

"BULSTRODE ON THE WARPATH."

A SPLENDID, COMPLETE
TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE
IN THIS ISSUE.

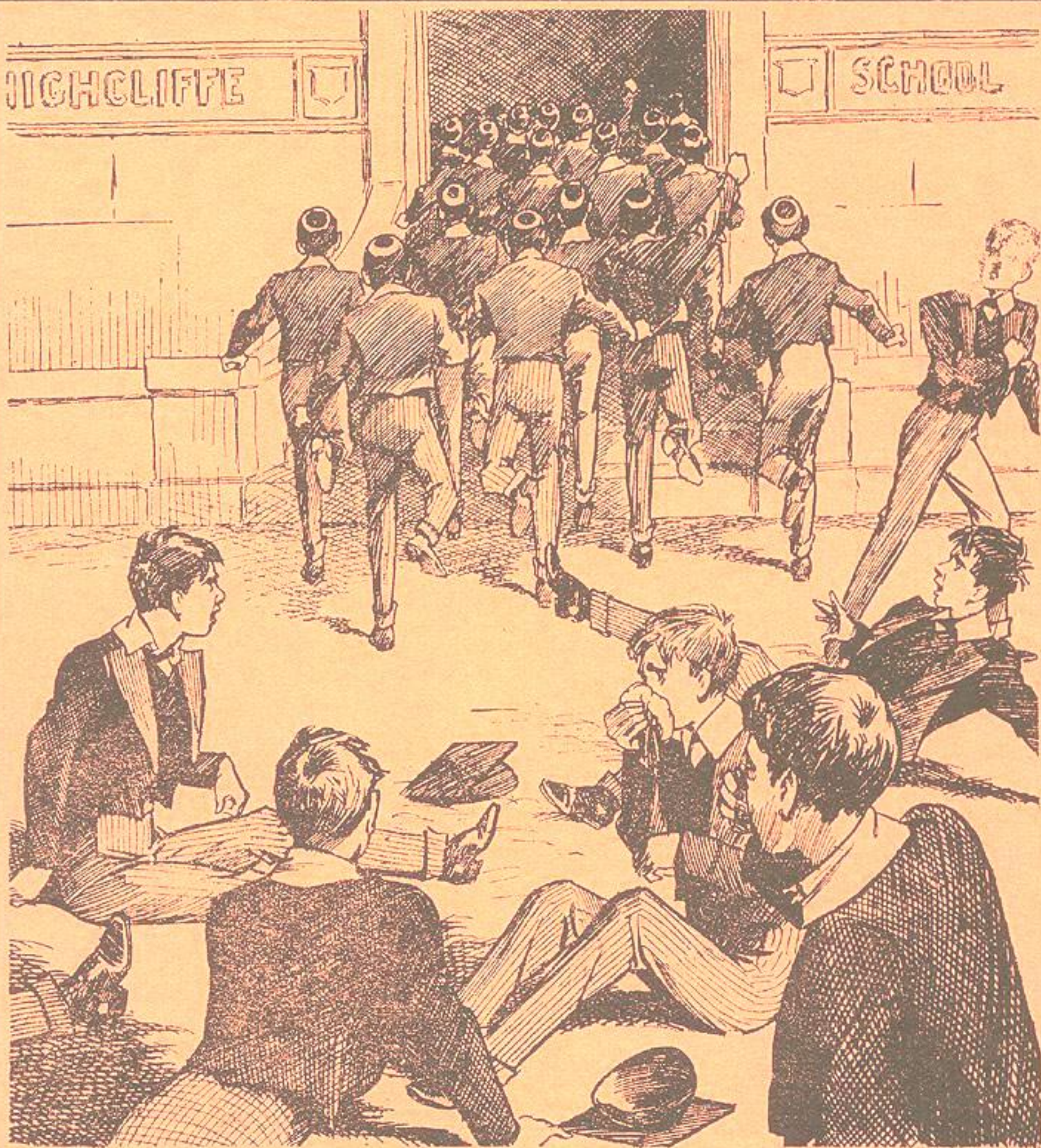
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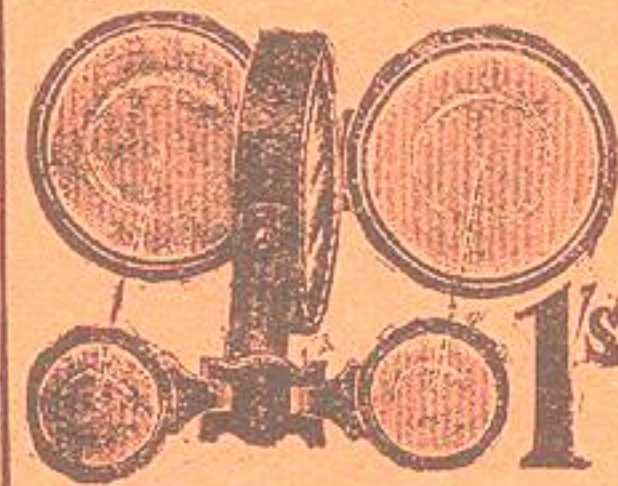
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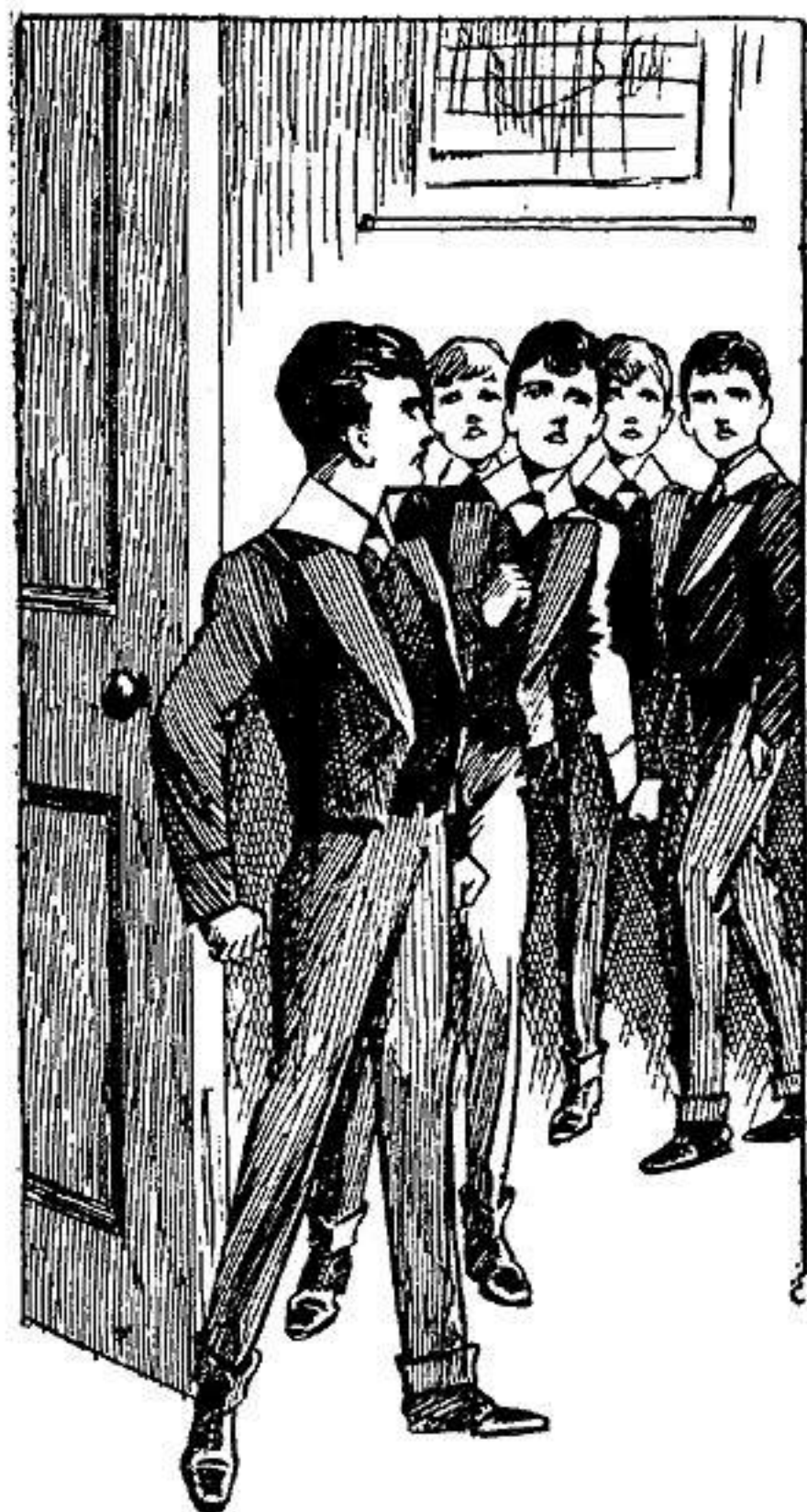
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Not Satisfied.

“LOOK here——”
“Rats!”
“I tell you——”
“Silence!”

“Silence be hanged! Ain’t I Form-captain?” shouted Bulstrode. “Can’t I speak at a blessed Form-meeting, when I’m captain of the Form? By Jove——”

“Shut up!”

“Cheese it, Bulstrode!”

Bulstrode on the War-path.

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the Chums of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

“Order!”

The meeting in the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars was growing excited. It was a mass-meeting. Nearly all the Form were there. Bulstrode had dropped in by chance, and Bulstrode was indignant. Bulstrode was captain of the Remove—a position he had held for some time now, not to the general satisfaction. As Form-captain, he certainly ought to have been consulted in the matter of calling a meeting of the Form. But he hadn’t been consulted, and it was only the sound of many voices in the Form-room that had drawn him to the spot.

And even then the Removites had seemed rather unwilling to let him in. But it was not easy to keep the burly, broad-shouldered Bulstrode out. He had shoved his way in, and was now in a state of simmering fury.

“Look here!” roared Bulstrode. “What do you mean? What is the little game, anyway? What do you mean by calling a Form-meeting without speaking to me about it?”

No reply.

“I suppose it’s your doing, Wharton?” Bulstrode shouted, turning to Harry Wharton with blazing eyes.

Wharton coloured.

“Not at all,” he answered. “I was here, talking to Nugent, when the fellows came in. I haven’t the faintest idea what the meeting is about, or what it’s for.”

“Same here,” said Nugent. “I only know that the fellows have all started jawing at once, and I wish they’d go to Jericho.”

“The fact is——” said Ogilvy.

"That's it!" remarked Morgan. "The fact is, look you—"

"I guess"—began Fisher T. Fish, the American junior—"I guess the fact is—"

"You see, Bulstrode—"

"Ahem!"

The juniors seemed to find some difficulty in explaining. Bulstrode looked round at them with a bitter expression. Bulstrode's lines had not fallen in pleasant places since he had been captain of the Remove. The task was not easy, and more than once he had half regretted helping to push Harry Wharton out of the post. But there was a great deal of courage, and a great deal of obstinacy, in Bulstrode. He was the kind of fellow to stick to his guns.

"Well," Bulstrode demanded—"well, what is the meeting about?"

"The fact is—"

"Oh, speak out!"

"Well, not to put too fine a point on it—" said Skinner.

"Will you speak out?" roared Bulstrode, his temper rising again.

"Well, we were going to discuss the advisability of—"

"What?"

"Getting a new Form-captain," said Tom Brown.

"That's the long and short of it, and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Bulstrode snapped his teeth.

"And you were going to talk that over behind my back!" he exclaimed.

Tom Brown coloured.

"Not in the least. We thought it wouldn't be exactly pleasant for you to hear the matter discussed, that's all."

"Oh, don't mind me," said Bulstrode bitterly. "I'll listen with pleasure. I think you're a set of bounders, that's all."

"I don't see that we're bound to have the same Form-captain all the time," said Hazeldene. "You yourself said, in Wharton's time, that a change was a jolly good thing, and that Harry Wharton couldn't expect to be cock of the walk, term in and term out."

Bulstrode bit his lip. There was no doubt that he had said that, and a great many more things that he regretted afterwards, in his keenness to get Harry Wharton out of the position of Form-captain, and himself in.

"And now," said Ogilvy, "we may as well go on with the meeting. Bulstrode can sit on a desk and listen."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I'll listen!" said Bulstrode. "I'll jolly well punch your head afterwards, too, Ogilvy!"

"Order!"

"Order!"

Bulstrode swung aside and sat on a desk, and swung his legs. He bit his nails in his anger. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent also drew a little aside. The meeting was nothing to them, and Harry did not want to appear to be engineering a scheme for shifting Bulstrode, as Bulstrode had shifted him a few weeks before.

"Nice fellows to skipper, ain't they?" said Bulstrode, looking at Wharton. "They've got their backs up against me now, the same as they had against you. All because we lost the cricket match with Courtfield, I believe."

"And with Highcliffe, too," said Nugent.

Bulstrode sniffed.

"Well, I couldn't help losing. I know I did my best. Wharton was in the sanatorium with a cold, Bob Cherry was away, and Vernon-Smith got his back up and refused to play. That was three good men gone, and the Highcliffe chaps were in great form. They nearly did us the last match, when we were at our strongest. This time we had no chance."

"A cricket captain ought to see that a team has a chance, though," said John Bull. "It's all very well to say that things happened. But a cricket captain shouldn't let 'em happen."

"I can't perform giddy miracles, can I?"

"Let the captaincy alone, then. Wharton used to make us win, anyway."

Bulstrode fell silent.

It was the truth, bitter as it was. Would the Greyfriars Remove have won those last two matches if Wharton had been captain? Perhaps—perhaps not. Certainly, Wharton had always been found a fellow of infinite resource, and had a wonderful talent for finding players when they were wanted. Bulstrode was only too painfully conscious of his own shortcomings as skipper.

The Removites were talking—mostly at the same time, and in loud voices. Bulstrode could hear most of what they said.

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It was pretty clear that the Form had tired of Bulstrode as captain.

"Everything's gone to the dogs since Bulstrode got in!" Ogilvy remarked. "Licked by Courtfield—licked by Highcliffe—"

"And going to be licked in the St. Jim's match, for a cert.," said Morgan, with a snort.

"And even the Upper Fourth are getting their ears up."

"And Temple says he's going to wipe up the ground with us in the Form match—and he'll do it, too, if Bulstrode's skipper."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"What do you think Ponsonby said to me the other day?" roared John Bull. "He said—"

"What I think is—"

"Look here—"

"Ponsonby said—he was walking along with Gadsby and Vavasour, you know—three extra special cads, you know—and I met him, and he said—"

"By Jove—"

"He said we ought to play marbles instead of cricket!" roared Bull. "Marbles!"

"My hat!"

"The worm!"

"Marbles!"

"My word!"

"What did you do, Bull?"

"Oh, I let him have my left under the chin," said John Bull.

"But that doesn't alter the fact that he said it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Marbles, by Jove!"

"Look here," said Ogilvy, "the fact's plain enough. Wharton was captain, and Wharton used to pull us through. Wharton ought to be skipper again."

"Hear, hear!"

"Wharton for ever!"

"Wharton for skipper!"

The Form-room rang with the shouts. There was little doubt as to the sentiments of the Remove.

Bulstrode turned to Harry Wharton with a bitter look.

"You've got your wish now," he said.

"What wish?" said Harry, looking at him steadily.

"You've got me out."

"I've done nothing."

Bulstrode laughed.

"The others have done it, then," he said, with a sneer.

"Oh, I know I didn't treat you well—it was a bit sharp, the way I got you out. But you might have given me a chance, all the same."

"You are mistaken."

"Not that I care much. You can have the job, and be hanged! I'm pretty sick of it, anyway!"

"I tell you—"

"Here they come," said Bulstrode, with a savage laugh—"here they come! Now you can explain how modest and unassuming you are, and how you really don't want to be captain, but how you accept it from a sense of duty! Oh, I know the patter from start to finish!"

Wharton did not reply.

The Removites were all coming over towards them, their minds evidently made up. Bulstrode shoved his hands deep into his pockets, and waited.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Wharton Says "No!"

"WHARTON—"

A dozen voices started. Bob Cherry waved a large hand.

"Order! Don't bellow at a fellow like that!"

"Who's bellowing?"

"Shut up, Bob Cherry!"

"Order! Let me explain to Wharton—"

"Faith, and I'll explain entirely!" said Micky Desmond.

"It's like this, Wharton, darling—"

"Cheese it, Tipperary—"

"Faith, and I—"

"Let me put it to him," said Ogilvy. "You know very well that it takes a Scotsman to explain things. Now, look here, Wharton—"

"Look here—"

"Shut up!" roared Ogilvy. "Look here, Wharton—"

"Look here—"

"Faith, and look here—"

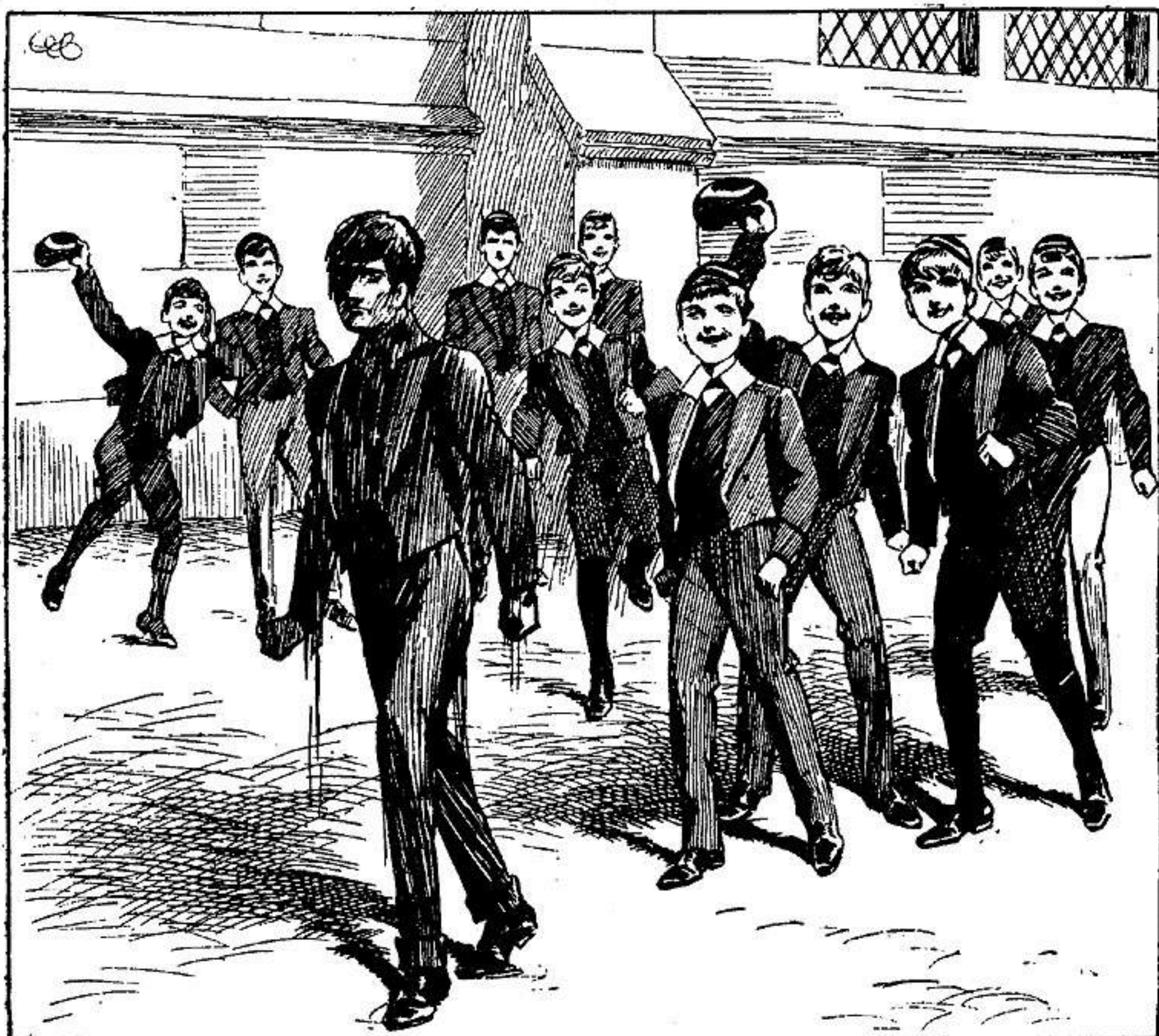
Wharton put his fingers to his ears.

"Well, I'm looking," he said. "But for goodness' sake don't roar at a chap like that! I'm not deaf!"

"Well, they won't let me explain quietly," said Ogilvy.

"The fact is, we're not satisfied with our Form-captain."

"Hear, hear!"



Bulstrode, snorting angrily, marched on, followed by a yell of derision from the Remove fellows. A procession of fags followed the drenched and muddy Form-captain right up to the School house, sniffing emphatically. (See page 5.)

"That's no business of mine," said Harry Wharton. You can settle that with Bulstrode."

"But you used to be Remove skipper——"

"I'm not now."

"But we want you to be skipper again. You're elected unanimously. We've had enough of Bulstrode's blunders."

"Faith, yes! He's let the Highcliffe bounders walk over us——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Highcliffe have been crowing ever since they won the cricket match," roared John Bull. "You know the other day they stuck a notice on our school gates—'PRIVATE ASYLUM.' I knew Porsonby's fist."

"The rotter!"

"The cheeky cad!"

"They're getting too swelled-headed to hold themselves, now," said John Bull. "We simply must take them down a peg or two, somehow."

"And Bulstrode can't do it."

"Bulstrode can only swank here. He can't touch Highcliffe."

"He's not a bit of good!"

"So you see——"

"You see"—roared Ogilvy—"you see, we want you for Form-captain again, so as to score over the Highcliffe swankers. You see?"

"Yes, I see. I see you're a lot of unreasonable asses!" said Harry Wharton.

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

"Eh?"

"What!"

"Oh!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. It was a way he had—not always pleasing even to his friends—and it had a very exasperating effect upon fellows who did not like him. But Harry was annoyed, and he did not care if he showed it.

"If you want my opinion, there it is," he said. "If you don't want it, there it is all the same. Go and eat coke!"

"What!"

"I'm jolly well not going to be Form-captain again! I don't bear malice for being shifted out. You can't say I haven't backed up Bulstrode all the time. But I'm not going to be Form-captain. You've given the job to Bulstrode. Give the chap a chance, then."

"He's had a chance!"

"He's messed up everything."

"He's an ass!"

"And a fathead!"

"He can't do anything for toffee."

Wharton gave another shrug.

"Well, I'm not stepping into Bulstrode's shoes, that's all," he said. "I'm standing out. Bulstrode's Form-captain, and I'm backing him up."

"Oh!"

The Removites only stared. They couldn't do anything else. They knew how bitterly, at the time, Harry Wharton

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had resented being turned out of the captaincy. They had taken it for granted that he would be glad to be reinstated. Surely the triumph over his rival ought to have attracted him. But apparently it didn't. His answer only confirmed the opinion the Remove had always held—that Wharton was a rum beggar, a very rum beggar indeed.

There was a short silence. Bulstrode stood with his hands in his pockets, a very peculiar expression upon his face. He had not expected that reply from Harry Wharton, either.

"Well," said Ogilvy, at last, "I suppose you're joking."

"Not at all."

"You don't refuse to be Form-captain?"

"Yes, I do."

"But—but—"

"Faith, and I think—"

"Give Bulstrode a chance," said Harry.

"We've given him a chance," said Tom Brown, "and he's no good. The whole Form thinks the same."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, you can look for somebody else, then," said Harry. "I'm not taking it on. Next term, perhaps I might put up for election against Bulstrode. I don't know. But as far as this term is concerned, I stand out."

"That's all very well," said Morgan belligerently; "but what about the Form?"

"The Form elected Bulstrode," said Harry. "You can stand by what you've done. Give the chap a chance. That's my view."

"Good!" said Nugent. "I say the same."

"And Bulstrode has done jolly well, considering," went on Harry quietly. "He's had a lot against him, and some of the fellows have been trying to egg him on to make things worse instead of better."

"I suppose that's meant for me," said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, with a sneer. "My opinion is that things are as rotten with Bulstrode as they were with Wharton, and I'd as soon have Bunter for Form-captain as either."

There was a laugh. Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, was the last fellow in the Form who was likely to have a chance. But Bunter was also the last fellow who was likely to realise that. As Vernon-Smith spoke, the fat junior came rolling forward.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's Bunter! You can buzz off, Bunter; there's nothing to eat here."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz away!"

"Look here, you fellows, I think there's a lot in what Vernon-Smith says!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at the grinning Removites through his big spectacles. "I'm quite willing to stand up for election as Form-captain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really—"

"Shove him out!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, I say, you fellows! Oh—ah—yah—yaroo!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter dropped on the floor in the passage outside, and the door was closed upon him. He did not come in again.

"Now, look here, Wharton," said Ogilvy. "I suppose you're going to change your mind."

"No fear."

"We want you to be Form-captain, and give the Highcliffe cads a warm time."

"Leave it to Bulstrode!"

"He's no good!" roared a dozen voices.

"Give him a chance."

"Oh, rats!"

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"You hear what Wharton says!" he exclaimed. "Give me a chance. As for the Highcliffe cads, I'll jolly soon show them what's what, if the Form will back me up."

"Oh, you can talk," said Elliott.

"Yes, I guess Bulstrode can keep his end up, when it comes to jawing," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Give him a chance," said Wharton.

Ogilvy snorted.

"Well, what do you fellows say?" he asked. "Suppose we give Bulstrode a chance, to see whether he can back up against the Highcliffe cads, and if he can't we'll drop him, and have a new election."

"Agreed!"

And with that the matter dropped.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Nice!

"BEGAD!" said Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

"By Jove!" remarked Gadsby.

"It's Bulstrode," said Vavasour.

The three Highcliffe fellows were sitting on a stile in Friardale Lane. Bulstrode of Greyfriars was coming down the lane from the village with his hands in his pockets, his cap on the back of his head, and a wrinkle of great thoughtfulness on his brow. Bulstrode was, in fact, wearing a worried look. He was worried.

The three Highcliffe fellows exchanged a grin. Bulstrode did not see them, and he would pass within a few feet of them as he came on. His eyes were on the ground, and he never thought of looking up.

"Begad!" said Ponsonby. "What a chance! Bulstrode is captain of the Remove over there, you know—skipper of that gang."

"And here he is," said Gadsby. "And here's a nice deep ditch, with plenty of mud and slime in it. What a chance!"

"Absolutely," said Vavasour.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three Highcliffe fellows slipped off the stile, and stood waiting. If Bulstrode saw them, he would guess that their intentions were hostile, and he might dodge them. But when they were off the stile, the thickets hid them from view. They waited, grinning, and Bulstrode came swinging past the thickets into view.

"Collar him!"

Ponsonby rapped out the words.

Bulstrode started, and looked round; but before he could even put up his hands, the three Highcliffe fellows were upon him.

He was seized, and rolled over in a second, and the three of them piled upon him, pinning him down upon his back in the dust.

"Oh!" gasped Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got the cad!"

"Squash him if he wriggles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode was doing more than wriggling. He was struggling desperately. He was a powerful fellow, and the Highcliffians were not athletic, and they had all their work cut out to hold him.

But they were three to one, and they had him down, and they managed it. Ponsonby knelt on him, and Gadsby stood on his legs, and Vavasour caught his wrists, and dragged them up past his head.

"Oh!" gasped Bulstrode again. "Oh, you cads! Leggo!"

"No fear!" said Vavasour breathlessly. "We're going to put you through it, you cad. We're going to knock the Greyfriars Remove sky-high, and we're beginning on you."

"We've licked you at cricket," said Ponsonby, "and we're going to lick you in every other way. We're fed up with Greyfriars swank."

"Let me go!" roared Bulstrode. "I'll fight any two of you, if you let me get on my feet."

Ponsonby chuckled.

"That's just what we're not going to do!" he exclaimed. "We've got you tight, my son, and we're going to keep you so."

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

"Shove him into the ditch," said Gadsby. "Right in! Smother him! We'll send him back to Greyfriars looking a precious sight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode struggled fiercely. That ditch was a deep one, and stagnant in the hot summer weather, and it was thick with slime and green ooze. But he was powerless against the three. They rolled him over in the dust, nearer and

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nearer to the ditch, the Greyfriars junior resisting fiercely all the time.

He got one hand loose, and hit out, and Ponsonby gave a roar as the heavy fist caught him right in the eye.

"Oo-o-o-och!"

Splash!

Ponsonby was on the edge of the ditch, and he toppled over and sat down in the muddy water.

"Yaroo!"

"Br-r-r-r!" gasped Gadsby, as a splash of green slime caught him in the mouth. "Grooh! Oh, you utter ass!"

Ponsonby scrambled out of the ditch. He was soaked and smothered with mud up to his waist, and he was in a furious temper. Bulstrode was struggling, and had nearly got free from Gadsby and Vavasour. Ponsonby threw himself upon him, and pitched him headlong into the ditch.

"There!" he gasped.

"My hat! You are in a state, Pon, old boy!" gasped Gadsby.

"Why didn't you hold his hands, you idiot?" roared Ponsonby.

"Oh, I say!"

"You fathead!"

"Never mind; look at the Greyfriars rotter!"

Ponsonby looked, and in spite of the state of his own clothes he could not help joining in the roar of laughter. Bulstrode had gone right under the slimy water, and he had scrambled up in a shocking state.

From head to foot he was soaked with muddy water. His clothes were covered with mud, and festooned with slime, and ooze, and weeds. His face had disappeared under a curious mixture of green ooze and black mud. His cap was somewhere in the depths of the ditch, and his hair was caked and loaded with slime.

And the scent that Bulstrode brought up from the stagnant depths of the ditch was appalling.

Whiff—whiff!

The Highcliffians suddenly left off laughing, as they caught the scent and staggered back. Vavasour turned quite pale.

"Oh, my aunt!" he gasped.

"Phew! Great Scott!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

Bulstrode was scrambling and struggling furiously out of the ditch. If he had got near the Highcliffians it would have gone hard with some of them, three to one as they were. But they did not wait for him. They had no desire to make a closer acquaintance with the burly Greyfriars junior, especially in his present muddy and highly scented condition.

"Oh, buzz off!" panted Ponsonby. "I shall be ill!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!"

The Highcliffians ran down the lane. Bulstrode dragged himself out of the ditch, leaving a trail of slime and green, rotting weeds after him. He crawled out into the dusty lane, and gasped.

"Ow, ow, ow! Groo! Oh!"

The three Highcliffians were disappearing round the cross-roads. Bulstrode made a few steps after them, and then halted. It was useless to chase the Highcliffians. The scent that was clinging to him made him feel quite faint.

"Oh!" he panted. "Oh!"

He tramped off towards Greyfriars.

He was not very far from the school—the old tower was in sight over the trees. The burly Removite was anxious to get where he could wash himself and get out of his muddy clothes. He squelched out mud and water at every step he took. It was not till he came up to the gates of Greyfriars that he realised what an extremely curious appearance he would present when he arrived.

He was tramping in through the gateway when there was a roar, and Gosling, the porter, planted himself in his path.

"None o' that!" shouted Gosling. "Out you get!"

Bulstrode stopped in surprise.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," went on Gosling angrily—"we don't allow tramps in 'ere, my fine fellow—specially not tramps in such a filthy state! Phew! Whew! Get out! I'd kick you hout only it would make me sick to touch you!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bulstrode.

Gosling staggered back in his amazement. He knew the voice, though the features were quite hidden by thick mud.

"M-m-m-master Bulstrode!" he stuttered.

"Yes, you silly chump! Let me pass!"

Gosling tottered out of the way. Bulstrode tramped in furiously through the gateway, his face scarlet under its coating of mud.

Gosling's shout had drawn several fellows to the spot, and they all stared at Bulstrode. No one recognised him until he spoke.

"My hat," Bob Cherry exclaimed, "what a whiff! What does Gossy mean by letting such an animal in here?"

"Get out, you whiffer!" shouted Ogilvy.

"You chump——"

"Bulstrode!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 176.

NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How on earth did you get into that state?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Bulstrode gasped.

"The Highcliffe cads!"

Then from the Removites rose a yell of indignation, directed, not against the Highcliffe fellows, but against Bulstrode:

"Yah!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker Catches It!

BULSTRODE panted for breath. He was in a dilapidated and exhausted state, in no condition to be ragged by the Remove; but it was very probable that he would have been ragged if he had been fit to touch.

The juniors were utterly exasperated. This was the beginning of their going on the warpath against Highcliffe—their Form captain had been sent home in this state, for the whole school to giggle at. Fellows of all Forms were gathering round—at a respectful distance, because of the scent—and laughing.

Bulstrode was scarlet under the mud—but his blushes could not be seen, there was too much mud. The only colour he showed was green, where the ooze from the ditch clung to his ears and his hair.

"Yah!"

"Look here, you rotters——" said Bulstrode.

"Yah!"

"This is the start," said Ogilvy. "We're going on the warpath, and we're going to wipe up Highcliffe; and this is how Bulstrode begins—by getting sent home in this state!"

"Yah!"

"I'll bet all Highcliffe are grinning over it by this time," said Tom Brown.

"Yes, rather!"

"Yah!"

"But I couldn't help it!" roared Bulstrode. "They were three to one!"

"Yah!"

"I did my best——"

"Yah!"

The Remove evidently were not to be appeased. Bulstrode snorted angrily and marched on, followed by a yell of derision from the fellows. A procession of fags followed him right up to the School House, sniffing emphatically.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth were lounging on the steps, and they struck attitudes of horror as Bulstrode came up.

Temple put his hand over his nose for protection, and waved the other one at Bulstrode.

"Go away!" he shouted.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Buzz off!" gurgled Fry. "You're buzzing too much! Buzz off!"

"You silly asses——"

"Get away!"

Bulstrode tramped furiously on, and the Upper Fourth fellows got away—they didn't want to come into contact with Bulstrode's clothes. Coker of the Fifth was chatting with Potter just inside, and he gasped as Bulstrode came by.

"Great Scott! What's that?"

"Some blessed tramp coming in——"

"It's me," said Bulstrode.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Coker. "What do you mean by coming into the House in this state? If you've been exploring the bottom of some particularly nasty ditch you might wallow in a pond for a bit before coming in. Get out!"

"Rats! I'm going up to the dorm."

"You're not coming into the House in that state," said Coker, who had assumed wonderful airs of authority since getting his remove from the Shell into the Fifth. "You just clear out! Do you hear?"

"Rot!"

Coker gaped.

"I'll jolly well kick you out if you don't!" he shouted.

"Rats! Get out of the way!"

"What?" roared Coker.

"Buzz off, and don't be a silly ass," said Bulstrode.

"My hat! I'll—I'll——"

Bulstrode made a rush for the stairs. Coker was in the way, and he did not shift, so Bulstrode had to run into him. Bulstrode was not sorry to run into him—he wanted to pass on some of his mud and his effluvia to someone else.

He threw his arms round Coker and grasped him, and Coker roared and snorted.

"Ow, ow! Yaroo! Phew! You can go! I'll let you pass, old chap! Let go! Oh, get away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter. "Punch him, Coker—punch him!"

"Groo! He's horrid! He's awful! Yow! Leggo! Yah! I'll give you five bob to let go!" yelled the unfortunate Coker.

But Bulstrode didn't let go. He wound his arms round Coker and embraced him, and held on, while the unfortunate Fifth-Former struggled for liberty and gasped for breath.

"Now then," gasped Bulstrode—"now then, you rotter, how do you like it? Have some more? How do you like that?"

"Gro—hoo!"

"Cave!" shouted Potter.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was coming down the passage. Bulstrode let go, and bolted upstairs in a twinkling.

Coker, dazed and half suffocated, stood rubbing the mud out of his eyes and mouth, and gasping for breath. Mr. Quelch stopped and looked at him, with a severe expression growing upon his face. Bulstrode had transferred a good half of his slime and ooze to Coker, and the stirring of it had intensified the scent of that ooze and slime. Coker was not a nice object now, agreeable to neither eyes or nose.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "Is that you, Coker?"

"Ow! Yes, sir! Groo!"

"How dare you come into the House in that state, Coker!"

"I—I—I— Oh!"

"If you have fallen into a ditch or a pond, Coker, you might at least clean yourself before entering the House!"

Mr. Quelch exclaimed angrily. "I am surprised at you, Coker—you, a senior of the Fifth Form—appearing here in this disgusting state! I say disgusting, sir!"

"I—I—I—"

"Not a word, Coker! I should cane you severely if you were in my Form, sir!" Mr. Quelch exclaimed. "As it is, I command you to report yourself at once to your own Form-master."

"But, sir, I—I— Bulstrode—"

"Go at once to your Form-master, sir!"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"At once!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Coker jumped.

"V-v-v-very well, sir."

"I will see that you do," said Mr. Quelch grimly.

And he watched the Fifth-Former as far as the door of Mr. Prout's study.

Coker reluctantly tapped at the study door, and went in.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was sitting at a table, cleaning a rook rifle. Mr. Prout was supposed to be a great sportsman, and he kept several guns in his study, and when he had ten minutes to spare he was certain to be cleaning them. He looked up at Coker, and laid down the rifle. Then he looked at him again and sniffed.

"Coker! Coker, how dare you?"

"I—I—I—"

"How dare you, sir, come into my study in this state!" shouted Mr. Prout. "Is this a trick, sir—a practical joke worthy only of an especially impudent fag in the Second Form?"

"If you please, sir—"

"I don't please, Coker. If you expected to please me by coming into my study in a disgusting state, Coker, you have most peculiar ideas. Hold out your hand, sir."

"I—I—I—"

"On second thoughts, you need not. Get further away from me at once, sir!" cried Mr. Prout, putting his hand over his nose. "At once, sir! I will not cane you—I refuse to cane so disgusting a boy! Get away!"

Coker backed away, not wholly sorry that he was too disgusting to be caned.

"Go out of my study," said Mr. Prout. "Take five hundred lines, Coker. Bring them to me to-night. Go!"

"May I explain, sir—"

"Certainly not. Go at once. Go! Go! You are horrible, Coker! I am astounded at you! Retire at once. Go!" thundered the Fifth Form-master.

And Coker went, the richer by five hundred lines.

Mr. Prout threw his window wide open, and snorted wrathfully.

Coker tramped away furiously to a bath-room and cleaned himself. Then he went to look for Bulstrode. Bulstrode had some cleaning to do, and Coker expected to find him in the Remove dormitory. And Coker meant to punch Bulstrode hard, and many times.

"You lookee fol someone?"

Coker stopped and looked down at the little Chinese. It was Wun Lung of the Remove—the mild-featured, almond-eyed

little Celestial. He looked at Coker, with a smile that was childlike and bland, and his look did not betray the fact that he had watched the encounter between Bulstrode and Coker and was still inwardly chuckling over it.

"Yes," said Coker. "Where's Bulstrode?"

"You lookee fol Bulstrode?"

"Yes. Where is he?"

"Me savvy."

"Take me to him, then, if you know where he is," said Coker.

"Cokee follow me."

Wun Lung went down to the end of the passage, and opened a study door, and stood aside for Coker to enter. The Fifth-Former passed in unsuspectingly, and in a second the little Chinese had whipped the door shut and locked it on the outside.

Coker roared.

"Hallo! Open that door!"

"No savvy."

"Unlock that door."

"No savvy."

"You Chinese beast!"

"No savvy."

"I'll pulverise you!"

"No savvy."

And then the little Celestial's soft footfalls died away down the passage.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Pax!

BULSTRODE was scrubbing himself in the Remove dormitory. He had tossed his clothes off, and hung them out of the window to air. Then he had to scrub himself all over, and wash his hair two or three times. The scent of that rich ditch was a remarkably clinging one.

It seemed to have an affectionate regard for Bulstrode, and to be determined not to leave him. Bulstrode rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, and murmured things to himself—not nice things. He was in a towering rage, which was not surprising, under the circumstances.

The door opened quietly, and little Wun Lung came in. Bulstrode glared at him. There had been more than one rub between these two, and Wun Lung had generally managed to get his own back when he was rubbed the wrong way. But of late, Bulstrode had been much kinder to the little Chinese. Since he had become Form-captain, Bulstrode's bullying proclivities seemed to have almost disappeared.

And the little Chinese never forgot a kindness. But Bulstrode was not feeling kind at the present moment. He was ready to burst into thunder upon anybody or anything.

"What do you want?" he roared.

"Notting, Bulstrode, pleasee."

"Then get out, you pigtailed worm!"

Wun Lung grinned.

"Me comee—"

"Get out!"

"Me tellee—"

Whiz!

A heavy cake of soap missed the little Chinese's ear by an inch as he dodged. Wun Lung kept a wary eye upon Bulstrode.

"All light," he said. "Me comee tellee, Bulstrode—"

"I'll squash you!" roared Bulstrode, bundling into his clothes. "You wait a minute till I'm dressed, and I'll jump on you!"

"Me waitee."

"You—you—you impudent heathen beast—"

"Me comee tellee Bulstrode Cokee comee."

Bulstrode started.

"You came to tell me what?" he demanded.

"Cokee comee lookee fol Bulstrode."

"Oh!" said Bulstrode.

He realised that the little Chinese had come to do him a service; and he repented of that whizzing cake of soap. The frowns vanished from his face.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" he said. "I'm glad that soap didn't hit you, too."

Wun Lung grinned.

"Allee light," he said.

"Where is Coker now?"

"Me lockee dool on Cokee in Bullee's study."

"My hat! You've locked him in John Bull's study?"

"What you tinkee?"

Bulstrode burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He makee muchee noisee, yellee and kickee dool," grinned Wun Lung. "Allee light; no gettee outee. What you tinkee?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode finished dressing in haste. Then he hurried down



Oo-o-o-och! As Bulstrode's heavy fist caught him in the eye, Ponsonby gave a roar, and toppled over into the muddy ditch—splash! (See page 5.)

to the Remove passage. Coker certainly was making a noise in No. 14 Study. There were two fellows outside making a noise too. They were John Bull and Fisher T. Fish. The study belonged to them, and they had come to it to find the door locked, and Coker kicking away furiously at the panels inside.

"Open this door!" John Bull shouted through the keyhole. "What do you mean by locking us out of our study, you Fifth-Form bounder?"

"Open this door!" roared back Coker.

"I guess we can't without a key."

John Bull kicked on the door, and so did Coker. The door shook and rattled. Bulstrode burst into a laugh as he came up.

"It's all right," he said. "Coker can't open it—he's locked in, and Wun Lung's got the key."

"Allee lightee; me lockee."

"What do you mean by locking bounders in my study?" demanded John Bull.

"I guess it's cheek."

"He was after me," said Bulstrode, "and Wun Lung locked him in. And he's jolly well going to stop there till he comes to reason."

Coker yelled through the keyhole.

"Let me out! I've got lines to do!"

"Are you going to make it pax?"

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

"No!" roared Coker.

"You won't get out till you do, and till you say you're sorry you came here bothering the Remove," said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

"I'll wreck the study if you don't."

"All right. It's not my study."

"I guess—"

Crash! crash!

"My hat, that won't do!" exclaimed John Bull. "He's smashing up our props. Look here, you'll have to let him out."

"I guess so, rather!"

"No lettee out till makce pax."

Crash! crash!

The furniture in No. 14 Study was being tumbled about in the most reckless manner. The looking-glass had evidently gone, and it sounded as if a chair had been crashed upon it. John Bull and Fisher T. Fish were naturally getting excited. It was their happy home that was getting broken up.

"Let him out!" shouted John Bull. "We'll collar him and bump him as he comes out. There are enough of us to do it."

"Oh, all right. Unlock the door, kid."

"Me savvy."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Wun Lung inserted the key and unlocked the door. The crashing in the study stopped as the juniors threw the door open. The room was a picture! All the furniture was upset, and most of the breakable part of it was broken.

Coker glared at the Removites, and they glared at him.

"You hooligan!" roared John Bull.

"You hobo!"

Coker rushed at the doorway. The Removites collared him and clung to him; but the Fifth-Former was a powerful fellow. He dragged the four of them out into the passage with him as they clung.

But there he went down.

Coker rolled on the linoleum, and the four Removites rolled on him. The Fifth-Former was overwhelmed by numbers.

"Bump him!" gasped Bulstrode.

"You bet!"

"All lightee."

Coker was grasped and swung off the floor. He gasped and struggled, but he was bumped all the same.

Bump! bump!

"Will you make it pax now?" demanded Bulstrode.

"Ow! ow! ow! No!"

"Is it pax?"

"Ow! No!"

Bump! bump!

"Ow! It's pax! I make it pax! Yow! Leggo!"

"Sorry you came here?"

"I—I—ow! Yes."

"Awfully sorry?"

"Yow—yes!"

"Good! Let the bounder go."

Coker staggered to his feet, very flustered and dusty and furious. Bulstrode pointed down the passage with quite a lordly gesture.

"Buzz off!" he exclaimed.

"You—you cheeky fag—"

"Buzz off! No Fifth-Form bounders allowed in this passage," said Bulstrode loftily, "and I can tell you we're going to keep the Fifth Form in their places. There's too much swank about the Fifth."

Coker was almost suffocating with rage. But he had made it pax, and he was a fellow of his word. He tramped away down the passage, snorting with fury.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jevver get left?" roared Fisher T. Fish.

Coker made no reply to that question. He tramped away, still snorting, and disappeared down the stairs.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something Like an Idea!

HARRY WHARTON and Frank Nugent were busy at their prep. in No. 1 Study, when Bulstrode knocked at the door and came in. Wharton nodded, and Frank Nugent pushed out a chair with his foot without getting up.

"Can I speak to you a minute, Wharton?" Bulstrode asked.

"Go ahead."

"I don't want to interrupt you."

"It's all right; pile in."

Bulstrode did not sit down. He stood with his hands in his pockets, his broad shoulders leaning on the mantelpiece.

"In the first place, I want to say I'm obliged to you for standing up for me as you did to-day," he said.

"That's all right; it was only fair play."

"I don't get fair play from all of them," Bulstrode said moodily. "I've done my best, I believe, but I don't seem to make a howling success of it as Form-captain. You'd do a lot of harm if you turned rusty."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I sha'n't do that," he said. "You can depend on me to back you up."

"It's jolly decent of you."

"Thanks."

"I mean it," said Bulstrode, "especially after the way you were shifted out."

"Oh, that's all over now!"

"A good many of the fellows backed me up then, to give you a hard dig—fellows like Vernon-Smith," said Bulstrode. "He wants to start having high-jinks now, smoking in the studies, and little parties going to the Cross Keys, and I've got his back up because I've jumped on it."

"Well, you might really have expected that," said Nugent. "The Bounder didn't back you up against Wharton out of brotherly love."

"I suppose not," Bulstrode said, with a rueful grin. "Well, now I'm captain, I'm going to do my best. I want to go for the Highcliffe cads. I shall never hear the end of that ducking until I've settled Ponsonby & Co."

"Probably not."

"Got any idea?" asked Bulstrode. "The cads are always

careful to give us a wide berth, you know, and they won't fight unless they're two or three to one. I don't see how we're to get at them."

"Well, it's not easy."

"If you could suggest anything—"

Wharton could not help smiling. He was to think things out, and manage, just as if he were still Form-captain, and Bulstrode was to reap all the glory. But Harry was a generous fellow, and he did not mind.

"What about raiding their place?" he asked.

Bulstrode started.

"Raiding Highcliffe?"

"Yes."

"My hat! That's a big order!"

"I know it is; but it's the only way to get at fellows like the Highcliffe cads. To-morrow's a half-holiday, and we could do it. Take over the whole blessed Remove, and raid them. Wipe them up in the quadrangle, and invade the Fourth Form studies and wreck them."

"By Jove!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "It's a ripping idea. The Highcliffe cads won't be thinking of anything of the sort."

"Not much!"

"I'll do it!" exclaimed Bulstrode, with sparkling eyes. "I'll do it! The fellows will have to back me up, after the way they've hauled me over the coals for not doing something."

"Yes, rather!"

"Thanks, awfully, Wharton! You're a good sort, and no mistake!"

And Bulstrode quitted the study, with a satisfied grin upon his face. A raid upon Highcliffe was, as he had said, a big order; but that would make it all the more impressive. If it came off successfully, Bulstrode's reputation as a leader was established.

Bulstrode went down to the junior common-room.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "See the conquering hero comes! Been exploring any more ditches Bulstrode?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jevver get left?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, Bulstrode's thinking of sending a petition to Highcliffe, begging them to let us off lightly and allow us to exist," said Ogilvy.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I've got an idea," said Bulstrode. "I've formed a plan. You fellows have been chipping me a great deal because the Highcliffe cads have been crowing. Well, now you can all back me up in getting our own back on them."

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Brown. "I'm ready, for one!"

"What's the wheeze?" demanded Skinner.

"We're going to raid Highcliffe."

"Raid Highcliffe!"

"My hat!"

"Not the school?"

"Yes, the school!"

"Great Scott!"

"Ripping!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We'll make them sit up! Hurrah!"

"What rot!" said Skinner. "We shall get caned. The headmaster is sure to report us to Dr. Locke if we do anything of the sort."

"Let him report!"

"We may get sacked."

"Yes, rather!" said Snoop.

Bulstrode laughed rather unpleasantly.

"You've been chipping me as much as anybody about not going for them," he said. "Now you can back me up. As for getting sacked, I don't think that's likely; but anyway, I run most risk, as I shall be considered the ringleader."

"That's so," said Hazeldene. "I'll back you up, for one."

"And I, rather!" said John Bull.

"And I!"

"And all of us!" said Bob Cherry. "It's a ripping idea!"

"It's rotten!" said Skinner.

"Oh, you can stay out if you're afraid."

"I'm not afraid. Only—"

"Only rats!"

"Bosh!"

"We'll go!"

"Hurrah!"

And it was settled almost unanimously.

ANSWERS

READ the special complete tale of "CORONATION DAY AT ST. JIM'S," contained in this week's "GEM" Library. Price 1d.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 176.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Expedition.

THERE was some excitement in the Remove the next day.

It was a half-holiday that day, and the half-holiday was to be employed in the expedition against Highcliffe. The Removites could talk of nothing else, and they were making all sorts of preparations. The matter was kept a secret to the Remove. The Fourth and Fifth knew nothing about it. And, needless to say, the Sixth were very carefully kept in the dark. If the prefects had got wind of the scheme, the Removites would have found themselves very speedily detained for the afternoon, probably with a few hundred lines each to do.

Whether the plan would have met with the approval of older heads the juniors did not know, and did not much care. They were keen to get level with the Highcliffe fellows for many insults and many injuries, and they really had no other chance. Ponsonby & Co. did not play the game. It was useless challenging them to fight, with or without gloves. They declined. It was useless to go out and look for them. Unless they were in strong numbers they would never face the foe. All the time, however, that they avoided any test of their boasted superiority, they swanked in the most exasperating manner, and made no secret of their fixed opinion that the earth was really hardly good enough for them to walk on.

It was no wonder that the Greyfriars fellows had their backs up. The Highcliffians were the kind of fellows who would mob a cricket team that won on their ground, though they were deep enough to bring it about in a way that made them appear the injured party. Personal dislike was added to the rivalry between the two schools, and the Removites were in a peculiarly exasperated state of mind, from being treated with contempt by fellows whom they heartily despised.

The expedition was the only thing on that day. The fellows talked of nothing else; and, judging from the number of lines given out by Mr. Quelch in the morning, they thought more of it than of their lessons.

In the eyes of the Greyfriars Remove, all other expeditions in history faded into insignificance beside it. What was the celebrated "going up" of Xenophon and his comrades, or the marching of the Seven against Thebes, in comparison with the "going up" of the Remove against Highcliffe?

The preparations made by the Removites would have alarmed the Highcliffians if they could have seen them. Stuffed stockings and socks were the chief weapons, it being, unfortunately, impossible to take pillows and bolsters. Some of the fellows meant to go with cricket-stumps under their arms, to use if the Highcliffians used similar weapons—as they probably would if they had the chance.

Glad enough were the Remove when school was dismissed. Even cricket practice was dropped for the sake of the expedition against Highcliffe. About two o'clock the juniors were marshalled in the Close.

Other fellows gathered round, to inquire where they were going.

"Out!" was the rather unsatisfactory reply to such questions.

Billy Bunter was very keen to know. He had been kept in the dark, as he was a hopeless chatterer and tale-bearer. When he saw nearly the whole Form marching down to the gates, the fat junior rolled after them as fast as he could roll. He could only imagine that some gigantic picnic was being planned, from which he was to be excluded. And Billy Bunter did not mean to be excluded if he could help it. Wherever feeding of any sort was going on, that was the place for Bunter.

"I say, you fellows!" he panted, breathlessly, overtaking the Removites at the gates. "I'm coming with you, you know!"

"Fall in, then," said Ogilvy.

"I'm jolly well not going to be left out!" said Bunter.

"Where is the grub?"

"The what?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"The grub."

"What grub?"

"The grub for the picnic, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Bunter, with a snort. "I suppose there is going to be some grub, isn't there?"

"Ha, ha! It's not a picnic!"

"Not a picnic!"

"No, you fat duffer!"

"Then what is it?"

"An expedition."

"A w-w-w-what?"

"That's what D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, would call it. An expedition, in full."

"An expedition! Where are you going?"

"Highcliffe."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 176.

NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"But we ain't on good terms with Highcliffe," said Billy Bunter, puzzled. "How can you be going to Highcliffe for a feed?"

Bob Cherry roared.

"My hat! He thinks nobody can go anywhere any time excepting for a feed! He's got feeds on the brain!"

"I suppose you're not going over to Highcliffe for nothing?" demanded Billy Bunter peevishly.

"It's an expedition. We're on the giddy warpath."

"Do you mean to say it's a fight?"

"Exactly."

"And no feed at all?"

"Just so."

"Well, of all the silly asses——"

"Eh?"

"Of all the blessed idiots," said Bunter, in measured tones, "of all the unholy dummies, I think the Greyfriars Remove takes the cake!"

"You cheeky porpoise——"

"Look here, I believe you're pulling my leg," said Bunter. "I don't believe even you, Bob Cherry, would be ass enough to walk over to Highcliffe unless there was a feed!"

"Why, I—I——"

"I'm jolly well coming!"

"Oh, do come, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "Come, by all means! We're only too glad to have you on this particular picnic."

"Oh, really, Wharton, you know, that's rather decent of you! I suppose there aren't going to be any girls there, though?"

"Not likely!"

"H'm!" said Bunter, sniffing. "I guessed that! If Marjorie and Clara were there, you'd be too jolly jealous to take a good-looking chap with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter.

"Got your pocket-mirror, Fishy?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yep. What for?"

"Show it to Bunter. He says he can't see anything to cackle at, and we can. Lend him your mirror and make matters right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter grunted, and tramped on with the juniors down the road to Highcliffe. In spite of the assurances given him, Bunter could not quite believe that the juniors were going over to Highcliffe simply to settle accounts, in a fistic sense, with Ponsonby & Co.

Bunter meant to be in it, whatever was going on. He cast a self-satisfied smirk at Harry Wharton & Co. as they came in sight of the gates of Highcliffe. The big, red-brick school stood out with a glare in the hot June sun.

"Come on, Bunter," said Bob Cherry kindly. "You mustn't miss this!"

"I'm jolly well not going to, I can assure you," said Bunter.

And the fat junior marched in at the gates with the rest.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Raiders.

PONSONBY & CO. were lounging about the grassy quad. The Highcliffe juniors were a set of slackers, and were very seldom known to "buck up," even at cricket or footer.

At footer, Greyfriars had always licked them hopelessly. At cricket, they had always, or nearly always, been licked until the last match, when the Removites, under Bulstrode's lead, had had the worst of it. But they had bucked up on that occasion for reasons that were far from sportsmanlike. They had had big bets depending on the game, and, as Ponsonby had said to his comrades, they simply couldn't afford to lose. For the cheerful youths of Highcliffe were very much given to laying the odds. Fellows in the Fourth Form there imitated the manners and customs of the "bounders" of the Sixth and the Sixth Form at Highcliffe was fast very fast indeed.

On this sunny June afternoon Ponsonby had nothing better to do than to stand with his back against the trunk of an elm, and smoke a cigarette. The tree was between him and the school, so that he felt safe from observation from a master; though, as a matter of fact, the Highcliffe masters were not very strict in those matters.

The headmaster was a short-sighted, studious old gentleman, who was deeply interested in producing a new edition of "Horace," and he devoted most of his time to that valuable work. While he was looking after Q. Horatius Flaccus, Highcliffe School was gradually going to "rot." The other masters followed the example of slacking. The Sixth slacked, and the Lower Forms were not slow to follow the example of the Sixth.

Which enabled the Fourth Form to have what they regarded as a "high old time"; though whether that high old time was likely to be of benefit to them in the long run was a question Ponsonby & Co. never took the trouble of considering.

Ponsonby blew out a cloud of smoke, and watched it curl upwards. As he watched it his eyes fell upon the school gates, and he started.

"Begad!"

Ponsonby always said "Begad!" instead of "My hat!"

"What's the matter?" said Vavasour lazily. "Give a chap a light, and shut up!"

"The Greyfriars bounders!"

"What?"

"Look!"

Ponsonby jerked up what was left of his cigarette to point. Greyfriars juniors were streaming in at the gates.

"What on earth do they want?" said Gadsby.

"Looking for trouble, perhaps," Merton remarked.

"Then they'll find it—"

"So shall we, if we stop here," said Ponsonby. "We may as well get indoors, I think, and let the Sixth look after them."

Gadsby yawned.

"Yaas; it's too hot to-day for fighting," he said.

"Come on, then."

The juniors strolled towards the house. They felt very much inclined to run, but they could not do that, for appearances' sake. But they strolled very fast.

That the intentions of the Greyfriars fellows were hostile was pretty clear. They came upon Gadsby major, of the Sixth, as soon as they were fairly inside the gates.

Gadsby major waved a lofty hand at them.

"Get out!" he shouted.

"Yah!"

It was the warcy of the Greyfriars Remove. And they came straight at the Highcliffe prefect.

Gadsby major stared at them blankly. He did not really think that juniors—fellows from another school, too—would venture to touch him Gadsby major, of the Sixth, a prefect, and really a very great man.

But they did.

They came right at him with a rush, and Gadsby major, prefect and Sixth-Former as he was, was bumped over in a twinkling.

He gave a wild roar.

"Oh! Ow! Hellup!"

"Bump him!" roared Bulstrode.

"Hurrah!"

"Down with Highcliffe!"

Bump, bump!

A prefect bumped, in broad daylight, in the quad. at Highcliffe, and by juniors from another school!

It was incredible—but true.

The Greyfriars left Gadsby major trying to collect his wits, and rolling over in the dust, and rushed on.

Seniors and juniors who came into their path were seized and bumped over, and left sprawling.

The alarm quickly spread.

Highcliffe fellows gathered round, some of them to yell, and some of them to fight; but there were forty of the Greyfriars, all in a determined humour, and sticking well together.

They carried all before them.

They caught sight of Ponsonby & Co. making for the house, and tried to intercept them; but at the last minute Ponsonby's stroll changed to a run, and the Highcliffians dashed into cover.

The Greyfriars reached the door as the last of the Highcliffians disappeared inside.

Bulstrode waved his hand.

"After them!" he shouted.

"Hurrah!"

"Follow them to their holes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in, Greyfriars!"

It was awful cheek—there was no doubt about that—but the Greyfriars Remove had always been famous for their cheek. They rushed in.

Ponsonby was halfway up the stairs, and he turned, almost horrified at what he saw.

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"Great Scott! They're coming in!"

"My hat!"

"Oh! Run for it!"

The Highcliffians could have held the staircase against big odds if they had had the nerve, but they hadn't.

They dashed up the stairs desperately, to escape.

"After them!" roared Bulstrode.

"Hurrah!"

"Run!" yelled Ponsonby.

He dashed into his study and slammed the door, nearly slamming Gadsby and Vavasour across the passage. The yell of the invaders was on the stairs. Gadsby beat on the door and shrieked.

"Let us in—let us in!"

Gadsby and Vavasour shoved their way in, and then Ponsonby slammed the door again. But by that time Bulstrode and Wharton were on the spot.

Bump!

Bulstrode threw his powerful shoulders against the door, and it flew open. The three Highcliffians went reeling across the study.

The Greyfriars rushed in.

Gadsby, Vavasour, and Ponsonby drew into the furthest corner, and put up their hands in a scared, helpless way. There was little left now of the "swank" they had shown when they were dealing with Bulstrode singly in Friardale Lane.

There was plenty of time for the Highcliffians to rally and bring overwhelming numbers against the invaders, but they were too scared. They seemed to have no nerve left. And their leaders—Ponsonby & Co.—were penned up in their study, more like frightened geese than like the well-known swankers of Highcliffe.

"Collar them!" roared Bulstrode.

"Ke-e-e-ep off!" panted Ponsonby.

"Go away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars rushed on.

Ponsonby & Co. hit out feebly, but they were seized, swung off their feet, and bumped down on the carpet in a second.

There they whimpered.

"Yow! Leggo!"

"Let us alone!"

"Get out!"

"My hat!" Bob Cherry ejaculated. "Where is all the Highcliffe swank now?"

"Echo answers, 'Where?'" grinned John Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're going to have what I had, only a bit thicker," said Bulstrode. "Give me the ink."

"Good!"

"It's only tit for tat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode emptied the ink bottle over the three Highcliffians. Then he hunted round the study, and found a bottle of gum, and a pot of jam, and another of marmalade. He turned the contents over the struggling, yelling Ponsonby & Co. Then a shovelful of thick soot from the chimney was added, and the state of Ponsonby & Co. was simply terrific. The state of Bulstrode, when he had crawled out of the ditch at Friardale, was really nothing to it.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry gasped. "What giddy pictures! Have you chaps had enough?"

"Ow!"

"Do you admit that Greyfriars is top dog?"

"Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving Ponsonby & Co. writhing and wriggling, and snorting and sniffing, the Removites of Greyfriars tramped out of the study. Up and down the Fourth-Form passage the invaders were raging, and the Highcliffians were fleeing on all sides.

A master had come dashing upstairs, and the Greyfriars, emboldened by success, had pushed him into a study and locked him in.

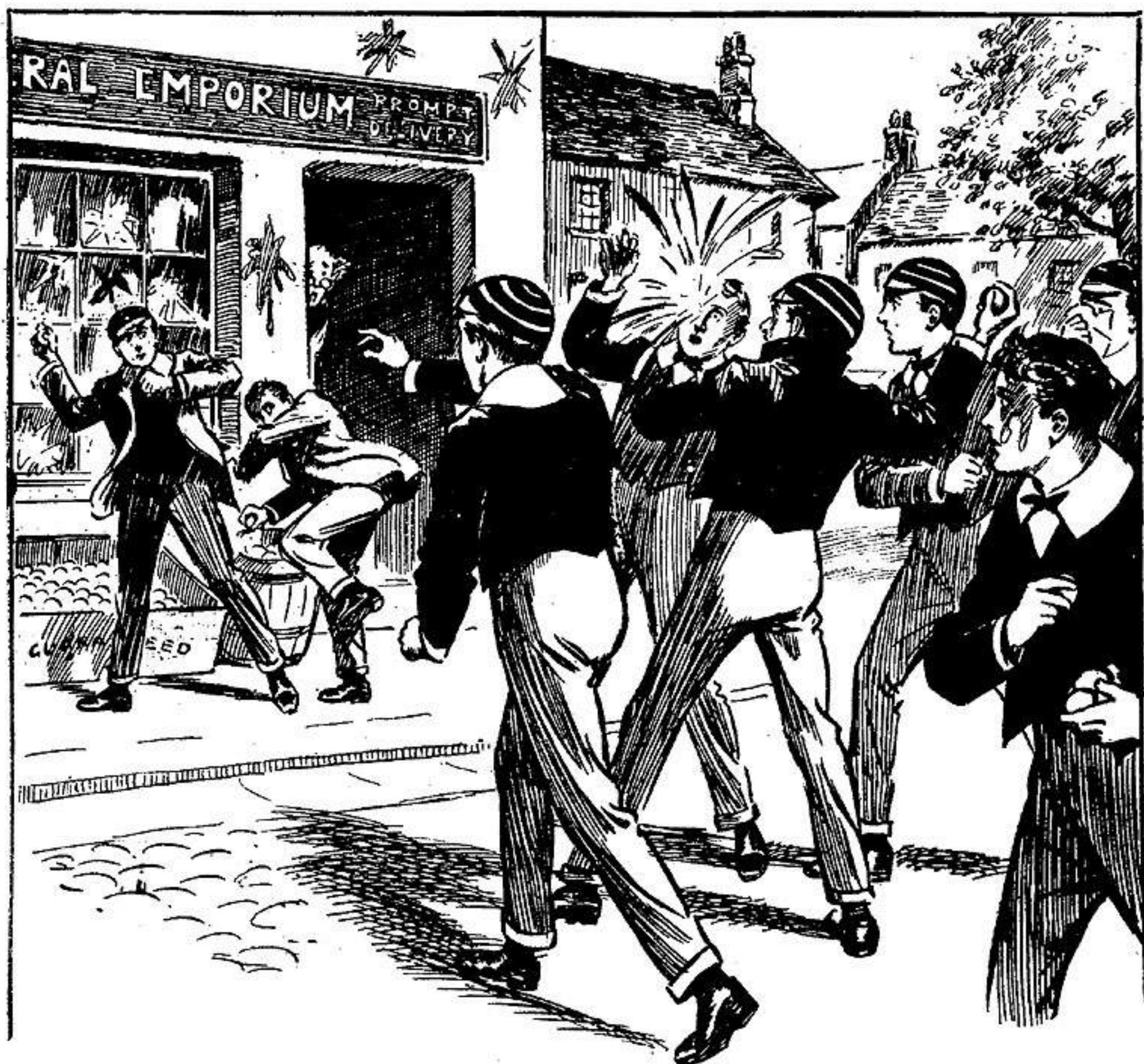
Then they proceeded to turn out the studies.

Work of that kind did not take the Greyfriars Removites long. It was easy to devastate.

Chairs and tables were pitched out into the passage, soot and ashes were flung round the studies, and ink sprinkled with a liberal hand.

The Remove were in earnest.

They were not likely ever to get into Highcliffe School again, and they meant to leave their mark while they were there—with a vengeance! And they did!



"Pelt them!" roared Jack Blake, and Tom Merry & Co. pelted away wildly. Biff! Splash! Eggs spattered upon the shop-front round the two Grammarians, and they spattered upon the Grammarians too! (A lively scene in the special, long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "Coronation Day at St. Jim's," in this week's "Gem" Library. Order to-day. Price One Penny.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Regular Rag.

BULSTRODE and his followers spent just five minutes in the Fourth-Form passage at Highcliffe.

It was not long, but it was long enough. Then they crowded out.

It would not do to remain too long. Even the Highcliffe fellows, craven as they were, would rally when they realised that they had overwhelming numbers on their side, and that there were only two score of the invaders.

Leaving the whole of the Fourth-Form passage, and especially Ponsonby's study, a wreck, the Removites crowded out.

Two or three big fellows of the Sixth tried to bar their way out, but they were speedily bumped over, and the Remove marched into the quad.

Bulstrode looked over his men.

"All here?" he asked.

"Adsum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All excepting Bunter," said Harry Wharton looking over the crowd. "I suppose he bolted at once as soon as he knew that it was a fight."

"You bet!" said Fisher T. Fish.

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Bulstrode laughed breathlessly.

"I suppose so. We'd better retreat now; no good waiting for the whole School to pile on us. I think we've given Highcliffe a lesson."

"Yes, rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"March then!"

"I say, is it certain about Bunter being gone?" said Mark Linley, rather anxiously. "It would be just like him to get his head into a cupboard, and forget it was time to go."

"He'll have to take his chance of that," said Bulstrode. "I'll give the signal, anyway."

Bulstrode put his fingers to his mouth, and gave a shrill, piercing whistle. It was the signal agreed upon to call the Greyfriars fellows together if they were dispersed. But there was no reply to it.

"Bunter's gone, all right," said Nugent. "Besides, we know jolly well that he wouldn't take a hand in a fight."

"I guess not."

"Faith, and ye're right," said Micky Desmond. "I remember seeing him in the passage, but I didn't see him doing any fighting intirely."

"Come on, then!"

The Remove marched down to the gates. The High-

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

cliffians were gathering round with threatening looks, but the Greyfriars marched on unconcernedly. They little feared a rush from the enemy.

They had just reached the gates, when there was a wild yell from behind.

"I say, you fellows!"

The Remove halted.

"Bunter!"

"That dummy, Bunter!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors looked round in alarm. Billy Bunter came into sight, flying across the quad. at a wonderful speed for one so fat and clumsy. His eyes were blinking wildly behind his big spectacles.

"Help! Yow! Help!"

The Highcliffians were closing in to intercept the fugitive. There was a big smear of jam on Billy Bunter's fat face, and his hands were sticky with it. Bunter had evidently forgotten time and space, so to speak, in burying himself in some well-supplied study cupboard, and he had realised his danger too late.

The Highcliffians were crowding round in dozens now, and they were wild with rage. Bunter by himself was an easy victim. They closed upon him and collared him.

Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour were still in their study. In the state they were in, they did not want to be seen, and they were too utterly spent with their struggles to move, as a matter of fact.

But the Highcliffians, strong in numbers, were assuming a very threatening appearance, and it looked dangerous for the Removites to venture into the quad. again, with the odds four or five to one against them.

Bunter was caught—and a crowd of Highcliffians surged between him and his friends. The fat junior yelled for help.

"I say, you fellows—help! Ow! Yow! Don't shake me like that, Merion, you beast! You'll make my glasses fall off! Ow! And if they get broken, you'll have to pay for them! Ow! Yaroooh! Oh!"

"Bump the cad!" shrieked Merton.

"Squash him!" yelled Monson.

"Roll him over!"

"Ow! Help! Rescue! I s-s-say, you f-f-fellows——"

Bump, bump, bump!

The Removites wheeled round. Bunter was a hopeless outsider, it was true; and he had got into trouble through his usual greediness, and he had not obeyed the signal. But the Removites felt that they could not leave a Greyfriars fellow in the hands of the enemy.

Bunter was likely to suffer pretty severely, if they did. The Highcliffians would make him suffer for what they had taken at the hands of the rest of the Remove.

"We must rescue the beast," said Bob Cherry.

"Yes—yes."

"Come on!" said Bulstrode.

And the Remove charged back at the Highcliffians.

The latter had not expected the charge; but they closed up to meet it. In a minute there was a wild and whirling fight in progress in the quad.

Harry Wharton reached Bunter, and dragged him out of the grasp of Monson and Merton.

The fat junior was gasping and snorting.

"Ow! Save me! Yow! Oh! Rescue! I s-s-s-say——"

"Come on! Run!"

"Ow! Yow! I——"

"Run, you fat idiot!"

"Oh, really——"

"Run!"

Wharton gave Bunter a kick to start him, and the fat junior bolted for the gates. The fight was going on furiously, and the din was terrific. The Removites retreated for the gates again, but the Highcliffians had rallied well now, and they pursued and attacked all the way.

In the gateway, Harry Wharton & Co. turned at bay.

Then the Highcliffians fell back, cowed, and the Remove marched out unmolested into the road.

They sent back the Remove yell at the baffled Highcliffians.

"Yah!"

Then they marched down the road.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, mopping his brow. "My only hat! That was warm while it lasted!"

"Faith, and ye're right—and it's a couple of beautiful black eyes I have to take home to Greyfriars," said Micky Desmond.

"I don't believe my nose will ever come straight again," mumbled Ogilvy.

"Well, it never was very straight, was it?" said Nugent innocently.

"You silly ass——"

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm hurt," groaned Bunter. "I—"

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I'm afraid I can't walk, you know. I—I think you had better carry me home. Oh!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!"

"Groo! I'm fearfully injured! I think I shall expire if I try to walk. I think some of you fellows might have the decency to carry me. Ow!"

Bob Cherry winked at John Bull.

"Lend a hand, Bull," he said.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Mind how you lift me," said Bunter feebly. "You know how delicate I am, owing more than anything else to want of proper nourishment. I never get enough to eat. Mind how you take hold of me."

"Oh, we'll be awfully careless—I mean careful!"

"Gently—please—remember I'm delicate."

Bob Cherry and John Bull lifted the fat junior very carefully. Then they let him drop upon the road. It was a drop of about a foot, but it jarred Bunter very much, and he gave a terrific yell.

"Ow!"

"Well, you clumsy ass," said Bob Cherry, "what did you want to fall down for?"

"Yaroooh! You let go! Ow!"

"I know I did, but you might have waited a second for me to take hold again."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

"You—you awful beast!" spluttered Bunter. "Ow! Get away!"

"Don't you want to be carried?"

"Yow! No! Gerroff!"

And Billy Bunter walked back to Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Dastardly Scheme.

PONSONBY sat upon the carpet in his study and groaned. Vavasour sat up, and gave back groan for groan. Gadsby still lay extended on the floor. He had not recovered enough breath, yet, to groan with.

"M-m-my hat!" said Vavasour. "M-m-my only summer hat!"

"Begad!"

"Fancy their cheek in coming here—here!"

"It's unspeakable!"

"Absolutely!" groaned Vavasour.

"Ow! I feel horrible! How do I look?"

"Rotten!"

"Well, you look a fearful sight, anyway."

"How do you feel, Gaddy?"

Gadsby sat up at last, and groaned.

"Horrible!" he gasped.

"You look it, too!"

The three heroes of Highcliffe looked at one another. There was no doubt that they did look horrible. On the occasion when they had ducked Bulstrode in the foul ditch, they had not taken any regard of his clothes, or of anything else. They had done their worst. Bulstrode had more than repaid them now.

The three Fourth-Formers of Highcliffe reeked with ink, and soot, and jam, and gum. Their clothes were utterly spoiled—their hair was stuck in matted knots with gum and jam, their faces were blackened, their features hidden by ink and soot. They had never been in such a state before, and they looked, and felt—and were—horrible!

Ponsonby ground his teeth.

He did not care to reflect that it was only tit for tat—that he had been done unto as he had done to others. The shame and humiliation of his defeat, in his own study, among his own friends, rankled bitterly in his breast, and it added to his spite and anger to think that if he had had the courage to put up a good fight, and the others had had the courage to back him up, the Greyfriars raid would never have been a success.

It had been a success—a complete success—but it was owing quite as much to Highcliffe poltroonery as to anything else.

And it was that that rankled.

"We'll make them suffer for this!" groaned Gadsby.

"Oh! My head!"

"Ow! My nose!"

"I've got a black eye!"

"I'm black all over!"

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Groo!"

Two or three faces looked in at the study door, and there was a yell of laughter. Most of the Highcliffians had been roughly handled. But no one looked such a sight as the three occupants of Ponsonby's study.

"Oh, look at them!" howled Monson. "Look at them! My hat!"

"Pretty pictures, I must say!" said Merton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby glared at them.

"Oh, get out!" he growled. "We were taken by surprise—"

"Nuff to surprise anybody to see you now! Ha, ha, ha!"

"We had no chance—"

"Rats!"

"They were a dozen to three."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Monson. "We were a hundred against forty or so, and we ought to have simply eaten them."

"If you had backed me up!"

Monson sniffed contemptuously.

"If you had tried to lead, instead of sneaking into your study to get out of danger, you mean," he sneered.

"Look here—"

"Oh, rats; you've got it in the neck, and you deserved it."

And many more fellows looked into the study to say things to the same effect. Ponsonby crawled to the door and slammed it, and turned the key.

"Nice, isn't it?" he snarled.

"All your fault," said Gadsby savagely.

"Well, I like that! How is it my fault?"

"You're our blessed leader, ain't you?"

"Lot of good trying to lead you," sneered Ponsonby. "You turned as white as chalk when you found the Greyfriars chaps were chasing us into the house."

"It's a lie!" yelled Gadsby furiously.

"It's the truth, and you know it."

"Shut up," said Vavasour. "What's the good of ragging one another? What we've got to think of, is how to get level with the Greyfriars brutes."

"Well, that's so; but—"

"As a matter of fact, we didn't cut any figure as heroes, any of us," said Vavasour. "We—we were taken by surprise. Who'd have thought the Greyfriars beasts would have had the cheek to come here? That was the reason."

"Quite so."

"We couldn't do anything," said Ponsonby. "We hadn't an earthly, under the circumstances."

"I think we could do something now," said Gadsby angrily.

"Our Head ought to complain to Dr. Locke, and get the young scoundrels flogged."

Ponsonby nodded.

"Well, yes, there's something in that."

"The Head's sure to take the matter up, if we complain," said Gadsby. "Why, the thing's unheard-of—unspeakable—raiding chaps in their own school, and wrecking their studies. It's trespass—it's jolly near burglary! Ow!"

"Yes, rather! What do you think, Vav?"

Vavasour sniffed.

"I think if we don't want to look bigger asses than we look at present, we'd better leave the Head out of it," he said curtly. "Nice blessed fools we should look, I must say. Fancy all Greyfriars chortling over it. We allowed forty fellows to whip us in our own school, and we're nearly two hundred—then we went sneaking to our headmaster to complain, because we were afraid to revenge ourselves. Pah!"

"Well, it would look a bit rotten, I suppose."

"I should say so."

"But we've got to do something!" shouted Gadsby. "Do you think I'm going to take this lying down?"

"You took a great deal lying down," sneered Vavasour.

"I didn't notice you trying to get up while the Greyfriars chaps were here."

"Look here, Vavasour—"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Ponsonby. "I've got an idea!"

The other two turned to him at once. A peculiar expression had come over Ponsonby's face—an expression so cunning, and so evil, that it startled the other two. With his face in its inky, gummy, disfigured state, that strange, evil expression made his look almost terrible.

"Well, what is it?" asked Gadsby, in a subdued voice.

Ponsonby rose to his feet. He went to the door, and listened, as if to make sure that no one was outside to hear. Then he came back softly towards the others, and spoke in low, scarcely audible tones.

"I've got 'em!"

"Got whom?"

"Those infernal cads!" said Ponsonby. "Bulstrode—for choice—Bulstrode, the beast who gave you a black eye—and you a swelled nose—and me a dose of gum down the neck! Bulstrode, the leader of those cads—I've got him!"

"That's all very well—but how have you got him?"

"He's a thief!"

"What!"

"They raided us, under pretence of a japo," said Ponsonby deliberately. "But it was really because Bulstrode knew we had a lot of money in this study—"

"What!"

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"And under pretence of sacking the study, Bulstrode took my banknotes out of the drawer of my table—"

"What!" yelled Gadsby.

"And he's taken them away."

Gadsby and Vavasour were trembling with excitement now.

"B-b-but did you see him?" stammered Vavasour.

"We all three saw him turn out the drawer of the table," said Ponsonby.

"Ye-es; he just pulled it out, and let all the things drop on the floor—that was all," said Gadsby. "I saw him do that."

"It would have been jolly easy for him to pick up a couple of banknotes that were lying in it."

"Yes; but—"

"But he didn't," said Vavasour.

"Yes, he did."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes!"

"My hat! You saw him?"

"Yes—and so did you and Gaddy!"

Vavasour turned pale under the ink and the soot.

"Look here, what are you getting at, Pon?" he demanded.

"Gaddy and I didn't see anything of the sort; and I don't believe you did, either."

Ponsonby grinned.

"Never mind what we saw or didn't see," he replied.

"It's not a question of that. It's a question of what we say we saw; and what we can prove."

"You think you can prove that Bulstrode took two banknotes from your drawer?"

"Yes. I had two banknotes—two fivers—you remember those we got from Banks, over the cricket-match when we beat Greyfriars—"

"Yes; they're our common property—not yours."

"That's all right; I've been keeping them," said Ponsonby—"and here they are!"

He opened his pocket-book, and took out the two crisp banknotes. They rustled in his fingers as he opened them out.

"B-b-but you said that Bulstrode took them!" stammered Gadsby.

"So he did; we're going to prove it." Ponsonby put the banknotes into his waistcoat-pocket, folded up small. "That's our little game."

"B-b-but—"

Gadsby and Vavasour were keenly, eagerly interested—but scared. They were willing to go almost any length for revenge upon Greyfriars; but they wanted to feel safe.

"I've got the whole scheme in my mind," said Ponsonby.

"We declare that two banknotes are missing from the drawer Bulstrode turned out. We go over to Greyfriars to demand them. We have the numbers—we can prove that."

"Yes; but we have the banknotes, too."

"We go into Bulstrode's study to ask for them," said Ponsonby, with an evil look, "and while you two chaps keep him talking, I slip them into some corner, or chuck them into the cupboard or under the table. They fold up very small, and it's quite easy. Bulstrode will be furious; and we will demand a search, and they can't refuse it—he won't want to refuse it. We call in a master to search—he finds the banknotes—we give the numbers, and—"

"My hat!"

"What do you think?"

"He'll be expelled from Greyfriars, for a dead cert."

"Exactly!"

The three young scoundrels looked at one another with bated breath. It was a scheme worthy of a den of criminals. But that thought did not seem to occur to them. The utter baseness of it was lost upon their callous natures. Their only thought was revenge upon the fellow who had defeated and humiliated them—revenge upon the fellow who had shown them up as cowards.

"When it's made out that the raid was simply a cover for a thief to do some rotten burgling, I think Greyfriars will leave off crowing about it," Ponsonby said, with a chuckle; "and we sha'n't see them raiding us again in a hurry, either."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But can you be sure of carrying it out, Pon? Suppose you lose your nerve—"

Ponsonby sniffed.

"What rot! It's only a question of slinging a little folded paper into a corner; I can do it with my hands behind me, even while I'm talking to Bulstrode."

"Good!"

"We may even get shown into the study when Bulstrode's not there, and have time to hide the notes in the chimney, or something."

"Good again!"

"Let's get out," said Ponsonby. "The sooner we get it over the better. Even if it doesn't work, we don't stand to lose."

"Oh, it's ripping!" said Gadsby. "We'll make the cads sorry they ever came here."

"Yes, rather!"

And the Highcliffians, much encouraged and "bucked up" by the prospect of revenge upon those who had defeated them, spent the next hour in cleaning themselves, and preparing for the visit to Greyfriars. Not a single scruple made itself felt in their hearts. They were going to be revenged—and the more complete the revenge, the more they were likely to enjoy it. For the fact that they were going to bear false witness, to brand an innocent lad as a thief, the three young villains did not seem to care a straw.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Something for Bunter.

BULSTRODE was in high feather just now.

The raid on Highcliffe had been so successful, that the veriest grumbler in the Remove had no fault to find.

It had been carried through triumphantly from start to finish; and Bulstrode had shown that, when he was fairly on the warpath, he was really to be depended upon as a leader. Bulstrode had been given a chance, as Harry Wharton had recommended, and he had come through the test with flying colours.

The Remove were feeling satisfied with Bulstrode, and Bulstrode was feeling satisfied with himself. He had a black eye, and a swollen nose, and his mouth looked a little crooked; but what did trifles like that matter? He had vindicated himself as captain of the Remove, and silenced the grumblers.

Bulstrode bathed his eye very cheerfully after his return to Greyfriars. Most of the Removites had some injuries to attend to, and they attended to them in high spirits. They had given Highcliffe a record licking, and that was a great comfort, and source of never-ending jubilation. After being thoroughly licked in their own quarters, on their own ground, surely even Highcliffe swank must diminish.

"We shall have to celebrate this a bit," Bulstrode remarked to Harry Wharton. The two of them were on the best of terms now. "Will you fellows come to tea in my study?"

Wharton nodded cheerily.

"Pleased!" he said.

"I say, Bulstrode, I'll come—"

"That you jolly well won't, Bunter," said Bulstrode; and he made a movement with his foot, which sent Billy Bunter scuttling away. "You come, Nugent, and you, Bull, will you?"

"Certainly!"

"I'll ask Linley and Cherry and Fish and Tom Brown, too," said Bulstrode. "Hazeldene, of course. It will be a nice little tea-party."

"Good! And many thanks!"

"Turn up at half-past five, then," said Bulstrode. "I'll get Wun Lung to help with the cookery. He's a jolly good cook; and better than Bunter."

"Mind he doesn't work any of his blessed Chinese wheezes into the cooking, then," said Nugent, laughing.

"Yes, rather!"

Bulstrode went into his study. He was usually flush of money, and he happened to be in great funds just now. Hazeldene and Tom Brown were in the study; and they hailed the idea of a feed with great enthusiasm. The long walk and the fight at Highcliffe had given them a good appetite.

Wun Lung entered into the thing with great keenness. Bulstrode impressed upon him that no dogs or cats were to be introduced into the menu, and the little Chinese grinned. It was not so very long since Wun Lung had introduced Chinese cookery into Greyfriars, much to the disgust of juniors who had partaken of a particularly rich stew, and discovered too late that a defunct poodle was chief among the ingredients.

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"Allee lightee," said Wun Lung. "Me cookee nicee, nicee, allee light!"

"Mind, it's a promise."

"Me savvy—me promise."

Wun Lung was not exactly what would be called truthful; he had a truly Oriental way of wandering round the facts in any matter. But he had a way, too, of "playing the game" where his personal friends were concerned, and Bulstrode was now added to the number of them. Bulstrode felt that he could trust the little Chinese on this occasion.

Bulstrode, Tom Brown, and Hazeldene went down to Mrs. Mimble's little tuckshop together, to lay in supplies. Bulstrode threw a sovereign on the counter with the air of a prince.

Mrs. Mimble assumed her most amiable smile. Bulstrode gave her a list of things, Hazeldene and Brown helping to select them, with great cordiality.

"Send them up to my study, Mrs. Mimble," said Bulstrode.

"Yes, Master Bulstrode."

"I think we may as well get in some cricket practice, while Wun Lung is getting the tea ready," Bulstrode remarked.

"Yes, rather!"

"We've got to meet St. Jim's at cricket next week, and they'll be a harder nut to crack than Highcliffe, and Highcliffe beat us at the last match," Bulstrode remarked, as they left the tuckshop. "We've simply got to get into form."

"Is Smith playing?"

Bulstrode's eyes gleamed, and he shook his head. There was very bad blood just now between the captain of the Remove and the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"No; he refused to play in the Highcliffe match when I wanted him, and I'm not going to play him against St. Jim's. It would be one of his rotten tricks to back out at the last moment, if we were depending on him."

"Well, that's likely enough."

"Vernon-Smith won't play!" said Bulstrode, with a decided tone. "The question is, who am I going to play in his place?"

"I guess I can answer that question."

It was Fisher T. Fish who made the remark, as he joined the juniors outside the tuckshop. Bulstrode stared at him.

"What on earth do you know about cricket?" he asked.

The American junior shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess I can show you some points!" he said. "You should just see how we play cricket over there!"

"Rats!"

"I guess we can get a bit ahead of you fellows in the Old Country—some!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bulstrode. "You know you jolly well can't play! If you could, I'd give you a chance in the Form team with pleasure."

"Wharton's going down to practise with me now," said Fisher T. Fish serenely. "I guess if you guys choose to turn up, you'll see something worth seeing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, we'll turn up!" said Bulstrode, with a laugh. "We're coming down to practice, anyway. But what you don't know about cricket would fill big volumes!"

"I guess—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter! Do you want to be played in the Form eleven, too?" exclaimed Bulstrode.

The fat junior blinked at him.

"I dare say I could play as well as some chaps," he replied. "I'm used to being kept out of things by personal jealousy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I wasn't going to speak about cricket. I hear you're standing a feed to celebrate the victory over the Highcliffe rotters. I'm coming!"

"You're jolly well not!"

"I mean, I'm coming to oblige you," explained Bunter. "Of course, there will be some cooking to do, and you know what a dab I am at cooking."

"Wun Lung's attending to that."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode;

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The crashing in the study stopped as the juniors threw open the door. The room was a picture. All the furniture was upset and nearly everything breakable was broken. Coker glared at the Removites and they glared at him. "You holligan!" roared Bull from the doorway. (See page 8.)

you jolly well won't let a heathen cook your things, when I'm quite willing to—"

"To eat them uncooked?" suggested Hazelcote.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

But the fellows were walking away. Billy Bunter blinked after them angrily through his big spectacles.

"Beasts!" he murmured.

Then a sudden idea appeared to strike Bunter. His little round eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

He rolled away towards the School House, and ascended to the Remove passage. There was a sound of movement in Bulstrode's study, and Bunter looked in at the half-open door.

Door and window were both open for coolness in the warm June weather, for Wun Lung had a big fire going.

Wun Lung was cooking cutlets, and the smell was very appetising. Billy Bunter sniffed and sniffed, with gleaming eyes.

"Oh, ripping!" he murmured. "I say, Wun Lung—"

The little Chinese looked round, turning his almond eyes upon Billy Bunter, as the fat junior blinked into the study.

"Buntree! No wantee Buntree! Buntree goec off!"

"Oh, really, Wun Lung—"

"No wantee Buntree!"

"Look here, I've come to help you!" said Bunter. "You

know I always had a sincere friendship for you, Wun Lung!"

"Lats!"

"You heathen beast, if you say 'Rats!' to me, I'll—I—I mean, exactly! It's only your little joke, of course! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lats!"

"I say, old fellow, I suppose I can have one of the cutlets?"

"No savvy."

"Shall I open the jam for you?"

"No savvy."

"I'll get that tin of biscuits open all ready, if you like," said Bunter. "I don't mind taking the trouble in the least."

"Lats!"

"Suppose I cook the cutlets, and—"

"Lats!"

"Look here, you pigtailed beast—"

"Buntree goec off!"

"I'm hungry!" said Bunter pathetically. "I've only had tea in Hall, and some sausages in the tuckshop, and a few biscuits and some cake. I suppose you don't mind if I have a snack of this ham, Wun Lung?"

"Buntree buzzes off!"

"I'm jolly well not going away hungry!" said Bunter.

"I'll wipe up the study with you first! What are you going to give me?"

Wun Lung looked at him. He dropped his hand slyly upon a can of water, in which he had been washing the frying-pan before using it. The water was greasy and lukewarm. Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Well?" he demanded.

"You no gooe 'way 'less I givee someting?"

"That's jolly certain!"

"Mo givee!"

"Good! What is it? I— Oh, oh! Yaroo!"

Swish! Slish!

The water shot from the can in a steady stream, and caught Bunter full on his fat face. He staggered back under the shower of it, gasping and choking.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Me givee someting!" murmured Wun Lung. "Me givee more, if Bunter likee!"

Bunter apparently did not like. In one second he was out of the study, and had slammed the door, and was scuttling down the passage.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

How It Is Done.

"SWANK, Fish!"

"Nope! Jevver get left, Wharton? Guess I haven't played your game much. But you should see us play baseball over there!"

"Ring off, windbag!" said Frank Nugent. "We mean a real game—cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Guess I'm on, all the same, Wharton!"

And, by a strange mischance for him, Fisher T. Fish ceased talking, not happening to think of anything else to brag about for the moment.

The chums of the Remove were taking him down to the practice-nets. He was going to show them how to play cricket. "Perhaps!" Bob Cherry remarked when he first heard of it.

According to Fisher T. Fish, the game of cricket wanted now life infusing into it. He had witnessed several matches at Greyfriars, and had volunteered sundry advice to the chums about their batting and bowling. The fellows had stood it in good part for some time, but when he started boasting they were of one accord in requesting him to do something instead of talking.

Now Fisher T. Fish was to show them how cricket should be played, and it may be said that he had more than even his usual share of confidence about it.

Silently they walked along for some moments. Then Fisher T. Fish broke out again as they came in sight of the nets:

"Looks like fishing, if you ask me."

"Look here, you Transatlantic lunatic," said Bob Cherry, "don't try to be funny about what you don't understand!"

"All serene, Cherry—all serene! But I guess I'd rather use a landing-net than a bat, if I have to stand up in the corner behind the stringwork!"

"Oh, chuck it, Fish!" said Harry Wharton. "Get in front of those wickets, and show us what you can do! I'm just about sick of your talk!"

"Gee, Wharton, you're losing your hair, old son! I mean no harm! I'm just going to show you what cricket ought to be!"

The juniors stared at Fisher T. Fish. Nothing could stop his cock-sure flow, apparently. They confidently expected him to make a show of himself.

"Fact, you fellows," he went on jauntily, "I can show you some terrific things in cricket! Pop said I was the best bat our way for miles!"

"Get in front of those wickets, you horrible swanker!" roared Harry Wharton, his patience well-nigh exhausted. "I've had about enough jaw!"

Even Fisher T. Fish stopped at the sight of Wharton's excited face.

"I say, Wharton, old man, your cricket game isn't manslaughter, surely?" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; it isn't, Fish!"

"But we do kill a few talkers now and then!" said Bob Cherry.

"Get in, Fish!" said Harry Wharton, interrupting Bob Cherry, in his turn. "I want to see what you can do with four fellows feeding you as hard as they can!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yes, yes! I'm on! You want me to stand up in front of those three sticks?"

"Yes."

"All serene! Don't shout so loud! Pop might hear you

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in Brooklyn, and he doesn't like being disturbed in the afternoon—"

"Oh, chuck it, Fish," said Bob Cherry, "and begin!"

"Yep! But I say—"

"Well?"

"Hadn't I better bowl all you fellows out with one ball each first?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped. Fisher T. Fish had perpetrated many tall suggestions, but the chums had never heard anything quite so cool as this before. In common parlance, they were flabbergasted. Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry could not speak. But Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, came to the rescue. He was regarding Fish with a quiet smile.

"I say, Fish," he said, "do you think Wharton, Nugent, and Cherry will be enough?"

"I guess I'm not bad, Linley!" replied Fisher T. Fish. "But I'll buy a dime's worth! What's the idea? Why the sweet voice?"

"Oh, nothing! But you see, Fish, a fellow so good as you could not show his full powers on such stuff as Wharton, Nugent, and Cherry, so I thought perhaps you would like to wire for Johnny Tyldesley, of Lancashire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chums. "Well done, Marky! Got you, Fish!"

"Nope! Jevver get left? I could bowl Tyldesley out in—"

"Rats!" shouted the chums, with one accord.

"All serene—all serene! Do I bowl, Wharton?"

"Rather!" answered Harry Wharton. "And I think I can promise you you'll be sorry!"

And without any more talk Harry Wharton selected a bat, and walked to the wickets. Bob Cherry gave him his centre, while Fish divested himself of his coat, and made very elaborate preparations to annihilate Harry. The juniors stood grinning.

"Right-ho!" shouted the leader of the Remove.

Fish made a mark about fifteen paces behind the bowler's wicket.

"My only hat!" said Frank Nugent. "Did you ever see such swank? He might be Mr. Brearley!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But though Fisher T. Fish's run to the bowler's wicket was grotesque, there was surprise in store for the chums. They saw at once, of course, that Fisher T. Fish's idea of bowling was speed. Knowing that many famous fast bowlers take a run something like a catharine-wheel in full career, they thought that Fish doing the same was merely apeish swank.

But be the American's run what it may, his arm came over in beautiful fashion. Before the chums could realise it, there was an ominous rattling crash. There seemed to have been a red streak along the turf under Harry Wharton's bat, and then their chief, looking dazedly at the bowler, with his wicket beautifully spreadeagled behind him.

Fisher T. Fish had done it. Harry Wharton had been bowled, first ball, as neatly as any fellow ever was bowled. They could not believe their eyes. Wonder of wonders, Fisher T. Fish said not a word. Then Harry Wharton's voice broke the silence.

"That was a jolly good ball, Fish, and I think I'm the right fellow to tell you so," he said.

The American youth nodded.

"Your turn, Bob Cherry," he said, doing a few juggling tricks with the ball for effect.

"If you don't mind, Fish—and you fellows," said Harry Wharton, turning to the chums, "I should like a few more from you, Fish."

"Gee, Wharton! That's me, every time. Put 'em up!"

Harry Wharton readjusted his stumps. Then he turned to face Fisher T. Fish again. The juniors were more surprised than before. Fish, making the same elaborate run, sent down a perfectly ridiculous ball. It travelled at about seven feet from the ground, and rising higher as it got to the other end of the net, went over into the field beyond. It was also lamentably off the wicket. The juniors were bewildered. Then the truth burst upon them. The American youth's first ball was a fluke. They burst into roars of laughter, while Bob Cherry ran for the "lost ball."

"You'll want a landing-net, after all, Fish," said Mark Linley.

"Nope! Jevver get left? See me do Wharton this time!" replied Fisher T. Fish coolly.

And they did; but in inverse ratio, as the scientists say, for the next ball was loose, and Harry Wharton made no mistake about it. His hit from it would have been a boundary. The chums cheered. Fish set his teeth, and bowled another. It was slightly better, but Wharton had no difficulty whatever in disposing of it. Then another one was sent down, and the leader of the Remove, opening his shoulders, got under it in splendid fashion.

"Hurrah!" shouted the delighted chums. "Bravo,

Wharton! That would have been right over the sight board—on the ground! Buck up, Fishy!"

"All serene! I'll get him this time!"

"Don't brag, you beast!" said Bob Cherry, setting everyone in a fresh roar.

To save time the fellows got all the balls out, and while some ten of the chums fielded Fisher T. Fish was left busy "slinging" them down to Wharton. But not once did he repeat his good ball of the opening. Several were respectable deliveries, but he received unmerciful punishment from Harry Wharton. Fish worked like a demon, sending them all round the wicket, and several times nearly hitting Wharton himself. But even when he did get a good one straight, Harry Wharton had no trouble in stopping it. He had got Fisher T. Fish's length. But the American lad was all grit. He pin-wheeled up to the bowler's crease with surprising endurance. But it was no use. At the end of a quarter of an hour, Harry Wharton was still master of the situation, and Fish had to pause at last.

"Let me have a go, Harry!" said Bob Cherry.

Fisher T. Fish nodded acquiescence. He had had quite enough of Wharton's stone-wallings.

Then the chums were electrified to see Fisher T. Fish pull up the bowler's stump, and coolly place it six or seven paces nearer to the batsman.

"I've been bowling from too far a mark like a silly jay," he said, in explanation.

A perfect storm of expostulation broke on him.

"Of all the bounders!" said Bob Cherry, who had just got to the wicket.

"The blessed lunatic!" said Nugent. "Ask him if he'd like a tennis ball, now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With much difficulty Harry Wharton explained to Fish that such a thing was unheard of.

The stump was put back in its old place, and the trial went on. Bob Cherry was a hard hitter. Fish's first ball, again, by a lucky chance, was a very good one. It nearly beat Bob Cherry, but he managed to block it. Then the next one went sailing sky-high over the bowler's head, and the chums saw clearly that Fisher T. Fish had had enough of it. Two or three more were sent down to Bob Cherry. But the same result always followed. Everything that looked difficult turned out to be quite easy to Bob Cherry. He punished the bowling almost as much as Harry Wharton had done. But the jeers and jokes that were cast at him made Fisher T. Fish hang on yet. Seeing that he could not shift Bob Cherry any more than Harry Wharton, he called for Frank Nugent. The change was worse than ever for Fisher T. Fish.

At timing a ball Nugent had no equal in the Remove. Fisher T. Fish, getting desperate, sent him some really good ones. Every time they all but beat Nugent. But Nugent was good at that sort, and the chums cheered to the echo as they saw their "careful" batsman save his wicket time after time—in the very nick of it.

"I can't play on these rotten English pitches," said Fisher T. Fish. "A matting wicket is the thing for me, you fellows!"

"Have you ever played on a matting wicket, Fish?" asked Nugent sweetly.

"Nop. But I can tell by this that it is what I want to beat you—"

"Rats, rats, rats!"

"Put him in to bat!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"I was always better with the bat!" said Fisher T. Fish, swanker to the last.

"Ha, ha! Let's see him bat!" yelled John Bull. "This is the player you want for the St. Jim's match, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode laughed.

"Yes, rather," he said. "Put him on the batting for goodness' sake."

And a bat was put into the hands of Fisher T. Fish. Anybody else, after such an exhibition of bowling, would have gone to the batting crease with humility of spirit. Not so the junior from New York.

He might have been a Jessop, or a Fry, or a Grace, or the three of them rolled into one, by the way he went to the wicket. There he took up an awkward posture, and glanced down the pitch with a defiant eye.

"I guess I'm ready," he said.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stumped!

HARRY WHARTON tossed the ball to Nugent. Frank grinned as he caught it, and went on to bowl. Fisher T. Fish watched him with a very watchful eye, but the moment the ball left Frank's hand, it was lost to the American junior. He did not have the faintest idea what had become of it, till it clicked his middle stump out of the ground. There was a roar of laughter from the juniors.

"Well bowled! Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish looked down at his wicket with a comical

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expression upon his face. Then he glanced round at the grinning juniors.

"Odd how these flukes happen, ain't it?" he remarked.

"Flukes!" roared Nugent.

"Yep!"

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"I guess you'd better try again."

The ball was fielded and tossed back. Nugent looked very grim as he grasped the leather to bowl again. Fish gave him a confident grin.

"I guess you can bowl away," he said.

Whiz!

Click!

Fish's middle stump again reposed on the ground, leaving his wicket with a peculiarly toothless look.

"Gee!" ejaculated the American junior.

"How's that?" roared Nugent.

"Ha, ha! Out!"

"Nope!"

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"I guess that was a fluke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another fluke, Franky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Nugent sent down another ball. He sent exactly the same ball, not trying to vary it in the least, for he knew perfectly well that the American junior could not possibly deal with it. Fisher T. Fish made a swipe at the ball with his bat, and missed it by a foot or more, and the middle stump curled over in the air.

"How's that?" shrieked a dozen voices.

"I guess I'm not set yet," said Fish. "I can't handle these English bats, somehow. They're not like the bats I'm used to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You want your bats made in New York—"

"Oh, cheese it," said Bulstrode. "You can't play cricket for toffee; that's what's the matter with you."

"I guess—"

"Buzz off the wicket," said Bob Cherry. "You can't play, and you've shown that, and you've nothing else to show. Travel!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, let him have another ball," said Nugent. "I'll give him just the same one, and he won't be able to touch it."

"I guess I'll give you a boundary this time."

The ball came down, and Fish swiped and missed, exactly as before, and for a fourth time his middle stump was whipped out.

"Gum!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never saw so many flukes at one time. Did you, Fish?" said Hazeldene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Fisher T. Fish was turning red now. Bunter himself at the wicket could hardly have given a more convincing exhibition of a complete inability to handle a bat, or to time a ball. But the American junior was not beaten yet. He gripped the cane handle of the willow harder, and snorted.

"I can't get used to the pitch, somehow," he said. "But it will come in time, I guess—some. Give me another ball."

"If we wait here till you get sufficiently used to the pitch to be able to bat on it, it's a life sentence for the lot of us, I think," said Tom Brown. "Chuck it!"

"I guess—"

"You've guessed wrong, if you guessed you could play cricket. Hop-sotch is about your mark," said the New Zealand junior. "Buzz off! Go and play marbles!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

"What's the row?"

"Look there!"

Bob Cherry pointed towards the distant gates of the college. There was a general exclamation from the Remove cricketers.

"Highcliffe cads!"

Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour had just come in, and were walking towards the school-house. The juniors from the playing fields could see them crossing the Close.

Wharton gave a low whistle.

"What on earth do they want?" he exclaimed. "It's a rather curious thing, to pay us a visit, just after our visit to them."

"I guess they're looking for trouble."

"No fear. They wouldn't come three at a time for that. I suppose it's just a visit. They are on friendly terms with Vernon-Smith, and they've come over to see him, I should think."

"We don't want the cads here," said John Bull.

"Let's run them out," suggested Hazeldene.

"Oh, let them alone. I suppose they have a right to visit Vernon-Smith if they like. I don't admire their taste, that's all. Let's get on."

The Highcliffe fellows went on to the house, and the Removites turned to the cricket again. After all, the movements of Ponsonby & Co. did not interest them very much. The Highcliffians could not have come over for a row, as there were only three of them; and after the rough handling they had had that afternoon the Remove could afford to let them alone.

"Get off the pitch, Fish," said Bulstrode. "We want to practise. We've got to get in to tea at half-past."

"I guess I'm not finished."

"You've guessed wrong, then; you have. Buzz off!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, run him off!" said Bulstrode; and two or three juniors gently took Fisher T. Fish by the arms, and ran him off the pitch.

The American junior expostulated loudly.

"Look here, you guys, I was just going to show you what batting was like over there!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"We can guess," said Bulstrode, with a grin. "If it's anything like what you've shown us, it must be simply ripping. But we've seen enough to know that we can never really hope to bat in the American style."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I could knock spots off any of you with the bat —"

"Yes, you could knock spots off anything but the cricket-ball," said Bob Cherry. "You couldn't knock anything off that. Buzz off, and be quiet."

"I guess—"

"Oh, buzz away—vamoose!"

And the Removites set to practice at the nets, Fisher T. Fish looking on, with an extremely contemptuous expression upon his sharp American features. It was clear that he did not think much of the Removites' cricket, though he could hardly think less of it than they thought of his.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, strolled on the pitch. He had the stump of a cigarette between his lips, and his hands in his pockets. Bulstrode glanced at him, and frowned darkly.

"Stop that!" he exclaimed.

The Bounder looked at him.

"Stop what?" he asked.

"Throw that smoke away."

"Rats!"

"What is it?" said a quiet voice, and Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, stepped out of the pavilion.

Vernon-Smith's hand went quickly to his mouth; but it was too late. Before he could throw the cigarette-stump away the captain of Greyfriars had seen it.

Wingate's brow grew very dark. He came towards Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder of Greyfriars faced him with a sullen brow. The cricketers looked on rather apprehensively. They could see that Wingate was very angry—and when Wingate was angry it generally meant "ructions" for the person he was angry with.

"I'm glad to see that you're trying to keep order and play the game now you're captain of the Remove, Bulstrode," said Wingate. "As for you, Smith, you are a hopeless cad. I'm afraid; but I'll do my best to enlighten you. Give me a stump, somebody."

Someone handed the Greyfriars captain a cricket-stump. He made a step towards Vernon-Smith; and the Bounder of Greyfriars backed away, his eyes growing very alarmed.

"Look here—" he began.

Wingate did not trouble to speak. He grasped Vernon-Smith by the collar, and sat down, and drew the junior across his knee.

The Removites looked on, grinning.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

The cricket-stump rose and fell—across Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars yelled furiously, and struggled with all his strength; but he was as a child in the hands of the big Sixth-Former.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

After six strokes Wingate rolled Vernon-Smith off his knee, and the Bounder of Greyfriars sat in the grass, his face white with pain and fury. Wingate tossed the stump aside.

"The next time I find you with a cigarette in your silly mouth I'll give you something a little thicker," he said. And he walked away.

Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet. There was no sympathy in the looks of the Removites. As a rule they backed one another up against the prefects. But Vernon-Smith was so utter an outsider that he could expect no sympathy. The Bounder of Greyfriars glared at them. Then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and walked away without a word.

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"My hat!" exclaimed Nugent suddenly. "Those Highcliffe bounders can't have come to visit Smithy, or he wouldn't be here now. Whom have they come to see?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Bulstrode. "Let's get on. It's close on half-past, and Wun Lung will have the tea ready then."

"Good! But—"

"Play up!"

And the practice went on, and the Highcliffe fellows were forgotten.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Keeps an Eye Open!

PONSONBY and his companions had gone into the School House. Their demeanour was very quiet and subdued, as befitted fellows who had come upon a serious errand.

Ponsonby & Co. were prepared to play the game out without a falter to the end. The utter wickedness of their scheme did not seem to trouble them in the least. They were still smarting in many places from the ragging they had received, and they were smarting still more in their pride. They were ready for anything to revenge their injuries upon Greyfriars generally, and especially upon Bulstrode.

The Greyfriars triumph would be very much marred if it was made out that the raid had been simply a blind to cover a robbery. Bulstrode's success would be changed to worse than defeat if it was proved that he had come to Highcliffe as a thief. The Highcliffe trio rejoiced at the prospect; and the scheme, as Ponsonby had planned it out, was so simple to all appearances that they thought it could not fail.

Trotter, the page, met them in the Hall, and Ponsonby signed to him.

"Here, kid! We've come over to see Bulstrode."

"Yessir!"

"Take us to his study."

"Yessir!"

Trotter led the way. Ponsonby slipped sixpence into his hand, and the page was ready to oblige.

The three Highcliffe fellows came up the stairs and stopped outside No. 1 Study in the Remove passage. A fragrant smell of cooking came through the open doorway and greeted them.

"Ere you are, sir!" said Trotter.

"Thank you!"

Trotter departed, leaving the Highcliffe trio looking in at the study.

Wun Lung had finished cooking, and was giving the finishing touches to his preparations for Bulstrode's little feed.

The three young rascals exchanged glances of satisfaction.

Nothing could have happened better to suit their purpose. The little Chinese in the study, they thought, they could afford to disregard. Wun Lung looked so simple and innocent that very few people guessed at the real keenness and Oriental cunning of his character. As a matter of fact, there were very few fellows in the school who could have equalled the little Celestial in keenness and acute observation. But the Highcliffe fellows took him at face value, so to speak. Some of the Greyfriars were learning to know him better. But to Ponsonby & Co. he was a little, simple Chinese, of no account whatever.

"Oh, this is ripping!" murmured Ponsonby. "We'll wait in the study; and that Chinese chap will be a witness that we weren't alone there, in case they should start any rot about our having planted the notes on Bulstrode."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laugh made Wun Lung look round.

The little Chinese's eyes gleamed and twinkled as he looked at the Highcliffe fellows. He was thinking of the poor figure they had cut in the afternoon, and wondering what they wanted at Greyfriars.

"Bulstrode here, kid?" asked Ponsonby.

Wun Lung shook his head.

"Bulstrode outee," he said.

"We want to see him."

"You goee lookie in Close."

"We've walked over from Highcliffe," Ponsonby explained.

"We've had enough walking round. We'll wait for him."

"Yes, rather!" said Gadsby. "I suppose we can sit down?"

Wun Lung nodded.

"Allee light!"

"You seem to be getting ready for a feed," Vavasour remarked.

"Me gettee leady."

"Nice little tea-party, I suppose, to celebrate what you've been doing to-day?" said Ponsonby, with a very unpleasant look.

"What you tinkee?"

"Bulstrode's paying for it—eh?"
"Bulstrode payee."
"He's got heaps of money, of course?"
"No savvy."

"Oh, he's bound to be rolling in money, under the circumstances," said Gadsby, in a very significant way.

Wun Lung looked at him with a sharp, suspicious glance.

"No savvy," he said.

"I don't suppose you do savvy yet, as you call it," said Gadsby. "But you will soon, I think. Eh, Pon?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You sittee down," said Wun Lung, placing three chairs in a row for the visitors. "Me goee callee Bulstrode if you like."

Ponsonby exchanged a quick glance with the others. He almost trembled with excitement at the chance thus presented of carrying out his scheme.

Wun Lung did not appear to notice it. But, as a matter of fact, nothing escaped him. From the moment the Highcliffe fellows had come in Wun Lung had observed something very unusual in their manner, and he knew that something very unusual was on.

"Well, I don't know," said Ponsonby, with elaborate carelessness. "I don't know that you need go and call him. We can wait."

"Oh, yes, we can wait!" said Gadsby.

"When do you expect him in?"

"Half-past fivee."

Ponsonby looked at his watch. He was rather fond of his watch, it was a very valuable gold one—far too valuable, in fact, for a boy of his age to wear. But all the Highcliffe fellows were strong on gold watches and jewellery. Ponsonby wore a ring as well, and a diamond in his tie.

"Well, perhaps you may as well call him," said Ponsonby.

"Me callee."

"Buzz along, then."

Wun Lung nodded, and quitted the study and ran several steps noisily along the passage. Then he stopped, and crept back noiselessly towards the half-open door of the study. He knew, as well as the Highcliffe fellows knew, that they wanted to get rid of him for a few minutes, and he wondered what for—and he meant to know. Wun Lung was suspicious.

If they meant to raid the feed, he intended to interfere promptly enough—but he hardly thought that such could be their intention. They must know that they would be ragged if they did, and they had no chance of getting safely out of Greyfriars.

The little Chinese peered through the crack of the door.

His almond eyes glittered, and seemed to narrow to glittering pin-points, as he saw that the three Highcliffe fellows were on their feet, their faces blazing with excitement.

Ponsonby was stepping towards the door.

Quick as thought, Wun Lung popped into the opposite study and looked out into the passage from a narrow slit behind the door.

Ponsonby looked out, and closed the door of Bulstrode's study.

Wun Lung stepped into the passage again.

Something was going on in that study that he meant to know all about; and the little Chinese, with his Oriental ideas, had not an English boy's scruples about the use of the keyhole.

In a moment he was on his knee outside the study door and peering through the keyhole, which gave a view of almost the whole of the interior of the study—Remove studies at Greyfriars were not very large.

A cap belonging to Bulstrode—the one he had worn, in fact, on that expedition to Highcliffe—lay on the desk in the corner. Ponsonby picked it up.

Wun Lung held his breath.

He was amazed—and watchful! He did not know what to make of Ponsonby's action, but all the suspicion in his nature was aroused.

He watched the cad of Highcliffe pick up a knife from the tea-table, and make a small slit in the lining of the cap. His amazement increased. That the intention to inflict a slight injury on an article of wearing apparel could be all Ponsonby's object seemed impossible. But what else?

A moment more, and Wun Lung understood!

Ponsonby inserted a finger and thumb into his waistcoat-pocket, and drew out the closely-folded banknotes. What they were Wun Lung could not observe. But he saw that the Highcliffe junior inserted something from his pocket into the lining of the cap. Then he replaced the cap exactly where he had found it.

"I think that will fix him!"

Wun Lung heard Ponsonby mutter the words aloud.

"What-ho!" murmured Gadsby. "It couldn't be better. It's exactly the place where a chap might hide banknotes."

"Especially stolen ones."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby came to the door again, to open it. He did not mean to have the door shut when Wun Lung returned; all

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was to appear as the little Chinese had left it. Wun Lung scuttled across the passage into the other study, and stood trembling with excitement behind the door.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung is Very Clumsy.

PONSONBY stood looking out into the passage.

No one was in sight.

The Highcliffe junior turned back to his companions.

He was looking a little pale, but his face was ablaze with triumph.

"No good staying here," he remarked, in a low tone. "The less we are in the study alone, the better. Let's follow that Chinese chap."

"Good!"

The three Highcliffe fellows walked down the passage and went downstairs. Wun Lung stood where he was for several minutes, trembling.

He did not know what to do.

He understood in a flash the plot of the Highcliffe cads. After what he had seen and heard, there could not be much doubt on that subject.

But what was he to do?

It was borne into his mind, now, that it would have been better for him, and better for others, if he had attempted to learn the English custom of speaking the truth, along with the other English ways he had picked up at Greyfriars.

But he never had! The fellows never believed a word he said, and they had reason. Billy Bunter was a terrible fibber, but he only told fibs that had some purpose to serve—some purpose useful for Bunter. Wun Lung would lie for the pleasure of the thing, with a true Oriental love for giving his imagination full rein.

If the little Chinese bore witness against the Highcliffe plotters, his evidence would not affect the matter one jot or tittle, for no one would know in the least whether he was telling the truth or not.

In fact, he had been very friendly with Bulstrode lately, and his friendship with the Remove captain would tell against him. For it was perfectly well known that Wun Lung would lie, or do anything else, for a fellow he liked.

Wun Lung had never really known to what to attribute the English prejudice in favour of speaking the truth. He began to understand now that a reputation for truthfulness had a value.

But it was too late to think of that now.

What was he to do?

He came out of the study at last, and crossed into Bulstrode's study. He stood looking at the cap, into the lining of which the Highcliffe cad had inserted the banknotes—the two fivers which were to be declared to have been stolen from his study at Highcliffe School during the raid in the afternoon.

The little Chinese picked up the cap.

He groped in the torn lining, and his fingers came into contact with the banknotes. They crisped and rustled as he drew them out.

"Fivee poundee!" he murmured, with expanding eyes.

He turned to the fire, chuckling. He had thought of what to do. Burnt in the fire, the fivers would leave no trace behind, and then when the Highcliffe cads made their accusation—he chuckled at the thought.

But with his hand within a foot of the fire, the little Celestial paused. The dancing gleam in his eyes showed that a humorous thought had struck him, and his little olive face expanded into a wide grin.

"Me savvy!" he murmured.

He placed the cap just as Ponsonby had placed it, and put the folded banknotes into his pocket. Then he quitted the study and strolled out into the Close.

The cricketers were coming in now with their bats under their arms, looking very ruddy and healthy after their practice at the nets.

Ponsonby and his companions had stopped on the steps of the School House, and were lounging there in very elegant attitudes. They nodded superciliously to the Greyfriars cricketers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "What do you fellows want?"

"Another licking?" asked Bulstrode. "You've come to the right place, if you do."

Ponsonby curled his lip.

"We want an explanation with you fellows," he said.

"Nothing that needs explaining, that I know of," said Harry Wharton.

"Bulstrode may know better."

Bulstrode looked at the Highcliffe fellow in astonishment.

"I don't understand you," he said.

The Highcliffe fellows sneered.

"Perhaps we'll make you understand soon," said Ponsonby.

"Perhaps!" sneered Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" remarked Vavasour.

Bulstrode made an impatient gesture.

"I don't understand what you're getting at," he said. "If you've come to look for trouble, you can have all you want."

"Hear, hear!"

"And I can tell you——"

Bulstrode was interrupted.

Wun Lung, the Chinese, came bolting out of the House, and he ran in the clumsiest possible way right into Ponsonby.

Ponsonby was standing on the second step, and the sudden rush of the Chinese drove him headlong off it, and he pitched over on the ground, with the little Celestial clinging to him.

Bump!

"Ow!" roared Ponsonby.

"Yow!" gasped Wun Lung.

He clung to the Highcliffe fellow as if startled out of his wits, and unable to let go of Ponsonby.

The Highcliffe junior struggled fiercely to free himself, and the two rolled over on the ground.

"Help!" gasped Ponsonby. "The beast is dotty!"

Harry Wharton jerked the little Chinese off the gasping Highcliffian. Wun Lung gasped for breath.

"You clumsy young ass," said Bulstrode.

"Me solly."

"You dangerous idiot!" roared Ponsonby.

"Me velly solly. Me lookee fol Bulstrode, and me in gleet bully, to oblige nicee handsome gentleman from Highcliffe."

"Well, you clumsy young idiot, you needn't have bolted out of the House like that," said Bulstrode. "But it serves the fellow right for being in the way, if you come to that."

"Quite so," said John Bull. "Will you come in and have a brush down, Ponsonby?"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth with rage.

"I'll come in and have what I came over here for!" he exclaimed.

"What's that?"

"My banknotes."

"Your what?" shouted the juniors together.

"My banknotes!"

The Greyfriars fellows stared blankly at Ponsonby. That youth dusted down his trousers, and put his jacket straight, which had been torn nearly inside out by the extreme clumsiness of the little Chinese.

"Are you mad?" said Harry Wharton, at last. "Your banknotes! What do you mean by your banknotes?"

"Two fivers."

"Well—how could they be here?"

"Because they were brought here."

"Eh! How? By whom?"

"That's for you to settle. To put it plain, after you fellows wrecked my study to-day, we found that two five-pound notes were missing from the drawer of my table. We've searched everywhere, but they can't be found. We want you fellows to explain what's become of them."

The Greyfriars fellows stood dumbfounded.

The terrible significance in Ponsonby's accusation struck them at once; but they did not believe it. The same suspicion shot into every mind at the same time.

It was a trick of the Highcliffians—a cowardly trick to revenge themselves for their defeat in the afternoon!

Wharton's lip curled scornfully.

"You accuse us of having taken banknotes from your study?" he said.

"Yes."

"All of us?"

"It was Bulstrode who turned out the drawer the notes were in—all three of us saw him do it."

"Yes, rather!" said Gadsby and Vavasour together.

"Yes, I saw Bulstrode clear the drawer out, too," said Wharton; "but he certainly didn't take any banknotes from it. I don't believe there were any there. Nobody would be fool enough to keep banknotes loose in a drawer."

"Mine were there."

"And you say you've missed them?"

"Yes."

"And you suspect Bulstrode of having taken them?"

"Yes."

Bulstrode clenched his hands hard. He made a step towards the cad of Highcliffe; but Wharton dropped a hand on his arm.

"No need to get wild about it, Bulstrode," he said.

"Nobody here will believe a word of it. It's a lie—a cowardly lie of those cads!"

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THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Accused!

BULSTRODE pressed Wharton's hand. That ready and complete confidence from Wharton, the unhesitating backing-up from the fellow who had always been his rival for leadership in the Remove, touched Bulstrode deeply. And Bulstrode, under the serious accusation brought against him, needed support.

He knew that he was innocent. But innocence was not always enough. Only a short time before, Bob Cherry—honest, frank, open-hearted Bob Cherry—had been expelled from Greyfriars on a charge of theft.

His innocence had been vindicated, and he had returned in triumph. But his expulsion showed how a false accusation might carry terrible weight, and it might not have happened that his innocence would come to light.

The memory of that was in Bulstrode's mind, and it unnerved him. For even if the Highcliffe fellows failed to prove their charge, it would always hang over Bulstrode as a suspicion, and furnish a weapon for the hands of his enemies.

With those thoughts thronging in his startled mind, Bulstrode was taken at a great disadvantage, and he certainly did not look his best. Hasty judges, indeed, might easily have attributed his confusion to the fact that he was guilty and was found out. Harry Wharton knew better. With his clear glance, he had seen through the Highcliffe plotters at once.

Wharton's voice rang out clearly and sharply as he repeated:

"It's a lie—a cowardly lie!"

Ponsonby bit his lip.

"You'll have to prove that," he said. "We've come over here for our banknotes. We've got the numbers, and we can prove that they were in our possession. If Bulstrode likes to give them up quietly, and make no more trouble about the matter, we're willing to say nothing in public about it. But we must have our banknotes—that's a dead cert."

"Absolutely," said Vavasour.

"I haven't got your banknotes," said Bulstrode thickly. "You know I never took them. We ragged you for your swank, and never took anything—except the jam Bunter took. You know it as well as I do."

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"I've come here for the banknotes," he said.

"Liar!" said Harry Wharton, coldly. "You've come here to smirch Bulstrode's good name, if you can, because you're too cowardly and mean to try to revenge yourself in any more decent way."

Wharton was a hard hitter when he gave his tongue the rein. Ponsonby turned livid.

"You can put it that way if you like," he said, biting his lips; "but we don't go without the banknotes."

"You cad!" shouted Bulstrode, jerking himself away from Wharton's hold. "You dare to call me a thief!"

"Yes—Oh!"

Biff!

Bulstrode's knuckles came home upon Ponsonby's somewhat prominent nose, and the Highcliffe cad went with a crash to the ground. Bulstrode stood over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Get up, you cad!" he shouted. "Get up! I'll smash you!"

"Go it, Bulstrode!" sang out the Removites.

"Lam him!"

"Squash the cad!"

Ponsonby sat up, with his hand on his nose. His nose looked very red, and there was a thin stream of crimson issuing from it, which he proceeded to mop with his handkerchief.

Bulstrode watched him with burning eyes.

"Get up!" he roared.

"Groo!"

"You've called me a thief. You'll have to stand by your words with your hands, you cowardly hound! Get up!"

"Ow!"

"You won't settle it this way, Bulstrode," said Gadsby savagely. "There are enough of you here to rag us, if you like, I suppose; but if we leave Greyfriars without the banknotes, we go straight to the police-station, I warn you of that."

"Absolutely," said Vavasour.

"If you prefer dealing with the police——"

"You wouldn't dare!" said Wharton angrily. "You can come here and lie to us, but you wouldn't dare to perjure yourself in a court of law."

Ponsonby staggered to his feet.

"Keep off, you ruffian!" he gasped, backing away from Bulstrode. "I'm going to see the headmaster. We'll see whether I can't have my stolen property back."

"You hound!"

"Hands off, I say!"

Bulstrode was too enraged to listen. He advanced upon Ponsonby, and the Highcliffe fellow backed away, feebly defending himself.

Gadsby stepped into the doorway of the School House, and shouted. It was the intention of the Highcliffians to bring the masters into the matter. The more disgrace they could heap upon Bulstrode the greater their triumph would be.

"Help!" shouted Gadsby. "Help!"

Mr. Quelch's study door opened.

The master of the Remove looked out, and stared up and down the passage, evidently very much surprised. Then he caught sight of Gadsby.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "What does this mean?"

"We claim your protection, sir!" exclaimed Gadsby.

"We belong to Highcliffe, and we've come over here on an important matter, and these ruffians are setting on us."

Mr. Quelch frowned and came to the doorway.

"Bulstrode!" he rapped out.

Bulstrode dropped his hands at once and turned towards the Remove-master.

"Yes, sir?"

"How dare you attack these boys! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Bulstrode! Cannot strangers enter the gates of Greyfriars without these unseemly disturbances?"

"He called me a thief!" said Bulstrode sullenly.

"What!"

"He says I've stolen his banknotes."

"Impossible!"

"It's true, sir," said Gadsby.

Mr. Quelch frowned at him.

"Silence, please! Who accuses you of this, Bulstrode?"

"Ponsonby, sir—and the others, too."

"Ponsonby! I trust, Ponsonby," said Mr. Quelch, fixing a very severe glance upon the junior captain of Highcliffe—"I trust that you spoke in the heat of the moment, and that you are prepared to withdraw so foolish an accusation now?"

Ponsonby's face set obstinately.

"Nothing of the kind, sir," he said.

"Do you persist in it?"

"Yes."

"You accuse Bulstrode of having taken banknotes belonging to you?" Mr. Quelch demanded, sharply and angrily.

"Yes, sir. I have the numbers of them." Ponsonby took a paper from his pocket and passed it to Mr. Quelch.

"There are the numbers written down, sir."

Mr. Quelch glanced at the paper in his hand.

"Two banknotes, Numbers 00013579 and 00013578," he said. "You have lost two banknotes bearing these numbers?"

"Yes, sir."

"You suspect Bulstrode of having taken them?"

"Yes, sir."

"But how could Bulstrode possibly have done so? What opportunity can he have had for purloining banknotes belonging to a boy in another school?" Mr. Quelch demanded.

"I will explain, sir. The other day we met Bulstrode in the lane, and we had a row with him. Nothing much, only I happened to be showing the banknotes to Gadsby and Vavasour at the time, and he saw them."

"It's a lie!" exclaimed Bulstrode fiercely. "You hadn't any banknotes with you—not to be seen, anyway. You jumped on me from behind a hedge—"

"Silence, Bulstrode! Let Ponsonby finish."

"Well, sir, I suppose Bulstrode made up his mind, then, that he'd have the banknotes. Anyway, this afternoon a gang of these fellows came over to Highcliffe and raided our studies, and turned everything inside out—"

"What! Is it possible?"

"It was a rag, sir," said Harry Wharton. "They ragged Bulstrode, three to one, and we went over and ragged them. It was only tit for tat, sir."

"It was most outrageous!" said Mr. Quelch. "But as I dare say there was provocation, even a rag of that sort might be pardoned; but not if any dishonesty was perpetrated."

"Oh, that's a Highcliffe lie, sir."

"Go on, Ponsonby."

"Bulstrode and some others wrecked my study, sir. Bulstrode, especially, was very keen on turning everything out, and he turned out the drawer of my table where I keep the banknotes. We were on the floor, with some of the rotters sitting on us, and we couldn't interfere—"

"You were whining in the corner, and afraid to lift a hand!" said Bob Cherry scornfully.

"Silence, Cherry!"

"After they had gone," said Ponsonby, with a livid face, "we picked up the things knocked out of the table-drawer, but we couldn't find the banknotes anywhere. We thought they'd got knocked into some corner, and we hunted for

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them, and it wasn't for some time that it dawned upon us that Bulstrode must have taken them, and that the rag was only a blind to cover up what he was really doing."

"You cur!" muttered Bulstrode.

"Of course," said Ponsonby, "we don't mind a rag. If that were all, we could take it in good part, and we don't complain, sir. We don't mean that we want any of the fellows punished for ragging us in our studies at Highcliffe; but when it comes to stealing a chap's money, we think it's time to put a foot down. Besides, we can't afford to lose the money—ten pounds, sir."

"If your money is here, Ponsonby, you assuredly shall not lose it," said Mr. Quelch, coldly. "What have you to say to this accusation, Bulstrode?"

"That it's a string of lies from beginning to end, sir!" said Bulstrode, huskily. "I never saw any banknotes when they were ragging me the other day, and I never saw any in Ponsonby's study this afternoon. I certainly never took anything that didn't belong to me. I'm not a thief, sir."

"I believe you, Bulstrode. You have many faults, but I am sure that dishonesty is not one of them," said Mr. Quelch. "But this matter must be sifted out to the bottom. Such an accusation cannot be allowed to rest uninvestigated. Once more I ask you, Ponsonby, whether you are quite certain of what you say?"

"Quite certain, sir."

"If this is an accusation prompted by malice, it would be better for you to withdraw it now, before the matter goes any further, for the results must be serious to either Bulstrode or yourself."

"I have nothing to withdraw, sir."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips. He did not believe the accusation; yet, as he had said, the matter had to be investigated to the very bottom.

"My view is this, sir," said Ponsonby. "Bulstrode hasn't had time to get rid of the notes yet. They're either about him at this moment, or in his study, or perhaps in his box. I think there ought to be a search—a thorough search. If the notes are not found, I sha'n't know what to think about the matter. If they are found, though, I suppose that will settle it."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Are you agreeable to a search, Bulstrode?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Bulstrode at once.

"Very well. It is the best way. Follow me."

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Search.

QUITE a crowd followed Mr. Quelch into the House. Fellows had gathered round from all sides, and half Greyfriars had heard the accusation against Bulstrode. Bulstrode walked in with a pale, set face. Wharton slipped an arm through Bulstrode's, and the captain of the Remove gave him a grateful glance.

"You don't believe it?" he muttered.

"Of course not."

"And you, Cherry?"

"I believe it's all lies," said Bob Cherry.

"I—I was against you when you were accused about that postal-order, Cherry," Bulstrode muttered remorsefully.

Bob bit his lip.

"Let that rest," he said. "Anyway, there was something that looked like evidence in that matter. There's none here. It all depends on Ponsonby's word, and we know that he's an utter cad. Only an idiot would take his word."

"Yes, rather!"

"Yet it's curious," Nugent said slowly.

"What's curious, Franky?"

"About Ponsonby being willing to abide by the result of a search. If he hasn't missed any banknotes, he knows they won't be found here."

"Of course they won't be found."

"Then his accusation drops to the ground."

"Yes, immediately."

"Then why is he willing to stand by a search? It looks as if he, at least, believes in the accusation himself."

Wharton was silent. He had not looked at it in that light. Was there something of truth in Ponsonby's statement, after all? Had he really missed banknotes? Wharton remembered that Billy Bunter had been concerned in the raid on Highcliffe, and he began to feel very uncomfortable. Bulstrode would never have stolen, he was convinced; but he was by no means so sure about Bunter.

The juniors tramped upstairs in a crowd to Bulstrode's study. The tea-table was laid, but the viands were mostly cold by this time. It was no time to think of the feed Wun Lung had prepared for Bulstrode and his guests, however.

Mr. Quelch entered the study. The Highcliffe fellows, and Bulstrode and his immediate friends, followed him in. The rest of the fellows crowded in the passage, as near to the study as they could get.

Mr. Quelch fixed a hard, searching glance upon Ponsonby, which made the cad of Highcliffe shift a little uncomfortably.

"The search you have demanded shall be carried out in the most thorough manner, Ponsonby," said the Remove-master, "not because I believe a word against Bulstrode, but because I wish to clear, beyond the chance of dispute, Bulstrode's name. If no trace is found here of your banknotes, I shall conclude that you have brought this accusation from sheer spite, and I shall request Dr. Locke to acquaint your head-master with the circumstances. Accusations of this sort should not be brought lightly, and without proof. Wharton, will you kindly fetch Gosling?"

"Yes, sir."

In a few minutes Harry Wharton returned with the school porter. It was beneath the dignity of a Form-master to make the search himself.

"Gosling," said Mr. Quelch, "I wish you to make a search of Bulstrode's person, and of this study, to discover whether some banknotes are concealed!"

"Yes, sir," said Gosling.

"Begin with Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode submitted quietly to the search. He knew that he had not the banknotes about him, and that the search would prove it conclusively to everyone.

Gosling was very thorough. As a matter of fact, he disliked Bulstrode, and would not have been displeased to discover him in the wrong. But the search, thorough as it was, failed to reveal anything that did not belong to Bulstrode.

"Of course, the things might be hidden in his boots, or in the lining of his jacket," Gadsby remarked. "You wouldn't expect them to be in his pockets!"

"Quite so!" said Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" added Vavasour.

"They ain't there, sir," said Gosling. "I should ha' felt them, sir."

"You may proceed to search the study!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

Gosling went through the study carefully, watched by the fellows there, and by the crowd crammed outside the doorway. The news was through all Greyfriars by this time, and Fifth and Sixth fellows mingled in the crowd, looking on eagerly.

Carne and Loder, of the Sixth, were making bets on Bulstrode's innocence or guilt—needless to say, unheard by Mr. Quelch.

Gosling turned out the study pretty thoroughly. He did not seem to notice the cap lying on the desk, and he passed close to it several times. Ponsonby bit his lip; he began to fear that the cap might be passed over, and he was anxious, of course, not to have to draw attention to it himself. But if Gosling did not see it, he would have no choice but to point it out; it would not do to let it be passed over.

Gosling paused at last.

"There ain't nothing to be found, so far as I see, sir," he said.

"You haven't looked in the bookcase!" said Gadsby.

"You see, sir—"

"The banknotes might be hidden between the pages of a book," said Ponsonby. "I've heard of such things."

"This study is used by three boys," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Bulstrode would hardly be likely, I suppose, to conceal banknotes where they might be found at any moment by Brown or Hazeldene. I think we may take the search here as concluded, and go up to the dormitory."

Ponsonby started.

"Hold on a minute! There's a cap lying there!"

Mr. Quelch made an impatient gesture.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed sharply. "I suppose banknotes could not be concealed in a cap?"

"I don't know, sir. I believe that's the cap Bulstrode wore when he was over at Highcliffe to-day."

"Is that the case, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode glanced at the cap.

"Yes, sir."

"You may look at it, Gosling, but it seems to me to be absurd," said Mr. Quelch. "I wish to do everything reasonable to satisfy Ponsonby, however, before reporting him to his head-master for making a wicked and malicious accusation."

Gosling took up the cap, and ran his fingers through it.

"The lining's torn, sir," he said.

"I didn't know that," said Bulstrode.

"Well, it is, Master Bulstrode," said Gosling. "There don't appear to be nothing in it, though, fur as I can see."

"You haven't searched!" said Ponsonby irritably.

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"I 'ave, sir! Wot I says is this 'ere!" said Gosling, with dignity. "If you don't like the way I does it—"

"That will do, Gosling!" said Mr. Quelch. "Take the cap yourself, Ponsonby, and search it, since you seem to be so strangely bent upon it!"

"Then will you watch him, sir?" exclaimed John Bull. "He's quite mean enough to slip the banknotes into the cap, and say he found them there!"

"I hardly think any boy would be wicked enough to do that, Bull. But I will certainly see that Ponsonby does nothing of the sort."

And Mr. Quelch watched the cad of Highcliffe very closely. Ponsonby ran his fingers through the cap, and felt in the torn lining.

Nothing!

The Highcliffe fellow's brain swam for a moment. The banknotes were not there. He had placed them there with his own hands, stowing them away into the deepest recess of the torn lining. But they were not there now. The cap, so far as he knew, had not been moved from the spot where he had put it after stowing in the folded banknotes. But the banknotes were not there!

Ponsonby turned white. Then, as he caught Mr. Quelch's penetrating glance, a wave of crimson flushed into his cheeks.

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch, in an ominous voice.

"They—they don't seem to be here, sir!" stammered Ponsonby. "I—I can't understand it!"

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unmasked.

MR. QUELCH'S eyes never left the Highcliffe fellow's face. The changing expressions in Ponsonby's face were not lost upon him for a second. Surprise, rage, disappointment, terror—all those emotions chased one another over the startled visage of the cad of Highcliffe. Ponsonby's brain was in a whirl. What had happened? Where were the banknotes? He had placed them there—he knew that—and the study door had been closed at the time, and Bulstrode certainly had not been in the study since. How had they been removed? What did it mean?

"Well?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "They are not there?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"You say you cannot understand it, Ponsonby. What is it that you cannot understand? Had you any special reason for supposing that the banknotes were hidden in the lining of Bulstrode's cap?"

"Ye-es—no—n-n-no!" stammered Ponsonby, hardly knowing what he was saying in his amazement and alarm.

"Why should you suppose that they were hidden there?"

"I—I—I didn't suppose so!"

"Then why cannot you understand the fact that they are not there?"

"I—I didn't say—"

"Is it possible?"—Mr. Quelch's voice took on a deep and stern tone—"is it possible, Ponsonby, that you are so base as to have intended what was just suggested by Bull—to place the banknotes here, and declare that Bulstrode had stolen them?"

"I—I—"

"I guess that was his little game!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes, rather!"

"The cad!"

"The coward!"

"The beast!"

The voices of the Greyfriars fellows grew loud and threatening, and a movement was made. Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Stand back!" he said. "If Ponsonby has really done this base thing, he will not escape unpunished!"

The three Highcliffe fellows exchanged looks. They simply did not know what to make of the matter. They had all seen the banknotes placed in the lining of the cap. The cap had been still lying where they had left it. It seemed impossible that the notes were not still there. Gadsby took the cap from Ponsonby, and ran his fingers desperately through the lining. Nothing was to be found; and all eyes were upon Gadsby with the sharpest suspicion.

"Well," said Mr. Quelch icily, "are you satisfied?"

"Ye-es!" stammered Gadsby.

"Do you wish to have Bulstrode's belongings in the Remove dormitory searched, too?"

"Yes," said Ponsonby.

But he spoke without keenness. The search must be asked for, to keep up appearances; but he knew, of course, that the banknotes were not in Bulstrode's box in the dormitory. The question was, where were they?

"Hold on, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "It begins to look pretty clear that Ponsonby came here intending to plant the banknotes on Bulstrode, and then accuse him of stealing them!"

"Yes, rather!"
 "I believe so, too," said Bulstrode.
 "And if that's the case, sir," said Wharton, as Mr. Quelch made him a sign to proceed—"if that's the case, sir, Ponsonby must have the notes actually about him at the present moment."

There was a general movement of interest. No one had yet thought of that obvious fact, but no one had any doubt about it, now that Harry Wharton suggested it.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry ejaculated. "Of course! The blessed boulder's got the blessed banknotes in his blessed pocket at this blessed moment!"

"By George! Yes."

"Search him!"

"Have him searched, sir!"

The voices rose to shouts. The fellows outside were pressing into the study, and it looked as if violent hands would be laid upon the Highcliffe fellows. Ponsonby & Co. changed colour.

But Mr. Quelch waved the excited Greyfriars fellows back. "Order!" he exclaimed sharply. "Do not crowd in here! I assure you all that this matter shall be thoroughly threshed out. Ponsonby, I am loth to say it, but it really appears to me that you have come here with a wicked and detestable scheme in your mind for ruining the reputation of an innocent lad!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir!"

"You did not come with the banknotes in your possession, intending to place them here, and declare that Bulstrode had taken them?"

"Certainly not! I regard the question as an insult!"

"Very well. Then you have no objection to being searched by Gosling, to reveal whether any banknotes with numbers corresponding to the numbers you gave me are to be found in your pockets?"

Ponsonby drew himself up in the true Highcliffe manner.

"The suggestion of a search in my case is an insult!" he said. "But to satisfy you, I am willing to submit to it!"

"Very well. Gosling!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will go through Master Ponsonby's pockets as you have been through Bulstrode's. Turn the contents out upon the table!"

"Yes, sir?"

Ponsonby smiled in a disdainful way. Where the banknotes were was a mystery to him; but he had no reason to think that they were in his own pockets—indeed, he would have laughed at the idea. He felt that he had nothing to fear from a search.

He threw his jacket open, and the Greyfriars porter went slowly and methodically through his pockets.

He turned out a cigarette-case, and a purse containing several pieces of gold, and other things that made the Greyfriars fellows open their eyes.

Finally, from an inside pocket of the jacket, Gosling brought to light a little square of folded, crimping paper, crimping and rustling as he fingered it.

There was a murmur from the juniors.

That little wedge of folded paper was a banknote, or banknotes; there was not the slightest doubt on that subject.

Ponsonby looked at it, and his eyes almost started from his head. Well he knew what it was; it looked exactly the same as when he had placed it in the lining of Bulstrode's cap.

He made a wild grasp at it; but Mr. Quelch struck his hand aside in a second.

"Stop that!" said the Remove-master grimly.

Gosling laid the wedge of paper on the table. The crowd looked on with bated breath. Gadsby and Vavasour were as white as chalk.

What did it mean? How had it happened? They could not imagine. Was there such a thing as magic? Was it Providence? What was it? The folded banknotes, which they had seen Ponsonby place in the lining of Bulstrode's cap, had just been turned out of the inside pocket of Ponsonby's jacket. The mere thought of it made their heads swim; they seemed to be in a horrid dream.

"Unfold those banknotes," said Mr. Quelch, and his voice was like iron.

"Yessir!"

Slowly Gosling unfolded the notes. They crisped and rustled in his fingers. He spread them out rustling upon the table.

Mr. Quelch consulted the paper still in his hand—the paper upon which Ponsonby had written down the numbers of the missing notes.

"Read out the numbers to me, Gosling, from those banknotes."

"Yessir!"

"Are they both five-pound notes?"

"Yessir!"

"And the numbers—"

"One is 00013579, sir—"

"Very good! And the other?"

"00013578, sir."

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

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Mr. Quelch's brow hardened.

"Very good! They are the numbers you gave me, Ponsonby. The two banknotes, of which you have given me the numbers, and which you declare were taken from your study at Highcliffe, have been found in your own pocket."

Ponsonby was white as death.

He tried to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Have you anything to say?" asked Mr. Quelch icily. "Can you now venture to deny that you brought these banknotes here, intending to place them in Bulstrode's study, to be found by a search, so that a totally false and wicked accusation could be brought against Bulstrode?"

Ponsonby could not answer.

What was he to say? By some mysterious agency, which he could not understand in the least, the banknotes had been returned to his possession, and his whole wicked plot had been discovered. He was amazed and terrified, and his tongue refused to utter a word. He stood dumb and confounded.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Explains.

THE silence in the study lasted a full minute. Ponsonby could not speak; Gadsby and Vavasour did not know what to say. The looks of the Removites grew more threatening.

"Ponsonby, have you anything to say?"

Ponsonby broke silence at last, in a hoarse and unnatural voice.

"I—I can't understand it," he gasped. "I—I certainly didn't know that the banknotes were in my pocket."

Mr. Quelch's lip curled.

"You admit that these are the banknotes you affected to have missed, and of which you gave me the numbers?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"As they were found in your own pocket, you admit fully that Bulstrode could not possibly have stolen them at Highcliffe?"

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"You withdraw, then, the wicked accusation you have made against a Greyfriars boy?" the Remove-master demanded, in his deepest and sternest tones.

"Ye-e-es, sir," faltered Ponsonby.

"Very well. Your headmaster will be made acquainted with your base conduct, Ponsonby, and the matter will be left to his discretion. I think you ought to be sent to prison. I have seldom encountered a boy so utterly without moral principle."

"If you please, sir," said Bulstrode. "May I say a word?"

"Certainly, Bulstrode!"

"If—if you don't mind, sir, would you—would you let off Ponsonby, and—and not report him to the master of Highcliffe, sir?"

"That is a very strange request from you, Bulstrode. I am glad to see that you can forgive an injury; but this wretched boy must be punished."

"I was thinking of taking him into the gym. on his way out, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled involuntarily.

"I should be sorry to be the cause of making trouble between the masters of two schools, sir, and least said is soonest mended," said Bulstrode.

The Remove-master hesitated a moment, and then he nodded.

"Very well, Bulstrode. I will let the matter drop here—only expressing once more my utter detestation of this wretched boy and his accomplices. Wharton, will you have the kindness to see them out of Greyfriars? They are not fit to breathe the same air with decent boys."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch left the study. Ponsonby broke into a shout.

"Mr. Quelch—sir—I claim protection! I—ooooh!"

A hand slapped over Ponsonby's mouth and stopped him. The juniors closed round him grimly.

"You're coming to the gym," said Harry Wharton. "You're going to stand up to Bulstrode, without gloves, too. Come on!"

"I—I won't! I—I—"

"Will you walk, or shall we carry you?"

Ponsonby decided to walk. Wun Lung grinned after the juniors as they crowded out of the study with the cads of Highcliffe in their midst.

"Tea leadee when you comee backee," he remarked.

"Right-ho, Wun Lung!"

The juniors crowded out. Pale as ashes, the cads of Highcliffe were marched into the gym. There Bulstrode, Wharton, and Bob Cherry took their jackets off. Ponsonby,

Gadsby, and Vavasour stood up to them in combat. The cads of Highcliffe didn't want to. But they had the choice of that, or of being thrashed with a cricket-stump; and they were fairly warned that if they did not put up a good fight, they would get the "lamming" all the same.

They were fairly in for it; and they did their best. The Greyfriars juniors received some hard knocks. But they knocked the Highcliffians up and down and round and round, till it seemed to Ponsonby & Co. that a series of dreadful earthquakes was occurring, and at last the three young rascals lay on the floor, utterly knocked out and unable to rise.

"That's better than reporting them to their masters," said Bulstrode, gasping a little, as he put on his coat with Fish's assistance. "Now kick them out."

And promptly enough the cads of Highcliffe were kicked out of the gateway of Greyfriars, and left to crawl home sore and sullen to their school.

In Bulstrode's study, quite a cheerful party assembled to that belated tea. Wun Lung had warmed up the things, and a cheerful scent greeted the juniors as they came in. The little Chinese was grinning serenely.

"Highcliffe lotters gone?" he asked.

Bulstrode laughed.

"Yes—licked and kicked out," he said.

"Allee lightee. Me tellee now."

"Eh? You'll tell what?"

"Me workee wheeze."

The juniors looked attentively at Wun Lung. The grin on the little Celestial's face showed that he had something to communicate.

"What wheeze?" asked Harry Wharton. "What are you getting at, you young bouncer?"

"Me playee tlickee on Ponsonby," grinned Wun Lung. "Me watchee thlough keyhole, see him puttee bankeetotee in Bulstrode's captee—"

"What!"

"My hat!"

"Then he leavee studee; me nippee in, takee notee," grinned Wun Lung. "Me lushee quicke outee housee, lun into Ponsonby, and fall to the groud, pokee notee in pocket—"

"What!" roared the juniors.

"Me goodee conjurer," said Wun Lung complacently.

"What you callee sleightee-handee. Me puttee backee notee in Ponsonby's pocket. What you tinkee?"

The juniors stared blankly at Wun Lung. They had not been able quite to understand the affair before; but they understood it now. Bulstrode turned quite white. He realised the terrible position he would have been in, but for the intervention of the little Chinese.

"Great Scott!" said Wharton. "Then that was why you ran into Ponsonby on the steps, and wouldn't let go him."

Wun Lung chuckled.

"What you tinkee?"

"And—and he had already put the notes in the lining of my cap," muttered Bulstrode. "You saw him?"

"Me savvy!"

"That's why he was so astonished when they weren't there," Bob Cherry exclaimed. "When he picked up the cap, he certainly expected to find the notes in the lining. My hat! I wonder what he felt like when they weren't there?"

"The hound!" exclaimed Wharton. "But for Wun Lung—"

"Good heavens!" said Bulstrode hoarsely. "But for Wun Lung, the notes would have been found hidden in the lining of my cap, and—and— Oh!"

His voice broke.

"It's horrible!" said Wharton. "My hat! We'll make the Highcliffe cads squirm for this. Those chaps ought to be in a convict prison. But it's all ended all right, Bulstrode; there's nothing to worry about now."

The Remove captain nodded without replying. The narrowness of his escape from the dastardly plot had unnerved him. He grasped Wun Lung by the hand, and pressed it hard, without saying a word. The little Chinese grinned serenely, evidently very well pleased with himself.

"Tea leady!" he remarked.

The juniors sat down to tea. Bulstrode recovered his spirits soon, and was as merry as the rest, but sometimes a thoughtful shade came over his face. The lion of the evening, of course, was Wun Lung. It seemed as if the juniors could not make enough of the little Chinese. And when the Remove generally knew the story afterwards, they joined in making much of little Wun Lung—who had saved the captain of the Remove from a disgrace that might have been lifelong!

THE END.

(Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance. Price One Penny.)

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Rupert Thurston, friend of Ferrers Lord, the millionaire, and commander of the latter's wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep, receives mysterious orders to sail for the Chinese seas. While on the journey the engines break down, and Thurston and Horton the diver, while waiting for the repairs to be completed, rescue a mad castaway, who tells them a strange story. With the engines repaired they restart on the search for the Crimson Hill, which is eventually sighted. A party, headed by Thurston and including Ching-Lung, go in search of, and discover the entrance to the Crimson Hill. Here they meet Ferrers Lord, and Ivan Scaroff, the uncle and enemy of Michael Scaroff. During their absence, however, Prout discovers that Rogers, the castaway, is a traitor in the pay of Michael Scaroff, and has him shot immediately on the return of Thurston.

(Now go on with the story.)

Ching-Lung Discovers the Cook in a Strange Condition, and Makes a Good Thing Out of It—Prout has a Fright, and the Hapless Monsieur Pierre again Gets into Hot Water.

Ching-Lung paused suddenly as he passed the galley door, and placed one sharp ear close to the keyhole. A muffled human voice was groaning out a strange medley of words.

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After listening for a good five minutes, the Chinese boy heard something like this:

"Please, saire, I am a pig, thou art a pig, he is a pig! Ah, saire, I am smothaire! Oh, let me go, Mistaire Prout, and I svaire I do it nevaire once again! Ve saire all sorry he is a pig! Mort de ma vie! I am strangle! Oui, ve saire all sorry pigs, please, Mistaire Prout, saire! Oh, mi, I vas choke! Oh, mi, mistaire sorry pig, I svaire I hit you no more again vit a flour-bag! Ah, I vill have r-revenge! Please, saire, let us be pigs-pi-p-p-p!"

It was the weary voice of Monsieur Pierre, still endeavouring to repeat his apology, and quite ignorant in his terror that his tormentor had vanished long ago. The dread inspired by the steersman's threats to hurl the stove at him (twenty men could not have done it) had kept him from lifting a finger. There was a brief silence, and then the weird babbling began again.

"Ah, mistaire please pig! Sacre, I die, I choke, pig, I—"

Ching-Lung grinned an unholy grin, and peeped cautiously into the galley.

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"Hi!" he shouted.

The weird figure, draped in the flour-bag, sank upon its knees.

"Oh, Mistaire Prout," wailed Monsieur Pierre, "forgive me and set me free! Ah, oui, thou was a pig—"

Ching-Lung scented something worth having. He uttered a terrible roar, imitating Tom Prout's bellow to perfection. The horrified cook grovelled at his feet.

"What!" yelled the Chinese boy. "You dare to call me a pig? Oh, I'll throttle you!"

"Mercy, mercy! I am bewildered! I am dead! I know not what I speak, saire! Oh, forgive me, saire!"

Ching-Lung giggled, and performed a noiseless dance, significant of huge delight.

"All right," he roared. "I'll let you off!"

"Oh, t'ank you—t'ank you!" moaned Monsieur Pierre.

"You just wait a bit!" went on Ching-Lung. "You have called me a pig! That is an insult that can only be wiped out—"

"Not in blood!" moaned the shivering cook. "Mercy, Mistaire Prout! I no fightaire! Oh, mi! Oh, mi!"

"Not in blood," roared Ching-Lung; "but in beef!"

"Yes, yes! Ah, oui, oui!"

"In beef, I tell you. You cook two big steaks with plenty of 'taters at once. Don't let anyone know. Smuggle them into the swimming-bath, and put them on the diving-board with two plates. If those steaks are tough, I'll come back and murder you! I'll give you twenty minutes to do 'em. When you hear the galley door close, count fifty slowly, and then you can take off that bag!"

Ching-Lung stole away, closing the door violently after him, and sought out Eric Hagensen. Eric's grin grew wider and wider as he listened to the story.

"He do it not," said the Norwegian boy, shaking his head.

Crafty Ching-Lung had dropped back into his pigeon-English at once.

"You waitee bit, Elic!" he squeaked. "If de steakees not dere we makee him sittee up. I wondel what ole Thomas Plout do to him. He jabbel, jabbel allee de timee 'bout pigs. We goee and takee a lise out of Tom now!"

Prout was in a vacant cabin, taking a well-earned rest. His head ached terribly after the awful concoction he had unconsciously drunk, and he was pale and shaky. His voice had lost all its lustiness when, in answer to a timid knock, he shouted a feeble:

"Come in!"

Ching-Lung opened the door, looking terribly grave and stern.

"Mr. Plout, I plesume?" he said.

The steersman stared.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You presume, do you, Ching? Great pip, what's happened? Don't you know me?"

Ching-Lung waved one yellow hand contemptuously.

"Oncee 'pon a time," said Ching-Lung sadly, "I honoul you wid my acquaintance. I tink you a genelum. Dat allee past!"

"What are you driving at?" roared the steersman.

"What have I done?"

Ching-Lung sighed wearily, and wagged his pigtail.

"You askee dat? Oh, shamee, shamee! I tink you a genelum, and I mistook. Farewell! Henceforth we are strangers!"

Choking back a bitter sob, Ching-Lung glided towards the door. Tom Prout was very ill indeed, but he could not stand this. He seized the Chinese boy by the pigtail, and jerked him back violently.

"Here," he bellowed fiercely, "you just talk straight, and explain yourself! What's yer game?"

Ching-Lung buried his face in the handkerchief with the border of pink dragons, and wept bitterly.

"You are a coward," he sobbed, "and—and a badee ole bully!"

"Hi," gasped the astonished steersman, "dror it mild!"

"You goee and bully a pool lily Flench chapee not halfee youl size!"

Tom Prout began to see.

"Why, Ching," he roared, "you ain't goin' back on me for a bit of a joke like that, are you? I jest axed him for a bit of grub and a splash of rum, and he banged me over the head with a bag and cursed me cruel. I only made him apologise and find the tuck. Oh, goodness, I wish I'd never tasted that rum! It's made me bad!"

Ching-Lung began to see now. With a look of horror on his face he let fall the handkerchief.

"Let me smell your breff!" he gasped.

"What for?"

"Oh, don't askee me," said Ching-Lung, wringing his hands—"don't askee me! Let me smellee!"

The amazed steersman opened his enormous mouth. Ching-Lung staggered back with a stifled scream.

"You poisoned!" he moaned. "You deadee! Ole Bovlil swore to do it! You not livee two days!"

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

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Prout's eyes dilated with horror.

"I knowed there was something wrong with the rum all the time!" he howled. "I never felt so bad in my life. If I've got to peg out, I'll kill that mossoo fust! Get out of my way!"

He made a mad rush for the door, but Ching-Lung waved him back.

"You waitee lily bit, Thomas. Ole Bovlil him raging wildee. Him tellible chapee when him in a lage. He sayee you insultee him, and him going to muldel you. He looking now fol you in the fo'e's'le wid tlee pistols and a gleat big axe. You lie low, and I talkee him ovel. I got something dat stopee de poisoonee you takee. Dlink it off!"

Tom Prout looked doubtful as Ching-Lung held up a little glass bottle filled with some jet-black fluid. Monsieur Pierre's glass of rum had utterly shattered his strong nerves. His disordered imagination pictured the chef tearing round the ship in search of him, armed to the teeth, like some famous fire-eater of old.

"You're a pal, Ching!" he said. "I feel so mortal bad I couldn't fight a cat—just as if I was going to peg out. If that stuff keeps the poison from bowling me over, I'll talk to the Frenchy to-morrow. Send the doctor round, like a good chap, and keep mossoo quiet. Have I to drink it all?"

"Evelly dlopee," said Ching-Lung.

The steersman drained the bottle, turned black in the face, burst into a fit of coughing, and then sat down. It was the most horrible concoction that ever a man tasted.

"You feelee bettel aftel dat!" squeaked Ching-Lung. "Mind you lockee de dool."

Eric had been listening at the keyhole.

"What dot stuff in de bottle?" he inquired. "Dot him make look funny!"

"Only a lily harmless medicine of my ownee," answered Ching-Lung, with a grin. "It do him a lottee of good. It a mixtule of Epsomee salts and gunpowdel, wid a lily dlop of ink! Comee 'long! De steaks getting coldee."

They stole towards the dark swimming-bath, and Ching-Lung lighted a stump of candle. Monsieur Pierre had kept his promise, and the two plump steaks were deliciously tender. A pannikin of water from the fresh-water tank washed down the repast. Then Eric asked the usual question:

"What we do now?"

Ching-Lung was never at a loss. He wrinkled his forehead for a moment.

"I tink we not quitee finishee wid Mr. Plout yetee, Elic!" he squeaked. "You waitee at de galley dool, and I go up de passage. When you see me wavee my flippel, tellee de cook chapee dat Mr. Holton wantee him at once in de saloon—savvy? He, he, he! You going to laugh fitee to bust! Oh, dis bigee blain of mine!"

The hapless steersman, with aching liver and throbbing head, lay moaning in his cabin. Suddenly, from outside, he heard a bloodthirsty scraping of knives and the cocking of pistol-triggers. Ching-Lung made the terrifying sounds with his throat.

"Oh, crumbs!" moaned the steersman, in a cold perspiration. "It's the Frenchy! He's scented me!"

"Aha!" cried the cook's voice. "I haf scent you! Aha, coward! Aha, villain—cochon—pig of an Engleeshman! I vill swim in your coward blood! I vill carve you to sausage-meat! Pierre Bovrille is nevaire insult witout r-revenge! Come forth, r-rascal, and I slay you!"

There was another vicious scraping of knives, and Prout moaned:

"Put it off till to-morrer, do! I ain't fit to fight now!"

"Aha, pig, you shrink, you tremble! Aha, you Engleesh dog! I vill br-reak down ze door and slay you! Aha, son of a fat vashervoman—"

The last word was enough, and Tom Prout leapt from his bunk.

"Washerwoman!" he roared, rushing towards the locked door. "I'll mangle yer! If you'd got a bloomin' Maxim gun or a ton of lyddite out there, I'd mangle yer! Look out for a hearthquake!"

Ching-Lung waved both arms frantically, and Eric rushed into the galley. The message was so urgent that monsieur came at a run just as the end of Ching-Lung's pigtail vanished into the gloomy fo'e's'le, and the unhappy cook ran blindly into the enraged steersman's arms.

"Washerwoman!" hissed Tom Prout. "Oh, I've got yer now, my beauty!"

Biff! biff! biff! Cries of agony and prayers in broken English rang through the corridor. In the dark fore-castle Ching-Lung, with both hands pressed to his sides, danced a fiendish dance, and choked with delight.

Shanghai at Last—Ching-Lung Visits His Cousin Fat-Fin-Yow, Who Gives a Banquet in His Honour—Master and Pupil—Tom Prout and Ben Maddock See Snakes.

At midnight Ferrers Lord donned his diving-suit, and disappeared into the black waters as mysteriously as he had emerged from them. He left Rupert no further orders, but merely told him to be cautious. Though Rupert knew the other vessel must be close at hand, he did not catch a single glimpse of her. All the millionaire's actions were veiled in an aggravating mystery. Thurston, from the saloon, watched his lamp fade and dwindle until its feeble gleam vanished from sight.

"Mystery upon mystery," he muttered, closing the shutters. "I wonder if I shall ever win his confidence?"

On the 24th the Lord of the Deep came to rest in sixteen fathoms two miles outside Shanghai. The vessel was two days before her time, and there were groans in the fo'c's'le at the thought of forty-eight hours of inaction.

"I'll tell yer wot it is," said the bo'sun to Tom Prout. "I'm gettin' sick o' this. Now, when I signed that paper it read: 'And I solemnly swear not to go ashore at any civilised port for two years after this date, except by special permission.' Now, that's 'ot, ain't it? I'd give both eyes to stretch my legs. By thunder, it's gettin' tirin'!"

Prout polished his bald head, and nodded.

"As you say," he roared, "it's 'ot—real torrid. Ben! But you must see, my pal, it ain't like it was when that brute Trethvick commanded. Mr. 'Orton is a real gent, and so's Mr. Thurston—a reg'lar true blue. If you was to ax 'em now—"

"Ax 'em yerself!" snapped Maddock. "You're third officer, ain't yer?"

The steersman did not deny it, but he shrank from the task. Suddenly he had a bright inspiration.

"I've got an idea, Ben."

"Then 'ang on ter it tight," growled the bo'sun, "and don't let it escape. It's the fust yer ever 'ad, and if it gets away yer might never get another all yer life. Wot is it?"

"We'll get Ching to ax Ben. He'll do it like a shot: Why, 'ere he is! Hi, Ching!"

Ching-Lung entered the conning-tower head downwards, having mounted the steps on his hands. He turned a somersault, and fell with his full weight on Ben Maddock's toes. Though the bo'sun experienced a good deal of pain, he beamed upon Ching-Lung, for to offend the Chinese boy then would have been fatal.

"'Ere, Ching!" roared Prout. "I've got a cigar for you!"

"And 'ere's a few o' them cigarettes yer likes," said the bo'sun.

Ching-Lung giggled as he pocketed the gifts, but he was not deceived by this lavish outburst of generosity. He kissed the top of the steersman's shiny head, and then, placing an unlighted cigarette close to that same gentleman's rather ruddy nose, puffed out a cloud of smoke. Maddock screamed with laughter.

"Why, Tom," he said, "yer nose must be red-'ot! Why, 'e's lighted 'is cigarette at it!"

"Not so 'ot as your 'air!" roared Prout. "It's a wonder it don't set the ship afire. Listen to me, Chingy!"

He explained to the Chinese boy that he and Maddock wished to go ashore for a bit of fun.

"You wantee me askee Mr. Thulston—ch? Allee lightee, you no wolly 'bout it. I goee wid you, and show you loundee. I tlot off at oncee and axee him. Solly I havee to go likee dis, but I gotee colns on bofe feet. Good-bye, my loved ones!"

Ching-Lung calmly turned himself upside-down, blew a kiss to each, and vanished down the ladder on his hands.

Thurston was sitting with his feet on the table, studying the code-signal book, when a strange apparition appeared in the doorway.

It was a cloud of smoke, from which protruded two hands and two naked feet. The feet were uppermost, but if the weird vision possessed a body at all, the veil of smoke, which in some mysterious manner clung about it, hid it from sight. The horrible thing waddled forward, and the right foot laid a scrap of paper before the commander of the Lord of the Deep. On the paper was scrawled in a schoolboy hand:

"Pleze, sir, me want to go to c mi kuzzen, Fat-Fin-Yow.—With luv."

"Look here, Ching-Lung," said Rupert sternly, "that is certainly a very clever trick—perhaps the cleverest I've ever seen; but the fore-castle is the place for it. I don't want the saloon poisoned with your vile tobacco!"

"Me velly solly, sil," squeaked Ching-Lung, as he emerged from his smoky mantle. "Dat mighty smalt trick, and takee long timee to lealn. He, he, he! Excuse me!"

Rupert glanced at the paper.

"You're a fine chap to spell," he said, with an amused laugh. "What does all this mean?"

There was a cigar-box on the table, and Ching-Lung.

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cautiously stretched out his hand. A cigar crawled like a living thing out of the box and disappeared up his sleeve, followed by two more in quick succession.

"Oh, datee mean me wantee go ashore, and see my cousin, Fat-Fin-Yow," answered the Chinese boy blandly. "Him velly lich and fatee. Him a melchant and a mandalin, and tladee in bils'-neets fol making soup. Me been Shanghai lots and lots of timees. Mr. Plout and Mr. Maddock wantee go wid me, please, sil. Me not see darling ole Fat-Fin fol ninety-tee yeals. You not sayee no?"

Rupert only wished he could pay the town a visit himself; but he was afraid to leave the ship, for at any moment a message might arrive from Ferrers Lord. He knew, from the scanty news Lord had given him concerning the state of affairs in China, that Shanghai was quiet.

"Well, Ching," he said, "I will speak to Mr. Horton, and if he has no objection, neither have I. Both Maddock and Prout deserve a short holiday. If Mr. Horton gives his consent, remember the two men are in your charge, and if anything happens to them I will never forgive you. You must not be away more than six hours."

Ching-Lung beamed with delight, for he felt sure Ned Horton would give his permission. In his joy, he decided to call upon Monsieur Pierre in the galley. The cook was peeling potatoes, and humming a little French song. There was a horrible crash outside the door, which made Pierre leap into the air.

"Mer-rcy!" gasped the Frenchman. "Zere go all my plates! Aha-r-r, zey vill all be smash! Oh, my! Vat has happen?"

A couple of huge piles of plates had been placed outside the door ready for arrangement on the shelves. Monsieur Pierre rushed out, wringing his hands in dismay. The whole corridor was littered with crockery, and in the midst lay something that made Monsieur Pierre's eyes bulge out like a snail's.

"Quel horreur?" he shrieked. "Vat is it dat it is? Oh, my, oh, my! It is a mangled cor-rpse!"

It looked like a mangled corpse, certainly. A ghastly knife lay beside the body, and the body was headless, and twisted into the most horrible shape. The Frenchman, in the semi-darkness of the corridor, saw the bloodstained neck from which the head had been severed. He did not look round for the head. Chill with horror, he fled back into the galley, and locked the door. Then he began to dance about and yell for aid.

"Oh, my—oh, my! Zey haf mur-r-der-r Ching-Lung! Help—help! Zey haf chop off ze head of him! Horreur! Vat a crime! Mur-r-der-r! Oh, my! Send for ze police-mans! I am zeeck—I faint! Oh, my! Mur-r-der-r! Help!"

The moment the terrified cook began to dance and shriek, the twisted corpse in the corridor jerked itself into a very lively attitude, and Ching-Lung sat up with a grin. He had tied a piece of red flannel over his coiled pigtail, and then drawn his head through the collar of his blouse. In the half-light of the corridor the red flannel had looked terribly ghastly, and the bloodstained knife had added wonderfully to the whole gruesome reality of the trick.

"Me bettel slingee my hook," murmured Ching-Lung, "and leavee ole Flenchy chap to explaine. He, he, he! Pletty smalt to knockee allee dat clockely ovel, and not bleakee a ting."

"Oh, my!" shrieked Pierre's agonised voice. "Zey halt mur-r-der-r Ching-Lung! Zey haf chop him all up to mince-meat! Zey haf cut off ze hands and ze face of him! Send for ze fire-stations—I mean ze police-stations and ze escapes!"

Ching-Lung executed a series of rapid catherine-wheels.

"Well?" cried the steersman and bo'sun in a breath.

"It allee lightee," replied Ching-Lung airily. "Mr. Thulston have givee me pelmission to take bofe you lily children ashore, and treat you to toffee. I expectee I have to takee you in de polambulator, and not folgetee youl feeding-bottles. He, he, he! Hallo! Whatee dat?"

"Mur-r-der-r!" The cry came faintly to their ears. "Oh, my! Send for ze police-courts!"

"Ole Bovlil," said Ching-Lung, with a wink. "You should watchee him, Mr. Benjammy. He dlinking velly, velly much too muchee. He gotee delelium tlemens. Me saw dem coming on longee ago. You better goee, Mr. Plout."

"Oh, my! Ze mangle cor-rpse! He all chop up!" wailed the cook.

Prout and Maddock stared at one another, and then at the Chinese boy, but Ching was quite grave.

"He velly likely mincing a toughiee chicken," murmured Ching-Lung.

"I'll mince him!" roared the steersman. "Look here, Chingy, you've been too smart for us all the trip. You played me up proper that night you said the Frenchy was going to murder me. I don't want to make a fool of myself again, so if you've been larking, just say so."

Ching-Lung giggled.

"Well," he answered, "since you so politee, Thomas, I

tellce you. I did havee a lily joke wid ole Bowlil, but nuffing to makee him hollel. I just letee him see me likee dat."

In a twinkling Ching-Lung had whipped out knife and flannel, and a headless, distorted body lay on the floor of the conning-tower. It was so sudden and so realistic, even in the stronger light, that for a moment both men stared aghast. Then they held their sides, and shrieked with laughter.

"I don't wonder he hollered!" said Prout. "Do you, Ben?"

Maddock didn't, but gave it as his opinion that, as the ship wasn't a blessed monkey-cage, he'd stroll down and twist the cook's head off. By the use of a good deal of strong language and some violence, he managed to persuade the cook that, as Ching-Lung was at that moment alive and well in the conning-tower, it was rather unlikely that he could be dead five minutes before.

"Zen it vas a vision!" gasped the cook. "It terrify me—it shock me to ze soul. Oh, my! Do not leafe me, saire, until I shall recovaire! Aha-r-r! Ching-Lung, he is dead! I tell you vy ze poor lad is dead. Ze vision nevaire lie. Ven you see somevun dead in a vision zey sure to die kveck. Helas! He shall not live for long!"

Maddock shook his big fist in Monsieur Pierre's face.

"And that's another wision!" he bellowed. "When you see that wision it means that if you talk any more of your silly tomfoolery you'll get hammered with this partic'lar wision. Tunder! Are you a man, or your own blessed grandmother? Just get on with yer cookin', or you'll see stars instead of wisions!"

But monsieur was not convinced. Sin-Ho, Lord's Chinese servant, whom Ching-Lung had ousted from the saloon, now helped in the galley. Every five or ten minutes Monsieur Pierre sent him out to see whether his rival was still alive, so certain was he that poor Ching-Lung was doomed to meet a sudden and violent end.

To the huge delight of Thomas Prout & Co., Ned Horton saw no reason why they should not have a run on shore. It was impossible to bring the vessel to the surface before dark, on account of the risk of being seen, and the day seemed terribly long. Neither of the men had visited the town, and they questioned Ching-Lung about it.

"Oh, it allee lightee!" said Ching-Lung. "Not a bad kind of placee. I takee you to see my cousinee, Fat-Fin-Yow. You waitee bit, and den you know. He, he, he! Oh, de lubly glub you getee at old Fat's house! Oh, it a lubly tleat! You waitee!"

To their disgust it was raining heavily when night came—a straight, drenching rain, but luckily no wind. They took the dinghy, and rowed towards the clustering lights of the town. Rupert, thinking good-naturedly that there would be little enjoyment in prowling round a foreign town at night, had given a full twenty-four hours' leave, and advised them to go direct to the Wen-hi Sailors' Home to sleep.

But Ching-Lung had other views. As he sent the boat flying through the masses of shipping, he pointed forward.

"Dat where old Fat livee," he said.

A row of lights flashed through the darkness.

"Why," roared Prout disappointedly, "that's only a blessed boat! I thought we was going ashore!"

"To-morrow, my sweetlips!" chuckled the Chinese boy; "but not to-nightee, unless old Fat-Fin-Yow at homee in 'uns palace. Sometimes he livee on de watel, sometimee on de land. It not safee for foleign debils to go in de townee at night."

"I don't mind," growled the bo'sun, "so long as I gets a change."

"You get dat allee lightee, you bet," squeaked Ching-Lung.

Tom Prout's look of disappointment vanished as the boat drew alongside the junk. It was not the miserable craft he had thought, but a huge, mastless sampan, loaded with flowers, whose sweet scent reached him gratefully. There were seven glazed and curtained windows in the junk's side, through which a brilliant light poured. Ching-Lung tied the painter of the boat to the gangway.

"Yu-lal-lal-lu-liety!" he called.

A window above them opened, and a head appeared.

"Good glacious!" said a gruff voice. "Good glacious, mussy!"

Ching-Lung gabbled something in Chinese, and the head was withdrawn.

"Ole Fat himme at home," said the Chinese boy, turning to his companions. "You bofe justee follel me in, and I inteljooce you."

He bounded up the ladder, and the next moment Tom Prout and Maddock were shaking hands with Fat-Fin-Yow, Esq. He was a little, fat Chinese, with a great, flat, good-humoured face, and his moustache had two long ends that came down to his waist. On his head he wore a very battered white beaver hat. There was a hole in the crown, through which his pigtail emerged and dangled behind him. He had an eyeglass screwed into his left eye, and a mighty wart on the side of his little snub-nose.

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NEXT WEEK: "BARRED BY HIS PEOPLE."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Good glacious me!" he kept saying, as he danced round them wringing their hands—"good glacious mussy!"

That was all the English Mr. Fat-Fin-Yow had ever learned; but actions go further than words. When Ching-Lung had said that Fat-Fin was a dealer in birds'-nests he had not told the whole truth. Fat had once been favourite juggler to the fickle Empress, and was a master of his art. For some reason he had been banished from the Court at Peking; but he quickly gave the two sailors a sample of his skill. Chin-Lung had been his pupil.

"Drink, Ching?" he asked in Chinese.

Ching-Lung nodded.

"Smoke?"

Ching-Lung nodded again.

"Good glacious!" said Fat-Fin-Yow.

He put his hand into his pocket and offered Ben Maddock a cigar. The bo'sun was about to take it, when suddenly the cigar disappeared, and a whole box of cigars came in place of it. Maddock was staggered.

"Why you not havee one?" squeaked Ching-Lung. "Dey allee lightee. Den you getee a dlink."

The bo'sun took one very gingerly, as if he were afraid it were going to explode. On the contrary, it was an excellent cigar. The very next moment Fat-Fin-Yow made a wild clutch in the air, laid two glasses on a little straw-table, and then, clutching Ching-Lung's pigtail, pointed joyously to a bottle of whisky dangling from the end of it.

"Oh, he a champion!" said Ching-Lung. "Ole Fat mighty clebber. He teachee me allee my ticks. You justec tly dat whisky, sweethealts. Why, you gotee nowherce to sitee down."

"Good glacious mussy!" said Fat-Fin-Yow, when Ching-Lung pointed out the lack of sitting accommodation.

"Look outee!" shouted Ching-Lung.

Prout and the bo'sun were not nimble enough. Fat-Fin waved his hand, and two short-legged, leather-topped stools came rushing through the air. One fell on Prout's head, and the second whizzed past and struck Mr. Benjamin Maddock in the stomach and made him wrathful.

"Look here, Ching," he bellowed, "I reckon this is a fine show, but I ain't an Aunt Sally! You just tell old flat-mug there to mind where he pitches the furniture, or I'll raise lumps on his face, d'ye hear?"

Ching-Lung grinned, and translated the polite remark. Fat-Fin looked horrified, and made abject apologies for his clumsiness.

"What does the old ape say?" asked Prout, rubbing his bald head.

"Oh, him say him velly solly! It allee a laxident. De spiltee whatee obey Fat-Fin mistakeen de oldel. Dey t'ink him meancee fetchee de stools and chuckee 'em at de foleign debbils. Oh, he tellible, olful, hollible, beastly solly, ain't you, Fat?"

"Good glacious mussy!" said Fat-Fin-Yow.

His pigtail stood erect above the old white hat, and, as he bowed his regrets, his eyeglass kept jumping from one eye to the other.

"It's all right, old buck!" roared Prout. "You're a jolly old bounder, you are! Try some whisky, Ben? My heye, we've dropped into strange company!"

So, with cigars alight and glasses filled, they sat down to enjoy the rest of the performance.

"De nextee t'ing on de ploglamme," explained Ching-Lung, "is to showee you howee we get dinnel leady in China. Dere will be no collection aftel dis. Are you leady, Fat-Fin? Nowee we off!"

It was a most weird and amazing performance. Ching-Lung waited as if ready to catch something, and an instant later he clutched a tablecloth, which he spread out with a single jerk on the carpeted floor. Then Fat-Fin kept him busy. Jugs, glasses, dishes, cups, plates, and knives and forks, chopsticks, bread, and fruits were flung at him like lightning, though where they came from was a mystery.

"Dere you am, gentlemen," said Ching-Lung calmly, "dinnel leady. Solly we suchee a long timee."

Prout and Maddock squatted down and sniffed the savoury steam that rose from the various dishes. Soup came first, and the bo'sun swore he'd never tasted anything like it in his life. As it happened to be made out of a puppy, doubtless Benjamin spoke the truth. After that came more soup, then fowls stewed with rice, excellent fish, then sweet cakes and fruit, and last of all coffee.

Both the sailors did themselves more than justice, especially Mr. Prout. He got so festive at last that he poked the jovial Fat-Fin-Yow gaily in the ribs, which made that gentleman choke with laughter, and almost swallow his chopsticks. The steersman cast longing eyes on one covered dish, wondering what dainty morsels were hidden there, but the dish was not uncovered. At last Prout filled his glass.

"Ching, Ben, and friend Fat," he roared, "unused as I am to public speakin', I rises now on one of the 'appiest moments of my life to ax you to drink the 'earty 'ealth of our new but beloved pal Fat. Fat, you're a jool!" (Here he slapped the Chinaman on the back with terrific force.) "As I says, Fat's a bit of orlrito. He ain't got a wery 'andsome kind of a mug, but 'is 'eart is there. Drink!"

Tom Prout sat down amid great applause from Ching-Lung and Ben Maddock. Fat-Fin seemed to realise the situation. The steersman was reaching over to again thump him encouragingly on the back, when Fat-Fin bounced up unexpectedly to reply. The consequence was that Prout's fist crashed down on the crown of the white hat, and knocked it hard and fast over Fat-Fin's eyes.

Ben Maddock shrieked with laughter, but the laughter died on his lips. Fat-Fin, unable to see, got his feet entangled in the tablecloth, and crashed at full length into the very midst of the plates and glasses. The cover of the mysterious dish fell off, and a dozen wriggling, hissing snakes swarmed out. Yells of horror mingled with the hissing, and the lamp was knocked down.

Maddock and Prout burrowed under the tablecloth, and shrieked for help in agonised tones. In the darkness, chuckling softly, Fat-Fin-Yow and Ching-Lung crept away.

The Ball at the Russian Embassy — Rupert Thurston Receives Two Shocks in Rapid Succession.

The fatal day, so long looked forward to, dawned at last over the Yellow Sea, and still Rupert had heard nothing from Ferrers Lord. His orders were to meet the millionaire on the twenty-sixth in Shanghai, and nothing more. But Shanghai is a huge town, and Ferrers Lord had mentioned neither time nor place. Thurston paced thoughtfully up and down the saloon, wondering what course he must take. The orders were so vague it was difficult to decide.

He pressed the spring, and the shutters of the window fell aside noiselessly. Rupert sprang forward. Fastened to the pane outside was a piece of rubber, on which was written, in Ferrers Lord's clear hand:

"Ball at Russian Embassy to-night nine o'clock. Show your card, and you will be admitted. Bring six men armed to escort you back at midnight. Evince surprise at nothing you see or hear.—F. L."

Mystery again. Rupert was wearying of this everlasting mystery. He was uneasy, too, for Ching-Lung, Prout, and Maddock were still absent, and their term of leave had expired the previous night. He was afraid some accident had happened to them, for he trusted them too well to think that they would break rules wilfully.

He showed the message to Horton, and asked him what he thought of it.

"Well, sir," said the brawny diver, "it says as much as it wants to say, and nothing more. You're to attend the ball, take six men with you, and, if you happen to see anything out of the common, you've got to keep a straight face. You'll find out more when you get there, I guess. Christopher! It's no good worrying about it. I'll stay and look after the ship, and if those three chaps turn up, and can't give a good excuse, I'll have them flogged."

It was nearing a quarter-past eight when the launch moved away from the Lord of the Deep. Rupert wore a dark macintosh over his evening clothes, and the men with him carried revolvers. Ten minutes brought them to the quay. At the head of the oozy steps they saw the flash of carriage-lamps, and a man approached them. Even in the gloom Rupert recognised Ferrers Lord's livery.

"Mr. Thurston, I presume, sir?" said the man.

"Yes."

"I was sent to meet you with the carriage. You need not trouble about your men. Mr. Ferrers Lord has made arrangements."

Rupert stepped into the carriage, on whose panels the millionaire's monogram was blazoned. The horses galloped forward through the narrow, garbage-strewn streets of Shanghai. At last it passed between two tall gate-pillars, and the squalid gloom of the streets was changed, as if by the touch of a magician, into fairyland.

They were in the beautiful gardens of the Russian Embassy. Chinese lanterns, hanging like lustrous jewels from every tree, shed their soft light down upon marble tables and laughing groups of men and women. From the ball-room came the faint hum of music and voices.

The carriage halted, and Rupert ascended the steps. Two sentries armed with rifles were guarding the door. Both saluted as he passed, and, feeling certain that the face of one of them was familiar, he shot a quick glance over his shoulder. The man was Tom Prout.

Rupert had no time to speculate upon the oddness of the thing. Before he knew it he was in the ball-room, marching between two rows of merry-makers.

"Monsieur Rupert Thurston!" announced the footman. Sparkling with jewels, the Countess Maravitch, wife of the Russian Ambassador, waited to receive him. She was a handsome, dark-haired woman, and she welcomed him in French.

"I am charmed to see you, M'sieur Thurston," she said — "charmed! Any friend of Prince Tu-Li-Hoan is not only my friend, but the friend of Russia. Ah, the dear prince, how he must love you! He called you his dear Rupert in his letter. Of course, you are tutor to his sweet boys. You dance, of course, and the prince told us on no account to wait for him. We shall begin in a moment. Let me introduce you to Lady Violet Deloraine—a fellow countrywoman."

Thurston did not hear her last words as she bustled away. He was too amazed and puzzled to listen.

"By Jove," he muttered, "this is a pretty mix-up! Here I am under false colours, supposed to be the friend of some confounded Chinese prince, or his tutor, or both. Well, I'm hanged! Let's see, what was it Lord said? Evince surprise at nothing you see or hear. Well, I'll try my best, but—Great Scott!"

The Countess Maravitch was advancing towards him, accompanied by a tall, elegantly-dressed girl. Rupert set his teeth, and dug his nails into the palms of his hands. The girl was the Lady Violet, niece of Ferrers Lord. Like a man in a dream, he heard the countess introduce him. A moment later the music crashed out, and he was whirling down the ball-room with his arm round her ladyship's waist. He managed to pull himself together.

"How cool you are, Mr. Thurston! I quite expected you to spoil everything by looking amazed. By the way, when we reach the corner, glance into the alcove."

Rupert turned his head and glanced into an alcove, and his teeth clenched with a snap. Standing among the palms, and chatting gaily with the Countess Maravitch, was Michael Scaroff. He lifted his blue eyes and bowed mockingly at Thurston and his partner whirled past.

"What does it all mean?" gasped Rupert. "I shall have a hard fight with myself to keep my hands off that fellow."

"Perhaps you had better be told," Lady Violet answered, "for you may not be proof against a third shock. We are almost the only English people here except a few girls and harmless young men. The rest are Russians and French people. This is not a pleasure ball, but a conspiracy, and we have been invited merely as a blind."



"Barred by His People!"

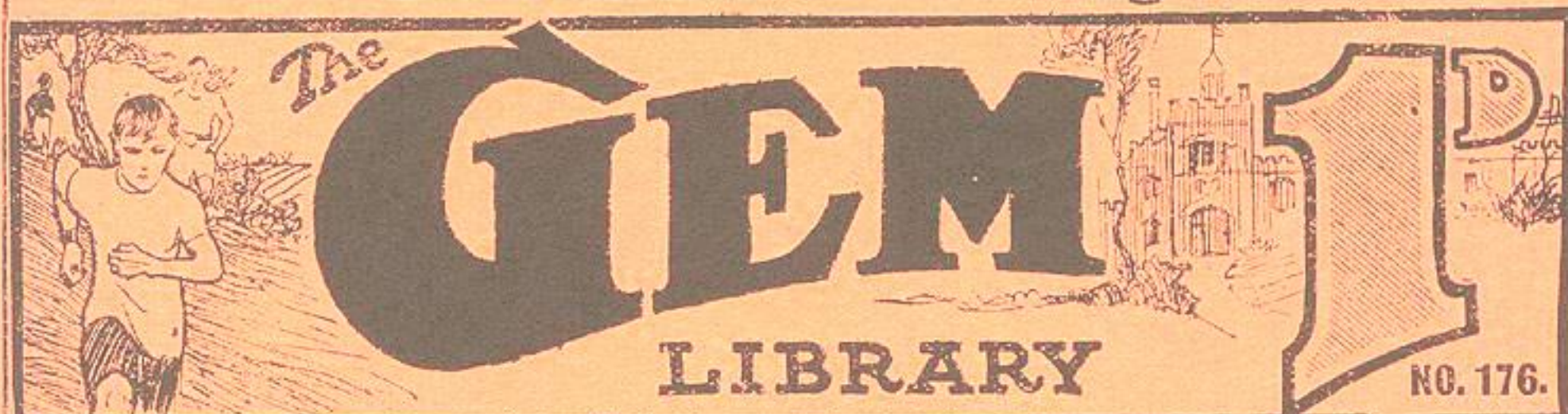
In our next week's story is described the great event of the Greyfriars cricket season—namely, the match with St. J'm's. Bulstrode, the Remove cricket captain, intends to shine, but his hopes are not realised. By a combination of circumstances, with which Billy Bunter is not entirely unconnected, Bulstrode's father receives a wrong impression, and the one-time bully of the Remove is

"Barred by His People!"

The Editor

(Another splendid long instalment of this adventure serial next week).

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