

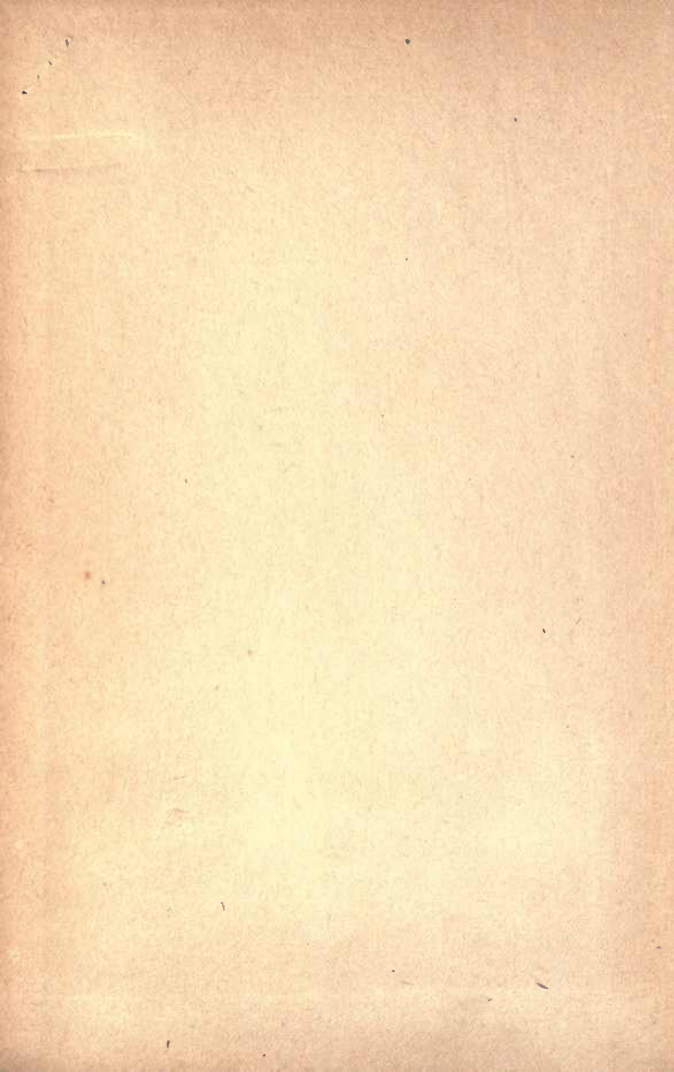
IN
CARRINGTON'S
DUTY-WEEK

J. G. NICHOLSON



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C. K. OGDEN



IN CARRINGTON'S DUTY-WEEK

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A PRIVATE SCHOOL EPISODE

BY

JOHN GAMBRIL NICHOLSON



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OF W. A. M.

Unmarked by him his days of boyhood pass,
His golden days unvexed of sighs and tears ;
But he shall see them in the coming years
Reflected clearly in my memory's glass :
For him they bloom and wither as the grass ;
Their matchless melody he no more hears
Than he can comprehend my hopes and fears,
Or why I cannot always smile, alas !

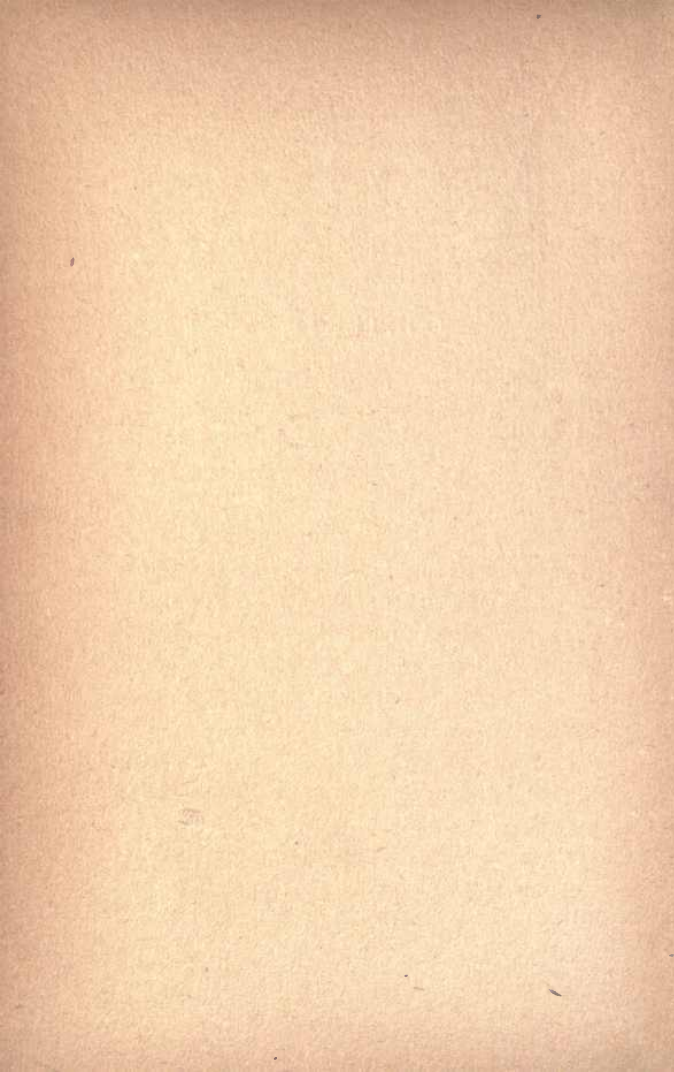
But he will like to hear what I can tell
Some day when time has strengthened sympathies
About his misty schoolboy memories ;
And then perchance, enlightened by their spell,
Will understand it all, and say, "*How well*
You must have loved me to remember this !"

J. G. N.

1892

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PROLOGUE

MR CARRINGTON was entirely responsible for the whole affair, so he may be fitly allowed to explain in his own words why he, so to speak, threw Mason and Burrell into one another's arms.

"Oh, Roper!—just a minute!"

Mr Roper was in the act of closing the door behind him as he went out. He turned back and stood on the threshold, with his hand on the handle.

"I forgot to tell you something," continued Carrington.

"Well, come on then; it'll be Sunday morning in exactly two minutes," and Roper consulted his watch.

"Oh, it won't take one to tell. What do you think I've done to that new boy, Burrell?"

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"Don't know. Not marked him already?"

"Oh, no. I've handed him over to Mason."

Carrington looked at his colleague inquisitively to note how he received the announcement, but Roper merely lifted his eyebrows.

"What for?" he asked.

"Experiment!" replied Carrington, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "While I was talking to the new boy about his books just before bed-time, Master Coley turned up, so I asked for fun if they knew each other."

"Why, of course they do, since Burrell's gone to Number Thirteen."

"Yes, I'd forgotten that at first. Burrell said, 'Not very well,' all the same. So I formally introduced them and said, with a great affectation of gravity, that Coley must look after the new chap's interests, now he's lost his old chum."

"Ah, I don't know what'll become of Coley without Lloyd."

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"That's what I thought ; I said I'd ask him in a week's time how he'd carried out my behests, and sent them up together. They both took me to be in deadly earnest."

"Well, if you ask me, I say he won't make another Lloyd of this new boy ; he's too volatile to suit Coley, from what I've seen of the young man."

Roper turned to go.

"Oh, Mason's full of life, too ; more so than you think. Well, good-night, if you're bent on going."

Then Carrington returned to his book, and rolled a cigarette, just to finish up with, soon forgetting these two boys on whom he had jocularly enjoined the duty of a week's chumming.

CHAPTER I

SUNDAY

“HAVEN’T we got to get up now, Mason ? ”

Burrell was looking at his watch which hung on the bedstead-rail over his head. Mason was occupying himself in pulling up the blind of the window in his corner ; he could reach the cord without even sitting up in bed, but the blind came down every time he pulled it up.

“ Oh, don’t you disturb yourself just yet,” he answered, giving up his fruitless efforts, and drawing the sheets over his shoulders.

“ But it’s past eight,” remonstrated the new boy.

“ Well, never mind ; the bell hasn’t rung, or I should have heard it. It takes more than two mornings to get into the good old habits.”

“ What, of being punctual with the bells,

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Coley?" inquired a third boy who had awoke to the situation.

"So it seems," replied Coley. "I didn't mean that, all the same; I meant of sleeping through the beastly row that bell makes."

"Pull up the blind, Coley."

"Oh, I can't fag; it won't stay up: gone wrong in the holidays like everything else. Here, Lewis, wake up and draw that blind of yours."

Mason accompanied his command with a pillow, which effectually roused the boy who slept near the other window.

"Shut up, Coley!" he grumbled, lazily shoving the missile down on the floor.

"Well, I'll show you it's a fine morning, anyhow," said Coley, dragging at the cord once more, and holding on to it a second or two. "There, you see! Prime, ain't it?"

It was a sunny morning, and things looked very bright outside; the trees in the school garden were fresh and green in their early Spring foliage, and the blue sky was

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flecked with fleecy white cloudlets, driven across it at a good pace by the breeze. Some birds twittered loudly under the eaves. There was just time to take a peep at all this before the boy's effort expired, and down came the blind again.

"Shall I fix it?"

Burrell asked the question, and, without waiting for any answer, tumbled out and went across to the window.

"How beastly energetic! It's awfully good of you, really," drawled a big boy, whose bed stood next to Burrell's.

"Here, I say, mind my Sunday shirt, will you?" cried Mason, as Burrell prepared to clamber on the chair at his bedside.

"All right, I won't stand on it," said the operator, and he got on the edge of the chair, and stood on tip-toe to reach the catch at the top of the blind-cord. Coley watched the proceeding lazily for a moment; then sprang up with a cry of:

"Look out, Burrell."

The boy on whom Coley's pillow had

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descended had summoned up sufficient energy to hurl it at Burrell's head ; warned by the cry he turned and saw it coming, tried to duck, and slipped off the edge of the chair, bringing Coley down with him in his fall, while the refractory blind clattered down also, with more noise than ever.

The other four boys roared. Burrell regained his feet and began apologising.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mason !"

Coley was lying atop of the pillow, which he had caught just before it reached his new chum, and taken down beneath him. Now he raised it up, and stood a moment in very determined attitude, with his lips compressed. Lewis was shielding himself with his arm, and giving expression to his usual remonstrance, "Shut up ! Shut up, will you !" But Coley contented himself after all with plumping the pillow down in its proper place at the head of his own bed, and getting back between the sheets again. Burrell was left to do the same, and to settle within his own mind the

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cause of the sudden cessation of hostilities, which took him by surprise as much as the commencement of them had done. He fixed up the blind successfully this time, and was getting down to the ground before anyone had spoken another word. Then it was Coley who broke the silence.

“Look there now!”

He was examining his precious shirt as he lay half in, half out of bed, and ruefully held out a creased cuff for Burrell's inspection. At that moment the bell rang, and he turned out in search of his socks with a melo-dramatic threat of, “I'll murder you, Lewis!” One other boy got out at the same time; that was Thorn, the prefect of the room. The prefects, as Burrell soon discovered, were on the whole worse than useless. Having punitive powers, they yet seemed to have mutually agreed never to exert them; consequently, their influence, as Uncle Remus would have said, “was powerful lacking.” In Number Thirteen, Thorn was not altogether a failure; he set an excellent example,

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though it was seldom backed up by any show of authority. Burrell was astonished to see that Lewis was allowed to spend twenty minutes more in bed, and scramble into his clothes in the last five—he often did it himself in after days!

When the second bell rang, Coley and Burrell went down together.

“Come down and put your boots on,” suggested the pioneer. “We’ve loads of time, and there’s such a crush at the boot-holes after breakfast. Besides, then you’re ready to get off at once if you want to walk before Church-assembly. I almost always go out then; there’s nothing else to do except write home; lots of chaps do that, but I shall get my letter done after tea to-day, as we’re not allowed out yet in the evening.”

“But you asked me for before dinner,” said Burrell.

“Yes, I know; I forgot I shouldn’t have to write my letter first thing. You’d better come with me both times. After dinner I’m planned with Victor Limehouse, so I can’t

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promise you that period. I've got all my afternoon periods planned already. Look here!"

They had been in undisputed possession of the boot-room, but as Burrell glanced over a page of Coley's pocket-book several more boys came in. One of them said, "Carrington's gone in!" Whereat everybody scuttled upstairs.

"He'll give marks if we're late; nobody else would to-day, though," explained Coley.

"But we were called late," said Burrell.

"Ah, yes; but Carrington rung the second bell, and that means just five minutes, and not a second over, with him."

When the two boys entered the school-room, Mr Carrington was on the dais, and his eye on the clock. Mason and Burrell had no time to spare, but were just safe, and the new boy turned down to the desk he was occupying for the time being, at the very bottom of the room. Coley sat in the third row from the front, and went to his place with a downward glance at his feet: had his laces been untied he

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would have been sent back, and that would almost certainly mean a mark at this critical moment. His boots were all right; they usually were, but he had been so busy chatting to his new chum, that he wasn't sure about them for once. As he lifted his eyes, in squeezing to his seat, he saw an amused look flicker over Mr Carrington's face for half-a-second. Coley didn't quite know what it meant; at any rate, it would be safe to smile; so he smiled. Next minute it was, "Shut the door, Paul!"

The boy sitting nearest the door rose and shut it reluctantly; he saw two late-comers scurrying round the corner of the corridor, and would fain have given them a chance. Just as the door closed, they reached it, and before Paul had sat down again came in, trying to look as if they'd never run a step in their lives. But Mr Carrington's pencil was making cabalistic marks in his red book which would identify them when the detention-list was being made up at dinner-time on Monday. One

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of the new-comers was the elder Limehouse ; he took the trouble to remark in a deferential tone, " Bell rang late, sir ; " but his face, as he went to his seat, showed that he knew he had wasted his labour. There were five or six more to come, and almost as soon as all were in, the gong sounded, and " Silence ! " was called. Then they passed out, form by form, to breakfast. The master moved down as the rows of desks emptied, till he stood in the middle of the room opposite the door, where he could get a back-view of the boys going in single-file along the corridor. There was a prefect stationed outside, but some of the prefects needed a little support in this way. Burrell was the very last boy out, and as Mr Carrington followed close on his heels, the master gave him a gentle recognition of their over-night conversation, in the shape of a hand laid on the back of the boy's neck, helping him along with a mild squeeze. Burrell did not feel called upon to speak, as he was not addressed ; besides, it was " silence," and this might

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be a trap to catch a greenhorn! So he held his voluble tongue for once.

Once in the dining-hall, he made his way to Mr Shields's table, and took a seat beside Mason; he had sat at that table, though not next his new chum, at every meal so far, and this time the chair had been kept vacant for him. But it would not be for long; the rule was to sit according to age, and the new boys were daily expecting enquiries as to the day and year of their birth.

They were not allowed to talk until after prayers; most of them had their Bibles with them, and were finding the place. On Sundays there was always a Psalm, the verses being read by the Head and the boys alternately; on other days the Head had it all to himself. Burrell had no Bible, but Coley pushed his along so that they could both look on. Then Mr Rochester came in, fairly late as was usual on Sundays, and went to the high-table. When the reading began, Burrell discovered that his chum's Bible was the

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revised version, and the Head's was the authorised ; so that neither of those two boys, at any rate, took much part in the reading. Nor did very many of the others ; Mr Carrington kept them going or there would have been nobody to get the alternate verses started.

Almost before they were up again, after the prayers, Coley had commenced chattering, and the two neighbours kept up a lively conversation during the meal. Boys went out when they had finished, and on week-days some of them were in a terrible hurry, but on Sundays nobody profited much by getting out, and everybody liked to wait for the letters. The prefect for the week fetched them from the Head's table, and distributed them. This Sunday the post-bag was not so heavy as usual, as the fellows had only come back two days before. Still, Burrell had one from his mother, and put it in his pocket to read at his leisure.

After breakfast, " Sunday-books " were given out in the library, but our two friends

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decided that they wanted no literature that day ; and five minutes after coming out of the hall they were off to the shore. Here they had a stroll along the margin of the water till it was time to go back for Church-assembly ; at least half the fellows in the Upper School were on the beach, and the other half, roughly speaking, might have been found in the woods.

"Look at my shoes," said Burrell ruefully, as they came back up the hill.

"Pooh ! it doesn't matter," replied Coley. "I'm wondering how you're to walk with me to Church ; I'm in the first division, and if you sit right down at the bottom of the schoolroom, you'll get out with the second. You'd better ask Carrington which division you're in. Or shall I ?"

Burrell deputed his friend to the knotty question, but they went to the masters' room together. Coley asked, and Mr Carrington only sent him out with, "Don't you worry yourself, my son. I'll settle it."

And after the bell had rung for the assembly, and every boy was in his place,

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the master walked down the room ; and, while critically scanning hats, boots, gloves and the like, said to each of the new boys, " First division ! " " Second division ! " according to the height of the boy. So Burrell was able to go, when the first division was ordered off, and Mr Roper made no objection that morning to his walking with Mason though the new-comer was half-a-head shorter than his comrade.

The School sat at the very back of the Church, occupying about ten rows of chairs on both sides of the aisle, and there was nothing to interest them during the service, except a small boy going to sleep in the front row, and the Head trotting down the aisle after taking up his collection-bag. The little man had a ludicrous habit of pumping the air with his right arm as he walked, and Coley nudged and winked till Burrell observed it and grinned.

They had to march up to School again in rank, and then there was a general rush for grub. Boys stood about just inside the gates with mouths full ; they were

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forbidden to go out eating. At last the two chums were fairly filled with a mixture of their respective tuck, and went to the woods. They had to scamper back like hares to be in time for dinner-assembly, the bell ringing when they were a quarter of a mile away. But it was done safely, and if they had no time to go below for a wash, it didn't much matter ; most of them were used to doing without it. Coley had, like many boys, a brush in his desk, and under cover of the lid uplifted he managed to smooth his hair without being nabbed by Carrington.

After dinner, Burrell stayed in, waiting until the senior Bible-class came on. Coley had impressed upon him the great advantage of being in this class ; while the juniors were in, after breakfast, he had been free to wander about ; but while the seniors were in, the unfortunate juniors were under supervision. Burrell would have liked to write his letter home before class, but saw nobody else doing so ; he therefore mouched about the Fifth class-room trying to make the

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acquaintance of some of the chaps. Jimmy Limehouse was showing his holiday photographs, and later on Blackhurst brought his out, which were a much superior set.

At tea Coley and Burrell had a good time; both took in full jampots which came out empty, and both did a large amount of excited conversation. At tea, prefects sat at the top of the tables instead of masters, the latter being at the Head's table, for Mr Rochester never came in to tea. He was supposed to come in to take prayers, though, before they dispersed, and on Sundays he rarely missed the duty. While tea progressed there was a good deal of noise; the prefects were very lax in singling out offenders, and the difficulty of doing it from the high-table was extraordinary. The boys knew this.

"Do you see?" Coley explained to Burrell, who was looking up the hall, "every one of those masters is ready to speak to Gerrans if he can spot a boy's voice, and yet not one of us gets spotted.

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The only thing Gerrans can do is to silence the whole lot, and he won't do that to-night. He's got Pinky, though!"

A small youth was slowly going up to the dais from the table nearest it, and stood beside Mr Gerrans with downcast eyes, while the master questioned him. Whatever his answers were, they gave immense amusement to the whole staff, and our two friends judged by the appearance of those masters who sat with their faces to the boys that their efforts to repress laughing were costing them something. But Gerrans was, outwardly, grave as a judge, and though a tentative smile once flickered round the corners of "Pinky's" mouth, it didn't last long. Between the intervals of buttering his toast (as his manner was) the master delivered sentence, and "Pinky" retired to a corner of the room with his face to the wall, and remained there until prayer-time.

"See how riled Thorn looks?" asked Coley, designating with a motion of his head the prefect of their bedroom, who

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presided that evening at the small boys' table.

"What for?" asked Burrell.

"Why, he ought to have spoken to that kid, and saved Gerrans from having to interfere. It would have saved the young 'un two marks, I'll bet. But they never think of that."

"Who's the boy?" Burrell inquired.

"Oh, only F. C. Brown; he's always in trouble. And yet he's the most innocent-looking kid in the school. At any rate, he's a grand little bat for his size; he'll be down for second nets this term if he gets his rights."

Their conversation drifted into the channel indicated, till Gerrans rang the bell. Then they produced their Bibles and stopped talking. The prefects went to their seats at the first table and the masters took the places they vacated, except when the master wasn't staying, when he went out at the upper door and "his prefect" remained in possession—generally looking very much injured. At Wright's table

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no change was made, Mr Shields going out when the bell rang. His deputy was trying not to see his charges, and Coley thought it quite safe to whisper, "Old Shields is an awful slacker." It was very skillfully done, with an eye fixed on Mr Gerrans who still stood on the dais, and who didn't see it this time. Then, Mr Rochester came in with a tribe of his children ; and Mr Gerrans, relieved from the possible duty of chaplain, came down to his table, his prefect quietly vacating the seat and going to his own.

In ten minutes, the boys were passing out, table by table, and Mason and Burrell retired to their desks in the big school-room, and wrote their letters till Church-assembly came on. Then the general cry was "It's coats!" and with a great deal of grumbling and mumbling everybody went down to fetch up his coat from the room below, opining that "Carrington was an ass." As Mr Carrington had received word on the subject from Mrs Rochester he didn't care what the fellows thought as

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he went in, top-hat in hand, to take assembly ; nor what they said, so long as it didn't reach his ears.

The morning performance was repeated, and the boys marched off in two long files ; through the avenue of young saplings, now wearing their tenderest green, and out upon the quiet road. There was evening light over the western hills, and the peaceful stillness was broken only by the regular tramp-tramp of the boys' feet, and the monotonous call of the single bell that the village could boast. Burrell must have fallen into a dreamy mood ; perhaps he was contrasting the present calm with the stir of a Lancashire cotton-town on a Sunday evening—its streets thronged with people, not all church or chapel-goers, and its twenty steeples rocking with the clamour of bells. A sharp order of " Burrell, keep step ! " recalled him to his surroundings, and he fell to admiring the shiny shoes of Phil Lewis, who walked immediately in front of him. Some boy in that quarter was talking to his neigh-

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bour in a subdued murmur without being observed, so the new-comer ventured to ask Coley quietly :

“ What time do we get out ? ”

His chum only gave him at the time a side-glance fraught with meaning, but later on found an opportunity to ejaculate, “ Half-past eight you'll get marked,” all in a breath.

On the return journey, dusk as it had become, there was almost if not quite the same silence observed ; the masters were in the habit of keeping the whole division in on a Monday for any disorder in the Sunday night darkness, and nobody risked anything on this occasion. They made up for it at supper ; a bell-like chime was rung upon all the glasses in the hall until Mr Carrington followed in at the tail of the long file, and relieved his unlucky prefect. And after grace was said the conversation was “ full and high ” for ten minutes ; but each table hushed up a little as the master passed it in his patrol of the hall, and his amused affability,

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as he spoke to one and another boy on his way, showed that he was not in the least concerned to stop the animated chatter. They all filed out in excellent order and perfect silence when he touched the bell on the high-table and "returned thanks," and he stood a minute at the door of the masters' room to watch them fetch out their hats from the schoolroom, dimly lighted by one solitary burner at the lower end. Nobody said "Good-night," as they were all supposed to be silent till they were safely inside the bedroom doors, but comrades contrived to go upstairs in pairs as a kind of protest.

Carrington was not on dormitory-duty ; Roper was, and his voice was heard in the corridor just as his colleague flung himself into a chair, glad to get the hated Sunday-duty over. Victor Limehouse, the library monitor, was poking round the schoolroom collecting the "Sunday books" of certain slackers who had left them lying on their desks.

"Now, Limehouse, can't you hurry up?" cried Mr Roper down the corridor.

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His voice had an irritated, nasal twang which showed he was impatient at having dormitory-duty to do.

The boy went bustling round in the obscurity with his arms full of books up to the chin. He was whistling softly to himself, and had nothing apparently to say.

The master advanced to the door, looked in, and said snappishly, "Why don't you speak when you're spoken to? I'm not going up till I've seen you out of here. There's a whole landing neglected while I look after you."

"I'm just coming, sir; I'm being as quick as I can."

Limehouse spoke in rather a nonchalant tone, and Roper waxed furious. Turning on his heel, he left the boy behind, saying angrily, "Well, you'll be marked if you're not up before me, so there!"

Limehouse had gathered all the books, but had to go down to the bottom of the room to turn out the gas. Mr Carrington stepped out of his quarters into the schoolroom, where the boy was muttering, "Well, I

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shan't be, so there!" Roper had not hurried off by any means, but he was going up the stairs. His colleague said quickly, "I'll put that light out, Victor; you be off," and with a rapid step he passed the book-laden fellow and put out the light.

"Shall I look after those books?" he suggested.

Victor's smile was lost in the darkness, but his voice was light as he replied, "Oh, don't bother, sir; I've got to be marked to-night."

Carrington, however, insisted on taking off the top of the pile, whereupon the boy's chin came down several inches, and he really did quicken his steps along the corridor, but he wouldn't leave the job. He bundled the books into the cupboard dexterously, gave a hurried look round, locked the door of the book-case, and took his sturdy self off with a cheery, "Good-night, sir."

Mr Roper gave him the mark as soon as he reached his dormitory-door, and Victor

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took it without demur ; some days he might have objected strenuously, but to-night he contented himself with declaring, when the master walked off,

" Carrington tried to save me that mark, and I wouldn't let him. I shall get one every Sunday night when Roper's on this landing ! "

" I'll help you if you like," said Jimmy.

" Well, you can try to get leave," said his brother.

Mr Carrington's action passed quite without notice ; he was Coley's patron, for one thing, and Coley got shirty when his patron was discussed from either point of view.

Victor was in bed before some of the others, and Mr Roper was able to get the light out at 9.15 sharp, so that he went off punctually to his pressing engagement, whatever it was. Then the boys talked till 10, when Thorn came to bed ; at 10.15 talking had to cease, and Burrell, at any rate, didn't transgress the rule ; he was asleep first of all.

CHAPTER II

MONDAY

THE bell rang at half-past seven next morning, and in Number Thirteen there was some little jubilation over it. It had been a matter of speculation the night before what time it would ring. In the Summer-term there was school from seven till eight, but on very few occasions had the boys been let in for it on the first Monday morning.

Jimmy Limehouse and Lewis both consulted their watches as soon as the first tinkle made itself heard. Lewis's was under his pillow, but the youngster's hung over his head on the bed-rail, so it was Jimmy's voice which announced the time.

"Keep you hair on!" he cried, in a tone of immense satisfaction; "it's half-past seven."

Then he nestled down again, and courted

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sleep once more, as if he had another hour to slumber.

"Good biz.," murmured Victor from his bed, next Burrell's; but gave no other sign of action.

"I told you so, Mason," said Lewis triumphantly. "Old Tom hasn't got a timetable out for morning school."

"I suppose it will be the last day of grace, though," said the new boy.

"Oh, I shouldn't wonder if we get till next week," answered Lewis drowsily.

"Pull up your blind, Phil," ejaculated Coley at that juncture; and Lewis looked across hastily, perhaps expecting Coley's pillow as before. Then he lazily stretched out an arm to the cord, and up went the blind with a jerk quite sufficient to account for faulty catches.

It was not so fine a morning as the previous one, but the garden looked fresh and bright, and everybody seemed in fair spirits. The dressing went on in much the same fashion as on Sunday, but the assembly-bell found even the two chums

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unready, and they had to pack up their Sunday suits in the wrappers at high speed. But a great deal can be done in five minutes, as Lewis was engaged in demonstrating, and Coley and his *protégé* were in the schoolroom before Mr Carrington. There was actually nobody late this morning, and the master on duty looked very comfortable as he said "Shut the door, Paul!" with every seat occupied. Most boys held the theory that it rejoiced the masters to get a long mark-list, but boys are not physiognomists.

Before they passed along to the dining-hall, Mr Carrington announced that Mr Gerrans wanted all the new boys in Mr Beach's class-room after breakfast. After prayers were over Coley interpreted:

"Of course, that's to get your ages; this is the last time you'll sit by me. Gerrans will read out the age-order, I expect, in dinner-assembly, and you'll be on Carrington's table most likely."

"Can't I give my age so as to keep here?" asked Burrell.

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Coley opened his eyes wide at the proposal.

"No, it's no good doing that," said he ; "you'll have to write your name and birthday in the Head's book soon, and you must put it right there. They wouldn't agree, you see !"

"I don't suppose they ever compare," suggested Burrell.

But Coley opined that it would never do. He went on to say that he was concerned himself in the general movement.

"I hope I don't get shoved up just by Shields's elbow ; it's jolly down this end, right away from him. But so many of the new chaps are kids, there's bound to be a good push-up for this table."

"It's no use your hurrying over breakfast," said Coley, later on, as he noticed his neighbour trying to keep pace with him. "You can't get away, as you've to go to Gerrans ; and he won't be out for ages yet. You see, there isn't a single master who's begun so far ! It's an awful swindle when you have to go to them after break-

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fast ; it means any time ; you never can tell exactly."

The new boy found it rather a nuisance : he went to the class-room appointed, and watched the fellows on the upper field at play. There was football still going on at one end, about a dozen enthusiasts shooting at a goal not yet taken down. But the majority were playing cricket with a great deal of noise ; they had an innings in turn, going in in the order of their appearances on the field ; and as batches of threes and fours came through the gate at once, it was a question of priority which needed a great deal of settlement. Burrell cared little for the footer, but he watched the cricket with keen glances. It was the first time the things had been out, and nobody was shaping much, but he had been playing during the holidays, and was longing for a smack, even on that truly awful wicket ! However, he hadn't yet been down for his boots, fearing to keep Gerrans waiting, and he resigned himself with a sigh to the loss of this playtime. At any rate

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the other new boys were in the same boat.

At last Gerrans came in, at about ten minutes to nine, and took names and ages in a very business-like fashion. Then, while they were putting their boots on, the bell rang, and it took Burrell all his time to get ready for school.

Outside he heard a good many exclamations of "Assembly! Assembly!" and found all the boys going to the schoolroom instead of to their classrooms. The Head was coming to read out the new class-lists, and perhaps to put up a new time-table. Carrington was stroking the assembly into order, while the remainder of the staff were waiting, capped and gowned, for the Head's appearance. They enjoyed this little performance as much as the boys; who, for their part, rejoiced to see the hand of the clock leaving nine minute after minute behind. "Wasting time grandly!" they chuckled to one another.

One of the principal topics of interest was the reading of the rules, which had not

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yet been done. There had been a promise of years' standing on the part of "Old Tom" to give a printed copy to every boy, and it had become by this time a standing joke against the Head. They were never forthcoming, and his stock of excuses for the delay must be (so thought his masters and boys) almost exhausted !

At twelve minutes past nine he sailed along the corridor—his long gown floating and his right arm pumping the air. The masters came inside, and formed a little group just within the door. The class-lists were read, and Gerrans superintended while the boys quietly took the order assigned to them. Nothing was said ; much was to be divined, however, from action and look. Cherished window-seats were given up with reluctance by some and triumphantly appropriated by their fortunate successors. Neighbours parted from one another with regret or relief, as the case might be. New-comers came up timidly from the desks at the back to take for the first time their proper position in

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the School. Boys who had expected a remove and failed to get it showed their disgust in their faces. No books were transferred at present : all that had to be done out of schooltime.

Mason's destiny was nowise remarkable ; he remained in the same form and in much the same position in it. He had to move two places only from his seat of last term, and there was no bitterness of parting just then for him. That had been undergone in the closing assembly of the previous term, when his bosom-chum Lloyd had sat beside him for the last time.

Burrell took a very fair position for his age and size : he was ten months younger than Coley, and not nearly of the same mental calibre ; but he had been well-taught and had done best of the new boys in his preliminary examination. He was placed at the tail-end of his form, which was fourteen strong under the new arrangement.

Presently it was all settled, and the Head turned to the subject of rules. No-

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body expected for a single moment that there would be anything for them except an excuse. They were not disappointed.

"I had intended," quoth the Head, sapiently, "to give a printed copy of the rules to each boy, but the time-table has caused unusual trouble this Term, and I have been obliged to leave other matters, in order to work it out."

This announcement caused almost unanimous mirth, expressed, of course, by glances and smiles only. The more mischievous or more confident of the fellows ventured to endeavour to catch the eye of a responsive master, but the staff were, for the most part, hiding their faces behind caps or looking on the ground with twitching lips. Coley was bold enough to look at Mr Carrington, but only received a severe shake of the head—a motion belied by the master's twinkling eyes.

Meanwhile, the reading of the rules was progressing; old stagers knew them by heart, and some had written out many thousand times, in the days of the old

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régime, such examples as "No disorder of any kind is permitted in the class-rooms, or corridors, or on the stairs." To Burrell it all seemed very stupid; how could he be expected to comprehend, to say nothing of remembering, about two dozen restrictions, some of which were bound to go in at one ear and out at the other? For example, "On Sundays, bells are rung at the following times, etc., etc." It seemed to him that this much-promised copy in print would have been of far greater service to him.

A short talk followed ("Quite a young jaw to-day," was Victor's comment on it afterwards), in the course of which the subject of prefects cropped up, and the whole of that august body looked supremely miserable. Ere it all came to a conclusion, the Head had said five times that he had been "exceedingly annoyed," and the hands of the clock had wandered round to ninety-five. Then the forms dispersed to begin with the second period's work, and there was much discussion of the new time-table

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in the corridor, the head-boy of each form being supplied with the only copy which would be at their disposal till they could cluster round the notice-board at the side of the Head's desk.

There was a break in the work at 10.45, and everybody blundered out for a breath of air, a bun, and a game of tip-and-run, all taken together. A baker's boy came up daily at this time with a basketful of grub, going back in ten minutes with his basket empty, and his pocket full of pence. If "Simple Simon" had no penny, the "pieman" was not above taking stamps in payment—a very reprehensible practice of which the School authorities knew nothing.

Coley was out later than Burrell, and found his chum on the field, watching the apology for cricket.

"Aren't you playing?" he asked, with a great bite at his bun.

"No fear," mumbled Burrell, whose mouth was full; "not at that rot."

"Well, it's poor fun, of course, but I'm going to try to get a knock."

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Coley was soon lucky enough to run a man out, and had his one knock, and no more. Wickets fell at the rate of four or five per minute with sixty fellows fielding. The bell rang all too soon, and as the two boys walked in together, Coley collared the new-comer once more.

"How'd you get on?" he asked; and then, almost while Burrell was beginning an answer, proceeded to talk about something else.

"You ought to have been here last term," he declared. "The buns used to come to the bottom of the field, and we bought them through the railings. It saved the boy a long walk up to the back door, and was jolly convenient for us. The Head stopped it, though."

"Why?"

"Oh, some rot or other. He said it was a wild-beast show, and that the village people would be coming round every morning at feeding-time, to see the savage creatures fed through the bars."

Burrell laughed; it amused him a good bit.

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"Well," he said; "it doesn't much matter as long as we get them somehow."

"I never used to want any at first," said Coley, "but I soon found out that you can't get through the morning without some grub."

"You could if you had more breakfast."

"Yes, but a fellow's in a hurry at breakfast; it saves the Head's pocket grandly, doesn't it?"

"What?"

"Why, letting us go out of the hall at breakfast when we like!"

Burrell smiled again; he hadn't heard all this sort of thing before, as he was fresh from home; and Mr Carrington thought the two boys were getting along very well as he watched them from the window. Coley's somewhat sober face showed considerable animation; Burrell's merrier physiognomy was all smiles. They parted in the corridor with a friendly charge, which drove Burrell into the wall perilously near the glass-panelled door of the masters' room.

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School was over at twelve-thirty on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; on the other three days it began at nine-fifteen and continued till a quarter to one. This morning Coley was detained in Mr Beach's class-room—the place *par excellence* for getting detained in—and Burrell went to the field to make his *début* at cricket. In these matters a new-comer always had a fair show, and Lance Rochester at once asked him to bowl at the lower end. There were three balls going; a batsman at either end; no runs were being scored, but when you were out (caught or bowled) you came out. By this time, some of the smaller boys had set up their wickets near the wall; there were not more than a dozen boys at the senior pitch (if “pitch” it could be called), and the “field” consisted of one man on the on side and two on the off. Had there been even one bowler to each ball there would have been three at each end, but as several boys were “going shags,” there was a little group of at least five behind each wicket. Burrell

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did not lack perception, but it was very difficult for him to know when he was expected to deliver his ball and when to refrain ; to say nothing of the difficulty of confining his attention to the one which had been thrown to him by Lance. He only bowled three balls in five minutes, and then gave the ball back to its owner, preferring to go and field at cover-point and mid-on, where he soon found some work to do, and did it as well as the rough ground permitted.

Before it came to his turn to go in, he had made a catch, and had nearly brought off another really difficult one by a capital effort. His batting came at the lower end, and he did not care to take off his coat as he received the bat, for he felt it very unlikely that he could stop little Graiseley long. This small boy (who was not, it is true, so juvenile as he appeared) was slinging them down the hill with disastrous results, but the new boy had two or three very much over-pitched to begin with, and soon felt at home. He was in fair practice

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already, for he had played almost every day for the past fortnight, so that when his chum came running through the gate it was to see Burrell make a very neat low off-drive which he had the privilege of fielding. Before that ball was returned, however, the innings came to an end, and Burrell had his right thumb in his mouth. He had been caught off it behind the wicket.

Coley joined him as he returned to his former position, and condoled.

"Rotten wicket, isn't it? There hasn't been a blade of grass in the middle here ever since I can remember."

"I shouldn't mind that," Burrell retorted, "if it was level; but look at that!"

He pointed with his left hand to a spot near one end, where a stone of quite fair size was protruding from the earth.

"You must get put down for nets," said Coley; "there's always a decent pitch on the upper field, and some good bowling to play. I'm sure to be down for second

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eleven practice ; I was in the second all last season."

Then he held forth on the two elevens and their prospects, and when they were not actively fielding they talked constantly till it was Coley's turn to bat. Mr Gerrans had turned up by that time, and was bowling easy-looking lobbs from the lower end, one of which Coley very soon spooned back to the bowler in playing forward with stiff arms—the fatal stiff arms that had long kept him out of the first eleven

In dinner-assembly Mr Gerrans appeared, and read out the new order for sitting in hall. Coley was disgusted ; fate placed him precisely where he had not wished to go, and he turned round in his seat after grace and made a grimace as he caught Burrell's eye. His quondam neighbour had fared better, and was about as far from his master (Mr Carrington) as the length of the tables permitted. There was one boy between himself and the window, a boy called Johnson, in his own form.

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On his right was Brand, a merry fellow in the Fifth Commercial, who lent him an illustrated paper at dinner.

There was a free hour after dinner, except for the boys on the mark-list. A fair number of names graced the page ; Monday's list was a record of forty-eight hours, and Sunday, moreover, was always prolific of marks. F. C. Brown headed the day's list with three ; he had beaten record the previous term with one hundred and thirty-nine. His great fault was that he was always found out ; his ill-luck was proverbial ; nobody had ever known Pinky to escape anything. He looked very penitent as Burrell saw him during the reading of the list—his head bent, his long lashes drooping over his splendid eyes ; but one minute later he was barging round the detention-room pending Carrington's arrival, and, of course, was spotted and awarded "extra time."

Burrell wanted to play cricket again, and had three innings in less than an hour. About a quarter past three Coley lounged

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into the field, and leaned back on the wire railings. His chum was made aware of his presence by hearing a voice from the masters' room window, crying out :

"Mason. Get off that wire!"

So he joined him at the top of the field, and they lolled against the gate, eating apples which Coley produced from his pocket. Just then Mr Carrington came out and joined them.

"Just out of marks, sir?" asked Coley.

"Yes, only just; plenty of extra time to-day."

"How long can you keep in?" inquired Burrell. The query was not fitted for Coley, but the look which accompanied it was, so he saved the master the trouble of replying.

"Only thirty minutes for marks; fifteen extra for extra time."

Burrell wanted to ask if Victor had incurred any additional penalty, as he had arrived on the field only just before Mr Carrington, but he refrained.

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"I see you're on my table, Burrell," the master remarked.

"Yes, sir."

"Rather out of my reach, though."

"Yes, sir."

"You managed to amuse yourself to-day."

"Yes, sir."

"If you care about books, you'll get through a good deal of reading at dinner."

"Yes, sir."

Carrington turned his attention to the other boy.

"What are you reading, Coley?"

"One of Stevenson's, sir; 'Catriona,' a sequel to 'Kidnapped.'"

"Yes, I know. You like Stevenson?"

"I didn't care for 'The Master of Ballantrae,' sir."

"Well, it's not meant primarily for boys. What did you get through in the holidays?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing at all?"

"No, sir; there's plenty to do without reading. If it wasn't for the School lib-

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rary I shouldn't know much about books."

"And the waiting for the second helpings at dinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, there's some consolation in that, then."

Coley kicked the turf into a hole with his heel. The long periods of waiting at dinner were a sore point with everybody. Masters did the carving, and had to eat their own food between the serving of the first and second portions; they made all possible haste, but dinner lasted a full hour as a rule. Carrington turned to cricket.

"Lance has asked me for the election after prep."

"Oh, yes, sir; and we're not going to let new boys vote in future."

"Quite right, too. Who's to be captain?"

"Thorn, I expect, sir. Some fellows want Graiseley."

"Oh, no. He's too small. Lance ought to be nominated."

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"He won't be, sir. And he wouldn't get two votes if he were."

"Well, it's too bad, Mason! I shall be disgusted if he's left off all the committees. Our senior prefect, and a good sportsman."

"He's not popular, sir."

Carrington was about to reply, "Because he's his father's son; it's a shame," but he kept his thought unspoken and went off somewhat wearily to ring the bell; he had had just five minutes to himself since nine o'clock.

The elections after prep. were very interesting to Burrell, though a new ordinance debarred his participation in the ballot. The prefects came in at twenty minutes to nine and brought the necessary strips of paper; these had been prepared presumably during their prep. Mr Carrington explained, while they distributed the papers, that the three pieces each boy received were for the reception of names for the committees of cricket, tennis and library. Six boys were required for each, and every voter put down his selected six.

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In the case of the cricket paper one was to be designated as captain. There were no nominations ; Mr Carrington had wished to have some, but it never had been so, and he succumbed to the general feeling against it. Thus small kids in the lowest form were at liberty to put down the names of their bosom comrades among the lower boys. Some of them did it, invariably.

The whole proceeding only occupied seven minutes, and three prefects went round to collect the papers in their separate batches ; Thorn was honoured with Carrington's cap as a receptacle for the cricket papers, which he had to take up. Then the prefects bore the whole cargo away, and the counting was delayed until after supper. Results were not out before twenty to ten, but every boy in the bedroom probably knew them all ere he sank to rest. Carrington went down to the prefects' room for his cap while bed-room duty was going on, and smiled to see its business-like disposition. When the masters, in a noisy group, came out from their supper (which they took

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with the house-party) Roper and Carrington went to the notice-board in the lobby to see how things had gone. Thorn was the unanimous choice as captain, and on the whole the committees were well chosen. Lance Rochester was on the Library Committee in a respectable position, but was the last successful man on the Tennis, and did not appear at all on the Cricket list. Carrington held forth on it in the masters' room, explaining that the elder son of the Head—the ablest boy the school had ever turned out—had been similarly, or worse treated in days gone by. He swore he would “hortate” the School on the subject in morning assembly. Gerrans advised him to do nothing of the kind.

In Number Thirteen there had been a small rag. Lewis and young Limehouse had played footer with a ball made of Jimmy's stockings—Lancashire v. North Wales. Mr Roper had given them two marks each. Still they were not vastly subdued, and the whole room raised a carefully repressed cheer when Thorn came

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to tell them in the dark how the voting had gone. He was by no means shy of publishing his own captaincy ; it was somewhat balanced by Victor's being on every committee and Mason on that for cricket.

But the last topic of conversation, after all, was the early school next day.

"Beastly rot," grumbled Lewis, "it's just the worst thing about this term—getting up at half-past six."

He spoke as if he really did it !

CHAPTER III

TUESDAY

THE bell rang at half-past six next morning, and in all the bedrooms there was a consensus of opinion on the subject ; everybody thought it was "rotten." Things were either "rotten " or "decent ;" there was no higher praise than the latter, and no medium between the two extremes.

Phil Lewis sleepily declared his one consoling thought to be that he wouldn't do a single scrap of work.

"Mental arithmetic ! Why, I sha'n't be properly awake till I hear the breakfast gong," he said.

Then an idea struck him, and he called out to young Limehouse—

"Jim ! you said you'd finish that game this morning."

Jimmy was not keen on it.

"Oh, be blowed ! The ball's burst.

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Besides Thorn will mark us again. How many, Stan? Two?"

He asked as if he were considering whether the fun would be worth the price, and Victor cried:

"Don't be a young ass! You've got quite enough already for to-day."

"Don't excite yourself. I'm too sleepy to turn out till the last minute."

"Roper will come round this morning," observed Coley mischievously, getting his trousers on.

"Not he!" replied Jimmy scornfully.

"We'll have a slack time," said Victor; "we go to the Head for Mechanics; he won't be down this morning, you bet."

"Oh, yes, he will," contradicted Coley, "he always starts off with a good spurt."

"Well, look out for *Prevent us, O Lord*, then," said Jimmy. "That's the only collect he knows."

"Shut up!" said Thorn. "And get up, too."

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"Going to, directly."

Coley and Burrell went down when the second bell rang. It was a grand morning, and they stood at the big window, behind the Head's desk, and looked out over the field to the sea. Then Carrington came in and said, "Every boy sit down!" That was his formula. Roper had another, "Sit down in your places!" And Howitt always said, "Sit down there!" Howitt never wasted words and was inordinately fond of "there!"; "bell there!" "mark you, there!" were his orders. When the clock struck seven Carrington's mark-book came into play; several boys were late. There was no noise; "silence" had not been called, but early morning assemblies seldom needed the order to be given. Almost every boy had an illustrated paper in his desk; the literary pabulum of the majority was "Scraps," "Comic Cuts," *et hoc genus omne*. It drove Mr Beach wild; the Head seemed unconcerned, however.

Phil Lewis came in while the clock was

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striking ; Carrington didn't mark for that. A tall handsome boy in the Fifth Commerical came five seconds after, just as Paul was closing the door. His name went down. He looked at the clock as he saw himself marked, and said in affected astonishment, "It isn't time, yet." Burrell was noting everything from his seat about the middle of the room, having nothing else to do. He was surprised to hear, "I'll put you down two, Adams !"

The clock really seemed scarcely to point to seven, so Burrell sought enlightenment from his neighbour, Graiseley.

"What's that for ?"

"Oh, Adams is such a fool ; he always says that when he's late. The clock jumps back, you know."

"Jumps back ?"

"Yes, you watch it. When it strikes, the hand goes back half a minute."

"Perhaps he didn't know."

Graiseley leered.

"He's had extra marks for saying the

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same thing plenty of times ; he ought to know."

" I should have said it, though."

" Oh, yes ! You wouldn't be marked if you did. I should, though. We know you have to go by the striking. Carrington isn't bad ; he lets you through if you're in before the last stroke."

" Don't the other masters ? "

" No, Gerrans don't. Why don't you get your chum to put you up to these things ? "

" What chum ? " asked Burrell. He had a pretty fair idea, though, to whom Graisleley alluded.

" Why, Coley, of course ; you're as thick as thieves, aren't you ? "

" He's in my room," explained the new boy.

" You're in his, you mean ! " corrected his neighbour.

About seven minutes after the hour the Head appeared. The master on duty always waited ten minutes after seven on the chance of his Chief's coming down.

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If he wasn't there by that time, he himself said a collect and dismissed forms to their respective rooms.

The fellows put their books away ; there was soon perfect quietude ; then the Head said : " Let us pray," with his usual unctuous ponderosity. Some of the chaps merely leaned over their desks, but most of them knelt up on the seats to bend over. Sure enough, they had the stereotyped collect this morning ; and then off they filed to their different masters, some of whom had only just come down upon the scene.

Burrell enjoyed the first hour of the day very fairly : they had dictation in Shields's class-room. It was downstairs ; a cold, dingy room, with a little area and a grass bank outside its windows. Shields pretended to like it ; his colleagues secretly admired him for making the best of things. This morning he selected a piece from a political " leader " ; it was very usual for him to make use of the newspaper.

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A question about Parliamentary procedure came up ; Burrell was the only boy out of the fourteen who could answer it. Shields beamed upon him, and gave him a word of praise, which made him very uncomfortable. Later on, Graiseley was sent to the masters' room for a volume of the cyclopædia. Shields prided himself on being broadly instructive, and his cyclopædia was a standing joke. He digressed from any lesson into reading extracts therefrom, under very slight provocation. One day a boy had said to Roper, after he had informed the Matric. class of the nature of Saxon coinage, "Please, sir, isn't that out of Mr Shields's cyclopædia ?"

At the end of the lesson, they changed books and corrected. Again Burrell came in for *kudos*—he was one of the two best. After that, they spelt some words they had learnt in prep., and gave the meanings. There was good fun often to be got out of the examples of their use. Shields on this morning asked a dull boy for a

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sentence embodying the word "dactyl" whose meaning was given in the book as "a poetic foot." The sentence, offered amid considerable laughter, was "Shakespeare had a dactyl." Most of the fellows had sense enough to see the joke; some few wanted to know where it lay.

Better still, however, was little Brown's effort to use "transient: passing quickly" He gave his sentence thus: "That engine is transient." And another boy caused further amusement by trying to beg the question in this way, when asked to illustrate the use of "furtive: stealthy"—"The word furtive means stealthy!"

Despite this sort of thing, Shields kept excellent order, and managed his work very well. Burrell enjoyed it; he'd been used to a class of thirty-six, and to a much stricter *régime*, combined with far less real order and attention on the part of the boys.

Breakfast went down well this morning, but rapidly withal. Burrell polished off

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his porridge and a cup of coffee in five minutes from the end of prayers, and was playing cricket at half-past eight, so that he put in nearly three-quarters of an hour on the field before school. It was a joy to be alive on such a morning ; the sky was very blue and so was the sea ; the leaves on the young trees down the sides of the field were superbly and radiantly green ; and the woods up the hillside behind the School gave a great charm to the inland prospect. Jimmy Limehouse passed along outside the bottom railings with his pal Bob Thorn, both carrying hand-cameras. Jimmy called to Burrell, who was fielding in the "country."

"Take this up to Roper, will you ? I want to go down to the shore."

So Burrell received through the railings a newspaper for which the youngster had been to the railway bookstall, and took it to the masters' room. Roper was not there, but three other men, who had finished their breakfast before its lawful owner, pounced

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on the paper and immersed themselves immediately in county cricket, while the boy went back to his game.

During the morning "break" Burrell found that the photographer whom he had befriended was in high glee at having caught some snaps at a "crocodile" on the beach. This sounded very extraordinary, but Burrell was not so green as to be unaware that Jimmy had in reality taken a procession of school-girls on their morning parade. Some upper-school boys, who ought not to have shown such interest in a small kid's work, were asking him already for prints off the plate, which was to be developed before dinner. This kind of thing had, however, to be "kept dark" in other senses than the photographic.

Coley walked through the village with Burrell at one o'clock and informed him that Jimmy was a little fool, and Victor a big one.

"They both go after girls; it's such rot, I think!" was his dictum.

Burrell was much of the same opinion

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just then ; particularly when Coley explained himself further.

“ If the Head gets to know, he'll stop us going on the shore, or lock up the dark-room, or confiscate cameras. It isn't good enough.”

Neither of the two chums was a photographer, though Burrell was destined to be bitten with the hand-camera epidemic before many weeks were over.

They messed about on the railway station, which was a very favourite resort of the boys, till it was late. Going home by the shore they saw nobody about, and Coley came to the conclusion that his watch was slow and the bell had rung. This conjecture received ample confirmation as they went up the avenue ; the gong was actually sounding for dinner. Mr Carrington saw them pass the side-windows of the school-room as he sent the forms out of assembly.

“ You're done for,” said Coley, ruefully.

“ So are you, aren't you ? ” asked Burrell, nowise concerned.

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"Yes, but I don't want to be getting you marks."

"Oh, rot; I'm bound to get some. Never mind that!"

Carrington spoke to them in the passage. "I shall have to mark you. Get in to the hall quick!"

So when the day's list was read out Burrell's name figured in it, but not in very close proximity to his friend's. He thought nothing about it, and Coley thought Mr Carrington had done it on purpose; but really it was merely the exigencies of space at the last minute which caused the separation.

Immediately after dinner, Burrell had, of course, to go to "marks," in Mr Beach's class-room. Carrington was already there waiting with the book for which he had been up to the Head. Some of the fellows were a long time coming, and several pleading cries of "Can't we begin, sir?" had been put up before the door could be finally shut. Then it was "All hands be-

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hind!" (another individual formula) and every boy stood up straight and stared at the wall. There were twenty-six there on this afternoon—a fair average number; some of them stood between the two rows of desks, because not more than twenty could conveniently stand round the walls. The window side was not used, to begin with; Carrington stood there, and surveyed the rows of backs before him. On one side of the room were shelves; some fellows liked standing there best; they could at any rate read the titles on the backs of the lesson books. Two stood with their faces to the door; it had glass panels like all the doors in that corridor, but the glass was of a fluted description and there was no seeing anything through it. *The* best place was in the angle formed by the projecting fire-place; a boy could scarcely be seen at all who got well in that corner.

There was dead silence all round. Nothing was done; boys had merely to stand up straight with hands behind—ten minutes

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for every mark. Extra time was given for leaning against the wall, laughing, fidgetting ; as for talking, nobody tried that with Carrington. His extra time for *small* 'offences was always ten minutes ; some men only gave five.

Burrell stood beside Coley, facing the shelves ; he could see out of the nearer window from the corner of his right eye, and he gazed meditatively at the sunny road, bordered by young rustling saplings. Carrington gave Adams some extra time ; he had pushed his neighbour's foot. Almost directly after, a boy was trying to look furtively at his watch and was similarly penalised. The master spoke very quietly and merely said, " Extra time, so-and-so " ; the other boys seldom knew what it was for. This tended to repress them very effectually. Before the first ten minutes were over six boys had extra time, and two of them had come with three marks, so that Carrington was letting himself in for another long detention. But it was always

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in the first ten minutes that boys were inclined to fool ; it was a rare thing for extra time to be given after the first batch had cleared out. Their *cong  * came when Carrington said,

" These boys have longer to stay :— Adams, Lee, etc."

He found it preferable not to read the names of those who had done their time ; they were apt to start going before he reached the end of the list. Neither Burrell's name nor Coley's was read, and they went out to the back together.

" Isn't it rot ? " asked the old stager.

" Rather stale," assented Burrell.

" Wastes time so, doing nothing."

" We seemed to have more than ten minutes," said Burrell.

" No, I expect it was right ; Carrington's very particular. Didn't you see how busy he was all the time ? "

" No. Doing what ? "

" Oh, lots of things. Putting down the time in the book ; and checking off the

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boys ; and marking down the extra time ; and getting ready to read out those who have more than one."

"He can't watch us much."

"Oh yes, he does ; all the time. Sometimes you can do him, but not unless you get in a good place. I've had my watch out on the shelf, or hanging down in front before now."

"Didn't he catch you ?"

"No, but he's caught plenty of other chaps."

"What do you get ?"

"Oh, extra time, and he takes your watch. I hardly ever get extra time with any of the masters. Roper reads the paper ; he don't catch anybody."

"What were those chaps doing to-day ?"

"Graiseley was breathing on the glass of the door ; I looked to see. I don't know about the others. Gerrans is the worst boss ; you have to mind yourself with him."

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"What's he do?"

"Oh, comes down on you like bricks. I don't know why we mind him so. He never keeps on 'Stand up!' 'Stand still!' 'Stop laughing!' like some of them do. I suppose we don't do it with him. He's the best master; he gets order without any punishments hardly. He did me neatly once. I had my watch on the top of the books in the lower shelf all the first mark. When it was time for us, I just squinted behind before picking it up, and he was staring at me hard. So I pretended to tie up my lace and then I looked again, and he'd got his eye fairly on me still. So I had to go and leave it."

"He'd have given you extra time if you'd picked it up?"

"Rather, and had the ticker too. So I did the best thing. I came back to look for it after marks, but, of course, it was gone. He gave it to me the next Saturday."

The two chums then went to the field and played cricket till the bell rang for

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afternoon school. It was light enough for a little game after tea, too, and three masters joined in. This time they picked sides and counted runs ; Gerrans bowled crowds of boys out with his lobs, and Roper drove a ball on to the roof of the North House, where it broke a slate and then rolled down into the field again. It was a grand time—so peaceful and balmy ; the sea like glass, and not a sail to be seen ; the quiet woods so very restful to look at, and the sky palely blue with rosy cloudlets drifting over from the west. Burrell was not on Coley's side, but both sides had to field right through, and they were near each other. Once Burrell remarked, " Isn't it prime out here ? "

" Yes," said Coley, " but that beastly prep. bell will soon spoil it all. We ought to have prep. later in summer."

He got an innings, and Burrell, who didn't, had more right to grumble. But Coley's batting only lasted two minutes at the outside. The new boy caught Mr

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Carrington at cover-slip, and felt sorry ; though it didn't make much difference, as the master on duty had to go about twenty past seven to see the lessons put up on the boards and ring the bell. When Mr Carrington went, Coley also donned his coat, and so did several others who were not altogether ready for prep. Carrington waited for Mason and they went off together ; the master trying to expound wrist-play, which was what his *eromenos* sadly lacked. Then Coley offered to ring the bell at the proper time and his patron got the schoolroom gases going. Two poor little forgotten wretches were poring over " avoir " at the bottom of the schoolroom, and he sent them out to say it to Mr Gerrans on the field. The head boy of each form was supposed to write up the lessons on one of the three boards ; Carrington, however, always wrote his own. What the boys wrote was generally pretty illegible to those who sat nearest, and was quite lost upon those at any distance. In fact,

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the boards presented a truly fearful and wonderful appearance when filled with the prep. work.

The bell rang, and in five bare minutes boys got in from the field, took off their boots, washed (or did not wash) themselves, fetched their books, ascertained their work, and settled into their places. How it was all done was a puzzle, but hardly any boy was ever late.

For the first four minutes the schoolroom was humming like a hive; a seething mob jostled, pushed and screamed between the desks. It was a babel of "Lend me a pen!" "What's the work?" "Get out of the way!" "Who's got my Virgil?" "Where's the Lower Fourth lesson?"

Boys came pelting along the corridor like mad things; not so rowdy to-night as usual, for Gerrans stood perspiring outside the masters' door, holding a coat and a collar on his arm, and weeding out his big fair moustache while he heard the two luckless kids stumble through "*J'aurai*, I shall

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have." Inside the masters' room Carrington was putting on his cap and gown in the fading light and gathering a pile of books under his arm; while a small boy was rummaging in a far corner for the composition-books of his form, asking vainly, "Please, sir, which is Mr Shields's shelf?"

Then the master on duty sallied forth into the schoolroom, and, dazzled with excess of light from the ghostly incandescent burners, roared "Every boy sit down!" Those who were nearest did so, and many who could not have heard a thunder-clap in that hubbub of voices saw the movement and thus obtained their cue. It was then twenty-nine minutes past seven, and when Carrington said "Silence!" (at half-past exactly) every boy was in his seat, and had to open his books and shut his desk forthwith. Then till half-time there was a great calm, broken only by the going out of six boys to their baths, and the occasional voice of the master, hardly raised above a whisper,

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as he tramped up and down the long room between the rows of desks, giving what little attention was required to the boys' requests. The new-comers caused most trouble, not having yet received their own books and not possessing sense enough to borrow any before prep. commenced. On the previous evening Carrington had declared they must provide for themselves, but there was a certain amount of difficulty in arranging it. Each form had two lessons to do, and when one was a popular lesson the whole form seemed to conspire to work at that one first, leaving no spare books for would-be borrowers. It was rough on the master, whose prep. would have been completely spoiled by all the shifts and devices he had to invent unless he had shown great tact and resource. There never were any books forthcoming for new boys the first fortnight or so; a great piece of mismanagement on the Head's part.

Coley had provided his friend with the

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necessaries this night, but Burrell had a bad time all the same. He had some Algebra to do of which he knew nothing, and though Graiseley tried to help him with signs and nods and gesticulations, it was of very little use. He essayed to read up the book-work, having too much sense to expect (as some boys did) that, with eighty boys to control, Carrington would be able to come and teach him. At seven minutes past eight it was "Change your work!" Then desks were opened, and books changed, and after two minutes of a certain degree of turmoil, things settled down again till a quarter to nine, when it was "Stop work!" Then a hubbub arose similar to that which preceded prep., but not quite so bad, because Carrington remained up at the Head's desk to stop horseplay and bawling. He tolerated a certain amount of noise; after the strain of prep. it was necessary to blow off steam, and he didn't want it blown off in supper. Howitt always went out of the room and

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left it to chaos, but it wasn't wise ; the row, on one such occasion, had brought the Head along from his distant quarters.

Burrell was parleying with a person of some importance—Clements, the head boy of his form, who was collecting the prep-work to take into the masters' room.

"Chuck your book over, you Burrell," roared Clements, distracted by his difficulties and hampered by two sets of exercise books, which he was endeavouring to keep separate.

"I've done no Algebra," said Burrell.

"Never mind, man ; pass it over, confound you."

"But I want to . . ."

He proceeded so far, when Graiseley snatched it out of his unwilling hands and sent it spinning at Clements. He very cleverly butted it down with his head upon the desk, and was stooping to add it to his unwieldy load of books, when a small kid shoved about a dozen of them from under his arm. Clements turned with a smothered exclamation ; but it was Price,

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his First-form pet, who had done the damage and was now putting out his tongue cheekily from the safe distance of the doorway.

"All right, young Price ; I'll murder you !" shouted his *erastes*, his savage expression changing to one of amused tolerance.

"Stop that bawling, Clements," cried Carrington, coming pretty near bawling himself.

"Please, sir, he's giving cheek," explained Clements, thus beset on all sides.

Burrell looked round for Mason ; he, however, was just then standing outside the door of the masters' room, worse laden than Clements, and asking two or three boys to knock and open for him before he found a small chap to accomplish it. Burrell thought he'd go up and ask Mr Carrington if he couldn't have his Algebra book back till the next morning. But there was no gaining the master's ear ; he had four or five boys round him trying to get off the marks he'd given for being late from baths.

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"It's no use," he was saying, "you went at half-time, and you came in after I said 'Stop work.'"

"But, please, sir," argued Richards, "we thought at first there wasn't any hot water, and then just when we were coming back——"

He had said all this before; the others had already turned away and left him to make his last effort alone. But it was ten to nine, and, with a wave of his hand, Carrington shouted "Every boy sit down!"

Richards was much aggrieved; he was a decent fellow, in the Upper Fifth, and he didn't want a mark at all. Besides, he either had, or persuaded himself that he had, a fair excuse, and yet he couldn't make Carrington listen. So he went away in a rage, consoling himself by saying, "I shall go to the Head!" His speech, however, was quite inaudible; he meant it to be, for he really had no intention of an appeal to a higher court.

"Silence!" cried Carrington, and a hush

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fell on the room. "Sixth!" and the top boys filed quietly out to supper. When the room was half-empty out came the mark-book, which he had hoped to use no more that evening, and he said, "F. C. Brown, I shall mark you!" Pinky, who sat next to the bottom blackboard, threw down a chalky duster with a comical look of despair. He had been beating it vigorously, out of sight under his desk, and a cloud of white dust was rising from his vicinity. The pad of felt, or something of that kind, was tied to the board, but the string was necessarily long enough for the boy to get hold of it.

As the forms filed out Carrington moved down to command a view of the passage, despite the fact that five prefects were ranged up outside the dining-hall door. When it came to the last form, he divested himself of his cap and gown, and placed them in the open arms of Rivers, whose duty (or pleasure) it was to put down the gases, and take the masters' *impedimenta*

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into their room. He himself followed up his boys closely, and relieved his deputy in the hall, who had not made up his mind yet as to whom he should punish for the tune on the glasses. Considering that about a dozen chaps were at it, it was rather a serious question !

It was Carrington's misfortune (for so he felt it) to notice just as he came in that Master Burrell was chucking, or pretending to chuck, a pellet of bread at his *vis-à-vis*. So our friend got his second mark, and felt so glum during supper that he could hardly speak a word. The mark was useful in the room ; nobody needed further reproof for a considerable time after it was given. When Carrington said grace before meals it was his (peculiar) custom to knock on the high-table with the handle of a knife ; the three or four kids nearest him made a point of offering their knives simultaneously as he reached the top of the room. On this occasion he accepted Price's, and the " Burnley slogger " was triumphant

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over his fair-haired neighbour. Price was a left-hand bat of considerable reputation, aged ten.

Number Thirteen was somewhat sparsely populated at nine o'clock, for Victor and Coley were attending a cricket committee. It was the custom to hold committee meetings at bedtime, and the result was disastrous to order in the bedrooms. Just after lights were put out—or put down, instead, in certain rooms—up came the non-prefectorial members of a committee to get to bed without supervision. On this night the business was somewhat lengthy, and the two Thirteeners were not up till half-past nine.

“Business done : — Nothing !” quoth Phil as they came in. He then proceeded to get out of bed, where Mr Roper had left him looking most demure, and began to brush his plentiful hair by the light of the gas, which Victor turned up.

“Well, you're not down for nets, if that's what you mean,” suggested Coley drily.

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"Pooh! who cares for nets?" cried Phil disdainfully. "Except goal-nets," he added.

Lewis didn't play cricket, and wanted to talk now about the iniquity of locking up the football with which he and about six of his persuasion had terrified the cricketers after breakfast. But the rest were keen on knowing what twenty-two boys had been chosen to go to net-practice on the top field. The two committee-men recalled, between them, the whole list, while Jimmy checked off the numbers on his fingers. (It is open to question whether, even jointly, they could have reproduced the twenty-second prop. of Euclid's First Book). Burrell heard his own name mentioned with some surprise, and at his faint exclamation his chum stopped to comment.

"Oh, you got on easily; Carrington was the first to mention you. But it doesn't mean yet that you've got colours, you know!"

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One master was always supposed to attend every meeting of all committees. It was always Roper or Carrington for the sports committees, and, as Roper was on bedroom duty, the latter had finished his day's work with this additional duty. He had felt it to be rather an imposition when he went down, but some fun with Coley, whom he had attempted to squeeze flat behind the door of Shields's class-room, had enlivened proceedings considerably for him.

CHAPTER IV

WEDNESDAY

BURRELL woke in the middle of a dream of cricket. He was just making frantic snatches at a ball composed of bread, which crumbled into nothing, and slipped through his fingers, when the bell broke off the dream abruptly.

At most schools in England a boy wakes on Wednesdays with a comfortable feeling of something pleasant in store. But these boys had their mid-week half on Thursday, in Continental fashion.

"I think it's a very good tip," said Thorn, as Burrell expressed his disgust at the arrangement.

"Why? It doesn't break up the week fairly. Look what a beastly long first half!"

"Well, then; look what a jolly short last half!"

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"But we need it more in the middle," urged Burrell.

Thorn smiled as he left Victor to take up the discussion from his bed, where he lay with his arms behind his head. The prefect was the only fellow who had turned out.

"My objection is that other schools have Wednesdays, and so it's beastly awkward for fixing matches."

This was Victor's view of the matter.

"Yes, rather!" agreed Burrell; "how do you manage it?"

"Why, we make other schools change their holiday when they want to play us."

"I wonder they do. I suppose we change ours sometimes?"

"No, never in my time. It's Dr Pattison's day for music; we couldn't change."

"Well," remarked the new boy, "it's good cheek to make other schools do it every time."

"Bless you, the Head's got cheek enough for anything!" interposed Jimmy.

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"Like some of his kids!" added Thorn.

Jimmy presently remembered his negatives, and leaped out of bed as he asked excitedly:

"Where did you put those negs., Stan.?"

Thorn had undertaken to see them safely out of the basin in the dark-room the previous night. A boy who developed after tea (and Jimmy had not developed until that time, after all) would leave his negatives to wash during prep. and rush out after prep. to take them out if he could get leave. If he couldn't—well, he went all the same! But Jimmy had forgotten his snapshots until he was going in to supper, and had begged his brother to go out to them. Victor had passed the commission on to Thorn, and his young brother had been so perturbed at this piece of news, which transpired just before talking ceased the night before, that he wondered now how he could have thought of anything else upon awaking!

"Are they all right?" he inquired,

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slily, putting on his stockings with incredible speed.

"Yes, I think so."

"Didn't you look at them, then?"

"Scarcely; I only just lifted them out. What are they?"

"Oh, nothing much."

Young Limehouse now breathed freely until a new thought crossed his mind.

"You didn't lay them film side down?" he inquired sharply.

"No, of course not; I stood them up on their edges in the window, like Victor told me to."

"Oh, that's all right. Thanks!"

Burrell had too much sense to pursue the subject of these negatives at the time, though he wanted to ask how they had turned out. Thorn would have thought it a matter to report had he known the nature of them. Jimmy went out first, for once in a way, this morning; he wanted to get over to the South House and secure his property before early school. It

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was Coley who recurred to the subject as he and his chum went down at second bell.

"Those photos will cause a row; you mark my words."

"Are they any good?" asked Burrell.

"Yes; Jimmy told me one of them was a really good snap. And lots of the chaps are after prints off them. It will soon leak out."

"Oh, I daresay they'll keep them pretty dark."

"No, these affairs with Miss Briggs's girls always leak out; somebody will be ass enough to send one to a girl there, and she'll show it round or something."

"What'll the Head do?"

"Oh, something jolly nasty. We're always having rows about those girls, and losing holidays and things. I believe we have our holiday on Thursday because they have Wednesday."

"Well," reflected Burrell; "it's only fun!"

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"I daresay ; but when you have to pay too dear for it, it becomes very soft to try it on. Jimmy is a grand little chap, and yet he's awfully silly. Victor ought to lick him, and instead of that he encourages him."

The Head's class had to teach themselves this morning ; Carrington said the collect at ten past seven, and sent the boys off to their masters.

Burrell had a placid morning until a quarter to twelve, when his form went to Mr Beach for Latin. Here he was utterly discomfited over the numerals ; he had prepared them the night before, but only in the slipshod style which wouldn't do at all under this master. So he found himself imprisoned till the bell rang at 1.25 for dinner-assembly. Not that it took him the additional hour to master his lesson ; when he tried he could get up things of that sort as soon as most fellows : but the class-room was crowded with boys who came in from other forms at half-past

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twelve, having been "turned" in some previous lesson that morning. Thus Mr Beach had his hands so full that many boys, like our young friend, couldn't go up even when they were ready. Burrell went without saying the work, and was told to say it across at Mr Beach's room after tea. If the grey-bearded old master, who was admitted on all sides to be the best teacher in the school, could have done so, he would have continued to teach until the crack of doom, but the dinner-bell had been fixed as the limit.

After dinner, Burrell renewed his acquaintance with the same class-room, where the marks were worked off as on the previous day. Again he behaved himself well enough to go after ten minutes of standing, and got in a good innings on the field for the first time in the day.

During afternoon school he went out to his music-lesson. As he had not sat down to a piano since the previous term,

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he was nervous at first, but Dr Pattison was not the man to inspire dread. His cheery, fussy greeting of the new boy was characteristic of him. Johnson, Burrell's immediate predecessor on the music list, had fetched him out of his class, and piloted him into the music-room, which he entered for the first time.

"Ah, here we are!" exclaimed the Doctor; "well, Burrell, and how are you?"

Burrell said he was quite well.

"That's right! Learned before, I see, and brought your music too. Good boy! Now, Johnson, you be off, young man; and mind you practise that exercise like a black before next Wednesday!"

So saying he conducted the grinning boy to the door by the ear, dismissed him with a friendly nod, and proceeded to put his new pupil through his paces. Burrell enjoyed the forty minutes' lesson thoroughly, and with it the list for the day terminated. Not so the teacher's work; there was singing on

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Wednesdays after tea. When the boy got back to his form (and he hunted it down after a search which took him into two wrong class-rooms) it was ten past five, and I'm afraid he didn't do a great lot of work during that period. His form was let out punctually, but, coming up from below, where he had gone to prepare for tea, he met Mason in the corridor, who with his comrades had only just escaped. The gong sounded as Burrell entered the school-room, but it didn't look much like a tea-assembly! Mr Carrington was there, certainly, but he stood in the middle of the room, the top being well occupied. On one side the Head had two boys up at his board working something in Mechanics, while the rest of the form were anxiously waiting to give in their marks. On the other side Mr Gerrans was bawling loudly enough to wake the dead in an attempt to get through a chapter of German translation before dismissing his form. At the bottom of the room Carrington was keeping

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what order was possible in the circumstances. Every boy who was ready for tea had to sit down, so Burrell and Johnson chatted about music-practice.

"Half-an-hour a day," explained the latter, "and always in your playtime."

"What time?" inquired Burrell.

"Oh, different times and different places. The list won't be up just yet, I hope; when it is, you'll have to look and see. You might as well get a practice-book to-night; Carrington gives out stationery on Wednesdays after tea."

"What's it for?"

"Oh, you have to enter every day how much you do, and the time, and the piano. Then in prep. the master signs them all."

"What a fag!" the new boy observed.

"Yes, but you'll be able to take it easy some weeks. Shields only comes round about twice in his duty week, and Roper sometimes not at all. The deuce of it is, masters swap nights sometimes, and you have Gerrans or Carrington dropping on

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you with two marks, or fixing you up for the next half."

"Can't we swap?"

"Oh, rather. I swapped my Mondays and Fridays with my brother all last term. It was a great score!"

"Why?"

"Well, you see, his practice is before dinner in Beach's class-room those days, and there's always work going on, so I got off. My time is after tea in the South House those days, where there's no getting out of it."

"Didn't your brother mind?"

"Bless you, no; he likes playing the piano. I like playing chess in the reading-room at night and footer before dinner!"

"Well, we get our lesson in school-time, anyhow," said Burrell.

"Yes, most of us; and you needn't practise the day you have your lesson. That's prime!"

By this time it was about twenty to six;

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tea was supposed to be at half-past five—the time for stopping afternoon school. Of course, it was ridiculous! The Head was just locking up his desk and sailing out, rattling his keys loudly. His boys began to crowd round Carrington with “Go and wash, sir?” Impatiently he said “Yes,” or nodded his head, a dozen times in a minute, endeavouring to fix his attention on the rest of the room. Then he was able to roar “Silence!” which he could not do before while the Head was teaching (though Howitt invariably did it and passed the classes out too!). The seats were now fairly well filled, especially at the lower end, but Gerrans's boys were just coming in after their ablutions. This “getting ready for tea” resolved itself, in many cases, into rushing out to the box-room to get pots of jam and other luxuries, which boys were allowed to take in every night. On this present night there would be, perhaps, every third boy thus encumbered as he came back to the assembly. In spite of the

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opposition stream, Mr Carrington began to pass the forms out. The temptation to scuffle was great as those going met those coming, particularly as it was quite impossible for two boys to pass one another in the doorway, one half of the door being seldom, if ever, folded back. Two or three chaps got marks; it was unavoidable with such a rotten arrangement. At last the room was empty, and, without bothering himself about those boys not yet returned, the master on duty retreated into the adjoining room, flung himself into an easy-chair without taking off his cap and gown, and held forth on the annoyances of his lot for the seven hundredth time, while he lolled with his arms hanging down to the floor—a picture of limpness. Most of the staff were still in the room; only one was forced to be present from the very commencement of tea, and he frequently came out when somebody else condescended to turn up in the hall and relieve him. It was often six o'clock before

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the whole six were sitting down. Mr Beach had tea in his own room.

Carrington had to give out books, etc., after tea, and before going into the hall he went to inspect the stationery cupboard. There was a great demand upon him this evening, later on, for materials, and it was seven before he was able to lock up. The list of names in the account-book was in alphabetical order, and Carrington read it up and down on alternate occasions. Thus a boy knew—if he cared to know—about the time to go near and make his demands.

The cupboard was on the floor, with sliding doors ; Carrington stood in a corner granting or refusing requests, and while he plied his pencil and looked round upon all things, a volunteer gave out the goods. To-night it was little Price who officiated ; it very often was, for he was the most obliging kid imaginable, and loved dearly to be of use. Gerrans delighted to tell how his stockings fell about his boots in a football practice, and how Price came on

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the field with an offer of his garters ! Very deftly the youngster dispensed the pens and pencils, books and blotting-paper, while his master recorded them in the book.

Some boys were notorious for large stationery bills ; some had next to nothing all the term. F. C. Brown asked for a penholder and a new nib twice a week regularly. Richards represented the upper school almost as frequently, frankly confessing that he ate two penholders a week ! Even when at last Adams was reached, the names going backwards to-night, there were six or seven who had come late, and Carrington was too good-natured to send them away empty. Price stoutly refused to accept his *congé*, and remained to lock up for his master, perfectly satisfied with the " Thank you very much, Price," which he received at the end.

Burrell was not seasoned enough to know his turn wouldn't come in the first twenty minutes, or to get his order executed by proxy, so he lost all his after-tea play until

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seven. Then Carrington rang the bell for the first batch of singers. On Wednesdays prep. commenced at eight, and every boy had half-an-hour's singing in one of the two classes. The division was made thus : boys who had voices, first ; boys who had no voices, second.

" Which division do I belong to, sir ? " asked Burrell of Carrington, as he rang the bell.

" Well, you can go in the first to-night ; you shall have the benefit of the doubt ! " was the reply.

All the new boys had the same benefit, but in less than two minutes some of them were coming back again. Burrell was among these, and was rejoicing in the thought of some cricket while the light lasted, when he remembered his appointment with Mr Beach. He was passing his door at the time, and he knocked and went in. The master was alone, and heard the numerals while he continued smoking his pipe. It was soon over, and Burrell was

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dismissed with a commendation for his conduct.

"Always come when I tell you to, Burrell," said Mr Beach. "I often forget, but you don't; and when I remember and you don't come, I punish pretty smartly."

At last our friend was free to join his chum on the field; Coley also "had no voice"; a most untrue statement, taken literally! All too soon came the second bell, but as a matter of fact only one-fourth of the hour had been reserved for the second division. Again Burrell enjoyed the lesson; the Doctor was a magnificent conductor, even of boys without voices.

"You ought to see him on speech-days," said Coley, as they went across afterwards to prep. "Such a spanking hood; it makes all the others look sober. And he has medals, too, lots of them."

"What are they for?"

"Oh, for conducting choirs who win competitions, or something of that sort!" replied Coley.

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When Burrell began to undress at nine o'clock, he was able to demonstrate that he hadn't played cricket without result ; two of his brace-buttons were missing.

"Ask Roper for leave for the linen-room," said Coley.

He did, next time Mr Roper appeared.

"Very well ; do you know where to go ?" he inquired.

Burrell said he did, and Jimmy's offer to pilot him was of no avail. So when the boy had divested himself of his knickerbockers, and arrayed himself in his dressing-gown (which was bright blue outside, lined with scarlet, and of his own selection !) he proceeded along the corridor to the linen-room. Several other chaps were there on the same or similar errands ; Miss Rock was promising a multitude of repairs before the morning, and assured Burrell of the return of his knickers before he went to sleep.

"How are you getting on, dear ?" she asked. And though Burrell thought it

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queer, the form of address was very home-like, and forged the first link of a bond of sympathy which was destined to become a very happy and enduring one. He told Coley with a grin when he got back to his room.

"Yes; she always calls you that," said Coley; "she calls Victor 'dear.'"

"That's nothing!" laughed Victor, who was not easily abashed. "I heard her say it to Barr."

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed two boys at once. Barr was scarcely bigger than Victor Limehouse, who was one of the most solid customers in the school; the great difference lay in their characters. Barr was a cross-grained, uncouth bully.

CHAPTER V

THURSDAY

BURRELL and his pioneer found themselves both chosen for the scratch match on the upper field. The teams were on the notice board, and a lovely scrum was going on around the spot at five minutes to seven, when our two friends went out to look. They knew they were down without looking; Thorn had told them he would put them both in. But they enjoyed the shoving first-rate, and Coley took part in an animated discussion which was proceeding noisily. Burrell was bewildered; what he heard was something like this:

“Look there; three masters on Thorn’s side!”

“Well, you ass; there’s Gerrans and Carrington on the other side.”

“Oh, I say! Gerrans and Graiseley both the same side!”

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"Thorn's got all the batting, though."

"Yes, he's taken jolly good care to have Limehouse and Rochester."

"There's only one new boy; that's Burrell."

"Ah, he's in Thorn's bedroom, don't you see."

"What a swindle; I'm only about fourth change with all those bowlers on my side!"

"Pinky will have to go in last."

But, after all, the discussion was much less coherent than this; the remarks being made simultaneously and interspersed with cries of "Mind where you're coming to!" and "Look out, will you?"

When Mr Carrington went into assembly a small boy notified the fact by shouting "All in!" through the swing-door. Then they bundled in and sat down, making rather more noise than was common in morning assembly. Carrington had to say "Too much noise!" before the talking fell to the customary whispers.

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"You're playing," said Graiseley to Burrell.

"Yes, I know ; I wanted to."

"I didn't ; I wanted to go out with Rivers. It's an awful nuisance ; every blessed half taken up for cricket."

"But," said Burrell, with wide-open eyes, "you're in the first eleven, aren't you ?"

"Well, I don't mind matches, but these practice-games are a bit too thick. There's net-practice every day."

The new boy was enthusiastic, and could scarcely believe that the young grumbler meant what he said. If Burrell could get cricket he was always happy. Graiseley, however, was one of those perverse creatures who are invariably injured whatever is done ! His small stature, pale face, and slender little legs hardly betokened the sportsman that he was. He came of a family who played cricket and footer by instinct, taking no trouble over games, and yet being shining lights at everything. His

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demure little mouth could grow very hard at times, and altogether he was too paradoxical to be easily understood by anybody. Certainly Burrell had not yet fathomed him, though he liked him a good deal.

When the boys came in to breakfast-assembly at eight, Victor went up to Mr Carrington, who immediately announced to the room that the players in the afternoon game were requested to roll the pitch after breakfast and at eleven o'clock. So Burrell dutifully went up as soon as he came out of the hall, and assisted at the shafts of the big roller instead of playing on the lower field. There were very few chaps there ; Thorn was bossing the business, but not another big boy was up when Burrell got there ; later on Lance Rochester came. Jimmy was there as cricket-curator. Lewis languidly lent a hand, though he was not expected to do so ; he seized the opportunity of preaching " footer all the year round," as his habit was. The small fry turned up well ; Pinky Brown and Lee

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being most energetic. At a quarter to nine Mr Roper appeared, smoking his after-breakfast pipe, and later on Mr Gerrans, hauling a string of lower-school boys who were to roll instead of saying their French verb.

The bell didn't ring till ten past nine on Thursdays, and the wicket had a capital rolling. Burrell enjoyed it, working really hard, and not merely pretending to shove, as several others did. Lewis ceased to hortate when the masters came, and was soon dismissed by Gerrans for throwing fellows' caps down just in front of the roller. Mr Roper was sarcastic on the subject of the committee: they certainly set a poor example, for four of them never came near. Burrell knew that Coley was swatting, but he didn't guess that Victor and Wright were playing on the lower field.

It was a lovely morning, sunny and breezy. Some of the atmosphere of enjoyment seemed to follow them even into

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the class-rooms. There was the indefinable feeling of the half-holiday, which made Thursday and Saturday mornings pass quickly, both to masters and boys. Burrell's form went to the Head for the first hour, for their weekly examination. They had a splendid time. Mr Rochester's reputation as a highly successful teacher was certainly not made by this sort of work. He pitched upon Mental Arithmetic, and in five minutes found that Rivers was the most incapable boy in the form. Then he badgered the poor unfortunate fellow for twenty minutes with a good old stock question : " If I go to the Station, and buy eleven return-tickets at a fare and a quarter," etc. Rivers easily had six-pounds-ten left out of a five-pound note ; Mental Arithmetic was allied with magic in his mind. The Head was excruciatingly funny. Two other classes working in the school-room were much amused ; and Carrington, who was teaching one of them, was much disgusted. He took Rivers's form in the

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subject, and it was supremely galling to him to witness the boy's discomfiture.

At the recess there was a fair muster of bun-eating players at the roller, but six or seven minutes was all that could be given to the pitch before they were rung in again. Victor was being slanged by Mr Roper for slackness as they came in, when he had the temerity to pick a daisy and to offer it to his mentor. Roper angrily knocked his hand away, and turned to Carrington with an offended air.

"Why didn't you take it and stick it in your coat?" asked Carrington in a rallying tone.

"Beastly cheek!" growled Roper, cleaning his spectacles.

"Well, I wish he'd offer me a flower. I'd show you how it ought to be received!"

After recess, Burrell finished up the morning with drawing, going up to the drawing class-room with about twenty others for an hour and three-quarters. Mr O'Brien left him pretty much to himself, as he was busy

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with numbers of minutiae on this, the first drawing day of Term. It was a very free-and-easy lesson ; talking was tolerated up to a certain point, and everybody enjoyed it. Coley was doing geometrical drawings (with a view, presumably, to his future engineering) ; he sat at a little table near one of the windows. The room looked North, and there was a splendid view seawards, but the boys didn't look out of the windows much, not caring greatly for the beauties of nature. Burrell was unable to get an easel, so sat down with his freehand copy at the other end of Coley's table. Mr O'Brien managed them very well, and without giving marks too. This morning he had given one, in the preceding class, to Phil Lewis, and it was quite a topic of conversation.

" Phil's got a mark from O'Brien," was Coley's first contribution to a conversation carried on between himself and his *vis-à-vis*.

" What for ? "

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"Chucking bread about ; he often does it ; I'm glad he got one. Gerrans will put it down *two* in the book, I daresay."

"Why ?"

"Oh, I don't know. He did once before. O'Brien gives his marks to Gerrans after school, you see."

"Do you get marks for this work ?"

"Rather ; everybody gets ten—that's maximum—if he behaves properly. It's such fun : O'Brien writes all the names down on a long strip of drawing-paper every day, and takes it down to Gerrans, and everybody has ten ! I can't see why he takes the trouble to do it. I'll bet they laugh every drawing day in the masters' room."

"I suppose they count ?" said Burrell.

"I don't believe they do ; that makes it funnier still. But his bad marks do, so mind you don't chuck bread unless he isn't looking."

"I'm not going to ; I use india-rubber ; I never saw bread used before !"

"Well, we always have it here. Got any marks for to-day ?"

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"No, have you?"

"Of course not!" replied Coley, indignantly; "why, I only had twenty-one last term!"

"Does anybody get *none*?"

"Yes, one or two chaps. Palmer never gets any. It's funny about marks: you always get them if you try not to; haven't you noticed it?"

"I haven't had time to try yet," said Burrell, smiling.

"No, of course not: but it is so. Now there's young Bob Thorn: his pater gives him a shilling when he goes home for every mark he gets below the average in his form. It goes on the reports."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, the average, perhaps, is thirty; well, if he only gets twenty he has ten bob. It used to be sixpence a mark, but that was when Bob was in the Lower Fourth, where the average is about fifty. When he got into the Upper Fourth, last term, where the average is only about thirty

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(I don't believe it's as much as thirty, though!) he said he must have a fresh understanding with his pater, so it's been a shilling since then."

"Does he ever get anything?"

"Not he! That's just what I was going to say. He tries like bricks, and yet he's generally top-scorer in his form. It isn't always the most disorderly chaps who get most, though."

"I expect it is generally," observed Burrell.

"Well,—I don't know." Coley seemed inclined for a moment to consider it philosophically, but eventually gave it up with an air of "Too much fag!" Then he took up another side of this prominent mark-question, which was really the most frequently discussed of any subject among the boys, especially in the bedrooms at the end of the day.

"I'll tell you this, anyhow," he volunteered; "if once you get a bad name among the masters, you're done for. Palmer

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might do a dozen things and not get a mark, and Pinky would be marked for every one of the dozen."

"Hard lines!"

"Rather! Carrington marked Beauchamp six times in one week for looking at him while he said grace at dinner!"

"Nonsense."

"It's right! He said Beauchamp looked at him in a cheeky manner."

"Well, did he?"

"How do I know? I don't suppose he meant to at first, but I guess he did after the first day or two. I should have done."

"How did it end, then?" asked Burrell.

"Oh, Carrington's week only comes once in six, and before it came round again they understood each other better, I suppose. It never happened again. It's often quite a misunderstanding."

"Well, that's too bad: they let you explain, though?"

"Pooh! you can't explain. Besides, they often *won't* let you. And when they

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do, it's no good ; you can see all the time, while you're making it as clear as daylight, that they don't mean to take off the marks whatever you say. Then you get waxy, and give cheek, and get them doubled. That's what young Thorn does generally. What I object to is having half-holidays stopped for bad mark-lists."

"Do they do that?"

"The Head does, sometimes. He's the only one that thinks it fair. I know the other masters don't ; Beach thinks it's rot, I'm sure. Why shouldn't the boys who get them be punished, without the others and all the masters?"

"Yes, it's not fair," agreed Burrell.

"No, it's beastly rot. So it is rot for a mark to stop you from a match."

"Does it?"

"Yes, of course. If it's an out-match it does. You must stand your blooming mark after dinner with the others, and the very day you get it too. So if you only get one mark a week, and it happens to

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come between Friday and Saturday's dinner, you're as badly off as those who get seven, and are gated on half-holidays. It's lost us many a match at cricket and footer, I can tell you. Why should a mark be more heavily punished one day than another?"

"Why don't they have some other arrangement?"

"Bless you! the Head thinks it's splendid; he won't alter for anybody. He don't care twopence for the games, but he's an ass not to see that they do more for his old school than all his teaching, and the open schols. we get. Once a master—he's left now—kept a mark from Saturday till Monday, so as to let Victor go to a footer match, and the Head was in a wax about it. And Roper last term went to see if he could get leave to have marks before dinner one Thursday, so as not to spoil our best match of the season, and he said he'd never venture to ask again."

"I wonder the masters mark the chaps in the teams, then," observed Burrell.

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"So do I ; I've often thought I wouldn't. It would pay to let us off in such cases ; they must see it would. Nobody would take advantage of a let-off like that, I'm sure. Or they could give a task just for once."

"Perhaps they think it wouldn't be fair."

"Oh, crikey, you must think they're mighty conscientious ! I'm sure they don't stop long to consider that ! Still, I don't know." Coley's face puckered up in thought, as he measured out an angle on his paper. "It must be hard for a chap like Roper. He fags at the ground and the practices ; goes out with the teams ; does all he can for the games ; and then he goes and marks Victor or Graiseley or Lewis just before a match, and won't take it off ! He and Carrington are the best two for the games. Carrington is permanent secretary, and he has awful tussles with the Head before he can get matches on, if there's any going away early or coming back late. I believe

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the Head bullies him awfully because he sticks up for the footer and cricket."

"What a shame!" said Burrell.

"Yes, and he lets the masters pay all their own ex'es, too, when they take us to play away."

"Well, they do that at most schools."

"Then it's a rotten state of things," cried Coley.

His indignation had caused him to raise his voice, and the master looked across with a warning word. He quieted down, and plied his compass and rule in silence. His chum wondered whether this outburst was to be accounted for by the patronage Carrington was popularly supposed to bestow on Coley.

Presently he resumed his conversation. He had not done with marks yet.

"A long time ago the Head promised a half if ever there was a day without marks, and we got one once."

"Jolly good!"

"Yes, it took some getting, I can tell

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you. But last term we got a blank mark-sheet again, and expected another holiday, and he wouldn't give it,—stingy old wretch ! ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Oh, he said it wasn't an understood thing that we were always to have one : he only promised it once.”

“ What a sell for you ! ”

“ So it was, but you ought to have heard the row it kicked up. For twenty-four hours it had been “ Don't get marks ! ”

“ Don't get marks ! ” Everybody was reminding everybody else : we kept a sharp look-out on wretched kids like F. C. Brown ; and you saw it scribbled in chalk all over the place, “ Don't get marks ! ” Well, as soon as ever we came out of hall, after he'd sold us that day, everyone was saying, “ Get marks,” “ Get marks ! ” “ Get as many as you can.” The inscriptions were altered ; we rubbed out all the “ Don't ”s. Next day we had the record : a hundred and thirty-one, I think it was. I know fifty-

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five out of ninety boys in the school were on the book."

"What happened?"

"Oh, we had to work all the next Thursday afternoon. But we didn't care: it was splendid!"

"Hard lines on the masters, wasn't it?"

"Well, yes, it was!" Coley admitted; "because, of course, they helped us to get the blank page; we couldn't possibly do it if they didn't. But, of course, they knew why we were so naughty after it; they'd put that down to the stingy old Head's account, not ours."

Before dinner, Jimmy and Mr Roper, assisted by some small fry who loved to dabble in anything, marked out the wicket.

On this Thursday there were no gated boys; the previous week had only consisted of two days,—a period too short to enable anybody to qualify for the necessary number. Mr Carrington was only too glad.

In the afternoon Burrell enjoyed himself

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hugely until near tea-time when his head began to ache. It often did after a cricket-match ; perhaps the excitement caused it, or the strain on the eyes. He and Coley were both on Wright's side, that is, with Mr Gerrans and Mr Carrington. Their side went in first, and made ninety-four (Gerrans 37, Graiseley 24, and Burrell 12 not out). Coley made two ; Mr Carrington an unenviable duck, much to the disgust of himself and his side. Coley chaffed him terribly as he lolled under the tree beside the scoring-box ; and Burrell came to the conclusion that—though at times like these there was a delightful *rapprochement* between all masters and boys—Mr Carrington would not have tolerated quite so much presumption from any other boy on the field. Burrell went in eighth wicket down, so the first hour and a half of the afternoon was a time of nervous ease for him. Had it not been for his anxiety to do well, he would have enjoyed it perfectly ; his flannels and his shoes were new ; he wore a nobby

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canvas shirt laced up the front, and he could sport a blazer, which was more than most of the boys could do, as there were only five of last Summer's team left to wear the school colours.

The wicket crumbled badly despite the rolling : there had been no rain for weeks ; the grass was long, too, and spoilt boundary-strokes and out-fielding alike. But nobody (except, perhaps, the masters) cared much for these drawbacks. Shields disposed of most of Burrell's side with his fast bumpy left-hand deliveries ; in his first over he bowled Carrington, who was very sick, because he was about the one man who could hit Shields. Thorn and Mr Roper took a wicket or two each, but most of the runs came from them. Mr Howitt kept wicket.

Burrell batted very steadily, and, unlike most of his predecessors, made some useful strokes on the off-side. Mr Gerrans partnered him for a time, and the boy was very much pleased with the commendations

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that came along the wicket as he made a good stroke, or refused to play at a rising ball outside the off-stump.

When Thorn's side went in, runs came very slowly, and it was five o'clock before the seventh wicket fell at sixty odd, and the game came to an undecided conclusion. Mr Howitt and Mr Roper made most of the runs, Thorn's ten being the only other double-figures. Gerrans bowled remarkably well at one end (not the wily lob, however, which got wickets so often on the practice-field), and Graiseley, though he only took one wicket, kept up the other end very steadily. Victor Limehouse made the longest hit of the day—a square-leg smack into the South House garden, but came out next ball. Burrell was honoured with the position of cover-point to both bowlers, and did very well, though he grew tired towards the close.

Despite the afternoon's cricket there was a pick-up side on the lower field after tea. Burrell didn't play; his head was

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bad, and he lounged by the tennis-courts, watching some of the committee-men gallantly dragging the small roller over one of the courts, while the rest mowed the grass on the other court with a tiny lawn-mower, supplemented by an old scythe, borrowed from Daniel, the man-of-all-work.

After prep. everybody was thoroughly tired, and nobody had energy enough to make a row in supper. There was an excellent opportunity; for the milk, instead of being put as usual in the places of the boys who took it, was in two big pitchers on the high-table. Carrington, to avoid a fuss, took it round himself, and poured it out, going along from table to table. It was a job he didn't much relish, but nobody could have done it more justly or more expeditiously. By the time it was finished, it was on the stroke of nine, and Carrington touched the bell. F. C. Brown, who had only just received his allowance of milk (and that a short one, as it happened) tried to drink it during the "returning of thanks."

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Of course, the temptation was too much for his yellow-haired little neighbour, and the milk went all over Pinky's waistcoat. So that the next word to "Amen" was "F. C. Brown, I shall mark you!" And the small originator of the disturbance had to go and confess, "Please, sir, I made him!" Then the mark was transferred to Croydon, and the honourable little chap (goodness knows what else he could have anticipated!) went out, when his turn came, with such a rueful pout that Carrington was highly amused.

In Number Thirteen there was a chattering which sorely tried poor Burrell's nerves. His head was aching fit to split, and he had it on the cool pillow in less than five minutes...

"Seedy, Burrell?" asked Mr Roper, surprised to find anybody in bed at his first visit.

"Yes, sir, I've got a beastly headache."

"Hard lines! Well, you played a very good innings this afternoon."

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This didn't cure the throbbing in Burrell's head, however pleasant it was to hear. It had been a trifle better during supper, but running upstairs and hurrying into bed had started it off again ten times worse than before. Every speech, every laugh, made him wince.

"Poor old chap!" said Coley, looking at the white face very sympathetically, and kicking off his slippers at the same time with a great noise.

"Thorn's got some 'Eno,'" suggested Lewis. He would have opened the prefect's drawer, and taken it out, but Burrell murmured,

"Oh, don't take it without asking; he'll be up presently."

It was a relief to get the light out, but after Mr Roper had gone there was a good deal of animated discussion raging round such points of interest as the afternoon's cricket, milk at supper, and Jimmy's photos, which were on view in their untuned state during the undressing.

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At ten, when Thorn came up, nobody remembered to ask for the medicine except Burrell himself, and he couldn't raise sufficient energy to bother about it. He was feeling very cold, but he had lain perfectly still for nearly an hour, hoping the turmoil inside his head would settle down into quiescence. It had not done so, however; the lighting of the gas, and Thorn's movements (though they were anything but noisy) tortured the poor fellow afresh. Nobody spoke to him, fortunately; perhaps the other chaps thought he was asleep.

The light went out for the last time; talking ceased; five boys were soon asleep, but Burrell never came near it. He felt horribly wakeful, and could not attain that delightful incoherence of thought which is the precursor of sleep, and which is so hard to come at when one is trying for it. The pain was in his left temple, and that was a good thing, for he could only lie on his right side like so many other people. He put his hand out of bed, and, cooling it on

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the rail at his head, applied it to the throbbing temple. This didn't do it a scrap of good; the moving had made him worse. The deep regular breathing of the other boys was most irritating; here was he losing the best of the night and yet needing sleep most of all. And Coley had said he'd never had a headache in his life! Well, Coley must be better made than he was, or took more care of himself, perhaps. What a row Victor was making in the bed next to him, snoring away like a pig! How the deuce had he got this cruel headache? Of course he'd often had them before at home, but then there was his mother to coddle him up and do things for him. The last time he was like this, she had come in when she went to bed, and he had asked for a bandage for his head. She tied a clean white handkerchief round it. At first he was sorry because it wasn't wetted with cold water or vinegar, but he had gone to sleep soon after. He would tie his handkerchief round now.

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Oh dear ! Oh dear ! What a fag it was to get it out of his jacket, lying on the chair beside him. There ! perhaps that would do it good. How long must you give a thing like that to act ? Well, not less than half-an-hour perhaps. Why wasn't there was something to cure headache instantaneously ? He believed there was ; he'd seen it advertised in a paper only the other day. Now, what was the stuff called ? Oh, dear, how stupid ! It was making him worse, trying to remember like that ! He wouldn't think about it. He wouldn't think about anything. What a stupid old head, to go on thinking when he didn't want it to ! What a time he was lying awake ! Everybody in the room was asleep, most likely everybody in the house. Perhaps he'd have to go on like this till the morning ! He wished he knew what time it was ; he couldn't see if he were to open his eyes. And what a row his watch made over his head. Darn the thing ! he would wrap it in his handkerchief, which

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might just as well come off his head—it wasn't doing a morsel of good. He could get out and wet it. No, it was too much fog. There, now he couldn't hear that beastly ticking. Why, it wasn't very dark after all ! Of course not ; there was the gas on the landing, and the faint light came in through the fan-light over the door. Then Mr Carrington hadn't gone to bed yet : it couldn't be more than about eleven. Beastly cricket ! these matches always gave him a headache. He wouldn't play again. It was hard lines—other boys didn't get headaches. He believed there was something wrong with his constitution ; he'd never be a strong man. But Father was strong and hearty enough. Dear Father ! It was a week ago to-day he said good-bye to him at the station. He'd be just going to bed now, and Mother too. Lilian and little Walter would be fast asleep hours ago. How would his bedroom look with only Walter in it ? He wondered whether his own bed was taken down, or was stand-

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ing dismantled in its corner. Confound it! if only his head would be quiet for five minutes he could go to sleep. At home he'd have been asleep before now. The pain was worse and worse. What was the use of lying so still when he never got a bit better? It was just like a beastly machine beating at the inside of his brain. What was it really, he wondered? If you could see into your head when it was like this, what would it look like? Just the same as at any other time, he supposed. What was pain, anyhow? People talked about forgetting your pain. Rot! how could anybody forget a brutal machine banging the inside of your head right over your eye? What nonsense people talked! What was that verse? *With Thee conversing I forget all pain and toil and care?* Ah, that was only in a hymn. Now, here was Mr Carrington coming along the corridor. Now he would open his eyes and see the gas go out. What a grand sleep Victor was having! And his mouth open,

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too ! It would be good fun to shove some soap in it. Ha ! ha ! Oh, shut up ! that made his head worse. There went the gas. How quietly Carrington went to bed ; you couldn't hear his door shut ! It must be twelve now, quite. Three mortal hours of it already, and—how many ? —well, say six and a half more. Nice and fit he would be for getting up to morning school, wouldn't he ? Perhaps he could stay in bed, though ? But, no, he wouldn't do that unless he was horribly bad. Just let him fancy ; could he do Mental Arithmetic like he was now ? If he went to the station and bought Oh bother ! it hurt him to try. Silly old Head, setting such rotten sums. What was it first period tomorrow ? Well, never mind ; there was drill in the afternoon. He wondered if it would be like the old drill : he used to enjoy that. Graiseley said it was stupid. But Graiseley said that about everything. How steadily he had bowled, over after over ! Dash it ; he wouldn't think about cricket

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any more. Perhaps he could stop thinking altogether now. If only he could ! Grey matter—yes, that's what the brain was made of. What was the matter with his grey matter ? Oh, how silly ; making jokes with a splitting head ! No, he wouldn't play so much cricket ; he'd swear he wouldn't ! What was the use of going to a school at the seaside, and then spending all the blooming time playing cricket ? He'd go to the shore oftener ; and to the woods sometimes. That wouldn't give him a headache ! What good did it do you, after you'd left school, to have played such a lot of cricket ? Now, by the sea you could learn heaps of useful things, and in the woods, too ! What good was nearly everything they did at school ? Oh, but that wouldn't do ! Mother told him it was silly to talk like that, and showed him why. Only a week since he came ; good heavens ! it seemed a month ! Twelve more weeks like that ! But, after all, it had gone quick ! Had he really slept

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in this bed seven times ? Yes, eight. No, not eight, he hadn't done any sleeping to-night as yet. What rot ! To lie in bed thinking, thinking, thinking all night ! Beastly old grey matter ; it must be seething about like mad. Why wouldn't it be quiet ! That must be Jimmy, tossing round on his bed. What a lively chap he was ! And what a brown skin he had ! When he blushed just now, the blood rushed all over his face and he seemed to steam. No wonder boys called it " smoking " ! It must be one o'clock now. Oh, dear ! five and a half more hours. It was no use lying still like that ! He was warmer, now, though ! He supposed he'd better lie still. Perhaps, if he thought of the sheep jumping through the hedge . . . No, of course not ! you didn't do that when your headache was keeping you awake. There, now he *was* thinking about those sheep ! Oh, he *would* stop it. It was very quiet outside ; the trees would rustle if there was any wind ; there couldn't be any.

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It wasn't really pitch-dark now! Why not? Perhaps the moon—no, not on that side of the house. What did it matter? If only his head would stop aching! How *could* people do anything with a bad headache? He supposed they had to, sometimes. He'd read somewhere about many a soldier going into battle with a splitting headache. Well, it was cruel, anyhow. It was bad enough to lie still. Could he have stopped that hard smack of Thorn's if his head had been as bad as it was now? He wished he'd been put in earlier; he only had about six overs; six or seven—well, perhaps eight, or even nine. Dash it! cricket again! Oh, dear, oh dear! how bad his head was! the grey matter didn't seem to be settling down. It was too bad; all the night lying there suffering, and nobody to pity him! Stop a bit, though; no good getting in a wax: that wouldn't improve his chance of dropping off. How still he had lain all that long time! Surely he'd stop thinking soon! He must have

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eaten too much. Not at supper, certainly. Well, at tea, then? No, not anything out of the way. Dinner? that was nonsense; food digests in six hours (or was it five?) How long was it since dinner? Just about twelve hours; more, now, he expected! How did they divide the twenty-four hours? About fifteen for waking; that left nine for sleeping. He should only get—how many, to-night? Perhaps four and a half—that was just half the proper number. But some men did with six! Ah, yes—*men*, not boys. Well, he'd be a man before long; how long? He was nearly fourteen. Well, say five years! Why, how soon! And he hadn't begun to be one yet. He wondered if he'd have headaches like this when he was a man. Oh, dear! how hard it was not to get in a wax. It was so abominably aggravating. Perhaps he *was* really getting rested. Could your body get rest while your brain kept on thinking and throbbing like that? He must ask Father; he would know. Most

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likely, you could get rest like that ; your brain worked, anyhow, when you dreamed, and yet you got rest. Some people said, though, that it wasn't rest if you dreamed. Well, he didn't often dream, at any rate. Now, wasn't he any better ? Well, perhaps, a tiny bit—the least trifle. No, he didn't believe he really was ; he was only trying to pretend to himself. That was it. And he'd just forgotten for a minute. *With Thee conversing I forget . . .* Good-night ! there was that hymn again. Talking to God it meant. Saying your prayers, he supposed. Well, he'd said his. Had he, though ? Yes, of course : he remembered now. Not very properly to be sure ! Perhaps he'd better say them again. God could make his head better, he supposed. He wondered if he would. Oh, would God *please* make his head stop aching, and let him go to sleep ? His feet seemed asleep ! What a wonder they didn't get tired of being in the same position all those hours. The left one was crossed over the

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other. He would move them. Well, they were warm, anyhow! *Pes*, *pedis*, a foot, masculine; *lex*, *legis*, a law, feminine . . . What a stupid photo! a lot of girls—fielding a square-leg hit, too! . . . *Victor*, *victoris*, a conqueror . . . 1066 to 1087 . . . Jubilee year, 1887 . . . 63 for seven wickets. . . . The match was thus drawn, in favour of Mr Burrell's XI. . . . Well left alone, Burrell! Well, you played a very good innings this afternoon. . . Good-night, sir! What a vile row! all in, was it? . . . Oh! that bell! Why, dash it all, it was next morning!

CHAPTER VI

FRIDAY

I woke up well, and it was morning! The man who wrote *that* [God rest your sympathetic soul, dear friend!] knew what it was to wake up in the morning very far from well. Burrell didn't; so the fact that his headache was completely gone didn't strike him as being in the least noteworthy.

"Better, old man?" asked Coley from his corner as soon as the bell had ceased.

"Oh, yes; I'm all right, thanks"; and Burrell tumbled out of bed quite cheerfully. He had been getting rather slack lately; but, without his knowing it, his vigil was having the effect of making him more conscientious. It wasn't destined to last long—this improvement in turning out.

"Drill to-day!" remarked Jimmy, put-

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ting his hand into his jacket-pocket to make sure that the dangerous prints had not mysteriously disappeared in the night.

"Sergeant won't come, perhaps," suggested Victor. "First time, he sometimes forgets."

Coley soon disposed of this vain hope.

"I met him in the village yesterday, and he said he was coming. He said he came up last Friday as far as the gate, and then somebody told him it was no use; we weren't all back."

"Grand!" exclaimed Jimmy. "I wonder who it was. Do you know?"

"No; I asked him. He said it was a small boy—Pinky, perhaps."

"No, I'll bet it wasn't!" objected Victor. "Pinky hasn't wit enough for that!"

"Oh, hasn't he though!" retorted Coley. "Now I'll bet you it *was* Pinky!"

"Perhaps you *do* know, then?"

"No; I'll swear I don't. Only it sounds just like him."

"Well," declared Victor, "it was jolly

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decent of him, whoever it was. And it was quite true, too: we aren't all back yet."

When they were going downstairs, Burrell asked his chum if drill was as bad as Graiseley said.

"Oh, it's fairly rotten!" said Coley; "Sergeant isn't much good, and he gives us a lot too much 'doubling.' I believe he thinks it tames us down. You can have a pretty good lark as far as he's concerned."

"Doesn't he mark you?"

"No, but a master is always out there, too; he does! Carrington will be there to-day: he won't let you talk even!"

Graiseley had chapped hands, and showed them to Burrell, as soon as the latter sat down in the first assembly.

"How funny they look!" exclaimed Burrell, examining their backs, which bore a kind of little war map, lined out in red.

"They hurt jolly well, I can tell you!" said Graiseley, looking at them most com-

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placently. "If I could wash in warm water, they wouldn't bleed like that!"

Burrell smiled.

"I hate washing in warm water!" he said. "You ought to put some vaseline on them."

"Well, give us some, then!"

"All right; I will: only it's upstairs."

"Well, you can ask Carrington for leave to get it."

"What, now?"

"Yes."

So Burrell walked out of his place, and asked leave to go back to his room. Carrington said, however, that he might go after breakfast; he thought that would be quite soon enough.

"Old donkey!" ejaculated Graiseley, as his neighbour came back again to his seat. "I knew he wouldn't let you!"

"Why not?"

"Oh, he don't like me."

"But I didn't tell him it was for you!" remonstrated Burrell.

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"You didn't! why ever not?"

Without waiting for an answer to what Burrell considered a very ridiculous question, Graiseley got a paper out of his desk and began to read it.

Burrell turned to Johnson, who sat on his left.

"What's our work?" he inquired.

"Don't know. Clements will tell you," was the reply.

So Burrell leaned over, and, after some little difficulty in attracting the attention of Clements, the head-boy of the form, managed to borrow the time-table from him, and busied himself making a copy of it in his pocket-book until the collect was said. Before Carrington called "Silence!" he drew their attention to the fact that the music time-table was up, and announced that he should sign books in evening prep. Burrell could not manage a peep at it until breakfast-assembly, when several other boys went up like himself to see how their practice-times suited their convenience.

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Price was making a great row.

"Jolly decent! not down once for the old piano!" he vociferated.

To Burrell all pianos were as yet equal; but he soon learned which was the one to which the Burnley Slogger alluded. It had no pedals, and was in a class-room where the practice was never impracticable; two very serious drawbacks.

"I can't think how the dickens Gerrans arranges it," growled Johnson, as they sat waiting to be sent in to breakfast. "It isn't alphabetical; nor according to forms; nor by ages!"

"Which is No. 4 piano?" asked Burrell.

"North House," replied Johnson, "it's a decent one, too!"

"I'm there after breakfast!" remarked the new boy, trying not to speak querulously.

"Hard luck! I hate that time; it isn't good enough. I always stay as late as I can in hall on my after-breakfast morning."

"What for?"

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"Well, you can only do about twenty minutes then, if it's a nine o'clock day. You can say you didn't come out of breakfast till half-past eight, and you went as soon as you could and practised till five to nine. See?"

"I'm going to change mine," said Burrell confidently, as he consulted the notes he had made in his pocket-book. "I shall want to play cricket that time."

"Well, don't you wish you may get anybody to be so soft, that's all!"

"I'm going to try," said Burrell.

"Bet you won't manage it!" retorted Johnson.

He didn't that morning, at any rate; and he practised religiously on the North House piano from 8.25 till 8.55, only occasionally looking out through the window for a glimpse of cricket, caught between the swaying branches of the trees in the garden. Mr. Carrington came in while he was at it; this being the first morning of practice, he was so tremendously energetic

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as to go the round of the pianos—a thing seldom done by him or any other masters.

“ Well, Burrell ; you're at it, then ? ” he said.

The boy could think of no reply save to state that he *was* at it.

“ Better to-day ? ” the master went on, coming up close, and pinching his ear.

“ Yes, thank you, sir ! ”

“ Too much cricket ? ”

“ I daresay it was, sir. I often have bad headaches.’

“ Do you ? ”

Then Carrington looked down at him with a glance that the boy thought remarkably searching, and after that went away with, “ Well, get on with your playing.”

Burrell wondered how he knew about the headache ; perhaps, Mr. Roper had mentioned it last night, or Coley might have just told him. As he ran up and down his scales, he chafed a little at having to give up this precious time to them. But that didn't prevent him doing his best to play

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them correctly, and going over the hard ones again and again in a praiseworthy endeavour to get them right.

He got out punctually at half-past twelve ; that was something to be thankful for, as he had been to Mr Beach for Latin during the morning. Despite the good resolutions of last night he went straight to the field ; and played cricket energetically till the bell rang for dinner-assembly. Coming up from below, he had his hair unmercifully ruffled by somebody who passed him on the stairs. It was Jimmy Limehouse, and Burrell pursued him hotly along the corridor. Jimmy dodged nimbly through the fellows, uttering a despairing yell as he found he would be collared before he could get into the comparative safety of the schoolroom. He was going to bolt out of the swing-door, but caught a glimpse of Carrington, who was already in assembly, and who was coming to the schoolroom door to see what the row in the corridor meant. So he pulled up short, and was

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walking in as sedately as if he'd never run or screamed in all his born days. But Burrell hadn't so keen a perception of circumstances, and fell upon him from behind, bending him back over his knee and trying to put him down on the floor.

"I shall mark you two boys," said the master, under whose very nose this was going on ; and they rose, looking extremely silly. Burrell felt that he was very red, partly from exertion, but more perhaps from shame and vexation. Jimmy was also the colour of a turkey-cock ; but he generously tried to shield his antagonist.

"It was my fault, sir," he said, as their names went down in the pocket-book.

"Oh, nonsense ! Go to your places !" was all the reply this piece of information elicited.

"I began it, sir !" he continued, as he reluctantly passed into the room.

"That will *do* !" cried Carrington, with a voice somewhat louder than before. And

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Jimmy, who was afraid the one mark might become two, gave it up. He said "Sorry!" though, to Burrell, and quite audibly, too. It was said in what might have fairly been considered a cheeky tone, but Carrington did not, or would not, take any notice of it, and crying "Silence!" passed them out to dinner.

"I've got a mark," said Burrell to Brand at table; "when shall I have to stand it?"

"Oh, not till after tea, I suppose. It all depends on the Sergeant's coming."

"Well, he's coming then!"

"Hope he isn't! I wonder which div. goes first. Seniors, I suppose."

Burrell couldn't enlighten him here, so he turned to his other neighbours for information.

When he read the mark list, the Head warned any boy against going off the premises until the question of drill was settled. When they got outside, Carrington was besieged with requests for information. He waved everybody away, and merely

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saying "Marks in Mr Beach's classroom," went into the masters' room. He left the door open, and Burrell heard him ask anxiously,

"Will this blooming Sergeant come?"

Three or four of the other men hastened maliciously to inform him that drill was inevitable. It was good for the men who were not on duty, because they scored an extra half-hour. School commenced at four on drill days, each division having forty-five minutes.

"I'll begin marks, anyhow. I never get a let-off!"

And with this, Carrington came out again, and ignoring a number of unnecessary observations, such as "Marks, sir?" went to get at any rate a bit of the detention over.

With assumed complacence and affability he hustled the mark-boys round, and commenced unusually quickly. Before three minutes had gone he saw the Sergeant coming up the side of the field—"the thin

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red line," as the staff jocularly called him. But he was determined to stand off the first ten minutes, so he took no notice of the instructor's appearance. Nor, when Victor appeared and knocked at the door, sent by the delighted masters'-room to apprise Carrington, did the duty-master yield up his victims till the first mark was stood. It was so humbugging to have to reckon odd minutes, and the Sergeant was able to renew his acquaintance with the boys in the meantime, while Pinky and Price once more fondled his malacca with due gravity. At last Carrington said, "All with more than one mark come again after tea!" Then there was a general rush, and many enquiries of "Which division first, sir?"

They took it in alternation, and Carrington decided "Seniors first!" to the disgust of several seniors. Victor remonstrated, pretending to remember distinctly that the seniors went first on the last drill of last Term. But a semi-jocular, semi-peevisish

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retort of "Shut up, Victor, you donkey!" put discussion at an end. Then, sending his aggressor to ring the bell—a lovely piece of diplomacy lost upon Limehouse!—Carrington carried his book into the masters' room, and came out again with his cap on, resigned to his fate. Outside, he returned the Sergeant's salute, and ordered Coley to pull up the wickets from the middle of the field, and pitch them to the side under the wall.

"Fall in!" cried the instructor, and some of the more energetic ones proceeded to divest themselves of cuffs, or coats, or even waistcoats; some, like Jack Adams, turned their sleeves up above their elbows. It was quite warm enough for this disrobing, and no objection was raised. Then, for more than forty-five minutes, the squad went through its evolutions. Lewis affected to be overcome with fatigue, and made himself so obnoxious that Carrington had to mark him. He came near being told to fall out, which would have meant going to the

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Chief. After that, all went fairly well, except when in the doubling round the field they ran along by the wall over the junior pitch. Here some wickets were standing up, and those Coley had slung across from the other pitch were lying down. Of course, everybody went bang over these stumps; they presented a tremendous obstacle, which made great sturdy chaps reel and totter, and the charge wavered like that of the English at Bannockburn. But Carrington wasn't going to mark anybody just because the Sergeant was an ass, so he rather enjoyed this episode than otherwise. He didn't like the Sergeant over-much; it had been reported in the masters' room that he had been heard to say there was only one master at the school who could keep order! This galled everybody, including Gerrans, who might have been flattered thereby had he not been a fine fellow. It was bad enough to have to come and keep order for a drill-sergeant! But to be so stupidly misunderstood and maligned was worse.

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The dismissal of the division rested with the master ; till he rang the bell they had to go on. The first division nearly always got an unfair share of the ninety minutes. They did on this day, but at last Carrington cried to one of the juniors—a good many of whom were already on the scene of future action—to ring the bell.

“ Oh, sir, what a time ! ” cried Jimmy, as they broke off, and he held up his watch. “ I'm going to try some snaps at the second div. and the light's getting worse every minute ! ”

Richards and Wright also brought out their cameras, and, what with this and the short time that remained, it did not seem long to Carrington before the end came, and the bell was again rung for school.

After tea, the rest of the detention was stood off, and it wasn't over till quite ten past seven. Johnson was enchanted ; it went on during his practice-time, which should have been done in that room.

Burrell was abstemious at tea and supper,

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and wisely refused to mix sardines with strawberry jam. He had some horrid Algebra again in prep., and, though he was rather more competent by this time to tackle it, he came to the conclusion that the book was a catchy one, and that the expressions he was told to factorise had no factors. He had expected to have his bath long before now; but the hot water was so deficient that even to-night only one or two at the top of his form had their turn.

There was an out-match arranged for the first eleven on the morrow; Mr Carrington had managed to get all the May fixtures away to give the pitch a chance. After prep. Victor went to ask leave to stay up for the committee-meeting. Mr Carrington acceded, but not very willingly.

"It ought to have been held before," he said; "why couldn't you have had it after tea? Then the team would have been up before prep. and the fellows would have been steady."

"Please, sir!" cried Victor in alarm;

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"you haven't marked any first eleven chap, have you?"

The master smiled as he answered,

"Well, considering that you haven't picked the first eleven yet, I don't know but what I have!"

He had not, though; there had only been three marks given since tea-time up till then.

The Committee met at nine, and Carrington attended it. To him the day appeared interminable, and he was so cross and worried when they dispersed at half-past nine, that he refused to go in to supper. The other men had gone in, and he sent word by a servant that he wasn't coming. He sat down straight away to a pile of exercises that awaited him, but after ten minutes the maggot seized him to go upstairs, and see if any extraneous duty might still be found! There was a pretty fair din going on in the rooms on his landing, but on Shields's landing up above a tin-whistle was discoursing popular airs, and

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very well they were rendered. Carrington went up and relieved Adams of the instrument ; he didn't punish him any further, except in disregarding utterly the piteous appeal, " Oh, sir, you'll take care of it ? "

Then he descended to his own corridor, and thought of going to see Number Thirteen. There were several excuses ; the gas was still on, showing that Coley and Victor were not making any great haste into bed ; he could enquire after the new boy's headache ; the fellows might like to discuss cricket and the coming match, as they had often done before with him after he'd turned out their gas ; he could enquire into the state of the companionship he had enjoined. But despite all these excuses, he hesitated, and finally turned off to see who was talking to Miss Rock in the linen-room.

He found Coley there, minus his jacket which was undergoing repair. The master's first care was to pass the time of day with

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the matron ; his second to order the boy to be off.

" Please, sir, I'm waiting for the coat ! " he remonstrated.

" No, no ! Go to bed and get that light out : you're not to wait."

He backed up this command by taking hold of Coley's arm, and walking him along the corridor.

" And who gave you leave, I should like to know ? " said Carrington.

" A prefect ! " replied Coley, smiling demurely : " you didn't think I'd risk a mark, did you, sir ? "

The boy was picked for the first eleven, and was keen on making his *début* without let or hindrance. It was doubtful if he were worth his place, but it was a rare thing to find a committee-man who didn't get in ; they were voted for on account of their playing powers as a rule.

" Well, I wish I could come and see you play," said his master, as Coley went into his room.

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"Who's going, sir? Mr Roper?"

"Yes, I believe so."

Then Mr Carrington went in and got the two fellows to bed, and turned out the light, disregarding Victor's remark that Thorn would want it alight again almost directly. Going out, Carrington went along to the linen-room again, and stayed talking to Miss Rock longer than he intended. He wished he'd gone sooner, when Mrs. Rochester came bristling in and spoke his name with a distinct trace of displeasure in her tone. Still, why the deuce shouldn't he talk to the matron?

In Number Thirteen there was congratulation going on that the bedroom should have three first eleven men. Burrell took very little part in the conversation; of course he wasn't chosen—he had not expected to be. But he certainly had expected equally little that Coley *would* be. He had meant to ask his chum to go for a long walk to the caves round the headland the next afternoon, and now

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there would be nobody for him to go with, unless he took somebody about whom he cared very little. It must not, however, be supposed that he envied or grudged Coley his place in the team; he was the last boy in the world to do that sort of thing.

CHAPTER VII

SATURDAY

IF there had been excitement over the teams for Thursday's game, there was much more over the composition of the first eleven in the opening match of the season. The choice made by the committee formed the chief subject of conversation during the morning. Burrell was obliged to hear a good many criticisms on the inclusion of Coley, but he did not see the use of championing his chum, so he kept out of discussions.

After breakfast, he was just rushing out to play cricket when Jimmy accosted him.

"Would you like to help me pack the bags?" he enquired.

Burrell hesitated a moment before replying, and answered the question indirectly when he made up his mind to go.

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"I'll come," he said. He wanted to decline, but his refusal might be construed into the result of the unfortunate affray of the previous morning. So he took on the honour—charity—privilege—whatever it might be, and accompanied Jimmy over to the "bicycle-shed." Here was kept all the cricket-material, and Jimmy unlocked the big box to get out what was necessary for the afternoon's match.

"What do you get for this job?" asked Burrell, strapping a pair of pads round each bat which the curator selected from the rack.

"A bob a week," answered Jimmy.

"It's hardly worth it, is it?" inquired Burrell sarcastically.

"No, hardly. But I don't really care about the money so much. It's useful, but I like to be able to stay up at night."

"What for?"

"Oh, to oil the bats, and tidy up, and put things away."

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"But you haven't stayed up yet," observed Burrell.

"No, because there's hardly anything in use at present, and it's all bundled into the prefects' room at night. But next week I shall have the nets to look after, and everything will be done ship-shape, or Carrington won't pay me."

"Are you going for your pay this week?"

"I don't know if I shall," said Jimmy, holding two odd batting gloves in his hand, and trying to reconcile his conscience to sending them as a pair. "If Victor goes for his reading-room pay, I shall go for mine."

"You and he seem to like these jobs," Burrell remarked.

"Well, we get chosen from a lot of applicants. You see, we do them properly—that's where it is. Victor's had his berth for several terms now, and knows all about the work."

"But you haven't been cricket-curator before?"

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"No, but Lloyd was, last summer, and I used to help him. He was in our room; Coley and he were awfully thick."

"Yes, I've heard about him. So you can have assistance, can you?"

"Lloyd used to have leave for somebody to help him. It takes two chaps to get nets in at night, I can tell you. Often there's a master to give you a hand, but you can't reckon on that. Last summer Shields was almost always round here at nine, but I believe it was only because he wanted to talk to Lloyd. He used to sit on the box and chaff him all the time we were rubbing in the oil."

The things were packed in two bags—the property of the club. Few, if any, of the fellows possessed cricket-bags of their own. On the present occasion they would go to the match in their flannels; it was only a drive of something like five miles.

"What are you going to do?" asked Burrell, as, each carrying a bulging bag, they went across the garden.

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"What, now!"

"No, this afternoon."

"Oh, I don't know yet. I thought I might get in as scorer, but you see Jacobs is a pref. so I suppose he'll go every out match. I went sometimes last season. Carrington gets me the job."

"Well, what are you going to do, then?"

"I'll walk over to see the match with you if you like."

"Can we?"

"Oh, yes; it's only about an hour's fast walk, and we could see an hour's cricket."

"No, I don't think I want to!" said Burrell, reflectively.

"I'll take my camera," suggested Jimmy.

He thought that would be an inducement, but it was no great one to Burrell. He proposed as an amendment that Jimmy should go with him to the caves in the headland. But Limehouse wouldn't do that, so until the middle of the morning Burrell was without plans for the afternoon.

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Just after recess, at a quarter past eleven, the day was clouded sadly for both him and Coley. Burrell's form had to go to Mr Beach's room for Latin, and just as he was entering the door Coley passed along the corridor on his way to the schoolroom. In his hand was a piece of bun, and he chucked it at Burrell's head. The latter ducked, and then they both made a rush for the fragment. Coley's foot slipped on the tiles of the floor, and he fell full-length, while his chum triumphantly secured the missile, and stood over him trying to get a shot at his head which he protected with his arm as he scrambled up again. Unluckily, Mr Beach was in his class-room, and moreover, it was a trifle after time. Disturbed and irritated, he came to the door, and saw the two boys in the middle of their contest.

"Now you two boys will be marked!" he said, testily. "Mason, I shall give you two! I'm surprised to find you so disorderly!"

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The thunderbolt had fallen indeed ! There was nothing for Burrell to do but to go inside with a flaming face, while Coley walked slowly along to the schoolroom, very pale, with a great lump in his throat.

Neither of the boys could concentrate his attention on his lessons after that, and Burrell was kept in at a quarter to one. His chum fared a trifle better, and was able to go straight to Mr Roper at that time and tell him to cross off his name. Roper was exceedingly short with him.

" You ass, Coley ! " he said, but the boy's quivering lip checked any further remarks, and he went away at once to alter the list, and hunt up the first reserve. There were two reserves picked, such a contingency as the present one being thus provided for. The boy was Brand, and he was in Mr Beach's classroom. Roper had to go and fetch him out, Mr Beach yielding him up reluctantly, and Brand flying out to change with delighted alacrity. Roper was hurrying the team into the

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changing-room ; they were to have their dinner at one, and start at half-past.

When Burrell was releasd, which was not until nearly bell-time, he did not care to go outside and watch the waggonette start, as many of the fellows were doing. It was gloriously sunshiny outside, but he felt most unhappy as he took his books along to the schoolroom. The first person he saw there was Coley, sitting moodily at his desk. Burrell went up to him diffidently, but Coley turned away, and lifting up the lid put his head under it in a pretended search for something. So Burrell went away, and wandered downstairs to get ready for dinner, feeling more lugubrious than before.

The team drove off with a clatter ; the bell rang the remainder of the boys in, and Burrell did not see any opportunity for a word with his injured friend. But, after dinner, while the Head was reading out the marks, he looked round when their two names came out together. Coley sum-

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moned up a faint smile, which was quite enough to take much of the load off the younger boy's heart.

"Marks in the schoolroom!" was the order, as they came out of dinner. When Burrell went in there, Coley was leaning against the wall by the top-window. He still looked somewhat dejected, but not so much so as before. Burrell went up and stood beside him with his back to the wall, too. Carrington was just coming in; there was no time for much explanation. They said "Beastly sorry!" simultaneously. This seemed funny to both of them, and they nearly laughed. At the same time their hands chanced to meet, and prompted by a common impulse, they gripped one another for a second before Carrington moved them all away from the windows and end walls.

Coley and Burrell stood together; there were two long rows all down the middle of the room. Carrington had considered thirty-seven boys too many for the classroom. He himself stood in front for the

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first ten minutes, and Burrell saw then how busy he had to be with eyes and fingers to get the thing into working order. He also saw his glance rest on Coley and himself with an unmistakable look of annoyance, which he thought he understood. They could all watch the hands of the clock; that was something to do, and most of them did it. To have faced the other way would have been to look straight out of all the side-windows. Some of the boys in the corridor outside wanted to come in; there would be an opportunity, perhaps, when the first mark boys came out. In the meantime they flattened their noses up against the crinkled glass and made Price laugh. Carrington gave him extra-time, and then, perceiving the cause, turned to open the door behind him, the delinquents skedaddling instantly out of the swing-door.

Burrell got off after ten minutes. Then he lounged about, waiting for Coley. They would be able to do the caves after all.

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At last Coley got his *cong  * likewise. Not an allusion was made then to the marks.

"What are we going to do?" asked Coley.

"Go to those caves?" suggested Burrell.

"I thought perhaps you'd like to go over to the match," said Coley.

"No, it's too far; I never meant to. Unless you want to go?" he added, doubtfully.

"No, I don't. It's all right for those fellows with their machines. I would if I had one here."

"But I don't ride," said Burrell.

So they started off to the caves. They were on the far side of the headland which was so conspicuous a feature of the view from the school windows. It was, perhaps, five miles off by the road, but they didn't keep to the road; a short cut saved them quite a mile, if not more. Had the tide been low they could have walked by the shore, and gone into the lower cave. But it was too high for that, so after a great deal of

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uphill work, they came to the top of the cliff, and looked down its quarried side from an overhanging ledge.

"It's a wonder," remarked the pioneer, "that we haven't met any of the other chaps. This is a favourite place any time of the year."

But to-day it seemed to be deserted by every living creature, except dirty-looking wiry sheep, which nibbled the short grass and gazed stolidly at the two boys.

"How do we get down?" asked Burrell.

"Oh, down that path," said Coley, pointing to a scarcely discernible track on their left. His companion followed him, as he began to descend with the carelessness born of experience. Soon he had to wait for Burrell, who was progressing very slowly with his heart in his mouth. Coley thought he was stopping to look about him, so he put in a word for the scenery.

"Grand up here, isn't it?"

It was, certainly. A splendid expanse of open sea stretched before them, the little

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wind-raised caps of foam gleaming snowy-white in the sunshine. A long way out was the dark smoke-trail of a big liner whose identity Coley was not able to discover, as her funnels were indistinguishable at that distance, even to his long-sighted eyes. The coast-line that ran westward from their point of view was abruptly terminated not many miles away by a far more imposing promontory than the one on which they stood. On their right ran a longer extent of coast, but this also culminated in a headland, beyond which the line, when it again trended out seawards, looked to the boys a mere hazy streak of bluish-grey. The gorse was putting out its yellow blossoms all about them. Overhead a few wisps of white cloud were rapidly flying. The breeze was blowing stiffly off the shore ; it was inconveniently strong here, though they would have called it a mere breath at the foot of the hill.

Before they reached the opening of the cave Burrell had begun to feel the strain

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on the back-muscles of his legs ; he was sturdy enough for anything in his build, but not in such fine training as Coley, who was always as hard as nails. Moreover, one was town-bred, the other country-bred.

" Fagged ? " cried the pioneer incredulously, as Burrell flung himself down on a ledge and took out his pocket-handkerchief.

" Rather," admitted Burrell.

So they rested a bit before going into the cave. They couldn't get very far in, when they did proceed ; it was nothing like the lower cave for size and only penetrated the cliff a short distance.

" I wish we could have had a low tide," said Burrell, ruefully, craning his neck to look at the foot of the cliff, whence the booming of the water rose up to their ears.

At that moment, whether from giddiness or from a slip of the foot it was hard to say, he stumbled, and, before Coley could make a

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move, was slipping down an almost perpendicular piece of the cliff in a sitting posture. At first Coley was inclined to laugh, and it certainly had a smack of the ludicrous to see Burrell making frantic clutches at the short turf as he slipped along. It was only a slide of some fifteen feet, and a projecting ledge brought him up safely ; but the getting back again was quite another thing from the descent.

"Are you hurt?" enquired Coley, anxiously.

"No, I'm all right," said Burrell, standing up on his feet, and brushing his knickers vigorously.

Then he essayed to get back, but all at once it dawned upon them simultaneously that there wasn't the slightest possibility of his doing so. Then they both grew rather frightened—especially Burrell.

"I say, Coley, how the dickens shall I get back?" he asked querulously.

"I'm darned if I know, old chap," was all Coley could say in reply.

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It was excessively awkward, and so was the long pause that ensued. The older boy saw that his chum was horribly nervous, and to keep up his pecker he made several suggestions, which he knew to be impracticable. After a bit, he went to have a look round, hoping he might see some solution of the problem. But as soon as he was out of sight, Burrell called him back.

"Have you found a place?" cried Coley hopefully, re-appearing up above.

"No. I say, don't go away. I don't like staying here alone."

"Well, it's no use coming down to you, is it?" said Coley.

"Of course not."

"If only it was any other day there would be men in the quarry!" Coley remarked.

"Are you sure there aren't any?"

"Yes; you know we didn't see any. They don't work Saturday afternoons."

"Don't they leave any ropes about, or anything?"

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"I don't know ; there's a hut, of course. There might be some in there ; only it's sure to be locked."

Coley began to think it would be worth while to go and see, despite Burrell's anxiety for his presence on the spot. Of course, in such predicaments, story-tellers relate that some extraordinary things have been done, such as the cutting of steps with a knife, etc., but if the feat had been performed on the cliff-side above Burrell's head, nothing less than an Alpine goat could have ascended such a place !

Then the quicker of the two wits began to work for the first time, and Burrell cried,

"Why, I could get nearly up to your hand if you leaned over, I believe !"

If Coley's arm had been about five times as long as it was, he might have touched Burrell's finger-tips, but it was a suggestion in the right direction.

"Can't you let down your coat ?" said Burrell.

Coley took off his jacket and leaned

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over with it in his hand. The boy below could get within, perhaps, four feet of it.

"Tie mine to it!" Burrell suggested.

He divested himself of it, but durst not attempt to throw it up to Coley, lest it should be blown out of reach. So Coley tied first his braces, and to eke them out a bit of string he had in his pocket, to the sleeve, but even then the impromptu rope was not long enough. Burrell, however had plenty of string, and he threw it up fastened round his knife. Then the necessary length was attained for Burrell to attach his jacket, and Coley drew it up.

The two jackets tied together, unluckily, only just reached Burrell's outstretched finger-tips, and that with Coley's arms at full extent as he lay and leaned over. So much precious sleeve was wasted in fastening them together. Obviously braces and string, however useful as a mode of communication, would not be of much use if the rope was to bear any weight. So another garment became imperatively ne-

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cessary, and Coley hesitated a moment between his shirt and his trousers. He appealed to his chum, who at once decided that the upper garment would give greater length if it were only strong enough. It was a linen shirt, and they both had their doubts. Burrell didn't wear white shirts, and his, being of flannel, might be a trifle more reliable. But finally they decided to try Coley's, and he spent what seemed to Burrell an interminable time in tying knots. It was not the simplest thing in the world; he was surprised to find how ill-adapted wearing apparel is for rope-making; by the time the knots were well made the whole thing resembled a bundle of clothes almost as much as a line! While he was doing it, Burrell took off his boots, and threw them up, and that brought his stockings prominently before his eyes and his mind. They were strong and long, and he pulled them off and tied them together. It was safer than the shirt, the sleeves of which would have assuredly given way at

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the first heavy strain. So the rope had to be reconstructed, and a very much better rope it looked with this alteration.

At last everything was ready ; and after much planting of his heels against stones and getting a fair grip on the sleeves of the uppermost jacket, Coley gave the order to climb. Up came Burrell, with some little difficulty and a very scared face ; clinging with his hands to the rope which had a brutal desire to sway, and with his toes to the most salient points of the perpendicular cliff.

When he had clambered into safety the two boys could for the first time afford to laugh. They did it. Then they felt much better. Hastily they fumbled at the knots, and assumed once more the garments which had done such gallant service.

" It's like one day when we were bathing," said Coley ; " and Lloyd tied all my things into knots."

There seemed to be no end of things to collect, but at last they made for home,

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running a good bit of the way. Coley's watch said half-past four when they started on the homeward journey, and they heard the bell for tea-assembly as they made a last burst up the avenue. I am afraid if they had stayed to wash-up they would not have been into assembly in time. They certainly did get into the schoolroom just before Mr Carrington passed the forms out !

The fellows who had been over—on foot or on cycles—to see the match, had brought home a rather disheartening report. Their opponents had made just upon 100, and the latest score put the school total at 36 for five wickets. There was so much discussion at tea about the cricket that neither of our friends was encouraged to recount his exploits to his neighbours.

The Head came in to prayers, for a wonder, and while they were all kneeling down Burrell almost, if not quite, dozed off into slumber with his head on his arms. He was tired, and there was a dreamy feeling

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abroad. The window near him was open, and the evening sun was sending long slanting rays of gold across the garden, where a thrush fluted melodiously in a tree at the gate. The pure scented air contrasted quite curiously with the atmosphere of the tea-room, impregnated with half-a-dozen odours, all more or less disagreeable. The Head's voice was deep and soothing, and when the usual thunder of moving chairs followed the benediction, Burrell did not realise for quite a little time where he was.

He went for some more stationery after tea, and then played a bit on the field. He was feeling a trifle headachy again, but grew better ere long. Then the eleven drove up, with considerable row for a vanquished team! They had only made 77, but Thorn had come off grandly with a not out innings of 41, going in second wicket down. Coley discussed it all without a trace of resentment, and Burrell was never very far from him. After they had changed (they had their tea before returning) the

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members of the team held a sort of *levée* in different parts of the premises.

During prep. there was a small diversion. Upon coming in Carrington had shut all the lower openings of the windows, but had been unable to find the pole to shut the upper parts. The gases in the chandeliers flickered in the cross-draughts from three sides of the room, and at last a small boy, upon whose head the cold air came down like water, ventured to ask for less ventilation.

At this, indignant looks were cast upon him by others, and Carrington waxed wroth. These open windows were his *bête noire*, and one or two boys always made themselves very objectionable in resenting the shutting of them. He knew pretty well who they were, and guessed why he couldn't find the window-pole. However, he sent Paul to look for it in the masters' room, but the boy came back empty-handed. Then Carrington made a shot at a venture.

"Now, Lewis," he cried, "if you don't find that window-pole in a minute-and-

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a-half, I'll give you two or three marks ! ”

Lewis began as usual, “ Please, sir ! ” in a most injured tone.

“ Now, come on ! ” said Carrington, quite angry and determined.

So Lewis had to go to the side of the room, and fish it out from its hiding-place on the floor, where it had been carefully laid before prep. began. The boy looked rather silly, creeping out from under the desks with the pole in his hand. Then, when the windows were shut to Carrington's satisfaction, and several victims had been able to turn their coat-collars down, McPharlane was stupid enough to open his waistcoat wide, and make noises suggestive of being suffocated. Carrington promptly ejected him from the room with three marks as a journeying-mercy ! At the end of prep. when he had simmered down a little, he “ hortated ” them a bit.

“ Stuffy air won't kill you,” he declared ; “ but draughts will. Do you think I'm

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going to have delicate little boys who dare to shiver frowned down by great lusty chaps who are too thick-skinned to feel a hurricane? (*Laughter*). I can't stand draughts myself. I'm delicate (*more guffaws*). So is McPharlane; he's come here because he's got no lungs to speak of! (*Oh! Oh!*) After my duty-week I often have neuralgia: it's all through these open windows. If I stay here long enough I shall lose every tooth I've got in my head. I've got three upstairs now, which I'm keeping in memory of Lewis, Adams & Co. (*Laughter*). Put your books away! (*Babel*).

Burrell heard this speech, but missed the incident which caused it. He was at last favoured with a bath! But as he had to go second-turn it was almost a cold one. Some of his class-mates went back to wait till the next time, but Johnson and Graiseley were, like himself, of opinion that there's no time like the present. So those three despised a retreat, and made such

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a din over their ablutions that Mr Gerrans had to go in and threaten marks.

At nine o'clock Carrington heaved a deep, deep sigh of relief. His duty-week was over, not to recur for another five weeks. As the boys went out of supper, Jimmy came up with a hand half-raised in token of question, and a laconic request of "Stay up, sir? Cricket things?"

"Yes," said the master. "And Jimmy, send Coley to me! Ask Mr Roper first, mind!"

So Coley came back, having got half-way up-stairs, and they two helped the curator by going round collecting materials in the moonlight from the field and other places. Of course, in return for this, Jimmy left them as much *tête-à-tête* as was possible, and Coley had a long tale to tell his *erastes*. Carrington was quite content to listen, and smoke his cigarette. He had nothing to say, to begin with, and Coley—once started—gave that day's history in particular, and an account of the whole week in general.

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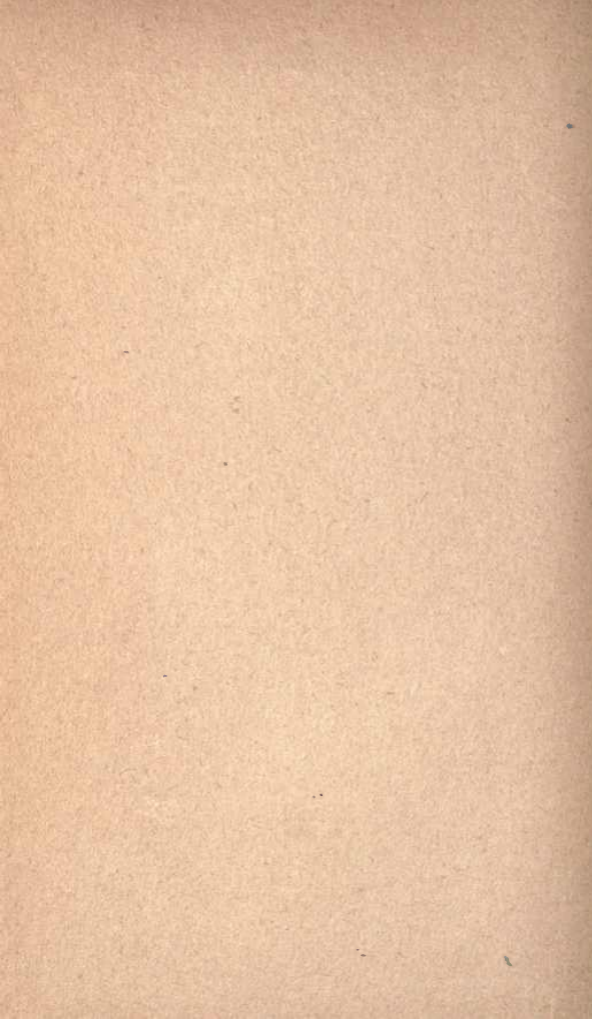
The stowing away of the bats and other things took young Limehouse an unconscionable time, in spite of his two coadjutors. When Carrington sent them up to bed, Roper met them on his descent from bedroom-duty, and he was later than usual that evening.

“Croydon tells me,” said Roper; “that you declare you have a tooth out after every duty-week!”

Then the two pedagogues took a stroll in the garden before going into supper, and resumed the conversation of the previous Saturday night with which this record opened.

“Those boys will be chums for more than a week, I prophesy,” were Carrington's concluding words. “But I sha'n't take much credit for it; circumstances have aided and abetted me considerably!”

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