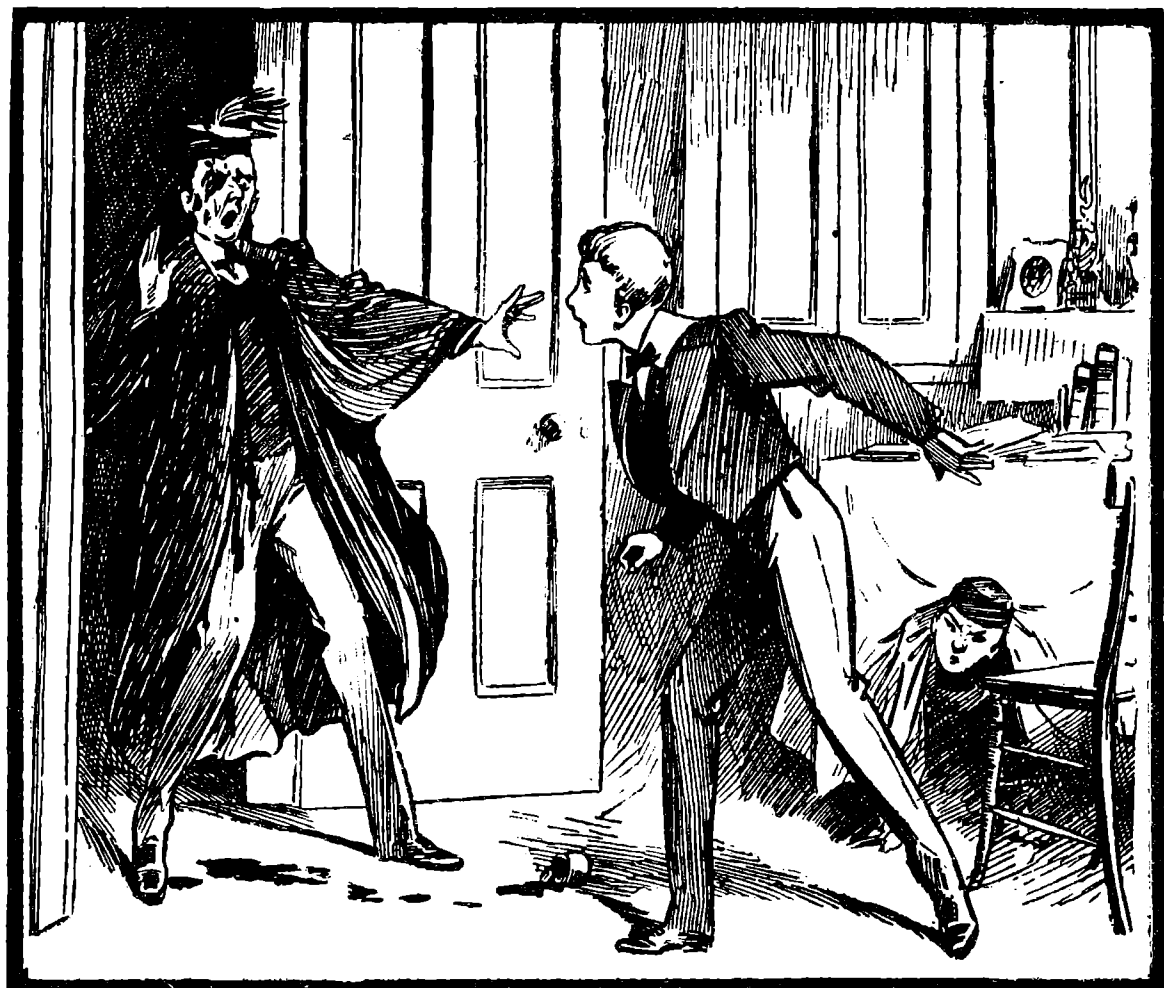


THE BEST PAPER FOR SCHOOL STORIES!

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No.
253.

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



“MY HAT!” GASPED BOB. “IT’S QUELCH!”

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

A Grand
Long Complete
Story, dealing
with the
Early Adventures
of
Jimmy Silver & Co.

THE ROOKWOOD SWEEPSTAKE!

By
Owen
Conquest

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Sweepstake!

"I'VE got the favourite!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

Beaumont looked quickly at Jimmy's paper.

"By Jove! He's right! He's drawn Sweet Lavender!"

In spite of all the stringent rules regarding gambling, a sweepstake had been organised on the Camperdown Cup by Beaumont, the most unscrupulous and unpopular prefect in Rookwood College.

He was supported by Hansom and Talboys of the Fifth, who had lured the Fistical Four into taking a share each at one shilling. It had gone dead against the consciences of Jimmy Silver and his followers, who at first refused to have anything to do with the affair.

It was not until Hansom hinted that Tommy Dodd & Co. had said the Fistical Four would not have the nerve to enter that the four chums paid up.

As a matter of fact, the Modern chums, Tommy Dodd, Tommy Cook, and Tommy Doyle, had not been approached at that time, but were lured into it by Hansom, who used the same tactics with them that he had employed with the Classical chums.

Thus, seven honest, straight-forward juniors were led into a scheme for which they had not sympathy by two or three unscrupulous seniors.

The "draw" took place in the study of Leggett, the cad of the Fourth. There were twenty entrants and twenty-one horses, Beaumont taking two chances. Everyone had a horse, and Jimmy Silver had drawn the favourite, Sweet Lavender.

"Good luck!" said Tommy Dodd, slapping Jimmy Silver on the back. "I wish I'd had it, old kid, but I congratulate you!"

"Thanks!" drawled Jimmy. "I suppose this is as good as a guinea in my pocket, Beaumont?"

"Not exactly," said Beaumont hastily. "Sweet Lavender is the favourite, of course, but you know the favourite comes in second or third as often as not. If you like, Silver, I'll give you five bob for that ticket."

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"You're awfully kind, Beaumont!"

"Oh, that's all right! It's a sporting chance, and you get your bob back, and make four, anyway, and I take the risk."

"Good! You're very generous, but I couldn't take advantage of your generosity," said Jimmy Silver, shaking his head.

The prefect scowled.

"Do you mean to say you won't sell Sweet Lavender?"

"Quite so."

"Then you're a young fool! The horse very likely won't win!"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 253.

"Then what do you want him for?" asked Jimmy Silver innocently.

Beaumont turned red.

"If you give me any of your cheek, I'll—"

"I'm off!" said Jimmy Silver. "Good-night!"

And he walked out of the study, followed by his chums, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby.

Jimmy Silver was the object of a very respectful attachment in the Fourth Form at Rookwood the next day.

The fellow who held the favourite for the Camperdown Cup, and had twenty-one shillings to draw when the race was run on the Saturday afternoon, was a fellow to be respected. Jimmy Silver was a little elated about it.

In his heart he disapproved of the whole proceeding, having a healthy, wholesome lad's natural distaste for any kind of gambling; but he also shrank from the least appearance of priggishness, and he disliked appearing to set up as a judge upon others.

And so he did not say much about his opinion of the sweepstake: and, as a matter of fact, there was something gratifying in holding the expected winner, and getting ahead of the Modern chums in that line.

Many and tempting were the offers Jimmy Silver received for Sweet Lavender. Beaumont increased his offer to ten shillings, which the leader of the Fistical Four refused, and Hansom and Talboys made up twelve shillings between them, and offered that sum, which Jimmy Silver also declined with thanks.

"I hear you're going to give a feed if your horse gets the race, Silver," said Tommy Dodd, meeting the chief of the Fistical Four in the passage after morning school.

"I think so," said Jimmy.

"Good wheeze! But, I say, if you feel inclined to sell the ticket—"

"I don't," said Jimmy Silver.

"But I thought you regarded a sweepstake as gambling?" said Tommy Dodd, with a wink at his chums.

"So I do, Doddy."

"And you disapprove of gambling?"

"Strongly."

"Then you had better sell the ticket, and get clear of the wicked business," said Tommy Dodd. "I'll give you six bob."

"I won't sell!"

"But as you disapprove of gambling—"

"Yes, but it would be just as bad to sell the ticket. I should be making a profit out of the thing, you see."

"Oh, if that's the only difficulty, it's all right! I don't particularly want to buy the ticket; you can give it to me if you like. That will make it all right."

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"I think I'll keep it, Diddy, thanks all the same."

"But think—"

"Rats! I am going to keep it."

"Look here, Cook, Doyle, and I will make up half-a-sovereign between us, and go Co. in it," said Tommy Dodd. "Will you sell Sweet Lavender for ten bob?"

"Hansom and Talboys have already offered me twelve."

"My hat! - We're not going beyond that."

"Not likely," said Tommy Cook.

"And you won't let it go for twelve?" said Tommy Dodd. "Why, you must be off your rocker! A certain twelve is better than a possible twenty-one."

"Never mind; I'm sticking to it."

"But, I say," said Tommy Dodd, changing his tone, "I'd let Hansom have it if I were you, Silver. He's a Fifth-Former, and can look out for himself."

"I suppose I can do the same."

Tommy Dodd laughed.

"I don't know, kid. You know what Beaumont is, and what Leggett is. If Hansom won the sweep, he's captain of the Fifth, and Beaumont wouldn't dare to try to swindle him."

"That's true," said Tommy Doyle, with a nod. "But if a junior won—"

"If a Fourth-Former won," resumed Tommy Dodd, "there'd very likely be some rotten swindle, and you wouldn't get the money."

"The ticket wouldn't be much good to you, then."

"Oh, I don't know! If we were done, we'd raise Cain about it, I can tell you."

"And so would I," said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes; but you fellows in the end study don't amount to much, you know. You couldn't do anything, and—"

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Diddy?"

"Oh, no offence, you know! I'm just pointing out a fact."

"Better chuck it, or I shall be just punching a nose!"

"But, seriously, you'd do better to let Hansom have the ticket," said Tommy Dodd.

"I'm going to stick to it. If I'm done, there will be a row. The fact is, I was bounced into this thing, and I wish I'd kept out of it. But as I'm in it, and it's got to go through, I'm going to see that it's honest. See the point?"

"Good idea—if you can manage it!"

"Well, I'll have a try. If Sweet Lavender had fallen to anybody else, I'd back him up in getting fair play. You fellows ought to back me up."

"Oh, rather! It's all in the Form."

"I reckon so, especially as you were really the cause of my getting into it, against my own better judgment," said Jimmy Silver.

Tommy Dodd stared at him.

"Well, I don't see how you make that out, Silver," he said. "We didn't like

the idea at first, but we weren't going to have you say we funk'd it."

"What!" yelled Jimmy Silver.
"Well, that's how Hanson put it," said Tommy Dodd. "As you were already in it—"

"Already in it? Why, when he came and asked us, he said you three were in it!"

"Eh?"
"And he said you thought we'd funk it!"

"But he asked you first—"
"He told me he had asked you first," Tommy Dodd rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"There's some lying been done somewhere," he said. "I suppose the fact of the matter is, that Hanson played us off against one another, and, like a pair of silly jays, we tumbled into the trap."

Jimmy Silver nodded gloomily.
"Well, of course, I never suspected a fellow of telling a lie," he said. "It was easy enough for the rotter to take us in."

"Well, it's done now. The only thing we can do now is to see that it's run on fair-play lines, and make the rotters cash up!"

"That's so!"
"The money's in Beaumont's hands, but Leggett has a finger in the pie. They won't part with it if they can help it. So long!"

And the Modern chums walked off.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Sportsmen!

THERE was a growing excitement in the Fourth Form at Rookwood as the Saturday drew near.

It was not the healthy excitement of anticipation which usually preceded an important football or cricket match. Nothing of that kind! It was the feverish excitement which is inseparable from the spirit of gambling.

Every boy who had drawn a ticket in the sweepstake was anxious for his horse to win, as a matter of course. Those who had drawn outsiders were discontented.

It was not only that they stood to lose their shillings—though a shilling was not a small sum to a junior.

But every entrant in the sweepstake had turned over in his mind so often how pleasant it would be to win the stakes, that he already regarded the twenty-one shillings almost as his own, and was certain to feel a proportionate disappointment if he lost.

After tea on Friday afternoon, Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was working in his study when Jones minor of the Fourth tapped at his door and entered.

Jones minor's horse had been scratched, but he had purchased a ticket from another youngster, and was now the proud possessor of a slip bearing the name of Auld Reekie, a horse that was supposed to have next best chance to the favourite.

Bulkeley looked up from his work.
"What do you want, Jones?"
"Can you give me a pass, Bulkeley?" asked Jones minor hesitatingly. "I want to go down to Coombe for something important."

"It's nearly locking-up," said Bulkeley, looking at his watch.

"Yes, I know, but—"
"You wouldn't be back till long after calling-over. What do you want to go for?"

"It's rather important."
"That's rather vague," said the captain of Rookwood, with a smile. "I suppose it's to smuggle food in from the tuckshop, eh?"

"Oh, no, Bulkeley; honour bright!"
"Then what is it?"

"Oh, I just want to get a paper," said Jones minor, turning very red.

Bulkeley stared.
"You want to go out after locking-up to buy a newspaper?"

"Ye-es."
"Well, you can't! I think you must be a fool, Jones, to come to me with such a request," said Bulkeley severely. "You can't go!"

Jones minor went out, looking very crestfallen. Leggett met him in the passage.

"Has he given you the pass?" asked the cad of the Fourth.

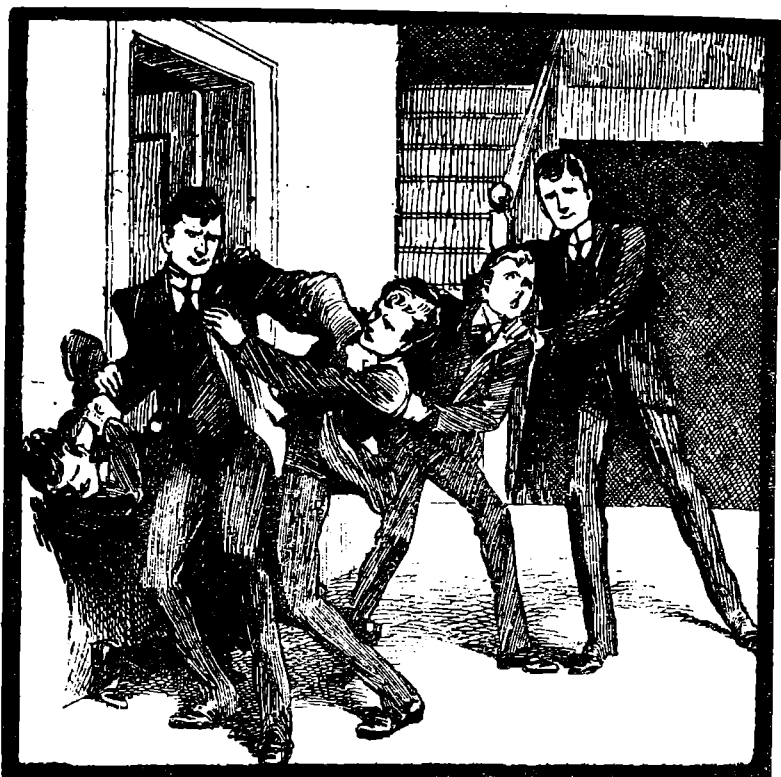
Jones minor shook his head dismally.
"I'll tell you what," said Leggett, "my horse is scratched, just like yours was. I'll give you a bob to go Co. in Auld Reekie, and I'll get over the wall and go down to the village for the 'Sporting News.'"

Leggett nodded, and pulled a folded sporting paper down from inside his waistcoat, where it had been concealed. The young rascal had already fetched it from the village, but he had taken care not to let Jones minor be aware of that.

Beaumont threw his novel aside. Beaumont was what he was pleased to call a sportsman, and he betted on races, and played cards, and smoked, and was fond of reading novels. A healthy and exciting football story would have bored him, but the latest sensational novel was exactly suited to his mood.

"Give it to me, young'un!"
He took the paper, and opened it, and ran his eye down the column where information was to be found concerning the Camperdown Cup.

"Russell scratched, Lord Tom scratched, Blue Bean scratched," he said. "That's all, so far. Sweet Lavender



Beaumont seized Jimmy Silver by the collar and fairly swung him off his feet, but in a moment the Classical chums rushed to the rescue.

"I say! I gave three bob for the ticket—" began Jones minor.

"Yes, I dare say you did; but the horse may be scratched by this time," said Leggett persuasively, "and I have all the risk of breaking bounds to get the paper."

"Oh, all right!" said Jones minor. "Hand over the bob!"

Leggett handed over a shilling, and wrote his initials on Jones minor's slip. Then they parted. Jones minor was anxious to have the sporting paper to know whether his horse was still in the running, and he was not sorry, upon the whole, to hedge a little. Leggett chuckled as he walked away to Beaumont's study.

The astute young financier had done a good stroke of business, from his own point of view.

"Hallo," said Beaumont, as he looked up from a yellow-backed novel he was reading, "have you got that paper?"

still the favourite, and Auld Reekie pretty certain to come in second."

"Good," said Leggett. "I've a half-share in Auld Reekie."

"Oh, have you?" said Beaumont, sitting up and looking at him. "Who's got the rest?"

"Jones minor of the Fourth."

"It's rot for Jones to have him," said Beaumont. "Come to think of it, the favourite is pretty unreliable, and Auld Reekie may pull it off yet. Go and bring Jones minor here."

Leggett grinned and left the study. In a few minutes he returned with Jones minor.

"I say, young Jones," said Beaumont, looking up from the paper with a very serious face, "I hear you've got Auld Reekie!"

"I've got half," said Jones minor, looking scared. "Is that the paper, Leggett?"

"Yes," said Leggett unblushingly.
 "But you told me—I mean, you never told me—"

"Oh, rats! Beaumont's talking to you!"

"I'm sorry for you, young Jones—"

"I—I say, he's not scratched, is he?" said Jones minor, in dismay. "Don't tell me he's scratched, Beaumont!"

"Not exactly scratched," said Beaumont. "It's pretty certain he'll run, but something's gone wrong with him, and he hasn't an earthly."

Jones minor looked inclined to cry.

"I'm sorry," said Beaumont. "You're a regular young sportsman, and I shouldn't like you to get hard hit the first time. What did you give for the ticket?"

"Three bob; but Leggett has taken half for a shilling—"

"Oh, he's taken half for a shilling, has he?" said Beaumont. "Well, if you like, I'll take the other half for—sixpence, and I'll give you Nero!"

"Nero! But he's a rank outsider!"

"Not so much an outsider as Auld Reekie is now," said Beaumont, smiling.

"But—but if Auld Reekie's no good, what do you want him for?" asked Jones minor timidly.

Beaumont frowned darkly.

"I was going to do you a good turn, you ungrateful young hound!" he exclaimed. "But don't sell me Auld Reekie if you don't want to. Get out of my study, confound you!"

"But—but, I say—" hesitated Jones minor.

"Sell, you duffer!" whispered Leggett. "Beaumont will make it warm for you if you get his back up, you know that."

"I don't mind selling to you, Beaumont," said Jones minor. "I—I'll take sixpence, and Nero."

"Just as you like," said Beaumont, with a yawn. "And I'll tell you what, young Jones. If Auld Reekie wins, I'll make it another bob for you. Not that I think he will win, mind. I'm doing this out of good nature."

A prefect was too formidable a person for a lad like Jones minor to argue with, but he couldn't help wishing that Beaumont would keep his good nature to himself. He dared not say so, however.

With a hesitating hand, he drew out the ticket, and handed it over to Beaumont. He received in return sixpence, and the slip of paper bearing the name of Nero, considered the rankest outsider entered for the Camperdown Cup.

Jones minor, moreover, hardly knowing whether to be pleased or miserable, quitted the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver's Little Deal.

HALLO, young Jones! What's the matter with you? You look as if you were going to your own funeral!"

Jones minor was certainly looking very lugubrious that Saturday morning, as Jimmy Silver came upon him in the quad soon after breakfast. He was leaning against a tree, his hands in his pockets, and an exceedingly miserable expression upon his face.

"What's the row?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"That rotten sweepstake!" said Jones minor. "I've been done!"

"Your horse scratched?"

"Oh, yes; but that's nothing. You take your chance of that. But I bought Auld Reekie for three bob, and—and—"

Jones minor broke off, the tears of vexation and disappointment welling up into his eyes.

"Phew!" said Jimmy Silver. "Don't

do that, old chap. It's not manly, and waterworks are barred in the quad. What's the trouble, anyway? I heard somebody say that Auld Reekie was second favourite, and that there was now even betting on him and on Sweet Lavender."

"Yes, that's just it. Beaumont led me to think that—that he was no good, and he gave me sixpence—sixpence—and Nero for my ticket," said Jones minor, fairly weeping now. "I sold half to young Leggett, and got sixpence and Nero for the other half. I—I'm out of it now, and—and—"

"Well, don't blub! You can't wash your ticket back again, you know," said Jimmy Silver practically, though he was touched. "But you've been done—rottenly done! We can't handle a prefect very well. But as for Leggett—"

"Oh, he was in the game with Beaumont. I can see that now."

"Here he is!" said Jimmy Silver abruptly. "Here, Leggett!"

He ran quickly towards the cad of the Fourth, who showed a strong disposition to avoid him.

Leggett, seeing that there was no help for it, stopped.

"Can I do anything for you, Silver?"

"Yes; you can give Jones minor back the half of the ticket."

"Can't! I've sold it to Beaumont."

"Is that the truth?"

"Ask Beaumont."

And Leggett walked away grinning.

He was quite secure from reprisals.

Jimmy Silver looked puzzled. And Jones minor knuckled his wet eyes.

"So Beaumont is the sole owner of Auld Reekie now?" said Jimmy Silver.

"I'm afraid your chance is gone for good, Jones. It serves you right for gambling. But—well, it's a rotten swindle! Still, you've got Nero."

"I don't suppose he'll run," said Jones minor. "But if he does he'll come in about tenth, I suppose. I wouldn't mind so much, only I sold my silver-handled knife to raise the money, and—and it was a birthday present from my governor, and he's coming down to Rookwood in a few days. And he's bound to miss it, and—and—"

And Jones minor's tears flowed afresh.

"I think you're the stupidest young ass I ever struck!" said Jimmy Silver.

"How much can you get your knife back for?"

"Three-and-six."

"Will you sell me Nero?"

Jones minor stared.

"Sell you Nero? It's no good!"

"I know it isn't," said Jimmy Silver.

"But I'll give you three-and-six for Nero, if you like, to get you out of this scrape."

"I—I couldn't take it."

"Yes, you can, and shall! Give me the ticket!"

"I say, this is awfully good of you, Silver!"

"Rot! Here's the money!"

Jones minor gladly handed over the slip of paper, and took the three shillings and sixpence.

Jimmy Silver thrust the slip carelessly into his pocket along with the one already there bearing the name of Sweet Lavender.

"Thanks, old chap!" stammered Jones minor. "I say, I'm awfully grateful, you know! I should have got into no end of a row with the governor. If he had a suspicion that I'd been gambling he'd—he'd—"

"Well, don't gamble again," said Jimmy Silver. "If three-and-six will keep you from growing up into blackguardly habits it's money well spent."

"I won't!" said Jones minor solemnly.

"I promise you! I've had enough of the

rotten business to last me some time, I can tell you!"

And Jones minor went away in search of the purchaser of his knife with a light heart.

Jimmy Silver was looking a little gloomy. As a matter of fact, funds were not very high with him just then, and the three and sixpence he had paid to Jones minor left him with only three-pence in the world. And, as the day was a half-holiday, he was likely to want money that afternoon.

When morning school was over, and the Fourth Form poured out of the class-room, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby joined Jimmy Silver.

They were flabbergasted when they heard that Jimmy Silver had bought Nero from Jones minor, for Jimmy did not tell them the reason.

"Why, Nero is the rankest and rottest outsider entered for the race!" said Lovell.

"I know he is," replied Jimmy Silver. "But I've done it, and there you are. Can't be helped now!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The End of the Sweep.

THE Fistical Four threw themselves into the cricket practice that afternoon with their usual zest, and so did the Modern chums.

But when the practice was over, and they left the field, they remembered the race, and, in spite of themselves, they were eager to hear the result of it.

The race was over at four o'clock at the latest, and so the result was already known in London; but when it would reach Rookwood was a question.

A telegram from the racecourse was hardly feasible, and might have led to discovery.

The juniors found that the others were as ignorant of the result, and as anxious about it as they were.

"Well, I'm not going to worry about it!" said Jimmy Silver.

The juniors were in their study about six o'clock having tea, when Beaumont the prefect came in. There was a curious expression about Beaumont's face.

"Hallo! Had the news?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"What news?" asked Beaumont, colouring a little.

"About the race! Who's won? Sweet Lavender?"

"Oh, we haven't any evening papers yet," said Beaumont. "The result will be in the Sunday papers to-morrow. I want to speak to you, Silver."

"Speak away."

"I gave my ticket to young Jones minor," said the prefect. "It was for Nero, you know, a rank outsider. He thinks himself wronged by the affair."

"So he was," said Lovell.

"It was an absolute swindle!" said Jimmy Silver bluntly.

"Yes, and—"

"I didn't come here to ask your opinion about that," said Beaumont, who evidently had some reason of his own for not losing his temper. "I've changed my mind about it, and would have taken Nero back; but young Jones minor says he's sold him to you."

"That's the fact."

"Well, I'll buy him of you, if you like. Of course, he's a worthless outsider; but I don't want any fellow to feel that I've done him. I'll give you two shillings."

Jimmy Silver looked closely at the prefect.

Although not of a suspicious nature, he was as keen as a Sheffield blade, and he smelt a rat immediately.

"I gave Jones minor three-and-six," he said slowly.

"Very well. If you want to sell, I'll make it three-and-six."

"I don't want to sell."

"Don't be a fool, Silver!" said Beaumont sharply. "I am willing to give you all you gave Jones minor for a worthless strip of paper!"

"It's no good beating about the bush," said Jimmy Silver abruptly. "If it were a worthless slip of paper, you wouldn't give me a red cent for it. You did Jones minor over the matter, and you'd do me if you could. If you really want to buy back Nero, it's because you've got some news from the race-course, and you know he's got a chance of winning, after all!"

"My hat!" shouted Lovell. "That's it! The race was over before four o'clock, and Beaumont has somehow got news—"

"You may as well own up, Beaumont," said Jimmy Silver. "You've had news that the race is won, and that's why you want to buy Nero back!"

Beaumont bit his lip, but did not speak.

"Well, I'm not going to sell," said Jimmy. "I've got Sweet Lavender and Nero, and if either has won I'm going to have the tin!"

"You confounded young fat, suppose it is true?" blurted out the prefect.

"Do you think I am going to be dictated to by you? As a matter of fact, I have gone to the expense of wiring to a sporting paper office in London, and I've just had the reply at the post-office. I haven't done it for nothing!"

"No; you've done it to try and swindle Silver!" exclaimed Newcome excitedly. "But you won't succeed, though, you rotter!"

"Hold your tongue, Newcome!"

"I won't hold my tongue! You're trying to cheat Silver!"

"It's all right, kids," said Jimmy Silver. "He can try till he's black in the face, but he won't succeed. I've got the tickets, and I hold on tight!"

Beaumont turned a face inflamed with rage upon the cool junior.

"Stick to the tickets, then!" he exclaimed. "You won't get the stakes!"

"You dare not keep them!"

"You'll see! As a matter of fact, you are not entitled to the stakes. Nero was my horse, and there was really a rule in the competition that no competitor was to be allowed to sell his ticket, to prevent speculation!"

"My hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "My only old sombrero! My ancient tile! If that doesn't take the whole of the giddy biscuit factory! You've just made up that rule!"

"Don't answer me! Under the circumstances, the stakes will not be handed over to you!"

"Won't they?" said Jimmy Silver, with a dangerous glitter in his eyes.

"Certainly not! I am willing to give you five shillings for the ticket!"

"Twenty-one shillings, and not a cent less!"

"Then you will have nothing! I——"

"Very well!"

Jimmy Silver walked to the door and threw it open. Beaumont looked after him uncasily.

"What do you mean?" he said. "I——"

"Get out of our study! I'm going to have the stakes if I make all Rookwood ring with the matter! As a beginning, get out, you swindler!"

"What?" yelled Beaumont, in a rage.

"Swindler!" said Jimmy Silver. "Cheat! Thief, if you like that better!"

The prefect sprang towards him.

"By George, I'll make you——"

"You won't make me take back those words! You're a low, dishonest, gambling thief!" said the leader of the Fistical Four, between his teeth.

"Now——"

He got no further. The grip of the infuriated Sixth-Former was upon him, and he was fairly swung off his feet. But in a moment Lovell, Newcome, and Raby rushed to the rescue. The big senior and the four juniors, struggling wildly, surged through the doorway, and right into a fellow who was coming quickly along the corridor.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the voice of Bulkeley. "What's this? You rowing with the juniors, Beaumont! What does this mean?"

"Thief!" howled Raby. "Swindler! Hand over the stakes!"

"Hold your tongue!" gasped Beaumont, who would have handed over the stakes, or anything else in the world, rather than have been betrayed to the captain of Rookwood.

But Raby was too excited to hear or heed.

"Hand over the stakes!" he bawled. "Silver's won the sweep, and you're not going to——"

Bulkeley's hand gripped Raby by the collar.

"Shut up!" he said quietly. "No need to tell all Rookwood! Now, what is this about? I know too much for you to keep it dark. There has been a sweepstake, and you have had a hand in it. Is that it, Beaumont?"

"Suppose it is!" snarled Beaumont.

"Then you're a cad, and you ought to be sacked from the school for encouraging the juniors to gamble!" exclaimed Bulkeley hotly. "Silver, tell me all about it! It's too late to think of keeping the secret now!"

That was plain enough. Silver hesi-

tated a moment, and then explained succinctly.

The prefect listened with lowering brows.

"Is all that correct, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley at last.

"About right," said Beaumont, with an attempt at bravado. "It was only a yarn about not handing over the stakes to make him sell the ticket!"

"Liar!" said Bulkeley contemptuously. "You meant to rob him! Not a word! If you answer me back, I'll march you straight to the Head!"

The prefect covered.

"You are holding the stakes," said Bulkeley. "It seems that Silver has won. He will not take the money. The money will be handed back to every subscriber. You will send me a list of their names, and they will report to me that they have had their money back! Do you understand?"

"I suppose so!" snarled the prefect. "But——"

"That's enough. It will be done in an hour, or you'll go up before the Head, and you know what that will mean. Get out of my sight!"

Beaumont slunk away like a whipped cur. Bulkeley turned sternly to the juniors.

"I am surprised to find you four taking part in a thing of this kind," he said. "I have always looked upon you as worthy to lead the Fourth Form. I am sorry to find myself so disappointed. I have been deceived in you!"

"I say——"

"But——"

"Don't try to justify yourselves. I'm disappointed in you—that's all!"

And the captain of Rookwood swung away with a clouded brow.

"He's in a tantrum," said Jimmy Silver uncomfortably. "I know we were wrong, but not so wrong as he thinks. As for the money, rats to that! I don't want to touch money won on a race. But—but it's rotten to have old Bulkeley thinking us a set of cads!"

"He won't let us explain!"

"Well, we can't explain away the fact that we were in the sweep. It's—it's rotten! I'd rather have the worst licking possible from the Head than have old Bulkeley look at me like that! But we'll make him see yet that we're not the rotters he seems to think!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "We'll show him that we're fit to be the top of the Fourth Form! And, by Jove, let any chap ever propose a sweepstake again in my hearing, and I'll make him think an earthquake has fallen on him!"

And the chums of the Fistical Four gave an emphatic assent.

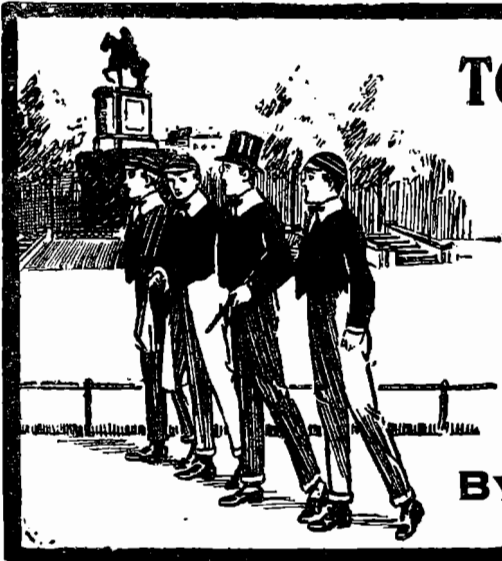
THE END.

Another Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Friday's issue of the PENNY POPULAR, entitled

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TOM MERRY & CO. IN IRELAND!

A Magnificent Long Complete School
Tale, Dealing with the Early Adven-
tures of the Chums of St. Jim's.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Family.

GENTLEMEN—that is to say, deah boys—” began Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, the swell of St. Jim’s.

“Hear, hear!”

“We are about to bweak up for the holidays—”

“Hear, hear!”

“Nobody like Gussy to bring us un-
heard-of news!” said Noble.

“We bweak up to-morrow,” said Arthur Augustus, unheeding. “And duning the vac I am goin’ to pay—”

“Good!” said Monty Lowther. “Nothing like paying up in the vacation, and starting the new term clear. Whom are you going to pay?”

“I am going to pay—”

“Your tailor?”

“Pway don’t be an ass, Lowthah! I am goin’ to pay—”

“Your bills?”

“I am going to pay a visit!” shrieked Arthur Augustus. “I’m goin’ to pay a visit to Dublin, you ass!”

“By George, are you?” said Tom Merry. “Well, I hope you’ll have a good time.”

“Sure, you’d better come to Belfast!” said Reilly, of the Fourth, who hailed from that famous city. “Dublin is all right, but Belfast is—”

“All righter?” suggested Monty Lowther.

“I am goin’ to Dublin—”

“Better come to Belfast!”

“For the Horse Show,” explained D’Arcy. “I am goin’ to Dublin for the Horse Show in the vacation, deah boys.”

“Sure you mean the Horse Show?” asked Monty Lowther, with an air of surprise.

“Certainly!”

The humorist of the Shell shook his head gravely.

“That isn’t the kind of show you ought to be exhibited in!” he remarked. “It’s another kind of animal—”

“You feahful ass!” said Arthur Augustus. “I didn’t say I was goin’ to be exhibited, you howlin’ duffah! I’m goin’ to the Horse Show because my bwotlah Conway is exhibitin’ some horses there; and I want to see the place, anyway. Dublin is a vewy intwestin’ city, and the capital of Ireland!”

“Is it really?” asked Manners. “Where did you hear that?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Better come to Belfast!” said Reilly.

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with a shake of the head. “I’ll put you up with pleasure if you come to Belfast, and show you over the factories and things. We’re the richest city in Ireland, and the greatest city in the United Kingdom—”

“I was goin’ to say—”

“You’ll have to go to say, to get to Dublin!” agreed Reilly. “Sure, the Irish Say will be a bit rough on you, too!”

“Pway don’t be fumpay, Weilly! I was goin’ to say, that I shall be glad to see any of you fellows who care to come with me,” said D’Arcy. “I should be vewy pleased to make up a party to do Dublin.”

“Faith, Dublin’s more likely to do you!” said Reilly. “Better come to Belfast!”

“Blake and Dig are coming down to my place for the vac,” said D’Arcy. “They’ll be coming with me, and Hewwies will come if he can get away ffrom his people; but they’re goin’ to take him to the Channel Islands. Any of you fellows who care to meet me at Holyhead to crossov oah to Dublin will be welcome guests, and I’ll look atah you in Dublin, and see that you don’t come to any harm!”

The juniors glared at Arthur Augustus. “You don’t say so!” gasped Monty Lowther at last.

Arthur Augustus nodded genially. “Yaas, wathah!” he replied. “You wemembah the time we did London, and you fellows all got lost? I’ll be more careful of you in Dublin. I weally won’t let you get out of my sight, and I’ll see that you don’t get undah the twams, or fall into the Jiffey—”

“The what?”

“The Jiffey!”

“The Liffey, you gossoon!” yelled Reilly.

“Vewy well; the Liffey, then!” said Arthur Augustus graciously. “It’s all one, deah boys! Now, would you fellows like to come to Dublin?”

“What ho!”

“Hear, hear!”

“There, there, you mean!” said Monty Lowther.

“Vewy well,” said D’Arcy. “You can write to me, you know, and tell me what time you can get down to Eastwood, or you can meet me at Holyhead when I take the boat. And you can all vewy upon me to look atah you!”

“And you can rely on us to give you a thick ear if you do!” said Kangaroo.

“Weally, Kangy—”

“What kind of grub do they provide in Dublin?” asked Fatty Wynn dubiously.

“I weally don’t know, but I expect it will be all wight. Iwish hospitality is well known,” said Arthur Augustus.

“Sure, yes! But ve’d better come to Belfast!” remarked Reilly.

“You can wun down ffrom Belfast on the wayway, Weilly,” Arthur Augustus remarked. “You can meet us in Dublin, you know, and show us wound, as you are an Iwish chap, and know the wopes and speak the language, and so on!”

“The language!” yelled Blake. “What kind of language do you think they talk in Dublin, you chortling ass—Dutch or Sanskrit?”

“Iwish, I suppose!” said D’Arcy innocently. “I’ve heard them speak Welsh in Wales, anyway,” he said. “I wemembah once I was there on a holiday, and I heard a chap swenwin’ howwibly, as I thought; but a fellow said he was only speakin’ in Welsh—”

Fatty Wynn rose to his feet, and laid down his knife and fork, and moved away through the packed juniors towards Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. He halted in front of the swell of St. Jim’s, and glared at him.

“What sort of an ass do you call yourself?” he demanded.

“Weally, Wynn— Yawwoh!”

Arthur Augustus came off the window-sill with a sudden bump. He found himself suddenly lying on his back on the floor of the study, with Fatty Wynn sitting on his chest. The fat Fourth-Former was a heavyweight, and Arthur Augustus gasped feebly beneath him.

“Ow!” Gewwoff! Weally, you know—”

“Take it back!” roared Fatty Wynn.

“Eh? Oh! Wescue!”

“Take it back!”

“Take what back, you feahful ass? Gewwoff!”

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared Figgins. “You forgot there was a wild Welshman present, look you! You had better apologise, Gussy, before he slays you.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Bai Jove! Wescue!”

Fatty Wynn glared round at the grinning juniors.

“Welsh is the most musical, the most poetical language that ever was talked,” he said. “Stilly asses who don’t know Welsh don’t understand it. I’m going to wipe up the floor with Gussy to show him that Welsh is a poetical language—”

"Ow! Wescue!"
 "Take it back, then!" roared Fatty Wynn.
 "Sing him a Welsh song if he doesn't, Wynn," suggested Monty Lowther.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Ow! I will take anythin' back, if you will woff off my chest!" murmured Arthur Augustus faintly. "Pway dwag him off. He's cwushin' me to extinction, and uttably wuinin' my jacket!"
 In another moment the juniors had dashed to the rescue.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Apologetic!

TOM MERRY & CO. threw themselves, with one accord, upon the two struggling juniors.
 Hands were laid upon Fatty Wynn and his foe from all sides, and they were whirled both bodily into the passage, and bumped down on the linoleum.
 Then the door was slammed upon them.

Arthur Augustus picked himself up, and went to the Fourth Form dormitory to change his clothes, and he was occupied in that important task for more than an hour.

When he came down, he looked as clean and neat as a new pin. He glanced into Tom Merry's study in passing, and found the chum of the Shell resting. The Terrible Three looked at him rather grimly.

"Awfully sowwy, deah boys," said D'Arcy gracefully. "As a mattah of fact, I am afwaid I was to blame."

"Go hon!" growled Lowther.
 Arthur Augustus nodded.
 "Yaas," he said. "I didn't mean it, of course, but Fatty may possibly have construed my wemarks into a weflection on his native language. Undah the cires, he was quite wight to wesenit it, and I owe him an apology."

"Br-r-r!"
 "That is weally not an intelligible wemark, Mannahs, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy mildly. "I owe you fellows an apology, too, for havin' caused a woy in your studay. I apologise. Now, it's all wight."

"The table isn't all wight," growled Tom Merry. "It's got a leg off through your barging about!"

"Sowwy, deah boys! Howevah, between one gentleman and anothah an apology sets everythin' all wight," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I apologise, therefore—"

"Go and apologise to Fatty Wynn, and give us a rest, do!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"
 "Scat!"
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and gave Monty Lowther a glare that ought to have withered him to ashes upon the spot. But it did not have that effect.

Lowther did not turn a hair, and Arthur Augustus turned haughtily upon his heel and quitted the study.

The sound of a chuckle followed him. Arthur Augustus walked down the passage, and entered Study No. 6. Blake and Herries and Digby were there, looking out things they intended to take home with them for the holidays.

"Here's Gussy," said Blake. "Good! Can I have your Sunday topper to take my white mice home in, Gussy?"

"Weally, Blake—"
 "Certainly not!" said Digby. "I want it for my white rabbit."

"I wefuse to have a wabbit taken home in my toppah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Pway listen to me. I owe you chaps an apology—"

"Never mind that," said Blake. "Let's have the topper instead."

"I apologise for havin' caused a woy—"
 "My dear chap, you're always causing rows in 'one way or another," said Blake. "What with your tenor solos and other things, we live in a state of rows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "The question before the meeting is—can I have your Sunday topper to carry my white mice in?"

"I want it for my white rabbit."
 "It would do for me to carry Towser's biscuits in," said Herries thoughtfully.

"I propose that we toss up for it. Does that suit you, Gussy?"
 Slam!

The door closed violently after the retreating form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the swell of St. Jim's walked away.

He left the school House, and walked out into the quadrangle, where the shadows were lengthening as the sun sank lower over the distant woods.

I'll give him one to match if he comes to this study!"

"He can't be coming here!" said Kerr.

"I'll bet he is!"

Fatty Wynn was right. The footsteps of the swell of the School House were heard in the passage outside Figgins' study, and there was a tap at the door, and Arthur Augustus opened it and presented himself to the amazed eyes of the New House trio.

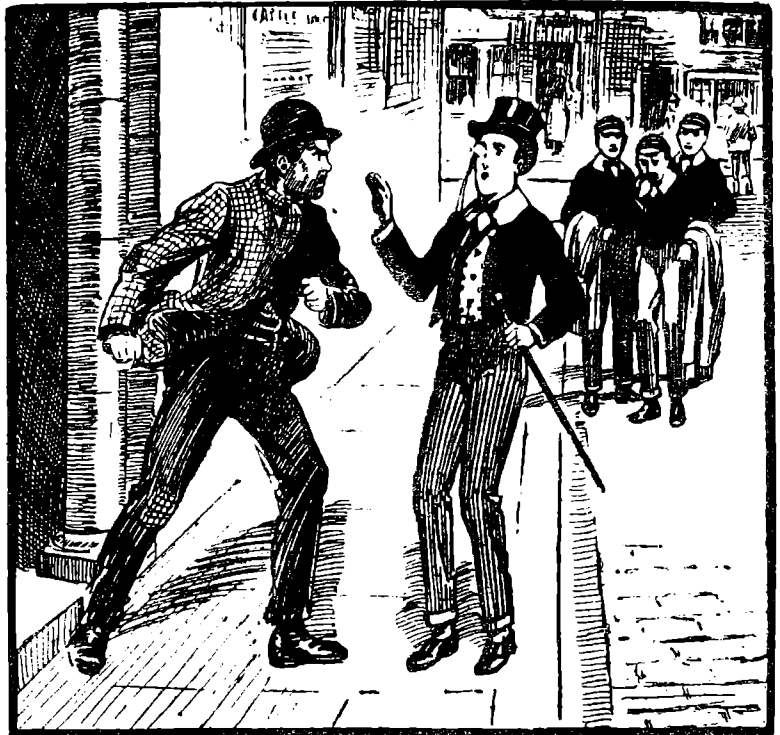
"I—" he began.

"The blessed cheek!" gasped Figgins. "Collar him!"

"Bai Jove! I— Oh!"

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn rushed upon the intruder. They swept him over in their combined grasp, and bumped him on the study carpet. A cloud of dust rose from the carpet, and a yell of anguish from D'Arcy.

"Bai Jove! You're wuinin' my bags! Oh!"



"Spalpeen! Gossoon!" said Arthur Augustus agreeably, wondering what was the cause of the frightful expression that was overspreading the stranger's face. "Cruiskeen lawn!" "Phwat did ye say?" roared the stranger. "Sure, if ye're looking for a black oie, it's Mike Milligan that can oblige ye!"

Arthur Augustus crossed the quadrangle towards the New House.

School House and New House juniors at St. Jim's were generally in a state of warfare, but on the last day of the term they buried the hatchet, so to speak.

The New House were rivals of the School House, but that was no reason why Fatty Wynn, Figgins, and Kerr should be left out of the round of apologies. They were entitled to an apology like the rest, and Arthur Augustus was not a fellow to neglect his duty.

Figgins & Co. watched Arthur Augustus from their study window as he crossed the quad towards the New House. Fatty Wynn breathed wrath.

"The blessed bounder!" he exclaimed. "He hasn't had enough, and he's coming over here for some more. He's given me a fat nose to take home for the holidays.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bump him!"
 Bump!

"Ow! Yareeh! You awful wuffians! I shall wefuse to apologise now! Ow!" Figgins started.

"Eh?" he exclaimed. "What—what did you come here for, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on the carpet and gasped.

"Ow! I came to apologise to Wynn, but now I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! Ow!"

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

"Weally, you fellows— Ow!" Figgins winked at his chums.

"It's all right, Gussy—" he began. "It is not all wight!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"You have thown me into a fluttah, and—"
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made my twousahs howwibly dustay. I am gaim' to give you a feahful thwashin' "

"Hold on! We apologise—"

"Eh?"

"As one gentleman to another—I mean, as three gentlemen to another—we apologise," said Figgins, with great gravity. "That sets all right, doesn't it?"

"Your bags won't be dusty now," grinned Kerr.

"Order, Kerr! How dare you be funny on such a serious subject?" said Figgins sternly. "It's all right, Gussy. Fatty accepts your apology. You accept ours. Kerr apologises to me, and I apologise to Kerr. And you agree, so I expect, that everything is quite correct, as they say in the song."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed suspiciously at Figgins & Co. But he encountered three faces that were almost owl-like in their gravity and he was satisfied.

"Vewy well, deah boys, it's all wight," he said. "I shall have to go and get a bwush-down. It's all sewene."

And Arthur Augustus departed; and as he went down the passage he heard a sound from Figgins' study that sounded suspiciously like a cackle.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Huckleberry Heath.

THE next morning St. Jim's broke up for the holidays.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther found themselves in the same carriage with D'Arcy, Blake, and Digby. Manners and Lowther were going to Tom Merry's place for the vacation; and Blake and Digby with Arthur Augustus.

Their way lay together as far as Easthorpe. Then the train would bear the Terrible Three on to Huckleberry Heath, where Laurel Villa was situated—the home of Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess.

"Don't forget that you're comin' to Dublin in time for the Horse Show, deah boys," Arthur Augustus remarked, when they were approaching Easthorpe. "I wathah think we shall have a wippin' time, you know. Pway tell Miss Pwiscillah that you will be all wight in Dublin, Tom Mewwy. Say that I shall keep an eye on you all the time."

"Why, you ass—"

Arthur Augustus jammed his silk hat on his head.

"Good-bye, deah boys!" he said. "See you again when we start for Holyhead. Pewwaps I'll wun ovah to Huckleberrwy Heath and see you befoah. Good-bye!"

And the Fourth-Formers and the Shell fellows shook hands all round, with mutual good wishes, and as the train stopped in Easthorpe Station, Blake and D'Arcy and Digby stepped out.

The Terrible Three waved their caps from the carriage window as the train glided on.

"Only two stations further on," said Tom Merry, looking from the carriage-window, and feasting his eyes upon the green countryside. "It's a jolly good idea of Gussy's, going to Dublin in the vac. We've been in France and in America, and we've never been to Ireland yet. Chap ought to see his own country first."

"Hear, hear!"

The little station at Huckleberry Heath came in sight at last. As the local train slowed down, a feminine figure was visible on the platform. It was Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

Tom Merry's old governess was there to meet the train. Her kind old face peeped out from under an Early Vic-

torian bonnet, and she was using her parasol with deadly effect upon the station porter, of whom she was asking questions.

The unfortunate man had been jabbed in the shoulders or ribs three or four times, to draw his attention to Miss Fawcett's queries as to whether the train was overdue, and whether there had been an accident.

The train clattered in, and stopped, and Tom Merry threw open his carriage-door. Miss Fawcett ran towards him.

"My darling Tommy!"

Miss Fawcett never could understand fully that Tom Merry had really passed the age of seven or eight; and to her he remained still the nice little boy she had been accustomed to lead about by his chubby hand.

The captain of the Shell at St. Jim's was really a different fellow, but Miss Priscilla was never likely to realise it.

She folded Tom Merry in her arms as he descended from the train, and fairly hugged him, much to the interest of several persons on the platform.

"My darling Tommy! I was afraid there had been an accident. The train is nearly a minute late! Oh dear!"

"All serene!" said Tom Merry, kissing Miss Priscilla on both cheeks.

"Are you quite well, Tommy?"

"Right as rain!"

"You have not got your feet wet coming down?"

Tom Merry turned pink, and Manners and Lowther were taken with a sudden fit of coughing.

"No fear," said Tom Merry. "Not likely to get one's feet wet on a blazing summer day like this, I suppose?"

"Did you get the new socks I sent you, Tommy?"

"Yes."

"And the new—"

"Yes, yes. I got everything," said Tom Merry hurriedly. "It's all right. Let's get down to home, dear. I'm anxious to see Laurel Villa again."

"Certainly, my darling child! You are sure you are quite well?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"There seems to be a little flush in your cheeks," said Miss Fawcett, holding her darling at arm's length, and surveying him fondly, quite regardless of the interested spectators of the touching scene.

Manners and Lowther nearly choked with their coughing, and Tom Merry's flush became more pronounced than ever.

"Warm day!" Tom Merry explained.

"Dear me! It was a little thoughtless of Dr. Holmes to break up on a very warm day, which is not good for boys to travel on," said Miss Fawcett. "Surely you could have suggested to him to defer the breaking-up till to-morrow, Tommy dear!"

"Ahem!"

"I fear you are a little feverish—"

"You haven't spoken to Manners and Lowther yet, dear," said Tom Merry hurriedly.

"Oh, don't mind us," said Monty Lowther, in his blandest tone. "We like to see you welcomed home, Tommy. Please excuse my cough; it's come on quite suddenly."

"You ass!" murmured Tom Merry fiercely.

"Pray excuse me, my dear little ones," said Miss Priscilla, shaking hands with Manners and Lowther. "I am so anxious about Tommy. The dear child is so delicate, though he will never admit it. I am very glad to see you, my dears, and I am so glad you were with Tommy, to take care of him if he should have felt faint in the train."

Tom Merry murmured something, and Manners and Lowther tried not to yell—

and succeeded with noble efforts. Then they set out for Laurel Villa.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Off to Dublin.

TOM MERRY & CO. spent several days at Laurel Villa, till Kangaroo joined them, and then they met Jack Blake & Co. at Eastwood House.

They stayed there for a short while, and then, one fine morning, they started for Euston, to catch the 8.30 train for Holyhead.

Arthur Augustus was looking a little sleepy as the handsome Mercedes car rolled them away to the station. The swell of St. Jim's was not accustomed to rising so early during the holidays.

"Lovely morning," said Monty Lowther. "We're going to have a fine day. I'll teach you some more Irish in the train, Gussy."

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy." Kangaroo staved.

"What's that?" he asked.

"I'm teaching Gussy Irish, ready for getting to Dublin," Lowther explained.

The Cornstalk roared. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon him severely.

"Weally, Kangawoo, I see no reason for cacklin'," he said. "I considah that it is vewy kind of Lowtah to take the twouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here we are!" said Tom Merry, as they ran into the grey, grim station. "Now, then! How many hat-boxes are you travelling with, Gussy?"

"Only one, deah boy. My patah says that in case of accidents I shall be able to get a new toppah in Gwafton Stwect."

"Oh, good! That's a very important point. If your topper should be blown overboard, I don't see how we could visit Dublin without it, of course."

"Quite so, deah boy. Pway be careful with that hat-box, portah!"

"Yessir."

The hat-box was deposited safely upon the rack in a first-class carriage, and the juniors ensconced themselves there. Arthur Augustus looked round the carriage a little dubiously.

"I suppose we all want to twavel in the same cawwage?" he remarked.

"Yes, rather!"

"There are only six seats, you see, and there are seven of us," Arthur Augustus remarked. "It seems wathah a pproblem, doesn't it?"

"Not at all," said Lowther. "You can sit on your hat-box."

"Weally, Lowtah—"

"Or lie on the floor," Kangaroo suggested. "That would really be better, because then we could use you for a foot-rest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful— H'm! I will stand, deah boys, and you can have the seats," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stiffly.

The juniors roared.

"You ass! Stand all the way to Holyhead? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Undah the cires—"

"Sit down, fathead!"

And Tom Merry dragged the swell of St. Jim's into a corner seat.

"But there are only three seats a-side, deah boy."

"Can't we squeeze up and make room for four?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, so we can!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Arthur Augustus being thus amicably accommodated, the juniors rested their feet on the floor instead of upon the aristocratic person of the swell of St. Jim's. The train started.

"We're off!" said Manners. "What time do we get in to Holyhead? Anybody know?"

"About two o'clock."
"Well, that's not a bad run," said Manners. "Lucky I've brought my pocket chess with me. Who's going to play?"

"I wouldn't mind singin' a tenah solo to pass the time, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus modestly.

Lowther shook his head.
"Might lead to misunderstandings on the line," he said.

"Weally, Lowthiah, I fail to comprehend."

"Suppose it was mistaken for a train whistle—"

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors started on their journey in great spirits, minus the tenor solo.

Piggins & Co. were waiting on the Admiralty Pier at Holyhead when Tom Merry and his comrades arrived.

They greeted the arriving juniors with a St. Jim's yell, and they shook hands most heartily all the way round. They were very glad to see one another again.

Fatty Wynn was carrying a large and well-filled bag in his plump hand, and it was not necessary to ask what it contained.

The fat Fourth-Former evidently did not intend to risk going hungry on the

"Oh, really, Figgy—"
"We're off!" said Tom Merry. Hurrah!"

The steamer was throbbing off from the pier.

Fatty Wynn disposed of the veal pie very quickly, and some cold sausages followed it. Then Fatty Wynn glanced at the sea, and was reassured by its smoothness, and started upon a pigeon pie.

A cold pudding followed, and by that time Fatty was so interested in his occupation that he forgot all about the sea and its dangers.

The contents of the bag rapidly diminished.

"You fellows have some?" asked Fatty Wynn hospitably.

"No fear!"

"Thanks, no!"

"Wathah noi!"

"We lunched in the train," explained Kangaroo, "and I think the water is going to be choppy."

"Oh!" said Fatty Wynn.

The steamer glided on swiftly over the shining sea.

Fatty Wynn cast a doubtful look round him; but the water was calm and shining, and he was reassured, and he commenced operations upon a large bag of tarts.

The other fellows strolled up and down the deck, looking out over the bright

"Is there anything you would like?"
"Yes," said Fatty faintly. "I think I should like to die! Oh!"

"Poor old man!"

Groan!

"Buck up, Fatty!"

Groan!

"It'll soon be over, you know. I'll tell you the instant we see the Irish coast."

Groan!

"Feeling very bad, old chap?"

Groan!

Fatty Wynn was past the power of speech. He lay back on the seat, and groaned, careless of everything. Life seemed a burden to Fatty Wynn at that moment, and the greatest boon would have been sudden death. He had wild thoughts of jumping overboard, but he had not the strength to rise from the seat, and he dared not move. Every motion of the ship was a fresh anguish to him.

"You shouldn't have bolted so much, you know," said Figgins. "It was reckless."

The fat junior groaned.

"It was the pigeon-pie!" he moaned. "It might have been the sosses, but I think it was the pigeon-pie. Ow!"

The juniors gathered round Fatty Wynn in great sympathy. Two or three other people were feeling qualmy along

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voyage, though he was running other risks to which the contents of the bag would probably add

The juniors walked on to the steamer in a big crowd of passengers, and Fatty Wynn cast a slightly anxious look at the sea.

It was very calm, and shining in the bright sun.

"Looks all right," said Tom Merry, with a smile; "but I shouldn't bolt more than enough for four, Fatty."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"The fact is, I'm hungry," he said. "We've been waiting for you chaps a quarter of an hour. I think, upon the whole, that a chap can't do better than lay a solid foundation. What do you think?"

"Remember the chops of the Channel," grinned Lowther.

"Well, this isn't the Channel, you know."

"Two and three-quarter hours before we arrive at Kingstown," said Figgins. "Better be careful, Fatty."

"I'll just have a snack now. A veal pie will last me a bit, with some of the cold sausages, Figgy."

Figgins chuckled.

"Go it, Fatty! You'll soon have room for more."

sea and chatting cheerfully as they drew further and further away from the shore.

Fatty Wynn had intended to point out the Welsh mountains to his comrades, but it slipped his memory now. He was busy.

It was nearly an hour before he joined the chums of St. Jim's, with a somewhat shiny look upon his plump face.

"Feeling all right?" asked Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"Right as rain," he said.

"Oh, good! Keep it up."

"The steamer isn't so steady as she was," said Fatty Wynn.

"It won't be a rough crossing," said Manners, "but we shall rock a bit. Shall I call to the steward to get a basin ready?"

"Ow!"

"Like some nice fat bacon now, Fatty?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Groo!"

Fatty Wynn made a desperate rush to the side.

He returned, and sat down, looking white and worn. Figgins brought him a glass of water, but the Falstaff of the New House at St. Jim's waved it feebly aside.

"Take just a sip, old man!" said Kerr sympathetically.

Fatty Wynn groaned.

the deck, but with the exception of Fatty Wynn the St. Jim's fellows were all right.

"We're in sight of land now, Fatty," said Figgins encouragingly. "Turn your head, old son, and see Dublin Bay as we go in."

Groan!

"Most beautiful bay in the world, you know, Fatty," urged Blake.

Groan! Fatty Wynn did not care for beautiful bays at that moment.

"Soon be on land now, Fatty."

Groan!

"Here we are!" exclaimed Figgins at last. "It won't be a few minutes now, Fatty. We're closing up to the pier."

When the steamer stopped at Kingstown Pier at last, Figgins and Kerr took an arm each of Fatty Wynn, and led him ashore.

Fatty Wynn did not speak a word until the juniors were seated in the Dublin train. He sat silent during the run from Kingstown to the city, but as the train ran into Westland Row Station he raised his head.

"Feel better, Fatty?" asked Figgins. "Better?" said Fatty. "I'm all right. I feel hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Arthur Augustus Speaks Irish.

REILLY of the Fourth was waiting for the party at Westland Row Station. Dublin was blazing in the summer sunshine as the juniors alighted from the train, and Reilly rushed up to them excitedly.

"Arrah, and here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"You should have come to Belfast," said Reilly. "But sure, ye'll have a ripping time here. Of course, in Belfast—"

Fatty Wynn tapped him on the arm. "I'm hungry," he said.

Reilly grinned.

"Sure, you needn't tell me that!" he said. "I know that, Faith, and did anybody iver see ye when ye weren't hungry?"

"I've had a rotten time coming over," said Fatty Wynn. "I'm hungry now. I suppose there are places in Dublin where a chap can feed when he's in danger of dying of starvation?"

"Sure, and that's so; but in Belfast—"

"We ain't in Belfast now," roared Fatty Wynn; "we're in Dublin. Where can I get something to eat?"

"We had better get to Conway's hotel," said Arthur Augustus. "My majah will be expectin' us."

"Is it far?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"I weally do not know. Do you know where the Mewwion Hotel is, Weilly?"

"Sure I do. We'd better take a car." The juniors walked out into Westland Row in the bright August sunshine.

Monty Lowther pressed Arthur Augustus' arm, and pointed to a gentleman in decidedly ragged garments who was standing upon the kerb, apparently devoting the whole of his attention to the important business of chewing a straw.

"Ask him to recommend you to a good restaurant, Gussy," whispered Lowther.

"Vewy well. He doesn't look as if he goes to good westauwants, though," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, rather dubiously.

"Oh, you mustn't judge by appearances in this country," said Lowther airily. "That chap is very likely a peer. You know they have a great love for jokes and japes in Ireland, and he may be a member of the peerage dressed like that for a lark. They do that kind of thing in Lever's novels, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

"Speak to him in Irish, old man."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus walked up to the dilapidated gentleman on the kerb, and raised his silk hat gracefully.

"Pway, excuse me—" he began.

The man stared.

"Spalpeen gossoon!" said Arthur Augustus agreeably.

The stranger's look became fixed.

"Spalpeen gossoon!" repeated D'Arcy, wondering what was the cause of the frightful expression that was overspreading the stranger's face. "Cruiskeen lawn!"

"Phwat did yez say?" roared the stranger.

Arthur Augustus staggered back.

"Bai Jove! He speaks English!" he ejaculated.

"English, is it?" roared the stranger. "Is it mad ye are, then? Sure, if ye're looking for a black oie, it's Mike Milligan that can oblige ye!"

"My deah man—"

Biff!

The stranger hit out, and Arthur Augustus sat down on the pavement in great surprise.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 253.

"Ow! Bai Jove!"

Crunch!

D'Arcy's silk hat had fallen off as he sat down thus abruptly, and the stranger brought down a heavy boot upon it.

The hat crunched up.

"Bai Jove! Ow! Wescue! The man's mad! Yawwooh! Help!"

Tom Merry & Co., shrieking with laughter, rushed up. The stranger glared at them, and swung away, and went on chewing his straw at another corner.

"What on earth did you say to him to make him biff you?" asked Blake.

"Ow!"

"Did you speak to him in Irish?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Gwoo! Yaas!"

"What did you say?"

"Only what you told me, deah boy—spalpeen gossoon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

Reilly shrieked, in great danger of a violent attack of hysterics. Arthur Augustus picked up his ruined topper, and sadly tried to push out the crushed sides, and make it bear some semblance to a hat again.

"It's uttably wuined!" he groaned.

"Never mind! We'll go through Grafton Street, and you can get another," said Tom Merry consolingly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had pushed back his cuffs in a businesslike manner.

"I am goin' to give that awful wottah a feahful thwashin'!" he exclaimed.

"Hold on—"

"Stop him!"

"Order!"

"I wufuse to ordah—I mean—I am goin' to thwash that feahful boundah! He has stwuck me on the nose—"

"You should have specified which part you wanted to be struck on, if the nose doesn't suit you!" remarked Lowther. "How was he to know? Be reasonable!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"The man's all right!" gasped Reilly. "It's one of the customs of the country, that's all. It's quite a common custom in Dublin!"

"Bai Jove! Is it poss?"

"Quite possible—frequently happens after you greet a man as you greeted that chap," said Reilly faintly. "You see, you have to be awfully careful in pronouncing our language; it's very important."

"Vewy well. In that case—"

"Better let him off," said Tom Merry. "And, as he's twice as big as you are, it's barely possible that thrashing him wouldn't work out quite satisfactorily. Let's get on this tram and get down to the hotel before Fatty Wynn begins eating one of us."

"I'm hungry—"

"Vewy well. I am vewy much obliged to you for your instructions, Lowthah; but I shall not twy to talk any more Iwish on this visit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; I shouldn't!" said Reilly. "Come on!"

And Arthur Augustus, carrying his battered hat in his hand, allowed himself to be led away, and shortly afterwards the juniors were discussing a solid meal with Lord Conway, Arthur Augustus' elder brother, in the restaurant of the Merrion Hotel. And Fatty Wynn was happy.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In Dublin.

"THIS is something like!"

Fatty Wynn made that remark as he sat at the table in the restaurant and looked over the well-spread board.

His unhappy experiences on the Irish Sea were forgotten by this time. In fact,

the fat Fourth-Former of St. Jim's had an aching void to fill.

Lord Conway smiled.

"Something like!" repeated Fatty Wynn. "Jolly good idea of yours, coming to Dublin, Gussy!"

"You should have come to Belfast!" murmured Reilly.

"Did you have a good crossing?" asked Lord Conway.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"All except Fatty," said Tom Merry. "He suffered a bit. He laid in too many preparations for the voyage."

"Any accidents on board?" asked the viscount, looking very hard at his brother's nose, which was red and a little swollen.

"Not on board," grinned Blake. "Gussy had some trouble with a chap in Westland Row, that's all. Gussy goes about looking for trouble, you know!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"He called a man names," explained Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"And the man punched his nose!" grinned Digby.

"Pway, don't listen to these wicidulous wemarks, Conway!" said Arthur Augustus, with a severe glance at his humorous chums. "It's all wot, of course! I was simply speakin' in Iwish to the chap, and he misunderstood me!"

His elder brother stared at him.

"Speaking in what?" he ejaculated.

"Iwish."

"Do you mean to say that you know any Erse?" exclaimed Lord Conway. "And were you ass enough to talk to people in Erse?"

"Weally, Conway, deah boy, I object to bein' called an ass! As I am in Iweland, I natuwallly talk to the people in Iwish! When I was in Pawis I talked in Fwench!"

"And there were some misunderstandings there, too!" grinned Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"But what on earth did you say to the man?" exclaimed Lord Conway, in astonishment. "What Irish did you use?"

"I said 'Good-afternoon, my deah fellow,' or something to that effect, in Iwish."

"But what words did you use?"

"Two Iwish words that Lowthah taught me."

"Oh!" said Lord Conway, with a glance at Monty Lowther, who was sedately eating his dinner. He knew the humorist of the St. Jim's Shell. "And what were the words?"

"Spalpeen gossoon!"

"Eh?"

"Spalpeen gossoon!" said D'Arcy. "I hadn't time to say any more. But Lowthah taught me some more words as well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Conway—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lord Conway, laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. "You young ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked at his elder brother very severely.

"I fail to undahstand the cause of this wibald laughah!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Conway, I twust—"

"You young aes!" gasped Conway. "If that's the way you talk in Irish you'd better depend on English in the future, especially as it's the language of the country!"

"Bai Jove! Is it? Lowthah said—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Monty Lowther. The Shell fellow was devoting his attention to the asparagus, and seemed to have no attention left for any-

thing else. D'Arcy tried in vain to catch his eye.

"Lowthah!" he exclaimed.
 "Hallo?" said Monty Lowther.
 "Were you pullin' my leg when you were teachin' me Iwish, you wottah?"
 "Eh?"

"I demand whethah you were wottin' when you were teachin' me Iwish?" said Arthur Augustus, rising from his seat, wrathfully.

Lowther nodded.
 "Do you mean to say yaas?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Certainly not!"
 "Then what do you mean to say?"
 "Yes," said Lowther; "not yaas."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus reddened with wrath. "I am sowwy to have to disturb the harmony of this meetin'," he said, "but I shall have no wescource but to twash Lowthah. He has taken me in."

"If you make a row, we'll get the waiter to take you out," said Manners.
 "I'm going to twash Lowthah—"
 "Sit down, Gussy," said Jack Blake, dragging Arthur Augustus down into his seat.

"Pway welease me, Blake—"
 "Do you always thrash your guests, Gussy?" asked Kangaroo. "I will make a note of that, if that is another custom of this country."

"Lowthah is not my guest now. He is Conway's guest—"

"It's all in the family," urged Blake.
 "Besides, think of his uncle."

"His uncle?"
 "Yes," said Blake solemnly. "His uncle."

"You uttah ass! What has his uncle got to do with it?" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Why, if you start on Lowther, you mayn't leave a whole bone in him, or even a speck of grease to mark the spot! You know what a fearful fellow you are when you get going. Are you prepared to bring down Lowther's uncle's whiskers in sorrow to the grave?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as a silly ass, Blake—"

"You can regard me as your twin brother if you like," said Blake affably, "only sit down, and be quiet."

"Order!" said Lord Conway, laughing.
 "Arthur, please be quiet. We don't want the hotel manager to come and complain of disorderly conduct at this table."

"Bai Jove!"
 That awful thought made the swell of St. Jim's sit down immediately.

And the fearful thrashing was not bestowed upon the humorist of the Shell.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Trouble on the Tram.

"HORSE SHOW to-day!" said Tom Merry cheerfully, the next morning, as the juniors sat down to breakfast.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Pass the kidneys," said Fatty Wynn. "I've been waiting nearly a minute for you, Blake. I say, I'm hungry. I think this must be a very healthy place. I know I've got a jolly good appetite here!"

"Every place you live in must be a jolly healthy place, then," said Kerr. "You aren't exactly off your feed at St. Jim's!"

"And the grub's good," said Fatty Wynn, unheeding. "Upon the whole, I like Dublin. I shall always remember the grub at this hotel as long as I live!"

"Faith, but you should have seen Belfast!" said Reilly.

"Kidney and bacon better than this at

Belfast?" asked Fatty Wynn, with great interest.

"Faith, everything's top notch! And the eggs and butter—"

"We might go round through Belfast to get home," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How are we going to get to the horse show, Weilly?" asked Arthur Augustus, changing the subject.

"Tram," said Reilly.

"I suppose we could have taxicabs, couldn't we?" asked D'Arcy. "They are weally more comfortable than twams, you know!"

"Who's the leader of the party?" asked Reilly.

"Oh, weally, Weilly—"

"Splendid tramway service here," said Reilly. "Not up to Belfast, of course, but ripping! We shall get to Balls Bridge in next to no time!"

"What are we goin' to Balls Bwidge for, Weilly?"

"Horse show, ass!"
 "Oh, I see! Is it held there?"

"The pillow Nelson used the night before the Battle of Trafalgar," said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Bai Jove! Have they weally got that here?"

"You'll see it to-morrow."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

After breakfast the chums of St. Jim's started.

The morning was very fine and sunny, and the juniors clambered to the top of a tram. Eleven juniors covered a good deal of space there. The tram clanged off on its way to Balls Bridge.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had taken a front seat by himself. The other fellows were in the rear seats. In the seat behind D'Arcy was a stout, farmer-looking man, with a stubby beard and a weather-beaten face, probably bound to the horse show himself.

Monty Lowther occupied the third seat behind, with Manners. Monty Lowther had a light cane under his arm, and as the tram started he gently reached forward with it, past the intervening



"It is all right, Gussy. Fatty accepts your apology. You accept ours. Kerr apologises to me and I apologise to Kerr!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed suspiciously at Figgins & Co. But he encountered three faces that were almost owl-like in their gravity, and he was satisfied. "Very well, deah boys, it is all wight," he said. "It is all sewene!"

"Yes, fathead! In the grounds of the Royal Dublin Society," said Reilly. "And, sure, it's a splendid show entirely!"

"Yaas, wathah! There are jumpin' competitions, too," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "I wathah think I should like to take part in that!"

"Only horses do the jumping," said Lowther.

"I mean on a horse, you silly chump!" said D'Arcy. "I suppose you wemembah the time I won a steeplechase? I have told Conway I will jump his horses for him if he likes, but he did not seem to be impressed."

"They parade the horses there, hundreds of them," said Reilly. "I've seen it before, you know. Sure, it's a splendid show! And we've got to go up the Nelson Pillar!"

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

farmer, and softly tilted D'Arcy's hat up from behind with the end of his stick.

The next instant he whipped the cane back, and became intensely interested in the roadside.

Arthur Augustus caught his hat as it tilted over his nose, and set it on his head again, and turned a wrathful glare round. The stout farmer just behind him was reading a paper, and he had not seen Lowther's action in the least. He was chuckling over some joke he was reading in the paper, when he became aware of D'Arcy's fixed glare.

D'Arcy gave him a terrific look, fully convinced that the etout gentleman had tilted up his hat, and then settled down again with a sniff.

The Irish farmer had a look of wonder upon his good-natured, ruddy face.

Why a perfect stranger should turn

round and glare at him in that ferocious manner was a mystery to him; but seeing that D'Arcy was English, perhaps he attributed it to some peculiar English custom.

The tram clanged on, and about ten minutes later, when D'Arcy was staring steadily ahead, and the farmer was buried in his paper again, Monty Lowther gently insinuated his cane forward, and knocked up the brim of D'Arcy's topper from behind.

"Bai Jove!"

This time the topper fell off, and D'Arcy caught it just in time. He jammed it fiercely upon his head, and swung round in his seat.

He glared at the farmer, and then at Manners and Lowther in the seat farther behind.

The two Shell fellows were staring hard at a passing jaunting-car. Apparently that jaunting-car filled up their whole thoughts.

"Sir!" said D'Arcy.

The farmer looked up from his paper. "Is it spakin' to me yez are?" he inquired.

"Yaas."

"Oh!"

"I am surprised at you, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, in a most stately way. The astounded farmer looked at him blankly.

"It's surprised at me yo are?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What do you mean?"

"You knocked my hat!"

"Your—your hat!"

"Yaas!"

"Shure, I didn't, my poor young gentleman," said the farmer. "Faith, and it's mistaken ye are! I was r-readin' me paper."

"Better humour him," murmured Monty Lowther under his breath.

"You tilted my hat ovah my nose!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

And the farmer, who had heard that it was judicious to humour lunatics, took Monty Lowther's advice.

"Yis, sorr," he exclaimed. "But, shure, I won't do it again!"

"You had better not, you ass!"

"No, sorr."

"I wufuse to have such absurd twicks played upon me."

"Yis, sorr!"

"I weward you as a fwivolous ass!"

"Yis, yis!"

"If it were not for my wewspect for your yeas, sir, I should give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Yis, yis!"

"Then pway do not do it again."

"No, no!"

And Arthur Augustus turned his back upon the alarmed farmer and sat down.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Mistake!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat with a very pink face, staring directly before him. The other passengers on top of the tram were grinning, and the juniors of St. Jim's grinned.

The farmer was the only person who was not grinning. He was in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. He would not have hurt a poor insane lad for anything, but he was in momentary fear that D'Arcy might break out and be violent.

He looked round for another seat to change into, but there was a big crowd going to the Horse Show at Balls Bridge, and there was not a single seat, excepting the one beside D'Arcy. And that would have been a change for the worse.

The tram clanged on, and Monty Lowther restrained his peculiar sense of humour for some time. They had

passed the Circular Road by the time the farmer had become interested in his paper again, and it was safe for the humorist of the Shell to push his cane forward once more.

Arthur Augustus gave almost a yell as he felt his silk hat jerked forward over his eyes. He caught it, and jammed it on his head, and tore round. Lowther had only just time to put his cane out of sight and to become interested in a distant view of the Grand Canal.

The farmer was deep in his paper, and did not see D'Arcy turn round. But this seemed to the exasperated swell of St. Jim's merely a dodge to irritate him. He reached over the back of his seat, and dashed the newspaper down.

"Ochone!" ejaculated the startled farmer, suddenly seeing D'Arcy's excited face glaring at him. "Oh! I—ah!"

"You wuffian!"

"Phwat!"

"You fwightful ass!"

"Oh, sorr!"

"I weward you as a dangewous lunatic!"

The farmer knew that it was a peculiar fancy of lunatics to fancy that others were mad instead of themselves. He needed no further convincing that the elegant young gentleman was not right in his head.

"I'm sorry, sorr!" he stammered.

"Will you let my toppah alone?"

"Certainly, sorr—certainly!"

"How dare you touch it!"

"Yes, sorr; no, sorr."

"I weward you as a feahful ass! A man of your yeas ought to know bettah. How dare you play such twicks?"

"Holy smoke!" murmured the farmer. "Shure, I wish the journey was over! Oh, sorr, I'm sorry! I won't touch it again, sorr."

"I wufuse to sit in fwont of you!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "If you cannot wefwain fwom playin' insane twicks on me, I insist upon changin' seats."

"Oh, sorr! Yis, sorr!"

Arthur Augustus came out of his seat, and made room for the farmer to pass him. The stout gentleman rose willingly. He moved forward to take the front seat, but he kept his face to D'Arcy all the time, as if afraid that the swell of St. Jim's might spring upon him.

He backed into the seat like a horse into the shafts of a cart, and sat down with a gasp. Arthur Augustus took the seat behind, breathing wrath.

The tram arrived at Balls Bridge, and the juniors descended. So did nearly all the other passengers, including the farmer. The stout gentleman hopped out and hurried into the grounds, keeping the corner of his eye on Arthur Augustus. The St. Jim's juniors followed him in.

"That man's conduct was uttably wemarkable and outrageous," said Arthur Augustus. "I fail to compwehend it. How a man of his age—"

"What did he do?" grinned Blake.

"Did you not see him continually tiltin' my hat ovah my eyes fwom behind?"

"No."

"Did you, Lowthah?"

"Certainly not!"

"My dear chap, you were sittin' just behind him—"

"Yes, I should have seen it if he did it," said Monty Lowther cheerfully.

"But he didn't."

"You uttah ass—"

"Thanks!"

"You must be off your silly wockah, Lowthah! Do you mean to say that my toppah was not tilted, ovah my eyes?" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's.

"Oh, no! But it wasn't the farmer.

You owe him an apology for being so rude to him."

"Wasn't that the man?" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"No!"

"Then who was it?"

"I did it, daddy! I did it with my little hatchet—I mean with my cane," said the Shell fellow cheerfully.

The juniors roared. The expression upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was irresistible. He glared at Monty Lowther speechlessly. Lowther lifted his cane, and tilted the elegant junior's topper off once more, as if to show how it was done.

"Oh!" gasped D'Arcy. "It was you—"

Monty Lowther nodded.

"Little me!" he agreed.

"You feahful wottah! You have caused me to be guilty of gwoss wudeness to a stwangan!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "But I believe you are wottin'. He admitted doin' it."

"That was only to humour you."

"Wats! Why should he want to humah me?"

"Because he thought you were potty."

"Eh? How could he think that?"

"Well, you see, I thought I ought to give him some explanation of your extraordinary conduct," explained Lowther.

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"You—you told him—"

"Exactly!"

"Bai Jove! I will thwash you—"

Monty Lowther dodged behind the shrieking juniors.

"You'd better go and apologise to the gentleman, I think," he said. "He must have a very bad impression of English manners."

"Bai Jove, yaas! I will thwash you aftahwards."

Arthur Augustus looked round anxiously for the farmer. The stout gentleman was still in sight in the crowd, and D'Arcy hurried after him. He realised that Monty Lowther's little jape had made him most inexcusably rude to a stranger, and he was anxious to explain matters and to apologise.

"Pway stop, my deah sir!" he panted, as he hurried after the stout gentleman.

"I want to speak to you. I—"

The farmer looked round, and saw D'Arcy dashing after him.

His ruddy face went quite pale.

There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that the lunatic had broken out at last, and was about to be violent.

He gazed at D'Arcy for one moment, and then broke into a run. Arthur Augustus, surprised at that peculiar action, put on a burst of speed.

"Pway stop!" he exclaimed. "My deah sir, pway stop!"

But the alarmed farmer did not stop.

He dashed away at full speed, panting for breath, with the swell of St. Jim's panting on his track.

Tom Merry & Co. put their hands to their sides and roared.

Arthur Augustus was tearing on the track of the fleeing farmer, and would have caught him had not two or three people got in the way. Arthur Augustus ran into a couple of sightseers, and sat down suddenly, and when he recovered himself the farmer had disappeared.

The swell of St. Jim's sought him far and wide, but he was gone. Doubtless the much-injured gentleman was congratulating himself upon a fortunate escape from a dangerous lunatic, and Arthur Augustus returned to his comrades, and found them in hysterics. Lord Conway joined the party just in time to save Monty Lowther from assault and battery, from which he could not possibly have defended himself in his convulsed state.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Arthur Augustus Distinguishes Himself.

IT was some time before Arthur Augustus recovered his equanimity. But the Horse Show had the effect of placating him at last. Love of horseflesh was one of D'Arcy's strong points, and in the interest of the great show he was willing to forget and forgive all offences.

The juniors walked round under charge of Lord Conway, and looked at the innumerable horses of various breeds assembled there with unflagging interest.

Lord Conway's own animals came in for a special share of attention, and at the Horse Show, if not in the streets of Dublin, Arthur Augustus was really equal to the task of guide.

What D'Arcy did not know about horses was not worth knowing, and he could tell the points of any animal at a glance.

"Bai Jove!" said the swell of St. Jim's enthusiastically. "I regard this as a wippin' place, you know. We'll have another day heah, dear boys."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "Yaas, I'm weally glad I brougtht you youngstabs to Dublin," remarked the swell of St. Jim's thoughtfully.

"You should have seen Belfast," said Reilly.

"By Jove! What's that?"

There was a sudden uproar and a rush of the crowd. A parade of horses was taking place, and the crowd was very thick, and there was pushing and yelling as the rush started.

"Arrah! Look out!"

"Run!"

"Look out!"

Lord Conway knitted his brows.

"It's a loose horse!" he exclaimed. "The brute is savaging—look at him! Here, get out of the way, you kids—among the trees, here!"

"Bai Jove!"

The crowd was scurrying back in hot haste.

It was a splendid animal that had broken loose—a handsome stallion, a perfect picture of strength and beauty.

The groom lay on the ground, where he had been knocked by the excited animal, and the horse was dashing along at top speed, with a crowd in pursuit.

The noise added to the excitement of the runaway, and it dashed right at the crowd, who broke and ran and yelled in alarm.

With its head tossed up and mane flying, the runaway dashed on directly towards the spot where the St. Jim's juniors were standing.

Tom Merry & Co. dashed for the trees. A crash from the flying hoofs of the runaway would probably have been fatal.

But Arthur Augustus did not move. He set his silk topper back on his head, jammed his eyeglass firmly into his eye, and watched the runaway with perfect coolness.

"Gussy!" roared Blake, from the trees.

"Gussy, you ass! Run!"

"Wats!"

"Gussy!"

"Run, you ass!"

"Wats! I'm going to stop him!"

"My hat! He'll be killed!" exclaimed

Tom Merry.

"Gussy—"

"Arthur—"

Lord Conway and the juniors ran back towards the swell of St. Jim's.

But they were not needed.

The runaway swerved as it came charging down upon the elegant junior, and the swell of St. Jim's made a spring.

In a second he was upon the back of the runaway stallion, though how he had got there seemed a miracle to the onlookers.

There was no saddle upon the horse, not even a cloth, but Arthur Augustus could ride any animal barebacked.

With his knees gripping the flanks of the horse he sat tight, while the surprised and excited stallion pranced and careered furiously.

The juniors halted.

"Great Scott!" gasped Tom Merry.

"The reckless aes!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"It's all right," said Blake. "Gussy can ride anything. It's one of the things he can do. Mind he doesn't ride you down, that's all."

The runaway was careering wildly, but as if he knew he had a master upon his back, his fury spent itself, and as D'Arcy remained firmly seated, the fury of the animal calmed down.

There was a roar of cheering from the crowd, ready, like an Irish crowd at any time, to appreciate good horsemanship.

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus, with a placid smile on his face, rode the horse back to the panting groom.

"Here you are, dear boy!" he said cheerfully.

"Tare an' 'ounds!" gasped the astonished groom. "How did ye do it, sorr?"

Arthur Augustus slipped from the horse as the groom took the bridle.

"It's all wight," he said. "Bai Jove, he's a beauty, and I'd like to wide him!" He patted the horse's glossy neck. "It's all wight, old boy!"

And the recaptured runaway was led away.

Thump!

Arthur Augustus staggered as Tom Merry's appreciative thump landed upon his back.

"Ow! You ass! Yow!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Yawooh!"

"Bravo!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and its a broth av a boy ye are!" shouted Reilly, hugging the swell of St. Jim's. "Faith, and I've niver seen anything like it! Bravo!"

"Pway don't thump me, you silly asses!" gasped D'Arcy. "You can admire me as much as you like, but pway leave me a little bweath!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was ripping of you, Arthur," said Lord Conway quietly; "but he might have savaged you. I thought for a moment his teeth were in your leg."

"Oh, that was all right; he didn't touch me!"

"You might have been killed if you'd slipped when you mounted him."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and have some lunch," said Fatty Wynn. "Excitement makes me hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was the hero of the hour after that. He bore his blushing honours thick upon him with becoming modesty.

The next two days the St. Jim's juniors spent in seeing the sights of the city, and then came the time for them to return to England.

It was with feelings of regret that they bid good-bye to Erin's Isle, but, never theless, one and all agreed that they had had a ripping time, and that they would never, never have cause to regret having spent a holiday in Ireland.

THE END.

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BILLY BUNTER, EDITOR!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Great Wheeze.

BOB CHERRY came out of Study No. 13 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, and walked along the passage whistling cheerily. Bob Cherry's whistle was loud enough, if not particularly sweet; and voices were heard from some of the studies as he passed, requesting him in far from polite terms, to "cluck it!"

Whereat Bob Cherry whistled crescendo, till he arrived at the door of Study No. 1, where he ceased whistling, and kicked at the lower panels.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed, as he tried the door, and found that it would not open. "What's the matter here?"

There was no reply.

Bob Cherry, somewhat puzzled, pushed harder on the door. It yielded an inch or two, showing that it was not locked, and Bob became aware of a foot jammed against it on the inside.

"Hallo, hallo! Why don't you open the door?" he shouted.

"Oh, really, Cherry," said a voice from within, "you can't come in, you know."

"Why not?"

"You see, you don't belong to this study now—"

"Well, I suppose I can give you a look in if I want to?" exclaimed Bob, bestowing a sounding kick upon the door, which made it groan again. "Open the door, you fat young oyster, do you hear?"

But Billy Bunter did not remove his foot from the door.

"I say, you know, you can't come in," he said. "You see—"

"I don't see. Is Wharton there?"

"No."

"Nugent, or Inky?"

"No."

"Then what are you doing that I mustn't see?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What little game are you up to, Bunt?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Open the door!"

"You can't come in, you see."

Bob Cherry breathed hard through his nose.

It was only a few days since he had left Study No. 1, and had been transferred to No. 13, at the other end of the Remove passage.

A certain amount of rivalry had somehow arisen between the two studies, but still, that was no reason why Bob Cherry shouldn't pay a visit to his old quarters if he wanted to.

So Bob thought. He kicked at the door again, and again, but still the stubby boot within remained jammed against the door, and it did not open. It yielded another inch or two, but that was all.

There was a patter of feet in the passage, and Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, came scuttling along. He was Bob Cherry's study-mate in No. 13, with

Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire. He stopped as he saw how Bob was engaged.

"No open?" he asked.

"No," said Bob wrathfully. "That young porpoise, Bunter, has got his hoof against the door. There's something up, I suppose, but, of course, I'm going in."

"What you tinkee?" grinned Wun Lung. "Me open door. What you tinkee?"

He stooped down close to the slit between the door and the jamb, taking a pin from his sleeve. There was barely room to insert his wrist in the opening, but he contrived to do it. Bob Cherry grinned as he watched him. He thought that Billy Bunter would soon be shifted now.

Wun Lung groped within with his slim fingers, and there was a sudden roar in the study.

"Ow!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and pushed at the door. There was no longer any resistance. The door flew open, and Bob strode in. Billy Bunter, with his spectacles nearly falling off his fat little nose, was executing a kind of dance on one leg, and clapping the ankle of the other with both hands.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anything the matter, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry innocently, as he watched the antics of the fat junior.

"Ow! I'm hurt! I'm bleeding to death!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! You beast! Yah! -Ow!"

"You're making a jolly lot of row for a chap at death's door," said Bob heartlessly. "For goodness' sake expire quietly, and make a decent and respectable end. Now, why were you trying to keep me out, you grampus?"

He looked round the study.

Billy Bunter, suddenly forgetting that he was bleeding to death, made a jump towards the table, and dragged a big sheet of blotting-paper over some manuscript sheets that lay there.

"It—it was only a j-joke, Cherry," he stammered. "I didn't really want to keep you out, you know."

"Make an effort and tell the truth for once, old chap," said Bob. "You'll find it easier than you think."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What were you— Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was extremely short-sighted, and although he had covered the sheets with the blotting-paper, as he thought, he had left the end of one of them exposed to full view.

And on that sheet, in big sprawling letters, Bob Cherry read the words:

"BUNTER'S WEEKLY."
"A MAGAZINE FOR THE AMUSEMENT, INSTRUCTION, AND GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF ALL FORMS AT GREYFRIARS SCHOOL."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter peevishly.

Bob Cherry roared with laughter, and Wun Lung doubled up in a paroxysm of silent merriment. It seemed comical to them that Billy Bunter's secret was staring them in the face, so to speak, under Bunter's own eyes, without the fat junior being in the least aware of it.

"What are you cackling at, you silly asses?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bunter's Weekly!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha! What has made you weakly, old chap? Under feeding. I suppose?"

Billy Bunter blinked down at the exposed sheet, and uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"A magazine for the general improvement of Greyfriars," gasped Bob Cherry. "I can see Greyfriars being improved by Billy Bunter. Oh, my hat!"

"Look here, Cherry, you beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not going to scoff that idea, anyway. It's my idea—anyway, it's mine in a way. You see," went on Bunter, more confidentially, "when I was at St. Jim's, they showed me a copy of a school paper they've got there, called 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' and it rushed into my mind at once to start a school paper here. Don't you think it's a ripping idea?"

"Absolutely scorching!"

"I'm thinking of running it on business lines," explained Bunter. "All contributions to the paper to be paid for at advertisement rates, and the name of the author appears on the stuff. Every copy to be sold at a penny, and proceeds to go to the editor for expenses."

"Are you going to ask me to be editor?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Who, then—Wharton?"

"Certainly not."

"Inky?"

"You know jolly well that I shall edit the paper myself, Bob Cherry. It requires a fellow of more than ordinary ability for a thing of that sort. As you're not in our study now, you won't have a hand in it. But I'll tell you what," said Bunter, in a burst of generosity, "if you like to advance the cash required for initial expenses, you shall have a hand in it, and shall be made an honorary sub-editor. I could start the first number on five pounds."

"Make it five hundred," suggested Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Cherry! On second thoughts, I could make five shillings do," said Bunter.

"On third thoughts, you might make it fivepence."

"Oh, really, Cherry! Say sixpence—for a contribution of sixpence you can

have your name on the paper as honorary sub-editor."

"Thanks. I think I'll keep the sixpence. But this wheeze of a school paper isn't a bad one," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "The idea crossed my mind when Tom Merry was over here, and he told me about his paper. I've a jolly good mind to take it up."

"You've a jolly good mind to take up my idea! Look here, Cherry—"

"My dear ass—"

"It's my wheeze."

"Oh, I'll make you an honorary sub-editor!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Besides, as you have so politely and delicately pointed out, I don't belong to this study now, and it's open to me to borrow the wheezes from Study No. 1 if I like. Come on, Wun Lung, old chap. We'll start a school paper, and call it the 'Wun Lung Weekly.'"

"What you tinck?"

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

But Bob Cherry and the little Chinese were gone. Billy Bunter blinked after them, and then blinked at the heading of "Bunter's Weekly."

"The beast!" he murmured. "I won't stand it! I'll—I'll—Hallo!"

Three juniors came into the study—Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, otherwise known as "Inky." Wharton hurled his cricket-bat into a corner.

"Tea!" he said.

"Tea!" said Nugent.

"Tea!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Tea!" roared three voices together.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.
No Contributors**

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the chums of Study No. 1. He had intended to keep his great idea dark till the first number of the school paper was sketched out, and all ready for the first contributions, when he hoped to spring it on the Remove, and gather in a harvest of small silver by means of his original idea of making contributors pay for the publication of their stories. But there was the heading of "Bunter's Weekly" plain for all to see.

"What on earth have you got the table lumbered up with this rubbish for?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Don't you know it's past tea-time?"

"Are you ill, Billy?" asked Nugent sympathetically.

"Ill? No!"

"The esteemed Bunter must be rather rocky somewhere," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "He has actually forgotten the time of a meal! It is marvellous!"

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"What's this rot?" asked Frank Nugent, staring at the headline on the sheet of manuscript. "'Bunter's Weekly!' What the— Who the— How the—"

"'Bunter's Weekly!' Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The laughfulness is terrific. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"'Bunter's Weekly!' gasped Nugent, holding it up. "A magazine for the—"

"Amusement, instruction, and general improvement— Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Wharton.

"Of all the esteemed Forms at Greyfriars!" grinned Hurree Singh.

Billy Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a jolly good idea to start a school paper!" growled Billy Bunter. "I'm

just the chap to edit one, too. You want a powerful intellect and a wide grasp of all sorts of subjects to be a successful editor. That's just where I come out strong. If you fellows like to put down your names as honorary sub-editors, I can let you have the positions for the moderate charge of five shillings."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, do stop cackling! Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Bob Cherry has just been here, and he has boned the idea. He's going to start a school paper himself. If you chaps were decent enough to stand by a chap in your own study, you'd snatch him baldheaded, and jolly soon stop him."

"Oh, rats! Let's have tea!"

"I've no time to think of tea now," said Billy Bunter loftily. "I'm not one of the chaps who spend their whole time in thinking about their meals, like some chaps I could name. I've had a snack, while I was drawing up the leading article of the 'Weekly,' and I don't want any tea."

shall have to get it fixed up as soon as I can," said Bunter. "I'm going round canvassing for contributors. Sure you fellows wouldn't like to come in on the ground floor?"

"Quite sure, thanks!"

"Well, I'll be off. I think you're missing a big chance, but it's your own lookout."

And Billy Bunter gathered up the scribbled sheets, and left the study. The chums of No. 1 burst into a laugh.

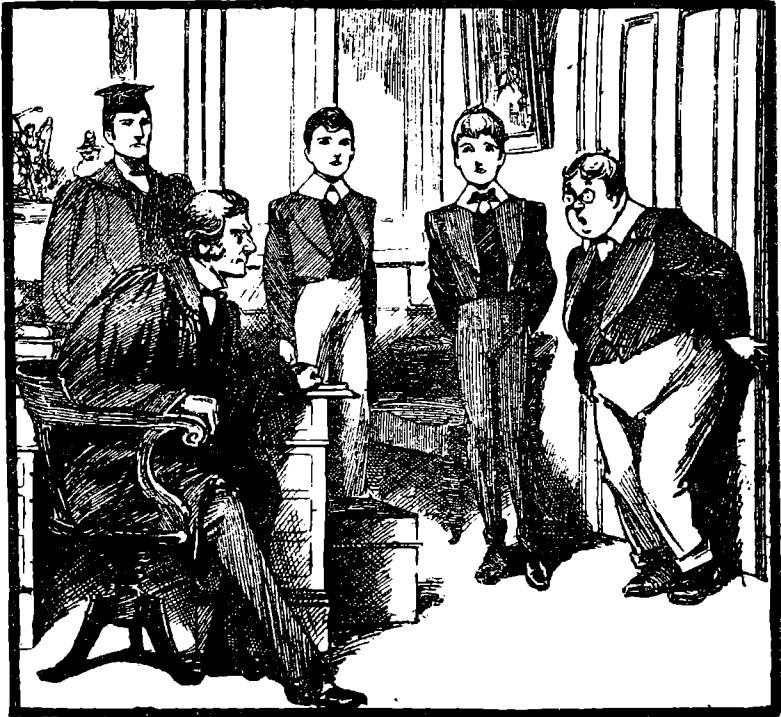
"So this is the latest," grinned Nugent; "Bunter as an editor! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a bad idea about the paper, though," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "A school paper is a jolly good idea, and we might make something of it."

"The goodness of the esteemed idea is terrific!"

"Bunter's taking it jolly seriously to miss his tea over it," grinned Nugent. "I'm not going to miss mine."

He pulled open the door of the cup-



"Bunter, you are not telling the truth!" thundered Dr. Locke, in a voice that made Billy Bunter jump clear of the study carpet.

The three juniors stared at him.

"You don't want any tea?"

"No. I could do with some, but I can't bother about it now," said Bunter.

"Now, I shall want contributions for the first number of the 'Weekly.' All contributions have to be paid for by the contributor at the rate of a shilling a column. Would you fellows like to put your names down first?"

"No, thanks!"

"The price will probably be raised later. There is bound to be a rush on the space of this splendid, up-to-date, and widely-circulated paper—ahem!—upon this paper which will shortly be widely circulated, I mean. You'd better not miss the chance."

"I'd rather see that we don't miss tea. Get that rubbish off the table."

"I've finished with the table. Now that Cherry knows about the paper, I

board where the study provisions were kept.

"Hallo! Have you moved the things?"

"No; they're there."

"They're not."

"Yes; there's the ham, and the cold beef, and the hard-boiled eggs—"

"They're gone!"

"The cold pudding, and the cake—"

"Gone!"

"The bananas—"

"Gone!"

"Then what on earth is left?"

"Nothing!" roared Nugent.

"Phew! Bunter said he had had a snack."

"No wonder he didn't want his tea!" howled Nugent. "The young wolf has scoffed the lot! Now, what are we going to do? It's too late for tea in Hall."

Harry Wharton laughed. "We shall have to get it in some other study, I suppose. Where can we invite ourselves?"

"Shall we give Bob a turn?"
"Good idea!"

There was nothing else to be done. Bunter had doubtless taken a series of snacks while he was engaged upon the planning of the first number of "Bunter's Weekly." At all events, the cupboard was bare, and there was hardly a crumb left for the chums of Study No. 1, who had come in very sharp set from cricket practice.

The three chums left No. 1, and hurried along the Remove passage. Bob Cherry's new study was at the other end. Billy Bunter was standing in the doorway of Bulstrode's study, and they heard him speaking in persuasive tones as they came along.

Wharton immediately fastened a finger and thumb on Bunter's fat ear. The junior squirmed.

"What have you done with the grub?" demanded Harry.

"Ow! I've eaten it, of course! Wow! I was hungry, and I had to have a snack to keep up my strength for my literary work. Yow!"

Billy Bunter wriggled out of Wharton's grasp, and rubbed his crimsoned ear ruefully.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, scat! We're going to get some grub with Bob Cherry. Blessed if I know why the Head couldn't take you out of the study instead of Bob!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you fellows, if you're going to tea with Cherry, I'll join you. I'm feeling pretty hungry!"

And Billy Bunter, leaving his canvassing for contributors over for the present, followed the chums of the Remove towards No. 13. Harry Wharton tapped and tried the door, but it was locked. A cheery voice was heard within.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's there?"

"We are! Have you had tea?"

"Yes, long ago."

"Got anything left?"

"Not a crumb."

"Rats! You might let a fellow in, anyway!"

"Can't be did. I'm busy, getting out the first number of my new paper, 'Cherry's Weekly.'"

"What!" roared Bunter. "Your new paper! My new paper! Yah! Beast! You've boned my idea! Yah!"

"Don't interrupt me, Bunter, with that row! Surely you know that an editorial office ought to be quiet and undisturbed. You will make my leading article rocky!"

"Yah!" roared Bunter, through the keyhole. "It's my wheeze! Yah!"

"Oh, get away!"

"Yah! It's my idea! You've boned it! Yah!"

"You can contribute to the paper, if you like. I accept all contributions at the reasonable rate of a shilling a column, either poetry or prose. After to-day an extra charge will be made for poetry, so you had better close at once!"

"Yah!"

Wharton and his friends retreated, laughing heartily. Whether Bob Cherry was in earnest or not, they did not know, but Billy Bunter was boiling with indignation. He yelled and roared through the keyhole, and Bob Cherry soon ceased to reply, and Bunter desisted at last.

"The beast!" he muttered. "I'll jolly well mess up his precious 'Cherry's Weekly' for him! Cherry, you rotter, open this door! Look here. I'll go into partnership with you if you like. If you care to stand the expense, I'll edit the

paper for nothing, and only have two-thirds of the profits!"

There was no reply to this generous offer. Billy Bunter kicked at the door, but there was no reply to that, either, except a subdued chuckle, which he recognised as Wun Lung's.

But suddenly a new expression came over Bunter's face. Since Bunter had developed his powers as a ventriloquist he had succeeded in many a little jape, for though most of the Lower School knew what he could do, they were not always prepared for it.

And as a ventriloquist and an imitator of voices, Billy Bunter was certainly very clever. As a rule, it was safe to take, as Bob Cherry put it, a hundred per cent. off his statements of what he could do; but there was one thing he could do, and do well, and that was ventriloquism.

He walked away very noisily down the passage, and there was a chuckle in No. 13 as the juniors there heard him go. Bunter grinned, and stole back on tip-toe, and opened the door of the box-room at the end of the passage, which was only half a dozen paces from the door of No. 13. This was to make all ready for a sudden retreat. Then he tapped at the door of No. 13.

"Hallo! Open this door!"

Bob Cherry jumped up from his table; for it was the voice of Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, his study-mate, and Bob Cherry made haste to open the door.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry is Not to be Taken In.

"COME in, kid!" said Bob Cherry, as he threw open the door of the study. "We're busy, and you can help. We're starting a new— Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry stared into the passage. It was empty.

The junior gazed up and down, greatly puzzled. Mark Linley was not the fellow to play a trick of that sort on him, and he wondered where the junior from Lancashire had got to.

He closed the door of the study and locked it again, and sat down at the table. The table was littered with papers, and the floor was pretty thickly strewn. Bob Cherry was hard at work.

The fellows in the Remove seemed to expect No. 13 to keep its end up against No. 1, and the new Co. had soon fallen into the way of it. The idea of a school paper, published in No. 13 before No. 1 had time to take it up, appealed very strongly to Bob Cherry.

He had set to work at once, ably seconded by Wun Lung, and the result was that scribbled sheets lay all over the study. The table, the floor, and the shelf were all covered by this time, and about half the sheets were crumpled up, Bob being dissatisfied with them. The new paper had cost a considerable sum in foolscap already, but the young editor was too enthusiastic to even think about that.

"Blessed if I can get on with this leading article!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Listen to this, kid, and stop grinning!"

"Mc listen."

"We have the honour of presenting the first number of 'Cherry's Weekly' to an expectant public. We trust that the first number will be received—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Tap!

"Open the door, Bob!"

It was Mark Linley's voice again. "Go away!" roared Bob. "That door's not going to be opened! You should have come in when you had the chance!"

And he went on reading.

"We trust that the first number will be received with approbation by our vast and numerous circle of readers, and that they will—"

Tap! Tap!

"Open this door!"

"My hat! It's Quelch!"

Bob Cherry made one bound to the door, and threw it open.

Then he blinked in amazement at the empty passage.

There was no one to be seen. Yet Bob Cherry had plainly heard the familiar, metallic tones of the master of the Remove.

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

"What do you think of that, kid?"

Wun Lung grinned.

"Me savvy! Buntel playee tick!"

"How do you mean?"

"Ventriloquist!"

"Oh! Fancy my not thinking of that before!" said Bob savagely, slamming the door. "But I was half-expecting to see Quelch, you know, because I haven't shown up some lines he particularly wanted to see by tea-time. How can a chap do lines when he's editing a paper, I'd like to know?" He locked the door. "That door's jolly well going to stop shut now, whoever comes to it!"

And Bob Cherry sat down at the table again, and picked up the rough draft of the leading article of the school paper. There were a good many rough drafts crumpled up on the floor already.

"And that they will appreciate our efforts, and not grudge the small sum of one penny, which will purchase a copy of the new paper." That sounds all right?"

"Allee lightee!"

"Contributions may be submitted to the Editorial Office, No. 13, Remove Passage. All contributions must be written on both sides of the paper only."

Tap, tap! A hand tried the handle of the door outside.

Bob Cherry glared at the door.

"Go away!" roared the amateur editor.

"Open the door!"

It was the Remove-master's voice.

But Bob Cherry, of course, was not to be taken in this time.

"Cut off, you ass!" he shouted.

"What!"

"Get away!"

"Cherry!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Are you insane, Cherry? Open this door at once!"

"Rats!"

The handle was rattled furiously.

"Open this door! Upon my word! Cherry, open this door, or—or I will have you punished severely!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Do you know who I am, Cherry?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather! It's because I know who you are that I'm not going to let you in fathead!"

"What!"

"Oh, run away and play!" said Bob Cherry impatiently. "I'm busy! Go and eat coke! Go and chop chips! Buzz off!"

"Boy, open this door!"

"Rats!"

"Open this door at once!"

"More rats!"

"I—I think you must be insane, Cherry. Before I report this extraordinary conduct to the doctor, I will give you one more chance. I command you to open this door! I have come to see about the imposition you have not shown up, as directed by me. Will you open this door instantly, Cherry, or will you not?"

"Doesn't he do it wonderfully?" grinned Bob Cherry. "I should really think it was Quelch talking, you know."

if I did not know how well that young bouncer can imitate a chap's voice."

"Will you open this door or not?"

"Not!"

"Boy, what does this mean?"

Bob Cherry rose quietly from the table, and took up the inkpot. Wun Lung watched him, with a grin.

"Look here!" whispered Bob. "I've had enough of this old buck! You unlock the door quietly, and whisk it open, kid, and I'll bung the ink in his chivvy before he has time to dodge! See! I think, perhaps, he'll let us alone after that."

"Ha, ha! Me savvy!"

"Quelch, then!"

The juniors stepped quietly to the door. Wun Lung silently turned the key, and Bob Cherry raised his hand with the inkpot in it, and stood ready to hurl the contents at the troublesome individual outside the door.

"Now, then!"

The door whisked open.

Bob's arm swept through the air, and the stream of ink shot full upon the figure outside. There was a shout.

"Oh! Upon my word!"

Bob Cherry staggered back into the study.

"My only hat! It's Quelch!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Wrong Man

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, stood in the doorway, petrified. His gown and his face were liberally splashed with ink, for the inkpot had been full, and Bob had expended the whole of the contents in that dexterous throw.

The Form-master's aspect would have been comical to indifferent eyes, but Bob Cherry did not see anything funny in it. He was overcome with horror at what he had done.

He staggered back into the study, and caught at the table for support, his eyes fastened in a sort of fascinated stare upon the inky face of the Remove-master.

Mr. Quelch!

Wun Lung, with a gasp of terror, squirmed under the table, and stayed there. Mr. Quelch was speechless for some moments.

He found his voice at last.

"Boy, are you mad?"

"Oh, sir, I—I—"

"Cherry, you—you must be insane! You—you have assaulted me, your Form-master! You will be expelled for this, sir—expelled! Expelled!" roared Mr. Quelch, his anger rising. "Yes, sir, expelled from Greyfriars for this unheard-of outrage!"

"Oh, sir, I'm sorry! I—"

"I dare say you are sorry, Cherry! I have no doubt of it. But you will be sorer yet, shortly!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"But I—I—I—"

"Me solly, too!" piped Wun Lung, blinking out from under the table. "Me no tinkee—"

"I'm awfully sorry, sir! You see—"

"Not a word!" Mr. Quelch dabbed the ink from his face with his handkerchief. "Not a word, Cherry! I go to the Head to report this matter. Prepare yourself to follow me there! You will be expelled!"

"Oh, sir, I—I didn't know it was you!"

"Do not attempt to excuse yourself by falsehood, Cherry! You know my voice; you knew it was I! Not a word!"

"But, really, sir—"

"Enough!"

Mr. Quelch stalked away in a towering

passion, as was natural under the circumstances.

Bob Cherry dropped helplessly into a chair, and gazed at Wun Lung, who put his head out cautiously from under the table, and gazed back at him.

"M-m-my only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Fancy it being Quelch! That is all the fault of that young villain Bunter! He was at it first!"

"Allee light!"

"Quelch will report this to the Head. My hat! I shall be kicked out! He won't listen to reason!" groaned Bob Cherry. "All through starting to edit a rotten school paper. It was a rotten idea at the start. What on earth do we want with a rotten school paper. You might have had more sense, Wun Lung, really!"

Wun Lung stared, as well he might.

"What you talker? Me!"

"Yes, you! What did you want to start a rotten paper for?" growled Bob Cherry. "It's all through that piffle!"

"Me no staltee! You staltee!"

"Oh, don't begin to argue about it now! The mischief's done, anyway. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you fellows want?"

Several Removites were gathering round the door. They stared in on Bob Cherry with expressions of amazement, mingled with admiration.

"Well, you did slang him a treat!" said Bulstrode. "But what on earth made you do it? You must have known he'd be wild."

"And, slamming the ink on his chivvy, too!" said Skinner. "It was all right as a jape. But that sort of thing means the sack."

"Yes, rather!" remarked Ogilvy.

"Blessed if I can understand you, Bob Cherry! Were you particularly anxious to be kicked out of Greyfriars?"

"Oh, dry up, you dunmies!" growled Bob crossly. "I didn't know it was Quelch, of course!"

Bulstrode shook his head.

"That won't wash!" he remarked.

"You know his toot."

"Yes; draw it mild, Cherry!"

"I thought it was Bunter imitating his voice!" howled the exasperated Bob.

"Can you understand now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at, you rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No good telling that to Quelch, I'm afraid," said Skinner, wiping his eyes. "You'd better confess you've been drinking, and—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"What's the row here?" asked Harry Wharton, coming into the study.

"Quelch has just gone past No. 1 like a whirlwind, with ink all over his face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulstrode.

Bob Cherry explained. Harry Wharton did not laugh. It was funny enough, in a sense, but he realised how serious it was for Bob. Unless Mr. Quelch could be made to believe that Bob had acted mistakenly, it was certain expulsion for the unfortunate junior. And it was useless for Bob only to explain. Without being unnaturally suspicious, Mr. Quelch might regard the explanation as a cock-and-bull story. It would be necessary to adduce proof—and Harry knew that. There was only one way—through Bunter.

"Nice state of affairs, ain't it?" groaned Bob Cherry. "I'm going to be expelled—all through that fat young oyster and his rotten school paper!"

"Bunter will have to explain to Quelch."

"Catch him!"

"He'll have to—and prove it, too."

Hallo! What do you want, young Green?"

Green, of the Third Form, was pushing his way through the crowd in the Remove passage. He put his head into the study.

"Cherry's wanted."

"Who wants him?"

"The Head."

"Oh! Where?"

"Head's study. He's to come at once."

And Green walked away whistling, apparently unconcerned by the excitement in the Remove. The juniors ceased to laugh as Bob Cherry rose, with a very gloomy expression on his face.

"I shall have to go," he remarked.

"I say, this is rotten," said Nugent anxiously. "We shall have to get Quelch somehow."

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

"We'll make Bunter clear it up," said Wharton. "Does anybody know where the young rotter is?"

"Hiding himself, of course."

"You fellows hunt for him; he's got to be found."

"Right-ho!" said Hazeldene. "Scatter up and down the passage, you chaps. Bunter can't be far off."

Bob Cherry went to the door. Harry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Keep your pecker up, Bob. I'll make Bunter come and own up to the Head."

Bob Cherry nodded gloomily.

"All right, old chap."

And he went his way to the Head's study. Harry Wharton and his chums joined in the search for Bunter. Although No. 1 and No. 13 had become rival studies, the old friendship was just the same at bottom, and Wharton meant to leave no stone unturned to save Bob from the consequences of his unfortunate mistake.

Bob Cherry made his way slowly and heavily to the Head's study. He knew what to expect there, and he was in no hurry to face it. He could hardly expect his explanation to be believed, unless it was backed up by Bunter—perhaps not then. And he knew Bunter too well to expect him to run the slightest risk for anybody else's sake. Bob Cherry felt that all was lost, and his heart was heavy as he tapped at the door of the Head's study.

"Come in!"

Dr. Locke's voice was unusually deep and stern. Bob Cherry felt a fresh sinking at the heart as he opened the door and went in.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon the junior. Mr. Quelch was in the study, his face still blotched with the ink. His eyes were glinting.

"Cherry!" Dr. Locke's voice was like a knife. "I have heard a most astounding complaint from Mr. Quelch. Have you anything to say, any defence to make, before I decide to expel you from the school for an assault upon a Form-master?"

"Ye-es, sir. I—I—I'm sorry—"

"That is not to the point. You are naturally sorry now that you are face to face with the consequences of your ruffianly action."

"It—it was a mistake, sir."

"What!"

"I—I didn't know it was Mr. Quelch, sir."

"Nonsense!" said the Remove-master. "I had spoken to him through the door, a dozen times or more, Dr. Locke."

"Yes, sir, but—but—"

"Do you mean to say that you did not know Mr. Quelch's voice, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir; but—but I thought it was another chap imitating his voice, sir."

"Indeed! Extraordinary! What other boy?"

Bob Cherry was silent.

"Come, Cherry! You say that another boy had the astounding impertinence to imitate Mr. Quelch—for if he had not done so, you could not suppose that when Mr. Quelch spoke it was this imitator."

"Yes, sir."

"Who was the boy?"

The junior did not speak. He realised that by doing so he might get Bunter into serious trouble.

"You cannot answer, Cherry?"

"I—I—I'd rather not, sir."

"That is not the question. I order you to do so. If there is any truth in your extraordinary statement, I must see the boy and question him."

There was silence again. It was broken by a sound of hurried footsteps in the passage without. And then a heavy body crashed against the door of the Head's study, and it was burst open.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Close Shave for Bob Cherry.

DR. LOCKE started to his feet.

"Bless my soul! What is that?"

"Ow! I'm hurt!"

"Bunter! Wharton—"

"If you please, sir, Bunter has come to confess," said Harry.

"Confess! What?"

"About the mistake he caused Cherry to make, sir. Dr. Locke is waiting for you to explain, Billy."

"Ow! I'm hurt! Ow!"

"Get up, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir." Bunter scrambled to his feet. "I've had such a fearful shock, sir, that I can't remember anything that occurred, sir."

"Bunter, what do you know about this matter?"

"Nothing, sir!" said Bunter promptly.

"I wasn't in the box-room when Mr. Quelch was talking to Cherry through the door, sir, and I didn't hear him say anything. In fact, I didn't know he was there."

"Where were you, then?"

"In the box— I mean, I forget, sir."

"Bunter, you are not telling the truth!" thundered Dr. Locke, in a voice that made Billy Bunter jump clear of the carpet.

"O-o-o-oh, sir! I always tell the truth, sir. I was brought up strictly, sir. I've never told a whopper in my life, sir. My father always used to lick me when I told one, sir."

"Bunter, have you been imitating Mr. Quelch's voice, to lead Cherry to suppose that it was his Form-master speaking to him outside his study, when it was really yourself?"

"No, sir! Certainly not, sir! I wouldn't think of such a thing! I couldn't imitate Mr. Quelch's voice, sir! Besides, Cherry ought to have known that it was Mr. Quelch speaking the second time. I should have known."

"The second time! Then it was you speaking the first time?" exclaimed the Head.

"Yes, sir—I—I mean no, sir. I wasn't speaking at all—in fact, I wasn't on the spot! I was feeling so sleepy, sir, that I was taking a little snooze in the box-room, and I didn't know anything about the matter till long afterwards."

"What! It did not happen ten minutes ago!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean, sir, I—I—I—"

"You are telling falsehoods, Bunter!" said Dr. Locke sternly. "You have contradicted yourself several times already."

"Oh, no, sir! You don't understand, that's all, sir. You see—"

"I wish justice to be done," said Dr. Locke. "If I had reason to believe that

Cherry really thought a trick was being played upon him by a mischievous junior, and did not know that he was throwing the ink at Mr. Quelch, it would make a great difference."

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch. "I should be far from wishing to punish severely a mistake, however careless. An imposition would meet the case."

"Exactly. Now, Bunter, tell me the truth, and if I am satisfied that your explanation is veracious, I shall not punish you in any way."

"Oh!" said Billy, gasping with relief. "Why didn't you say that at first, sir? I can remember exactly what happened now, sir. I wanted Cherry to open the door, sir, so I imitated Mr. Quelch's voice. I'm an awfully good ventriloquist, sir, and I can imitate voices a treat. And—then Mr. Quelch came along, and I thought he would be waxy, so I bunked—I mean, I slithered into the box-room, sir—"

"And when I spoke at the door, Cherry naturally imagined that it was you speaking again!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Yes, sir. He was an awful ass, sir."

"Ahem! If you imitated Mr. Quelch's voice, then, you can do so now, as a proof that you are telling the truth," said Dr. Locke. "I am afraid that I cannot place the slightest reliance on any statement you make without corroborate evidence, Bunter."

"Yes, sir. I can imitate any voice that's a little out of the common, sir—anything that has any characteristic a fellow can grasp, I mean. Mr. Quelch has a sort of raspy sound in his voice that makes it easy—"

Mr. Quelch turned pink as he heard a suppressed chuckle from the passage.

"That will do, Bunter," said Dr. Locke hurriedly.

"Yes, sir. I'll give you the imitation with pleasure, sir."

And Bunter reproduced Mr. Quelch's voice with so much fidelity that the Head started.

"Now, then, what are you juniors doing there? Get to your studies at once!"

There was a sound of scuffling feet in the passage.

So faithful was the imitation that the crowd outside really believed that it was Mr. Quelch speaking, and they ran off at once. The Head heard them go, and he could not but be satisfied with that unexpected proof.

Bunter grinned gleefully.

"You heard that, sir! If you like I'll give you a series of imitations. I'm awfully clever at that sort of thing, and—"

"That will do, Bunter. I am satisfied that you have spoken the truth for once. Cherry, you acted in a very hasty and thoughtless manner, but I exonerate you from the blame of throwing the ink over a master. I am sure you believed it to be this foolish and impertinent junior."

"Oh, really, sir!"

"Silence, Bunter! You will take five hundred lines for your carelessness, Cherry, and I hope it will be a lesson to you to think before you act on another occasion. You may go. As for you, Bunter, I have promised not to punish you, and I shall keep my word. But if I hear of your venturing to imitate a master's voice again, I promise you equally faithfully that I shall give you a caning that will cause you to remember the occasion for a very long time to come. You may go."

"Oh, really, sir, I—"

"Leave my study!"

And Billy Bunter went.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Claims His Reward—and Gets It!

HARRY WHARTON linked arms with Bob Cherry as the latter came out of Dr. Locke's study. Bob was still looking very serious. He knew that he had had a narrow escape, and he pressed Wharton's arm as they went down the passage.

"Good for you, Harry," he said, in a low voice. "If you hadn't brought that fat young beast here I should have been done for. It was only that that got me off."

"Thank goodness you did get off!" said Wharton, with a deep breath. "Lucky the Head was willing to listen to reason."

"Yes; he's really an old sport," said Nugent. "So is Quelch. As for that ass Bunter, he ought to be scalped!"

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter came trotting after the Removites—"I say, it's all right now! I've got you off, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry glared at him.

"Oh!" he grunted. "You've got me off, have you?"

"Yes, certainly! You were really an ass, you know, to think that it wasn't Quelch. I suppose it was really a mistake?"

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"You didn't really know it was Quelch—eh?" chuckled Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry's brow became as black as a thundercloud, but the short-sighted junior did not see it.

"Didn't you hear me tell the Head so?"

"Oh, yes; but you would naturally put it that way, of course. You didn't want to be expelled. I say, it was jolly lucky for you I had the pluck to own up!"

"You had the what?"

"The pluck!" said Bunter firmly. "Wharton thought I should get a licking, but I said I didn't care—"

"My hat!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, perhaps I didn't put it exactly like that," said Bunter hastily. "I—I meant that I didn't care, and that it was no use trying to hold me back, because I was determined to go to the Head's study and own up!"

"My word!" murmured Nugent. "You ought to be a poet, or a journalist, or something. Bunter. You've the imagination to run a Press agency!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! You see, I was really bound to own up. It was the manly thing to do. But there are lots of fellows who wouldn't have done it. I ran a jolly big risk in getting Cherry off, but I didn't mind that a bit. I think that Cherry ought to stand something in return, but that's for him to decide."

"I'm standing something," said Bob Cherry. "I'm standing you! Lots of fellows couldn't."

"Oh, really, you know! If you wanted to stand me a feed, for instance, I shouldn't refuse. I think you might stand me a feed. I've been through a trying time, and anything of that sort always makes me hungry. I need keeping up. I saw Wun Lung take some strawberry jam and treacle into your study this afternoon. Of course, I don't mean to say that I want any reward for owning up to the Head in a manly way. But if you thought you owed me something in return—"

Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed.

"So I do," he replied. "I certainly think I owe you something, Bunter. Come to my study. You shall have all the jam and all the treacle."

"Right you are!" said Bunter, with alacrity. "I'm rather fond of jam, and

I like treacle. This is very decent of you, Cherry."

"Yes, isn't it!" said Bob grimly. "Come along!"

"I'm coming. I say, Wharton, you're coming? You can have some of the jam. If you'd like to make it up to me, you can stand me some tarts at the tuckshop afterwards. Why, he gone! Nugent—Ho's gone, too!"

Wharton and Nugent had walked away chuckling. They guessed that Bob Cherry had something in store for the fatuous Billy, but they did not feel inclined to interfere. Bunter, as he said himself, deserved a reward for the way he had owned up.

Bob Cherry entered his study with the expectant Billy at his heels.

Wun Lung had waited there, and he was looking very anxious. Mark Linley was there, too, with a shade of anxiety on his face, but they both brightened up at the sight of Bob's cheery countenance.

"Is it all right?" asked Linley.

"Yes, rather!"

"Wun Lung glad," said the little Chinese, "allice lightce."

"You see, Billy Bunter owned up about the rotten trick he played in the manly way that one would naturally expect of him," said Bob Cherry. "I've promised him the jam and the treacle in return."

Wun Lung grinned.

He read more in Bob Cherry's expression than the Owl of the Remove thought of reading there.

"Allice light," he murmured.

"Get out the jam and treacle, Wun Lung."

"Me savvy."

Billy Bunter blinked with satisfaction as the little Chinese brought out a jar of treacle and a flat dish of jam.

"I say, you fellows, this is decent of you. I never really get enough to eat in Study No. 1. Wharton keeps me awfully short."

"Will you start with the jam or the treacle?" asked Bob Cherry politely.

"I think I'll start with the jam, Cherry. It looks awfully nice. I—Oh! What on earth are you up to? O-o-o-o-och!"

Bob Cherry slammed the dish of jam upside down on Bunter's head. It ran down over his ears, and he gave a wild yell. He clawed at it with his hands, and drew them away, jammy and sticky.

"Oh! Ow! Yow! What are you doing? Oh!"

"Take the treacle now, Bunt!"

"Ow!" gasped Billy, making a break for the door. "Oh, you beast! I—O-o-h!"

Bob Cherry jerked him back with one hand, and with the other emptied the jar of treacle upon the fat, alarmed face.

Billy Bunter spluttered and yelled.

"Now, you young oyster!" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones. "You wanted something in the way of reward for your owning up, and I promised you the jam and treacle. You've got 'em!"

"Ow—wow—yow!"

"Now you can cut. If you give me any more of your giddy ventriloquism, or any more of your manly way of owning up, this is only a joke to what you'll get next time. Cut!"

And Bob Cherry led Billy Bunter to the door and bestowed a gentle kick to start him, and the fat junior went dizzily down the passage.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The First Number of "Cherry's Weekly."

BILLY BUNTER wore a thoughtful expression in class the following morning. His random answers to some of Mr. Quelch's remarks brought him lines galore; but Bunter never worried about lines.

He seldom did them himself. Bunter was thinking over his grand idea, and he naturally had no time to bestow much attention upon such trivial matters as vulgar fractions and Latin prose.

Once or twice he looked towards Bob Cherry, when Bob wasn't looking at him— as he thought—and grinned. As a matter of fact, he was too short-sighted to see that more than once Bob caught his grin, and stared at him in return. Bunter seemed to be enjoying a joke all to himself, and Bob wondered what it was.

When morning school was dismissed, Bob Cherry did not immediately burst out into the Close with a shout, as usual. He hurried away towards Study No. 13. "Cherry's Weekly" was the attraction. Bob had taken up the idea quite seriously, and he was determined that "Cherry's Weekly" should appear before any rival paper could make its appearance.

Harry Wharton and Nugent strolled out into the Close, and Billy Bunter, for

knew anything about business, you would understand that, Inky. I can't get on with it just now, as I want a stroll before dinner, and—here, hurry up, or we shall lose Wharton."

The nabob looked at him in surprise. "Is it necessary to keep the esteemed Wharton in sight?" he asked.

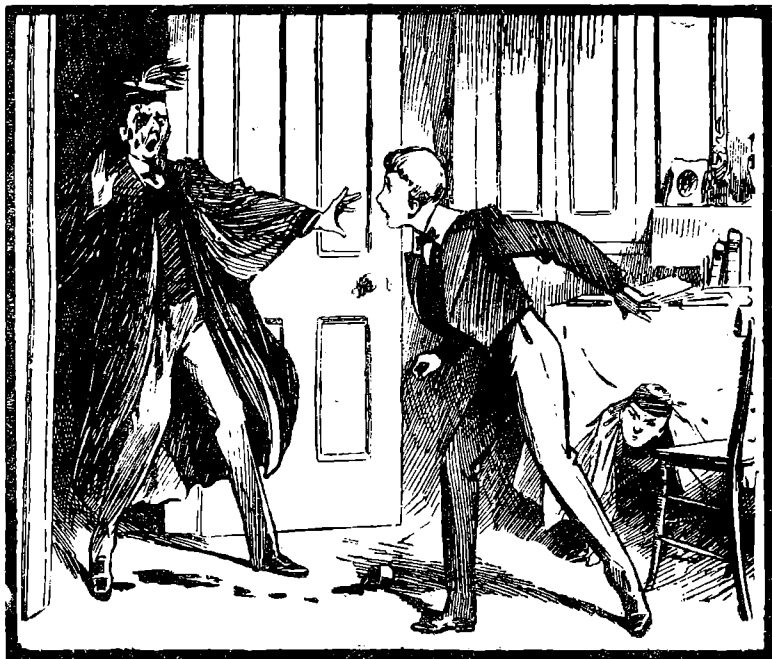
"Yes, rather; I'm expecting Cherry—I—I mean, I want to speak to Wharton. What are you staring at, Inky?"

"The esteemed Cherry," said Hurree Singh, looking towards the School House with an expression of amazement on his dusky features. "He appears to be labouring under the great excitement."

Billy Bunter gave a gasp, and scuttled after Wharton, and poked himself in between Harry and Nugent. They looked down at him.

"What do you want?"

"N-n-nothing; but—but I think Cherry wants to speak to you. He seems excited about something," stammered Billy Bunter.



Bob Cherry's arm swept through the air, and a stream of ink shot full upon the figure in the doorway. The next moment Bob gave a gasp. "My only hat! It's Quelch!"

some reason best known to himself, kept close at their heels. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh tapped the fat junior upon the shoulder.

"What of the esteemed mag that my fat friend is editorially producing?" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Is the first number readyful?"

"Oh, really, Inky, there's a lot of work to be put into it yet, and I haven't collected any of the subscriptions," said Bunter. "If you like to pay your subscription now—"

"The thankfulness is great, but the excusefulness is terrific!"

"Early subscribers get the paper at a reduction. I can let you have it for five shillings a year, all cash to be paid strictly in advance."

"The ratfulness is terrific. I will expend the sum of one penny on the paper first numberfully, when it is producefully published."

"Well, it will take some time, and I require money to work with. If you

The Removites looked round. Bob Cherry certainly did seem excited about something. He had come out of the House at a run, and was glaring up and down and round about the Close as if in search of someone; and his expression seemed to imply that something painful would happen to that someone when Bob Cherry sighted him.

He caught sight of Billy Bunter, who seemed to be trying to make himself as small as possible behind Wharton, and came racing over towards him.

"I—I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, "you—you'll stand by a fellow in your own study, won't you?"

"Of course!" said Harry. "But what's the matter?"

"Where's that young villain?" roared Bob Cherry. "Come out, Bunter; you're too fat to hide behind Wharton, you young ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" said Bunter. Dodging round Wharton as Bob Cherry. THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 253.

chased him. "I—I say, you fellows, stop him; he's dangerous!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Wharton, as the two dodged round and round him, bumping him in turn, Bob Cherry in hot chase of Billy Bunter. "You'll have me over soon! You're making me giddy! What's the row?"

"I'm going to squash that fat beetle."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Come here, you fat young burglar! Stop!"

"Here, you stop!" said Harry, seizing Bob by the shoulder, and forcing him to halt. "You can't play 'Here-we-go-round-the-mulberry-bush,' with me for the mulberry bush! What is the matter?"

"The young reprobate has been in my study," roared Bob Cherry. "The first number of 'Cherry's Weekly'—"

"The which?"

"The first number of the new school paper. It was almost finished last evening, and I got into a row through leaving my prep undone to do it. And it was left on my table. Somebody dodged into my study this morning and messed it up. Look here!"

Bob Cherry flourished a roll of manuscript under Harry's nose.

Harry looked at it. As Bob flattened it out he read on the front page 'Cherry's Weekly. A Journal Devoted to the Amusement and Instruction of Greyfriars.'

But there was no more to be seen, for the manuscript volume would not open. Each page had been dabbed to the next with secotone, and it was possible only to turn the corners of the leaves.

Wharton could not help grinning.

"Look at that!" roared Bob. "That's an evening's work! My leading article and a poem; an article on mills in Lancashire, by M. Linley, Esq.; Extracts from the Works of Confucius, translated by Wun Lung—all messed up! There were blank pages for you fellows to fill up—all spoiled! Look here! I'm going to make Bunter eat this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I—I—"

"How do you know it was Bunter messed it up?"

"Of course it was Bunter. He daren't deny it!"

"I—I—I—"

"I'm going to make him eat it! Come here, you young sweep!"

"I—I say, you fellows, you stand by a chap in your own study. It was my idea, you know, and Cherry boned it. So, of course, I busted up his first number. He shouldn't go around borrowing people's ideas."

"Why, you borrowed it yourself from Tom Merry at St. Jim's!"

"Ye-e-es, but—"

"Come here and be squashed, you-you beetle! I—leggo, Wharton! I tell you I'm going to, squash him!" roared

Bob Cherry. "He's wanted squashing for a long time!"

"Hold on, Bob—"

"I won't! I'll squash him!"

Wharton laughed, and made a sign to Nugent and Huree Singh. Three pairs of hands closed on Bob Cherry, and he was suddenly bumped on the grass. Three boots were planted upon his waistcoat as he wriggled there.

"Make it pax with Bunter," said Wharton, laughing.

"I won't!"

"Better!"

"I tell you I won't!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'm going to squash him, and make him eat this number!"

"When I say 'Jump!' you all jump!" said Wharton.

"Here, hold on!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Lemme gerrup!"

"Make it pax, then!"

"I—I—I— Look here, you take your hoofs off my chest!"

"Rats! When I say 'Three!' kids, you all jump. Ready?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Look here, you dummies—"

"One!" said Wharton, counting.

"You utter ass—"

"Two!"

"I—I—I—I'll make it pax, if you like!"

"Good!"

Bob Cherry was allowed to rise. He staggered up, and dusted his waistcoat, grinning ruefully. Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, Cherry, I don't bear any malice," he remarked. "I'll let you contribute to the first number of 'Bunter's Weekly,' if you like. All contributions charged at the low rate of one shilling a column—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" granted Bob Cherry.

And he stalked away in disgust, with his ruined first number under his arm.

"I say, you fellows, have you made up your minds whether you'd like to contribute to the 'Weekly'?" asked Bunter, blinking at the chums of Study No. 1. "As you fellows are in my study, I could offer you reduced rates!"

"Oh, take a run round your hat, Billy!" said Wharton. "Come on, Bob! This isn't the sort of weather for messing about on amateur mags. Leave it till the winter!"

"All right!" said Bob Cherry.

And, stuffing his ruined magazine in his pocket, he strolled off with his chums.

Bob Cherry was considerably disappointed at the failure of his first number, but he determined to make another effort at some future time.

Billy Bunter, however, still had great hopes of producing "Bunter's Weekly." But support was lacking, and, therefore, very little more was ever heard of Billy Bunter, Editor!

THE END.

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

A Weekly Chat between The Editor and His Readers.

FOR NEXT FRIDAY!

I wish to draw the attention of all loyal readers of the PENNY POPULAR to the splendid attractions which will appear in next Friday's issue. The long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

"THE GREYFRIARS' BUN FIGHT!"

Bob Cherry makes an announcement that a meeting of the N.O.B.F. will be held in Study No. 13. Needless to say, the juniors are very curious to know what the letters N.O.B.F. stand for, and when a large number of the Renovites are refused entrance to the meeting there are ructions galore.

Billy Bunter is determined to find out what it is all about. He does, but, all the same, he has to pay for his knowledge, as you will see when you read next Friday's tale of the Greyfriars chums.

I wonder whether you can guess what N.O.B.F. signifies? You will be very surprised when you learn.

There will be a splendid, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. in next Friday's issue, entitled:

"TOM MERRY'S SPECIAL NUMBER!"

Once more that little 'organ, "Tom Merry's Weekly," claims the juniors' attention, and they resolve to bring out a special issue. All goes well, and there seems every prospect of the number being a good one. However, a certain New House junior manages to get at the copy, and inserts a limerick up against the School House. When the number is printed, a great surprise awaits Tom Merry & Co., for they find it contains libellous lines concerning a master. Nevertheless, these lines were not inserted by the New House fellow.

How did the lines get into the paper? Someone must have tampered with the copy after the New House junior substituted the limericks. Who is that someone? I can assure you that the School House juniors experience some troublous times before the culprit is discovered.

The long, complete yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co. in our next issue is entitled:

"THE SECRET OF THE MOOR!"

The Classical Chums are out on the moor one day, when they are thrown into a perilous adventure. They come across a desperate gang of scoundrels, carrying out a cunning conspiracy. There is no lack of excitement in this tale.

Don't forget to order your copy of next Friday's PENNY POPULAR in advance.

YOUR EDITOR.

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

"THE GREYFRIARS BUN FIGHT!"

Please order your copy of the "PENNY POPULAR" in advance, and hand this number, when finished, with, to a non-reader.