

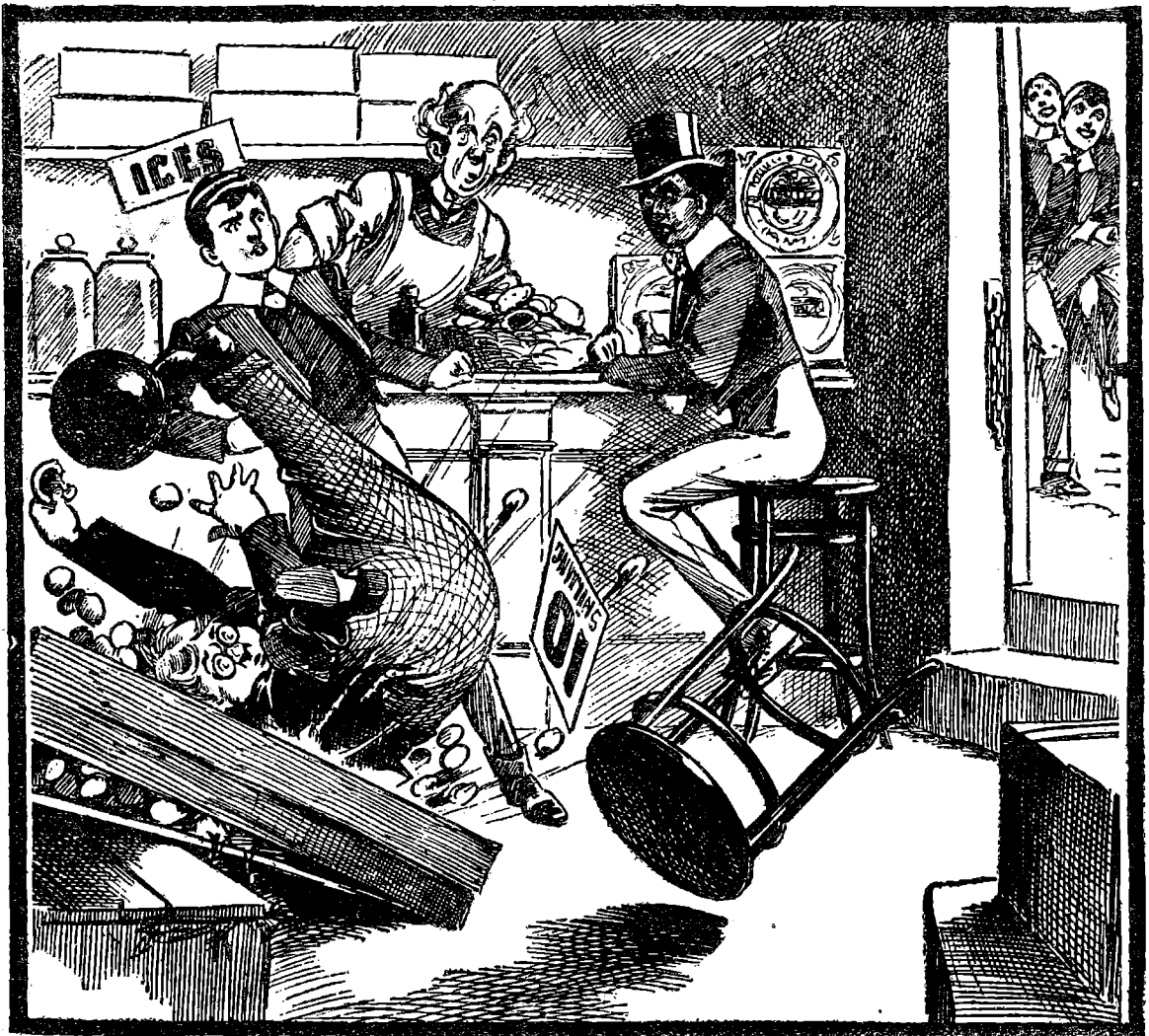
THE ARRIVAL OF TOM BROWN!

(See Inside for a Splendid Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Arrival of Tom Brown at Greyfriars.)

The Penny Popular

No.
258.

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



BOWLING OVER BILLY BUNTER!

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

THE CHUM FROM NEW ZEALAND!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A New Chum.

NEW ZEALAND?"

"So I hear."

"That's a jolly long way to come to Greyfriars," Bob Cherry remarked. "I wonder what the chap will be like?"

"And he's coming into the Remove?" asked Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"So Wingate says. He mentioned the matter to me, because—"

Wharton paused for a moment.

"I suppose he thinks I might look after the chap a bit at first."

"Good! If he's a decent sort we'll look after him," agreed Bob Cherry.

"He's bound to be a bit strange in the place at first, and Bulstrode & Co. will do their best to make things warm for him, as they always do with new boys. Might as well give Bulstrode a hint on the subject to start with."

"Or a licking," suggested Nugent.

Wharton laughed.

"We'll wait till he gets his ears up, anyway," he remarked. "He may let the new chap alone, you know."

"What's his name, by the way?" asked Bob.

"Brown—Tom Brown."

"Stunning name," said Bob Cherry heartily. "British all through. I wonder where he'll be put? The studies in the Remove are all full up."

"Somebody will have to make room for another," said Harry Wharton. "I'd have him in No. 1 like a shot, only we're four—myself, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Bunter. You're only three in No. 13, Bob."

"Oh, we'll take him in with pleasure!" grinned Bob. "We don't have a chap from New Zealand every day. When is he coming?"

"This afternoon, I understand; but I don't know by what train. Might be on the look-out for him, though."

"What-ho!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Those Upper Fourth chaps are starting footer," Bob Cherry remarked, with a glance out of the hall window, near which the group of juniors stood. "Temple has a new ball, and they're giving it an airing in the Close."

"Let's go and lend them a hand—"

"Or a foot—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, blinked reproachfully at the juniors through his big spectacles. Like most incessant talkers, Billy Bunter frequently found himself talking without finding a listener. His study-mates had compared Bunter to the little brook which went on for ever.

"Yes, Bob Cherry, it is!" grunted

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Bunter. "You know jolly well it is! I say, you fellows, I'm going out—"

"Good-bye!"

"Yes, but—"

"We won't detain you, Bunter. Buzz off!"

"Look here—"

"You'll be late. Bunk!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here. I've been disappointed about a postal-order this morning, and I'm stony. I'm going to meet somebody—somebody important—and if you fellows could lend me half-a-crown—"

"What do you want a half-crown for to meet somebody?" demanded Bob Cherry. "You can walk to meet him, I suppose?"

"Yes; but he's coming a long way, and I think I ought to stand him a bit of a feed," explained Bunter. "He's bound to be hungry. It's really for the honour of Greyfriars. We don't want to look inhospitable, I suppose? As captain of the Remove, it's really up to you, Wharton."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Here's a couple of bob," he said, tossing the shillings into the eager palm of the fat junior. "Now buzz off, and don't bother."

"Thank you, Wharton! I'll put this down to the account."

"Rats!"

And Billy Bunter buzzed off.

The chums of the Remove looked after him with somewhat puzzled looks.

"Blessed if I know what the young ass is up to!" said Harry.

"Oh, blow Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let's go and collar the footer from the Upper Fourth!"

"Good egg!"

"Hallo, you youngsters!"

Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, met the juniors at the door.

"The Head has heard from the new kid's guardian, and it seems that he's coming by the four o'clock train. The Head suggested that he should be met at the station as he's a new kid and coming such a long way."

"Good idea, Wingate."

"I was going," said the captain of Greyfriars; "but it occurs to me that the kid might feel more at home if he were met by some fellows belonging to the Form he is going into—the Remove."

"What do you think, Wharton?"

"I'll go with pleasure," said Harry, smiling.

"Good! The four o'clock train at Friardale, mind!"

"I'll remember."

The big Sixth-Former nodded and walked away.

The Removites turned out into the Close, where a crowd of fellows belonging to the Upper-Fourth were "airing," as Bob Cherry expressed it, Temple's new football.

Between the Upper Fourth, and the

Remove—the Lower Fourth—there was a keen rivalry, which frequently led to scrimmages in the Close and the passages, and the occasion of the airing of Temple's new footer was an opportunity too good to be lost.

The Upper Fourth fellows were kicking and passing, getting into shape for the coming football season.

Harry Wharton grinned as he looked at them, and gave the signal whistle, which brought the Remove fellows from all parts.

"On the ball!" yelled Bob Cherry.

And the Removites bore down upon Temple, Dabney & Co. Wharton hooked the ball away from Temple, and was off with it like a shot, leaving the captain of the Upper Fourth almost speechless with indignation.

"You—you Remove rotter!" gasped Temple. "After him!"

"Hurrah!"

"On the ball!"

The Removites rushed the footer off at top speed, passing from one to another as the Fourth-Formers made desperate attempts to recover their property.

As fast as one of them got near the fellow in possession of the ball, that fellow would pass it to another Removite, who kept the ball rolling literally.

It was Wednesday—a half-holiday at Greyfriars—and the Close was crowded. Fellows belonging to both Forms rushed up from all quarters.

"Hurrah!"

"On the ball! Pass!"

"Yah, you rotters! Give us our ball!"

"Thieves!"

"Rotters!"

"Hurrah!"

The din was terrific. Temple, who was getting wildly excited, clawed at Harry Wharton, and dragged him over.

There was a yell from the Removites. "Foul!"

"Where's the referee?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry pitched the captain of the Upper Fourth off, and sprang to his feet, gasping with laughter.

The Upper Fourth had never been so thoroughly ragged. The football went whizzing towards the gates of Greyfriars, and there was a rush of the juniors after it.

Gosling, the porter, was standing near the gates, gazing with an eye of great disfavour at the juniors.

Bob Cherry saw him, and a gleam of fun came into his eyes.

He put on a spurt, and gained possession of the ball.

Bob Cherry was a sure kick at goal, and Gosling's portly figure was a good target. Bob kicked, the ball sailed through the air, there was a yell.

"Goal!"

"Ow!" gasped Gosling, as the footer bumped on his chest. "Ow! Yow!"

He sat down with violence and suddenness in the gateway.
 "Goal! Hurrah!"
 "Young humps! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Ha, ha ha!"
 "On the ball!"
 And the rush of the juniors passed over Gosling. The ball was kicked out into the road.

Half-past three rang out from the clock-tower.
 Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Come on, kids! It's near time to go to the station—let's take Temple's new footer to meet the new kid!"

"Bravo!"
 "Good egg!"
 "Hurrah!"

And the Removites dashed down the country road—still "on the ball" with the Upper Fourth streaming after them in furious pursuit.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Coloured Gentleman.

BILLY BUNTER came up to Friardale Station at a breathless run, and ran into the Friardale porter in the vestibule. He staggered back against an automatic machine, and gasped for breath.

"Is the three-forty in yet?" he jerked out.

"Ow!" said the porter.
 "Is the three—"
 "Br-r-r!"

The porter was rubbing his waistcoat, where Billy's head had smitten him, apparently causing him considerable inward pain. He glared at Bunter, but the glare was quite lost upon the short-sighted junior.

"I want to meet the three-forty—"
 "Oer-r-r!"

And the porter, having worked up an expression of anguish in expectation of a tip by way of compensation, and having received no tip—Billy Bunter had a conscientious objection to tipping, or indeed to parting with money at any time if he could help it—he resumed his normal expression and walked away, leaving Bunter's question unanswered.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to report him to the company and get him sacked!"

And the fat junior found his way to the platform. The train was not in yet, however, and Bunter had to wait several minutes for it. He filled in the time by extracting chocolates from a machine on the platform, and eating them.

When at last the train came puffing in, Bunter's mouth was full of chocolate, and his lips liberally smeared with it. The three-forty train at Friardale was only a local, and the new boy at Greyfriars would have found it difficult to come from London upon it; but Bunter never thought about that.

If the Maori was on the train, it was all right. And Billy Bunter blinked up and down the row of carriage windows as the train steamed in.

Several passengers alighted, and walked towards the exit of the platform. Bunter blinked at the last to alight, who stood staring up and down with a strange and inquiring air.

He seemed to be a youth about Bunter's own age, but as black as the ace of spades. He was dressed in Etons, and wore the regulation silk topper; but his face was as black as his hat. His hands were encased in gloves and could not be seen. He looked up and down the platform, and Bunter hurried towards him.

"I say, you know—"

The stranger blinked at him.
 "I'm Bunter!" explained the fat junior. "William George Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove. I suppose you're Brown?"

The stranger nodded.
 "Tom Brown, of New Zealand?"
 "I see Brown."

"Blessed if he doesn't speak like a nigger, too, like a nigger minstrel!" murmured Bunter. "I don't know about chumming up with this chap. He's blacker than Inky. Still, if he's rich, I suppose it would be only hospitable to look after him."

"I've come to meet you," explained Bunter. "We thought it would be only decent for one of the principal chaps in the Form to come."

"I see glad."
 "Curious thing, I seem to know your voice," said Bunter, blinking at the stranger. "I suppose I can't have met you before. You look awfully like a Christy minstrel, if you'll excuse my saying so."
 "You tink so?"

"Berry much good!"
 "I hear that your pater's awfully rich," went on Bunter.

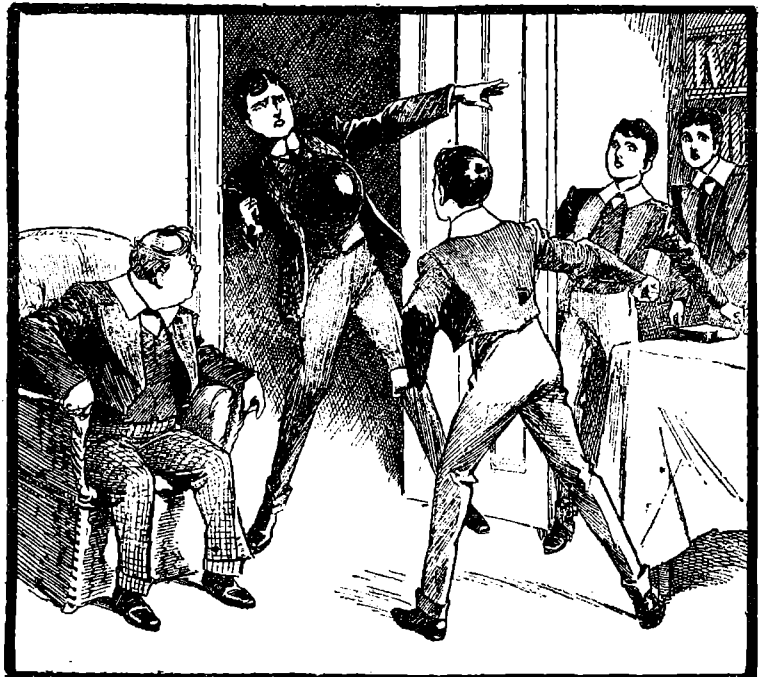
The black youth nodded.
 "Berry rich," he said—"berry, berry rich!"
 "That must be ripping for you!"
 "Berry ripping!"
 "I suppose you have all the pocket-money you want?"
 "Oh, no! Fader allow me only a pound a week."

"A pound a week!" shrieked Bunter, with visions of unlimited feeds dancing before his eyes.

The new-comer nodded.
 "Den he sends me tips as well," he remarked.

Bunter pressed his arm lovingly.
 "I can see that you and I will get on," he remarked. "I took a fancy to you at first sight. You're just the fellow I wanted to chum with."

The black youth grinned.
 "I see berry glad!"
 "That's all right. I'll see you through. I'll teach you to box if you like,



Tom Brown faced the door and took the ball in his hands. He dropped it on the floor, and, as it rose, he kicked. "You— Oh!"

"Well, come on. I suppose you're hungry after your journey?"
 "Berry hungry."

"Where's your box?"
 "M-m-my box?"

"Yes. I suppose you haven't come all the way from New Zealand with only the clothes you stand up in!" exclaimed Bunter, in amazement.

"N-n-no!" stammered the new-comer.
 "You see, it's coming on."

"Oh, I see! Good! That will save trouble. Come on, and have a feed at the tuckshop before you go to the school."

"You'm berry good!"
 "Not at all. I'm always kind to new boys. As you come from such a distant place, of course, I feel it a duty to look after you."

"We thought we'd give you a bit of a welcome," said Bunter. "I'm standing a feed."

and show you how to take photographs. Hallo! What's all that row?"

The new boy glanced up the street, and hastily backed into a shop doorway. Down the old High Street of Friardale came a wild and noisy crowd. They were the juniors from Greyfriars.

Well ahead were the Famous Four, with the ball at their feet, and they were keeping the ball rolling in fine style. Round them surged the Removites, and after them came the Upper-Fourth, red with rage.

Temple, Dabney & Co. had been making great efforts to recapture their new football, but in vain, and the chase had extended all along the lane to Friardale. Wharton's object in going to the village the Fourth-Formers did not know, but they would have followed him across the whole county rather than have given up the struggle for the footer.

The new boy seemed strangely anxious to keep out of sight of the Greyfriars fellows. But black faces were too uncommon in Friardale to escape notice. Bob Cherry and Linley stopped, too, Nugent rushing the footer on amid a crowd of Removites.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's the game?"

Bunter blinked at him. "Oh, really, Cherry, I don't quite understand you!"

"What's that?" "I wish you wouldn't allude to my friend Brown so disrespectfully, Cherry; This is the new boy from New Zealand."

"What!" yelled Wharton and Bob Cherry together.

"This is Brown." "It isn't—it's black!" "Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The black youth was making frantic signs to the Removites not to give him away. They did not recognise him for the moment, but they knew very well that his black complexion had been laid on before a glass.

"It's Brown from Taranaki," said Billy Bunter. "I've chummed up with him because I consider it my duty to look after a stranger from a distant part of the Empire."

"My hat! Here's Bunter as a patriot now."

"I hope I am patriotic, Wharton. I believe in strengthening the bonds of Empire, and—hands across the sea, you know, and—that sort of thing. I am going to chum up with Brown."

"You utter ass!" "I don't mind his being black. All New Zealanders are black."

"What?" "It's the climate, Bulstrode says."

"Bulstrode! Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I'm going to look after this chap, and I don't care if he's as black as your hat. I like him."

"Ha, ha, ha! This is what you were borrowing tin for, was it—to stand the stranger a feed—eh?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Well, you know, I like being hospitable."

"I suppose Black's—I mean Brown's—rich?" said Wharton, grinning.

"He has a pound a week pocket-money," said Bunter importantly, as if he already felt a considerable portion of that pound in his own pockets.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I see what you're cackling at!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll see soon. Go ahead with your New Zealander."

And the chums of the Remove ran on in pursuit of the footballers, who were nearly at the station by this time. They were laughing almost too much to run.

"My hat!" said Wharton. "This isn't so rotten as most of Bulstrode's japes, either! It will serve Billy right for sucking up to a rich chap—as he supposed."

"Supposes, yes!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha! Fancy his being idiot enough to believe that New Zealanders are black!"

"Ha, ha, ha! He'll believe anything when he's on the track of a feed."

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter piloted his new friend to the village tuckshop, where Bulstrode and Skinner gave the New Zealander a most effusive welcome.

Billy Bunter slapped down a handful of silver on the counter, and gave his orders with the air of a prince. It was a time to be generous when he was chumming up with a chap who had a pound a week pocket-money as well as tips.

"Come on, chappy," said Bunter

affectionately to the New Zealander, at whom Uncle Clegg was staring blankly—"come on! Order what you like!"

"You'm berry good!" "Not at all," said Bulstrode. "Bunter's doing the right thing—he always does! Wire in, kids, and let's do Bunter honour. Bunter's the real sort of a chap to stand a feed!"

And Bulstrode, Skinner, and the dark youth "wired in," and the way they travelled through the "tuck" was amazing.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Bunter is Unfortunate.

"ON the ball!" "Go it!" "Pass there—you duffer—pass!"

"On the ball!" Outside the station raged a terrific struggle for the possession of Temple's new footer. The run down the long lane had not made the energy of the Greyfriars juniors abate in the least.

The Upper Fourth were determined to get their ball back, and the Removites were determined to keep possession of it till it suited them to part with it. And when the crowd of excited juniors swarmed round the station the struggle was keen.

The villagers came to their doors to look on, and a crowd collected to watch. The village policeman caught sight of the scrimmage from a distance, and quietly strolled in the opposite direction. He had no mind to be accidentally rolled over in the gutter, and scrambled over by forty or fifty excited youths.

"On the ball!" roared Wharton. "Play up, Remove!" "Hurrah!"

It was the Famous Four's object to send the ball into the little station in order to retain possession of it while they waited for the train to come in with Tom Brown of Taranaki—the real Brown.

The Upper Fourth soon saw what they were at, and ranged up to prevent them, so that Temple, Dabney & Co. found themselves keeping goal at the station-door.

Again and again Wharton & Co. sent in the ball, and the defenders cleared, and the Fourth-Formers tried to rush it away up the street. But the Removites always rallied and brought it back again.

In the excitement of the struggle no one heard or heeded the sound of a train coming into the station.

The four o'clock train had arrived, but the fellows who had come to meet it were thinking of anything but that.

The struggle was at its hottest, and the attack on goal was hard and hot, when a stranger appeared on the scene, from the interior of the station.

He was a lad of about Harry Wharton's age, and of much the same size—perhaps a little more stoutly built, but very active and agile, too.

He had a round, boyish face, extremely sunburnt, with a pair of dark eyes, that seemed capable of staring the broad sun of noon in the face, so strong and steady and keen were their glance. The expression of his face was happy and good-humoured, and there was a gleam of fun, too, in his eyes.

The lad came down to the station entrance, and looked out in great amazement at the scene. Temple & Co. grouped in the doorway, and the Famous Four pelting the ball in at them, a crowd of Upper and Lower Fourth boys swarming round with excited faces and wild yells.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated the newcomer.

Dabney had retired into the station for

a few minutes to dab his nose with a handkerchief. He had met the incoming footer with his nose—and stopped the ball, but his nose had suffered considerably.

The new-comer tapped him on the shoulder, and Dabney blinked at him over his crimsoned handkerchief.

"Excuse me!" said the sunburnt lad. "Will you tell me what's the matter?" "Form row," said Dabney briefly.

The other looked puzzled. "What's that?" "We're licking the Remove."

The stranger seemed to understand. "Oh! You belong to Greyfriars School?"

"Oh, rather!" "I'm a new boy."

"Oh, are you?" said Dabney, without taking much interest in the matter, and he mopped fiercely away at his streaming nose.

"Yes, I believe I'm going into the Lower Fourth—that's the Remove, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Dabney. "Go and eat coke, you cheeky Remove waster!"

Tom Brown laughed—a hearty, wholesome laugh that was good to hear.

He stepped towards the doorway, leaving Dabney mopping his nose, and looked out. It was easy for him to distinguish the Remove from the Upper Fourth. They were younger boys, though the difference was not great; and their shouts, too, showed who they were. The New Zealander looked with great interest on the struggle.

"On the ball!" roared Wharton. "Buck up, Remove!"

There was the shriek of an engine in the station, and Bob Cherry gave a jump.

"That's the train going out!" he exclaimed.

"Blow the train!" "But the New Zealand kid—"

"Oh!" "He must be there."

"Come on, then!" Wharton and Cherry made a rush for the station door. Temple and Fry jumped in their way; but the Removites did not close with them.

"Pax!" exclaimed Wharton. "We're here to meet a chap—a new kid coming from New Zealand. We want to get on the platform."

"Rats!" "We want to meet Brown—"

"Bosh! Give us our ball!" "Now look here—"

"It's not pax till you give us our ball."

"But—" "Go and eat coke!"

"It's all serene!" said Tom Brown, quietly, stepping forward. "I'm Brown—I'm the chap from New Zealand—and awfully obliged to you for coming to meet me!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and glanced over him quickly. He noted the keen eye, the sturdy form, with satisfaction.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "You're coming into our Form. Line up!"

"Right-ho!" "On the ball!" shouted Wharton. "Back to Greyfriars—on the ball!"

"Hurrah!" "Buck up, Remove!"

The Removites dribbled the footer away, and Temple, Dabney & Co. rushed in pursuit. Temple robbed Nugent of the ball, and sped away with it. A lithe form shot past him like an arrow, and the ball was fairly taken from his toe with lightning speed. Temple hardly knew that it had gone till he saw that active form speeding away down the lane, with the ball bounding in advance.

Harry Wharton gave a shout.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
A Score for the Remove.

MR. QUELCH staggered back within the house, and disappeared from view for a moment.

There was the sound of a heavy fall within, and of a football bouncing away. The Removites stood petrified.

Tom Brown chuckled. "Goal!" he ejaculated. "That's the second!"

"What?"
"That's the second goal—and both flukes! Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! Do you know who you've goalled?"

"Haven't the faintest idea."
"It's Quelch—our Form-master—master of the Remove!"

"Phe-e-w!"
Mr. Quelch reappeared in the doorway. The Remove-master was usually a quiet and somewhat cold individual; but on the present occasion he showed very visible signs of excitement.

He was almost stuttering with wrath, and for some moments he could not make himself intelligible.

"Boys!" he gasped at last. "Boys!"
Tom Brown raised his hat, with an expression of contrition upon his handsome, sunburnt face.

"I am very sorry, sir."
"We are sorry—" began Wharton.

"Leave it to me," whispered Brown. "I'm a new boy; I shall get off more lightly than you would."

Wharton could not help being struck by the solid sense of that remark. It showed that the lad from Taranaki had all his wits about him.

Tom Brown came towards the wrathful Remove-master with a contrite expression, which was blended with the most perfect innocence.

"I am sorry, sir—so sorry! I hope the footer did not hurt you!"
"Boy!"

"If you please, sir, I'm the new boy."
"Boy!"

"Tom Brown, sir, of Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand."

"Boy!" gasped the Remove-master. "I didn't see you before I kicked, sir. I hope it didn't hurt you!"

"It did hurt me," said Mr. Quelch severely. "But that is not the point. How dare you kick a football into the public doorway of a school?"

"Oh, sir!"
"You must know that you are not allowed to do anything of the sort here."

"Oh, sir!"
"I do not wish to be hard upon a new boy, especially one coming from such a distant place," said Mr. Quelch. "but you must know—"

"Yes, sir."
"You deserve to be caned most severely."

"Yes, sir."
Mr. Quelch looked a little puzzled.

"However, as you are a new boy—and considering that you have lately arrived from New Zealand—I do not wish to cane you immediately upon your arrival at the school."

"Oh, thank you, sir! You are very kind!"

"You will be more careful in the future. Wharton and Cherry, you will take a hundred lines each. You were kicking the ball here, although it was Brown who sent it into the house."

"Yes, sir," said Wharton and Cherry meekly.

Mr. Quelch went back into the house. Tom Brown smiled at his new friends, and hurried in after the Form-master to look for the footer. Upper Fourth and Remove had been gathering on the spot, and a crowd followed Tom Brown in. But the

New Zealander was the one to pick up the ball, and Harry Wharton linked arms with him and rushed him up to the Remove passage.

The Upper Fourth followed fast; but on their own ground the Removites were invincible. The ball was kicked along to Study No. 1, and kicked into it; and Temple, Dabney & Co. strove in vain to reach even the study door.

"Yah!" roared the Upper Fourth. "Give us our ball."

"Come and fetch it!"
"Yah! Rottors!"
"Who scores this time?"

"The Remove!" roared the Lower Fourth.

Harry Wharton held up the football—which was not looking so new as it had looked—so that Temple could see it across the heads of the crowd of Removites who barred his path to the study.

"Here you are, Temple!"
"Hand it over, you rotten fag!"
"Say 'please, pretty, and you can have it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Temple did not say "please, pretty"; he snorted with wrath. The Upper Fourth attempted a rush, but it was in vain.

"Are you going to ask for it nicely?"
"No!" roared Temple.

"Are you going to admit that the Remove scores?"
"No!"

"Well, we score all the same. I'm going to chuck this ball out of the window, and you Upper Fourth worms can go and wiggle for it."

"Gimme that ball!"
"Rats!"

And Harry Wharton carried the ball into the study, and tossed it from the open window into the Close. The Upper Fourth, with many threats and cat-calls, dispersed, and the Removites were left to chuckle over their victory.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Rough on Wingate.

"CAN you play footer, young Brown?" asked Harry Wharton, a little later, when the chums were sitting in Study No. 1.

Tom Brown laughed his merry laugh. "What-ho!" he said, "Rugby, of course; what game do you play here?"

"Soccer. We'll teach you soccer."
"Or, I'll teach you Rugger," suggested Tom Brown. "It's the better game, you know."

"Bosh!"
"I've played it all my life, and I ought to know," said Brown, warmly. "I'll show you fellows how to play. Anyway, it's a good dodge to play both kinds."

"Yes, there's something in that."
"I suppose you haven't a Rugger ball in the place?" asked Tom Brown, with a slight sniff, glancing round the study.

"No, I think not," said Wharton laughing. "Still it would be good fun to learn to play Rugger, and we'll get a ball, by all means."

Tom Brown had finished his tea, and he rose from the table. He picked up Harry Wharton's football from the bookshelf.

"You see, there's a jolly lot more in Rugby," he explained.

"You can't drop a goal in your old game, for instance. When I played for the Taranaki Terriers I was considered rather a dab at dropping a goal. I'll show you if you like, with this ball."

Wharton jumped up in alarm.

"Here, hold on, old chap; you're so jolly unlucky with your goals," he exclaimed, "and this is a small room for footer. It was all very well to biff

Bunty into the eggs—that was funny—"

"Was it?" snorted Bunter, "I didn't see anything funny in it."

"And you got off pretty easily after goaling Quelch on the chest. But you've given us enough goals—you have really."

"The enoughfulness is terrific."
"I'll drop the goal against the door, if you like," said Tom Brown. "Lightning never strikes three times in the same place. The ball will bounce back from the door, and won't hurt anything."

"Oh, all right—go ahead."

Tom Brown faced the door, and took the ball in his hands. He dropped it on the floor, and as it rose, he kicked.

It was a splendid drop kick, and it sent the ball straight at the door. If the door had remained shut, the footer would have bounced from it as Brown expected. But he was certainly unlucky with his goals, for, just as he kicked, the door opened wide and Wingate, of the Sixth, and captain of Greyfriars looked in.

"You—Oh!"
Wingate sat down in the doorway!

Tom Brown stared blankly at Wingate, and Wingate stared blankly at Tom Brown.

Bob Cherry burst into a roar. "Ha, ha, ha! You were going to drop a goal, kid, and you've only dropped a prefect! Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" gasped Tom. "I'm sorry."

"The sorrowfulness of the esteemed Maori is continued and terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

Wingate staggered to his feet. "You cheeky young sweep—"

"I'm sorry."
"Do you know I'm captain of the school—head of the Sixth!" roared Wingate. "Why, I'll scalp you; I'll pulverise you!"

"It was an accident—"
"Are you the chap who biffed Mr. Quelch with a footer?"

"That was an accident, too."
"You've had too many accidents," said Wingate, taking the new junior by the collar, and twisting him round, and applying his boot with considerable force to his person.

"I think you ought to allow yourself one accident a day at the most."
"Ow!"

"I think that you won't have any more accidents for some time to come, now."

"Yow!"
"There!" said Wingate, stopping. "I think that's enough, as you are a new boy."

"Ow! It's more than enough, thank you," gasped Tom Brown. "I'm jolly glad that I'm not an old boy."

Wingate grinned. He had had a sudden shock, but his wrath never lasted long. He liked the New Zealander, too, for the plucky way he had taken his punishment.

"I came here for you," he said. "I suppose you're Brown, the kid from—from—what is it—Borriobool-Gha?"

"Taranaki," said Tom cheerfully. "That's it! Mr. Quelch wants to see you—he's your Form-master. Go to his study—here I'll take you there. Don't bring a footer."

Tom Brown grinned, and followed the captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate looked at him once or twice curiously, as they went downstairs.

New boys at a big school like Greyfriars generally showed some signs of nervousness, or at least of being subdued. There was very little of that sort about Tom Brown. Greyfriars

might have belonged to him, and the whole county might have been his private estate, to judge by his easy manner.

"I was going to give you a few tips, as you've come such a long way," Wingate remarked, "about getting on here, and holding your own. But it seems to me that you are able to look after yourself pretty well."

"I've usually been able to do so," assented Tom, modestly.

"Well, you don't seem very down-hearted, anyway."

"I'm never downhearted."

"Good! You seem to have made friends already, too."

"Yes! Jolly decent chaps they seem, too," said Tom Brown heartily. "I like Greyfriars. I say, I'm really sorry I biffed you with the footer. My luck seems to be out."

"Oh, that's all right," said Wingate. "I should recommend a little more care in the future, as all the prefects here aren't as good-tempered as I am."

"I hope they all haven't had as much practice at kicking goals, as you seem to have had," Tom Brown remarked.

Wingate laughed, and stopped at Mr. Quelch's door and tapped.

He opened the door, and signed to Brown to go in.

"Here is the new boy, sir."

"Thank you, Wingate."

And Tom Brown entered the Form-master's study, to go through the usual ordeal of a new boy. But he went through it calmly and coolly enough.

Mr. Quelch found him "all there," and the new boy quite satisfied him. The Form-master referred to a list on his desk.

"Ah! You will go into Study No. 2, Brown," he said. "There are only two boys in that study at present, and there will be ample room for you."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom.

And he withdrew from the Form-master's study. He went slowly back to the Remove quarters. He was disappointed at not being put into No. 1 or No. 13, but he knew that he could not argue about the matter with the Form-master. Exigencies of space determined the matter as far as Mr. Quelch was concerned.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the New Zealander came into No. 1. "Get through all right?"

"Right as rain, thanks!"

"Do you know which study you are going into?"

"Mr. Quelch says No. 2."

There was a general falling of faces.

Tom Brown looked round inquiringly.

"I'm sorry not to be with some of you chaps," he remarked. "But is there anything up against Study No. 2?"

"It's Bulstrode's room!"

"Buistrode?"

"Yes, the big chap in the tuckshop—the chap who was japing Bunter!"

"He's a beast!" remarked Bunter.

"Well, it can't be helped," remarked Harry Wharton. "It may be possible to change later, if you don't get on with Bulstrode. You'll find Hazledene, the other fellow in there, all right. If your things have come from the station, you may as well get installed there, and we'll lend you a hand."

"Right-ho!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The First Rugby Match of the Season.

TOM BROWN burst into the Remove dormitory with a Rugby ball under his arm. Harry Wharton & Co. were there, with Ogilvy, Morgan, Elliott, and several other fellows of the Remove. It was

getting late in the evening, but Tom Brown's proposition to have a little Rugby in the dorm had been hailed with acclamation.

Mark Linley had played Rugby at home in Lancashire, and Morgan in Wales; but they were the only Removites besides Brown who knew anything to speak of about the game. But the rest were willing to learn. And it was fun, anyway.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as the New Zealander came in.

"Now, then—"

"Line up!"

"The line-upfulness is terrific."

"How many of you can play Rugger?" asked Tom Brown.

"Two," said Wharton; "Linley and Morgan. We have all a pretty good idea of it, though."

"Good! Form up the sides. Linley had better captain one side, and I the other."

"Right you are!"

The sides were soon formed. Goals

doors slightly to peep in and see what was going on.

The Removites within were far too busy to see that.

Temple grinned at the sight that met his eyes. The Removites were swaying and scrambling in a decidedly irregular scrum, and seemed to have been transformed into a huge heap of legs and feet.

"They're playing footer!" said Fry in wonder.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Check! Footer in the evening—in-doors!"

"Oh, the Remove have check enough for anything!" said Scott. "They'll have Quelch or a prefect up here soon."

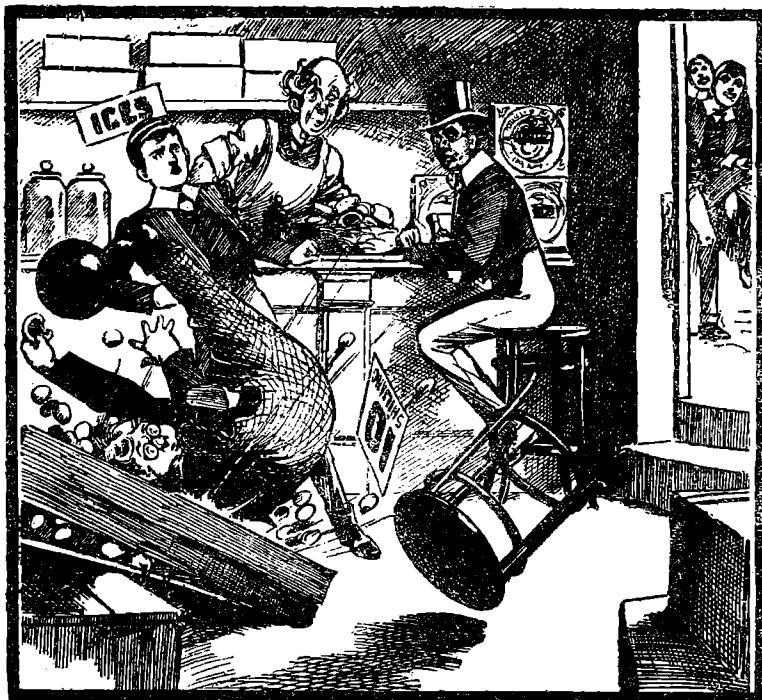
"We had better interfere, I think," said Temple gravely.

"Good! They want a licking!"

"Hold on! You remember the little game they played with us this afternoon? This looks like a chance of tit for tat."

"Good egg!"

"Wait till the ball comes near the



There was a terrific crashing and smashing as the plump form of Billy Bunter bumped into the box of eggs. "Oh! Help! Yow!" yelled the Owl of the Remove.

were arranged at opposite ends of the dormitory. The ball was kicked off, and the somewhat peculiar match commenced. The footer-field was rather accommodated by beds and boxes and washstands, but there was a great deal of excitement in dodging the obstacles.

The fun was soon fast and furious, and there was a considerable din in the Remove dormitory.

As the Remove studies were underneath it did not matter so much; had a Sixth Form-room been below there would have been an angry prefect on the scene in a very few minutes. But the noise reached many ears, and among them the ears of Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth.

While the Rugby match proceeded in the Remove dormitory a crowd of Upper Fourth fellows gathered in the passage outside, and Temple opened one of the

door, and I'll cut in and collar it," whispered Temple. "We'll make the Remove sing small this time."

The Fourth-Formers grinned gleefully.

The affair of the football of the afternoon was still rankling very sorely in their memories, and they were eager to give the Remove tit for tat.

Temple pushed the door a little wider open, and the Upper Fourth fellows watched their opportunity.

The Removites had no idea they were there. They were too busy. The informal Rugby match was growing very exciting.

Tom Brown had the ball, and was making a run up the field, and Mark Linley had tackled him.

Brown struggled desperately to get away from the Lancashire lad, but Mark's tackle brought him down—with

a bump that was rather painful. The floor of the Remove dormitory was harder than the ground of the football-field.

Tom Brown passed to Harry Wharton before he went down, and Harry caught the ball; but he was tackled and bowled over by Bob Cherry the next moment, throwing the ball towards Nugent, who was near the door.

Nugent wasn't ready for the pass, and the ball missed him and swooped against the wall near the door, dropping within a few feet of Temple.

That was Temple's opportunity.

He darted into the room and picked up the ball in a twinkling, and was out again into the passage before a hand could be raised to stop him.

Bob Cherry gave a wild yell.

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

"Temple & Co.!"

"Upper Fourth rotters!"

"They've got our ball!"

"After them!"

Harry Wharton leaped up and rushed to the door. After him in a stream went the Removites. The game had come to a sudden termination. It was a question now of dealing with the Upper Fourth, and recovering Tom Brown's ball.

The Removites rushed into the passage.

"After them!" yelled Wharton.

"Come on!" shouted Tom Brown.

And down the passage with a rush went the juniors Temple & Co. were well ahead, Temple with the oval ball under his arm making for the stairs.

"Stop them!" roared Wharton.

Temple snapped his teeth.

"Come on! Rush the bounders!"

The Fourth rushed on. There was a scrimmage in the passage, but more and more Removites joined in, and the pursuers were on the scene now. Temple & Co. had all their work out to hold their own. They were driven up to the end of the passage by overwhelming numbers, and penned up there against the doors of the box-room and Study No. 13.

There they made a last stand.

Temple was still clutching the footer, determined not to give it up; and the Removites gave him their chief attention.

"Got him!" shouted Bob Cherry, throwing his arms round Temple's neck in a most affectionate way. "Collar the footer!"

Temple wrenched himself away, and went with a bump against the door of No. 13.

The door flew open, and Temple rolled helplessly into the study, with Bob Cherry rolling over him.

Removites and Upper Fourth rushed and rolled in after them, and in a second the study was crammed with fighting, struggling forms.

The room was a good size, for a junior study, but there was no space for the excited combatants who poured into it.

They bumped against the table, and sent it flying—and they bumped on the bookcase, and brought it over with a crash.

In the midst of upset furniture, scattered books and papers and flowing ink-pots, the struggle went on with undiminished vigour.

Temple and Bob Cherry staggered

into the window, and an elbow crashed through the panes. An excited youth dragged the ashpan from under the grate, and scattered the contents over the Removites—his own friends getting as much of the ashes, however. Fry had Ogilvy on the floor, pouring ink over his head. The juniors were so excited with combat that, as a matter of fact, they hardly knew what they were doing.

Temple was still holding on to the ball. Fry and Dabney and Scott rallied round him, and the Removites were hurled forth from the study, but the four still held on to their ball, and now they were penned in a corner, with the Remove hemming them.

They were backed up against the wall which separated the study from the box-room—a thin wall of lath and plaster, of no great strength. As the Removites rushed upon them, and the Fourth-Formers were bumped heavily against the wall, there was an ominous creaking. The excited juniors did not notice it.

"Gimme that ball!"

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton closed with Temple.

They whirled to and fro, and went with a bump on the wall as the Removites crowded forward to collar the last defenders.

Crash!

A huge gap appeared in the wall, and there was a crashing of falling laths and a wild tearing of paper.

Temple and Wharton, still in one another's grip, went reeling through the gap, and three or four juniors bumped helplessly after them.

"My only hat!" gasped Nugent.

"The wall's given!"

"Help!"

Harry Wharton staggered up. The footer was in his grasp at last. He tossed it to Tom Brown, and the New Zealander caught it.

"We've got it!"

"Hurray!"

"My hat, there'll be a row about this!" gasped Wharton. "No hiding a thing like that. Fancy the rotten wall giving way! It must have been very weak!"

"Rotten!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder if we could patch it up?"

Temple staggered to his feet. He was dishevelled and dusty and exhausted, but the prospect of a serious row over the burst wall put an end to the scrimmage.

"I—I'm sorry!" he panted.

"Can't be helped. We shall have to face the music," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You fellows clear out!"

"Cave!"

"Here's Quelch!"

"Oh! Now look out for hurricanes!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is where the row begins, my beloved 'earers!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stood in the doorway.

He seemed transfixed by what he saw.

The juniors stood silent, dusty, disordered, and waited for the storm to break.

"It is, I presume, what you call a 'rag,'" said Mr. Quelch. "I must make you learn somehow that a rag must be kept within bounds. I shall punish you all most severely. Who started this struggle?"

There was no reply.

Mr. Quelch waited a few moments, and then went on.

"Very well; I will take it that you are equally to blame. Your punishment will be equal, then. You will all come to my study before bedtime, and receive six cuts each with the cane. You will do a hundred lines of Virgil each to-morrow. Brown, as a new boy, is excused the caning, but he will do the lines!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"You will take your property out of this study, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch. "It cannot be occupied again until it has been repaired, which may take some time."

"Yes, sir."

"You will go back to your previous quarters in the interval. Perhaps the discomfort of overcrowded quarters will make you realise the necessity of keeping order. Now, disperse at once."

Mr. Quelch stalked away, and the juniors dispersed.

Temple grinned at Wharton as he went.

"Well, it was fun, anyway," he said. "It's pax now. We'll lick your cheeky kids another time!"

Bob Cherry looked round the wrecked and dismantled study with a glance of regret. He had grown attached to his quarters in No. 13.

"Well, I shall have to come back into No. 1 with you for a bit, Wharton," he remarked; "and Wun Lung will go back with Bulstrode, and Mark with Russell and Lacey—till this room is repaired. Study No. 13 is wiped off the list for a bit, and I'm willing to admit that No. 1 is top study—so long as I'm in it!"

"And after," grinned Nugent.

"Oh, no! When I get back into No. 13, No. 13 will be top study again," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Rats! It was never top study."

"Look here, Nugent!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry!"

Harry Wharton interposed.

"Don't begin another row now, for goodness' sake!" he exclaimed. "We've had enough of that for one evening. Let's go and get a wash, so that we can look decent to take our licking from Quelch."

Wharton tapped Tom Brown on the shoulder. The New Zealander had a swollen nose and a black eye, but he grinned at Wharton with perfect good temper.

"You're getting an exciting first day at Greyfriars, Brown."

"Yes, rather—but I like it!" grinned Tom Brown.

The juniors took their respective lickings manfully, and listened with great meekness to some strong remarks Mr. Quelch made on the unruliness of the Remove. They went up to the dormitory that night with tingling palms, but feeling quite satisfied with themselves for keeping their end up against the Upper Fourth.

The next day Bob Cherry resumed his old quarters in Study No. 1, and the Famous Four were united again, and for a time nothing more was heard of the burning question as to which was top study in the Remove.

THE END.

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A MAGNIFICENT
LONG COMPLETE
STORY, DEALING
WITH THE
EARLY ADVENTURES
OF
TOM MERRY & CO.
AT ST. JIM'S.

ASHAMED OF HIS NAME!

BY
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD**

THE FIRST CHAPTER. For Two Pins!

"VAVASOUR!"
"That's it!"
"Sounds a swagger name,"
said Monty Lowther of the
Shell, with a yawn. "Another giddy
aristocrat like the one and only Gussy, I
suppose!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"
"Vavasour!" said Gore of the Shell,
with a sniff. "I'll Vavasour him, if he
comes any nonsense, anyway. What's
his front name?"

"Guy!" said Tom Merry.
"My hat, thicker and thicker!" said
Gore, with another sniff. "I'm quite
anxious to see Guy Vavasour. If there's
any rot—"

"Oh, bosh!" said Tom Merry. "No
reason to suppose that the new kid is
going to put on side, because he happens
to be named Guy Vavasour. Chap can't
help his name, any more than he can
help his face—that's why we're not down
on you, Gore."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What's the matter with my face?"
bawled Gore.

"The question is, what isn't the
matter with it?" drawled Monty
Lowther. "But Tom Merry's right,
you can't help it, and we're not down on
you."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.
"And I trust you are not going
to be wude to the new chap, simply be-
cause he happens to have a respectable
name, Goah."

"If he puts on any side—" began
Gore angrily.

"He hasn't done so yet," said Tom
Merry pacifically. "You haven't seen
him yet, Gore. Wait till he puts on
side."

"His name's enough for me!"
growled Gore.

"Weally, Goah—"
"Oh, rats!"

The group of juniors were in the hall
of the old School House of St. Jim's,
after lessons on a spring day. They
were discussing a new boy who had just
arrived; a junior, who was going into
the Fourth or the Shell, they didn't
know which.

They knew he was to be a School
House boy, that was all, and that made
them a little curious about him. If he
had been going into the New House
they would not have interested them-
selves in Guy Vavasour at all.

Mellish of the Fourth, the sneak of
the School House, had caught sight of
the new boy as he descended from the
station hack, and was shown by Toby,
the page, into the Head's study.

Mellish's report was that he looked
like a swanker; but the other fellows
discounted Mellish's evidence very much.



Mellish was only too likely to take a dis-
like to a fellow because he looked
straight and decent; indeed, Mellish's
dislike, as Monty Lowther remarked,
was a compliment to anybody.

Gore and Crooke and two or three
others were against the new boy, how-
ever, before they had seen him; partly
because Tom Merry & Co. showed a dis-
position to speak of him in a friendly
way.

The new boy was with the Head now,
and the group of juniors meant to see
him as he came out. They had nothing
particular to do just then, and interview-
ing a new "kid" was as good a means of
killing time as any other.

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Monty
Lowther.

There was a general movement as the
new boy came down the passage from
the Head's study.

He was certainly an elegant-looking
youth.

He was taller than most of the juniors
there, slenderly built, with a fair face,
and clear-cut features, and fair hair curl-
ing over a high forehead.

He was dressed most elegantly, in the
best-cut clothes, and, indeed, looked
quite as well-dressed as Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's; than
which there was no higher praise.

He glanced at the juniors inquiringly.
"You're the new kid?" asked Tom
Merry.

"Yaas!"

The new boy spoke in a somewhat
drawing voice, as if it were almost too
much trouble to speak at all, and his
accent was very like that of Arthur
Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy felt his
bosom warm to him at once. It occurred
to him immediately that here was a
congenial spirit come to St. Jim's at
last.

"Vavasour—eh?" said Gore.

"Yaas!"

"What Form are you going into?"
asked Tom Merry.

"Shell!"

"That's my Form. I'm Tom Merry,
captain of the Shell."

"How do you do?" said Vavasour.
"And I'm Gore of the Shell," said the

owner of that name in a far from
friendly tone, "and I don't stand any
nonsense."

Vavasour looked at him, raising his
eyebrows slightly.

"Indeed!" he said.

"I mean that," said Gore.

"Yaas!"

"Goah, deah boy, pway don't be wude
and wotten to a new-comah," said
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You will
give him a vevy bad impression of the
mannahs of this Coll."

"I'd give him an impression on his
silly nose for two pins!" grunted Gore.

"My nose?" asked Vavasour.

"Yes!"

"For two pins?"

"Yes, hang you!"

"Good!"

Vavasour, with perfect coolness, felt
over the lapel of his elegant jacket, and
extracted therefrom a couple of pins.
He laid them in the palm of a very
white and well-kept hand, and extended
that hand to George Gore. Gore stared
at it as if it were some curious zoological
specimen, and wondered what it meant.

The juniors grinned. Vavasour's
manner was perfectly grave and serious,
and it was hard to think that he was
making fun of George Gore, the bully of
the Shell. The burly Gore looked as if
he could crumple up the elegant new-
comer with a single drive of his heavy
fist; and he was not a safe fellow to
make fun of.

"What do you mean, you ass?"
blurted out Gore angrily, and growing
very red in the face.

"You said you would make an impres-
sion on my nose for two pins," said
Vavasour, in his drawing voice.

"Yes, I did, and—"

"Well, there are two pins—and here is
my nose."

Gore drew a deep breath of rage.
There was a chuckle from the group of
juniors. Gore doubled up his big fists,
and rushed at the new boy.

Tom Merry & Co. looked a little
anxious. They did not want to see the
slender fellow hammered by the burly
bully of the Shell. But he had challenged
Gore, and it was impossible to interfere.
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had a wise
grin upon his aristocratic face.

"There's more in that chap than
meets the eye, deah boys," he mur-
mured. "Our respected friend Goah
won't crush him so easily as he thinks."

Arthur Augustus was right.

Gore rushed at the new boy with his
heavy fists thrashing out, and it looked
for a moment as if Guy Vavasour would
be swept away before him, if not
slaughtered where he stood. But only
for a moment.

Then the delicate white hands came
sweeping up, and Gore's big fists were
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knocked into the air—and Gore rushed right upon a hard set of knuckles.

Biff!

"Groooh!"

Gore staggered back. Between the impetus of his own rush, and the force of the blow, he had received a terrific drive, right on the nose, that brought the water with a rush to his eyes.

He staggered back—two, three paces, and sat down with a bump.

"My hat!"

"Bwavo!"

"Groooh!" murmured Gore, dabbing at his nose with his fingers, and taking them away crimsoned. "Groooh! Oh! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My nose is still waiting," said Vavasour gently; "and you have not yet earned the two pins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gore staggered up, and jammed his handkerchief upon his flowing nose. He gave the new boy a glare, and stalked away.

"Nuff's as good as a feast," grinned Monty Lowther; "and Gore has had enough. Now, Mellish, it's your turn."

"I don't want to quarrel with the new chap," said Mellish, in alarm, backing away. "I—I don't believe in jumping on new kids."

"You did five minutes ago."

"Your turn, Crooke."

"Oh, rot!" said Crooke.

"And Crooke and Mellish walked away before the argument could be carried any farther. After George Gore's experience, they did not want to sample the powers of the new Shell fellow.

Vavasour looked round, with a quiet smile.

"I'm sorry to cut up like this my first day here, you fellows," he said. "But it really wasn't my fault, was it? I'm not a quarrelsome chap, and I don't want to row with anybody."

"Good for you!" said Tom Merry heartily. "Gore has only got what he was asking for, and it will do him good. But, blessed if I should have imagined you could hit out like that! You—excuse me—you don't look like it."

Vavasour laughed.

"You see, Gore fancied you must be a spooney because your name's Vavasour," said Blake, with a chuckle. "If you had been Smith—"

"What!"

Vavasour's expression suddenly changed. The pleasant smile died away from his face, and a gleam came into his eyes. He took a step towards Blake, and Jack Blake stepped backward in sheer astonishment.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "What's the row? I'm not ragging you!"

"You said—"

"I was going to say that if your name had been Smith instead of Vavasour, Gore wouldn't have jumped on you," Blake explained. "No offence in that, that I can see."

"Oh, all right!"

"Only, if you're spoiling for a fight, you can come on," said Blake warmly. "You'll find me a tougher nut to crack than Gore, I can tell you!"

Vavasour smiled.

"But I'm not spoiling for a fight," he said. "I want to be friends with everybody who will let me. It's all right. At the present moment I'm looking for the refreshment department. Anybody know the way to the dining-room?"

"We're just going to have tea in my study," said Tom Merry hospitably. "Will you come and have tea with us?"

"By Jove, yes! Thank you so much."

"I was just goin' to ask the new chap to come to Study No. 6, Tom Mewwy."

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"Too late!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We've bagged him now. Besides, he's coming into the Shell, so he belongs to us, anyway. Come on, Vavasour! A chap who has a daisy right-hander like that deserves a good tea."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Vavasour laughed, and walked away with Tom Merry. And the group of juniors broke up, realising that however soft and dandified the new fellow looked, he evidently wasn't so soft as his looks implied.

And Gore, bathing his nose in the Shell dormitory, and feeling as if it had suddenly grown two sizes too large for him, realised it, too, and made up his mind to leave the new boy severely alone—at least, so far as fisticuffs were concerned.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

One Little Weakness.

TEA in Tom Merry's study was always a pleasant and cosy meal; and when he was in funds, and had company, it was a merry one.

Nearly a dozen fellows made rather a crowd for a junior study; but they were used to crowding.

Tea was ready at last, and the juniors sat down round the table, and anywhere else where they could find room to sit.

The talk turned upon the new boy himself. New boys were expected to give an account of themselves, and Vavasour was not at all reticent.

"Been to school before?" asked Manners.

"No; I've had a tutor," said Vavasour. "First-class man."

"Oh!" said the juniors.

"Vavasour is first-class in every way," said Monty Lowther, with a solemn wink into his teacup. "He comes from a first-class place. Tell us about the baronial hall at home, Vavasour, old man!"

"Well, a chap needn't be ashamed of having been born in a baronial hall, that I know of," said Vavasour loftily. "We have a fine old place down in Kent—dates from the time of the Conquest. My ancestors—"

"Your aunts?" asked Lowther.

"Aunts! I didn't say aunts!"

"No; but your aunt's sisters will be your aunts, wouldn't they?"

"Look here!"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a severe look at the Shell humorist through his eyeglass. "I regard the subject of ancestahs as a most important one. Did your ancestahs come ovah with the Conquewah, Vavasour, deah boy?"

"Yaas, Sir Hugh de Vavasour was at the Battle of Hastings. But they were a great family in Normandy before the Conquest," said Vavasour.

"I think it vevy pwob that Vavasour is a wlehion of mine," said D'Arcy. "The D'Arcys were connected with the Vavasours in the weign of King John. You belong to the Kent Vavasours, old fellow?"

"Yaas."

"Then it's the same family," said D'Arcy triumphantly. "We're a sort of distant cousins, you know. There was a mawwiage in the weign of King John."

"Very distant cousins, I should think," yawned Blake. "Get off your hobby horse, Gussy, old man!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What's in a name?" said Digby.

"You can't beat Smith for a really good old English name."

Vavasour turned red.

"I wish you'd drop that!" he exclaimed irritably.

"Drop what?"

"I don't like jokes of that sort."

"But I wasn't joking."

"Oh, rot!"

"Vavasour's got some relation with that awful name," said Blake solemnly. "It hits him on the raw."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vavasour jumped up.

"Look here, I'm not going to stand this! I—"

The juniors stared at him in astonishment. It was evident that the new junior was really angry, and there was a painful pause. Why any fellow should be angry at such a harmless little joke was a mystery.

"Sit down!" said Blake gracefully. "I withdraw my remark. But you must allow me to observe that you are an ass!"

"Chap can't help belonging to a good old family, and being proud of it, too," said Vavasour sulkily.

"Yaas, wathah, I quite agwee with our friend Vavasour. I wegard you as an ass, Blake!"

Vavasour sat down.

Tom Merry skillfully turned the subject to football, and the clouds cleared. On the subject of football Vavasour could talk, and his talk showed that he knew how to play the game.

"We'll give you a trial in a practice match to-morrow, Vavasour," said Tom Merry. "If you're any good, we'll put you down as a reserve for the Junior Eleven."

"Yaas," said Vavasour. "Good!"

"By the way, what study has Linton put you into?" asked Lowther.

"No. 8."

"Scott! That's Gore's study!"

"Who's Gore?"

"The fellow whose nose you punched."

"Well, I can punch it again if he doesn't get on with me," said Vavasour easily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When tea was over, and the guests had departed, the Terrible Three of the Shell cleared the table, and took out their books to work. Monty Lowther bestowed a comical look upon his chums.

"What do you think of the new chap?" he asked.

"Well, he's all right," said Tom Merry.

"Very high-class," grinned Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

"We've all got our little weaknesses," he said. "Vavasour's is swank. But it isn't very bad, and I dare say it will soon get knocked out of him."

"Yes, I think that's very likely. If he talks about the baronial halls here, it will get to be a standing joke."

"He will learn to drop that."

"And the first-class tutor—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mustn't discuss a departed guest," said Manners severely. "I'm surprised at you, Lowther. But why on earth was he so ratty at the suggestion that he might have a relation named Smith?"

"Couldn't be connected with anything so common," grinned Lowther. "He'd better say so to Smith minor of the Fourth, or Smith major of the Sixth. Then there will be trouble in the family."

"Well, everybody's an ass on some point," said Tom Merry. "Vavasour's an ass on that point, that's all. After all, you know, if he's been brought up in an atmosphere of old-family and blue-blood bosh, he can't help it, you know. Now, give me a Latin dic, and shut up!"

And the Terrible Three set to work.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Strange Meeting.

"HOW long is that blessed Gussy going to be?" Tom Merry asked the question.

It was the day after Vavasour's arrival at St. Jim's, and the Terrible Three were leaning on the stile in Rylcombe Lane, in a row.

They were waiting for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy and Vavasour were at Mr. Wiggs', the tailor's, in the village. D'Arcy and Vavasour had chummed up very much during the short time Vavasour had been at St. Jim's.

Whether or not they were related, owing to that marriage between members of the D'Arcy and Vavasour families in the reign of King John, certainly they had many tastes in common. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had taken Vavasour with him to see his tailor; an excursion quite after Vavasour's own heart.

The Terrible Three had been in the village with them; but Mr. Wiggs' little shop was not so pleasant a place to them as it was to D'Arcy, so they walked on, and were waiting for him in the lane. D'Arcy had said that he wouldn't be more than five minutes. Twenty minutes out of the five, as Monty Lowther put it, had already elapsed. But there was no sign of D'Arcy or Vavasour yet from the direction of the village.

"Oh, he'll be hours!" growled Manners. "Wish we hadn't said we'd wait. We ought to have known our Gussy better."

"Well, you kept us waiting ten minutes at the photograph shop," said Lowther.

"That was different. I was getting films."

Tom Merry laughed. "New waistcoats are far above rubies, and far above films, with Gussy," he remarked. "But he'll be along soon, I suppose."

"Here comes somebody," said Lowther.

"A pedestrian came in sight from the direction of Rylcombe. But it was a personage very different in appearance from the elegant swell of St. Jim's, or the almost equally elegant Vavasour."

A man of under middle size, with a coarse, red face, and a stubbly, three days' growth of beard on his chin, and the unkempt look that men have who are accustomed to late nights, and plenty of them.

The flush in his face showed that the man was under the influence of drink at that moment, though he was not intoxicated. His clothes were shabby, and the bowler hat he wore rakishly on the side of his head would not have done credit to a ragman.

He was a young man, probably under thirty, but dissipation had set a deep mark upon him. The juniors of St. Jim's glanced at him, and then turned their glances away. He was not a pleasant object to look at. He seemed very incongruous and out of place in the country lane, among the woods and green hedges.

He stopped as he came opposite the juniors, and looked at them.

"Evenin'," he remarked.

"Good-evening!" said Tom Merry shortly.

"Got a half-crown to spare, young gentlemen?"

"No!"

"Make it a bob?"

"I've got nothing for you," said Tom Merry. "You look as if you'd spent more than half-a-crown to-day in liquor."

The man scowled.

"That's none of your business, young cocky," he said.

"Quite so; if you don't ask me for money. If you beg, you must expect to get plain English," said Tom Merry calmly.

"I've had 'ard luck," said the man.

"I'm out of work."

"You're not in a state to be in work, I should think," said Tom Merry, in disgust.

"I got the push," said the stranger pathetically. "Old Smith, he gave me the push, for no fault of my own. I've been trying to drown it, that's all, young gentlemen. If you could give me half-a-crown to 'elp me on my way? I've tramped all the way from Kent 'ere."

"Man in blue looking for you?" asked Manners sympathetically.

The stranger held on to the stile, and the Terrible Three drew a little farther away. There was a scent of rum and whisky about the stranger that did not please them.

He blinked at the schoolboys with a bleary gaze.

"Wot if a chap took a drop too

and he gave a low whistle. His bleared, uncertain eyes were fixed upon Guy Vavasour.

"My eye!" he murmured.

"Sowwy to keep you waitin', deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I trust you have not waited long?"

"Nearly half an hour," growled Lowther.

"Sowwy. But Mr. Wiggs was showin' us some new waistcoats—"

"Rippin' waistcoats, too," said Vavasour.

"Same voice!" murmured the man at the stile. "It's 'im!"

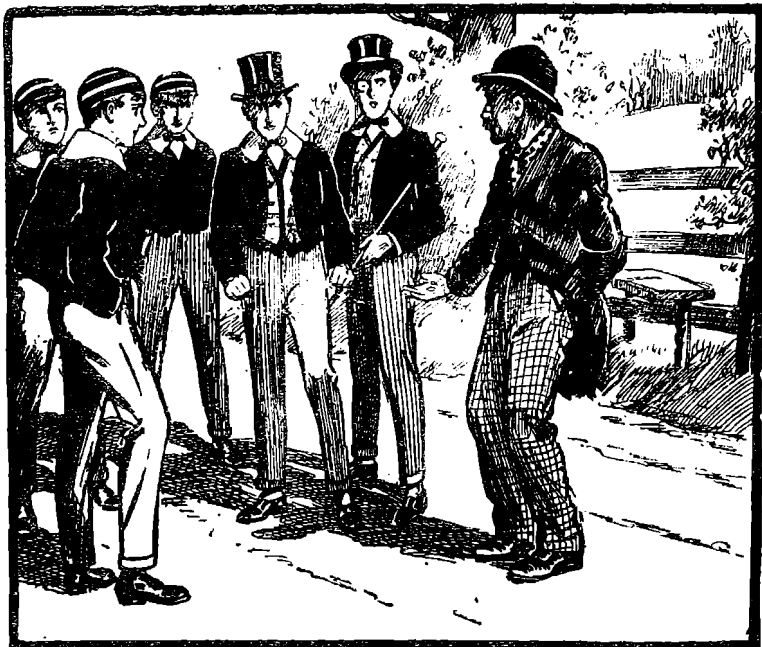
"Howevah, I'm veady to return to St. Jim's now," said D'Arcy. "Is this chap a friend of yours, Tom Mewwy?" And he turned his eyeglass upon the tipsy gentleman hanging to the stile.

"No, he isn't!" said Tom Merry warmly. "He begged of us, that's all, ass!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

Vavasour glanced at the man, and started.

A strangely pale look came over his



"You had better get off now," observed Vavasour, who was strangely pale. "I'm off!" said Mr. Smiley, with a loving glance at the glimmering sovereign in his dirty palm. "I'm going, Master Vavasour; but you won't mind speaking a few words to a pore man first!"

much?" he said. "Ain't I worked for old Smith this 'ere ten years? But there wasn't no standing him arter he made his money."

"You'd better go back to old Smith," said Monty Lowther. "If a policeman comes along and finds you hanging on to the stile, he'll run you in."

"Me and young Smith was pals," said the man dreamily. "But since old Smith made his money, young Smith have become a reglar toff."

The Terrible Three laughed—they could not help it. These confidences from a man they had never seen before struck them as comic.

"Hallo, here's Gussy at last!" said Tom Merry.

The two elegant youths came in sight. The tipsy stranger leaned heavily on the stile, and blinked at the new-comers as they joined the Terrible Three. Then suddenly his intoxication seemed to clear,

aristocratic, well-cut face, as his eyes fell upon the shabby, tipsy stranger.

The man leered at him.

"Appy to see you agin, sir," he said.

Vavasour stared at him.

"You ain't forgotten Smiley, sir?"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in amazement. "Surely you don't know that fellow, Vavasour, deah boy?"

"No!" stammered Vavasour.

"Vavasour!" repeated Mr. Smiley, in astonishment. "Is that young gentleman's name Vavasour?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I've made a mistake," said Mr. Smiley, with a disagreeable grin. "I wasn't expectin' to 'ear that the young gentleman's name was Vavasour. My eye!"

"My name is Vavasour," said the new boy at St. Jim's haughtily.

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Mr. Smiley grinned again. "My eye!" he said. "I don't know you!" "My eye!" was all Mr. Smiley said. "But if you're hard up, I can let you have some help," said Vavasour, feeling in his pocket.

"That's a kind and generous young gent!" said Mr. Smiley encouragingly.

Vavasour's gloved fingers came out of his waistcoat-pocket with a sovereign in them. He held it out to Mr. Smiley.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered an exclamation. He was very careless with money himself; but giving a sovereign to a tipsy mendicant on the high road seemed to him to be going altogether too far.

"Weally, Vavasour," he remonstrated, "the man will only get dwunkah than he is now, and get locked up, you know."

"Don't you worry, young gent," said Mr. Smiley, as he took the sovereign in an exceedingly dirty finger and thumb. "If I was locked up, my generous friend Mr. Vavasour would come and bail me out. Wouldn't you, Mr. Vavasour?"

He laid a strange, sarcastic emphasis upon the name that puzzled the juniors. Vavasour was strangely pale.

"You had better get off," he said. "I'm goin'," said Mr. Smiley, with a loving glance at the glimmering sovereign in his dirty fingers. "I'm goin'. I'm thirsty. I 'eard you were at school now, Master Vavasour, but I didn't know where."

"Come on, you fellows!" said Tom Merry.

"Old on a minute, Master Vavasour," said Smiley. "You won't mind speakin' a few words to a pore man wot has got the push?"

Vavasour hesitated. "Go on, you fellows, will you?" he said. "I don't know what the man can have to say to me, but I may as well humour him."

"He may wob you!" said D'Arcy anxiously.

Vavasour laughed; but there was an anxious ring in his laugh.

"No danger of that," he said. "I wouldn't 'urt such a generous young gent," said Mr. Smiley. "That kind-hearted young gent will 'elp me agin when I'm 'ard up, I know that."

"I should certainly wefuse to do so."

"You don't know what a kind 'eart young Master Vavasour 'ave got," said Mr. Smiley.

"Weally, you wuffian—"

"Oh, come on!" said Tom Merry.

It was evident that Guy Vavasour wanted to be left alone with the mendicant, though for what reason the chums of St. Jim's could not guess.

Tom Merry & Co. walked on down the road, leaving them standing together, and a turn of the lane hid them from the sight of the juniors.

Tom Merry and his companions walked on to the school. They did not speak, though each of them was thinking, to himself, that the matter was very queer.

It looked as if the man, who called himself Smiley, knew Vavasour, had known him before he came to St. Jim's. There was a veiled threat in his manner towards the elegant schoolboy, and it seemed to Tom Merry & Co. that Vavasour had stayed to speak to him against his will.

Yet why should he have yielded to the man's demand if he didn't want to? That was a puzzle.

They reached St. Jim's; and it was ten minutes or more later when Vavasour came in, and then he was flushed as if he had been hurrying. And he did not speak a word about the curious encounter in the lane. The chums of the School House did not refer to it—but they wondered.

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Skimpole Puts His Theory Into Practice.

SKIMPOLE of the Shell came out of the School House with a big book under his arm. The book was the famous volume of Professor Balmyscrumpet, Skimpole's inseparable companion.

There was a beaming smile upon Skimpole's face, showing that an idea was working in his mind. A little crowd of juniors were standing outside the School House, with overcoats on over their football things, waiting for the time for the kick-off in the House match between the School House juniors and Figgins & Co. and the New House junior team.

It did not occur to Skimpole that he would have been better occupied upon the football field himself. To Skimpole's mighty brain, it was quite clear that football was a waste of time, when there were great questions like Determinism to be settled.

Skimpole, for once in a way, was flush with money. As a rule, he was short of that useful article: which was, perhaps, one reason why he believed in the urgent necessity of what he termed a re-distribution of wealth.

An uncle of Skimpole's had come down unusually handsome, and Skimpole had three pounds in his pocket, and Skimpole, like a true enthusiast, was prepared to translate his theories into practice.

According to Skimpole's principles, he had no more right to that three pounds than anybody else had, and he was prepared to share it with the down-trodden millions. Skimpole was going forth that afternoon with the express determination of doing good.

As he was ready to part with his three sovereigns, he was not likely to be long in want of an object for his intended goodness.

He found the object very quickly. Truly, he was not a pleasant object to look at; but as a true Determinist cannot logically blame anybody for anything, Skimpole did not blame the man he met for being under the influence of liquor.

He only sorrowed at the sight, and reflected that, under Socialism, such things would be impossible—perhaps not having it very clear in his mind how they were to be made impossible.

The man was leaning on the stile in Rylcombe Lane, and blinking in the spring sunshine. He blinked at Skimpole, and Skimpole blinked at him. Skimpole was very pleased with the meeting.

"How do you do?" he asked affably.

"Hey?"

"It's a nice afternoon!" said Skimpole.

"I fear you are in want, my friend."

The man stared at him blankly.

"Stony!" he said. "I've jest parted with my last tanner for—for food."

"For drink, I should have thought," said Skimpole.

"Ain't touched a drop for weeks," said the man. "I'm a teetotaler, young gentleman. If you could 'and me 'arf-a-crown to 'elp me on my way—"

"I trust I can do more than that," said the benevolent Skimpole. "I have three pounds, and it is all at the service of the poor and needy."

"Mad!" murmured the stranger.

"Dotty!"

"Not at all," said Skimpole; "I am a Socialist!"

"Ho!"

"Pray excuse me for having fancied that you were under the influence of drink," Skimpole went on. "I know that hunger in the extreme state has the same symptoms as intoxication. Want and exposure account for your trembling hands and your thick enunciation."

"Wot!"

"What is your name, my friend?"

"My name's Smiley!"

"Dear me! I have heard that name before, somewhere," said Skimpole.

"You are in want, my friend?"

"Starving!" said Mr. Smiley pathetically.

"Come with me!"

"Hey?"

"Come with me, and I will give you food and drink, and provide you with a somewhat improved suit of clothes, and a bath, which you sadly need," said Skimpole.

"Gammon!"

"I am quite in earnest, my unfortunate friend. Pray, come with me, and you shall have everything you require."

Mr. Smiley blinked uncertainly at Skimpole. But it was evident that the youth was in earnest, and Mr. Smiley, fully convinced in his mind that he was mad, decided to accompany him.

It might be worth while, especially as Skimpole had said that he had three pounds. If Mr. Smiley found anything like an opportunity, those three pounds would change owners very quickly.

Mr. Smiley staggered a little as he detached himself from the stile. Skimpole held out a supporting arm.

"Pray lean on me, poor friend and brother," he said. "You are reduced to a state of weakness by want. But I will help you. Lean on my arm."

Without leaning on Skimpole's arm, Mr. Smiley would probably have been unable to walk at all—though it was not hunger that was the matter with him.

He leaned very heavily on Skimpole, and the genius of the Shell piloted him to the gates of St. Jim's. As he led him in, there was a terrific yell from the direction of Taggles' lodge, and the school-porter came hurrying up.

"You get hout of 'ere!" he shouted.

"Hey?"

"My dear Taggles," said Skimpole reprovingly. "I am surprised and shocked that you should act so brutally towards a brother in distress!"

"That 'orrid tramp ain't no brother of mine!" said Taggles, who was not a Socialist, evidently. "He's drunk!"

"You are frequently under the influence of gin yourself, Taggles. But this poor fellow is not intoxicated. He is suffering from extreme want; a result of the disorganised social conditions we live under—"

"He's drunk!" roared Taggles, "and tramps ain't allowed in 'ere!"

"My dear Taggles—"

"Houtside!"

"I refuse to have my friend ordered out!" said Skimpole, with dignity.

"Pray come with me, my poor fellow! Kindly keep your distance, Taggles!"

Taggles stood thunderstruck as Skimpole piloted his zig-zagging friend across the quadrangle towards the School House.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Taggles.

"My only hat!"

And he retired to his lodge. Skimpole and his friend disappeared into the School House.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Skimpole's Brother.

"BEATEN 'em!" said Jack Blake, with satisfaction. "Beaten the New House! That last goal was a regular daisy, though I kicked it myself!"

"Yaas, wathah! I must say that you have played up vewy well, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You all backed me up vewy well—"

"That's more than you did for me!" growled Tom Merry. "You stopped to stick in your eyeglass, when you ought to have stopped a pass!"

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"Never mind; we've beaten 'em!" said Blake. "Now I'm ready for tea. As

Gussy didn't do much playing, I think he ought to get the tea."

"I regard you as an ass, Blake!" "Vavasour will get it," suggested Monty Lowther. "Vavasour is very handy at filling kettles and cleaning frying-pans and things!"

"My dear fellow—" began Vavasour. Vavasour had been a keen onlooker at the game, not having been able to play. Vavasour had shown much keenness for football, and Tom Merry was already thinking of giving him a place in the junior team; though that was likely to meet with some opposition.

"You are an ass, Lowthab," said D'Arcy, "and I do not regard it as in the best of taste to chip my friend Vavasour!"

"I stand corrected!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah! I think—" "What with?" asked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthab—" "Well, here we are!" exclaimed Jack

Blake, throwing open the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth-Form passage, while the Shell fellows went to their own quarters. "Hallo! It seems that tea's ready!"

The four juniors stared into the study. Well they might stare.

They had expected to find No. 6 empty, and the fire out. But the fire was burning merrily, and the study was not empty. It had two occupants. One was Skimpole of the Shell. The other was his brother—in a Socialistic sense—the disreputable Mr. Smiley.

Mr. Smiley was seated in the arm-chair, with his feet on the fender. His battered bowler hat was on the back of his head. Skimpole was looking after him well, and Mr. Smiley was making huge raids upon the substantial meal upon the table.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Blake, Herries, and Digby together.

"Ah, is that you, Blake?" said Skimpole.

Mr. Smiley looked round with an affable smile. He was still under the influence of the gin he had lately consumed at the Green Man in Rylcombe, and it made him affable. The genius of the Shell blinked at the Fourth-Formers.

"Yes, it is!" said Blake grimly. "What are you doing in my study?"

"Having tea."

"Yes, I can see that, ass! Who's this froak?"

"This is my brother."

"Your what—what?"

"My brother!" said Skimpole firmly.

"I trust you will excuse my taking possession of your study in this way, Blake? Gore cut decidedly rusty when I took my brother into my own study. You are aware that Gore shares my study with me, and Gore is a very disagreeable person, and does not understand in the least the desire to do good to one's fellow-creatures. He grew violent, and threatened to call in a prefect, so I had no alternative but to take Mr. Smiley to another study. I chose this one, my dear Blake. Of course, as a matter of fact this study is as much mine as yours."

"How do you make that out?" asked Blake, pushing back his cuffs.

"Under Socialism, all studies will be nationalised," Skimpole explained. "Everything in the world, my dear Blake, belongs as much to everybody as to anybody. For example, if I sold your clock, in order to raise funds to help the submerged tenth, I should be completely justified in doing so. It is as much my clock as yours."

"You'd better not do it, all the same," said Blake. "There'd be a slaughtered lunatic lying about soon afterwards, if you did."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Please come in!" said Skimpole, blinking hospitably at the chums of Study No. 6. "You are quite welcome!" "Quite welcome in our own study!" roared Herries.

"Certainly, my dear Herries!"

"Well, my hat!"

"That's Socialism, is it?" said Blake thoughtfully.

"Yes, my dear Blake," said Skimpole, beaming. "that is Socialism. Pray excuse me for using your tea-things. I have had the misfortune to break some of them; but, of course, they are as much mine as yours. Under Socialism all teapots and cups and saucers will be nationalised."

"And that's your brother, is it?" asked Digby.

"Yes, my dear Digby."

"You said his name was Smiley."

"Yes, that is his name."

"Then how can he be your brother, fathead?"

"In a Socialistic sense, my dear Digby. Are we not all brothers?" said Skimpole reprovingly.

"Oh, I see!" said Blake. "Blessed if I didn't think it was a relation you had dug up! Where did you pick up that thing?"

"I found him on the road, suffering from want. As I chance to be in funds to-day, I determined to do good—in fact, I went forth this afternoon with the fixed intention of doing good!" said Skimpole. "I have taken the stranger in."

"He's taken you in, I fancy. What he's in want of is soap and water."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And did you ask permission to bring that giddy tramp into the school, Skimmy?"

Skimpole shook his head.

"That would have been quite superfluous, my dear Blake. This school is as much mine as anybody else's; under Socialism, of course, all schools will be nationalised. Besides, permission would have been refused."

"Yes, I think that's very likely. Would you like some good advice, Skimmy? Under Socialism, I suppose, good advice will be nationalised, so you have as much right to it as anybody else. I'll give you some, anyway. Take your friend the quickest way out of St. Jim's before anybody else sees him!"

"But why, my dear Blake?"

"Because you'll get licked if he's seen here."

"I am prepared to suffer in the cause of the advancement of the human species, my dear Blake. All pioneers of true reform have to suffer. I do not expect to encounter unceasing the ignorance and prejudice of the age."

"Great Scott, what a flow of language! Skimmy, old man, I won't lick you, because you can't help being dotty. But take that thing out of my study."

"I have already pointed out that it is not your study—"

Blake strode towards Mr. Smiley, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Time to go," he said.

"Hey?" said Mr. Smiley.

"This is my room. Get out!"

"My dear Blake—"

"Shut up, Skimmy! Smiley, if that's your name, you're superfluous here. Will you get out?"

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Smiley, with a dizzy glare at Blake. "I'm quite comfortable 'ere. I'm 'aving tea with my young friend. I've got another young

friend at this 'ere school, too, wot I'm anxious to see afore I goes."

"Rot! Skimmy's the only lunatic here!"

"My dear Blake—"

"Master Vavasour is my friend," said Mr. Smiley, with dignity. "I ain't goin' without seein' Jim."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglass and looking more closely at the shabby figure sprawled in the armchair. "I know that chap now. It's the wotah we met in the lane the othah day, who begged of Vavasour!"

Mr. Smiley looked at him.

"Ow do you do?" he said affably.

"Glad to meet you agin."

"I am not glad to meet you, you wuffan! I regard you as a vevy disreputable person. Pway wetire fwom this studey!"

"I ain't goin' without seein' my friend Vavasour!"

Blake hesitated. He was very much exasperated at finding a tipsy tramp installed in his study, though it was impossible to be very angry with Skimpole.

His first thought was to take Mr. Smiley by the shoulders and sling him out; but if the tipsy fellow showed fight it would mean a row, and that would certainly get Skimpole into trouble.

If the masters discovered Mr. Smiley in the School House, it would most certainly mean punishment for the junior who had brought him there. The fact that he was Skimpole's brother, in a Socialistic sense, would not influence them at all.

"Pray sit down and have tea with us, Blake!" said Skimpole. "I hope you are not so snobbish as to fancy that you are superior to Mr. Smiley in any way."

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, I think I am a little bit," said Blake. "Mr. Smiley is de trop— Mr. Smiley is going out, and he can choose the door or the window. It is a free country, so he can choose which he likes. Is it to be the door or the window, Mr. Smiley?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm goin' to see my friend Vavasour!"

"You're going out!"

"I ain't!" said Mr. Smiley.

Blake compressed his grip on the man's shoulder and jerked him out of the chair. Mr. Smiley reeled against the tea-table, and fell across it with outspread arms, and there was a terrific crash of crockery.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Skimpole.

Blake gave a yell.

"Oh, you fathead! You've smashed all our crocks!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Mr. Smiley straightened himself up rather dazedly. His good humour was gone now, and there was a very warlike expression upon his face. He doubled up his fists and put his back against the wall.

"I ain't goin'!" he announced.

"You'll be put out, then."

"My dear Blake—"

"Shut up, Skimmy, and get out of the way! Collar the cad, you chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the Fourth-Formers collared Mr. Smiley, and in spite of his struggles he was whirled round and whipped through the doorway into the passage. But Mr. Smiley, under the combined influence of gin and rum—or heredity and environment, as Skimpole would have declared—was in a fighting mood, and he struggled desperately in the passage. There was a crash and a bump as Mr. Smiley and the four juniors went to the floor together in a struggling heap.

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THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Somewhat Mysterious.

"GREAT Scott!"

"Who is it?"

"What's the giddy row?"

"My hat!"

"Go it, ye cripples!"

Most of the School House juniors were coming in to tea about that time, and there was a crowd upon the spot in a few moments. Fourth-Formers and the Shell swarmed round the struggling heap outside the door of Study No. 6.

Vavasour came along with the Terrible Three, and Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Bernard Gyn rushed up after them.

Gore of the Shell and Levison and Mellish and Reilly and Lorne, and a dozen others, came out of their studies.

The crowd thickened in the Fourth-Form passage, and there were exclamations and inquiries on all sides.

"Who is it?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in amazement. "Looks like——"

"It's Smiley!" yelled Monty Lowther, catching a glimpse of the man amid the struggling juniors.

"Smiley!"

"The tramp!"

Skimpole blinked out of the doorway of Study No. 6.

"It is my friend Smiley," he said. "My brother, and your brother, in the sense of Socialism. I brought him in here to tea, and for some reason Blake is behaving rudely to him——"

"Great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothing whatever to laugh at," said Skimpole. "I regard this as outrageous conduct on Blake's part. This study is as much Smiley's as Blake's, and——"

"Smiley!" muttered Vavasour!

"Here!"

Gore gave him a malicious look.

"Your friend, Vavasour?" he said.

Vavasour did not reply.

"Let him alone, Blake," said Levison. "You've no right to handle Vavasour's friends like that. Why shouldn't Vavasour have a friend in if he wants to?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I did not know he was here," said Vavasour, pale to the lips.

Mr. Smiley wrenched himself out of the grasp of the panting juniors, and staggered up.

"I ain't goin'!" he gasped. "Not without seein' my young friend Vavasour! He's goin' to 'elp a poor cove, he is. Where's Vavasour?"

"Here he is!" exclaimed the delighted Gore.

"Here he is, Smiley!" grinned Mellish. Blake grasped the tramp again.

"Out you go!" he exclaimed.

"Elp!" roared Mr. Smiley, as the juniors grasped him. "Don't let 'em chuck out an old pal, Master Vavasour! Lend me a 'and!"

Vavasour stood quite still.

"Lerame alene!"

"Master Vavasour——"

"Vavasour's not going to help you, you silly chump!" said Monty Lowther, getting a good grip on the back of Mr. Smiley's neck. "Now then, come on!"

"Orright!" roared the enraged Mr. Smiley, glaring at Vavasour as he staggered down the passage in the grasp of the juniors. "Orright! You'll go back on an old pal, will yer? You'll see an ole pal 'andled like this 'ere? I'll tell 'em something, I will!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry.

"I ain't goin' to shut up! I'm goin' to tell you something about that there young impostor!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Vavasour, striding forward.

"Impostor—eh?" grinned Gore.

"We're getting to it now! Out with it, Smiley! Let's have the whole story!"

"That there young bounder wot pretends to be a gentleman——"

Vavasour grasped the intoxicated man by the shoulder, and shook him.

"Hold your tongue, Smiley!" he said.

"The fellows don't mean to hurt you! Come with me quietly, and I'll see you out of the gate! Let him alone, you fellows! He'll come with me quietly, won't you, Smiley?"

Smiley gave him a surly look. Tom Merry & Co. released him. They were struck by the white misery in Vavasour's face. The boy looked as if he had received a fearful blow, and the expression on his face almost scared them.

Mr. Smiley stood gasping, and exhaling rich odours of gin and rum.

"Come on, Smiley," said Vavasour, "you mustn't make a row here, you know!"

"I dunno that I'm goin'," said Smiley.

"You wouldn't stand by an ole pal when I arst yer. I'm goin' to tell 'em all about Smith's Entire——"

"Come on, Smiley!"

"Look 'ere——"

Vavasour whispered in the man's ear. Smiley gave a sullen nod, and allowed Vavasour to lead him away.

The crowd of juniors stood looking on as the elegant Shell fellow and his disreputable companion disappeared downstairs.

What did it mean?

What was there in common between Guy Vavasour and this drunken, disreputable rascal? It was an amazing mystery.

"Smith's Entire," said Gore, puzzled.

"What on earth did he mean by Smith's Entire?"

"He's drunk," said Tom Merry. "He was just babbling."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Gore sneered.

"Yes, you'd like to hush it up, for Vavasour's sake," he said. "It's as plain as anything can be that that rotter knows something about Vavasour—something that Vavasour doesn't dare to let us know!"

"He's got him under his thumb," said Levison. "You all saw how quickly Vavasour chipped in when the rotter said he was going to tell us about him."

"Yes, rather."

"Faith, and it's quare!" said Reilly.

"But Vavasour's all right!"

"All wrong, you mean," said Levison.

"There's something jolly fishy about all this, and you all know it very well. I think the Head ought to be told. It's a case of blackmail, that's what it is! Vavasour is under that fellow's thumb!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry.

He looked anxiously down the stairs, wondering if Vavasour would succeed in getting clear with the now quieted Mr. Smiley. The din in the junior passage must have been heard below.

Vavasour was hurrying his companion as much as he could; but Mr. Smiley was in an obstinate mood, and he refused to be hurried.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jims, strode towards them as they were nearing the door.

"Who is this?" demanded Kildare, staring at the tramp. "Did you bring this man into the school, Vavasour?"

"No," said Vavasour. "A chap brought him in to give him a meal, and I'm seeing him off the premises."

"Oh! See him off at once then, and tell the chap if he brings any more tramps into the school there will be trouble!"

"Yes, Kildare."

Vavasour piloted the man to the school gates. A number of curious fellows followed them.

At the gates Mr. Smiley seemed to have recovered his good humour—the moods of intoxication are very changeable.

He insisted upon shaking hands with Vavasour for good-bye, and Vavasour submitted, wincing—the proceeding being watched by fifty pairs of curious eyes.

Then Mr. Smiley went zigzagging down the road, and Vavasour walked away. He did not return to the School House; but walked round the path by the old chapel in the dusk of the falling evening, evidently wanting to be alone.

It was hours later when Vavasour came into the School House, and he was still looking pale.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Hero of the Hour.

"PLAY up, School House!"

"Go it, Vavasour!"

"Goal! Goal! Hurray!"

There was a big crowd of juniors round the football-field. Some seniors had joined it, too, and were cheering heartily.

The return match between the School House and New House was being played, and Figgins & Co., and the New House team generally, had been looking forward to a victory.

Vavasour had been included in the School House team at the last minute, and, strange to say, he had kicked the first goal for the School House in the first five minutes of the game. Figgins & Co. stared.

"My hat!" ejaculated Figgins.

"That new chap is hot stuff!"

"Oh, Fatty!" said Kerr, with a reproachful look at Fatty Wynn, who was looking very astonished in goal.

Fatty Wynn turned pink.

"Well, that was a scorcher!" he said.

Tom Merry clapped Vavasour on the back as they walked back to the centre of the field.

"Good egg!" he said. "Keep that up!"

Vavasour smiled.

"I'll try," he said.

And he did try—with great success.

He did not score again in the first half; but Tom Merry scored twice from passes by Vavasour from the wing, passes that came just when and where they were wanted, and the juniors cheered Vavasour as much as Tom Merry.

"He's a giddy dark horse!" said Blake enthusiastically. "Blessed if I care twopence whether there's a Vavasour Lodge or not—he's a jolly good footballer!"

"Three goals to one!" said Kangaroo, with great satisfaction. "Figgins & Co. won't pull it off so easily this time!"

"No fear!"

The New House juniors lined up for the second half with grim determination. Fortune favoured them at first.

Two goals came to Figgins, and the score was level.

Then for some time the tussle went on without a goal to either side. Sometimes the School House goal was hard pressed, and sometimes the struggle raged before the New House citadel; but Fatty Wynn was not found wanting. Fatty Wynn sent out the leather every time, and the New House cheered their plump champion.

Jack Blake glanced up at the clock-tower.

"Ten minutes to go!" he exclaimed.

"Play up, School House!"

"On the ball!"

"Wake up, you fellows!"

That was unnecessary. The School House players were wide awake enough

But the New House men were equally wide awake.

Then there came a roar.
 "Bravo, Vavasour!"
 "Go it!"
 "Kick! Kick!"

Vavasour had brought the leather down along the touchline, and he looked round for a fellow to take the pass. But Tom Merry was on his back, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was far behind; and the New House halves and backs were closing on Vavasour. The new boy paused a second, and then kicked—a long kick from the far wing that looked next to impossible.

But the ball went home, true as a die; and Fatty Wynn in goal leaped at it a second too late!

Blake yelled.
 "Goal!"
 Goal it was.

The ball was in the net, and there was a deafening roar of cheering and hand-clapping.

"Goal! Goal!"
 "Bravo, Vavasour!"
 "Hurrah!"

It was a wonderful kick, and it was no wonder that the School House crowd shouted themselves hoarse.

Blake chuckled gleefully.
 "Two minutes to go!" he said. "The New House will never get level now! Vavasour's kicked the winning goal!"

And Blake was right.
 Figgins & Co. made the most of the few minutes left; but they had no chance, and the referee's whistle rang out to tell that the match was over.

Four goals to three!
 The New House were beaten again, and this time the New House fellows could not say that it was a fluke.

They had been beaten after a gruelling game, which left all the players gasping, and they had been beaten by fine play.

Vavasour had kicked the winning goal, and kicked it under the greatest difficulties. The new boy was the hero of the hour.

As the teams came off the field, Figgins slapped Vavasour on the back.

"Jolly good, Vavasour!" he exclaimed. "You ought to be in the New House. That's where you ought to be. You're wasted in the School House."

Vavasour laughed.
 "Weally, Figgins," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "we should wufuse to part with him. We are pwoind of Vavasour!"

"What-ho!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily. "I'm jolly glad to put you in, Vavasour! You've won the match for the House!"

"Yes, rather!"
 "Bravo, Vavasour!"
 "Hurrah!"

"Oh, don't!" exclaimed Vavasour, drawing back.

"Rats!"
 "Yaas, wathah, wats! You've won the match, deah boy!"
 "Up with him!"
 "Hurrah!"

And up went Vavasour upon the broad shoulders of Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, and he was borne off towards the School House amid a cheering crowd.

The New House fellows joined in the cheering. It was Vavasour who had beaten them, but they could admire a tough opponent—a foeman worthy of their steel.

The cheering crowd arrived at the doorway of the School House.

George Gore stood upon the steps.
 Gore had his coat and cap on, and had evidently lately come in. There was a disagreeable smile upon his face; and Crooke, who was with him, was

chuckling. The cheering crowd halted, and Vavasour was set down.

"Hurrah, Vavasour!"
 "Hurrah, Smith!" said Gore.
 "Hurrah, Smith!" echoed Crooke, with a giggle.

Vavasour started.
 "What are you silly asses cackling about?" demanded Tom Merry.
 "Don't begin any of your rot now, or you'll get bumped! Vavasour has just won the House match for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "We're not rotting," said Gore. "I suppose we can cheer Smith if we like, can't we?"

"Good old Smith!" chuckled Crooke.
 Vavasour was deadly pale.

"What do you mean by calling him Smith, you fatheads?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"It's his name."
 "His name's Vavasour, clump!"
 "His name's Smith, fathead!"
 "Look here—"

"Ask him!" grinned Gore. "Look at him!"

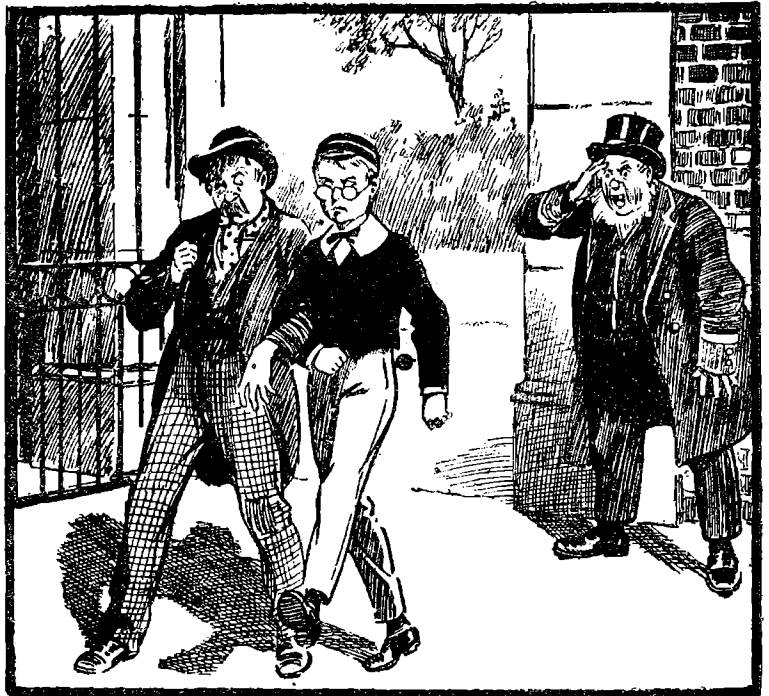
comes to St. Jim's under false colours?" said Gore. "I think we all ought to care if a fellow comes here under an assumed name."

"It's a lie!"
 "It's the truth!"
 "Speak up, Vavasour, old man!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy encouragingly. "We all know that Goah is lyin'. He's a wottah! Speak up, deah boy!"

But Vavasour did not speak up. The hunted look intensified in his eyes; his face was like chalk. And a grim, uncomfortable silence fell again. Gore went on:

"I've been to see that man Smiley. He got tipsy—and talked. He's told us the whole story. Vavasour's not Vavasour at all; it's all bunkum about his people, and Vavasour Lodge, and all the rest of it. He's lied from beginning to end. His name's Smith—and he used to be a pal of Smiley's, when his father, old Smith, kept the pub."

"What!"
 "It's not twue, you wottah!"



"You are frequently under the influence of gin yourself, Taggles," said Skimpole, marching Mr. Smiley in at the gates. "This poor fellow is not intoxicated; he is suffering from want, a result of the disorganised social conditions we live under—" "He's drunk!" roared Taggles, "and tramps ain't allowed in 'ere!"

All eyes were upon Vavasour.

He stood still, silent, his face deadly white. All the colour, all the happiness, had died out of it now, and his eyes had a hunted look.

The shouting died away. It seemed to the juniors as if there were the chill of a tragedy in the air.

The silence lasted some moments, which seemed like hours.

Tom Merry broke it.

"Look here," he said, "we're fed up with this persecution of Vavasour. I don't care twopence whether he has gassed about his people or not; I know he's a jolly good footballer, and he's won the House match."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "You can shut up, Gore!"
 "I suppose you care whether a fellow

"It's true, every word of it, and he dare not deny it!" said Gore calmly.

Vavasour was silent.
 Why did he not speak?
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy felt a chill creep over him.

He knew at last that his loyal faith had been misplaced; that he had placed faith in a fellow who had deceived him—who had tried to deceive them all—and would have been deceiving them yet, but for the accident of his recognition by Smiley.

"His name's Smith!" said Gore, with a grin. "His father kept the Vavasour Arms, near Sevenoaks! He was a butler in the Vavasour family before he kept a pub! Smiley was his potman! Young Smith used to hold horses and that kind

of thing about the pub. Old Smith made money, and he's a brewer now—head-cook and bottle-washer of Smith's Entire!"

"Smith's Entire!" said Tom Merry mechanically, remembering what Smiley had said. "I—I see now! Oh!"

"Vavasour, deah boy—"

"Call him by his right name!" said Gore. "His name's Peter Smith!"

"Peter Smith!" said Levison. "Ye gods! Rather a change after Guy Vavasour! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you cad!" said Blake roughly.

"He came here under a false name, under false colours!" said Gore. "He was ashamed of the name of Smith, and ashamed of the pub! Guy Vavasour—the only Vavasour about him is the Vavasour Arms, where he used to hold horses!"

"You've said enough," said Tom Merry quietly; "no need to rub it in! You can hold your tongue now; it will be better for you!"

Gore thought so, too, and he held his tongue.

"Say somethin', Vavasour, old man!" said D'Arcy miserably. "You've only got to say that the cad is lyin', and we'll believe you!"

Vavasour did not reply.

A change came over his pale, thin face—his features worked—and with a sudden sob he covered his face with his hands and rushed into the house.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Staunch Friends.

THE crowd of juniors broke up in silence.

Their faces were clouded.

There was no doubt in any mind of the truth of the disclosure. Vavasour's manner proved the truth of it clearly enough. The wretched boy had made no attempt at defence; no attempt at sustaining his former attitude of lofty contempt.

He had broken down under the accusation—he had given way utterly. The story was true; he had come to St. Jim's under false colours—he had money, certainly, but nothing to boast of—the very name he had seemed so proud of was not his own.

If the exposure had come at any other time, the St. Jim's fellows would probably have laughed over the matter, and considered that it served the impostor right.

But it came at a moment when Vavasour was the hero of the House—he had shown that he had coolness, courage, determination, and loyalty.

And those qualities were a great set-off to the snobbish weakness which had caused him to enmesh himself in this network of lies and deceit.

If he had attempted to brazen the matter out, the fellows would have felt less uncomfortable about it. But his utter surrender had disarmed them; even his enemies.

Gore, who had brought this to pass, was surprised himself to feel that he was not happy over his success. The taste of his triumph was bitter in his mouth.

The agony of humiliation and shame in Vavasour's white face haunted Gore's memory, and he wished heartily that he had left the fellow alone.

Vavasour had gone straight to the Shell dormitory, and he remained there alone whilst the shadows thickened in the dormitory.

The door opened at last.

Vavasour did not look up.

Several fellows came in; they came towards him. Vavasour raised his head; he saw Tom Merry, Blake, D'Arcy, Lowther, Kangaroo, Manners, and several more.

A bitter look came upon his handsome face.

"So you've come!" he said.

"Yes, we've come!" said Tom Merry quietly.

"You might let me off this," said Vavasour. "I'm going!"

"Going!"

"Yes! I suppose you don't think that even a liar, and a boaster, and swanker could have the nerve to stay here after an exposure like that?"

"It's all true, then, Vavasour?"

"Don't you know it is?"

"Well, yes!"

"We're sorry, Vavasour, old man!" said D'Arcy miserably.

"There's nothing to be sorry for!" said Vavasour bitterly. "You least of all—you trusted me after the others suspected. I played a fool's game, and I deserve this!"

"What did you do it for, Vavasour?" asked Tom Merry.

Vavasour made a weary gesture.

"Because I was a fool and a snob, I suppose. I was the son of a public-house keeper—he kept the Vavasour Arms—and old Sir Gilbert Vavasour had always been kind to me, and took a lot of notice of me. I always had tastes above my station, and—and I didn't look like a horse-boy, did I? Then my father made money, and—and I had new prospects. We changed our name—you know that can be done legally. I wasn't satisfied with being Peter Smith. My father became Mr. Vavasour—I became Guy Vavasour! Why don't you laugh?"

"I don't feel like laughing!" said Tom Merry.

"Vavasour's my name now—legally. I was born Smith. I was an ass! That's all! I came here under false colours—I was a liar from beginning to end! I didn't mean to be; but one thing led to another, and—and here I am. I shall be gone to-morrow, and you can remember the joke to laugh over."

"Nothing of the kind," said Tom Merry. "I thought you had some idea of this sort in your mind, and that's why we came. We don't want you to go."

Vavasour stared.

"You don't want me to go?"

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Because you're a good chap, and we like you!" said Tom Merry, at once. "You've done wrong—or, rather, you've been a fool! A fellow who is ashamed of his name and his origin is a fool! There's nothing in either to be ashamed of! But—but I can understand how you got into it, and if you were nothing but a snob, we should be glad to see the last of you. But you've proved that you're the right sort—excepting for this humbug, you've been straight and decent. And, now it's all over, we know you will be straight, and you will have friends to back you up, too. We're ready to stand by you, and give you a chance."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Monty Lowther.

"That's what we've all come to say!" said Manners.

"It will be all right," said Tom Merry. "Stay here, and all this will be forgotten—all we shall remember is that you're a good chap and true blue!"

The tears were running down Vavasour's cheeks.

"But—but the other fellows!" he muttered.

"They'll follow our lead. They're not against you—even Gore has just said to me that he's sorry he meddled in the matter. You've got to stay here, Vavasour, and face the music like a man—and you'll pull through all right!"

"I'll stay!" said Vavasour.

It was not an easy thing to live down, but Vavasour lived it down. His borrowed plumes had been shorn from him; but that gave his own good qualities a better chance of showing themselves—and, indeed, things were easier to Vavasour himself when he no longer had the weight of a deception on his shoulders. And from that day there was no "straighter" fellow at St. Jim's than the boy who had been Ashamed of His Name.

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Preparing for the Strike.

"I'M not going to stand it!" said Jimmy Silver resolutely to his chums, in the end study at Rookwood School.

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby nodded sympathetically.

"The whole thing is getting too thick, and I'm not going to stand it any longer."

Jimmy Silver looked very determined as he made that statement.

And the looks of his chums showed that the matter was a serious one.

There had been discontent, not loud, but deep, in the Fourth Form at Rookwood for some days past. And it was not without reason.

The housekeeper was down with influenza. That was not what the juniors were dissatisfied about. A housekeeper, as Jimmy Silver admitted, had a right to be down with influenza if she wanted to. But the housekeeper, being on the sick-list, her place was temporarily taken by a substitute.

Now, Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, was quite satisfied with the many recommendations of Miss Skinner. But the boys were not satisfied with the fare she provided.

What Miss Skinner knew about cooking would have filled whole cookery-books. What she knew about economical management ought to have made her fortune. But what she didn't know about boys would have overflowed libraries, and was likely to cause trouble at Rookwood.

Savings on the housekeeping bills might be gratifying in some quarters. Experimental dishes might increase Miss Skinner's knowledge of the noble art of cooking and management, and of what the human frame could stand. But fellows who found a sparing allowance in the place of plenty could not be expected to be pleased.

The Fifth and Sixth took it philosophically. It was beneath their dignity to complain. And, besides, they were better treated.

Moreover, as most of them had liberal pocket-money, they could compensate themselves for sparing meals in the Hall by expensive study fees.

With the juniors it was different. Their pocket-money was more limited; while, on the other hand, their appetites were keener, and made bigger demands.

And, besides, as Jimmy Silver pointed out, the juniors were not so well treated as the seniors. Miss Skinner's idea seemed to be that the younger a boy was the less important he became. Which, of course, was absurd.

"Why shouldn't we go on strike, and let the grub alone?" suggested Jimmy Silver.

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby stared at him.



The frying-pan was overturned, and the hapless leg of mutton was hissing away in the midst of the embers.

"Well, what do you think of the idea?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, ripping!" said Lovell sarcastically. "I can see myself missing meals as a protest against the diet, I don't think!"

"I think you're a howling lunatic!" added Newcome. "I get hungry enough as it is, without missing my meals entirely."

"Ass! I don't mean you to miss your meals."

"But if we cut the grub—"

"What's the matter with grubbing ourselves in the study?"

"My hat!"

"That's the wheeze!" said Jimmy Silver, with considerable satisfaction. "I reckon I know a lot about cooking—"

"Sure you reckon correctly?"

"Oh, don't be funny! I reckon I'm all there in that line. And you kids can help. We'll grub ourselves in the study, and eat meals in the Hall. Bootles won't miss us at first, perhaps; but if there's an inquiry, why, all the better. We explain in public that we cut the grub be-

cause we can't stand it. We're willing to go to the trouble and expense of providing grub and cooking it for ourselves. I don't see how the Head himself could find fault with that."

"But what about the tin?" said Lovell doubtfully. "It costs money grubbing oneself, you know!"

"That's all O.K.! I've had a remittance from the pater, and it was really that that made me think of it. I've got nearly five pounds in hand, and that will see us through for a start. If we find the idea catches on we can get the whole Form to back us up, and have a whip-round for funds. Of course, we can feed a large number more cheaply than a few."

"Of course! The Form will want to know something about the cooking, though."

"That's all serene! I'm a good cook."

"Have you done much cooking?" inquired Raby.

"Well, no, I haven't had much actual practice; but I've been reading up a cookery-book, and I've got a lot of ideas on the subject, so let's get along to the

tuckshop and lay in some provisions before they close."

"We can't get all we want at the tuckshop," Lovell remarked thoughtfully. "We shall want meat for dinner to-morrow. I suppose we're dining in the study to-morrow?"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes. I'll get Bulkeley to give us a pass down to the village, and we can run down there on our bikes to do the shopping. We'll get the groceries at the school-shop, though. It will save time."

As the Fistical Four walked into the school-shop three Modern juniors, who were chatting in the doorway, looked round at them. Tommy Dodd & Co., the rival leaders of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, at once saw that something was on. The important looks of the Fistical Four were sufficient to betray that fact.

"Hallo! Some jape, I suppose?" said Tommy Dodd.

"Looks like it!" said Tommy Cook.

"My word! Listen to the orders he's giving!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, in amazement. "Two pounds of raisins, two pounds of sultanas, two pounds of currants, two pounds of peel. I say, Silver, are you giving a two-pound feed?"

"I think I know what I'm doing!" said Jimmy Silver loftily. "We might take you merchants into the idea."

"They might think it was their own!" suggested Raby.

"Yes. Perhaps it'll be safer to leave them out."

"What's the little game?"

"Little boys shouldn't ask questions. It's not up against you. We've no time to attend to you just now," said Jimmy Silver, in a tone of superiority that got the Modern chums' backs up at once. "You'll know some time."

"Look here—"

"Rats! Buzz off, young 'uns!"

The bill slowly ran up to more than a pound, and still the leader of the Fistical Four did not seem to be finished. Many juniors had gathered round now.

Extensive and curious grew the crowd, watching the movements of the Fistical Four, and the little school-shop was crammed; but this was rather pleasing than otherwise to the four chums.

They felt that they were taking their proper place as chiefs of the Fourth Form, and the cynosure of all eyes.

Tommy Dodd & Co. occupied an extremely back seat just now. All eyes were on the Fistical Four.

Tommy Dodd was puzzled. This could not be an ordinary study feed that the Fistical Four were planning; but, then, what was it? What was the little game?

The purchases in the tuckshop finished, Jimmy Silver planked down twenty-seven shillings, a sum that made the juniors stare. Then the new purchases were packed into a basket, and Jimmy Silver and Lovell carried it between them as they left the place. After them went a crowd of curious juniors.

"What on earth does it mean?" said Tommy Doyle, in wonder. "Are they going to have a barring-out in the end study and stand a siege?"

With an accompaniment of questions and jokes, the Fistical Four marched to their study and dumped down the basket, and slammed the door in the faces of half the Fourth Form.

The latter dispersed, excitedly discussing the matter, and wondering what on earth was in the wind.

The Fistical Four did not choose to enlighten them. Jimmy Silver looked at his watch.

"I'll get the pass from Bulkeley," he said. "He's bound to give it to me. You chaps get the jiggers down to the gates ready."

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"Right you are!"

The provisions were stacked away in the cupboard, which almost overflowed, and the juniors left the study, locking the door after them.

The pass was duly obtained, and the four Classical juniors set off for the village, where they speedily made their purchases.

The first purchase was a leg of mutton, which Jimmy Silver carried under his arm. Then the chums passed on to the greengrocer's, and ordered huge quantities of every kind of vegetable. These were to be sent.

Then they remembered that they had no cooking utensils, and proceeded to supply themselves with saucapans and pans of every description, including a roasting-jack on which to roast the mutton.

These purchases were secured to Jimmy Silver's bicycle, and the juniors set out upon the return journey.

A musical clink-clink proceeded from Jimmy's machine, with its rattling burden, and attracted some attention on the road. They reached the gates in good time before locking-up, and the clink-clink brought a curious crowd round them at once.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were not to be seen, but there were plenty of juniors to inquire what Jimmy Silver was investing his cash in old tins for.

The chums maintained a lofty silence. They wheeled their machines into the shed, and left the tins there for the present, intending to smuggle them into the end study after dark.

Jimmy Silver took the leg of mutton with him as he went up to the study. He uttered an exclamation as he came in sight of the study door.

He left it locked. It was wide open now, and light was streaming out, and a sound of laughter and merry voices.

"My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

And with keen apprehension in their hearts, the Fistical Four hurried forward.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Daring Raid by the Moderns.

TOMMY DODD & CO. were in the end study, and pretty nearly half the Fourth Form seemed to be there with them. The study was a large one for the Fourth; but it wasn't built to accommodate the number of juniors who were crammed inside it now.

There hardly seemed to be breathing-room. But the juniors looked very cheerful, apparently not greatly troubled by their close quarters.

Tommy Dodd was sitting on the table, with Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle. The chairs and stools were occupied by other juniors, and still more were sitting on the window-sill and the fender, in fact, anywhere, and all were eating.

And the things they were eating!

The Fistical Four, staring in blankly, saw that the cupboard-door was wide open, and the purchases they had made at the school shop an hour or so before were in the hands of the raiders.

All kinds of materials for cooking—raisins, sultanas, currants, lemon-peel, and so forth—the juniors were handing to one another, with the unlimited gene-

rosity of fellows who did not have to pay for them.

"Get out of this!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Let that grub alone!"

"Oh, draw it mild, old chap!"

"We came here for a feed!"

"This is Doddy's treat!"

"It isn't!" shouted the leader of the Fistical Four excitedly. "This is my grub!"

"You can settle that with Doddy!" said Lacy obstinately. "We came here for a feed, and I don't see leaving till it's finished."

"I reckon—"

"You bounders—"

"It's all right," said Tommy Dodd.

"You can have some; and what more do you want? We should have had to wait till you came back for this feed, only I managed to get the lock open with a crowbar. I hope I haven't damaged the lock. It seemed to give a sort of crack when it gave way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fistical Four exchanged glances.

It was useless to lose their tempers and make a fuss about the matter, especially as it was pretty clear that the Fourth-Formers wouldn't be turned out of the study till they had finished their feed.

It was a joke that they themselves might have played upon the Modern chums had the circumstances been different; but that was very little comfort to the Fistical Four.

Jimmy Silver pushed his way into the study. Along with the other supplies for the cookery, he had laid in plenty of condiments, and he expected to find them still untouched in the cupboard. There was a grim smile on Jimmy Silver's face.

"Here, don't shove," exclaimed Towle, as Jimmy pushed against him, and sent a tin of condensed milk he had just opened streaming down his trousers. "Look what you've done!"

"Rats!"

Jimmy groped in the cupboard. What he was looking for was a large packet of pepper, and, as he expected, it was untouched. There was nothing in that to tempt the juniors. But they were destined to have it, all the same!

Jimmy Silver opened the end of the packet, and turned from the cupboard with it in his hand.

"Hallo! What have you got there?" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Pepper!"

"Eh?"

"Will you have some along with the tart?" asked Jimmy blandly.

"No, no! Oh! Look here—"

"I think you will!"

"Ow! I tell you— Atchooooo-o-o!"

With a sweep of the hand, Jimmy Silver scattered the pepper over the feasting juniors.

A blinding cloud of it spread all over the room.

The feasters sprang to their feet, coughing and sneezing and shouting.

"You—you rotter!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Ow-oooo-atchooo!"

"Hold on!" gasped Lacy. "I'm finished! I'll get out!"

"Stop it! I'll bunk!"

"Ow! Hold on, you ass!"

But Jimmy Silver did not hold on.

He was master of the situation now. He scattered clouds of pepper on all sides, and there was a frantic stampede to the door on the part of the coughing, sneezing juniors.

Lovell, Newcome and Raby were roaring with laughter at the door. Tommy Dodd & Co. and two or three others came in a rush for the doorway, and jammed in it, and rolled over one another. After them came the frantic juniors, stumbling

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over them, and piling over in all directions, yelling and sneezing wildly.

The noise of sneezing could be heard the length of the corridor. And over the struggling, frantic crowd Jimmy Silver was still scattering clouds of pepper.

Jam and marmalade and condensed milk and other things were mixed up with them, and as they sorted themselves out and escaped into the passage, they presented a series of shocking sights.

With all the fun taken out of them, the Modern chums and the rest of the feasters retreated, amid a storm of coughs and sneezes; and the Fistical Four stood in the study and roared with laughter. But there was still plenty of pepper in the air, and the laughs were soon changed to sneezes.

Jimmy Silver jammed the window wide open, and Raby waved a newspaper about, with the idea of fanning away the pepper. Lovell wrenched away the paper and pushed Raby into the arm-chair.

"I say!" gasped Raby. "I—"

"You ass! Let the pepper settle!"

"Snakes!" said Jimmy Silver. "This is a ghastly mess, and no mistake! But I think we've taught Tommy Dodd & Co. a lesson about interfering with our culinary arrangement."

"Ha, ha! I rather think so!"

"There's a lot of the stuff left yet, too. They've not had time to scoff it all,"

broom, but Tommy Dodd held up his hand in sign of peace.

He had a swollen nose, very red from the sneezing, and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle both bore marks of the conflict upon their faces. But the Modern chums were friendly, all the same.

"It's pax!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Keep that lunatic quiet!"

"But, I say—"

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver. "It's not pax if you put your faces inside this study! Travel along!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come, get off that!" said Tommy Dodd, with perfect good humour.

"We've come to cash up."

"Cash up for what?"

"The grub. How much did we scoff?" And Tommy Dodd drew a handful of silver from his trousers' pocket.

"It was a jape, of course, but we're going to cash up."

"Oh, no, you're not!" said Jimmy Silver.

"We won't take it. We might have japed you in the same way. Thanks for the offer, all the same."

"Oh, just as you like," said Tommy Dodd.

"But what on earth are you kids driving at? What's that thing fixed up on the mantelpiece for?"

"They're going to roast something,"

said Tommy Cook. "Is that a new wheeze for roasting chestnuts, Silver?"

then, and we'll let you into the scheme on equal terms. We're going to grub ourselves in the study, and cut all the meals in the Hall."

Tommy Dodd gave an expressive whistle.

"That will mean trouble, my son. We're allowed to have tea in the studies, but there would be a row if we started missing dinner."

"I don't care! If there's a row it will lead to an inquiry, and the Head wouldn't let Miss Skinner go on with her theories if he knew how it worked out in practice. Anyway, we're up against the present rules, and we're ready for a row."

"Exactly."

"I know a lot about cooking," said Tommy Dodd. "I'll help you with that mutton. Of course, you'll be glad of a little expert advice?"

"I reckon I'm expert enough," said Jimmy Silver. "You can grease the dishes for the puddings if you like, and stone the raisins. Get those tins here as quick as you can, you chaps."

Lovell, Newcome, and Raby went for the tinware. Jimmy Silver unwrapped the leg of mutton, Tommy Dodd & Co. watching him with great interest.

There was a sound of bumping in the passage. Tommy Dodd opened the door, and stared at a hirsute individual who was dragging along a heavy sack.

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said Jimmy Silver. "Let's get the place tidy and start."

And the Fistical Four set to work.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver as Cook.

IT took some time to get the study in order again, but the Fistical Four were industrious. They cleared away all the litter, and packed up what was left of the provisions.

The pepper settled at last, and they left off sneezing. A huge fire was banked up in the grate, and Jimmy Silver affixed the roasting-jack to the mantelpiece.

He stepped back to admire it.

"Snakes! That looks jolly business-like!" he remarked. "We shall want a tin to catch the gravy, too. You chaps go down to the bike-shed and get up the tins. It's dark now, and you can get 'em in without being noticed."

The three were about to leave the study, when there was a kick at the door, and the Modern chums came in. They stared at the roasting-jack, and the Fistical Four stared at them.

Raby reached out for the hearth-

"Of course it isn't, ass! That's to roast a leg of mutton."

"A—a—a which?"

"A leg of mutton," said Jimmy Silver. "Look here, I don't mind letting you kids into it. I don't want you chipping in and mucking the business up all the time. We're going on strike!"

"My only hat!"

"It's the rotten grub we've had lately under Miss Skinner's rule!" explained Jimmy Silver. "We're not going to stand it!"

"Good for you!" said Tommy Dodd cordially. "We'll back you up if you've got a scheme. We don't like it any more than you do. I was famished in the class-room this afternoon. Weren't you, kids?"

"Absolutely!"

"It's simply rotten!" said Tommy Dodd, growing excited. "Miss Skinner may have boxes and trunks full of certificates, but we don't want the blessed recipes worked off on us. I know 'em—how to make three gallons of nourishing soup out of a mutton chop that the dog has finished with, and so on. Scat!"

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"Well, you chaps can back us up,

"Hallo! What's that?"

"Greengroceries for the young gentlemen, sir."

"Phew! My hat!"

"That's all right!" said Jimmy Silver, coming to the door. "Bring them in here. Shove them into the corner if you want the sack. There's a bob for you."

"Thank you kindly, sir!"

The greengrocer's man departed, and Jimmy Silver rather anxiously watched him go. Though the juniors were allowed cabbages in their studies while the quantity was not specified, anything on this scale had never been attempted before.

Jimmy Silver's heart beat as he saw Bulkeley stop the greengrocer's man on the stairs and question him; but, to his relief, the Rookwood captain only laughed and walked away.

Tommy Dodd gazed at the huge heap of greengroceries in the corner of the study. Potatoes were rolling in all directions from the heap. There were enough cabbages and turnips and carrots to last the juniors for weeks, Tommy Dodd thought.

"We want enough, you know," said

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Jimmy Silver. "You see, stews are awfully nourishing, and you can make ripping stews out of vegetables and a little meat. I reckon we shall have this leg of mutton hot to-morrow, and cold the next day. That's the economical way of running a house, you know, and you save waste."

"Quite so."

"You chaps can begin peeling potatoes now," said Jimmy Silver. "I am thinking of having mashed potatoes to-morrow with the mutton, and we want to get them boiled to-night ready. We sha'n't have much time after morning lessons."

"Anything to help," said Tommy Dodd obligingly. "But what are you doing with the mutton, Silver?"

"I'm hanging it up to roast."

"Better let me do it. You see—"

"Rats! You peel the potatoes."

Jimmy Silver fastened up the joint to roast. A slightly puzzled look came over his face.

"I say, you chaps, do you remember whether mutton ought to have a slow or a quick fire?" he asked.

"Quick," said Tommy Cook.

"Slow," said Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver grunted.

"Lot of good asking you for advice! I dare say a medium fire is about the thing—a lie about what we've got. Hallo! What's that unearthly row?"

There was a sound of running feet in the passage, and a clatter-clatter of tins. The juniors rushed to the door. Lovell, Newcome, and Raby, laden with tinware, were coming along the passage at top speed, with eight or nine vengeful Fourth-Formers hot on their track.

"Stop 'em!" shrieked Lacy. "We'll give 'em pepper!"

"Collar the rotters!"

The three Classical juniors dashed breathlessly up to the door of the study. They had left a trail of clattering tins behind them, and had not brought in more than half their load.

"Collar them!" roared Towle.

"Here, quick! Help!" gasped Lovell. They pulled him in, and Newcome and Raby, and the clanking, clinking tins. The pursuers stopped, not caring to tackle the juniors who stood in the doorway, and retreated, kicking the fallen tins before them.

The din was terrific, and in a few moments an angry voice called up the stairs.

The juniors scuttled off, and the prefect growled as he saw the tins scattered along the floor, and went to look for the youngsters. Jimmy Silver, and his chums hurried out and gathered up the tins, and quickly brought them into the study. A smell of burning greeted them.

Lovell sniffed.

"What's that? Something's burning!"

"Snakes! It's the mutton! Turn it, quick!"

Jimmy Silver had hung the mutton much too close; it was not beginning to cook, but it was beginning to burn. Raby dashed toward it, and dragged it away from the fire—and dragged the jack away from the mantelpiece at the same time.

"Oh, now—"

The leg of mutton crashed down into the cinders.

"You ass!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"How could I help it?"

Jimmy Silver dragged the mutton out of the fender.

"Give me a cloth to wipe it!" he said crossly.

And he wiped off ashes and cinders, and set up the jack again, and cut off the burnt corner with his pocket-knife.

"I think that'll do. You can watch and turn it, Raby."

Jimmy Silver arranged a large flat tin on the fender to catch the drippings from the mutton. There was none as yet, but it was as well to be ready.

Tommy Dodd & Co. cheerfully peeled potatoes. Raby watched the joint, and turned it, whether it wanted it or not.

Lovell began to peel onions, a task that seemed quite a pathetic one, for it soon made him weep. Jimmy Silver continually looked at the mutton, and admonished Raby.

The Rookwood cooks were very busy—so busy that they forgot that it was long past tea-time, and that the Fistical Four, at least, had not had tea.

A curious smell began to make itself observed in the study, and Tommy Dodd looked at the mutton, and sniffed.

"Better if you'd taken my advice, Silver. I told you I knew how to cook."

"What's wrong now?" demanded the leader of the Fistical Four.

"Something's wrong with that blessed mutton, or it wouldn't be niffing like that. The fire's too quick, I expect."

"Too slow, to my mind," said Tommy Cook.

"Oh, rats!" Jimmy Silver sniffed.

"There does seem to be a sort of a niff about, though. I don't reckon it comes from the mutton."

"Where does it come from, then?" grinned Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver sniffed and sniffed.

"Why, it's the saucepan!" he exclaimed suddenly.

"The saucepan! Bosh!"

"It is! Look here! Phew!"

Jimmy Silver dragged off the lid of the saucepan. A smell of burning potatoes so strong that it could almost have been cut with a knife, emerged from the saucepan, and a blinding vapour that filled the study. The juniors sniffed and coughed.

"What do you call that?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver triumphantly. "Is that the giddy way you cook potatoes, Dodd?"

Tommy Dodd stared blankly at the smoking saucepan.

"The potatoes are all right!" he grunted.

"Rats! You can't cook for toffee!"

"Look here, Silver—"

"I suppose I shall have to cook the vegetables as well as the meat," said Jimmy, in a tone of resignation. "The work always falls upon the most sensible chap in a party. I've noticed that."

"You don't seem to be cooking the mutton very quickly," said Tommy Dodd. "The potatoes are getting done, anyway."

"Done for, you mean," said Lovell.

They made the fire bigger. The grate was not a large one, but it was necessary to have a large fire to cook the mutton, and so the coals were banked up on the hob.

"My hat!" said Tommy Dodd. "It's warm!"

"The mutton will be done pretty soon, I think."

"What's that row in the quad?"

"Blessed if I know, or care, either!"

But Lovell went to the window. It was quite dark in the quad, but a crowd of fellows were there, staring up apparently at the sky over Rookwood College. Lovell looked upward, and saw sparks floating across the dark sky.

"Somebody letting off fireworks, I think," he said, turning back into the study.

Jimmy Silver did not listen. He was cocking his eye thoughtfully at the

mutton. In spite of the huge fire it did not seem to be getting on satisfactorily.

"Look here—"

"Why not fry it?" suggested Cook. "There's a jolly big frying-pan among these things, and fried mutton is—ripping!"

Jimmy Silver hesitated a moment, and then decided to act upon the suggestion. The pan was produced, and the mutton was placed in it.

"By Jove! It's cooking now!" exclaimed Raby.

There was no doubt about that. The leg of mutton seemed to be on the way to being reduced to dripping bodily. The frying-pan was swimming with gravy, and the parts of the joint that stuck over the edges of the pan were burning and smelling vilely.

"We shall have to let the fire down a bit!" gasped Jimmy Silver, his face streaming with perspiration.

Raby jumped up.

"I'll pour a jug of water on it!"

"Stop, you ass! Oh, great Scott!"

Jimmy Silver had reached out to stop the over-zealous Raby, and knocked the handle of the frying-pan. A flood of melted grease overflowed into the fire. There was a terrific burst of flame, and the juniors scuttled off to escape it. Then from the door they watched the fire in dismay.

The frying-pan was overturned, and the hapless leg of mutton was hissing away in the midst of the embers. Blaze was roaring up the chimney, and they heard the duller roar above that told of a chimney on fire.

There was a fresh burst of shouting from the quad, and the meaning of the crowd there dawned upon Lovell.

"My hat! It was our chimney they were watching!"

Jimmy Silver dashed forward to drag the mutton from the fire, but the heat and the spluttering drove him back.

"I reckon it's done in!"

"And so are we!" gasped Lovell. "The chimney's afire!"

Footsteps, rapid and heavy, sounded in the passage. The door was kicked open, and Bulkeley stared in. He started back in amazement.

"Why—what the—how the—your young rascals!"

"It's—it's all right, Bulkeley!"

"All right!" roared the captain of Rookwood. "Do you call this all right? The chimney's on fire! Do you hear?"

"We didn't mean—"

"No, I don't suppose you did! Get out of the study at once!"

"But—"

"Get out!"

That the Rookwood cooks were hauled over the coals for that escapade we need not say.

But the Head, if he was a Tartar, was a just Tartar. He had learned enough from the stammering explanations of the juniors to know that they had cause for complaint, and no doubt he gave Miss Skinner a hint on the subject, for the next day there was a decided improvement in the House fare.

THE END.

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