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SIR JIMMY'S ENEMY!



BUNTER IN A NEW RÔLE!

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

SIR JIMMY'S ENEMY!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Witnesses!

"**E**RE come the blokes!" Sir James Vivian, Baronet, of the Greyfriars Remove, made that observation.

Lord Mauleverer, his relation and study-mate, suppressed a shudder.

The noble Mauly had grown accustomed to Sir Jimmy and his little ways, but Sir Jimmy's pronunciation was still a worry to his noble nerves.

Mauly did not betray the fact, however. Not for worlds would he have hurt the sensitive feelings of Sir Jimmy of the Remove.

"Ere they come!" repeated Vivian cheerfully.

There was a tramp of many feet in the Remove passage outside. A bang came at the door. It flew open, and Bob Cherry's cheerful face looked in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" greeted Bob.

"Op in, old cove!" said Sir Jimmy hospitably.

"Trot in, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer, sitting upright on the sofa.

"Glad to see you!"

Bob Cherry grinned, and "hopped in," followed by his comrades—Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, and Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

"Where's the other 'blokes?" asked Vivian, when the Famous Five were all in the study.

"More coming?" asked Wharton.

"Wot to! Toddy and Squiff!"

"Here's Toddy!" said the voice of that youth at the door, and Peter Todd came into the study. "Squiff's coming!"

Squiff—otherwise Sampson Quincy Ifley Field—followed Peter Todd in.

There were seven visitors in the study now, and it was a little crowded.

"Shut the door, some of yer," said Sir Jimmy.

Squiff grinned, and kicked the door shut.

"Well, here we are!" he said.

"The herefulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "But what is the whyfulness, my esteemed Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"I don't know, I'm sure," he answered.

"Eh? You don't know why you've asked us here?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Not at all."

"Are you potty?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Yaas—I mean, no."

"Well, you told us to come here," said Peter Todd. "We've come. If you're pulling our leg, Mauly, you're going to be bumped!"

"My dear man," yawned his lordship, "I'm always glad to see you; it's a pleasure at all times! But I don't know why you've come. Jimmy told me to tell you to come, and I told you. I didn't ask Jimmy the reason. Too much trouble. I dare say Jimmy will explain."

All eyes turned upon Sir Jimmy Vivian.

The Famous Five and Toddy and Squiff

were somewhat puzzled. They had been asked to come to Study No. 12, and they had come; and now they wanted to know why they were there.

Sir Jimmy grinned.

"It's orlright," he said.

"The all-rightfulness is probably terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "But the whyfulness—"

"I'm goin' to explain. You're 'ere to meet a chap what's comin' to see me," said the baronet.

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton. "Some specially distinguished chap?"

"Yes," grinned Sir Jimmy.

"When is he coming?"

"Six."

"It's only five minutes to six now," said Peter Todd, glancing at his watch.

"Who is the chap?"

"Angel of the Fourth!"

That name had a startling effect on the gathering of juniors. Every face lost its polite smile, and became grim at once. Evidently Angel of the Fourth was not persona grata, so far as Harry Wharton & Co. were concerned.

Lord Mauleverer, who had sunk back into an easy position on the sofa, sat bolt upright again, and ejaculated:

"Begad!"

Johnny Bull turned to the door.

"Don't go!" called Sir Jimmy.

"I'm not going to meet Angel of the Fourth!" answered Johnny Bull. "I think it's like your cheek to ask any decent chap to meet that howling cad!"

"I thought you'd done with that fellow," said Harry Wharton gravely.

"So I 'ave," answered the baronet.

"He ain't comin' 'ere as a friend."

"Oh!" said Johnny Bull, and he turned back from the door.

"Suppose you explain, Jimmy, you young ass?" suggested Bob Cherry.

"I'm goin' to, old bird," answered Sir Jimmy Vivian. "Angel's comin' 'ere at six. You fellers know 'ow the matter stands. It ain't a secret that I was stranded when I was a kid, and brought up in Blucher's Rents, and that Mauly's uncle found me out, and sent me 'ere. Mauly's been a good friend to me, and I've been a ungrateful beast to 'im!"

"Oh!" ejaculated the visitors together.

"Jimmy!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"It's a fact, Mauly, and I'm ownin' up to it," said Vivian. "You blokes know that I 'ad a 'ard time when I was a nipper, and was taught lots of things that wasn't good for me or any chap. Angel of the Fourth made friends with me, and I thought it was kind of 'im—'im so well off and aristocratic, and me just wot I am. I'd 'ave done anything for that bloke, and I rowed with Mauly about it, too. And the long and the short of it was that he got us both into trouble, hangin' round a pub, and when we came up afore the 'Ead, he got off by puttin' it all on me—a thing that even Snoop wouldn't 'ave done!"

"We all know that," assented Squiff.

"Arter that I punched his 'ead, and he dropped me, or I dropped 'im, or both," said Sir Jimmy. "Mauly was kind enough to look over it all. But Angel's begun agin now. He spoke to me to-day for the fust time since I punched his 'ead."

"The rotter!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"Friendly as you please," said Sir Jimmy, with a grin. "He thinks he can soap me over, I reckon, and get me in his study playin' poker agin, and all that. I've got his I O U's for twenty quid."

"Great Scott!"

"You see, he played me for my tin, but I won his paper instead," explained Sir Jimmy. "I wasn't the mug he thought me. Well, I don't want his paper, and I don't want his money. I don't want 'im. He said he'd like to come to the study for a chat. I told 'im to come at six, and I'd be 'ere. You fellers are goin' to be 'ere, too, and 'ear me talk to him. That's what I want. I want Mister Angel to understand that I'm done with 'im for good, and Mauly and his friends to understand it, too. See?"

"I—I see!" said Wharton.

"Bunter saw 'im talking to me, and Skinner saw 'im," continued Sir Jimmy. "They'll be saying at once that I'm thick agin with Angel. Well, I ain't, and I want to make it plain. I want you fellers as witnesses that I ain't having nothing to do with the rotten cad!"

The Remove fellows grinned, understanding now what they had been asked to the study for.

It was likely to be a surprise to Angel of the Fourth to find them there.

Doubtless the dandy of the Fourth thought it easy enough to get the waif of Greyfriars under his influence again, and could not understand that Sir Jimmy had done with him for good. He was coming to the study to resume the friendship on the old footing; and he was likely to get a shock. Sir Jimmy was wisely seeing to it that there should be no mistake about the matter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

The door opened.

But it was Billy Bunter's fat face and glimmering spectacles that appeared in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, you 'op out!" said Sir Jimmy.

"Oh, really, Vivian! You can't leave an old pal out of a spread!" said Bunter, coming into the study. "If there's any cooking to be done, I'm your man!"

"You silly howl, it ain't a feed!" snapped the baronet.

"What is it, then?" demanded Bunter tartly. "If it isn't a feed, what are all the fellows here for?"

"Oh, 'op out!"

Billy Bunter blinked round inquisitively at the numerous gathering. His curiosity was excited.

"I say, you fellows—"

Tap.
"Ere he is," said Sir Jimmy. "Come in!"
The door opened again, and Aubrey Angel of the Fourth Form stepped into the study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Plain English!

ANGEL of the Fourth stepped in, and stopped.

Evidently he had expected to find Sir Jimmy Vivian alone in Study No. 12.

The sight of the crowd of Removites was a surprise to him, and certainly not a pleasant surprise.

His glance rested with sharp inquiry on the grinning face of the baronet.

"I looked in, Vivian—" he began.

"That's all right," said Sir Jimmy. "You 'op in, Mister Angel. There 'ere blokes 'ave come to 'ear what's said."

Angel's face darkened, and his lips came together in a tight line.

"I'll see you another time," he said curtly, and turned.

"Don't let 'im bunk!" exclaimed Sir Jimmy.

Bob Cherry closed the door, and put his back to it. Angel gave him a fierce look.

"Let me pass!" he shouted.

"Not till you've heard what Vivian has to say," answered Bob coolly.

"We've come specially as witnesses."

"The witnessfulness is great, my esteemed and disgusting Angel!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Aubrey Angel clenched his hands hard, but he did not attempt to pass Bob Cherry. That was a task quite beyond his powers. He turned back towards Vivian with a bitter look.

"What does this mean, Vivian?" he asked, between his teeth.

"That's wot you're going to 'ear," answered Sir Jimmy. "You spoke to me arter lessons, Angel, jest as if nothin' 'ad 'appened. I'm going to make it clear to you that something has 'appened. You're a cad, Mister Angel!"

Angel breathed hard.

"You're a swindling, cheating gambler!" said Sir Jimmy. "You made friends with me to spoof me out of my money, you and your pal Kenney, and when I didn't lose my tin you got me down to the Cross Keys for your sharper friends to swindle me, and you was to go 'arves with them in the plunder."

"My hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Oh, begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"I could see all that arterwards, when my eyes was opened," said Vivian. "I believed in you, Mister Angel, till you put all the blame on me afore the 'Ead, and got off by sneaking and lying."

Angel's face was white with rage.

That was not the sort of talk he had expected to hear in Sir Jimmy's study, though it was what he deserved.

"You got to understand," resumed Sir Jimmy, "that I don't know you any more, and you don't know me. I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole, Mister Angel! You ain't good enough!"

"You cheeky little cad!" hissed Angel.

"I beat you at the poker game," continued Sir Jimmy. "You wasn't risking much. You was only playing for paper. I got your IOU's now for twenty pounds, and Kenney's for ten quid. Well, 'ere they are!"

Vivian took a little bundle of papers from his pocket.

With a sudden movement of his arm he flung it in Angel's face. It struck

the dandy of the Fourth on the mouth, and fell to the floor.

"There's your paper!" said Vivian. "I don't want it, and I don't want your money! Ah! Would you?"

Sir Jimmy jumped up as Angel rushed forward at him, breathing fury.

But the Fourth-Former stopped.

"Oh, come on!" jeered Sir Jimmy. "I'm ready for yer! I expected you'd get yer rag out, and these blokes will see fair play."

Angel trembled with rage.

"Go it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The pluckfulness of the esteemed Angel is not great," remarked Hurree Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Non est!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't come here for a row," said Angel, between his set lips. "I'm not lookin' for rows with a gang of fags, thanks! If that low cad has done, I'll get out."

"I've jest about done," said Sir Jimmy Vivian, with a nod. "I've told you what I think of you, Angel, and I've told you plain. I want you to leave me alone in the future, and arter what I've said you can't make any mistake about that. And if you want to scrap, I'm your man. You're bigger nor I am, but I'm ready for yer!"

Angel gave him a look of savage contempt.

"You're not in your alley now," he said. "Keep your slum manners to yourself, Vivian! I took you up out of pity, just the same as Mauleverer has done. Personally, I couldn't stand you any more than Mauleverer can!"

"That's a lie!" said Sir Jimmy.

"I wish Mauleverer joy of you!" said Angel bitterly. "You must make him shudder every time you speak!"

"Shut up, you cad!" growled Johnny Bull.

Angel turned to the door.

"If you're done, I'll go now!" he said, with a sneer.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had been a much-interested spectator of this little scene. "Jever see such a funk, you chaps?"

"Only yourself, old fellow!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Toddy, you beast—"

Bob Cherry stood aside from the door. Angel was done with now. Sir Jimmy had "told him off," as he would have expressed it, and he could go. With a face white with rage, the dandy of the Fourth dragged the door open and strode out.

Then came Billy Bunter's chance.

Billy Bunter had been severely snubbed more than once by Angel of the Fourth. He had been prepared to pal with the wealthy Fourth-Former, and Angel had declined the honour in the most cutting manner. Bunter felt that this was his chance, and he took it.

As Angel strode out of the study Bunter made a rush after him, and landed out with his boot.

The unexpected kick hurled Angel forward, and he fell on his hands and knees in the passage with a loud yell.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Ow! Oh! Ah!"

"That's what you want, you cad!" said Bunter loftily. "You come in again, and you'll have some more!"

Angel scrambled to his feet, panting with rage.

Bunter had supposed, from Angel's refusal to tackle Sir Jimmy, that he was a hopeless funk, who could be kicked with impunity.

But Angel was not quite so hopeless a funk that he could be kicked by Billy Bunter.

He made a rush back into the study, straight at the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter promptly dodged round the table. Angel pursued him savagely, his eyes flaming, and Bunter dodged and panted, amid yells of laughter from the Removites. Bunter's new-found truculence had vanished all of a sudden.

"Keep him off!" he yelled. "I say, you fellows, keep him off! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand up to him, Bunter!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Angel overtook him, after he had circumnavigated the study table thrice at great speed.

Biff!

Angel's boot landed on Bunter's fat person, and he pitched forward in a heap, roaring. The Fourth-Former continued to kick him as he lay on the floor, and Bob Cherry promptly collared him. The first kick was tit for tat. Bunter had asked for that, but that was the limit.

Bob's heavy grip whirled Angel to the doorway.

"Cut!" he said briefly.

Angel clenched his hands furiously, and Bob grinned, and put up his big fists. But the dandy of the Fourth did not attack. He tramped away down the Remove passage instead.

Harry Wharton, laughing, stooped to drag Bunter up.

"Keep off!" yelled Bunter. "Yaroooh! I say, Wharton, keep him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" I'm Wharton, you blind owl!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Oh! All right! I thought it was that beast again!" Billy Bunter was helped to his feet, and stood gasping, blinking over his spectacles, which had slid down his little fat nose. "Keep that cad off, you fellows!"

"He's gone!" grinned Bob.

"Oh, he's gone, has he?" said Bunter, in great relief. But the next moment his courage revived. "Gone! The sneaking funk! I was just going to lick him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The rotten funk!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Fancy a Fourth Form chap running away from me like that! I've a jolly good mind to go to his study after him!"

"I'll call him back if you like," said Bob.

"Oh, no! Nunno! I—I don't want him. On the whole, I think I'd better treat the cad with contempt."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, either!" growled Bunter.

But the Remove fellows did, and they persisted in cackling, as the meeting in Lord Mauleverer's study broke up.

Billy Bunter blinked very cautiously along the passage before he ventured out. But Angel was gone. And, assured that Aubrey Angel was quite gone, Bunter confided to Peter Todd what he would have done to him if he had found him in the Remove passage, receiving the disconcerting reply of "Rats!"

Sir Jimmy Vivian and Lord Mauleverer were left alone in the study. His lordship was smiling.

He had been very anxious about Sir Jimmy's friendship with the blackguard of the Fourth, and he was glad that it was over. He was greatly relieved to find that Sir Jimmy was quite clear of the Fourth-Former's influence, and had answered so unmistakably his new advances. To his surprise, he noted that the Remove baronet's face was clouded.

"Jimmy, old nut, you've done the right thing," said Mauleverer. "I think the cad will keep clear of this study now. What are you lookin' blue about?"

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"Oh, nothin'!" muttered Sir Jimmy.
 "Get it off your chest, dear man," said Lord Mauleverer. "What is it?"
 "Look 'ere, Mauly, you've been a good friend to me," said Vivian slowly.

"Yaas."
 "I ain't got any claim on you, if you come to that," said Vivian.
 "Yaas, you have, dear boy. You're a relation, for one thing."

"And you only stood by me 'cause I was a connection, and 'cause your guardian asked you to see me through 'ere?" said Sir Jimmy.

"That was partly the reason, certainly."

"Course, you couldn't feel friendly towards a bloke like me," said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "Tain't to be expected!"

"Don't be a young ass, Jimmy! Of course I feel friendly!"

"That bloke said—"

"Eh?"

"Angel said that you shudders every time I speak," said Vivian moodily. "I s'pose you does. I know I don't speak like the other blokes."

"Not at all," said Mauleverer. "Angel was only trying to make you feel dissatisfied with your friends, you young ass!"

Sir Jimmy brightened.

"Course, that's it!" he said. "He's mean enough for anythin', that cove is! I won't think of nothin' he says!"

"That's right, old son," said Lord Mauleverer benignantly. "Keep clear of the rotter, an' forget everythin' he's ever said to you. If he ever speaks to you again, don't answer, but just hit him in the eye."

Sir Jimmy laughed.

Confidence had been restored between Lord Mauleverer and his queer relation—to last, unless Angel of the Fourth could prevent it. But Study No. 12 was not yet done with the cad of the Fourth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hazel Goes His Own Way!

HARRY WHARTON frowned darkly.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and the chums of the Remove were thinking of the river. There was a cricket match that afternoon between the Remove and the Third, which was left to the lesser lights of the Remove. The Famous Five were going up the river, and Marjorie & Co., of Cliff House School, were coming with them. Wharton was looking for Hazeldene of the Remove after dinner, and for some time he had not been able to find him.

Truth to tell, the Co. would not have missed Hazeldene very much if he had not come. But he was Marjorie's brother, and Marjorie wanted him to come. He seemed to have disappeared after dinner; and when Wharton sighted him at last Hazel was going out of gates—in company with Angel of the Fourth. Hence the exasperated frown of the captain of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Found Hazel?" called Bob Cherry, joining the captain of the Remove in the quad.

Wharton made a gesture towards the two juniors going down to the gates.

Bob whistled.

"They've been rather thick lately," he said. "I'm afraid Hazel's kicking over the traces again, Harry. Can't be helped. Tain't our bizney."

"Well, I'm bound to ask him whether he's coming with us," said Harry. "Marjorie expects him."

"I fancy he's going over to Highcliffe. I know Angel's made friends with Ponsonby and his set."

"Well, I'll speak to him."

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Wharton hurried after Hazeldene and Angel, and overtook them outside the gates. They had turned towards Courtfield, which was the way to Highcliffe School.

"Hold on Hazel!" called out Wharton.

"Hallo!" said Hazeldene, rather sulkily. "What's wanted?"

"You're not playing cricket this afternoon—"

"You told me I shouldn't be wanted," interrupted Hazel.

"No, that's all right, but as you're not playing I thought you'd be coming up the river with us."

"Sorry—something else on."

Wharton took no notice of Aubrey Angel, who stood with a sneering smile on his face.

Hazel looked annoyed and restive. He did not like Wharton's manner towards his new friend.

"I thought it was understood, Hazel," said Harry quietly. "Marjorie thinks you are coming."

"Well, I'm not!"

Hazel made a movement to pass on.

"Hold on a minute," said Wharton, with a troubled look. "I wish you'd come, Hazel. It will be ripping up the river on an afternoon like this."

"Don't care for it, thanks."

"May I ask whether you're going to Highcliffe now?" asked Harry, biting his lip.

"I don't see that it matters to you; but, as a matter of fact, I am," said Hazel coolly. "Angel's asked me to go with him."

"I should think that's a good reason for not going," said Wharton. "You know Angel well enough to keep clear of him, Hazel."

Angel's eyes gleamed.

The captain of the Remove treated him with complete indifference and contempt. Wharton had no civility to waste on the cad of the Fourth.

"Angel's my friend," said Hazel. "If you're going to speak about him, I'll trouble you to be civil!"

"You know how he treated young Vivian," said Wharton. "He got him into a bad scrape, and betrayed him; lied about him to the Head, and put all the blame on him, though Vivian was only his dupe. He would treat you in exactly the same way if it suited him."

"I've had enough of this Hazel!" said Angel, his lips trembling with anger. "I'm goin' on. You can suit yourself."

He strode up the road.

"I'm coming, Angel!"

"Hazel—"

"Oh, let me alone!" exclaimed Hazeldene angrily. "I don't want any of your kind uncle bizney, Wharton. I can look after myself, I suppose. As for that scrubby little ruffian Vivian, I don't believe half he says!"

"Look here, Hazel—"

"That's enough!"

Hazeldene followed Aubrey Angel, running to overtake him.

Wharton clenched his hands, and he turned back to the gates with deep anger in his breast. Evidently Hazel was kicking over the traces again, as Bob expressed it. The weak-natured fellow had fallen under Angel's evil influence, as Sir Jimmy had done. But Harry Wharton could not dictate to him how he was to spend his afternoon, and he rejoined his chums.

"Hazel not coming?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No."

"I have an esteemed idea," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "As the excellent Hazel is conspicuous by his worthy absence, suppose we take the excellent and ludicrous Vivian?"

"Not a bad idea," assented Harry.

"The girls won't mind. Old Mauly will be pleased, too. Let's take him."

Sir Jimmy Vivian was soon found, and he gladly agreed to accompany the Co. Lord Mauleverer, who was resting under the elms after the terrific exertion of eating his dinner, gave them a smile and a nod when they passed him. His lordship was glad to see Sir Jimmy in such good company. Bob Cherry paused as he saw Mauly.

"Come with us, Mauly," he said. "We can pack you into the boat."

"I'd like to awfully," yawned his lordship, "but I can't."

"Why not?"

"Tired."

"Too tired to walk down to the boat?" asked Bob.

"Yaas."

"That's all right—I'll lead you by the ear," answered Bob cheerily.

"Yaroooh!"

Bob Cherry took a grip on Mauly's noble ear, and walked on, taking the ear with him. Needless to say, Lord Mauleverer accompanied the ear. If it had been detachable, Mauly would certainly have remained in the seat under the trees. But it wasn't, so the slacker of the Remove had to go.

The juniors marched down to the raft, where the boat was launched. Bob Cherry released Mauly's ear, to help with the boat, and Lord Mauleverer promptly faded away out of sight.

"Come back, Mauly!" roared Bob.

But his lordship disappeared. Bob Cherry led too strenuous a life for Mauly to yearn for his society. The juniors, laughing, embarked, and the boat pulled away down the river, to the spot where Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis and Philippa were to be taken on board.

Four pretty hats were sighted on the bank, and the boat pulled in to the rushes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Miss Clara, in playful imitation of Bob Cherry's usual greeting.

"Ere we are agin!" said Sir Jimmy genially.

"Isn't Hazel coming?" asked Marjorie quickly.

"Couldn't come," said Harry.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

Marjorie nodded, and stepped into the boat. Her pretty face was somewhat clouded. Whenever Hazel was playing the goat the symptoms were easily to be seen by those who knew him well, and Marjorie's strong affection for her wayward brother made her more than usually observant.

For a week or more the symptoms had been visible in Hazel's case. But Marjorie said nothing more, and the boat pulled away up the sunny river.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sir Jimmy Means Well!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! There's old Smithy!"

The Remove boat had reached Popper's Island, when a skiff was sighted coming towards them. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was sculling, and Tom Redwing sat in the stern. The Bounder drew in his sculls as he saw the Famous Five and their fair companions.

"Hold on!" he shouted.

The oars ceased to ply.

Vernon-Smith looked across the intervening water, raising his straw hat to the Cliff House girls.

"Going to the island?" he asked.

"No, only passing it," answered Wharton, with a quick look at the Bounder.

He guessed that Smithy wanted to warn them off the island for some reason.

"Oh, all serene!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'd pull well out, if I were you; there's a strong current close in."

"Oh, bother the current!" said Bob Cherry. "We've been there before, Smithy. It's as safe as houses."

Bob was not quite so observant as Wharton. The Bounder smiled.

"You've been on the Island, Smithy?" asked Frank Nugent.

"We were going to land, but we decided not," said Vernon-Smith.

"Old Popper about?"

"I don't know. I'd keep clear of the island," said the Bounder. "That current is really rather strong."

"You can't be too careful," said Tom Redwing.

"Right-ho!" replied Wharton. "Thanks, Smithy! We'll give it a wide berth."

The skiff went on down the river.

Harry Wharton & Co. pulled on, Bob Cherry looking a little puzzled. But Nugent, who was steering, understood, and steered clear of the island. There was evidently something there that the Bounder did not wish the Cliff House girls to see, and Nugent thought he could guess what it was. The Highcliffe nuts sometimes visited the island to play cards there, and it was quite probable that Hazeldene of the Remove was with them on this occasion, as he had gone over to Highcliffe with Angel.

The boat pulled on abreast of the island, but keeping well in to the bank. The channel was not a wide one, however, and the wooded island was well within view. Straw hats could be seen among the greenery of the island, and two of them had the Greyfriars badge and the others belonged to Highcliffe School.

Just as the boat came abreast an elegant figure rose into view, and a match was struck and a cigarette lighted. It was Aubrey Angel of the Fourth Form.

"Have a light, Hazel?"

The drawing tones of Aubrey Angel came quite clearly across the water.

"Thanks, old man!"

It was Hazeldene's voice.

"Same here, Angel!" came in Ponsonby's voice. "I say, these fags are good! Your deal, Hazel!"

Harry Wharton & Co. rowed rather clumsily just then, rattling the oars in the rowlocks, and drowning the voices that were speaking on the island. Every face in the boat wore an expression of elaborate unconsciousness, excepting Sir Jimmy Vivian's.

Sir Jimmy whistled.

Marjorie's face was set. She understood now why the Bounder had warned Harry Wharton to keep clear of the current close by the island. He knew that her brother was there, gambling with Angel of the Fourth and the nuts of Highcliffe.

Poor Marjorie tried to keep back the trouble in her face, but it was not easy. Her brother was in trouble again, as he always was when any fellow of a stronger nature chose to lead him astray.

Bob Cherry, as he caught the look on Marjorie's face, clenched his hands on his oar. He would gladly have laid his hands about Hazeldene at that moment.

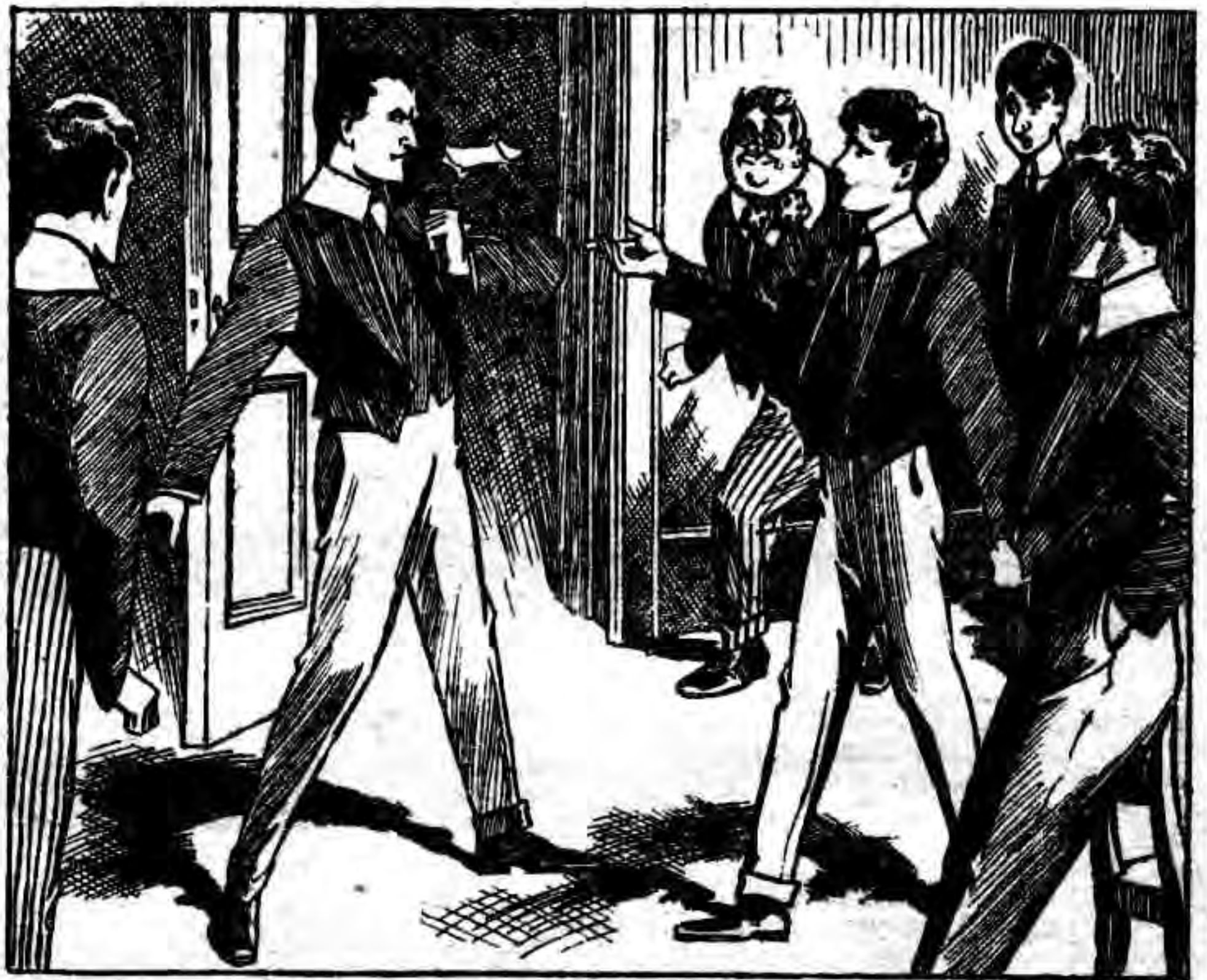
The boat pulled on, leaving the island behind.

"That there bloke Angel is goin it," remarked Sir Jimmy. "He's as thick as thieves with them 'Ighcliffe coves."

"What a lovely afternoon!" remarked Nugent blandly.

"Ripping, isn't it?" said Miss Clara.

Sir Jimmy did not understand that the



Angel gets back his IOU's! (See Chapter 2.)

conversation was to be turned. He pursued the tenor of his thoughts.

"That there bloke with him is your brother, ain't he, Miss Marjorie?" he asked.

Marjorie started.

"Yes," she said, in a low tone.

"Ow!" gasped Sir Jimmy. "Wot you stamping on my blinking foot for, Bull, you clumsy hass?"

Johnny Bull turned crimson.

"How beautiful the woods look from the river!" remarked Philippa Derwent enthusiastically.

"Topping, ain't they?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I was a-going to say——" went on Sir Jimmy.

"Like to row a bit, Vivian?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Not just yet," answered the baronet. "I'm quite comfy a settin' 'ere with the young lydies."

"Oh!"

"I was goin' to say——"

"Smithy's boat is out of sight," observed Nugent.

"It's been out of sight a long time," said Sir Jimmy, with a stare. "I was going to say, Miss Hazeldene—— Yar-oooooh!"

"What?" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Skuse me, miss, I didn't mean for to say that, but some silly hass 'as kicked my hankle!" gasped Sir Jimmy.

"Oh!"

"About them blokes on the island," resumed Sir Jimmy cheerfully, after rubbing his ankle. "That game ain't good enough for your brother, Miss Hazeldene. I can see that you're worried about it."

Marjorie crimsoned.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave it up. There was evidently no way of making the baronet understand that he was to keep off a delicate subject.

"Don't you go for to blame him too much, miss," went on Sir Jimmy. "I know how easy that bloke Angel twists a feller round his finger. I've been there, so to speak, as these coves could tell you. Hazel is a bit of an ass, like I was. He ain't a bad sort, and you mustn't think that he's a shady cad like Angel, 'cause

he ain't. That there Angel is too cunning for 'im, that's all there is to it."

Poor Marjorie was silent.

"And, seeing as 'ow it worrits you, miss, I'm going to stop it," continued Sir Jimmy. "That's why I'm speaking to you, miss, which it ain't my business, otherwise. I know 'ow to make Angel chuck up chummin' with Hazeldene, and I'm going to do it, 'cause I can see it worrits you. That's all, miss."

"Oh!" said Marjorie.

"I can see that you blokes think I'm putting my foot in it, torkin' to the young lydy like this 'ere," added Sir Jimmy calmly. "But I'm doin' it so that she won't worrit about her brother—see? Arter to-day, Angel won't speak to Hazel any more, 'cause he won't dare to. I know 'ow to stop 'im, and you can take my word for that."

"You are a good little fellow!" said Marjorie, hardly knowing what to say, and yet relieved in her mind. For there was no doubt that Sir Jimmy meant what he said, and was not speaking "out of his hat."

"You leave it to me," said Sir Jimmy reassuringly. "I know something about that feller Angel what'll make him fair cringe when I put it to 'im. Now I'll do some rowing, if you like, Wharton. I done jawing."

Harry Wharton laughed, and relinquished his oar to the baronet. Sir Jimmy having kindly dropped the subject, nothing more was said about Hazel and Angel again that afternoon, and it was a very cheery excursion, after all.

Later, when Harry Wharton & Co. saw the girls home to Cliff House, Marjorie said a very kind good-bye to Sir Jimmy Vivian. Sir Jimmy smiled with satisfaction on the homeward way afterwards.

"You blokes thought I was putting my foot in it," he said to the Co., as they came in at the gates of Greyfriars. "But I wasn't! I ain't going to see a nice girl like Miss Marjorie worried."

"You're a queer little beggar!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "And do you think you can really do as you said?"

"I know I can!"

"Good luck to you, then!"

"You leave it to me," said Sir Jimmy.

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confidently. "Angel's going to quarrel with Master Hazel this very day, and that'll be the end of it."

And the Co. could only hope that Sir James was right.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Angel Toes the Line!

"COME in!"

Aubrey Angel and Kenney of the Fourth were chatting in their study later in the evening when a tap came at the door.

Angel seemed in high feather.

He had reason to be. His luck had been good in the precious party on the island that afternoon; and he also had the satisfaction of knowing that he had annoyed Harry Wharton & Co. by taking Hazeldene under his wing. He was expecting Hazel in his study after prep, and when the tap came at the door he supposed it was Marjorie's brother.

But it was Sir Jimmy Vivian who came into the study.

Angel and Kenney stared at him. They had been far from expecting a visit from the baronet of the Remove.

Angel started to his feet.

"Get out of here, you young cad!" he shouted.

"I ain't getting out jest yet," answered Vivian coolly. "I got something to say to you, Angel."

"I've done with you! Get out!"

"Not till I've spoke," answered Sir Jimmy.

The junior had a cricket-bat under his arm, and he let it slide into his hand as Angel and Kenney made a movement towards him. The two Fourth-Formers stopped. Sir Jimmy looked quite reckless, and the bat was dangerous at close quarters.

"I'll go fast enough when I've said what I've come 'ere to say," said Vivian. "Till then you'll keep your hands off, unless you want to get hurt."

"You low ruffian!" exclaimed Kenney.

"You shut up!" said Sir Jimmy.

"I'm 'ere to talk to Angel. You can get out for a bit, Kenney."

"Catch me!" said Kenney disdainfully.

"Stay where you are!" said Angel.

"I mean to!"

The baronet shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I don't care, if Angel wants you to 'ear what I'm going to say," he exclaimed. "You ain't the feller I'd trust with secrets, if I was Angel."

Angel started.

"You've got no secrets with me!" he said savagely.

"I know some things about you, and I'm going to mention them," answered Sir Jimmy. "Kenney can 'ear, for all I care!"

The dandy of the Fourth compressed his lips.

"You might step out a minute or two, Kenney," he said.

"What utter rot!" exclaimed Kenney angrily.

"Oh, get out for a few minutes! What does it matter?"

Kenney sulkily left the study. Sir Jimmy kicked the door shut after him.

"Now, what is it, you low cad?" said Angel, between his teeth.

"You've made friends with a feller in the Remove, same as you did with me," replied Sir Jimmy quietly. "Master Hazel's the bloke I mean. You've got to drop it!"

"What?"

"You've got to break off with Hazel to-day for good, or else I'll make you 'op!" said Vivian.

"What do you mean, you cheeky cad?" hissed Angel.

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"Ave you forgot that I met you afore you came to Greyfriars?" asked Sir Jimmy sarcastically. "When I was a nipper, and 'ad a job in old Punchielli's gambling dive in Soho, you came there with the captain, who's a card-sharper and a thief, and you gambled and got squiffy, and I saw you. If the 'Ead had knowed that you wouldn't have been let into Greyfriars, and if he knowed now you wouldn't be allowed to stay 'ere!"

Aubrey Angel clenched his hands convulsively.

"I could 'ave told the 'Ead that when you rounded on me, an' made out that it was me took you to the Cross Keys," said Sir Jimmy. "I didn't do it, 'cause I ain't a sneak, Master Angel. But if you don't let Miss Marjorie's brother alone I'm going straight to the 'Ead!"

"Oh!" muttered Angel.

"I ain't going to see that silly fool led into rotten tricks, and then throwed over and p'r'aps kicked out of the school to save your bacon," said Sir Jimmy. "He's a silly fool, but he ain't a bad sort, and he's in my Form. And I ain't going to 'ave his sister worried. It's got to stop!"

Angel breathed hard.

There was malignant hatred in the look he fixed upon Sir Jimmy Vivian; but it did not trouble the baronet.

"You're going to break with Hazel, and drop him entirely," pursued Sir Jimmy deliberately. "If you don't, Mister Angel, look out for squalls! Dr. Locke would fire you out of this 'ere school like a shot if he knowed you as I know you. And if you don't do as I say, he's going to know you. I could 'ave given you away before if I'd liked. Well, I didn't! But for that nice girl's sake, Mister Angel, I'd give you away fifty times over! See that?"

"You—you couldn't prove——" stammered Angel.

"I'll chance that. I reckon much proof won't be wanted. P'r'aps it'll make the 'Ead inquire a bit more close as to why you left your old school!" said Sir Jimmy sarcastically.

Angel compressed his lips.

Sir Jimmy Vivian was in deadly earnest. What he would not have done for personal reasons he would not hesitate to do in order to serve Marjorie Hazeldene. Marjorie's kindness had made a deep impression upon the waif of Greyfriars. He had never had much to do with Hazel, but it was Marjorie he was thinking of, and her concern for her wayward brother.

The Fourth-Former looked at him with glittering eyes, and Sir Jimmy met his glance with cool contempt.

"Like to risk it with the 'Ead?" he asked. "I'm ready, if you are! You can come with me to the old sport, if you like!"

"Oh, hang you!" muttered Angel.

"Ang me as much as you like!" grinned Sir Jimmy. "But you'll do as I say!"

Angel did not answer immediately; but he knew that he dared not defy the baronet. Angel dared not let the Head learn what Sir Jimmy knew. He could deny—a lie cost him little—but would he be believed? He did not want the circumstances under which he had left Lyncroft too closely inquired into; and he did not want to attract the Head's special attention at any time. He had too many shady secrets for that.

Yet to give way to his former dupe, and toe the line!

The thought of that made his blood boil.

Sir Jimmy watched him coolly, easily reading his thoughts in his face.

"S'pose you tell the 'Ead a 'eap of

lies?" he said. "S'pose it comes out about you and Hazel? Hazel ain't got much nerve. He's as likely as not to blurt it all out afore the 'Ead!"

Angel knew that. He was thinking of it. Hazeldene was not the fellow to maintain a bold front if taxed by the Head when his conscience was not clear.

The long and the short of it was that the dandy of the Fourth dared not defy Sir Jimmy if the latter was in earnest.

And he was. That was plain enough.

"You know you'd be set down as a sneak by the whole school if you told tales of me to the Head!" said Angel at last.

"I don't think so, when the blokes know what I done it for," answered Sir Jimmy. "Anyway, I'm risking that, rather than let you lead Hazel on and worrit Miss Marjorie."

"Get out of my study!"

"You're going to break with Hazel?"

"Yes! Now get out!"

"Right-ho! If you don't keep your word, Master Angel, I go to the 'Ead without giving you any warning. Jest remember that!"

Sir James Vivian left the study.

Aubrey Angel threw himself into a chair, with a dark, knitted brow. His hatred of the waif of Greyfriars, once his dupe, was too bitter and savage for words, and he had a fierce longing to be revenged upon him in some way. But at present he could see no way. At present, what he had to do was to break with Hazeldene, or take the consequences, and he dare not face the consequences.

His gloomy thoughts were interrupted by Kenney's return to the study. Hazeldene of the Remove came in with Kenney.

Hazeldene was not looking well. He had a worried and seedy appearance. His merry afternoon did not seem to have improved him. Angel gave him a glum look. He had no regard for Hazel personally, though it had suited him to make himself agreeable. But the task Sir Jimmy had set him was not a pleasant one. It had to be gone through, however.

"Well, finished with that little toad?" said Kenney impatiently.

"Yes; he's gone."

"Hazel's come in for his revenge," said Kenney. "He was pretty well cleaned out this afternoon on the island."

"I don't care to play," said Angel reluctantly.

Kenney stared at him. As it had been arranged between the two young rascals to get Hazel into the study that evening, and relieve him of what money he had left after the afternoon's play, Angel's remark astounded his chum.

"Oh, let's have a game, Aubrey!" he said.

"No!"

Hazel's weak face flushed.

"Look here, I've come here to play!" he exclaimed angrily. "I suppose you know it's the game to give a man his revenge, after winning his money?"

"Go and play somewhere else!" snapped Angel. "You can go over to Pousonby, if you like. He won more of you than I did."

"Look here, won't you play?"

"I don't care to."

"Dash it all, Angel——" began Kenney.

"Oh, give us a rest!" growled Angel. "I'm not going to play, and that's the end of it."

"Well, you're a cad, then!" exclaimed Hazel, quick to anger, like most weak natures. "You've won my money, and you ought to give me a chance."

"Oh, hang your rotten quid! I'll give it to you back if you like!" sneered Angel.

"I don't want it back. I want a chance of winning your money, same as you did mine."

"Well, you won't get it."

"You're a rotten cad, then!" exclaimed Hazeldene passionately, his voice shrill.

He was already out of sorts and irritable, and Angel's contemptuous manner roused all his resentment.

"Now you've given me your opinion, get out of my study, and don't trouble to come back again!" snapped Angel. "I don't care to be bothered with Remove fags, anyway. Get out, and be hanged to you!"

Hazel trembled with rage.

"So that's how you want to treat me!" he exclaimed, almost stuttering with excitement. "Take me up one minute, and drop me the next, after winning my money! I'm sorry I ever had anything to do with you, you rotten blackguard!"

"Get out!"

"I'll jolly wipe up the study with you first, you sneaking hound!" shouted Hazeldene.

He made a rush at Angel; but the two Fourth-Formers collared him together, and bundled him out of the study, slamming the door after him. Hazel picked himself up, and, after a minute or two of irresolution, went his way, pale with rage and resentment.

"I'd like to know what you've treated Hazeldene like that for, Angel?" Kenney said, after the Remove had gone.

He spoke very tartly.

"He's no good!" snapped Angel. "A weak-kneed cad, likely enough to give the whole game away if there was trouble."

"But—"

"Oh, bother the fellow!" growled Angel. "I had to drop him, if you want to know."

"You don't mean that Vivian—"

"Vivian knows somethin' I don't want jawed all over Greyfriars," growled Angel. He clenched his hands. "Oh, I'll make that scrubby little beast wriggle for dictatin' to me! I'll make him sit up, somehow—and Mauleverer, too! Somehow—somehow!"

Sir Jimmy Vivian had succeeded, and Hazeldene owed him more than he was ever likely to acknowledge. But, if Aubrey Angel could contrive it, the schoolboy baxonet would pay dear for his success. And the outline of a plan was already forming in Angel's cunning brain.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton Chips In!

"CHEER-HO, kid!"

Harry Wharton dropped his hand kindly on Sir Jimmy Vivian's shoulder in the quadrangle a few days later.

Vivian had an expression on his face which hinted that the major portion of the troubles of the universe had suddenly descended upon his youthful shoulders.

"What's the row, my infant?" asked the captain of the Remove cheerily.

"Nothin'."

"Are you making a face like a fiddle for nothin'?"

"I ain't."

"Ahem!"

"It's all right," said Sir Jimmy. "There ain't nothing the matter. I can't help being a slummy little cad, can I?"

Wharton stared at him.

"Who's been calling you that?" he asked. "Angel?"

"He ain't said nothing to me."

"He's dropped Hazeldene," said Harry Wharton. "You did some good there, Jimmy. But who's been calling you complimentary names? Punch his

nose, kid. And if he's too big for you, tell me, and I'll punch it!"

"You don't want to punch Mauly's nose, I s'pose?"

Wharton jumped.

"Mauleverer hasn't been slanging you?" he exclaimed incredulously.

"Why not?" said Vivian bitterly. "I never treated Mauly well. Didn't I row with him about Angel, the time I was took up by that bloke, and believed in 'im? 'Sides, I am a slummy cad, I s'pose. There ain't no denyin' of that."

"Look here, Jimmy," said the captain of the Remove quietly, "if Mauly's been slanging you to your face, that's one matter; but if you've got it through a third party, that's quite another. Is this a fact, or hearsay?"

"The fellers didn't know I could 'ear them," said Sir Jimmy. "They was only speaking to themselves. I was t'other side of the tree, and I couldn't 'elp hearing them."

"I'm sure there's a mistake," said Harry, knitting his brows. "Mauly isn't the fellow to speak of you like that."

"You see, it's true," said Sir Jimmy. "Mauly only took me up 'cause old Brooke asked him to. I'm only a trouble to 'im. I ain't going to trouble 'im any more, though. He don't want to be bothered with me, only he don't like to say so. That's jest Mauly all over. He even lets Bunter worry 'im 'cause he's so jolly polite. But I can see 'ow it stands now. I don't care, neither."

It was pretty evident, from the quiver in poor Sir Jimmy's face, that he did care very much, however.

Harry Wharton's face became very grave.

"I think you're on the wrong scent, Jimmy," he said. "Look here, speak out to Mauly about it."

"No fear!" said Sir Jimmy hastily.

"But I'm sure you're mistaken."

"I ain't."

"Let me speak to Mauly, then," said Harry.

"No, no, no! Think I'm going to beg a bloke to be friendly with me when he shudders every time I speak?" said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "I ain't going to be took up out of pity, neither. I don't blame old Mauly. He done a lot for me, and I wasn't thankful. It just serves me right, and I ain't complaining. Don't you say a word to Mauly!"

"Jimmy," said the captain of the Remove firmly, "you've got to speak out to Mauleverer. Take my advice. I'm older than you. You say you heard some fellows speaking about you and Mauly. Well, you're a young ass, and you've been spoofed. Come and see Mauly. You've no right to think of him like that without giving him a chance to explain."

"But I tell yer Angel and Kenney never knowed I was there."

"I thought it would be Angel and Kenney!" said Wharton grimly. "Come along and look for Mauly. You've been spoofed."

Sir Jimmy shook his head. But he made no further demur, and he went with the captain of the Remove. Lord Mauleverer was discovered in his study, reclining at ease on his sofa. He was fanning himself gently with a Japanese fan.

"Trot in, dear boys!" he said languidly. "Where have you been, Jimmy? Don't you know it's past tea-time?"

"You don't want a slummy cad to tea, Mauly!" said Vivian bitterly.

Lord Mauleverer sat up.

"Eh?" he ejaculated.

"I ain't going to 'ave tea in this study no more," said Sir Jimmy doggedly. "I'm going to 'ave tea in 'All."

"My dear kid," said Mauleverer anxiously, "what's the matter now? Delarey's back to-day, and he'll be here in a minute with the stuff for tea."

"Oh, I know Delarey's back," said Sir Jimmy. "You 'ad a pleasant talk with 'im, didn't you?"

"Yaas."

Piet Delarey, the South African junior, came into the study. He gave Wharton a friendly nod. Delarey had been away from Greyfriars for a week or two, visiting relations who had come over with the South African troops.

"Hallo, Jimmy! I haven't run across you since I came in," he said cheerily.

"Did you want to?" sneered Sir Jimmy.

"Eh?"

"You don't want to run across a slummy cad, do you?" asked Sir Jimmy.

"What do you mean, you young ass?"

"You know what I mean," said Vivian. "Look 'ere, Wharton, leggo of my arm! I'm going!"

"You're not going till you've told Mauly," said Wharton sternly.

"Mauly don't want to be told that I know 'im and Delarey 'ave been talking about a bloke behind his back," said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "I may be a slummy cad, but I wouldn't go for to do a thing like that there."

"Is the kid off his rocker?" asked Lord Mauleverer in wonder.

"Must be, I should think," said Delarey, staring at Vivian. "What are you driving at, you young chump?"

"You know jolly well!"

"I don't."

"That ain't true," said Vivian.

"What?"

"That ain't true!" repeated Sir James Vivian.

Delarey laid down his parcel. His eyes were gleaming now.

"Jimmy!" said Lord Mauleverer feebly.

"Let me go, Wharton!" said Sir Jimmy angrily. "I didn't want to come 'ere. You made me."

"I brought this young ass here, you fellows," explained Wharton. "Angel has been stuffing him up somehow, and I want the matter explained."

"Oh!" said Mauleverer.

"You'd better explain, I think, Vivian," said Delarey drily.

"P'raps you'll deny it," said Sir Jimmy sardonically. "P'raps you didn't ask Mauly, when you came in, whether that grubby little mongrel Vivian was about, and p'raps Mauly didn't say the slummy little cad was somewhere around—hay?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer blinking. "Who told you that, Jimmy?"

"Nobody told me."

"Then what put it into your silly head?"

"P'raps it ain't true?" sneered Sir Jimmy.

"No, it certainly isn't."

"Rats!"

"Oh, begad! What?"

"Rats!" repeated Sir Jimmy; and he jerked himself away from Wharton and swung towards the door.

Delarey's strong grip dropped on his shoulder, and he was swung back again.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Dark Doubts!

"LET me go!" shouted Sir Jimmy furiously.

"Not just yet," said the South African junior quietly. "I want to know who told you this yarn first, you little fool!"

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"Yaas, begad!" said Mauleverer.
 "Nobody!" said Sir Jimmy doggedly.
 "Then how do you know?" demanded Wharton.

"I 'eard it."
 "From Angel and Kenney?"
 Vivian was silent.
 "Won't you spin us the yarn, Jimmy?" said Lord Mauleverer gently.
 "I've warned you before about that cad Angel tryin' to make trouble in this study. There isn't a word of truth in what he's told you."

"He never told me," said Sir Jimmy. "I 'eard it by accident."

"Tell us how," said Delarey.
 "Oh, I'll tell yer, if yer set on it," said Sir Jimmy bitterly. "I was settin' on the bench under the elms when I 'eard them talking. They didn't know I was there, and I didn't see 'em, only 'eard their voices. They was laughing over it, and Angel says, says he, that Delarey asked Mauleverer if that grubby little mongrel was about, and Mauly answered—what I've said. They walked on while they was talking, and that's all I 'eard. It was enough for me."

Lord Mauleverer's face grew stern, and his languor dropped from him.

"It's not true, Jimmy," he said.
 "Can't you see, you young ass, that they must have known you were under the tree, and passed within hearing just so that you should hear them?"

"Oh!" said Vivian.

"They know you're a touchy young ass," said Wharton. "If they'd said it to you you wouldn't have believed them; but by making you think you'd overheard it by accident they took you in. Can't you see that now?"

"Oh!" repeated Sir Jimmy.

"I think it's cleared up now," said Harry Wharton, looking at Mauleverer. "Excuse me chipping in, Mauly, old man."

"Begad, I'm much obliged to you," said his lordship. "The silly young ass seems to be twisted round Angel's finger whenever that cad chooses."

"I'll go and see Angel about it," said Delarey. "Is that the new chap in the Fourth?"

"Yaas."

"Let's go and see him before tea," Lord Mauleverer sighed.

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"Wharton, old man, are you busy?" he asked.

"No. Why?"

"Suppose you go with Delarey to see those cads about it instead of me? I'm tired."

"Fathead!" exclaimed Delarey, "Come along! You can come, too, Jimmy."

Sir Jimmy was convinced now, as Wharton was glad to see, before he left the study. Lord Mauleverer, with another deep sigh, detached himself from the sofa. Delarey, with a grim expression on his face, led the way to Angel's study, and Sir Jimmy followed with Mauleverer.

Angel and Kenney were at tea when they arrived, and seemed in high good humour. But their expressions changed when Mauleverer and Delarey came in, with Vivian at their heels.

"What do you want, confound you?" demanded Angel.

"Only a word with you," said Delarey. "You spun a yarn about Mauly and me to get this young idiot's back up."

"What rot!"

"He heard you under the elms, as you meant he should. Do you dare to say now that you heard Mauly and me speak of him as you said, then?" asked Delarey quietly.

"Yes," said Angel coolly. "I didn't know the scrubby little beast was listening, but it's true, all the same."

"It's a lie!" said Delarey.

Angel shrugged his shoulders.

"It's a lie!" added Sir Jimmy. "I know that now. You knowed I was there, Angel, you 'ound, and that's why you was speaking like that!"

"And you're going to answer for it," said Delarey. "Put up your hands, Angel! I'll leave Kenney to you, Mauly."

"Yaas, all right," sighed his lordship. "Hold my jacket, Jimmy. Don't rumple it, please."

"Look here, get out of this study!" blustered Kenney. "I—I— Ah! Get off, hang you! Oh, my hat!"

Delarey was already tackling Aubrey Angel, and his lordship woke to energy and went for Paul Kenney.

There was a terrific scrap in the study, Sir Jimmy looking on with a grinning face.

The tea-table went over with a crash of crockeryware. Paul Kenney went sprawling among the wreckage, hurled there by a right-hander from Lord Mauleverer. He deemed it prudent to remain there.

Delarey made short work of Angel. The blackguard of the Fourth was no match for the lithe South African junior.

After five minutes, which seemed like a series of earthquakes to Angel, the dandy of the Fourth went to the carpet, and stayed there.

"I think that's enough," remarked Delarey, in his quiet way.

"Yaas. I'm tired."

The Removites quitted the study, and Angel and Kenney sat up and blinked at one another.

"Oh, gad!" groaned Aubrey Angel. Kenney gave him a bitter look as he staggered to his feet.

"That's the end of your precious scheme!" he sneered. "You were going to make a split in their study—and you've got this study wrecked instead, you precious fool!"

"I'll make them suffer for it!"

"Oh, rats!"

The three Removites sat down to tea in Mauleverer's study, Sir Jimmy in a repentant mood. After Delarey had gone down, after tea, the baronet spoke to Lord Mauleverer timidly.

"I'm sorry, Mauly."

"All serene, kid!" said his lordship. "But—but do be a bit more careful, old scout. You see, you practically called Delarey a liar, and that's not pleasant. He's a forgivin' chap; but—but I don't want to jaw you, kid. Only, do be a bit more sensible!"

"I will, Mauly," said Sir Jimmy meekly.

"And don't ever believe a word Angel says," added his lordship, "whether you hear it by accident or not. I don't believe that chap could tell the truth if he tried, by gad!"

"I won't, Mauly."

"That's right, young 'un!"

Sir Jimmy looked very thoughtful when he left the study. Harry Wharton met him in the passage, and smiled.

"All serene now?" he asked.

"Yes," said Sir Jimmy. "Them two cads has had a licking for telling lies. But—but Angel said it was true, all the same."

"You surely don't believe a word of that cad's?"

"No, I don't!" agreed Sir Jimmy.

"He's a rotter all through!"

But he looked very thoughtful, all the same. Perhaps there was, somewhere deep down in his heart, a lingering, miserable doubt. Poor Jimmy's nature was a sensitive one, and he was only too painfully aware of his own shortcomings, and that his ways might be disagreeable to the fastidious Mauly. The waif of Greyfriars had his pride. He did not want to be a burden upon Mauly's patient good-nature, if Mauly did not want him. If only Mauly would speak out! Was it really friendship, or only Mauly's long-suffering good-nature and politeness that made him tolerate the one-time waif of Blucher's Rents? Did he speak Sir Jimmy fair to his face, and indemnify himself by speaking of him contemptuously to others? It was a miserable, shameful suspicion, and Sir Jimmy tried to drive it from his mind, but it could not quite be driven away. Aubrey Angel had been exposed, and he had been thrashed, but the poison he had instilled was still working.



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THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Two Visitors to No. 12!

"I SAY, you fellows, seep Mauly?" William George Bunter made that inquiry, blinking anxiously at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. Billy Bunter seemed very anxious to know where Lord Mauleverer was.

"Gone out!" answered Harry Wharton.

"Sure?"

"Yes. You'll have to squeeze a loan out of somebody else," said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "Try Fishy."

"If you think I want to borrow Mauly's money, Wharton——"

"Well, don't you?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, where's Vivian?"

"Gone out with Mauly," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Another blank, Bunt. Why don't you ask me to lend you a quid?"

"You haven't got one!" grunted Bunter. "I say, you fellows, have you seen Delarey?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

Delarey was standing within a few paces, talking to Tom Brown, the New Zealander. But the short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not observe him. The South African looked round.

"Here I am!" he said.

"Oh, there you are!" said Bunter, starting.

"Yes. What's wanted?"

"N-n-nothing. I—I thought you might be gone out with Mauly," stammered Bunter.

"Delarey's in the eleven this afternoon," said Wharton. He glanced up at the clock-tower. "Time we got a move on."

The chums of the Remove walked away to the cricket-field, where they were to play a visiting team from St. Jude's. Billy Bunter trotted after them. As a rule Bunter was not keenly interested in cricket, but on this occasion he adorned the pavilion with his presence until the match had well started.

He did not quit the spot, in fact, till Delarey had gone to the wicket.

Then the fat junior rolled away, grinning.

It was a Wednesday, a half-holiday, and nearly everybody was out of doors.

Billy Bunter found the School House silent and deserted when he rolled into it. He gave a cautious blink round, and puffed away upstairs to the Remove passage. There he paused again for another cautious blink, and rolled on softly towards No. 12.

Having ascertained that Lord Mauleverer had gone out with Sir Jimmy, and that Delarey was playing cricket, Bunter had Study No. 12 at his mercy. Billy Bunter was on the war-path. Delarey had brought back some good things to school with him, as Bunter had soon discovered, and the Owl of the Remove intended to sample those good things. In times of scarcity and war-rations all was grist that came to Bunter's mill.

"Peaches!" murmured Bunter. "A whole blessed box, and never asking an old pal like me to try 'em! I'll show him!"

Bunter's caution seemed unnecessary as he tiptoed to No. 12, for the Remove passage was deserted.

He stopped at the study, opened the door quickly, and rolled in, closing the door as quickly behind him.

Then he jumped.

Naturally, he had taken it for granted that the study was empty, as Lord Mauleverer and Vivian and Delarey were else-



Sir Jimmy deals with Angel! (See Chapter 12.)

where. But it was not. Bunter was inside the study, with the door closed behind him, before he observed that the room already had a tenant. A junior standing at the table swung round towards him with a startled face. It was Aubrey Angel of the Fourth Form.

Bunter and Angel stared at one another in silence for a moment, Bunter astonished, and Angel startled and angry.

"What are you up to here?" exclaimed Bunter.

Angel gritted his teeth and did not answer.

He had a sheet of impot-paper in his hand, and Bunter blinked at it. It was part of one of Mauly's old exercises—unfinished, like many of his lordship's exercises.

"Confound you!" muttered Angel.

Bunter grinned as the Fourth-Former clenched his hand.

"None of that!" he said cheerfully. "I'll yell out if you touch me, Angel, and Delarey will jolly well thump you if he finds out what you're after!"

"Delarey!" repeated Angel.

Bunter gave him a fat wink.

"Yes, rather! I know your little game!"

"You—you know!" stammered Angel.

"Yes, rather; and if you're not jolly civil I'll call Delarey in!" chuckled Bunter. "He—he's just down the passage."

"You lying toad, he's playing cricket!"

"Oh, you knew that, did you?" grinned Bunter, not at all abashed. "You found out that the study was empty, same as I did, before you hopped in. Nothing for us to row about, old chap. Let's go halves!"

"Halves!" repeated Angel.

"Yes. That's fair."

Angel gave him a strange look.

"Halves in what?" he asked.

Bunter winked again.

"You can't spoof me," he remarked.

"You're after Delarey's box of peaches, same as I am. Ha, ha, ha! Well, there's enough for two, and I don't want to row with you, Angel. Let's whack 'em out. You keep dark about me, and I'll keep dark about you. That's fair."

Angel drew a deep breath.

"You—you're right," he muttered. "I—I came here after—after Delarey's peaches, of course!"

"Oh, I knew that!" said Bunter airily. "Same here! Have you found them yet?"

"No. I—I've only just got in."

"Bow-wow!" chuckled Bunter. "You've been here a good five minutes at least, or I should have seen you in the passage."

"I—I mean, I can't find the dashed things!" said Angel. "Do you know where they are?"

"In this cupboard, I expect," said Bunter. "Let's look!"

He rolled over to the study cupboard, and as soon as his podgy back was turned Angel slipped the sheet of impot-paper into his pocket and moved towards the door.

"My hat, it's locked!" said Bunter dismally. "What a suspicious cad, you know! He's locked up those peaches! I suppose he thought they weren't safe, the suspicious 'beast! I say, Angel, where are you going?"

"Nothin' doin' here if the peaches are locked up," said Angel.

"I say, we can get the cupboard open somehow! Suppose you get a chisel!"

"Oh, rats!"

Aubrey Angel quitted the study and hurried away. Billy Bunter gave an exasperated snort.

"Yah! Funk!"

Bunter turned his attention to the cupboard again. It was locked, and the key was gone. Possibly Delarey had suspected that the Owl of the Remove had a taste for peaches. Bunter glanced at the poker, but shook his head. Even Bunter did not care to smash in the cupboard door with the poker. The penalty for that burglarious action would have been a little too severe.

The fat junior gave a dismal groan.

"Oh, dear! To think that there's a box of peaches in that blessed cupboard and the door locked! Beast!"

A shout from the cricket-field floated in at the window.

"Well hit, Delarey!"

Bunter sniffed.

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"Beast! I wish the ball had bunged on his napper! I suppose he's got the key in his pocket! Beast!"

Bunter rolled out of the study, his fat face dismal. Aubrey Angel had disappeared. Bunter turned his steps in the direction of the Fourth Form passage. He was keen on getting hold of the peaches, and, judging others by himself, he supposed that Angel of the Fourth was equally keen. His idea was to consult with Angel as to the best means of negotiating the locked cupboard. Angel was a clever fellow in many ways, and Bunter wondered whether he could pick a cupboard lock.

Nobody was about in the Fourth Form passage. Bunter threw open Angel's door and looked in, to see whether he was there.

There was a sharp, angry exclamation as Aubrey Angel—who certainly was there—leaped to his feet.

"I say, Angel—"

"Hang you, you spying fat cad!" shouted Angel. "Get out!"

"Who's spying?" demanded Bunter warmly. "Hallo! What are you doing with Mauly's paper, Angel? What on earth—Yaroooooh!"

Angel rushed on him, and spun him out of the study. Billy Bunter had been surprised to see Lord Mauleverer's unfinished exercise lying on Angel's study table; but he had no time to think about that. He landed in the passage with a bump and a roar.

Angel followed him out, kicking him savagely as he rolled on the floor. Billy Bunter picked himself up in frantic haste and fled. Evidently Aubrey Angel was not in a mood to be consulted about burgling the Remove study cupboard.

Bunter's yells died away on the staircase, and Angel turned back savagely into his study. This time he turned the key in the lock.

Billy Bunter drifted away dismally to the cricket-ground dissatisfied and wrathful and peachless. His only comfort was seeing Delarey clean bowled by Lunn of St. Jude's.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Crushing Blow!

"SEEN my bloomin' Euclid, Mauly?"

"Jimmy, old fellow," said Lord Mauleverer mildly, "would you mind referrin' to your blessed Euclid, or your dashed Euclid, or even your confounded Euclid, at a pinch? But bloomin' is barred."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Sir Jimmy amicably. "I reely meant to say my linking Euclid, Mauly."

Lord Mauleverer shivered.

"Dear man, blinkin' is worse than bloomin'," he said, "Why not try it without any adjectives at all—what? I'm sure you don't mind my mentionin' it, Jimmy?"

"Not at all," answered Sir Jimmy. "It's very kind of you to tip a cove the wink, Mauly."

"Oh, begad!" murmured his lordship, almost overcome at the idea of tipping a cove the wink.

"But, to come back to business, where's my blooming—I mean, my blinkin'—that is, my dashed Euclid?"

Sir Jimmy looked round the study for his Euclid. He did not want to see Euclid that day. In fact, Jimmy Vivian, like many schoolboys, nourished a bitter animosity towards the ancient gentleman. Jimmy had often expressed a desire to meet Euclid and give him a "oner." But, much as he disliked that troublesome old Grecian, Jimmy had to "dig"

at him that afternoon. Poor Sir Jimmy was still sticking at the Pons Asinorum, and could not quite discern the point "which was to be demonstrated." The mere look of the letters Q E D made him feel inclined to punch Euclid. He had to "mug up" some more Euclid, lest worse should befall him.

The volume was found on a chair, and Sir Jimmy walked out of the study with it. He was going to Tom Redwing's study to ask his help, Redwing being always willing to extend the same to anyone in difficulties. Sir Jimmy found Redwing at home, and Snoop and Stott, his study-mates, fortunately absent. The sailorman's son greeted him with a cheery smile.

"'Ere I am, ole bird," said Sir Jimmy, "and 'ere's' blooming—I mean dashed old Euclid! Let's 'ave a cut at it!"

"Right-ho!" said Redwing.

Jimmy opened the book at the fifth proposition; it opened easily there. It had often been opened at that point before.

As he opened it a half-sheet of note-

CADET NOTES.

One of the most striking results of the war has been the growth and expansion of the Cadet Movement. It is estimated that since the war broke out the numbers of members of various forms of Cadet Corps has nearly doubled. Before the war not more than about 60,000 boys belonged to Cadet Corps altogether, and it is now stated that the present strength of the Movement is about 120,000. This is very good so far as it goes, but there is still plenty of room for further expansion. Out of the million and a half lads in the country of suitable age for the Cadet Movement at least half a million ought to be enrolled in the corps.

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.

paper fell from the volume and dropped on the study carpet.

"You've dropped a letter," said Tom Redwing.

"Tain't mine," said Sir Jimmy. "I never use a dashed book-mark. Mauly or Delarey's been usin' my Euclid and markin' the place, I s'pose."

He picked up the letter.

"It's Mauly's fist," he remarked, looking at it. "Hallo!"

Sir Jimmy's face changed suddenly. He stared at the letter in his hand, his face growing white and his eyes bulging.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Tom Redwing stared at him in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothin'!" muttered Vivian.

The waif of Greyfriars was still staring blankly at the letter. He crushed it in his hand now.

"I—I think I'll be goin', Redwing," he said in an unsteady voice. "If you'll 'skuse me, we won't do that there proposition now."

"Just as you like, of course," said Redwing, in wonder.

Vivian left the study.

"You've left your Euclid here, kid," called out Tom.

Sir Jimmy did not heed—probably he did not hear. He was walking quickly away down the Remove passage with that fragment of a letter in Mauly's handwriting clutched tightly in his clenched fingers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry met him in the passage, and stopped, as he caught the expression on the baronet's face. "What's up, Vivian?"

"Nothin'."

"My dear kid, you look——"

"Let a bloke alone, can't you?"

Sir Jimmy shoved rudely past, and hurried down the stairs, leaving Bob Cherry staring.

Vivian hurried out of the house. He tramped across the quad, and sheered off as he sighted Harry Wharton and Peter Todd. He paused under the elms, but Billy Bunter was there, lolling on a bench. With a muttered exclamation, Vivian started for the Cloisters. In the Cloisters, at last, he found solitude.

There he stopped, and there he smoothed out the crumpled paper and read it through.

It was a half-sheet of paper, a fragment of a letter, apparently used carelessly as a book-mark in the volume where Sir Jimmy had found it.

It was in the familiar handwriting of Lord Mauleverer—a hand that was as well-known to Sir Jimmy as his own—and it ran:

"Dear Uncle,—I hope this won't come as an unpleasant surprise to you. It's often been in my mind to write to you before about this, but I've tried to be patient and stand it. But I can't tolerate Vivian any longer, and I feel bound to speak out.

"It isn't that he's a bad sort; he's not. In fact, he's very good, considering everything. He means well. But I can't hear him speak without shuddering. He makes my flesh creep, and he's simply disgusting in a thousand ways. I'm keeping friendly with him because you want me to do my best for him, but it's hard. I hope you won't be angry, uncle, but it's more than flesh and blood can stand. Couldn't you take him away, and send him to some other school? I don't want to hurt his feelings. No need to let him know that I asked you——"

There the letter ended.

The second sheet had been torn away, and it finished abruptly.

Sir Jimmy looked at it with a white face and a misery in his look that might have touched a heart of stone.

So that was how Mauleverer wrote of him to his uncle!

Well as he knew Mauly's delicate hand, Sir Jimmy could hardly believe his eyes as he gazed at that tell-tale fragment.

That was how Mauly thought of him!

It was not to be wondered at, he reflected bitterly. He had been brought up in a slum. He still retained many of his slummy ways and modes of thinking. A gently-nurtured, fastidious fellow like Mauleverer was the last fellow in the world to tolerate him.

He had done his best. Even in his bitterness and misery poor Sir Jimmy was just. Mauly had done his best. Sir Reginald Brooke had asked him to do what he could for the little waif at school, and he had done it, with an inward repulsion, evidently, which he had struggled to conceal.

That was what his outward friendship meant.

He did not want to hurt Sir Jimmy's feelings. That was like Mauly. The unhappy fag laughed bitterly. He only

wanted the waif taken away from Greyfriars because he was disgusting, and Mauly couldn't stand him any longer.

Yet the letter had never been sent, evidently. Some pang of conscience must have troubled Mauleverer, and he had torn up the letter and thrown it away instead of sending it to his guardian. Evidently that was so, for here was the letter—or a part of it, at least.

With utter carelessness Lord Mauleverer had used a sheet of the torn-up letter for a book-mark on some occasion when he had borrowed Vivian's Euclid; or—the dark suspicion stabbed Sir Jimmy like a dagger—had he deliberately placed this fragment in the volume so that Sir Jimmy would find it and learn, as if by accident, what Mauleverer shrank from telling him by word of mouth?

It was possible. Anyway, here it was. Intentionally or not, it had been placed where Jimmy had found it.

That was the meaning of Mauleverer's friendship.

Suspicions that had been lulled to sleep awoke now in full force. That talk between Mauly and Delarey which he had heard Angel speak of—that talk had taken place, just as Angel had said. He had no doubt of it now. If Mauleverer would write of him like this to his uncle, he would speak of him like that to his study-mate.

It seemed to the unhappy boy that the very sunlight was blotted out of the sky. Where he had walked with cheery confidence, he now saw dark and yawning pitfalls. What faith was he ever to place in word or look after this?

Yet he would not blame Mauly. Mauly had done his best, and regard for Sir Jimmy's feelings, compassion for the wretched outcast, had prevented him from being candid. Only, he couldn't stand Jimmy any longer, and wanted to be rid of him.

Sir Jimmy crushed the letter in his hand again, and groaned aloud. That was how Mauleverer thought of him and spoke of him. And Delarey, too! He must be in this. It hurt Jimmy horribly to believe that. He thought a heap of the South African junior who had been so kind to him.

Was it the same with the other fellows—Wharton, Bob Cherry, Squiff, all of them? They were kind to him; but so was Mauly, and Mauly spoke of him as disgusting. Did they all think the same and speak the same behind his back? Was it all politeness, another name for black treachery?

It was a long time before Sir Jimmy Vivian left the Cloisters. That tell-tale fragment was in his pocket now. He did not mean to part with that. Only that palpable evidence in black and white, which he could see with his eyes, could convince him that it was not a miserable dream, and could prevent him from ever trusting Mauly or anyone else again. He was not feeling angry, only utterly, utterly wretched.

But he knew what to do now. Lord Mauleverer wanted to be rid of him. He had asked his guardian to take him away from Greyfriars. At all events, that had been in his mind when he had written this letter.

He would not have to ask twice. Greyfriars had lost its charm for Sir Jimmy Vivian. Under the fair surface of public school life he had found, or thought he had found, depths of smiling treachery that had no existence even in the alleys he had lived in in his early days.

They thought that he was not good enough for Greyfriars. But if Greyfriars was like this Greyfriars was not good enough for him either. His mind was made up as he went with slow, heavy footsteps towards the School House.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bitter Blood!

"**B**EGAD! Here you are, then!" Lord Mauleverer called to Sir Jimmy as he entered the House. "Do you know you've missed tea, young 'un?" said his lordship severely.

Sir Jimmy looked at him.

Mauleverer's manner was the same as of old. There was the same lazy cordiality. Nothing in his look or tone indicated that his feelings were as depicted in the letter Sir Jimmy had read.

A sense of repulsion came over Sir Jimmy. He started back as Mauly was dropping a kindly hand on his shoulder.

"Don't touch me!" he exclaimed shrilly.

"Eh?"

"Ands off!"

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

He gazed at the waif of Greyfriars in wonder.

Sir Jimmy stood panting. Mauleverer's smiling, friendly face had roused anger and repulsion in his breast. After all, whatever he was, he was better than this friendly, smiling backbiter. That was the thought in his mind.

"Anythin' wrong, Jimmy?" asked his lordship helplessly.

"Oh, no!" said Sir Jimmy bitterly.

"Only, don't touch me, Lord Mauleverer! You ain't quite good enough to touch me!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Let me alone, that's all! I ain't going to trouble you much longer, if that's any comfort to you!"

Sir Jimmy went on his way, but not to the study. He had missed his tea, but he was not hungry.

Lord Mauleverer stood blinking with surprise. Sir Jimmy's vagaries were too much for him. Several fellows had seen that peculiar incident, among them Angel of the Fourth. Aubrey Angel was smiling as he strolled away.

"Oh, begad!" said Mauleverer. "Wharton, old man, do you know what's wrong with Vivian?"

"Blessed if I do!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"The wrongfulness appears to be terrific!" remarked Hurrée Singh. "Perhaps the esteemed young ass is off rockerfully!"

Lord Mauleverer went to his study, hopelessly puzzled.

By the time he sat down to prep with Delarey Sir Jimmy had not appeared there. He came in when prep was nearly over, looking tired and weary.

"You haven't done your prep, kid," said Lord Mauleverer mildly.

"I ain't going to do none!"

"You'll have a row with Quelchy in the morning, then!" remarked Delarey.

"P'raps, and p'raps not!"

"What's up with you?" inquired the South African junior.

"Find out!"

"Jimmy!" murmured Mauleverer.

"Don't talk to me!" answered Sir Jimmy. "Can't you let a bloke be? I ain't good enough for you, Lord Mauleverer, am I? I ain't asked you to be friendly, neither. You needn't 'ave took so much trouble to spoof a kid what didn't know nothin'."

"I don't know what you mean, Jimmy."

"'Course you don't!" said Sir Jimmy sarcastically. "Wot beats me is why you took the trouble to spoof a poor bloke. I ain't no claim on you. You wasn't called on to take no trouble. Good manners, I s'pose—that was it. We 'adn't no good manners in Bluecher's Rents." Sir Jimmy laughed bitterly. "P'raps we wasn't any worse for that, neither."

Lord Mauleverer looked at him in silence.

"Has Angel been pulling your leg again, Jimmy?" he asked.

"No, he ain't!"

"Has he—?"

"Oh, don't talk to me about Angel!" said Sir Jimmy gruffly. "I believe it was all true he said, too. But he ain't said anything more, if that's wot you want to know. I ain't even seed 'im."

"You believe what he said was true?" repeated Delarey.

"Yes, I does!"

"We've denied it, Jimmy."

"I know that."

"What do you mean, then, you young sweep?" exclaimed Delarey angrily.

"I mean that you're a liar, and Mauly's another!" said Jimmy, with bitter deliberation. "I think they're nearly all liars and spoofers, and a kid from the slums can't keep his end up with 'em. All the same, I reckon you two, an' Wharton an' Cherry an' Nugent—the whole lot of 'em rotten liars!"

"Have you gone mad?" exclaimed Delarey, too astonished to be angry.

"No, I ain't!"

"Then what's the matter with you?"

"Find out!"

The South African junior gave him a grim look, and then turned quietly back to his work. He had had enough of Sir Jimmy Vivian for the time being.

Lord Mauleverer was looking utterly distressed.

"Jimmy!" he said appealingly.

Sir Jimmy broke out savagely:

"Will you shut up? Let a bloke alone!"

"I want to know what's wrong, my dear kid!"

"I'll tell yer. What's wrong is that you're a liar, Lord Mauleverer, and a spoofing rotter!" shouted Vivian. "That's what's wrong. Now, shut up!"

"Oh, gad!" gasped Mauleverer.

He sat blinking at Sir Jimmy. The latter moved about the study, gathering up a few things—one or two small articles that belonged to him.

Mauleverer broke the silence at last.

"Jimmy, what are you up to?"

"I ain't stealing nothing of yours!" answered Sir Jimmy.

"Oh, gad!"

Sir Jimmy left the study.

Lord Mauleverer blinked helplessly at Delarey.

"What does this mean, Delarey?" he said feebly.

"I suppose Angel has been getting at the young fool again!"

"I—I suppose it's that! But—"

"Let him rip!" said Delarey, shrugging his shoulders. "After what happened before, he ought to have more sense. He's lucky to get off without a licking, after what he's said!"

Lord Mauleverer did not reply, but he left his prep unfinished, and went down to the Common-room. Sir Jimmy was not there.

"Seen Vivian, anybody?" asked his lordship.

"Gone to bed," grinned Skinner.

"Looked rather seedy, I thought. Too many smokes with Angel, I dare say."

Harry Wharton joined Lord Mauleverer as he left the Common-room.

"Vivian looked awfully blue," he said.

"There's something wrong, Mauly. Has Angel been up to his tricks again?"

"I—I suppose so," said Mauleverer. "He's been talkin' simply frightful rot in the study. I can't do anythin' with him. Come and try your hand, will you?"

"Yes, rather!"

The two juniors went up to the Remove dormitory. It was dark there, but a glimmer of moonlight came in at the

high windows. Sir Jimmy was lying on his bed, and as Wharton opened the door he heard a sob.

"Poor kid!" murmured Mauleverer. "There's somethin' awfully wrong!"

Sir Jimmy sat up as he heard the juniors enter. In the glimmer of moonlight his faced showed white, stained with tears.

"You can't leave a cove alone!" he said bitterly.

"Jimmy, old chap," said Wharton, "we want you to explain. What have you got against Mauly?"

"Nothin'."

"Then why—"

"Find out!"

Wharton coughed.

"You know I'm your friend, Jimmy!" he began.

"Ow do I know?" sneered Vivian.

"P'raps you are, and p'raps you ain't. P'raps you're as big a sneaking liar as Mauly 'isself! The odds is that you are. I don't want nothin' to do with you, anyway!"

Harry Wharton flushed. Concerned as he was for the little fellow, who was evidently in deep trouble, such words were hard to bear.

"Then you won't explain, Jimmy?"

"There ain't nothin' to explain, 'cept that I don't like liars and 'umbugs!" said Sir Jimmy. "Let a bloke alone! I ain't going to worry any of yer much longer! Give me a rest, and be 'anged to you!"

He turned his face away, and refused to speak again. Wharton and Lord Mauleverer left the dormitory quietly. Sir Jimmy's trouble, whatever it was, was beyond their dealing with.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

In Black and White!

SIR JIMMY VIVIAN received a good many curious glances when the Remove fellows came up to bed that night.

All the Form knew that there was trouble between the little waif and his kind friend and protector, Lord Mauleverer. Indeed, a good many of Sir Jimmy's wild words had been heard by other fellows. Skinner expressed his surprise that Mauleverer stood it; and Billy Bunter gave Mauly his valuable advice to lick the little cad, anyhow—advice which very nearly earned Bunter a back-hander from his lordship. Lord Mauleverer was not feeling resentment. He was worried and distressed. It was evident that Sir Jimmy harboured a deep and bitter resentment against him, and he suspected that Angel of the Fourth had something to do with it. Yet the baronet had said that he had not even seen Angel. Whatever it was, Mauleverer had done all he could—more than most fellows would have done—to set the matter right, and he could do no more.

If Sir Jimmy chose to keep up resentment without explaining the cause, he had to be allowed to have his way.

Poor Sir Jimmy did not feel like explaining. What was the use of it? Mauly could not deny his own hand, could he? Perhaps he could, and would, and would lie and lie, as Jimmy now believed, that he had lied before. What was the use of it all?

Vivian was not thinking of that. He was thinking of the decision he had come to—the only decision he could come to, so far as he could see—and that was to leave Greyfriars. He did not think of writing to Lord Mauleverer's guardian to take him away. That would mean explanation, recriminations. He did not want to accuse Mauly. He only wanted to have

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done with the whole business—to get back to his old quarters, where people were rough and shabby and worse, but at least did not hide deceitful hearts under false smiles. Mauleverer wanted him to go. Well, he would go, and there would be an end!

That was Sir Jimmy's fixed decision as he turned in, heedless of the curious glances many of the Removites gave him. He did not sleep.

He heard the clock strike again and again. He was only waiting for the hour to strike when it would be safe for him to move without danger of awakening the others.

Midnight at last!

Sir Jimmy sat up in bed. There was a glimmer of moonlight on the windows, but the dormitory was very dim.

Softly, quietly, he crept from his bed, and dressed in the dark.

Round him there was steady breathing, and the resonant snore of Billy Bunter could be heard. But through the quiet there came a sudden voice.

"Is that you movin', Jimmy?"

Vivian stood still, his heart beating. It was Lord Mauleverer's voice. His lordship was awake.

Sir Jimmy did not answer. He crept away on tiptoe towards the door. The creak of a bed sounded as Mauleverer jumped up.

"Jimmy!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a drowsy voice. "Wharrer row?"

"Jimmy! Stop!"

Sir Jimmy had the door open when Lord Mauleverer reached him. Mauleverer caught him by the shoulder, pulled him back, and shut the door quickly.

They stood facing each other in the dimness, Sir Jimmy breathing hard.

"Let me pass, Lord Mauleverer!" he said, in tones of concentrated rage.

"Where are you goin', Jimmy?"

"I'm goin' out!"

"Jimmy," said Lord Mauleverer, in great distress, "don't be a young ass! I was suspectin' somethin' of this sort from what you let drop, an' I stayed awake on purpose.

"You did!" ejaculated Vivian.

The slacker of the Remove had stayed awake till midnight on his account!

"Yes. Now, tell me where you were goin', Jimmy?"

"You've guessed, ain't you?" answered Vivian bitterly. "I'm goin' out of Greyfriars, and I ain't comin' back, neither! Wot are you interferin' for?"

"You young duffer!" exclaimed Mauleverer. "Do you thing I'm goin' to let you run away from school?"

"That's wot I'm goin' to do. Don't tell me no more of your lies!" said Sir Jimmy. "Wot's the good? You'll be glad I'm gone. Wot's the good of keepin' up this 'ere 'umbug?"

"You're not goin'," said Lord Mauleverer quietly.

"You'll let me pass, or I'll shift yer soon enough!" said Sir Jimmy between his teeth.

"Wharton!"

"Hallo?" The captain of the Remove sat up in bed. "What's the row?"

The voices had awakened a good many of the Remove.

"Vivian's got a potty idea of runnin' away," said Lord Mauleverer. "For goodness' sake, help me reason with him!"

"He jolly well won't go!" said Wharton grimly.

The Famous Five turned out at once, with several more fellows. Peter Todd lighted a candle-end.

Everybody was awake now. Even Billy

Bunter was sitting up in bed and jamming his glasses on his fat little nose.

Sir Jimmy eyed the juniors angrily as they surrounded him. His escape was cut off, with a vengeance, and his breast heaved with resentment.

"Now, what does this mean, you young ass?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Find out!"

"You weren't going to leave Greyfriars, surely, kid?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I was—an' I am, too!"

"What for?" demanded Bob.

"'Cause I'm fed up with livin' among liars and 'umbugs, for one thing!" answered Sir Jimmy bitterly.

"Why, you cheeky young sweep—"

"Do you want a hiding, young Vivian?" boomed Bolsover major.

"You can't go, Jimmy," said Lord Mauleverer. "Unless you're potty, kid, I can't guess what you're thinkin' of it for. What makes you think I want you to go? Has some cad—Angel, perhaps—"

"You don't, then?" sneered Sir Jimmy.

"Certainly not!"

"Liar!"

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton caught Sir Jimmy by the collar, his brow dark.

"Look, here, there's enough of that, Vivian!" he said. "You've asked for a jolly good hiding, and you'll get it if you're not careful. What have you got against Mauly, you young cad?"

"Find out!"

"Well, I'm going to find out," said Harry. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, slanging your best friend, the chap who's always stood by you—"

"You don't know!" sneered Sir Jimmy. "P'raps you do, though. I dessay you're as big a liar and 'umbug as he is!"

"The kid must be mad!" said Bob Cherry, in utter wonder.

"I'm afraid he is a bit potty," said Lord Mauleverer. "There's no way of accountin' for this, otherwise. Some cad has been stuffin' him up—"

"It's a lie!" shouted Vivian. "Think I'd 'ave believed anybody wot told me you was a liar and a spoofin' rotter? I wouldn't 'ave believed it without proof!"

"Oh, begad!"

"Let's have the proof, Vivian," grinned Skinner.

"Trot out your proof, Vivian," said Wharton sharply, "or you'll get the licking you've been asking for!"

"Lying little cad!" said Bolsover major.

"Lyin' am I?" exclaimed Sir Jimmy. P'raps Mauleverer will deny his own 'andwritin', then?"

He grabbed the paper from his pocket and held it up.

"Look at that! That's Mauleverer's fist—and that's 'ow he speaks of me to 'is uncle—me, that he pretends to be friendly with!"

"Great Scott!"

There was a buzz in the dormitory as the juniors crowded round to look at the letter in the candle-light. Lord Mauleverer looked, and started as if he had been stung.

"Oh, gad!" he said. "Oh, by gad!"

"Mauly!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, staring at him, "You—you couldn't—"

"No, I couldn't," agreed his lordship.

"It's your 'and!" yelled Sir Jimmy.

"Your hand, right enough," said Squiff.

"Not quite," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "If I'd written a caddish thing like that, I'd deserve all that poor old Jimmy called me, and more. But I didn't. That letter is a forgery!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Sir Jimmy Is Satisfied!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "A—a—a forgery!" stuttered Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"Yaas, you young ass!"

"A—a trick?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas."

"I say you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter, dear man! Jimmy, where did you get that letter?"

"I—I found it in my Euclid to-day," stammered Sir Jimmy. "Look 'ere, Mauly, it's in your 'and."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"It's like my hand. I shouldn't see the difference myself," said Mauleverer quietly. "But it's not mine, Jimmy, for I have never written anythin' of the kind to my uncle. Some cad wrote that and stuck it in your Euclid, an' imitated my handwritin'. Surely you can take my word, kid?"

"I—I—"

"And I can guess who it was," exclaimed Wharton fiercely. "That rotter Angel!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Will you dry up, Bunter, you fat chump?"

"No, I won't!" howled Bunter. "I know who it was! I say—"

"Begad! What do you know about it, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter was gasping with excitement.

"I say, you fellows, I know who did it!" he stuttered. "Listen to me! Look here, what did Angel want an old exercise of Mauly's for, eh? If young Vivian had shown me that letter, I could have told him. I tell you I saw Angel take an old exercise of Mauly's out of No. 12, and when I went to his study to speak to him he had it on his table there, and he cut up rusty and kicked me out, and I'd have licked him only—"

"Oh!" said Sir Jimmy in a low voice. Belief was struggling in his mind with black and bitter doubt.

"I thought Angel was after the peaches at the time," gasped Bunter, "but I can see what he wanted now. He didn't want Delarey's peaches, you know—that was only spoof. It was a sample of Mauly's fist he wanted, and that's what he got. I tell you I saw him."

And Bunter, having obtained a hearing at last, burst into a description of the raid on No. 12, which had so unfortunately failed to materialise in peaches.

"Begad, that settles it," said Lord Mauleverer, knitting his brows. "I'd have guessed it was Angel, anyway, but that settles it. Anybody comin' with me to see Angel?"

"I say, it's late, Mauly—half-past twelve—"

"Yaas, Angel will lose his beauty sleep."

"He will deny it," muttered Sir Jimmy miserably, "and—and—"

"Can't you take Mauly's word, you young ass?" growled Bob Cherry.

Sir Jimmy was silent.

"Angel won't deny it," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Either Angel will confess, or I shall take this letter to the Head to-morrow morning and demand a public inquiry."

"Oh, my hat!"

Lord Mauleverer, with the letter in his hand, walked out of the dormitory. Half the Remove followed him on tip-toe. They reached the Fourth Form dormitory and crowded in—still very quietly. There was an exclamation as Wharton turned on one of the electric lights.

"Remove cads! Line up!" It was Cecil Reginald Temple, the captain of

the Fourth who spoke. "Wake up! It's a raid!"

"Hold on, Temple!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's not a raid."

"What are you doin' here, then, at this time of night?" demanded Temple suspiciously.

"You've got a forger in your Form, Temple, an' we've come to speak to him," said Lord Mauleverer calmly.

"I see you're awake, Angel!"

Angel rubbed his eyes.

"What are you driving at, you drawlin' cad?" he asked.

"Look at that letter!"

Aubrey Angel started as his eyes fell on the precious letter.

"You've seen that before?"

"Never!" yawned Angel.

"You didn't steal a copy of my handwritin, practise it in your study, an' write this in imitation, and stick it in Vivian's Euclid for him to find there?"

"You cheeky cad!" shouted Angel.

"You deny it, Angel?" asked Lord Mauleverer quietly.

"Yes, you cad!"

"I saw you!" howled Bunter. "I saw you bagging Mauly's old exercise, Angel! I'm a witness! He, he, he! What were you doing with that old exercise in your study?"

"You deny it Angel! Very good," said Lord Mauleverer. "You'll have a chance of denyin' it before the Head in the mornin'. I'm takin' it to him immediately after prayers, to ask for an inquiry into who forged it. If you're innocent, you've nothing to fear. If you're not, you may as well get ready to leave Greyfriars. Come on, dear boys! Let's get back to bed."

Angel's face was a study as Lord Mauleverer turned to the door. Paul Kenney gave him a warning look.

"You—you're goin' to the Head?" panted Angel.

"Yaas, in the mornin'."

"I—I—"

"I'm going as a witness!" trilled Billy Bunter. "You weren't after the peaches, you rotter! I know what you wanted! He, he, he!"

"Mauleverer!" shouted Angel, as the schoolboy earl reached the door.

"Well?" Mauley looked back. "Have you anythin' to say?"

"You—you're really goin' to the Head about that rubbish?" panted Angel.

"Yaas."

"I—I—" Angel licked his dry lips.

"I—I don't mind ownin' that I did it for—for a joke!"

Sir Jimmy Vivian's face lighted up. It was a confession; and the last miserable, lingering doubt of his kind friend left Sir Jimmy at that moment, never to return.

"You own up, you unspeakable cad?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I—I admit it."

"Well, of all the sneaking curs!" exclaimed Temple. "Forging a fellow's hand! That's rather thick, even for you, Angel!"

"I'd go to the Head, anyway, Mauly!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "That cad ought to be kicked out of Greyfriars!"

"I'm dealin' with that cad!" said Sir Jimmy, between his teeth.

He rushed at Angel.

The dandy of the Fourth came out of bed with a crash, tangled in bedclothes. He howled wildly as the baronet smote him hip and thigh. He tore himself free of the bedclothes, and fought savagely, but the infuriated baronet simply overwhelmed him. Removites and Fourth-Formers looked on, grinning. Aubrey Angel's handsome face was no longer handsome when Sir Jimmy had finished. Both his eyes were closed, and his nose was swollen and streaming,

and he lay gasping on the floor, as soundly thrashed as ever a rascal had been.

"Mauly," Sir Jimmy whispered remorsefully to Mauleverer as they left the dormitory — "Mauly, I'm sorry! I never knewed—"

"All serene, kid," said Lord Mauleverer kindly. "You had it in black and white, an' I can't blame you for thinkin' as you did. But—"

"I ought to 'ave guessed," muttered Sir Jimmy. "I ought to 'ave knowed you better, Mauly! But—but I was 'urt—"

"I know, kid," said Mauleverer softly. "Don't think about it any more—it was all lying malice, from that cad's lying hand. Shove it out of your mind."

"I—I will, Mauly! And—and you don't want me to leave Greyfriars?"

"I'll punch your head if you speak of such a thing, you young ass!"

Sir Jimmy laughed. He could laugh now. He slept contentedly, after all, in the Remove dormitory that night.

Angel of the Fourth, the next morning, displayed two black eyes to the surprised and horrified gaze of his Form-master. And as Angel did not care to explain how he had come by them—lest more should transpire—he received a caning, a gating, and a hundred lines for his disgraceful appearance.

But that was not all his punishment. He received, in addition, the utter contempt and scorn of all the Fourth Form and the Remove. Even his pal Kenney seemed rather shy of him. Even Skinner and Snoop and Scott regarded him unfavourably.

His miserable plot was known and exposed, and the Greyfriars juniors were not slow to let him know what they thought of it. And Angel, in fear of his rascality coming to other ears, bore in silence the words and looks of scorn that met him on all sides.

But in Study No. 12 in the Remove all was calm and bright. Confidence had been restored there, beyond Angel's power to shake again, even if he ventured upon the attempt; and Sir Jimmy Vivian's face was very sunny in the days that followed. Harry Wharton and Co. administered a severe elanging to the baronet, which Sir Jimmy bore meekly, feeling that he deserved it; and then they magnanimously forgave him, on condition that he never played the giddy ox again, as Bob Cherry expressed it. But Sir Jimmy was not likely ever to fail again in faith in his kind friend, Lord Mauleverer!

(Don't miss "THE SECOND FORM MYSTERY!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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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.

Duke Payton's Last Fight (Continued).

HERE in the ravine Ferrers Lord, the shikari, and Ching-Lung found Duke Payton, of the Woods and Forests Department, with a spear-cut in his head and an arrow in his shoulder. He was stone dead, and around him lay the slain.

"Old wolf," said Ferrers Lord sadly, "here are the fruits of thy curse."

"Nay, not my curse, sahib," said Larput Raj, "for I did but curse in my anger out of a hot heart, and a curse must come from hatred, and I hated not Payton Sahib. Ay, I would have given this hand to have stood beside him and battled beside him! A battle it must have been. Count thou the slain, then, sahib, and marvel. It was a warrior's death that this brave sahib died, and may such a death come to me and to thee when our hour draws nigh."

"Keep thy wishes and thy curses alike between thy teeth, old wolf," said Ferrers Lord. "Poor lad! I was beginning to like him very much, Ching. Yes, it must have been a fight. Carry him out, and then come with me, shikari, and see if there are any more of these fellows in the ravine."

"Nay; carry him out, and I will go alone," said the shikari. "Truly I hope there are more and many more. Then will I show ye, sahib, that there was no hatred in my heart for Payton Sahib, not even when I cursed him. He had brought sorrow into our villages and made many widows, and my thoughts were bitter. But always he fought like a man, even as he fought this last great fight that shall be told to our children's children in the villages. Farewell, Payton Sahib, brave warrior and gallant foe! If there be more of them that slew thee hiding here, I, Larput Raj, once thine enemy, swear that I will send their shadows to accompany thine on thy long, dark journey!"

Larput Raj dropped the rifle with a snap into the palm of his left hand, and went bounding up the ravine.

The death of Duke Payton cast a shadow over the camp. Only Rupert Thurston had known him really intimately, for he had been very reticent, and sometimes inclined to be a little domineering—a fault that could easily be forgiven in a man who had been accustomed to command and be obeyed for the greater portion of his life.

They buried him the same evening in a pretty little valley behind the camp, with a pool close by where, in the night, the wild creatures came down to drink. Ferrers Lord read the Burial Service. They were all there except the Dahrans and Maddock, who was on watch. The bearers stood round the grave of the man who had warred against them with bowed heads. It was the bearers who fired the last salute.

"Poor old Duke Payton!" said Thurston. "Sleep well, old friend! It's just the place he would have chosen, Ching. He loved the wild and the open skies. This has rattled me badly, Ching. When you got to know him he was one of the best."

"It has rattled me, too," said Ching-Lung, as they turned away. "He asked me to go with him, and I was loading some of those wretched bombs, and declined. If I had gone he might not have been lying there. He must have put up a terrific fight—something to make you gasp. He had brained four of them and appeared another after he had used up his ammunition, so it was a hand-to-hand affair. And I don't think he did it because he was altogether cornered. My idea is he was thinking that if he let any of them out on our side they would be sniping us."

They had very little time for sorrow and regrets. It was the millionaire's scheme not to interfere with the brown warriors sufficiently to make them abandon their gigantic task—though that may have been impossible with such determined foes—but to keep checking them. Every half-hour or so Ching-Lung or Barry O'Rooney sent over a bomb that stopped the inrush of boulders and gravel for longer or shorter periods. But the warriors persevered.

"I take off my hat to the beggars for their industry, Ben," said Ching-Lung to the bos'un. "Industry is an admirable thing, but it can be overdone. If they'd only take a rest at night I'd take off my hat to them several times."

Mr. Benjamin Maddock, who was in his shirt-sleeves, rubbed his hands over his brown, hairy arms.

"It's a pity they don't join a trades union and work a fair and proper eight hours a day," he said. "But, only bein' heathen savages, we can't expect too much, souse me! I'm tired of the gravel-pushers!"

As a token of his weariness and contempt, Maddock spat on his hands and picked up a bomb. The canister had previously contained tinned pears, and there was a highly-coloured picture of a young lady on it who was seated in a green garden-chair, with a red parasol over her head. Her boots were yellow, and she was nursing a sky-blue dog.

Maddock studied this masterpiece of art very solemnly.

"Souse me," he growled, "if it don't seem wastin' a match to fight the fuse at all! If the thing don't go off, the picture will strike 'em stone blind. Hi! Here's your dope comin' over, polishes! Accept it with my kind regards!"

The usual report followed, and the usual yells, and the usual stoppage in the downpour of soil and gravel.

"It's a lot better here than at the top of that pole, though the scenery ain't quite so picturesque," went on the bos'un. "Mighty bad luck about Mr. Payton, souse me! What? You don't mean to tell me—Why, they're at it again, drat 'em!"

Maddock heaved over another bomb, and for twenty minutes there was peace. Then the stream of gravel began to run once more.

"Here, I'm fed up and sick and tired of it!" said the disgusted bos'un. "If I can't fetch along something to stop it a bit longer than that, souse me, I'm a one-eyed Dutchman! Let me have a stroll round and do a bit of thinking."

"Come back to me when your headache starts," said Ching-Lung. "I've got some stuff that will cure it."

Maddock did not claim to be an inventive genius, but he did think he could invent something in the shape of a bomb that would have more effect than a tin canister. The brown warriors seemed to be growing familiar with this type of weapon, and everybody knows that familiarity breeds contempt.

It happened that Weary Willie, the mule, who had grown sadder and more morose since he had lost the tip of one ear, had wandered away, and Gadra Singh had gone to search for him. That is why the bos'un was able to borrow a couple of iron saucepans. When he had wrenched the handle off the smaller one it fitted nicely into the larger utensil.

Maddock collected all the hard and unpleasant trifles he could find—broken crockery, nails out of packing-cases, and other spiky articles. When that bomb was loaded and wrapped round with copper wire it looked the real thing. As he was carrying it towards

the trench he met his friends Prout, O'Rooney, and Gan-Waga.

"What have you got there, by honey?" asked Prout. "Are you going to boil a ham, or what is it?"

"It's a bomb I've just made," said Maddock, "and it's loaded right up to the top with the real stuff. Just look here, souse me, and I'll show you. You put the fuse in—"

"Make sail!" yelled Prout. "He's made a bomb! I wouldn't trust him not to set himself or somebody else on fire with a box of wet matches. By honey, he'll blow up the whole shooting-match! I'm leaving!"

"Bedad, and so am Oi!" cried Mr. Barry O'Rooney. "Here's wan chap for the first thrain to Ballybunion!"

They fled, Gan-Waga waddling behind them as rapidly as he could work his plump legs.

"Well, of all the rabbit-hearted crawlers!" said the bos'un, with contempt. "Of all the—"

"Ar-r-r-r! Moaz awful thief! What you do thus to steal my saucepan?" demanded the excited voice of Gadra Singh, the cook.

"Easy, easy, souse me!" said Maddock. "You can have it back arter I've done with it. Have a look at it. You see, it ain't exactly a saucepan now. It's a bomb. Look at it, I tell you!"

The cook glared at the wire-bound thing with frozen eyes for less than the twentieth part of a second, and then he bolted. The bos'un marched down to the trench. No one was there. Maddock lighted the fuse, grasped the handle firmly, and heaved.

To his horror the handle snapped clean off, and, instead of soaring over the ravine, the saucepan with the sputtering fuse shot into the air above his head, and came hurtling back.

Still Holding Their Own.

IN nine cases out of ten the man who undertakes a job he does not understand makes either a mess of the job or of himself. To manufacture a fuse that will burn an exact number of seconds requires the most scrupulous care. If it burns too long the enemy may return the bomb ere it has time to explode, and if it does not burn long enough the thrower is hardly likely to do any more bombing. Maddock's case, luckily for the gallant bos'un, was the tenth case. His fuse consisted of damp, black gunpowder wrapped in tissue-paper, a haphazard sort of thing.

As the bomb descended, Maddock went over the parapet. It was the quickest thing he had ever done in his life. As he dropped flat in full view of the enemy he heard the saucepan bump down on the floorboards, and waited for the crash. He expected a whole section of the trench to go up in the air, but as nothing happened he at last risked one eye. The fuse had gone out, so Maddock went in and mopped his perspiring face. After all his trouble, it seemed a pity to waste the thing, but without the handle he was not sure that he could throw it far enough. He lighted the fuse again, and lifting the heavy missile high above his head, he sprang across the trench, his chest striking heavily against the parapet. It was a wonderful throw. The saucepan bumped over the top of the mound, and rolled down behind it. It exploded with a crash like a thunderclap, filling the air with smoke and dust and shields and baskets and other debris. There was a gap in the mound nearly four feet square.

"That, my dear Benjamin," said the voice

of Ching-Lung—"that is the proper article with which to present them!"

"I should shay sho, souse me!" grinned the hos'un. "The stuff you've been giving 'em sir, ain't strong enough. That'll keep 'em quiet!"

It kept them quiet until after dusk, for no more gravel came down the chute; but from the look-out post it was seen that they were bringing up enormous quantities of it. When it grew dark the stream began to flow once more. At midnight it had become a noisy torrent, pouring into the ravine with a ceaseless rush. There were several alarms. Three or four times little bands of spearmen appeared at the head of the crossing, but melted away at the first rifle-shot. It seemed part of their plan to keep harrying the defenders and rob them of their sleep. In the morning it was seen that they had removed their dead.

Dandu brought his customary report. In order to prevent another disaster like the one that had resulted in the unhappy death of Duke Payton, the millionaire had ordered Shaldza to keep a close watch on the ravine, for in the night it was practically impossible to prevent a few of the brown warriors from creeping down unseen, however vigilant the sentries might be.

"All is quiet on the lagoon, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord, as the chief made his parting salaam. "Quiet as yet."

"Then you still expect danger from that direction, chief?"

"I have always expected it," said the millionaire. "It's hard to believe that these brown fellows can only have one idea in their heads at one time. It's hard to believe that they can't knock rafts together or build canoes or some kind of craft to ferry themselves over. If they stick to their present idea of filling up the ravine, and to that only, we shall be lucky. And they will be unlucky," he added, with a smile.

Two days passed, days of burning heat, with skies of copper. It was about nine in the evening when Mr. Thomas Prout came to the tent. He was carrying a coil of fishing-line to which were tied several little tags of flannel and an iron weight. Ferrers Lord tilted back the shade of the lamp so that the light fell on Prout's burly figure.

"It's dropped four feet eight inches, sir," said Prout, "and it's still runnin' out fast."

"And no hope of rain," said Ferrers Lord. He knitted his brows. "I wanted them to go further than this. Very well."

Prout had just sounded the depth of the water behind the dam. It was leaking away at a speed that made action imperative, for very little water was coming down from above, owing to the drought. The millionaire called Prout back.

"Bring the battery," he said, "and call them out of the trenches. Old wolf, where art thou?"

Larput Raj, who had been lying on the ground outside, sprang to his feet.

"Go thou to Dandu, old wolf of the hills," went on Ferrers Lord, "and tell him and his men that there will be a great flame and much noise. And warn his brother swiftly to bring his canoes from the mouth of the ravine. Tell him also that this is not the great magic I promised, for that is yet to come."

"You are going to blow up the dam, then?" asked Thurston, who had just awakened from a nap. "It's a pity."

"Say rather that the weather is a pity. I wanted a big weight of water behind the dam, but the stream higher up seems to be running dry. It won't be very spectacular. I suppose you imagined it going up with the warriors charging across it in thousands. Even that might have happened if I could have summoned up the courage."

"Courage—you?" asked Thurston, staring. "That's about the last thing I ever could dream you were short of."

"My dear fellow," said the millionaire quietly, "it would have been glorious, and I suppose it would have been war. A cinema film of it would have brought in a small fortune. Perhaps it was not lack of courage so much as prudence. The best-laid mines, like the best-laid plans of mice and men, oft go agley. At the crucial moment the mine might have failed to explode, with the most uncomfortable consequences for ourselves. You cannot hold up an army with one machine-gun and a few rifles if that army means to fight; and the best machine-gun will jam at times. And now the weather has decided for us."

They went out into the sultry, breathless night. Prout had already warned the defenders to leave the trenches. The dull roar of the falling gravel had become a

familiar sound. A flash-lamp held by O'Rooney shone on Prout's hands as he knelt joining up the mine-wire to that of the battery. The battery stood on a camp table outside the tent.

"All ready, sor," said Barry O'Rooney. "There's nothing more to do but squirt on the juice."

There was a hoarse braying of horns. A star-shell soared up from the summit of the look-out post, where Maddock was on watch. It was another attack on the crossing. Hundreds of arrows were pinging over. Ferrers Lord reached out his hand and sent the spark through the wire as the warriors, unchecked by gunfire, leapt down the steep path.

The explosion followed instantaneously. It was a chaos of flame and rock and water and deafening sound. Pebbles and fragments of earth pattered round them like hail. The whole force of the explosion seemed to take the course of the ravine. None of the warriors who had entered it could have survived its scorching breath for a moment. Those above were flung back, bruised and battered.

The pent-up waters, free at last, went roaring on their way in frothing surges, sweeping before them the great bar of gravel that had taken so much painful labour to create. Then came silence.

"Chingy," said Gan-Waga, "come alongs with yo' handkerchiefs, old dear. I gotted something in my eye."

"Bedad, don't Oi wish ut was my fist!" said Barry O'Rooney feelingly. "Av ut was O'd kape-ut there and dig ut in!"

Mr. O'Rooney's remark caused some laughter, and Ching-Lung hastened to render first-aid to the Eskimo.

It was not till the break of dawn that the full effect of the explosion could be seen. Their own upper trenches were crushed flat, and buried beneath a pile of rock. On the other side the mound had completely vanished, and the timbers of the chute had been flung in all directions. No dead bodies were visible, and no doubt they had been removed, for there must have been hundreds of warriors behind the mound at the moment the mine had exploded, and the casualties could only have been enormous. What would be the next move?

"They've had a bad shaking-up this time," said Thurston, as they sat at breakfast. "There are thousands of them right back there, but they seem to be taking a rest. I wish Payton could have seen the fireworks last night. As I was looking at the swarms of them from the top of the post just now it struck me that we were doing a mighty big thing. Of course, we've got the position and the weapons, but it's a large order. I'm feeling quite proud of myself."

"We had to explode the mine far too soon," said Ferrers Lord. "If we could only have let them work there for another few days it would have been in our favour. If there is another attack on the ravine at all, I am a very poor prophet. They won't face the risk of another explosion. This dry weather is all against us. If it lasts they will be able to march through the swamps, though the intersecting cracks, Dandu tells me, are very deep and dangerous, and swarm with crocodiles. Dandu is late this morning with his report. Give me another cup of coffee, if you please, Ching. Ah, here's the chief!"

Dandu salaamed. He was panting.

"Evil tidings, Azada!" he said. "I was wrong. They are building many big canoes, and there is a boat with many oars that will carry a hundred warriors ready for launching. Our young men attacked it, hoping to destroy it with fire; but they were too strong, and drove us off. Unless thou bringest thy great magic swiftly, Azada, we are lost!"

"Where are these canoes?" asked the millionaire.

"On the island of the crocodiles, Azada. It is well hidden, for there are many reeds. There they build their canoes."

"Go, then, and burn the reeds," said the millionaire. "They are tinder-dry, and a breeze blows. Smoke out these brown rats, and delay their work. I will give you more of the flaming water you used on your spears the other night. Go, and act quickly!"

Dandu moved off with a couple of tins of paraffin.

Ching-Lung and Thurston walked down to the end of the ravine and watched the canoes put out across the lagoon. The yellow reed-beds extended for many miles. One by one the canoes vanished into a winding channel, and the wild-fowl they had disturbed settled down again. Ching-Lung and Thurston did not wait long. The attentions of the flies in that particular spot were too painful. Ching-Lung called up to Maddock to know if

there was anything doing within his extensive line of vision.

"I know what I could do, souse me, and that's a pint of nice, cool bitter beer, sir!" said Maddock. "The back of my neck is red-hot, and I've got a tongue as dry as sand-paper. Hallo! A big smoke nor'-east of the lagoon—a mighty big smoke!"

They could not tell how successful Shaldza had been in carrying out the object of the expedition, but by the smoke that rose he had managed to create a fire on a tremendous scale. It raged for several hours, and the millionaire's binoculars showed vast black patches and gaps in the yellow of the reed-beds. As the wind dropped the fire died down; but towards nightfall the breeze came again, and it blazed up furiously, reddening the whole sky.

The shikari, who had been sent to Dandu for news, returned, shrugging his naked shoulders.

"A failure," said Ferrers Lord. "Shaldza fired the reeds, Ching, but there was not a canoe left on the island."

"What the newspapers call intelligent anticipation, chief."

"Or ordinary common-sense. Once they were discovered they realised their danger—especially the danger of the reeds being fired. Though not a success, it means another delay. We'll move the machine-gun down there in the morning, Ching. There will be a raid, and a raid that will take some beating off. Will you attend to that?"

"Yes, chief," said Ching-Lung.

Ferrers Lord sat down near the lamp and opened his pocket-book. He sat there studying a pencilled, roughly-drawn plan of the lagoon and of the river that ran down to the old camp where Gadra Singh had routed the Dahrans with his big gun. Then he rose and went out into the night.

Larput Raj, faithful old watch-dog, lying there asleep with one ear cocked, sprang erect at the light footfall of the master he almost worshipped.

"Old wolf," said Ferrers Lord, "bring to me six of thy best men, and rouse Prout Sahib. And listen thou to me."

The glare of the burning reeds was still reddening the sky when Prout, Larput Raj, and the six bearers left the camp.

Conclusion.

IT was comparatively cool in the great camp, for pleasant breezes blew from the hills and tempered the heat of the sun. A hand was playing. And in this remote portion of our far-flung Empire things were happening that have always puzzled and astonished every other nation in the world, even our staunchest allies. There were ladies in dainty frocks watching the last chukker of a finely-contested polo match. Indian troops flashed their white teeth in full appreciation of the game, and lads in khaki, brown as chestnuts, from England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, added their applause.

As the ponies galloped out an aeroplane zoomed across the green turf and took wing. It began to climb in swift spirals. When a thousand feet up the pilot began to show the spectators some of the breakneck tricks an aeroplane can perform. It was like a gala day at Hurlingham or Ranelagh, in London, before the war, in the height of the fashionable season.

Colonel Raynor, in command of the summer camp, was chatting to a group of ladies when an orderly approached, stood at the salute, and handed him a crumpled envelope. The colonel was not youthful. He gave an apology, put on his glasses, and opened the envelope. He read the letter through twice.

"Bring these two men to me!" he said sharply.

Old Nacha, sun-blistered, limping, and white with dust, came forward, supported by his nephew's arm. Five minutes later the bugles were ringing. The sports had come to an abrupt end. There was work to be done.

That their greatest peril lay not from beyond the ravine soon became obvious. The enemy had already a number of canoes afloat, and were adding to the number with feverish activity. Shaldza and his men showed great pluck, but many times during the next twenty-four hours they had to paddle for their lives, being attacked by enemy patrols. Two canoes were captured or sunk, and ten of the Dahran fishermen failed to return.

On the other side of the ravine the enemy still remained in great strength, and flights of arrows came over constantly.

(To be concluded.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 84.—Mrs. MIMBLE and TROTTER.



ONE must not say that Mrs. Mimble is not an important person. Does she not keep the tuckshop? And is not that enough to establish her as of great importance?

To the boys of Greyfriars, anyway. Scarcely to the readers of the stories, perhaps. For they cannot savour the charms of Mrs. Mimble's cooking. Not theirs to sit at her counter, after the fashion of Billy Bunter when in funds, till replete within and greasy without. I don't mean that there are many of them who would want to do so—one here and there, perhaps. I have had letters from youngsters whose intense and misdirected sympathy with Bunter has given me the notion that they would emulate his gorging exploits if it were in their power.

As for Trotter, his is rather a peculiar position. A boy among boys, yet marked off from them by his position, he is sure to be submitted at times to treatment that he does not like. But that would be by a few only, and those few not from among the decent fellows. For a decent fellow does not hit anyone who cannot hit back, as it were; and Trotter can hardly retaliate in kind for any jokes played upon him without risking his place. On the whole, however, Master Fred Trotter is pretty capable of taking care of himself.

Mrs. Mimble can also take care of herself. She is soft-hearted and kindly, and possibly a trifle slow; but she knows too much to trust Billy Bunter. Experience taught her that lesson; but most of us have to learn by experience, so we need not blame the good lady of the ringlets for not perceiving by intuition that Bunter is untrustworthy. He would run a bill of any length at the tuckshop if allowed. He does still owe an old account there; but, though Mrs. Mimble may remind him of that when it becomes necessary to resist his pleadings that fresh credit may be granted him, she must long since have resigned all hope of seeing it paid. That will never happen unless Bunter comes into a fortune; and even if such a stroke of luck befell him he might forget it.

As for the rest, Mrs. Mimble knows fairly well whom she can trust and whom she cannot. The fellows who are to be trusted seldom ask for tick; if they are stony they usually go without luxuries. Even if an unforeseen emergency, such as the arrival of an honoured guest who had not been expected, arrives, they try to borrow before they ask Mrs. Mimble for credit. That is only fair. But one cannot imagine the good dame declining to give credit to Harry Wharton, or Peter Todd, or Squiff, though she would hardly give it to Skinner, or Snoop, or Stott.

More than one story has centred around the tuckshop; but Mrs. Mimble cannot be said to have played a prominent part in any of them. She was down with influenza when, at the suggestion of Fisher T. Fish, the School Shop Co., Limited, was formed to carry on in her absence. But business was done in the Rag, not on the usual premises; and the devices of Fish as managing director and the raids of Billy Bunter upon the stock did not affect Mrs. Mimble.

There was another occasion, when she went away to visit her invalid father, and Fish took over the running of the tuckshop, with results that were by no means eminently successful. For Fish, imagining that he could afford to try the kind of operation that his father, Hiram K., practised at home in the U.S.A., that is to say, reaping the advantage of having a corner—we call it war profiteering now, but it amounts to very much the same thing, being a matter of supply and demand—offered inferior goods at high prices, and was ragged for his rapacity. He was very glad to clear out and hand over to Mrs. Mimble again; but he had to stand a heavy loss.

In his bad days Vernon-Smith had once to settle a big bill with the dame. He and Snoop and Stott raided the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble imagined it was burglars. Mr. Quelch did not agree. Bunter gave the game away by blackmailing the raiders and taking in to breakfast from the proceeds of his blackmailing veal-and-ham patties, tarts, and cake. Inquiries were instituted, and Bunter split. The raiders got it hot, for theft had not been their only offence. They had also tried to throw the blame for the affair upon Harry Wharton & Co.—a miserable and mean trick.

Mrs. Mimble and Trotter both shared in the strike of the school staff which left the Head so badly in the lurch, and led to Mr. Prout's acting for a brief time as Commander-in-Chief of the Kitchen, with a crowd of Removites as his army. That experiment was not a success. The dinner prepared was quite uneatable. Fish chipped in again, and tried to run a restaurant on Mrs. Mimble's premises. But his customary desire for big profits wrecked that.

Bunter was at the bottom of that trouble. Things had been missing from the kitchen store-cupboards—grab, of course—and the Head found Dibbs, the groom, guilty. Dibbs was not guilty, and the only evidence against him was manufactured by Bunter—to get himself out of a scrape the Owl had imitated the voice of Dibbs. The staff were sure of the groom's innocence. It was true that Mrs. Kebble, the matron, had believed that she heard the voice of Dibbs in the store-room; and when fragments of the feast were found in the old harness-room it certainly looked black against Dibbs, though, again, that was due to Bunter.

Dibbs was told to go. Dibbs proved to his fellow-servants that he could not possibly have been guilty; and Mrs. Kebble, Mrs. Mimble, Gosling, and Dibbs himself went to the Head to prove what Gosling called "a halibi." Gosling suggested a strike, and Trotter, with the natural instinct of a boy, thought it no end of a lark. No doubt Trotter got some enjoyment out of the audacious language which Gosling used to the Head; but Mrs. Mimble did not, though her usually placid temper was roused at last, and when the Head ordered her to remove her things from the school shop she shouted that she would be "right glad to."

It was Trotter who solved the mystery,



which shows that Trotter has his wits about him. The strike had turned into a dismissal, but that did not hinder Trotter from walking in at the gates—where he found Lord Mauleverer acting as lodge-keeper—and up to Study No. 1. There he told the Famous Five that he had thought the matter out, and was sure that Bunter's ventriloquism was responsible for it; and he outlined an ingenious scheme for catching Bunter red-handed in the store-room. It was carried out, and Bunter was caught; and the Head was very pleased with Trotter, and gave him a week's extra wages as a reward. And, of course, the staff came back.

Trotter has plenty of curiosity. He was very much interested in the interview between the sailor, Fritz Lasker, and the boy who had masqueraded at Greyfriars as Clive Cholmondeley; and only the presence of several Remove fellows in the passage prevented him from putting his ear to the keyhole on being sent out of the study after conducting Lasker thither. But there is no evidence that he has the keyhole habit as badly as, say, Bunter. Trotter, by the way, is not fond of either of the Bunters. You may remember Mr. Prout's giving Sammy it hot for kicking Trotter's shins.

A decent lad, the Greyfriars page; and Mrs. Mimble is a very decent sort also, so that if there is little to be told about them, that little is to their credit.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"THE SECOND FORM MYSTERY!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's story deals with Spring, the unpleasant new boy in the Second Form. Sammy Bunter is also prominent in it; and Dicky Nugent, Gatty, and Myers all play their parts.

We do not very often have a Second Form story; but I know that many readers appreciate such a yarn as a change, just as they like now and then to have one in which the stalwarts of the Sixth Form figure prominently. Some few are dissatisfied whenever the Famous Five are a little bit out of the limelight. But, though Harry Wharton and his chums are the leading characters of the series, they are not the only ones; and it would tend to sameness if they always played the leading roles. They are always in the stories, as a matter of course.

EXTRACTS FROM THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."

Our fine serial finishes in our next number, and the week following the "Extracts from the Greyfriars Herald" will again appear in the back pages. Most of you, I am sure, have followed the fortunes of Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, and the rest of them with breathless interest; but, all the same, I do not think you will be sorry to have more of the short stories of Greyfriars doings.

LIST OF GREYFRIARS STORIES IN THE "MAGNET" (continued).

- 421.—"Skinner the Skipper."
- 422.—"His Highness."
- 423.—"When Friends Fall Out."
- 424.—"The Mailed Fist at Greyfriars."
- 425.—"Micky Desmond's Luck."
- 426.—"The Terrible Two."
- 427.—"False Evidence."
- 428.—"The Upper Hand."
- 429.—"Coker's Conscript."
- 430.—"The Forbidden Match."
- 431.—"The Hero of Greyfriars."
- 432.—"The Boy from South Africa."
- 433.—"Kicked Out of School."
- 434.—"Frank Nugent's Polly."
- 435.—"Fighting to the Finish."
- 436.—"Called to the Colours."
- 437.—"Run to Earth."
- 438.—"Monsieur Wibley."
- 439.—"The Other Bunter."
- 440.—"The Giant of Greyfriars."
- 441.—"The Schoolboy Farmers."
- 442.—"Sticking to His Guns."
- 443.—"His Own Fault."
- 444.—"The Trickster Tricked."

YOUR EDITOR.

10-8-18