolutely mad, you know, by gad!"

"Vavasour!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Vavasour, very meekly.

"Take a hundred lines for talking in class!"

"Y-e-es, sir!"

And Vavasour did not talk again. It was only too plain that Mobby was on the warpath, and that his kind consideration for the nuts of Highcliffe was a thing of the past. First lesson passed off in a thunderous atmosphere.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER

### The Nuts and the Nutcracker!

MR. MONBS had amazed his class.

After the licking of Ponsonby, most of the Fourth were very much on their good behaviour.

But the nuts were furious.

More than one licking was required to reduce the great Ponsonby to the level of a common or garden member of the Fourth Form. He had been accustomed to having his own way too long. It was too sudden a change to fall from his high estate at one fell swoop.

He sat gritting his teeth. The other nuts made signs to one another, and exchanged an occasional whisper. They were feeling inclined to boil Mobby in oil. The favouritism of the master had given them a specially easy position in the Form, and they had always slacked at their work, and had been allowed to slack. They were not inclined to begin hard work without a struggle.

Even the Caterpillar looked uneasy when he was called upon to construe. For the Caterpillar, with all his good qualities, was as great a slacker as any of the nuts. His chum and study-mate had frequently induced him to work, but only by dint of powerful persuasion; and, as it happened, Courtenay had made him do his preparation the previous evening. De Courcy was glad of it now. He stumbled somehow through his construe, wondering whether the storm was to burst upon him in turn.

But the master was curiously easy in the

lesson. Perhaps his classical knowledge was not much greater than that of the Highcliffe juniors.

At all events, he found no fault with the Caterpillar's quantities, which would have made "Quinctilian stare and gasp," but fortunately did not produce that effect upon Mr. Mobbs.

De Courcy breathed with relief when he was through with his ordeal.

"Blessed if I didn't feel quite nervous, Franky," he whispered.

"I wonder he didn't drop on you," said Courtenay. "You gave him about a dozen good openings, and he seems to be on the warpath this morning."

"Must be his liver."

"Something's the matter with him, certainly."

"Poor old Pon! Look at him grindin' his teeth!" murmured the Caterpillar. "This will make it rotten for Pon if Mobby keeps it up."

"You are talking, De Courcy?" said the master.

"Yaas, sir."

"Kindly keep silent."

"Certainly, sir," said De Courcy, wondering why lines did not fall upon him.

But for some reason best known to himself, Mr. Mobbs's attention was wholly given to the nuts, and he passed lightly over the faults of others. It was favouritism of a kind the nuts had not been accustomed to. Fellows of no account, like Smithson and Benson, who had no rich relations, had always received the sharp edge of Mr. Mobbs's tongue, and Ponsonby & Co. had enjoyed watching their sufferings. Now the "outsiders" were let severely alone, and it was the nuts themselves who went through the ragings. They were bewildered and exasperated.

"We'll make the cad suffer for this," Gadsby whispered, after receiving a hundred lines for stupidity. "We'll get our people to speak to the Head about it. We'll show Mobby that he can't do as he likes."

"The rotten cad!" said Monson. "Turning on us like this! What have we done to the beast, I'd like to know!"

"Mind your eye!" whispered Drury.  
"He's watchin' you, Gaddy."

"Hang him!" said Gaddy, savagely.

"Gadsby!" came Mr. Mobbs's voice rapping out.

Gadsby glared.

"You are not only stupid, Gadsby, and careless with your lessons, but you persist in talking in class instead of attending to your instruction! You will stand in the corner till the end of morning lessons!"

"What!" gasped Gadsby, in rage and amazement.

"Go into the corner at once,

Form was a little too much. Gadsby's brow was as black as thunder as he went into the corner.

"Turn your face to the wall, Gadsby!"

"What for, sir?" demanded Gadsby rebelliously.

"Because I order you to!" snapped Mr. Mobbs.

Gadsby, quivering with rage, stood in the corner, with his face turned to the wall. The

Fourth-Formers chuckled. Gadsby's punishment was so ridiculous for a fellow of his age and size that his Form-fellows could not help thinking it funny. But it did not seem funny to Gaddy. He was feeling murderous.

"What'll he be doing next?" murmured the Caterpillar. "I'm getting interested in Mobby. This is a new departure. It's awfully interestin'."

The nuts were looking at Ponsonby. Pon was their leader, and it was up to Pon to strike a blow for them in this new, strange,

and unexpected dilemma. If Mr. Mobbs were to keep on like this life would not be worth living at Higheliffe. But Ponsonby was not feeling up to striking a blow for independence. He was still aching from the thrashing he had received. The nuts were disappointed in their leader.

Lines continued to fall thickly upon the unhappy nuts.

During the morning there was not a member of the noble and select circle who did not accumulate at least two hundred lines. Smithson & Co., who generally gathered in impots, went scot-free. They could scarcely believe in their good luck, and they rejoiced.



"Yaroo!" yelled Mr. Mobbs, as the cane missed Ponsonby's hand and struck his own shin. "Yaroo! Oh, crumbs! Oh, you blithering cuckoo. Ow!" (See Chapter 9.)

Gadsby!" said Mr. Mobbs, pointing with his cane.

"The—the corner, sir?"

"Immediately!"

Gadsby rose in a fury. To be set to stand in a corner like a naughty kid in the Second

The nuts almost gasped with relief when the Form-room clock indicated the hour of dismissal.

But there was no dismissal yet for the nuts. "Dismiss!" said Mr. Mobbs. "All boys who have received impositions will stay in and write them out before dinner!"

"Oh!" said the nuts.

The rest of the Fourth filed out. Ponsonby & Co. remained behind. Mr. Mobbs blinked at them from his desk.

"Ah, you are the idlest and stupidest boys in the class!" he remarked. "You should be ashamed of your attainments!—I should say your want of attainments! You are a disgrace to the form!"

Ponsonby & Co. gritted their teeth and said nothing.

"However, we shall change all that," went on Mr. Mobbs. "In future I wish you to understand that you are to work, and work seriously. I shall have no mercy upon slackers! I am dissatisfied with you!"

Mr. Mobbs quitted the Form-room, and then the rage of the nuts broke out into words as the door closed behind him.

"The cad! The rotter! The beast! The outsider!"

"We're not going to stand it!"

"Absolutely not!"

"What are we going to do, Pon? We can't let him run on like this."

"Life wouldn't be worth livin', by gad. We're gettin' all that he used to give to those cads, Smithson and the rest."

"All very well for those outsiders, but he can't treat us like this."

"What's the programme, Pon?"

Ponsonby clenched his fists.

"I can't understand him," he said. "He may be seedy; I know he has a bad liver, the unhealthy beast! He can't mean to keep this up. If he does we'll make Highcliffe too hot to hold him. We'll get our people down on him. But he can't mean to keep it up—he can't. And we're not goin' to be detained."

"What are we goin' to do?" asked Gadsby doubtfully.

"We're goin' out."

"Phew!"

"Follow your leader!" said Ponsonby.

He marched determinedly to the door. The nuts, encouraged by their leader's example, raised a faint cheer, and followed him. Ponsonby hurled open the door and led his flock out into the passage.

They marched almost into Mr. Mobbs. The master was standing in the passage—perhaps in anticipation of some such move.

"Stop!" he shouted.

"Oh, gad!"

"Did I not detain you?" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs.

Ponsonby's face set sullenly.

"We don't want to be detained," he said.

"Are you aware, Ponsonby, that I am your Form-master?" demanded Mr. Mobbs. "Are you aware that I expect my authority to be respected? I shall cane you all for breaking your detention! You first, Ponsonby! Hold out your hand!"

Ponsonby paused a moment, then he remembered the thrashing in the Form-room, and he held out his hand. Swish! Swish!

"You next, Gadsby!" Swish! Swish!

The furious nuts crowded back into the Form-room, each of them the richer by two severe cuts. They glared at each other almost speechlessly.

"Good gad!" gasped Vavasour at last.

"How—however are we goin' to stand this, dear boys?"

"We're not going to stand it!" shrieked Monson.

"What can we do, by Jove?"

"Rush the cad, and rag him!" suggested Gadsby.

But that bold suggestion was received in chilling silence. Rushing Mr. Mobbs and ragging him was rather too daring an enterprise for the nuts of Highcliffe. They decided to do their lines instead. And from then till the bell rang for dinner little was heard in the Form-room but a weary scratching of pens.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Billy Bunter Makes a Surprising Discovery!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came out of the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars, while Ponsonby and his friends were under detention in the Form-room at Highcliffe. The Famous Five had been thinking

more about Wibley than about their lessons that morning. They could not help wondering how the "spool" Form-master was getting on at Highcliffe.

"Can't have been bowled out," said Bob Cherry. "He would have been back by this time if there had been any suspish."

"It's working," chuckled Squiff. "I only wish we could be over at Highcliffe to see it."

"Why shouldn't we?" said Wharton. "It's a half-holiday this afternoon, and we can go over and see Courtenay if we like."

"Hear, hear!"

"In fact, I told Courtenay we might drop in this afternoon," said Harry. "We've got some points about the cricket to settle."

"We'll jolly well go," said Bob Cherry. "We might come in useful, too, in case there's any trouble for Wib."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"When are you chaps starting?" asked Bunter, blinking in reproachful inquiry at the chums of the Remove. "I want to be ready, you know."

"Go and eat coke, dear boy!"

"I'm coming," Bunter explained. "Wibley would be disappointed if I didn't turn up. That's why I'm coming. Not that I care much for your rotten feed!"

"It isn't a feed!" roared Johnny Bull.

"What is it, then?"

"Find out!"

"Oh, really, Bull! The fact is, you fellows, if Wibley's going to bring his people, I think I ought to be there——"

"Wibley isn't going to bring his people," said Wharton.

"Then what's he gone home for?"

"He hasn't gone home."

"Then where is he?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I say, you fellows, don't walk away while I'm talking to you! Beasts!"

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully after the Famous Five as they strolled away across the Close. He was more curious than ever, and more than ever convinced that some treat of unusual magnitude was in preparation, and that he was to be left out of it.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "After all I've done for 'em, too! Ungrateful beasts! But I'm jolly well going to keep an eye on them."

Billy Bunter kept two eyes on them, as a matter of fact, not to mention a pair of spectacles. He was determined that the Famous Five should not escape him that afternoon.

When the chums went out after dinner Billy Bunter promptly rolled out after them. The Famous Five went round to the bike-shed for their machines, and Bunter ran them down as they wheeled the bikes out.

"I say, you fellows—— Yow! Keep that rotten bike away from me, Bob Cherry, you beast! Are you going biking?"

"We are—we is."

"Where are you going to meet Wibley?"

"Ask us another."

"Look here, I'm coming to the picnic," said Bunter. "If you're going to bike it, I'll borrow Toddy's bike. Is Wibley's place far away?"

"We're not going to Wibley's place, fat-head."

"Wait till I get Toddy's bike out," yelled Bunter as the five juniors wheeled their machines out.

"Bow-wow!"

Bunter desperately grabbed Toddy's bike off the stand. Unfortunately for him Peter Todd came in for it just then. He jerked it away and wheeled it off, unheeding Bunter's indignant expostulations.

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "I suppose I shall have to take Squiff's bike, and the beastly thing is too high for me."

He lifted down Squiff's bike. But his luck was still out. Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was one of the party for Highcliffe, and he came in for his machine.

"What are you doing with my bike?" the Australian junior demanded, indignantly.

"I want you to lend it to me."

"I'll lend you a thick ear," growled Squiff. "Hand it over!"

"Now look here, Squiff—yooooop!"

Squiff sat the Owl of the Remove down on the floor and wheeled the machine away. Billy Bunter sat and gasped, and then

jumped up—as he remembered that the cyclists would be out of sight if he didn't hurry. He bolted out of the bike-shed and rushed for the gates.

But they were gone.

Billy Bunter blinked up and down the road, but the seven riders were out of sight, and there was nothing to indicate which direction they had taken.

"Oh, the rotters!" gasped Bunter. "The

beasts!  
They've dodged me! Oh, the cads!  
After all I've done for 'em!"

Harry Wharton and Co. were riding away cheerfully for Courtfield, en route for Highcliffe. Billy Bunter stood in the road and snorted.

He was at a loss.

"Where the deuce have the beasts gone?" murmured Bunter. "If they ain't going to see Wibley's people, where are they going? They were talking about the old priory the other day."

Bunter reflected further.

The old priory in the wood was a good distance from Greyfriars on foot, and Bunter did not like exertion on a warm afternoon. He decided to borrow Tom Brown's bike and ride. He could easily leave the bike to take care of itself when he came to the footpath. If anything happened to the abandoned bike it would be really fortunate that it

belonged to Tom Brown and not to himself.

But there was no end to Bunter's misfortunes that afternoon. He was soon in the bike-shed again, but as he was wheeling the machine out the New Zealand junior spotted him. Tom Brown did not waste any time in talk. The last time Bunter had borrowed his machine it had been returned with a bent pedal and a broken chain, and Bunter had declined all responsibility for the necessary

repairs. Once was enough in Tom Brown's opinion. The New Zealand junior picked up a bike-pump and started on Bunter. Billy Bunter let go the bike as if it had become suddenly red-hot, and fled for his life.

Tom Brown chased him as far as the School House, lunging with the pump at Bunter's fat person, eliciting a wild yell from Bunter at every lunge. The Owl of the Remove streaked for



"Go to the corner at once, Gadsby!" ordered Mr. Mobbs.

"And turn your face to the wall!" (See Chapter 10.)

the gates, and did not pause to take breath till he was in the road.

"Oh, dear! Beast! Yow!" mumbled Bunter, as he pumped in breath. "I've a jolly good mind—yow!—to go back and lick him—ow!—but I've got no time to waste on him—groooh! I suppose I had better hoof it—wow!"

So Billy Bunter hoofed it.

He tramped away in a very disconsolate

FACT!

# The Bunter Family

(As it Really is.)  
AT HOME



THE HOUSE



THE GARDEN

THE WHOLE  
HOUSEHOLD  
STAFF

MRS. PARKER  
(THE WASHING LADY)

MRS. SPRIGGS,  
(THE CHARLADY)  
THURSDAYS  
AND FRIDAYS!

NOW MR. BUNTER TRAVELS

EMILY  
AND  
JANE

THE FAMILY  
IN THE PARLOUR  
WINDOW,  
A SWEET  
DOMESTIC  
SCENE

ALSO  
THE FAMILY  
CAT

TEA  
PROVIDED

HIS GRANDMOTHER AND HIS UNCLE BOB  
RESIDE WITH THE FAMILY.

ALSO THE HOUSE WHERE  
BILLY WAS BORN!

mood. He did not like a long walk on a warm afternoon, especially with an uncertainty at the end of it. The only clue he had to the whereabouts of the supposed picnickers was the mention of the old priory—and if he did not find them there he was "done." The fat junior grunted and perspired as he rolled away, and it was a long time before the ruins of the priory, embosomed in the thick wood, came into sight.

Billy Bunter halted in the ruins and mopped his streaming brow with his handkerchief.

There was no sign of the Famous Five or Wibley there. No sign whatever of a picnic.

"Beasts!" was Bunter's comment.

He blinked round suspiciously among the ruins. He blinked into the gloomy opening that led to the vaults. Then his eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. A glimmering object on the ground met his eye. He picked it up and blinked at it triumphantly. It was a fragment of silver tissue, such as is wrapped round chocolates. It was quite clean and new, and so evidently could not have been on the ground there very long—some time that day, at all events.

"They're here, the beasts," grinned Bunter. "They must have seen me coming and dodged down there to spoof me. I'll jolly soon run 'em down. This jolly well shows that somebody's been here, and I know who that somebody is."

Billy Bunter blinked down the steps into the vaults below. The opening was very dark and forbidding, and Bunter had had an unpleasant adventure there once, and he did not quite relish a descent into the shadowy depths. But he was convinced that the picnickers were there. The fragment of silver tissue was a clue. It proved that someone had been there that day, and naturally it did not occur to Bunter that they had been there before morning lessons.

"I say, you fellows, I know you're here!" shouted Bunter. "I'm coming down."

"Down!" answered the booming echoes below.

"Wharton, you rotter—do you hear?"

"Hear!" came back the echo.

Bunter grunted and descended the stone

steps. He struck a wax vesta and blinked round him. On one side lay the deep vaults, on the other the subterranean passage that led towards Greyfriars. Before him was a blank stone wall, in which was the pivot-stone giving access to the hidden cell. Bunter blinked right and left, but only deep shadows met his gaze.

"Hiding in there, the beasts!" growled Bunter. "I'll jolly soon have 'em out."

He struck another match and felt over the stone that closed up the cell. He knew where to press to set the pivot in motion. The heavy stone swung back and a light struck upon Bunter's blinking eyes. It came from a smoky lantern on the floor of the cell.

"G-g-great Scott!" stuttered Bunter.

His eyes almost started through his spectacles at the sight of a little thin gentleman in a black frock-coat, with a pale, scared face.

"Mr. Mobbs!" howled Bunter.

Mr. Mobbs gasped.

"Bunter! Is that Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove? How did you find me here? Where are they?"

"They!" ejaculated Bunter. "Who?"

"The ruffians!" panted Mr. Mobbs. "The kidnappers!"

Bunter gave a yelp.

"Yow! I didn't know there were any—my hat!—I'm off!"

And Bunter bolted for the stairs. He had not the slightest inclination to deal with ruffians and kidnappers in those gloomy depths.

Mr. Mobbs, trembling in every limb, followed him. He hardly dared to risk making his escape, even now the stone door was open. For, if the kidnappers had spotted him, he remembered their dreadful threats. But he had had enough of that gloomy recess under the old priory, and he screwed up his courage to the sticking-point and made the venture. On tiptoe, trembling and shivering, he made his way from the cell and up the stone stair after the panting Bunter.

There was neither ruffian nor kidnapper in sight! Mr. Mobbs was soon breathing the free air in the sunny summer's afternoon. He was free!

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### A Little Exercise !

"GLAD to see you, dear boys!" "Welcome as the flowers in May!" said Courtenay cordially. "We'll get up some cricket—what?"

Harry Wharton & Co. had arrived at Highcliffe. Courtenay and the Caterpillar greeted them warmly. Ponsonby & Co. could be seen in the quadrangle, but they were not looking their usual selves. The nuts were down on their luck. The glory had departed from the House of Israel, so to speak. Canings and detentions did not agree with the nuts, and they were as exasperated as they were perplexed.

They had been muttering among themselves, and scowling, and they scowled still more at the sight of the Greyfriars fellows.

"We thought we'd drop in," remarked Bob Cherry. "Has somebody been cracking your nuts? They don't look very chippy."

Courtenay laughed.

"They've had a bad time this morning," he remarked.

"A regular scorcher of a time, by gad!" chuckled the Caterpillar. "Mobby has cut up rusty with his nobby nuts."

"Mobby has?" grinned the Greyfriars party.

"Yaas—he's a regular tartar to-day. Ponsonby's had an awful lickin' in class——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The whole gang were detained doin' lines till dinner-time——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And caned all round for breakin' their detention——"

The Greyfriars juniors yelled. They had wondered how Wibley was getting on at Highcliffe. They knew now.

It was evident that the new Mr. Mobbs had been making things decidedly warm for the nuts of Highcliffe.

"Anything else?" grinned Wharton.

"No; that's the total bill, so far," said the Caterpillar. "But Pon & Co. are simply flabbergasted, by gad! They can't make it out. They were always Mobby's prime favourites. Pon took Mobby home once to

see his noble uncle. Ever since that Mobby had been prepared to lick the dust off his boots. Now, all of a sudden, he has turned on them. The worm will turn, you know, but I never believed that a worm like Mobby would turn."

"But he's done it!" chuckled Courtenay. "It was a surprise for the whole Form. Mobby was fairly on the war-path."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The awfulness is terrific."

"Must be a surprise for them," said Harry Wharton. "And you don't know what's the matter with Mobby?"

"Can't make it out."

"It's a giddy mystery," said Courtenay. "Mobby must be ill, or dotty. He's made the nuts hate him like poison already, and I fancy they've got some scheme afoot for getting their people to complain to the Head, and get him the sack."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Here he comes," yawned the Caterpillar.

Mr. Mobbs the Second appeared in the quad. Ponsonby & Co. scowled at him, as he came up to the group of Greyfriars juniors. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him, but they simply could not recognise Wibley. It was Mr. Mobbs to the life. But, considering that he was Mr. Mobbs, he was very gracious to the party from Greyfriars.

"Ah, my young friends," said the little master, "I am glad to see you here!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton.

Courtenay and the Caterpillar simply stared. After Mr. Mobbs's conduct the previous week towards the Greyfriars chums, this was a startling change of face.

The Caterpillar tapped his forehead significantly. He could only conclude that Mr. Mobbs was wandering in his mind.

"You have come over to play cricket, perhaps?" Mr. Mobbs continued.

"We were thinking of a little game, sir," said Nugent.

"Very good! Now, how do you like the idea of giving some instruction to certain boys of my Form who have, I am sorry to say, shown a slacking spirit with regard to games? It would be a kind act."

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I—

I mean, yes, rather, sir!"

"Am I dreamin', Franky?" murmured the Caterpillar.

Frank Courtenay wondered whether he was dreaming, too.

"Very well," said Mr. Mobbs. "I take you at your word, Ponsonby." He beckoned to the nuts, and Ponsonby & Co. came up with dark faces.

"Ponsonby, I am sorry to see you slacking about the quadrangle on a half-holiday," said Mr. Mobbs, in his severest squeaky tones.

"I suppose we can do as we like on a half-holiday, sir," said Ponsonby, sullenly. Mr. Mobbs had never reproved him for slacking before.

"Not in the least, Ponsonby. I disapprove of slacking. You had better play cricket this afternoon."

"I don't care to, sir."

"You will play cricket by my orders, Ponsonby. These Greyfriars boys have kindly consented to give you some much-needed instruction."

"What!" yelled Ponsonby.

"B-b-by gad!" stammered Vavasour.

"Go on the ground at once! You need not trouble to change; I fear the exertion might be too much for you," said the Form-master sarcastically. "Master Wharton, I depend on you to see that these slacking lads have plenty of exercise."

"Rely on me, sir," said Wharton.

Ponsonby & Co. could scarcely believe their eyes and ears. Mr. Mobbs was not only down on them, but apparently on good terms with the Greyfriars juniors. What was the meaning of it all?

"I won't go!" muttered Gadsby.

Mr. Mobbs's eyes were upon him at once.

"Gadsby! What did you say?"

"I—I said I'm quite ready, sir," stammered Gadsby.

"Very good! Get on the field immediately. I shall watch you. Any boy who shows a sign



"Great Scott!" gasped Billy Bunter as he saw the figure below him. "G-great Scott! Mr. Mobbs!" (See Chapter 11.)

of slacking will be detained the whole afternoon, to write out *Cæsar* until six o'clock!"

The dismayed nuts went sullenly on the field. Even fagging at cricket was better than writing out "*De Bello Gallico*" all the afternoon. Mr. Mobbs was evidently in earnest. Hitherto the nuts of Highcliffe had only experienced the velvet glove; now they were getting the iron hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. went on the field grinning. Wibley's latest wheeze tickled them immensely. And they fully intended to give the Highcliffe slackers plenty of leather-hunting.

"Poor old Pon!" murmured the Caterpillar, lounging up to the pavilion to watch. "He will be quite worn out by the time Mobby gets taken to an asylum."

"It will do him good," said Courtenay,

laughing. "I like Mobby better like this than in his old style."

"Pon doesn't!" grinned the Caterpillar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pon didn't. Mr. Mobbs—displaying a knowledge of cricket the nuts had never suspected him of before—put the slackers into the field, and Wharton and Bob Cherry went in to bat. Ponsonby sullenly went on to bowl, and he bowled very badly. It was pretty clear that he was trying to hit the batsman, not the wicket. Mr. Mobbs rapped out at him.

"Ponsonby, you are bowling like a baby! Give the ball to Courtenay, and go into the field. Courtenay, oblige me by bowling."

"Certainly, sir!"

Courtenay bowled, and then the batsmen got to work, and the field were given some leather-hunting to do. All the nuts were in the field, and they dawdled after the ball, till Mr. Mobbs's sharp voice snapped out to them.

"Gadsby, don't slack! Merton, get a move on! Monson, you are a lazy and incompetent young fool! Vavasour!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Unless you exert yourself, I shall send you into the Form-room with a thousand lines to write out."

"Oh, by gad!"

The miserable nuts began to exert themselves. But Vavasour was soon slacking again, and Mr. Mobbs yelled to him.

"Vavasour, go into the Form-room at once! You will write out a thousand lines, and if they are not finished by six o'clock, you will be detained for three half-holidays. Not a word, sir! Go!"

Vavasour, in utter dismay, tramped off the field, and disappeared into the School House. The lesson was enough for the rest of the nutty band. They exerted themselves manfully, and hunted the leather up and down the ground, as it was driven by the batsmen, till the unaccustomed exertion made them pant and gasp and stream with perspiration.

The Greyfriars juniors looked on with smiling faces. The Caterpillar felt like a fellow in a dream. What had come over Mobby?

For a whole hour the merciless Mobby kept

the unhappy slackers of Highcliffe fagging on the cricket-field. By that time, Ponsonby & Co. were ready to drop with exhaustion. They stumbled and fumbled and moaned and gasped, and mopped their streaming faces, till even the Greyfriars fellows, much as they despised the slackers, took pity on them.

"That will do!" said Mr. Mobbs at last.

"Do you feel better for this exercise, Ponsonby?"

"Oh, dear!" said Ponsonby faintly.

"Do you feel better, Gadsby?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You may go now. Remember that this is only the beginning. I will have no more slacking in my Form!"

With suppressed groans, the wretched nuts limped and staggered off the field. Mr. Mobbs glanced kindly at the grinning juniors of Greyfriars.

"Thank you very much, my dear boys! If you would care to refresh yourselves after your little game, pray come with me to the tuck-shop."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

They accompanied Mr. Mobbs to the tuck-shop, where they refreshed themselves with flowing ginger-pop.

"Pinch me, Franky!" murmured the Caterpillar. "I want to know whether I'm dreaming."

Many other fellows at Highcliffe wondered whether they were dreaming, too; and quite a crowd came to peep into the tuck-shop, to gaze in almost awed wonder upon the extraordinary sight of Mr. Mobbs treating Harry Wharton & Co. to ginger-pop, and imbibing that refreshing beverage himself with apparent enjoyment.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

'Mr. Mobbs the Reformer!

"Oh, dear!"

"I'm nearly expirin'!"

"What's to be done, Pon? We can't stand it. Oh, dear!"

The unhappy nuts had gathered in Ponsonby's study; with the exception of the still more unhappy Vavasour, who was grinding out lines in the Form-room.

Ponsonby & Co. were in a state of desperation. They lay about the study in every attitude of limpness and exhaustion. Monson had collapsed into an armchair; Ponsonby was stretched on the sofa; Gadsby was leaning across the table; Drury was gasping on the rug; Merton and Tunstall were fanning themselves feebly. Never had the nuts felt so utterly used-up.

"We can't stand it, y'know," moaned Monson feebly. "It'll kill me. What an utter beast Mobby is. Oh, dear!"

"What are we goin' to do, Pon?"

But the wretched Pon had no suggestion to offer. They had to grin and bear it, if they could. Bearing it, at least, was necessary. Grinning was out of the question. They did not feel like grinning.

It was a good hour before the slackers of Highcliffe pulled themselves together. They did not leave the study. They were afraid of catching the eye of the terrible Mr. Mobbs—Mr. Mobbs, once so kind and considerate, and now so Hunnish.

"Let's have a little game," said Ponsonby, taking a pack of cards from the drawer of the table. "And a smoke will set us up a bit."

"Suppose Mobby——" began Gadsby uneasily.

"Mobby never comes here."

"But since he's turned out such a beast——"

"We'll lock the door."

"Oh, all right!"

The nuts felt somewhat comforted as they sat playing nap, with cigarettes going, and little piles of money on the table. It was one of their nice little customs, and it made them feel better. At least they were safe in the study, so they believed. But there seemed to be no end to their troubles that day. Before the "little game" had lasted half an hour there came a sharp tap at the door.

The handle was tried, and the rap was repeated, so loudly and sharply, that it rang out like the crack of a pistol.

"Open this door at once!"

"Mobby!" gasped Gadsby.

In wild haste the nuts shoved the cards, the cigarettes, and the money out of sight. The Mobby of former times had always been

careful not to discover the manners and customs of the nuts. But the Mobby of to-day was on the warpath, and he had evidently come there to catch them.

"Will you open this door?"

"Buck up!" panted Monson, pale with terror. "The beast might report this to the Head! Oh, dear!"

Rap, rap, rap!

"Ponsonby, open this door! I can smell tobacco-smoke here!"

"The game's up!" moaned Drury. "Oh, you idiot, Pon! What did you start smoking for? You might have known?"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Ponsonby savagely.

He unlocked the door. Cards and cigarettes were hidden, but he could not hide the smoke that loaded the atmosphere of the study. But that had to be chanced. The irate Form-master could not be refused admittance.

"Why was that door locked?" exclaimed the Form-master, as he rustled into the study.

"Ahem!"

Mr. Mobbs coughed.

"You have been smoking!"

It was not much use to deny it. The study reeked with it. Ponsonby & Co. maintained a sullen silence.

"What else have you been doing?"

Silence.

"Gambling, I presume!"

No answer.

"Turn out your pockets!"

Slowly and sullenly the nuts obeyed. All kinds of things were turned out—cards and dice and cigarettes among other things.

"Disgraceful!" hooted Mr. Mobbs.

"Shocking! Are you aware that you may be expelled from the school for this rascally conduct? It is my duty to report this to Dr. Voysey."

Ponsonby gritted his teeth. He knew that the doctor would not thank Mr. Mobbs for making it necessary for him to expel a number of juniors who had rich and influential relations.

"Report it, then," said Ponsonby fiercely, "and we'll tell him at the same time that you've known it a jolly long time, Mr. Mobbs."

"What—what!"



Ponsonby & Co. lay about the study in every attitude of limpness and exhaustion. Never had the nuts felt so utterly used-up! (See Chapter 13.)

"Do you think we didn't know that you knew?" hissed Ponsonby, quite forgetting prudence in his rage. "You've kept your eyes shut jolly carefully, and I can't make out what you've spotted us for now."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Mr. Mobbs, a surprising ejaculation for a Form-master. Ponsonby's statement somewhat surprised Wibley of the Remove.

But he remembered himself in a moment.

"Ponsonby, you are impertinent! You will take a thousand lines! Put those cards and cigarettes into the grate, and set fire to them immediately. For this time I will not report you to the Head, but the next time you shall be expelled from Highcliffe. Make an end of those wicked things at once!"

Sullenly the nuts piled cards, cigarettes, and dice-box into the grate, and ignited them.

There was soon quite a blaze going. Mr. Mobbs turned out the table drawer, and discovered more cards and bridge-markers, and several sporting papers and racing lists, which he promptly tossed into the fire. It was a clean sweep, and probably the best thing that could have happened to the sporting set of the Fourth, though they did not look at it in that light.

They looked on with burning eyes and set lips as Mr. Mobbs proceeded upon his career of reform. When he had finished he glared at them over his glasses.

"Disgraceful! Are you not ashamed of yourselves?"

Sullen silence!

"Are you ashamed of yourselves?" thundered Mr. Mobbs.

"Ye-e-s, sir!" stammered Monson.

"Will you promise amendment in the future, if I pardon your stupid wickedness on this occasion?"

"Yes, sir!" The nuts would have promised anything at that moment.

"Very well," said Mr. Mobbs, "I shall allow the matter to end here. But remember I shall keep an eye on you in the future. I will pass this matter over now, only giving you a thousand lines each. I understand now the exhaustion you showed in the cricket-field; it is due to this vile smoking, which has sapped away your stamina. I will not allow you to destroy your health in this way. I will——"

Mr. Mobbs suddenly paused.

He was standing near the study window, and his eyes had suddenly fallen upon a figure in the quadrangle, coming from the direction of the gates.

It was a skinny figure in a black frock-coat, somewhat rumpled and muddy.

Mr. Mobbs stood transfixed, the words dying away on his tongue.

For it was the real Mobby who was tramping across the quad towards the house—the real, genuine article, who had evidently escaped from the cell under the old priory earlier than the Greyfriars japers had planned.

"Great Scott!" gasped Mr. Mobbs.

His next action astounded Ponsonby & Co.

With a single bound he reached the doorway of the study and fled. His rapid footsteps died away down the passage.

Ponsonby & Co. gazed at one another in stupefaction.

If they had needed any proof that their Form-master was mad they had received it now. For that extraordinary action was proof positive that Mr. Mobbs was as mad as a hatter!

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Exit Mr. Mobbs!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. had seen the new arrival, too.

They were chatting with Courtenay and the Caterpillar outside the house when he appeared in sight.

They stared at him blankly in dismay. Bob Cherry caught Wharton's arm.

"Mobby!" he said faintly.

"Mobby!" stuttered Johnny Bull.

"The Mobbyfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Courtenay and De Courcy looked surprised.

"Mobby, by gad!" said the Caterpillar.

"I thought he was in the house. I'll swear I saw him go indoors!"

"I'm sure I did!" said Courtenay, rubbing his eyes. "Blessed if I saw him go out again!"

Mr. Mobbs, looking very sour, came up the steps. He frowned at the Greyfriars fellows, taking no other notice of their existence. He was looking very muddy and dusty and rumpled.

"Had an accident, sir?" asked the Caterpillar, surveying Mr. Mobbs's rumpled attire.

"I have had worse than that, De Courcy!" gasped Mr. Mobbs. "I have been the victim of a savage and brutal gang of ruffians. I have been kidnapped!"

"Kidnapped!" exclaimed Courtenay.

"Yes. The whole day I have been a prisoner in an underground cell!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I was released by chance. A schoolboy happened to come there—a boy named Bunter, belonging to Greyfriars. Then I escaped."

"Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I'll scalp him!"

"But—but—but——" stammered Courtenay, in utter amazement. "You—you have been a prisoner all day, did you say, sir?"

"Yes. I was seized this morning, while taking my walk, by a gang of dastardly, masked ruffians!"

"But—but we saw you here half an hour ago, sir!"

"What?"

"You took the Fourth this mornin', sir," said the Caterpillar.

Mr. Mobbs staggered.

"What do you mean, De Courcy?" he exclaimed, in a shrill voice. "I tell you I have been a prisoner all day in an underground cell, after being kidnapped by a gang of dastards, who intended to hold me to ransom. They mistook me for the Head of

Highcliffe, and seized me—seized me by violence. I have only just escaped.”

“But, but— Then, who took the Fourth this morning?” gasped Courtenay.

“I do not understand you, Courtenay.” Mr. Mobbs passed his hand over his brow in a dazed way. “Do you mean to say that someone took the Fourth this morning, and you supposed it was I?”

“Certainly, sir.”

“Was I—was I not missed?”

“No, sir.”

“This is astounding!” ejaculated Mr. Mobbs. “The plot is deeper than I dreamed. But—but if some scoundrel has been here in my name, how was it that you did not recognise that it was not I? Did he resemble me?”

“If it wasn’t you, sir, it was your double,” said the Caterpillar. “But it was you, sir. Excuse me, but—haven’t you been—been ill, or something?”

Mr. Mobbs did not reply. He rushed into the house to see the Head at once. The Caterpillar rubbed his nose.

“I knew he must be potty,” he remarked. “He’s been actin’ all day as if he was potty. Now he fancies he’s been kidnapped. Extraordinary, ain’t it?”

“Where on earth’s Wib?” muttered Wharton.

“Oh, dear! He’ll be caught!” whispered Squiff. “That idiot Bunter—oh, we’ll slaughter him! Wib will be spotted.”

“Hallo! Where are you off to?” asked the Caterpillar.

But the juniors did not stay to enlighten him. They rushed away in search of the spoof Mr. Mobbs. Now that the real Simon Pure had returned, it was necessary for Wibley of the Remove to get off the scene at once.

Harry Wharton looked into Ponsonby’s study.

“Is he here?” he exclaimed.

“Who?” growled Ponsonby.

“Mr. Mobbs.”

“No, he isn’t.”

Wharton ran on. The Removites looked up and down the passages, but there was no sign of the spoof Mr. Mobbs. They ran out into the quadrangle again. But still Wibley of the Remove was not to be seen.

“He’s hiding somewhere,” muttered Squiff. “He must have spotted Mobby coming in and cleared off.”

“I’ve looked in Mobby’s study,” said Johnny Bull. “Wib’s not there.”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here’s the real article again.”

Mr. Mobbs appeared, with the Head. Dr. Voysey was looking astonished, and was very angry. Mr. Mobbs’s strange tale had utterly taken him aback. The news that an impostor, closely resembling Mr. Mobbs, had taken the Form-master’s place at Highcliffe that day, was quite unnerving. Dr. Voysey suspected some nefarious design upon the school silver. The whole house was soon in a buzz of excitement as the news spread. Ponsonby & Co. heard it, and gasped with astonishment.

“Not the real Mobby?” exclaimed Ponsonby, when Smithson brought the startling news. “Gammon!”

“Mobby himself says so,” said Smithson. “It beats the band, don’t it! But you can hear him say so himself.”

The nuts rushed away to see Mobby. They found Mr. Mobbs in the quadrangle, quivering with excitement.

“Close the gates!” Mr. Mobbs was shouting. “Keep watch on all sides! The villain must be still about the premises. He must be seized. Doubtless he has filled his pockets with valuables. It is a plot. Lock the gates!”

“Mr. Mobbs!” yelled Ponsonby. “W-w-w-wasn’t it you?”

“My dear Ponsonby—”

That reply was convincing. Mr. Mobbs was his old toadying self again, and Pon was once more his “dear Ponsonby.” The dandy of Highcliffe realised that the story of the impersonation, astounding as it was, was true. He breathed a deep, deep sigh of relief. That career of reform his Form-master had started upon was not to be continued, then. The nuts of Highcliffe would be once more in clover.

“But—but he was exactly like you, sir,” gasped Gadsby. “We never saw any difference. He was a beast, sir! He thrashed Pon—”

“He caned us all!” howled Monson.

“And detained us!” shouted Drury.

"The brutal ruffian!" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs. "So you have suffered at his hands, as well as myself, my dear boys. But he will be punished. He cannot escape. He is hidden somewhere about the building. Search for him!"

"What-ho!" said the nuts in chorus.

They burned to distinguish themselves by the capture of the impostor. It was a chance of getting their own back.

Up and down and round about the High-cliffians searched. The gates had been locked, and the porter was on guard there. Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. joined in the search, though with a different object in view. They were very anxious for Wibley. But Wibley had vanished. The spoof Mr. Mobbs was not to be discovered.

"Amazin' happenin'," yawned the Caterpillar. "Fairly knocks a chap, doesn't it? But I'm fed up. Let's go and have tea, Franky."

"Better help to find the rotter," said Courtenay.

"Remember our guests, dear boy! It's past tea-time."

"Oh, we're helping!" said Harry Wharton.

"Well, I'm tired—exhausted, in fact. I'll go and get tea," said the Caterpillar generously. "You fellows come along when

you're fed up. I'm fed up already."

The Caterpillar proceeded to No. 3 Study. He did not find it empty. A junior was seated there in the armchair, casually glancing at a book. The Caterpillar raised his eyebrows a little at the sight of Wibley of the Remove.

"Hallo!" he said.

"Hallo," said Wibley calmly.

Wibley was in Etons now, and he did not bear the remotest resemblance to Mr. Mobbs.

His disguise had vanished. Perhaps a spot or two of grease-paint lingered about his ears, but the Caterpillar did not notice it.

"Glad to see you, of course," said the Caterpillar affably. "But I didn't know you were in the little party."

"No!" said Wibley.

"No. I didn't see you with them."

"Well, here I am," said Wibley.

"Quite welcome, dear boy. As you seem to have nothin' to do, you might like the idea of helpin' me to get tea," suggested the Caterpillar.

"Like a bird," said Wibley cheerfully.

They proceeded to get tea. The Caterpillar was a little puzzled at finding Wibley there, but he did not think of connecting him with the mysterious Mr. Mobbs. There was a fragrant



"Why was that door locked?" demanded the Form-master, as he burst into the study; his thin red nose sniffed at the thick atmosphere. "You have been smoking!" he exclaimed. (See Chapter 13.)

scent of cooking in the study, when the door opened and Ponsonby looked in. He took no notice of Wibley.

"Not here?" he asked.

"Eh, what?"

"We're searching all the studies now," explained Ponsonby. "Mobby's sure the man is still in the school. The whole house is bein' searched from top to bottom. By gad, we'll make him squirm when we get hold of him!"

"You can look under the sofa, if you like," said the Caterpillar urbanely; "also in the coal-locker, and down the spout of the teapot."

Ponsonby retired and slammed the door.

"Whom are they looking for?" asked Wibley.

"Man been herē impersonatin' Mobby," explained the Caterpillar. "They suspect he's a burglar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cacklin' at!"

"Oh, nothing! Hand me the butter, and I'll fry the eggs. Better call the chaps in now; we're ready."

"Yaas."

The Caterpillar proceeded in search of his chums.

"Come on, Franky; tea's ready. Haven't they found the man yet?"

"No," said Courtenay. "He seems to have vanished into thin air. He can't have got away; but he hasn't been found."

"Oh, he'll turn up; but tea can't wait, and he can," urged the Caterpillar. "Our guests must be famished, and there's a rippin' tea ready."

"You've got tea all by yourself?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"No; Wibley helped me."

Bob jumped.

"Who?" he yelled.

"Wibley!"



In a single bound Mr. Mobbs reached the study doorway; he went through it and dashed down the corridor, with the astounded juniors staring after him. (See Chapter 13.)

"WIBLEY?"

"Yaas. He was in my study. Didn't he come over with you?"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seems to be pottiness in the air to-day," drawled the Caterpillar as Bob Cherry rushed away to tell his chums the news. "Has that chap gone off his rocker, too, Franky? Come and have tea. Wibley's done the cooking, so it's all right."

Harry Wharton & Co. joined them in the study, grinning. They looked at Wibley as they came in, and Wibley nodded and smiled.

"All ready?" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seems to be a lot of excitement here this afternoon," said Wibley casually. "De Courrey says that a man has been impersonating Mr. Mobbs. Have you fellows seen anything of him?"

The juniors shrieked.

"I don't want to be inquisitive," yawned the Caterpillar. "But would you mind tellin' a chap what the cackle is about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By the way, there is a bundle here that ought to be kept out of sight till it can be sent back to Greyfriars," remarked Wibley.

"A bundle?" said Courtenay.

"Yes—a black frock-coat, and some other things in it," said Wibley, "a beard like Mr. Mobbs's, and bags like his, and collar, and so forth. I've tied it up and put it in the cupboard behind the other things. Of course, you fellows will keep mum."

"But—but I don't understand."

"Oh! Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, almost weeping. "Don't you understand? It was a jape on Mobby and the nuts—it was Wibley all the time!"

"Wibley?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The Wibfulness was terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"But the fat would have been in the esteemed fire if the catchfulness had come off."

"Oh, my word!" said the Caterpillar. "What a thumping wheeze! And—and I never guessed. I've been taken in in my old age, by gad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it gave me a shock when I saw

Mobby coming in," murmured Wibley. "There was no getting out, you see. Retreat cut off. So I buzzed into this study and locked the door. I thought you fellows wouldn't mind my using it as a dressing-room in the cires——"

"Delighted, dear boy!"

"And whipped off my Mobby rig and put it in a bundle," said Wibley. "I've used somebody's cambric handkerchiefs to clean my chivvy——"

"Mine, by gad!"

"They'll wash, you know. I hadn't any time to waste. Luckily, there was some

water in the kettle, and a jam-jar to pour it into. It took me ten minutes to get rid of my rig and become myself again," said Wibley. "It was a jolly narrow escape. If I'd tried to bolt, I should have been nailed. But it's all serene now—so long as you fellows keep mum."

Courtenay wiped his eyes.

"We'll keep mum, of course," he said. "Blessed if I had a single suspicion. You

ought to be on the stage, you boulder!"

"I'm going there some day," said Wibley cheerfully. "This is by way of keeping my hand in, you know. I fancy we've given Pon & Co. as good as they gave us now. We had a licking at Greyfriars, and they've had some lickings here—from Mobby the Second!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Study No. 3 rang with laughter as Wibley told his story. "I fancy we've given Pon. & Co. as good as they gave us, now!" he said. (See Chapter 14.)

No. 3 Study rang with laughter. The party sat down to a merry tea at what time the search for the impersonator of Mr. Mobbs was still going on, high and low, from one end of Highcliffe to the other.

After tea the chums of Greyfriars took their departure, Wibley going with the party, and Courtenay and the Caterpillar seeing them off at the gates. Ponsonby & Co. saw them go; but they little dreamed that in the Greyfriars party went the mysterious "Mr. Mobbs" for whom they were still searching.

That mysterious Mr. Mobbs was never discovered.

Indeed, so utterly had he vanished, and so completely did the search for the kidnapping gang fail, that many fellows suspected that Mr. Mobbs had not been impersonated or kidnapped at all, but that he had suffered from delusions and imagined the whole business.

But Ponsonby & Co. were very suspicious—they knew their "Mobby" better than anyone else at Highcliffe, and they believed entirely in his story.

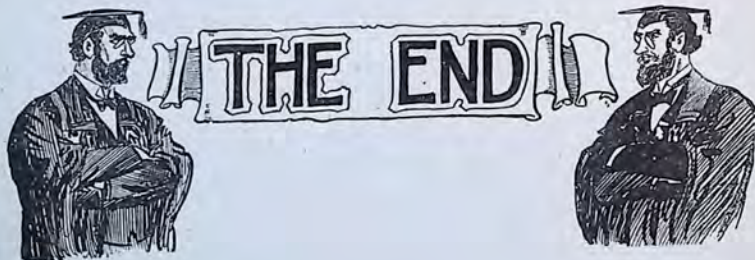
As for Mr. Eugenio Mobbs, he did all in his power to "reinstate himself" in the good graces of his aristocratic pupils, positively fawning over them.

Ponsonby & Co. soon fell back into their slacking habits, safe in the knowledge that an invitation to Mr. Mobbs to spend a fortnight of the vacation at Ponsonby's uncle's place was sufficient to ensure their toadying Form-master turning a "blind eye" on all their shady proceedings.

But all the "compensation" the genuine Mr. Mobbs gave them could not wipe out that terrible day of lines, lickings, and detentions. Pon and his nutty friends would have given worlds to find out the real identity of "Mr. Mobbs the Second," but that little privilege was denied them.

Someone had scored over them, but who that daring japer was remained a mystery, so far as Pon & Co. were concerned, at any rate.

Courtenay and the Caterpillar, of course, said no word; and, needless to say, Harry Wharton & Co. kept their own counsel. The Head of Greyfriars would certainly not have looked at the matter as they did, and his sense of humour would have failed him in appreciating that tremendous jape. The chums of the Remove chuckled over their success in strict privacy. The jape had been a triumph all along the line, and the only drawback was that they could not tell Ponsonby & Co. the true identity of the Form-master's substitute.



# HOW TO TELL "FORTUNES"

WITH  
CARDS

AND  
DICE



AN AMUSING ENTERTAINMENT  
WHICH PLAYER AND AUDIENCE MUST NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY Fig. 1

**T**HERE is no more amusing diversion for a frivolous half-hour's entertainment than that of fortune-telling by cards. Young or old enjoy it, and with a ready tongue the combinations presented may be so varied that quite surprisingly good predictions can be made.

Surround the whole business with as much mystery as possible. Insist that all shuffling be done by the subject himself, and that cutting is always carried out with the left hand.

Learn the meanings of the cards by heart. This is not difficult, and by doing so one is enabled to tell a fortune quickly: always a more impressive proceeding than telling it card by card.

These are the generally accepted meanings of the cards:

## CLUBS

Ace of Clubs, wealth and prosperity. King of Clubs, upright, affectionate. Queen of Clubs, deeply in love. Knave of Clubs, generous and sincere. Ten of Clubs, a fortune from an unexpected quarter. Nine of Clubs, obstinacy; disputes with friends. Eight of Clubs, love of money. Seven of Clubs, fortune and great happiness. Six of Clubs, lucrative partnership. Five of Clubs, marriage with a wealthy person. Four of Clubs, inconstancy.

Three of Clubs, a second or third marriage. Two of Clubs, opposition.

## SPADES

Ace of Spades, a love affair; if reversed, a death. King of Spades, an ambitious person. Queen of Spades, a treacherous friend. Knave of Spades, indolent, but well-meaning. Ten of Spades, an unlucky card. Nine of Spades, the worst card in the pack; sickness or loss of fortune. Eight of Spades, opposition from friends. Seven of Spades, sorrow. Six of Spades, great fortune. Five of Spades, success; a happy marriage. Four of Spades, illness; small loss of money. Three of Spades, an unfortunate marriage. Two of Spades, a death,

## HEARTS

Ace of Hearts, pleasure; if with Spades, quarrelling; if with Diamonds, news of an absent friend; if with Clubs, merry-making.

King of Hearts, nice, but hasty and passionate. Queen of Hearts, fair and affectionate. Knave of Hearts, the subject's dearest friend. Ten of Hearts, the antidote of bad cards that lie near it, but confirming the good. Nine of Hearts, wealth; this is also the wish card. Eight of Hearts, feasting and merry-making. Seven of Hearts, fickle. Six of Hearts,

generous, easily imposed upon. Five of Hearts, waverer, changeable. Four of Hearts, marriage late in life. Three of Hearts, imprudent; hot-headed action, which has disastrous consequences. Two of Hearts, extraordinary success and good fortune.

### DIAMONDS

Ace of Diamonds, a letter; the card next to it will indicate its nature. King of Diamonds, hot-tempered. Queen of Diamonds, coquette. Knave of Diamonds, a selfish person. Ten of Diamonds, money. Nine of Diamonds, a roving person.

Eight of Diamonds, marriage late in life. Seven of Diamonds, a gambler. Six of Diamonds, unhappy marriage. Three of Diamonds, quarrels, lawsuits, and disagreements. Two of Diamonds, a serious love affair.

There are two effective ways of fortune-telling.

For the first, ask your subject to shuffle the cards very thoroughly and to wish all the time. Then cut them into three piles with the left hand. Should the wish-card (the nine of Hearts) be one of those cut, it is a lucky omen.

Notice the two other cards and their possible bearing on the wish. Now, after lifting the cards and putting them together with the left hand, proceed to divide them into piles in this fashion:

The first pile is to yourself. The second, to the house. The third, to your wish.

The fourth, what you do expect. The fifth, what you don't expect. The sixth, sure to come true. The seventh, foretells the happenings of to-night.

Arrange these piles, as you deal out the cards, one by one, in a semicircle. Then proceed to read them off by their meanings.

Another and rather more complicated method is to ask the person whose fortune is being told which King he will be (if it is a woman, one would naturally ask which Queen).

After the wishing has been done as before, the fortune-teller lays out the cards

in rows—seven in a row.

To read the fortune the teller must start from the King or Queen chosen, counting seven from him or her in every case.

The King

or Queen of the same suit will always be the lover or sweetheart of the one whose fortune is being told, and the Knave being their thoughts, it is, of course, quite easy to discover their feelings.

It is rather a good plan to write the meanings of the cards on an old pack. By using this a few times a rapid flow of ideas will much more readily be induced. It might be mentioned that a too strict adherence to rule is by no means either necessary or desirable in fortune-telling. Tell what the combinations of cards suggests to you—quite irrespective of the exact meaning of each—and you will be infinitely more amusing and obtain much greater fame as a wizard.



Fig. 2.—CARDS FORETELLING A WISH ABOUT A LOVE AFFAIR, LEADING TO AN EARLY MARRIAGE.

A few predictions are shown by the accompanying diagrams. Fig. 1 depicts the manner of dealing out the cards in sets of seven, and in what respect each is to be read.

Fig. 2 shows three cards which might conceivably come together in any one set. They would be read as foretelling the following: You will get a wish (Nine of Hearts), which is about a love affair (Ace of Spades), and it will lead to an early marriage (Six of Diamonds).

Fig. 3 conveys the following: You will get a letter (Ace of Diamonds) about money (Ten of Diamonds). Your good fortune, however, will not permit you to marry until late in life (Eight of Diamonds). The five cards representing Fig. 4 tell that the sub-

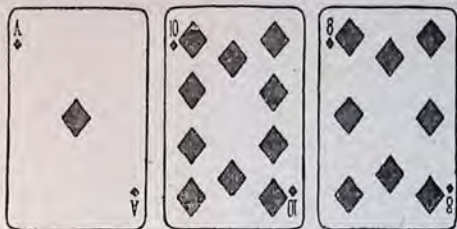


FIG. 1.—FORETELLING THE RECEIPT OF A LETTER ABOUT MONEY; BUT GOOD FORTUNE WILL NOT PERMIT THE RECIPIENT TO MARRY UNTIL LATE IN LIFE.



FIG. 2.—REVEALS THAT THE SUBJECT'S DEAREST FRIEND WILL MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A FLIRT, AND WILL SHORTLY SUFFER ILLNESS OR SLIGHT LOSS OF MONEY, BUT AFTERWARDS WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH AN AFFECTIONATE LADY AND ENJOY EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS.

ject's dearest friend (Knave of Hearts) will make the acquaintance of a flirt (Queen of Diamonds) and will shortly after suffer illness or slight loss of money (Four of Spades), but afterwards he will fall in love with a fair, affectionate woman (Queen of Hearts) and enjoy extraordinary success (Two of Hearts).

#### A THROW OF THE DICE

Although forecasting of the future from dice is one of the most ancient methods of prediction, it is curiously enough almost unknown in modern days. For this reason it is of special value to the home entertainer, and will prove much simpler than cards, the meanings being easier to learn as well as fewer in number.

First chalk a magic circle on the table,  
then obtain a small cup or box to shake  
the dice in.

Three dice only should be used.

The person whose future is at stake  
must shake and cast the dice in the circle.  
This, as in card fortune-telling, should be  
done with the left hand.

Three tells you of an approaching accident;  
four, a rise in your position; five,  
that you will make the acquaintance of  
one who will be a friend; six, predicts

loss; seven, a scandal; eight, a reproach  
—that is not undeserved; nine, a wedding;  
ten, a christening; eleven, trouble  
for one you love; twelve, an important  
letter; thirteen, tears; fourteen, beware  
of an enemy; fifteen, good luck and  
happiness; sixteen, a journey; seventeen,  
a water journey; three sixes, or eighteen  
points, is a very good sign. It means  
great profit in business, or something the  
person wishes for very much.

THE END



Dick Penfold

## WE ARE SEVEN

(With apologies to William Wordsworth)

By DICK PENFOLD

### I

I met a little Greyfriars Boy  
Fifteen years old, he said;  
His hair was thick with many a curl  
That cluster'd round his head.

### II

He had a pleasant, sunny air,  
For footer he was clad;  
His eyes were fair, his cheeks were rare,  
His Beauty made me mad.

### III

"Comrades and chums, my little boy,  
How many may you be?"  
"How many? Seven!" Bob Cherry said,  
And, wondering, looked at me.

### IV

"And where are they? I pray you tell!"  
He answered, "Seven are we;  
Four chaps in Study One do dwell,  
And then there's little me!"

### V

"You say there's four in Study One,  
And you hang out elsewhere;  
And yet you tell me you are seven!  
There's some mistake I swear."

### VI

Then did the youthful Bob reply,  
"Seven worthy chums are we;  
There's Wharton, Nugent, Inky, Bull—  
And I'm as good as three!"



# Gan Waga's Birthday!

□ □ □

An amusing Complete Story  
of the famous Eskimo and  
the Crew of the "Lord  
of the Deep"

□ □ □

By SIDNEY DREW

□ □ □

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### Ching Lung tries to Borrow a Polar Bear

"YOU may be interested to know, my dear Gan Waga, or, on the other hand, you may not be interested to know," said Prince Ching Lung, "that in the village of Slopwash-in-the-Sludge there still resides, healthy and still wonderfully active, a certain gentleman, Ebenezer Slipey, who takes his beer and baccy regularly, and never forgets to trot round for his old age pension when they're weighing out the goods."

Gan Waga the Eskimo, who was seated on the floor doing nothing in particular, grunted.

"Whys I be ninterested in old 'Nezer Slipey, hunk, Chingy?" he asked. "I not knows 'Nezer Slipey."

"Because he is a gay and giddy one," said the Prince, yawning behind the newspaper. "Dear old Ebenezer Slipey, bless his blue eyes and golden curls, claims to be nearly a hundred and twenty years old. He can't remember Julius Caesar taking his first trip to England and handing the ancient Britons a few nasty ones, but he can remember the return of the

Duke of Wellington after the battle of Waterloo, where the great emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, got it rather nastily in the neck. It's Eb's birthday to-morrow, and the proud villagers of Slopwash-in-the-Sludge are going to squirt off rockets and things in Eb's honour."

"I not tink a hundred and twenty much olderfulness, Chingy," said Gan Waga. "I must be olderfulness than that."

"I hadn't noticed it, Gan," said Ching Lung, throwing the newspaper aside. "In fact, I shouldn't have thought it. When were you born?"

The plump Eskimo shook his head. Dates and figures were very foggy things to Gan Waga.

"I nots surer, Chingy," he answered, with wrinkled brow. "It either the umpteenth of September, or the ninety-tooth of October."

"Well, that's getting near it," said Ching Lung gravely. "It's rather useful to be born on two different dates, for then you can have two birthdays. Do you happen to remember the exact year? I suppose you were there when it happened—unless you were out at the time?"

"I sureness was there, Chingy," said the Eskimo, "but I not certain of the year. Oh, yes I am, old bean, it was two millions and two."

Prince Ching Lung shook his head doubtfully as he lighted a cigarette.

"That doesn't seem to be quite right, Gan. There's a trifling error somewhere. According to your date you're not born yet, and not likely to be for quite a long time. Still, my stout lad, the year doesn't matter, the day is everything. What we have to decide is whether your birthday falls on the umpteenth of September, or the ninety-tooth of October. As you weren't born in this country, we can't pay our bob or so for a copy of your birth-certificate. To settle between the two doubtful dates, let us strike a sort of average, not with a brick or a hammer or with our fist, but with our brains. I should say, Gan, that the correct date of your birthday is Wednesday next, Mapril the thirty-second-and-a-half. If there are months called October and September, why not Mapril?"

"That rightness, Chingy old dear," said the Eskimo, nodding. "It is Maprils, Chingy. I members now, it nots Septembers, Chingy."

"And who is Ebenezer Slipey, anyhow?" said Ching Lung. "Why should the Slopwash bunch squirt off squibs and fire rockets for that ancient dodderer? We'll give you a birthday, Gan. We must do something to waken ourselves up. Just a little family party, you know, but done in style, something that will make you think of home sweet home. And we'll get the invitations out in good time, so that they'll have no excuse for not buying you presents. Yes, Wednesday is the date. On Friday they start taking in stores."

When Prince Ching Lung spoke of taking in stores, he referred to the steam yacht *Lord of the Deep*. The beautiful vessel had been overhauled and reconditioned. She had coaled, and was lying in Portsmouth Harbour at her old moorings, the very queen of the big, busy harbour—in her new white paint, shining funnel, and varnished spars.

"You have to pay some of the 'spenses, Chingy, unless I gotted nuff money, Chingy," said Gan Waga. "They want a lots to eats."

"How much have you got in ready cash, Gan?"

Gan Waga had a handful of coppers, a sixpence, a packet of chewing-gum, a collar stud, a ball of string, and several cigars.

"Abouts six hundred pounds and tenpence, Chingy," he said, examining his wealth, for Gan Waga was as hazy about money as about dates.

"You must have been robbing a bank," said the Prince. "There's no doubt you've been robbing me again, for those are my cigars. Your six hundred pounds and tenpence won't go far with the appetites those chaps Prout, Maddock, and O'Rooney carry about with them, so you'd better leave it to me. You can pay next time when it's my birthday, so waddle, my bouncing boy, and find Joe. Joseph is a trustworthy sort of merchant, so breathe in his ear that I'd like to see him on the strict Q.T. And don't let the other rascals know a thing."

Gan Waga waddled on deck, discovered Joe the carpenter, and gave him Ching Lung's message. Joe gave the Eskimo a suspicious glance out of the tail of his eye to see if there was a catch in it, spat into the sea, went below, and tapped at the door of the Prince's cabin.

"The blubberbiter sent me, sir," said Joe, "told me you wanted me, but you can't tell half the time whether he's pulling your leg or not."

"He's not tugging your leg this time," said Ching Lung. "I want you to get hold of your pal the third engineer and do something for me before we start taking in stores. They've finished all the refrigerating-plant, haven't they?"

"All finished, brand new and up-to-date, sir. There's not a yacht afloat with such a plant. It's perfect!"

"And there's nothing down there?"

"Only about enough grub to last the crew a week, sir," said Joe. "We're getting it fresh mostly."

"Right," said Ching Lung. "I want the cold-room to give a party in, so help yourself to a cigar, and I'll tell you what I want done."

There is nothing pleasanter in this world than a pleasant surprise, so the Prince did not pay a visit to the cold-room with Joe until he learned that Mr. Thomas Prout, Mr. Benjamin

Maddock, the bo'sun, and Mr. Barry O'Rooney had gone ashore. They had gone to Mr. Mandolini's famous circus, which was paying its annual visit to Porthampton. Ching Lung wanted to give them a pleasurable surprise, but they were curiously suspicious, and if they had seen the Prince and the yacht's carpenter together they would have imagined things.

It was easy indeed for the Prince to get things done, for he was open-handed and generous to a fault, and a great favourite with the crew. He inspected the cold-room and issued his instructions to the carpenter and the third engineer.

"I'll foot the bill, Joe," he said, "so do it properly. And tell your men that I don't want it talked about. When it's finished they can all shake a loose leg ashore with free tickets to the circus and a good supper afterwards."

Joe was a hustler, and so was the third engineer, a stiff little Yorkshire man who hailed from Scarborough. Gan Waga came down to see what was going on, but finding the Eskimo in the way, Joe ordered him to be thrown out, so the Eskimo wandered back to the Prince, who had a fountain pen in his hand and a sheet of paper before him.

"I wish you could keep away from me for about five minutes in the twenty-four hours, Eskimoses," said the Prince. "I'm writing the invitation-cards for your birthday party.

And I wonder what the guests would like for dinner."

"Blubber-pies and strawberry jams very niceness stuffs, Chingy, and so are tallow cangles and parsley," said Gan Waga.

"Yes, I know, but they don't always have a whale or two for sale in the fish market, so we can't make certain of blubber-pie," said Ching Lung. "Whales seem to be a bit

scarce this season. I think we can manage the tallow candles and parsley sauce, if the chef will cook them. He's more used to French dishes than Eskimo cookery, but you can ask him if you like."

Gan Waga gave a grin that displayed two rows of magnificent white teeth.

"I not tink I better go to the old chef," he said. "The last times I went into

his galley, Chingy, he throwed a hambone at me and chased me out with a big iron saucepan-pots. He seemed a bit angrifuls about sometings. He said I a nasty fat thieves, the rudeness man. And I never touches his old galley, only a few roast chickens, and a veal and ham pie, and a leg of pork, and some muttuns choposes, Chingy. A very bad-tempered chaps to make so much fussness abouts a bit of stuff like that, hunk? I not think he loves me, Chingy."

It was blowing rather hard, so having finished his writing, Ching Lung put on a pair of rubber boots and an oilskin, and Gan



Just before dusk there was an alarm of fire, and Prout, Maddock, and O'Rooney were called away to put it out. (See Chapter 2.)

Waga piloted him across the tumbling harbour in the motor-launch. People on the quay, who were shivering with cold beneath their overcoats, shivered harder when they saw the bareheaded, barefooted, thinly-clad Eskimo, with the salt spray shining on his face, steady the launch with the boat-hook for the passenger to step ashore. There was sleet in the wind as well as spray, but Gan Waga liked it.

"I shall be just an hour," said Ching Lung, pointing to the harbour clock. "It's just going to strike one. Be here for me when it strikes two."

"I hitch up and waits fo' yo', Chingy," answered Gan Waga. "I snook a cigar, and ifs yo' morer longfuis I take a nice nap."

Ching Lung boarded a passing tram, and alighted at Porthampton's most famous restaurant, when, as it was lunch-time, he hoped to find an old acquaintance, Mr. Mandolini, the proprietor of the world-renowned circus. Mr. Mandolini was there, red-faced and prosperous, with a massive gold watch-chain across his ample waistcoat, and a hundred-guinea diamond stud in his shirt front.

"By jimps!" cried Mr. Mandolini, rising so quickly with outstretched hand that he overturned his chair, "why it's a real treat to meet your Highness again. Thanks for answering my letter about them Chinese jugglers. It was a bit of a liberty, but I hadn't time to go to Paris and see 'em for myself. When you wrote telling me they were real good, I knew I could take your Highness's word for it, and booked 'em by telegraph. And, by jimps, they are good, too, the smartest thing in their line I've struck yet."

"Oh, I was quite sure you'd like them," said the Prince. "They come from my province; and I've had them up at the palace once or twice to entertain the Court. We'll have a bottle of champagne, if you'll join me in one. I haven't time to lunch with you, but if it won't put you out of your way, I want you to lend me a few oddments for one evening only. Do you happen to have a stray polar bear with a gentlemanly temper?"

"By jimps, I'm sorry," said Mr. Mandolini. "I've only got one, and she's a lady with a

cub. Since that cub arrived she's been anything but ladylike. I'd lend her to your Highness willing enough, but, by jimps, you'd have a handful with her and the cub. Must it be a polar bear?"

"A polar bear would be more suitable," said Ching Lung, "but if I can't get one, I suppose I must do without."

"There's my big grizzly, Thork," said Mr. Mandolini. "He's a born thief, almost as big a thief as my biggest elephant, Bazbaz, but old Thork is as gentle as a stuffed guinea-pig. If you floured him or dusted him over with chalk, he'd pass for a polar bear in a crush. He's not on the programme this week, so if your Highness will tell me when and where you want him, I can send him along."

Ching Lung accepted the loan of Thork, the grizzly bear, with thanks, and made some further requests, which Mr. Mandolini duly dotted down in a fat pocket-book with a gold-cased pencil. Then, the champagne bottle being empty, the circus-proprietor and the Prince shook hands once more, and fastening a serviette round his ample neck, Mr. Mandolini commenced his lunch with a dozen oysters.

As the clock was striking two, Ching Lung prodded Gan Waga out of his placid slumbers with the butt-end of the boat-hook.

"Br-r-r! Why you don't get frozen stiff is a mystery to me," said Ching Lung. "Rattle up that engine and let's get into the warm."

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### The Invitations

"LETTERS, gentlemen," said the steward. There were only two people in the booby-hutch, Mr. Benjamin Maddock, the bos'un, and Mr. Barry O'Rooney, and there were three letters. A smell of white paint still lingered there. A new stove had been put in, and also four comfortable wicker chairs upholstered in scarlet, and a new scarlet cloth covered the table. The painters had scraped off the coloured prints of racehorses and professional boxers that had formerly decorated the walls, but a new supply had arrived, and Maddock was hanging them up.

"Bedad, Oi wonder phwat this is, Ben," said Barry O'Rooney. "There's wan for me, wan for you, and wan for Prout, wid the names and addresses typewritten and gilt edges on the envelopes loike a brass-band. And he jabers, Oi do belave they're scented."

Barry O'Rooney sniffed the envelope, that diffused a faint odour of musk, and then opened it and drew out a long, gilt-edged card. He read:

"Gan Waga requests the pleasure of the company of Barry O'Rooney, Esquire, at his birthday party on Wednesday next, at six-thirty p.m.

There will be a little dinner in the Eskimo style, to be followed by mirth, music, and song.

"N. B. — Evening-dress (furs) essential. These may be obtained on loan by applying to the store-keeper.

"The merry blubberbiter is umpteen years to-day,

He was born in icy regions where the polar bears hold sway.

If you can't afford a present you had better keep away,

From Gan's gay and glorious birthday in the morning."

"Fancy that, now," grinned Barry O'Rooney. "Bedad, Oi loike the poethry. Oi'll wager, Ben, the prince sat up all night wid fourteen wet towels tied round his brow and a chunk of wit on his head composin' that rubbish. 'Av you can't afford a present you'd bether keep away.' Sure, the only present that fat owl is loikely to get from me is a tin of rat poison wid

written instructions how to take it and doie quick. Is yours different, or just the same as moine, bhoy?"

"Just identical, only the name, souse me," said the bos'un, comparing the two invitation cards. "I don't think I'll go ashore to buy any birthday presents. How about a rope with a noose in it, and a few bows of pink ribbon tied on to make it look pretty. I could fasten on a card, too, souse me, wishing Gan Waga joy and hoping he'd hang himself with the rope before his next birthday came round."

"A very nate oidea, bhoy," said Barry

O'Rooney, "only Oi'm afraid the Eskimo won't oblige, he's such a cantankerous beast. Ask him to do a little koinde-ness loike that, a little thing that would plase everybody, and, bedad, he'll turn ut down. Hur-roo! Here you are, Tommy, my bould son," he added as Prout came in. "You've got an invitation to



Prout & Co. stepped, it seemed, into another land. "Glad to welcome yo' alls to Wagaland, old dears," said the Eskimo. "Just like homes, hunk?" (See Chapter 3.)

a birthday parrty. Oi've read the rules, and it sames we can't be present widout a present. Ben is giving a rope wid a noose in it, and Oi'm giving a full-size tin of rat poison, hall-marked, jewelled in every hole, warranted to kill a whole thrife of Iskimos av instructions are followed out."

Mr. Thomas Prout gave a slow grin as he inspected his own card of invitation.

"It wouldn't be much good giving him a loaded revolver with directions how to blow his brains out, for he's got no brains to blow out," he said. "By honey, I think a penn'orth of monkey nuts would about suit the case. Fur suits, eh? It's some jamboree in the cold-room, I guess."

"And thim little jamborees wid Prince Ching Lung behoind thim want a considerable amount of watching," said Barry O'Rooney.

"Sure, darlints, if I show up I mane to put a life-preserver in wan pocket and a knuckle-duster in the other. Go we must, or they'll think we're afraid, and the O'Rooneys, whose proud motto is 'Hit hard, bedad, and hit often,' know no such word as that. Av there's any twist in it or any thlickery or foul play, that oil-tub of an Eskimo will have given his last birthday party, for his name will be mud."

"I'll help, souse me," said the bo'sun.

"And I'll be lying somewhere handy, by honey, to put on the finishing touches," said Prout.

In the morning, when Ching Lung strolled into the saloon of the Lord of the Deep, a steward brought in the letters.

"There are some parcels for Gan Waga, your Highness," he said. "What shall I do with them, as I never know where to find him."

"He's sure to find me, so you may as well leave them here," said the Prince. "Have you called Mr. Thurston?"

"Yes, your Highness. Mr. Thurston will be here in ten minutes, but he told me to ask your Highness not to wait for him."

Ching Lung placed Gan Waga's parcels on a side table, and had just finished reading his correspondence when Rupert Thurston joined him. Thurston, after a greeting, also opened his letters.

"A nuisance," he said. "I can't attend that birthday party, for I must go to London. Will you give it a miss and go with me?"

"I'd have gone if you'd spoken sooner, old man," said Ching Lung, "for any old day would have done for Gan Waga's feast, but I've got everything prepared and the presents are beginning to arrive. And now that I think of it, we can't put it off on account of the stores. Stretch a point and get away by the eight o'clock train. I'd like you to hand Gan out his gifts with a few appropriate remarks."

"Then I'll telephone up and see if it can be managed, Ching. It's some documents my lawyer wants me to sign. Shall I help you to some grilled sole or don't you want any breakfast this morning? The coffee is at your

end, and, if it won't tire you too much, I'd like a cup."

"Excuse my absent-mindedness, but I was thinking," said Ching Lung. "There are three parcels for Gan by this post, and I suppose they're from Prout, Maddock, and O'Rooney. I'd like to open them and see what the bounders have sent. It would help you a bit if you knew beforehand what was inside. I know as a stump speaker you have a quick and ready wit, but it would be helpful."

"Perhaps; but it's a bit shabby, Ching," said Thurston. "Of course, Gan Waga wouldn't mind at all. I'm a trifle curious, I admit, to know what sort of presents those chaps could send Gan Waga. I'm puzzled myself, and can only think of cigars. What are you giving him?"

"Not a solitary thing, except doing the paying. What could I possibly give his Serene Fatness when he looks upon everything in the world that belongs to me as his own personal property. It's a good thing I'm small, for if my pyjamas fitted him I should be buying fresh pyjama suits every week. On reflection, you're right about those parcels, so we'll leave them alone, and I'll fix up a few dud presents. Only do 'phone that off and catch the late train or drive up by car, for I'm hoping you'll enjoy yourself for half an hour."

Just before dusk there was an alarm of fire. There was a lot of smoke down in the forehold, and Prout, Maddock, and Barry O'Rooney were called away with others to discover the fire and put it out. They found no fire, but they were a long time away, so they did not see the tug that came alongside the yacht. Of course, it was only a dummy fire arranged by the carpenter to get the mariners out of the way.

In good time Mr. Thomas Prout came into the booby hutch carrying three bundles of furs, for the yacht voyaged far and wide at the whim of her millionaire owner, Ferrers Lord, and she carried in her store-room an ample supply of clothing suitable either for frozen Arctic seas or burning tropic skies.

"There's ten quid a-piece on them, by honey," said Prout. "I had to sign a chit saying we'd be responsible for loss or damage before that thief of a store-keeper would hand 'em over. He says it's a new rule. All the



The five musicians came out of the igloos, and they thumped the cans as they sang. "A little Eskimo music and a little song in honour of Gan Waga," said Ching Lung. (See Chapter 3.)

stuff is fresh, and he's got to account for it."

"Bedad, ut's iligant goods," said Barry O'Rooney, handling the soft warm fur. "Av anything happens, ut will be up to you, Tommy, for you did the signing, not us. And anyway, a miserable durthy little thirty quid wouldn't be missed at all at all by such a bloated millionaire. Wait until Oi get insoide this lot, bhoys, and Oi'll look the handsomest woild man from Borneo you iver sot oies on."

Except that they were a good deal too clean, they resembled three Arctic explorers when they had donned their fur suits.

"Oi'll tell you phwat," said Barry O'Rooney, "for Oi've got a swate oidea. Aftther the purrtly, Oi'll change and take you two

ashore and up to ould Mandolini, the circus man. Oi'll sell you to him for a hundred quid a toime as woild gorillas from Centhral Afrieky. The ould bhoys would niver dhraem you were anything ilse, for you're gorilla to the life. Oi'll give you a foile so you can foile the bars of your cages in the middle of the noight, and we'll share the plundher. How's that for a brain-wave, you ugly, hairy monsther?"

"Cut it," growled the bo'sun, "or I'll give you a oner that'll make that bit of brain you've got rattle inside your skull like a nut. It's just on time, souse me. Now we'll see what this game's all about."

Pront slipped a flash-lamp into one capacious pocket of his fur coat, and a short

life-preserver, wrapped round with tow, to render it less dangerous if he had to hit anyone with it, into the other. Then he followed Maddock and Barry O'Rooney along the alley way and down below to the door of the cold-room.

They knocked on the steel panel and stepped, as it seemed, into another land.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### The Presents

"By honey," said Mr. Thomas Prout, clapping his gloved hands, "that's good, that is, rattling good."

Fine snow was falling from a cloudy sky, but it was not altogether cloudy, for a few stars were shining as well as four mock moons. There was thick snow on the ground, or, rather, the floor. From the sky, too, hung many icicles, and they must have been pretty long ones, for their roots appeared to be up in the stars. There were ice hummocks and icebergs, and the landscape, cleverly painted, seemed in the dim light to merge away into a vast dreary snowfield.

Squatting on an iceberg, very much at home, well floured and well stuffed with buns, was Thork, the big grizzly bear. Near him, in a pool of water, a seal was rolling, and two other seals, even happier and more at home than Thork, lay on a slab of ice after a glorious feed of fresh cod and silver whiting. Near the pool were two igloos or snow huts, and in the space between an iron pot was boiling. Gan Waga, furred to the eyes and smoking a cigar a foot in length, extended a hairy paw to each of his guests.

"Glad to welcomes yo' alls to Wagaland, old dears," he said. "Just like homes, hunk? Ifs yo' too warmth opens the merry old window."

"Bedad, we're not too hot yet, but we'll tell you whin we are," said Barry O'Rooney. "That's a noice bear you've got, but would you moind keeping ut on the chain, for Oi wouldn't loike him to make a mistake and imagine Oim a hambone. Yes, ut's all very loife-like."

"I don't see any chairs, souse me," said the bo'sun, with one eye on the bear. "If

we have to sit on the snow, Gan, will you excuse me a minute while I run and get a hot-water bottle? I'm wearing a pair of borrowd trousers, you see, and they might shrink with the damp."

"And do you mind turning the snow-storm off at the meter?" added Prout. "It's too real, by honey, and it gives me a cold nose."

Joe the carpenter, who was also in furs, brought forward a bench and a table. There was another knock, and as Rupert Thurston came in with the collar of his motoring coat turned up above his ears, Ching Lung crawled out of one of the igloos.

"Before the gifts are presented," said the Prince, "we'll have a little Eskimo music, and a little song in honour of Gan Waga."

The musicians came out of the other igloo, five of them. Their instruments were of a primitive kind, and consisted of tin cans and walrus-ribs. Their faces were very yellow and sad-looking, and their voices dirge-like as they thumped the cans and bones and sang:

"It's cold, so cold at the old North Pole

That your whiskers freeze if you stop to sneeze

And they sell no wood and you can't buy coal,

So you have to sit and cough and wheeze,  
And you feed on blubber, for there ain't no cheese,

And the polar bears have a nasty squeeze,  
And your nose gets froze and your hands and knees,

Oh, it is a rotten hole.

Please take us back to Colney Hatch,

For we're tired of the old North Pole."

They ended this dirge with such a banging of tins and bones that the startled seals scuttled into the pool, and Thork shook about half a bushel of flour off himself and came down to see what was the matter. As Thork seemed to want a seat on the form in the front row, Barry O'Rooney politely made room for him. Thork took a roll instead, scattering the songsters and nearly upsetting the pot.

"Don't worry, Barry," said Ching Lung. "I believe he's a vegetarian, but I know he never eats pork, so you're in no danger. We'll chain him up before he rolls the igloos

flat. He doesn't look so pale as he did, so he must be getting sunburnt. Out of it, you hairy villain."

After this little delay Rupert Thurston proceeded to hand over the presents. Some of them were bulky, so Joe dragged them forward on a sledge. There was a barrel marked "Super Fine Whale Oil," and a case labelled "Fresh Walrus Livers in Pure Treacle," and another case supposed to contain that favourite Eskimo delicacy "Pickled seals' feet in refined tallow-candle jelly." Gan Waga bowed his gratitude.

"Dears, dears, I only wish they was fulness and not duds. Chingy," he sighed. "I never had walrus livers in treacles, but it must be

lovelifuls, and I could eats about six or seventeen yards of it now, old duck."

As Thurston opened the first parcel, which had come by post, Prout, Maddock, and Barry O'Rooney nudged each other and grinned.

"A token of affection to his friend Gan Waga from Tom Prout," said Rupert Thurston, reading the card. "A bottle by the feel of it and something good, I'll wager. Here you are, my lad, a bottle of anti-fat mixture. Take it according to directions and you'll be thin in a week."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed the three mariners loudly. "That's the stuff to give him, lots of it and often."



"A little gift to remind you of the happy day, Gan, from your staunch friend, Mr. Benjamin Maddock," said Rupert Thurston gravely. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Barry O'Rooney. (See Chapter 3.)

"I a jolly good mind to bash yo' over the faces with it," said Gan Waga. "I don't want no nanti-fatness. Yo' so thin yo' jealousful of me."

"Order, order, please," said Rupert Thurston. "What have we here? To dear Gan Waga on his birthday, with all love and esteem from Barry O'Rooney." A tin of cigarettes, I think. No, it isn't a tin of cigarettes. It says on it 'Slaughtim's Rat Poison—a swift and certain death to rats, mice, spiders, fleas, bugs, beetles, and other vermin. Harmless to cats, dogs, and children. A charming gift, indeed. Will you try it now, Gan?"

Ching Lung grinned, and the three mariners rocked with laughter on the form until it fell over. Gan Waga was making for them with the rib of a walrus, but Ching Lung and Joe held him back and told him to be good. Then Rupert Thurston opened the third parcel.

"A little gift to remind you of the happy day, Gan, this time, I believe, from your staunch friend and well-wisher, the bos'un," he said. "Yes, I am correct in my surmise. Mr. Benjamin Maddock wishes you to wear this little present in memory of him, and he would like you to put it on at once. It feels a bit bulky for a necklace or a watch-chain or even for a pair of suspenders. What a sweet little thing!"

Thurston held up a halter. Pretty little bows of pink and blue ribbon were tied to it, but it was a halter all the same, and it would have explained itself even if the donor had failed to enclose a message, for it said: "Go and hang yourself," plainly enough.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Barry O'Rooney. "Bedad, that's a nasty one, Gan darlint. That's a bigger shtinger than the anti-fat an' the rat-poison. Come, bhoy, and use ut quick. Sure, Oi'll find you a lively nail to toie the rope to, and a noice chair to jump off. And Oi say, Alanna, take a large dose of the vermin-killer afore you jump off the chair and make a good job of ut."

Gan Waga was quite angry. He had not expected presents of this insulting nature on his birthday. Once more he snatched up the

rib of a walrus and bore down on the givers of the gifts. The three mariners jumped clear, and picking up the stool, threatened to use it as a battering ram on the Eskimo, and then Ching Lung tripped Gan Waga up, and instructed three members of the band to sit on his chest till he got cooler.

"Having performed these pleasant duties, gentlemen, I'll leave you," said Rupert Thurston. "I like your company, but I don't like frozen feet. I think your presents well chosen and kindly meant, and I'm sorry to see Gan Waga so ungrateful."

"Arrah, and ut's roight you are, sir," grinned Barry. "He's an ungrateful haythen, after all the thought and throuble and expense we went to, the fat murderin' rogue. Av we hadn't threatened to splicate him wid this ould bench he was for braining a few of us wid that big bone. Oi'll niver give him another present as long as Oi live barring a thick ear. Waste of money it is. Phvat av I to do wid the rat-poison at all af he won't ate ut, unless Oi can persuade Prout or Maddock to thry ut?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Barry," said Thurston. "Be as good as you can, for I've not too much time to catch my train to town."

Having sworn to behave like a gentleman, Gan Waga was permitted to rise. It was then discovered, to the horror of most of the guests, that Thork the bear had chewed up the tin of rat-poison. He didn't seem to like it, either, for he was snorting and coughing. Barry explained, to the general relief, that the tin had contained nothing more deadly than sawdust, and after a drink of water and a few more buns, Thork settled himself down in the snow and began to snore.

Then came the dinner, brought piping hot out of the igloos in electrically heated dishes. The dishes had peculiar names; such as "Stewed mammoth's foot, eighty thousand years old, from frozen Northern Siberia," and "Seaweed and sea cow pie," with "Lapland moss" as a vegetable, but they were very nice and tasty, and as Prout, O'Rooney, and Maddock were careful to eat only what the Prince ate; they felt fairly safe.

"Well, souse me. If they grab you as well as this all the toime in your part of the world, Gan, I wouldn't mind spending a holiday there," said Maddock. "And you needn't wear that present I sent you yet, not, at least, till after dinner. Bit awkward, using a knife and fork with thick gloves on, but I keep hitting my mouth pretty well in spite of that, so it don't signify. Gan, my lad, we'll let bygones be bygones. I lift this pint pot to you in all affection.

I don't even wish you dead, not till dinner's over, for it wouldn't be good manners to go on with the feast and you a corpse. Good luck, blubber-biter, and, for the sake of Mike, don't make such a row when you eat."

"By honey, I've told him that scores of times," said Prout. "He reminds me of a piggollop-ing it down with both feet in the trough. I'm enjoying it all

very much, only I'm getting like Mr. Thurston, a bit cold about the feet. But if it's home-like to Gan Waga on his birthday, things like that don't worry us. I love him to feel home-like. If he was only at home for good and all, by honey, I'd prance round this ship on my hands, howling for joy. How much is the fare back, blubber-biter?"

As Gan Waga was prevented by Ching Lung from throwing a vegetable dish at Prout the

can-and-rib band struck up another tune and the songsters warbled:

"He's a blubbery, rubbery, bouncing boy,  
A buttery, plumpery How-d'ye-Go.  
A jellified, jollified, genial joy,  
Gan Waga our Eskimo."

This sounded very nice and flattering.



Gan Waga stood up with half a pork-pie in his hand. Whatever may have been in his heart his mouth was too full for words, so he could only bow his thanks. He must have been touched, for he swallowed the lump in his throat so hard that his little black eyes started out of his head. He gulped harder and got the lump down.

"Look heres," he said fiercely,

"yo' stops it. Yo' call me any morer rubbery, blubbery, jellified, plumperiness, and I jolly well picks up the tables and knock yo' all sillies. How dares yo', hunk? Yo' valler-face idgit with the big voice, yo' the worstest, so have that."

Gan Waga, who did not seem to appreciate the full meaning and beauty of the song sung in his honour, banged the half pork-pie down on the head of the nearest musician, and the angry musician retaliated by prodding Gan hard in

the ribs with a big walrus bone. Joe separated them as they were rolling in the snow trying to bite each other's ears.

"Now gentlemen," said Ching Lung, "this little dinner and little misunderstanding being over, we will endeavour to entertain you with an Eskimo war-dance. Shift the table and form further back. You must imagine that it is dead of night, one of those nights of intense darkness known only, I am thankful to say, on polar realms. Just before dawn the enemy Eskimos are creeping down on the igloos." Suddenly all the lights went out, including the mock moons and the stars. Mr. Thomas Prout put his hands in his pockets to see if his life-preserver and flash-lamp were quite safe. Prout had some reason for being suspicious for it was not the first little function organised by Ching Lung that he and his two comrades had been invited to. They were always, up to a certain extent, highly enjoyable; and arranged regardless of expense, but generally some sort of a hitch occurred.

"Whisht! Are you there, Tom?" whispered Barry O'Rooney. "They're too quare to please me. Do you think it's safe?"

"By honey, I don't know; they're so full of wheezes," muttered Prout. "Get both fists ready, and if anything comes near you hit it hard. Pass the word to Ben. Never mind what it is, hit it."

Then the dawn broke, or, rather, the four mock suns threw a pale gleam over the frozen wilderness. Sitting on the bench, the three mariners surveyed the prospect. All looked secure and unchanged. Two of the seals were on the ice and one in the pool, and in the dim light Thork, the bear, was sleeping off his huge feast of buns. The only difference was that the musicians had become hostile warriors, and were stalking the igloos armed with clubs and harpoons. They uttered a shrill war-whoop, which died away amid the frozen stillness, and then the voice of Ching Lung came drowsily from one of the igloos.

"You've left the cat out, Gan," said the voice. "I can hear the poor little thing squalling. Get up and let it in."


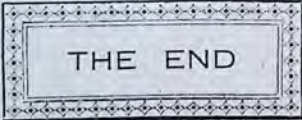

Gan Waga's reply was drowned in another blood-curdling war-whoop as the warriors rushed at the doomed igloo and its wretched inhabitants. The fierce attackers pounded it with clubs and stabbed it with harpoons, and beat it to ruins. Shrieks of agony, that sank into sobs and gurgles and finally into stillness, came from the tumbled heap of snow, and then the yelling conquerors dragged out a fur-clad human body by the heels and tumbled it head-long into the big pot that simmered over the fire.

Then the dawn went out, and it was night again, and then just as quickly the temperature of that frozen waste changed, for somebody had turned on the steam-pipes.

With a howl Mr. Thomas Prout switched on his flash lamp. Chunks of ice were tumbling from the sky as the icicles melted, and water dripped from the ceiling. The remaining igloo was fading away, revealing the wooden framework beneath. The seals glared glassily through the mist and wet, and Thork lay undisturbed, for the real seals and the real Thork had gone, leaving only stuffed dummies.

Soaked, wild-eyed, and ankle-deep in slush, the mariners splashed their way to the locked door and howled to be let out. More swiftly thawed the snow and more dense grew the fog of steam. In the extraordinary change of climate from the arctic to the semi-tropical the snowfield had turned into a lake. When Joe at last let them out, they could not fall on him and tear him to pieces, for Joe had a wide grin on his face and a revolver in each hand.

"Sorry," said the store-keeper, after examining the furs which Prout returned next morning, "but you've made an awful mess of these. I'll send 'em to be put right, and the cost will come out of your wages. You'll be lucky if you get off with a fiver."



THE END



# Billy Bunter's Resolve!

A PLAY IN VERSE  
FOR  
AMATEUR ACTORS.

[NOTE.—As in the case of previous plays published in the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, performances may be given by parties of our readers, without fee or licence, on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.]

## CHARACTERS :

HARRY WHARTON	Captain of the Remove.	PERCY BOLSOVER	.. The Bully of the Remove.
BOB CHERRY	} Wharton's Chosen Chums.	DOCTOR LOCKE	.. Headmaster of Greyfriars.
FRANK NUGENT		DAME MIMBLE	.. Proprietress of the School Tuckshop.
JOHNNY BULL			
HURREE SINGH			
BILLY BUNTER	.. The Famous Fat Boy of Greyfriars.		

## ACT I.

SCENE.—No. 7 Study in the Remove Passage.

(BILLY BUNTER is seated at the table, scribbling industriously. There are piles of books in front of him, and he has a wet towel tied round his forehead. He grunts laboriously as he writes. Suddenly there is a loud knocking without.)

BUNTER (looking up):

Oh, dear! Confound that beastly knocking!  
I can't get on; it's simply shocking.  
A plague on any chap who enters!  
I'm never free from my tormentors!

VOICE FROM WITHOUT:

Say, Billy! May we step inside?

BUNTER:

I wish you'd run away and hide!

CHERRY:

Rats! We'll do nothing of the sort.  
We're coming in right now, old sport!  
(Enter THE FAMOUS FIVE. They stare in astonishment at the studious BUNTER.)

WHARTON:

My only aunt! What's wrong with Billy?

BUNTER:

Nothing; I'm simply swotting, silly!

NUGENT:

Good gracious! Fancy Bunter swotting!

BULL:

The silly porpoise must be "rotting."

BUNTER:

I hope you fellows realise  
I'm going to win the Founder's Prize,

This towel which adorns me now  
Is meant to cool my fevered brow.  
I wish I had a lump of ice ;  
Its cooling properties are nice.  
I'd also love a treacle tart,  
To make me work with better heart.  
But funds are very low, indeed,  
So there's no prospect of a feed.  
But, though I'm in a starving plight,  
I'll carry on and swot all night !  
However dull and dense I am,  
I'll come out top in this Exam.

CHERRY :  
You stupid bundle of conceit !  
You'll stand no chance if you compete.  
Your feeble brain can't tussle with  
The brains of Todd and Vernon-Smith.  
And as for Linley and the rest,  
Methinks you'll have to give them best !

WHARTON :  
You scarcely know a line of Greek ;  
Your French makes everybody shriek.  
The first exam. you ever sat in  
Proved you were ignorant of Latin.  
And any other Greyfriars " crammer "  
Could give you points at English grammar.

HURREE SINGH :  
That's so, my fat and foolish Billy !  
To sit for the exam. is silly.  
You'd never win the prize, I fear,  
Not if you swotted for a year !  
That, in a nutshell's the position ;  
Give up this foolish, vain ambition !

BULL :  
I echo what my friends have said,  
So shut your books and go to bed !

WHARTON :  
To sit up swotting half the night  
Will make you ill, you silly kite !

BUNTER (rising to his feet and wagging his fore-  
finger at the FAMOUS FIVE) :

Your speeches have been made in vain !  
I know you think that I'm insane,  
But listen ! I am out to win !  
(It's all right, Bull ; you needn't grin !)  
The prize is twenty pounds in cash ;  
With such a sum I'll cut a dash.  
I'll buy a hamper, crammed with tuck ;  
Then buy another one, for luck !  
I'll buy a wireless crystal set ;  
Also a gramophone I'll get,

And with the balance that remains  
I'll feed till I've internal pains !  
That twenty pounds will be divine,  
And very shortly 'twill be mine !

CHERRY :

You're optimistic, Billy—very !

BUNTER :

And not without good reason, Cherry !

NUGENT :

You'll finish bottom, I should say—

BUNTER :

Oh, really, Nugent ! Run away !

WHARTON :

It would not give me much surprise  
To see him win the Booby Prize !  
But as for getting first or second,  
A miracle it would be reckoned !

CHERRY :

Take my advice and chuck this game !

BUNTER :

To get rich quick, Bob, is my aim.  
I'm tired of being stony-broke ;  
It's getting quite beyond a joke !  
I never get enough to eat,  
And not a soul will stand me treat.  
The postman, when he comes at " brekker,"  
Never enriches my exchequer  
By bringing me some big donations  
From all my well-to-do relations.  
I'm tired of being poor and needy  
And, though I'm not the least bit greedy,  
I want to win that twenty pounds.  
How perfectly divine it sounds !  
But leave me now alone in peace,  
And let this conversation cease.

WHARTON :

Well, Bunter, I admire your pluck,  
And, honestly, I wish you luck.  
But, if you had ten thousand tries,  
You'd never win the Founder's Prize !

BUNTER :

Never's a long, long day, old chap :  
Now buzz along ; get off the map !

NUGENT :

We'll leave the porpoise to his labours,  
With Scott and Shakespeare for his neigh-  
bours.

(Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE. BILLY BUNTER  
settles down to work once more. He polishes  
his spectacles and replaces them on his nose ;  
then he picks up his pen, jabs it furiously

in the ink, and scribbles away as if for a wager.)

BUNTER (looking up):

I'll tackle this examination  
With courage and determination.  
Whilst others slumber in the dorm.,  
I mean to take the world by storm.  
And when I've won in this exam.,  
I'll have a feed of eggs and ham.  
The cry will go up, "BUNTER'S TOP!"  
The place will flow with ginger-pop!  
I'll strut around, in pomp and power,  
And be the hero  
of the hour!

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE.—THE  
SCHOOL TUCKSHOP.

(DAME MIMBLE  
is hovering behind  
the counter, and  
BOLSOVER MAJOR  
is perched on a  
stool, partaking of  
pastries and ginger  
beer.)

BOLSOVER:

Madam, these  
doughnuts are a  
treat!

The cream-buns,  
too, are hard to  
beat.

The juicy jam  
tarts are divine—

Such luxuries  
are in my line!

DAME MIMBLE (bobbing a curtsey):

Such compliments delight and cheer,  
They ring like music in my ear.

But ere you praise me any more,  
Perhaps you'll pay me three-and-four!

BOLSOVER:

Most certainly, my worthy Dame!  
To pay up promptly is my aim.  
You think, no doubt, I've not a groat,  
But kindly change this five-pound note!

DAME MIMBLE (in astonishment):

My goodness! You're a millionaire!

BOLSOVER:

Not yet: but still, I don't despair.

DAME MIMBLE:

How did you come by all this wealth?

BOLSOVER:

An aunt of mine did good by stealth.  
She posted me this handsome sum;  
'Twas jolly good of her, by gum!  
Another dish of pastries, please!  
And here I'll sit, and take my ease.

(Enter BILLY BUNTER, very slowly, muttering  
to himself).

BUNTER:

"To be, or not  
to be? That is  
the question!

Whether 'tis  
nobler in the mind  
to suffer

The slings and  
arrows of out-  
rageous fortune,

Or, to take arms  
against a sea of  
troubles,

And, by oppos-  
ing, end them."

BOLSOVER:

Bunter! You  
gave me quite a  
start!

You're rattling  
Shakespeare off by  
heart.

BUNTER (ignoring  
Bolsover)

"To die, to  
sleep; to sleep—

perchance to dream,

Ay, there's the grub!"

BOLSOVER:

You're wrong; it should be "There's the  
rub."

Not, as you put it, "There's the grub!"

BUNTER:

"For in that sleep of death what dreams  
may come,

When we have cuffed off this mortal  
shoil—"



"For this small loan I'm jolly grateful.  
What tempting tarts! I'll have a plateful."



"Well, here's good fortune to 'Your Humble'!"

BOLSOVER:

My only aunt! That's worse and worse!  
Bill Shakespeare never wrote such verse!  
The sense of his remarks you spoil,  
It's "shuffled off this mortal coil."  
But don't keep spouting Shakespeare here!  
What have you come for—ginger-beer?

BUNTER (*suddenly becoming aware of his surroundings*):

Hellup! You gave me quite a start!

BOLSOVER:

Why have you learned that stuff by heart?

BUNTER:

Because—you needn't raise your eyes—  
I mean to win the Founder's Prize!  
I quite intend to finish first;  
I'll do it, even if I burst!

BOLSOVER:

I hear you've swotted night and day.

BUNTER:

Yes, and I'm ready for the fray!

BOLSOVER:

And do you really hope to win?

BUNTER:

All subjects I'm well grounded in.

BOLSOVER:

You think you'll beat the other kids?

BUNTER:

I'm certain of the twenty quids!

BOLSOVER:

If optimism breeds success,  
You'll win the Founder's Prize, I guess!

BUNTER:

You've guessed correctly, just for once.  
You needn't think that I'm a dunce.  
I might have been, a week ago,  
Since then I've made big strides, you know.  
I know my Latin and my Greek,  
Each foreign language I can speak.  
I've swotted up Geography,  
And German, and Topography.  
I'm versed in Physiology,  
And Science, and Conchology.  
I've dug my intellectual tusk in  
The works of Carlyle and of Ruskin.  
I've wandered through the Courtfield streets  
Reciting yards and yards of Keats.  
I've used my brains in Botany  
(You think I haven't got any)  
I'm simply bound to come out top,  
And then—why, I shall buy this shop.

BOLSOVER (*greatly impressed*):

You really think you stand a chance?

BUNTER:

I've won those quidlets in advance.

BOLSOVER:

By Jove! You've got the confidence:

BUNTER:

I've also got the skill and sense.

DAME MIMBLE:

You'll cause a wonderful sensation  
By winning this examination.  
You've studied for it day and night,  
And so you ought to win all right.

BUNTER (*turning to Bolsover*):

I hear your Aunt Jemima wrote  
Enclosing you a five-pound note.  
So may I beg a little loan?  
Please don't reveal a heart of stone.  
Ten shillings will secure a snack,  
And—when I've won—I'll pay you back.  
In fact, I'll pay you back fifteen,  
So come on, Bolsy! Don't be mean.

BOLSOVER:

You seem so certain of success,  
I'd better make the loan, I guess.

BOLSOVER produces a ten-shilling note from his pocket and hands it to BUNTER, who dances

with delight. He capers round the tuckshop, knocking several stools over.)

BUNTER :

Thanks very much indeed for this,  
I almost feel inclined to kiss—

BOLSOVER (*jumping back hastily*) :

Nunno! Stand clear! Keep off the grass!  
I'm not a girl, you frabjous ass.

BUNTER :

For this small loan, I'm jolly grateful.  
What tempting tarts! I'll have a plateful.  
I'll also have some Chelsea buns,  
Likewise some doughnuts—jammy ones.  
Some buttered scones will be a treat,  
And macaroons are nice to eat.  
Then, when I've had a rabbit pie,  
Poached eggs on toast I think I'll try.  
And then—I hope I shall not burst—  
With ginger-pop I'll quench my thirst!

DAME MIMBLE :

Hand me your money, if you please!

BUNTER :

Right-ho! And then I'll take my ease.

(BUNTER passes the ten-shilling note over the counter. He is then served with his requirements, he perches himself on a stool beside BOLSOVER, and gets busy.)

BUNTER :

I say! I'm in the seventh heaven.  
These tarts are prime. I'll eat eleven.

BOLSOVER :

I hope you will enjoy your snack,  
But don't forget to pay me back.

BUNTER :

For your ten bob you'll get fifteen  
When I have won the prize, old bean!

BOLSOVER (*aside*) :

And if he fails to win that prize,  
I'll punch his nose and black his eyes,  
I can't afford to lose ten bob,  
And if I do, I'll make him sob!

BUNTER (*raising a glass of ginger-beer*) :

I say! I wish you wouldn't mumble!  
Well, here's good fortune to "Your  
Humble!"

END OF ACT II.



"I think the Head's a heartless beast! My wrath against him is increased. Why do you glare at me, Bob Cherry? It is ill-mannered of you—very!"

# ACT III.

SCENE.—*The front portion of Big Hall. The Head's rostrum is seen, also two forms in front of it. THE FAMOUS FIVE are seated on one form; BILLY BUNTER and BOLSOVER MAJOR occupy the form behind. All are looking very excited. (BUNTER nudging WHARTON in the back):*

Say, Wharton, this suspense is awful!

To keep chaps waiting isn't lawful.

I'm in a fever of suspense

And my excitement is intense.

My heart is beating like a hammer,

My speech is just a nervous stammer.

I'm in a fluster and a flurry.

Oh, dear! I wish the Head would hurry!

CHERRY:

He won't be very long, old son

And then we'll quickly know who's won.

BUNTER:

The winner is myself, of course!

BOLSOVER:

If not, I'll make you feel remorse.

*(The juniors shuffle their feet, and wait with growing impatience for the Head to arrive.)*

BUNTER:

To keep us waiting is a shame.

The Head must learn to play the game.

He knows that we're on tenterhooks,

And yet he's buried in his books.

I really think he has forgotten

To give us the result. It's rotten.

*(Enter the HEAD, whilst BUNTER is speaking.*

*He carries a cane and approaches from the rear; and the fat junior is not aware of his presence.*

*The other juniors turn round and see him, and they try to warn BUNTER, by signs and nudges,*

*that the HEAD has arrived. BUNTER, however,*

*wattles on.)*



"Come forward, boy, and take your due.  
The Founder's Prize is won by you."

I think the Head's a heartless beast!

My wrath against him is increased.

Although, of course, I realise

That I have won the Founder's Prize,

It's only fair that Dr. Locke

(Who called us here at four o'clock)

Should come and tell us the results.

Confound the Head, and all his faults!

Why do you glare at me, Bob Cherry?

It is ill-mannered of you—very!

CHERRY *(in a stage whisper)*:

The Head is here, you silly chump!

BUNTER:

Don't pull my leg; you made me jump!

THE HEAD *(in tones of thunder)*:

Yes, Bunter! I am truly present!

CHERRY *(aside)*:

Bunter will find this shock unpleasant!

BUNTER *(in great alarm)*:

Oh, crumbs! I didn't see you here, sir!

That frown of yours is getting fiercer!

THE HEAD:

How dare you take my name in vain?

I will administer the cane!

BUNTER:

Oh, help! I never said a word!

All those remarks you overheard

Were not intended, sir, for you,

So please don't get into a stew.

For Mr. Quelch my words were meant,

And not, sir, to your detriment!

THE HEAD:

Bunter! You do not speak the truth.

You are a most misguided youth.

You sought to slander your Headmaster—

Such conduct always brings disaster!

Hold out your hand, you wretched boy!

HURREE SINGH (*aside*):

The lickfulness he'll now enjoy!

(BUNTER gingerly extends his hand, and the HEAD administers three sharp cuts with the cane. BUNTER's yells of anguish awaken the echoes.)

THE HEAD ( *panting* ):

Such punishment is richly due—

BUNTER:

Yow-ow! Oh, dear! I'm hurt! Yarooo!

(THE HEAD then mounts the rostrum, and produces a sheet of paper from his pocket. There is an excited murmur from the assembled juniors.)

THE HEAD:

Silence! My boys, I will proceed,  
For your enlightenment, to read  
The names, also the marks allotted  
To those whom—you would say—have  
"swotted."

BUNTER:

Of course, sir, my name heads the list?

THE HEAD:

Bunter, I warn you to desist!

BUNTER:

But surely, sir, I top the bill?

THE HEAD:

Base boy, be silent, and sit still!

BOLSOVER (*aside, shaking his fist*):

If Bunter hasn't bagged the prize,

His nose will

swell to twice its  
size!

I'll punch him  
here, I'll punch him  
there,

I'll thump and  
clump him every-  
where!

He's got ten bob  
by false pretences.

My hat! I must  
have lost my senses

To lend him such  
a princely sum.

If he's been  
beaten, I'll be  
glum!

THE HEAD:

Let this chatter-  
ing cease at once.

Bunter, you are an arrant dunce!

You sat for the Examination,  
And worked, no doubt, with desperation.

But such a shameful lack of knowledge  
Brings great discredit on this College.

I have your papers with me now,  
They make me frown, with furrowed brow.

Your writing, Bunter, is appalling,

I really never saw such scrawling!

Your spelling is both weird and weak,

So are your Latin, French, and Greek.

While as for your Geography

Such ignorance amazes me!

You tell us, wretched boy, that Russia

Was once the capital of Prussia!

You then remark that Asia Minor

Is a young 'fag' who hails from China.

Brussels is noted for its sprouts

You tell us—but I have my doubts!

Chelsea for Chelsea Buns is famous—

Oh, what an utter ignoramus!

Six marks alone you have obtained:

The winner, ninety-eight has gained!

BUNTER (*in horrified tones*):

But, sir, there must be some mistake—

WHARTON:

Shush! Hold-your tongue, for goodness'  
sake!

BUNTER:

I can't have failed in the Exam.,

Look how I had  
to swot and cram!

THE HEAD:

Bunter, your  
brain must be  
befogged.

I really feel you  
should be flogged!

BUNTER (*plead-  
ingly*):

Don't put that  
threat in execution!

Think of my  
weakly constitu-  
tion!

THE HEAD:

The boy who  
won, with ninety-  
eight,

Is Nugent, I am  
pleased to state.



"Oh, dear! I think an earthquake hit me,  
Or some mad monster bruised and bit me!"

Come forward, boy, and take your due.  
The Founder's Prize is won by you!

(FRANK NUGENT steps up to the rostrum, amid loud cheering and handclapping. THE HEAD presents him with the Founder's Prize.)

BUNTER:

It isn't fair! I must protest!  
I'm sure I've beaten all the rest!

THE HEAD:

Bunter, I warn you to be silent,  
Or my next action will be violent!  
Nugent! Sincere congratulation  
On winning this Examination.

(THE HEAD shakes hands with FRANK NUGENT, and then withdraws. BUNTER, fearing the wrath of BOLSOVER MAJOR, attempts to rush out of the Hall, but he is too late. BOLSOVER pounces upon him, and drags him back.)

BOLSOVER:

You played me false, you wretched worm,  
And now I mean to make you squirm!

BUNTER (*struggling wildly*):

Help! Rescue! Wharton! Cherry! Bull!  
This bullying beast has lost his wool!

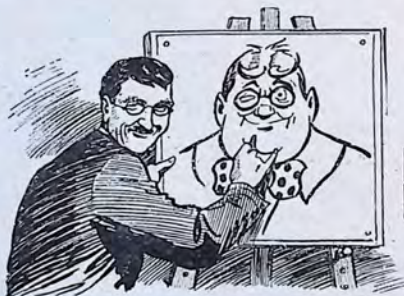
(The furious and indignant BOLSOVER proceeds to use BILLY BUNTER as a punching-ball. After smiting him in sundry places, he leaves his victim sitting dazedly on the floor, groping for his spectacles. Exit THE FAMOUS FIVE, laughing. Exit BOLSOVER MAJOR, snorting.)

BUNTER (*still in a sitting posture*):

Oh, dear! I think an earthquake hit me,  
Or some mad monster bruised and bit me!  
I don't know if I'm on my head,  
Or balanced on my heels instead!  
I feel just like a punctured tyre,  
I'm certain I shall soon expire.  
And then I'll go to some bright land  
Where no Exams. are ever planned!  
I'll draw a last, long, lingering breath  
Then, like a hero, meet my death!

CURTAIN.

THE



END !

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## DON'T FORGET—

That all the many friends whom you have met in the splendid school stories in this volume of the Holiday Annual may be found every week in the Companion Papers !

To my numerous new friends who have enjoyed the stories of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, and Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, I wish to point out that it is the easiest thing possible to keep in touch with all these popular favourites all the year round.

The "MAGNET" is published every Monday morning, and its chief feature is a long, complete tale of Greyfriars by Frank Richards, with Harry Wharton and his chums of the Greyfriars Remove to the fore.

In the "BOYS' FRIEND," also published on Mondays, we get a capital Rookwood yarn every week featuring Jimmy Silver, Tubby Muffin, Lovell, the egregious Carthew, and all the comrades of the cheery Fourth Form ; while in the "POPULAR," which appears each Tuesday, we have complete yarns of all the schools—Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood.

The "GEM" comes out on Wednesday, and in that famous weekly story paper the spotlight will be found on Tom Merry, the celebrated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the other high-spirited leaders of the junior school at St. Jim's, who help to make this series by Martin Clifford a triumph.

These facts are mentioned partly in response to the myriad enquiries which reach me concerning the "Holiday Annual" stories. "Must we wait a whole year for more?" is the burden of these queries. Not the very least occasion ! My friends and supporters all over the world can have many cheery hours with the jolly characters each passing week.

In conclusion I must also draw attention to the "SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY," published monthly. This 4d. Library gives book-length tales of all the favourite school-boy characters in fiction.—THE EDITOR.

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