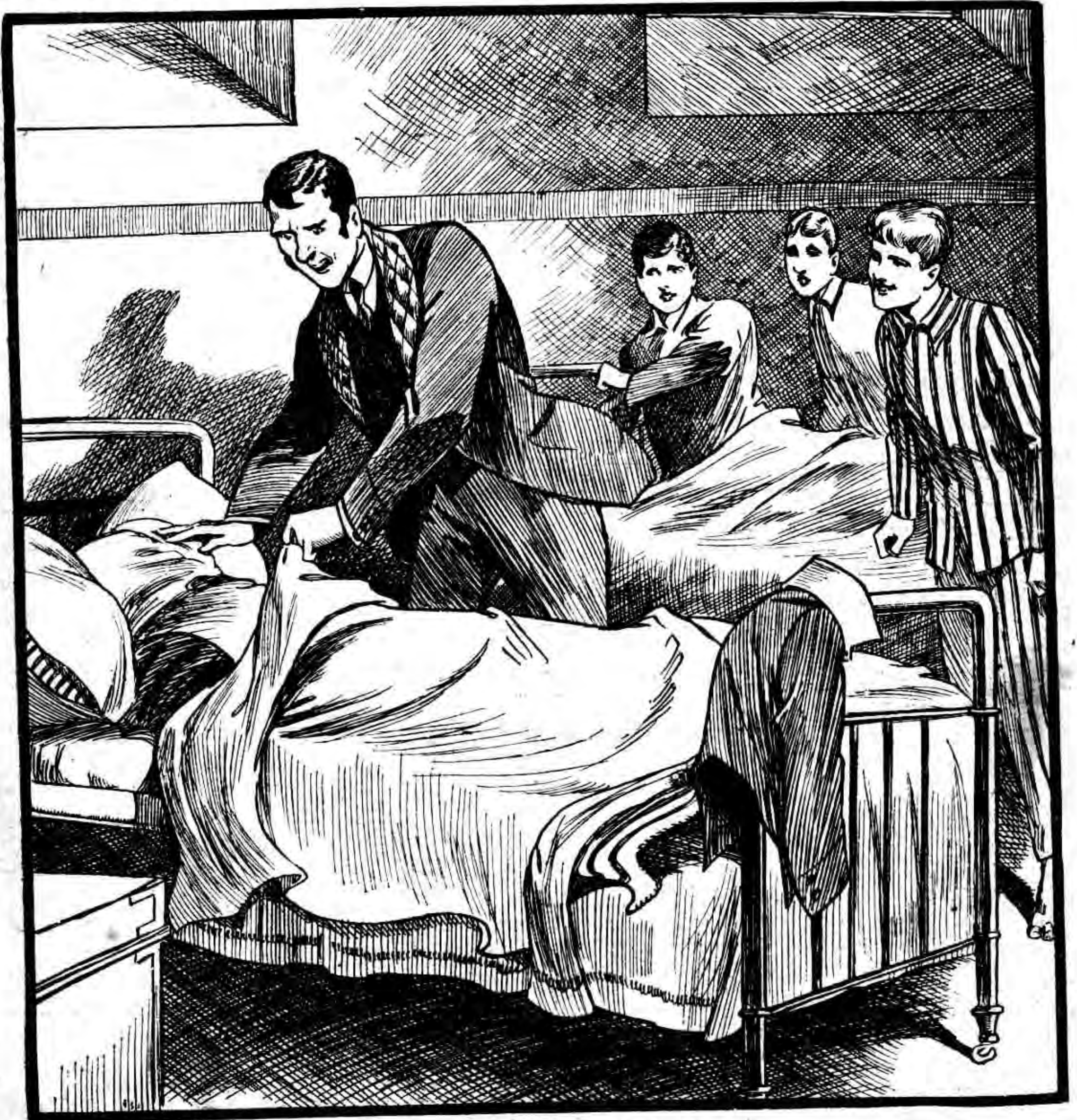




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KICKING OVER THE TRACES!



NOT THERE!

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KICKING OVER THE TRACES!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Co. Take a Hand!

"YOU fellows busy?"

The Famous Five grinned as Lord Mauleverer asked that question.

They did not look very busy.

It was a warm afternoon, and the Famous Five had been at cricket. Now they were enjoying a well-earned rest. They were stretched in the grass, under the old beech close by the cricket-ground, the backs of their heads resting on their clasped hands, staring up at the blue sky, and simply "lazing."

Life seemed good to the chums of the Remove that sunny summer afternoon.

Lord Mauleverer came along at almost a snail's pace, his aristocratic features shaded by a Panama hat.

He stopped, and blinked at the row of juniors, as he asked his question. The Famous Five seldom slacked—in fact, never; but they looked a good deal like slacking now; and certainly they did not look busy.

"Busy!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Awfully!" said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"It's a fearful rush, Mauly!"

"The energy required for sprawling under this tree," said Nugent, "is simply terrific. But we're on our mettle!"

"The mettlefulness is great, my esteemed and ludicrous Mauly!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sleepily.

"If you're not busy—" recommenced Mauleverer.

"Can't you see we're busy?" asked Johnny Bull.

Lord Mauleverer looked round for something to sit down on. Fortunately somebody had left a camp-stool near at hand, and his lordship sat down on that with a sigh of relief.

"I'm dashed sorry to interrupt you!" he said. "It isn't as if you were playin' cricket, or rowin', or any rot like that. But it does seem a shame to drag you away when you're actin' sensibly for once."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"What's wanted?" he asked. "Do you want some coaching in cricket?"

Lord Mauleverer shuddered.

"Like a long spin on a bike?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Don't, my dear fellow!"

"I'll tell you what. I'll run a foot-race with you, all round the quad," said Bob, sitting up.

"Don't suggest such awful things!" said Mauleverer. "You send a cold shiver down my spine—you do, really! I'm tired, too."

"What's made you tired?"

"Well, I've walked here from the School House," said his lordship reflectively.

"Poor old chap!" said Johnny Bull, with deep sarcasm. "That's nearly a hundred yards, isn't it? You must be worn to a shadow."

"Did you do it under the hour?" asked Frank Nugent.

His lordship fanned himself with his Panama, and did not reply. Perhaps he felt that it was too much fog to reply to frivolous questions.

And perhaps Bob Cherry felt that a little shock would be good for his lazy lordship. At all events, he stretched out one long leg, and hooked his foot in the camp-stool.

Crash!

"Oh, begad!"

Lord Mauleverer found himself sitting on the turf, without any clear idea of how he had got there.

"Do that again, Mauly!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some silly idiot kicked that stool!" gasped Mauleverer. He did not rise, however. He found the grass comfortable. "I say, I asked you fellows if you were busy. If you're not, an' if you feel equal to a little exertion, I'd like you to do me a favour."

"Any old thing," said Harry Wharton, at once.

Lord Mauleverer was wearing a troubled look, but the chums of the Remove did not attach much importance to that. Having to walk a hundred yards on a warm afternoon was enough to make the slacker of Greyfriars feel that life was scarcely worth living.

"It's young Jimmy!" explained Mauleverer.

"Sir James Vivian, Baronet, of that ilk?" grinned Bob.

"Yaas."

"Well, what's Jimmy been doing?" asked Wharton. "Whistling in the study, and setting your noble nerves on edge?"

"Worse than that," said Mauleverer seriously. "I'm gradually breakin' him of whistlin' in the study, and he's learnin' to go out without slammin' the door. Jimmy's a good little chap, really, and he's droppin' most of his uncivilised ways. Of course, it wasn't poor old Jimmy's fault that his father left him stranded, and he was dragged up in a slum till my uncle found him and dragged him out. His pater was a bit of a corker, you know, but Jimmy is all right. But—"

"Oh, Jimmy will be a credit to you, Mauly, when we've given him a bit more Greyfriars polish," said Bob. "He's got a heart of gold—or perhaps I should say currency notes, now. There are worse things a chap could do than eating peas with a knife."

"Are there?" said Mauleverer doubtfully.

"Lots!" grinned Bob. "He might be a vicious slacker like Skinner, or Snoop. Considering the way he passed his early years, Mauly, it's rather surprising that the kid hasn't any vices."

"That's the trouble," said Mauleverer dismally.

Harry Wharton sat up.

Like all the Co., Wharton liked Sir Jimmy, and was always kind to the little waif who had suffered so severely for the sins of his father.

"What's that, Mauly?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "You don't mean to say that Jimmy is kicking over the traces?"

"And looking on the wine when it is red?" asked Nugent.

"And the sporting paper when it is pink?" queried Bob.

"You know, he ran wild as a kid," murmured Mauleverer. "He used to play pitch-and-toss for coppers in his blessed alley, and even make bets on races with bobs, you know. He says all the kids did so in Somebody's Rents, where he lived. Awful, isn't it? I jawed him no end about it, an' he chuckled it, of course, on comin' here. He's a good kid. I jawed an' jawed him, you know. It was simply exhaustin' to—"

"To Jimmy?"

"No; to me, you ass! But I felt it my duty, an' he's my relation, an' all that," said Mauleverer. "But—but now he's at it."

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"You don't mean that Skinner—or Snoop—"

"No, 'tain't Skinner this time. It's Angel of the Fourth."

"That new chap?" grunted Bob Cherry. Bob's look showed that he did not think much of the new chap.

"Yaas."

"Well, what is Angel up to?" asked Harry Wharton.

"They've got Jimmy in the box-room, an' they're playin' poker," said his lordship. "I noticed that Jimmy was rather gettin' thick with Angel, and I looked for him. I found them there. There's Angel and Kenney of the Fourth, an' Jimmy. Angel slammed the door in my face an' locked it. So I want you fellows to help me—if you're not busy," added his lordship considerably.

The Famous Five jumped to their feet at once. There was no trace of slackness about them now. If Sir Jimmy's bad training was being taken advantage of by the cads of the Fourth, Harry Wharton & Co. were prepared to chip in and put their collective foot down—hard.

"You're comin'?" asked Mauleverer.

"Of course we are, duffer!" said Bob Cherry. "Get a move on! What are you sitting there for like a stone image?"

"Tired."

"I'll help you up."

"Yaroooh!"

Lord Mauleverer disengaged his ears from Bob's grasp, and rubbed them, and led the way to the School House. After him went the Famous Five, ready to deal with Angel of the Fourth in the most drastic manner—in a way that would certainly not make him feel angelic!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Sports of the Fourth!

BANG!

Crash!
There was a jump in the box-room at the end of the Fourth-Form passage.

Angel and Kenney of the Fourth, and Sir Jimmy Vivian of the Remove, were there, seated on empty boxes, with a big trunk serving them by way of a table.

Aubrey Angel, the new fellow in the Fourth Form, was dealing the cards, when the sudden crash came at the door.

The cards scattered as he jumped.

"What the thunder!" he exclaimed.

"Mauleverer again, I expect!" grunted Kenney. "Never mind him! Pick up the cards, Vivian!"

Sir James Vivian, Baronet—once Jimmy the street-arab—did not move. He stared at Kenney instead.

"Wot's that?" he said.

"Pick up the cards!"

"Pick 'em up yourself!" retorted Sir Jimmy.

The schoolboy baronet had been taken up by the black sheep of the Fourth—the wealthy and aristocratic Angel, and his hanger-on, Kenney; and poor Sir Jimmy was very much flattered by Angel's regard. But he was a great stickler for his independence. He did not mean to be ordered about, or treated as if he wasn't quite as good as the others.

Kenney knitted his brows, but Aubrey Angel gave him a quick look.

"Lend me a hand, Vivian!" he said.

"Cert'nly, old fellow!" said Sir Jimmy at once.

And he willingly lent a hand at collecting up the glimmering pasteboards.

Meanwhile, the thumps and bangs on the door continued, and Bob Cherry's powerful voice boomed through the key-hole.

"Open this door, you cads!"

"Let us in, Jimmy!" called out Lord Mauleverer.

"Open the door, Vivian!"

"Get a move on!"

Thump, thump! Bang!

"Don't take any notice of the interfeerin' rotters!" said Angel. "They can't get in, anyway!"

He shuffled the cards again, and Kenney cut. Sir Jimmy looked rather uneasy. He was a good little fellow, and he knew how much Mauleverer had done for him. He was grateful. It was not every fellow in Mauleverer's position who would have welcomed a relation like Jimmy Vivian at a school like Greyfriars. But his lordship, with all his fastidiousness, had never flinched, and he had stood by the rescued street-arab through thick and thin. Perhaps he did not enjoy his task, but he did it dutifully. Sir Jimmy, in his darker, earlier days, had known little enough of kindness, and Mauly's kind friendship had been an inestimable boon to him.

The waif of Greyfriars was feeling rather conscience-stricken as he sat on the box listening to the clamour at the door. Perhaps Mauly bored him a little with his good advice and kind precepts; but Jimmy had a conscience.

"I—I say, suppose we let 'im in?" he remarked.

"They want to interfere, you young ass!" growled Kenney.

"Jimmy, open the door, there's a good kid!" called out Lord Mauleverer.

"Wotcher want?" inquired Sir James.

"I want you, dear boy."

"I'm rather busy, Mauly."

"You're playin' cards, you young rascal! Open the door at once, or I shall get into a wax!"

"Oh, run away and play!" called out Angel of the Fourth. "You're not comin' in here!"



Busy—very! (See Chapter 1.)

Thump! Bang!

Aubrey Angel dealt the cards carelessly. The clamour at the door did not seem to worry him.

"Well, they won't let us in," said Bob Cherry. "The question is, how are we going to get in? That door's a bit tough to bust!"

"It's got to be forced if they won't open it," said Harry Wharton quietly. "The lock can be smashed."

"Phew! There'll be a row about that," remarked Nugent.

"Can't be helped. We're going in!"

"I will fetch the esteemed hammer from the coalful cellar," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Good! Cut off!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur cut off for the coal-hammer. Inside the box-room the sports of the Fourth looked rather serious as they listened.

"Only gas!" said Angel, rather uneasily, however. "A row like that would bring the prefects up here!"

"They'd like to give us away to Wingate and Gwynne!" growled Kenney.

"No, they wouldn't!" said Sir Jimmy at once. "They ain't sneaks. But I believe they mean to bust in the door."

"Hang them!" said Angel, between his teeth. "Let them do as they like! There's your cards; do you draw any?"

But Kenney and Sir Jimmy did not think of drawing cards just then. They were too uneasy to continue the poker game.

Bang, bang, bang!

Bob Cherry filled in the time during the nabob's absence by pounding on the box-room door with his fist.

"Hallo! What's the thumpin' row about?" demanded Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of the Fourth, coming up the passage with Dabney and Fry. "What are you fags kickin' up a row in our quarters for?"

"Askin' for a lickin'?" inquired Dabney.

"We'll take all the lickings you can hand out, and smash up those gambling rotters afterwards!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Eh? What's that?" said Temple.

"Angel's got a Remove kid in there playing cards!" said Harry Wharton. "We're going to stop them. Don't chip in, Temple!"

Temple shrugged his shoulders. He had been a friend of Angel's, but his friendship had not survived the new fellow's first day or two at Greyfriars.

"My dear man, I'm not goin' to interfere!" he said. "You can snatch the fellow baldheaded for all I care!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney heartily.

"I'll lend you a hand, if you want one," said Fry. "Hallo! What the thump are you going to do with that hammer?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned with the huge hammer in his dusky hand.

"Smash in the lock!" answered Wharton.

"My hat!"

"There'll be a row!" said Temple.

"Let there be!" replied Wharton indifferently, and he took the hammer from the nabob. "Angel, will you open this door, or have it forced open?"

"Go an' eat coke!" came the reply from within.

"Very well!"

Crash!

The heavy hammer descended on the lock with a terrific concussion. Strong as it was, the lock groaned under the blow.

The three young rascals in the box-room jumped to their feet. That drive at the lock showed that the Removites were in deadly earnest.

"Better open the door!" whispered Kenney hurriedly. "We shall have Capper or Quelch on us here if that goes on. Besides, the lock won't stand it. They mean business, Angel!"

Crash!

Angel, gritting his teeth, strode towards the door.

"Stop that!" he shouted furiously.

"I'll unlock the door."

"Buck up, then!"

Aubrey Angel turned the key, and the door was thrown open. He stood with a scowling brow as Harry Wharton & Co. swarmed into the room.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Knocked Out!

HARRY WHARTON glanced at the cards and money on the trunk, the cigarettes and fag-ends that littered the floor, and his brow darkened. If the cads of the Fourth chose to spend their half-holiday like that it was no business of his; but it was quite another matter when they drew the youngest and most easily-influenced member of the Remove into their shady transactions.

Angel and Kenney were scowling fiercely; and Sir Jimmy had a half-ashamed and half-sullen expression on his face.

"Now, you interferin' cads, what do you want here?" said Aubrey Angel, through his set teeth.

"We've come to stop this, you unspeakable rotter!" said Wharton. "Jimmy, you young rascal, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I ain't doin' any 'arm!" said Vivian.

"Don't you call gambling harm?"

"It's only a game!" said Jimmy.

"Vivian isn't in want of your sermons at the present moment, my immaculate friend!" sneered Angel. "He's free to go if he chooses."

"I don't choose!" said Vivian. "I want to be let alone. Why can't you let a bloke alone, Wharton? 'Tain't your business!"

"Do you know what would happen if the Head got to know of this, you young ass?"

"He won't get to know of it."

"Jimmy, old chap," murmured Lord Mauleverer, in distress, "you know jolly well that decent people don't gamble!"

"Oh, don't they?" said Sir Jimmy satirically. "You ain't seed what I've seed, Mauly. When I used to keep watch for old Punchielli in his dive at Blucher's Rents there was plenty of decent people came there on the quiet to play chemin-de-fer and roulette. Titled blokes, too!"

Lord Mauleverer was silent.

Sir Jimmy, in his early days, had seen many things that it was not good for him to see, and he had very much to unlearn at Greyfriars. And unlearning was a slow and difficult process.

"That's where I fust seed Master Angel," said Jimmy.

"You couldn't help being there, Jimmy, but Angel could," said Wharton. "You must know the fellow is an utter blackguard!"

"You'd better take care what you say, Wharton!" exclaimed Angel, his eyes gleaming with rage.

Wharton turned on him.

"You are a blackguard and a rotten cad!" he said. "If the Head had known the facts about you you'd never have been admitted here. And you're going to keep your blackguardism to yourself, Angel! You'll let Vivian alone after this!"

"I shall please myself about that!"

"I don't want to be let alone," said Sir Jimmy. "Why shouldn't a bloke amuse himself? I've played pitch-and-toss since I was old enough to toss a penny. I don't see no 'arm in it!"

"You must take our word for it, then," said Harry. "But Angel knows the harm in it well enough. And he is going to answer for this."

"Let's get out of this!" muttered Kenney.

The two Fourth-Formers made a movement to the door. They found the doorway filled by Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent, who did not budge.

"Let us pass!" exclaimed Angel fiercely.

"Not yet!" answered Nugent.

Wharton caught Angel by the shoulder and swung him round.

"You can choose your man," he said. "You're not going to leave this room without a thrashing, Angel!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Temple. Temple, Dabney, and Fry were looking in from the passage with grinning faces. Evidently they had no intention of helping their Form-fellows.

"I'm goin' out!" shouted Angel furiously.

"Will you pick your man?" asked Wharton.

"No! I'm goin', I tell you!"

"Then I'll pick you!"

The captain of the Remove pushed back his cuffs, and advanced upon Angel. Angel backed away with a savage look.

"Look 'ere, you let Angel alone!" exclaimed Sir Jimmy hotly.

"Shut up, Jimmy!" growled Cherry.

"Yaas, dry up, kid!" said Lord Mauleverer. "The cad wants a lickin'!"

"Hold on!" said Angel quietly, with glittering eyes. "I've had one fight with you, Wharton, already. On second thoughts, I'll pick my man."

"You're welcome!"

"Pick me, old sport!" implored Bob Cherry. "I'm simply yearning to squash your features for you!"

"Me!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "I promise you a regular high old time!"

"No, me!" grinned Nugent. "I'm your man, Angel! Say I'm the lucky man!"

"My esteemed Angel—" began the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Mauleverer!" said Angel.

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated his lordship.

Angel had evidently chosen Lord Mauleverer as the least dangerous of the six. His lordship looked dismayed.

"Your game, Mauly!" said Bob.

"My dear man, pick somebody else," urged Mauleverer. "Here's five strenuous chaps all eager to thrash you. Make it one of them!"

"I've picked you!" grinned Angel.

"Mauly, you ass, you're not funkng that cad?" shouted Johnny Bull.

His lordship shook his head placidly.

"Not at all, my dear fellow; but I don't want to fight him!"

"Why not?"

"Tired!"

"You silly ass!"

"Well, as your merry champion is too proud to fight, you may as well let me pass!" sneered Angel.

"Mauly, you ass, get a move on!"

"It's too warm for fightin' this afternoon!" said Lord Mauleverer distressfully. "How can I fight the beast in this fatigun' weather?"

"Give him a cosh with the hammer, and buck him up," said Bob.

"Oh, begad! I—I—I'm ready!" sighed Mauleverer. "Take my jacket, Wharton, old man, an' don't rumple it. Come on, Angel, and for goodness' sake let's get it over. It's very inconsiderate of you to start your blaggin' on a hot afternoon."

Lord Mauleverer wearily squared up to the Fourth-Former.

Angel attacked at once, with a venomous glitter in his eyes.

Evidently he regarded his lazy lordship as an easy victim, and attributed Lord Mauleverer's unwillingness to fight as funk.

But on that point he was quite mistaken. His lordship was plentifully endowed with pluck. And as there was no getting out of the exertion, Mauleverer put all his beef into it with the idea of getting the exertion over as soon as possible.

The juniors stood round the doorway looking on.

Angel, to his surprise, found his attack

stopped, and found the suddenly-energetic nobleman attacking in his turn, hotly.

The Fourth-Former was driven back, Mauly's fists playing rat-tat-tat upon his face and chest; and the more Mauly attacked the less Angel seemed to like it.

He made an effort and closed in, and Lord Mauleverer received a savage upper-cut that jarred every tooth in his head, and made him stagger. Angel followed up his advantage, hitting out fiercely; and the Co. looked on anxiously. They could not interfere in a fair fight, man to man; but they were anxious for Mauleverer now.

"But there was no need for anxiety.

Punishment had roused Mauly's fighting-blood, and he showed no further trace of slackness. He stood up to Angel's battering fists, and then the advantage was on his side again. Angel retreated once more, followed up fast, and a heavy drive that landed on his mouth sent him to the floor with a crash.

"Oh, lor'!" ejaculated Sir Jimmy.

Angel sat up with a dazed look.

"Have some more?" asked Mauleverer cheerfully.

"Ow!"

"You're not licked yet, Angel?" said Bob Cherry. "Get up and take your medicine like a little man!"

"Ow!"

"Look here, I'm not goin' to wait a long time," said Mauleverer plaintively. "I'm tired. I said so before. If you don't come on, Angel, this fight isn't goin' on any longer!"

"Ow!"

"The fellow doesn't seem to have any sense. Angel, do you want any more, or don't you?"

"Ow! No!"

"Thank goodness!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "I've barked my knuckles on your beastly mouth. We ought to have had the gloves on, begad! The rotter's got a jaw like a brick wall. I'll have my jacket, Wharton, please!"

Wharton helped his lordship on with his jacket, while Angel rose, with Kenney's assistance, his face black with rage.

"Sure you're satisfied, dear boy?" asked Mauleverer politely.

"Hang you!"

"Oh, begad! I don't want to be unpleasant, Angel; but if I find you speakin' to my relation again I shall go for you! It will be an awful bore, but I shall have to do it—I shall make a point of it!" said Lord Mauleverer determinedly. "Now, be decent, an' don't give me all that exertion for nothin'. I appeal to your better nature, dear man!"

Angel did not reply. He left the box-room with Kenney, taking no further notice of Sir Jimmy, who gave him an appealing look as he went.

Lord Mauleverer rubbed his chin tenderly. The upper-cut had hurt.

"Now, would you like to come for a walk, Vivian?" he asked.

"No," growled Sir Jimmy, "I wouldn't!"

"Come an' have a talk in the study, then!"

"Rot!"

"My dear fellow—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Sir James, and he swung angrily out of the box-room, evidently very much exasperated.

Lord Mauleverer sighed.

"I suppose I've done right in interferin' with this little game, you fellows?" he said dubiously.

"Of course you have, ass!"

"Vivian doesn't seem much obliged."

"Oh, Jimmy'll come round," said Bob.

"Angel's had a lesson, and if he wants

another he'll get it. I'll make an end of this muck before we go."

Bob gathered up the cards and the smokes, shoved them in a heap into the grate, and set a match to them. Then the chums of the Remove left the box-room—Lord Mauleverer still rubbing his jaw ruefully.

"Well done, old man!" said Temple of the Fourth. "I shouldn't have thought you had it in you!"

"Wouldn't you, begad?" yawned Mauleverer.

And his lordship went away to his study, No. 12 in the Remove, to rest. He felt badly in need of a rest. Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered away to the cricket-ground. They sighted Sir James Vivian in the quadrangle, stalking along with his hands in his pockets and a dark and moody expression on his face. Bob Cherry called to him cheerily.

"Come and have a look at the cricket, Jimmy!"

Vivian glanced round, "Go an' fry your face!" was his elegant reply—apparently the Blucher's Rents equivalent to "Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. And the Famous Five walked on without Sir Jimmy.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mauly's Tea-party!

SMACK!

"Yaroooh!" "Cheero, old nut!" Lord Mauleverer backed away from the exuberant Bob Cherry, who had thus greeted him in his usual cheery way. It was the following day, and after lessons Bob had come upon Mauly in the quad, walking by himself and looking decidedly thoughtful and dismal.

"Anything troubling your noble serenity, old scout?" asked Bob.

Lord Mauleverer rubbed his shoulder, where Bob's hearty greeting had fallen.

"Yaas," he answered.

"Tell your Uncle Robert, then," said Bob encouragingly.

"It's Vivian."

"Oh, my hat! Vivian again?"

"Yaas."

"Well, what's he been doing now?"

"Nothin'."

"Then what are you scowling about?" demanded Bob.

"Was I scowlin' dear boy?" said his lordship mildly. "I was thinkin'. I'm a bit worried about Jimmy. The young ass has got his back up. I don't know why, unless it's because I interrupted his game yesterday, an' thrashed his friend Angel."

"Perhaps it's that," grinned Bob Cherry. "Very probably, I should say."

"I've told him to drop the fellow, and he won't," sighed his lordship, "and he scowls at me in the study. It gets on my nerves. That horrid cad Angel has been fillin' his mind with rot. He thinks Angel's friendly. And I'm blessed if I know what the cad is takin' Jimmy up for, unless it's simply to make himself dashed unpleasant."

"Perhaps it's to replenish the exchequer."

"Well, Angel's rich, and Jimmy hasn't much tin," said Mauleverer. "Angel may think he has, as he's a baronet, but he hasn't. He can't like Vivian, you know. He's a cad and a snob, an' not at all likely to make allowances for Vivian's little ways, as decent fellows do. He's tryin' to make Jimmy distrust me, too. Jimmy's got it into his head that I'm only standin' him at all because my uncle asked me to. Of course, there's somethin' in that, too. But I really like the little ass, and I don't want to see him goin' to the dogs."

Lord Mauleverer sighed deeply.

Evidently the problem was a worry to his mind. Mauly did not like problems, or anything else that involved exertion, physical or mental.

"Delarey's away, too," he said. "He has some influence over Jimmy. But he's with his relation who came over with the South African boys. Will you come to my study to tea, old scout?"

"Yes, if you like."

"And help me to stand Jimmy," said his lordship. "He's awfully ratty, and it's dashed unpleasant secin' him scowlin' across the table. He looks on that cad Angel as a sort of hero, somehow, an' thinks I'm interferin' with a valuable friendship."

"Young ass!" growled Bob.

"Bring some other fellows with you," said Mauleverer. "I'd like to see Jimmy come round. Bring your dashed rations and things. I've got some unrationed stuff to go round."

"Right you are!" said Bob, laughing.

Lord Mauleverer wandered away wearily to the School House. His lordship's sense of duty must have been very strong, or certainly he would have shaken off Sir Jimmy Vivian and all the trouble he entailed.

Bob Cherry proceeded to gather up his friends for tea in Mauly's study. Frank Nugent was booked for tea with Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, and Johnny Bull was due in Tom Brown's study. But Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh accompanied Bob to No. 12 at tea-time, and Peter Todd was picked up on the way. Billy Bunter joined them in the passage, and rolled into No. 12 after them. Mauleverer stared a little at Bunter, but made no remark. The Owl of the Remove gave him an effusive smile.

"Here I am, Mauly," he said. "I've put off Temple of the Fourth, and Coker of the Fifth, to come here."

"Oh, begad!"

"Hazeldene wanted me to go over to Cliff House with him, too, but I said it couldn't be done," said Bunter.

"Don't let me interfere with your goin' with Hazeldene, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer anxiously.

"You'll catch him before he starts, if you hurry," said Bob.

Bunter did not seem to hear.

"Can I help with the cooking, Mauly?" he asked.

"There isn't any cooking, Bunter."

"Oh, I thought this was a feed!"

"Begad! Did you?"

"Well, I suppose there's something?" said Bunter warmly. He cheerfully blinked into the study cupboard. "Oh, crumbs! Two kinds of jam! I'll set the table for you, if you like, Mauly."

"Shall I kick him out for you, Mauleverer?" asked Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Oh, let him rip!" said Mauleverer.

"Hallo, here's Vivian!"

Sir James Vivian came into the study, and looked surprised at the sight of the guests, and not specially pleased.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Allo!" grunted Vivian.

He stared at Bunter.

"Wot's that fat frog doin' 'ere?" he demanded.

"Ahem!"

"Bunter's come to tea, Jimmy," said Lord Mauleverer mildly.

"Ho!" grunted Vivian.

Billy Bunter turned his big glasses on the baronet with a glare of contempt, and went on laying the table. He was not thin-skinned, and he did not mean to miss the two kinds of jam.

The tea-party sat down, Sir Jimmy with a moody brow.

It was plain that the happenings of yesterday rankled in his mind, and that he was feeling bitter.

To the untrained waif, Angel of the Fourth appeared to be quite magnificent—a superb youth, whose notice was an honour in itself. This magnificent being had condescended to notice him, to be friendly to him, and Mauleverer and his friends had interfered and broken off that promising friendship. Sir Jimmy's heart was hot with resentment.

He did not waste any politeness on the guests. Even Harry Wharton, whom he had always liked and respected, received only a stony stare from him.

But the chums of the Remove were patient. They could make allowances for the little waif's faults and foibles. Sir Jimmy had not been trained on the lines of a Chesterfield.

"Call this a tea!" Sir Jimmy remarked unpleasantly.

"What's the matter with it, kid?" asked Mauleverer.

"Tain't like Angel has in 'is study," said Jimmy. "He's got plenty of stuff."

"I don't see how a fellow can have plenty of grub now, Jimmy, unless he's dodgin' the grub rules."

"Well, p'raps he does!" said Sir Jimmy defiantly. "Tain't for a bloke like Angel to go short. All very well for the likes of the fellers 'ere. Angel's a bit different. He's a gentleman!"

Lord Mauleverer shuddered.

His guests went on with their tea as if they were deaf.

"Can I pass you the pickles, Jimmy?" asked Peter Todd, with elaborate unconsciousness.

"I don't want any blinkin' pickles!"

"Ahem!"

"I'd be 'aving tea with Angel now if you blokes 'adn't interfered," said Vivian resentfully. "He'd asked me, but he called it off, 'cause he said it would only cause unpleasantness for me. He's considerate, he is. He knowed me when I was a reg'lar little ragamuffin, workin' at Punchielli's dive, and he's took me up and been friendly—a rich feller like 'im. 'Course, you must go and interfere!"

"Angel isn't a good friend for you to have, Jimmy," said Wharton.

"Oh, rot!"

"Ahem!"

Sir Jimmy was eating jam with his knife as he spoke, an act of barbarism which the guests affected not to see. He now reached out with the same knife and helped himself to butter with it. There was little butter on the table; but after that there seemed too much for the necessities of the tea-party. It remained untouched.

Lord Mauleverer sat in silent anguish.

Even Billy Bunter did not help himself to butter after Sir James Vivian had done with it. Even Bunter had his limits.

There was a lurking grin on Sir Jimmy's face.

As a matter of fact, the most unpleasant ways that Sir Jimmy had learned in Blucher's Rents had been eradicated since he had come to Greyfriars, and the juniors guessed that he was deliberately making himself obnoxious now.

It was his way of repaying them for having interfered between him and his magnificent friend in the Fourth.

There was a large box of crystallised fruits to grace the tea-table, and eke out the rationed articles. Billy Bunter started early on that box. Sir Jimmy started on it, too, helping himself with his fingers, which were buttery and jammy. He handled everything in the box in turn, discarding what he did not like. And the guests let the preserved fruits severely alone, like the butter, excepting Bunter, who captured as many as he could before the baronet could touch them.

Mauleverer's tea-party, which was in—

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tended to bring Sir Jimmy round, certainly was a hopeless failure.

Even Bob Cherry's tolerant good humour almost failed him.

The guests took their leave of Mauleverer earlier than they had intended, and their feelings were deep as they went down the passage. Billy Bunter went last, and he gave vent to a loud sniff as he departed. Lord Mauleverer and his queer relation remained alone in No. 12.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Declaration of Independence!

LORD MAULEVERER stood on the hearthrug with his hands in his pockets and an expression of the gloomiest misery on his face.

Sir Jimmy remained at the tea-table, cheerfully winding up his tea by eating jam with a knife.

There was a long silence in the study, broken only by the offensive smacking of the baronet's lips.

Lord Mauleverer spoke at last.

"Jimmy!"

"Allo, old mug?" answered Sir James.

"Don't do that."

"Don't do wot?" demanded Vivian belligerently.

"Don't put your knife to your mouth, old fellow."

"Rats!"

"What have you started that for again, Jimmy? You'd dropped that horrid way of eatin'."

"Don't you like it?" grinned Vivian.

"No," said his lordship, with a shudder.

"Then you can lump it!"

"Eh?"

"Wot do I care wot you like?" said Vivian. "You don't care wot I like. Why can't you let a bloke alone?"

"Do you mean to say, Jimmy, that you're going to make yourself offensive in the study because I've stepped in between you and Angel?"

"Well, s'pose it's so, wot then?"

"Then you're a horrid little beast!" said Lord Mauleverer indignantly.

"If you don't like a 'orrid little beast, let the 'orrid little beast alone!" retorted Sir Jimmy. "I got other friends, I s'pose."

"Angel won't do you any good, Jimmy."

"Oh, cheese it, Mauly!"

"He's a bad hat, Jimmy."

"Rats!"

"Your guardian and mine would be waxy if he knew you'd made a friend of a fellow like that, kid."

"S'pose you're going to tell 'im?" sneered Sir Jimmy.

"Oh, begad! You know I'm not. But—but—"

"Oh, come off!" said Vivian disdainfully. "Look 'ere, Mauly. You mean well; you're a good sort. I know that. But do you think I can't look arter myself? Bless your 'eart, I know more than you'll ever know! I can keep my end up. S'pose I play games in Angel's study. I don't see the 'arm. Nobody never told me it was wrong afore I come to Greyfriars. S'pose it's wrong? Well, I ain't called on to be a puffed character, more'n anybody else—see?"

"Oh, gad!" murmured Mauleverer.

"You been good to me, I know," pursued Sir Jimmy. "But you don't like me overmuch, Mauly; you can't stand my ways. Angel says—"

Sir Jimmy broke off abruptly at that point.

"Angel says?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

"I understand," said Mauleverer quietly. "It's Angel's game to make

trouble between you and your real friends, Jimmy."

"Don't you say nothin' agin Master Angel!" exclaimed Vivian resentfully. "I won't 'ear it!"

His lordship was silent.

He had promised Sir Reginald Brooke to do his best for this curious relation, whose early training had been so much against him; and he really was very kindly disposed towards the little waif. But the line Sir Jimmy was taking now was rendering his task an impossible one.

Sir Jimmy's docility seemed to have deserted him entirely under the malign influence of the cad of the Fourth.

Vivian rose from the table looking rather shiny and sticky.

"Look 'ere, Mauly," he said, "let it drop. I know you mean well, but I ain't going to be interfered with. 'Tain't your business, anyway, nor Wharton's, neither. I'm going to make wot friends I like—see?"

"Oh, gad!"

"Let me alone; that's all I want. I'm going to drop in at Angel's study this evenin'," added Sir Jimmy defiantly.

"You oughtn't to, Jimmy," said his lordship feebly.

"Oh, bosh!"

"I suppose that means that I've got to come along and fight Angel again?"

CADET NOTES.

Every boy between 14 and 18 years of age ought to belong to some recognised Cadet Corps. In such times as these it is necessary that all should prepare for the possibilities of the future. Nor need it be supposed that the membership of the Movement involves nothing more than tiresome and monotonous exercise in military drill, etc. The movement provides all kinds of other relaxation, and this side of its work will be enormously extended in the near future. All our readers should join the Cadet Force, and any desiring to do so should apply to the Central Association of Volunteer Regiments, Judges' Quadrangle, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, W.C. 2, who will send them full particulars of the nearest corps, etc.

said Mauleverer, with a sigh. "You're workin' me hard, Jimmy."

Vivian's eyes flashed.

"Don't you come chippin' in, Mauly!" he exclaimed. "If you do, it won't be Angel that you'll fight; it'll be me!"

"You!" ejaculated Mauleverer.

"Yes, me!" retorted Sir James. "I ain't goin' to stand it. You let a bloke alone. I tell you straight, Mauly, that if you put your blessed nose into Angel's study I'll punch it 'ard!"

Lord Mauleverer simply blinked at the baronet of the Remove. His breath was taken away.

"In fact," continued Sir Jimmy, "if you're goin' to kick up a row, you may as well kick it up 'ere, and done with it. I'm your man!"

To Mauleverer's horror, the baronet threw off his jacket, pushed back his cuffs, and spat on his hands.

He squared up to his noble relation in quite a scientific way.

Mauleverer did not removed his hands from his pockets. He watched the antics of his study-mate with a fascinated gaze.

"Well, do you want any?" demanded the baronet.

"Thank you, no!"

"Will you let a bloke alone, then?"

"Begad!"

"Yes or no?" snorted Sir Jimmy.

"If you ain't going to let me alone, I'll

give you a wipe across the kisser for a start!"

Mauleverer shuddered.

"Don't use such horrid expressions, Jimmy!" he gasped.

"I don't want to tork to you at all, come to that," said Sir Jimmy. "Jest you keep off the grass, and let a feller alone. Will you do it? If you won't, you've got a fight on your 'ands, 'ere and now. I mean that!"

"By gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "I wonder whether it's my duty to thrash the young scoundrel? But—but I can't touch the sticky little beast! Jimmy, I'm disappointed in you."

"Oh, piffle!" said Jimmy.

"You're a disgustin' little beast!" said Lord Mauleverer severely.

"Master Angel don't call me sich names," said Sir Jimmy. "He's a gentleman!"

"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Oh, give a cove a rest!" said Vivian.

"Are you going to foller me to Angel's study and kick up a row? That's wot I want to know."

Mauleverer drew a deep breath.

"No," he answered. "If you insist on goin' your own way, Jimmy, I don't see what I can do. When you get into trouble, though, you can come and tell me, an' I'll do my best for you."

"Br-r-r-r!" was Sir Jimmy's ungrateful rejoinder to that.

And he quitted the study.

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer, sinking on the sofa, quite overcome. "Oh, begad! What's a fellow to do?"

There really did not seem anything for a fellow to do, under the circumstances, and his lordship did nothing.

Sir Jimmy walked down the Remove passage with his nose in the air. He found Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry chatting by the window near the staircase, and they glanced at him rather curiously.

Sir Jimmy twisted up his features into an elaborate sneer of defiance, and sniffed audibly as he passed.

Bob Cherry made a movement with his foot; but he restrained the impulse, and the baronet went down the stairs un-kicked.

"I'm getting rather fed up with that little beast," remarked Bob. "I wonder Mauly doesn't give him a thumping good hiding."

"He's not a bad little chap," said Harry. "It's Angel's work; that new fellow seems to be a rotter all through. But either Jimmy will have to drop Angel, or we shall have to drop Jimmy!"

Sir Jimmy, as he made his way to Angel's study in the Fourth, cared little what impression he left on the chums of the Remove. With all his unenviable experience of the seamy side of life, Sir Jimmy was at heart innocent and unsuspecting, and he had not learned yet to distinguish the false from the true.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not as Per Programme!

VIVIAN'S comin', I think."

Aubrey Angel made that remark in his study in the Fourth Form passage, and Paul Kenney gave a grunt.

"What do you want that low cad comin' here for, Angel?" he asked. "I don't see how you can stand him."

"Well, I can't, as a matter of fact," replied Angel, blowing out a little cloud of smoke. "He gets on my nerves horribly."

"Then what do you want him for?"

"I don't want him, but he's useful."

"There'll be a row if the Remove rotters find he's here and come after him," said

Kenney sulkily. "We don't want any more shindies."

Angel smiled.

"I think that's over," he said. "I've told Vivian plainly not to come to me any more if the fellows in his Form are goin' to interfere. I've told him that he'll have to drop my friendship unless he becomes his own master."

"Oh!" said Kenney. "That means that he'll row with Mauleverer, and break off with Wharton and his gang, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

"Still, I don't see the point. It might be worth while knowin' a baronet, if he was the usual baronet sort; but that scrubby little beest!" Kenney sniffed. "Besides, he's got no tin. From what I hear, his father was a bad lot, and actually deserted him, and left him to starve. He never left him a penny to bless himself with; I know that. The kid has nothing but his allowance from Mauly's uncle, and that's charity."

"Yes, I've heard all that. But he has a good allowance," said Angel calmly. "Just at present, dear boy, every quid tells."

"Eh? You've got no end of money!" exclaimed Kenney, with a stare.

"I generally have all I want. But the gee-gees have a way of runnin' off with a fellow's tin, you see. Last week I had twenty pounds. This week I've not got a red cent, and I owe ten quids to the sportin' men at the Cross Keys."

"Phew! That's goin' it strong."

"The worst of it is that my pater's down on me for gettin' the polite boot at Lyncroft, and if I ask for more money he will want to know what I'm doin' with it," said Angel. "He's suspicious now. He hands out a good allowance, an' I have some good tips from my relations, an' there it stops. Unless I can make a raise here, I shall be stony for a week."

"But that little cad's got nothin'—"

"Your mistake, my boy! He's got vicious tendencies, an' some money saved up—just the merchant I want to know at present," grinned Angel. "I find that he's never spent half his allowance from old Brooke. He's got five quid in a money-box or somethin', and he's put ten in the Post Office Savings Bank, and he's bought a lot of War Savings Certificates, which can always be sold. Toppin' dodge, those War Savings things. You buy 'em for fifteen-and-six, and they give you a pound back in five years' time; an' if you're short of dibs you can get your money back any time. Vivian's goin' to be short of dibs, an' get his money back, I think."

"Oh!"

"Disgustin' little beast, if you like," said Angel, "but valuable at the present moment. But that's not all." Angel's eyes glittered. "It's up against Wharton and his set, an' that makes it interestin'. And, after what happened yesterday, I'm sharpenin' my knife for Mauleverer. Sir James Vivian is goin' to be encouraged to become just as big a black-guard as he's got it in him to be—and that's a very big one, I believe. It will make that gang sit up. An' when I'm done with the little cad I shall drop him like a hot potato." Angel lighted a fresh cigarette. "That's the programme, dear boy. Keep a smilin' face, an' stand in with me to clear the little beast out of his dibs."

Kenney laughed.

"Well, that's put a different complexion on it," he said. "If you don't mean to have the sticky little beast hangin' on for good—"

"Oh, rats! In a week or so he will have outlived his usefulness," said Angel contemptuously. "But until then—Shush! Come in!"

There was a tap at the door, and

Sir Jimmy Vivian entered the study in response to Angel's cheery call.

There were signs about him of his feed in Study No. 12 which were very noticeable to Angel's fastidious eyes, though apparently he did not notice them.

He gave the waif of Greyfriars a cheery nod of welcome.

"Trot in, old nut!" he said. "So you were able to come, after all?"

"Yes, and 'ere I am," said Sir Jimmy.

"Squat down! Pass Vivian the smokes, Kenney."

Kenney passed the cigarettes, and Sir Jimmy lighted up at once. Sir Jimmy had smoked "fag-ends" ever since he was big enough to walk. He had accepted Mauleverer's assurances that smoking was bad form in a schoolboy, and had dropped the habit; but under Angel's influence he had taken it on again. He was learning a good many things from Aubrey Angel which Mauleverer regarded as bad form; he was also learning to be indifferent to Mauly's opinion.

"I'm jolly glad to see you, Vivian," remarked Angel. "I hope we're goin' to be jolly good pals."

"I 'ope so, Angel," said Sir Jimmy eagerly.

He gazed with undisguised admiration at the well-dressed, elegant Fourth-Former lounging in the armchair.

To be the pal of that elegant dandy seemed to poor Sir Jimmy something like the seventh heaven of delight.

The bare thought of having that splendid friendship spoiled by the interference of well-meaning friends made him savagely resentful.

"But, if you'll excuse my mentionin' it, I don't want any more shindies," went on Angel, watching Sir Jimmy's face through a little cloud of smoke. "I like you no end, Jimmy, an' we've got a lot of things in common, but can't you find some way of keepin' your other friends from interferin'?"

"I've done that!" said Vivian grimly. "They won't interfere agin."

"But Mauleverer—"

"I ain't friendly with 'im now."

"Dear me! I really hope, Vivian, that I haven't been the cause of any disagreement between you an' your relations?" said Angel, with a look of concern.

"Tain't your fault, Master Angel," said Sir Jimmy. "It's all Mauly's; and I've told 'im off, I have. He won't meddle any more. I've told 'im I'm goin' to punch 'im if he does."

"You've got spirit, young 'un, and no mistake!" said Angel admiringly.

Praise from the dandy of the Fourth was praise indeed, and Sir Jimmy felt great satisfaction at the way he had shaken off Mauleverer.

"But don't call me Master Angel, dear boy," said the Fourth-Former gently. "Now we're pals I'd like you to call me Aubrey."

"Oh, sir! It'd seem to be like a cheek!" said Sir Jimmy simply.

"But I'd like you to. After all, we're really old friends."

"It's very kind of you to say so, Master Angel—I mean Aubrey. That night I saw you at Punchielli's dive in Sobo I never knowed that the time would come when we should be friends," said Vivian. "You was going it that night, sir."

"I generally do go it rather in the vac," smiled Angel. "I wish you could arrange to spend the next vac with me, Vivian. I'd try to give you a good time."

"Wouldn't I like it, just!" said Sir Jimmy, while Kenney contrived to turn a laugh into a cough.

"Then it's a go," said Angel. "I shall

depend on you, Vivian. That is, of course, if Mauleverer will let you."

Sir Jimmy clenched his hands.

"He won't interfere," he said. "I'll see that he don't! I won't 'ave him chippin' in between me and my friends."

Kenney winked at the ceiling. Angel threw away the stump of his cigarette.

"Kenney, old nut, you might run along and tell Loder I can't come this evenin', as I've got a guest," he said.

"Certainly."

Kenney left the study.

Vivian beamed on Angel. That superb youth had actually "cut" an engagement with Loder of the Sixth for his sake.

In a few minutes Kenney returned to the study, though whether he had paid a visit to Gerald Loder's study in the meantime was another matter.

"We never finished that game yesterday," Angel remarked. "I believe I had won a quid or so from you, Vivian. I'll give you your revenge now, if you like."

"I'm on!" said Vivian.

Cards were produced at once—they were quite handy. Kenney prudently turned the key in the lock.

Sir Jimmy had not needed to be taught the game of draw-poker by his new friend; he had learned that much earlier. Angel had not found it thus far so easy to clean out the baronet as he had anticipated, for Sir Jimmy was very keen. But this evening the cad of the Fourth meant to make a clean sweep.

Owing to his speculations on the turf, Angel was ill-provided with ready cash; but Sir Jimmy had no objection whatever to playing for paper. It never even crossed his mind that a magnificent person like Aubrey Angel might decline to settle up on his I O U's; not that that would have been necessary, for Jimmy certainly never would have asked his superb friend for the money.

With Sir Jimmy playing cash, and Angel and Kenney playing paper, the task of the two sharpers seemed simple enough—for sharpers they were, and nothing better.

Poker—even with a five-shilling limit—is a game at which considerable sums of money can be won and lost.

As Angel was risking only written I O U's, he could afford to cover Sir Jimmy's stakes every time; but he found the baronet a keen adversary at that peculiar contest.

After a few rounds, in which Sir Jimmy was mainly successful, Angel and Kenney set to work on the clean sweep.

Stake after stake was dropped into the silver bowl that served as a pool, and Sir Jimmy's silver and currency notes were covered with I O U's.

Kenney dropped out after a time, averring that it was going too high for him; which made no difference to the two young rascals, as it was understood that they were to share the plunder after the baronet was gone.

The game was between Sir Jimmy and Angel now, and Jimmy had ten pounds in currency-notes in the pool, matched with Angel's I O U's.

The fag had thoughtfully brought all his little savings with him.

But now all his money was in the pool, and he paused.

Angel covered his last stake, and smiled.

"Pass?" he asked.

"No, fear!" answered Sir Jimmy. "I reckon I shall 'ave to go on paper now, same as you, Master Angel."

Angel whistled softly.

He had no intention whatever of collecting promises to pay from his dupe. It was cash he wanted.

But, under the circumstances, he could

scarcely refuse to play for paper, as the pool was crammed with his own worthless I O U's.

As Sir Jimmy did not pass, but covered the last stake with an I O U, Angel had no resource but to call for a show of cards, which was not what he had intended. Had Sir Jimmy passed out when his cash was exhausted, Angel would have taken the pot without a show of cards, which was what he wanted. But simple as Vivian was, there was apparently a limit to his simplicity.

Angel threw up his cards.

"Show!" he said. "There you are—four of a kind."

Sir Jimmy grinned genially.

"Queens!" he said. "I reckon I can beat that, Master Angel."

And he laid four kings and an ace upon the table.

Sir Jimmy stretched out a grubby hand to the pot. He had won, and he pocketed the stakes—ten pounds of his own money, and about the same amount in paper with Angel's initials on it, and half as much in Kenney's I O U's.

The two sharpers looked at him fixedly.

Cleaning out the baronet of the Remove did not seem such a simple task, after all. Sir Jimmy was very pleased with his success, and he never dreamed of suspecting the bitter anger that was roused in the breast of the elegant youth opposite.

It was Kenney's deal next, and Angel gave him a significant look as he took up the pack. Kenney understood the look, and he nodded.

Sir Jimmy cut after Kenney had shuffled, and Kenney brought the two halves of the pack together with a snap—putting back the top half where they had been before, so that the "cut" had not taken effect. But, to his surprise, Sir Jimmy leaned across the table with indignation in his eyes.

"None o' that, Kenney!" he said.

Kenney stared at him.

"None of what?" he asked angrily.

"I seen that done often enough," said Vivian. "The Captain played cards that way. I know the game, Master Kenney. I'm s'prised that you'd do sich a thing in the presence of Master Angel!"

"What do you mean, you young cad?" shouted Kenney.

"I mean that them cards ain't cut at all, the way you put 'em," answered Sir Jimmy doggedly. "You've put 'em like they was afore I cut."

"Why should I, you young ass?"

"There ain't but one reason for doin' of it that I know of. It's 'cause you had fixed up the cards for dealin', and the cut would 'ave upset them."

"Do you dare to accuse me of cheating?" demanded Kenney, breathing hard.

"I don't know no other word for it," answered Sir Jimmy. "Bless your 'art, Kenney, I was brought up on dodges like that there! There ain't a trick with the cards that I couldn't spot, through watchin' the captain play. Why, jest from 'abit, I always look at the cards at once to see whether they're marked."

Angel mentally decided at once not to use the marked pack he had in the table drawer in case of need.

Kenney was quite pale.

"You young rotter—" he began.

"Oh, cut it out!" said Vivian. "You was going to cheat me and Master Angel, and there ain't no two ways about it!"

Angel's eyes glittered, but he forced a smile.

"Own up, Kenney!" he said lightly. "You were joking."

"Joking?" repeated Kenney. "Ye-e-es, I—I was joking. The—the fact is, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 547.

Vivian, I did it for a lark, and I shouldn't have dealt until you had cut again."

"That's all right, then," said Sir Jimmy placidly. "Let's cut again."

The cards were re-shuffled and cut, and the game went on without any more attempts on the part of the two young sharpers to assist fortune by ways that were dark. They realised that Sir Jimmy's peculiar experiences made him a little too much for them. The result was that Sir Jimmy continued to win, being a much better player than either of the others.

Kenney was soon tired of losing waste-paper to the fag, and he quitted the study.

Angel affected to yawn.

Sir Jimmy was in possession of his notes to the extent of twenty pounds, and



GET ONE OF THESE CARDS.

IT is mostly on the impulse of the moment that we fritter away our money. If we stopped to think we should remember that we are asked to save so that our money may make things easier for the brave boys "out there."

If you carry a War Savings Card in your pocket it will be a very useful reminder.

You won't mind going without your little pleasures when you remember for whom it is that you are saving.

If you haven't one of these War Savings Cards, get one to-day from any post-office.

Each card is divided up into thirty-one spaces. Whenever you have 6d to spare you just buy a coupon at the post-office and fix it on one of the spaces. As soon as all the spaces are filled up you can take the card to a post-office and exchange it for a 15s. 6d. War Savings Certificate.

In five years' time that certificate will be worth £1.

This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

Angel saw no prospect whatever of winning the paper back, to say nothing of Sir Jimmy's own money.

But he was master of his features, and his look did not express anything of the angry bitterness in his heart.

"Goin' on, sir?" asked Sir Jimmy, as he noticed the yawn.

"Oh, let's chuck it!" said Angel. "I think I'd better get on with prep, or there will be trouble with Capper in the mornin'. Another time, Vivian."

"Any time you like, Master Angel." Sir Jimmy rose. "You—you don't mind my sayin' somethin', sir," he went on hesitatingly. "About that Kenney. He was cheating. A gentleman like you, Master Angel, wouldn't suspect a chap of that, I know; but I've 'ad a different life from yours, sir. It was plain enough. I don't think, sir, that that bloke is fit to be a friend of a feller like you. He ain't good enough."

Angel gave him a very curious look.

Not for an instant did poor Sir Jimmy suspect that the swindle had been arranged between the two Fourth-Formers, and that Angel was the prime mover.

"You don't mind my mentionin' it, sir?" said Vivian.

"Not at all, kid," said Angel graciously. "I'm sure you're mistaken about Kenney. He was simply larking. Take my word for that, Jimmy."

"All right, sir," said Sir Jimmy submissively.

When he had quitted the study the agreeable smile left Angel's face. His feelings towards his intended dupe were very nearly those of hatred.

What cash he had had was gone, and with it written promises to pay Sir Vivian twenty pounds. That was the net outcome of his scheme for replenishing the exchequer at Sir Jimmy's expense. Aubrey Angel had plenty of food for thought that evening.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Tell Vernon-Smith to come to my study, will you?"

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton glanced at Wingate's frowning face rather curiously as the captain of Greyfriars turned back into his study. It looked like trouble for Vernon-Smith.

Wharton went at once to the Bounder's study. He found Vernon-Smith there with Skinner, his study-mate. They were at prep.

"Wingate wants you, Smithy!" said Harry, looking in.

"Oh, bother!" answered the Bounder.

"I'm busy!"

"I hope there's nothing wrong," added Wharton. "Wingate was looking rather rusty."

"Nothing wrong that I know of."

Skinner looked up from his work with a grin.

"Been kicking over the traces again, Smithy?" he asked. "Lookin' on the wine when it is red at the Cross Keys—what?"

Vernon-Smith left the study with Wharton without replying. It was a favourite joke with Skinner that the Bounder's reform was nothing but camouflage, and that under it Smithy was the same old Bounder as of yore.

Wharton went down the passage with Smithy to the stairs. He was looking rather concerned.

"It's all serene," said the Bounder, with a grin. "I've got nothing to answer for, Wharton. Spotless as a baa-lamb, I assure you."

"I'm sure of it!" assented Wharton. "But Wingate looked as if something was up. You haven't been chumming with that cad Angel? You mentioned to me that you knew him before he came here."

The Bounder shook his head.

"We haven't spoken more than twice," he answered. "Angel came to my study, and jawed me his first day here; but he was disgusted with me." The Bounder grinned. "I was just about as disgusted with him, to tell the truth. I think he's spoken to me in the quad since, that's all. Not enough to contaminate me—what?"

"I'm glad you've had nothing to do with him. I wish the fellow never had come to Greyfriars!" said Harry.

"Young Vivian seems to pull with him remarkably well," said Vernon-Smith.

"If I were Mauly I'd stop that."

"Mauly's tried."

"Better try again, I should say. Angel's a bad hat. And if anything happens, you can bet it will all be put on Vivian. I know the chap."

Vernon-Smith went down the stairs and presented himself in Wingate's study. He found the prefect frowning grimly, and he shrugged his shoulders as he noted it. He was quite prepared for his rather shady past to rise up against him once more, as it had done before. The Bounder's earlier reputation at Greyfriars was not easily lived down. In fact, his reform had only come in time to save him from expulsion.

"Wharton told me you wanted me, Wingate," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Here I am."

Wingate looked at him hard.

"The Head's spoken to me," he said.

"About me?" smiled the Bounder.

"Not about you specially. But it looks as if some junior of this school has been playing the goat."

"So you send for me at once?" grinned Vernon-Smith. "Thanks!"

"Well, I don't want to do you any injustice," said Wingate. "But you came very near being sacked, Vernon-Smith, and, of course, I know what it was for. Sir Hilton Popper has telephoned to the Head. He makes out that he saw a boy—a junior—in a Greyfriars cap hanging about the garden of the Cross Keys. That low den is strictly out of bounds, as you know. Dr. Locke has asked me to look into the matter."

"Not guilty, my lord!"

"This is a serious matter, Vernon-Smith. I want to ask you plainly whether you've been playing the fool again, as you did before."

"If I had I shouldn't be likely to tell you, Wingate. I should most likely roll out a pack of lies," said the Bounder coolly. "But, as it happens, I haven't. You will have to look a bit farther. Try the Sixth."

"Sir Hilton referred to a junior."

"Sir Hilton Popper is pretty well known to be a fussy and meddling old fool," suggested the Bounder. "Perhaps he's mistaken."

"You must not speak of a governor of the school like that, Vernon-Smith. I accept your word, but I warn you to be careful."

"Thanks, awfully!"

"You can go!" said Wingate impatiently.

"Right-ho!"

The Bounder sauntered out of the study quite cheerily. He had a clear conscience, and he reflected that a clear conscience was a rather valuable asset. Harry Wharton met him at the end of the passage.

"All serene," said the Bounder. "Somebody's been playing the goat, or old Popper thinks somebody has. Naturally, somebody thought of me at once." He laughed a little bitterly.

"I think I can guess who it was," said Wharton.

"So can I. And as Wingate's given me a warning I'll pass it on. That's only good-natured," said the Bounder, laughing.

And he went along the Fourth Form passage and tapped at Angel's door and opened it. Angel and Kenney had their heads bent over a pink paper, which was whipped out of sight the moment the door opened.

"Hallo! It's you!" growled Angel.

"Little me!" replied the Bounder.

"I've just been called up because some cheery youth has been seen hanging about the Cross Keys."

Angel started.

"I thought I'd pass on the tip," said



A flogging for someone! (See Chapter 11.)

Vernon-Smith. "You've only been a couple of weeks at Greyfriars, Angel, and it would be a pity to be sacked before the half-term, at least. Verb. sap."

And with that the Bounder walked away.

"Phew!" murmured Kenney, as the door closed.

"Confound his cheek!" growled Angel.

"Well, it's rather good-natured of him to give the tip. It shows that the beaks are on the alert," said Kenney uneasily.

"I—I say, I'd give up the Cross Keys to-night, if I were you!"

"Does that mean that you funk it?"

"Well, if you put it like that, I do. I'm jolly well not going to be sacked from Greyfriars if I can help it!"

"Oh, rot! They can't know much if they suspect Smithy," answered Angel. "I can't put it off for to-night. Vivian's comin'!"

"The little beast will come any time you choose."

"I know that; but I've fixed it up with Hawke and Cobb," said Angel.

"I've got to go through with it. You know how the little cad welshed us the other night—cleared us both out!"

"Chiefly impot-paper!" grinned Kenney.

"It's got to be met. My signature's worth somethin', whether yours is or not. He's comin' for a flutter, and I've fixed it up with Hawke to clean him out, and go halves. We can't do it, but Hawke can. Hawke's puttin' in this evenin' specially, and I can't disappoint him."

"I'd rather disappoint him than risk it."

"Where's the risk?" exclaimed Angel impatiently. "They don't know much, and what they know only makes them suspect a Remove chap because of Smithy's juicy old reputation. Safe enough for us!"

Kenney shook his head.

"I scent danger!" he answered.

"Leave me out."

"I'll leave you out fast enough!" said Angel contemptuously. "You've got no nerve. I'm goin'."

"They wouldn't be so hard on you, as

a new chap," said Kenney. "I should get it in the neck. I'm off!"

"Oh, rats!"

And when Sir Jimmy looked into Angel's study shortly before bed-time, to make the final arrangements for the night out, the arrangements were made—only Kenney, as he explained, had a slight cold, and couldn't come.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Night Out!

HARRY WHARTON stirred and awoke.

Some sound in the dormitory had awakened the captain of the Remove, and he raised his head and listened.

Greyfriars was on the East Coast, and more than once the Hun air-raiders had passed that way, and Wharton listened, half-expecting to hear the drone of the Gothas.

But there was deep silence.

"Hallo! Anybody up?" murmured Wharton drowsily.

There was no reply, and Harry dropped his head on the pillow again. He was not aware that the sound which had awakened him was the gentle closing of the dormitory door from outside. If he had known that Sir Jimmy Vivian had crept quietly from the Remove dormitory, Wharton would probably not have settled down again so promptly. But he did not know.

Vivian, with beating heart, was creeping away, a pair of boots in his hand. He was greatly excited, and perhaps a little conscience-smitten. But conscience was stilled by the thought that Angel, the admired and superb dandy of the Fourth Form, was going, too, and what was good enough for Aubrey Angel, the magnificent, was good enough for the one-time waif of Blucher's Rents. Silently he crept into the lower box-room. There were still lights below—the masters had not yet gone to bed, and most of the Sixth were still up. It was necessary to be very careful.

"You 'ere?" whispered Sir Jimmy, blinking round in the darkness.

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There was no answer, and he waited. It was some minutes later that a soft footfall entered the room.

"'Ere I am, Master Angel!" whispered Vivian.

"Right-ho, kid! All serene?" asked the Fourth-Former.

"Wot?"

"Nobody awake—what?"

"Nobody. Not that they'd 'ave stopped me, neither," said Sir Jimmy independently.

"Good man!" smiled Angel.

In a few minutes they were out of the house by way of the leads under the window.

Hardly a gleam of light came from the house; blinds were closely drawn on all windows where lights still burned. Sir Jimmy and his companion reached the school wall, and dropped into the road outside.

Keeping in the shadows as much as they could, the two juniors tramped away towards Friardale.

Aubrey Angel did not share the excitement that was throbbing in his companion. This was nothing new to him, either at his present school or at his former one. Probably it was something of the kind that had caused his sudden departure from Lyncroft.

The ill-assorted companions reached the village, and turned into the narrow lane beside the Cross Keys.

"You know the way, Master Angel?" whispered Sir Jimmy.

Angel laughed softly.

"Of course. I've been here before."

"More'n once?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh!" said Vivian.

Much as he admired Aubrey Angel, something seemed to jar on him. The dingy shadiness of the adventure could not wholly be disguised. But Sir Jimmy made no further remark as he followed the Fourth-Former into the shadowy garden and up the rickety wooden steps of the veranda at the back of the house. There Angel gave a low whistle, and a half-glass door was opened.

"'Ere you are, gents!" said a husky voice, that brought a scent of rum and tobacco along with it.

Sir Jimmy shivered a little as he caught that rum-laden breath.

It brought back earlier days to his mind—days and nights in the purlieus of Blucher's Rents and the back streets of Soho. It awoke remembrances that had almost passed from his mind. Greyfriars had wrought a change in him deeper than he understood. There was nothing enticing to him in the pub. But for his regard for his companion he would much rather have been back in his dormitory at Greyfriars. Yet Angel, the wealthy and well-trained, found pleasure where the one-time slum-arab found only disgust. It was curious enough; but the explanation was that Sir Jimmy's faults were those of training, and Angel's were of the heart.

The two juniors stepped into a lighted room, and the door was closed. Mr. Jerry Hawke, bookmaker and sharper, grinned at them cordially, with a very curious glance at Vivian.

"Glad to see you, young gents!" he said. "Mr. Cobb'll be 'ere in a minute or two. Sit down, gentlemen!"

The gentlemen sat down.

There were cards on a green-covered table, a box of cigarettes, and a bottle of whisky. Angel mixed himself a whisky-and-soda, Sir Jimmy watching him with a blank expression. Sir Jimmy had known the taste of intoxicants in his slum, but Angel—Even in the midst of his hero-worship Sir Jimmy could not help feeling that there was something

wrong with a fellow of Angel's age who drank spirits.

Mr. Hawke did not seem surprised. He had already learned to know Aubrey Angel, short as their acquaintance had been.

Mr. Cobb, the landlord of the Cross Keys, came into the room, and joined the merry party. It was eleven o'clock now, and Sir Jimmy was feeling very sleepy, though he would not have confessed it for worlds. Angel seemed fresh enough. Late hours were no new experience to him.

It was not long before the quartette were seated round the card-table, and a game of poker was in progress.

Sir Jimmy's face took on a peculiar expression after a few rounds of the game in which he had lost some money.

"I think we'd better be goin' 'ome, Master Angel," he said abruptly.

Angel's eyes glittered.

"Why?" he asked quietly.

"You'll lose your money 'ere, sir."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"P'r'aps the gents won't object to playin' with some cards I've brought in my pocket, then," said Vivian.

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Mr. Hawke's jaw set squarely. He knew by that observation that the sharp little waif had spotted the fact that the cards were marked. Fleecing Sir Jimmy was not an easy task for Angel, even with the experienced aid of a professional sharper. But Mr. Cobb broke in blandly.

"Any cards are all the same to me, my boy."

"Then 'ere you are," said Vivian.

He produced his own pack, and Mr. Hawke's well-worn cards were swept into a drawer.

Mr. Hawke and his friend took that rebuff placidly. They were not thin-skinned. Angel's eyes were glittering, however. Sir Jimmy did not suspect him—would not have dreamed of suspecting him of complicity in a swindle. But how was the swindle to come off? It was not easy; and Angel had not taken the trouble to bring Vivian there for nothing.

But, as Mr. Hawke would have expressed it, there were more ways than one of killing a cat. He dropped a whisper to Angel while the latter was mixing himself a fresh whisky-and-soda; and

Angel proposed bridge instead of poker. Sir Jimmy knew little of bridge; it was not a game played in Blucher's Rents. He had learned to play it from Angel; but naturally he did not play it well. But he assented at once, as he would have assented to anything that Aubrey Angel had proposed.

Bridge gave the sharpeners their opportunity. With his own partner playing to lose, Sir Jimmy had not a ghost of a chance of winning. It was a slower game than poker; but, from the point of view of the sharpeners, surer. Whether Angel won or lost was a matter of no moment, as he was standing in with Hawke and Cobb; but Sir Jimmy was losing all the time now, and he was losing real money. The stakes were high—Angel had suggested that, and Vivian agreed—because there was not time for more than a rubber. Even Angel did not propose to stay out all night.

Sir Jimmy found himself with ten pounds to pay out. Angel had to pay out the same sum, and he went through a solemn pretence of doing so. But Sir Jimmy was content. He was not aware, this time, that he had been cheated, though he certainly noticed that Angel was playing very badly as his partner. It was his loyalty to Angel that blinded him.

"My hat! Pass one!" exclaimed Angel. "We shall have to clear off, Vivian."

"I s'pose so," assented Jimmy, suppressing a yawn.

"Give you your revenge any time you like, young gents," said Mr. Hawke solemnly.

"Cert'nly!" chimed in Mr. Cobb.

Angel nodded.

"Day after to-morrow, then," said Angel. "Same time—what?"

"Cert'nly, sir!"

"I'm game," said Sir Jimmy drowsily. And Aubrey Angel sampled the whisky once more before he said good-night to the sharpeners.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Found Out!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation as he sat up in bed.

The electric light had been suddenly switched on in the Remove dormitory.

Several of the juniors awoke, and glanced round them in sleepy surprise. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stood in the doorway, looking into the dormitory.

"Anything the matter, sir?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"No, Wharton. I merely wish to ascertain whether every Remove boy is in bed," answered Mr. Quelch. "Do not be alarmed, my boys."

"Oh, we're not alarmed, sir!" said Vernon-Smith, with a sardonic grin.

The Form-master's eyes had turned to his bed at once, as he noted. Apparently the Bouncer was the one Mr. Quelch would have expected to find absent, if anyone was absent.

Mr. Quelch looked relieved, however, to see him there. It would have been a painful shock to him to discover Vernon-Smith in wrong-doing, for he fully believed in the reckless junior's reform.

"Pray sit up, all of you," said Mr. Quelch. "You need not rise; I only wish to see that everyone is present."

All the juniors were awake now, excepting Billy Bunter, whose resonant snore was still audible. Bob Cherry threw a pillow at him, and Bunter started up with a howl.

Only in one bed remained a motionless figure.

It was Sir James Vivian's bed.

"Wake up, Jimmy!" called out Lord Mauleverer.

Tom Redwing, who was in the next bed, tossed a pillow across to awaken Sir Jimmy. But the recumbent figure did not move.

"He seems fast asleep, sir," said Redwing.

"Vivian!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

No reply, and no movement. The Form-master came up to the bedside, and gazed down at the motionless form, and then, with a sharp, angry exclamation, he threw back the bedclothes. There was a gasp from the Removites when a bundle of coats and other clothes was revealed. Sir Jimmy Vivian was not there, and his place had been occupied by a dummy.

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer, in utter dismay.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch's look was terrific at that moment.

"Vivian is absent!" he exclaimed. "Wharton, do you know anything about this?"

"I had not the faintest idea of it, of course, sir," answered Harry.

"Was anyone here aware that Vivian was absent?"

There was no reply. If anyone had been aware of it he would not have been likely to tell the Remove-master so, as a matter of fact.

"Vivian is your relation, Mauleverer, and—"

"Yaas, sir!" groaned the dismayed Mauleverer.

"Do you know where he is gone?"

"No, sir."

"Nor when he is likely to return?"

"Naturally, I know nothin' about it, sir," muttered Mauleverer. "I—I don't think that—that Jimmy means any harm, sir!"

"Vivian is absent from his dormitory at midnight, Mauleverer! It is nearly midnight now. He has left a bundle in his bed, which would have deceived me if I had not been very careful. This shows that the matter is planned—he must be outside the school."

"Yaas, sir, I—I suppose so!" mumbled poor Mauly. He thought he could guess where Sir Jimmy was; but he kept his uneasy surmises to himself.

Mr. Quelch turned to the doorway, as there was a step in the passage. Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, appeared there, with a very grim brow.

"I have found a member of my Form absent, Mr. Capper," said the Remove-master. "It appears that Sir Hilton Popper was not mistaken, as I had hoped. The guilt lies with my Form."

"Not wholly, sir," answered Mr. Capper. "A boy of my Form is also absent."

"Bless my soul!"

"Angel, the new boy, is missing from his bed," said Mr. Capper. "There was a dummy arranged in his bed to deceive the eye. The two boys have probably gone together."

"That appears to be the case, certainly."

"Kenney, who is Angel's study-mate, suggests that Angel may simply have gone into the quadrangle," said Mr. Capper. "He says Angel has suffered from a headache, and may have gone to seek relief in the fresh air. I regard that as highly improbable."

"I agree with you," said Mr. Quelch drily.

He glanced at the startled Removites. "I am sorry you have been disturbed, my boys. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The light was turned out, and Mr.

Quelch quitted the dormitory with the Fourth Form master. Both the masters were looking very grave.

"This must be looked into at once!" Mr. Capper said.

"Undoubtedly. I hoped that Sir Hilton Popper's statement to the Head would prove to be unfounded; he has made mistakes before. But—"

"But it has led to this discovery," said Mr. Capper. "I certainly did not think that anyone would be found absent when we arranged to inspect the dormitories after lights out. It is a shock to me!"

"And to me. Vivian's early training was against him; but I had firmly believed that he had settled down to Greyfriars ways. It appears that I was mistaken. But for Angel there is no excuse. He did not labour under Vivian's early disadvantages."

"He is a new boy, however," said Mr. Capper. "He is new to our ways, and may have fallen under Vivian's influence."

"He is the elder."

"True; but Vivian's experiences have been so very peculiar," said Mr. Capper, shrugging his shoulders. "I did not feel at all sure that it was a wise step on the Head's part to admit such a lad here."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

Both the masters were angry with the delinquents; but each of them, as if instinctively, was disposed to lay the greater part of the blame on the junior who was not in his Form.

"Dr. Locke will, I think, admit that that was a mistaken step now," said Mr. Capper.

"I must say that I was satisfied with Vivian," said Mr. Quelch. "I cannot help thinking that he has acted under Angel's influence."

"I must say that I take the exactly opposite view."

"It is certain, at least, that Vivian never acted in this way before this boy Angel came to Greyfriars."

"You mean that you never discovered him!" answered Mr. Capper tartly. "My belief is that it will turn out that Vivian was the tempter. However, our duty remains to be done. After Sir Hilton's disclosure, there can be little doubt where the boys are gone; but we should have proof."

"That is to be obtained by a visit to the place in question," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "When they leave—"

"Quite so! They will walk into our hands," said the Fourth Form master. "I will accompany you."

And the two masters went downstairs for their hats and coats.

Meanwhile, there was a buzz of excitement in the Remove dormitory. Whatever the masters might think, Harry Wharton & Co. knew very well who was the tempter and who the tempted.

"The silly young ass has gone and done it now!" said Bob Cherry. "That beast Angel's at the bottom of it!"

"No doubt about that," said Wharton, between his teeth. "We did all we could."

"Oh, it's rotten!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Poor old Jimmy never meant any harm, and he knew no better, anyway."

"The rottenfulness is terrific, my esteemed Mauly!" said Hurree Singh sympathetically. "It will mean the flogful licking!"

"May be worse than that," said Squiff. "Anyway, it will be the sack for Angel. They're bound to think him the worse of the two, as he's older, and in a higher Form."

"He is the worse of the two," said Redwing.

"Angel won't be sacked," said the Bounder quietly. "I'll bet you two to

one he wriggles out of it! It's that young fool Vivian who will have to stand the racket, if Angel can put it on him."

"You think he'd be cad enough?" exclaimed Wharton.

"I know he would—and he will!"

"Oh, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Lucky it wasn't you, Hazeldene," said Skinner with a grin. "You've been jolly thick with Angel. It might have been you."

"Oh, rats!" said Hazeldene, who was quite pale. "Fancy old Quelch nosing into the dorm at midnight! Any fellow might have been caught!"

"I shall be jolly careful after this!" chuckled Skinner. "Looks as if we shall lose our baronet! What a misfortune! I shall weep briny tears, I know!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Certainly—I'm going to sleep!" yawned Skinner. "Mauly, you can stay awake an' watch for the return of the merry prodigal! Ha, ha!"

As a matter of fact, Lord Mauleverer did stay awake—and he was not the only one. There were a good many fellows who were too concerned for Sir Jimmy to think of going to sleep again just yet.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Black Treachery!

"WAIT a minute, Vivian!"

Aubrey Angel slipped back into the inn, leaving Sir Jimmy waiting in the dark, shadowy garden outside.

Sir Jimmy supposed that he had forgotten something; he did not guess that his worthy companion had gone back to claim his share in the spoils.

Angel rejoined him in a few minutes.

"Come on!" he said curtly.

Sir Jimmy noted the irritable tone, and followed Angel silently. Angel was not in a good temper. The fleecing of Sir Jimmy was a more difficult task than he had supposed; and even Angel had felt some repugnance to entering into a compact with a pair of low sharpers like Hawke and Cobb. A third share was little enough, and Sir Jimmy still retained the Fourth-Former's written promises to pay his gambling debt of twenty pounds lost in the study. Even the fact that Sir Jimmy would never ask him to pay irritated Angel—he did not like feeling under an obligation to his dupe and victim.

He had always felt a scornful dislike for the unfortunate Vivian, and this feeling was intensified almost into hatred now, as they crept out of the dark garden, Sir Jimmy tired and sleepy, and Angel with a racking headache.

In silence they trod the narrow lane beside the inn, and emerged into Friar-dale Lane to head for the school.

At that hour there was no sound or sign of life, and they were not likely to meet anyone on the road, unless it was Police-constable Tozer making his round.

But matters were not quite as usual that night.

As the two juniors stepped out into the high-road and started for Greyfriars, two dark figures loomed up from the shadow of the trees beside the road.

"Stop!" said a quiet voice.

They stopped—thunderstruck.

For they knew that voice—the quiet, steely tones of Mr. Quelch. It was the Remove-master.

Angel made a backward step, thinking of flight. But the next moment he knew that he was known.

"Angel!" It was Mr. Capper's voice now. Follow me!"

"Oh, my heyl!" muttered Sir Jimmy Vivian.

The Removite was utterly dismayed.

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But even then the loyal little fellow was thinking more of his companion than of himself. He could not help him, but he pressed Angel's arm in token of sympathy. His hand was flung violently off.

"Come!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—" began Angel, stammering.

"You need not speak now, Angel," said Mr. Capper coldly. "You can explain to Dr. Locke, who is waiting up to see you."

Angel caught his breath.

It was useless to speak. The exposure was complete. He knew now that the masters must have been suspicious, and that the dormitories must have been visited. That was the only way of accounting for the presence there of the masters of the Fourth and the Remove. The two roysterers had been missed from their beds, and their whereabouts suspected. Angel would have given a good deal then to have followed Kenney's example in taking the Bounder's tip. Paul Kenney was congratulating himself in the Fourth Form dormitory, and Angel—What was to happen to him?

The two juniors followed the masters along the dark road in grim silence.

The Head knew; he was waiting up to see them when they were brought in. Never had an exposure been more complete. What subterfuge, what lie, could save the blackguard of the Fourth now? He had been only a week or two at his new school, and now this blow had fallen already. He would have to leave Greyfriars, as he had had to leave Lyncroft; and he shivered at the thought of his father's grim, angry face when he came home again in disgrace. How was he to save himself from that?

Angel's thoughts were busy as he tramped along the dark road. How was he to save himself? He had little time to scheme and plan, but somehow he must escape this peril. As for his companion, he did not give him a thought, until it came into his mind that there was one way—and one way only—by which he might save his own skin. Lying and treachery came easily enough to him. But would they serve him? That was the question. If he could succeed, somehow, in making the dupe appear the tempter, and the tempter the dupe—in laying the guilt upon Sir Jimmy's shoulders!

That was his thought now.

They reached Greyfriars at last, and Mr. Quelch opened the side gate with his key, and they passed in.

Sir Jimmy whispered to Angel as they crossed the shadowy quad.

"I'm sorry, Master Angel—I'm sorry for this."

"Don't speak to me!" muttered Angel savagely.

And Sir Jimmy was dumb.

Perhaps he had expected some expression of regret from Angel for having got him into this fearful scrape, and he wanted to assure the Fourth-Former that he was ready to take his full share of the blame. The bitter hatred and malice in Aubrey Angel's voice came as a startling shock to him. The scales were beginning to fall from Vivian's eyes already. He was beginning to see Angel as others saw him.

They followed the masters into the dark house in silence.

A light glimmered under the door of the Head's study.

Sir Jimmy trembled a little as he approached that dreaded apartment. What was he to say to the Head? What was the verdict to be? He had no excuse to offer for his conduct, save that he had acted under Angel's influence—an excuse that he did not think of for one moment. Little did he dream that

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that very pretext was in Angel's own mind—that he had already decided upon his course of action, and that his scheme was to sacrifice his comrade to save himself. No thought of a scruple entered Angel's mind. His only trouble was whether he would be successful.

Mr. Quelch tapped at the Head's door, and they entered.

Dr. Locke's brow was dark and stern as the culprits stood before him. The Head had been informed of the state of affairs, and he had waited up for the two masters to return with the juniors.

"Here are the boys, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Where did you find them, Mr. Quelch?"

"They came together out of the Cross Keys public-house."

"As we feared, after what Sir Hilton Popper had said," remarked Mr. Capper.

Dr. Locke nodded.

"I feared so," he said. "Angel, Vivian, have you anything to say?"

Angel cleaved his throat.

"You have broken bounds at night, and stolen out of the school," said the Head sternly. "You have been found in a low resort. Have you anything to say—any words of excuse to utter?"

"Yes, sir," muttered Angel huskily.

"I will hear anything you have to say," said the Head.

"I—I did not mean any harm, sir," muttered Angel. "I—I've never done anything of the kind before. I—I looked on it as a lark when Vivian proposed it."

Sir Jimmy started violently.

It was Angel who had proposed that rascally excursion, and Vivian, reckless as he had grown, had hesitated long before he consented. He could scarcely believe his ears as Angel spoke. Even yet he did not realise that the dandy of the Fourth was seeking to extricate himself at his expense.

"Vivian proposed this excursion?" said the Head.

"Yes, sir. And—and I understand that he'd done it lots of times, and—and that it was looked on more or less as a lark," said Angel humbly. "I—I suppose it was wrong, sir, but I never thought at the time. Vivian told me that lots of the fellows do it."

"If Vivian told you that he spoke falsely!" said the Head sternly.

"Well, sir, I'm new here, and I don't know. I thought it was very kind of Vivian to take me in hand, as a new fellow."

Sir Jimmy did not speak.

He was feeling stunned.

This was Angel. This was his superb friend, for whose sake he had broken with Lord Mauleverer and shunned Harry Wharton & Co.! He wondered whether he was dreaming as he listened to the lying, plausible tongue. Angel had taken a cunning line in representing himself as an unsuspecting new boy led into wrongdoing by an old hand. And poor Sir Jimmy's questionable past lent colour to the falsehood.

Vivian could not speak.

His idol was shattered. The scales had fallen from his eyes, and he saw his admired pal as he really was—base, false, unscrupulous, treacherous to the core. That was a heavier blow to Vivian than the punishment to come.

There was a silence in the study.

The Head scanned the two juniors intently. Mr. Quelch frowned; but Mr. Capper had given a nod, indicating that Angel's explanation agreed with his own views.

"There are, perhaps, excuses to be made for you, Angel, as a new boy here," said the Head at last. "But you

must have been well aware that you were doing serious wrong."

"I—I think so now, sir."

"Do you mean to tell me that you did not think so at the time?"

"I—I never thought at all, sir," said Angel, with an air of great frankness. "Vivian only laughed when I said I thought it was too thick. I—I'm afraid I was silly, sir; but—but I didn't like to be thought a spooney, and—and I thought I should be showing the white feather if I didn't go. I never wanted to go, for that matter. It was a horrid place, and the smell of the smoke nearly made me sick. I—I tried to get Vivian to come away, but he wouldn't."

"And how were you engaged at the place, Angel?"

"I was just looking on, sir, seeing some men play billiards."

"You did not play?"

"Oh, no, sir! I can't!"

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"You have not spoken, Vivian. What have you to say?"

Sir Jimmy gave Angel one look—a look that made even the blackguard of the Fourth feel a little uncomfortable.

"Nothin', sir," he answered dully.

"You admit that you led this new boy into this disreputable adventure?"

"He says I did, sir," answered Sir Jimmy bitterly.

"Do you deny it?"

Angel set his lips hard. He was prepared for recrimination, for denials and counter-denials, and he was ready to call on Kenney as a witness on his side. But he had nothing of the sort to fear. Sir Jimmy was not thinking of a contest of that kind with his false friend. He was feeling too utterly sick and miserable to care much what happened to him. And he had pride, too—a pride that Angel was far from understanding. He had done wrong, and now that he had to face the music he would not try to creep out of the consequences of what he had done.

Sir Jimmy cleared his throat and spoke at last. "I know I've done wrong. I knowed it at the time. I've 'ad a lesson to-night that I sha'n't never forget. I s'pose you're goin' to send me away, sir? I ain't saying that I don't deserve it. I ain't saying anythin' agin Master Angel, either."

"Angel declares that you led him into this, Vivian."

"I 'eard 'im, sir."

"Is it the truth?"

"I ain't nothing to say, sir."

"Very well," said the Head quietly.

"You may both go to your dormitories. I shall deal with you in the morning."

And, under charge of the Form-masters, the two juniors left the study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sir Jimmy's Last Word!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were wide awake when the door of the Remove dormitory opened and the light was turned on.

Sir Jimmy Vivian came in, and Mr. Quelch waited at the doorway till he was in bed, and then turned out the light and retired.

As soon as he was gone there was a buzz of voices in the dormitory.

"So you've come home, Vivian?" said Skinner.

"Yes, I've come 'ome," said Vivian quietly.

"Where 'ave you been?" asked the Bounder.

"Cross Keys!" said Vivian briefly.

"Oh, my hat! What were you doing there?"

"Gambling."

"Well, you don't make any bones about

it, you young blackguard!" said Bol-sover major. "Are you sacked?"

"I dunno yet."

"The cheery chopper's coming down in the morning—what?" grinned Skinner. "I told you fellows we should lose our giddy baronet. Alas!"

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Yes, it's funny, ain't it?" said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "Larf away! I've played the fool, and I've got it in the neck!"

"Jimmy, you young duffer," said Mauleverer miserably, "what did you want to go to that hole for?"

"I didn't want to go, Mauly."

"Oh, begad! If you didn't want to go, what did you go for, then?" exclaimed his lordship in astonishment.

"'Cause I was a silly fool, Mauly. 'Cause I believed a chap was my pal, and I wouldn't refuse anything he asked!" said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "I've jest got what I deserve, and I ain't grumbling. I don't suppose ole Brooke will 'ave anything more to do with me arter I'm kicked out of ere, and I can go back to Blucher's Rents, I s'pose. That's the place for me. I don't care!"

"Jimmy!"

"Tain't sich a bad place, neither," said Sir Jimmy. "They ain't gentlemen in Blucher's Rents, so they don't turn on a bloke and put it all on 'im when there's trouble. They don't lead a bloke into mischief and then make out it was all his doin'. The coves in my alley would be ashamed to do that. Blucher's Rents ain't such a bad place, come to think of it."

"So that's what Angel's done?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

Sir Jimmy laughed, a laugh that was not good to hear.

"Course he has! I'd 'ave knowed he would, only I'm a silly fool. I've been brought up in an alley where they don't act like that, you see. I ain't learned public school manners yet."

"The sooner you go back to your alley the better!" said Skinner. "If you hadn't been an ignorant young ruffian you'd have known what to expect of a fellow like Angel."

"Well, I know now, and I ain't anxious to stay 'ere, neither. My old pal the Spadger wouldn't 'ave done it. He'd have died fust! Master Angel wouldn't touch old Spadger with a barge-pole; but Spadger wouldn't 'ave stood up and lied like Master Angel did. But I don't care!"

Sir Jimmy laid his head on the pillow, and did not speak again, but there was something that sounded suspiciously like a sob.

He did not answer the further remarks that were addressed to him, and the Remove fellows went to sleep at last.

But it was long before Sir Jimmy slept. He had received a shock that night that it was not easy to recover from.

When the rising-bell rang out, and the sun streamed in at the windows of the Remove dormitory, Vivian turned out with the rest, looking pale and worn. His night out, and what had followed, had told heavily on him.

Lord Mauleverer was looking utterly distressed. He had done his best for the waif of Greyfriars, and he had failed. The crash had come, even worse than he had feared. After breakfast he followed Sir Jimmy into the quad, and Harry Wharton & Co. joined them. The Co. had been thinking it out.

"Look here, Jimmy," said Mauleverer quietly. "I know how matters stand, and I'm not goin' to allow it. Angel's lied to the Head, and you've got to nail

his lies. It was all Angel's doin', and you've got to tell the Head so!"

"I ain't telling the 'Ead nothing!" answered Sir Jimmy.

"You can't have it all put on you, kid!" said Harry Wharton.

"Angel can say what he likes, and I ain't going to say a word!" said Sir Jimmy doggedly. "Wot's the good, anyway? He'll only tell more lies, and the 'Ead won't know which one is lyin'. It ain't good enough for me."

"But you can't leave Greyfriars!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Jimmy's lip quivered.

"Can't he 'elped," he said. "I—I'm sorry I treated you so rotten, Mauly. I know you meant to be a good friend to me. But I've got it in the neck now, and I ain't going to complain."

Mr. Quelch looked out of the doorway.

"Vivian!"

"Yessir?"

"Kindly go to the Head's study at once!"

"Yessir!"

Sir Jimmy went into the house.

The chums of the Remove followed him slowly. Angel of the Fourth had been called to the Head's study at the same time. The two delinquents were evidently about to receive their sentence.

"If Jimmy's sacked, I'm goin' to the Head!" said Lord Mauleverer determinedly. "I know the facts, and the Head's goin' to know. What do you fellows think?"

"I agree," said Wharton. "You can call us as witnesses. That cad sha'n't sneak out of it by putting it all on Vivian!"

And the Co. nodded assent.

They waited at the end of the passage in keen anxiety. A few minutes later Gosling was sent for.

"That looks like a flogging," remarked Nugent, as the porter disappeared into the Head's study. The juniors waited.

They were near enough to hear the sound of steady swishing from the Head's study. Somebody was going through it.

The door opened at last, and Angel and Vivian came out. Angel was rubbing his hands, and Sir Jimmy was white and limping a little. He grinned faintly as he saw the Removites.

"Well?" said Harry Wharton.

"Tain't the sack," said Sir Jimmy. "The 'Ead ain't a bad old sort. I've been flogged. 'Ow, ow! It 'urts!" He twisted. "The old feller laid it on, too! Master Angel's only been caned, 'cause he's an innocent new kid, what was led into this 'ere by me! That's good, ain't it?"

Lord Mauleverer drew a deep breath of relief.

"If you'd been sacked, Jimmy, I was goin' to the Head to tell him the truth," he said.

Angel started.

"And we were all going as witnesses!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That would have knocked your little game on the head, Angel."

Sir Jimmy wriggled painfully.

"It 'urts!" he remarked.

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Johnny Bull gruffly.

"I know that. And I'd rather be in my shoes now than in Angel's, anyway," said Sir Jimmy. "I've done with that cove."

"Yaas, I suppose that even you won't be aas enough to speak to that rotten cad again!" said Mauleverer.

"Not if I knows it! I'm done with the rotter!"

Angel's eyes glittered.

"You low, dingy cad!" he said between his teeth. "Done with me, you sneaking little slum ruffian! Do you think that I could have stood you, any-

way, you disgusting street-arab? No decent fellow could stand you!"

"That needn't trouble you; you ain't decent," said Jimmy. "And I dessay you'll git friendly agin when I 'ave some more money, and you want to win it from me. I can see some things now, Master Angel, that I couldn't see afore. I know Kenney wasn't the only swindler in the study that evening, and I reckon you was 'and-in-glove with Hawke and Cobb, too. You played jolly bad as my partner, didn't you? And I reckon I know what you went back for, too. You won't be able to fool me agin. You're a common swindler and rogue, Master Angel, with all your airs. And that's what I think of you!"

Smack!

Sir Jimmy's hand struck the dandy of the Fourth full in the face, with a smack that rang like a pistol-shot.

"Now come on, if you like!" said the baronet of the Remove, putting up his hands. "I'm your man!"

Angel stood for a moment, panting, looking at Sir Jimmy like a demon; then he turned and walked away. Lord Mauleverer slipped his arm through Sir Jimmy's, and walked him away to the Form-room. Sir Jimmy had been more sinned against than sinning, and his old friends tacitly agreed to overlook his escapade, assured that, whatever troubles the waif of Greyfriars might fall into in the future, he was not likely to fall again under the influence of Angel of the Fourth.

(DON'T MISS "SIR JIMMY'S ENEMY!" — next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

NOTICES.

CRICKET.

VICTORIA C.C.—ground, Victoria Park—wants matches.—A. Painter, Ellesmere Road, Bow, E. 8.

E. Tomlin, 17, Mimosa Street, Fulham, S.W. 6, wants players for club—age 13-14.

GROVE C.C.—16—wants matches for July or August—6 miles.—H. Edwards, 64, Eden Road, Walthamstow, E. 17.

CLAPHAM ORIENT C.C.—wants players—age 14-16.—P. Levy, 69, Hambolt Road, Clapham.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED BY—

Edward Worthington, 23, Robert Street, Preston.—"Nelson Lee Library," 20 copies between 1-119; half-price and postage. MAGNET, 10 copies between 1 and 450. The "Union Jack," "The Swell Mobman," "The Golden Call," "Secret of Bleakmoor Prison," "The Man Who Sold His Estates." 3d. each offered. Write first.

G. Wren, 55, Centenary Street, Camborne, Cornwall.—MAGNET, 1-480; "Gem," 1-450. 4d. each offered.

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A. Bland, 18, Carr House Road, Shelf, near Halifax, Yorks.—"The Honour of a Jew," "Tom Merry Minor," "Levison Minor," "Loyal to the Last," "Talbot's Triumph," "Tom Merry's Find," "Billy Bunter's P.O." Shilling each offered, also postage.

Miscellaneous and Amateur Magazines.

A. Sullivan, P.O. Box 82, Cape Town, South Africa, wants members and agents for correspondence club.

R. Woffenden, 263, Odessa Road, E. 7, wants members for Albion Athletic Club—age 13-15.

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 547.

A Great New Serial Story.

THE BROWN TORRENT.

BY SIDNEY DREW.

A Thrilling Story of Adventure, in which Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and other Popular Characters, play their parts.

NEW READERS START HERE.

Rupert Thurston buys an idol bearing the inscription, "I am Sharpra the Slumberer, and at my awakening the world shall tremble!" Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, Maddock, Prout, and O'Rooney arrive. The idol's eyes are seen to open, and with a terrific crash the hotel collapses.

A lank Indian, named Gadra Singh, is employed as cook; and the one-time rebel, Larput Raj, is the shikari. While watching the idol he sees its eyes open, but they quickly shut.

Duke Payton arrives and joins the expedition to the cactus country. They are out hunting a tiger, and Ching-Lung manages to shoot it. They find a blue-eyed native who has been killed by a python, and bury him. Maddock, Gan-Waga, Barry O'Rooney, and the cook are left in camp. Some rebelling natives fire on them. The natives are beaten, and the party proceeds in peace to Dandu's village. Barry accidentally releases Rosti, the python. Barry, Maddock, and Prout go to get Gan-Waga's fowl. Through his field-glasses Ferrers Lord sees a horde of natives advancing. Gadra Singh's rifle goes off, and is a signal for the attack. The natives are badly beaten; but attack again.

(Now read on.)

A New Ruse (continued).

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" said Ching-Lung. "I say, Gan, go and dig out Gadra Singh, and tell him to bring all the mustard and ground pepper he can spare, even if we have to do without pepper and mustard for the rest of the trip. I'll make them sneeze their heads off. Hurry along, old son! We've got to keep those beggars very busy."

More blazing spears were thrown, and a few bombs to vary the monotony.

Meanwhile, Ferrers Lord, Prout, and O'Rooney were fixing their tackle. At intervals the bearers squibbed off their rifles at any shadowy object that seemed to move.

Tying an electric-lamp to his belt, the millionaire grasped the rope, and went down hand-over-hand into the black depths of the ravine. He hung there, with the water gurgling and hissing below him, until his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom. The vague forms of the rocks took shape, and also the splintered wreckage of the wooden bridge that had proved such a failure and disaster to the enemy. He gained foothold on a rock, and his flash-lamp winked up a message to Prout and O'Rooney to lower what he needed.

He worked down there alone for more than half an hour, and then climbed up unaided. Barry O'Rooney helped him on with his coat. Then he stepped back into the trench.

"Gentlemen who are smoking are warned to keep away," said Ching-Lung. "I don't want to go up in the air just yet. Our illustrious cook, Gadra Singh, has proved himself a useful sort of guy. He brought enough black powder with him to blow up a dozen fortresses. I am now preparing a little dish with plenty of seasoning in it, chiefly pepper, mustard, and swan-shot. I shall serve it up presently, when they start to get busy again."

The only light was the glow-lamp by which Ching-Lung was working. The torches across the ravine had burned themselves out. Thudding sounds announced that the brown warriors had resumed their tasks. They seemed like moles, who needed no light to work by.

"Gentlemen," said Ching-Lung at last, "you may smoke. The deed is accomplished. This, I can assure you, is hot stuff."

"It makes them sneezes, hunk, Chingy?" chuckled Gan-Waga. "It brings eyes to their tears, Chingy, hunk?"

"Tears to their oies, you mane!" said Barry O'Rooney. "Bedad, that blubberboiter can't open that vast red cavern he calls a mouth widout twisting his tongue into knots! Phwat d'ye mane, oies to their tears, ye spalpeen?"

The Eskimo was so confident in his friends that he had no suspicion of the real danger of their position. Perhaps he had not given it a serious thought. He lighted a large, fat cigar, and advised Mr. Barry O'Rooney to return to Ballybunion Castle and put an end to his famous career by helping himself to a large dose of rat-poison.

A sudden bumping, followed by a hollow crash from the depths of the ravine, made Payton send up a star-shell. The quickness and energy of the foe would have been worthy

of great admiration had it not been so menacing. The mound had risen considerably, and a kind of corduroy track laid upon it, a number of newly-cut logs placed at a slope.

The star-shell created the usual scurry and a precipitate rush of brown bodies to gain cover. A boulder was sliding down the wooden chute. It slid over the edge and dropped into the ravine.

"I never was much good at arithmetic," began Prout, "but—"

"Or at anythin' else bar ateing and dhrinking and forgettin' to spake the truth," interrupted O'Rooney. "Get on wid ut, Tom!"

"I'm pretty good at hitting a goat with my fist, anyhow!" said Prout warningly. "I know it could be worked out by figures how long it would take to fill that hole if they dropped one of those things in every second."

"That easiffulness, old dears!" said Gan-Waga. "It take ninety thousand yearsees two minutes and fourpence-halfpenny."

"Just about the toime you deserve to be kept in gaol," said the Irishman. "And where does the fourpence-halfpenny come in, ye son of an eyergrown sausage? Whoy, you're mixin' two separate things up! Bedad, av course, Oi know they say toime is money, and money is toime; but ut's precious little money a man iver got who got toime! How much money did the governor of the gaol give ye, Tom, when they let you out? Was ut siven years, or only foive, you did for hittin' that bloind man wid a shovel and stealin' his money-box and dog?"

"Be quiet, please, Barry," said Ching-Lung. "Prout is sensitive, and it is unkind to rake up the past."

"But ut wasn't a rake he hit the bloind man wid, sor; ut was a shovel," said Barry. "Oi read the evidence."

Prout merely grinned.

They were silent again. The bumping and thudding continued, and the crashes became more frequent. The millionaire neither spoke nor stirred.

"Hallo, Payton!" cried Ching-Lung. "Are you awake? I want a little of your kind attention if you're not busy."

"Hallo!" answered Payton. "What is it?"

"Put up a glim, will you, old man? I'm just going to hand them the mustard, and I want to see how they like it. Count ten slowly, and then let your firework go."

Ching-Lung waited a few seconds, and then put the glowing tip of his cigarette to the fuse of the bomb. The throw was well-timed. Bomb and star-shell exploded together; but the bomb went farther than Ching-Lung intended, and as the explosion took place behind the mound its effect could not be seen by the eye. But the frantic howls that arose gave ample proof that the brown warriors did not relish the pungent contents that the bomb shed around. It seemed to have had another effect—to cause a diversion—for an instant later Maddock threw up a star-shell, and the machine-gun, worked by Rupert Thurston, was clattering fiercely as the warriors swarmed up at the head of the pass in a second fierce attempt to force their way across. It was another failure,

probably only a feint, and not a real attack, for it was half-hearted.

"I'll take command, Payton," said the millionaire. "I want to rest every man I can. This sort of thing must tell on their nerves in time. Let them have as much sleep as possible. Good-night to you!"

Payton turned away.

Till dawn the bumping and crashing continued incessantly, but the millionaire knew that the enemy must put out a much greater effort if they intended to choke up the ravine in any reasonable time. The first glimmer of dawn showed that the whole slope had been timbered. The constant friction of the boulders as they rolled or glided down had stripped the bark off the trunks and made them slippery and white.

Naked brown arms lifted rush baskets and shields over the mound and emptied them. They were piled with stones and gravel that poured down the slippery incline and went streaming in a ceaseless current into the ravine.

It was a labour of Hercules to fill up that yawning gulf; but the warriors had an almost unlimited supply of labour.

Thurston, his eyes tired, and a growth of stubble on his chin, came along, yawning.

"I'm about dead-beat, chief," he said. "I wonder how you do it? You never seem to get tired. What industrious beggars these brown chaps are! Maddock has just come down. He reported that he saw a lot of horses at the back there. He thought they were horses, at least, but his eyes were like mine—shutting on their own account. He flopped down on the fire-step and went to sleep. If I don't keep pinching myself all the way back to the tent I shall be asleep, too."

Ferrers Lord climbed to the summit of the look-out post as the eastern sky grew crimson with the burning glow of the morning. Strings of ponies with panniers were being led up towards the mound from some big hole or gravel-pit, where hundreds of human figures were at work. The millionaire smiled to himself as if satisfied. The dogged determination of the enemy to bridge the ravine in that way was perfectly satisfactory. It would take a week at least, probably ten days, if he chose to allow them to go so far.

The day went on without very much excitement. At intervals bombs were pitched over the mound, but these did not delay the work for very long. After ten minutes or so the interrupted stream of gravel again began to flow over the top.

Dandu reported that his brother's canoe had patrolled the lagoon and many of the creeks that intersected the marshes without sighting a single enemy.

"Those men who come from the hills and the forests can know but little of canoes. Azada," said the chief. "We of the plains are accustomed to lakes and rivers. Put what can they know of paddles and canoes and boats, save a few, perhaps, who have their homes near some mountain lake?"

"That may be true, Dandu. But the forests

have their rivers. So bid thy brother still be watchful," said Ferrers Lord.

"Nay, he will not fail thee, Azada. There is a boy, too, come from my own people. He brings tidings that Zapra, the priest, is with them no longer. I had told this lad, who is trustworthy, to watch Zapra, the priest, and tell me what he did. Since he spoke evil to my brother and his men he has not returned. This makes me afraid, for he is very cunning, and, like a poison-snake, most to be feared when he is not seen."

"Give me thy promise to keep thy lips dumb, and I will tell thee a secret, Dandu."

The chief put his fingers over his mouth, and then stooping, made the sign of the snake to seal the silent oath.

"Zapra, the priest, lies too deep for even the digging beetles to find him, so have no fear," said Ferrers Lord. "He has followers still, and for that reason hold thy peace, friend Dandu. He was plotting treason and signalling to the foe with his little smoke-pots. Larput Raj, my shikari, has eyes at the back of his head. He saw these treasons, and slew Zapra."

"It was a good deed, for surely he was our foe, Azada," said the chief. "Did he not urge my young men on with lies to destroy thee and thy people? His heart was black, and lies were for ever on his tongue. It pleases me to know that he can harm us no more. But I am glad to know that it was thy shikari's hand that slew him, not mine, though I have often been tempted to strike my spear through his breast. Hast thou no commands for us, great sahib?"

Ferrers Lord had no further commands to give.

Presently Duke Payton came into the tent. "I've got a report from one of Dandu's fellows that he has seen a herd of water-buck, sir," said Payton. "I'd like to bag a couple of them if there's any chance. May I go?"

The millionaire smiled.

"My dear Payton, you are my guest," he said. "Why need you ask such a question?"

"I suppose it was unnecessary," said Payton. "But I couldn't very well clear off without telling you."

"The chances of an attack are very remote," said the millionaire. "They seem too busy with their navy work. I hope you'll have good sport, Payton. Do you intend to go alone?"

"I am taking the Dahran lad with me to show me where he saw the buck, and one of Dandu's ponies to carry back the game, if I bag any. It's not very far—just in the reed-beds about half a mile down the lagoon at the end of the ravine."

Payton looked very spick and span and fresh as he shouldered his rifle and set off, the young Dandu guide leading the pony.

"Whither away this pleasant day?" asked Ching-Lung.

"After water-buck," said Payton. "Rupert Thurston is too fagged out. Will you come along, prince?"

"Sorry, but I'm busy. I am concocting new and ferocious bombs, and Gan is helping me," said Ching-Lung. "We are both tremendously busy on the firework stunt. If we don't blow ourselves up we'll come another day."

Duke Payton's Last Fight.

DUKE PAYTON'S guide was a lad of thirteen or fourteen—the boy who had brought Dandu the news that Zapra, the priest, had left the camp. Though he could not understand a word of English, and knew just as much about the vernacular, he was a bright, intelligent youngster, and knew what was required of him. An old hunter like Payton could have done without his services once he had been told where the buck had been; but the boy was useful, for the Dahran ponies did not take kindly to white people, and would probably have bolted at the sound of the first shot if Payton had come unattended.

As they neared the end of the ravine the lad stopped the pony and pointed forward. Dropping behind a rock, Payton put up his field-glasses and scanned the reeds three hundred yards away.

In the distance a few of Shaldza's scouting canoes specked the blue surface of the lagoon. Closer in flocks of wild-fowl were on the water.

Payton made a gesture to the boy to remain where he was. A short descent brought him to the very end of the ravine. Only a small stream of water was pouring from it into the lagoon, the rest being held up by the dam caused by the fallen natural bridge and the boulders and gravel the enemy warriors were shooting into it.

The next instant Payton heard a scattering and splashing. It sounded as if the water-buck had entered the ravine to feed on the mosses and water-plants that grew there. Probably they had scented him or the boy. He waited, expecting to get a running shot, and the splashing grew louder. As the buck did not emerge, he thought the animals had recovered from their first alarm and gone farther in. Here was the chance of making a good bag.

When out hunting Payton did not mind getting dirty. He walked into the water heedless of the fate of his polished boots and leggings. Then, with a hiss and a ping, an arrow whizzed past his ear. His rifle barked, and as its crisp echo went ringing through the ravine the archer, who had been kneeling on a ledge twenty feet above him, tumbled headlong, with tossing arms and twitching legs, and splashed into the water.

A savage yell followed. Over the clustered rocks and through the shallow pools brown-skinned men came bounding and floundering over the rocks or through the pools, with brandished spears—warriors who had made the descent in spite of the machine-gun during the two attacks, and some, perhaps, who had escaped, living and unmaimed, when the wooden structure had crashed into the chasm. And they were out for blood and vengeance.

It flashed through Payton's mind that the sight of Shaldza's canoes had kept them here in hiding. In the same swift way, as his rifle dropped two of them in quick succession, he realised that if they were to follow the camp side of the ravine they might make a flank attack in the darkness. He could not count them. Perhaps there were twenty of them, perhaps fifty. Another fell, beating the water into foam with his hands in his death-throes.

The terrified face of the lad looked over the edge of the chasm and vanished.

Payton retreated as he fired. The magazine held seven cartridges. He ducked just in time to avoid a sidelong slash from a spear aimed at his neck. A blow from the butt of the clubbed rifle cracked the man's skull. The magazine was empty, but he had his auto-

matic pistol. He drew it, and fired rapidly. His one hope was that the boy had seen and gone for help. His one idea was to hold on till help came. It would be madness to let one of them free to fire arrows in the darkness or to creep down at midnight on the silent camp and spear the sleeping men.

They were all round him. Flashing spears, gleaming teeth, ferocious eyes, and brown faces distorted with hate and the passion of battle, made a wild picture before him.

Payton crashed the empty automatic pistol into one face and brandished his clubbed rifle. He was wounded, but he was quite unconscious of that. Payton saw red. He shouted, and struck out right and left. The survivors, seven or eight of them, turned and fled before the terrible figure with the blood streaming down his face.

Payton followed with great leaps. Knocking another warrior senseless, he tore the spear from his limp hand, and hurled it full at the back of a retreating comrade. Then he was alone, except for the dead—alone, and the victor!

He sat down on a rock, with the rifle between his knees, and wiped his hands with his handkerchief. Then he filled his pipe. He felt dizzy, and kept missing the matchbox in a foolish, awkward way when he tried to strike a match.

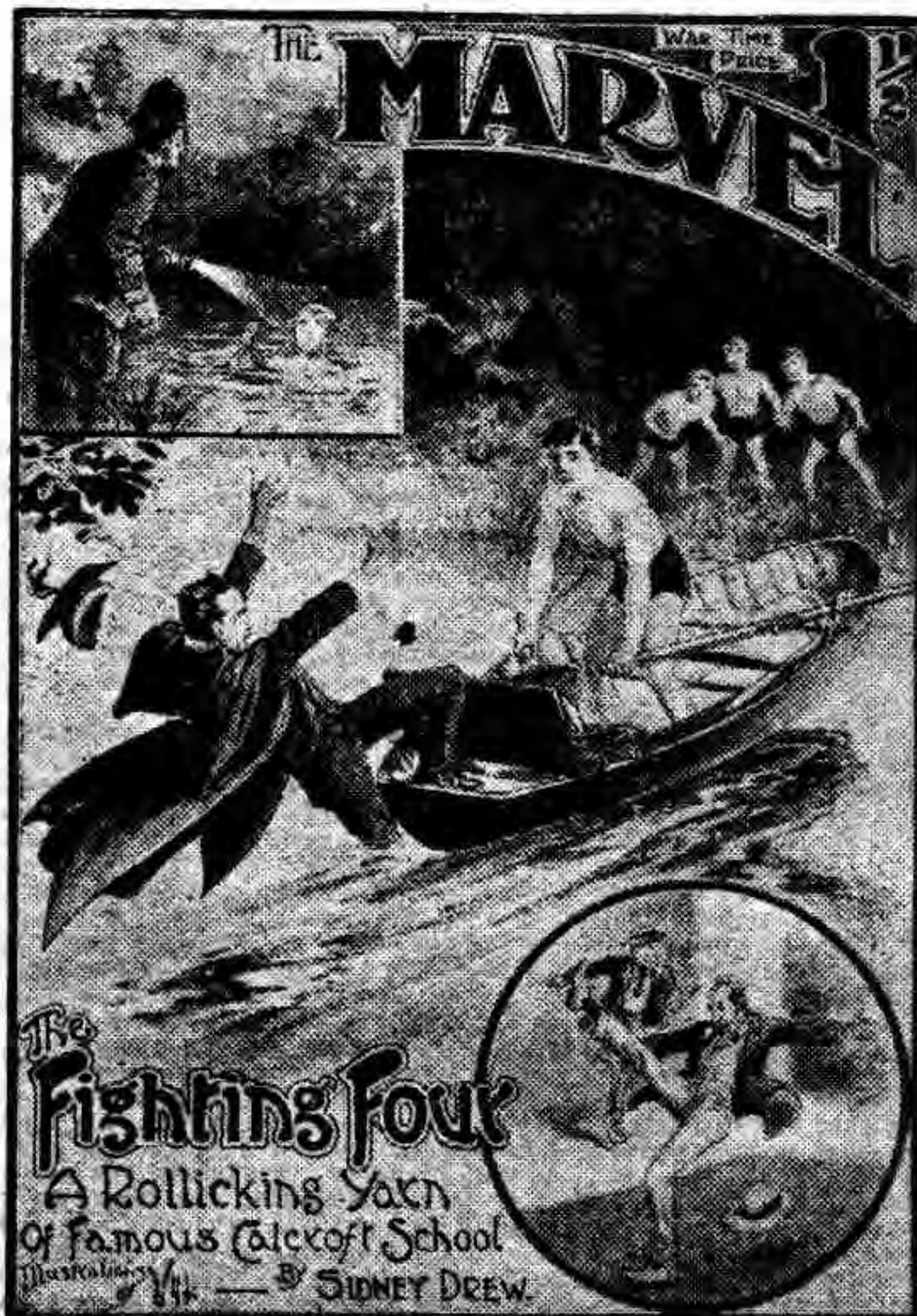
"It was some fight," he muttered—"a real fight! What's the matter with me? Or is it the matches? Yes, some fight that! And I stopped them. They might have made a bad mess of it for us if I'd let 'em out. All snipers and thugs. I know the sort. Creep along and knife you in the dark. And it is getting dark, too! Another thunder—thunder-storm coming up, I suppose. No use going after buck now. I'm— Yes, it was some fight—a real good—"

Payton tumbled off the rock, and lay motionless in the pool of water below.

A terrified boy on a sweating, hard-riden pony brought the news to the camp.

(NEXT WEEK'S INSTALMENT IS A SPECIALLY EXCITING ONE, AND YOU MUST NOT MISS IT ON ANY ACCOUNT!)

A Rollicking New Complete School Tale!



GET "THE MARVEL" EVERY TUESDAY.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 83.—TOM REDWING.

TOM REDWING is so recent an addition to the Greyfriars circle that there can be but few of our readers who do not know all that has been told about him.

But he is so established a favourite, and he has played so conspicuous a part during the last few months of the stories, that it would seem wrong to leave him out of this series.

There is little wonder that he has achieved popularity. Among all the fellows in the Remove, hardly one can be counted his superior. Redwing is not only thoroughly sound and plucky, but he has in him the makings of something very like a great man. He can conquer difficulties, and that is one of the most important points in the moral outfit of an ambitious lad. Not many fellows would have stuck to the classics as Tom did, with so little in the way of help or encouragement, with, as it seemed, practically no chance at all that learning of that kind would ever be of any material use to him. It is true that the study of Latin and Greek appealed to him; but there must have been many hours when the knotty points to be overcome made such work wearisome, for those ancient languages are not as easy to learn without the help of a tutor as are some modern ones, and Tom had none of the aids to study which most people who start in learning a language on their own possess. But he stuck to it through all discouragement.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was greatly surprised to find that the fisher-boy who had saved his life off the Hawkscliff was a scholar. The Bounder himself is by no means exactly nuts on the classics; there are many other things he finds more interesting than Horace and Homer. But he was disposed to like Tom Redwing, apart from the gratitude he naturally felt; and he has sense enough not to think his own tastes the necessary standard for the tastes of others. It occurred to him that it might be possible to give Tom the chance of a really first-class education—the chance for which he had yearned so long—as, in a sense, a reward for his courage. He could easily enough arrange matters with his millionaire father. No difficulty there! But he struck a snag in Tom's manly independence of character. Tom did not want a reward—would not take any reward, disguise it as the Bounder might. The sailorman's son, with all his modesty, had strong pride in him, and he would not accept charity.

He did not know that Vernon-Smith was from Greyfriars. Had he known, it is very unlikely that he would have fallen in with Leonard Clavering's scheme. He met young Clavering in the train. That youth was on his way to Greyfriars when he wanted to join the Army. Tom was going to work when he would far rather have been going to school. They talked, and the upshot of it all was that Tom Redwing went to Greyfriars under the name of Leonard Clavering, and Leonard Clavering enlisted under the name of Tom Redwing.

No one at Greyfriars knew either of them—as far as either was aware. But even so, there were obvious difficulties about the scheme—pitfalls into which the real Redwing might stumble. Clavering, under the name of Redwing, might be safe enough from detection in the Army; but Tom was always liable to it in his school life.

Sir Hilton Popper was one of those difficulties. Young Clavering owed Sir Hilton no real gratitude, and certainly felt none towards him; but the fact remained that it was the crusty old baronet who was paying the school fees at Greyfriars for the supposed son of the man he had helped to fetch from South America to fight and to die. Tom had his scruples about that, but Clavering overcame them.

Vernon-Smith did not make a big difficulty. He was not likely to give Tom away. But when the boy from Hawkscliff found the fellow he had rescued at Greyfriars, he was in alarm lest his secret and Clavering's should leak out. He was bound by promises to Clavering, and the fact made him behave towards the Bounder in a manner that puzzled that astute youth.

A bigger difficulty was his recognition by Cecil Ponsonby, who had seen him at Hawkscliff, and his feud with the Highcliffe nuts. Vernon-Smith put a stopper on one plan of

Ponsonby to "show him up"; but even after Tom had saved the life of the leader of the Highcliffe nuts at the imminent risk of his own, Ponsonby still continued to persecute him.

And there were the snobs in grain—such fellows as Skinner and Snoop and Bunter. Once Ponsonby's story got about, they were down on the so-called Clavering, of course. For the matter of that, they had been down on him before. He had the ill-luck to share a study with Stott and Snoop, and the manners and customs of those agreeable young gentlemen failed to appeal to him.

Then exposure came. But it came at a time when it mattered comparatively little to the real Clavering, whose battalion had left for France, after he had horsewhipped Sir Hilton Popper—a punishment most thoroughly deserved. Sir Hilton, being what he is, naturally refused to do anything whatever for Tom Redwing, and Tom set his face away from Greyfriars, without hope that he would ever see the place again, unless as a visitor, maybe—and as a visitor he would hardly have cared to go.

But he had left good friends behind him—one in particular, who would stand by him through thick and thin. The Bounder has a



Tom Redwing

heart not so easily moved as most; he says sometimes that there is no one on earth for whom he cares much except his father. That is not quite true. He cares for Harry Wharton, his one-time enemy; and he has a feeling of regard for several other fellows. But Tom Redwing had grown to count for more to him than anyone else at Greyfriars—even Wharton. He plotted a plot—quite a harmless plot, but deep. With the aid of his father, and the connivance of the Head and Mr. Quelch, he managed that a scholarship at the school should be offered on such terms as would give Tom every chance of winning it, and he induced Tom to enter. Mr. Quelch, who liked and respected the boy, volunteered to coach him; and Tom won, in spite of the dastardly efforts of Skinner and Ponsonby to prevent him.

So he came back to Greyfriars in something like triumph, though he is the last fellow to swank about anything. But there were further trials in store for him. He had not yet conquered Skinner's enmity; and Skinner devised a trick which proved too strong even for the stomach of Stott—and Stott is not a specially squeamish individual. The cad of the Remove induced a drunken loafer of the longshoreman class to personate Tom's father, supposed to have gone down with his ship when she was sunk by a Hun submarine.

The cowardly dodge met with a measure of success. Yet in the long run it worked out for Tom's good. For his father was not dead after all. He was in the neighbourhood when the trick was played. Believing his son well and happy in his new surroundings, he had not intended to reveal himself—just such mistaken unselfishness and generosity as Tom might have shown in a similar position—like

father, like son. But he was forced to show up, to Tom's ecstatic joy. There is not an atom of snobbery in Tom Redwing's make-up; he was proud of his sailor father, not ashamed of him.

There will be more trials for Tom at Greyfriars yet, you may be sure. He has made bitter enemies, though through no fault of his own. But he is sure to come out all right in the end. In spite of the intense sensitiveness which makes him feel every malicious pinch, he has too much ballast and sound common-sense to let himself be beaten by the devices of the rotters. And in the Bounder he has a chum who will stand by him through thick and thin!

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday :

SIR JIMMY'S ENEMY !"

By Frank Richards.

This is the third of the series which began with "Angel of the Fourth." Angel is the enemy referred to, as you will easily guess. He does all that he can to set Sir Jimmy Vivian wrong with his real friends, and comes very near success. But things do not work out quite as he had reckoned, and he finds himself despised by every decent fellow for his treachery. He does not get the sack yet, however, and it is likely we may hear a good deal more of him before the time for that occurs.

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- 361.—"The Rival Ventriloquist."
- 362.—"The Fight for the Cup."
- 363.—"The Cruise of the Famous Five."
- 364.—"Surprising the School."
- 365.—"The Schoolboy Auctioneer."
- 366.—"Bunter the Blade."
- 367.—"The Last Plunge."
- 368.—"Captured at Last."
- 369.—"Tom Dutton's Triumph."
- 370.—"Through Fire and Flame."
- 371.—"Bunter's Banknotes."
- 372.—"The Hun Hunters."
- 373.—"Carried Away!"
- 374.—"The Fall of the Fifth."
- 375.—"Special Constable Coker."
- 376.—"When Johnny Comes Marching [Home]"
- 377.—"The Mystic Circle."
- 378.—"The Schoolboy Acrobats."
- 379.—"Hurree Singh's Peril."
- 380.—"Heroes of Highcliffe."
- 381.—"The Punishment Policies."
- 382.—"The Slackers' Eleven."
- 383.—"Fifty Pounds Reward!"
- 384.—"The Scouts' Victory."
- 385.—"The Old Boys' Challenge."
- 386.—"Mauly's Flirtation."
- 387.—"The Schoolboy Lawyer."
- 388.—"The Mystery of the Gables."
- 389.—"The Mysterious Mr. Mobbs."
- 390.—"Sportsmen All!"
- 391.—"The Master Who Stayed at Home."
- 392.—"Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves!"
- 393.—"Ponsonby's Plot."
- 394.—"The Fellow Who Won."
- 395.—"At War With Greyfriars."
- 396.—"Backing Up Bunter."
- 397.—"Coker's Canadian Cousin."
- 398.—"A Lancashire Lad's Luck."
- 399.—"Champion of the Oppressed."
- 400.—"The Sunday Crusaders."
- 401.—"Bunter's Anti-Tuck Campaign."
- 402.—"The Midnight Marauders."
- 403.—"Straight as a Die!"
- 404.—"Going the Pace!"
- 405.—"The Remove Eleven on Tour."
- 406.—"The Conjuror's Capture."
- 407.—"The Jape of the Season."
- 408.—"The Revels of the Remove."
- 409.—"Harry Wharton & Co.'s Pantomime."
- 410.—"Bunter the Masher."
- 411.—"The Bounder's Relapse."
- 412.—"Hazeldene's Honour."
- 413.—"The Schoolboy Speculator."
- 414.—"Bob Cherry's Challenge."
- 415.—"The Colonel's Cup."
- 416.—"Fought For and Won!"
- 417.—"Foes of the Sixth."
- 418.—"Shielding a Scapegrace."
- 419.—"Coker's Engagement."
- 420.—"Flooring Fishy!"

YOUR EDITOR.

3-8-18