

**THE CLIFF HOUSE  
PARTY!**

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

**ONE OF THE  
BEST!**

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

**THE VANISHED  
SCHOOLBOY!**

By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

# The **Penny Popular**

No.  
248.

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



## **A WHIPPING FOR BILLY BUNTER!**

(A Great Scene from the Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.,  
contained in this issue.)

# THE CLIFF HOUSE PARTY!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

*A Magnificent Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Early Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Billy Bunter Catches It.

**M**ARJORIE HAZELDENE came out of the Head's house at Greyfriars with a serious expression upon her charming face. Her friend Clara was waiting for her under the big elms.

For more than a week the girls had been at Greyfriars. Cliff House, the girls' school, presided over by Miss Penelope Primrose, was deserted, and Miss Primrose's fair pupils were being "put up" at Greyfriars. It was a curious change for them, and for the Greyfriars fellows.

"Any news?" asked Miss Clara, linking her arm in her friend's.

"Yes; we're going back to-night."

"Oh!"

"Miss Locke has just told me so," said Marjorie. "You know they discovered that there was something wrong with the foundations at Cliff House—"

"Something rocky," said Miss Clara, who was somewhat addicted to slang, doubtless from hearing so much boyish conversation of late. "Yes, I know."

"Well, it turns out to be a false alarm. They've made a thorough examination, and the place is safe enough."

Miss Clara sniffed a little.

"That's through leaving matters of this sort to men," she remarked. "Men are always floundering out that something is wrong somewhere, when it isn't. I know all the time that Cliff House was safe enough, but that old gentleman talked to Miss Primrose in such dreadfully long words that she believed the place was nearly tottering. If she had asked my opinion—"

Marjorie laughed.

"But she didn't, dear. Of course, it was thoughtless of her. But there is good news; we're going back this evening, and Miss Primrose is going to give a garden-party to-morrow afternoon, and invite all the Greyfriars juniors, as a mark of our—of our appreciation, I think Miss Locke said, of their kindness to us during our stay here."

Miss Clara clapped her hands enthusiastically.

"Ripping!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, Clara!"

"Oh, don't say 'Oh, Clara!' or I shall say spiffing next!" said Miss Clara, with a toss of her golden head. "It is ripping, so there! And Miss Primrose is a duck—a real duck! A garden-party is just the thing! Do you remember the night of the dance?"

"Yes, indeed; it was lovely!"

"I say, you fellows—I mean, you girls—"

Marjorie Hazeldene looked round to find Billy Bunter, the fat junior of the Remove, standing at her side.

"I say, would either of you like a gold watchchain—thirty-six carat gold case," said Bunter, who was rather hazy as to

the possible number of carats, but did not mean to err on the side of being too moderate, "or a splendid dogwhip? I've got ten articles to sell at ruinous prices, and I should like you to make some bargains."

"I don't want any, thank you! We are leaving Greyfriars to-day."

"Oh, really! I'm sincerely sorry. Perhaps you would like to buy some of these things which I am selling for the Imperialist Fair Trading Company," said Bunter, fishing out handfuls of the goods—gold watchchains, chain bracelets, lace-edged handkerchiefs, etc.

"No, thank you!" said Clara, with a scornful glance at the array of rubbish Bunter held out enticingly. "But you can return Marjorie the half-crown she lent you last week, as we are leaving the school to-day."

Bunter blinked at her.

"The—the half-crown?"

"Yes," said Marjorie. "You promised it for last Saturday."

"Ah, yes, I remember! I was going to settle it out of the cheque I was expecting for some work done for the Patriotic Home Work Association," said Bunter. "Unfortunately, that turned out to be a swindle. They did me out of six shillings for a colour-box, and then steadily refused to take any picture-postcards I coloured for them. I've spent a small fortune in postage to the cads. Rotten, isn't it? Of course, I shall repay the half-crown shortly. I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning, and you can have it out of that."

"You promised it for Saturday, and I needed it."

"Yes; but I didn't get the cheque," said Bunter, in a tone of patient explanation. "I suppose it's impossible for the feminine mind to understand business. However, I will settle it shortly. When I have sold all these articles I shall get a free camera, and I am going to do photographic work for the Press. I expect to make pounds and pounds. Would you care to have this splendid forty-six carat silver-mounted dogwhip as a parting gift for Wharton? He's thinking of buying a dog, and I believe he's rather expecting a present from you, as you're going away."

"You untruthful little wretch!" said Miss Clara. "How dare you say such things? Harry does not even know we are going away yet!"

"N-n-n-n-no; I suppose not! I—I mean, I think he would naturally expect a present if he knew, and you can have this dogwhip cheap."

"Can I try it?" asked Miss Clara, with a glimmer in her eyes that the short-sighted Owl of the Remove failed to see.

"Oh, certainly! It's a splendid article, and—Ow! What are you doing?"

Miss Clara had taken the dogwhip, and

was making free play with it round Bunter's fat calves.

"Ow, ow! O-o-o-h! Gerroosh!" Bunter hopped to escape the stinging slashes, but Miss Clara was in earnest. As fast as he hopped she caught him with the lash, and Bunter howled and danced like a lunatic.

"Ow, ow! Stop it! Wow!" "You untruthful little wretch!" gasped Miss Clara, breathless with her exertions. "You ought to be thrashed!"

"Ow, ow! Wow! Yow!" "Oh, dear—oh, dear!" exclaimed Marjorie, with the tears of merriment running down her cheeks—"oh, dear! That will do, Clara!"

"The little wretch was telling stories! Take that, and that!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Miss Clara finally threw the dogwhip at Bunter. The fat junior ceased his impromptu dance, and jammed his spectacles straight on his nose. Half a dozen juniors had gathered round, attracted by the noise, and they were shouting with laughter. Bunter blinked at them furiously.

"Ow, ow! Oh, dear, I am hurt! I don't like that girl Clara at all! Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two girls were walking away, leaving Bunter wailing miserably.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Greyfriars Merchant Does Not Prosper.

**I** SAY, Ionides—excuse me, you know—"

Billy Bunter looked cautiously into the study of Ionides of the Sixth. The Greek was sitting before his window, leaning back in a luxurious chair, with his feet upon a velvet footstool.

Everything in Ionides' study spoke of luxury and wealth. The Sixth-Former was the son of a wealthy Greek merchant, and his allowance of pocket-money was of a size that made even rich fellows at Greyfriars open their eyes.

He was ostentatious with it, too, a dandy in dress, and thoroughly effeminate in his tastes; so that there was a great deal more contempt than liking for him in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars.

Yet Ionides had his good points in his way; he could be generous, at all events, to those who flattered him sufficiently; and at Greyfriars, as everywhere else, there were eyeopponents.

To Billy Bunter's mind, Ionides was just the fellow to purchase some of the wonderful bargains supplied by the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. Bunter's taste in jewellery was not exactly that of an artist, and to his eyes the big sham-gold watchchain was a work of art.

After his encounter with the Cliff House girls, he had watched for Ionides to come, and he had seen the Greek

senior enter with Carberry, and followed him to his study.

Ionides turned his head a little and glanced at the fat junior.

"What do you want?"

"I—I want to speak to you, my lord," said Bunter. "Excuse me calling you my lord, but I've heard from the fellows that you are a lord in your native land, and I can't help thinking it's true."

The senior's face softened somewhat. His vanity was excessive; he could take in flattery as a gudgeon takes in bait, and even such crude chunks of flattery as Billy Bunter administered were acceptable to him.

"You are right!" he exclaimed. "I am one of the oldest families in Greece; and my ancestors fought with Leonidas at Thermopylae."

"Did they really?" asked Billy Bunter, who had very hazy notions of that brilliant period of Greek history. "What was the row about? I suppose Leonidas was an awful rotter, and I hope they licked him."

Ionides sniffed.

"Fool! I mean they were in the army of Leonidas, against the Persians," he said. "But how should you understand, with your dull English brain?"

"Of course not," said Bunter readily. Bunter would have sold his patriotism for a mess of pottage any day. "You're quite right, you know. I don't believe in all this talk about you aliens. Not all of you, at all events. I don't see why you should stay at home if your countries aren't fit to live in."

Somehow, this tactful remark did not seem to please Ionides. He sniffed again. Bunter went on in the same strain of gentle flattery.

"We're all awfully glad to have some of you aliens here, Ionides. Some of the fellows say you're a bully and a beast, and a silly ass, and so on. They're always making jokes about your using face-wash and darkening your eyebrows, and putting your hair in curling-pins of a night. But I don't see why you shouldn't if you want to—Ow-wow!"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly as a heavy volume, hurled by Ionides, caught him on the chest.

He was fairly bowled over, and he sat down upon the carpet with a bump that shook the study. It was a thick Turkish carpet, but Bunter was hurt all the same. He sat there gasping, and blinking at the angry Greek through his big spectacles.

"Ow-wow! Yow! What did you do that for, you beast?"

"Get out of my study!"

"But—but I—Ow!" Bunter staggered to his feet. "I—I came to speak to you on an important matter, Ionides."

"If you have a message, deliver it, and go!" exclaimed the Greek, with a wave of his hand, which made three or four valuable rings flash in the light.

"It isn't exactly a message," stammered Bunter, feeling that he had started very badly, though he had intended to be very tactful and flattering. "It's—it's about some things I want to show you, my lord. If your lordship would condescend to look at them—"

"What are you chattering about?"

"I thought you might like to buy this ripping gold watchchain," said Bunter, producing it. "It's splendid workmanship, sixty-eight carat gold—"

"You young fool!"

"I—I mean fifty-two carat gold," stammered Bunter. "Wonderful value for the money. How much did you give for that watchchain, Ionides?"

"Twelve guineas," said the Greek boastfully.

"My hat! What a feed you could have stood for a lot of money like that!" exclaimed Bunter, aghast. "However,

you can have this watchchain at a big bargain, for two guineas. That isn't much to you, and you can keep that one you have now for second-best, you know."

The Greek rose to his feet, and looked at the chain and then at Bunter. His own chain was a very handsome and tasteful one, and the chain Bunter was holding up for him to view was hideous and vulgar in design, and of a colour that proclaimed its sham nature at a dozen yards distance.

"Jolly good, isn't it?" said Bunter, putting the chain into the Greek's outstretched hand. "Of course, it isn't solid. But it's thirty-six carat gold case, you know, and looks better than the solid article, owing to the superior workmanship."

Ionides took the chain, and looked at it, and then looked towards his fire. The Greek always had the luxury of a fire in the evening, and his grate looked very handsome and bright with a brass curb and fireirons, which lavish tips induced the maids to keep as clean as new pennies.

"Haven't you anything more to show me?" asked Ionides, in a tone that would have warned anybody but Bunter that he meant mischief.

But Billy Bunter was too occupied with his own thoughts to notice anything. He thought he had found a customer, and he was beaming with satisfaction.

"Yes, rather, my lord!" said Bunter.

"What do you think of this handsome, solid silver-mounted cigarette-case, in real Morocco leather, from our own factories at Tangier—I mean the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.'s own factories at Tangier? Fastens with a catch, first quality, and holds ten cigarettes, and slips into the pocket like—like anything. How do you like it? Take it and look at it. Our goods will bear the closest inspection."

Anything more.

"Yes; here's a silver pocket pencil, solid silver lead—I mean solid silver case, first-class black lead, made in England—none of your beastly foreign stuff about it—writes like—like anything. Look at it."

"Anything more?"

"Certainly. Here's a handsome dog-whip, real whistle, and lash on it, silver-mounted in first-class style. You can have it for ten-and-six."

"Good!"

Ionides stepped over to the fire, and thrust the four articles he held deep into the red cinders, and proceeded to stir the fire over them with the poker.

Billy Bunter gazed at him for a moment spellbound.

He could hardly realise what was happening.

But as the valuable dog-whip and the priceless cigarette-case flared up and crackled in the fire, he made a wild rush forward to save them.

"Oh, really, Ionides! I say, you beast, I—"

The Greek grasped him by the shoulder, and held him back with a hand of iron.

"So much for your impertinence!" he said. "I suppose it is a great joke to bring this rubbish here and try to sell it to me. So much for it! Now get out of my study, before I throw you out!"

Bunter blinked dazedly at the fire that had consumed his treasures.

"You—you're going to pay for them!" he gasped.

Ionides laughed mockingly.

"Get out, you young fool!"

"Look here, you can have the four for fifteen bob—"

"Get out!"

"Six bob, then," wailed Billy Bunter. "I shall have to send six bob for them myself to the Imperialist Fair Trading

Co., or they'll summons me. Six bob!"

Ionides lifted him towards the door, and dropped him in the passage. Then he laughed, and shut the door.

The next moment it was opened again, and Billy Bunter looked in cautiously.

"I say, Ionides, I shall really have to send five bob to the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. for those things. You might make it five—"

The Greek rushed towards him threateningly, and Billy Bunter fled. Ionides ran into the passage after him and delivered a flying kick, and Bunter gave a yell as he rolled over on the linoleum. He did not follow Ionides into his study again. Somewhat sore, and utterly dismayed, he went off in search of sympathy from Harry Wharton & Co. But he received very little.

"Ionides acted like a mean cad, but it serves you right," said Harry. "You shouldn't try to sell that rubbish to people. Besides, I've no doubt you were asking him more than you were entitled to."

"The morefulness was probably terrific," said the Nabob of Banipur.

"But—but I've got to send five bob for the things to the Fair Trading Co.," said Bunter tearfully.

"Send back the rest of the articles, and explain that you've had an accident with these," said Harry. "They had no business to send them to you, and the risk was theirs. Have done with the matter at once."

"Good! I can write and say I've had an accident with the lot, then, and keep the other six," said Bunter meditatively.

"Ow! Leggo my ear!"

"You young rascal!" said Wharton savagely. "Do you know that what you are proposing would be stealing—the same as if you took a watch out of somebody's pocket?"

"Ow! Leggo! Why, you advised me to do it, yourself; Inky heard you."

"Oh, it's not safe to speak to you at all!" said Harry disgustedly. "I said you should explain that four of the articles had been destroyed through no fault of yours. They ought to stand the loss. But to keep the rest—"

"I say, Wharton—"

"Shut up! To keep the rest would be stealing; and to sell them to fellows for more than they are worth would be little better than stealing, too."

"I say, Wharton, it's not very nice of you to advise me to do dishonest things—"

"What!" roared Wharton.

"Of course, I sha'n't mention it, but between ourselves, I think you might be a bit more careful about the advice you give to a chap younger than yourself. If I wasn't so jolly strict in my notions, I shouldn't wonder if you induced me to do things I might be sorry for afterwards."

And Billy Bunter walked away, leaving Wharton absolutely speechless.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Parting Guests.

THE girls are going!" That news brought the whole Remove out into the Close.

Three large brakes were drawn up before the house, one of them piled with luggage, and the other two ready to receive the Cliff House girls.

There was real regret on both sides at the parting.

The stay of the Cliff House party at Greyfriars had been short, but it had been exciting in some respects, and had been pleasant enough. The Famous Four bade farewell to Marjorie & Co. with great regret. But the prospect of the garden-party at Cliff House on the following day was a consolation.

The girls were in the brakes, and Miss Locke had come out to take her place. Harry Wharton was on the step of the brake, still speaking to Marjorie and Clara, when Bulstrode came forward. There was a half-sulky expression upon Bulstrode's face, an expression that Wharton could not quite understand.

"I want to speak to Miss Hazeldene," said Bulstrode brusquely.

"What is it?" said Marjorie quietly.

"If Wharton will give me a chance to speak—"

Harry stepped aside, compressing his lips.

"It's about that night you broke bounds," said Bulstrode, in a low voice, which was only audible to Marjorie, Clara, and Harry Wharton. "You know the window was fastened while you were out."

"Yes," said Marjorie wonderingly.

"Well, it was I who fastened it."

An exclamation broke from Wharton. Marjorie looked at the burly Removite in wonder. Miss Clara uttered a single word:

"Cad!"

Bulstrode flushed crimson.

"It was caddish," he said. "I know it was. I was wild about the trick you had served me in the box-room, and I thought I'd get my own back. I know it was caddish, and—and I'm sorry."

"It is all right," said Marjorie gently.

"Don't trouble about it. It was a cruel thing to do, but if you are sorry—"

"I am sorry."

"Then it is all right."

Marjorie held out her hand frankly, and Bulstrode flushed again as he took it. He stood cap in hand as the brake drove off.

Most of the Remove followed the brakes to the gates, and sent a final cheer down the dusky road after their departing visitors. As Harry Wharton turned in again, after the vehicles had disappeared, he almost ran into Bulstrode. The Removite bully gave him a very unpleasant look, and stopped.

"You heard what I said to Marjorie Hazeldene?" he said, in a challenging tone.

"Yes," said Harry quietly.

"You know it was I who shut you and Marjorie out the other night?"

"I know now. I guessed then."

"Well, and what are you going to do about it?"

Bulstrode's tone was aggressive, not to say bullying. He seemed to have owned up to Marjorie and apologised by some great mental effort, and now to want to indemnify himself for it by quarrelling with Wharton. But the captain of the Remove did not want trouble with Bulstrode then.

"I am going to do nothing," he said. "I am glad you were decent enough to own up, that's all."

"Thank you for nothing. I was not looking for your praises, and I don't value them," said Bulstrode.

"Then I have nothing more to say."

"You don't want the gloves on in the gym—eh?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"What do you mean? I have licked you once, Bulstrode, and I could do it again. If you want a fight, you've only got to say so."

"Oh, I don't, particularly!" said Bulstrode, with a sneer. "As you so modestly put it, you have licked me before and could do it again, and I imagined you would want to, after what I said just now!"

"Well, I don't want to. As a matter of fact, I find you're not such a cad as I thought you, and I'm glad of it."

And Wharton moved aside and walked on, leaving Bulstrode with a clouded face. It was some minutes before the burly Removite walked towards the house. As he came into the light from the windows, a fat figure with glimmering spectacles loomed up.

"I say, Ogilvy—"

"What do you want?" snapped Bulstrode savagely.

"Oh, is it you, Bulstrode? Look here, would you care to have this splendid nickel-plated penknife, two blades, at a bargain? I can let you have it for ten-and-six—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"It's a big bargain—a really ripping penknife, will cut anything—and you can have it for eight shillings."

"Get out of my way!"

"Suppose we say six shillings, then? Look here, I want you to have this penknife, because you just need it. You ought to have a penknife like this. You can have it for four-and-six."

Bulstrode stretched out his hand, and jerked the penknife away from Bunter.

"Yes, you can have it to look at, rather! Oh! What on earth—"

Bulstrode, with a twist of his arm, sent the penknife flying into the darkness of the Close. Bunter gave a gasp.

"Now, you can go and look for it, confound you!" said Bulstrode savagely.

And he walked into the House, leaving Billy Bunter blinking with dismay.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### A Good Time Coming.

THE next morning Harry Wharton, when he came out of the Remove Form-room after lessons, found a letter for him in the rack, addressed in Marjorie Hazeldene's well-known handwriting.

His chums gathered round him as he opened it. They knew that hand-writing, too, and they wondered what Miss Hazeldene could have written about so soon after leaving Greyfriars. No doubt the letter referred to the garden-party of the coming afternoon.

Wharton smiled as he read it.

"Well?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Well, what's the news?"

"It's about the party at Cliff House," said Harry. "Listen, and I'll read it out. Do you remember a chap named D'Arcy whom we met when we went to St. Jim's for the cricket match?"

The Removites grinned.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Nugent, imitating with great fidelity the accent of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, he isn't a chap one could forget in a hurry," he said. "Decent chap,

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too. I like him. Well, Marjorie met his cousin, Ethel Cleveland, at St. Jim's, and struck up a friendship with her, and Cousin Ethel's coming to the garden-party this afternoon, and D'Arcy is bringing her."

"Good!"

Harry read out the letter. It was a brief one, informing him that Miss Penelope Primrose had made arrangements with the Head of Greyfriars for the whole Remove to come to the garden-party that afternoon, and that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his cousin would be there. The Removees were always pleased to meet a fellow from St. Jim's, and they were glad to hear it.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, get off the earth, Bunter! Don't bother!"

"Look here, you fellows, did I hear you say that that chap D'Arcy was to be at the garden-party?"

"Yes, porpoise."

"Good!" said Bunter. "I only wanted to know."

And he was walking away, with a satisfied grin on his fat face, when Bob Cherry caught him by the shoulder and swung him back.

"What did you want to know for, porpoise?"

"Oh, really, Cherry. I wish you wouldn't shake me like that! You really make my glasses fall off, and then—"

"I'll knock your head off for two pins! Do you think I can't see through you, you fat rascal? If you try to sell D'Arcy any of those swindling articles you've got, I'll knock you into tiny little pieces!"

Bunter grunted indignantly.

"Why shouldn't I sell him some if I want to? He may be looking for a pearl-handled, silver-mounted, first-class penknife, for all you know; or he may at this very moment be thinking of getting half a dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs to give to his cousin as a present. I don't see why I shouldn't give him a chance."

"You young rotter—"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names, Bob Cherry! I suppose you're jealous, as usual, because I'm going to get a camera from the Imperialistic Fair Trading Co.—"

"Fathcad!"

"The fatfulness of the honourable Bunter's esteemed head is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"I'm going to take a camera with me this afternoon," said Bunter, twisting out of Bob Cherry's clutches. "I want to get some practice ready for when I get that first-class, splendid-value camera from the Fair Trading Co. It stands to reason that the girls would like their photos taken, and I can get Ogilvy to develop them for me, as I haven't studied that part of the business yet. Of course, I can take photographs. You only have to press something, you know, and something happens inside the camera, and then it's done."

"Awfully simple!" said Harry, laughing.

"Yes, isn't it! I don't see why chaps plume themselves so much upon being able to take photos. I shall get a good set this afternoon. I haven't handled a camera myself, but I've seen Ogilvy use it. It's only a small one, not very expensive—nothing like the one I shall be getting shortly from the Imperialistic Fair Trading Co. Still, it holds twelve plates, and it's very easy to work."

"Is Ogilvy going to lend you his camera?"

Bunter did not appear to hear the question. He went on very hurriedly:

"It will be a ripping wheeze to take the photos this afternoon! I can take 'em singly or in groups—Miss Primrose with her parrot, and D'Arcy standing

with his cousin, and so on. You know what an awful bore a garden-party is, as a rule. The camera will fill up the time."

"You can take a camera, if you like," said Bob Cherry, "but if you take any articles for sale, I'll squash you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

Billy Bunter buzzed off, looking very injured.

"I'm blessed if I shall be able to stand that chap much longer!" said Bob Cherry. "He's always getting up to some cheap trick and making us look small. I know he's thinking of trying to plant some of that beastly sham jewellery and stuff on Gussy, from St. Jim's. He makes me sick!"

"The sickfulness is terrific!"

Bunter was grunting to himself as he walked away. He was dissatisfied, too.

"I'm blessed if I can stand those chaps!" he murmured. "They grumble at having to let me have a small loan every now and then, though I always put it down carefully on the account; and yet they make a fuss if I try to raise a little money by selling big bargains at a reduced price, and really doing favours to all my friends. I say, Russell, do you want a penknife—"

He broke off, as he nearly ran into a junior in the doorway.

"I'm not Russell, and I don't want a penknife!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy, is it you? You're coming with me to the garden-party this afternoon, I suppose?"

The Scottish junior looked at him with considerable disfavour.

"I'm coming to the garden-party, certainly," he said. "I'm not coming with you specially; we're all going!"

"Well, it was really through me that the Form got the invitation. I'm very popular with the girls, and— What are you kicking me for, you beast?"

"Sort of lesson," said Ogilvy cheerfully. "Have another?"

"N-n-no! Don't be a beast! As I was saying, will you lend me your camera this afternoon? I'm going to take some photographs at the garden-party."

"No, I won't!" said Ogilvy, with charming directness.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"You don't know how to use a camera."

"Well, I can learn, you know. As a matter of fact, I shall be getting a camera shortly, and I'd rather practice a bit before I got it. I've heard that you might ruin a new camera before you know where you are, if you haven't any previous knowledge of it."

"Well, you cool young beggar," said Ogilvy, in astonishment, "you're not going to ruin my camera for practice? Get off!"

He walked away, leaving Bunter looking sulky. The fat junior's eyes glimmered behind his big spectacles.

"Beast!" he murmured. "I'm jolly well going to borrow the camera, all the same! I know where he keeps it, and he won't like to kick up a row before Miss Primrose and the girls at Cliff House. Beast!"

The hour was drawing near for the juniors to be off, and there were many preparations made by the heroes of the Remove.

The afternoon was very fine and warm and sunny—a perfect afternoon, and the prospect was a most enjoyable one.

The Famous Four looked very nobby indeed when they came downstairs, and even Billy Bunter had a nice clean collar on. He attached himself to the four chums, as usual, and Bob Cherry only gave a grunt.

Bunter carried a little packet in his hand, and as they went out into the

Close to join the rest of the Remove, Bob Cherry noticed it. He took the junior's fat ear between a tight finger and thumb.

"What have you got there, porpoise?"

"Ow!" squealed Bunter.

"What have you got in your hand? Is it those rotten articles?" shouted Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry— Of course it isn't; it's a camera!"

"Oh, that's all right, then!"

Bob Cherry released Bunter's ear, and Billy rubbed it ruefully. As a matter of fact, he had what were left of his precious "articles" in his pockets, and he meant to find a sale for them at Cliff House if possible, in spite of Bob Cherry.

"We're all ready," said Skinner. "Is that fat young rotter coming?"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Let's be off!" said Wharton.

And the Remove, followed by a good many envious glances, walked out of the gates, and down the road to where Cliff House stood fronting the North Sea.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### At Cliff House.

"HOW do I look, Marjorie?"

"Beautiful, my dear!"

"Do you think these red roses in my hat really suit me?"

"Yes, I do, really, dear!"

"Well, so do I," said Miss Clara, with another glance in the glass. "Really, I do think I look rather nice!"

"Yes, you do, indeed!"

"It's perfect weather," said Milly Brown, looking out of the window. "I think it is going to be such a lovely afternoon."

"Ripping!" said Miss Clara.

"Oh, Clara!"

"Oh, Clara!" mimicked that volatile young lady. "Really, Marjorie, you will make Ethel think I am slangy!"

Ethel Cleveland laughed.

"One picks up these dreadful expressions from boys," explained Clara. "Do you know, I nearly told Bunter I would give him a thick ear! I did, really—nearly, you know!"

And Ethel laughed again. She was somewhat graver herself, but she liked the lively Clara. Cousin Ethel had found many friends at Cliff House, and she was glad of the opportunity of paying them a visit.

Her cousin D'Arcy had, of course, been only too delighted to bring her. If Cousin Ethel had asked him to take her to the North Pole on an aeroplane, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would have telegraphed to town for one immediately.

Arthur Augustus was sunning himself in the garden. He had arrived with his cousin some time before the Greyfriars party were expected.

The swell of St. Jim's had halted beside a fountain, and was viewing his reflection in the clear water, and did not notice, in his preoccupation, that the girls were coming out of the house. Miss Clara made a sign of silence, and they looked on.

D'Arcy's reflection was really worth looking at. Dressing had been reduced to a fine art by the swell of St. Jim's, and his slim and elegant figure showed off his ripping attire to the best advantage.

He was clad in the handsomest of summer clothes, of a light grey in tint, with a touch of green. He wore a white waistcoat, and a Panama hat—a real Panama, as the juniors of St. Jim's had told one another in rather awed tones, which had cost his noble governor sixteen guineas. But, as Gussy said, it was necessary for a fellow to be decently dressed.

"Bai Jove, I was afraid it would be so!" murmured D'Arcy, as he scanned

his reflection. "This is what comes of dwessin' in a huwvy, and puttin' on the w'ong tie. I knew this tie would nevah set accuwately. It is a little bit cwooked."

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and looked anxiously at his reflection. The tie was, perhaps, a trifle crooked, though so slightly that only Arthur Augustus would ever have noticed it.

"Bai Jove! I can't let them see me like this," said D'Arcy, aloud. "I'll slip up to my woom again and put it stwaight. I shall have to untie it."

Then he paused.

"Pewwaps I shall meet some of the gals. No, I'll do it here—there's nobody in the garden."

A low ripple of irrepressible laughter fell upon his ears.

D'Arcy jumped, and looked round.

He whipped off the necktie, and was about to tie it again.

Half a dozen merry faces were looking at him; and the swell of St. Jim's stood transfixed, with the necktie in his hand.

"Bai Jove!"

"My goodness!" murmured Clara. "Pray excuse me. I—I couldn't help it—"

"It was I," said Ethel. "I laughed first."

Arthur Augustus, very pink in the face, raised his hat with one hand, holding the loose necktie in the other.

"Pway don't mind me, deah boys—I mean deah gals!" he said. "I see no reason for mewwiment, but pway don't mind me."

"Certainly not!" said Clara. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I gweatly wewget that you should discovah me in such a widoiculous posish," said Arthur Augustus; "as a mattah of fact, I am not weally finishin' my toilet in the garden, as you might suppose, but am just awwangan' my necktie, which was a little cwooked. It is wathah difficult to get it stwaight without a glass."

"Let me tie it for you," said Miss Clara.

"Bai Jove, Miss Twevlyn, that's awfully kind of you!"

Miss Clara took the necktie, and arranged it nicely. Then she proceeded to tie it in a sort of sailor's-knot.

D'Arcy looked at it in the fountain, and started.

"Bai Jove, that isn't the way to tie a necktie!"

"No? Shall I try again?"

"Yaas, wathah, if you don't mind."

Miss Clara tried again. This time she tied the necktie in a slip-knot and pulled it very tight. D'Arcy looked in the water again.

"Bai Jove!"

"Very nice now, isn't it?" said Miss Clara. "Don't you think it's nice, Merjorie?"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Weally, Miss Clawah, if you think it's nice I'll leave it like that," said Arthur Augustus unhappily.

"I think it's ripping—and so unique."

"Yaas, it's wathah unique," murmured D'Arcy, blinking at the reflection.

"Bai Jove, you've tied it in a wotten knot, and it looks as if I were goin' to be hanged—bai Jove!"

"Did you speak?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

"My goodness; here's Miss Primrose and the boys!"

The girls had caught a glimpse of them through the shrubberies. It was too late for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to think of slipping away quietly and changing the necktie. Miss Clara had made it look, as he had remarked, like a hangman's knot, but there was no help for it now. And the glimmer of fun in the girl's eyes gave

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D'Arcy an uneasy suspicion that she knew she had not tied it correctly.

Miss Primrose, in a wonderful bonnet, received her guests in her old-fashioned stately way. Her kind old face was beaming; her heart was still young, and she liked to see young and happy faces round her.

Her expression grew unconsciously, perhaps, a little less cordial at the sight of Bunter. She was beginning to know something of the fat junior from Greyfriars. But courtesy came before everything; she had invited the whole of the Remove, and Bunter had to come with the rest.

Bulstrode, too, was perhaps not a welcome guest. But Bulstrode seemed to be on his best behaviour this afternoon. He was very quiet and subdued in his manner, and had no unpleasant things to say to anybody, which was quite a change for Bulstrode.

Billy Bunter was blinking round in search of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he "froze" to the swell of St. Jim's as soon as he saw him. D'Arcy was always polite, and though he did not particularly fancy Bunter's company, he did not seek to avoid him.

"I suppose you remember me," said Bunter agreeably. "It's an awfully great pleasure to meet you again, D'Arcy. I remember you made a jolly big score in that cricket match against us at St. Jim's."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the fat face.

"You've wathah a bad memory, Buntah. I had a duck's egg in the first innings, and only scored four in the second."

"Yes—er—that's what I meant to say," said Bunter. "I say, D'Arcy, would you like a ripping, pearl-handled, silver-mounted penknife; finest Sheffield steel blade, cuts like anything, folds up when you close it, and can be carried in any pocket?"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Just look at it," said Bunter hurriedly, fishing the penknife out of his waistcoat pocket. "It's the chance of a lifetime."

They were somewhat apart from the others, in the shrubbery.

Arthur Augustus gingerly took the penknife in his hands. He didn't want to accept a present from Bunter, yet he was chary about hurting anybody's feelings by a refusal. As for buying the penknife, it never even occurred to his mind that Bunter was trying to sell it.

"Ripping knife, ain't it?" said Bunter.

D'Arcy looked at it. It had an imitation pearl handle, and the blade might have been of a sort of steel, but it certainly wasn't made in Sheffield. No Sheffielder could have turned out so absolutely rotten a blade. The penknife was worth, perhaps, sixpence, if it was worth anything.

Arthur Augustus turned it over in his fingers.

"Lovely, ain't it?" said Bunter enthusiastically. "I wish you'd have it. It's just the penknife you're looking for."

"Weally, Buntah—"

"You'd better have it, D'Arcy—it's just the thing you want!"

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus, "as you're so pwessin'. I'll take it. Thank you very much, deah boy!" And he slipped the penknife into his pocket.

Bunter's eyes glimmered with satisfaction. Here was a customer at last—and one who had not even inquired the price!

"Wait a minute, D'Arcy—"

"Pway excuse me, deah boy. I want to join the ladies."

"Yes, but wait a moment. I don't see you very often, you know, and I

should like to show you some things. Would you care for half a dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs—twenty-two carat lace—I mean real Valongseong lace—ripping things, I tell you? Just look at them!"

"Weally, Buntah—"

"Better have them while you've got the chance. They'll do for a birthday present to some lady," urged Bunter.

"Vewy well, if you insist," said D'Arcy, putting the handkerchiefs into the inside pocket of his lounge jacket.

"And now—"

"Another minute! Just look at this fountain-pen—the latest thing in fountain-pens, you know. How do you like it?"

"Wippin', deah boy; but—"

"It's yours."

"But weally you are vewy genevouse—"

"The fact is I mean to be generous," said Bunter. "Put it in your pocket."

"Oh, vewy well! Thank you, vewy well! You are vewy good, and I shall attach gweat value to these little pwesents," said D'Arcy. "And now I must weally wewjoin the ladies."

And he walked away.

He left Billy Bunter rooted to the spot, staring after him with blinking eyes, and gasping like a fish out of water.

"Presents! presents!" muttered Bunter. "Presents! Is he off his rocker? The ass! Presents! He owes me fifteen shillings for that little lot, and he's jolly well got to pay it! Presents! I'll give him presents!"

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Good Time.

THERE was no doubt that the garden-party at Cliff House was a success. Except for Bunter, the Removites from Greyfriars were models in their conduct; and even Billy was not so bad as usual.

The Famous Four had impressed upon him with such blood-curdling threats what they would do if he worked off any ventriloquism, that the fat junior did not venture to play any tricks of that sort. As for the camera, Miss Primrose had welcomed cordially the suggestion that photographs should be taken before tea.

There was to be tea on the lawn. But before the meal, while the light was still quite good, the photographs were to be taken.

Bunter arranged it with Miss Primrose without consulting Wharton, and mentioned it to the chums of Study No. 1 afterwards. Bob Cherry only grunted.

"You'll make a muck of it," he said. "I'm sincerely sorry to see you jealous again, Cherry, of my wonderful abilities as a photographer. You run down everything I do."

"Because everything you do is a rotten failure!" said Bob. "You don't even know how to handle a camera."

"It's easy enough. I've watched Ogilvy doing it. You focus it, and then you press this little handle here. That makes the plate flop down, and leaves another plate in its place."

"H'm! Sure the plates are in there?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Phew! I never thought of that. I believe Ogilvy always keeps it loaded, in case he wants it suddenly. But I'll soon see."

"Wharton, deah boy," called out Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "if you're disengaged at the present moment, you're wanted for cwoquet!"

"Certainly," said Harry.

The chums of the Remove turned away. Bunter was examining the camera. He was rather in doubt about how to open it. He discovered at last

that it opened at the back, and he succeeded in getting it open, and then he counted up the plates with which it was loaded.

There were twelve plates in the slides, all ready for use. The fat junior closed the camera again with a satisfied look.

"That's all right," he said. "There's twelve, and I can take twelve ripping photos. Ogily won't mind my borrowing his camera when he sees the ripping positives I shall get!"

Bunter meant negatives, but he was still rather hazy about photography. He was ready to begin operations with the camera, but the others were not ready. While the boys and the girls were enjoying themselves in their various ways, Bunter filled in the time by looking out for fresh customers for the remaining articles belonging to the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. He had not yet had an opportunity of nailing D'Arcy again, but he was waiting for it.

Croquet and tennis had no attractions for Billy Bunter. He had an eye to business. He discovered Miss Clara at leisure, with a racket in her hand, and he came up to her with his most ingratiating smile.

"I say, Miss Clara, would you care to see a ripping little purse?"

"No, thank you!"

"It's made of real Persia leather, from our own factories—I mean, the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.'s own factories, at Ispahan. It will hold anything—pounds, shillings, or pence—anything you like; fastens with a catch. Look at it, and if you like it—"

"No, thank you!"

"Oh, really, Miss Clara—"

"Clara! Clara!"

"They're calling me!"

And Miss Clara hurried away. Bunter gave a sniff of disgust.

"They say women are fond of making bargains," he muttered. "The girl must be a silly ass to turn up her nose at a bargain like that! I say, Miss Cleveland, would you care to see a little purse—real Russian leather, made in Moscow? Ow!"

A strong grip fell upon Bunter's collar.

He was whirled round, to find Bob Cherry glaring at him. Ethel Cleveland walked on with Nugent, chatting, without noticing Bunter, who was whirled into the cover of a shrubbery by the indignant Bob.

"You young pig!" said Bob savagely. "I warned you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"How many of those rotten articles have you got about you?"

"Three. If you like to take the lot at a reduction—"

"Show them to me!"

Billy Bunter fished out the articles. Bob Cherry changed his grasp from the fat junior's collar to his arm, and, holding him tight, marched him off. He stopped at last on the edge of a pond in a secluded portion of the grounds of Cliff House.

"Now chuck that rubbish in the water!" he said sternly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Quick, or I'll chuck you in!"

"But—but I—"

Bob rushed him down towards the water. Bunter turned quite pale, and in great alarm he threw the three precious articles into the water. They sank, and Bob Cherry, with a twist of his arm, sat Bunter down on the grassy bank.

"Just in time," he said grimly. "You'd have been in in another minute, you—you toad! That's an end of your precious articles!"

"You—you'll have to pay for them!" spluttered Bunter. "You—you—"

Bob Cherry walked away while he was speaking.

Bunter rose to his feet, looking sulky and angry. He moved off from the spot, and a minute or two later jumped as he received a slap on the shoulder. He blinked sullenly at Bulstrode.

"What's the trouble?" asked the big Removite good-naturedly. "Anything gone wrong, Billy?"

"It's that utter beast, Cherry!" said Bunter viciously. "He's made me throw my articles into the water—the articles I had to sell for the Imperialist Fair Trading Co., you know. I shall have to account for them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. They'll make me pay for the things!"

"Serve them right to lose the money," said Bulstrode. "They oughtn't to have sent them to you, and

like you from disgracing the school. You've sold them to D'Arcy?"

"Yes, I have," said Bunter obstinately. "I think you're talking rot. D'Arcy hasn't paid me for the things yet, either. The silly ass imagined that I was making him a present of them, you see, and I haven't had a chance to explain; but—"

"If you explain to him, Bunt—if you say another word to him on the subject, in fact—I'll break every bone in your body," said Bulstrode, in a low, unpleasant tone.

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Wh-wh-what do you mean, Bulstrode? I can't afford to lose the things. I shall have to pay for them. I shall have to send the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. fifteen shillings for the ten articles, you see, and I am going to have fifteen shillings from D'Arcy for the three he bought. That will make up for my losses in other directions. I can't be dunned by the Fair Trading Co. for the sake of



"You untruthful little wretch!" gasped Miss Clara, breathless with her exertions. "Take that—and that!"

they weren't worth more than a bob the lot, anyway!"

"They'll make me pay. I had ten articles altogether, and that beast Ionides burnt up four of them, and Cherry's made me throw three into the water."

"Better throw the rest after them," grinned Bulstrode.

"I've sold them."

There must be three jelly big mugs at Greyfriars, then."

"I haven't sold them to our fellows." Bulstrode's expression changed.

"You don't mean to say that you've been palming off that rotten rubbish on the girls here?" he said angrily.

"No, I haven't. I've sold them to D'Arcy. Blessed if I know what you're scowling about. It's no business of yours, is it?"

"You little fat toad!" said Bulstrode. "It's the business of every Greyfriars fellow, I suppose, to keep a little mongrel

making a stranger presents. Don't be absurd!"

"Little cad!" said Bulstrode. "Look here, I'll pay the fifteen bob, and you're not to mention the matter to D'Arcy again. You understand?"

"Oh, certainly! I'd just as soon have the money from you, Bulstrode. Hand it over!"

"Not much!" said Bulstrode grimly. "We'll call in at the post-office as we go back, and I'll get a postal-order, and make it payable to the firm, and cross it, and then you won't be able to blue it. I know you: You're not going to spend the money, and then dun D'Arcy all the same. Shut up! Don't jaw to me! It's settled! Yes, I know you don't understand why I'm doing this—you wouldn't! Shut up! They're calling you to take the photos. Get off, you worm!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Get away, I tell you!"

And Bunter got away.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

## The Photographs.

"HOW very clever of the dear boy!" said Miss Primrose, as Bunter came up with his camera. "Have you had much practice, Bunter?"

"Not very much, ma'am; but I can take ripping photos."

"How clever!"

"H'm!" said Miss Locke. She was no great believer in Bunter, but she did not want to throw cold water on the idea. All the girls were eager to have their photographs taken, and she would not disappoint them.

"My hat!" murmured Ogilvy, as he saw the hand-camera. "That's mine!"

Bunter did not even glance at Ogilvy. He knew that the owner of the camera could not make a fuss about the unskilled lean there.

"Please stand in a group here—so," said Bunter, assuming all the airs of a professional photographer. "I want to get a really good group. Would you mind standing at the side, Miss Primrose?"

"Certainly!"

"And you this side, Miss Locke."

"Very good!"

"I want a good group. I've got twelve plates in the camera—"

"My twelve plates!" muttered Ogilvy.

"I shall take several photos afterwards, but I want to begin with groups, while the light's suitable. Bob Cherry, would you mind putting your feet out of sight? They'll come out too big."

There was a chuckle among the juniors, and Bob Cherry turned very red. He mentally promised Bunter all sorts of things when they were home at Greyfriars.

"Put on a pleasant smile, Ogilvy, please."

Ogilvy murmured something.

"Don't grin like that, Desmond. Your hat a little farther back, D'Arcy, or I sha'n't get any face," said Bunter, squinting into the view-finder. "Can you lend me a table or something to rest this camera on?"

A table was forthcoming. Bunter placed the camera on it, and squinted into the view-finder again.

"Good! I think this group will come out well. Would Miss Clara mind stopping whispering to Marjorie Hazeldene? Any movement spoils the picture."

Miss Clara's eyes glimmered.

"Will D'Arcy remove his eyeglass? It will come out very badly in the picture."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ah! Quite still now!"

Click!

"Dear me!" said Miss Primrose. "Is it taken?"

"Certainly, ma'am, and a very good picture," said Bunter off-handedly.

"Now I shall be glad to have some singles. If you would care for them, ma'am, I could get some fine enlargements made for you to have framed."

"Perhaps we had better see the prints first," said Miss Locke.

"Oh, certainly! Now, Miss Cleveland, may I take you?"

"Bai Jove! Where does he want to take you, Ethel?"

"I mean the photograph."

"Oh, I see!"

Cousin Ethel smiled and nodded. Bunter snapped her, and then proceeded to make further snaps. He took groups and singles, and a view of Cliff House from the garden, and a view of the garden from Cliff House. When the camera clicked for the last time, and the final plate was used up, Bunter rammed it back into its case.

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"I wish I had brought some more plates," he said. "That's the last!"

Upon the whole, the garden-party were not sorry that it was the last. Bunter had been half an hour at work, and he was growing tiresome.

Tea was the next item on the programme, and it was a tea to be remembered.

Under the shady old trees in the sunny garden, on little tables set out in rows, a most substantial tea was laid.

Boys and girls did it full justice—the boys more than the girls, perhaps. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Harry Wharton were seated at one table with Cousin Ethel and Marjorie, and it was the merriest table of all. But all the young faces were bright and happy, and Miss Primrose's old face was very happy, too.

Billy Bunter distinguished himself at the tea. He started early, and finished late, and kept up an excellent speed all the time. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy more than once glanced at him in wonder.

"Bai Jove," D'Arcy murmured to Wharton, "there's a chap at St. Jim's we call Fatty Wynn, he's a bit of a Falstaff; but—but he's a fool to this chap! I weally nevah did see the equal of Buntah! Bai Jove, I should like to get him into a study at St. Jim's with Fatty Wynn, and match them!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I think Bunter would win hands down," he remarked.

"Bai Jove, I think you're wight, deah boy!"

It was over at last, and the time came to say farewell. The Greyfriars juniors thanked Miss Primrose for her hospitality, and it was no mere lip-service—they were grateful, and they showed it. It had been a ripping time. They said farewell to the girls of Cliff House, and to D'Arcy and Cousin Ethel.

They walked home to Greyfriars in a very contented mood. Billy Bunter had the camera under his arm, and he nearly

dropped it when—out of sight of Cliff House—Ogilvy grasped him by the shoulder.

"Ow! Leggo, Balstrode! Oh, is it you, Ogilvy?"

"You young sweep! What do you mean by taking my camera without getting permission?"

"I did ask permission."

"Well, yes; but I said you couldn't have it."

"Still, I asked permission, and— Look here, Ogilvy, I'll give you one or two of the photographs if you'll develop the plates for me. I haven't studied that part yet!"

Ogilvy could not help laughing.

"You cheeky young beggar! As Miss Primrose will be expecting some proofs, I suppose I'd better do it. But if you take my camera again—"

"It's all right, I sha'n't need it. I shall have a much better one myself next week!"

Ogilvy took the camera into the dark-room as soon as they reached Greyfriars. Billy Bunter waited outside anxiously while Ogilvy was at work under the red lamp.

Some of the other juniors waited, too, anxious to see how they came out in the negatives. There was the sound of a chuckle in the dark-room, and the juniors looked at one another wonderingly. What was Ogilvy chuckling about?

"There he goes again!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The chuckle was audible again and again, and, in all, twelve distinct chuckles were heard through the door. Wharton smiled slightly. He guessed that it meant that there was something wrong with each of Bunter's negatives. The door of the dark-room, suddenly opened, and Ogilvy staggered out. He seemed almost in hysterics.

"What are they like?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Ogilvy. "Look at 'em!"

They looked at them. Each plate was as black as midnight, and on none of them was anything discernible except dead blackness.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy, you have mucked them up!"

"Mucked them up!" yelled Ogilvy.

"You've mucked them up, you young ass! They came out like this in the developer! Ha, ha, ha! You must have let the light get to the plates!"

"The—the light?"

"Yes. You must have opened the camera!"

"Opened it! Of course, I opened it to see if there were any plates in it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass?"

"Oh, my hat! You young duffer!"

Don't you know that the plates are sensitive to light, and if the light gets at them they're done in? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really—"

"They were all done in before you started taking the photographs," chuckled Ogilvy. "Every one of 'em! They were all done in when you opened the camera. You young ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Bunter blinked at the negatives.

"H'm! I expect it's the way you've developed them!" he grunted.

And he walked away in great disgust. A shout of laughter followed him. After the airs Bunter had put on as a photographer, the climax was too funny. And for a long time afterwards sly allusions to his wonderful negatives gave Bunter reason to remember the day of the Cliff House garden-party,

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at St. Jim's.

# ONE OF THE

# BEST!

By  
**Martin  
Clifford.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Inside and Out.

"GET out!"  
"Master Levison—"  
"Get out, I tell you!"  
Tom Merry paused outside the open doorway of Study No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage.

Grimes of the Fourth stood in the doorway, looking very red and uncomfortable. Grimes, the grocer's boy of Rylcombe, and now in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, shared that study with his cham, Lumley-Lumley, and with Levison and Mellish of the Fourth. Levison and Mellish were in the study now, and the former was speaking.

"Get out! I've told you before that grocer cads aren't wanted in this study! If you come in, you'll go out on your neck!"

"But it's my study, Master Levison," said Grimes.

Levison sniffed.

"Your study or not, you're not coming in here! You oughtn't to be at St. Jim's at all, and you know it! My hat, only last week you were bringing the groceries round to the back door! Now you're in the Fourth! Blessed if I know what St. Jim's is coming to!"

"Rotten!" said Mellish. "The Head ought to know better, really. I don't think Lumley's pater ought to be allowed to pay fees for all kinds of rotten outsiders to come here. Anyway, they oughtn't to be stuck in our study. That's too thick!"

"I don't know that I'm doin' any 'arm 'ere," said Grimes.

"Well, you're slaughtering the King's English, for one thing," said Levison, with a sneer; "and you're a rotten outsider for another! Buzz off!"

"I ain't buzzing off!" said Grimes sturdily. "This 'ere is my study, and I'm coming in! I'm goin' to do some work."

"Your proper work's sweeping out the grocery shop at Rylcombe, and cleaning the windows," said Mellish.

"And taking round the groceries," said Levison. "If you want to swot, Grimes, you can go into the boot-room. I dare say Toby will be pleased with your company. We're not."

"Not a bit!" said Mellish.  
Grimes was very red, but he did not retreat. Most of the St. Jim's juniors had been very decent to Grimes; but the two cads of the Fourth had never been known to be decent to anybody.

But Grimes, though he was very patient, and had, perhaps, too keen a sense of his shortcomings as a St. Jim's boy, was not to be bullied. He stepped into the study with his jaw looking very square and a gleam in his eyes.

Levison jumped up.

"Are you going out?" he exclaimed.

"No, I ain't!" said Grimes. "If Master Lumley was 'ere, you wouldn't

carry on like this 'ere, Master Levison. And you'd better remember that I've licked you once, and can do it agin if you cut up too rusty."

"I'm not going to fight with a shop boy!" said Levison loftily. "There are two of us here, and if you don't get out we shall throw you out!"

"Yes, rather!" said Mellish. "Are you going?"

"No!" said Grimes emphatically. "I ain't!"

"Then here goes!"

Levison and Mellish rushed at Grimes together. Grimes dropped his books, and put up his hands at once.

Bill!

Mellish staggered back with a yell. But Levison fastened upon the grocer's boy, and closed with him, and yelled to Mellish for help. In a moment Grimes was struggling with the two of them.

Two voices came bawling up the staircase—the voices of Manners and Monty Lowther of the Shell.

"Tom—Tom Merry! How long are you going to be?"

"Wait a tick!" shouted back Tom Merry.

"Rats! Buck up!" yelled Lowther.

"Can't come!"

Tom Merry stepped into Study No. 9. Grimes was putting up a gallant fight, but the two cads of the Fourth had him down on the carpet, and Levison was kneeling on his chest.

Neither of them saw Tom Merry, and had they tackled Grimes one at a time Tom Merry would not have thought of interfering. But two to one was not fair play, and Tom Merry thought that it was time for somebody to "chip in."

"I've got him!" panted Levison.

"Now get a cricket-stump, Mellish, and we'll lather him! We sha'n't have a chance like this again!"

"You won't have a chance now, you rotter!" exclaimed Tom Merry, grasping Levison by the back of the collar and wrenching him off Grimes.

"Gerroff!"

"Ow!"

Levison reeled across the study, with Tom Merry's grip on his collar. Grimes grappled with Mellish, and threw him off, and Mellish rolled on the hearthrug. Grimes staggered breathless to his feet.

"Thanky, Master Merry!" he gasped.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Two to one's not cricket!" he said.

"Now, Grimey, I heard what was going on, and I advise you to prove to these two rotters that you can come into your own study whenever you like. I'll look after Levison while you prove it to Mellish."

Grimes chuckled.

Mellish was still on the rug. Now that the odds were no longer on his side, he did not seem inclined to get up. There was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and Monty Lowther and

Manners stared into the study wrathfully.

"Tom Merry, you ass—"

"Tom Merry, you fathead—"

"What are you wasting time in study rows for, when—"

"Look here, you fathead—"

"All serene," said Tom Merry. "Levison and Mellish think that Grimes mustn't come into his own study. Grimey is going to prove to them that he can, and I'm going to see fair play."

Monty Lowther grinned.

"Oh, that alters the case!" he said.

"Go it, Grimey!"

"Pile in!" said Manners. "I'll hold your jacket!"

"Let me go!" yelled Levison, struggling in Tom Merry's grasp.

"Not just yet," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "Grimey has a little argument to go through with Mellish."

"I—I—I was only joking," mumbled the wretched Mellish. "I haven't any objection to Grimes coming into the study, really, you know. In fact, I—I want him here. I—I—"

"Get up!"

"You see, I—I—"

"I won't lick 'im, Master Merry," said Grimes. "I don't want to 'it a chap who don't want to back up his own words."

"That's where you make a mistake," said Tom Merry calmly. "Mellish wants to have the rights of the matter demonstrated to him—"

"I—I don't!" stammered Mellish.

"Yes, you do. Get up!"

"I—I won't!"

"Take the cricket-stump to him, Grimey."

"Oh, Master Merry—"

"Obey orders, my son!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle. "If you don't, we'll bump you! Now, then, Mellish, will you have the cricket-stump or Grimey's fists?"

Mellish apparently decided that Grimey's fists would be the less painful of the two. He scrambled to his feet.

"Now lick him!" commanded Tom Merry.

"Oh, Master Merry—"

"Lick him!" roared Tom Merry.

"Oh, alright!" said Grimes.

And Grimes advanced upon Mellish. Mellish put up his hands, but he fell down as soon as Grimes gave him a light tap. He lay groaning on the carpet.

"Get up, you awful funk!" yelled Monty Lowther, stirring the cad of the Fourth with his boot.

"Ow!" groaned Mellish. "I—I'm hurt! I've sprained my ankle, I think! Ow!"

"Well, of all the funks I think that rotter takes the cake!" said Manners, in disgust. "Kick him out, Grimey!"

"Right-ho!" said Grimes. "They were

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going to chuck me out. One good turn deserves another!"

"Hear, hear!" And Grimes laid his strong hands upon Mellish, and Mellish went whirling through the study doorway. He bumped upon the floor outside with a terrific yell.

In spite of his sprain, however, he seemed able to rise now, for he jumped up, and disappeared down the passage at top speed.

Tom Merry released his grip upon the scowling Levison.

"Here you are, Grimey!" he said. "Now talk it over with Levison."

"I won't fight that grocer cad!" roared Levison.

"You can please yourself about that; but you're going to be licked. Go it, Grimey!"

"I don't want to hurt 'im, Master Merry," said the good-natured Grimes. "I don't mind him callin' me a grocer. I ain't ashamed of bein' a grocer. I'd rather be ashamed of bein' down on a poor chap, what ain't 'ad any chances."

"Grimes, my son," said Monty Lowther solemnly, "your sentiments do you honour! They remind me of a book I read once, called 'Little by Little, or Bit by Bit,' or something of the sort. But they won't do for St. Jim's. We're not good enough for them, and we can't live up to them. Therefore, pile in and give that cad a licking!"

"Oh, Master Lowther—"

"Or else we'll pile in and give you the bumping of your life!" said Lowther.

"Put up your 'ands, Master Levison!" said Grimes, advancing upon the cad of the Fourth.

Levison put his hands into his pockets. He had the best of reasons for not wanting to fight Grimes. He had tried it once already, and he still had the marks of it upon his face. He did not want a second experience of the same sort.

"I won't fight you, you cad!" he snarled. "I fight with my equals!"

"You don't fight with anybody, if you can help it, Levison, old man," said Monty Lowther. "If he won't put up his paws, Grimey, chuck him out!"

And Grimes laid hands upon Levison. Levison took his hands out of his pockets then, and closed with the new boy, gritting his teeth savagely.

They whirled round the study, seemingly all arms and legs, for a few moments, and then there was a wrench—a gasp—and Levison went flying through the doorway.

Bump!

He landed in the passage outside with a terrific concussion.

"Bravo!" said Tom Merry. "Are you satisfied, Levison?"

"Ow! Ow!"

"Are you satisfied that Grimey can come into his own study whenever he likes?"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"I suppose that means yes," said Tom Merry. "We're leaving you in possession, Grimey."

"Thank you, Master Merry!"

"Not at all," said Tom Merry politely. "Pleased! Come on, you chaps! There won't be much more light for cricket practice!"

And the Terrible Three of the Shell left No. 9 Study. Tom Merry paused in the passage to speak a word to Levison, who was sitting up and gasping.

"You'll let Grimes alone now, Levison," he said. "If you want to tackle him, tackle him one at a time, and nobody will chip in. But if there's any more ragging by two to one, you'll be made an example of. Understand?"

"Ow!" groaned Levison. "I'll make

you sorry for this, Tom Merry! I'll make that grocer cad sorry, too! Ow! Ow!"

And Levison staggered away, still groaning. The Terrible Three smiled, and went out to cricket practice. And Grimes remained in undisturbed possession of No. 9 Study.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Lumley-Lumley Has His Doubts!

**L**UMLEY-LUMLEY of the Fourth came into the School House a little later, and ascended to his study. Lumley-Lumley, the fellow who had once been known as the Outsider of St. Jim's, but who was never called the outsider now, wore a thoughtful expression.

It was Lumley-Lumley who had brought Grimes to the school—Grimes had stood his friend at a time when he was down on his luck—and the Outsider of St. Jim's never forgot a benefit or an injury.

He had persuaded his father, the millionaire head of Lumley's, Limited, to pay Grimes' fees at the school, and the millionaire had induced Dr. Holmes to give Grimes a chance there.

It was the chance of a lifetime for the one-time grocer's lad, and Grimes certainly was very grateful, and was trying his best to do Lumley-Lumley credit. And yet a doubt crossed the Outsider's mind at times as to whether he had done wisely. He meant well by Grimes, but he wondered.

St. Jim's had received Grimes very well, with a few exceptions like Levison and Mellish and Crooke. But Grimes was out of his element, and Lumley-Lumley wondered sometimes whether he was satisfied with his new lot. If he were not satisfied, he might not say so, for fear of seeming ungrateful. Lumley-Lumley wondered!

Lumley-Lumley paused in the doorway of his study, and watched Grimes at work.

The one-time grocer-boy was seated at the table, painfully conning over the first easy steps to Parnassus.

Grimes did not take kindly to the classics. His private opinion was that the Latins were duffers, to talk to one another in such extraordinary lingo.

He was murmuring to himself over his work as the Outsider looked in. Lumley-Lumley grinned as he caught his mutterings.

Grimes was tackling our old friend, "hic, haec, hoc," and it troubled him more than it troubled the "Babes" in the First Form.

"Hic!" murmured Grimes. "Lemme see, that means hoc! Nunno; it means this 'ere! That's right! Hic—this 'ere Isto—that means that there! I'm getting on! Hic—haec—hoc—that's the nooter! Sounds like a drink, it does! I—Hallo, Master Lumley!"

He caught sight of his friend in the doorway. Lumley-Lumley grinned, and came into the study.

"Swotting away, Grimey?" he asked.

Grimes sighed.

"Yes, Master Lumley!" he said. "Mr. Lathom 'ave been so kind as to set me this 'ere exercise! Them Latins uester speak same as we do in some ways. For instance, where we say, 'this 'ere—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lumley-Lumley. "Wat's the joke, Master Lumley?" he asked.

"I guess we don't say 'this 'ere' in English—not in real English!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Never mind! How are you getting on with the giddy pronouns?"

"It's 'ard!" said Grimes.

"But it's coming easier?"

"Yes, I s'pose so!" said Grimes dubiously.

Lumley-Lumley looked at him keenly. "Are you glad you came to St. Jim's, Grimey?" he asked.

Grimes hesitated and coloured.

"Get it off your chest, old fellow!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm tough, you know; I like the facts!"

"It was werry kind of you, Master Lumley, to bring me 'ere, and werry kind of your father—I mean, your pater—to pay the fees!"

"I didn't ask you that, Grimey! I asked you whether you were glad you had come to St. Jim's, I guess!"

"It is a great chance for me, Master Lumley!"

"I didn't ask you that, either! Are you glad you came to St. Jim's?"

Grimes' colour deepened.

"I'd be ungrateful to say I wasn't!" he replied at last. "I 'ope I sha'n't never forget 'ow kind you've been to me, Maester Lumley!"

"Don't talk rot, Master Grimes!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Well, never mind now! Grimey, old man, chuck those giddy pronouns in the fire, and come out to the cricket practice!"

Grimes rose with alacrity.

"Right-ho, Master Lumley!"

Lumley-Lumley slipped his arm through Grimes' as they walked down the Fourth Form passage. His doubts as to his wisdom in changing Grimes' sphere of activity had deepened.

"I saw your old pal, Pilcher, in the village this afternoon, Grimey!" he said.

Grimes brightened up.

"Pilcher!" he said. "I ain't seen 'im since I kin to this 'ere school, Master Lumley!"

"He sent you his kind regards!"

"Good old Pilcher!" said Grimes, with satisfaction. "There ain't a better butcher's boy nor Pilcher in Sussex, Master Lumley! 'Ave you seen Craggs, too—'im what takes out the medicines for Mr. Twist, the chemist?"

"No, I guess I haven't seen Craggs!" said Lumley-Lumley.

It occurred to the Outsider for the first time that, in coming to St. Jim's, Grimes had necessarily broken with his oldest pals, the fellows he had known from childhood; and perhaps left them with jealousy and distrust in their breasts towards him.

"Craggs 's orlright!" said Grimes, with enthusiasm. "Did you ever 'ear 'ow he fought with Master Gay, of the Grammar School? I think that was afore your time 'ere, p'r'aps. Fifteen rounds they 'ad, all fair and square, till both of 'em was dropping, and neither was licked. And shook 'ands arter it, like real sportemen, they did! Good sort, Master Gay, of the Grammar School—one of them Colonials! You should see Craggs shootin' for goal, too, when he plays for the Rylcombe Wanderers! I play centre-forward for them—that is, I used to!" said Grimes, stopping short. "Cause, I sha'n't play for them no more!"

"You'll miss them!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes," said Grimes, suppressing a sigh. "They was good sorts, all of them! 'Ard-workin' fellers all the week, and playin' 'ard on Saturday arternoons; that's my sort!"

"We don't work 'ard enough for you here, Grimey, I guess?" said Lumley-Lumley good-humouredly.

"Well," said Grimes slowly, "it do seem a bit like wastin' a chap's life, don't it, Master Lumley?"

The St. Jim's junior stared.

"Wastin' a chap's life?" he said.

"Somethin' like that!" said Grimes.

"Fellers in my class takes things more serious! Cause it makes a difference if you're born rich, I s'pose; but it always seems to me that at fifteen a feller ought to be thinkin' of settin' to work, and thinkin' of making his way in the world!"

"Perhaps he ought," said Lumley-Lumley thoughtfully. "Well, here we are! You fellows finished?"

Tom Merry & Co. were coming off the cricket-ground.

"Finished?" inquired Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "We've had enough. Tea's our mark just at present. Coming?"

"Thanks very much!" said Lumley.

"And you as well, Grimes," said Tom Merry, turning to the new boy. "I suppose you won't refuse an invitation?"

Grimes flushed.

"No, Master Merry," he said; "but—"

"Hang the 'buts'!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Come on!"

And Grimes was marched off to Tom Merry's study to tea, with Lumley-Lumley and all the famous "Co." of the School House.

And if clouds had been gathering on Grimes' brow, they were chased away now. It was impossible for anybody not to be jolly in Tom Merry's study with the chums of the School House to tea.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Grimes to the Rescue!

TOM MERRY looked round the study, and looked into the cupboard, as the crowd of juniors swarmed in. Besides the Terrible Three, there were Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy of the Fourth, and Reilly and Kerruish and Kangaroo of the Shell.

It was a good-sized party for tea, and the contents of the study cupboard were comprised in half a loaf, half a tin of sardines, and three lumps of sugar.

"Gentlemen——" said Tom Merry.

"Heah, heah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy cordially.

"Gentlemen——"

"Bravo!" said Herries. "Where's the feed?"

"Gentlemen——"

"Hooray!" said Kangaroo. "I'm hungry!"

"Gentlemen, you will have to wait a bit while we get something from the tuckshop! You can wire in and lay the table, and make the toast, and boil the kettle, while I send Toby down to the tuckshop for the tommy!"

"You won't send Toby!" said Monty Lowther, with a grin. "Toby's away on his holiday, fahead! That fellow Trotter's here, instead of Toby; but he's just as good. I'll whistle him up."

Monty Lowther stepped into the passage, and put his fingers to his lips and blew a shrill blast. Gore of the Shell put his head out of the next study.

"Stop that row!" he yelled.

"Rats!" said Monty Lowther politely. "It's a signal, my son. When I whistle, you see Trotter trot."

Phew-cep!

Trotter, the page, came along the passage grinning. Toby, the house-page, was away on his holiday, and the new page was equally obliging. As a matter of fact, he had reaped a little harvest of tips from Tom Merry & Co., and he was only too ready to answer Monty Lowther's whistle.

"Ere I am, Master Lowther," he said.

"Tuckshop," said Lowther. "Are you off duty?"

Trotter chuckled.

"I've come off," he explained. "I'd leave anything to oblige you young gentlemen."

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "I don't know whether cookey and the house-dame would feel much obliged if they heard you. Got the list, Tommy?"

"Here it is," said Tom Merry. "Want half-a-quid, too?"

Monty Lowther laughed.

"I've got a tanner," he said.

"Manners, old man——"

"Sorry!" said Manners blandly. "I busted my last three bob in a new roll of films to-day."

"Well, of all the asses!" said Tom Merry wrathfully. "To blow the last of the study funds in filthy films when we've got a tea-party on!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I should ask you to allow me to lend you a half-sovereign, deah boy——"

"Good! Hand it over!"

"I am vewy sowwy——"

"Nothing to be sorry about, that I can see. Chuck it over!"

ask guests to lend the tin to provide their tea, but necessity knows no law, and a silly chump has wasted all the available cash in disgusting films. Play up! Small contributions thankfully received—larger ones in proportion!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"P'raps you'd let me lend you a 'arf-quid, Master Merry," said Grimes bashfully. "If you wouldn't mind takin' a loan from me, seein' as——"

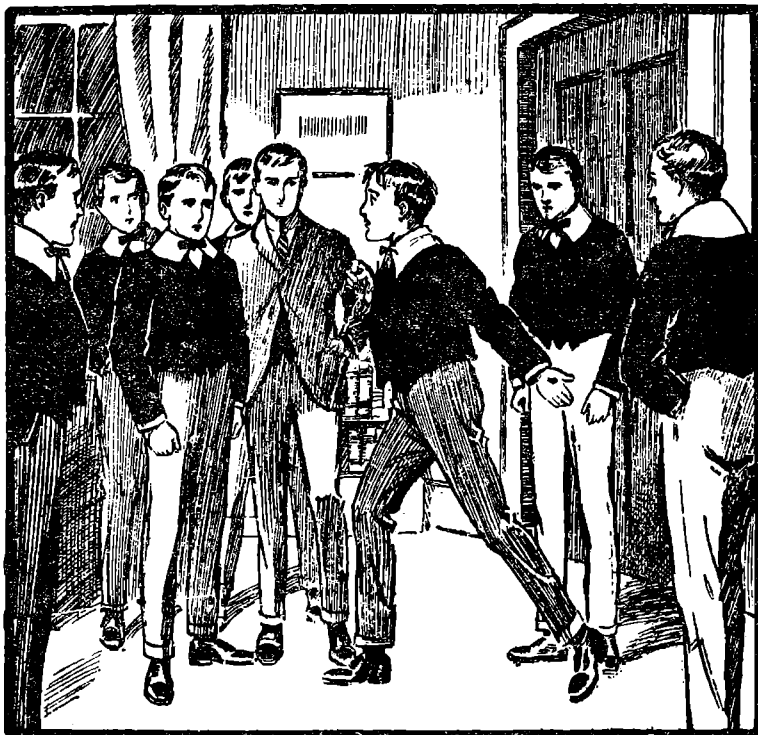
"Grimes, old man, you're as lovely as you are beautiful!" said Tom Merry affectionately. "I said all along that it was a ripping wheeze of Lumley's to bring you to St. Jim's. I said all the time that you'd do the school credit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cash as well as credit," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "Grimes, we're proud of you! Come to my arms, and let me kiss you on your baby brow!"

"Oh, Master Lowther!"

"Hand over the half-quid, Grimey!"



Levison fixed a haggard look upon the fellow he had always designated as a cad and an outsider. "Grimes," he muttered thickly, "speak a word for me! Don't get me sacked from the school—don't!"

"I am sowwy, but I am quite stoney," said Arthur Augustus. "My governah has failed to send me a wemittance, and I am quite stoney!"

Tom Merry glared at the fellow of St. Jim's.

"You—you jabberwock!" he ejaculated. "If you're stoney, what on earth did you offer to lend me ten bob for?"

"I didn't, deah boy. I was goin' to say that I should ask you to allow me to lend you a half-sovereign, if I had one!"

"Yen—you, you ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"You burbling duffer!" said Blake sulphurously.

"I wefuse to be called a burblin' duffah!"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "money wanted! Any small loans now advanced to this study will be repaid without fail on Saturday. I am quite aware that it is not the usual thing to

Grimes grinned sheepishly and fumbled in his pockets. He turned a half-sovereign out of one and a whole sovereign out of another. He held up the latter and looked at it, and stared as if surprised.

"My hat! Why, he's rolling in filthy lucre!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "A quid and a half——"

"My 'at," said Grimes.

"Hand over, Grimey!" said Tom Merry. "What are you staring at that quid for? Isn't it a good one?"

"It's a good one right enough," said Grimes; "but it ain't mine."

"What!"

"It ain't mine," said Grimes, with a shake of the head. "If one of you young gentlemen put it into my pocket for a little joke, jest own up and take it back!"

"Bai Jove! I should not weward that

as a joke in good taste!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"What rot!" said Manners. "If the quid's in your pocket, Grimey, it's yours. How could you possibly have another fellow's quid in your pocket?"

"I s'pose it's a joke," said Grimes. "I ain't more'n twelve bob—two bob of my own and a 'arf-quid that Mr. Lumley-Lumley sent me to begin my allowance. You know Mr. Lumley-Lumley is makin' me an allowance as well as payin' my fees 'ere. Well, that's the 'arf-quid. But this 'ere thick-un, that ain't mine. Somebody's shoved it into my pocket for a joke."

"That's a jolly queer thing," said Tom Merry. "I don't understand it. Sure you didn't have a sovereign of your own?"

"Quite sure, Master Merry." "Well, hand over that half-quid, and you can think over the sovereign. Blessed if I know how it got into your pocket if it isn't yours."

Grimes tossed the half-sovereign to Tom Merry, who caught it and turned to Trotter, who was waiting in the passage, grinning in at the doorway.

"There's the list, and there's the cash," said Tom Merry. "The list comes to nine bob, and the other boblet is yours, Trotty. Buzz off!"

"Yes, Master Merry." "And Trotter "buzzed off."

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### No Thanks!

LEIVISON and Mellish were in the school tuckshop when Trotter came in with the list, the half-sovereign, and a basket.

Dame Taggles was serving the two cads of the Fourth Form, and Levison was paying.

Trotter laid the list on the counter, and Dame Taggles began to hand out the good things, and Trotter stacked them into the basket. Levison and Mellish watched him.

"Who's that little lot for, Trotter?" asked Levison.

"It's for Master Merry," said Trotter. Levison sniffed.

"Master Merry, is it?" he said. "Are they having a feed?"

"Yes, sir," said Trotter.

"Is that cad Grimes in Merry's study?"

"Master Grimes is there, sir," said Trotter.

"Master Grimes!" sneered Levison. "Master Grimes is a grocer's boy—same class as you are, Trotter."

"Thank you, Master Levison," said Trotter calmly.

"You're not called upon to touch your cap to him, or to call him Master Grimes," said Mellish. "Call him Grimes."

"I 'ope I know my place, Master Mellish," said Trotter; "and I'm takin' my cousin Toby's place 'ere, and I don't want to give no trouble."

"You like waiting on upstarts out of your own class, I suppose?" suggested Levison.

"I never liked waitin' on you at Greyfriars, Master Levison," said Trotter. Levison turned red.

"Why, what do you mean, you cad?" he shouted. Mellish chuckled, and then suddenly became quite grave as Levison glared at him.

"I mean what I says, Master Levison," said Trotter. "You ain't no right to go for to try and make me disrespectful to Master Grimes. He's give me a bob anyway, and you never give me a bob all the time you was at Greyfriars afore you was sacked!"

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Mellish chuckled again.

"You—you low cad!" said Levison, clenching his fists. "Have you been round telling the fellows here that I was sacked from Greyfriars? It's a lie."

"It ain't a lie, Master Levison," said Trotter stolidly. "But I ain't told nobody. It ain't my business. You let me alone, that's all. If I was to be sent to a school like this, I should expect the page to call me Master Trotter. It's only a matter of speaking, and it's right. Anyway, I ain't going to get myself into trouble acause you don't like Master Grimes. It ain't good enough. Another jar of jam, please, Mrs. Taggles."

"Yes, Trotter!"

Levison looked at the page with gleaming eyes. He was strongly inclined to punch him, but he could guess that if he attacked Trotter he would have to reckon with Tom Merry and Co. afterwards.

"You're a rotten worm, Trotter!" he said.

"Yes, Master Levison."

"And a low cad!"

"Yes, Master Levison."

"And a dirty rascal!"

"Thank you, Master Levison," said Trotter imperturbably. "If I wasn't a servant 'ere, Master Levison, I'd say the same to you!"

"You—you below-stairs thief!" said Levison.

"I ain't a thief," said Trotter, "and you know it. And I ain't ever been sacked in my life. You was sacked from Greyfriars, with your lies and your conjuring tricks, and your getting fellows into trouble with your little games!"

"You young rotter, I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the floor with you!" yelled Levison.

"You'd better let me alone," said Trotter. "I ain't done nothing to you. I ain't said a word about your getting pushed out of Greyfriars yet. I can't hit you back, 'cause I'm a servant 'ere; but I'll complain to the 'ouse-master if you touch me, and tell 'im that you was a-settin' of me agin Master Grimes—so there!"

Mellish drew Levison away by his sleeve.

"Better let him alone," he whispered. "Come away. I've got an idea."

The two cads of the School House left the tuckshop, leaving Trotter still adding to the stores in the basket.

Levison's brow was black with rage. It was too humiliating to be worsted in an encounter with a mere page and boot-boy; but he had brought it upon himself.

He gritted his teeth as they went out into the deep dusk of the quadrangle.

"What's the idea?" he growled.

Mellish chuckled.

"Figgins!" he said.

Levison stared.

Figgins of the Fourth was the leader of the juniors in the New House at St. Jim's, the deadly rivals of Tom Merry & Co. of the School House.

"What about Figgins?" snapped Levison. "Blow Figgins!"

"Blow him as much as you like," grinned Mellish; "but if the New House chaps knew that Tom Merry was laying in a feed, what do you think they would do?"

"Raid it, I suppose," said Levison.

"Exactly. Verbum sap., you know. Let's tell them."

Levison hesitated. The warfare between the juniors of the two houses at St. Jim's was never-ending. It was quite in order for Figgins & Co. to raid a feed of the rival juniors; but for a fellow to league with a rival house against his own was unheard of.

Levison did not object to treachery on its own account, but he knew what the

result was likely to be if Tom Merry & Co. discovered how the information had been carried to Figgins.

"Make Figgys promise he won't tell," suggested Mellish. "You cut over to the New House and see him, and—"

"Good egg," said Levison. "You cut over to the New House and see him—"

"No fear," said Mellish.

"Why can't you do it as well as I?" demanded Levison angrily.

"Because I don't choose to," said Mellish coolly. "If you want to muck up the feed for Tom Merry and Grimes—there's your chance; but I'm not taking any."

And Mellish settled the matter by walking away. He disappeared under the elms, leaving Levison hesitating and doubtful.

But the cad of the Fourth speedily made up his mind. From where he stood he could see the window of Tom Merry's study, and he caught a glimpse of Grimes near the window.

The sight of Grimes determined him. He started at a run in the direction of the New House, and came to a sudden halt as he ran into three juniors in the shadows.

Three pairs of hands seized him, and he was swept off his feet.

"It's a School House cad!" cried the voice of Figgins of the Fourth. "Bump him to show that he musn't run about on the respectable side of the quadrangle!"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

"Buck up, then!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Or, rather, you can bump him, while I get on to the tuckshop—"

"Hold on!" gasped Levison.

"We're holding on!" chuckled Figgins. "Now, then—one—two—three!"

Bump!

Levison descended on the ground with a sudden concussion.

"Ow!"

"One more!" said Figgins. "It's Levison! I know his sweet voice. Now then—"

"Stop it!" gasped Levison, writhing in the grasp of the New House trio. "I was looking for you chaps!"

"Well, you've found us!" said Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pax!" exclaimed Levison. "I've got something to tell you! It's important! Leggo!"

"What is it?" asked Figgins suspiciously.

"Do you want to raid a feed from Tom Merry?" said Levison eagerly.

"What-oh!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn immediately.

"You've got a chance," said Levison hurriedly. "They've sent Trotter down to get in a supply of tuck—a big supply. He's just going to leave the shop with it, and if you buck up you'll nab him!"

"Well, you rotter!" said Figgins in disgust. "Fancy a chap giving his own House away! Bump him for being a traitor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" roared Levison. "Yow-ow! Groo! You rotters! Yah!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yarrah!"

And, having administered justice to the informer, Figgins & Co. hurried in the direction of the tuckshop.

Levison remained gasping on the ground. He sat up and gasped and panted. His only consolation was that Figgins & Co. were on the track of the feed. They had administered justice to Levison, but they were not likely to let the booty escape them, and that was a consolation to Levison.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

## The Raiders.

"STAND and deliver!"  
"Oh!"  
Trotter had finished packing good things in the basket, and had left the tuckshop. He was crossing towards the School House, and as he passed under the shadows of the old leafless elms three figures loomed up in the dusk.

The challenge rang out in Figgins' voice, and Trotter halted in astonishment.

"Stand and deliver!"

"Your basket or your giddy life!"

"Hands up!"

And then there was a chuckle.

"Oh, it's Master Figgins!" said Trotter.

"Not this time!" said Figgins sternly. "I am Dick Turpin the Second. This chap is Jack Sheppard junior, and this fat boulder is Claude Duval minor. Shell out the loot before we imbue our hands in your gore and shed your blood and your buttons!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We want the grub," explained Fatty Wynn. "This is a House raid. Hand over the basket, or we shall slaughter you!"

"But the grub belongs to Master Merry!" said Trotter in dismay.

"That's a mistake!" said Figgins blandly. "It belongs to us. Hand it over!"

"But, Master Figgins—"

"Seize the traitorous catiff!" said Figgins in a deep voice. "Blow his roof off! Strew the hungry churchyard with his bones!"

Three pairs of hands seized Trotter.

"Ere you are, Master Figgins!" gasped Trotter. "I s'pose I can tell Master Merry that you 'ave took the grub?"

"Yes, Trotty, you can tell him we have took it," chuckled Figgins. "Tell him we'll be pleased if he'll come over to tea in our study, as we've had an unexpected windfall."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"Master Merry will be wild," said Trotter. "He borrowed a 'arf-quad of Master Grimes for this 'ere grub, Master Figgins."

"Good! Tell Grimes he can come to tea, too, if he's got any more half-quids," said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Figgins & Co. disappeared in the direction of the New House with the well-laden basket.

"Well, my heye!" said Trotter, who was not so accustomed as his predecessor to the peculiar little ways of the juniors of St. Jim's. "My honly heye!"

And Trotter returned to the School House rather disconsolately, and made his way to Tom Merry's study.

He found the juniors ready for tea, and in a state of great expectancy.

All eyes were turned upon the page as he appeared in the study doorway.

"Here he is at last!" said Monty Lowther, who was making toast.

"You've been a jolly long time, Trotter. Toby would have been back in half the time."

"I'm sorry, Master Lowther—"

"Where's the grub?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm sorry—"

"You ass!" exclaimed Manners.

"Haven't you got it?"

"Master Figgins—"

"What!"

"Master Figgins and Kerr and Wynn—"

"they've took it!" said Trotter.

There was a roar.

"Figgins!"

"Raided our feed!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You ass, Trotter!"

"You chump!"

"Toby would have dodged them!"

roared Monty Lowther. "You unreliable ass! You jabberwock! Collar him and bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

But Trotter had fled.

His hurried footsteps died away down the passage.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another in dismay.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard this as wotten!"

"Beastly!" groaned Blake. "I'm hungry!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Famished!" said Kangaroo. "And there's nothing in our study. We're hard up!"

"Same here!"

"I guess I'm in the same boat," said Jerrold Lunley-Lumley. "I sha'n't have any cash till Saturday, I guess."

"Let's raid the New House and get it back," suggested Blake desperately.

"Faith, and I'm ready," said Reilly.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"We should find the whole giddy passage ready for us, to say nothing of Ratty," he said. "We can't raid Figgy's study quite so openly as that. And they've got the stuff in their study before this time. We've been done!"

"Poiled, diddled, dished, and doke!" groaned Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "under the painful circumstances of the case, I fear there is nothing to be done but to call upon Grimes once more. Grimes, old son, we are all expecting large consignments of coin of the realm on Saturday. Saturday is settling day. Shell out!"

"Yaas, wathah! Shell out, Gwimey!"

Grimes grinned.

"But I ain't got nothing exceptin' two bob, 'ceptin' this sovereign that don't belong to me, what I found in my pocket."

"Finding's keepings," suggested Monty Lowther. "Of course, it's according to whose pocket you find it in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry took the sovereign and turned it over in his hand. It was certainly a good one, and bore the image of his gracious Majesty King George, the Fifth. There was a deep scratch upon his Majesty's beard, as if someone had been scraping the metal with a keen pen-knife.

The sovereign was genuine, and it represented twenty shillings' worth of tuck at Dame Taggles' little shop.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "we find ourselves faced by a most peculiar and mysterious concatenation of circumstances—"

"Oh!"

"At a time when the funds are low, and the store of gold is depleted, and credit is in a somewhat exhausted state—"

"Cut it short!"

"At a time, to be brief, when we are stony broke, and hard up for a feed, our respected friend Grimes discovers gold-mines in his pockets—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, when a fellow finds a sovereign in his pocket, the natural conclusion to come to is that it's his own quid—"

"Soveweign, deah boy—"

"Quid!" said Tom Merry firmly. "I don't want to asperse Grimey's memory in any way, but I must state it as my

opinion that this quid must be his, and that he has forgotten how he came by it. Quids don't travel into fellows' pockets of their own accord. I think this quid must be the profit on some grocery deal that Grimes has forgotten. Very likely he made a spanking profit out of jam or marmalade or something, and forgot all about it in the worry of mugging up Latin since he's been here."

"Oh, Master Merry!"

"At all events, if the coin isn't Grimey's, it must have been shoved into Grimey's pocket by some giddy practical joker for a lark. I don't quite see where the lark comes in myself. I shouldn't risk my quids in that way. A fellow finding a quid in his pocket might naturally conclude that it was his own, and might spend it, and decline to see the joke afterwards and refund it. However, if some silly ass has played this joke on Grimes, he can wait until Saturday for his quid, when he claims it. That's only a just punishment for having played such an idiotic joke."

"Hoar, hear!"

"Therefore, as we are prepared to refund the quid out of our numerous remittances that arrive on Saturday, I think we are justified in expending this quid now in sustaining our strength after our arduous labours on the cricket-field."

"Bravo!"

"So if Grimey hasn't any objection, I'll take the responsibility, and the quid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll blue it in style—the whole of it—and this time we'll go down to the tuckshop in a body, and if we meet any New House members we'll squash 'em!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I ain't no objection, Master Merry," said Grimes at once. "That there quid belongs to somebody else, and I desay he'll own up to puttin' it in my pocket, and then he can wait till Saturday afore he gets it back, and serve him right."

"Good egg! Come on, all of you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. marched out of the study in a body. If Figgins & Co. should attempt any further raiding, there were enough of them to deal with any number of New House juniors.

But Figgins & Co. were not to be seen in the quadrangle. They were enjoying their booty in their study in the New House, with a select party of New House fellows to keep them company.

Tom Merry & Co. arrived at the tuckshop, and Dame Taggles was all smiles as she handed out good things to the value of twenty shillings. The unexpected sovereign was expended to the last sixpence, and Tom Merry & Co. returned to their study in the School House laden with provisions as if for a siege.

And then there was a feed. The feed was a little late, but it was very plentiful, and the juniors enjoyed it all the more from having had to wait for it.

There were good things and to spare, and when the hungry juniors had finished, the table was by no means cleared. Tom Merry filled a glass with lemonade and rose to his feet.

"Gentlemen, a toast—"

"The toast's finished," said Monty Lowther. "Try the cake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" said Tom Merry. "Gentlemen, a toast. Here's to Grimey, the founder of the feast, and may he always find a quid in his pocket when his pals are hard up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

## The Sovereign.

GRIMES, Lumley-Lumley, and Jack Blake & Co. were sitting in Study No. 9 the next day, when they heard footsteps outside. The door opened suddenly, and Levison of the Fourth looked in unpleasantly, and Knox and Kildare followed him into the study.

Knox, the prefect, was not looking displeased by any means. Knox was very much "up against" Jerrold Lumley-Lumley and his friends—Tom Merry & Co. And Knox was as much down on the grocer boy as Levison was.

But Kildare was looking annoyed and concerned. Kildare had had to enter into the matter, as head prefect of the House, but he did not like the task.

Grimes looked rather nervously at the prefects. Lumley-Lumley nodded to them with perfect coolness.

"Come in, kids!" he said cheerfully. "Have you come to have some strawberries and cream?"

"None of your cheek, you young cad!" growled Knox.

Kildare smiled.

"No, Lumley," he said; "it's a more serious matter than that, I'm afraid. Levison had lodged a complaint with the prefects. He declares that he has lost a sovereign, and that, as it hasn't been found, he believes it is being kept back by somebody."

"Levison is a feathery fabwicatah, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Grimes has got my quid!" said Levison. "It was in my pocket when I was struggling with him here. I missed it immediately afterwards. He got up that row with me to pick my pocket."

"You got up that row with him," said Blake. "I know all about it."

"I suppose there's no truth in this, Grimes?" said Kildare.

"No, Master Kildare."

"I demand a search," said Levison. "The sovereign happened to be marked, and there can be no doubt about it if it's found. I demand a search of Grimes' pockets!"

"Rotter!" said three voices in unison from the passage.

The Terrible Three had arrived upon the scene.

Levison scowled at Tom Merry & Co.

"You mind your own business!" he snarled. "This is nothing to do with you. Grimes has got my quid, and he's going to hand it over. I accuse him of stealing it."

Kildare compressed his lips.

"You have no evidence to make an accusation like that, Levison," he said.

"I think the evidence is clear enough," said Levison. "Grimes saw me put the sovereign into my pocket, and he had a row with me a few minutes afterwards. We struggled, and he pitched me out of the study. Then I missed the sovereign from my pocket. I came back and searched the passage and the study, and there wasn't a sign of it. Where had it gone if Grimes hadn't taken it? I hadn't been out of the House—I hadn't even been downstairs. There isn't any hole in the study or the passage where the sovereign could have disappeared."

"Looks to me like a good case," said Knox. "Grimes ought to be searched. If the quid's marked, and it's found on him, that will settle the matter."

"It won't be found on him," growled Kildare. "I believe the kid's as honest as the daylight."

"Thank you, Master Kildare," said Grimes gratefully.

"Hold on!" exclaimed a voice in the passage.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 248.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had come into the study, and now Kangaroo of the Shell appeared in the doorway dragging a plump youth bristling with buttons by the arm. It was Trotter, the substitute of the absent Toby, and he was looking very surprised and flustered.

Kildare frowned.

"What does this mean, Noble? What have you brought that kid here for?"

The Cornstalk grinned.

"Evidence!" he said tersely.

"What evidence?"

"On this case—the case of Levison's quid!"

"Oh!" said Kildare. "Does Trotter know anything about that?"

"He knows something about Levison," chuckled Kangaroo; "and that's just as much to the point."

Levison turned pale.

Trotter jerked himself away from Kangaroo and gasped for breath. As soon as he had heard what was on in Lumley-Lumley's study, Kangaroo had rushed the page up to the Fourth Form passage, much to Trotter's astonishment.

"Oh, Master Noble!" gasped Trotter.

"Do you know anything about this, Trotter?" asked Kildare.

"No, Master Kildare."

"Hold on!" said Kangaroo. "Just you let me question him, and we'll have it all out. He knows more than he knows—I mean more than he knows he knows."

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

"Now, Trotty," said the Cornstalk, wagging his forefinger at the page, "you were page at Greyfriars before you came here to have a busman's holiday?"

"Yes, Master Noble."

"You saw a lot of Levison when he was a Greyfriars boy?"

"Yes, Master Noble."

"He was sacked from Greyfriars, wasn't he?"

"Well, he 'ad to leave," said Trotter.

Levison broke out passionately.

"What's all this got to do with my sovereign being lost? This is nothing to do with the matter, Kildare. I protest—"

"I can't see that this bears on the case at all, Noble," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"You will soon," said Kangaroo. "Let me go on. Levison has started this thing, and if he hears unpleasant details about himself, it can't be helped. Fellows shouldn't get sacked from schools if they don't like to hear about it afterwards. Now, Trotter, isn't it a fact that Levison used to play rotten tricks on the fellows at Greyfriars, and made himself unpopular?"

"Yes, Master Noble."

"It's a lie," said Levison.

"It's true," said Kangaroo. "I've had it from Greyfriars chaps themselves, who came over here for the cricket. I'm only calling in Trotter as a witness—a giddy eye-witness. Now, Trotty, among Levison's other wonderful accomplishments, such as telling lies and listening at keyholes, isn't he a clever conjurer?"

"Yes, Master Noble."

"He used to play conjuring tricks at Greyfriars, making things pass into fellows' pockets without their knowing it, and that kind of thing?"

"Yes, he did, Master Noble."

"Wasn't there a row once among the Remove fellows at Greyfriars, through Levison making something appear in somebody's pocket?"

"Yes, there was."

"Oh!" exclaimed Kildare.

"There you are!" said Kangaroo triumphantly. "Levison has done conjuring tricks since he's been here, as we all know. But what I wanted to get at was, that he got into trouble at his old school

for making something turn up in a fellow's pocket without the fellow's knowledge. And if he did that rotten trick at Greyfriars, he could do it at St. Jim's. If that marked quid was in Grimes' pocket at all, Levison put it there by sleight-of-hand."

"By Jove!" said Kildare.

"It's a lie!" screamed Levison.

"Which I believe it's true," said Trotter. "It would be just like Master Levison. I know he's done the same kind of thing at Greyfriars, and that I can swear to."

"It's a lie!"

"It's not a lie," said Kildare roughly.

"It's the truth, Levison. Thank you, Trotter; you can go. I'm much obliged to you. Levison, this lets in some light on the matter. Your spite against Grimes is well known, and as a fellow who knows you well has declared that you are a conjurer, and can pass things into people's pockets without their knowing it, and that you've been known to play such dodges—well, even if your marked coin is found on Grimes, I shall not believe that he stole it. You are as full of tricks as a monkey, and this looks to me like another of them."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Levison gritted his teeth. He was pale with rage. Trotter's unexpected evidence had indeed, as Kildare said, let in a flood of light on the subject.

"Do you want this to go any further, Levison?" asked the captain of St. Jim's.

Levison panted. If he dropped the matter there, he would be pointed at as a slanderer, he knew that.

"Yes," he said, between his teeth.

"Grimes has got my quid, and I want it back."

"You want Grimes searched?"

"Yes."

"Quite right," said Knox. "Let's search him."

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry.

"Mind your own business," said Knox, with a scowl. "In fact, you juniors had better clear out of the study altogether."

"I've got something to say," said Tom Merry.

"Hold your tongue!" snapped Knox.

"Let him speak, Knox, if he's got anything to say about the matter," said Kildare quietly.

"I've got this to say," said Tom Merry. "Levison says he's lost a quid."

Well, we'll take his word for it that he had a quid. But he's got to prove that he lost it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I suggest, therefore, that Levison is searched first," said Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"

"What rot!" exclaimed Levison angrily.

"If the marked sovereign turns up in Levison's own pockets, we can consider the matter as closed," said Tom Merry imperturbably.

Kildare looked at him sharply.

"This is getting extraordinary!" he exclaimed. "Does that mean that you have some reason to suppose that Levison still has the sovereign about him?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Rot!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, grinning. "Turn out your beastly pockets, you utah wotah!"

"Turn out your pockets!" shouted Monty Lowther.

Kildare nodded.

"Turn them out," he said.

"But look here—"

"Do as I tell you!" said the captain of St. Jim's crisply.

Levison, with a sullen face, turned out his pockets. He could not understand the turn affairs were taking. Why Tom

Merry should want him to turn out his pockets he could not understand; but, like a wolf or a fox, whatever he could not understand he was afraid of. He turned out his pockets slowly and unwillingly.

"Is that all?" asked Kildare, as he ceased.

"That's all," said Levison.

"There's a hip-pocket to your bags," said Monty Lowther.

"I never keep anything in it," said Levison.

"Turn it out, all the same!"

"Oh, rot!"

"Do as you're told, Levison!" said Kildare.

"Oh, all right!" growled the cad of the Fourth.

He groped in the unused pocket, and an expression of blank astonishment came over his face. He tried to compose his features the next moment, but it was too late.

"You have something there?" asked Kildare.

"Ye-es."

"Hand it out at once."

Levison withdrew his hand, and there was a glimmer of gold in the gaslight. He held a sovereign between his finger and thumb.

"Hand it to me," said Kildare.

The captain of St. Jim's took the coin. He held it up to the light and glanced at it. There was a sharp cut on the beard of his Majesty King George the Fifth.

"This coin is marked!" said Kildare.

He held it out to Levison to see.

"Is that the sovereign, Levison?"

And Levison faltered:

"Yes."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Quality of Mercy.

THERE was silence in the study for a full minute. Kildare stood with the sovereign between his finger and thumb, and storm-clouds gathered on his brow.

The juniors were grinning, and Grimes had to suppress a chuckle.

Knox looked angry and annoyed. He had hoped that the matter would turn out to the disgrace of Grimes, and he had been disappointed.

His anger turned against Levison now.

As for Levison, he seemed to be dumb-founded. He knew that the marked sovereign had been in Grimes' pocket—for the best of reasons—he had put it there. To one so skilled in sleight-of-hand as Ernest Levison that had been quite easy.

How the sovereign had come back from Grimes' pocket to his own was a marvellous mystery. Some amazing chance had interposed, evidently to turn his conjuring trick back on himself.

Levison could only stand blinking at the sovereign as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Well?" said Kildare, at length.

"That is the sovereign, Levison?"

"Ye-ses, I suppose so!" stammered Levison.

"I suppose you did not happen to have two marked sovereigns?" the captain of St. Jim's asked sarcastically.

Even Levison could not venture to make such an assertion. He shook his head.

"Then how comes it that you have the sovereign in your pocket all the time, while you are accusing Grimes of stealing it?" demanded Kildare sternly.

"I—I—I don't understand!" gasped Levison.

"You have been lying," said Kildare contemptuously.

"Give the young cad a licking for

bringing us up here and making asses of us," growled Knox angrily.

"I—I didn't know the quid was there," stammered Levison.

"You had forgotten you had it?"

"I—I never use that pocket. I don't know how it got there!"

"And you accuse Grimes of stealing it as soon as you miss it, without taking the trouble to go through all your pockets?" said Kildare.

"I—I—I—"

"You have slandered Grimes," said Kildare, "and you will have to learn that accusations of theft can't be brought so lightly as this against a fellow. You have accused Grimes of stealing a sovereign that was in your pocket all the time. I shall give you the biggest licking you have had since you've been here. Come to my study."

"I—I—I—"

study, and Grimes lent us half-a-quid

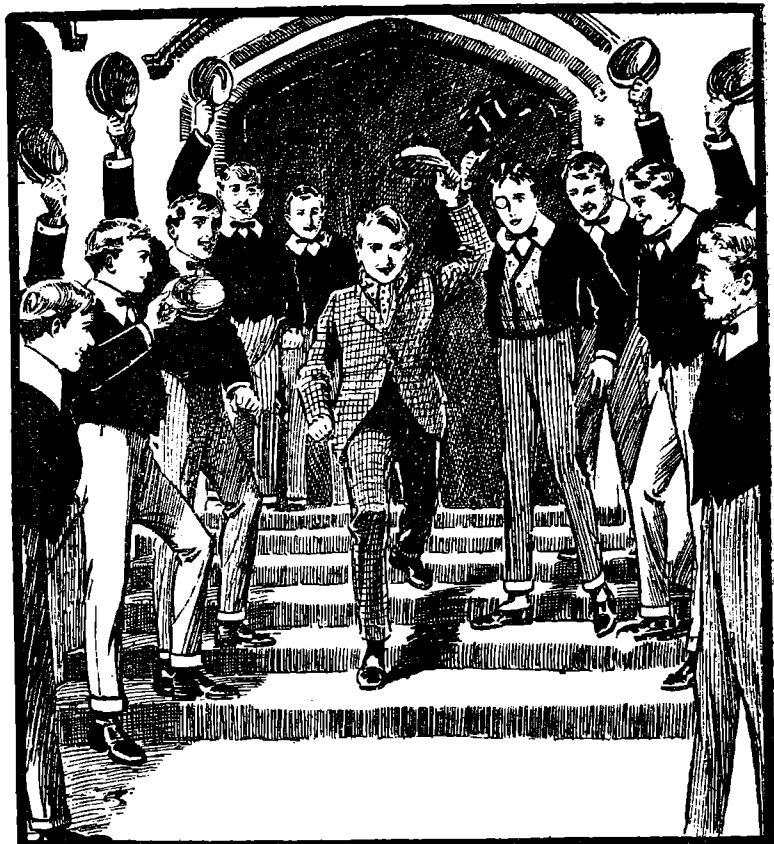
"Half-a-sovereign, deah boy!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Shut up, you ass!" growled Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Grimes lent us half-a-quid," said Tom Merry. "At the same time, he found a sovereign in his pocket, and he was surprised to find it there. He told us all that it wasn't his, and we all supposed that it had been slipped into his pocket for a joke. It was a marked sovereign. Figgins & Co. raided our grub, so we called on Grimes for the quid, intending to repay it to whomsoever it belonged to on Saturday, when we should have some cash. We only supposed it was a practical joke, so far, though we couldn't see any sense in it."

"Yaas, wathah!"



Grimes bade a most affectionate farewell to the juniors who had come to see him off. "We shall see you again, Gwimsey, deah boy?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Yes Master D'Arcy, I shall bring the groceries round, you know!"

"Follow me!" thundered Kildare.

"But I—I say!" panted Levison.

Kildare's strong grip dropped upon his shoulder.

The cad of the Fourth writhed in the grasp of the St. Jim's captain. His face was deadly white now. The result of his plotting against Grimes was a licking for himself, and the expression of Kildare's face showed that it would be well laid on.

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry, with a scornful look at the shivering cad of the Fourth. "There's a little bit more to tell you, Kildare, now that the cad has been shown up."

Kildare paused.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Yesterday we were stony in my

"We guessed at once that it was a scheme of Levison's. He had slipped it into Grimes' pocket, and he had waited to give him a chance of spending it. Like the cad he is, he fancied that Grimes would be glad enough to be a sovereign richer, and wouldn't say anything about it. Grimes hadn't noticed it was marked, but I did. If he spent it, or kept it about him, it could be traced by the mark, and Levison didn't suspect that the moment Grimes found it in his pocket he showed it to all the fellows who were with him and said it wasn't his."

"Oh!" murmured Levison.

"As soon as we knew what Levison was getting at we played this little jape

on him," said Tom Merry. "I got the quid back from Mrs. Taggles, and Monty Lowther shoved it in the Fourth Form dorm, where Blake could find it. Blake put it into Levison's hip-pocket while the rotter was asleep, so that he had his sovereign back without knowing it."

"Oh!" murmured Levison again.

Jack Blake grinned.

"I couldn't have done it while Levison was awake," he explained. "I'm not a giddy conjurer."

"Then we let Levison rip," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"It's all lies!" shrieked Levison. "They—they knew Grimes had stolen it, and so they put it back to get him out of trouble!"

Kildare knitted his brows.

"You accuse all these fellows of being in league with a thief?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Bai Jove!"

"You say Grimes showed you the sovereign, and said it wasn't his?" said Kildare to Tom Merry. "Plenty of witnesses?"

"Nearly a dozen. All these fellows, and some others."

"That was soon after his tussle with Levison?"

"Yes."

"That settles it!" said Kildare. "You shouldn't have played this trick with this sovereign. You should have come and told me about it. But I can understand your wanting to take a rise out of that rotten cad Levison. It seems, then, that Levison was not making a mistake in supposing he had lost the sovereign, but he deliberately planted it on Grimes, and then complained of losing it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That makes it blacker than before. If the Head knew about this, the rotter would be expelled from the school!"

Levison gasped.

"I—I—I say, do—don't tell the Head!" he groaned. "I—I don't mind being licked, Kildare, b-but don't tell the Head! I—I—I daren't go home!"

Kildare gave him a scornful look.

"You should have thought of that before you played this rotten game!" he said.

"I—I—I— Don't tell the Head!" wailed Levison. "I—I won't do it again! And—and it was really only a joke! I—I should have owned up, you know! I—I was really only playing a conjuring trick on Grimes, and I was going to own up afterwards, and we should all have had a good laugh over it!"

"Do you expect me to believe that?"

"Well, I—"

"Bai Jove! That chap gets a biggah liah every day!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in astonishment. "I wogard it as amazin'! I should not have imagined that any chap could woll out woppahs like that!"

Kildare fixed his eyes upon the trembling cad of the Fourth.

"I shall leave it to Grimes to say!" he exclaimed. "I shall take you to my study, and give you the hiding of your life, or else I shall report the whole matter to the Head. Grimes has a right to ask that it shall be reported, as he was your victim!"

"My 'at!" said Grimes.

Levison fixed a haggard look upon the fellow he had always designated as a cad and an outsider. Time's revenges are curious enough, and it had come about that Levison's fate depended upon the boy he had vilified and injured, and attempted to disgrace.

It was an opportunity for Grimes to pay off all old scores with terrible

interest, for if the matter had been reported to the Head, there was no doubt that Levison would have been turned out of St. Jim's.

He had risked that punishment before by his rascality, and it would have fallen upon him this time without hope. It all depended upon a word from Grimes, and the fellows in the study all looked anxiously at the new junior.

Rascal as Levison was, the juniors did not want to see him expelled. A good licking he undoubtedly deserved; but they did not want to be too hard on him, and they were anxious to hear what Grimes would say. If ever any fellow had a right to be vindictive, if ever any fellow could justly say, with the prophet of old, "I do well to be angry," it was Grimes of the Fourth.

But Tom Merry & Co. need not have had any doubts in the matter. There was no hesitation about Grimes. There was no bitterness in his looks. Pity for the wretched junior who had schemed and failed could be read in Grimes' honest face—pity mingled with contempt, but nothing like vindictiveness.

"Grimes," murmured Levison thickly; "speak a word for me! Don't get me sacked from the school! Don't!"

"I ain't wantin' anythin' of the sort!" said Grimes. "I don't want nothing to be said about the matter. I don't bear malice, Master Levison. I only hope that you won't go for to tell lies about me any more. I hope Master Kildare won't say a word about it. That's all I've got to say!"

"You hear that, Levison?" said Kildare sternly. "If you're not kicked out of the school, you owe it to Grimes. Follow me!"

Levison followed the captain of St. Jim's without another word.

In Kildare's study he had a most tremendous licking, and his howls could be heard far and wide. But the matter ended there, and for some time afterwards Ernest Levison was in a very subdued state. Whether it was due to repentance or the fear of further trouble cannot be said; but certainly he was careful to give no further offence to Grimes of the Fourth.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Honest Injun.

**D**URING the next two or three days Jerrold Lumley-Lumley often regarded his chum with a very thoughtful look.

Grimes was getting on in the Fourth. The first mysteries of the Latin tongue had been penetrated, and he was beginning to take part in the regular work of the Form-room.

The persecution by Levison and Mellish was over. Levison carefully avoided giving trouble, and never allowed even a sneer to escape him, and Mellish followed the example of his leader.

It seemed as if the thorns had been gathered from the path of the new junior, and that all was plain sailing before him.

But Lumley-Lumley had his doubts. The conviction had been growing in his mind that in bringing Grimes to St. Jim's he had done an unwise thing.

A few days later he entered his study, and found Grimes wrestling with mensa, a table, and mensae, of a table, and mensam, a table, when Lumley-Lumley came in. Grimes looked up from his grammar cheerfully, but the keen eyes of the Outsider noticed that his cheerfulness was forced.

"Getting on, Grimey?" he asked.

Grimes nodded.

"Yes, I think so, Master Lumley," he said. "This 'ere ain't so 'ard when you begin to get used to it."

"Do you like it yet?"

"Oh, I like it all right, Master Lumley! Anyway, it's a werry useful thing to learn. Not much use in business, of course!"

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"No; you're not likely to have many Latin correspondents when you've got a big grocery business going," he remarked.

"No, Master Lumley. Still, I s'pose it's a useful thing to know. Anyway, I'm peggin' away at it, and I'm getting on. It's werry kind of you to coach me as you do!"

"Oh, rot!" said Lumley-Lumley.

There was a pause. Lumley-Lumley sat on the corner of the table and swung his legs. Grimes returned to mensa, O Table, and mensa—by, with, or from a table.

"I guess I want to have the truth, Grimey," said Lumley-Lumley.

Grimes looked up again.

"The what, Master Lumley?" he faltered.

"The truth, Master Grimes!"

"Oh!" said Grimes.

"You know I've knocked about the world," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm rich, and I've been poor. I've seen queer sights, and a good many countries, and different kinds of people. I know that money and position don't make happiness. The happiest man I ever saw was a lame beggar in San Francisco. The happiest time in my life was when I hadn't a dime in my pocket, and my boots were tied on with string. Grimey, old man, I had forgotten what I've learnt by experience, and was following the usual stick-in-the-mud way of thinking when I thought that it would be a big thing for you to come to St. Jim's."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"I've been thinking it over, I guess. Look here, Grimey, you've got to tell me exactly how it is. Honour bright, would you rather be at St. Jim's, or back in your old business?"

Grimes was silent.

"I guess it's pretty clear, what you've got in your mind," said Lumley-Lumley, laughing, "or you'd answer up at once!"

Grimes reddened.

"I don't want to seem ungrateful, Master Lumley," he said.

"I guess it's not a question of that. I want you to do as you like. If you want to stay at St. Jim's, here you are! If you'd rather have the grocer business, there you are! You've only got to say, 'Honour bright,' you know."

"You wouldn't be offended, Master Lumley?" he asked.

"No! Honest Injun!"

"And—and you won't think me ungrateful?"

"I guess not," said Lumley-Lumley, grinning. Grimes' questions showed pretty plainly what his answer was going to be.

"Well, Master Lumley—"

Grimes hesitated.

"Go it!"

"Well, it seems to me an awful waste of time 'ere," said Grimes hesitatingly. "Fellers old enough to be thinkin' about the future seem to be thinkin' of nothin' but lessons and games. Them as is preparing to earn their livings in the future is called swots, as if there's something rotten about 'ard work. And the swottin' they do seems to me all—ahem!"

"All what?" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"All rubbish!" said Grimes, coming out with great frankness now that he had once started. It was evident that he had given a great deal of thought to the subject. "They ain't learnin' anythin' of any use. There's a lot of work to be

(Concluded on page 29, col. 3.)



# THE VANISHED SCHOOLBOY!

A Splendid  
Long Complete Story,  
dealing with the  
Early Adventures of  
**JIMMY SILVER & CO.**  
the  
Chums of Rookwood.

— BY —

**OWEN CONQUEST**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Beaumont Has a Shock.

"HALLO! What's the matter with Beaumont?"

Jimmy Silver uttered the words sharply. The Fistical Four were coming along the lower passage at Rookwood, when the prefect came out of his study, and met them face to face. It was late in the evening, and Beaumont had only recently come in.

Earlier in the evening Beaumont had been searching for Leggett, the cad of the Fourth. He had inquired of the Fistical Four as to whether he had been seen by them, but he received no information.

Beaumont, the most unpopular prefect in the school, was a harsh and cowardly bully, and was cordially disliked by everyone.

As a matter of fact, Jimmy Silver and his chums, Lovell, Newcome and Raby, had known that Leggett was, at the time of Beaumont's inquiry, in the study of Tommy Dodd & Co., and they were completely mystified as to the reason.

Although Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern chums of Rookwood, were the sworn enemies of the Fistical Four, they were frank, wholesome lads, and not given to spending their time with a cad of Leggett's type.

Beaumont had been searching for Leggett in order to give him a thrashing, and the cad of the Fourth, in his fear, had taken refuge in the Modern chums' study.

He had solemnly avowed to them that he intended to turn over a new leaf, and Tommy Dodd & Co. promised to back him up. Beaumont was hated by them as much as the rest of the school.

Tommy Dodd had hit upon a plan whereby Leggett would be protected from the clutches of the bullying prefect, and Beaumont would, at the same time, be given a severe shock which they hoped would be a lesson to him.

Leggett was to hide himself in the old tower for a couple of days and nights, so that it should appear that he had run away from school out of terror for Beaumont, and the Modern chums promised to keep him supplied with food. This plan, they knew, would give Beaumont a serious fright.

Having made their plans, Leggett had succeeded in getting away from the Modern chums' study to safe quarters without encountering Beaumont.

But now the four chums stopped in amazement and alarm as they met the prefect in the passage. His face was



The Fistical Four found Tommy Dodd & Co. in the school luckshop busily making purchases, which Tommy Cook was packing into a basket.

strangely pale, and his eyes had a half-furious, half-frightened look that was very curious to see. The Fistical Four did not like Beaumont, but he looked as if he had had a terrible shock.

"I say, what's the matter?" asked Jimmy Silver anxiously. "Are you ill, Beaumont?"

"No," muttered the prefect thickly.

"Bad news, then?" said Jimmy, noticing a note crumpled up in Beaumont's hand.

The prefect hastily thrust the paper into his pocket.

"No, no! Have you seen Leggett?"

"Oh, if that's all——" began Jimmy Silver.

"Stop! Have you seen Leggett? It's——it's important. I'm afraid something has happened to him."

"Phew!"

"Have you seen him?"

"No," said Jimmy Silver, "I haven't." He looked curiously at the prefect. "What have you done to him?"

Beaumont started violently.

"I? Nothing! Who says I have done anything to him?"

"Nobody, that I know of," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "But if anything's happened to him, I suppose it was through you——"

"It's a lie—it's—— I say, will you go and find him? I—I promise you that I'm

not going to lick him. I—I believe this is a joke of his, but——"

"What's a joke of his?"

"Nothing. Only——only find him! It's——it's important."

"You're not going to lick him——honour bright?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then we'll find him for you," said Jimmy Silver, impressed by the prefect's strange, anxious manner. "Come on, kids?"

The Fistical Four went on their way. Beaumont descended the stairs, and the chums, glancing back, saw that his walk was strangely unsteady.

"Well, of all the giddy mysteries!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "What do you make of that, you chaps?"

"I can't make anything of it," said Raby.

"Same here," said Lovell and Newcome, looking puzzled. "I suppose Beaumont hasn't really hurt Leggett, has he, or anything of that kind?"

"Can't make it out. Let's go and see Tommy Dodd & Co. Leggett was with them the last we heard of him."

"Good!"

The Fistical Four hurried to the Modern chums' study, but it was empty and in darkness. The junior common-room was

drawn blank also; the Moderns were not there.

But just as the Fistical Four came out of the common-room, they met them in the passage. The rain on Tommy Dodd & Co.'s clothes showed that they had been out of doors.

"Hallo! Where have you been, kids?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Minding our own business, infants," grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Have you seen Leggett?"

Tommy Dodd looked thoughtful.

"Do you mean to-day or yesterday?"

"To-day, fathead! He was in your study about tea-time."

"So he was, now I come to think of it."

"Well, where is he now?"

"Can you see him, Cookie?" asked Tommy Dodd gravely.

Tommy Cook looked up and down the passage, and felt in his pockets, and then shook his head in the most solemn way in the world.

"No, I can't, Doddy," he said.

"I can't, either," said Tommy Dodd.

"Do you want to see him very particularly, kids?"

"Yes, Beaumont wants him."

"Ha, ha, ha! Beaumont had better find him, then."

"But—"

"Oh, come on, kids," said Tommy Dodd.

"We can't stay talking all night to these bouncers."

And Tommy Dodd & Co. walked away, grinning. The Fistical Four looked after them in rather wrathful amazement.

"They know something about it," said Lovell.

"I reckon so. There's a mystery somewhere, and I'm blessed if I can guess what it is," said Jimmy Silver, "Let's get on."

The Fistical Four inquired right and left. But no one had seen Leggett since tea-time; no one had noticed or cared where he had been or what he had been doing.

The four chums returned at last to Beaumont's study. They found the prefect there. He was standing in the light of the gas, reading a crumpled paper.

He thrust it hastily into his pocket as the juniors came in. It was evidently the same paper they had seen in his hand in the passage before.

"Have you seen anything of him?" asked the prefect eagerly.

"No. He doesn't seem to be in the school, and nobody appears to have seen him lately," said Jimmy Silver.

Beaumont muttered something.

"Perhaps he's gone somewhere for a master or a prefect," Lovell suggested.

Beaumont shook his head.

"I've inquired; he hasn't."

"Look here!" said Jimmy Silver bluntly. "Do you really think that anything may have happened to him, Beaumont?"

"How should I know?" said Beaumont uneasily. "I don't suppose for a minute that anything has happened to him."

But his trembling lips gave the lie to his words.

"You do think so!" said Jimmy Silver deliberately. "And if anything has happened, you know something about it, too."

"You young liar! Get out of my study!"

The Fistical Four left the room.

"There's something wrong somewhere," said Jimmy Silver.

And ere long it was certain that the leader of the Classical chums had guessed correctly.

For when bed-time came for the Fourth Form, Leggett did not take his place with the rest of the juniors to march up to the dormitories.

Leggett was missing!

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## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Disappearance of Leggett.

"WHERE is Leggett?" Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, whose duty it happened to be that night to see lights out in the Fourth Form dormitories, asked the question.

It was a question which no one could, or would, answer.

Leggett was not in his place, and the amazement in his Form-fellows' faces showed that they did not know what had become of him.

"Where is Leggett?"

Bulkeley was puzzled. He was seen to speak in a low voice with Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form, and Mr. Bootles looked puzzled, too.

The Form-master questioned some of the juniors, but the replies were unsatisfactory. No one had seen Leggett for a couple of hours at least.

"Go up to bed," said Bulkeley. "This will be looked into."

The Fourth Form, greatly wondering, prepared to retire. The Fistical Four were troubled in their minds. Leggett's absence at bedtime was a pretty clear proof that something unusual had happened, and they were anxious about him.

Of late the cad of the Fourth had shown symptoms of a desire to turn over a new leaf, and the chums of the end study were rather interested in his progress.

"Worried about something, kids?" asked Tommy Dodd, glancing towards the Fistical Four as the Fourth Form were about to disperse.

"Yes," said Jimmy Silver abruptly.

"Do you know where he is, Doddy?"

"My dear chap, how should I know?"

"I believe he's run away," said Towle.

Jimmy Silver started.

"What makes you think that, Towle?"

"He said he was going to."

"What for?"

"Because Beaumont was always licking him."

"He'd never have the nerve to run away," said Lovell, shaking his head.

"Besides, we saw him after locking up."

"Bounds have been broken before now," said Lacy, shaking his head.

"Well, that's true."

"If he hasn't run away, where is he?" said Towle.

"Answer that if you can," said Tommy Dodd.

"Why do you believe he's run away from school, Doddy?"

"My dear chap, it's not a question of what I believe; I settle it on the evidence," said Tommy Dodd, with a yawn.

"I believe I'm sleepy, and I'm going to bed."

Bulkeley went in to see lights out in the Modern dormitory that night, as Knowles, the Modern prefect, was away for a day or two, and he was taking his place.

He was looking rather troubled. Several fellows were seated on Towle's bed, talking to him. They were urging him that it was his duty to tell the Rookwood captain what he knew.

"Now, then, bed!" said Bulkeley.

"Don't bother me now."

"Towle's got something to tell you," said Lacy.

"No time now—"

"It's about Leggett."

The captain of Rookwood was all attention at once.

"Do you know anything about Leggett, Towle?"

"Only what he said to me, Bulkeley," said Towle uncomfortably.

"Tell me what it was."

"He said he was going to run away from school because Beaumont was always licking him," said Towle.

Bulkeley compressed his lips.

"When did he say that?"

"This evening, just before tea. Beau-

mont was looking for him at the time, to lick him for something or other."

"Thank you. I am glad you have told me that, Towle. Good-night, boys!"

"Good-night, skipper!"

Bulkeley turned out the light and left the dormitory.

Bulkeley went straight from the Modera dormitory to the study of the bully of the Sixth. He tapped at the door and walked straight in.

Beaumont started up nervously. He had been sunk in a chair before the fire, which was nearly out. His face was pale, and there were drops of perspiration on his brow. He gave the captain of Rookwood a haggard look.

"Do you know what has become of Leggett, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley in his direct way.

"How should I know?" muttered Beaumont hoarsely.

"You look as if you knew something," said the Rookwood captain, eyeing him keenly. "What is the matter with you?"

"I'm not—I'm not feeling quite well."

"Towle says that Leggett declared it was his intention to run away because you were always licking him," said Bulkeley abruptly.

Beaumont shivered.

"It's not true."

"How do you know it's not true?"

"Well, I don't suppose it is."

"I knew you were a brute to the juniors as a rule," said Bulkeley, in measured tones; "but I thought that you and Leggett were birds of a feather. And I have never noticed how you treated him. Have you ill-used him lately?"

"I may have licked him once or twice. He deserved it."

"And you cannot throw any light upon his disappearance?"

"How should I know anything about it?"

"Do you, as a matter of fact, know anything?"

There was a pause.

"No," said Beaumont desperately.

"Very well. I must go and tell the Head what I have discovered, so that the boy can be searched for. The police must be communicated with."

The prefect shuddered.

"The police?"

"Of course. It is plain that he has run away from school, and he must be found and brought back as quickly as possible. Then—and Bulkeley's face became hard and significant—"then will come an inquiry as to why he ran away."

And the Rookwood captain quitted the room.

As soon as he was alone Beaumont let his white face fall into his hands.

"Has he run away? Oh, if it is only nothing worse!" the wretched senior groaned.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### The Fistical Four on the Track.

THE next day all Rookwood knew that Leggett had run away from school. His place was empty at the breakfast-table, and in chapel, and his desk had an unoccupied space in the Fourth-Form class-room. Leggett was gone!

He had not been liked. The boys had nicknamed him "Stylock" and the "Cad of the Fourth." But now that he had taken such a desperate step there were few who did not feel some concern about him.

To run away from school was a serious offence. It might mean expulsion as a punishment. It would certainly mean a severe flogging; and Dr. Chisholm, kind headmaster as he was, knew how to lay it on when occasion required.

There was a rough time in store for Leggett when he was recaptured. That

he would be recaptured seemed certain. The junior could only, at the best, reach home, and then he would be sent back to school as a matter of course. The desperate step of running away was as futile as it was desperate.

The Fistical Four were concerned about the disappearance of Leggett, and almost equally so by their conviction that Tommy Dodd & Co. had the clue to the secret.

Leggett had, perhaps, consulted the Modern chums about running away, or they had learned something about it. At all events, Jimmy Silver guessed that they knew more than they told, and Jimmy Silver, as usual, guessed correctly.

"Daddy wouldn't grin like that if he wasn't up to something behind our backs," said Jimmy Silver, as the Modern chums passed the Fistical Four in the quad after morning school. "He knows something we don't know."

"Let's knock their heads together till they explain," was Raby's brilliant suggestion.

"I'm afraid we couldn't knock the secret out that way," said Jimmy Silver, with a shake of the head.

"Leggett seems to have really run away," Lovell remarked. "There's no sign of him about Rookwood. It was a silly thing to do. It will show up Beaumont; but Leggett will have a painful time with the Head afterwards if he comes back."

"There's something about it I don't understand," said Jimmy, wrinkling his brows. "Those Modern rotters are up to it, and we're not."

"It won't do," said Raby. "It's derogatory to our dignity as—"

"Rats! What's this little secret they've got between them. That's what we've got to find out."

"Well, we can only do that by shadowing them," said Raby.

Jimmy Silver looked dubious.

"I don't know about shadowing people in broad daylight," he remarked. "However, I suppose it can't do any harm, if it doesn't do any good."

"Quite right."

"Come along, then!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. had gone into the school tuckshop. The Fistical Four followed them in, and found them busily making purchases, which Tommy Cook was packing into a basket.

The chums looked at them curiously.

"Hallo! Going on a picnic, Daddy?" asked Lovell.

Tommy Dodd turned rather red. He was evidently not best pleased at being found in his present occupation by the Classical chums.

"Oh, rats!" he exclaimed. "Funny thing that you four kids are always poking your noses into things."

"My dear chap, if it's a picnic we'll come with you with pleasure," said Jimmy Silver liberally. "Never shall it be said that the Fistical Four refused to share a feed with anybody, friend or foe."

Tommy Dodd sniffed.

"Well, it isn't a picnic, so cut!"

"Ah, it's a study feed, I suppose! Never mind; we'll be just as pleased to come along with you and—"

"It isn't a study feed."

"What is it, then?"

"Oh, rats!"

The Fistical Four looked rather surprised. They called for ginger-pop, and consumed it while Tommy Dodd & Co. finished packing the little basket and carried it out of the tuckshop.

Jimmy Silver dragged his chums to the door the moment the Modern chums were gone.

"Come on!" he muttered. "We've got to keep them in sight!"

"What's the game?"

"That grub in the basket. What do you think they want it for?"

"Blessed if I know, if it isn't a feed."

"It's to take to somebody."

"Eh? I suppose Tommy Dodd & Co. haven't started in business in the catering line, have they?"

"Yes, I believe so—and I believe they're catering for Leggett," whispered Jimmy Silver excitedly.

His chums gave a simultaneous jump.

"Leggett!"

"I reckon so."

"My hat!"

"I don't believe he's left Rookwood at all. It's all a wheeze up against Beaumont. He's hiding somewhere about."

"But where?"

"Well, there are lots of places—the ruined priory, or the old tower," said Jimmy.

"Let's have a hunt for him," suggested Lovell eagerly.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"Not likely. We'll just keep those Modern rotters in sight. If they are going to feed him, they will have to get that basket to him, and that's where we come in."

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby chuckled.

"Good! Let's get on with the shadowing, then."

The Fistical Four kept the Moderns in sight. Tommy Dodd was carrying the basket. He looked back several times, and appeared annoyed to see the Fistical Four in sight.

They strolled into the gym, and so did the Classical chums a minute later. They strolled out again, and wandered down to the ruined Priory of Rookwood; and the Fistical Four wandered down there at their heels.

Then they strolled round the old tower, and the Fistical Four strolled round the old tower, too. Finally, Tommy Dodd & Co. stopped and waited for the chums of the end study to come up.

"What are you following us about for?" demanded Tommy Dodd, looking rather dangerously at his rivals of the Fourth Form.

The Fistical Four looked at them in innocent surprise.

"Following you about?" repeated Jimmy Silver.

"Rats!" said Lovell.

"You know jolly well that you're following us about!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, rather excitedly. "What do you mean by it?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Jimmy Silver blandly.

"Look here—"

"I say, you know—"

"Oh, go on, I like to hear your pretty voices!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.

"What are you following us about for, then?"

"Perhaps it's because we think a thing of beauty is a joy for ever, and so we don't want to lose sight of you," said Jimmy reflectively.

"You rotters! Come on, kids!"

The Moderns stalked away indignantly. Fast on their track, never losing sight of them for a moment, went the Fistical Four. Tommy Dodd looked back again and sniffed.

"They smell a mouse, kids!"

"Quite so."

"We shall have to leave this till after afternoon school."

"My hat! Leggett will get jolly hungry."

"He'll have to stand it. It will be a punishment for running away from school, anyway," said Tommy Dodd, rather unreasonably. "Come on, I'm going in."

The Modern chums went in. And the Fistical Four chuckled gleefully. They remained on the watch till the bell rang for afternoon classes, and then they stalked Tommy Dodd & Co. to the classroom.

Jimmy Silver noticed that Tommy Dodd & Co. looked rather uneasy in class.

"They know we're on the track," the leader of the Fistical Four whispered,

when Mr. Bootles' back was turned. "I think we'll do the shadowing after school a little more cunningly. No need to give ourselves away. We'll keep out of sight, and keep an eye on the bouncers, and let them guide us to the spot where they've hidden Leggett."

"Good wheeze!" said Lovell.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Leggett Turns Up.

"CAN you see those rotters?"

"No, Daddy."

"Good! I suppose they've given it up. Come on!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. came quickly out of their study, in the dusk of the evening. They scudded down the passage, Tommy Dodd carrying the basket, and left the House.

A glance round into the shadows showed nothing suspicious, and the Modern chums darted off towards the old tower of Rookwood.

Then four dim forms detached themselves from the black shadows of the ancient elms.

"There they are!" muttered Newcome.

"They've gone towards the old tower," whispered Raby.

"And I reckon Tommy Dodd had the basket in his hand."

"I saw it!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Come on, kids! We're on this!"

The Fistical Four had been watching for the Modern chums to come out. The dusk favoured them. As they scudded after the Moderns through the dusk of the Close they heard a creaking of rusty hinges through the gloom. It was a proof that Tommy Dodd & Co. were going into the old disused tower.

"Quiet now!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four reached the ancient door of the tower. It was ajar. The Modern chums had not quite closed it, on account of the noise the rusty hinges made.

They squeezed in, and found themselves in the dense darkness of the old tower. It was the first time they had entered it since a famous occasion when they had been trapped and made prisoners there by Tommy Dodd & Co., and Jimmy Silver grinned in the darkness at the recollection of that little adventure. It was the Fistical Four's turn now.

"Quiet!" he whispered again.

They felt and groped their way to the spiral stair, and mounted slowly up the heavy stone steps.

At the second turn of the staircase a glimmer of light fell upon their eyes. It came from a deep recess in the staircase wall, a kind of stone cell without a door. There had been a door once, but it had yielded centuries before to the ravages of time.

Jimmy Silver made a sign of caution to his comrades. Keeping close to the wall, they stole on cautiously and looked from the gloom into the lighted cell.

"Leggett!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

The leader's suspicions were correct.

A bicycle lantern was burning in the little cell, and its light showed Tommy Dodd & Co. leaning against the stone wall, talking to a junior who was sitting on a camp-stool unpacking the basket. It was Leggett!

The missing junior was found!

Leggett's face was rather pale in the light. He did not seem to have had a pleasant time since taking up his quarters in the old tower. Tommy Dodd was speaking, and the sound of his voice came clearly to the ears of the Fistical Four.

"Are you going to stick it out for another night, Leggett? I don't think you should. The Head is anxious, and he's a good old sort."

"I'm thinking of Beaumont," said Leggett. "I'm jolly hungry. Why couldn't you fellows come before?"

"Couldn't be did; those rotters from

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the end study were watching us. They smelt a rat. About Beaumont—I don't think you'd bear him much of a grudge now, Leggett, if you saw him."

Leggett grinned. He had selected a steak pie from the basket, and was devouring it hungrily.

"What does he look like?"

"As if he had a fearful weight on his conscience," said Tommy Dodd. "Everybody sees that he's awfully cut up about your going, and so I suppose he's sorry for having been such a beast. You should see him."

"I can guess what he's like," said Leggett. "You don't know the reason though. I left a note for him on his study table before I came here."

Tommy Dodd looked at him in surprise.

"A note! What sort of a note?"

"Oh, I told him that I was afraid to let him see me again—and afraid to run away because my father would only send me back; and so I told him I had made up my mind to drown myself in the river. I piled it on, you know, and I knew that when I disappeared he would take it all in."

"You—you young rotter!"

"Oh, draw it mild! I wanted to give him a bit of a twist—"

"By Jove! And you've done it," said Tommy Dodd. "He's said nothing about that note. Of course, he's afraid of being called to account for his share in your suicide. You—you cunning young rascal! That was taking it altogether too far. I never suspected anything of that sort."

"I knew you didn't," grinned Leggett.

"He must have been through a horrid time," said Tommy Cook. "But I say, that'll get you an extra licking when you turn up, Leggett."

Leggett grinned again.

"Not at all. If he hasn't shown the note—and I knew he wouldn't—he won't dare to show it afterwards, because he ought to have shown it at first."

"What do you mean?"

The words were clearly heard in the silence of the old tower. There was a gurgling sound the next moment, as if a hand had been clapped over a mouth.

But Tommy Dodd & Co. had heard enough. Leggett dropped the steak pie in alarm. The Modern chums dashed out upon the staircase with clenched fists.

"Jimmy Silver, you rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knock 'em flying, boys."

"Rather!"

"Ha, ha! Sock it to 'em, kids!"

In a moment seven juniors were mingled in a wild tussle in the darkness of the stairs. Tommy Dodd & Co. had the advantage of position, but the odds were on the side of the Fistical Four.

With many a gasp and howl the rivals of the Fourth struggled, heedless at first of a strong voice that rang through the din.

"Stop that, will you? Stop it, I say!"

"Bulkeley!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, at last. "Here, hold on! I mean, let go! Pax! It's old Bulkeley!"

The juniors, considerably dusty and rumped, separated at last. The captain of Rookwood strode into the midst of them.

"I saw you sneaking into the tower," he said, "and I guessed that something was up. What—the-why-how—Leggett!"

He had caught sight of the missing junior. Leggett's jaw dropped at the expression upon the Rookwood captain's face. Bulkeley's quiet eye took in all the scene—the blankets on the floor of the cell, the lunch-basket and lantern, and he understood all.

"You had better come with me, Leggett," he said quietly.

"If you please, Bulkeley—"

"Come with me!"

And with Bulkeley's grasp upon his collar, the cad of the Fourth was marched

off down the stairs, and out of the old tower, across the dusky quad, and into the School House, and straight to the study of Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood. The Fistical Four and the Modern chums looked at one another.

"Well, of all the giddy asses!" said Jimmy Silver. "You lot take the cake. You waltz off with the whole giddy Huntley and Palmer, and no mistake! But I say, we can't leave Leggett to face the music alone."

"I'm going to speak up for him," said Tommy Dodd, going down the stairs.

"Better than that; let us make Beaumont speak up for him."

"Beaumont?"

"Why not? Come along to his study."

The determined Jimmy Silver led the way. Beaumont was alone in his study. He looked at the juniors with a nervous start as they came in. He was rather given to starting nervously of late.

"Leggett's come back, Beaumont," said Jimmy Silver, plunging directly into the subject. He was startled by the effect of his words. Beaumont sprang to his feet, his colour coming and going.

"What! What did you say?"

"Leggett's turned up!"

"Then he's not—not—"

"No; he's not drowned in the river," grinned Jimmy Silver. "That was a little wheeze to make you sit up. Bulkeley's marched him off to the Head. We want you to go and speak up for him."

"I don't want him punished."

"Then get him off."

Beaumont hesitated some moments, and then left the room. The chums watched him enter the Head's study. They waited anxiously for Leggett to come out.

The cad of the Fourth made his appearance at last, and the expression of his face showed that he had escaped with nothing worse than a lecture.

"Well, how did it go?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Right as rain," said Leggett. "The Head was in a fearful wax when Bulkeley explained to him, but then Beaumont came in. He explained to the Head that he had had to deal with me rather severely—perhaps had a little overdone it—and begged me off. He was so much in earnest that the Head gave in. Blessed if I know what's come over Beaumont! One thing's jolly certain, he won't dare to lick me after this, not for a jolly long time to come, anyway. Everybody's got an eye on him now."

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "And mind you keep to the straight path, Leggett, and don't forget that you're turning over a new leaf."

"Oh, that's all right," said Leggett.

"Mind, we don't want to have taken all this trouble for nothing," said Tommy Dodd. "You undertook to turn over a new leaf, and you've got to keep your word. I expect you to. If you start being a cad again I shall regard all my trouble as wasted."

"And then I shall feel it my duty to give you a high old time," said Tommy Dodd. "I shall keep a fatherly eye on you in the future, Leggett, and see that you do not fall from grace."

And Leggett smiled a rather sickly smile.

THE END.

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**"ONE OF THE BEST!"**

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Continued from page 16).

done in the world, Master Lumley, and they ain't learnin' 'ow to do any of it. They're only learnin' 'ow to live without doin' any. It don't seem to me right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're only goin' to laff, Master Lumley—"

Grimes reproachedfully. "But I'm not," said Lumley-Lumley, clapping his chum on the shoulder. "I shouldn't wonder if you're quite right, Grimey. You'll do better in the grocery line, I guess. And so we'll tell the Head, And Mr. Sands will give you your job again—"

Grimes started to his feet.

"You mean it, Master Lumley?" he exclaimed eagerly.

"I guess so."

"And you ain't offended?"

"Ha, ha! Of course not."

"Then I don't deny that I'd rather be in my old business," said Grimes. "I must say it seems to me more sensible and useful-like."

"Hear, hear!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Come with me to the Head."

And he marched Grimes off at once to the Head's study.

Tom Merry & Co. heard the news with regret.

They were sorry to lose Grimes of the Fourth.

But, as Blake sapiently remarked, very likely Grimes knew his own business best, and the Co. agreed that very likely he did.

Grimes bade a most affectionate farewell to his friends at St. Jim's.

"We shall see you again, of course, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he shook Grimes by the hand.

Grimes nodded and grinned.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy, if you want to. I shall bring the groceries, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"And I shall be playing in the Rylcombe Wanderers, too," said Grimes. "We'll meet on the footer-ground, Master D'Arcy. I'm sorry to leave all you fellows," Grimes went on, "but a chap has to make his way in the world, you know, and it's best to begin young. But I 'ope we'll always be good friends when we 'appen to meet."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The next day Grimes reappeared at St. Jim's, but he was not in Etons, and he had a basket on his arm, and he came to the tradesmen's entrance. But his honest face looked very bright and happy, and he grinned cheerily at Tom Merry & Co. when they walked round to speak to him. Fourth-Former of St. Jim's, or grocer's lad with a basket, Tom Merry & Co. were agreed that Grimes was One of the Best!

THE END.

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