

"THE STOLEN STUDY!" and "THE GREYFRIARS CHINEE!" INSIDE.



The GEM 2d



NOT NICE *for* KNOX!

BLAKE & CO. GO ON THE WARPATH WHEN THEIR STUDY IS STOLEN—BUT THEY ARE NOT EQUAL TO THE CUNNING OF THEIR ENEMIES!

The STOLEN STUDY!



One after another Levison, Mellish, and Hooker were ejected from Study No. 6. "Now chuck their rubbish out after them!" roared Blake. Books, bags, and other articles rained into the passage, descending in a shower upon the unfortunate trio.

CHAPTER 1.

Lowther's Great Scheme!

"SCHOOL to-morrow, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark in a lugubrious tone.

Tom Merry & Co., with equal lugubriousness, answered:

"Oh, rotten!"

"Beastly!" added Lowther.

The juniors of St. Jim's all agreed that it was rotten and beastly. Not that there was anything rotten or beastly about St. Jim's itself. They were very fond of the old school, and they generally contrived to have a good time there. But, from a schoolboy point of view, there was no doubt that holidays were better than term time.

The little party of St. Jim's juniors at Eastwood House had enjoyed the vacation immensely. They would have been willing to prolong it, as Lowther said, for months and months and months. But the end of the vac had come all too soon, and on the morrow they were to return to St. Jim's—to learn Latin in the Form-room instead

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of roaming about the pleasant countryside—to play cricket only on half-holidays instead of all day long as they pleased—to fall once more under the authority of masters and prefects, after the long freedom they had enjoyed.

So though St. Jim's was a ripping place, and most of the fellows there were ripping, too, they could not help regarding the beginning of the next term as both rotten and beastly.

"I don't want to go!" groaned Jack Blake. "It's all your fault, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and regarded him inquiringly.

"Weally, Blake, I fail to see that at all. I am not responsible for the fact that we have a wiciduously short holiday."

"It's all because we've had such a good time here," growled Blake. "If we weren't so jolly comfy here, under your pater's roof, I shouldn't mind going back."

Arthur Augustus smiled benignantly.

"Yaas, that is a vewy nice way of puttin' it, Blake, deah boy. I am vewy glad that you have been so comfy undah

my patah's woof. But I suppose evewythin' must come to an end some time. We've got to go back to-morrow."

And the Co. groaned in chorus. They were sitting on the terrace of Eastwood House, looking out over the park. Now that the holidays were over, it seemed that they had been there but a very short time.

Monty Lowther's brow wore a very thoughtful wrinkle. Tom Merry glanced at him.

"It's no good, Monty," he remarked.

Lowther looked up.

"What's no good?" he asked.

"I know what you're thinking of, but it's no good. I've thought it over, and looked at it every possible way, but I can't think of a single excuse for putting it off. There's no reason at all why we shouldn't go back to the school to-morrow, excepting that we don't want to."

Lowther grinned.

"That's a good reason enough," he remarked.

"Good enough for us, but it wouldn't do for the Head!"

"Well, I've been thinking," went on

A RIP-ROARING LONG YARN OF RIVALRY, RAGGING AND JAPING AT ST. JIM'S, STARRING ALL YOUR FAVOURITES.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Lowther determinedly. "Look here, Gussy's pater is a governor of St. Jim's."

"Yaas, that is so, Lowthah!" "What's the good of a fellow's pater being a governor of a school if he isn't put to any use?" demanded Lowther. "A line from Lord Eastwood would make the Head willing to let us off for another week."

The juniors all looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hopefully, but the swell of St. Jim's shook his head.

"As a mattah of fact, deah boy, I have appoached the patah on the subject already," he said. "I tried to point out to him, that in the circles it is up to him to use his influence as a governah of St. Jim's and an old friend of the Head's; but he weplied in a way that I can only considah disrespectful, though he is my patah."

"What did he say?" "Well, to tell you the twuth, he said I was a young donkey," confessed Arthur Augustus, "and he wefused to do anythin' of the sort."

Groan! "Then there's only one thing to be done," said Monty Lowther firmly. "The Head being unreasonable on such matters, and Gussy's pater being a hard-hearted parent, we've got to depend on ourselves. You know our motto as Boy Scouts—'Be Prepared.' Well, we've got to be prepared for the beginning of the term. Lucky for you chaps you've got a fellow with you with ideas in his head. We shall have to be ill!"

"Ill!" "Exactly! When a fellow's ill he doesn't have to go back till he's well. You remember Levison of the Fourth came back a week late last term. He had influenza. As a matter of fact, I don't believe he had influenza at all—that fellow Levison is such a spoofer. But he stayed away a week."

"Bai Jove! I almost wish I had influenza!" said Arthur Augustus. "However, a holiday with influenza wouldn't weally be much of a holiday."

"But you're going to have it," said Lowther.

"What?" "So am I."

"Bai Jove!" "You and I and all of us," continued Lowther. "It's the only way, as they say in the play. They can't send back to school a crowd of invalids. We've left it rather late, I know, but there's still time. We've got to fall ill this evening."

"My hat!" "They'll bring in the local medical johnny," said Lowther, his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm over his new idea. "But we can pull his leg all right. He will look for the symptoms. Well, we can have lots of symptoms."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He will order us to remain here till we're well. We can get convalescent pretty quick—well enough to go out, you know but not well enough to go back to school. I think it ought to be worth at least an extra week to us."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard that as a weally bwiliant ideah, Lowthah, and I am surprised I nevah thought of it. As the matab and Cousin Ethel are both away, it won't

make them anxious. Lowthah, deah boy, you are a genius!"

"Bravo, Monty!" "Bai Jove, though," said D'Arcy thoughtfully, "I am not quite sure that it will be weepful to pull the patah's leg like that."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Lowther. "As it's my idea, I'm responsible. All you've got to do is to cough and look pale."

"Yaas, but—" "Gussy's objection being disposed of, what do you fellows think?"

"Ripping!" "Topping!" "Hear, hear!"

"Then the sooner we begin the better!" said Monty Lowther briskly. "Here comes Gussy's pater! Strike the giddy iron while it's hot! Keep an eye on me, and do as I do."

"But, weally, Lowthah—" "Shurrup! Do you want to give the game away?"

"Yaas—I mean, no! But—" "Cheese it!"

Lord Eastwood had just come out on the terrace, so Arthur Augustus, though he was not quite satisfied, had to "cheese it." The earl glanced kindly at the group of juniors.

"Well, I'm sorry you are going to-morrow," he said. "But holidays must come to an end some time, you know."

Monty Lowther gave a slight moan, and Lord Eastwood looked at him quickly.

"What is the matter, my boy?" he asked. "Don't you feel well?"

Lowther moaned again. And the juniors, taking their cue from the author of the brilliant idea, moaned

It is Monty Lowther who is blamed when Blake & Co. lose their famous study to the black sheep of the Fourth Form. But it is thanks to Lowther that the study is recaptured from its new tenants!

in a kind of chorus. Herries of the Fourth, who was always a little heavy-handed, gave a deep groan; but the other fellows only moaned. Lord Eastwood looked at them with some alarm.

"What ever is the matter?" he asked. "I—I'm afraid we're going to be some trouble to you, sir!" moaned Lowther.

"I know it's too bad to plant a lot of invalids on anybody. But—"

"A fellow can't help being ill!" groaned Lumley-Lumley. "I guess these things kind of happen, sir."

"Influenza has been going about a lot lately!" said Tom Merry dismally. "I suppose it isn't a fellow's fault if he catches it?"

"Oh, it's howwid!" Groan!

"What worries me most," murmured Lowther, "is that it will prevent us from going back to school to-morrow. We're so keen to see the Head again, and—and the Housemaster, and to get back to our lessons. I've been thinking for days of Julius Caesar and—and Eutropius, and things. Now we shan't be able to go!"

"And to think of missing the German lessons!" groaned Digby. "Herr

Schneider is always so nice when he comes back from Germany."

"And the mathematics!" murmured Blake. "The only thing I can think of is to send for our books, and—and try to do some lessons by ourselves while we're ill!"

"Ow, ow!" "Dear me!" said Lord Eastwood.

"This is very sudden! I really hope that you boys have not caught influenza! It is extraordinary that you should all have caught it at once. You look quite in your normal state of health, too."

"Appearances are awfully deceptive, sir," said Lowther—"awfully! I couldn't describe to you how my head's aching!"

Which was strictly true, as Lowther's head was not aching at all.

"It may be something worse than influenza, for all we know," said Blake. "Would you mind letting somebody telephone for a doctor, sir? I know it's too bad to give you a lot of trouble, but in case of severe illness—"

"Go to bed at once!" said Lord Eastwood. "I will telephone for Dr. Sharpe immediately!"

"Bai Jove! We haven't had dinnah!"

"Then you have not lost your appetite, Arthur?" asked Lord Eastwood; and at that moment a twinkle appeared in his eye.

"No—yaas—I—I mean—" "Never mind dinner!" said his lordship briskly. "We must consult Dr. Sharpe before you eat anything more."

Off to bed at once, and I will telephone for the doctor! He will be here very soon."

And Tom Merry & Co.—who were hungry, and quite ready for dinner—rose rather reluctantly, not quite knowing whether to be pleased or not at the success of their scheme.

CHAPTER 2.

The Invalids!

"LOWTHAH, deah boy, I wegard you as an ass!"

The St. Jim's juniors occupied four communicating rooms in Eastwood House. They had gone up together to bed; but bed at half-past six was not inviting. Dinner was at seven at Eastwood House, and the juniors would have preferred dinner to bed. But there was no help for it. If they were ill—too ill to go back to St. Jim's on the morrow—the proper place for them was bed. They undressed reluctantly.

Lowther grunted at D'Arcy's remark. He was not wholly satisfied himself.

"It was a weally bwiliant ideah, I admit; but you ought to have left it till aftah dinnah."

"I should jolly well say so!" growled Blake. "I'm hungry!"

"Nearly famished!" groaned Herries.

"And suppose the doctor orders us gruel and sloppy things?" said Digby, with a shudder.

"I guess we shall have to stand it," said Lumley-Lumley. "Lowther has landed us this time, and no mistake!"

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther crossly. "It was necessary to strike the iron while it was hot. But I must say your pater is quick in jumping on a fellow, Gussy. I don't quite regard it as playing the game."

"Wats! If we are ill, we are ill!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps, affah all, it is worth missin' dinnah to keep away fwm school anothah week."

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"Especially if we have gruel and beef-tea all the time!" growled Herries. "I don't think it's much of an idea, after all!"

"You don't think at all!" growled Lowther. "You haven't the necessary apparatus in that thick head!"

"Look here, Lowther——"

"Oh, bow-wow!"

"If you want a thick ear, you Shell boulder——" began Herries warmly.

"Shush!" said Tom Merry. "If the medical johnny hears us ragging one another when he arrives, he won't believe we're giddy invalids. Besides, we can work it. We'll tell him we feel a craving for food—plenty of food. Invalids have to be humoured."

"Of course," said Lowther, brightening up, "that—ahem!—that was my idea all along. We have all the symptoms of illness—a general disinclination to work, and all that kind of thing, and, at the same time, a strange craving for food."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush! Invalids don't laugh!"

The juniors turned into bed. They were beginning to have doubts now as to the excellence of Lowther's wonderful wheeze; but there was nothing to do but to carry it through now that it had been started. After all, if it meant an extra week's holiday, it was worth while missing a meal.

There was a step in the passage outside, and all the invalids moaned in chorus. But it was not the doctor yet. It was D'Arcy minor—Wally of the Third Form—who came in, followed by Joe Frayne. The two fags were spending their vacation at Eastwood House, and they were equally dismal at the prospect of returning to the school on the morrow. Wally was looking suspicious.

"I hear you chaps are ill," he said, looking round the room occupied by the Terrible Three.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther moaned.

"Too ill to go back to school to-morrow," added Wally.

Moan!

"Well," said Wally, with emphasis, "if it works, I'm going to be ill, too! So is Frayne—aren't you, Frayne?"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Joe Frayne.

"Get out, you young ass!" muttered Lowther. "If the medical man should hear you——"

There was a knock at the door, and a gentleman in a black coat stepped in. It was the doctor from Easthorpe.

"Well, and how are we?" he asked cheerily. "Influenza? What? You youngsters should not be here. Influenza is infectious!"

Wally and Joe Frayne slipped out.

Monty Lowther gave an agonised moan. Dr. Sharpe paused by his bedside and gave him a very keen look. Lord Eastwood came into the room, looking very grave, but there was still a twinkle in his eyes.

"Now, what is the matter with you?" asked Dr. Sharpe.

"I—I can hardly describe it," said Lowther faintly.

The doctor felt his pulse, and shook his head gravely. Lowther started a little. He had not supposed there was anything wrong with his pulse.

"Is—isn't my pulse all right?" he asked.

"Certainly not as it should be in a case of influenza," said the doctor gravely. "Now, tell me your symptoms."

"A—a tired feeling," murmured Lowther. "A—a general feeling of——"

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"Disinclination to work?"

"Yes, exactly."

"You feel it would be impossible to take a journey by railway, or anything of that sort?"

"Yes, yes."

"You have a sensation of horror and repugnance at the idea of being confined within a class-room?"

"Exactly!" said Lowther, feeling as if he were getting on nicely.

"Is there any loss of appetite? Probably not."

"Not at all!" said Lowther eagerly.

"In fact, I—I feel a craving for food."

"Same here, sir!" murmured Manners.

"And you?" asked the doctor, turning to Tom Merry's bed.

"Just the same, sir."

The doctor shook his head with deep gravity.

"Very serious—very serious. What sort of craving is this? I suppose you feel that you could eat a large dinner?"

"Oh, yes!"

"H'm!" said Dr. Sharpe, slowly and gravely.

"I—I think the other fellows feel the same, sir," said Monty Lowther, as the medical gentleman appeared lost in thought. "Won't you see them?"

"Not necessary. I am sure your symptoms are all the same. General disinclination for work—especially school work—and a craving for food. I fear that it is a serious case, and serious measures must be taken. In the first place, you must overcome this craving for food——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"That is the first step. For this evening I shall order you a little weak milk-and-water, and a small portion of dry bread."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, really——"

"But——"

"Nothing more than that," said the doctor firmly. "You must remain in bed, with such nourishment as I have prescribed, and it will be necessary for you to take some medicine."

"I—I don't feel exactly like taking medicine, doctor!" faltered Tom Merry.

"Precisely—precisely! But that must be overcome. I will send a large bottle for each patient, and it must be taken regularly. Plenty of medicine and a little bread and weak milk-and-water will work wonders. You will, I think, find yourselves marvellously restored in the morning—perhaps well enough to return to school."

"Oh!"

"If not," resumed the medical gentleman, with more emphasis, "the treatment must be continued. No breakfast in the morning."

"Eh?"

"For lunch a small piece of dry bread, with cold water."

"What?"

"For dinner the same. No supper. If it should be necessary to continue the treatment over a whole day, the effect will be very beneficial. In a day, at the most, I promise a complete recovery. I will call and see you again to-morrow morning."

And the doctor took his leave. As he went out with the earl, and the door closed, the juniors thought they heard the sound of a subdued laugh. The Terrible Three sat up in bed and looked at one another.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, you ass!" said Tom Merry and Manners.

All that the doctor had said had been heard from the adjoining rooms. The rest of the juniors came in in their

pyjamas, and all were looking dismayed.

"Bai Jove! This is a pwetty pwospect," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard you as a howlin' ass, Lowthah. What's the good of an extva holiday if we're goin' to be kept in bed and fed on bwead and water?"

"How could I foresee it?" grunted Lowther. "That doctor is a beast—a horrid beast! And I believe that Gussy's pater has seen through the whole game, and he has put up the medical johnny to spoof us like this as a punishment for pulling his leg."

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm jolly certain of it!" groaned Tom Merry.

"Look here, I'm going to get well!" exclaimed Herries. "I'd rather be at school than sticking in bed on milk-and-water."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Same here!"

"We can't own up now," said Tom Merry dismally. "We've got to see it through for this evening, at least. Oh crumbs, I'm hungry!"

"I'm famished!"

"I'm perishing!"

"Oh, you uttah ass, Lowthah!" The door opened, and Wally's grinning face looked in.

"Well, how did it work?" inquired the scamp of the Third. "The pater and old Sharpe were grinning when they came down. Looks to me as if they smell a rat. Are you going to stay away from school? If so, I'm going to develop influenza, too. I caught it from you chaps."

"Oh, go and eat ooke!" said Blake crossly. "We're put on milk-and-water till we get well."

"What?"

"And a little dry bread," said Herries.

Wally burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm jolly well not going to be ill, then!" chuckled Wally. "I'd rather go to St. Jim's and have something to eat. Hope you'll enjoy the bread-and-water. Ha, ha, ha! Yah!"

A pillow whizzed through the air and caught Wally under the chin, and he went through the doorway like a stone from a catapult. He landed in the passage with a bump and a roar. Blake slammed the door.

"We're in for it!" he growled. "No dinner—nothing to eat to-night! My hat! Lowther, you villain, you've landed us into this. This is what comes of your beautiful idea. Bump him!"

"Here, I say——"

But the exasperated juniors did not listen to what Monty Lowther had to say. They yanked him out of bed and bumped him heartily, and Monty Lowther's yells rang through the room. "There!" gasped Blake. "That'll teach you not to spring your wonderful ideas on us, you fathead!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, ow, ow!"

"And now for the bread-and-water!" groaned Herries.

Monty Lowther crawled back into bed, and the unhappy juniors waited for the dinner prescribed by the doctor. And while they waited they told Monty Lowther what they thought of him.

CHAPTER 3. Holding Out!

EIGHT dolorous-looking juniors sat up in bed to partake of a frugal and decidedly unappetising meal.

Tom Merry & Co. had spent the afternoon out of doors, and they had a

really first-class hunger, as Blake called it, all ready for dinner. They had been anticipating the generous feed at the hospitable table of Lord Eastwood. Instead of which, they sat up in bed to eat a little dry bread and to drink weak milk-and-water.

When that meal was finished they felt almost as hungry as when they had started. The stately butler of Eastwood House, the frigid Chillingham, presided at the meal, under the instructions of the medical gentleman, who had impressed him to be very careful indeed that no other nourishment was offered to the invalids. It was in vain that Arthur Augustus begged of Chillingham, almost with tears in his eyes, to send up something a little more substantial. Mr. Chillingham shook his solemn head.

"Doctor's orders, Master Arthur!" he replied.

"But the doctor is an ass, Chillingham!" remonstrated Arthur Augustus.

"His lordship has instructed me to see that the doctor's orders are carried out, Master Arthur," said Chillingham inflexibly.

And the immovable butler saw the plates carried away, and departed, leaving Tom Merry & Co. in the deepest of despondency.

"Well, this takes the cake!" said Blake miserably. "We can't own up now and let that medical beast have the grin of us!"

"Imposs, deah boy!"

"I shan't be able to sleep if I don't have something to eat!" said Herries dismally.

"Must stick it out till to-morrow morning," said Manners, "then we can all suddenly recover. I hate letting that medical villain do us in the eye like this, though."

"He's jolly well not going to do me in the eye!" growled Monty Lowther ferociously. "We've set out to prolong our holiday, if only for a single day, and we're going to do it! It's up to us to see it through!"

"But we can't live without food!" howled Herries.

"I don't care! I'm not going to give in! Wally can help us," said Lowther. "The young boulder will be looking in on us soon. We've got lots of tin. We'll get Wally to cycle down to Easthorpe and get some tuck. He can smuggle it to us, and we can hold out. The doctor beast will be surprised to find us still ill in the morning."

"Bai Jove! That's a wippin' ideah!" The juniors brightened up considerably. They waited eagerly for the expected visit from the scamp of the Third. About an hour later Wally's grinning face looked into Tom Merry's room. The fag was very much tickled by the predicament of the juniors.

"Well, how are you getting on?" he inquired. "What are the invalids doing out of bed? Aren't you afraid of a relapse?"

"Oh, go and eat 'coke!" growled Herries.

"Come in, Wally!" said Monty Lowther cordially. "Shut the door. Look here, we're going to trust you."

"That sounds like the beginning of a confidence trick!" said D'Arcy minor doubtfully. "What's the little game?"

"That beastly sawbones is japing us! He thinks we're not really ill, and he's put us on bread-and-water till we recover!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We want you to take a quid, and go down to Easthorpe and get us some grub," said Lowther. "Now, be a good pal and oblige us."

Wally whistled.



With great activity the juniors bore chairs and tables out of other studies and added them to the pile, which soon reached the ceiling. "Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "This will wathah surprise Figgins & Co. when they see it!"

"You can sneak a bundle in here, you know," said Tom Merry.

"Can't be did!" said Wally. "The pater is up to that. Old Chilly is keeping an eye on these rooms. If I came in with a bundle, I should be spotted. As it is, I'm only allowed to stay here five minutes now, as invalids mustn't be disturbed."

"It's no go!" growled Herries. "That ass Lowther ought to be boiled in oil! I—"

"Shut up!" said Lowther. "Take the quid, Wally. We'll let down a cord from the window and pull up the bundle. All you've got to do is to get it here, and tie it on the end of the string."

"Bai Jove! That's all wight!"

"Well, I could do that," said Wally. "But where do I come in? If there's going to be a feed, Frayne and I are going to be on the scene!"

"You can't come here and feed, you young ass! They'd smell a rat!"

"That's all serene; we'll have the feed in our own room," said Wally. "Joe and I are both stony, and we don't get our new term's tip till to-morrow morning. Make it another half-quid, and I'm your man!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Isn't the giddy labourer worthy of his hire?" demanded Wally indignantly. "It's jolly decent of me, I consider, to look after you at all."

Arthur Augustus silently passed a ten-shilling note over to his cheerful minor.

"Good enough!" said Wally. "I think you're a set of silly asses, but I'll try to help you out. When you hear a jackal howl under the window, the bundle will be there. I suppose you

remember the signal of the Jackal Patrol, of St. Jim's—my patrol?"

"Better make it some other signal," said Lowther. "That will be noticed. Jackals don't howl round an English house, as a rule."

"Make it the curlew call," said Tom Merry.

Wally sniffed.

"Jackal or nothing!" he replied. "I'm a jackal, and I'm not going to give the signal of another patrol!"

"Look here, Wally—"

"Weally, you young ass—"

"Oh, let the young duffer howl like a jackal, or like a giddy hyena, if he likes!" exclaimed Blake. "Anything so long as we get some grub! I'm famished!"

"Well, I'm off!" said Wally. "Cheer up! I'll be back with some grub in an hour, and then you'll hear the giddy jackal!"

"Buck up!"

D'Arcy minor departed, leaving the juniors with their spirits considerably raised. In their present state of famine an hour was a long time to wait; but it was worth that to defeat the humorous medical gentleman who had cornered them.

Lowther prepared the cord for lowering from the window, and when the hour had elapsed the light was put out in Tom Merry's room. At the dark windows the juniors clustered, waiting eagerly for the signal from Wally in the darkness of the garden below.

"Hark!" muttered Tom Merry, after a long silence.

A weird howl rang out in the darkness.

Tom Merry answered it with the curlew call, the signal of his Scout. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,537.

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patrol at St. Jim's. Monty Lowther lowered the cord.

In a couple of minutes the howl was repeated, as a signal to haul up, and Monty Lowther drew up the cord.

A large bundle came rustling through the ivy.

Three or four hands grasped it and dragged it into the room. The window was shut and the blind pulled down, and then the light was turned on again. The hungry juniors eagerly opened the bundle. Their eyes danced as they saw sandwiches and pies and tins of corned beef and cakes and tarts.

"Good old Wally!" chuckled Blake. "This is where we do the doctor Johnny in the eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" muttered Lowther. "Somebody's coming!"

He whisked the bundle under his bed only just in time. Lord Eastwood came in. The crowd of juniors in pyjamas looked a little flustered. Lord Eastwood gazed at them with a humorous eye.

"Come, come!" he exclaimed. "You should not be out of your bed in your dangerous state of health! This will never do!"

"Weally, patah—"

"I have looked in to see how you are," said Lord Eastwood genially.

"Have not the symptoms vanished yet?"

Monty Lowther moaned artistically, and the other juniors followed suit. There was a chorus of moaning. Lord Eastwood smiled.

"If you had recovered sufficiently, I was going to ask you to come down to supper," he said. "If you felt well enough to return to school to-morrow, I am assured by Dr. Sharpe that it will do you no harm to have supper."

Had that offer come an hour earlier the juniors would probably have jumped at it. But, strong in the possession of supplies, they shook their heads and groaned.

"Thank you very much, sir!" said Monty Lowther feebly, "but I don't feel up to coming down to supper."

"Couldn't think of it!" groaned Manners.

"I don't want any supper, thank you!" mumbled Herries.

Lord Eastwood looked surprised.

"Oh, really!" he said. "Are you quite sure you are not sufficiently recovered to go to school to-morrow?"

"Quite sure, sir!"

"Ahem! Very well; perhaps you will feel quite differently at breakfast-time to-morrow morning," said his lordship significantly. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And Lord Eastwood departed. The juniors exchanged a grin.

"The noble pater is beginning to have his doubts!" grinned Lowther. "My hat! We'll get a whole week away from school if we work it well!"

"I wathah feel, Lowthah, that we are not quite justified in pullin' the patah's leg in this way," said Arthur Augustus.

"Right-ho! Don't have any of the grub, then," said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, that is wubbish!" said Arthur Augustus.

And, the coast now being clear, the bundle was dragged from under the bed, and the invalids feasted at a rate that would have turned them into real invalids if they had not had the strongest and soundest constitutions.

When the feast was over there remained sufficient food for another feed in the morning, and the juniors, as they went to bed, chuckled at the anticipated

surprise of Dr. Sharpe when he found in the morning that they were still holding out.

CHAPTER 4.

A Sudden Recovery!

"WELL, and how do you feel this morning?"

Dr. Sharpe asked the question genially as he stood by Tom Merry's bed.

Tom moaned.

"Thank you, sir, just about the same," he replied, in a feeble voice.

"Not recovered, eh?"

"Just the same as yesterday, sir."

"And you others—you feel just the same?"

"Just the same, sir!"

"If you had felt well enough to return to school to-day, I was going to order you a breakfast of eggs and bacon and kidneys and buttered toast," said the medical gentleman.

"Thank you very much, sir, but we don't want it!"

"Eh?"

"Don't mention eggs and bacon to me!" murmured Lowther. "The craving for food has entirely gone, doctor. Perhaps a little weak milk-and-water—nothing else, thank you!"

"Water without the milk for me," said Manners. "Milk is rather too—too vigorous in my weak state."

The doctor looked utterly puzzled. Convinced that the juniors were "spoofing," and were as well as he was himself, he had fully expected them to be reduced to reason by the morning. At all events, they ought to have been clamouring for food. He was extremely puzzled, and doubted for a moment his diagnosis of the case.

"Well, I must say you are holding out well," he remarked. "Perhaps you will have recovered by lunch. Have you taken your medicine?"

"N-no!"

"Then you must take it now, in my presence," said the doctor firmly. "I will measure it out for you and administer it."

"Groogh!"

Unheeding the disgusted expressions of the juniors, the doctor measured out the medicine in generous doses, and administered it. There was no help for it; the medicine had to be taken under the doctor's eye. The juniors gulped it down with very dry faces.

The taste was horrible, and they could not help suspecting that Dr. Sharpe had made it as nasty as possible as a part of their punishment.

They could not grin, but they bore it. And then the medical gentleman, still looking a little puzzled, took his leave. Tom Merry & Co. smiled in rather a sickly manner at one another when he was gone.

"Groogh!" murmured Blake. "I shall taste that beastly stuff for hours! I wonder what the beast put in it?"

"Bai Jove, it was howwid!"

"Never mind; we're keeping it up," said Tom Merry heroically. "It's up to us not to give in, for the honour of the School House."

"But I say, are we going to stay in bed all the morning?" asked Herries. "I'd rather be at St. Jim's than slacking in bed."

"We can get out when we're convalescent, of course; but we can't get convalescent all of a sudden. It's rather rotten to stay indoors on a morning like this, I know; but we've got to play the game. We can have a pillow-fight, anyway!"

SAFE WARNING!



Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Coutts, 143, James Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A pillow-fight was not exactly in keeping with their character of invalids, but the juniors felt that they had to do something. A wild and whirling combat was in progress when Wally and Joe Frayne came in to say good-bye. The two fags were starting for school.

"Hallo! You look like invalids, I must say!" Wally remarked. "The pater would believe you were ill if he looked in now—I don't think! Well, I'm off! Good-bye, you slackers!"

"If you refer to me as a slackah, Wally—"

"Well, what are you?" demanded Wally derisively. "Blessed slackers, sneaking out of work! That's what you are—slackers!"

The juniors looked grimly at Wally. In their keen desire to prolong their holidays it had not occurred to them that their conduct might be looked upon in that light. Now they came to think of it, it was really very much like slacking, and Tom Merry & Co. had always prided themselves upon being nothing at all like slackers.

"You cheeky fag!" growled Lowther. "Clear off!"

"Shall I tell the fellows at St. Jim's you're ill, or that you're slacking?" asked Wally, with a grin.

"Rats! Get out!"

Monty Lowther made a threatening motion with the pillow, and the scamp of the Third dodged out of the door, chuckling.

A few minutes later the juniors, from the windows, saw Wally and Frayne starting for the station in the car. Outside, the morning was fresh and sunny, and it seemed to call to the imprisoned juniors to come out into the open. But it was impossible for invalids to go out. Invalids had to remain in their rooms. Pillow-fighting palled after a time, and the juniors began to look very glum.

At lunch-time, the stately Chillingham brought them their lunch of bread and weak milk-and-water. The juniors disposed of it in heavy silence, and they detected a ghost of a grin on Chillingham's stolid face as he retired.

Then the remains of the provisions in the bundle were disposed of, and the pangs of hunger, at least, were assuaged.

But the pangs of boredom were not so easily dealt with.

Their confinement in the rooms was getting on the nerves of the juniors, accustomed as they were to activity. Their tempers began to show signs of the strain.

Arthur Augustus' conscience misgave him more than ever on the point whether it was justified or not to "spoo" Lord Eastwood in that manner. The juniors yawned through the afternoon with terrific yawns. Manners and Lowther played chess till they were tired of it; some of the juniors read till they were weary of the sight of a book. And just before dinner-time the doctor came in.

But the juniors, irritated and exasperated as they were growing, were obstinate now. They knew that the medical gentleman fully expected them to give way by this time, and they were determined that he should not be gratified. At any costs, they were not going to give Dr. Sharpe that satisfaction.

The doctor was evidently puzzled. He described in tempting terms the dinner he would have ordered for them if they had been sufficiently recovered. But the juniors only moaned in chorus in reply.

Dr. Sharpe might have been made a little uneasy by their long abstention from food, had not his keen eye observed an empty sardine tin. But it was a very big clue, and the medical man smiled.

"So you have not recovered yet, Merry?"

Moan!

"Perhaps you will get better now that Master Wally is gone!" suggested Dr. Sharpe humorously. "Sardines are very bad for invalids in your state, and I don't suppose that the sardines were taken without other harmful things at the same time. I dare say there will be quite a change to-morrow morning—now that Wally is gone!"

And the medical man chuckled and departed.

"What silly idiot left that sardine tin in sight?" groaned Blake. "The beast knows all about it now, and he guesses that Wally smuggled the stuff in."

"Bai Jove! The game's up now Wally's gone, just as he says, deah boys. There's nobody else to smuggle in any grub."

"I told you all that it was a rotten idea!" said Herries, with a snort. "I told you so plainly! It was utterly rotten!"

"Simply fatheaded!" agreed Digby.

"Just like Lowther!" added Lumley-Lumley.

All the fellows agreed that it was just like Lowther. And the humorist of the Shell, the author of that brilliant wheeze which had turned out so unfortunately, glared at his chums, and turned out of bed.

"Where are you goin', deah boy?" asked D'Arcy, as Monty Lowther began to dress.

"I'm goin' down to dinner!" growled Lowther.

"But you're ill, you ass!"

"I've recovered!" said Lowther coolly. "It's too late for us to return to St. Jim's to-night, anyway; and we can't get any grub to be ill to-morrow. I've recovered, and I'm frightfully hungry! I'm going down to dinner!"

"I've jolly well recovered, too!" exclaimed Herries.

"Anyway, we've beaten them by a day!" said Tom Merry. "We've had an extra day on the holiday!"

"But what a day!" groaned Blake.

"Yaas, bai Jove! What a howwid day!"

Lord Eastwood smiled when eight THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,537.

upon various parts of his person and pinned him down.

"Yaroooh! Leave off, you young villains. Yow-ow-ow!"

"Are you going to keep quiet?"

"Ow! Yow! Yes."

"That's better," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "It's only another ten minutes to the next station, Knox, and if you're a good boy we'll let you change there."

Knox lay gasping and glaring on the floor of the carriage. There was no help for it. The juniors were too many for him.

Tom Merry & Co. chatted cheerfully as the train rushed on, their feet still firmly planted upon the infuriated prefect.

"Hallo, here's Leckford!" said Tom Merry, as a station came in sight. "The train stops here a couple of minutes. Would you like to change carriages, Knox, or are you quite comfy where you are?"

"Groogh! I'll change, you young demon!"

"Good! Say you're sorry for having been a hooligan, and you can get out! We can't let you go without an apology, can we, Gussy?"

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically. "Knox has acted in a wuffianly mannah, and an apology is due to us."

"You hear the decision of the arbiter of elegance, Knoxy? It's up to you to apologise. There isn't much time. We're slowing down."

"Hang you! I'll—I'll—"

"Are you going to apologise?"

"No!" yelled Knox.

"Right-ho! Then you'll stay where you are!"

"All the way to Wayland!" chuckled Lowther. "You will get a little dusty, Knox. But it will be a valuable lesson in manners."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The train had stopped. Cutts and Gilmore were looking out for Knox; but it was not quite in the prefect's power to join them. He wriggled under the juniors' boots, but the boots were firmly planted.

"Let me go!" shrieked Knox. "The train's stopped."

"And you're stopping, too, Knoxy. Where's that apology?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox simply writhed with rage. But the prospect of remaining as he was for another hour was too much for him. He gave in.

"I—I—I—" he stuttered.

"Are you sorry?"

"Ye-es," stuttered Knox, choking with rage.

"Then you can get out," said Tom Merry calmly. "Open the door, Gussy! Out you go, Knoxy! Now then, all together!"

Knox was ejected from the carriage. He fell on the platform, a torn and dishevelled and dusty object.

Cutts and Gilmore, looking from their window, burst into a yell of laughter. That was all the sympathy Knox received from his chums. He staggered up and shook a furious fist at the grinning juniors; then he hopped along the train, and plunged into Cutts' carriage. The express moved off again, and Tom Merry & Co chuckled.

"Bai Jove, you know, there will be twouble with Knox at St. Jim's about this!" Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Sufficient for the railway journey is the jape thereof," said Monty Lowther. "We've done him in the eye, anyway! This is where we chortle."

And they chortled accordingly.

CHAPTER 6.

The First Jape of the Term!

"WAYLAND!"

Tom Merry & Co. alighted from the train at Wayland Junction. The local train for Rylcombe was waiting, and the juniors crossed the platform and entered it. Knox, Cutts, and Gilmore did the same. Knox had got rid of some of the dust, but he was still looking very torn and ruffled, and the juniors grinned at the sight of him. He scowled furiously at Tom Merry & Co., mentally promising them many things when they were once more at St. Jim's.

At Rylcombe the journey ended. Tom Merry & Co. left the station, giving directions for their baggage to be sent on to the school. Tom looked at his watch as they came out of the station.

"The fellows will be at morning lessons when we get in," he remarked. "Lessons for us, too, this afternoon. Ow!"

"Wotten!"

"I shall be rather glad to see our study again," Manners remarked as

Blake grunted.

"Lot of good us refusing to allow it if the Housemaster allows it, ass! There are bound to be new boys this term, of course. And Levison has always had an eye on our study. The rotter would get it away from us if he could. We were silly asses not to come back on the first day of the term."

"Yaas, wathah! Lowthah is an awful ass!"

"And a howling idiot!" said Herries. "But if anybody's got our study there will be trouble, I can tell 'em that, to start with."

It was a new and disturbing thought to the juniors. Fellows generally kept the same studies, but there was no rule on the subject, and in case of a rush of new boys, it was only too probable that there would be some change. And if the juniors should find their old quarters occupied by strangers, they would certainly be paying very dearly for that extra day of holiday.

With that new idea in their minds they were glad when they reached St. Jim's. Cutts, Gilmore, and Knox were staying behind, not in a hurry to get to school. Tom Merry & Co. walked in at the school gates, and Taggles, the old porter, touched his hat to them and grinned.

"Glad to see you back, young gentlemen," said Taggles. "I 'eard as 'ow you was ill!"

"We had a sudden and complete recovery," said Tom Merry. "Glad to see you, Taggy. We're going to give you a high old time this term."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"How's Towser, Taggles?" asked Herries anxiously. His first thought was for his famous bulldog.

"Which 'e seems a bit orf his feed, Master Herries," said the school porter, "and his temper ain't good. 'E tried to bite Master Levison yesterday."

"I hope he didn't!" exclaimed Herries, in alarm.

"No, no! It's all right. Master Levison got out of reach in time, and 'e ain't 'urt," said Taggles soothingly. "Don't you be affeared of that."

"Rats! I don't care whether Levison was hurt or not," said Herries crossly. "I was thinking of Towser. I remember he was seedy the last time he bit Levison, that's all. Levison doesn't agree with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Herries. "I'll go and have a look at Towser now."

And Herries tramped away towards the kennels with a frowning brow. That extremely unhandsome bulldog was the apple of Herries' eye, and the one drawback to Herries' happy holiday had been the fact that he couldn't have Towser with him. He mentally resolved never to accept another invitation for a vacation unless Towser was included in it.

The Co. walked on to the School House. The school was still at morning lessons, and the quadrangle was deserted. So was the New House, the Form-rooms being attached to the School House, and the other House being simply a boarding-house.

A glimmer of fun came into Tom Merry's eyes as he looked round. At the end of the last term, Figgins & Co. of the New House had wound up with a jape on the School House fellows, which Tom Merry & Co. had promised to avenge in the new term. Now was their opportunity.

"This way!" said Tom, turning towards the New House.

"Wats! There's nobody there now,"

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A MAN OF MUSCLE!



"Sorry, sir! I pumped in a gallon too much!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Lipscombe, 42, Kimberley Road, Brighton.

they walked down the lane towards the school. "There's one thing you forgot, Monty, when you schemed that wonderful scheme of yours."

"And what's that?" snapped Lowther.

"About the study. If a fellow isn't on the scene the first day of the term, his study's liable to be snapped up by somebody else," said Manners thoughtfully. "We've always managed to keep Study No. 10 in the Shell passage, and it would be a bit rotten to find it packed with new boys, or to find Gore or somebody else installed there. It's one of the best in the passage, and a lot of fellows would like it."

"If we find anybody there, we'll jolly soon shift them out!" growled Lowther.

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake. "I never thought of that, either. Why, do you know, it's quite possible that Study No. 6 has been snapped up. It's far and away the best study in the Fourth Form passage. Suppose some rotter has—"

"Bai Jove! Of course, we should refuse to allow anythin' of the sort."

Tom Mewwy. The fellows are all in the Form-rooms," said Arthur Augustus.

"That's why!" said Tom.

"Weally, I don't quite gwasp—"

"With your intellectual powers, Gussy, you can't be expected to. Follow your leader!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Jolly good idea!" said Blake, catching on at once. "We'll let Figgins know that we've come back! Good egg!"

The New House was silent and deserted as the juniors entered it. The boys were all in the class-rooms, and Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster, was with the Fifth, of whom he was Form-master. The late-comers had the House all to themselves. They ascended the stairs to George Figgins' study.

Although it was only the second day of the term, Figgins' study showed that the New House Co. had fully entered into occupation. Figgins' bat lay on the table, and a half-unpacked hamper stood in the corner. There were books and papers and parcels about the study, and a cricket cap lay in the armchair and a pair of muddy boots on the hearth-rug. The juniors grinned as they looked round the room.

"We're going to put Figgins & Co. in their place this term," Tom Merry remarked. "It's high time these New House bounders learned which is Cock House at St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And now's the time to start!"

And the School House juniors started. They emptied the hamper in the middle of the study, and overturned the table, and piled the chairs and the fender and the fireirons upon it.

The study curtains were quite new, and were evidently a new pair brought home by Figgins & Co. to decorate their apartment. They were jerked down and added to the pile on the floor. Then the bookcase was emptied, and the books stacked among the overturned chairs and tables and curtains. Then the juniors sped along the deserted passage, and with great activity bore chairs and tables out of the other studies, and added them to the pile, which soon reached the ceiling.

"Bai Jove, this will wathah surprise Figgins & Co. when they see it!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Well, it ought to," said Blake, with a grin. "The study's getting pretty full, but there's still room for a few more chairs. This is the first jape of the term, and we may as well be thorough about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. chuckled, and departed from the New House, still without meeting a soul. Morning lessons were not over yet. With a feeling that they had deserved well of their country, the Co. turned their steps in the direction of the School House, and made their way to their old quarters.

CHAPTER 7.

Held by the Enemy!

TOM MERRY, Manners, and Lowther went on to the Shell passage, where their study was situated. Blake & Co. stopped in the Fourth Form passage at Study No. 6, the famous apartment of which they had held possession so long that they had come to regard it as their own.

Jack Blake threw open the door and strode in. Arthur Augustus and Digby followed him in. Herries was still busy looking after Towser. Lumley-Lumley had gone to his own study, which he had

shared the previous term with Levison, Mellish, and Blenkinsop of the Fourth.

Blake looked round Study No. 6.

During the vacation the junior studies were thoroughly cleaned out, and polished up almost to the brightness of a new pin, under the careful eyes of Mrs. Mimms, the House dame. But Study No. 6 did not present the spick-and-span brightness that was to be expected at the beginning of the term. It showed signs of occupation. There were the ashes of a dead fire in the grate, and there was a sooty kettle in the fender. There were books on the table and a bag in the corner.

Blake and Digby and D'Arcy exchanged glances.

Their worst fears were suddenly realised.

They had come back a day too late. Study No. 6 had been taken possession of.

"Well, my hat!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove! We're payin' now for Lowthah's wotten wheeze!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I said all along it wasn't weally justifiable to spoof the patah and the Head that way. This is wetwibution, deah boys."

"Some new beast has been put into our study," growled Digby. "It's rotten. We never go more than four to a study, and we're four already."

"It isn't a new beast!" growled Blake. "Look there!"

He pointed to the initials on the bag in the corner. The initials were "E. L."

"E. L.," said Dig. "Ernest Levison, by gum!"

"Levison, bai Jove! That awful cad!"

"E. L. might stand for something else," said Dig hopefully.

Blake grunted.

"There's his name in a book," he said.

There was no possible doubt about it. On the title page of a Latin grammar on the table was written, in Levison's neat, small hand, the name of the cad of the Fourth, "Ernest Levison." Levison, the sneak of the House and the old enemy of Blake & Co., had taken advantage of the delay in their return to instal himself in their old quarters.

"Sickenin'!" groaned Digby.

"Oh, rotten!"

"We'll jolly well shift him out!" growled Blake wrathfully. "It isn't only because he wants the study that he's done this. It's one up against us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Mellish is here, too," said Blake, looking over the books on the table. "He was bound to bring in the other cad. And Hooker, too. Three of them. That means that we're turned out of the study altogether."

"Rotten!"

"We'll appeal to Wailton, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "We can wely on our Housemaster to see justice done."

Blake shook his head dismally.

"Fathead! It must be the Housemaster who's given Levison, Mellish, and Hooker this study. They couldn't collar it on their own."

"I wogard it as wathah wotten of Wailton, anyway!"

"Can't understand old Railton playing us such a trick!" said Blake. "He knows this study belongs to us. No reason to change us out, excepting that it's the best study in the passage, and the other fellows may have said they want a change. But that's all rot!"

"Utth wubbish, of course!"

"And if they've turned us out of here, where are we going?" said Digby.

"Which is our study now?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Why, we shall have to be separated!" exclaimed Digby, aghast. "That's it! They're going to separate us, and distribute us along the passage!"

"Bai Jove!"

It was a horrid thought. The chums of Study No. 6 had always been inseparable ever since they had come together under the roof of the old school. Study No. 6 had always belonged to them, and they had always chummed together. To be separated now was too utterly rotten. It was evidently not to be stood. Yet if Levison, Mellish, and Hooker had taken possession of the study with the Housemaster's sanction, it was pretty certain that it would have to be stood.

And the new occupants could not have taken the study without permission from the Housemaster. How Levison had worked it was unguessable; but Levison was cunning enough for anything. That unlucky extra day of the chums on vacation had given him his opportunity, and Levison had not lost it. The cad of the Fourth Form, whom they had always despised, had scored over them this time with a vengeance.

"We're jolly well not going to stand it!" Blake exclaimed at last hotly. "We'll go and speak to Railton about it as soon as lessons are over. Perhaps he didn't know we were coming back to St. Jim's to-day. Gussy's pater must have written about us, you know, and we may have been expected to stay away longer."

"Oh, that silly ass Lowther—"

"Hallo! They're coming out!" said Digby.

Footsteps and voices below announced that morning lessons were over, and that the fellows were free from the Form-room.

There were steps in the Fourth Form passage, and three juniors came along to Study No. 6, with grinning faces. They were Levison, Mellish, and Hooker. Their expressions showed that they knew already of the return of Blake & Co.

The three juniors came into the study and stared at the grim faces of Blake & Co.

"Hallo! What are you fellows doing in our study?" asked Levison.

"Weally, Levison—"

"Our study!" said Blake savagely.

"Your study last term; ours now!" said Levison, grinning. "I don't mind showing you to your new quarters, if you like!"

"You needn't trouble. We're staying here."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Blake and Herries go into my old study along with Lumley-Lumley and Blenkinsop," said Levison, unheeding; "Digby goes into Study No. 5 along with Kerruish and Reilly; D'Arcy goes into Study No. 4."

"They grew in beauty side by side, and now they're scattered far and wide!" chortled Mellish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Hooker.

Blake brought his fist down on the study table with a resounding bang.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "you know jolly well that this isn't playing the game! You've no right to bag our study because we were—ahem!—delayed!"

"Ill!" chuckled Levison. "We heard you were ill! You had quite a sudden recovery, didn't you, you set of spoofers!"

"If you chawactewise me as a spoofah, Levison—"

"Well, what are you?" demanded Levison. "Do you mean to say that you were really ill, and that you've recovered all of a sudden?"

suddenly recovered juniors came down to dinner. But he asked no questions. The cure had been as sudden as the illness, and his lordship understood both. Tom Merry & Co. did full justice to the dinner, in spite of their recent illness, and the next day they were still in a state of sufficient recovery to start for St. Jim's.

Dr. Sharpe came to see them in the morning, and he expressed his pleasure at their complete recovery in such sarcastic tones that the juniors longed to pile on him and bump him.

CHAPTER 5.

A Moving Job!

"**B**AI JOVE! We're goin' to have company down!"

Arthur Augustus made that remark as the Co. entered the little railway station at Easthorpe.

They were in good time for the train, and their baggage was piled on the platform to wait for the incoming express.

There was another pile near at hand, and three fellows were standing near it, talking—St. Jim's fellows.

They were Cutts and Gilmore of the Fifth and Knox of the Sixth.

The three seniors of St. Jim's had been spending their vacation at a place near Eastwood House, and as they were on the worst of terms with Tom Merry & Co., the two parties had several times come into hostile contact. Cutts & Co., like the juniors, were evidently a day late in returning to school.

"Cutts, by Jupiter!" said Blake.

The seniors gave the group of juniors disdainful glances.

"Hallo, you kids!" called out Knox.

"What are you doing here? You ought to have been back at St. Jim's yesterday!"

"Same to you!" said Tom Merry politely. "What are you doing here, Knox?"

Knox frowned.

"We had leave for an extra day, of course," he said.

"Well, and we took leave—french leave," said Tom Merry. "Jolly glad of it now, as it gives us the pleasure of your company on the way down, Knox!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, don't talk to those fags!" said Cutts, with a curl of the lip.

"Weally, Cutts—"

The three seniors walked loftily away up the platform.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon them indignantly.

"Bai Jove! I feel gweatly inclined to give Cutts a feahful thwashin'!" he remarked.

"Oh, rats! Here comes the express."

The train stopped in the station. The juniors entered an empty first-class carriage. Cutts and Gilmore came out of the buffet, and mounted into the train, but Knox was stopping to finish his drink.

The guard was waving his flag when the Sixth Former came hurriedly out and ran to the train. In his hurry, he jumped into the nearest carriage, which happened to be the one occupied by Tom Merry & Co. There were eight juniors in the carriage, so all the seats were taken. It was not a corridor train, so Knox had to stay in the carriage till the next station, which was a good distance.

The guard slammed the door after him, and the train moved off. It was too late for Knox to change when he discovered that he was in the wrong carriage.

He scowled at the juniors, and they gave him far from welcoming looks. Knox was not desirable as a travelling companion.

"Well, you're in the wrong box!" growled Monty Lowther.

"Make room for me."

"Eh?"

"I want to sit down!" said Knox angrily. "You think I'm going to stand up for twenty miles?"

"Sorry—no room!"

The train was out of the station now, and rushing along at a fair speed through green meadows and woods.

Knox stood by the door, scowling at the juniors. Nobody had the slightest inclination to give his seat up to Knox.

And as Knox hadn't the slightest inclination to stand until the next station was reached, there was trouble brewing.

"Now, I don't want any cheek from you young beggars—" began Knox.

"Just the same with us!" remarked Monty Lowther cheerfully. "We don't want any cheek from you, Knox."

"Wathah not!"

"I want a seat."

"Looks to me as if you will go on wanting," remarked Lowther. "What do you fellows think?"

"Looks like it to me," agreed Manners.

"Yaas, wathah! I must remark that appeavances seem wathah that way. But pewwaps you would like to sit on the floor, Knox? I could use you as a footstool."

Knox clenched his hand. For a lofty Sixth Former to stand while fags of the Fourth and the Shell were sitting down was not to be thought of.

"Now, which of you young rotters is getting up?" he demanded.

"Echo answers which?" said Lowther sweetly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, shut up, and make room," said Knox. "Five of you kids can sit on one side."

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort, Knox. If you request us civilly, we will ttry to make woom for you; but otherwise, I shall wegard you with contempt."

"Hear, hear!"

It was not Knox's way to request anything civilly. That was not at all his way of dealing with juniors. At St. Jim's he was a prefect, with great authority over the juniors.

Outside St. Jim's he was simply a school-boy, like the rest, though a very big one. And outside the school the juniors had no intention whatever of recognising his authority.

"I order you to give me a seat!" he said fiercely. "If you refuse to obey a prefect—"

"No prefects here," said Tom Merry. "Wait till you get back to school before you put on airs, Knoxy. Besides, you're not really the genuine article. The Head stopped you being a prefect last term because you were a naughty boy. If he had taken my advice, Knox, he would never have made you a prefect again."

MODEL CRAFT.

I guess all you fellows are interested in really super model Speed Boats. If so, turn to page 17 and there you will find details of the Hornby Speed Boat Folder, printed in colour and giving all details of the Hornby fleet of Speed Boats and Racers. They are all there—from the out-and-out racers to the smart limousines. What a thrill to be the champion of the pond this year!

Knox ground his teeth.

"Will you give me a seat?" he roared.

"Wathah not!"

"Rats!"

"Go and eat coke!"

There was no doubt about the intentions of the juniors. Knox wasted no more time on words; he collared the junior nearest to him, who happened to be Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and yanked him out of the seat by the shoulders.

There was a roar from the swell of St. Jim's.

"Let go, you wottah! You are wumplin' my jacket! Hands off!"

"Hands off, Knox!"

Knox buried D'Arcy across the carriage, and he collapsed upon the knees of Tom Merry. Then Knox sat down, scowling, in the corner seat.

But he did not occupy his seat in peace. The juniors were all on their feet now, and they looked warlike.

Arthur Augustus smoothed out his crumpled jacket and breathed fury. He put his eyeglass carefully into his pocket and pushed back his cuffs.

"Give me my seat, you wottah!" he shouted.

"Hold your tongue!" growled Knox.

"If you give me any of your cheek I'll give you a caning first thing at St. Jim's."

"We're not at St. Jim's yet," said Tom Merry. "Knox, old man, you're going to get out of that seat. Now, are you moving?"

"No!" roared Knox.

"Then there is going to be a moving job," said Tom Merry, setting his teeth.

"All hands on deck!"

"All hands on Knox, you mean!"

chuckled Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors piled on Knox as one man, or, rather, one boy. Strong hands grasped him on all sides. Knox hit out savagely, and there was a roar from Herries as he rolled on the floor of the carriage, and another roar from Lowther as he rolled on Herries. But the juniors were in deadly earnest.

Knox was wrenched out of his seat, and he struggled furiously in the midst of the clinging juniors. He trampled to and fro in the narrow limits of the carriage, with the juniors hanging on to him. Lowther and Herries grasped his legs and brought him down with a bump, and the panting juniors sprawled over him. Knox lay in the bottom of the carriage, with eight breathless juniors piling on him and keeping him down.

"Ow!" gasped Knox. "Gerroff! I'll smash you! I'll—I'll—gerooooogh!"

"Bai Jove! Keep the wottah down!"

"Pile on him!"

"Stand on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox, dishevelled and dusty, struggled furiously on the floor of the carriage. The eight juniors stood on him, and their shoes were heavy—with the weight of the sturdy juniors above them. Knox struggled in vain. Herries' big shoes were on his chest, D'Arcy and Lowther stood on his arms, and the other fellows on his legs.

Knox was as secure as if he had been held in a vice.

"Sit down!" said Tom Merry calmly. "Knox will come in handy as a footstool. We'll keep him like that to the next station."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll smash you!" panted Knox; and he made a frantic effort to rise. But eight pairs of shoes jammed

"Ahem!"
"And this is our study now, anyway," said Mellish insolently, "and we'll trouble you fellows to get out of it. We're rather particular about the fellows we ask into our study."

"You uttah wottah—"
"Come on!" said Blake savagely. "We'll go direct to the Housemaster and ask him to let us have our old study. Railton is a brick, and I know he won't refuse."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Levison & Co. in chorus.

Blake stared at them, a little uneasy. The laughter of the interlopers made him feel that there was something more to come.

"Well, where does the cackle come in?" snorted Blake. "I'm jolly certain

"He, he, he!" cackled Mellish and Hooker together.

"Bai Jove, we're done in the eye, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus dismally.

There was no doubt about it. Mr. Linton, master of the Shell, was quite a different kind of man from the hearty and genial Mr. Railton. He was a just man; but he was cold and severe, and the very last man to whom the juniors would have gone to ask for a favour.

His sense of justice might have made him restore them to their study if he had looked at the matter as they did. But the chances were that he wouldn't. As No. 6 was the best study in the passage, Mr. Linton was more likely to think justice would be done by letting someone else have a turn in it.

"Of course!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't quite see how you're going to help it," said Levison, grinning.

"I'll explain, then," said Blake, breathing hard. "You've sneaked into our study and collared it. We're not going to let you keep it. This is our study, and you cads are going out of it. I give you one minute to go and take your belongings!"

"And what if we don't?" sneered Levison.

"Then you'll be put out!"

"Rats!"

Blake pushed back his cuffs. He was so exasperated that he was ready at that moment to fight not only Levison & Co. but all St. Jim's, if necessary.

"Are you going?" he shouted.



Grrrrrrh! It was a loud and angry growl. Levison dropped the tongs and jumped back in alarm, bumping into Mellish. "It's a dog!" he gasped. The table-cover was whisked aside and out from beneath the table leaped Towser, with flaming eyes and open jaws!

that Railton will let us have our study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling duffers—"

"Railton might if he were here," grinned Levison. "Only you see, he isn't here. Railton hasn't come back yet."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Railton's abroad, and won't be back for a week at least," said Levison coolly. "Of course, you fellows don't know any of the news, as you've been slacking in the country instead of coming back to school. But it's a fact, all the same."

Blake & Co. exchanged dismal looks.

"Then—then there isn't a Housemaster here!" exclaimed Digby.

"Yes—Linton."

"Linton of the Shell?"

"Exactly!" said Levison, with a cool nod. "Mr. Linton is acting as Housemaster until Railton comes back. And if you think old Linton likely to do you any favours, you're welcome to go and ask him. Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not only because it was the best study that Blake & Co. wanted it; old associations had a great deal to do with their affection for that famous apartment. But that was a matter that the cold and formal master of the Shell would never have comprehended, or taken the trouble to comprehend.

Levison's look showed how very sure he felt of his ground. He chuckled gleefully.

Blake & Co. stood almost dumbfounded. They knew instinctively that any appeal to Mr. Linton on the subject would be in vain. They had only themselves to depend upon.

"Well, when are you going?" asked Levison, with a sneering grin. "This is our study, you know, and we don't allow all sorts of bounders in it."

Blake looked at his comrades with a gleaming eye.

"We're not going to be turned out of our study, you chaps," he remarked. "That's understood, of course."

"No!"

Mellish and Hooker looked somewhat nervous. Blake was a celebrated fighting man in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and when he was angry he was not to be trifled with. And he was certainly angry now.

But Levison knew what he was about. He had the study by the permission of the Housemaster pro tem, and if the former occupants used violence, they placed themselves in the wrong at once. Blake was, as a matter of fact, playing into the hands of the cad of the Fourth, but he was too angry to think about that. He threw the study door wide open.

"Outside!" he said briefly.

"Rats!"

"Kick them out!" shouted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Huwvah!"

The three juniors rushed to the attack. Levison, seized in Blake's powerful

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grasp, and whirled off his feet, was slung, head-foremost, through the doorway. He landed in the passage with a terrific bump and a wild roar.

Hooker followed him out, helped by Dig's boot. Mellish dodged round the table as Arthur Augustus charged at him, and scuttled out of the doorway. He stumbled over Levison and Hooker, and added himself to the sprawling heap.

"Yow! Ow! Oh! Yah! Oh!"

"Now chuck their rubbish out after them!" roared Blake.

Books, bags, and other articles rained into the passage, descending in a shower upon the unfortunate trio. Then Blake slammed the door. Study No. 6, which had been held by the enemy, was cleared. Blake & Co. remained in possession. But for how long? Even in the moment of victory they could not help asking themselves that question.

CHAPTER 8.

Levison's Triumph!

"**B**AI Jove! We've got wid of those wottahs, anyway!"

"Ye-e-es!" said Blake.

Levison & Co. had limped away down the passage, breathing fury. Their books and other belongings remained scattered where they had fallen. What they were going to do was a question—and a worrying question. Other fellows might have been depended upon to play the game, but not so Levison and his set.

If Levison complained to Mr. Linton, there was little doubt that the master of the Shell would come down heavily. He would probably regard Levison's ejection from the study as a defiance of his own authority—and, indeed, it was something like that, as Jack Blake realised rather late.

There was a tap at the door, and Tom Merry looked in. His expression was surprised.

"Anything wrong, or has it been raining books and things?" he asked.

"Railton's away, and your rotten Form-master's stepped into his shoes," said Blake.

"Yes, Kangaroo's just told me. But what—"

"And he's given our study to Levison, Mellish, and Hooker."

"Too bad!" said Tom Merry sympathetically.

"And we've chucked them out."

"Phew!"

"Well, what else were we to do?" growled Blake. "I suppose we weren't called upon to let those cads have our study?"

Tom Merry looked grave.

"I don't know what Linton will say," he remarked. "Levison's sure to complain. He's that sort."

"If I had a Form-master like that," said Blake bitterly, "I'd boil him! Why don't you bring up your Form-master better, you Shell bounders?"

"Cave!" said Monty Lowther from the passage. "Here comes Linton, and he looks as if he's in a giddy wax!"

"Now for it!" groaned Blake.

Mr. Linton, master of the Shell, and temporary Housemaster of the School House, did indeed look "waxy" as he swept along the Fourth Form passage, with frowning brow and rustling gown. He had thoughtfully brought a cane with him—a piece of thoughtfulness which Jack Blake did not admire in the least.

He strode into the study with a brow



like thunder, and the three dispossessed owners of Study No. 6 followed at his heels. Levison & Co. were looking dusty and rumped; they had evidently gone to Mr. Linton immediately, to let him see how they had been handled by the lately returned juniors.

"Now, what is all this?" asked Mr. Linton angrily. "Blake, Digby, D'Arcy, I am informed by Levison that you have ejected him violently from this study."

"Our study, sir," murmured Blake.

"It is not your study now, Blake. Did not Levison tell you that he had been assigned to this study for this term?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Then how can you say that it is your study?"

"It has always been our study, sir. It's only fair that we should keep it," ventured Digby.

"That is not my opinion, Digby!" snapped Mr. Linton. "If you had been here—as you should have been—when the term opened, you would probably have taken possession of your old room as a matter of course. As it was, Levison represented to me, very reasonably, that it is the most spacious and best-lighted study in the passage, and that he would like to have it. There is no reason whatever why you should have it again this term. As a matter of fact, I am not ignorant that you four have always been more or less in mischief, and my opinion is that it will be a good thing for the House for you to be separated."

"Oh!" murmured the juniors.

Mr. Railton would not have taken that view; but it was just like Mr. Linton.

"Therefore, I have assigned the study to Levison," said Mr. Linton. "If Mr. Railton chooses to alter my arrangements on his return, I shall have nothing to say. For the present, you will respect the arrangements. Levison has told you that I gave him the study, and you have directly defied my authority by turning him out. I shall cane you. In the first place, pick up those articles you have thrown out and restore them."

Blake & Co. ground their teeth. But there was nothing to do but to obey.

They could not disobey the Form-master.

Levison & Co.'s property was collected up from the passage and brought back into the study. Levison, Mellish, and Hooker looked on, grinning. They were getting their own back now with a vengeance.

Under Mr. Linton's gleaming eye the juniors finished the restoration of the belongings of Levison & Co. They were almost choking with rage, and they spoke no words. But if looks could have slain, Mr. Linton's career as a just and severe Form-master would probably have come to a sudden termination then.

"Now hold out your hand, Blake."

"Swish!"

"You are a most unruly boy, and I shall try to teach you respect for authority!"

"Swish, swish, swish!"

"Now, Digby!"

"Swish, swish, swish, swish!"

"Now, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, Mr. Linton, I wegard this as—"

"Silence!" thundered the Form-master. "Hold out your hand!"

"Swish, swish, swish, swish!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! Ow, ow, ow!"

"And now leave this study!" said Mr. Linton sternly. "And if you make any attempt to enter it again without the permission of the owners, I shall punish you more severely. I shall instruct the House prefects to see that you are not guilty of any ragging here. Take care!"

And Mr. Linton rustled off.

Blake and Digby and D'Arcy clasped their aching hands, and looked daggers at Levison & Co. as they stood defeated and furious in the passage. The three cads of the Fourth were in possession of the study again, and they were grinning with triumph.

"Hard cheese, kids!" said Tom Merry, with great sympathy.

Blake groaned.

"Ow, ow! The beast laid it on jolly hard! Ow, ow!"

"Yaas, wathah! I feel as if I had been flayed, you know," said Arthur Augustus dolefully. "It has thwown me into a fluttah. Lowthah, you uttah ass!"

"Hallo! What have I done?" demanded Lowther, in surprise.

"You dangerous chump!" groaned Digby. "This is what comes of your rotten wheezes! If we'd come back to school yesterday, this wouldn't have happened."

"Serve you right for slacking," grinned Levison.

"Bai Jove! I won't have that wotten cad gwinning at me! Hold my eyeglass, Tom Mewwy, deah boy, while I give Levison a feahful thwashin'!"

"Hold on!" growled Blake. "Let the cad alone! We don't want Linton on our necks again! I've had enough for one day!"

"But, weally—"

"Oh, don't jaw! Let's clear off!"

"Yes; you'd better clear off," said Mellish loftily, "and none of your wedding into this study again, you know. You'll catch it if you do!"

The taunt of the cad of the Fourth passed unnoticed. Blake and his comrades walked down the passage, squeezing their hands. The caning had been very severe, and it was likely to be some time before they got over it. Study No. 6 was left in the hands of the enemy, and Levison & Co. chortled with triumph.

Blake looked disconsolately into Lumley-Lumley's study.

"I'm shoved in here," he announced. Lumley-Lumley nodded agreeably. "Jolly glad to have you instead of Levison," he said. "I've heard it all, and it's a rotten trick. But it's better for me, if that's any comfort."

It wasn't much comfort for the chief of Study No. 6, as a matter of fact. He had often sympathised with Lumley-Lumley for having Levison and Mellish as studymates; but not to the extent of wishing to give up his own study to them. But there was no help for it now. Study No. 6 had been defeated by their old enemies; and it did not seem clear how they were to get their study back.

But, in spite of the licking, and the great authority of Mr. Linton, Blake had by no means given up the idea.

Somewhat or other he was going to regain possession of his study, and the four chums were to be unified again—he was determined upon that. It had to be done somehow, but, unfortunately, how was not yet clear.

Such comfort as was afforded by the School House fellows, Blake had, but that was not much. All the School House agreed that Levison had played a dirty trick, and that he couldn't have done it if old Railton had been there. And the juniors were not slow to tell Levison their opinion of him.

But the cad of the Fourth only shrugged his shoulders. Hard words break no bones, was Ernest Levison's motto. So long as he could not be "chucked" out of Study No. 6, he was quite willing to brave the opinion of the House, and it was unluckily only too certain that he would not be chucked out.

CHAPTER 9.

Towser Finds His Enemy!

HERRIES was very busy. Of what had happened in Study No. 6, and of the change that had been made there, Herries knew nothing as yet. Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy were getting their things into their new quarters. Herries was very busy with Towser.

Towser had welcomed his master back with any amount of doggy affection. But there was no doubt that Towser was off colour. Herries was

afraid that he might have bitten Levison, after all, and that Levison disagreed with him. When anything was wrong with Towser, Towser filled up the whole horizon for Herries.

Herries remained with his ugly, but faithful favourite till close on dinner-time. Then he finally decided to take the bulldog to Study No. 6. True, there was a rule about pets not being kept in the House—especially dogs. But at the beginning of the term it was possible that it might escape notice, as the school had not yet shaken down.

Herries resolved to risk it. He wanted to have Towser under his eye. As for the objections of his studymates, Herries brushed that consideration aside as of no account whatever. How any reasonable human being could possibly object to a dog like old Towser passed Herries' comprehension. And when Towser was seedy, it was no time to think of silly objections. That was how Herries looked at it. Towser was going to be taken care of under his master's eye—that was settled.

The dinner-bell began to ring, but Herries did not heed it. In fact, he was glad that the fellows would be gone in to dinner, as it gave him a chance of getting Towser up to the study unnoticed. He led Towser away to the School House, and whisked him into Study No. 6.

Nobody was there—both the former and the present owners of the study were at dinner. Herries left Towser in the study, while he fetched an old box from the box-room, and in that box he made a bed up for Towser. Towser allowed himself to be put to bed, and Herries slid the box under the table.

There was a large table-cover over the table, which reached nearly to the floor. It was a new one, as Herries noted, but it did not occur to him that it belonged to anyone but one of his chums. All he thought about it was that it came in very handy for concealing Towser from sight. For it was very necessary to keep the bulldog out of sight. If Towser's presence in the House became known to the prefects, or the masters, it meant prompt ejection for Towser, and lines for his master.

Having disposed Towser quite comfortably in the box under the table, Herries left the study, carefully closing the door behind him. Towser could do

with a very great deal of sleep. Unless, he, was disturbed there would be no trouble.

Towser had a very special objection to Levison of the Fourth, who had sometimes amused himself by tormenting the bulldog while he was safe on his chain. That kind of amusement appealed to a nature like Levison's. But there was no danger of Levison finding the bulldog there, Herries thought. If Towser had seen him, Towser would have gone for him at once, but it was not likely to happen. As a matter of fact, Herries would have known that it was extremely likely to happen if he had known about the study's change of ownership. But he did not know that yet.

Herries was a quarter of an hour late for dinner, and his Form-master, Mr. Lathom, frowned at him as he took his place at the Fourth Form table. However, he made no remark, as Herries had only returned to school that day. But as dinner could not be continued to suit the convenience of a late-comer, Herries had a very short meal, and when dinner was over he repaired to the school shop to make up for it.

Meanwhile, Levison & Co. went up to their study.

They were decidedly pleased with their new quarters, which were a great improvement upon their old study. And it was a pleasure to them to take the place of Blake & Co. The three young rascals grinned gleefully as they came into the study, and Levison produced a packet of cigarettes and handed them round, that being one of the little indulgences of Levison and his set.

"Thanks!" said Mellish, as he lighted his cigarette. "Well, we're here, anyway! Blessed if I really thought you'd be able to bring it off, Levison, when you suggested the idea yesterday."

Levison shrugged his shoulders. "Easy enough to work round old Linton," he said. "It wouldn't have done if Railton had been here. He'd have given me one look and said 'No!' as sharp as a knife. But Linton doesn't like those rotters."

"Bit of luck for us!" grinned Hooker. "The fellows seem down on us, though, for collaring the study."

"They'll get used to it," said Levison carelessly. "Why should Blake bag the best study and keep it?"

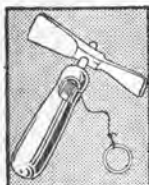
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"Echo answers why?" chuckled Mellish. "But what about when Railton comes back?"

"Well, I don't think he'll have the cheek to shift us. It would be up against Linton if he did, and the masters are always careful not to let one another down before the fellows," said Levison shrewdly. "I've thought about that."

"Blessed if you don't think of everything," said Mellish admiringly. "Anyway, we've got the study for the present. Not that I care much about the study as about giving those rotters a fall. Hallo!"

"What's up?"

"There's somebody under the table," whispered Mellish cautiously. "I heard somebody move. Some cad spying on us!"

Levison's eyes gleamed. He was sitting on the table, and as he bent his head to listen he heard a slight movement, too. He threw his cigarette into the grate, and made a sign to his companions to do the same. The cigarettes vanished from sight.

Levison & Co. themselves were far from being above such meanness as eavesdropping, and the movement under the table naturally brought the suspicion of an eavesdropper into their minds.

"Not a word!" whispered Levison, below his breath. "I'll make him sorry for spying on us, whoever he is. Go on talking."

Levison slipped from the table. Hooker and Mellish went on talking in loud voices to reassure the supposed eavesdropper. Levison cautiously picked up the tongs from the grate and came back to the table. He bent down with an evil grin on his face, and made a sudden thrust under the table with the tongs. If an eavesdropper had been there he would certainly have been hurt, and Levison fully meant that he should be.

Mellish and Hooker giggled gleefully. But their giggle died away the next moment in a gasp.

The tongs had come into contact with a body under the table, but it was not an eavesdropper. That there might be a dog in the study the cads of the Fourth had not suspected, but they discovered it now.

Grrrrrrgh!

It was a loud and angry growl.

Levison dropped the tongs and jumped back in alarm, bumping into Mellish, who had leapt to his feet.

"It—it's a dog!" gasped Levison.

"Oh, my hat!"

The table-cover was whisked aside, and out from beneath the table leaped Towser, with flaming eyes and open jaws.

Towser was hurt, and he was angry. And Towser recognised his old enemy, who had tormented him when he was chained up and had no chance of retaliating. The chance of retaliation had come. Towser took no notice of Mellish or Hooker, who darted towards the door with yells of terror. He made directly for Levison.

Grrrrrrgh!

"Ow! Help!"

Levison leaped wildly on the table. Mellish and Hooker fled from the study and bolted down the passage. Towser did not follow. Towser had a business-like eye on Levison. He pranced round the table with snapping jaws, striving to get at his enemy, and Levison yelled for help.

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CHAPTER 10.

Dogged!

"HELP!"

Grrrrrrgh!

"Help! Ow! Help, somebody!"

Levison knelt, crouching, on the study table, his eyes wide open with terror and fixed on the bulldog.

Towser whisked round and round the table, making clumsy jumps at Levison; but he could not reach the Fourth Former. His growling was simply horrifying. If he had got at the cad of the Fourth, Levison would certainly have suffered severely, and at every instant he dreaded that the bulldog might reach him. He crouched in the middle of the table, turning round incessantly to keep his eyes on the bulldog.

The mingled voices of Towser and Levison brought a crowd along the passage. Blake was the first to reach the study, and he stared in and burst into a yell of laughter at the sight of Levison crouched on the table, stuttering with fear.

"Hallo!" roared Blake. "What game are you playing, Levison? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Call him off!" shrieked Levison.

"What have you got Herries' bulldog here for?" asked Tom Merry, arriving on the scene. "Herries will be talking to you about that."

"Yaas, wathah! You have no right to bring Hewwies' bulldog into your beastly study, Levison!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I didn't bring him in!" yelled Levison. "He was under the table. You rotters have planted him on me because I won't let you have the study. I'll complain to Mr. Linton! Call him off! Do you hear?"

"He'll only obey Herries," grinned Blake.

The table rocked as Levison cowered back. Towser snapped at the cover and tore a corner from it, and very nearly dragged it off the table, and Levison along with it. There was another shriek of terror from Levison.

"Call him off—call him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd in the passage outside the study doorway was thickening, and the juniors were all roaring with laughter. Nobody felt sympathy for Levison. Nobody but Levison was afraid of Towser. The bulldog was a sleepy and good-natured animal as a rule, and though he had a playful way of nipping at trousers, he would not have bitten anyone—anyone but Levison. But he had a deadly eye for the junior who had tormented him while he was on the chain. The juniors in the passage enjoyed the scene.

"Help!" yelled Levison.

"Will you call him off?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He won't come away for us!" grinned Tom Merry. "Nothing doing, Levison!"

"Drag him away, then!"

"Thanks—he doesn't look as if he'd like to be dragged!"

"Wathah not! I have too much respect for my twousahs to twy any-

thin' of the sort. Besides, this serves you wight, Levison. Towsah would not go for you unless you had ill-treated him. I twust, Levison, that this will teach you the wottenness of cwelty to animals."

"Call him off! Help! He'll have me down in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towser was rending all the table-cover that was within his reach. Most of it lay now in fragments on the floor. And he was snapping savagely round the table, and each moment the terrified junior dreaded that the snapping jaws would reach him. Seldom had Towser been seen in such a state of excitement.

"Help!" roared Levison. "Help—help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody had better find Herries," grinned Blake. "We shall have all the school here soon, if Levison keeps on."

"Anybody know where Hewwies is?"

"I guess I saw him in the tuckshop," said Lumley-Lumley.

"I will go and look for Hewwies, Levison. I recommend you to keep out of Towsah's weach until Hewwies awwies."

Levison did not need that recommendation. He was doing his best. Arthur Augustus departed, smiling.

"Blessed if I knew Levison was such a giddy acrobat before!" said Blake, as the cad of the Fourth whirled round to keep his eyes on the prancing bulldog.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" shrieked Levison.

"Hallo! What's this row here?" Knox of the Sixth came striding angrily



Click! Levison jumped up and stared towards the window appeared the head and shoulders of Monty Lov

along the passage. "More trouble with you young rascals, as usual?"

Knox pushed his way through the juniors and looked into the study. He jumped back at the sight of Towser. Knox did not like bulldogs at close quarters, and Towser was looking very dangerous.

"Blake! You have been told about keeping animals in your study! I shall report this to the Housemaster!" exclaimed Knox, only too glad of a chance to repay the kindly attentions he had received from the juniors in the train.

"It isn't in my study!" grinned Blake.

"What! This is your study?"

"Mr. Linton has handed it over to Levison," said Blake. "If Levison uses his study to give acrobatic performances it isn't my business."

"They've planted this beast here because they can't have the study!" shrieked Levison. "I shall be bitten! Call that dog off, Blake!"

"It isn't my dog!" said Blake stolidly.

Towser made another wild leap and bumped on the table. The table rocked dangerously as Levison crouched wildly back. For a moment it looked as if the junior would roll off on the floor. But he managed to stick to the table, white with terror.

"Keep him away, Knox!" yelled Levison. "You're a prefect—you're responsible! You ought to drive him away! Ow!"

"Knox doesn't like bulldogs," chuckled Digby. "Knox isn't taking any."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox set his teeth. He was certainly afraid of tackling Towser, but he did not like to show the white feather before

a crowd of juniors. He had a cane in his hand, and he screwed up courage and entered the study, and flourished the cane at Towser.

"Shoo! Shoo!" exclaimed Knox. "Get out, you brute! Shoo!"

Towser turned upon the prefect, with all his teeth showing, and a bloodthirsty gleam in his eyes. Knox made one jump back into the passage, pushing the juniors right and left in his hurry to escape. There was a yell of laughter.

"Go for him, Knox!"

"Don't mind his teeth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I— That brute shall be shot!" panted Knox. "He—he shan't be kept in the school at all, Herries!"

Arthur Augustus was returning with Towser's master at last.

"Herries, take your dog away!"

Herries came up, frowning darkly. He glared into the study.

"Who's been disturbing my dog?" he demanded angrily. "I won't have my dog disturbed! What is that cad doing in my study?"

"It's my study!" howled Levison.

"Call that brute off!"

"What?"

"It's Levison's study, Herries," said Blake. "He's sneaked it this term. It's been given to him!"

Herries snorted.

"Well, if it's his study, he can look after himself in it," he said. "I'm not looking after him. Watch him, Towser!"

Grrrrrrgh!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Herries, I order you to call that dog off!" shouted Knox.

"Go and eat coke!" growled Herries.

"Towser wouldn't go for him if he hadn't been a brute. Towser doesn't go for other chaps. It's not my business to look after Levison. If he sneaks my study he can take the consequences."

"If you do not call that dog off at once I will fetch Mr. Linton."

"Fetch your grandmother!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox strode away furiously. Blake caught his incensed chum by the arm.

"Take Towser away, Herries, old man. Railton isn't back, and Linton's Housemaster pro tem. Take him away, quick!"

"Well, he ought to have his bite," said Herries reluctantly. "This is poor old Towser's first chance of getting at Levison. It's a rotten shame to disappoint him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get him away before Linton comes," urged Tom Merry.

"Oh, all right! Towser! Come on, Towsy, old man!"

Towser declined to come on. He was still making wild efforts to get at Levison, and he was deaf to his master's voice. Herries made a dive at him, and gripped him by the collar, and jerked him to the door.

"Take him away!" panted Levison. "I—I'll smash him some time. I'll poison him! I'll—"

"Will you?" roared Herries, turning round on him. "You'll poison my bulldog, you cad? Come here, Towser!"

Herries strode back to the table, caught it with his left hand and tilted it up. Levison shot off it, and landed in a heap on the floor. There was a blood-curdling growl from Towser as he strove to get loose and hurl himself upon his enemy. Levison picked himself up with a terrifying shriek, and backed into the corner of the study. It was all Herries could do to hold the bulldog back from him. Levison was quaking from head to foot.

"Take him away!" he moaned. "Yow! Drag him off! Go away! Help! Ow!"

Towser's snapping jaws were within a foot of the shrieking junior. Levison was almost collapsing with terror. Herries eyed him grimly.

"Now you'll beg Towser's pardon before I take him away!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I won't, you idiot!" screamed Levison.

"I give you one second before I let go his collar."

"Oh! I—I beg your pardon, Towser!" howled Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, Herries!" gasped Blake, almost weeping with laughter. "Linton's coming upstairs."

Herries growled and led his bulldog out of the study. He disappeared with Towser at the opposite end of the passage as Mr. Linton rustled up to the study with Knox at his heels. The master of the Shell looked very angry.

He glanced at the quaking and chalky Levison with contempt.

"Where is that dog? Have you been bitten, Levison?"

"N-no, sir."

"Then what is all this disturbance about?"

"I—I—he was going to bite me, sir!"

"You should not show this unmanly fear of an animal, Levison. It is cowardly. The dog appears to be gone," said Mr. Linton, looking round.

"Herries will take a hundred lines for introducing his dog into the House against the rules. You will tell him so, Blake. Knox, there was no need for you to trouble me in this matter. You should have dealt with it yourself. A prefect should be able to perform his duties, Knox, without troubling a master over a trifling matter."

And Mr. Linton rustled angrily away again, leaving Knox biting his lip with chagrin. The juniors grinned after him as he strode away.

"I—I'll have that beastly dog killed somehow!" panted Levison.

"You should not show this unmanly fear of an animal, Levison," grinned Blake, imitating Mr. Linton's tart voice. "It is cowardly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison slammed the study door.

CHAPTER 11.

Figgins on the Warpath!

"MY hat! Who's been here?" Figgins of the Fourth uttered that exclamation in excited tones.

After morning lessons the New House juniors had gone to their House to dinner as usual, and after dinner Figgins went up to his study; then he made the discovery that somebody had been there before him.

Figgins stared in amazement at the stack of furniture that filled the study from floor to ceiling.

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w. The other fellows all stared round. Framed in the And he was snapping the black sheep gambling at cards!

"My hat!" said Kerr. "What silly ass—"

"Those School House bounders!" growled Fatty Wynn, the third member of the famous Co. of the New House. "While we were at classes, of course."

"But the School House rotters were at classes, too!"

"Not Tom Merry and Blake and the rest. They came back this morning," said Fatty Wynn, "and they've given us an early call."

George Figgins breathed hard through his nose.

And they've started the term with a jape on the New House," grinned Kerr. "It's one up to them, Figgy. My hat! It will take some trouble clearing the study out!"

"Well jolly well give them tit for tat!" growled Figgins. "Like their beastly cheek. japing us first day they get back!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Redfern, as he came along the passage. "Somebody's been taking away my study furniture. Hallo! You fellows turned burglars in your old age?"

"It's a rotten School House jape!" snapped Figgins. "Take your rubbish away! We can't get into the study!"

Redfern grinned.

"They've started well," he remarked. "It was quite a peaceful day yesterday with those bounders away. Now they're beginning."

"And now we're going to begin," said Figgins grimly.

There were wrathful exclamations from all the New House members of the Fourth Form when they discovered their studies denuded of furniture, and the same stacked up in Figgins & Co.'s quarters. For a considerable time the New House juniors were busy with an extensive moving job.

Figgins & Co. frowned darkly as they set their study to rights. The nice new curtains had been somewhat damaged by having chairs and tables and bags and boxes piled on them. A good deal of damage had been done, in fact; and it was time for afternoon classes when Figgins & Co. had finished putting their room in order.

Figgins & Co. gave the School House chums grim looks as they met going into the Form-room for afternoon lessons. Blake & Co. were looking somewhat grim, too. They were thinking about the change of ownership of Study No. 6; but they smiled at the sight of the New House trio.

"Haven't had a chance of speaking to you yet, Figgy," said Blake affably. "Looked in to see you this morning, but you weren't there."

"Yaas, and we quite missed you, Figgy."

"We left you a little reminder of our call," remarked Digby.

And the School House juniors chuckled in chorus.

"We'll give you a little reminder, too, that we're Cock House of St. Jim's, and that we're not going to stand any rot from the School House this term," said Figgins, breathing hard.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was time for lessons then, and there was no opportunity for Figgins & Co. to take vengeance. But in the Form-room Figgins did some hard thinking. While Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was meandering on—as the juniors described it among themselves—Figgins was not thinking of Mr. Lathom or the valuable instruction he was imparting; he was thinking of his bounden duty as leader of the New House juniors to give Study No. 6 the "kybosh."

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Blake looked at him several times and grimed. The mighty brain of the great Figgins was evidently hard at work, and Blake wondered what would be the outcome.

Later in the afternoon, some time before the end of lessons, Figgins missed a book which was imperatively required, and Mr. Lathom told him to go and fetch it. Figgins left the Form-room with an innocent expression on his face, and Blake chuckled softly. Arthur Augustus, who was next to him, gave him an inquiring glance.

"What's the joke, deah boy?" he asked.

"Figgy!" grinned Blake.

"Nothin' funny in forgettin' a book, is there?" asked D'Arcy in surprise.

"Not at all. Only Figgy's book is in Figgy's desk, I fancy. Figgy is pulling Mr. Lathom's leg."

"But why?"

"Because he wants to get out of the Form-room. I rather fancy he's thinking of paying a visit to our study to rag it the same as we did his," murmured Blake joyfully.

"But we haven't a study now. We're sepawated, deah boy."

"Exactly! But we haven't told Figgy yet."

Arthur Augustus started.

"Bai Jove! If he goes to Study No. 6—"

"That's the little game, unless I'm mistaken—and you're Uncle Blake never makes mistakes," said Blake loftily.

The idea of Figgins ragging Levison's study, under the belief that he was ragging Blake & Co., struck Arthur Augustus as so funny that he burst into a sudden cackle, which drew Mr. Lathom's eyes upon him at once. The master of the Fourth blinked at D'Arcy over his spectacles.

"D'Arcy, keep silence in class, please!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir. I mean, yaas, sir. Sowwy, sir!"

"And take fifty lines!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

A good many of the fellows glanced at Arthur Augustus, wondering what was the cause of his peculiar outburst of merriment, Levison among the others. But Levison did not guess.

Ten minutes later George Figgins came back with a cheery smile on his face, and resumed his place in the class. Mr. Lathom eyed him somewhat severely.

"You have been a long time, Figgins!"

"Yes, sir; the book wasn't there. I think it must be here in my desk, after all," said Figgins calmly.

"You will take fifty lines for carelessness, Figgins!"

"Yes, sir," said Figgins meekly.

He didn't mind the fifty lines. In spite of that imposition, he was looking particularly cheerful during the remainder of afternoon lessons. And when the Fourth Form were dismissed, Figgins & Co. came out smiling into the passage. Blake and his chums joined them at once, smiling, too.

"You look awfully chirpy, Figgy," Blake remarked. "Anything specially pleasant in getting fifty lines?"

Figgins laughed.

"Not exactly. But I don't mind—considering." And he grinned at the Co. and the Co. chuckled.

"Cheap—considering!" remarked Kerr.

"Nothing to speak of—considering," chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"Considering—what?" asked Blake innocently.

"Oh, nothing!" said Figgins airily.

"Perhaps you fellows will be surprised when you go to your study. Perhaps you won't. Come on, kids! No time to talk to these School House bounders. We've got to get some practice at the nets."

"Our study!" said Blake calmly. "We haven't a study now, Figgy."

Figgins stopped short.

"What!" he ejaculated. "You haven't a study? What do you mean?"

"They've distributed us along the passage," explained Blake. "The powers that be feel that our shining example ought not to be hid under a bushel. They've put us into three different studies along the passage, in order that the Fourth Form may have the full benefit of us. We're not in Study No. 6 any more."

Figgins' jaw dropped.

"Not in Study No. 6 any more?" he repeated faintly.

"No."

"Wathah not, deah boy," chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Figgins.

"What's the matter?" asked Blake cheerfully.

"N-not in Study No. 6 any more! Then—Oh!"

"Awfully good of you to sympathise with us in this way, Figgy. It's hard cheese on us, being turned out of our study; but we really didn't expect New House chaps to feel it like this on our account. We're awfully grateful, Figgins."

"Awfully gwateful, deah boy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgy looks quite distressed," said Blake. "I must say, Figgy, that this shows that you've got a kind heart as well as a fat head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins crossly, and he strode away, followed by the Co., all three of them looking decidedly dismayed.

Blake looked at his chums with a sweet smile.

"I rather fancy," he remarked. "that there's some sort of a surprise waiting for Levison in his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 12.

Something Like a Rag!

LEVISON & CO. came up to Study No. 6 at tea-time, looking quite cheerful. The possession of that coveted apartment afforded them undying satisfaction. In other studies, which they had shared with other fellows, Levison & Co. had been under considerable restraint. Their favourite amusements, such as smoking cigarettes and playing nap for penny points, and so on, were not easily indulged in in studies shared by other fellows.

Levison and Mellish had both been licked by Lumley-Lumley for smoking in his study. Hooker had been pitched out of his former quarters "on his neck" for the same offence. More than once their "smokes" had been thrown into the fire, their sporting papers had been burnt, and their packs of cards torn up by indignant juniors who did not approve of their little ways. But in a study of their own they had no interference of that kind to fear.

And the fact that they were keeping Blake & Co. out of their quarters gave their pleasure an added zest. So Levison & Co. had plenty of reason for feeling cheerful, to say nothing of the fact that they were in funds at the beginning of the term, and had arranged an extra-special feed for tea that afternoon.

Blake & Co. were on the cricket ground now with Tom Merry and the rest. But cricket did not appeal to the black sheep of the Fourth. They played as much as they had to, cricket practice being compulsory at St. Jim's, and beyond that they let bat and ball severely alone.

Levison threw open the door of Study No. 6 and strode in. The next moment there was a loud yell as the cad of the Fourth went sprawling at full length on the floor.

"Yah! Oh!"

"What on earth—" began Hooker. "Hallo! There's a cord there! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hooker and Mellish stopped just in time. Levison sat up on the carpet and gritted his teeth. He had caught his foot in a cord stretched across the floor a few inches above the carpet and invisible to him as he strode in. He had come down heavily, and he was feeling hurt. And the chuckles of his comrades didn't improve his temper.

"Ow! You silly chumps, what are you cackling at?" he growled. "Did one of you put that cord there? I'll jolly well—"

"No fear!" said Mellish hastily. "Blake, I suppose—"

"Blake hasn't been here!" snarled Levison, as he picked himself up. "He went straight down to cricket after lessons, and so did the others. It was some other rotter."

"Tom Merry, perhaps," suggested Hooker.

"He went down to cricket, too. It was some other rotter—they're all up against us having this study!" growled Levison, rubbing his knees. "Well, we're jolly well going to stick to it, all the same."

"You bet!" said Hooker.

Levison jerked the cord away savagely. Mellish stooped before the fire to light it. The fire had been laid earlier, to be ready for tea. Mellish struck a match and applied it, and there was a sudden fizz.

Fizz, fizz! Bang, bang!

Mellish leaped to his feet as if he had been shot.

"Yaroo! Oh, my hat! What—"

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

"Great Scott! Oh!"

"What the—how the—who the—"

Bang, bang!

Fireworks were banging away merrily in the grate, and a strong smell pervaded the study. The three juniors exchanged looks as the explosions finished. The firewood had been scattered over the grate.

"Oh!" muttered Levison, between his teeth. "Some villain has been here shoving crackers into the grate, and you lighted them, you silly fool!"

"How was I to know?" demanded Mellish, with equal irritation. "How could I tell there were fireworks in the grate, you silly ass?"

"Look here, you fathead—"

"Oh rats!"

"By George, you did look scared, Mellish!" chuckled Hooker. "Never mind, no more harm done. Get the firewood together again, and let's have tea."

But the cheerful looks of the new owners of Study No. 6 had departed. Levison and Mellish were in extremely bad tempers by this time.

Levison jerked open the cupboard door savagely. There was a sudden crash and a roar of wrath from Levison.

A string had been attached to the cupboard door and tied to a tray in the cupboard. On the tray had been piled all the study crockeryware, and a pot of

jam, and a pie, and several other articles. Levison had noticed that the cupboard door was ajar, but he had not noticed the string. The savage jerk he had given to the door had dragged the tray bodily out, and its contents shot to the floor in a shower round him.

Crash, crash! Smash!

"My hat!" gasped Mellish.

The juniors stared at the ruins in dismay.

There lay their feed at their feet. The piedish was broken, and the pie in pieces, the gravy running over the carpet. The jampot was in half a dozen pieces. The crockeryware was in pieces innumerable.

Levison panted with rage.

"Look at that!" he almost stuttered. "Look at it! Oh, I'll make somebody suffer for this! It must have been those rotters, after all! They've sneaked in somehow when we didn't see them and done this!"

"The rotters!" howled Mellish. "There's our feed gone! Oh, the beasts!"

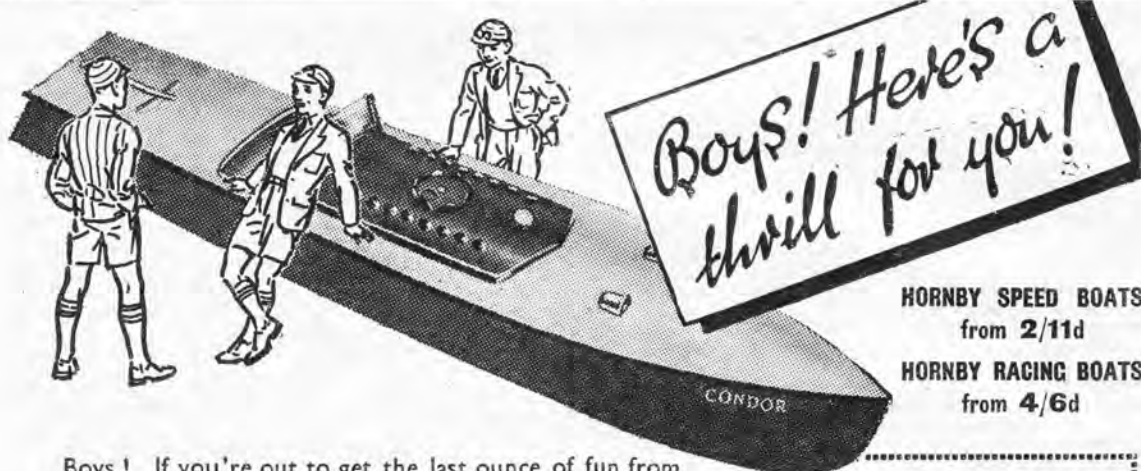
"And look at this!" howled Hooker. "There's ink in the kettle!"

"Great Scott!"

"And—and the armchair's smothered with treacle!" gasped Hooker. "Lucky we didn't sit down in it! Look at it!"

Levison ground his teeth with fury. And further search revealed that still more damage had been done. The bag of tarts in the cupboard had been carefully inked, and were no longer eatable. The cake—a really handsome cake—had been treated with a dose of liquid glue, and could no longer be regarded as a welcome addition to any tea-table. Even the loaf was soaked through with purple marking-ink, and the butter had been mixed with the pickles.

(Continued on next page.)



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Whoever the raider was, he had done his business thoroughly in Study No. 6, and the joyous little feed planned by Levison & Co. was very much off.

The three cads of the Fourth regarded one another with looks of almost speechless fury.

"It must have been Blake!" gasped Levison at last. "Of course it was! He's dodged in here and done this! I—I'm going to Linton about it!"

"Hold on!" muttered Hooker uneasily. "We shan't do ourselves any good by sneaking all the time, Levison. The chaps are down on us already!"

"I don't care!" Levison was too furious for anything but vengeance just then. He rushed into the passage and collided with Knox, who was passing. The prefect gripped him by the ear, and Levison howled.

"Well, where are you running to?" growled Knox. "Did you do that on purpose, you cheeky young sweep?"

"Leggo!" panted Levison. "Look here, Knox—look what they've done to my study! Look at it!"

Knox glanced into the study and whistled.

"Who did this?" he asked. "Blake, of course. Whom do you think?"

The prefect smiled. Mr. Linton had been already extremely irritated by the trouble over Study No. 6, and this renewal of the ragging was certain to have a most exasperating effect upon him. Knox thought he saw his way clear to repaying his experiences in the railway train with interest.

"Very well! It's my duty to report this to the Housemaster," he said. "You had better come with me, Levison!"

And Levison went.

CHAPTER 13.

Knox Does Not Score!

"WELL bowled, Blake!"

The School House juniors were at cricket practice, and Tom Merry's wicket had just gone down to Blake's fast bowling.

Blake grinned serenely as he scattered the Shell fellow's sticks.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!" said Tom Merry good-humouredly. "You're improving, Blake. We'll have you the equal of Fatty Wynn this term, if you keep on like this. See if you can do it again."

"My dear chap, I'll hit your sticks as long as you care to set 'em up!" said Blake kindly.

"Blake! Here, Blake, you're wanted!" Wally of the Third had just arrived on Little Side, breathless. "Blake!"

"Rats!" said Blake. "I'm bowling!"

"Mr. Linton wants you!"

Jack Blake groaned.

"Oh, my hat! Why don't you Shell fellows drown your blessed Form-master? Blessed if he won't turn my hair grey. What does he want, Wally?"

"Looks to me as if he wants a giddy victim!" grinned Wally. "He looked as black as thunder when he told me to fetch you in. Herries, Dig, and Gussy are to go, too."

"I weally do not see why Mr. Linton should wequiah my pwesence," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This is weally a bore!"

"If it's some more about Towser, I shall jolly well tell him I'm fed-up!" growled Herries.

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"Well, you'd better go," said Tom Merry. "Linton doesn't like being kept waiting."

"Oh, come on!" said Blake resignedly. "Luckily we haven't done anything this time. Nothing like having a clean conscience when you're going to see a Form-master—specially Linton! Go and tell him to keep his wool on, Wally. We're coming!"

Wally chuckled. He was not likely to carry that message to the irate master of the Shell.

The four chums of the Fourth walked away towards the School House wondering what was wanted, and feeling a little uneasy. They had remarkably clear consciences, as it happened. They had not been back at St. Jim's long enough to have got into mischief yet. But Mr. Linton was not a pleasant man to deal with, even for juniors with unusually clear consciences.

The Shell master looked very angry when they entered his study. Knox was there, and so was Levison.

Blake thought he understood now.

"I have sent for you, Blake," said Mr. Linton harshly, "as Knox has made a report to me—"

"It wasn't our fault, sir."

"What? You admit that it was your action, then?"

"Well, I helped, sir," said Blake.

"But we were all in it."

"Yaas, wathah, sir," said D'Arcy, jumping to the same conclusion as Blake. "But I should like to point out, sir, that we were entirely justified in the circumstances."

"What? You dare to say that you were justified in committing this outrage—this rag, as I suppose you would call it?"

"Yes, sir!" said Blake firmly. "It wasn't our fault."

"Not your fault? I do not understand you. I suppose you acted of your own accord in what you have done?"

"Well, yes, sir. But I don't think Knox can have reported all the circumstances. He probably hasn't mentioned that it was all his fault."

"My fault?" howled Knox, in astonishment.

"You know jolly well that it was your fault, Knox!" exclaimed Blake hotly.

"You started it!"

"I—I hadn't anything to do with it! I—I—"

"You had! You started it! You caused it all!"

"Yaas, wathah! We should not have weported Knox's conduct to you, sir; but as Knox has chosen to weport it, it is only fair to inform you that Knox started all the twouble."

Mr. Linton looked amazed. He gazed at Knox, and then at the juniors. Knox was looking angry and amazed, quite taken aback by the unexpected accusation; but the juniors were angry, too, and in earnest.

"I cannot understand this!" snapped Mr. Linton. "Do you seriously state, Blake, that Knox, a prefect of the Sixth Form, took part in this rag?"

"Yes, sir."

"It's a lie!" yelled Knox.

"Moderate your language, Knox, please!" said the master of the Shell sharply. "Now, Blake, we must have this cleared up. Knox, you say, took part in it?"

"Yes, sir; he started it."

"Have you any witnesses to prove this extraordinary assertion?" exclaimed the Form-master. "Who else was present?"

"Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell, sir. They'll all bear me out that Knox began it," said Blake.

"This is—this is amazing! I cannot believe that a prefect would take part in such a thing, and then report the matter to me. Be careful of what you say, Blake."

"I'm telling the truth, sir," said Blake sturdily. "Knox shoved himself in among us, and made Gussy give him his seat. Then we wouldn't stand it."

"Wha-a-at?"

"We asked him to give up his seat, and he wouldn't. And he hit out when we moved him. Then we made a foot-rest of him," said Blake, "and it served him right!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard it as actin' quite within our wights, sir."

Mr. Linton stared at the juniors, looking as if his head were turning round.

"To—to what are you referring?" he gasped.

"What Knox has reported to you, sir, about the rag in the train," said Blake wonderingly.

"Oh, you—ahem! That is a matter I am not acquainted with, and Knox has made no report on the subject," said Mr. Linton. "I have sent for you in reference to an outrage in Levison's study—the study that was formerly yours."

"My hat!" murmured Blake. "Oh, I—I see! I thought Knox had reported about—"

"Bai Jove! I undahstand—"

"It is in reference to a rag, as you would term it, in Study No. 6 that I have sent for you," said Mr. Linton. "The other matter you mention has nothing to do with the case, and we need not go into it. Knox has reported you for ragging Levison's study. I have looked into the study. What have you to say?"

"Oh, that ass, Figgy!" murmured Blake, under his breath, understanding at last why he had been sent for.

"What did you say, Blake?"

"N-nothing, sir. Has Study No. 6 been ragged, sir?" said Blake innocently. "If it has, I don't see why Knox should report us. We haven't had anything to do with it!"

"You deny, then, having ragged Levison's study?"

"Certainly, sir," said Blake at once. "We haven't been in the study since dinner, sir—since Herries' bulldog was there, anyway. You told us we were not to go in, sir," added Blake with great meekness.

Mr. Linton looked at the juniors searchingly.

"Very well! You have reported these juniors as the authors of the outrage, Knox. Upon what grounds, please?"

Knox bit his lip. He, as well as Levison, had taken it for granted that the former owners of the study had ragged Levison's property there. He began to realise that he had been a little too hasty.

Mr. Linton was not a sweet-tempered man, but he was just. As the Shell fellows sometimes said of their Form-master, he was a beast, but a just beast. And he would require some proof before handing out punishment.

"I accepted Levison's statement on that point, sir," said Knox. "Levison informed me that Blake had ragged his study, and I—"

"You might have made some inquiries first, Knox," said the Form-master unpleasantly. "Now, Levison, if you accuse Blake of damaging your property, kindly tell me why. Did you see him doing it?"

"I wasn't there, of course, sir."

"Did anyone else see him doing it?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Then upon what do you base your complaints against Blake?"

Levison's eyes gleamed greenishly, and he gritted his teeth.

"I know he did it, sir," he blurted out. "He won't let me keep the study in peace. He means to make me give it up, though you gave it to me, sir."

"You deny having been in the study, Blake?"

"Certainly, sir! And I can prove it if necessary," said Blake cheerfully.

"We all went down to the cricket immediately we came out of the Form-room. Tom Merry and a crowd of chaps went with us. They can all tell you so. We haven't been near Study No. 6."

"Wathah not, sir!"

"And if you like, sir, we'll call a dozen chaps to prove that we haven't been near the place!" chimed in Digby.

"Well, Levison, what have you to say now?" said Mr. Linton icily.

"If it wasn't them, it was some of their friends!" said Levison sullenly. "It was done to drive me out of the study."

"Can you name anyone as the author of the rag?"

"I—I suppose not, sir."

"When you can do so, Levison, you may bring your complaint to me again!" said Mr. Linton sharply. "Until then, let me hear no more of the matter. You may go. Knox, it appears to me that you are far too willing to bring accusations against these juniors, and you compel me to suspect, Knox, that there is some personal dislike at the root of the matter. Kindly be a little more careful next time. You may go!"

Knox left the study white with rage. His humiliation in the presence of the juniors was bitter. Mr. Linton made a gesture of dismissal to Blake & Co., and the four chums left the study smiling. They were feeling cheerful.

"Not such a bad old beast, after all," Blake remarked as they returned to the cricket ground. "Looks to me as if Knox has put his hoof into it this time! He won't care to report us in a hurry next time—so next time we'll give him something to report, my infants."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox followed Levison to his study. He took a cane with him. The caustic tongue of Mr. Linton had infuriated Knox, and as he could not reply to the Form-master in kind, he had to look for another victim. Levison had caused him to put his foot in it, and he intended to have a reckoning with Levison. He strode into Study No. 6 swishing the cane.

Levison looked at him nervously and dodged round the table.

"I say, Knox," he stammered, "I'm sorry it turned out like that! Of course, I know very well it was Blake—"

"Hold out your hand," hissed Knox.

"I—I say, what for?" gasped Levison in dismay.

"For telling me lies, and getting me to repeat them to that old brute," said Knox, forgetting the respect due to a Form-master in his rage. "I'll teach you not to make a fool of me! Come here!"

"But—but, I say—"

Knox ran round the table and collared Levison. Then the cane rose and fell, and Levison's yells rang through the study. He had received a dozen stinging cuts by the time he wrenched himself away and fled. Then Knox cursed Hooker and Mellish—not because they had done anything, but because he had an irresistible desire to cane somebody. So he walked off feeling somewhat solaced.

But in Study No. 6 he left three very discomfited juniors. Blake's study was still held by the enemy, but the enemy



Levison jerked open the cupboard door savagely. There was a sudden roar of wrath from the cad of the Fourth as, with a crash, a big pile of crockeryware fell to the floor. A string had been attached to the cupboard door and tied to a tray, and the study crockeryware had been piled on the tray! Some cheerful japer had been at work!

could not be said to be having a very good time there.

CHAPTER 14.

Unappreciated!

"THE question is, what's going to be done?" growled Blake.

It was a few days later, and the chums of Study No. 6—of Study No. 6 no longer—were at tea with the Terrible Three in the latter's study.

No. 6 was still in the possession of the enemy. Blake and his comrades had made things very unpleasant in several ways for the interlopers. Nearly all the School House fellows were down on them. Even Figgins & Co. of the other House were down on them, and sympathised with the dispossessed juniors. But it seemed to make no difference to Levison & Co. Indeed, Levison seemed to enjoy the fact that he was able to defy public opinion in the Lower School.

He held on to his prize.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were still distributed along the passage in separate studies. The other fellows they were quartered with made them very welcome. But the four chums, who had always been called the inseparables, were separated now—and they chafed under the new order of things.

This cosy little tea-party in No. 6 was a thing of the past—they had no room they could call their own. Blake, too, was accustomed to being head of the study, but he couldn't be head of Lumley-Lumley's study. Herries found certain difficulties in the way of practice with his cornet. His own chums had not really enjoyed that cornet, and other fellows wouldn't stand it at any price,

But, above all, the inseparables missed one another's company. By the separation of quarters the old "Co." was broken up, and they did not like it. Something had to be done, but it was a perplexing question what was to be done.

When Mr. Railton came back he might be requested to make an alteration, but the juniors realised that Mr. Railton was not likely to reverse his predecessor's arrangement, unless very good reason could be shown. The mere fact that Blake & Co. wanted their old study was hardly sufficient to make the Housemaster put a slight upon Mr. Linton, for that was really what it would have amounted to.

The juniors had to depend upon themselves, and ragging Levison was the only expedient that suggested itself—and that was useless. The more Levison was ragged the more obstinate he became. And it was not easy to rag a fellow who wasn't above sneaking. When every rag led to trouble with Mr. Linton, or a prefect, ragging began to pall.

So the question remained—what was going to be done? The Terrible Three were sympathetic. They condemned Levison's rotten conduct in bagging Study No. 6 as much as anybody. But they couldn't see quite clearly what was to be done. Indeed, Monty Lowther had remarked, in his humorous way, that, so far as he could see, it was Blake who was going to be done. But Monty Lowther's humour was not appreciated by the Fourth Formers. There was no comfort for them in Lowther's little jokes—rather the reverse.

"Yaas—what's goin' to be done?" said D'Arcy. "As a mattah of fact, it's up to you fellows."

"Up to us!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I don't quite see that!"

"Yaas, wathah! You landed us into this wotten posish—Lowthah did, at any wate. But for Lowthah's utterly wotten ideah of pwoolongin' the vac, we should have been back here on the first day of the term, and this wouldn't have happened. Even Levison couldn't have had the wotten nerve to ask for our study if we had been in it at the time."

"Exactly!" said Blake. "Lowther's done it."

"The next time you catch me backing up a wheeze of Lowther's, you can take me out and drown me," said Herries in measured tones.

"The trouble is that Lowther can get us into a scrape, and can't get us out," growled Digby. "Not brains enough for that."

Monty Lowther sniffed. It seemed as if he was never to hear the end of his unfortunate scheme for prolonging the holiday. The other fellows seemed to have quite forgotten by this time that they had welcomed the scheme when it was first suggested. The scheme had been a rotten failure, and it had led to unexpected and disastrous results, so far as Blake & Co. were concerned. All the fellows agreed that Lowther was an ass and a fathead, and the cause of all the bother.

"It weally serves us wight, in a way, for allowin' Lowthah to spoof my patah and the Head," continued Arthur Augustus. "It is weally wetwibution. A fellow has no wight to spoof his patah, in any cires."

"Certainly not!" said Blake. "And the outcome is, that with all Lowther's cleverness, we didn't get an extra holiday, and only spoofed ourselves out of our own study."

"Exactly!" said Dig. "So it's up to you chaps," said Blake. "And if you can't manage it somehow, the only thing you can do decently is to let us have your study."

"Our study!" howled the Terrible Three.

"Yes. We could do in your study. It's not quite so good as Study No. 6, but we'd manage to make it do."

"Yaas; that is wathah a good ideah."

"You'll manage to get a thick ear!" said Tom Merry wrathfully. "Of course, Lowther was an ass. We all admit that—"

"Oh, do you?" said Lowther truculently.

"Oh, yes!" said Manners. "There's no denying that you are an ass, Monty. No good disputing well-established facts, you know. Why, we might have found our own study bagged."

"I jolly well wish you had, instead of ours!" growled Blake. "If you aren't going to give up this study to us, what are you going to do? It's up to you. It isn't as if those cads were keeping up the traditions of Study No. 6. They're disgracing it. They smoke and play cards there."

"Yaas, wathah! Levison is going to have a party there to-morrow aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus. "I heah that he has asked Gore and Cwooke of the Shell, and Piggott of the Third. All wottahs! You know what that means. They're goin' to play cards for money, the same as that wascal Cutts does in his study. Nice goings on in our study, bai Jove!"

"Serve 'em right if we brought a

prefect down on 'em!" growled Herries.

"Imposs, deah boy! We can't sneak like Levison!"

"That's where we're at a disadvantage in dealing with such a rotter!" snorted Blake. "He sneaks, and we can't."

"It's wathah wuff on us; but a chap's own self-respect comes first," said Arthur Augustus firmly.

Monty Lowther's brow wrinkled in deep thought. A new idea seemed to have come into his mind.

"So Levison's giving a little party, is he?" he asked. "Of course, we can guess what kind of a party it will be—with Levison, Mellish, Gore, and Cwooke in it. They'll have the door locked, and cards and cigarettes going."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's the shining example of Cutts," snorted Blake. "If ever a chap ought to be sacked, it's Cutts!"

"Never mind Cutts now," said Lowther. "I've got an idea."

There was a general sniff.

"Rats!" growled Blake.

"Go and boil it!" said Herries.

"Take it away and buy it, deah boy!"

"For goodness' sake, don't have any more of your ideas!" implored Digby. "We don't thrive on your ideas."

"Yes; I must say we are rather fed-up with your ideas, Monty," confessed Tom Merry. "Try to forget it as quick as you can."

"Best thing you can do," agreed Manners.

Monty Lowther glared at his unappreciative chums. It was not at all an encouraging reception.

"Silly asses!" growled Lowther. "I've got an idea for bringing Levison & Co. to book. If it works, you fellows can have your study back."

"If!" sniffed Blake.

"If it works," continued Lowther calmly, "Levison will come to you to-morrow, and ask you to take the study back."

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"And then, perhaps, you'll admit that there's something in my ideas," said Lowther warmly.

"Yes; when Levison does that," yawned Blake, "I'll admit that you've got as much brain as a bunny-rabbit—not before!"

And, tea being over, the Fourth Formers departed, without evincing the slightest faith in Monty Lowther's idea, or the least curiosity to know what it was. Tom Merry and Manners, however, were very interested, and they looked inquiringly at their chum when the Fourth Formers were gone.

"Well, what's the wheeze, Monty?" asked Tom Merry carelessly.

"My bisney!" said Lowther coolly. "Leave me out of cricket to-morrow afternoon, and I'll do what I can. I shall want your camera, Manners."

"My camera!" said Manners, starting.

"Yes; with a new roll of films in it."

"What the dickens are you going to do with my camera and a new roll of films?" demanded the astonished Manners.

"Take photographs."

"But what's that got to do with Study No. 6?"

Lowther hesitated, but he felt that the idea was too good to keep.

"Keep it dark!" he said impressively. "I suppose you know that there's ivy on the House wall under the window in Study No. 6?"

"Ivy!" said Tom Merry wonderingly. "Yes; it's been there for some centuries. I think, so I've happened to notice it. Are you wandering in your mind?"

"We climbed up it once to jape those bounders when they had locked the study door," said Lowther calmly.

"I know we did. But what—"

"What's been done once can be done again. And a fellow with a camera outside the window can take snapshots quite easily; a whole set of interiors—I think you call 'em interiors in your photographic language, Manners—in a few seconds."

"But what—"

"Don't you see?" said Lowther, in a tired voice. "That's my idea. With printed proof of the little games those rotters carry on in Study No. 6, we have them in the hollow of our hands. Don't you see?"

"My hat!"

"Suppose they see you?"

"They won't see me."

"Suppose you fall?"

"I shan't fall."

"But—but it's risky."

"Blow the risk!"

"But—but, I say, Monty—"

"Rats!"

And, with that ancient and classic rejoinder, Monty Lowther closed the subject.

CHAPTER 15.

Lowther Does the Trick!

SATURDAY afternoon was a busy time for most of the St. Jim's juniors.

There was a House match to be played between the junior clevens of the School House and New House. Monty Lowther was a member of the School House junior eleven on most occasions, but on this particular occasion he cut cricket. There was also a senior match between Kildare's team and that of Monteith, the captain of the New House. So after dinner most of the St. Jim's juniors were on the playing fields. Monty Lowther went there with his chums, but he was only a looker-on. He looked on at the beginning of the match, with Manners' camera slung over his shoulder in a leather case.

But there were some fellows in the School House to whom cricket, even on that bright and sunny summer's afternoon, made no appeal. Neither the senior nor the junior match drew them to the cricket ground.

Levison was giving a little party in his study on the lines of the little parties sometimes given in the quarters of Cutts, who was Levison's model. Cutts certainly was not an ideal model for anybody, but it was Levison's ambition to follow in his footsteps. Levison, when he was in funds, was sometimes admitted to Cutts' little parties, and it was his daring scheme to reproduce the same thing on a smaller scale in the Fourth. Cutts and his friends played bridge for a shilling or half-crown a hundred. Levison & Co. played nap for penny points. But that was the chief difference.

While the juniors who had no ambition to be known as "blades" or "dogs" were playing or watching the grand old game, Levison & Co. were preparing for an extremely "doggish" time.

PEN PALS COUPON

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Now that he had a study of his own, from which intruders could be kept out, Levison was able for the first time to carry out what had long been his desire.

And his friends willingly joined him. Levison was in funds, and he had laid in a supply of cigarettes for the occasion. Gore of the Shell was the first visitor to arrive, and he nodded genially to Levison, Mellish, and Hooker, as he came in.

"Squat down!" said Levison genially. "The others will be here in a minute. No good starting till we're all here. Better have the door locked, you know."

"Right-ho!" said Gore. "Here comes Crooke."

Crooke of the Shell came in, swaggering. Crooke was the son of a millionaire, and he had plenty of money, so he was especially welcome at Levison's hospitable board on that occasion.

A white-faced fag followed him in. It was Piggott of the Third, who fagged for Cutts, and had learned many of the ways of that estimable youth.

The party was now complete, and Levison turned the key in the lock.

"All serene!" he remarked. "Of course, if anybody should come along you know what to do. Shove the smokes into that box. I'll look after the cards. And remember that we're a meeting of a debating society, and we locked the door because we thought that Blake & Co. were going to rag us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the six young rascals sat round the table in high good humour.

Outside the sun was shining cheerily, and a soft breeze blew in at the open window, but it did not tempt the black sheep of the School House out of doors. They could hear the merry shouts from the cricket field, but those shouts fell upon deaf ears. Levison handed round the box of cigarettes, and the party lighted up, and there was soon a blue haze of smoke in the study. Then Levison produced the cards.

"Nap or banker?" he asked.

"Oh, banker!" said Crooke. "I'll take the bank."

"Cut for the bank!" said Levison.

Levison secured the bank. Then the young rascals began to play. They felt perfectly secure. On a half-holiday, with almost everybody out of doors, there was hardly a possibility that the study might be visited. Most of the prefects were on the playing fields, and the masters were occupied with their own affairs. The locked door prevented any sudden surprise. And as the window was more than twenty feet from the ground, there was no danger of being overlooked. The security seemed perfect, and the young rascals prepared to enjoy themselves—in their peculiar way.

The game was going strong.

The players had little heaps of money at their elbows, all of them being flush at the beginning of the term.

There were several notes in Crooke's little heap, Crooke liking to display his wealth to the envious eyes of his associates.

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

Crooke yawned and lighted another cigarette.

"Lot of row they make over their silly cricket," he remarked.

"Silly asses!" said Levison. "Give me a light!"

Levison was looking very cheerful. His little pile of money had doubled in size in half an hour.

Mellish was not looking so cheerful. He had lost, and he was very nearly stony. His face was growing sullen. Gambling was not conducive to feelings of good-fellowship.



A shadow crossed the open window for a moment, but in the excitement of the game the juniors did not notice it. But when a sudden click broke the silence they started and looked round.

Click!

Levison jumped up and stared towards the window. The other fellows all stared round. Framed in the window appeared the head and shoulders of Lowther of the Shell!

Click!

Levison stared at him with starting eyes.

Lowther was evidently supported by the thick old ivy, and his elbows were resting on the broad window-sill and the camera in his hands bore upon the interior of Study No. 6.

Click again!

Lowther had taken three snaps before the juniors in the study realised what he was doing. Then Levison sprang towards the window with a hoarse cry.

"Lowther! You hound!"

"He—he's photographing us!"

gaspd Piggott.

"Take his camera away!"

"Collar him!"

Lowther let go the camera. He had attached it to the strap, and it swung back from his shoulders, still open. He swung himself back on the ivy as Levison reached the window, panting with rage, and with his fists clenched.

Levison leaned out, and glared down at him. Lowther grinned up at the furious face of the cad of the Fourth.

"Got you!" he remarked cheerfully.

"You—you rotter! You beast!" shrieked Levison.

Lowther laughed and slid down the ivy. Levison shook his fist after him furiously. He looked round savagely for some weapon to reach the Shell fellow, and caught up a heavy book and hurled it down at him. It was a dangerous thing to do, for Lowther was still ten feet from the ground, and if he had lost his hold the result might have been serious. But Levison was in too great a fury to think what he was doing.

But Monty Lowther did not lose his hold. He grunted as the heavy book caught him on the shoulder, but he held on and continued his way to the ground. He jumped clear of the ivy a few seconds later, and grinned up at the furious faces crammed in the study window.

The black sheep, frantic with rage,

shook their fists down at him. Lowther calmly levelled the camera, and snapped again.

"Get back!" howled Mellish. "He's taking us!"

The juniors crowded back from the window. They knew that Lowther had secured a picture of them—six infuriated faces and shaking fists at the open window!

In the study, they regarded one another with dismayed looks. Levison jammed down the window. The young rascals gathered up the money from the table. Levison swept the cards into a drawer. The "blades," doggish as they were, were in no humour for more gambling. They realised only too clearly that the snapshots Lowther had taken were more than enough to get them all flogged and expelled from the school, if Lowther chose to make them public. Their fate was held in the hollow of his hand!

"My only hat!" murmured Gore at last. "What a rotten trick! I—I say, he can't intend to use those photographs against us. That trick was played on me once before, but that was out of doors. I thought we were safe here. Levison, you fool—"

"He—he can't use them; he's only trying to scare us!" muttered Levison hoarsely. "But—but if they should get about—"

"If anybody sees those photographs, we're done for," said Hooker, with white lips. "You will have to get them from him somehow, Levison."

"I—I'll try."

Levison hurried from the study. The party broke up in utter dismay.

Lowther was looked for, but he was not to be found. It was half-an-hour later when Levison encountered him. There were stains of pyro on his fingers. Levison guessed that he had been in the dark-room—developing.

The cad of the Fourth looked at him, with almost speechless rage and hatred in his face.

Lowther nodded cheerfully.

"Finished your little game?" he asked.

"You—you— Where are those photographs?"

"In a safe place, my son," chuckled Lowther. "You may be interested to hear that you have come out beautifully. Quite a successful lot. First picture—crew of gamblers playing round a study table—"

"Hush!"

"Second picture—same crew of gamblers looking round startled, like a gang of coiners surprised by the police," pursued Monty Lowther cheerily. "Third picture—gamblers standing up, cards in some of their hands, or cigarettes. Fourth picture—set of angry faces at window; best of the lot! Those pictures will want some explaining, Levison—don't you think?"

"You—you're not going to show them—"

"I'm going to have a set enlarged and printed and hung up in the Common-room," said Monty Lowther mercilessly.

Levison gritted his teeth.

"You want something out of me!" he said. "You haven't taken all this trouble for nothing. What do you want?"

"Now you're talking," said Lowther genially. "I want you to let Blake have his study back."

"I—I won't!"

"When Blake has Study No. 6 again I'll hand you the films," said Lowther. "Otherwise I shall have them printed, and hung up in the Common-room, as I said. You swindled Blake out of his

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A SINISTER UNKNOWN BREAKS INTO THE REMOVE DORMITORY AT NIGHT! WHO IS HE, AND WHAT IS HIS OBJECT?

THE GREYFRIARS CHINEE!

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

No Savvy!

BILLY BUNTER was stooping before the fire in Study No. 1 in the Remove, with a fork in his hand, and a crimson glow on his smiling face.

There was a sizzle and a savoury smell in the study. Billy Bunter was frying sausages—a thing he could do to perfection, and which he thoroughly enjoyed. Bunter was never happier than when he was cooking, except, of course, when he was eating.

He was far too busily occupied to notice that the study door quietly opened, and that a face looked in. It was a curious face, with a deep olive skin inclining to yellow, oblique eyes, and an expression of innocent curiosity. The head was adorned only by a pigtail.

It was the face of Wun Lung, the Chinese, the new boy in the Remove Form at Greyfriars. He looked into the study and sniffed the scent of frying sausages, and came softly in. Wun Lung had a catlike tread. Billy Bunter, quite unconscious of his presence, rose and took the frying-pan off the fire.

"Done to a turn," he murmured. "If those fellows don't come in, I shall scoff the lot myself. They oughtn't to be late for tea when I've taken so much trouble."

Bunter stepped back from the grate and gave a jump as he knocked against the Chinese boy. He turned quickly round.

"I say, you fellows, you startled me! You shouldn't come in so quietly. Why—who—what do you want?"

Billy Bunter blinked in amazement through his big spectacles at the unexpected visitor.

The Chinese smiled sweetly. "Me Wun Lung," was all he offered in the way of explanation.

"Yes, I know you're Wun Lung," said Bunter. "But what do you want here?"

The Chinese made a gesture towards the frying-pan.

"Wun Lung hungry."

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the new boy.

"Well, of all the cheek!" he said. "Of all the nerve! A giddy heathen inviting himself to tea in a fellow's study! You'd better bunk!"

"No savvy."

"Bunk!" said Billy Bunter, pointing to the door with the frying-pan. "Skedaddle! Get out!"

The Celestial shook his head slowly, as if not comprehending.

"No savvy."

"I'll wager you could savvy if you wanted to," said Bunter. "But if you don't understand plain English, and as I can't talk Chinese, I shall have to proceed to demonstration."

"No savvy."

"See if you can savvy this," grinned

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Before the bully of the Remove realised what was happening, he was swept off the floor and went sailing over Wun Lung's back. Next moment he came down on the floor with a crash which shook the dormitory. Bulstrode had got more than he bargained for from the Greyfriars Chinese!

Bunter; and he took the Celestial by the pigtail, and drew him forcibly to the door. "There, that's the door! There's the passage! You travel! Bunk! Slide!"

"No savvy." "My only hat!" exclaimed the exasperated Bunter. "I'll teach you to savvy, if I have to bump your head against the wall. What study are you in—Russell's, isn't it?"

The Chinese boy nodded.

"Then come along; I'll see you home."

Billy Bunter led the new boy by his pigtail along the passage to the door of Russell's study. Wun Lung made no resistance. Bunter opened the door and jerked Wun Lung into the study. Then he wagged a fat forefinger at him warningly.

"You stay there," he said. "That's your place."

He closed the study door and returned to Study No. 1. In the attractive occupation of turning out the sausages into a dish, and taking a snack to go on with while he waited for the other fellows to come, Billy Bunter forgot all about the Chinese boy.

The tea-table was laid in Study No. 1, and the teapot was warming in the grate. All was ready for the evening meal, but the chums of the Remove had yet to put in an appearance. Billy Bunter could not understand anybody being late for a meal; but Harry Wharton & Co. placed football practice before even meals.

"Well, it's all ready," murmured Billy Bunter. "I suppose I'd better not make the tea till they come. The kettle's boiling. I wish they'd come. I know I shall bolt all the sausages if they don't turn up pretty soon."

Bunter stepped back from the fire. There was a light footfall in the study, and he looked round.

"Is that you, Wharton? Why, it's that confounded heathen again!"

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the Chinese boy. Wun Lung smiled blandly and crossed to the tea-table and sat down. Bunter watched him in speechless indignation. He drew a plate before him and picked up a fork. He was about to help himself to sausages when Bunter rushed forward.

"Hold on, you young ass!"

Wun Lung looked at him innocently.

"Me likes sausage."

"I dare say you do!" grunted Billy Bunter. "But you'll have to wait till I ask you to tea before you feed on my sausages. Travel!"

"No savvy."

"Get off that chair!"

"No savvy."

"Look here, I'll sling you out if you don't go!"

"No savvy."

Bunter grasped the Chinese boy by the shoulders and jerked him off the chair. The next moment Bunter was sitting on the carpet, blinking dazedly. How he had got there he had not the

THRILLS, MYSTERY AND FUN—ALL IN THIS GRAND STORY OF THE EARLY SCHOOLDAYS OF THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS.

faintest idea. Wun Lung was still sitting at the table, helping himself to sausages. It seemed impossible that the slim, bland, smiling Oriental could have sat the fat junior down so easily, apparently without an effort. Bunter blinked at him in utter astonishment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said a cheerful voice at the door. "Do you find the floor more comfy than a chair, Bunter? I didn't know you had visitors."

It was Bob Cherry. He came in, looking curiously at the Chinese. Billy Bunter staggered to his feet.

"I—I haven't visitors!" he gasped. "That cheeky young villain has come in of his own accord, and started bolting the sausages. I've chucked him out once, and I was going to chuck him out again, when—when my foot slipped and I fell down."

Bob Cherry fastened a grip on the back of the Celestial's collar, lifted him bodily out of the chair, and set him on his feet. Wun Lung looked at him with a disarming smile. Bob Cherry led him to the door.

"Get out!" he said concisely.

"No savvy."

"You gooe out," explained Bob Cherry, in the nearest approach he could make to the "pidgin" English of Wun Lung. "You bunkee jolly quick. You scootee or I kicke—kicke jolly hard! Savvy?"

Apparently Wun Lung savvied for once. He could understand an upraised boot at all events. He scuttled along the passage like a rabbit. Bob Cherry turned back into the study with a laugh.

"Funny little beggar," he remarked. "He seems to have taken a fancy to this study. He would have been put in here, if we'd had room, but we're five already."

"That's too many," said Bunter. "I know they have six in some of the Remove studies, but I should object."

"I don't suppose the Head would pay much attention to your objections, if he decided to put another fellow in here," grinned Bob Cherry. "Still, it wouldn't be quite fair. Counting you as two—and you're fat enough—we are six already."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"And we don't want any strange dogs in the kennel," said Bob Cherry. "I rather like that little Chinese beggar, but there's no room for him here. I say, those sausages look ripping, Bunter!"

"They are ripping!" said Bunter. "I'm sorry I couldn't run to chips. There's bread-and-butter. I've got one baked potato for myself. You don't care for them, do you?"

"Awfully!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Then I'm sorry there's no more than one. Hallo! Here's Wharton at last! The sausages are getting cold, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came into the study. The chums were glowing from the exercise of the football field. Nugent sniffed the scent of the sausages appreciatively.

"Bunter, you're worth your weight in gravy!" he exclaimed. "These sosses are prime! I wonder if we can persuade Inky to have one?"

Hurree Singh shook his head.

"The esteemed banana and the honourable brown bread are excellent prog for my worthy self," he remarked.

"I prefer sausages," remarked

Nugent, sitting down at the table. "Why, the fat villain hasn't cooked any chips! I always like chips with sausages."

"The funds wouldn't run to it," said Billy Bunter. "You fellows get things done pretty cheap as it is. I had to have a pork pie to keep up my strength, or I should have been too hungry to do the cooking, and so it wouldn't run to chips. Fortunately, I've got a baked spud for myself. I've made you a banana fritter, Inky, and it's really nice. I nearly ate it myself."

"I thank my esteemed chum," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, as he sat down.

The chums of the Remove settled down to tea. The four footballers were hungry, and Billy Bunter, though he took no exercise, had an appetite excelling any other there. The tea had just commenced when the door opened, and Bunter looked up with a grunt.

"My hat, if it isn't that Chinee again!"

The Face at the Gate!

WUN LUNG came into the study with his soft step, and his bland, insinuating air. The chums of the Remove all turned their heads to look at him.

Bulstrode thought that the diminutive Wun Lung was an easy victim for a "rag." But the bully of the Remove discovered that he had woken up the wrong customer!

Harry Wharton gave him a good-natured nod. Harry had befriended the new boy in the Remove, and saved him from a set of rough spirits who had considered it great fun to "rag" the Chinese. And since then Wun Lung had shown a great attachment for the captain of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry.

"Me hungry," said Wun Lung.

"They're having tea in Hall," said Billy Bunter, with a withering look at the Chinese. "Go down and grub with the Form."

"No savvy."

"Bunk! Travel! Get out!"

"No savvy."

"Oh, let him stay to tea!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Will you have tea with us, Wun Lung?"

Wun Lung's almond eyes glistened.

"Me savvy."

"Yes, I thought he'd savvy that,"

grinned Bob Cherry, making room for the guest. "Sit down here, my pippin. You can hang your pigtail over the back of the chair. I hope you've brought your chopsticks. We don't keep them in this study. We haven't a rush of Chinese guests, you know."

The Celestial grinned. "Choppee stickee alone. Knife-folkee now—allee samee foleign devil."

"My hat! You mustn't call your entertainers foreign devils," said Nugent.

"It's not considered polite," said Wun Lung slyly.

"The apologyfulness is acceptable,"

said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I am gladly pleased to welcome a guestful visitor from the farful lands of Asia. It is perhaps possible that you speakfully converse in my language. Tum Hindustance bol sakte?"

The Chinese shook his head. He replied in Chinese, to which the nabob in turn shook his head.

"Oh, don't!" said Bob Cherry. "If you're going to hold a conversation in Hindustance and Chinese, I shall slide. Do you like sausages, kid? Savvy?"

"Me savvy. Me likee muchee."

Bob Cherry gave the Chinese boy a liberal helping of everything. He had none of the prejudices of the Hindu with regard to articles of diet, and he had a good appetite. His face glowed with pleasure and good-humour, but a cloud settled on Bunter's.

Bunter was not inhospitable, but he was thinking of his supper. An extra guest at the table "queered" the next meal. The chums of the Remove were content with the bread and cheese supper in Hall; Bunter wasn't.

Tea finished, the chums of the Remove rose. They had their preparation to do for the lessons the next day, and after that there was a meeting of the junior football committee to be attended.

Billy Bunter sat in the armchair to rest after his labours, and Bob Cherry cleared away the tea-things. Books were brought out, and pens dipped into ink. Wun Lung sat on the hearthrug, and blinked at the fire.

"He's at home here now," murmured Bob Cherry. "He doesn't mean to shift."

"I suppose he has prep to do," said Wharton, with a puzzled look, and he bent and tapped the Chinese boy on the shoulder. Wun Lung looked up with a child-like smile. "I say, Wun Lung, haven't you your prep to do?"

"No savvy."

"Haden't you better get along to your study and do your prep?"

"No savvy."

It was pretty clear that Wun Lung did not choose to "savvy." Harry Wharton gave it up, and the chums of the Remove settled down to work. For a long time there was silence in the study. Billy Bunter rose from the armchair at last with a grunt, and joined the workers at the table.

Wun Lung coiled himself up in the chair, and stared at the fire. He seemed to be asleep, but several times when Wharton looked round he caught the gleam of the firelight on the dark eyes of the Celestial.

At the end of an hour the Removites had finished their prep. Harry Wharton rose from the table with a slight yawn. The Chinese boy looked up.

"Wun Lung, old chap, hadn't you better run along and do your prep?" asked Harry kindly.

"No savvy."

"You will have to prepare your lessons for the morning," said Wharton. "I thought Mr. Quelch had explained it to you. Have you your books?"

"Bookee in studee."

"Then run along and do your work."

"Me savvy."

The Chinese boy rose and scuttled out of the study. Wharton smiled. There was something about the youthful Celestial that he liked. But the captain of the Remove suspected, at the same time, that there was more in the Chinese than met the eye.

"Better get along to the committee, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "Nugent and Inky can play chess. The meeting is at eight in Trevor's study, you know."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry, rising and stretching his long legs. "I—Hullo, hallo, hallo! Here's young cheerful back again!"

Wun Lung came scuttling in with several books under his arm. He had evidently misunderstood Wharton, or chosen to misunderstand him. He had brought his books into Study No. 1 to do his preparation there. Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Let him stop," he said. "One of you fellows might lend him a hand with the work, too. I would myself, only I've got to get along. You might, Inky."

"The pleasurefulness will be terrific," said the good-natured Nabob of Bhanipur.

"What about my game of chess?" said Nugent.

"You can playfully work out an esteemed problem on the chess-board, while you waitfully attend for me to reach the finishfulness."

"Oh, rats! I think I'll have a sprint round the Close."

And Nugent went out with Harry and Bob.

Hurree Singh and Wun Lung were soon busy over books. The dark face of the Hindu and the yellow countenance of the young Chinese drew closer together, and Hurree Singh explained in his curious English, and Wun Lung answered in English more curious still. Their voices soon sent Billy Bunter to sleep in the armchair.

Meanwhile, Wharton and Cherry went to Trevor's study to the committee meeting, and Nugent went out into the Close.

It was a very dark night, but quite fine. It was too dark to sprint round very fast, but Nugent took a rapid swinging walk, enjoying keenly the sharp air after the warmth of the study. As he passed the gym, a voice floated to his ears from an open window of that building. It was the voice of Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove.

"If you fellows will stand by me, we'll make him go through it. Every new kid has to be ragged, and why shouldn't a rotten Chinese? Wharton will give in if there's a lot against him."

Nugent did not choose to listen. He passed on without either quickening or slackening his pace. There was a glint in the junior's eyes. He knew what Bulstrode's words meant. The Remove bully had not given up the idea of ragging the Chinese, and he was seeking to gain support in his opposition to Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove had come down heavy on the ragers, and there had been some bitterness over it. Nugent walked on. He passed the porter's lodge, and swung on past the iron gates of Greyfriars.

In the dim gloom a patch of something white at the gate caught his eye, and he glanced at it.

Then he gave a sudden start.

It was a human face that was pressed against the bars of the gate, and a pair of deep, black eyes were looking in, and they were fixed on the junior.

The sudden discovery sent a thrill through the junior.

He hesitated a moment, and then walked directly towards the gates, which were, of course, closed for the night. A low ejaculation broke from Nugent as he came closer and made out the form of the man outside the gate.

He was a Chinaman!

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The Man From China!

NUGENT stared at the stranger in surprise. Wun Lung had only been a couple of days at the school, and here was another Chinaman, peering in at the gates of Greyfriars under the cover of darkness. It was natural that Nugent should connect the two, and he jumped to the conclusion at once that the stranger was some relative of Wun Lung.

"Hullo!" he said, stopping at the gate.

The man looked at him. He was clad in the garb of China, with some modifications. But, apart from that, there was no mistaking the Mongolian features, the oblique eyes, the pigtail. The face was that of an old man, wizened and wrinkled, but the eyes were as keen and alert as a monkey's.

"Do you want anything here?" asked Nugent. "If you want to get in, you have to pull the bell. Have you come to see anybody?"

The old man gave Nugent a sharp look, with a quick, sudden movement of the head that reminded the boy strangely of a parrot. He began to speak in a language totally unintelligible to the junior, but which he guessed to be Chinese. Then remembering himself, he went on in English without a pause:

"Is Wun Lung here?"

"Yes," said Nugent. "There is a boy of that name here—a new boy."

The old Chinaman nodded quickly.

"Do you want to see him?" asked Nugent.

"Yes, yes," said the old man eagerly.

"Tell him—"

"You can't come in without ringing up the porter. The Head would let you see him if you asked. Ring the bell."

The Chinaman shook his head.

"No, no. I wish to speak to Wun Lung, no others. Tell him I am here, and he will come."

Nugent looked uneasy. If the man were a relation of Wun Lung, there was no reason why he should not apply to the Head for permission to see the young Chinese. There was something furtive about the old Chinaman that made Nugent vaguely suspicious, and he hesitated to reply.

"Tellee him," urged the Chinaman. "the Mandarin Yen Hai is hele to see him, and he will come."

"But why don't you get permission to come in?" asked Nugent.

The mandarin made an impatient gesture.

"Tellee him—tellee him!" he repeated.

"Wait a minute or two," said Nugent shortly.

He walked back towards the House. He was suspicious of the old Chinaman, yet it could scarcely do any harm to convey his message to Wun Lung. If the boy chose to see the mandarin, it was his own business. At all events, the looked gate was between them.

Nugent went up to Study No. 1. The two Orientals were busy over their books.

"Hullo!" said Nugent. "Nearly finished? I say, Wun Lung, have you any relations from China answering to the name of Yen Hai?"

The Chinese boy gave a sudden start.

"Yen Hai!"

"That's it. I can see that you know the name," said Nugent curiously.

It was easy enough to see that Wun Lung knew the name. He had turned pale under his dark skin, and a troubled look came over his face. He rose from the table.

"Who is he, kid?"

"He is my uncle," said Wun Lung.

"Me not likee him. He not likee me, come to England."

"Well, he has come to see you."

Wun Lung started again.

"He is not here?" he exclaimed, in a shrill whisper.

"He's at the gate, and wants you to go and speak to him," said Nugent. "But you needn't go unless you like. I'll go back and tell him you don't want to see him."

Wun Lung shook his head quickly.

"I must see him. Where is he?"

"Outside the gate."

"Will you come with me?" said the Chinese boy timidly. "I—I am afraid."

"Nothing to be afraid of," said Nugent reassuringly. "There's a locked gate, and he's on the other side of it. But we'll come, won't we, Inky?"

"The ratherfulness is terrific," replied the nabob promptly.

"Me tankee you muchee!"

"Rats!" said Nugent cheerfully.

"We're not going to let your Uncle Gargoyles frighten you. We'll come along and see fair play. We shan't hear any of your conversation, as we don't know a word of your cheerful language. Come on, and tell the old bouncer to get back on his tea-caddy."

Wun Lung smiled and followed Nugent from the study, and the nabob brought up the rear.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were just returning from the meeting in Trevor's study, and the juniors met them in the passage.

"Come on!" said Nugent. "Wun Lung's Uncle Gargoyles has called to see him, and we're going to see that the old chap doesn't bite through the bars of the gate."

"Gargoyles," said Bob Cherry, looking puzzled. "That's not a Chinese name."

"Ha, ha, ha! His name is Yen Hai, but I call him Gargoyles, after his features," explained Nugent. "Come on; he's waiting at the gate."

"Does Wun Lung want us to come?"

"Yes, rather! He's afraid of the gargoyles."

"Right-ho! We'll come."

The Removites went out into the Close and walked in a body to the gates. The old, wizened yellow face was still pressed to the bars. The black eyes scintillated as they fell on Wun Lung. A pair of claw-like hands grasped the iron bars.

"Yen Hai," said Wun Lung, in a low voice.

The old man replied in Chinese. He spoke in a shrill, harsh voice, and the Chinese junior listened with downcast eyes and a troubled brow.

He shook his head as the mandarin paused, and then Yen Hai went on again, more volubly than before. His voice sank lower, and there was a pathetic note in it, as if he were pleading with the boy. The wizened old features contracted, and the Removites, to their amazement, saw the fierce dark eyes dimmed for a moment by moisture. But still Wun Lung shook his head.

Then the manner of the mandarin changed. His face flushed with anger, his eyes blazed, his voice took on a shriller and harsher note. Wun Lung flushed and his eyes flashed, but he did not speak. A torrent of invective poured from the lips of the old mandarin.

Not a word of the strange tongue was comprehensible to the Greyfriars juniors. But the old man's meaning was clear now, at all events. He was cursing the lad who had refused his demand, whatever it was. In his rage

his voice became husky, and his claw-like hands grasped and shook the iron bars of the gate.

His voice sank at last from sheer exhaustion. The Removites stood looking on in silence. Then Wun Lung replied in Chinese. He spoke only a few sentences, in a low tone, with perfect quietness. The invectives of the old mandarin had not roused his anger.

The mandarin listened, his brow growing darker and darker. He interrupted the boy at last with a cry of rage, shook his fist fiercely through the bars of the gate, and then, turning, disappeared into the darkness.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That's what I call a really agreeable old gentleman to have for an uncle!"

The mandarin was gone. Wun Lung stood silent, with a pale face, and the juniors waited for him to move. He moved with a sudden start, turning back towards the House.

Curious as they were, the chums asked no questions, and Wun Lung did not speak.

A Fall for Bulstrode!

WINGATE, the captain of Greyfriars, looked into the Common-room as half-past nine rang out from the clock tower.

"Bed-time, kids!" Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was playing chess with the Chinese junior. He had discovered that Wun Lung was proficient at the game, and it was a bond of union between the two Orientals.

Hurree Singh was a pastmaster at the great game, and there was no junior at Greyfriars who could stand against him. But, somewhat to his surprise, the young Chinese was giving him a hard struggle. The nabob was too keen on the game even to hear Wingate's words.

Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Hazeldene were standing round the table,

looking on at the game with great interest.

"Bed-time," said the Sixth Former again, looking over towards the group.

"Please wait momentarily, respected Wingate," said the nabob, in his purring voice. "I have the esteemed Chinese chum mate in three."

A smile flickered over the bland face of Wun Lung. He moved a piece, and the expression of the nabob's dusky features changed. He gave a gasp and fixed his dark eyes on the board in dismay.

The captain of Greyfriars came over to the table and glanced at the array of chessmen.

"Come on, you'll never finish that game," he said good-naturedly.

"The esteemed Wingate is mistaken in error," said the nabob. "The game is already finishfully concluded. The honourable Wun Lung can finish in two."

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"Has he beaten you, Inky?"

"He has beaten me lickfully."

"I don't see it," said Wingate, who was a chess player himself. "Where's the move?"

Wun Lung smiled.

"Lookee, takee pawnee," he murmured, "checkee. Kingee donee."

"The game is donefully finished," said the nabob. "I did not expectfully look for the lickful defeat. I shall try you againfully to-morrow, my worthy chum."

"Me likee muchee."

"Well, off you go to bed now," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"No savvy."

"You'd better savvy before I come to look for you again," said Wingate, and he went out.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rose and swept the pieces into the box. Perfectly good-natured as he was, he felt a trifle on edge after his defeat, and would gladly have tackled the Celestial in another game. But bed-time at

Greyfriars was half-past nine, and there was no arguing with Wingate.

The Remove went up to bed. There was some whispering between Bulstrode, Levison, Trevor and the rest of the rougher set in the Remove. Harry Wharton did not notice it, but Nugent, mindful of the words he had caught at the open window of the gym, guessed at once what was on.

"There's going to be trouble to-night, Harry," he said in a low voice, as he took his shoes off. Wharton looked at him quickly.

"In what way, Frank?"

"About that heathen." And Nugent explained. Harry Wharton's brow grew dark.

"There will be a row if they begin," he said briefly.

The juniors went to bed. It was evidently the intention of Bulstrode and his set to leave whatever they meant to do till after lights out.

Wingate came in and found the Remove quietly in bed. Billy Bunter was already asleep. The fat junior was as good a sleeper as he was an eater. Wingate looked up and down the dormitory and turned the lights out.

"Good-night, kids!"

"Good-night, Wingate!"

The door closed. The Remove dormitory was dark and silent. A murmur of voices rose from the upper end of the long lofty room. Bulstrode's tones could be distinguished above the others, though his words were only audible to those near him. Harry Wharton did not close his eyes.

Five minutes elapsed, to make sure that the captain of the school was gone for good. Then there was a scratch and a match flared out. A candle-end was lighted, and then several others. A flickering light spread through the Remove dormitory, and most of the fellows sat up in bed.

Bulstrode stepped out. He had kept on most of his underclothing, and now he slipped on his trousers and a pair of



Suddenly, in the gloom of the dormitory, a blacker shadow loomed up in front of a window. Bulstrode started back, petrified with terror. There was a movement from the black shadow and a hand reached out. A loud and piercing shriek left Bulstrode's lips.

slippers. Trevor, Levison, Skinner, Crouch and others followed him.

Bulstrode, with one eye on Harry Wharton's bed, walked towards the Chinese boy. He laid his hand on the bedclothes and dragged them off with a single jerk. Wun Lung started up with an exclamation in Chinese, and stared at the bully of the Remove.

"Out you come!" said Bulstrode.

"Don't move, Wun Lung," said Harry Wharton quietly. He sprang out of bed, and was on the spot in a second.

"Stand back, Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode looked at him furiously. "It's no good, Wharton!" he snarled. "You can't carry things with a high hand in the Greyfriars Remove. Every new boy goes through it, and this heathen can have his share as well as others. You went through it yourself," he added with a sneer.

"You shan't touch Wun Lung."

"I shall touch him. I shall toss him in the blanket, and make him run the gauntlet, and souse him with cold water," said Bulstrode tauntingly.

"You will not!"

"Get out of it, Wharton!" said Trevor. "We're going to put him through it. Why shouldn't we?"

"Because he's a foreigner and an inoffensive little chap," said Wharton.

"He does not know our ways. You don't know how much you might scare him."

"He'll have to chance that."

"Well, I can only repeat what I said before," said Harry Wharton. "The fellow who touches Wun Lung will have to walk over me first."

"It's a lot of trouble over nothing," said Levison, with a shrug of the

shoulders. "I don't see why the Chinese shouldn't go through it. But if Wharton makes such a point of it, I say let him alone."

"You can say what you like," said Bulstrode between his teeth. "You have been sucking up to Wharton ever since he rescued you on the Black Pike. I'm going to put the Chinaman through it. Get out of the way, Wharton!"

"No fightee," murmured the Chinese, taking hold of Wharton's arm, as the Remove captain was about to raise his fist. "No fightee. Me not affraid."

Wharton looked at him curiously. Undressed, the Chinese boy did not look so helpless as his bland and childlike manner implied. His limbs, though diminutive, were hard as nails, the muscles like iron. It occurred to Wharton that Wun Lung's manner was deceiving, and that considerable strength dwelt within the slim frame.

But against an opponent like Bulstrode the Chinese surely could have no chance. Bulstrode was bigger than Wharton in every way, and though Wharton had conquered him in a fight, he was a powerful adversary, and another fight might easily end differently. A struggle between Wun Lung and Bulstrode would be like David and Goliath over again.

"There you are!" exclaimed Trevor. "He's not afraid, he says. Let him go through it."

"Rats!" said Wharton. "He doesn't know what you mean."

"No affraid," said Wun Lung, in a murmur audible only to Wharton. "Big fellow no hultee Wun Lung. Ju-jutsu."

Wharton started. It had not occurred to him that the Chinese boy might be

proficient in ju-jutsu. Yet he was still unwilling to leave Wun Lung to the tender mercies of Bulstrode. He hesitated.

"All right," said Wun Lung, with a grin. "Lettee him tly takee me off bed, and you see. If he hultee me, you comee help. Savvy?"

"Very well," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Mind, I'll chip in the moment you want me."

"Allee light."

Wharton stepped aside. He sat down on his own bed and looked on. The gleam of mischief in Wun Lung's eye gave him an idea that there was a surprise in store for the Remove bully, but he still had very strong misgivings. He was ready to interfere, however, as soon as interference should be needed.

Bulstrode was astonished at the change of front on Wharton's part. Still, he was glad to avoid a personal encounter with the best athlete in the Remove. He swaggered towards Wun Lung, who was sitting on the edge of his bed in his pyjamas.

"Come off, you young rotter!" he grunted, seizing the Chinese boy by the shoulder and giving him a powerful jerk.

Wun Lung came flying off the bed, and then he seemed to curl round Bulstrode like an eel. The bully found himself swept off the floor and sailing over Wun Lung's back. Next moment he came down on the floor with a crash that made the whole room shake. Wun Lung was sitting on his chest when he realised where he was, and he was pinned to the floor.

The Removites gazed on in blank astonishment. It had been done so quickly that no one had been able to follow the heathen's motions. But they could all see Bulstrode lying on his back and Wun Lung sitting on his chest.

"My hat!" gasped Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"How do you like it, Bulstrode?"

"The honourable Bulstrode seems surprisingly astonished."

The expression on Bulstrode's face made the whole Remove roar. Had an earthquake suddenly happened in the Remove dormitory, Bulstrode could not have looked more amazed. The back of his head had hit the floor in his fall, and his head was feeling very dizzy.

"I—I—lemme get up! Get off my chest!" he stammered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Drag him off, you fools!" yelled Bulstrode furiously.

Trevor and Crouch started forward. Wharton quickly stepped in the way.

"Fair play," he said. "I should think that Bulstrode's big enough to deal with a little chap like that without assistance."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Levison. "Why don't you fling him off, Bulstrode?"

"Get off, you yellow imp!" roared the bully of the Remove.

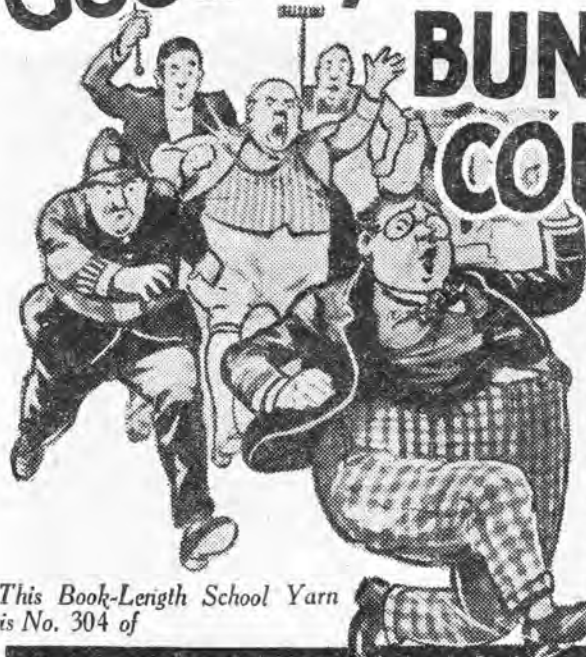
Wun Lung smiled blandly. He had his weight on Bulstrode's chest, his knees on Bulstrode's elbows. His weight was not great, but it was sufficient to pin down the bully. Bulstrode could not get rid of his diminutive assailant. He could only squirm and gasp, and his face was crimson with mortification. The whole Remove was laughing at the ridiculous sight.

"Let me get up!" growled Bulstrode savagely.

"Plomise," said Wun Lung sweetly. "to lettee me alone, and I lettee you lise."

"I—I won't!"

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"Then you stay where you are, I tinkee."

"Let me get up!"

"Lats!" said Wun Lung. His curious Chinese pronunciation, the changing of "r's" into "l's," strangely transformed that familiar rejoinder. But there was no doubt as to what he meant. "Lats, my friend!"

"I—I promise!" muttered Bulstrode, who would have given anything to get out of that absurd position. "It's all right."

"Allee light."

And Wun Lung sprang up like an indiarubber ball, and the bully of the Remove rose to his feet.

The Terror of the Night!

BULSTRODE stood panting, his face scarlet. It seemed for a moment as if he would spring at the Chinese boy and crush him. Wun Lung was sitting on the edge of his bed again, and the smile that was "childlike and bland" was playing over his features.

But the Remove bully restrained himself. He turned away with a sullen scowl, and went towards his own bed. And the intended raggers followed his example. Bulstrode had given up the idea, and his followers did not feel inclined to carry it out without him. In a few minutes they were all in bed again.

Harry Wharton patted the Chinese junior on the shoulder.

"Good for you!" he said. "I never thought it was in you!"

"Me placise," said Wun Lung. "The battle is not always to the strong. What you tinkee?"

"Quite right," laughed Wharton. "I think you can take care of yourself, anyway."

And he went back to bed. The candle-ends were blown out, and the Remove, after much muttered discussion of the curious development on the part of the Chinese boy, went to sleep, with one exception.

Bulstrode had given his promise to let Wun Lung alone, and for very shame's sake, he could not break it the next moment. But he was nursing his revenge. His back ached after that tremendous thump on the floor. His head was still singing. He lay awake and waited for the rest of the dormitory to sleep.

The buzz died away at last. Eleven rang out from the clock tower, and then half-past. Greyfriars was silent. The Remove dormitory was sound in slumber. Only Bulstrode, with his aching bones, lay awake and vengeful.

The bully of the Remove stepped out of bed. The night was very dark. There was no glimpse of the moon, and only the faintest glimmer of starlight came in at the windows of the dormitory.

There was a faint sound in the room. Bulstrode heard it, but he attributed it to some sleeper stirring. In the darkness he could see nothing.

But he knew his way to the Chinese junior's bed. To seize the jug from the adjacent washstand and invert it over the head of the sleeper was his amiable intention. The shock and the drenching would sufficiently repay Wun Lung for that little exhibition of ju-jutsu.

He groped his way along the dormitory, his bare feet making no sound. He knew every inch of the room, and he carefully avoided the beds, and everything else with which contact would have made a sound.

There was a faint noise in the darkness. It sounded like a stealthy footfall, and Bulstrode started for a moment, listening. He concluded that he must have been mistaken. It was impossible that there was another Removeite out of bed beside himself.

He crept on towards the Chinese junior's bed.

Suddenly, in the dense gloom of the dormitory, a blacker shadow loomed up against a window. He stopped, thrilling in every limb, his heart giving a sudden, convulsive jump, as a sound of low, quick breathing caught his ears.

For the moment he was petrified with terror.

It was not another boy out of bed. The black shadow looming up before him had the stature of a man.

Bulstrode started back, and in his terror he lost all caution, and his feet came heavily on the floor. There was a low, gasping sound from the black shadow, a sudden movement, and a hand reached out. Bulstrode felt the wind of it by his face as he dodged.

A loud and piercing shriek left Bulstrode's lips—a shriek into which all the terror and all the horror of that moment found expression.

It rang through the dormitory with a thousand echoes.

There was a momentary mutter in the darkness, and a strong hand grasped Bulstrode, and he writhed in a powerful grip.

"Silence!"

That single word, muttered in a strange tongue—English, but never spoken by English lips.

But Bulstrode was too convulsed by terror to heed. He shrieked again and struggled frantically, and tore himself from the detaining grip, and sprang away blindly in the darkness.

He collided with a bed and fell to the floor, and, fearing every second that terrible grasp upon him again, he lay and shrieked almost in a frenzy.

There was a quiet sound of a door softly closing.

"What the dickens is the matter?"

It was Wharton's voice.

The captain of the Remove was sitting up in bed, striving to pierce the darkness with his eyes as he listened to Bulstrode's wild cries.

"What is it? Who is that shrieking?"

"Help, help!"

Wharton sprang out of bed. He seized a match-box and lighted a candle, and

held it up, staring round him in the gloom. All the Removeites were awake now—some sitting up in bed, some calling out, the more timid ones crouching under the bedclothes.

"Bulstrode!" exclaimed Wharton, as the light of the candle fell on the prostrate, quivering form of the bully of the Remove.

"What is the matter?" cried Bob Cherry.

He was out of bed and at Harry Wharton's side in a moment. Nugent and Harree Singh were quick to follow, and a dozen or more of the Remove tumbled out, grasping pillows, water-jugs, boots—anything they could lay hold of for weapons.

Harry Wharton stooped over Bulstrode and helped him up. Bulstrode's eyes were rolling, his face white, his lips quivering as if with palsy. The horrible fright in his face made Harry Wharton shudder.

Bulstrode, who seemed hardly able to stand, leaned heavily on Harry's shoulder and gasped.

The dormitory door opened and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came quickly in with a lamp in his hand. The Remove master had a poker in the other hand. His face was very startled.

"What ever is the matter?" he asked. "Wharton, what is it?"

"I don't know, sir," said Wharton, completely mystified himself. "I was woke up by fearful shrieking, and I lighted a candle and found Bulstrode like this. Look at him, sir."

The Remove master came closer and threw the light on Bulstrode's face. The deadly whiteness, the convulsive twitching of the features, made him start.

"Bulstrode, calm yourself! What has happened?"

Bulstrode cast a fearful glance round the dormitory. The lights, the crowd round him, brought back some of his courage. He drew himself away from Harry Wharton, but he was still trembling.

"Is—is he gone?"

Mr. Quelch looked amazed, an expression that was reflected in every other face.

"What are you talking about, Bulstrode?" the Remove master demanded.

"Is he gone?"

"He—"

"What has happened?"

"I—I don't know. It was a burglar, I suppose," groaned Bulstrode. "But I came on him suddenly in the dark."

"Do you mean to say that there was a burglar in the dormitory?"

"Yes, or—or somebody."

"I can see that you have had a great fright, Bulstrode, but I hardly think that there could have been a burglar," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I have just come along the passage, and I have seen nothing of an intruder. He cannot be here, either. Tell me exactly what happened."

"I—I was coming along just here when I saw a kind of shadow, and then he took hold of me," muttered Bulstrode through trembling lips. "I shrieked."

"What were you doing out of bed at this time of night? Why should you have been coming along here when your bed is in the upper end of the dormitory?"

Bulstrode was silent.

"Come, Bulstrode," said the Remove master, kindly enough. "You have had a bad dream, and it frightened you. To-morrow you will know it was all a dream."

"It was not, sir," said Bulstrode. "I was out of bed and wide awake!"

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"Then why were you out of bed?"

"I—I was going to play a little joke on Wu Luang," stammered Bulstrode. Mr. Quelch's brow darkened and so did Harry Wharton's.

"You were going to play a trick on a sleeping boy at this hour of the night, Bulstrode?" Mr. Quelch demanded, in a voice that made Bulstrode quake.

"It—it was only a joke, sir."

"And what kind of joke did you intend to play?"

"I—I was only going to throw some cold water over him, sir."

"And did you realise that such a sudden shock in the night might have had an effect on him equal to the fright you have had yourself?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

"I—I didn't think of that, sir."

"You should have thought of it. You deserve the most severe punishment, and if you ever carry out your malignant intention, Bulstrode, you will be severely dealt with. I shall make it a point to keep myself informed. Now, about this person you imagine touched you. Are you quite certain, now you are calmer, that there was anybody at all?"

"Quite certain, sir," said Bulstrode, with a shudder. "I—I can feel his grip on me now."

"You did not see him?"

"Only a faint shadow. It seemed to loom up in the dark."

"It was probably a boy."

"It was too big for a boy, sir, and a boy could never have gripped me like that. It was the grip of a fellow stronger than myself, and I'm the strongest in the Remove."

Mr. Quelch looked round at the scared faces of the Removites. The juniors were casting uneasy glances into the shadows round the dormitory.

"Did any of you hear or see anything?" he asked.

There was a general shaking of heads.

"Was anyone awake before Bulstrode cried out?"

Another general negative.

"Mightn't the apparition have been a boy from a higher Form, coming here for a raid?" said Mr. Quelch, mindful of the rows between the Remove and the

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Upper Fourth, and turning to Bulstrode again.

Bulstrode shook his head firmly.

"It was a man, sir."

"Boys, you may search the dormitory while I remain here," said Mr. Quelch. "You will not sleep, I am sure, till a search has been made. Wharton, take two more with you and go and wake Wingate, and ask him to call the prefects to search the house for a burglar."

"Yes, sir."

Wharton, Cherry, and Nugent went to wake Wingate. The Remove, under

Mr. Quelch's eye, searched the dormitory from end to end.

But there was no trace of the burglar. If he was not a figment of Bulstrode's heated and terrified imagination, he had made good his escape.

The search over, the Removites felt easier in their minds. The three elums returned and announced that Wingate was up and calling the prefects.

"I will leave you now," said Mr. Quelch. "Keep your lights burning till I come back. The house will be thoroughly searched before I go back to bed. If there is a burglar, we shall discover him, or, at least, evidence that he has left the house. None of you may stir from the dormitory."

And Mr. Quelch left the room.

The Removites were in a buzz of excited talk now.

In the security of the light and the crowd Bulstrode began to be a little ashamed of the wild terror he had displayed. He had not, after all, been hurt. Many of the Removites were inclined to attribute the whole matter to an attack of nightmare, and Bunter asked Bulstrode what he had had for supper. The answer to that question was a hurtling pillow, which flattened the inquirer down upon his bed, and put an end to further questions on his part.

The eager buzz of talk ceased as the dormitory door opened again and the Remove master entered the room.

(Has Mr. Quelch discovered anything about the mysterious marauder? Make sure you don't miss next Wednesday's sensational developments.)

a yawn. "As soon as you've got the study I'm to give him the roll of films, that's all."

Blake stared.

"But—but I don't understand."

"Naturally you wouldn't," agreed Lowther, with a nod. "But there it is, all the same. I've worked the oracle. In case of difficulty, you kids should always come to this study and ask for help."

"Oh, jais!" was Blake's ungrateful reply.

But there was no doubt that the good news was true. Monty Lowther had worked the oracle, as he said. Blake & Co. took possession of their old study with great rejoicing. As Mr. Monty Lowther did not choose to explain the way the oracle was worked, they were considerably mystified. But there it was—Study No. 6 was theirs again!

They moved their belongings into that famous apartment in high spirits. And that evening a great house-warming, as Blake called it, was given in Study No. 6, at which the Terrible Three were honoured guests—and there was great joy in the study which had been recaptured by its owners.

(Look out next week, chums, for "RIVAL CARAVANERS!"—a lively long yarn of fun and adventure on the highway, featuring the St. Jim's chums. Order your GEM now.)

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THE STOLEN STUDY!

(Continued from page 21.)

study, and you've got to make restitution—otherwise, he'll get the study again when you've been kicked out of the school. You see, he'll get it, anyway."

"I—I won't give in! I'll—I'll—!" Levison clenched his hands with helpless rage. Even as he spoke he knew that he would have to give in.

"You can please yourself about that," said Lowther coolly. "But if Blake doesn't have his study back to-day, as soon as the match is over, you know what to expect. You can say what you like to Linton—put it how you like—tell him you've acted like a mean cad and are sorry for it. But if Blake doesn't have his study, you can look out for the order of the boot!"

"Look here, Lowther. I—I—"

"Nuff said!"

Monty Lowther walked away, leaving Levison clenching his hands with fury. The Shell junior did not look back. He strolled away to the cricket field, whistling cheerily. And Levison, after a few minutes' thought, took his way slowly and reluctantly to Mr. Linton's study.

Jack Blake met with a surprise that afternoon when he came in after the House match.

Mr. Linton called to him.

"Blake, you, Digby, Herries, and D'Arcy may take Study No. 6 again," said the master of the Shell. "Levison has told me that, upon reflection, he is unwilling to deprive you of a study you have occupied a long time. As he wishes to change out, and Melish and Hooker say the same, there is no reason why you should not have the study. I trust this will be the end of the bickering on the subject."

Jack Blake almost fell down with surprise. Mr. Linton went away before he had time to reply.

"Well, m-my hat!" gasped Blake. "This beats the band! What has Levison done that for?"

"Bal Jais! It's really walloah handsome of Levison, afiah all." "Rats! He's been made to do it somehow. Is it possible that Lowther—"

Blake rushed away in search of Lowther.

"Do you know what Levison's done?" he demanded, as he burst into the study of the Terrible Three.

"Yes."

"He's given us our study back!"

"Exactly."

"What has he done it for?"

"A roll of films," said Lowther, with

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