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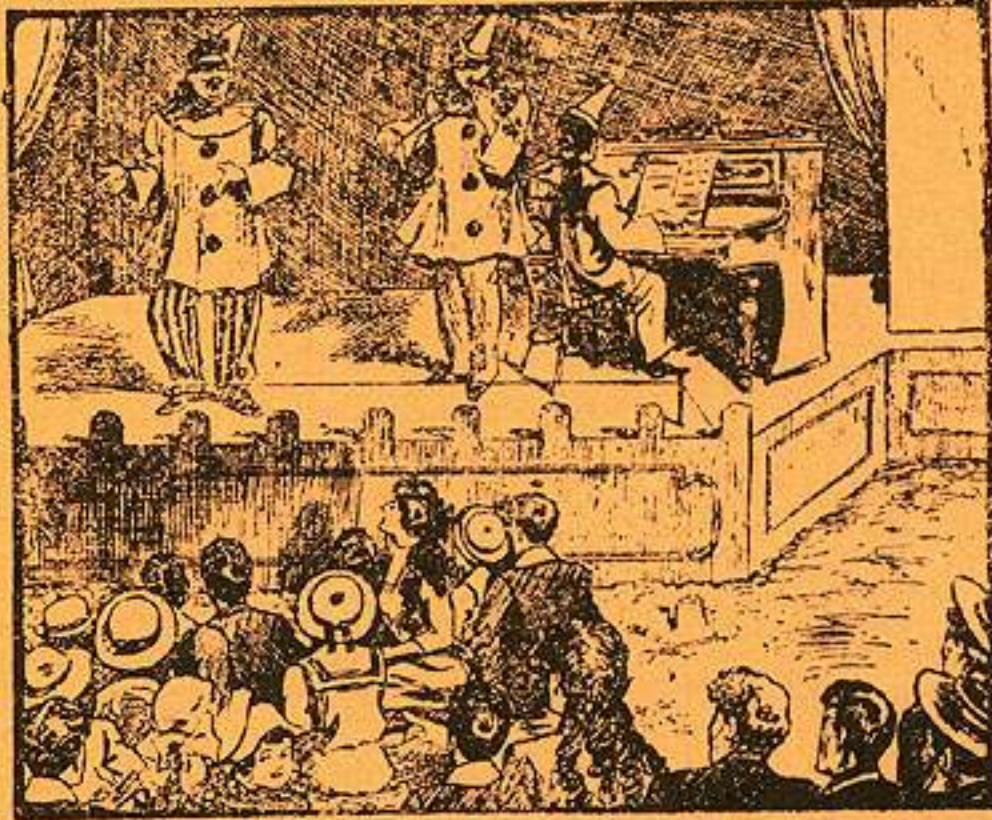
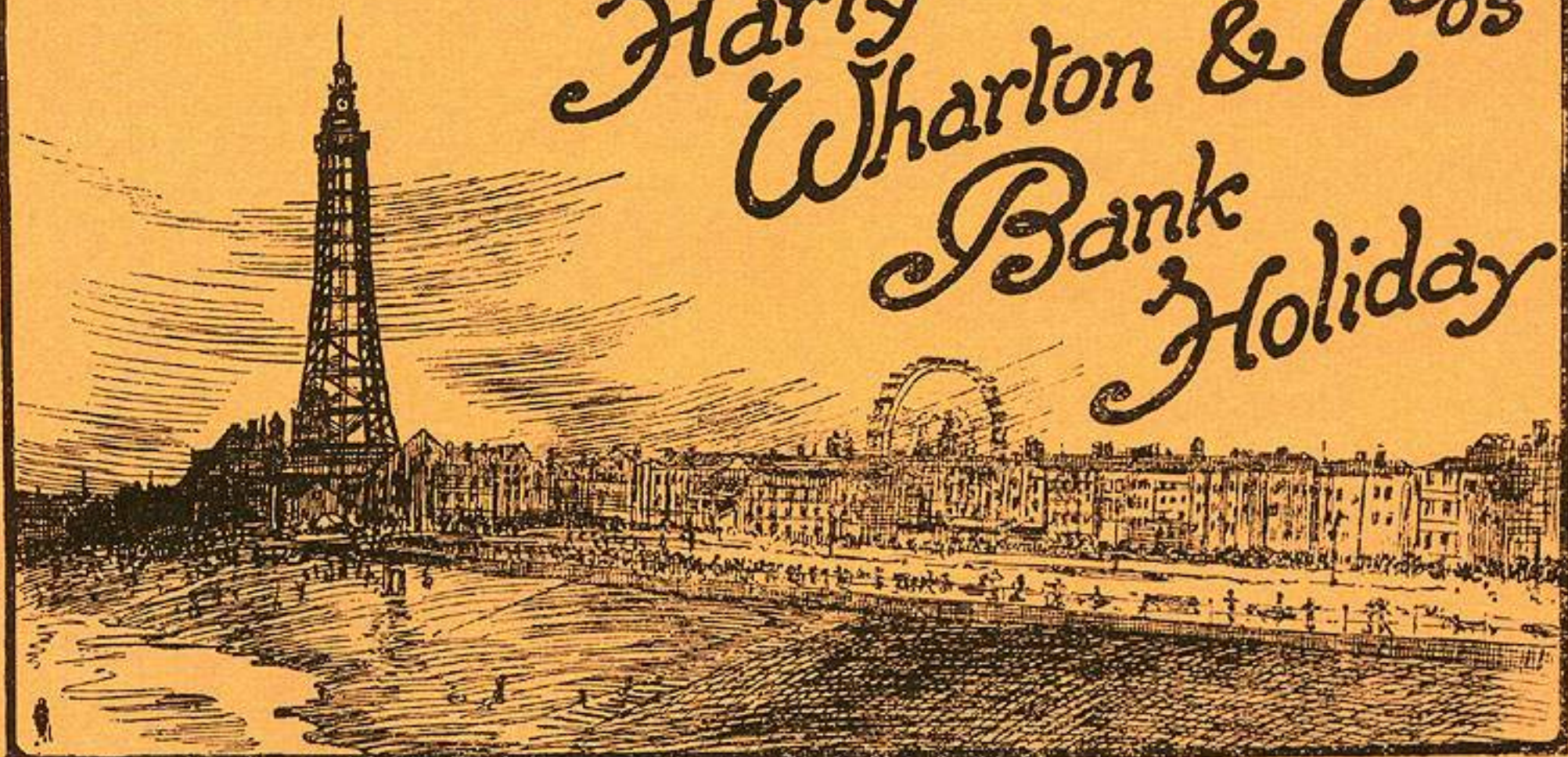
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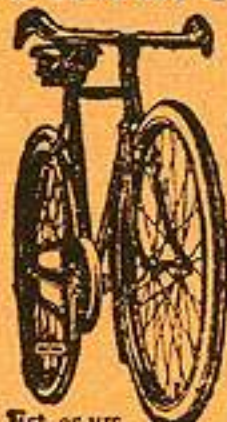
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Lord Mauleverer, and their Chums of Greyfriars.

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Joke of the Season.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, gave a growl.

He was sitting in his study, No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, driving his pen over the foolscap at express speed. He had a French imposition to get through before afternoon school, and he had twenty-five lines yet to do. The sound of incessant outbursts of laughter and chuckling in the passage outside interrupted him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"He, he, he!"
"My hat!"
"Show it to me, Snoop!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was evidently something very interesting going on in the Remove passage. And it was quite impossible to grind out "Henriade" at express speed with that noise going on just outside the study door. Harry Wharton tried to close his ears to the laughing and ejaculating, and to write as if he could not hear it, but the result was not one that was likely to please Monsieur Charpentier, the French master at Greyfriars. And Wharton wanted those lines to pass muster, for it was the last day of the term, and he did not want to have the impot. to do over again after school. The last evening of the term could be better spent than in writing out weary lines from the "Henriade."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"It's genuine!"
"Twelve-and-six!"
"Ho, he, he!"
That "he, he, he" was Snoop's ill-natured cackle.

Harry Wharton grunted angrily. The last lines on his paper ran thus:

"On voyait dans Paris la discorde—ha, ha!

Excitant aux combats—he, he, he, he!"

Evidently that would not do! Harry Wharton threw down his pen, jumped up, and ran to the study door and tore it open. Outside, in the Remove passage, a group of juniors were standing by the window around Snoop, the sneak of the Form, who held a little slip of coloured paste-board in his hand. The juniors were all laughing joyously, as if over a most excellent joke. Snoop, indeed, seemed to be almost in hysterics. Wharton shouted from his study door:

"Shut up, you asses! You're spoiling my impot. Go and cackle somewhere else."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!"

"Come and have a squint at it, Wharton," said Billy Bunter. "It's funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The joke of the season!" grinned Bolsover.

"He, he, he!" cackled Snoop.

"What on earth is it?" demanded Wharton, his curiosity excited, and forgetting his impot. for the moment. "What have you got there, Snoopey?"

Snoop held it up.

It was an oblong slip of cardboard, with printing and writing on it; and Wharton uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Is it a pawn-ticket?"

"Yes. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I don't quite see the joke," said Harry. "Have you been pawning your Sunday topper or your best bags to raise cash for the holidays?"

"No, I haven't," said Snoop, turning red, as his companions burst into a howl of laughter. "It doesn't belong to me, you ass."

"What are you doing with it, then?"

"I picked it up."

"You don't mean to say it belongs to a Greyfriars chap?" asked Wharton.

"Ha, ha! No! That's the joke."

"What do you mean?" demanded Wharton. "You'd better give that thing back to its owner, and shut up. I don't see anything to cackle about, anyway."

"You don't know the joke!" grinned Snoop. "It belongs to a master."

"Rats!"

"It does—honour bright."

"Lot you know about honour bright," growled Wharton. "Do you mean to say that a master here has been raising the wind at Uncle's in Courtfield?"

"Yes!"

"It's Mossoo!" howled Bolsover major. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Monsieur Charpentier!"

"Yes."

"My hat!"

The crowd of fellows burst into another loud cackle. There seemed to them to be something irresistibly comic in the fact that a pawn-ticket was in the possession of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master.

"We all know that he's rotten poor," remarked Bolsover major, "but I never thought he had come down to this."

"It say, you fellows, I think it's disgraceful!" said Billy Bunter.

"Rotten!" said Trevor. "Chap who's so poor oughtn't to be here. What would the Head say if he knew, I wonder?"

"Sack him, most likely."

"Jolly good thing, too."

"Yes, rather."

"Sure, and some of the chaps says he sinds his salary home to his people in France," said Micky Desmond. "Sure, if that's thrue, he's a good little man intirely, and it's a shame to poke fun at him."

Wharton's brows contracted.

"It's a rotten, caddish thing to chuckle over, if Mossoo's in hard luck," he said. "It's just like you, Snoop. It's perfectly well known that Mossoo has to send money home to somewhere in France—you were gassing the other day about spying on him when he was getting a money-order at the post-office."

"I wasn't spying on him," snarled Snoop. "I happened to see him—"

"Yes, you happen to see a lot of things other fellows don't happen to see," retorted Wharton scornfully; "and if Mossoo dropped this ticket, you ought to have given it back to him as soon as you found it, and said nothing."

"Oh, rats!" said Snoop. "It's too good a joke to keep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll send him a picture-postcard with three brass balls on it," grinned Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you going to do with that ticket, Snoop?" asked Wharton sharply.

Snoop chuckled.

"I'm going to give it back to Mossoo, of course. I saw him drop it from his waistcoat-pocket in the Close, so I know it's his property, though it hasn't got his real name on it. We have a French lesson this afternoon, and I'm going to hand it back to him before all the class. That will make him look small. He, he, he!"

The juniors roared.

Wharton made an angry gesture.

"Look here, Snoop, that's a rotten, caddish thing to do. I suppose a Greyfriars master oughtn't to go to a pawn-broker's. But you don't know what may be the reason; and the poor chap can't help being hard up, anyway. Least said soonest mended. I—"

"Oh, you're going to preach, as usual!" said Snoop, with a sneer. "I owe Mossoo one for giving me fifty lines yesterday, anyway. Besides, it will be the joke of the season. Just fancy his face when I hand it back to him before all the class."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" began Wharton.

A bell rang.

"There's goes the bell!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "I'm off."

And there was a general scattering of the juniors. Harry Wharton stood undecided. He did not in the least approve of Snoop's idea of a joke, and he was sorry for the little Frenchman. Monsieur Charpentier, in spite of some peculiar little ways, was a very kind-hearted little gentleman, and the better fellows in the Remove liked him.

But it was too late to interfere now. Snoop was gone, with the rest. Harry Wharton, with a wrinkle in his brow, turned back into his study, and gathered up what he had done of his imposition, and he took it with him to the Form-room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Very Rough on Mossoo.

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, found his class very slack that afternoon.

It was the last afternoon of the term; on the morrow the school was breaking up for the midsummer holidays. There was no preparation that evening; and most of the fellows considered that it would have been better if there had been no lessons in the afternoon, either.

But on the last day of the term Mr. Quelch was not hard with his Form.

Even Billy Bunter's construing was allowed to pass.

It was natural that the fellows should be thinking of the coming holidays, and that school work should seem to them as good as over and done with.

But a good many of the Removites were thinking of something else beside the coming vacation. Bolsover major and Snoop & Co. were thinking of the intended jape upon the French master.

Snoop had the pawn-ticket in his pocket, and he had a grin upon his face. It was the kind of joke that appealed very much to the meanest fellow in the Remove.

When Mr. Quelch left the Form-room, and the Remove came under the charge of Monsieur Charpentier, there was a general movement of interest.

Mossoo, as the juniors called him, came in with his usual benign smile, though there was more gravity than usual in his face. The prospect of the holidays did not seem to be causing him much pleasure—or perhaps he had missed the lost ticket.

"Bon jour, mon garçons," said Monsieur Charpentier,

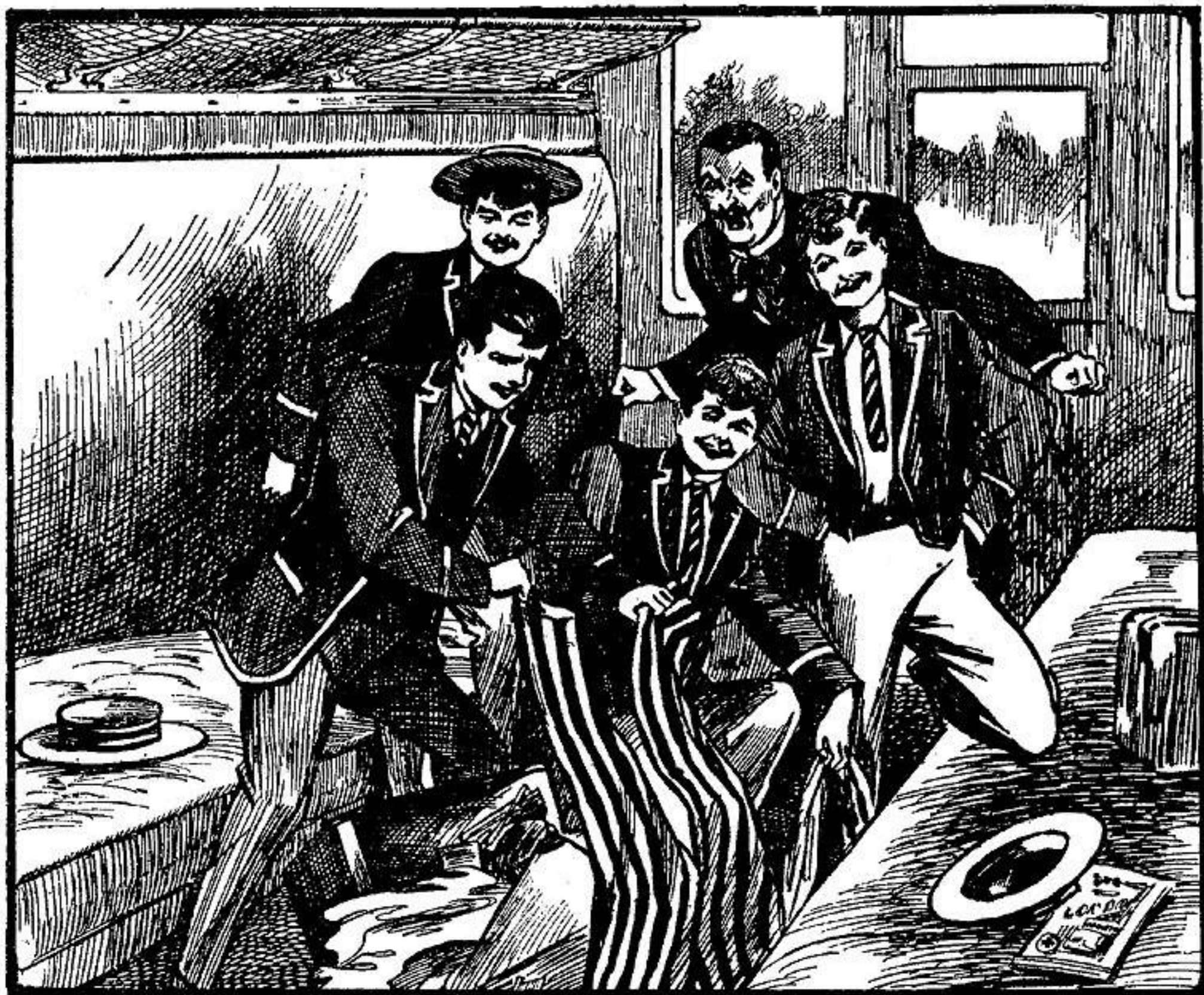
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The first article Lord Mauleverer picked up was a pair of striped, highly-coloured trousers such as are worn by nigger minstrels. In his amazement he held them in the air. "My hat!" said Johnny Bull, "you've brought away the wrong pair of bags, Mossos." "Zat is all right!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier, turning crimson. "Zey are mine!" (See Chapter 5.)

rubbing his hands. "Zis is ze last day of ze term, but I hope zat you not forget all zat you learn vile zat you are in ze holiday, n'est ce pas?"

"Certainly not, sir," said Bob Cherry. "I'm going to take a French grammar to the seaside with me, sir."

Some of the juniors chuckled. Bob Cherry might take a French grammar to the seaside with him, but he was not likely to open it there.

Monsieur Charpentier smiled benignly.

"Zat is quite right, Sherry—quite right. I hope, too, zat you not forget zat beautiful poem, ze Henriade. Now I zink you have lines from ze Henriade to show me, Wharton?"

"I'm sorry, sir; I haven't been able to finish them," said Harry, handing in his paper.

"Zat is all right. As it is ze last day of ze term, ve say no more about cet," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I zink—Vat is it, Snoop? It is zat you have somezing to say to me?"

"Yes, sir," said Snoop.

"Say it, zen, mon garcon."

"I think you have lost something, sir."

"Vat?"

Monsieur Charpentier turned pink.

"Have you lost something, sir?"

"It is true; I lose somezing viz my pocket, n'est ce pas?" said the French master. "Is it zat you have found him, Snoop?"

Snoop held up the pawn-ticket in full sight of the class.

"Is that it, sir?"

For a moment Monsieur Charpentier did not reply.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 234.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday:

He stood overwhelmed with shame at this utter exposure in the eyes of the whole Remove.

Many of the fellows felt sorry for him as they saw the colour coming and going in his cheeks, and the water coming into his eyes.

There was a long and painful silence.

"Oui, oui," said Monsieur Charpentier at last; "oui, oui, I zink zat is my property, Snoop. You have find him?"

"Yes, sir," said Snoop.

"How do you know zat it is mine, zen, as my name is not written zere?" asked the French master quietly.

"I—I—"

"I zink zat you see him fall from ze pocket, Snoop?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Vy not give him to me at vunce, zen?"

Snoop was silent.

"I zink zat you keep him back to give him to me now, because zat would be very unpleasant for me, n'est ce pas?" Snoop did not reply.

The little Frenchman stepped towards him and took the ticket, and slipped it into his pocket. There was a quiet dignity about him that abashed even the callous Snoop.

"I zink zat you have been very insolent to your master, Snoop, in acting in zis way," said Monsieur Charpentier. "But I not punish you; I leave you to zink over it, and I hope zat you feel sorry you have insult a master who vish always to be kind to you. You may sit down."

Snoop sat down.

Bob Cherry jumped up. His face was very red, and his eyes were gleaming.

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"May I speak a moment, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly, Sherry."

"I want to tell you that the Remove don't hold with Snoop in playing a dirty rotten trick like that, sir," said Bob Cherry, his eyes flaming indignation at the unfortunate sneak of the Remove. "He's a dirty cad, sir, and a rotter, and it would serve him right if you licked him!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Frank Nugent.

"Begad, yaas!" said Lord Mauleverer. "The fellow is a rotten outsider, you know."

Snoop turned crimson.

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad. "Don't think that the rest of us had anything to do with it, sir. The fellow is a cad."

The tears came into Monsieur Charpentier's eyes.

"I zank you; I zank you, mes garçons," he exclaimed. "It make me feel very happy zat you speak so viz ma. I forgive Snoop, and I hope zat he learn to have ze kinder heart. Zat is all. Now ve have ze lesson."

Snoop sat with a bitter sneer on his face.

But the rest of the Remove—even those who had backed up Snoop in his little joke—put on their very best behaviour, touched by the way the little Frenchman had taken the matter. Only Snoop, and Bolsover major, and Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, were unrepentant, and seeking a chance of giving further trouble.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bounder Catches it.

MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER found the greater part of the class extraordinarily attentive, considering that it was the last day of term. He passed over Snoop carefully. In spite of his kind heart and his forgiving temper, the little Frenchman could not help feeling indignant, and just now he felt that he could not speak to Snoop. The sneak of the Remove sat looking savage and sullen. Vernon-Smith touched his elbow and whispered to him.

Snoop chuckled in response.

"You must not speak in ze lesson, Smeet," said Monsieur Charpentier mildly. "I zink zat I ask you to give a leetle attention to ze lesson, Smeet."

"Yes, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"You will go on, Smeet—"

"Certainly, sir."

Vernon-Smith turned cheerfully back to the opening page, and commenced.

"Je chante—"

"Excuse," said Monsieur Charpentier. "You begin again; I zink you sall go on vere Bull he leave off."

"Yes, sir; but I should like to go over these beautiful lines, sir, and ask you if I have them right, sir," said the Bounder.

Monsieur Charpentier beamed. The Henriade was his favourite poem—he was a little gentleman of very quiet and orderly tastes—and any praise of that long-winded poetical history of Henri Quatre was certain to touch the right spot.

"Zat is all right, Smeet," he said. "You continue. I am very please zat you admire zat grand poem. Continuez, continuez."

Vernon-Smith continued.

As most schoolboys know, "zat grand poem" commences with:

"Je chante ce heros qui regna sur la France,

Et par droit de conquete et par droit de naissance."

Which, being interpreted, means:

"I sing the hero who reigned over France, both by right of conquest and right of birth."

But Vernon-Smith had planned a little variation. The Remove listened with breathless amazement as he rattled off the lines he had substituted for Voltaire's, and little Monsieur Charpentier's face became scarlet.

"Je chante ce bon maitre qui vint de la France,

Et vendit le montre pour payer les frais de vacance."

Vernon-Smith's French was worse than that which old Chaucer has described as "the French of Stratford-by-Bow." But though the French was bad, and the lines did not scan, the meaning was clear enough:

"I sing the good master who came from France,

And sold his watch to pay the expenses of the vacation."

There was a buzz in the class.

The nerve shown by the Bounder of Greyfriars in thus "cheeking" the master to his face was simply astounding.

Probably even the Bounder would not have ventured upon such a joke if it had not been the last day of the term.

"Stop!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier.

"Yes, sir."

"Vat is zat zat you say, Smeet?"

"Je chante ce bon maitre who came—I mean qui—"

"Stop!"

"Certainly, sir."

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"You rotter!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Smeet! Smeet! You are insolent! Stand out before ze class!"

"Yes, sir."

Vernon-Smith stood out before the class, with an impertinent smile upon his face. There was a chuckle from some of the fellows.

Monsieur Charpentier stood before the Bounder, his face crimson, and his features working with emotion.

"Is it zat you make a shoke?" he gasped. "You make a shoke because Snoop he show you zat ticket, n'est ce pas?"

"Really, sir—"

"I zink zat you deserve great punishment, Smeet," said Monsieur Charpentier, choking. "You know zat I not like to punish ze boys on ze last day of ze term, but you are very sheeky, very insolent! You are a bad boy, Smeet!"

The little Frenchman choked.

Vernon-Smith winked at Snoop. His hard nature was far from understanding the emotion the little Frenchman showed.

"I try to make my class respect me!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "In my country it is not ze disgrace to ze honest man zat he is poor. But I zink—I zink—"

He broke off.

The little gentleman's emotion was too much for him and he burst into tears, and covered his face with his hands and rushed from the Form-room.

There was a babel of exclamations at once:

"Smith, you cad—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy old Mosscoo blubbing!"

"My word!"

"The blubfulness of the esteemed Mosscoo is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "But the cadfulness of the esteemed Smith—"

"You rotter!" roared Bob Cherry, jumping up from his place and rushing at the Bounder. "You ought to be thrashed!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the matter with the old fathead?" he exclaimed.

"It was only a joke, anyway. I never thought he'd turn the waterworks on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a rotten shame to rag him!" said Harry Wharton, frowning. "He's never done anything to us. You wouldn't dare to rag Quelch. It's taking advantage of poor old Mosscoo being soft."

Vernon-Smith sneered.

"Oh, I expected you to preach!" he said.

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"I'll jolly well do something more than preach!" he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well give you a licking for baiting Mosscoo!"

And he rushed at the Bounder.

In a moment they were grappling, and fighting furiously. The Bounder might be a cad, but he had plenty of pluck.

Bob Cherry caught the cane from the Form-master's desk.

"Lend a hand!" he roared.

Nugent and Johnny Bull and Mark Linley lent a hand. Vernon-Smith, in the grasp of many hands, was flung across a desk, and held there. Then Bob Cherry made the cane sing in the air.

"Let me go!" yelled the Bounder. "I'll fight any of you!"

"This isn't a fight—it's a punishment!" said Bob Cherry.

Thwack!

The Bounder yelled. He was held face downwards on the desk by the angry juniors, and he had no chance. He had to take his punishment. But he yelled to his friends:

"Help! Bolsover! Snoop! Rescue!"

Snoop did not move; he was not likely to. Bolsover major jumped up.

"Let him alone!" he shouted.

Thwack!

"Yow!"

"You mind your own business, Bolsover!" said Bob Cherry. "If you want a fight to finish the term with, I'll meet you in the gym., or Vernon-Smith, either! But just now I'm going to lick this cad!"

Thwack!

"Ow! Ow!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Oh! Yaroooh! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith struggled desperately. There was evidently no rescue for him. Ogilvy and Morgan and Penfold and Tom Brown and Bulstrode and Lord Mauleverer and half a dozen more fellows had gathered round to help Harry Wharton & Co. if needed. Bolsover major sat down again.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Ow, ow, ow! Yow! Leggo!"

"Make it a dozen, Bob!"

Thwack!

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"Yarooop!"

The Form-room door opened, and Mr. Quelch looked in, amazed, dumbfounded by the scene in the Form-room.

"What—what—what—" he gasped.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Quelch!"

"Cave!"

The Bounder of Greyfriars, dishevelled and enraged, struggled from the hands of the raggers.

"What does this mean?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Where is Monsieur Charpentier?"

"He's gone out, sir."

"Tell me what has happened, Wharton?"

Wharton hesitated a moment.

"Somebody was cheeky to Mossos, sir," he said, "and—and he went out. We thought we ought to keep discipline in the Form-room, sir."

"Oh!" Mr. Quelch almost gasped. "Is this what you call discipline? But I think I understand, Wharton, and I have not the slightest doubt that the punishment has been well placed. Go back to your seats!"

The Remove resumed their seats. Vernon-Smith sat quivering with rage, and squirming most uncomfortably from side to side. It was ten minutes or more before the French-master returned, looking very pale, but composed at last, and the lesson finished very quietly.

Vernon Smith gave the chums of the Remove a look like a demon as he passed out of the Form-room.

"You can come over into the gym., if you like!" Harry Wharton said disdainfully.

But the Bounder did not like.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Last reed.

"BUCK up with those herrings, Franky!"

"Nearly done," said Frank Nugent, turning a crimson face from the fire in No. 1 Study. "You make the tea! The fellows will be here in a minute."

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton.

It was very warm in No. 1 Study. The sun of July was blazing in the Close outside, and there was a fire in the study to cook for tea. It was going to be an extra special tea, to celebrate the last day of the term. Besides bacon rashers and new-laid eggs, there were herrings which Nugent was grilling, and a huge cake, and jam-tarts galore.

The window was wide open to let in the breeze from the Close, and the door was wide open to allow it to pass through and cool the study. And it wafted a delightful odour of cooking herrings out into the Remove passage.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull presented themselves in the doorway, with their best smiles on.

"Too early?" asked Bob.

"Not at all. Lay the table!" said Wharton.

"Ha, ha! Good egg!"

And Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull laid the table. Mark Linley came along the passage and looked in.

"Time!" said Harry Wharton. "Come in, Marky! Where's Mauly?"

"Begad, here I am, my dear fellow!"

And Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, lounged elegantly in.

Frank Nugent dished up the herrings. The six juniors sat down to tea round the table. There was not too much room, but there was a gorgeous spread, and that was the chief thing at a junior brew.

"Last day of the term!" said Bob Cherry sentimentally.

"Blessed if I'm quite glad to be going away, after all!"

"We've passed many jolly days here," said Nugent.

"Good!" said Johnny Bull, who was very unsentimental.

"And now pass the herrings!"

"Here you are!"

"I want—" said Lord Mauleverer, in his leisurely way.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you want, Mauly?"

"Herrings?" asked Nugent.

"No. I want—"

"Another rasher?"

"Begad, no! I—"

"Eggs for Mauly," said Harry Wharton.

"Hold on! No, thanks! I want all you fellows—"

"Have you become a blessed cannibal?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I want all you fellows to come down to my place for the vac., or during the vac.," said Lord Mauleverer. "Do let a fellow speak!"

"Oh, they're all coming to me!" said Harry Wharton.

"I'm going home," said Mark Linley, with a quiet smile.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "If you don't come home for the holidays with me, Marky, I shall jolly well come home with you!"

Mark laughed.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't enjoy it," he said.

"Well, you come with me, then, ass!"

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EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

Mark smiled and shook his head. The Lancashire lad was at Greyfriars on a scholarship, which he had won by grit and hard work. But the other fellows, though they had never seen his home, knew that it was very poor. Mark Linley could not ask a fellow home for the holidays, and that was the reason why he very seldom accepted an invitation from anybody else. Once or twice he had been persuaded into it, but only once or twice.

"Begad, you know, you've got to come with me, you know, my dear fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I can give you some shootin' and swimmin', you know, and you can prevent me from gettin' bored to extinction in the vac., you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm thinkin' of having a cricket week, too, and that will keep you lively."

"Well, that's a good wheeze," said Harry Wharton. "That's the best of being a giddy millionaire and rolling in money. I think I shall come."

"Same here," said Frank Nugent.

"So will I if Marky will, and heaps of thanks," said Bob Cherry. "Do you chaps know the great date that occurs early in the vac.?"

"Blessed if I do."

"August Bank Holiday."

"Oh!"

"You needn't say 'Oh!' like that," said Bob Cherry. "August Bank Holiday is a gorgeous date. Everybody who is anybody has a good time, then. I'm thinking of going to some particularly lively seaside resort, and having a good time, just like a common or garden person."

Mark Linley smiled.

"Then I can come with you if you like," he said. "I shall have a day at Blackpool on Bank Holiday, anyway."

"Hurray!"

"By Jove, that's a ripping idea!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, with glistening eyes. "You fellows all come and stay with me, and we'll all go to Blackpool for the holiday on—when did you say it was?"

"First Monday in August."

"Begad! Good! I've heard of Bank Holiday before!"

"Go hon!"

"I have, really, you know. All the banks are closed on Bank Holiday," said Lord Mauleverer, with the air of a fellow imparting some interesting and very novel information.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's true, you fellows. I shouldn't wonder if that's why they call it Bank Holiday," said Lord Mauleverer. "There must be some reason."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry slapped his lordship on the back.

"Mauly, old man, you're simply crammed up with knowledge," he said. "How do you get to know these things?"

"Oh, a chap picks up a lot of tips about things by keeping his eyes open," said Lord Mauleverer modestly. "I'm a rather observant chap, you know. That's all."

"Know anything more about Bank Holidays?" asked Wharton, laughing.

"Certainly. There are three or four in a year—or five—I wouldn't be certain of the number."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And—and people go on holidays, then, you know. Excursion trains, and—and things," said Lord Mauleverer, rather vaguely. "Of course, I don't claim to know much about it. Fellow only knows what he happens to pick up, of course. But I'm almost certain there's a Bank Holiday in August, so—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm quite certain about it," shrieked Bob Cherry, "and on August Bank Holiday we're going in a gang to Blackpool. Marky is a Lancashire chap, so he will be able to show us the ropes, and guide us round the band-stand."

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

A pair of big spectacles glimmered in at the doorway. Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, blinked in at the chums rather doubtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I thought the smell of the herrings would bring him along."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Come in, Tubby!" said Harry Wharton. "It's the last day of the term, and we're overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and we can stand even you."

"Oh, really—"

"Pile in, Bunter! Don't stand on ceremony."

Billy Bunter was not likely to do that. He took a seat at the table and started, and he was most industrious.

"Made all your arrangements for the vac., Billy?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

Billy Bunter looked up with his mouth full of herring.

"Yes, I'm going to stay with a titled friend of mine," he mumbled. "I expect to have an absolutely ripping time. Sorry I can't ask any of you fellows to come; but my friend is a bit particular, and——"

"What?"

"Otherwise, I'd be delighted. Pass the tea, please."

"You fellows will all come down with me to-morrow when we break up, then?" said Lord Mauleverer. "I'll send a wire to my uncle."

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter pricked up his ears.

"Eh, what's that?" he exclaimed. "I'll come with pleasure, Mauly!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "You won't! You're booked for the vac."

"Oh, I could get out of that, for the sake of a chap I like as much as I like Mauly!" said the fat junior hurriedly.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Couldn't think of it," he said. "I wouldn't come between you and your friend for worlds."

"I—I could throw him over, Mauly."

"Impossible, dear boy!"

"But, I—I say——"

The juniors roared with laughter. Billy Bunter's unfortunate habit of swanking had put him into an awkward position. Lord Mauleverer either could not or would not understand, and the fat junior did not succeed in extracting an invitation from his lordship. And the Owl of the Remove had to console himself with rashers and eggs, and herrings and cake and jam-tarts, which he did very thoroughly, at all events.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Off for the Holidays!

THE next morning Greyfriars broke up for the midsummer holidays.

It was a glorious morning, and the Greyfriars fellows were in great spirits.

Brake after brake rolled away to the station laden with merry juniors, and even the stately seniors looked merry.

Fellows who had not spoken to one another for weeks shook hands, or thumped each other on the back, as they parted for the long vacation.

Coker, of the Fifth, whose chief business at Greyfriars seemed to be to sit heavily on the Remove, shook hands all round with Harry Wharton & Co.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were very friendly, too.

Everybody seemed to be in the highest spirits and on his best possible behaviour.

When the brake came for the Lower Fourth, the Remove crammed themselves into it, a great deal like sardines in a tin.

As Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked, the cramfulness was terrific.

They rolled down to the railway-station in great style.

They passed Trumper & Co., of Courtfield School, on the road, and instead of the usual chipping, they gave the Courtfield fellows a cheer, and Trumper & Co. waved their caps in return.

Masters and boys crowded on the long platform at Friar-dale Station.

Harry Wharton & Co. secured a carriage, and tumbled into it, and cheerfully held the door shut against new-comers.

Loder and Carne, of the Sixth, came up to the door, and Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully at them through the window.

"No room!" he remarked sweetly.

Loder scowled.

"There are seats in there!" he said angrily. "You fags can go two to a seat!"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Can't be did!" he replied. "Besides, you couldn't travel in this carriage, anyway, Loder."

"Why couldn't I?" roared the bully of the Sixth.

"All animals have to go in the guard's van. It's one of the regulations of the railway," Bob Cherry explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder dragged at the handle of the door. The juniors inside held it fast, and Loder passed on down the train at last, with many threats of what he would do next term.

"Any more honourable room, my worthy chums?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, coming up with Wun Lung, the Chinese, and Tom Brown.

"Heaps!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

And the door was opened, and the three juniors clambered in.

Hurree Singh and Wun Lung were going with Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, to spend the holiday with Brown's uncle in Devonshire. But Harry Wharton & Co. were glad of their company till it was necessary to change trains. Billy

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Bunter came along the platform, and blinked into the crowded carriage.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Room further along," said Bob Cherry. "There's nine of us here."

"I'd rather come in there, Cherry, if you don't mind."

"But I do!" said Bob cheerfully.

"Oh, really——"

"Better buck up, Bunter; the train's going to start."

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter.

And he rolled along the platform in search of another carriage. Frank Nugent looked at his watch.

"Train doesn't start yet," he said. "Another five minutes."

"I didn't say it was starting now," said Bob Cherry. "I said it was going to start, and so it is! It's not going to remain here all day, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major and Vernon-Smith came down the platform. Bolsover grasped the handle of the carriage. All the carriages were pretty full by this time, though a good many Greyfriars fellows had gone off by earlier trains, and a good many were following by later ones.

"We're coming in there!" growled Bolsover.

"Your mistake!" said Nugent. "You're not!"

"Lemme open that door!"

"Rats!"

"I'll jolly well——"

"More rats!"

"Wait till next term!" roared Bolsover. "I'll knock you into a cocked hat when I come back to Greyfriars, Frank Nugent!"

"Thanks!"

"You—you—you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come on!" said Vernon-Smith. "Let's get into the carriage with Loder. We can get up a little game of nap to pass away the time."

"Oh, good!"

"Nice, dear boys, I don't think!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Mossos!"

Monsieur Charpentier came along, with an umbrella under his left arm and a big bag in his right hand. The porter was shutting the train doors now, and the little Frenchman was greatly excited.

"Ciel!" he exclaimed. "I lose zo train. I zink I lose him!"

Bob Cherry waved his hand from the window.

"This way, Mossos!"

"Zanks—zanks!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "That will make ten of us, to say nothing of the bag!"

"Never mind; must be polite to foreigners," said Bob Cherry. "What price the entente cordiale? Jump in, Mossos! Chuck us that bag!"

Bob Cherry pushed the door open, and stood ready to receive the big bag. It was very big and very heavy, and Monsieur Charpentier did not find it easy to throw it in. But he managed it at last, and the big bag came hurtling at Bob Cherry, who caught it on his chest. Bob Cherry gave a roar, and rolled over, and the bag crashed on the floor of the carriage. The lock burst open, and the contents of the bag came streaming out.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "The giddy bag's burst!"

"The burstfulness is terrific!"

"Never mind. Jump in, Mossos!"

Bob Cherry put out a hand to help the little Frenchman in. The porter was trying to shut the door, and little Mossos was jerked in just in time. The door slammed behind him, and he fell, gasping, among the legs of the crowded juniors.

The engine shrieked, and the train moved.

"We're off!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Ciel! Mon dieu! My bag!"

"All right, Mossos," said Harry Wharton; "we'll pick up the things! Make room for Mossos to sit down, you fellows!"

"Here you are, Mossos!"

"Begad!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "What on earth——"

He was picking up some of the articles to restore them to the burst bag. The first article he picked up was a pair of striped, highly-coloured trousers, such as are worn by nigger minstrels. In his amazement he held them in the air.

Monsieur Charpentier turned crimson. The juniors stared at the gorgeous bags in blank amazement.

"My hat! You've brought away the wrong baggage, Mossos!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "They look like the bags Coker uses for his minstrel shows."

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"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, "we've taken our tickets you know, and we're bound to go. Awfully sorry if we incommode you in any way." 'Erb stared in amazement. "Blessed if we ain't got a toll in the kerridge," he said in great admiration. "Begad, we have! Say that over again, your lordship!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Zat is all right; gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Zoy are mine."

"Oh!"

"By Jove!"

"Zat is all serene. Pack zem in ze bag, je vous prie."

The juniors, astonished as they were, made no further remark on the subject. Monsieur Charpentier was evidently very much confused. They had never suspected the little Frenchman of indulging in such frivolous amusements as amateur theatricals, but it was evident now that Monsieur Charpentier did something in that line. In addition to the weird bags, there was a gaudy swallow-tailed coat, and an opera-hat, and a spotted neckcloth, and a little case which evidently contained make-up.

"Well, my only respected Uncle Sam!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Fancy Mossos going in for this sort of thing! This beats popping his watch!"

But he did not say so aloud.

The bag was refastened, and carefully stacked away on the rack. Monsieur Charpentier was given a corner seat and space enough to sit in it, the juniors being considerably crowded in the rest of the carriage. But they did not mind. The more the morrier, as Bob Cherry remarked, and it was all in the day's play.

Monsieur Charpentier proved to be an acquisition in the long railway journey. He told the juniors stories of his native country as the train rushed on through the smiling

landscape, and was, in fact, a very jolly travelling companion. They were quite sorry when he changed trains and disappeared with his mysterious bag. The next to change were Hurree Singh and Wun Lung and Tom Brown, and the Co. gave them a parting yell which woke every echo of the station.

And then Harry Wharton & Co. rolled on contentedly towards Lord Mauleverer's home, where they were to spend the first days of the vacation, till Bank Holiday drew them to the lively delights of Blackpool.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Excursion.

LORD MAULEVERER, in his home at Mauleverer Hall, was the same fellow whom the juniors knew at Greyfriars—kind, easy, simple, and unaffected. But his surroundings were startlingly different. The great Hall, with its imposing Elizabethan facade, fronted great stretches of park and woodland, and as far as the eye could reach from the great terrace the land was within the borders of the Mauleverer estate. At Greyfriars Lord Mauleverer had a study in the Remove passage, and frequently fagged for Wingate, of the Sixth. At the Hall he had an endless number of vast apartments at his disposal, and his own private quarters occupied more space than the whole Remove passage at Greyfriars. And instead of

fagging for another fellow, he had a fag himself—Bob Cherry persisting in calling his valet his fag. Mauleverer, indeed, dispensed with his valet whenever he could; but Joseph had a sense of duty which prevented him from being wholly dispensed with. Joseph was a faithful servant, and had a great idea of the dignity of the Mauleverers, which he expected his lordship to live up to. Mauleverer frequently disappointed him. Indeed, his youthful lordship more than once joined with the other juniors in playing little pranks upon Joseph, and was the inventor of a booby-trap which caught the stately butler unawares, and made a terrific smash in the imposing dining-room.

That it was a fine thing to be a millionaire was very evident. Motor-cars of all sizes were in the garage at Lord Mauleverer's order, and he always had a dozen horses to choose from. Great magnates of the county were wonderfully civil to Lord Mauleverer. Anything that a boy could wish for was his for the asking, and yet his tastes were simple, and he never showed the slightest suspicion of side. He could enjoy himself thoroughly, and he liked to see the other fellows enjoy themselves—and they did.

When Joseph learned that Lord Mauleverer was going to Blackpool on Bank Holiday, he almost wept. When he discovered that Lord Mauleverer had taken a set of third-class excursion tickets for himself and his friends, he almost fainted. Lord Mauleverer seemed to enjoy his dismay. Joseph so far forgot his strict training as to venture upon a mild expostulation with his lordship, and in return Lord Mauleverer offered to buy him a ticket, too, and take him along as a friend—an offer which Joseph, with a becoming sense of his dignity as Lord Mauleverer's valet, declined.

The chums of Greyfriars made all their arrangements for the first Monday in August. They had to rise at an unearthly hour, and one of Lord Mauleverer's cars was to whiz them up to Birmingham to take the excursion train for the North. When they left the car they would say good-bye to respectability, in the opinion of Joseph, the valet. After that, they would disappear into the crowd of excursionists and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

They went to bed early the previous night and slept like tops. It was six o'clock that Joseph woke them up, with a lugubrious face. Joseph was evidently suffering severely.

"Up with you, my dear fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer, looking into the room in which the Famous Four and Mark Linley slept in a row of beds, preferring to dig that way. "It's time for brekker."

"And a beautiful day!" said Frank Nugent, looking out of the window.

"Ripping!" said Harry Wharton.

"Is breakfast ready, Joseph?"

"Ready when your lordship descends," said Joseph, with dignity.

"Good old Joe!"

Joseph jumped.

"Your lordship!" he remonstrated feebly.

Lord Mauleverer dug him gently in the ribs.

"Cheer up, Joe, and mind there's plenty of tommy for brekker!"

The juniors dressed themselves gleefully that morning. The dawn gave promise of a splendid day, and if the weather was fine there was certain to be a terrific crowd at Blackpool. And they liked the prospect. The breakfast was ample, and would have satisfied even Billy Bunter if he had been there.

And when breakfast was over the big car came snorting round to the drive, and the Greyfriars juniors went out to survey it. There was a suspicion of a grin on the face of the stately chauffeur.

"You've put in the lunch-basket, Joe?" asked his lordship.

"Yes, my lord."

"You haven't forgotten the ginger-beer?"

"No, my lord."

"Where's my tin whistle?"

"I did not know that your lordship required a tin whistle," said the unhappy Joseph.

"How can I be a Bank Holiday bounder without a tin whistle?" demand Lord Mauleverer, in astonishment. "Bring me my whistle and my hat."

Joseph obeyed. But Lord Mauleverer was not satisfied. He stuck the tin whistle into his pocket, and surveyed the shiny topper with distinct disapproval.

"Take that away!" he said.

Joseph coughed.

"You're lordship's 'at," he said.

"I want a strawyard."

"Oh!"

Lord Mauleverer put his straw-hat on the back of his head. Joseph turned away to hide his agitation. He had a vague feeling that the House of Lords, the British Constitution, and the Empire generally, were in danger.

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Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"You fellows ready?" he asked.

"What-o!"

"Pile in, then."

"'Ear, 'ear!" said Bob Cherry, dropping his H's for the especial benefit of Joseph and the chauffeur.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The half-dozen juniors crowded into the car.

Toot-toot!

The big car swung down the avenue.

Toot-toot!

"Buck up!" said the schoolboy earl. "We've got to get into the station in time. There's bound to be a crowd. Get a move on, Thompson."

"Jackson, my lord," coughed the chauffeur.

"Exactly; I meant—er—Johnson," said his lordship, who had a weakness for forgetting names. "Buzz off."

"Yes, my lord."

"Make her romp!" said his lordship. "But don't run over anybody if you can help it, Robinson. Frightful bother stopping for injured pedestrians."

The chauffeur chuckled, and made her "romp."

The car spun along the deserted roads in the keen morning air at a speed which would certainly have resulted in fines if there had been any police-traps in the vicinity.

The juniors enjoyed the spin immensely.

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob Cherry, waving his straw-hat. "This is ripping! Let her go!"

"Thompson is a careful driver," said Lord Mauleverer. "There's no danger. We're going to the first stop north of Birmingham, to catch the excursion train there. We shall have lots of time."

"Good egg!"

As the car rushed on, under the brightening sun, the roads became more lively, and the juniors found great amusement in chipping panting cyclists whom they passed on the road. Often enough, as cyclists, they had said things when a big car went thundering by and leaving a cloud of dust and a smell of petrol behind it. But circumstances were changed now, and the point of view changed with them. To angry queries from cyclists as to whether they wanted all the road, they replied cheerfully that they did, and rushed on leaving the cyclists speechless with rage. One exasperated wheelman pedalled furiously in pursuit, with a loudly-declared intention of altering the cast of somebody's features, and he hung behind the car for nearly a mile, his face getting redder and redder with exertion, till he looked like a particularly highly-tinted beetroot. But he was dropped behind at last, the juniors giving him a parting yell.

"We're beginning the day well!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "If somebody doesn't break our necks for our cheek, we ought to have a good time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's the station!"

The car slacked down in the town. They were in ample time for the train. Outside the railway-station were excursionists galore in the bright sunshine. Folk from far and near were pouring in to catch the excursion train, which was to stop there to pick up passengers. The place was too far from Mauleverer Hall for Lord Mauleverer to be known there; and the car was received with catcalls as it swooped up. But the Greyfriars juniors did not mind. They yelled back with much enthusiasm.

The car stopped, and they tumbled out. Mark Linley took charge of the lunch-basket, it being understood that it would not be possible to get food on the train. The chauffeur touched his cap.

"Buzz off, Williams," said Lord Mauleverer. "Bring the car back here to-night, and wait for us."

"Yes, my lord."

"And take a holiday to-day," said Lord Mauleverer, cheerfully handing a five-pound note to the chauffeur. "It's Bank Holiday to-day. Did you know?"

"Yes, my lord," grinned the chauffeur.

"Wonderfully intelligent chap, that driver of mine," said Lord Mauleverer, as the car buzzed off. "I forget his name; but he's a very clever chap. I don't suppose he'll damage that car at all to-day."

"Are you going to let him have the car out?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"I dare say he'll take it out. I hope he won't smash it up; I rather like that car."

"You—you ass! It must be worth a thousand pounds."

"Yaas; I shouldn't wonder! But Higginson is very careful."

And Lord Mauleverer & Co. pushed their way through the crowd into the railway-station.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Off to Blackpool.

THE platform was crowded.

Crowded was hardly the word; it was crammed.

All sorts and conditions of people in holiday attire were there—men with wives and families, men without wives or families; youths with cigarettes in their mouths, and youths without cigarettes.

The Greyfriars juniors kept together, not an easy thing in the pushing, swaying crowd. But good humour reigned supreme.

In the crowd, as in all Bank Holiday crowds, there were a few hooligans, who rushed and pushed from a mistaken sense of humour; but the crowd as a whole was cheerful and kind and orderly, as Bank Holiday crowds always are.

There was a rush and a sway when the train was signalled.

It came in—and it was seen at once that there were already a good many passengers on board. They leaned out of the windows, and waved their hands and their hats, and yelled.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "It will be a squeeze."

"Looks like it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"More the merrier," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Keep close, and don't let those bounders shove us back."

A group of young men in gay neckcloths and bowler-hats were standing close to the juniors, and—probably having taken offence at their clean clothes—had been shoving them a great deal. The leader of that cheerful band was a young man, with a fine complete set of blue pimples upon his face, and a cheap cigarette in his mouth. He was addressed by his companions as "Erb!" which was probably a contraction of Herbert. 'Erb was evidently in the gayest of humours, and he entertained his companions with a series of humorous remarks concerning the personal appearance of the Greyfriars & Co. But the juniors only grinned good-humouredly, and refused to be drawn into a row.

"Git be'ind me, ole pals," said 'Erb, as the train came buzzing in, "and shove."

"Wot to, 'Erb!"

And as the train stopped, the young men shoved for it. The juniors shoved, too, and they succeeded in getting a carriage-door open. From inside rose voices in shrill protest.

"Full up!"

"Ain't room for a beadle."

"Git out!"

"Call the guard!"

"Horder there!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were rushed into the carriage, whether they liked it or not, by the stream behind. All six of the juniors crammed in, and 'Erb, with a furious face, followed them.

"You git out, you kids!" he roared.

"Oh, you go and eat coke!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"I says to yer, git out!"

"And I says to yer, rats!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ain't no more room 'ere, ole pals," said 'Erb, as his comrades strove to squeeze in; "ain't room for a fly. Git into the next, and call to me if there's room."

And 'Erb's followers obeying, 'Erb closed the door, and held it fast against all further attacks from outside.

As a matter of fact, the carriage had been only half-full when the occupants had yelled that it was full up; and as it was a third-class carriage there were five seats vacant. The six juniors took possession of them; and 'Erb stood by the door holding it.

The occupants of the carriage were two gentlemen and three ladies, two of the latter in shawls, and a very sporting-looking gentleman, who was evidently going to Blackpool, seekink what he might devour. 'Erb favoured them with a grin and a wink.

"Ain't room for no more in this 'ere kerridge, lidies," he remarked.

"Ain't room for you, if you come to that," remarked one of the ladies.

"You're right, Maria!" said her friend.

"And 'e can't come in on his good looks, anyway, Clara."

"Not much he can't!" said Clara.

"There ain't any more good looks wanted in this carriage," said 'Erb gallantly. "There's enough 'ere already."

This polite reply from 'Erb so thawed the two ladies that they smiled upon 'Erb at once, and good feeling was established for the journey.

There was a shriek from the engine, a chorus of yells from the porters, a roar from the crowd of disappointed excursionists left on the platform, who had to wait for the next train; and the train started.

"We're off!" said 'Erb.

"And your friends in the other kerridges, ole man," said Miss Maria's young man sympathetically.

"Yez; that's wot comes of kids shovin' theirselves in where they ain't asked," said 'Erb, with an aggressive glance at Lord Mauleverer & Co.

"Begad," said Lord Mauleverer, "we've taken our

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tickets, you know, and we're bound to go. Awfully sorry if we incommode you in any way."

'Erb stared.

"Blessed if we ain't got a toff in the kerridge," he said, in great admiration. "Begad, we 'ave! Say that over agin, your lordship."

Lord Mauleverer looked surprised.

"Begad! How did you know I was Lord Mauleverer?" he asked.

'Erb roared.

"'E's a lord!" he shrieked. "Oh, my 'at! Oh, my heyo! A real live lord! 'Ark at his cheek! Are all the others lords, too, your lordship?"

"No," said Mauleverer simply.

"Dook, I suppose?" said 'Erb, with a heavy sarcasm that made Miss Maria and Miss Clara and their young men shriek.

"Markises, at least," said Miss Maria's young man.

"We're schoolboys, going to Blackpool to have a jolly day," said Bob Cherry, with perfect good humour, "and if that chap wants to sit down we'll make a little room for him."

"Thank you kindly," said 'Erb. "If his lordship will make a little room—"

"With pleasure, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer.

Room was made for 'Erb, and he sat down, and winked at the young ladies opposite. 'Erb intended to have a little fun with this youthful excursionist who had the colossal cheek to pretend to be a lord.

"'Ow did you leave your lordship's father, the dook?" he inquired.

"He, he, he!"

Lord Mauleverer looked at him.

"I think you are impertinent," he said, after a pause. "I don't want to have to punch your head."

"Punch my 'ead!" said 'Erb. "Oh, my lord! 'It a man your lordship's own size, and let little fellows like me alone."

"He, he, he!"

"Horder, horder!" said the sporting gentleman in the corner. "Wot's the good of ragging? Wot's the odds so long as you're 'appy? I was thinking myself of a little game to pass away the time."

The sporting gentleman had taken a much-used pack of cards from his pocket, and was shuffling them on his knee.

"I'm your man," said 'Erb. "'Apenny nap."

"'Ere you are!" said the sporting gentleman.

Miss Maria's young man and Miss Clara's young man joined in the game, and nap was soon going strong, and 'Erb's remarks grew more and more emphatic as his half-pennies were transferred to the sporting gentleman's pockets.

The sporting gentleman gave the juniors a kindly glance.

"Like to join in?" he inquired affably.

"Not for money!" said Harry Wharton.

The sporting gentleman laughed.

"Like to play for nuts, I suppose?" he said. "Well, I 'spose it takes all sorts to make a world, and that ain't my sort."

"Nor mine, neither," said 'Erb, with a sniff.

But 'Erb soon withdrew from the game, declaring that he wanted what money he had left to expend in the joys of Blackpool. Miss Maria's young man looked very hard at the sporting gentleman, as if suspecting that he had some hidden way of aiding the fickle goddess Fortune, and withdrew sulkily; and Miss Clara's young man followed his example. The sporting gentleman yawned and put away his cards.

But he evidently had a hungry eye upon the juniors.

They were well dressed, and he could see that they had money in their pockets.

And he wanted some of it. It was perhaps very natural; for the sporting gentleman was one of those gentlemen to whom work had never appealed.

"Wot price a little game to pass the time?" he said.

"Sort of guessing competition, you know. Look 'ere!"

He spread a soiled newspaper over the knees of his check trousers, and placed three thimbles upon it in a row. Then he produced a pea from his waistcoat pocket.

"Now, I wonder which of you gents could guess which thimble this pea goes under," he remarked. "It's jist a simple conjuring trick, you know."

'Erb winked.

Miss Maria's young man giggled. Miss Clara's young man sniffed.

It was pretty clear that the three of them had heard of peas and thimbles before, and were too old birds to be caught with such simple chaff.

But Lord Mauleverer looked on with great interest. It seemed to him a very simple thing, and he had not the

slightest doubt that he could tell quite easily which thimble the pea was under.

"Guess!" said the sporting gentleman invitingly.

"The middle one!" said Lord Mauleverer promptly. He was quite certain that he had seen the sporting gentleman place the pea under the middle thimble of the three.

The sporting gentleman lifted the thimble, and the space below was empty.

Lord Mauleverer stared.

"Well!" he ejaculated. "Begad!"

"Try agin!" said 'Erb, with a grin.

The sporting gentleman went through the trick again. This time Lord Mauleverer easily spotted the right thimble, and the sporting gentleman looked dismayed as he named it.

"You're a cute young gent," he said admiringly. "'Taint many young gents as can spot this trick, when it's done by me, Captain Pointer. Try again!"

"Quite easy, I think," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Try again!" persisted the sporting gentleman.

"All serene!"

Lord Mauleverer tried again, and correctly named the thimble.

"Oh, it's no good trying with you, I see," said Captain Pointer, in disgust. "You're as well up in this 'ere game as I am."

"Never tried it before," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Well, try again, and we'll see."

The sporting gentleman manipulated the thimbles once more, and Lord Mauleverer pointed to the middle one.

"It's under that," he said positively.

"Bet you it ain't!" said the sporting gentleman.

"But I saw you put it there, my dear fellow."

"What'll you bet on it?"

"I musn't bet," explained Lord Mauleverer. "It's not permitted at my school."

The sporting gentleman chuckled.

"Any of you gents like to bet on it?" he asked.

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"It would be robbing you, if we did," said Johnny Bull.

"The pea's under the middle thimble right enough."

"I'll tell you wot I'll do," said Captain Pointer, with the air of a man making a generous offer, "I'll lay you five bob to a shilling that it ain't."

"No, thanks."

"Five bob to a copper!" exclaimed the captain.

"Can't bet!"

"Don't want to," added Harry Wharton.

"Oh, be a sport," said the sporting gentleman reproachfully.

The juniors shook their heads. But 'Erb, with a chuckle, came to the rescue.

"I'll take yer on that," he said.

The sporting gentleman gave him a far from amiable glance.

"No, you won't," he said. "I'm torkin' to these young gents. I'm open to bet them five bob to a copper that the pea ain't under that thimble. Now, take the offer, young gents. If you're right, five bob will come in 'andy to you at Blackpool; or you can give it to the fust beggar you meet. You'll meet some."

Lord Mauleverer hesitated. The sporting gentleman was so much in earnest about it, that the schoolboy millionaire did not like to say him nay. And, after all, he was not bound to take the money, if he didn't want to.

"All serene," he said.

"You take me?"

"Yaas."

"Put down the copper, then, and I'll put down the five shiners," said the sporting gentleman.

Lord Mauleverer laid down a penny with a smile, and the sporting gentleman placed five shillings beside it. Then he turned up the thimble. His face was a study as he saw the pea reposing beneath it.

"I'm gitting clumsy in me old age," he said, with a sigh. "'Ere you are, young gent, you 'ave won the shiners. Take them."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Thanks, no," he said. "I don't want to take your money, sir."

"When I loses, I pays," said Captain Pointer decidedly. "You take it! Bless you, it ain't nothing to me. I've come into two thousand quid from my uncle in Australia, and the money ain't nothing."

"But I—I don't like—"

"Take it, sir—take it; you've won it."

Lord Mauleverer unwillingly took the money, inwardly determining to hand it to the first necessitous person he met when he stepped out of the train. 'Erb chuckled. The sporting gentleman gave him an imploring wink, and 'Erb

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subsided into silence and the enjoyment of a farthing cigarette.

"I knew where it was, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm rather a sharp chap, you know, and the game's easy enough for anybody to guess, I should think, begad!"

"You couldn't do it again," said the sporting gentleman, with a shake of the head.

"I think I could," laughed the schoolboy earl.

"Well, try!"

"Not for money," said Harry Wharton quickly. "Don't be an ass, Mauly. It's gambling."

"You let the young gent alone," said Captain Pointer, with a rather unpleasant look. "I s'pose he's old enough to know his way about, ain't he?"

"Look here," began Nugent.

"It's all right," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "I don't mind! It's only a game, you chaps, you know."

And the sporting gentleman manipulated the pea and the thimbles once more, Lord Mauleverer watching him very carefully.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer Buys Experience.

CAPTAIN POINTER placed the three thimbles in a row. Lord Mauleverer spotted the left-hand thimble at once, with absolute certainty. When he pointed to that thimble, 'Erb seemed to be near a fit of choking, and Miss Maria's young man giggled. Lord Mauleverer was a little annoyed.

"That's the thimble!" he exclaimed.

"Wot'll you put on it?" asked the sporting gentleman.

"Oh, nothing! I don't want to bet."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the sporting gentleman. "I don't believe in betting; I've lost 'undreds by it, and I'm against it. But jest for the fun of the thing we'll lay down a quid apiece, and the chap who wins is to give the money to the 'Ome for Lost Cats, in Blackpool. It's a very deserving institootion, and it can do with a 'elping 'and."

"Begad, that's not a bad idea," said Lord Mauleverer; "if you can afford to give away sovereigns to charity—"

"I've got plenty of quids, don't you worry," said Captain Pointer. "'Sides my pension for serving in South Africa, I've got a legacy from my uncle in New Zealand."

"Australy, it was afore," said 'Erb humorously.

The sporting gentleman glared at him.

"Ain't it all the same?" he demanded. "If you've got anythin' to say agin my uncle, young man, you'd better say it out fair and square like a man."

The sporting gentleman was at least two sizes larger than 'Erb, and that humorous young gentleman became quite subdued at the suggestion.

"Oh, that's all right!" he said.

"Don't you interrupt, then," said the sporting gentleman truculently.

"I don't want to interrupt, as I knows on," said 'Erb.

"Well, don't then."

'Erb lighted another cigarette, thus putting an extra strain of nearly a farthing upon his financial resources. The sporting gentleman laid down a glistening sovereign upon the soiled newspaper. Naturally, the sovereign did not ring upon the newspaper; but it is extremely doubtful if it would have rung anywhere. Lord Mauleverer laid down a sovereign beside it, and the sporting gentleman's eyes glistened.

"Now, choose your thimble," he said.

"The one on the left?"

"Sure?"

"Yaas."

"Turn it up yourself, with your own 'and," said the sporting gentleman. "I want it to be clear that there ain't any trick about this 'ere."

"Certainly."

Lord Mauleverer turned up the thimble.

To his amazement, the space beneath was empty.

"Begad!" he ejaculated.

The sporting gentleman chuckled.

"The quickness of the 'and deceives the heye," he explained. "You've lost that quid, young gent, and the 'Ome for Lost Cats has won it."

And the sporting gentleman transferred the sovereign to his waistcoat-pocket, doubtless only temporarily, until he found a favourable opportunity for transferring it to the funds of that charitable institution.

Lord Mauleverer was looking amazed.

"Well, I was sure—" he murmured.

"Try again!" said the sporting gentleman invitingly. "It's all in the cause of charity, you know."

"Don't, Mauly, you ass!" whispered Harry Wharton. "It's all spoofig; it's just gambling, and nothing else."

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The Greyfriars juniors looked at one another blankly, and one name leaped to their lips. "Mossoo!" The little Frenchman had not observed the faces of the juniors amid the sea of faces that surrounded him. He was not looking in their direction; but the juniors knew him and watched in amazement! (See Chapter 13.)

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"If the money goes to charity——" he began.

"Do you think it will?"

"Yaas; he said so," said Lord Mauleverer simply.

"You—you ass!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"It's all right, my dear fellow. I shall be right this time."

The Greyfriars juniors gave one another hopeless looks. They were not experienced, certainly, in the ways of railway sharpers, but they felt pretty certain that the gentleman with the thimbles was simply a swindler, and that he was journeying to Blackpool simply for the purpose of picking up gulls in the train going. And certainly the enterprising gentleman had never lighted upon a richer prey than Lord Mauleverer. The schoolboy earl's trusting and unsuspecting nature made him an easy victim; and his comrades did not want to appear too much in the light of Mentors taking care of him. Even the kind and gentle Mauleverer would have resented being taken care of by fellows no older than himself.

The young earl, too, was getting interested in the "game," and a little excited. When the sporting gentleman set the thimbles out again in an inviting row, Lord Mauleverer was very keen to pick out the thimble that the pea was under. He pointed it out with his slim forefinger, and the railway sharper laid down a sovereign. Lord Mauleverer laid down one beside it.

"Turn it up!" said Captain Pointer.

Lord Mauleverer turned it up.

No pea was visible.

"Begad!"

"Another quid for the Cat's 'Ome!" said 'Erb.

The sporting gentleman frowned at him.

"Yes, for the Cat's 'Ome!" he said, slipping it into his pocket. "And a most deservin' charity, too."

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"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "It's amazin', you know. I could have sworn——"

"Well, 'ave another try."

Next time Lord Mauleverer was successful, but as no money had been put down this time, his success was not worth very much to him. By this time his lordship was very excited, and he needed no urging from the sporting gentleman to draw him on. He laid down sovereign after sovereign, which disappeared one after another into the pockets of the sporting gentleman.

When he had come to the end of his sovereigns—which was not until he had parted with twenty of them—he pulled out a pocket-book to extract a banknote from it.

Captain Pointer's eyes fairly danced.

But he was doomed to disappointment this time.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been on the point of interference some time, and now they chipped in.

"Put that away!" said Bob Cherry.

"Really, my dear fellow——"

"You're not going to be swindled any more——"

"Swindled!" roared the sporting gentleman threateningly.

"Yes," said Bob, looking him fearlessly in the eyes. "If you play that rotten trick in the carriage again, we'll keep you here when the train stops, and send for a policeman."

The sporting gentleman changed colour.

Policemen and he were on the worst of terms professionally.

"If the young gent doesn't want to keep on——" he said.

"My dear fellows——" said Lord Mauleverer.

"You're an ass, Mauly," said Johnny Bull, "and we're not going to see you done any more."

'Erb chuckled. Miss Maria's young man and Miss Clara's young man were grinning hugely. Lord Mauleverer turned pink, and allowed the subject to drop. He realised dimly

that he had been "done," though he did not quite see how. The sporting gentleman stepped out of the train when it stopped again, and changed carriages, doubtless with a view to securing other victims further along the train.

The excursion train rushed on through the sunny morning. "Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, at last. "I believe I've been an ass, you fellows."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Has that only just occurred to you?" he asked.

"I suppose there was some trick about it?" said his lordship thoughtfully.

"I suppose there was!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Still, if the money goes to the Cat's Home——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Maria's young man rose.

"Nearly in," he said.

The juniors had lunched from the ample basket brought by Lord Mauleverer, and the basket was left in the carriage.

The train stopped.

A big, crowded station stretched away before them, and from the distance came the strains of a band.

"Ere we are!" said 'Erb.

And he jumped out, and went along the train in search of his friends.

Harry Wharton & Co. alighted.

"What station's this, Marky?" said Bob Cherry. "You've been here before."

Mark Linley smiled.

"Central Station!" he said.

"And where's the sea?"

"Nearly under your nose," said Mark, laughing. "Come on!"

And in a few minutes more they were on the sands.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In Merry Blackpool.

BLACKPOOL was glorious under a blazing sun. As that great poet, Lewis Carrol, has expressed it:

"The sea was wet as wet could be,

The sands were dry as dry,

They could not see a cloud because

No cloud was in the sky!"

The crowd was enormous. Blackpool was swarming. The railway-station was swarming, the town was swarming, the piers were swarming, the sands were swarming, and the sea was swarming.

"Good many people here," said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

"Begad, yaas!"

Mark Linley's eyes were sparkling. The Lancashire lad was breathing his native air again. His heart was light, and his face had lost the seriousness that it usually wore at Greyfriars. Mark Linley, the scholarship boy, was usually grave beyond his years; but the gravity was gone from his face now. With his straw hat on the back of his head, and a cheery grin on his face, he looked as merry as anybody on the wide sands of Blackpool.

Strains of music from the bands floated over the shore, amid a buzz of voices in many tongues. The various accents of the northern counties, and of Scotland and Ireland, mingled there with the snappy dialect of the cockney from down south, and foreign tongues, too, were not wanting.

As they emerged from the crowd, and made their way down the beach, Johnny Bull uttered a sudden exclamation.

"My hat!"

"Somebody you know?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather."

Johnny Bull ran towards a little gentleman, who started at the sight of him. The Greyfriars juniors uttered an exclamation together.

"Mossoo!"

It was Monsieur Charpentier, the French master of Greyfriars.

The little Frenchman seemed surprised to see them, and they were certainly surprised to see him. They had been under the impression that Monsieur Charpentier spent his vacations on the other side of the Channel, in la belle France. But evidently he had given the famous Northern watering-place a turn this time.

The juniors raised their hats to Monsieur Charpentier, and Monsieur Charpentier raised his shiny silk-hat in return.

Yet there was little delight mingled with the surprise in his face. There was a slightly furtive expression as of a man who has been caught.

"Zo pleasure of seeing you here," exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier, "and it is also ze great surprise."

"We're here for the day, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Zat is also viz me," said Monsieur Charpentier. "It is

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ze healthy place for me. Ze air is so good as in my native land."

Mark Linley smiled. Like a loyal Lancastrian, he had a very strong belief that the air was decidedly better at Blackpool than in Monsieur Charpentier's native land. But he did not say so to the little Frenchman.

"Fancy meeting you, sir," said Lord Mauleverer. "Having a good time, sir?"

"I zink ze time is very good."

Harry Wharton & Co. comprehended that the Frenchman was, somehow, put out at having met them, though they could not guess why. They raised their hats again, and bade him farewell, and Monsieur Charpentier, with a graceful bow, disappeared into the crowd.

The juniors strolled on.

"Mossoo looked like a cat caught in the larder," grinned Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I know why. No harm in his having a day at Blackpool that I can see."

"Begad, no!"

"Jolly good idea of his," said Mark Linley. "But perhaps he thinks it's a bit frivolous for a master at a school. Good many schoolmasters come here, though."

"Might be thinking of that rotten pawn-ticket bizney," said Harry Wharton. "Snoop ought to be ragged bald-headed for springing it on him as he did."

"Yes, rather."

"I wonder if there are any other Greyfriars chaps here?" said Frank Nugent. "Trevor is a Lancashire fellow, I believe."

"Might find the Bounder," said Johnny Bull.

"Groo!"

"Ho and Bolsover were saying something about Blackpool the day we broke up at Greyfriars, I remember."

"Well, Blackpool's big enough for all of us," said Mark Linley, smiling. "Where shall we go first?"

"It's ripping just to bask in the sun," said Bob Cherry, drawing in a deep breath of the pure, ozone-laden air.

"Yes; but we're going to do the whole giddy place in one day," remarked Nugent. "As Marky is a Blackpudlian—or, anyway, a Lancastrian—he ought to be the guide, and show us the ropes. What have you got on view, Marky?"

Linley laughed.

"There's the prom.," he said. "Upper Walk, Lower Walk, or Middle Walk. Three piers, each of them the best in the place, and the finest in the world."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then there's the Tower, and the Big Wheel——"

"Huray!"

"The Palace, and the Winter Gardens——"

"Bravo!"

"And dozens more," said Mark Linley. "You can get a steamer across to Douglas, in the Isle of Man, when you have time. That's a ripping place, but we sha'n't have time to-day. I suggest beginning with the Tower."

"Lead on, Macduff!"

And Mark Linley began with the Tower.

That graceful erection, the pride of the Blackpudlian heart, was the centre of an enormous crowd. There were great numbers waiting for an ascent, and the Greyfriars juniors took their turns at the turnstiles, and went into the lift. The lift bore them comfortably to the top.

"See anything from here?" Bob Cherry asked.

Mark smiled.

"Yes, you can see the sea, and the shore——"

"Go hon!"

"And as far as Preston when the weather's clear, on one side, and the Isle of Man on the other."

"Preston," said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "I've heard of Preston."

"Not really!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

His lordship nodded.

"Yaas, I have. It's where the pans come from."

"Tho what?"

"Pans!"

"Is Preston famous for pans, Marky?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I don't know."

"I'm sure I've heard of Preston pans," said Lord Mauleverer, shaking his head. "We had it in the history lesson one day, I remember. I can't remember more than that about it, but it was something about Prince Charlie and Preston pans."

Bob Cherry roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Prestonpans is a place, fathead, where there was a battle or something."

"Oh!" said his lordship. "Was it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can see all over the Fylde from here," said Mark Linley, as they stepped out of the lift.

"The which?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The Fylde."

"What's that—a theatre?"

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"Ha, ha! No, it's a district. This part of Lancashire is called the Fylde," Mark Linley explained. "Come on, and have a look!"

The Tower was swarming with people. The day was beautifully clear, and the view from the top of the tower was wonderful. Away in the sea were steamers and sailing-ships, and boats galore. Away over the waters, Mark Linley pointed out a cloud which he declared was the Isle of Man. Perhaps it was. But more clearly were to be seen the Cumberland hills to the North, and the mountains of Wales on the south.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "Here we are again!"

Two juniors, in white Panama hats, smoking cigarettes, came into view. They were Bolsover major and Vernon-Smith of the Remove at Greyfriars. Both of them were wonderfully "got up." Evidently they were out for enjoyment, and were not particular what kind of enjoyment it was. They had flowers in their jackets, cigarettes in their mouths, and sticks under their arms, and with their Panama hats cocked on the sides of their heads they looked decidedly doggish.

"Fancy meeting you!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Just met Mossos, down on the beach, and now we run into you."

Vernon-Smith smiled disagreeably.

"Well, now you can run out of us again!" he said.

Bolsover frowned.

"Blessed if we want your company, if it comes to that," he said. "We're not anxious to be seen with a couple of silly young asses smoking. Why don't you chuck those fags away and have some chocolate instead? You know you like it better."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bolsover major.

"We've come here to have a giddy time," said the Bounder loftily. "We're having it, too, ain't we, Bolsover?"

"We are," grinned Bolsover.

"You'll be giddier than you want to be, soon, if you don't chuck smoking," said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"Pooh! I've got some cigars in my pocket," said the Bounder. "We're going to have a good time. No rotten prefects here to worry us."

"The cigars will worry you worse than the prefects, I imagine."

"Rats!"

Vernon-Smith took a handsome cigar-case from his pocket and opened it. Inside were a row of Havana cigars, with gold and red labels—good cigars enough, but decidedly dangerous for youths of fifteen. In sheer bravado the Bounder took out one.

"Have a cigar, Bolsover?" he asked.

Bolsover hesitated.

"I think I'll finish the fag," he said.

"Oh, try a Larranaga!"

Bolsover flushed as he caught the grinning glances of Harry Wharton & Co., and throwing away his unfinished cigarette, selected a cigar.

"Light!" he said.

"Better not let a bobby see you," said Nugent, chuckling. "You ain't old enough to smoke in public without being taken by the collar, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith sneered, and struck a match.

"Give us a light," said Bolsover.

"Here you are."

Bolsover lighted up, and Vernon-Smith followed his example. They puffed away with a great appearance of enjoyment, blowing out clouds of really fragrant smoke. The chums of the Remove grinned.

"You'll be sorry for that soon," said Harry Wharton. "We'll pick your bodies up as we come back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled the Bounder.

The chums of the Remove strolled on. Vernon-Smith and Bolsover sat down to look at the sea and enjoy their Larranaga cigars.

Harry Wharton & Co strolled about the tower. It was ten minutes later when they came back past the two Greyfriars bounders. Bolsover was not smoking now. His half-finished cigar lay before him, and his head was bowed, and a ghastly colour was in his face. Vernon-Smith still had his cigar in his mouth, and his teeth were tightly clenched upon it, as if in desperation.

"Having a good time?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully.

Vernon-Smith removed his cigar.

"Get away!" he growled.

"Ain't you enjoying yourself?"

"Lemme alone!" murmured the Bounder huskily.

"You all right, Bolsover?"

"Groo!"

"Feeling ripping?"

"Ow!"

"Get up and run about a bit. It will do you good," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh—oh! Ah!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Bolsover stared at them with glassy eyes. He could not speak. He could not move—or, rather, he dared not; he knew what would happen if he did. The chums of the Remove regarded him with great commiseration.

"Don't chip the silly asses," said Harry Wharton. "Shall I see if I can get you some cold water, Bolsover, old man?"

Bolsover groaned.

"Gerraway!" he murmured faintly.

"Oh, all right."

Bolsover twitched all over, and made a movement. Then the catastrophe came. The chums of the Remove strolled on, leaving the doggish youth in the grip of worse than seasickness.

When they descended from the tower, Bolsover and Vernon-Smith were still there, with faces the colour of chalk, and suffering bitter anguish. Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle as they went down.

"Well, if that's having a giddy time," he remarked, "a steady time will do for me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors plunged once more into the throng on the sands. The smooth water tempted them, and there were facilities galore for bathers. Soon they were disporting themselves in the blue waters, enjoying themselves to their heart's content, while the two black sheep of the Remove were slowly and painfully recovering from the giddy time they had had. Harry Wharton & Co's time was, perhaps, not quite so giddy, but it was certainly a great deal more enjoyable.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Very Giddy Time.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came out of the sea, with ravenous appetites. Mark Linley was again called upon for his services as guide.

"Anywhere where we can get a meal before we perish?" asked Bob Cherry pathetically.

Mark laughed.

"Heaps of places, and it depends upon the kind of meal you want," he said.

"Oh, it's Mauly's treat, so we'll have the best."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer; "let's have something decent, for goodness' sake. Chap told me you could get a decent lunch here for five bob; but I think we'd better have a good square meal—I'm hungry."

"You can get a good square meal for a good deal less than five bob, if you want to," said Mark, laughing. "But there are places to suit millionaires as well."

"That's what we want!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Lead on!"

"Lead on, my son, or I shall take a bite out of one of you!" said Bob Cherry. "I feel as hungry as Billy Bunter!"

"There's the restaurant—yonder."

"Good egg! Buck up!"

And Mark bucked up. It was a very handsome restaurant he led them into, where they were accommodated at a nice little table by themselves, with a most courteous waiter to attend to their needs. There was a big fern on their right, and past that another table, where two Greyfriars fellows were already sitting—Vernon-Smith and Bolsover. The Greyfriars fellows seemed fated to run across one another that day.

Harry Wharton & Co. nodded to the two, but Bolsover and Vernon-Smith ignored them. They were both looking a little sickly still—the result of their adventure with the Larranaga cigars—and apparently they attributed their sufferings to the chums of the Remove.

The same waiter looked after both parties. Lord Mauleverer gave his orders in the simplest manner, letting the waiter bring everything he chose to bring, and by that method he secured, certainly, a ripping lunch, which did not err on the side of cheapness.

Vernon-Smith was more particular, and it pleased him to call away the waiter whenever the latter was busy at Wharton's table.

The waiter, either not specially caring for the way Vernon-Smith ordered him about, or perhaps thinking that the larger the party the larger the tip, certainly gave more of his attention to Harry Wharton & Co. than to Vernon-Smith and his companion. The place was crowded with customers, and there was plenty for him to do, and Vernon-Smith's autocratic requirements were out of order, so to speak. The Bounder of Greyfriars rapped savagely on the table.

"Waiter!"

"Yes, sir."

"Why don't you come?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come here!"

"Yes, sir." "Arf a minute, sir."

"Leave our giddy waiter alone, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "Can't you see he's carving a fowl for us?"

"Blow your fowl!" said Vernon-Smith. "Can't you see I'm waiting?"

"Well, if you're waiting, what do you want the waiter for?" asked Bob Cherry. "If you can wait, let him wait here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Waiter!" roared Vernon-Smith, exasperated.

"Yes, sir."

"I'll complain to your manager!"

"Yes, sir."

"You lazy bounder——"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll—I'll——"

"Yes, sir."

The waiter went at last. Vernon-Smith scowled at him.

"You won't get any tip from me!" he said.

"Thank you, sir!" said the waiter, who had guessed that before. "Very good, sir! What can I do for you, sir?"

"I want something to drink!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Have you got any champagne?"

The waiter jumped. He had been accustomed to all sorts and conditions of visitors to the liveliest seaside resort in the North, but he had never had champagne ordered by a boy under fifteen before.

"Ye-e-ess, sir," he stammered.

"Well, bring it!"

"What brand, sir?"

"Heidsieck!" growled Vernon-Smith.

The waiter hesitated.

"Well, why don't you go?" roared the Bounder.

"Would you mind paying for the champagne, sir?"

"Do you think I'm not going to pay you, you dummy?"

"Yessir; I mean, it will be fifteen shillings, sir."

Vernon-Smith opened a fat pocket-book, and took out a wad of banknotes. The waiter's eyes opened wide at the sight of them, and his manner involuntarily became more respectful. The son of Samuel Smith, the millionaire, was always very well provided with money, and on this especial occasion he seemed to be rolling it. Vernon-Smith did not carry his wealth so gracefully as Lord Mauleverer. He delighted in showing it about; and just now he was keen to outshine the party at the next table.

He detached a five-pound note from five or six others in the pocket-book, and fluttered it down upon the table.

"Change that!" he said.

"Yessir!"

The waiter picked up the fiver and vanished.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Smithy's going strong. Cigars and champagne! The unspeakable ass! He'll make himself ill."

"Yaas, begad!"

Harry Wharton looked a little serious.

"I suppose we can't interfere," he said. "It's really no bisney of ours, though I hate to see a Greyfriars chap making such a silly ass of himself. If those blessed chumps drink champagne, they'll get squiffy."

"And they'll get chucked out."

"The fatheads!"

But there was evidently nothing that the Famous Four could do in the matter. If the waiter chose to serve champagne to the reckless young blackguards, it was his business and theirs, and not Harry Wharton & Co.'s.

The waiter was a long time bringing the champagne. Perhaps he had spent some time in making sure that the five-pound note was a good one. But it came at last, and the pop as it opened made a good many people turn their heads. The wine creamed into the glasses, and Vernon-Smith, with a sneering glance towards Harry Wharton & Co., took up his glass by the stem.

"You fellows over there like a drink?" he called out.

"No, thanks."

"Spooney asses!" said the Bounder contemptuously. "But I suppose you couldn't stand it."

"You can't stand it, for that matter," said Nugent. "Why don't you let it alone, and not play the giddy goat?"

"Begad, yaas, deah boy!"

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"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And Vernon-Smith drank. Bolsover sipped his glass. The Bounder was used to champagne, young as he was; but Bolsover major was not. And he was very nervous of that glass of creamy fluid, though he would not have admitted it.

"Drink up!" said the Bounder.

"All serene," said Bolsover major. "I'm not very thirsty."

"Ha, ha, ha! Champagne isn't for thirst, you ass! Drink up."

"All right. But——"

"Oh, if you're afraid of it, let it alone!" sneered the Bounder.

Bolsover major flushed angrily, and drained his glass.

"I can stand it as well as you can," he said.

"Bet you you can't," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "My pater always gave me champagne when I was a nipper, and I could drink him under the table before I was fourteen. Fill my glass again, waiter."

"Yessir."

"And fill my friend's."

"Yessir."

"And bring me another bottle."

Vernon-Smith flung down a sovereign.

"Another fowl here, waiter!" called out Lord Mauleverer.

"Yessir."

The waiter seemed more devoted to Vernon-Smith now than to the other party. The Bounder could, as he said, stand the wine—he seemed to have a head of iron, for that matter. But he was growing flushed with it, and in a state to hand out liberal tips. The waiter probably had one eye on the sovereigns he had given the Bounder in change for the five-pound note.

"You haven't touched your stuff, Bolsover," said Vernon-Smith presently. His second glass was empty.

"All in good time," said the bully of the Remove, a little thickly.

"Oh, drink up; here comes the second bottle!"

"Look here——"

"Be a man, old chap."

Bolsover major drank the champagne. A film seemed to come over his eyes as he did so, and he set down the glass so clumsily that it crashed on his plate and broke. There was a giggle from somewhere. Bolsover major stared stupidly at his broken glass.

"Hallo!" he said.

"It's all right," said Vernon-Smith to the waiter. "You can charge for it. And I'm going to give you a good tip if you look after us."

"Yessir."

"Open that bottle."

"Yessir."

"Have a little more, Bolsover?"

"Certainly," stammered Bolsover, to whom the great room, and the tables, and the diners, and the ferns were now circling like forms in a dance. "Pour it out! Here's to you!"

"He's getting squiffy!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Oh, the ass!"

"The Bounder's doing it on purpose," said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "It's the kind of thing that amuses him. Bolsover wouldn't be such an ass if he were left alone."

"Let's get over and bump him," said Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That wouldn't do here," he said. "I'd like to. But we don't want to be booted out. It will be bad enough to see them going."

"Yaas, begad!"

"You're not drinking, Percy, old man," said the Bounder, watching the vacant face of his companion with malicious amusement. Vernon-Smith had a peculiar nature; and he was the kind of fellow whom it is better to have for an enemy than a friend.

"Fill up, then," said Bolsover. "Fill my glass, waiter, you rotter! Why don't you fill my glass, you skulking chump?"

"The waiter's gone," said Vernon-Smith; "and your glass is full."

"Is it?"

"Can't you see, you ass?"

"I—I don't seem to see very clearly," said Bolsover major, blinking at him in a queer, bewildered way. "Where's my glass?"

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Lord Mauleverer soon fell into the spirit of the thing. He danced well, and the crowd roared, and 'Erb played his mouth-organ till it seemed as if he could not have an ounce of breath left in him. "My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "This is fun! Go it Mauly!"

Vernon-Smith guided his hand to it.

"There you are!" he said.

Bolsover took hold of the new glass with a shaking hand. He lifted it, and his hand swayed, and the champagne creamed over into his plate, and swamped his viands.

"Clumsy ass!" said the Bounder.

Crash!

The glass fell from Bolsover major's nerveless hand, and was smashed into a hundred pieces on the floor.

Bolsover major started in stupid astonishment.

"What's that?" he muttered thickly.

"That's your glass," said Vernon-Smith, with a chuckle.

"You've dropped it."

"Dropped it," repeated Bolsover.

"Yes. Can't you see?"

"Who says I've dropped it?" demanded Bolsover, raising his voice, and evidently hardly conscious now of what he was saying or doing.

"I do, you ass!"

"Then you're a liar!" said Bolsover deliberately.

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Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Bring another plate, waiter," he said. "Take that glass away. Bring me another bottle of champagne."

The waiter coughed.

"I think your friend 'as 'ad enough, sir," he said.

The Bounder sniffed.

"I can see that," he replied. "It's not for him, it's for me."

"We've run out of Heidsieck, sir."

"Bring me some Moët Chandon, then."

"I'm afraid we've run out of champagne altogether, sir."

It was pretty clear that the waiter meant that he would serve no more. Vernon-Smith scowled.

"Pour out what's left, and bring me some coffee," he said, "and a couple of cigars."

"Yessir."

"Buck up, Bolsover. You're all right, ain't you?" said Vernon-Smith, watching his friend with great amusement.

Bolsover major was sitting bolt upright on his side of the table, with a strange vacant look upon his flushed face. His eyes were wide open, and fixed upon the Bounder.

"Are you there, Smithy?" he asked, after a long pause.

"Yes, I'm here," chuckled the Bounder.

"Which of you is you, then?" demanded Bolsover, with great gravity.

The Bounder roared.

"Blessed if I can't see two of you!" said Bolsover, with great amazement. "I didn't know you had a brother just like you, Smithy."

"I haven't, you ass!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Then, who's that chap sitting beside you? You're as like as two peas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's laughing, too, just the same as you are!" said Bolsover, in astonishment. "I—I—my only hat!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Keep still, can't you?"

"Eh?"

"Keep still. You'll give me a headache, spinning round and round like a giddy dervish," said Bolsover crossly.

"Why can't you keep still?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bolsover angrily. "And tell that other chap to shut up, too! I'm not going to have the pair of you cackling at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major flushed furiously and made a lunge across the table at one of the laughing faces—fortunately, the one that was not there!

Vernon-Smith started back. He had intended to amuse himself by making Bolsover intoxicated, and he had succeeded; but he did not want the joke to go too far at his own expense. But he remembered now that the bully of the Remove had a very unpleasant temper when it was aroused, and it was very probable that the drink would have the effect of rousing it in its most unpleasant aspect.

"Here, shut up, old man!" he said. "You're making people stare at us. Keep quiet, there's a good chap."

"Who's staring at me?" demanded Bolsover, looking round offensively. "I'd like to see him! I'll alter the shape of his face for him!"

Bolsover major's voice was raised, and it was heard at a good distance, and people turned round and stared in earnest now. The bully of the Remove did not even see it; all the faces to him were in a wild whirl now.

But Vernon-Smith began to look anxious. He did not want to go out of the place "on his neck."

"It's all right, old chap!" he said. "Bring my bill, waiter."

"Ere it is, sir," said the waiter, who had got it ready. He was extremely anxious to get rid of his visitors. He was quite aware that he ought not to have served the boys with champagne, and he did not want trouble to follow.

Vernon-Smith threw down another five-pound note.

Bolsover major calmed down a little and sat staring stupidly about him. The waiter brought the change, and, after a keen look at Vernon-Smith's face, gave him the change correctly.

Vernon-Smith tossed him a five-shilling-piece.

"Thank you, sir!" said the waiter.

"Bolsover, old man, come on."

"Eh?"

"Come on!"

"Who are you?" demanded Bolsover in the most offensive manner.

"I'm your old pal," said Vernon-Smith, grinning. "Come on, old man! Lend me a hand with him, waiter."

"Yessir!"

And the Bounder of Greyfriars and the waiter between them raised Bolsover major to his feet.

"Whur going?" murmured Bolsover.

"Out on the front."

"I don't want to go out on front."

"We'll have a stroll on the prom., and it will set you as right as a trivet."

"Don't want to go stroll on prom."

"Well, we'll go wherever you like, old man!" said Vernon-Smith. "But come on!"

"I want to go home!" said Bolsover, with a vague, wretched feeling in the midst of his abasement that home was the best place for him.

"All right, you shall go home," said Vernon-Smith pacifically.

"Whur's home?"

"Only just round the corner," said the Bounder. "I'll have you there in a jiffy. Lean on my arm. That's right!"

Bolsover major leaned on his arm and hung there heavily, and turned a deep, inquiring look upon him.

"Who you?" he demanded.

"I'm your old pal, you know."

"You ain't!"

"For goodness' sake, get him out!" said the waiter anxiously.

Bolsover major caught the words, and turned upon him fiercely.

"You talking to me?" he roared.

The waiter backed away.

"No, sir! Certainly not, sir! Oh, not a bit, sir! Oh, no!"

"You'd better not!" said Bolsover truculently.

"Certainly not, sir!"

"I'm not standing any of your rot!" said the Remove bully thickly.

"Oh, sir! No, sir! This way, sir!"

"I'm not going that way!" said Bolsover, developing a sudden obstinacy. "That ain't the way home! I'm going the other way!"

"Come on!" said Vernon-Smith. "Come with your old pal!"

"Old pal!" said Bolsover, with a sudden access of affection. "That's right! You're my old pal, and I'm your old pal. Orrigh'!"

And he threw his arms about Vernon-Smith's neck and wept.

"My only summer bonnet!" murmured Bob Cherry. "If the silly ass only knew what an exhibition he was making of himself! The awful ass!"

"Let's go and lend him a hand," said Wharton.

"He'll row with us if we do."

"Chance it!"

"Oh, all right!"

The Greyfriars juniors had finished, and they paid their bill, and left the table. They surrounded Bolsover major, and by persuasion and pushing they got him out of the restaurant, into the garden attached to it looking on the sea.

Vernon-Smith was glad enough of their help. Bolsover major in his present state was a little too much for him.

The unhappy wretch sank down upon a bench in the garden under a tree and stared stupidly about him.

Wharton turned a fierce look upon the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"You've done this, you cad!" he muttered between his teeth.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"He shouldn't drink if he can't stand it," he said. "I can stand it all right."

"I suppose you were born a blackguard, and he wasn't."

"Begad, yaas!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Vernon-Smith. "If you're so jolly fond of him, you can take charge of him if you like. He's not much use to me."

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Gets Excited.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked anxiously on from their table. They had finished their lunch, and were enjoying their coffee, and feeling as right as rain.

But the two "bounders" who had come to Blackpool to have a giddy time were not quite so happy.

Vernon-Smith, in spite of his capacity for strong drink, was feeling the effects of the champagne; and there was no doubt that Bolsover major was helplessly, hopelessly intoxicated. He had drunk enough of the potent liquor to intoxicate a man—and he was a boy, and unused to it.

The big, burly fellow was raised from his seat by the combined efforts of the waiter and Vernon-Smith, and stood very unsteadily upon his legs. It seemed to Bolsover major that he was attempting roller-skating for the first time, so strangely did his feet seem to desire to travel away in different directions.

"Come on, Percy, old man!" urged Vernon-Smith.

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Wharton's eyes blazed.
 "Do you mean to say that you want to desert him, after getting him into that state?" he demanded fiercely.
 "Well, I can't propel him round the town like that."
 Bolsover blinked at him.
 "What's that?" he said. "Where's my old pal?"
 "Oh, here I am!" growled the Bounder.
 "You're not my old pal!" said Bolsover, putting his crimson face close to Vernon-Smith's and staring at him.
 "You're Bunter!"
 "Oh, you ass!"
 "What are you doing here, Bunter?"
 "I'm not Bunter, you fathead!" shrieked Vernon-Smith.
 "Who are you, then?"
 "I'm Vernon-Smith!"
 "It's a lie!"

The chums of the Remove could not help grinning. There was something comic as well as horrible in the spectacle.

"You're Coker!" said Bolsover, with intoxicated deliberation. "You're Coker of the Fifth; and I tell you plainly I'm not having any of your cheek! You hear me?"

"Yes, I hear you, you fool!" growled the Bounder.

"Who you calling a fool, Coker?" demanded Bolsover.

"I'll jolly well lick you for that! I don't care if you're in the Fifth! Not much!"

And with surprising agility the bully of the Remove made a sudden rush at Vernon-Smith, clasped him round the neck with his left arm, and began to punch him unmercifully.

The Bounder of Greyfriars yelled.

"Ow! Stop it! Draggimoff! Ow!"

"I'll give you something to remember me by, Coker, now we're going!" said Bolsover, evidently under the impression that he was at Greyfriars, and that the school had not yet broken up for the holidays. "I'll smash you! I'll—Take that! And that! And that!"

"Ow! Ow! Help!"

Biff! Biff! Biff!

Vernon-Smith's head was in chancery, and he struggled furiously to escape from the grasp of the infuriated bully of the Remove, and the rain of blows that crashed upon his face and head. But Bolsover clung to him fiercely, hammering away for all he was worth.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You got him like that, and now you can face the music, Smithy! Serve you jolly well right!"

"Yaas, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Draggimoff!" spluttered Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Bolsover!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

Vernon-Smith dragged himself away at last, and Bolsover lost his balance and fell with a crash on the gravel path beside the bench. He made one effort to rise, and sank back again, and rolled over and went to sleep.

Vernon-Smith stood dabbing his face furiously with his handkerchief. He had had a very rough hammering, and there was a crimson stream from his nose, which stained his handkerchief a deep red as he dabbed away.

The chums of the Remove roared with laughter. They were concerned about Bolsover, but they did not feel any sympathy for the Bounder of Greyfriars. He had only received what he deserved, or, rather, less than he deserved.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Vernon-Smith scowled at them blackly.

"You rotters!" he howled. "Hang you! Hang you!"

Ow! My nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The drunken brute! He can look after himself, anyway!"

And Vernon-Smith swung away savagely.

Harry Wharton grasped him by the shoulder, and whirled him back.

"Let me alone!" yelled the Bounder.

"Are you going to leave him there?" demanded Wharton sternly.

"Do you think I'm going to carry him round the town in that state?" hooted the Bounder.

"You got him into that state."

"Oh, rats!"

"Are you going to desert him, you cad?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, with blazing eyes.

"I'm not going to worry about him."

"Then you're a cur!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith swung away. But with a rush the Greyfriars juniors surrounded him.

"We can't stop you from deserting Bolsover," said Harry Wharton sternly. "We'll look after him, if you won't! But we can jolly well punish you for such a caddish trick, and we're going to!"

"Begad! Yaas!"

"Bump the cad!"

"Yes, rather!"

Vernon-Smith made a wild rush to escape. But he had no chance. The grasp of the juniors was upon him, and he

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was gripped and bumped upon the gravel. He yelled furiously, but his yells did not save him. He was bumped again and again, and then rolled in the gravel, and when he escaped from the juniors' hands he was in a sorry state.

"Now, cut off, you rotten cad!" said Bob Cherry scornfully. "And if we come across you again, we'll give you some more!"

"Hang you—hang you all!"

"Oh, buzz off!"

And Vernon-Smith, breathing vengeance, staggered away, torn and dusty and dishevelled.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to Bolsover major. He was left upon their hands, and little as he deserved from them, they felt that they could not desert a Greyfriars fellow in such a plight.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan.

BOLSOVER was sleeping soundly. What to do with him the chums of Greyfriars hardly knew.

He was not likely to recover consciousness for some time, and when he did, he was not likely to be in a condition to look after himself.

It was, as Nugent remarked, rather "thick" to have to spend a considerable part of their day's outing looking after the foolish fellow, after he had been deserted by his own chum.

But the Removites felt that they could do nothing less.

To leave him in his present state was impossible. He would probably be taken in charge by a policeman, and taken to the station, and his feelings when he awoke in the police-station would be terrible, to say nothing of the disgrace and the scene he would have with his father afterwards if Mr. Bolsover learned about it, as he would be pretty certain to do.

The chums propped the insensible junior up on the seat, and discussed what should be done. Bolsover's head sagged upon Wharton's shoulder, and he snored there heavily.

"Lovely-looking rotter, he is, I must say!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder what the Head would say if he could see him now?"

"It would be the sack for him."

"And serve him right!"

"Begad, yaas!"

"Well, we've got to look after him," said Harry. "We'll take it in turns to stay here with the silly ass; no good all of us wasting the afternoon. I'll take the first turn, and one of you come back in an hour."

"Well, that's about the best we can do, I suppose," said Johnny Bull.

"I'll stay with him if you like, Wharton," said Mark Linley. "You fellows are strangers here, and haven't seen the place, and I can see it as often as I like in the holidays, as I live up here!"

"No; fair play's a jewel! We'll take turns at it."

"But I don't mind a bit," said Mark earnestly. "I've got my Xenophon in my pocket, and I can do some Greek while I'm looking after him. I'd just as soon."

The Lancashire lad was in earnest, and, after some demur, the juniors agreed to let him have his way. It was arranged that they should go round the town, and return to the hotel garden at five or six o'clock. They walked away, leaving the Lancashire lad alone with the insensible Bolsover.

Bolsover was found a comfortable shady place to sleep under a tree, in the grass, and Mark Linley sat near him, and took out his Xenophon, and contentedly did Greek while he waited for Bolsover to come to himself.

The hours slid away, while Linley followed the Ten Thousand in their wanderings up and down through the pages of Xenophon.

It was two hours before Bolsover major opened his eyes.

When he did, he lay bewildered, staring stupidly about him for some time, and finally he groaned and sat up dizzily.

Mark Linley closed his book at once, and came over to the wretched junior.

Bolsover looked at him dazedly.

"Where am I?" he stuttered.

"You're all right," said Linley. "This is the hotel garden—that's where you had your lunch, you know. You've been asleep."

"Where's Smith?"

"Oh, he's gone!"

"Gone!" muttered Bolsover. "Is he coming back?"

"No."

"Not coming back! Do you mean to say that he's left me in the lurch?"

"Well, yes; I suppose it amounts to that!"

"I'm thirsty!" moaned Bolsover. "My throat's burning. My head's aching frightfully. I think I had too much to drink."

The Lancashire lad smiled slightly.

"I think you had," he assented. "Shall I get you something cool—a lemon-squash?"

"Thanks!"

Mark Linley brought the lemon-squash from the hotel. Bolsover major sipped it gladly. His throat was dry as burning lime, or seemed so, and his head throbbed and throbbed. But the cool drink and the breeze from the sea helped to revive him.

"I've been a silly ass!" he said.

"You have!" assented Mark.

"How did you come here?"

"Don't you remember? We were having a feed at the next table."

"I mean, what are you doing here now? You didn't stay to look after me, did you?"

Mark nodded.

"What for?" asked Bolsover.

Mark Linley laughed.

"Well, you weren't in much of a state to look after yourself," he said. "You would have been in the lock-up by this time."

The Remove bully shuddered.

"Oh, I've been a fool!" he said. "My pater would have made a row if he'd heard of that. I was a fool to come here with Smithy at all. I might have had a ripping day with my pater and my minor, young Hubert—they've gone on a yacht. But I wanted to play the giddy goat with the Bouncer."

"Well, you've played it; no mistake about that!" said Mark.

"And the Bouncer isn't coming back?"

"No; he's gone!"

"He didn't want to be bothered with me, I suppose?" asked Bolsover, his eyes gleaming.

"I suppose not. But you were pretty rough on him," added Mark. "You mistook him for Coker, of the Fifth, and went for him, and his nose is nearly twice the proper size by this time, I fancy."

Bolsover chuckled hoarsely.

"Serve him right, the cad! I was a fool to chum with him! He served me rotten tricks before; nobody can depend on him. I'll give the rotter a wide berth in the future! But, oh, how my head aches!"

"Come and have a wash and a cup of tea," said Mark Linley; "that will buck you up." He gave Bolsover a helping hand to rise. "You'll feel better soon."

"I feel seasick," said Bolsover, "and my head—oh! I feel as if a blessed steam-engine was going full pressure inside my napper. Where are your friends?"

"They're coming back for me."

Mark helped the exhausted, aching bully of the Remove to a seat in a tea-house in the garden. Bolsover drank tea, and it revived him, and then a wash in cold water set him almost right. But he still felt very heavy and languid, and he sat down heavily upon a bench overlooking the sea.

Mark Linley sat beside him, and as Bolsover did not seem to be in a humour for talk, he took out his book again. The bully of the Remove watched him curiously.

"You're a queer beggar, Linley!" he said at last.

Mark smiled.

"Thanks!" he said.

"Precious few fellows would waste their afternoon looking after me, considering—"

"I'm not wasting it; I'm reading."

"What's that—Greek?"

"Yes."

"Groooh!" said Bolsover.

There was another long silence. Bolsover sat drinking in deep draughts of the ozone-laden air from the Irish Sea, and feeling better every minute. There was a swarm of people in the gardens and along the front. Blackpool was enjoying itself. Strangers had poured into the town by the thousand—or, rather, by the ten thousand—and the promenade, and trams, and the piers, and the tower and the winter gardens, all were crowded, and the steamers on the blue sea churned on amid flocks of pleasure-boats. It was a gay and animated scene.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed a cheery voice at last.

And Bob Cherry and the rest came up, red of face and very merry and a little tired, and ready for tea.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Recognition.

"FEEL better, old man?" asked Harry Wharton.

Bolsover looked shamefacedly at the juniors.

"Ye-e-es," he said, in a low voice. "I'm pretty nearly all right. It was jolly decent of Linley to stick to me, after that cad Smith left me in the lurch."

"Oh, Marky's a real white man," said Bob Cherry. "He does these things! I'm glad you've got over your little spree without getting locked up. It would have been a bit of a shock to your pater to get a wire to come down here and bail you out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't rub it in!" said Bolsover. "I know I've been a fool. But I never knew the beastly stuff would get into a chap's head like that!"

"Come and have tea," said Harry Wharton. "You won't see the Bouncer again to-day, I expect. Would you like to go round with us?"

"Pleasure to us, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer politely.

Bolsover flushed.

"You're jolly good," he said. "Of course I'd like to come with you! I don't want to hang about a place alone, and I certainly don't want any more of Vernon-Smith. If I see that cad again, I shall punch his head for leaving me in the lurch."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"You've done a little in that line already," he said. "Smithy's nose was looking like a prize beetroot when we passed him on the prom. half an hour ago. I say, this is a ripping place. We've had a jolly time, Marky."

"We've been on all the giddy piers, and up and down on the trams, and looked in at the Zoo, and done the winter gardens and the Palace," said Frank Nugent. "Plenty of things here to pass the time. It seems that there are going to be big things on the sands to-night, too—pierrot shows, and so on."

"Yes; they're worth seeing!" said Mark.

"We'll jolly well see them after tea."

The afternoon's exploring had left the juniors very hungry. Lord Mauleverer stood a princely tea, and Bolsover joined the party without anything further being said on the subject. Bolsover's manner was very subdued. He was not feeling quite well yet, and, polite as the juniors were, he knew very well that they must be thinking of his conduct.

By the time the chums of Greyfriars had finished their tea, it was dusk, and Blackpool was beginning to be lighted up.

The juniors, in a merry mood, strolled down to the front. The crowds were enormous.

The whole front was a blaze of electric-light, and the piers, lighted up, blazed out from the shadows of the sea.

In some places it was difficult to walk for the crowd.

Strange noises filled the air—mouth-organs and tin whistles seemed the favourite musical instruments, and many of the promenaders depended upon their vocal organs, which were powerful if not melodious.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry suddenly. "Here's our friend Herbert!"

It was 'Erb & Co. again. 'Erb & Co. were dancing in a circle, and with them were several very brightly-dressed young ladies, dancing with great spirit. 'Erb was playing a mouth-organ, and keeping very good time with that fearsome instrument. The juniors stopped to watch the dance, as did a crowd of other promenaders. They recognised Miss Maria and Miss Clara, and their respective young men among the devotees of Terpsichore, evidently enjoying themselves immensely.

'Erb finished his musical performance, and gasped for breath. He caught sight of the juniors, and hailed them in a voice which showed that 'Erb had not neglected the cup that cheers during the day.

"'Ere you are, me lord!" shouted 'Erb. "'Ere you are! Come and jine the dance, me lord! Come and 'op it with yours truly!"

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

"His lordship!" exclaimed Miss Maria. "My only love, come and give us a 'op!"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer.

He tried to back away in the crowd, but Miss Maria, who was evidently in a state of great excitement, due partly to the dancing and partly to the black bottle which 'Erb passed round for refreshment, would not let him escape. She laid a powerful grasp upon the astounded youth, and dragged him into the Terpsichorean circle.

"'Ere we are!" she exclaimed gaily. "Strike up, 'Erb!"

"'Urray!" said 'Erb.

"Go it, Maria!"

"Go it, me lord!"

"'Urray! 'Op it!"

ANSWERS

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"By Jove!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "I really—you see—don't you know—begad! Oh, dear! My dear young lady—oh!"

And he danced.

He had no choice in the matter, for Miss Maria was a muscular young lady, and could have tossed Lord Mauleverer over the heads of the crowd if she had liked.

The crowd applauded uproariously. 'Erb and his friends seemed almost hysterical with delight, and the Greyfriars juniors, who had not also joined in the dance, joined in the roar. Lord Mauleverer's face was a study at first; but, as it happened, he was a good dancer, and he fell into the spirit of the thing. He danced well, and the crowd roared, and 'Erb played his mouth-organ till it seemed as if he could not have an ounce of breath left in him.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry ejaculated. "This is fun! Go it, Mauly!"

"Put her through!"

"Hop it, Mauly!"

"Begad, don't you know," said Lord Mauleverer, as he whirled past Harry Wharton with the light-footed Maria, "the young lady dances beautifully, you know! Begad!"

"Go it!"

"Op it, Maria!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Maria ceased at last from sheer exhaustion. She was bubbling over with good humour and breathlessness. Lord Mauleverer bowed gracefully to his partner.

"Thank you very much, miss!" he said, raising his straw hat.

"Oh, ain't he a toff!" said Miss Maria. "Where did you get that voice?"

"Begad—"

"Ain't I told you 'e's a lord?" shouted 'Erb. "Walk up, gents; 'is lordship is goin' to stand the drinks!"

"Urray!"

"Indeed, I shall be very happy, my dear fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Come on, dear boys! It's my treat!"

And he was whirled towards a refreshment buffet near at hand.

'Erb & Co. took advantage of the treat with great gusto. The Greyfriars fellows drank lemonade, but 'Erb & Co. drank something more potent than that; and we regret to say Miss Maria followed their bad example.

The two parties parted on the best of terms, and the Greyfriars juniors sauntered on, laughing.

"Well, it's a jolly place, and no mistake," said Bob Cherry, "and I think Maria's simply a duck. They're jolly nice people when you get to know 'em!"

"Ripping!" said Nugent, laughing. "This is what comes of Mauly being such a fascinating chap. Nobody wanted to dance with me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer. "I felt quite nervous at first, don't you know. Begad! By Jove! Here's Smith and Captain Pointer!"

Vernon-Smith was strolling along the lighted beach, with the sporting gentleman who had taken so many sovereigns from Lord Mauleverer in the train coming down. Vernon-Smith had found a new friend; but his new friend was likely to make him pay for the privilege before he had done with him.

Bolsover clenched his hands at the sight of the Bounder. Vernon-Smith affected not to see them, and Harry Wharton put his arm through Bolsover's, and dragged him on.

"'Nuff rows for one day," he said.

"Oh, all right!" said Bolsover. "I'll leave punching his head till we get back to Greyfriars!"

A flare of light, and the rat-tat-tat-a-tan of a drum, drew the juniors' attention to a pierrot show near the pier. A large crowd was gathering round to see it, and the juniors mingled with the onlookers. They sat down on the beach with the rest.

"This will be worth seeing," said Mark Linley. "It's a pierrot company that comes to Blackpool regularly every summer—the Masked Pierrots. One of them is a Frenchman, and gives French songs and dances. I've never seen them before, but they are well known."

"Let's see 'em, by all means!" said Johnny Bull.

The performance was just beginning.

The good-natured crowd gave the pierrot troupe a cheer before they started, by way of encouraging them. There were five in the company, and they were all masked—a little trick in the "profesh" which was very successful when it was first devised. But even the simplest excursionist in the Blackpool crowd by that time probably did not believe that the masks concealed the well-known features of great society people who were doing it for "fun." It was only too evident that the pierrots were doing it for money.

A little man, looking very bizarre with his ample pierrot dress, and his chalked face half-covered by the mask, made his bow to the audience. He looked an exact reproduction of Canio in "Pagliacci." The Greyfriars juniors looked at him, and, in spite of the concealment of the mask and the

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pierrot-dress, it seemed to them that there was something slightly familiar about him.

"Seen that chap before, somewhere," said Bob Cherry.

"Looks familiar to me," said Harry Wharton, with a puzzled look. "That's the French performer, I think—he sings in broken English."

"Listen!"

A piano and a fiddle, played by two of the pierrots, struck up, and the little man began to sing in what the crowd took to be a masterly imitation of the broken English of a Frenchman imperfectly acquainted with the language, but which the Greyfriars juniors, as soon as they heard it, knew to be quite genuine. For they knew the voice, though they had never heard it raised in song before. And they looked at one another with blank looks, and one name leaped to their lips at once—

"Mossoo!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mossoo's Secret.

"MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER!" murmured Harry Wharton. "My hat!"

"Mossoo, by gum!"

"Great Scott!"

"By gad!"

The little Frenchman had not observed the faces of the juniors amid the sea of faces that surrounded him. He was not looking in their direction. But the juniors knew him, and they watched him in amazement.

So that was the secret!

It was probably to pay his fare to Blackpool that the French master had disposed of the watch to the pawnbroker in Courtfield before the school broke up; and this was what he was doing in Blackpool—working in a pierrot show!

The juniors simply gasped at the idea.

They knew that the French-master's salary at Greyfriars was not large, and that he had to help poor relatives in his native country. Many fellows at Greyfriars had suspected that Monsieur Charpentier was very hard up indeed. His shabby clothes had drawn many sneering expressions from fellows like Snoop and Vernon-Smith. But that he raised money by appearing as a pierrot on the sands at Blackpool—the Greyfriars fellows had certainly never dreamed of that.

Fisher T. Fish, the American junior at Greyfriars, had told them stories of American college life—of undergraduates who worked as farmhands and waiters in the summer to pay their college fees in term time; but for a master—even a French master—at an English school to raise cash in this way was a little new.

The juniors could only stare at him in astonishment. Monsieur Charpentier—billed as Count de Montfort in large letters in the show—sang on in his cracked voice to the great amusement of the audience, and to the great wonder of Harry Wharton & Co.

His song described the adventures of a Frenchman who came to see London; and it was quite a funny song, in the queer dialect of Mossoo. The Frenchman illustrated the song with a dance at the same time, to the squeaking of the fiddle and the pong-pong of the much-tortured piano.

"Ze day I come to London

Ze fog was in ze sky;

A pretty girl she look at me,

And vink ze ozzer eye.

N'est-ce-pas?

"J'ai dit, 'My name is Adolphe;

I've travelled from Parec;

I love ze sharming Engleesh mees,

So kummer-kummer-kummer longer me."

N'est-ce-pas?

Kummer-kummer-kummer-kummer longer me."

The sight of their French master, executing the most absurd antics and chanting such an utter absurdity, was too much for the Greyfriars juniors. They burst into a yell of laughter, in which the whole crowd joined. Bob Cherry clapped his hands vigorously.

"Go it, mossoo!" he bawled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Imperfect, indicative of aller, to go!" shrieked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you asses!" whispered Harry Wharton, in alarm. "Don't let him know we know him. Poor old Mossoo would simply writhe if he knew we knew."

"Quite right, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Sorry I spoke," murmured Bob Cherry. "All serene! He didn't hear."

Monsieur Charpentier had not noticed the yells of the juniors among so many other yells. When the noise subsided, he started on the second verse, which detailed his adventures with the charming English miss. It seemed that the English miss did not turn out very charming in the end, as, after taking him for a ride on a motor-bus, and a visit to a cinematograph, he found that she had suddenly departed, and that his pocket-book and purse had departed also, so that poor Adolphe had to get a job as a waiter in order to pay his fare back to Paris. But this want of honesty on the part of the English miss did not shock the audience; they laughed loudly at the misfortunes of the unfortunate Adolphe in London.

Monsieur Charpentier's turn was very much applauded, and the little Frenchman was bowing his thanks, when he caught sight of the seven Greyfriars faces in a row in the crowd.

He gave a wild jump.

His eyes almost started through his mask, and he stared blankly at the juniors, evidently too overcome to keep his presence of mind.

Then, with a stifled exclamation, he rushed back behind the canvas screen, and disappeared.

"He's seen us!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Poor old Mossoo!"

"He thinks we know him, too," said Johnny Bull.

The crowd were clapping and shouting for the performer to come on again. The applause was so great that the Count de Montfort simply had to appear. He came into sight again with trembling hands, and avoided looking towards the Greyfriars boys.

"Blessed if I don't know that chap!" said a voice behind the juniors. "I've seen him before somewhere, Pointer."

It was Vernon-Smith's voice.

Harry Wharton looked round. The Bouncer and Captain Pointer had joined the crowd behind them, and the Bouncer was looking very curiously at the French performer as he bowed his acknowledgments to the enthusiastic audience.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "I know him!"

"Whom do you think it is?" exclaimed Wharton.

The Bouncer started.

"Hallo! You here?" he exclaimed.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Well, don't speak to me."

"I'm going to speak to you when I get you into a quiet place, Smithy," said Bolsover, between his teeth.

The Bouncer looked at him with a sneer.

"Hallo! You're in the family now, are you? Got over the cham?"

"Yes—no thanks to you. I might have been locked up for all you cared," said the bully of the Remove savagely.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't be bothered with boobies," he said. "You should learn to take your cham. like a man, or leave it alone. Pooh!"

Bolsover gritted his teeth.

"I know that chap," said Vernon-Smith, as the Count de Montfort went back into the booth. "It's old Charpy! That's what he's down in Blackpool for to-day. My hat! Won't there be a cackle at Greyfriars when I tell the fellows about seeing him doing pierrot bizney on the sands!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"You won't tell them!" he said.

The Bouncer stared.

"Why shouldn't I? It will be a good joke, I think; and if the Head hears of it, Mossoo will get the push, as sure as a gun."

"If you think it's Mossoo——"

"I know it is!"

"Then you're bound to hold your tongue. The poor old chap can't help being hard up, and it would be caddish to give him away."

Vernon-Smith sneered.

"I'm jolly well going to have a closer look at him after the show," he said, "and make sure that it is Mossoo. Then

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I'll let all Greyfriars know, if only to show you that you can't dictate to me, Harry Wharton."

"You rotten cad!"

"Thanks!"

"You worm!" said Bob Cherry witheringly.

The Bounder yawned.

"Let's get a bit further off, Pointer," he said. "I'd rather not be seen with these hooligans. They belong to my school, but I don't recognise them outside the school. A fellow isn't bound to do that."

"Begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

Captain Pointer grinned, and moved away with his young friend. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged dismayed glances.

"Rotten for Mossos!" said Nugent, after a pause. "It's beastly the Bounder recognising him. He won't hold his tongue."

"Oh, he's cad enough for anything!" said Johnny Bull.

"Might bump him, and make him promise," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I don't know whether he'd keep a promise bumped out of him," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It would be asking a lot, wouldn't it?"

"Begad, yaas!"

But the juniors could not help feeling worried in their minds. They were all concerned for poor Monsieur Charpentier, whom they liked very well. If his peculiar mode of spending the vacation was known at Greyfriars, it was certainly very probable that he would have to leave his post at the old school. And that would be a very heavy blow to him. French-masters' posts in good schools did not, as Bob Cherry remarked, grow on every bush; and they knew how poor Monsieur Charpentier was.

"We'll see the show to a finish, and see that Vernon-Smith doesn't go in and speak to him," said Harry Wharton decidedly. "After all, unless he speaks to him face to face, he can't say for certain that it's Mossos."

"Quite right."

"We'll do that," said Bob Cherry. "If Vernon-Smith comes nosing about the place, we'll bump him, as we did before, and he'll clear off."

"That's the idea."

And the juniors sat the show out; and when it was over, and the crowd dispersed in search of other amusements, they did not depart. They looked round for Vernon-Smith; but what they saw was a figure in a long coat over his pierrot dress, hurrying towards them. It was Monsieur Charpentier, and the mask had been taken now from his chalked face.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The End of a Great Day.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. raised their straw hats very respectfully to the French master. In spite of the comic pierrot dress and the chalk, he was still their French master. The little Frenchman was evidently labouring under great emotion.

"Mes garçons," he said, "you have stop here to speak viz me, n'est-ce-pas?"

"Well?" began Wharton hesitatingly. He did not wish to tell the Frenchman what they were really waiting for. Monsieur Charpentier evidently did not know that the Bounder had been among those who had seen him.

"It was kind of you," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I know zat you know me. I see in your faces zat you have me recognise."

"Well, we—we couldn't help it, sir," said Bob Cherry apologetically.

"Begad, no!"

The Frenchman shook his head.

"I not blame you," he said. "It is ze accident. But it is very unfortunate. Vat you zink now of your master?"

"It's not our business, sir," said Frank Nugent.

The little Frenchman gesticulated.

"Helas, it is zat I need ze money!" he said. "I not tell all ze vorls, you understand; but in France I have ze old fazzer and muzzer, and zey are in need. Ciel, it is not ze great fortune zat vun make by teaching ze French at ze school, vous savez."

"I suppose not, sir."

"I come to zis," said the Frenchman, with a gesture towards the pierrot booth. "In Paris I have sometimes sung in ze cafe-chantants, vous savez—a great secret. Zen I zink of zis in ze vacance. It is honest, and it amuse ze people; but I lose all ze dignity of my character, vous savez. It is not dignified—hein."

The juniors could not help smiling. Like many very little men, Monsieur Charpentier had a wonderful idea of his personal dignity, and his favourite attitude was Napoleonic. To be caught in a ridiculous garb, singing a ridiculous song, and dancing with ridiculous antics, was a great blow to him.

"It's all right, sir," said Bob Cherry comfortingly. "We're not going to say anything about it, sir."

"Not a word, of course," said Johnny Bull.

The little Frenchman's face brightened up.

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"I know zat I can trust you, mes garçons," he said. "You are ze good boys. If it had been boys like zat Snoop or zat Vernon-Smeet, I say, 'Do your vorst!' But viz ze noble garçons zat you are, I say, 'Do me ze favour of not to mention!'"

"Right you are, sir."

"Not a word!"

"Honour bright!"

The little Frenchman clasped the hands of the juniors in turn, and shook them very heartily.

"Zen I am no longer sorry zat I see you here," he exclaimed. "I am glad zat I meet my young friends. Vat is it zat you zink of ze performance?"

Harry Wharton grinned. The French master was ashamed of the undignified manner in which he earned money during the holidays; but he was not above the little vanity of wishing to hear a favourable opinion on his performance, all the same.

"It was ripping, sir!" said Harry.

"Splendid, sir!"

"Gorgeous!"

"First-chop, sir!"

The little Frenchman beamed and almost purred.

"I zink zat I do him as an artist," he said. "Zat is so. Zere are vays of doing zeze zings, n'est-ce-pas? Zere are vays, and vays, and ozzer vays. I zink zat I do zem in ze vay of ze artist."

"You do, sir."

"Yes, rather."

"Begad, yaas!"

And Monsieur Charpentier, very much pleased with the juniors and with himself, shook hands with them all again, and went back into the booth.

"Good old Froggy!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He doesn't know that the Bounder saw him; and it would have been too cruel to tell him. We shall have to find some way of keeping Smithy's mouth shut."

"Here he is," said Nugent quietly.

The Bounder, alone now, was coming towards them. The juniors hurried to intercept him, having no doubt that he was going to the booth to seek a personal interview with Monsieur Charpentier. The shows were mostly over now, and the people were streaming away towards the railway-stations. The long and merry day was drawing to an end. In a short time the Frenchman and the rest of the pierrots would be gone, and the juniors had only to keep the Bounder off the grass, so to speak, till then.

They halted in his path, and the Bounder halted, too.

"You're not going on," said Harry Wharton quietly.

He expected a fierce outburst in return from the Bounder; but it did not come. In the glare of the electric lights, he observed that Vernon-Smith's face was very pale.

"I—I don't want to," said the Bounder. "I wasn't thinking of Mossos—hang him! I came back here to see you chaps."

"Looking for a thick ear?" asked Bolsover suggestively.

Vernon-Smith did not answer him.

"What on earth did you want to see us for?" demanded Mark Linley, in surprise.

"I can't get home."

"What?"

"I've been robbed."

"Robbed!" exclaimed the juniors, in a breath.

"Yes, and swindled, too!" said the Bounder bitterly.

"That chap you saw me with—I suppose you noticed him?"

"Yes, rather. He cheated Mauly in the train."

"He got me into playing cards," said Vernon-Smith bitterly. "He cleared me out. I'd been drinking again, and I was excited, and—and he won every cent. And—and he wouldn't give me back even enough to pay my fare home. And—and after I'd left the cad, I found my watch was gone. I'm pretty he had it."

"My hat!"

"Well, I must say you're a giddy ass," said Bob Cherry. "It serves you right, for being a gambling blackguard, that's my opinion."

"Go on. Pile on a fellow when he's down!" said the Bounder bitterly.

Bob Cherry relented at once.

"I don't want to do that," he said. "If you're in a hole, I'm sorry. But you brought it all on yourself."

"I can't get home," said the Bounder, in a low voice.

"I've been looking for you. I won't go in and see Frenchy, if you don't want me to. Hang him! But—but I want one of you to lend me a couple of pounds to get home with."

"Haven't you got a return ticket?"

"No, I came down first-class," said the Bounder, with a touch of his old arrogance. "I'm not an excursionist."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, we are," he said. "We came down on third-class

excursion tickets, and they were quite good enough for us. I dare say we could raise a couple of quid, Smithy, but the question is, are third-class bounders like us sufficiently aristocratic for a moneylender's son to borrow of?"

The Bounder winced.

"You can lend it or not, as you like!" said Vernon-Smith savagely. "I dare say I shall be able to manage somehow. Lots of people sleep on the beach here on fine nights."

"You can have the money, of course," said Harry Wharton. "We'll whack it up among us. You can send it back by post."

"I'd rather mop up the beach with the cad!" growled Bolsover.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

The money was raised, and Vernon-Smith hesitated as he took it.

"I'll send this back immediately I get home," he said.

"All serene."

"And—and, I say, I'm sorry for the way I spoke just now," said the Bounder, with a glimmer of good feeling that the juniors had not expected of him. "I—I'd like to come back with you fellows, third class, if you'll have me, so far as our ways are together."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Come on, then."

"Begad, it's about time we got to the station!" said Lord Mauleverer, looking at his watch. "We've got none too much time for our train, dear boys."

And the Greyfriars party made their way with the thronging crowd towards the Central Railway Station.

The crowd was terrific. Thousands upon thousands of tired but happy people were thronging back to the railway-stations; thousands more were crowding into the innumerable boarding-houses that form so large a proportion of Blackpool.

Wedged in the crowd; the juniors had to keep pace with the rest of the holiday-makers, and advance into the station by slow and steady degrees. The time booked for their return train had long passed when they found themselves at last on the crammed platform. But the times for the trains were of no moment now. The station officials were working like bees to get the crowd off, despatching train after train. As fast as one was loaded up to overflowing, it rolled out of the station, and another appeared from nowhere to take its place.

Train after train was filled and despatched, amid roars and shouts and yells, and the din of mouth-organs and whistles and singing voices. Still the juniors were wedged in the apparently endless crowd.

"We won't go home till morning, I think," gasped Bob Cherry.

"Looks like it, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But it's all in the day's play, dear boy."

"Here's our train!" said Wharton.

They shoved forward, and had a chance at last. They piled into a carriage, and were followed in by a wild wave of humanity. The carriage was packed, and disappointed trippers glared in and passed along, and yelled for more trains to be put on.

The carriage was intended to hold ten, and there were sixteen in it when Bob Cherry succeeded in getting the door shut. But the Greyfriars juniors were all together, and they were off at last.

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "Talk about sardines!"

"It's warm!" said Johnny Bull.

"But we've had a ripping day!"

"Yes, rather! Hurrah!"

A gentleman in the corner was playing a concertina. Another gentleman was playing a tin whistle. Both played very well; but as they played simultaneously the effect was not harmonious.

But it was all, as Lord Mauleverer had said, in the day's play. It was a merry and uproarious ending to a merry and uproarious day.

The Bounder sat silent as the train rushed on through the night. But he was thinking. He had to change trains before Harry Wharton & Co. got out. Bolsover had been

staying with him, and would have changed with him; but he had declared his intention of going to an hotel rather than going home with the Bounder, after his experiences in Blackpool. And thereupon Lord Mauleverer had asked him to come home to Mauleverer Hall for a day or two, and Bolsover had gladly accepted. Bolsover chatted with the chums of the Remove with unusual cordiality as the train rushed on.

It slackened down at last. Vernon-Smith made a movement, and took down his coat from the rack and put it on.

"I get out here," he said. "I'm much obliged to you fellows. You've treated me very decently in helping me to get home."

"That's all right, Smithy."

"But I mean it," said Vernon-Smith, "and if there's anything I can do—"

"There is," Wharton said quietly. "Give us your word not to say anything about Mossos at Greyfriars—not to give him away there."

The Bounder nodded.

"All serene! I won't say a word! Honour bright!"

The train stopped, and the Bounder stepped out.

"Good-night, you fellows!"

"Good-night, Smithy!"

The train rushed on again. Most of the passengers were asleep by this time, and the Greyfriars juniors followed their example. Nugent leaned his head back on the partition, and Bolsover leaned his on the window, and Johnny Bull and Mark Linley leaned on one another, and dropped into balmy slumber.

A sudden jerk of the train and a shouting voice woke them up.

"Wake up, you slackers!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Tumble out! They don't give you much time!"

And the Greyfriars juniors bundled sleepily out of the carriage. The fresh, keen air of night revived them, however. As the train started again, a head leaned out of a window, and a hand waved, and a raucous voice shouted:

"Good-night, me lord!"

It was the irrepressible 'Erb. Lord Mauleverer raised his hat gracefully.

"Good-night, dear boy!" he called back.

And the train disappeared, carrying the grinning 'Erb away into the night.

The Greyfriars juniors walked out of the station, and they found Johnson and the motor-car in readiness. Johnson woke up and touched his cap.

"Kept you waiting, Robinson?" asked Lord Mauleverer sympathetically.

"Only an hour, sir," said the chauffeur.

"Tumble in, you fellows! You can let her rip on the road, Robinson. There won't be anyone about at this time of night."

"Yes, my lord!"

And the chauffeur did let the car rip. The juniors enjoyed the wild dash through the midnight, under the clear stars, and all too soon Mauleverer Hall appeared in sight. Very happy and very tired, the Greyfriars juniors went to bed.

"Good-night, my dear fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I hope you've had a good day."

"First chop, Mauly, my son!"

And Lord Mauleverer turned in. The juniors were not long in getting to sleep. Bob Cherry was the last.

"Jolly place, Blackpool, Wharton!" he remarked.

"Groo!"

"We'll go there again!"

"Yaw-aw!"

"Sleepy, Nugent?"

"Groo!"

"I say, Linley—"

Snore!

And Bob Cherry chuckled, and went to sleep himself. And it was late in the following morning when the juniors awoke, to discuss, with great enjoyment, their Bank Holiday at Blackpool.

THE END.

SPOOFING THE SCHOOL!

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OUR THRILLING NEW SERIAL STORY. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREWFerrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.Prince Ching-Lung, Adventurer, Conjuror and
Ventriloquist.Nathan Gore, Jewel collector,
and multi-millionaire,
Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN."

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and, as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?" The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord.—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and win back my diamond." He travels down to the cave where the Lord of the Deep is hidden, only to find that this wonderful submarine vessel has been destroyed by Nathan Gore. He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and rushes across Germany into Russia in a special train, taking with him a number of the crew of the Lord of the Deep. After many delays they succeed in nearly overhauling Nathan Gore. The rival jewel-collector, however, is on one side of a gorge, which is crossed by a light bridge, and Ferrers Lord and his party are on the other. Before the millionaire can cross, his rival destroys the bridge. Ferrers Lord decides to descend to the water and cross by raft. They are just about to push off when, with a clatter of hoofs, a troop of Russian soldiers rush down the hill and surround the party.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Bluff that Failed—A Terrible Swim.

"Pull back, Ching," said the millionaire, his tones calm and unruffled.

He sprang ashore, beckoning to the men to follow him. The soldiers formed a ring round them. The fiery Barry had his hand on his revolver. Lord folded his arms.

"Your business?"

"Your passports," said the bearded officer.

Lord handed the man his papers. They were couched in the usual style:

"We, Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury, Earl of Salisbury, Viscount Cranbourne, Baron Cecil, a Peer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, a Member of his Britannic Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, etc., request and require, in the name of his Majesty, all those whom it may concern to allow Ferrers Lord, Esq., Rupert Thurston, Esq., Harold Honour, Esq., and their servants, Thomas Prout, Benjamin Maddock, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, and Joseph Holmes (all British subjects), travel-

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday:

ling in Russia, to pass freely, without let or hindrance, and to afford them every protection and assistance of which they may stand in need."

The officer smiled and bowed to Ching-Lung.

"Yours, your Highness?" he said politely.

Ching-Lung was known. Ferrers Lord bit his lip.

"His Highness travels as one of my attendants," he said quickly.

"Your Excellency chooses his attendants from high places."

"That is no business of yours, captain."

"It is my duty to detain even a prince, if he has no passport, Excellency."

Thurston was examining the soldiers critically. They were more like a gang of marauders than anything else.

Suddenly the millionaire took a step forward.

"Ching," he said in English, "get your horse ready to pull off. This is a pretty bluff. They haven't got a Government mark on any of their trappings."

"By Jupiter!" put in Rupert. "I noticed that myself."

"Not sogers?" gasped Barry. "The dirrthy thrumps!"

"SPOOFING THE SCHOOL."

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Library in advance.

"Pick your men," went on Ferrers Lord coolly. "Cover them when I speak."

Then he addressed the man in Russian.

"You intend to arrest his Highness?"

"Arrest, Excellency? Ah, no! My orders are to take him back to Prinsk until he receives his papers."

"And you will do it?"

"I must."

"You are mistaken," said Ferrers Lord. "Now, lads!" Nine revolvers flashed as they were drawn, and every man was covered.

"Ching," said the millionaire, "you understand Russian. Will you kindly but firmly relieve these unwashed rogues of any weapons they may possess? My sham officer, hold up your hands, or I will test whether your ragged uniform is bullet-proof."

There was a volley of curses. They sat with their hands up, and the way the Englishmen grinned did not soothe them. Barry's prisoner made a clutch at his pocket, and got a thudding fist-blow on the ribs that knocked him over like a skittle.

Ching only obtained two revolvers and eight rusty swords. He pitched the swords into the water.

"Friend officer," said Ferrers Lord, "turn out your pockets."

"Curse you, no, you English dog!"

"Prout," said the millionaire, "unhorse this gentleman."

"By force, sir?"

"Any way you like."

Prout grinned as he doubled his great fist.

"Mr. Rooshan," he said, "I'm going to give you a buster! One—two—"

The Russian wisely got down.

"Search him, Prout."

The man made no resistance. Prout handed the millionaire a pocket-book crammed with English banknotes.

Ferrers Lord smiled.

"You may divide these among you lads," he said. "It is what Nathan Gore paid them. Hitch on a couple more horses and get aboard."

The raft was pulled clear, and the horses cut free. Ferrers Lord raised his cap mockingly to the enraged rascals on shore. They roared and cursed like maniacs.

"Good-bye!" said Barry, blowing them kisses. "Good-bye, me purty soger-bhoys! We'll not forget yez whin we're spindin' the money. Adoo, adoo, adoo! We can no longer sthay wid yez. Bedad, dince a bit more, for Oi luv to see ut! Be careful wid yez hair, and don't be afther pullin' it all out boy the roots!"

Ching-Lung fired into the air. At once there was a wild stampede. His Highness lay down under the sail and kicked. Barry snapped down his trigger, and they ran faster, leaving their sorry horses behind them.

"Well, I'm jiggered," said Joe, "if they ain't in a 'urry! They don't seem to like your music, Barry."

"O'ill wager wan gintleman didn't care for the chune Oi played on his best ribs," grinned O'Rooney. "Isn't ut a dhrame of bliss to faal yer fist go kerwallop loike a dhrum? Faith, Oi luv Rooshia! I luv any placo where yer fists don't get sthiff for want o' usin'! Thomas, count out the chips."

They grinned again. There was a hundred pounds to divide between the five of them. The biters had been thoroughly bitten. Barry kissed his share, and then meanly obtained Gan-Waga's in exchange for a jack-knife, worth about half-a-crown. Gan did not understand the value of money, and was quite satisfied with the deal.

The breeze was light, and the clumsy raft moved very slowly as they tugged at the sweeps.

"Our friend Gore is a resourceful man," said Rupert, with a chuckle.

"It is a case spoiled by meanness," said Ferrers Lord, smiling. "I saw through it at once, and knew that they were not soldiers, but some of the scum of Prinsk, masquerading in worn-out uniforms. Had they done what they were paid to do they might have taken us in. Had we gone back to Prinsk, Gore would have shown us his heels. They carried it out too cheaply to bluff us. All the same, the idea was good."

They all laughed.

"What about poor little Ching's passport, sonny?" asked the prince.

"My dear fellow, how could I get one? You are not a British subject, except at heart."

"And yet I own a ripping estate there."

"I could not help it, Ching." And the millionaire's stern eyes softened as he looked at his friend. "The Government could not help me, and the Chinese Ambassador flatly declined. I could not do without you, either."

"I believe I'm going to cause trouble," said Ching-Lung.

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"You will cause Russia trouble," said the millionaire grimly, "if Russia plays any pranks with you."

Barry and Joe relieved Prout and Maddock at the sweeps. When they were tired, Hal Honour and Ferrers Lord took their places. All at once a fresh, strong breeze sprang up, and the sail belled.

"That's more like it," said Ching-Lung. "I was just going to get out and push."

Gan brightened up.

"Come 'long den, Chingy," he said eagerly. "It butterful nice 'nough for swim."

"I'm your man, whaleoil. Get peeled."

They both undressed.

"In with your tuppenny!" cried Ching-Lung.

Gan bent down. Ching-Lung sprang, and, touching the Eskimo's back lightly with his toes, turned a splendid double somersault, and disappeared with hardly a splash.

"Follow de leader, oh!" crowed Gan.

He followed. The water was very muddy. The men looked back. Two heads appeared, and the owners of those heads were rubbing them for all they were worth.

"What's up?" shouted Barry.

"I've knocked the back of my head into my spine!" called Ching-Lung mournfully.

"Ow, ow, ow! I busted my brain-boxes!" wailed Gan-Waga.

"Down with the sail," cried Ferrers Lord, "or we'll be aground!"

His sweep had struck the bottom. A fierce gust struck the sail and tore it away. The raft bumped and grated and came to a standstill. Gan and Ching, still rubbing their heads, came splashing forward. The sweeps failed to move the raft. Taking off boots and stockings, they entered the water, and tugged and pushed until they were breathless. But they could not get the raft afloat.

"Oh, pip!" said Ching-Lung. "Oh, pipitty-pip!"

They looked at each other blankly. The flood-water extended for miles on all sides. In parts the depth was great. The raft was their only hope.

"Try again," said Ferrers Lord cheerily.

They did their best, but failed. Then they began to laugh.

"Ut's all very well to snigger and grin," said Barry darkly, "but what about me and Gan? Gan'll go firrst."

"Me go where?"

"Yez'll be eaten," said Barry. "Yez are the fattest. Shipwrecked mariners allus kills the fattest firrst. They'll ate yez, and thin they'll ate me!"

"Y-y-yo' ch-ch-ch-chaffin'!" stammered Gan, in horror.

"Ax Joe, ax Tom, ax Maddock."

"By hokey, it's true!" assented Prout. "It's always the rule to eat the fattest."

Gan got into the water and swam for it. They howled to him to come back, but he took no heed. His black head grew smaller and smaller, until it vanished.

"You shouldn't talk like that, Barry," said Rupert. "You've frightened him."

"Rats, Ru!" said Ching-Lung. "Don't worry about Gan. What's important is the programme."

It was a dreary outlook. The raft was firmly fixed, and a raft that will carry nine men is a heavy craft. With the exception of Barry, they were all magnificent swimmers. Barry had improved greatly, but he could not compare with such water-rats as Prout, Maddock, and Joe.

"What do you advise?" asked Ferrers Lord. "I will listen to any suggestion."

"Could we split the raft in two?"

Honour answered Rupert's question with a shake of his head. They had no tools.

"We might tear off a plank to hold O'Rooney," he said.

"And swim for it?"

"That is all I can think of."

Ferrers Lord knitted his brows. The water was cold, and a squall was coming up from the west. They could not stay where they were. Luck seemed dead against them.

"Get your plank, then."

The millionaire saw that his banknotes were safe in their oilskin case. A beam was wrenched free.

"Forward, lads!"

They sprang into the water, which barely reached their knees, Barry towing his plank behind him. For almost a mile the water never deepened. All at once Thurston dropped out of sight, and Prout followed him. They had reached the deep at last.

A cold breeze was blowing, and dark clouds had gathered. Rain began to fall.

Barry hooked one arm around the plank and struck out with the other, while Ching-Lung, with the rope between his teeth, took him in tow. Their teeth soon began to chatter. The storm had gathered swiftly, and vivid flashes of lightning streaked the sky, followed by the deafening rattle of thunder.

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Ferrers Lord swam easily beside Honour.

"We shall be a sorry crowd when we strike solid ground," said the engineer.

"I'm beginning to think so, Hal." The millionaire's voice was slightly uneasy. "Had we known this storm was coming up we might have waited."

"Until the water rose and floated us off?"

"Exactly. As you say, we shall be a sorry crowd—drenched, and without boots. I must lend Ching a hand."

He took the rope himself. Joe, Maddock, and Prout swam doggedly, but they were getting chilled.

"A man can't swim in trousers, Tom," growled Maddock.

"They fair drags you down."

"They does, blow 'em!" answered the seaman. "It ain't much too 'ot, neither, is it?"

"Well, it don't make me perspire much," said Ben. "These trousers are lickin' me. I'm goin' to blow a bit."

Prout rolled over on his back, and the lightning flickered on his red face.

"Tired, Tommy?" asked Ching-Lung.

"Trousers, sir," sighed Tom.

"Take 'em off."

"Ut wouldn't be dacint," put in Barry. "Such talk brings the blush to me maiden cheek."

"I'll bring the blush to yer maiden nose in a minute!" snapped Prout, who was cold, weary, and irritable. "It's all very nice for you, Irish, travellin' on yer blessed private yacht, wi' a tug to haul yer along. Try some work, and see how you likes it. Try swimmin' for a bit."

"Cheer up! Cheer up!" laughed Ching-Lung. "Where's your leg, Thomas? Hold still, there, and I'll jolly soon turn your long kicksies into bathing-drawers. I won't cut you."

Ching took out a pair of scissors and cut Prout's trousers round eight inches above the knee. He pulled off the useless legs, and Prout felt the relief and lightness immediately.

"Better?"

"A sight, sir. I can get along now."

Maddock, Joe, and Barry went under the same operation. Intervals of blue, glaring light were followed by intervals of ebony darkness. The engineer found bottom, and they rested almost breast-deep in water.

They were beginning to lose heart. Their hands and feet were like lumps of ice. At every flash they strained their eyes in vain for a glimpse of the shore.

"Hullo!" cried Ching-Lung. "What's that yonder?"

He began to swim. A flash showed him that the object was a post. Something caught his foot and dragged him down.

"A fence, by Jingo!" he shouted. "Come along!"

The upper rail of the submerged fence was only a few inches under water. They perched themselves on it like a row of penguins, the rain lashing their backs. The millionaire passed his flask from hand to hand. No one spoke for a long time. They shivered miserably.

"Iv'ry cloud has a silver loinin'," said Barry wearily at last.

"How's that?" asked Ching-Lung.

"Bedad," sighed Barry, "av we hadn't been wet this rain wud have soaked us roight to the skin. Ut doesn't matter now. Iv'ry cloud has a silver loinin', Oi begs to repate."

"I wish my shirt had a waterproof linin'," moaned the sad voice of Maddock.

"And I wish I'd got a smoke," sighed the carpenter.

Ferrers Lord looked at his watch, which no immersion could injure.

"It seems madness to start the lads swimming again, Hal," he muttered, "and yet they cannot stay here all night. I will push on and try to get help."

"Let me go?"

"No; I will go myself."

"A boat!" cried Ching-Lung. "Hurrah, a boat! Listen, and then yell!"

Surely they heard the sound of oars—the sweetest music they had ever listened to?

"Boat, ahoy!" roared Thurston.

"Ahoy, ahoy, ahoy!" shouted Prout, Maddock, and Joe. A shout answered them.

"Oy, 'oy, 'oy, 'oy! Ya-ho-hoo-oo-oo!"

"That's Gan's warble," said Ching-Lung delightedly.

"Ahoy, porpoise! Ahoy, lard and tallow! Pip-pip!"

"Oy, Chingy! 'oy, puppy-soup! 'oy, pigtail!"

"Be all the powers!" said Barry. "Oi must place the kiss of pace on that Eskimoo's fat mug and wroite a poem in his honour! Oi'll call ut 'Saved From the Say; or, Did They Get Their Tootsies Wet?' Coo-ee, Gan! More power to yer ilbow, me bouncin' bhoys! Come along wid yez, and be hugged!"

"I comin'."

"Where are yez? 'Ow! Murther! Mo loif's lift me!"

A splash followed Barry's yell. There had not been a flash for some time, and the darkness was so intense that it was impossible to see the boat. Barry found it, or it found Barry. The nose struck him in the small of the

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back, and Barry dived below. He did not come up actually smiling. A lantern gleamed on the grinning features of Gan-Waga.

"You giddy Trojan!" said Ching-Lung. "Your hideous old dial is good to see! Where did you get the boat?"

"Me pinch him, Chingy!" chuckled the son of the North. "I go swim-swam long ways. Den I spotees de boat, wid an old whiskery chap in um. De ole chap fishin' catches—"

"Catchin' fishes, idiot!"

"Yep, fatchin' kitches, Chingy. Me stick my 'ead up and say: 'Ah-hoo! Tchak-kik-kik! Woosh!' jes likes dat. Olo whiskers holler like mad, and—hoo, hoo, hoo!—he flops in de water—ha, ha!—and frog away—hoo, hoo!—and den I collar de boats. Wah, hah, hah, hah!"

"You'll swaller the boat if you don't shut your face, shark mouth," said Prout. "Close it, afore yer head breaks off at the hinges. Chuck barkin', can't you?"

"Dere some bread and cheeses and fishes aboard," grinned Gan; "and bald-headed Tommy not gete none."

"Cheese did yez say?" said Barry eagerly. "Gan, this heart is thoine alone. Lit me place the kiss of pace upon your honeyed lips, and press yer fat but manly form to this luvvin buzzum. And thin let me put me molars into that cheese, for, be the ghost of Joolius Sneezer, Oi'm as holler under me waistcoat as an impty b'iler! Troth, Oi'll dedicate me book of poems to yez in the follerin' musical manner:

"To Gan,
The small fat man,
Oi dedicate this buk.
For luk,
Whin Oi thought Oi'd freeze,
The swate ould goat
Brought me some cheese,
In a stolen boat.
But Oi'd faal more frisky
Av the bhoys had brought whisky.
Thin, blubber and gristle,
Oi'd have wet me whistle!"
(Signed) BARRY O'ROONEY."

Ferrers Lord, Thurston, and Hal Honour were already in the boat. Barry's original verses evoked a general laugh. The boat was well provisioned. The owner of the craft had made a good haul of barbel. Barbel is not a toothsome fish, but they did not shy at it when they discovered an oil-stove. Joe cleaned a couple and put them on to boil. In the light of the lantern the bare legs of Prout, Maddock, Joe, and Barry shone white. They found a tin of tea, and Ben took the oars. Barry gnawed a black loaf ravenously.

The storm-centre was moving away to the east. The rain stopped, and the moon rose dimly through the clouds.

"How's the barbel?" asked Thurston anxiously.

"Gettin' along prime, sir," said the cook.

"Can't we manage the tea, somehow, without waiting for the fish? I'm parched!"

Ching-Lung was equal to the emergency. Finding a couple of empty tins, he cut some of the barbed wire from the fence and suspended the tins clear of the floor. Gan and Prout were set to cut dry chips from the locker. The fire was built in the first tin; the second, filled with water, was hung over it; and when the water began to boil the prince threw in a handful of tea.

The bad light rather interfered with the culinary operations, and the smoke was unpleasant. It was not cheerful to squat in wet clothes on damp boards. They had seldom had more miserable experience.

"How are we goin' to dhrink the tay?" inquired O'Rooney.

"Wid our mouthars, Irish," said Gan.

"D'yez think Oi'd disgrace meself, boy, dhrinkin' afther a woid Eskimo, who's nixt brother to a howlin', long-whiskered walrus? 'Arrah! Oi'd doie of pizen on the chist!"

"On de tay-chist, hunk?" grinned Gan.

"Nobody wants to make you drink," said Ching-Lung. "Boys, you'll be glad to hear Barry doesn't like tea."

"Aisy, now, aisy," answered the Irishman hastily. "Ut's afther chaffin' a bit Oi was. Tay, is ut? Bedad, av Oi have a wakeness at all, at all, ut's for that same tay! Oi luv ut! Ut's a fam'ly failin'. Me ould grandmother became a widdy through ut and for luv of ut. Yez see, me ould grandfather did a bit in the smugglin' loine; and wan noight he was comin' home, wid a kig of brandy under aich arm and a chist of tay under the other, whin—"

"How many arms had your grandfather got, Barry?" asked the voice of Hal Honour.

"Oi cudn't be sure, sor," said Barry unblushingly. "Havin' been a sojer in his youth, yez know, he was sartinly an army man. Will, wan noight, as Oi was tellin' yez, he—"

"Stow it, you long-winded gas-bag!" growled Benjamin

Maddock. "Muzzle it, Joe, afore it wears all its teeth out!"

"Will, wan noight," went on Barry, "he was comin' home to the castle—"

"A castle out o' a set o' chessmen," said Prout scathingly. "Shut up, and stow it away! Give him a drink."

The tea was cool enough. Prout had the place of honour and the first drink.

"What's it like, Tommy?"

"Not bad," said the steersman, somewhat doubtfully. "I've tasted better. It's a bit high flavoured."

He passed the tin to Joe. Joe did not drink much. He murmured something about not being very thirsty, and the tin went to Gan-Waga.

"Golly!" said Gan, smacking his lips, "dat butterful enough. It lubly, surlicious! Try him, Chingy."

The prince's face was a study. He pressed his hand to his stomach and paled. That tea had a curious flavour.

"Not like him, Chingy?"

"Oh—er—yes, yes, certainly, Gan. It's—yes, it's splendid! Here you are, Ben."

Ben, the tough old bo'sun, did not worry about the flavour. He put away a pint of the liquid, and Barry's turn came.

"Here's luck, bhoys! May yer shadders niver grow less, and yer whiskers niver grow grey. Misther Thurston, may Oi have the joy of givin' yez a nip firrst from the festive bowl."

"Thanks; I'll wait for the second brew."

"Misther Honour, then?"

"I'll wait, Barry," answered the engineer.

The darkness hid Ching-Lung's look of horror and loathing. His inside was turning round and round. With glassy eyes, he stared at the dark form of Barry. Barry drunk deep, and the tin was tilted higher and higher. A warm, soft object glided down, and touched the Irishman's nose.

"Bedad," he said, "the faylaver is all of a lump at the bottom. Oi fancy— Ow, horror! Oh, murther! Ghosts and goblins! Fetch a stummick pump! Oi'm pizenod to bits!"

"What is it?" gasped the tea-drinkers, in shaken voices.

"A frog!" howled Barry. "A biled frog! Bring a carrt-load of doethors, for the sake of Hiven! Oi'm pizenod in cowlid blud! Ow, marcy, marcy, marcy!"

Ching-Lung flopped down with a hollow groan of disgust. Joe, Prout, and Maddock turned a rich pea-green hue, and pressed their hands over their waistcoats, as they thought of the hideous stew they had imbibed. The frog must have been scooped up with the water. The laughter of Rupert and Hal Honour added to their misery. Gan did not object to frogs even as a flavouring in tea, and he roared again.

There were five very sick men on board the boat, and Ching-Lung was the sickest of them all. He did not want any of the barbel. He sat and groaned, but the others, being of coarser mould, soon got over the episode, and made an onslaught on the fish.

"Allow me to offer yer 'ighness a bit of the wing rib," said Joe, with a wink.

"Shut up! Go away!"

"Let him alone," said Barry; "let him alone. He'll only croak at yez. People who eat frogs always croak!"

"Confound you! Let it rest!" roared Ching-Lung. "Let it rest, can't you, you pigs?"

"Oi thried that with my share," said Barry, "but rist ut wudn't! How can yez ixpiet frogs to rist whin ut's their nater to jump? Bedad, ut was a fat 'un. Did yez see ut, Ben?"

"I did," groaned Ben. "Its stomach was all yeller, wi' pink spots!"

"It had grand feet," put in Prout—"bootiful feet, and big brown eyes!"

"And there was a smile on its face even after bein' boiled!" added Joe.

"Shut your mouths, or I'll murder some of you!" yelled the wretched Ching-Lung.

"Is the gentleman in pain?" said Barry sweetly.

The millionaire was at the oars. The stars shone out over the flood-water, and a grey line of shore showed dimly ahead. Refreshed by his meal, and elated by the sorrows of Ching-Lung, Barry sang an Irish ditty. The moonlight grew brighter and clearer. It was very cold, and the men had to keep chafing their legs and feet.

"How close did you get to land, Gan?" asked Ferrers Lord.

"Half a mile," said Gan-Waga.

"Did you see a house?"

"No, sah; see lot of treeses, and some smokes behind um! Not waits to looks much! I sease de ole mans flop outer de boats and come to find de boysses!"

The oars dipped steadily. Not a gleam of light appeared.

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from the shore. At last the boat touched the grassy bank. They could hear the cries of countless wildfowl.

"Hurroo!" said Barry. "Agin Oi place me noble feet on Terry Firmy. He's an Orrish gint, that same Terry Firmy, and, bedad, he gives yez an Orrish welcome. Oi will now do a sprint on his face, just to resthore the circulation to me numbed and chilly limbs. Oi'll race any man for tuppence!"

"I'll take you!" said Joe.

They sprinted up and down till a warm glow crept over them. Beyond the stretch of grass was a belt of trees. There was no sign of a human dwelling.

"I hardly like going through the wood without boots," said the millionaire. "Some of us will get lamed, I fear."

"Let us make sandals," said Hal Honour. "Bring the lantern here."

He produced his big knife. It contained a stout saw and a bradawl. The engineer cut one of the floorboards into lengths. With the wood and some tarpaulin he made a pair of rough sandals, and fastened them to his ankles. They were very clumsy, but they were good enough to protect the soles of his feet from stones and thorns.

"Bravo, Hal!" said Rupert.

"Ivry man his own shoemaker," grinned Barry. "Fut-gear made to measure whoile yez waits, and, bedad, av the leather rots we'll give yez a new lot for nothin'. Small foives for me, plaze, Misther Honour, and small noinety-foives for Prout, Maddock, and the other gints. Oi'll not have a pair that squeaks. Av yez have got any elastic-soides or forty-button wans, Oi prefer thim to the lace-ups. Oi always did take a proide in me butes. Whin Oi was a small bhoiv with brougnt blue oies and flaxin hair, whin— Oh, thim happy, happy days! Oh, oh, ho!"

Barry burst into tears at the recollection, and wept on Gan's neck.

"Was they so 'appys?" asked the sympathetic Gan.

"We had roice-pudden iv'ry birthday," sobbed Barry, "and an egg for tea at Christmas!"

They were quickly fitted with their makeshift sandals. Ferrers Lord placed a sum of money in the locker—a sum that would pay the owner of the boat ten times over. Taking the lantern, he made for the wood. It was difficult to walk on the stiff boards, and stumbles were frequent. Naturally, Ching-Lung was more expert than anyone else.

"Smoke ahead," said Hal Honour.

"I have noticed it," answered Ferrers Lord. "Keep back a moment."






Giving the lantern to Rupert, he went on alone. He heard a murmur of voices. Cautiously parting the branches, he peered forward. A fire was blazing in a clearing, and round it sat half a dozen ragged, dark-faced, black-haired men. A few rabbits were roasting on spits.

"Gipsies!" muttered the millionaire.

It was a blackguard-looking gang, but a glance told him that they were true gipsies, and belonged to the mysterious race found wandering throughout all parts of Europe. They wore silver rings in their ears and on their dirty hands, and were chattering in the Romany tongue as they smoked. Ferrers Lord understood a good deal of their queer language. He stepped boldly into the circle of light.

"A stranger asks for Romany hospitality," he said. "He has sat by their fires before in many lands, and Tom Lee, who is their king in England, has given him the sign."

(To be continued next week.)

**It is a fine thing to have a Friend in one of
Great Britain's Colonies**     

Make Use of "The Gem" Library's

**FREE
CORRESPONDENCE
EXCHANGE.**

A long list of Colonial readers wishing to exchange letters and postcards appears in this Thursday's issue of "The Gem" Library, 1d.

PLEASE GIVE THIS SPECIAL NUMBER OF "THE MAGNET" TO A NON-READER!

My Readers' Page.



**OUR GRAND NEW
WEEKLY FEATURE
ON PAGE 28 AND
PAGES III. AND IV.
OF THE COVER.
SHOW YOUR FRIENDS
THIS COPY.**

NEXT WEEK'S STORY. "SPOOFING THE SCHOOL"

is the title of our long, complete tale of Greyfriars for next week, and my readers may look forward to something extra-good from the magic pen of Frank Richards, who has made most of the opportunities afforded him by a subject which is full of humorous possibilities. I will not spoil a fine surprise for my chums by letting them into the secret of next Tuesday's splendid story now; but I cannot resist revealing the fact that the enterprising junior who sets himself the task of

"SPOOFING THE SCHOOL"

is none other than our bold young friend, Frank Nugent.

A HEADMASTER'S APPROVAL.

A chum of mine, in Natal, South Africa, writes me an interesting and enthusiastic letter, in which he pleads for the inclusion of a boy from his province amongst the famous chums of St. Jim's or Greyfriars. Incidentally, I may say that I seldom get a letter from any part of the world in which a similar request is not made! But my Natal reader need not despair; it is quite possible that a South African may appear either in "The Magnet," or "The Gem," before long. After making his modest request, my Natalian chum goes on to say something that inspires me with peculiar interest and gratification, which I am sure many thousands of my chums will share.

"This is something to show you that your two papers are well thought of out here," writes my South African correspondent. "At St. C— College, a public school in the city, which I attended about two years ago, all books that were brought into the school had to be first examined by the Head to see that there were any 'blood and thunder' about them. 'The Gem,' and its companion paper, 'The Magnet,' were passed by him as readable, and a number of boarders started reading them, including myself, and have been reading them ever since. I have a copy of 'The Miniature Magnet.' All those I am finished with are passed on. I see Martin Clifford and Frank Richards were both boys once, judging by the yarns they write. Well, good luck to your two ripping papers, from
A COLONIAL READER (Rider F.O.)."

Much obliged, "Rider F.O." Everyone knows what a critical body of men headmasters are, as, indeed, they have to be, from the responsible position they hold; and no book would have a chance of being passed by the headmaster of a public school as being fit and proper reading for the pupils under his charge unless it conformed in every respect to the highest standard. This "The Magnet" and "The Gem" Libraries do, and always have done, and, I hope, always will do.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

A. A. W. (Dublin).—Thank you for your postcard. There has not been an issue of "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Library under the title of "Deserted by the School." One, however, which you might have mistaken for it, and which was entitled "Despised by the School," was on sale the first week in June, and is still obtainable. If you order through a newsagent you should be able to get it.

"A Magnetite" (Cleckheaton).—If you advertise in a daily paper—for preference the one your relation used to read—there is a chance that he will see the advertisement and write to you. Another and surer way would be to advertise in an Australian paper. If you send your advertisement to J. Willing, Junr., Ltd., advertising agents, of 125, Strand, London, with a note stating in which paper you wish to have it inserted, they will see that it goes through for you for a small fee.

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C. H. Turner (Yorks.).—A soft piece of indiarubber, applied gently, will remove the dirt from cigarette pictures. It will not, of course, remove stains, and will not clean it effectually if the card is at all cracked, but in these cases the cards are not worth keeping, as it is very easy to obtain duplicates.

"Original Reader" (Brondesbury, N.W.).—Thank you for your letter and the two suggestions it contained, which latter I will bear in mind.

HOW TO JOIN THE MERCHANT SERVICE.

Of all careers to which boys seem to have a decided leaning, the sea must certainly be placed at the top of the tree. Very few boys pass through their teens without feeling within them the strong longing to "go for a sailor," and no matter how much they may be advised to the contrary, no matter how many people tell them to think of some other career to follow, they are persuaded in their own minds that the sea is the one and only possible calling for them to enter.

And there is no reason for parents to be surprised when their lads show this decided longing for the sea. It is only natural that they should do so. The average British lad has it in his bones, so to speak, and no matter how much he tries to fight against it, the feeling will remain in him. Sometimes, after a year or so, the craving passes off, and the lad settles down to some trade ashore, and thinks no more of the sea. At other times the desire grows stronger and stronger as the days roll by, until nothing will suit the lad but that he must go right off to the coast and embark aboard a vessel.

And it is here that a lad frequently makes a mistake. Instead of confiding in his parents or guardians, instead of telling them of his great desire, instead of getting their advice on the matter, he runs away from home, goes to the coast, and without any thought gets aboard the very first ship he can. Then his troubles begin, and he wishes he had stopped at home. He finds that the sea is not quite what it is cracked up to be, and he realises that his friends at home are longing and mourning for him, that they miss him as much as he misses them, and that he has caused a lot of misery to himself and all his relations by his foolish course of action.

Therefore, I say to my boys, do not run away to sea. If you do, you will certainly regret it. When you get to a seaport there are always plenty of unscrupulous men about who will offer to find you a ship on the payment of a certain sum, and once in their hands you will find it very difficult to get out of them. They will put you aboard a ship with a very doubtful reputation, and you will speedily wish yourself back again at home.

Now, boys, if you have made up your minds to enter the merchant service, confide in your parents; don't run away from home. Tell them of your desire, and talk the matter over with them. Then get your mother or father to take you to the office of the nearest superintendent of the Mercantile Marine, and this gentleman will see that you have a ship found for you, provided you can pass the various examinations through which he will put you. The most important of these latter, perhaps, is the eyesight test. There will be nothing to pay for the advice of the superintendent, for he is there for the very purpose of advising lads who want to go to sea, and your parent being with you, he will the better be able to deal with your case.

Although the advice the superintendent gives you will be free, yet the eyesight test will not be applied unless the sum of one shilling is paid, when a proper certificate will be issued. This will be very useful later on, for shipowners generally require the applicant for a post to produce a certificate stating that his eyesight is satisfactory before they think of entertaining his application.

Other valuable qualifications are pluck, size, and endurance, although so long as a lad is wiry, the matter of size may be left out of consideration.

THE EDITOR.

PLEASE GIVE THIS SPECIAL NUMBER OF "THE MAGNET" TO A NON-READER!

OUR SPLENDID NEW 3-PAGE FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

THE BUNSEY BOYS ACT THE SILLY GOAT!



1. Ferdy and Georgie, the Bunsey Boys, ought to have been in bed and wide asleep. Instead, they were very wide the other way, and hauled in old William, the goat, by his spikes from his comfortable doss on some old iron in the backyard.



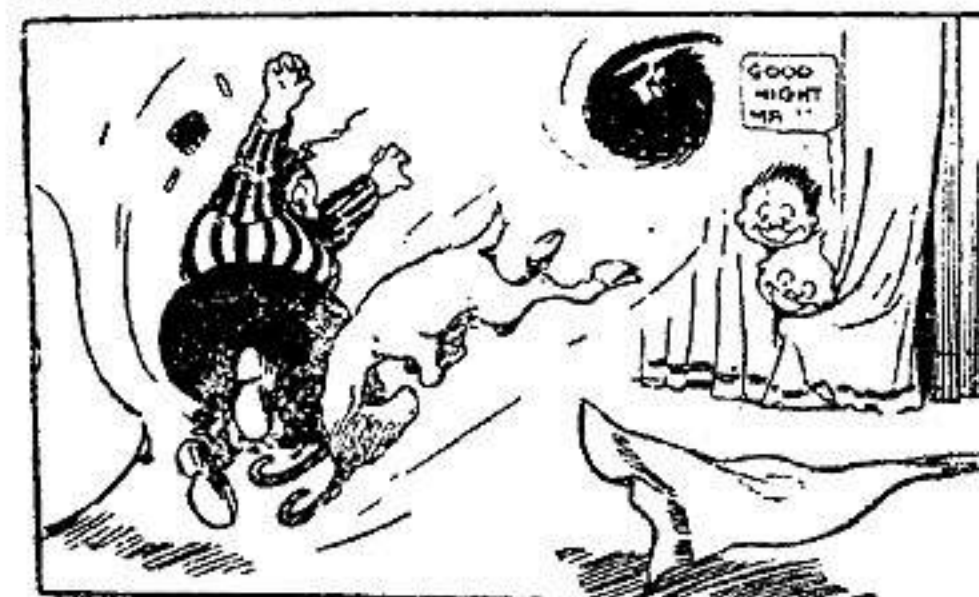
2. They stowed him away under the mat. He didn't mind, as he'd taken a fancy to the pattern on the new carpet. It reminded him of the flower-beds. It took a bit of doing to make him fit properly, but ma was busy reading "The Gem" Library.



3. So she didn't see a sound till little Ferdy and Georgie started saucing her. Now, ma won't stand being sauced—remember that! She gets that agranoyed. Out of her easy-chair she bounced—



4. And, of course, she guessed first time that those boys of hers were under the mat. Shall we say more, friends, than that she guessed wrong.



5. And in less than a tick knew it, for William had got past such childish things as whackings, and wouldn't have 'em at any price. They were no use to him. He couldn't eat 'em.



6. It was a pity, of course, that ma piped those two little nobbs poked through the art-muslin, for little Ferdy and Georgie had only got their pretty little pyjamas on. Oh, why weren't they made of cast iron!

SMART LAD.



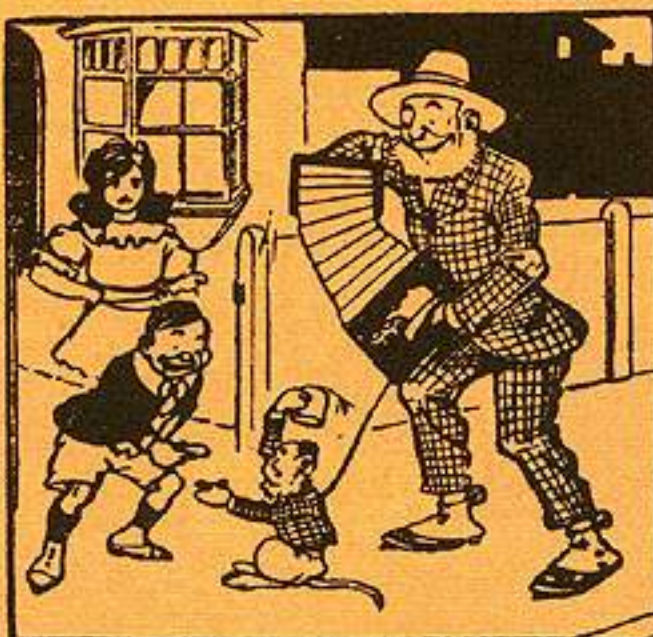
Sport: "How would you tell a young partridge from an old one?"

Boy: "By the teeth."

The Sport: "Great Scott! A partridge hasn't any teeth!"

Boy: "No; but I've got some!"

SAW A FAMILY LIKENESS.



Kind-hearted Little Girl: "Oh, Reggie, don't give it to him! Give it to his father."

THEN HE MOVED UP.



She: "I wish this was a theatre."

He (very bashful): "Er—er—how—er—fancy. Why?"

She: "Because the attendant would come and say sit a little closer, please."

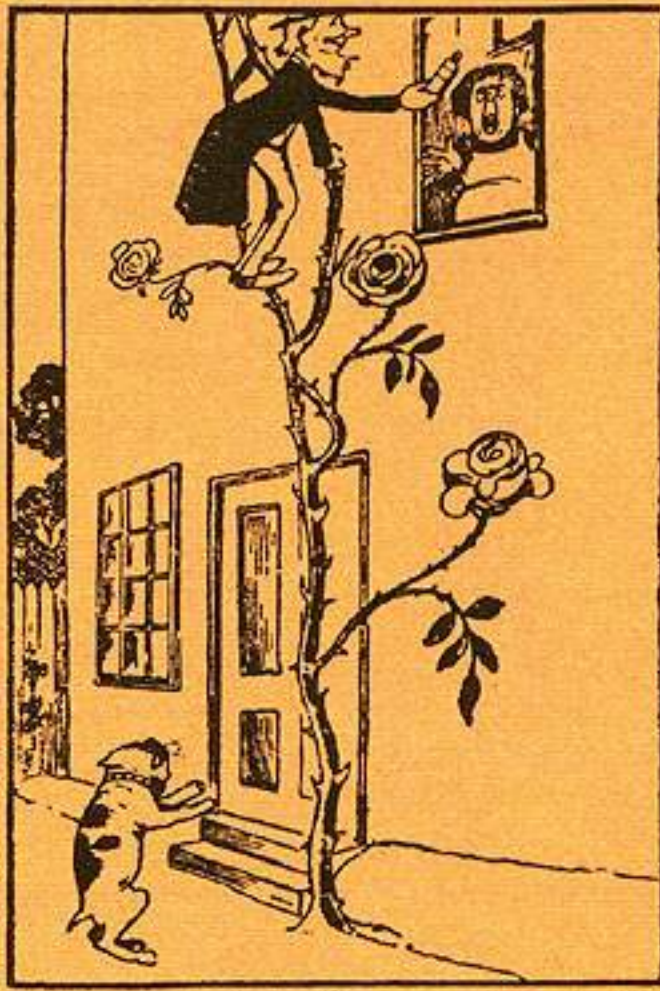
THEN SHE BOUGHT A DOZEN BOTTLES!



1. "Allow me, madam, to sell you one of my wonderful bottles of plant reviver. All you have to do is—" "Get away, man, or I'll set the dog on you."



2. Thereupon the good lady retired to an upper apartment. Meanwhile, Lawrence was busy. "H-s-s-s! Tiger! Seize him!" cried the good lady.



3. But before Tiger could get his molars into working trim the fertiliser was so busy that Lawrence was up at the second storey.

MISUNDERSTOOD.



Excited Italian (in heated argument concerning musicians): "Italy is turning out the most musicians, and has always turned out the most."

German: "Dot vos right, and gan you plame dem?"

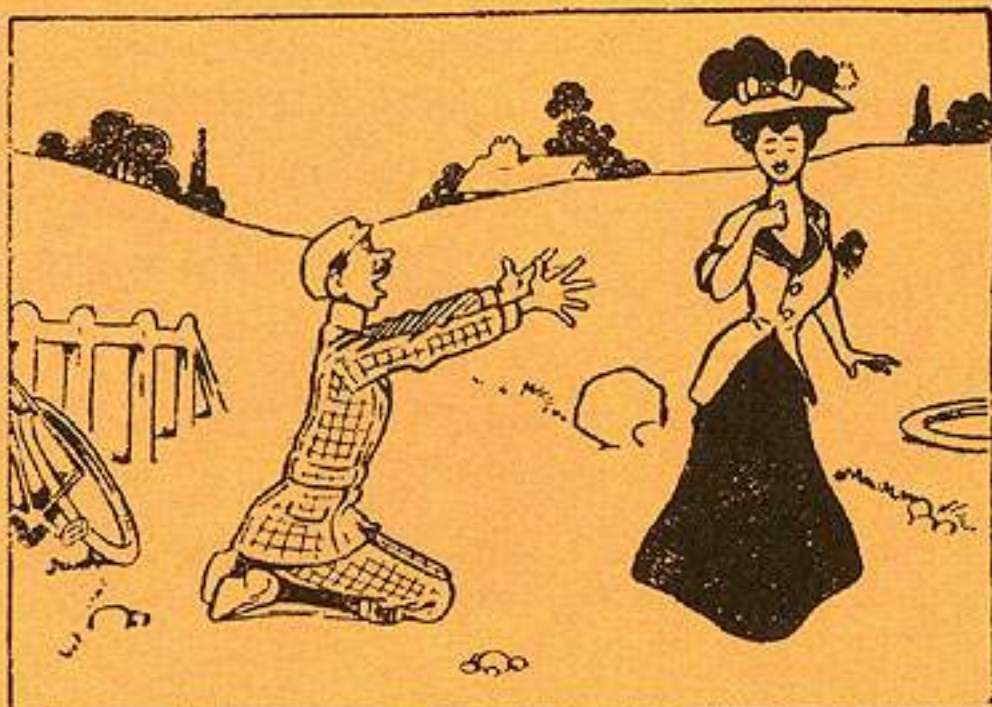
A FUNNY "BULL."



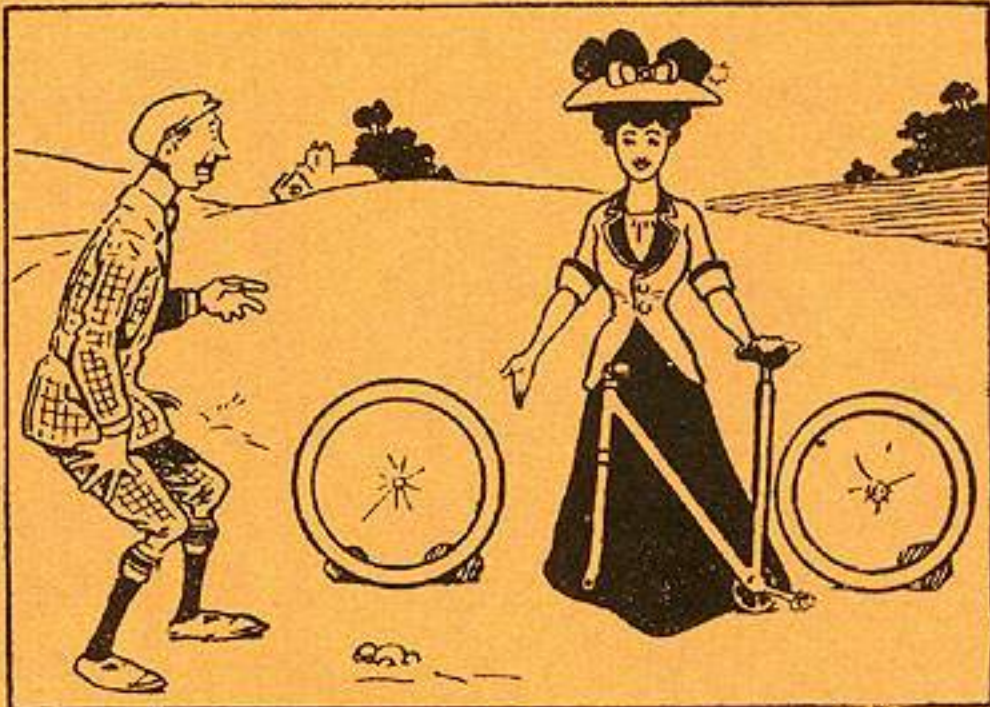
Schoolmaster (during lesson on natural history): "Tommy, what animal supplies you with boots, shoes, and meat to eat?"

Tommy: "Father."

CAST A SPELL OVER HIM!



1. Tompkins thought it a fine opportunity to pop the question when he saw the fair Miss Moneybags stranded by the road-side with a broken bicycle. "Wilt thou be mine?" he cooed.



2. But the fair charmer answered not. She just picked up the frame and wheels, and, placing them in the above position, plainly showed Tompkins "O NO" was her answer. That did it.

"BAI JOVE!"



Algy: "Lot of what, I wondah?"

NOTHING TO COMPLAIN OF.



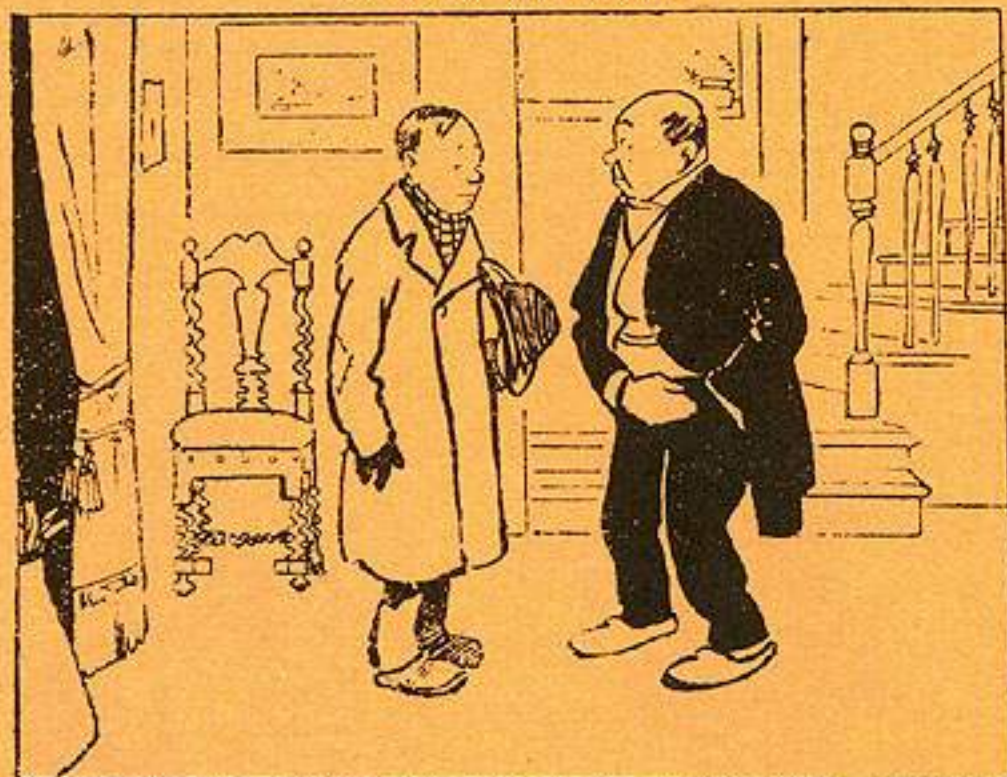
Colonel Hotstuff: "Aren't you aware that Wellington, when on a campaign, ate the rations of a common soldier?"
Private Newlyjoined: "Then what did the common soldier get—nothink?"

SO LOUD.



Jimmie (in loud voice): "Speak louder, Bill. I can't hear 'cos of that feller's weskit."

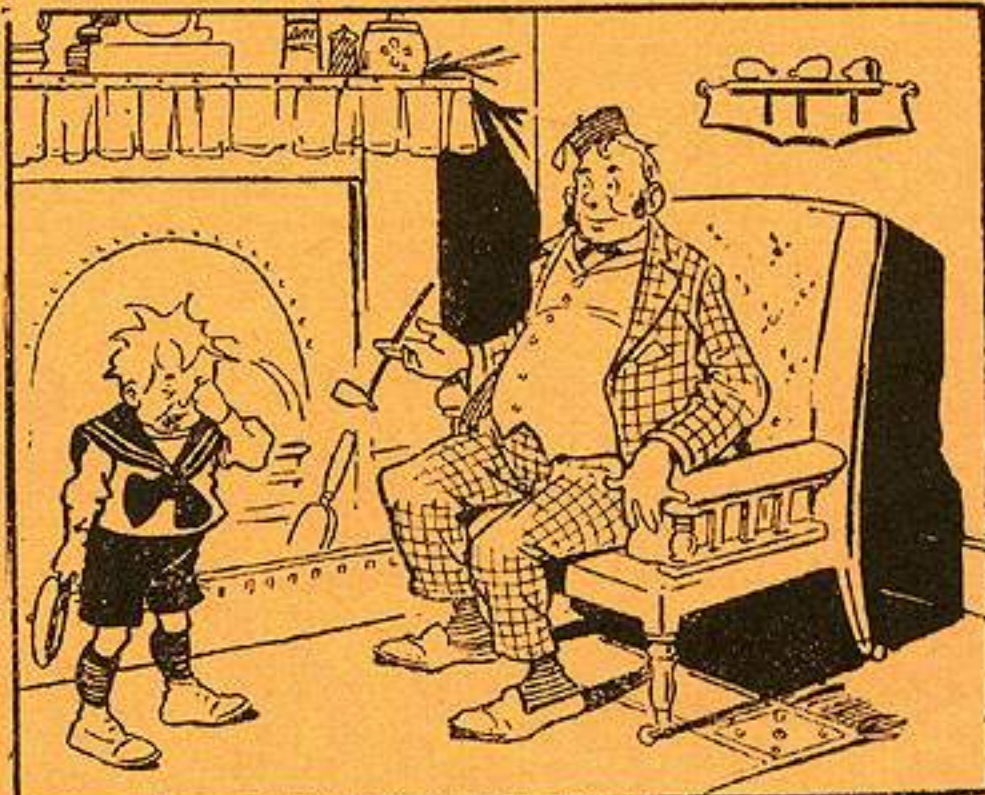
WANTED REVENGE!



"Give your master my compliments, and say I'm very much obliged to him."

"And if he asks me wot you give me for meself, wot shall I say?"

HE KNEW TOO MUCH.



Uncle: "What are you crying for, George?"

George: "Teacher caned me because I was the only one—boo hoo—able to answer a question to-day."

Uncle (indignantly): "This is scandalous, my poor boy! What was the question?"

George (between sobs): "Who put the bent pin in teacher's chair?"