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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
A Message from the Enemy.

BIFF!

Crash!

"Take that, you rotter! Take that, you waster! Brr-r-r-r!"

Biff, biff!

Bump!

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior at Greyfriars, quickened his steps as he came up the Remove passage. The biffing, the crashing, the excited voice, came from No. 13 Study, which Hurree Singh shared with Bob Cherry, of the Remove. It was Bob Cherry's voice that rang out in loud, excited tones, amid the sounds of heavy thumps.

Biff, biff!

"There, you rotter! There, you cad! Yah!"

"My only auntful relation!" murmured Hurree Singh, in alarm. "What is the matterfulness with my ludicrous chum?"

And he flung open the door of the study and dashed in, expecting to find Bob Cherry engaged in deadly conflict with Vernon-Smith, or Bolsover major, or some other of his foes in the Lower Fourth.

But Bob Cherry was alone in the study. He had a punching-ball fastened from ceiling to floor, and he was just delivering a terrific drive at it as the Nabob of Bhanipur came in.

Evidently Bob Cherry was treating the punching-ball as he would have liked to treat Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, and his remarks were all addressed to the ball as he thumped it right and left.

Biff!

The ball jumped away from Bob Cherry's terrific drive, and that drive was a little too much for the fastening of the cord at the ceiling. The staple came out, and the ball, instead of swinging back, dashed right on, and caught Hurree Jamset Ram Singh full in the face.

Crash!

"Yaro-o-o-o-o-oh! Oh! Yah!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I didn't see you, Inky——"

"Yah! Oh!"

Inky sat down violently on the floor. The punching-ball

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dropped beside him. The nabob blinked at Bob Cherry, gasping for breath.

"I'm so sorry, Inky, old man!" said Bob repentently. "I thought the blessed thing was fastened all right."

'Ow!"

'I didn't know you were coming in then. What did you pop in in such a giddy hurry for?"

"Ow! I thought my esteemed chum was fightfully encountering some esteemed cad like the honourable Smithy!" said the nabob, in his curious English. "It was for the rescuefulness of my ludicrous chum that I came in hurriedfully."

Bob Cherry grinned. The nabob's English always had that effect upon him. There were some words in the English tongue that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would never get quite to understand, and so it came about that he used opprobrious expressions, sometimes, in a complimentary sense.

"Good old Jampot!" said Bob Cherry. "I say, I'm sorry I biffed you on your royal boko! I suppose they'd cut off my head for that in Bhanipur?"

"The boilfulness in the esteemed oil would be terrific!" said the nabob solemnly.

He staggered to his feet, rubbing his nose ruefully. That dusky organ was, as Mr. Weller would have described it, "swellin' wisibly."

Bob Cherry gathered up his punching-ball, and tossed it into a corner.

"I was thinking it was Smithy I was punching," he said. "That rotter can't be punched now. He's going round pretending he's seedy after his illness, so that a chap can't touch him. He knows I'm simply longing to lick him!"

"The samefulness with me, my worthy chum!" said the nabob sadly.

"It's rotten!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"The old Co. is getting thinned down," said Bob Cherry gloomily. "We were the Famous Five—you and I and Wharton and Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent. Now, Nugent and Bull and Wharton are gone, and we're left. Mark Linley has gone, too—old Marky, one of the best. What are we going to do without them, Inky?"

Inky shook his head. The problem was too much for him, and he gave it up.

"The only thing I can think of," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully, "is to give Vernon-Smith an awful hiding. He's the cause of all the trouble, and he's lost us four good chums. Only it can't be done now—he's been ill—and he's making out that he's not fit; and if a chap were to hit the beast, there would be a row about it. As a matter of fact, he's as fit as you or I, but he's pretending—the rotter's malingering!"

Inky nodded. He was caressing his nose, and gently dabbing it with a handkerchief. The handkerchief came away with spots of red on it.

"So the only thing is, to hammer the punching-ball and keep fit, till Smithy gets well, and then hammer him," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"I say you fellows——"

A fat junior looked into the study, and blinked at the two Removites through a very large pair of spectacles.

Bob Cherry grunted; he did not like William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

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

"Or, really, Cherry——"

"Buzz off!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Smithy says——"

"Hang Smithy!"

"But he says——"

"I don't care what he says!"

"Yes; but——"

"Oh, clear out!"

The nabob chuckled softly.

"Perhapsfully it would be betterful for the esteemed Bunter to deliver his absurd and esteemed message!" he remarked.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"All serene!" he said. "Go ahead with the absurd and esteemed message, Bunty!"

"Smithy says he'd like to see you in his study."

"Smithy can go and eat coke!"

"But he wants to speak to you, and he doesn't feel fit, you know. He's being excused lessons now, owing to being ill, and he's taking it easy on his sofa," said Billy Bunter. "You can't expect him to come and see you. Considering that your chum Wharton put him into that state, I think you might go and see him—— Ow!"

Billy Bunter dashed out of the study, just as Bob Cherry rushed at him. Bob's boot caught him as he fled, and almost lifted him from the floor.

"Yaroo-o-oh!"

Bunter roared and disappeared.

Bob Cherry turned back into No. 13 Study, panting.

"Shall I go, Inky?" he asked.

The nabob nodded.

"No harmfulness in going, my worthy chum," he said. "I think you shall go."

Bob Cherry knitted his brows.

"The cad has got some scheme on, if he wishes to see me," he said. "I know he's quite well, and only malingering. I'm pretty certain that he was smoking last night with Bolsover and Snoop and Stott. He's simply taking the Head in—he's fooling him about his health, same as he fooled him about Wharton. I shall jolly well tell him plainly that I know he ain't ill!"

The nabob looked anxious.

"Let there be no quarrelfulness, my worthy chum," he said. "It would look bad, for all the esteemed fellows believe that the ludicrous Bounder is really seedy!"

"I'll be jolly careful!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll keep my temper."

And Bob Cherry, with a wrinkled brow, went down the Remove passage to Vernon-Smith's study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Spider and the Fly.

VERNON-SMITH, of the Remove—the fellow who was always known as the Bounder of Greyfriars—lay upon the sofa in his study. The sofa was a large and luxurious one, and that, like the rest of the furniture, looked very uncommon in a junior study. But the son of the millionaire was in the habit of making himself comfortable. Everything that money could buy, for use or for ostentation, was provided for the Bounder of Greyfriars by his millionaire father.

The Bounder was looking a little pale as he lay on the sofa and stared at the fire. He had lately been through an illness. It had been a short illness, and the iron frame of the Bounder had thrown it off, and he was as sound as a bell again. His paleness was due to smoking, and to keeping indoors; but it suited his plans to let it be supposed that he was still in a state of great weakness. It was easy for the cunning Bounder to pull the wool over the eyes of Dr. Short, the little medical man from Friardale. It was still more easy for him to deceive the Head of Greyfriars. Dr. Locke did not suspect for a moment that the pale-faced, languid-looking junior was perfectly fit and able to take his place in the Form-room, as usual, and to play on the football-field, too.

Bob Cherry tapped at the study door and entered. The Bounder turned his head, and looked at him, but did not rise.

"Come in," he said.

Bob stepped in.

"Sorry I can't get up," said the Bounder. "You know I'm crocked."

Bob Cherry looked at him fixedly.

"I know you're not!" he replied abruptly.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I know you're malingering."

The Bounder smiled. The accusation did not seem to hurt his feelings.

"Come in and shut the door," he said. "I want to speak to you."

Bob Cherry hesitated a moment, and then came in and shut the door. He stood looking at the fellow on the sofa. The old, mocking smile was on the Bounder's face.

"Sit down," he said.

"Thanks! I'd rather stand."

"Please yourself," drawled the Bounder.

"I mean to."

"I want to talk business to you," said the Bounder. "When Harry Wharton was here, and was captain of the Remove, he was up against me all the time. You backed

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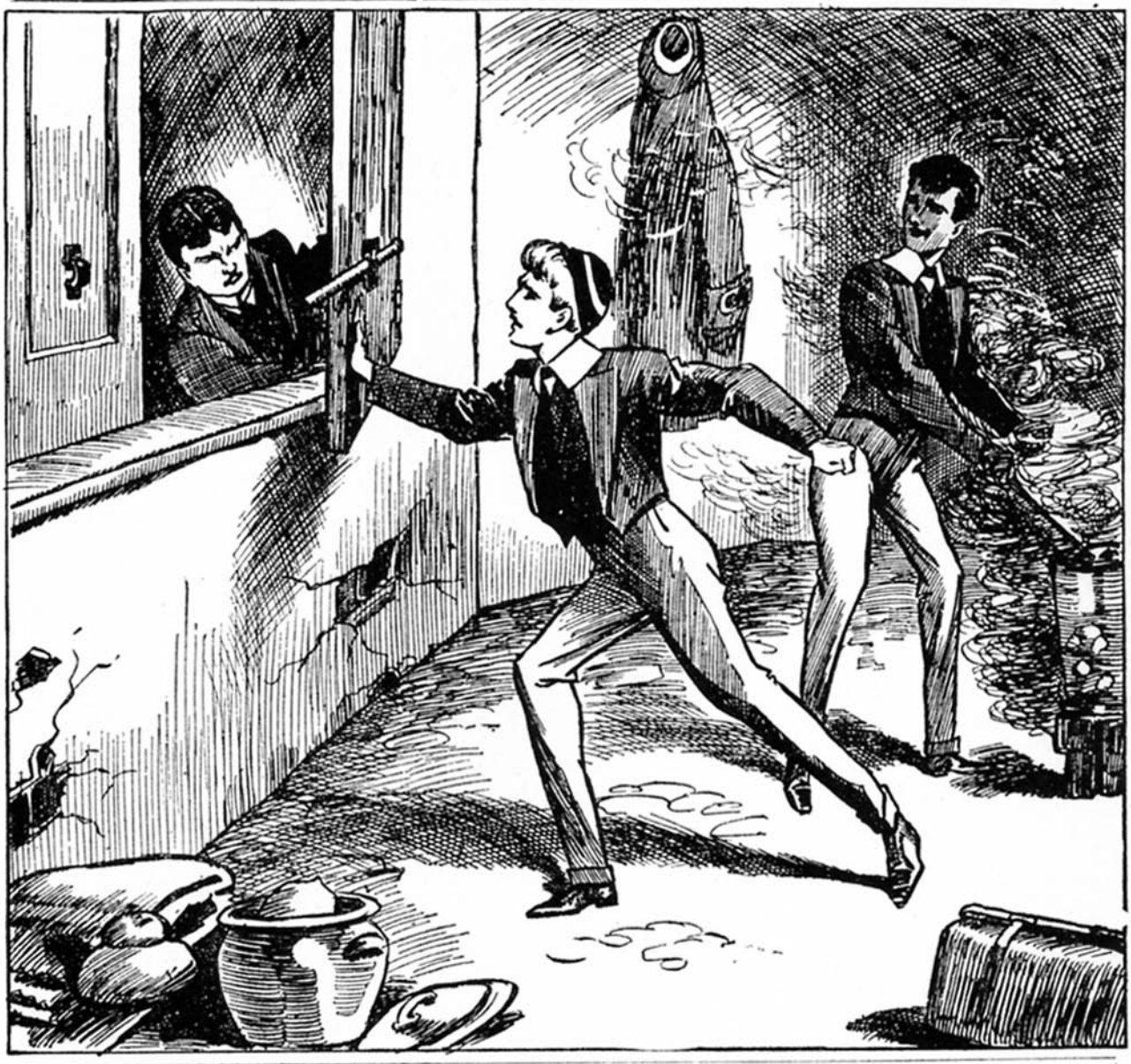

The head and shoulders of the bully of the Sixth appeared in the opening, and Bob Cherry jammed the shutter to with a bang. The next moment the besieged juniors heard a dull thud and a yell. Loder had evidently fallen upon Courtney, who had been following up behind. *(See Chapter 9.)*

him up, and so did Johnny Bull, and Mark Linley, and Frank Nugent. Where are they now?"

Bob Cherry clenched his hands.

A glitter came into the Bounder's eyes.

"I warned Wharton that if he didn't knuckle under, I'd drive them from the school," he said. "Haven't I done it?"

"Yes, you cad—you have!"

"You are the last of the old brigade, excepting the nigger," said Vernon-Smith. "You were the Famous Five, and I've reduced you to the Famous Two. Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry breathed hard. It was difficult for him to keep his hands off the Bounder.

"As for the nigger——"

"Do you mean Hurree Singh?" asked Bob Cherry, knitting his brows.

The Bounder nodded.

"Then you'll call him by his name. If you call him the nigger again, I'll pitch you off that sofa."

Vernon-Smith smiled.

"I'll call him his Royal Highness, if you like," he said agreeably. "Anything to oblige. As I said, about his Royal Highness, he doesn't count. But you are the last of the old firm, and if you like to play the game—as I consider it—I'll let you alone."

"Thank you!" said Bob Cherry sarcastically. "I don't really feel very much afraid."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"The others didn't feel afraid," he said. "But I've downed them. It looks to me as if you've got an idea in your head that I got rid of Wharton by foul play——"

"So you did," said Bob Cherry. "He fought you the other night on the Friardale road, and licked you. After he left you, somebody—very likely somebody you'd treated badly—came along and lammed you with a cudgel. Because Wharton had been fighting with you, you put it on him; but he didn't do it."

"The Head believed he did."

"I know that; but it wasn't true."

"The whole school believed it, and believes it now."

"But it was a lie."

"That is what you have been saying ever since," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "You are saying everywhere that I lied about Wharton, and that I sent the false telegram that caused Linley to leave and lose the Noble exam.—that I tricked Nugent into going to the Cross Keys, and getting sacked for it—that I caused the trouble between Johnny Bull and Bulstrode that Bull was expelled for."

"It's all true."

"But it doesn't suit me to have you blowing it round the

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school, Bob Cherry. If you say it often enough, the fellows will begin to believe you."

"I hope so."

"That's what you intend?"

"Certainly."

"And when I'm well, you've got a big licking saved up for me?" said the Bounder, with a sneer.

"You're well now. I've got a big licking saved up for you when you've left off pretending to be ill!" said Bob grimly.

"And you mean business—you won't change your mind."

"No!"

"You're going to be a thorn in my side all the time—you're not going to give me any peace?"

"Quite right!"

"You mean that?"

"Every word!"

"Very well," said the Bounder, with a yawn—"very well. Now it's plain sailing. I know what I've got to expect."

"Yes, you know what you've got to expect," said Bob Cherry. "Have you done?"

"Not quite. As you won't come into line, I'm going to serve you as the others were served. I'm going to get you kicked out of the school."

Bob Cherry laughed contemptuously.

"I'm not afraid," he said.

"You think I can't do it—after what I've done?"

"You admit, then, that you got the others out by foul play?" asked Bob Cherry, his voice trembling with rage.

Vernon-Smith nodded calmly.

"I shifted them out," he said. "I'm going to shift you out after them. I'll drive you out of the school like a dog!"

"Do you want me to give you a hiding now without putting it off till you've done malingering?" asked Bob Cherry thickly.

"You dare not touch me!

"What!"

"You dare not!" said the Bounder tauntingly.

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

"Say that once again," he said, "and I'll take that dog-whip yonder, and give you the biggest hiding you ever had in your life!"

The Bounder sneered.

"You dare not!" he said calmly.

Bob Cherry kept his word. He made one spring towards where the dog-whip lay upon the table, and grasped it. He made another spring towards the Bounder, and grasped him by the collar, and dragged him off the sofa.

"Now, you cad!" he shouted.

Lash, lash, lash!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Called to Account.

LASH, lash, lash!

Bob Cherry's blood was up; and he had forgotten everything now—everything save that his enemy was in his grasp—his enemy who had driven his chum in shame and disgrace from the school.

Lash, lash!

Vernon-Smith writhed in the grasp of the sturdy junior, as the dog-whip lashed fiercely across his back.

"Take that, you cur! Take that, you hound! Stand up like a decent chap, and put up your fists, if you don't like it!"

"Help, help!"

"You'll get the licking before you get help!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Help, help!"

Lash, lash!

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage.

The door was thrown open, and half a dozen excited juniors looked in.

"Faith, what's the row?" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"Bob Cherry!"

"Let him alone!"

"Stop!"

"Stand back!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Let him alone!" shouted Bolsover major, dashing into the study.

"Keep off! Then take that!"

The dog-whip lashed across Bolsover's face, and he reeled back with a yell.

Then the lash descended upon Vernon-Smith's back again.

"Let him alone, Bob Cherry!"

"Stop it!"

"You know he's ill!"

"I know he's pretending to be ill!" said Bob Cherry. "I know he's lying, as usual! I know that——"

"Cave!" shouted Ogilvy from the passage.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, strode through the crowd of juniors into the study. His face was dark with anger.

"Cherry!"

Bob Cherry's arm dropped to his side.

"Yes, sir!"

"How dare you!"

Bob Cherry released the Bounder.

He realised that his anger had carried him away, and that it had placed him in a very awkward position.

As soon as Bob Cherry's grasp relaxed, Vernon-Smith fell helplessly upon the study carpet, and lay there.

His eyes closed, and he seemed scarcely to breathe.

"He's fainted!" cried Bolsover major.

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry bitterly. "He's shamming!"

"Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You have come here and assaulted Vernon-Smith—assaulted a boy not yet recovered from a serious illness, and in the most brutal manner."

"He has recovered, sir. He's only malingering."

"How dare you say so? The doctor has said that he is not yet fit to attend his lessons," said the Remove-master.

"He's taken the doctor in, sir. He's cunning enough to take anybody in, as he took the Head in about Wharton."

"I am not likely to pay much attention to your opinion upon that point," said Mr. Quelch harshly. "Go out of this room, and wait for me in the passage."

"Yes, sir."

Bob Cherry quitted the study.

The Removites crowded in the passage gave him dark looks as he came out.

Bob Cherry had always been a popular fellow in the Remove, but of late his popularity had suffered, through his loyalty to the banished Wharton.

Mr. Quelch knelt beside the Bounder.

"Water!" he said.

"Yis, sorr," said Micky Desmond. And he rushed away.

The juniors crowded round anxiously.

"Is he hurt, sir?"

"Has he fainted?"

Mr. Quelch waved his hand.

"Stand back!" he said. "Give him air!"

The Removites crowded back.

Micky Desmond dashed into the study with a jug of water, and the Remove-master bathed the face and forehead of the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith opened his eyes.

"What is it?" he gasped feebly.

"You are all right now, my boy," said the Remove-master gently.

"Did I—did I faint?"

"Yes."

"I—I'm sorry to give you this trouble," said the Bounder. "I—I'm not quite well yet, sir, and I—I had a shock——"

The Form-master frowned.

"I know the shock you had, Vernon-Smith," he said. "I saw Cherry in the act of striking you."

The Bounder gasped.

"I—I don't want to say anything against Cherry, sir," he said. "I—I dare say he lost his temper, and——"

"It is not necessary for you to say anything against him, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove-master grimly. "I shall report his conduct to Dr. Locke."

"I—I only want him to let me alone, sir, till I'm well, and able to take care of myself," muttered the Bounder feebly.

"You will be safe from him after this, Smith. Dr. Locke is not likely to allow such a dangerous young ruffian to remain at Greyfriars."

The Bounder groaned.

Mr. Quelch helped him upon the sofa, and the Bounder sank down with an air of exhaustion.

"Stay with him, Bolsover major," said Mr. Quelch. "Cherry, you will come with me to the Head!"

"Yes, sir!" said Bob miserably.

"Follow me!"

And the Remove-master stalked away with rustling gown. Bob Cherry followed him in silence.

He knew that he was in for it now.

That the Bounder was quite well, he knew; that the cunning schemer had been malingering, and that he had deliberately provoked the hot-headed junior into thrashing him, Bob understood now quite clearly.

It was the Bounder's last blow, and it meant the finish of Bob Cherry's career at Greyfriars.

He saw it all clearly enough now.

That was why the Bounder had sent that message by Bunter; that was why he had taunted him in the study, and Bob Cherry had fallen blindly into the trap.

Bob's heart was heavy as he followed his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch walked on without a word, and without turning his head. He knocked at the Head's door, and the deep voice of Dr. Locke bade him enter.

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
To Go, or Not To Go.

DR. LOCKE looked up in surprise as the Remove-master entered, with the downcast junior following at his heels.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "What has happened, Mr. Quelch?"

"I have to report Cherry's conduct to you, sir."

"What has he done?"

"He has attacked Vernon-Smith——"

"What? Vernon-Smith is ill!" the Head exclaimed, aghast.

"That did not prevent this young ruffian from attacking him, sir, and thrashing him with a dog-whip!"

"Good heavens!"

"Vernon-Smith fainted in his hands!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I leave you to deal with him, sir. He belongs to my Form, but I have not one word to say in extenuation of his infamous conduct."

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon the Removite.

"Have you anything to say, Cherry?" he asked. And his usually kind voice was like iron.

Bob Cherry panted.

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"Smith is only malingering. He is as well as you or I, sir, and he provoked me into going for him, to get me into this scrape."

"Indeed! You are aware that he is excused lessons because he is unwell?"

"He is malingering!"

"Dr. Short is still attending him, and has not suggested that he is affecting to be ill."

"He has fooled the doctor!"

"Indeed! You expect me to take your opinion before that of a fully qualified medical man, Cherry?"

"Dr. Short does not know how cunning he is."

"Have you any other defence to make?"

"No, sir! I'm sorry I lost my temper with the cad, but he deserved all he got, and more. He got my chum expelled from the school; he sent a false telegram to Mark Linley, and made him lose the exam.——"

"Have you any proof of these statements?"

"How could I have, sir?"

"Do you expect such terrible accusations to be believed without proof?"

Bob Cherry was silent.

He was quite certain of the truth of his statements in his own mind, but his assurance upon the point could not, naturally, carry conviction to the doctor's mind.

"Very well, Cherry," said the Head sternly. "You have acted in a way that I will not attempt to characterise in words. I do not think there are any words that would adequately describe your conduct. After what you have done, you do not expect, I suppose, to remain at this school?"

"Oh, sir!"

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"You are expelled from Greyfriars, Robert Cherry!" he said.

"Dr. Locke!"

"You will leave this school by the first train in the morning. A prefect will take you to the station. I shall write to your father to-night!"

"Oh, sir! I——"

"Not a word. Go!"

"I—I can't leave Greyfriars, sir."

The Head almost jumped.

"What!" he thundered.

Bob Cherry stood like a rock.

"I cannot consent to be expelled from the school, sir," he said respectfully, but firmly. "There's been enough of that. Smith got Wharton expelled by trickery, but he's not going to make a clean sweep of us."

"Robert Cherry!"

"I've done nothing to deserve being sacked for, sir, and I can't go!"

"Boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Cherry!" gasped the Head.

He stared at Bob as if he could hardly believe his ears.

Bob Cherry's face was hard and grim. The good-natured, easy-going junior could be very determined when he liked. There was an iron determination in his face now.

"You will leave Greyfriars by the first train in the morning," said the Head at last. "I shall send Wingate and Courtney to the station with you."

"I shall not go, sir."

"You—will—not—go!" exclaimed the Head, in a terrifying voice.

"No, sir," said Bob undauntedly.

"Cherry! Do you know what you are saying—do you know that you are speaking to your headmaster?"

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"I'm sorry if you think me disrespectful, sir. But I can't be sacked from the school when I've done nothing to deserve it. There was a time before, sir, when a rascal got up a scheme against me, and I was nearly sacked. You admitted that I was wronged that time. Cannot you believe the same now?"

"I cannot! The case is entirely different. You will leave Greyfriars in the morning, and if you should have the utter folly to resist, you will be taken away by force."

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

"Somebody will get hurt, then," he said.

Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"Leave my study!" he thundered. "Take him away, Mr. Quelch!"

"Certainly, sir! I have never heard of such unpardonable insolence," said the Remove-master, with a glare at Bob Cherry. "Go, you young scoundrel—go!"

Bob Cherry left the study.

A crowd of fellows were waiting in the hall for him as he came down the passage.

A loud hiss greeted him.

"You rotter!"

"You cad!"

"Smithy's been taken to bed!"

"You've damaged him!"

"Rotter!"

And there was a chorus of groans and hisses.

Bob Cherry faced the hostile crowd coolly.

"You're a set of silly asses!" he said contemptuously. "Smithy has taken you all in! He's no more ill than I am! He's lying."

"Faith, and it's thrue that he's an awful loyer!" said Micky Desmond thoughtfully.

"You ought to have let him alone, Bob," said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "I believe he's only humbugging myself; but the look of the thing——"

"He taunted me into it," said Bob.

"That would be his little game, if he's shamming," said Russell doubtfully. "But you should have had too much sense to lay hands on him."

"I know that, now," said Bob bitterly. "I walked into the trap, like a giddy fly into the spider's web!"

"And now you're going—eh?" said Snoop.

"No," said Bob calmly, "I'm not going."

"Not sacked?"

"Yes; I'm sacked."

"Well, I suppose you're going, if you're sacked," said Snoop.

Bob Cherry's lip curled.

"That's just where you make a mistake, Snoopy," he said. "I'm sacked; but I'm not going"

"But——"

"Oh, rats!"

And Bob Cherry walked away, leaving the juniors in a buzz. He returned to No. 13 Study, with a gloomy brow. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed him there. The dusky face of the nabob was very disconsolate.

"All up now, Inky," said Bob Cherry, forcing a smile.

"The upfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum," said the nabob dismally.

"Sacked!" said Bob. "Me! Sacked, by gum!"

"And after the sackfulness, there is the go-fulness!" groaned the nabob. "The last of the esteemed Co!"

"But I'm not going, Inky."

"My esteemed chum——"

"You heard me say so!"

"But when my esteemed chum is sacked——"

"Do you remember the time the Head was away, and we had a rotten master," said Bob Cherry—"you know what we did?"

The nabob nodded.

"My esteemed friend refers to the honourable barring-out?"

"Exactly. We barred the bounder out, didn't we?"

"Yes; but——"

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "that's what I'm going to do."

The nabob opened his eyes wide.

"But the barring-out requires many esteemed persons," he murmured. "It is impossible for you to bar out the school, my dear chum."

"I'm going to, impossible or not," said Bob Cherry grimly. "Do you think I'm going to wait till morning, and then be chucked out?"

"I fear that the chuckfulness will be terrific!"

"Well, it won't happen! I'm going to have a giddy barring-out, all on my lonesome," said Bob Cherry.

The Nabob of Bhanipur opened his eyes wide.

"My esteemed chum——" he murmured.

"I mean it, Inky."

"But how——"

"I've got till to-morrow morning," said Bob Cherry determinedly. "To-morrow morning they'll find me barred in, in the old tower, and the school barred out."

"Alonefully?"

"Yes."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his head.

"Not aloneful, my worthy chum. I shall stand by you stickfully."

"No, you won't, Inky! You can help me get ready, if you like, but you're not going to stand by me when I stand up against the school. I'm not going to drag you into my troubles."

"The dragfulness will not be needed," said the Indian junior quietly. "The stickfulness of my worthy self to my esteemed chum will be ludicrously terrific."

"Can't be did!"

"I mean also the business," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I shall not part from you, my august chum!"

"Look here, Inky——"

"I will not look, and likewisefully shall not listen. If my worthy chum bars out the school, I bar out the school also."

"Inky, old man——"

"It is settled!" said the nabob.

"I sha'n't let you, you ass!"

"I shall not wait for the letfulness."

"I tell you——"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

And Bob Cherry gave it up.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Great Preparations.

BOB CHERRY appeared in the common-room that evening as usual.

The fellows looked at him very curiously.

Most of them were sorry for him. Even the Bounder's own friends knew how utterly unreliable his word was, and doubted whether he was not, as Bob Cherry declared, malingering. It was easier for the Bounder to deceive the masters than to deceive the fellows he mixed with, and worked and played with, day by day.

Some of the Remove believed that Bob Cherry had attacked a sick fellow, who could not defend himself, and condemned him without stint. Others guessed that he had fallen into a trap of the cunning Bounder. But, whatever the truth was, one fact stood out clearly enough—that Bob Cherry was expelled, and would have to go.

And knowing that, even his enemies refrained from chipping him. Snoop, the sneak of the Remove, ventured upon his unpleasant snigger, as Bob Cherry came into the common-room, and unexpectedly found Bolsover major's heavy hand upon him.

"Shut up, you cad!" said Percy Bolsover roughly.

Snoop stared at him angrily.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Cherry's sacked ——"

"Yes; and now you can let him alone."

"You—you rotter!" exclaimed Snoop, simply glaring at the bully of the Remove. "You've been as much down on him as anybody."

Bolsover major nodded.

"I know that; I'm up against them all. But there's such a thing as not hitting a fellow when he's down."

"Oh, rot!" said Snoop.

"Rot or not, look out for squalls if you don't shut up," said Bolsover major.

And Snoop thought it best to shut up.

Tom Brown and Micky Desmond, Russell and Morgan and Ogilvy, and a few more of the fellows, were sympathetic towards Bob. Little Banthorpe, whom Bob had protected from many a bullying, was almost in tears. And the usual grin had faded from the face of Wun Lung, the Chinese junior.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, joined Bob Cherry, as he sat staring gloomily into the fire. Bob looked at him, as the schoolboy earl tapped him gently upon the shoulder with a slim, white finger.

"Hallo, hallo hallo!" he said.

"Begad, old man, this is rotten, you know," said Mauleverer.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Bob, with a grunt.

"You're going to-morrow morning—what?"

"No!"

"I hear you're sacked, don't you know!"

"That's so."

"But you're not going?"

"No!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer in astonishment.

He could say no more, he was too amazed.

Bob Cherry wrote four letters that evening. One was to Harry Wharton, the late captain of the Remove; another to Frank Nugent, the first of the famous Co. to leave the old school; one to Johnny Bull; and the fourth to Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, who had been Bob Cherry's best chum at Greyfriars.

Bob posted the letters in the school letter-box, and then strolled into the little tuck-shop in the corner of the Close with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mrs. Mimble looked at him sympathetically.

"I hear you're going, Master Cherry," she said. "I'm so sorry."

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry. "I'm not going."

"Master Hazeldene was saying that you are expelled."

"That's so."

"Then you must go," said the good dame, opening her eyes.

"Well, I'm not," said Bob.

"Master Cherry!"

"I'm going to hang on, and give the Head a chance to come round and find Smithy out," Bob Cherry explained. "But never mind that now. I want some tuck."

"Yes, Master Cherry."

Bob Cherry laid five golden sovereigns on the counter.

"That much!" he said.

"Five pounds!" gasped Mrs. Mimble.

"Exactly."

And Bob Cherry rattled off a list.

Mrs. Mimble served him in a dazed frame of mind. Bob Cherry had seldom expended more than two or three shillings at a time in the little tuck-shop before. It was a shipping order this time.

Bob Cherry had raised the money by means of loans from Lord Mauleverer, Hurree Singh, and little Wung Lung, three of the richest fellows at Greyfriars. They would have lent him twice as much if he had asked for it.

Mrs. Mimble handed out the articles that Bob Cherry named, and Bob and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh crammed them into a couple of cricket-bags.

Then they left the tuck-shop.

"Where nowfully, my esteemed chum?" asked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"We'll take them into the tower."

"Good!"

The juniors skirted the School House in the deep December dusk. The old tower of Greyfriars was a ruin, but the lower part of it stood firm and sound; the walls, several feet thick, were of huge blocks of stone, and the old oaken door was strong and intact. A spiral stair led upwards into roofless chambers and shattered walls. On the ground-floor were two narrow windows. Bob Cherry opened the creaking old door and entered, followed by the nabob.

The two bags were deposited in a shadowy corner.

"That's done!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully as they quitted the tower.

"We shall want something to drink, my worthy chum, as well as for the eatfulness," murmured the nabob.

"Well, there's plenty of ginger-pop in that little lot," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "But we shall have to have water. Water-cans will do to keep it in, and we can get them out of the woodshed and fill them at the fountain to-night."

"Right!"

"There will be a surprise for the giddy school to-morrow morning," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

And the nabob grinned, and remarked that the surprisefulness would be terrific.

The two juniors returned to the School House and strolled into the common-room. Coker of the Fifth was there, with Potter and Greene, and he was evidently waiting for Bob Cherry.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, here I am," said Bob.

"I hear you are not going to go," said Coker severely.

"I'm not going," said Bob calmly. "Going to go isn't good English, Coker."

There was a chuckle, and Coker glared. He wagged his forefinger at Bob Cherry disapprovingly.

"Kids must obey orders," he said.

"Likewise goats, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry. "Shut up! That's an order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you young sweep——"

"Can't!"

"What!"

"Not unless you get behind a mask, or a fire-screen, or

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"Look 'ere!" roared Tozer. "Yes, I've got my eye on you, Tozey," said Bob Cherry. "If you want to start in business as a window climber, you should leave the cold mutton alone. You should refuse to listen to the voice of the charmer, and tell cooky you won't touch the rabbit pie. Shun the fatal kitchen!" A queer sound came from Mr. Quelch. Tozer turned round sharply. "This 'ain't a larfin' matter, sir!" he said. *(See chap. 10.)*

something," said Bob Cherry. "With a face like that, Coker, you shouldn't ask me to look. It's cruel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," roared Coker. "I don't want any of your cheek!"

"Well, I don't want any of yours, if you come to that," said Bob Cherry. "But I'm getting it. Exchange no robbery, you know."

"I'll jolly well——"

"Bedtime, you kids," said Wingate of the Sixth, putting his head in at the door.

"Right-ho, Wingate!" said Bob Cherry.

The captain of Greyfriars looked at him sternly, but did not reply. The Remove went up to bed, and Bob Cherry went with them, looking not at all like a fellow who was under sentence of expulsion.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Camping-Out.

WINGATE extinguished the light in the Remove dormitory, and the juniors were left to slumber.

There was the usual buzz of talk, and the talk mostly ran upon the subject of the expulsion of Bob Cherry, and his declaration that he did not intend to go.

"It's all gas!" Bolsover major opined. "He'll climb down in the morning, and go!"

"I guess so," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "The prefects will sling him out on his neck if he doesn't, I reckon."

"Hear, hear!" said Snoop.

"How are you feeling now, Smithy?" asked Bulstrode.

"Pretty rotten," said the Bounder in a feeble voice.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Bob Cherry says you're malingering, Smithy," said Hazeldene.

"Bob Cherry can say what he likes while I'm in this state," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Bob Cherry. "Half the fellows know you're shamming, Smithy."

"I shall not argue with you," said the Bounder loftily.

"Oh, rats!"

And Bob Cherry did not speak again.

The Nabob of Bhanipur remained equally silent, but neither of the chums of the Remove went to sleep.

They intended to be busy that night.

One by one the Removites dropped off to sleep, until, when eleven o'clock rang out through the night, only Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remained awake in the Remove dormitory.

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Bob Cherry sat up in bed as the last stroke of eleven died away.

"You awake, Inky?" he murmured.

There was the sound of a movement.

"Yes, my esteemed chum!" came back the nabob's whisper.

"Good! Are you game?"

"The gamefulness is terrific."

"Then up you get!"

Bob Cherry slipped quietly out of bed. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed his example. His dusky face was quite invisible in the darkness of the dormitory, but his eyes were gleaming.

"Inky," old man, murmured Bob Cherry, as he laced his boots. "You're doing a fat-headed thing in sticking to me like this."

"My worthy chum——"

"You'll get sacked as well!"

"I do not wish to remain if my esteemed chum is sacked."

"But what about your people?"

"I am the head of my family!" said the nabob proudly. "I am the Prince of Bhanipur! The esteemed India Office has the guardianship of my honourable self, and I do not care an august sixpence what they think about it."

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

"If you've made up your mind, Inky, and you're quite sure——"

"The surefulness is great."

"All right, then."

The two juniors finished dressing in the dark. There was a sound of steady breathing from the other beds, and a deep, unmusical snore from Bunter's. The Remove were fast asleep, with the exceptions of the expelled junior and his chum.

"The bedclothes, Inky," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Good!"

The two juniors rolled up their bedclothes into bundles, with the pillows and bolsters in them. Bob Cherry had placed a rope under his mattress in readiness, and the two bundles were tied up tightly, to render them easy for carrying.

Then the two juniors quitted the dormitory.

The passage was in deep darkness.

Downstairs, there was a light in the Head's study, and some of the masters were still up; but the boys' quarters were dark and silent.

"This way!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Follow your giddy leader."

He led the way to the back of the house into a box-room, where the window opened over an outhouse.

Bob Cherry deposited his bundle on the floor, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed his example.

"Now to get the rest of the things," said Bob.

"Right-ho!"

They crept back to the dormitory, and this time the mattresses were taken, and a couple of overcoats and a rug or two. The articles were deposited in the box-room, and then the chums descended to the Remove passage to their study.

A couple of bags were filled with articles they required, and carried to the box-room. Then Bob Cherry closed the box-room door, and opened the window.

There was a grey mist outside, that had rolled up from the sea. Dimly through the mist the stars were twinkling.

The School House was very silent. Bob Cherry climbed cautiously through the window, and stepped upon the roof of the outhouse.

"Shove the things out, Inky."

"The shovefulness is——"

"Terrific!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Buck up!"

The nabob passed the bags and bundles through the window.

Bob Cherry took them from his hands, and laid them upon the roof. Then the nabob climbed out, and the window was softly closed.

"You first, Inky!"

"Right-ho, my esteemed chum!"

The nabob dropped lightly to the ground. Bob Cherry tossed down the bundles one after another, and the nabob caught them, and lowered them to the ground. Then Bob Cherry dropped from the outhouse and joined him.

"So far, so good!" murmured Bob.

"The goodness is great!"

"Inky, old man," said Bob, in a low and earnest tone, "I wish you'd go back."

"Nonsense, my worthy chum!"

"You've no reason to get into trouble for me, Inky, old man."

"Rats!"

"Come on, then, you obstinate bounder!"

And the nabob chuckled, and picked up his bag. In a few minutes they were in the old tower. Bob Cherry fumbled in his pockets, and produced a matchbox.

Scratch!

A light glimmered out in the dimness. It showed the juniors to one another, their eyes gleaming with excitement.

"Here we are!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Yes, ratherfully!"

"Get in the other bundles, Inky, while I get the lamp going!"

The nabob nodded, and hurried out.

Bob Cherry took a lamp from his bag, filled it from the oilcan by candle-light, and trimmed the wick. He lighted it, and strange lights and shadows danced in the old room.

The lowest apartment of the ruined tower was square in form, with the stone stair at the back leading upwards.

Bob Cherry set the lamp upon an old stone seat, and gazed round with considerable satisfaction. A more secure fortress for the barring-out it would have been difficult to discover within the walls of Greyfriars.

On the famous occasion when the Greyfriars juniors had barred their master out, the gymnasium had been used, but that had required a large garrison. For a garrison of two the old tower was excellent. There were only two windows to guard, and both of them could be closed with strong shutters if needed. There were iron bars to the door.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned with the bundles, and tossed them upon the floor.

"Now for the giddy water supply, Inky!"

"Right-ho!"

With a bicycle lantern in his hands, Bob Cherry led the way. The woodshed, where Gosling kept his belongings, was closed, but not locked. The water-cans were easy to find, and they were washed out at the fountain in the Close, and filled with water, and conveyed safely into the tower.

"I think we can close up now," Bob Cherry remarked.

Midnight tolled out from the clock-tower.

"'Tis now the giddy witching hour of night, when churchyards yawn!" said Bob Cherry dramatically.

"The yawnfulness of my esteemed self is also terrific!" remarked the nabob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry closed the massive oaken door. The iron bars were dropped into their sockets. From among the supplies the juniors had placed in readiness in the old tower, Bob Cherry drew a tin pail, with holes knocked in the sides. He lighted sticks in it, and piled on coal from a sack, and there was soon a cheerful fire burning. It diffused light and heat through the chilly old room.

"That's better, Inky!"

"Yes, my esteemed friend."

Meanwhile, the nabob had unpacked the bedclothes. With rugs and coats and bedclothes the juniors soon made themselves comfortable, lying with their feet to the fire in the tin pail.

"This is as good as the dorm!" said Bob Cherry drowsily.

"The goodfulness is terrific!"

"Comfy, Inky?"

"Quite comfy, my worthy chum."

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!" mumbled the nabob.

Silence.

"You asleep, Inky?"

Snore!

Bob Cherry chuckled sleepily, and he was soon fast asleep, too.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Barred Out.

CLANG, clang, clang!

The rising-bell rang out through the frosty December air.

In the Remove dormitory Tom Brown, of Taranaki, sat up and yawned.

"Bother that rising-bell!" he said. "I believe Gosling gets up earlier and earlier every morning! Groo! It's cold!"

"Cold as New Zealand mutton!" mumbled Bulstrode.

"Some of the fellows are up already," said Hazeldene, with a glance towards the two empty beds. "My hat! They've taken their bedclothes with them, too!"

"Bob Cherry—and Inky!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "They're gone!"

"Gone!"

"Great Scott!"

"Bedclothes and all!" exclaimed Bolsover major, in amazement. "Where on earth——"

"Bob Cherry's bolted, to save being kicked out!" said Snoop.

"But what about Inky?"

"Gone with him, perhaps," said Newland.

"It's a lark," said Russell, shaking his head.

"I shouldn't think Bob Cherry felt much like larking this morning," said Vernon-Smith, with a sneering smile.

The juniors tumbled out of bed as the rising-bell ceased to clang. They dressed themselves in a state of amazement. Wingate, of the Sixth, met the Remove as they came down.

"Cherry is wanted," he said. "Where is he? He's to be ready to start immediately after brekker."

"He isn't here," said Tom Brown.

"Hasn't he come down yet?"

"He was gone before we were up!" said the New Zealand junior.

Wingate started.

"Gone! Where?"

"I don't know. Inky's with him, wherever he is. They've gone, and taken their bedclothes with them!" said Tom Brown.

Wingate stared blankly at the New Zealand junior.

"Gone, and taken their bedclothes with them!" he repeated. "Are you joking, Brown?"

"Honest Injun!"

Wingate ran up to the Remove dormitory. A glance into the room showed him that the New Zealand junior's statement was correct. Wingate came down, looking very grave, and looked for Mr. Quelch. Both of them went to the Head's house at once.

The Remove hurried out into the Close, to look for Bob Cherry. Bob's declaration that he did not intend to leave Greyfriars was fresh in their minds. That Bob was still about the school they felt certain; and Bolsover major suggested that he was in hiding.

The juniors searched in all likely and unlikely places for him.

Wingate came out into the Close a little later, and called to the juniors.

"Have you seen anything of Cherry"

"Can't find him," said Tom Brown.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter came puffing up. "I say, you fellows——"

"Have you seen Cherry?" demanded Wingate.

"No. But——"

"Well, look for him, all of you!" said Wingate, frowning.

"I know where he is!" yelled Bunter, as the captain of Greyfriars was turning away.

Wingate swung back.

"Where is he, Bunter?"

"The door of the old tower's fastened, and there's somebody talking inside!" said Billy Bunter excitedly. "They're there!"

"In the ruined tower?"

"Yes. I heard Cherry's voice. I knocked at the door, and they didn't answer. But I know jolly well they're there!"

Wingate strode away to the old tower, with a crowd of excited juniors at his heels. He found the old oaken door closed, and it did not budge as he dragged at the handle. He knocked on the door with his knuckles. The sound of a chuckle was audible from within.

"Are you here, Bob Cherry?" shouted Wingate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"You are here, then?"

Another chuckle.

"Am I here, Inky?" asked the voice of Bob Cherry, sounding a little muffled through the thick oaken door.

"The herefulness is terrific, my worthy chum!"

"Yes, Wingate, I'm here!" came Bob Cherry's voice. "Inky says I'm here, and I think I am myself; but of course I wouldn't make the statement without corroboration. You know you don't believe my statements."

Wingate knocked angrily on the door, while the juniors outside chuckled.

"Open this door at once, Cherry!"

"Eh!"

"Open this door!"

"What?"

"Open this door!" roared Wingate.

"Nice morning, isn't it?"

"Open this door!"

"Rather cold, but one must expect that at this time of the year. Don't you think so?"

"Bob Cherry!"

"You see, it's getting near Christmas now," went on Bob Cherry.

"Will you open this door?"

"But a little exercise will keep you warm, even in this giddy December weather," said Bob Cherry calmly.

"Will you obey me?"

"Either Indian clubs or dumb-bells," continued Bob Cherry. "I should recommend the dumb-bells myself, or a punching-ball. Have you tried a punching-ball, Wingate?"

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

It was a new experience to them to hear a Remove junior "cheeking" the captain of Greyfriars. Wingate could hardly believe his ears. He thumped on the door.

"Bob Cherry, are you going to open the door?"

"Oh, the door!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Will you open it?"

"No, thanks!"

"I order you to open it."

"No orders received in this establishment until open for business," said Bob Cherry. "Opening time will be duly announced."

"Do you mean to defy your head prefect, Cherry?"

"I haven't any prefects," said Bob, in surprise. "I'm sacked from the school. Chaps who are sacked aren't under the orders of the prefects."

"Will you open this door at once?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"Open the door!" bellowed the captain of Greyfriars.

"Wingate, old man, you're like a giddy gramophone with only one record," said Bob Cherry. "Change the record, for goodness' sake, or else ring off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate breathed hard. He realised that Bob Cherry would not open the door, and that he was beginning to look ridiculous. The Remove were enjoying the scene, and fellows of other Forms were crowding round to listen.

"Do you mean that you are going to shut yourself up in there, Cherry, and refuse to come out?" demanded Wingate, calming himself with an effort.

"You've hit it."

"Your Form-master will be sent for——"

"I haven't any Form-master. I'm sacked!"

"I shall speak to the Head!"

"Speak to the Head, and welcome. I haven't any headmaster; I'm sacked. I'm like King Charles. My Head's been cut off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will get yourself into trouble with this foolery, Cherry."

"I'm in trouble already, neck deep," said Bob Cherry. "I don't see how I should improve matters by opening the door. Even the pleasure of your company in a walk to the station isn't a sufficient inducement, Wingate, old man."

"Though the pleasurefulness would be terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wingate clenched his hands hard. He was baffled. The thick oaken door would have required a battering-ram to burst it in. And it was pretty clear by this time that Bob Cherry did not intend to open it.

"I shall have to inform the Head of this, Cherry!" said Wingate.

"Go ahead!"

"What do you mean to do?"

"I mean to stick here," said Bob Cherry grimly. "This is a giddy barring-out."

"What?"

"Getting deaf?" asked Bob Cherry pleasantly. "This is a barring-out. The Head has sacked me because I licked a rotten cad who was pretending to be ill. The Head has made a mistake; but the biggest mistake he made was in thinking that I should go quietly. I'm not going. I told the Head so!"

"You cheeky young rascal!" shouted Wingate.

"Go it!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"You young sweep——"

"Pile it on!"

"For the last time, will you, or will you not, open this door, Bob Cherry?"

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"Is that really for the last time?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes!" shouted Wingate.

"Thank goodness. I was getting fed up with that one."

Wingate breathed hard through his nose, and strode away, with a very red face. There was a chuckle inside the tower. Outside, there was a roar of laughter from the juniors. Such a happening had certainly never occurred before in the history of Greyfriars, and it went right to the hearts of the Remove. That one fellow should have the unparalleled nerve to bar out the school, and defy all Greyfriars, seemed incredible; but it had happened. True, Bob Cherry had little to lose. He was expelled, anyway, and nothing worse than that could happen to him at Greyfriars. But the cool "cheek" of it was astounding, nevertheless, and from that moment Bob Cherry was a hero in the eyes of the Removites. Those who had condemned him, and those who had not, were of the same opinion upon the subject of Bob Cherry's barring-out. As Tom Brown remarked, Bob Cherry took the biscuit, and the whole Form agreed with him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
The Rebels.

NOBODY at Greyfriars seemed to be thinking of breakfast that morning.

Almost the whole school gathered round the ruined tower where the two recalcitrant juniors had entrenched themselves, evidently for a siege.

The whole school buzzed with the news.

The crowd waited in great excitement for the Head to arrive. Wingate had reported the affair to Dr. Locke, and left him to deal with it. The Head was bound to come, and the Greyfriars fellows were intensely interested to know what would happen then. Snoop was of opinion that Bob Cherry would give in as soon as he was ordered by the Head; and, indeed, it was difficult to imagine any junior defying the authority of the reverend Head of Greyfriars. But the fellows who knew Bob Cherry better did not think that his enterprise would end like that of the famous duke who, with ten thousand men, marched up a hill, and then marched down again. Bob Cherry meant business, and the fellows were very keen to hear what would pass when the Head arrived.

"He can't have the cheek to stand out against the Head!" said Coker of the Fifth.

"He will!" said Tom Brown.

"But he can't, you know," said Coker.

"He will, whether he can or not," said the New Zealand junior, with a chuckle. "Just you wait and see!"

"Yaas, begad," said Lord Mauleverer. "He's got nerve enough for anything, you know. Jolly good luck to him, my dear fellows! He's in the right, you know. What?"

There was a sudden shout.

"The Head!"

Then silence.

The reverend form of the Head of Greyfriars was approaching with a stately pace. Dr. Locke's face was very serious and stern. He was utterly taken by surprise by Bob Cherry's resistance to his sentence of expulsion. But he had no doubt whatever that at a command from him, the door of the old tower would be opened, and the culprit would come forth.

The Head arrived before the oaken door, amid a dead silence. He knocked.

From within the tower came a sound of crackling wood, and a smell of cooking bacon. The garrison were evidently preparing their breakfast.

"Cherry!" said the deep voice of the Head.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Robert Cherry!"

"Yes, sir. Wait a moment till I've turned this rasher, and I'll attend to you."

The crowd heard every word, and they gasped. A shade of pink crept into the headmaster's face. He began to realise that his task was not easy.

The Head knocked again.

"Robert Cherry! Do you know who is here?"

"Yes, sir. My late headmaster, I think."

"I am your headmaster, Cherry!"

"Oh, no, sir! You've sacked me, you know. You can't be my headmaster after you've sacked me," said Bob Cherry. "That's not law."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Coker of the Fifth.

"Very well, Cherry," said the Head, after a pause. "As you no longer belong to Greyfriars, I am not your headmaster. But in that case you are trespassing in remaining here, and I order you to leave."

"Not at all, sir. My fees are paid up to the end of the term," said Bob Cherry.

"The fees will be refunded."

"It takes two to make a bargain, sir, and I don't agree to that."

"Cherry, enough of this impertinence."

"Oh, sir, I don't regard you as impertinent at all. I simply think that you are labouring under a misapprehension."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head blankly.

"Have you anything more to say to me, sir?" came Bob Cherry's voice very respectfully. "If not, I will have my brekker. But I am quite at your service, sir, if you wish to continue this conversation?"

"Open this door at once!"

"Impossible, sir."

"Why is it impossible?"

"It's barred, sir."

"Then remove the bars!"

"That's barred, too, sir."

The Head gasped, and the crowd giggled.

"Cherry, do you dare to bandy words with me?" cried Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir."

"What!"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head again. The scene was becoming intolerable, and the Head—the reverend Head—the awe-inspiring ruler of Greyfriars, felt that he was in danger of becoming absurd.

"Cherry, it would be a—a more dignified proceeding on your part to leave the school quietly, as you have been expelled," he said at last.

"I'm sorry I can't agree with you, sir."

"I order you to go!"

"Impossible, sir. When my father was besieged in Ladysmith, sir, the giddy Boers ordered the lot of them to chuck it; but they didn't, sir—not a bit of it. They stuck it out to the finish. I'm following in my father's footsteps, sir."

"This is insolence, Cherry! You have been guilty of wicked conduct——"

"Not at all, sir. That's a mistake of yours."

"What!"

"I shouldn't have touched the Bounder, I mean Smithy, if he'd been ill. He's a rotten cad, but I wouldn't have laid a finger on him if he hadn't been perfectly able to stand up for himself. He's shamming, and spoofing you, sir. Every fellow who knows me, knows that I wouldn't be a brute. The Bounder has taken you in. He lied about Wharton, and he's lied about me. He's not going to score over me as he did over Wharton. Wharton was drummed out of Greyfriars. I'm sticking here."

"You cannot stay here, Cherry."

"I'm going to try, sir."

"If you do not come out peaceably, I shall order the prefects to enter by force and remove you."

"Let 'em all come, sir. Inky and I will try to keep them out."

"Is Hurree Singh with you?"

"Yes, sir; standing by me like a true pal."

"Hurree Singh!"

"Yes, honoured sahib," same the soft voice of the nabob through the door.

"You have no concern in this matter, Hurree Singh. I command you to leave the tower at once."

"The impossiblefulness is terrific, honoured and ludicrous sir. The stickfulness of my treasured self to my esteemed chum is terrific."

"I shall punish you for this insubordination, Hurree Singh."

"Thank you, honoured sir."

"You will be expelled, as well as Cherry, if you throw in your lot with his, Hurree Singh!" exclaimed the Head angrily.

"The facefulness of the esteemed music will be terrific."

"Dear me!" murmured the Head. "This is—is extraordinary. I really hardly know what to do, under the circumstances."

"Will you have a rasher, Inky?" It was Bob Cherry's voice within the tower.

"Thank you, no, my worthy chum. I have an esteemed banana."

"Rashers for me, old man."

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" came Bob Cherry's voice, mumbling a little, probably on account of the rasher of bacon he was negotiating at the same time.

"Do you finally refuse to open this door?"

"I am compelled to do so, sir."

"Then you will be removed from Greyfriars by force, sir."

"Thank you, sir."

The Head walked away. He walked with his usual stately step, but his ears were burning. He joined Mr. Quelch in the School House. The Remove-master looked at him inquiringly.

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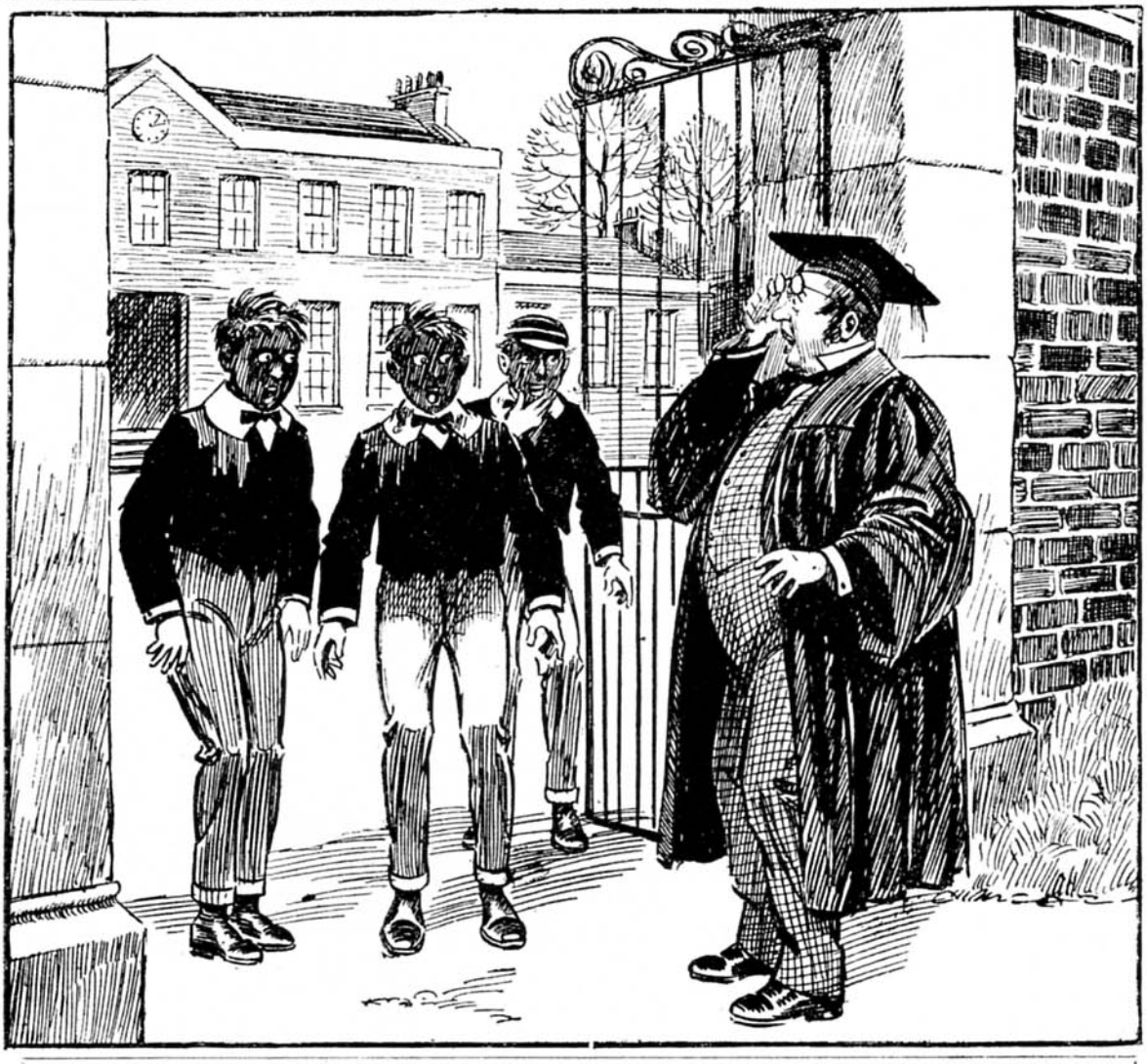

The three tarry juniors stood facing the headmaster of the Grammar School. Dr. Monk halted in astonishment at the strange sight. He pushed his spectacles up to look at them. "Good heavens!" he gasped. "Bless my soul! Where did these three negroes come from?" *(For the above incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "JACK BLAKE ON THE WARPATH," by Martin Clifford, which is contained in this week's issue of "The Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)*

"Surely that wretched boy has not presumed to disobey your orders, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, aghast.

Dr. Locke nodded.

"That is exactly what he has done, Mr. Quelch."

"It is amazing."

"It is amazing, and—and most disconcerting, Mr. Quelch." The Head paused. "Robert Cherry's conduct is outrageous, Mr. Quelch!"

"Most outrageous, sir."

"But——" The Head paused again.

"But——" repeated the Remove-master.

"But it is not the conduct of a boy who is guilty of wrong-doing, Mr. Quelch," said the Head slowly. "Mr. Quelch! Is it possible—barely possible—that a terrible mistake has been made? Is it possible—barely possible—that we have been deceived by Vernon-Smith? Both of us remember the character Smith had when he was first at Greyfriars. Certainly he has shown marked improvement since then. But—Mr. Quelch, please bring Vernon-Smith to my study. Before this matter goes any further, I wish to question him carefully."

"Very well, sir."

And in a few minutes the Bounder, feeling far from comfortable at the turn events were taking, found himself in the presence of the Head of Greyfriars.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder is Questioned.

VERNON-SMITH was quite cool and composed outwardly, whatever his inward feelings might be like, as he faced the Head. Mr. Quelch stood by, his eyes upon the Bounder's face. Perhaps a doubt had crept into his mind also.

"You wished to speak to me, sir?" said Vernon-Smith respectfully. There was a feeble tone in his voice, as of a fellow not yet fully recovered from a trying illness.

"Yes, Vernon-Smith," said the Head, his eyes upon the Bounder's face. "I understand that you were attacked in your study yesterday by Robert Cherry, assaulted brutally when you were too ill to defend yourself."

"Yes, sir."

"It is a fact that you were ill—you were not malingering?"

"Excuse me, sir. That question is an insult," said Vernon-Smith. "I am being regularly attended by a medical man. Surely his word should be sufficient."

"You are right, Smith. Quite right," said the Head. "Yet—another matter." He broke off. "Last week Harry Wharton was expelled from Greyfriars for a savage attack upon you. You were beaten into insensibility with a bludgeon."

A Grand, Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday.

"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"Yes, sir. I have been ill ever since."

"Wharton's account was that he left you perfectly conscious, after a severe fight, and that your more serious injuries must have been inflicted upon you by some other person."

"I know it, sir."

"You stated that this was false."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, Smith, I want you to be very careful. Since what happened last week, I have discovered that you have a personal enemy, who attacked you in a violent manner once in this school."

The Bounder paled a little.

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes. I have learned that a man—a foreigner——"

"A South American," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, a South American," resumed the Head. "This man visited you here at Greyfriars, and from what he said in public, it seems that he was indignant, and fancied himself injured, over some business transaction with your father. He saw you in your study, and attacked you, and the boys who came to your aid found you on the floor, with this man attacking you in the most savage manner."

"That is correct, sir."

"Did this man leave the neighbourhood immediately?"

"I think so, sir."

"You are not sure?"

"I am not sure, sir, of course. But I should imagine he did, because I told him I would give him in charge of the police if he troubled me again. I told him that when he spoke to me the next day at the school gates, sir; Bolsover major was with me. I have not seen the man since."

"What I am trying to fathom is this, Smith. After Wharton left you, may not this man—this South American—have found you in the lane, and attacked you again? You may have fainted when Wharton left you, and not seen the man."

"It is not likely, sir."

"As he had attacked you in a savage manner once, is it not probable that he may have come upon you, and repeated his action?"

"I hardly think so, sir. Wharton left me senseless."

"Do you distinctly state that Wharton used a weapon—a bludgeon—in attacking you?"

The Bounder set his lips for a moment.

"Yes, sir," he said, very clearly and distinctly.

The Head sighed.

"Very well, Smith. That is what I wished to know. You may go."

The Bounder quitted the study.

Dr. Locke exchanged glances with Mr. Quelch. Both the gentlemen were looking very thoughtful.

"There is no reason for doubting Vernon-Smith's statement, Mr. Quelch?" said the Head, after quite a long pause.

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"I confess that I see none, sir."

"I did not precisely doubt it," the Head said slowly. "But Cherry is so persistent in his statement, that—that, in short, I felt that I had better question Vernon-Smith. But I must say that he has answered in the most satisfactory manner."

"And about Robert Cherry's present conduct, sir——"

Dr. Locke knitted his brows.

"The position is most ridiculous," he said. "I am loth to have so absurd a scene as would be caused by forcing an entrance into the tower. I think the matter can be left for the morning, and by dinner-time the two foolish boys will probably be hungry, and will come out of their own accord."

"I hope so, sir."

The Remove went into their Form-room that morning in a state of suppressed excitement. Two places were empty in the Form-room. Never had the juniors waited so eagerly for the hour of dismissal. Whether Bob and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would come out of the old tower, or whether they would stand a siege there, was a matter of intense interest to the Remove. And the stand taken by Bob Cherry was having an effect upon the fellows that was not at all pleasing to the Bounder. It was an extraordinary proceeding, but the fellows could not help feeling that it was not a proceeding of a fellow who was in the wrong. The old distrust they had always felt towards the Bounder revived now. His many deceptions were remembered, and the impression was growing in the Form that he was deliberately malingering, and imposing upon the doctor and the Remove-master.

Glad enough were the Removites when they were dismissed after third lesson. The Form streamed out into the Close, and crowded round to the old tower. The door was still fast, and when Bolsover major rapped on it, the voice of Bob Cherry replied from within.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Still here?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Am I still here, Inky?"

Inky chuckled.

"You are still here, my worthy chum."

"Yes, I am still here, Bolsover," said Bob Cherry. "My statement is corroborated by an eye-witness, and you can rely upon it."

"You ass!" said Bolsover.

"Same to you, and many of 'em!"

Bolsover major joined Vernon-Smith in the Close. The Bounder's face was very dark. All his plans had gone without a hitch, so far; but the unexpected conduct of Bob Cherry seemed likely to spoil the whole scheme, at last. If Bob Cherry had departed quietly, all would have been well; but now the whole school was in a furore, and the longer the trouble lasted, the more likely the truth was to come to light.

"Cherry's still there, Smithy," said Bolsover major.

"I know he is!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"He seems to be going to hold the giddy fort."

"He ought to be chucked out by force!" growled the Bounder.

"Well, I suppose he will be," said Bolsover slowly; "but I say, Smithy——" He hesitated.

"Well?" said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer, "are you coming round to Bob Cherry's side, like all the rest?"

"Not exactly; but—look here, Smithy! Was that a straight yarn you pitched the Head about Wharton?"

The Bounder compressed his lips.

"Yes," he said. "Don't you believe it?"

"It was so unlike him——"

"So you are standing up for him now?"

"N-no," hesitated Bolsover. "But—but if you made a charge like that against a fellow, and it wasn't true, Smithy, it—it would be a bit too thick, you know. I've been backing you up against No. 1 Study, but I wouldn't have a hand in any business of that sort. It's too utterly rotten."

"Oh, rats! He's gone, at all events."

"Some of the fellows think it was that foreign chap you quarrelled with in your study, who lammed you the other night in the lane," said Bolsover.

"Let them prove it, then."

"Was it that man, Diaz, Smithy?"

"I've said it was Wharton."

"Yes, but—but—well, I suppose it's no business of mine."

"Has that only just occurred to you?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

Bolsover major bit his lip, and walked away without speaking again. The Bounder sent a savage look after him. Bolsover had been one of his steadiest backers, and it was only too plain that Bolsover suspected him now, and was falling away from his allegiance. A doubt crossed the Bounder's mind, for the first time, whether it would not have been better to play the game, after all. But it was too late to think of that now. He could only go on as he had begun, and trust to cunning and good luck for success.

The juniors went in to dinner in a buzz of excitement. Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were still holding the fort in the ruined tower. And all Greyfriars wondered how it would end.

——

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Admittance.

"WE'RE the giddy victors, so far!" said Bob Cherry, as he sat upon a box, and toasted his toes at the fire in the tin pail. "Hurray for us!"

"The hurrayfulness is terrific!" grinned the nabob.

The besieged juniors had finished their dinner. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dinner was a very frugal one; but Bob Cherry had done full justice to ham and bacon and eggs and sardines and rolls and butter. The old tower was very quiet now, save for the crackle of the fire in the tin pail. The old room looked quite cosy and comfortable, and the fire diffused a pleasant heat through it.

"I wonder what the Head will do!" Bob Cherry remarked.

"The honourable Doctor sahib will keep out of it, I think," said the nabob wisely. "He will lose his esteemed dignity if he is defied by our worthy and ludicrous selves. He will leave the matter to the esteemed prefects, and perhaps send for the august Tozer from the police-station."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I'd like to see the esteemed Tozer on the warpath!" he remarked. "It would take more than a village policeman to get us out of here, Inky."

"Yes, ratherfully."

Knock!

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"Here we are again!" he said cheerfully.

"Robert Cherry!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice outside the oaken door.

"Yes, sir," said Bob cheerfully.

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"Are you still determined to defy authority, and to remain here, Robert Cherry?"

"Excuse me, sir. Unless I am reinstated in the Remove, there is no authority over me here. A chap expelled from school comes under the authority of his parents again, and my people are not here. Therefore I am my own master."

"You are impertinent, Cherry."

"I did not mean to be, sir. I was only explaining the law to you."

Mr. Quelch was heard to gasp.

"I do not desire you to explain the law to me, Robert Cherry. I require you to open this door at once, and come out."

"Impossible, sir."

"You refuse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then force will be used."

"Very well, sir."

"For the last time, Robert Cherry, will you open this door, before I order the prefects to force an entrance?" demanded the Remove-master sternly.

"Better let them sail in, sir."

Mr. Quelch's voice was heard rapping out the next moment.

"Wingate, Courtney, Loder! Please effect an entrance, and fetch those juniors out."

"Very well, sir," said the three prefects together.

"The cry is, still they come, as your respected and august poet, Shakespeare, remarkfully observes," chuckled the nabob.

"All hands to repel boarders!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate's face appeared at the window on the left, Courtney's and Loder's on the right. There was no glass in the windows, but oaken shutters within. The shutters were open to admit light. The windows were large enough for a senior to enter, but not easily. Bob Cherry jammed a poker into the fire.

Wingate put his hands in at the window, which was on a level with his face, and began to draw himself in.

Bob Cherry closed the shutter, and rattled the bar into place.

"That puts the stopper on Wingate," he remarked.

"Yes, ratherfully."

"Now for the other bounders!"

Loder was climbing in, with Courtney pushing him from behind. The head and shoulders of the bully of the Sixth appeared in the opening, and Bob Cherry jammed the shutter shut so quickly that Loder popped back in a great hurry, and pushed Courtney over. Courtney stumbled and fell, and Loder fell on top of him. There was a terrific roar.

"Yarooh!"

"Oh, you ass!" gasped Courtney. "What did you fall on me for?"

"You silly ass! Why didn't you hold me?"

"You fathead!"

"You chump!"

"Cheese it!" called out Wingate sharply. "This isn't a slanging match. Gosling, go and fetch me an axe."

"Yessir!" said the school porter, who had come to watch the proceedings, like nearly all Greyfriars; and Gosling hurried away.

"Now look out for the giddy fireworks," said Coker of the Fifth.

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Gintlemen, the circus is just going to begin!" said Micky Desmond. "Chief performers, Wingate, Courtney, and Loder. Don't shove for the front seats."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep back there, you juniors!" growled Wingate.

Gosling returned with the axe. Wingate took it in his hands, and there was a terrific crash as he brought it to bear upon the outside of the shutter.

The oak was old, and it cracked and broke under the mighty strokes of the Greyfriars captain.

Crash, crash, crash!

Crack, crack!

"Hear, hear!" shouted Bob Cherry. "That's a boundary, Wingate, old man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The shutter fell in fragments.

Wingate dropped the axe, and put a flushed and angry face into the opening.

"Now I'm coming in," he said.

"I think not, Wingate."

"We'll see if you'll resist your captain," said the Greyfriars skipper, beginning to climb in at the shutterless window.

"You're not my captain," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "I've no captain, you know; I'm sacked from the school."

"The sackfulness is terrific!"

Bob Cherry picked up his pillow, and held it ready. Wingate climbed further in.

"Get back, Wingate!" said Bob persuasively.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Will you get back?"

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"No, you young ass!"

"Then I shall have to hit hard."

"You'd better not."

Swipe!

Bob Cherry hesitated no longer, or Wingate would have been in at the window. He brought the pillow round with a terrific swipe. It caught Wingate on the face and chest, and knocked him out of the window like a cork out of a bottle.

Bump!

The captain of Greyfriars descended heavily upon the ground.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" sighed Temple of the Fourth, who was a great light of the Fourth Form Dramatic Society.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a red-hot poker here," said Bob Cherry from the window. "I'm ready for any number. Let 'em all come!"

"The let-'em-all-comefulness is terrific!" ejaculated the nabob, brandishing a bolster. "I am quite ready for the esteemed and disgusting enemy."

Loder came clambering in. The bully of the Sixth was eager to show that he could succeed where the captain of Greyfriars had failed. Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully at the sight of Gerald Loder. He had felt some compunction about swiping Wingate, who was a popular fellow with all Greyfriars. But it was a distinct pleasure to swipe Loder, the Sixth-Form bully.

"Where will have have it, Loder?" asked Bob Cherry.

Loder snarled.

"Don't you dare to touch me, you young scoundrel!"

"In the eye or on the nose?" asked Bob Cherry politely. "I'm willing to oblige in any small details, so long as you get the swipe."

Loder did not reply, but made a great effort to pull himself in at the narrow window.

Swipe!

"Yarooh!"

It needed only one swipe. Loder rolled from the window, and bumped upon the ground, and lay there groaning.

There was a roar from the crowd.

"Well hit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only aunt!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is a kid's game, for great fighting men like us, my inky pal. Only I hope Quelchy won't put his old napper in. It will be rather thick having to swipe a giddy Form-master; though, of course, he isn't my Form-master now, as I'm sacked!"

"The noble dignity of the esteemed teacher sahib is too great," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head.

"Yes, I think he'll keep clear."

Mr. Quelch was indeed far too dignified a personage to dream of clambering in at the narrow window to come to close quarters with the juniors. And it was really very fortunate for him, under the circumstances, that he was too dignified a personage for such proceedings. For if he had put his respected head in at the window, his respected head would certainly have received a terrific swipe from Bob Cherry's pillow.

Outside the old stone tower, the crowd of fellows grinned and chuckled, and the prefects looked flushed and dusty and furious. They looked very doubtfully at Mr. Quelch, and Mr. Quelch looked very doubtfully at them.

"Shall we try again, sir?" asked Wingate.

The Remove-master shook his head.

"It appears impossible, Wingate, if those young rascals are bent upon resistance. I think they had better be left alone for the present. I will speak to them." Mr. Quelch advanced to the window. "Cherry!"

"Adsum!" said Bob Cherry.

"If you are determined to prolong this intolerable scene——"

"Yes, sir."

"The police will be sent for!"

"Tozer, sir!"

"Yes, Cherry. Police-constable Tozer will be sent for from Friardale!" said the Remove-master impressively.

"Very well, sir. Let him come—and Toze!"

"What!"

"I don't know if that's a regular verb, sir," said Bob Cherry—"I toze, thou tozest, he tozes. Let him toze!"

Mr. Quelch murmured something under his breath, and Bob retired. Bob Cherry's barring-out was a success, so far; the garrison of two remained victorious in their citadel. And through the afternoon Greyfriars hummed and buzzed over it.

"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"
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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Majesty of the Law.

BOB CHERRY looked from the shutterless window, from which he could obtain a view of part of the Close and the school buildings. It was a sharp, frosty afternoon, and the blazing fire in the tin pail was very welcome to the garrison of the old tower. In the Form-rooms over in the School House, afternoon lessons were proceeding as usual—or, rather, they were proceeding not as usual, for the excitement in the old school did not conduce to study.

The fellows were brimming over with excitement over Bob Cherry's barring-out, and there were few fellows in the junior Forms who did not wish him luck. Even the seniors, though they affected to look grave and solemn about it, laughed among themselves over the terrific "cheek" of the expelled junior. Bob Cherry had become the hero of Greyfriars at a bound, and quite unexpectedly.

Indeed, some of the more enthusiastic fags were inclined to offer their services to Bob Cherry as garrison, and take an active hand in the proceedings. Nugent minor of the Second, and Paget and Tubb, considered it very seriously indeed. Billy Bunter of the Remove turned it over in his mind, having made the discovery that the garrison of the old tower had laid in a large stock of provisions. But the Owl of the Remove realised that they were not likely to let the biggest eater in Greyfriars into the tower to diminish their supply.

During afternoon lessons a good many fellows managed to obtain surreptitious peeps from the Form-room windows, to see whether anything was going on. And later in the afternoon the Remove were left in charge of a prefect, while Mr. Quelch went out, and then the excitement of the Remove rose to almost fever-heat. They knew that there was going to be a fresh attack upon the barrers-out, and they would have given whole terms of pocket-money to witness it. The unhappy prefect in charge of them did not find his task an easy one.

Mr. Quelch strode into the Close, and encountered Police-constable Tozer from Friardale. The village policeman had been sent for, and he had arrived. But Mr. Tozer was wearing a very doubtful look as he saluted Mr. Quelch.

"I 'ad your note, sir," he said, "and I come."

"Thank you, Mr. Tozer," said Mr. Quelch affably. "Two foolish boys have shut themselves up in the old tower, and refuse to come out. It is most awkward, but I feel sure you will be able to help us."

"H'm!" said Mr. Tozer.

"I will show you the way——"

"This 'ere ain't my looty, sir," said Mr. Tozer. "I can't remove young gents by violence, especially if so be they've locked the door agin me."

"I am sure that the sight of an officer's uniform, Mr. Tozer, will terrify them into submission," said Mr. Quelch diplomatically.

Mr. Tozer swelled visibly.

"Which I 'ope so, sir," he said. "But, as I says——"

"Dr. Locke wishes to see you afterwards," added Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Tozer knew what that meant. And, having settled in his somewhat slow mind that it could not very well be less than half-a-sovereign, he nodded his head ponderously.

"Only too pleased to do anything I can, sir," he said. "The lor is the lor, but a officer can stretch a point to oblige a generous gentleman like Dr. Locke, sir."

"Exactly. Follow me."

"Lead hon, sir!" said Mr. Tozer.

And Mr. Tozer followed with his ponderous footsteps in the wake of the Remove-master, as Mr. Quelch led him to the scene of action. Bob Cherry, looking out of the unshuttered window, recognised Mr. Tozer, and nodded affably. A short time before Bob Cherry had had the pleasure of pinning upon Mr. Tozer's back a placard, borrowed from a shop-front, bearing the legend, "In this style, one guinea!" And the village policeman had paraded Friardale with that placard on his back. The Removites had regarded it as a first-rate joke, but it had not struck Mr. Tozer in that light. Hence relations had been very strained since.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Tozer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry affably. "Have they sent for you?"

"They 'ave!" said Mr. Tozer impressively.

"Where did they find you?" asked Bob Cherry, with interest. "Did they drag you out of the Cross Keys by your ears, or did they dig you up at the Peal o' Bells?"

Mr. Tozer turned purple.

"I'm goin' to fetch you houter that!" he said.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"You can't come in here, Tozey."

"Come hout!"

"Go and heat coke!" replied Bob Cherry. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chuckled softly.

"If you don't come hout I shall come hin!" said Mr. Tozer.

"But you can't get hin," said Bob innocently. "Even if the door were opened, it wouldn't be wide enough for you."

Mr. Tozer nearly choked.

"I'm comin' hin at the winder," he said.

"You'll have to take in a few yards of your belt, then, Tozey."

"Will you hopen the door?"

"No fear!"

"Then look hout!"

"I'm looking hout, Tozey. Tozey—Tozey, take my tip, and run away and play. Go and sample the ale at the Cross Keys at the back door, and don't shove your purple proboscis in where it isn't wanted!"

Mr. Tozer's proboscis, and indeed the rest of his face, grew more purple than ever at this remark. Mr. Quelch was turning away his face. He was very angry with the juniors, but he found it very hard indeed not to laugh.

Mr. Tozer advanced to the window, and his purple face

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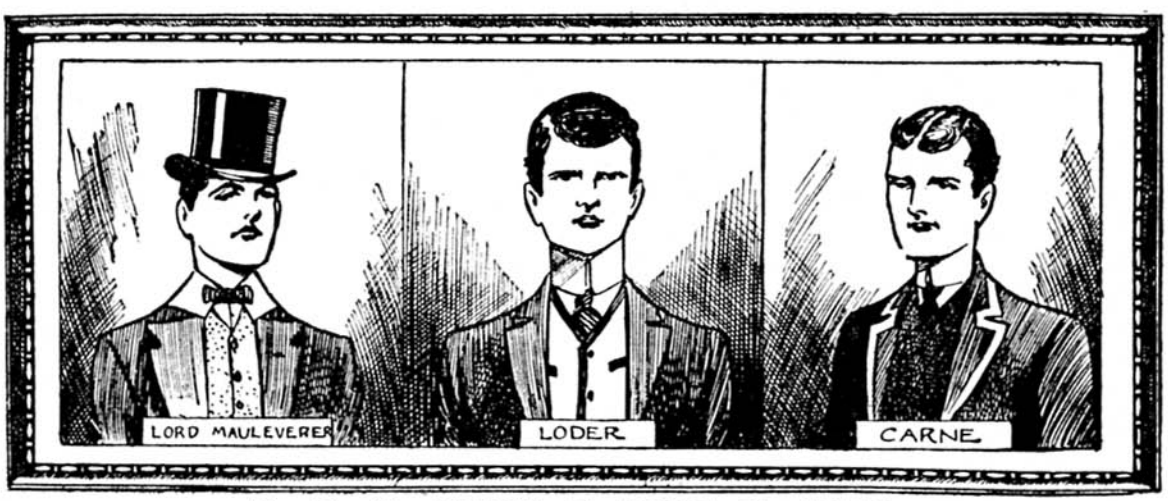

No. 9.—Mr. QUELCH: Dr. LOCKE: Mr. PROUT.

Bob Cherry's eyes danced with glee as he shook hands with his chums over and over again. "Here we are again," said Frank Nugent, with great satisfaction. "Hurray!" (*See chapter* 13.)

looked into it. Bob Cherry drew the red-hot poker from the fire.

Mr. Tozer jumped back as it flourished before his face.

"Don't you touch me with that!" he roared.

"Why not?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"You'd burn me, you young hidiot!"

"Well, that's what I want."

"Hey?"

"That's what I warmed it for," explained Bob Cherry. "Don't be afraid, I'm only going to give you a little dab on the top of your nose, Tozey."

Mr. Tozer seemed on the point of exploding.

"You desperit young raskil!" he stuttered.

"Come on, Tozey!" said Bob Cherry invitingly. "Just one dab, and it will give the purple blossom quite a finish."

"You young villain——"

"Do come!"

"I tell yer——"

"Come, oh, come, my fair one!" sang Bob Cherry.

"I'm coming hin!" said Mr. Tozer, gathering all his courage. "If you touch me with that there poker it's an offence agin the lor."

"It will be an offence against your nose, too, won't it, Tozey? Which will suffer the most, do you think—the law, or your proboscis?"

"Look 'ere——"

"Yes; I've got my eye on you. Tozey—Tozey, if you want a start in business as a window-climber, you should leave the cold mutton alone. You should refuse to listen to the voice of the charmer, and tell cooky that you won't touch the rabbit-pie. Keep out of the areas, Tozer! Shun the fatal kitchen!"

A queer sound came from Mr. Quelch. Mr. Tozer turned round sharply, and found the Remove-master coughing. Mr. Quelch had not started to cough, but he managed to turn his demonstration into a cough just in time.

"This 'ere ain't a larfin' matter, sir!" said Mr. Tozer.

"Certainly not—certainly not!" said Mr. Quelch hastily.

"The majesty of the lor 'ave been insulted, sir!" said Mr. Tozer, "Me, representin' the majesty of the lor, 'ave been cheeked."

"The young rascals shall be punished for it, Mr. Tozer. Pray remove them from the tower without delay."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Tozer. "Rely on me, sir."

And Mr. Tozer hitched at his belt, and turned to his difficult task. He put his fat hands into the deep embrasure of the window, and began to drag himself in. Bob Cherry advanced the red-hot tip of the poker.

"Take that there poker away!" gasped Mr. Tozer.

"Take that there mug away!" retorted Bob Cherry.

"You'll be took in charge for this!"

"You'll be took free of charge," said Bob Cherry. "Inky, old man, don't you think a little dab would improve Mr Tozer's olfactory organ?"

"The improvement of the esteemed organ would be terrific, my worthy chum!"

"I'm comin' hin!" said Mr. Tozer grimly.

And he shoved his portly form into the ample window.

The pillow would not have been of much use in this emergency. Mr. Tozer was too heavy to be moved by such simple means. Bob Cherry flourished the poker, and the heat of it fanned the purple face of the village constable.

"Outside, Tozer!" said Bob Cherry.

"I'm a-coming hin!"

"Your mistake!" said Bob Cherry blandly. "You're a-going hout!"

Tap!

It was the lightest of touches—but it was a touch—and Mr. Tozer uttered a fearful yell, and rolled back from the window. He bumped on the ground, and sat there, roaring, with both hands clasped to his nose.

"Exit Tozer!" said Bob Cherry calmly. "Hear, hear!"

"The hear, hearfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" roared Mr. Tozer. "Yow! Help! Murder! Fire! Perlice! Yah! Oh! My nose is burnt orf! Yar-o-o-op!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, rushing towards him. "Mr. Tozer! Bless my soul! You do not mean to say——"

"Yar-o-o-oh!"

"But your nose——"

"Yah! Oh!"

"Pray let me see it!" said Mr. Quelch, in great distress. "I—I had no idea—I did not think—dear me——"

"Yow! It's burnt orf! Gr-o-oh! Oh, the hagony!" gasped Mr. Tozer.

"Pile on the agony!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Let me see it!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in alarm. "I may be able to assist——"

He jerked the police-constable's fat hands away from his nose. There was the slightest of slight marks on the tip of that prominent feature, and Mr. Quelch uttered an exclamation of annoyance and disgust.

"Why, you are not burnt at all!"

"It's burnt orf!" roared Mr. Tozer ferociously.

"Nonsense!"

"Wot!"

"It has hardly been touched!"

"Ho!" said Mr. Tozer.

He felt over his nose carefully, and was surprised to find that it was still there. He staggered to his feet, and put his helmet straight.

"I've been hassaulted!" he said. "The majesty of the lor, in my person, has been insulted! I declines to 'ave anything more to do with the matter!"

"Oh, do come and have another dab, Tozey!" implored Bob Cherry.

Mr. Tozer snorted, and declined the invitation. He stalked away towards the gates of Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch cast a helpless glance after him, and then walked away to the School House. The second attack had failed, and even the majesty of the law had failed to overcome Bob Cherry's barring-out.

In the old tower the two victorious juniors gave a cheer.

"Licked again! Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

"Hip, pip!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.
The Return of the Expelled.

HARRY WHARTON, late captain of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, stepped from the train at Courtfield Junction. Two juniors who were waiting on the platform rushed across to him, and grasped him by either hand and began to shake them. Wharton's face lighted up at once.

"Johnny Bull! Franky! It does me good to see you again!"

"What-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!" said Frank Nugent.

"Marky hasn't come?" said Harry Wharton.

Nugent shook his head.

"Poor old Mark's at work in a giddy factory now," he said. "He had to go back to work when he left Greyfriars, as he lost the Noble Prize after Smithy's trick with the telegram. Linley can't be on in this scene. But we're here!"

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull. "Bob said in his letter to me that he'd written to you two fellows, and Mark Linley as well——"

"And we were to meet here and come on to school," said Nugent. "Blessed if I could quite believe my eyes when I read old Bob's letter this morning. I fancied the Bounder would get up some scheme for getting him sacked, as he did with us; but that Bob would take the bit in his teeth——"

"And bar out the school!" grinned Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I could quite believe it, either," said Johnny Bull. "But he said he'd do it, and Bob is a fellow of his word. And as he asked us to come and lend a hand——"

"We've come!" said Harry Wharton.

"Exactly!"

"Bob's position is that he's done nothing to be sacked for, and he's not going to be sacked," said Frank Nugent. "Good old Bob! I made up my mind at once that I'd pile in."

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull.

"And here!" said Harry Wharton. "Good old Bob!"

"May have been chucked out by this time, though," said Nugent thoughtfully. "It's a bit strong, one fellow barring out the whole giddy school."

"If he's still holding out, I'll back him up to the finish!" said Wharton.

"What-ho!"

"I suppose you all got the same instructions as I did—to get to Greyfriars after dark, so that we could skip into the old tower without being seen and stopped?"

"Just so!"

"Bob's a giddy general!" said Wharton. "We'll back him up like anything! I got permission at home to spend a few days with an old Greyfriars chum. I thought I'd better not give my uncle too many particulars as to his whereabouts——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now we're here," said Nugent, "it's good to be together again, isn't it, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I suppose it will end in our going out on our necks," Nugent remarked thoughtfully. "But we shall have helped old Bob, and it will be fun while it lasts!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I've brought a bag of grub with me, for a giddy siege!" said Harry.

"Same here! Tommy enough for a week!"

"And some here!" said Johnny Bull. "My aunt packed it for me when I said I was going to spend a few days with you chaps, and we should be camping-out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the three old chums of the Remove, taking their bags in their hands, walked out of the station and took the road to Greyfriars.

The December evening was dark, and the bitter winter wind whistled in the leafless trees on the road. But the hearts of the juniors were light. They had been compelled to leave the old school by the machinations of the Bounder. But their hearts had always been with Greyfriars. To revisit the old place, even for only a few days, and under such extremely peculiar conditions, was a pleasure to them, and it made their hearts bound as they recognised the familiar sights of the road.

Dim through the December dusk the tower of Greyfriars rose into view above the trees, and from the tower came the well-known chime as they approached the school.

"Ten o'clock!" said Harry Wharton.

"I wonder how Bob's got on?"

"We shall soon know. I'll bet a hat he's holding out!"

"Yes, rather!"

They came up to the school gates.

"Not going to ring at the bell for Gosling, I suppose?" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha! No."

"We know the old spot," said Harry Wharton, as they halted by the school wall, under the shadow of a big tree that grew over from within. "Give me a leg up, and then hand up the bags."

"Good egg!"

Wharton clambered to the top of the wall, and the bags were handed up, and dropped over inside. Then Johnny Bull and Nugent climbed. In a few minutes the trio stood within the walls of Greyfriars.

Across the old Close, through the leafless elms, the lights of the School House glimmered in the distance.

They seemed to glimmer a welcome to the three juniors.

"Quiet now!" murmured Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

They stole away in the deep dusk across the Close. There was a glimmer of a lantern in the darkness, and a surprised exclamation met their ears.

"Ho! Nice goings hon, I must say! Hout of the dormitory at this 'ere time of the night! Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"Hallo, Gosling!" said Wharton.

The school porter jumped.

"I know that there voice!" he exclaimed. "Master Wharton!"

"Yes; as large as life!"

"My heye!" said the astounded Gosling. "My heye! You've come back!"

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"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Wharton. "Don't say a word, Gosling, old man!"

Gosling snorted.

"It's my dooty to report this 'ere," he said.

"Gossy, old fellow——"

"Keep your head shut——"

"I'm goin' to report this 'ere to the 'Ead——"

"Won't you keep mum, you silly ass?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Suttingly not," said Gosling, with dignity—"suttingly not, Master Bull! Wot I says is this 'ere—— Yar-o-o-oh!"

Bump!

The three juniors were upon Gosling in a moment. The porter was bumped upon the ground, his lantern kicked out, and his hat jammed over his eyes. Then Harry Wharton and his comrades dashed for the old tower.

Gosling sat up dazedly, and made frantic efforts to extract his head from his hat. The three juniors reached the old tower breathless. From the single unshuttered window a light gleamed out into the night, and a head was framed in the opening.

"Bob!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"We've come!"

"Hurray!"

"The hurrayfulness is terrific!"

"Gosling knows!" gasped Wharton. "He's gone to report us! Open the door, quick; or no, we'll buzz in at the window, in case——"

"Shove in, quick!"

"Take the bags!"

The bags were passed in at the window, and the three juniors followed them in hot haste. In a couple of minutes they were within the old tower, and shaking hands with Bob Cherry as if they would never leave off.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Reunion of the Chums—Shoulder to Shoulder.

BOB CHERRY'S eyes danced with glee as he shook hands with his chums over and over again.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, quite fogetting the dignity of a prince of Bhanipur, executed a war-dance round the fire-pail in his excitement.

"Hurray!"

"The hurrayfulness is——"

"Terrific! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull, clapping the dusky junior on the back. "How are you, my esteemed and ludicrous chum?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fitfulness of my worthy self is terrific——"

"Bravo!"

"Here we are again!" said Frank Nugent, with great satisfaction. "So you've held the giddy fort all day, Robert, my son?"

"We have—we has!" grinned Bob Cherry. "First the prefects, and then Tozer. But here we are, as safe and sound as a crab in a crumpet-shell! Hurray for us!"

"There will be a jolly row soon," said Johnny Bull. "The powers that be will get their respected hair off when Gosling reports that we're here."

"Let 'em! Who cares?"

"Nobody! Hurray!"

And the excited juniors cheered till the old tower rang with their voices, and the echo of it rolled far across the Close, and as far as the School House.

"The fellows are all in bed yonder," grinned Bob Cherry. "We shall have to sleep with one eye open, in case there's a night attack. There are enough of us to hold the fort now. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!"

Lights gleamed in the dark outside.

The juniors crowded round the window.

Mr. Quelch and the Head of Greyfriars were approaching, with Wingate and Gosling, the two latter carrying lanterns.

The Head gazed at the narrow window, crowded with faces inside, in amazement, as Gosling and the captain of Greyfriars held up their lanterns.

Harry Wharton & Co took their caps off respectfully.

"Good-evening, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

"Cold this evening, sir!" ventured Frank Nugent.

"Is that you, Nugent?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you, Bull—and—and you, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"You—you have had the—the unparalleled impertinence to come back to Greyfriars, after being expelled from the school!" exclaimed the Head.

"Yes, sir; thank you!"

"The yesfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Dr. Locke gasped.

"Boys! This—this insolence——"

"Oh, sir!"

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"How dare you return here, when you have been expelled from the school?"

"They came at my invitation, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

The Head looked at him sternly.

"Your invitation, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir; to help me in the barring-out!"

Dr. Locke drew a deep breath.

"Is it possible, Wharton, Bull, Nugent, that you intend to remain here?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will not be allowed to do so."

"We're backing Bob Cherry up, sir, shoulder to shoulder," said Harry Wharton.

"The shoulder to shoulderfulness is terrific, honoured sahib," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"This is—is simply unheard of!" gasped the Head. "I cannot take measures to remove you to-night; but in the morning you will certainly be taken away by force."

And the Head, greatly perturbed, turned away, and walked back to the House, followed by Mr. Quelch. Wingate gave the juniors a grim look.

"You will get yourselves into trouble, you young sweeps," he said.

"We're in it already, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "I say, Wingate, we're just going to have supper. You can come and join us, if you like, on your parole not to take advantage of it."

Wingate burst into a laugh.

"No, thanks!" he said.

"We've got broiled ham," said Bob Cherry temptingly.

"And sosses!" said Johnny Bull.

"And a cold chicken!" said Wharton.

"And jam sponge and dough-nuts," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha! No, I won't come in—till I come in to-morrow to sling you out on your necks," said the captain of Greyfriars. And he departed. Gosling went his way, grumbling and shaking his head, expressing his firm conviction, to space, that all boys ought to be drowned at birth.

Bob Cherry turned back from the window, and grinned cheerfully at his chums.

"Now for supper," he said.

"Hear, hear!"

"By Jove, you look pretty comfy here!" said Harry Wharton, glancing round the apartment of the old tower. "That's a ripping dodge for the fire. Got plenty of coal?"

"Well, there's a big bagful," said Bob Cherry. "When the coal's used up, there are some benches here. And we've got a chopper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've started on one of the benches already—chunks of wood burn well in a pail," said Bob. "Keeps the place nice and comfy. Now, then, Johnny, the frying-pan is in that corner!"

The frying-pan was handed out, and a savoury smell of cooking soon pervaded the apartment. To the three juniors who had met after a long train journey, and were very hungry, it was appetising enough.

Crockery was scarce, and so was cutlery; but, as Bob Cherry remarked, with a cheerfulness it seemed impossible to diminish, one plate would hold enough for two, and fingers were made before forks. The juniors gathered round the fire-can, and ate their supper in a fashion somewhat primitive, but none the less enjoyable on that account.

"Beats a study brew, doesn't it?" said Nugent.

"It do—it does!" said Bob Cherry. "Pass the coffee. I always think coffee's all the better for being made in a milk-can!"

"And the sugar's better for being kept in a jam-jar, I suppose," said Nugent, as he extracted a sticky lump.

"Gives it a flavour!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Wasn't the ham ripping?"

"First chop!"

"And we've got enough grub for a week, putting it all together," said Bob gleefully. "Fancy holding the fort for a week. The other fellows will be simply tearing their hair to join us here and get out of lessons!"

"But how will it end?" said Johnny Bull.

"What's the good of bothering how it will end, when it's hardly begun?" said Bob Cherry. "It shows we're not going to be treated unjustly, and take it lying down. The Famous Five are together once more, and keeping their end up. If we go out on our esteemed necks, as Inky would say, we'll all go together, and we'll leave Greyfriars with something to talk about when we're gone."

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors chatted round the fire cheerily enough, till drowsiness descended upon them, and they rose for bed.

"Bedding's a bit short," said Bob Cherry. "But we've got our clothes, and you chaps have brought your rugs with

you. And we shall keep the fire going. One of us will have to keep awake to keep watch, and he can look after the fire. Who's going to take first watch?"

"Toss up!" said Johnny Bull.

"All serene!"

The selection fell upon Harry Wharton.

"Your kick-off!" said Bob Cherry. "Call me in an hour!"

And Bob Cherry rolled himself in a rug, with his feet to the fire, and was asleep in two minutes.

The other fellows followed his example. Harry Wharton remained awake to watch. But there was no alarm: the silence of the night was unbroken. One after another the juniors took their turns to watch. But the night passed away undisturbed; it was evident that all Greyfriars had gone to bed, and that the Head had left over dealing with the rebels until the next day.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.
No Surrender.

MORNING dawned upon Greyfriars—the second day of the siege of the old tower. Bob Cherry's barring-out was still "going strong." Before the rising-bell clanged out over the school, many of the Greyfriars fellows were down, and crowding round the old tower to see whether the garrison was still holding out. Coker and Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, were the first to arrive, and they almost fell over as they saw Harry Wharton looking at them from the window.

"Wharton!" yelled Coker.

Wharton nodded calmly.

"But—but we drummed you out of Greyfriars!" gasped Potter.

"I've drummed myself back, you see!"

"You don't mean to say you've come to stop?"

"Yes; you'll find that I'm a sticker."

"My hat!"

The news of the return of Harry Wharton & Co. soon spread. But the crowd that gathered to stare at them seemed friendly enough, in spite of the circumstances under which Harry Wharton had quitted Greyfriars. He had been drummed out of the school by the indignant fellows, in the belief that he had made a dastardly attack upon Vernon-Smith, and left him insensible in the lane. But somehow, now, a doubt was creeping into the minds of the Greyfriars fellows. The return of the old captain of the Remove did not seem like the action of a fellow who was guilty. And distrust of the Bounder was deepening. If only one or two of the Famous Five had been disgraced it would have been different, but even the dullest fellow remarked that it was curious that circumstances had so shaped themselves as to rid Vernon-Smith of all his rivals in the Remove. And the juniors could not avoid the suspicion that Vernon-Smith had lent a helping-hand to circumstances.

Without any tangible evidence to go upon, the fellows were arriving at a conclusion not far from the truth. Bob Cherry's barring-out had had an effect that Bob had never dreamed of himself. It was so evidently the act of a fellow who was wrongfully accused and driven to his last defence, that doubts were creeping into the mind of the Head himself.

Vernon-Smith could see the way the wind was veering, and he ground his teeth at the thought of it. He had succeeded completely in his plans; the last of the Famous Co. had been "sacked," and the Bounder was triumphant; but in the very hour of his triumph this had come. How was it to end, was the question the Bounder asked himself uneasily. With Harry Wharton & Co. united, and on the spot, it was only too possible that something might come to light that would shed an unexpected ray upon the facts.

Vernon-Smith was one of the fellows who came to look at the barred citadel; and Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed as he caught sight of the Bounder, with the old sneering smile upon his thin lips.

"So you're here again!" the Bounder exclaimed, as he saw Wharton at the window.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Wharton.

"So one kicking out wasn't enough for you—you want another," said Vernon-Smith.

"You may get the next kicking-out," said Wharton quietly. "I suppose you feel very safe now, Smithy; but I think your number's up!"

The Bounder forced a scornful laugh.

"I believe the truth of what happened between you and me will be told," said Wharton, and all the fellows outside the tower listened keenly. "My uncle is helping me to get the matter investigated. We've talked it over heaps of times, and when we were talking it over, I remembered that South American chap who came to see you here. And I believe that it was he who bludgeoned you in the lane that night, and you let him escape punishment, to fix it on me."

"What rot!" said the Bounder.

"Well, you lied, in any case!"

"Blessed if I'm not beginning to think so intirely!" said Micky Desmond.

Vernon-Smith strode away, with a dark brow. The South American, the man who had bludgeoned him in the lane, and whose deed he had laid at Wharton's door, had fled—and surely he would never be seen in that district again after what he had done. He would not know that the Bounder had concealed his guilt, and so he would place as great a distance between himself and Greyfriars as possible. Indeed, it was probable that he would flee to his own country. But if he were found—if he should give evidence as to what had really happened—— The Bounder shivered at the thought. Truly, in that case, his number would be up, as Harry Wharton expressed it.

That would be evidence, convincing evidence. But even without evidence, the juniors seemed to be showing a disposition to veer round, and take the side of the expelled junior.

Vernon-Smith hurried away in search of Loder, his pal in the Sixth; and a few minutes later Loder appeared upon the scene with a frowning brow.

"Clear off, all of you!" he exclaimed.

"Begad, Loder——"

"Faith, and we're talkin' to Wharton, Loder darling."

"Against the orders," said the prefect. "All communication between these young rascals and the boys is forbidden. They're to be left severely alone. Clear off!"

And the crowd unwillingly dispersed.

When the boys went into their Form-rooms that morning Dr. Locke consulted with Mr. Quelch. The two masters were in a puzzled and worried frame of mind. The return and reunion of the Famous Four had put a different aspect on the matter. Exactly how to deal with such an unheard-of situation the Head did not know.

"It would be too humiliating to have to send for a posse of constables from Courtfield," the Head remarked. "The affair would get into the newspapers; the whole country would be talking of it."

"That is very true," said Mr. Quelch. "But they refuse to go; and the present situation cannot be allowed to last."

"No; that is impossible."

"Communicating with their parents or guardians is the only course I can think of, sir. They could not refuse to obey their fathers' orders."

"But that will take time; and, meanwhile——"

"Meanwhile the school is in an uproar."

Dr. Locke knitted his brows.

"Another thought has been troubling me," he said. "I cannot help wretched doubts creeping into my mind, Mr. Quelch. These boys have been expelled on clearly proven charges. Yet——" The Head paused for a moment. "Mr. Quelch, do you think that their action, unprecedented and outrageous as it is, is the action of guilty persons?"

Mr. Quelch rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"If the evidence against them were not so clear, sir, I should certainly say not," he replied. "This very recklessness on their part is the outcome of indignation, not of guilt—that is the impression their conduct would give."

"And we cannot forget the character Vernon-Smith had when he was first at Greyfriars," Dr. Locke said slowly. "He has changed, or has appeared to change. But it is possible that he has deceived us. If a mistake has been made it would be terrible—terrible! Think of the fearful injustice of it!"

"It would be terrible indeed."

"Yet we can do nothing but rely upon evidence that seems to be clear. Investigation cannot be carried further than we have carried it; and to reverse our decision in the face of the evidence would be absurd."

"Impossible, sir."

"They must go!" said the Head. "The authority of the school cannot be defied in this manner; and it is having a bad effect upon all the boys. But I truly wish that something would come to light; but then it is absurd to think of it. Only—I am sorry if I do him injustice—but I cannot trust that boy Vernon-Smith."

"If that foreigner could be found—the man Diaz——" said Mr. Quelch musingly. "But the man has disappeared."

"Yes; and will doubtless take great care not to be discovered if he is guilty. But is it possible to imagine such wickedness on the part of Vernon-Smith, as an accusation against Wharton, when he knew that another was guilty?"

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"I could not believe that without the strongest evidence," he said.

"And there is no evidence."

"None!"

Mr. Quelch watched Vernon-Smith that morning in the Remove Form-room. The Bounder was attending lessons

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that morning for the first time since his illness. Mr. Quelch's keen eyes searched his face again and again. The Bounder moved and spoke in a languid way, quite keeping up the character of a fellow still feeble from illness. If he was playing a part, Mr. Quelch had to admit that he was playing it very well, and that it was impossible to detect the imposture.

In the old tower the Famous Five remained in garrison.

They were not disturbed till towards noon, when Johnny Bull, who was on the watch, gave the alarm.

"Here they come!"

Harry Wharton & Co. crowded to the little window.

Gosling and three others were advancing towards the old tower, carrying ladders on their shoulders, and accompanied by Mr. Quelch. The Head was not there. Dr. Locke was discreetly keeping out of the matter. His dignity had suffered enough already.

Mr. Quelch's brow was very stern. Perhaps the Remove-master was looking sterner than he felt. In spite of himself, there was a glimmer of sympathy in his breast towards the boys who were barring him out.

"For the last time, I command you to leave that place," he said, looking at the crowd of faces in the window.

"We are quite willing to do so, sir, on conditions," said Harry Wharton.

"Indeed! What conditions do you ask? If you will go at once you will be allowed to go without being punished, if that is what you mean."

"That isn't it, sir. We want to be reinstated in the Remove; to remain at Greyfriars till the facts are found out."

"Wharton!"

"Sooner or later, sir, we shall be able to prove that we were innocent, and that it was a plot against us."

"You cannot expect me to listen to this," said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Then I'm afraid it's impossible for us to surrender, sir."

"You see these men," said Mr. Quelch. "Unless you leave at once, they are going to plant these ladders against the tower, and enter above, where there is nothing to keep them out. Then you will be ejected by force."

"We shall resist, sir."

"Nonsense! You cannot resist four men!"

"We shall try, sir."

"The tryfulness will be terrific, honoured sahib."

"For the last time——"

"Sorry, sir!"

"You refuse?"

"We must refuse, sir—without meaning any disrespect to you."

Mr. Quelch turned to his assistants.

"Enter the tower, and eject those boys," he said.

"Yessir!" said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"Please lose no time."

And the enemy advanced to the attack.

— — —

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.
Holding the Fort.

GOSLING & CO. planted their ladders. The three men who had been called in for the difficult task of ejecting the juniors were villagers from Friardale, and they had willingly undertaken the task for a pound each. They were three sturdy fellows, and if they succeeded in getting into the tower it was very probable that the juniors would be ejected by force. But they were not in yet.

"Now, Bob, you're skipper here," said Wharton.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"You're skipper, Harry," he said. "Give the giddy orders."

"All serene! You stay down here at the window, then, and biff out anybody who tries to biff in. The others come up."

And Harry Wharton dashed up the stone stairway, with Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh at his heels.

The top of the old tower had fallen away many years ago, and the upper part was by no means secure. The walls were broken off at different levels, and pierced by shattered windows. The tops of the ladders reached to the top of the crumbling wall.

Each of the four juniors took one side of the tower, while Bob Cherry remained below on guard. The Removites were armed with pillows or bolsters, and they were ready to use them.

Gosling & Co. came up the ladders, and each of the assailants found a junior at the top ready to hit out.

They paused.

"You look 'ere, you young raskils," said Gosling, "you ain't goin' to 'it me. Wot I says is this 'ere, I shall break my neck if I falls off this 'ere ladder."

"Well, it's your neck," said Frank Nugent cheerfully. "It's no business of mine."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"It'll be manslaughter," said Gosling darkly.

Nugent shook his head.

"Only Gosling-slaughter," he said. "It won't matter a bit. The Head could get a new porter quite easily."

"You young raskil——"

"But if porters were as scarce as dodoes I should biff you off, just the same," said Nugent. "Come up and see!"

"Look 'ere——"

"I'm looking!"

"Pray lose no time!" said Mr. Quelch from below.

There was a rush up the ladders.

The three villagers came on bravely enough, and the pillows swiped down at them. One of the men ducked, and slid down the ladder. Johnny Bull caught the top of the ladder and sent it crashing to the ground. The other two caught the pillows with their heads, and went rolling down the ladders, and reached the ground with loud grunts.

Gosling was a little more successful. He managed to catch hold of Nugent's pillow, and wrenched it away. Then he grabbed hold of Nugent's arm.

"Gotchew!" he said.

Nugent drew back, or he might have been pulled over the wall. The school porter plunged after him, and rolled upon the stone flooring of the upper storey of the tower.

He grappled with Nugent, and they rolled over together.

"Got one of 'em!" yelled Gosling. "'Elp!"

"Rescue!" roared Nugent.

The other three had disposed of their foes, and they dashed to Nugent's aid at once.

Gosling was whirled over on his back, and Johnny Bull sat on his chest, and Hurree Singh stood on his legs.

"Seems to me that we've got one of them, not you," grinned Harry Wharton. "A rope—quick!"

Bob Cherry dashed up with a rope. Johnny Bull and Inky wound it about Gosling's arms and legs, and knotted it. The porter did not resist. He knew that he would fare worse if he did.

"Look out below!" said Harry Wharton. "Two of you!"

Bob Cherry and Inky dashed down the stair. They were just in time. One of the enemy had his head and shoulders through the window.

Biff! biff!

Two pillows smote the red face at the same moment, and the man went rolling out on the ground.

"Ow! qw!"

"Hooray!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hip-pip!"

Harry Wharton pushed away the remaining ladders, and they crashed down on the ground.

Gosling lay upon the stone flags, bound hand and foot.

"Ow!" he groaned. "Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"A giddy prisoner of war," said Nugent. "Shall we pitch him out?"

"Hear, hear!"

Gosling gave a yell of alarm.

"You'll break my neck!" he roared.

"Pooh! Don't worry about a trifle like that," said Nugent.

"You murderous young villain!"

"Can't afford to keep prisoners of war," said Harry Wharton, with a shake of the head. "The provisions won't stand it. No quarter!"

"Nor half!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Drop him over on his head," said Johnny Bull. "That won't hurt him."

"Ow! Lemme alone! Wot I says——"

"No; drop him on his weakest spot," said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a chopper here," said Bob Cherry from below. "Might chop his silly head off. It would be more merciful, really."

"Good! Bring up the chopper. Inky can look after the window."

Bob Cherry dashed up the stairs with the wood-axe in his hand. He stood over the terrified porter and flourished it in the air.

"Do it with one chop," said Wharton. "We don't want to put him to the torture. Mind you don't hit his head instead of his neck; it would only blunt the chopper."

"I'll be careful. Just one chop, and you'll see his head off. Would you prefer it at the back, Gossy, or just over the Adam's apple?"

"'Elp!" roared Gosling. "You just keep that chopper away! Don't you murder me! I won't be murdered! I'll——"

"Don't be ridiculous, Gosling!" came Mr. Quelch's angry voice from below.

"'Elp!"

"I've never chopped a porter's head off before," said Bob

Cherry, measuring the distance for his stroke. "I've chopped wood, of course—but not this sort."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep still, Gosling! If you wriggle like that I shall spoil the edge on your silly head."

"Ow! 'Elp!" shrieked Gosling, who was so terrified that he did not know whether the juniors were in earnest or not. "'Elp!"

"Well, if you say 'please' pretty we might spare your life," said Nugent thoughtfully. "After all, you chaps, he's an old man, and if he is executed it will cause a lot of disturbance in the liquor trade, through the demand for gin falling off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say 'please' pretty, and we'll spare your life," said Bob Cherry, making a playful whisk at Gosling with the chopper.

"How! 'Please pretty!'" roared Gosling.

The juniors yelled with laughter. Down below, Mr. Quelch hurried away. The attack had failed, and, angry as he was, he was afraid that he would burst out laughing if he remained. The juniors dragged Gosling to the edge, and lowered him down carefully, feet first, and let him roll on the ground.

Gosling lay there roped up, and roaring for release.

The three villagers were scratching their heads in perplexity. They were not at all disposed to renew the attack. It was evidently impossible to dislodge the undaunted garrison of the tower.

"Can't you untie me, you silly jossers?" roared Gosling "Lemme loose, you hasses."

One of the men untied him. Gosling scrambled to his feet, shook his fist up at the grinning juniors, and shambled away. He had had enough of it, and he would have told the Head himself so at that moment. His assistants followed him, and four ladders remained lying on the ground tokens of the victory of Harry Wharton & Co.

There was a ringing cheer from the garrison of the tower.

"Hurrah for us!"

"Hip-pip-hooray!"

The cheer reached the Form-rooms of Greyfriars, and told the whole school that there had been another attack, and that the barring-out was still going "strong."

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.
The Truth at Last.

PIP!

Toot-toot!

Dr. Locke glanced from his study-window. The afternoon was wearing on, and the Head was again in consultation with Mr. Quelch. The two masters had come to the conclusion that there was nothing for it but to send for the fathers of the besieged juniors. It would be a humiliating confession of failure on the part of the authorities of Greyfriars, but there was evidently nothing else to be done. The two masters were still discussing the matter, when the toot-toot of a motor-horn was heard in the Close. A handsome car came swinging in at the gates of Greyfriars, and buzzed up the gravelled drive towards the School House.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "It is Mr. Vernon-Smith!"

He knew the fifteen-hundred-guinea car of the millionaire. Mr. Vernon-Smith was to be seen sitting in it—a stout man, with a square jaw like a vice. A few minutes later the millionaire was shown into the Head's study.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was looking very excited. Mr. Vernon-Smith, the great millionaire and financier, had once been Mr. Samuel Smith, the moneylender. And when Mr. Vernon-Smith was excited, his manners were still those of Samuel Smith.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "You did not inform me, sir—my son did not inform me—I have been most anxious—I should have been told at once!"

The Head looked at him.

"Pray sit down, Mr. Vernon-Smith."

"How is my son?"

"Your son?"

"Yes, my son!" almost shouted the millionaire. "You did not tell me that he had been the victim of a murderous assault. I heard from you last week, certainly, concerning his treatment at the hands of a schoolfellow, whom you expelled for the offence. But this matter—more serious—how is it, Dr. Locke, that you told me nothing about it? I demand to know!"

"I—I fail to understand——"

"If I had known, sir, I should have brought down the most expensive doctors in London, sir. I should have brought

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down the greatest specialist in Cavendish Square, if necessary. I demand to know why I was not informed!" roared the millionaire.

The Head looked helplessly at Mr. Quelch. His first impression was that Mr. Vernon-Smith had been drinking. But the millionaire did not look intoxicated.

"Will you explain to Dr. Locke what you are excited about?" suggested Mr Quelch in his cool, incisive voice. "Are you under the impression that some fresh misfortune has happened to your son?"

"Under the impression?" shouted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I should say so, sir, when the criminal has confessed it with his own lips—nay, boasted of it!"

"What!"

"My son has been assaulted, beaten into insensibility with a bludgeon, and the criminal is now in the hands of the police, and has confessed!" shouted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Bless my soul!" cried the Head.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips.

And the two masters exchanged a quick glance. Was it light, at last? Was the strange mystery about to be cleared up in this unexpected manner?

"There is some mistake, sir," said the Head mildly. "Your son is quite well, excepting that he is still a little weak from his illness."

"He has been attacked!"

"That is a mistake."

"A mistake? But the man has confessed!"

"Your son is now in the Remove Form-room, engaged in his usual lessons, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the Remove-master quietly.

The millionaire gave a gasp of relief, and calmed down a little.

"Then the villain must have attacked the wrong boy by mistake," he said; "that is the only explanation. Pray excuse my heat, Dr. Locke. I was certainly under the impression that my son was lying in danger——"

"If that had been the case, you must surely know that I should have informed you of it without delay," said the Head drily.

"Yes—yes," said the millionaire, sinking into a seat; "of course! But the man has confessed, you see. I will explain. I have had some dealings in South American mining matters with a man named Diaz, and he was dissatisfied." The financier did not think it necessary to add that he had swindled the unfortunate foreigner, and driven him into a state of madness by his trickery. "You understand, gentlemen, that in business deals a man may lose instead of gain, and he may have a foolish impression that he has been wronged. This foreigner—this man Diaz—fancied himself wronged, and swore revenge, like a hot-headed Southern imbecile as he is. This morning, sir, he forced his way into my office in the City and attacked me—— Me!"

The millionaire made that statement with a full comprehension of the incredibility of it. That any man should have the audacity to attack Samuel Vernon-Smith, the great financier, was almost unbelievable to Mr. Vernon-Smith himself. When such a thing happened, Mr. Vernon-Smith was quite prepared to see the end of the universe.

"Indeed!" said Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir. He was secured before he could do any harm, and removed to prison," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I am, of course, guarded by private detectives day and night. A man in my position requires to be."

"Very probable," said the Head, thinking of some little details he knew of Mr. Vernon-Smith's methods of business.

"Well, sir, this man in the hands of the police—he is half mad—confessed, or rather boasted, that he had had his revenge, although he had failed to get at me. He gave a full account of how he had met my son on a lonely road—finding him in a helpless condition, apparently, after a fight with some one—and had beaten him with a bludgeon till he was insensible. He gloried in it, sir. He declared that he hoped that my son would never recover. Of course, he is half insane. As soon as I was informed, I came down in my car immediately. I expected to find my son in a bad condition after what this wretched foreigner said. That is my excuse, sir, for addressing you as I did when I came in. I am sorry!"

Dr. Locke nodded The man's anxiety was evidently real. The millionaire, hard as steel to all the world, had one soft spot in his heart—an affection for his worthless son and a pride in him.

"But it is very strange," the millionaire went on. "This man Diaz has evidently attacked someone in mistake for my son. There is no doubting the truth of his story as far as that goes."

"I am afraid, Mr. Vernon-Smith, that there is more than that in it," said Dr. Locke very gravely. "Mr. Quelch, may I ask you to bring Vernon-Smith here?"

"I will do so at once, sir."

The Remove-master quitted the study. Mr. Vernon-Smith looked puzzled.

"I do not quite understand now," he said.

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"I shall speak to your son before you, sir. I fear that you must prepare yourself for a shock. I fear that your son has been guilty of terrible duplicity."

"Dr. Locke!"

"He has inflicted a terrible wrong upon another boy, sir; but the whole matter will be cleared up now, and you shall be satisfied."

Mr. Quelch returned with Vernon-Smith. The Bounder was looking uneasy, in spite of his nerve. He started at the sight of his father.

The millionaire shook hands with his son.

"I am glad I see you well, at all events!" he said, with a sigh of relief.

"I'm not quite well," said the Bounder; "but very nearly. What has brought you down here, dad?"

Strangely enough, there was an affectionate tone in the Bounder's voice. It was the first time Dr. Locke or Mr. Quelch had heard it there. Even Vernon-Smith was not all ice.

"I will explain to you, Vernon-Smith," said the Head quietly. "That man Diaz, who came to see you here, and whom you spoke to afterwards at the school gates, knew you well enough by sight, I suppose?"

"I suppose so, sir," said the Bounder wonderingly.

"Quite so. That disposes of any theory that he might have attacked another person by mistake. Vernon-Smith, that man is now under arrest for an attempt upon your father——"

"The scoundrel!" cried the Bounder. "You've not been hurt, dad?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"He was collared in time," he said.

"Oh, good!"

"He has confessed," went on the Head, "that he attacked you on the road. He found you in an exhausted state after a fight—exactly as Wharton declared he left you. He has confessed that he beat you with a bludgeon."

The Bounder turned white.

"Vernon-Smith," said the Head, raising his hand, "you accused Harry Wharton of doing what you knew perfectly well the man Diaz had done!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith clenched his hands hard. He understood now, too. He understood that he had, in his anxiety for his son, exposed a plot of the Bounder's, and shown up Vernon-Smith in his true colours.

Vernon-Smith stood silent.

The study seemed to reel round him for a moment. In spite of his nerve, he was overcome. For he knew now that the game was up. Diaz was under arrest. Diaz had confessed, his accusation against Harry Wharton was proved to be a foul calumny, and his whole house of cards had tottered and fallen to the ground!

"Vernon-Smith, you falsely accused Wharton! You caused him to be driven in disgrace from the school! Wharton has been foully wronged! You have wronged him; and—Heaven forgive me!—you have caused me to wrong him, too!"

The Bounder tried to speak, but his tongue clove to his mouth. What could he say now? In the face of the known facts, what lie could serve his turn?

"Mr. Vernon-Smith"—the Head turned to the millionaire—"you have been the means of exposing this wicked plot against an innocent boy. I am sorry that you should have been the means, as the wrong-doer is your son; but I cannot say how thankful I am that the truth has come to light. All I can say is, that I must ask you to take your son away from Greyfriars with you; and I am sorry that you should suffer this pain and humiliation by the action of this unscrupulous, worthless boy."

The Bounder found his voice:

"You are going to expel me, sir?"

"Do you expect anything else?"

"Yes, sir. My father has caused this, and it is not fair to him. Without my father you would not have learned the facts——"

"You admit the facts?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders in quite his old way. He was recovering his coolness now. The millionaire did not speak. He seemed stunned.

"It is not much use denying them, sir," he said. "But there are other things I can tell you. You have been unjust to others besides Wharton. I am willing to make a full confession, and to take my punishment, but only on condition that I am not expelled. If you spare me that I will tell you everything."

Dr. Locke glanced at Mr. Quelch.

He was in a difficult position. To allow the Bounder to remain at Greyfriars after what he had done seemed impossible. But the doubts in the Head's mind had now become certainties.

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"Dr. Locke!" The millionaire broke silence at last. "I am afraid my son has acted—ahem!—not exactly as—as I should have wished. But he is my son—my only son! You will not make me the means of his disgrace? I cannot think that you would be justified in that, whatever he has done!"

The good old doctor looked deeply troubled.

"He has brought false accusations, sir, and caused me to act upon them," he said.

"And I have unconsciously been the means of exposing him."

"That is true."

"Then I think some consideration is due to me. I appeal to Mr. Quelch for his opinion."

The Remove-master frowned.

"There is something in that," he admitted. "But to allow such a boy to remain at the school, mixing with the other boys, how can that be allowed? If he remained, it could only be after a severe flogging, and under constant surveillance by the masters and prefects."

"I agree to that, sir," said the Bounder quickly. "I know I deserve punishment, and I'm not afraid to face it."

The Head sighed.

"You have acted with great wickedness, Vernon-Smith. I wish I could believe that you were repentant. But at all events, your power for evil is gone now. You cannot deceive me again. If I permit you to remain, from consideration for your father——"

"I will confess everything, sir."

"And I shall speak to my son very pointedly, sir," said the millionaire. "Do not let him be disgraced at the beginning of his life. Anything but that!"

"He was willing enough to inflict that disgrace upon others!" said the Head, somewhat tartly. "But I own that I am very unwilling to let a father be the cause of his son's disgrace. I am placed in a very awkward position. Vernon-Smith, I shall allow you to remain at Greyfriars if you make a full and frank confession, and you will be let off with a public flogging."

The Bounder set his teeth.

"Very well, sir."

"Now," said the Head sternly, "you admit that Wharton's explanation was true—the injuries you received were inflicted by the foreigner, Diaz?"

"Yes, sir."

"In the case of Nugent, who was expelled for frequenting a public-house, he declared that you had tricked him into going there, by making him anxious about his minor. I did not believe him. His statement was true?"

"Yes, sir."

"John Bull was sent away because he persisted in fighting with Bulstrode, against my direct orders. I understand that he declared that it was a scheme of yours to cause trouble between them—that you caused Bulstrode to pick trouble with him."

"It is true, sir."

"Last of all, Mark Linley was called away from school by a false telegram announcing his sister's illness. He missed the Noble Examination, which he would almost certainly have won, and the loss of the money made it impossible for him to stay here. Who sent that telegram?"

"A friend of mine in Lancashire."

"And I need not ask," said the Head, with a curling lip, "whether Robert Cherry's statement was true, that you were pretending to be ill, and that you provoked him into an attack upon you, while you were supposed to be in a helpless condition. Cherry told the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

The Head made a gesture of disgust.

"Leave my study!" he said. "I cannot bear the sight of you now, Vernon-Smith! You will be flogged, and all Greyfriars will know the truth! If you care to remain after that, you may remain!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Bounder went. To Dr. Locke, it seemed impossible that any fellow could choose to remain, under such a load of disgrace and obloquy. But he did not know the Bounder. Vernon-Smith had a thick skin; and if, as the Oriental proverb declares, contempt will pierce even the shell of the tortoise, Vernon-Smith was tougher than a tortoise in that respect. He intended to remain!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.
All's Well that Ends Well.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here comes the Head!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked from the window of the tower. Dr. Locke was approaching in the grey dusk of the December afternoon, and his kind old face was very grave.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said all the juniors together.

Dr. Locke nodded.

"My boys," he said, very kindly, "you may come out now. This nonsense must end; and the cause of it is removed. You have acted in a most rebellious and disrespectful way; but under the circumstances I shall pardon you."

"Oh, sir!"

"Vernon-Smith has confessed everything!"

"What?"

The Famous Five uttered that exclamation together.

They could not doubt the news, from the Head's own lips; but it seemed too good to be true.

"Vernon-Smith confessed?" said Harry Wharton.

"The Bounder?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Confessed?"

"Yes," said the Head very gravely, "something was discovered, unfortunately by means of Vernon-Smith's father, which makes it impossible for me to punish that wretched boy as he deserves. All of you are completely exonerated, and you are free to resume your old places in the Remove."

"Oh, sir!"

"And I ask you to pardon me for having been led away by a wretched schemer to inflict injustice upon you," said the Head.

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's all right, sir! Only it was all a mistake—but we didn't mean this barring-out to be disrespectful, sir. We're jolly glad you've found out the facts, sir!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is——"

"Terrific! Hurray!"

Dr. Locke smiled.

"The truth has been announced to the whole school," he said. "You will find all your schoolfellows prepared to give you a great reception. That is all, my boys."

And the Head departed.

"Well, my hat! If this doesn't beat the record!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Bobby, old man, lend a hand with these bars."

"Hurray!"

The garrison of the old tower dragged away the fastenings of the door. The barring-out was at an end, and it had ended in the triumph of the Famous Five.

There was a shout in the Close. Through the dusk a crowd of fellows were streaming towards the old tower. As the five juniors came out of their fortress, they were surrounded by cheering fellows, seniors and juniors.

"Shoulder-high!" shouted Coker, of the Fifth.

"Hurray!"

Bob Cherry chuckled as he was swung up on the shoulders of Coker and Potter.

"My hat! This is a giddy change!" he said. "Don't break my neck, please! It's more valuable than Gosling's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And amid a cheering, yelling crowd, waving their caps, the Famous Five were borne shoulder-high back to the old School House. And that evening there was a celebration at Greyfriars, which Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was justified in describing as terrific.

And the success of the Famous Five did not end there. For the wrong inflicted upon Mark Linley, the brave-hearted Lancashire lad, remained to be repaired—and it was repaired.

But for the Bounder's trickery Mark would have won the prize, which would have enabled him to finish the term of his scholarship at Greyfriars. The doctor took the matter in hand; and a sum of money from the school funds enabled Mark Linley to return to Greyfriars and take his old place in the Remove Form. And, needless to say, the Famous Five gave him a tremendous reception when he arrived.

The Bounder had taken his flogging, and he stood it with his usual stoicism. The utter contempt and scorn of his schoolfellows would have been harder still to bear, by any other fellow than the Bounder. But Vernon-Smith contrived to bear it with calmness; and as all things are forgotten in time, it was possible that there was foundation for the Bounder's belief that he would succeed in living it down. But it was not likely that he would ever be dangerous again. His character was known too well.

Mark Linley was the guest of honour at a great feast in No. 1. Study the day he returned to the old school. All the Co. were there, and Micky Desmond, and Tom Brown, and Lord Mauleverer, and Bulstrode, and even Boisover major, and Coker, of the Fifth, and Nugent minor, of the Second—in fact, as many fellows as the study would hold—and there was an overflow party in the passage. It was a very happy evening; and the Famous Five and their comrades fully agreed with Bob Cherry when he remarked, that all was well that ended well.

THE END.

(Next Monday's issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY, will contain another splendid long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled, "HARRY WHARTON'S WIN." Order your copy of "The Magnet" in advance—Price 1d.)

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OUR THRILLING NEW SERIAL STORY. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE·ROUND·THE·GLOBE!

THE STORY·OF·THE GREAT MAN-HUNT

BY **SIDNEY DREW**

Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.

Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, and ventriloquist.

Nathan Gore, jewel collector and multi-millionaire, Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously, and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and as he listened, his face came over deadly 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 a hoarse voice. Ching-Lung 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, Teneriffe, 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 purchased 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. When they arrive they visit Nathan Gore's island, and find that it is well protected by forts. Ferrers Lord, wishing to end the chase, sends his conditions of peace to the mad millionaire. They are, that he returns the stolen diamond and publishes in all the papers in the world an apology. Nathan Gore refuses, and war is declared.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Clever Scheme—Barry Gets His Neck Washed Gratis.

Ferrers Lord came into the saloon and held a photographic negative up to the light. It had been taken in the early morning with a long-range telephoto lens. He handed it to Thurston.

"What is it, old chap?" asked Rupert. "Ah, Ching-Lung Island! By Jove! Gore doesn't let much grass turn to hay under his feet!"

"No; he moves fairly fast," answered the millionaire. "That is an excellent photo. One can see pretty well all the progress he has made. The difficulties are very great. The foundations of his new fort must be far below the water-level!"

"What's that great guillotine-looking thing?"

"A huge pile-driver. He must line his excavations with wood, and then fill up with concrete. He is doing that there, and his pumps have to work night and day to keep the water down. It is a gigantic task. Look at the number of shanties built on the sand-bank for his workmen—a regular city of them. Look at the barrage he has thrown up to keep out the sea. What would happen, do you think, if that gave way?"

"Well, I'd pity his foundations," said Rupert.

Ferrers Lord laughed, and, taking the negative, began to examine it through a magnifying-glass. Nathan Gore had achieved wonders. The island was a swamp. The rise on which he was constructing his fort was an island at high tide. The scale on which he was working was apparent by the crowd of lighters and tramp-steamers, and the clouds of smoke and steam. Further out lay the two watchful cruisers guarding the flotilla.

"Yes," said the millionaire, "I think it would be awkward, Rupert, if that dam gave way. It would spoil most of his materials. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds might cover the damage. I wonder," he added, laughing again, "if——"

"If what?"

"Oh, nothing! Just a wonder, Rupert!"

The millionaire began to pencil on his cuff lazily. At last

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"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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he scratched out what he had written and drawn. Rupert went on reading his book. Suddenly a glare of sunshine made the electric-light look dim and yellow, and the blue waves were lapping the submarine's plates.

Rupert hastened on deck. Loneland was invisible, and the horizon was unspecked by sail or smoke. As he stood looking across the sea, there was a bustle of sound.

"By your leave, sir; by your leave!"

Rupert jumped out of the way. A stream of men, each carrying a plank, poured out of the wheel-house. In ten minutes a stout raft was floating on the port-side. The procession of sailors and planks went on until a second raft had been built.

"Say, Barry, what's the pantomime?" queried Rupert.

"Sor," grinned Barry, "av Oi knowed, the threat of hangin' and picklin' to foller wudn't kape me from tellin' yer honour. But, be jabers, Oi don't know. Oi can only think that we're tachin' thim paces of wood how to swim!"

"You're a half-baked idiot!" said Rupert.

"Thank yez, sor, and the same to—— Murther!"

Barry went staggering as a beam, carried by Gan-Waga, tickled him up between the shoulder-blades, and he failed to check himself until his chest smote against another beam carried by Prout. Turning round sharply to see what was behind, Prout managed to insert the corner of his plank on Maddock's Adam's apple. This caused some words, Maddock expressing a desire to tie Prout into eel-strings, and Prout thirsting to grind Maddock into sawdust.

"Awast, awast, ye lubbers!" cried the voice of Ching-Lung. "Hold tight, Barry! Hold tight, Ching! Fast, Gan!"

One end of Gan's plank rested on the deck. Ching-Lung walked up it, trod lightly on Gan's head, stepped from it to Barry's shoulder, and from that position took one stride downwards to the deck again.

"What a hollow sound your tuppenny gave out, Ganus!" he chuckled. "It seemed pretty full of wind. Hallo, Tom! How sad you look! Are you thinking of the ma-in-law you left behind you?"

"Bustle up, there!" roared Joe. "Come, ye swabs, come! This ain't no dancin' class. Forrard there, Maddock! Shift along! D'ye 'ear, or do ye want to feel?"

Joe had a nice rope's-end with a knot in it, and as Joe was a little monarch when any carpentry was being done, he was obeyed. He gave Gan-Waga a taste of the knot, which made Gan dance. It also made Gan angry. For Gan always looked upon himself as a volunteer where work was concerned.

He said nothing, but waited until Joe was looking the other way. Then he smote with a wet mop, and took a hurried departure.

"I don't understand the manœuvres a bit, Ching," said Rupert.

"I've just found out. I fell upon the chief, and wrung the truth from him. He is going to build a couple of torpedo-boat destroyers."

Rupert stared incredulously.

"You're sure he's not going to build a second Eiffel Tower?"

"Honour bright, Ruperto; that's what he told me! You know me. Like little Georgy Washington, I cannot tell a fiblet. If my pa ever found me chopping down a cherry-tree, I'd say: 'Papa, I did it with my little penknife.' Joking apart, though, he told me so!"

"Absurd!"

"Well, go and ask him yourself, you blitherer! He may mean paper ones, for all I know! Go and beard him in his den!"

"Beg your pardon, gentlemen," said Joe, standing up, "but you're in the way!"

"You'll be in your giddy coffin in a minute!" said Ching-Lung. "What cheek! Joe, I'll report you! You are a low, chisel-faced, gimlet-legged, claw-hammered shaving-producer!"

A forge was brought up, and it hissed and roared as they plied the bellows. Afterwards, a circular-winch. Glowing flakes of iron sprang from the buzzing saw. Ferrers Lord entered the wheel-house, and sat there puffing at a cigarette. To all questions he answered:

"Wait and see!"

"Wait and go bald!" said Ching-Lung at last. "Look here, oh chief! What's the game? If you don't let the cat out of the bag, I shall muzzle myself, and commit suicide by dying of thirst! This is my ultimatum. Think of your conscience when you see me lying at your feet a young and beautiful corpse. Come, speak! Thou torturer of the helpless. What silly circus are you going to run? Er—thanks!"

Ching-Lung took a cigarette from the millionaire's case, and lighted it by holding it near Rupert's nose.

"After all," said Ferrers Lord, "we shall have more peace of mind if you were a corpse, Ching. The fact is I am going to try a bluff. It is rather a risky bluff, but if we bring it off it will be worth all that. I am building two destroyers."

"What are they supposed to destroy—microbes or cockroaches?"

"Wait and see!"

"But you haven't enough steel on board to build a saucepan!" persisted Ching-Lung.

"What does that matter? My dear Ching-Lung, I am no slavish imitator. Why should I build boats of steel because other people do so? I build my destroyers of canvas and wood."

Ching-Lung put his head inside a locker and called faintly for help.

"Take no notice of the little ass," said Thurston. "I think I see your drift, old chap."

"A bluff, Rupert. You'll see later on. It may not be to-night, for we must wait for a fairly dark one. A bright moon would spoil our chance completely."

The men worked their best. The two narrow rafts ran fully two-thirds of the length of the Lord of the Deep. Iron hoops were clamped to them. Round these canvas was stretched to form low bulwarks. Dummy funnels were then erected, and dummy guns mounted. The launch was lowered when the men were lunching on deck.

"By Jove," said Rupert, "they look pretty good!"

"I think they will pass muster in the dark," said Ferrers Lord. "I have invented a little apparatus for making them show smoke. It is automatic, and keeps sprinkling gunpowder on smouldering tow."

"But how will you work the boats?"

"From the Lord of the Deep. We shall only be submerged about a fathom. I shall tow one, and run the other above us, fastening her with a chain to the deck. Of course, you know what I am driving at?"

"The dam?"

The millionaire nodded.

"This is my idea," he explained. "I am at war, Rupert, but not for killing purposes. I want to kill nobody. This is a mere battle of wealth. My aim is to ruin Gore financially. I see a splendid chance to hit him hard. Unless we can draw off the cruisers we cannot get to the dam. The water is too shallow for the Lord of the Deep to get near, but the launch can find plenty. Prout will manage the bluff, and we'll do the rest. Look at those two villains!"

Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga, in fur overcoats and tall hats, were promenading the deck arm-in-arm, each smoking a cigar. Their legs and feet were bare, and Ching-Lung kept getting himself mixed with a walking-stick he carried. Gan had a large portmanteau. The millionaire stopped the launch, and watched them.

They stooped abaft the flagpole. Gan opened the bag, and handed Ching-Lung a sheet of newspaper, which the prince, with one flourish, converted into a paper boat.

"Good-bye, dear friends!" said Ching-Lung. "Owing to circumstances and creditors, we are obliged to leave our native shores, and sail the briny main."

"Tar-tars, people!" lisped Gan.

"Farewell, farewell, me darlints," said Barry O'Rooney. "Oi hope yez won't be saysick."

Gan dived into the bag again, and brought out a walking-stick and a handbell. Into the ferrule of the stick he thrust the end of his lighted cigar. Then he launched the boat, and rang the bell violently.

"Any more for Southend and Margate?" roared Prout.

"Bring me back a monkey and a parrot and a tiger and a cocoanut and some Turkish delight, dadda!" called Maddock.

"All aboard!" said Gan.

Ching-Lung kissed Maddock, and shed a few tears, which exploded as they fell. He took Gan's hand. Raising their hats, and holding their walking-sticks over their heads, they each put a leg over the rail, and a toe into the boat

"Bye-bye!" said Ching-Lung.

They let go. Fur overcoats and tall hats shot up to the truck, and hung there in the breeze, and Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga sank with a splash. A second or two later they were both floating on the surface, smoking their cigars through the handles of their hollow walking-sticks.

Gan had taken the portmanteau with him. Amid clapping and laughter he passed a black bottle to Ching-Lung.

"Where's the corkscrew?" asked the prince.

"In de bagses, Chingy!" said Gan.

"Find it, then."

Gan searched the portmanteau. His head and glistening shoulders disappeared inside. His legs followed, then his feet. Minutes passed away.

"Here, silly, where are you?" cried Ching-Lung.

"Looking fo' de corkscrewses," replied the muffled voice of the Eskimo. "Show a light, Chingy!"

Ching-Lung flashed the rays of an electric torch into the recesses of the old bag.

"Found him?"

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"Nots yets, Chingy! Oh, Chingy, shuts de lids! De water him comin' ins bad 'nough—orful!"

Ching-Lung shut the portmanteau. All the men were watching eagerly. How Gan had managed to squeeze into the bag was something of a mystery.

"Found it?" asked the prince again.

"Yep, Chingy," said a voice from the depths.

Gan's bare arm emerged, and Ching-Lung took the corkscrew.

"Look for the glass," he said, winking at the sailors.

"Yep, Chingy."

Ching-Lung locked the bag, drew the cork, and began to remove the contents of the bottle.

"Yo' sneak!" yelled the muffled voice. "Yo' drinkings! Lemme out!"

"How dare you say I'm drinking?"

"I smell yo' breffs, yo' sneaks! Lemme out! I calls pleecemans!"

The shrill peal of a police-whistle came from the interior of the bag, but Ching-Lung only smacked his lips and smiled. But lo and behold! as he floated on his back, bottle in one hand, and cigar in the other, a dripping helmeted head rose from the waves behind him, and a mighty truncheon smote him on the spot where his pigtail was anchored to his scalp. Ching-Lung yelled "Hel-up!" and sank.

"I gets mades two sergeants and a 'spector overs dis job," grinned Gan-Waga. "Where he gones?"

Gan dived, and came up with the bottle. He refreshed himself out of it, and dived again.

"It all rightses, peoples!" he gurgled. "I gots a clue. I justs founds him footprintses at the bottoms. Yo' watches me."

Once more Gan dived. When he returned to the surface there was a roar of laughter as he tossed a pigtail overboard.

"Dems his whiskers anyways," he remarked. "He grows dem on de backs of him face. What fo' dat long, leans Frenchmans looks so pale?"

"A-r-r-r!" cried Yard of Tape. "Vot for you shall say zat? I have got ze paleness. If you haf cut off ze pigtail of him he shall murdaire you!"

"Nebbaire mind. I shall not hurt haire; I shall only tickle haire!" mimicked Gan, and the men screamed.

Ching-Lung rose, blowing hard, only to be knocked down by the heroic policeman's truncheon. Gan reeled on the real pigtail to which his highness was attached, but Ching-Lung broke away. Then came a desperate chase in the water. Both were tryers. For a long time Ching-Lung escaped; but at last, after diving under the vessel, he ran right into the arms of the law.

"Will yo' comes quiet?" growled Gan, using the truncheon briskly.

"Y-yes!" moaned the prisoner.

Gan bundled him into the portmanteau, which still floated. It was lifted on board.

"He's a most desprit ruffians," said Gan.

"Bedad! Oi shud think ut!" grinned Barry. "Plaze, Mr. Consthable, Oi faal sure he'll thry to bolt for ut whin yez open the mousethrap. Give me the tickler, and Oi'll cosh him av he does."

"Hards as yo' cans," said Gan, giving Barry the club.

"Oi'll make him see skoy-rockets, and squibs wid pink whiskers," said Barry.

"Gets readys, den."

Barry did get ready. He pulled up his muscle for a deadly smite. Two bare feet and some eighteen inches of bare leg shot out of the bottom of the bag.

"By hokey, he's escapin' through the cellar," said Prout. "Stop him!"

The portmanteau began to run at great speed. Barry objected to that. He wanted his cosh, and he saw his opportunity vanishing with the bag. Howling to Maddock, who was emerging from the wheelhouse, to stop it, Barry sprinted in chase.

The uncanny-looking object rather startled Maddock, who had missed the earlier fun. However, he grasped the situation, and a mop at the same time, and gallantly awaited the onslaught. The shock came. It was so impetuous that it took Maddock off his legs, and set the bag spinning round like a big top. Then the top lost its balance, and shot across the deck on its side with paralysing velocity.

Barry jumped out of the way, but as the portmanteau whizzed past him, the lid snapped open and a stream of water from a syringe soused Barry in the neck, left him for Prout's whiskers, and used itself up on Joe's hair. Then the bag crashed against the rail, and Ching-Lung curved gracefully into the air and sank into the green sea, leaving hardly a bubble on its surface. Gan plunged after him. Gan floated like a cork, and scrambling on the Eskimo's chest, Ching-Lung imitated a key-bugle with splendid skill.

"Did yo' coshes hims, Barry?" piped Gan.

Barry, who was leaning over the side to allow the water to run out of his collar, did not reply. Prout scrubbed at his beard with a red handkerchief, and remarked that the weather was treacherous.

A Grand, Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday.

"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

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"All the same," said Joe, mopping his head, "a wet squall like that does a lot of good. I'm glad to see Barry's washed his neck."

It was well past midnight before the sham destroyers were completed. A brilliant moon shining in a cloudless sky made a delay of twenty-four hours necessary. The glass, too, was going down slowly but steadily.

"We shall have rough weather," said Ferrers Lord at dinner, "but not to-night. I trust not to-morrow night either."

"It will give your beautiful destroyers a hustling when it does come along, old chap," said Rupert.

"It will knock them to pieces, of course. We can only hope for good luck and a fairly dark night. If we lose our trouble, we can't help it. Never cry over spilt milk, but thank your stars it was not cream. All things considered, I feel pretty confident that we shall lure the cruisers in chase."

"They'll pound you to oatmeal gruel," said Ching-Lung.

"Will they?" laughed Ferrers Lord. "My dear prince, you forget that my dummies are armed, that they can sail thirty knots unless the pace shakes them to bits. Listen! Do you think they dare face my fire?"

He pressed a button behind him, and several guns crashed loudly.

"How beastly, terribly awful!" chuckled Ching-Lung. "You'll frighten 'em into fits. So far so good; and it would be so far better, Mr. R. T., if you wouldn't cling to the claret so lovingly."

"Sorry, old chap!" said Thurston, passing over the wine.

"Now, my chief of millionaires," went on Ching-Lung, "unfold thy tale."

"There is no tale, Ching. I shall run one dummy right above your head, and the other two behind on a long, floating cable. Prout will steer; Rupert will work the little blank guns. We shall be off in the launch. You will run in, Ru, and fire a dead shell. Then you will pretend to bungle, and show lights. That and the shell will bring them at full speed. Flight, then, is your duty, and take the cruisers with you as far as you can entice them. We ought to manage to sneak through and get ashore. A little digging and a hundredweight of dynamite with a time-fuse will make a vast hole in both Gore's dam and pocket. There is the button, Rupert, that fires the carronades on the dummies electrically. This other one shows their lights. Oh, for a fairly dark night!"

"Oh, for goodness' sake, chuck it, Gan!" snapped Ching-Lung. "Chuck it, or I'll murder you!"

"What I doings, Chingy?"

"Eating with your mouth full. How dare you!" said the prince. "I'm always telling you about it. I'll have more of those stewed oysters, please. They taste a trifle tinny, and—— Gan, you pig, I believe you've got oil in your hair."

"I nots, Chingy," said Gan. "It only lard, Chingy."

Ching-Lung glared and Rupert laughed. Then the prince rose from his chair, and, taking the Eskimo firmly by the ear, led him from the room. Before he had time to resume his seat, however, Gan darted in, seized the toothsome dishes of oysters and a basket of rolls, and flew.

After dinner they lighted their cigars and took a turn on deck. A poet could hardly have imagined a more glorious night. The lazy sea, aglow with phosphorescence, was almost without a ripple. Though the glass had fallen, and was falling, there was little moisture in the air. Most of the men were fishing; but the fish were either scarce or far from hungry, for the sport was poor. One by one the sailors abandoned their lines and crowded aft, as the news spread that Barry, in his best form, was spinning yarns.

"We're in for a blizzard," said Ching-Lung, looking up at the dull, yellow ring that surrounded the moon. "It may be a good way off, but I can smell. I've got a good nose for storms and cooking."

The millionaire tapped the weather-glass.

"You are an evil prophet, I hope, Ching."

"A prophet of evil, you mean," said Rupert.

"He is certainly that; but I hope he is an evil prophet, and that we shall miss the storm. My destroyers are more suitable for being kept in glass cases than for weathering gales."

"Hi!" yelled Ching-Lung, as one of the fishing-lines jerked taut. "You've got a bite!"

"Who? Where?" cried twenty voices.

Every angler rushed to his line. The strain was on Prout's. Prout began to haul in manfully.

"By hokey," he gasped, "it weighs tons!"

"Troth, ut must be the sav-sarpint!" said Barry. "Lit yer uncle give yez a hand, Tom. Yo—heave—ho! Bedad, ut's the bottom of the ould ocean we're afther pullin' up!"

"She dor.'t seem to kick much," remarked Maddock. "Shoo! Look at yer own line, Barry!"

"Niver! Lit ut wait!" said Barry. We'll git this slapleen out first. Yo—yo—heave—ho!"

It was hard work. They dragged at the wet line lustily. At last the monster of the deep showed itself faintly, and Joe stood in readiness to murder it with a boathook. Then there was a yell of laughter, as the prize was hauled on deck—a bucket of coal. Chalked on the bucket was the following touching request:

"To Thomas Prout, Esq. Go and eat coke!"

"By hokey," growled Prout, "if I only had the name and address of the fossil who did that, I'd call on him with a double-barrelled gun and a 'atchet!"

"Coals, coals, coal-o!" carolled Maddock.

Maddock just succeeded in dodging a large lump of the fuel, which the steersman hurled at him. He did not, however, managed to elude a lively skate which Barry had just caught and flung.

"That'll tache yez, yez ugly son of a gun, to rispict the misfortchunes of yer betthers!" said Barry. "Tom, darlint, yer uncle has avenged yez. Whoy, oh, why shud we repoine? We have the fish, and, bedad, we have the coal to cook ut wid, both from the bottom of the dape blue say! Come back, childer, and Oi'll finish the swate sthory Oi was tillin' yez when the coal-merchant called at the back dure."

"Hear, hear, Barry!" chorused the men, who loved yarns as a child loves sweets.

Ching-Lung shook his fist at the moon, whose brilliance prevented them from carrying out their plans. Ferrers Lord and Thurston paced up and down, conversing in low tones. A ripple began to crisp the water, and there was a grey haze low in the western sky. Then a black line formed on the horizon like a smudge of ink.

"Bang go our giddy destroyers!" thought Ching-Lung. "They'll be hammered into porridge by the first wave that hops along. By Jove, she's coming up at a lick!"

The black smudge flung out grey masses of cloud that swept swiftly across the sky. There was a strong current of air high up, though the surface breeze was light and unsteady. The grey masses rushed over the moon, making it intensely dark.

"Ching!" called the millionaire.

"I'm here, old chap!"

Ferrers Lord strode out of the gloom.

"I shall make the attempt at once," he said. "We may have time before the storm breaks. It seems such a pity to lose our labour and our dummies for nothing. They are bound to go the moment we get a sea on. Pass the word there, Rupert!"

Barry's thrilling story was cut short at its most exciting point. The deck opened, and the hydraulic lift raised the little launch from below. The Lord of the Deep moved slowly towards the island, until the searchlights of the forts were seen twinkling in the blackness.

O'Rooney, Joe, Ching-Lung, and Maddock donned their oilskins. Spades, picks, and drills were placed in the launch, and Joe carried the dynamite cartridge on his shoulder, and packed it away securely in a tub of sawdust. The reel of the insulated wire was fixed astern, ready to be paid out.

"Ready, lads?" asked the millionaire's deep voice.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Don't make one single slip, Rupert!" whispered Ferrers Lord. "This is a ticklish business, old chap. The launch is a tight little craft, but if it blows strong she's hardly good enough to run in the teeth of it. In that case, we shall run round and get shelter on the other side of the island. Somehow, I have a conviction that we shall not see you for a day or two. You must come and look for us."

"Hang it, I'm uneasy myself!" said Rupert. "I wish it was all over!"

The millionaire laughed, and shouted an order for three days' provisions and water to be placed in the launch. There was something ominous about the order. Rupert felt his heart sink as the little vessel slid gently into the water, and swung at her hawser.

"Good luck!" he cried.

"Pip-pip!" answered Ching-Lung cheerfully. "Don't forget to warm my slippers! We won't do a single thing to him. If any of you chaps would like me to bring you a lock of old Gore's hair to put in a locket, don't all speak at once. So-long, Ganus!"

"Cast off!" said Ferrers Lord.

With a gentle throbbing, the launch slid away, and was lost in the gloom.

"Hang it!" growled Rupert, shrugging his shoulders uneasily. "I wish to goodness they were safely out of it!"

Even the very calmness of the sea seemed threatening. The moon was quite hidden. In the dark wheelhouse Prout was silently waiting for orders, while Rupert superintended the operation of poling one of the dummies astern. Bladders were fastened at intervals to her long cable to float it. The dummy dropped behind.

"All serene, Tom?"

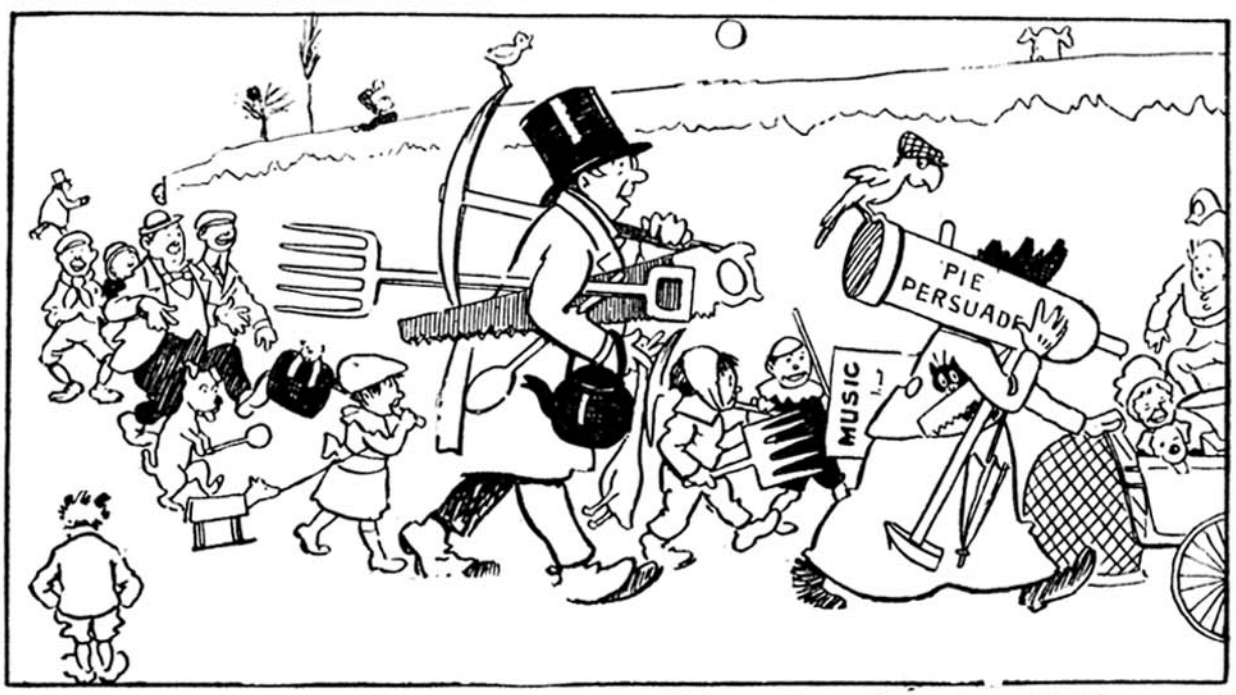
"Ay, ay!" said the steersman. "I hope we sha'n't drag her under, sir."

The cable had been shackled to the dome of the wheelhouse, which would be barely three feet below the surface. Two iron bars held the second vessel. She would naturally fall into her position directly above the submarine the moment the Lord of the Deep was submerged. The lights of both dummies were in electric communication with the submarine.

"Sink us a little," said Rupert, "and then try the lamps!"

The water hissed into the tanks. The submarine sank until only the top of her dome was clear. At a touch of the button the lamps of the dummies blazed vividly.

Another long instalment of this grand serial in next Monday's issue of "The Magnet.")



Mr. and Mrs. Jones and family are invited to dine out on Christmas Day. Christmas pudding is expected!

My Readers' Page.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
EVERY WEDNESDAY
AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"
By Frank Richards.

In next week's splendid complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, Harry Wharton & Co. score a great triumph over Vernon-Smith and his cronies from Highcliffe. Vavasour, Ponsonby, and their friends of the "smart set," give a grand dance at Highcliffe School, and, in addition to the Bounder of Greyfriars, the girls of Cliff House are prevailed upon to come.

Needless to say, Harry Wharton & Co. are not asked, yet they have no intention of being left out!

How they achieve their object, and turn the tables in the most decisive manner upon the cads of Highcliffe, makes a story of special interest, and no "Magnetite" should allow either himself or his friends to miss

"HARRY WHARTON'S WIN!"

A LANCASHIRE READER'S OUTSPOKEN COMMENTS.

Here is an interesting letter from a chum of mine in Preston which offers food for reflection:

"Preston, Lancs.

"Dear Editor,—I must really write and congratulate you on your paper, 'The Magnet' Library. I have been a reader for some three years, and I have also taken in 'The Gem' as well. The latter is a great favourite with my sisters, but I like 'The Magnet' the best myself.

"There is only one paper, in my opinion, which comes up to 'The Magnet.' You can guess what that is, I expect! I refer, of course, to the ripping little 'Penny Pop.' I think this new paper which you have given us is an absolutely grand one, but I don't think it is half as well known as it deserves to be. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that it is principally the boy 'Magnetites and 'Gemites' who are backing the good old 'Penny Pop.' up, and doing their best to make it a success. I hardly ever see girls reading it or advertising it round about here, or in Manchester, either, where I often go. When we were trying to get you to bring it out, your girl readers were just as keen on the idea as the boys, and I think they ought to back it up more now they have got what they want. I am sure they couldn't wish for a better little paper, or better value for the money.

"There is another thing, too, Mr. Editor, and that is this: I know a good many girls who buy one of the three famous companion papers each week, and then change about amongst themselves, so that each girl reads all three papers each week, but only buys one herself. I think this is a downright mean trick, don't you? I don't think you will find boys doing it much, if at all. The least you can do, in my opinion, to show your appreciation of the ripping stories you enjoy reading so much, is to buy at least one copy of each paper. If all your readers did this, I am sure your circulations would be much greater, as they deserve to be. If I want to give a 'Magnet,' or 'Gem,' or 'Penny Pop.' away, I always buy an extra copy. It is a pretty cheap present, anyway—only a penny—and it is very much appreciated, I can assure you. Well, Mr. Editor, I am sorry my letter is so long, but I don't write to you often. Good luck to you!

"A Boy Reader (H. F.")

Well, H. F., I must thank you very much for a very interesting letter, which, however, raises one or two rather controversial points. It is very difficult for me to give an opinion on the point you raise as to whether my girl readers support me as well as my boy readers. I am inclined to think some of the former will have something to say on that subject when they see your letter.

I only know this, that some of my girl chums, at least, have done me some very good turns, and that I have very many girl readers of "The Penny Popular."

As for that habit some readers have of "swopping" papers with their friends, I am afraid it is true that the circulations of the trio of companion papers suffer considerably owing to this practice. At the same time, you must remember, H. F., that some of my most loyal readers may be too poor to buy all three papers each week—they simp can't afford to do it, and, therefore, poverty being no crime, it is quite a mistake to regard the "swopping" of papers as meanness on their part. With others, of course, it may be different, and then it is quite a different story.

However, your feeling on this point proves that you are a reader of the right sort, and I am sure your remarks will be taken in the right spirit, even if they do provoke a little discussion. You must write to me more often, H. F., if you will.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Minnehaha" (Kent).—I do not think there is any need for you to attempt to decrease your height, as it is only just about the average. It would do you no harm, however, to indulge less in the sports you mention.

"An Invalid Reader" (Cardiff).—I am sorry it is impossible for you to obtain the numbers of "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Library which contained stories by Sidney Drew, as they are out of print.

V. L. (London, N.W.)—I do not know of any book dealing with the subject you speak of. You might write to H. Glaisher & Co., of 34, Charing Cross Road, W.C., who will be able to tell you if such a book is published, and the cost, etc.

P. Jones (Newport).—Yes, there is a First Form at Greyfriars.

D. S. Barnes (Herne Hill).—The "Magnet" Library was first published on February 15th, 1908.

STAMP-FAKING FEATS.

SOME ARTFUL PHILATELIC FRAUDS.

Nowadays, stamps are not very frequently forged in their entirety. A better game—that is to say, one offering greater chances of success—is to transform a common stamp into a rare variety by some dexterous alteration of the design or inscription.

This form of fakery was first perfected some twenty years ago by a clever chemist, a Londoner, with a German name, who changed the common penny black English stamp of 1840—worth from 4d. to 6d. per specimen—into the scarce "V.R." variety of the same date—worth at that time about £10—by expunging the Maltese crosses from the upper angles of the design and substituting the all-important letters "V.R." It was a rare feat, and the faker hoped to reap a rich reward. He did he was sent to penal servitude for three years!

In earlier days the stamp-faker worked with a small hand-press and other crude appliances, in some attic or cellar, and his primitive efforts presented no great danger to the well-informed collector. Now he employs modern methods; he calls science to his aid, and, although his productions are invariably detected when submitted to experts' tests, he sometimes enjoys a temporary success, which encourages him to try again.

The system of grafting one piece of stamp on to another is responsible for much cunning fakery, though at the same time it is quite fairly and properly employed in repairing damaged specimens of scarce stamps. In Paris, the centre of the stamp-mending art, there are "postage-stamp hospitals," where a torn specimen, or one with a corner missing, can be so cleverly "restored" that even when held up to the strongest light no trace of the repair can be detected.

THE EDITOR.

(To be continued next week.)

"THE GEM" LIBRARY —Every Wednesday— || — OUR COMPANION PAPERS — || "THE PENNY POPULAR" —— Every Friday ——

THE MAGNET LIBRARY'S

SPECIAL

COMIC SUPPLEMENT

Punctured or why the burglar escaped with the Turkey

THE MILKY WAY IN SAMBOLAND.

1. "Nebber mind de baby!" said the dusky guardsman to the nursemaid. "He's all right. He got him bottle. Him quite happy. You come along and talk to me!"

2. But unluckily for the baby, whilst they were talking, a cocoanut dropped on his bottle and smashed it, poor little chap. But he wasn't downhearted, No——

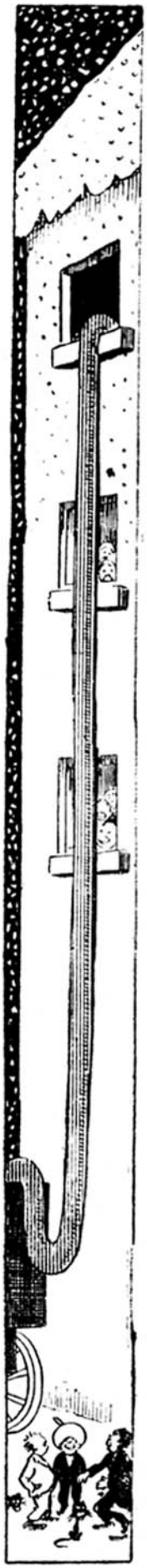
3. He very soon made an excellent feeding bottle out of the cocoanut, so that everything went on bright and cheerily, and the guardsman and the nursemaid went on quite happily with their conversation——yes!

SAUCY!

"That the worst about Christmas," grumbled the prize turkey; "one's got to put up with such a lot of chestnut-sauce!"

HARD LUCK!

Madame Biddy: "Now, what chance has a poor hard-working hen?"



Printed and published by the Proprietors at The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Agents for Australia: Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Wellington, N.Z.; for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd., Cape Town and Johannesburg. Subscription, 7s. per annum. Saturday, December 21st, 1912.

BOY SCOUTS, TOO!

1. "What-ho!" said the boy scouts, who were out to capture the village. "The whole of the village seems to be here. Let's make sure of them."

2. So the artful laddies got some needles and thread, and set to work. And in a very short time—

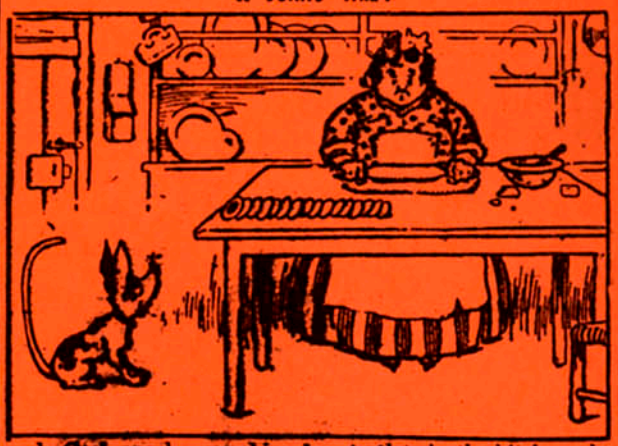
3. They'd got everybody fixed like this. And that did it. When those villagers get hold of the boy scouts there will be trouble, that's a fact!

THE SHOEMAKER FOUND THEM SLIPPERY CUSTOMERS!

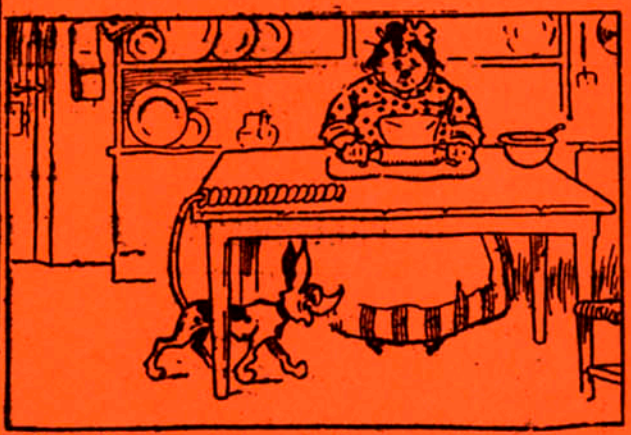
1. "Ha, ha!" chuckled the shoemaker. "I've got them fairly! I'm the only cobbler in the village, and I can charge what I like for repairing." So he put up the above notice.

2. But while the villagers were worrying about the price of leather a roller-skate merchant opened next door to the cobbler, and, of course, as you may guess—

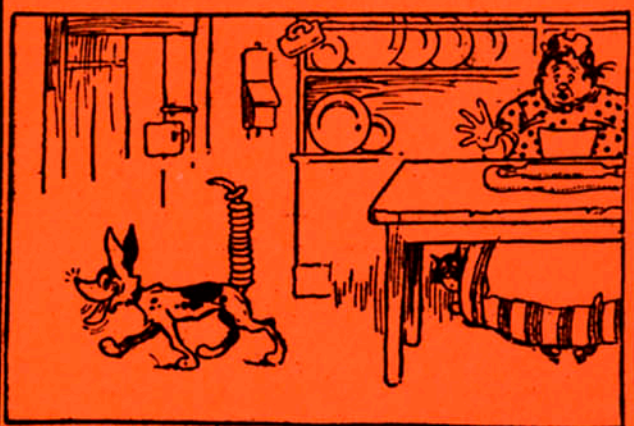
A FUNNY TAIL!



1. Dick was busy making jam tartlets in the kitchen when Fido strolled in. "My, couldn't I just get outside some of those toothsome tarts!" he gargled.



2. But he was a brainy animile was our Fido, and he soon discovered a plan whereby he might obtain possession of the morsel—as the above illustration shows.

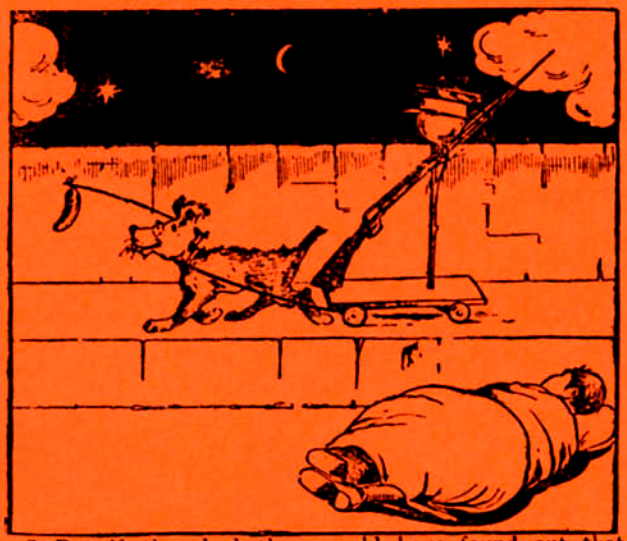


3. "What-ho!" he murmured, as he merrily trotted out. "This is where your humble does himself a bit of good, and no mistake!"

3. The merry villagers patronised the skate chap, and saved the boot-leather like this. And thus was the greedy cobbler foiled!

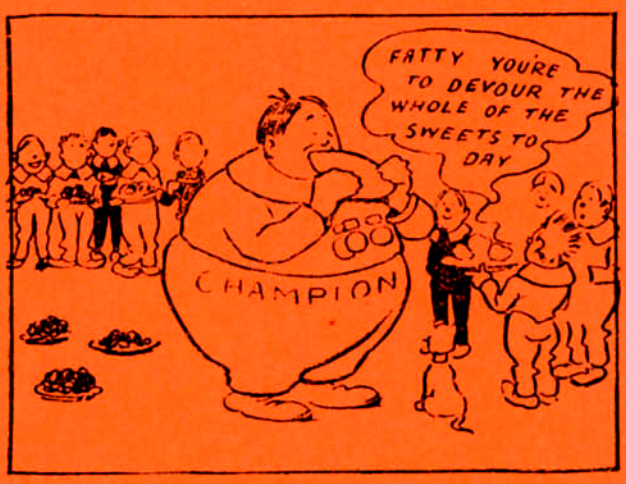
A FROSTY NIGHT AND ALL'S WELL!

1. "All right, Sergeant; I can see that that sentry is very active on his post—we need not go any further!" said the orderly-officer of the guard.



2. But if they had they would have found out that Private Spud Murphy was not so active as appeared from outside the fortifications.

IF PUNISHMENT COULD BE MADE MORE CONGENIAL.



Billy Bunter writes to say that it wouldn't be a bad idea if all schoolboys were punished in the above manner, and if they are extra bad they should be compelled to eat the punishments of others! (*See 4th Picture.*)