

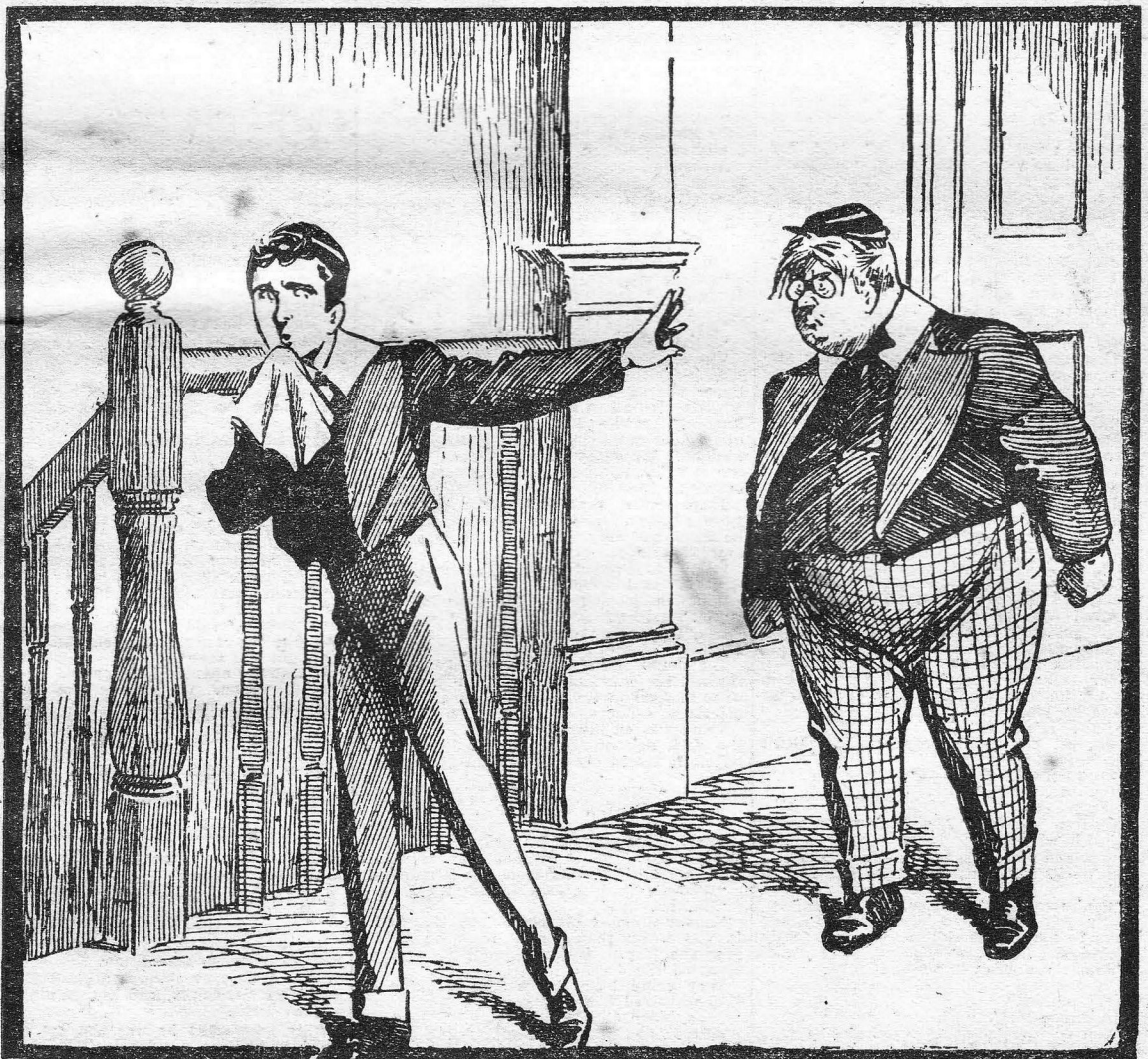
# THE ALL-SCHOOL-STORY PAPER!

## The Penny Popular

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



## BUNTER IS BARRED!

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

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# THE BARRING OF BUNTER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

### Bunter Causes Trouble.

**U**GH!" Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, gave that grunt as he put his nose out from under the bedclothes.

It was a chilly morning. The rising bell had ceased to clang, and the Remove were slowly and unwillingly turning out of bed.

"Ugh! It's cold!" "That's on account of the weather," Bob Cherry remarked. "It's often cold at this time of the year."

"Oh, really, Cherry!" "Tumble up, lazy-bones!" "It's so jolly c-c-cold!"

"Well, it won't get warmer," said Nugent. "Tumble up, or you won't have time to wash!"

"That won't worry Bunter," said Bulstrode, with a disagreeable laugh. "He doesn't trouble soap and water very much."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—," "I think something ought to be done," said Bulstrode. "Study No. 1 is a disgrace to the school!"

"Eh! What's that?" exclaimed Wharton. "I say your study is a disgrace to the school!" said Bulstrode. "Blessed if it's healthy to have a fellow in the school who never washes!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—," Wharton was silent. He was rather susceptible on that point; and the chums of Study No. 1 were extremely annoyed with Bunter themselves.

Billy Bunter was, as the Removites said, opposed to soap and water on principle. Even in summer his ablutions were more or less of a farce.

In winter he dabbed his nose with soap, and hastily rubbed it off again, and he was finished. Though generally the last out of bed, he was frequently ready to go down with the quickest, because he spent so very few minutes at the washstand.

There was sometimes a rush for the bathrooms, and fellows would stand waiting, towel on arm, for five or ten minutes for their turn. But Billy Bunter never joined in any of those rushes.

Wharton glanced at him with great disfavour as he slowly put one leg out of bed, like a swimmer feeling the depth of the water before he plunged in.

"Ugh! It's cold!" "Oh, get up!" said Harry crossly. "Don't be a cowardly slacker!"

"Look here, Wharton—," "Get out of bed!" "It's c-c-cold!"

Wharton grasped his bath-sponge and sopped it with water. The fat junior blinked at him, and made one bound out of bed.

"It's—it's all right, Wharton; I'm getting up."

"You're only just in time, you oyster." Billy Bunter grunted discontentedly, and began to put on his clothes. He had nearly finished dressing when Wharton spoke again.

"Aren't you going to wash, Billy?" "Of course I am," said Bunter peevishly. "Don't bother!"

He turned to his washstand. Some of the Removites watched him with interest. He dabbed the sponge on his nose, and then squeezed it out and dabbed it again.

Then he commenced a tremendous rubbing with the towel.

"My only hat!" said Skinner. "That's a wash!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—" "Dirty beast!" said Bulstrode. "You see, I'm in rather delicate health,"

explained Bunter. "I'm afraid of the effect too sudden a shock might have on me—"

"Oh, then it won't do for you to start washing in the morning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I didn't mean that, Bulstrode. I mean that the sudden contact of the cold water might give me pneumonia, or consumption, or something. I'm an awfully clean chap, but I don't believe in overdoing a thing."

And Bunter brushed his hair, and was finished.

Bulstrode and Skinner grinned to one another as they went downstairs. Stott joined them, and the three chuckled over a discussion they carried on in low tones. Bunter was too short-sighted to observe them, or he might have known that mischief was afoot.

Bulstrode and Skinner had schemed a scheme several days before in connection with Billy Bunter, but had not yet had an opportunity of putting it into practice.

A shout of laughter from a group of Upper Fourth fellows greeted them as they went down to their study. Wharton glanced at Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth. "Here come the anti-soap merchants!" exclaimed Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I hear that the Head is going to have Study No. 1 disinfected," said Fry. "There's going to be a fumigation there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "What price soap?"

The chums of the Remove strode on with red, indignant faces. The laughter of the Upper Fourth fellows followed them.

"This is all through that fat worm Bunter!" growled Nugent. "I knew there would be a row sooner or later about his not washing. We ought to take the matter into our own hands, and give him a lesson. It's beastly!"

There was a shout of laughter in the Remove passage. Half the Remove seemed to be there, and they were all laughing heartily over something.

"Oh, it's all round the school, now it's once started!" said Wharton.

"They're looking at the door of your study!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Upon the whole, I'm rather glad that I dig in No. 13 now."

The chums of the Remove pushed their way through the crowd of chuckling juniors. They came in sight of the door of their study, and uttered a simultaneous exclamation of anger.

There was an inscription in white paint on the dark oak of the door. In big, glaring letters it stared them in the passage.

**"THE ANTI-WASHITES!"  
"DOWN WITH SOAP!"**

Harry Wharton looked angrily up and down the passage. His expression only caused a fresh burst of laughter from the Removites.

"Who did this?" exclaimed Harry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent dragged his chum into the study. It was worse than useless to make a row over the joke. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh slammed the door.

They could hear the juniors laughing as they dispersed down the passage.

"It's rotten!" exclaimed Harry. "Of course, Bulstrode's at the bottom of it! It's beastly unfair! Bunter is a dirty little brute, but that's no reason to brand the whole study!"

"Oh, Bulstrode's glad of the chance of getting us, of course!"

"Confound him!" "Something will have to be done with Bunter."

"We must get that foolery off the door," said Harry. "It will be a joke all over the school soon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. Three pairs of eyes glared aggressively at the hilarious Cherry.

"What are you cackling about?" demanded Nugent. "I can't see anything funny in this."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Stop that row!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry, if you want to imitate a cheap alarm clock, you can go and do it in your own study!" shouted Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Ho, ho, ho!"

"Outside!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Study No. 1 looked at one another in exasperation, and then, with one accord, they seized upon the hilarious Cherry. Bob, still laughing hysterically, was whirled to the door, and Hurree Singh flung it open.

"Now, then," exclaimed Wharton, "are you going to stop that gurgling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Will you chuck it?" "Ho, ho, ho!"

"Then out you go!"

With a whirl Bob Cherry went flying into the passage, and he spun round on the linoleum, and sat down with some violence. But he did not seem to mind the bump. He sat there, and went on laughing uproariously:

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Shut up!" shrieked the exasperated Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Nugent slammed the door with a slam that rang along the passage like a cannon-shot. Bob Cherry picked himself up, and almost staggered away, laughing hysterically.

As he was no longer an inhabitant of Study No. 1, he naturally saw the matter in a more humorous light than Wharton, Nugent, or Hurree Singh did.

"It's beastly!" growled Wharton, throwing "Julius Cæsar" on the table with a crash. "Bunter will have to be cured!"

"Yes, rather!" "The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Let's get that rot cleaned off the door now, though," said Nugent. "The sooner we tackle it the easier it will come off!"

"Right you are!"

The chums opened the door and started on the inscription. Fortunately, the paint had not had time to harden. They rubbed and scraped until it came off, and there were only a few white smears left to show that it had been there.

Then they went in to dinner.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Barred.

**B**ILLY BUNTER looked a little nervous when he came into Study No. 1 later that afternoon and found the chums of the Remove there.

The latest joke of Bulstrode and his friends was all over the school now, and the chums of No. 1 were everywhere alluded to as the anti-soap merchants, and the never-washers, and so forth.

Billy knew that he was the cause of the trouble, and he wondered what kind of a reception he would get from Harry Wharton & Co.

He blinked uneasily at the chums of the Remove, who were having their tea in the study. They did not look at him.

"I say, you fellows—," They did not look up. Wharton drank his tea, and Nugent helped himself to cake, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh skinned a



banana. The three of them appeared to be quite unaware of Billy Bunter's presence.

"I say, you fellows, you might have called me in to tea! If you'd like anything extra, I'm quite willing to run down to the tuck-shop for you."

No reply.  
Bunter strode towards the table, and grasped Frank Nugent by the shoulder, and shook him.

"Look here, Nugent—"  
Frank rose to his feet, took Billy Bunter by one fat ear with his finger and thumb, and led him, squealing, to the door.

"Ow, ow, ow!"  
Bunter was led into the passage, and then Nugent retired into the study again and closed the door. He had not spoken a word.

The fat junior stood blinking in the passage for some moments. Then he hurled the door of the study open again and rushed in.

"Look here, you fellows—"  
Harry Wharton rose from his seat, took the fat junior by the hair, and jerked him into the passage again. He whirled Bunter round, gave him a gentle kick that sent him half a dozen steps along the passage, and went into the study.

Bunter staggered along in great surprise, and stopped himself by clutching at the wall.

"They're mad," he murmured—"mad as blessed hatters! I'm blessed if I'm going to be shut out of my own study in this way! I'm not going to stand it! And I'm jolly angry, too! I'm going in to have some tea!"

He opened the door of No. 1 once more, and blinked in wrathfully.

Biff!  
A cushion, hurled by a steady hand, smote the fat junior fairly on the chest and bowled him over.

Back he went into the passage, and crashed on the opposite wall, and slid down to a sitting position.

He sat there for a full minute, gasping to recover his breath.

When he regained his feet he was red with rage, but he made no further attempt to enter Study No. 1.

He rolled down the passage and looked into Bulstrode's study.

Bulstrode was there, with Tom Brown and Hazeldene, who shared the study with him. They were having tea, and they all stared at Bunter.

Bulstrode pointed to the door.  
"Outside!" he said briefly.  
"I say, you fellows—"  
"Outside!"

"I'm hungry! I've been turned out of my own study by those beasts! I—"  
Bulstrode picked up an egg. Bulstrode was not in the best of tempers.

He took aim at the fat junior, and Billy Bunter promptly dodged out of the study.

The egg was not thrown, and Bunter took courage to peep into the room again after about a minute of hesitation and doubt.

He put his head cautiously round the door.  
"I say, Bulstrode— O-o-o-och!"

Plop!  
The egg smashed on Bunter's nose. It spread on his face in a shower, and the fat junior gave a choking gasp:

"Ow! Yow! Groo! O-oh!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"You—you beast!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not look into the study again. He scuttled away to the dormitory, and tried to clean off that smashed egg.

It took him ten minutes to clean it off and change his collar, which was splashed, too. He was bursting with wrath when he quitted the dormitory.

The persecution to which he was subjected would have tried a patient nature, and Bunter was not patient. He had brought it all on himself, but that made no difference to the Owl of the Remove.

He came down from the dormitory, and met Skinner in the Remove passage. He came up to him with a wheedling smile.

"I say, Skinner, old chap, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening. Would you mind lending me a couple of bob of it in advance?"

Skinner made no reply to Billy Bunter's request, but, with a dramatic gesture, walked away.

Bunter blinked after him furiously.

"Beast!" he muttered.  
After thinking deeply for a moment or two, the fat junior moved off to the Sixth Form passage.

Some of the seniors might be having a late tea, and there might be pickings for a fag.

"Ah!"

The sight of Stott of the Remove carrying a tray into a Sixth Form study made Bunter utter that ejaculation. The study was that belonging to Ionides, the Greek Sixth-Former. Ionides was a bully, and no junior cared to get too near his study; but Bunter, on the scent of a feed, was reckless.

"I say, Stott, old man—"  
"Oh, get away!" said Stott.

"You're fagging for Ionides, I suppose? Look here, do you want any help? I'm willing to lend a hand if you like."

"Clear out, and go and buy some soap!" said Stott.

"Oh, really, Stott!" Bunter peeped after him into the study. "What a lot of grub! I suppose Ionides is standing a feed?"  
"Yes, he is," said Stott. "Carberry and Loder are coming. You can get out."

"I say, you know, Ionides is a filthy bully, and he's as likely as not to give you a licking," said Bunter. "I'll fag instead of you, if you like. You know what a horrid beast that Greek chap is, and—"  
"Ow!"

Bunter left off as a vice-like finger and thumb fastened on his ear from behind, but Bunter was quite taken by surprise. He blinked in anguish at the Greek senior.

"Ow! Leggo!"  
"You young cad!" said Ionides, his eyes glinting with a curious, opalescent light, as

Even if he could not partake of it, there was something gratifying in the sight of a large supply of provisions.

Bunter blinked into the room.  
He started, and his eyes glittered, as he saw that it was empty. Stott had evidently left the study for some purpose, and for the moment the treasure was unguarded.

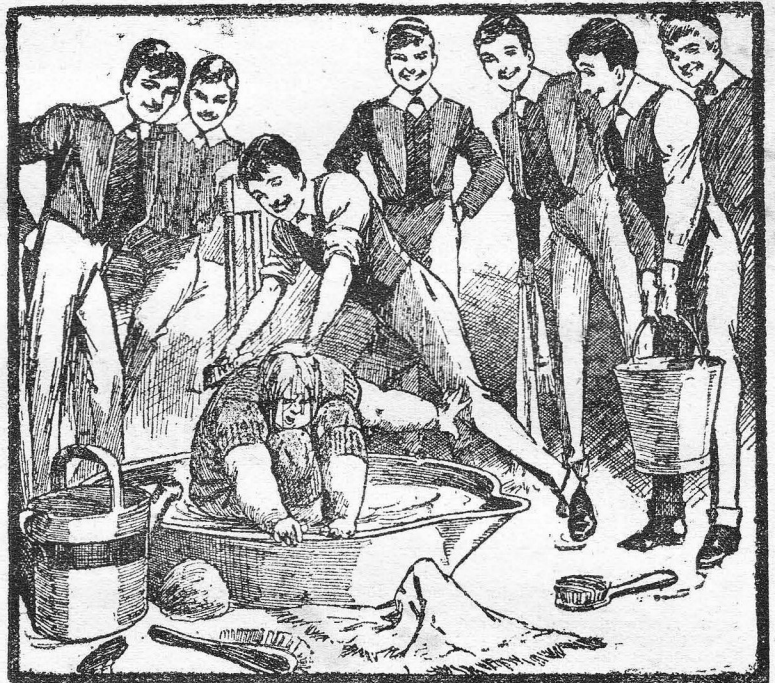
Bunter stepped quickly into the room.  
On the table were plates of cold ham and beef, tongue and chicken, tarts and cakes, and jellies and meringues. Surely there was time for a hasty grasp at something before he was discovered!

There was a step in the passage even as Bunter hesitated as to which article he should grab. The fat junior turned cold all over.

He understood—a little too late—that Stott had only left the study to tell the seniors that all was prepared.

To be caught there!  
Bunter knew what that would mean. Ionides, Carberry, and Loder were the three worst bullies in the Sixth. They would lick him unmercifully, and kick him out of the study—he knew that.

The fat junior cast a despairing glance round in search of some place of concealment. He glanced under the table, but the cover was too short.



"Yow!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I won't be washed! I'll complain to the Head! It's unhealthy to have a bath after eating! I won't—I won't!"

they always did when he was angry. "What were you saying about me?"

"I—I was only saying to Stott that you were such a decent chap that it's a pleasure to fag for you!" wailed Billy Bunter. "Ow! Ow!"

"Get away, you lying little fat beast!"  
"Oh, really, Ionides—"  
"Go!"

The senior slung the fat Remove along the passage, and Bunter scuttled off, quite giving up the idea of fagging for Ionides. The Greek looked into the study.

"Are you ready, Stott?"  
"Getting on," said Stott. "I've only to make the toast now, and the tea. It will take about ten minutes to make all that toast."

"Oh, very well!" And Ionides walked away.

Billy Bunter scuttled out of his sight, getting back to the Remove quarters. Suddenly he pulled up short, however, and retraced his steps.

A kind of fascination drew him back again to Ionides' study in the Sixth Form passage.

He looked at the bed, which was in an alcove and hidden by draped curtains. That was evidently the place.

In a moment the fat junior was through the curtains, and squatting on the bed. The curtains, falling back into their place, hid him completely.

He had hardly effected his retreat when the seniors entered the study. Stott followed them in. Ionides glanced at him.

"You can come back in half an hour and clear away," he said.

"Oh, all right!" said Stott. He went out and closed the door.

Carberry and Loder glanced at the table with looks of satisfaction. Ionides was the richest fellow at Greyfriars, and when he stood a feed, it was worth sitting down to. Nobody at Greyfriars liked Ionides, but few refused his invitations.

"Sit down, you fellows," said the Greek. "All ready, I think."

"Good!"  
Ionides lifted a huge plate of warm, buttered toast to the table from the fender.

The three seniors sat round the table, and then commenced a scene that was simply torture to Billy Bunter.

The curtains of the bed were a kind of muslin, and he could see through them into the lighted study, though he himself, in the dark alcove, was quite invisible.

He watched the three seniors at their feed, and as he saw the piles of ham and tongue disappear, he could have wept.

The toast diminished alarmingly, and Bunter watched every slice of it with hungry eyes. Then they commenced on the cakes and tarts.

Bunter could not restrain his feelings. In spite of himself he gave a low grunt, almost a groan, and the next moment he was petrified with terror as he saw Carberry raise his head in a listening attitude.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Mysterious Dog.

IONIDES glanced at the prefect, mistaking his motion. He put his hand upon the silver teapot. Everything in Ionides' study was in the most expensive style.

"Another cup of tea, Carberry?"

"No, thanks! I thought I heard something."

"Eh! What was it?"

"Have you any animals in the study?"

"Animals! Certainly not."

"It's curious. I thought I heard a sound, something like a dog-wheezing," said Carberry.

"I suppose I was mistaken. It came from the direction of the bed."

"I will soon see," said Ionides.

He rose to his feet. Billy Bunter's heart stood still as the Greek came towards the bed.

He was so terrified that he forgot even his ventriloquism, which might have been useful to him then.

He could only sit still, holding his breath.

The Greek came over to the bed, and, stooping, raised the coverlet to glance underneath. He rose again, and shook his head.

"Look on the bed!"

"Ah, yes!"

Ionides, who was turning away, turned back and laid his hand on the curtains.

Then, in the nick of time, an inspiration came to the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

Gr-r-r! Bow-wow! Gr-r-r!

It was a wonderful imitation of the growling of a dog, and it seemed to proceed from under the bed.

Ionides gave a start, and dropped his hand from the curtains.

"Why, there is a dog there, after all!" he exclaimed.

"I saw nothing when I looked under the bed!"

Carberry chuckled.

"Well, it jolly well sounds like it!" he remarked.

"I will look again."

Ionides bent down and looked under the bed. He looked and stared, and stared again. There was no dog there.

"I—I cannot understand it!" exclaimed the Greek.

"There certainly is not a dog under the bed."

Gr-r-r!

Carberry gave a jump.

"My hat! The blessed thing's under the table!"

He jumped up, kicking back his chair.

The growl had quite a savage sound, and he was in fear of feeling canine teeth in his leg.

Loder jumped away from the table, too, and both of them looked under it—Loder grasping a jug, and Carberry a chair, ready to execute vengeance upon the doggy offender.

They both gasped as they failed to see any dog there.

"My word!" said Loder.

"It was growling under my blessed feet!" said Carberry, in amazement.

"Hang it! What has become of the confounded brute?"

"Blessed if I can get on to it at all!" said Loder.

The Greek was looking excited. Very little was required to rouse his passionate Oriental temper, and he was in a white fury now.

He caught up the poker from the grate.

"I will find it!" he exclaimed.

"I will kill the brute! I will break every bone in its body!"

"Oh, hang it, Ionides, give it a kick in the ribs, and that will do!" said Loder.

"I will kill the brute!"

"Oh, please yourself!"

Ionides, poker in hand, looked round for

the dog. Bunter could see his face through the curtains, and its expression made the junior shiver.

Ionides would certainly have killed a dog, if he had found one. He was not likely to kill Billy Bunter, but he would make the fat junior feel sorry for himself if he found him, that was certain.

Ionides approached the bed again, and promptly a growl came from the direction of the door.

The Greek swung round in that direction.

Gr-r-r! Yapp-p-p!

"Hang it!" said Loder. "The beast seems to be outside the door all the time!"

"Nonsense! He was in here."

"Well, I jolly well can't see anything of him!"

"I will find the brute! I will smash him!"

Gr-r-r!

Ionides was turning towards the bed again, and it was the Greyfriars ventriloquist's wish to keep him off that direction.

The growl now proceeded from behind a little cabinet of Japanese manufacture that stood across a corner of the room.

Ionides sprang towards the cabinet, and wrenched it away, and two or three articles fell to the floor and smashed. They were valuable pieces of china; but the Greek seemed to care for nothing in his fury.

There was nothing behind the cabinet, however.

Gr-r-r!

Ionides made a swipe with the poker in the direction of that growl, and there was a crash as a china bowl of flowers went flying into pieces.

HOW TO  
MAKE MONEY!

BUY  
WAR SAVINGS  
CERTIFICATES!

APPLY TO YOUR NEAREST  
POST-OFFICE FOR FULL  
PARTICULARS!

"Ah! I nearly had it then!"

"You quite had the bowl," grinned Carberry. "You'll make a wreck of the happy home if you keep on like this."

"My belief is that the dog is outside the door all the time," said Loder.

"Fool!" said the Greek passionately. "How could it be outside, when we heard it in the room?"

"Who are you calling a fool?" demanded Loder.

"You! Fool! Idiot!"

"If that's the way you talk to a guest, Ionides, you jolly well won't see me inside your study again in a hurry!" said Loder angrily.

"Bah! I care not!"

"Oh, all right!"

Loder opened the door, and stamped out into the passage. The feed had been very nearly finished, and Loder was able to consider his dignity without losing much. Had it been the beginning of the feed, there might have been a difference.

Ionides scowled after him. When he was in a violent temper, as was frequently the case, the Greek cared nothing for anyone.

He had even been known to fail in respect to the Head at such times.

"You'd better chuck it, Ionides!" said Carberry.

"I agree with Loder, that the dog must have been outside the door. There's something wrong with the acoustics of the study, I suppose."

"Rot!"

"Look here!"

"The dog is in the study."

"Well, where is it, then?"

"Bah! I will find it—I will kill it! Fool! How could it have been outside the study when we heard it growl under the bed?" exclaimed Ionides.

Carberry knitted his brows.

"Look here, you blessed foreign sweep, you'd better mind what names you call a prefect!" he exclaimed.

"Bah! I care nothing for a prefect!"

"What?"

"Bah! Do not talk to me!"

Carberry clenched his fist. But he remembered that Ionides was the richest fellow in the Sixth, and that he owed him money. And instead of striking the blow his fingers itched to strike, he strode in silence from the room.

Ionides scowled as he went, and resumed looking for the dog. His passionate temper was at boiling-point now.

"Ah! I will find the dog—I will torture it!" he exclaimed, in a suppressed voice. "I will kill it by inches when I have found it."

"Oh, the ferocious beast!" murmured Billy Bunter. "I—I wish I was out of this study. I know the horrid savage cannibal beast will find me sooner or later."

Gr-r-r-r.

The growl seemed to be unmistakably from the passage this time; Ionides sprang to the door and looked out. A yelp died away faintly.

The Greek's eye blazed.

He did not doubt any longer that Loder and Carberry had been, after all, right, and that the dog was in the passage or on the stairs.

Completely bewildered, the Greek rushed out of the study, the poker in his grip, and dashed down the passage towards the corner.

Billy Bunter whipped out of his hiding-place, and darted from the study. He gasped with relief to find himself outside.

Then a dreadful thought crossed his mind.

He could only get out of that passage by taking the same direction that Ionides had taken.

Before he had time to think about it, the Greek's footsteps were heard returning. He had passed the corner, and had found no dog in sight either in the passage or on the stairs.

Completely bewildered, the Greek was coming back, wondering whether his senses were playing him tricks, and in a state of boiling rage.

Billy Bunter skipped into the nearest study, and closed the door without latching it. He dared not make a sound. Ionides passed the study, and went on to his own. Billy Bunter hardly breathed.

The Greek re-entered his study. Bunter, in the next room, could hear him running about, evidently looking for the mysterious dog, in the faint hope of finding him and wreaking a savage vengeance upon him.

A glimmer came into Bunter's eyes. He was safe; but immediately he was relieved of fears for his own personal safety, he began to remember that he was hungry, and to think of the piles of good things left uneaten on the table of Ionides.

The fat junior was dense as a rule; but when he was hungry, his faculties were wonderfully sharpened. He stood for some minutes in deep reflection.

Then he took the key out of the lock, and changed it to the outside of the door. The study he was in was Carne's, and Bunter knew that Carne was out.

There was not much danger of his little scheme being interfered with; and Bunter, as usual, had a little scheme.

He stepped quietly out of the study, and crept along to Ionides' door.

That door was open, and he could see Ionides still rummaging about the study, with a face white with rage, and glinting, opalescent eyes.

"He looks like a blessed tiger," muttered Bunter, and his heart failed him; but he looked at the feed on the table, and his courage revived. It was worth while running some risk for that.

Gr-r-r-r!

Ionides gave a jump, and sprang out into the passage. He glared at Bunter, who suppressed his desire to run, and smiled a sickly smile.

"Are you looking for anything, Ionides?" he faltered.

"The dog!"

"Oh, you mean Carne's dog!"

"Carne's! I did not know Carne had a dog!"

"Well, as it went into Carne's study, I supposed it was his dog," said Bunter, as carelessly as he could.



Ionides waited for no more. He rushed along the passage, hurled open the door of Carne's study, and rushed into it. Bunter followed him quickly. He pulled the study door shut behind the Greek, and turned the key in it.

Ionides was a prisoner.

Bunter darted back to Ionides' study. In a second or two he was filling his pockets at the well-laden table.

There was a roar of rage from the next study, and a wild hammering on the door. Ionides had discovered that he was a prisoner.

Billy Bunter only chuckled. He had the key out of Carne's lock, so that even if anybody came to the rescue, Ionides could not be released until another key had been found.

Of the consequences of his reckless action the fat junior did not even think. Bunter was short-sighted mentally as well as physically, and he was constantly committing actions without reflection, and then spending hours of terror when the unforeseen, though perfectly obvious consequences came near.

The fat junior filled his pockets rapidly. Cakes and buns, jars of jelly and heaps of meringues and puffs, disappeared into his capacious pockets.

In a few minutes his clothes were bulging out on all sides, and at the same time his jaws were working rapidly; for Billy was taking snack after snack as he proceeded.

Hammer, hammer, hammer! came Ionides' furious blows from the next study.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and Bunter hastily ran out. Stott was standing outside Carne's study in amazement. He glanced at Bunter as the latter passed him hastily.

"Jolly good!" he muttered, twenty times at least, as he disposed of item after item. "This is something like! That foreign waster is a beast, but he has a good taste in grub. I should like to fag for him if he wasn't such a bad-tempered beast. This is ripping!"

It was all so good that Billy Bunter finished it up to the last crumb.

And when all was gone, and the fat junior was feeling more satisfied and contented with himself and things generally, he gave vent to a long, gratified sigh.

The sound was followed by a sharp exclamation.

"He's here!"

It was Bulstrode's voice.

The next moment Bulstrode, Hazledene, and Tom Brown were looking round the trunks at Billy Bunter.

Bunter blinked at the three juniors dubiously.

"Were you looking for me, Bulstrode?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! We've been looking for you everywhere. And I don't think we should have found you here if you hadn't grunted," said Bulstrode. "We just looked into this room on chance."

"I'm sincerely sorry I've finished my feed. I was going to ask you fellows, only somehow it slipped my memory."

"Been robbing somebody?" asked Hazledene.

"Oh, really, Vaseline—"

"Oh, his postal-order's come!" said Tom Brown. "That's it—I don't think!"

"Oh, really, Brown—"

"Well, come on," said Bulstrode. "We want you!"

"What do you want me for, Bulstrode?"

strode. "Ionides can wait. It will do him good to cool his heels a bit longer. Come to the dorm, Bunter."

"But, you see—"

"Come on!"

Bulstrode marched the fat junior up, and quite a procession of Removites accompanied them.

They reached the dormitory, and there a fresh crowd of juniors awaited them, all of whom burst into a snigger at the sight of Billy Bunter.

Bunter gave a sort of spasmodic wriggle in Bulstrode's grasp.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"What—what's the little game? You see—"

"Lock the door, Skinner!"

"Right-ho!"

Bunter made a desperate attempt to break away. He nearly suffocated himself in the attempt, for Bulstrode did not relax his grip for a moment.

"Ow—ow! Oh! Groo!"

"Keep still, can't you, Fatty?"

"Yow! Ow! Groo!"

"He's been over-eating himself," said Skinner. "I've often noticed him grunting like this after a big feed."

"Groo! Ow! Oh! Really, Skinner—"

"Is the bath ready?" demanded Bulstrode.

"The bath!" ejaculated Bunter.

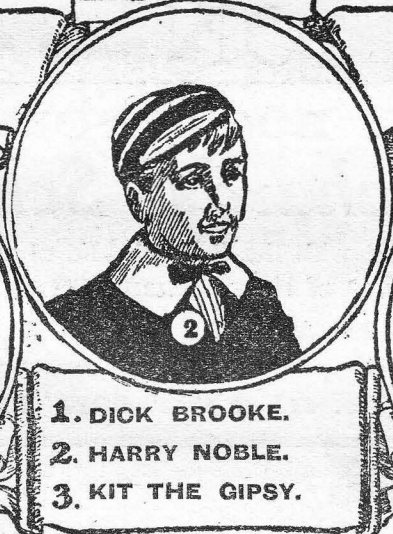
"Quite ready!" chorused a score of voices.

"Well, here's Bunter. He's ready, too!"

Bunter was jerked forward. Bulstrode released him, and the fat junior gasped for breath, and blinked round him in great apprehension.

A huge bath stood in the dormitory, and

NUMBER 13.  
THE "PENNY POPULAR"  
PORTRAIT GALLERY.



NUMBER 14 NEXT FRIDAY.  
Mr. RAILTON, MONTEITH,  
JOE FRAYNE.



1. DICK BROOKE.
2. HARRY NOBLE.
3. KIT THE GIPSY.

"What's all this about, Bunter?" he asked. "Is Ionides in here?"

"Sounds like it, doesn't it?"

"Is he locked in?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

Bang, bang bang!

"Open this door! Let me out!"

Bunter scuttled off. He sought a quiet spot to enjoy his feed.

Stott put his mouth to the keyhole of the door and yelled to the Greek.

"Where's the key?"

"What? The key? I do not know!"

"It isn't in the lock!"

"Find one then—find one—this is a trick—it was Bunter—I will smash him! Find Bunter, and make him give you the key. Quick!"

"Bunter! My hat! All right! I'll find him in a jiffy!"

And Stott ran away in search of Bunter. But Bunter had found the quiet corner, and was sitting hidden by trunks in the box-room, enjoying his feed.

Needless to say, he had a good appetite for it. Stott sought him in vain; while in Carne's study the angry senior's blows were still ringing furiously on the locked door.

Billy Bunter sat in a corner of the top box-room, hidden behind the trunks, enjoying himself.

He had turned out the contents of his pockets, and his eyes glistened behind his big spectacles at the enticing array set forth before him.

"We've got a little treat in store for you, Bunter," said Bulstrode kindly. "We've had an eye on you for some time, and we've all felt that you deserved it, and that it will do you good. It's something quite nice, that you haven't had for a long time. Come on and see what it is."

"I—I'd rather know what it is first, Bulstrode, if you don't mind. You see—"

"Oh, come on!"

"But—but—"

Bulstrode inserted his fingers into the back of the fat junior's collar, and jerked him to his feet.

"Now come!" he said.

As Bulstrode retained his grip on the junior's collar, Billy Bunter hadn't much choice about coming.

He trotted discontentedly along with Bulstrode, Tom Brown and Hazledene bringing up the rear.

Bulstrode had promised Bunter a treat, but Bunter knew Bulstrode. He was in a state of nervous apprehension.

As they descended the stairs from the top box-room, they came upon many Removites, all of whom greeted them with sniggers.

"Oh, so you've found him!" said Skinner.

"Yes; he's been gorging in the box-room."

"Where's the key of Carne's study, Bunter?"

"Never mind that now," interposed Bul-

strode round it were six large cans of water, some hot and some cold. A collection of scrubbing-brushes, bath sponges, and cakes of soap lay round the bath, and rough towels galore.

Billy Bunter eyed these great preparations with indignant alarm.

"Look here, you fellows, is this a j-j-joke?" he stammered.

"Not at all. It's deadly earnest."

"We're going to give you a treat, Bunter."

"One you haven't had for a long time, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is," said Bulstrode, "we've determined that Study No. 1 can't be allowed to bring disgrace, and perhaps an epidemic or something, on the school. If chaps won't wash, they're to be made to. You catch on?"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"We've gone to considerable trouble and expense to provide you with a really good bath," said Bulstrode. "We hope the change won't be too violent; but, anyway, it's bound to do you good in the long run."

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Now, strip and get in."

"I won't!" yelled Bunter.

"Then we'll jolly well strip you and chuck you in!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Nuff said! Strip!"

"I won't!"

Bunter made a wild rush for the door. A dozen hands grasped him, and he was whirled back. Tom Brown carefully took off his spectacles and put them in a safe place. Then the juniors began to strip Bunter.

The fat junior struggled and kicked wildly. Bulstrode received a kick under the chin that sent him rolling on the floor. He jumped up in a fury, with clenched fists, and was rushing at Bunter, when Tom Brown caught him by the arm.

"Hold on!" said the New Zealander quietly.

Bulstrode glared at him furiously for a moment. Then his face relaxed, and he unclenched his fists.

He knew there would be no bullying or brutality while Tom Brown was present, and he did not want to interrupt the "jape" for a fight with the boy from Taranaki.

"Oh, rats!" he said.

"Lemme go!" spluttered Bunter. "I won't be bathed! You're a set of beasts! Look here, it's—it's unhealthy to bath just after a meal!"

"It's still more unhealthy never to bath at all," said Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Yank those things off him. My hat! They fit him like a second skin! How do you get in and out of those things, Bunter?"

"Oh! Ow! Yah! Oh!"

"Now, then, he's ready!"

"Chuck him in!"

maids used to scrub a wooden floor, it was rough on the human skin, and Bunter had good cause for the yells he uttered.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

He kicked out furiously, and rolled over in the bath, sending a swamp of water over the side, and then it was Skinner's turn to yell. The water had flooded on his chest, and he was soaked to the skin.

"Oh!" he roared. "The fat beast! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you idiots cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner growled and retired. He had had enough of the washing. He was nearly as wet as Bunter; and he had his clothes on, too. He retired to change. Billy Bunter sat in the soapy water and blinked round him.

"You lemme alone!" he gasped. "I'll complain to the Head! I'm not going to be bathed! You know jolly well what a clean chap I am!"

"Ha, ha! We do! That's why we're bathing you!"

There was a knock at the door, and Harry Wharton's voice was heard:

"Hallo! What's on in here?"

"It's all right!" called out Russell. "We're bathing Bunter!"

"Bathing Bunter?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rescue!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, you ought to stand by a chap in your own study, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Rotters! Cads! Rescue!"

"There, I think that will about do," said Ogilvy, who was wet to the elbows. "That's enough soap on, I think."

"Yes, that'll do."

"Now to get the soap off."

"Better roll him right under the water."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Ow! Help! Murder! Fire!"

The juniors swamped water over Bunter, but did not shove him underneath. The soap was washed off, and then Bunter was permitted to hop from the bath.

The fat junior certainly looked much the cleaner for his involuntary ablutions. There was no doubt on that point.

"Ow! I shall e-c-catch cold, I know!" he stuttered. "Ow! If I expire, my death will lie at your door, Bulstrode!"

"I don't mind!"

"You—you beast! Ow!"

"Here's the towels," said Ogilvy. "He can do that part of the business himself."

"Good!"

Billy Bunter rubbed himself dry with the towels, amid a grinning circle of juniors. He blinked and gasped furiously all the time.

When he was dry the fat junior began to don his clothes sulkily.

"Now we've done our duty," said Bulstrode, "my opinion is that Bunter ought to stand us a feed."

"Hear, hear!"

"You beasts! I'd like to lick you all round!" said Bunter, glowering. "Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind, this is only the beginning!" said Bulstrode. "If you jolly well miss your wash to-morrow morning there'll be another bath for you! You savvy?"

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"Get into the bath, Bunter!"

"Yow! I—I won't!"

Many hands grasped Bunter, and he was plumped into the bath. He blinked round at the juniors furiously. Ogilvy began to pour in the water, and there was a yell from the hapless Falstaff of Greyfriars.

"Ow! It's e-c-cold!"

"Shove in some more hot, Russell."

Russell began to pour in from a hot-water can, and there was a still wilder yell from Billy Bunter.

"Yow-w-w-w! It's hot!"

"There's no satisfying some people," said Bulstrode. "Shove it all in, and he'll get used to it in time."

"Ha, ha! Good!"

And the water was swamped into the bath. Bunter yelled in earnest now, as he received alternately a swamping in hot and cold water.

"Now, then, who's going to wash him?" asked Bulstrode.

"Yow!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I won't be washed! I'll complain to the Head. It's unhealthy to have a bath after eating. I won't—I won't! Yah!"

"I'll wash him," said Skinner.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### The Bathing of Billy Bunter.

**S**KINNER grasped Bunter by the hair with his left hand, and seized a scrubbing-brush with his right. He began to scrub Bunter.

As the scrubbing-brush was one that the THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 283.

"Ha, ha, ha! My dear Billy, I wouldn't rescue you from a treat like that for anything!" called out Harry through the door.

"It will do you good!"

"Yah! Look here! Ow! Rescue! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Wharton's footsteps could be heard dying away down the passage. It was evident that he did not intend to interfere with the bathing of Bunter.

"Now then, scrub away!" said Bulstrode.

"Yah! Help!"

"Blessed if I like to get near him!" said Ogilvy. "He's splashing like a blessed whale!"

"Keep still, Bunter!"

"Yah! I won't!"

"Shove his head under when he struggles," said Hazeldene. "You hear, Bunter? You're going to be ducked whenever you wriggle."

"Help!"

Ogilvy seized a big bath-sponge, and began to rub. Bunter splashed furiously, and Bulstrode jammed his head under water. The fat junior lifted it again, gasping and spluttering wildly.

"Oh—ooh—groo! Yaroo!"

"Are you going to keep quiet, then?"

"Yah! No! Yes, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter kept a little more quiet while two or three juniors rubbed him into a lather with soap and sponge.

In a few minutes the fat junior was a mass of soapuds, and he was spluttering and sniffing and blinking painfully as the soap found its way into his mouth, nose, and eyes.

"Look here—"

"We're going to teach you cleanliness. It was really up to Wharton to do it, but we're attending to it for him. We're not going to have the fags of the Second and Third chipping the Remove as anti-soap merchants!"

"Not much!"

"Beasts!"

"Well, just you remember!"

And Bulstrode unlocked the door, and Bunter finished dressing. Ogilvy glanced at the bath of soapy water and the swamp on the floor.

"Who's going to clean all that up?" he asked.

There was a chorus at once.

"Bunter!"

"I won't!" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to do anything of the sort! Catch me! No fear! Why—"

"Yes, you are!" said Skinner. "All this trouble has been taken on your account, and it's only fair you should clean up."

"Yes, rather!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"I won't! I—I won't!"

"Duck him in the bath, then!" said Bulstrode.

"Collar him!"

"Ow! I—I'll clean up, if you like!"

"Come on!" said Tom Brown good-naturedly. "I'll help you!"

Bunter grunted. The juniors cleared out of the dormitory, chuckling and grinning, and Tom Brown and Bunter cleaned up after that enforced bath. Tom did most of the work, Bunter grunting and glowering all the time.



Bunter did not utter a word of thanks to his assistant. He was not feeling in a very thankful mood. He quitted the Remove dormitory and went downstairs.

As a matter of fact, he was feeling all the better for his bath, but he would not admit it to himself. As he entered the Remove passage he suddenly halted, and gave a gasp of fright.

Ionides was just entering it from the lower stairs at the other end. The Greek caught sight of him at the same moment.

Bunter stood petrified. Ionides had evidently got out of the study. As a matter of fact, Carberry and Carne had brought a ladder to the window, and the Greek had descended that way, and the door was still locked.

Bunter, in his late thrilling experiences, had forgotten all about Ionides, and he was suddenly reminded of the fact that after the feast comes the reckoning.

The Greek's eyes were blazing. "Ah! You!" He ran swiftly along the passage towards Bunter.

"Cut for it, you ass!" yelled Tom Brown. And Bunter ran.

But the Greek ran a yard to every foot of Bunter's, and he overtook the fat junior in a few seconds.

Billy Bunter heard the pattering footsteps close behind, and in sheer terror he dropped down, almost under the Greek's feet.

Ionides, who was not prepared for that movement, stumbled right over him, his knees coming on Bunter's back.

He flew headlong, with outstretched hands, and rolled over on the floor, having passed completely over Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Brown. "Cut it, Bunter! Cut, you ass!"

Bunter staggered to his feet. He gave one wild blink at the rolling Greek, and fled.

Ionides was on his feet in a few seconds. He was in time to see Bunter whisk into Study No. 1 and hear the door slam.

The next moment the Sixth-Former was hammering furiously at Harry Wharton's door.

"Bunter!"

"Get out!"

"Kick him out!"

"Let the kickfulness be terrific, my worthy chums!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Hold on, you chaps!" gasped Bunter.

"That beast Ionides is after me, you know! He thinks I shut him up in Carne's study, you know."

Thump, thump, thump!

Bunter had locked the door, and the Greek was assaulting it wildly.

Wharton frowned.

"Look here, we can't stand that row. I suppose you did shut Ionides up, as a matter of fact, didn't you, Bunter?"

"Ye-es."

"Then you had better go out and take the licking."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You'll get it sooner or later," said Nugent. "What possessed you to be such a silly ass? Didn't you foresee that Ionides would be wild?"

Hammer, hammer, hammer!

"I—I didn't think about it," stammered Bunter. "You see, I was hungry, and there was a ripping feed in Ionides' study. It was the fault of you fellows. If you hadn't deprived me of my tea I shouldn't have wanted Ionides' grub."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Ionides is after me now. He nearly had me in the passage, but I fell down—and I mean, I tripped him up with wonderful presence of mind. He can't get in here, though."

Bang, bang, bang!

"Wharton, open the door!" came the voice of the Greek, stifled with rage. "I want Bunter!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton.

"Will you let me in?"

"No!"

"I will make you smart for this, Wharton!"

"More rats!"

"That's the style!" murmured Bunter.

"Look here, if you fellows stand by me he won't be able to do anything. He's not popular with the prefects, you know, and they won't interfere. He can't hurt the five of us."

The Greek bestowed a final savage kick upon the door and retired.

Billy Bunter heaved a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness he's gone!" he muttered,

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Changes Beds.

"I SAY, you fellows!" said Bunter, blinking at the Removites as they began to undress in the dormitory that night. "I say—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say," persisted Bunter, "did you ever see me do a balancing trick with a jug of water?"

"Rats!"

"I can balance a washstand-jug full of water on my chin, you know."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Skinner, his tone changing. He thought there was a fair prospect of seeing the fat junior drenched, and he was interested at once. "Let's see you do it."

"Certainly! I'll take your jug."

"Better take your own; you might break it."

"Oh, I'll stand close to the bed in case it falls, and then it will fall on the bed and it will be all right!"

"You ass!" howled Skinner. "You'll drench my bed!"

"Oh, there's no risk!" said Bunter, taking Skinner's jug from the washstand.

"You utter ass!"

"Let's see if you can do it again, with your own bed."

"That he jolly well won't!" exclaimed Skinner wrathfully. "I'm going to have his bed to-night, and he can have mine, as he's soaked it with water."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Shut up! I'm going to have your bed."

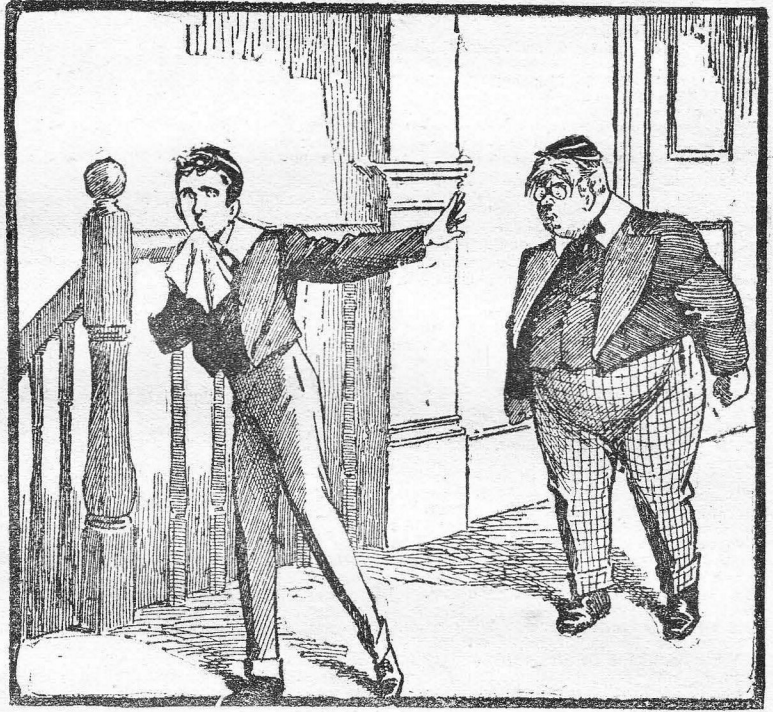
Billy Bunter grunted, but made no objection. Harry Wharton glanced at him curiously. Bunter was so attached to his own personal comfort that he might have been expected to raise strenuous objections to giving up his bed to Skinner. But he appeared to be quite indifferent upon the point.

Bunter was much shorter than Skinner, and he was accustomed to sleep curled up like a hedge-hog, so he was able to avoid the dampness at the foot of the bed.

The juniors were all in bed when Carberry came in to extinguish the lights. Bunter had covered his head with the bedclothes, so that Carberry would not have noticed that he was in the wrong bed, even if he had looked at him—which he did not.

The door closed, and the juniors were left to sleep.

Billy Bunter was one of the first to slumber.



Skinner made no reply to Billy Bunter's request, but, with a dramatic gesture, walked away.

"Oh, really, Skinner!"

"Get away from my bed with your silly tricks!"

"There's no risk, you know. I'm a dab at balancing-tricks."

"Look here," shouted Skinner, "if you soak my bed with that blessed water, you can sleep in it, and I shall sleep in yours, so remember."

"Oh, I don't mind; it's all right!"

"All right, then," said Skinner grimly.

"You can go ahead."

And Billy Bunter went ahead.

For a "dab" at balancing the fat junior certainly was very clumsy.

He lifted the jug of water, with considerable effort, as high as his chin, and it immediately toppled over upon the bed.

There was a bump, and a splash of gushing water.

The jug did not break, but it rolled over on the bed, and the foot of the bed was simply drenched with water.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Behold the balancer! Is that what you call being a 'dab' at it, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

In ten minutes or so his unmusical snore hummed and buzzed through the long dormitory. All the juniors were safe in the arms of Morpheus, when the door of the dormitory quietly opened, and a new-comer peered in in the dark.

"They're asleep," said a whispering voice.

"Good!" answered the tones of Ionides of the Sixth. "It is better to have no disturbance; the Form-master, Quelch, might come, and he does not like me already."

"No wonder!" murmured Loder.

"What did you say, Loder?"

"Nothing."

"I thought you spoke."

"Oh; no! Bunter's bed is exactly opposite the door—you can't miss it."

"Very good."

"Mind, you'd better buzz off when you've larrupped him," muttered Loder. "The fad best will make a fearful row, and the masters wouldn't like this sort of thing, you know."

"The masters be hanged!"

"Yes, that's all right between ourselves, but you see they have the ~~map~~ hand, so

it's no good playing the giddy ox. Besides, those young rascals would think nothing of piling on you in a crowd, though you belong to the Sixth."

The Greek gritted his teeth.

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, larrup him and buzz off, then. I'll get along now, I think," said Loder, and he went quietly down the passage without waiting for the Greek to reply.

Ionides stepped silently into the Remove dormitory.

He had a strap in his hand—a thick leather strap, which was intended for the plump limbs of Billy Bunter.

He groped his way towards Bunter's bed.

It was very dim in the dormitory, only a few straggling rays of starlight penetrating at the high windows.

But Ionides knew which was Bunter's bed, and he groped his way to it with the certainty of a cat in the dark. It did not even occur to him that the fat junior might have exchanged beds with another Removeite.

He reached the bed, and heard the sound of steady breathing. His eyes glittered in the dark as he gripped the strap.

Slash!

The heavy strap descended across the shoulders of the sleeper, and Skinner came out of the land of dreams with a gasp.

"Gro-ow! Yow! Ah! Ah! Oh!"

Slash, slash, slash!

"Take that, and that, and that!" hissed the Greek.

"Ow! Ah! Help! Murder! Burglars!"

"Take that!"

"Help!"

Harry Wharton sat up in bed, startled. There were wild yells, and the sound of a slashing strap, from Skinner's bed.

"What on earth's the matter?" gasped Wharton.

"Help!"

The captain of the Remove sprang out of bed, and groped for a matchbox. Skinner rolled out of bed on the side opposite to that where his assailant stood, aching all over and yelling with pain.

Scratch!

Harry struck a match, and uttered an exclamation of amazement as the light showed up the dark face of the Greek.

"Ionides!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is why Bunter changed beds with Skinner."

"Phew! The cunning rascal!"

"I'm hurt!" gasped Skinner. "Ow! The beast! Yow! I'm hurt!"

Ionides uttered a fierce exclamation.

"What! Where is Bunter? It is Bunter I meant to punish! Bunter!"

The match went out.

Nugent struck another, and lighted a candle-end. Bunter sat up in bed blinking, roused by the uproar in the dormitory.

The Greek's savage eyes fell upon him.

"Ah! You are there!"

He strode towards Bunter. With a gasp of terror the fat junior rolled out of bed, and in a twinkling he was ensconced behind Harry Wharton for protection.

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

##### I Rough on Ionides.

**S**TAND aside, Wharton!" Ionides rapped out the words angrily, as the young captain of the Remove stood between him and the shivering Bunter.

"Ow! Don't!" gasped Bunter. "Don't let him get at me, Wharton. You ought to stand by a fellow in your own study, you know. Ow!"

"Look here, Ionides—"

"Stand aside!"

"I won't!"

Ionides gritted his teeth.

"Once more, will you stand aside?"

"No, I won't!"

The strap whistled in the air. In a second more it would have descended with a slashing cut across Wharton's unprotected shoulder.

But at that precise moment a pillow whirled through the air, hurled by Bob Cherry, and it caught the Sixth-Former full in the face.

Ionides staggered back as if he had been struck by a cannon-shot, and he fell with a crash on his back.

"Hurrah!" yelled Nugent. "Clean bowled!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greek struggled to his feet. A perfect hurricane of pillows and bolsters rained upon him, and he was sent staggering again. He rolled over on the floor, his dark face convulsed with rage.

"Kick him out!" shouted Wharton.

"Hurrah!"

"Collar the cad!"

"Kick him out!"

The Removeites rushed upon the senior.

Ionides tried to struggle up, but a dozen pairs of hands were grasping him, and, powerful as he was, he had no chance against so many.

The juniors roiled and hustled him along the floor to the door, and he was sent whirling into the passage.

He bumped against the opposite wall, and lay for some moments gasping.

Then he picked himself up.

The Removeites crammed the door of the dormitory, laughing and hooting, and the Greek gazed at them for a moment with a face convulsed with rage.

Then he came charging into their midst like a bull.

"Line up!" shouted Wharton.

The juniors stood firm to resist the shock.

Three or four of them were sent flying, but the rest fastened upon the Greek like cats, and he was dragged down with a bump upon the floor of the passage, with the angry juniors swarming and sprawling over him.

"We'll take him downstairs this time," said Wharton, his eyes flashing. "Even the Sixth had better learn that they must not come playing tricks in the Remove dorm."

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

"Let me go!" gasped the Greek helplessly.

"Let me go! I will go, and—"

"Yes, you'll go," said Harry grimly. "Yank him along!"

"Here goes!"

The Greek was rolled and dragged and shoved along the passage to the stairs. There he was rolled over, and he was half-way down before he could grasp the banisters and stop his descent.

He clung to the banisters, gasping for breath.

From the landing the juniors looked down at him, hooting. Clearly the Greek would have liked to charge at them again, hitting out right and left; but he had had enough of that.

He glared at them savagely, muttering threats, to which the jeers of the juniors answered.

There was a sound of an opening door, and the Greek started. He was dishevelled, dusty, bruised; he had no desire to be seen in that state.

He hurried away, and the Removeites, too, lost no time in scuttling back to the dormitory.

"Lights out!" whispered Wharton quickly.

In a few seconds the dormitory was plunged into darkness, and the juniors were all in bed, and ready to appear buried in innocent slumber as soon as a master appeared.

A minute later the door opened, and a lamp glimmered in, and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked into the room.

The juniors all had their eyes closed, and were breathing regularly.

The Remove-master shook his head slightly, and retired. He had certainly heard a disturbance, but it did not appear to be in the Remove dormitory. But Mr. Quelch knew the Remove too well to trust wholly to appearances.

When the master's footsteps had died away, the juniors ventured to sit up in bed, and there was a succession of chuckles.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I really think we did Ionides that time! What?"

"Yes, rather!"

"He won't come back in a hurry."

"Faith, and sure it was an illigant bating," said Micky Desmond.

Skinner groaned.

"I'm sore all over, and aching in every blessed bone," he mumbled. "The beast went for me while I was asleep!"

"A cowardly thing to do," said Wharton, "and dangerous, too. The shock might do a weak fellow a lot of harm. I'm jolly glad we gave that bully a good ragging!"

"It was all through Bunter," grunted Skinner. "I know now why the fat beast changed beds with me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It was funny! I never saw what the oyster was driving at, any more than you did! But we ought to know our Bunter by this time."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ionides meant to be licking him, but he licked me instead. The fat beast! I ought to have guessed that he was up to some mean trick!" grunted Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner, you insisted upon changing beds with me! I didn't ask you to. You can't say I asked you to do anything of the sort."

"You spilled the jug on the bed on purpose, you—you worm!"

"I was performing a balancing trick—"

"Oh, don't tell lies!" growled Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Shut up!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

And the Owl of the Remove grunted, and went to sleep. The Removeites soon followed his example, with the exception of Skinner, who was still aching. It was a considerable time before sleep revisited Skinner's eyelids.

Meanwhile, the Greek had returned to his study, where he found Loder sitting in the armchair, his feet on another chair, and smoking a cigarette.

Loder had heard a sound of disturbance from upstairs, but he had taken care not to get near it. He knew that the Greek's passionate, savage temper might get him into some difficulty, and he had not the slightest wish to share it. He looked up, and nodded through a cloud of smoke as Ionides came scowling in.

"Licked Bunter?" he asked.

"No!" snarled the Greek. "There was another boy in his bed, and I thrashed him by mistake."

Loder chuckled.

"He's a deep young rascal, Bunter is," he remarked. "He'll be a great lawyer, or a criminal, when he grows up. Fancy his fooling you like that! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you sniggering at?"

"Well, it's funny. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bah!" growled the Greek. "If that is all you have to say, you can get out of my study."

Loder shrugged his shoulders, and rose. "Certainly," he said. "What a nice, pleasant-mannered fellow you are, Ionides! Good-night!"

And he left the Greek alone, aching all over, and in the vilest temper that even Ionides had never been in. But Ionides did not think of paying another visit to the Remove dormitory. He had had enough of that!

THE END.

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

## "THE GREYFRIARS ACTORS!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Please order your copy of the PENNY POPULAR in advance!



# A FAITHFUL FRIEND!

*A Magnificent Long Complete Story,  
dealing with the Early Adventures of  
Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood  
School.*

By OWEN CONQUEST.



"I won't move the bags an inch!" declared Leggett. "I—ow! Yow! Yaroooh!" The cad of the Fourth jumped as the dog barked at his heels.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Striking a Bargain.

"MY hat! Look at that rotter!" Thus Arthur Edward Lovell in a voice that rang with indignation.

Lovell pointed up the road in the direction of Coombe. Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome stared ahead, and the sight that met their gaze sent feelings of repulsion through their frames.

For not two hundred yards in front of them a man was beating a small dog in a brutal manner.

"I say, this is a bit too thick!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver in an annoyed tone. "That chap wants bumping," remarked Newcome.

"What-ho!" said Jimmy Silver. "And, what's more, he's going to be bumped! The spiteful brute! He deserves to be horse-whipped for whacking a dog like that!"

"Hear, hear!" "Come on, you fellows!" urged Jimmy Silver. "We've got to chip in here and give that chap a good hiding!"

Jimmy Silver broke into a run, and his chums followed quickly in the rear.

The dog was yelling with pain as the man brought the thick stick down continuously on the animal's back.

Jimmy Silver & Co. ran for all they were worth.

A strong feeling of sympathy for dumb animals was embedded in the hearts of the Rookwood juniors.

Jimmy Silver was particularly fond of dogs, and at the animal's plight he became eager to get to grips with the man.

In his enthusiasm for the approaching juniors, the man did not observe the approaching juniors. "I'll teach yer to run away!" he growled, bringing his stick down with terrific force. "I'll show yer that you've got to obey—Ow! Yow! Yaroooh!"

Jimmy Silver had planted his fist in the scoundrel's face, bowling him completely over.

Having regained its freedom the dog limped to the rear, whining and shaking itself.

The Fistical Four stood over the man, their faces warlike and grim.

"You low-down rotter!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly.

"Waccher talking about?" said the man in a hoarse voice, rubbing his head, which had come into hard contact with the ground.

"You know very well what I'm talking about!" declared Lovell, with emphasis.

"I—I—" "You were ill-treating that dog, you brute!"

"Suppose I was?"

"Well, you're going to suffer for it!" cried Lovell decidedly.

A coarse grin covered the scoundrel's face, and he struggled to his feet.

"Oh, am I?" he said harshly. "We'll see about that. I'm going to teach that 'ere dawg obedience!"

He stooped to pick up the stick he had dropped, but Jimmy Silver's hand closed on it first.

He threw it into the wood at the side of the road.

"Ere, give me that stick!" demanded the man.

"No jolly fear!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver firmly. "You're not going to beat that dog any more. You've tortured it enough already, and—"

"That's my business!" growled the scoundrel. "It ain't your dawg!"

"No, it isn't," admitted Jimmy Silver. "But if it's yours, you're not going to vent your brutal spite on it!"

The man gripped his fists tightly and faced the resolute juniors.

"I'll teach you to interfere with me!" he exclaimed fiercely. "I'll knock yer 'eads off!"

"Come on, then!" said Lovell, squaring up.

"We're ready for you!"

The man slouched forward, showing his teeth in his rage.

Out shot his gnarled fist, right at Lovell's head.

Lovell ducked, but he was a fraction of a second too late.

The man's fist crashed into the junior's head, and bowled him to the ground.

"You brute!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver hotly. "Come on, you fellows! Give him socks!"

"What-ho!" shouted Raby and Newcome.

Jimmy Silver planted his strong left fist underneath the man's chin, and he staggered backwards.

Next instant Raby and Newcome had thrown their strength into the fray.

They held on to the scoundrel like grim death, and forced him to the ground.

By this time Lovell was on his feet again, and lending his assistance.

Raby and Newcome took charge of the man's hands, whilst Jimmy Silver and Lovell collared his feet.

"Let me go!" yelled the man, struggling hard. "Let me go, or, by hokey, I'll—"

"Bump him, you fellows!" ordered Jimmy Silver.

The man was bumped forthwith.

"Yow! Grooooh! Yarooogh!" roared the scoundrel, as the juniors let him fall heavily.

"Another bump!"

"Bump!"

"Yow! Let me up! Grooooh!"

"We'll let you go when you promise not to touch the dog again," said Jimmy Silver.

"I'll—"

"Are you going to promise?"

"No! I'll smash you! I'll—"

"Bump him, you fellows!"

"Bump, bump!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Let me—"

"Will you promise?"

"No; I'll be hanged if—"

"Another bump!"

"Bump!"

"Ow! Yow! Yarooogh! I'll promise! Let me go!"

"Let the rotter go," said Jimmy Silver, releasing his hold on the man's leg.

The four juniors lined up, gripping their fists tightly, in case the scoundrel should attempt to attack them.

The man rose to his feet, and ground his teeth in his rage.

He made a step forward, but Jimmy Silver wagged a warning finger at him.

"Better clear!" he said calmly. "We're not going to stand any nonsense!"

"I want my dog!" said the man. "Where is he? Hi, Rags, come 'ere, you little beast!"

"You're not going to have that dog!" said Jimmy Silver with firmness.

"Ain't I? It's my dog!"

"I don't care whether it is or whether it isn't!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're not going to torture the animal any more. Look at it! Look how it cringes at the sight of you!"

"Oh, bosh!" snapped the scoundrel. "Rags and I are jolly good pals—ain't we, Rags? Come here, you little beast!"

But Rags refused to come. At the sight of the man the dog turned and ran a short distance down the road.

"There you are!" said Jimmy Silver disdainfully. "That just shows you how fond it is of you."

"That's only its fun!" declared the man.

"Fun or not," said Jimmy Silver, "you're not going to vent your spite on the animal again. Look here, we'll buy it from you!"

"Hoh!" The man grunted, and his eyes lighted with satisfaction. "And 'ow much are yer prepared to pay?"

"How much do you want?"

"Well"—the man grinned coarsely—"I

can't say that I like the idea of parting with old Rags. 'E and I 'ave been the best of pals."

"I don't think!" murmured Lovell. "It'll fair break my 'eart to part with the dawg. But if you young gents will give 'im a good 'ome, and look arter 'im, I don't mind selling 'im for ten bob."

Jimmy Silver frowned. He felt a strong desire to hurl his fist in the man's ugly face, but he controlled himself.

Nevertheless, he could not help thinking that the man was swindling them in charging ten shillings for the dog.

Rags was nothing more than a mongrel. But Jimmy knew only too well how the animal would be treated if it was returned to the charge of its owner, so he gave way.

"Here you are, you rotter!" he exclaimed, handing the man a ten-shilling note. "The dog is ours, and although it isn't worth the money, I pay it willingly to keep it out of your possession."

"Really, young gent—" "Knock off the soft sawder," said Jimmy Silver curtly. "I hope that the next dog you have will be one who can hold its own. And I hope that if you ever ill-treat it, you will be made to suffer for your brutality!"

"I say—" "Come on, you fellows!" said Jimmy Silver, turning to his chums. "Time we got a move on!"

He whistled to the dog, who came scampering up, wagging its tail excitedly.

"Good old Rags!" said Jimmy Silver, patting the dog's head. "You're mine now, my pippin. That brute won't torture you any more!"

"Hear, hear!" The Fistical Four walked on in the direction of Coombe, Rags following behind, barking as though from sheer joy at being under the charge of a new master.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Licking for Leggett.

LEGGETT, the cad of the Modern Fourth at Rookwood, was in a most disagreeable mood.

He had been detained that afternoon through inattention during morning lessons.

Having arranged to spend the afternoon at the Bird-in-Hand, that disreputable inn in Coombe, his temper had been riled at having to cancel the engagement.

He had, however, finished the lines which Mr. Manders had bestowed upon him, and was now strolling across the quad towards the gates.

Towle and Lacy came marching up, and they happened to glance at Leggett's gloomy-looking face.

"Hallo, Leggett, what have you lost?" asked Towle, with a grin.

"Lost?" queried the cad of the Fourth. "I haven't lost anything."

"My mistake," said Towle humorously. "You look as though you'd lost a quid and found a farthing!"

"Look here, Towle—" "Leggett!"

The cad of the Fourth spun round quickly as his name was called.

The juniors had reached the gates at the same time as a cab had drawn up.

Mr. Manders, the master of the Modern Fourth, stepped out of the cab, and beckoned to Leggett.

The cad of the Fourth slouched towards the master.

"Take these bags up to my study, Leggett!" commanded Mr. Manders, and he handed the junior three bags, one of which was particularly heavy.

"Perhaps I'd better call Mack, sir," suggested Leggett.

"Nonsense!" snapped Mr. Manders, his eyes glinting. "You are quite capable of carrying them. They belong to my friend, Mr. Jasper, so be very careful with them."

Mr. Manders stepped back into the cab, and the vehicle went off down the road.

Leggett glared at the departing cab, and then turned to Towle and Lacy, who were grinning at his discomfiture.

Towle sat down on one of the bags, and simply roared.

"Oh, I say, Leggett, you might clean my boots for me," he remarked humorously. "And mine, too," added Lacy, enjoying the joke. "You're a ripping servant, and—" "You can laugh, you rotters!" exclaimed Leggett angrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to leave the bags here," said the cad of the Fourth.

"Shall be sorry for you if you do," said Towle. "Old Manders can lay it on pretty thick, you know, and—"

"What right has he to make a servant of me?" demanded Leggett fiercely.

"Better ask him." "He could just as easily have called old Mack."

"Perhaps he couldn't trust Mack," suggested Towle simply. "You see, you're such a splendid servant that—"

"Rot!" exclaimed Leggett indignantly. "I won't move the bags an inch. I— Yow—ow! Yarooogh!"

Quite unnoticed by the cad of the Fourth, Rags had come scampering up the road ahead of the Classical chums.

Pulling up short at the rear of Leggett, the dog commenced to bark snappily.

Leggett jumped into the air at the first bark. He had been taken completely un-awares.

Yap! Yap-ap-ap! The cad of the Fourth turned round quickly, and endeavoured to push the dog away with his foot.

Rags dodged aside playfully, however, and, thinking Leggett was also in a playful mood, he pawed at the cad's feet.

"Get away, you little brute!" growled the bad-tempered Leggett.

Yap-p-p! Yap! Rags refused to retreat an inch, but jumped up to Leggett in an affectionate manner.

"Clear off, you beast, or—" Yap! Yap!

Rags refused to take his departure. The cad of the Fourth began to lose his temper, and at last, unable to control his rage any longer, he hurled one of the bags at the dog.

Rags had been keeping a wary eye on Leggett, and, backing away cleverly, he dodged the missile.

Many a time people had thrown things at him for sheer fun, and Rags thought that Leggett was enjoying the fun as much as he was.

But the cad was far from enjoying himself.

Rags leapt at Leggett once again, but this time the cad determined to put an end to the animal's capers.

He kicked out spitefully with his foot, and, catching the dog full in the stomach, sent it hurtling into the air.

Rags landed on his side, and yelped with pain.

"Serve you right, you little beast!" growled the cad. "I wish I'd killed you!"

"Here, let go my neck!" Jimmy Silver had stepped forward, and taken a tight grip on the cad's neck.

The Fistical Four had seen the cad's brutal action, and had sprinted up in time to prevent Leggett from doing the dog further injury.

"What do you mean by kicking my dog, you rotter?" demanded Jimmy Silver angrily.

"Serve the beast right!" snapped Leggett fiercely. "It shouldn't have come messing around me!"

"The dog was only playing." "I don't care. I didn't ask it to play with me."

"You low-down cad!" said Jimmy Silver indignantly. "That poor dog's been tortured enough for one afternoon without you venting your spite on it."

"Well, it shouldn't—" "Suppose we kick the rotter in the same way," suggested Lovell.

"Good idea!" agreed Newcome. "I'll take first kick, and—"

"No," broke in Jimmy Silver quickly. "we'll duck the rotter in the fountain! Kicking's too good for him!"

"Oh, good!" "Collar the cad!"

Leggett was promptly collared, and the Fistical Four hurried him towards the fountain.

"Let me go!" shrieked the cad of the Fourth. "I've got to carry those bags to Manders' study!"

"Blow Manders!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "You can look after the giddy bags when we've done with you."

"But—" "Here we are!"

The Fistical Four pulled up before the fountain.

Leggett struggled and kicked furiously, but the Classical chums held on to him grimly.

"Are you ready?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yes!"

"Then go!"

With a heave the juniors hurried the cad into the fountain.

Splash! Leggett landed right in the centre of the water, and disappeared from view.

Next moment, however, his head came to the surface. He gurgled and spluttered, and shook his fist at the laughing Classics.

"You rotters!" he exclaimed. "You—" "Serves you right, Leggett!" said Jimmy Silver. "If you dare touch that dog again—"

"I'll kill the blessed thing!" "You'd better not!" said Jimmy Silver warningly. "We'll have no mercy on you if you dare to lay a hand on the dog!"

"I'll—I'll—" Leggett spluttered frantically, and struggled towards the side of the fountain.

"Come on, you fellows!" said Jimmy Silver. "Mustn't waste any more time over this beastly cad!"

The Fistical Four departed, and went in at the gates of Rookwood.

Lacy and Towle had already taken their departure, having left Mr. Manders' bags strewn over the ground.

Muttering threats of vengeance on the Fistical Four, Leggett scrambled out of the fountain.

The water dripped off him and formed puddles in the road.

The cad of the Fourth looked the picture of misery.

He stopped before Mr. Manders' bags, and was just preparing to pick them up when a cab pulled up, and out stepped the Modern master.

Mr. Manders' eyes lighted on the crest-fallen cad of the Fourth.

"Good heavens!" he gasped. "What—what—"

"It's those cads!" growled Leggett, turning round quickly. "They—"

"What do you mean?" demanded Mr. Manders. "How dare you stand before me in such a disgraceful manner? How dare you, I say!"

Leggett started back at the Modern master's wrath.

"And what are my bags doing on the ground?" asked Mr. Manders. "Why haven't you taken them indoors, as I told you?"

"I—I—" "Don't bandy words with me, you disgusting boy!" roared the master. "You have disobeyed my order! You—"

"I couldn't help it, sir!" said Leggett dismally. "Those beastly cads set upon me, and—and threw me into the fountain!"

"Nonsense—nonsense!" "It's true, sir! Just because I was obliging you, the four of them set upon me, and—and—"

"To whom are you referring, Leggett?" "Jimmy Silver & Co.," replied the cad of the Fourth, shivering with cold. "The four of them! They— they dragged your bags out of my hands, and—and hurled me into the fountain!"

Mr. Manders stamped his feet in his temper.

"This is disgraceful—unheard of!" he roared. "Disgusting young hooligans! To think that they should treat my property in such a manner! I will thrash them—yes, I will have no mercy on them! You may go up to your dormitory, Leggett, and change your things!"

"Shall—shall I carry the bags for you, sir?" asked Leggett cringingly.

"No. I will see to them myself now!" snapped Mr. Manders.

Leggett went into the House, and Mr. Manders stamped after him, breathing fury. He stamped into his study, and then sent the pageboy for Jimmy Silver & Co.

Five minutes later the Fistical Four entered Mr. Manders' study with sheepish expressions on their faces.

The master held a cane in his right hand, and glared spitefully at the chums as they entered.

"You boys have been guilty of a disgraceful act!" said Mr. Manders severely.

"Oh!" "You have dared to throw a boy—a boy of my House—into the fountain!"

"Yes, sir," admitted Jimmy Silver. "He deserved it!"

"Nonsense! Absurd!" rapped out Mr. Manders. "Just because he was carrying my bags into the House you had the effrontery to hurl him into cold water. Such an act might have brought about his death!"



Jimmy Silver & Co. gasped. "Did—did he make that excuse, sir?" faltered Jimmy Silver.

"What excuse?"

"That we ragged—I mean, that we threw him into the fountain because he was carrying your bags?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"Then he lied!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver heatedly.

"How dare you make such an accusation against your schoolfellow?" said Mr. Manders raspingly. "You are disgraceful young hoodlums! You should be expelled from Rookwood. You—"

"I'm telling the truth!" cried Jimmy Silver defiantly. "Ask Towle or Lacy. They saw what happened. They know that we were perfectly justified in what we did."

Mr. Manders frowned portentously. Then he pressed the button for the pageboy.

Tupper appeared in less than a minute.

"Tell Towle and Lacy that I wish to see them immediately!" he cried.

With a polite "Yessir!" Tupper left the study, and two minutes later Towle and Lacy entered.

Mr. Manders looked at them severely.

"I understand you witnessed the disgraceful encounter between these boys and Leggett this afternoon?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Then please be good enough to explain the reason why Leggett was hurled into the fountain?"

Towle stared at the Fistical Four, and then looked straight at Mr. Manders.

"Because he was acting like a brute, sir," explained Towle, with emphasis.

"Oh!"

"He kicked Jimmy Silver's dog in a most brutal manner, and had it been my dog I would have treated the cad in the same way!"

"Silver did not call Leggett to account for carrying my bags?" asked Mr. Manders.

"Certainly not, sir!"

Mr. Manders turned to Lacy.

"Do you bear out what Towle says?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Lacy. "Every word of it is true!"

Mr. Manders bit his under-lip.

"You may go!" he growled. "You deserve punishment for having treated a boy in such a manner, but that punishment I will leave to Mr. Bootles. Towle, please be good enough to send Leggett to me!"

"Very well, sir!" said Towle. And he went off in quest of Leggett.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Saved by Rags.

THE Fistical Four returned to their study, vowing vengeance on the cad of the Fourth.

They entered the room, and Jimmy Silver gave a sudden exclamation.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "Where's Rags?"

"Great Scott! He's gone!"

"Look!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Somebody's cut the rope with which I tied him to the table!"

"The rotter!"

"Whoever could have done it?"

The Fistical Four knitted their brows in thought.

"I wonder whether Leggett has done it?" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"But what—"

"He's a vindictive beast, and there's no knowing what he'll do with old Rags if he's got him into his possession."

"Phew!" gasped Lovell. "You're right there, Jimmy. I say, oughtn't we to make inquiries?"

"Rather!" replied Jimmy Silver. "Come on!"

The Fistical Four left the end study and went downstairs.

A crowd of fellows were in the hall, and the Classical chums questioned them.

"Leggett!" said Tommy Dodd, in answer to Jimmy Silver's inquiry. "What do you want with him?"

"He's stolen my dog!"

"Oh, it was your dog, was it?" asked Tommy Dodd blandly.

Jimmy Silver stamped his foot impatiently.

"Look here, Dobby, what do you know about it?" he demanded irritably. "Has Leggett gone out with my dog?"

Tommy Dodd scratched his head as though in deep thought.

"Well, now I come to think of it, I do remember seeing Leggett crossing the quad

with some beastly mongrel under his arm," he said slowly.

"The rotter!" Jimmy's eyes flashed.

"Come on, you fellows," he added "to his chums. "If that cad harms the dog, I'll give him the biggest hiding of his life."

Jimmy Silver turned on his heel, and tore towards the gates, with his chums at his heels.

Old Mack, the porter, was standing at the door of his lodge.

Jimmy Silver beckoned to him.

"Has Leggett gone out, Mack?" he asked.

"Which 'e 'as, Master Silver," replied the porter.

"Which way did the rotter go?"

"I believe as he went towards Coombe," replied Mack. "He 'ad a dawg under 'is arm. 'E was running, too, but what for I don't—"

The Fistical Four did not wait to hear any more. They ran through the gates, and peited down the road in the direction of Coombe.

About two hundred yards from the school they came face to face with Townsend and Topham, the nuts of the Fourth.

"Seen Leggett?" asked Jimmy Silver, breathing hard.

"Just passed him," answered Townsend.

"He was making for the river."

"The cad!"

The words burst from Jimmy Silver's mouth. What was Leggett going towards the river for? Did he intend to drown the dog, or—

Jimmy's further surmises were broken off abruptly.

Suddenly the faint sound of a dog barking could be heard through the woods at the side of the road.

"Come on, you fellows," said Jimmy Silver, and they broke through the woods.

The four chums whistled for all they were worth, and Jimmy Silver called the dog by its name.

Yapap-ap-ap!

Clearer still came the dog's bark.

The juniors whistled louder than ever, but not a sign of the dog could they see.

They kept on, however, in the direction from which the sound came.

Yap-ap-ap!

Rags was barking furiously. Jimmy Silver felt that they must be very near their pet now.

He stared through the trees, and then he gave a joyful exclamation, for standing by the bank of the river, which could be plainly seen in the distance, was Rags.

Jimmy Silver put on a spurt, and halted the dog. But although Rags recognised the junior, he did not budge from the bank.

"Good old Rags!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Come here, you little beggar!"

The dog wagged its tail as he recognised Jimmy, but he made no movement to leave the bank.

"I wonder what's up with the little beggar?" remarked Lovell.

"Come here, Rags!" commanded Jimmy Silver.

But Rags did not move.

He looked at Jimmy Silver, and then stared at the river.

"I wonder what— Great Scott!"

A sudden thought came into Jimmy Silver's mind, and he shuddered.

"Surely Leggett hasn't fallen in," said Lovell, voicing Jimmy Silver's thought.

"Goodness knows!" said Jimmy Silver. "It's jolly funny, though, especially as he brought Rags out here."

"Yes, and look at the dog; he won't budge an inch," said Lovell. "It's pretty evident that he's trying to tell us something in his doggy way."

The chums were deeply concerned. Something had happened, that was pretty evident. But what? That was the question.

Owing to the recent heavy rains, the river was running rather fast, and only a good swimmer would have been safe in the water.

Leggett was not a good swimmer. Had he fallen in, and—

Suddenly a faint cry came from down the river, a cry that sent the colour from the faces of the Fistical Four.

"Help! Oh, help!"

Again it came, and Rags barked louder than ever.

Jimmy Silver did not say a word. He suddenly broke into a run, and tore down the bank in the direction from which the cry came.

"Help! Help!"

Again came that pitiful cry, louder this time.

Jimmy Silver ran faster. Somebody was in danger, somebody was in need of help. Could it be Leggett?

The same thought entered the minds of all the juniors.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome were racing along in the rear of Jimmy Silver, and they suddenly uttered startled ejaculations.

Without throwing off his coat, Jimmy Silver had dived into the rushing water.

He went under, but his head came up quickly, and next instant the Classical captain was swimming his hardest towards where a junior was clinging to the protruding branch of a tree.

A second glance, and Lovell & Co. recognised the helpless junior as the cad of the Fourth.

Leggett's face was very white, and he looked at the end of his tether.

Jimmy Silver swam on pluckily. The stream was strong, and he was carried along at a good pace.

Gradually he drew nearer to the helpless junior, and Lovell & Co. watched their chum with bated breaths.

Leggett no longer called for help, and when at last Jimmy Silver drew up to him, he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Jimmy Silver gripped the helpless junior under the arms, and, swimming on his back, he endeavoured to reach the shore.

Try as he would, however, he made little progress. The stream was getting stronger hereabouts.

"Jimmy!" murmured Lovell, as he walked along the bank, his eyes glued on his chum.

"Oh, Jimmy!"

Raby and Newcome, too, were looking concerned.

Jimmy Silver kicked out his hardest. Jimmy was one of the best swimmers at Rookwood, but he had all his work cut out now to keep afloat.

His breath was coming in short gasps, but he stuck to his guns manfully.

The bank seemed to be miles away from him, but gradually he saw himself getting nearer.

The realisation forced him on to further efforts. He kicked out hard and quick.

The watchers on the bank saw him get nearer and nearer.

Lovell bent over the bank, ready to grab rescuer and rescued as soon as they came within clutching distance.

Nearer, nearer—

At last!

Lovell caught hold of Jimmy's shoulder, and pulled him up the bank. Leggett was lying in the Classical junior's arms like a dead weight.

Jimmy Silver breathed heavily, but he had complete control of himself.

"Let's get him to Rookwood as soon as we can," said Jimmy. "He—he might need a doctor!"

"But, Jimmy, you—"

"I'm all right," said Jimmy quickly. "Bit puffed, that's all. Get a move on! You and I can carry him all right!"

With that, the strange procession started for Rookwood. Rags trotted behind, barking furiously, little realising that the cad of the Fourth, who had intended to make him suffer, was now suffering himself.

Leggett was in the sanatorium for fully a week after the event on the river. During this time he made a complete confession to Jimmy Silver.

Out of sheer vindictiveness, he had intended to drown the dog, but in trying to do so, Rags had leapt out of his arms, and, slipping down the bank, he had fallen into the river, and been carried down-stream.

He seemed very repentant at the time of his confession, but as soon as he recovered his old caddish ways returned. He vented his spite on Rags one day by kicking the dog in the stomach.

But he did not do it a second time, for hearing that a village youngster wanted a dog, Jimmy presented him with Rags. The lad was delighted with the gift, and he had cause to be, for there was no doubt that Rags would prove a Faithful Friend!

THE END.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver and Co. is entitled:  
**"ONE WET WEDNESDAY!"**  
 By OWEN CONQUEST.  
 DON'T MISS IT!

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

# COWARD OR HERO?

BY  
MARTIN  
CLIFFORD

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Caught in the Trap.

"**B**Y gum!" said Figgins of the Fourth. "That's a stunning turn-out!"

And Kerr and Fatty Wynn agreed that it was.

Figgins & Co., the great chiefs and leaders of the New House juniors at St. Jim's, were lounging in the gateway when a trap came up.

Figgins & Co. had nothing special to do just then. They were debating whether they should put in a little extra footer-practice, or raid the School House, or sally forth in search of a row with the Grammar School fellows.

Fatty Wynn had another suggestion—a visit to the tuckshop; but as funds were very low just then, the Co. sat upon that suggestion. The arrival of the handsome trap from Rylcombe gave a new turn to their thoughts. It was certainly a handsome turn-out. There was a groom in charge of the trap, and he halted it outside the lodge of Taggles, the porter, and descended. Taggles came out.

"The trap for Master D'Arcy!" said the groom.

"Ho!" said Taggles.

"So that's for Gussy," said Figgins, with a grin. "Gussy is going for a giddy drive. Do you remember, my infants, the occasion when Fatty was going for a ride, and one of the School House bounders bagged his gee-gee, and went for a ride instead?"

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"It was that bounder Merry!" he said.

"And—"

"And he had the ride, and we had the grin up against us," continued Figgins.

"Yes, but—"

"But one good turn deserves another," said Figgins. "Do as you are done by—that's a golden rule; do those who do you, also, is a good old maxim. My sons, I think that that is our trap."

The Co. chuckled joyously.

The juniors of the two Houses at St. Jim's were keen rivals, and they occupied a great deal of their spare time in ragging one another. Fatty Wynn had by no means forgotten the occasion when Tom Merry had raided his horse.

It was only fair to raid the School House vehicle in return. The Co. approached the trap, just as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in view on the other side of the quadrangle, coming out of the School House.

The groom was talking to Taggles, but he spun round suddenly as Figgins seized the horse's head, and turned the trap round to the gates again.

"Here, let that trap alone, sir!" exclaimed the groom. "It is for Master D'Arcy. It was hordered by telephone."

"That's all right," said Figgins. "D'Arcy ordered it for us! He didn't know it, but he did. Pile in!"

Figgins led the horse at a rush through the gateway again.

The groom ran towards him, but Kerr's foot somehow got into his way, and he sat down on the ground, and sat there gasping for breath.

In a moment more the New House Co. were in the trap, outside the gates. Figgins gathered up the reins with a chuckle.

"Figgins! Stop, you wottah!"

An elegant figure came flying through the gateway. Arthur Augustus was dressed in his best. The sight of his handsome turn-out in the hands of the New House fellows made

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Arthur Augustus simply gasp with alarm and indignation.

"Figgins, you wottah!"

The trap was in motion now. Arthur Augustus ran after it, waving his hand frantically to the New House juniors. Fatty Wynn grinned, and Kerr kissed his hand. Figgins was busy with the horse, which was fresh and somewhat restive.

"Figgins! Stop, you boundah! Stop, you wottah! Stop! That's my twap!"

"Go hon!" said Kerr.

"Good-bye, Gussy!" said Fatty Wynn.

"You won't be caught in this trap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, you wottahs! I ordah you—"

"Remember the time you fellows raided my horse?" grinned Fatty Wynn.

The horse dashed on now, and Arthur Augustus had to put on a spurt to keep up the pace. He sprinted behind the trap in a cloud of dust raised by the wheels. His silk hat was on the back of his head, and his eyeglass flying at the end of its cord, and his face was crimson with excitement and exertion.

"Stop, you wottahs!"

"Good-bye!"

"Oh, you wascals! I shall give you a feahful thwashin' for this! I want that twap vevy specially!"

"So do we! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I ordah you to stop! I—"

"Good-bye!"

"See you later! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus made a terrific effort, and leaped on behind the trap, catching hold with his hands, and hanging on there. His delicate lavender kid gloves split in the effort, and his hat fell into the road. His elegant boots dragged and scratched along the rough road as the trap rushed on.

"Get off!" roared Kerr.

"I wefuse to get off! I—"

Kerr leaned over the back of the trap, and, taking an orange from his pocket, he gently squeezed it over the features of the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy spluttered and let go.

He sat down with a bump in the road, and the trap rushed on, Kerr and Wynn waving their hands in affectionate farewell.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat in the road and gasped.

"Ow! The wottahs! Ow! The wascals! Ow!"

The trap disappeared.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet at last, dusty and breathless. He gathered up his topper, and mournfully dusted it and polished it with his handkerchief. He was red and dusty and perspiring.

"The awful wottahs! I will give them a feahful thwashin' for this! Ow!"

He dusted his clothes as well as he could. He was still dusting himself down, and regarding his damaged topper with mournful eyes, when three youths came in sight on the road. They were Gordon Gay, Wootton major, and Wootton minor, of Rylcombe Grammar School.

They gave a joyful chortle at the sight of Arthur Augustus, and bore down upon him. The swell of St. Jim's blinked at them. Under other circumstances, he would have dodged the Grammarians, to avoid a ragging, but just at present he was glad to see Gordon Gay & Co.

"Had an accident?" asked Gordon Gay, grinning.

"Yaas, deah boy! I was goin' to the station to meet a new chap, and those

wottahs have bagged my twap! I am howvibly dustay, and my toppah is wuled! Look at it!"

The Grammarians inspected D'Arcy's topper. It certainly looked in a very parlous state. It was dreadfully dented, and the brim was cracked.

"I was thinkin' you might do me a favour, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't want to meet the new chap in a battered toppah. Will you lend me your hat, Gay?"

"My hat!" ejaculated Gordon Gay.

"Yaas. You take the same size, I wemembah. Of course, your toppah is not quite the style I'm accustomed to wearin', but I could make it do."

Gordon Gay looked at him long and hard.

"Any old thing would do, I suppose?" he asked sarcastically.

"Yaas, any top in a storm, you know," said D'Arcy innocently. "I would weturn your toppah to you undamaged. I shall take it—"

"You'll take it—ch?"

"As a great favah—"

"Oh, I see. Gussy, old man, you ask these little things so politely that a chap simply can't refuse you," said Gordon Gay solemnly.

"In fact," said Wootton major, "I'm really inclined to lend you my boot, Gussy, without your even asking for it."

Gordon Gay took off his silk hat.

"Gussy, old man, we came along to rag you. Just in time I remembered what the celebrated Dr. Potts says—was it Potts or Dotts? I forget—Let dogs delight to bark and bite, it is their nature to; let cats delight to mew at night, it is their nature, too!" Therefore, instead of biffing you, Gussy, I am going to lend you my topper. You needn't thank me. Thank Dr. Potts—or was it Shotts?"

"Thank you vevy much, Gay!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pway hand me the toppah—"

"I'll polish it for you first," said Gay.

"You can't wear a topper so carelessly as I do. I'll give it a good polish with my handkerchief while Wootton brushes you down."

"Thanks awf'ly!"

Wootton major and minor looked considerably puzzled. They had borne down on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to rag him gently, as a pleasant pastime for a quarter of an hour.

They did not know what Gordon Gay was driving at. But he was their leader, and they obeyed instructions. They began to dust D'Arcy carefully down, while Gordon Gay polished his topper with his folded handkerchief till it shone again.

Gordon Gay had turned his back to D'Arcy while he was engaged with the topper, and D'Arcy could not see what he was doing with it; but when Gay turned again he showed the topper gleaming in the sun.

"That all right?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Wippin', deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus put the topper on. It was just his size, and he surveyed the result in a pocket-mirror—a necessary article he never forgot. The three Grammarians looked at him solemnly.

"Perfect picture!" said Gay.

"Gorgeous!" said Wootton minor.

"I'm awf'ly obliged to you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus gratefully. "I should not have liked Woland Way, the new fellow who is coming to St. Jim's, to see me in a battered toppah, and with my clothes howvibly dustay. You see, I want to make wathah a fuss of that chap. Will you take



my toppah, Gay; it will be all wight for you?"

Gay gasped.  
 "Certainly, it will be good enough for me—too good, in fact!" he articulated. "I'll let you have it back when you send mine over. Go on, Gussy; you look a picture. Good-bye, Bluebell!"

"Good-bye, deah boys!"  
 And Arthur Augustus walked down the road in cheerful spirits. He had lost the trap, and would not be able to drive Roland Ray to St. Jim's; but owing to the kindness of the Grammarians he was looking as neat and natty as when he had started.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**  
**Well Marked.**

"**B**AI Jove! There's my twap!"  
 Arthur Augustus uttered the exclamation.

There it was.  
 Figgins & Co. had drawn up outside Mr. Bunn's in Rylcombe to take aboard refreshments, liquid and solid, before they proceeded on their drive.

Fatty Wynn had paused in the confectioner's to sample some of the refreshments on the spot, and so the New House Co. were not yet off again.

They had just got into the trap to start again, when Arthur Augustus came sailing down the old High Street. D'Arcy quickened his pace.

"Hold on, you wottahs!"  
 Figgins & Co. looked round quickly.

"My hat! Here's Gussy again!"  
 Figgins gathered up the reins and cracked the whip.

D'Arcy put on a spurt.  
 As he came closer the New House juniors saw his face more clearly. They were so surprised for the moment that Figgins forgot to start the horse. They stared at the swell of St. Jim's in blank surprise.

From under the brim of his shining silk hat two purple streaks had emerged, and were streaking down D'Arcy's face, one on either side of his nose.

As the swell of St. Jim's forehead was dewed with perspiration after his exertions on that warm afternoon, the dampness had not made him suspicious that there was anything wrong with his new hat.

If he felt that streak crawling down his face, he had supposed that it was perspiration. But it wasn't. It was marking-ink—Dobbs' Patent Indelible Purple Marking Ink!

"My only summer chapeau!" gasped Figgins. "Look at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Where did you get that face, Gussy?"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah wude wottahs! I—"  
 "He's on the war-path, you know, and he's painting up for the part!" gasped Kerr. "Perhaps he's got a tomahawk up his sleeve. Let's get off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 Figgins started the horse as D'Arcy came within half a dozen paces of the trap. The swell of St. Jim's shook his fist after the trap. After his previous experiences, he did not feel inclined to take up the pursuit again. The trap disappeared down the winding old High Street, and D'Arcy breathed wrath.

"The uttah wottahs! Wats!"  
 "My heye! Oh, crumbs!"  
 D'Arcy swung round sharply.

Grimes, the grocer's boy, had halted, with a basket on his arm, and was regarding Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in great amazement. Several other persons were staring at him, too, and grinning.

The sight of a handsome, well-dressed, and elegant junior, with two streaks of purple marking-ink down his face, was curious, to say the least of it.

"Weally, Gwimes—" began Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Grimes.  
 "What are you cacklin' at, you duffah?"  
 "He, he, he! Oh, that face!" roared Grimes.

Arthur Augustus, very much offended, walked on with his aristocratic nose very high in the air.

"I weally think all the people here are goin' dottay this aftahnood!" he murmured. "I wondah what ewevybody is gwinnin' at?"

Indeed, everybody seemed to be grinning. It was as if a grinning epidemic had smitten Rylcombe that afternoon. Everybody D'Arcy passed seemed to be seized with a sudden desire to grin or to cackle, and they grinned

and cackled freely. The swell of St. Jim's was in a state of simmering indignation by the time he reached the railway-station.

"Is the twain in yet, Twumble, deah boy?" he asked the old Rylcombe porter.

Trumble stared at him. He seemed unable to speak for a moment. A third and a fourth streak of marking-ink had emerged from under D'Arcy's hat, and were coursing down his face, and he was beginning to look somewhat like a zebra.

"Oh, scissors!" murmured Trumble.  
 "Weally, Twumble—"

"Good evings!" said Trumble. "Wot—"  
 Arthur Augustus passed him haughtily and went upon the platform. Trumble burst into a loud guffaw. D'Arcy could not understand it. Trumble was generally a quiet and steady old fellow; but it was evident that he had been drinking now. That was the only way of accounting for his peculiar conduct.

Arthur Augustus tried to calm himself as he paced the platform, waiting for the train, but whenever the people looked at D'Arcy they chuckled.

"They must be all wavin' mad," murmured the swell of St. Jim's, in utter perplexity—"as mad as hattsahs! I cannot compendish this at all! I wish the twain would come in!"

"Pwavy excuse me," said Arthur Augustus elegantly. "You are the new fellow for St. Jim's, I suppose?"

"Ye-es."  
 "Your name is Woland Way?"  
 "Roland Ray—yes."  
 "Happay to meet you, deah boy. My name is D'Arcy—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's—and I've come to meet you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Weally, Way—"  
 "Ha, ha, ha, ha!" yelled the new boy.  
 "Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in dismay. "He's mad, too!"

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**  
**Coward?**

**R**OLAND RAY held his sides and roared.

It was really not a polite thing to do, considering that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had taken the trouble to walk from St. Jim's to meet him at the station. But he could not help it.

The sight of Arthur Augustus with his face streaked like the skin of a zebra would have been too much for the gravity of Solomon.  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"



"Is the twain in yet, Twumble, deah boy?" Arthur Augustus asked the old Rylcombe porter. Trumble stared at him, for a third and fourth streak of marking-ink had emerged from under D'Arcy's hat, and he was beginning to look like a zebra. "Oh, scissors!" murmured Trumble.

The train came in sight at last. It slowed down in the station, and several passengers alighted; and Arthur Augustus looked round for the new boy for St. Jim's.

Among the passengers who stepped down was a lad of about his own age, in Etons and a silk hat, and it was easy enough to guess that he was the new boy. The other passengers were all elders.

The boy in Etons stood on the platform, glancing about him, when Arthur Augustus came up with a polite bow, and raised his hat. He disclosed a forehead clotted with marking-ink, and from which streaks of purple descended, striping his face. But he was unaware of the fact, and quite unconscious of the cause of the new boy's stare of amazement.

Arthur Augustus drew back, very much offended.

"Weally, Way—" he expostulated.  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "You silly ass!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as a wottah! I—"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Ray. "I'm sorry! Ha, ha, ha! But what on earth have you done that for?"

"Done what, you ass?"  
 "That—on your face!"  
 "M-m-my face!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"Yes! Ha, ha, ha!"  
 Arthur Augustus put his hand up to his face and rubbed it. He rubbed the streaks of marking-ink into a purple smudge, and the

new boy shrieked. D'Arcy stared at his fingers as he drew them away—empurpled!

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—what—somethin' has happened to m-m-my face!"

"Something has!" yelled Ray. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus groped for his pocket mirror, and opened it.

The sight of his face in the mirror made him jump almost clear of the platform. The mirror dropped from his hand, and there was a crash as it smashed at his feet.

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus took off his hat. The leather lining inside over the forehead was soaked with marking-ink. Then the swell of St. Jim's understood—and comprehended, also, why Gordon Gay had so cheerfully lent him his hat.

His face became crimson where it was not purple.

"Oh, the awful wottah! That is what they were gwinnin' at! Bai Jove! That frightful spooah! He put ink undah the linin' of the hat! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is weally not a laughin' mattah, deah boy. I have been the victim of a howwid joke. Pway, excuse me while I wun off and get a wash."

Roland Ray nodded. He could not speak. He sank upon a seat, gurgling.

Arthur Augustus rushed away in search of soap and hot water. The grinning porter kindly accommodated him, and Arthur Augustus laved his face, and rubbed it, and scrubbed it. But it was the boast of the firm of Dobbs that their celebrated marking-ink was indelible; and their boast was not unfounded.

The worst of the ink washed off; but Arthur Augustus was left with a purplish complexion that was likely to require time, as well as washing, before it disappeared.

He gave it up at last.

Roland Ray grinned when D'Arcy rejoined him on the platform. The swell of St. Jim's had a complexion somewhat like that of a Hindu now.

"Sowwy to keep you waitin', deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Does that look bettah?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Good! It's the howwid, you know. A beast knocked my hat off, and another beast lent me his hat and put this wotten ink in it, you know. It's wotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust we shall meet the Gwammah School chaps goin' back!" said D'Arcy wrathfully. "I shall give them a fearful thwashin', and you can help me. You know, we're up against the Gwammah School at St. Jim's. It's a new school in this district, and we think it's like their beastly cheek to be here at all, you know, and so we take a lot of twouble to keep them in their place. Would you wathah take the back, or walk?"

"Walk," said Roland Ray, as he glanced at the ancient back outside the station.

"Vewy good. I had a twan to come and meet you, but some boundahs waided it," said Arthur Augustus, as they walked down the old High Street.

Ray glanced at him curiously.

"I'm sure you're very kind," he said. "You're taking a lot of trouble over a stranger."

"You see—"

"You don't always hire traps to come and meet new boys, I suppose?"

"Wathah, not. But you are wathah a special sort of new boy."

"Thanks," said Ray, laughing. "But in what way?"

"You are a hero."

Ray coloured.

"We've heard all about it," said Arthur Augustus. "We know about you, you see. Mr. Lathom—that's our Form-mastah—told us you were comin' into the Fourth and told us what you had done. All the fellows know by this time."

"What rot!" said Ray.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"Yaas, I understand—you don't want to be made much of. True hewoes are always modest. I'm a vewy modest chap myself. But you see, it's up to us to show our appreciation of pluck, don't you see?"

"No, I don't quite see. I'd rather that nothing was said upon the subject," said Ray uncomfortably.

"Wats! You are a hewo! You wushed into the flames—"

Ray shuddered.

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"Don't speak of that!" he said.

"Why not, deah boy?"

"Because I don't like to remember it," cinder. As it was, I was badly burned. I've was very nearly burnt to death. If a fireman hadn't dragged me out at the last minute, I should have been burnt to a cinder. As it was, I was badly burned. I've got the marks all over me now."

"Bai Jove! Have you weally? I should wegard them as honourable scars, deah boy."

"I don't like to think about it. I've dreamed about it scores of times since it happened, and it's horrible!" Ray's face had become pale and tense. "I shall never get it off my nerves, I think!"

"You saved somebody's life, didn't you?"

"Yes, my kid brother. It was our house that was burnt down, you know. It was an awful experience, and I don't like thinking about it."

"Wight-ho, deah boy! All the same, it's up to us to show that we appreciate pluck, you know; and you are a giddy hewo!"

"Hallo, Gussy! Where did you get that complexion?"

The three Grammarians were sitting on the stile in the lane, and they greeted Arthur Augustus with that inquiry as he came by. The swell of St. Jim's halted, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the grinning Grammarians with a glance of the loftiest scorn, which ought to have withered them on the spot. But it didn't! They laughed.

"You uttah wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus, taking off the silk topper he had borrowed from Gordon Gay, and which he had cleaned of the ink as well as he could at the station. "There is your wotten hat, Gordon Gay; and I wegard you as a wank outsidah. Pway return my toppah!"

Gordon Gay tossed it over.

Arthur Augustus examined it suspiciously. But there was no ink in it. The three Grammarians chuckled in chorus.

"What a lovely complexion!" murmured Wootton major. "It reminds me of the black fellows at home on my native heath."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You could play Othello now, Gussy, without making up for the past," suggested Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose. He turned to Roland Ray, who was grinning.

"Pway back me up, deah boy—"

"Eh?" said the new junior.

"There are only three of the wottahs, and two St. Jim's chaps can lick three Gwammarians any day," D'Arcy explained. "I am goin' to give Gordon Gay a fearful thwashin'!"

"Come on!" said the Australian junior invitingly. "I'm simply longing for that fearful thrashing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Back me up, Way, old man—"

"Oh, come on!" said Ray uneasily.

"My deah fellah—"

"They're three to two," said Ray uneasily. Arthur Augustus stared at him blankly. Three to two didn't make any difference to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And this was the hero—the fellow who had risked his life in a burning house! Surely he wasn't afraid of three Grammar School fellows in a scrap?

"That's all right!" sang out Gordon Gay. "If you're looking for a scrap, come on! One of us will see fair play!"

"Good!" said D'Arcy. "Come on, Way! You can wely upon him. He's an awful wottah, but he will give us fair play. We'll pitch the wottahs ovah the stile. Come on, Way—"

"Where are you goin', you boundah?"

Roland Ray was walking on rather fast.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "He doesn't want any!"

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy ran after the new boy and caught him by the shoulder.

"Way, old man, back me up! Gwammah cads will think you are afraid of them!"

"Let them think so!"

"But—but I say—"

"I'm going on!"

And Roland Ray went on. Arthur Augustus hesitated a few moments, and then followed him. The three Grammarians on the stile sent a yell of laughter after them. It was only too plain that the new boy for St. Jim's had farked.

The two juniors finished that walk to the school in silence—amazed silence on Arthur Augustus's part. The new boy had farked! At all events, that was what it looked like. But it was impossible. A fellow who had not been afraid to risk his life in a burning house could hardly be afraid of a harmless "scrap" with a schoolboy. It was an extraordinary thing, and the swell of St. Jim's was perplexed. But Roland Ray did not utter a word of explanation, and they arrived at St. Jim's in grim silence.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER. FUNK!

"RUBBISH!"

George Gore of the Shell made that remark.

George Gore of the Shell was given to making emphatic remarks. He was unusually emphatic now.

A crowd of fellows in the common-room in the School House were discussing the new boy. Roland Ray had arrived at St. Jim's, and he belonged to the School House, and was in the Fourth Form.

He had not yet been assigned to a study, but the juniors, though as a rule opposed to having new boys crowded into their studies, had no objection to Ray. Even Jack Blake had been heard to declare that he would welcome him in Study No. 6, although there were already four fellows in that famous study.

Merely as a new boy, Ray was of no importance. New boys came often enough to the school, and did not attract any special attention among two or three hundred fellows. But Roland Ray was a new boy somewhat out of the common.

The story of his heroism was known all over the school. He had plunged into a burning house to rescue his young brother, and had saved his life, and nearly lost his own. He had been badly burnt, and had had a long illness as a result. The story had been in the papers at the time, and some of the St. Jim's juniors had seen it. There was no doubt that Roland Ray was a splendid chap, as Tom Merry declared in the common-room.

And the general admiration on the subject called forth that remark of George Gore's. Gore didn't like hearing anybody praised.

That feeling was shared by Levison and Mellish, the cads of the Fourth. They were quite ready to set themselves against the new boy, for no better reason than that most of the fellows were inclined to like him and respect him.

"Rubbish!" repeated Gore.

"Rot!" said Levison.

"Piffle!" said Mellish.

That was their contribution to the discussion.

Tom Merry turned upon them angrily.

"What's rubbish, rot, and piffle?" he demanded sharply.

"All that gas about the new kid," said Gore. "All gammon!"

"It was in the papers," said Kerruish of the Fourth.

"Oh, rats!"

"Sure, I read the report meself!" exclaimed Reilly.

"The newspapers always exaggerate!" said Gore, with a sniff. "I don't suppose there was really anything in it!"

"Probably nothing at all!" said Levison, with his unpleasant sneer.

"Hallo, here he comes!" said Monty Lowther.

"Kow-tow to the giddy hero!" said Gore sarcastically.

Roland Ray entered the common-room. He had just come from an interview with Mr. Railton, the master of the School House.

Tom Merry raised his hand, and the juniors gave a cheer at the signal.

"Hurrah!"

Roland Ray looked astonished.

"Hallo, what's the row?" he asked.

"You are!" grinned Blake. "We're giving you a cheer!"

"Me! What for?"

"We know about you—all about you." Ray flushed.

"Oh, cheest it!" Blake chuckled.

"And you can come into Study No. 6 if you like, Ray," he declared. "We're four

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in there already, but we'll make room for you, if you like."

"Yes, wathah!"

"Mr. Raitton's told me No. 7," said Ray. "Sure, and that's my study!" said Reilly cordially. "I'll be glad to have you—and so will Kerruish—won't you, kid?"

"Yes, rather!" said Kerruish, with equal cordiality.

"Thank you!" said Ray. "You're very kind."

"They're glad to have the giddy hero!" said Gore, with a sneer. "They're swallowing that yarn whole."

Ray looked at him.

"What yarn?" he asked.

"About the burning house, and the rest of it."

"That's true!" said Ray.

"Oh, rats!"

"Shut up, Gore!" growled Tom Merry. "If you don't shut your head, I'll jolly soon shut it for you!"

"Let Ray shut it for me, if he's such a giddy warrior!" sneered Gore.

"Don't mind Gore, Ray!" said Tom Merry. "He can't help being a pig."

"I don't mind him," said Ray quietly. "It doesn't matter twopence to me whether he believes the yarn or not. I hadn't the faintest idea that anything was known about it here, and I never dreamed that you fellows would think of making a fuss about it if you did know. I'd much rather nothing more was said on the subject. Will somebody tell me where my study is? I want to put my things there."

"Sure, and I will!" said Reilly.

George Gore stepped into the path of the new junior as he stepped towards the door. Gore had been watching him keenly, and he had come to the conclusion that the new boy was anxious to avoid a row with him. And that was quite enough for the bully of the Shell. He planted himself in Ray's way, and the new boy had to stop.

"What do you want?" he asked.

Gore grinned.

"I don't believe a word of the yarn about the burning house and the giddy heroism!" he said. "That's plain English, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's plain enough. Now let me pass!"

"Let him pass, Gore, you cad!"

"Knock him down, Ray!"

"Punch his head!"

Gore did not move.

Ray hesitated.

"Well, I'm waiting to be shifted!" said Gore sneeringly. "If you're such a giddy hero, you can shift me! Come on!"

Ray did not come on. He stood in a state of evident hesitation, the colour coming and going in his cheeks. The juniors exchanged queer glances.

How the situation would have ended cannot be said, for Tom Merry strode forward, seized Gore by the shoulders, and flung him bodily against the wall. Gore crashed on the wall, and slid down to the floor, and sat there.

Ray left the common-room without a word. Gore gasped, and struggled to his feet. Tom Merry looked at him with gleaming eyes.

"If you're looking for trouble, come on!" he said.

"What are you interfering for, you rotter?" roared Gore.

"You are not going to rag the new kid. You're bigger than he is, for one thing. If you are spoiling for a fight, tackle a chap in your own Form. I'm ready!"

Gore gave a kind of bellow, and rushed at Tom Merry.

In the excitement that followed Roland Ray was forgotten. It was a wild and whirling combat, and at the end of it George Gore lay gasping on the floor, with both his eyes closed and his nose streaming red. Tom Merry was gasping, too, and he was mopping his nose with his handkerchief, turning the handkerchief crimson in the process.

"Had enough?" he asked quietly.

"Ow!" groaned Gore, as Levison helped him to his feet. "Ow! Yes! Grooh!"

He dabbed savagely at his nose.

"All the same, that new kid's a funk!" he snarled. "He's a rotten funk, and you know it, and that's why you're standing up for him! Grooh!"

Tom Merry did not reply. He went away to bathe his face; it needed it.

He left the junior Common-room in a buzz.

A funk!

It certainly looked like it. Could a fellow be a hero and funk at the same time? Or was the sneering, doubting bully of the Shell in the right in his assertion that the story

of the burning house, and the heroic rescue, was "spoof"—some ridiculous exaggeration of a commonplace thing which had covered Roland Ray with undeserved glory? That was much more likely. And there was a revulsion of feeling among the juniors as they talked it over. All the fellows had an uncomfortable feeling that they had been taken in.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER. A Cruel Jape!

ROLAND RAY'S life during the next few days was not a pleasant one.

One morning a white feather was stuck in his cap from behind, and he walked about with it for a long time, wondering what the fellows were yelling at, until he discovered the trick.

And the day after that, Arthur Augustus, as he came out after detention in the Form-room, was drawn into the quadrangle by the sounds of loud laughter, and found the new boy in the midst of a mocking crowd of juniors and fags.

Ray's hands had been tied down to his sides, and on his face, in black paint, was daubed the familiar word "Funk."

His face was half hidden by the daubs of paint, and it showed up white against the black letters.

The grinning crowd looked on and jeered, no one offering to help the unhappy lad.

Gore and Levison and Mellish were there. They had captured the new boy, and tied his hands in a secluded corner, and then daubed the letters upon his face, and chased him into the quadrangle.

"Funk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got his signature on his face now!"

grinned Lorne.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus came up hotly.

"You wotahs!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I regard you as beasts! Why can't you let the chap alone?"

"Rats!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Let that fellow alone!" roared Gore, as Arthur Augustus opened his penknife to cut the cord round Ray's wrists.

"Wats, you wotahs!"

Gore rushed at the swell of St. Jim's to stop him, and Jack Blake's foot got in his way, and he rolled over with a yell.

D'Arcy cut Ray loose, and led him into the house. Ray washed the painted letters from his face in the Fourth Form dormitory, the tears running down his cheeks along with the soap and water. Arthur Augustus was fuming with indignation.

"You won't have any peace till you've licked one of those wotahs, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Don't you feel up to it?"

"No!" groaned Ray.

"You are weally a much stwongah chap than Mellish or Levison, you know, if you made up your mind to it," urged D'Arcy.

Ray shook his head.

"I can't—I can't! I—I think I shall write to my father to take me away from here. I sha'n't be able to stand it much longer."

Arthur Augustus did not reply. He left the dormitory, his brow wrinkled in thought.

The next day was Saturday, a half-holiday at St. Jim's. School House juniors were playing the New House, and Arthur Augustus was in Tom Merry's team.

"Comin' down to watch the match?" he asked Ray, before the team went to the ground.

"I—I think not," faltered Ray. "The fellows will only rag me there. I'll have a read."

"You ought to take up footah, deah boy."

"They don't want me in the junior club."

D'Arcy did not reply to that; it was true enough. Nobody wanted to play football with the Funk.

"Aftah the match I'll give you some pwactice, if it's light enough," said Arthur Augustus. "It will buck you up."

"Thank you!" said Ray gratefully. "I should like it. I used to be a footballer before—before—"

"I undahstand!"

"I'm going to read in the old chapel," said Ray. "You'll find me there."

"Wight-ho!"

And Arthur Augustus joined Tom Merry's eleven, and went down to the football-field. Roland Ray took his book, and walked away by himself. His steps turned in the direction of the ruined chapel. It was a quiet spot, with moss-grown masses of old masonry, shaded by old trees. Ray liked the place. It was a safe refuge from the scornful looks

and constant chipping of the juniors, at all events.

He sat down on a fragment of stone, and opened his book. He had been reading about half an hour when the sound of footsteps caused him to look up. His face changed colour as he saw Gore and Mellish and Levison before him. His tormentors had found him again.

Gore nodded to him with a grin.

"Hallo, here you are!" he exclaimed.

"What do you want?" said Ray dully. "Can't you let me alone? What have I done to you?"

"You're a rotten funk!" said Gore.

Ray was silent.

"Do you know you're sitting within a dozen steps of the haunted crypt?" demanded Levison.

Ray smiled.

"You don't believe in ghosts?" asked Gore, with a cruel grin.

"No, I don't."

"Good! Then you wouldn't mind exploring the crypt by yourself?"

"I don't want to do that," said Ray.

"Sorry—you've got to! Collar him!" shouted Gore.

Ray started to his feet. The hands of the ragers closed upon him at once, and the Funk shrank in their grasp.

"Let me alone!" he panted.

"Shove him in!"

Mellish ran down the stone steps, chucking, and opened the oaken door of the old crypt. Ray was bundled down the steps, struggling fiercely now. Black as midnight, the crypt yawned before him.

"Let me go!" shrieked Ray, white as a sheet, struggling madly.

"My hat! He's learning to wriggle!" gasped Gore. "Chuck him in!"

Roland Ray rolled upon the damp stone floor of the crypt. As he lay there dazed the juniors shut the door upon him, and Gore jammed a fragment of stone under it.

Then the three ragers sauntered out of the old chapel, leaving their victim still hammering at the door, and shrieking to be released.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Shock!

"W AY, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus, still in his football clothes, came into the ruined chapel. He looked round for Roland Ray. The new boy had told him that he would find him there, but he could not see him.

"Way! Where are you?"

Ray's book was lying on the ground. But there was no other sign of the new boy in the ruins. D'Arcy looked puzzled.

"He can't have gone and left his book behind," he murmured. "Where is he, I wondah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy looked round quickly. Gore and Levison and Mellish were looking in through one of the shattered casements.

"Looking for the Funk?" grinned Gore.

"Where is he?"

"Might look in the crypt."

"Bai Jove! You uttah wotahs! Do you mean to say that you have shut him up in the cwypt?" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's.

"Ha, ha, ha! Look and see!"

Arthur Augustus clenched his fists. But he unclenched them again, and ran down the stone steps to the crypt. He kicked away the wedge of stone, and threw open the door.

"Way! Way, old man! Are you heah?" he called out anxiously, peering into the darkness.

There was no reply; only the echo of D'Arcy's voice answered from the gloomy recesses of the crypt.

"Way! Are you heah? Answah me, deah boy!"

Dead silence.

Arthur Augustus struck a match, and descended into the crypt.

Then he uttered a cry of horror.

In the pale, flickering light of the match he saw a form extended before him upon the cold stone floor.

The match went out.

"Can you see him?" called out Gore.

"Yaas. He's fainted, I think. Come and help me cawwy him up!"

Gore hesitated, and then descended into the crypt. It occurred to him—rather late—that it had been a dangerous trick to play upon a boy who was known to be a funk.

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The wretched boy might have gone mad with fear, shut up in the silence and darkness—silence and darkness that would be peopled with horrid shapes by his feverish imaginings.

D'Arcy struck another match. Gore bent down, and looked at Ray. The boy was evidently not shamming. He was white as marble and quite insensible, and his hands were cold to the touch.

"You cruel beast!" said D'Arcy, between his teeth. "You cowardly wotah!"

"Well, he shouldn't be such an awful funk!" muttered Gore. "There was nothing to hurt him there. Chap of his age oughtn't to be afraid of the dark like a baby!"

"Shut up, and help me to get him out!" They raised the boy in their arms, and bore him up the steps to the open air.

Ray did not move. When they laid him down, he lay stiff and inert. His face was hard and cold, and his eyes closed.

"He's fainted!" muttered Levison. "Looks more like a fit!" said Gore anxiously. "I—I'm sorry we did it, now! But how were we to know he'd take it like this?"

"Help me cawwy him in!" said Arthur Augustus quietly. "We shall have to send for the doctah!"

Gore flushed. "Look here, leave him alone; he'll come round! We're not going to have a row about it, and the Head inquiring into it, and—"

"You cad! Help me cawwy him in, I tell you!"

Gore sullenly complied. There was evidently nothing else to be done. The ragers had reason to repent of the cruel and cowardly jape now. A crowd of fellows gathered round as D'Arcy and Gore were seen bearing the insensible Ray into the School House.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Fom Merry.

"Goah shut him up in the haunted crypt, and he fainted!" said D'Arcy.

"You—you villain, Gore!" Tom Merry muttered.

"I didn't know—" stammered Gore. "You ought to have known! He might have gone mad! You fool—you rascal! You may get expelled over this, and serve you right!"

Gore bit his lip. Mr. Raitton, the Housemaster, met them at the door. He had seen the procession from his study window. The Housemaster required only a few words of explanation.

Roland Ray was taken up to his bed at once, and a doctor was telephoned for.

And when the medical man arrived Ray was removed with all care to the school sanatorium, and it was made known that he was ill—very ill.

The news was received with gloomy looks by the St. Jim's juniors.

The fellow was a funk—an utter funk! There was nothing to be afraid of in the old crypt. But Ray's want of nerve had done worse than real danger could have done. He had been frightened out of his wits—not metaphorically, but actually. When he came out of that deep, stony stupor he was delirious.

There were few fellows in the House who did not feel sorry for the wretched boy then.

Gore and Mellish and Levison were avoided as if they were plague-stricken. There was contempt in every glance thrown at them. And there was worse than that to come, for Mr. Raitton had made a very strict inquiry into the matter, and learned the facts.

The facts could not be concealed, especially as Mellish blurted out a full confession on the spot, in the hope of escaping more lightly than the other two.

The three young rascals were taken before the Head, and, after a severe lecture, they were soundly flogged.

They went to bed that night wishing most severely that they had not carried the ragging of the Funk to such a length.

"The rotter!" said Gore, between his teeth. "I dare say it's half shamming! Oh, won't I hammer him when he's well again!"

But it seemed likely to be some time before Ray was well again.

Two or three days passed, the doctor coming from Rylcombe every day to see his

patient, and at last it was announced that Ray was getting better.

At length Roland Ray returned into the School House.

The fellows all looked at him curiously when he made his first appearance. He was looking somewhat pale, but, apart from that, he was quite his old self. And it seemed that there was a new light in his eyes, a difference in his manner. He had changed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy greeted him with open arms.

"Jolly glad to see you again, Way, old man!" he exclaimed.

"Jolly glad to see you, too," said Ray heartily. "I haven't had much of a time in the giddy sanatorium. Will you come with me to my study?"

"Your study?" stammered D'Arcy.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"To see fair play."

"Fair play!" repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes. I'm going to argue it out with Reilly and Kerruish, and see whether I'm going to be turned out of my own study," said Ray.

Arthur Augustus could only stare.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### The Hero!

**T**OM MERRY came along the passage, and stopped—as he saw Roland Ray. He came up to the Funk with a cheery smile.

"Glad to see you again!" he said. "Are you all right now?"

"Right as rain!" said Ray.

"You look all right," said Tom Merry. "You needn't be afraid of those chaps ragging you again, I think. They've had a lesson."

"I'm not afraid," said Ray.

"No?" said Tom Merry, somewhat puzzled.

"I'm changed—a bit," said Ray. "Do you remember reading in the paper the other day of a chap who had his nerves upset by a shock, and then had them put right again by another shock?"

"Yaas, deah boy, I do wemembah!"

"Well, the same thing's happened to me."

"Bai Jove!"

"I won't tell you what I went through in the crypt," said Ray quietly. "It was awful! You chaps have never been in the state I was in—frightened at a shadow—and you can't realise it. I hammered at the door till my hands bled, I shrieked till I couldn't utter another sound. I thought I was going mad. Then I must have fainted, I suppose. I don't know what happened till I woke up in bed in the sanatorium, and the nurse told me that I had been delirious. Then I began to mend, and—and I felt that I was getting to be my old self again—as I used to be before that night of the fire."

"Bai Jove!" That was all Arthur Augustus could say.

"I never was a funk," said Ray, in the same quiet tone. "It was a matter of nerves. Well, my nerves are all right now. I've got over it. The shock I've had has braced me up. I'm all right—as some of the fellows will find! Come up with me to my study."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy, still in a state of wonder, followed Ray up to his study. Reilly and Kerruish were there, having tea, and they stared at the new-comers.

"Faith, I'm glad to see you out of hospital again," said Reilly. "But plaze don't put your head into this study. I shall have to punch it if you do."

"Same here," said Kerruish. "Sorry you've been ill, but we don't want any funks any more than we did."

"This is my study," said Ray.

Reilly grinned.

"You know what you'll get if you come in," he said.

To Reilly's astonishment, Ray walked into the study and put up his hands.

"Come on!" he said.

"Sure, and it's dotty ye are!" said the amazed Irish junior. "I tell ye I shall hammer ye worse than Gore—"

"Gore will have a chance presently. I'm dealing with you now. Come on—unless you are what you've called me—a funk!" said Ray.

"A funk, is it?" roared Reilly, and he rushed at Ray.

In a moment there was a terrific combat

in progress. Two forms, intertwined, whirled round the study, and the tea-table was knocked aside, with disastrous results to the tea and the crockery.

Then Reilly went with a crash to the floor. He lay for some moments blinking dazedly at the panting Ray. Then he jumped up with a whoop.

"Sure, and ye've been spoofing us!" he exclaimed. "Ye're not a funk intirely!"

Ray grinned.

"Are you satisfied about that?" he asked.

"Faith, and I am!" said Reilly, dabbing his nose, which was flowing crimson. "Chap who can give me a swollen nose can't be a funk. Give me your fin!"

Ray laughed, and shook hands with the Irish junior.

"Sure, and now we'll go and look for Gore!" chirruped Reilly.

George Gore was in the common-room, talking to a crowd of fellows. He was explaining his intention of wiping up the ground with the Funk, and knocking him into the middle of the following week, and several other things, as a slight satisfaction for the flogging he had received. Gore's plentiful flow of language was interrupted by the entrance of Roland Ray and his companions.

"Here he is!" shouted Levison. "Pile in!"

Roland Ray walked straight up to Gore. Smack!

The bully of the Shell reeled back as Ray's open hand struck him full across the face.

"Why—wh-w-what—?" Gore could only gasp.

Reilly gave a yell.

"Faith, and me friend is lookin' for you, Gore darling! Go it, Ray!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pile in, deah boy!"

"Hallo! Is this a giddy miracle?" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared Gore. "I'll smash him! I'll spifficate him! I'll—I'll—"

"Sure, and me friend's ready!" chuckled Reilly. "Jackets off!"

"A ring! A ring!"

"Go it, Funk!"

The door was shut, and the bully of the Shell and the Funk of St. Jim's faced one another in the midst of an amazed and keenly interested circle of juniors.

It was a fight that was long remembered in the Lower School at St. Jim's. George Gore put up a good fight. He did his best. But he had no chance. The Funk simply walked over him, knocking him right and left, till at last Gore lay on the floor, completely winded, beaten to the wide, and gave in.

"If anybody else wants to call me a funk, I'm ready to talk to him!" said Roland Ray, looking round grimly.

There was a laugh.

"More likely to call you a giddy steam-hammer, or a Berserker!" grinned Blake.

"Come on, old son! We want you in Study No. 6!"

"Sure, and he won't do anythin' of the sort intirely!" exclaimed Reilly warmly.

"He's a friend of mine, and he belongs to my study!"

And Reilly and Kerruish marched Roland Ray off in triumph. And the crowd of juniors gave a loud cheer for the fellow whom they had always called the Funk.

It was a strange case. The counter-shock Ray had received in the old crypt had undone the work of the first, and restored to him his strength of mind and his lost nerve.

The result had proved it. Even Gore was satisfied—in fact, more than satisfied. It had been a question whether Roland Ray was a hero or a coward, but the question was settled now. He was the hero of the School House, and the guest of honour at a tremendous feed held that evening in Tom Merry's study.

THE END.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co., is entitled

**"THE CAPTAIN'S RIVAL!"**

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

DON'T MISS IT!