

STURGIS FORGETS!



A complete, humorous story of Greyfriars School as it will be—perhaps—in the year 1950!

By FRANK RICHARDS

Lashwood was strolling under the elms, his hands in his pockets, serenely indifferent to Sturgis and all other such small fry. Probably he had already forgotten having given Sturgis "six," though it had happened only a quarter of an hour ago.

Sturgis, naturally, still remembered it. "Six" from a prefect's ashplant was not to be forgotten in fifteen minutes—by the recipient thereof.

Sturgis' face was red and wrathful.

"I'll jolly well tell him——" he repeated.

Dawson, his study-mate, sitting on a corner of the study table, shook his head.

"Chuck it, old man," he advised.

"You can't tell a Sixth-Form man, and a prefect, what you think of him."

"What's going to prevent me?" demanded Sturgis.

"Well, you'll get another six."

"Not if he doesn't know who talked to him."

"Oh!" said Dawson. "You mean ——"

"I don't mean that I'm going to walk up to him in quad, and tell him that I think he's a pie-faced gorilla!" said Sturgis sarcastically. "You can't do that to a prefect! But when I get him on the wireless 'phone, how's he going to know who's speaking?"

Plain Speaking!

"I'll jolly well tell him what I think of him!" said Sturgis, of the Fourth Form.

He was staring from his study window at Greyfriars, at a distant figure across the quadrangle.

It was the figure of Lashwood, a prefect of the Sixth.



Lashwood boiled with wrath as he listened to the cheeky remarks coming through on his receiver.

"It's risky."

"Rot! Might be any man at Greyfriars talking to him—or out of Greyfriars, for that matter."

"But you're such an ass, you know," said Dawson doubtfully. "What did Lashwood give you six for, anyway?"

"Because I forgot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Dawson.

Sturgis glared at him.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Well, you're always forgetting something," grinned Dawson. "Never knew such an absent-minded beggar! You forget everything. Best thing you can do now is to forget that Lashwood gave you six."

Sturgis wriggled.

Sturgis of the Fourth was undoubtedly the most absent-minded fellow at Greyfriars, and he had a frightful memory. It was true that he forgot most things. But a licking from Lashwood of the Sixth was

not one of the things he could forget in a hurry. When the pain wore off, no doubt Sturgis would forget Lashwood, and the licking, too. But the pain had not worn off yet. Lashwood did these things scientifically and thoroughly.

Sturgis' absent-mindedness was a standing joke in the Greyfriars Fourth.

He had been known to walk into class with his pocket wireless receiving-set in his waistcoat pocket and absent-mindedly turn it on, without remembering where he was, with the result that Latin irregular verbs were suddenly interrupted by a burst of jazz music, or one of those interesting talks about the prices of Fat Stock or the latest fluctuations in the supply of mangel-wurzels.

Once, when the fellows had been doing amateur theatricals, Sturgis had played the part of Chingachgook, the Last of the Mohicans. Immediately after the show, and without removing his make-up, Sturgis rang up his mater at home on his wireless television gadget, to tell her about it.

Mrs. Sturgis, taking the call, was startled and terrified to find a frightful-looking Red Indian, his face daubed with war-paint, glaring at her from the instrument.

The poor lady almost fainted.

On another occasion, when Sturgis went for a spin on his air-bike on a half-holiday, he forgot to fill up with juice, and his machine conked out while he was crossing the Pyrenees. Sturgis was very late home that night, and received a whacking imposition from the Head.

But Sturgis' latest exploit, which had earned him "six" from Lashwood, was really, the fellows considered, a corker. In a game of air hockey that afternoon, Sturgis had forgotten to fasten the anti-gravitational floater on his stick. It was, Sturgis said, a thing any fellow might forget. But the result was unfortunate.

In 1950, air hockey was played at Greyfriars at an altitude of fifty feet over the football ground. Sturgis, of course, dropped his stick. That was like Sturgis. It would not have mattered had he not forgotten the floater. But, in the actual circumstances, it did matter a lot. A foot-

ball match was going on below, and Lashwood of the Sixth was taking a shot at goal when Sturgis' stick came whizzing downward and caught him on the head.

Lashwood, of course, was very sick about it; but Sturgis was sicker when the prefect had done with him. Hence his present intense desire to tell Lashwood what he thought of him.

He looked from the window again. Lashwood was still in sight, strolling loftily under the distant elms. Once he withdrew a hand from his pocket, to rub his head. No doubt at that moment he remembered the unimportant existence of the junior he had caned.

Sturgis gave him a vengeful look.

"Listen to me," he said to Dawson. "Lashwood is going to know what all the fellows think of him. Keep an eye on him, and see him turn green when I begin."

"But——" objected Dawson.

"Rats!" said Sturgis.

He had made up his mind, and was beyond argument.

Dawson took up a position at the study window, to keep an eye on the Sixth-Form man. There was no doubt that the prefect would be astonished and enraged to hear what the juniors thought of him; any prefect would have been! So he would be worth watching when Sturgis began to talk.

Sturgis took out his pocket 'phone.

These little wireless 'phones had been quite expensive at one time, but mass production had done its work, and now any fellow could buy one with a week's pocket-money. They were, of course, very convenient. When a fellow was stony, for instance, he could ring up the pater at home, and explain in a sad voice how very sorely he needed a remittance; and as all these instruments had the televisual attachment, which was turned off and on with a little switch, he could add a long, sad face to his sad voice, to move the paternal heart.

"Oh!" ejaculated Sturgis suddenly. "Blessed if I haven't forgotten Lashwood's wave-length."

"Like you, isn't it?" said Dawson

"Oh, rats! I'll get it in a minute. Now listen—and watch his face!"

Dawson watched from the window.

He saw Lashwood give a slight movement as Sturgis rang him, which showed that he had got the call.

The prefect slipped a finger and thumb into his waistcoat pocket, and took out his pocket instrument.

"You're through," said Dawson.

"Good!"

"Don't let him recognise your voice."

"Teach your grandmother!" retorted Sturgis.

And in a husky, disguised voice he began to talk to Lashwood of the Sixth.

Dawson chuckled, watching the expression on the prefect's face as the instrument in his hand repeated Sturgis' words to him.

"Hallo, you pie-faced, piffing fat-



"Hallo, you pie-faced, piffing fathead!" spoke Sturgis into his transmitter. "Where did you get that face?"

head!" began Sturgis in that carefully-disguised voice which no one could have recognised as his. "Hallo, you monkey-featured mugwump!"

Lashwood gave a violent start.

"Where did you get that face?" went on the wireless 'phone. "Did you win it in a raffle, or pick it up on a dust-heap? Do you call it a face?"

Lashwood seemed petrified.

It was the first time that the lofty ears of the Sixth-Form prefect had listened to conversation of this kind.

"Don't you think yourself no end of a big gun? It would do you good to hear the fellows chortle when you turn your back! You think a frightful lot of yourself, Lashwood! You're the only man at Greyfriars who does!"

Sturgis was enjoying himself.

Lashwood, to judge by his looks, was not.

He still seemed petrified, but red wrath was coming into his face. Dawson chuckled.

"You're making him sit up, old man," he remarked.

"I haven't finished yet," grinned Sturgis.

And he went on:

"Lashwood! You hear me, you bone-headed gorilla? I saw you playing footer to-day. I never laughed so much in my life! Keep on playing footer, Lashwood! It's the funniest thing going, the way you play! Enough to make a cat laugh!"

Lashwood, out there in the quad, under the elms, made a sort of convulsive movement. Lashwood rather prided himself on his footer.

"I say, Lashwood! How did you get into the Sixth? There are kids in the Third could teach you a lot of things! Does the Head know you crib?"

Dawson chortled.

The prefect's face was as red as a newly-boiled beetroot by this time.

"He's getting wild!" remarked Dawson.

"I'll make him wilder!" said Sturgis.

And he proceeded:

"Lashwood! I say, fathead! What sort of a howling ass do you call yourself?

Would you mind telling me something? Lots of fellows want to know. Why did they send you to Greyfriars instead of sending you to a home for idiots? I've often wondered."

"I say, he's coming to the House!" ejaculated Dawson.

Sturgis grinned.

"Let him! He's got a couple of hundred fellows to choose from if he wants to find out who talked to him."

"He looks frightfully wild!"

"I thought he would."

Sturgis chuckled gleefully; but Dawson, at the window, was a little alarmed.

Lashwood disappeared into the House, and Dawson turned from the study window.

"Better get that 'phone out of sight," he said. "Safer not to have it on you when Lashwood starts rooting about for the fellow who's been talking to him."

"Put it behind the books in the book-case," said Sturgis.

Dawson took up Sturgis' pocket 'phone. Then he gave a sudden start. His face was full of horror.

"You priceless ass!" he yelled aghast. "You forgot to turn off the television switch!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The television switch was on, fathead! So Lashwood saw you all the time you were talking to him!"

"Oh, my only aunt Sempronia!" gasped Sturgis.

He had no time to say more.

The study door burst open.

Lashwood of the Sixth rushed in. His ashplant was in his hand, and red wrath was in his face.

He did not speak. He was too enraged to speak. He collared Sturgis of the Fourth with his left hand, and with his right—

But let us draw a veil!

The next day, Sturgis of the Fourth swapped his pocket 'phone with a Remove man for some white rabbits. He was fed up with it!

THE END