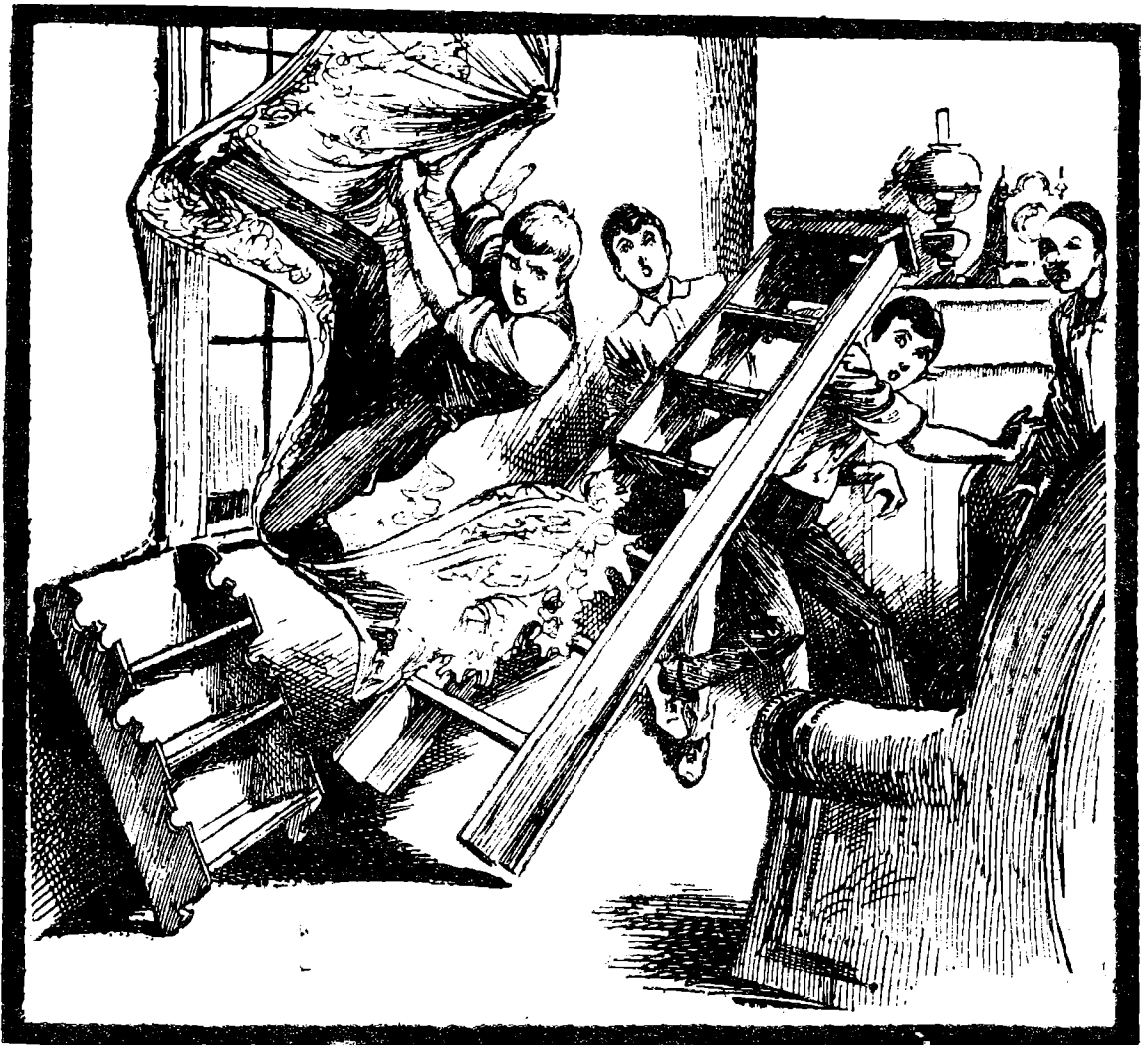


THE ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!

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252.

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



**BOB CHERRY'S SIDE-STEP!**

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

# THE TENANTS OF STUDY No. 13!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Turned Out!

**B**ANG!  
Crash!  
Bump!

Harry Wharton looked amazed as he hurried along the Remove passage at Greyfriars. He had heard the terrific din as he came upstairs, and wondered what it was, and whence it came; but as he came along the passage he discovered that it proceeded from his own study.

Bang!  
Crash!

"My only hat! What on earth are they up to?" muttered Harry, as he ran along to the door of No. 1, and turned the handle.

But the door was not opened. It was locked on the inside. Harry Wharton shook the handle and thumped on the panels.

But the noise he made was effectually drowned by that in the study.

Bang! Bang!

Crash!

Thump!

It was the banging of a pair of tongs upon an iron fender—the crashing of a cricket-stump on a wooden table-top. In the midst of the fearful din the voice of Bob Cherry could be heard.

"Keep it up!"

Harry kicked and rattled.

"Open the door!"

"Rats!" came back Bob Cherry's voice.

"Can't stop! Sheer off!"

"It's I—Wharton!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, Harry?" Bob flung open the door.

"Come in! Lock the door after you, or we shall have a lot more asses coming in—ahem!—I mean, a lot of asses coming in! Go it, Inky!"

"What on earth—"

"Keep it up!"

Bang! Bang!

Crash!

Harry Wharton stopped his ears, and gazed at the scene blankly. The chums of the Remove seemed to be enjoying themselves. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, was dancing—apparently some sort of a native Hindu dance—and Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent were beating time—the first with the tongs on the fender, and the second with the cricket-stump on the table.

Billy Bunter was seated in the armchair, wheeled back into the corner out of the way, and, by way of adding to the din, he was clashing cymbals constructed of the lid of a tin saucepan and a trowel.

Bang! Bang!

Crash!

"Go it, Inky! Keep it up!"

The nabob, whose feet were going like lightning, grinned gleefully.

"The keep-it-upfulness is terrific!" he exclaimed. "If my worthy chums could

beat time a little more timefully, the advantage would be great!"

"You're out with that cricket-stump, Nugent!"

"Rats! You're out with those tongs!"

"I say, you fellows, you're both out," said Bunter, blinking at the Removites through his big glasses. "Better leave it to me!"

"Better chuck it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, laughing. "What do you think the chap in the study underneath thinks about it?"

"Oh, that's all right! He's gone out!"

"Quelch will be up here if you don't shut up. You know he's been down on us before for making a row, and threatened to turn us out of the study!"

"That's all right, too! Quelch's gone out!"

"Oh, I see!"

"While the cat's away," explained Bob Cherry, banging away cheerfully, "the mice will play! Go it, Inky!"

"The gofulness is great!"

Thump, thump, thump! went the nabob's boots on the carpet—bang, bang, bang! the tongs on the fender—crash, crash, crash! the stump on the table—clatter, clatter, clatter! Billy Bunter's home-made cymbals.

Noise is not, as a rule displeasing to boys, and to make a real, thundering, unearthly "row" is often a pleasure. The chums of Study No. 1 were fairly letting themselves go.

Hurree Singh danced away tirelessly, and his comrades beat time, and the noise of it penetrated far beyond the Remove passage.

There was a furious kicking at the locked door.

"Stop that row!" roared the voice of Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove.

Bang! Bang! Crash! Crash!

Bulstrode went angrily on his way.

There was a sharp knock on the door a few seconds later, and Bob Cherry, exasperated, ceased banging for a moment to give the knocker a piece of his mind.

"Will you go away?" he roared. "I know who you are, and I'll simply wipe up the linoleum with you if I come out! You utter ass, what do you want to come bothering for? Sheer off, fathead!"

"Open this door!"

Bob Cherry jumped clear of the floor, for the voice was not the voice of a junior of the Remove, and Bob's blood almost ran cold as he recognised the metallic tones of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, his own Form-master!

The din died away suddenly, and a ghastly silence ensued.

"M-m-m-my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I—I—I said that to Quelch! Oh, the fat's in the fire now!"

Mr. Quelch knocked at the door angrily.

"Open this door!"

Harry Wharton opened it. The Form-

master strode in, his brows contracted in a dark and heavy frown.

The juniors stood dumbfounded. Mr. Quelch had certainly been out when Bob Cherry commenced his little celebration, but Bob hadn't noticed how the time had passed.

The Form-master had returned, and had probably heard the noise as he came in, and probably the complaints, too, of fellows who were disturbed by it. He looked very angry indeed.

His keen glance roved over the culprits, fairly caught in the act. Bob Cherry still had the tongs in his hand, and Nugent the stump. Billy Bunter had quickly slid the saucepan lid and trowel behind him, and had closed his eyes, with an elaborate pretence of being asleep in the armchair.

How he could expect Mr. Quelch to believe that he had been asleep through such a din was a mystery, but Bunter seldom thought very far.

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I didn't know it was you, sir! I thought it was one of those Upper Fourth cads, sir!"

"I presume you would not have spoken as you did if you had known that it was I," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I shall not allude to that. You were making a deafening noise in this study!"

"Only—only—a—a—a—a little celebration, sir!"

"Only a little fun, sir!" said Nugent. "The funfulness was great!" murmured the nabob.

"And we didn't know you had come in, sir!" ventured Bob.

Mr. Quelch smiled grimly.

"I can quite believe that, Cherry. But I cannot have you disturbing the whole school in this way. I warned you on a previous occasion that if better order was not kept in this study you would be separated!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I am sorry, Cherry; but you had a plain warning, and you have chosen to disregard it. You will leave this study to-morrow!"

"Oh!"

"As a matter of fact, five boys is a larger number for one junior study than is advisable," said Mr. Quelch.

"Doubtless so many find it difficult to keep quiet. A new study has been papered out up the passage, and it was intended to relieve some of the crowded studies by transferring boys there. You will take your books into No. 13 to-morrow, Cherry, and share it with Linley and Wun Lung!"

"Oh!"

"That is all. Now, not another sound to-night!"

And Mr. Quelch grimly quitted the study, leaving the silence of dismay behind him.

For some moments there was a grim silence in Study No. 1.

For some time the juniors had shared that study together, and though it certainly was close quarters for five, they had contemplated never separating.

Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, and Hurree Singh had been inseparable, and they would even have missed Billy Bunter if he had been turned out.

But for Bob Cherry to go!

That was rotten—beastly—impossible! But the fiat had gone forth, and the juniors knew only too well how useless it was to argue with Mr. Quelch.

And, truth to tell, they could not say that they had not had warning. But youth is thoughtless. Warnings received one day are frequently forgotten the next, and Bob Cherry never was much given to reflection.

It was done now.

"My Aunt Matilda!" said Nugent at last. "Quelch has got his little back up! The fat's in the fire now!"

Bob Cherry granted.

"I'm done!"

"You'll have to go, Bob," said Harry, with a shade on his face. "It's rotten, but it can't be helped. But it won't make any difference to our chumming. You'll only be at the end of the passage!"

"Right at the other end!" growled Bob Cherry.

"It's rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows!" It was a voice from the armchair. "We needn't desert Cherry, you know. He'll have to keep clear of this study for a bit, but we can visit him in No. 13. I'll go in there to tea every evening if he likes, for the sake of Auld Lang Syne!"

Bob Cherry did not show as much gratitude as might have been expected for this really generous offer.

"Oh, will you?" he remarked.

"Certainly, Cherry! Nobody can ever say that I wouldn't stick to an old friend," said Bunter.

"So long as he had any grub to give away!" remarked Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Well, I suppose it can't be helped," said Bob. "We may be able to get round Quelch later, and I may be shifted back again. He's a beast, but he's a just beast! It can't be helped!"

There was philosophy, but there was little consolation, in that reflection. It couldn't be helped, and it was useless to bother about it; but the juniors bothered, all the same.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**  
**The Furniture Arrives.**

**B**OB CHERRY was not satisfied; but he was beginning to view his exile from Study No. 1 with more equanimity. After all, he would be only half a dozen doors away, and he was "digging" with two fellows he liked.

Invitations would always be going to and fro between No. 1 and No. 13, and in all outdoor occupations the chums would go on the same as before.

So Bob Cherry planned and thought; and so indeed Harry Wharton and the rest thought. But in the dormitory that night a question came up which indicated that there might be a rift in the lute.

"You chaps will come to a feed when we get the place furnished," Bob Cherry remarked, looking up from unlacing his boots, as he sat on his bed. "Wun Lung has ordered some new furniture, so we ought to be pretty comfortable."

"We'll come, rather!" said Harry Wharton. "This division needn't make any difference. To all intents and purposes we can still be one study."

"Two studies with but a single

thought, two rooms that beat as one," said Nugent, with a grin. "But it's a good idea."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"The goodness is terrific. Although our worthy chum is separately divided from us into another apartment, the distance lends enchantment to the esteemed view," said Hurree Singh; "and in spite of the separateness we are still Study No. 1."

"That's it," said Nugent. "We're still Study No. 1."

"Oh, I don't know about that exactly," said Bob Cherry. "Perhaps it would be better to say that we are Study No. 13."

"Stuff!" said Nugent. "Why, No. 1 has always been top study in the Remove."

"The topfulness is terrific."

"Yes, but—"

"It's all right, Bob. You still belong to us. Study No. 13 is nothing—nowhere

tion of roughly handling the new "props." But they were busy at morning lessons when a huge van rolled up to the gates of Greyfriars.

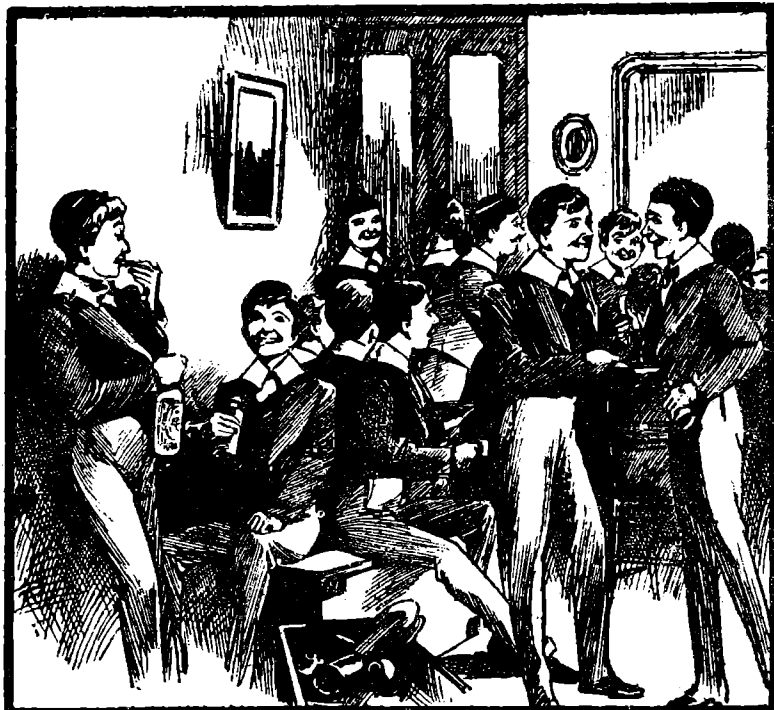
Gosling, the porter, stared at it in amazement.

The van rolled in, and turned round to the side entrance. The juniors in the class-room heard the rattle of the wheels and their eyes anxiously sought the clock over the bookcase.

It wanted only five minutes to the time of dismissal.

Those minutes seemed very long to the Removees. They wanted to get out upon the scene of action. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley were both very curious. It was a half that afternoon, and if the furniture had come, there would be time to fit up the study.

Mr. Quelch glanced at his class in some surprise. Their unquietness was evident to his eyes, and he did not understand it.



Bob Cherry granted. The new study was most uncomfortably crammed now, and he had a suspicion that it was a "rag." But the juniors made themselves at home. They sat on the window-ledge, on the armchairs, on the coal-locker, on the fender, and on the floor. They weren't particular, so long as they sat somewhere, and joined in the feed.

—only a number," said Nugent. "No. 1 is still top study."

"Oh, I don't know—"

"Well, I do—take my word for it."

"That's all very well—"

"Of course it is. Hallo! Here's Wun-gate to see lights out."

"Into bed, you youngsters."

"Yes. Will you come and unlace my boots?" asked Nugent.

The captain of Greyfriars only laughed, and the juniors tumbled into bed.

The next morning, the new tenants of No. 13 were curious to see the arrival of the furniture ordered in London by Wun Lung; but they were gone into morning lessons before it made its appearance.

Wun Lung had explained that it would be sent down to Friar-dale on the railway, probably packed in the van which was to bring it to the school.

The juniors expected a big pantechnicon, and they were eager to help carry in the things—some of them with the inten-

The Remove certainly were always willing to anticipate the hour of dismissal; but their keenness to get off now made them give random answers.

"Come, come; this will not do!" exclaimed the Form-master. "I should be sorry to detain you till dinner-time, but really I may be compelled to. Skinner, if you look at the clock again I shall give you fifty lines!"

"Ye-es, sir."

"What is the matter with you?"

"Well, sir; the fact is, sir, we—"

"Well, what?"

"There's some furniture just come for Cherry's new study, sir," said Skinner, "and we want to help him get it in, sir. You can't trust these carmen with furniture—we want to get it into the study for Cherry without being damaged."

"Indeed! In that case," said Mr. Quelch, with a glance at the clock, "I will now dismiss the class."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

And the Remove hurried out. In the passage Skinner indulged in a chuckle, and Bulstrode chuckled, too.

"Fancy Quelch swallowing that!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rotter!" said Bob Cherry, as he passed Skinner. "If you come any of your hanky-panky with my props, you'll get a thick ear."

"Oh, we're all coming to lend a hand!" said Bulstrode.

"You'd better stay where you are!"

"Rats!"

And nearly the whole of the Remove crowded round the house to see the van unloaded. The carman was busy; and the trim maid at the door was looking astonished. The Removites looked astonished, too. They knew Wun Lung, and his wealth and extravagance. But they had never expected anything like this.

The little Chinese had apparently ordered everything that caught his fancy, without taking into consideration the question whether the things could possibly be accommodated in a junior study.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bulstrode.

"What's that—a roll-top desk!"

"And a cheval glass."

"And a bookcase!"

"Faith, and a Japanese screen."

"And a brass fender."

"And two armchairs!"

The juniors passed remarks and chuckled as the articles were taken out and stacked in the passage. But these were not all. Great bundles were rolled out of the van, and the juniors discovered that they contained carpets and curtains. Then there was a crate packed with crockery, and several packing-cases.

"Great Scott!" said Harry Wharton. "Wun Lung will want all the Remove studies, and the passage as well, to accommodate that lot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's all, sir," said the carman, touching his cap to Wun Lung, who was superintending the unloading. "Sign, sir."

Wun Lung signed for the goods, and gave the man a half-crown, and the van rolled away. Bulstrode winked at his friends.

"Now we'll help carry them up," he remarked.

"Tankee you!" said Wun Lung. "You cally this."

He tapped a heavy armchair. But the practical jokers of the Remove did not intend to work. They were out for fun.

Bulstrode laid his hands upon the cheval glass.

"Lend a hand, Snoopy!"

"Right you are!"

"You'd better let that alone," said Wharton.

"Mind your own business! Don't you want us to help you, Wun Lung?"

The little Celestial hesitated. While he hesitated, Bulstrode and Snoop wheeled the cheval glass along the passage and began to mount the back stairs with it.

"Look out!" roared Bulstrode suddenly, letting go when the big glass was half up the stairs.

Snoop let go and sprang out of the way.

Down went the glass, rolling and tumbling with crash on crash—and the mirror was in a thousand fragments when, with a final crash, it reached the bottom.

"My hat!" said Bulstrode. "It's broken!"

There was a sudden murmur from the juniors in the passage.

"Look out! Cave! Here's Quelch!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### All Hands to Work!

**M**R. QUELCH came upon the scene with a frowning brow. The crashing of the cheval glass down the stairs had rung through the whole house. The juniors ceased giggling as the Form-master appeared.

Mr. Quelch looked at the smashed glass at the foot of the stairs, and then at the huge array of furniture along the wall.

"What is all this? What does it mean?"

"It's the furniture for the new study, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"What!"

"My new furniture, sir," said Wun Lung, with a smiling bow. "Nice—nice, sir. The glass is broken; allee lest allee light."

"But—but—but—"

"I'm sorry," said Bulstrode. "Quite an accident."

"Liar!" murmured Bob Cherry, under his breath.

"That is a valuable glass," said Mr. Quelch. "You should not have attempted to carry it upstairs, Bulstrode. Gosling could have done that."

"Yes, sir! I wanted to make myself useful, sir."

"I hope you are telling me the truth, Bulstrode, and that you did not do this damage wantonly," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, sir! I—"

"Enough! Wun Lung, does all this furniture belong to you?"

"Yes, sir. New furniture for new study, sir."

"But—but where can you intend to put it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Surely you must be aware that there is no room in your study for a quarter of all this."

Wun Lung's face fell a little.

"Me no tinkee of that, sir."

The Form-master smiled.

"It is a pity you did not think of it, my boy. It would have saved a great waste of money. You had better carefully calculate how much the study will hold, before you have anything carried upstairs, and the rest can be sent away."

"Ye-es, sir."

"As for you, Bulstrode, and Snoop, you can leave at once. If there are any more accidents, I shall have something to say about the matter."

And Mr. Quelch walked away, and Bulstrode and Snoop sulkily took themselves off. Bob Cherry chuckled a little.

"My dear ass," he remarked to Wun Lung; "I suppose you'll get about a tenth part of all that into the study."

"No tinkee of that."

"Then you'd better start 'tinking' before you get the things carried up. That crate will be a tidy weight. Here comes Gosling! Hallo, hallo, hallo, Gossy, my son! Did you scent work from afar, like a giddy war-horse sniffing the battle?"

"Gossy," snorted, and the juniors laughed. Gosling, the porter, was about the last man in the world to go about looking for work.

"Which, Mr. Quelch says, there's some things 'ere for me to carry hupstairs," he said. "Wot I says is this 'ere—why can't the young humps carry them hupstairs, hey?"

"Did you say that to Quelch?" asked Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"Yes—I can hear him doing it," remarked Nugent.

Gosling snorted again, and stared at the things he was to carry up.

"Look 'ere, all these things ain't goin' up," he said aggressively. "You ain't going to furnish the 'ole blessed 'ouse, I suppose?"

"Only one study, Gossy."

"How can you get all that lot inter one study, Master Wharton?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's a job for your mighty brain, Gosling," he said. "You can work it out by algebra, you know."

"Begin with the crate," said Bob Cherry. "We're certain to want the crockery. Can you manage it alone, Gossy?"

"Wot I says is this 'ere," he remarked. "I can't carry the crate."

"I'll lend you a hand," said Skinner.

"No, you won't," said Bob, pushing the obliging Skinner back. "You can go and eat coke. I'll help you, Gossy."

And he lent a hand. The crockery was safely conveyed upstairs, after several narrow escapes at the turnings, and Gosling appeared exhausted when he came down again. He sat on a trunk and gasped for breath.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," he remarked. "I can't carry any more up now. That's what I says."

"All right, Gossy; I'll ask Mr. Quelch what's to be done."

"Don't you do nothin' of the sort!" exclaimed Gosling, jumping up. "I dare say I can manage all right, though I'm cruel tired."

And he did.

One by one the articles of furniture were carried up, till the new study and a great deal of the passage outside it overflowed.

Then the remainder was left—rather regretfully. Wun Lung still cherished a hope of getting it into the study, when he had arranged the present contents in order.

The arranging had to be left till after dinner, but as it was a half, the new study-mates had plenty of time for the work.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Bob Cherry Lays the Carpet.

**B**ANG!

"Hallo! What on earth—"

"It's all right—only knocking a nail down," said Bob Cherry, who, hammer in hand, was scanning the bare floor of Study No. 13, and had just delivered a terrific blow on the ringing boards. "Can't lay carpet over loose nails, you know. Might tear! Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's another!"

Bang!

"Sure you've knocked it down?" asked Nugent sarcastically.

"Oh, yes; it's quite in, I think—might give it another tap to make sure."

Bang!

"You'll have the floor through if you keep that up," said Harry, laughing.

"Let's get the carpet unrolled."

"My hat, there's enough of it!"

There certainly was. Wun Lung had ordered Brussels carpet by the yard, instead of the cheap "square" the juniors usually put in their studies. It was a good carpet, and would certainly look very nice.

It would have to be cut to fit the study, but as there was plenty of it, that did not matter. Bob Cherry unrolled it quickly, sending the roll bumping against Nugent's legs and nearly knocking him down.

The rest slipped out of the way, and the carpet was unrolled. Bob Cherry opened his pocket-knife.

"Lemme see," he remarked. "It's just wide enough for the study—that's a bit of luck. I shall only have to cut it off at the end, and then fit it into the fireplace and the window."

"The fitfulness will be terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, as Bob Cherry began to gash the carpet with his knife.

"This knife's jolly blunt!" said Bob. "Anybody got a sharper one?"

No one had. Bob Cherry sat on the carpet and cogitated. Harry Wharton mildly suggested taking his time about it, but Bob shook his head. That was not his way.

"One of you chaps run down to Quelch's room, and borrow his razor," he said. "That would cut it a treat!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I think Quelch would cut us a treat, too, if we borrowed his razor to cut carpet with!"

"Well, the stuff has got to be cut!"

"Me cutee," said Wun Lung, who had watched Bob Cherry's operations on the carpet with some uneasiness. "Me cutee allec light!"

"Oh, you can't do it, you know!"

"Me fly."

"Oh, just as you like; but you won't be able to do it!"

And Bob Cherry handed the knife to the little Celestial.

Wun Lung set to work, and, in spite of Bob's doubts upon the subject, he soon had the carpet cut to measure. There was a great deal left over, which Nugent said would do for Study No. 1. Bob Cherry generously made him a present of it—very generously, considering that it belonged to Wun Lung.

"Well, that looks all right," said Bob Cherry. "You chaps might stand on the carpet while I hammer the nails in, in case it should get pulled out of the way. Here, you stand on the edge here, Nugent! Ow—wow! You ass! I didn't say stand on my fingers!"

"Sorry!"

"B-r-r-r! Now, then, here goes!"

The hammer came down.

Nugent gave a fiendish yell, and jumped clear of the floor.

"Ow—wow!" he roared. "Yow! You ass! Dummy—duffer—fathead!"

"What on earth's the matter?"

"Oh! Yow! You've nearly busted my toe!"

"Sorry!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!"

"Look here, I'd rather you didn't dance like that on our new carpet, Nugent," said Bob Cherry anxiously.

"Why, you—you—you—"

"Couldn't you do it in the passage?"

Nugent spluttered with wrath.

"I'm not going to stay near you while you've got a hammer in your silly hand!" he roared. "Yah! Ass! Dummy! Fathead! G-r-r-r!"

And Nugent departed.

Bob Cherry looked after him with an expression of surprise that made the others shriek.

"Lots of fuss some chaps make over a little tap on the toe!" Bob remarked. "Come and keep this down with your foot, will you, Wharton, while I hammer it?"

"No, thanks!" said Harry promptly.

"By George, are you afraid of a little tap? I sha'n't hit you! Besides, lightning never strikes twice in the same place, you know!"

"Lightning may not, but I expect you would," said Wharton. "Hold the edge down with your hand!"

"I might give my fingers a knock."

"Ha, ha! Better your fingers than my toe!"

"Oh, rats! Blow your toes!"

And Bob Cherry began to hammer. Bob always regarded himself as a thorough workman, and anything he made was, as he boasted, solidly made. He knew how to put in carpet so that it wasn't in danger of rucking up, and he was using two-inch wire nails for the purpose.

"Hand us some more nails, Linley. You might put your foot here to keep the edge down while I'm hammering!"

Linley handed him the nails, but did

not put his foot there. Bob Cherry hammered away cheerfully.

"Wouldn't tacks be better?" the Lancashire lad suggested.

"Tacks? Oh, no! Most people use tacks; it's just slovenliness," said Bob. "You see, a thing ought to be done thoroughly!"

"Well, you are doing that thoroughly!" said Harry, laughing. "I say, do you think that board will hold any more nails? You're pretty well filling it up!"

Bob Cherry sniffed.

"Just look at that, and see if it isn't safe!" he said, giving the carpet a tug to show how safe it was.

He put his strength into that tug, and when the carpet parted from the floor he went rolling backwards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry sat up, half-rolled in the carpet, in amazement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's come up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"H'm! I suppose it wanted a few more nails!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop that sniggering! Perhaps you'd better hand me over some of the four-inch, Linley!"

The juniors shrieked again.

"Oh, do try tacks!" said Wharton.

"Can't you see the carpet came over the heads of the nails? You've cut it to rags, putting in so many and hammering so hard!"

"If you know more about laying carpets than I do, Wharton—"

"Well, I couldn't know much less, I think."

"I'll have some of the four-inch, Linley!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, hand 'em over, and stop cackling!"

"Me tinkee p'laps—"

"Oh, that's all right, Wun Lung! You leave it to me!"

"Yes; but p'laps—"

"Leave it to me, old chap!"

And Bob Cherry set to work with the hammer and the four-inch nails.

Bang, bang, bang!

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. And Puts up the Looking-Glass.

THE carpet was at length fitted and fastened down, and then it was possible to begin arranging the furniture. The table and chairs were brought in, and then the bookcase, and the study assumed a more homelike and comfortable appearance.

"Now, about the looking-glass," said Bob Cherry, cocking his eyes thoughtfully at the space over the chimney. "That glass is just about the size. That's lucky!"

"Me take measule."

"Oh, that accounts for it, then!" said Bob, as his comrades giggled. "Blessed if I ever saw such a sniggering set of loads! I shall want a pair of steps to fix up that glass!"

Mark Linley went in search of a pair of steps, and Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton lifted the glass, meanwhile, upon the mantelpiece.

It was a very handsome glass, with a gilt frame, and certainly it was expensive. Harry Wharton had his doubts about its safety if Bob Cherry fastened it up, but he felt diffident about saying so.

He had come there to help, not to take the management out of the hands of the owners of the study. Little Wun Lung shared Wharton's doubts, but his politeness was great.

The glass, which was large and heavy, was lifted up on the mantelpiece, and backed against the wall, and Bob and Harry held it there while Linley sought for the steps. In a few minutes Mark

re-entered the study, carrying them on his shoulder.

"Good!" said Bob. "Hold this, Inky, while I get on the steps."

"With pleasurefulness, my worthy chum."

Huree Singh and Wharton held the glass, and Bob Cherry mounted upon the steps in front of it. The steps rocked and swayed, but Linley held them in time, and the cords tautened and held fast. Wun Lung held the steps on the other side. He cocked his eye at the glass.

"Little more to the left, kids."

"Right-ho!"

"H'm! Now a little more to the right."

"Good!"

"H'm, h'm! Perhaps it was better before. Put it back to the left again."

"Right-ho! Don't mind us," said Harry. "This is a healthy exercise, at all events, and every bit as good as Indian clubs."

"The healthfulness of the esteemed exercise is terrific."

"That's about right. Don't jaw; you take my attention off my work. Give me up the hammer, Wun Lung."

"Hammel hele," said Wun Lung, reaching it up.

Bob Cherry stooped to take it, and carelessly missed it, and the hammer dropped as Wun Lung let go.

There was a yell from the little Chinese:

"Ow! Yow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you roaring about, kid?"

"Ow! My foot!" wailed Wun Lung.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Well, what did you let the hammer drop for? Can't you give it up to me, and do that yelling afterwards?"

Wun Lung handed up the hammer, and skipped out of the study. He sat on a chair in the passage and nursed his foot. Bob Cherry produced huge nails from his pocket, and began to nail up the looking-glass.

The nails were brass-headed, and six inches long. He passed them through the eyeholes at the side of the looking-glass, and if they had been well driven into the wall the glass would certainly have been secure.

But that was not so easily done.

The first nail had not gone an inch into the wall when it jarred upon a brick, and refused to go in further. Bob Cherry hammered away valiantly, but the nail bent instead of going in.

"Beast!" he murmured. "Just my luck that a rotten brick should get into the way."

"If the brick is rottenful, my worthy chum, the nail should be drivently shoved into it," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Ass! The rotten thing isn't rotten!" said Bob. "When I say rotten, I don't mean rotten!"

"Oh!"

Crack, crack, crack! went the hammer. The nail bent till it could not be hammered again, and most of Bob's doughty blows took effect on the gilt frame—with grievous results to the gilding. The glass had two or three very narrow shaves.

"I'll put the other one in first," said Bob. "There's two holes in this timplat thing fastened on the glass. One nail ought really to keep the thing up."

Crack, crack!

"By Jove! That one only needed a couple of whacks to send it right in!"

"I expect it's gone into the plaster," said Mark Linley.

"Well, I dare say it has. So long as it's gone in, that's all right."

"But the plaster may not hold it safely."

"Oh, if you know more about nailing up looking-glasses than I do, Linley, perhaps you'll put up the next one," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, you'll jolly soon want a next one if you leave this to Bob," said Harry.

"The soonfulness will be terrific."  
"You chaps hold that glass, and don't jaw, while I nail the other side," said Bob, shifting the steps along the fireplace. "Now then, give a hand to these steps, Linley. Don't look on while I do all the work."

Mark smiled, and held the steps safe, and Bob Cherry mounted. He drove in two nails, and both of them went in with suspicious ease. But Bob Cherry was quite satisfied.

"That's jolly soon done!" he remarked. "It takes a certain amount of knack to do these things. I was always a handy chap about the house. I offered the mater to mend the things at home in the holidays, if she'd leave them for me, and save a lot of money that way. But she never would see it. Women never understand how to save money in small things. You can let that glass alone now; it's all right."

And Bob Cherry descended from the steps. Harry Wharton looked at the glass a little doubtfully.

"Quite sure?" he asked.  
"Look here, old chap, you can hold a glass all right, but you don't know anything about fixing it up," said Bob Cherry. "That glass is all right. You let go and see. I've given it a rather artistic tilt forward at the top. You'll see that it will hold all right."

"Oh, all right! If you think—"  
"Of course I do. Let it alone."  
Wharton and Hurree Singh let go the glass, and stopped well out of the way of it in case it should fall.

Bob Cherry surveyed it with great admiration.

"You don't often see a glass put up as quickly and neatly as that," he remarked. "Oh! Hallo, hallo!"

He jumped back just in time. The looking-glass flashed as it fell, the nails pulling out of the soft plaster under the weight of it, and there was no chance to save it.

Right on the steps it crashed, and there was a terrific smash. The top of the steps came through the backboard of the looking-glass, while the glass itself lay scattered over the carpet in a thousand fragments.

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER. And the Curtains!

"M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Fancy that! The nails seem to have come out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Nothing to cackle at that I can see. Wun Lung, old chap, these asses have managed to smash the glass among them."

"Eh—what? We?"  
"Me savvy," said the little Clinee. "Me gettee nothel glass nothel time, but Bob Chelly not puttee it up."

"Well, you'll want it put up safe, and—"

"Yes; that justee what me wantee."  
"This was an accident, of course. I suppose they weren't holding the glass tight against the wall when I put the nails in. I can't do everything without assistance, can I? There's a limit to what one chap can do."

"Not when it comes to smashing things," said Wharton. "You could do the window and the bookcase as easily as you have done the looking-glass."

"The carefulness would be terrific."  
THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 252.

"Oh, rats! We shall have to clear all this up from the carpet somehow. You fellows might do that while I put up the curtains."

"Pl'aps me bettel puttee up curtains—"

"Not a bit of it! I don't mind taking the trouble, and we want the job done thoroughly. You chaps pick up the glass."

The "chaps" did not look happy. But they had come there to help, so they picked up the glass. Linley carried the frame of the looking-glass away, to be sent off to Friardale to be re-glazed.

It was a long task picking up the fragments, but Harry and the nabob stuck to it.

Bob Cherry unrolled the curtains, and certainly they were very handsome for a junior study. There was a painted pole—white—which looked very natty against the green paper when it was up.

Bob Cherry fixed the pole and the cornices without any accident, and then mounted the steps with the curtains in his arms.

Wun Lung watched him rather anxiously.

"Why not slide the rings on the pole down here, and then put the pole up on the brackets?" he inquired, naturally enough.

Bob Cherry pursed his lips for a moment.

"Well, this is my way," he remarked.

"Yes, but—"

"You see, I've nailed the pole first, and the rings are on it—"

"But the pole is supposed to—"

"Never mind what the pole's supposed to do. I'm dealing in facts, not in suppositions," said Bob Cherry loftily.

"A few four-inch nails make anything safer. Now all I've got to do is to hook the curtains on to the rings."

"That's more easily done on the floor, my son."

"Rats! I'm a handy chap at this sort of thing."

And Bob Cherry set to work.

The juniors watched him curiously.

The steps Bob was standing on were none too high for the purpose, and he had to stand on the extreme top, and hold the curtains above his head with both hands to fasten the pins on the curtain-rings.

Naturally enough, the weight of the curtains told upon him, and the attitude he was obliged to stand in, with his head well thrown back, soon gave him an ache in the neck.

But he stuck to it manfully.

After about twenty minutes of labour, in which his neck and his arms ached as if he were on the rack, he succeeded in fastening up the curtains. Then, with a gasp, he looked down at his friends.

He did not see any reason why they should be grinning. But grinning they undoubtedly were.

"Ain't that all right?" demanded Bob.

"Ripping!" said Wharton. "You've fastened most of the hooks on the wrong rings, and got them mixed up a little, but I suppose that's merely a handy way of doing it."

"My hat!"

"I'll soon set that right," said Bob

Cherry. "Things are bound to go a little wrong when one chap does all the work and the rest look on. Here goes!"

He turned to the curtains again. The steps rocked with the sudden movement, and Wun Lung, clutching at them to save them, inadvertently gave them a push instead.

"Oh!" roared Bob Cherry.  
He had said "Here goes!" and now he certainly was going!

He made a desperate clutch at the curtains to save himself, and succeeded in bringing them down with him.

The next moment he was rolling on the carpet, wrapped up in the torn curtains, and fragments of the lace hung to the curtain-pole above.

"M-m-m-my hat!"  
"Hurt, old chap?" asked Wharton, springing at him at once.

Bob Cherry jumped up with an activity which showed that he was not seriously hurt.

"No," roared Bob, "I'm not hurt! I enjoy this sort of thing. Br-r-r!"

"Glad you haven't broken your neck," said Linley. "You've busted the curtains."

"Me gottee nothel pail."

"Good, kid! I'll put them up in a jiffy. Wait a minute till I've recovered my breath. Must have a bit of rest."

"Lats!"

"What!"

"Me say lats," said the little Celestial firmly. "Malk Linley puttee up next curtains. Only one more pail, and if you teal them, no curtains for studec."

"Look here, if you think Linley can put up curtains better than I can—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackling asses!" said Bob Cherry.

"Of course, I've no objection to Linley trying his hand; but I'm a handy chap at this sort of thing, and it's safer to leave it to me. Still, go ahead, Marky, and I'll hold the steps."

"I'd rather Wharton held the steps, if you don't mind," said Mark, smiling.

"Look here—"

"You see, if I got shoved through the window, it would mean breaking my neck on the ground outside."

And Harry Wharton held the steps while Linley mounted. He soon had the curtain-pole down, and the new curtains were placed upon it before it was put up again. To put it up then, and secure it, occupied the junior but a couple of minutes.

"Jolly good!" said Wharton.

"Not so bad," said Bob Cherry, looking critically at the curtains. "Not quite so graceful perhaps as I should have made them look, but they'll pass. You haven't put any nails into the curtain-pole, Linley."

"It doesn't need any."

"Hardly safe, old chap. What do you think, Wun Lung?"

"Allee light."

"Well, they're your curtains," said Bob. "I should take more care of them if they were mine. Let's get the crockery unpacked."

"You puttee books in bookcase. We unpack clokey."

"Right you are!" said Bob Cherry unsuspectingly.

The crockery was unpacked, and the cutlery and the tin ware. Wun Lung had laid in a supply of every utensil likely to be wanted in the study, if they stood a six or seven-course dinner and cooked it there.

The cupboard, capacious as it was, was taxed to the fullest limit. The bright new copper kettle was placed on the hob. The brass fender and fireirons made the grate look very cheerful.

The Japanese screen was placed before the cupboard, and the armchairs on

### TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

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either side of the grate. Other articles were brought in, and soon it became necessary to tack and wear in getting about the study among the furniture, as small craft do among the big shipping in a crowded port.

An art jar full of flowers was placed upon the mantelpiece, to occupy the space till another glass could be obtained; and the furnishing was complete.

"I think we've done pretty well," Bob Cherry remarked, looking round.

"Yes, rather! You haven't broken the bookcase or the window—"

"Look here—"  
"Or put the hammer through the screen or the clock—"

"Oh, rats! We've done jolly well, and I feel jolly dusty. I'm going to get a wash, and then we'll have tea. You fellows come?"

"Right-ho!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Crowded House-Warming.

BOB CHERRY re-entered the study ten minutes later, looking all the better for his wash. He glanced round No. 13 with an eye of pride.

There were, perhaps, too many things in the room, for its size, but otherwise it was decidedly comfortable. Such a carpet was unknown in the junior studies. Such curtains were quite as good as those in Mrs. Locke's drawing-room. The screen was a work of art, and the clock a handsome marble one, with a musical chime.

The bookcase was a specimen of Spanish mahogany, and the armchairs were handsome leather ones. Wun Lung had certainly not considered expense in ordering the furniture for the study, and Bob Cherry thought that his guardian would open his eyes when the bills came in.

Several fellows had come along the passage to peep into the new study. It impressed them all wonderfully.

Even Bulstrode, who was rich, and who spent a great deal of money on his study, was impressed. He could never get near anything like this, he knew.

Bob Cherry gave a grant of satisfaction as he looked round. He was beginning to be reconciled to his change of quarters.

He wasn't very far from his old friends. He certainly had more room to himself, and he was away from Billy Bunter—a great advantage in some respects.

The fire was laid in the grate, and Bob Cherry put a match to it. Then he filled the copper kettle at the tap at the end of the passage, and jammed it down on the fire.

"I say, Cherry—"

He looked round. Billy Bunter was blinking in at the door through his big spectacles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"I thought you might like me to lend you a hand with the feed," said Bunter, coming into the study. "I'm willing to do anything I can, you know. Can I cook anything for you?"

"You can help me," said Bob. "I've got a lot of cooking to do, and I've asked the fellows for six o'clock."

"You wouldn't mind me having a little snack to go on with—"

"I'll give you a thick ear to go on with if you come any rot!" said Bob Cherry. "Rub out that frying-pan."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"If you don't want to work, dear!" said Bob Cherry tersely. "No room for idlers in Study No. 13."

Bunter blinked indignantly. But he was not likely to depart while there was food about, so he set to work. He rubbed

out the frying-pan with an old newspaper, and then greased it with butter. His eyes glistened behind his spectacles as he watched Bob unpack sausages galore.

"My word!" murmured Bunter. "They make me feel awfully hungry! I suppose I can have a go at the sardines, just to—"

"Leave 'em alone, porpoise. You're here to work."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Shut up! Hold that frying-pan here."

Bunter obeyed. Bob Cherry tossed the sausages into the pan, and two or three of them went over the side upon the rug. There was an exclamation of dismay from Wun Lung, who had just entered the study.

"It's all right," said Bob, picking up the sausages. "I can wipe them; they're not hurt."

"Me no tinkee of sausages."

in the tool-shed! Give the fire a poke, Bunter."

"No makee smoke—spoilce curtains."

"Hang the curtains!"

"They are hung," said Bunter, squinting through his glasses. "The curtains are hung, Cherry."

"Ass! Shove that frying-pan on the fire."

"Makee smell. No cookee helo. Spoilce study."

"More rats!"

"Buntel spilec glease on lug," said Wun Lung.

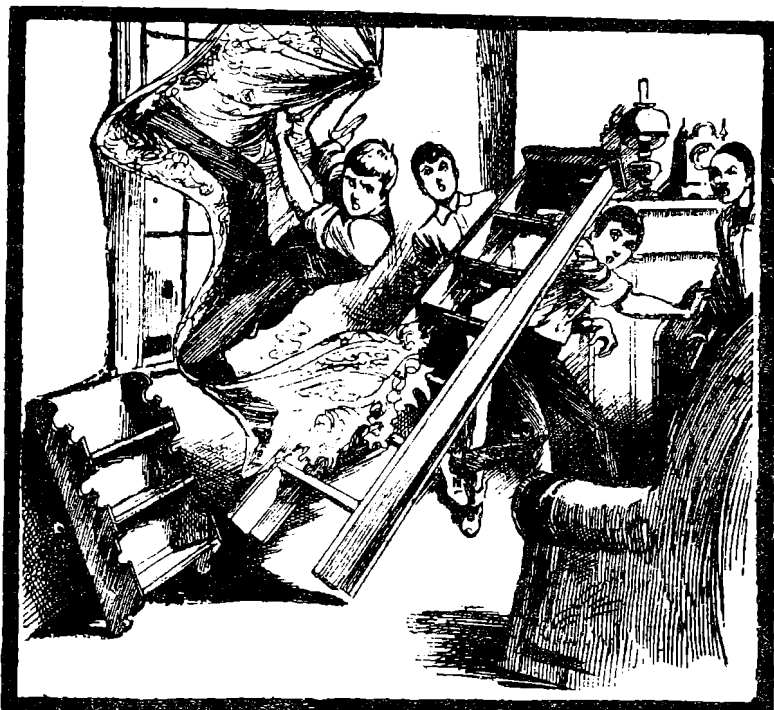
"Spill some more, Bunter!"

"Certainly!"

"Me tinkee that—"

"Never mind what you tinkee. Hand out the eggs!"

Wun Lung yielded the point. With Bob Cherry cooking in the study, there was no chance of keeping it in a state of pristine elegance. Bob Cherry didn't



Bob Cherry made a desperate clutch at the curtains to save himself, but only succeeded in bringing them down with him. "M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Bob.

"Eh? What are you worrying about, then?"

"Me tinkee of lug."

"Lug! What on earth does he mean by lug?"

"Lug—nice healthlug," explained Wun Lung. "Healthlug costee three guineas; no spoilce healthlug."

"Oh, the rug! Blow the rug!"

"Costee three guineas—"

"You should have got a cheaper one, then. I suppose we're going to do cooking in this study?"

"Cookee on split-stove in box-loom," said Wun Lung anxiously.

Bob Cherry laid down his fork, and looked fixedly at the Chinese junior.

"Do you think I'm going to cook on a spirit-stove in the box-room, you be-nighted heathen? I'm going to cook here!"

"Spoilce fulnitule."

"Blow the furniture!" roared Bob.

"Do you think I'm going to let the furniture make my life a burden? Blessed if I wouldn't rather camp out

care much for elegance. But he was getting hungry, and he cared very much indeed for his tea—and a solid one.

As Bob and Mark had not had to subscribe towards the furnishing, they had pooled their funds for the feed, and this tea was to be a more than usually gorgeous one.

There were various good things—hot and cold—and cakes and tarts unlimited. There was a smell of cooking that could almost have been cut with a knife, but that was not disagreeable to hungry juniors. Billy Bunter and Bob were busy, very warm and very red, when the door opened to admit Frank Nugent.

Nugent gave an appreciative sniff.

"Jolly good!" he said. "I see I'm early. Can I lend a hand?"

"Help Wun Lung lay the table."

"Good!"

Hurree Singh and Harry Wharton came in a few moments later. Mark Linley was still absent, and he did not turn up till the party were sitting down

to tea. He had a lexicon under his arm, and Bob Cherry snorted as he saw it.

"Doing that rotten Greek again?" he asked. "Blessed if I can see what you see to be so fond of in the giddy stuff! How many parasangs have the giddy Ten Thousand retreated this afternoon?"

Mark Linley laughed as he laid down his Xenophon and the lexicon and a sheaf of papers. Wingate had been helping him with his work, and he was feeling cheerful—the cheerfulness that comes of an advance made in a difficult study.

"Glad I'm not late," he said. "I know you didn't want my help in getting tea. Bunter is worth ten of me at such a time."

Billy Bunter blinked at him over a plateful of sausages.

"I'm sincerely glad to see that you

"Hungry?" asked Bob Cherry, helping Linley liberally. "This is a ripping spread, though I say it. I did most of the cooking. Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Skinner looked in at the door.

"Room for one more?" he asked. "I've heard you're giving a house-warming. You know how fond of you I always was, Cherry."

"Yes—I don't think! But come in!"

"Thanks awfully!"

Skinner joined the feasters. A minute or so later two more juniors looked in—Micky Desmond and Morgan.

"Faith, and they never tould us it was ready!" exclaimed Micky, in a tone of wonder. "Sure, and ye're getting forgetful in ye're old age, Bobby darling."

"We're in time, though, look you," said Morgan. "I don't mind sitting on the fender."

"Faith, I'd sit anywhere—on the coal-locker, or on Billy Bunter's head—rather than stay away from me friend Cherry's house-warming!" said Micky genially.

"Comee in!" said Wun Lung hospitably. "Nottee much loom."

"The roomfulness is limited, but the hospitality is terrific!" said the Nabob of Bhanupur.

"My hat!" exclaimed Stott, looking in a few minutes later, with Ogilvy and Lacy looking over his shoulders. "This is a Form feed, I suppose?"

"Faucy forgetting to let us know in time, though!" said Ogilvy. "I'm shocked, at you, Cherry—I am, really! Luckily we thought of giving you a look in."

"I'll begin with ham," said Lacy. "Don't trouble to cook any more sausages, specially for me. I'm not particular."

Bob Cherry grunted. The study was most uncomfortably crammed now, and he had a suspicion that it was a "rag." But the juniors made themselves at

home. They sat on the window-ledge, on the armchairs, on the coal-locker, on the fender, or the floor. They weren't particular, so long as they sat somewhere, and joined in the feed.

But the end was not yet. Bulstrode and Russell and Trevor came along a few minutes later, and looked in on the crowded juniors in the study.

"Good!" said Bulstrode. "I thought it was a Form feed. Come in, you chaps, and make yourselves at home!"

"Here, draw it mild!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "This isn't a monkey's cage!"

"Then what are you doing in it?" demanded Bulstrode.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Clear out, Bulstrode!" exclaimed Skinner. "You can't shove yourself in anywhere without an invitation. It's bad form. Buzz off!"

"Beastly bad form!" said Ogilvy. "I'm surprised at you, Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode grinned, and forced his way in. He trod on Stott, and nearly pushed over Lacy. The study was full to suffocation.

But the new-comers found room. The chums did not feel inclined to "fire" them out on the occasion of a house-warming, and a scuffle would have been a difficult business in the crowded room. So they took it good-humouredly.

"Fall to!" said Bob Cherry. "So long as there's anything left, wire in!"

"Certainly! Rely on us, old chap!"

"We'll stand by you," said Skinner cordially, "right to the last cup of tea and the last sardine!"

"I say, you fellows, there won't be enough to go round!"

"Better leave off in time, then," said Skinner. "If you eat only half as much as usual, that will leave enough for a dozen fellows."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Hallo!" exclaimed a voice at the door; and Bennett and Lyle looked in.

"Quite a crowd. Sorry we couldn't come earlier, Cherry."

"Don't mention it," said Bob Cherry politely. "The later you come the better I like it."

"Ha, ha, ha! Very good! Pass me the ham," said Skinner.

There was a crowd in the passage by this time. All the Remove had scent of the house-warming, and they seemed to be all turning up. Fellows came into the study till it was impossible for more to come in, and nearly impossible for those inside to move or breathe. The doorway was crammed, and the passage outside was crowded.

The new tenants of No. 13 took it good-humouredly.

It was a "rag," but they didn't mind. With so many guests at the board, the feast naturally vanished in record time; but the chums had started first, and they had enough—excepting Bunter, who

never had enough. There were loud demands from the passage for helpings, but helping soon ran short.

Skinner squeezed up from a sitting posture with some difficulty.

"All over!" he exclaimed. "Jolly good feed! Nothing left for you chaps, so you can bunk!"

There was a howl of indignation from the passage.

"Nothing left except a bottle of ginger-beer," said Bob Cherry.

"Hand it over, then!" exclaimed Lyle.

"Right you are!"

Bob Cherry drew the cork, holding the neck of the bottle towards the crowd in the doorway. There was a squirt of froth, and a yelling and a scattering from the uninvited guests.

"Yah! Ow, ow! Beast! Grr-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I've got a siphon of soda-water here," said Bob. "You can have that next, as the ginger-beer is ad gone."

The way the doorway and passage cleared at that offer was marvellous. Bob Cherry laughed heartily as the Removites scattered.

"Well, it's been a jolly feed," said Wharton—"jolly good; and it upholds the reputation of Study No. 1!"

"Eh? No. 13, you mean."

"My dear chap, we're not going to desert you," said Nugent. "You're still one of us. The study is a colony from No. 1; hands across the sea, you know."

"That's all very well, but it would really be more appropriate for No. 13 to take the lead, and No. 1 to back it up."

"What fearful rot!"

"Yes; I must say that's rot," agreed Wharton. "Bob will admit that himself when he thinks it over."

"No fear!"

"But, my dear chap—"

"The rotfulness is terrific!"

"I don't see it. You see—"

"Rats! What I say is—"

"I'm jolly well not going to—to—"

"Order!" exclaimed Mark Linley, laughing. "Don't let the house-warming finish in a row, chaps!"

"Who's rowing?" asked Bob Cherry heatedly.

"Well, you certainly sound as if you are."

"Bosh! I'm trying to point out reason to these owls!"

"Never mind," said Wharton. "Let's get to the cricket-field."

And this suggestion was too good not to be followed. For the time being peace reigned between the rival studies, but whether this state of affairs would last for long was a very difficult question to answer.

THE END.

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## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Great Idea.

"**W**ERE absolutely done!" said Tommy Dodd mournfully to his chums Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle.

"Absolutely!" groaned Tommy Cook. "What's more, it's too late to do anything now."

A short distance away stood Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, the Fistical Four, arrayed in Norfolk jackets and cycling knickers, buttonholes, clean collars, and, in fact, as spick and span as they had ever been seen before.

They were standing by their bicycles at the gates of Rookwood College, waiting for the Head's pretty daughter, Dolly Chisholm. She had graciously consented to go with them for a spin, and the Modern chums were green with envy.

"I wish I could think of some wheeze to stop their little game," said Tommy Dodd to his chums. "But the worst of it is that we have only just discovered the idea. Why didn't we tumble to it sooner?"

"Can't you think of something?" said Tommy Doyle. "You're the leader of the party!"

Tommy Dodd gave a sudden jump, as a stream of cold water was projected against his trousers. He yelped and swung round angrily. The stream of water came from the nozzle of a hose in the hands of Mack, the school porter.

The Modern chums were standing on a grass plot, and Mack had taken it upon himself to water that particular grass plot at that particular moment. Mack was not on the best of terms with Tommy Dodd & Co., or the Fistical Four, either. The stream sent against Tommy Dodd's legs was probably not an accident.

"What are you up to, you clumsy villain?" howled Tommy Dodd.

Mack looked at him.

"Begging your pardon," he said, "I didn't see you in the shade of the elm!"—Mack meant "elm"—"Would you mind steppin' out of the way, young gentlemen?"

"You might have said that before you drenched my trousers, ass!"

"Accidents will 'appen."

Tommy Dodd growled and walked off the grass, followed by his chums. The Fistical Four, at the gate, had seen the mishap, and they were grinning. A glimmer came into Tommy Dodd's eyes, and he grasped Tommy Cook's arm so suddenly and so hard that Tommy Cook uttered an exclamation.

"What the dickens—"

"Quiet! I've got an idea!"

Tommy Cook stared at him.

"What do you mean, Duddy?"

"I've got an idea how to do those rotters!" hissed Tommy Dodd. "Mack has just put it into my head!"

"Has he? What the—"

"Get into the house, both of you, and

change as quickly as you can into cycling things, and get my things out ready for me, while I speak to Mack."

"But—"

"No time for talk. I'll explain afterwards."

"Right you are!"

Both Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle knew that they could trust their leader. They hadn't the faintest idea of the plan that was working in Tommy Dodd's active brain, but they were content to follow their chum's lead.

They ran into the house to carry out his instructions, and the chief of the Modern chums walked across the grass towards Mack.

"Get hoff the grass!" called out Mack. "You'll get wetted again, Master Dodd. Get hoff the grass!"

"I want to speak to you, Mack!"

"Get hoff the grass!"

"Is a two-shilling piece any good to you?" asked Tommy Dodd, showing a glimmer of silver between his finger and thumb.

Mack's manner changed at once. A two-shilling piece was a great deal of use to him.

"Wot can I do for you, Master Dodd?" he asked, quite civilly.

"It's ten to three now," said Tommy Dodd, in a low voice. "At a few minutes to the hour I want you to go away and leave the hose lying here, so that anybody who came along could pick it up and use it."

The porter stared.

"What for, Master Dodd?"

Tommy Dodd gave a slight jerk of the head towards the gate. Mack glanced in that direction, and saw the Fistical Four standing there—and understood. He grinned. He was on the worst of terms with the Fistical Four.

He did not like Tommy Dodd much better, as a matter of fact; but that was no reason why he should not accept the two-shilling piece and allow the Fistical Four to receive a drenching.

"It'll have to be kept dark, sir," he murmured.

"Of course," said Tommy Dodd readily. "You just walk away for a few minutes and leave the hose lying here. It's not your fault if somebody picks it up and plays with it while your back's turned."

"That's so, Master Dodd!"

"I'll drop this two-shilling piece into the grass, and you can pick it up," went on Tommy Dodd. "Is it a go?"

"Yes, sir."

Tommy Dodd let the coin fall and walked away into the school. Mack stooped to move the hosepipe and picked up the florin. Mack was grinning expansively. He had never earned two shillings before in so easy a way.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Change of Escort.

**J**IMMY SILVER looked at his watch. "Two minutes to three," he remarked.

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby glanced towards the spreading elm-trees that hid the Head's house from sight. Two minutes more, and they would be carrying off the Head's daughter before the envious eyes of all the Fourth Form, and of the Fifth, too.

"Bound to be a little late," murmured Jimmy Silver.

"I expect so," said Raby.

"Oh, I don't know!" said Lovell. "Miss Dolly isn't the kind of girl to be late. I expect we shall see her as the clock strikes."

Raby hastily gave his necktie a jerk, to make sure that it was quite straight: Lovell jerked a little more white cuff into sight, and Newcome flicked a speck of dust from his knickers.

"One minute more— Ow-wow! What the dickens—"

"Oh!"

"Ugh!"

A sudden jet of water played right over the Fistical Four. They whirled round in rage and amazement, and yelled out simultaneously:

"Tommy Dodd! You villain!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. were there. They were clad in their best, and they had wheeled down their bicycles and stood then against a tree near the gate. Then Tommy Dodd had taken up the hose left on the grass by the bribed and corrupted Mack.

Taking care not to get any water over himself or his comrades, Tommy Dodd was playing the hose upon the astonished Fistical Four. The fellows in the quad looked on at first in utter amazement, and then with yells of laughter.

The Fistical Four yelled—but not with laughter. They were far from laughing at that moment. For the first swish of the water drenched them from head to foot, and almost swept them off their feet. It was a powerful stream, with heaps of force behind it, and Tommy Dodd let them have it at full strength.

Alas! for the elegant attire of the four cyclists. In a few seconds, before they fairly knew what was happening, their clothes hung around their limbs in drenched folds, the flowers were swept away from their buttonholes, their caps were off their heads, their hair streaming with water, their shirts and cuffs were limp rags.

Tommy Dodd & Co. chuckled. Tommy Dodd played the hose right merrily. The Fistical Four reeled from the torrent. Then, frantic with rage, they made a desperate rush at the Modern chums.

If they had reached them, the Modern chums would have fared badly—quite as badly as the unhappy Fistical Four had.

favoured. But they did not reach them—they could not.

Tommy Dodd kept the torrent at full force, first upon one of them and then upon another, and they were fairly knocked flying by the rush of the water.

Lovell went over, and Raby fell across him. Newcome was bowled over on his back. Jimmy Silver rushed on desperately, but the torrent caught him fairly beneath the chin and bowled him over.

There was a shout from Hooker, of the Fourth.

"Look out, you drowned rats! Miss Dolly's coming!"

The Fistical Four staggered to their feet. A charming girl, with brown hair and blue eyes, was wheeling a bicycle through the elm-trees that surrounded the Head's house.

The chums looked at her—and at themselves. Their condition was deplorable. They looked, as Hooker put it, like drowned rats. They could not face the girl in that state. Well they knew how the bright blue eyes would glimmer with fun. As for going out for the promised ride, it was impossible. They were in no state for that.

As the slim form of Dolly Chisholm appeared through the elms, four juniors broke into a desperate sprint for cover. Four drenched bicycles lay on the ground in a puddle of water. Four flying figures disappeared into the house—Jimmy Silver only stopping a moment to shake his list at Tommy Dodd.

Tommy Dodd, choking with laughter, shut off the water and threw down the hose. The Modern chums took their bicycles from the tree where they were leaning, and wheeled them forward to meet Miss Dolly near the gate.

The girl glanced at them, and then at the drenched machines on the ground. The laughing faces of all the fellows near seemed to puzzle her. She looked at Tommy Dodd & Co. inquiringly as they raised their caps.

"Will you excuse Silver, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby?" said Tommy Dodd smoothly. "They were waiting here when something went wrong with the garden-hose."

"That's so."  
"They have somehow got drenched; you see the state their machines are in."  
"Dear me!" murmured Miss Dolly. "I am so sorry."

"Yes, it is a shame," said Tommy Dodd hypocritically. "They looked such drowned rats that they couldn't face you, and they've left me to make their excuses."

"Exactly," murmured Tommy Doyle. "If you would allow us to ride with you, Miss Dolly, we are quite ready," went on Tommy Dodd eagerly. "They would feel it very much if you were disappointed about the ride, and as we are ever so much better riders than they are—"

The girl laughed—a pleasant, rippling little laugh.

"How did the accident happen?"  
"It was quite sudden," said Tommy Dodd. "The hose was turned in their direction, and they were in the way of the water; that's how it came about."

"Was Mack using the hose?"  
"No, he had carelessly left it on the grass, and some juniors started playing with it," said Tommy Dodd innocently.

Miss Dolly smiled.  
"If you would let us come with you—"  
"Well, I must have my ride," said Miss Dolly, "and if my companions are not here, I must be quite free to accept your kind offer. It is very kind and obliging of you, Dodd."

"Not at all," said Tommy Dodd blissfully. "It's a great honour, and we are awfully grateful. We'll take the best care of you, Miss Dolly."

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"I can take care of myself," Miss Dolly remarked.

"Yes, of course," agreed Dodd. "We're not the kind of fellows who think that a girl always needs taking care of, just because she is a girl."

Tommy Dodd would have said anything at that moment, and his chums would have backed him up. Miss Dolly, still smiling, mounted her machine, refusing assistance, and the Modern chums rolled out of the gates of Rookwood one on either side of the fair cyclist, and one riding behind. Four drenched figures stood at a study window, shaking fists after them.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Jimmy Silver Rises to the Occasion.

THE Modern chums and Miss Dolly were watched by Jimmy Silver till they disappeared through the stone gateway. He then turned back from the window of the end study. His usually cool and determined face was very gloomy.

"Did you ever see such a swindle?" he exclaimed.

Lovell shook his head.  
"No, Jimmy. We're done!"  
"Foiled, diddled, dished, and done!" said Raby. "I'll make cats'-meat of those rotters when I get within hitting distance of them again!"

"They've absolutely done us. And we were going to whisk Miss Dolly off under their noses, too!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Instead of which, they've whisked her off under ours."

"It couldn't be helped. We couldn't have faced her in this state."  
"I believe she must have guessed half of it," said Jimmy Silver. "She'll be laughing at us in her sleeve for being done so easily by those Modern rotters."

"You're a regular Job's comforter," said Newcome.

"What's to be done?" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Better get these wet clothes off, I should say. We shall catch pneumonia if we hang about in them much longer."

"I don't care if I do. I'd catch pneumonia forty times for the sake of getting level with those rotters!"

"It can't be did!"  
"Let's get changed, and then think it over," said Raby. "It's no good catching cold."

Jimmy Silver nodded gloomily. The four chums stripped and rubbed themselves dry, and changed their clothes. They felt better when that was done, but they were still in a state of rage and chagrin that was almost intolerable.

They left the House, meeting with grins and chuckles from every fellow they passed.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, stared at them as they came into the quad.

"Hallo! Weren't you going out with Miss Dolly?" he asked.

The chums turned red.  
"That's so," said Jimmy Silver awkwardly. "But there was an—an accident, and Tommy Dodd & Co. have gone instead."

The big Sixth-Former laughed. He guessed well enough that the "accident" had been some device of the Modern chums, for the rivalry of the two parties in the Fourth was a standing joke among the seniors at Rookwood, and furnished them with much food for merriment.

The Fistical Four walked on.  
"Hallo, you merchants!" exclaimed Hooker, meeting the four chums with Towle and Leggett and Lacy and some others of the Fourth Form, in a laughing crowd. "Hallo! I hear you've been taking shower-baths instead of taking Miss Dolly out for a ride!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"It was nice of Dodd & Co. to come to the front as they did, and take your place, wasn't it?" Hooker remarked.

"If you fellows aren't looking for trouble, you'd better shut up," said Jimmy Silver darkly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The Fistical Four strode away and passed the gates. They had had enough chipping to last them for the afternoon. Jimmy Silver threw himself down upon a grassy bank.

"Things are getting into a nice state," he grunted. "We shall be chipped to death over this, to say nothing of the crowing we shall have to put up with from Tommy Dodd & Co."

"It's rotten!" said Newcome.  
"Can't something be done?" said Lovell desperately. "Can't you think of something, Jimmy? Where's that keen brain you're always talking about? If you've got a brain at all, think of some way of getting level with those rotters."

Jimmy Silver looked very thoughtful.  
"Hang it!" said Raby. "If the rotters would only get a few punctures, the ride would be mucked up, and—"

Jimmy Silver started up.  
"Punctures!" he yelled. "Ha, ha! I reckon we shall be able to get our own back, after all. It's Raby saying something about punctures that's made me think of a wheeze."

"I'd like to know what you chaps would do without me to think of things for you."

"Oh, cheese it, Raby, and let's hear Jimmy's idea."

"Suppose the cyclists were to get a large, full-grown, first-rate crop of punctures," said Jimmy Silver, grinning.

"What do you think of that?"  
"It would muck up the ride, and no mistake—but it can't be worked."

"It can be worked."

"But that would spoil Miss Dolly's ride, as well as those Modern rotters," said Raby thoughtfully. "We can't have anything of that sort, Jimmy."

"Ass! Do you think I'm the kind of chap to give a girl any trouble, or spoil her outing?" said the leader of the Fistical Four indignantly.

"Then what—"  
"Miss Dolly's tyres will be punctured along with Dodd & Co's; but suppose four fellows about our size happen to drive by, in a neat little trap—"

"My hat!"  
"Just in time to come to the rescue. We give Miss Dolly a lift, of course, and she has a pleasant drive under the chestnut-trees, instead of a ride. She would like it just as much—in fact, after riding so far, she'd like a drive for a change."

"Very likely, but—"

"Tommy Dodd & Co. can wheel their bikes home, and Miss Dolly's, too. There won't be room for them or the machines in the trap."

"Yes, but—"

"We'll carry off Miss Dolly under their eyes, just as they've done us. But the chap laughs best who laughs last, and we shall laugh last. And those rotters will stop chipping us when they see us drive into Rookwood with Miss Dolly in the trap, and when those Modern rotters come crawling in an hour or two later wheeling their machines."

"Yes, but how—"

"Don't you think it's a ripping wheeze?" demanded Jimmy.

"Absolutely ripping, if it can be worked! But how in the name of all that's impossible are you going to give them a lot of punctures they can't mend?"

Jimmy Silver chuckled.

"That's where the beauty of the idea comes in!"

"Blessed if I can see it!"

"I reckon we can work it easily enough, all the same. There are lots of things

you don't see, my son, till I point them out to you."

"Oh, get on with the jaw, and don't cackle!"

"Very well. You know they are riding back through the chestnut wood, and you know the track through the wood is so narrow that four riders would have to ride very close, if one didn't have to drop behind."

"What about that?"

"Tin-tacks are cheap."

"Tin-tacks!"

"Yes, tin-tacks! What's the matter with buying a dozen packets or so of tin-tacks in Coombe, and distributing them in the road there for a distance of about fifty yards, to make quite sure? The rotters ride over them, and they gather up about a hundred punctures in a couple of seconds—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'll get their tyres so jammed full of tacks that there won't be any question of mending the punctures. You can't mend fifty punctures by the roadside, and keep a lady waiting for you all the time—especially when there's four nice young fellows ready to take her home in a trap."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell.

"Come on, and let's go down to the village!" said Jimmy Silver. "We've got to buy the tacks and hire the trap. Lucky I'm a good driver! Let's get a move on!"

And the Fistical Four, chuckling over the prospect, hurried towards the village.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Disaster.

THREE more absolutely joyous and beaming faces than those of Tommy Dodd & Co. could not have been found that sunny August afternoon throughout the length and breadth of England.

They had beaten the Fistical Four hollow. They had carried off the prize. They were enjoying a pleasant ride with a charming girl. Earth had nothing more to offer.

"It is charming," said Miss Dolly, with a bright smile. "I don't think I have ever enjoyed a ride so much."

"Haven't you, really?" said Tommy Dodd, beaming.

"No, really."

"And the best part lies before us, too," said Tommy Cook. "It's jolly under these shady trees, and you never meet any traffic on this road, either."

Four abreast, riding somewhat close, for the lane was narrow, and the sides of it were rough and rugged, the cyclists spun on under the overhanging chestnuts.

Overhead the branches met and formed a green canopy, through which the sun's rays filtered in subdued shafts of gold. It was the pleasantest ride within a hundred miles of Rookwood, and a favourite of Miss Dolly's.

"Ripping!" said Tommy Dodd, once more.

Tommy Cook was looking worried.

"I—I say, I believe I've got a puncture!" he murmured.

Tommy Dodd glanced at him. Tommy Dodd looked annoyed. It was really very exasperating of Cook to get a puncture just then.

"Don't you think of waiting for me!" said Tommy Cook hastily. "I'll examine the tyre and you keep on. I'll overtake you before you get to Rookwood."

"Oh, no!" said Miss Dolly immediately. "We shall wait for you!"

"I'd rather—"

"Dear me, I think I have a puncture, too!" said Miss Dolly, as she stopped her machine and lightly dismounted. "My front tyre is getting flat."

"Oh, I'll jolly soon mend that for you!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Miss Dolly, in astonishment. "My back tyre is going down, too. What can be the matter with it?"

"I've got a puncture in each tyre, too," said Tommy Cook, looking blue. "Both the beastly tyres have gone as flat as pancakes."

"That's curious," said Tommy Dodd. "I never came across such a crop of punctures so suddenly before!"

"Nor I," said Miss Dolly. "But look at your own machine! And Doyle's! Dear me, your tyres are all flat!"

Tommy Dodd stared at the machines in amazement.

Miss Dolly was quite right. Their tyres were going down, and were almost flat. Both tyres on all four machines were flattened out. And the punctures must have been pretty serious ones for the tyres to go down so suddenly.

Tommy Dodd glanced round him. He had not noticed it at first, but it was the case. Tacks were scattered everywhere in the dust of the road. Tacks were sticking all over the tyres on all four bicycles.

No wonder the tyres had suddenly gone flat. As for repairing, that was out of the question. Tommy Dodd & Co. were too careful ever to travel without their

repair outfits, but they could not have mended all those punctures in a whole afternoon. They were looking utterly dismayed and nonplussed.

"It's—it's rotten!" said Tommy Dodd. "Somebody has done this for a joke, I suppose. I wish I had the joker here, by Jove! I'd joke him!"

"We shall have to walk the machines to Rookwood," said Tommy Doyle. "You needn't bother with yours, Miss Dolly; I'll wheel it. And I can manage yours, too, Doddy. You can walk on with Miss Dolly, and we'll follow with the machines."

"Not at all!" said Miss Dolly.

Tommy Dodd, in utter amazement,



"Look out, you drowned rats, Miss Dolly's coming!" The Fistical Four staggered to their feet. A charming girl, with brown hair and blue eyes, was wheeling a bicycle through the elm-trees that surrounded the Head's house.

"My only hat!" said Tommy Dodd. Miss Dolly was looking puzzled.

"This is very strange!" she remarked. "I have never heard of such a thing before—never!"

"I—I can't understand it!" muttered Tommy Dodd. "I—I'm afraid the ride's rather spoiled, Miss Dolly. Can you see what's wrong with your tyres, kids?"

"Yes!" yelled Tommy Cook, who was bending down by his machine. "My hat, they're stuffed full of tacks!"

"What?"

"Tacks!"

"Tacks?"

"Yes, tin-tacks!"

Tommy Dodd, in utter amazement,

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"It's—it's a beastly long walk for you, and uphill half the way," said Tommy Dodd. "I—I wish we could get a vehicle of some sort. But there's nothing near here."

"I can walk it," said Miss Dolly bravely, though, to tell the truth, the prospect was not attractive.

"Hallo! I can hear something on the road!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd eagerly. "It may be something that will give us a lift to the village."

The sound of a horse and wheels could be heard round the corner in a narrow lane that branched off a score of yards away. The juniors and their fair companion looked eagerly towards the turning.

A market-cart going to Coombe would have been a godsend then. But it was not a market-cart that came into view. It was a neat little trap with a boy driving, and three other boys sitting in it. And a gasp broke from Tommy Dodd & Co. simultaneously.

"Jimmy Silver & Co.!"

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

##### The Capture.

**J**IMMY SILVER stopped the trap, threw down the reins, and jumped into the road. He raised his cap to Miss Dolly, and Lovell, Newcome, and Raby were only a moment behind him.

"Fancy meeting you!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Nothing wrong, I hope?"

Miss Dolly gave him a curious look.

"Yes," she said; "the tyres are punctured."

"It's too bad! Nothing serious—oh, Duddy?"

"Yes," grunted Tommy Dodd. "About a dozen punctures in each tyre, on each jigger."

Jimmy Silver whistled.

"That's bad!"

"It will take you a long time to mend them, Duddy," remarked Raby, with a grin.

"We can't mend them!"

"Can't mend punctures!" ejaculated Lovell. "Really, Duddy, old man, you ought to learn to mend punctures with anybody! But it's impossible to mend this lot in less than about a day's hard work."

"Too bad!" said Jimmy Silver again. "How fortunate we came along! We were so sorry to miss you, Miss Dolly. Of course, Tommy Dodd explained?"

The girl smiled.

"Yes. There was an accident with a hose-pipe, I think."

"That is it. A trio of silly young monkeys who ought to have known better, got playing with the garden-hose, and we were drenched."

Tommy Dodd & Co. exchanged wrathful glances. It was impossible to pick a row with the Fistical Four before Miss Dolly, but they had never felt so strongly inclined to do so.

It was dawning upon their minds, too, who was responsible for the tin-tacks and the punctures.

"We were simply soaked, Miss Dolly," said Lovell. "We had to change, and Tommy Dodd & Co. were jolly glad to take our places."

"It is very curious," said Dolly, with a serious face, but a glimmer of fun in her blue eyes. "Someone has been throwing tacks about in the road."

"Some beastly rotter, you know," said Tommy Dodd. "Some measly sort of mongrel whom I shall lick into the middle of next week when I get a chance."

"I hope you will," said Jimmy Silver heartily. "It was a really reckless thing to do, whoever did it, and quite as bad as fooling about with a hose-pipe and drenching fellows who were just going out for a ride."

"Quite as bad," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver turned to Miss Dolly with his sweetest smile.

"It's too bad that your bike should be punctured in this way, Miss Dolly," he said.

"It is very fortunate," Miss Dolly remarked—"that is, of course, if you have room for us in the trap."

"We have room for you, Miss Dolly," said Jimmy Silver hastily. "You see, the trap is only a small one. We couldn't possibly cram eight into it, and besides, it would be cruelly to the horse. And then there are the bicycles. They couldn't be left here."

"Certainly not," said Lovell.

The girl nodded. What Jimmy Silver stated was exactly correct.

"Dodd & Co. will have to walk home," said Jimmy Silver, with much commiseration. "Duddy won't mind wheeling your bike along with his own, Miss Dolly."

"Of course, I shall wheel it," said Tommy Dodd, keeping up appearances admirably. "I'm—I'm glad you came by in time to save Miss Dolly from that fearfully long walk, Silver."

Miss Dolly hesitated.

"You must go in the trap, Miss Dolly," said Tommy Dodd. "I'm only too glad it's come by in time to give you a lift. I'll take care of your machine. If you start now, you'll be in time for tea."

"I suppose I had better," said the girl.

"Oh, certainly! There's nothing else to be done."

"Exactly!" said Tommy Cook.

"Then I will go. Thank you so much for a very pleasant ride," said Miss Dolly, with a sweet smile that made the Modern chums feel much more contented. "I have enjoyed it very much indeed. And it is so kind of you to take care of my machine."

And Miss Dolly let Tommy Dodd assist her into the trap, though Jimmy Silver stood ready. Jimmy Silver gathered up the reins, and Lovell, Newcome and Raby climbed in.

They looked very cosy and comfortable in the trap, and they waved their hands

to the Modern chums as Jimmy set the horse in motion.

Tommy Dodd & Co. stood holding the disabled bicycles, looking after the trap. It disappeared down the shady lane, and then the Modern chums looked at one another. Tommy Dodd forced a grin.

"Done at the finish!" he said. "Never mind, it has been great fun, and they've only got their own back, after all."

And the Modern chums started on the long walk to Rookwood, wheeling the machines.

"Hallo!"

"Look there!"

"Silver!"

"And Miss Dolly!"

In the cool of the afternoon the trap drove in at the gates of Rookwood School. The junior cricketers were coming off the ground, and a crowd witnessed the arrival of the trap.

They had seen Miss Dolly go out with Tommy Dodd & Co., and they saw her come home with the Fistical Four.

Exactly what had happened they did not know, but it was clear to all the Fourth Form at Rookwood that the Fistical Four had triumphed in the end.

Jimmy Silver drove the trap up to the Head's house, with a flourish. Lovell jumped down and assisted Miss Dolly to alight. Raby rang the bell.

"Thank you so much," said Miss Dolly, with a sweet smile for all four of the juniors. "I have enjoyed that drive immensely."

"So have we," said Jimmy Silver, beaming. "So glad you came! I hope you will let us drive you out another afternoon. Miss Dolly, when you have time."

"Oh, yes, do!" said Lovell.

Miss Dolly smiled again.

"You are very kind," she said. "I shall be very pleased, I am sure."

And the girl tripped into the house. The juniors stood, caps in hands, until the door had closed behind her.

"We've scored this time!" said Jimmy Silver, as they turned away.

"Oh, rather!" said Lovell. "Ha, ha! I wonder when those chaps will come crawling in."

The Fistical Four had taken the trap back to the village, and returned to Rookwood before the Modern chums arrived. Tired and dusty, Tommy Dodd & Co. wheeled the machines in at the gates of Rookwood.

They found the whole Fourth Form in possession of the story, and they were exposed to an unmerciful storm of chipping until they escaped to their study and locked themselves in. When they had had tea and a little rest they went to look for the Fistical Four.

And the next morning seven members of the Fourth Form at Rookwood received impositions for appearing in class with prominent signs of combat upon their features.

THE END.

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at St. Jim's.

# THE THIRD FORM

## MYSTERY!

By  
**Martin  
Clifford.**

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Cash!

"HERE'S Wally at last!"

"Come in, kid!"  
Curly Gibson and Jameson, fags of the Third Form, spoke together in voices fraught with intense concern. D'Arcy minor's gloomy expression as he came into the study did not lessen the concern.

"No go!" said Wally D'Arcy indignantly. "Complete wash-out, bother it!"

"Wasn't Gussy there?"

"Oh, Gus was there all right, and so was Jack Blake, but they were all up on their hind legs, and no mistake! Gussy wouldn't fork up a bob!"

"My aunt!"

"Phew!"

Curly Gibson and Jameson stared at the leader of the Third Form in surprise. They could not remember Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Wally's elder brother, having refused to give his minor money before.

It was difficult to believe that Arthur Augustus could be anything but generosity itself.

"Perhaps he hadn't got the tin, Wally?"

"Oh, he'd plenty of tin!"

"Then——"

Wally looked grimly about the room.

"No, it wasn't meanness; it was because he was up on his hind legs. He jawed a lot about my having had too much pocket-money lately."

Curly Gibson grinned.

"Well, you have been to their study once or twice lately, kid."

"Oh, rats!"

"Three times this week——"

"Only got half-a-crown from him each time!" exclaimed Wally. "Besides, we've had a lot of expenses since we were allowed to turn this room into a study. When a fellow is given a study he ought to furnish it properly."

"Rather!"

"I should have thought Gussy would have been the first to admit that."

Wally shook his head in the same grim way.

"Well, he wasn't anyway, and he started a long jaw about thrift or something. He's coming here with Jack Blake and the other two to finish the jaw."

"My aunt!"

"Let's lock the door!"

Wally chuckled, for the first time since his arrival in the study. It was rather a grim chuckle, though.

"Gussy and Blake and the others have their good points," he said.

"Rather!"

"First chop kids, in fact——"

"But they are too fond of getting up on their hind legs," finished Wally. "All old fogeys are. I consider it's our

duty to make them come down to all fours again occasionally."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the wheeze, kid?"

Wally did not answer at once. He moved across the miniature room, and pulled the tool-box from the cupboard.

"Anyone got any wire?"

"There's some in the box——"

"What do you want wire for, Wally?"

D'Arcy minor did not stop to explain. He found a coil of stout wire, and selected a pair of pliers and a hammer, and at once set to work.

"Now we want a couple of giddy staples, kids."

"There's tons there."

"Good egg! Get the door open, Curly, and you keep a look-out in the passage, Jameson. I sha'n't be a minute doing it."

Curly Gibson and Jameson stared in growing astonishment. At first they thought Wally meant to barricade the door against the promised visit of the Fourth-Formers, but he certainly was not doing that.

He was driving one of the two staples in the door framework at a point level with the lower hinge, and in such a way that the door could not quite close.

Then he drove the other staple in the opposite doopost, and Curly Gibson chuckled loudly.

"You're going to stretch the wire across the doorway, kid?"

"Yes; that's the wheeze. A wire's better than a string, because it doesn't show so much."

"That's so."

"Ha, ha, ha! We'll put something soft for the old fogeys to fall on, though."

Wally nodded.

"I've thought of that. Help me draw this wire tight, Curly, and you drive the staple home when it is tight, Jameson, to hold the wire taut. Good biz!"

The wire could scarcely be seen, even when looked for now that it was taut across the doorway. It was a thousand to one against Jack Blake & Co. noticing it when they came in.

"Hand over Pongo's cushion. I'm going to get him another one, so it doesn't matter spoiling it."

Curly Gibson did as requested, staring again. Why was Pongo's cushion going to be spoilt?

Wally threw the cushion down carelessly in front of the door, at a distance of about five feet from the wire, then he flashed across the study to the chimney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Curly Gibson and Jameson chuckled loudly. Wally was raking down a shovelful of soot.

Without a word he sprinkled this on the cushion in such a way that it scarcely showed at all.

"That's the wheeze!"

"My aunt!"

"Ripping!"

"It's for their own good," said Wally loftily. "It's not an ordinary jape. I have to think of my brother's welfare."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what Gussy said to me when I went to borrow five bob just now!" grinned D'Arcy minor. "S-sh!"

The sound of footsteps had caught Wally's keen ears. He darted across to the table by the window and opened a book.

Curly Gibson and Jameson whipped out a draughts' board and commenced a game. There was absolute stillness in the little study.

The footsteps came nearer. The chums of the Fag Form listened intently, then the footsteps stopped altogether.

Someone was turning into the room.

The door was pushed open to its full extent, then a gasp rang out. It was followed by a bewildered yell.

"My hat!"

The visitor caught his shins on the wire, and he pitched headlong into the room instantly. There was a loud bang, and a junior form thudded on to the cushion with both hands, simply covering himself with soot.

"Great snakes—— I guess—— Phew!"

The cry rang out in startled tones, and Wally & Co. jumped to their feet, yelling with laughter. There was a big mistake somewhere, for it was not a member of Jack Blake & Co. who lay prone on the floor, but that did not abate the Third-Formers' mirth.

They rolled about in great glee.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just look at his chivvy!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" choked Wally.

"It's Lumley-Lumley! Is that how you like it done, Lumley-Lumley?"

Lumley-Lumley, the millionaire's son, rose to his feet slowly. He was in a shocking state, his face, collar, and clothes covered with soot.

The older junior's keen eyes were sparkling curiously.

The fags continued to roll about, shrieking with laughter as Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stood facing them with clenched fists. Then, without a word, the millionaire's son strode from the study.

He dared not trust himself in the little room a moment longer, for the lack of early training had left Lumley-Lumley with a temper which required every atom of his powerful will to keep under control.

He was biting his lip without noticing the pain as he swung into the passage again, but, as things panned out, it would have been far better for his peace of mind if he had stayed in the study after all.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
Mr. Selby's Misfortunes.

**J**ERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY had once been known at St. Jim's as the Outsider.

But he was not that now. A great change had come over the millionaire's son, and a change which was very much for the better.

Few juniors, probably none at St. Jim's, had had the upbringing of Lumley-Lumley, and it was scarcely to be expected that a childhood spent in the streets of New York would not influence the character of a lad of more advanced years. That he had pluck there was no gainsaying, but there was a time not so long ago when his sense of honour was scarcely developed at all. In the old days there were few things he would have stopped at to gain his end, and although the change which had come over him was a splendid one and a genuine one, even Jack Blake and Tom Merry did not quite realise what restraint he had to put upon himself to live up to the change.

There were occasions upon which he had to fight his battles over again, when he had to bite his lip to prevent the New York street boy overshadowing the St. Jim's junior in his character.

He was biting his lip in just such a manner as he swung out of the Third Form study.

He had paid his visit to Wally for a purpose which would have astounded the fags, for he had come to do what Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Jack Blake had refused to do—to offer to lend the chums of the Third money to furnish their new study. It was not strange that Lumley-Lumley should fail to see that his reception was all a mistake in the bitterness of the moment.

And there was one other trait in the character of the millionaire's son which influenced him for a moment. He hated being laughed at above all things.

There could be no two questions on the point, he had been laughed at just now, and for attempting to do a kindly action. Lumley-Lumley's change had occurred too recently for him not to feel bitter when his good actions failed to bear instant fruit.

His hands were still clenched as he stood in the corridor, then something else happened before Lumley-Lumley had shaken off the state of feeling which had been his so often when he was known as the Outsider of St. Jim's.

Someone was coming along the corridor—a portly form wearing cap and gown. It was Mr. Selby, the Third Form-master.

Mr. Selby passed Lumley-Lumley without a word, and in a flash the millionaire's son saw that he was making for Wally's study. In another moment the master would gain the door, and then—The wire was still stretched across the doorway, and the cushion, covered with soot, would still be there.

It would be the easiest thing in the world to stop Mr. Selby on some pretext or other, and talk to him in a loud enough voice for Wally to hear and be warned in time. The junior who had been brought up in the streets of New York could think very quickly.

He hesitated for a fraction of time, then his eyes flashed again. He was the Outsider again, just for the moment.

He allowed Mr. Selby to walk on towards the half-open door of the Third Form study.

The millionaire's son stood motionless. He heard the sound of well-known voices behind him. He was perfectly conscious of the caddish thing he was doing, but even when there was still time to save

the situation with a shout he remained silent.

"Hallo, deah boy!"

"Hallo, Lumley!"

The well-known voices came nearer, and a friendly hand descended on his shoulder.

"Pway don't give way to dweamin', deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House. "It's wathah a bad habit to get into!"

"Gussy never dreams except when he's thinking of the young draper's lady of Rylcombe—I mean, the draper's young lady."

"Weally, Blake! Bai Jove!"

Mr. Selby had just left the passage. He had attempted to walk into the Third Form study.

A loud and ringing thud sounded from the room; a muffled yell followed it. Jack Blake, Arthur Augustus, Herries, and Digby, the chums of Study No. 6, left Lumley and dashed ahead. Lumley-Lumley did not move.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Gweat—gweat Scott!"

"Phew!"

The chums of Study No. 6 had gained the study doorway. They stopped dead, and stared into the room.

Arthur Augustus could scarcely believe his own eyes.

"It's Mr. Selby!" he gasped. "Mr. Selby, the respected mastah of the Third Form, lyin' pwone on the foah! Bai Jove—"

"Mind the wire, Gussy!"

"The wiah! Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus' alarm increased. There had been many rows between Wally, his younger brother, and Mr. Selby in the past, and they had always been matters of great concern to the swell of St. Jim's.

He turned one stern, unrelenting glance towards the half-scared, half-laughing faces of the three fags in the study, and rushed to Mr. Selby's side.

"Pway allow me, deah boy—I mean, deah sir! I twust— Bai Jove, he is all ovah soot!"

Arthur Augustus had held out a spotless, aristocratic hand to the fallen master, but he started back at the sight of the soot.

"Pway—pway help Mr. Selby to his feet, Blake, deah boy!"

"Ass!" muttered Jack Blake, holding out his hand. "I hope you aren't hurt, sir?"

Mr. Selby did not say whether he was hurt or not. He sneezed violently once or twice, rubbed some soot from his eyes, and seized the first junior to hand. The first junior happened to be Arthur Augustus.

"How dare you, boy? How dare you?"

"Bai Jove! Gweat Scott! Pway release me, sir, as you are covahin' me with soot!"

"How dare you?" repeated the Third Form-master, in a voice of thunder. "D'Arcy, how dare you play this—this abominable trick upon me?"

"Bai Jove, Mr. Selby, I twust you know me bettah!"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" put in Wally D'Arcy, stepping forward sturdily enough, although he was a good deal scared. "There has been a mistake, sir!"

"A mistake!" thundered Mr. Selby.

"Y-yes, sir! Of course, we didn't mean you to fall in the soot. We planned that for Gussy—for my brother, sir!"

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Foah me? You planned this for me, Wally?"

"Silence, boy!" cried Mr. Selby, making an effort to keep a never very reliable temper. "Do I understand that

you are responsible for—for this disgraceful trick, D'Arcy minor?"

"Yes, sir."

"We helped, sir," added Curly Gibson and Jameson together.

And the three fags stood side by side. There was something attractive in the way which the three chums of the Third stood together, facing the justly angry master. But the attractiveness was completely lost upon Mr. Selby.

He stood glaring at the juniors, trying to calm himself enough to speak quietly. He did not succeed.

"You three boys are to go to my room instantly!" he flashed at them at last. "At once! Were you other boys party to this trick?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Answer me, D'Arcy!"

"No; wathah not!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I twust we should not so far forget our dig as to play a twick which would cause anyone to be covahed with soot!"

"Then go to your rooms!"

"Yaas; certainly, sir!"

Arthur Augustus answered very respectfully. But he did not follow Wally & Co. from the room. He stood in great concern before the angry and sooty master.

"Mr. Selby, may I respectfully ask you to bear in mind—"

"Go to your room, boy!"

"Yaas, sir, certainly! I twust you will allow me to point out that my minah had no ideah—"

"D'Arcy, will you—will you not obey me?"

"Bai Jove! I twust I shall always obey my eldahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in blank astonishment. "I respect you too much to evah think of disobeying you. May I point out, sir, that my minah would nevah willingly play a twick on a mastah, or an eldah—that this was a weally wegweattah affah—"

"A hundred lines, D'Arcy!" thundered Mr. Selby.

And he strode from the room.

Arthur Augustus stood staring after him blankly. He turned to Jack Blake in astonishment.

"He cannot have been addressin' me, deah boy! There is some w'etched mistake somewhere."

"Yes; and you made it, kid!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Yes, really," said the chief of Study No. 6 abruptly. "He thought you were checking him!"

"What uttah wot! Weally, Blake, you must be waggin'! I have nevah checked a mastah nor an eldah in my life! It would be uttahly imposs foah me to check an eldah!"

"Selby thought you checked him, anyway; but that doesn't matter."

"Doesn't mattah!"

"Don't keep repeating what I say like a giddy parrot, kid!" said Jack Blake. "I say, young Wally is in for it this time, and no mistake!"

"Wotten!"

"Young asses not to keep a look-out to see that a master wasn't coming!" put in Herries.

Jack Blake did not answer. He had stepped into the passage, and was looking along the corridor, a thoughtful expression on his good-looking, strong, young face.

"I say, you chaps, Lumley has gone!"

"Yaas, wathah! But about the mattah of the howwid lines?"

"Funny Lumley should have cleared so quickly!"

"I am inclined to agree with you, deah boy; but as there was some soot on his face, I considah it vevy pwob that he has gone to wash."

"Soot on his face!"

"Yaas, wathah! Howevah, it weally

doesn't matten whethah there was soot. Weally, Blake, I believe you are not payin' the slightest attention to my wemarks."

Jack Blake did not answer. He had not heard Arthur Augustus speak, as a matter of fact.

What had Lumley-Lumley been doing in the corridor, and how had he got soot on his face? Could he have known of the booby-trap Wally had prepared?

It was strange that he should have hurried away in the way he had.

Jack Blake, the sturdy junior from the broad acres, had a knack of seeing a good way beneath the surface of things for his age; but he was also one of the most generous-natured fellows.

If Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had not been one the outsider of St. Jim's, Jack Blake would never have entertained the thoughts which had just come to him in a flash, the chief of Study No. 6 admitted that to himself.

But it wasn't very fair to think things of a fellow just because he had been a cad once.

"It's all rot!" Jack Blake mused, half against his judgment. "Lumley never knew anything about the booby-trap. I'm not going to say a word to the chaps."

There was a doubt, and Jack Blake had given the millionaire's son the benefit of it.

If he could have looked into Lumley's study at that moment he would have had to change his opinion, though, much as he wanted to believe the change in the ex-outsider was a real and lasting one.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mellish's Room is Searched.

"DISMISS—all except the Fourth Form and the Shell!"

Mr. Linton, the Shell master, gave his order in a quiet, impressive voice. He did so the next morning the moment breakfast in the School House was at an end.

The Fourth Form and Shell juniors looked amazed.

None of them had the slightest idea why they were being detained.

Tom Merry looked at Jack Blake inquiringly, but the Fourth Former was as puzzled as the Shell junior. It certainly was surprising that juniors should be ordered to remain in the breakfast-room in that way.

"And Linton is clearing, too!"

"All the masters are going!"

Arthur Augustus looked round blankly. "Bai Jove, you are wight, Mannahs, deah boy! However, Kildare, our respected skipkap, is wemainin'."

Everyone turned to look at the brawny captain of St. Jim's. There was not much to be read on Kildare's strong, handsome face.

"Yes, Kildare's staying behind all right."

"Then it's Kildare who wants us to remain here."

"Looks like it," muttered Digby. "Rotten, isn't it?"

Those who had relied upon a last peep at their Latin before going into class, agreed with Digby heartily. Those who felt safe on the score of Latin translation, waited in surprise for the next move in the strange detention.

Kildare sat on at his table until the door closed behind the last of the juniors who were not to remain in the breakfast-room. Then he jumped to his feet.

He faced the expectant juniors in his steady, attractive way.

"A very unpleasant occurrence has been brought to my notice," he began—"an occurrence which I can only hope is an absurd and senseless trick. A sovereign has been taken from one of the studies."

"Bai Jove!"

Kildare turned abruptly.

"Repeat what you told me, Mellish."

Mellish, usually known as the cad of the Fourth, got up rather nervously. He did not feel very comfortable under the indignant stares of all the juniors.

"There isn't much to tell, Kildare—"

"You say you left a sovereign in a vase on the mantelshelf of your room?"

"Yes; that's so."

"And the money isn't there now?"

"No; that's a fact, and I'm absolutely certain I left it there—in a large, open sort of vase."

"When did you put it there?"

"Last night. I meant to take it up to the dormitory with me, but I forgot about it. Someone sneaked it during the night, and it's a beastly caddish thing to do!"

"What rot!"

Tom Merry burst out indignantly, hot and flushed-looking.

"Do you know anything about the trick personally?" asked Kildare.

"No, certainly not, Kildare."

"I didn't think this was like one of your pranks, Blake, so there is no need to flare up. Mellish, I expect you will find your sovereign in your room. Wait a minute. What boy is responsible for these tricks?"

No answer.

"Come on," he said briskly. "The culprit hasn't much to fear. Own up, whoever did it."

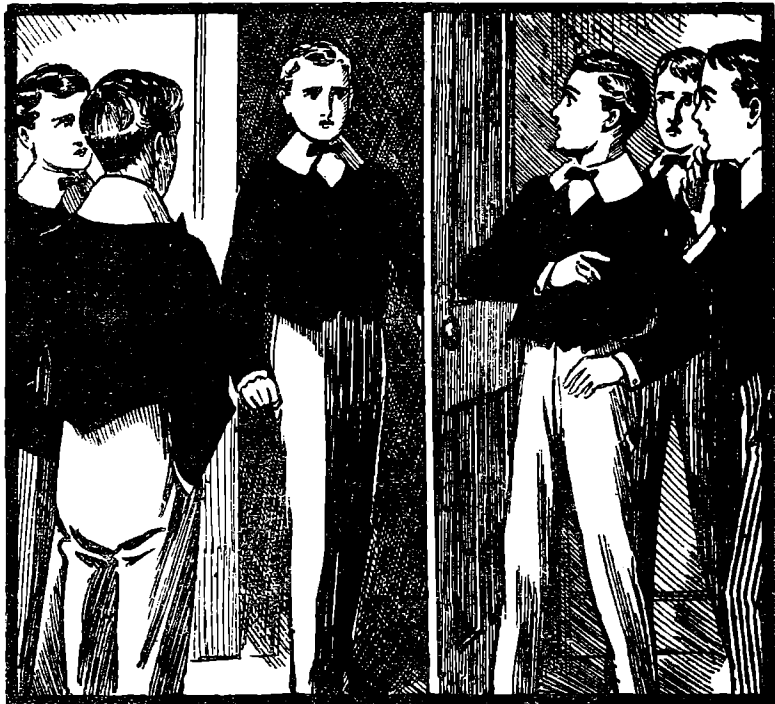
Again no answer. Everyone was looking at everyone else.

It was a very awkward pause for fellows like Tom Merry and Jack Blake.

Kildare shrugged his shoulders.

"Unless some boy is playing the part of a timid little coward, the culprit comes from another Form. Dismiss, and report to me after you have searched your room again, Mellish."

"Yes, Kildare," said the cad of the



The millionaire's son stepped into the room, outwardly cool and self-reliant as ever. "It's about young Wally I want to speak," he said quietly. "Did he explain about bringing your watch back, Guesy?" "How do you know it was Wally who brought it back?" demanded Blake quickly. "Because I saw him!" Jack Blake started. "I don't believe it!" he exclaimed hotly.

Kildare put up his hand.

"I can appreciate your indignation, Merry, but indignation will not help us," the captain interposed quietly. "I am convinced that this is merely a trick—"

"Yaas, wathah, and a simlah twick has been played upon me. I wegwet to say some wascal removed my watch from the dwessin'-table in the dormay last night!"

"Took your watch?" exclaimed Kildare, in amazement.

"Wathah!"

"Exactly the same with a knife from our study, Kildare," put in Harry Noble. "But that was returned. There's an epidemic of these rotten japes going about, by the look of it."

"Bai Jove! I am inclined to agwee with you, deah boy!"

"Rather! It's only a jape, of course."

Fourth. And he hurried from the large room.

A crowd of the other juniors followed him upstairs, grim and determined-looking. This was not an occasion for standing upon ceremony.

A good dozen of the juniors pushed their way into Mellish's study. The cad of the Fourth turned on them indignantly.

"I say, you can't all come in here."

"Get on with the search, Mellish," said Tom Merry grimly. "Get on with the washing!"

"I'm not going to look now—"

"Oh, yes, you are!"

"I tell you I'm not. I'm not going to be bullied, and I have my Latin to look at."

Jack Blake stepped forward.

"You are going to look for that sov."

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he said quietly. "A chap plays a trick upon you, and you at once rush off to Kildare and sneak. You are going to look for the money all right."

"Wathah, unless Mellish wishes me to administah a feahful thwashin', bai Jove!"

The cad of the Fourth tried to summon up courage enough to stand firm, but the expressions on his visitors' faces unsettled him.

He commenced the search unwillingly. "No, it isn't here!"

"You haven't looked yet."

"Yes, I have. I left it on the mantel-shelf."

Jack Blake wheeled round. Mellish was not a junior to be trusted.

He was quite capable of carelessly putting his money somewhere, or even dropping it, and then jumping to the conclusion that it had been taken from his room.

The cad of the Fourth never scrupled about accusing other fellows of things like that. But in reporting to Kildare he had not counted upon a public inquiry as this proved likely to be.

Still, as a matter of fact, he really did think the money had been taken from his room.

"I'll search my room when I like! I'm not going—"

"Up with the carpet!" said Tom Merry briskly.

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

"And yank the bookcase away from the wall!"

The Terrible Three and Jack Blake & Co. did not hesitate for an instant. Mellish had brought a charge against some fellow unknown, and had cast a slur on the Shell and Fourth Forms. Then he had refused to institute a proper search.

Kildare had said a search was to be made, and one would be made.

Cornstalk & Co. devoted their energies to the chairs and sofa, and probed away at the cracks with a flat ruler; the Terrible Three had the carpet up, and shook it, disregarding a term's accumulated dust.

"Atishoo!" sneezed Arthur Augustus in horror. "You uttah wuffian, Tom Mewwy—"

"Rats!"

"I wefuse to considah it a mattah of wats! I am in a howwid meas!"

"What's that there?"

"A bwass-headed nail, Kangawoo, deah boy!"

"On the ball, chaps!"

It happened that the floor boarding was in excellent condition. It would have been impossible for a sovereign to have dropped between the cracks anywhere, and it seemed equally impossible that the money could escape notice.

The little room was thoroughly ransacked by the determined dozen.

A silence fell upon them all as they began to realise that the search was to prove fruitless.

"It's a beastly shame!" said Mellish indignantly. "I've been robbed of a sovereign, all the money I have for the rest of the term!"

"Rats! You haven't been robbed; it's a trick!"

"No, it isn't, Jack Blake, and you know it isn't! Some beast has robbed me, and now you've wrecked my room!"

Arthur Augustus looked at him with intense contempt, but there wasn't a more generous-natured junior in St. Jim's.

He put his hand in his pocket.

"I wegwet to say you have acted in a weally wotten mannah in goin' to Kildare about a twick!"

"Oh, I like that!"

"I wegwet to say that I must considah

you in the light of a wretched sneak!" went on the swell of St. Jim's. "How-ovah, I am pweared to make good your loss on the condish that you do not spweed this wotten tale ovah the school!"

Mellish's little eyes glistened. Arthur Augustus was holding out a sovereign to him.

The cad of the Fourth took the proffered coin without the slightest compunction.

"All right, Gussy!" he whispered. "I won't say a word. You can tell Wally I won't say a word!"

Arthur Augustus started, and looked at Mellish in blank amazement.

Nearly all the other juniors had left the study in disgust by then.

Arthur Augustus did not move.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Caddish Suggestion.

"MELLISH, I do not undahstand your wemark!"

Arthur Augustus spoke quietly, but his head was very high in the air. He was a trifle paler than usual.

"Oh, that's all right; you can trust me, Gussy!"

"I wegwet to say I cannot agwee with you. Howevah, that is not the point, Mellish. I know of no weason for wishin' to twust you!"

The cad of the Fourth grinned, glancing cautiously towards the door.

"None of those chaps listening, I suppose?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy & Co. are not in the habit of listening! I must wequest you to explain, Mellish!"

Mellish looked a little uncomfortable. "I only meant, I wouldn't breathe a word about—about young Wally having been in this room before breakfast!"

"What uttah wot, you outsidah!"

"Oh, you can call me names, but if you don't believe about Wally having been here, ask him!"

"I shall pwoceed to do so diwectly. I have administahed a feahful thwashin' for your wotten imputation!"

"I don't say it was Wally who took the money."

"Bai Jove!"

Mellish started back with a subdued cry. Arthur Augustus was standing over him with clenched fists.

"I must ordah you to take back that wemark, you uttah wottah!" breathed the swell of St. Jim's. "Unless you take that wemark back instantly, I shall knock you down!"

"But I didn't say anything. I don't believe it was Wally, as a matter of fact, although he was in here before breakfast, and alone. I saw him coming out myself!"

"He was here for some weason or othah."

Mellish grinned spitefully.

"No doubt," he said. "But he wouldn't tell what his reason was. When I asked him what he was doing in my room, he said, 'Oh, nothing!' He looked jolly uncomfortable, though!"

"That's a wotten fib, Mellish!"

The cad of the Fourth shrugged his shoulders.

"Ask Hancock, then; he was there at the time. If it comes to that, it was Hancock who noticed that Wally looked uncomfortable, and called my attention to it!"

"I wefuse to believe you!"

"Blest if I care what you believe!" snapped Mellish. "You ask Hancock, though, if he didn't say Wally was up to one of his tricks again. But, mind, I'm not saying Wally took the money!"

"You w'etched cad!"

"I only say it will be better for him if nothing is said about his visit here this morning," concluded Mellish. "I

give my word I won't breathe— Owl Oh!"

Arthur Augustus' long arm had shot out. The Swell of St. Jim's was very white, but he had not lost his temper.

Arthur Augustus very seldom lost his temper, in spite of his often-repeated promises to do so. He struck that blow deliberately, because, as Jack Blake would have expressed it, he felt it was up to him to strike.

And a good blow it was, too, with more weight behind the shoulder than would have been expected from a glance at Arthur Augustus' slight form.

Mellish sat down on his rolled-up carpet with a thud.

Arthur Augustus was still standing over him.

"That is foah dawin' to suggest my minah could be guilty of takin' monay belongin' to anoathah fellow!" the swell of St. Jim's said very quietly. "If Wally were heah, he would thwash you, youngstah as he is! I considah you in the light of an uttah outsidah and a cad to say things behind a fellow's back you daren't say to his face!"

Mellish began to half-whimper again.

"You'll be sorry for this, D'Arcy!"

"I twust you will not wepeat the wemark you made to me, or I shall be vewy sowwy indeed!" returned Arthur Augustus.

"I should wegwet havin' to administah a feahful thwashin' without gloves. The mattah is not ovah, yet, though!"

"No, it isn't!"

"You are wight there, Mellish," said Arthur Augustus; and he strode from the study.

He was still very white, but it was not because he had the slightest doubt about Wally. He was worried, that was all, for D'Arcy minor was so often tumbling into scrapes.

"I wegwet to say I am partly to blame, too," Arthur Augustus mused, as he walked along the corridor. "If onlay I had taken a firm line with the young wascal earlier, it would have been much bettah. I must be vewy firm indeed now, though!"

He hesitated for a moment, then the bell for first school rang.

Arthur Augustus had never hated the sound so much in his life. He longed to go and have the matter out with Wally, and the hour which would have to elapse before he could do so was very irksome in prospect.

Of course, he could ask the Form-master for a permit to go and speak to his brother, but that would cause comment among the other fellows. It would be better to wait.

But Arthur Augustus was a long time forgetting that first school.

It was Euclid, and some of Arthur Augustus' reasoning caused gasps from the maths-master, and shrieks from the class. When Arthur Augustus tried to prove the seventh prop. of the first book, with the proof Euclid had set down for the third problem of the second book, the climax was reached.

"You have the lesson to write out, D'Arcy!" Mr. Latham exclaimed. "Dis-graceful!"

And Arthur Augustus blushed. To the astonishment of Jack Blake, the swell of St. Jim's accepted the sentence without a word.

"My hat! Something is up with the kid, and no mistake!"

Digby nodded in surprise.

"Rather!"

"What did he stay back in Mellish's room for, kid?"

Jack Blake shook his head.

"Blest if I know! We'll tackle the young ass directly class is over!"

"Yes, that's it."



But this programme proved to be impossible to carry out. Arthur Augustus was the first to leave the class-room, and by the time the others had gained the corridor he was nowhere in sight.

Arthur Augustus had expected to be surrounded, so it was not chance which caused his disappearance.

He scudded away for the Third-Form quarters the moment he was free, and made for Wally's room.

The Third Form dismissed a few minutes before the Fourth, and it was nearly certain Wally & Co. would be in their den.

Arthur Augustus had slippers on, so he made no noise in his journey down the corridor.

He caught hold of the door-knob, and turned it. To his relief the door opened easily.

Then he gasped in astonishment.

The room was almost in darkness, for something large and solid-looking was standing before the window. Arthur Augustus had just time to discover that this was a bookcase he had never seen before, when a cry rang out:

"Look out, Curly!"

"You never locked the door, you ass!"

"Rush him out!"

And D'Arcy minor, Curly Gibson, and Jameson came dashing across the little study, and, throwing themselves on the

detested the nickname a great deal more now than he had in the old days when he undoubtedly deserved it.

He was finding it very difficult to seek friendships unless his were sought, and the rival Co.'s of St. Jim's, of course, never guessed this.

They never gave Lumley-Lumley's past a thought now themselves; it was not to be expected they should think Lumley-Lumley ever thought about it.

The ex-Outsider was standing with his back to the partially closed door, but he turned suddenly as a curious sound caught his ears. Then he started forward.

The extraordinary apparition of a pair of sturdy young legs appeared to be descending through the passage ceiling. Lumley-Lumley could only see the ankles and calves, and for an instant he stared at them blankly.

Then a chuckle escaped him, and he moved noiselessly across his study, peering round the door. It was as he thought.

A junior was letting himself down through the trapdoor in the passage ceiling.

The millionaire's son watched with a laugh on his face, then he grew grave again. He had recognised D'Arcy minor.

There was a thump, and Wally came down on the passage floor heavily. He had cleverly arranged that the trapdoor

and a moment later he came out again. It was without the watch then.

Lumley-Lumley was very puzzled for a moment or two, then burst into a roar of laughter. He went back to his own study still laughing, while Wally scudded away.

The Third-Former hurried out into the grounds, and joined Curly Gibson and Jameson behind the gymnasium.

"It's done, kids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where did you put Gussy's old clock, kid—on the mantelshelf?"

Wally nodded.

"Rather! And won't the old fogeys be surprised? And I say, I've found it!"

Curly Gibson and Jameson looked at their leader in surprise. D'Arcy minor was fumbling in his pocket.

"My hat! I thought it was lost again! Here it is, all serene."

"Phew!"

"Mellish's sovereign!"

D'Arcy minor chuckled.

"Rather! And where do you think I found it?"

"In the roof!"

"Yes; just over our room," laughed Wally. "Awful luck, of course; I wasn't even looking for it."

"Good biz."

## THE STORY OF THE YEAR!

# FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOL DAYS!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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## THE BOYS' FRIEND.

ON SALE MONDAY, AUGUST 13th!

swell of St. Jim's, hurled him out of the study.

Arthur Augustus sat down in the passage, and blinked in an amazed manner at the closed door. It was plain to him that his chances of getting into the fags' study were very remote, indeed.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### Lumley-Lumley's Surprise.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY stood by the open window in his study. A feeling of loneliness had come over him.

Of course, he could have gone to Jack Blake's room or Tom Merry's, and there would have been a hearty enough welcome by the juniors, who were ready to accept the millionaire's son at his present worth and not his past, but, somehow, Lumley-Lumley did not care to do that.

With the change which had taken place in him, a certain right sort of pride had made its appearance. If Jack Blake and the other decent juniors had forgotten his old nickname of the Outsider, Lumley-Lumley himself had not forgotten it. He

should close itself as he removed his fingers from the side.

"My hat, what a bump! Hope I haven't broken the ticker!"

Wally spoke the words aloud in alarm, and pulled something from his pocket. It was a magnificent gold hunter, a watch Lumley-Lumley had often seen before and admired.

He knew at a glance that it belonged to Arthur Augustus.

The millionaire's son looked startled for a moment, then he stepped round the door. Wally had darted away.

Lumley-Lumley could still see that he had the watch in his hand, for the chain was swinging as the fag ran.

"My hat! What's the youngster up to—Hallo!"

Wally had stopped suddenly, and appeared to be listening at a door further along the passage. Lumley-Lumley counted the doors in the corridor from where he stood, and a laugh flashed into his keen face again.

The scamp of the Third had stopped at Study No. 6, the room his brother shared with Jack Blake & Co.

Lumley-Lumley watched the younger junior slip into the room with the watch,

Curly Gibson looked at the sovereign rather uneasily.

"I say, how shall we return it to Mellish, Wally?"

"We aren't going to return it to Mellish at all!"

"Not—not going to return it?"

Wally chuckled again.

"Rather not!" he exclaimed. "Gus made Mellish's loss good, so this quidlet belongs to Gussy. I'll find some way of returning it to him before the day is out."

"What a rag!"

The three fags chuckled again as Wally carelessly dropped the sovereign into his trouser-pocket. Then they all sauntered towards the School House as the bell for afternoon lessons sounded.

They scudded hastily past Tom Merry and Piggins of the New House without being seen, and took their places in the classroom just in time to save an imposition for being late.

As soon as the class was dismissed the Third-Formers scuttled from the room; then they brought up against three older juniors who stood in a line across the passage.

THE PENNY POPULAR—No. 252.

The three were Tom Merry & Co., of the Shell.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Not so fast, Wally," he said, as each of them grabbed a fag. "Gussy wants to see you."

"Rats!"

"Gussy, here they are!" called out Manners. "It's no good struggling, young Jameson; if you got away I'd catch you again in ten yards."

Arthur Augustus and the other chums from Study No. 6 came up at a run. Tom Merry & Co. handed the prisoners over and began to walk away.

Arthur Augustus called out to them.

"Pway wemain, deah boys," he said, in uneasy tones. "We are all friends, weally, and I am vewy wowwied, Tom Mewwy!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Wally, I wegwet to say I am vewy wowwied indeed."

The scamp of the Third looked uneasy for a moment or two, then shrugged his shoulders.

"Anyway, I don't see that you can blame me for that," he said stoutly. "That's the worse of all old fogeys. They make mountains out of molehills and get in a stew over it. You're like our head gardener at home, Gus."

"I do not wish to discuss head gardenahs."

"What do you want to discuss, then? Neckties?"

"Wats—uttah wats! Wally, in the first place I must wemonstrate with you for the extwagance you have wun to in buyin' a new bookcase—"

"Bunkum!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Utter piffle!" said Wally. "I haven't bought a new bookcase, anyway."

"Then—then is that bookcase in fwont of your window Jameson's?"

D'Arcy minor chuckled.

"Belongs to all three of us, of course, and I made the thing myself in the workshop with my own wood. Curly Gibson paid for nails spot cash, so you needn't worry your old head about that."

"Bai Jove—"

"Finished?"

Arthur Augustus recovered from his surprise, and shook his head. As a matter of fact he had not intended speaking about the bookcase at all.

But, as he would have expressed it, he was in "wathah a fluttah" at the time.

"I regret to say that there is anothah vewy serious mattah that must be thwashed out," he began anxiously. "You know that Mellish is hinting you—you took a sovereign from his room—as a jape, of course."

Wally laughed grimly.

"Mellish isn't saying it's a jape, I know; he is hinting that I stole the money."

"Rotten cad!" said Jameson angrily.

"But Mellish and his hints don't matter," went on Wally. "Later on I'll square up accounts with him; but I'm too busy just now. I suppose you fellows don't think I sneaked the money?"

"No, wathah not!"

"Then what is there to worry about?"

Arthur Augustus looked puzzled, and glanced at Jack Blake. The chief of Study No. 6 turned to D'Arcy minor.

"Well, hints like Mellish's are the sort of things you want to nip in the bud," he said quietly. "You don't suppose Gussy likes to hear it being whispered that his brother has sneaked things, do you?"

"Well, I didn't sneak it."

"Of course not, but you ought to take the matter up."

"I don't see what I can do," said

Wally. "I'll go for Mellish directly I see him; but it is all Gussy's fault."

"Bai Jove!"

"Yes, it is, Gus, for not letting me have the extra five bob a week."

"Gweat Scott!"

The words had burst from Wally quickly. They had a startling effect on the older juniors.

Arthur Augustus could scarcely believe that he had heard aright.

"I do not follow you, Wally," he said, with a gasp. "How can my not havin' pwomised you the extwa money have anythin' to do with the disapeahance of Mellish's sovereign?"

"Yes, what on earth do you mean, kid?"

"Oh, it has everything to do with it, I suppose!" answered the fag grimly.

"I'm not going to explain, though."

"Oh, yes, you are!"

"Wathah! I ordah you to explain your extwaordinawy words instantly, Wally!"

Then Tom Merry stepped forward and dropped his hand on the fag's shoulder. The hero of the Shell looked very strong and self-reliant as he stood over the younger junior.

There was not a trace of anger or excitement on his handsome young face.

"This jape has got to stop!" he said.

"You've said a very funny thing just now, and it's up to you to explain what you mean by the words."

"Well, I can't, Merry."

"Oh, yes, you can! Haven't you got any money at all?"

"Not a blessed penny!" said Wally indignantly. "Since Gussy turned miser!"

"Gweat Scott! Misah! Bai Jove!"

"Look!" exclaimed the scamp of the Third, with a boyish laugh, and he turned his trouser-pockets inside out.

As he did so, a gasp came from Jameson. A coin had fallen from one of the pockets and lay on the passage floor.

It was a sovereign!

A death-like silence fell upon them all, even upon Mellish, and one or two others who had joined the little group. D'Arcy minor pushed the lining of his pockets back in their places.

"My only Aunt Jane, I'd forgotten about that!" he muttered; and he coloured because he knew that everyone was staring at him.

Digby picked up the sovereign.

"Where did you get this, Wally?"

"I found it! It isn't mine, and that's why I said I hadn't got any money. I'd forgotten all about the sov. being in my pocket."

"Where did you find it?"

"In the—"

"S-sh!" whispered Jameson; and Wally nodded.

"I'm not going to answer any more questions!" the scamp of the Third exclaimed defiantly. "If you chaps think I would sneak money that didn't belong to me, you must be a set of burbling asses!"

"What rot, Wally! You know very well—"

"You seem pretty suspicious, anyway, Blake."

"That's sheer piffle!" exclaimed the chief of Study No. 6. "You know very well none of us have any doubt about it; only it's up against you to explain."

"Rather!"

"Come on, Wally, don't be a young ass! Is this sovereign Mellish's, do you think—I mean, did you find it near his room?"

"No, I didn't, Manners!" retorted Wally, with a short laugh. "I found it ever so far from that cad's study; but I expect it's the sov. Mellish lost all right."

"Why do you think that?"

"Oh, because I've got a reason to think it is! The money belongs to you now, Gussy, so you'd better stick to it. I never saw such a set of old fogeys before in my life!"

The Fourth Form and Shell juniors were still looking at the fag, and they could see that anger was creeping into his face, in spite of his short laugh. Jameson and Curly Gibson were openly indignant.

But the three were defiant enough.

Wally turned to his brother.

"You've yourself to blame, Gussy," he said. "You shouldn't have turned miser."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry still had his hand on the fag's shoulder.

"Do you mean to say you aren't going to clear yourself, Wally?"

"I'm not going to say anything now."

"You are going to let the fellows think that there may be something in Mellish's hints? He was here just now, and you can be sure he will spread this all over the House."

"I don't care!"

"You don't mind being called a thief?"

Wally's face went very white. Of course, he minded a great deal. His hands clenched as he faced Tom Merry.

"Let me go!" he said angrily.

"You're a lot of old fogeys! I'll do just as I like!"

He swung off with his hands in his pockets, but Arthur Augustus called after him:

"Wally!"

Tom Merry turned to the Fourth-Former and lowered his voice.

"Let the kid go, Gussy," he said quietly. "It'll all come right before long, you'll see. I believe it's only a jape, and the fags don't want to explain because they'll have to give away their wheeze."

"Bai Jove! It's wippin' of you to say that, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

"Rot!"

"It's the only thing to say," put in Jack Blake. "The kid who thinks Wally took that sovereign out of Mellish's room is off his rocker, and he'll run up against the licking of his life if I hear him saying anything!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I'd go for a Fourth-Former if he said Wally wasn't playing the game!" put in Lowther. "Don't you be a burbling young ass, Gussy!"

And Arthur Augustus let the selection of words pass for once. He was very worried.

It was fine to feel that his chums and rivals alike were rallying round him, though.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Wally's Problem.

**W**HO sneaked Mellish's money?

—yah, D'Arcy minor!"

Wally, Jameson, and Curly Gibson started. A youthful fag, with an original sense of humour, had shouted out the words and scuttled away for his life.

Jameson started after him.

"We'll bump the young sweep!"

"Come on, Wally!"

But the scamp of the Third did not move. There was a sober expression on his usually laughing young face.

"I—I say, it's a bit rotten, Curly!"

"Of course it's rotten! Let's collar the young sweep and bump him!"

"I—I didn't mean that quite."

"My aunt, what did you mean, then?"

"Don't you think it's rotten to be called—called what the little beast called us—"

"Called me, you mean!" interrupted Wally. "Yes, that is rotten, of course. But I meant leaving ourselves open to such beastly remarks. There are bound to be a lot of kids who'll believe Mellish's yarn."

Jameson and Curly Gibson nodded. There were black sheep in the Fag Form of St. Jim's, just as there were in the Fourth and Shell, juniors who found pleasure in the downfall of more popular fellows.

There certainly would be juniors enough to believe Mellish's story of the missing sovereign and how it was found, and there would be a few who would put the same complexion on the strange affair that the cad of the Fourth had put on it.

Jameson and Curly Gibson saw that as clearly as Wally did. The scamp of the Third looked troubled.

"I suppose Tom Merry meant that I was letting Gussy down, and the pater, and everyone," Wally went on musingly. "I suppose I am really."

"It is beastly, of course, not to clear ourselves."

"And it'll be beastly if we have to own up!"

"That's a fact. But——"

D'Arcy minor did not finish his remark. He was very puzzled how to act.

As far as he was concerned he did not miss very much what the meaner spirits of any Form said or thought, but Gussy did. And well, so would the pater.

And yet all his inclination was on the side of saying nothing, of grinning and bearing the brunt of it all. He turned to Jameson.

"Would you rather I owned up, kid?"

"Do just as you like, Wally."

"What about you, Curly?"

"Bother Mellish and all the other cads, that's what I say! Still, I suppose a fellow has to think of his people; and Gussy's real serious about it all."

"Yes, that was what I was thinking. Bless if I know what to do!"

"It's jolly rotten which ever way you look at it."

The three staunch chums walked along the corridor, hands deep in their trouser-pockets. There were very gloomy expressions on their faces indeed.

Presently Wally turned to the others again.

"It's all Gussy's doing!" he burst out. "If he hadn't got up on his hind legs at the wrong moment, I could have squeezed the extra five bob a week out of him."

"Still, you have subbed a bit lately, and no mistake."

"Oh, I know all that! And I don't say Gus doesn't imagine he's doing it for my good, and all that rot," admitted the scamp of the Third. "But he might have waited a week or two before getting up on a perch. I shall have plenty of spare cash when the pater comes back."

"Beastly luck!"

"If we own up now, of course——"

"Dry up!" exclaimed Jameson hastily. "Here's the money-lending outsider, Lumley-Lumley!"

Jameson thought he spoke in a whisper. He was one of the last of the Third Form to wiffully hurt a fellow's feelings by speaking of what they considered were his past faults.

But Lumley-Lumley heard the words quite distinctly, and passed the fags with a bitter smile on his face.

He did not attempt to speak to them, but walked on at the same pace. He knew Jameson had not meant him to hear the words, but that did not take the sting away. It rather increased it, if anything.

He seemed in no hurry as he neared the Fourth-Form corridor, and yet he walked as if he had a set purpose in

mind. He stopped before the closed door of Study No. 6, and knocked.

"Can I come in, Blake?"

There was a moment's pause, then Arthur Augustus' unmistakable voice answered:

"As a mattah of fact, we are wathah bizzay just now, deah boy. If you could come anothah time——"

"I'd rather come in now, if you don't mind."

"Well, weally——"

There was some whispering, and Lumley-Lumley waited grimly. He was becoming strangely sensitive in some ways, so sensitive that it was scarcely believable that he could have once been the self-assured Outsider of St. Jim's.

He thought it painfully apparent that Jack Blake & Co. did not want him in their room.

Then suddenly the door was flung open, and the chief of the study nodded pleasantly.

"Come in, kid. I'm afraid Gussy has wolfed all the strawberries."

"Weally, Blake! Howevah, pway come in, Lumley-Lumley, and close the doah."

"There is no need to close the door. I sha'n't keep you long."

"Wight-ho, deah boy! I twust nothin' is the mattah?"

The millionaire's son did not answer at once. He stepped into the room, outwardly the same cool, self-reliant junior the others knew him to be.

But the suagness of the little study, and the staunch friendship which had been brewed there so long ago, and which nothing could ever really alter, was not without its effect on the lonely junior.

He turned to Arthur Augustus suddenly.

"It's about young Wally I want to speak," he said quietly. "I know it doesn't matter speaking before these other chaps."

"No, wathah not! Bai Jove! I twust——"

"No, nothing fresh has happened as far as I know. Did Wally explain anything about bringing your watch back, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Do you mean to hint that it was Wally who took the watch, Lumley?"

"I wasn't speaking about that, Blake. I asked if Wally had said anything when he brought it back?"

"Bai Jove, I had no idea——"

"How did you know it was Wally who brought the watch back?" demanded Jack Blake quickly.

"Because I saw him."

"I don't believe it!"

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Believe me or not, it's a fact," he said coolly. "And I can explain who took the watch."

Jack Blake started. He was looking very hard at the millionaire's son.

For a moment he thought that he had become the outsider again, that in some way he was playing a game for his own ends. Perhaps Lumley-Lumley guessed the other junior's thoughts.

Anyway, the bitter expression had crept into his eyes again.

Arthur Augustus was openly alarmed.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.  
Lumley-Lumley Explains.

"PWAY fah ahead if you have anythin' to say, Lumlay."

"I have quite a lot to say."

First of all do you remember meeting me outside Wally's room just before Selby fell into that booby-trap?"

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Wathah! And you were covahed with soot!"

"Did you guess how I came to be covered with soot?"

The swell of St. Jim's started. Jack Blake had guessed at the time, but had said nothing. The truth had never dawned on Arthur Augustus.

"Bai Jove! Did you also fall ovah the wiah, deah boy?"

"Yes, a few minutes before Selby did. I watched Selby walk into the trap. He passed me on the way to it, you know."

"Bai Jove! Why evah didn't you warn him, Lumlay?" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "Or, bettah still, detain the respected mastah, and warn my minah in some way?"

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, because I'm a rank outsider, and always shall be, I suppose!"

"Bai Jove! I must wegard that as wot!"

"Anyway, I did let Selby walk into the trap, and to get Wally into a row, too," went on the millionaire's son. "I was real mad at the time. Outsiders do get mad over japes, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake looked puzzled.

"Why have you come here to tell us this, Lumley?" he asked quietly.

"Oh, it's the beginning of it all! I was real mad when I let Selby fall over the wire; but I think I was real mad, too, with myself for having done it, afterwards."

"Yaas, wathah! Howevah, a few words to Wally, and the mattah would have been ovah."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"Oh, Wally would have been decent enough about it, I know; but I wanted to do something to square accounts with him. Did you hear anything about him receiving an express letter?"

"Yaas, wathah! I did hear somethin' about it."

"I sent it to him. Got the page-boy to send it off in Rylcombe, and used Kildare's typewriter so that Wally wouldn't guess. I told him that the writer was sending him a present."

"Bai Jove! What was the present?"

The millionaire's son laughed.

"Nothing very startling," he said. "It was a small monkey—a ripping little chap."

"A monkey! Bai Jove!"

"Yes, I'd had him some time. The pater sent it to me, you know, and I kept him in Rylcombe. I couldn't think of anything to send Wally that he'd like so much as the monkey, so I telephoned for it to be sent up. Wally's awfully keen on animals."

Lumley-Lumley stopped. He had gone rather pink. Jack Blake & Co. were looking at him in a strange sort of way.

"That was rather a decent sort of thing to do, Lumley, wasn't it?"

"It wasn't anything, Blake," answered the ex-Outsider hastily. "I'd acted like a cad, and I wanted to—to sort of save my conscience. It was selfish enough, really, if you think it out."

"Blest if I can see it, kid! Has Wally been keeping the monkey in his room all the time?"

"Yes, I'm certain he has, in spite of the new rule about having pets in the school."

"Bai Jove! Perhaps that accounts foah the thing which looks like a book-case!"

"Yes, that's the little beggar's home!" laughed Lumley-Lumley. "If you climb up that tree there, you can see right into the cage. Wally has got it placed to the window so that the animal can have plenty of light."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

Jack Blake laughed shortly.

"My only Aunt Jane, I should think

you didn't! Go on, Lumley!" he added, for it was clear enough the millionaire's son had more to tell.

Lumley-Lumley nodded. "I'd pinned a typewritten note inside the box telling Wally what to feed the monkey on," he explained, "and added a hint about giving it exercise. You see, I was pretty certain Wally would want to keep him in his room."

"Rather! What was the hint?" said Jack Blake excitedly.

"I suggested the monkey should be allowed to roam about on the roof at night," said the millionaire's son.

"My hat!"

"You're beginning to understand now?"

"Rather! You mean—"

"Wait a minute," said Lumley-Lumley. "In giving that hint I'd forgotten one thing, and that was that the monkey was the cleverest little beggar alive for opening things. He can open all sorts of boxes after you've shown him once how it was done; and he'd watch Wally opening a trapdoor just as intelligently as a human being could. He'd do nothing but try to open trapdoors for days afterwards."

"Gwout Scott!"

"I'll bet he's been roaming all through the roof trying the wheeze. He opened a good many, anyway."

"But what about Gussy's watch? Do you think—"

"And Mellish's sovereign?"

"You think the monkey took the things, Lumley?" exclaimed Jack Blake quickly.

"There isn't much to think about it, if you know the monkey at all. Most monkeys pick up things which take their eye, and this monkey is the worst little thief in the world. He'll collar anything!"

"Bai Jove! And Wally returned the stolen things as soon as he found them?"

Lumley-Lumley nodded. "Yes, that's it; and tried to shut all the trapdoors which the monkey had left open."

"But what about Mellish's sovereign?" exclaimed Digby.

"I was coming to that," replied the millionaire's son. "I don't know, of course, but I heard that Wally said he found it?"

"That's so."

"Then you can be sure the monkey dropped it somewhere; perhaps to pick up something else."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "That's moah than likely."

Lumley-Lumley turned to the door. He was out of the room before Jack Blake could stop him.

"But that doesn't matter, chaps," said the chief of Study No. 6. "He's turned out trumps again, and we'll see him later. I know why Wally wanted an extra five bob a week, Gussy."

"Why, deah boy?"

"To pay for food and stuff for the monkey; perhaps to board him out with Taggles; only, of course, he would have had to keep it dark. Ten to one the Head wouldn't be keen on monkeys being kept at St. Jim's."

"Bai Jove! I believe you are wight, deah boy!"

"Rather! Now let's go and see Wally."

"Yaas; let's wun like anythin'!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 scudded along the passage as hard as they could run.

#### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. In Wally's Den.

D'ARCY minor & Co. of the Third Form sat in front of the home-made cage which Arthur Augustus had mistaken for a bookcase, and looked gloomily at a bright-eyed little monkey, of the same breed one so often sees in charge of an Italian organ-grinder.

The faces of the fags were gloomier than ever.

Wally was feeding the little animal with pea-nuts bought with Curly Gibson's last pence.

"I say, Wally, it will be rotten if we have to get rid of Jacky!" Jameson said suddenly. "Awfully rotten!"

"I'm not going to get rid of him. If we decide to own up to the old fogeys, Gussy'll have to fork up the five bob a week Taggles wants for keeping him in the loft over the old stable: I'm not going to part with Jacky."

"My hat, no!"

"Shall—we have to own up, do you think?"

Wally did not answer. He was still thinking the problem over, and he was finding it a difficult problem. He started irritably as a knock sounded at the door.

"Is that you again, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, Wathah!"

"Then go and eat coke!"

An audible gasp sounded through the closed door, then a faint chuckle. Wally was surprised at the chuckle, and turned his head.

Then another voice sounded through the door.

"Are all three of you there, Wally?"

"Yes, Blake; and you can go and eat coke as well!"

"Not hungry, my son. How's the other one?"

Wally started.

"I mean, how's the other young monkey?" went on Jack Blake smoothly. "All four of you live in a cage together now, don't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I wegard that as funnay, deah boy! Ha, ha!"

Wally & Co. sprang to their feet. Another faint chuckle sounded through the closed door.

"You might let us have a look at him, you know," came Herries' voice. "I'm keener on bulldogs than monkeys, myself, though, whether Brazilian or Third Form ones!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Though Lumley says your monkey is a jolly fine little chap," added Digby's voice. "Lumley ought to know, too, seeing he sent him to you."

"My hat!" gasped Wally; and he was across the room in a flash.

He flung open the door in great excitement.

"What did you say, Dig?"

Digby did not answer, but led the way into the room. He looked about in pretended surprise.

"You've let it out of the cage, then?" he exclaimed, pointing to Curly Gibson.

"There's another one with his hands in his pockets!" observed Herries, nodding towards Jameson.

"And my minah!" put in Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't forget my minah, as I look upon him as a remarkably well-bred monkey. Ha, ha, ha! Although I say it, I wegard that as vewy funnay!"

Jack Blake stepped across to the cage which still stood right in front of the window, darkening the room considerably.

"My hat, what a ripping little fellow!"

Wally recovered from his surprise then, and faced the chief of Study No. 6. The fag loader looked uncomfortable for once in a way.

"What—what did you say about Lumley-Lumley, Dig?"

"That he sent you the monkey, of course. Didn't you guess?"

"My only Aunt Jane, no! Oh, I say, we've acted like cads to Lumley!"

He moved towards the door slowly.

"Did Lumley say why he sent me the monkey?" he asked, and Jack Blake grinned.

"He did, as it happens, but you'd better ask him for his reason."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Wathah, as I should uttaly wefuse to allow my minah bein' told the weason without Lumley-Lumley's consent, deah boys."

"Oh, I'll ask him quick enough," said Wally, in a very quiet voice; "and I shall have something else to say to him. Coming, chaps?"

Curly Gibson and Jameson darted across the room.

"Rather!"

"Sub on Gussy now for the extra five bob a week, Wally."

But there was no need to do so. The swell of St. Jim's had just adjusted his monocle in the perfect way only years of practice could have made possible.

"Of course, this weally wippin' little monkey will have to be kept in the stables," he said. "I will awrange with Taggles about his keep."

"Hooray!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah—I mean wot! I say, Wally, deah boy!"

"Yes, kid?"

"Give this note to Lumley-Lumley frowm Jack Blake & Co.," said the swell of St. Jim's quietly. "We want him to come to tea this afternoon. I trust you agree with my pwposal, Blake, deah boy?"

There was no need to ask. In fact, Wally & Co. had not waited for the answer.

They were already on their way to the ex-Outsider's study, their eyes sparkling with gleeful excitement.

THE END.

Next Friday's Long Complete Tale of TOM MERRY & CO. is entitled:

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