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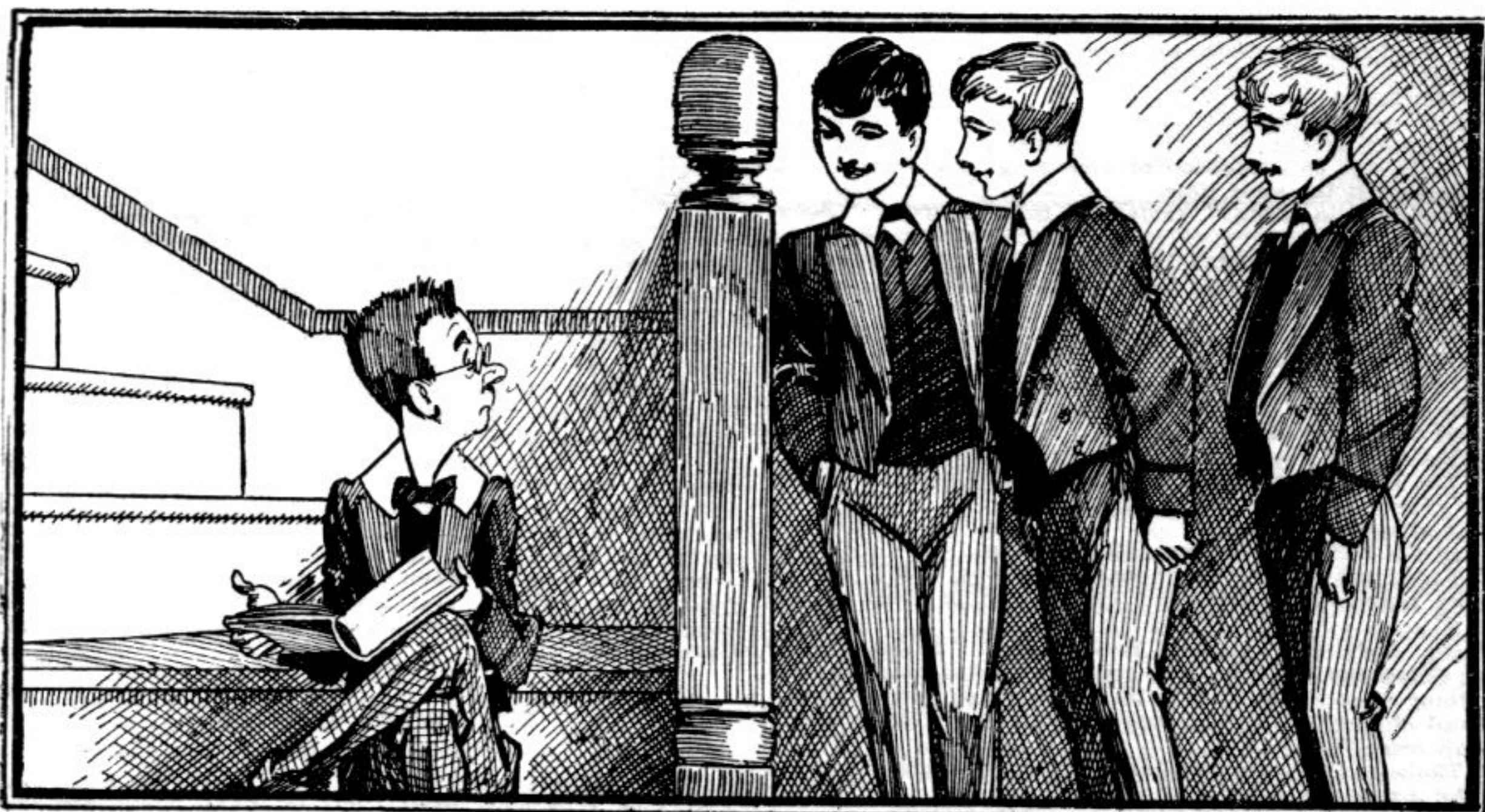
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Not Funny!

CRASH!
Bump!
"Oh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Four juniors dashed down the Fifth Form passage at Greyfriars at top speed. From one of the studies—the one belonging to Coker of the Fifth—there came a wild medley of sounds.

"Yah! Oh! My hat! Groo! Yaroooooooooh!"

Coker of the Fifth might have been wrestling with a steam-roller, or tackling a runaway motor-car single-handed, to judge by the wild sounds that rang out from his study. Fellows who heard the din came from all sides to see what the matter was. But four juniors who had been concealed in a recess in the passage fled at top speed, evidently anxious to get away from the scene of the disturbance. They were Wharton and Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull, the Famous Four of the Remove.

They did not stop till they reached No. 1 Study in the Remove passage. They dashed into the study, and there

they halted, breathless. Bob Cherry threw himself into the armchair, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent held on to the window-sill, and roared. Johnny Bull threw himself upon the table, and kicked up his feet in glee.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Distant sounds followed them to the study. There was a hurrying of feet, and a buzzing of voices.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull. "Poor old Coker!"

"Poor old Coker. Ha, ha, ha!"

A surprised face looked into the study. It was the face of Mark Linley of the Remove. He looked at the four convulsed juniors in amazement.

"What's the row?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's happened?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's some sort of a row going on in the Fifth Form passage," said Mark. "Have you been there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have we been there, you chaps?"

"Have we? Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see," gasped Wharton. "We thought that we hadn't been paying Coker sufficient attention lately—you know what an important person he is, and he ought not to be neglected—so we— Ha, ha, ha!"

"We went to his study," gasped Nugent.

"Yes?" said Mark inquiringly.

"And put the door just a little ajar—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And fixed a bag of soot on the top—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And when Coker went in—"

"When he went in," gurgled Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley grinned.

"I hope Coker doesn't know who did it," he remarked.

"You'll have him coming along with a cricket-stump."

"That's the beauty of it. He doesn't know," grinned Johnny Bull. "You see, we kept out of sight in the alcove, and heard him go in. We didn't see him, and he didn't see us. But we heard him, didn't we, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha! We did!"

"I think all Greyfriars could have heard him," grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were steps in the passage, and Micky Desmond of the Remove looked in. He was grinning, and chuckling, but there was an expression of something like alarm in his ruddy face at the same time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Seen Coker?"

"Coker?" said Micky. "No. But sure there's a fearful row in his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Prout was going in to see Coker, and some silly ass had fastened up a booby trap," said Micky, "and— Faith, what's the matter wid ye?"

The four juniors had suddenly stood bolt upright, and they stared blankly at Micky Desmond.

"Mr. Prout!" said Wharton faintly.

"The Fifth Form-master!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Going in to see Coker!"

"And he got the soot!"

And the Famous Four groaned in chorus.

"Faith, and phwat does it matter to you, thin?" asked Micky Desmond. "You don't know anything about it, do you?"

"Oh, don't we?" growled Bob Cherry. "I always said that Coker was an idiot. But I never expected he'd ever do anything quite so idiotic as to let old Prout go into his study instead of him, when there was a special booby trap rigged up all ready!"

"The silly ass!" groaned Johnny Bull. "There will be a frightful row over this."

Micky chuckled.

"Faith, and it was you, was it?" he said. "Betther keep it dark, ye omadhauns. Mr. Prout was ragin' and tearin' in the Fifth Form passage a minute ago, smothered with soot from head to foot, and simply chokin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and it won't be a laughin' matter for ye if he gets on the track!" said Micky warningly. "Keep it dark!"

"My only sainted uncle!" said Bob Cherry. "Was there ever such rotten luck! Fancy old Prout choosing that particular moment to put his napper into Coker's study? It's just as if he were looking for trouble."

"He found it, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, they don't know it was us, that's one comfort," said Harry Wharton. "We shall have to keep this frightfully dark."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"All very well, if it was Coker," he said. "But you can't smother a Form-master with soot without trouble to follow. Prout will raise Cain. He is certain to be annoyed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not a worrud!" said Micky Desmond. "It will mean caning all round, and gating for weeks! Keep it dark!"

"The dearest of dead secrets!" said Johnny Bull. "Not a word!"

"Not a whisper!"

"Not a breath!"

There was a step in the passage again, and it stopped outside. Harry Wharton made a sign to his chums, and they all assumed expressions of the most lugubrious solemnity. To look at them, one could not have guessed that they knew anything about Mr. Prout's mishap in the Fifth Form passage. Indeed, they looked as if they had never even heard of booby traps.

It was Trotter, the House page, who put his head into the study.

"Master Wharton!" he said.

"Hallo, Trotty!" said Harry Wharton affably. "Letter for me?"

"No, Master Wharton."

"What is it, then?"

"The 'Ead wants to see you in his study."

"Eh?"

"The 'Ead—"

"Oh, great Scott!"

"Wants to see you in his study, sir," said Trotter cheerfully. "Also Master Cherry and Master Bull and Master Nugent."

"Oh, take me out and kick me!" groaned Bob Cherry. "I am an ass, thou art an ass, he is an ass! We are an ass, you are an ass, they are an ass!"

"So much for the dead secret!" said Nugent lugubriously.

"Blessed if the Head hasn't got on to it like lightning!" said Johnny Bull. "It's marvellous how he finds out these things. I suppose we'd better go!"

"I suppose we had!" growled Wharton. "They'll send a prefect for us if we don't. This is one of the invitations a fellow is bound to accept."

"Ow! What rotten luck!" said Nugent, rubbing his hands, in anticipation.

"We shall have to explain that it was meant for Coker, and not for Prout," said Harry Wharton. "I'll put that to the Head at once. Come on! We'd better get it over."

And the Famous Four, with extremely serious faces, quitted No. 1 Study, and made their way with slow and reluctant steps into the presence of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Little Too Previous.

DR. LOCKE was sitting at his desk in his study when the four Removites presented themselves. They glanced anxiously at his face as they came in. His looks formed a kind of barometer by which they could gauge the severity of the coming storm.

But the doctor was not looking severe.

The Famous Four had expected thunderclouds, but the brow of the reverend Head of Greyfriars was quite calm.

The juniors exchanged a glance of relief.

The Head, at all events, was in a reasonable mood, and there would be a chance to explain before the cane was brought into play.

"Ah! Come in, my boys," said Dr. Locke kindly. "I have sent for you, upon a somewhat unusual matter, Wharton."

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton penitently. "I know, sir."

The doctor raised his eyebrows a little.

"You know?" he repeated.

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Theophilus Flippis took a bottle and a little drinking vessel out of his bag. The Greyfriars Juniors watched him with great interest. "Pray tell me when it is exactly four," he said, "so that I may take my medicine!"
"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 4.)

"Yes, sir."

"You are aware of the communication made to me?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "We are very sorry there is trouble, sir—"

Dr. Locke looked puzzled.

"You are very good," he said. "I suppose this will cause a certain amount of trouble, but that cannot be helped."

The juniors brightened up.

"No, sir; that's it exactly," said Bob Cherry eagerly.

"These things can't be helped, sir. They might happen anywhere."

"Certainly," said the Head.

"And it wasn't really our fault," said Johnny Bull.

"Not at all," said Nugent.

Dr. Locke looked perplexed.

"I do not quite follow you," he said. "This matter is very unexpected, but I do not see that it is anybody's fault—least of all, yours."

"My hat!" murmured Wharton.

"What did you say, Wharton?"

"I—I—I said—ahem!"

"You must not think that you are sent for to be blamed for anything, my lads," said the Head, with a smile.

"Thank you, sir," said Wharton gratefully. "Of course, we weren't really to blame, but we thought that Mr. Prout might be annoyed."

"Eh?"

"We firmly believed that Coker would get it, sir."

"What!"

"It was totally unexpected, Mr. Prout going into the study like that—"

Dr. Locke looked astounded.

"Would you be kind enough to explain what you are talking about, Wharton?" he exclaimed, with some asperity.

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NEXT MONDAY: "TOP DOG!" A Splendid Long Complete School Tale, VERNON SMITH & Co. versus HARRY WHARTON & Co. Grand New Series.

"Yes, sir; the accident to Mr. Prout, sir."

"The—the what?"

"The accident to Mr. Prout, sir," repeated Harry Wharton, in surprise—"the soot falling on his napper—ahem!—his head, sir, in Coker's study."

"What!" exclaimed the Head.

"Isn't— isn't that what you sent for us about, sir?" demanded Wharton, in bewilderment.

"Certainly not! I did not know of any such occurrence. I have sent for you in connection with a communication I have received, concerning a visitor who is coming to Greyfriars."

"Oh, sir!"

"Oh, you ass!" murmured Johnny Bull. "If you'd kept your head shut—"

"You've given it away now," murmured Nugent.

Dr. Locke looked fixedly at the chums of the Remove. Before he could speak, however, there was a knock at the study door, and it opened, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came in. He swept into the study, bringing an odour of soot with him, and little clouds of it scattered over the carpet.

Dr. Locke started up.

"Good heavens, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Look at me, sir!" stuttered Mr. Prout. "Look at me, sir! This is a joke, sir—a practical joke! A Fifth-Form boy has played this joke upon me, sir!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Prout certainly presented a shocking appearance. His semi-bald head was clothed with soot; his thin hair was thickened with it; his glasses were covered with it; his gown was heavy with it. His face was black as that of a nigger-minstrel. He sputtered out soot as he spoke.

"Come in, Coker!" he raved.

Coker of the Fifth unwillingly followed his Form-master into the study.

"This, sir, is the culprit!" raved Mr. Prout. "I fell into the trap, sir, in entering his study."

"I—I didn't know anything about it, sir," stammered Coker. "Some bounder must have set it for me, sir, I think. I'm very sorry this has happened to Mr. Prout, sir."

Dr. Locke glanced at the Removites.

"You are mistaken in thinking that Coker is guilty, Mr. Prout," said the Head mildly. "The trap was laid for Coker by junior boys."

"I trust you will discover them, then, sir," spluttered Mr. Prout. "You may go, Coker."

"Thank you, sir," said Coker.

And he promptly disappeared.

"I presume that these are the boys, sir?" said Mr. Prout, gouging soot out of his eyes, and glaring at the chums of the Remove.

"Yes, Mr. Prout."

"I trust, sir, that they will be adequately punished."

"Undoubtedly. But it seems to have been a mistake," said the Head. "These reckless boys set the trap for Coker, and you inadvertently walked into it, Mr. Prout."

"It was quite a mistake, sir," said Harry Wharton. "We're awfully sorry, sir. Of course, sir, you couldn't imagine for a moment that we should play such a trick on you, sir."

"We shouldn't dream of such a thing, sir," murmured Nugent.

"We respect you too much, sir," corroborated Johnny Bull.

"Much too much, sir," said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Prout gasped. He was very much excited, and he was a very much injured gentleman, but the "soft sawder" of the Removites was not without its effect upon him.

"I am smothered with soot!" he exclaimed. "It is outrageous! Of course, if it was a mistake, that makes the matter less outrageous."

"And we are all awfully sorry, sir."

The Head coughed—partly in a propitiatory way to Mr. Prout, and partly because he was getting some of the soot.

"Ahem! H'm! Groo! Ahem! As it was a mistake, Mr. Prout, and the boys are sorry, perhaps—perhaps you would care to take a lenient view of the matter. The fact is, I had just sent for these boys to ask a favour of them, and they inadvertently made me acquainted with the facts of this case. Otherwise, I should not have known whom the culprits were."

Mr. Prout coughed.

"In that case, sir, perhaps a hundred lines each would be sufficient, if they will promise to be more careful in the future," he said.

"I think you are right, Mr. Prout."

And Mr. Prout retired.

"You will take a hundred lines each, you lads," said the Head. "I think that is a very mild punishment, and you will agree with me."

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Thank you, sir."

"And now," said the Head, "I will speak upon the matter for which I sent for you. I have a small favour to ask of you."

"Anything, sir?" said the Famous Four together, with great unanimity.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Chosen Ones.

DR. LOCKE looked over his desk, and picked up a letter, and glanced at it. The four juniors waited, wondering. It was an unusual thing enough for the Head of Greyfriars to ask anything in the nature of a favour of boys in the Lower Fourth, and the juniors felt very much honoured. They also realised that the favour was required at a very fortunate moment; it had saved them from reprisals at the hands of Mr. Prout. They would have done anything for the Head at any time.

Dr. Locke glanced over the letter in his hand, and coughed, and glanced at the boys again.

They waited in respectful silence.

"It is a somewhat peculiar matter, my boys," said the Head. "There is a lad coming to Greyfriars—ahem!"

"A new boy, sir?" asked Wharton.

"No; not a new boy—a visitor, in a sense. This communication is from the editor of a journal, a—journal devoted to hygiene, especially among young people. It is called 'The Young Health-Seeker.' The editor wishes to give a description in his paper of the normal life at a public school, especially with regard to sports, exercises, and feeding, and sleeping accommodation, and so forth. The request he has made is a little unusual, but I do not care to refuse him. He suggests that his son should visit the school, and remain for a few days, taking notes, and living the life of

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an ordinary Greyfriars boy while he is here. It appears that this youth, who is very advanced for his years, does journalistic work for his parent's paper, and is a youthful authority upon the subject of hygienic conditions. This lad—his name is Theophilus Flipp—will arrive at Greyfriars to-day."

"Yes, sir," said the Removites.

"I wish him to be treated with every possible consideration while he is here," said Dr. Locke. "It would be only attentive for you lads to meet him, say, at Courtfield Junction, and bring him by the local train to Friardale, and then to the school. Would you care to take the trouble?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Very pleased indeed, sir."

"Most certainly."

"Ahem!" coughed the Head. "It is understood, of course, that there is to be no joking of any sort—no making a victim of Master Flipp—"

"Oh, certainly not, sir!"

"As a matter of fact, from—from what his parent states, I—I think the boy will probably be a little out of the usual in some ways," said the Head. "You will not only be performing an act of courtesy in meeting him at the junction, but—but you will be in the nature of an escort for him. You will see that none of the boys take any advantage of him in any way."

"Quite so, sir."

"The senior boys, of course, will know better than to do so; and I have spoken to the prefects on the subject," said the Head. "But the juniors may be thoughtless, and it is not possible for the prefects to see everything that is done. But for the sake of the school's good name for hospitality, I wish this boy to be treated well, and I have selected you lads as having most influence in the lower Forms."

"We'll do our best, sir."

"He arrives at Courtfield at three o'clock," said the Head. "You four boys will therefore be excused from afternoon lessons. I have spoken to Mr. Quelch, your Form-master, and he will not expect you in the Remove-room."

The Removites' eyes danced.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I—I mean, thank you, sir."

"We'll look after him," said Johnny Bull.

"Like the apple of our eye, sir," said Frank Nugent.

"Well, I trust you," said the Head. "You may go now."

"Yes, sir," said Wharton. "I suppose we shall know the chap at the station, sir."

"I must leave that to you," said the Head. "I think you will have very little doubt about the lad; you will see everyone who arrives by the three train, and you will be able to pick him out, I am sure."

"Very well, sir."

And the Famous Four quitted the Head's study in great spirits.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "This is a stroke of luck, and no mistake! The cheerful interviewer has got us an afternoon off."

"And it's French this afternoon, too," grinned Johnny Bull.

"Hurrah!"

"Hallo, you look very cheering, considering!" exclaimed Mark Linley, as he met the chums of the Lower Fourth. "Isn't it a licking?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"You haven't been let off, ye spalpeens?" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"Only an impot."

"Sure and it's lucky ye are."

"Yes, rather. And that isn't all. There's a giddy journalist coming to Greyfriars, to write articles about us,

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and we're going to the station to meet him," said Bob Cherry gleefully. "Lessons are off."

"Faith, and I'll come with you."

The Famous Four shook their heads in concert.

"Can't be did," said Wharton. "We're picked out because we're such nice good boys, who never do wrong—excepting occasionally with a bag of soot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've got to guard the giddy stranger like the apple of our eye," said Bob Cherry. "So long! You can think of us when you're grinding French verbs this afternoon."

And the Famous Four took their hats and strolled out into the Close.

It was not quite time to start for Courtfield yet; and in a very few minutes all the Remove knew what was "on." The Famous Four received many offers of companionship, and referred all the offerers to the Head.

"It's rot," said Bolsover major. "I'd go and meet the kid, and take care of him—I'm a more proper person. What could you chaps do, for instance, if the Highcliffe fellows dropped on you—or the factory chaps, eh?"

"Yes, rather," said Vernon-Smith. "I think it's rot! Look here, Wharton, go and ask the Head if we can come with you."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Better ask him yourselves," he said. "But he might suspect you of wanting to jape the new chap. You never know."

"Well, I expect I shall jape him," said Bolsover.

Wharton shook his head.

"Not allowed," he said. "We're going to look after him, like the giddy apple of our eye. All japes are barred."

"Doctor's orders!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Bolsover.

The Famous Four walked away towards the gates. Billy Bunter came panting after them, his fat little legs going like clockwork in his hurry to overtake the chums before they escaped.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Run!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Four broke into a trot. Billy Bunter exerted himself, and came along like a steam-engine—as far as the puffing was concerned, anyway.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped. "Hold on! I've got something rather important to say to you! I say—"

The chums trotted on.

"I say!" roared Bunter. "If there's a chap coming, and you'd like to stand him a feed, I don't mind looking after the cooking for you!"

They ran on, without looking back. Bunter halted breathless in the school gateway, and blinked after them through his big spectacles, as they trotted down the long white road towards Courtfield.

"I say, you fellows! Oh, really, you know—Yah! Beasts!"

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled, and kept on.

They reached Courtfield in good time, and paused at a shop for refreshment in the shape of ginger-beer, and then strolled round to the railway-station.

"Lots of time," said Bob Cherry. "The train's not in yet."

They went on the platform to wait for the train. People going to Friardale had to change at Courtfield, Friardale, the station for Greyfriars, being on a branch line. The four chums posted themselves along the platform to keep an eye open for Theophilus Flippa, the youthful representative of the "Young Health-Seeker." The train came rolling in at last, and it stopped in the station.

Almost the first passenger to step out was a lad of about their own age, and at the first sight of him the Famous Four felt certain that he was the youth they had come to meet. And with one accord they exclaimed:

"Great Scott!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hygienic.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, Theophilus!" murmured Nugent.

"My only grandmother!" said Johnny Bull faintly.

The Greyfriars juniors looked at the stranger.

He was a youth of spare form, clad in Etons, but wearing a cap instead of a topper. The cap had large flaps which came down over his ears, and round his neck he wore a huge muffler, doubled and knotted. It was a sunny autumn day, and the weather certainly did not seem to require those precautions. The muffled youth blinked round the station through a pair of large glasses.

"Is it he?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"'Tis he!" said Nugent dramatically.

"Well, we'd better capture him before the wind blows him away," said Harry Wharton.

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ONE
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And the Famous Four marched up to the stranger.

He blinked at them.

"Good-afternoon!" said Wharton, taking off his hat.

"Good-afternoon!" said the other three, taking off their hats in imitation of their leader; and Bob Cherry waved his round his head before he replaced it, in order to show his enthusiasm in greeting the representative of the "Young Health-Seeker."

The stranger blinked at them again.

"Good-afternoon!" he said.

"We are from Greyfriars," Wharton explained.

"And you're Theophilus Flippa?" asked Nugent.

The stranger nodded.

"That is my name," he said.

"Oh, good! Happy to meet you, Theophilus!"

And the four juniors took their hats off again, and bowed down almost to the platform.

"Dear me!" said Theophilus. "You are exceedingly polite. Pray excuse me if do not also salute you, as I am afraid of uncovering my head. I have a slight tendency to cold."

"Sorry!" murmured Wharton.

"Not at all. I keep it in check by taking every precaution against catching a chill, and by taking regular doses of the Marvellous Mixture for the Weak and Weary," said the stranger. "I carry a bottle about with me wherever I go, as it is necessary to take it every two hours without fail."

"Oh!"

"Porter! Pray be careful with that box. There is glass inside."

"Yessir."

"You have come to meet me?" asked Flippa.

"Yes," said the juniors.

"You are really very kind. Perhaps you are aware that I represent the "Young Health-Seeker?"

"Yes."

"Very good. I have made a study of hygiene, and, young as I am, I think I may say I have mastered the subject. I shall be able to give you many valuable tips. Perhaps you will tell me where I get the local train."

"That's what we're here for," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "Does this hatbox belong to you?"

"Yes, please."

"And this Indian club?"

"Yes; I have taken that out of my bag in order to do some exercises en route, as the carriage was empty. It is necessary to keep up one's exercises at regular intervals, as perhaps you are aware."

"Oh!"

"Porter, careful with that box," squeaked Flippa. "Put it in the train for Friardale."

"Yessir."

"This way!" said Harry Wharton, picking up the Indian club. "You take the hatbox, Bob."

"Right-ho!"

And the four juniors escorted Theophilus Flippa to the platform for Friardale, while the Courtfield porter trundled the box away upon a trolley.

The local train was in, and the juniors led Theophilus into it. Flippa took a corner seat, and Harry Wharton sat beside him, and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry opposite.

They were all smiling.

They could not help it. Dr. Locke's instructions, and the fact that he relied upon them, prevented them from japing the innocent stranger.

But they had never felt more inclined to jape anybody in their lives.

Theophilus seemed to them to be born for the especial purpose of being japed.

"Dear me!" said Flippa. "Would you mind closing the window, my friends?"

"Certainly!"

"And the other window."

"It's a warm afternoon," hinted Bob Cherry.

"But there is a draught in a moving train."

Bob closed the window.

"That is better," said Flippa. "Dear me, how suddenly the train started!"

The juniors exchanged glances.

The train glided out of Courtfield Station, and ran through the green countryside towards Friardale.

Flippa rose to his feet, after glancing at his watch.

"Pray hand me the club!" he said.

"The—the club?"

Flippa nodded.

"Yes; it is time for me to do my breathing exercise."

"My hat!"

Wharton handed Flippa the club. Flippa stood up and waved

It gently over his head. The juniors had imagined that Indian club exercise would be likely to damage the railway-carriage. But the way Theophilus did it, it was not likely to damage a fly if it had smitten one. Evidently the young health-seeker did not mean to run the risks of over-exertion.

He handed the club back to Wharton after making half a dozen passes with it. Then he sat down, breathing hard.

The juniors regarded him dumbly. They had seen all kinds of fellows in their time. Fellows had come to Greyfriars from all parts of the home country and the over-seas dominions, and there were fellows from India and China. But of all the queer fish that had ever come to Greyfriars, this was the queerest. They had never seen anything quite like Theophilus before—in fact, they had never seen anything in the least resembling him.

Theophilus did not seem to realise that there was anything out of the common about him. He smiled a beaming smile at the chums of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Plenty of exercise; that is the secret of health," he said.

"Oh," said Bob Cherry, "that's the secret, is it?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Do you always exert yourself like that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes."

"Don't you find it a frightful strain on the muscles?"

"My muscles are hardened by that exercise," said Flippo, in explanation. "Also, I keep myself fit by taking regular doses of the Mixture for the Weak and Weary."

"Oh!"

Flippo looked at his watch again.

"Another five minutes," he murmured.

"Another ten minutes to Friardale, if that's what you mean," said Bob Cherry.

Flippo shook his head, with a smile.

"Then I shall have to take it in the train," he said.

"Take what?"

"The mixture."

"The—the mixture!" stammered Harry Wharton & Co. all together.

Theophilus nodded.

"Yes. In taking the mixture, or, indeed, any medicine, it is strictly necessary to observe the most exact punctuality," he said. "I have to take six drops every two hours, and in five minutes more it will be time."

"And you're going to take it here?"

"Yes."

"My hat!"

"I have sometimes taken it in railway trains before, and even on an omnibus," said Flippo. "It is most important not to be a moment later—or early, for that matter."

"Great Scott!"

"I shall prepare the dose now."

"Go it!" said Bob Cherry. "This is interesting."

Theophilus beamed.

"I am sure you find it so," he said. "You see, every lad should take a deep interest in questions of health. It is a most important subject."

"Is it healthy to keep wrapped up like that?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, certainly!"

"You've got a weak throat?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then what do you muffle it up for?"

"To prevent it from becoming weak."

"Oh!"

Theophilus took a bottle out of his bag, and a little drinking-vessel. The Greyfriars juniors watched him with great interest.

"Pray tell me when it is exactly four!" said Theophilus, who had both his hands occupied now.

"'Nother minute," said Nugent.

"Very good!"

Flippo poured out his dose carefully. The juniors watched him, spellbound. They wondered what the Remove would have said if they could have seen Theophilus.

"Four!" said Nugent, putting his watch back into his pocket.

"Thank you!"

Theophilus took off the medicine at a draught.

"May I offer you fellows a drink?" he asked, as he bent over his bag.

"Got ginger-beer there?" asked Bob Cherry.

Theophilus made a gesture of horror.

"Ginger-beer! That is dreadfully unhealthy!" he exclaimed.

"Lemonade, then?"

"That is as bad."

"You don't mean to say that you carry beer about with you, or spirits?"

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"Good gracious, no! Alcohol is another name for suicide."

"Then what have you got to drink?"

"I was referring to my medicine."

"Ow!"

"One dose will make a new man of you."

"More likely to make an old man of me—old before my time," grinned Bob Cherry. "Thanks, I'm not thirsty—not that kind of thirsty!"

"Let me urge you—"

"You can urge me, if you like, but you won't get me swallowing any of your marvellous muck!" said Bob.

"Marvellous mixture," corrected Theophilus.

"Same thing!"

"Not at all. Allow me to explain—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We're getting into Friardale."

"The marvellous mixture is—"

"We stop in a minute."

"It is a—"

"Here we are!"

The train clattered into the station. The Famous Four alighted with Theophilus Flippo, and gathered up his belongings for him. Theophilus blinked round the station through his big glasses.

"I trust there is a vehicle to meet me," he said.

"Ahem! The Head never thought of sending his motor-car," murmured Bob Cherry, "and I've left my own Daimler at home, on the piano."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a lovely afternoon for walking," said Harry Wharton, "and your trunk can be sent on by the porter, if you want it at Greyfriars."

"My dear fellow, I am going to stay some days, so of course I shall want it. What shall I do otherwise for changes of underclothing?"

"My hat! How often will you want to change in a few days?"

"It is according to the temperature," explained Theophilus. "I may need to change five or six times in one day, according to the degrees of heat and cold. I carry a small thermometer for the purpose."

"Oh," gasped Bob Cherry, "I wish you were coming to Greyfriars for good, kid! We should like you in the Remove! Oh, rather!"

"Shall we walk?" asked Wharton. "It's not very far."

Theophilus shook his head.

"Impossible!" he said.

"Why?"

"Walking induces heat in the system, and heat induced in the system by exercise is liable to neutralise the revivifying effects of the marvellous mixture," explained Flippo. "I take the exercise first, and then the mixture. I cannot walk now."

"We could carry you," suggested Bob Cherry solemnly.

"Good!" said Johnny Bull. "We could take a leg and an ear each, and there you are."

Theophilus shook his head gravely. Among his other gifts, he had a wonderful impenetrability where a joke was concerned, and was evidently wholly lost to anything like a sense of humour.

"I should not like to give you the trouble," he said. "And besides, I hardly think you could carry me with any comfort to myself. The strain upon my ears would be painful. Is there no vehicle to be hired in the village?"

"There's the station cab."

"Then pray let us take that."

And they took it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Arrival of Theophilus.

"HERE they come!"

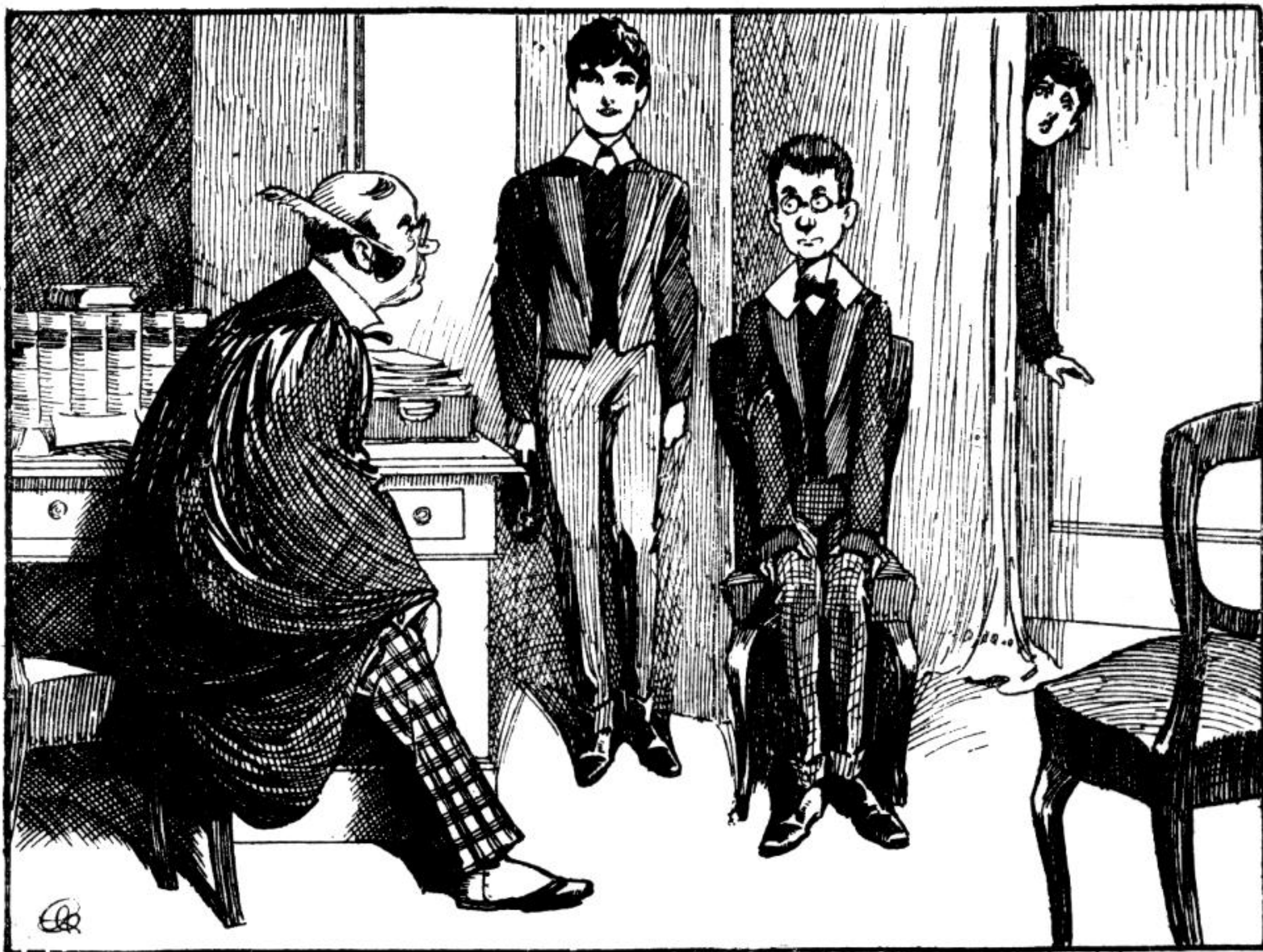
"They've got the hack!"

"Now to see what he's like," said Bolsover major.

Quite a crowd of fellows waited round the gates of Greyfriars to see the arrival of the precocious youth who represented "The Young Health-Seekers."

Lessons were just over, and half the Remove had turned up, as well as Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth, and Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth, and Hobson and Hoskins and some more of the Shell. Even fags of the Third and Second had come to see the stranger. A fellow who was going to do articles for his paper, on the subject of life at Greyfriars, was naturally an object of great interest to the juniors. Many of them were already composing legends of Greyfriars and wonderful stories of footer matches for the especial benefit of the young journalist.

Nugent minor of the Second was out in the road, and he



Theophilus sat bolt upright, with his hands on his knees, and blinked at Mr. Prout through his spectacles. "My name is Theophilus Flippo," he said, "and I am visiting the school to observe the conditions of public school life, from the point of view of hygienic conditions." "For what—what purpose?" gasped Mr. Prout. (See chap. 5.)

caught the first glimpse of the stranger in the hack with the Famous Four.

He staggered back into the gateway, laughing and gasping.

"What's the matter?" asked Bolsover major.

"What's he like?" asked Coker of the Fifth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent minor staggered away shrieking.

His extraordinary merriment redoubled the curiosity of the Greyfriars fellows.

They surrounded the hack eagerly as it drove in at the gates, and the driver had to stop.

Theophilus Flippo blinked out of the window of the hack, with little more than his prominent nose and spectacles showing through the folds of the muffler.

The juniors stared at him.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bolsover. "Is that it?"

"Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "What is it, my dear fellows?"

"Where did you dig that up, Wharton?"

"Faith, and is it alive it is?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus blinked at the crowd round the hack.

"I am very glad to see you, my boys," he said.

"Boys!" grunted Bolsover. "Are you a hundred?"

"Jump out!" said Vernon-Smith, opening the door of the hack.

"Yes, rather! Have him out!"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Get on, driver. Go up to the house."

"Yessir!"

The hack rolled on.

"Don't mind them, Flippo," said Harry Wharton reassuringly. "They're only a little excited, you know, at seeing a Pressman."

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Flippo nodded.

"Oh, I quite understand!" he said. "I shall be happy to show myself, and to talk to all the boys, while I am here. I hope to make a considerable difference in their habits, and to put them in the way of leading a thoroughly healthy life. I have several bottles of the Marvellous Mixture for the Weak and Weary in my trunk, which I have brought for the especial purpose of distributing to the boys."

"They will be much appreciated," said Johnny Bull solemnly.

"I trust so," said Theophilus.

The hack stopped before the School House.

Harry Wharton opened the door and jumped out, and Theophilus was escorted into the House. The crowd of fellows from the Close had followed, and they swarmed into the hall after Theophilus.

It was Bolsover major's intention to begin a ragging, regardless of the fact that Theophilus was a guest of Greyfriars, and the Famous Four closed round Flippo to keep the bully of the Remove at a distance.

But Bolsover major was not so easily baffled. He whispered to Vernon-Smith and Snoop and Stott, and the four of them made a sudden rush.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Theophilus.

"Back up!" cried Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!" echoed his comrades.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

"Yarooooop!" roared Bolsover major.

The bully of the Remove measured his length upon the floor, stretched there by a mighty drive on the chin from Bob Cherry.

Snoop, caught under the ear by Johnny Bull's fist, sprawled across him, roaring.

Vernon-Smith and Stott backed away.

At that moment the study door of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, opened, and Mr. Prout appeared.

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Mr. Prout was clean now, and looked very different from his appearance in the Head's study earlier that day.

He frowned at the scene in the passage.

"What is the matter here?" he exclaimed sternly.

"Ow!" groaned Bolsover, sitting up.

"Yow!" grunted Snoop.

"What are you boys doing on the floor?" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Get up at once, and don't be ridiculous."

Bolsover major and Snoop got up.

"Dear me! Who is this?" said Mr. Prout, seeing Theophilus for the first time. "Is this a new boy, Wharton?"

"Ahem! No, sir."

"A friend of yours, then?" asked the Fifth Form-master, surveying the stranger with a decidedly disparaging glance.

"A visitor, sir," said Wharton. "The—the Head's guest."

"What?"

Mr. Prout looked at him in astonishment, and then stared at Theophilus.

Theophilus succeeded in detaching the flapped cap from his head, and raised it to the Form-master.

"Pray allow me to introduce myself," he said, blinking at Mr. Prout. "My name is Theophilus Flippo, and I represent 'The Young Health-Seekers.'"

"Good heavens—I—I mean, dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"I shall be very pleased to have a few words with you, sir," said Flippo.

"With me?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may bring him into my study, Wharton," said Mr. Prout, not very favourably impressed evidently, but wishing to be civil to the extraordinary guest of the Head of Greyfriars.

The Fifth Form-master went into his study and sat down. Theophilus smiled genially to the crowd of fellows in the passage, and accompanied Wharton, who led him into the Fifth Form-master's study.

Mr. Prout lodged his glasses upon his nose, and looked at Theophilus.

"Well?" he said.

Theophilus coughed.

"Pray may I take a seat, sir?" he asked. "Standing throws the weight upon certain muscles of the legs, which—"

"You may sit down."

"Thank you, sir."

Theophilus sat down, and sat bolt upright, with his hands on his knees, and blinked at Mr. Prout through his big spectacles.

"So you are—" began Mr. Prout, very curious as to whom and what this extraordinary youth might be.

"Theophilus Flippo, sir."

"And you are here—"

"To visit the school for a few days, sir, and observe the conditions of public school life, especially from a point of view of the hygienic conditions."

"For—for what purpose?" gasped Mr. Prout.

"For a series of articles in my father's periodical, sir—'The Young Health-Seeker.'"

"Oh!" said Mr. Prout. "Oh!"

"But while I am here, sir, I shall endeavour to benefit the school by my presence," said the youthful representative of the Press. "I shall attempt, sir, in my humble way, to give some instruction in hygienic practices."

"Indeed!"

"Both to masters and to boys, sir."

"Eh?"

"Beginning, sir, with yourself, as I have the happiness to have made your acquaintance so soon," said Theophilus agreeably. "By a proper course of medicine, sir, and suitable exercises, it is possible to restore the growth of the hair."

"The—the what?"

"The hair, sir," said Theophilus calmly. "Now, you will allow me to remark that you are, practically speaking, bald—"

Mr. Prout started to his feet. It was quite true that Mr. Prout was not so hirsute as he had been in his earlier days; but it was equally true that it was an extremely sensitive point with the master of the Fifth. He glared at the happy Theophilus.

"I will allow you to remark nothing of the sort!" he thundered.

"But, my dear sir—"

"Has this—this person come to visit the Head, Wharton?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"Yes, sir."

"Then take him to the Head at once."

"Certainly, sir."

"But pray allow me, sir—" began Theophilus.

"I will allow you to leave my study," rapped out Mr.

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Prout, and he pushed Theophilus into the passage, and closed the door after him.

In the passage, Theophilus looked at Harry Wharton in surprise.

"Is the gentleman annoyed about anything?" he asked.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, that's all right!" he said. "Mr. Prout is taken like that sometimes. Come on; let's go to the Head."

And Wharton led the new-comer to Dr. Locke's study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Tactful!

"FLIPPS, sir!"

Harry Wharton announced Theophilus.

Dr. Locke looked up, and then rose to his feet, and came a couple of steps to meet Theophilus Flippo. He extended his hand, which Theophilus took in a very bony paw. The treatment Theophilus was undergoing did not seem, at all events, to make him plump. He was very sparsely covered with flesh.

"I am glad to see you, Master Flippo," said the Head, with a smile of welcome.

"Thank you, sir," said Flippo. "It is a pleasure to me to make your acquaintance!"

The doctor coughed.

"Pray sit down," he said.

"Thank you, I will avail myself of that offer, as I have no objection, founded upon hygienic considerations, to remaining in a perpendicular position."

"Oh!" murmured the Head.

Theophilus sat down. He blinked round the study through his large spectacles, apparently taking in all the details of the place. Harry Wharton retired from the study, and concealed his smiles in the passage. Dr. Locke looked at Flippo. Now that his visitor had arrived, he hardly seemed to know what to do with him.

"I understand that you will—er—stay a few days, Flippo?" said the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"I trust you will enjoy your stay among my boys."

"I trust so, sir. I shall do my best, sir, to improve their outlook upon matters of hygiene. You may, or may not, be aware, that I contribute eight columns weekly to the pages of 'The Young Health-Seeker,'" said Theophilus proudly.

"Indeed!" said the Head.

"Yes, indeed, sir. I do not say that these eight columns are the best stuff in the paper, but others have said so. While I am here, sir, I shall be glad to place my knowledge and experience at the service of yourself and the school."

"Thank you!" gasped the Head.

"Not at all, sir. It will be a pleasure to me," said Flippo. "In the first place, sir, may I make a remark?"

"Certainly."

"I observe that you have the top of your window open?"

"Yes," said the Head.

"That is liable to admit a draught."

"I do not notice it."

Theophilus shook his head wisely.

"You do not notice it, sir, but it is there all the same. I should recommend having the window tightly closed, or else wearing a muffler."

"Wearing a muffler!"

"Certainly, sir; round your neck."

"Oh!" said the Head.

"But, better than that, have the window closed, sir," said Theophilus. "Also have the keyhole stopped with wax or putty, sir. By this means all possibility of draughts is obviated."

"But what about ventilation?" asked the Head.

"It is the question of the more important of two requirements," explained Theophilus. "The lesser must always give way to the greater. I would offer to close your window, but it is only half an hour and three minutes since I took my mixture, and I cannot exert myself in any way until exactly one hour has elapsed."

"You need not trouble," said the Head drily. "I do not require it closed."

"But the draught—"

"It has not caused me any inconvenience for the past twenty years," said the Head. "Probably it will remain harmless."

ANSWERS

Theophilus shook his head.

"That is where you make a mistake, sir," he said.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, indeed. The older you grow, the more likely you are to take colds, and to crack up all of a sudden. A draught which may not hurt a man in the flush of health and strength at forty-five, may knock him completely over at sixty-five. I do not mean to say that you are sixty-five, sir; I am not aware of your precise age—"

Theophilus paused, for the Head to enlighten him upon that point. But Dr. Locke did not speak, and the cheerful youth ran on:

"You should remember, sir, that you are now, at all events, well on into middle age, and, in fact, on the downward path."

"Indeed!"

"Certainly. Your powers are failing, more or less rapidly, and it is only a question of time before—"

"Ahem! Ahem!"

"Before the failure is complete, sir. Your object should be to put off that time as long as possible, and by means of strict attention to hygiene—"

"Flipp—"

"Have you not noticed, sir, that your digestion has suffered of late years—"

"Boy!"

"Your sight is not so keen, and probably your hearing—"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"I am afraid I am very busy now," he said. "I hope to see you at another time, Master Flipp's."

Flipp's rose, too.

"Very well, sir," he said. "But pray remember what I have said. I wish my visit here to be of advantage to others besides myself."

"Master Wharton will look after you while you are here," said Dr. Locke, apparently not hearing the words of Theophilus. "I have asked him and his friends to do so."

"Thank you, sir! About that window—"

Dr. Locke opened the door of his study.

Even Theophilus Flipp's could take that as a hint, and he passed out into the passage.

The Head closed the door.

Then he drew a deep breath.

"What a dreadful—dreadful boy!" he murmured. "What an awful person to be in any house. How dreadful for his parents! Thank goodness he has not come to Greyfriars as a pupil."

There was a tap at the door.

"Come in!" said the Head.

It was Theophilus Flipp's who put his head in. He blinked at Dr. Locke in a very amiable way, and nodded.

"Pray excuse me, sir—"

"Yes," said the Head.

"I have been thinking, sir—"

"Well?"

"About that window?"

"That—that window!"

"Yes, sir," said Theophilus firmly. "This modern craze for ventilation is the cause of much ill-health. Look at me, sir! I never have any of my windows open."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"Yes, you look as if you do not," he said, as he scanned Theophilus's putty-coloured face and meagre features.

"Pray allow me to urge you to have it closed, sir—"

"You may go, Flipp's."

"Once more, sir—"

The Head pushed the door shut, and Flipp's had to go. Dr. Locke returned to his desk, looking quite dazed.

"What a dreadful boy!" he murmured again.

Tap! The door opened.

"Oh, go away!" exclaimed the Head, exasperated out of all politeness. "Go away at once, you foolish fellow! Do you hear?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

Dr. Locke jumped.

It was the master of the Fifth who was entering, and the Head had certainly been a little hasty in his speech.

Mr. Prout came in, and stared at the Head in great surprise. Dr. Locke had never addressed him in those terms before. Dr. Locke turned quite red.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Prout," he exclaimed. "I—I thought it was that dreadful boy coming back again."

"Flipp's, sir?" asked Mr. Prout.

"Yes."

"I passed him in the passage, sir," said Mr. Prout. "So he has made the same impression upon you as upon me?"

The Head sighed.

"I shall be very pleased when his stay at Greyfriars terminates," he said.

"Quite so, sir," said Mr. Prout. "And I, also. I have never seen such a tactless, impertinent, stupid young prig in my life!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"That is my impression of him, Mr. Prout."

"I think, sir, there will probably be some—what the juniors call japes—played upon this person Flipp's."

"I hope not, Mr. Prout. After all, he is a guest at Greyfriars."

"I hardly see how it is to be prevented, sir, if he mixes among the boys," said the master of the Fifth. "If anything of the kind should occur, and should have the unfortunate result of shortening his stay here—"

The Head smiled.

Mr. Prout smiled, too.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Such an Ass.

"I GUESS you're Flipp's?"

It was Fisher T. Fish, the American junior in the Greyfriars Remove, who spoke. He met Theophilus as the latter came down the passage from the Head's study. Flipp's paused, and looked at him through his spectacles.

"Yes; that is my name," he said.

Flipp's had been looking round for Harry Wharton, but the Famous Four had disappeared.

"Put it there!" said Fisher T. Fish, extending his hand.

Theophilus shook hands with the Yankee schoolboy.

"Have you come to stay?" asked Fish.

Theophilus shook his head.

"No," he replied. "I am staying only a few days, to collect some copy for the columns of the 'Young Health-Seeker.'"

"Oh!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Now, look here! You look a bright kid, I guess—just the fellow I've been looking for! I take a great interest in health questions myself."

"Indeed!" said Theophilus, with a beaming smile. "Then perhaps you would like to have a bottle of my Marvellous Mixture for the Weak and Weary?"

Fisher T. Fish grunted.

"Nope! Look here, this is how it is. Have you ever heard of Hiram K. Bubb's Purple Pills?"

"Never!" said Theophilus.

"They're very famous over there," said Fish.

"Over where?" asked Theophilus, looking round the passage.

"In the States, I mean."

"What states?"

Fisher T. Fish glared.

"The Yew-nited States!" he bellowed.

"Oh!" said Theophilus. "I thought you were referring to states of health."

"Nope! The Yew-nited States!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Hiram K. Bubb's Purple Pills are known wherever the Star-spangled Banner floats, sir. Now, I've got some of them with me—a good many boxes, in fact—and I can get them at a reduction. Can we trade?"

"Trade!" said Theophilus, puzzled.

"Yep."

"I don't quite understand."

Fish snorted.

"Can't understand plain American?" he asked. "Well, look here. These Purple Pills cost a dollar a box over there—that's four shillings in your queer English coinage."

"Yes," said Theophilus.

"I can let you have them at a shilling a box."

"Indeed!"

"If you take a quantity," said Fisher T. Fish, "as a galoot interested in health matters, this is a chance for you. Can we trade?"

"Thank you very much," said Theophilus.

"Not at all. I guess—"

"You are really very, very kind."

"I guess—"

"I am sure you mean to benefit me by this suggestion—"

"Correct! I guess—"

"And I am very, very much obliged to you—"

"Good! Then—"

"But I shall not require any of the pills, as I am already under treatment," added Theophilus, and he walked away down the passage before Fisher T. Fish could make any rejoinder.

The American junior stared after him.

"My eye!" he murmured. "I guess that merchant isn't such a silly ass as he looks! Nope!"

Theophilus walked on, looking round him through his

spectacles. Another youth in spectacles met him at the end of the passage. It was Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was always on the look-out for new boys at Greyfriars. Theophilus was not a new boy, but it was possible that he would answer the same purpose, from William George Bunter's point of view.

"So glad to see you!" exclaimed Bunter, grabbing the hand of Theophilus Flippis, and shaking it as if he had known Theophilus fifty years at least. "I have been looking for you, Cripps."

"Flippis, please," said Theophilus.

"Yes; I mean Flippis," said Bunter. "I'm Bunter."

"I'm very pleased to meet you, Bunter," said Theophilus, running his eyes over the fat figure of the Owl of the Remove, and thinking inwardly what heaps of good a course of the Marvellous Mixture would do him.

"The fact is," said Bunter, "as soon as I heard you were coming, Flippis, I decided to stand a big feed in honour of you."

"You are very kind, Bunter—"

"Bunter."

"Yes, Bunter. You are very kind, but I never indulge in big feeds. They are bad for the digestion."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Are they?" he said. "I've never found 'em so."

"You have never noticed it?"

"No!" snapped Bunter.

"But you will," said Theophilus cheerfully. "You have it to come, Bunter. It is evident, from your appearance, that you over-eat."

"Eh?"

"You are saving up, as it were, dreadful dyspepsia for your old age."

Bunter glared.

"That is, if you have any old age," said Theophilus. "If you go on without a change in your habits, I think it is very probable that you will die shortly."

Bunter jumped.

"Now, if you will take my advice, we may be able to prolong your existence, at least for some years," said Theophilus encouragingly. "In the first place—"

"You silly fathead!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, will you do me a small favour?" stammered Bunter.

"That is exactly what I want to do," said Theophilus, with a beaming smile.

"Good!" said Billy Bunter, looking more satisfied. "Perhaps you are right about the feed. In fact, I'm sure you are—Ahem! From this moment I shall say farewell to feeds. But, as a matter of fact, there is another matter. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, and I'm in want of a little ready cash. Could you cash my postal-order for me in advance? I will then hand it to you immediately it comes."

"I should be very happy, Bunter—"

"That's all right, then! Ten shillings!"

"Only I do not happen to have any change to spare—"

"That's all serene. I can get change at the tuck-shop," said Bunter eagerly.

"The tuck-shop?"

"I—I mean, at the chemist's," said Bunter, realising that he was giving himself away. "I shall be going there to get some—some medicine."

"What kind of medicine do you take?" asked Theophilus eagerly.

This was a subject he was quite at home in, and which possessed a never-failing interest for him.

"I—I was thinking of asking you to suggest some," said Bunter.

Theophilus beamed.

"Very good!" he exclaimed. "Why not try the Marvellous Mixture for the Weak and Weary?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Bunter.

"It will have the effect of bringing down your fat, which is a very important thing," said Theophilus. "It may also help to restrain your inordinate appetite, Bunter. In that case, your life may be prolonged. At present, speaking as a person with some medical knowledge, I should not give you more than five years."

"Ow!"

"But by the help of the Mixture—"

"How much does it cost?" murmured Bunter.

"Only a shilling a bottle."

"I—I—I—I'd better have plenty," said Bunter. "Suppose you lend me ten bob, and I'll lay in ten bottles."

"One bottle will be enough to start with, Bunter," said Theophilus, with a shake of the head. "You might decide to discontinue the treatment, and then the remaining bottles would be wasted."

Bunter grunted.

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"All right!" he growled. "Give me a bob, and—and I'll get one bottle."

"Not necessary, my dear Bunter. I have several bottles in my box, and I will fetch one for you immediately," said Theophilus.

Billy Bunter glared at him.

"You silly ass!" he roared.

"Eh?"

"You burbling fathead! If you think I'm going to swill your filthy medicines, you're jolly well mistaken!" Bunter yelled.

Theophilus stared at him in astonishment.

"But—but did you not suggest that I should lend you a shilling in order to purchase a bottle?" he asked.

Billy Bunter snorted. It was no use explaining to Theophilus that he had intended to change his mind about the expenditure of the shilling.

"You burbling ass!" he growled. "Look here, will you lend me a bob, or won't you?"

"I will give you the medicine for nothing—"

"Are you going to lend me a bob?"

"I am sorry, but it is against my principles to lend money, Bunter. But I will present you with a bottle of the medicine—"

Billy Bunter rolled away without waiting for Theophilus to finish.

"Dear me!" said Theophilus. "What an extraordinary boy! I—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed the cheery voice of Bob Cherry, as he came along the passage and caught Theophilus by the arm. "We're waiting for you!"

"Indeed!"

"Tea's ready!"

"My dear friend—"

"Come on!"

And Bob Cherry marched Theophilus Flippis into Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Tea in No. 1 Study.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had been requested by the Head to look after Theophilus Flippis, and they had made up their minds to do it. To the juniors of the Remove, it appeared simple and certain that the best way of looking after a fellow was to stand him a feed after a journey.

It fortunately happened that Study No. 1 was in funds, and the chums of the Remove had laid in a really excellent tea. There was a very appetising odour afloat in the atmosphere as Bob Cherry marched Theophilus in.

"Here he is!" said Bob Cherry. "Tea ready?"

"Quite ready," said Harry Wharton.

"Just made the tea," said Nugent.

"And I've made the toast," remarked Johnny Bull.

"And I've opened the sardines," said Mark Linley.

"Hurrah! Take a chair, Obediah—I mean, Theophilus!"

Theophilus Flippis regarded the tea-table, which would have made many a fellow's mouth water. But there was an expression of gathering horror upon the face of the youthful representative of "The Young Health-Seeker."

"Do you fellows drink tea?" he asked.

The chums of the Remove stared at him.

"Of course we do!" said Bob Cherry, puzzled. "We don't eat it!"

"Are you not afraid of its effect upon the gastric juices?"

"The—the what?"

"Tea has a most deleterious effect upon—"

"Oh, that's all right!"

Theophilus shook his head.

"Pray excuse me," he said. "I will not take any tea."

"All right. There's ginger-beer."

"Ginger-beer is windy."

"My hat! Will you try lemonade?"

"Lemonade is unhealthy."

"I'm sorry we haven't champagne!" said Harry Wharton, with a heavy sarcasm that was totally lost upon Theophilus Flippis.

"My dear fellow, I could not drink champagne!" said Theophilus. "It is one of the most unhygienic of drinks."

"What do you drink, then?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Pure water, in a small quantity at a time," said Theophilus. "I generally measure it out before drinking."

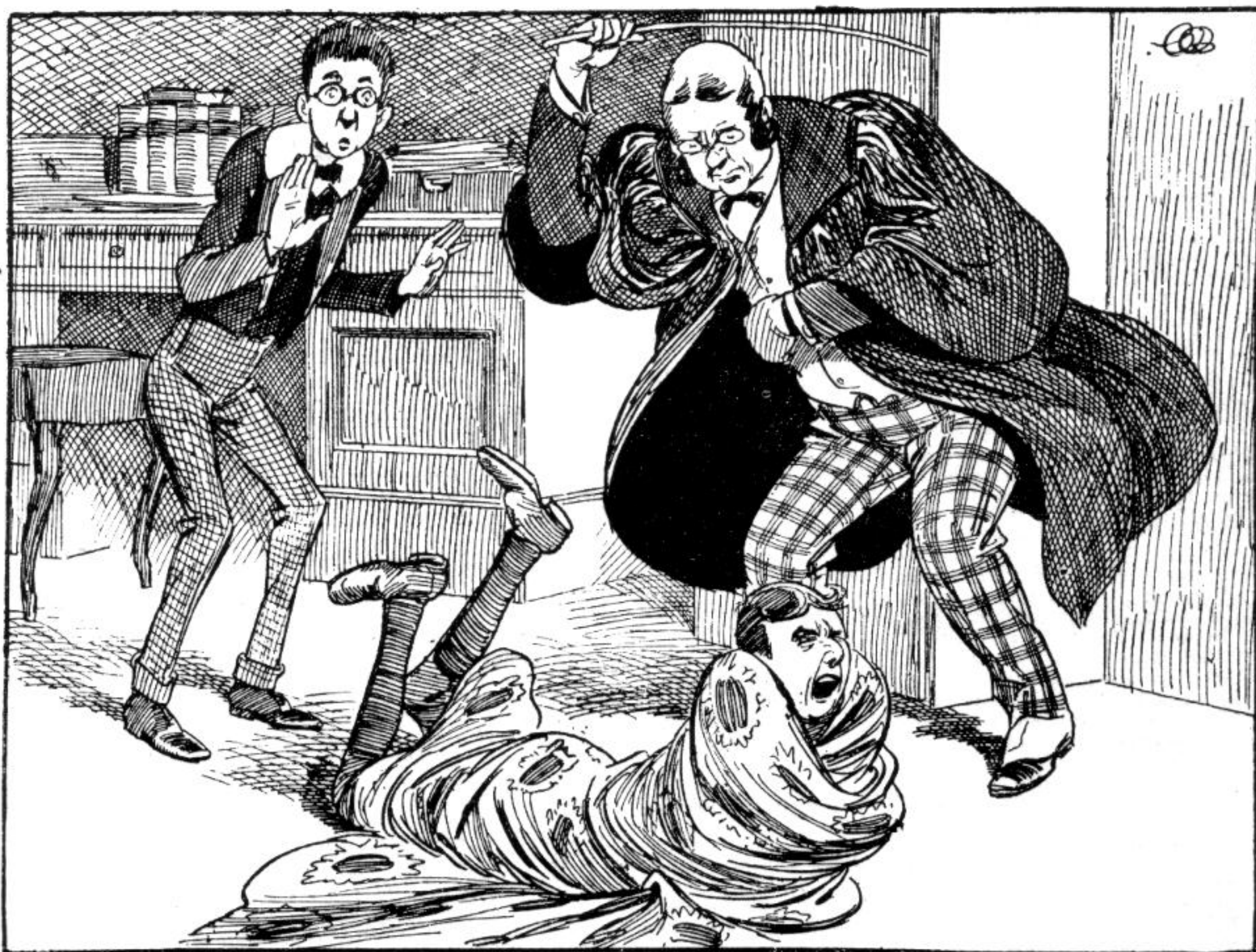
"Well, there's plenty of water," said Wharton. "You can drink it till you flow over at the ears, if you like!"

"You like sardines?" asked Nugent, as he pushed a chair to the table, and pushed Theophilus into it.

Theophilus gasped.

"Sardines?"

"Yes."



Mr. Prout picked up a cane. Whack! Whack! Whack! The flowered coverlet was not a good protection against the cane, and Coker roared in anguish as the blows got home. "Yow! Garroooooh! Oh! O-o-oh!" "Oh, dear, murmured Theophilus, "I am very, very sorry, my dear Coker! My dear, dear, sir—" Whack! Whack! (See chap. 16.)

"Fresh?"

"Well, you see, there aren't any sardines in the fountain in the Closé, and they don't live in our river," said Nugent sarcastically, "therefore we're compelled to get them in tins!"

"Good heavens!"

"What's the matter?"

"Are you not afraid of ptomaine poisoning?"

"Nunno! Not much!"

"My dear friend, you should never eat anything that has been enclosed in a tin. You run the most frightful risks."

"Will you have some toast?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Thank you!"

Wharton passed the toast, glad that something, at all events, was provided that the peculiar guest could eat. But as Theophilus looked at the toast, he pushed the plate away instead of taking any.

"That toast is buttered," he said.

"Yes. Don't you like it buttered?"

"Thank you! I never eat butter! Anybody who eats butter is in danger of catching some tubercular complaint."

"Ow!"

"Tuberculosis is very rife among cattle. I could give you a description of the bacillus—"

"Don't!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ring off!"

"Gro-o-oh!"

Theophilus blinked round at them.

"I assure you that if I gave you a description of the probable bacilli in that butter, you would never touch it again!" he said.

"We'd jolly well touch you, though!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Will you have some dry toast, Flippis?" asked Harry Wharton, with elaborate politeness.

"Thank you, yes!"

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"You like jam?"

"Jam!" exclaimed Theophilus, in horror. "Do you know what jam is made of?"

"Fruit, I suppose!"

"And other things," said Theophilus. "I never eat jam."

"Marmalade?"

"Oh, never!"

"What the dickens do you eat, then?"

"At home," said Theophilus, "I have some very carefully-prepared dried fruits, which I eat with dry toast for tea."

"Oh, dear!"

"It is owing to my care with my diet that I enjoy such bounding health," explained Theophilus.

The Removites looked at him, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus looked puzzled.

"I did not intend that remark for a joke!" he said.

"Jokes sometimes come off without a chap intending them," said Bob Cherry. "Will you have some preserved ginger?"

"What preservative is used in it?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Then I won't risk it, thank you!"

"No; I suppose it wouldn't do to risk losing your bounding health, your athletic figure, and rich complexion!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry reached out under the table to stamp on his foot, as a warning that politeness was required towards a guest. But Theophilus only nodded.

"Exactly!" he said.

"Are you always as careful as this when you go out to a party?" asked Johnny Bull.

And Bob Cherry stamped again. Johnny Bull was apparently unconscious of it, for he gave no sign, and did not even glance towards Bob.

"Always," said Theophilus.

"You must be exhilarating company!" said Johnny.

Bob Cherry stamped again, more emphatically than before.

Theophilus stooped and looked under the table.

"I hope my foot is not in the way?" he said.

"Of course not!" said Harry Wharton. "There's plenty of room."

"It is very extraordinary!" said Theophilus, in surprise.

"I have received three distinct concussions upon my foot!"

Bob Cherry turned crimson. He understood now why Johnny Bull had not heeded his secret signals. Theophilus had received them.

"I—I—I'll get you some water!" said Bob, jumping up to hide his confusion. "Do—do you like it warm or cold?"

"Cold, please!"

Bob Cherry fetched in a jug of water.

The juniors had their tea, Theophilus contenting himself with dry toast and water.

"I suppose you're not afraid of growing too fat on that diet?" Johnny Bull remarked.

"If I saw any signs of that, I should reduce the amount of toast," said Theophilus. "I have myself weighed every day, of course."

"Of course!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"It is most important to know whether one is losing or gaining weight," said Theophilus. "By the way, you have never tried the Mixture for the Weak and Weary, I believe?"

"Never!" said Wharton.

"I have a bottle in my pocket——"

"Better keep it there!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"I should like you fellows to try it. It can be taken in tea, if you persist in drinking that unhealthy beverage——"

"Improves the tea, I suppose?"

"Well, it gives it a flavour."

"I've no doubt it does," grinned Nugent. "But we'd rather stick to the old flavour, if you don't mind."

"Perhaps you will allow me to add a few drops to each cup," suggested Theophilus.

"No fear!"

"It will do you good."

"Make us as healthy as you are?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, in the course of time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray allow me!" said Theophilus, taking a bottle out of his pocket.

"Ring off!" roared Johnny Bull, jerking his teacup away as Theophilus reached towards it. "If you put any of that muck in my tea, I'll—I'll——"

"My dear friend——"

"Rats!"

Theophilus replaced the bottle in his pocket with a sigh.

"Once I put some in a friend's tea without his knowledge," he said. "He made quite a fuss about it, but I'm sure it did him good. Unfortunately, he was offended; I do not know why—and I have not seen him since."

"Go hon!"

"Will you have some more toast, Flipp's?"

"Thank you, no; I have eaten four ounces."

"Oh!"

"More water?" asked Bob Cherry hospitably. "Don't limit yourself with the water."

"Thank you—a half-pint is exactly enough."

Theophilus rose from the table. He glanced at his watch.

"Pray excuse me now," he said. "After a meal, it is advantageous to lie in a horizontal position for five minutes, in order to allow the process of digestion a fair start. I will therefore retire to the dormitory."

And he did.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. They waited till Theophilus's footsteps had died away down the passage before they gave expression to their feelings. Then they yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Medical Treatment.

"I 'VE been looking for you!"

It was Bolsover major who spoke.

Theophilus Flipp's looked up with an agreeable smile. He was seated upon the lowest step of the staircase, with his legs crossed, and a gigantic volume in his hands, which he was reading with the profoundest attention. Bolsover, Vernon-Smith, and Snoop came along the passage, and they grinned at the sight of Theophilus.

"Looking for me?" said Theophilus.

Bolsover nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Where have you been?"

"I have been taking a short rest in a horizontal position,

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after partaking of a light and frugal refreshment," said Theophilus.

"Did you eat a dictionary among the other things?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Theophilus looked astonished.

"Certainly not," he said. "What an extraordinary question."

"What's the book?" asked Bolsover, with a nod towards the big volume that rested upon the knees of Theophilus.

"'How to Get Well and Keep Well,'" said Theophilus.

"It is written by a very great authority—Professor Flabb. Would you like me to read you——"

"Yes, some other time," said Bolsover.

"There is no time like the present," said Theophilus. "I shall be at Greyfriars but a short time, and——"

"You can read it to us in the dorm. to-night," said Vernon-Smith.

"Good!" said Bolsover. "It will be as good as a sleeping-draught. But look here, Flick——"

"Flipp's," said Theophilus.

"I mean Flipp's. I understand that you are an authority upon the subject of—of hygiene, and—and health and things," said Bolsover.

"In my humble way," said Theophilus, with a beaming smile. "I shall be very, very pleased to afford you any information in my power. Have you a pain anywhere?"

"Oh, no!"

"An ache in one of your limbs?"

"Not at all."

"A feeling of vacuity and general emptiness in the head——"

"Eh?" said Bolsover suspiciously, while Vernon-Smith and Snoop giggled.

"If you have, a dose of the Marvellous Mixture will set you up, as right as rain," said Theophilus. "I have several bottles with me, and I shall be very, very pleased to hand you one. If you find it beneficial, you can then expend a part of your pocket-money in the purchase of further supplies."

"Yes, I can see myself doing that—I don't think!" said Bolsover. "I'm not ill, and I don't want any medical muck. I'm thinking of another chap——"

"A friend of yours ill?" asked Theophilus eagerly.

"Yes, that's it."

"I will gladly do anything I can——"

"He has been ordered by the doctor to take a sudden shock," said Bolsover, watching the simple face of Theophilus as he spoke. "You see, he needs a shock to buck up his circulation, and that's what's been ordered."

"Dear me!" said Theophilus.

"What is required is a chap to administer it," explained Bolsover. "As you take such an interest in hygienic matters, I thought you might do it."

"I should be very, very happy to oblige!"

"Sure it won't be troubling you too much?"

"Quite, quite sure!"

"Well, the chap's name is Coker," said Bolsover. "I usually administer this treatment to him myself, but just now, I—I've got an engagement."

"I shall be quite pleased to take your place, my dear friend."

"He has to have a pail of water thrown over him quite suddenly," said Bolsover. "That is the treatment."

Theophilus opened his eyes wide.

"What an extraordinary treatment!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Bolsover. "But that's what the doctor ordered. You see it gives him a shock to the system, which bucks up the circulation."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, exactly."

"I have never come across that treatment before," said Theophilus, with intense interest. "I shall be very glad to see it, and make a note of it. Do you know the name of the medical man who ordered it?"

"Yes," said Bolsover, with perfect calmness. "Coker had a specialist down about it, and it was ordered by Dr. Gobble. You've heard that name, of course?"

Theophilus wrinkled his brows in thought.

"The famous specialist," said Vernon-Smith.

"I do not recall the name," said Theophilus. "However, what you tell me is most interesting. Does Coker strip for this treatment?"

"No. You see, the special benefit of the treatment is that it gives him a sudden shock," said Bolsover.

"Yes, I see."

"And for that purpose, it has to be administered at an unexpected moment."

"Quite, quite so."

"Therefore, when I administer it, I generally wait for him

outside his study and bung the water over him as he comes out," said Bolsover solemnly.

"A very good idea, considering the object you have in view," said Theophilus, with a nod. "I suppose you are sure there is no mistake?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"It is really a very unusual treatment."

"Yes, that's what all the fellows say; but it seems to do Coker good. If you'd care to save me the trouble to-day, Flipp—"

"Oh, certainly! I shall be delighted!"

"Good! I'll show you Coker's study, if you'll come with me."

Theophilus rose, with his book under his arm.

"Better give me the book," said Vernon-Smith; "I'll take care of it for you."

"Thank you, my dear friend!"

Bolsover led the youthful health specialist away. Vernon-Smith and Snoop looked after them open-mouthed.

"My only hat!" murmured the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Great Scott!" said Snoop. "Is he really going to do it?"

"Looks like it!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The silly awful ass!"

"Shush—don't let him hear!"

And Snoop giggled more quietly.

Theophilus, evidently without a suspicion, followed Bolsover major to the Fifth-Form passage. In an angle of the passage a bucket was waiting—of water in which a considerable quantity of soot had been mixed. Bolsover pointed it out to his companion.

"That's the water, Flipp," he said.

"Very good!"

"There's Coker's door. As soon as it opens bung the water over the chap who comes out, without saying a word."

"Yes," said Theophilus.

"You see, the more sudden the shock the better."

"Yes, I quite—quite understand."

"When you've finished you might come and tell me. You know my name?"

"No. I think I have not yet heard your name, my dear friend."

"Brown," said Bolsover—"Tom Brown."

"Very good."

And Bolsover departed. Theophilus stood guard over the bucket and waited.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Gets the Shock!

"READY?" said Coker, of the Fifth.

"Yes," said Potter and Greene together.

"Come on, then!" said Coker.

Coker, of the Fifth, was in riding-breeches and boots, and he looked very like a sporting gent. It was Coker's ambition to look horsey, and he succeeded very well indeed. He liked himself in riding clothes. He was going out for a ride now, and was taking his two chums with him in order that they might form an admiring audience. Potter and Greene were quite willing to do that, as Coker was to pay for the hire of a pair of nags for them.

"Where are the gees?" asked Potter.

Potter had learned from Coker to call horses "gees." It sounded very sporty.

"They're in Courtfield," said Coker.

"We're walking there?"

"Yes."

"Right-ho! I'm ready."

Coker opened the door of the study, and the three Fifth-Formers strode out.

Swoooooosh!

Swish!

Splash!

"Yaroooooooooooop!"

"Oh!"

"Yah!"

Theophilus had done his duty!

The contents of the bucket swooped upon Coker & Co. as they issued from the study, and Coker had the chief benefit of them.

He staggered back wildly, yelling.

Theophilus lowered the pail to the floor.

The three Fifth-Formers gouged the sooty water out of their eyes, and glared at Theophilus as if they would eat him.

"You—you—" bellowed Coker. "You—you—"

"You—you—" shrieked Potter.

"He's mad!" gasped Greene. "He must be mad!"

"Mad or not, we're going to slaughter him for that!" yelled Coker.

The three chums of the Fifth rushed at the startled Theophilus.

Three pairs of hands gasped the surprised youth, and he was whirled over upon the floor with a terrific concussion.

Bump!

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ONE
PENNY.

"Yaroo!"

"Now bump him!" yelled Coker. "Roll him in the water! Yow!"

"Squash him!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Ow!" roared Theophilus. "Groo! Yow! Leggo! What are you up to? I trust a mistake has not been made! Ow!"

"You've made a mistake in biffing that stuff over me!" shrieked Coker. "I'm going to smash you baldheaded!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Bump! Bump!

"Yaroo! Help! Oh!"

"Good heavens! What is the matter?" exclaimed Wingate, of the Sixth, dashing along the passage. "Why, what—what—"

The captain of Greyfriars broke off in sheer amazement at the sight of the three drenched and dripping Fifth-Formers. Coker glared at him.

"Matter!" he roared. "This cheerful idiot has biffed a pail of dirty water over us; that's what's the matter! We're slaughtering him, that's all!"

"Ow! Help!"

"Hold on!" gasped Wingate. "He's a guest at Greyfriars—"

"Let him behave like a guest, then!" yelled Coker. "Guests don't bung pails of sooty water over their hosts, as a rule, I believe!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Flipp, what does this mean?"

"Ow, ow!"

"Answer, you idiot!" roared Coker, banging the head of the unfortunate Theophilus against the linoleum.

"Speak, can't you?"

"Ow! Groo! Ow!"

"Answer, you fathead! Explain yourself!"

Bump! Bump!

"Yaroo! Help!"

"Stop it, Coker!" gasped the captain of Greyfriars. "How can he answer when you're bumping his napper on the floor? Let him alone!"

"Ow! Help!"

Coker unwillingly desisted, and the unfortunate Theophilus sat up. He put his spectacles straight on his thin nose, and blinked at Wingate and gasped.

"Ow, ow! I am hurt! Grooo!"

"What did you do it for?" demanded Wingate.

"Groo! Ow! I think—Ow—"

"What did you bung that water over these chaps for?"

"Ow! I think there is a—yow—mistake!"

"You chucked the water over us!" yelled Greene.

"Ow! Is one of you Coker?"

"Yes, ass! I'm Coker!" said Coker.

"Very well; the water was intended for you, not for the others!" gasped Theophilus.

Coker stood almost petrified.

"Intended for me!" he stuttered.

"Yes, my dear Coker."

"You did it on purpose?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"Then you want squashing!" bellowed Coker. And he hurled himself upon Theophilus again.

"Yaroo!" roared Theophilus, as he bumped upon the floor. "Help!"

Wingate grasped the infuriated Coker, and dragged him back.

"Hold on!" he gasped.

"Lemme gerrat him!"

"Chuck it—"

"I'm drenched!"

"Yes, but—"

"I'm soaked to the skin!"

"Yes—"

"I'm sooty! I'm wet! Look at my bags!" shrieked Coker. "Look at my chivvy! Look at my hair! Look at me! I'll—"

"Groo!" groaned Theophilus. "This is the last time I will attempt to do you a favour, Coker. Ow! You are a violent person, and I shall never attempt to administer your medical treatment again!"

"Medical treatment?" gasped Coker.

"Yes, certainly!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate, gasping with merriment.

"Was that intended for medical treatment?"

"Certainly," said Flipp, in surprise. "It is his usual treatment, is it not?"

"Eh?"

"So I understood, at all events."

"What does he mean?" gasped Coker. "If he isn't a raving lunatic, what is he jabbering about?"

Wingate laughed.

"I think it's a jape," he said. "I fancy the ass has been taken in, though how he could be such an ass—Look here, Flippis, did somebody tell you that that was Coker's medical treatment that he was in the habit of taking?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Oh, my aunt!"

"And you believed it?" gasped Wingate. "Of all the silly chumps—"

"Dear me!" said Theophilus. "If I have been misinformed, and the victim of an absurd joke, I am sure I am very, very sorry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughing matter," said Theophilus. "I have been deceived."

"It won't be a laughing matter for the joker!" yelled Coker, of the Fifth. "As for you, you jabbering baboon, you've been licked, and you'll do! I want to know who put you up to this."

Wingate staggered away, doubled up with merriment. That any fellow should be so simple as Theophilus had proved himself to be was amazing, and Theophilus was evidently quite unable to see any comic side to the affair.

Coker grasped the youthful representative of "The Young Health-Seeker" by the shoulder and shook him.

"Who put you up to this?" he roared.

"Oh, Brown—Tom Brown!"

Coker started.

"Tom Brown, of the Remove?"

"I suppose so."

"The New Zealand chap?"

"I really do not know; but certainly his name is Tom Brown," said Theophilus. "If he has deceived me, I consider—"

"There's only one Tom Brown at Greyfriars," said Potter.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

"And we'll make him browner," he said. "Come on!"

And, leaving Theophilus struggling to his feet, the three Fifth Formers rushed away, on vengeance bent. At the end of the Remove passage they encountered Bolsover and Snoop and Vernon-Smith.

"Hallo!" said Bolsover, with a grin. "You chaps been taking a bath with your clothes on?"

"Have you seen Brown?" demanded Coker, without heeding the question.

"Tom Brown? He's in his study."

"Good!"

Coker & Co. rushed on. Bolsover major and his friends walked out into the Close, smiling serenely. They were on the worst of terms with Tom Brown and his study mates, and they did not care what happened in the New Zealand junior's study. That something would happen was quite certain.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Very Rough.

TOM BROWN, of New Zealand, was having tea in his study. Bulstrode and Hazeldene, who shared No. 2 Study with Brown, were there, having tea with him. The three Removites were seated round the table, chatting cheerfully, and unsuspecting of danger, when the door was suddenly hurled open, and Coker, Potter, and Green of the Fifth rushed in.

The three juniors started to their feet.

Without a word Coker & Co. hurled themselves upon the junior from New Zealand.

"Hallo!" roared Tom Brown.

"What—"

He had no time to say more.

The three seniors swung him off his feet, whirling him across the table, and there was a terrific crash as the crockery was swept away.

"Bump him!" roared Coker.

"Larrup him!" yelled Greene.

"Wallop him!" bellowed Potter.

"Yarooop!" gasped Tom Brown.

"What the—how the—who the—Help! Rescue! Rescue, Remove! Help! Oh!"

Crash!

The table went flying, and amid the ruins of the tea-things Tom Brown sprawled on the floor, with Coker and Potter and Greene sprawling over him.

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Bulstrode and Hazeldene sprang to the aid of their study-mate, and in a moment the six fellows were mixed up in a wild and whirling combat.

But the seniors were more powerful than the juniors, and Hazeldene found himself hurled out of the study, and he sprawled along the passage, gasping.

Bulstrode followed him.

Then Coker, Potter, and Greene devoted all their attention to Tom Brown.

The unfortunate Colonial was rolled in the ruins of the tea-things, and jam and tea and milk were daubed over him, and mighty smites from the open palms of the Fifth Formers made him roar.

"Help! Rescue, Remove! Ow!"

"Slaughter him!" gasped Coker.

"Yes, rather!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yaroooh! Rescue!"

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage, and a roar of voices. Harry Wharton & Co. came rushing out of the next study, and they nearly fell over Bulstrode and Hazeldene sprawling on the floor outside.

"What's the row?" gasped Wharton.

"Coker!" panted Bulstrode. "He's gone mad! And Potter and Greene! They've all gone mad! Ow!"

The Famous Four dashed into Tom Brown's study.

Right at the Fifth-Formers they rushed, and Coker & Co. were grasped and dragged off their victim in the twinkling of an eye.

There was a terrific struggle in the study, but Tom Brown, as soon as he recovered his breath, joined in it, and Bulstrode and Hazeldene lent their aid, and a crowd of Removites came along the passage to help. In a few minutes the three Fifth-Formers were secured. They were thrown upon the floor, and two or three Removites sat upon each of them to keep them there.

"Now, then," gasped Harry Wharton; "what's the row about?"

"Lemme get at him!" shrieked Coker.

"Get at whom?"

"Brown!"

"What's Brown done?"

"I haven't done anything," roared Brown. "But I'm going to do something. I'm going to smash that fathead Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The smashfulness will be terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The conduct of the esteemed Coker is terrifically outrageous!"

"He made that idiot Flippis bung a pail of sooty water over me!" roared Coker.

Tom Brown stared.

"I did!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, you did!"

"You're off-side, Coker," said Tom Brown, with a shake of the head. "I haven't done anything of the sort."

"He said you had!"

"Then he was dreaming!"

Coker gasped.

"Do you mean to say you didn't?" he demanded.

"I certainly didn't. I haven't spoken to the fellow that I can remember," said Tom Brown. "Do you mean to say you came here like a newly-escaped lunatic because he told you that?"

"I've been drenched with sooty water—"

"You'll get worse than that before you get away from here!" growled Bulstrode.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's the medicine merchant himself! Come in, Flippy! Make room for Flippis!"

Theophilus was pushed into the study by the juniors in the passage. He blinked round in a very confused way. He was still suffering considerably from his rough handling at the hands of Coker & Co. in the Fifth Form passage.

"My dear fellows—" he began.

"Here, Flippy!" exclaimed Nugent. "Did you tell Coker that Tom Brown put you up to slinging water over him?" Theophilus nodded.

"Yes, certainly," he said.

"But I didn't!" roared Tom Brown indignantly.

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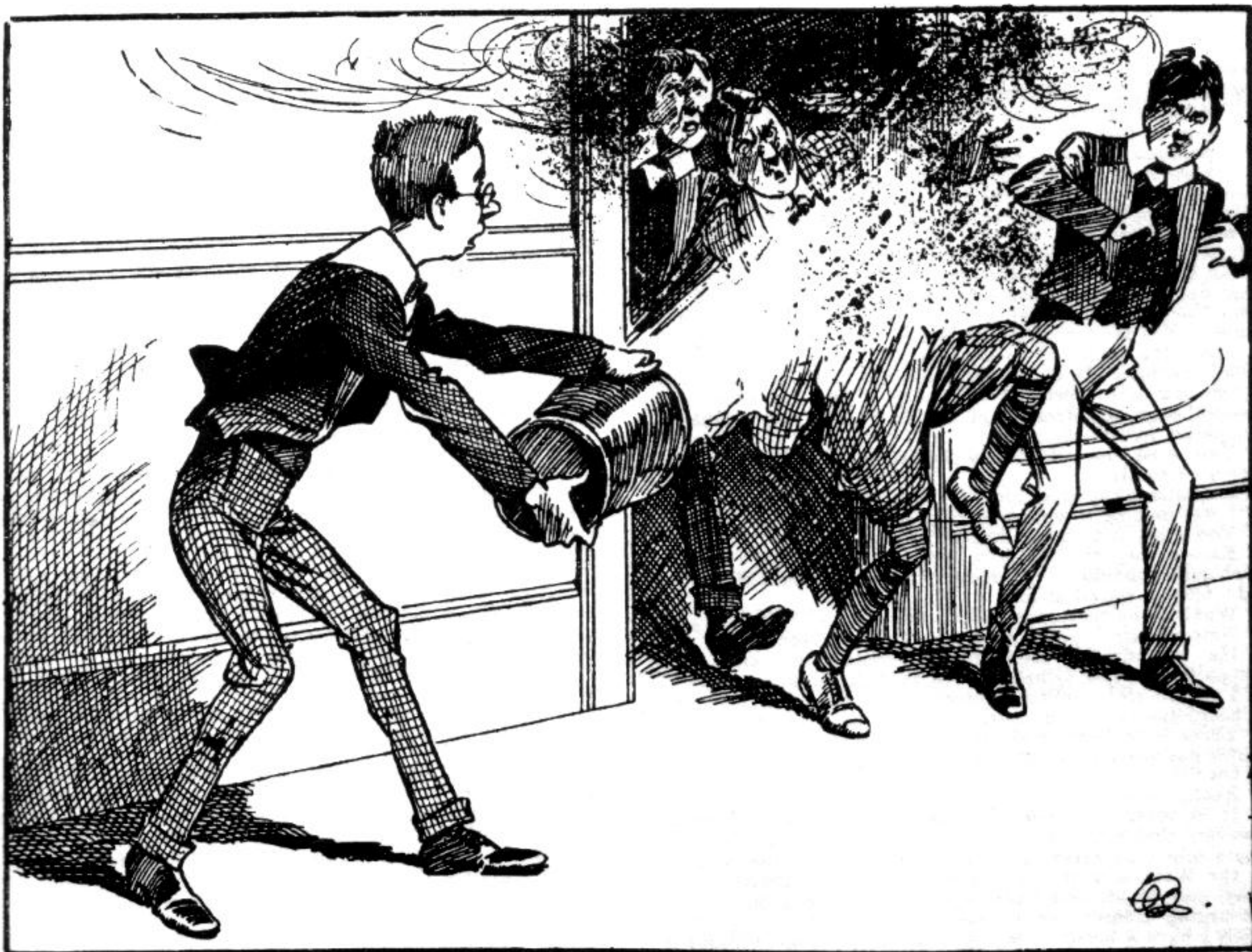
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As Coker flung open the door of the study, Theophilus did his duty, and the contents of the bucket swooped down upon the three Fifth Formers. Coker staggered back wildly! "Oh, groooo—" (See chapter 10.)

Theophilus blinked at him.
"Did you address me?" he asked.
"Yes, fathead. I'm Tom Brown."
Theophilus shook his head.
"You must be mistaken," he said.
"What!"
"You are labouring under some delusion," said Theophilus firmly, "unless there are two Tom Browns at this school."
"There's only one!" yelled the New Zealand junior, "and I'm that one."
"You are deluded. Some peculiar fancy, perhaps due to a bad state of the digestion," said Theophilus. "You are nothing at all like Tom Brown. I should recommend doses of my special mixture, taken every two hours, the bottle to be well shaken before taken—"
"You ass! Do you think I don't know my own name?" yelled Tom Brown.
"Such delusions are not uncommon. I—"
"But this is Tom Brown, you ass!" exclaimed Wharton, shaking Theophilus by the shoulder. "The chap who told you his name was Tom Brown was taking you in."
"Oh! That is, of course, possible!"
"It was Bolsover or Snoop or Bunter, or somebody," grinned Nugent, "and that ass Flippo believed it was Tom Brown, and that ass Coker believed it—"
"I'll find out who it was," growled Coker. "I'll—"
"You'll find out something else first," grunted Bulstrode.
"You'll find out that you can't burst into a Remove study in this way."
"Hear, hear!"
"I—I say; it was a mistake, you know," stammered Potter.
"We're sorry," said Greene.
"You'll be sorrier before we've done with you," said Hazeldene.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
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Bulstrode took up the shovel, and shovelled soot out of the chimney. The three Fifth Formers eyed it apprehensively.
"Look here! Don't you put that over us!" exclaimed Coker.
Bulstrode did not reply. He accumulated a heap of soot, and then he shovelled it over the Fifth Formers. Coker & Co. struggled wildly and furiously, but they were held fast, and their resistance was of no avail.
They had been in a very bad state when they raided the study. But undoubtedly their last state was worse than their first.
In a couple of minutes their faces were black as ink, and Bulstrode and Hazeldene and Tom Brown swamped cold tea over them, and rubbed the soot well in.
Then the juniors, roaring with laughter, bundled them out of the study.
Coker & Co. rolled in the passage.
"Buzz off!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "We give you ten seconds to get clear. Then we begin to jump on you." He took out his watch.
Coker & Co. did not require more than the ten seconds. They bolted, and disappeared from view, leaving the Removites yelling with laughter.
The unhappy Fifth Formers rushed up to the Fifth Form dormitory to clean themselves. But it was long before they were clean.
They had almost finished when Theophilus Flippo blinked into the study.
"I say, there seems to have been prevarication in this matter, which has led to a most unfortunate mistake," he said. "I am very, very sorry—"
"You ass!"
"Ahem—"
"You silly fathead—"
"It was very, very unfortunate—"
"Oh, buzz off!"

"I am very, very much concerned——"
Coker made a rush at him, and Theophilus did not finish.
He vanished.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Poor Bunter.

THEOPHILUS FLIPPS took his place in the Remove Form-room the next morning. He had asked permission to take lessons along with the Lower Fourth, and permission had been accorded him. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked at him rather grimly when he came in with the rest of the Form. Mr. Quelch had noticed Theophilus, and had not been favourably impressed by him. Theophilus, on the other hand, took a kindly interest in Mr. Quelch, as he did in everybody. Theophilus was all kindness, in fact, though it had to be admitted that a great deal of it was misplaced kindness.

But the person Theophilus took most interest in was Billy Bunter. The fat Removite seemed to have a great attraction for him. He contrived to sit next to Bunter, and was very friendly to him. Billy Bunter could not make it out at all; but he saw a prospect of obtaining a cash advance from Theophilus on the strength of it. So he was very cordial to Theophilus in return.

"You must not talk in the class-room, Flippus," said Mr. Quelch presently.

Theophilus blinked at him.

"I was making a remark to Bunter, sir."

"You must not do so during lessons."

"Excuse me, sir. It is a question of Bunter's health, which surely should be paramount to other considerations."

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

"What is the matter with Bunter's health?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir," piped Bunter. "I'm all right, sir."

"He is suffering from fatty degeneration, sir," said Theophilus. "The symptoms are unmistakable."

"I'm not, sir!" yelled Bunter.

Theophilus shook his head sadly.

"There is no mistake about it, sir," he said. "I fear that Bunter has but a very, very short time to live."

"Ow!"

"Really, Flippus——"

"It is very, very sad, sir," said Theophilus. "I think, however, that the march of the degeneration in Bunter's tissues might be arrested by a judicious use of the Mixture for the Weak and Weary, taken at regular intervals of two hours, and by his being placed upon a strict diet. I was just urging Bunter, sir, to take a dose of the mixture, of which I have a bottle in my pocket. I am never without it, sir."

"Please do not be ridiculous, Flippus."

"Eh?"

"If you talk to Bunter again, I shall request you to leave the Form-room."

"Oh, sir!"

"Silence in class!"

And the Removites left off giggling.

Theophilus, although his kindly heart was moved by his fears for Bunter's safety, refrained from any more talk during lessons, but he looked very serious and solemn.

When the class was dismissed, Theophilus linked his arm in Bunter's as they went out. Billy Bunter blinked at him very doubtfully.

"I say, Flippus," he said, "you are quite right about my being a bit seedy; it's owing to the short commons we get here, you know."

"I fear you suffer from over-eating, Bunter."

Billy Bunter shook his head eagerly.

"No, that's quite a mistake!" he exclaimed. "I never really get enough. I'm hungry at the present moment, and you know how dangerous it is to go hungry. Will you come over to the tuck-shop with me?"

"My dear friend, I am very, very——"

"Well, look here, cash my postal-order for me," said Bunter. "I'll hand it to you directly it comes——"

"Good old postal-order!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "If you lend Bunter any tin on his postal-order, Flippy, you'll get left."

"Oh, really, Fish——"

"I do not intend to do so," said Theophilus. "My dear Bunter, I think I know your symptoms. I will recapitulate them. You are hungry?"

"Frightfully hungry," said Bunter, with an expression of great suffering.

"You never feel satisfied after a meal?"

"I never get enough."

"Even after a meal, you could always eat some more?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Quite—quite so," said Theophilus. "At the present

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moment, although it is yet some time to dinner, you could eat a hearty meal?"

"Yes," said Bunter eagerly.

"You could eat a rabbit-pie, for instance, and a steak-and-kidney-pie, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes!"

"With a pudding to follow?"

"Yes," said Bunter, his eyes glistening, "I could! Oh, rather! Will you come over to the tuck-shop, Flippy?"

"And then you'd like some jam-tarts?"

"What-ho!"

"And doughnuts and cream-puffs?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"In fact, any kind of pastry?"

"Well, yes."

Bunter's mouth was watering by this time. He took an affectionate grip upon the arm of Theophilus Flippus, and led him towards the door.

"I quite—quite understand," said Theophilus. "My dear Bunter, I know all your feelings as if I experienced them myself."

"Come on, then!"

"Eh? Where?"

"Tuck-shop," said Bunter.

"What for?"

"To get the things."

"My dear friend, I was simply enumerating your symptoms," said Theophilus kindly. "I should never dream of having a hand in supplying you with those dreadfully indigestible things—never!"

Billy Bunter's jaw dropped.

He glared at Theophilus with a look that made the Removites roar. Half the Form had been listening with great interest to the talk. They felt pretty certain that it was not leading up to what Bunter desired, and they were right.

"You—you—you——" stuttered the enraged Owl of the Remove. "You—you——"

"Your symptoms are those of fatty degeneration, Bunter."

"Fatty degeneration of the head?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of every part of his person," said Theophilus. "I have studied the subject of fatty degeneration, and, indeed, have written an article upon it in the columns of the 'Young Health-seeker.' Bunter is suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart, the liver, the head, and the kidneys."

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"He has but a very, very short time to live——"

"Yow!"

"Unless he places himself upon diet immediately."

"I'm willing to do that," said Bunter, with a lingering hope. "Lend me five bob, and—and give me a list of the things I'm to get."

Theophilus shook his head.

"My dear, dear Bunter, you have too—too many things to eat now," he said. "The best thing you can do is to miss your dinner to-day."

"Eh?"

"And to have a small piece of dry toast, with cold water for your tea."

"What!"

"Before going to bed, be careful to avoid taking any supper, but take one dose—a tablespoonful of the mixture."

"Groo!"

"And to-morrow morning you may have one piece of very stale bread for breakfast, but no tea, coffee, cocoa, or any deleterious compound of that kind."

Bunter gasped.

"Keep this up for three months, and you will see a marvellous change," said Theophilus. "It may even be possible to save your life."

"You—you—you dangerous ass!" gasped Bunter. "You scarecrow! I'm in better health than you are, any day, you frightful idiot!"

"My dear, dear Bunter——"

"I'll fatty degenerate you, you silly ass!" roared Bunter, realising at last that there was no hope whatever of raising a loan from Theophilus. "Take that!"

Biff!

Billy Bunter's fat fist descended upon the nose of Theophilus with terrific force, and Theophilus sat down suddenly in the passage.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Before he could recover, Billy Bunter rushed upon him, and rolled him over, and knocked his head against the floor.

Then he rolled out into the Close, feeling and looking a little more satisfied.

Theophilus sat up.

He put his spectacles straight, and blinked round in dazed amazement at the juniors, who were yelling with laughter.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Ow! I—I say, is Bunter angry about anything? Have I inadvertently said anything to annoy him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus rubbed his nose.

"He has caused me considerable pain," he said. "This sudden violence, I suppose, is another symptom of his disease. My dear, dear fellows, I should recommend you to treat Bunter very gently. He has but a very, very short time to live."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus went away to bathe his nose. The juniors streamed out into the quadrangle, and found Billy Bunter there. Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder in a very friendly manner.

"So sorry, Bunter!" he said.

"Eh?"

"We're all cut up," said Bob Cherry sadly.

"Eh? What about?"

"About losing you," sobbed Bob Cherry. "I—I say, Bunter, what kind of flowers would you like me to put on your grave? I shouldn't be particular about an extra two-pence or so to please you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted and rolled away without replying to the question.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kind Invitations!

AFTER school that day Theophilus stopped the Famous Four as they came out of the Remove Form-room. There was a beaming smile upon his face.

"My dear fellows," he said, "I want you to come to tea with me."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

Theophilus shook his head.

"No, not here," he said; "we cannot have tea in the passage, you know. The Head has been kind enough to give me a room, and we will have tea there."

"There, there, then!" said Bob.

"Yes. I shall be very, very pleased if you will come."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another rather doubtfully.

Theophilus Flipp's idea of a study tea, and their idea of the same, bore not the least resemblance to one another.

"Ahem!" said Nugent.

"Hum!" said Johnny Bull.

"You see—" began Wharton.

"I really—really hope you will come," said Theophilus. "I have been making some preparations for tea, and I think you will like it."

"You—you see—"

"I shall be so—so pleased!"

"Oh, we'll come!" said Wharton, resigning himself to his fate. "Anybody else coming?"

"Yes; I am going to ask several fellows."

"Right—oh! When is it?"

"At six o'clock precisely."

"Very well."

"Thank you very much, Flippy!" said Bob Cherry heroically.

"Not at all," said Theophilus. "After tea, I'm going to give a lecture."

"Eh?"

"I have asked Mr. Prout's permission to use the room you call the Rag," explained Theophilus. "I am going to give a lecture on hygiene to all the boys who care to come. Admission will be free."

"Better make a charge," said Bob Cherry; "you'll get just as big an audience if you charge a pound a time."

"No; I desire to do good, not to make money," said Theophilus. "I really—really trust that my short stay here will be productive of some good to the school."

"Bravo!"

"I trust I shall see you all at the lecture. I am going to put a notice on the board."

"We've got a rehearsal on, you know," said Nugent.

"But you can rehearse at any time, and this lecture is only for once," said Theophilus. "I shall be able to teach you a great deal about your own insides, and the way to keep them in good order."

"Groo!"

Bolsover major passed, and Theophilus followed him, to extend to him the same invitation.

The Famous Four looked at one another.

"Nice kind of tea it will be!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Water and dry toast! I'm not a giddy anchorite."

"We can have tea in our study afterwards, as well," said Johnny Bull.

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ONE
PENNY.

"Yes, that's so; we'll go."

The chums of the Remove made up their minds to it. After all, Theophilus was not to be long at Greyfriars, and they had promised to look after him.

Theophilus caught Bolsover major by the arm. Theophilus was evidently a very forgiving youth, for he seemed to have no recollection of Bolsover's jape of the previous day, which had caused so much trouble with Coker of the Fifth.

"My dear Brown—" he began.

Bolsover chuckled.

"My name is Bolsover," he said.

"Dear me! I am quite—quite sure that you told me that your name was Brown!" said Theophilus in astonishment.

"That was a little mistake," said Bolsover. "These mistakes will occur, you know."

"Perhaps you are not well," said Theophilus. "Absent-mindedness is a symptom of ill-health, my dear, dear Bolsover. Would you like to try my mixture?"

"No, I wouldn't!"

"Ahem! I am standing a little tea to my friends," said Theophilus. "Would you care to come? In my room at six o'clock."

"I'm on!" said Bolsover. "Anything good?"

"Yes, indeed, it will be very good."

"Right—oh! Count me in."

"I shall be very, very pleased."

Bolsover nodded and passed on. Billy Bunter had overheard Theophilus's words, and he rolled up to the youthful representative of the "Young Health-Seeker."

"I say, Flippy, old man, you're standing a feed?" he asked.

"Not exactly a feed, my dear, dear Bunter. A tea in my room."

"I'll come, if you like."

"I was going to ask you, Bunter," said Theophilus. "I shall be very, very pleased."

"I'll come and help you get it ready, if you like," said the Owl of the Remove. "I suppose there'll be some cooking to do?"

"Oh, no! There'll be no cooking."

"Oh! It's a cold collation, then?"

"Yes, exactly."

"Well, I'll be there."

Theophilus made his way to the Fifth-Form passage and tapped at Coker's door. He opened it, and blinked into the study. Coker and Potter and Greene were there, and they bestowed a threefold glare upon the cheerful visitor.

"Blessed if it isn't the tame lunatic!" exclaimed Potter.

"What do you want, you imbecile?" roared Coker.

"My dear Coker—"

"Get out!"

"I was going to ask you fellows to tea."

"Come in, old fellow!" said Potter cordially.

"Yes, do come in," said Greene. "What have you got for tea?"

Coker snorted.

Theophilus came into the study. Potter and Greene were very agreeable, and Coker looked a little less warlike. After all, a feed was a feed.

"What are you going to give us?" asked Potter.

"A very, very nice tea," said Theophilus.

"Good! Something solid, I hope?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Pie, I suppose? Mrs. Mimble has very good kidney-pies."

"My dear friend, such diet is eminently unhealthy," said Theophilus. "I am afraid it would not be consistent with my duty to provide such extremely undesirable comestibles."

"What have you got, then?"

"Toast!"

"Eh?"

"Cold toast, without butter," said Theophilus. "It is very much more hygienic taken that way. You will find it excellent for the digestion."

"Anything else?"

"Certainly. Water."

"Water!"

"Yes, as much as you can drink."

"Is that all?"

"Nothing more is required, my dear friend, for the purposes of health," said Theophilus. "But in case you should require more, I shall have some rolls—very stale, as stale bread is better for the digestion."

"And nothing else?"

"What else could be required?"

The three Fifth-Formers glared at him.

"You're asking us to a tea composed of cold toast and water?" said Coker, Potter, and Greene in a breath.

"Yes. I shall be so, so pleased if you will come."

"Aren't you over-doing it?" Potter asked sarcastically. "Hospitality is all very well, but you shouldn't load fellows up with good things in that way."

"Perhaps the rolls are in excess," said Theophilus thoughtfully. "And it would be more beneficial if you drink the water with moderation."

Coker made a sign to his companions. The three of them closed round Theophilus and laid violent hands upon him.

"I—I say!" exclaimed Theophilus. "What— Oh!"

"Chuck him out!" yelled Coker.

"My dear, dear Coker—oh!"

Theophilus went flying through the doorway.

Bump!

He landed upon the linoleum and rolled over, with a roar.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Coker slammed the study door.

Theophilus gained his feet, and put his spectacles straight and blinked at the closed door and shook his head sadly. He limped away down the passage, and did not renew his kind invitation to Coker & Co.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Hygienic Tea.

SIX o'clock rang out from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, and the striking of the hour found Theophilus prepared to receive his guests.

The early autumn evening had closed in, and the gas was lighted in Theophilus Flipp's room. The weather was cold, and there was a big fire blazing in the grate. The window was tightly closed, and Theophilus had his muffler on. Evidently he did not mean to run any risk of catching cold.

There was a tap at the door, and Billy Bunter came in.

Billy Bunter was the first of the guests to arrive. Bunter was not famous for punctuality in other matters, but he had never been known to be late for a feed.

"Here I am, Flippy!" he said cheerfully.

"I am so, so glad to see you, Bunter!" said Theophilus.

"Don't munch," said Bunter, blinking round the study in search of the tea. "I—I say, you're not ready yet!"

"Quite, quite ready," said Theophilus.

"But where's the tea, then?"

"On the table, my dear, dear Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked at the tea-table. There were plates and cups and saucers; but all the eatables he could see were some rolls and a few rounds of dry toast; there was also a jug of water and a lemon.

"Is that the tea?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, that is the tea," said Theophilus, beaming. "A very healthy and hygienic tea, Bunter."

"Isn't there anything to eat?" roared Bunter.

"Certainly! Toast—"

"Toast!"

"And rolls!"

"Rolls!"

"And to drink there is pure, clear water," said Theophilus. "Those who have a taste for luxury may have a squeeze of lemon in it."

Billy Bunter glared at Theophilus, with feelings too deep for words. Before he could speak again the door opened, to give admission to Bolsover major. Bolsover was looking unusually good-tempered. An invitation to a feed had a mollifying effect even upon the bully of the Remove.

"Sorry I'm late!" he said. "Only a few minutes! I see you've not got the table laid yet though, so it's all right."

"The table is laid, my dear, dear Bolsover," said Theophilus.

"Laid?" said Bolsover, with a stare at the table.

"Yes, indeed!"

"But where's the tea?"

"That's it!" yelled Billy Bunter. "That's the tea the image has asked us to!"

"My hat!"

The door opened again, and the Famous Four came in. They came in with their politest smiles on.

"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry.

"So, so glad to see you!" said Theophilus, with a hospitable smile. "Pray take your seat, my dear, dear friends, as we are now quite, quite complete."

"Can I help you set the table?" asked Johnny Bull.

"The table is set."

"Eh?"

"That's the tea he's asked us to!" hooted Billy Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

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"I say, you fellows, bump him, and make him stand us something to eat, after asking us here!" said the Owl of the Remove.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"So you've asked me to come and gnaw dry toast, and drink water, have you, Flipp?" said Bolsover, with a deadly glare at the happy Theophilus.

Theophilus nodded brightly.

"Yes," he said. "This is a truly healthy and hygienic tea, and you will find that it will do you a really, really great amount of good."

Bolsover did not reply. He grasped the end of the table in both hands, with the intention of pitching the whole of that healthy and hygienic tea into the grate.

Harry Wharton & Co. seized him just in time.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Chuck it, Bolsover!" said Frank Nugent.

"That's just what I'm going to do!" roared Bolsover.

"I'm going to chuck all the muck into the grate!"

"My dear, dear friend—" exclaimed Theophilus, in dismay.

"Stop it, Bolsover!" said Wharton, laughing. "You needn't have tea if you don't like it, you know. Leave the table alone."

"Look here—"

"Leggo!"

The Famous Four wrenched Bolsover away from the table. The Remove bully made a rush at Theophilus, but they grasped him again and whirled him back.

Bolsover shook his fist at the surprised Theophilus.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "You bleating chump!"

"My dear, dear—"

"Yah!"

Bolsover stamped out of the study, and slammed the door behind him with a slam that made the crockery dance upon the table.

"Dear, dear me!" said Theophilus. "I trust that Bolsover is not annoyed with me for anything. I should be very, very sorry—"

"You blithering cuckoo!" said Billy Bunter. "If you think I'm jolly well going to eat that fodder, you're jolly well mistaken, you silly jay!"

"My dear, dear Bunter—"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

And Billy Bunter retired and slammed the door.

Theophilus blinked at the Famous Four in a most distressful way.

"Never mind them!" said Harry Wharton consolingly.

"We're going to have tea, Flippy."

"I am so, so sorry!" said Theophilus. "A hygienic tea would have done Bunter a very, very great amount of good, and might have arrested the process of degeneration."

The chums of the Remove grinned, and took their seats round the table.

The prospect of trying to satisfy healthy boyish appetites with cold toast and water was not exhilarating; but they had tea in their own study to follow, and they were determined to be polite.

Theophilus quickly recovered his good humour. He had four guests, at all events, who showed signs of appreciation.

"Pray begin!" he said. "Do not spare the toast."

"Oh, we won't over-do it!" said Bob Cherry, beginning to munch dry toast. "Nothing like keeping the appetite in check, you know."

"Yes, I think one piece will be enough for me," remarked Nugent.

"Same here," said Johnny Bull.

Theophilus took up the jug.

"May I fill your glasses, my dear, dear fellows?" he asked.

"Ye-es."

"Would you care for a squeeze of lemon in the water?"

"Ye-e-es."

"There!"

Theophilus handed round the glasses of water with a squeeze of lemon in them. The juniors munched the dry toast and sipped the water. It tasted somewhat bitter, but they attributed that to the luxurious squeeze of lemon.

Theophilus beamed upon them from the head of the table. The juniors would not have appeared to despise the fare provided for them for any consideration. But it was not easy to get it down.

"More toast?" asked Theophilus hospitably.

"Er—thanks, no."

"May I fill your glass again, my dear Wharton?"

"No, thanks."

"You have not finished yours, Bull."

Johnny Bull made an effort, and finished his glass.

Half-past six struck, and Theophilus started up. He grabbed a bottle and a cup from the mantelpiece, and measured out a dose of medicine and swallowed it.

The chums of the Remove watched him curiously.

"Is that the giddy mixture?" asked Johnny Bull.
 "Yes. It is a marvellous remedy," said Theophilus, as he set down the bottle. "You will find its action very, very beneficial. It may cause some slight pains in the stomach, but they are nothing—a mere nothing! They will pass off, and the benefit will remain."

"We're jolly well not going to try!" said Nugent.

Theophilus smiled gently.

"You have tried!" he replied.

"Eh?" Nugent remembered the peculiar flavour of the water, and turned quite pale. "What do you mean, Flipp?"

"You must excuse me, as it was for your own good," explained Flipp. "I placed a dose of the mixture in each of your glasses."

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

"You will find the result extremely beneficial. To-morrow you will come to me and thank me," said Theophilus.

The four chums were on their feet now, and they glared at Theophilus. He smiled at them sweetly in return. Bob Cherry pressed his hand to his waistcoat.

"Oh! I—I've got a pain!" he stammered.

"That is only the beginning," said Theophilus cheerfully. "It has not had time to take effect yet. You will feel a great deal more yet, but the ultimate effect—"

"You—you frightful ass!"

"My dear, dear friend—"

"Let's get out!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I—I shall massacre him if we stay here! Ow!"

And the Famous Four rushed out of the room.

Theophilus looked after them with a regretful smile.

"I'm so, so sorry!" he called out. "You will be glad presently—"

They did not look glad at present.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Peas-ful Scene.

COKER, of the Fifth, met the chums of the Remove a little later in the passage. He stared at them blankly. Harry Wharton & Co. were leaning up against the wall in a row, with pale faces, their hands pressed upon their waistcoats. Their faces were full of anguish.

Coker might be on terms of warfare with No. 1 Study, but he was not a hard-hearted fellow, and he paused, with a look of concern.

"Anything wrong with you kids?" he asked.

"Ow!" groaned the Removites. "Yow! Oh!"

"Feeling bad?"

"Grooh!"

"Been eating something wanky?" asked Coker.

"Yow! It's what we've been drinking."

"Phew! What is it—anything dangerous?"

"Yes! Ow!"

"We've been poisoned!" groaned Bob Cherry. "That villain Flipp—"

"Oh, Flipp!" said Coker.

"Yes; he asked us to tea—"

"He asked me to tea!" grinned Coker. "When we heard what he'd got for tea we chucked him out of our study."

"I wish we had!" groaned Johnny Bull. "But we didn't know he'd been planting medicine in the water."

"Great Scott! Have you been taking medicine?"

"Yow! Yes, without knowing it! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at, you silly ass!" howled Nugent.

Coker seemed to think that there was. He roared.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Wharton. "Ow-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker walked away, still laughing. Apparently he passed on the news of the sufferings of the Famous Four. Fellows came along to look at them. Bolsover major was the first. The Bully of the Remove seemed to be in high good humour about it.

"I should have had some of that if I'd stayed to tea," he remarked. "Serve you jolly well right! You've been standing up for that chap. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now he's made them sit up!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Faith, and it's horrible ye look!" said Micky Desmond sympathetically. "Sure, you ought to see a doctor intirely."

"What is it like, begad?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Ow! Like knives and daggers and lawnmowers and things!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad!"

"Sure, and I'd slaughter the medicine-merchant if I were you, intirely."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"I say, you fellows, you wouldn't have taken the medicine if you'd bumped that raving maniac as I wanted you

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to," grinned Billy Bunter. "Serve you right! He, he, he!"

Groo-oooooh!"

A procession of fellows came to look at the Famous Four, and they retired from the passage, though they did not feel much inclined to walk.

The medicine they had taken might be beneficial in the long run, but it was most decidedly a "twister" while the effect lasted.

Two hours afterwards the chums of the Remove were still looking pale and weak, and they were lying about Study No. 1 in various attitudes of listlessness. Every now and then fellows would look in and cackle, but the Famous Four were too done up to throw anything at them. They could only glare.

Theophilus looked in later on. He had a very sympathetic expression upon his face.

"Still feel the pain?" he asked.

"Ow! Yes! Not so bad, but it's still there!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"I'm very, very sorry," said Theophilus. "I find that, in the haste of the moment, I gave you treble doses. It was really too strong."

"Ow! You dangerous ass!"

"It will not do you any harm, though. And a little pain is nothing in the cause of health, is it, my dear, dear friends?" said Theophilus.

Bob Cherry's eye glinted, and he grasped a cushion.

"You wouldn't mind a little pain?" he asked.

"Not at all. I only wish I had been able to give that dose to Coker. However, I shall yet find an opportunity."

"You frabjous ass!" roared Wharton. "Are you going to dose Coker too?"

"Certainly! It will do him a very, very great amount of good."

"He will do you some good afterwards," groaned Nugent. "He won't take it so patiently as we do. If we hadn't promised the Head not to slaughter you, we wouldn't leave a grease-spot to mark the place where you'd been, you awful idiot!"

Theophilus blinked at him with a sad expression.

"You should not mind a little pain like this, my dear, dear fellow. I am determined to do good while I am here. After experiencing the effects of my mixture, I am sure you will never use any other medicine. I am going to bring it to the notice of Mr. Quelch, too. He has been kind to me, and I owe it to him."

"Yes, give Quelch a dose, and you'll be fired out of Greyfriars!" gasped Johnny Bull. "And the sooner the quicker. I'm done with you."

"My dear, dear fellow, a little pain is nothing—"

Whizz!

Bob Cherry hurled the cushion with deadly aim, and Theophilus went backwards through the doorway as if a cannon-ball had smitten him.

He crashed on the linoleum in the passage, and roared.

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It's only a little pain, you know. You don't mind that, Flippy. It's nothing, you know; only a little pain."

"Ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus groped along the passage for his spectacles, which had fallen off, and lodged them on his nose again. He blinked indignantly at the chums of the Remove. They felt a little better now. The sight of Theophilus being bowled over had done them good.

"I am going to give my lecture in the Rag now," said Theophilus, gasping. "I should be glad for you fellows to come—very, very glad!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"My dear, dear friends—"

Bob Cherry grasped another cushion, and Theophilus hastily closed the door and retired. Apparently he could endure a little pain better when it was inflicted upon others, and did not care for it personally.

He went downstairs, and found quite a crowd below collected before the notice-board. There was a notice pinned on the board, in Theophilus's handwriting:

"Lecture at half-past eight in the Rag. Subject: Hygiene. Lecturer: Theophilus Flippa. Admission Free!"

"Hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "Here's the silly ass who asks people to tea and doses them with muck! We're coming to the lecture, Flippy!"

"All are welcome," said Theophilus.

"Hurry! Lead on!"

Theophilus went into the Rag. Quite a crowd followed him. There were Remove fellows, and Fourth-Formers, and fags of the Third and Second, and several of the Fifth and the Shell. They were all grinning, and a more observant

fellow than Theophilus would have guessed that something was arranged in concert among them. But Theophilus had no suspicions. His mind was filled with his lecture. He mounted upon a chair, and surveyed the crowded audience with a benevolent eye.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"You know the subject of my lecture," said Theophilus. "I have taken the subject—the very, very important subject—of hygiene. Young as I am, I am somewhat of an authority upon that subject, and I have contributed many articles to the columns of 'The Young Health-Seeker' upon that subject, and I say— Yooowwww!"

Theophilus did not mean to say that. But while he was speaking he felt a sudden pang on the neck, a sharp pain, as if a wasp had stung him. He clapped his hand to his neck, and glanced round upon the crowd of grinning faces.

"Ow!" he said. "Dear me!"

"What's the matter, Flippy?" asked Bolsover major.

"I felt a sudden pain."

"Oh, pile in!" said Temple, of the Fourth. "We're waiting for the giddy lecture."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"The waitfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Very well, gentlemen. I am very, very pleased to see you so keenly interested in this most important subject, and I repeat— Yaroo!"

"What does that mean, Flippy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I felt a pain in my ear!" said Theophilus, looking round in amazement. "There must be wasps in the room. Truly it is extraordinary that there should be many wasps here at this time of the year; a most peculiar circumstance— Ow!"

He rubbed his nose.

"Was that a wasp?" asked Tom Brown.

"It must have been. It was a sudden sting—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Ow! Yaroo!"

Half a dozen of the sudden stings attacked Theophilus at the same moment. He dashed his hands across his face to frighten away the invisible wasps. But the stings came thick and fast, and the sight of peashooters in the hands of most of the juniors enlightened Theophilus at last.

"Ow!" he roared. "Pray do not shoot peas at me! Yow! It is very, very painful! Yow! I do not like it! Yaroo!"

Whizz, whizz, whizz, whizz!

Showers of peas smote Theophilus in all parts of his features. He fell from the chair and rolled on the floor, and apparently an unlimited supply of peas. Theophilus thickly than ever. He blinked round at the juniors in dismay. Nearly every fellow in the room had a peashooter, and apparently an unlimited supply of peas. Theophilus tried to expostulate, but he could not make his voice heard in the yells of laughter. Some of the fellows were laughing so much that they swallowed the peas instead of whizzing them at Theophilus, and they choked and spluttered wildly.

"Ow, ow!" roared Theophilus. "Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him a volley!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Theophilus made a wild rush for the door. He had forgotten the lecture now. The juniors crowded after him, still shooting peas in clouds. Theophilus, stung all over, dashed through the doorway and fled down the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "I don't think he'll give us any more lectures, at any rate."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover was right. Theophilus didn't!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw.

COKER was unusually quiet in manner as he went to bed in the Fifth Form dormitory that night. As a rule, Coker's voice was the loudest in the dormitory, but this night it was very quiet. It was so unusual for Coker to be quiet that several fellows gave him inquiring looks when he turned in.

"Anything wrong, Coker?" asked Potter.

"Faith, and you must be ill!" said Fitzgerald.

Coker grunted.

"I feel rather queer," he said. "It may be growing pains. I've got some very queer pains in my inside."

Greene chuckled.

"Been taking any of Flipps's medicine?" he asked.

"No jolly fear!"

"You might have taken it without knowing it," said

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Blundell, with a chuckle. "I hear that he doses Wharton and some more of the Remove without so much as saying 'By your leave.'"

Coker sat up in bed, turning quite pale.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

"Poor old Coker!" said Bland. "If you've taken a dose—"

"I—I had a drink before I came up to bed," said Coker.

"You fellows know I keep a jug of Mrs. Mimble's home-made lemonade in my study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter. "Flipps has got at it as sure as a gun."

"What is there to laugh at?" roared Coker.

"N-n-nothing!" stammered Potter. "I—I—I—"

"Then shut up!" growled Coker. "If that young villain's given me any of his disgusting medicine, I'll slaughter him! Ow!"

"What's the matter?" asked Greene, as Coker yelped.

"Ow! A sudden pain."

"You've got it!" grinned Fitzgerald. "Bedad, you've got it! Poor old Coker!"

Coker snapped his teeth. He had no doubt about it. He knew that Theophilus was determined to do good, as he considered it, and the way he had dosed the Famous Four showed that he would stick at nothing. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to introduce the medicine into the jug of lemonade in Coker's study. And the unfortunate Fifth-Former had drunk a whole glassful of that lemonade without a suspicion!

Another twist of pain took Coker suddenly, and he roared.

"Yow!"

The Fifth-Formers grinned. The whole matter seemed funny enough to everybody excepting Coker. Coker could see nothing humorous in it at all. He, too, had thought it funny in the case of the Famous Four. But the case was altered now. He rolled out of bed, and gathered the coverlet round him.

"Where are you going, Coker?" shouted Blundell.

Coker panted.

"I'm going to look for Flipps."

"Better get into your bags," exclaimed Potter.

"Oh, rot! I want to get at him before I feel too bad!"

And Coker, draping the coverlet around him, dashed out of the Fifth Form dormitory. He left the Fifth yelling with laughter.

Coker knew where Theophilus's room was situated. He ran towards it, the end of the coverlet floating in a graceful way behind him. He passed Wingate of the Sixth in the passage, and the captain of Greyfriars shouted to him.

"Coker, what are you up to? You can't do your Red Indian rehearsals in the passage at this time of night. Go back to bed."

Horace Coker did not heed.

He dashed on, and reached Theophilus Flipps's door, and kicked it open.

The cheerful Theophilus had not yet gone to bed. He was sitting at the table, poring over the great volume which was his constant companion.

He looked up, startled, as Coker hurled open the door, and rushed in.

Coker did not speak. He rushed right at Theophilus. Theophilus jumped up in alarm. Fortunately for him, Coker caught his foot in his airy garment, and stumbled, and came down heavily upon his knees.

Theophilus dodged round the table.

"My dear, dear Coker!" he exclaimed.

"You—you poisonous young villain!" said Coker sulphurously. "You've been giving me your filthy medicine."

"My dear, dear fellow, it was for your good. Did you take the lemonade?"

"Yes, I did!" roared Coker, scrambling to his feet.

"It will do you a great deal of good, Coker. You must not mind a little pain. It is very, very slight in comparison with the good the medicine will do you. Oh!"

Theophilus sprinted for the door as Coker chased him round the table.

"Stop!" roared Coker.

But Theophilus was not likely to stop. He could see in Coker's eye that it was his turn to have a little pain, or, rather, more than a little.

He fled down the passage at top speed, and dashed down the stairs.

Coker followed him at frantic speed.

Coker had forgotten that his attire was not exactly the thing for going about the passages in. He was thinking only of vengeance upon the happy Theophilus.

Theophilus paused in the lower passage, and looked back. Over the bannisters he caught a glimpse of Coker descending the stairs three at a time, and he fled again. He tore open

the nearest door, and dashed in, intending to lock himself in the room.

It happened to be Mr. Prout's study that he entered so unceremoniously.

The master of the Fifth sprang to his feet in amazement. "Flipp's!" he exclaimed. "What do you want here? How dare you rush into my study in that way! How dare you, sir!"

Theophilus gasped.

"I—I— Excuse me, sir! I'm very, very sorry, but — Oh, here he is!"

The door flew open again, and Coker dashed in. By Theophilus having run into the study, Coker took it for granted that Mr. Prout was not there. He found out his mistake now.

"Coker!" thundered Mr. Prout.

Coker was rushing at Theophilus.

Mr. Prout sprang towards him, and Coker tried to elude him, and caught his foot in the trailing coverlet, and rolled over on the floor. Mr. Prout caught up a cane.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! went the cane.

The flowered coverlet was not a good protection against the cane. Coker roared as the blows got home, and kicked in anguish.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Coker! This disgraceful conduct—"

"Yow! Yaroooooh! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Theophilus. "I am very, very sorry, Coker! My dear, dear sir—"

Thwack! Thwack!

"Oh! Oh! Ow!"

"Good heavens, what is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, looking in at the door. "What has happened, Mr. Prout?"

Thwack! Thwack!

Coker jumped up, and with the coverlet trailing over his arm, he dashed out of the study in his pyjamas, past the astonished Remove-master.

"There!" gasped Mr. Prout, throwing down the cane.

"I am sorry you have been alarmed, Mr. Quelch. But I do not think Coker will act in this way again."

"Oh dear!" murmured Theophilus.

"I fancy that boy has something to do with it, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a severe glance at Theophilus.

"N-n-not at all," panted Theophilus. "I am very, very sorry this trouble has occurred."

"Why did Coker pursue you into my study?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"He seems to have been annoyed, sir, because I gave him a dose of my medicine," said Theophilus meekly. "I put it into his lemonade, sir, so that he could not fail to take it. It will do him a very, very great deal of good in the long run, but he has some objection to suffering a little pain—"

"You—you extraordinary boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"You dangerous young wretch!" said Mr. Prout. "Go at once! I shall cane you otherwise, although you are the Head's guest. Go!"

"But, my dear, dear sir—"

"If you belonged to my Form, Flipp's, I should punish you severely," said Mr. Quelch.

"My dear, dear sir, that is because you are of a violent temper, I think, and a course of proper diet, added to regular doses of the mixture, would—"

Mr. Quelch strode from the study. The Fifth Form-master took a firmer grip on the cane, and moved towards Theophilus. Theophilus caught the gleam in his eye, and did not wait to say any more. To borrow an expression from Shakespeare, he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

He passed Mr. Quelch in the passage. The Remove-master had not gone back into his room. A sudden twist of pain had taken him, and he had paused, and he was breathing very hard. He glanced at Theophilus, and caught his eye. Theophilus paused.

Mr. Quelch caught his breath.

"Flipp's!" he said, in a gasping voice.

"Yes, sir?" said Theophilus.

"The—the medicine you have given to some of the boys causes them pain in the stomach, I believe?"

Theophilus nodded cheerfully.

"Yes, sir," he said. "A little pain, but the effect is decidedly beneficial. Coker will feel very, very great benefit from it to-morrow."

"I feel a—slight pain that I cannot account for," said Mr. Quelch, moving so as to cut off Theophilus's retreat. Theophilus seemed to desire to get by him, and the Remove-master did not mean to let him escape. "Some time ago, Flipp's—an hour or so—I drank some water from the-carafe in my room."

"Did you, sir?"

"I thought it had a slight taste."

"My dear, dear sir—"

"Had you been putting anything in that water-carafe?"

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asked Mr. Quelch, his eyes looking as if they would burn two holes in Theophilus.

"H'm!" said Theophilus guardedly. "You—you see, sir, the medicine is so very, very good—"

"Did you put any medicine in the carafe in my room?" shouted Mr. Quelch, seizing Theophilus by the collar.

"Well, yes, sir; only a mild dose."

"You—you—you— Come into my study!"

"W-w-what for, sir?"

"I am going to thrash you!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You impudent, stupid, wicked boy! Come!"

"B-b-b-but, sir—"

Mr. Quelch jerked Theophilus towards his study. Theophilus wrenched himself loose, and backed away.

"My dear sir, I—I object very, very much," he exclaimed.

"I shall appeal to Dr. Locke, sir. Ow!"

Mr. Quelch made a rush at him. Theophilus fled.

"Stop!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

Theophilus did not stop. He had a feeling that he would suffer more if he fell into Mr. Quelch's hands than if he fell into those of Coker. The Head was his only possible protection, and he fled wildly towards the Head's study. Mr. Quelch dashed after him, his gown fluttering in the breeze he made by his rapid passage. Theophilus reached the door of Dr. Locke's study first. But Mr. Quelch was a good second. Theophilus did not stop to knock. He threw open the door, and dashed in.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Head, springing up.

"Oh! Keep him off!" roared Theophilus.

Mr. Quelch rushed in.

Theophilus made a wild spring to get over the Head's desk, but the Remove-master leaped upon him at the same moment.

There was a terrific struggle in the study. Things went flying right and left. There was a crash from the looking-glass, another crash as the Head's armchair went over.

Dr. Locke caught up a cane.

"What is the matter?" he shouted. "Flipp's—Mr. Quelch—good heavens! What ever has happened?"

The Head dragged the Remove-master back. Theophilus dodged behind the desk, and crouched there in terror.

"I—I am sorry, for—for this scene in your study, sir," panted Mr. Quelch. "That—that dreadful boy has—has been too outrageous. You are aware that he has dosed some of the boys with medicine against their will. He has done the same to me. I am suffering horrible inward pains, sir—ow! That fearful boy—"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head.

"He is dangerous, sir!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "I—I really think he should not be allowed to remain at Greyfriars a day longer, sir!"

Dr. Locke looked sternly at the gasping Theophilus.

"Flipp's," he said, "go to your room, and go to bed. You will leave this school by the first train in the morning."

"My dear, dear sir—"

"Not another word! Go!"

Theophilus went!

Theophilus Flipp's left Greyfriars the next morning, and took the earliest train at Friardale Station.

The Greyfriars fellows were not sorry to see him go. It was impossible to dislike Theophilus. He was so kind and good-natured, and it was evident that he meant well.

But good intentions were not everything, as Bob Cherry remarked. And there was not a wet eye at Greyfriars when he departed, as Bob again put it.

Theophilus seemed grieved, but he was patient. His last offer to the Famous Four was to leave them a bottle of the famous mixture. And he was so earnest about it that they did not refuse. They accepted the bottle, and listened to instructions as to how the contents were to be taken.

Then Theophilus departed.

"Well, he's gone," said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath. "What are you going to do with that muck, Bob?"

Bob Cherry held up the bottle.

"Well, I'm not going to drink it," he said. "Here you are; three shies a penny!"

He set the bottle upon a seat in the Close, and Nugent brought it down with the first stone. Crash! And that was the end of the famous mixture.

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed a great deal over Theophilus's visit to the school. They could afford to laugh now that he was safely gone. Whether Theophilus's article appeared after all in the columns of "The Young Health-Seeker" they never knew, or cared, and they never again had the pleasure of seeing the cheerful youth who had made himself the Terror of Greyfriars!

THE END.

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THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?" The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and bring back my diamond." He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and for five months pursues Nathan Gore through Europe, New Zealand, Tenerife, and back to London, never once being able to catch him up. While in London, he hears that Nathan Gore has bought from the Dutch a remote island named Galpin. Lord immediately purchases an island four miles south of Gore's, christening it Ching-Lung. Learning that Gore is fortifying his island, and has actually fitted out warships for his own use, Ferrers Lord arranges a hurried expedition, and in a few hours the whole party are aboard the Lord of the Deep, bound for the Island of Ching-Lung. Barry O'Rooney, and the new French cook, "Yard-of-Tape," fight a duel, and the Frenchman is beaten. He is so incensed at his defeat that he shuts himself up in the galley, and when Prout goes to make inquiries he reads the following notice chalked upon the galley-door: "Notice! Beware! I have a loaded revolver within. My spirit is roused with great anger! I will shoot!"

(Now go on with the story.)

A Bid for the Treasure of the Santa Anna.

"Wottle of Baterloo!" yelled Prout through the keyhole. Prout was sorry. Evidently Yard-of-Tape had been lying in wait. The door flew open, and a mop shot out. It smote Prout on the head, and made him sit down. Prout crawled away and met Maddock.

"How goes it?" asked the steersman.

"'Ungry, me boy!" answered Maddock. "Just off to get me grub. The chief is at the wheel."

"Right!" said Prout.

He grinned, and put one eye round the corner. Maddock tramped to the galley and tried the door. It opened even more suddenly than it had opened for Prout. This time the contents of a bucket of water came out and drenched the bo'sun to the skin. To add insult to injury, the mop followed the bucket, and Maddock squatted down in the puddle, bellowing like a lusty young bull.

Then he bounded up and hurled himself against the door. It yielded, and he lurched into the galley.

Howls and screams rang through the ship. Out came the

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cook, and out came Maddock in hot pursuit, with a carving-knife in his hand, and potato-peelings in his hair. They went down the passage like some beautiful vision, and vanished into the swimming-bath. Then they emerged, the wild-eyed cook still leading. And at the bottom of the galley stood Gan-Waga.

Gan's chance had come. The fire-hose hung on the wall beside him. He had it down in a twinkling. Ten yards—five yards—three yards.

Swish! The jet took the cook in the chest, and floored him. Gan dropped the gushing nozzle, and ran for the galley.

He borrowed four or five pounds of candles, and went off to the billiard-room.

"Chingy!" he tittered. "Wottle Baterloo's good 'nough! Hoo, hoo, ho-o-o-o-o!"

Ferrers Lord unlocked a drawer in this writing-desk, and took out a faded chart and a newspaper.

"Ching," he said, without turning, "here is an old copy of the 'Paris Journal,' if you care to see it. I particularly

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want you to read the account of the sinking of the Santa Anna. It will perhaps amuse you."

"Right, old chap!" said the prince, rather surprised.

He took up the paper, and looked at the faded date—1785. The little double-sheet was, no doubt, thought a wonderful production in its day, and well worth the franc charged for it. Ching-Lung read the brief announcement:

"The Santa Anna was a Spanish ship of the line bound from Seville to St. Orino, carrying pay for the Spanish troops, who were almost on the point of mutiny, owing to the arrears due to them. A Dutch vessel niaking for Table Bay reported hearing firing to the south. The Santa Anna was heard of no more. A month later the British frigate Rapid foundered, with all hands, off Cargas Point."

"Well, what do you make of it, Ching? What do you make of it, Rupert?" asked the millionaire.

"Just another deep-sea tragedy, old chap," said Thurston. "They were common enough in those stirring times."

"And you have shown us this for nothing," said Ching-Lung. "Out with the yarn."

"To be sure. Here is another curiosity."

He handed them a piece of yellow parchment. On it was roughly drawn two ships running under full sail, and firing at each other. Below, and so faint and faded as to be almost illegible, was written:

"S. 37 deg. 15 min. E. 29 deg. 11 min."

"Santa Anna sank in shoal water, but slipped off before we could get money."

"Bad luck!"

Ching-Lung laughed.

"Where did you pick that up, old chap?"

"It had a queer history, Ching. It was discovered in the head of a queer idol that came into my possession. I know Cargadoa and Carghese on the map, but where is Cargas Point, near which the Rapid foundered? I cannot find it. Territories changed hands fast then, and, of course, the newcomers give places new names. I presume that the man who made this chart, or picture, or plan—whatever you like to call it—got ashore. It had almost slipped my memory. He gives the latitude and longitude, and when I was working out the reckoning yesterday the figures recalled the story of the Santa Anna. As she had some forty thousand troops to pay, there must have been a good deal of money aboard her."

"And we're going to look for it, eh?" cried Thurston excitedly.

"And restore it, when found, to the Spanish Government, eh?" grinned Ching-Lung.

Ferrers Lord shook his head.

"I am sorry you are losing your sense of honesty," chuckled the prince. "Our friendship ceases from this moment. Hold on, though. Let's work it out to the satisfaction of my little conscience. If the British had got it, it would have been theirs. Good! If the Spaniards had lost it, it wouldn't have been theirs. Good again! I ought to have been a lawyer."

"Or an organ-grinder," suggested Rupert.

"Shut up, chuckle-head!" said Ching-Lung. "Let me get on with the case. The argument is quite plain, and you can't refute it. Whichever of 'em got it, it was their property. The British did not get it, and the Spanish lost it. Neither of them getting it, they didn't own it. Therefore, it belongs to neither of 'em. If we get it, we stick to it."

After this lucid statement, Ching-Lung produced a lighted cigar out of his waistcoat pocket, and seemed slightly surprised at finding it there.

"I suppose we're close to the spot?" said Rupert.

"Within a few knots of it. Do not be very hopeful, Ru. We may never find it."

"Halves!" said Ching-Lung. "I spoke first. If we find it, I'll buy you each a Christmas-box, and put a little into the Post Office Savings Bank for you against old age."

"Thanks, you're too generous!" laughed Thurston. "You'd give anything away that you couldn't sell. This will be your ruin, my boy. Do be careful."

The thought of sunken treasure, and the prospect of a search for it beneath the sea, was exciting. Too impatient to stay below, where unemotional Ferrers Lord went on with his writing, Rupert and the prince climbed into the wheel-house. Prout was at the wheel.

"Top of the afternoon to you, Thomas!" said Ching-Lung.

"Thank you kindly," answered Prout; "but, by hokey, sir, the top of a loaf wi' a slice of beef on it would suit me better this moment. The sea air makes me peckish!"

"Sea air, you sea-cook! We haven't sniffed any for days!"

"Then it's the ozone off the hair-oil that Irish scoundrel uses," said Prout.

"Troth, what's that Oi hear?" growled the voice of Barry O'Rooney; and Barry's head shot up into sight.

"He was remarking what delicious scent you carry on your handkerchief, Barry," said Thurston. "It reminds him of green fields and odorous rose-gardens."

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"Of banks where violets grow," added the prince; "of honeysuckle and humming bees."

"Hummin' is right!" snapped Prout. "It do hum, and what it do remind me of is a gasworks!"

With this remark Prout relinquished the wheel to Barry, and went below.

"That's noice, that is!" said Barry. "The cantankerous ould son of a haythin image out of a penny peepshow! Gasworks! Gasbag Oi calls him! Did yez iver hear the loike?"

"It's an expensive scent, I think?" asked Ching-Lung.

"Thry ut, sor,—thry ut!"

Ching-Lung took the bottle and sniffed the contents. It was some preparation of violets that the cook had presented to Barry as a peace-offering. There was a slight onion flavour about it also.

"Delicious!" said the prince.

"Delightful!" said Rupert.

Barry looked pleased.

"Yez mustn't think Oi'm goin' to turn into a masher," he remarked. "Oi sha'n't stharrt wearin' four-inch collars just yet. Yarrd-of-Tape and me had a bit of a scrap, and that was a little token of luv from him afther the ball was over. Oi can't smell ut meself, havin' a cowl like the Arctic regions, but Oi didn't want to hurrt the Frinchy's faulin's, so Oi used a dhrop."

"Quite proper," said Ching-Lung. "I say it's splendid stuff. If you want a real, first-class perfume, you have to get the French stuff. They know how to make it. I could smell this all night. It's perfect. Barry, it's too good to use!"

"P'r'aps yer honour 'ud loike a little?"

"You brick!" said Ching-Lung. "May I have some really?"

"Sartinly!" said Barry. "Bedad, take just what yez wants."

Rupert wondered what the prince would do with the cheap stuff. He would have inquired, but Ching-Lung's left eye closed, and Rupert was silent.

"I'll bring back the bottle, Barry."

"Any toime'll do, yer Hoighness."

Gan-Waga, acting as Ching-Lung's messenger, returned the bottle shortly afterwards. Barry noticed that the prince had not taken much of the perfume.

"What him fo', Tommy?" inquired the Eskimo. "Yo' drink dat stuff, hunk?"

"No, me bhoy; ut's a scint, me bhoy!" said Barry. "A perfume to sprinkle on yer moochwor."

"Not know moochwor."

"Ut manes handkerchief in the French langwidge," explained Barry.

"Me not nebbber haves one," said Gan.

"Av coorse not, yez haythin! Ax his Hoighness to lind yez a moochwor, and troth, Oi'll scint yez up loike forrty duchesses!"

Barry saluted Ferrers Lord. The millionaire glanced at the compass and at the chart. He rapidly figured out a calculation. The Lord of the Deep was running at twelve knots. She was barely submerged. Ferrers Lord gave an order, and the water was pumped from her tanks. At once the bright sunlight flooded in. The watertight door was opened, and Ferrers Lord stepped out on the low-lying, shining deck.

"Stop her, O'Rooney!"

It was dead calm, and the lazy sea gleamed like a mirror. Thurston and Ching-Lung joined their chief, and the men, glad enough of a chance to see the sunshine, and taste the salt air, crowded up. Fishing-lines were baited and tossed overboard, and Rupert, a smart navigator now, "shot the sun."

The millionaire also took a reckoning. The two agreed when worked out.

"If we run half a knot to the south-west," said Ferrers Lord, "we ought to be quite close to the place where the Spaniard went down. It would be foolish to rely on the rough-and-ready latitude and longitude I showed you, so don't expect too much, Ru."

"I don't," said Rupert. "I've been looking at the Admiralty chart. There's no shoal-water marked."

"But the Pacific Ocean is a big place," said Ferrers Lord, smiling, "and you cannot trust to any chart. If one sticks to the old trade routes the charts are accurate enough, but when one wanders, a good watch and a line kept going are safer than any charts ever drawn."

The vessel forged slowly ahead, and ran into a shoal of bonitos. A cloud of flying-fish, trying to escape from their inveterate foes, came aboard. They were promptly captured, and used as bait. Then the fun with the bonitos became fast and furious for quite half an hour, until the shoal, greatly thinned in numbers, sheered off. Gan-Waga had bagged fourteen of the fish.

"All below!" cried Ferrers Lord.

Once more the water hissed into the tanks. The vessel sank until the light faded into a dull, glassy green.

"The Santa Anna sank in shoal water," said Ferrers Lord, "and then slipped off. If the old parchment is genuine—"

"There can be no doubt about that, I should think!" said Thurston.

"Nor should I, Rupert. I believe it is quite genuine. Anyway, when the Spaniard foundered, she must have settled on some submerged rock, and hung there for a short time. The rock or reef is what we must look for. Very slowly, O'Rooney! Just keep her moving, and no more!"

"Oi, oi, sir!" said Barry.

Two searchlights flung their beams ahead through the gloom. They revealed nothing.

"Stop!" said Ferrers Lord. "If the rock, as I expect, is a small one, a mere pillar rising from the bottom to within a fathom of the surface, it will be some trouble to find it like this. Let us try to find it automatically."

"How's that?"

"It is Honour's idea," said Ferrers Lord, "and a very clever one. Come to the tubes."

"The torpedo tubes?"

"Yes."

The torpedo tubes were fore and aft. Following the millionaire below, they entered the aft torpedo-room. The light revealed rows of the deadly, cone-shaped weapons.

"Help me! Ching!"

"Not one muscle do I move, my boy, till you explain the fatal plot!" said Ching-Lung.

"That will not take long. These are not loaded. Honour has fitted a powerful electric lamp each. The moment they strike anything solid, the light is automatically switched on, and the torpedo remains motionless for ten minutes. Then the light goes out, and the screw drives the torpedo to the surface."

"And then it yell 'Help, help!'"

"Not exactly," laughed the millionaire; "but it sounds reports at intervals to attract attention. Torpedoes are too valuable to be lost; they cost a lot of money. We'll send off six at this end, so that they will cover a half-circle, or, rather, the spokes of a half-wheel. Six from the other side will complete the wheel."

"But what if they all miss, and run clean away?"

"They will only travel a mile," explained the millionaire.

The torpedoes were placed in their tubes. A touch of a lever opened an outer watertight door, after closing an inner one.

"Now to the other sides, lads!"

Six more torpedoes were launched. They hurried into the state-room. Two widening slits appeared in the walls on either side, revealing the dark, polished glass that was stronger than the toughest steel. The vessel began to slowly revolve, like a gigantic top. The manoeuvre brought every point of the compass into view in turn. Ching-Lung sat before one window, Rupert before the other. The millionaire stood between them.

"How fast do these things travel, old chap?"

"That depends, Ching. They are regulated to various speeds. At present they are at their slowest!"

"A box of cigars I see the light first, Chingy!" said Rupert.

"Taken, me bhoi!" grinned Ching-Lung, imitating O'Rooney. "Sure, boy, that same token, ut's a moighty foine chance yez have to bet wid wan in whose veins the blud of the O'Rooney's of Ballybunion flows! As the poet remarked whin he throd in the darrk on the business ind av a pin, 'av Oi'd had a wager on foindin' that, ut's twinty to none Oi'd win!"

"You've both lost!" said Ferrers Lord. "Look!"

"Never!" roared Ching-Lung. "I see it! You're whacked! I twigged it before you, Rufus—er—Rupert. That's true, Ru, you beau-ty!"

A Visit to the Santa Anna.

A dim light winked dimly in the blackness. They sprang up and ran into the wheelhouse. Barry was scratching his head, and glaring forward.

"What's the row, Barry?"

"Ould Davy Jones smokin' a cigar, Oi reckon, and sittin' on his locker!" said Barry. "Oi just seed him sthroike a loight!"

"Where?"

"There!" said Barry. "Luk at him now! Bedad! What, another of 'em?"

Another faint light burned faintly more to the left. Ferrers Lord set the searchlight flashing.

"Hurrah!" shouted the prince.

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The glowing circle rested on a dark, shapeless object. In the centre hung the torpedo. The light slanted downwards. They made out a mass of weedgrown rock. Lower sank the light, and they craned forward. There was something else there, shapeless, too, and weedgrown; but still, the shapelessness could not disguise it.

It was the rotting, barnacled hull of an old-fashioned ship.

"The Santa Anna!" shouted Rupert.

The Lord of the Deep crept nearer. The bell clanged, stopping her engines. The rotting corpse of the fighting ship of the eighteenth century, and the miraculous fighting-ship of the twentieth, lay side by side, twenty fathoms deep.

Barry rubbed his nose, and scratched his head.

"She luks a throifle wet!" he said thoughtfully. "Did yez say she was the Santa Clause?"

"The Santa Anna, Barry."

"Ah!" murmured Barry. "The Sandy Annie! Well, she's nearly sandy enough. Hoosh! Call out the loifeboat! There's been a wreck! Ow! Hilp!"

Barry had quite a turn. It was only Prout in his diving-dress, but the goggle-eyed helmet looked uncanny in the dim light. The central cap had not been screwed up, and Prout's voice came hollowly from the depths.

"I'm ready, sir!" he said.

"Hold on!" said Ching-Lung. "I'm on this. You're not going alone, Tommy. Wait for me! Maddock—Joe, come and dress me!"

"Faith, av he ain't got two valets now!" said Barry.

Ferrers Lord raised no objection to Ching-Lung's journey, but he refused when Rupert asked to go. Rupert was not quite himself, and a diver must be in the best of health. Joe and Maddock quickly attired the prince, to the great admiration of Barry, to whom diving was something new. Barry kept passing remarks that made the men roar.

"Be careful not to get them swate little shoes wet!" he said, pointing to Prout's enormous lead-soled boots. "And keep that noice crease in your trousers! His bonnet's on sthraight, isn't it? Arrah! Don't let thim go widout their umbrellas! That's ut, cover up Tom's dial!"

They took the electric lamps and two massive axes. Maddock opened a door, and closed it behind them. The next moment water rushed in, and rose over their helmets. They stood still, breathing steadily, to make certain that the air-apparatus was working properly, and to see that they were properly weighted. Then Prout opened the outer door, and they walked towards the wreck.

The Santa Anna lay on her side. Strange creatures had made her their home; strange eyes glared at them from her shadowy recess. Fish flocked to the lights as moths flock round a lamp on a summer evening. Brilliant weeds swayed softly, and filmy tentacles were swiftly withdrawn as they touched the legs of the intruders. A great conger dived past Ching-Lung's head, and some other monster soared over them.

Prout wrote something on his slate.

"Shall we keep together, sir, or shall I go round the other side?"

"Keep together, Tom!" scrawled the prince.

They scrambled through a jungle of weed, but the weed was in reality a mass of living creatures. All at once Prout found both his legs pinned fast. He could not move them. Then something dashed against them with terrible force. Axe and lamp were dashed from his hands. The shock flung him backwards, but the buoyancy of the water lifted him again.

Still he could not stir. Ching-Lung was a dozen yards in front. Prout turned his head towards the ship, and waved his arms frantically. Then, for an instant, all was dark, except for the gleam of the prince's lamp.

To the diver no sound can come except by contact. He works in a voiceless, noiseless region. His dress is a little world of his own, and he carries his atmosphere with him. But he has his eyes, and even in the blurred, misty realms beneath the sea, he can use them to a certain extent. The sudden loss of light told Ching-Lung that something was amiss. Swinging round, he looked back.

The Lord of the Deep was almost invisible, or only visible as a long, shadowy object.

The prince stood waist deep in swaying weed, and an inquisitive fish, that insisted on swimming round his helmet, impeded his view. He struck at it with his axe. Then the light flashed out again with a swift succession of winks, and Ching-Lung read the message:

"What is wrong with Prout?"

Then the two beams flashed slantwise through the water, and shone visibly on the helmeted figure of the steersman. Prout was waving his arms grotesquely, like some fabulous sea-monster engaged in a weird dance. He rocked to and fro, and a stream of bubbles, that gleamed like pearls, rose from the exhaust valve of his helmet.

"What in Hanover is Tommy playing at?" muttered Ching-Lung.

He floundered back. Prout, too, was knee-deep in the weeds. He stopped swinging his arms, and pointed down. His gesture was a warning one, telling the prince not to come too close. The puzzled Ching-Lung cut away the weed, and held the lamp low.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he gasped.

Prout had been caught in a living trap. He had walked into the expanded jaws of a huge shell-fish. The great shell had closed upon the lead-soled boots. Each shell was nearly a yard across, and the strength of such a mollusc would be enormous. The lead had saved Prout's feet from being crushed to pulp.

Ching-Lung wasted no time. There was room to insert the keen-edged axe. He sawed it backwards and forwards with all his might, killing the tenant of the shell. The trap opened, and Prout was free. Even then the steersman could not account for the whole adventure. He was very short of breath. He guessed that some heavy fish had blundered into him either purposely or by accident. He recovered his lamp and axe. Ching-Lung grinned, and wrote on his slate:

"We're after treasure, Tommy, not oysters!"

Prout was careful not to get far behind. They went slowly, examining the skeleton of the Santa Anna. She had been a fine vessel in the days of yore, and a big one—a three-decker. Her figurehead was well preserved, and the jagged stump of her bowsprit still remained. She had sunk stern on, and it was possible to walk under her keel, from which the ocean weed fell like a curtain. They passed round her.

No entrance could be made from that side. The sand was banked right up flush with her deck. From the position in which she lay, Ching-Lung felt sure that she was full of sand. If so, it would take weeks of labour to reach the treasure.

Prout followed him up the slope, a cloud of small fish playing round them. Ching-Lung was a little in advance. Prout halted to free his legs from some clinging weeds. When he raised his head, he saw Ching-Lung drop slowly out of sight, the upraised lamp vanishing last of all.

"By hokey, he's found the way in!" muttered the steersman.

There was a jagged hole eight or nine feet wide. A mass of coral had diverted the sand on either side. Far down in the black pit the prince's lamp twinkled. Untwisting a coil of rope from his waist, Prout hitched it round the coral, and, clutching the end, he sank gently after Ching-Lung.

The interior of the Santa Anna was a mere sand-glutted shell—or so it seemed at first—bulkheads, stays, joists, and props had long ago rotted. The lamps gave little light, and all around lay steeped in mysterious darkness. Neither of the men were nervous, but a strange feeling swept over them as they stood in the heart of the old sea-coffin. Visions of eerie skeletons and bearded dons, with empty eye-sockets and bony hands, began to form themselves in Prout's imagination. He almost expected to see Davy Jones sitting in his famous locker drinking deep draughts of rum that he had recently looted from the spirit-room of some foundered ship. He peered nervously into the gloom, but no such apparition was visible.

Ching-Lung walked astern, scrambling over the sand-heaps. They had come years too late. The drifting sand had swallowed up the treasure; the action of the water had demolished all but the mere outer framework of the ill-fated ship.

"No go!" he thought. "We might dig for ever, and never find the stuff. I expect it would have been kept in the captain's cabin, but where was the captain's cabin in this old tub? Get out, you pig!"

The last remark was addressed to a thirty-pound conger that glided between them. The loathsome brute seemed undecided whether to attack or not. It lashed itself away, and was swallowed by the gloom. Prout clutched the prince's waist.

Two green lights were burning in the velvet blackness. Almost instantly a feathery something leapt through the water. It touched Prout's bare hand, and stung it like a wasp.

"An octopus," thought the prince, with a shudder of loathing. "How I hate the beast! I thought so!"

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All at once the water around them turned to ink. The great cuttlefish had spat out the curious colouring matter which every cuttlefish uses as a means of defence, or as a cover to stalk its prey. The lamps could not penetrate the murky water. Dreading an attack, they clutched their axes and waited. The water cleared slowly, and the green eyes had disappeared.

"He's thought better of it," mused the prince. "He might have lost one or two of his eight tentacles if he hadn't. I don't like those big jelly-fish a trifle. It's no use stopping here, for there's no chance of finding a single dollar in a blue moon!"

He made for the opening. It was impossible to reach the fore-part of the Santa Anna. The way was thoroughly barred by sand. Ching-Lung fixed his lamp to his waist, and pulled himself up the rope. Suddenly a jarring, clanging sound greeted his ears. Utterly astounded and amazed, the prince drew back. The sight he saw momentarily sent the blood surging back into his heart.

He was staring at another diver, and the other diver was staring at him. The other diver shot upwards, but Ching-Lung made a clutch at his ankles, and seized him. He felt himself shooting through the water, and the broad light of day dazzled his eyes. Ching-Lung seized a rope-ladder.

He was astonished, but his startling appearance caused other people more astonishment. To the left lay a small steam yacht of American build. The ladder to which he clung was attached to a boat, and four or five blue-jerseyed men were gaping at him. They helped him in, and unscrewed the nozzle of his helmet.

"Well, I'm durned!" gasped a little fat man.

"Where do you come from—eh? Who are you, at all, anyhow?"

Ching-Lung grinned.

"That's just what I'm going to ask you," he said. "You're trespassing. I struck that vessel first, and it's mine by law."

"Well, I'm durned!" repeated the little man.

They stared at Ching-Lung as if he were some kind of curiosity.

"How did you find it?"

"Pearlin'," said the little man. "I jest looked up history arter that, and tumbled to it that she was the Santa Anna, and had dollars in her. Strike me blue, this is a go! I ain't goin' to give in. I'll fight you in the courts about her. Where's yer boat? How does that durned suit work? How do—"

Ching-Lung screwed on the nozzle again, and calmly stepped overboard. He sank before their astounded eyes, blowing them a kiss as he did so, and the limpid waters of the Pacific closed over his helmet.

Prout, in a high state of perplexity, saw the descending lamp. Ching-Lung sank clear of the wreck, and, beckoning to the steersman, returned to the Lord of the Deep. They shut the door, and the pumper forced out the water. The inner door was opened, and they were quickly undressed.

Ferrers Lord laughed when he heard the news.

"Yankees," he said. "Well, they may have the treasure if they succeed in finding it. The same course, O'Rooney, and the same speed. You had better take your turn in twenty minutes."

Barry sighed deeply at the result.

"Oi thought, Tom," he murmured, "that Oi was going to get enough Spanish coin to retoire on, and kape a motor-car wid pink wheels. Ut's sad and wearyin'."

"Have a Spanish onion and some cheese, instead," said Prout.

"Oi will," said Barry; "wid a bottle of ale to wash it down."

And he did.

Gan Makes Himself Objectionable.

Gan-Waga had not forgotten Barry's promise about the scent. The Eskimo borrowed one of the prince's silk handkerchiefs—when the prince was not looking—and took it to the Irishman. This was shortly before supper-time. Barry deluged the handkerchief, and put more of the scent on his own and Gan's hair. Barry's cold was getting worse. He

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NEXT MONDAY: "TOP DOG!" A Splendid Long Complete School Tale, **VERNON SMITH & Co.** versus **HARRY WHARTON & Co.** Grand New Series.

could not have smelt a tannery, glue-factory, or gas-works, though promised a large reward for doing so. He put the stopper back in the bottle, and smiled.

"What d'yez think of it, me Eskimo bhoy?"

Gan sniffed, and turned rather pale.

"Me nots like him much, Barry."

"What's that?" said the Irishman. "Did yez iver hear the loike? Ut's wid bein' a poor, savage bathin'. Yer taste ain't cultivated or eddicated. The prince said ut was joyous and lovely, and Mистер Thurston offers me tin guineas a dhrop for ut!"

"Dids Chingy love him?" asked Gan.

"Said he could live on ut, wid a bit of food chucked in."

That was enough for Gan. If Ching-Lung considered it good, that was sufficient. In Gan's eyes the prince could do no wrong.

All the same, Gan thought he had peculiar tastes in scent. Gan had never smelt anything so fiendishly atrocious. There were no violets about it. It was a kind of essence-de-rotten-egg-cum-decayed-fish-and-onions.

Gan grew paler. It was the sort of smell that would flatten a bullet, and stop a charge of cavalry. A cannon-ball might have gone through it with lyddite behind it, but the cannon would have had to be fired at short range. The onion flavour rather predominated. To be plain, Ching-Lung had filled Barry's bottle with a mixture of sulphuretted hydrogen and oil of asafœtida, two of the most highly-scented chemicals known to mankind. To a blend of the two a boneyard is a bed of sweet roses, and soapworks a delicious scent-sachet. One whiff of these would make a dead horse take the bit between his teeth and bolt.

Gan had a strong stomach, but as he reeled down the ladder he began to feel giddy. He did not know what was wrong with him. He had wanted his supper before, but he was not hungry now. He wanted to crawl away somewhere quiet, and die.

"Not likes him!" he moaned. "Oh, mi—oh, mi! Feels sick. Not likes scentses. Take him backs!"

Gan staggered to Ching-Lung's cabin, and thrust the handkerchief amongst the prince's clean linen. Gan had begun to hate himself. He threw himself down on Ching-Lung's bed, and moaned out many "Oh, mi's." He writhed, and in doing so he rubbed the scent into the pillows and bedclothes.

Then he tried to smoke, which somewhat killed the perfume. Gan thought he would try to eat a little supper, but the faintness came on again as he was passing Rupert's cabin. Gan took a short rest on Rupert's bed. Again he was taken with slight dizziness, and he lurched into the state-room to recover. Bravely he went on again, but it was too much. Nothing in the ship was sacred to Gan-Waga. Feeling in need of another rest, he did not hesitate about entering the millionaire's cabin.

It was the poorest cabin in the ship. Gan flung himself down on the little bedstead and sobbed. He spent five minutes there, and it is wonderful what sulphuretted asafœtida can do towards perfuming a place in five minutes. Gan had enough on his hair to scent the whole Hotel Cecil, and that is not a small place. He could have perfumed Windsor Castle in another forty seconds, and made it uninhabitable for another month.

Gan recovered at the sound of the bell. A tramp of feet told him that the men were going to their meal. It was Barry's spell at the wheel.

Gan rose wearily. The men took their food in the fore-castle, one of the pleasantest places in the ship. Ferrers Lord looked after his men. He simply asked them to do their duty, and when that was done they were their own masters. The fore-castle was painted white, and the floor was scrubbed until it shone like snow. A cloth covered the long table, which at night was packed away, and at the head of the table stood Prout, before a mighty sirloin of beef. The Lord of the Deep had a cold-storage room, and wretched salt-junk and hard biscuits were unknown.

Two men acted as waiters in turn, and Joe and a sailor rejoicing in the tuneful name of Bert Bung shared the duty with him. As Prout carved the succulent slices they loaded up the plates with cabbage, boiled potatoes, and Yorkshire pudding, and whisked them away. A bottle of ale stood at every elbow, a mighty rice-pudding was cooling, a huge Dutch cheese shone alluringly beside it, and a tray of snowy bread was passed down the ranks. Celery sparkled in glasses. There were pickles and sauces galore, and, best of all, appetites that would have made an ostrich envious.

(Another long instalment of this grand serial in next Monday's issue of the "Magnet.")



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The rivalry, always simmering, between Vernon-Smith & Co. and Harry Wharton & Co., breaks out afresh with renewed vigour, and the cunning of the Bounder of Greyfriars gives him and his cronies the first round of the struggle.

For the time being, Vernon-Smith is

TOP "DOG,"

and the chums of the Remove are compelled to "sing small," while planning reprisals which they hope will turn the tide of victory in their direction much more.

OUR LATEST SUCCESS!

Nothing succeeds like success, 'tis said, and the truth of this saying is wonderfully exemplified in the case of our latest success. That is, of course,

"THE PENNY POPULAR."

The reception given to Number One of this wonderful new paper exceeded all expectations, but the rush for Number Two is so enormous, and the demand so clamorous, that it is as much as the printing-presses can possibly do to cope with it. Such a triumph has even satisfied me, your Editor—who am by no means easily satisfied—and I thank, from the bottom of my heart, all my friends whose loyal support can alone have made this great success possible.

CHAT ABOUT HOCKEY.

The game of hockey, without doubt, gains an increasing number of partisans each winter, not a few being from the standard of King Football. In spite of its ever-growing popularity, however, hockey is a game which non-players usually know very little about. Everyone knows the rules of football more or less thoroughly, but with hockey the case seems different. For instance, the uninitiated are often surprised to learn that the regulation hockey-ball is simply an ordinary cricket-ball painted white.

Players are not allowed to raise the head of the stick above the level of the shoulder at any portion of the stroke. To do so is to "give sticks"—an offence which is duly penalised. The correct stroke is a sort of swinging, scything stroke.

It is permissible to have an indiarubber ring round the stick just above the face. This prevents the ball running up the stick and striking one's features. But stick and ring together may not weigh more than twenty-eight ounces.

Rules of Play.

The rules of play have a great deal in common with football, even to having an "off-side" law. The most marked difference lies in shooting at goal. In football one may take "pot shots" at any range; in hockey, one must be within the "striking circle" before one shoots. The "circle" is marked in front of each goal, and is a line four yards long, parallel to and fifteen yards from the goal play. This line is continued each way to meet the goal-line by quarter circles, having the goalposts as centres, so that the "circle" is really a rough semi-circle. The object of the rule is to keep down hard, indiscriminate hitting.

No "Back Sticks" Allowed.

There is no charging in hockey. The goalkeeper, when within the "circle," may kick the ball, but no other player is allowed to do so. One may stop the ball with one's foot, though; also, you may stop the ball with your flat hand, but you may not catch it. No player is allowed to play the ball with the back of his stick; and, while cricket allows left-handed players, hockey will not permit such eccentricities. No "left-handed" sticks are made.

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Two Referees.

The game is usually refereed by two umpires, who each take a half of the ground for their jurisdiction. The reason for this lies in the extreme rapidity of the game, for the ball travels from end to end of the field at extreme velocity. By the way, in certain circumstances it is open to an umpire to award a "penalty goal"—which has the same value as an ordinary goal—against transgressing teams.

The usual duration of a hockey match is an hour and ten minutes—that is to say, thirty-five minutes "each way."

FROM A KEEN GIRL MAGNETITE.

Writing from Boston, a very keen girl "Magnetite" sends me a long and interesting letter, which I have, unfortunately, no space to publish in full. The first half of this cheery letter, however, runs as follows:

"Boston,

"Dear Editor,—I have been wanting to write to you for a long time, and seeing several letters from girl readers in your Chat page, I have just managed to pluck up my courage sufficiently to do so.

"I have been a regular reader of your jolly little books for the past two years, and I have never yet read stories which I like so much, and I am convinced that I never shall do. They are by far the best books for clean, healthy reading. Of course, there are many other books containing school stories, but I have never found one which comes near touching the 'Gem' and 'Magnet.'

"I have been doing my best to increase the popularity of my two favourite papers, although there is really not much chance of doing this, for nearly everyone in Boston has found out what delightful stories they contain; but I have managed to get over thirty new readers. The comic supplement is very amusing, and I think the 'Magnet' League idea a very good one."

Many thanks, both for your letter and your help, my Boston Reader. Write me again soon, and let me know how you like our latest companion paper, "The Penny Pop."

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

M. C. (London, N.W.).—In answer to your query, I should advise you to take your dog to the "vet." and have it examined. If you do not want to do this, you might try rubbing the affected parts with sulphur ointment.

ON JOINING THE ARMY.

A Chester reader of "The Magnet" tells me that he wants to become a soldier. He says he is seventeen years of age, 5ft. 8in. in height, and 36in. round the chest. This reader is still too young to become a soldier. He must wait until he is eighteen. Meantime, he can get information about the Army in a pamphlet which is supplied free on application to any police-station. He can get fuller information if he visits the local recruiting-sergeant. This pamphlet contains coloured plates, and gives details concerning enlistment, etc.

My young friend, if he is still seriously determined to become a soldier, will find much to interest him therein.

Then my Chester reader goes on to say that he has a great desire to become a good all-round athlete, and he wants to know how to set about it.

Well, the best way to set about it is to join some athletic club in his own district, and by practice with his clubmates to develop himself in those sports in which he takes an interest.

If there is no club in his own district, then he must try to make friends with some fellow-athletes and practise with them. If he wants some good handbooks on the subject of the different sports, such as boxing, wrestling, running, rowing, and so forth, he cannot do better than invest in those published in the Spalding's Series of Athletic Handbooks, price sixpence each.

These books he can obtain through any bookseller, and he will find them very concise and clear works of instruction on the various sports with which they deal.

THE EDITOR.

OUR SPLENDID NEW FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

The Bunsey Boys Encourage Ike in His Big-Game Hunting.



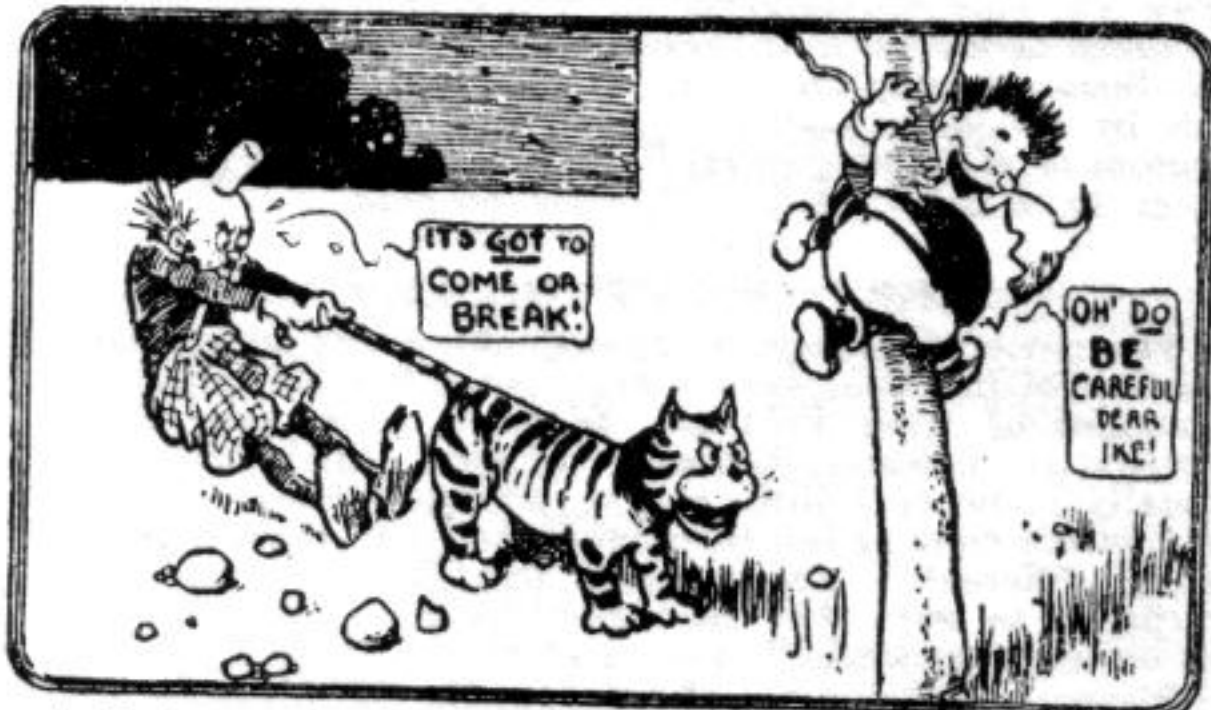
1. Dear Readers,—You know how we luv Happy Ike. Well, the uthar day we thought we wood try to show him how afeckshunate we was. Therefore we borrowed the stuffed tiger that Ma keeps in the hall, and prosceeded to be good littel boys. "Georgie," smiled me, as I dug a nice hole, "what a jubilee Ike will have when his turn comes!"



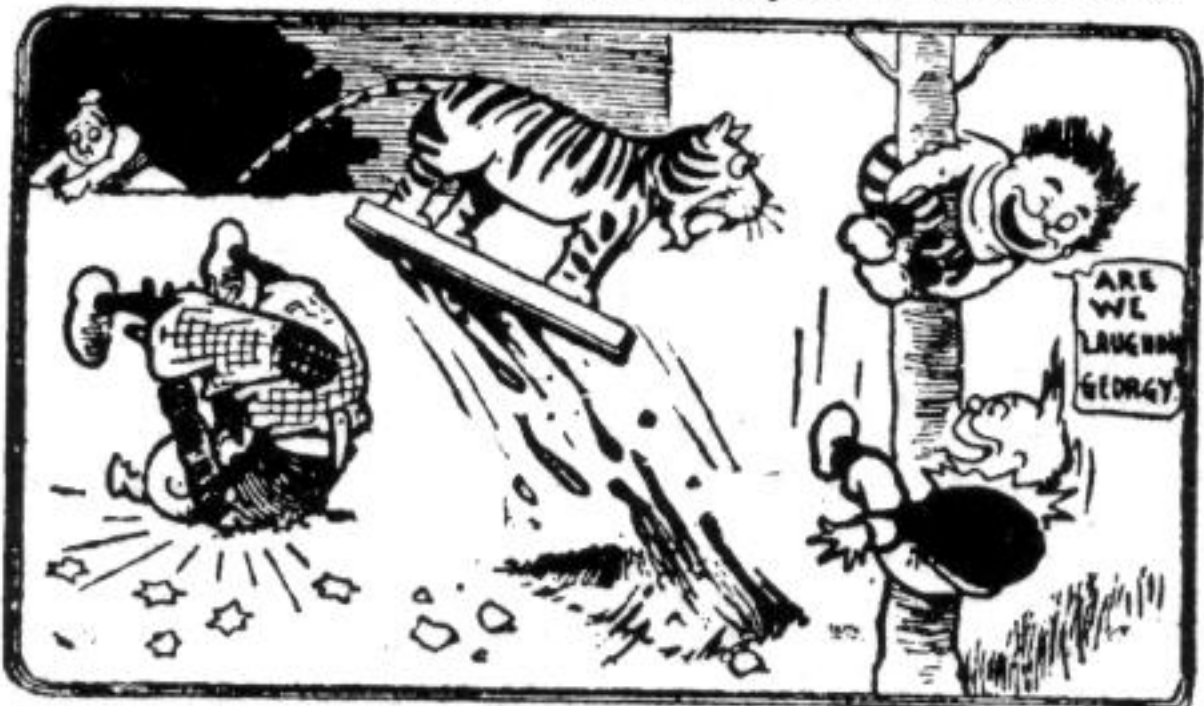
2. Well, when we had got that feroshus broot fixed as per above, we climb the tree for safety. "Help!" yelled us. "Help! The tiger's escaped from the menagerie, and wants we for lunch. Oh, do reskew us!" Just then we herd Ike's fary footstoops.



3. Very presently after that Ike arrove. "Wot!" he yelled. "Yu dare try to chaw up my deer boys! Take that, and THAT!" he added. "Die, tiger, dud—die!" "Oh, Ike," sed Georgie, "how brave you ain't to be sure!"



4. But somehow that tiger nevvver died. Nottim! He just stuck thare and grinned till Ike was as mad as a hatter. "What!" he yelled. "Yer won't be respectable, and die? Then heer goss to drag thee to a wet and watery gravestone! Wid that he lade hold of the rope and tugged.



5. Up into the air floo the feerse tiger, and backwards went Ike with sum suddenness. "Oh, Ike," cride me, "don't run away like that, just as you was bein' so valiant!" "Gurr-rr!" yelled Ike. "He's floo at me. Boys, save me!"



6. With that we went. When we pulled up for broth we terned round and observed Ike still under the tiger, wich had flopt on him, and Ma sittin' on the top of the heep, yelling for the pleece force. "Whare?" ast two koppers, who rusht up. "Over thare!" sed we. Then we did another went.—Yours, till later on, FERDY, The Bunsey Boy.

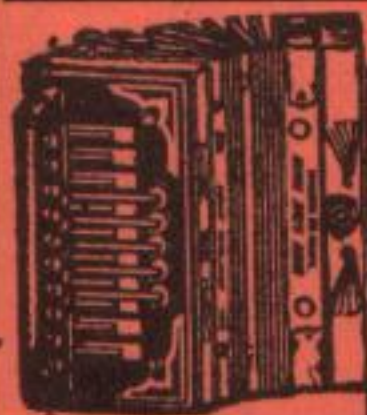
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ANOTHER FLARE UP!



She: "I hear you are going to marry again, and you told me the light of your life had gone out."

He: "Yes; but I am going to strike another match."

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!



"I'm wondering what your father would say if he saw you smoking?"

"Well, lady, I don't know as I care much about what he'd say. I'm wondering what he'd do!"

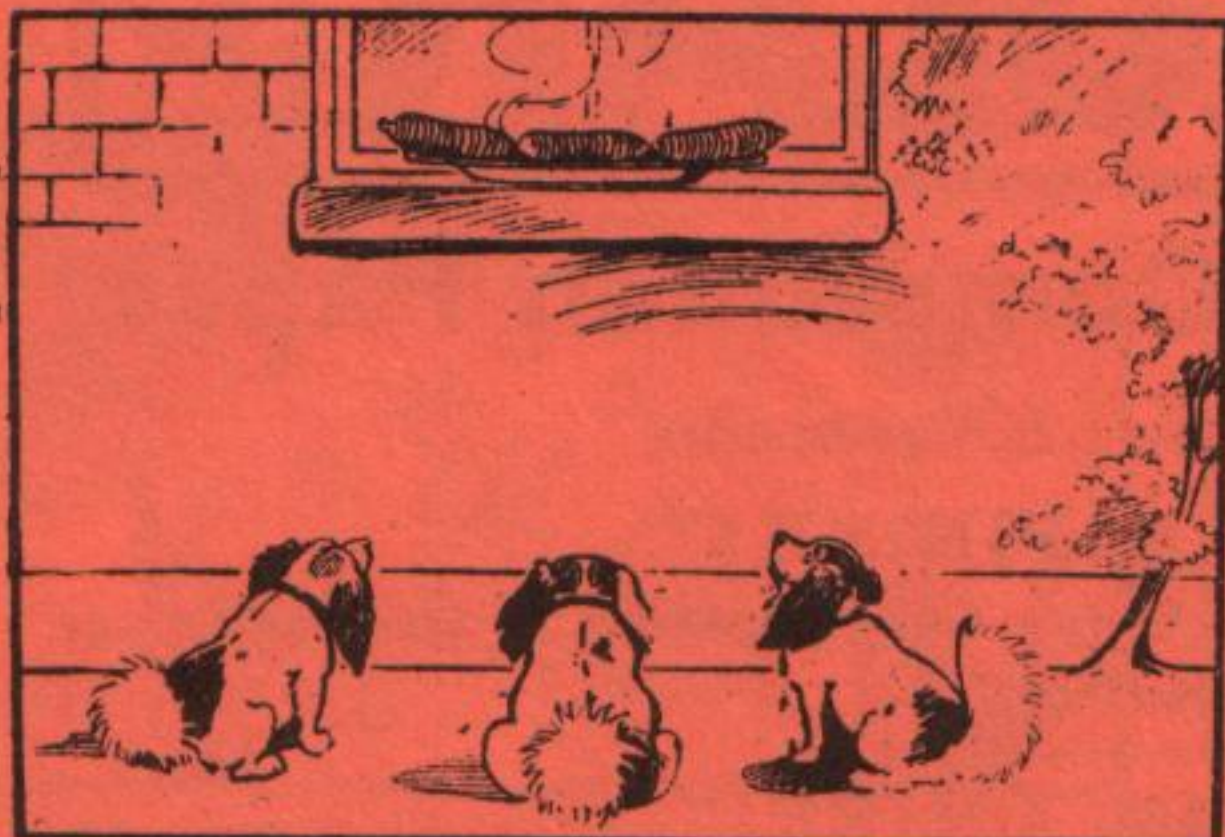
CLEARED OUT!



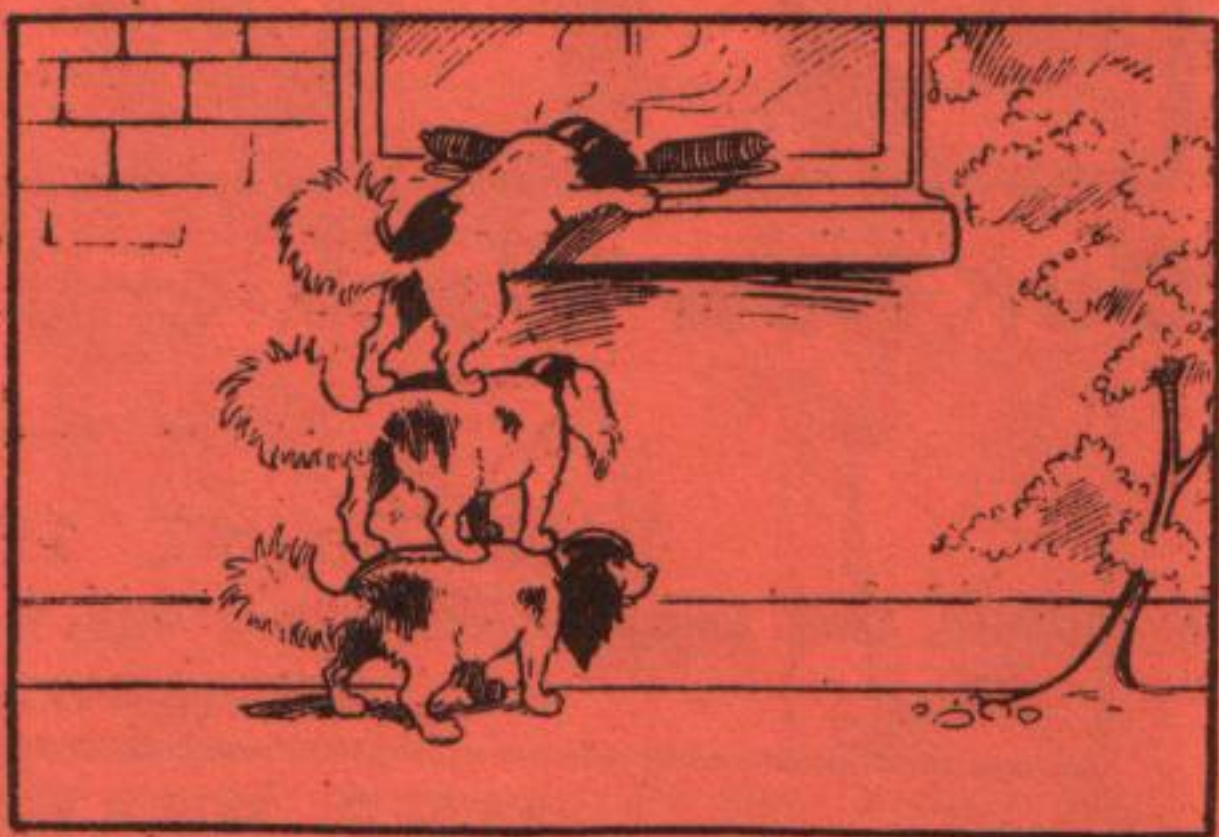
Walter: "Do you leave your valuables with the manager of the hotel when you arrive at the seaside?"

Wally: "No. When I leave."

HOW THEY DID IT!



"Ki, yi! Those sausages look good. How can we get at them?" said the bow-wows.



"Aha! Bright idea! Up we go. One, two, three—here we are, laddies!" And thus the doggies enjoyed a light lunch. Clever little chaps, aren't they?"

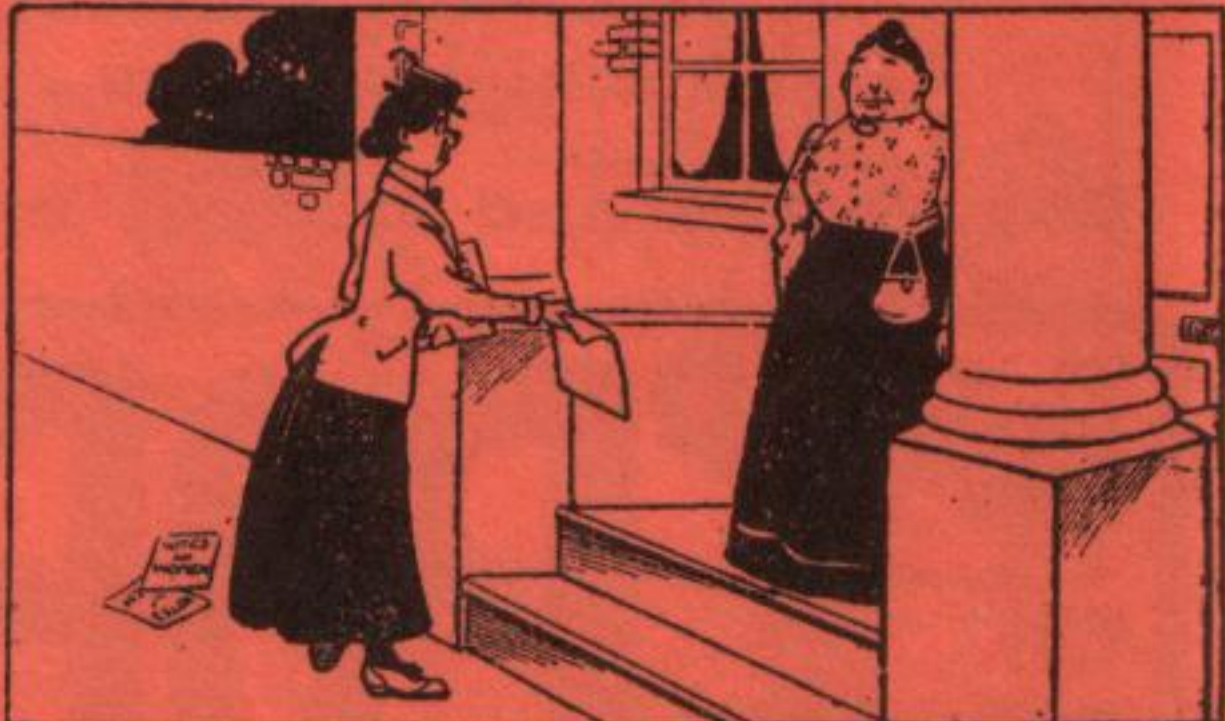
A PLEASING JOKE!



Mabel: "He said he could marry any girl he pleased. Is he married yet?"

Jack: "No; he hasn't pleased any yet."

NOT HAVING ANY!



Suffragette: "I don't expect you to join us, madam. I only ask you to help our propoganda."

Lady of the House: "Propoganda! I should be a proper goose if I did."