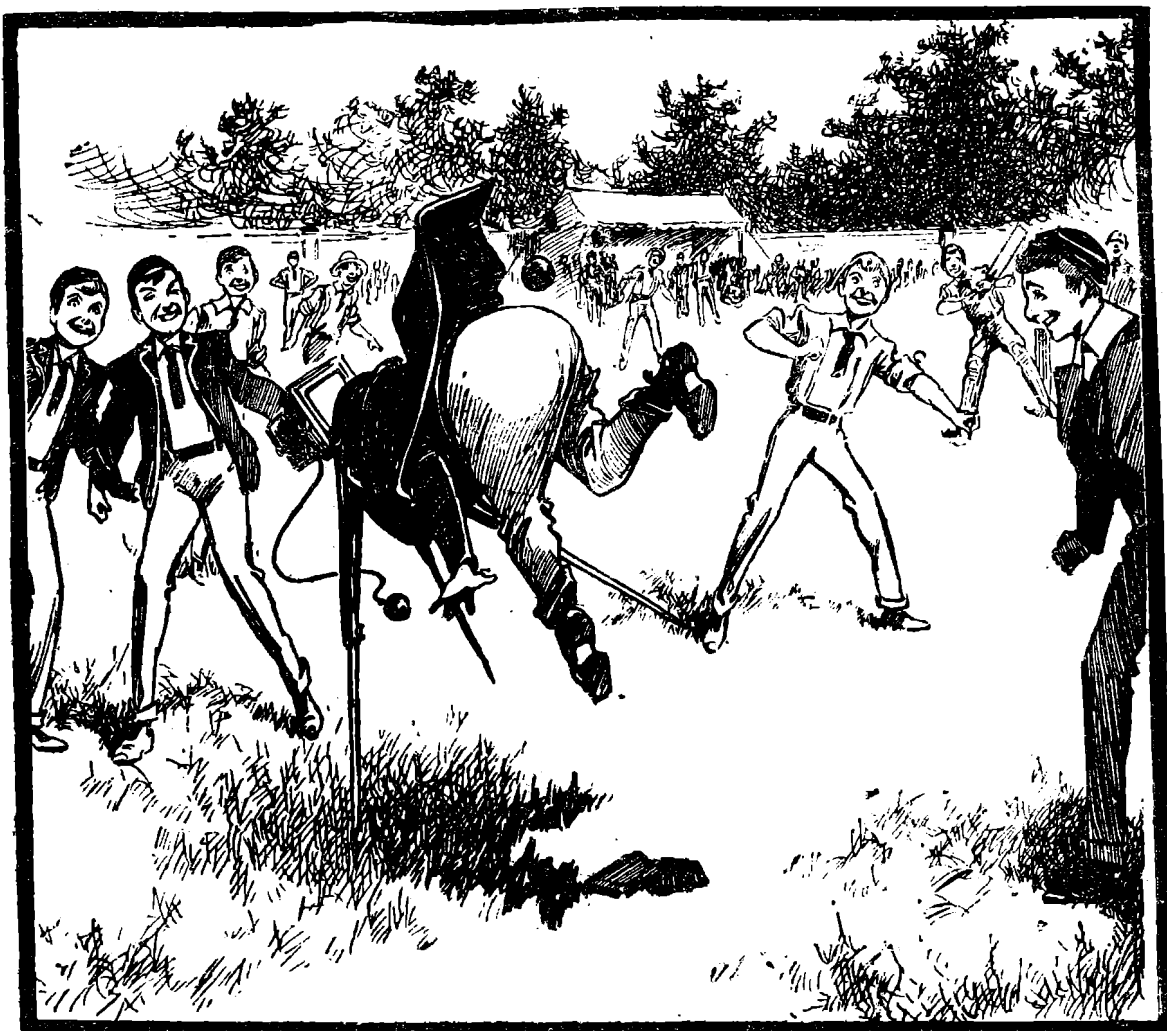


THE ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!

The Penny Popular

No.
249.

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



“WELL HIT, SIR!”

(An Exciting Incident from the Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
contained in this Issue.)

THE GREYFRIARS PHOTOGRAPHER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter is Pleased.

"IT'S come!"

Billy Bunter, who was standing at the window of No. 1 Study, turned round with a gleeful grin as he uttered that exclamation.

Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Nugent, who were talking cricket, did not appear to hear the remark, and Bunter repeated it, crescendo, with an indignant note in his voice.

"I say, you fellows, it's come!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking round. "Is that Bunter chirping? As I was saying, Wharton, Carberry was out—right out—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Out, as sure as a gun—as clear a case of leg-before as ever I saw. But—"

"Look here, you fellows, I tell you it's come! I think you might leave off jawing cricket for a minute on an important occasion like this!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking indignantly at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles. "I don't get a camera every day!"

"Eh! Have you got a camera?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent, haven't I been telling you for days past that I was going to have a camera as a prize for selling ten articles for the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.!"

"But you didn't sell the articles," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Most of them were chucked into the fire, or into a pond, if I remember."

"Very likely, but as a strictly honourable fellow I had to pay for them all the same, and so I got the camera."

"Blessed if I know where you got the tin, then," remarked Bob Cherry. "I don't remember hearing you ask Wharton for it."

"I have other friends, outside this study," said the fat junior, with a great deal of dignity. "I am not dependent upon Wharton. Bulstrode advanced me fifteen shillings."

"Phew! Bulstrode!"

"Yes, certainly. Of course, I am going to repay him. I expect to make a considerable weekly income out of my camera—making enlargements for framing and selling them, and so on. It's a much bigger one than I really expected, too."

"You haven't seen it yet."

"There's the carrier's man bringing it in," said Bunter, jerking a fat thumb towards the window. "You can see him! I half-expected a little hand-camera by parcels post, you know; but they've sent me a big stand-camera—look!"

The chums of the Remove glanced out of the study window. The carrier from Friardale was certainly bringing up to the house something which could not be

mistaken for anything but the tripod of a stand-camera.

The juniors looked surprised, and Bunter chuckled with satisfaction.

"This is what comes after your sniffing and sneering at the Fair Trading Co.," he remarked. "I only sent them fifteen bob, and they've sent me a camera worth perhaps ten or fifteen guineas."

"Rats! Where would their profit come in, ass?"

"Oh, they're really doing it for advertisement, you know."

"More rats!"

"You don't know much about business," said Bunter, with an assumption of superior knowledge, which very nearly earned him a "thick" ear. "Lots of firms practically give away their things for the sake of advertisement. It pays them in the long run."

"I suppose they live on the advertisements," suggested Bob Cherry sarcastically. "So long as they are sufficiently advertised, they don't want any grub."

"Oh, you don't understand business! I've often thought that if we pooled the pocket-money in this study, and placed the finances in my hands, we could make a business concern of it, instead of pegging along from hand to mouth. But I can't stop jawing—"

"I know you can't—you never can!"

"I mean I can't stop here jawing, Cherry—I'm going to meet the carrier. They may possibly have sent it carriage forward—it isn't likely; but you might lend me some tin, Wharton, in case I have to pay the carrier. I've run out of money, somehow—partly through being disappointed about a postal-order."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You can see the carrier, Billy, and let me know exactly how much it is first," he said.

"If you can't trust money into my hands, Wharton—"

"Well, I can't!" said Harry bluntly. "So you can buzz off!"

"I'm not strong enough to keep on running up and down stairs," said Bunter hurriedly, changing the topic. "You'd better let me have it now."

"You can call up to the window."

"Oh, all right! It's a curious thing that the more money a chap has the meaner he gets with it," Bunter remarked.

Wharton laughed again, and Bunter hurried out of the study. The chums of the Remove looked out of the window. They were rather interested in Bunter's camera.

Bunter often took up new hobbies. Photography was his latest wheeze, and he had become the terror of all the amateur photographers in the school.

Bunter had very indistinct ideas on the subject of "meum and tuum." When he wanted a camera to practise with, he took one, if he could find it.

Ogilvy of the Remove was under the

necessity of locking his up whenever he was not using it; and even Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, had discovered that Bunter had borrowed his camera.

Mr. Quelch's camera was a valuable one, and Bunter had dropped it. And a very painful explanation ensued, which cured Bunter of any desire to borrow Mr. Quelch's camera again. Still, he was not wholly dissatisfied with the incident.

"You see, it seems to damage a camera to drop it on stones," he confided to the juniors in No. 1 Study. "Jolly lucky I had Quelch's camera to practise with, or I might have dropped my own, you know!"

"Blessed if I can make that out!" said Bob Cherry, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "From what we can see from here, that looks like an expensive thing—the stand is worth the money Bunter paid. Blessed if I catch on. The Fair Trading Co. isn't a firm of philanthropists—not by long chalks!"

Wharton nodded; he was puzzled, too. It was possible that the Fair Trading Co. were sending a really excellent prize to Bunter, because he was at a public school, and they might hope hereby to obtain a host of customers, whence they would obtain their profit.

It was possible—yet not probable. Such a firm was very unlikely to have any goods of really good quality to dispose of at all.

They watched Bunter meet the carrier, who handed over the parcels he was carrying. Bunter blinked up at the study window.

"Two shillings!" he bawled.

"Check!" said Bob Cherry.

Wharton extracted two shillings from his pocket. There was no earthly reason why Wharton should pay Bunter's expenses in this way—except that Bunter expected him to do so.

And it is a curious circumstance—curious but true—that the Bunters of this world frequently do get their expenses paid by people they have no claim upon, simply because they seem to expect it.

Wharton tossed the two shillings down to Bunter, who blinked round for them and picked them up, and the chums of the Remove saw him pay the carrier and receive some change. Then he bore the prize into the House in triumph.

A minute later he was at the door of the study. Bob Cherry opened it, and Bunter came triumphantly in, with the camera under one arm and the tripod under the other. He blinked gleefully at his study-mates.

"Jolly good prize, eh?" he asked.

"How much did you pay the carrier?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh! The carrier?"

"Yes, the carrier. Sharp!"

"You heard me ask Wharton for two shillings."

"Yes; and I saw the carrier give you some change."

Bunter's fat face fell a little. He was extremely short-sighted himself, and he was continually forgetting that other fellows could see farther than he could.

"If Wharton is going to make a fuss about a matter of threepence—" he began, with an attempt at crushing dignity.

"I'm not," said Harry, laughing.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "It's the principle of the thing. He said two shillings when it was only one and nupence. Hand over the other three-d., Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Hand it over!" roared Bob.

Bunter handed it over.

"If Wharton doesn't want it, I'll put it into the poor-box," said Bob. "I'm going to bring you up in the way you should go, Billy. I'm going to make an honest duffer of you if I have to skin you doing it."

"Look here—"

"Nuff said! If you want to unpack your camera on that table, do it while we're gone to the tuckshop; we want tea when we get in."

And Wharton, Cherry, and Nugent left the study, leaving Billy Bunter to unpack his camera.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Greyfriars Photographer Receives a Shock!

"HALLO, Vaseline! I want to speak to you!"

Hazeldene looked up from a book he was reading, and observed that Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, was standing in the doorway of the study.

"What do you want?" asked Hazeldene.

"You've had a letter from your sister?" said the burly Removite agreeably, but without looking at Hazeldene.

The latter nodded.

"Well, can't you tell a fellow if there's any news?"

"Oh, it's nothing!" said Hazeldene awkwardly. "Marjorie and Clara want me to take a few friends over to Cliff House to tea to-morrow night."

"I thought so. Who are you going to take?"

"Only Study No. 1."

"You can't take your own study-mate, I suppose?" asked Bulstrode, with an unpleasant glitter in his eyes.

Hazeldene reddened, and was silent. He had half expected that, and he did not know what to say. Wharton would have said out plainly, "No, I can't," but Hazeldene was not much like Wharton. He was too weak by nature to say a direct "No" to anybody, and his weakness had got him into more than one serious scrape.

"Well, you see," he began at last—"Marjorie says—" He hesitated.

"She says a few friends," said Bulstrode. "I suppose I'm a friend? Hang it! I think I've stood your friend once or twice. I suppose your sister doesn't like me?"

"Well, she doesn't, you know."

"Look here," said Bulstrode, "I—I want to come to Cliff House." He turned red. "I'm not in the habit of going around begging for invitations. But I want to come."

"I—I—I'll ask Wharton."

"What's Wharton got to do with it?" broke out Bulstrode angrily. "Since you were taken up by that study, you're always at the same old tune—Wharton says this, and Wharton says that. Hang Wharton!"

"He's done a lot for me," said Hazeldene, with some spirit.

"So have I—if you come to that. Look here, am I coming to Cliff House to-morrow or not?"

"Well, I suppose you can come if you want to," said Hazeldene weakly.

"That's settled then."

Hazeldene nodded, and left the study with a worried look on his face. He knew that the addition to the party would not be welcome to Study No. 1, and he was very much afraid that it would not be welcome to Marjorie & Co. But there was no help for it now.

The Famous Four were going down to the cricket ground, and Hazeldene joined them. Under Wharton's lead, Hazeldene was becoming a very fair cricketer, and he admitted that it was a great deal better than hanging about the Cloisters smoking cheap cigarettes, as had been his habit not so very long ago.

"Do you fellows mind if Bulstrode comes to-morrow?" he asked.

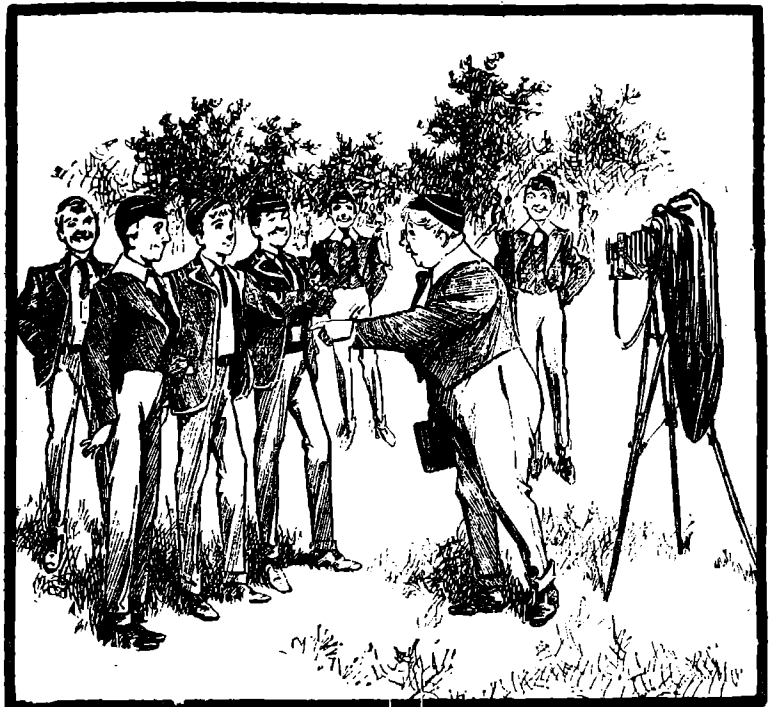
not be helped, they went out to the cricket. The long summer evenings gave light enough for cricket practice almost up to supper-time, a fact of which the keen cricketers of the Remove took full advantage.

The Upper Fourth were at practice on their ground, which adjoined the Remove pitch, and they greeted the Famous Four with grins.

Harry Wharton donned his batting gloves, affecting not to hear the voice of Billy Bunter, who was calling to him to come and join a group to be photographed.

Bunter had the camera in position now. There were a crowd of juniors round him, and a few seniors, all surprised to see Billy in possession of the stand camera.

Billy Bunter's romances about his financial resources were well known all over Greyfriars, and generally discounted; but the camera seemed to back



"Now, you chaps who are going to have your photos taken," said Bunter, in a business-like tone, "stand together. Try to look pleasant, Blundell! Keep your feet still, Micky Desmond!"

Harry Wharton looked rather grim. "That's for you to settle," he said shortly.

"Well, he wanted to come, and—I told him he could. I expect he will behave himself all right, you know. He can be all right when he chooses."

The chums of Study No. 1 vouchsafed no reply to that remark. As Wharton said, it was for Hazeldene to settle who he would take; but if they had known in advance that Bulstrode was coming, they would have hesitated to join the party.

It was true enough that the Remove bully could be "all right when he chose"; the trouble was that he very seldom chose to be all right. His impertinence to Miss Primrose had once caused a serious coolness between Cliff House and Greyfriars, and the juniors had not forgotten it.

Without saying anything further on the matter, as it was settled now and could

them up for once. It was evidently an expensive one.

"Look here," said Blundell of the Fifth. "It's no good your telling us that you got that camera as a gift from the Fair Trading Co. We can't swallow it. If it's a present from somebody, why can't you say so?"

"Well, if you don't believe me, Blundell, I'm sincerely sorry, but—"

"Of course I don't!"

"Well, there's the camera."

"Yes, I see it is. It strikes me that you've been borrowing tin all this time on false pretences, and that you've got money!" said Blundell severely.

Bunter was not blind to the advantage it might be to him to be supposed to "have money"; so he let it go at that. He turned his attention to the camera, leaving Blundell convinced that he had secret resources which he had drawn

upon for the purchase of that valuable article.

The camera was in position, and Bunter was all ready to dodge under the black-cloth. Ogilvy, the amateur photographer of the Remove, had given him a few hints about using it, and Bunter had already had considerable practice with other people's cameras. Ogilvy offered to take the photograph for him, and handle the whole matter, but this generous offer was declined.

"Now you chaps who are going to have your photos taken," said Bunter, in a business-like tone, "stand together. Try to look pleasant, Blundell."

"Why, you cheeky young bounder

"And don't talk. Keep your feet still, Micky Desmond."

"Faith, and I—"

"You can't jaw while I'm posing you. All of you ready? I say, Wharton—I say, you fellows!" said Bunter, bawling to the cricket-pitch. "Do you want to come and join the group? I can't waste quarter-plates, but you can come in this lot if you like!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" called back Bob Cherry, who was bowling to Wharton, and the Nabob of Bhanpur added that the cokefulness was terrific.

"I'd advise you to get a bit further off with that camera," called out Frank Nugent. "There's no net up on this side."

"If you think I'm going to muck up all my arrangements for the sake of your rotten cricket, Nugent—"

"Oh, suit yourself!"

"All you chaps ready?"

"Faith, and it's ready for five minutes we've been! I shall have to stand on the other leg entirely."

"Keep still!" said Bunter, disappearing under the cloth.

"Right-ho! Buck up!"

And the group stood very still, with that painful expression upon their faces which a photographer's victims generally summon up when they are told to look pleasant. Click!

The click came from the cricket-field, where Wharton was playing Bob Cherry's bowling. A mighty swipe sent the ball on its travels, and for a moment the fieldsmen did not know where it was gone. But only for one moment. Then they knew!

For Billy Bunter was seen to give a convulsive leap into the air, his little fat legs kicking out spasmodically from under the black cloth; and then the camera went over with a crash.

Billy Bunter had stopped the ball—quite unintentionally—and there was a roar from the cricketers:

"Bravo! Well stopped!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Splendid Gift!

"OW!" roared Bunter, clapping his hand to the spot where the ball had struck him, and dancing round the fallen camera.

"Ow! Oh! O-o-o-oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The group were no longer still, they were rocking with laughter. Billy Bunter danced and yelled, and Nugent ran up for the ball. He disentangled it from the black cloth.

"Thanks!" he said airily. "You stopped that beautifully, Bunter."

"Ow, ow! I'm hurt!"

Nugent ran back with the ball. The grinning cricketers resumed their play, and Billy Bunter blinked savagely at the group before him. They were yelling with merriment.

"Blessed if I can see anything to

cackle at!" growled Bunter. "I'm hurt. Help me to get that beastly thing upright again, some of you. I shouldn't wonder if it's damaged. If it is, somebody will have to pay for it. I'm not going to have my camera damaged. Oh, do stop cackling like a farmyard full of rotten hens!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ogilvy and Desmond gave Bunter a hand up with the camera. He blinked at the cricket-ground. Wharton was still batting, and Bunter considered it upon the whole advisable to get further off.

He carried the camera over towards the house, and the group followed. They were anxious to have their photographs taken; as Russell remarked, it wasn't every day you could get it done for nothing.

Bunter set up the tripod again, at a safe distance. He was almost under the windows of his Form-master's study now, but he did not notice Mr. Quelch looking out of the window with an amazed expression upon his face.

Having formed the group to his satisfaction, Bunter was about to disappear under the black cloth again, when there came a sudden interruption.

"Bunter!"

It was the Remove-master's voice, in tones so sharp that Bunter gave a wild jump, and nearly knocked the stand over again.

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"What are you doing with that camera?"

"This camera, sir? Taking photographs, sir. I haven't taken any yet, as I've been continually interrupted by silly asses—ahem!—I mean, I—"

"Whose camera is that?"

"Mine, sir!"

"Take care what you say, Bunter. I was expecting a new stand camera to be delivered to me this afternoon. As it did not arrive, I sent down to Friardale, and have just received word that it was taken in here by a boy, who signed the carrier's note for it. Where did you get that camera?"

"This—this camera was sent me, sir, as—as a prize."

"A prize! A fifteen guinea camera as a prize in a competition? Take care, Bunter!"

"Not in a competition, sir. It was sent me by the Imperialist Fair Trading Company, sir, as a prize—a bonus, sir—for selling ten articles."

"What was the value of the articles?"

"Oh, they were practically priceless, sir. Everything of the finest quality; it was practically impossible to estimate their value—"

"I mean, what did you give for them?"

"Fifteen shillings, sir."

"Is it possible, Bunter, that you were stupid enough to expect a bonus of fifteen guineas for selling articles to the value of fifteen shillings?" thundered the Remove-master.

"You—you don't understand, sir," said Billy Bunter feebly. "They do it for advertisement, sir."

"Don't be ridiculous, Bunter! Did this camera come here addressed to you?"

"I—I never looked at the address, sir. You see, I was expecting a camera, and so I took it for granted—"

"You took a little too much for granted, I think," said Mr. Quelch. "That is certainly my camera. You damaged my last one, Bunter, when you had the incredible impertinence to take it from my room. If you have damaged this one, you will hear from me. Ogilvy, please take that camera into my study."

"Certainly, sir!"

Billy Bunter blinked after the disappearing camera in utter dismay.

"You—you're not going to take it away, sir?"

"I am not going to lend you an expensive camera to play with, if that is what you mean," said the Remove-master severely. "I will overlook your mistake, Bunter, if I find that the camera is not damaged. I cannot, however, refrain from expressing the opinion that you are the most crassly stupid boy at Greyfriars."

And with this cheering remark the Remove-master turned away and followed Ogilvy. He disappeared after the camera, leaving Bunter blinking at the grinning faces round him.

"So that's the explanation," grunted Blundell. "I knew jolly well you never got a camera like that from a swindling company!"

"Oh, really, Blundell—"

"Faith, and now I come to think of it, there's a parcel addressed to Bunter in the hall!" chuckled Micky Desmond. "I shouldn't wonder if it's the camera from the Fair Trading Company, Buntie darling."

Bunter went slowly into the House. He was still rather inclined to think that the mistake was on Mr. Quelch's side, and that the camera really belonged to him. But, sure enough, in the hall was a small packet addressed to William George Bunter, Esq., Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter picked it up, and turned it over, and looked at it. There were advertisements printed on the outside of the wrapping, and in good-sized type appeared the words "Imperialist Fair Trading Co."

There was no mistake about it, this was the camera.

Surrounded by a crowd of grinning fellows, Bunter opened the packet. It contained a camera, and a grandiloquent note informing the fortunate recipient that this was the magnificent Hawkseye Camera, which was awarded him for selling the ten articles.

The camera certainly was a camera; but it was not exactly up to Bunter's expectations, especially after handling the new camera of the Form-master.

It was a tiny thing, covered with black cloth, and contained six cheap tin dark-slides. There was no doubt it would take photographs, though what kind of photographs it would take remained to be proved by experience.

Bunter's face was a study as he examined it. The crowd round him roared.

"Blest if it was worth while pestering fellows to death to buy ten giddy articles to get a thing like that," said Trevor.

"Oh, it's a camera!" said Skinner.

"You can't buy 'em even like that under two-and-six. I should say the cost-price was ninnepence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the ten articles were worth about threepence each," remarked Lacy, with an air of calculation. "That makes half-a-crown for the articles and half-a-crown for the camera—five bob the lot—in return for Bunter's fifteen bob—or somebody else's fifteen bob, rather, as I suppose Buntie borrowed it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a swindle!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Everybody told you that at the start," grinned Skinner. "But you knew such a precious lot, you frabjous duffer."

"I wish I had the fifteen bob now," growled Bunter. "This is what comes of being so beastly honest. I'm always suffering for my honesty. Blessed if it isn't enough to make a chap throw up his principles."

"You wouldn't have to exert much strength to throw up yours," said Russell

drily. "They'd go up like a ping-pong ball."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Bunter grunted, and walked away with the camera under his arm. He looked in at Bulstrode's study. The big Removite was writing a letter, and the envelope, already addressed, lay on the blotting-sheet.

It was addressed to "Miss Hazeldene, Cliff House School, near Friardale." Bunter, who never failed to see everything that did not concern him, noticed it at once. Bulstrode looked up irritably, and pushed the envelope under the blotting-paper.

"What do you want?" he said angrily. "Why can't you knock, you young pig?"

"I'm sincerely sorry, Bulstrode. Of course, I didn't know you were writing to Marjorie Hazeldene, or—"

"What do you want?" roared Bulstrode.

"It's about this camera. It's a swindle. Quelch has collared my new camera. He says it's his, and I've got this thing. That's all I've got in return for the fifteen bob I sent to the Fair Trading Company."

"Serve you jolly well right! Get out!"

"But look here; if you had left it to me I shouldn't have sent them the money; not till my postal-order had come, anyway. You really made me lose that money, Bulstrode."

"Well, it was my money! Shut up, and get out."

"It wasn't your money if you gave it to me," argued Bunter. "You insisted upon getting a postal-order, and crossing it, as if you thought I should try to keep the money!"

"I knew you'd keep it if you could, Bunk!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! Under the circumstances, as you've caused me a dead loss, I think you ought to have this camera, and refund me the fifteen shillings."

Bulstrode did not reply to this decidedly cool suggestion. He rose from his seat and picked up a dog-whip. Bunter made a wild rush for the door, but he was not quite quick enough.

The lash curled round his fat legs, and he jumped about a foot off the linoleum, and then he went down the passage as he could never have gone down the cinder-path. He kept on at a wild rush till the slam of the door informed him that Bulstrode was not pursuing, and then he stopped breathless.

"The—the beast!" he muttered. "Fancy deliberately doing a chap out of fifteen bob like that! I—I've a jolly good mind to complain to the Head!"

But, on second thoughts, Bunter decided not to mention the matter to the Head.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Great Preparation.

"MARJORIE!"

"Yes, dear?"

"Buck up!" said Clara Trevlyn, looking in at the classroom door at Cliff House—Miss Penelope Primrose's School for Girls.

Marjorie Hazeldene laughed as she came out. She had lingered behind a moment to speak to Miss Locke, the second mistress of Cliff House. There were three or four girls gathered round Miss Clara in the passage, and they were all looking very animated and excited.

Marjorie Hazeldene was the acknowledged chief. She was not as lively as Miss Clara by any means, but her head was much the steadier of the two. It had been Clara's idea in the first place to ask the Greyfriars boys to tea in the "study,"

and Marjorie had assented, the other girls agreeing with enthusiasm.

There were some Greyfriars' customs that appealed to Marjorie very much. Tea in the study was one of them. They had no separate studies at Cliff House, and that was a grievance with Miss Clara.

They were allowed to ask their boy-friends to tea, certainly; but where was the fun of having friends to tea at a long table, presided over by Miss Primrose? Tea then became simply a meal—merely that and nothing more.

The adventurousness of tea in the study, of lighting their own fires and boiling their own kettle, making their own tea, and so forth—all that was lost. But Miss Clara intended to take a leaf out of the Greyfriars book, and she had brought Marjorie round to her way of thinking.

Tea in the study was an institution at Greyfriars; and why not at Cliff House? The girls put their heads together over it. Hence vast and secret preparations, and the invitation to the Removites.

"Come, Marjorie," said Clara reprovingly, as she linked her arm in her friend's. "You can chatter about painting to Miss Locke another time."

"I was only saying—"

"Oh, I know—the Coreggjosity of Coreggio!" said Miss Clara, laughing. "Never mind that now. We've got to get ready for Hazel and his friends. We mustn't lose time, in case anything goes wrong with the arrangements."

And after a cautious look round, to make sure that they were not observed, the girls quitted the School House, and followed a path through the trees to a distance of about twenty yards from the house.

Here stood the gardener's shed, where Mr. McIlvaine, the genial Scottish gardener of Cliff House, kept all his paraphernalia. Mr. McIlvaine was away just now, and not likely to appear on the spot, and the girls were taking advantage of his absence.

During the day they had paid several visits to the shed, and added much in the way of furnishing and adornment to improve its appearance.

The floor of the shed was of bare planks, but they had covered it with a square of carpet, and the gardening implements had all been stacked away out of sight. Some neat chairs had been smuggled into the shed, and a box containing tools, which was too heavy to be moved, had been covered with a counterpane and several cushions to transform it into a sofa.

The grate had been carefully cleaned up, and a fire laid. As a fire was very seldom lighted in the shed—and never during the summer—it was a little doubtful how the chimney would draw. But that could not be helped. It might draw all right; but, as Miss Clara said very sensibly, it was no good meeting troubles half-way.

Clintz had been hung over the walls to conceal the rough wood and such implements as could not be removed. Marjorie & Co. had spent a considerable amount of pocket-money on their purchases for the adornment of the gardener's shed; but that would not be wasted, for Miss Clara, who was full of ideas, pointed out that all the materials could be worked up into something or other to be given to the poor.

"By Jove!" said Miss Clara, who had picked up that expression—and many more—from the boys of Greyfriars. "By Jove! Doesn't it look ripping!"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Stuff!" said Miss Clara cheerfully. "No time for 'Oh, Clara!' now. The boundaries—"

"Oh, Clara!"

"The boundaries," repeated Miss Clara obstinately—"the boundaries may come

along any time. We've got to get ready. I'll light the fire. Milly, did you get the—the grub?"

"I've got the provisions here, Clara," said Milly Brown, with a slight emphasis on the word "provisions."

Miss Clara laughed the laugh of superior knowledge.

"The fellows in the Remove call it grub when they have it in the study!" she exclaimed. "Or 'tommy'—sometimes 'tuck'; never provisions. Anybody got a match?"

Nobody had.

"Cut off and get a box of matches, Milly," said Clara. "Where's that frying-pan?"

"Dear me," said Marjorie, "where's the frying-pan?"

"I—I forgot it," stammered Alice Lake.

"My goodness, that chap forgets everything!" said Miss Clara. "Buzz off and get the frying-pan, you duffer!"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Buzz off!" cried Miss Clara. "Don't stand looking at me! Buzz off and get the frying-pan, you—you ass!"

Quite overcome, Alice hurried off for the frying-pan.

"What price something to drink?" said Miss Clara. "Did you bring the ginger-beer, Norah?"

"Faith, and I forgot it intoirly!" said Norah Flynn.

"Go and get it, then! My goodness, you'll turn my hair grey among you!"

Milly Brown dashed in breathlessly with a box of matches. Miss Clara gingerly drew a pair of housemaid's gloves upon her hands, and proceeded to light the fire. The fire lighted—and smoked! Apparently, there was no draught up the chimney—at all events, the smoke poured into the shed.

"Br-r-gr-r-r-br-r-gr-gr!" said Miss Clara, coughing.

"Oh, dear!" said Marjorie. "Wave something before it, Clara, and make the smoke go up the chimney!"

"There isn't anything to wave," said Clara helplessly. "My goodness! How annoying of the fire to smoke like this! I—I— Give me a spade!"

Marjorie found a spade, and handed it to her, and Miss Clara began to wave it before the fire to fan the flame. The other girls crowded back in time to avoid being brained with the spade.

Clara kept it up for several minutes, till she was nearly suffocated with the smoke, and had to run out of the shed to get breath.

"Groo—groo—groooh!"

"I've seen somebody make a fire draw by fastening up a sheet of paper before the grate," said Marjorie. "Is there a newspaper?"

"I'll go and find one," gasped Clara.

She was five minutes finding the newspaper. When she returned the shed was thick and hazy with smoke, and nobody liked to venture into it. Miss Clara looked into the dimness of it doubtfully.

"It will suffocate you, dear," said Milly Brown.

"Wait till it clears off," suggested Alice, who had returned with the frying-pan. "It may clear off presently."

Miss Clara snuffed.

"The guests may be here at any moment. I'm going in!"

And she dashed gallantly into the smoky shed, and jammed the newspaper up before the fire. She had no time to secure it, having to retreat to the open air for breath, and the paper fell on the flames and ignited.

There was a roar as the flame went up. "My goodness!" gasped Clara. "I—I hope the shed won't catch fire!"

The girls looked on in dismay. Thick smoke rolled from the door of the shed,

and dispersed among the foliage above; but very little was coming out of the chimney. The village clock chimed out.

"Oh, dear!" said Milly Brown. "The boys may be here any minute now!"

"Someone must meet them on the road," said Marjorie hastily, "or they will come up to the gate, and then—"

"All the fat will be in the fire," said Clara. "You cut off, Milly, while I get this—this beastly fire in order!"

Milly Brown hurried away. The smoke was a little less thick in a few minutes, probably because the fire was going out. Soon the girls ventured into the shed again. Miss Clara poked the fire, and a fresh smoke rose from the smouldering wood.

"My goodness! It's out!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Can I help you?"

Marjorie & Co. started and looked round. Harry Wharton was looking in at the door with a smile on his face.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Miss Clara Cooks the Sausages.

MARJORIE coloured as she met Harry's glance, and then laughed. Miss Clara was looking exasperated, but she laughed, too. The guests had arrived—not at the most opportune moment.

"Isn't it dreadful?" said Marjorie, shaking hands with Harry in the smoke. "I am sorry it is so smoky!"

"The smokefulness is certainly terrible," murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Perhaps I can help you," said Harry. "I've lighted lots of fires, you know."

Marjorie looked dubiously at Harry's nice clothes and silk hat. He did not look in trim for wrestling with an obstinate fire. But he did not seem to care for that. He took his hat and jacket off, and handed them to Nugent to take care of, and slipped into the work.

It was a strong belief of Miss Clara's that girls could do anything quite as well as boys; but she had to admit that Wharton handled that obstinate fire well.

In two minutes it was going again, the chimney was drawing, and the fire burnt clear. The haze cleared out of the open door and windows of the shed. The Cliff House girls and their guests breathed again.

"Oh, thank you so much!" said Marjorie gratefully.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's nothing."

"You have made your hands dreadfully black," said Miss Clara. "We are ever so much obliged to you!"

"Indeed, we are," said Marjorie. "There is a sink in the room next to this where you can wash your hands. The gardener keeps his soap and things there."

"Thank you!" said Wharton, looking at his hands, which were indeed black and horribly sooty. "That's just what I want."

The smoke having cleared off, the guests came in. There were ample seats for them all, the shed having that advantage over a junior study at Greyfriars, which could seldom seat a party if it numbered more than five or six.

Hazeldene looked round the shed with a grin.

"You've fixed this up all night, Marjorie," he remarked. "Is this the study?"

Marjorie laughed.

"Yes, this is the study—our study, you know. We haven't any studies indoors, so we've arranged this as one."

"And a ripping one it makes, too!"

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said Bob Cherry admiringly. "It's tons better than a Remove study at Greyfriars!"

"The betterfulness is terrific."

"We meant to have tea ready when you came," said Marjorie confidently, "but we have been delayed. The fire was such a dreadful bother."

"Too bad!" said Nugent sympathetically.

Billy Bunter blinked towards the basket of provisions.

"If there's any cooking to do you can count on me," he remarked. "I'd be only too willing to oblige. Of course, girls can't cook!"

"Can't they?" said Miss Clara indignantly. "You shall see! I am cook this time, and I rather think I shall turn the pro—the grub out all right."

Bunter shook his head.

"Better let me handle the grub," he said. "It's a serious matter, you know, if the grub were to get spoiled."

"You shall see!" said Miss Clara firmly.

Marjorie looked a little doubtful, but she did not argue with her friend. After all, it was not exactly the thing to let a visitor cook his own tea.

Miss Clara evidently knew all about it, for she took the frying-pan, and rubbed it out, and then called for dripping to grease it.

"Dere isn't any dripping!" said Miss Wilhelmina.

"Then butter!" said Clara. "It's awfully extravagant to use butter, but I shall have to use it this time."

"I—I forgot the butter!" stammered Milly.

Miss Clara gave her a freezing glance. "You'll be forgetting your own head next!" she said. "Do cut off and get the butter, and be quick!"

A wait of several minutes ensued while Miss Brown cut off and fetched the butter. The Greyfriars juniors maintained a perfect gravity, with the exception of Billy Bunter, who was, of course, hungry.

He wanted to suggest beginning with the cake, but there was a look in Harry Wharton's eye that restrained him. He shifted uneasily, and remarked that it was hungry weather, and then gasped as Bob Cherry pinched him, nearly taking a lump out of his fat leg.

Milly Brown returned with the butter, and Miss Clara took it and opened it on the table. Under the eyes of the Greyfriars juniors she did not wish to hesitate, but, as a matter of fact, cooking was not one of Clara's accomplishments. Billy Bunter could have given her points, and beaten her easily at that game.

She had never fried sausages before, and how much butter to put in the pan to start with was a great mystery to her. The juniors would willingly have offered advice, but under the circumstances they could not very well do so without being asked, so they assumed an air of elaborate unconsciousness.

Miss Clara hesitated only for a moment, then she cut off about half a pound of butter, and jammed it into the frying-pan. Then she put the frying-pan on the glowing fire.

Billy Bunter started up.

"I say, Miss Clara—"

Bob Cherry dragged him down again. He had made up his mind that Billy Bunter was not to be allowed to speak at all, and he was keeping to it.

"Lemme alone, Cherry! I—"

"Shut up!" whispered Bob fiercely.

"Did you speak?" asked Miss Clara, looking round with a glowing face from the fire.

"N-n-n—it's nothing!"

The butter was sizzling in the pan now. It melted quickly enough, and the frying-

pan swam in liquid grease, being nearly half-full of the melted butter.

Miss Clara detached the sausages, and plunged some of them into the sea of grease, and there were some splashes over the edge of the fire.

Sizzle—sizzle—sizzle!

Miss Clara started back as the spilt butter sizzled and spluttered, and unfortunately gave the handle of the frying-pan a push in doing so.

Marjorie sprang forward—too late!

A sea of grease swooped over the side of the pan into the fire, and there was a roar and a burst of flame.

Mark Linley dragged Miss Clara back, and only just in time, or her dress might have caught fire.

"My goodness!" gasped Clara.

"Oh, dear!" said Marjorie.

The fire blazed and roared away furiously, fed by the melted grease, and in the midst of the flames the sausages sizzled and scorched, and a smell of burning filled the shed.

"My word!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"They'll be spoiled! Oh, dear! And I'm so hungry! The sausages will be spoiled!"

"I—I'm afraid they will," said Miss Clara. "Dear me, how warm it is in here! The smell of burning is unpleasant, too."

"Oh, not at all!" said Bob Cherry, with great politeness. "I—I rather like it."

"Oh, it's ripping!" said Hazeldene. "You'd do better to let Bunter cook, Clara. He's a jolly good cook."

"Yes, rather! I'd be very pleased."

"Stuff!" said Miss Clara decidedly.

"One swallow does not make a summer. Accidents will always happen."

"When you are cooking!" murmured Miss Flynn.

"I will cook the bacon now."

"I'm blessed if I can stay here and see good food messed up like this!" murmured Billy Bunter.

"Did you speak, Bunter?"

"I said I'd go and take some photos in the garden while you were cooking."

"Yes, that's a good idea."

And Bunter went out with his camera under his arm, and the juniors, feeling that Miss Clara would cook more at her ease if no strange eyes were upon her, accompanied him. As they left the study Miss Clara flopped the bacon into the frying-pan, and there was a formidable sizz-sizz-sizzle.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Tea in the Study.

BILLY BUNTER had been disappointed with his camera at first. In comparison with the handsome stand-camera of Mr. Quelch, of which Billy had coolly taken possession till he was forced to give it up, his own one was indeed a wretched thing. But on trial it turned out that it would really take photographs.

Ogilvy had some plates that would fit it, and he had good-naturedly shown Bunter what to do. It was a very simple contrivance. The camera was worth about half-a-crown, but, properly handled, there was no reason why it should not take photographs.

Ogilvy had given Bunter half a dozen plates, and threatened him with immediate massacre if he ventured to take any more without permission. But Billy had botched those half-dozen in practice, and as he knew where Ogilvy kept his plates, he had taken the liberty of helping himself to half a dozen more.

He intended, when he had had a little practice, sending photographs to the illustrated newspapers for publication, as he had learned that amateur photographers sometimes made a great deal

of money that way. Then, out of his first cheque, he intended to pay for the plates he had taken out of Ogilvy's stock.

He was likely to pay for them in another way when Ogilvy discovered his loss. The Scottish junior was not mean, but he had a natural dislike to having his stock of photographic materials raided without permission being asked.

Bunter's camera held six plates, and the previous evening he had filled it by the aid of Ogilvy's red lamp with Ogilvy's plates. He had left the camera in the study after that, ready for use on the following day.

He intended to take six pictures while he was at Cliff House, and he had learned enough about photography now to know that he must not open the camera in the daylight to see if the plates were all right. He had done that sort of thing at first.

"Let me see," said Bunter thoughtfully. "It's a good idea to take the photos before tea, as the light is a good deal better. Would any of you fellows care to have an enlargement of a photograph to hang up in the study?"

"Let's see the photograph first," said Bob Cherry sceptically.

"Oh, really, Cherry, you can depend upon that being all right! I've studied the art as an art, and I'm practically an expert photographer now. I should like to earn a little money with the camera, too, as I want to buy some plates. I can't depend upon Ogilvy always leaving his cupboard unlocked. I could do you some splendid enlargements at ten-and-six each!"

"Go hon!"

"That's below the market price of the best quality and superior finish. I shall have to learn how to do the enlargements, too; I don't know yet. You would have to pay in advance, of course, as the process may be expensive."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at in that! Hallo, here's Miss Primrose coming! I'll snap her!"

"It isn't Miss Primrose, ass—it's Miss Locke!"

"Dear me, so it is!"

The juniors took off their hats to Miss Locke.

As a mistress at Cliff House, and as the younger sister of their own headmaster, she had a double title to respect, and the boys liked her very well, in spite of her strong views on the subject of votes for women. She seemed a little surprised to find the boys from Greyfriars in the school garden.

Marjorie came up to explain.

"Miss Primrose gave me permission to ask my friends to tea, Miss Locke," she said.

"Very good," said Miss Locke. "Tea is almost ready, I think."

Marjorie coloured.

"If—if you don't mind, Miss Locke, we're going to—have tea in the study," she said. "I'm sure Miss Primrose wouldn't mind."

"Tea in what?"

"In the study. Would you like to see it?"

"Certainly," said the amazed Miss Locke; and she followed Marjorie to the shed.

Miss Clara had just succeeded in burning all the bacon into an uneatable condition, and the smell that proceeded from the shed was what the Nabob of Bhanipur would have accurately described as "terrific."

Miss Locke breathed hard.

"Dear me! Are you going to eat that?"

Marjorie looked a little dismayed.

"It doesn't look very nice, does it?" she said.

"No, scarcely. Why not throw that stuff away, and make a tea of bread-and-butter and jam and cake?" suggested Miss Locke. "I should think that would be nicer."

"Ye-e-es, perhaps so," said Miss Clara doubtfully. "I—I haven't had much practice in cooking yet. You don't think the boys would like this bacon?"

"I feel quite sure they would not."

"Then I'll throw it away."

"And the sausages, too," said Milly Brown; "what's left of them."

Bacon and sausages were deposited in the garden. The smell of burning gradually dissolved away, and Miss Clara washed the blacks off her face and the grease off her fair hands.

"Do stay and have tea with us, dear Miss Locke," said Marjorie.

Miss Locke hesitated. She was afraid of playing the part of a wet blanket at a youthful festivity, but her pupils persuaded her.

"That's the dark slide with the plate in it falling out of place," he explained. "It leaves a new plate in position."

"Oh, I see! Have you finished?"

"No, I haven't. I've got five more plates. Have you come to be photographed, Miss Brown?"

"No; I've come to tell you tea's ready."

"Good. I'll leave the other five till after tea," said Bunter promptly.

And they adjourned to the study. It looked very bright and cheerful, and the table was well spread and wonderfully clean and neat, with its spotless cloth and dazzling crockery; but the "grub" brought a shade to the brow of William George Bunter.

"Where's the bacon?" he asked bluntly.

"Burnt!" said Miss Clara.

"Oh! And the sausages?"

"Burnt!"

"And the eggs?"



Click! The ball from Wharton's bat struck Bunter, whose head was enveloped in the black cloth. He gave a convulsive leap into the air, his fat little legs kicking spasmodically. "Ow! oh! Oooh!" he roared.

She helped to lay the table, and cut the bread-and-butter and cake, and the study soon presented a festive and agreeable appearance.

Jugs of bright flowers added to the adornment of the table, and the fire being allowed to go down, the temperature of the study became a little more tolerable. Milly went to call the juniors to tea.

She found the photographer of the Remove busy with his camera. Bunter had just taken Bulstrode, the burly Removeite having agreed to buy him a dozen new plates if the photograph turned out a success.

Bunter snapped the camera with the air of a past-master of the art of photography, and listened for the fall of the plate which would tell that the next was in position for use. He heard the bump in the camera, and was satisfied.

"What's that row?" asked Hazeldene, who knew little of cameras.

Billy Bunter smiled.

"Burnt!"

Before Billy Bunter could ask any more questions, Bob Cherry pinched him, and he gasped with pain and collapsed into a seat.

Bunter was dissatisfied, but the rest of the juniors from Greyfriars were delighted with the tea; and, as a matter of fact, they were greatly relieved not to be put to a terrible test of politeness by having Miss Clara's cookery placed before them.

The tea was delicious, perhaps owing to the fact that it was made by Miss Locke, and not by any amateur maker of tea. Miss Locke poured it out, too, and bread-and-butter and watercress were passed, and the juniors began an enjoyable tea.

Miss Locke had looked a little severe when she saw Bulstrode first; she was far from expecting to see him in a party invited by Marjorie & Co.

But Bulstrode was on his best be-

haviour. He was so quiet and subdued that the others hardly knew him, and he was painfully respectful to Miss Locke.

It was evident that the bully of the Remove was turning over a new leaf; though why, and how long it would last, were great mysteries to his companions.

But they did not trouble their heads about that now. All was going off well, even Billy Bunter behaving himself, and finding the cake so nice that he ceased to regret the sausages.

"K say, you fellows—I mean you girls," said Billy Bunter, as he accepted his tenth helping of cake, "I should like to take you in a group after tea, you know."

"We will be taken, with pleasure," said Marjorie sweetly; but the dimple in her cheek seemed to indicate that she had not much faith in the powers of the amateur photographer.

And when tea was over, and Bunter had crammed in as much cake as even he could possibly hold, the party adjourned to the garden to be "taken."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

One Thing Needful.

THERE was plenty of light for the camera, if the photographs did not turn out a success, it would not be the fault of the sun.

Billy Bunter snapped off the five in a very short time, and the bump of the last falling slide warned him that he had come to the end. He put his camera under his arm, and strutted off with a very self-satisfied expression on his face.

The Cliff House girls walked with the juniors as far as the turn of the road, and then they parted, with many thanks on the side of Harry Wharton & Co. for the enjoyable "tea in the study."

"I am glad you think it a success!" said Marjorie demurely.

"Why, it was ripping!" said the juniors, in chorus.

"We won't have any cooking next time!" said Millie Brown.

And Marjorie laughed.

Bulstrode lingered for a moment behind the juniors. Marjorie, seeing that he wanted to speak, stopped, too, wondering at the crimson flush in the burly Removite's face.

"I—I wanted to speak to you, Miss Hazeldene!" said Bulstrode. "I—I'm sorry for my actions in the past!"

Marjorie nodded cheerily.

"So you said in your letter!" she said.

"I am glad! It is all right!"

"And you don't owe me any grudge?"

"Why, of course not!"

"Thank you, Miss Hazeldene! It's awfully good of you to say so!"

And Bulstrode raised his hat, and walked after the others. Marjorie's face wore a thoughtful expression as she walked home to Cliff House.

She did not quite understand Bulstrode, but it seemed to her that a change for the better was coming over the burly Removite, and she was glad to see it. She was far from imagining that that change might be due to her own unconscious influence.

"About those enlargements," Bunter was saying, as Bulstrode joined them again. "I suppose you fellows would like a souvenir of the happy occasion. I think Marjorie will come out specially well!"

"Seeing is believing!" said Bob Cherry oracularly.

"Oh, it's all right! If Marjorie comes out well, I shall reproduce a lot of them, and sell them to the fellows at a tanner each—"

"You won't sell my sister's photograph!" said Hazeldene.

"Oh, really, Hazeldene—"

"Not unless you want the camera and negatives smashed on your fat head, my son!" said Bob Cherry impressively.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, shut up!"

And Billy Bunter relapsed into injured silence.

The juniors walked home to Greyfriars in a cheerful mood, discussing the tea at Cliff House, and some plans for returning the hospitality of Marjorie & Co. Ogilvy, the amateur photographer of the Remove, met them at the gates. He seemed to be waiting there for them, and he grinned as they came up.

"Had a good time?" he asked.

"Oh, ripping!"

"Taken a lot of photographs, Billy?"

"Only six," said Bunter. "The camera only holds six plates, you know. I think there will be about half a dozen successful out of them, you know. I practised with the plates you gave me yesterday, and—"

"Oh! And where did you get these, then?"

"Well, you see, I—I—I—"

"You young ass!" said Ogilvy, grinning. "I knew you had taken them out of my cupboard; I went there five minutes afterwards!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy! Then you don't mind—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Not at all!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter peevishly. "I say, Ogilvy, can I have your red lamp to develop them by?"

"Certainly. You can go in my study and do it, if you like!"

"Thanks awfully! I'll give you one of the pictures!"

Ogilvy grinned as the amateur photographer walked away.

"What's the little game?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Anything wrong with the plates?"

"Not at all. The plates were all right. Ha, ha, ha!"

And Ogilvy, chuckling, followed Bunter. The chums of the Remove, considerably puzzled, followed him into the house.

Bunter had gone to Ogilvy's study. There was a closely-fitting blind for the window, which turned it into a temporary dark-room, and this was already up, as Ogilvy had been doing some developing himself, and Bunter gave a grunt of satisfaction as he saw it.

He was an enthusiastic hobbyist, but he did not like anything in the form of work. He closed the door, let fall the curtain over it to keep out any gleam

of daylight, and lighted the red lamp.

There came a tap at the door.

"Developed them yet?" asked Ogilvy, through the keyhole.

"No; I'm just going to take them out of the camera!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the blessed joke?" demanded Nugent, as Ogilvy leaned against the wall of the passage and cackled away like a triumphant hen. "Look here, what is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Ogilvy.

Bob Cherry seized him by the throat, and jammed him against the wall, and brandished a fist in his face.

"What's the joke?" he roared.

"What are you understudying a blessed farmyard for? Expound, you ass!"

"Hold on!" gasped Ogilvy. "You'll— you'll see in a minute! Oh, my only hat! Wait till you hear from Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Ogilvy went off into a fresh scream, and the chums of the Remove looked at him, and at one another, and waited.

They did not have long to wait.

The door of the study was suddenly flung open, and Billy Bunter appeared, with a camera in one hand, and two or three empty black-tin slides in the other.

The fat junior was spluttering with rage.

"Beast!" he roared. "Rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pig! Beast! Yah! You—you—you—oh, there ain't a word!"

"What's the matter?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Matter! Oh, the rotter!"

"Anything wrong with the plates?"

"Plates!" yelled Bunter. "There weren't any plates!"

"What?"

"There weren't any plates! That— that unspeakable villain must have gone to the camera, when I left it in the study last night, and taken them out again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But didn't we hear the plates dropping in the camera after each photo you took?" said Hazeldene, puzzled.

"It was only the slides that fell," said the unhappy photographer. "The slides were empty—there weren't any plates in them."

"Then the photographs—"

"There weren't any photographs ass! I was only exposing the dark slides all the time!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses!"

"Oh, my sides!" gasped Ogilvy.

"Perhaps you won't collar another fellow's plates next time without asking permission."

"You—you—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the yelling juniors, and strode away in high dudgeon. The yell of laughter followed him. And as soon as the story of Bunter's great essay in photography spread, the whole Remove roared, too; and for days afterwards, if anybody wanted to raise a laugh, he had only to mention the Greyfriars' photographer.

THE END.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

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FAGGING FOR THE FIFTH!

By
Owen
Conquest

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Fourth Against Fifth.

"I won't do!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, the leader of the Fistical Four of Rookwood School. "It's got to be stopped!"

The cause of these ejaculations was the fact that the Fifth Form had definitely intimated to the Fourth that it was their intention henceforth to fag them.

It had started with some of the more timid members of the Fourth, including Topham and Jous minor, who were afraid to stand up to Hansom and Talboys and the rest.

"We're not going to stand it!" exclaimed Lovell.

"Hear, hear!" chorused Newcome and Raby.

"That's the idea!" responded Jimmy Silver. "Now, we usually spend our time in rowing with Tommy Dodd & Co., but on an occasion like this the whole Form ought to pull together. I vote that we call on Dodd & Co., and ask them to join us—"

There was a kick at the door, and it flew open. Three youths, with grinning, good-tempered faces, came in.

They were Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern chums of the Fourth, deadly rivals of the Fistical Four. But just now it was clear that their visit was paid in a friendly spirit.

"Pax!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, waving his hand as Jimmy Silver's fingers slid towards a ruler.

"Hear, hear!" yelled his chums, Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle.

"I was just speaking of you," said Jimmy Silver. "What have you come for, you bouncers?"

"We've been thinking about this rot the Fifth Form have started, about fagging the juniors," said Tommy Dodd, "and we've decided that it won't do."

"Just the conclusion we've come to," said Jimmy Silver. "We were just coming to your quarters, Doddy, to put the same thing to you."

"Then it's a go?"

"It is!"

"It are!"

"Rather!"

"Shake on it!"

And the seven juniors solemnly shook hands in a circle.

The immediate outcome of the new alliance was a notice which appeared on the board in the hall, signed by the seven juniors, defying the Fifth, and stating quite definitely that the Fourth had no intention of being fagged by them. Also, Fourth-Form juniors were warned against giving in to the Fifth, and the Fifth promised a warm time if they persisted in their wicked courses.

When Hansom and Talboys saw the notice, they were a little taken aback by the fact that the Fistical Four and the

Modern chums had combined against them, but Hansom dismissed any feelings of apprehension he may have felt, and promptly tore the notice up.

He looked along the passage as he reached his study door, and espied Topham. The latter was scuttling off as he caught sight of Hansom, but the Fifth-Former had spotted him.

"Fag!" Hansom swelled with importance as he shouted that word, like a full-blown Sixth-Former calling to his fag. "F-a-a-g!"

Topham hesitated, and was lost. He came slowly towards the head of the Fifth.

"Did—did you call me, Hansom?"

"Did I call you?" exclaimed Hansom, seizing him by the ear. "You know I did, you young scoundrel! How dare you keep me waiting?"

"Leg—legge my ear, please, Hansom. You're hurting me!"

"How curious!" said Hansom, with a grin, as he gave the ear another twist. "Amazing as it may seem to you, my young friend, that is my intention. Let me see, I think you are my fag."

"I—I—I—"

"I am afraid, my good youth, that a constant repetition of a pronoun, first person, singular number, cannot be taken as a satisfactory reply," said Hansom, twisting the junior's ear again. "Are you, or are you not, my fag, Topham?"

"Jimmy Silver says there's to be no more fagging for the Fifth."

"Does he? Well, you're to take no notice of what Jimmy Silver says. Do you hear me?"

"Ye-e-es. But he may lick me."

"If he does, you tell me, and I'll lick him. You're my fag. You understand? Now, Talboys and I are going to the gym. We want you to get your fagging done while we're gone. You're to tidy up the study, and get tea ready, and have it all done in exactly half an hour."

"I've got my prep to do, and—"

Hansom gave the ear a twist that made the unfortunate Topham wriggle.

"Don't you think you could let the prep stand over till you've finished fagging for me?"

"No—ye-e-es!"

"Good! Mind, if I don't find everything in apple-pie order when I come in, I'll skin you alive, and boil you in turpentine!"

"I—I—I—but Jimmy Silver said—"

"Blow Jimmy Silver! I tell you—Hullo!"

Hansom broke off as Jimmy Silver was seen coming down the passage.

"Silver!" shouted Topham, glad to be out of his difficulty, and to shift responsibility to other shoulders. "Silver, come here!"

Jimmy was already coming. He arrived on the spot with a flushed face and gleaming eyes.

"What are you bullying that kid for, Hansom?" he exclaimed hotly.

Hansom winked at Talboys, and grinned. "I'm teaching him his duties as a fag."

he explained. "I hear you kids have set your backs up against fagging for the Fifth. I'm sorry for that—for your sakes. I'm afraid it will lead to unpleasantness for you. You see, Topham's ear is already rather painful, isn't it, Topham?"

"Yes," said Topham, rubbing it ruefully.

"I was afraid so," said Hansom, shaking his head solemnly. "I am afraid that Silver's ears will be in the same state if he cheeks the Fifth. I am, really! Now, Topham, don't forget what I've told you."

"Topham is not going to fag for you, Hansom," said Jimmy quietly.

"You can fag instead, if you like," suggested Hansom, grinning.

Jimmy's eyes flashed, but only for a moment. Then a meek expression came over his face.

"Very well," he said, still more quietly. "Topham's got his prep to do. Cut along, kid! I'm fagging instead of you."

"I say, that's awfully good of you, Silver—"

"Oh, rats! Cut along!"

Topham gladly retreated.

"Just as you like, kid," said Hansom. "The study's to be tidied up, and the tea got ready, in half an hour from now. Understand?"

"Certainly!"

"If you don't get it done properly, and to time—look out!"

And the two Fifth-Formers marched off. Hansom grinned gleefully.

"This is better than I expected," he remarked. "If we make the leader of the Fourth Form fag for us, the rest will follow like sheep. We've broken the back of the opposition at the first slot, Talboys."

"What-ho!" said Talboys.

Jimmy Silver entered the Fifth study. He looked round him, a smile upon his handsome face, a glimmer of mischief in his eyes. There was a patter of feet in the corridor, and three faces looked in at the door.

"What does this mean, Jimmy?" howled Raby. "Is what Topham just told us true?"

"Not likely!" said Lovell. "You're not going to fag for the Fifth, after the stand we've taken up, Jimmy?"

"Surely not?" said Newcome.

"What do you think?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, I thought there was something funny about it," Lovell remarked. "I knew that you were not going to take it lying down like that, Jimmy. But what's the little game? Hallo! Here come those Modern chumps. They've heard, too."

Tommy Dodd & Co. came into the study with a run.

"What are you up to, Silver?" bawled Tommy Dodd. "What do you mean by disgracing the Form? What do you mean by knuckling under to those Fifth-Form rotters?"

"Keep your wool on!" said Jimmy Silver.

"You ought to be kicked out of the Form!" howled Tommy Cook.

"Listen to me—"

"You're not going to—"

"Listen—"

"I tell you—"

"Oh, ring off for a minute!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently. "I tell you it's a wheeze!"

"Oh, I see. Why couldn't you explain that at first?"

"You didn't give me a chance. Look here. Hansom was going to fag Topham, and I offered to take Topham's place. I'm to tidy-up the study and get tea ready."

"You're not going to do it?"

"I am. And you lot are going to help me!"

"I'm not!"

"Never!"

"Not likely!"

"You're off your rocker, Jimmy!"

"Was ever a leader followed by such a giddy set of asses!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, exasperated. "We're going to tidy-up the study in a way that will make Hansom and Talboys wish they hadn't asked for it. This is a start."

He caught the leg of the table and overturned it, with its pile of books and papers, ink-stand and ink-pot, into the middle of the floor.

The chums caught on at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "Good wheeze! Wire in, kids!"

The "kids" wired in with a will.

Each of them took a separate part of the study, and set to work upon it. Lovell cleared the ashes and cinders out of the grate and distributed them with a liberal hand all over the study. The fire was extinguished by a jug of water, and the smother was fearful, blacks settling in clouds on everything.

Raby tidied the bookcase. He did it by turning it over on its side, and shooting forth the whole of its contents on top of the heap from the overturned table.

Tommy Dodd opened the locker, and dragged out everything it contained, scattering all sorts and conditions of things far and wide.

Tommy Cook devoted himself to the cupboard. The provisions of Hansom and Talboys were plentiful, but when Tommy Cook had finished they did not look eatable.

Pickles poured into the jam-pot did not improve the jam, nor could condensed milk be said to benefit by the introduction of sardines into the tin.

Sugar dropped into the cinders, and cheese trodden on by seven juniors in turn, and butter sprinkled with red and black ink, coffee mixed with tea and soot, finished Cook's preparations for the comfort of Hansom and Talboys.

Jimmy Silver, meantime, was dragging down the pictures from the walls, upsetting every article of furniture that could be upset, and spilling everything that could be spilled.

He cleared the mantelpiece with a single sweep of the duster. He emptied the coal-scuttle into Hansom's Sunday hat; then he surveyed the scene of wreck and ruin with great satisfaction.

Raby laughed as he looked round.

"Well, they can't say we haven't taken plenty of trouble for them!" he exclaimed. "But, I say, the half-hour's nearly up. Better go now, I think, and leave them to the joy of the discovery. I think they'll really have a jolly time getting things straight here again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the allied juniors went from the study, leaving the door wide open, so that all who chose could see the wreck they had made of Hansom's and Talboys' quarters.

There was soon a crowd round the open door, looking in with roars of laughter—

a cheering sound that caught the ears of Hansom and Talboys as they came in from the gym.

Their wrath and indignation, when they discovered the cause of the mirth, is more easily imagined than described. They tore out of the study in a fury, with the intention of dealing with the culprits there and then.

But when they found seven stalwart juniors gathered in the end study, they decided to postpone the punishment to a more convenient moment.

Hansom and Talboys stalked back along the corridor vowing vengeance on Jimmy Silver and his followers.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. In the Hands of the Enemy.

"THERE he is!"
"Collar him!"

There was a sudden rush of feet. Jimmy Silver started and looked round.

The evening had set in, and he was crossing the Close in the dusk, and the first warning he had of danger was the muttering of voices under the trees.

Three or four forms loomed up in the dusk, and Jimmy, realising that he had fallen into an ambush of the Fifth, took to his heels and ran.

But it was too late. The grasp of Hansom was on his shoulder, and Talboys caught him by the arm. Five big fellows closed round the junior with grins of triumph.

Jimmy did not lose his coolness. He looked round him with fearless eyes. He was surrounded, and he did not attempt to struggle against such odds. Hansom, Talboys, Lumsden, and Jobson, of the Fifth, were holding him.

"Got the little beast!" said Hansom, with an air of satisfaction.

"I say, you chaps ought to have half a dozen Victoria Crosses each," said Jimmy. "It's awfully plucky of you to attack a chap in this way, you know."

"Not so much talking," said Hansom. "Come along!"

"Certainly. I was just going in."

"Shove him along, chaps. Mind that he doesn't do a bolt," said Hansom. "He's as slippery as an eel. Don't let the others get an inkling of what's going on either, or we shall have a pack of them yelping round."

The Fifth-Formers hurried their prisoner into the School House. They hurried him up the stairs and along the passage upon which the Fifth studies opened. Jimmy caught sight of Lovell in the distance and shouted to him.

"Buck up!" exclaimed Hansom.

Lovell came running towards them, but Jimmy was slung into Hansom's study, and the door slammed. Lumsden and Jobson set their backs against it.

Jimmy was feeling rather uneasy now, but he managed to conceal it.

"Now, my dear kid," said Hansom, "you were kind enough to upset this study for us a while back, and you see it's just in the state you left it in."

Jimmy looked round him. The study was, indeed, almost as wrecked as when the Fourth-Formers had finished fagging there. He grinned.

"Yes, I see that," he remarked. "Are you wanting another lesson?"

"We're going to give you one. You're going to set to work now and clean up this study, and put everything in its place as it was before."

"Rats! It can't be done!"

"Can't it? Have you got that cane, Talboys?"

"Here it is!"

"Hold that little rascal while I touch him up."

Talboys promptly collared Jimmy Silver. The junior struggled gamely, but Lumsden lent a hand, and Jimmy was

flung face downwards across the table. Hansom made the cane sing in the air.

"Now, Silver, are you going to do as you're told?"

"No!" roared Jimmy.

"Then here's the first lesson."

The cane rose and fell with rhythmical regularity. Jimmy's nether garments had seldom had such a dusting in the course of his previous experience. He was too plucky to make a sound, but his face went white and hard.

"Obstinate little brute!" said Hansom. "I'll make him yelp!"

He brought the cane down harder. Jimmy gave a gasp.

Crash, crash!

Lovell was kicking at the door outside. He had gathered the juniors to the rescue, and the attack on the door was a determined one.

"Turn the key, Jobson," said Hansom, looking round.

Jobson locked the door. Hansom made rapid play with the cane, and Jimmy Silver yelled at last.

"Stop it! You beast! Stop it!"

Hansom chuckled.

"Are you going to obey orders, then?"

"No! Yes—yes!"

Jimmy was dragged off the table. He was looking pale and savage, but in the study with four big fellows he was powerless.

"Set to work," said Hansom, sitting upon the table. "I'll watch you and give you directions. If you show any laziness, I'll give you another touching up."

Jimmy did not reply. It was no time for argument, and resistance was impossible. He set to work to tidy up the study. The Fifth-Formers grinned as they watched him.

Jimmy's shouts had, of course, reached the ears of the juniors outside, and they were kicking furiously upon the door. But the stout oak did not budge.

"I'm afraid it's no go," exclaimed Lovell at last. "They've got him, and they're giving him a high old time, kids, and we can't help."

"Rotten!" said Tommy Dodd. "My hat! I never felt so wild before. What are they doing, I wonder? Can you see through the keyhole?"

"Yes, I can. Jimmy is tidying up the study. Hallo, he's lighting the fire, and Hansom is standing over him with the cane. The beast!"

The sound of crackling wood could be heard.

The six juniors looked at one another in helpless wrath. Jimmy was unable to resist, but for the leader of the anti-fagging crusade to be forced to fag was a terrible come-down for the reformers.

What was to be done? It was into Tommy Dodd's active brain that an idea suddenly flashed. Jimmy had finished lighting the fire, and was cleaning the spilt ink from the floor.

"My hat!" exclaimed the leader of the Modern chums. "Why didn't I think of it before? I'll make 'em open the door!"

"What are you going to do?"

"Why, you know it's easy enough to get to the chimney of this study, through the skylight on the roof. I'll get a sack from downstairs and—"

Tommy Dodd did not wait to finish. He scuttled off in a twinkling, and was quickly at the ladder leading up to the trapdoor in the roof of the School House, with a sack under his arm.

To unbolt the trap and emerge upon the roof was quick work for the active junior. He knew the chimney belonging to Hansom's study. It was risky business to get along the ridge of the roof in the gathering dusk, but Tommy Dodd was plucky.

He rose to his feet beside the sack, and holding on to the brickwork, crammed the sack into the red chimney-pot. Thick

smoke had been coming out of the chimney-pot, but the stoppage effectually choked it. Only a thin stream of vapour forced its way past the sack.

Tommy Dodd chuckled as he descended and closed the trap. He rejoined the others in the passage, and they looked at him eagerly. He nodded.

"I've done it!"

"By Jove, you have!" exclaimed Lovell. "Look there!"

A thin wreath of smoke was issuing from under the study door.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Smoked Out.

"YOU clumsy ass!" shouted Hanson. "What do you mean by lighting a fire like that? Can't you see how it's smoking?"

"Can't be helped," said Jimmy Silver. "I lit it all right."

"Well, look at it. If you don't stop it smoking in two seconds I'll make it warm for you."

Jimmy Silver looked at the fire in perplexity.

It had been burning very well until a few moments ago, and then all of a sudden had come a rush of smoke from the chimney, filling the study with eddying vapour.

And it did not clear off. Volume after volume of smoke poured out, and the occupants of the study began to sneeze and cough. Talboys rubbed his eyes.

"I say, this is getting a bit too thick, Hanson."

Hanson grasped the cane savagely. "That young whelp's done it on purpose!"

"I don't see that," Lumsden remarked. "The fire was all right. There's something gone wrong in the chimney."

"Ha, ha ha!"

It was a loud laugh from the passage. Hanson gave a start.

"Is it possible? Those young scoundrels! They've done something to the chimney!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jimmy, the truth dawning upon him at once.

Hanson gave him a savage cut.

"Hold your row!"

"I say, I can't stand this!" exclaimed Lumsden, unlocking the door. "We shall be choked!"

He dashed from the study. A thick volume of smoke poured after him.

Jobson made his exit, too, and then Hanson and Talboys unwillingly went out. Jimmy scuttled out of the study and joined his friends.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Hanson savagely. "We shall have to give that feed in your study, Lumsden. This place won't be habitable."

"I should say so."

"Let's give these young villains a hiding."

But the young villains were already off. The Fifth-Formers stared in dismay at the thicker and thicker volumes of smoke pouring from the study.

Then suddenly Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, appeared upon the scene.

"Great Scott! What's all this?" he exclaimed. "What have you been doing in your study, Hanson?"

"Nothing!" snarled Hanson. "It's only the chimney smoking. I believe those young scoundrels of the Fourth have been stuffing up the chimney."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulkeley had no sympathy with the Fifth Form fagging scheme.

"It's no laughing matter, Bulkeley. If you—"

"Look here, Hanson, if your chimney's stuffed up, you'd better go and unstuff it before the Head gets on your track. This sort of thing can't be allowed."

"Do you think I'm going on the roof to—"

"I think you had better. As a matter of fact, you're getting into too much hot water lately in your rows with the Fourth, Hanson. We're getting fed up with it."

"I'm going to do as I like. I—"

"I warn you for your own good. If you have to explain to the Head, I expect it will come out that you were doing something to exasperate the juniors before they stuffed your chimney," said Bulkeley.

Hanson was silent.

"Now, take my advice; stop that before the Head comes on the scene," said the captain of Rookwood, walking away.

"I—I suppose we'd better!" groaned Hanson. "Come on, you fellows!"

"Thanks!" said Lumsden. "If the feed's going to be given in my study, I shall have to clear up a bit first, so I think I'll be off."

And he was off like a shot. Jobson followed him, without a word of excuse.

He descended and perjured a hooked stick from the first study he came to, and hastened back to the roof with it.

"Thanks!" said Hanson. "I'll have the beastly thing out in a jiffy."

He groped for the sack with the hooked end of the stick.

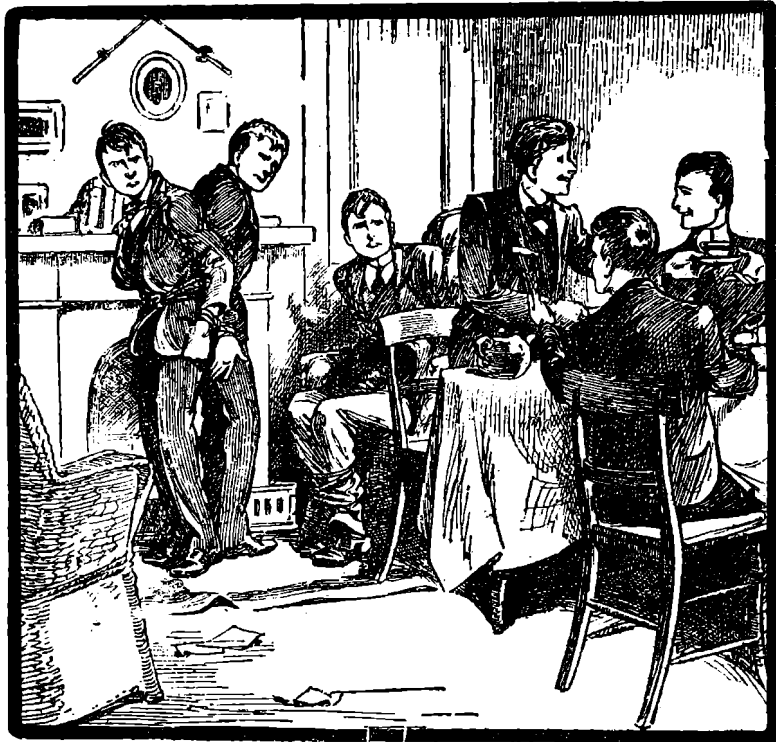
The obstruction came slowly up the chimney-pot, and Hanson was able to grasp it.

"It's a beastly sack!" he exclaimed. "There it goes!"

"Hark!"

A faint echo of a yell floated up from below. They say that every bullet has its billet, and certainly that sooty sack seemed to have found one.

When Hanson and Talboys had descended they found Knowles, the bullying prefect, awaiting them covered with soot. Hanson, with sooty hands and face, was carrying the hooked stick,



The three bound seniors looked on in helpless rage as the juniors helped themselves to the feed. "Jolly decent of Hanson to get tea ready for us," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Rather!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd heartily.

The owners of the smoky study were left to deal with the matter alone.

"Well, the cads!" said Hanson wrathfully. "I know I jolly well won't ask Jobson to that feed now. We shall have to have Lumsden, as we're using his study. Come on, Talboys!"

"I say, you—you couldn't manage it alone, could you?"

"No, I couldn't!" growled Hanson. "Go in there and open the window, and the smoke will clear off a bit, and—"

"Rats! You go in and open it!"

"Gr-r-r!" said Hanson expressively.

"Come along, confound you!"

They made their way to the roof. Standing close to the chimney-stack, Hanson groped in the pot for the obstruction; but it had been rammed down well out of reach.

"We shall have to get something and hook it up," said Hanson desperately. "Go and collar a hooked walking-stick, and bring it up to me, Talboys."

"All right!" said Talboys, ill-humouredly.

which chanced to be the property of Knowles, and he was immediately pounced upon by the furious Sixth-Former.

Talboys made his escape, but Hanson did not succeed in getting free until he had received several severe cuts with the stick.

When Knowles had somewhat relieved his feelings, he walked off to clean himself up a bit, and Hanson, in a towering rage, returned to his own quarters.

He found Talboys there, listening with dejected mien to some emphatic remarks made by Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth Form.

"I desire to hear no explanation. I only know that your chimney has been smoking in a scandalous and outrageous way, and that my room has been permeated by intolerable clouds of vapour. You need not trouble to explain. You will take fifty lines of Homer each, and stay in to-morrow afternoon to write them. Not a word!"

And the Form-master sailed angrily

away, leaving the two Fifth-Formers staring at one another with feelings too deep for words.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Brought to their Knees.

HALF an hour later the Fifth-Formers were enjoying a feed in the study.

It was a habit of Hanson's to give little feeds in the Form, as he was blessed with plenty of pocket-money: and he owed a great deal of his influence in the Fifth to that circumstance. The spread in Lumsden's study was really ripping.

Besides bread-and-butter and watercress and radishes, there were ham and tongue, jam and marmalade, cake and biscuits, farts, and cream-puffs. Hanson knew how to do these things in style, and Lumsden and Talboys were in a happy mood as they sat down to the table.

The feed was progressing with much good fellowship. Over the ham and tongue the three seniors discussed plans for bringing the Fourth Form to their senses.

Hanson was as determined as ever to carry out his plan of fagging the Fourth, and his comrades backed him up. They were just the fellows to stand by a chap who stood feeds like that.

There was a tap at the door, and Hanson left off speaking to turn his head.

"Come in!"

The door opened, and Jimmy Silver walked in. Seven members of the honourable Fourth Form at Rookwood followed him. The seniors stared at them in blank amazement.

"Get out!" roared Hanson, starting to his feet.

"Lock the door, Raby!"

"I've done it," said Raby, pocketing the key.

"You young rascals!"

"Hanson, old kid, don't be disturbed.

We've come to tea with you—"

"I'll tea you!" yelled Hanson. "Chuck them out, chaps!"

He rushed furiously at Jimmy Silver. Lumsden and Talboys followed his lead.

But it was no good. They were speedily overpowered, and bound up with rope.

"I'll break your necks!" hissed Hanson. "I'll—I'll—"

"No you won't, Hanson," said Jimmy soothingly. "You'll take your lesson like a little man, my dear child. Shove him on a chair, kids, and tie him there!"

Wriggling vainly, Hanson was bound to a chair. Then Lumsden and Talboys were tied together, back to back, and left. The juniors chortled triumphantly.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "I take it as a real kindness on the part of Hanson to have this nice tea ready for us."

"Rather!" said Tommy Dodd heartily. "You've often given ripping feeds, Hanson, and you've never asked us to them, which was, of course, an oversight on your part. I know you wouldn't intentionally leave us out in the cold."

"If you touch those things—"

"We shan't touch them without permission, Hanson. May we have tea?"

"No; confound you!"

"Very well, let him have his grub," said Jimmy, depositing a pat of butter upon Hanson's features. "Pour the marmalade down the back of his neck, Dobby!"

"Stop!" shrieked Hanson. "You— you can have tea if you like. I—I don't mind."

"Do you really and truly want us to have tea?"

"Ye-e-e-es!"

"Do you others want us to have tea?" asked Jimmy, glancing at Talboys and Lumsden.

"Yes!" exclaimed both those worthies together.

"You are quite sure?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Very well. We can't refuse pressing invitations like that, can we, chaps?"

"No fear!"

"Certainly not," said Tommy Dodd. "Fall to, my pippins! This is really nice of Hanson, and I shan't forget it in a hurry."

The juniors fell to with a will. They were hungry, but, in any case, they could have made a deep inroad upon the good things spread out upon the study table.

The Fifth-Formers watched them in speechless fury. Talboys ventured to give a yell in the hope of attracting other Fifth-Formers to the study. Jimmy promptly ladled jam over his face, asking him to say "when."

Talboys said "when" promptly enough, and there was no more yelling.

It was a ripping tea. Never had the Fistical Form or the Moderns chums enjoyed a better one, and certainly they had never had one under such triumphant circumstances.

The helpless rage of the Fifth-Formers added to the enjoyment. It was certain that on the morrow the story would be all over Rookwood, and the unhappy Hanson and his comrades would be the laughing-stock of the college.

Ham and tongue, bread-and-butter, cake, and preserves vanished before the mighty onslaught of seven hungry juniors; and the table was cleared at last to the final tart. They looked at one another with seraphic smiles.

"Are you happy, Jimmy Silver?" asked Tommy Dodd solemnly.

"I am happy, Brer Dodd," replied Jimmy, with equal solemnity.

Lovell chuckled.

"I reckon we've done ourselves uncommonly well," he remarked. "Let's make the bouncers sign the pledge—I mean, the document—and travel."

"Right-ho!"

Jimmy took paper and pen, and pulled the table towards Hanson. The Fifth-Formers watched him with wonder and curiosity.

"Now, Hanson," said Jimmy. "I'm going to untie your hands. You're going to write at my dictation, and your friends are going to sign after you."

"I'm not!"

"Refuse, and I shall give you a taste of the medicine you gave me to-day," said Jimmy, with a reminiscent wriggle.

"Mind, I mean what I say!"

"I won't write a word!"

"I've brought the cane, you see. Are you going to write?"

"No; I'm not."

Swish! The cane descended with telling force upon Hanson's shoulders. And Jimmy did not stop at the first out. He gave half a dozen, all as hard as he could lay them on. Hanson yelled and wriggled. It was not so bad as he had given Jimmy, but he felt it more—naturally.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Stop, you young demon!" yelled the writhing Fifth-Former. "Oh, I'll be the death of you for this! I'll—I'll—"

"We will leave all that for another occasion," remarked Jimmy Silver. "At present your business is to write what I tell you."

"I won't! I—ow—ow! Leave off! I will write if you like!"

"I thought so."

Hanson's right hand was freed, and a pen was put in it.

"Now write," said Jimmy. "We—Hanson, Talboys, and Lumsden—admit that we have no right to fag the respected members of the Fourth Form—"

"Shan't! Won't! Ow, ow! There, I've written it!"

The cane ceased to switch. The juniors were yelling with laughter, and even Talboys and Lumsden were grinning.

"Form," went on Jimmy, "and we hereby promise never to attempt to do so any more, but to behave ourselves like good little boys."

"Shan't! Ow! There—there it is!"

"Now sign it!"

Hanson, gritting his teeth with rage, signed the statement he had written out.

"Now you chaps have got to append your signatures," said Jimmy.

"I'm not going to," said Talboys.

"I—I don't! Ow! I—"

"Are you going to sign?"

"Hang you! Yes!"

Talboys' hand was freed, and he signed the paper; then Lumsden was attended to. He knew that the juniors meant business, and he did not want to sample Jimmy's powers with the cane. He signed without demur.

Jimmy blotted the paper, folded it carefully, and put it in his pocket.

"We're going to take care of that," he remarked. "So long as you chaps behave yourselves, and don't begin any tricks, we won't show it to anybody. But if you start the old game again we'll put it up in the hall for all Rookwood to read, and you'll be grinned out of the school. So look out!"

He opened the door of the study.

"Here, aren't you going to let us loose?" exclaimed Lumsden.

"You can get yourselves loose in time, with a hand each to work with," smiled Jimmy Silver. "We make you a present of the rope. We're not mean. Come on, kids!"

And the juniors, chuckling gleefully, quitted the study.

"Well, I don't think much of your old Fistical Four," Tommy Dodd remarked, as they parted in the passage, "but we've done very well, pulling together in this matter."

"That's so," agreed Jimmy Silver. "I think less than nothing of Moderns, but I admit that you've been rather useful this time."

"Mind, now we've busted up the Fifth and their giddy fagging, the alliance is off," said Tommy Dodd.

"Right-ho! Look out for a warm time to-morrow!"

And on the morrow the rivals of the Fourth Form at Rookwood were at logger-heads as usual. The alliance had served its purpose, and they had won the fight with the Fifth.

THE END.

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THE RIVAL

“RAG!”

By
**Martin
Clifford.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Tom Merry Has an Idea.

TOM MERRY burst into a sudden chuckle.

Monty Lowther and Manners, who were walking, with their arms linked in Tom Merry's, across the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo!" said Lowther. "What's the trouble with you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Been swallowing a Chinese cracker, and is it going off?" asked Manners sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Lowther crossly. "Explain, you ass!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"I've just been thinking——" he began.

"Oh," said Lowther, "that explains it! I admit that that's a jolly funny thing! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners.

"Look here, you asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther and Manners together, evidently determined to enjoy the joke.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "I don't want everybody at St. Jim's to hear the wheeze. We've got to keep it dark: from Blake and his lot, and from Figgins & Co. of the New House."

"Oh, it's a wheeze, is it?" asked Lowther.

"Yes."

"One of your little jokes?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Then I admit that it's nothing to be laughed at," said Monty Lowther, his face assuming an expression of owl-like gravity. "Sorry!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom Merry. "Look here, you know that on Wednesday the Grammar School seniors are coming over here to play the St. Jim's First Eleven?"

"Yes; and our respected skipper is mucking up the school team by shoving a lot of New House bounders into it!" said Manners.

"Well, Kildare's idea is to give a show to both Houses, you know."

"Rot, my son! We're cock-house of St. Jim's, aren't we?"

"We are!" said Lowther. "We is!"

"Well, then, if we put in one or two New House chaps, that's enough; but four or five—well, I call it rotten!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther.

"Well, it's Kildare's bizney, not ours," said Tom Merry. "Luckily, we don't have to run the First Eleven. The Junior Eleven is trouble enough for me. But, blow the First Eleven! I was going to say that the Grammar School seniors are coming over here on Wednesday to play our First——"

"You weren't going to say that," said

Monty Lowther. "You've said that. Get on with something fresh."

"Don't interrupt," said the captain of the Shell severely. "Now, we've played the Grammar School juniors often enough, and Gordon Gay & Co. are a good team. But the senior match will be worth seeing——"

"I expect most of us will see it," said Monty Lowther. "What on earth are you driving at?"

"The Grammar juniors will come over in crowds to see the match——"

"Most likely."

"There'll be hardly anybody left at the Grammar School——"

"Well?"

"Well, my infants," said Tom Merry serenely, "that's the idea. While DeLamere, the Grammar skipper, and the team are over here, and Gordon Gay and Monk and the rest are over here watching them being licked by our First Eleven, we're going over to the Grammar School——"

"Oh!"

"You remember the time when we had a visit from the Grammarians, and they fastened us up in our study?"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll do the same for them. While the game's going on here we'll rag Gordon Gay's quarters till he won't know whether he's got into a lunatic asylum when he gets home——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How does that idea strike you?" asked Tom Merry.

"Ripping!"

"First chop!" said Manners. "But we shall have to miss the match here."

"Never mind that. As a matter of solemn fact," said Tom Merry, "I rather think that St. Jim's won't pull it off this time. It's not because there are New House chaps in the team, but because some of them are rotters. Sefton's one, and you know the kind of worm he is, though Kildare doesn't. He smokes too much to have any wind; and at least two of the others are off colour. We don't specially want to stay at home and see the First Eleven beaten, that I know of."

"Might have picked a row with the New House cads on the ground," remarked Monty Lowther, in a reflective sort of way.

"Blake and Herries and Digby can do that, if it's strictly necessary. But even if a day passed without a ragging between School and New House, the universe might survive," said Tom Merry. "I don't say it would, but it might."

"So it might!" grinned Lowther. "Right-ho! We three'll do the trick. Better keep it dark; we don't want a crowd with us."

"No fear!"

"Bai Jove, you know, you fellows!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth,

the swell of St. Jim's, joined the chums of the Shell as they strolled under the trees. "Pway, excuse me. I could not help heavin' that remark——"

"Don't mention it, Gussy, my son!" said Tom Merry.

"It appears that you are goin' to jape somebody, deah boys!"

"Exactly."

"The New House wottahs?" asked the swell of the Fourth.

"Not this time."

"I twust," said D'Arcy with dignity, "that you are not thinkin' of jappin' Study No. 6. I should wufuse to allow anythin' of the sort."

"We shouldn't ask you, old son," said Tom Merry. "But Study No. 6 isn't the giddy victim this time."

"If it is the Gwammah School you had better place the mattah in my hands and follow my lead," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "What you wequire in a mattah like this is a fellow of tact and judgment."

"We've got one," said the captain of the Shell.

"Bai Jove! What's his name?"

"Tom Merry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"But I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry, becoming suddenly serious. "There's another little jape I've got in my mind that you can take part in."

"Yaas!"

"You won't object?" asked Tom Merry, winking at Lowther and Manners with the eye that was always away from Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly not, deah boy!"

"You might be a little hurt."

"A D'Arcy is not afraid of gettin' hurt."

"No. I forgot that. You are sure you will not mind taking part in the giddy jokelet?"

"Quite sure, deah boy!"

"And you'll be good friends with us however it turns out?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! Pile in, you chaps!"

And before the swell of St. Jim's knew what was happening, the Terrible Three had seized him, and sat him down in the quad, and jammed his silk topper over his eyes.

"Yawooh!" roared D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Shell fellows fled. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made wild grabs at his silk topper, and succeeded at last in un-hatting himself. He glared round in search of the Terrible Three.

"Ow! You wottahs! You uttah spoofahs! Ow!"

But the chums of the Shell had vanished, and the vengeance of the swell of St. Jim's for that little jape had to be postponed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Raid.

JACK BLAKE-of the Fourth wore a glum look as he came out of the School House dining-room after dinner. Tom Merry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Looking forward to a licking for the First Eleven," he asked, "or wherefore that worried brow, my son?"

Blake grunted.

"I shouldn't wonder if the First get beaten," he said. "With so many New House rotters in the team, and Monteith cutting up rusty with Kildare, it wouldn't be wonderful. The Grammarian seniors are a tough lot, too. But I'm not thinking of that."

"What is it, then? Thinking of the contributions you haven't got ready for the 'Weekly'?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake grunted again.

"No. My opinion is that 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is played out, and what is wanted in place of it is something a bit more up to date."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"But it isn't that," said Blake. "The Grammar School seniors are coming over to play the First Eleven, and we've got lines to do, and they've got to be done. Latham has been waxy this morning, all because a chap couldn't tell him which rotten king was kicked out of Rome. I made it Julius Cæsar, and that ass Herries said it was George the Fourth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we've got impots to get done before we can get out to the match!" growled Blake. "The New House cads will have bagged all the front seats by the time we get there."

"Hard cheese!" said Tom Merry sympathetically.

"Rotten!" said Herries. "Look here, you fellows might get on the ground early and keep places for us."

The Terrible Three shook their heads.

"Impossible, old son!"

"Why?" demanded Herries.

"Got an engagement."

"You don't mean to say that you're missing the match?" exclaimed Digby.

"Yes. Have to, you know. Most important engagement."

And the Terrible Three grinned and walked away.

Blake looked puzzled.

"That boulder Tom Merry has got something on!" he growled. "What do you think he's got on, Herries?"

Herries looked after the Terrible Three.

"He's got his cap on," he said.

Blake gave him a withering look.

"Ass!" he said politely.

"Well, you asked me," said Herries, puzzled.

"Br-r-r!" said Blake.

And the juniors went up to Study No. 6 to do their lines. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther strolled out of the school gates and walked down in the direction of Rylcombe.

The feud that raged between the two Houses of St. Jim's was only equalled by the strife between St. Jim's and the neighbouring Grammar School at Rylcombe.

True, the strife was confined to the juniors, the seniors being too high and mighty to take part in it.

Delamere, the captain of the Grammar School, and Kildare of St. Jim's often laughed together over the alarms and excursions of the fags. But the juniors took it in deadly earnest, and the chance of playing a jape on Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School was too good to be lost by the Terrible Three.

"There comes the brake!" exclaimed Lowther.

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The brake containing Delamere's eleven for St. Jim's rolled down the lane. The juniors waved their hands to the cricketers as they passed.

"We'll go by a roundabout way to the Grammar School," Tom Merry said sagely. "The Grammarians will be coming down this road in giddy droves. There's plenty of time, and we can stop for refreshment at Mother Murphy's, in the village. Miss Fawcett sent me a postal order this morning, and I want to change it."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners and Lowther heartily.

And the Terrible Three changed the postal-order at Mother Murphy's tuck-shop in Hylcombe, and expended a considerable portion of it in refreshment—liquid and solid. Then they made their way by a devious route to the gates of Rylcombe Grammar School.

That a good many fellows had gone over to see the match at St. Jim's was certain. The Close was deserted as the Terrible Three looked into it.

They strolled in, their hearts beating a little, and crossed towards the big, red-brick building, which was so different from the grey old stone pile of St. Jim's.

They entered the house, and were immediately greeted by a slim, somewhat sallow youth with a decidedly French look.

"Ha! It is ze garçons from St. Jim's!"

"Mont Blong!" granted Monty Lowther.

The French junior grinned at them. His name was Gustavo Blanc, and the Grammarians, who had started with calling him Monsieur Blong, had soon changed it to Mont Blong for short. He gave the St. Jim's trio his best Parisian bow.

"It is zat I am glad to see my shums," he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther. "Is Gordon Gay at home?"

"He is not in ze study now, my shums."

"All serene. We'll go up."

And pushing the surprised French junior on one side, the Terrible Three went upstairs and hurried to the Fourth Form studies. They had visited Gordon Gay before, and knew the way very well.

"That ass doesn't guess what we've come for," said Tom Merry, as they entered Gordon Gay's study. "But we'd better buck up, in case there are any more at home like him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Terrible Three bucked up.

In the noble art of ragging a study the chums of the Shell had few equals. In a very few minutes they made a great difference to Gordon Gay's quarters.

The table was turned upside-down, the carpet pulled up and tossed over it, the bookcase emptied upon the floor, and the contents of the cupboard scattered far and wide.

All the furniture was turned over, and the ashes from the grate were carefully spread over the study. Upon the glass, with a piece of charred coal, Tom Merry traced a message for the Grammarians:

"When this you see, remember me.—
TOM MERRY."

"And now we'll slide," said Monty Lowther.

There was a chuckle at the door.

"I don't think!" said a cheerful voice.

The chums of St. Jim's swung round in alarm. The doorway was crammed with Grammarian juniors!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tarry!

GORDON GAY, of the Fourth Form at the Grammar School, grinned genially at the dismayed visitors from St. Jim's. Behind him were Wootton major and minor, his chums, and Mont Blong and Tadpole, and Frank Monk and Lane and Carboy, and several other Grammarian Fourth-Formers. The odds were too great, and the Terrible Three realised that they were caught.

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Did you think we had gone over to St. Jim's for a match?" he asked cheerfully.

"Ahem! I had some idea of it."

"Quite a mistake!" grinned Wootton major.

"Oh, quite!" said Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We—we've finished here, you know," said Tom Merry. "We'll go now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I zink zat not!" chuckled Mont Blong. "I zink zat you not go in zeech hurry!"

"I don't think!" grinned Jack Wootton.

The Terrible Three exchanged a glance.

"Rush for it!" muttered Tom Merry.

"Right-ho!"

And the three St. Jim's fellows made a terrific rush at the crowd in the doorway.

"Line up!" yelled Gordon Gay.

Crash! Biff! Bump!

In a second Tom Merry & Co. were struggling furiously with the crowd of Grammarians. The fight was terrific. There was a roar in the passage, a trampling of feet, and bumping of falling juniors.

But the odds were too great. Tom Merry & Co. went down, with the Grammarians sprawling over them. Half a dozen Grammarians sat upon them to keep them down.

Gordon Gay staggered to his feet. The Australian junior caressed his nose, which seemed to have increased in size in the conflict.

"Ow!" he grunted. "We've got them!"

"Oui, oui, my shum!" said Mont Blong. "Ve have zem!"

"Groo!" grunted Monty Lowther. "Goroff my chest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Next time you call on a chap when he's not at home, make sure that he's out," said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "Luckily, most of the prefects are out, and the masters, so there won't be anybody to interfere. Bring them along!"

"What are you going to do, you bouncer?" asked Tom Merry, rather apprehensively.

"You'll see. Bring 'em along!"

And the Terrible Three, each with his arms firmly held, were dragged to their feet and marched away by the Grammarians.

They were marched in triumph out of the house and round the building, and Gordon Gay called a halt at the woodshed. Corporal Cutts, the porter of the Grammar School, had been lately engaged in tarring the shed. A bucket of tar with the brush in it stood just inside. Gordon Gay pulled out the sticky brush.

"Look here," roared Tom Merry, "keep that away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you touch us— Groo-oh!"

"Tar and feathers is the sentence," said Gordon Gay calmly. "There aren't any feathers, but I suppose an extra allowance of tar will make that all right."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Rival of the "Weekly."

STUDY No. 6 were busy. The four chums were eating strawberries and cream. Their talk ran on the match and the fact that St. Jim's had lost by 70 runs.

They expressed the opinion that the loss of the match was due to the presence of New House players in the team, and that something must be done. Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy discussed the subject at length. Blake was unusually silent.

"What are you thinking about, you old image?" asked Herries at last, giving Blake a thump on the shoulder, which effectually roused him from his reverie.

Blake gave a yell. "Ass! You've dislocated my shoulder!"

"Never mind. It'll grow again. What are you puzzling your poor little brain about? You haven't spoken a

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you dare to— Gro-o-oh!" Gordon Gay interrupted Tom Merry with a dab of the tarbrush. Tom Merry closed his mouth quite suddenly.

"Now, keep still," said Gordon Gay, as he dabbed away. "If you wriggle, you'll get it in the ears and the neck. Otherwise, I shall attend only to your features. There, I told you so!"

"Gro-o-oh!"
"Better take it quietly!"
"Gro-hoooh!"

Tom Merry's face was as black as ink, or tar, in three minutes. Then Gordon Gay turned to Manners and Lowther, who had been watching the proceedings apprehensively. Their raid upon the Grammar School during the cricket match was not turning out quite so howling a success as they had expected.

"Look here!" began Lowther warmly. "I say— Yow!"

Dab, dab, dab!
In a few minutes Lowther's face was as black as Tom Merry's.

Then Manners was treated to the same course of treatment.

The three tarry juniors looked at one another. They looked utterly absurd, with their eyes gleaming from their blackened faces. The Grammarians roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Now shove far over their heads!" suggested Carbox.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ow! Don't!" roared Tom Merry. "Cheese it!"

Gordon Gay laughed. "Nuff's as good as a feast!" he said. "I think they're feeling rather sorry that they ragged our study by this time." "Aro you sorry?" demanded Frank Monk.

"Yow!"
"I don't know if 'yow' means 'yes,' but I dare say it does," said Gordon Gay. "They look sorry, anyway. Kick them out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The Terrible Three were rushed across the Close to the gates. Then there was a sudden yell among the Grammarians.

"Cave! The Head!"
Dr. Monk was just entering the school gates. The crowd fled at once, leaving the three tarry juniors facing the headmaster of the Grammar School.

Dr. Monk halted in astonishment at the strange sight. He was somewhat shortsighted, and he pushed up his spectacles to look at them.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul! Where did these three negroes come from?"
"Ow! Ow!"
"Grooh!"
"Yowp!"

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Monk. "They are evidently three negroes, and that apparently is their language. I wonder if they can speak English. My poor fellows, how did you come here?"

The Terrible Three did not reply. They rushed past the headmaster of the Grammar School, and bolted out of the gates. Dr. Monk turned round, and stared after them in amazement.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. And he walked on to the house in a state of great mental wonder. Behind the gym the Grammarian juniors were shrieking.

The Terrible Three dashed out of the gateway, and fled.

They halted in the road at last, panting. They were half-way to St. Jim's. But it suddenly occurred to them that they were in no condition to return to the school.

"Ow!" gasped Manners. "How shall we get this off?"

"Goodness knows!" granted Lowther. "Yow!"

"It will want scrubbing off," groaned Tom Merry. "Ow!"

"Oh, you ass! If you ever propose raiding the Grammar School to me again, I'll take you into a quiet corner and suffocate you!" mumbled Manners.

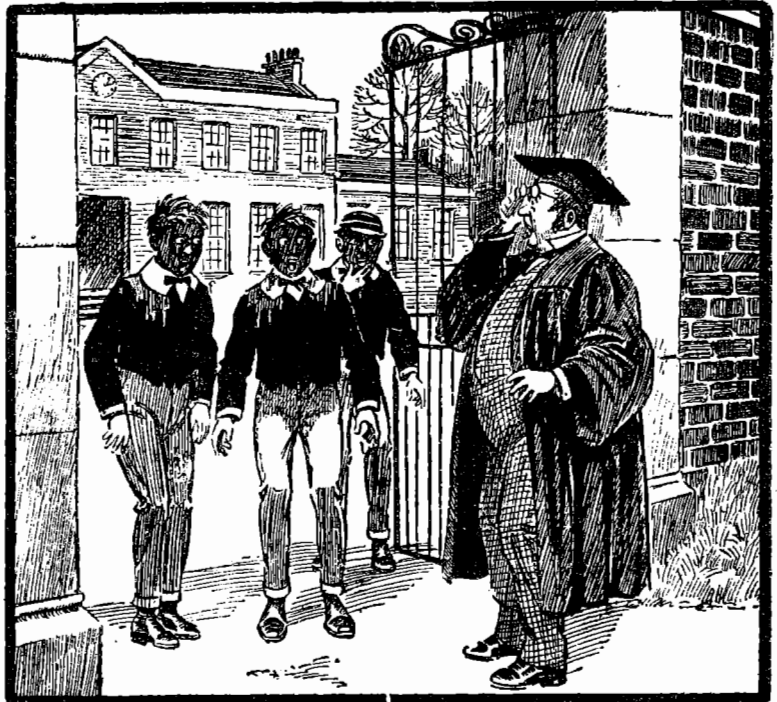
"Of all the rotten wheezes, it was about the rottenest!" growled Lowther. "Ow!"

"Grooh!"

And the unhappy heroes of St. Jim's went in search of a wash. They rubbed and dabbed at their faces at a wayside stream, till their skin felt as if it were coming off, and their handkerchiefs were reduced to tarry rags.

But with all their efforts their faces remained in a decidedly piebald condition.

They looked at their reflections in the water, and groaned.



The three tarry juniors stood facing the headmaster of the Grammar School. Dr. Monk halted in astonishment, and pushed up his spectacles to look at them. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul! Where did these three negroes come from?"

"We shall be grinned to death at St. Jim's," said Tom Merry lugubriously. "Oh, dear!"

"Grooh!"
"Well, we'd better get in!" growled Lowther desperately. "If we get in before the finish of the match, we may be able to sneak in and get a scrubbing in hot water before the fellows spot us."

"Ow! We're spotted enough already!"
"Oh, buck up!"

And the disconsolate juniors hurried towards the school. They passed a good many people in the lane, and yells of laughter greeted them wherever they showed their piebald faces.

By the time they reached St. Jim's the Terrible Three were in a state of exasperation, and Manners and Lowther had expressed their opinion of Tom Merry and his wheezes many times, and with great emphasis, and in the most dreadfully plain English!

word for nearly five minutes, and that's a sure sign that there's something wrong. Get it off your chest, my son!"

"Look here!" said Jack Blake seriously. "The school's getting in a bad state."

"Right-ho!"

"The School House is cock-house at St. Jim's, and it's us—we who have made it so, when the seniors would simply have let our side down."

"Yes, rather!"

"The New House is altogether too cheeky, and they put on as many airs as—as D'Arcy does fancy waistcoats."

"Weally, Blake—" protested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Worst of all, old Kildare has let the New House rotters into the First Eleven, and we've been licked on the cricket field."

"We have!"
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"Something's got to be done."
 "It have—I mean, it has."
 "And we've got to do it."
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Where," said Blake, getting warm—
 "where, I'd like to know, is there a
 bigger ass, a more absolutely howling
 cad and waster, than Monteith, of the
 New House?"

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.
 Dig and D'Arcy giggled.
 "What are you silly geese cackling
 at?" demanded Herries.
 "Oh, nothing!" said Dig. "Go on,
 Blake!" Herries has answered your
 question."

"Look here!" said Herries wrathfully.
 "What are you getting at? I said
 'Hear, hear!' not 'Here, here!' If I
 had said 'Here—'
 "Here," said Blake, "chuck it! How
 dare you wrangle when your Uncle Blake
 is talking? Kids, your uncle is a great
 man, and he has an idea!"

"Spout it out, then!" said Herries
 crossly. "You're so beastly long-
 winded. Cut the cackle and come to the
 hosses."

"Well, here it is," said Blake. "St.
 Jim's is getting into a general state of
 dry rot. We've got to do something,
 and I know how to do it. The juniors
 are altogether too much set upon in this
 school. Our opinions ain't treated with
 the respectful attention they deserve.
 The doctor sometimes consults Kildare
 about things, and even Monteith. He
 never consults us."

"Nevah!" said D'Arcy. "Weally in-
 considewate of him, don't you know?"
 "We are passed over," said Blake.
 "We think a good deal more about the
 honour of the school than our elders, who
 are mostly asses. Yet we are never
 listened to. We shan't be consulted
 about the cricket. If we went into
 Kildare's study to give him some advice,
 what would he do?"

"Chuck us out!" said Herries.
 "Exactly! We are only juniors, liable
 to be chucked out. It's scandalous!
 But, as somebody said once—I forget
 whether it was Solomon or Julius Caesar
 —the pen is mightier than the sword."
 "I don't see what that's got to do with
 it," remarked Herries.

"You never do see anything, my son,
 until it's pointed out to you," said Blake
 politely. "What is it that has always
 stood against tyranny, and voiced the
 rights of oppressed minorities? What is
 it that makes its voice heard in every
 home, in every street?"

"The phonograph?" hazarded Herries.
 Blake gave him a withering glance.
 "The Press," he said, with dignity.
 The chums looked decidedly puzzled.
 "The press!" repeated Herries. "What
 press are you talking about? If you
 mean a clothes-press—"

"Ass! To put it in plain and simple
 language, suitable to your intellect, we
 are going to start a newspaper."
 They stared at him for a minute in
 amazement.

"A newspaper!" gasped Herries.
 "Yes; a newspaper. Why not?"
 "Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.
 "The idea is weally stunnin'." Blake,
 you are a clevah chap!"

Blake put his hand upon his heart and
 bowed.
 "D'Arcy," he said, "you do me
 proud. To be pronounced clevah by a
 young gentleman of your intellectual
 attainments is an honour I keenly appre-
 ciate."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" said
 D'Arcy.

"Well, it does seem a good idea," said
 Herries thoughtfully. "But newspapers
 are generally printed, ain't they? How
 are we going to get it printed?"

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"Herries, old man, your brain-box
 wants oiling, or something. We're not
 going to print it. It will be written, of
 course, by hand."

"Oh, I see!"
 "Glad you do. We need only have one
 copy, which will be passed around to
 readers. Then it will come home to roost
 in the editorial office—otherwise known
 as Study No. 6."

"But 'Tom Merry's Weekly' is
 printed," said Digby. "I don't see—"
 "Let me explain, my gentle youth.
 Those things cost money."

"Yes, that's so," said Herries, with a
 nod.

"Well, this is going to be a corker,"
 declared Blake. "Nothing dull or heavy;
 no giddy reports of dull twaddle from
 the school debating society, and that rot.
 A really first-chop production, you know.
 And we shall go specially strong on
 cricket, and slating the New House
 cads."

"That sounds all right," said Herries.
 "Who's to be editor?"

Blake gave him a smile of condescen-
 sion.

"I suppose there's not much doubt
 about that," he said. "Whose idea is
 it?"

"Well, that's all very well; but you're
 the youngest kid here."

"Well, I've got most brains; you must
 admit that."

"Rats!"

"Oh, Blake's editor," said Digby;
 "that's only fair. But we shall all con-
 tribute."

"Of course," said Blake graciously.
 "And I shall appoint all of you sub-
 editors. I don't know exactly how many
 sub-editors a paper has, but three won't
 be too many."

"All right," said Herries. "I'm agree-
 able. When shall we bring the first
 number out?"

"We'll start on it at once. There's no
 time like the present."

"What about letting the others into
 it?"

"We'll tell the House about it, but it's
 to be kept a dead secret from the New
 House, of course."

"But we shall have to let them see
 it, or they won't know how we've run
 them down!"

"Yes; but not till we spring it on them
 suddenly. Now, here's plenty of fool-
 cap, so let's make a start."

Blake drew the paper towards him,
 and picked up a pen. He gnawed the
 handle for some moments thoughtfully.

"I say, what shall we call it?" he
 asked.

The chums hadn't thought of that.
 They wrinkled their brows in deep reflec-
 tion.

"The 'Anti-New House,'" suggested
 Herries.

"Too clumsy."

"The 'Rough on Rats,'" suggested
 Digby.

"That's better, but it won't do. We
 don't want it to appear too partisan.
 We're going to represent the whole of
 St. Jim's, of course."

"Call it 'The Saint,' then," said
 D'Arcy.

"Ah, you've got it! 'The Saint' will
 do all."

This was agreed upon, and Blake pro-
 ceeded to draw up the full title.

"The Saint"; the Official School
 Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by Jack
 Blake, Esq., S.S., and published in the
 cock-house at St. Jim's. No connection
 with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.'"

"Good!" said Herries. "But what
 does S.S. stand for?"

"Study Six, of course. Must have
 some initials after the name. Makes it
 look more imposing, you know. Now for
 the contents."

And Study No. 6 were soon hard at
 work with a deep thoughtfulness and
 attention which, we regret to say, they
 seldom bestowed upon their lessons. And
 they remained at work, quite contented
 with their new occupation, for a long
 time; till, missing them from their usual
 haunts, other juniors of their House
 came to look for them. Mellish put in
 his head at the door.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Swotting!
 What's come over you?"

"Git!" said Blake laconically.

"What!"

"Clear!"

"But—"

"Bunk!"

"Shan't! I—"

"Mizzle!"

"I—"

Biff! A cushion, deftly hurled, smote
 the intrusive junior upon the chest, and
 sent him out into the passage again in a
 heap.

"We must teach these disrespectful
 youths not to interrupt the editorial
 labours," said Blake. "How are we to
 write if we— Crumbs!"

The sudden ejaculation was caused by
 the return of the cushion with a whiz. It
 caught Blake fairly in the neck, and he
 went over backwards with his chair,
 followed by the inkpot, and most of the
 first number of "The Saint." Mellish
 looked in, and gave a yell of laughter.

"How's that, umpire?"

And then he bolted, before the chums
 could get at him.

Blake picked himself up. There was
 ink upon his face and his collar, and
 wrath in his eye.

"I'll slay him when I get hold of him!"
 he exclaimed. "There's a bump the size
 of an apple on the back of my head. The
 howling rotter! Never mind. Get to
 work."

But the editorial duties were doomed
 to more interruptions. Mellish had spread
 the astounding news of having seen all
 four occupants of Study No. 6 hard at
 work all at once, and other juniors came
 to see the phenomenon.

They looked into the study as they
 might have looked into a cage at the Zoo,
 and many were the questions showered
 upon the unhappy editors.

"Hallo! They're really working!"
 exclaimed Kangaroo.

"All of them, by Jove!" said Lorne.

"They must be ill."

"Blake is; he's got black spots on his
 face."

"Tell us what the matter is, Blake,
 there's a good chap."

"Is it an extra long tempo?" asked
 Reilly.

"No. He's off his rocker—that's
 what's the matter."

"Look here," said Blake, exasperated,
 "if I come to you, there will be weeping
 and wailing in the School House, I can
 tell you!"

"Well, why can't you tell us what the
 game is?" said Mellish. "What's the
 giddy secret, anyhow?"

"Well, it's up against the New House.
 And do you think you'd have sense
 enough not to let Figgis & Co. on to it
 if I told you?"

"Rather!" was the general excla-
 mation.

"Then come in, and I'll explain."

The juniors crowded into the study.
 They were curious to hear the explana-
 tion of the unwonted industry of Study
 No. 6. As Mellish said, it wanted some
 explaining.

And Blake, who was really proud of his
 brilliant idea, was not, upon the whole,
 loth to enlighten the curious youths of
 the School House. So he explained, and
 the news that a newspaper was being
 started was received with many excla-
 mations of wonder and admiration. But

Blake began to experience upon the spot some of the worries of an editor.

All the juniors offered to contribute, and they took it for granted that their effusions would all be accorded prominent places in the first number of "The Saint." One had a long poem in his desk; another had a story that was half finished, and offered to finish it that very evening.

Gore had an essay upon "Kindness to Animals," which alone would have filled three numbers of the paper, and he wanted it all to go in. Mellish was ready to do the literary and dramatic criticisms. Blake did not show a very deep gratitude for all these generous offers.

"Sorry," he said, "but space is limited. Poetry is barred, and so is 'Kindness to Animals.' There won't be any literary or dramatic criticisms, Mellish. The editor is willing to consider contributions, which must be short and crisp and up-to-date."

"Hark at the rotter!" said Mellish. "Where did you get that from, Blake? He's spouting some rotten advertisement at us!"

Blake blushed. "And it's a rule in this editorial office," he said severely, "that dogs and outsiders are not admitted; so travel, all of you!"

There was a chorus of grumbling. "Well, I wouldn't have my poem stuck in your rotten paper, anyway," said Bishop, the poet. "Lot of rot, I call it!"

"I say, Blake, you might find room for my essay," said Gore. "It's an important subject, you know, and—"

"What about cruelty to readers?" demanded Blake. "There's that to be considered."

"Oh, rats!" said Gore crossly; and he marched off with the poet.

At last the chums of Study No. 6 were left to their editorial duties in peace.

"Some of them seem to be cross," remarked Herries, grinning.

"Yes; they want to dump down all their rubbish upon a long-suffering editor," said Blake. "We shall have to draw the line very tight. Now to work again."

And then the only sound that broke the silence of the usually noisy study was the scratch-scratch of four industrious pens travelling at a great rate over the paper.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Kerr Makes Discoveries.

"THERE'S something up over the way," said Figgins. The chief of the New House juniors was looking thoughtful. There was evidently something upon his mind.

Kerr and Wynn looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, what is it, Figgy?"

"I don't know. But Blake and his friends are up to something; that much I am certain of. They are awfully mysterious over something. Now, what are the bounders hatching?"

The Co. put their heads together and thought it out, and finally said that they gave it up.

"So do I," said Figgins. "But one thing's certain, and that is that it's something up against us. Blake is preparing some sort of a giddy surprise for us, and if we don't get on to it he's bound to score. We've got to find out what's on the carpet."

Fatty Wynn looked down in a puzzled way at the shabby square of carpet which adorned the study. Figgins called him an ass, and proceeded:

"I mean, we've got to find out what they're up to. It's something deep, and if we ain't careful they'll get the better

of us. Now, how are we going to find out?"

Again the Co. gave it up.

"Well, we've got to," said Figgins decidedly. "I've noticed that there's no light in their study window just now. Now's the time. Whatever it is they're getting up, it keeps them awfully busy in their study, and so I suppose there will be signs of it there. One of us has got to go and scout."

"Jolly good idea!" said Fatty Wynn. "You're the very chap, Figgy."

"I didn't say I was going. I said one of us."

"You could do it best, Figgy," said Kerr.

"Rats! The chap who goes may get caught by those bounders."

"That's what I was thinking."

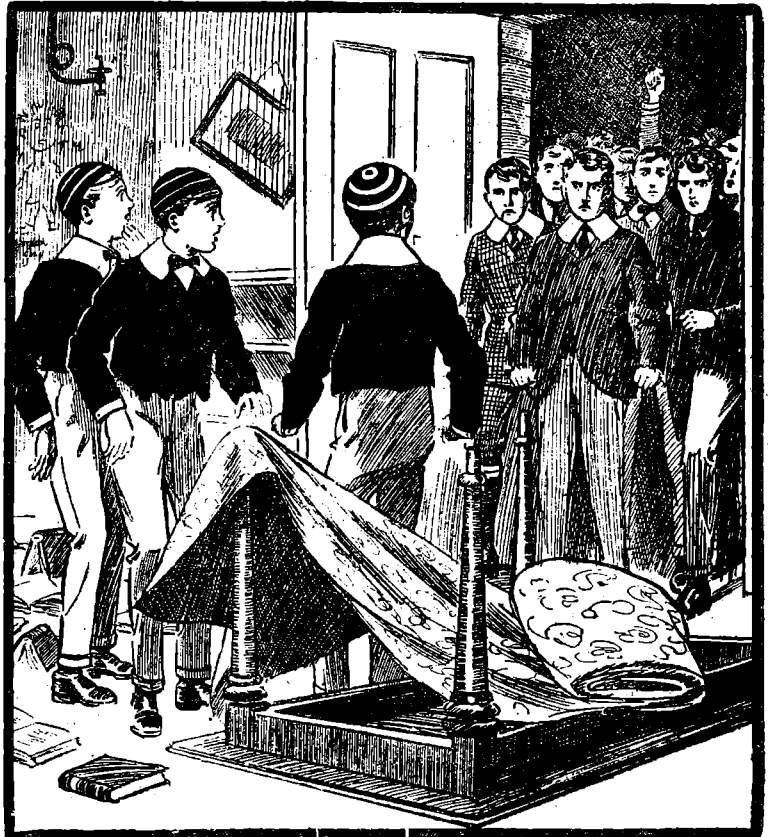
"Oh, were you? Well, we'll toss up for it. But, I say, you're the man, Kerr. You make up so beautifully that you

"Well, I'm willing to risk it," said Kerr, a little dubious inwardly, but unable to resist this torrent of praise. "How shall I fix it up?"

"Let me see. You must make up as a chap about your own size. Oh, I say, go as little Lathom! He's away this evening, you know, and it will be safe, and if they take you for a master, they won't dare to scrag you. You imitate Lathom beautifully."

Kerr grinned.

Mr. Lathom was the fussy, short-sighted master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. He was a good little man, but extremely fussy. He wore glasses, and had a habit of peering before him, so that he had a comical resemblance to a tortoise poking its head forward. He had a habit, too, of speaking sententiously, with much hawing and humming, and of imparting wisdom in the form of aphorisms.



"I think we'll slide now," said Tom Merry, glancing round the wrecked study. There was a chuckle at the door. "I don't think!" said a cheerful voice. The chums of St. Jim's swung round in alarm. The door was crammed with Grammarian juniors.

could easily pass yourself off for one of those kids."

"Oh, I say!" said Kerr. He was flattered, but doubtful.

Kerr's father was an actor, and Kerr himself was the leading light in the St. Jim's Amateur Dramatic Society. He had more than once shown his delighted schoolfellows really excellent impersonations, and his fame was all over St. Jim's.

"Yes, you'll do," declared Figgins. "You are a born giddy actor, Kerr. You remember how you played off being a long-lost cousin of that bounder D'Arcy, and gave him a showing-up. You will be able to pull it off, there isn't the slightest doubt about that."

Kerr, for the amusement of the juniors in the New House, had often imitated Mr. Lathom, and had once made up as that gentleman with great success.

Figgins' idea was really brilliant, for it was a thousand to one that the imposture would never be detected. Kerr's "property" wardrobe was varied and extensive, and equal to the demand.

"Little Lathom's about your height," said Figgins, "and you can pad to get the breadth. You have his voice and gestures to the life. Come on, and we'll help you. We've got a clear hour without being worried by any of those beastly prefects."

And Figgins & Co. set to work.
THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 249.

With the assistance of Figgy and Wynn, Kerr was soon made up in his new character. Figgy called in some of the New House boys to see him when he was finished, as a test of the disguise.

"Come in here, Pratt, Redfern, Owen, Mr. Lathom wants you."

"No larks," said Pratt. "Old Lathom's gone off. I saw him go out of the gates myself, and he looked as big a guy as ever! Oh, crikey!"

He gasped in dismay as he saw the figure in the study.

Kerr played the part to the life.

"Er—what did you say, Pratt? Repeat your remark, if you please."

"I—I beg your pardon, sir," stammered Pratt, frozen with terror. "I didn't know you were here, sir. I was only jo-jo-joking."

"You were jo-jo-joking, were you? How dare you jo-jo-joke upon so sacred a subject! Flip him over the ear, Figgy!"

Pratt gasped again on hearing such a command from the supposed Form-master.

"Dot him on the boko!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, with great dignity.

The stupefaction of Pratt was so ludicrous that the chums burst into a roar of laughter, and Pratt was enlightened.

"Oh, it's you, Kerr!" he exclaimed, panting with relief. "You beastly bounder! You nearly frightened me out of my wits!"

"You should learn to be a good boy, and to speak respectfully of your kind teachers," grinned Kerr.

"Oh, rats! What's the jape, anyway?"

"I'm going on a visit to the School House, that's all. Keep it dark."

Pratt grinned.

"What-ho!"

And quite a number of New House juniors watched the pseudo-master of the Fourth as he crossed the quadrangle in the dusky evening.

"He's great," said Figgins—"he's simply great!"

"But if he's spotted," said Wynn, "there will be a howling row."

"Oh, he won't be spotted!"

Kerr entered the School House boldly, with Mr. Lathom's slow and solemn tread, his head poked forward, a pair of big glasses on his nose. A couple of Third Form youngsters, who were chasing each other in the passage, bolted at sight of him. He passed up the stairs with great dignity, and reached the famous No. 6 Study.

The fact that there was no light in the window showed that the chums were not at home. Kerr tried the door, and it opened readily. He grinned as he went in. He turned up the gas, and looked around.

The room presented its usual aspect, and except that it was a little better furnished, did not differ from the usual run of studies at St. Jim's. Kerr looked round the room, and nothing out of the common caught his eye.

Yet for days past the chums of Study 6 had been busy there hatching some plot or other, and surely there must remain some clue to the secret if he looked long enough for it. So Kerr said to himself, as he renewed his search.

A pile of manuscript on the table, under a book, came in for his attention, and he glanced at it carelessly. Then he started, and his look became riveted.

For this is what caught his eye:

"The Saint," the Official School Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by Jack Blake, S.S."

Kerr gave a whistle.

The secret was out!

He was strongly tempted to open the

pages of "The Saint" and ascertain just what they contained, but he thought it better to hurry back to Figgins with the news of the discovery he had made.

"What a go!" he muttered. "So that's their little game! What a go!"

He replaced the book on the foolseap, and turned towards the door.

At the same moment there was a trampling of feet in the passage without, and Kerr had just time to whip into the cupboard before the chums of Study No. 5 entered.

Kerr's movement had been quick as lightning, and he was out of sight and the cupboard door closed when Jack Blake and his companions entered the room.

"Hallo! The gas is alight!" exclaimed Blake. "You careless ass, Herries! Why didn't you turn it out? I told you to!"

"I did," said Herries.

"Stuff! It didn't light itself! Never mind, let's get to work. We've got to finish this number to-night, and we've only got twenty minutes. Buck up!"

The four juniors sat down, produced their pens, and began to write.

Kerr ventured to peep from the cupboard, and saw the quartette busily at work.

"I think my leader is all right," said Jack, with a grin of satisfaction.

"I say," said Digby, "do you spell 'conglomeration' with two r's or one?"

"I ain't quite sure," said Blake dubiously. "Put it in inverted commas. Then if it's wrong, it'll be supposed to be a joke."

"Ah, that's a jolly good idea!"

"I've finished my article," said Arthur Augustus. "I think it's weally good."

"And I've given Figgins & Co. something!" said Blake. "This will make them sit up. What do you think of this as a limerick?"

"There are three horrid bounders who

By the queer name of Figgins & Co.;

They ought to be sacked

From the school, that's a fact;

They're a howling disgrace to the show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not bad, is it? Hallo! What's that?"

"What's what?"

"I thought I heard something. Fancy, I suppose. Get on, and we'll get the thing pasted out, and it will be all ready."

Kerr remained as still as a mouse in the cupboard.

He had nearly betrayed himself when he listened to Blake's flattering description of the Co. to which he had the honour to belong; but he was on his guard now.

The chums finished their writing at last. It had not been a short or an easy task, for, beside their own compositions, they had to copy out the various contributions sent in by School House boys.

But it was done at last.

The method of "publication" hit upon by Blake was a very ingenious one.

To have the magazine printed was out of the question, and to make a number of written copies was too much like work, as Herries put it. So Blake had purchased a large sheet of cardboard, and the contributions being written on one side of the paper only, they could be pasted in proper order on the cardboard and read by all.

Blake had made a large pot of paste, about twenty times as much as he required for his purpose, and invested threepence for a brush. He flattened out the sheet of cardboard on the table, and commenced to paste the sheets of fools-

cap upon it. The board was a "double imperial," so there was plenty of room.

Blake was finished at last, and the cardboard was left lying on the table, with several books placed round its edges to weight it, it having shown a tendency to buckle under the influence of the paste.

"That's done," said Blake. "We'll leave it here to dry, and later on we'll post it up in the hall. Then we'll issue a special invitation to Figgins & Co. to come over with their pals and read the pretty things we've said about them."

And the chums quitted the study.

As soon as they were fairly gone Kerr stole from his hiding-place. He turned up the light, and surveyed the first number of "The Saint."

There were many items that made him grin, and many that made him savage, but he did not empty the inkpot over the first number of Study 6's paper.

He felt that it would not be playing the game. But he considered himself quite free to make any revisions he chose. And so, with Blake's pen and ink-eraser, Kerr proceeded to make some alterations, so neatly that they could only be noticed by actually reading the lines.

And, as the chums had already finished the work of revision, they were not likely to read "The Saint" over again before posting it up in the Common-room.

Kerr grinned when his work was completed. It satisfied him. He turned the light out and left the study. He was bursting with the news he had for Figgins and Wynn, and he made all haste to join them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Spotted!

"TOM MERRY!"

"Where's Tom Merry?"

"And Manners?"

"And Lowther?"

A good many fellows were asking those questions in the Common-room. The Terrible Three had not been seen for some time.

"I saw them cut in across the quad just before the finish of the Grammarian senior match," said Kangaroo of the Shell. "They seemed to be in a hurry."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wemebah seein' them, too. They were wunnin' like anythin'."

"They've been keeping out of sight ever since," said Bernard Glyn. "Some jape on, I suppose. These bounders in Study No. 6 have started the fashion, and Tom Merry's taking it up, I suppose."

"A rival newspaper, perhaps," remarked Gore. "Blake's starting a giddy paper he calls 'The Saint,' advertised as no connection with 'Tom Merry's Weekly.' Perhaps they're starting a new giddy paper in turn, advertised as no connection with 'The Saint.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I would wegard it as a great check on the part of the Tewwible Thwee to start a newspapah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "They have the school magazine, and we have a wight to the school newspapah. Of course, 'The Saint' will beat 'Tom Mewwy's Weekly' hollow."

"I guess so!" remarked Buck Finn, the American junior. "I've got an article in it—"

"So have I!" said Bishop of the Fourth. "I have—"

"Yaas, wathah! And I—"

"I have offered Blake a splendid article on the subject of 'Determinism,' and for some reason he has refused it," said Skimpole of the Shell, the genius of St. Jim's. "I had already offered it to

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The First Number of "The Saint."

"HALLO, Figgy! You're the very chap I want to see!"
 "How curious!" grinned Figgy, entering Study No. 6.

"I was just coming over to see you!"
 "Come in," said Blake. "We've got something to show you!"
 "Curious again. I thought you had!"
 "Did you? You'll never guess what it was. Come on; it's in the Common-room!"

"So you've posted it up?"
 Blake stared.
 "What! How do you know anything about it?"

"Oh," said Figgins, "a little bird told me! That's what we've come over for. Come on, chaps; you're all invited to read the first number of 'The Saint!'"

A dozen New House juniors, including, of course, the "Co.," were at the heels of Figgins. They followed Jack Blake into the juniors' room in the School House. Shrieks of laughter were proceeding from that apartment.

Jack Blake had hung up the big cardboard sheet, upon which the pages of the magazine were pasted in careful array, in a prominent place.

The news that the first number of "The Saint" was published had flown like wildfire, and the room was crowded. Seniors as well as juniors had come to see this latest production of Study No. 6.

The howls of laughter made Blake grin with satisfaction. He knew that the paper was a success, and its reception was very pleasing. But the laughter exceeded even his rosiest anticipations as he entered the room with Figgins & Co. A yell greeted him.

"Hallo, ass!" shouted Tom Merry.
 "You've described yourself well, Blake!" grinned Lowther.
 "It's the giddy truth!" said Manners.
 "Fancy Blake growing so candid in his old age!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Somewhat mystified, Blake pushed his way to the front. Mellish kindly pointed out to him the cause of the uproarious laughter. Herries was standing by glowering, yet half-grinning, too. Blake coloured as he read. The title of the paper had been altered by the addition of a single letter, so that it now read:

"'The Saint': the Official School Magazine of St. Jim's. Edited by John Blake, Esq., A.S.S."

Kerr had put in the "A" very neatly before the "S.S."

The effect was comical in the extreme. "Who did that?" demanded Blake wrathfully. "Herries, you ass, I left you in charge of the thing while I went for Figgins, and I haven't been gone two minutes! Why didn't you—?"

"It hasn't been done now," said Herries. "It must have been got at in the study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.
 A light dawned upon Blake. The unexpected knowledge of Figgins & Co. was now explained. Somehow or other they had discovered the project of Study No. 6, and had got at the first number of "The Saint," and the chums had never noticed it.

"I smile!" yelled Figgins. "Hear me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

Blake ran his eyes swiftly over the magazine. Ready fingers pointed out more of the improvements Kerr had made upon it. The linerick, for instance, in which Blake had described Figgins & Co. in terms the reverse of complimentary, had been woefully changed.

Tom Merry for the columns of the 'Weekly,' but he also has declined it!"
 "Go hon!"

"Might as well have put it in!" raved Levison of the Fourth. "It wouldn't have been much rottener than the rest. The best thing in 'Tom Merry's Weekly' was my acrostic in the Christmas Number!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I guess Blake will soon get tired of writing out 'The Saint' by hand," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Papers can't be brought up by hand like kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But to come back to our mittens," said Kangaroo. "Where are Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"They're not in their study," said Reilly of the Fourth. "Sure, I looked in for them, and they weren't there, intirely!"

"Can't be out now; it's past locking-up," remarked Kangaroo. "Old Lathoin sometimes takes a kid for a walk, to jaw botany with him, but he can't have taken away."

"They're up to something."

"Let's have 'em out!" said Digby. "If they're jolly well starting a newspaper to rival 'The Saint,' they're jolly well going to stop it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lumley-Lumley.

And quite a crowd of curious fellows started looking for the Terrible Three. As a rule, Tom Merry & Co. were sufficiently in evidence, but their disappearance was certainly very peculiar. They had gone out before the match with the Grammar School seniors, and they had been seen to dash into the School House afterwards in a very hurried manner.

That was all that was known; they had not been seen since. And such a proceeding was so mysterious that the juniors wanted to know.

The Shell studies were drawn blank, and somebody suggested the Form-room at last. There was a light gleaming under the big oaken door.

"I guess they're there!" Lumley-Lumley remarked.

"What on earth are they doing, then?" said Jack Blake.

"Their prep, perhaps."

"Why can't they do it in their study, as usual?"

"Give it up."

Kangaroo opened the Form-door. Sure enough, there were the Terrible Three, with their faces bent over their work. They were doing their preparation, and they seemed very busy.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "We've spotted you! What are you doing?"

"Prep," said Tom Merry, without looking up.

"What are you doing it in here for?"

"To get it done."

"I mean, why aren't you doing it in your study?"

"Because we're doing it here!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Can't you look up for a minute while you're speaking to a chap?" exclaimed Kangaroo in astonishment.

The Terrible Three were keeping their faces bent close over their work.

"Oh, buzz off!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here—"

"Scoot!"

"But, I say—"

"Clear!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing!"

"What are you bending over your desks like that for?" asked Gore.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"There's something fishy about this!"

said Kangaroo. "I'm jolly well going to see your chivvy, Tom Merry! What have you been doing to it?"

"Oh, clear off!"

Kangaroo rushed towards the desk and caught hold of Tom Merry's curly hair. Tom Merry gave a yell, and, perforce, raised his head. Lowther and Manners jumped up at the same time.

There was a yell of amazement and laughter from the juniors as the faces of the Terrible Three were seen. In spite of their best efforts with soap and water, the tar was still only too distinctly visible. Their rubbing and scrubbing had made their faces as red as beet-roots, and the high colour did not seem likely to fade out; and where their faces were not crimson they were black. The effect was extraordinary.

The School House juniors simply gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally D'Arcy, of the Third Form. "Where did you dig up these chivvies, you bounders?"

"Weally, Wally!" said D'Arcy major severely. "I wegard chivvy as a wathah vulgah expression!"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"Weally, you young wascal—"

"Piehald, by Jove!" yelled Kangaroo. "Ha, ha, ha! Where did you pick up the tar, Tom Merry?"

"Have you been investigating into a tar-pot?"

"Bai Jove! I wegard your appearance as decidedly funny, deah boys!"

"That's what they've been keeping out of sight for!" roared Gore. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did you get it done?" gasped Clifton Dane.

Tom Merry snorted.

"We raided the Grammar School while Delamere's eleven were over here," he said, "and—and—"

"And got caught?" yelled Blake.

"Well, yes."

"And tarred?"

"Well, yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I like your giddy complexions!" grinned Kangaroo. "How long do you think your complexions will take to wear off?"

"Weeks!" gasped Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, clear out!" exclaimed Tom Merry, exasperated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, you silly asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Manners. "We're fed up! Clear out! Scoot! Scat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three seized rulers, and rushed at the laughing juniors. The crowd swarmed out, gasping with merriment, and Tom Merry slammed the door shut after them.

"Silly asses!" growled Tom Merry, his face redder than before, if possible.

"As if a chap can't have a quiet evening in a Form-room without all this bother!"

From outside, in the passage, came a roar from the juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The clumps of the Shell grunted, and settled down to their prep again in solitary state.

Now it ran as follows, and Blake could hardly help grinning as he read:

"There are three jolly fellows we know,
By the title of Figgins & Co.,
They are all of them bricks,
And they've whacked Study Six,
And they don't give the School House a show."

"Hear me smile!" chirped Figgins.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Never mind," said Blake. "Read the rest, you bouncers, that's all!"

Digby had gone to Study No. 5 for a bottle of ink and a brush, and he now returned, and the alterations were carefully blacked out.

But they had caught on, and the juniors began to address Blake with the addition of initials after his name, and Figgins & Co. set Kerr's limerick to a kind of chant, and began to sing it.

This was not likely to be stood by Study No. 6, and it looked as if a general row was coming; but just then Kildare came in, and the sight of the captain restored order.

"Hallo, Blake!" said Kildare good-humouredly. "I hear you have started in the editorial line. Is this your effusion?"

"That's it," said Blake modestly. "I wish you'd read it, Kildare. Good literature is always improving to the mind, and this beats 'Tom Merry's Weekly' hollow!"

"Thanks, I will!"
And Kildare stopped before "The Saint," and began to read.

He grinned in some places, and frowned in others. The editors had not spared the New House by any means.

Digby's article was funny. It was supposed to be written by "The Office Boy," and was, of course, a hit at the New House.

Dig hadn't been very clear where the stops ought to be put, and, being of a liberal turn of mind, he had sprinkled them freely over his composition after he had finished it, determined that, at all events, there should not be too few. The result was peculiar:

"We are informed: that there is a plague of rats at St. Jim's?; These sociious animals generally live in old houses, but in the present; case they inhabit a New House. They are nasty little animals, very unpleasant to look at, and very troublesome! to decent people. The New House is: simply a conglom-

meration of rat holes, where the little bruits live in swarms; They sometimes come out and are checky, and then the young gentlemen of the School House; have to; chase them back? to their dennis again " " ,

There was more in the same strain, and the punctuation was decidedly the funniest part of Dig's crushing article.

Kildare's grin grew broader when he came to Herries' contribution, which was in a more serious vein. The chief editor had declared that there ought to be some serious writing in the paper—it couldn't be all fun; and Herries had produced a poem, but its effect upon most of the readers was the reverse of solemn.

It was entitled, "Ode to a Perishing Sparrow," and commenced thusly:

"Poor little sparrow, I see thee lie,
And a tear of sympathy comes into my eye;
Some cruel boy with a catapult
Has slain thee in the prime of life.
Never more wilt thou chirp or fly home
to thy nest,
Poor little sparrow!"

The poem had originally contained twelve stanzas, but space was limited, and Blake had only been able to squeeze in four and a half, so that the poem ended rather abruptly, which Herries said spoiled the effect.

Kildare did not seem to think that the effect was spoiled, however, for he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. Herries watched him in amazement and some indignation.

"There's nothing funny in that poem," he said. "It's a serious one, Kildare."

Kildare gasped.
"Is it? I mistook it for humour. I beg your pardon, Herries!"

"Poor little sparrow!" giggled Figgins.
"Poor little perishing sparrow! Perishing rot, I say! Ha, ha, ha!"

The rest of the first number of "The Saint" we need not describe in detail, but it was about on a par with what we have quoted.

The New House were slated right and left, and the School House exalted, as was only to be expected.

Under the head of "Cricket Notes" appeared the following:

"The St. Jim's First Eleven is going to the dogs. They can't play cricket for toffee. The editor of 'The Saint' has a suggestion to make. That is, that all the cads shall be forthwith kicked out,

and their places filled by School House chaps, who will uphold the honour of the old school. If this is not done, the captain of St. Jim's is hereby warned that the juniors of the School House wash their hands of the result."

"Well, it's about time they washed their hands, some of them," said Figgins. Kildare finished his perusal and walked away, leaving the juniors in possession of the room. Figgins & Co. began to chant their limerick again, and Blake and his chums, getting out of patience, charged them out of the room, and ejected them ignominiously from the School House.

From time to time, however, New House boys came in in twos and threes to look at the first number of "The Saint," and all the time one or other of the chums of Study No. 6 mounted guard over it, in case any of the enemy should be tempted to damage the interesting publication.

Monteith heard of "The Saint" in due course, and of its uncomplimentary references to himself, and he came over to see it.

Digby happened to be on guard just then, and he eyed the New House prefect rather uneasily. Monteith finished his reading, and then grabbed the big cardboard sheet.

"Here, I say, what are you up to?" demanded Dig, in alarm.

Monteith gave him a cuff that sent him reeling.

Then he crumpled up the cardboard, tore it, and scattered the fragments round the Common-room, amid cries of indignation from the juniors present.

Then the incensed prefect stalked out of the School House, followed by loud groans and hisses.

"Never mind," said Blake, when he was told of the untimely fate of the first number of "The Saint"—"never mind, my infants. We've made them sit up, and that's what we wanted. I never thought Monteith would show how much we had ruffled him, the ass! We've made those New House wasters wriggle, and that was what we wanted. And let them wait till the next number comes out, that's all!"

But, strange to say, "The Saint" did not make another appearance. Blake expressed the opinion that the work involved in producing a single number was not worth the candle—which was another way of saying that he was not up to tackling the job!

THE END.

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