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The Bully of St. John's.

By CLIFFORD OWEN.



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A WHIMSICAL STORY OF SCHOOL LIFE.

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CHAPTER I.

BERTIE BLY.

"GUARD, am I all right for St. John's?"

"Yes, sir."

"No change?"

"No change, sir."

The guard slammed the door, and the boy who had put the questions concerning his destination leaned back upon the faded cushions of the third-class compartment with a sigh of relief. He was a good-looking boy of about fifteen, with a fresh complexion and clear blue eyes, which, however, wore a troubled look as he bent his gaze upon the opposite side of the carriage with a thoughtful frown. The guard blew his whistle, the engine gave an answering hoot, and then the train began to move slowly out of the little wayside junction.

Suddenly, however, there came the noise of shouting from the platform, and, glancing out of the window, the boy observed the figure of a tall, slim lad, immaculately clad in Etons and wearing a top-hat of the glossiest hue, taking leaping strides towards the departing train, having

evidently broken through the barrier at the last moment in time see it starting out.

"Hi, hi!" he called, waving a gold-knobbed cane frantically. "Hi, hi! stop your bally engine, I say! Pull up your beastly twain for half a mo., can't you?"

"Stand back!" called out the guard.

"You go and assimilate coke, deah' old boy!" hooted the new-comer, dashing wildly up the platform. "I'm going to catch this twain, or bust!"

The boy with the fresh complexion and the blue eyes hereupon threw open the door of his compartment, as the long-legged youngster in the silk hat dashed up upon a level with it.

"Here you are!" he cried. "Jump in here!"

"Wight-o! You're a beastly pal!"

Saying which, despite the loudly-voiced protestations of the guard, the new-comer, breathless and panting, flung himself into the carriage and rolled over upon the floor.

"Close shave," remarked the other boy, securing the door of the compartment as the train left the platform.

For some time the other occupied

himself with knocking the dust from his trousers and carefully wiping his glossy hat with a large, spotted silk handkerchief, without, however, speaking a word in reply. At length, having reduced his headgear to its former state of shininess, he stuck it upon his head, and extended a neatly-gloved hand.

"Shake, deah boy," he drawled, in a refined if somewhat affected accent. "You have saved the giddy situation. If I had lost this wotten twain I should have had to wait a whole beastly hour for the next one to St. John's."

The other boy smiled.

"You did cut it rather fine, didn't you?" he said.

"Wathah! I always do cut everything fine, don't you know. It's a way I have. As a mattah of fact, I broke my journey frow London, and got out at the beastly junction just for the sake of a little toddle. One gets so howwidly cwamped and stiff in one's beastly pins sitting still for hours. I say, deah boy," he added, staring quizzically at his companion, "I suppose you don't happen to be goin' to St. Jack's?"

The other nodded.

"Yes, I'm going to the school," he replied, quietly.

"My hat! a new boy, eh? A fwesher?"

"Yes," nodded the other again.

"Phew! you don't say so? Wathah a wummy time to come to the coll.—what?"

"Yes, I suppose the chaps don't usually come to St. John's after the Whitsun holidays, as a rule?"

"No, not as a wule, deah boy, though it's not unheard-of for a fwesher to toddle up in mid-term. Here's my card. Swop."

The young swell had taken a monographed silver card case from his waistcoat-pocket as he spoke, and extracting from it a slip of pasteboard, handed it to his com-

panion, who observed at a glance that it bore the legend:

"Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly."

"Thanks," murmured the other boy, slipping the card into his jacket-pocket. "Haven't got one myself. Don't carry 'em. But my name's Carton—Jim Carton."

"Wight-o, Carton! Glad to make your acquaintance. If there's anything I can do for you, pway command me."

Then Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly, first placing his silk hat carefully upon the rack above him and laying his gold-knobbed cane beside it, relapsed languidly into the corner of the compartment opposite. Pulling up his immaculately-creased trousers and displaying to view a pair of bright scarlet hose, he crossed his legs leisurely, and then produced a gold cigarette-case, which he extended towards Jim Carton with a smile.

"Pway accept a cigawette," he invited.

After a moment's hesitation, the other took the proffered smoke. He rarely indulged in tobacco, as a rule, but he knew that to refuse the invitation now might give offence to his new-found friend, which, in view of his being a "fresher," would be a distinctly unwise proceeding.

"Of course we're not allowed to affect the giddy fag up at the coll.," remarked Bly, holding out a lighted match, "though we do a bit on the quiet whenever we get a giddy chance."

Jim Carton grinned.

"Of course. By the way, what sort of place is St. John's? Decent-sized college, isn't it, and rather jolly, eh?"

"Toppin', deah boy! Spiffin', abso. Aw'f'ly jolly, and aw'f'ly swaggah, too!"

"Really?"

"Yaas, I think the old shop might

be weasonably described as swaggah, though, of course, it's distinctly more so than it used to be."

"Yes?"

"Yaas. Since I came, you know, I flattah myself—though perhaps I shouldn't mention it—that during the couple of years that I've been a membah of the coll. I have succeeded in waising its beastly tone no end."

Carton grinned again over the smoke-rings of his cigarette. The serious expression upon the face of the young dude opposite, coupled with the emphatic manner with which he had made the statement, appeared irresistibly droll.

"You see," continued Bly, "I sort of set the fashions, don't you know. For instance, perceive this weally beautiful necktie. I bought it in Piccadilly. Now, when the fellahs spot it they will try to imitate it all over the shop. Of course they'll nevah succeed, but they'll endeavah to do so all the same."

Carton regarded the speaker quizzically. Bertie Bly was rather a good-looking lad, with pale, aristocratic-looking features, and a very prominent nose. Good nature and weakness were blended in his somewhat foolish cast of features, though there was a latent and elusive hint of nobility in them as well. The most striking feature of this curious boy, putting aside his extraordinarily immaculate get-up, was the colour of his hair, which was a bright red in hue; but it was of an aggressive redness that is rarely seen, an uncomplaining blazing red, which had long since got its owner the opprobrious title of "Fiery Nob."

Altogether, Bertie Bly—as he was universally known throughout St. John's Collegiate School—was a rather extraordinary fellow, as his present companion was soon to discover.

"By the way, deah boy, are you

going to be a beastly Ancient or a bally Modern?" queried this young scion of the noble house of Bly.

"I don't quite understand," said Carton.

"Well, you see, it makes the deuce of a diff'wence. If you're an Ancient, you're all wight, but if you're a Modern you're a howling wotter. Twig?"

Carton shook his head negatively.

"Hanged if I do!" he admitted.

"Phew! deah boy, your nappah is somewhat thick—what? You are wathah slow of compwehension."

"Sorry; but if you'll explain—"

"P'wah have patience," admonished Bertie Bly, raising one of his gloved hands. "You see, it's like this: The old coll. is divided up into two sections, which are howwibly opposed to each other. Twig?"

"I see, Ancients and Moderns, you mean?"

"There you have it in a giddy nut-shell, deah boy—Ancients and Moderns. I'm a beastly Ancient, and if you're a bally Modern—well, I'm sorry for you, that's all!"

"Why?"

"My deah fellah, I shall, in that event, be compelled to t'weat you with great diswpect. So, to put the thing on a thwepenny-bit, as it were, the question is: what are you—an Ainch. or a Mod.?"

Jim Carton thought for a moment.

"Well, I'm for the Classics, of course—" he began.

Bertie Bly's right hand shot out like a piston.

"Put it there, deah boy, if it weighs a beastly ton!" he said, with enthusiasm.

"Which means that I'm an Ancient, then, and on the same side as yourself?"

"Abso., old fellah. If you're a Classic you're an Ancient, and consequently one of us. I shall have much pleasure in intweddoocing you

to my two friends and study-mates—
Fweddy Manvers and Tubby
Bouncer."

"Glad to meet 'em," remarked the
other boy, heartily.

"I should think so! Two of the
vey best, I do assure you. Wipping
kids, both of 'em. We all share
study No. 5 in the schoolhouse,
y'know, and we all vey wightly
weward ourselves as the cocks of the
Fourth. There are three other
bounders who dispute the title, but
as they are howwible Moderns they
are beneath anyone's serious con-
sideration."

"Who are they?"

"A cweature of the name of Silas
Jinks, a low Amewican, is one; a
silly jossah wejoicing in the name of
Jack Joyce is another; and the
third is Archie Bwuce, a tewwibly
common little lout, immensely oofy
and chock-full of cockles."

"Cockles?"

"Cheek, deah boy," explained
Bertie Bly, raising his red eyebrows
to their fullest extent. "Archie
Bwuce is, without exception, the
sauciest snipe that ever I stwuck in
my natch."

"Do you strike him pretty often?"
punned Carton.

"Oh, yaas, wathah! I am per-
petually stwiking him, although I
must admit upon the last occasion he
succeeded—by the vey mewest
chance—in dotting me on the beastly
boko. Archie Bwuce is vey wude
and wough upon occasion."

"I suppose you hold quite a
position in the school?" encouraged
Carton, with a twinkle of merriment
in his blue eyes.

"Oh, wathah! What do you
jolly well think? I am quite a
feature in the place; in fact, I am
asking my gov'nah to allow me to
stick on at the deah old coll. for
another yeah, just to give the fellahs
a tweat, don't you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway, pardon me, but are you
laughing—"

"Nunno," answered Carton,
hastily. "Cigarette-smoke in my
throat!"

Bertie Bly regarded the other sus-
piciously for a moment or two, and
then continued:

"They call me the 'Toff of the
Fourth,' you know, a title of which
I may say I am deservedly pwound.
You see, my gov'nah is a beastly
membah of Parliament, and a mil-
lionaire to boot; consequently, I
have to uphold a standard, so to
speak, and show the fellahs at the
coll. that I am a person of—of some
beastly importance. Twig?"

"I quite understand," said Carton,
gravely.

"And the Casuals honnah me
because I help 'em to keep up their
end of the pole against the wotten
Inmates."

"Casuals and the Inmates?"
echoed the astonished fresher.

"Merely another name for
Ancients and Moderns," explained
Bertie Bly, tossing his finished
cigarette out of the carriage window.

"Savvy?"

"Oh, I see. By the way; why are
they called 'Moderns'?"

Bertie Bly snorted indignantly.

"They swot at Stinks, for one
thing."

"Stinks'?"

"Chemistwuy, deah boy, and
physiology, and modern languages,
and all such piffle. Feahful out-
sidahs, all of them, and a disgwace
to the deah o'd coll. Of course you
will be expected to stwike some sort
of beastly blow at the Inmates as
soon as possible," continued Bertie
Bly, smiling amiably at his com-
panion. "Ewevy fwesher must do
that, don't you know. Can you put
'em up?"

"Put what up?"

"Your dooks, old son—your giddy
dooks."

"Dukes?"

"Oh, I say, do twy to pull yourself togethah and stwive to wefwain fwom being a howling cwackpot!" exclaimed the other, pathetically. "What I meant was—can you fight?"

Carton nodded.

"I was reckoned to be the best boxer in the grammar school I have just left," he replied, frankly.

"Good! Then you must certainly put the kybosh on one or other of the Modern boundahs. By the way, deah boy, there's one fellah you'll have to keep your eye skinned for, and he's a wottah, if you like, a boundah of the vewy worst descwip-tion!"

"Who's that?" questioned Carton, coming out of a reverie with a start.

"Howwid lout of the name of Logan. Larry Logan, he calls himself, and he's a big, bullying Modern waggamuffin."

"A bully, eh?"

"Yaas, wathah! He's the beastly bully of St. John's!"

Half an hour later the train ran into the little wayside station of St. John's, from which the distant towers of the old college bearing that name might be discerned. It was a quiet little spot, and the station was about the sleepest Jim Carton had ever seen.

He and his companion were the only two passengers who alighted from the "local," for most of the fellows at the school had returned from the short Whitsuntide vacation the previous day, or early that morning. Carton had meant to enter the school on that day, too, but circumstances had delayed his arrival by a day. As for Bertie Bly, he made it an undeviating rule to always turn up at the college punctually a day late. He was under the impression that by so doing he lent himself additional importance in the eyes of his chums.

"Hi, portah!" called out Bly,

when the local train had departed, beckoning with his gold-knobbed cane to the sleepy-looking railway servant who was slowly trundling a trolley towards them. "Hi! stir your beastly stumps, can't you, my man! Buck up, for goodness' sake! I say, don't huwway yourself, will you, deah old son?" he continued, with heavy sarcasm. "I mean, don't get into a beastly perspewation on my account, you know."

"Luggage?" queried the porter, dismally.

"No, my twaps came on by the other twain an hour ago. But I want you to kindly twolley my top-pah out to the fly. It is too hot to weah it upon my beastly head."

"Your whatter?" inquired the porter.

"My toppah!" hooted Bertie. "My top-hat, deah old coon. Take it out to the fly upon your twolley, and then come back for my fwien'd's luggage. And do buck up, if you want the bob I was going to givo you."

Bertie had taken his shining silk hat from his head the while he spoke, and placed it with great care upon the empty trolley.

"There you are, my deah man! Sheer off, and give it to the dwivah of the school fly. He's outside somewhere, I know, because I wired for him to meet me."

With a dejected shrug of his shoulders, the porter trundled Bertie's tall hat along the platform towards the station entrance, through which he disappeared from view. He returned, however, in the course of a few minutes for Carton's port-manteaux, and the two corded and rather dilapidated-looking tin boxes which the guard had tumbled out upon the platform a little while ago. These latter the Toff of the Fourth eyed a little askance, though he took care to conceal the fact from the fresher at his side.

"It would be a vewy excellent plan, deah boy," he remarked, what time the porter was loading his trolley with Carton's baggage, "if you had your bully twunks and things sent on to the coll. a little later."

"Why?" queried Carton, growing rather red in the face.

"Because, deah boy, there isn't woom for them," replied the other, promptly, "unless we have two frys. Bettah have 'em sent up after. Much more comfy, don't you think?"

"Oh, all right," agreed Carton, rather reluctantly, as though he were possibly considering the double expense this arrangement would naturally entail. "Send them up to St. John's School by-and-by," he added, turning to the porter and slipping some coppers into his hand.

"Did you give my toppah to the dwivah of the school fly?" inquired Bertie.

"Yes, sir," growled the other.

"All right. Cheer up, old son. Here's your bob, and do for goodness' sake go and make a beast of yourself somewhere with it. It'll do you good. Nothing like a little dissipation for bucking a fellah up when he's pippy. Go and buy some giddy gingah-beer, and—Hallo! what the blazes is that?"

Hoots and yells had suddenly arisen from beyond the station wall, coupled with shouts of defiance and howls of execration.

"Chuck it over, Jinks!"

"Pass it, Jack!"

"Forward!"

"Let go, Fred Manvers!"

"Gimme that topper, or I'll dot you on the boko!"

"Yah-boo!"

"Well kicked, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Carton turned to his companion.

"What's that?" he questioned.

But Bertie Bly had, apparently, not heard the question. He was standing with his legs apart, his gold-knobbed cane held stiffly in one hand, and an extended shilling in the other, his head turned in a listening attitude meanwhile, and an expression of frozen horror depicted on his face.

"I do believe," he gasped out, "that something is happening to my toppah. I heah some howwid Modern cads outside, though I can distinguish the voices of my deah pals, Manvers and Tubby Bouncer, too. Come on deah boy," he added, breathlessly, grasping Carton's arm and hurrying him towards the exit doors. "Come on, and wemember, if there's a fight with those wotched Modern boundahs, sock into 'em for all you're worth for the honnah of the Ancients!"

His words were almost drowned by the hoots, yells, and shouting which emanated from outside the station. Darting forward and bursting through the station doors, Bly, closely followed by Carton, dashed out into the open.

CHAPTER II.

A PAINFUL PREDICAMENT.

A STRANGE sight met their gaze. Half a dozen boys were fighting like fury in a knot about a landau outside the station entrance, the driver of which vehicle was standing up in his seat, watching the fracas with huge delight expressed in every line of his rubicund face. Upon catching sight of Bly, however, he switched off his expression to one of intense indignation and solicitude.

"I am very sorry, sir," he called out, addressing Bertie, "but the young varnints climbed up and snatched your hat before I could stop 'em, and—"

"Aha!" hooted Bertie, putting

his hand to his head and staring distractedly at the juniors engaged in the fracas before him, "I knew it was my toppah. Oh, you beastly, howling wottahs!"

A glance was sufficient to show Carton that, in truth, the cause of the lively melee now taking place in the middle of the road was a dilapidated silk hat, at which both contingents tugged and tore for possession. Suddenly it flew up in the air, brimless and concertina-shaped, and as it descended to terra-firma again, one of the boys met it with a drop kick, which sent it whizzing up again to the accompaniment of howls of laughter from the rest.

Bertie rushed forward, and springing up towards the again descending hat, caught it on the end of his cane, which, however, passed completely through it.

"Oh, you wottahs, you toads, you beastly Modern cads!" he shrieked. "You've utterly wecked my toppah! How beastly cwuel of you!"

"Why, it's Bertie in the flesh!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We didn't know you were around, sonnie."

"Awfully sorry, Bertie. We didn't know it was yours."

"Liahs!" stormed the Toff of the Fourth, almost weeping as he regarded at arm's-length his mutilated headgear. "Liahs! You knew vewy well it was my toppah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fweddy Manvers, how came you to let those beastly boundahs gain possession of my toppah?"

The question was indignantly addressed to a boy who, flushed and breathless with his late exertions, was standing near at hand.

"Sorry, old kid," he replied, grinning from ear to ear, "but we couldn't help it. These wasters knew you were coming, and got here before we did. That's how it happened."

"We fought like billy-o for it," put in an exceedingly fat boy, who was standing at the speaker's side, mopping his streaming brow, "but they'd already given it the kybosh, so it wasn't much use, anyway."

"Last quawtah they wecked and wuined fourteen of my toppahs," cried the outraged Bertie, sending his cranium-cover flying over the hedge with a savage kick, "and now, upon the wewy first day of my awwival, they start their giddy nonsense again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The shout of laughter emanated from three other boys, who were standing across the road with their hands thrust into their trouser-pockets, and their faces wearing expansive and expressive grins. These three were Silas Jinks, the American, Jack Joyce, and the Scotch lad, Archie Bruce. The trio were all Moderns at St. John's, and the particular rivals and deadly enemies of Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly, Fred Manvers, and Tubby Bouncer, the two "Ancient" juniors, who were now standing at Bertie's side.

"You can laugh, you wottahs!" hooted Bertie, almost beside himself with rage, "but we'll soon make you gwain upon the other side of your beastly faces!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Come on, deah boys. We must give these outsiders a howlin' hidin'. Come on, Fweddy; come on, Tubby; and come on, what's-your-name. You're a beastly pwspective Ancient, you know, so you've got to help us wipe these wasters off the earth."

"School-house, forward!" shouted Manvers.

"Down with the Inmates!" yelled Tubby Bouncer.

And with that the three dashed ahead, and fell upon the Modern trio tooth and nail.

For an instant Jim Carton hesi-

tated, not knowing exactly what to do. But seeing that Bertie Bly was now wrestling breast to breast with Silas Jinks the tall American member of the Modern trio, and moreover decidedly getting the worst of it, he sprang forward to the rescue of his late companion, and in a few moments succeeded in tripping the Yankee up and bringing him heavily to the ground.

"That's the beastly ticket, deah boy!" gasped the delighted Bertie, upon whom, unfortunately, both Silas Jinks and Carton had sprawled. "Give the blighter socks, and kick his giddy twousers!"

"Pax!" roared Jinks, as, assisted by Bertie, Carton began to pummel the American junior right and left. "Pax, you duffers! I guess I've had all I want just now. Get off ny chest and stop your punching, or I reckon I'll get real mad!"

"Is it pax all round, deah boys?" inquired the Toff of the Fourth of Jack Joyce and Archie Bruce, who, gasping and panting, now reposed comfortably upon their backs in the dusty road, with Fred Manners and Tubby Bouncer sprawling upon them.

"Yes. Chuck it!"

"Right-o! We give you best."

"Blow out at the tuck-shop if we let you up without a welting," stipulated Tubby Bouncer, with whom food of any description was the be-all and end-all of existence.

"Yes, all right, you greedy bounder. Anything you like, only get off my chest!"

The Ancient juniors released the Modern trio after a few more words of parley, and then Jim Carton, grimy and covered with dust from his wrestling bout with Silas Jinks, was introduced all round.

"These three wottahs are not a bad set of wasters on the whole," remarked Bertie Bly to Carton, when the ceremony of presentation

had been performed, "but, all the same, you must nevah on any consideration show them quartah."

"I guess we'd better get a move on to the tuck-shop," said Silas Jinks. "Tubby Bouncer's looking real starved."

Tubby nodded vigorously, blowing out his fat cheeks like miniature balloons.

"That's where you hit the giddy nail on the head, Jinky, old son," he replied. "Barring a couple of pork-pies, a howling jam puff, and half a pound of chocolates, I've had hardly anything since dinner!"

"Oh, I say, deah boy, what a feahful shame!" sympathised Bertie, taking his friend's arm. "You weally must be on the last verge, abso. Come and fill up, old fellah, at these wottahs' expense. Dwivah, guide your somnamulistic quadwupped to the beastly village tuck-shop."

Picking up his gold-knobbed cane from the road, Bertie hopped into the open fly, while Fred Manners and Tubby Bouncer climbed in after him, shutting the door behind him with a bang.

"Drive on," commanded Manners addressing the driver. "Get on with the washing, old son. "What are you waiting for?"

"Ain't the other gents coming?" grinned the driver, glancing at Silas Jinks, Joyce, and Archie Bruce, who were at the moment busily engaged in knocking the dust from their clothes.

"No bally feah!" exclaimed Bertie, indignantly. "What next, I wondah? We can't publicly associate with feahful wottahs like that. Get a move on, deah boy. These cweatures 'll have to walk."

"I guess not!" ejaculated Silas Jinks, making a dive for the landau as it moved away.

"Not blooming likely!" hooted Archie Bruce.

"Hear us chuckle!" supplemented Jack Joyce.

The door of the fly was flung open, and, despite a strenuous resistance upon the part of the occupants, the Moderns had soon comfortably ensconced themselves in the vehicle.

"Here, I say, take your beastly feet off my beastly twousers, can't you?" howled Bertie, as Jinks placed his large and dusty "sevens" languidly upon the immaculately-creased nether garments of Marmaduke Percival. "You're howwibly impolite, Jinky; but then, that's only to be expected from a beastly Modern cad. I must weally request you once again to kindly wemove your twotters from my twousers."

"You jest go and chew coke, Egbert!" grinned the American, pushing his feet up against the Toff of the Fourth's brand-new fancy waistcoat.

The next moment, however, he had drawn his knees up to his chin with a yelp.

"Oh! ow!"

"Serve you jolly well wight, deah boy, for being so beastly familiah!" said Bertie, flourishing the small open penknife which Tubby Bouncer had thoughtfully passed. "Do you take me for a bally door-mat or a giddy shoeblack?"

At this moment Fred Manvers and Archie Bruce rolled out of the vehicle, locked in a deadly embrace, a fierce and sudden dispute having arisen as to which of the two should have the honour of occupying the corner seat facing the driver.

"Hil lower the bally boats! There's some beastly men over-board!" hooted Bertie.

"Look 'ere, young gents," growled the driver, twisting round on his seat, "'ow much longer are you going to keep me 'anging about?"

"Wats, deah boy! You just pull in your fiewy, untamed, funeral wacer half a mo', and shut your

silly face, unless you are clamouring for an elongated eye-ball!"

With a snort of mingled indignation and disgust the driver reined up his steed, and turned upon his box to witness the fight which was taking place in the middle of the road between Manvers and Bruce, who were rolling about in the dust, panting loudly and breathlessly, threatening dire reprisals the while the occupants of the waiting vehicle stimulated them with encouraging shouts of approval.

"Go it, Archie!"

"Dot him on the twunk, Fweddle, deah boy!"

"That's right, biff him, Bruce!"

"Down with the Ancients, wasters!"

"Herroo, the Moderns!"

The wrestle in the road, however, came to a termination as suddenly as it had begun, for each of the two combatants, having succeeded in getting a grip upon the other's throat, made further resistance impossible upon either side. It was ten minutes, however, before the antediluvian fly moved off once more in the direction of the little village of St. John's—St. Jack's, as it was universally called by the three hundred boys of the college—which lay a little more than a mile beyond.

Entering the little winding village street, the landau eventually pulled up outside a small shop, in the window of which were displayed innumerable kinds of comestibles and sweetmeats, in addition to greengroceries, bags of flour, and ropes of onions. There were even a few masks and false noses displayed for sale, the surplus stock left over from last November. It was the "all sorts" shop of the hamlet, and was presided over by two maiden ladies, Miss Hannah Ramsbothom and Miss Anabel Ramsbothom respectively.

Miss Hannah Ramsbothom, the

elder of the two sisters, bore an implacable enmity towards the fellows of St. John's; while Miss Anabel, on the contrary, rather enjoyed their turbulent visitations.

It was opposite this little store that the school fly with its seven occupants now pulled up. As the juniors stepped out of the vehicle, however, they were greeted loudly by a crowd of fellows, wearing the collegiate caps, who came streaming out of the tuck-shop door directly the landau came to a halt.

"Why, it's Bertie—Bertie, the Bounder!"

"How dare you call me a boundah, you beastly Modern wottah!"

"And Tubby Bouncer, come to lead up as usual!"

"Rats!" retorted Bouncer, striding through the crowd.

"Clear the way!" shouted Manvers. "We've defeated three of your rotten gang, and now they've got to stand treat."

"Where's Bertie's topper?" one of the fellows inquired, and immediately a score of throats voiced the same query.

"My toppah has fallen into the hands of the beastly Philistines, deah boys!" asseverated Bertie Bly, likewise shouldering his way towards the tuck-shop door.

"Meaning us, my smarties," explained Silas Jinks, the long-legged American junior. "We had a rattling five minutes of footer, and I kicked a darned goal before Marmaduke Percival came upon the scene."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Bertie!"

"Pway cease your howlin' and cacklin'!" said Bertie, frigidly, turning round at the entrance of the shop and regarding the crowd with a haughty stare. "The conduct of Jirkey, Joyce, and Bwuca in using my toppah for footah was wude and wepwehensible in the extweme.

I wegard their conduct with scorn and spurnery!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bertie disappeared into the tuck-shop, his face almost as red as his hair with suppressed indignation.

"For some weason or other which I cannot compwehend, those jossahs seem to imagine that it's funny to kick my toppah into wibbons!" he growled.

"Say, Bertie, don't make me smile; I've got a cracked lip," said Jinks.

The American gave the Toff of the Fourth a terrific biff in the rear with his knees as he spoke, which had the effect of precipitating the young scion of the noble house of Bly into the tuck-shop upon all-fours.

"Oh, I say, Jinkey, look heah, stash that wotten horse-play!" cried the exasperated Marmaduke Percival.

The fellows came crowding back into the shop again, surrounding the seven new-comers upon every hand.

"Say, boys," said Jinks, "these blighters got the darned drop on us a little while since, so we've got to stand the whack of tuck in consequence. But I've got a giddy notion regarding this treat of ours which is going to do 'em a darned power of good. Lay hold of 'em, sonnies!"

The command was no sooner given than carried into effect, for Bertie Bly, Tubby Bouncer, and Manvers were instantly seized by a score of ready hands, and held in a grip of iron, which fate likewise fell to the lot of Jim Carton a moment later, when Jack Joyce and Archie Bruce pointed him out as being a prospective Ancient.

"Heah, I say, deah boys, what does this wude, wough tweatment mean?" gasped Bertie, struggling frantically in the hands of his captors. "Lemme go!"

"What's the giddy jape?" howled Tubby. "Leggo, can't you?"

"Rescue here, Ancients!" cried Manvers, glancing about him desperately. "Rescue, school-house!"

"Yes, wescue!" shouted Bly, kicking out right and left. "Wescue!"

"I calculate there ain't going to be any rescuing this journey," grinned Silas Jinks. "We're all Moderns here present."

The three Ancient juniors groaned in unison.

"Oh, my beastly word!" murmured Bertie, glaring round from face to face of his grinning captors. "We are in the hands of the wotten Philistines!"

"Bilked, done, dished, and giddled!" remarked Tubby Bouncer, alliteratively.

"Of all the rotten luck——" growled Manvers.

The latter's remark was certainly very applicable to the circumstances, for, by a strange coincidence, the crowd of fellows who now occupied the tuck-shop were composed entirely of Modern boys, who had come down en masse after third school. There was not a single Ancient present among them.

"Say, Miss Hannah, we'll just trouble you for a few lemons, if there are any hanging round. Darned sour ones, too, if you please. And if you've got any rotten oranges as well, yank 'em over. I'm a buyer."

"I wish you boys would make a little less noise," remarked the elder Miss Ramsbotham, with a sniff, opening a drawer full of lemons as she spoke. "The racket and din you make almost deafens me at times."

"You jest stand yourself a penn'orth of cotton wool at my expense, Miss Hannah, and bung it in your earholes whenever we're around," retorted the Yankee, in his most uncompromising New York drawl.

"Are you trying to be rude, Master Jinks?" inquired the old dame, tartly.

"Never let it be said, ma'am. What about the lemons?"

"Here they are. Two a penny."

"That's the ticket. Now yank out any old oranges you want to get rid of cheap. And you might let us have a penn'orth of mustard and pepper and a little vinegar, and any other old thing you want to get rid of as well."

While the irate and elder Miss Ramsbotham had gone in search of the things enumerated, Silas Jinks cut some of the lemons up into slices.

"Now, then, sonnies," he grinned, turning to Bertie Bly and Co., "open your little fairy chops and prepare to receive the first course. Lemons are darned good, I can tell you, for tickling the palate."

"Heah, I say, Jinkey, don't be a giddy thistle-shifter!" expostulated Mamaduke Percival, drawing back from the juicy and dripping slice of lemon which the American was holding out before his nose. "Take the wotten thing away!"

"Rats, sonny! you've got to chew it right here. It's our treat—ain't it, kids?—and we're going to do you proper or bu'at!"

"I don't want to be done pwooper, as you ungwamatically expwess it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I absolutely wefuse to chew your beastly lemon—oo! ooch! oh! ow!"

Jack Joyce and Archie Bruce had suddenly applied their fingers to Bertie's ribs, with the result that, when the Toff of the Fourth emitted a yell of laughter, the dripping slice of cruelly sour lemon was thrust instanter into his mouth, which latter was immediately closed by the hands of his captors and held firm.

"Serve 'em all alike!" commanded Jinks. "This is going to be a durned

circus, or my name ain't Silas Horatio."

In less than a minute the ill-fated Ancient juniors were gasping and spluttering and screwing up their faces as they were perforce compelled to assimilate the slices of lemon which, despite their utmost endeavours to prevent it, were eventually thrust between their teeth.

"Next course — ice-cream!" grinned the Yankee. "When I give a banquet in honour of my friends, I always reverse the general order of things. Ices first, soup last. Just trot out four tuppenny ice-creams, ma'am."

In a few moments the ices were forthcoming, and in less time than it takes to tell, the first of them had been carefully emptied down 'he back of Bertie's neck.

"Oh! ooh! ow—yah!" shrieked Marmaduke Percival, as the freezing cream trickled down his back. "Oh, you howwible, wretched wuffians! Won't I make you sweat for this! Oh, you beasts!"

The other three captives fought like furies to escape the second course of the impromptu "feed" given in their honour, but entirely without avail. For, struggle as they might, the ices were forced down their collars.

Their troubles, however, had only just begun, as the four Ancients realised to their cost when, under the direction of the grinning Jinks, their captors compelled them to swallow several spring onions covered in mustard, a few chocolate creams doctored with cayenne, four kipper-tails soaked in vinegar, and, finally, the dregs of half a dozen dusty gingerbeer bottles—"to wash it all down," as Jinks said.

The quartet had rebelled and fought fiercely against the kipper-tails, but a few pins-well applied in the tenderest portions of their various anatomies eventually had the desired

effect, with the result that the four doubtful delicacies in question disappeared down the throats of the four hapless and indignant school-house boys after due persuasion.

"Now, sonnies," said Silas Jinks, when the dregs of the last gingerbeer bottle had been drained, "you must be getting along to the school—that is, of course," he added, earnestly, "if you think you've had quite enough. Bertie, can I tempt you with another ice or kipper's tail—"

"Shut your face, you howling wottah!" retorted Marmaduke Percival, savagely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The delighted crowd of onlookers gave vent to a roar of merriment, which sounded like a veritable thunderclap in the little tuck-shop.

"I guess Tubby Bouncer ain't quite satisfied, though," continued the Yankee. "Tubby, another squashed tomato, or a rotten orange? Surely you can manage just one more!"

"You go and eat coke, you beast!" almost screeched the infuriated Tubby. "I shall be ill in a confounded moment!"

Fred Manvers said nothing, but there was that in his eye and the grim curl of his lip which spoke plainly enough of inward plans and resolutions for revenge in the near future.

Jim Carton, the fresher, was in the meantime undergoing the throes of mingled indignation and shame. To be caught and treated like this upon the first day of his arrival was as gall and wormwood, and whips and scorpions to him. At the same time he had the common sense to regard the whole affair as a practical, if singularly unpleasant, joke. Like Manvers, he was determined to go through with the jape with as much dignity as he could muster under the circumstances, and to wait patiently for a chance to "take it

out" of his present captors with compound interest as soon as opportunity offered.

"Well, dear boys, if you're quite satisfied, if you're really quite sure you've had enough prog for the present, we'll see you as far as the coll," said Jinks. "In fact," he added, with a grin which extended literally from ear to ear, "we'll see you to the schoolhouse. Miss Ramsbothom, kindly permit me to purchase a dozen yards of box-ropes and a bag of flour."

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTOR IS AMAZED.

In the meantime, Sam Hake, the driver of the school fly, was becoming impatient. Shouts of intermittent laughter came wafted through the tuck-shop doors from time to time, but no sign of his fares was vouchsafed until he had been awaiting their advent for nearly half an hour.

Then suddenly the doors were flung open, and a stream of fellows came tumbling out, shouting with laughter and making the air hideous with war-whoops and caterwauling.

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed the jehu. "What the—who the— Haw, haw, haw!"

The worthy Sam Hake's burst of merriment was to be accounted for by the fact that four strange figures had at that moment emerged from the tuck-shop, four figures which his instinct told him were none other than those of Messrs. Bertie Bly, Tubby Bouncer, Fred Manvers, and the new boy, Jim Carton. We say instinct advisedly, because had Sam Hake not possessed that useful quantity he would certainly have never recognised the quartet; for Bertie Bly and his three friends had undergone a strange metamorphosis since they had entered the tuck-shop half an hour previously.

Each of the Ancients was now completely encased in a large sack, in which holes had been made for their arms. Their wrists, however, were bound behind them with twine, while the tops of the sacks had likewise been secured about their four respective necks. Their faces, moreover, were utterly unrecognisable, owing to large quantities of flour with which their features and hair had been plentifully daubed. The four boys presented an additionally ludicrous appearance in that their faces had been adorned each with a long false nose, while they were compelled to hop and hobble along on account of the sacks which encased their feet.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Sam Hake. "They be funny 'uns to look at, upon my sowl! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Shut up, you wotten idiot!" expostulated the voice of Marmaduke Percival Egbert from beneath the long, curling paper nose which had been carefully affixed over his own aquiline proboscis. "Shut up, you beastly wearing bull!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Now, then, sonnies, in you hop!" commanded Silas Jinks, "and be quick about it. We're waiting."

Despite their protestations and wild threats of vengeance to come, the prisoners were bundled neck and crop into the open vehicle, amid the jeers and ribald laughter of the crowd, which now composed a goodly number of villagers as well.

"Look heah, deah boys," wailed Bertie, in accents of extreme suffering, "I beg you to welcase me—I weally must beg you to welcase me I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not jolly well goin' to let us go up to the beastly coll. in this feahfully outwageous and disgustin' condition?"

"He, he, he!"

"I don't know how we can do it, Bertie."

"Poor old Marmaduke!"

"It's extremely ewel of you, and I—"

"Go on, Sam. Get on with the washing!" commanded Jinks.

"Look here, young gents," replied the driver, mopping his eyes with a red handkerchief, "I ain't going to drive those young fellers hup to the school like that, you know."

"Rodents!" said Jack Joyce. "Get a move on, and be sharp about it, Sam, or you'll get a giddy turnip at your napper!"

"Rather!" chipped in Archie Bruce. "Do as you're told, Samuel, unless you want an enlarged ear or a swollen eyebrow."

"Quite right, old crow," supplemented Silas Jinks, with a nod. "Tickle up the gee, and don't go too quick, 'cause we're walking behind."

Sam Hake eyed the score or so of fellows gathered about the vehicle with mingled distrust and alarm. The most cursory glance was sufficient to show him that they were all well provided with cabbages, carrots, turnips, and onions, which vegetables they held in their arms, and which overflowed their jacket-pockets.

"Well, don't blame me if there's a rumpus, that's all," he growled, jerking the reins. "If the 'ead-master 'appens to twig these 'ere boys behind I'll look to you to explain that I'd nowt to do with it, mind."

"That's all right, Sammy. Buck along."

Growling and grumbling beneath his breath, the driver whipped his horse into a shambling trot. The vehicle with its four fuming and raging prisoners began to move along the High Street, while the crowd of boys followed in a noisy battalion behind, striding along four abreast in a rapid march, what time they

peppered the Ancient quartet with the vegetable missiles which they had bought up wholesale from the tuck-shop a few minutes since.

The beginning of the High Street, the spot where the Misses Ramsbothom's shop was situated, had been comparatively deserted, being as it was merely the entrance to the little village of St. John's. Upon turning a bend in the thoroughfare, however, they came upon villagers, a score or so, who stopped and stared and guffawed loudly at the strange spectacle presented to their gaze by Messrs. Bertie Bly and Co. Children playing in the roadway shrieked with delight and clapped their hands, while the proprietors of the various little shops which lined the diminutive street rushed to their doors under the impression that a circus was passing, or about to pass.

And when the fly had gone by they laughed anew as their gaze fell upon a large placard of white cardboard which had been affixed to the back of the vehicle, and which, roughly printed in blacking, bore the legend:

"FOUR ANCIENT ASSES!"

A crowd had now begun to gather from every direction of the hamlet, making a procession behind the fly. Hoots and yells of derision filled the evening air upon every hand, mingled with burats of uproarious laughter as Bertie Bly sprang to his feet from time to time and hurled insult and invective at the army of Moderns behind, and by so doing providing additional amusement for the hugely delighted throng of villagers around.

At first Sam Hake had attempted to clear the village by whipping his horse into a gallop, but the long-legged Silas Jinks had soon put a stopper on that ruse by seizing the nag's bridle and walking beside it for the rest of the way.

"Holy smoke!" chuckled Archie Bruce, as the cavalcade at length

hove in sight of the school-gates, "we shall get into the howlingist row over this!"

"Oh, hang the shindy!" laughed Joyce. "The jape was too good to be missed, whatever the giddy consequences."

"Rather!"

At the quadrangle gates Sam Hake pulled up, while Jinks and half a dozen Modern boys dragged the four Ancient juniors out of the fly and bundled them through the entrance.

"For goodness' sake, deah boys, undo us before we're spotted!" wailed Bertie Bly, hanging back with all his might. "I beseech you, chappies, as a gentleman, to welsease us. Please welsease me at once!"

"No beastly bally feah; not for all the gold in the beastly bally Indies, deah boy!" mimicked Archie Bruce, while the crowd shouted with laughter.

"You wottahs! you beastly cad! you howwible bundahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bung 'em in, Jinkey!"

Utterly regardless of threats and entreaties alike, the grinning Modern juniors thrust their four hapless prisoners by main force into the quad.

Unable to walk because of the sacks which enveloped them, the quartet of Ancients were compelled to hobble or hop forward every step of the way, to the unspeakable delight of the villagers. The thick coating of flour which covered their features mercifully concealed their blushes of shame, though their grunts and groans of anguish were audible even upon the outskirts of the crowd.

Fortunately for their dignity, the quadrangle happened to be deserted at the present moment, for it was tea-time, and the fellows were enscoured in their various studies almost to a man.

"Look here, you fellows," expos-

tulated Manvers, between his close-set teeth, "let us go! Your confounded jape's gone far enough. Chuck it, before we all get nabbed."

"And be quick about it, you cad!" stammered Tubby Bouncer, wrenching savagely at the cords which tightly secured his wrists together behind him.

"Yaas, wathah! For goodness' sake, deah boys, do let us fwee before we all get jolly well potted. Supposin' any of the beastly fellahs should see us in this utterly absurd wig-out—"

"Sorry, old kids, but it can't be did," grinned Jinks. "Can it, you chaps?"

"No fear!"

"Rather not!"

"Come on," cried Manvers, in a low tone to the other three prisoners, "we must get to our study somehow. If the chaps see us in this condition we shall be the laughing-stock of the place for the rest of the half. Buck up! Don't waste a moment!"

"Yes, that's the ticket," assented Tubby, leaping forward in his sack. "Buck up, Marmaduke, and follow your giddy leader!"

"Wight-o, deah boy, I'm coming!"

As Manvers had said, there was nothing else for it but to get to the shelter of the schoolhouse as soon as possible the best way they could. And the only way to reach that haven of safety was by making a series of frantic hops, hobbles, and jumps across the quad. And anything more utterly ludicrous than the spectacle the four Ancient juniors presented as they proceeded to carry out this plan could hardly be imagined. With their faces and hair bedaubed in flour, their long, artificial noses painted red, and their ungainly movements, they might well have been four strange and uncanny creatures conjured up by a troubled dream.

Again and again the assembled

villagers made the quadrangle ring and echo with peals of laughter as they watched the frantic endeavours of the Ancients to reach the school-house upon the other side ere their friends within should spot them.

"Oh, you cacklin' hyenas!" hooted Bertie Bly. "If I had my way, I'd have you all boiled in beastly oil! Wathah!"

"Get on, ass!" cried Manvers.

"Hurry up, or we're dished!" Spurred to renewed efforts, the quartet took longer and more frantic leaps forward than before, with the result that more than once they toppled over en masse and measured their length upon the ground.

Instead of invoking more bursts of laughter from the spectators, however, their misfortunes were now greeted with silence, a strange and unaccountable silence, difficult to understand.

"Well, thank goodness they've shut off their cacklin'," grunted Marmaduke Percival. "Anything more utterly exasperating than their bwaying, I can't imagine!"

With bended heads, their eyes fixed intently upon the ground to judge the distance of each successive jump, the quartet proceeded diligently in their endeavours to reach the school-house in time to avoid discovery.

"We shall do it!" panted Tubby Bouncer. "The chaps are all at tea."

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped Bertie. "We can hop up the stairs all right, if only——"

Biff!

The Toff of the Fourth never finished the sentence; for, in taking a bigger leap than before, as he spoke, with his head down like the rest, he came into violent contact with an object which, when he picked himself up, he recognised with a gasp to be nothing more nor less than Dr. Dalton, the dreaded headmaster of St. John's himself!

"Oh, lor'!"

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

"Howlin' Jewusalem!"

The four hapless Ancients uttered the breathless exclamations simultaneously, and then stood speechless before the astounded Head, who, arrayed in the full splendour of cap and gown, a sheaf of examination papers clasped in his hand, was now staring in blank amazement at the four weird figures before him as though indeed he were regarding as many ghosts in broad daylight.

"W-w-what the—what does—who are you—and what on earth are you doing here?" he blurted out.

"It's a howling jape, sir—that is, I mean it's a lark," began Tubby Bouncer, breathlessly.

"A lark?" echoed the doctor, in an astounded voice. "Who are you? I don't understand. How dare you village boys enter the college quadrangle in this disgraceful manner? Be off with you at once!"

"We're weally not village boys, sir!" wailed Bertie. "We belong to the beastly coll.—I mean, I'm Bly, you know, sir."

The doctor started violently as he recognised the mellifluous, if at present somewhat excited, accents of Marmaduke Percival.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "Am I dreaming? Then who are you?" he added, turning to the other three.

In voices rendered husky with mingled anger and shame, Manvers and Tubby Bouncer made known their identity, and explained the presence of Jim Carton.

The doctor put his hand to his head as though he imagined he was still in the midst of a strange and terrible dream from which he might happily awake at any moment.

"Who—who is responsible for this—this absurd practical joke?" he inquired, at length. "Who, I say,

“tied you up like that and made such spectacles of you!”

No answer.

“Bly, Manvers, do you hear me speaking to you?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Manvers.

“Well, then, why don't you answer?”

“Well, sir, the fact is, it's—it's against our rules to—to peach.”

“Then you mean to say—you mean to tell me that this senseless jest was perpetrated by boys belonging to this college?”

Silence again.

“Upon my word, this is a nice state of things! What sort of impression do you suppose you have given this new boy of the college? Why, upon my word, the lad will imagine he has come to a lunatic asylum instead of one of England's most justly famous public schools!”

“Exactly what I thought, sir, when I first awwived myself,” murmured Bertie.

“Silence, sir!” thundered the indignant headmaster, shaking his examination papers almost fiercely in Marmaduke Percival's snowy-white countenance. “Silence, I say, and remove that absurd, that ludicrous—that—that disgraceful nose, sir!”

The doctor glared at the twelve-inch paper caricature which had been affixed to Bertie's natural organ, and which now jutted out for a foot or more, with an upward curl, giving the noble scion of the house of Bly an appearance, coupled with his flourey head, which can only be adequately described as amazing.

“Remove that nose immediately, I say!” repeated the doctor.

“I should be charmed to comply with your request, sir,” stammered the hapless Bertie, wrenching in vain at his tightly-bound wrists; “but, dash it, sir, I weally cannot weach the bally thing!”

The doctor relapsed into silence

for a moment as he regarded the four figures more closely. Then the humorous aspect of the question struck him forcibly, so that, despite his utmost efforts to retain a severe cast of countenance, the ghost of a smile flickered about his lips.

“Don't stop talking here,” he commanded. “I will interview you all by-and-by concerning the perpetrators of this senseless joke. Bly, come here a moment while I release your hands. Ah, here are some of your companions. They will perform that office for you instead. Explain the case to them, and get to your studies as soon as possible. Remain there until I send for you.”

With which the Head turned upon his heel and stalked majestically away, his not unkindly face twisted up in a smile which might even be described as a grin.

The companions to which the doctor referred were a mingled crowd of schoolhouse and Modern boys, who, attracted by the shouting at the quad gates some few minutes since, had now streamed out of their quarters to ascertain what was going forward. The Moderns who had escorted the Ancient quartet from the village tuck-shop vanished like magic from the quad gates directly the doctor had appeared upon the scene, and, slipping to another entrance, Silas Jinks, Jack Joyce, Archie Bruce, and the rest now joined the crowd of boys, comprising all sizes and class denominations, from juniors to members of the lordly Sixth, who had come running out of the school-house and Fuller's House opposite, the strongholds of the Ancient and Modern respectively.

Instead of helping the four hapless juniors out of their present predicament, however, the mingled crowd of Ancients and Moderns merely roared themselves hoarse with laughter when they discovered the identity of the quartet.

The personal friends of Messrs. Bly and Co. even failed to come forward with that neighbourly, not to say brotherly assistance and kindly aid which might have been expected of them under the circumstances. Indeed, they laughed and jeered at the sorry and ludicrous spectacle presented by the quartet as long and as loudly as anybody else, despite the mingled entreaties and threats of the latter.

Consequently, it was not until the four Ancient juniors had made their way in a series of indignant jumps from the quad into the hall of the schoolhouse, and from there up the staircase to the landing upon which their study was situated, followed meanwhile by a grinning rabble of fellows, that they were released by the house-master, who, drawn to the spot by the untoward hubbub, instantly came to the rescue.

CHAPTER IV.

LARRYMORE LOGAN, BULLY.

KNOWING as he did the keen rivalry, even enmity, which existed between the two sects of the college, Dr. Dalton had but little difficulty in guessing that some of the Modern juniors had been responsible for the unenviable plight of Bertie Bly and Co. He detested anything in the nature of blabbing, however, on the part of his boys; consequently, when he interviewed Bertie Bly and his three companions in misfortune later that evening, he did not press his inquiries too closely, though he caused an announcement to be at once put on the notice-board in the main corridor to the effect that any practical joke of a like nature which would tend to bring the college into ridicule would in future be severely dealt with.

Bertie Bly, Tubby, and Fred Manvers, however, naturally came

in for a good deal of chipping, which they parried as best they might. Jim Carton in the meantime occupied himself in making the small study which had been given him as presentable as his few belongings would permit. These comprised nothing more than a few well-bound, though faded, volumes, containing the works of his favourite authors, one or two pictures and photographs, an old-fashioned writing desk, and a folding bookcase of diminutive dimensions. But although the various articles in question had a somewhat meagre and even shabby appearance, they gave the small, barely-furnished room a cosy look.

Carton was in the midst of this occupation, when a Third Form fog strode into the room familiarly, and slapped a folded blue paper upon the study table, after which he vanished as quickly as he had appeared, leaving the door wide open behind him.

"Well, of all the dashed cheek!" growled the fresher, picking up the paper and kicking the door to with a bang. "I'll take particular care to clump that kid's head when I come across him again. What the dickens is this, I wonder?"

He opened the sheet of blue-tinted foolscap as he spoke, giving vent to a grunt of surprise as his gaze fell upon the following:

NOTICE.

"This is to give notice that you are required to attend the High Court of Inquiry held to-morrow afternoon at 4.30 in the Fifth Form Class-Room to answer all and sundry questions put to you by the Examiner-in-Chief.

The Court will be presided over by Larrymore Logan and a special jury. Any contempt of Court on your part will be dealt with severely, so do not fail to appear punctually before your judges at the time aforesaid.

"(Signed) LARRYMORE LOGAN,
Chief Justice."

"Phew!" grinned Carton, when he had read this epistle through twice, "another spree of these Modern chaps, I suppose. Well, I'll watch out that they don't take a rise out of me a second time."

At that moment there came a rap upon the study door, and Bertie Bly, Tubby Bouncer, and Fred Manvers came in. They had cleansed themselves of all traces of their late escapade, and had entirely changed their clothes.

"I say, you chaps, what does this paper mean?" inquired Carton, holding out the epistle he had received a few moments ago to his three new-found friends. "Another jape, eh?"

"By Jove!" remarked Marmaduke Percival, squinting down the page. "One of Logan's wheezes. You will have to be careful, deah boy."

"Careful? Why?"

"This chap Logan's the beastly belly of the coll. so far as we juniars are concerned, don't you know. I wathah fancy I mentioned the blightah's name to you in the twain this afternoon?"

Carton nodded.

"Yes, you did. But what about this notice? I oughtn't to turn up, ought I, seeing that it comes from the Modern side of the school?"

Manvers scratched his chin.

"You oughtn't to, of course," he agreed. "But you'd better, all the same."

"Don't see it."

"You'd feel it, though, if you didn't turn up."

"Why? What would happen?"

"I'm afwaid a good many things would happen, deah boy," put in Bly. "You see, if a fellah—a new fellah, you know—does'n attend these wotten Inquisitions which that wagamuffin Logan always gets up especially for his benefit, the boundah and his pals make things bowwibly unpleasant for him."

"Yes," said Tubby, "you'd better go, old son, and get through with it. New chaps usually do."

Carton laughed.

"Oh, I don't care a tuppenny toss so long as they don't come it too thick," he replied. "My only objection to complying with this command was that it came from the Modern side."

"Quite right, too," said Manvers. "By the Lord Harry, I'd like to see a new kid defy the edict of the great and only Logan, and that's a fact! I don't remember a fresher ever having successfully done it yet, though."

"Would it do our side any good if I refuse to go?" was Carton's next question.

"Oh, it would be weally wipping," assented Marmaduke. "I would show that waster Logan that we'd got a fweshah on our side at last who didn't care a wap for him or his measly gang of wottahs."

"Still, I shouldn't rile him, if I were you," warned Tubby, sitting on the edge of the table and swinging his fat legs to and fro. "He's a dashed nasty chap, is Logan, and if he's got a grudge up against you, life's not worth living in the coll."

"Oh, rats!" laughed Jim Carton.

"Yaas, wathah! Wats! That's pwcisely what I said to Logan myself when I first came to this beastly coll. two yeahs ago."

"Yes, and a dashed good hiding you got from him for saying it, you silly owl!" grinned Bouncer.

"I do wish, my deah Tubby, you would twy to wefwain fwom making wemarks like that. It's most annoyin'!"

"Dry up, cuckoo!"

"I de.cl.ine to be designated as a beastly cuckoo!"

"Oh, do close your face!"

"Weally, Tubby, you are forgetting yourself. Your expressions are low in the extweme."

"All right, Marmaduke. Pax. Do be quiet."

"Well, what's to be done?" queried Carton. "Shall I obey this injunction of your pet bully or not?"

"You'll get it in the neck if you don't," said Manvers.

"Well, what's the idea, anyway? What shall I be expected to do?"

"Goodness only knows. It all depends. Sometimes it's one thing, sometimes another. But you can bet your eyebrows it'll be something dashed unpleasant, whatever it is. The last school-house fresher had to swallow a tin of blacking mixed with treacle as a punishment for contempt of court, and—"

"By thunder," said Carton, with a savage grin, "I'm not on the bragging stakes, but I'd never do a thing like that!"

"That's pweicely what poor old Weggie Western said, deah boy. But he necked the beastly blacking all the same," put in Bly.

"Then he was a howling ass, that's all I have to say!" retorted Carton, warmly.

"Oh, no, he wasn't, old son," said Manvers. "Don't you believe it. But they gave him such a jolly ragging that he was obliged to give in, after hanging it out as long as he could."

Carton remained for a moment in thought.

"Well, I'm not going to attend this Larry Logan's precious Court of Inquiry, as he calls it, just because he likes to command me to," he said. "He can go and eat c'cke, and—"

"Bwavo, deah boy! Spoken like a beastly Bwiton!"

"You take my tip, Carton," said Manvers, seriously, "and go through with it. It'll pay you in the long run. Larry Logan's a cad to the finger-tips, and he'll make you smart in a hundred ways if you don't

knuckle under. He and his crew are all-powerful among the lower Forms."

"He and his crew can go to blazes!" rapped out the new boy. "I'm not going to be ordered about by a self-constituted bully like that. 'Tisn't likely. Wouldn't mind so much if Logan were a school-house chap."

"Bwavo, deah boy! You're a howlin'—"

"Oh, do shut up, Bertie!" cried Manvers.

"But to give in without resistance to a Modern bully is coming it a bit low down, in my opinion," concluded Jim Carton.

Bertie Bly's be-ringed hand shot out and gripped that of the fresher enthusiastically.

"You're a howlin' bwick!" exclaimed the Toff of the Fourth. "Weally, you do us pwoud. Pway permit me to invite you to a little convivial spweed in our diggings—study No. 5 in this cowwidor, don't you know. We've got some clinkin' gwub—haven't we, you kids?—and it's only wight and pwoper that you come and peck a bit in our company."

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on, Carton. You're one of us, you know, now."

Jim Carton bit his lip, and looked a little confused.

"I'm afraid it is I who ought to have provided a feed to-night," he said, slowly. "Sorry I didn't bring a hamper. I—I came away in rather a hurry from home, you know, and—and there wasn't time to pack one—I mean—well, the fact is, I forgot—"

The new boy ceased his stammered apology, and then glanced quickly from one to the other of his companions with a half-furtive, half-wistful look.

"My deah boy, what awful wot!" said the Toff of the Fourth, hur-

riedly. "One can't always remember to bring a hamper to the beastly coll. Can one, you chaps?"

"No fear."

"Of course not."

Saying which, the trio escorted the fresher to their own joint study half a dozen doors up the same passage. Here a spread had been laid, in which pots of jam, cake, pork-pies, and pickles were the predominant features.

"Jove! but you chaps do yourselves well, don't you?" laughed Carton. "What a rattling spread!"

"Oh, we're not always so well primed as this," said Manvers.

"No fear!" put in Tubby, ruefully. "Towards the end of the term we get beastly broke, I can tell you. Why, there have been occasions when I have been actually hungry and pining for food."

"Great Scotland Yard!" said Manvers, laughing. "I never knew you otherwise than hungry and pining for food, Tubb."

"No, wathah not! Howwid glutton and gourmand!"

"Oh, rats!" retorted Bouncer. "Come on, don't stand talking there. We're wasting time."

And Tubby thereupon drew up his chair, and plunged a knife and fork into a substantial-looking Watling which reposed upon a plate before him.

"Who says pie?" he murmured, ecstatically.

"Pie!" hooted the crowd, as they took their places about the festive board.

They had barely done so, however, when the door was thrown violently open, and a big, squarely-built boy with a red face and fishy-looking eyes, strode into the study with two more fellows at his heels.

"My eye!" he exclaimed, pulling up short and staring at the banquet. "Look at these blighters feeding, Gilks!"

Bertie Bly rose from the table and regarded the new-comer severely.

You are extremely wide to entah our study without pveiously knocking," he expostulated.

"What do you want, Logan?" inquired Manvers, glancing sharply at the bully's face.

Tubby Bouncer said nothing, but his gaze wandered anxiously over the viands upon the table.

"You shut up, Manvers, unless you're asking for trouble!" rapped out the bully of the Lower Forms. "For two pins we'd bone every bit of prog you've got!"

"Oh, lor!" gasped Tubby Bouncer, frantically seizing his portion of pork-pie with one hand and a jar of pickles with the other.

"But as we've just come from a feed ourselves, we'll let you off," continued Larry Logan, generously.

"Thanks, f'wightfully!" murmured Bertie Bly, with heavy sarcasm.

"Now, then, no sauco, Egbert!" put in Gilks, the bully's right-hand man.

"Wats to you!" retorted Mar-
duke Percival.

"I'm afraid we shall have to give Bertie another hiding," said Lee, the bully's second cronie. "The effect of the one we gave him last term appears to have worn off a bit. The blighter's as cheeky as ever."

While this dialogue had been in progress, Jim Carton had sat quietly regarding the bully of St. John's taking in the fellow's every detail. Larrymore Logan was somewhat loudly dressed in a check suit. His light hair was rather closely cropped, and was in strange contrast to his florid features, while he possessed a squat nose and a large, loose mouth. His chin, however, although heavy, lacked prominence. The boy was long-legged and long-armed, and from first to

last he looked exactly what he was—a hectoring bully where fellows smaller and weaker than himself were concerned, and a toady and sneak in his dealings with those in authority above him.

It was upon Jim Carton that Logan now turned his prominent, fishy eyes with an insolent stare.

"You're the chap I was looking for," he said, abruptly. "What's your name, kid?"

The question was delivered in his usual hectoring manner, and the new boy was quick to resent it.

"I'm Jim Carton," he answered, shortly. "What do you want with me?"

Logan glared at the speaker, while Gilks and Lee sniggered aloud.

"A cheeky pup, if'faith!" said the former.

"Likewise a saucy snipe," added Lee.

"Look here, my fine feller," remarked the bully, addressing Carton again. "You're a fresher here, and don't know better. But I warn you that if you don't answer me civilly in future when I choose to speak to you, you'll be presented with a first-rate specimen of a thick ear. Now, then, Mr. James Carton, do you know who I am!"

"I've heard about you," said the other, drily.

"Ah, then you're probably aware that it was I who sent you the notice to attend my Court of Inquiry to-morrow afternoon?"

"Yes," said Carton, quietly.

"Well, mind you turn up, then, or it will be the worse for you."

If Carton had had any doubt before as to whether he would obey the bully's injunction, that doubt was now resolved into a certainty by Logan's insolent manner of speaking.

"I shall do nothing of the kind," he answered, quickly.

"What?"

"I say I sha'n't come."

The bully burst into a laugh, which was echoed by his two satellites, Gilks and Lee.

"Won't come, eh? We'll see about that, my lad. Take my tip and turn up to the tick, unless you want to 'go through it.' That's all I have to say," added the bully, turning on his heel. "Remember, four-thirty sharp, or you'll be sorry."

And with that Larry Logan and the others strode from the room, leaving the door wide open behind them.

"Well, of all the howlin' waga-muffins I ever stwuck, commend me to yonder snipe!" exclaimed Marmaduke Percival, kicking the door to with a bang.

"Thank goodness he didn't make a raid on the grub!" remarked Tubby Bomicer, with his mouth full.

"Now, you see what sort of chap you've got to deal with, Carton," said Manvers. "What do you think of him?"

"Precious little," replied the fresher. "He's a big lout and full of bounce, but I'd stake anything he's as cowardly as a rat underneath it all. You can see that in his face. Shifty chap, too. Sort of fellow who'd do you for your last farthing if he could. Heaven help anyone who ever got in that blighter's power!"

"Bai-Jovo, deah boy, that just sums that wottah up in a couple of shakes!" remarked Bertie Bly. "You are an excellent judge of chawacter, Carton, old chappie."

"Well, what are you going to do about this Court of Inquiry to-morrow?" queried Fred Manvers. "Going?"

"Not a bit of it."

"You'd better."

"Wild elephants wouldn't drag me."

Manvers shrugged his shoulders.

"Right-o! Have it your own way. I am afraid you'll be sorry, all the same."

"I'll chance it," was Carton's reply. "By the way, you chaps," he added, "how is it this lout Logan and the other two are allowed over here in the school-house? They're all three Moderns, aren't they, and belong to Fuller's House? I thought——"

"Yaas, wathah, of course they're beastly Modern chaps, and they have no wight over heah whatevah. But the boundahs always come, all the same, whenever they bally well choose. It's weally disgustin' the way those three wottahs make themselves at home over heah."

"No, they're not supposed to come over to the school-house at all," supplemented Manvers; "but, bar some of the Sixth fellows, the chaps don't like to quarrel with Logan, you see."

"Holy smoke! You don't mean to say they're all afraid of him?"

"Not of him exactly; but he's got a strong clique of fellows about him who always back him up through thick and thin. The result is that any chap opposing Logan gets it in the back of the neck."

"It's a tewwible state of affairs," put in Bly, "and, 'pon my word, we ought weally to wise in webellion and put the absolute kybosh upon the blighter and his gang."

The four friends sat chatting for half an hour or so, and then Jim Carton got up to take his leave, after thanking the others for their hospitality. It being his first day at the school, he had no preparation to think of like the others had, but he had letters to write, he said. He had not left study No. 5 more than a couple of minutes, however, when he burst into it. His face was pale, and his eyes were blazing with anger.

"Hallo! what the dickens——"

"What's up?"

"What's the mattah, deah boy? Have you seen a beastly ghost?"

"I say, you chaps, come here a minute, will you?" said Carton, thickly. "Come and look at my study."

The others got up without a word, and quickly followed the new boy back to his room at the further end of the passage.

"Now, then," said Jim Carton, throwing open the door, "what do you think of that?"

"Thunder and lightning!"

"Holy smoke!"

"Howlin' Jewusalem!"

The three exclamations burst simultaneously from Bly, Manvers, and Tubby Bouncer as their gaze fell upon the interior of the room. When they had seen it half an hour ago the study presented an appearance of neatness and order. Now, however, everything in the place was thrown upside down and piled into the centre of the apartment in a heap. The walls had been dismantled of the few pictures which Carton had put up, and now lay smashed into fragments; ornaments, photographs, and books, the former broken, the latter torn, had been thrown about everywhere, while the old-fashioned writing-desk which had stood upon the study table had been broken open, and its contents scattered all over the floor.

"This is Larry Logan's work," said Fred Manvers, at last, breaking the pause which had fallen.

Jim Carton had become livid. His lips were pressed firmly together, and his eyes gleamed with a steely light.

"Is it?" he said, in a hard voice. "Then, by thunder, I'll make him pay for it dearly!"

CHAPTER V.

THE COURT OF INQUIRY, AND A CHALLENGE.

CONSIDERABLE curiosity was rife among the three friends, Bertie Bly, Bouncer, and Manvers, as to what would be the outcome of Carton's refusal to accede to Logan's command to attend his self-instituted Court of Inquiry. It was not the first time that a new boy had defied the bully's edict. Twice before, in their knowledge, new-comers to St. John's had had the temerity to do so, always, however, with disastrous results to themselves.

Consequently when, upon the following day, third school was over, Bertie and his friends made their way to the schoolhouse in search of Carton, who had miraculously disappeared directly the four o'clock bell had sounded.

"Find him in his study, I expect," said Manvers, as the trio crossed the quadrangle. "He said something about squaring his place up after Logan's ragging last night."

Near the schoolhouse they ran into Silas Jinks, Jack Joyce, and Archie Bruce, their three Modern rivals.

"Hallo, you cads—I mean, kids!" greeted Jinks, pulling up.

"Hallo, you rotten wasters," replied Manvers, cheerfully.

"Coming to the Court of Inquiry?" grinned the Yankee. "Old Logan's holding a 'cod' court in the Fifth room presently, for the benefit of the new chap who was with you yesterday. Comin'?"

"Yes, we shall be there, deah boy," said Bertie; "but I don't think the fwesher will."

"You don't say! Why not?" "He defies the beastly powers, deah boy."

"Silly ass!" said Jack Joyce.

"I kinder reckon he'll have to come whether he likes it or not," remarked Silas Jinks.

"Where are you going?" queried Bruce.

"Find out!" replied Tubby Bouncer, politely. "Go and eat coke!"

With which the schoolhouse trio, who felt pretty sore against Silas Jinks and Co. on account of the jape of yesterday, entered the schoolhouse and disappeared from view, leaving the Yankee and his two friends to wend their way to the Fifth Form classroom, where a crowd of juniors and Lower Form fellows were already beginning to congregate in anticipation of the entertainment which Bully Logan's court-martials invariably provided.

In the meantime, the three Ancient juniors had unearthed Jim Carton in his study, to which he had immediately repaired after third school with the express object of putting things to rights after the ravages made upon his sanctum by Logan, Gilks, and Lee upon the previous evening.

The boy had made no complaint to the Head or house-master upon the matter, as he might very excusably have done under the circumstances, but he was determined to repay the bully as soon as possible for smashing his pictures and destroying his books.

"Hallo, deah boy!" greeted Bly. "Thought we should find you heah. Come out into the fields for a bit, and permit me to give you a few beastly lessons in cwicket. I'm a battah and a bowlah of some wepute, and—"

"Here, draw it mild, Egbert," said Manvers. "You know you can't bowl for sour apples, or bat for toffee."

"My deah Manvers, I have nevah had occasion to bowl for sour apples or for toffee, either. To do so, I considah, would be widiculous in the extweme, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ring off, Egbert; you're too funny!"

"As a bowlah, I have always been considered——"

"Shut up, Marmaduke!"

"While, as a battah, you can't find my equal in the whole of the——"

"Lower Third Form, eh? Quite right, Percival!"

"My deah boy, generally speaking——"

"Yes, you are—generally speaking. I say, Carton, what do you say to coming down to the nets for awhile?"

"Right-o!" replied the fresher. "I'll come in half a mo. I think I've got this study pretty shipshape now, though I shall have to have those pictures glazed again—one day."

"It's a howling shame!" said Manvers, sincerely.

"S'pose it was Logan and Co. who did it, right enough?" questioned Tubby Bouncer.

"Of course it was, ass," said Manvers. "No one else in the coll. would do a dirty trick like that."

"Well, I'm going to fight him for it, anyway," said Carton, grimly.

"What!" cried Manvers, laughing. "Fight Logan?"

"My deah boy, are you milky on the beastly filbert?" queried Bertie, in alarm.

"Don't talk bosh, old son," said Tubby.

"Why shouldn't I fight him?" rapped out the fresher.

"Because, my dear fellah, he'd simply wipe up the beastly floor with you," replied Bly. "He's a giddy marvel with his dooks."

"I don't care, I'm not an infant at that game myself," growled Carton, reaching for his cap. "I haven't seen the cur since last night, but when I do run across him I shall chance my luck."

"Wats, my deah boy! I'm vewy much afwaid your nappah is inclined to wun away with your common sense. I weally——"

Marmaduke Percival did not finish the sentence, however, for at that moment there was a rush of feet along the passage outside, and then the study-door was thrown violently open, to admit a crowd of fellows, who streamed pell-mell into the room.

Carton whipped round with clenched fists.

"What the deuce——" he began.

But before he could utter another word he was roughly seized by a dozen hands and dragged towards the open door; and although the new boy struggled and kicked out right and left to release himself his efforts were of no avail.

"Let me go, you rotters!" he shouted, angrily.

"Yaas, wathah, let him go, you wough boundahs!" hooted Bertie, springing forward. "Wescue heah, deah boys. Down with the wotten Moderns!"

The other two needed no bidding, for even as Bertie Bly flung himself tooth and nail upon the rearguard of the invaders, they likewise dashed forward, hitting out at the enemy right and left in an attempt to rescue Carton, who was now being forced through the door.

A lively melee ensued with the rearguard of the marauders, who succeeded in beating back the three Ancients, what time the fresher was being conveyed willy-nilly along the corridor and down the schoolhouse staircase.

Fortunately for the success of the Moderns' bold plan of abduction, the Ancient stronghold was practically deserted, as it usually was after third school at this time of the year, boys and masters alike having taken advantage of the fine weather to repair to the adjoining meadows for cricket practice. Consequently Jim Carton was half-carried, half-dragged down the stairs and through the hall of the schoolhouse without challenge or

molestation, save from Bertie Bly, Fred Manvers, and Tubby Bouncer, who continued to harass the rear-guard of the attacking force unceasingly.

Flushed with mingled anger and shame, Carton was forced across the quad, until finally he found himself being pushed and dragged to the doors of the Fifth Form classroom, which was now crowded with fellows, mostly juniors, who set up a loud cheer at the fresher's appearance.

"Bravo!"

"Well bagged!"

"Bring him in!"

"That's the ticket!"

"Haul him up!"

These and a hundred other exclamations broke from the large gathering of Modern boys which filled the spacious classroom from end to end, and which, moreover, composed a very fair sprinkling of Ancients as well.

Seated at a desk upon the platform at the further end of the room was the feared and hated bully of St. John's, Larry Logan himself. He was attired in a scarlet tablecloth, which he wore about his shoulders in imitation of a judge's robe, while upon each side of him Gilks and Lee were seated, similarly attired. Beneath the desk a couple of forms had been arranged to hold a dozen Moderns representing a jury, while beyond them a space had been railed off by four more forms to constitute a "dock," into which Carton was now dragged. The rest of the room was occupied by the crowd of spectators.

"Close the doors!" commanded Larry Logan, in an authoritative voice.

The big oak doors of the classroom were shut-to and locked to prevent the entry of intruders. Bertie Bly, Bouncer, and Manvers, however, had slipped in before the order was given, and now stood squeezed up

against the wall by one of the classroom windows.

The bully of St. John's rose to his feet, and amidst the sniggers of the crowd he addressed the jury in a short speech, enjoining them to follow the case for the prosecution closely, but not to allow themselves to be unreasonably prejudiced against the prisoner, by what he termed "the disreputable appearance of the creature in the dock."

"Here, take your hands off, you louts!" broke in Carton, suddenly, wrenching himself free from his captors as he spoke. "I don't mind a joke, so long as you keep your maulers off my clothes!"

"Quite right—quite right," assented the judge. "Let the prisoner stand by himself."

"I'll settle my account with you by-and-by!" growled the fresher, between his closed teeth, glaring at Logan.

"Prisoner," replied the latter, gravely, "have a care that you do not commit further contempt of court, or it will be the worse for you. This court was founded for the purpose of making a judicial examination of freshers coming to this college that we might ascertain for the benefit and good of our select community whether or not they are fit and proper persons to mix with us. Now, prisoner," added Logan, "be prepared to answer, and truthfully answer, such queries as I see fit to put to you."

Another snigger ran round the room, and Carton shrugged his shoulders with an air of resignation.

"Now, then, prisoner, what's your name?" inquired Logan.

"Carton, of course."

"That's not the way to answer. The court requires your full name. What is it?"

"James Carton."

"What other names have you?"

"Oh, find out! Get on with the washing, and get this rot over!"

The judge shrugged his shoulders, and exchanged significant glances with the other judges each side of him.

"By answering in that disrespectful manner you are merely laying up a rod in pickle for yourself," he remarked, sententiously. "We punish contempt of court with the utmost severity. Now, then, attention, please. How old are you?"

"Fifteen and a half."

"H'm! Well, you're a big lout for your age, although you don't look particularly intelligent for your years. Next question, prisoner," continued the judge, pointing at Carton with a long cane which he had produced from somewhere behind the desk at which he was seated. "Have you a mother?"

"No."

"Then tell us: What is your father? You have a father, I suppose?"

The colour instantly left Carton's face, leaving it as pale as ashes.

"Here, I've had enough of this," he said, abruptly, and the next moment he had taken a couple of strides through the guard which surrounded him a few feet away upon either hand; but he got no further, for he was immediately pounced upon and dragged back into the "dock" again.

"How dare you attempt to leave the court?" demanded Logan, when the burst of laughter which had succeeded Carton's sudden manoeuvre had died down. "How dare you, sir, act in this outrageous and unprecedented manner? I am afraid we shall have to deal harshly with you. Now, I will repeat the question I asked you a moment since: Have you a father?"

"Yes," said the prisoner, sullenly.

"What is he? What is his profession, occupation, or trade? Is he

a duke or a dustman, a marquis or a milkman, a prince or a pawnbroker? Does he dabble in the Law, the Church, or in Art? Give us a full description of him and his doings, his profession, age, appearance, and approximate income."

"You can go to blazes!" retorted Carton, so savagely that even the judge was for the moment taken a little aback, while a chorus of shouts emanated from the densely-packed crowd around.

"Don't lose your temper, crackpot!"

"Pull yourself together, fresher!"

"Yaas. Don't get so beastly furious, deah boy!" warned Bertie Bly.

Dot the judge on the boko for his cheek!" called out Silas Jinks.

"Silence!" thundered Logan, standing up and bringing down his cane with a sounding slap on the desk before him. "Silence in court!"

"Wats!"

Logan turned upon the speaker furiously.

"For two pins I'd come down and break your neck, young Bly!" he remarked.

"Wats again, deah boy! Wats, wats, wats! Get on with the beastly washing!"

"Now, prisoner," resumed his lordship, sitting down again, "will you answer my question, or will you not? What, I ask you again, is your father?"

"Find out!"

"Ah, then, you still persist in replying in that insolent manner?"

"Oh, hurry up and get this rotting finished!" retorted the prisoner, ill-humouredly. "I've got something better to do than waste my time talking to a set of jackasses!"

The learned judge now called upon Edward Gilks, the counsel for the prosecution, who thereupon stated his case briefly and to the point.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the

jury," he began, "you see before you a creature whose depravity can only be adequately described as hopeless. From first to last there is not one single good point to be found in his favour. His strange entrance to the college yesterday, his colossal cheek and impudence, his refusal to answer the necessary questions put to him by his lordship, and, finally, his contempt of court, all go to show that the prisoner in the dock is a villain of the deepest dye, an irredeemable character who will go from bad to worse, until he sinks into the very mire of crime. Now, gentlemen of the jury, I leave his future in your hands. Shall such a man go free? No! Shall such a creature be permitted to leave this court without just punishment? No! Buck up, then, you silly jossers, and consider your giddy verdict."

At the conclusion of this eloquent burst of oratory, the counsel for the prosecution resumed his seat amidst the frantic cheers of the crowd.

"Lee, K.C., counsel for the defence!" called out the judge.

Whereupon the bearer of that name rose to his feet.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury," he said, "the prisoner's case is such a deplorably hopeless one that I feel it would be useless for me to attempt to utter a word in his defence. I can only trust that you will deal as lightly with him as your consciences will permit."

After which, amid renewed cheers, the counsel for the defence likewise resumed his seat, leaving the judge to address the jury.

"Gentlemen," said Logan, gravely, "the prisoner's guilt is as plain as a giddy pikestaff. Buck up! What's the verdict—guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty," replied the foreman of the jury, promptly.

"Prisoner at the bar," continued Logan, addressing Carton in his most impressive tones, "you have been

found guilty by twelve good men and true of the most heinous offences which it is possible to commit—namely, viz., and to wit, colossal saucy and impudence to myself. You have likewise been found guilty of contempt of court under no less than three counts. The sentence of the court is, therefore, that you shall receive 'socks on the trousers' and that I myself shall administer the same, here and now! Ably as your counsel has defended you, in spite, I say, of his wonderful oratory, we cannot find it in our hearts to believe you otherwise than a depraved and dangerous character. Therefore, the sentence of the court must be carried out to the full—that is, a baker's dozen with the cane upon that part of your person which is most befitted by Nature to receive corporal punishment!"

A murmur ran round the densely-crowded room, a murmur half-incredulous, half-expostulatory. The "sentences" usually passed on freshers by the bully of St. John's were, in the main, productive of amusement, the victim invariably coming out of the ordeal with his face painted a variety of colours, a stream of golden syrup trickling down his neck or plastered upon his head. Occasionally the new boy was compelled to eat or drink some concoction of an unpleasant nature, such as coal-dust and treacle, red ink and gingerbeer, and sometimes even less desirable mixtures. The last victim had been a Lower Fifth Form boy, who for openly defying the "court" had been forced to swallow half a tin of blacking. But Larry Logan's sentence of thirteen cuts with the cane was quite unprecedented in former courts-martial, and the crowd of fellows present hardly believed that the bully was really in earnest, until they saw his satellites making the necessary preparations.

"Here, I say," said Manvers, "surely Logan's only joking? He's not going to have the giddy nerve to lay that cane across Carton?"

"I'll bet you a bob to a shilling he does mean it," said Tubby Bouncer. "He's got a grudge up against Carton, with a vengeance, has Larry Logan. Didn't you twig the look he gave him last night in the study, and again just now. You take it from me, unless someone stops him, he'll give that new kid jip!"

In the meantime, while Jim Carton was being securely held, half a dozen fellows had dragged forward a large blackboard easel usually used for lecturing. This they opened and spread out in the space before the desk. The top of the easel and the lower end of each leg of it had been provided with short lengths of box-cord, the object of which was at once patent to the onlookers when, a minute later, the prisoner was forced towards the easel face foremost.

Carton struggled with all his strength to wrench his hands free from his many captors' grasp, but so tightly was he held that he soon found that breaking away was a sheer impossibility. A minute later, breathless with his struggles and the rage which all but choked him, he was fain to submit to the cords at the top of the easel being bound about his wrists, while at the same time his ankles were secured to the lower framework in the same way.

"That's the ticket!" grinned Logan, when the work of tying up the prisoner had been accomplished. "Now he looks a little less cocky."

Carton, upon hearing this, tugged and tore at his bonds with all his might, grinding his teeth with fury and cursing audibly at his impotence to free himself. He and the easel would have come crashing to the ground had not the latter been held in position by three or four of the Moderns.

"I say, deah boys," cried Bertie Bly, anxiously, raising his voice to make himself heard above the babel of sound which prevailed upon every hand. "If Logan means biz. we must effect a wescue!"

"Not much chance of rescue here," growled Manvers.

"It's only a cod on Logan's part," put in Tubby Bouncer. "He'd never dare to carry out a sentence like that."

"He's only trying to frighten Carton, take my tip."

And indeed Larry Logan's next words seemed to bear out Tubby's supposition that the bully had been merely trying to cow the new boy into subjection.

"Look here, Jim Carton," he said, standing at Carton's side, the long cane held firmly in his hand, "if you will apologise to me before the whole room for your manner of speaking just now, I'll let you off with a far lighter sentence."

Carton turned his head and glared.

"Go to blazes!" he said. "You wrecked my room last night, you and those other cowardly skunks, and I swore I'd make you pay for it. And so I will directly I get free."

"Aha! Sayest thou so, my boastful buccaneer. We'll make you alter your tune before long, or I'll know the reason why. Now, for the last time, Carton, will you apologise?"

"No, curse you! And if you touch me with that cane you will be sorry!"

"I reckon it's you who will be sorry!" sneered the bully, rolling up his right shirt-cuff to lend additional effect to his words. "Dashed sorry you'll be, too, before I've finished with you. Hold the easel, chaps, while I give this insolent pup a taste of my virtuous wrath."

Gilks, Lee, and one or two others of Logan's particular set again

seized the easel and held it firmly, while their chief and leader took a step backwards, raising the long cane high above his head.

Before the blow could descend, however, there was a disturbance at the side of the long room.

"Wescue! Wescue! Come on, deah boys!" cried the voice of Marmaduke Percival Bly, and a moment later, accompanied by his two friends, Bouncer and Manvers, the owner of the voice struggled forward through the crowd. "Wescue, Ancients!"

Aroused into action by Bly's call to arms, the small sprinkling of school-house boys dotted about the class-room likewise made a valiant attempt to reach the easel. But their design was frustrated at the outset by the crowd of Moderns, who barred their way and forced them back to the walls. Bly, Tubby, and Manvers were also soon captured, amid the hoots and jeers of the crowd, and the trio realised too late that the only way to have effectually brought about a rescue under the circumstances would have been to rush the doors and summon assistance from without. Now it was too late.

"Take your beastly, filthy maulers off my collah!" hooted Bertie Bly, struggling in the hands of the half-dozen fellows who were shoving him about none too gently. "Wescue me, you wuffians, or I shall biff some of you most fwightfully!"

But Marmaduke Percival was not allowed to put his threat into execution, for from that moment he and his two friends were hustled away into a corner and kept there.

"You beastly wottahs!" cried the youthful scion of the noble house of Bly. "There'll be a fwightful shindy over this. We'll swoop down and bash you, feahfully by-and-by."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck him out!"

"Kill him, somebody!"

At this point Logan's stentorian voice arose above the clamour.

"Silence over there! Shut your row, can't you? Now, then, Carton," he added, fiercely, when silence had been at length restored, "be prepared to receive the just punishment of the court you have seen fit to defy. Hold the easel tight, chaps!"

Thwack!

The long cane in the bully's hand descended upon the prisoner's nether person with a stinging cut, and Carton, half mad with pain and rage, tore and rent at the bonds which held him, so that the frame of the easel rattled and rocked in the hands of the fellows who were holding it firmly to the floor.

Thwack! Thwack!

Two more cuts descended, this time upon the fresher's shoulders, causing him to groan through his close-set teeth with mingled pain and shame.

"You rotten cad!" he cried, almost inarticulate with passion, glaring over his shoulder at the smiling Logan as he spoke. "You cowardly cur!"

"Punishment of the court," said the bully, mockingly. "But I'll let you off the rest if you humbly apologise for your insolence to me just now. Will you do so, or are you anxious for more?"

"Untie me, you cowardly skunk, and I'll soon show you how I'll apologise!" cried the prisoner, livid with rage. "I dare you to let me go!"

Logan laughed coarsely.

"Hallo! hallo!" he said. "What's this, a challenge?" while a buzz of excitement ran round the room as the boys pressed forward.

"Will you fight me, you cad? Will you fight me now—at once—here?"

Logan laughed again.

"I might hurt you," he sneered. "You had far better take the thrashing I'm going to give you."

"You miserable rat! I knew you'd funk it!" cried Carton, twisting his wrists violently to and fro in a vain endeavour to set them free. "You can only take it out of a fellow when he's helpless and surrounded by your skunks of pals. But you'll have to release me soon, and then I'll settle with you."

Carton shouted the words in a whirl of passion. Their effect upon the audience, however, was electrical, and a hundred shouts and ejaculations broke from as many throats.

"Don't be a fool, Carton!"

"He'd eat you up!"

"Let him go, Logan, and give him a chance!"

"Let's see what he can do!"

"Yaas, wathah, you beastly wottah, welease him!"

"He daren't do it!"

"Rats! Logan would kill him!"

"No, no! Give the fresher a chance!"

"Make a ring! Make a ring!"

Gilks, Lee, and one or two others roared for silence, and after exerting their lungs for nearly a minute they succeeded in restoring the classroom to some sort of order again. Then the bully of St. John's turned once more to the helpless prisoner at his side.

"Do you really mean you've got the brass to want to fight me?" he inquired.

"You'll have to fight me directly I'm released!" rapped out the other.

"Then, in that case," replied the bully, with a scornful smile, "you shall have that pleasure without delay. Untie him, Gilks. The cub wants a lesson."

CHAPTER VI.

'GAINST FEARFUL ODDS.

A SCENE of the greatest animation ensued. Four forms were instantly dragged into the centre of the great room and placed end to end to make a square, while the fellows scrambled hither and thither for places of vantage from which they might view the fight. Some clambered up to the windows, perching themselves in the niches, others swarmed up on the lecture platform, three or four climbed up and balanced themselves riskily upon the desk which Logan had lately vacated, while everywhere din and confusion reigned supreme.

But although the majority of the crowd were anxious and eager for the battle, there were not a few who raised dissenting voices. Carton was a "fresher," while Logan was a recognised pugilist throughout the school. The fight would be terribly unequal. It ought not to be allowed to take place.

Among the loudest dissenters were Bertie Bly and Co. and their rivals, Silas Jinks, Jack Joyce, and Archie Bruce. The latter, although Moderns, liked to see fair play above everything.

"Say, boys," the American shouted above the tumult, "this here fight ain't co-rect! Logan can put 'em up too well. Besides, Carton ain't his weight."

"That's the ticket, Jinkey, deah boy!" seconded Marmaduke Percival. "I move, deah chappies, that we don't 'et 'em swap undah the circs. What?"

"Lie down, Bertie!"

"Shut up, Jinks!"

"If the fresher wants to fight, let him!"

"Yes, rather. It's his own lookout!"

"If he can't take a joke, he must put up with the consequences!"

The exclamations emanated from everywhere around, and the six boys realised at a glance that all hope of stopping the unequal encounter between Jim Carton and Logan was nipped in the bud at the outset.

"Well, I ain't going to see young Carton mauled, even if he does happen to be a school-house chap!" asseverated the Yankee.

"Bwavo, Jinkey!" said the Toff of the Fourth. "Come on, deah boys, we'll wush the bally door!"

The next moment Bertie Bly and Co. and the other three Moderns had made a simultaneous dive for the entrance to the class-room. The ruse proved unsuccessful, however, for the crowd about the doors was too strong. Jinks and the rest were shoved unceremoniously back, despite their most strenuous exertions to fight their way out of the room.

"There'll be the howlingest house row over this bit of business, or I'm a giddy Dutchman!" growled Manvers. "You wait, my cockalorumus — you wait and see, that's all!"

In the meantime Jim Carton had been released from his invidious position, and now stood within the "ring," denuded of his coat and vest. The lad's face was very pale and very grim, and as he rolled up his shirt-sleeves tightly above his elbows the marks made by the cords which had all but cut into the flesh showed in deep red rings about his wrists.

Upon the other side of the open square made by the four forms Larry Logan was likewise divesting himself of his coat and waistcoat, while the fellows crowded twenty deep about the "ring."

"Now, my young pup," said the bully, advancing into the centre of the ring and regarding Carton with a white sneer upon his singularly unprepossessing face, "come and

take your gruel. I reckon you'll be sorry you didn't take the flogging instead before I've finished with you. And, see here," he added, "no pretending to be whacked until you are. If you cry 'pax' before you're properly wolloped, you'll have to undergo the rest of the sentence."

"Shut your mouth!" snarled Carton. "Talk when you've beaten me! Come on!"

A loud cheer emanated from all the Ancients present, a shout of approval in which a score or so of the Modern fellows present joined, for Larry Logan was by no means a general favourite even in his own house. He was more feared than liked, and there were many indeed who cordially hated the fellow for his insolent, domineering ways to those beneath him and his subservience to those in authority.

After the cheer which followed Carton's words had died away, the two combatants faced each other in the centre of the room amid a breathless silence. Now that they were without their jackets, the two boys did not appear to differ in size and weight so greatly as might have been supposed. The bully's sloping shoulders and long arms looked less powerful and formidable, while Carton's chest and shoulders seemed to have expanded.

"Are you ready?" inquired Larry Logan, drily, eyeing the boy before him with an unpleasant grin.

Without deigning to reply, Carton leapt forward much in the manner of a hound suddenly freed from its leash, while at the same moment his left arm flashed out at Logan's head. So swift was the attack, indeed, that the bully was fain to spring back to avoid the swinging left-hander which had been too quick for him to parry. Ere he could recover himself the fresher was upon him like a fury, and a square hit between the eyes was the result,

"Bravo!" yelled the crowd, aroused to enthusiasm by the splendid manner in which the new boy had opened the ball. "Bravo, Carton! Well done, sir!"

The bully of St. John's, however, was too old a hand at the art of self-defence to be more than momentarily influenced by his opponent's onslaught, unexpected though it had been. The "biff" he had received upon the forehead dazed him for a moment, but recovering himself immediately, he rushed at Carton, getting in a couple of half-arm blows and a nasty cross-counter, which sent the fresher staggering away with a gasp.

A pin now might have been heard drop in the densely-crowded classroom as again the two combatants faced each other with grimly-set faces and tightly-clenched fists.

Biff! Biff!

Carton had rushed in again, but had reeled back at once from a couple of blows which had seemed to bury themselves in his chest. Again he sprang forward, this time with more success, for he drove his right home with a sounding smack behind the bully's ear.

"Bravo, the fresher!"

"Good on you, Carton!"

"That's the ticket!"

"Yaas, wathah! That was simply wippin, deah boy!"

Those and a score of other ejaculations welled up suddenly, and as suddenly died away, as the next moment the two belligerents were locked together in a deadly embrace in the centre of the ring, lamming into each other savagely meanwhile, swaying violently to and fro.

"Break away! Break away!" yelled the crowd with one great voice.

The command was instantly obeyed, for Carton and the bully at once sprang asunder. They were only parted for an instant, however, for,

like a whirlwind, Jim Carton came on again, hitting out like a fury, as though, indeed, it were his intention to rush Logan out of the ring. The onlookers were little short of amazed at the splendid pluck and form exhibited by the new boy. He seemed to be electric, full of nerve and force, and as nimble on his feet as a cat, with the result that before the fight had been in progress more than a couple of minutes, Carton had won a good half of the spectators to his side.

The long reach and straight hitting of Logan, however, soon began to have their effect, for again and again Carton's rushes were punished with blow after blow, which left tell-tale marks upon the younger boy's face, neck, and arms.

"Say, sonny, just go a bit slower!" called out Silas Jinks from his seat in one of the window niches.

"Yaas, wathah! Tako it easier, deah boy!"

Whether Carton heard the advice or not, or whether he himself had begun to realise that he was using up his strength, certainly from that moment he altered his tactics, contenting himself with merely brushing aside the bully's sledge-hammer blows, and putting in a well-directed hit here and there whenever opportunity presented.

Seeing the other's change of front, Larry Logan determined to put an end to the fight as soon as possible. With this object in view he made a rapid rush at Carton, bearing him back into a corner of the ring, and hitting out with all his strength as he did so. Instead of placing his opponent hors-de-combat, however, as he had confidently anticipated doing, Logan realised, when it was too late, that the two savage blows he had aimed at his opponent's head were wasted upon empty air. Carton had ducked like lightning, and

slipped aside, while instantly there was a sounding "slap-slap!" as he placed a couple of blows with terrific force in the bully's ribs.

With a howl of fury which could be heard even above the sudden clamour of the crowd, Logan sprang again at his wiry young antagonist. This time he was more successful, for his left came home with a terrific biff upon the other's ear, while his right landed squarely upon Carton's nose, instantly tapping his "claret."

From that point things began to look pretty bad for the new boy. The sharp punch on the nose he had received caused him to see a million flaming stars, and for a while he was unable to parry or stem the other's terrific onslaught. Blows fell like scorching missiles upon his face, neck, and chest, and it was as much as he could do to retain the perpendicular under the fierce fire of the bully's attack.

The two hundred fellows in the class-room held their breath, as they expected to see Carton go down every instant. They were not destined to witness this contretemps, however, for Carton suddenly rallied, and pulled himself together with a superhuman effort of will, and then faced Logan apparently as fresh, and certainly far less winded, than was his long-limbed antagonist.

Enraged at his failure to administer the coup de grace, Logan came on again, making use of the rushing tactics which had always stood him in such good stead before.

And then a strange thing happened.

For without the slightest warning, and in the most natural manner in the world, Jim Carton began to fight "left-handed"; his left became his right, his right his left, the latter arm guarding his body, the former flashing out like lightning, and catching the bully a square hit on the point of the jaw, which sent

that worthy staggering wildly backwards into the arms of the dozen or so fellows who were crouching upon the form behind him.

At first the onlookers failed to grasp the fact that Carton was ambidextrous, but when, during the next few seconds they watched him fight left-handed as easily as he had done the more legitimate way, they pressed forward more eagerly still, curious to see how this unexpected change of front would affect the bully of St. John's.

Biff! Biff! Smack! Smack! Biff! Slap! Biff!

The rapid exchange of blows resounded all over the room, while a glance was sufficient to show the now thoroughly excited throng of onlookers that it was Logan who had suffered most, for his left eye was half-closed, and his rather prominent proboscis was streaming.

"That was weally whipping!" hooted Bertie Bly from somewhere near the ceiling. "Bai Jove! that's the bally ticket! Wathah!"

The Toff of the Fourth had swarmed up one of the supporting columns of the class-room, from which point of vantage he had watched the fight with intensest interest.

A dull purple had now mounted to Larry Logan's face. Inwardly he was raging because, so far, he had been unable to down his nimble antagonist. This new development on the latter's part, that of being ambidextrous, had completely nonplussed him, and he saw that unless he could "out" Carton at once his prestige as the bully of St. John's would be entirely gone. Already, he knew, he had been made to look a little ridiculous by his failure to defeat this strangely pugilistic fresher, and realising now that everything depended upon the next few minutes—for he was becoming terribly blown—Logan rushed in

once more to the attack. But Carton's left-handed mode of fighting nonplussed him more and more. He could not adapt himself to the altered conditions, try as he might. He fainted and dodged and struck out with all his force, but to no avail. Again and again he tried to close with his opponent, but always in vain. Once, twice, thrice Carton's right, doing the work of his left, caught the bully upon the nose, mouth, and chin respectively without his being able to retaliate by a single telling hit in return. Then, just as he was about to make another run at Carton, the latter took the initiative. Swiftly brushing aside his blows, the fresher darted in beneath the bully's guard and caught him a terrific blow upon "the mark," that tender, vulnerable spot which, in the excitement of the moment, Logan had left unguarded.

With a gasping cry which resembled the yelp of a terrier in pain, Logan staggered backward, wildly catching his breath. Ere he could recover himself, however, the nimble-footed Carton was upon him like a tiger, his eyes blazing, his bleeding lips tightly compressed.

Biff! Biff!

In the tense stillness which now reigned supreme the two terrifically-delivered blows sounded almost simultaneously like the double crack of a whip. And then the bully of St. John's closed his eyes and reeled away at an angle, weakly fighting the air.

Carton might have followed up the advantage still further, but he checked himself in time, and waited a few seconds for the bully to recover his wind. The two hundred fellows closely packed around craned their heads forward and strained their eyes, holding their breath in intense excitement as they watched Logan, amazed and breathless, stare about him wildly.

The spell, however, was quickly broken, for the bully, with the snarl of a beast of prey, sprang at Carton with a bound. Ere the fresher could avoid the onrush, Logan had literally fallen upon him tooth and nail, his long arms swinging like semaphores, his loose mouth working convulsively, his breathing coming in sharp, hard gasps. Had he borne down upon his antagonist thus fiercely in the opening stages of the fight he might, and probably would, have ended the battle to his own credit. But now it was too late. He was winded, half-blinded, and more than half-mad with rage. As a result of these things, he fought carelessly, unscientifically; in consequence, his own aim now being to "out" the other at all cost, at any price.

The two boys met with a crash; there was a tangle of flying arms for a few short seconds, and then with a thwack which might have well been heard beyond the oak doors of the densely-crowded classroom, Carton administered a terrible upper-cut which literally lifted Logan off his feet and sent him sprawling upon his back in the middle of the ring.

Second after second passed, and still the crowd of fellows, eager, breathless, strained, held themselves in to see if Logan would rise. And then when Gilks and Lee sprang over the forms into the ring and lifted up their all but unconscious comrade, a shout arose which made the classroom vibrate to its very foundations:

"Bravo, Jim Carton! Bravo! bravo!"

The bully of St. John's was defeated!



CHAPTER VII.

A BRILLIANT IDEA.

THE memorable fight between Carton and the school bully naturally had the effect of bringing the former into a good deal of prominence and popularity throughout the college. Everybody wanted to know him and make friends with him, even a goodly number of the Moderns desired his acquaintance, while the Ancients, almost to a man, including the seniors, voted him a decided acquisition to the place.

The doctor had been informed of the Court of Inquiry episode, and the fight which had followed it; but as Carton had come out of the affair so successfully he very wisely deemed it best to say nothing upon the subject to either him or Logan. He was well aware of the latter's reputation in the school as being that of a bully, and he was not a little pleased to learn that the fellow had received such a severe lesson at the hands of the new boy. The headmaster had been a public schoolboy himself, having "gone through the mill" from early boyhood, so that he knew that the bully's defeat would be sufficient punishment for Logan without any further interference on his part. He realised, too, that fights were sometimes very necessary, and on this as upon many similar occasions, the pedagogue of St. John's chose to close his eyes to the flagrant breach of rules.

There were many who predicted, however, that Logan would soon take a telling revenge upon the fresher who had so ignominiously defeated him.

For days after the fight the bully walked about moodily, as though he were brooding upon his ill-fortune. In the presence of his friends he had vowed to bring off another battle with Carton in the near future, when, he declared, he would admin-

ister a thrashing which "he would remember to the last day of his life."

But although many days went by it was noticed that the bully refrained from actually challenging his defeater to another battle. He had attributed Carton's victory all along to the fact that the latter had fought left-handed. The fellows therefore concluded that Logan was probably fitting himself by practice to cope more successfully with that particular style of boxing with a view to repaying his defeater with interest in the days to come.

Carton, in the meantime, had made innumerable friends in the school-house. His class-mates accounted him a "good sort," and voted him a member of the Lower Fifth cricket eleven, while upon half-holidays Bertie Bly and the other two occupants of study No. 5 in the school-house invariably insisted upon Carton accompanying them whenever they made excursions into the surrounding country.

In spite of this amicable state of affairs, however, there was a rift within the lute, so far as the school-house trio of friends and the new boy were concerned. The fresher, they found, greatly to their virtuous indignation, was obsessed with an insatiable desire to rise in class. On more than one occasion he had even confessed to an ambition to win one of the school scholarships.

To this end Carton was wont to shut himself up in his study and swot at his books whenever opportunity offered. Bertie Bly and his friends remonstrated with him upon this unseemly conduct, earnestly begging him from time to time to turn from his wicked ways and live the life of a "slacker," which they unanimously regarded as being the only possible kind of existence worth living at all at least so far as St. John's was concerned.

They even went so far as to

threaten that if he continued upon his abandoned course they would be compelled to cast him off for ever, and to place him outside the pale of their friendship. But to threats and entreaties alike Carton was deaf. He continued to study harder than ever, utilising every spare hour, and even foregoing the cricket-field upon occasion what time he remained locked in his study tearing the heart out of books.

Carton, moreover, made no secret of the fact that a scholarship would be particularly acceptable to him, in that his "people" were by no means over endowed with the goods of this world. So that in view of these things it was soon spread about the school that Jim Carton was a "pauper."

In spite of this undoubted drawback, however, the days and weeks which followed the memorable battle in the Fifth Form room were bright and pleasant ones for the new boy, and the hint of moroseness which had marked his disposition during the earlier period of his advent at St. John's almost entirely disappeared. Altogether Carton regarded his star as being in the ascendant. He found his studies comparatively easy; he was making rapid headway in class, and he had, moreover, succeeded in winning a certain amount of popularity by his plucky fight with Larrymore Logan.

One morning the doctor made an announcement. A subscription, he said, had been started by himself and the under-masters for the aid and benefit of a widow of one of the "old boys" of St. John's.

Many years ago a boy of the name of Arthur Devereux had very greatly distinguished himself in the school, although in later years fate had dealt hardly with him. Ill-health had combined, with other untoward circumstances, to bring about his death, and he had died a

few months ago, leaving his widow and her two children without means of support, despite the fact that at one time he had held a prominent position as a man of letters in the world.

Addressing the boys after call-over in Hall, Dr. Dalton pointed out that it would be a pretty compliment and a very practical help to the widow of the late St. John's "old boy" were the fellows to present the widow with a substantial sum. He did not expect the fellows to give much. Those who could afford it might contribute half a crown; boys who had not half a crown to spare might possibly manage to put down their names for a shilling. The masters of St. John's were contributing a sovereign each, and as he himself intended giving a ten-pound-note, he hoped to be enabled to present a cheque for at least fifty pounds to Mrs. Devereux, who would, he assured his listeners, be grateful beyond measure for the kindly assistance rendered by the boys of the school at which her late husband had at one time so greatly distinguished himself.

The headmaster's appeal bore immediate fruit, for before nightfall the subscription list had been filled with names. The money would, the doctor announced that evening, be collected in the course of a few days.

Jim Carton had given practically his last half-crown to the good cause, but he little imagined what a strange part that subscription was to play in his life ere many days had passed.

In the meantime the unpleasantness which had arisen between the Ancients and the Moderns, as a result of the Court of Inquiry held upon Carton and the ragging of his study, had grown more in evidence as the time went by. Party feeling had been rife enough before the fight with Logan, but now it was soon to

come to a head. The smouldering fire was to shortly blaze into the fierce conflagration of one of the biggest "House rows" St. John's had ever known.

And it all came about through Bertie Bly.

Upon the morning following the doctor's announcement concerning the subscription for the widowed Mrs. Devereux, Marmaduke Percival Egbert suddenly announced to his friends that it was his birthday.

"Holy smoke!" said Tubby. "I didn't know you had one."

"Why the dickens didn't you let us know before, so that we could have bought you a pair of diamond socks or a jewelled topper, or some such trifle as a mark of our friendship and esteem?" said Manvers.

"It's awfully wipping of you, deah boys, to want to buy me a jewelled toppah," answered Marmaduke Percival, seriously. "I appreciate your kindness to the full. As a mattah of fact, the weason why I didn't mention the fact that my beastly birthday was appwoaching was simply because I was wathah afraid you fellahs might wun into extwavgance on my account."

"Needn't have worried yourself," grinned Tubby.

"Well, you don't look particularly pleased although it is your birthday, Egbert," Manvers remarked.

"Buck up! What's the matter? Brooding over appwoaching age, or have you lost a quid and found fourpence?"

"No, deah boy, I haven't lost a beastly quid or found anything at all. The weal facts of the case are, deah boys, that I have failed to weceive the beastly fivah from my gov'nah which I have every wight and weason to expect, under the circs."

"Howling Jerusalem! was your gov'nor going to send you a fiver, then?"

"Pwomised me faithfully," replied the youthful scion of the noble house of Bly. "Pwomised to send me a fivah to mark the auspich. occas., don't you know, deah boys."

"And it hasn't come, eh?"

"My deah fellah, I wegwet to say that it has not awwived."

"Poor old Percival!"

"I weally could not possibly enjoy my birthday without my fivah," said Bertie, pathetically. "I have dweamt of the giddy thing for days. I dweamt of it last night, and woke up in a perspiwation because I imagined I had used the beastly thing for shaving papah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Imagine Percival Egbert shaving!"

"Pway don't laugh at me, deah boys. It was a tewwible dweam, I do assure you."

"And now it's terrible reality, eh, you giddy plutocrat?"

"It is indeed, deah boy. Do you know, I think I will go into the village and send a wotten wire to my gov'nah to blow him up fwightfully for omitting to send my fivah."

"Don't despair, Egbert," comforted Manvers. "Perhaps it will come by a later post."

Marmaduke Percival glanced at his gold repeater.

"My deah fellow, it is now half-past four," he said. "The lettah containing the fivah should have weached me by the first post this morning. I do weally think that my gov'nah's conduct is most wewehensible under the circs."

"So it is, Marmaduke," agreed Tubby, sympathetically; "perfectly scandalous! Just think what a terrific quantity of prog. one could have bought with your fiver—if it had come!"

"Yaas, deah boy, that's what I was thinking. It had been my intention to stand a weally wipping feed to you wottahs."

"Oh, I say," cried Tubby, indignantly, "your gov'nor ought to be ashamed of himself!"

"Tubby, how dare you speak so of my gov'nah?" retorted Bertie Bly.

"All right, Egbert, don't get your shirt out!"

"That is a vewy wude expression, Bounsah. My beastly shirt is not out."

"Well, then, don't get ratty."

"How can I help feeling watty, howwibly watty? Evewything has gone wong with me to-day. My Aunt Matilda, instead of bunging me a couple of quid as usual on my birthday, wote this morning to say she'd bought me a beastly pawwot."

"A what?" grinned Manvers.

"A pawwot, deah boy. A howwible cockatoo thing. Vewy valuable, she says it is. I'm to be given the wetchid thing when I go home for the summer vac."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, deah boys, I weally wish you wouldn't cackle so at my howwid misfortunes. When I go home I shall wing that pawwot's neck."

"Poor old Marmaduke!"

"Never mind, buck up! There are worse troubles at sea."

"I wefuse to consider that aspect of the question. I weally don't care a tinker's cuss what happens at sea. My Aunt Matilda has bought me a beastly pawwot, and my gov'nah has failed to tip me the fivah he pwomised. And, to make mattabs a hundred times worse, the beastly laundwess Leah has utterly wuined my white waistcoat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was a new one, deah boy—bwand new. I shall nevah recovah my loss—nevah! I have witten and sent her a piece of my mind!"

"Great Scott! you shoulda's have done that!" gasped Manvers, with a horrified face.

"Pway why not, deah boys?" inquired Marmaduke Percival, staring.

"Because you simply can't afford to part with any!" Manvers grinned. Bertie Bly sniffed and said:

"It is just possible that you imagine that remark to be funny."

"Not at all."

"Permit me to say that I considah my bwain to be far superior to yours in every wespact; in fact, I will go so far as to say that if your beastly bwain, and what there is of Tubby's beastly bwain, were shoved together they would weigh vewy considerably less than the one which is contained in my own nappah!"

"His nappah!"

"Oh, ring off, Bertie; you're too killing!"

"And you, deah boys, are extremely wuda. You are perpetually making oppwobwious wemarks concerning my nappah."

"Bertie, do run away and drown yourself!"

"I wefuse to drown myself," replied Marmaduke Percival, hotly. "For two beastly pins I would fetch my kid gloves and give you a fearful hidin'!"

"Nunno!" cried Manvers, earnestly, slipping behind Tubby Bouncer and grinning over that gentleman's shoulder at the ferocious Bertie. "Spare me that! Wallop me not, I entrest thee!"

"Very well, deah boy," replied Bly, seriously. "Come out from behind Tubby. I pwomise not to hurt you!"

"Do you swear you won't harm a hair of my head?" questioned Manvers, in a frightened voice.

"My deah fellah, my beastly word's my giddy bond!" replied the other, euphonistically. "Come out, deah boy; I pwomise not to thwash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tubby, I don't see what there is to—"

"He, he, he!"

"Manvers, is it possible you are twying to make a fool of me?"

"Imposs., old son," said Manvers.

"Yaaa, wathah, of course."

"Seeing that you're a fool already—the silliest, chuckle-headedest, blitheringist fool that ever disgraced St. John's!"

Bertie Bly literally staggered backward from this unexpected volume of abuse.

"Manvabs!" shrieked the Toff of the Fourth, "wemove your coat immediately! Tubby, I must wequest you to fetch my kid gloves. You will find a pair in my box. I will thrash this wude wuffian at once!"

"Oh, dry up, you giddy wilk!" cried Bouncer, wiping his streaming eyes.

"Tubby, is it possible that you are alludin' to me?" queried Bly, haughtily. "Wemove your coat also, and wait your turn to weceive a frightful hidin'. I will go and fetch my gloves myself, for I weally cannot consent to soil my hands upon your howwible chivvys. Pway remain here until I weturn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Marmaduke Percival turned away with his head held high in the air, with the result that he walked slap into Dr. Dalton, who had been quickly approaching the spot in the quad where the trio were.

"Pway pardon my wudeness," apologised Bertie, hurriedly, picking himself up from the ground and politely assisting the headmaster to rise. "Weally, I cannot express how feahfully sowwy I am not to have seen you, sir!"

"Very well, my boy, I accept your apology," replied the doctor, rather ruefully, brushing the dust from his gown; "but I cannot comprehend why you should walk about the quad-rangle with your eyes upon the clouds. What was the matter with you?"

"I am sufferin' fwom a beastly cwick in the neck, sir," answered Bertie, promptly.

"Crick in the neck? H'm! I should strongly advise you to remain in the school until it is better, or you'll do somebody a serious injury," was the headmaster's good-natured reply. "By the way," he continued, taking an envelope from his pocket, "I was coming to give you this when you walked into me just now. It came by the first post this morning; but somehow or other it became mixed up with my own private correspondence. I only discovered it half an hour ago. I am sorry, Bly."

"Bai Jove!" hooted Bertie, taking the extended letter from the doctor's hand and gazing at it delightedly. "It's my beastly fivah!"

"Your what?"

"My fivah, sir. It's my birthday, you know, and I've been expectin' to weceive this lettah all day!" cried Marmaduke Percival, who had hurriedly torn off a corner of the envelope and peered inside. "I don't care now if it snows pink. I can see the boundah in there!"

"See the what?" queried the astonished headmaster.

"The fivah, sir."

"Oh, quite so—quite so. And what, may I ask, do you intend to do with so much money?"

The doctor smiled benignly upon the Toff of the Fourth as he posed the question, what time Manvers and Tubby Bouncer threw attentively near, broad and expressive grins upon their faces.

Marmaduke Percival looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Well, of course, in the first place, sir, I shall weally feel it incumbent upon me to contwibute another half-crown to your beastly—I mean, your whipping subscription," he replied.

"Good, boy, good boy!" smiled the doctor. "Every little helps.

And what else do you intend to do with the five-pound-note your father has so considerably sent you? What are you going to buy?"

"Gwub, ad lib., and a bwand new toppah!" replied Bertie, with great earnestness.

"Dear me, what extraordinary things to spend a five-pound-note on! In that event, then, I suppose the Misses Ramsbothom, who keep the tuck-shop in the village, will benefit chiefly by your father's generosity, eh?"

"Yaas, I suppose they will, sir," answered Marmaduke Egbert, who was dying to make a bee-line for that tuck-shop at the present moment.

"Do you know what I should do if that money were mine and I were in your shoes?" said the doctor.

"Ask me anoth—I mean, I have not the faintest idea, sir."

"Well, I should form a tuck-shop of my own in the school. I should buy up a certain amount of comestibles and confectionery wholesale, and offer them to the boys at the same prices as those charged by the people in the village; then, instead of going a mile to the tuck-shop there, they would buy up everything you had to sell, instead of going all that distance to get what they wanted."

"Holy Moses!" gasped Bertie.

"Bly," said the doctor, severely, "that is not a nice expression."

"Weally, I beg your pardon, sir. Pway continue your most intewesting remarks."

"Well," said the doctor again, "I should use your five-pound note for the purpose of making a fair profit."

"Pwofit?"

"Certainly. Why not? Every sovereign spent in wholesale pastry and so forth should yield you two or three shillings profit. Quick sale, quick return, you know. Why,

by the end of term you would in all probability have doubled that five-pound note."

"Good gwacious!" murmured Marmaduke Percival, staring at the doctor as though he were unable to credit the evidence of his ears. "Weally, you don't say so, sir. You take my bweath away. It all sounds like a giddy dream."

"Of course," continued the doctor, "you would have to give up a part of your recreation time to business, which would obviously coincide with the various recreation intervals during the day. For the better working of the concern you should form a company of three or four of your friends. You would provide the money at the outset, and they would pay you back out of the profits as time went on. Now, what do you think of the idea?"

The doctor had begun his remarks more or less in a jesting spirit, but as he proceeded the common sense of the notion struck him so forcibly that his concluding words were quite serious in their tone.

"Well, sir, I think the idea is weally whipping, and I shall most assuredly considah it," replied Marmaduke Percival.

"That's right. Take my advice and form a company, and do as I have said. You will find that your tuck-shop—you could use one of the cycle sheds—will provide you with both occupation, amusement, and not a little profit as well. Now, why not take your two friends here, Bouncer and Manvers, into partnership? I always see you three about together."

Marmaduke Percival looked Joubtful.

"Fweddie Manvahs is all right, but Tubby 'u'd nick half the stock on the first day, and wuin us at the outset," he objected.

"What do you mean, you howl-

ing loat!" exclaimed Bouncer, going very red in the face.

"Bouncer! Bouncer!" said the doctor, warningly. "That expression—"

"I beg your pardon, sir, but Bly—"

"I am quite sure," interrupted the Head, turning with a smile to Marmaduke Percival, "that Robert Bouncer would do nothing of the kind."

"No, we'd watch that, sir," put in Manvera.

"Well, well, boys, think it over, think it over!" remarked the headmaster, nodding pleasantly at the three boys, and beginning to walk away.

The trio lifted its cap as one man, and the doctor, returning the salute, passed on, leaving Bertie Bly staring after his stately figure with a thoughtful frown.

A moment later Marmaduke Percival had slipped forward to Dr. Dalton's side again.

"Pway excuse me, sir," he said, hurriedly, "but might I ask you not to mention this wattlin' notion of yours to anybody? You see, sir, we don't want to blow the gaff—let on, you know—until evewything's weady."

"Oh, no, of course not, Bly. I should not think of saying a word," assured the Head.

"Thank you, sir. I think your idea's a weally spiffin' one, and we shall put it into pwactice without delay."

"Good. I am very glad to hear it. You must let me know how you're getting on."

Bertie raised his cap again and returned to his two companions, who had been watching him with amusement and not a little eagerness.

"Well?" inquired Manvera.

"Are you going to take it on?" questioned Tubby.

Marmaduke Percival fixed his gaze vacantly upon a passing cloud.

"The first meeting of the School-house Tuck Shop Co., Limited, will take place in five minutes," he remarked. "Follow your uncle, deah boys, and come along."

CHAPTER VIII

THE TUCK-SHOP OPENS.

THE next few days were very active ones for Messrs. Bly, Bouncer, and Manvera. Journeys were taken frequently into the neighbouring town of Wickleham, a busy little centre five miles westward of the village of St. John's, to arrange for the wholesale purchase of every conceivable kind of prog needed for the Amalgamated School-house Tuck Shop Co., Ltd. The trio, headed by Marmaduke Percival, worked with enthusiasm, for the idea of running a "grub house," as Tubby called it, appealed to them as much for the crow it would give them over their rivals, Silas Jinks and Co, the Modern trio, as the ultimate profit they hoped to derive from the undertaking.

By mutual consent it was agreed that it would be better to open the store unexpectedly. Consequently, the Co. worked in the little cycle shed near the quad gates, which was to be the scene of their future operations, under shadow of night, after prep., and before the dormitory bell. And so quietly and unostentatiously was everything accomplished that nobody in the school, with the exception of the doctor himself, was aware of what was going forward.

Consequently, when, upon the following Wednesday morning, after second school, four hundred boys turned out for the hour's recreation before dinner, they were amazed

beyond measure to behold a diminutive tuck-shop planted as if by fairy hands in their very midst, or, more correctly speaking, in the north-west corner of the quad.

The Lower Fifth were out first, and they stood together in a crowd for a few moments, as though spell-bound at the unexpected sight. Then with a wild whoop they dashed forward, under the impression that some new and original jape was in progress. Arriving at the cycle shed, they observed to their further amazement Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly, Robert Bouncer, and Frederick Howard Manvers standing smilingly behind their well-stocked counter, surrounded upon every hand by bottles of sweets, dough-nuts, oranges, apples, and bananas. In a corner, upon a high stool, there reposed a very small cask bearing the legend "Ginger Beer on Draught."

The counter—two long boards resting upon trestles and covered with a snowy white tablecloth, kindly lent by the doctor's wife—was liberally supplied with plates of pastries, dishes of nuts, small bags of popcorn, sandwiches, ice-cream, and dough-nuts innumerable. Over the top of the cycle shed a huge notice had been nailed:

**THE AMALGAMATED SCHOOL-
HOUSE TUCK SHOP CO., LTD.**

Managing Director: Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly, Esq.

**WALK UP! WALK UP! WALK UP!
Cheap Prog! First-Class Quality! No
Credit and no 'Ank!**

COME IN YOUR THOUSANDS!

Where else can you get such Rattling Grub? Nowhere! Where else can you purchase Better Suckers? Nowhere!
**ROLL UP, COMRADES! PLANK DOWN
THE GIDDY DIBS AND TAKE YOUR
CHOICE!**

**POPULAR PRICES. ALL ARE
WELCOME."**

Overcome with astonishment, the Lower Fifth stood en masse before the tuck-shop, staring at this announcement wide-eyed and open-mouthed.

Was it a joke on the part of the school-house juniors, or was it a really bona-fide concern? they inquired. Other fellows were arriving at every instant, and the clamour which arose upon every hand was almost deafening.

"Here, I say, Bly, what's it all mean?"

"Is it a wangle, Manvers?"

"What's the jape, you chaps?"

"Come on, deah boys, and make your purchases!" shouted Bertie above the din. "Walk up, deah fellows, we are waiting to wait upon you, ha! ha! Twy our ginger-beer; it's weally wipping!"

"Come on, old kids!" shouted Manvers. "Plank down your money, and have a shot at our Neapolitan ice-cream! Only a ha'penny a time!"

"Yaas, wathah! Twy our ice-cream. It's weally wipping!"

"Dough-nuts are dirt cheap!" howled Tubby, throwing back his head and giving full play to his lungs. "Come on, you wasters! Come on, you rotten blighters! Come on and try 'em!"

"Our thwee-cornered puffs are dweams!" backed up Bertie. "Don't stand there, deah boys, like a lot of beastly sheep! Give us your beastly custom, and make way for the othahs!"

By this time the whole school had turned out, and were flooding the quad on all sides, filling the air with shouts and war-whoops, as was their usual custom when first released from class.

But in spite of the large attendance, no one as yet had come forward to purchase anything, in spite of the strenuous invitations of the "Co." behind the counter. Nearly

all the fellows still laboured under the impression that the whole thing was a colossal joke, and they were chary of falling into what they imagined must be a prepared trap of some kind.

Dr. Dalton, however, appearing on the scene at this moment, soon put all doubts to rest. Making his way through the crowd, which at once divided respectfully upon each side to let him pass, the head-master, arrayed in the full glory of cap and gown, pince-nez on nose, and with a seraphic smile upon his face, approached the counter and laid a sixpence upon it.

"Kindly sell me a jam tart and—er—a bottle of ginger-beer," he said, in his blandest tones, while the crowd looked on in breathless amazement.

"Yes, sir."

"Certainly, sir."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Co. almost shouted the words as they turned simultaneously to execute their first order.

"My dear Tubby, do pway mind my feet! I'm not a beastly doormat!" gasped Marmaduke Percival, frantically hopping about.

"Sorry, old kid," murmured Tubby, breathlessly, diving for a corkscrew. "Why don't you hang your feet over the counter if you don't want them trodden on?"

"Raspberry, apricot, or strawberry, sir?" said Manvers, in his politest accents, handing the Head a plate of pastries as he spoke. "I can strongly recommend the apricot, although there is no gainsaying that the raspberries are a little fresher. On the other hand, the strawberry—"

"I will take a raspberry tart," said the doctor, helping himself as he spoke.

"Mr. Harvey, what will you have?" he added, turning to the house master, who had strolled up

at that moment. "Will you share a bottle of ginger-beer with me?"

"Delighted!" responded Mr. Harvey, with an amused smile.

"Will you get off my feet, you wotten boundah!" hooted Bertie Bly, as the over-zealous Tubby made another wild dash for a tumbler.

Chatting together as though the newly-formed tuck-shop was the most ordinary thing in the world, the pedagogue of St. John's and the House master of the Ancients remained standing by the counter until they had finished their jam tarts and ginger-beer, after which the doctor picked up his twopenno change, and with a nod and a smile at the enterprising Co., sauntered off with his colleague.

The head-master's action immediately broke the ice, for he and Mr. Harvey had no sooner left than with a whoop the crowd of fellows standing about the tuck-shop descended upon it in force, fighting for places, and creating a din and clamour that could be heard from the far side of the school-house buildings.

"Hi, Bertie, chuck us over a bottle of ginger-beer!"

"Yaas, wathah! Half a beastly mo', deah boy!"

"Manvers, old son, bung us a dough-nut! How much?"

"Penny. Hand it over. That's the ticket. Here you are."

"Bouncer, penn'orth of suckers."

"Right-o, old kid! Wait a tick."

"Tubby, will you please wetwain fwom tweading on my feet? You're wuinin' my beastly patents!"

"Oh, rats! Shove your feet under the blinking counter and get rid of them!"

"Wats, yourself, you wudo wottah!"

"I say, Egbert, buck up with my bottle of ginger-beer."

"Yaas, deah boy! I'm just comin'

with it. Pway possess your beastly soul in patience for half a motor!"

The clamour arose louder still. Everybody was speaking at once. Everybody wanted to be served immediately, and it was as much as the Co. could do to serve even a tenth part of the eager crowd.

"Say, Manvers, expostulated Silas Jinks, who, with Jack Joyce and Archie Bruce, had eventually fought his way through the throng of fellows to the tuck-shop counter, "hurry up with my toffee. Been waiting here nearly a minute."

"Jumpin' Jewusalem, give us a chance, old fellah!" gasped Bertie, who was darting hither and thither in a frantic attempt to serve half a dozen fellows at once.

"You'll be served if you wait a tick," expostulated Tubby, holding out a bag of popcorn in one hand and pouring out a bottle of ginger-beer with the other.

"Clear off, some of you," commanded Manvers, "and give the chaps behind a look in!"

Acting upon the hint, those who had been provided with the things they had bought moved off to allow the rest of the crowd to purchase what they required. An ever-moving stream in consequence jostled by, while pennies and half-pence, threepenny bits, and even sixpences, poured into the coffers of the Co. in an unending torrent. Bly, Bouncer, and Manvers worked like Trojans to supply the wants of the clamouring throng until, at the end of half an hour, their arms ached and their heads grew dizzy with their exertions.

At length, long before the whole of the crowd had been served, Manvers stood up upon the counter, and made an announcement which brought a dismal groan from the gathering.

The Amalgamated Tuck Shop Co., Ltd., had sold out!

CHAPTER IX.

A BUSY AFTERNOON.

WHILE the foregoing events had been in progress in the quad, Larrymore Logan, the bully of St. John's, was seated at the window of his study in Fuller's House, the Moderns' headquarters, perusing a letter for the twentieth time, which had come by that morning's post. It was written in a bold caligraphy, and ran:

"DEAR MR. LOGAN,—I am writing to you for the last time to say that, unless you pay me something substantial on account of your debt with me, I shall have no alternative but to call upon your father and explain the situation. What are you going to do in the matter? I have given you every opportunity to settle up, but my patience is now completely exhausted. Remember, I do not threaten idly. Send me a fiver within the next few days, and I will agree to hold my tongue. Fail to do so, and you will compel me to give you away.

"This is the last time I shall write to you upon the subject.

"Awaiting the favour of an early reply, I am, yours truly,

"ISAAC COHEN."

When Logan had perused this epistle again he sprang to his feet, and tearing it up into little pieces, flung it savagely into the grate.

"Curse him!" he muttered, beginning to pace up and down the little room. "Curse him a thousand times! He takes advantage of my weakness for backing horses and playing cards to lend me the money at an outrageous rate of interest, and now he threatens me. Tell the gov'nor, eh? Phew! it'll go dashed hard with me if he does. Why, hang it, I shall be ruined! The old boy 'ud take me away from the coll. instanter if he ever learnt that I'd backed the gees and gambled."

For a while he continued to walk to and fro, his hands thrust deep

into his pockets, his forehead wrinkled up in a thoughtful frown.

"This old rascal Cohen lent me the money, in spite of the fact that I was a minor, knowing that he had only to present his bill to the gov'nor to have it paid. Well"—Logan stopped in his perambulation and stared at his reflection in the mirror over the mantelpiece—"if I can't stop this wretched money-lender from blabbing I shall be dished—dished utterly."

He ran his fingers through his hair, and continued his walk again.

"And I can see no way of staving the brute off any longer, and that's a fact," he growled. "I've borrowed every penny I could; I've pumped everyone dry. No one but a born idiot, in or out of the coll., would think of lending me another half-penny. By George!" cried Logan, aloud, "it's serious—it's frightfully serious. I don't know what I shall do."

The strong sunlight of a fine June morning streamed through the study window, illuminating the boy's face. It was very pale. There was a drawn look upon it; his eyes were full of trouble.

"By all the gods," he muttered, clenching his hands and biting his lip, "something 'll have to be done, and soon!"

A clamour of shouting came wafted from the direction of the quad, where business at the newly-formed tuck-shop was in full progress. Logan turned his head in the direction of the sound, and then again resumed his walk.

"Something must be done. Somehow, anyhow, I must ward this fellow off. But how—how!"

* * * * *

The initial success of their venture in founding the tuck-shop filled the respective breasts of Bertie Bly, Tubby, and Manvers with a very pardonable elation. They had sold

out in half an hour, even to the last bottle of ginger-beer and the final orange, and upon squaring accounts they discovered to their satisfaction and surprise that they had made a net profit of six shillings and elevenpence-halfpenny, which, considering the comparatively brief period during which the "shop" had been open to the public, was very creditable.

"I weally had no ideah my notion of starting a beastly gwub-shop would turn out to be so wippingly successful," remarked Marmaduke Percival, an hour or two after the cycle shed had been closed for the day.

"My hat! I like that! Your notion? What price the doctor?"

But Bertie ignored the remark. Dinner in Hall was over, and the three friends had foregathered in their study to make up their accounts.

"Instead of playing ewicket, we must toddle ova' to Wickleham and buy up some more gwub," continued the Toff of the Fourth, "so that we can westock the beastly tuck-shop weady for the morning; then we must give a standin' ordah for supplies to be sent up ewevy day—what?"

"Quite right, Egbert," assented Manvers.

"That's the ticket!" chimed in Tubby.

"I think, deah boys, that as we are goin' to twansact a vevy important business mattah, I had weally bettah wear my toppah. Don't you think so, chappies?"

"Rather!" said Tubby. "It'll lend us dig."

Bertie retired to his dormitory, while Tubby Bouncer and Manvers occupied their time in waiting by chivvying a few juniors about the quad. After a quarter of an hour, however, Marmaduke Percival appeared upon the scene again resplen-

dent in Etons and a brand-new silk hat.

The youthful scion was immaculate, from his glossy topper to his patent leather boots. His trousers were perfectly creased, his waistcoat was new, while the collar which graced his neck was a little higher, if anything, than the one he usually sported on Sundays. It kept his head very upright, and gave him the appearance, as Tubby said, of looking over a white-washed wall, while the silk necktie he had purchased in Piccadilly the day before he had returned to the school, coupled with his gold-knobbed cane and his lemon-coloured gloves, made up an ensemble which delighted his two friends beyond words.

"My only, ageing aunt!" exclaimed Tubby, as the Toff of the Fourth advanced leisurely towards him and Manvers as they stood by the quadrangle gates, "isn't he magnif.?"

"Spiffin!" assented Manvers, with a grin.

"Bertie, you do us proud!" Tubby remarked, fervently. "You're a treat for tired eyes to look at."

"How d'you like my new top-pah?" inquired Marmaduke Percival, tilting his glossy headgear a little forward and to the left as he posed the question. "I weally fancy it's wathah more fash. than the last one—what?"

"Abso. gorg., dear boy!" said Manvers. "Your other toppers weren't in it with that one."

"Come on, Egbert," said Tubby Bouncer, linking his arm within that of the young dandy, while Manvers did the same. "Come on, my gay Beau Brummel, and give the village a treat!"

"By the way, Bertie, have you brought the 'oof with you?" Manvers questioned.

"My deah fellah, do you imagine that I am milky on the beastly

filbert, or what? Of course I've brough't the 'oof."

"Good on you, Marmaduke! Let us hie ourselves unto the station, then, or we shall miss the giddy puff."

Two minutes later the trio were marching across the quad. to the school-gates bound for the village station, whence they would take the local train to the neighbouring town of Wicklehams and walk back. They had tried to persuade Jim Carton to accompany them upon their business expedition; but that young man, whom they had discovered with a wet towel round his head stewing at "Homer" in his room, refused point-blank to stir. The term-end examinations were not far distant, and he was admittedly making a desperate effort to cram up in time to get his "remove" for next half.

It was market-day in the village, as a consequence of which its single street presented a scene of unwonted activity and bustle. As the trio made their way towards the station many amused glances were thrown at Bertie Bly, as he stalked majestically between his two friends.

Farmers and shopkeepers standing at their doors cracked indifferent jokes at Marmaduke Percival's expense; small boys shouted after him inquiring, in a snatch of ribald song, where he had purchased his headgear, while several country lasses favoured the Toff of the Fourth with a giggle as he paraded down the High Street, his aristocratic features wearing an expression of becoming ennui and boredom.

"My word, Egbert, if you're not off!" grinned Manvers.

"Creating an absolute furore, old son!" laughed Tubby.

The faintest suspicion of a smile curved the lips of Percival Egbert.

"Yaas, deah boys, I wathah imagine that I am cweating some-

thing of a giddy sensation," he said. "Fact is, these honest people hawdly evah get a weally decent chance of seeing me weally pwoperly dwessed. Let's walk a little slowah, deah boys. I should hate to curtail their enjoyment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tubby, I must weally wequest you not to guffaw like a beastly hyena when in my company."

"Sorry, Egbert," apologised Bouncer, "but you're real cheese, aren't you?"

The Toff of the Fourth stopped abruptly and regarded the speaker with a cold stare.

"Tubby, I must weally wequest you to wefwain fwom wewerwing to me as 'cheese.' I considah it a disgustin' simile!"

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!" yelled Manvers, whose glance had at that moment alighted upon the station clock in the distance, "it's half-past four, and the train goes at four-thirty-five. Come on, or we shall miss it!"

He sprinted off in the direction of the station, while Tubby Bouncer, seizing Bertie by the arm, endeavoured to drag the Toff of the Fourth along as well.

"Come on, fathead!" he cried. "Buck up! Move your giddy pins! Run!"

"I wefuse to wun!" replied Marmaduke Percival. "I wegawd wunning as being utterly vulgah."

"But, dash it, owl, you'll miss the train!"

"Blow the twain! Wun yourself, my deah fellah. I wefuse to be hnwied."

"Very well, then, stay behind, jossler!" hooted Tubby, letting go his hold of Bly's arm and dashing off in Manvers's wake.

Fortunately, however, the outside clock of the station was four minutes fast, so that when Manvers and Bouncer rushed upon the platform

and entered the little local train which was to take them to the neighbouring town they found that they had three minutes to spare.

"All that giddy canter for nothing!" growled Manvers, from whom the perspiration was streaming in little rivulets. "Confound it!"

"And I bunged away half a doughnut, too!" exclaimed Tubby, indignantly. "Got the tickets?"

"Course I've got the tickets, fat-head!"

"Take one for Bertie?"

"Yes. Where is he?"

"There he is, there's the blighter, as cool as a giddy cucumber!" snorted Tubby, mopping his forehead and nodding up the platform, along which Marmaduke Percival was now strolling leisurely, twirling his gold-knobbed cane in his hand.

"There you are, then, deah boys," greeted the latter, with a languid smile. "Bai Jove, but you weally look quite hot! Been wunnin'?"

"Go on, jump in, Egbert," said Manvers, indicating a third-class compartment with a jerk of his thumb. "We shall go off in a minute."

The Toff of the Fourth gave vent to a gasp of mingled horror and astonishment.

"My deah fellahs," he said, "do you weally imagine that I am going to twavel in that howwible old beetle-widden cattle-twuck? Bai Jove! what do you take me for?"

"Well, what do you want to travel, 'first'?" inquired Manvers, staring.

"My hat! shall we get 'em to shove on a Pullman for you?" exclaimed Tubby Bouncer.

"Twy to wefwain fwom bein' wude, deah boys," replied Bertie, with hauteur. "Of course we're goin' to twavel first, or nothing. Follow your leadah, fathead, and don't play the giddy ox!"

Manvers and Bouncer followed the

Toff of the Fourth into a first-class compartment, upon the cushions of which they distributed themselves in attitudes of elegance and ease.

"This is a bit of all-right, this is!" remarked Tubby.

"Yes, but we shall get it in the neck from the guard for travelling first with third tickets," Manvers growled.

"Leave it to me, deah boys," answered Marmaduke Percival, loftily. "If there's any twouble, wely upon me."

At that moment the guard's whistle sounded, and the train, with a preliminary jerk, began to move. The same instant, however, there was a wild rush of feet, and a middle-aged man, of portly build and rubicund countenance, dashed up the platform.

"Bwavo!" hooted Bertie, from the window. "I'll bet you a tanner to a beastly sixpence this twain gets to the next station before you!"

"Stand back there!" shouted the guard.

"Nonsense!" gasped the middle-aged gentleman, flinging open the door of the first-class compartment in which the three boys were ensconced and springing in wildly upon Bertie's feet.

He closed the door behind him with a bang, the train glided out of the little station, and the newcomer flung himself down breathlessly into the only unoccupied corner of the compartment, breathing heavily, what time Bly, clutching his left foot in both hands, wriggled about on the cushions like an eel.

"I am afraid I trod on your foot, young gentleman," apologised he of the portly frame, gazing at the writhing Marmaduke Percival over the top of his pince-nez with an oily smile. "Hope I haven't hurt you?"

"Oh, pway don't mention it!" gasped Bly. "I thowoughly enjoyed

it. I should be vewy much olliged if you'd dance about on my other foot for a bit just to make it even."

"Don't be rude, young sir," retorted the old gentleman, irascibly.

"Wude, my eye!" exclaimed the indignant Egbert. "You should have waited for the next twain; beside, I vewy much doubt if you had any wight to entah this compartment at all."

"Why, what do you mean, you—"

"Have you a first-class ticket?" inquired Bertie, haughtily.

"What's that got to do with you? Mind your own business!" rapped out the other.

Five minutes later the train ran in to the next station.

"Portah," cried Bertie, leaning out of the open window and beckoning a railway servant with his gold-knobbed cane, "come heah!"

"Yes, sir?" replied the porter, with avidity, scenting a tip in view of Percival Egbert's immaculate attire and glossy topper.

"I am extwemely sowwy to twouble you, but I must weally request you to examine this gentleman's wayway-ticket. He hopped into our cawwiage at the last station, but I am convinced that he is twavellin' first-class with a beastly third-class ticket!"

"Ho, in that case we'd better have a squint at it," remarked the porter, dropping his trolley with a crash upon the platform and opening the carriage door. "May I see your ticket, please?" he added.

"No, you may not!" retorted the corpulent gentleman to whom the question was addressed.

"Ho, we'll see about that. Guard!"

"What's the matter? What's wrong here?" inquired the guard, coming up at the summons. "What's the trouble?"

"Old gent here refuses to show his

ticket," explained the porter. "This young toff says as 'ow 'e's only got a third-class ticket."

"I am afraid I must trouble you to let me see it," said the guard, holding out his hand.

Purple with anger, the florid-faced man in the corner produced the return half of a third-class ticket, which he held out to the guard with a muttered apology.

"Here, this won't do, sir," said that worthy, severely. "You'll have to get out and change your carriage, unless you like to pay the difference to Wickleham."

"I ain't going to pay no difference for anybody!" growled the old gentleman. "I'll swop my carriage."

Gathering up his hat and stick, he stepped out of the compartment, with a glare at the imperturbable Bly.

"I must warn you not to do this sort of thing again, sir," said the guard, "or you'll get into trouble. There's too much of that sort of thing goes on on this line for my fancy. 'Urry 'up, if you please! Third-class compartments at the other end."

"The beastly boundah!" exclaimed Marmaduke Percival, gazing indignantly after the retreating form of the other. "Wotten waster! I weally cannot understand how people have the cheek to t'wavel first with a third-class ticket. It's weally disgwaceful! Portah! here is a tanner for your twouble."

"Thank you, sir!" said the porter, taking the proffered sixpence with a grin.

"I am glad you called our attention to this matter, young gentleman," said the guard, addressing Bly. "It's not the first time we've caught people doing the same sort of thing. I'm much obliged to you."

"P'way don't mention it! I we-gard that fellah's conduct as being

most wepwehensible. He deserved to be shown up."

"My hat!" blurted out Tubby Bouncer, unable to contain himself at the sight of Bly's expression of injured innocence.

"Shut up, fathoad!" whispered Manvers, fiercely, landing out at Bouncer with a hand in which were clasped the three third-class tickets he had purchased for himself and the other two a while since.

Tubby deftly parried the blow, with the result that the three tickets in question flew out of his hand and fell upon the floor immediately in front of the open door where the guard was standing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried the official, seizing the pasteboards quickly. "What does this mean! These are not the right colour!"

He glanced at the tickets, and then held them out to Bertie Bly with an indignant stare.

"Eh?" queried Marmaduke Percival. "What?"

"These 'ere are third-class tickets!" rapped out the choleric guard.

"Of course they are, deah boy!" replied Marmaduke Percival. "Great Scott! tell me something I don't know!"

"And you're travelling with them?"

"Poor deah Queen Anne is long since defunct," replied Bertie, calmly. "But p'way don't get your wag out! We were going to pay the diffewence."

"Well, of all the confounded, brazen impudence!" gasped the guard. "You call me up to turn a man out when you have only got third-class tickets yourselves!"

"My dear fellah, I am vevy much afwaid you are lacking in a sense of humour."

"What?"

"Jump on your bally engine, deah boy, and dwive your beastly twain,"

continued Marmaduke Percival, imperturbably. "And if you will vewy kindly send me a ticket-collector by-and-by, I will dub up the diffewence with gweat pleasure!"

The whistle sounded from the other end of the train, and the guard moved hurriedly off, while the grinning porter closed the door.

Arriving at the station of Wicklehams the boys paid the excess fare due on their tickets, and then made their way into the busy little town, with the intention of giving the orders at the wholesale confectioners for the morrow's supply of comestibles to be sent up to the school.

"We must find the cheapest bally shop in the place," said Manvers. "Yesterday's lot of grub was too expensive. The lower the price we get the prog for, the better the giddy profit."

"Wathah! We'll find a wattlin' cheap place somewhere—Hallo, deah boys! that's a weally wipping girl!"

The Toff of the Fourth had pulled up outside the door of a small confectioner's shop in the High Street, behind the counter of which a smiling, pleasant-faced girl of about twenty was arranging some pastry on a large glass dish.

"Come on, fathead!" exclaimed Manvers, wrathfully. "What the dickens have girls got to do with you? Come to the wholesale place and let's do our business, crackpot."

"Yes, buck up, Bertie!" said Tubby Bouncer, "or the giddy place'll be closed for the night. Besides, if we give 'em a decent order, it's ten to one that they'll bung us in a few dough-nuts and things for nothing while we're there."

"Tubby, you're a howwible, gweedy beast!"

"Rats! Come on!"

They led the reluctant Egbert along the crowded High Street in the direction of the big wholesale

confectioner's, which was situated at the further end.

"I say, deah boys, that weally was a wipping girl!" broke out Marmaduke Percival, when they had traversed a few hundred yards. "I weally think—"

"Hanged if you do!" said Manvers. "I've never known you think yet. Come on!"

They wended their way in and out among the crowd—for it was market-day in Wicklehams, too, and the pavements were well-filled with pedestrians in consequence—until suddenly Manvers and Bouncer discovered that Bertie Bly was no longer by their side.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Manvers, "where's the image gone?"

"Dunno!" grined Tubby. "He was here a little while ago."

The Toff of the Fourth had disappeared as if by magic!

For the next ten minutes the two boys occupied themselves in seeking for their missing chum. But in vain. Not a sign of Marmaduke Percival could they see.

"Scotland Yard! I know where he's gone!" said Manvers, suddenly.

"Off his giddy rooker, I should think!"

"He's gone back to have another look at that girl in the confectioner's we passed just now."

"By Jove! I believe you're right! The silly image!"

They turned, and making their way along the thronged pavements, came at length to the confectioner's. Peering in through the window, they observed Marmaduke Percival Egbert engaged in close conversation with the pretty girl behind the counter, upon which Bertie Bly was leaning.

"What the deuce is he up to?" exclaimed Manvers.

"Come on, Fred!" Bouncer grinned. "We must hear what the silly jackass is gassing about."

Under cover of some wedding-cake boxes which had just been unpacked and stood piled near the open door, the two eavesdroppers were enabled to approach a few yards into the shop without being observed.

"Four dozen raspberry tarts, four dozen apricot ditto, and six dozen three-cornered puffs!" Marmaduke Percival was saying, in his most mellifluous accents. "Three dozen custards, and half a gross of doughnuts!"

"Yes, sir," said the girl, sweetly, as she rapidly dotted down the items upon a slip of paper before her. "Anything else, sir?"

"Oh, yes! oh, lor', yes!" replied Egbert Percival, hurriedly, blushing to the roots of his flaming red hair as he spoke. "I haven't half-finished yet. Wathah not! I want a howwible lot of things!"

Manvers and Tubby Bouncer gasped as they realised in an instant what had occurred. Charmed by the pretty face of the girl-assistant, Bly had slipped their company upon the first opportunity, and was now giving a wholesale order to the delighted dameel, buying up a stock of pastry at practically retail instead of wholesale prices, for the tuck-shop at the school!

"Now, my deah young lady," began Bertie, desisting from sucking the gold knob of his cane for a moment to bestow a killing smile upon the giggling girl, "we will begin on the sweet list."

"Oh, no, we won't!" cried Manvers, darting forward from his place of concealment.

"Not if we know it!" chuckled Tubby.

Marmaduke Percival started galvanically, and, swiftly turning, upset a huge tray of bath-buns all over the floor.

"Fweddy Manvers! Tubby! How

dare you intwude yourselves like this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I must wequest you to leave these pwemises immediately!"

"Come on, you fatheaded chump!"

"Manvers, release me! Tubby, let go my arm, you howwible wottah! Kindly wemove your filthy flippahs from my coat, Fweddy. Tubby, you are wumpling my collah!"

"Come on!"

"Travel!"

"Pway don't be so wough! I am just giving an ordah——"

"Yes, we heard you!" grinned Manvers. "You mustn't mind him, miss," he added, turning to the perturbed-looking girl behind the counter. "He's off his giddy rocker, you know."

"I beg your pardon——"

"Milky on the filbert," explained Tubby Bouncer. "Crumpy—balmy—mad, you know."

"Manvers! Tubby! how dare you tell such fwightful whoppahs?"

"I say, miss, he hasn't paid you anything yet, has he?" inquired Manvers, seriously.

"No, not yet, sir. He was just giving me the order, when——"

"Ah, then that's all right," said Manvers, in a tone of great relief. "Fraid you must cancel that order, miss. You see, the poor fellow isn't responsible for his actions."

"You wottah!"

"Bung him out, Tubby!" commanded Manvers, laying hold of Marmaduke Percival and dragging him towards the door.

"Welease me! Welease me at once, you howwible wuffians!"

But his hardhearted and unsympathetic chums ran the youthful scion of the noble house of Bly through the shop-door into the street, where, deaf to his expostulations and indignant threats of dire

reprisals, they dragged him off to the wholesale confectioner's at the other end of the town and stood over him what time he grudgingly gave the extensive order for the morning.

After that they lugged him off to the station, refusing to let go their hold of his collar until the train had started back to St. John's.

"P'w'aps you boundahs were wight to wun me away fwom that shop, after all," Percival Egbert agreed magnanimously, as the train moved out of the station. "The pwices that young lady quoted for the gwub were wuinous. At the same time, deah boys," added the Toff of the Fourth, with a heavy sigh, as he gazed out of the window at the now rapidly-receding town, "she was a weally wippin' girl!"

* * * * *

That Bertie Bly and Co. effected their commercial transactions successfully might be judged from the fact that, after second school upon the following day, their tuck-shop was replenished with every possible kind of comestible, while they had a reserve store packed away in their study as well.

Again the whole school made a rush upon the place, and again money flowed like water into the coffers of the enterprising three.

Only one little difference occurred among them, and that was when, during a lull in business, Tubby Bouncer was caught red-handed filching a doughnut and surreptitiously conveying same to his mouth. At first he denied the charge of pilfering, but when the doughnut in question was forcibly extracted from his jacket-pocket, he begged forgiveness of his two partners, and promised not to commit the same offence again.

But both Bertie and Manvers knew Tubby's weakness for food of old; consequently they threatened to kick him out of the firm there and

then, unless he consented to wear a muzzle, as Manvers disrespectfully called it, during business hours.

At first Tubby had strenuously refused to entertain the notion for a moment; but, seeing that his two friends meant to enforce their threat at all costs, he eventually gave way, as a result of which the fat boy of St. John's was to be seen assisting in the dispensation of the prog. disguised by a fencing-mask, which his two colleagues had secured about his neck, and through the wire-work of which he glared furiously at the grinning boy whom it fell to his lot to serve.

The next morning, however, when the trio sallied forth after second school from their classroom to hastily take charge of their "shop" before the rest of the fellows made a run upon it, they were staggered and amazed to observe upon the other side of the quad, exactly opposite their own tuck-shop, a stall composed of boxes covered with red cloth, upon which there stood a large array of comestibles, while ranged upon more boxes behind were baskets of oranges and apples, stacks of ginger-beer bottles, and great bundles of bananas. Hampers stood about everywhere, likewise gallon jars labelled "Lemonade," while there were two tins of sherbet, and one fair-sized crate marked "Tomatoes." Above the stall a kind of canopy had been arranged over four broom-handles stuck in four barrels filled with mould, and from the front of this canopy—a large scarlet tablecloth—there depended a placard bearing the legend:

AMERICAN STORE!

Proprietor: Silas Jinks, Esq.
Managing Directors: Messrs. John Edward Joyce and Archibald Macdonald Bruce.

CUTTING PRICES! HA'PENNY IN THE
PENNY OFF ALL PURCHASES!
NO DUD STUFF!

Jinks for Ever!

NO CONNECTION WITH THE FIRM OVER THE WAY!

Come up, Moderns, and patronise your own side! A Model Store for Modern Men! Everything cheaper and better than the tuck shop opposite! Rally round the Stars and Stripes!

Behind the counter Silas Jinks, Jack Joyce, and Archie Bruce were standing gazing at the three school-house juniors with expansive grins as the latter came to a halt in their wild career and stared at the rival store with widely-dilated eyes and drooping jaws.

"W-w-w-well, I'm spificated!" gaped Manvers.

"My beastly hat!" murmured Marmaduke Percival. "Am I dweamin', or have I got 'em again?"

"The rotters!" blurted out Tubby, "the absolute wasters! We're dished—we're diddled—we're done in the giddy optic!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the three Moderns from behind their counter.

"You beasts, you wotten boundahs, you—you—"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Come on!" cried Manvers, excitedly. "Here come the Fifth Formers! The whole school will be out in half a tick. Let's cut to our own show quick!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Followed by the derisive jeers of Jinks and Co., the school-house trio scuttled away across the quad to their cycle house, the big doors of which they hastily unlocked and flung open, displaying to view their own well-filled and carefully arranged counter. They had barely done so when there came a stampede of running feet mingled with shouting as the boys poured out of the various classrooms into the quadrangle.

"Walk up! Walk up! Walk up!" bawled Silas Jinks and his two colleagues. "Gather round, Moderns!

Who'll buy? Don't all speak at once!"

"Stick to the old firm!" yelled Manvers from the other side of the quad. "'Cheap and nasty' ain't the motto here!"

"Yaas, wathah! Stick to the old firm and shame the giddy devil!" hooted Bertie.

The unexpected sight of the rival tuck-shop brought shouts of laughter from the crowd of fellows who were streaming into the quad at every moment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roar of merriment might have been heard a mile away as it rose again and again upon the quiet noon-day air.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," cried Silas Jinks, standing on a tub and waving a penny flag decorated with the Stars and Stripes. "Now's your chance, sonnies! This is the firm for honest dealing and value for your oof!"

"Wats!" screeched Marmaduke Percival, making a trumpet of his hands. "Wats! and hang 'em aound your beastly neck, you wotten imitator!"

"Ancients, forward!" howled Tubby. "School-house, this way! Rally round!"

For the space of half a minute the big crowd hesitated, and then, by a natural impulse, the concourse divided up—the Modern fellows making a dive for Jinks's store, the Ancients rushing for place at the schoolhouse tuck-shop, the former roaring with laughter the while.

"Oh, my eye, rattling wheeze!"

"One on the boko for the school-house rotters!"

"Bravo, Jinkey!"

Trade at both "shops" was of the briskest. Oranges, apples, dough-nuts, and hard-boiled eggs, in which latter commodity both stores seemed to be particularly well provided, went off with amazing celerity, while

the loud popping of ginger-beer corks continuously punctuated the air upon both sides of the quad.

But mischief was in the air. The Ancients were now beginning to turn wrathful glances in the direction of the "American" tuck-shop, from which the strident voice of Silas Jinks came wafted from time to time:

"No rotten Ancient fodder here! Fresh goods only. Nothing 'Ancient' at all—bar our reputation! Down with the school-house! Moderns for ever! Walk up! Buck up, and patronise the Cock Store of the Cock House at St. Jack's!"

"I say, d'you hear that?" cried one of the school-house fellows, indignantly.

"Rather! We're not going to take that sort of thing lying down, are we?"

"No, hanged if we are! We ought——"

Again the voice of the irrepressible Jinks awoke the echoes:

"Would we serve a school-house rotter here? No! Do we admit their existence, sonnies? No durned fear! Why should the splash of the Moderns find its way into the pockets of the Ancient besters? Never let it be said! The Cock Store for the Cock House, and hurroo for the Moderns for ever!"

"Here, we're not going to put up with that cheek!" cried Manvers. "What do you say, you chaps?"

"Rather not!"

"Not likely!"

"No bally feah! Pway stand aside, deah boys!" cried Bertie Bly, excitedly. "Pway allow me to bung this egg at that frightful boundah Jinkey! Stand aside, or you will ruin my aim!"

As he spoke the Toff of the Fourth sent a hard-boiled egg hurtling through the air towards the rival store. Up it went like a bird, and, making a graceful curve, finally

alighted, by the merest lucky accident, precisely upon Silas Jinks's nose.

"Howling Chicago!" roared the proprietor of the American tuck-shop, reeling wildly backward and sprawling among the hampers behind him. "'Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the Ancients. "Bravo, Bertie! Good shot, sir! Well chucked indeed!"

For a moment the crowd of Moderns gathered about the store of Jinks and Co. were too nonplussed to realise what exactly had happened, or that the egg which had bowled the Yankee over had come from one of the Ancients.

Their hesitation was of but momentary duration, for an instant later a perfect hail of eggs, tomatoes, and oranges went flying towards the school-house tuck-shop, striking the Ancients in a dozen places at once.

The action was a signal for the commencement of a pitched battle between the two rival contingents of the school, with whom of late relations had been strained to breaking-point. No sooner had the Moderns' first volley descended among them than the Ancients, frantically raiding the cycle store, returned the compliment with a shower of missiles comprising anything they could lay their hands upon, from hard-boiled eggs to tangerines.

Then a scene of the wildest confusion ensued, a spectacle the like of which had never before been witnessed at the famous old school; for, following the Ancients' example, the Moderns likewise made a dash for whatever they could lay their hands upon in their tuck-shop, swiftly rifling hampers and baskets which lay around, despite the loudly-voiced expostulations of Silas Jinks, Joyce, and Bruce, who, however, were borne to the ground in the rush.

Thus armed, the two sides advanced upon each other at a run.

Showers of hard-boiled eggs were answered by volleys of Ribstone pippins, while a hail of tangerines and crab-apples was responded to by a rain of bananas and tomatoes.

Squish! squash! Biff! biff! Bang! Thwack! Squelch!

The air was thick with the flying missiles, and in less than a minute the quad was littered from end to end. Then pork pies, three-cornered puffs, jam tarts, and cheese-cakes were brought into requisition, to be followed almost immediately by another fusillade of fruit and vegetables as the fellows gathered up the damaged apples, oranges, and tomatoes from the ground.

Biff! biff! biff! Smack! Squash! Thwack!

The two sides were fighting at close quarters now, and their features were, almost without exception, despoiled and dripping with the juice of the broken fruits. Scores of eyes had been bunged up by a particularly well-directed missile, while more than one fellow's "claret" had been tapped!

Hoots, yells, shouts, and the war-whoops of each contingent filled the air, and a glance would have been sufficient to convince the onlooker that the pitched battle which had begun half in jest had now developed into a fight in dead earnest.

Suddenly and without warning, as though they were acting upon a given signal, the Ancients and Moderns rushed upon each other pell-mell, disregarding their erstwhile weapons of attack in place of their fists, which they used to full advantage as they fell upon each other tooth and nail.

It was the biggest House row that had ever occurred in the annals of St. John's, and when Dr. Dalton and some of the masters, attracted by the din, arrived upon the scene,

they stood rooted to the spot at the spectacle presented to their view; for the whole of the four hundred boys which comprised the college—seniors and juniors alike—were in the quad fighting like furies, charging each other in battalions, retreating in batches and then dashing forward again, slipping and sliding about, meanwhile, in all directions upon squashed tomatoes, oranges, and bananas which had long since lost all resemblance to fruit of any kind.

How, in spite of the masters' utmost endeavours to stop the fray, the battle-royal waged for the better part of an hour, need not be detailed here. Suffice it that at the end of that period the rival contingents were forced to desist from sheer exhaustion. It was for ever after a matter of dispute as to which side had gained the day, the Moderns claiming that distinction, the Ancients disputing it strenuously. If the truth must be told, however, there is but little doubt that it was the Moderns who got the worst of the fray; for, upon subsequent investigation, it was very evident that not one of their number had got off unscathed, while some had been very badly knocked about indeed, while the Ancients, on the other hand, had suffered considerably less individual damage. Moreover, the Moderns had not the hardihood to deny that they had been driven to the quadrangle wall at least three times during the melee.

Later that afternoon an announcement appeared in the doctor's handwriting upon the school notice-board to the effect that he required a full muster in Hall at seven o'clock.

By which the whole school knew that it was in for a row from the Head.



CHAPTER 2.

THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT

AND a very severe and scathing lecture the headmaster had prepared. For when the four hundred fellows had answered to call-over and the doctor made his appearance, he spoke in the most cutting terms concerning what he designated as their "singularly unbecoming, their preposterous, their even black-guardly behaviour" of that afternoon.

After severely censuring the captains and seniors of both contingents—for these had played quite as prominent a part in the fracas as had the juniors who had started it—the headmaster wound up his diatribe with an exhortation to the whole school to abolish the strong party-feeling which existed between them. He adjured them to pull with, and not against, each other, pointing out that the general credit and welfare of the school were bound to suffer in consequence of that school being divided against itself.

He had determined, he said, to cancel the bi-weekly half-holidays for the next month as a punishment for the inexcusable outbreak in the quad, but he would reconsider his decision in the matter, and would, in fact, extend a pardon to seniors and juniors alike if the fellows would undertake to keep the peace in future.

This resolution was greeted with loud cheers from both Ancients and Moderns alike.

Only one thing, the doctor said, when the noise had died down, would he be compelled to do, and that would be to abolish the school-house tuck-shop and the stores. He had thought that the formation of a tuck-shop in the school precincts would redound to the benefit of the boys, but he now saw plainly that

this would only be the cause of constant rivalry and friction between the two Houses, even as it had been to-day; consequently, both the tuck-shops must in future consider themselves suspended.

Prolonged groans from Messrs. Bly, Jinks, and Co.

"And now," remarked the doctor, referring to a slip of paper in his hand, "I have to make an announcement, which I am sure will please you all. It is that the sum total collected for the Devoreux subscription has, I find, amounted to well over the fifty pounds I had hoped for, amounting, in fact, to sixty-eight pounds, ten shillings and eightpence. I have forwarded a cheque for that amount this afternoon to the widowed lady, who is so greatly in need of it. We shall probably hear from her to-morrow. It is to be sincerely hoped," added the headmaster, with a quizzical smile, peering over his gold-rimmed pince-nez at the sea of faces before him—"it is to be very sincerely hoped that there are no enterprising burglars at present in the neighbourhood of St. John's, for at least two drawers of my *escritoire* are filled with gold and silver as a result of yours and my colleagues' contributions."

After letting off this very innocuous joke, the worthy Head, delighted beyond measure at the manner in which his boys had responded to the charitable appeal he had made a few days before, passed out of Hall, followed by the other masters, a benignant smile upon his kindly face.

Not a little elated at having escaped condign punishment for their escapade of that afternoon, the four hundred boys trooped out of the great room after him, and made their way to their various quarters, both Ancients and Moderns being for the present upon better terms with each other than they had known for a long time past.

There was one boy, however, who made his way to his study with a slow step and a clouded brow, and that was Larrimore Logan, who, after entering his room, kicked the door to savagely behind him.

By that evening's post the bully had received yet another communication from the money-lender in London with whom he had so unwisely become entangled, and it was this epistle which Logan, after turning up his gas, perused with a white face. The note was briefer and more to the point than the usurer's last communication had been. It ran:

"SIR,—Your letter to hand. I regret that I cannot alter my decision or extend any further clemency to you. If I do not receive at least half the sum I owe to me by Friday morning, I shall call upon your father and explain the case. Yours truly,

"ISAAC COHEN."

With tightly-compressed lips and a brow wrinkled in thought, Logan folded up the money-lender's epistle and replaced it in his pocket. Then he began to walk up and down the little room with bent head, as he had done before three days ago.

Suddenly he stopped as though struck with an idea. With a new look upon his face—a look of anxious, eager intentness, he remained standing in the middle of the room, motionless, immovable.

"Dare I risk it?" he whispered to himself in the silence. "Dare I—dare I do it? Pshaw! one must run risks to gain an end. And yet—"

Again he began to perambulate the room, but now with swift, nervous strides the while his eyes wandered to and fro over the faded carpet beneath his feet. His hands were clasped behind him, and as he walked they twitched convulsively.

Presently he stopped again,

thrusting his hands deep into his trouser-pockets with an air of desperation.

"By Heaven, I'll do it!" he muttered, hoarsely. "It is my only chance! I'll do it to-night, before it is too late!"

* * * * *

Boom! Boom!

The deep notes of the school-house clock echoed across the moonlit quadrangle, floating into the partly open windows of Fuller's House, situated upon the other side.

It was two o'clock. The whole college was wrapped and lapped in slumber, and Morpheus reigned supreme over Ancients and Moderns alike. In Fuller's House the going of the hours passed unheeded, for boys and masters were sunk in profoundest sleep, the former in their various quarters, the latter in their dormitory cubicles.

In one of these dormitories, however, a boy lay listening to the striking of the great clock with straining ears, even as he harkened intently to the steady breathing of his companions in their beds around.

The boy was Larrimore Logan.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes he waited after the last vibration of the old bell had died away into stillness, and then slowly, cautiously he slipped from his bed and drew on his clothes, making no noise, moving about like a cat in the shadow of his cubicle. Five minutes later, with a guilty glance about the long, moonlit dormitory, he crept from the room and made his way down the broad, branching staircase which led to the hall below.

Here all was silent and still. Crossing to the hall door, he turned the key in the lock and slipped the bolt. A moment later Logan was standing in the quad, his head averted in a listening attitude. Then, taking swift strides in his

indiarubber shoes, he crossed the quadrangle and approached the rear of the school-house. Gently pushing up a window, he drew himself up to the ledge and clambered through.

Within the Ancient stronghold, to which was annexed the doctor's quarters, all was quiet as the grave and as dark save for the faint light which filtered through the casement he had just left. Creeping along the passage cautiously, the midnight marauder made his way into a broad corridor, out of which led several doors. One of these doors at the further end the boy softly opened and stole in, leaving it slightly ajar behind him. Then he stood in the dark, and listened for two full minutes without moving.

"All serene!" he muttered beneath his breath. "There's not a sound."

A moment later he had struck a match, and lighted the stump of a candle which he produced from his jacket pocket, and the glimmer of which now illumined a small, tastefully-furnished room containing an escritoire, a cabinet, and an old oak bookcase. A Turkey carpet covered the floor, while the walls were hung with several old oil paintings.

It was Dr. Dalton's private study, the little sanctum into which few had ever penetrated.

"Just like the old boy to leave the door unlocked!" chuckled Logan to himself, as he produced a bunch of keys and a small chisel from his pocket. "Saved me the fag of getting in through the window, anyhow. Now, I wonder in which of these drawers the old fool has put the subscription money? I'll try this one to begin with. If one of these keys should fit, there'll be no need to use the chisel at all."

Placing the lighted stump of candle upon a chair at his side, he dropped upon his knees before the

escritoire, and after trying the lock of the top drawer with half a dozen of the keys upon his bunch it slid open.

A glance, however, at its contents was sufficient to show the would-be purloiner that it contained nothing of more value than a few private papers.

With a muttered exclamation of impatience Logan pushed back the drawer into its slot again, and turned his attention to the one immediately below it. Again he tried the keys upon his bunch one after the other, carefully and laboriously, until at last he found another to fit the rather larger lock. A moment later the second drawer stood open.

Another exclamation escaped the bully of St. John's, but this time it was one of satisfaction. For it was filled with loose half-crowns and shillings, while a small leather bag reposed upon the top.

Tossing his bunch of keys aside upon the soft carpet, Logan took up this bag, and hastily opening it, gazed eagerly at the little pile of sovereigns which it contained.

"Gold!" muttered Logan. "I'm in luck!"

The whispered words had barely escaped his lips when something stirred upon his left.

It was only the little clock upon the mantelpiece warning to strike, however, and with a sigh of relief that was almost a gasp, Logan turned back to his nefarious occupation again.

Tilting the gold out into the palm of his hand, he methodically counted the coins.

"Twenty pounds!" he breathed, his lips curving in a half grin. "Twenty pounds! By Jove! I'll bag the lot and hide 'em in my room until the row's blown over."

The clock chimed the half-hour, its tiny gong sounding curiously

shrill in the utter stillness of the room.

"The silver's too risky," Logan continued, still speaking to himself in a whispered undertone. "Better only to take the gold. It's easier to hide."

He chuckled, and began to push the little drawer into its place again. But the chuckle died away in his throat, his face grew suddenly livid, and he remained staring before him, hardly daring to breathe.

He was afraid to move, too terrified to turn his head, but he knew—he was sure—that someone was standing behind him.

One, two, three seconds passed—three long seconds, which to the terror-stricken boy seemed like three eternities. Then, grating his teeth together, he forced himself to turn his head over his shoulder. The next instant he had sprung to his feet with a half-smothered oath as his startled gaze fell upon the figure of a boy standing in the open doorway regarding him steadily.

It was Jim Carton.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COWARD.

For the space of nearly half a minute the boys stood gazing at each other in silence. Then Logan, moistening his dry lips, took a half step forward.

"You!" he gasped, faintly.

Carton made no reply. His face was no less pale than that of the boy whom he had caught in the act of robbing the head-master's desk, and his eyes wandered from Logan to the open drawer, from there to the empty gold bag lying upon the floor, the chisel and keys beside it.

"So that's the game, is it?" he blurted out, at length. "I saw a light from the passage, and I

thought it was a burglar. I—I did not dream it was you."

Logan threw out his hand with a hurried gesture of fear.

"For Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud!" he cried, in a low tone.

Then the expression of his face changed from that of cringing fear to low, evil cunning.

"For your own sake, Jim Carton, I shouldn't speak too loud if I were you," he said.

"Why? What do you mean?"

"You've caught me in the act of stealing this subscription money, but how comes it that you yourself are prowling about the corridors at half-past two in the morning, eh, Jim Carton? Your dormitory is in the other wing, as I happen to know. Come, don't play the hypocrite or the sneak. It's just been a matter of luck. You heard what the doctor said about the money in the eseritoire in Hall this evening, and now you're on the same game as I am."

"What, you—"

"Aha! don't bluff. It won't work with me, Jim Carton. I say you came down here to break into that desk yourself. What else would bring you down here—here, to the doctor's study, at this time of the night? You're a pauper—everyone knows that—and you meant to nail some of this money to-night. Come, now, be reasonable, be fair. Don't take a mean revenge just because I happened to get here first and spoil your deal."

The bully dropped his voice.

"We'll share and share alike, though, you and I. We're both on the same lay—well, then, let's divide the money and say no more about it. You take half. I'll take the other half. If we threw the things about the room a bit and upset a chair or two, the doctor 'u'd think it was a case of ordinary burglars perhaps. Come, now, what d'you say?"

Logan's head was thrust forward between his shoulders, his eyes glittered, and his lips twitched with agitation as he waited for the other boy to speak.

"What do I say?" echoed Carton, scornfully. "I say you're a fool, as well as a confounded knave, if you think that I have designs on yonder desk. I have been working in my study since midnight, sweating for the exams. Every night for the last month I have slipped away from the dormitory when the fellows were asleep to put in a couple of hours' work in my room. As I have to pass this door going to and fro, I saw your light just now when going back. However, I can't stand talking here. I am sorry—dashed sorry, Logan—but there's nothing for it but for me to give you away. Would to Heaven someone else had caught you! You must stay here, Logan, while I lock you in and summon the doctor."

The bully of St. John's put his hand up to his head, and stared at the speaker in a dazed way. His usually florid face was ghastly pale, beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead, and his lips were parted and drawn down. Then, suddenly, before Carton knew what he was about to do, the fellow had fallen upon his knees in an agony of guilty fear, grasping the other's jacket in a trembling hand.

"For Heaven's sake, Carton, don't blab!" he cried, hoarsely. "If you do I shall be ruined—ruined, do you hear?—done for! I shall be expelled; my gov'nor will cut me off. You don't know my father, or you would understand. Be a brick, Carton—be a brick, and don't say a word. I was tempted—tempted horribly. In the last vac. I got mixed up with a money-lender. I had been gambling, and had got into terrible straits. This man in London advanced me money, and

now he has been threatening to tell my father the circumstances if I don't pay up at once. I couldn't pay, Carton; I hadn't got the money. But when the Head talked about the subscription money being in his room, I—I saw a way out. I fell into the temptation, Carton, as you yourself might have done had you been in my place."

"Get up! Get up!"

"No, no. Listen—just listen to me for a moment. I have done wrong—'terrible wrong, but no one will suffer if I put the money back now—all of it. If I return it now no one will ever be the wiser, save you and I. No one will know that we have been here to-night at all. Think, only think what it will mean to me if I am held up before the whole school as a thief. The trouble I was afraid of with the money-lender and my father would be nothing—nothing to that terrible disgrace. Carton—Jim—let me put the money back and go. Just this once. Put yourself in my place, and think how you would feel if you had been caught just as you have caught me now. For Heaven's sake, Carton, be a brick, and let us go from here before we are heard. Say you will—say you will!"

The bully's voice had dropped to a cringing whine, and as he finished speaking the hoarsely-whispered words he gripped Carton's arm in his agitation, turning up his white face in a piteous appeal.

For a long while Jim Carton remained silent. He knew that he ought to tell the doctor everything, and yet his heart was touched to the quick by the words he had just listened to. If, he thought, he informed the Head of Logan's attempted theft the boy might be ruined for life, might go from bad to worse, dragged down by the millstone of his shame and his expulsion

from the school into the very mire of despair. After all, as the boy had said, no actual harm had been done. The money could be replaced at once, the drawers re-locked, and all traces of the attempted robbery obliterated. No one would be harmed by his—Carton's—silence, whereas the boy now cringing before him might be saved from a downward course in life. Yes, after all, it would be better to give Logan the chance he begged for, to give him a new start, he concluded.

Jim Carton's resolution was soon formed, and he acted upon it at once.

"Get up, Logan," he said; "don't kneel there. Put that money back at once and lock those drawers, and I promise not to say anything if—"

The bully sprang to his feet, and grasped the other's unresponsive hand.

"D'you mean it—d'you really mean it?" he whispered, breathlessly. "God bless you, old son! You're the biggest friend I ever had."

"I am no friend of yours, Logan, don't think that. It is only that I could not have it on my conscience that I helped to send a fellow on the downward path when I might perhaps have saved him."

Logan winced.

"But you're a pal—you're a pal, all the same!" he said, with unrestrained fervour.

He turned towards the open drawer of the *escritoire*, and then came back again to where the other was standing.

"Here," he said, holding out the roll of sovereigns which had remained clasped in his hand since he had taken them from the little leather bag, "take these and put them back yourself. Count them, and return them to the drawer so

that you may be sure that I am not keeping any."

"I'll trust you," said Carton, briefly. "Be quick."

"No, no, you put them back and lock the drawers. I feel done—done up. My hand is shaking like a leaf. I can't—"

"All right, give them here."

Carton took the gold from the other's moist, trembling hand, and picking up the leather bag from the floor where Logan had tossed it, he slid the sovereigns into it. Dropping upon one knee before the desk, he was in the act of replacing the bag in the half-open drawer, when a half-smothered exclamation from the boy behind him caused him to stop and turn.

The next instant he had risen to his feet with a quick intake of the breath as his gaze fell upon Dr. Dalton, the head-master, who, clad in dressing-gown and list slippers, was standing at the entrance to the study with the open door in his hand.

"What does this mean?"

The doctor's low-toned voice cut through the silence of the room like a knife as he looked long and searchingly from one to the other of the two boys. For a moment neither of them spoke, and then it was Logan who broke the terrible pause with a whirl of vehemently-uttered words.

"I caught him, sir, caught him in the act!" he said, breathlessly, pointing an accusing finger as he spoke at Jim Carton, who, with the little leather bag of gold still in his hand, was gazing at him blankly. "I saw a light here from my dormitory window across the quad—it's opposite this study, you know, sir. Being sleepless, I happened to look out, and when I saw the glimmer of that candle I slipped over at once, climbed through another window, and caught Carton in the act of

rifing your escritoire in the nick of time. But I promised to say nothing if he'd put the money back. I didn't want to ruin him—indeed I didn't. But now you've discovered us there's no use trying to conceal it any longer. It's too late for that."

The doctor nodded.

"Yes, Logan," he said, gravely, "it is indeed too late for that. Carton, my lad, what have you to say?"

Carton took a step forward, his eyes fixed in a wild stare upon Logan's livid face. He had been too nonplussed and horrified at the bully's brazen audacity to speak before, and even now his voice was husky and unlike his own.

"You cur!" he cried. "You contemptible hound! Why"—he turned to the doctor swiftly—"it was I who discovered Logan. He is lying, sir—lying abominably. Look," he added, stretching out a hand and pointing to the open drawer—"look, sir, there are his keys—the keys he used to open the desk!"

Logan stepped back as if the speaker had dealt him a blow, while a half-smothered oath escaped his lips.

The head-master closed the study door in silence, and then he turned to Carton with a grave smile, as he said:

"I do not need your word or the evidence of that bunch of keys to tell me who was the real thief here to-night," he said, in a pained voice. "I was awake when you passed my bedroom door, Carton, ten minutes ago, and I followed you here."

"Then—then, sir, you heard—you overheard—"

"Everything," answered the doctor, solemnly. "I listened outside that door just now to your conversation with this unfortunate lad. It was noble of you, very noble

of you indeed, to consent to shield him, but I am afraid your generosity would have been terribly misplaced. Logan, go back to your dormitory at once. I will talk to you in the morning. For your own sake you will say nothing of what has occurred to anyone. I do not wish the school to be disgraced. You will leave the college quietly to-morrow. Go!"

When the morning came, however, and call-over was taken, Larrymore Logan was found to be missing. Subsequent inquiries seemed to indicate that the boy had caught the first up-train to London, a theory which was substantiated later on in the day by a telegram received from the boy's father saying that his son had confessed everything. The mystery of the bully's disappearance, however, was not explained to the school at large, and it was only after the lapse of two or three weeks that the real truth leaked out. For Jim Carton, acting upon the doctor's wishes, had not breathed a word of what had taken place in the study that night when he had surprised Logan in his nefarious occupation.

The bully's father, after a long interview with the head-master, agreed, after some persuasion upon the part of the kindly-hearted doctor, to deal leniently with his son. He informed the Head that he intended sending the lad to America, where, under the eye of a brother who was concerned in commercial enterprise, he would have a chance of making a new way in the world.

In the course of time Jim Carton got his remove to a higher Form, and after months of hard work he subsequently won a school scholarship which entitled him to three years' tuition at the college without fees. This had been the boy's

great goal and ambition, for, a few months subsequent to his arrival at the school, his father had failed and become bankrupt through no fault of his own. Relatives had sent Jim to the college, which had been his father's greatest wish that he should join, and in an almost incredibly short period Carton had proved to them that their generosity had not been misplaced.

It was with no little regret, however, that Marmaduke Percival Egbert Bly and his two chums, Manvers and Tubby Bouncer, saw their erstwhile friend and classmate pass into a higher Form at the summer half. They saw little of

him after that, and so were fain to follow their own devices without his companionship. And very many and various were the strange adventures and escapades which "the Toff of the Fourth" and his two chums went through — adventures which will be narrated hereafter. Their constant rivalry with the Modern trio, Silas Jinks, Joyce, and Archie Bruce, formed the basis of further "japes" and "wheezes," an enumeration of which might well fill many volumes.

But it may be truthfully said that both contingents were heartily glad to see the last of Larrymore Logan, the bully of St. John's,

THE END.

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