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Vol. 6.

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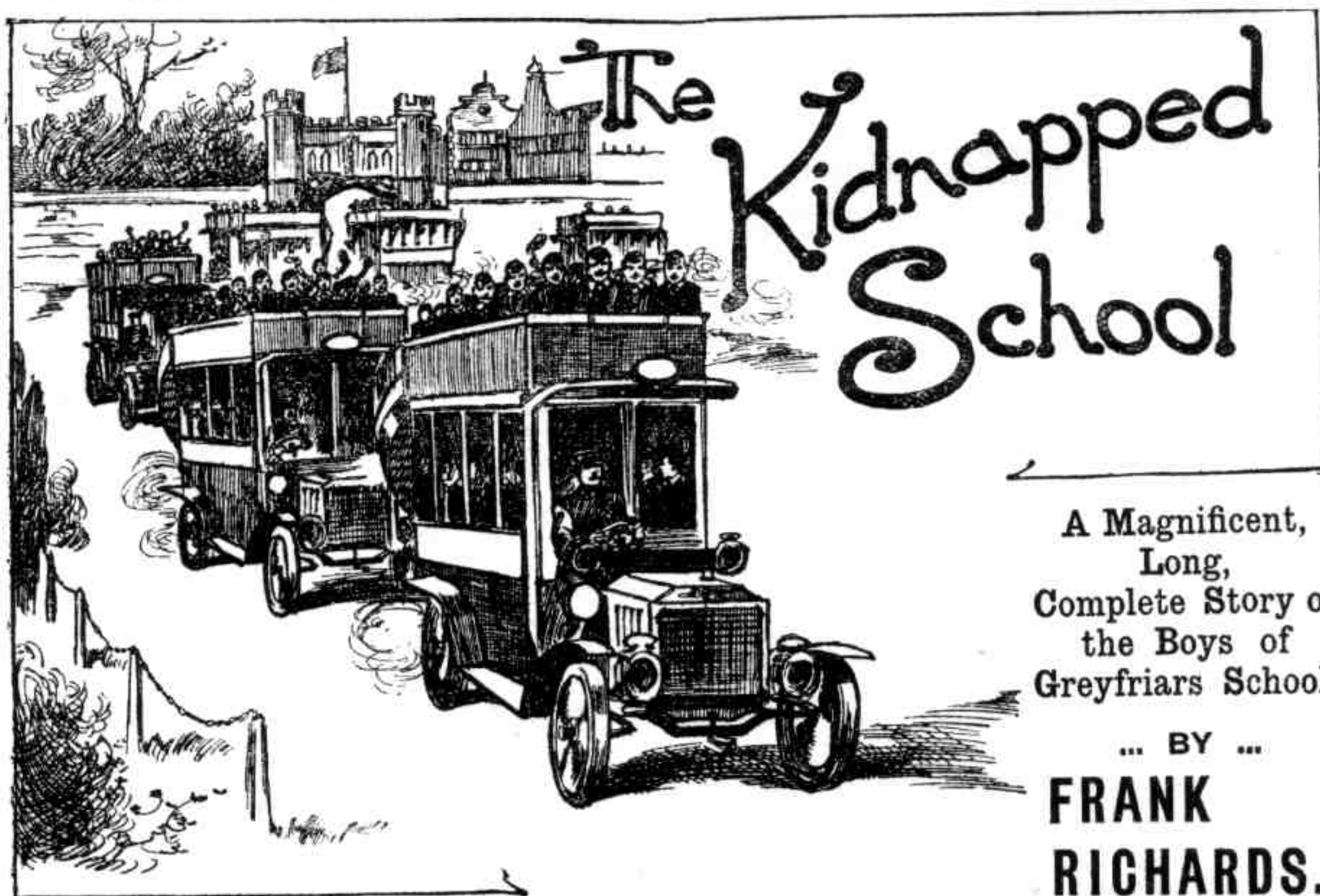
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A Magnificent,
Long,
Complete Story of
the Boys of
Greyfriars School.

... BY ...
**FRANK
RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Carried Unanimously.

"MAULEVERER!"

"Mauly!"

"Where is Mauleverer?"

About fifty voices were asking the question, in the lecture-hall at Greyfriars, and asking it in indignant tones. The lecture-hall was crowded.

As a rule, the fellows did not meet there unless there was a lecture to be listened to, or an address from the Head, for a prize-distribution, or something of that sort. But there was evidently nothing of that sort on now. The meeting was not at all orderly, the fellows lounged about as they liked, and they all talked at once.

All the lower Forms were mingled there, the Remove and the Upper Fourth being in great force, as well as the Third and the Shell. There were fags of the Second, and "babes" of the First. There were several Fifth-Formers, and one or two of the Sixth. The big clock indicated

the hour of six, and many eyes were glancing at the clock. And every now and then came the indignant inquiry:

"Where's Mauly?"

"Where's that ass, Mauleverer?"

Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy millionaire, and the dandy of the Remove, was one of the juniors who were not present. And, to judge by the remarks of the meeting, he was very badly wanted there.

The Famous Four of the Remove—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull—stood in a group together, chatting. They were discussing the meeting, and why it had been called. They did not know—nobody in the lecture-hall knew, so far. All they knew was that Lord Mauleverer of the Remove had put a notice on the board calling the meeting, and that they had come.

The next day was to be a whole holiday, and the Greyfriars fellows had been making many plans for spending that day to the best advantage. Lord Mauleverer's notice on the

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the
**GRAND SCHOOL
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board had, therefore, attracted a great deal of notice. Lord Mauleverer was the only titled fellow at Greyfriars, and he was a millionaire, and had an unlimited allowance of pocket-money—very much more than even Vernon-Smith, who was the son of a millionaire. If Lord Mauleverer had some scheme on for spending the whole holiday in a particularly gorgeous manner, there were very few fellows who were not willing to back him up; and the notice he had put on the board hinted as much.

For it ran:

"All chaps who would like to have a big outing to-morrow are requested to turn up in the lecture-hall at six o'clock.—
"MAULEVERER."

It was discovered that Lord Mauleverer had obtained permission from the Head to hold a meeting in the lecture-hall. But that was all that was known. What he had to say to the meeting, and whether he was going to ask a crowd of fellows to join him in some extra special excursion, might be surmised, but could not be known for certain.

And now it was past six, and the meeting was there—a very numerous meeting—but Lord Mauleverer was not.

Fellows were coming in every minute, and anxious glances were turned upon the new-comers as they crowded in; but the schoolboy earl was not among them.

And when the clock indicated a quarter-past six the indignation of the meeting was very great. In fact, it seemed to be transforming itself into an indignation meeting.

"Where is the silly ass?" growled Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove. "He ought to be bumped for keeping us waiting like this."

"Perhaps his watch has stopped," suggested Nugent.

"Oh, rats!"

"More likely he's forgotten about putting the notice up, and forgotten all about the meeting," grunted Bob Cherry. "You know what a blessed slacker he is."

Some of the fags were beginning to make a loud uproar to testify their impatience, somewhat like a theatre audience when the curtain does not go up to time. Paget and Tubb and Bolsover minor, of the Third, were stamping on the floor in unison, with great effect. Nugent minor, of the Second Form, was bumping an empty inkpot on a chair. Micky Desmond was buzzing through a comb and paper. The uproar in the room was growing in volume every moment. And still the schoolboy millionaire came not.

"Mauleverer!"

"Where's Mauleverer?"

"Where is the silly ass?"

"Twenty-past six!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I'm going to wait for him any longer! Time we went and had tea."

"Yes, rather!"

"Let's go and have a look for him," said Harry Wharton. "If he's forgotten the meeting, we'll carry him here, and bump him all the way."

"Hurrah!"

Harry Wharton & Co. hurried out of the room, leaving the hall in a buzz behind them. They ascended the stairs, and hurried along the Remove passage to Lord Mauleverer's study.

The Remove passage was deserted; all the fellows were downstairs in the Rag.

Bob Cherry opened Mauleverer's door by the simple process of jamming his boot against it. The door flew open with violence.

The Famous Four stalked in.

An elegant youth was lying upon a luxurious sofa by the study window. He had a book in his hand, but he was not reading. He had fallen asleep.

He opened one eye as the door crashed open, and then closed it again.

Bob Cherry gave a roar.

"Mauly!"

Lord Mauleverer opened the other eye.

"Begad!" he murmured. "Don't make a row! I'm having a little doze."

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Slacker!"

"What about the meeting?"

Lord Mauleverer opened both eyes.

"The—the meeting!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, ass!"

"Yes, slacker!"

"It's twenty-past six, and the fellows are all there!" roared Johnny Bull. "What do you mean by it, hey?"

"Begad!" Lord Mauleverer sat upright on the sofa, looking quite dismayed. "Begad, you know, I forgot all about it!"

"Ass! Fathead!"

"You see, my dear fellows—"

"You awful slacker!" roared Bob Cherry. "You got us all to the meeting, and then forgot all about it. What do you mean by it?"

"I'm awfully sorry," said Lord Mauleverer—"I am, really! You see, I'm tired. I often get tired. The weather's really too warm, you know. Look here, run back and tell the fellows I'll be along in ten minutes or so, when I've had a little rest."

The juniors gazed at Lord Mauleverer in stony silence for some seconds.

Then they made a sudden rush at him and whipped him off the sofa, to the accompaniment of a wild yell from his lordship.

They whipped up the noble earl in a strong grasp, and whirled him out of the study into the Remove passage.

Lord Mauleverer roared.

"Ow! Oh! Begad! Yah! Oh! You've knocked my head on the wall—oh! Lemme down! I'll walk! I'll come at once! Yow!"

"Yes, you'll come at once," grinned Bob Cherry. "No doubt about that. Bring the silly ass along!"

"Yah! Oh! Yowp! Begad!"

Lord Mauleverer, in the grasp of the four juniors, was rushed at top speed along the Remove passage.

Down the stairs they went at top speed, and Lord Mauleverer gasped, and kicked, and struggled wildly.

But there was no escape for him. They reached the bottom of the stairs, and rushed him along the lower passage to the lecture-hall.

A yell from the open doorway greeted them.

"Here they come!"

"Here he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With arms and legs flying wildly in the air, Lord Mauleverer was rushed into the room. The juniors set him down upon the floor with a considerable concussion.

Bump!

"Yow-w-w!"

Lord Mauleverer sat on the floor and gasped for breath. Harry Wharton turned to the yelling crowd.

"Gentlemen! Allow me to present Lord Mauleverer, who will now address the meeting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo!" groaned his lordship. "Ow! Oh! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

His Lordship's Great Wheeze.

LORD MAULEVERER scrambled breathlessly to his feet.

He was looking very untidy, and his collar was torn, his necktie missing, and his hair very dusty and towzled.

His appearance, as he stood gasping for breath and trying to smooth down his hair, elicited a fresh yell of laughter from the crowd in the lecture-hall.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in, Mauly!"

"Go ahead!"

"Begad," gasped his lordship, "I feel very untidy, you know! I'm sorry I kept you fellows waiting, you know—really, you know."

"We're not going to wait much longer," roared Bolsover, the bully of the Remove. "If you don't begin pretty soon, we'll give you the frog's march."

"Hear, hear!"

"My dear fellows, pray allow me to get my breath back!" gasped his lordship. "It—it was very kind of the chaps to carry me here, but they needn't have been quite so rough. Oh! Ah! Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in, Mauly!"

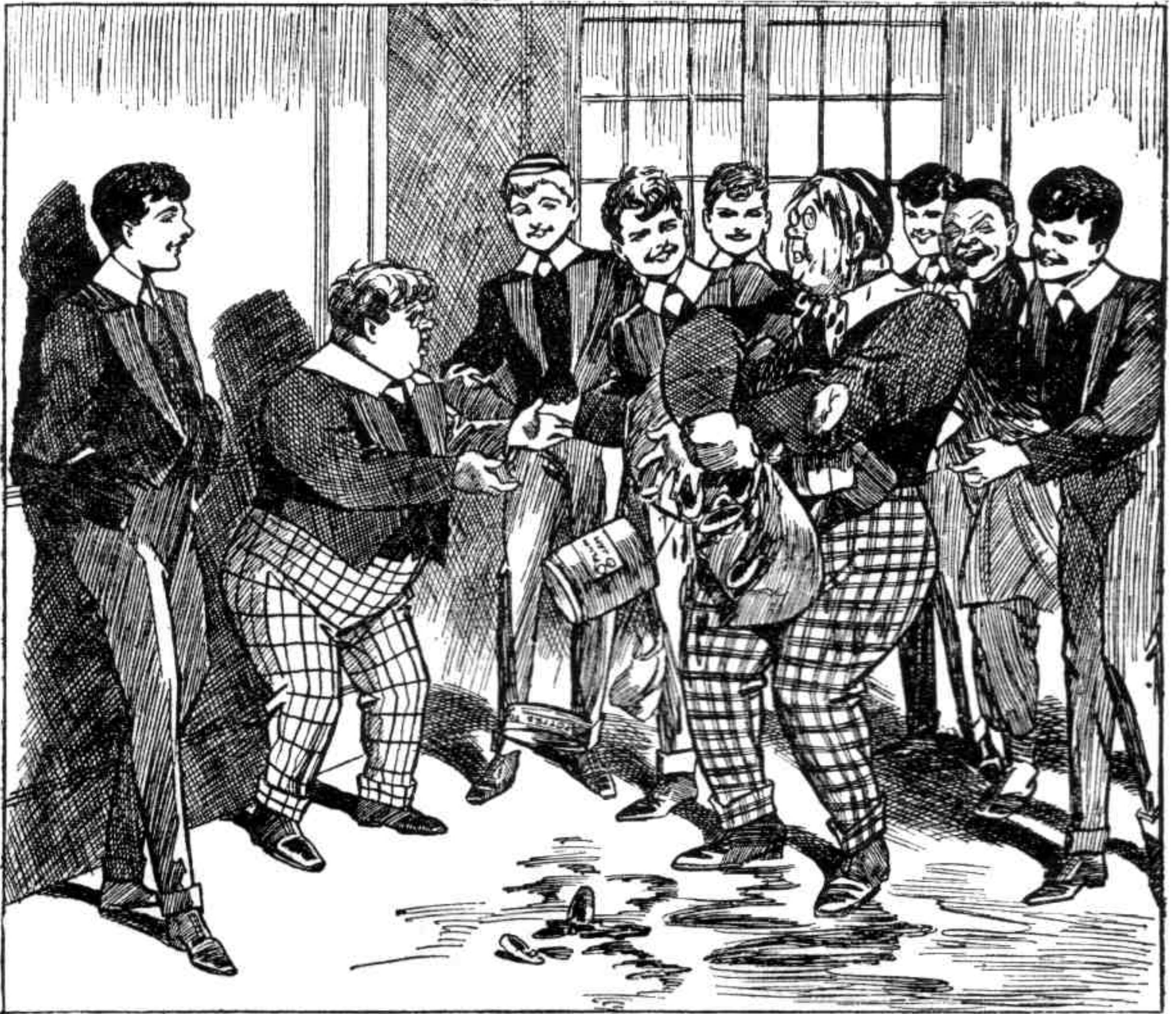
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236

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See Page 27. "The Gem" Library, Number 236.



"Let me take some of the parcels for you, Billy," said Sammy Bunter, to his rain-soaked and dripping brother. Billy Bunter blinked at his minor. "You gerroff!" he growled. "You're not going to sneak any of my grub." (See Chapter 17.)

Lord Mauleverer cleared his throat. He mounted upon a chair which Bob Cherry brought forward for him to use as a rostrum. Bob waved his hand.

"Order! Silence for Mauly! Nugent minor, I'll give you a thick ear if you don't stop that row! Bolsover, keep your minor in order! Silence!"

"Order!"

"Gentlemen," began Lord Mauleverer, when silence was almost restored. It was never likely to be quite restored while there were so many fags in the room.

"Hear, hear!"

"To-morrow is a whole holiday, gentlemen——"

"Go hon!"

"Have you called the meeting to tell us that?" demanded Vernon-Smith sarcastically.

"Order!"

"Shut up, Smithy! Pile in, Mauly, old man!"

"Certainly! I had an idea about to-morrow," said Lord Mauleverer, still a little breathlessly. "That's why I've called this meeting. I want to stand treat to the whole school to celebrate this meeting—I mean, to celebrate this whole holiday."

"Hurray!"

"My idea is a big excursion for the whole school to take part in," continued the schoolboy earl. "A motor drive round the country, stopping for lunch and dinner at places on the coast. Enough motor-cars to carry the whole school."

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

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"We could spend part of the day at Margate, and other places like that," said his lordship. "That's the wheeze. I invite all the fellows of all Forms to have the day out with me. All who care to come are welcome. Unlimited tuck will be provided."

There was a buzz.

"Oh, ripping!"

"Good old Mauly!"

"Hurray!"

"What about the exes?" demanded Vernon-Smith. "Do you know it would cost more than a hundred pounds?"

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"Begad, yaas, my dear fellow! That's all right. All expenses will be met by me, as it's my treat."

"By Jove!"

"Good old Mauly!"

"Lunch-baskets will be provided to carry in the cars," said Lord Mauleverer, "and fellows can order anything they like at Mrs. Mible's or Uncle Clegg's, to take with them. There is no limit. There will be six private motor-buses provided, sufficient to carry the whole school, if the whole school cares to come. No expense will be spared to make the trip a success. Who cares to come?"

There was a roar.

"I!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

"What-ho!"

"Count me in!"

NEXT
TUESDAY. "THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"Faith, and I'm coming!"
 "The comefulness will be terrific!"
 "Hurrah!"

There was no doubt that Lord Mauleverer's magnificent idea had caught on.

Everyone was enthusiastic.

Coker & Co., of the Fifth, shouted applause as loudly as the Removites, or the Fourth-Formers, or the fags of the Second and the Third.

The room rang with cheers.

"Hurrah! Bravo, Mauly!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll all come!"

The uproar was, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would have said, terrific. The lecture-hall rang from end to end. Certainly no lecture that had ever been delivered in that historic apartment had ever elicited such unbounded applause.

Lord Mauleverer gazed over the enthusiastic meeting with his kind and genial smile. He took pleasure in the pleasure of others, and it was easy to see that he was pleased by the reception his plan had met with.

"Begad," he murmured to his chums, "it's one of the pleasures of being a giddy millionaire, you know. It's ripping."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"But I say, Mauly," he said, "this is ripping of you, but it's likely to run you into nearer two hundred quid than one hundred."

"That's all right."

"Well, I know you're rolling in filthy lucre," said Frank Nugent, "but it's a lot of money."

"It's all serene, dear boy."

"Faith, and it's a broth of a bboy ye are!" roared Micky Desmond, rushing up to the schoolboy millionaire and embracing him enthusiastically. "Sure, and I must hug ye!"

"Oh!" gasped Mauleverer.

"Faith, and I—"

"Gerrooh! Leggo!"

"Shoulder him!" roared Bulstrode.

"Hurrah!"

"By Jove! Begad, you know! Oh, I say, don't—ah—oh!"

But Lord Mauleverer's expostulations were in vain. The crowd made a rush for him. Coker, of the Fifth, and Temple, of the Fourth, seized him and elevated him upon their shoulders, and he was marched round the lecture-hall in triumph.

Cheers rang out round him as he was borne round the hall shoulder-high.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Bravo, Mauly!"

The door opened, and Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, put a very red face in. Wingate looked angry.

"What's all this row about?" he roared. "Do you want a licking all round, you noisy young rascals—eh?"

"It's all right, Wingate."

"All serene, old man."

"Is it all right?" said Wingate truculently. "Stop it at once! What are you doing with Mauleverer? Stop this nonsense!"

Coker and Temple came to a halt in front of the irate captain of Greyfriars, and Lord Mauleverer gasped on his perch and looked down at Wingate.

"Begad," he said, "it's all right, my dear fellow! You'll come, too, won't you?"

Wingate stared at him.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"The whole school is coming out in a troop of motor-cars to-morrow for the day," Harry Wharton explained. "It's Mauly's treat. You must come, Wingate."

"Pray do, my dear fellow!"

"He's blueing a hundred quid on it," said Bob Cherry. "The more the merrier, you know. You'll have to come."

"The Sixth are all invited," said Frank Nugent. "Likewise the Fifth."

"The Sixth will have a special car all to themselves," said Lord Mauleverer. "I really hope you and your friends will honour us, Wingate."

Wingate laughed.

"I will see," he said. "Thanks for the invitation, anyway. And now don't make so much noise; you can be heard all over the house."

"Right-ho!"

Wingate retired, and the juniors marched Lord Mauleverer round the lecture-hall once more, with perhaps a shade less noise. Then he was marched out to his study. Lord Mauleverer fully appreciated the enthusiasm of the Greyfriars fellows; but the prospect of ascending the stairs on the shoulders of Temple and Coker was an alarming one.

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A Story for ALL
 "Magnet" Readers.

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN IRELAND!"

"I say, lemme down!" he gasped. "I'd rather walk, you know—really, begad! I say, you know, my dear fellows——"

"Rats!" said Coker. "Carry him up!"

And they carried him up, with a cheering crowd of juniors behind. About half-way up, Horace Coker's foot slipped, and there was a terrific yell from Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh! Ah! Help!"

The next moment there was a wild scramble on the stairs. Lord Mauleverer sorted himself out and fled. Coker sat up on the stairs, with Temple sitting on him, and somebody else sitting on Temple. He gasped.

"Oh, you ass!"

"You fathead!" groaned Temple. "What did you tumble over for?"

"Groo! What did you slip for?"

"Ow! My leg!"

"Yow! My nose!"

"Where's Mauly?" demanded Bob Cherry.

But Lord Mauleverer was gone. He had fled into his study and locked the door.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker Condescends.

THESE was considerable excitement at Greyfriars that evening.

Whole holidays were not frequent, and when they came there generally was some excitement; but this one was a very special one, and created much more interest than usual. Lord Mauleverer was known to be simply rolling in money, and sometimes to spend it with the most lavish recklessness. But for a junior schoolboy to spend a hundred or two hundred pounds on a single outing was something very new.

Lord Mauleverer was of simple tastes personally, but he spent his lavish allowance with a reckless hand. His study had been furnished regardless of cost, and it was a very luxurious "den" for a junior. He would tip the school porter a half-sovereign without thinking about it; and, needless to say, Gosling regarded him with awe and veneration. He was a perfect gold-mine to hard-up fellows who wanted to borrow; and as his memory was very bad, he never remembered to ask for the return of the loans, and, in fact, never remembered the loans at all. Bunter, of the Remove, made quite a little income out of him, and so did some other fellows who were not too scrupulous. So far from remembering loans and their amounts, Lord Mauleverer found it difficult even to remember fellows' names—even fellows he met every day. But Bunter did not mind being called Punter or Shunter, so long as the loans were forthcoming; though Coker had been known to cut up rusty when he was addressed as Poker or Croker.

Six private motor-buses to carry the whole school on an excursion was something that appealed to the imaginations of the fellows. Unlimited tuck, giving what orders they liked at the school shop, appealed to them still more. Billy Bunter resolved to make the fullest use of that permission, and so did a crowd of other fellows.

Vernon-Smith, who was the son of a millionaire, often tried to outshine the schoolboy earl; but on this occasion he gave it up, and decided to go with the party. Pretty nearly all Greyfriars had decided to go, too. There were many fellows who would have refused an invitation from Vernon-Smith, rich as he was. But nobody wanted to refuse Lord Mauleverer. He was so kind and gentle, and truly hospitable, that his guests were sure to have a good time, if he could manage it.

Even the high and mighty Sixth condescended to accept the invitation. They were to have a 'bus all to themselves, with unlimited supplies; and although, as Loder remarked,

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
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it was rather infra dig to be treated by a junior, still he would go—and the other seniors said they would go, too.

Lord Mauleverer made the arrangements easily enough. He had frequently had cars out from the big garage in Courtfield; and he simply sent them a postcard, saying what he wanted. And Lord Mauleverer was too good a customer to be neglected. A most imposing gentleman, in a frock-coat, and a silk-hat, presented himself at Greyfriars that evening and asked for Lord Mauleverer. He was the representative of the Courtfield Car Company. Lord Mauleverer gave him carte blanche, and he departed well satisfied with the assurance to his lordship that at ten o'clock on the following morning six private motor-buses, with chauffeurs complete, would be waiting outside Greyfriars.

"I'm going," Coker, of the Fifth, remarked to Potter and Greene, in his study. "It's really ripping of Mauleverer, you know; and I don't think we ought to stand on our dignity as seniors on an occasion like this."

Potter stared.

"No fear!" he said emphatically. "Why, we're allowed to give any orders we like at the tuck-shop. I'm making up a list of the things I want."

Coker grinned.

"I saw Bunter making up a list," he said. "He was filling an exercise-book."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was thinking of giving a treat myself, like this, if we had found the smugglers' treasure the other day," said Coker thoughtfully. "If that hadn't turned out to be a jape, I was going to stand something to the whole school."

Potter and Greene grinned.

"But it was a jape," remarked Greene. "Those young bounders are still chuckling over you're going to the cave to dig up ten thousand golden guineas, Coker."

"You went as well," said Coker warmly. "As a matter of fact, I had my suspicions all along that it was a bit fishy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you, I wasn't half satisfied about that idiotic document. But you fellows were so keen to look for the rotten treasure," growled Coker.

Potter and Greene chuckled. The juniors had not allowed them to forget the treasure-hunt in the cave at Pegg, and it was likely to be a standing joke at Greyfriars for some time.

Coker frowned at his hilarious chums.

"Oh, don't cackle!" he said crossly. "Look here, I think we ought to go and see Mauleverer, and tell him we'll come. I dare say he's feeling a bit uncertain as to whether seniors will come out with his show."

Potter winked solemnly at Greene.

"All serene, old man!" he said. "I'm on."

And the heroes of the Fifth walked round to the Remove passage. They found Lord Mauleverer's study pretty full. Harry Wharton & Co. were there, making arrangements for the morrow, Lord Mauleverer agreeing to everything that was suggested. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were there, too, helping—or, at all events, criticising. Tubb, and Paget, and Bolsover minor, of the Third, had come in, to assure Lord Mauleverer that they would come, and incidentally to partake of the "tuck" in his well-stocked study cupboard. Billy Bunter was there, sitting in the easiest of easy-chairs, and still engaged in compiling his list. There were several other fellows present, too, most of them talking at the same time. Lord Mauleverer was reclining in an easy attitude on the sofa, with his head resting upon a cushion that had cost six guineas at Liberty's.

"Hallo!" said Coker, looking in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "You fellows have come just in time. We want volunteers to act as waiters to-morrow. What offers?"

Coker frowned majestically.

"Just looked in to speak to you, Mauleverer," he said.

"Thank you, dear boy," said his lordship. "How do you do?"

"I hear everybody's invited to a beanfeast to-morrow," Coker remarked.

Lord Mauleverer looked puzzled.

"Not exactly a beanfeast," he said. "There won't be any beans."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Johnny Bull. "We'll give Coker beans if he doesn't behave himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're thinking of coming," said Coker loftily.

"Good!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Of course, it's a bit unusual for Fifth-Formers to go out with a junior gang," said Coker condescendingly.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We're not particular."

"Look here, Cherry—"

"Can't!" said Bob, with a shake of his head.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Hurts my eyes!" explained Bob.

There was a cackle from the juniors in the study, and

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EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

Coker knitted his brows. He was very much inclined to fall upon the humorous Removite, and smite him hip and thigh; but he restrained himself.

"I don't want any of your cheek, Bob Cherry," he growled.

"Well, I don't want any of yours, for that matter," said Bob Cherry affably. "But I'm getting it."

"About this bun-struggle," said Coker, "we're coming, Mauleverer. What time are you thinking of starting?"

"Ten in the morning, dear boy."

"Better make it half-past ten," said Coker reflectively. "No rising-bell to-morrow, you know; and I expect I shall be up late."

"Well, my hat!" said Nugent. "Of all the cheek—"

"Half-past ten, Mauleverer?" asked Coker.

His lordship shook his head.

"Ten o'clock, my dear fellow," he said. "Make an effort and get up a little earlier, Croker."

"Coker, you ass!"

"Sorry; I meant Coker, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're looking for a thick ear—" began Coker wrathfully.

"Order!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Nobody is allowed to cheek Lord Mauleverer to-day. If you're not ready at ten, Coker, you can go and eat coke—"

"And Potter and Greene can go and eat Coker," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, perhaps we could be ready at ten o'clock, Mauleverer," said Coker. "I suppose the Fifth Form have a 'bus to themselves?"

"I forget," said Lord Mauleverer. "Do the Fifth Form have a 'bus to themselves, Wharton?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Yaas, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer, "you have a 'bus to yourself, Poker."

"Coker, fathead!"

"My mistake; I meant Croker."

"Look here, you ass—"

"Order!" said Bob Cherry. "You really ought to put on a mask, or a fire-screen, or something, before you ask people to do that, Coker."

Coker gave Bob Cherry a glare, and rushed at him. Someone put out a foot, and Coker stumbled over it, and fell on his knees in front of Bob Cherry, and roared. Bob Cherry gazed at the senior as he unintentionally knelt before him, with great gravity, and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Arise, Sir Horace," he said solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker scrambled up, and three or four Removites grasped him, and he was gently but firmly pushed into the passage.

"Get out," said Nugent. "Buzz off, Sir Horace! You've been knighted, and what more do you want?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, Sir Horace."

"You young sweeps!" roared Coker, charging back into the study. "I'll— Oh, oh! Ah! Oh!"

Bump!

Coker descended upon the linoleum in the passage once more, and Potter and Greene were strewn over him. Then the study door was slammed.

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"Queer way some fellows have of accepting an invitation," murmured Bob Cherry. "That's Coker's way. It's not what I call polite."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll be back here in a second," said Johnny Bull. "Get the cushions ready, and biff him!"

"Good egg!"

Lord Mauleverer's study was thick with cushions of the most expensive kind. Four or five juniors grasped fat cushions, and stood ready to pelt Coker as soon as he put his head into the study again. There was a sound of voices in the passage, and the door opened.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Biff, biff!

Bump! Crash!

"Oh!"

"Hold on!" roared Bob Cherry. "It's not Coker—it's Wingate!"

But it was a little too late!

ANSWERS

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little List.

GEORGE WINGATE, the captain of Greyfriars, sprawled in the doorway, with cushions whizzing upon him. They were most expensive and beautifully soft cushions; but that did not make the fusillade any more agreeable to Wingate. He blinked dazedly at the horrified juniors.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Sorry, Wingate!"

"Awfully sorry, Wingate, old man!"

"Quite a mistake!"

"Oh, rather!"

"The sorryfulness is terrific!"

"Me velly solly!" murmured little Wun Lung, the Chinese, who had thrown the final cushion—after he had had time to see who it was, too.

"You—you young villains!" gasped Wingate. "What do you mean? I—I— Oh!"

The juniors rushed forward to help the captain of Greyfriars to his feet. Wingate was helped up by many hands.

"We—we thought it was Coker!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"You young sweeps! I—"

"So sorry, Wingate, old man—"

"Oh, rather!"

"It was a mistake; we thought it was Coker—"

"You'd better make sure it's Coker next time," growled Wingate, as he dusted down his clothes. "You deserve to have a licking all round. I looked in to tell you that Courtney and I are coming to-morrow, Mauleverer."

"Jolly glad!" said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "It's awfully good of you to come, Wingate."

"It will give the thing quite a tone," remarked Nugent gravely.

Wingate laughed.

"When do you start?" he asked.

"What time do we start, Wharton?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Ten in the morning," said Harry, laughing.

"Right-ho!" said Wingate. "I'll be on hand."

And he nodded to the juniors and quitted the study.

"Not half so haughty about it as Coker," grinned Bob Cherry. "Perhaps that's because he's only in the Sixth, and captain of the school. Good old Wingate!"

"Wingate's a brick!" said Johnny Bull. "It's a good thing he's coming. He'll help to keep the Fifth in order."

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking up from the list he had been busily engaged upon for a long time.

"I say, will one of you be able to lend me a portmanteau?"

"A which?"

"Or a small trunk," said Bunter. "I don't know that it need be a specially small one, either," he added, thoughtfully.

"What on earth do you want a trunk for?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Wants to make himself complete," remarked Fry, of the Fourth. "He's the same size as an elephant now, and with a trunk he'll be the complete article."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Fry! I shall want a trunk, or a big bag at least, to carry the things I'm going to order of Mrs. Mible, you know," Bunter explained. "Mauleverer said we were to order what we liked, you know; and I've been making up a little list."

"Is that the little list?" asked Bob Cherry, grinning as he saw the exercise-book in Billy Bunter's fat hand.

"Yes, that's it," said Bunter.

"Looks to me like a jolly big little list."

"Oh, no!" said Bunter. "It's quite moderate. Lord Mauleverer is really playing up jolly well, you know, and I wouldn't think of doing anything that could possibly seem like imposing on him. Some fellows might. But I couldn't."

"The nobleness of the honourable Bunter is terrific!"

"Well, I think a chap ought to be decent," said Bunter. "I was thinking of reading the little list out to Mauly. I don't want to do anything underhand—like some fellows."

"There won't be time to read out that little list; life's too short."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Let him read it out," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "I like being read to sleep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! First of all, one dozen jam-tarts," said Bunter.

"Yaas!" said his lordship.

"Twopenny ones!" added Bunter hastily.

"You bet!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It wouldn't be like you to make 'em penny ones, Bunt."

"Oh, really, Fish, I wish you wouldn't interrupt. Two cakes, one seed and one currant—price two shillings each. Is that all right, Mauly?"

"Yaas!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

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"Two bottles of currant wine—"

"Yaas!"

"One pound of coconut-ice, and one pound of chocolate-cream. One pound of muscatels, and one pound of cream crackers."

"Yaas!"

"Two tins of pineapple, and a bottle of preserved cherries. One dozen cream-puffs, and one dozen marmalade tarts."

"Begad!"

"Is that all right?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Oh, yaas!"

"It's jolly thoughtful of Bunter to plan out the provisions for the whole party, in this way," Frank Nugent remarked.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him indignantly.

"Oh, really, Nugent! These things are for me."

"What on earth are you going to do with them?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Take them in the car with me."

"What for?"

"To eat, of course."

"But where are you going to put 'em?" demanded Bob Cherry. "You can't possibly have room inside?"

"I wish you wouldn't interrupt me with frivolous remarks, when I'm doing accounts and trying to save Mauly expense," said Billy Bunter peevishly. "Shall I go on, Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes.

"Eh? Oh, yaas!"

"Are there any more things on the little list?" asked Bob, in amazement.

"Of course there are. I've hardly started yet."

"My only Aunt Jemina Ann!"

"Two pounds of dough-nuts, and one pound of preserved ginger. Two dozen buns, and two dozen meringues. That all right, Mauly?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"A case of Tangerine oranges, and two bottles of jelly. Three rabbit-pies, and two pounds of cold beef, two pounds of ham—"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Are you awake, Mauly?"

"Eh! Oh, yaas! Go on. I'm not missing a word."

"Half a pound of tongue, and six hard-boiled eggs—"

"Yaas!"

"And—"

"To be continued in our next," said Bob Cherry, elevating his boot and kicking Bunter's exercise-book across the study.

"Nuff's as good as a feast."

"Ow! You fathead—"

"You'll have to run that list as a serial, Bunter," said Nugent; "we're fed up with it now. Chuck it!"

"I say, you fellows, I—"

"It's all right, dear boy," yawned Lord Mauleverer. "You needn't read out the rest. I'll take your word for it."

"Well, if it's all right, I'll take the list down to Mrs. Mible, just as it is," said Billy Bunter, picking up the precious list. "If you're satisfied that it's all right, Mauly. Of course, I want to avoid appearing to do anything greedy—like some chaps."

"Yaas."

"You don't think I've overdone it, do you?"

"Yaas."

"Eh?"

"I mean no. It's all right."

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're fed up with you and your little list. And if you take all those things in the car, we'll jolly well scoff them for you."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bob Cherry reached out with his boot, and Billy Bunter rolled into the passage. Wharton slammed the door after him.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Beast!"

He scrambled to his feet, and for a moment was on the point of charging back into the study. Then his eye fell upon the little list, and he smiled, and picked it up, and changed his course for the tuck-shop. Billy Bunter intended to get his big order executed before there was a rush on the tuck-shop, and he did not mean to wait till the morrow before starting on the good things.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Rain.

"I SAY, you fellows—"

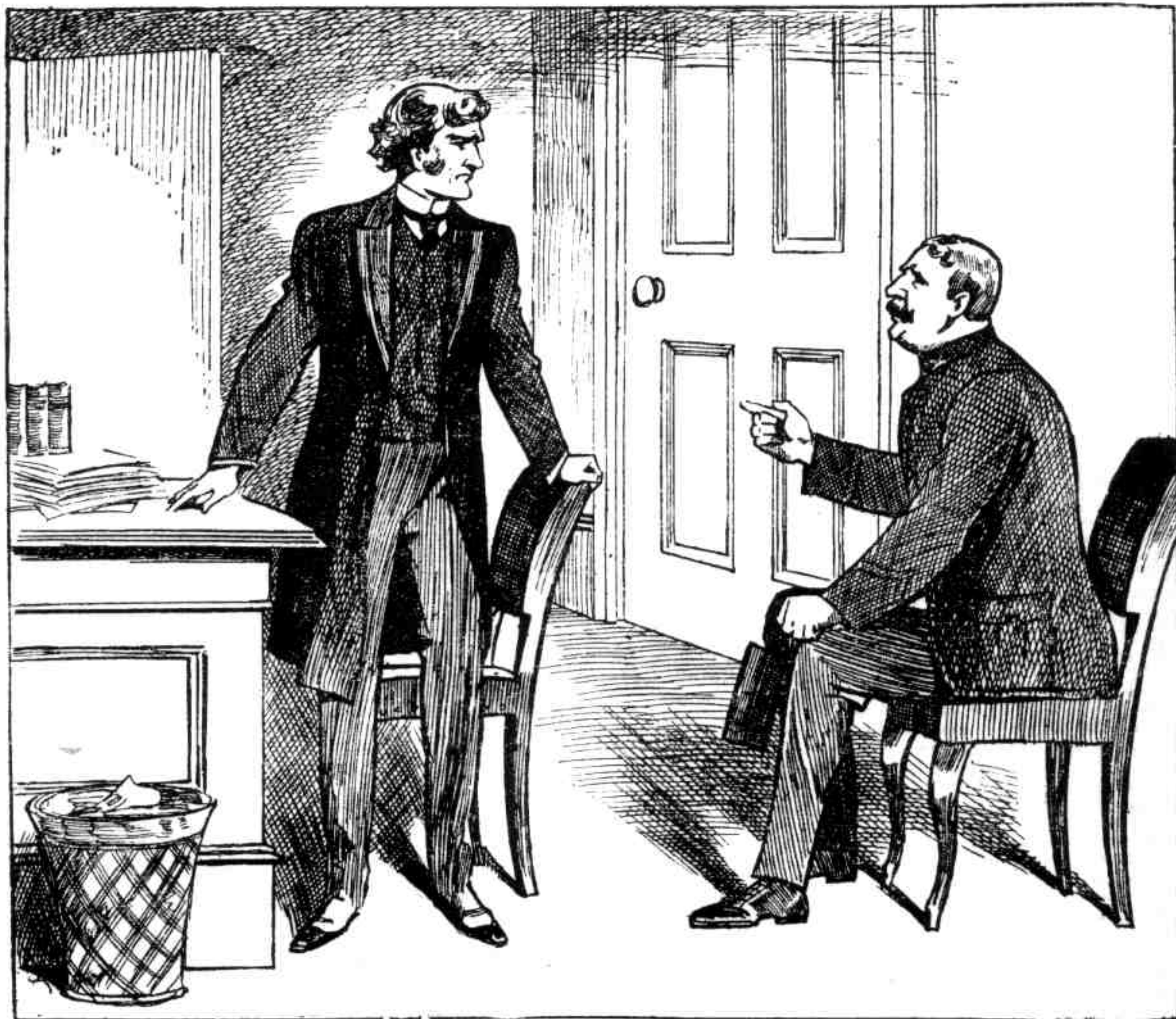
"Oh, get out!"

"No room for porpoises!"

"Scat!"

Billy Bunter snorted with indignation. He had spent rather too long in making up his little list, and he was late at the tuck-shop.

GET YOUR CHUM TO BUY THE "MAGNET!"



"There is no news of the kidnapped boys!" said Inspector Grimes to the Head, but the chauffeurs have been found bound hand and foot, and gagged, on the lower slopes of the Black Pike!" The Head started. "Bound!" he exclaimed. "Good Heavens!" (See Chapter 11.)

Mrs. Mimble's little shop in the corner of the Close was crammed.

Lord Mauleverer's statement that anything the fellows liked could be ordered to any extent, either at Mrs. Mimble's or at Uncle Clegg's in the village, had been taken full advantage of.

There were a good many fellows who were not given any credit at all at the tuck-shop, and more whose credit was strictly limited, but Lord Mauleverer's credit was quite without limit.

Any tradesman for miles around Greyfriars was only too glad to oblige the schoolboy millionaire to any extent.

Lord Mauleverer had informed Mrs. Mimble at the school, and Uncle Clegg in the village, that all orders were to be put down to him, and he was likely to have a very considerable bill to meet at each establishment.

Bunter grunted angrily as he saw the crowd in the tuck-shop in the corner of the Close. The little shop was full to overflowing.

Removites, and Shell fellows, and fags of the Third and Second crammed the shop, and were waiting outside in swarms for their turns inside.

Billy Bunter's attempts to push his way through were met with very decided opposition. It was useless for the Owl of the Remove to explain that he was hungry, and that he had a little list. Nobody cared whether he was hungry or not, and he was pushed back without ceremony. Bunter blinked wrathfully through his big spectacles at the crowd of juniors round the school shop.

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NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"I say, you fellows," he protested, "I want to get in! I—"

"I dare say you do!" grinned Snoop. "So do we, and you'll take your turn, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Snoop—"

"I've been waiting half an hour," said Bolsover minor of the Third. "I rather reckon Mrs. Mimble will be sold out before we get in."

Bunter gave a gasp of dismay.

"Sold out!" he ejaculated.

"Looks like it."

"The stuff's going fast enough," chuckled Penfold of the Remove. "If Mrs. Mimble had known this was coming she'd have had in a special stock, I fancy."

"I'm not going to wait here till she's sold out," yelled Bunter. "Make room for me, you fellows. I've got a list of things to order."

There was a yell of derision at the cool request.

"Rats!"

"Buzz off!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Bunter pushed forward, trusting to his weight to carry him through. But it was a case of no thoroughfare. Bulstrode and Tom Brown of the Remove caught him by the shoulders, and swung him round, and he went spinning.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down in the Close with a loud concussion, and gasped.

"Now you buzz off, you fat boulder!" growled Bulstrode. "You're not wanted here. You take up the room of two, and you're not coming in till everybody else is served."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Scat!" roared Hazeldene.

And Billy Bunter "scatted."

The fat junior moved disconsolately away. The crowd round the tuck-shop was thickening every minute. Nugent minor and a crowd of Second-Form fags came tramping up, and they strove to push in through the crowd, and were promptly shoved out again. Sammy Bunter of the Second, Billy's minor, came hurtling out of the throng, and sat down near his major, who was just moving off. Bunter blinked at him.

"No chance of getting in, Sammy?" he said.

Sammy snarled.

"Beasts!" he said. "I'm going to have another try."

"I'm not," said Billy; "I'm going down to the village. Mrs. Mumble will be sold out before half those chaps have got in."

Billy Bunter rolled away towards the gates, while Sammy made another vain attempt to insinuate himself into the crowd.

Bunter tramped out into the road to Friardale.

He did not ask a prefect for a pass out of gates. A good many passes had been asked for, and the prefects had stopped giving them. But Bunter intended to risk lines, for the sake of ordering his little list at the village tuck-shop.

He rolled on down the country road as fast as his fat little legs could go.

A spot of rain fell upon his fat face, and then another. Billy Bunter glanced up at the sky. The evening was falling, and a thick cloud was rolling up from the direction of the sea. Bunter gave a grunt of dismay.

"Ow! I shall get wet! I shall catch cold! Groo!"

It was a sudden shower; in two minutes the rain was falling thickly, and the Owl of the Remove blinked round him in search of shelter.

There was a barn a short distance from the road, and a gap in the hedge gave access to it. Bunter scrambled up the bank and through the hedge, and plunged into the barn. The rain was falling hard now, and the fat junior, puffing with exertion, shook the drops from his clothes in the shelter of the barn.

"Groo!" he murmured. "What rotten luck! All the fault of those rotters who wouldn't let me get into the tuck-shop. Beasts!"

It was very dark in the barn. Billy Bunter blinked out of the half-open door at the driving rain, coming down thicker and thicker in the gathering gloom. Suddenly he started. He had caught a sound behind him in the old barn.

He looked round apprehensively.

Billy Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and the barn was a lonely place, and the darkness made him uneasy.

"Who—who's there?" he stammered nervously.

There was no reply.

But as he listened, in the silence of the barn he heard a sound of low, suppressed breathing.

He blinked round him through his spectacles in dismay.

"I—I say!" he murmured.

The breathing ceased.

Bunter moved nearer to the door. But a driving gust of rain drenched him, and drove him back into the barn.

"Who—who's there?" muttered Bunter. "I say, you may as well show yourself, you know. Is it one of the fellows?"

He gave a sudden start.

From the dark corner of the barn he caught a gleam of strange light, and he soon discovered that it was the gleam of a pair of very bright eyes that were fastened upon him.

He moved towards the door again, with a sudden rush of fear at his heart, resolved to risk the rain and make for some other shelter, rather than stay where he was.

There was a sudden movement in the straw piled at the corner of the barn, and two dim figures loomed out in the gloom.

One of them darted across and intercepted Billy Bunter before he could get to the doorway.

"Stop!" said a soft, foreign-sounding voice.

Bunter stopped, palpitating with terror.

In the dusk of the doorway, he could see a strongly-built man in seafaring clothes, with a dark, foreign face, and very bright, piercing black eyes.

"I—I say," muttered Bunter; "I'm not doing any harm, you know. I—I didn't know there was anybody here. I didn't mean to intrude. I—I've got to get back to calling-over, you know. I—"

"Stay where you are, nino!"

"Ye-es, certainly!" gasped Bunter. "I—I shall be

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A Story for ALL
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"TOM MERRY & CO. IN IRELAND!"

very pleased, sir. Certainly. I—I meant to say that I'd like to stay here, if you don't mind."

He backed away from the seafaring man.

A good many foreign sailormen were to be seen at the fishing town of Pegg at all times, and Bunter had no doubt that this was some seaman from a foreign ship that had stopped at the little town.

He looked a pretty rough character, and Billy Bunter eyed him with the greatest uneasiness. It was evident that the foreign sailorman and his companion had stopped in the barn for shelter from the rain, as Bunter had done, but for some reason they appeared to take exception to Bunter's presence there.

The other man came into the light of the doorway. He was a powerfully-built man, in seafaring clothes, but did not look like a foreigner. His face was hard and clear-cut, and tanned by sun and breeze.

"Let the boy alone, Diego," he said.

The dark-faced sailorman muttered something in a foreign tongue.

"Stuff!" said the other.

"But I tell you, captain—"

"Pish!"

The foreign seaman scowled, and shrugged his shoulders. The man he had called by the title of captain turned towards Billy Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious.

BILLY BUNTER shrank back against the wall of the barn, his fat face quite white, and his heart thumping with fear against his fat ribs. The aspect of the foreign seaman filled him with alarm. He would not have been surprised to see the dark-faced sailorman produce a knife from his boot or his belt, and advance upon him with murderous intent.

Billy Bunter was not a hero. The darkness and loneliness of the old barn, and the fact that the two mysterious strangers blocked the way to the door, made the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove shiver with dread.

The captain regarded him with an intent stare. The foreign sailorman rummaged in his jacket, and Bunter felt certain that he was feeling for a knife. He watched the movements of the sailorman in terror. The swarthy hand came out—but it held nothing more dangerous than a short black pipe, which the seaman proceeded to fill, and then light. Bunter gave a gasp of relief.

"Who are you, my boy?" asked the captain, in a quiet voice. "You need not be afraid; there's nothing to be afraid of, sonny. You have as much right to take shelter here out of the rain as we have."

"Ye-es," gasped Bunter.

"Who are you?"

"M-m-my name's Bunter," said the fat junior. "I belong to Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars? What is that—a church?"

Bunter grinned a little.

"No; a school!" he said.

"Oh!" said the captain, slowly, "there is a school here, is there?"

"Jolly big school; two hundred and fifty chaps," said Billy Bunter, with some importance. "I'm in the Remove—that's the Lower Fourth."

"Aye, aye. Head of your class, I dare say," said the captain, gently.

"Well, I ought to be," said Bunter, "but there's a lot of favouritism in these matters, you know. I should be captain of the Form by rights."

The foreign seaman muttered something, in a language of which Bunter did not understand a word, but which sounded soft and pleasant to the ear. The captain shook his head impatiently.

"It is stuff!" he said. "You did not know there was anyone here when you came into this barn, Grunter—is that your name?"

"Bunter, sir."

"Ah! Bunter! You did not know there was anyone here?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"You came from the road?"

"Yes—I was going to Friardale to order the grub for our excursion to-morrow," Bunter explained. "Then it came on to rain!"

"And you did not stay outside, listening, before you came in?"

Bunter blinked in astonishment.

"Oh, certainly not," he said. "I wouldn't do such a thing. Besides, I didn't know there was anybody here talking secrets."

"Secrets!" exclaimed the captain. "What do you mean?" The sudden harshness in his voice robbed Bunter of his returning confidence. He began to palpitate again.

"N-n-nothing, sir," he stammered. "I didn't mean anything, sir, I—I never mean anything, you know. I—I mean—"

"You did not hear us speaking, then?"

"No, sir, not a word."

"You see it is all right, Diego. The boy was not spying."

"No lo credo, señor."

The captain laughed.

"You are a doubting Thomas, I guess, Diego," he said; and Billy Bunter "guessed" at the same time that the captain came from across the wide Atlantic. "It is all right, and you are a fool!"

"I—I shouldn't think of listening, sir," said Billy Bunter. "I didn't know there was anybody here. And what was there to listen to, anyway?"

"My friend, Diego, was telling me a little story to while away the time," explained the captain, "that is all. Is it not so, Diego?"

"Si, señor."

"The rain has come on very suddenly," the captain remarked. "Is your school a very long way from here, Master Bunter?"

"Oh, no; quite near, sir," said Bunter, regaining confidence at the friendly tone of the sea-captain. "It's rotten! If it lasts over to-morrow, it will muck up our excursion."

"Ah! You are going upon an excursion?" said the captain, pleasantly, as he lighted a cigar.

"Yes, rather," said Bunter, quite willing to talk about himself, and impress these seamen with a due idea of his importance. "Certainly! The whole school! I'm really getting the affair up—myself, and my friend, Lord Mauleverer! We're going to have a day out—the whole giddy school!"

The captain gave him a curious glance.

"The whole school?" he said.

"Yes!"

"A picnic, I suppose, by the seashore?" the captain suggested.

"Oh, no; a day out in motor-cars."

"You will want a large number of cars to accommodate so many, I should think," said the captain, smiling.

"Six special motor-omnibuses," said Bunter importantly.

"Truly?"

"Yes, rather. They're coming down from Courtfield to the school at ten in the morning. Lot of responsibility for me," said Bunter. "Of course, I have to take on practically all the management. Lord Mauleverer is a very close friend of mine."

"Two hundred and fifty boys in six motor-buses!" said the captain. "That will be a very large party!"

"Oh, the more the merrier," said Bunter. "I shall spare no expense to make the outing a big success."

"That is very generous of you, young gentleman. Your schoolfellows must be very much attached to you," said the captain, smoothly.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Yes, I'm very popular in the school," he said. "There's a lot of personal jealousy, of course. But I'm very popular; partly because I take so much trouble for the other fellows. I'm getting up this excursion regardless of expense."

"And you start at ten o'clock in the morning?"

"That's so."

"In six motor-omnibuses?"

"Just so!"

"And they come from Courtfield?"

"Yes," said Bunter, a little surprised by the keen interest the captain appeared to take in the details of the matter. "The chauffeurs will bring them over from the garage at Courtfield, and arrive at Greyfriars at ten. Then we start."

"You are much to be envied," said the captain.

"Yes, I intend to have an absolutely ripping time," said Bunter.

"I hope you will, my young friend."

"We're going all round the country, and we're going to stop and feed at various places," said Bunter. "We're going to take plenty of grub in the cars in case of accidents. It will run Lord Mauleverer into a couple of hundred quid, if a penny—ahem!—I mean Lord Mauleverer and me."

"Your friend must be very rich."

"Rolling in money," said Bunter, as boastfully as if the money were his own. "He's a millionaire, you know; the richest chap at Greyfriars. Coker says he was going to stand a big excursion like this if he'd found the smuggler's treasure, but—"

The captain started.

"The what?" he exclaimed.

"The smuggler's treasure."

"Indeed! What is that?"

"Oh, you haven't heard of it," said Bunter. "It's a story

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The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

about a treasure buried in a cave at Pegg. They say that Captain Firebrace, the smuggler, used to run cargoes in the caves along the coast here, and he buried ten thousand guineas, in gold, to save them from the revenue officers. That was an awful long time ago. Of course, only an ass like Coker would believe such a yarn. They planted a dummy clue on him, and he went searching in the cave for the guineas. He, he, he!"

The captain laughed, too, very heartily.

"I suppose nobody believes such a queer story!" he remarked.

Bunter chuckled.

"No fear. I don't, anyway. It's all rot, of course. Some of the chaps explore the caves on half-holidays, looking for the treasure. They've never found any. He, he, he!"

The captain glanced out of the door.

"The rain has stopped," he said.

"Good!" said Bunter. "I'll be off!"

"Good-night, my young friend! You have entertained me very much."

"Oh, good-night," said Bunter.

The fat junior had forgotten his fears of the sailormen; but he was glad to get out of the barn. They stood aside for him to pass, and he plunged through the deep dusk in the direction of the road.

"I guess that's queer, Diego!" said the captain.

The Spanish seaman growled.

"The whelp was spying," he said.

"I guess not."

"Then why did he speak about the treasure of Captain Firebrace?"

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"You are a fool, Diego," he said. "If he had known that we had been speaking about that, he would certainly not have mentioned it. Diego, this was a lucky meeting for us."

The seaman looked puzzled.

"You don't understand?" asked the captain.

"No, señor."

The captain laughed.

"You heard what the boy said of the excursion to-morrow—two hundred and fifty boys, in six motor-cars?"

"Yes?"

"It will be a pleasant excursion, Diego. Why should we not join it?"

The seaman stared at his captain as if he suspected him of taking leave suddenly of his senses.

"Oh, you are mad," he said. "What do you mean?"

The captain laughed again.

"I guess it's dry now," he said. "It's time we were moving. Come on!"

And the two strange sailormen quitted the barn. Meanwhile Billy Bunter was hurrying to the tuckshop in Friardale, where he astonished Uncle Clegg by the extent and variety of his orders.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Feed for Nothing.

"RAIN!" said Bob Cherry, with a grunt.

"Rain! Oh, rotten!"

"Beastly!"

"Yaas, begad!"

The juniors looked out of the dripping windows into the weeping close of Greyfriars.

The rain coming on with the evening filled them with dismay.

If it lasted over the morrow the great excursion planned by Lord Mauleverer & Co. would have to be abandoned.

A rainy day would make an end of the great plans the whole of Greyfriars had been laying for the morrow.

"Rotten!" said Harry Wharton. "But I dare say it will clear up before to-morrow! Ugh!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Fellows wet and angry came in from the school shop with their collars turned up round their necks.

Some who had been down to Uncle Clegg's in the village were wetter still when they came in. Ogilvy, one of the crowd from the village, was grinning, however, as he came in and shook off the raindrops.

"Wherefore that gurgle?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at."

Ogilvy chuckled.

"You haven't seen Bunter," he replied.

"Bunter! Where is he?"

"In the rain."

"Ha, ha, ha! Did he go down to Uncle Clegg's?"

"Yes, I passed him on the road coming back," grinned Ogilvy. "He's laden up to the chin with packages, and he

can hardly walk. The rain stopped for a bit and came on again extra hard just as he came out of Friardale. I was running, but Bunter couldn't run. He wanted me to take some of his parcels. I had enough of my own to carry, and I wasn't taking any. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is he now?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I left him half-way in the lane."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"He won't leave any of the parcels behind if they've got grub in them," grinned Frank Nugent. "He'll stick to them like grim death. Let's watch for him."

The rain was falling thickly in the Close now, and dashing against the windows of the old house.

Outside, all was dark and wet.

The juniors crowded in the lighted doorway, watching for Bunter. The sound of heavy feet flopping through the wet came from the shadows of the Close, and there was a yell from some of the juniors.

"Here he is!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Buck up for the last lap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A weary form came tramping and staggering through the rain. It was Billy Bunter. He was simply drenched with rain, and rain was running down his fat face. He was so laden with packages and parcels of all sorts and sizes that he had almost disappeared from view under them, and the parcels were as drenched as the Owl of the Remove was.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Here he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter staggered into the doorway, and stood there gasping, pouring with rain.

"Ow! Oh! I say, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! I'm wet!"

"You look damp," grinned Bulstrode.

"Ow, and my parcels are wet, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The dough-nuts are running!" yelled Snoop. "The jam tarts are running, too. There's jam all over your bags, Bunter."

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me take some of the parcels for you, Billy," said Sammy Bunter.

Billy Bunter blinked at his minor.

"You gerroff!" he growled. "You are not going to sneak any of my grub."

And Billy Bunter tramped upstairs to the Remove passage, leaving a trail of mud and rain behind him.

The juniors yelled with laughter, and some of them followed Billy Bunter to his study, perhaps to lend him assistance.

Bunter piled his parcels on the study table, and growled with angry dismay as they squashed one into another.

"Ow! The jam tarts are all done in! Oh! The puffs are all spoiled! Blow the rain! Ow! What rotten luck! Grooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up, you fellows," said Bunter. "One of you might go and get me a towel, I think. Ow, and a change of clothes. Go and fetch Mauly's dressing-gown for me, one of you. Ow!"

"What would Mauly say?" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ow, I'm wet! Grooh! Where's that towel?"

"Plenty of towels in the dorm," said Snoop.

"Grooh!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of his study, and pulled the door shut behind him and locked it, not caring to trust his treasures to the Removites.

"Lemme help you upstairs, Bunter, old man," said Bolsover major kindly.

"Thanks!" grunted Bunter.

Bolsover helped him up the upper staircase. His foot slipped, and he fell, dragging Bunter down with him. The fat junior roared.

"Ow, you clumsy ass! Yow! Gerroff!"

Bolsover was sprawling over the Owl of the Remove, and he seemed in no hurry to get off.

"Yow! Help! Ah! Oh!"

"Your fault," said Bolsover, picking himself up in a leisurely way. "You can go up without my help now, you fat duffer."

"Grooh! Ass! Yah!"

Bunter tramped on upstairs to the Remove dormitory, where he stripped off his soaking clothes and towelled down his fat person. Bolsover major returned to the group of juniors in the passage, and held up a key.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Did you get that away from Bunter?"

Bolsover major nodded.

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"Yes, who wants a feed?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do."

"And I!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Go it!"

Bolsover major opened the study door.

The juniors crowded in. A dozen fellows crammed themselves into the room, and some of them started on the catables on the spot, and some carried them off to safer quarters, to be devoured at leisure. All the things were wet through, and the buns and tarts and cakes were simply squashy masses, but the goods contained in jars and tins and boxes were still in good condition, and they were quickly raided.

In ten minutes there was nothing left of Bunter's big supply save a sticky mass of indigestibility upon his study table, and some empty tins and jars and bottles.

Then the Removites, chuckling, crowded out.

Bolsover major locked the door.

"What's that for?" asked Hazeldene.

"I'm going to put the key back into Bunter's pocket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He will think the ghost of Greyfriars has bolted his things," grinned Russell.

Bolsover ascended to the dormitory. Billy Bunter was putting on his dry clothes, and the wet ones lay on the floor. Bolsover picked up the jacket, slipping the key into the pocket as he did so.

"Can I help you, Bunter?" he asked, politely. "Want these things dried?"

"Oh, they'll dry," said Bunter. "I want that jacket, though. I put the key of my study in the inside pocket."

"I'll get it out for you."

"Gimme the jacket," said Bunter suspiciously.

"Oh, all right!"

Bolsover major tossed the wet jacket to Bunter, and it clung round his fat face. The Owl of the Remove gave a yelp.

"Ow! You ass!"

Bolsover laughed and quitted the dormitory. Bunter disentangled the jacket from his head, and felt in the pocket. The key was there, sure enough, and he transferred it to the pocket of the jacket he was wearing. Then he rolled out of the dormitory.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Astonished.

A CROWD of juniors were waiting outside the locked study in the Remove passage.

The story of Bolsover major's little joke had passed round, and the juniors were curious to see how Billy Bunter would take the loss of his great feed.

A sniff came from the fat Removite as he saw the crowd waiting.

"I say, you fellows, what do you want?" he asked.

"Feed!" said Tom Brown.

"Look here, you can go to the tuckshop if you want feeding—"

"Mrs. Mible's sold out," said Hazeldene.

"Well, I had to go down to Uncle Clegg's in Friardale, and you can do the same thing, if you want tuck," said Billy Bunter crossly. "You can all order what you like, to be put on Lord Mauleverer's account."

"But you've got enough to go round," said Tom Brown.

"Look here, you New Zealand bounder, I'm not standing a feed!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove indignantly. "What do you mean? Just clear off!"

The juniors grinned.

"I suppose we can wait here if we like," said Stott. "If you're not going to feed us, we can see you feed, at least, I suppose."

"You want to rush in when I open the door," growled Bunter, taking the key from his pocket. "I know your little game."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you sheer off! What I've got in that study is mine!"

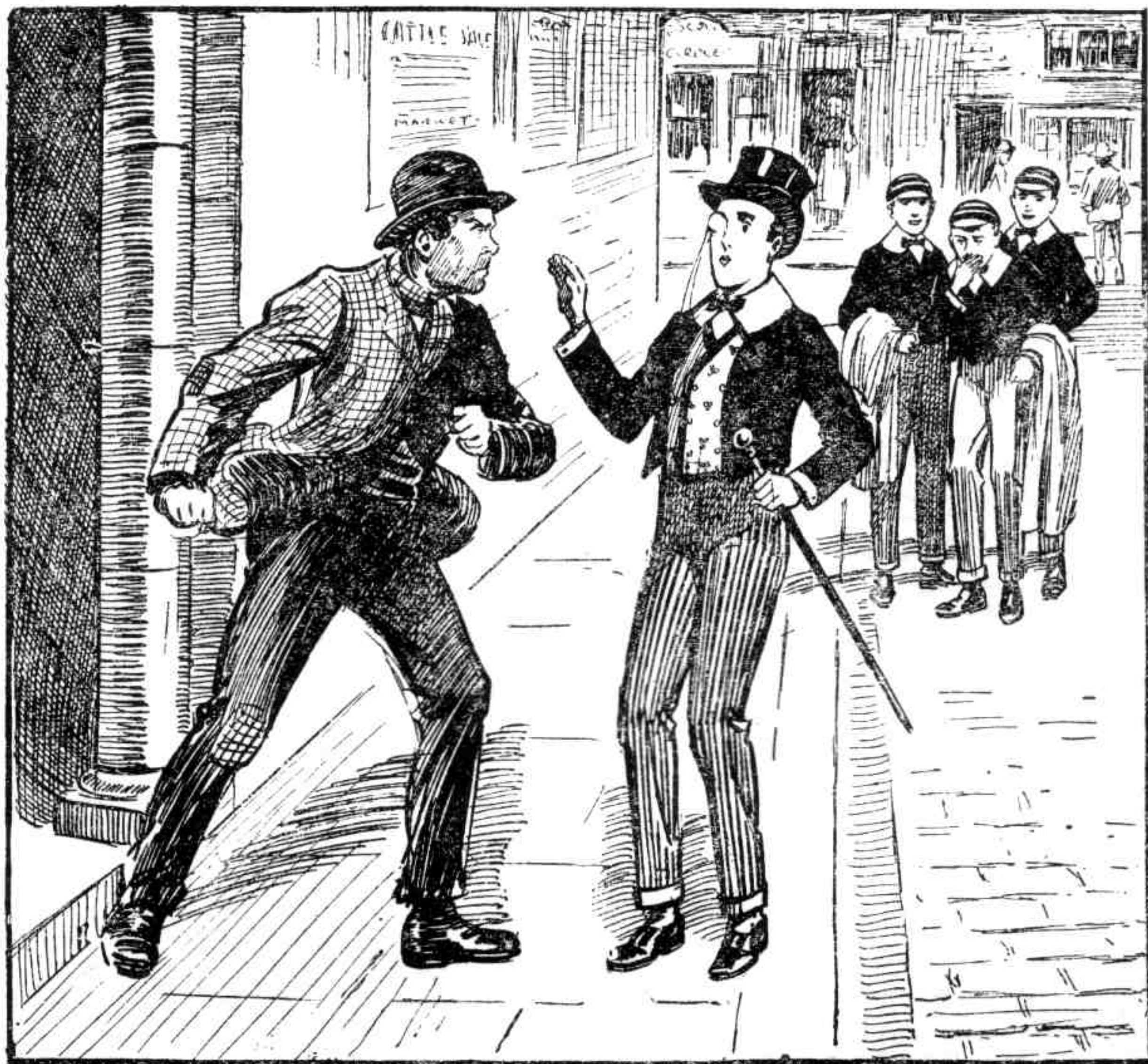
"But you can't eat that lot, Bunter," urged Bulstrode.

"Yes, I can; a lot of it has been spoiled by the rain," said Bunter. "I can manage all the rest, and I expect I shall be hungry when I've finished. You buzz off!"

The juniors exchanged grinning glances, and did not move. Bunter stood by the locked door, key in hand, in a tormented state of indecision. He was very hungry, and very anxious to get at the consignment of good things he had placed in the study; but he did not venture to open the door. He was very much afraid of a general rush on the part of the Removites.

There was a heavy footstep in the passage, and Coker, of the Fifth, came along. Potter and Greene were with him.

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"Spalpeen, gossoon!" said Arthur Augustus, agreeably, wondering what was the cause of the frightful expression that was overspreading the stranger's face. "Cruikseen lawn!" "Phwat did ye say?" roared the stranger, "shure, if ye're looking for a black oie, it's Mike Milligan that can oblige ye!" (For the above incident see the grand, long, complete tale of the Chums of St. Jim's, entitled: "TOM MERRY & CO. IN IRELAND," which is contained in this week's issue of our popular companion paper, "The Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

"Hallo!" said Coker. "What's the trouble here? You kids having a row?"

"Yah!"

"Buzz off, you Fifth bounders!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Lun away and eattee cokee!"

"I say, you fellows!" exclaimed Bunter eagerly. "I say, Coker! I've got a ripping feed in here, and those bounders want to rush it. Stand by me, and keep 'em out, and you three can come in, if you like!"

Coker & Co. grinned.

"Good egg!" said Coker. "We'll keep 'em out!"

"Yes, rather!" said Potter.

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

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Coker, rather puzzled.

"We want to see you feed," said Tom Brown blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Secure in the protection of the Fifth-Formers, Billy Bunter unlocked the study door, and held it open for Coker & Co. to enter.

The chums of the Fifth, frowning at the hilarious THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 236.

Removites, passed into the study, and Billy Bunter slammed the door shut. The juniors in the passage simply yelled in anticipation of Coker & Co.'s feelings when they saw the kind of feed the raiders had left in Bunter's study.

Coker, Potter, and Greene looked at the sticky mass on the table, and then they looked at Billy Bunter. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not immediately notice what had happened to his feed.

"Where's the grub?" demanded Coker.

"There it is," said Bunter, in surprise.

Coker glanced again at the sodden buns, and tarts, and puffs, and snorted.

"Where?" he roared.

"On the table, of course!"

"What! Do you mean to say that you've asked us in here to eat this stuff?" shouted Greene.

"Yes, certainly. What's the matter with it?" demanded Bunter.

"Matter with it!" exclaimed Coker. "Look!"

He grasped the Owl of the Remove by the back of the collar, and dragged him towards the table, and pushed his

fat face down towards the sticky mass. Billy Bunter wriggled in the powerful grasp of the Fifth-Former.

"Ow! Leggo! Oh!"

"Look at it!" roared Coker furiously.

"M-m-my aunt!" gasped Bunter, looking blankly at the heap on the table.

He wondered whether he was dreaming for a moment.

He had left piles and piles of good things on the table in the study, as well as that sticky wreckage; but it was only the heap of stickiness that was left.

"I—I don't understand this!" panted Bunter. "I—I left a lot of things here—all kinds of things! They're gone! The door was locked all the time I was in the dorm. You saw me unlock it myself."

"Yes, I saw you," growled Coker.

"I—I don't see how anybody could have got into the study," said Bunter, in bewilderment. "It—it must have been a g-g-ghost, I think."

"You cheeky young sweep!" said Coker. "This is your idea of a jape on the Fifth, I suppose."

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"We'll jolly well teach you not to be so funny," said Coker. "Shove his fat chivvy into it, you fellows."

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Oh! Grrrrrooooooh!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene grasped the Owl of the Remove, and he was forcibly bent over the table, and his fat face was jammed down into the sticky mass.

Bunter gurgled and struggled furiously.

But the more he struggled, the deeper his fat countenance was ground into the wet and sloppy remains of tarts, and buns, and cake.

Jam and crumbs covered his face and his spectacles, and choked up his nose and eyes and mouth, and clung lovingly to his hair.

"Groooh!" murmured Bunter, in a muffled voice. "Groooh! Leggo, you beads! Let me do! Ow! I've jogig!"

"There!" said Coker, giving Bunter a last shove, which ground the end of his fat little nose on the table. "There! You won't be so funny again!"

And Coker & Co. strode angrily from the study.

"You haven't fed!" exclaimed Tom Brown, in surprise.

"Don't you like the grub?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fifth-Formers strode away without deigning to reply.

Billy Bunter rolled away from the table, clawing frantically at the mass of stickiness that encumbered his features.

"Oooooop!" he mumbled. "Help! I've jogig!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sight of Bunter was too much for the Removites.

They shrieked.

Billy Bunter came out of the study, clawing at his face, and the juniors staggered away down the passage in various stages of hysterics.

"Helb!" moaned Bunter. "Helb! Groo! Ah! Groooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter clawed and dabbed at his face frantically, and succeeded in clearing his eyes, and then he wiped his spectacles and adjusted them again upon his sticky nose.

Then, in a state equally divided between amazement and rage, he rolled into his study again to search for the missing eatables.

But he found them not.

"It—it must have been a ghost!" the Owl of the Remove gasped. "The—the study's haunted! The door was locked all the time! The blessed place must be haunted!"

There was a fresh yell from down the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter glared along the Remove passage.

"Look here, you fellows, who's taken my tommy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did you get in, you beasts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts! Rotters! Ow! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better go and get a wash, Buntie," said Tom Brown, with the tears of merriment streaming down his face. "You look jammy!"

"The jamfulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific."

"Buntie vellee sticky," murmured Wun Lung. "Better washee, me tinkee."

"You—you rotters! Somebody's raided my grub!" bellowed Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, with a wrathful glare at the hysterical juniors, rolled away. It took him quite a long time to get the jam and other stickiness off his face and his ears, and his hair. Then he went up and down the Remove passage in search of a good Samaritan. But feeds were evidently off.

There were signs in half the studies he looked into of

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recent feeding, but only empty jars and bottles and tins remained, and there was nothing for Billy Bunter.

It was in vain that he went to and fro, seeking what he might devour. There was nothing to be devoured, and after all his great preparations for a really record feed, Billy Bunter had to wait till supper-time, and then regale himself upon bread and cheese, and by the time he had it he was glad enough of even that.

And there was a fresh outburst of merriment on the part of the Removites when they saw Billy Bunter at the supper-table negotiating the bread and cheese.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Off.

MORE than one of the Greyfriars fellows awoke in the night, and listened for the rain, but they were comforted at not hearing the drops on the dormitory windows. By the time the morning dawned the clouds had passed away, and a burst of summer sunshine greeted the Remove when they turned out at the clang of the rising-bell.

Bob Cherry was the first up in the Remove dormitory, and he ran to the window, and mounted there and looked out.

"Ripping morning!" he exclaimed. "First chop! It's going to be a fine day!"

"Hurrah!"

"Begad, that's good!" said Lord Mauleverer.

And the Remove turned out in good spirits.

The rest of Greyfriars looked very cheerful when they gathered in the big dining-hall for breakfast.

The morning was beautifully fine, and the fellows were looking forward to a merry day spent in the open air.

They finished making their little preparations for the day's outing, after breakfast, while waiting for the arrival of the cars.

Towards ten o'clock, the hour fixed for the arrival of the cars, a crowd of fellows went down to the school gates to look for them.

Ten o'clock struck from the old tower, but the cars were not yet in sight from the direction of Courtfield.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "They're late!"

"No sign of 'em yet!" said Frank Nugent, looking down the road.

"Begad, no!"

"The lateness of the esteemed chauffeurs is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps there has been an esteemed bust-up on the road."

"Oh, cheese it, you giddy Job's comforter!"

"Let's go along and look for them!" suggested Nugent.

"Oh, they'll be along soon!"

Coker & Co. came down to the gates.

"Not here yet!" exclaimed Coker.

"Not yet, Smoker, old man!" said his lordship.

"Coker, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if we ought to be kept waiting like this!" said Potter.

"Hard cheese, Rotter!" said Lord Mauleverer politely.

Potter frowned.

"Potter, you idiot!" he corrected.

"Yaas; I meant Potter, you idiot!"

"Look here, you silly ass—"

"Not coming yet?" demanded Temple, of the Fourth, coming along with Fry and Dabney and Scott, of his Form. "They're late."

"Yaas."

"I suppose you gave them instructions properly?"

"Yaas."

"Well, they're late!" growled Temple.

"Oh, rather!" grunted Dabney.

"Yaas."

"I expect you've made some bungle about it!" said Coker.

"Yaas."

"What!"

"Yaas—I mean, no! I expect they'll come soon. Lots of time!" said his lordship cheerily. "Don't be impatient, Broker—"

"You silly fathead! My name's Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "some of you might run along and see if the cars are coming! There may have been an accident!"

Harry Wharton looked up the road towards the town of Courtfield.

There was no sign of the expected cars upon the long white road.

The fellows were beginning to get very impatient. Lord

Mauleverer's carelessness in making arrangements was well known.

"The ass has told them to-morrow by mistake!" growled Coker. "Did you order the cars for to-morrow, Lord Mauleverer?"

"Yaas; I distinctly said to-morrow!"

"What! Then—"

"But it was yesterday, you know, that I said it," his lordship explained.

"You ass—"

"Begad, you know—"

The quarter rang out from the clock-tower. The Greyfriars fellows exchanged looks of exasperated impatience.

"Quarter of an hour late!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's queer! I saw the chap who came down from the garage yesterday, and he understood plainly enough that the cars were to be here at ten o'clock this morning."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Let's get along the road, and look for them!" said Harry Wharton.

"Right you are!"

A dozen more juniors went out into the road, and walked down towards Courtfield. They had not proceeded far when there was a sound of tooting on the road, and Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation:

"There they are!"

"Thank goodness!"

Round a bend of the high-road the foremost car came in sight.

It was a towering motor-omnibus, capable of accommodating a great number of passengers inside and out.

It swung on down the road, and after it came another and another, till six of the huge vehicles were in sight, in a procession.

The Greyfriars juniors stopped in the road, and watched them come on.

Wharton held up his hand as the foremost 'bus reached the spot where they were standing.

"You can take us on to the school," he called out to the chauffeur. "We came to look for you. You're late!"

"Yes, sir."

And the juniors clambered on behind the car without waiting for it to stop, and swung on towards the gates of Greyfriars.

A cheer from the crowd there greeted the appearance of the procession of motor-buses.

They were certainly very handsome turn-outs. Each had a uniformed chauffeur in charge, sitting sedately at the steering-wheel.

The head-chauffeur jumped down as he brought the foremost 'bus to a halt, and touched his peaked cap to the Greyfriars fellows.

"Is Lord Mauleverer here?" he asked.

The schoolboy millionaire came forward.

"Yaas, my man," he said.

The chauffeur touched his cap again.

"I was ordered to report to you, sir."

Lord Mauleverer looked at him.

"You are not the man who drove me before," he remarked.

"No, sir—I mean, no, my lord!"

"I understood it was to be the same man in charge. I believe I said so."

"I was put on to the job, sir," said the man respectfully.

"I think you can rely upon me, sir."

"Oh, yaas! What's your name?"

"Tadd, sir—William Tadd!"

"Very well, Tadd. It's all right."

"Thank you, sir!"

The news that the cars had arrived was soon spread over the school, and the Greyfriars fellows came out in crowds to take their places.

The Sixth Form had a car to themselves, and so did the Fifth, but the juniors piled on without regard to dignified seclusion.

The whole crowd was in great spirits.

Innumerable lunch-baskets and bags were piled on the cars, almost the only fellow without a personal supply being Billy Bunter.

Dr. Locke came out to see the fellows off.

There was a kind smile on the good old doctor's face as he waved his hand from the gate to the joyous crowd as the motor-buses started.

With a cheer the cars rolled down the long white road.

"Off at last!" said Bob Cherry. "Well, we're only half an hour late, and that's jolly good, considering that Mauleverer made the arrangements!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer & Co. were in the leading car. Lord Mauleverer leaned down the front to speak to the chauffeur.

"Gadd—" he began.

"Tadd, sir!"

"Yaas, I mean Tadd! Go through the village!"

Tadd was turning the car to take the road past the Black Pike towards the bay.

"Road's up, sir," said Tadd.

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EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Is it?" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "It wasn't up last night."

"The rain, sir," said Tadd respectfully. "We heard in Courtfield that the road was up."

"Well, you'll have to go round, then, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, sir! Ay, ay, sir!"

And the car rolled on, with the rest of the procession in its wake. They disappeared from the view of Dr. Locke, standing at the school gates, and the Head turned back towards the School House. He little dreamed of what was to happen before he saw the Greyfriars boys again.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Vanished School.

GREYFRIARS was very quiet that day.

Almost the whole of the school had gone on Lord Mauleverer's excursion.

Most of the masters went out for the day, also, and it was late in the afternoon when Dr. Locke returned, and the dusk was falling on the old school.

He met Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, in the hall as he came in.

"The boys have not come back yet, I see, Mr. Quelch!" he remarked.

"No, sir," said the Remove-master.

"I gave them instructions to be back by dark," said the Head.

"They have gone a long way, sir," said the Remove-master, with a smile. "Perhaps they will be a little late in returning."

"Yes, doubtless. After all, whole-holidays do not come every week, and we may allow them a little latitude," the Head remarked.

And he went into his study.

Darkness fell upon Greyfriars.

It had been a glorious summer day, and if the Greyfriars fellows were having a good time, and had gone far afield, it was not surprising if they overstayed their time a little.

But when it had been dark an hour, and there was still no sign of the boys returning, Mr. Quelch grew a little anxious.

He went down to the gates, across the dusky Close, and spoke to Gosling, the school-porter.

"No one has come back yet, Gosling?" he asked.

"No, sir," said Gosling.

"It is a little strange! They are very late!" said Mr. Quelch. "Please let me know as soon as you see anything of the cars, Gosling."

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Quelch returned to the School House.

Gosling grunted.

"Which the young rips won't be 'ome till late," he murmured. "Wot I says is this 'ere, I shouldn't be surprised if they don't turn up till near midnight, that's wot I says."

Another hour passed, and the cars had not come in.

About ten o'clock Mr. Quelch came down to the gates again, and now there was a shadow of real anxiety upon his face.

It was past bedtime for the junior Forms, and it was certainly very singular that the holiday-makers had not come in.

If the juniors had been on the excursion alone, Mr. Quelch could have understood it better; but all the seniors were with them, and with the whole body of school prefects in the party it was certainly singular that the cars had not returned.

"Nothing seen of them yet, Gosling?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Nothin', sir."

"It is very strange!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch went to the Head's study. Dr. Locke was there, very busy upon his Horace, of which he was scheming a new edition which was to put all previous editions of Q. Horatius Flaccus into the shade. Dr. Locke had been so deeply buried in his Horace that he had forgotten the passage of time, and, indeed, the fact that the whole school was absent at all.

"Pray excuse me, sir," said the Remove-master. "I thought it better to tell you that the boys have not returned."

Dr. Locke started.

"Dear me! Not returned yet—any of them?"

"None, sir."

"What is the time?"

"A quarter-past ten."

"Dear me! That is very singular!"

The Head laid down his pen and looked anxiously at Mr. Quelch.

"Very singular indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "I cannot understand it at all. Of course, there may have been a

breakdown of the cars—perhaps all of them. But in that case it would have been easy for Wingate or Courtney to send a telegram here."

"And there has been none?"

"No, sir."

"Extraordinary!"

"It is so extraordinary that I cannot help feeling alarmed, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "It seems impossible that any accident can have happened to so large a party. Two hundred and fifty boys, with all the prefects with them, could hardly get into any serious trouble."

"I should think not," said the Head.

"But why have they not returned—or, at least, informed us of the cause of their delay?"

"It is amazing!"

"What shall be done, sir?"

Dr. Locke rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"I hardly see that anything can be done," he said. "It would scarcely be useful to send Gosling to look for them. We don't know where they may be—perhaps twenty miles away if there has been an accident to the cars."

"Quite so, sir."

"We can only wait for them to come back."

"Very well, sir. I can suggest nothing better, certainly."

And Mr. Quelch left the study.

Dr. Locke plunged into Horace again, but Mr. Quelch did not seek any occupation. He was very anxious. It seemed impossible that any misfortune could have happened to so great a crowd of fellows—and yet, where were they?

Eleven o'clock struck!

Mr. Quelch went down to the gates again, and remained there, with an anxious brow, looking out into the shadowy road.

The minutes dragged by.

Twelve o'clock!

Midnight!

"Good heavens!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "What can have happened?"

He returned to the Head's study.

He found Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, and Mr. Capper, of the Fourth, with the Head. All of them were looking very anxious, and the Head had ceased to devote his attention to Horace now.

"They have not come?" exclaimed the Head, as the Remove-master entered the study.

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"No, sir."

"And no word has been received?"

"No, sir."

"Extraordinary!"

The masters looked at one another in great disquietude. It was amazing and unsettling. That something untoward had happened was certain now; and yet, if there had been a serious accident, why had they not heard of it? It was inconceivable that any accident could have happened to disable every member of so numerous a party and prevent a wire from being sent to Greyfriars.

"It cannot be an accident," Mr. Prout said. "I cannot imagine what it means. Neither can it be a prank, for the prefects would not enter into such a thing."

"It is simply unaccountable," said Mr. Capper.

They waited.

One o'clock boomed out on the still night air.

A light shower of rain began to fall in the Close, cooling the air after the heat of the day.

No one thought of going to bed.

Gosling was up, with a light burning in his lodge. Even Gosling was feeling anxious now. Mr. Quelch left the School House to go down to the village, to ascertain if anything had been seen of the excursion there. Mr. Prout volunteered to walk over to Pegg, and Mr. Capper to go to Courtfield.

Dr. Locke sat up to wait for them to return.

The dawn was creeping up the eastern sky when they came in. There was no sign of the boys. Mr. Quelch was the first to return.

He had inquired at the police-station in Friardale, and nothing had been seen there of the cars. It was only known that they had not passed through the village on their way after leaving the school.

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Mr. Prout came back from Pegg, tired and sleepy, and a little cross. He had no news.

Of the persons he had been able to inquire of in the fishing village on the bay, no one knew anything of the excursion.

Finally, Mr. Capper came back from Courtfield. The Greyfriars masters gave him a look of eager inquiry as he came in, but his expression told that he had no news of the missing school.

"I have been to the garage in Courtfield," he said. "The night-watchman informed me that nothing had been heard of the cars, or of the chauffeurs in charge of them. They were amazed at the garage at the cars not having returned."

"It is, indeed, amazing!" said the Head.

"The boys certainly did not pass through Courtfield," said Mr. Capper. "That is all that is known."

"Extraordinary!"

"I have also seen Inspector Grimes at Courtfield Police-station, and he will come over if you need him, sir."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"I suppose the police must be called in to search for the boys!" he exclaimed. "This is a most remarkable occurrence—a complete mystery! It seems impossible that anything can have happened to them, but there is no alternative but to make a search."

The sun rose higher in the sky, and the bright summer sunshine streamed down upon the Close of Greyfriars.

A new day had come; but it did not light up the usual busy scene at the old school.

The Close was deserted; the Form-rooms were empty and silent.

Where were the Greyfriars fellows?

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

No News!

DR. LOCKE rang up Inspector Grimes, of Courtfield, on the telephone, early in the morning, and had a long talk with him. The inspector was as amazed as the Head of Greyfriars. But he promised that search should be made instantly for the missing school.

It was about half-past nine when Inspector Grimes made his appearance at Greyfriars, with a very serious and perplexed expression upon his ruddy face.

Trotter showed him at once into the Head's presence. Dr. Locke was pale with anxiety.

"You have news for me, I hope, Mr. Grimes?" he exclaimed.

"I have news, sir," said the inspector. "Not of the boys, though."

"Nothing has been heard of them?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Then what have you to tell me?"

"We have found the chauffeurs who were sent in charge of the cars, sir."

"Indeed! Then they can tell us—"

"Nothing of the boys, sir. I will explain. The car company in Courtfield sent six cars, with a chauffeur in charge of each. The head chauffeur was a man named Williams, who has driven Lord Mauleverer before. The manager assures me that the cars were sent off in time yesterday to arrive here at ten o'clock in the morning, and as I learned from Mr. Capper that they did not arrive till half-past ten, I was struck at once by that circumstance. It is now explained. Every officer in Courtfield has been engaged in the search; and the chauffeurs have been found—bound hand and foot, and gagged, in a lonely shed on the lower slopes of the Black Pike."

The Head started.

"Bound!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; and very stiff and cold and hungry," said the inspector. "One of them had managed to get rid of his gag, and had been calling for help for a long time, and that was how my men came to find them."

"But—but, I do not understand," said the Head, in bewilderment. "It is not surely suggested that the boys—"

Inspector Grimes shook his head.

"No, sir. The chauffeurs had seen nothing of the boys. They were

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"What are we kidnapped for?" shouted Wingate furiously. "I want labour!" explained Captain Firebrace. "I'm searching for something in this cavern, and the whole place has to be dug from end to end. And you have to do it!" (See Chapter 13.)

waylaid on the road from Courtfield to the school yesterday morning."

"What?"

"As they brought the cars along the loneliest part of the lane, sir, they were attacked by a gang of men numbering twelve or fifteen, who forcibly stopped the cars, and dragged the chauffeurs out of them."

"You amaze me!" gasped the Head. "Why—why—"

"The chauffeurs were stripped of their uniforms, and were then hustled away to that lonely shed, and left there bound and gagged, so that they could not give the alarm."

"Good heavens!"

"The cars came on to Greyfriars, as we know," said the inspector. "It is clear, therefore, what the uniforms were taken from the chauffeurs for. Six of the ruffians must have put on the uniforms, and brought the cars on to the school, pretending that they were the chauffeurs sent from the garage at Courtfield."

The Head gazed in blank amazement at the speaker.

"Is it possible?" he gasped.

"It is certain, sir."

"But—but, can the men give a description of their assailants—"

"Only that they seemed to be seafaring men, sir; and that several of them were foreigners," said the inspector.

The Head sat dumbfounded.

It was some minutes before he could speak, and then his voice was husky.

"Is it a plot to kidnap the boys of the school, then?" he asked.

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"There is no other explanation that I can think of, sir; and the thing was so utterly unheard of, that it is not surprising that it succeeded."

"It is astounding! But—but where can the boys be? It cannot be easy to hide away two hundred and fifty boys?"

"It would seem impossible," said Mr. Grimes; "and I have no doubt that we shall succeed in finding them. Half the police of the county are out looking for them now, and I am expecting news every minute."

The inspector rose.

"As soon as I hear anything I shall ring you up on the telephone, sir," he said.

"Thank you!" gasped the Head.

And the inspector left; leaving the Head of Greyfriars in a state of anxiety and mental perturbation such as he had never experienced before.

The inspector was as good as his word; he very soon had some news to communicate. Mr. Quelch was in the study with the Head, when the telephone-bell rang.

"Please answer the inspector, Mr. Quelch," said the Head.

The Remove-master took up the receiver.

"Hallo! Yes?" he said. "This is Greyfriars. Dr. Locke is here. What news?"

"We have found the motor-buses."

"And the boys?"

"No, sir."

"Where were the cars?"

"Abandoned in a lonely lane over the Black Pike."

"No one with them?"

"No one."

"No sign of the boys?"

"Not so far! But we are sparing no effort."

"Good!"

Mr. Quelch hung up the receiver.

The morning hours glided by in unusual quietness and idleness at the old school.

The Form rooms were empty.

The masters, idle, tired, sleepy, moved about the old school restlessly, full of anxiety for the missing boys.

The day passed.

There were many rings on the telephone; but there was no news of the boys.

All the information that was received was of a negative description. The boys had not been seen in Friardale, or Courtfield, or Pegg, or any of the places round about the school. Search had been made along the coast, and inland in all directions, but nothing was discovered. All that could be learned was that the excursion, almost immediately after leaving Greyfriars the previous morning, had vanished—vanished as completely as if the boys had melted away into thin air.

The Head's anxiety was indescribable.

Night fell again, and there was no news—not a word from the missing boys, or from the rascals who had somehow contrived to make them prisoners. The cars had been recovered from the lonely spot where they had been abandoned by the kidnappers, and taken back to Courtfield. The police and many other searchers were scouring the country far and wide.

But the result was nil.

If the boys had been kidnapped, the only solution was that the kidnappers intended to extract payment from the Head for their release. And for that purpose they must communicate with him.

But no communication came.

If it came it might afford a clue to the police; or, at the worst, the Head might meet the demands of the kidnappers, for the sake of having his charges restored to him safe and sound.

But it did not come. It seemed that, if the boys had been kidnapped, it was not for the purpose of holding them to ransom; yet what other motive could the kidnappers possibly have?

The Doctor felt his head in a whirl as he tried to think it out.

The night passed.

It was upon Tuesday that the Greyfriars fellows had disappeared from human ken; on Thursday morning there was no news.

The day dragged by.

The whole countryside was excited now with the strange happenings; and as well as the police, there were crowds of searchers.

But they searched in vain.

One explanation was that the boys might have been taken to sea from the bay; but no large vessel had been noticed there—and it would require one, to carry off two hundred and fifty boys. And besides, how could the embarkation have been contrived without the alarm being given.

But if that was not the explanation, where were the boys?

The whole school had vanished!

It seemed like an evil dream to the Head, as he waited—and waited in vain—for news of the kidnapped school.

THE TWELTH CHAPTER.

The Captives.

AND where had the Greyfriars fellows been for the past two days?

They were within a mile of Greyfriars School; but they might as well have been a thousand miles away, so far as any chance of communicating with the school went.

Under the frowning rocks of the great Shoulder, the cliff shutting in the end of the bay, was a narrow opening in the rock, covered with water at high-tide.

At low tide it was open from the sea, and boats could pass in and out.

It was the great cave in which, on a celebrated occasion, Coker, of the Fifth, had searched for the supposed treasure buried by Captain Firebrace, the smuggler of olden days.

Harry Wharton stirred and awoke.

Where was he?

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove felt a heavy, dull aching in his head, a dry and bitter taste in his mouth.

His faculties cleared slowly.

He fancied at first that he was in bed in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. But as he moved he found that it was soft sand that was round him, and overhead, as he gazed upward, was an arch of rock.

He started into complete wakefulness in his astonishment.

What had happened?

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His head and his limbs were heavy; but he made an effort and sat up in the soft sand, and looked about him with dizzy eyes.

He was in a huge cave. Overhead, the arch of rugged rock seemed boundless—high in some places, sloping low in others. Here and there in the rock were upward fissures, through which the sun-rays came from above.

The fugitive rays of the sun lighted up the centre of the great cave, and left the recesses full of lurking shadows.

One side of the great cavern was closed in by murmuring water. The others were lost in shadow.

Wharton passed his hand over his eyes in bewilderment.

Round him, on the soft sand that covered the floor of the cave, other fellows were stretched in slumber, line upon line of recumbent forms.

There were scores of them.

Bob Cherry was next to him—his chums Nugent and Johnny Bull were close at hand—then Lord Mauleverer, Billy Bunter, Wingate of the Sixth, Coker of the Fifth—faces he knew on all sides.

And all were plunged into deep slumber. So far, he himself seemed to be the only fellow awake.

What did it mean?

It seemed to him that it was some strange and terrible dream, and that he would soon wake to find himself in his bed at Greyfriars.

But it was real enough.

He was in the great cave under the rocks of the Shoulder, at the end of Pegg Bay. He knew the cave well enough; he had explored it often on half-holidays.

The rest of the crowd that had started upon the day's excursion with Lord Mauleverer were with him.

But how had they come there?

He had no recollection of it. He sat with his hand to his throbbing brow, and tried to piece out in his mind what had happened.

He remembered the start from Greyfriars, the six big cars swinging down the road; and Tadd, the head chauffeur, taking the lonely road over the Pike because, as he declared, the road through Friardale was up.

All that was clear in his mind.

Then he remembered that, in the loneliest part of that lonely road, there had been a breakdown—two of the cars had gone wrong, and the expedition had stopped, perforce, while the chauffeurs attended to the damage.

The Greyfriars fellows had waited about idly while the repairs were being done; and as the weather was hot, they had opened the hampers of lemonade, and drunk a great deal of the refreshing liquid. William Tadd had acted as waiter in the most obliging way, opening bottle after bottle, and carrying round the glasses to the thirsty fellows. After that, Wharton could not remember clearly what had happened.

The last scene in his recollection was of a group of Remove fellows drinking health to the founder of the feast, in foaming glasses of lemonade handed to them by Tadd.

Wharton had a faint remembrance of feeling sleepy afterwards; and he supposed that he must have fallen asleep.

But how was it that he had not awakened in the road, where he had fallen asleep? Where were the cars? How had he and the whole party been transported to the sea-cave under the great cliff?

It was amazing—incredible!

Harry Wharton staggered to his feet. His movements awoke Bob Cherry, and Bob opened his eyes and sat up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob. "'Tain't rising-bell."

"Wake up, Bob!"

"Groo! I've got a headache."

"Get up! Something's wrong—awfully wrong."

Bob Cherry blinked round him.

"M-m-my hat! Where are we?"

"In the smugglers' cave."

"W-w-w-what!"

"That's where we are, old man—unless we're dreaming."

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"How on earth did we get here?" he exclaimed, staring round the shadowy cavern.

"Goodness knows!"

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"My hat! It must be a dream! It can't be real."

"It's real enough, but—I can't understand it."

The two juniors moved away towards the mouth of the cave, picking their path among the recumbent forms of the sleepers.

At the end towards the sea, the water flowed; the ground there was at a lower level, and was covered by the water from the bay. It was only possible to get in and out of the cave by boat.

Out in the flooded outer cave a steam-launch lay moored to a rock, at some little distance from the water's edge.

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Several men were visible upon her deck; and they all looked like seafaring men, and several had dark, foreign faces.

They looked towards the juniors and grinned.

One of them, a swarthy Spanish seaman, called into the cabin of the launch.

"Capitano! They are awake!"

Wharton hailed the launch.

"Hallo, there!"

"Hallo, seniorito!"

"Who are you?"

The Spanish seaman grinned.

"I am Diego Diaz, at your service, seniorito."

"I mean, who are you—what is that vessel?"

"Captain Firebrace's launch."

"What!"

"And Captain Firebrace is here."

The captain came in sight. It was the man who had been with the Spanish seaman in the old barn on the Friardale Road, when Billy Bunter had taken shelter there from the rain. Harry Wharton & Co. had never seen him before.

The captain smiled.

"Ah! So you have woke up!" he said.

"Yes," said Bob Cherry. "Did you bring us here?"

"Ay, ay!"

"What for?"

"You will soon see."

The captain muttered an order, and the launch came closer to the shore, and Captain Firebrace, as he called himself, stepped on the rocks.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Kidnappers!

HARRY WHARTON and Bob Cherry gazed at the captain in bewilderment.

He was followed on the shore by Diego and a dozen other men, among whom the juniors recognised the false chauffeurs who had brought the cars to the lonely road over the Black Pike.

They had doffed their chauffeur garb now, however, and were dressed as seafaring men.

They were armed, as the Greyfriars juniors noted with further amazement, each of them carrying a revolver in his belt, and a Lee-Metford rifle slung on his shoulder.

It seemed more like a dream to the juniors than ever; and for one dizzy moment they wondered whether the spirits of the old smuggler gang had returned to haunt the scene of their exploits of a hundred years before.

Several more of the Greyfriars fellows were awake now, and they were gathering round.

Billy Bunter blinked at the captain and the Spanish seaman, recognising them at once.

The captain gave him a cheery nod.

"Ah, my young friend Grunter," he remarked.

"Bunter, please," said the Owl of the Remove, blinking at him. "I—I— How did we come here?"

"I want to know that," said Wingate of the Sixth, striding forward with a grim frown upon his brow. "What has happened?"

"How on earth did we get here?" said Coker, rubbing his eyes.

"Me velly much sulplisee!" murmured Wun Lung; and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the surprisefulness was terrific.

"Who are you?" demanded Wingate, looking sharply at the captain.

"I am Captain Firebrace."

Wingate frowned.

"Don't be an ass," he said. "That is the name of a smuggler who used to run cargoes in this cavern, a hundred years ago."

The skipper nodded.

"I have borrowed his name," he said. "My own need not trouble you. I am Captain Firebrace here. After all, one name is as good as another."

"Si, senior—si!" grinned Diego.

"Did you bring us here?" demanded Wingate.

"Ay, ay!"

"But how—why—"

"I guess you are surprised," grinned Captain Firebrace—to call him by the name he gave himself.

"I—I cannot understand it!" said Wingate in bewilderment. "The last thing I remember is being on the road, waiting for the cars to be repaired—"

"Naturally. Did you like the lemonade?"

"The lemonade?"

"Ay, ay!"

Wingate started, as a light flashed upon his mind.

"It was drugged!" he exclaimed.

"I guess so."

"You—you villain! You—"

"I guess it's no use wasting words," said the skipper

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ONE
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easily. "There was something in the lemonade, and you've only just woke up. It's all right; you're not going to be hurt—any of you."

"Do you mean to say that you drugged us to bring us here?" exclaimed Courtney.

"I guess so."

"Then those chauffeurs were in the plot!"

The skipper grinned.

"The chauffeurs who were sent with your cars are tied up in a shed, in a lonely place," he replied. "My men took their place and their clothes."

"Good heavens!"

"The breakdown was worked, and the lemonade was drugged—it was the easiest way to get you here!" the captain explained, with perfect coolness.

"You awful villain!" gasped Coker.

"Do you mean to say that you deliberately planned to kidnap the whole school?" shouted Wingate.

"I guess so."

"And we have done it," grinned Tadd.

"But—but what for?" demanded Wingate.

"You can't expect to keep us here."

"I guess that's just what I do expect," grinned the skipper.

"What? Two hundred and fifty of us?"

"Exactly."

"Do you think we shall let you?" roared Coker.

"I guess you can't help yourselves."

"Why, we'll smash you!" yelled Temple of the Fourth.

Captain Firebrace tapped his revolver with a significant gesture.

"If there is mutiny, the mutineers will get hurt," he said. "If there's trouble, my men have orders to shoot."

"Shoot!" gasped Wingate.

"Yep."

"Why, you scoundrel, do you understand that you're in England, not in the Rocky Mountains?" shouted the captain of Greyfriars.

"I guess I'm just as much master in this hyer cave as if I were in the Rocky Mountains," said the captain coolly.

"Look you, you couldn't get away, even if you could handle us, which you can't. You can only get out of this cave by water, and there is no craft excepting my launch. Anybody trying to board the launch will be shot dead, by my order."

"My hat!"

"The launch is guarded, and watch will be kept all the time," continued the captain. "You can see that you will not have a chance there."

The Greyfriars fellows stared blankly at the cool American.

What he said was perfectly true.

To attempt to leave the cave by swimming was to court death among the currents that wound and eddied outside the cave, among the sunken rocks at the base of the Shoulder.

A very powerful swimmer, who knew every inch of the bay, might have succeeded in doing it, but only at the risk of his life. And even so, he would have to elude the watch of the armed men on the launch.

Unless the kidnapped schoolboys could overcome the kidnappers in a struggle, it looked as if they would have to remain in the cave exactly as long as Captain Firebrace pleased, unless they were searched for and found.

"You see, I've got you where your hair is short," said the skipper with a grin. "And I warn you that my men have orders to use their firearms if needed."

"You dare not!"

"I guess you'll see if you give us any trouble."

"But what is this for?" shouted Wingate furiously. "Do you think you are going to get money for setting us free?"

"I reckon not."

"Then what is your object?"

"I want labour," explained the captain. "I'm searching for something in this cavern, and the whole place has got to be dug from end to end. It would take my men weeks and weeks to do it. But I couldn't hire a hundred labourers to come here—it would be talked of all over the country, and draw attention to the spot, I guess."

"I guess so!" grinned Tadd.

"I had thought of kidnapping a gang of fishermen from Pegg," went on the skipper. "But that was a little difficult, and might have been dangerous. But when I learned from a pleasant little chat with our fat young friend here about the excursion of a whole school to-day, I laid my plans accordingly. You need have no fear; you are not going to be hurt, any of you, unless you give trouble. But you are going to work."

"Work!" said Wingate dazedly.

"Yep."

"In what way?"

"Spades will be served out to you, and you will work in gangs under my men, acting as gangers. The whole cave

has to be dug up from end to end until I find what I want."

"And what are you looking for?"

"The treasure of Captain Firebrace."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Prisoners!

WINGATE started.

"The treasure of Captain Firebrace!" he repeated.

"The smuggler's treasure!"

"Yep."

"It does not exist; it is only a yarn," said the captain of Greyfriars.

The American skipper shook his head.

"It does exist, I guess, and it ain't only a yarn," he answered. "Captain Firebrace, who buried it here, was my grandfather."

"Phew!" said Bob Cherry.

"I had the story from my popper," continued the skipper. "I've waited a long time for a chance to hunt for it. I've made some money, and got together a heap of friends to help me, in the South Seas, and now we've come here to look for the treasure of old Firebrace. All I know of it is that it's buried in this cave somewhere. The cave seems to be a mile long one way, and split up in every direction, and the treasure may be buried in any corner of it. My men and I have been looking for it for some days, but I could see that we had no chance. We wanted a hundred diggers at least, keeping at it steadily all day. But as I've said, I couldn't bring gangs of labourers here. When the story got out, the authorities would be down on me here at once, and I should have been stopped. I guess that wasn't my game. You boys are going to do the digging; you'll take a spade apiece, and work in gangs."

"My hat!"

"When the treasure's found, you'll go free," said Captain Firebrace. "I guess it will be a pleasant change to you after school work—hey?"

"Do you think we shall put up with it?" demanded Wingate angrily.

"I guess you've got no choice in the matter."

"You cannot force us to work."

"If you refuse, I guess you will be flogged."

"What!"

"And you'll get no grub, either, unless you earn your rations."

Wingate was silent.

The power was in the hands of the lawless ruffian, and it certainly looked as if he would be able to have his way.

The Greyfriars fellows were amazed, but some of them, especially the fags, did not seem particularly downcast at the prospect of escaping school lessons for a few days.

To take orders from this gang of lawless rascals was not pleasant, doubtless, but it was a strange adventure, and a change from the Form-rooms at Greyfriars.

The seniors were furious enough.

But if the kidnappers meant to carry out the threat of using their weapons in case of a revolt, there was nothing that the prefects could do. Schoolboys with their bare fists could not face Lee-Metford rifles.

The skipper watched the changing expressions upon Wingate's face with grim amusement.

"I guess you'd better make up your minds to do what's wanted," he said. "You won't find me a hard master. The kid who finds the treasure will be given a handful of it for himself; I promise that."

"It's all rot; there's no treasure," said Courtney.

"I guess we'll see about that."

"I suppose you know you'll be arrested and put in prison for this, my man?" said George Wingate after a pause.

The American shrugged his shoulders.

"If I'm caught, very likely," he said. "But I'm risking that, I guess. I don't think your police will have much chance, though."

"We shall be searched for."

"Not in this cave, I guess."

Wingate's heart sank.

It was true enough. Who would dream of looking for the vanished schoolboys in the tide-hidden cavern under the Shoulder?

"I guess you know the lay-out now," said the skipper. "You're going to work here, under my men's orders, and you'll have your rations. You may have to stay here for weeks, or only for days, according to the time it takes to unearth the treasure. That's the programme. What have you got to say?"

Wingate gritted his teeth.

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"I don't quite know what to say, excepting that you are a rotten scoundrel," he said. "I don't believe you would dare to use those firearms either."

"Try us," said the skipper.

"You can't make us work, anyway."

"You won't get any rations unless you do."

"You dare not starve us."

The skipper grinned.

"You will see! The work will be ready to be started to-morrow morning. Every boy who is willing to work can come and say so, and he will be given rations for the day. All who are unwilling will be given nothing."

And with that the skipper stepped back upon the launch.

The Greyfriars fellows, all of whom were awake now, discussed the matter in unending amazement.

The extraordinary occurrence had thrown them quite off their balance, and it was a long time before they could grasp it and understand how matters stood.

For the short remainder of that day the kidnappers did not interfere with them.

The Greyfriars fellows were left to their own devices, the skipper probably being willing to allow them time to realise fully how helpless they were.

And they did realise it!

They explored the cave far and wide in the hope of finding some outlet other than by the opening on the sea, but they found it not.

They searched along the flooded portion of the cave for a boat, but there was no boat to be found. It was certain that other boats had been there, for so many boys could not have been brought to the cave in the launch alone. But they had come and gone; and the only vessel there now was the steam launch, crowded with armed ruffians.

It was an astounding state of affairs—a whole school kidnapped, and guarded by armed men, on the coast of law-abiding England, within a mile of their distracted headmaster.

It was so unheard of that, for that very reason, it was quite probable that Captain Firebrace and his gang would be able to carry the enterprise through successfully. No one could suspect what had happened.

The Head of Greyfriars, wherever he thought of searching for the missing school, would never dream of looking for them in the lonely sea caves.

Why should he?

He had doubtless heard the story of the hidden treasure of the smuggler of olden time, but he probably regarded it, like everyone else, as a fable.

That a gang of seafaring rascals had come to the bay to search for it, and that they had kidnapped a crowd of schoolboys to furnish the necessary labour in secret, was a thing the Head would not be likely to think of.

The search for the missing school would take all directions, but it was not likely to head for the caves under the towering Shoulder.

Wingate realised it; and he realised that the skipper was master of the situation, and that the only way of escape was by seizing the launch.

But that was impossible!

Rather than be taken prisoners themselves, the ruffians would certainly use their firearms, and the Greyfriars fellows were not prepared for bloodshed.

The rest of that strange and eventful day wore away.

Some of the fags were cheerful enough about the matter; but most of the Greyfriars fellows were angry, and ready for almost anything to deliver themselves from the hands of the kidnappers.

But there seemed to be no resource.

By night they were hungry; but nobody had as yet applied for rations. But as the night passed the hungriest fellows, realising that they would have to give in, made a virtue of necessity and asked for food, promising to work on the morrow in return.

Billy Bunter was the first, and others soon followed his example; and nearly the whole of the kidnapped school had taken the same line before midnight.

Wingate was the last to give in.

The captain of Greyfriars felt the humiliation of his position keenly. But it could not be helped.

They were in the hands of the enemy, and unless fortune turned up a card in their favour there was nothing for it but to make the best of the position.

The fellows slept in the sand of the cave that night, as comfortably as in their beds in the school dormitories.

In slumber they were able to forget their strange position, and the disastrous ending to the day's excursion so gaily planned by Lord Mauleverer & Co.

But the day came at last—the dawn of a strange day for the boys of Greyfriars!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's
number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

THE clang of a bell from the launch awakened the Greyfriars boys.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's rising-bell!" said Bob Cherry.

He sat up in the sand and rubbed his eyes.

Through a deep fissure in the rocky arch overhead the sunrays were streaming down into the great cavern and glimmering in a dim light even in the recesses.

The Greyfriars fellows rose.

Some of them bathed in the outer cave, and others dressed without taking that trouble.

Breakfast was handed out from the launch—coffee and crackers and cold boiled bacon—a substantial breakfast enough.

Then Captain Firebrace pointed to a pile of spades that had been landed from the launch.

"There's your tools!" he remarked.

"I guess you take the giddy biscuit, you do!" said Fisher T. Fish, the American boy in the Remove, evidently greatly admiring his enterprising fellow-countrymen. "I guess you prance off with the whole cake factory!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You can't deny that it's mighty slick, Cherry," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it's the slickest thing I ever heard of."

"It will land that rotter slick into prison, I hope!" said Frank Nugent.

Fisher T. Fish shook his head wisely.

"I guess not," he said. "The skipper has got his head screwed on the right way. You watch out for him. Yep!"

After breakfast work began.

It was work very different from what the Greyfriars fellows were accustomed to.

Spades were handed to them, and they were divided into gangs of a dozen each, and set to work in different parts of the cavern, each gang under the superintendence of one of the gang of Captain Firebrace.

The work was enormous.

The whole of the great cavern was evidently to be explored, and the surface dug to a considerable depth, in search of the hidden guineas of the old smugglers.

Captain Firebrace appeared to be quite assured that the treasure was there; and, doubtless, if the old smuggler captain was truly his grandfather, as he had declared, he possessed some proof which he had not communicated to the Greyfriars fellows.

But if he was certain that the treasure was buried in the cave, he certainly did not know which part of the cave.

The whole of the surface was marked out in sections to be excavated, and as fast as one section was completed it was refilled, in order that the next might be begun.

The Greyfriars boys worked away the whole morning.

Then there was a rest for dinner.

The same fare that had been given out for breakfast was supplied for dinner, with the addition of duff from the launch.

The schoolboys ate with a good appetite—especially Bunter.

But the unaccustomed work was making the fellows very tired, and some of them very cross.

Coker & Co., and some of the Removites, who had lately been doing a good deal of gardening, took it better than the rest. But even Coker was tired, and he growled when the bell went again at two o'clock for a resumption of labour.

"I'm jolly well not going to stand much more of this!" he said to Potter.

Potter nodded sympathetically.

"I'm tired to death," he confided.

"Same here!" growled Greene. "This is worse than gardening!"

"I wonder what the Head's thinking about it?" said Bob Cherry, as he took up his spade. "He would be surprised if he could see us now."

"Yes, rather!"

"The surprisefulness would be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My own great surprisefulness is still very terrific."

"Now then, senioritos, it is time to work!" called out Diego.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bob Cherry.

The Spanish seaman grinned. He did not seem to mind Bob Cherry's reply.

"Work, seniors," he said.

And the Greyfriars fellows recommenced their weary labour.

When night fell they were tired out, from Wingate of the Sixth to the youngest fag. They ate their supper, and slept again in the sand.

"How do you feel, Harry?" asked Nugent, as they lay down in the soft sand in the darkness of the cave, broken feebly by the lights of the launch.

Wharton grunted.

"Jolly fagged!" he said.

"Same here!"

"They must be searching for us," said Johnny Bull; "the

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whole countryside will be up about the disappearance of the school."

"The upfulness will be terrific."

"But they haven't found us," growled Bob Cherry; "and it looks to me as if they won't find us. We shall find the treasure first."

"Oh, blow the treasure!" said Bolsover major.

"Yaas, begad!"

"We haven't found that yet—the skipper said it might take weeks," said Harry Wharton. "We've been hard at it for a whole day, but we haven't done a tenth part of the work yet."

"We're jolly well not going to stop here for weeks!"

"Wingate's getting awfully wild," Nugent remarked. "I believe he's got some scheme in his head of going for the rotters."

"There will be trouble. I believe they will shoot, if they think it's needed."

"I guess it's no good," said Fisher T. Fish. "The skipper is too slick for you. It will take you Britishers a long time to get over a sharp American, you bet!"

"Look here, Fishy!"

"Jevver get left!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, go to sleep!" growled Bob Cherry, in disgust.

And the Removites settled down to slumber.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton Makes a Discovery.

THE next day and the day after passed, and another and another day.

There was no change in the aspect of matters in the hidden cave by the sea, under the great rocks of the Shoulder.

In the outer world, Greyfriars was deserted; and the Head and the masters and the police and crowds of other searchers sought far and wide for the kidnapped school.

But they found them not.

In the smugglers' cave the Greyfriars boys remained in the hands of the kidnappers, and worked all day under the eyes of their taskmasters.

They were growing more and more restive daily under the labour and the imprisonment in the cave.

Wingate and some of the seniors had made a desperate attempt to seize the launch in the darkness on the third night, and had been seized themselves, and were kept bound prisoners there the whole of the next day.

The lesson was enough for the kidnapped schoolboys.

Their captors were on the watch, and shots had been fired, though fortunately no one had been hit—it had not been necessary; but had the schoolboy attack shown any sign of succeeding, there was no doubt that the kidnappers would have resorted to bloodshed.

Working under the orders of the taskmasters was better than that, as the fellows realised, and there were no more outbreaks.

Wingate and his comrades, after a whole day spent in bonds, without food, were not inclined to risk it again on a hopeless chance.

It seemed that the kidnapped school were hopelessly at the mercy of the kidnappers. Their only hope was in rescue from outside.

But nearly a week had passed and there was no sign of rescue.

The launch had gone out into the bay several times during the week, doubtless for provisions and information, but no one in Pegg suspected the business of the American skipper.

And when the launch was absent, a dozen armed men always remained there in the cave to watch the prisoners; and if they had been overcome there was no means of leaving the cave save by swimming.

And a swimmer, even if he escaped alive from the dangerous currents at the base of the Shoulder, had to cross the bay to get to the shore for help.

It was a task that would have taxed the greatest strength, and the fellows regarded it as hopeless to think of.

But the thought was working in Harry Wharton's mind.

The imprisonment in the smugglers' cave was growing intolerable.

The supposed treasure had not been discovered, though by this time a good half of the floor of the cavern had been excavated and thoroughly explored to a good depth.

Some of the kidnappers themselves seemed to be losing their faith in the accuracy of their captain's information, though Captain Firebrace never showed any signs of doubt.

As for the Greyfriars boys, they regarded the whole matter in the light of a wild-goose chase; and, indeed, it was one of their consolations to reflect that the treasure-hunters were destined to be disappointed.

Harry Wharton & Co. were working in a gang under the keen eye of Diego, the Spaniard, on the Monday of the new week, when Harry uttered a suppressed exclamation.

Bob Cherry glanced at him.

Harry Wharton's eyes were gleaming with a strange light.

"What is it, Harry?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Hush!"

"But, I say——"

"Mum's the word!" whispered Harry.

Bob Cherry nodded. He noticed that Wharton, instead of digging on in the same spot, was shovelling the sand so as to make it deeper there.

It was not till they knocked off for supper that Wharton found an opportunity of explaining, unheard by the kid-nappers.

"What was it, Harry?" Bob asked, after a glance round to make sure that none of the rascals were within hearing.

Wharton glanced round, too, and lowered his voice. The Co. had drawn apart from the other fellows.

"My spade touched something solid under the sand," whispered Wharton. "I think it was a chest."

"Phew!"

"The treasure!" murmured Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Yes; I think it's very likely," he whispered. "But those scoundrels are not going to have it. They've no right to it; the right is to the finder, and I found it."

"Quite right!" said Bob.

"Oh, of course, we're all together in this!" said Harry. "I don't claim more than the other fellows, but I mean those kidnapping rascals are not entitled to anything. Even if the treasure were theirs, by enslaving us in this way they give us the right to take it if we can. We're in a state of war here."

"But they'll jolly well take it, all the same," said Bob.

"Yes—if they find it. They haven't found it yet," said Harry. "That's why I said nothing. I'm going to look to-night, when they're asleep, and make sure of what it is."

"Good!"

"But if they had it, Harry, they'd set us free," said Nugent.

"Do we want them to escape, after seizing us like this and making slaves of us?" asked Wharton.

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"The nofearfulness is terrific."

"But——" began Bob.

"I've got an idea in my head," said Harry, in a low tone. "I've been thinking of it for a good while, and now I've made this discovery I am going to try it."

"What's that?"

"Swim out of the cave at night."

Bob Cherry gasped.

"You ass! You'll be drowned!"

"I'm a good swimmer, Bob. You know I swam off once round the rocks here, and came through it all right. Of course, it's rather thick undertaking it in the dark. I know it will be risky."

"It's death!" muttered Nugent, with pale lips.

Wharton shook his head.

"I believe there's a good chance," he said.

"But—but——"

"If I could get through I could get to Greyfriars and tell the Head. The Revenue officers along the coast and the police could get here together and nail these scoundrels," said Harry. "As for their revolvers, they wouldn't dare to use them when they were certain to be captured. If the entrance to the cave were covered by a gunboat, there would be no escape for them, you see."

"By Jove, no! They'd be shut up here."

"I'm going to try it."

"It's frightfully dangerous," said Nugent uneasily.

"But I think I can do it."

"Well, if you've made up your mind——"

"I have," said Harry, with a smile.

And there was no further argument on the subject. When Harry Wharton had determined upon a thing, argument was not of much use. And, as a matter of fact, he had a good chance of success. He was a splendid swimmer, and if anyone there could accomplish the dangerous task, it was



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Harry Wharton. And any of the Greyfriars fellows would have been willing to run some risk rather than allow the kidnappers to succeed in their rascally scheme. After having slaved at the orders of their taskmasters for a weary week, it would have been too bitter to see them take the treasure and sail away scot-free with it.

Little more was said on the subject during the evening for fear of eavesdroppers. It was not till a late hour, when all the schoolboys were asleep and the kidnappers had retired to the launch, that Harry Wharton crept away to the spot where he had been at work during the day.

He descended into the excavation, and groped in the sand with his hands, dragging it aside, and feeling for the shape of the hard object his spade had struck.

He made out easily the form of a great chest clamped and banded with iron, so deeply and firmly embedded in the sand that it could not be moved a fraction of an inch.

Wharton, breathing hard, drew himself out of the excavation.

He had no doubt now of the accuracy of Captain Firebrace's information. The treasure was there. But the kidnappers should not touch it, if he could help it. Even if the skipper was, as he claimed, the grandson of the original Captain Firebrace, he had no claim to the treasure, which had been won by the lawless deeds of its former possessor. It was "treasure trove" in law; it belonged to the finders, minus the Government percentage.

Wharton heaped sand thicker and thicker upon the chest, and retired from the spot as cautiously as he had approached it, and returned to where he had left his chums.

The Co. were awake and awaiting him eagerly.

"Well?" whispered Bob Cherry.

"I was right."

"Good egg!"

"And now I'm going," said Harry. "Good-bye, old kids! I'll be back soon, I hope, with help enough to make all these rascals prisoners and give them what they deserve."

"Let's come as far as the water with you," said Nugent.

"No. They might hear something. Better stay here."

"I don't like to let you go, Harry."

Wharton laughed.

"I shall be all right," he said.

He stripped off his clothes, with the exception of his underclothing, and left his boots and cap. Then he made his way silently and cautiously down to the water.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Risk of His Life.

LIGHTS were gleaming through the cavern from the little deck of the launch.

Harry Wharton stood upon the edge of the sea as it lapped there at his feet, and gazed at the lighted launch.

The Spanish seaman, Diego Diaz, was the only man visible there, and he was tramping up and down, with a rifle in the hollow of his arm.

If he was keeping a keen look out the swimmer could hardly hope to pass him unseen, but it was a risk that had to be run.

Wharton set his teeth, and stepped into the shallow water. The cold contact sent a shiver through him. The tide was not at the full, but in the outer cave it had risen almost to the top of the low arch of rock that fronted the sea. The launch could not leave the cave till the tide went down, and if Harry Wharton gained the opening, pursuit was impossible, excepting by swimming, and no one among the gang of kidnappers was likely to try that.

Wharton skirted the side of the cavern where the water lapped the perpendicular rock, and swam softly towards the opening.

He felt, rather than heard or saw, a sudden movement of the Spaniard on the launch.

There was a shout.

"Senorito!"

Wharton gritted his teeth.

He was seen.

He swam on fiercely, realising now that life itself was at stake. He heard a click from the launch in the deep silence, and a savage yell.

"Come back, fool, or I shoot!"

Wharton swam on desperately.

Crack!

The foreign ruffian was as good as his word.

The report of the rifle rang in deafening echoes through the cavern, rolling back in reverberating waves of sound.

Something struck the side of the cave within a couple of feet of the swimming junior, and glanced off into the water.

Crack, crack!

Ping, ping!

Two more shots, and one whizzed so close to the swimmer that he felt the wind of it on his wet face.

Then a desperate stroke carried him out under the low arch of rock at the mouth of the cave, and the launch disappeared.

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NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
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ONE
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appeared behind him, only a loud echo of shouting following the brave lad into the darkness.

Crack, crack!

Bullets struck the water behind him.

But he was safe now.

He swam out of the low arch of rock, the rocks above only a foot from his head; but the shadow over him disappeared at last, and stars gleamed out upon him.

He was in the open bay at last.

There he paused, treading water, to recover his breath. He looked back at the cave he had left. The opening was like a narrow black shadow on the water, and from it came a confused echo of sounds.

Harry Wharton's heart was beating like a hammer.

He had had a fearfully narrow escape, and he knew it. But his task remained yet to be done.

He regained his breath, and swam away along the cliff for some distance, and then struck off for the shore where lay the village of Pegg.

The night was dark, but stars gleamed in the sky, and showed up faintly the line of the cliffs, and he caught the glimmer of a lighthouse lantern in the distance.

It gave him his bearings, and he swam steadily on.

There was no sign of pursuit.

Until the tide was lower—which would not be till morning, for it was still rising—the launch could not leave the cave.

Wharton swam steadily, keeping his strength, and slowly crossed the glimmering bay towards the fishing village.

Strong and steady as he was, it was a terrible task.

Once a whirling current caught him among the sunken rocks, upon which many a good ship had come to grief in stormy weather. But he extricated himself, and gained at last the safety of the smooth and open bay.

It remained then a matter of strength and endurance, and he believed that he was equal to the strain.

He swam on silently and steadily under the stars.

He felt his strength going, and still the shore seemed fearfully distant.

But at last sand crumbled under his feet, and with a last effort he dragged himself ashore.

He sank down upon the shingle, exhausted, and lay for some time breathing heavily, with the water dripping from his limbs.

Then at last he dragged himself to his feet, and staggered wearily to the door of the nearest fisherman's cottage.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head is Surprised.

IT was about an hour later that there was a terrific peal at the bell at the gates of Greyfriars School.

Gosling started out of his slumber, and rose grumbling.

Ting-ting-ting-ting!

"Orright!" growled Gosling. "In a 'urry, ain't yer? Well, wait, then. What I says is this 'ere—you wait till I've got into me trousis, anyhow."

Ting-ting-ting-ting!

Gosling growled his way down to the gates.

He uttered an exclamation of amazement as the light of his lantern, shining through the bars of the gate, fell upon a strange figure without.

It was Harry Wharton of the Remove.

He was bareheaded, and wore a fisherman's oilskin clothes and heavy boots, and he was panting for breath. Gosling almost dropped his lantern at the startling apparition.

"Master Wharton!" he gasped.

"Yes, Gossy; here I am. Open the gate—quick!"

"My honly 'at!" said the porter. "'Ow did you come here?"

"Let me in!"

"Where have you been, Master Wharton?"

"Open the gate!" roared Harry.

Gosling swung the gate open, and Wharton rushed in.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—" began Gosling.

But Harry Wharton did not wait to hear what he said. He passed Gosling like the wind, and raced away towards the School House.

In five minutes more Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch, in their dressing-gowns, were down in the hall, and Harry Wharton was giving them a breathless and excited description of what had happened to Lord Mauleverer's excursion party.

The masters listened in blank amazement.

Mr. Prout and Mr. Capper joined them, and Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, and they heard the recital with astonishment and wonder.

"Extraordinary!" gasped the Head.

"Amazing!"

"Mon Dieu! It is zat it is meeraculous!" said Monsieur Charpentier.

"And you swam out of the cave to come here?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"It was a terrible risk to run."

"I came through it all right, sir."

"And you say they fired on you?" exclaimed the Head.

"Yes, sir. One bullet at least went very close. The other fellows won't know whether I was hit or not; they'll be awfully anxious about me."

"Their minds will soon be relieved," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "The police and the coastguards will soon account for these scoundrels, unless they make their escape before they can be captured."

"They can't get out of the cave before morning, sir," said Harry gleefully. "The tide is in. The mouth of the cave is very low down, you see—it rises higher inside. They can't get out till after the turn of the tide; it won't be low enough before daylight."

"Excellent!"

"There is no time to be lost," said Dr. Locke. "You had better go to bed, Wharton—"

"May I go with the police, sir, when they go?" asked Harry. "I should like to see the finish, sir; and—and I believe I have discovered the treasure. I partly uncovered a big sea-chest to-day, digging in the sand."

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Well, if you are not too fatigued—"

"Oh, not at all, sir! I'm as right as rain!" said Harry eagerly. "When I've changed into some decent clothes, I shall be all right."

"Very well; you shall go," said the Head, with a kind smile. "You certainly deserve it, Wharton, after what you have done." He turned to the Form-masters: "And now, gentlemen, there is not a moment to be lost."

And not a moment was lost.

In the earliest grey of dawn, less than six hours after Harry Wharton's escape, a gunboat was floating outside the tide-covered mouth of the cavern, crowded with police ready to deal with Captain Firebrace & Co. as soon as the tide was low enough to allow them to get at the gang of kidnappers.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Golden Guineas.

It was a night of fearful anxiety for all in the smuggler's cave.

Harry Wharton's chums had heard the shots, and whether the captain of the *Remove* had succeeded in escaping or not they did not know.

The thought that perhaps the body of the brave junior had sunk in the flooded outer cave, riddled by bullets, turned them almost sick with horror and dread.

And the anxiety of the kidnappers was almost equally great.

For they did not know either whether Diego's bullets had found a billet, and whether the bold swimmer had perished, or whether he had escaped to bring them to justice.

Captain Firebrace and his men passed an anxious and sleepless night. Even if justice was now stretching out its hand for them, they could not escape; they could not leave the cave till the tide went down.

When dawn glimmered through the great fissure overhead into the cave all were awake, and keenly on the watch.

The Greyfriars fellows all knew of Harry Wharton's bold attempt by this time, and they shared the anxiety of his chums.

With the morning light the tide began to go down.

The opening at the extremity of the outer cave reappeared from under the water, and grew larger and larger as the level of the sea declined.

Lower went the water, and all eyes were bent upon the opening with the keenest anxiety. The schoolboys hoped, and the kidnappers feared, to see boats enter there.

There was a sudden yell from Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah! They're coming!"

"Begad! Yaas!"

"Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

A boat had appeared in the opening as soon as the water was low enough to allow it to pass in without bumping the heads of the crew on the rock overhead.

It was a big boat, rowed by sailormen of the Royal Navy, with armed marines and police crammed into it.

There was a groan of despair from the kidnappers on the launch.

They had their weapons in their hands, but they were not disposed to begin a sanguinary conflict which could only end in defeat and the hangman's rope for all of them.

Inspector Grimes stood up in the boat with a warrant in his chubby hand and a grin of satisfaction upon his fat face.

"Lay down your arms," he said grimly, "in the name of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 236.

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"TOM MERRY & CO. IN IRELAND!"

the King! There is a gunboat outside, and you cannot get away. If a single shot is fired you will take the consequences."

Captain Firebrace gritted his teeth.

"I guess the game's up!" he remarked.

And he threw his revolver into the water.

The police boarded the launch, and the sullen, savage kidnappers were quickly disarmed and secured.

"I guess we've got you this time, skipper," grinned Harry Wharton.

Captain Firebrace shrugged his shoulders, and the handcuffs on his wrists clinked.

"I guess so," he said. "I never reckoned you'd try that dodge on me—I never calculated a swimmer could get out alive. It must have been touch and go, I guess."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It was," he said. "It may be a comfort to you to know that we've got the treasure, too. I found it yesterday."

The skipper drew a deep breath.

"Done!" he said. "Dished and done! I give up!"

Harry Wharton leaped ashore, and his chums rushed to greet him, and they fairly hugged him in their delight.

The smugglers' cave resounded with wild cheering.

The kidnapped schoolboys made the hollows of the old Shoulder ring again.

"Hurrah!"

"But the treasure!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on!"

Several of the juniors seized spades and rushed away towards the buried chest. They uncovered it in a few minutes, exposing to view a huge sea-chest, barred and clamped with iron. But the woodwork was rotten from its long burial, and crashing blows from the spades burst the lid into fragments.

Crash—crash!

"It's open!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Golden guineas!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yaas, begad!"

It was true enough.

Inside the big chest many things were packed of various kinds, and among the rest were several bags of old guineas bearing the effigies of their Majesties George III. and George IV.

The blows of the spades had broken open the bags, and the golden coins rained down in the sand.

The juniors gathered them up eagerly, and they were stacked up and counted.

"One thousand!" said Harry Wharton at last. "The story ran that there were ten thousand golden guineas buried here, but, after all—"

"One thousand is jolly decent," grinned Bob Cherry. "The story grew, and the guineas didn't, that's the reason."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Captain Firebrace and his friends went to prison on the charge of kidnapping, as certainly they richly deserved.

And after many legal delays the discovered guineas were handed over to the finders, and, as Bob Cherry put it, they made a handsome "whack" all round for the schoolboys who had been kidnapped in the cave, and had been the means of discovering them.

And so, after all, it had to be admitted that Lord Mauleverer's excursion had been a great success, for its ultimate result had been that the smugglers' treasure had been discovered, and it was won, not by the kidnappers, but by the kidnapped school!

THE END.

FOR NEXT WEEK!

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

by FRANK RICHARDS.

Is the Title of Next Week's Splendid, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., and Fisher T. Fish at Greyfriars.

Also next week, a thrilling instalment of "TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE."

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

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, conjurer 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'll 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.

Such is Nathan Gore's cunning, however, that they are unable to overtake him, though pressing him hard. The mad millionaire flees to Prince Miguel Ollenorff, an old enemy of Ferrers Lord, and plots with him to wait in ambush for the party, which is being guided by a gipsy lad through the forest belonging to the Russian prince. This boy rushes into the undergrowth in pursuit of a wild boar, and a second later a shot is heard, and a dozen Russians surround Ferrers Lord and his party.

('Now go on with the story.)

Baffled Rage—Good Fare and Fun in the Servants' Quarters
—Barry Breaks into Verse.

Nathan Gore choked back a sigh of rage as he saw Ferrers Lord unharmed. He dared not shoot again, though his foe was not ten paces away. And then, hat in hand, smiling like the hypocrite he was, Prince Miguel bowed to the English millionaire.

"This is indeed a pleasant surprise!" he said. "I had heard you were travelling in Russia, but I little dreamed that my benefactor would honour my poor estate with a visit."

Ferrers Lord bowed coldly.

"Have you had any luck, prince?" he asked.

"Not yet. One of those fools exploded his gun, and I suppose the report has frightened the boar."

"He sent his ball unpleasantly close."

"The dog! I'll knout carefulness into him! Wait! Is that a call?"

They heard the faint notes of a bugle. The prince answered them with his hunting-horn.

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NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"To the left into the long ride!" he cried. "We may yet show your Excellency sport. Let go the dogs!"

Freed from the leash, the great brutes sprang away.

"Will your Excellency take a rifle?"

"No, thank you," said Ferrers Lord.

"But this one is terribly fierce! He has ripped up many dogs, and killed a peasant-woman!"

"Give my friend, his Highness Ching-Lung, a spear," said Ferrers Lord.

Ching-Lung's eyes sparkled as he seized the powerful weapon. Uninvited, he sprang upon the pony that Nathan Gore had ridden. The baying of dogs and the shouts of the beaters grew louder and nearer as they ran down the glade. The dogs had found their quarry.

"What a fuss over killin' a poor little porrk!" said Barry, quite as excited as anyone. "Whoy, me uncle, Dinnis O'Rorke, wud kill forty in a day widout winkin', and salt them down aftherwards. Arrah! His was the porrk sausages to make yer mouth wather! Av Oi cud be hanged wid a string of thim, Oi'd doi laughin' loike a mealy potatoer

in a hot oven! Stick him in the neck, Mither Ching, while Oi howld his tail! There isn't a pig on airth whose tail Oi couldn't howld! Oi'll grab him whin he comes—"

"Look out!" cried the Russian.

Barry glanced at the boar for the tenth part of a second. Its great bristly head, its flapping ears, its bloodshot eyes, and murderous, flashing tusks showed through the bushes.

"Murder!" howled the Irishman.

He gave up every notion of "howldin'" that pig's tail, and, turning tail himself, scuttled up a tree. The boar burst into the clearing, the dogs tearing at its flanks. Prince Miguel, rifle in hand, coolly pulled at his moustache and watched Ching-Lung. The terrified pony was wheeling and plunging.

"I had better shoot, Excellency, I think," said the Russian. "That pony will throw your friend, and the boar will certainly kill him."

"Shooting boars is not what we consider sport," said Ferrers Lord drily. "It is the risk that adds zest to sport. Save your bullets. Perhaps his Highness will be able to teach us something."

As if by magic, Ching-Lung had the pony under control. One dog lay torn and dead. Sheltered behind the trunks, the beaters were yelling to keep the boar from charging out of the glade. The pony dashed forward, and Ching-Lung leaned low in the saddle. He seemed to graze the boar. Like a flash his body rose erect in the saddle, and fell. The spear-head shone like a streak of silver, and sank deep in between the shoulder-blades of the boar.

The boar sank upon its knees. Round came the pony. Two strong yellow hands whipped out the spear. The brute rose, tottering and bleeding, and charged down upon the Russian. He turned to run, but tripped and fell. Ching-Lung rolled from the pony, between man and beast, and met the terrible charge. The spear sank to the shaft, and the boar dropped, writhing. Ching-Lung was flung back by the shock, and dropped across the prince's body.

As he staggered up, he saw a packet lying on the grass. There was some gold lettering upon it which caught his quick eye. He deftly pocketed his find, and wiped his forehead.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried the men.

"Hooray!" sang out Barry from his perch. "Oi always did say he ought to have been a porrk-butcher!"

The Russian brushed his clothes, and thanked Ching-Lung in well-chosen terms.

"They were two neat strokes, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "This is a bigger gentleman than any we found near Kwai-Hal. Have we taught you anything, Prince Miguel?"

"You have only increased my respect for the rifle, Excellency," answered the Russian. "It is safer. You will be my guests, I trust."

Ferrers Lord was about to refuse. He had no suspicion of treachery. He saw Ching-Lung's hand move in an odd manner that was clearly a signal.

"My movements are uncertain, prince," he said; "but we will remain a short time, at least."

"I am overjoyed, Excellency!"

As they returned to the castle, the millionaire and Ching-Lung fell behind.

"Why do you want to stay, Ching?"

"Because I have found something," whispered Ching-Lung—"something queer, old chap."

"Found what?"

"A pocket-book dropped by our Russian friend. It's crammed with English banknotes, and bears the name of a dear friend in gold letters—'F. Nathan Gore.'"

Ferrers Lord did not start.

"Oh!" he said enigmatically. "That is indeed a curiosity. But it is even more curious to be the guests of the nephew of Michael Scaroff."

Barry, Gan, Joe, Thomas Prout, and Benjamin Maddock found the servants' quarters of the Castle of Matrinsk much to their liking. The prince had given orders to treat them nobly, and the culinary department produced something like a Lord Mayor's banquet. They did not give the food much chance of going bad. After his fifth attack on a venison-pasty—a pasty almost the size of a bath—Barry sadly laid down his knife and fork.

"What a thing eating is to take away yer appetite!" he sighed.

"Dreadful!" said Prout sympathisingly. "I want some o' that yaller cheese and watercress, but I'll ha' to give it up. How are you goin', Joe?"

"I've fell at the roast gander," said Joe.

"Pass him here, den, Josey!" grinned Gan-Waga. "Me butterful 'ungrys stills. Oh, lubly joyfulness, ain't hims brown and fatness? I hab some ob dat gold stuff wid him."

"That's marmalade!" gasped Prout. "Ugh, you pig!"

The sight of Gan-Waga dipping a drumstick into the marmalade and eating the mixture with a glowing face that

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spoke of utter bliss, was much more than they could bear. They flung a dozen bones at him and hastily left the table. Prout happened to look back. Gan was adding pepper, salt, vinegar, and mustard to the choice dish.

"By hokey," muttered the steersman, "if he can do that and live, his blessed hinside must be copper-sheathed and riveted, and pertected wi' ingyrubber! By hokey—by ho-key! A Belleville biler couldn't stand it! Look at him, Barry!"

"Bedad, he reminds me av the bhoys," said Barry—"the young gint who

"Looked all koind of dishes,
Mixin' troipe and little fishes.
He wance throied throat and marmalade,
And sponge-cake spread wid musthard;
But moighty sick that bhoys was made
Wid vinegar and custhard!"

"Lit him alone! Lit him alone! We'll bury him darrkly at dead of noight, and engrave on his tombstone, wid many tears and a cowlid chisel: 'He did not ate to live, but ate to doie. Don't sthop to git yer fate wet, sthranger, but pass boy. His name was Gan, you'll understand. He died of eatin' jam wid gander.'"

However, Gan did not die. He joined them, looking quite as healthy, if not more healthy, than usual. They strolled out into the park. A little black-browed man—one of the prince's valets, hurried after them.

"Sye!" he called.

"That's the Seven Dials accent," said Joe. "That's a cockney, my lads. He's a Londoner, I'll bet. Hallo!"

The little man ran up.

"Hallo, nine-foot-thirteen!" said Prout. "How's yer mother? Does she still wheel that apple-barrer in the White-chapel Road? By hokey, they was apples, too—all apple and no pips! I've bought pecks of 'em!"

The little man began to bristle. Barry seized him lovingly by the hand.

"Tom," he cried, "ut's Bill! Oh, Bill, how are yez? Ut does me hearrt good to gaze wid oies dim and wet wid joy into yer smollin' counting-house! Joe, ut's Bill—ut's our Bill!"

"Don't know him," grinned Joe.

"What," cried Barry, in amaze, "not know Bill, whose mother did our washin'?"

"To be sure!" said Joe.

"The very chap!" said Maddock.

"Bill, by hokey!" chuckled Prout.

Barry took out a pocket-book, and opened it before the little man, who was boiling with rage, purple, and then nearly black, with passion.

"And that reminds me, Bill," he went on quickly. "There's a few things down here we've missed, and we'd take ut koindly av yez 'ud wrote to yer mother to sind them back." Then he pretended to read from an imaginary list. "Not returned from the wash boy Mrs Sudslosh—noine pairs of socks, embroidered in blue-green silk, wid satin heels and velvet toes, the property of Barry O'Rooney, Esquire; foive flannel shirts, wid calico frills, linen cuffs, and raal pearl buttons, hall-marked roight through, all the property of the above distinguished gintleman, who is distantly related to the R'yal Family through Adam and Eve; also, wan shirr, in rags (the only wan he ever had), belongin' to Mither Prout; wan duster, wid a hole in the middle, used about iv'ry foive year boy Mither Gan-Waga as a pocket-handkerchief; wan collar (a donkey-collar), worn on Sundays boy Ben Maddock, who only missed bein' a dook because he wasn't the ildest son of wan whin his fayer doied. Further—Dear, dear, are yez taken bad?"

The little man was red in the face, crimson, purple, and then nearly black with passion.

"Y-y-you—you—you—" he spluttered.

"U, v, w, x, y, z, a, b, c," said Joe gently.

"Y-y-you—"

"Whisht!" said Barry. "Whisht! Ut's a fit comin' on! Bill darlint—Bill, don't doie! At last, Oi beg. Oi intrate, give us the addhreses of yer mother afore yez turns up yer toes! Think, think"—Barry's voice was full of tears—"think what ut wud mane av we lost the garrmints! Think of Mither Prout widout a shirr! Think of me, related, through Adam and Eve, to the R'yal Family, widout a shirr or socks! Don't doie yet—don't die! Whisper ut—where does she live?"

"Y-y-you—y-y-y—" spat the valet. "Oh, y-y-y-you—"

And then the little man, wild with wrath, shook both clenched fists at them, gnashed his teeth, folded his arms like a Napoleon, and strode back to the house.

"Tell yer ma not to forget, Bill!" shouted Barry.

And then they looked at each other and roared as they slapped Barry on the back.

GET YOUR CHUM TO BUY THE "MAGNET!"

"Me nots see the jokes," said Gan. "What's him alls about?"

"It's yer poor knowledge of English," explained Joe, with a grin. "Barry was a treat. He was just chaffin', you see, and fine he did it. Haw, haw! Y-y-y-you!"

"But s'poses de chap bringing order from de boss or Chingy?"

Prout smote his thigh.

"By hokey," he said, "I never thought! That's a true word, fatty. I thought he was just goin' to pal on, and, if he had took his chaff and chaffed back, we'd ha' had him. I like a chap who don't get riled at a bit of jokin'."

"Me not like him mug!" growled Gan. "I go and asks Mr. Rupert or my Chingy."

"His Chingy!" sniffed Maddock. "I reckon he owns him!"

"I guess his Highness reckons he owns Gan, anyway," said Joe. "They're a brace of 'all-marked' uns."

Gan could go when the other men hung back; for, as Prout put it, "the iceberg had the whole run of the ship." He walked direct into the dining-room where Prince Miguel and his guests were lunching. He returned with a smile on his face and a plate of strawberry ice in his hand.

"Good 'nough—butterful!" he gurgled. "We go fishesing for pikeses in de lake. Dere rods and boatmans, and we hab tea and 'joys ourselves. Chingy him say so. And dere some nasty stuffs comin'."

"What's that?"

"Nasty whisky."

"Gan," said Barry, pressing a kiss on Gan's brow, "we all luvs yez!"

Tells of Some Queer Fishing, in which Ching-Lung got Badly Hooked.

The men went off in high spirits, and quickly reached the lake. It looked a likely place for fish. Joe, who professed to be a great angler, said there ought to be pike in it as high as Nelson's column.

Two boats were ready in charge of two bewhiskered Russians. The rods were up, the bait-cans held a stock of dace and gudgeon, and Barry took care to be sure that the whisky had not got mislaid. They christened one boatman "Whiskery Willy" and the other "Hairy Harry," and the boatmen answered to their titles without demur.

"Now for fish!" said Barry. "Oi bet me socks Oi catch the biggest! Push off, Whiskery Will. Oi app'int meself captain of this good and thrue ship, and me wurd is law."

"And I'll boss this one," said Joe. "Look here, Gan, you sit near the whisky. You can't trust Ben. There's greed in his gooseberry orb now. Push off, Hairy Harry! Let her go!"

The boats pulled out together. The baits were put on the hooks, and the heavy green and white floats went bobbing about the surface of the water. Fishing with live bait for pike did not satisfy Joe. He preferred to troll, and his skill in sending the artificial dace spinning across the lake excited universal admiration.

It looked easy—so easy that Barry thought he would try. At the very first attempt he ravelled himself up in about fifty feet of line, and got the hooks so firmly fixed in the seat of his trousers that they had to be cut out. There was a smile on the face of Whiskery Willy that would have stopped a train.

"Ut's a bad rod and a bad reel!" growled the disgusted Irishman. "What can yez ixpect from Russia? Oi niver seed sich a spalpeen of a thing. Arrah, but that was a raal rod me ould Uncle Dinnis had when Oi was a bhoys. Shure, the silver, limpid river ran past the window of the castle, and many's the mornin' we'd lave thim winders open to let the salmon jump in from the sthrane afther the floies that walked about the ceilin'."

"I'm a bit of a liar myself," said Prout, "but that floors me."

"Wud yez accuse me of tillin' an ontruth, Thomas Prout?"

"Oh, no," answered Prout, "not on any account, I wouldn't."

"Oi'm glad of that—moighty glad of ut. Ut saves on-plesantness. Wance more yez have saved yer loife, Tom. Whiskery William, may I ax yez to stick another gudgeon on thim prickly hooks. Ut's a quare thing, isn't ut, that all hooks are bent? Such thrifles appeal to a thinkin' moind like me own. Odd that a man niver comes across a sthraight hook or a round square. Thank yez, me whiskery wan!—thank yez koindly! Wid a betther face yez would be betther-lookin', and wid all the hair and whiskers off yez wud be bald."

"You gibbering idiot, chuck drivellin'!" said Prout tartly.

"You're frightenin' all the fish!"

"Ut's yer great ugly face, yez means! Whisht! Oi've got a boite!"

"So you have! Give him— Well!"

"Murther!" said Barry blankly.

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NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"What done dats?" gasped Gan-Waga.

The float had gone down and risen again. Splinters of cork flew from it. Barry landed a small jack, and then they examined the float.

"Ut's a staggerer!" said the Irishman. "Bedad, luk how ut's busted itself!"

Prout scratched his head. It was extraordinary. The top of the pike float was quite shattered.

"Bad 'nough!" roared Barry. "Yo one gone sames, Tom."

"By hokey! What does it mean?"

Chips of cork from Prout's float were dancing on the ripples. Before he could pull it up, however, a run from what looked like a heavy fish made them forget the mystery. Prout struck and hooked a monster. Joe's rod, too, was bending like a bow as he played a monster. There was tremendous excitement on board both boats.

"He's giving in, the rogue!" cried Barry, kneeling ready with the gaff. "Be aisy wid him, Thomas, me jooil of a bhoys! Don't pull his mouth too much. Ut spiles a horse to pull him. Arrah, Oi seed the shoine of him, thin! Whin Oi git this tickler in his ribs he'll be afther comin' gintly. He's comin' now. Aisy! Aisy! A little hoigher. Hurrah! Nailed!"

He gaffed the struggling fish.

"Tare and 'cuns!" he yelled. "The baste has spat in me face."

"Ow, ow!" said Gan, in terror. "It blood!"

Barry dropped the fish, and wiped his face. His handkerchief was crimson. Prout sat down and glared. The boatman pointed to the twenty pound pike with trembling hand. Except for a slight quivering of fins and tail, it was motionless—dead.

"Oi'm goin'," said Barry hoarsely. "Oi don't loike a place where such things happen. Oi'm goin'. Oi don't loike floats that bust, and fishes that spit blud at yez, and thin doie in a jiffy! Tom, Oi faal faint. This place is haunted."

Prout reached for the whisky, and drank nervously. Joe had just landed a fine fish, and was admiring and gloating over his capture. Gan's eyes rolled in fear.

"Afther yez wid the bottle, Tom!"

Prout passed it over, raised his cap, and polished his bald head.

"By hokey!" he muttered. "If it 'adn't been broad daylight I should ha' run. Sartinly it's the rummest go I ever fell over. That fish must ha' bust a bloodvessel."

"D'yez think the corks did that as well?" asked Barry.

"Dunno. I gives it up."

"Ghosts, goblins, spooks, banshees, fairies, imps, or my-hatmas," growled Barry, "Oi intind to howld a post-mortem and an inquest on that fish! Yez cannot frighten a man wid the blud of the O'Rooneys in his veins. Oi shall find out how he doied. Still, still, me flutterin' heart! Yez name is Barry. The O'Rooneys know no fear. Bedad, they're the bhoys for shootin' lindlords! Where's me knoife?"

Barry opened the fish and began to dissect it.

"Heart good," he went on learnedly; "liver first-rate, lungs prime, stomach containin' the remains of a fat roach. Let's luk at the brain, av any."

He hacked through the tough skull.

"Brain small, and—arra! What's this at all, at all?"

He brought it out on the end of the knife.

"By hokey!" gasped the steersman. "A bullet—no; a slug from an air-gun!"

Barry put on his coat as the astonished Prout examined the little hollow piece of lead.

"Oi'm goin' home," remarked O'Rooney. "Ut's not healthy bein' near the wather. Wather is a frequent cause of cowlds and bronchitis."

"Steady on!" said Prout, glancing cautiously round him.

"Was it good shootin' to hit them floats?"

"Oi shud call ut nigh on a miracle."

"And, by hokey, who shoots like that?"

"On'y Chingy," put in Gan. "Nobodys elses."

"By hokey, you've got it! There ain't anyone else. He's somewhere ashore in them bushes. Steady on, and I'll tempt him. Pretend to take no notice, but keep your eyes peeled."

"The haythin rascal!" growled Barry. "Sure, av course he's the ghost!"

"Listen!"

Prout placed a cup in a conspicuous position. There was sudden impact, and the cup broke in pieces.

"In thim thick bushes yondher, as Oi live!" said Barry.

"What can we do to git avin wid him?"

The steersman did not answer. He headed the boat for the shore.

"Where are you going?" shouted Joe. "Not chuckin' it, eh?"

"Not much!" answered Prout. "We want more tackle."

They rowed into the boathouse. There was a hazy idea in Prout's brain. He sprang out. Hanging to the beams were several steel traps which the keepers set for game and otters.

Prout took one down. It was of the ordinary pattern, with teeth and a powerful steel spring.

"Stop here a bit," he said. "I'll try and stalk him. If I do, in he goes!"

"And sarve him roight, the spalpeen!"

"Yo' not catchin' Chingy so easy 'nough," said Gan.

"Chingy, him take some of dat."

"By hokey, I can try, can't I?"

"Wid joy, me son—wid joy! But what are yez goin' to do wid that ould thrap?"

"I dunno. Let me grab him, and, by hokey, he'll be a wet chance!"

Prout crawled round the back of the boathouse, and wormed along through the undergrowth. He had made a note of the spot where he expected the marksman was lurking.

Prout travelled inch by inch. Ching-Lung was the shyest and quickest game any man could hunt.

The steersman paused to tie a length of tarred twine to the trap. He knew why he had brought the trap, but he never hoped to be able to use it.

"By gum!"

He dropped into the grass. There was a flicker of white close to the edge of the water. He could see Ching-Lung kneeling there.

The prince was peering up into the branches of a tree. He had an airgun in his hand, and was watching the movements of a squirrel.

"If I can only get behind him," muttered Prout, "I'll give him a ta-ra-ra and some extra for luck. He'll be the wettest Chinee on earth, by hokey! And then I'll slide."

The prince levelled the gun at the squirrel. It was a tempting and difficult shot, but he did not fire.

He looked across the lake, and knelt down on the edge of the bank. He took aim at Maddock's float, and waited for it to remain steady.

The way Prout stalked would have delighted a redskin warrior. Foot by foot he crept nearer.

Holding his breath, he tied the string to a branch. The end of Ching-Lung's pigtail was within reach.

Pressing down the spring of the powerful trap with his muscular hands, he allowed the steel jaws to close over the prince's pigtail.

"Now go!" he muttered.

One mighty push sent Ching-Lung over the bank. There was a splash and a gurgling cry. The string became taut.

"By hokey," grinned Prout, "that was a squelcher! You can stop there and cool, sonny."

Ching-Lung was certainly a wet Chinee, and he was also an astonished one. He came up crowned with weeds, and then went down again to recover the gun.

But he could not dive. Some power was holding him back. He put up his hand, and found his pigtail standing on end.

"Great pip!" he gasped.

He managed to screw his head round, and saw the string. It had caught round a jutting branch. When he swam for the shore it held him back like an anchor. He tried to break it by swimming violently. The tarred string refused to break. He tried to climb up his own pigtail; but even Ching-Lung could not manage such an acrobatic feat.

He could not sink; he could not swim more than a yard or so. If ever a Chinee was properly bagged and netted, his Highness of Kwai-Hal was that particular Celestial. He could only escape by cutting his pigtail. It was impossible to unplat it. To a Chinaman a pigtail is more than sacred.

"That's Barry or Prout," he thought. "I'll kill both of them for it!"

He did not intend to call for aid while there was the remotest chance of escape. It would be terribly humiliating. He set his brains to work. A few ducks swam past. They looked as if they were grinning at him.

Then he heard footsteps and voices. The first voice was the voice of Prout, and it said:

"'Ow bootiful is nater, Barry! Oh, 'ow I love nater! By hokey, I could walk for hiver in these green woods a-Listenin' to the warblin' of the geese and the pure, sweet song of the bullfrogs!"

The second voice was the voice of Barry O'Rooney, and it answered:

"Tom, me bhdy, sich sintiments war-rms me hear-rt. Oi luve the man who thruly admir-res nater. What is more soothin' to the toired oie than the soight of a field of praties? What is more grateful moosic to the jaded ear than the tindher squaaln' of a pig? Wid yez, me noble friend, Oi c'u'd roam these woods for iver. And Gan-Waga

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is another of the same kidney. Gan, doesn't yer hear-rt faal loight to view the scenery?"

"It lighter when me eatin' cangles," remarked Gan.

"Whisht—whisht! The muse is upon me."

"Undher the greenwood three,
Plaze come and walk wid me,
To view the scenery.
Sit down, and wet yer throttle,
Wid somethin' from this bottle."

"By hokey," chuckled Prout, "that's good! The last line is fine. I accept the invitation. We'll sit down right away just 'ere, where all these big toadstools are."

Ching-Lung writhed and squirmed. He could not see them, but he knew that the conversation was intended for his ears. They could tell where his head was by the string, and Barry picked up a big, juicy toadstool.

"This makes me a bhoy agen," he said. "Ah, thim days of happiness and bliss! Gone like a dhrame, or last Saturday's wages. Ut's curious what a bhoy loikes. Oi luv-ved to sit on a bank loike this, and shoy things into the wather. Did yez ever do that?"

"Thousands of times!"

"Me, too!" said Gan.

"Loike that?" inquired Barry.

"Just like that."

A floppy toadstool descended, and broke into a mash on Ching-Lung's head. He swam a few strokes, but the string betrayed his exact position. Down came another toadstool, and then a ball of moss and damp soil.

"And then there was payshooters," went on Barry, recalling the joys of the past. "Did yez ever make a shaypooter—Oi mane, shoopater—oh, dhrat ut!—pooshater? Oi'll get ut soon—a payshooter?"

"Often."

"But dere no peases," said Gan.

"Sure, ould Barry can tache yez to be a bhoy, Gan. Barry can do ut. Whisht now—whisht! This us how yez do ut. Foind a good stalk of hemlock loike this, and cut ut at the joints. Ut's holler, and a payshooter at wance. And for pays, bedad, luk at the berries on that hawthor-rn, all har-rd, and not loikely to be roipe for a month. What did Oi tell yez?"

Barry had cut a stem of hemlock, and filled his pockets with the green berries.

"Butterful 'nough!" said the admiring Gan.

They grinned, and made themselves similar weapons. Knowing what to expect, Ching-Lung dived, but the string was too taut.

They crawled nearer, and the stinging berries began to rattle round his head.

"Confound you!" he yelled. "Cheese it!"

"Hallo!" cried Prout. "What was that?"

"Me t'ink it was a swear," said Gan.

"Ut was," said Barry. "Some voile wretch swore! Oi hear-rd the awful wur-rd. My blud curdles. Come away. Oi cannot sthand bad langwidge. Come away!"

"I 'ate swearin'!" said Joe.

"Him make me sick!" grinned Gan. "Swearin's make me bad!"

"Come away, then—come away! Lave the wretch to his own avil conscience!"

Fifty yards further on Barry and Gan hurled themselves upon Prout, and hugged him rapturously. Prout had distinguished himself. They were indeed getting their own back, and with a high rate of interest into the bargain.

"We must let Ben and old Joseph into the fun!" said the steersman.

"Me son, we must! Forward, to till the tale of a pigtail and a rat-thrap!"

A bed of reeds hid Ching-Lung from Joe. The carpenter was having good sport, and he was happy. Ben had secured one good fish, and was playing a second when they rowed out.

"How have you done, Barry?" asked Joe.

"A twinty-pounder, Joe," said the Irishman.

"Is that all?"

"All! Bedad, wait a mo'! Tom has got wan a hundred and thurty odd!"

Joe put down his rod and filled his glass.

"It takes something to wash that down, Irish," he said. "Tell me some more. How did yer catch it—on a blessed shark'-ook and telegraph-wire? Go hon!"

"I copped it in a rat-trap!" grinned Prout. "Bet you a tenner it's right! By hokey, if it don't weigh close on that I'll pay up! Come and look! Keep your mouth shut, and row arter us!"

(To be continued.)

GET YOUR CHUM TO BUY THE "MAGNET!"

My Readers' Page.



OUR GRAND NEW
WEEKLY FEATURE
ON PAGE 28 AND
PAGES III. AND IV.
OF THE COVER.
SHOW YOUR FRIENDS
THIS COPY.

FOR NEXT WEEK.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS,"
by Frank Richards. This amusing, interesting, and exciting, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. will appear in next Tuesday's "Magnet" Library, and my readers may rest assured that they have something really grand to look forward to. Competitions and puzzles of all sorts become "all the rage" in the Lower Forms at Greyfriars, and two juniors, at least, lay themselves out to turn the craze to their own advantage. Both Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish, the cute American junior, proceed to make hay while the sun shines; but by the time

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS"
is at an end they find somehow that they have not benefited very much, after all!

BACK NUMBERS OFFERED AND WANTED.

R. S. Shippe, 10, Blandford Street, Sunderland, wishes to obtain early numbers of "The Magnet."

H. Brownsey, Glenmore, Queen Street, Taunton, has 100 numbers of "The Gem" and "The Magnet" to dispose of at half-price.

E. Morgan, 164, Lightwoods Road, Bearwood, Birmingham, has a quantity of back numbers to dispose of.

B. H. Green, 94, Drayton Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, has a number of old "Magnets" for disposal at half-price.

(This Column, which has been open for many weeks, will in future be discontinued.)

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Constant Reader," Keighly.—Thanks for your letter. The values of your stamps are as follows: 25c. (1849-50), 4d., if used; and 25c. (1853-60), if unused 30s., and if used, 5s. The colour of this latter stamp is a dull blue; but there is another issue of the same date of a deeper blue, and this is worth 4s. used.

H. F., Manchester, and "Frederick," Bradford.—The best means of putting on flesh is to go in for a sound course of physical training, such as with a pair of dumbbells, or an exerciser, eat plenty of good food, wholesome and nourishing, and drink as much milk as you comfortably can. Milk is one of the finest foods in existence, and you should endeavour to drink at least a pint a day. Go to bed early, rise early, and avoid smoking and similar bad habits, and you will soon notice an increase in your weight.

H. Barnby, Clapham.—Many thanks for your letter. In answer to your query, I have to tell you that you have, as far as I can gather from your letter, a fairly good knowledge of how to arrive at the characters of different people by reading the lines, etc., on their faces. Sometimes the conclusion arrived at is fairly correct; but it is not always advisable to rely upon this method of estimating different persons' characters, as, according to an old saying, "appearances are deceptive."

R. L. V. J., Old Ford.—Thank you for your letter. With regard to your question concerning emigration, I am afraid that you cannot obtain absolutely free passages to Australia, as these are only granted to female domestic servants, and then only under certain stated conditions. It is seldom possible either to work your way out, as there are very few shipping firms who now employ men and boys for the single trip. There are, however, assisted passages, which are allowed under certain conditions, which are too numerous to state here. For these conditions and further information, write to the Chief Clerk, Emigrants' Information Office, 34, Broadway, Westminster, S.W., enclosing six penny stamps for the booklets on the different parts of Australia.

W. Bury, Burnley.—Write to W. Clarkson, 43-4, Wardour Street, London, W.C., for their list. You might also try A. W. Gamage, Ltd., High Holborn, London, W.C.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 236.

NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE COMPETITION CRAZE AT GREYFRIARS!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

TRAINING FOR THE AUTUMN SPORTS.

No. 1—Races.

It now wants but a few weeks to the commencement of the autumn sports meetings, and it is time for those of my readers who are thinking of entering any of the competitions to start training seriously. No one, unless in the pink of condition all the year round, can expect to take part in any sport with any hopes of success without previously training. Another thing that must be seriously considered and guarded against is the strain that is put upon an unfit body in racing.

First, let us deal with training for

Sprinting.

which includes all races up to 440 yards—otherwise, a quarter of a mile. For the hundred yards' sprint a boy must train hard, and if he is not already the possessor of good leg muscles he must work hard to get them, as a racer with weak legs stands no "earthly" in a good hundred yards' sprint. A sure method of improving the condition of the calves is:

Every morning take a good walk, travelling at the rate of about three or four miles an hour, keeping this up as steadily as possible. Two hours every morning is quite sufficient. Some readers may find this too long, either on account of business hours, or because it is rather too much to tackle at once. In this case the time may be split in two, doing one hour in the morning and one in the evening. This system of training must be carried on until within about three weeks of the race, when it is either advisable to increase the distance or to take an extra half an hour's walk during the day. The monotony of the two hours' walking may be relieved by introducing a short run—up to 200 yards or so, which should be covered briskly but not violently.

Now, when the reader has become accustomed to training, the running distance may be shortened to 100 yards, and the speed increased. The speeds for different days should be regulated in some such manner as follows: Take, for instance, three days' training. The speeds on the first and second days should be slightly lower than top, but on the third day the distance should be covered as quickly as possible. It is a tip worth remembering on this third day to have a timekeeper, when the improvement in the speeds can be noted.

Now for the next and hardest race—

The Quarter-Mile.

This race requires both stamina and speed, and it is for this reason that it is looked upon as the hardest race to run. The distance to be covered is over four times as great, yet the speed to be maintained is practically the same as in the hundred yards. The system of training is practically the same as for the hundred: Long, brisk walks to harden the muscles, with a short run in the middle of them. If there is ample time for training, the run need not exceed two hundred yards at first, and need only be taken at full speed but once a week. And then, as the body gets more used to training, and the leg muscles become harder, the distance may be gradually increased up to the quarter, which distance should be run at full speed a day or so before the race. If this can be taken fairly easily, the remaining time for training should be filled up with long walks.

Training for the

Half-Mile

is the same as for the preceding races, with the exception that the distances in both cases, walking and running, should be lengthened. The run should be taken easily at first, and only done at top speed but once a week, and then if possible with the assistance of a timekeeper and a pacer.

One more thing to learn is the correct manner of

Starting.

Place the left foot about six inches in front of the right, lean slightly forward, with the weight of the body on the forward foot. At the signal for starting press the foot hard against the ground, leave the line at once, and fall directly into the pace you have been training for.

THE EDITOR.

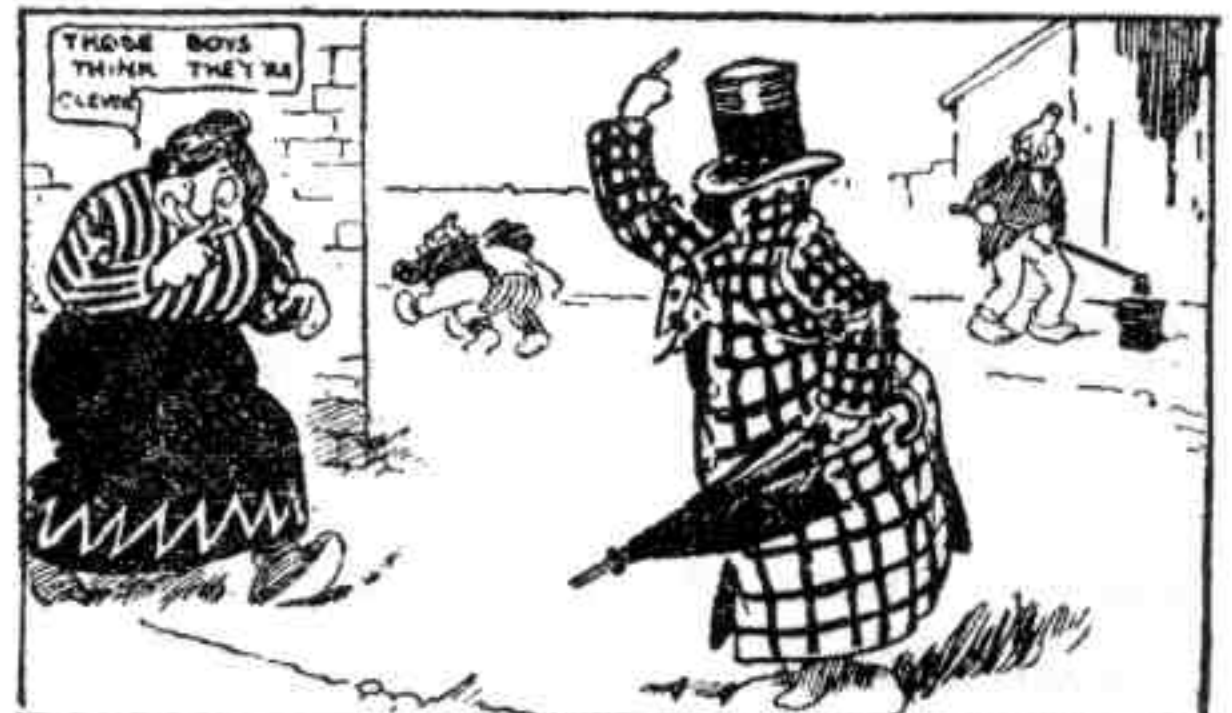
OUR SPLENDID NEW 3-PAGE FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

THE BUNSEY BOYS FIND THEY ARE DONE AGAIN!



1. Those naughty little terrors, the Bunsey Boys, togged up the beautiful statue of Appollinaris defying the park-keeper with an overcoat and topper.



2. Lucky ma! Through the scullery window she saw the whole bag o' tricks, so she whistled up Happy Ike on a bird call.



3. They shifted the flinty gentleman who was still defying the park-keeper, and hid him in the dustbin for Ike to chop up to hearthstone in his spare time.



4. Then ma rigged up Happy Ike in the overcoat and topper, and you would have thought he was the statue's twin brother. Ma waddled back to her washing.

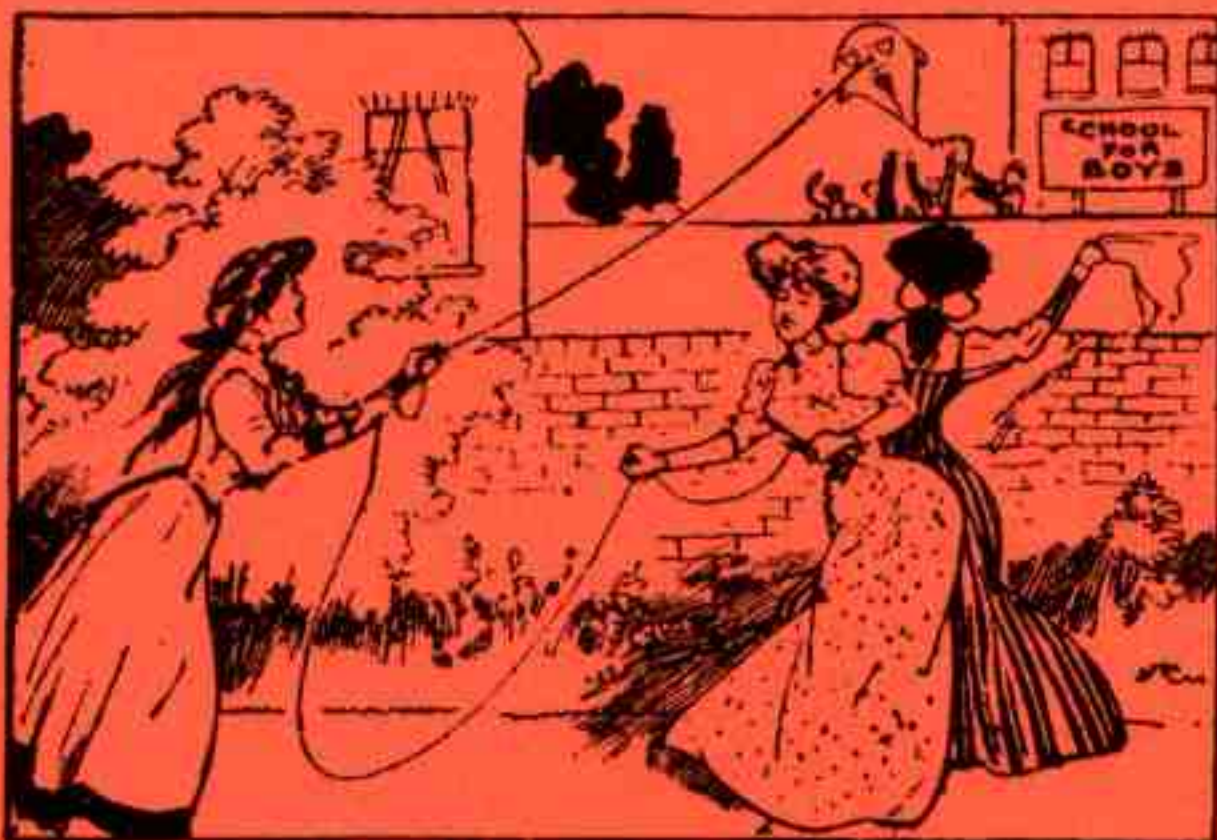


5. And you can bet it wasn't long before those boys came to fetch her out, saying that a broker's man had called with a carpet bag for the piano.

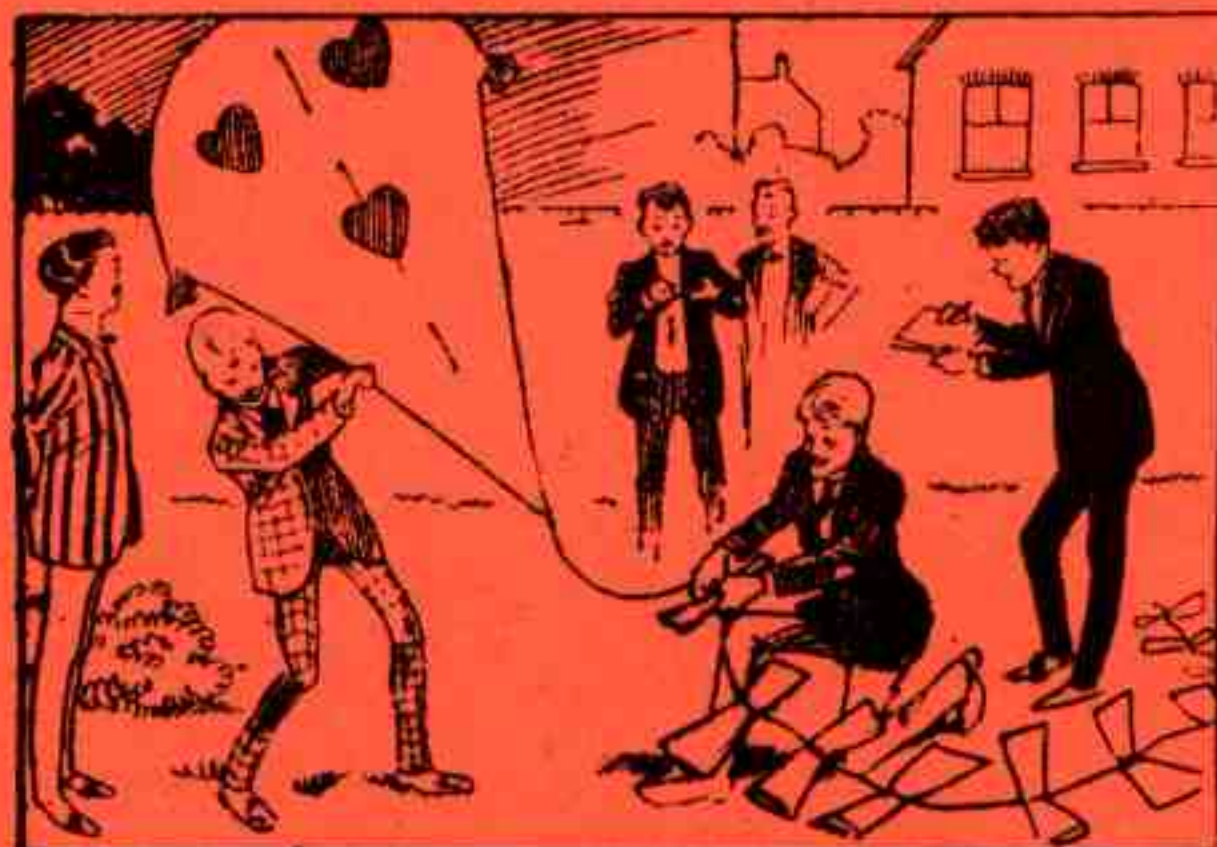


6. And Ferdy and George, the little Bunsey boys, got the fright of their lives. "It's alive-oh!" gurgled Georgie, "and I thought it was made of hearthstone!"

WINGED MESSAGES OF LOVE!



1. Oh, they're saucy minxes, are the artful students of Miss Primm's academy. Of course, they are not allowed to exchange love-letters with the boys of Dr. Whackem's academy by post, so they do it by kite.

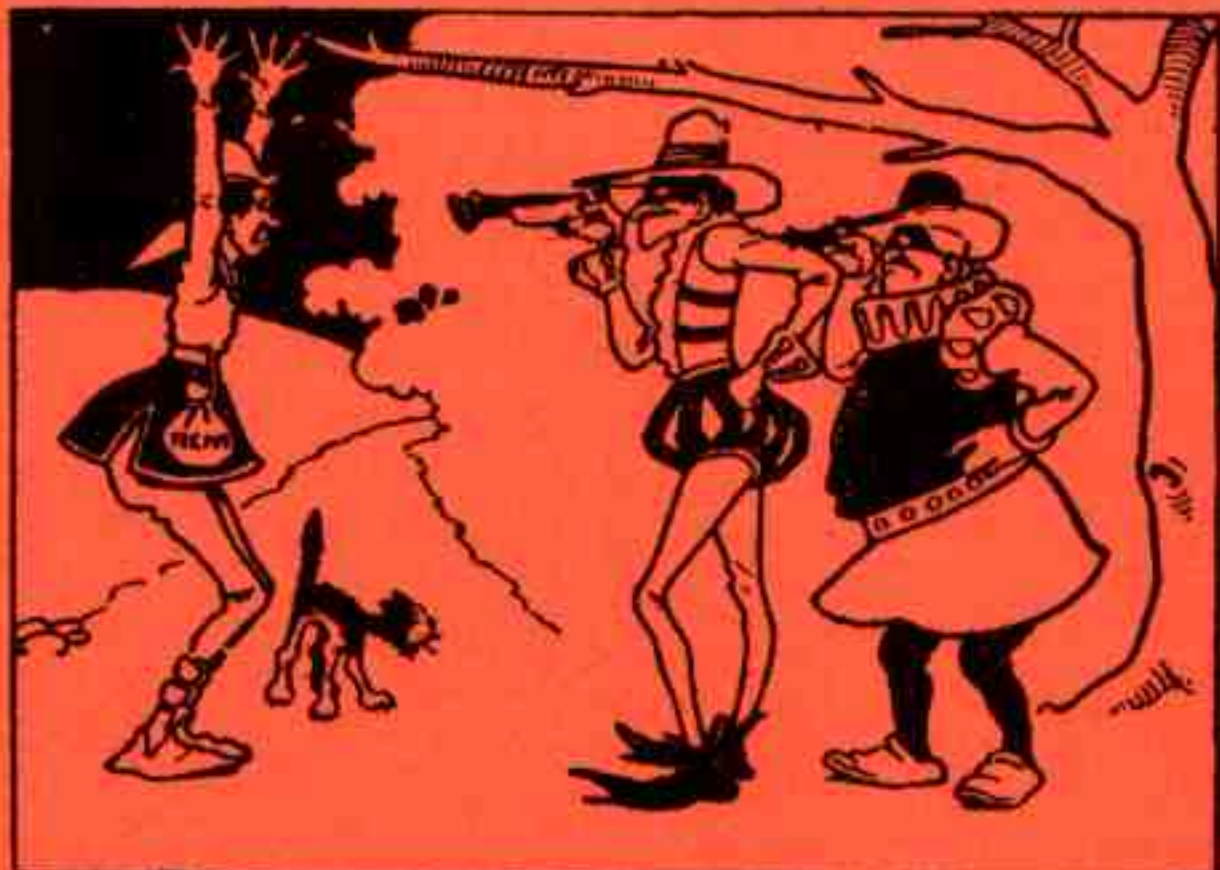


2. Yes, having written their love effusions they just tie them to the tail of their kite, and then fly it over the garden wall. The boys of Whackem's remove them, and attach their budget of sweet nothings.



3. Then they let the kite flutter back to its pretty owners again. And thus do the merry maidens revel in their little love affairs without danger of discovery.

A NEW HAT TRICK!



1. "Throw up thy hands!" said the bold, bad highwaymen to simple Simon, who was going to pay the rent. So, yea verily and right hastily, he threw up his hands.

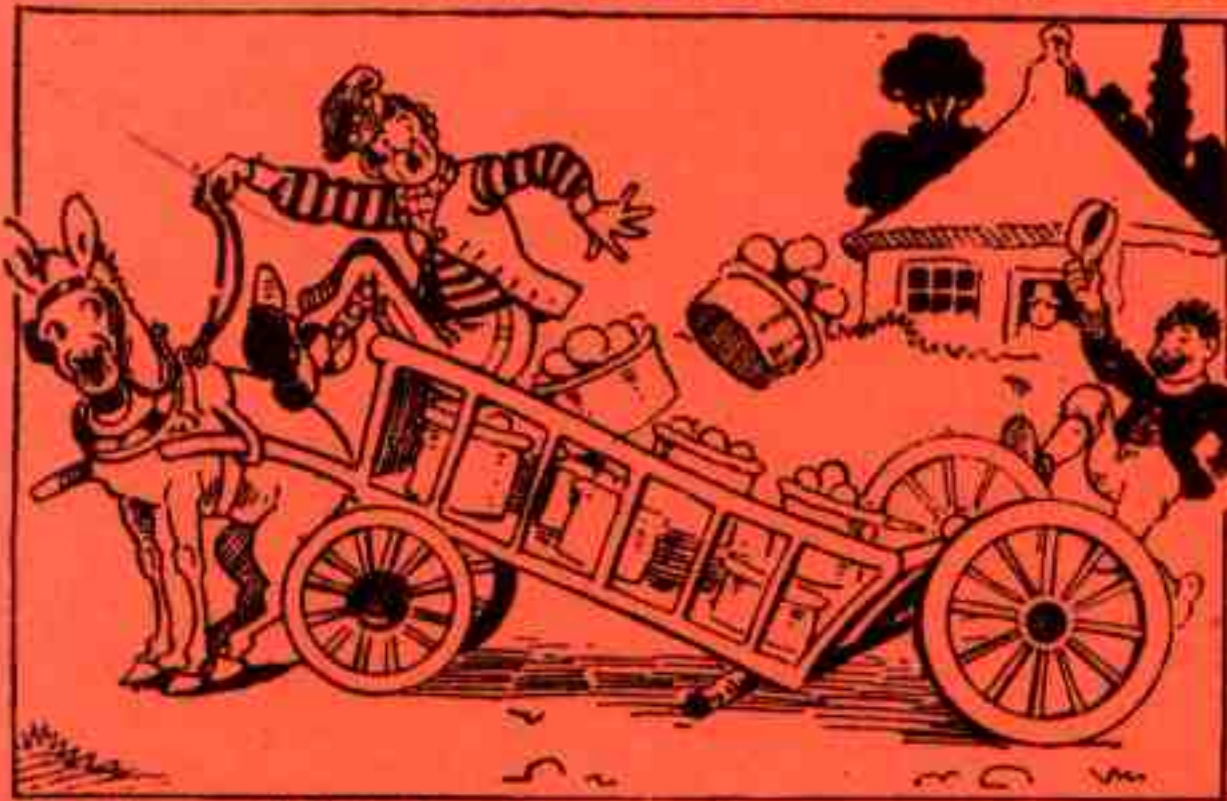


2. But in doing so they encountered a branch of a tree, with which he gently pushed the villains' hats over their opties, forsooth. Then the welkin rang with music, etc., from their lusty throats.

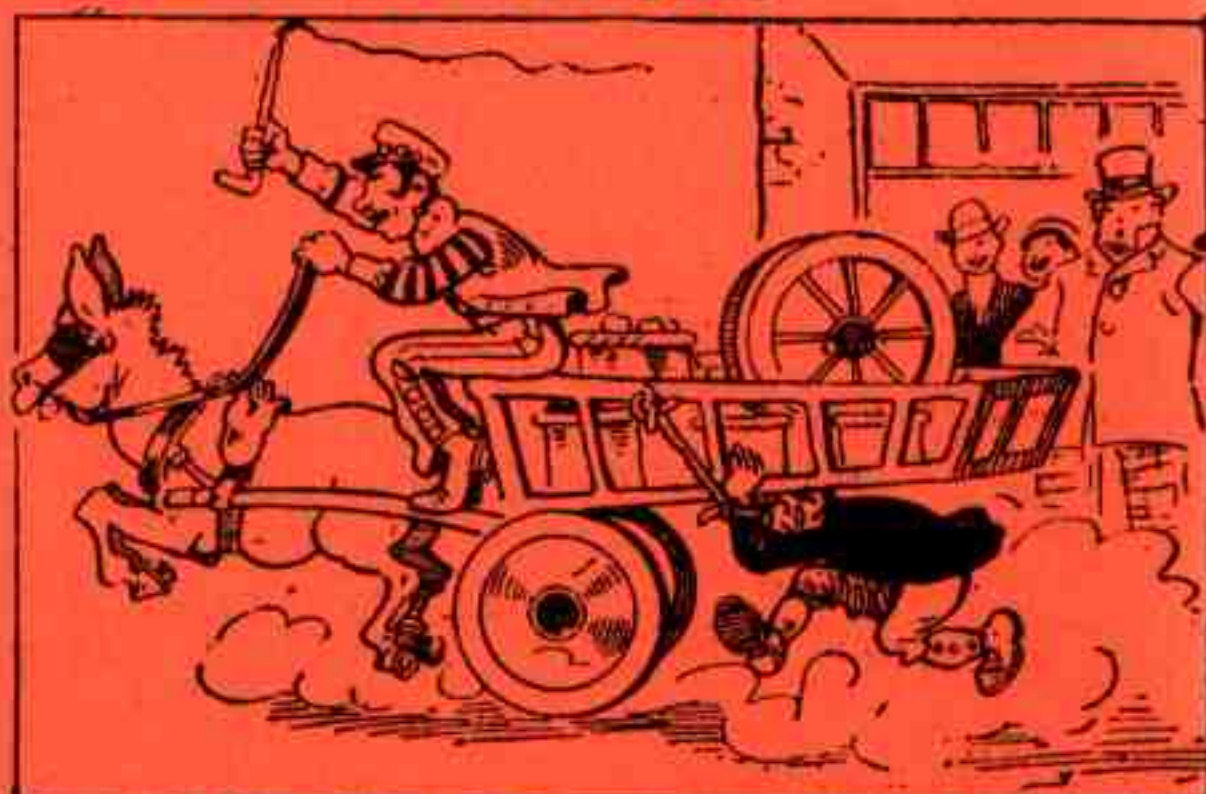


3. And when the bold bad uns got their nightcaps off, they each accused the other of doing the deed, while our brainy friend got himself hence with their peashooters. By my halidom, what brains!

A STORY OF WHEEL AND WOE.



1. The small boy thought it was mighty funny when poor old Charlie the Coster's back wheels came adrift, and let his cart down in the road—bump!



2. But Charlie was by no means done, and grabbing the bad small boy, soon fixed him thuswise. "You can just run all the way to Covent Garden, me lad," chuckled Charlie. "That'll teach you to laugh!"

LOST PROPERTY.



Ejected Lodger: "I presume you will allow me to take my belongings away with me?"

Landlady: "I am sorry, but your other collar has not come home from the laundry yet."

HER FIRST ATTEMPT.



Mrs. Justwed: "It's my first attempt. I made that out of mother's old cookery book."

Mr. J.: "Great Scott! I think I must have got a bit of the binding!"

A SMALL MATTER.

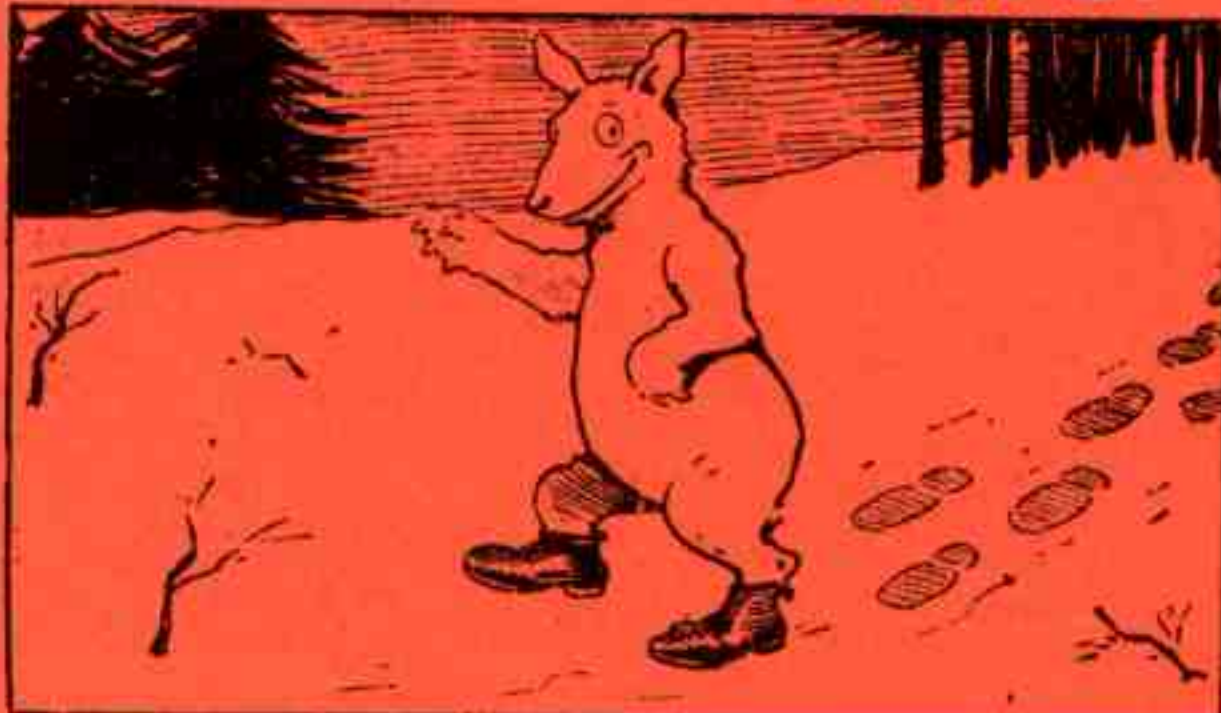


Cissie: "Mamma, mayn't I take the part of a milkmaid at the fancy ball?"

Mamma: "You are too little."

Cissie: "Well, I can be a condensed milkmaid!"

BEAR-LY POSSIBLE!



1. "Good!" said the bear as he came across a pair of number ten's lying in the snow. "This'll do it! If I slip these trotter cases on, and pursue my way, that merchant with the gun will be foiled. Ha, ha!"



2. So he slipped his little tootsies into the number ten's and did a merry paddle to his little home 'mongst the fir-trees, while the gent with the pop-gun got a severe shock! "Gues: I'm on the wrong trail after all!" he growled.