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The **GEM**

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GRAND

X

**FREE
GIFTS**

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Selected **STAMPS**
and **100 STAMP HINGES!**



No. 1,547. Vol. LII.

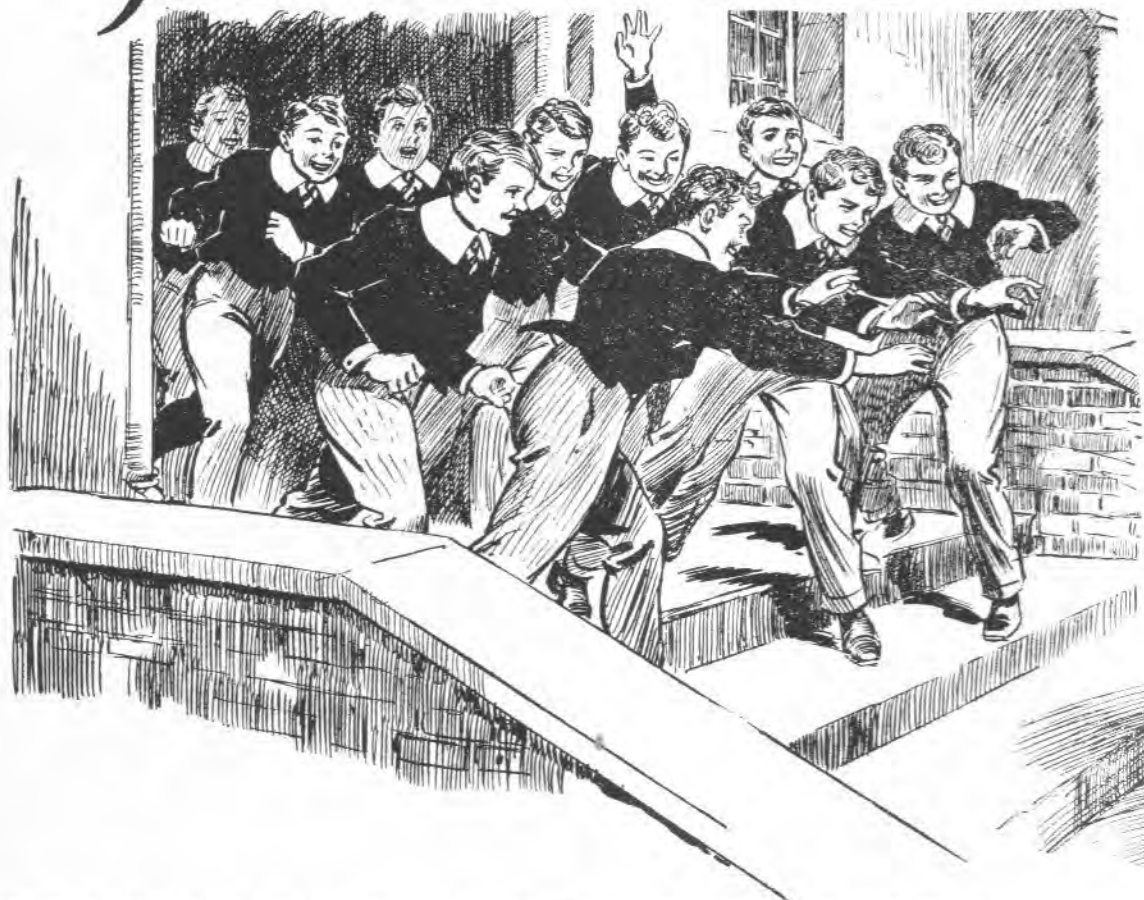
EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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The New House



Utterly bewildered and confused in the hands of the rebels, Mr. Ratcliff was hustled along to the door of the New House, where several powerful shoves sent him flying down the steps. The next moment he landed in the quadrangle with a bump!

CHAPTER 1.

An Untimely Call!

"COME in, fathead!"
Tom Merry called out thus politely, as a tap came at the door of his study in the School House at St. Jim's.

The door opened and Fatty Wynn looked in.

Fatty Wynn of the Fourth belonged to the New House; and the Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther—were busy with the latest number of "Tom Merry's Weekly." So three pens pointed to the door by which Fatty Wynn had just entered, and three voices said in unison:

"Buzz!"

"I've just come—" said Fatty Wynn.

The fat Fourth Former was interrupted.

"Travel!" said Tom Merry.

"Can't you see we're busy?" demanded Manners. "How is a chap to

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do a photographic article when a porpoise rolls in interrupting him?"

"Blow your silly photographic article!" said Fatty Wynn crossly. "I've come—"

"Well, what about my comic column?" said Monty Lowther. "I shan't get it done in time!"

"Tell the chaps to read 'Comic Cuts' and then they needn't bother about your comic column!" grunted Fatty Wynn. "Comes to the same thing."

Monty Lowther rose in wrath.

"You New House fathead!"

"You School House ass!" retorted Fatty Wynn.

"If you say that I pinch my jokes from 'Comic Cuts' you'll go down that passage on your New House neck!" said Lowther wrathfully. "There may be sometimes a slight resemblance—very slight!"

"Great minds run in grooves," suggested Tom Merry.

"Exactly. But as for pinching jokes—"

"And the resemblance isn't so jolly

close, either," said Manners. "For instance, 'Comic Cuts' jokes are funny, and yours aren't, are they?"

"Why, you silly fathead!" snorted Lowther.

"Look here, I haven't come here to jaw about Lowther's rotten jokes," exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "I've come here—"

"Rotten jokes, by Jove! Well, they're above your head, you New House duffer!" said the exasperated humorist. "You're as big an ass as Figgins! There was your ripping piece 'houseboat' and 'boathouse.' Figgins couldn't see that."

"Blessed if I could, either," said Manners. "I knew it was a joke, of course, because it was in the comic column. But—"

"If you're going to talk like an idiot, Manners—"

"Not at all, old chap! I'm not going to pounce on your preserves," said Manners affably.

"Look here, Manners—"

"Order!" rapped out Tom Merry.

THERE ARE SCENES OF WILD EXCITEMENT IN THE NEW HOUSE AT ST. JIM'S WHEN STUDY TEAS ARE BARRED AND MEALS ARE CUT DOWN TO A MINIMUM!

Riot!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"How's an editor to do a leading article with two silly asses ragging one another? Shut up!"

"I say——" recommenced Fatty Wynn.

"Don't you say anything," urged Tom Merry. "These two duffers are enough—too much, in fact! Haven't you seen the notice on the door—'No admittance except on business'?"

"Yes, but——"

"Then buzz off! Call later. Go and eat coke! Rats!"

"Comic Cuts," indeed!" said Monty Lowther indignantly. "Why, my comic column is better than anything in 'Comic Cuts.' Look at my humorous limerick."

"Bow-wow! Limericks are out of date."

"Good stuff," said Lowther loftily, "is never out of date. Just listen to this——"

"And a good combined toning and fixing solution——" murmured Manners, intent upon his article.

"It is with much pleasure that we present this special number to our readers," murmured Tom Merry.

"Look here!" howled Fatty Wynn.

"For goodness' sake shut up a minute!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Just listen to this, and tell me whether it's anything like 'Comic Cuts,' you duffers. It's about a New House bounder, and it goes——"

"Cheese it! Combined toning and fixing solution——"

"Dry up! This special number——"

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*When Mr. Ratcliff, the sour-tempered New House master, puts the juniors of his House on short commons, it proves an expensive and painful punishment—for Ratty himself!*

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But Monty Lowther neither cheesed it nor dried up. Lowther was too generous to keep a good thing to himself. When he had perpetrated an extra good joke, he was always keen to delight the study with it. The study, as a rule, was not so delighted as Lowther expected.

"There was a fat duffer named Wynn, Who feared he might some day grow thin.

So each day he devoured Quite enough for a crowd, Till he almost burst out of his skin!"

"You silly ass!" shouted Fatty Wynn wrathfully. "Is that your fatheaded limerick?"

"Jolly good limerick, and true to life!" said Monty Lowther. "What do you think of that, you chaps?"

"Does devoured rhyme with crowd?" asked Manners.

"Of course it does! If it doesn't
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sound like good rhyme to you, Manners, it's your ear that's at fault. You never had much of an ear."

Now, Manners was musical, and he prided himself on having a good ear. Naturally, he snorted.

"Well, I haven't such big ears as you have, I know," he admitted. "Nature doesn't deal with us all alike—thank goodness!"

"What's the matter with my ears?" bawled Lowther.

"Nothing—nothing," said Manners soothingly. "They're first-rate—would do credit to an elephant, in fact."

"You silly ass!"

"Same to you, and many of them!"

"If you want a thick ear, Manners—"

"My ears are all right, thanks," said Manners, unmoved. "I can tell you that devoured doesn't rhyme with crowd, anyway. But have it your own way, so long as you let me get on with my article."

"Blow your silly article! Howling rot—"

"Well, I like that!" said Manners warmly. "What about your own comic column? I've seen chaps crying over it!"

"You haven't!" roared Lowther.

"I have!"

"I tell you, you haven't!"

"Peace, peace!" roared Tom Merry. "Shut up, you duffers! Is this the lofty calm and repose suitable to an editorial office?"

"That idiot, Manners—"

"That fathead, Lowther—"

"Order! Let's chuck the New House bouncer out and get on with the washing," said Tom Merry. "It's all Wynn's fault. He started the argument. Chuck him out!"

"Look here!" shouted Fatty Wynn, who had been vainly endeavouring to make his voice heard for some minutes. "I tell you I've come—"

"We know you've come, fathead! Now you're going!"

"Why, you rotters—leggo! Chuck it! I tell you I've come to—yoooop! I say—whoop!" roared Fatty Wynn, as the editorial three grasped him and spun him into the passage.

Bump!

"Now buzz off!" said Tom Merry severely. "Don't you know better than to interrupt editors at their weighty task?"

Fatty Wynn sat up and gasped.

"You silly idiots! I tell you I've come—"

"Blessed if he isn't beginning again!" exclaimed Tom Merry quite exasperated. "Here, hand me that ink!"

Fatty Wynn did not wait for the ink. He picked himself up, shook a fat fist at the study generally, and retreated. Tom Merry slammed the door with a sigh of relief.

"Now let's get on!" he said.

"That's all very well," said Lowther, "but that idiot Manners says he's seen chaps crying over my jokes!"

"Crying with laughter, I mean," said Manners amicably.

"Oh!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Now, cheese it, and get on with the washing!" he said.

Monty Lowther, thus propitiated with the soft answer that turneth away wrath, sat down to his comic column. He scratched his nose thoughtfully.

"Praps 'devoured' and 'crowd,' aren't very good rhyme," he said at last. "I'll alter those lines. Thanks

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—ahem—for the tip, Manners, old man!"

So all was bright and calm once more in the editorial office.

CHAPTER 2.

The Raiders!

"WATHAH nice, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form made that remark in Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus was standing before the looking-glass, trying on a new necktie. The expression upon his noble countenance showed that he was pleased with the effect. He nodded to his reflection in the glass in a very satisfied way.

"Wathah nobbay, I must say!" he went on. "I weally wish Blake, Hewies, and Dig would be a little more careful with their neckties! You know a chap by the way his necktie is tied. Hallo, deah boy! Come in! What do you think of this necktie?"

Fatty Wynn, a little dusty, had looked in at the door. Arthur Augustus greeted him with his usual urbanity.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were down at the footer practice, keeping it up manfully, though the dusk was thickening over the playing fields of St. Jim's. The days were much shorter now, but footer was footer, and could not be neglected.

Arthur Augustus was really pleased that somebody had dropped in. He wanted to have an opinion on his new necktie.

"Wathah nobbay, don't you think so, Wynn?" he asked.

"Oh, yes!" said Fatty Wynn absently. "I've looked in, Gussy—"

"You think that a pale blue necktie with black bars goes well with the shirt I'm wearing?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Ripping! I've come to—"

"Or do you think this one with the crimson spots would look a little better?"

"Yes, certainly! I've come—"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Look here! Will you let a chap speak, and blow your old neckties?" exclaimed the New House junior warmly.

"They are not old neckties, Wynn; they are quite new—"

"Oh, blow 'em!"

"However, I pwesume that a New House boundah won't know vewy much about decent neckties!" said the swell of the School House stiffly. "You chaps nevah dwess vewy well. Figgins' neckties would disgwace anyone."

"Hang Figgins' neckties! Look here, D'Arcy—"

"As a mattah of fact, Wynn, Figgins' neckties look as if he has been twyin' to hang himself!" grinned Arthur Augustus.

"I've come to—"

"If you want to speak to me, deah boy, wun on while I'm twyin' on this othah tie. Then you can give me your opinion of it."

"I've just looked in to see those Shell bounders, and they've played the giddy ox, as per usual!" said Fatty Wynn in an aggrieved tone. "I want a chap to help me, and I want you, D'Arcy!"

"Certainly, deah boy! You are going to buy a new hat?"

"No!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"If it is a mattah of selectin' new shirts or socks, Wynn, I am entirely at your service."

"It isn't anything of the kind!"

"You are goin' to get a new necktie, pewwaps? It is weally high time. I will come with you with pleassuah." "Oh, my hat!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Will you let a chap speak? It's Ratty!"

"Watty? What has Watty been doin', deah boy?"

Arthur Augustus was very sympathetic, though he went on tying his new necktie. Mr. Ratchiff, the House-master of the New House, was as heartily disliked on the School House side as in his own House.

"He's been a beast, as usual!" growled Fatty Wynn. "Confiscated my grub, you know! I had a lot of tarts, and a whole cake, and the awful beast said I was a greedy young rascal, and took them away from the study! He's always poking his blessed long nose into our study! One of these days," added Fatty fiercely, "I shall dot him on it with a stump!"

"Bai Jove! As a mattah of fact, Wynn, pewwaps Watty was wight for once," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "You do scoff wathah a lot of pasty, you know! Blake says if you don't chuck it, you won't be able to keep goal any longah, because you won't be able to squeeze between the posts, you know. I werged that remark of Blake's as wathah funny!"

Fatty Wynn snorted. He did not seem to see anything funny in that remark of Blake's.

"Look here! I didn't come here to listen to Blake's rotten jokes at second-hand," he exclaimed. "I want a chap to help me. I can't ask Figgins or Kerr or Redfern, or any New House chap, because I don't want to risk getting any of them into a row with Ratty. A School House chap would be all right—Ratty can't come over here looking for him. But if you don't want to take the risk, I'll look for somebody else. I dare say Reilly would do it, if I can find him."

"The wisk is nothin', Wynn. I should be vewy pleased to help you. But what are you goin' to do?"

"I'm going to raid the larder," said Fatty Wynn ferociously. "Ratty's taken my tarts and cake and sent 'em down to the larder. I've asked Mrs. Kenwigg to hand 'em back, but she says she must see Mr. Ratchiff's orders are obeyed."

"That is quite wight, Wynn."

"Oh bosh! Who's Ratty? Anyway, she won't hand 'em over; and I'm going to take 'em. They're mine!"

"Yaas, I wathah think you would be justified in takin' that step, Wynn," assented D'Arcy. "If we had a House-mastah like that in the School House, I—"

"You'd put up with him, same as we have to do!" growled Wynn.

"Pewwaps we should," agreed Arthur Augustus, on second thoughts. "Yaas, pewwaps we should, deah boy. We are vewy lucky to have old Walton, instead of that wottah. I am quite at your service, deah boy!"

"Come on, then!"

"Wait a minute! What do you think of this necktie?"

"Haven't I said it's ripping?" granted Fatty.

"But this is the othah one."

"Oh dear! That's ripping, too!"

"I am afwaid, Wynn, that you are not vewy intewested in neckties," said Arthur Augustus severely. "You New House boundahs are wathah slovenly. However, I will come with you now. Where are you goin'?"

"I'm going to raid the larder!"

"Yaas. But isn't it kept locked?"



"The window!" explained Fatty Wynn. "I've nosed it all out. I can get to the larder window if a chap bunks me up."

"Bai Jove! I'd bettah not put on a toppah, then."

"Well, I might kneel on your hat."

"I should certainly wefuse to allow anybody to kneel on my hat, Wynn. If I am goin' to bunk you up I will put on a cap—pewwaps I'd bettah take Blake's cap, as it may get feahfully wumpled. Bai Jove! And I'll put on one of Dig's jackets, as you may wub your boots against it. I won't keep you a minute."

"Buck up, for goodness' sake!"

"What's the huwwy?"

"I'm hungry."

"Oh, all wight!"

Arthur Augustus, arrayed in Blake's cap and Digby's jacket, accompanied the fat Fourth Former from the study. They descended the stairs together and went out into the dusky quadrangle.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were coming in from the footer, and they hailed Arthur Augustus at once.

"Tea ready?" called out Blake.

"Bai Jove! I forgot tea! I've been twyin' on neckties."

"Fathead! Come and lend a hand, then!"

"Pway excuse me Blake. I'm goin' to help Wynn."

"What's the little game?" demanded Blake.

"Pewwaps it would be bettah to say nothin' about it, Blake. Wynn would get into a feahful wov if it came out that he was waidin' the lardah—"

"Cheese it!" growled Fatty Wynn, with an uneasy glance round.

"All sewene, Wynn! I'm not goin' to tell them anythin'!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Come on, deah boy!"

The swell of St Jim's walked off with Fatty Wynn, leaving his chums chuckling. Arthur Augustus' way of keeping anything secret never failed to cause hilarity in Study No 6.

In the dusk the two juniors slipped round to the rear of the New House. Lights were burning in the kitchen and the House dame's room, but the windows were screened with dark curtains. Fatty Wynn stopped under a square, dark window covered with wire netting

"Ring off, old chap, and gimme a bunk up."

"The fellows in my study," pursued Arthur Augustus calmly, "do not wely on my tact and judgment, and they get into all sorts of sewapes. I twust you will take my advice. I wecomend you—"

"Oh dear!"

"Anythin' the mattah, Wynn?"

"No; only suffering from too much jaw."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Are you going to bunk me up?" demanded Wynn.

"Yaas, but pway allow me to give

"What shall I pass you, Wynn?" asked Arthur Augustus. "The lot—quick!" exclaimed Fatty. One after another D'Arcy handed out the comestibles from the pantry, Fatty Wynn receiving them from him and laying them on the ground.

"Is that the lardah window, deah boy?"

"That's it."

"Then you will nevah be able to get through that wiah."

"I've got a pair of wire cutters."

"Bai Jove! Wynn, there will be a feahful wov if the lardah is burgled like that!" said Arthur Augustus in some alarm.

"That's why I haven't got a New House chap to help me," said Fatty. "It won't come out about you lending a hand."

"I was not thinkin' of that, Wynn. But it will come out about you, and Watty will be down on you like a hundwed of bwicks. He will know it is you if you take your own gwub."

"Can't be helped. Gimme a bunk up!"

"Pway allow me to give you a word of advice, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus sagely. "You cannot do bettah than be advised by a fellow of tact and judgment. I wathah pwide myself upon my tact and judgment, you know. The fellows in my study—"

you a word of advice first. If you collah your own gwub, Watty will know it is you. Why not collah somethin' else of the same value, which would be quite justifiable? Then Watty will not have any clue."

"My hat!" said Fatty Wynn, quite struck by that sage advice. "You're not such an idiot as they make out, Gussy."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"I'll jolly well do it!" said Fatty. "There's lots in the larder, I know that—once I'm within reach of it. Thanks, old chap! Now bunk me up."

"Certainly, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy planted himself close to the wall, and Fatty Wynn clambered on his back. There was a loud gasp from Arthur Augustus.

"Wharrer marrer?" mumbled Wynn breathlessly.

"Gwoogh! I—I forgot you weighed twenty stone, Wynn."

"I don't weigh twenty stone, you fathead!"

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"I—I feah I shall collapse. Gwoogh! Oh, bai Jove!"

"Don't let me down!" yelled Fatty Wynn. "Stick it out! Oh crumbs! Yah!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus had fairly collapsed under the fat Fourth Former's weight. He staggered, and Fatty Wynn came down with a rush. He sat on the hard, unsympathetic ground and roared.

"Yew-ow! Oh, you fathead! Yoo—hooop!"

"Gwoogh!"

"Oh, you idiot! Oh, my beres! Yew-ow!"

"Oh deah!" parted Arthur Augustus. "I am weally vewy sowwy, Wynn. But weally I am not an elephant, you know. I twust you are not hurt. Oh deah!"

"Yaroooh!"

"If you make that wow, Fatty, Watty may heah you."

Fatty Wynn choked back the sound of anguish. He did not wish to be caught under the larder window, loitering with felonious intent, so to speak. He limped to his feet.

"Bai Jove! How vewy lucky!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus suddenly.

"Lucky, you dummy!" breathed Fatty Wynn sulphurously.

"I was wewewwin' to this jacket, deah boy. You have wubbed your muddy boots all ovah it. It was vewy lucky I put on Dig's jacket!"

"Bunk me up—"

"Oh deah!"

"Look here, I'll bunk you up!" said Fatty Wynn. "I can stand your weight all right. Get on my shoulders."

"Bai Jove! But—but I don't want to wob the lardah!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, vewy well!" said Arthur Augustus resignedly. "Pway give me a back, Wynn."

Fatty Wynn planted himself firmly, close to the wall, and Arthur Augustus climbed on his back. The Welsh junior stood like a rock. Arthur Augustus, kneeling on his shoulders, easily reached the stone sill above.

"All serene?" muttered Fatty. "Here's the wire-cutters. Just rip the wire-netting open anyhow; it doesn't matter how much you damage it."

"I should be sowwy to do unneces-sawwy damage, Wynn."

"For goodness' sake, don't jaw so much, old chap!" said Wynn. "You're like a sheep's head, you know—nearly all jaw. The cook may come out any minute."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus set to work rapidly with the wire-cutters. In a few minutes the wire-netting over the window was in ruins. Inside the netting was the window, which, however, was open for ventilation. Arthur Augustus climbed on the sill, and put his head and shoulders into the pantry.

"All right?" asked Fatty anxiously.

"Yawwooh!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Gwooh! I've knocked my beastly head!"

"Never mind your head, old chap. Hand out the grub—all you can reach."

"Yew-ow!"

"I'm waiting, you know. Suppose Monteith should come nosing round, or Sefton? For goodness' sake, buck up!"

It was very dark inside the larder, but as Arthur Augustus' eyes became used to the gloom, he could see various articles within his reach.

"What shall I pass you, Wynn? There is a cold wabbit here."

"Yes, yes."

"And a tongue."

"Good!"

"And a numbah of sausages."

"Ripping!"

"And a meat pie."

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas; but which of them shall I pass you, Wynn?"

"The lot—quick!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus handed out the articles, one after another.

Fatty Wynn received them from him and laid them on the ground.

Arthur Augustus wriggled out backwards from the window, and dropped to the ground, gasping. He rubbed his noble "napper" rather ruefully.

"I have given my head a feahful knock," he remarked.

"Never mind. You have this meat pie," said Fatty generously. "The rabbit and tongue and sosses will do me!"

"Thank you, deah boy! I—I was not burglin' on my own account. I am wathah dusty and gwubby. It was vewy fortunate I put Dig's jacket on. Bettah cleah off before you are spotted wound here."

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"As we're leaving, Bill, do you think we ought to tip him?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Dennis, Greendale, Pampisford Road, South Croydon, Surrey.

"You bet! Thanks awfully!"

"Don't mench. deah boy," said Arthur Augustus gracefully. And he walked off to the School House, while Fatty Wynn collected up his plunder with a gleeful countenance, which shone with satisfaction like unto a full moon.

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have awwived," said Arthur Augustus, with stately dignity.

"Look at my jacket!" hooted Digby.

"Covered with mud."

"Look at my cap!" growled Blake.

"Smothered!"

"It weally was not my fault, Blake. I could not refuse to give Wynn a bunk up. I wegard it as vewy thoughtful on my part to put on your cap and Dig's jacket. I noticed that the fat boundah's boots were muddy."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Next time I play footer on a muddy day," said Blake ferociously, "I'll put on Gussy's Sunday topper and his best bags!"

"Bai Jove, Blake—"

"What about tea?" murmured Manners. "We've been editing a long time, and editing makes you hungry."

"Pway stop waggin', deah boys. Let's have tea," said Arthur Augustus.

"I am sowwy to say that I have not yet weceived the wemittance I was expectin'."

"Then what are we going to have for tea?" demanded Blake. "The cupboard is empty."

"Bai Jove! It appeals that I have wequested your company to tea at a wathah awkward moment, you fellows!"

"It do—it does!" agreed Tom Merry. "We forgive you, but what about our tea? Our study cupboard is as empty as Mother Hubbard's."

"Better find somebody to stand us tea," said Blake reflectively. "Who's in funds along the passage? They can't refuse seven of us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake— Bai Jove, here is that boundah Wynn again!"

Fatty Wynn came into the study, followed by Figgins and Kerr. All three of the New House juniors were grinning.

There was a large bag in Fatty Wynn's plump hand, and he laid it on the table. The School House juniors regarded it in surprise.

"What the dickens—" began Tom Merry.

"You fellows haven't had tea?" asked Figgins.

"No fear! There isn't any tea going in this study."

"Good! We've come to tea!"

"The merry dickens you have!" ejaculated Blake. "Well, you're welcome to a whack in one of Towser's dog-biscuits. That's all we've got."

"We've brought the feed with us," explained Figgins. "If you chaps don't mind, we'll stand the feed, if we can have it in your study."

"Come to my arms!" said Blake affectionately.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin', Figgins, deah boy!"

"Fatty's simply rolling in tuck," said Figgins. "He won't tell us where he got it from, but he's simply reeking with it. For some weird reason I don't pretend to understand, he wants to have the feed over here. Ratty confiscated some of his stuff this afternoon, but he wouldn't worry us at tea-time. But there it is!"

"Corn in Egypt," said Monty Lowther, as Fatty Wynn opened the bag. "My hat! What do my aged eyes behold? Sosses, rabbit, meat pie, tongue! Fatty, my plump tulip, let me kiss thee on thy baby brow!"

"Oh, come off!" said Fatty. "Lend me a frying-pan, somebody. I'll have these things ready in a jiff. I suppose you've got salt and pepper, and some bread. That's all we want now."

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"We'll borrow a loaf along the passage," said Blake. "As for the giddy condiments, we've got lots. That's all we had for tea before you came. By Jove, we'll let you sing a Welsh song after tea, if you like, Fatty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fatty Wynn did not answer; he was already busy with the frying-pan. His fat face beamed as the sausages began to sizzle.

The clouds had rolled by, so to speak, in study No. 6. It was too late for tea in Hall, and seven hungry juniors would have been reduced to the necessity of cadding along the passage but for the timely arrival of Figgins & Co. It was like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years.

All hands set to work at once. Where Fatty Wynn had mysteriously obtained that timely supply did not matter very much, compared with the much more important fact that he had obtained it. The table was laid, the crocks were handed out, while an appetising scent of cooking filled the study, and pervaded the passage outside.

"Begin with the rabbit!" beamed Fatty Wynn. "Better have that cold. It's a ripping rabbit—I've had some. Never mind where it came from. Pile in!"

"Blessed if I quite catch on!" said Tom Merry. "What's the giddy mystery, anyway?"

"I catch on, though!" grinned Blake. "This is what that fathead Gussy was bunking Wynn up for, I suppose."

"What's that?" exclaimed Figgins.

"Shut up!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn hastily, turning a ruddy face from the fire. "They're not to know!"

"We're not to know!" exclaimed Kerr.

"No, not a word!"

"Why not, you fat image?"

"Safer not!" said Fatty Wynn mysteriously. "That's all right. Don't you ask any questions. The grub's mine, that's enough. Exchange is no robbery, is it?"

"No, but—"
"Pile in! The sosses are nearly done."

Most of the juniors were already piling in. They were all hungry. Blake & Co. were fresh from footer, and the Terrible Three had been editing so busily that they had forgotten tea-time. So full justice was done to that handsome spread so unexpectedly "stood" by Fatty Wynn.

"Bai Jove, I must remark that this is wippin' of you chaps!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But if Watty knew—"

"What's Ratty got to do with it?" asked Figgins.

"Nothing!" jerked in Fatty Wynn.

"Cheese it, Gussy!"

"Wely on me, deah boy! I am not goin' to say a word about the lardah."

"The larder!" ejaculated Figgins.

"What larder?"

"Pway excuse me if I do not weply to that question, Figgins. If you do not know anythin' about it, you will be able to say so to Watty when he makes inquiries."

"Blessed if I understand," said Figgins. "But these sosses are a treat—just like those we had for breakfast this mornin'. Might be some of the same lot, by Jove, only better cooked. Pass me another, Fatty."

"Here you are, Figgy."

"Gentlemen," said Monty Lowther, holding up his tea-cup, "here's to the founder of the feast, and may his shadow never grow whiskers."

"Hear, hear!"

"Heah, heah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Here's to the foundah of the feast—old Watty! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ratty!" repeated Figgins, with a stare.

"Shut up!" roared Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn, I was not goin'—"

"Shove a soss into his mouth and keep him quiet!" said Fatty Wynn.

"I wefuse to have a soss shoved into my mouth, Fatty Wynn, and I wegard you as an ass!"

Figgins and Kerr were decidedly mystified, but Fatty's evident uncasiness made them forbear to ask questions. Tea in Study No. 6 finished amid general satisfaction.

Just after the juniors had finished, the door of the study opened, and Redfern of the New House looked in.

"Oh, you're here!" he exclaimed.

"I've been looking for you. Come on!"

"What's the row?" asked Figgins.

"Ratty! The whole House is called up, and you were missing, so I've scouted for you. Come on, or Datty will warm you!"

"The whole House!" repeated Kerr.

"What's wrong then?"

"Goodness knows!" Redfern shrugged his shoulders. "Ratty in his tantrums again, I suppose. Follow on, kids!"

Redfern hurried away, and Figgins & Co. followed him. There was no time to be wasted when Mr. Ratcliff had ordered the House to be assembled. Mr. Ratcliff did not like being kept waiting.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when the New House follows had gone. "I feah there is goin' to be twouble. Watty is lookin' for the waidah."

"What raider?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Pway keep it dark, deah boys. Fatty has been waidin' the lardah, because Watty confiscated his gwab."

"And that's where the feed came from?" exclaimed Manners.

"Yass, watah!"

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"Oh, my hat!"

"I wegard Fatty as bein' quite justified, othahwise I should not have bunned him up. But Watty will be vewy wild, I think. I twust Fatty will keep it dark. Pewwaps we had better go ovah and see how they're gettin' on."

"Perhaps we hadn't!" grunted Blake.

"You'd give Fatty away as sure as fate."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, it was a good feed!" remarked Monty Lowther. "It was worth a licking—if Fatty gets the licking. But it had better be kept awfully dark, and I suggest that Gussy be promptly sat upon every time he opens his mouth."

To which the whole study, except Arthur Augustus, replied unimously:

"Hear, hear!"

CHAPTER 4.

Mr. Ratcliff Is Ratty!

THERE was considerable surprise and, in some quarters, alarm in the New House at St. Jim's. The order had gone forth for the whole House to be assembled in Hall, by order of the Housemaster.

Even the high and mighty Sixth were not exempt. Monteith, Baker, and Sefton and the rest of the New House Sixth Formers looked very cross when they came in. They did not like being bothered.

Such alarm as was felt was among the juniors. They did not know what delinquencies might have come to light, and the matter was evidently serious.

Figgins and Kerr looked very curiously at Fatty Wynn, as the Co. took their places in the ranks of the Fourth. The references to "Ratty" in Study No. 6 recurred to their minds, and they wondered whether the fat Fourth Former was the cause of this unusual proceeding on Ratty's part. Fatty Wynn's plump face expressed nothing whatever. He maintained an appearance of unconcern.

"Anybody know what the row is?" whispered Redfern.

"Blessed if I do," said Figgins.

"It's a giddy mystery," said Lawrence.

"Something to do with Mrs. Kenwigg, I think."

"Mrs. Kenwigg?"

"Well, Ratty went to see her in her room," said Lawrence. "I saw him. He's been down in the kitchen, too. Something gone wrong below stairs."

"What's that got to do with us?" said Owen.

"Goodness knows."

"Silence!" rapped out Monteith irritably, as Mr. Ratcliff came in.

There was silence at once, and all eyes were turned upon Mr. Ratcliff. That gentleman's thin and meagre face was not pleasant in its expression. His brow was like thunder. Ratty was evidently in one of what the juniors disrespectfully termed his "tantrums."

Mr. Ratcliff's small, bright eyes, which reminded one of a rat, gleamed upon the anxious assembly. Some of the prefects assumed an air of elaborate unconcern. They wanted Mr. Ratcliff to be aware that his tantrums did not disturb the serenity of the Sixth.

"Boys," said Mr. Ratcliff, in a rasping voice, "a most unprecedented thing has occurred in this House. An act of fragrant dishonesty has been committed."

A thrill ran through the assembly.

Clampe of the Shell turned quite pale. He wondered whether Mr. Ratcliff had discovered, at last, any of his secret dealings with a certain

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"bookie," whose "dead certs." accounted for a good deal of Clampe's pocket-money.

Sefton of the Sixth looked uneasy, too. He had certain little secrets, which he was very careful to keep to himself, but which might have been brought to light.

Mr. Ratcliff paused to allow his words to sink in, perhaps to give the assembled consciences time to work.

"A robbery has been perpetrated!" he said.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Figgins in dismay.

"Somebody's been burgling Ratty's desk again!" murmured Redfern. "Oh dear! The School House will chip us over this."

"I don't believe it," muttered Kerr angrily. "The old donkey is making some idiotic mistake. There aren't any thieves in the New House."

"Silence!" growled Monteith.

"Some time this afternoon," resumed Mr. Ratcliff, "the House larder was broken into and a quantity of eatables abstracted."

There was a buzz in the Hall. Monteith looked at Mr. Ratcliff as if he would like to hit him. After giving them all this bother, it turned out that somebody had taken "tuck" from the larder. That was all! Mr. Ratcliff talked as if a burglary had been committed.

"The old duffer!" growled Figgins, in relief. "I knew it was all rot. Somebody's taken a currant bun, I suppose."

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, as the murmur of voices rose—a murmur of anger and indignation.

The buzz died away.

"Some unknown boy," went on the Housemaster, "has broken into the larder. The wire-netting over the window has been cut. A meat-pie, a tongue, a number of sausages, and a cold rabbit have been taken."

"My hat!" murmured Kerr and Figgins together.

Their eyes turned involuntarily to Fatty Wynn.

Fatty closed one eye for a moment.

"The House has been assembled in order that the culprit may be discovered at once," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Some boy in this House has been guilty of this theft. It is possible that the boy in question does not regard the action in the light of a theft. I take the most serious view of the matter, however. The culprit will be severely flogged, and a bill will be sent to his

parents for payment. I call upon the boy in question to come forward!"

Some of the juniors grinned.

The prospect of being severely flogged and of having a bill sent to his parents was not exactly enticing to any boy. No one was surprised to see that nobody came forward.

Mr. Ratcliff waited a full minute. There was no movement and no reply. His brow grew darker.

"There is no clue at present to the culprit," he said. "If the boy refuses to admit his guilt, his punishment will be all the more severe when he is discovered. He may even be expelled from the school. There is a dishonest boy in the New House. Anyone who knows or suspects him is bound to come forward and speak."

"Chance for a sneak!" said Figgins. "What offers?"

There was a chuckle in the Fourth.

Mr. Ratcliff's cold eye turned upon the Fourth Formers. The chuckle died away suddenly.

"I am waiting," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I am quite convinced that this outrage has not been committed without the knowledge of other boys."

Mr. Ratcliff waited. He was likely to wait. If any fellow there had known or suspected the identity of the raider, he was not likely to come forward and acquaint Mr. Ratcliff with it.

Darker and darker grew the brow of the Housemaster. To his narrow and prejudiced mind, a refusal to "sneak" seemed like a defiance of his authority.

"Very well," said Mr. Ratcliff at last.

"It appears that the whole House associates itself with the dishonest boy who has robbed the larder. Until the guilty party is discovered, therefore, punishment will fall upon the whole House. I except, of course, the senior boys. The culprit is undoubtedly a boy in the Shell, the Fourth, or the Third Form. I give him one more opportunity to speak."

Silence.

"Very well!" Mr. Ratcliff could not conceal his irritation and chagrin. "The juniors of this House are evidently in a conspiracy against the authority of their Housemaster. It is my duty to make my authority respected. I shall not fail to do so. Since the larder has undoubtedly been robbed in order to provide for an orgy of overfeeding in some junior study, I have little doubt that a discovery will be made. Unless it is made, and at once, the juniors of this House will all be punished. Monteith!"

"Yes, sir!" said the head prefect of the New House, with a grim look.

"You and the other prefects will kindly make inquiries as to the recent consumption of food in the junior studies. You will ascertain in which of the studies has been consumed a meat pie, a tongue, and a rabbit, and a quantity of sausages. Kindly report to me at once what you discover! Dismiss!"

The assembly broke up, grumbling. Monteith's face was a study. To make a round of the junior studies inquiring after lost meat pies and sausages was not exactly a task that pleased the great man of the Sixth.

"Get to your studies, you young rascals!" said Monteith gruffly.

And the juniors departed, smiling.

CHAPTER 5.

The Sausage Hunters!

TURN out your pockets!"

grinned Redfern.

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence were in their study, awaiting the call of the prefects.



"Well, anyway, I've saved something!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Spenceley, 8, Fatherson Road, Reading, Berks.

MAKING the MOST of YOUR STAMPS

Our expert here tells you the accessories you need, how to clean stamps and the best method of mounting them in your album.

YOU'RE the proud owner of a few hundred different stamps? Stamps which, following the advice given last week, you've got to know fairly well. Excellent! You've hours of real fun before you.

But before you "get down to it" you'll be wise to spend some of your precious pocket-money on a few vital accessories. These are simply a pair of tweezers, a magnifying-glass, some stamp mounts, a swap-book, an album, and—if your money will run to it—a stamp catalogue.

WHY YOU NEED ACCESSORIES.

A word or two regarding these accessories. Firstly, the tweezers. Every time you pick up a stamp with the fingers you deposit on its—let us hope—clean, fresh surface a layer of grease. Finger a brand-new stamp a few times and you change it into a grubby bit of paper fit only for a wastepaper basket. Arm yourself with a pair of tweezers as soon as you can.

The need for a magnifying-glass is pretty obvious. The keen collector is for ever examining his treasures, and what better help than a good glass?

Stamp-mounts. When collecting first began people ignorantly glued their

stick to—figuratively, of course—good-quality stamp-mounts.

Know how to use them? There are two usual ways. Method No. 1.—Holding a mount upright, fold over a small section, keeping the gummed side outside. Lightly dampen this section and press it to the back of a stamp. Moisten the second, larger section, and place the stamp in position on the album page.

Method No. 2.—Fold over lengthways a narrow section of the mount, dampen it, and fix it to the right edge of the back of your stamp, but keeping it free of the perforation. Moisten the larger section of the mount and fix the stamp in place. This method scores over the first one in that you can examine the back of a stamp without either removing it or injuring its perforation.

SWAP-BOOK AND ALBUM.

A swap-book. No collector is long picking up duplicates. These can often be conveniently disposed of by swapping them with your friends. A book filled with a host of pockets is ideal for holding the loose stamps until disposed of.

And now Accessory No. 1—the album. There are many kinds and sizes of these. If you're collecting in a small way don't kick off with too large a volume, or your stamps will seem like a blade of grass in a forest—lost. The beginner's ideal is probably a book with room for six thousand or so specimens.

Finally, the stamp catalogue. Owing to the large number of stamp illustrations essential this costs a good deal to print. But if you've ever examined one you'll agree that it's more than worth its cost, for it's a veritable treasure-house of philatelic information.

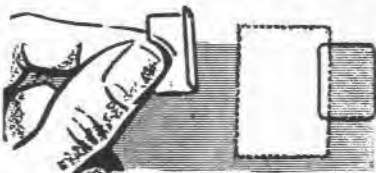
Having equipped yourself for the hobby, the next job is to prepare your stamps for their home, and here remember that cleanliness is everything where stamps are concerned. During your searches for specimens always keep the collector's standard of the perfect stamp before you.

Its colour should be fresh, its paper clean, and its design should be placed centrally within its severing boundaries. If perforated, all its perforations should

be intact; if used, the postmark, unless of special significance, should be so faint that you know it's only just there; and, if new, its back should possess its original gum.

CLEANING YOUR STAMPS.

Very often used stamps have the paper on which they did postal service still adhering to them. *Never tear this*



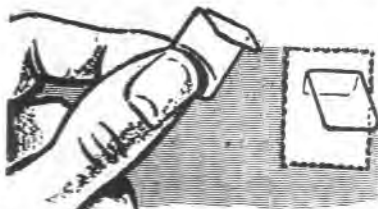
The "side" method of mounting. Left: How to fold mount. Right: Mount and stamp in position.

from a stamp. Instead, float it, back downwards, on a saucer of cold water. The water will quickly soften the gum, and you'll be able to peel off the paper. Carefully wash off any gum remaining and dry the stamp between sheets of white blotting-paper.

During this cleaning process guard against letting water touch the front of the stamp. For if the printing ink contains aniline dyes the colours will "run."

Certain inks, notably orange ones, discolour on contact with the sulphur in the air. You can restore these by brushing them with a weak solution of peroxide of hydrogen.

With your stamps all ready for your album there only remains the question of how you're going to mount them. Where possible, arrange them in chronological date of issue. But whatever your choice, do mount your treasures in an orderly fashion. Centre them within the spaces marked for them, or stick them flush with the top of each space, but, above all, be consistent. Nothing looks worse than a higgledy-piggledy massing of stamps.



The "back" method of mounting. Left: How to bend mount. Right: Mount in position on back of stamp.

stamps on paper. Result—thousands of inestimably valuable stamps were ruined. Don't risk ruining your stamps by either gluing them or affixing them with stamp-edging. Instead, always

The lofty Sixth Formers had indulged in a considerable amount of grumbling among themselves, and in strict privacy had passed remarks about Mr. Ratcliff which would have made his scanty hair curl if he had heard them.

But the Housemaster's behest had to be obeyed, and Monteith, Baker, Webb, and Sefton had started on their rounds.

Monteith looked frowningly into Redfern's study, and his frown deepened as he heard Redfern's humorous remark.

"Now then," snapped the prefect, "what did you kids have for tea?"

"Ginger-beer!" said Redfern.

"Nothing else?"

"No; we ran out of tea, and drank ginger-beer instead."

"I mean, what did you have to eat? You know very well what I mean, you young rascal!"

"Let's see!" said Redfern meditatively. "I had a rasher."

"I had an egg," said Lawrence cheerfully.

"I had a bloater," said Owen. "You

can still scent it in the study, Monteith."

"No meat pies?"

"No, worse luck!"

"Or sausages or rabbit?"

"Devil a one!"

"And no tongue?"

"Well, I had a tongue," said Redfern.

"Ah! Well, you'll have to account for it!" growled Monteith. "Did you get it at the tuckshop?"

"No."

"At Rylcombe?"

"No."

"Did it come in a hamper?"

"No."

"Oh!" said Monteith. "Then you will kindly explain where you got it? Did one of the other fellows give it to you?"

"No."

"Then where did you get it?"

"I brought it to St. Jim's with me." Monteith stared.

"You brought that tongue to St. Jim's with you!" he ejaculated. "Do you

mean to say that a tongue has kept good all that time?"

"Yes, Monteith."

"It's impossible—unless it was tinned tongue, of course. Was it in a tin?"

"No."

"Very well; you will follow me to Mr. Ratcliff!"

"I—I say, Monteith, it was mine, you know," said Redfern.

"You can prove that to Mr. Ratcliff! He may believe that you have an untinned tongue that's kept good for whole terms—perhaps!"

"But—but it kept good all right, Monteith. I've used it every day. I—I keep it in a safe place, you see."

"Oh! And where did you keep it?"

"In my mouth."

"Your mouth?" yelled Monteith.

"Certainly! Where could I keep it? You see, it's fixed there," explained Redfern. "It—it's my own tongue I'm speaking about, you know. I—I was born with it."

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"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lawrence and Owen.

Monteith simply gasped as he realised that the Fourth Former was pulling his leg. The cheerful Reddy had been alluding to his own tongue, which certainly he had brought to St. Jim's with him.

Monteith did not laugh. He grasped Redfern by the collar.

"You cheeky young sweep!" he roared.

"Here, I say, Monteith! Yo-ow—Leggo! I say, you know—oh crumbs! Yah!"

Monteith shook the junior till the study spun round him. Then he dropped him on the rug, and stamped out of the study.

Redfern sat up and gasped.

"Oh, my hat! The silly ass! Lot of good working off first-class humour on a giddy prefect!" he groaned.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monteith strode along to Figgins' study. Figgins & Co. looked very demure as he came in, frowning.

"We had tea over in the School House, Monteith," said Kerr. "But you can look in the cupboard if you like."

"Hang your cupboard!" said Monteith. But he looked in and satisfied himself that there were no meat pies, rabbit, sausages, or tongue there. He came out of the study and met Baker, who was making for the stairs.

"Finished?" he asked.

Baker snorted.

"Yes; I've asked the kids."

"Taken their word—what?"

"Yes. Why not? If Ratty wants to track down sausages and rabbits, he can track 'em down himself!"

Baker went down to his study, grunting. Monteith hesitated a moment, and followed him. Webb followed, too. Only Sefton was left to carry on the inquiry. The bully of the Sixth was keener on the search than the other prefects.

But Sefton failed to make any discovery. He came into Monteith's study to tell the head-prefect so.

"Some of the young rascals have had the stuff," said Sefton. "But I fancy they've hidden it away somewhere."

"I don't care if they have," said Monteith. "I know we've been made to look idiots to the whole House. Some cheeky young rascal has nicknamed us already the sausage-hunters."

"I'm fed up with it," growled Baker.

"Same here," said Monteith. "I'll go and tell Ratty there's nothing doing. He can send for a detective if he likes. Perhaps Sexton Blake or Ferrers Locke might be able to track down his lost rabbit. I know I'm jolly well not going to do it!"

And Monteith repaired to Mr. Ratcliff's study with his report.

The Housemaster heard it with a dark brow.

"Then the stolen goods cannot be discovered?" he remarked.

"No, sir. As a matter of fact," said Monteith, speaking out more plainly than he usually ventured to do with his Housemaster, "it is very likely only a lark of some kid, and it seems rather strong to call it a theft."

"I did not ask your opinion about that, Monteith."

"Very well, sir," said the prefect, greatly discomfited, and he quitted the study without another word.

Mr. Ratcliff remained alone with a moody brow.

The matter was not done with yet, by any means. The New House fellows did not expect Mr. Ratcliff to let it drop; they knew him too well for that. They

were curious to know what steps he would take next.

He had spoken of punishing the whole House unless the delinquent was discovered—an act of injustice which would be rather "thick" even for Ratty.

There were two juniors who knew who the real culprit was. After the prefect's visit to their study, Figgins and Kerr taxed Fatty Wynn on the subject.

Fatty Wynn was non-committal.

"Don't you ask questions," he said. "The less you know about it, the better; old Ratty may be on your track."

"But that feed over the way," said Figgins. "There was a meat pie, a rabbit, a tongue, and sausages."

"There was," agreed Fatty.

"Then you burgled the larder. And I suppose you got Gussy to help you. That's what he was chortling about," said Kerr.

"You oughtn't to have done it, Fatty," said Figgins seriously. "You might have known that Ratty would call it stealing."

Fatty Wynn snorted.

"If I had anything, it was only what I was entitled to," he replied. "Ratty took my jam tarts and cake, didn't he? Exchange is no robbery! I didn't call him a thief when he took my grub."

"Ahem! Housemasters do these things," said Figgins.

"He's put it among the House stores," said Fatty. "That will save him money on the bills. I suppose a chap in the Fourth isn't supposed to supply the House with jam-tarts and cake, is he? One good turn deserves another. He's got my jam tarts and my cake in exchange for his stuff. What more does he want?"

"He wants you!" grinned Kerr.

"Oh rats! I'm not going to tell you fellows anything about it, either."

"Well, you couldn't tell us much more than we know already," grinned Figgins. "So that's why you got a School House chap to help you, was it? Well, I don't see what Ratty can do, so long as we keep mum. But—but I wonder what he's got in his head?"

It was not till the next morning that Figgins & Co. discovered what Mr. Ratcliff had in his head. It came as a painful shock to them.

CHAPTER 6.

Short Commons!

"WHAT'S the trouble?" The Terrible Three had come out of the School House after breakfast for a run before lessons.

They found Figgins & Co. in the quadrangle, looking decidedly glum and grim.

Fatty Wynn was almost in tears.

"Licked?" asked Manners.

Figgins shook his head.

"Worse than that!" groaned Fatty Wynn.

"Ratty again?" said Monty Lowther.

"You'd hardly believe it," said Figgins, with suppressed fury. "Fairly knocked us into a cocked hat. The larder was raided yesterday—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the chap can't be discovered—"

"Rather a fat chap, wasn't it?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Well, whoever it was, he can't be found," said Figgins. "Ratty's decided to punish the whole House—the juniors, you know—till he's found. And how do you think he's going to do it?"

"Lickings or lines?"

"Worse!" groaned Fatty. "He says the grub was raided for what he calls an orgy. What we call a study feed, Ratty calls an orgy, you know. That's like him. Well, he's going to stop our orgies. He's cut down the grub."

"My hat!"

"No rashers in the morning!" said Fatty Wynn tragically. "Only bread-and-butter and porridge."

"Well, a chap can survive on bread-and-butter and porridge," said Tom Merry comfortingly. "Lots of people live on that."

"I can't!" mumbled Fatty.

"Of course, it comes harder on Fatty," said Kerr. "Fatty could always eat enough for a dozen, you know. But that isn't all. Dinner, too—"

"He's cutting down the dinner!" said Figgins. "That's the order! All juniors in the House will have one small helping and no pudding!"

"No pudding?" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Would you believe it? No pudding!"

"Horrors on horrors' head!" said Monty Lowther sympathetically.

"And tea in the studies is going to be stopped," said Kerr. "Tea in Hall for all of us, till the chap is found out. And only bread-and-butter. No cake or jam. And the tuckshop is out of bounds now for the New House."

"Great Scott! There won't be any more orgies, that's a cert."

"We're not going to stand it!" exclaimed Figgins.

"What are you going to do?"

"Blessed if I know," Figgins had to confess. "You see, you can't scrag a Housemaster; it isn't allowed. But we're not going to starve."

"I know my health will give way," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I shan't be able to keep goal any longer. I shall gradually fade away and die."

"Well, it will take you longer to fade away than the other chaps," remarked Monty Lowther. "You'll be the sole survivor of the New House, Fatty."

"Oh, don't be funny! This isn't a joke."

"It's more dangerous for Fatty, too," said Lowther commiseratingly. "When the chaps get really sharp set, they'll notice how awfully fat Fatty is, and when it comes to cannibalism, Fatty Wynn will go first. I suppose he would last the whole House for a week."

"You silly ass!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling dummies!"

"Shush!" said Lowther. "I was going to say—"

"Oh, don't talk to me, you funny idiot!"

"I was going to say that—"

"Shut up!"

"That perhaps you'd like this toffee," said Lowther calmly.

Fatty Wynn's face cleared at once. He accepted the toffee, and it vanished in a moment. The bell for classes called the juniors in, and the discussion of the New House grievances was postponed.

But those grievances were very real and heavy.

At dinner-time in the New House the new regime was enforced.

Every hungry junior received one small helping. Pudding did not appear on the junior tables at all.

It was true that the amount of provisions supplied was sufficient to keep the juniors in health. Even Mr. Ratcliff did not care to cut it too short for that. But a bare sufficiency for the purposes of subsistence was not quite enough for hungry fellows, and, indeed, the line was drawn very sharp.

Very nearly every fellow in the House would have liked a second helping, but there were no helpings to be had. Every fellow, without exception, wanted the usual pudding. Pudding was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

The New House juniors were looking black and rebellious as they came out of the dining-room.

For the New House, the tuckshop had been placed out of bounds. In spite of the prohibition, however, there was a swarming in that direction.

But it was in vain. Dame Taggles had received her orders from Mr. Rateliff. No New House boy was to be served in the school shop.

The customers were turned away empty.

It was simply infuriating.

Glum were the faces of the New House fellows in class that afternoon. They could not even look forward to tea in the study. Tea in the study was banned.

At tea-time they marched into Hall, and sat down to the long tables. Frugal fare was placed before them, and even bread-and-butter was limited.

After tea they hung about in groups, hungry and savage, and confiding to one another what they would like to do to Ratty.

"What are you going to do about it?" Redfern demanded of Figgins.

Figgins grunted.

"What can I do?" he asked.

"Isn't that your business? You're leader."

"Bow-wow!"

"Clampe's been talking of finding out the chap who raided the larder, and giving him away to Ratty," said Redfern.

Figgins scowled ferociously. "Where's the rotten sneak?" he exclaimed. "I've got a thick ear for him!"

"He's got one already," said Redfern with a grin. "I left him dabbing his nose, too."

"Good for you, Reddy!" "I suppose you chaps don't know who it was?" said Lawrence.

"Might have been some School House chaps," said Lawrence.

"It wasn't," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then you know who it was?"

"Ahem!"

"Some of the fellows say that the chap ought to own up," remarked Owen.

"Oh, rot!" said Figgins. "That's all piffle! If Ratty would be reasonable, it would be different. But he makes out that it was dishonest to take a meat pie and a rabbit in exchange for jam tarts and a cake. He can't expect a fellow to own up if he's going to put it like that."

"To say nothing of the flogging," said Kerr. "It's rot! Ratty can't keep this up very long, anyway."

"Well, if you fellows can't find a way out of the pickle, I'm going to," said Redfern. "After all, we're top study in the New House. I've always said so."

"You've always talked out of your silly hat!" agreed Figgins.

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Look here, Reddy—"

"Cheese it!" said Kerr practically.

"No good ragging one another. You think of a way out of it, Reddy, and we'll back you up."

"Done!" said Redfern.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, Pratt?" asked Figgins, as Pratt of the Fourth came along rubbing his hands.

"Ow-wow!" gasped Pratt. "I've been through it! Wow-wow! I—I got Blake to get me some stuff from the tuckshop, as he's a School House kid—yow-ow—and Ratty found it out somehow—spying, as usual, I suppose—wow! I got three on each—yow-ow—hand, and Blake's reported to his House-master—yooop! Railton's given him a hundred lines for helping to disobey Ratty! Yooooooop!"

"Well, I suppose Railton had to," said Figgins considerably. "But what an awful beast Ratty is! I was thinking of getting Tom Merry to do some shopping for me."

"Licking if you do!" groaned Pratt.

"And lines for Tommy!" said Kerr.

"Not good enough, Figg!"

"But what's going to be done?" asked Fatty Wynn, almost wildly. "I'm frightfully hungry now—famished, in fact. What shall I feel like to-night?"

"My hat! It won't be safe to be in the dorm with you," said Lawrence.

"Something's got to be done!" roared



A cauliflower hurled by Redfern squashed in Seton's face. There was a yell of laughter as the Sixth Form bully staggered back. "Pelt him!" roared Owen. "Give him the taters!" A shower of potatoes whizzed at Seton from all sides. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,547.

Fatty Wynn. "I tell you we're not standing for it!"

"Well, it's up to us, as top study," said Redfern. "I'm going to have a big think."

"With what?" snorted Figgins.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence walked away, Reddy's brows deeply wrinkled. Apparently he had started on the "big think."

"Cheeky ass!" growled Figgins. "We've got to toe the line, that's all."

"But—I say—" mumbled Fatty Wynn.

"All your fault!" said Figgins. "What did you want to rob the larder for? Nice prospects!"

Fatty groaned at the prospects. He groaned many times that evening at prep in the study. After the feast the reckoning had come, and the reckoning was to last longer than the feast!

CHAPTER 7.

Something Like a Rag!

THE next day there were clouded brows and gleaming eyes in the New House.

The juniors were fed-up—more than fed-up.

Rebellion was not exactly feasible, but the juniors were very nearly ripe for it.

Tom Merry & Co. were sympathetic. But the School House fellows could do little.

Mr. Ratcliff was very keen. He had already discovered the "dodge" of some of the New House fellows in getting friends from the School House to make purchases for them at the tuckshop. He had come down very heavy on that dodge. Several of the School House juniors had been reported to their Housemaster for trying to help the unhappy victims of Ratty's tyranny to obtain supplies, and they had been punished.

Whether Mr. Railton approved of Ratty's conduct or not, he could not allow his boys to interfere with the regulations of the other House. And that morning he issued an order forbidding his boys to make any purchases at the school-shop, excepting with their own money, and for themselves. He could do nothing less, at the demand of Mr. Ratcliff.

That resource was knocked on the head at once. But Tom Merry & Co., anxious to help their old rivals who had fallen upon such bad times, were not easily beaten. That day a whole crowd of School House fellows issued invitations to tea to a crowd of New House fellows.

But on that point they found that Mr. Ratcliff was equal to them.

Figgins & Co. came into Study No. 6 in the School House at tea-time, looking lugubrious. They had been asked to tea, but they had not come to tea. They had come to explain that they couldn't come.

"Here you are, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus cheerily, as they came in. "Tea's nearly weady in the study. Come on!"

"Can't!" said Figgins.

"Why not, Figgy?"

"School House is out of bounds for us, so long as the new order lasts," said Figgins. "Just dropped in to tell you. We must clear now, or we shall be spotted here. Thanks all the same, Gussy, but Ratty's done us!"

"Bai Jove! What a wotten shamo!" Figgins & Co. departed hurriedly.

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But brief as their visit was, they had been spotted by Sefton, who reported them to the Housemaster. They were sent for by Mr. Ratcliff at once.

"You have broken House bounds!" said Mr. Ratcliff, taking up the cane. "Hold out your hands! You first, Figgins!"

Swish, swish, swish!

Figgins & Co. quitted Mr. Ratcliff's study, squeezing their sore hands under their arms.

Tea in Study No. 8 would have revived Fatty Wynn. He had been robbed of that happy prospect, and that was worse than the caning. Life did not seem worth living to the fat Fourth Former just then.

Figgins clenched his hands.

"Something will have to be done," he said. "This can't go on much longer."

"I—I say, Figgy, suppose I own up!"

"And get a flogging, fathead?"

"Well, a flogging wouldn't be much worse than this!" said Fatty Wynn, almost tearfully. "I'm wasting away!"

Figgins could not help grinning, angry as he was. The plump figure of David Llewellyn Wynn showed no signs, so far, of wasting away. His plump cheeks were as round and rosy as ever.

"You can grin!" mumbled Fatty. "You don't know what I'm suffering. I've got an aching void. I know now what they feel like in open boats at sea."

"You're not going to own up!" said Figgins decidedly. "We're not going

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to give in to Ratty like that. Look here! We'll put it to the fellows, and make a regular protest at tea-time. That ass Reddy says it's up to him. Well, I think it's up to us, and we're going to take the bull by the horns."

"I'd rather take Ratty by the neck!" mumbled Wynn.

"There'll be a row, Figgy," said Kerr.

"Chance it!" said Figgins.

"Oh, all serene!"

Rebellion was smouldering among the juniors, and Figgins found a good many of the fellows prepared to back him up.

The New House Fourth Formers looked very determined when they went into Hall to tea. Mr. Ratcliff was there, at the senior table, where plenty reigned, as usual. Figgins stood up, instead of sitting down, and the rest of the Fourth followed his example. Baker, the prefect, who took the head of the Fourth Form table, stared at them.

"Sit down!" he snapped.

The juniors remained standing.

"We want to speak to Mr. Ratcliff," said Figgins.

"Rubbish! Sit down!"

Mr. Ratcliff glanced round and rose to his feet. The look on his face made some of the juniors wish that they had sat down. But Figgins & Co. stood firm.

"What is it, Figgins?"

"If you please, sir, we wish to protest!" said Figgins, a little surprised at his own audacity.

"What?"

"We're tired of going short of food, sir. We protest!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Ratcliff icily.

"You protest, Figgins? Am I to understand that all the juniors who are standing up protest also?"

"Yes, sir!" said a chorus of voices.

"Very well. Each of you will stay in on Saturday afternoon and write out five hundred lines of Virgil. Now sit down."

The Fourth Formers simply collapsed into their seats.

The frugal tea was disposed of, amid furious whispers and burning glances.

In silence the Fourth Form marched out after tea.

"Ripping wheeze—I don't think!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Five hundred lines and a gating—my hat!"

"For goodness' sake, Figgins, don't let's have any more of your wheezes!" said Pratt.

"Of all the fatheads!" said Digges.

"Of all the duffers!"

"Of all the idiots!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Redfern.

"What's the good of jawing Figgy? It was a good idea, and I backed him up. But it was N.G."

"N. blessed G.!" groaned Fatty Wynn.

"I'm not going to stay in on Saturday afternoon!" said Figgins, between his teeth. "And I'm not going to write out five hundred lines!"

"You've got to, ass!" said Lawrence.

"Well, I won't!"

"We'll have to strike against gatings and lines," said Kerr. "We shall have to come to grips with Ratty sooner or later. May as well be sooner."

"Blow Saturday afternoon!" said Fatty Wynn. "I shall be dead before Saturday afternoon, if this goes on. I'm hungry!"

Redfern drew a deep breath.

"I've got an idea—" he began.

"Go and boil it!" said Figgins ungraciously.

"Who'll back me up?" said Redfern. "Dash it all, Figgy, I backed up your giddy protest, and it wasn't much good, was it? I've kept my idea back to give yours a chance."

"Let's hear it," said Figgins more amicably; "anything up against Ratty and I'm your man."

"Gentlemen," said Redfern, looking round at the angry and excited Fourth Formers, "I'm going down to the bunshop in Rylcombe to have the biggest tea they can provide. I invite you all to join me."

"Bunshop's been put out of bounds," said Lawrence.

"Can't be helped. I'm going. Who's coming with me? We'll have the biggest feed of the term!"

"And who will pay for it?" asked Pratt.

"Ratty!"

"What?"

"That's the idea," said Redfern calmly. "The scheme is to order heaps of everything, first-class, as much as we can eat, and tell them to send the bill in to Ratty. We'll explain that it's Ratty's treat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, what a rag! What a ripping rag! I'm your man!"

"Hurrah!" choried Fatty Wynn.

"Bravo, Reddy!"

"There'll be a fearful row!" said Pratt.

"Let there be! We can stand a row, with a good feed inside us, and plenty in our pockets for to-morrow. Besides,

it will be worth something to see Ratty's face when the bill comes in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Whose game?" demanded Redfern.
"You and I and all of us!" chortled Figgins. "Come on!"
"Hurrah!"

There was hardly a fellow who hung back from Reddy's daring scheme. The juniors were all ripe for revolt. The news of Redfern's rag spread like wildfire, and crowds of New House juniors rolled up to join in the army that was destined to invade the Rylcombe bunshop.

Fourth, Third, and Shell, and even fags of the Second, joined heartily in the scheme. Within a quarter of an hour after tea-time the New House was deserted, save by the seniors.

Redfern of the Fourth, with at least seventy fellows at his back, was marching on the bunshop.

CHAPTER 8.

Ratty's Treat!

MR. BUNN looked surprised. Mr. Bunn's handsome and up-to-date establishment in Rylcombe was frequently patronised by the St. Jim's fellows, and on half-holidays the juniors often came there in crowds. But seventy fellows at a time was an unusually large order.

Mr. Bunn rubbed his plump hands, and smiled in anticipation of an unusual rush of business.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Bunn!" said Redfern cheerily.

"Good-afternoon, young gentlemen!" smiled Mr. Bunn.

"Rather a lot of us—what?" said Redfern. "It's a treat, you know—a school treat. Our Housemaster's treat."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; Mr. Ratcliff is standing us a treat," explained Redfern.

"Very kind of Mr. Ratcliff, I'm sure."

"Oh, he's kindness itself," said Redfern—in his own way, you know! Sit down, you fellows, and order what you like."

There were a good many tables in the bunshop, but the accommodation was somewhat taxed by the numbers of the New House army.

But all the juniors found places, and they proceeded to give their orders with a liberality that delighted the heart of Mr. Bunn.

"Put it all down on one bill, please," Redfern said to that gentleman. "Now, you fellows, give your orders."

Orders poured in.

As Mr. Ratcliff was to pay—though he was not yet aware of it—there was no reason for the feasters to stint themselves.

Mr. Bunn and Miss Bunn and the old waiter were kept very busy during the next half-hour.

Fatty Wynn's face beamed like a full moon.

The feasters started with solids—such as rabbit, and meat pies, and ham and tongues, and eggs and sausages, and savoyes.

Mr. Bunn's stock of those comestibles soon ran short. The hungry juniors had long privations to make up for, and they made up for them with a vengeance.

From the more solid articles of diet they proceeded to lighter forms of pastry and preserves, fruits and sweets and cakes.

The tables almost groaned under the weight of the good things.

The amount of cakes and jam-tarts a hungry junior could consume when the bill was going to somebody else was astonishing.

Jam tarts ran out, and so did dough-nuts and cream puffs. Fortunately, there were plenty of cakes. Five-shilling cakes vanished like twopenny ones. Expensive jars of preserves were emptied as if the company was composed exclusively of millionaires.

When the keen edge was taken off their appetites, the juniors toyed with meringues and candied fruits.

Mr. Bunn was keeping a careful account of the goods supplied.

Once he had ventured to hint to Redfern that the bill was running up to a high figure. That was when it touched five pounds. But Redfern assured him

that it was a matter of not the slightest moment. Mr. Ratcliff was standing that treat, and he would say just the same whether the feed came to five pounds or fifteen. Which was certainly quite correct. But what Mr. Ratcliff was likely to say Redfern did not confide to Mr. Bunn.

"I say, you chaps, isn't it spiffing?" said Fatty Wynn dreamily, as he slowly consumed big chunks of pipe-apple. "I've actually eaten all I can hold—I have, really! I can hardly get rid of this pineapple. Have some pine, Reddy?"

"Thanks, I got some!" grinned Redfern.

"I rather like this preserved ginger," remarked Lawrence. "I believe it comes rather expensive. We're in luck."

"These jars of candied fruits are ripping," said Owen. "We can't afford them, as a rule. I think they're half a crown each. I know we've had more than ten of them so far. I've put one in my pocket."

"Shove some stuff into your pockets, Fatty!" said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn shook his head sadly.

"Can't," he said; "they're full already."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's why I put on my overcoat," remarked Pratt. "May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and we've got the rest of the week to

think of. I know I've got more than ten bob's worth in these pockets."

"Who says ginger-pop?"

"Pop!"

"Jolly good mind to make it champagne!" grinned Redfern.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time we got moving," said Figgins presently. "We mustn't miss calling-over. We don't want to give Ratty an excuse for finding fault with us, especially after he's stood us this ripping feed."

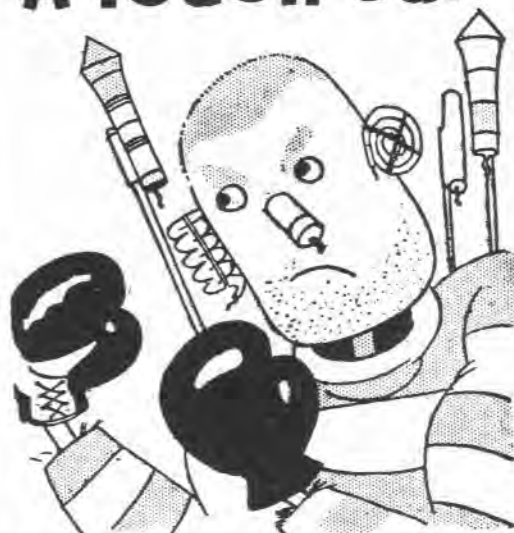
"No fear! Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall have to roll Fatty home like a barrel," said Redfern. "I believe he weighs half a ton more than usual."

"I think I could do with some more

(Continued on the next page.)

A TOUGH GUY-



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jam tarts," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "I can eat them going home, you know. A walk will set me up again."

"Don't spare the tommy!" said Redfern hospitably. "A dozen jam tarts for Wynn, please, Miss Bunn."

"Tarts have run out," said Miss Bunn, smiling. "But—"

"Oh, chocolate eclairs and meringues will do! Fatty isn't particular, so long as there's plenty."

"Some more pineapple for me," said Owen.

"I'll take a dozen meringues."

"I'll have a couple of tins of sardines, please."

The New House juniors really showed great presence of mind. Thoroughly satisfied as they were, they realised that they would be hungry again on the morrow. By the time they prepared to leave, their pockets were nearly bursting.

Those who had been thoughtful enough to bring their overcoats congratulated themselves. Every pocket at that moment had a distinct value.

"Well, I suppose we'd better slide," said Redfern regretfully. "It seems a pity to leave a land of plenty like this—a land flowing in milk and honey. How much does the bill come to, Mr. Bunn?"

"Eighteen pounds ten shillings, Master Redfern," said Mr. Bunn, in almost an awed voice.

Some of the juniors gasped a little. They knew that the bill must have been going up by leaps and bounds. But eighteen pounds ten—it was a staggering total. What would Mr. Ratcliff say?

It was rather too late to think of what Mr. Ratcliff would say. The deed had been done.

Redfern, however, was not in the least abashed.

"Is that all?" he asked, with an air of surprise. "It seems to me that we've had a jolly good feed at that figure."

"We have," said Figgins. "We shall come and see you again, Mr. Bunn."

Yes, rather—next time Ratty stands treat!" chuckled Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure that's all right, Mr. Bunn?" asked Redfern. "We're not particular to a bob or two. Our generous Housemaster is paying, you know."

Mr. Bunn smiled.

"That is quite correct, Master Redfern—eighteen pounds ten shillings."

"Right-ho! Send it in to Mr. Ratcliff to-morrow."

"Ahem! You do not wish to settle now?"

"Mr. Ratcliff didn't hand us the money," explained Redfern. "You send the bill in to him. That's all right."

"Very well, Master Redfern."

"Mind he gets it by the first post in the morning," said Redfern. "Ratty—I mean Mr. Ratcliff—is very particular about his bills. He never likes to have accounts hanging about."

"I will post it to-night, Master Redfern."

"Good! Come on, you fellows! Good-night, Mr. Bunn!"

"Good-night, young gentlemen!"

Redfern and his army marched out of the bunshop. They left it very bare of provisions.

"I feel better now," remarked Redfern, as they went down the village street. "How do you feel, Fatty?"

"Lovely!" said Fatty Wynn. "Don't

walk so fast, you fellows. I—I'd rather go a bit slowly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Most of the party felt inclined to go a bit slowly. They arrived at St. Jim's as Taggles was about to lock the gates, and marched in.

They turned up for calling-over with smiling faces.

In the New House junior dormitory that night there was a surreptitious feed, appetites having revived by that time. But there was still a good deal left over for the morning. And if some of the fellows suffered from indigestion, they felt that they were suffering in a good cause.

But they could not help wondering what Mr. Ratcliff would say on the morrow. It was certain to be something very emphatic.

CHAPTER 9.

The Little Bill!

"RIDICULOUS!"

Mr. Ratcliff uttered that ejaculation at the breakfast-table.

He had been opening his letters, and among them was one from Mr. Bunn, of Rylcombe. The letter contained an account of eighteen pounds ten shillings for eatables supplied to young gentlemen of the New House at Mr. Ratcliff's order.

The Housemaster could scarcely believe his eyes at first.

Unless Mr. Bunn was intoxicated or insane, there seemed no way of accounting for that extraordinary demand.

"Ridiculous!" repeated Mr. Ratcliff angrily.

He rose from the breakfast-table and hurried to his study, and rang up Mr. Bunn on the telephone, determined to have the matter out at once.

Mr. Bunn, however, was not yet up, and the Housemaster was baffled.

He had to leave the elucidation of the mystery till after lessons. During the morning Mr. Ratcliff was in a very ill-humour. That extraordinary claim for eighteen pounds ten shillings worried him.

The Fifth Form, who had the honour of possessing Mr. Ratcliff as Form-master, found him even more acid than usual that morning.

Cutts of the Fifth confided to St. Leger that he would give a "pony" to "dot" the master of the Fifth on the "boko." And Cutts immediately received a hundred lines for talking in class.

After morning lessons Mr. Ratcliff rustled out of the Form-room, and hurried to his own House. A crowd of New House juniors watched him whisking across the quad, and exchanged glances. There were feelings of apprehension now.

They knew that Mr. Ratcliff had received the bill for that extensive feed. What was to happen next they did not know, but they anticipated that it would be something in the nature of an earthquake.

Tom Merry & Co. had learned of Redfern's rag, and they approved highly. But they looked for trouble for their friends of the New House.

"Watty will be feafully waxy," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "It wowwies him awfully to have to part with money."

"He won't pay!" said Blake.

"He'll have to," said Redfern. "I suppose Bunn won't go without his money, will he?"

"It was Ratty's treat, you know," said Figgins.

"It was wippin'—simply wippin'!"



With Mr. Ratcliff in his path, Redfern lowered his head on his third waistcoat button, and, with a gasp,

said Arthur Augustus. "But there will be a feaful wow!"

Meanwhile, Mr. Ratcliff was on the telephone again. This time he succeeded in getting through to the bunshop. Mr. Bunn's wheezy voice answered him over the phone.

"Is that Mr. Bunn speaking?" rapped out the Housemaster.

"Yes."

"I am Mr. Ratcliff."

"Oh, good-morning, Mr. Ratcliff! I hope you are well this morning!" came Mr. Bunn's affable voice.

"You have sent me a bill."

"Yes—eighteen pounds ten shillings, sir. I hope you have found it quite correct. A list of items will be supplied if you wish."

"It is an absurd imposition, sir."

"Wh-a-at!"

"What do you mean by sending this ridiculous bill to me?" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff in a voice that almost made the telephone jump. "I have ordered nothing from you!"

"Dear me!"

"What does it mean? I insist upon an explanation at once!"

"The goods were supplied to the young gentlemen yesterday, sir. Master Redfern informed me you were paying."

"Master Redfern!"

"Certainly. I trust all is correct."

"I will certainly be more careful on another occasion, Mr. Ratcliff. I naturally had no doubts in the matter, as Master Redfern assured me—"

"That is your own affair, sir! I shall not pay this bill."

"Ahem!"

"Not a shilling! Not a halfpenny, sir!"

"As the goods were ordered and supplied in your name, Mr. Ratcliff—"

"I gave the boy Redfern no authority for ordering them, and accept no responsibility—none whatever!"

"Excuse me," came Mr. Bunn's voice, quietly, but very firmly, "the responsibility is yours. On more than one occasion I have supplied you with goods, which were fetched by a boy with a statement that they were to be charged to you."

"That is quite different. When I send a boy on an errand, sir, he has my authority. In this case, there was nothing of the kind."

"How was I to know that?" demanded Mr. Bunn. "Only last week Master Pratt came to me for biscuits, stating that he had been sent by you, and you accepted the bill in the usual way."

"That is quite different. I sent Master Pratt on that occasion."

"Very well! And I concluded that you sent Master Redfern in a similar manner."

"You were mistaken, and I shall certainly not pay for your mistake. I will not pay one shilling."

"I trust, sir, that you will reconsider that decision. I cannot, of course, afford to lose such a sum, and I fear that it would be hopeless to attempt to recover it from the boys. I hold you responsible."

"Nonsense!" roared Mr. Ratcliff. "I will pay nothing!"

"If you maintain that attitude, sir, it will only remain for the matter to be tested in the County Court."

"Wh-a-a-t!"

"I should be sorry to take such a step, sir, but you leave me no alternative," purred Mr. Bunn.

"Sir! How dare you! The County Court! You are a rascal!"

"Eh?"

"Rascal!" raved Mr. Ratcliff, "That, sir, is my opinion of you. You have probably concocted the whole scheme with the boys!"

"Oh!" Mr. Bunn's voice was very acid now. "If you care to put that statement into writing, Mr. Ratcliff, instead of slandering me upon the telephone, I shall certainly have you served with a writ for libel. Since you take this view of the matter, I decline any further personal communication with you. You will hear from my solicitor in due course."

And Mr. Bunn rang off abruptly.

"Listen to me!" Mr. Ratcliff shouted into the telephone. "I tell you—are you there? Mr. Bunn, do you hear

me? Bless my soul, the unmitigated scoundrel has rung off!"

Mr. Ratcliff jammed the receiver savagely on the hooks. Then he paced up and down his study for some minutes, almost palpitating with rage.

Evidently he was to hear from Mr. Bunn's solicitor, and a summons to the County Court would follow. The worry of such proceedings would be unendurable. In spite of his rage, Mr. Ratcliff had to acknowledge that the bunshop proprietor had a good case.

On special occasions, when he had visitors, for example, Mr. Ratcliff would send a fag down to Mr. Bunn for some delicacy, which was charged to him, and paid for in due course. He had not been accustomed to sending written orders. Therefore, Mr. Bunn had a full right to assume that Redfern's extensive orders had his Housemaster's sanction.

On the other hand, Mr. Ratcliff would disclaim having authorised this especial order, so he also had a pretty good case. The decision would probably be a matter of chance, depending on the personal humour of the judge.

In any case, whether he won or lost the action, the Housemaster would become an object of ridicule. The whole county would read it in the local papers, and laugh over the trick his boys had played him.

Legal aid would be required, too, and that would cost money; and even if he won the case, he would probably not get his costs. In any event, he would be time and money out of pocket—the result of most legal proceedings for everyone concerned, excepting lawyers.

"It is infamous!" stuttered Mr. Ratcliff. "I have no time for County Courts! Bless my soul! Such institutions ought to be abolished. Any idle rascal with plenty of time on his hands may bring an action against a busy man who has no time for such things—and win, too! It is nothing better than blackmail. The law is very seriously in need of reform—very seriously indeed. County Court, indeed! Impudent rascal! And as for Redfern—as for that young rascal—"

Mr. Ratcliff almost choked.

He rang the bell violently. The House page came in answer to the summons, and he looked alarmed at the expression on Mr. Ratcliff's face.

"Find Master Redfern at once and bring him to me!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff.

"Oh lor'—I—I mean, yes, sir!"

And the startled page fairly bolted!

CHAPTER 10.

Open Rebellion!

"ALL together!" said Figgins.

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll back you up, Reddy!" Redfern of the Fourth had received Mr. Ratcliff's summons to the study. Redfern was looking rather serious; but he was quite cool. He knew that he could depend for support upon most of the fellows who had joined in the "rag." Even if Mr. Ratcliff carried the matter before the Head, they could not "sack" all the juniors of the New House.

"We'll all go together," said Kerr.

"I'm with you," said Lawrence.

"Same here!"

"And here!"

"All together!" repeated Figgins.

"Lead on, Reddy! Here we go, like giddy Daniels into the lion's den!"

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met the Housemaster. His head smote Mr. Ratcliff like New Housemaster went over like a skittle!

"Nonsense! Do you mean to say that you supplied Master Redfern with goods to the value of eighteen pounds ten shillings?"

"Master Redfern and the others, sir. There were about seventy in all."

"Seventy?" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes. I understood that it was a kind of school treaty, and that all expenses were being borne by yourself."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Ratcliff was almost dazed for some moments. He could not suppose that Mr. Bunn was "pulling his leg." But it was almost incredible that Redfern & Co. had been guilty of such an amazing freak.

"You—you should not have supplied the goods without my personal or written order!" he exclaimed at last.

Twenty juniors, at least, followed Redfern to Mr. Ratcliff's study. They arrived in a crowd at the study door, and Redfern tapped.

"Come in!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

Redfern threw open the door.

Mr. Ratcliff's eyes fairly burned at him. His glance passed Redfern, and fell upon the rest of the juniors.

"I sent for Redfern," he snapped. "I do not require the rest, at present, though you will all be severely punished. You may go."

The juniors stood their ground.

"We're all in it, sir," said Figgins.

"Every one of us, sir," said Fatty Wynn.

"Silence! Redfern, I have received a bill from Mr. Bunn, for goods supplied to you, ordered in my name."

"Yes, sir," said Redfern.

"You used my name in ordering food from Mr. Bunn?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Redfern coolly. "Naturally, sir, as you are my Housemaster, I told Mr. Bunn to send the bill to you. I hope it is correct, sir."

"You have dared to use my name in ordering food!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "You have the effrontery to admit it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Redfern, you will be flogged for this, and the bill will be sent to your parents."

"My parents won't pay it, sir. I don't suppose they could," said Redfern calmly. "They're not rich."

"Then the sum will be equally divided among the boys who joined you in that disgusting orgy, and paid equally by their parents."

"Indeed, sir!" said Kerr. "Then I shall write to my father about it. He will have a counter claim to make."

"What? What do you mean, Kerr?"

"I mean that my father pays for my meals here, and they have been cut down, sir," said the Scottish junior calmly. "My father is a business man, sir. If he pays for what I have to get out of doors he will expect restitution to be made of the money he has paid for my meals in this House."

"Kerr, how dare you!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "You shall be flogged, as well as Redfern!"

Kerr shrugged his shoulders.

"Every boy who shared in this orgy shall be flogged!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "Redfern, take that pen and write down a list of their names."

Redfern did not move.

"Do you hear me, Redfern?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you intend to add disobedience to your other rascalities?" fumed Mr. Ratcliff. "Very well! I shall bring you to reason, Redfern. You are dangerously near being expelled from the school, Redfern!"

"That rests with the Head, sir," said Redfern. "I am quite ready to go before Dr. Holmes."

"So are we all, sir," said Kerr.

"Hear, hear!" came from the passage.

Mr. Ratcliff gritted his teeth. He certainly did not wish the matter to go before the Head. He knew how little Dr. Holmes was likely to approve his system of cutting down meals. That kind of punishment was not at all in accordance with the Head's ideas. The juniors knew it, too.

"You will all go into Hall at once!" he said between his teeth. "Figgins, go and fetch Taggles immediately. Go!"

The juniors went.

They did not go into Hall, however. They marched out into the quadrangle.

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Five minutes later Mr. Ratcliff came striding into Hall, with a cane in his hand. He expected to find the delinquents there, and Taggles, the porter, on the spot, ready to "hoist" them for punishment.

Hall was empty!

Mr. Ratcliff stared round him, hardly believing his eyes. His orders had been disobeyed. Not a single junior had turned up for flogging.

It was open rebellion now and Mr. Ratcliff was a little nonplussed. Not that he thought for a moment of receding from the position he had taken up. Opposition only made him all the more obstinate. And, indeed, he had gone rather too far to recede now.

He hurried out and called Monteith and Sefton.

"Please find Redfern at once, and bring him to me—by force, if necessary," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Bring Lawrence, Owen, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn also. The others I will deal with later. You are authorised to use force, if necessary!"

"Oh!" said Monteith.

Sefton only stared.

"Don't waste time—I'm waiting!"

snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Very well, sir."

The two prefects quitted the New House and looked round the quad-



"Marvellous the way the old car pulls! You'd never think we had a caravan behind us!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Ellis, Chauffeur's Cottage, Rowney Bury, Harlow, Essex.

rangle. On the School House side there was a crowd of New House fellows talking excitedly together. Tom Merry & Co. were with them. The two prefects approached the group.

"You're wanted," said Monteith.

"Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. Follow me at once!"

"Sorry!" said Redfern.

"Can't be did!" said Figgins.

"What's that?"

"We're not going to be flogged!"

"What? You refuse to come?" exclaimed Monteith.

"Yes."

"We're fed up!" shouted Fatty Wynn. "We've had enough of it. Tell Ratty to go and eat coke!"

"Wynn!"

"Look here, you've got to come!" exclaimed Sefton. "Mr. Ratcliff told us to use force, if necessary. Are you coming?"

"Rats!"

"Buzz off, Sefton!"

Sefton promptly seized Redfern by the collar. Five or six juniors fastened upon the bully of the Sixth at once, and

he was dragged away from Redfern and sent spinning. He collapsed on the ground with a roar.

"My hat!" ejaculated Monteith. "You kids are only making matters worse for yourselves, you know!"

"We'll chance that," said Figgins. "Ratty's got no right to starve us, and flog us because we send out for tommy. We're fed up. We'd rather be sacked all round than put up with it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus. "I quite approve. Bwiton's nevah shall be slaves, you know. I weward Watty as a beast!"

Sefton picked himself up, dusty and rumpled, and with a face like a demon. He tramped off to the New House without seeking to try conclusions any further with the rebels.

Monteith hesitated a few moments, and then followed him. Mr. Ratcliff had authorised him to use force, certainly, but he had not explained how force was to be used by one prefect against a score of determined juniors.

"Well, we're in for it now!" said Redfern. "I wonder what Ratty will try next? He will have to take it to the Head."

"Bet you he won't do that!" said Tom Merry sagely. "He won't want the Head to know what he's been doing."

"Wathah not. Dr. Holmes is an old sport deah boys, and he would not approve of Watty's trusany!"

"Well, we're going to stick it out," said Figgins. "We're fed up. Britons never shall be slaves!"

"Hear, hear!"

"They can't sack half the school, anyway," said Blake.

"That's one comfort," grinned Redfern.

But the New House rebels waited rather anxiously for Mr. Ratcliff's next move. They felt that they were in the right, but a defiance of constitutional authority was a decidedly serious step.

But there was no "next move" from Mr. Ratcliff. The fact was that the New House master was puzzled and perplexed, and did not know in the least how to deal with the storm he had raised. He was taking his time to think it over. Meanwhile, the bell rang for dinner.

"Are we staying out?" Redfern asked dubiously.

"No jolly fear!" said Fatty Wynn promptly. "I'm not going to miss dinner. And look here! We're going to have a real dinner to-day. No more short commons for me!"

"Hear, hear!"

The fact that the rebels had not yet been dealt with was a sign of weakness on the part of the New House tyrant, and the rebels realised it quite clearly. It encouraged them, as was natural. And they marched into the New House in a body—fully determined that Mr. Ratcliff's new regulations concerning meals should be cast to the winds.

CHAPTER 11.

Mr. Ratcliff's Little Game!

MR. RATCLIFF was not in the dining-room.

Perhaps, in the peculiar circumstances, he did not care to face the fellows who had defied his orders, and who had, so far, escaped scot free.

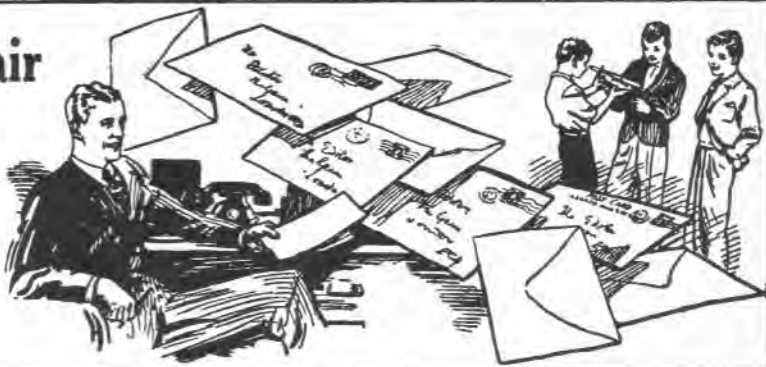
He was taking his lunch in his study.

The rebels sat down to their tables in a truculent mood. Mr. Ratcliff's failure

(Continued on page 18.)

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal.
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
Fleetway House, Farring-
don Street, London, E.C.4.



HALLO, Chums! I've got so many grand things to tell you about this week that I really don't know where to start. Firstly, however, what do you think of the GEM's Free Gifts? Ripping, aren't they? Every reader, I am sure, will be very eager to get the splendid packet of Foreign Stamps and the 100 Stamp Hinges presented Free next week.

The stamps are all specially selected for the GEM, and among them will be found several recent pictorial issues which will be new to experienced collectors. Readers who are stamp enthusiasts will thus have an excellent opportunity of filling up free some of the blank in their albums. While for those readers who are not philatelists here is a great chance to start this interesting hobby.

Stamp collecting has never been more popular than it is to-day, and its fascination is never-ending. Stamps bring you glimpses of far-off countries, and increase in the most interesting way your knowledge of the people who inhabit them. There are air stamps, commemorating great flights—Lindbergh's crossing of the Atlantic, and the opening of the trans-Pacific airway; stamps showing streamlined trains, athletes, animals, and a thousand-and-one intriguing subjects.

A BARGAIN OFFER!

Join the ever-growing army of stamp collectors—and make a start with the GEM's free stamps next Wednesday. The following Wednesday there will be another grand packet of stamps in the old paper for you.

But that is not all. In next week's issue will also be found full particulars of a wonderful offer the GEM is making to its readers. It is a Stamp Collector's Outfit, comprising a "Sterling" Stamp Album, with spaces for 6,400 stamps, a Swap Book, 500 Ever-ready Folded Hinges, a Magnifying Glass, and a pair of Tweezers. This is a bargain offer

much too good to be missed. See that you don't miss it.

"THE TOFF'S DARK HOUR!"

It is only fitting that an extra-special programme of stories and new features should be arranged to mark the presentation of free gifts. This I have done to my complete satisfaction, and, I feel sure, to the ultimate satisfaction of all readers.

The powerful St. Jim's story, the first of a great series, bears the above title. It introduces that popular character Reginald Talbot, the one-time schoolboy-crackman, and tells how once again the shadow of the past darkens his life at St. Jim's.

It comes as a shock to Talbot when he meets at Rylcombe Station an old friend of his underworld days—Marie Rivers, the daughter of the Professor and his accomplice in crime. But it is an even greater shock to the junior when he learns that Marie's father has also come to Rylcombe, and that Marie herself is taking up a post as nurse at St. Jim's!

It is obvious to Talbot that the crackman and his daughter are not there for their health! Is the robbery of St. Jim's their object? If so, what can Talbot do? He cannot find it in him to expose Marie, for he owes her a debt of gratitude. Yet he is determined to prevent his benefactor, Dr. Holmes, from being robbed. He is torn between loyalty and friendship.

Martin Clifford tells this dramatic story in his most forceful and compelling style, and readers will enjoy every moment of it.

"BILLY BUNTER'S RAID!"

In contrast to the St. Jim's yarn,

PEN PALS COUPON

9-10-37

Daniel Gwira, P.O. Box 104, Sekanell, Gold Coast; sports, art; overseas.

Kwaku Mensah, 2, Ekyaa House, Winneba, Gold Coast, W. Africa; stamps; age 16-20.

James Oyetenji, P.O. Box 131, Sekanell, Gold Coast; art, sports.

James Quandt, P.O. Box 104, Sekanell, Gold Coast; age 10-16; football.

D. Hewlett, 10, Malpas Drive, W. Timperley, Cheshire; pen pals; age 15-18; Los Angeles.

W. Elston, 10, Hamilton Rd., Thornton Heath, Surrey; stamps; overseas.

Miss A. Elford, Conrad's Cottage, Oakdale Estate, Northumberland Rd., Bellville, C.P., South Africa; girl correspondents; age 20.

W. Fritsch, 15, Nelson Ave., Cambridge, South Africa; stamps; any country except England, Canada, U.S.A., Australia.

this sparkling Greyfriars story is full of lighthearted fun and laughter.

There is very little Billy Bunter wouldn't do to get a feed, but it is something new for the Owl, who is not of the stuff of which heroes are made, to suggest raiding one from the rivals of the Remove—the aliens of the Foreign Academy. Under his leadership, which to Bunter's idea means directing operations from a safe place, the Owl has difficulty in finding backers. But Bulstrode & Co. come to the rescue, whether from a kindly motive or from a desire to pull Bunter's leg remains to be seen!

Frank Richards is at his brightest and best in telling this tiptop tale, which means that readers are booked for a grand treat.

"LAUGH THESE OFF!"

In recent weeks I have received many requests from readers for two particular features—the return of Monty Lowther's fun corner and a portrait gallery of the principal St. Jim's characters. In next week's free gift number both these features will be introduced. Monty Lowther will entertain you with all the best wisecracks and jokes of the week—and, believe me, you'll enjoy yourselves laughing them off with Lowther!—while the portrait depicting Monty himself is coupled with a poem by the St. Jim's rhymester.

Another full-of-hints stamp article by our expert, which tells readers how to identify stamps, and four more illustrated jokes, for which the senders are awarded half-a-crown, sets the seal on this great number.

All that remains for me to say is, do yours truly a favour by recommending the GEM to all your friends—and don't forget to order early.

All the best, chums!

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS

A feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest with each other. Readers wishing to reply to notices appearing here must write to the advertiser direct. Notices for publication should be accompanied by the coupon on this page, and be posted to the GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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to deal with them gave them a sense of power in their hands.

They knew very well that Mr. Railton of the School House would have dealt very promptly with insubordination in his House—very promptly and effectively.

But then Mr. Railton would never have exasperated his boys into mutiny in the first place. He was too well respected for any School House fellow to think of defying his authority. If Mr. Ratcliff was not equally respected he had only himself to thank.

There was not the usual order and quietness at the junior tables. Dinner was accompanied by a buzz of talk and laughter. Some of the fellows sat on the tables instead of chairs.

Monteith, as head prefect, was bound to keep order, but he did not interfere. He knew that now the juniors had broken out his orders would not be regarded.

He was very far, too, from approving of his Housemaster's actions. He did not feel inclined to enter into a rowdy contest with excited juniors in support of a master who had himself abandoned the task.

The other prefects followed his example, with the exception of Sefton. Sefton strode up to the Fourth Form table.

"Get away from the table at once, Lawrence!" he rapped out.

Lawrence looked at him coolly. After bearding his Housemaster, so to speak, he was not likely to be afraid of Sefton.

"Go and eat coke!" he replied cheerfully.

Sefton gripped him by the collar. Lawrence promptly snatched up a plate, and Sefton let him go, and dodged back just in time to escape having a plate broken on his head.

A hot potato whizzed from Figgins' hand, and caught Sefton on the nose. It was followed by a whole cauliflower from Redfern, which squashed in the Sixth Form bully's face.

There was a yell of laughter as Sefton staggered back, spluttering.

"Pelt him!" roared Owen.

"Give him the taters!"

"Give him the gravy!"

"Hurrah!"

Sefton fairly fled under a shower of missiles. Potatoes followed him in a volley, smashing all over him.

"Come back and have some more!" roared Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sefton did not come back. He did not want any more.

The juniors proceeded gleefully with their dinner. It was not a case of a single helping this time. They helped themselves—and there were many helpings; and Fatty Wynn did not leave off till the table was clear.

"Now what price pudding?" exclaimed Redfern.

"We're jolly well going to have pudding, of course!" said Fatty Wynn. "Bag it when it comes in for the seniors."

"Good egg!"

A huge plum pudding was brought in for the senior table. There was a rush of juniors as it appeared, and it was captured, and taken to the Fourth Form table. Fourth and Third and Shell gathered round and helped themselves.

Monteith rose to his feet. But he contented himself with ordering another pudding to be brought in for his table. It was past the powers of Monteith or anyone else to recover that pudding.

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from the hands of the raiders. It was already disappearing at record speed.

Still Mr. Ratcliff did not appear.

The din in the dining-room must have reached his ears; but he still lay low. He was completely at a loss. The only resource that appeared open to him was to call in the authority of the Head.

But he was naturally loth to take that step. He did not desire to confess that he could not keep order in his own House—which was what he was appointed for. And he was uneasily conscious of the fact that the Head would not approve of his line of conduct. Punishing the whole House for the fault of one unknown culprit could not be called just; and his method of punishment was very questionable.

Exactly what he was to do was a mystery. But he was not in the least inclined to make concessions. Punishment, and still more punishment, was all that he could think of.

The dining-room was in an uproar. Some of the juniors were playing leapfrog among the tables. But they crowded out into the quadrangle at last, laughing and cheering, immensely encouraged by the inaction of the Housemaster.

"Hallo! You look pretty cheery," said Tom Merry, as he met them in the quad.

"We've had a ripping feed!" grinned Fatty Wynn. "All there was on the table—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the seniors' pudding," chortled Redfern—"we bagged it, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what is Ratty doing?" demanded Blake.

"Nothing."

"My hat!"

"Pewpaws Watty realises that he is in the w'ong, and is w'epent'!" suggested Arthur Augustus.

"No jolly fear!" said Figgins. "What the old boy realises is that he can't handle us. He's beaten to the wide."

Nothing had been seen of Mr. Ratcliff when the bell rang for afternoon lessons. Clampe of the Shell suggested cutting lessons, but Figgins promptly vetoed that suggestion.

"We don't want to slack, and we don't want to put ourselves in the wrong," he said. "Get into the Form-room."

"I'm jolly well staying out!" said Clampe.

"You'll stay out with a thick ear if you do!" said Figgins autocritically.

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Oh, come on!" said Figgins, and he took Clampe playfully by the collar and ran him into the Shell Form Room.

Clampe, on second thoughts, was glad that he had turned up for lessons. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was not a master to be trifled with.

Figgins & Co. marched cheerily into the Fourth Form Room with Study No. 6. They were as good as gold at lessons; Mr. Lathom had no fault to find with them.

The wisdom of Figgins' advice was quite appreciated by most of his comrades. If the matter came before the Head, it had to be established that the rebels had only "backed up" against tyranny in their own House. At lessons they were on their best behaviour. Indeed, Mr. Lathom specially commended Redfern in class.

During afternoon lessons the rebels could not help wondering what Mr. Ratcliff was thinking of. It was impossible for the Housemaster to allow matters to remain as they were. He

was taking the Fifth as usual that afternoon. Figgins felt compassion for the Fifth. The Fifth Formers were pretty certain to be getting the keenest edge of Ratty's tongue.

Last lesson was in progress in the Fourth Form Room when Toby, the School House page, came in with a message for Mr. Lathom.

The Fourth Form master blinked over the class and signed to Redfern.

"Redfern, you may leave the class. Mr. Ratcliff desires to speak to you. You may go to his study in the New House."

Redfern set his lips.

"Isn't Mr. Ratcliff taking the Fifth, sir?"

"Apparently, Redfern, Mr. Ratcliff is not taking the Fifth at this moment, as he has sent for you. Kindly go at once."

Redfern hesitated.

"It's all wight, Weddy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Watty has w'epent' of his wotten conduct, and is goin' to exp'ess his wegwet."

Redfern grinned. He knew how little likely that was. His own suspicion was that the New House master wanted to get him away from his comrades, in order to make an example of him without causing a riot. That was quite in keeping with Mr. Ratcliff's stealthy character.

Mr. Lathom looked at him in surprise. He was quite unaware of the trouble in the New House.

"You are to go at once, Redfern," he said.

"Very well, sir," said Redfern reluctantly.

Figgins caught him by the sleeve as he was moving out of the class.

"Don't go to the New House, Reddy," he whispered hurriedly. "It's a trick. Stick in the quad."

"You bet!" said Redfern.

Redfern would have preferred to remain in the Form-room, but Mr. Lathom had to be obeyed. The junior quitted the Fourth Form Room and went down the passage to the door of the quadrangle. He strolled into the quadrangle, and a sharp voice hailed him.

"Redfern!"

It was Mr. Ratcliff.

"Yes, sir," said Redfern, keeping at a respectful distance from the Housemaster.

"Follow me, Redfern."

"What for, sir?"

"Do not ask me impertinent questions, Redfern. Follow me at once!"

Mr. Ratcliff whisked away towards the New House. He looked back in a couple of minutes. Mr. Ratcliff's thin face became crimson as he saw Redfern sauntering away under the elms.

"Redfern!" he shouted.

Redfern did not seem to hear. He sauntered under the trees, whistling.

Mr. Ratcliff made a rush towards him.

"Redfern, you insolent young rascal!"

The junior dodged round a tree. Mr. Ratcliff dodged after him, and Redfern promptly dodged round another. It was like a game. And Mr. Ratcliff, realising what a ridiculous figure he was cutting, stopped, panting for breath.

"Do you refuse to follow me, Redfern?" he gasped.

"Yes, sir," said Redfern quietly.

"You shall be expelled for this!"

"That's for the Head to decide, sir!"

"For the last time, Redfern—"

Redfern walked away.

Mr. Ratcliff stood for some moments

nonplussed. He had laid his little plan very carefully. Redfern was to be got into his study and unmercifully flogged, and that example would have the effect, Mr. Ratcliff anticipated, of scaring the rest of the rebels into submission.

It was like the case of the spider and the fly over again. But while Mr. Ratcliff was quite prepared to act the part of the spider, Redfern was disinclined to play up as the fly.

The Housemaster strode away at last to the School House, and Redfern grinned. Was the New House tyrant going to the Head at last?

It was surely unlikely that he would explain to Dr. Holmes the stealthy trick

grinding voice, "you will take Redfern at once to my study. Use any means you like. I will assist you if needed."

"Yes, sir," said Sefton. And the bully of the Sixth started for Redfern.

CHAPTER 12.

Rescue!

REDFERN clenched his hands hard. He was quite prepared to resist, but he had little chance in a tussle with a prefect of the Sixth, and he knew it. And Mr. Ratcliff was hovering behind the prefect, ready to lend what aid was required.

His hard head smote Mr. Ratcliff on his third waistcoat button. There was a terrific gasp from Mr. Ratcliff, and he went over like a skittle.

Bump!

Mr. Ratcliff sat down with a heavy concussion, his long thin legs flying in the air.

"Oh! Ah! Yooooop—woop!"

Redfern reeled from the shock. He made a bound to escape, but Sefton's grasp was already on him from behind. The prefect seized his collar, and his knuckles ground into the back of the Fourth Former's neck.

"I've got him, sir!" panted Sefton.



In the grasp of the rebels, Monteith was shoved unceremoniously through the open window head first. There was a loud crack as his head came in sudden contact with Mr. Ratcliff's. "Yooop!" roared the prefect. "Wow!" gasped the New House master.

he had tried to play, so utterly unworthy of the dignity of the Housemaster. Mr. Ratcliff, in fact, was not thinking of the Head. He made his way to the Sixth Form Room, where Mr. Railton was taking the top Form.

He requested Mr. Railton to release Sefton from last lesson, on a matter concerned with the discipline of his House. Mr. Railton at once accorded Sefton the required permission, and the prefect followed Mr. Ratcliff from the room.

With the exception of the New House master, and the prefect and the rebellious Redfern, all St. Jim's was at lessons. The quadrangle was otherwise quite deserted. Redfern whistled as he saw Sefton come out of the School House with Mr. Ratcliff. He understood now. "Sefton," said Mr. Ratcliff, in a

"Stop!" shouted Sefton, as the junior bolted under the elms.

Redfern did not stop; he ran at top speed, and the Sixth Former broke into a chase behind him.

Up the quadrangle they ran, and Redfern was nearly cornered at the gates. But he dodged round the porter's lodge, and doubled back, Sefton panting behind.

Mr. Ratcliff jumped in his way to stop him. The junior's escape was cut off.

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff.

Redfern came straight on. As he rushed at the Housemaster, a bony hand was reached out to seize him. Redfern lowered his head, and fairly charged the Housemaster.

Redfern struggled furiously. Mr. Ratcliff sat up, gasping and gasping, as if he were gasping for a wager.

"Grooogh! Hold the young rascal, Sefton! Yurrrggg! Oh dear! I—I am quite breathless! Yooooohoooo!"

"Yow-ow!" roared Sefton, as an upper-cut caught him on the chin. "You young ruffian! Wow-ow!"

"Let go, you beastly bully!" panted Redfern.

"My hat! I'll smash you!"

Senior and junior were fighting furiously now. Redfern was game to the last. Mr. Ratcliff staggered up, and grasped the junior by the collar. In the grasp of the master and prefect, Redfern still wriggled.

"The—the rebellious young ruffian!"

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gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "Drag him away if he will not go! Drag him!"

Redfern's shoes dragged in the grass as he was hauled away. Into the New House they went, and into Mr. Ratcliff's study. Redfern was flung in, panting, and the Housemaster slammed the door, his eyes blazing.

"The young rascal shall have such a lesson as he will never forget!" he said between his teeth. "I will make an example of him. Remove your jacket, Redfern."

Redfern's reply was brief, but direct. "Shan't!"

"Remove his jacket, Sefton!"

There was another tussle, and Redfern's jacket came off, split in two. Then the bully of the Sixth held him securely while Mr. Ratcliff wielded the cane.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!
"Help!" roared Redfern. "Rescue!"
"Silence, boy!"
Lash, lash, lash!

There was a sound of loud voices in the quadrangle. Last lesson was over at last, and the juniors were swarming out of the Form-rooms.

Figgins & Co. looked round for Redfern as soon as they were out.

"He's not here," said Figgins. "Has Ratty got him?"
"Hark!" exclaimed Blake.

From the window of Mr. Ratcliff's study in the New House came an uproar. The swishing of the cane could be heard, and Redfern's voice in stentorian tones.

"Yo-ow-ow! You beast! Help! Rescue!"

Figgins' eyes blazed.

"Rescue!" he shouted.

Figgins started at a run, and Kerr and Wynn followed him at once. Lawrence and Owen joined in, and several other fellows. They sped into the House, and rushed along the passage to Mr. Ratcliff's door.

The door was flung open wide. Figgins rushed in. He did not pause for a moment; his blood was at boiling point. His fist, clenched hard, was dashed full into Sefton's face, and the

bully of the Sixth went over with a crash.

Redfern jumped away from the lashing cane.

Mr. Ratcliff seemed transfixed for the moment.

"Figgins!" he said hoarsely "How dare you! Leave my study at once!"

"I'm going," said Figgins scornfully. "Come on, Reddy! We've come to get you out of this!"

"Redfern, remain here!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Redfern.

"What! What did you say?"

"Shut up!" retorted Redfern.

Mr. Ratcliff stood rooted to the floor, the cane in his hand. It seemed to him that he must be dreaming. A junior in his House, where he was monarch of all he surveyed, had told him to shut up! After that it was time for the skies to fall.

Redfern's face was white with pain. He leaned heavily on Figgins' shoulder, and left the study.

"Redfern," panted Mr. Ratcliff, "I—I order you to come back! Figgins, I command you to leave that boy here!"

Neither of the juniors answered. Kerr slammed the door, and the rescuers departed, taking Redfern with them.

Sefton picked himself up, nursing his jaw. He looked at the Housemaster very dubiously.

"Sefton, go and fetch Redfern here at once!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Sefton.

He left the study, but he did not seek Redfern. He was not inclined to tackle Figgins & Co. just then. If Mr. Ratcliff waited for him to return with the junior, he waited in vain.

There was a trampling of feet in the passage and a roar of voices.

"Down with Ratty!"

Mr. Ratcliff started as if he had been stung.

The rebels were parading outside his own door, shouting that battle-cry. The House was evidently entirely out of hand.

The Housemaster's eyes glittered with rage. He selected his stoutest cane and strode from the study. At all events,

reckless as the rebels were, they could not venture to lay hands on him personally—he was sure of that.

Mr. Ratcliff had decided upon drastic measures.

A fresh roar greeted him as he appeared outside the study.

"Yah! Down with Ratty!"

"Figgins!"

"Rats!" howled the excited Figgins.

"Kerr!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Come here at once!"

"Bow-wow!"

Mr. Ratcliff rushed at the rebels, brandishing the cane.

Lash, lash, lash!

He did not care where the blows fell in his rage.

Monteith looked out of his study, shrugged his shoulders, and shut the door again.

The rest of the prefects were carefully keeping off the scene.

Mr. Ratcliff had woke up that hornets' nest, and he could have the pleasure of dealing with it—that was their idea.

Mr. Ratcliff did not find it a pleasure. He had lashed half a dozen times when the rebels closed round him like a sea. Figgins snatched the cane away, Redfern dragged at his gown, and a dozen pairs of hands seized him, and pushed and shoved.

Utterly bewildered and confused, the Housemaster was rushed and hustled along to the door, where powerful shoves sent him flying down the steps.

Mr. Ratcliff landed in the quadrangle with a bump.

Clang!

The big door closed after him. There was a grating of a key, the clinking of a chain. Mr. Ratcliff jumped up and bounded up the steps. He hammered furiously at the door.

But it did not open.

The New House master was locked out of his own House!

CHAPTER 13.

The Head Steps In!

"B A I Jove! Extwaordinawy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly in his eye. It had fallen out in his astonishment.

And the Terrible Three said with one voice:

"Great Scott!"

"What larks!" chuckled Wally of the Third.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

School House fellows were crowding in front of the School House. They were deeply interested. Mr. Ratcliff was locked out of his own House, and was raging on the steps. Such a scene had certainly never been witnessed in the quadrangle at St. Jim's before.

For excitement it even beat the celebrated occasion when an "old boy" had returned to St. Jim's for the special purpose of "whopping" his old Housemaster.

"Like a giddy lion seeking what he may devour!" chuckled Jack Blake. "Good old Figgins!"

"More power to his elbow!" chirruped Reilly of the Fourth.

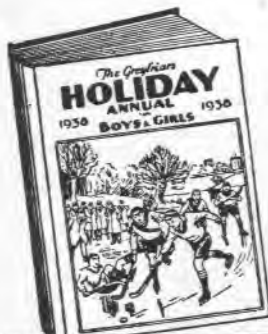
Bang, bang, bang!

The infuriated Housemaster, lost to all sense of dignity, was hammering savagely on the big door with his clenched fists.

"Figgins! Redfern! Kerr! Open this door at once! You shall be expelled! Monteith! Where are you,

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Monteith? I command you to get this door open! Am I to be locked out of my own House, Monteith?"

Monteith of the Sixth looked out of his study window. There was a lurking grin on his face, which he tried to hide. The downfall of Ratty was not displeasing to the head prefect.

Mr. Ratcliff fixed his eyes furiously upon the prefect at the window.

"Monteith, let me in! Do you hear?"

"The door is locked, sir."

"Then unlock it!"

"The key is gone!"

"Find it!" roared Mr. Ratcliff. "Do you think, Monteith, that I can remain in this ridiculous position—locked out of my own House? I command you to find the key at once!"

"Some of the juniors seem to have hidden it, sir. You might try the back door."

Mr. Ratcliff, in his rage, had not thought of that. He whisked away, with fluttering gown. But Figgins had thought of it. When Mr. Ratcliff reached the back door it was fast—locked and bolted. The enraged Housemaster hammered on it, and Mrs. Kenwigg's scared voice answered him through the window.

"The door is locked, sir—"

"Find the key!"

"The young gentlemen have taken it away. And—and they are having tea, and they have helped themselves from the pantry!" gasped Mrs. Kenwigg. "They are having tea in the passages and on the stairs, sir! All my jams and preserves! All the cake! Oh dear!"

Mr. Ratcliff gave a snort like an angry bull. The rebels were holding high revel in the New House, while their tyrant was locked out. Short commons was evidently a thing of the past.

Mr. Ratcliff simply panted. Unless he chose to climb in at the window, he was shut out of his own House indefinitely. He whisked round to the front of the House again, to Monteith's window.

The prefect was looking out, smiling. He became grave again under Mr. Ratcliff's furious eyes.

"Monteith, you are not keeping the juniors in order! Mrs. Kenwigg tells me that they have raided the pantry and—"

"I can't, sir! They've collared Setton, and locked him in the coal-cellar already! Baker is screwed up in his study! They're quite out of hand!"

"Good heavens!" Mr. Ratcliff stuttered with fury. "Monteith, help me in at your window! Lean down and give me your hands! I must come in!"

"Ahem! You see, sir—"

"Help me in at once! I command you, Monteith!"



"How about the last ten days in October, your worship? Will that be convenient for you?"

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"I don't think I could pull you up, sir," said Monteith. "I'll try, if you like. If you should fall—"

"Help me at once, I tell you!"

"Very well, sir."

Monteith leaned out of the window and grasped Mr. Ratcliff's hands. The next moment he gave a yell as his feet were up-ended.

Figgins & Co. had not been caught napping. Monteith was in the grasp of the rebels, and they shoved him unceremoniously through the open window head first.

There was a loud crack as his head came in sudden contact with Mr. Ratcliff's.

"Yoooooop!"

"Wow!"

"Lower away!" shouted Redfern, and the unhappy prefect, with half a dozen hands grasping his ankles, was lowered head first out of the window.

The grinning juniors leaned out, and lowered him till his hands touched the ground, and then they let him go.

Monteith rolled over at Mr. Ratcliff's feet.

"Figgins!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "Redfern, I command you—"

Slam!

The window shut down, cutting off Mr. Ratcliff's commands.

Figgins fastened the catch. No one had troubled to reply to Mr. Ratcliff.

Monteith scrambled up, red and angry. He gave Mr. Ratcliff a grin look, and strode away to the School House. There he went to Kildare's study, and announced that he had come to tea, and there he stayed.

He was fed-up with Mr. Ratcliff.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Here comes the Head!"

"Phew!"

The laughter in the School House crowd died away.

Dr. Holmes, with a grave and frowning face, had come out of the School House, and, with stately steps, was crossing the quadrangle.

The Head had evidently learned, at last, of the riot in the New House, and was coming to deal with it personally.

Mr. Ratcliff ceased to hammer on the door as he caught sight of the headmaster. He endeavoured to calm his fury. Fury and excitement were not likely to meet with the approval of the grave and reverend Head.

A Housemaster was expected to be able to keep his temper.

"Mr. Ratcliff," said the Head, with great asperity, "what is the meaning of this extraordinary scene?"

Mr. Ratcliff panted.

"I have been locked out of my House, sir! The prefects have been assaulted! The juniors are quite out of hand!"

"A most extraordinary state of affairs, sir," said the Head coldly.

"Such a state has never arisen in the School House. You may give me your explanation later, Mr. Ratcliff. At present I will deal with the matter."

Dr. Holmes tapped at the door.

"Open this door at once!" he said. "It is I, Dr. Holmes, your headmaster."

"Oh, my hat!" A voice was heard to ejaculate within.

"Is that you, Figgins? Open the door!"

"Yes, sir. Certainly, sir. I'm getting the key," stammered Figgins.

There was a grating in the lock, a clinking of a withdrawn chain, and the door swung back.

A crowd of juniors were disclosed, looking considerably abashed, most of them with cake or other comestibles in their hands.

Dr. Holmes surveyed them grimly.

"Who is the leader of this extraordinary outbreak?" he exclaimed.

"We're all in it together, sir," said Kerr.

"You answer me, Figgins! What does this mean?"

"We don't like being starved, sir," said Figgins. "We're helping ourselves. We think we're entitled to have enough to eat."

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Is it possible, Figgins, that you have been guilty of this outrageous insubordination because you are not satisfied with the fare provided in this school?" he thundered.

(Continued on page 28.)

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THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS!

The Minute-Gun!

"MY hat, how it blows!" It was Bob Cherry who uttered that ejaculation as he looked out of the window of the Common-room into the Close at Greyfriars.

It was a wild night. The old trees were groaning under the force of the wind, and the gale shrieked furiously round the old roofs and chimneys.

Through the roar of the wind had sounded, more than once, a crash of falling masonry, as some fragment hurled down from the shaky walls of the old tower.

"By Jove, it is blowing!" said Frank Nugent. "I shouldn't care to be at sea to-night."

"Yes, it must be rough in the bay, and jolly dangerous for any vessel that comes near the Shoulder," said Bob Cherry. "I'd like to have a run down to the shore to-night. There hasn't been a gale like this since I've been at Greyfriars."

Nugent shook his head. "It's too rough, even if we could get out without being spotted."

"Hark!" cried Bob Cherry suddenly. Through the roar of the gale outside came a deeper and more sombre sound. A hush fell upon the juniors gathered in the Common-room.

"Wh-what was that?" muttered Hazeldene.

"Some of the old tower falling," said Nugent.

Harry Wharton, who had been playing chess with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shook his head.

"What was it then?" "A gun at sea," He held up his hand. "Hark!"

It came again, booming heavily through the gale, and this time there was no mistaking the sound.

It was the minute-gun—the signal from a ship in distress on the rocky coast.

The juniors were silent. The deep sound from the sea had sent a chill to every heart. From the summit of the tower of Greyfriars, in fine weather, the sea could be seen—the wide bay, the great Shoulder jutting out into the English Channel. Well, the juniors knew what the scene must be like now, with the breakers crashing on the rocky ridge, and the Shoulder almost hidden in lashing spray and foam.

"By Jove!" muttered Bob Cherry. "The minute-gun!"

"A wreck," said Nugent in a hushed voice.

There was no doubt about it. A minute more had elapsed, and then the boom of the gun came heavily through the shriek of the wind once more.

Wharton, Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh, the chums of Study No. 1, left the Common-room together.

There was a thoughtful expression on Harry Wharton's face, which showed that he was turning over some idea in his mind. As soon as he was out of hearing of the rest he stopped.

"It's a ship in the bay," he said. "If she's near the Shoulder on a night like this, Heaven help her. I'm thinking—" He paused.

"I can guess what you're thinking,"

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By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

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said Bob Cherry. "We might be able to help."

Wharton nodded.

"Yes. Half the countryside will be there and I don't see why we shouldn't go, too."

"The Head wouldn't allow it."

"I wasn't thinking of asking the Head," said Wharton, laughing. "We can break bounds for once in a way. Hallo, there's Wingate going."

Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, had come downstairs with a waterproof on. North and Westcott, also wearing long raincoats, were with him. The Sixth Formers were evidently going down to the seashore. Wingate opened the door, and a terrific gust of wind came roaring in.

"Shut this door, you kids!" called out Wingate.

"Right you are, Wingate!"

The chums of the Remove rushed to the door. The Sixth Formers went out, and Wingate pulled the door from outside and the juniors put their shoulders

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An SOS from a distressed schooner starts Harry Wharton & Co. on an adventure which becomes a matter of life and death!
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to it from within. Even then it was hard work to shut it against the wind. It was slammed at last.

"My hat, how it blows!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It won't be easy to get along in a wind like this, Harry."

"Are you chaps game to try?"

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Then let's get off."

The Famous Four hurried up to the Remove dormitory. It did not take them long to prepare for the excursion. As they came out of the dormitory in raincoats and scarves, there was a glimmer of spectacles in the corridor, and Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, came in sight.

Wharton muttered a word of impatience.

Bunter was the chatterbox of the Remove, and if he saw them going, he would soon let the whole school know about it.

But there was no time to avoid the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter stopped and blinked at them inquiringly.

"Hallo, are you chaps going out?"

"Yes, blow you!" growled Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent, don't get waxy, you know. Of course, I shan't say a word to a soul."

"Mind you don't."

"Certainly. But I say, you fellows, don't hurry away. I want to speak to

you on a most important matter, Wharton."

"Wait till I get back, then."

"But it's important. I say, Wharton, hold on a minute, I want to speak to you before you go out!" bawled Bunter.

"Better let him jaw," growled Bob Cherry. "Anybody might hear him shouting. Now, what is it, Bunter?"

"I'm expecting a postal order by the next post, but in this gale the postman will be certain never to come to Greyfriars," said Bunter. "Could you lend me five bob for to-night, and have my postal order for it in the morning?"

"You—you—you—"

"The postal order will be for ten bob, and if you can spare it, I'd like the whole ten now. That will be cashing the order in advance, you know."

"You young ass!" said Wharton. "Here's a bob for you—"

"What about the postal order?"

"Oh, blow the postal order!"

"But I'm hungry," said Bunter. "If you could make this two bob, I'd let you have it back out of my postal order—"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh silently drew a shilling from his pocket and placed it beside Wharton's coin in the fat junior's palm.

"Thank you!" blinked Bunter. "This will be a bob each to you and Wharton, Inky. Wait a minute while I put it down to the account. You shall have it back to-morrow morning."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" growled Wharton. "You know you never pay anybody. Come along, you chaps."

The chums turned away.

"I say, Wharton—I say, you fellows, hold on a minute!"

"What is it now?" asked Harry Wharton angrily.

"I want you to understand that I can't take this except as a loan. I may be poor," said Bunter with dignity, "but I've got a proper pride, I hope." He slipped the shillings into his waistcoat pocket. "Unless it's clearly understood that I settle up for this to-morrow morning, I can't accept it."

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Oh, have it any way you like!" he exclaimed. "Only do shut up now and let us go."

"Certainly. Then it's clearly understood that I settle up for this to-morrow morning out of my postal order?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then you may as well make it three bob while you're about it, and I'll—ow—ow—ow!"

Bunter rolled on the linoleum as a heavy hand smote him, and the chums of the Remove walked away.

The fat junior sat up and blinked in a dazed manner.

Harry Wharton and his friends had gone, and Billy Bunter, feeling very bewildered, sat for some minutes there, blinking round in the gloom.

Meanwhile, the Removites, chuckling, made their way to a window at the back of the building by which they intended to gain egress into the Close.

One by one they dropped to the ground and the window was silently closed. Outside, the gale was raging furiously, and the chums crouched against the wall to allow the fierce wind to sweep by.

# A THRILLING YARN OF SEA AND SCHOOL ADVENTURE, STARRING THE FAMOUS FOUR OF GREYFRIARS.

"My hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "This won't be easy to get through." The others did not reply. They did not hear his voice in the roar of the wind.

Harry Wharton led the way. Crouching low to avoid the wind as much as possible, the chums of the Remove stole along the wall and reached a spot where the clinging ivy made it possible to cross the outer wall into the road.

In three minutes or less they were outside the school wall.

There, amid the roar and the groaning of the trees, they listened for the sound they had heard in the Common-room in Greyfriars.

Clearly it came to their ears.

Boom!

From the blackness towards the shore came a glimmer of light that shot into the sky and died away.

"A rocket!" muttered Harry Wharton.

Keeping close together, the chums of the Remove plunged on through the lane that led down to the shore, fighting their way, step by step, through the buffeting of the furious wind.

## The Wreck!

**BOOM!** Still through the black night came the dull, sombre sound of the minute-gun.

The breaking waves of the English Channel were audible now to the ears of the Greyfriars chums—the thundering of the huge billows on the hard rocks.

Spray borne by the wind lashed their faces as they drew nearer the sea. Lights twinkled in the gloom on the shore. Fisherfolk and country people from all quarters were gathered there to see what was to be seen, and in the hope of lending aid to the vessel in distress.

More than one ship had come to grief on the Shoulder, the great rock that jutted out on the north side of the bay. High on the summit of the cliff gleamed the light of the lighthouse, shining far over the wild waters.

"Here we are at last!" Bob Cherry shouted in Harry Wharton's ear. "Can't see anything."

Wharton shook his head.

There was blackness on the sea, blackness on the shore, and he could see nothing of the distressed vessel. But the sound of the gun, which was still fired at intervals, showed that she was near the shore.

"Look!" exclaimed Nugent suddenly.

A rocket shot up from the vessel at sea.

For a moment the chums caught a glimpse of the outlines of the vessel. She was a small schooner, with two masts, and the mainmast had gone by the board at the maintop. The topmast and the rigging hung round the ship. The schooner was very near to the great towering Shoulder.

"She'll be on the rocks!" exclaimed Nugent, who knew the bay well. "It's only a matter of minutes now!"

"If she could get round the Shoulder—"

"She can't—she'll be on the sunken rocks in a couple of minutes!"

The chums watched and listened with painful intensity.

It was impossible to aid the doomed vessel. There was no lifeboat for miles along the coast, and none of the fisherfolk would put off in such a sea. No



In the wild waters, with his strength giving out, Harry Wharton feared that he was being swept from his path. But the lightning came again, lighting up the wrecked schooner and showing him that he was right.

boat could have lived long in the raging billows.

"Hark!"

Through the roar of the wind and waves came a dull grinding crash!

"She's struck!"

It was a shout from the fishermen.

A flash of lightning darted across the inky heavens.

Harry Wharton was watching keenly. In the flash he caught sight of the doomed schooner—jammed by the rush of the billows upon the sunken rocks at the foot of the towering cliff.

Round her the waves were roaring and tossing, breaking over her sloping deck as she lay jammed on the rocks.

Wharton set his teeth.

The vessel was not fifty yards from the shore, but between the shore and the sunken rocks was deep water, raging and tossing furiously.

"There's a chance for them!"

"What's that, Wharton?"

"There's a chance yet," said Harry, shouting to make his voice heard. "She's not gone down—she's jammed fast. Look when the lightning flashes again!"

The lightning came again and showed the position of the ship more clearly.

The thundering waves seemed to be hammering her still more firmly upon the rocks, and she showed no sign of sliding off into the water.

The sea was breaking clean over the schooner, and it was clear that no soul on board could long survive.

There was a look of grim determination on Harry Wharton's face.

"There's a chance for them yet."

"But—but—what—"

"If a rope could be got out to them—"

"Impossible! No boat could live in that sea."

"I wasn't thinking of a boat."

Nugent laughed nervously.

"You weren't thinking of a swimmer, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Harry quietly.

"Why, there's not a man on the coast would enter that sea for a thousand pounds!"

"I wasn't thinking of a man."

"Look here, I can see what you're thinking of, and you're not going to it!" shouted Bob Cherry. "You'll just stick here."

Wharton shook his head.

"You know I'm a good swimmer—"

"I know it jolly well," said Nugent.

"You fished me out of the Sark the day you came to Greyfriars and saved my life. But you couldn't swim in that rough water and you're not going to try it."

"It's no good talking, you chaps. I'm going to try it!"

"You can't! You shan't!"

"Look!" said Wharton quietly.

The lightning was blazing again. The deck of the wrecked schooner could be seen, and two or three dim forms clinging to the rigging. The flash passed and the scene was blotted out as by a curtain falling.

"There are men on there in danger," said Harry quietly. "We should be cowards not to try to save them."

"It's impossible."

"Well, I think I can try. We must get a rope, and you can tie it round my waist and hold it. Come on."

The Famous Four were accustomed to following Wharton's lead, and his determination carried the day.

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Keeping a wary look-out for Wingate—who would certainly have stopped the enterprise immediately—the chums prepared to carry out Harry's desperate plan.

Harry Wharton had not come unprepared for such a contingency, having foreseen that something of the kind might happen, as it had happened before on the rocks of the Shoulder. He had a coil of cord in his pocket, and it was only necessary to obtain a strong rope from one of the fishermen.

Wharton's idea was to tie the cord round his waist and swim out to the Shoulder, and then to pull the heavy rope after him to the deck of the schooner.

If he got through the raging waters safely, the plan would succeed. If not—But he did not think of failure, and his comrades dared not think of it.

The fishermen at first demurred, and, in fact, refused point-blank to supply the rope, having no doubt that the junior would be risking his life for nothing. But when they found that he was determined to go, they lent their aid at last.

Brave men they were, and yet they did not venture. They had their wives and families to think of. A coil of strong rope was brought from one of the boats lying high up on the sand, and the end of it was fastened to Wharton's cord.

The junior threw off his coat and jacket and shoes and walked down to the sea. The breakers came creaming over his feet as he stood there and looked towards the wreck, waiting for another flash to fix the position of the ship firmly on his mind before he plunged in.

Nugent and Bob Cherry were looking very anxious. They felt that the chances were ten to one against him reaching the schooner before he became exhausted, and then—

But there were lives to be saved—fellow-creatures clinging to the wreck out there in the hungry maw of the sea.

The flash of lightning came.

It showed the schooner jammed on the rocks, the sloping water-swept deck, and two clinging figures. If there had been three, as Harry thought, one had already been swept away.

"Hed on to the rope!"

And Harry Wharton, meeting a huge billow as it rolled in to the shore, plunged into the water and was carried out into the darkness by the receding wave.

### Harry Wharton's Pluck!

**H**ARRY WHARTON was gone! The roaring waters had swept him out of sight. The cord was running out between Bob Cherry's fingers, but that told nothing. The boy to whom it was attached might already be in serious difficulties.

There was a crunching of footsteps in the sand and Wingate dashed up. He looked angrily at the juniors.

"What are you doing here?"

They did not answer; they hardly heard him. Wingate shook Nugent angrily by the arm.

"Nugent! How dare you! What are you doing?"

"Wharton's gone to the wreck!" muttered Nugent.

Wingate looked aghast.

"Good heavens! The fool—the mad fool!"

The lightning flashed and the captain of Greyfriars stared seaward. He made

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out the wreck and a dark spot in the midst of the lashing waters.

It was blotted out the next moment.

But Wingate knew that he had seen Wharton's head, and that so far, at least, the Remove junior was alive and swimming hard.

Alive still and fighting the sea—but for how long? As Harry Wharton battled with the waves, he felt that the fight was a losing one. Wild waters were swirling round him. He could see nothing, hear nothing but the thunder of the sea.

He knew that at any moment the swirl of the waters might dash him on some rock. He felt his strength giving out with the terrible struggle, and he knew that if he failed to reach the wreck, he would never have strength enough to fight his way back to the shore.

Yet he did not falter for a moment. All his thoughts, all his energies, were bent upon the task in hand—to reach the schooner.

In the wild waters, the impenetrable darkness, he seemed to be swallowed up, and several times he feared that he was being swept from his path. But the lightning came again to light up the rigging of the wrecked schooner for a split second, and show him that he was right.

Something struck his hand in the rough water, and a chill ran through him. His whole body shuddered in the horror of a crash upon rugged rocks.

But it was not the rocks of the Shoulder that his hand had touched. It was a floating spar, and the next moment he caught a rope, and he knew that he was in the midst of the rigging trailing over the side of the wrecked schooner.

He clung to it convulsively.

The sea tossed him about, but he clung on and climbed closer to the vessel. Higher out of the water, till he gripped the woodwork of the schooner itself.

A lightning flash came, and showed him a white, wet face within a yard of his own.

Two pairs of eyes met, staring in the darkness. A wooden-legged man was gazing at Harry, and his face was blank with amazement.

"Bust my topsails!"

Harry heard the words—an ejaculation of amazement. The next moment, as the darkness closed in, a hand grasped him and dragged him on the sloping deck. A mouth was put close to his ear and a voice bawled:

"Hallo, my hearty! Where did you spring from?"

"I've swum out with a rope."

"A rope! Bust my topsails! And you a kid, too!"

Wharton clung with one hand to the seaman, and with the other dragged in the cord. It came freely, and the rope followed. The seaman, with a grunt of relief, caught the rope in his hands and made it fast to a stanchion.

"That's safe, youngster!"

"Good! How many are there of you here?"

A lightning flash lit up the deck for a moment and gave the reply to Harry's question.

Besides the wooden-legged man, there was only one form clinging to the rigging, that of a dusky foreign sailor. The others had been swept away by the thundering seas.

The survivor seemed to be too dazed by fear to see what was happening, or to hear the shouts of the wooden-legged sailor.

He had none of the iron nerve of the British seaman in that hour of peril.

He was clinging to the rigging for

dear life, now and then engulfed by the seas.

"Beppo! Beppo!"

The Italian made no reply.

The wooden-legged man gave a grunt of disgust.

"It's no good yellin' at the blessed Eyetalian!" he growled. "Hang on 'ere, youngster, while I haul him over."

Harry only imperfectly heard the words, but he understood.

He clung to the rope while the wooden-legged man scrambled away with surprising agility considering his loss of a limb.

There was a sharp cry in the darkness, and Harry's heart thumped against his ribs.

Did it mean that the wooden-legged seaman had been swept away from the wreck. He feared so, and he waited in tense anxiety for a lightning flash.

The flash came, and it showed the seaman still on the wreck, clinging to coamings of the hatchway. But the Italian was not to be seen.

The torn rigging to which he had been clinging was gone, and the hapless foreigner was gone with it.

He had vanished amid the white foam that dashed round the sunken rocks of the Shoulder.

The English seaman had evidently had a narrow escape of following him. He hung where he was for some time to recover his strength, while Harry Wharton waited anxiously in the darkness.

The seaman scrambled back at last. His wet face was white in the gloom.

"Beppo's gone," he muttered.

"There's no one else?"

"No. The skipper was the first to go! Let's try the rope."

"You go first."

"Ay, ay!"

The seaman clung to the rope, and, without a moment's hesitation, swung himself from the wreck into the tossing sea. He vanished in the black waters, and Wharton waited anxiously for some minutes. Had the wooden-legged man reached the shore? He could see nothing, and the roaring of the waves drowned every other sound.

At length he commenced to drag himself along the rope; the seaman, alive or dead, must be off the rope by this time.

Round the junior, as he plunged shorewards, the raging waves tossed and foamed, and many times it seemed to him as if he must be dragged from his hold. But he held on like grim death.

His strength was almost spent, and his senses were reeling with the roaring and buffeting of the waves, when he felt the shifting sand beneath his feet. A shadowy form dashed through the swirling water and grasped him. It was Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars reeled through the breakers with Harry Wharton in his arms.

Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Singh rushed to his aid, and in a few seconds more Harry was lying on the wet sand out of reach of the sea. For some minutes he lay breathing hard. He was quite exhausted, and his senses were swimming, and he was hardly conscious that he was safe at last. But his brain cleared, and he looked round him in the gloom, and sat up with the help of Nugent's arm.

"Thank goodness you're back!" muttered Nugent.

"But the seaman—where is he?" asked Harry.

"He's safe."

"Bust my topsails!" said a familiar voice, as a mahogany-coloured face

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

came close to Harry's in the gloom. "Ere's old Stumpy. He's all right!" Harry Wharton smiled faintly. "I'm jolly glad to hear it." "Bust my topsails! Old Stumpy's all right!" said the wooden-legged man. "And all through you, youngster. Thar ain't many men who would have swum out with that rope."

"Right!" said Wingate grimly. "And if I'd been here I'd have stopped that young beggar doing it! But I'm glad as it's turned out."

"The gladfulness is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. And Stumpy, as the wooden-legged man called himself, was taken into the cabin of a hospitable fisherman, and Harry, leaning on Nugent's arm, turned towards Greyfriars.

## Hauled Over the Coals!

CARBERRY, the prefect, looked into the Junior Common-room at Greyfriars and pointed to the clock. Carberry was in a bad temper, as he usually was. It wanted several minutes to half-past nine—the bed-time of the Lower Fourth—but the juniors thought they had better not take advantage of it. There was a general bustle of the Removeites.

Carberry glanced round the room. He noted the absence of the Famous Four.

"Where's Wharton?" he snapped. Carberry would willingly have given a week's pocket-money for a chance to catch Wharton in a real offence that could be reported to the Head. More than once he had attempted to make trouble for the boy he disliked so intensely, but, somehow, it had always recoiled upon himself.

No one replied to Carberry's question. All the fellows knew, through Billy Bunter, where Wharton and his chums had gone; but no one was inclined to enlighten the bullying prefect.

Carberry scowled darkly.

"Where is Wharton? Where's Nugent, and Cherry, and the nigger?" "They're not in my waistcoat pocket," observed Trevor, feeling there as if to make sure.

And the juniors giggled. "They're gone out, I suppose," said the prefect, with an unpleasant grin. "Well, get off to bed, you young sweeps. If they don't turn up by half-past nine I shall report them to the Head."

The absentees did not return by half-past nine. The Remove went up to bed, and Carberry departed to make his report. He met Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, in the passage, and mentioned the matter to him.

The Remove master was startled. "Four boys absent! You're sure, Carberry?"

"I believe so, sir. They have not gone up to bed with the rest, and I cannot find them anywhere."

"Dear me! This is a serious matter! You may leave it in my hands."

"I thought it my duty to report it to the Head, sir."

"You may leave it in my hands," repeated the Remove master quietly.

Carberry bit his lip, but he had to give in. However, if the juniors did not return soon, Mr. Quelch would have to report the matter to the Head, he knew that. And, as a matter of fact, half an hour later he saw the Form-master going to Dr. Locke's study.

The Head looked very worried.

"I am afraid they have gone down to the shore," he said. "Let them be sent in to me immediately they return."

"Yes, sir!"

But the juniors did not seem to be in a hurry to return. Half-past ten chimed from the clock tower, but the Famous Four had not put in an appearance, neither had Wingate and his friends returned.

It was near eleven when a ring came at the bell, and Gosling the porter rose, grumbling, and went to the gate.

He stared in blank amazement at the

Remove juniors as they came in with Wingate and the other Sixth Formers.

"Which this is a nice time for kids to come in."

"The niceness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Gosling grunted and retired again to his lodge.

The juniors went into the House, and Carberry, who was on the look-out, met the four Removeites as they were going upstairs. He dropped his hand on Harry Wharton's shoulder.

"No, you don't!" he remarked.

Wharton looked at him.

"Well, what's the trouble?" he asked.

The prefect grinned maliciously.

"You'll soon see. I've reported your absence, and you've got to go before the Head. I've been waiting for you to come in."

Wharton compressed his lips. He had intended to get back to Greyfriars before bed-time, but his adventure at the wreck had made that impossible. And the meeting with Wingate rendered it unnecessary to re-enter the school secretly.

He was in for it now, and the prefect's expression showed how much he enjoyed the situation.

"Come with me, all of you," said Carberry.

"Very well."

The prefect led the way, and the four juniors followed him to the Head's study. They were dripping with rain, and their boots squelched on the linoleum as they walked.

"Are you going to tell the Head all about it?" asked Nugent, in a whisper. Harry shook his head.

"No."

"But—"

"We broke bounds," said Harry quietly. "We can face the music without making a fuss, I suppose. Carberry's in the right in reporting us; only he mightn't be such a beastly cad about it."



"Look!" exclaimed Nugent suddenly. A rocket shot up from the vessel at sea. She was a small schooner, and the mainmast had gone by the board at the maintop. The topmast and rigging clung round the ship, and she was almost on the rocks at the foot of the Shoulder.

"But if the Head knew you had saved a man's life—"

"I'm not going to save myself behind a thing like that. It's all right."

Carberry tapped at the Head's door and entered, followed by the juniors. Dr. Locke laid down his pen and turned his chair round to get a good look at the culprits. He looked shocked as he saw the state they were in.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "You are wet through! Where have you been?"

"Down to the shore, sir."

"You broke bounds—at night?"

"We heard the minute-gun, sir, and we thought we might be of some use."

The Head smiled slightly.

"And you were curious to see what was going on?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"You know perfectly well that you have committed a serious breach of discipline, Wharton," said Dr. Locke sternly. "I blame you, because I am sure you are the ringleader. I shall punish you severely in the morning. At present, you must go straight to your dormitory and get those wet clothes off. You might have an illness as the result of this foolish escapade."

"Yes, sir."

"You have done very wrong, Wharton. I shall cane all of you, but I shall cane you most severely. You did right to report the matter, Carberry. Such breaches of discipline must be put down with a heavy hand."

"Yes, sir!" said Carberry.

"You may go, boys. I am very disappointed in you."

The juniors left the study.

They were very silent as they went to the Remove dormitory.

"Rotten!" said Nugent, at last, as they were stripping off their wet

clothes. "I suppose we were giddy asses to go out."

"The assfulness was terrific."

"Well, I can't very well be sorry, considering how it's turned out," said Wharton.

"No, that's so, too!"

"After all, we can take a licking. The Head's right; but I'm jolly glad we went, all the same."

And the Removites, having rubbed themselves down with rough towels, turned in, and were soon sleeping soundly. They had been tired out by their adventure, and even the roaring of the wind round the roofs and chimneys of Greyfriars failed to keep them awake.

### An Unpleasant Prospect!

**C**LANG! Clang! Clang! The rising bell rang through the morning air, but the Famous Four did not awaken. They were still sleeping soundly. The late hours, and the exhausting tramp through the wind the previous night had fagged them out.

The other juniors sat up in bed.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, putting on his spectacles and blinking towards the still sleeping chums, "that's rising bell, you know."

"Let 'em sleep," said Bulstrode, with a grunt. "There'll be a prefect up presently with a cane to wake 'em."

Wun Lung, the Chinese, blinked sleepily at Bulstrode and then slipped out of bed and glided towards Harry Wharton. He shook the captain of the Remove gently by the shoulder.

Wharton's eyes opened.

"Hullo! By Jove, it's time to get up, I suppose?"

"Lising bell gonee."

Harry sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Hum! I suppose I was tired out. Thanks, Wun Lung!"

He jumped out of bed. Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singa were awakened, and they turned out reluctantly enough.

The juniors were soon washed and dressed. As they came downstairs, Carberry met them with a dark look on his face.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Wherefore that sweet and haunting smile, Carberry?"

Whereat the prefect scowled still more darkly.

"Wharton's got to turn up in Hall after prayers," he said grimly. "The whole school's called together to see him go through it."

Harry Wharton started.

"What's that? The Forme called up?"

"Yes. Head's orders—and mind you're there!"

And the prefect stalked away.

There was a cloud on Harry Wharton's face.

"What can it mean?" said Nugent. "The school wouldn't be called together for anything but a flogging, and the Head can't mean that."

"I don't know," said Harry gloomily. "He was very ratty last night. He may be going to make a flogging of it."

"The rottenness would be terrific," said the nabob. "Suppose we go and speak remonstrately to the worthy Head?"

"No good, Inky. If it's to be a big row, I suppose we'll have to stand it."

But the nabob's face was thoughtful. He felt that if the Head understood the matter, he would never go to such extremes, and the assembling of the school in Hall certainly looked as if Wharton was to be flogged.

The nabob remained standing in the doorway when the chums of the Remove went out into the Close.

It was a breezy morning, the high wind of the previous night having not yet completely died away.

The Removites were punting a football about, and Hurree Singh stood for some moments watching them. Then he walked quietly away. There was a determined expression on his face.

It was the Head's habit to spend some time in his study before breakfast, and the nabob knew when he would be coming out.

He waited patiently in the corridor.

At last the Head's door opened and he came out and looked at the waiting Hindu in some surprise.

"What are you doing here, Hurree Singh?"

"I was waiting for the serene presence of your worthy self."

"What do you want?"

"To speak to your worthiness with respectable frankness," said the nabob. "It is about the summonfulness of the school to witness the ordeal through which my esteemed friend Wharton is to pass."

"Indeed!"

"The affair of the lastful night was equally shared in by all of us," said Hurree Singh. "Why is the callfulness of the entire school upon Wharton's account, when there were others who sharefully took part in all the proceed- ingfulness?"

The Head looked at him intently.

"Do you claim to have taken an equal part in this with Wharton, Hurree Singh?"

The nabob nodded emphatically.

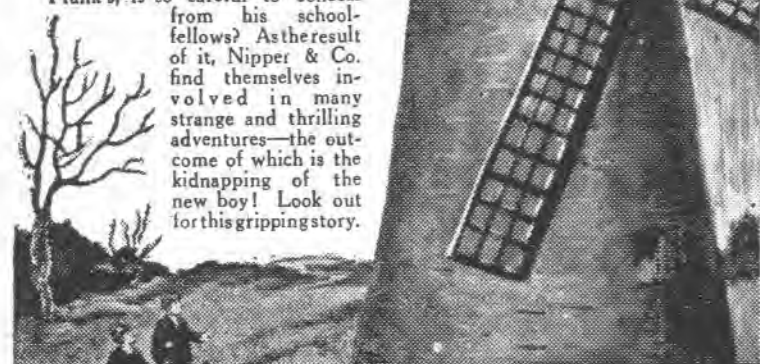
"The undoubtfulness is terrific, honoured sahib."

# THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOLBOY!

by EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

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"Indeed! I was not aware of that."  
"I assert it on the honourable word of a respectable Nabob of Bhanipur," said Hurree Singh, with dignity, "and my worthy chums will bear me out."

"I understand that it was Wharton alone who swam with a rope to the wrecked vessel. That, at least, I gathered from Wingate."

"That is correctly accurate; but the others were all there spotfully on the scene, and all equally shared in the worthy enterprise."

"I do not quite understand you, Hurree Singh; but, as Wharton went alone with the rope, I am bound to believe that the account given by Wingate is correct."

"The correctfulness is great; but—"  
"And I can spare no more time now."  
"But—"

"You may go, Hurree Singh."  
"Honoured sahib—"

"Will you go a once?"  
And the nabob went.

It was evidently useless to push the matter further in that quarter. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh departed with a troubled brow. His heart was heavy for his esteemed friend, as he would have expressed it himself.

But his friendly efforts were not yet over. He sought out Mr. Quelch.

"If I may speakfully address the worthy sahib," the nabob began diffidently.

"You may, if you are brief!" said Mr. Quelch.

"It is about the honourable Wharton. I am informally told by the esteemed Carberry that he is called up before the whole school."

"That is correct."

"I wish respectfully to protest, as I had quite as much to do with the matter as the esteemed Wharton, and I think it—"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Quelch. "You did not swim out with the rope."

"But I held it handfully."

"That is nothing. I am surprised at you, Hurree Singh."

"Respectfully and honoured sahib, I—"

"You may go."

And Hurree Singh gave it up again. When the chums of the Remove came in to breakfast, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined them, looking very doleful.

"The uselessness of the interceded-fulness is great," he remarked.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! What have you been up to, Inky?"

"I have intercededfully interviewed the Head, and the honourable Quelch. They are as hard as the worthy lion."

"You ass!" said Bob Cherry. "It's like your cheek!"

"But could I allow the esteemed Wharton to be flogfully licked when the mere wordfulness might save him?" said the nabob reproachfully.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, don't bother now, Bunter!"

"But I say, you fellows, I hear that Wharton is to be flogged before the whole school for breaking bounds last night. Bulstrode told me. He had it from Carberry."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The chums went in to breakfast, looking very glum. They ate little at the meal, and it was with heavy hearts that they turned up in the school Hall after prayers.

### The Hero of Greyfriars!

THERE was a hush in the crowded Hall.

Most of the fellows were looking towards Harry Wharton, who stood with his eyes on the floor.

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He did not meet a single glance. His face was pale, but quite calm. He felt that he was for "it." It was not the punishment that he cared for, though that was likely to be severe. It was the disgrace of a public flogging.

And he could not understand it.

A public flogging was a punishment only less severe than expulsion, and it was reserved for the worst offences. Breaking bounds was sometimes punished by lines, sometimes by caning. Flogging for it was unknown, and it seemed as if the usually kindly Head had changed his nature all of a sudden and developed into a merciless tyrant.

Harry Wharton's outward aspect gave no indication of it, but his blood was boiling. He had made up his mind that he would not take the flogging—that he would walk out of the room and leave Greyfriars first.

But he was more amazed than angry. He was puzzled, too, by the kindly smile Mr. Quelch gave him when he entered the Hall, and the cheery nod from Wingate.

Then he caught Carberry's spiteful eye, and saw the malicious grin on the sour face of the prefect.

Now he stood with his eyes bent down, waiting for the ordeal.

There was a faint murmur as the rustle of a gown was heard, and the Head entered at the upper end of the Hall.

Bob Cherry looked at Dr. Locke and gave a start. The face of the Head was serious and kindly, and he certainly did not look like a man who was about to visit a light offence with a severe punishment.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the great Hall as the Head began to address the school.

"Boys, you have been called together for an occasion which, as Head of Greyfriars, I could not suffer to pass unnoticed. Last night there was a wreck in the bay—a vessel went ashore

on the rocks of the Shoulder. One man was saved from the wreck, a seaman who could never have got ashore without assistance. A boy belonging to this school took out a rope to the wreck at the risk of his life. Wharton, stand forward."

Dumb with amazement, Harry walked out of his place.

The silence was broken and a ringing cheer from a hundred throats rang through the echoing Hall.

The Head listened to it with a smile. He held up his hand for silence.

"Wharton you broke bounds last night."

"Yes, sir."

"You went down to the shore without permission, for which you naturally deserved a severe caning, which last night I resolved to give you."

"Yes, sir."

"Since hearing the particulars of last night's occurrence from Wingate," said the Head, "I have changed my intentions. I have called the whole school together to hear what I have to say. For your breach of the rules of the school I think you will admit that you deserve punishment."

"Yes, sir," said Wharton quietly.

"A caning, but not a flogging. I do not admit that I deserve that."

The Head stared at him.

"A flogging! Who is speaking of a flogging?"

"Did you—do you—I—I understood that I was called up for a flogging," stammered Wharton. "Carberry said—I mean—"

The Head's brow darkened ominously.

"You understood that you were called up for a flogging after your act of heroism last night?" he said. "Am I to understand that Carberry said so?"

"I—I—"

"Stand forward, Carberry!"

The prefect, looking a little white, stepped out of the ranks of the Sixth. He was feeling a little sorry now that he had allowed the malicious deception to go so far. The Head looked at him sternly.

"Did you tell Wharton that he was called up for a public punishment, Carberry?"

"No, sir."

"It's a lie!" yelled Bob Cherry excitedly. "He did."

"Silence, Cherry!"

"I said nothing of the sort to Wharton," said the prefect coolly. "If he drew that impression from my words, I can only put it down to his guilty conscience. I certainly never said anything of the sort."

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"You gave me that impression!" he exclaimed fiercely. "You knew all the time that I drew that impression from what you said."

Carberry shrugged his shoulders.

"Really, I did not think anything at all about the matter. I delivered Dr. Locke's message and gave it no further thought."

"I hope, Carberry, that what you state is correct, and that you did not seek to give Wharton this false impression," he said.

"I assure you—"

"I must accept your word as there is no proof either way," said Dr. Locke. "It is probably a misunderstanding. You may go back to your place."

Carberry returned to the Sixth. Wingate, who was next to him, gave him a look of contempt that made even the bully flush uneasily.

"I am sorry, Wharton, that you should have entertained this idea for

a moment," said the Head kindly. "I understand now why a companion of yours addressed me on the subject. I presume that Hurree Singh was interfering for you!"

"The correctness of the worthy sahib is terrific."

"I drew the wrong impression that Hurree Singh was seeking to share in the credit of your heroic action. And now to proceed. I have, as I said, changed my intentions. Wharton was guilty of a serious offence in leaving the school last night, but in the circumstances I overlook that offence."

There was a murmur, which would have swelled into a cheer, but the Head raised his hand.

"Wharton swam out to the stranded ship and carried out a rope to the unfortunate men aboard her. Only one man was saved from the crew, I am sorry to say; but that man was saved wholly by the courage and resource of the head boy of the Greyfriars Remove—Harry Wharton."

"Hurrah!"

This time the cheer could not be held back.

"Hurrah for Wharton!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The room seemed to rock with the sound. Wharton's cheeks were scarlet.

The change from anticipation to realisation was great, and the junior hardly realised for the moment that he was being cheered by the whole school, instead of being sentenced to a flogging in the sight of all Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry cheered frantically.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

And in the exuberance of his spirits Bob stamped on the floor, till called to order by a severe glance from Mr. Quelch.

The Head raised his hand at last.

"You are right to recognise the pluck of your schoolfellow, my boys," he said. "Wharton has acted very bravely. He is pardoned for his breach of discipline, and I tell him before you all that Greyfriars is proud of him."

whole House. Mr. Ratcliff. And the method of punishment was by cutting down the meals—a dangerous thing with healthy, growing boys. You cannot expect me to approve of this. You seem to me to have acted very hastily and very harshly. I cannot say less."

Mr. Ratcliff turned almost green.

"I will deal with the juniors myself," resumed the Head. "And I shall deal with them with severity. The money due to Mr. Bunn shall be paid, and it shall be stopped out of their pocket-money. I shall also cane them. Meanwhile, I think it would be judicious for you to leave the school for a few days, and take a holiday. It will not be easy for you to regain authority in your House till this outbreak has been, to some extent, forgotten. For the present I will ask Mr. Carrington to take charge of the New House."

Mr. Ratcliff was almost speechless.

"Very well, sir," he stammered at last—"very well indeed!"

For a moment it trembled on his lips to add: "I resign my position in this school, Dr. Holmes!" But he did not utter the words. He was only too well aware that the Head would have received and accepted his resignation with great equanimity. And that would not have suited Mr. Ratcliff at all.

He left the study without another word.

And the Head, with a sigh, proceeded to deal with the troubles the New House master had brought upon his shoulders.

"All wight, deah boys?"

"How is it, umpire?"

And again the cheers burst forth. And then Bob Cherry, who never lacked nerve, started "He's a jolly good fellow," at the top of his voice, and the whole Hall took it up.

The great apartment rang and echoed with the sound, and in the midst of it the Head gave the signal to dismiss and left the room.

There was a rush of the Remove to surround Harry Wharton. He was shaken by the hand and thumped on the back till he was aching all over.

"Here, you chaps, shoulder high with him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry, struggling.

But Harry's resistance was in vain. The excited Removes raised him shoulder-high and he was carried out of the Hall, amid cheering Form-fellows.

(Next Week: "BILLY BUNTER'S RAID!"—a sparkling yarn of school-boy rivalry and fun at Greyfriars. Don't miss it.)

## THE NEW HOUSE RIOT:

(Continued from page 21.)

"Oh, no, sir! It's because we've been cut down in the meals."

"I do not understand this! Surely, Mr. Ratcliff, no alteration has been made in the boys' diet?"

Mr. Ratcliff mumbled a little.

"No—not permanently, sir," he said uneasily. "Certainly not! This new regulation was made as a punishment."

The Head looked fixedly at Mr. Ratcliff. He did not pursue the subject, however, in the presence of the juniors. But his face told clearly enough of his disapproval. He turned to Figgins & Co.

"I shall inquire into this matter strictly," he said. "For the present, I order you to return to your studies at once."

"Certainly, sir!" said Redfern. "We shouldn't think of disobeying you, sir!"

"I trust not," said the Head dryly.

He walked away to the School House, accompanied by Mr. Ratcliff.

The New House master was not looking happy.

In the Head's study he had the most uncomfortable ten minutes of his lifetime. Dr. Holmes exacted a full account of the whole trouble, listening very attentively.

"It appears, then, that for the fault of one boy, who may not have belonged to your House at all, you punished the

"What's the giddy verdict?"

Tom Merry & Co. showered questions on the rebels as they crowded out of the School House after their interview with the Head.

Most of them were rubbing their hands, but all of them looked quite cheery.

"Not so bad!" Figgins said. "Two cuts each. I think the Head was a bit fagged when he had finished."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And our pocket-money stopped to pay Bunn," said Redfern.

"And Ratty's leaving for a holiday," chuckled Kerr. "And Carrington is taking over the New House while he's gone!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well," said Tom Merry; "it seems to me that you've had the best of it. But you'd better toe the line rather carefully with Carrington—the Head will have his eye on you after this. Hallo! There goes Ratty!"

In the dusk the station cab drove out with Mr. Ratcliff sitting in it, his face like a thundercloud.

The juniors smiled after him.

For some days, at least, they were to be spared the presence of Ratty, which all agreed was a happy ending to the New House Riot.

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