

SPECIAL SUMMER NUMBER!

# The Magnet



2<sup>d</sup>

This Grand Issue Contains an Extra Long Complete School Tale, entitled  
**"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S HOLIDAY!"**  
By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

No. 340.

Vol. 8.

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## STORYETTES.

### RANGE AND RAGE!

The lieutenant of the Dreadall rushed on to the captain's bridge, and saluted.

"Well?" roared the commander. "What do you want?"

The shriek of the artillery on every side was deafening.

"Captain," cried the lieutenant, "the enemy has got our range."

The captain frowned.

"Confound the luck!" he growled morosely. "Now, how will the cook be able to get out dinner?"

### LUCKY!

"Ya-as," drawled the Yankee. "I once knoo a man, sir, who fell from a window-sill in a flat twenty storeys high, and never hurt himself, beyond a few bruises."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Englishman.

"True!" asserted the Yankee. "Up there he was, busy cleanin' the window, and he fell right off!"

"Oh, bosh!" objected his listener. "How could that be?"

"Waal, sir," drawled the other. "You see, he just happened luckily to fall inside!"

### RIDDLED!

The smart man burst into the room.

"Heard the news about Dickenson getting shot?" he roared, red with excitement.

Club members dropped their papers and sprang suddenly to life.

"No!" they cried. "When?"

"'Bout half an hour ago!" gasped the smart man. "I was there, and saw it!"

"Where did he get shot?" broke in another.

"Down at the ironmonger's!" chuckled the smart man, slipping into the best chair. "He bought two pounds of it!"

### TOWARD HIS TROWSIS!

The school managers were present—all of 'em—and the teacher was anxious that her scholars should do well.

She picked upon Tommy as the most likely to do her credit. Tommy's freckled knees showed through his pants, and, because the managers were present, Tommy sat with a hand on each knee.

"Tommy," said the teacher. "Will you please give me"—the teacher was always polite when the managers were present—"will you please give me a sentence with the word 'toward' in it?"

Then Tommy rose, and, in a graceful attitude, with a thumb on each freckle, answered:

"Please, teacher, I toward my trowsis!"

### THE REAL TRUTH!

Great excitement at Seaview-on-the-Sea. Frizzy Frazzles, the musical-comedy favourite, going in to bathe. Greater excitement at Seaview-on-the-Sea. Frizzy Frazzles out of her depth, and screaming for help.

Simultaneously, fifty-seven boats put out to save her; but one boatman, stronger than the rest, reached her side easily first. He had just reached out a muscular arm to grip Frizzy, when her frantic struggles dislodged her bathing-cap, which floated away, carrying with it, what was far more precious—her wig!

Huge excitement at Seaview-on-the-Sea.

"Oh, save my hair!" screamed Frizzy. "My hair—save my hair!"

"Pardon me, mum!" granted the boatman, hauling her roughly in. "I'm a life-saver, not a bloomin' air-restorer!"

### THE BITTER BIT!

Of course, they were perfect lunatics ever to think of taking their summer holidays in the summer. Sane folk nowadays pitch on November for their annual fortnight. But Arthur and Martha had adhered to the old-fashioned plan, and all they got they deserved, and all they deserved they got.

Huddled in waterproofs, and shivering so that the automatic piano tinkled dismally, they sat at the end of the pier.

"How the wind howls!" she yelled.

"Yes," he bawled in reply. "Probably it has the toothache!"

"The toothache?" she screamed.

"Yes!" he roared. "Have you never heard of the teeth of the gale?"

And the bitter wind bit them with increased venom and vigour.

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### DONE BROWN!

With a complacent smile and an outstretched hand, Cadger approached his old chum Brown.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "How bad you're looking! Anything the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Brown, surprised. "Never felt better in my life."

"But you do look bad!" pressed Cadger. "And ten to one I know the cause. You've got no 'baccy'?"

"Wrong again!" exclaimed Brown. "I've a pouch full!"

"Indeed!" smiled Cadger oilyly. "Then can you spare a pipe? My pouch is absolutely empty!"

### THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

Sadsea-on-Sand may be small, but when the season is in swing, every available room is let, and bathing-machines, rabbit-hutches, and even dog-kennels command high prices.

Last month it happened that a visitor to Sadsea saw the policeman soundly cuffing a youth, and, in surprise, he went to the constable for an explanation of the youth's misdeeds.

"What has he done?" repeated the representative of the law in disgust. "Why, 'e's bin pickin' pockets, sir! And if I ketch 'im at it again, I'll give 'im a good 'iding!"

"But why don't you run him in?" asked the visitor.

"Run 'im in?" repeated the guardian of the law in surprise. "No fear! Not just yet! Why, bless you, sir, we ain't runnin' anybody in this month! The police-station and all the cells is let to visitors!"



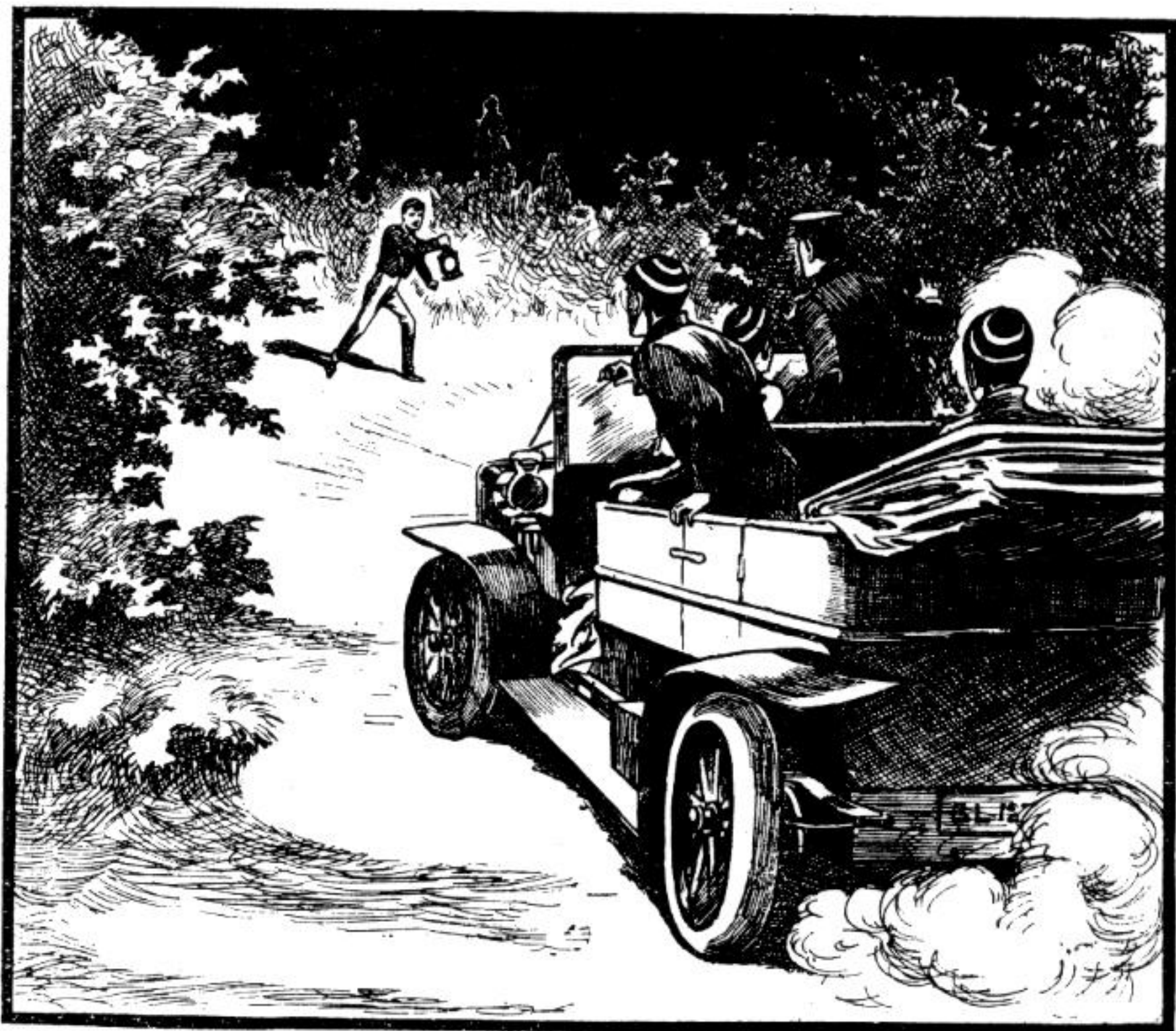
The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.



# HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S HOLIDAY!

A Magnificent, New, Extra-Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars School.

PICTURES  
BY  
C. H.  
CHAPMAN



BY  
FRANK  
RICHARDS

The car slowed down, and came to a halt within a couple of yards of the red lamp. "Hallo! What's wrong?" called the chauffeur. (See Chapter 13.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not in Request!

"TAIN'T easy to decide!"

Billy Bunter of the Remove made that remark in the junior common-room at Greyfriars.

There was a buzz of cheery voices in the crowded room.

All the fellows had something to talk about. Most of them were making plans. For it was the last day of the term at Greyfriars; and on the morrow the school was breaking up for the holidays.

Hence the general cheerfulness.

There was no "prep" to be done on the last night of the term. The time generally spent in prep was spent in chatting, in packing, or in lounging about the School House with one's hands in one's pockets. Which the Greyfriars fellows regarded as a much more agreeable way of spending it.

In one corner of the common-room, Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove were deep in discussion. The Famous Five had very special plans for that vacation. Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, was yawning in an armchair, apparently the only fellow who was totally unexcited by the



near approach of the holidays. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were discussing a forthcoming motor-car trip, in quite loud tones—making it quite impossible for anybody not to know that they were going on a motor-car trip. Tom Brown, the New Zealander, was solemnly explaining to Hoskins of the Shell his intention of going home to Taranaki for the holidays in an aeroplane—needless to say, for the sole purpose of pulling the leg of the simple Hoskins, who listened with wide-open eyes and mouth.

Billy Bunter had been sitting in a state of deep thoughtfulness. The fat brow of the fattest junior at Greyfriars was wrinkled with reflection. Peter Todd, his study-mate in the Remove, was watching him curiously. He was wondering what great plans William George Bunter was making for the holidays—that is to say, upon whom the fat junior was scheming to "plant" himself.

"'Tain't easy!" repeated Bunter, with a shake of the head.

"What isn't easy?" asked Todd genially. "Trying to think out what's become of the postal order you've been expecting all the term?"

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, in an absent-minded sort of way.

"Eh? Oh, no! But 'tain't easy!"

"Selecting a victim?" asked Todd, with a grin.

Bunter sniffed. He was really thinking out who should have the honour of his company for that vacation; but he did not like to hear it described as "selecting a victim."

"You see, there's such a lot of places a chap can go to," said Bunter loftily. "When a fellow's very much sought after, he can't go everywhere—but it's up to him to be careful not to hurt people's feelings."

"Quite so!" agreed Todd. "But that needn't worry you, surely?"

"Oh, really, Todd! Now, there's Mauly!" said Bunter, ticking off the name on his fat fingers. "Mauly has a splendid place, and a chap could depend on getting a good feed there. And then, as he's a lord, one will meet all sorts of nobs there. I should feel quite at home among Mauly's people."

"Just as if you were among your own titled relations?" suggested Peter Todd gravely.

Bunter nodded.

"Exactly. I really think I ought to give Mauly a chance. But then there's Wharton—I hear he's arranging some tour or other for the vac—and I think I should like that. I like the seaside."

"You mustn't forget Wharton!" agreed Todd. "Wharton's No. 2. Who's the next victim?"

"The next pal," said Bunter, with dignity. "The next pal I am thinking of is Vernon-Smith. I hear that Smithy always has a high time on his holidays—being the son of a millionaire, of course, he would! I think I should like it all right with Smithy!"

He ticked Smithy off on the third fat finger.

"No. 3," said Todd, with a grin. "Who's No. 4?"

"Well, there's Coker of the Fifth. I've always been very friendly with Coker of the Fifth, and I don't like quite to pass him over."

"My hat!"

"But I mustn't forget my friends out of Greyfriars," said Bunter thoughtfully. "There's that chap D'Arcy of St. Jim's, you know. I'm awfully pally with him, and I must manage to give him a week-end, at least."

"He must have a weak end if he has you with him for a holiday," agreed Todd, "and his weak end would be his head, I should say."

Bunter sniffed, but otherwise disdained to notice Todd's humorous remark.

"Then there's that other chap at Rylcombe Grammar School—Gordon Gay. I met him once at St. Jim's, and rather took to him. I feel that I ought to give him a look in, this vacation."

"You ought!" said Todd. "He doesn't know you from

Adam, of course—but give him a look-in. He may give you a kick-out in return. But don't be bashful!"

"Then you, Toddy—there's you!"

"Oh!" said Todd. "There's me, is there?"

"Yes," said Bunter calmly. "I might manage to give you a week. I don't promise it, but I'll do my best."

"Will you, by thunder?" gasped Todd.

"Then there's Temple of the Fourth—I rather like the idea of a motor-car trip. I must try to find time for Temple."

"Oh!"

"As I said, 'tain't easy to decide!" said Bunter thoughtfully. "I've got a good many more on my list. Still, you can count on me for a week, Todd! Now your Uncle Benjamin and your Cousin Alonzò are away, I think I could stand that. Yes, I'll give you a week."

"You'll give me a week! You—you——"

"Which part of the vac would suit you best?" asked Bunter. "I can only make it a week, as I have so many other engagements. Tell me which time you'd like best, and I'll try to fix it in. Of course, these things have to be wangled."

"I suppose they do," agreed Todd. "Lemme see; could you come on the 30th of February?"

"Eh?"

"In the year 1990?"

"I say, Toddy——"

"That's the only possible date I can give you," explained Todd. "If you can't manage that, I'm afraid it will have to fall through."

"Look here, Todd——"

"Better scratch my name off the list," grinned Todd. "I ain't worthy of the honour. In other words, I'm not taking any. Savvy?"

"On second thoughts, I don't think I could spare you a week. I want to be decent to a chap who's my study-mate here, but there are circumstances—— I shouldn't have much of a time in a country solicitor's house, anyway—hardly up to my style——"

"Why, you cheeky porpoise——"

"Besides, there's Hazeldene," said Bunter. "I must find time for him somehow. His sister Marjorie will expect to see me during the holidays. It will be a bit of a squeeze, finding time for them all; but I mustn't forget Marjorie—I don't want to spoil her holiday. I'm sorry, Todd, but I sha'n't be able to stay with you after all."

"You—you——"

"No good talking," said Bunter, rising from his chair. "I've said I'm sorry, and I am sorry, Todd; but it can't be helped. With so many engagements, something will have to go—and I'm afraid it's my week with you that will have to go. Sorry!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving Todd simply gasping.

Bunter stopped by Lord Mauleverer's armchair. Lord Mauleverer was yawning, and he yawned more portentously than ever as the Owl of the Remove joined him. But Bunter blinked at him very genially through his enormous spectacles.

"It's all right, Mauly!" he remarked.

"Begad, is it?" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes."

"Glad to hear it," yawned his lordship. "Good-bye!"

"Ahem! What I mean to say is, that I've been thinking out my engagements for the vacation, and I find I can give you a week."

"Begad!"

"Might as well make it the first week in the vac," said Bunter. "Then I can leave with you to-morrow, and come directly down to your place. The other fellows will have to wait, that's all."

"Begad!"

"Are you going by train or motor-car, Mauly?"

"Eh?"

"If you're going by train, I want to know which, so that I can be ready in time, you know."

"Yaas."

"I'd rather go by car, if it's all the same to you, though." "My dear man, I don't mind how you go—so long as you do go," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Well, which are you going by?"

"That depends, begad!"

Bunter looked puzzled.

"I don't see. What does it depend on, Mauly?"

"It depends on you, my dear fellow. If you go by train, I shall go by car——"

"Eh?"

"And if you go by car, I shall go by train——"

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

"And in either case I sha'n't see you till we get back to Greyfriars," said Lord Mauleverer calmly; "and not then if I can help it, begad!"

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**OUR COMPANION PAPERS:** "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday. "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Ed. Every Saturday, 2





Fish made a sudden jump through the doorway, pressing the nozzle of the syphon as he jumped to catch the ventriloquist before he fled. There was a gasping yell in the passage. "G-g-good gracious! What—on—bless my soul!" "M-m-my hat!" stuttered Fish. "It's Mr. Quelch!" (See Chapter 3.)

Billy Bunter glared at the schoolboy earl.

"You silly ass——"

"Thanks!"

"I jolly well won't come now."

"Many thanks!"

"I shouldn't care to pass a week with a silly chump, anyway——"

"Hear, hear!"

Bunter snorted and rolled away again. His list, extensive as it was, was not panning out very well so far. He joined the Famous Five, who were still deep in discussion. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were making extensive plans, which did not include William George Bunter. They went on talking cheerfully, apparently unconscious of the existence of the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows——"

"There's us five," Bob Cherry was saying. "And I suppose Smithy would come, and Tom Brown, and, of course, Hazeldene. What about three more?"

"I say, Cherry——"

"We must have eleven, if we can fix it," said Harry Wharton. "Unluckily, some of the fellows we want are booked. Bulstrode is going home, and Penfold can't come, and Mark Linley's going home to Lancashire. Fisher T. Fish would come, but he's no good at cricket, and he's a worry, anyway. Bolsover major might do, but he's booked. What about your minor, Franky? He plays a rather good game for a Second Form fag."

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

Nugent nodded.

"Dicky will be glad to come," he said. "I was thinking of suggesting it. That will make nine of us."

"I say, Nugent——"

"We'll ask Todd. If Todd comes that will be ten, anyway. And I dare say we could pick up an eleventh chap somewhere."

"I say, Wharton——"

"Ten, anyway," agreed Johnny Bull. "It's simply a ripping idea—simply ripping! How many fixtures have you got so far?"

"Three, so far. And we can get some more, too. I——"

"I say, you rotters, I'm talking to you!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, apparently becoming aware of Bunter's existence for the first time. "Did you speak, Bunty?"

Billy Bunter glared.

"You jolly well know I did, you beast! Look here, you fellows, I've decided——"

"Have you?" yawned Wharton. "Right-ho! Never mind telling us what you've decided—go and tell somebody else. We're busy. Why, you chaps, there's Mauly! We'll make Mauly eleventh man!"

"He can't play cricket."

"We'll make him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I hear you're arranging a tour for the vac," said Bunter.

"Yes, yes! Buzz off!"

"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!" By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Visiting seaside places, and fixing up cricket-matches en route, and so on?"

"Yes. Don't bother."

"Sounds like being a good time," said Bunter.

"Well, we hope so. Run along!"

"Well, I've decided what I'm going to do," said Bunter. "I'm coming with you."

The Famous Five stared at him.

"You?"

"Yes," said Bunter, with a nod. "I can't waste any time on Todd. I'm sorry about it; but I shouldn't have much of a time in a country solicitor's house—his pater is only a solicitor, you know. I was thinking of Mauly; but on second thoughts I can't stand a yawning ass like that. Besides, I should like a tour."

"Go hon!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"And if you're thinking of playing cricket you can't do better than play me. You know what kind of a cricketer I am."

"Ha, ha! We do—we does!"

"Then it's settled?" said Bunter.

"Quite settled!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We're making up a cricket team, not a freak exhibition, and you're superfluous, Bunt, old man. I recommend you to bestow yourself on some of your titled relations. We're not taking any."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Buzz off!"

"Now, look here," said Bunter, his little round eyes gleaming determinedly through his spectacles, "I'm coming! Hazel's coming with you, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"And so you'll be meeting Hazel's sister Marjorie—"

"Quite so!"

"That settles it, then. You know how pally I am with Marjorie."

Bob Cherry began to glare. But the Owl of the Remove did not observe the danger-signal. He rattled on cheerfully:

"Marjorie will naturally expect me to be in the party. It will spoil it all for her if I'm not there. I'm jolly well going to take her for little moonlight walks on the sands, and all that! He, he, he! Yow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter's fat chuckle was suddenly cut short. Five pairs of hands descended on him at once, and he was whirled off his feet.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Wharrer yer doing? Ow! Ow!"

Bump!

Bunter descended on the floor of the common-room, gasping. The Famous Five walked away and left him there still gasping. He groped for his spectacles, and set them straight on his little fat nose, and blinked round at the grinning crowd of fellows.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Beasts!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming, all the same! Where are those beasts gone? Ow! Ow! I'm coming, all the same! Grooh!"

And Billy Bunter picked himself up, snorting, and rolled away in search of the Famous Five, fully determined that he was coming all the same!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Left Out!

PETER TODD came into his study with a cheery whistle. Billy Bunter was there, with a far from cheery expression on his face. The Famous Five were celebrating the break-up of the term with a final feed in No. 1 Study, on an unusually large scale. Quite an army of fellows had been asked to it—more than the study would hold, as a matter of fact—but William George Bunter was not one of them. Troublesome as the Owl of the Remove generally was, the Co. would have relented towards him on the last night of the term, with the happy prospect of not seeing him again for a good many weeks. But his unfortunate remarks on the subject of Marjorie Hazeldene in the common-room had hardened their hearts.

Impertinence was the leading trait in Billy Bunter's character; but on the subject of Marjorie impertinence was not permitted. And when he had put his fat face into No. 1 Study a loaf had caught him upon the chest and bowled him over into the passage, and Bunter had beaten a discomfited retreat. He was glowering when Peter Todd came in.

"Hallo! You're not at the feed, then!" said Bunter, glad that someone else was left out.

Todd grinned.

"I'm just going," he said. "Everybody in the eleven will be there. As you're not in the eleven you've nothing to grumble at."

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"So you're going with those beasts?"

"Exactly!"

Todd began to select the best of the crockery from the study cupboard. On the occasion of a feed of unusual dimensions crockeryware was at a premium and had to be borrowed up and down the passage.

Bunter watched him through his big spectacles, with a very injured expression.

"I say, Toddy, you might put in a word for me, you know. We're good pals, you know."

"Go hon!"

"And as Marjorie will be in the party—"

Todd held up a warning finger.

"Chuck it!" he said peremptorily.

"Oh, really, Todd, I hope you're not getting jealous of me like Bob Cherry! It's not a fellow's own fault if girls take to him—"

"Shut up, you silly fathead!" said Todd. "The party will be meeting Marjorie and Miss Clara at Shoremouth, and, therefore, you are out of it. Marjorie can't stand you at any price."

"Look here, you know jolly well—"

"Besides, every fellow has to stand his own exes," said Todd. "We shall be weeks on the trip, and we can't afford to carry a passenger. If you hadn't the cheek of Old Nick himself you wouldn't expect it."

"If I get some postal-orders I'm expecting to-morrow morning—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Besides, Mauleverer's going to be there, and he's got lots of money. Mauly and I are great pals."

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

"And Smithy, too—Smithy's rolling in money!"

"He wouldn't let you roll in his money, I fancy!" grinned Todd. "This is where you shut up! They'd have let you come to the feed if you hadn't spoken familiarly of Marjorie in the common-room. Why can't you learn not to be such a rotten cad?"

"Why, you—you—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Todd, making up a pile of crockery ready to carry along to No. 1 Study.

"I say, Todd, old man, I really ought to come along, you know. If Wharton's been fixing up cricket matches, he'll want a good player—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Anyway, I'd umpire!" said Bunter desperately. "The team ought to take an umpire along."

"Umpires are supposed to know something about cricket, fathead!"

"Well, don't I know something about it?" roared Bunter, exasperated.

"You've kept it jolly secret if you do."

"Besides, you know what an entertaining chap I am. I'll make the railway journeys lively, you know. You know, I'm a splendid ventriloquist—"

"I know you bother people with rotten ventriloquial tricks!" growled Peter Todd. "No ventriloquists wanted on this journey. Go and eat coke!"

Todd lifted the little pile of plates, cups, and saucers, and turned to the door. Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He was in a state of the greatest exasperation. After the list he had made up of the fellows to stay with over the holidays, he had made the painful discovery that he was not at all in request. He had even ventured to hint to Coker of the Fifth that he'd go home with Coker, and Coker, after an astonished stare, had cuffed him for his cheek. He had told Vernon-Smith that he would come along with him, and Smithy had bidden him go and eat coke. Even Skinner and Snob and Stott had declined the honour of Bunter's company over the holidays.

And although Bunter often gave great descriptions of wonderful doings at home, it was to be noted that he did not show any great keenness to spend his holiday under the parental roof. And never had a fisher for invitations failed so lamentably to get a single catch!

Even his great gift of ventriloquism stood in his way now. The Remove chaps were fed up with it, for Bunter's little tricks were not always good-natured, and his wonderful gift had led to many severe thumpings.

But it came into his mind now, as Todd walked away with the pile of crockery, that his gift of ventriloquism had its uses, if only to make the fellows "sit up" for leaving him out of that holiday excursion.

He cleared his throat with a fat little grunt, his eyes following Todd to the door.

Todd had just stepped into the passage with his load of crocks, when there came a sudden growl of a dog under his very feet.

Gr-r-r-r-r!

Peter Todd gave a jump.



The pile of crockery in his arms tottered, and the next moment there was a terrific crash as it shot down on the passage floor.

Smash!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, coming out of the next study with a pile of crockery. "Well, you are clumsy! Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd stared at the ruin in dismay.

"There's a blessed dog here!" he exclaimed. "The beast growled right under my feet, and startled me. Mind you don't tread on him."

The Bounder of Greyfriars peered about the dusky passage.

"Can't see any dog," he remarked.

"Well, he's here. I nearly——"

Gr-r-r-r!

Vernon-Smith uttered a sharp exclamation and jumped away, as he heard that savage growl close behind him.

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "Who's clumsy now?"

"My hat! I—I thought the beast was going to bite me! Where's that blessed dog?" roared the Bounder, glaring round wrathfully.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Breaking up the happy home?" called out Bob Cherry. "Cocks cheap where you come from, you fellows?"

"There's a beastly dog here——"

"Can't see him."

Peter Todd uttered a yell. There evidently wasn't a dog in the passage, but he was mystified only for a moment.

"That ass, Bunter!"

He rushed back into his study. Billy Bunter was grinning all over his fat face, but his grin vanished as Todd rushed upon him.

"I say, Toddy—— Ow! Yow! Leggo! Yaroooh! Ooooooch!"

Peter Todd did not let go. He smote Billy Bunter hip and thigh. Bunter rolled on the study carpet and roared. But Peter was not finished yet. He brought his boots into play, and dribbled Bunter round the study like a football. The fat junior squirmed under the table at last, yelling.

"Ow! Yow! Help! Murder! Fire! Yah!"

"There!" gasped Peter. "Now, perhaps you'll give your giddy ventriloquism a rest!"

"Ow! Yow, yow, yow! Yaroooh!"

Peter Todd stalked out of the study. His contribution of crockery was in fragments on the floor, and he had to forage along the passage seeking further supplies. Billy Bunter crawled out from under the table, dusty and gasping.

"Ow! Yow! The beasts! But I ain't jolly well going to be left out of that feed, all the same, or I'll make 'em sit up if I am! Ow! Yow! After all I've done for them, too! Ow!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Last Feed of the Term!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in high feather.

No. 1 Study in the Remove passage was crowded—not to say crammed.

It had been Wharton's idea to spend a part of the vacation in an excursion, combining cricket with the pleasures of the seaside. And his idea had been backed up heartily by the Co. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, hailed the idea with enthusiasm. Tom Brown, the New Zealander, whose home was so far away, had joined in the scheme with great keenness. Peter Todd, whose services as a cricketer were highly valued, had assented at once. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, now on the best of terms with the Famous Five, and a pillar of strength in the Remove eleven, gave in his adhesion most cordially. Nugent minor was glad enough to join his major's party, and to have a chance of playing cricket with the Remove players. Hazeldene, whose chief qualification was that he was Marjorie Hazeldene's brother, and Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, made up the rest of the eleven.

And all the eleven were crowded into No. 1 Study for that final feed; and although No. 1 was a good size for a junior study, it certainly was a cram.

But the juniors did not mind that. Those who could not sit down, stood up, and good-humour prevailed on all sides.

The feed was ample, most of the juniors being in funds, and all of them having stood their "whack" to supply the festive board.

Crockery, borrowed from all sides, glistened on the table among piles of good things.

Bob Cherry looked round over the crowded study when all the eleven fellows were inside. The door had been left open, likewise the window, for coolness.

"Room for one more?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We'll make room," he said.

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ONE  
PENNY.

"Then I'll fetch Marky."

Mark Linley was Bob's study-mate in No. 14. Bob strode along the Remove passage, and found the Lancashire lad packing up his books. Mark looked round with a smile.

"Come on!" said Bob cheerily.

"Eh? Where?"

"Final blow-out to wind up the term," said Bob. "I wish you were coming with us to-morrow, Marky. But you can come to the feed, anyway."

And Bob marched the scholarship boy along the passage, and into No. 1 Study.

"Standing room only!" grinned Nugent. "Trot in!"

"Rather a squeeze," said Wharton; "but——"

"But what's the odds so long as you're 'appy?" said Bob Cherry. "Mauly, my son, gather up some of your legs. No room to sprawl, old chap."

"Begad!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Blessed if there isn't Bunter again!" exclaimed Bob, exasperated. "Give me a cricket-stump, somebody."

"Here's the poker," said Hazeldene.

"Thanks! Now, Bunter——"

But Bunter had vanished. He had not waited for the poker.

The crowd in No. 1 Study were soon busy with the feed, and the clatter of knives, and forks, and crockery, and popping corks made a merry din. Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, came along the passage and looked in.

"I guess I'm on in this scene," he remarked.

And Fish squeezed in somehow. Hospitality was unbounded in No. 1 Study on that special evening.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Get out!" roared Bob, as the fat face and glistening spectacles of Billy Bunter appeared again at the open doorway. He made a clutch at the poker, and Bunter vanished like a ghost at cock-crow.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Most of the juniors were talking at once, and there was a considerable amount of noise from the crowded study. In the midst of the joyous din, there came a sharp, metallic voice from the passage—the well-known, incisive voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Stop that disturbance instantly! Every boy here is to go to his own study at once!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Begad!"

"Oh, sir——"

Dismay fell upon the merry party. Certainly they were making some noise, but unusual freedoms were allowed on the last night of the term, and they had not expected Mr. Quelch to chip in like this.

"Rotten!" growled Johnny Bull.

But Fisher T. Fish had looked out of the doorway, and he gave a yell:

"'Tain't Quelchy!"

"What!"

Bob Cherry bounded into the passage. A fat figure was scudding away at the other end; but there was no sign of the master of the Remove.

Bob turned back into the study, breathing wrath.

"It's all right, you chaps! 'Tain't the Quelch-bird! It's that fat beast again with his beastly ventriloquism."

"Oh, good!" said Vernon-Smith. "Here's to us!"

"Hurrah!"

And the feast went merrily on. Fisher T. Fish posted himself just inside the door, with a syphon of soda-water close by him.

"I guess that fat galoot will be back here again," he remarked, "and I kinder reckon I shall catch him on the hop—some!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ten minutes later, when the noise in No. 1 Study was waxing fast and furious, there was a step in the passage.

Fisher T. Fish winked at the juniors, and picked up the syphon, grinning.

"I kinder guess there's going to be a surprisc—just a few!" he murmured.

"Not so much noise, please!"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch from the direction of the head of the stairs. But for the previous trick of Billy Bunter, the juniors could have been certain that it was the genuine voice of the Remove-master.

Fish held the syphon ready.

"Oh, rats!" he replied.

"What!"

"Come off!"

"Fish! How dare you address me in that manner!"

"Don't he do it well?" murmured Johnny Bull. "I'd



swear it was Quelch talking, if I didn't know it was that ventriloquial beast!"

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed Bunter is going to have a surprise."

Fish made a sudden jump through the doorway, pressing the nozzle of the syphon as he jumped to catch the ventriloquist before he fled.

The soda-water streamed out in a blinding flood.

There was a gasping yell in the passage.

"G-g-g-good gracious! What—oh— Bless my soul!"

With a roar of laughter the juniors crowded out of the study. But their roar of laughter died away suddenly.

The severe figure of their Form-master in his gown met their eyes, and he was staggering against the wall—drenched!

Fish, utterly dumbfounded and terror-stricken by his mistake, stood rooted to the floor, his jaw dropping, and his hand still unconsciously compressing the nozzle of the syphon, so that the stream of soda-water was still shooting out.

Wharton grasped his arm and dragged him aside, and gave a whoop as the stream caught him in the face.

"Oh! Ow! Groogh!"

"Look out!" roared Bob Cherry, who had also caught some of the soda-water. "Oh, you ass!"

"M-m-m-my hat!" stuttered Fish. "It—it's Mr. Quelch!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Awfully sorry, sir!"

"Quite a mistake, sir!"

"Yaas, begad!"

"The mistakefulness is terrific!"

Mr. Quelch was gasping for breath. That too hurried stream of soda-water had caught him full in the face, to begin with, and then it had drenched his gown. His face was running with it; and he was crimson with anger.

"Fish! Are you mad?" panted the Form-master. "How dare you—how dare you, sir?"

"I—I—I—guess—"

"You—you—you—"

"It was a mistake, sir!" gasped Wharton. "Fish thought it was Bunter, sir, playing a ventriloquial trick on us."

Mr. Quelch had heard of Billy Bunter's exploits in that line, and, fortunately, he understood.

But the wrathful frown did not leave his majestic brow.

"Fish should not have made such a mistake. You are an utterly stupid boy, Fish. You will take two hundred lines, and go to your study at once and write them out!"

"Oh, I swow!"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Quelch, and the dismayed Fish went—glad, however, to escape so cheaply.

"I came to tell you not to make so much noise!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Even on the last night of the term, it is unnecessary to turn the school into a bear-garden."

And the Remove-master, mopping his face with his handkerchief, stalked away.

The juniors looked very solemn till Mr. Quelch was gone. But when they crowded back into No. 1 Study they were grinning. They had never seen a Form-master drenched with soda-water before, and it struck them as funny.

The feast proceeded with a little less noise; but ten minutes later Billy Bunter's voice was heard again.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry laid hold of another syphon.

"This way, Bunter. Here's something for you."

"Oh, good! What is it?"

"Soda-water!" said Bob cheerfully, as Bunter's fat face came peering in. "Here you are, as much as you like!"

Sizzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

"Ow, ow! Gerroogh! Yaroooggggh! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was fairly bowled over by the sudden stream. He disappeared into the passage, and the feasters sent a yell of laughter after him; and after that the feast proceeded without any further interruptions from the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Quick March!

**B**RIGHT and sunny the morning dawned upon Greyfriars School.

All the fellows were up at the first clang of the rising-bell.

There were final preparations, final packings, final good-byes and au revoirs. Harry Wharton & Co. were catching the morning express from Courtfield. The Famous Five were going to Wharton's home for a few days, and the rest of the travelling team were to join them there after seeing their people. Tom Brown was going with Wharton, and Billy Bunter fully intended to go as well. Bunter relied

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fully upon his own abilities to such an extent that he had already written to his people not to expect him, as he was passing the first part of the vacation with his schoolfellows and friends.

The juniors, having taken leave of their comrades, started walking to Courtfield; their luggage being left with Gosling the porter to be despatched.

Lord Mauleverer was starting home in a magnificent motor-car, and the juniors said good-bye to him, and he "buzzed" off. Vernon-Smith dashed away in a trap. Harry Wharton & Co. contented themselves with "Shanks' pony," as Bob Cherry expressed it, to reach Courtfield Junction. Hazeldene walked to Courtfield with them; he was then going on to Cliff House to take his sister Marjorie home.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk so fast."

The juniors paused and looked round in astonishment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!"

Billy Bunter, in a shining topper, and with a light coat over his arm, was hurrying down the road after them.

The Owl of the Remove came up panting, and with perspiration glistening upon his fat forehead. It was a warm morning, and Bunter was not accustomed to exercise.

"You going from Courtfield station?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Yes, of course."

"What train?"

"Same as yours."

"But our train doesn't go in your direction," said Harry Wharton. "You want one going the opposite way."

Bunter grinned feebly.

"Of—of course, I knew you were only joking yesterday, Harry, old chap."

"If you call me Harry, old chap, I'll bump you!"

"Oh, really, Harry!"

Wharton frowned, and made a movement towards the fat junior. Billy Bunter dodged behind Johnny Bull.

"I say, Harry, don't start the vac with a row when we're going to have such a jolly good time together," he remonstrated.

"But we're not going to be together," said Wharton, puzzled.

"Oh, yes, we are! I knew you were only joking, you know, when you said you wanted to leave your old pal Bunter out of the party. You'll need an umpire with you, if you're going to play cricket. I'm going to be your umpire."

"You—you cheeky owl!"

"I don't mind a joke," said Bunter. "I can take a joke with anybody. He, he, he!"

The Removites stared blankly at Bunter. Billy Bunter was about as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros, and the extent of his nerve was colossal. But that he should have the extraordinary "check" to plant himself upon the party after their exceedingly plain speaking on the subject almost took their breath away.

"Well," murmured Bob Cherry, "this takes the giddy cake!"

"The wholefulness of the esteemed cake!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton raised his hand.

"Cut off!" he said.

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"Don't call me Harry; I don't like it from you!" snapped Wharton. "Clear off, or we'll chuck you in the ditch. Buzz!"

"You know that Marjorie will want me—"

Hazeldene made a stride towards the fat junior. Billy Bunter had to dodge again.

"You fat rotter!" growled Hazel. "If you mention my sister again—"

"Walk sharp!" said Bob Cherry.

The juniors walked quickly towards Courtfield. Billy Bunter rolled after them, not in the least discouraged. He was determined to look upon their refusal of his company as a joke; nothing, in fact, would convince him that it wasn't a joke.

Three fellows came in sight on the road, and the juniors recognised Trumper and Grahame and Wickers, of Courtfield Council School. Trumper & Co. were the old rivals of the Removites, and they seldom met without "slanging" or ragging, but on this occasion all was good-fellowship. Harry Wharton & Co. greeted them warmly.

"Off for the holidays?" asked Trumper. "Best of luck."

"Thanks! We'll give you no end of wallopings when we come back next term!"

Trumper grinned.

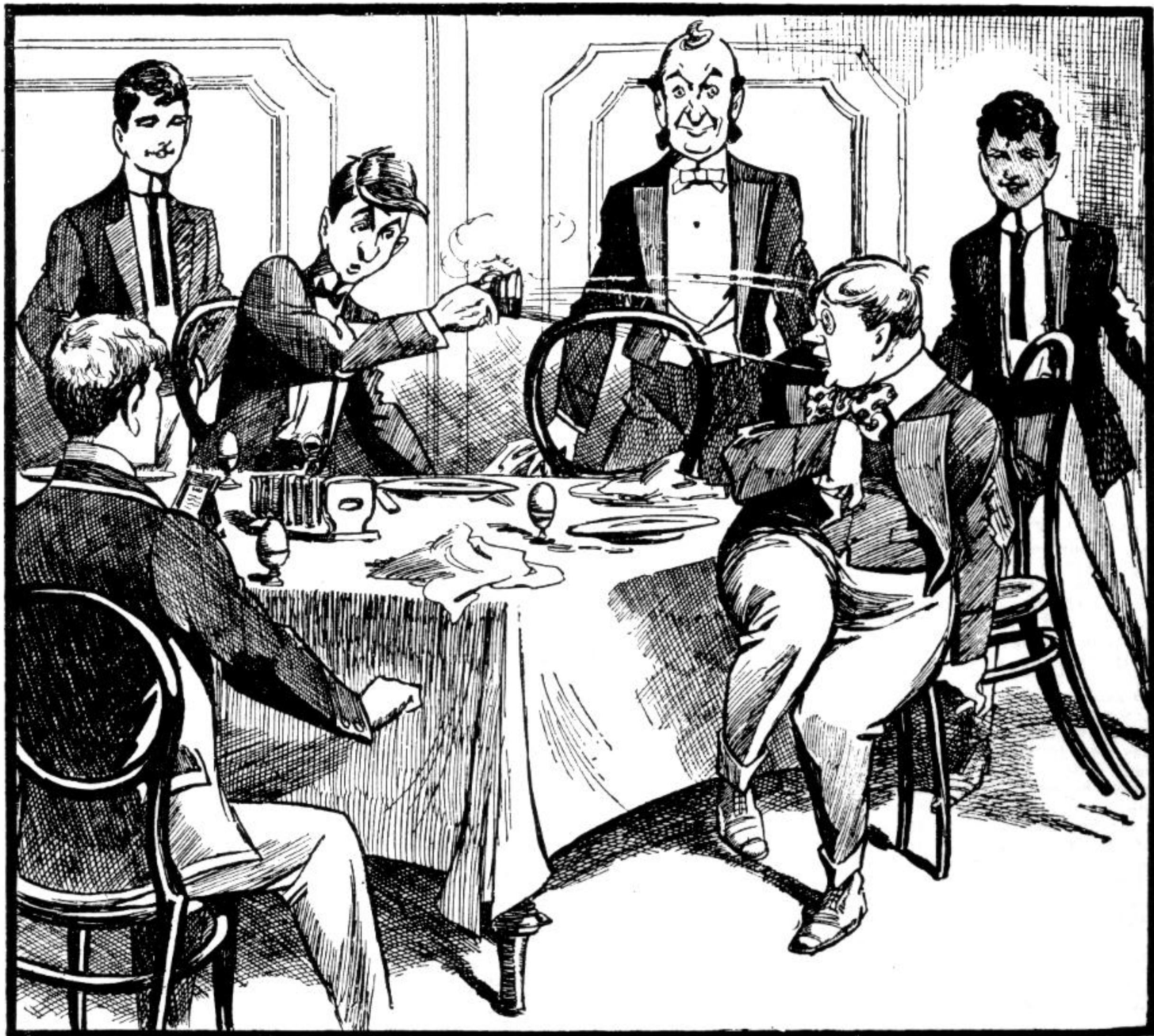
"I don't think!" he remarked.

"I say, Trumpy, old man," exclaimed Bob Cherry, "will you do us a little favour?"

"A big one, if you like!" said Trumper cheerily.

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"Oh, it was my voice that said the eggs were rotten, was it!" said Peter Todd grimly. "We've got a ventriloquist in the party, William. He plays rotten tricks, William. So I chuck my cup of tea over him, William—like that, William!" "Groogh!" roared Bunter, as Peter suited the action to the word. (See Chapter 15.)

"We're being haunted by a fat ghost."

Trumper & Co. glanced at Billy Bunter, who was puffing on up the road, and chuckled.

"Will you collar him, and walk him back to Greyfriars—you're going that way! Doesn't matter if you hurt him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any old thing!" said Trumper. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on towards Courtfield, Trumper and Grahame and Wickers continued on their way till they came up with the fat junior, and then they stopped. Billy Bunter would have passed them, but they stopped directly in his path, and the Owl of the Remove had to halt.

"I say, you fellows, get out of the way!" snapped Bunter.

"We're going to talk to you!" chuckled Wickers.

Bunter sniffed.

"I don't care to be seen talking to fellows of your class," he said loftily. "I draw the line at County Council schools myself. Let me pass!"

Trumper & Co. exchanged grins. Harry Wharton & Co. never seemed to see any difference in "class" between Greyfriars and Courtfield County Council School. But Billy Bunter, among his other enticing qualities, was a snob of the first water.

"Sorry, Bunter, but we're going to disgrace you!" grinned Trumper. "I'm going to take your noble arm, and Grahame

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is going to take the other, and we're going to walk with you to Greyfriars!"

"I'm not going back to Greyfriars!" roared Bunter.

"Your mistake; you are!"

"Look here—Leggo—"

"March!" said Trumper.

Billy Bunter had no choice about marching. Trumper had taken one fat arm, and Grahame had taken the other, and they marched Billy Bunter back towards the school. Wickers walked behind, helping Bunter with an occasional lunge of his boot when the fat junior slacked down. Bunter blinked at the Courtfield fellows in helpless rage. Any one of them could have made rings round Bunter in the matter of fisticuffs, and with the three together he was quite powerless.

"I—I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, as they marched him on. "I say, you'll make me lose my train, you know!"

"Sorry!"

"I've got to take the same train as my pals, you know!"

"Your pals don't seem anxious for you to do it!" grinned Trumper.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, the beasts! Do you mean to say they've asked you to—to keep me back? Oh, the rotters! After all I've done for those fellows! Leggo! Do you hear?"

"I hear!" agreed Trumper. "I'm not deaf. Kim on!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Bunter.

"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!" By FRANK RICHARDS.



"This way!"

Billy Bunter, writhing with rage, was marched on willy-nilly. They reached the gates of Greyfriars, where Trumper & Co. politely bade him good-bye, and strolled on towards Friardale. Billy Bunter, completely out of breath from that rapid walk, leaned on the stone pillar of the gateway, and gasped.

"Ow, the beasts! Ow, the rotters! Yow-ow-ow!"

The fat junior looked at his watch. He was fatigued and out of breath, and to catch that train at Courtfield he would have required to run all the way at a good rate. The game was up!

But Bunter's luck was in, as it happened. The carrier's cart came trotting by from the direction of Friardale. Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his glasses, and he jumped into the road and held up his fat hand.

"Give me a lift to Courtfield, will you, Cripps? I'll make it a bob!"

Cripps pulled in his horse.

"Jump in, Master Bunter!"

Master Bunter did not jump in; he hadn't a jump in him. But he clambered in, and sank down in the cart with a gasp of relief. Cripps whipped up his horse, and the cart rolled on towards Courtfield.

And Bunter grinned.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Good-bye, Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. walked on the platform at Courtfield Junction. They were in good time for the express, which had not yet come in. Hazeldene took his leave of his companions, and departed for Cliff House. The Famous Five and Tom Brown strolled along the platform, and went into the buffet for liquid refreshment in the shape of ginger-beer.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Highcliffe rotters!" murmured Bob Cherry, as they entered.

Highcliffe School was breaking up on the same day, and Ponsonby & Co. of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe were evidently catching the same train as the Greyfriars chums. They were in the buffet—Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour. Frank Nugent gave Ponsonby a dark look. There had been trouble between them, and Nugent had not forgotten it. However, the Greyfriars fellows were not looking for trouble on the first day of the vacation, so they walked farther along, and ordered their ginger-beer, without appearing to notice the existence of Ponsonby & Co.

The Highcliffe fellows, however, looked at them, and exchanged glances, and whispered. Ponsonby extracted an eyeglass from his pocket and jammed it in his eye, and surveyed the group of juniors with a supercilious stare. Bob Cherry grew a little restive.

"Suppose we bump those silly asses, just to wind up the term?" he suggested.

Wharton shook his head.

"They're not worth the trouble."

"I don't like that idiot Ponsonby looking at me with his silly eyeglass!"

"Never mind. Don't let's have a rag now."

And Bob Cherry grunted and contained his wrath. The Highcliffians evidently intended to make themselves disagreeable, and Bob would have been very pleased to knock some of the conceit out of them. However, he agreed to keep the peace, and the Greyfriars fellows assumed an elaborate unconsciousness of the supercilious looks of their old enemies.

The swing doors of the buffet were pushed open again, and a fat junior, gasping for breath, came in, and blinked round through his big spectacles. Johnny Bull saw him first, and uttered an exclamation.

"Bunter, by gum!"

"My only hat! Bunter!"

Billy Bunter sighted them, and bore down upon them with a cheerful grin.

"All serene, you fellows!"

"How did you get here?" demanded Nugent.

"It's all right! I don't mind a joke," said Bunter. "I had quite a pleasant walk with Trumper, and then got a lift in the carrier's cart coming here. He, he, he!"

"You can he, he, he as much as you like!" growled Wharton, "but if you get into the train, I'll jolly well pitch you out again!"

"Oh, really, Harry!"

"What is it?" said Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, loud enough for the juniors to hear, turning his eyeglass upon Billy Bunter.

"Something escaped from the Zoo, do you think?"

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

"Fat Jack of the Bonehouse!" said Gadsby.

Billy Bunter blinked across to the Highcliffe fellows. There

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was a gleam in his eyes. Miss Jummer, the young lady who presided over the bar, had just come in reply to a rap on the counter from Ponsonby.

"What are you going to have, you chaps?" drawled Ponsonby. "Make it fizz, what?"

"Yaas!" said Vavasour.

"Good egg!" said Gadsby. "Make it fizz, old chap!"

Ponsonby ordered champagne, with a flourish. Ponsonby was blessed with more money than brains, and he prided himself upon being a nut of the k-nuts.

"Silly asses!" growled Bob Cherry, in disgust.

Miss Jummer brought the champagne. Billy Bunter cleared his throat with a little cough. The Greyfriars fellows knew that cough, and they grinned. They knew that the Remove ventriloquist was clearing for action, so to speak.

Vavasour set down the long-stemmed glass, after drinking, with a flush in his face, a little out of breath after the champagne.

"What rotten stuff!"

"Eh?" said Ponsonby, not at all pleased to hear his expensive treat characterised as rotten stuff. "What's that, Vav?"

"Eh? I didn't speak."

"Didn't you?" growled Ponsonby. "If you don't like the fizz, don't drink it."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"What!"

"I—I didn't—"

"If you want to start the vac with a thick ear, Vavasour, you've only got to say so!" exclaimed Ponsonby angrily.

"I—I didn't speak—I swear I didn't!" exclaimed Vavasour in astonishment. "It must have been Gaddy."

"Don't talk rot!" growled Gadsby. "Do you think I don't know your voice? There ain't another voice like it outside a Punch-and-Judy show."

"I tell you—"

"Oh, rats!" said Ponsonby.

"You're drunk, Pon!"

"Oh, I'm drunk, am I?" said Ponsonby savagely, glaring at his chum. "Look here, Vav—"

"I didn't say you were drunk," yelled Vavasour.

"Yes, you did!"

"I tell you I didn't. Somebody else did!"

"Look here—"

"Don't make a noise here, little boys," came a voice apparently from Miss Jummer, who was serving the Greyfriars fellows with ginger-beer. "You silly little fellows should not drink champagne at all!"

The three Highcliffe fellows glared at Miss Jummer.

"What business is that of yours, Miss Jummer?" rapped out Ponsonby angrily.

The young lady of the bar turned round as she heard her name.

"I beg your pardon."

"I say, what business is it of yours whether we drink champagne or not?" demanded Ponsonby angrily.

He was excited by the "fizz," and annoyed by the altercation with Vavasour, and his temper was rising.

Miss Jummer stared at him.

"None at all," she said. "Why—"

"Well, then, keep your opinion to yourself," said Ponsonby rudely.

Miss Jummer flushed.

"I did not give you my opinion, but I will now," she snapped. "You are very silly to drink champagne at your age—very silly indeed! It is making you excited. And I will not serve you any more. Go away, and be quiet!"

Ponsonby & Co. glared. Ponsonby paid for the champagne with a sovereign, received his change, and the three juniors walked towards the door, all of them extremely bad-tempered. They had not reached the door when a voice exactly like Miss Jummer's rapped out:

"Stop! This isn't a good sovereign!"

Ponsonby swung back angrily.

"Rot! It's a good sovereign!" he said. "Let's see it."

Miss Jummer had gone to serve another customer, but she looked round as Ponsonby spoke, loudly and angrily.

"What is it now?" she asked.

"Let's see that sovereign."

"I have put it in the till," said Miss Jummer in surprise.

"Wasn't your change all right?"

"Yes, it was; but you said the quid was a bad one."

"I did not!"

"What! Why, you did!"

"I did not!" said Miss Jummer, with asperity. "And I request you to leave the buffet at once, Master Ponsonby. Your conduct is disorderly!"

Ponsonby ground his teeth, and turned to the door again. The buffet waiter was standing near the door, and there was a grin on his face. The grin irritated Ponsonby, but he



strode on; and as he turned his back on the waiter he heard a voice:

"Precious young rascals!"

Ponsonby turned furiously on the waiter.

"Begad, I'll report your insolence to your manager!" he exclaimed. "How dare you speak to me?"

The waiter stared at him.

"I ain't spoken," he said.

"You liar! You called us names."

"Somebody did," said the waiter. "I 'eard it; but it wasn't me. But don't you call me a liar, young gent! You jest get out. You've drunk too much!"

"It was you!" howled Ponsonby. "And I won't leave here till I've told your manager of your insolence."

The waiter, at a glance from Miss Jummer, opened the door.

"You'll go hout, and you'll go hout at once," he said; "and if you don't go hout, you'll be put hout. Now, then!"

"Come on, Pon," said Vavasour, catching his companion by the arm. "Don't get into a row with a waiter, for goodness' sake!"

The waiter shepherded the Highcliffians out of the buffet, and they departed in a towering rage. Billy Bunter grinned at his companions.

The Greyfriars fellows chuckled. Ponsonby & Co. had no suspicion of the cause of their trouble in the buffet.

"I say, you fellows, there'll be lots of fun having a ventriloquist in the party—"

"Only we're jolly well not going to have a ventriloquist in the party!" said Wharton.

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"Shut up!"

"We'll have some whisky," went on Wharton's voice—at least, it sounded like Wharton's voice.

His chums stared at him aghast

"Harry!"

"They won't serve us with whisky," said Nugent; "and we don't want any if they would. Have you gone off your rocker, Harry?"

Wharton gasped. For a moment he was dumbfounded. But the next moment he made a jump at Billy Bunter.

"You—you spoofing rotter!"

Bunter dodged among the little tables.

"Only a j-j-joke," he gasped. "I—I was only showing you how funny it would be!"

"Oh, it was Bunter!" exclaimed Nugent, in relief.

"Of course it was Bunter!" snapped Wharton. "Do you think I should suggest having whisky, you fathead? I'll—I'll—"

He made another rush at Bunter.

The fat junior skipped out of the buffet. He had not improved his chance of accompanying the party by that little joke.

"Train's in!" exclaimed Bob.

The juniors paid for their ginger-beer—and Billy Bunter's ginger-beer—and left the buffet. The train was beside the platform now, and passengers were hurrying to take their seats. The six juniors entered a carriage which was fortunately empty, just filling the number of the seats. But another passenger wanted to get in—it was William George Bunter. His fat hand grasped the handle of the door. Bob Cherry held the handle on the inside, and grinned at him cheerfully through the window.

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bob, I'm coming!"

"Full inside!"

"You can make room for one more."

"Got your ticket?" chuckled Bob.

"No. One of you fellows can pay."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me in, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand clear!" shouted the guard.

"Buzz off, Bunter! Good-bye!" roared the juniors.

"Oh, you rotters—"

"Good-bye, Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter released the handle of the door, and disappeared among the passengers on the platform. Bob Cherry dropped into his seat with a chuckle.

"Shaken off, by Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Greyfriars juniors began their journey in great spirits, enlivened by the prospect of the holiday before them, and the prospect of having at last shaken off Bunter.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Not Quite Left!

"FIRST stop Lantham," said Harry Wharton, and they settled down for the journey.

The time passed quickly enough in cheery chat on the inexhaustible subject of the forthcoming holiday tour. Besides the joys of the seaside, the juniors had three

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cricket matches booked for their excursion. One of them was with Gordon Gay, of Rylcombe Grammar School, who was to spend part of his vacation at Shoremouth, with some of his friends from the Grammar School. Another was with a party of St. Jim's fellows who were staying near that seaside town. But the first was with the local team at Wharton Magnus, near Harry's home. And the captain of the Remove intended to book some more fixtures, if the tour extended longer. The Remove chums were looking forward to the matches, and to the holiday generally. Shoremouth was a merry place, with any amount of boating and bathing, and there they were to meet the Hazeldenes.

"Lantham!" said Johnny Bull. "Hallo! There go the Highcliffe bounders!"

Ponsonby & Co. were seen alighting from the next carriage. They scowled at the merry faces of the Greyfriars fellows at their window, and walked down the platform to change trains. Then Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation:

"Bunter!"

"My only hat!"

"The only-hatfulness is terrific!"

There he was, coming along the platform, with the train guard walking by his side. There was a very severe expression on that guard's face, and it looked as if Bunter was in trouble. He was scanning the windows of the train as he came along, and the Greyfriars juniors promptly backed out of sight. But Bunter knew the carriage, and the guard opened the door.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said the guard, touching his cap. "This young person has been found travelling without a ticket. He says he has friends on the train who will pay his fare. Otherwise, he will get into trouble for swindling the company."

"Don't you be uncivil, my man, or I'll report you to the station-master," said Bunter loftily. "These chaps are my friends."

The guard grunted.

"Well, if somebody doesn't pay there will be trouble," he said. "Do you young gentlemen know him?"

The chums of the Remove glared at Bunter. His cheek was astounding. He had got into the train after all at Courtfield, and he had the amazing nerve to leave it to them to pay for his ticket. They did not believe for a moment that he had any money about him, but Bunter had a way of looking after his own money. He was never reckless with it excepting when he was in the tuckshop. Then he spent it like water.

"Yes, we know him," growled Bob Cherry. "But we're jolly well not going to pay his fare."

"No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, I've left a banknote in my study at Greyfriars," explained Bunter. "I'll write for it immediately we get to Wharton Lodge."

"You're jolly well not going to get to Wharton Lodge."

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"You kim along!" exclaimed the guard, grasping Bunter by the shoulder. "The young gents say they ain't paying your fare. This way with you!"

Bunter struggled.

"I say, you fellows, I'm stony—I am, really! You're not going to let a Greyfriars chap be hauled up for a paltry half-crown, I suppose?"

Wharton frowned angrily.

"Hold on, guard!" he said. "We'll pay it. Here you are."

The guard released the fat junior.

"Werry well, sir."

"Pay the full fare to Wharton Magnus," said Bunter.

"Rats! I'll pay your fare here, and not a brown over. Don't let him get into the train again without a ticket, guard."

"I'll see he don't!" grunted the guard.

"I say, Wharton—"

Slam!

The carriage door closed, and Bunter stood on the platform, blinking wrathfully at the juniors. The train glided out of the station, leaving him standing there. He shook a fat fist after the grinning faces at the carriage window.

"Really left him behind at last!" chuckled Tom Brown. "He's not in the train. There he is, ornamenting the platform."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors, satisfied that they had got rid of the Owl of the Remove at last, settled down to resume the discussion of the coming holiday.

They had to change again for Wharton Magnus, but at the junction there was no sign of Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had evidently been left behind.

"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!" — By — FRANK RICHARDS.



The local train took them on to the village near Wharton's home. It was a short run, and ere long the six juniors turned out in the little country station.

"Wharton Magnus!"

"Here we are!" said Harry. "My uncle may be here to meet us. Yes, here he is."

Colonel Wharton, a kindly-looking gentleman, with white moustaches, came across the platform to greet the juniors. He extended a hearty greeting to Harry's companions, and they walked out of the station in the best of spirits.

The colonel's car awaited them outside.

"You're not all here?" said the colonel.

"No; the others are coming down later, when they've been home to see their people, uncle," said Harry. "They'll all be here in a few days."

"Right!"

The car bore them rapidly to Wharton Lodge. There Miss Wharton, the colonel's sister and Harry's aunt, greeted them affectionately.

After removing the dust of travel the juniors descended to a late lunch in the old oak-panelled dining-room of the Lodge. Miss Wharton had taken special care of that lunch. She had had the honour of entertaining her nephew's friends before, and she knew their tastes. The lunch was, as Bob Cherry declared, ripping. It was half over when the colonel looked in, with a smile on his bronzed face.

"One of your friends has arrived, Harry!" he said.

Wharton looked surprised.

"Good!" he said. "I suppose it's your minor, Franky. But he's had hardly time to get home first before coming on, surely?"

"This way, my lad!" said the colonel to the junior in the hall.

The new arrival walked in.

There was a shout from the juniors.

"BUNTER!"

Billy Bunter grinned amiably at the party.

"Sorry I missed getting in at Lantham, Wharton," he said, in the most genial manner. "But it was all right. I found I had some cash about me, after all, and I caught the next train. Only an hour behind you. I'll help you with that lunch."

Bunter drew a seat to the table and started.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him fixedly.

They were too astounded to do anything but stare for some moments. Then Wharton made a sign to his comrades to keep the peace. He did not want a row in the presence of his uncle. But Bunter did not seem to notice the freezing silence of the Remove fellows. He was tucking into the lunch, and it absorbed all his attention just then.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter, Too!

**B**UNTER stayed.

Bob Cherry said he deserved it for his cheek. Wharton thought that he deserved something else for his cheek, but he did not desire to inflict that something else in his uncle's house.

The Co. decided to make the best of Bunter, and Bunter made himself at home at once. He persisted in regarding Wharton's many refusals of his company as a joke, and he said he could take a joke with anybody.

He was installed at the Lodge as one of the party, and Harry, having made up his mind to make the best of it, let it pass without many words.

Billy Bunter made himself very comfortable.

A hearty welcome was not necessary to his comfort; but at the Lodge nothing else was lacking.

That day, and the next, Bunter talked at considerable length of the good time they were going to have on their tour and at Shoremouth.

But the Co. had their own opinion about that.

"We won't have the fat boulder at Shoremouth," Harry Wharton remarked in private. "It wouldn't be fair to Marjorie. She can't stand him!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"But how are we going to shake him off?" grinned Tom Brown. "Blessed if he doesn't stick like a limpet to a rock, or like grim death to a nigger."

Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought.

"I don't want my uncle or aunt to see that there's any trouble," he said. "But I'll tell you what. We'll leave Bunter here."

"Leave him here!" murmured Nugent. "Rough on uncle and auntie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, he can't very well stay after we're gone. We won't tell him what train we're catching, you see, and we'll leave him in bed when we go."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Talk of angels!" murmured Johnny Bull, as Billy Bunter came into the room.

The fat junior blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows, when are you leaving?" he asked.

"Monday," said Wharton.

"What train?"

"A railway train."

"I mean, what time does it start?"

"The time it begins its journey."

"Look here, Wharton!" said Bunter, as the juniors chuckled. "I don't want to risk missing that train. I understand that you're not going direct to Shoremouth. You're stopping somewhere to play a cricket match."

"Exactly."

"Well, where are you stopping?"

"At a place."

"But what place?"

"The place where we're going to play a match."

"But where are you going to play the match?" howled Bunter.

"At the place we stop at."

Bunter blinked at him wrathfully.

"If you call this politeness to a visitor, Wharton, I don't. After the way you practically forced me to come here——"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"There was Mauzy wanted me to go to him," said Bunter loftily, "and Toddy begged me, almost with tears in his eyes, to go to his place. It was hard to refuse Todd, but I thought I'd come with you chaps, as you wanted me so much. Todd was very cut up."

The door had opened again, and Peter Todd came in. He had just arrived. He grinned as he heard the fat junior's remarks.

The other fellows grinned too. Bunter had his back to the door, and he had not seen Todd yet.

"If you fellows hadn't been so pressing I shouldn't have refused Todd," he went on; "and Todd owes me some money, too. I lent him a quid to get home with."

"What!"

"I suppose you could let me have it now, Wharton, couldn't you, and I'll tell Toddy to hand my quid over to you. I'm rather short of money. I really don't believe in lending money, only I felt I couldn't refuse Toddy, as I had already told him I couldn't possibly spare him any time this vac—— Yaroooh! Who's that?"

Peter Todd had advanced quietly behind the fat junior, and he now laid an iron grip on his ear. Bunter yelled, and swung round in alarm.

"Oh! Is that you, Todd, old chap? Leggo my ear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's that about my owing you a quid?" asked Todd, compressing his grip on Billy Bunter's ear, till the fat junior howled, and shaking him vigorously.

"Ow! Yow! I was only j-j-joking! Yow! Ow! What I really meant to say was—— Yow! Ow! Ow!"

"Well, you're saying it now," grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh! Oh! Don't shake me like that, Todd, you beast! You'll make my glasses fall off, and if they g-g-g-et b-b-broken—yow—ow!—you'll have to pay for 'em! Yaroooh!"

"Do I owe you a quid?" demanded Todd, still shaking.

"Ow! No!"

"Are you a fat lying toad?"

"Grooh!"

"Are you a fat, lying toad?" repeated Peter, shaking harder than ever.

Bunter gasped.

"Ow! Yes! Yes! Leggo!"

"Good! I've shaken some truth out of him, at all events!" grinned Todd. And with a whirl of his arm he sat Bunter on the floor. "I didn't know you fellows were going to have Bunter here."

"And we didn't either," said Wharton ruefully. "Bunter settles those things for himself."

Peter Todd shook hands all round with the juniors.

"Any of the others arrived?" he asked.

"Not yet! Nugent minor will be here to-morrow. Mauzy and the rest come along later. Jolly glad to see you, Toddy."

"I say, Wharton, I—I was only j-j-joking about Toddy owing me a quid. It was really Nugent minor."

"What!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"And I think that as your minor owes me a quid, Nugent, you ought to square up for him, and—and—— Gerroff! Hands off! Yaroooh!"

Bunter fled.

The next day Dicky Nugent arrived. And the day after Vernon-Smith put in an appearance.



The match with the local team was fixed for Saturday, and by that time all the Greyfriars eleven should have been at Wharton Lodge. Lord Mauleverer arrived on Friday, but only a letter came from Hazeldene. He was at Shoremouth, and he asked Wharton to excuse him, as his uncle was there. He promised to join the team in time for the match with the St. Jim's fellows at Headland.

Wharton received the letter on Saturday morning, when the party were at breakfast. He gave a whistle.

"Hazel won't be there," he remarked. "We shall be a man short for the match to-day."

Bunter looked up quickly from his sixth rasher.

"I'll play, Wharton."

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"You're a man short," remarked Colonel Wharton. "Why not play Bunter, Harry?"

"Oh, he can't play for toffee," said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! If you leave me out I shall really have to consider whether I can remain your guest any longer!" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

Colonel Wharton looked at the fat junior rather curiously. During the past few days he had observed some things, though he had said nothing about it. Harry Wharton frowned.

"After all, it's only a village team we're meeting this time," Bob Cherry remarked. "Might as well put Bunter in. He won't do any good, but he won't do any harm."

Wharton nodded.

"All serene. You'll play, Bunter."

Billy Bunter grinned with satisfaction. He had a full conviction that he was a cricketer, and that only envy kept him out of the Remove team at Greyfriars.

"Right-ho!" he said. "I'll show you some cricket! Of course, the team here ain't up to our form. Better put me on to bowl, and put 'em out of their misery—what!"

"You might put some of us out of our misery, too!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Anybody within range might be put out of his misery if you have the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter only snorted, and helped himself to another rasher. And when the Greyfriars cricketers went down to the village for the match on the village green, Billy Bunter rolled along with them, looking as if we were on the point of bursting out of his flannels.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Plays Cricket!

VERNON-SMITH had had a letter that morning from Hazeldene, as well as Harry Wharton. He had looked very thoughtful over it, but he did not offer to read any of it out, as the juniors rather expected he would. They would have been glad of news from Marjorie. The Bounder of Greyfriars still wore a thoughtful look as he walked down to the village with the cricketers. Bob slapped him on the back.

"Penny for 'em!" he said jovially.

The Bounder started.

"Eh? What?"

"Penny for your thoughts, old man!"

Vernon-Smith coloured a little.

"Oh, I—I was just thinking!" he remarked. "Is there time for me to get to the post-office, Wharton, before we play?"

"Lots!" said Harry. "It faces the green."

"Good!"

They reached the village green, and the Bounder hurried across at once to the post-office. Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"Well, what's the cackle about?" demanded Bob Cherry brusquely.

"Poor old Smithy!" grinned Bunter.

"What's the matter with Smithy, then?"

Bunter chuckled again.

"He's so jolly anxious to keep friends with Marjorie," he explained. "I fancy it comes a bit expensive to him. He, he, he!"

"What do you mean?" growled Bob. "Why should it come expensive to him?"

"Because he has to be chummy with her brother; you see, Marjorie hasn't forgotten that it was Smithy who used to be a wild beggar, and led Hazel into it," said Bunter. "Smithy is awfully keen to make her believe that he has reformed."

"Well, he has reformed, you fat rotter!"

Bunter sniffed.

"Oh, I don't take that in!" he said. "Smithy can take you chaps in, but he can't take me in. No fear! And if Smithy's reformed, Hazel jolly well hasn't! I know what Smithy's gone to the post-office for, and I know what Hazel's letter was about. He, he, he! I wonder how much he's going to send him?"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob.

But the juniors could not help feeling a little disturbed.

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a splendid, long, complete story, entitled:

It was only too probable that Billy Bunter, with his usual cunning, had hit on the facts of the case. Hazeldene was one of those fellows who are born to look for trouble, and to find it. Every time he came a "mucker" his repentance was sincere, and he made the best of resolves for the future, but when the effect of his lesson had worn off he would drop into his old ways again. It was as a companion of the Bounder of Greyfriars that he had learned most of his reckless ways, and when the Bounder had reformed Hazel had not followed his example, or, rather, he had reformed a good many times—every time he was in difficulties owing to his recklessness—but his reformations never lasted. And now that Hazel was away from the comrades who had helped to keep him straight, it was only too likely that he was getting reckless again. It occurred to Wharton—he could not help it—that perhaps it was not only Hazel's uncle who kept the wayward lad from joining the party at Wharton Lodge. It was only too possible that he had fallen among bad companions at Shoremouth, now that he was "on his own."

Vernon-Smith came back from the post-office without saying a word as to why he had been there. The juniors asked him no questions. It was no business of theirs, after all. The local team had arrived on the ground now. Their captain, Tomlinson, was an old acquaintance of Wharton's. He was the son of the village solicitor. The team was composed of village lads. The Remove team of Greyfriars would have beaten them easily, but with Bunter and Lord Mauleverer and a fag like Dicky Nugent in the team the result was by no means so certain. Dicky was a good player for his age, but he was only a Second Form fag, and Lord Mauleverer was too lazy to live, as Bob Cherry expressed it; and as for Bunter, he was an out-and-out duffer.

Wharton won the toss, and elected to bat first. Billy Bunter came up, blinking.

"I suppose you're starting the innings with me, Harry?"

"Then your supposer is out of gear," said Wharton tartly. "You're last man in."

"Better begin with a good score," urged Bunter. "It will encourage the others, you know."

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton. "Come on, Bob!"

The Remove captain opened the innings with Bob Cherry. Tomlinson went on to bowl the first over. Then the Removites met with a surprise. They had been inclined to look upon the match as a walk-over, as they were meeting a country village team, but cricket was well played at Wharton Magnus. Harry Wharton found it difficult to stop the bowling, and the fourth ball of the over found his wicket. Wharton retired with 2 runs to his credit, and with a somewhat elongated face. As it was a single innings match, there was no chance of retrieving his bad fortune. And Frank Nugent, who followed him in, was bowled the next ball. Nugent minor replaced his major at the wickets, and the last ball of the over knocked his wicket to pieces. A loud cheer from the villagers greeted the performance of the hat trick.

"Three down for two!" grunted Johnny Bull. "We shall have to wake up!"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared the exasperated Johnny. "Anything funny in seeing our wickets go down?"

"He, he, he! I warned Wharton to put me in first—you can't say I didn't, Wharton!"

Wharton did not reply. He was watching the batting anxiously. Vernon-Smith had gone in. But Bob Cherry was getting the bowling now from another bowler. Bob made 6 on the over, and the Co. were a little encouraged.

But the form of the villagers was very good, and, after a hard innings, the Greyfriars score stood at only 46 when Wharton called out:

"Last man in!"

Johnny Bull was at the wickets now, and it was for Billy Bunter to join him there. The fat junior drew on his gloves with a swagger.

"Do your best, for goodness' sake!" said Harry. "Don't hit out, but let Bull do the batting. Save your wicket if you can."

Bunter sniffed. He was far too good a cricketer to need advice from his skipper—at all events, he was satisfied that he was.

"Rot!" he said tersely.

"Eh?"

"Johnny Bull's not a bad stone-waller," said Bunter patronisingly. "Let him keep the innings open, and I'll take the runs."

Wharton dropped his hand heavily on the shoulder of the Owl of the Remove.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "I know how to play cricket. I'm going to give you fellows an eye-opener, and you'll see



what you've lost by not playing me in the Remove team at Greyfriars."

"You silly ass——"

"Nuff said," said Bunter, with dignity. "You watch me, that's all." And the Owl of the Remove rolled on to the pitch.

"N.G.!" growled Bob Cherry. "If the silly ass tried to keep his wicket up, he might give Johnny a chance to pile on a few more runs. But the chump is as conceited as he is fatheaded. We go out for forty-six!"

"Looks like it!" growled Wharton. "Unluckily, that fat duffer has the bowling."

Billy Bunter was quite aware that the eyes of all the team were anxiously upon him, and he swaggered considerably as he went on, swinging his bat. He paused to speak to Johnny Bull as he passed him at the wicket.

"Stick to stone-walling," he said.

Johnny Bull stared at him.

"What!" he ejaculated.

"You stick to stone-walling, and leave the batting to me," said Bunter. "What I want is some steady stone-walling at your end, to keep the innings open, and give me a chance."

"What you—you want!" gasped Bull, almost overcome.

"Exactly. I want to make a century if possible."

"You—a century! You silly chump——"

"You mind you don't let me down, that's all!" said Bunter, and he walked on to his wicket.

Perhaps it was just as well he walked on, for Johnny Bull was gripping his bat in a businesslike manner, as if he meant to lay it about the fat person of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter stood his stand at the wicket with an exaggerated straddle. He blinked along the pitch towards Tomlinson, who had the ball.

Tomlinson grinned. He did not think it would take him long to capture that wicket, from the way Bunter shaped.

Whiz! The ball came down. If Bunter had been contented to play a cautious game and save his wicket, and leave the scoring to his partner, he might have kept the innings alive. But nothing was further from Bunter's thoughts. He swiped at the ball, fully intending it to be a boundary. Unfortunately, his bat missed the ball by a foot or more.

The impetus of that wild swipe made Bunter spin round like a humming-top, and he lost his footing, and sat down on the crease with a gasp. There was a yell of laughter from the crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!"

"How's that?" grinned Tomlinson.

"Out!" said Colonel Wharton, who was umpire at the batting end. The middle stump was on the ground.

Billy Bunter sat and gasped, and blinked round him dazedly.

"Ow—ow! I say, you fellows, what are you clearing off for? I haven't batted yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The innings is over," said the colonel with a smile. "You are out. All down for forty-six."

Bunter staggered to his feet.

"I—I say, that was a trial ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter snorted and rolled off the pitch. Johnny Bull gave him a glare.

"You silly ass, what did you swipe at the ball for? Any silly owl ought to have known better than that!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Bump the silly chump!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Here, I say——"

"Can't be helped," said Harry Wharton, as cheerfully as he could. "We know Bunter was only a passenger, anyway."

"Oh, really, Harry——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I've had bad luck," said Bunter, glowering at the disgusted cricketers. "But wait till you see me bowling, that's all!"

"We shall wait a jolly long time before we see you bowling," said Harry. "You're not going to bowl, you ass!"

"If you choose to leave out your best bowler, Wharton, you'll have to take the consequences. It's throwing the match away."

"Scat!"

"Well, where am I to field?" growled Bunter discontentedly.

"Anywhere you like, so long as you don't get in the way."

The villagers started their innings in great spirits. Greyfriars were all down for an unexpectedly small total, and the home team had no doubt about winning now. But Harry Wharton & Co. were bucking up. Three of their bats were

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next door to useless, but in bowling they were as strong as ever. Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and Tom Brown the New Zealander, shared most of the bowling. Nugent and Todd going on as change bowlers. And the wickets went down at a good rate.

Six down for 22 encouraged the Removites. Hurree Singh had performed the hat-trick, Tom Brown had taken two, and one had been caught out by Wharton in the slips. It was not going to be a walk-over, at all events. Nugent captured the next wicket. Then another fell to the deadly bowling of the Nabob of Bhanipur, with the score at 34. Then Tomlinson came in, and he proceeded to hit out, and the score jumped to 40. His partner was caught out by Peter Todd, and the Removites breathed more freely when the last man went in.

But Tomlinson had the bowling, and he knocked the next ball away for four. Hurree Janset Ram Singh sent down his very best ball next time, and Tomlinson swiped it away into the long-field. There was a yell.

"Look out, Bunter!"

"Catch! Catch!"

Bunter blinked round him.

The batsmen were running, and the ball was sailing fairly into Billy Bunter's fat hands—if the aforesaid fat hands had been ready for it.

But they weren't.

The ball almost touched Bunter's fingers, and he muffed the easiest catch of the match; and the batsmen ran, and ran, and ran again; and there was a yell from the village crowd. The match was won!

And there was a yell from the disgusted Greyfriars fellows, too.

"Fathead!"

"Butter-fingers!"

"Yah!"

"I say, you fellows, I jolly nearly had that ball!" said Bunter. "Any of you chaps would have missed it by yards, but I nearly had it!"

But that was too much for the juniors. They made a rush at Bunter. For a moment the fatuous Owl of the Remove thought the fieldsmen were going to "shoulder" him, in recognition of his topping play. He soon discovered his mistake. They grasped him on all sides, and whirled him off his feet with rough-and-ready hands.

"Frog's march!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Yaroo! Help! Murder! Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Billy Bunter was frog's marched off the cricket ground and dumped down heavily on the grass. He sat and gasped, and groped for his spectacles, and blinked furiously at the indignant juniors.

"Oh! Yow! You rotters! This is the last time I'll play for you! Yow—ow! The very last! Mind that—the last time! Yarcooh!"

"You can bet on that," said Harry Wharton.

And Bunter was right; it was the last time.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Left in the Lurch!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were up very early on Monday morning.

They were to catch the train at eight-thirty, and they did not mean Billy Bunter to catch it. If anything had been needed to make them feel thoroughly "fed-up" with the Owl of the Remove, it was his combined swank and stupidity in the match with the villagers. In the match with the St. Jim's fellows at Headland, Wharton would rather have played a man short than have had Bunter in the team.

When Harry Wharton & Co. turned out that morning Billy Bunter was sleeping like a top. His room was shared by Tom Brown and Peter Todd, there being three beds in the room; but Bunter did not hear them rise, and they made their toilet without disturbing him.

It wasn't necessary to be very cautious; probably a cannon would hardly have disturbed the fat junior. Billy Bunter could do with a great deal of sleep. At Greyfriars the rising-bell did not always awaken him, and he was always the last down. On holiday, he frequently did not come down till ten o'clock in the morning. The Co. had always been down hours before Bunter put in an appearance.

The juniors breakfasted early. Colonel Wharton was down, and he did not make any remark on the subject of Billy Bunter. It was highly probable that by this time the veteran understood how matters were between Bunter and the rest of the party. He did not seem to observe that the Owl of the Remove was not there.





The impetus of that wild swipe made Bunter spin round like a top, and he lost his footing, and sat down on the crease with a roar. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. "He's out!" Billy Bunter sat up and stared about. "I say, you fellows!" he said. "What are you clearing off for? I haven't batted yet!" (See Chapter 8.)

Todd went up for his bag, and grinned at the sight of Billy Bunter fast asleep in bed. Bunter was muttering in his sleep, and Todd caught the words "jam-tarts—twopenny ones." He chuckled, and carried away his bag.

Colonel Wharton accompanied the juniors to the station, and they started on their journey to Headland, a seaside place only a few miles from Shoremouth. George Figgins of St. Jim's was staying there, with several of his school-fellows—Wynn and Kerr and Redfern and several more. Some of them the Greyfriars juniors had met in the school matches.

The match at Headland was likely to be a harder one than that with the village team at Wharton Magnus, but the Removites, though they had registered a defeat to begin with, felt confident enough. Hazel was to join them at Headland, and they would not be bothered with Billy Bunter, which made a considerable difference to the strength of the team.

While the train was bearing the juniors rapidly away Billy Bunter snored on comfortably in bed.

The fat junior had more than a suspicion that Harry Wharton & Co. intended to depart without him, owing to the fact that they had declined to tell him where their stopping-place was to be. That they were going later to Shoremouth he knew, but he did not know that Figgins and his friends were at Headland. So when the fat junior awoke

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and found that they were gone, the Co. felt pretty certain that he would not be able to track them down.

But Bunter did not waken very early. He had intended to keep his eyes very wide open that day lest the Co. should attempt to escape, so to speak. But his eyes had not started opening yet.

It was ten o'clock before he awoke. Then he yawned, and turned over for another nap. But at half-past ten he was more hungry than sleepy, and he decided to get up.

"I say, you fellows, are you awake?" he yawned.

There was no reply, and Bunter sat up, and blinked at the other beds. He grunted. He was not accustomed to seeing the other beds empty when he awoke.

"Beasts! Couldn't call me!" he grunted.

He turned out, and performed his ablutions—which did not take him long. They never did! Then he dressed and went down.

The house seemed very silent.

As a rule, with so many of the cheery juniors of Greyfriars there, Wharton Lodge was far from quiet, but now it seemed silent as the tomb.

Bunter blinked into the breakfast-room. It was empty.

"Rotters all gone out without me, I suppose!" he growled. "Well, I'll have breakfast, anyway!"

He rang, and his breakfast was served. He was too shortsighted to notice that there was a lurking smile on the face

**WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!** By FRANK RICHARDS.



of Wilkinson, the butler. Mr. Wilkinson was not quite in the dark as to Master Harry's reasons for departing without awakening Bunter.

"The fellows gone out?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Where are they gone?"

"Ahem! I think they went to the village."

"Oh! Colonel Wharton about?"

"The colonel has gone to London to-day."

Bunter grunted, and settled down to breakfast. Breakfast lasted him a considerable time, and then, surprised that he saw nothing of the juniors, he strolled out into the grounds. But the Co. had not yet come back.

At lunch-time Bunter came in, and found his companions still absent. He was growing a little suspicious by this time.

"Look here, Wilkinson, ain't they coming in to lunch?" he demanded.

"I think not, sir," said the butler demurely.

"Where have they gone?"

"Ahem! They went to the village."

"Not further than that?"

"Ahem! I think they have taken a train, Master Bunter."

Master Bunter jumped up.

"Where to, Wilkinson?"

"Master Harry did not tell me."

"Are they coming back to-day?" howled Bunter.

"Ahem! I think not."

"To-morrow—"

"Ahem! I think Master Harry is not coming home again till nearly the end of the vacation," said Mr. Wilkinson calmly.

Bunter gave a howl.

"The rotters! They've done me! Where are they gone? What station have they taken tickets to?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

"You do know, and you're keeping it dark!" snarled Bunter. "Look here, my man, tell me where they're gone, and I'll hand you a shilling!"

Mr. Wilkinson did not move a muscle.

"Ahem! I am afraid I cannot give you any information, Master Bunter. Doubtless Master Harry would have informed you, if he had wished you to know. And I really could not accept a shilling from you, sir! I really could not! Ahem! You are very, very generous, sir, but I could not reconcile it with my conscience, sir, to take such an advantage of your generosity—I really could not, sir!"

And Mr. Wilkinson retreated with a solemn brow.

"Look here, you—you rotter!" howled Bunter. "You know where they're gone, and I insist on your telling me! How dare you argue with a gentleman!"

For once a faint flush crept into Mr. Wilkinson's impassive face.

"I am sure I should not do such a thing, sir."

"You're arguing with me!" snorted Bunter.

"That is quite a different matter, sir."

"Wha-at! What! You—you— Serve my lunch, and shut up!" growled Bunter.

Mr. Wilkinson breathed hard, and shut up. But for his personal attachment to the Wharton family he would have boxed Billy Bunter's ears just then, and it was only because Bunter was Harry's guest that he refrained. In the servants' hall he confided to the other members of the household "below stairs" his opinion of Bunter, and it was not a flattering opinion. And all the ladies and gentlemen below stairs fully agreed with Mr. Wilkinson's opinion of William George Bunter.

Bunter ate his lunch. He was undecided what to do, but his state of indecision did not affect his appetite. He made a remarkably good lunch, and thought the matter over. The Co. had disappeared, and he did not know where they had gone. Colonel Wharton had gone to London, and Bunter wondered savagely whether the old gentleman had purposely gone to avoid him. But Miss Wharton remained, and she was such a kind and gentle lady that Bunter felt he would be able to deal with her. So after lunch he made his way to Miss Wharton's presence.

"You did not go with Harry, then?" asked Miss Wharton, whose simple mind had not discerned anything amiss.

"No; they forgot to wake me," said Bunter. "I'm to catch the next train. It's all right, Miss Wharton. But I've forgotten where they're going. Harry told me last night—ahem!—but I was sleepy, and I've forgotten."

"Dear me! That is very unfortunate!"

"You know, of course?" said Bunter.

Miss Wharton shook her head.

"Indeed I do not. Harry did not mention the name of the place to me that I remember. I have not asked him."

Bunter ground his teeth. He knew very well why Wharton had avoided mentioning the name of the place to his aunt.

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"Well, I dare say I shall remember," he remarked. "Of course, I can ask them at the station. I'll pack my bag now, and be off. They'll be awfully disappointed if I don't rejoin them to-day. By the way, I sha'n't have time to stop for a letter I'm expecting from home—a letter with a postal-order in it. And I happen to be out of money. Perhaps you would be so kind as to lend me a sovereign, ma'am, and I'll send a postal-order for it."

"Certainly, my dear boy!" said the innocent old lady.

A quarter of an hour later Billy Bunter was on his way to the station, with Miss Wharton's sovereign in his pocket. When he reached the station he inquired what station Harry Wharton & Co. had taken tickets for. He staggered when the booking-clerk, who knew Wharton well, of course, informed him that Master Wharton had taken no tickets there that morning.

"But—but they've gone by train!" howled Bunter.

"Then they must have gone without tickets."

"What train did they go by?"

"I really do not know. I have not seen them!"

Bunter rolled away in a state of breathless fury. He made inquiries up and down the station, but it did not seem to occur to him to expend any of his cash in tips. And the old porter who had seen Harry Wharton & Co. into the train—minus tickets—had a five-shilling piece in his waistcoat pocket, and a strict injunction to tell Bunter nothing. So he shook his head solemnly in reply to all the fat junior's furious questions. Billy Bunter gave it up at last!

"Beasts!" he murmured. "Rotters! They've gone without tickets, so as to throw me off the track! Where the dickens have they gone to? And where the dickens am I to go to?"

It was a knotty question.

But suddenly Bunter brightened up.

"Anyway, they're going to Shoremouth afterwards! Jolly lucky I saw Hazel's address on Smithy's letter the other morning! Hazel knows where they are, and I know where Hazel is; they'll see me again sooner than they think, the rotters!"

And the Owl of the Remove was soon en route.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Hazel's Friends!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. smiled as they stepped out of the train at Headland.

By the simple precaution of travelling without tickets, they had succeeded in throwing Billy Bunter off the track. As Wharton was well-known in the village near his home, it had been quite easy for the party to enter the train ticketless, and at the first stop which allowed sufficient time. Wharton had slipped from the train and bought tickets for the party, of course, paying at the same time for the distance already covered. Bunter would probably guess that he had done that; but he could not very well inquire at every station along the line for traces of the vanished juniors. Yet the chums of the Remove knew so well the pertinacity of William George Bunter, that they glanced round the platform at Headland, and would not have been at all surprised to see him there.

But he was not there fortunately.

But some other fellows were there to meet the juniors. A long-legged, rugged, good-humoured-looking junior came across the crowded platform as soon as he spotted them, followed by an extremely fat youth, whose proportions rivalled those of Billy Bunter, and a slim-built junior, with keen grey eyes. Wharton knew them at once—Figgins and Wynn and Kerr of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. All three of them had played in the St. Jim's junior team at Greyfriars, captained by Tom Merry.

"Here you are!" said Figgins, shaking hands warmly with Wharton. "Had your wire in good time to get here and meet you."

"Jolly glad to see you again!" said Fatty Wynn. "This way to the buffet!"

"Blow the buffet!" said Figgins.

"Now, Figgy, the chaps are bound to be rather peckish after a long journey," said Fatty Wynn argumentatively. "I know I'm peckish, and I haven't had a journey. And they've got beautiful sausage-rolls at this station."

"Rats!" said Figgins cheerfully. "Come on to the hotel, it's just on time for lunch."

The Greyfriars fellows had engaged quarters at the Headland Hotel, where Figgins & Co. were staying, and they left the station together; Fatty Wynn, with a regretful expression upon his plump face. Evidently he found it difficult to tear himself away from the sausage-rolls.

Figgins led the way, chatting cheerfully with Wharton. The strains of a band fell upon their ears as they left the



station. A few minutes' walk, and they were in sight of the bright blue sea, dotted with boats and white sails. Bathing-machines were ranked along the foreshore, and in the distance the heads of swimmers could be seen dotting the waters.

There was a thick crowd on the "front," and a ceaseless buzz of voices. Arrived at the big hotel, the Greyfriars fellows met some more of Figgins' party—Redfern and Owen and Lawrence of the Fourth Form, and an Indian junior whom Figgins presented as Koumi Rao, the Jam of Bundel-pore—who immediately began talking to Hurree Singh in a weird language of which the other fellows did not understand a word.

They had lunch on a wide terrace looking over the sunny sea. Fatty Wynn's performance at lunch quite interested the Greyfriars juniors. It reminded them of Billy Bunter.

"There are seven of us here," said Figgins. "But we've got four fellows joining us for the match, coming from different parts. I've arranged that. We're all New House chaps at St. Jim's—all the eleven. It was a bit of luck being able to fix up this match with you fellows in the vac. We've got permission to use the local pitch here on Wednesday—that'll suit you?"

"Any day you like," said Wharton cheerfully. "That'll leave plenty of time for our other man to get here from Shoremouth."

"I noticed you're a man short," said Kerr. "If your man doesn't turn up, we can find you a man here."

"He'll turn up all right. I'll wire him the date after lunch."

Wharton despatched the telegram to Hazeldene in the afternoon. Then the juniors went down to bathe, and to ramble about Headland. It was dusk when they came in, and Harry expected to find a reply from Hazeldene awaiting him. But there was no telegram. But the next morning, at breakfast, there was a letter from Hazel.

Harry Wharton felt a slight misgiving, he hardly knew why, as he opened it. And as he read Hazel's letter, he frowned.

"Oh, the silly ass!" he murmured.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the news from Hazel?" asked Bob Cherry.

Wharton threw the letter to him.

"Read it!" he said, his frown deepening.

Bob Cherry read it, and whistled. It was a short letter, but there was a good deal of information in it, especially reading between the lines.

"Dear Wharton,—I had your wire rather late yesterday when I came in. Did you know that some of the Highcliffe chaps are staying here in Shoremouth? I've met them—Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour. I know we're not on very good terms with them at Greyfriars, but as they seemed inclined to forget all about it, of course I was agreeable. We have been having a very good time together. I suppose you don't mind if they come over with me on Wednesday? No good keeping up school rags on a holiday, you know. Ponsonby is staying with his uncle here, who has a car, and he's going to bring me over in the car on Wednesday morning. The train would be too late, if stumps are pitched early. Ta-ta!

HAZEL."

Bob Cherry read the letter out, for the benefit of the other fellows. Vernon-Smith compressed his lips as he listened.

"That accounts!" he murmured.

Wharton looked quickly at the Bounder.

"Accounts for what?" he asked.

The Bounder coloured a little.

"Oh, nothing!"

But after breakfast, when the juniors went out, Wharton made it a point to walk with the Bounder, and ask for information.

"Look here, Smithy, is Hazel up to his old tricks again?" he asked abruptly.

Vernon-Smith looked uneasy.

"How should I know, Wharton?"

"I think you do know, all the same. You know what kind of fellow Ponsonby is. You know his idea of a good time on a holiday. Hazel is a silly ass, and those cads would like to help him make a fool of himself. He wrote to you at my place. Was he asking you for money? Out with it. I've got to know about it. The silly duffer has got to be looked after, if he can't look after himself!"

"Well, yes," said the Bounder. "He wanted a couple of quids."

"And you sent them?"

"Well, yes."

"He had plenty of money to begin the holiday," said Harry, frowning angrily. "His people are paying his exes there, and I know he had a fiver from his uncle. It looks to me like the old game—and Ponsonby is at the bottom of it."

"I thought so, as soon as I know that Ponsonby was there," said Vernon-Smith. "Hazel had a pretty severe lesson the time we went to Boulogne, on Founders' Day. But a lesson never lasts him long." The Bounder's lip curled.

Wharton bit his lip.

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"It's rotten if he's beginning again," he said restlessly. "Rotten for Marjorie, too—and for all of us. He ought to be kept away from those chaps, and now he's proposing to bring them over here for the match."

"I don't see what we can do. It's his own bizney," said the Bounder. "We can't take it on ourselves to act in loco parentis, you know. And Hazel wouldn't stand it from us."

"He ought to have a jolly good licking!" growled Wharton.

"That wouldn't improve matters."

"I suppose it wouldn't. But how are we going to be civil to his precious friends. Ponsonby played Nugent a rotten trick not long ago, and Nugent certainly won't speak to him. And they're only coming to make themselves unpleasant—they want to get at us somehow through that silly ass Hazel."

"I suppose so. Still, it will only be one day—we can put up with them for that long. Looks to me as if we shall have to, unless you write to Hazel not to come."

"I'd do that—only—only—"

"Only it would hurt Marjorie," said the Bounder quietly.

"Yes; that's the rub!"

"We shall have to make up our minds to grin and bear it," said the Bounder. "After all, the Highcliffe chaps may try to be decent for once."

Wharton had very strong doubts on that point; still, there was evidently nothing to do but to grin and bear it, as the Bounder suggested.

But during the day, he could not help thinking with a troubled mind of Hazel and his undesirable friends. However, the juniors spent a very merry day by the sea, in company with Figgins & Co. That evening the rest of Figgins' team arrived—four fellows belonging to the New House of St. Jim's—Thompson, Dibbs, Pratt, and Jameson. And the next morning, at an early hour, the rival elevens prepared for the match. But at the time fixed for starting from the hotel, Hazel had not arrived.

"Your man hasn't come!" remarked Figgins, when the juniors were gathered with their cricket-bags, ready to start for the ground.

"He seems to be late," said Harry, biting his lip. He wondered whether it was a trick of Ponsonby's. As he was bringing Hazel over in a car he could make him as late as he chose, and Wharton was pretty certain that Ponsonby was far from having any goodwill towards the Greyfriars party.

"He may be coming straight to the ground," Vernon-Smith suggested. "He knows where we are playing."

Wharton nodded.

"Well, we won't wait. If he doesn't turn up we'll get a substitute."

And the party started for the Headland Cricket Ground. Figgins & Co. had already played a match there with the local team, and they had many acquaintances there. The cricketers changed in the pavilion, but there was still no sign of Hazel.

It was time for stumps to be pitched, and Wharton's exasperation was increasing. There had been ample time for Hazel to arrive, but he had not arrived.

"Well, shall we wait a bit for your man?" Figgins asked politely. "Or if you like I'll get you an extra man here, quite easy."

"I think you'd better," said Harry. "Hazel is rather unreliable, and he mayn't turn up till midday."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here comes a car, anyway."

Zip-zip-zip!

A handsome car stopped outside the gates. Four fellows descended from it, and walked in, and the juniors recognised Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe, and Hazeldene. Hazel was not looking good-humoured, and he came up and shook hands with Wharton in a very perfunctory manner.

"You're late," said Harry.

"I've been to the hotel for you, and found you'd left," said Hazel. "I'm in time to play, I suppose?"

"Yes, it's all right. We were just going to start without you."

Hazel looked sullen.

"You can start without me, all the same, if you like," he said.

Wharton made an effort to be genial.

"Oh, it's all right!" he said. "Get into the pavilion and change. Figgins won't mind waiting a few minutes more."

"Not a bit," said Figgins, though he had given Hazeldene a very curious look.

"And we'll watch the game," said Ponsonby, with a drawl.

"I suppose you're not in want of another man, Wharton?"

"No; we've got eleven."

"I'd have played for you with pleasure," said Ponsonby calmly. From his manner it would never have been guessed



that the Highcliffe fellows were on the worst of terms with Harry Wharton & Co. And the Co. who, of course, did not want to show any signs of disagreement before Figgins and his friends, did their best to be civil. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll umpire for you."

"Good egg!" said Gadsby. "So will I."

Wharton hesitated. He did not want to have anything at all to do with the Highcliffe fellows, but he could not very well make a display of his dislike. As they had come there as friends of Hazel, he was bound to be civil to them, and the simple-minded Figgins never guessed for a moment that there was anything amiss. Ponsonby was looking at him inquiringly, and Figgins chimed in at once:

"Right you are!"

"But—" began Harry, rather at a loss.

"It's all right," said Figgins; "we were going to ask some fellows here to umpire, but as your friends are here, and they're willing—"

"Very glad," said Ponsonby.

"Certainly!" said Gadsby.

"Then it's a go," said Figgins.

"But you've got a right to select an umpire yourself," began Wharton.

"Oh, I'm quite satisfied!"

As Figgins was satisfied, there was nothing more to be said. And much as Wharton disliked the Highcliffians, he did not suspect them of any intention to "wedge" themselves in where they were not wanted. Well as he knew Ponsonby & Co., he was far from suspecting what was passing in their minds.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Foul Play!

HARRY WHARTON won the toss, and the Greyfriars side started to bat. Wharton opened the innings with Vernon-Smith. Figgins led his merry men into the field, and Fatty Wynn was put on to bowl the first over to Wharton. The fat Fourth-Former was the champion junior bowler at St. Jim's, and Wharton was very careful. Harry was in great form, however, and he punished the bowling severely. The over gave him eight runs, and then Koumi Rao went on to bowl to Vernon-Smith.

Koumi Rao's bowling was knocked all over the field by the Bounder, and the score jumped to sixteen. It was a good beginning for Greyfriars, and they were looking very cheerful. Kerr bowled the next over to Wharton.

The Scottish junior was a good change bowler; but Wharton was quite able to deal with his bowling. He cut the first ball away for two, and the second for another two. The third he drove away into the country, and the batsmen ran—once, twice, thrice—and the ball was not yet in. There was time for a fourth run, and Wharton and the Bounder crossed the pitch like lightning.

But the ball was coming in then, from the hand of Figgins, not to the wicket-keeper, but straight as a die for the batsman's wicket. Ponsonby, who was umpire at Wharton's end, waited and watched. Wharton felt, as it were, the ball coming in, and he put on a desperate spurt, and his bat clacked down on the crease.

Crash!

The wicket flew to pieces!

But Wharton's bat was on the crease a good second before the fall of the wicket, and he breathed relief. But he was satisfied too soon.

"OUT!"

Ponsonby rapped out the verdict.

Wharton started.

"What!"

"Out!" said the umpire.

Wharton flushed. His face was already red with running, but the unfair verdict of the umpire made his face quite crimson with anger.

"Out?" he repeated. "My bat was on the crease."

Ponsonby shook his head. His face was perfectly cool and calm, but there was a mocking light in his eyes.

"I thought—" began Lawrence, who was at slip, with a rather queer look at the umpire.

Lawrence had certainly thought that the bat was on the crease in time.

"I know!" said Ponsonby crisply. "Out!"

Wharton controlled his rage with a great effort. He knew that he was not out, but he knew, too, that it was useless to dispute the sentence of the umpire. Like a flash he realised now why Ponsonby had come there.

It was the meanest and rottenest trick that the cad of Highcliffe had ever thought of playing on his old enemies, and Wharton realised that he had walked directly into a trap with his eyes open.

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He had never thought of anything of this kind. That Ponsonby would be base enough to offer his services as umpire, with the deliberate intention of giving unfair verdicts against the fellows he disliked, was a suspicion that was not likely to cross an honourable mind. It was too late to remedy the matter. The St. Jim's fellows supposed that Ponsonby was there as a friend of the Greyfriars team, so they were certainly not likely to believe that he was acting with deliberate unfairness towards them. Wharton's teeth came hard together, and for a moment Ponsonby was in danger of being stretched on the pitch with a good left-hander straight from the shoulder. But it would never have done. Wharton knew that. Calming himself as well as he could, the captain of the Remove carried out his bat.

"Man in Bob!" he said, scarcely able to control his voice.

Bob Cherry gave him a curious look.

"Hard cheese, old chap!" he said. "It was a close thing. I really thought you were home in time."

"I was home in time," said Harry, in a low voice.

"But the umpire—"

"That's what he's umpiring for," muttered Wharton.

"You understand—now?"

Bob Cherry gave a start.

"My hat! He couldn't be such a cur, not even Ponsonby! He must have made a mistake, Harry. We're all human, you know."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Look out for him, that's all!" he said. "Don't give him a chance! We've got to play the umpires in this match, as well as the other team."

"I can hardly believe he would—"

"I couldn't have believed it if it hadn't happened," said Harry bitterly. "But we ought to have known those cads! Look out for him, that's all."

"Oh, I'll look out!" said Bob.

Harry Wharton watched the batting very anxiously after that. He knew now that both the umpires would be hand-in-glove to give decisions against the Greyfriars side wherever it was possible. At the same time, to complain of the umpire was not "the game." Wharton felt that he was caught, and that he was helpless, and his feelings towards the Highcliffe fellows were not amiable. Figgins & Co. did not understand that there was an old feud at work, and fault-finding with the umpires would seem to them simply due to chagrin at being given "out."

The St. Jim's bowling, however, accounted for Bob Cherry's wicket, and then for Frank Nugent's. The score was at 40 at that time. Then Hazeldene went on. Wharton did not expect much of Hazel.

At Greyfriars, lately, Hazel had improved very much as a cricketer, and Wharton had played him in the Remove team. But since the beginning of the vacation, Hazel looked very much off colour. His complexion was less healthy, and there were dark circles under his eyes that seemed to hint of late hours. He had not taken the trouble to keep himself fit, and perfect fitness was required to face a team like Figgins's.

Wharton was not surprised when Hazel was clean bowled for a duck's egg. Hazel came off the pitch with a sullen expression on his face, as if he fully expected reproaches from his skipper, with a consciousness of having deserved them. But Wharton did not speak to him. Reproaches were useless. A duck's egg was a duck's egg, and any amount of talking would not have made it better.

"Man in, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull went to the wicket. Between them, the Bounder and Johnny made the fur fly. The score was going up in jumps, when Vernon-Smith lost his wicket. The batsmen had run four, and Smithy's bat was easily over the crease before the bails were off, when Gadsby's "Out!" fell upon his ears like a thunderclap.

Wharton met the Bounder as he came off. Vernon-Smith's face was dark with passion, and all the field had noticed it. It gave them the impression that he was a bad loser. But this time Smithy had reason to feel furious. Nugent minor went on in his place.

"Were you out?" Wharton asked, in a low tone.

The Bounder gave him a quick look.

"So you noticed it?" he asked.

"I noticed it in my own case."

"You, too? I wasn't out!" muttered the Bounder, gritting his teeth. "They've taken us in. They came here for the special purpose—"

"I know that now," said Wharton.

"What fools—what asses we were, not to think—"

"It's too late now. The St. Jim's chaps wouldn't understand."

"No. I know what they'd put it down to. Can't be helped. But afterwards—I'll have something to say to those cads later."



The Bounder flung down his bat savagely. Even the Bounder, keen and suspicious as he generally was, had not divined Ponsonby's little game, and he felt more annoyed at his own obtuseness than at the loss of his wicket.

Nugent minor did unexpectedly well, knocking up ten runs before he was stumped. Todd captured only three, and came off with a set face. He, too, had been given out leg-before-wicket when he knew very well that he was not out. But he bore it philosophically. A quarrel with the umpire in the middle of a game was not to be thought of. Greyfriars stood at 70 when "last man in" was called. Lord Mauleverer was last man in, Tom Brown being at the other end.

"Do your best, Mauly, old man," said Wharton, not very hopefully.

"Yaas."

"Back up Tommy as much as you can."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer showed unexpected form. The slacker of the Remove was bucking up for once. With the New Zealander junior at the other end, his lordship did remarkably well. The runs went up and up, and Wharton's face brightened when the board registered 86. In spite of foul play from the Highcliffe umpires, Greyfriars were not doing so very badly.

It was Tom Brown's wicket that went down—after Tom's bat was on the crease, but the verdict came:

"Out!"

The New Zealander stared at Ponsonby.

"That wasn't out!" he said.

Ponsonby smiled.

"Out!" he repeated.

"Look here——"

"Who's umpire?" asked Ponsonby sweetly

"You are, but——"

"Well, you're out."

"Why, you rotten cad——"

"Ahem!" said several of the fieldsmen.

Tom Brown made an effort, and controlled himself. It was not the "game" to go for the umpire; and besides, it would not have altered the decision. Out or not, he was given out, and he had to get off.

"All down for 86!" said Bob Cherry, with a sigh.

"Do you know——" began Tom Brown, as he joined his comrades at the pavilion.

"Yes, we know," said Wharton grimly. "Can't be helped—now."

The New Zealand junior ground his teeth.

"But this means a licking for us. We've got no chance against this kind of thing."

"We've got to stand it; can't complain. The St. Jim's chaps wouldn't understand. We don't want to pose as a set of duffers who can't take a licking."

"I—I suppose not; but——"

"Not a word, Tommy."

Tom Brown nodded.

"Not a word now," he agreed; "but I'll have something to say to those cads later."

A good many of the Greyfriars fellows intended to "say things" to Ponsonby & Co. later.

Unless, by miraculous good luck, the match was already lost. Harry Wharton & Co. were playing a losing game from the start. But they still hoped.

The St. Jim's innings started, and they were three down for 30, when the cricketers knocked off for lunch.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Beaten to the Wide!

FIGGINS & CO. were "standing" a very handsome lunch to the visiting team, to which Fatty Wynn did most justice. Hazel was very silent, apparently being busy with his thoughts, and not wholly pleasant ones. But Ponsonby & Co. chatted pleasantly, making themselves very agreeable, especially to Figgins & Co. Figgins, indeed, remarked to Wharton what exceedingly agreeable fellows his Highcliffe friends were—a remark to which Harry found it difficult to reply.

"By the way, we saw a friend of yours in Shoremouth when we came away this morning, Wharton," Ponsonby remarked.

"A friend of mine?" said Harry.

"Yes, a fat chap—what is his name?—Punter, or something," drawled Ponsonby.

"Punter? Oh, Bunter!"

"Yes, Bunter; that's it."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Is Bunter there?"

Hazel looked up.

"He spotted us as we were coming away," he growled.

"Had the nerve to want to come over in the car with us. We shook him off."

"Did you tell him where you were going?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yes!"

"Oh! Then we shall see him before long."

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Wharton's surmise proved well-founded. Before lunch was over a fat figure came rolling in, and the Owl of the Remove blinked agreeably at the crowd of cricketers.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Scat!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Awfully duffy of you to forget to tell me where you were playing this match!" said Bunter. "If I hadn't met Hazel in Shoremouth, I shouldn't have found you to-day—really."

"Beastly bad luck your meeting Hazel, then."

"Oh, really, Bob——"

"Rats!"

"I haven't had lunch," said Bunter, taking a seat. "Hazel wanted me to come over in the car, but I declined to travel with those friends of his. I don't approve of those Highcliffe chaps." The short-sighted Owl of the Remove did not see the Highcliffe chaps within six feet of him. "Having a good time is all very well, but for fellows to go to the races, and all that—I don't approve of it. You needn't make faces at me, Hazel. There ain't any masters here, you know, and I suppose it doesn't matter if the fellows know that you've been going to the races with Ponsonby and that set."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Hazeldene, reddening.

Wharton compressed his lips. He was not surprised to hear it; indeed, he had expected to learn something of the sort. Billy Bunter tucked into the lunch, easily rivalling the exploits of Fatty Wynn.

"I haven't seen Marjorie yet," he remarked. "I say, you fellows, I like this place. I think I shall stay here till you go to Shoremouth. If you want any help this afternoon, I'm quite at your service. How's the match going?"

"All down for eighty-six!" grunted Bob.

"H'm! Sorry I wasn't here to bat for you," said Bunter. "I suppose you can look forward to a licking? Well, I must say it's your own fault. If you hadn't forgotten to tell me where the match was taking place, I'd have been here, and I'd have batted for you with pleasure."

Harry Wharton & Co. glared at the fat junior. But Bunter's eyes were on his lunch, and he did not see the glares, which were almost ferocious.

"I'll tell you what," went on Bunter, with his mouth full. "Ask Figgins to let you make a change in the team. I'm sure Figgins wouldn't mind, just to give you a chance."

"Any old thing," said Figgins, with a smile.

"There you are, Wharton. Now you can put me in——"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, after getting licked by a village team, you ought to make an effort this time. Pass the pepper, somebody."

"Here you are!" said Bob Cherry ferociously. He passed the pepper, with a jerk of his arm, which sent a shower of it over Bunter.

"Groogh! You clumsy ass! Atchoo-choo-choo!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Sorry!"

"Yow-ow! Atchoo-atchoo-atchoooooooh!"

"Ready when you are, you chaps," said Figgins.

"Atchoo-choo-choo! Oh, you beast! Groogh! Atchoo!"

Leaving Billy Bunter still sneezing, the cricketers returned to the field.

Figgins & Co. resumed their innings in great spirits. Billy Bunter, as soon as he had recovered from the pepper, resumed his lunch. He had a companion in Fatty Wynn, who had not finished yet. The two fat juniors seemed to be rivalling one another, but Billy Bunter was an easy winner. He was still going strong when Fatty Wynn rolled away to see how the match was getting on.

The match was getting on well for St. Jim's. They were already 80 for four wickets. Figgins was still batting, though he had had a narrow escape; but the umpire had given him "not out," and Figgy accepted the verdict, though his own idea had been that his wicket was lost. Figgins could almost have sworn, as he said afterwards, that the stumps went down from a smartly-returned ball before his bat was on the crease; but the umpire held that he had got home in time, and, of course, Figgins could not dispute that decision. Still less could the Greyfriars fellows dispute it.

Figgins was still batting when last man in was announced, and Fatty Wynn rolled on the pitch. The score was at 120. Fatty Wynn had had a rest since lunch, but he was still feeling the effect of his injudicious exploits at the table, and his pace was slow as he ran. At his first run he laboured along heavily, and the ball came in and knocked his bails down, and then Fatty's bat clumped on the crease. He knew that he was too late, and he gave an apologetic grin along the pitch to Figgins, and started walking away without waiting for the umpire's verdict.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Gadsby. "Where are you going?"

Fatty Wynn looked round in surprise.



"Out!" he replied.  
 "You're not out."  
 "Wha-a-at!"  
 Fatty Wynn clumped his bat back quickly enough, but he looked astonished.  
 "I say, you know, my wicket was down," he said.  
 Gadsby shook his head.  
 "You were home in time."  
 "Well, my hat! I could have jolly well sworn that the wicket was down before I grounded my bat," said Wynn in amazement.  
 "Not at all! You're in."  
 "He was out!" said Tom Brown fiercely.  
 "If you're going to complain of the umpire, Brown——" began Gadsby.  
 "I say, I—I think I was out," said Fatty Wynn uneasily. He wanted to play a fair game, and had no desire to take advantage of a mistake of the umpire. But Gadsby raised his hand.  
 "Not out!" he said finally.  
 "What's up, Fatty?" called out Figgins from the other end.  
 "Umpire says I'm not out."  
 "Well, duffer, you're not out, then. Blessed if I ever heard of a chap grumbling because an umpire gave him not out!" said Figgins in astonishment. "Don't play the giddy goat."  
 "Oh, all right!"  
 And Fatty Wynn continued his innings. Many more runs had been taken before Fatty Wynn was unmistakably "out," and the St. Jim's innings closed for 130. The feelings of the Greyfriars fellows were indescribable; and their remarks to one another were not loud, but deep.  
 "Are we going to stand this?" Tom Brown muttered fiercely to his captain.  
 Wharton set his lips.  
 "What can we do? We agreed to the umpires, and Figgins thinks they are friends of ours. We can't have a scene here."  
 "I—I suppose not. But—but—but——" Tom Brown relapsed into furious silence; his feelings were too deep for words.  
 Greyfriars batted again. Ponsonby had been talking to Gadsby in low tones. Perhaps the cad of Highcliffe thought that that last unfair decision had been a little too palpable.  
 In the Greyfriars second innings there was less of it, at all events. But the knowledge that they were "playing the umpire" had taken a good deal of the verve out of the Remove cricketers. Greyfriars finished their second innings for 60.  
 Bob Cherry almost groaned.  
 "Total 146," he muttered, "and the Saints have knocked up 130 for their first innings. Oh, my only aunt!"  
 "They want seventeen to win, and ten wickets to do it with," said Vernon-Smith. "Where do we come in?"  
 "Echo answers where!" groaned Bob.  
 "The wherefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh dolefully. "But later on there will be a terrific smashfulness of those esteemed skunks!"  
 "Yes, rather; that's one comfort."  
 St. Jim's started their second innings with smiling faces. Wanting only seventeen runs to win, they were quite confident of winning with wickets to spare. But the Remove fellows made a tremendous effort.  
 Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh bowled his very best in the first over. And luck helped him, and the Removites cheered the performance of the hat trick. Inky had done very well indeed; St. Jim's were three down for 4 runs.  
 But it was only a flash in the pan, as it were.  
 It showed the Removites what they could have done but for foul play from Ponsonby. But that was all.  
 With six wickets down, St. Jim's tied. Then, as Bob Cherry lugubriously remarked, it was all over bar shouting. Redfern ran a single, and Figgins & Co. had won the match with five wickets in hand.  
 "Hard luck on you chaps," Ponsonby remarked to Wharton, as the field went off. Wharton did not reply; he could not.  
 "Playing again at Shoremouth, I understand from Hazel," Ponsonby went on.  
 "Yes," muttered Wharton.  
 "Good; we're staying there. We'll umpire again for you, if you like."  
 Wharton gave the cad of Highcliffe a look. He could not say what he thought, as the St. Jim's fellows were round them. Ponsonby knew that.  
 "Certainly," chimed in Gadsby. "We'll be happy to oblige."  
 "Absolutely," grinned Vavasour.  
 Wharton turned his back on them.

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When the cricketers had changed, he tapped Hazel on the shoulder as he was about to walk away with his Highcliffe friends.

"You're staying here with us, Hazel?"  
 Hazel shook his head.  
 "No; I'm going back in the car now."  
 "We shall be here a couple of days longer. You might as well——"  
 "Thanks, I can't. As a matter of fact, I've got some engagements for to-morrow."  
 "With the Highcliffe fellows, I suppose?" said Harry.  
 "Well, yes."  
 "Probably the races?"  
 "That's my business."

Hazel walked away with his friends. Harry Wharton & Co. returned to the hotel with the St. Jim's fellows. Vernon-Smith was a little late in rejoining them there. When he came in he drew Wharton aside.

"I've been speaking to Hazel," he said.  
 "Hang Hazel!" growled Wharton.  
 "The Highcliffe fellows are going round the town. They don't leave here to get back to Shoremouth till eight."

"Well?"  
 "I know which way they're going!" said the Bounder, his eyes gleaming. "I suppose you're not going to take it lying down—the rotten trick they've played on us to-day? We can't say anything to Figgins and the rest, but we can say something to those cads. They're chuckling over the way they've done us; and I believe Hazel knows too. What price having a little talk with them on the way home? You know it's a jolly lonely road from here to Shoremouth along the coast, and——"

Wharton's eyes gleamed. He was only too keen to have a little talk with Ponsonby & Co. away from the St. Jim's fellows.

"I'm on!" he said promptly.  
 "Half a dozen of us will do," said the Bounder. "We're all going to the cinema to-night. Half a dozen of us can slip out without saying a word, and then——"  
 "Good egg!"

And the prospect of prompt retaliation upon Ponsonby & Co. cheered up the Remove fellows wonderfully.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Held Up!

**L**ORD MAULEVERER had taken a whole sheaf of tickets for the cinema that evening. His lordship had booked the best seats available, and the whole party started in great spirits. Billy Bunter had attached himself especially to Lord Mauleverer. Mauly was the one least likely to treat him as he deserved; and, indeed, the noble youth's patience was very long-suffering. When Bunter slipped his fat arm through Mauly's, however, even Lord Mauleverer struck. He couldn't stand that.

It had not been possible to obtain so many seats all together at the cinema, which rendered it more easy for some of the Greyfriars fellows to slip out during the performance without attracting special attention.

The Famous Five, the Bounder, Tom Brown, and Peter Todd were those who left quietly after the show had fairly started.

They walked quickly out of the town to the dusky coast road that ran towards the distant town of Shoremouth. On that road the Ponsonby party had to pass on their return; and before they departed the incensed juniors intended to have something to say to them.

"But they'll be in the car," said Bob Cherry. "How are we going to stop them, Smithy, old man? Have you thought of that?"

The Bounder grunted.  
 "Of course I have. I've got a lantern, and they'll stop when I show the red light. They'll think the road's up, or something. Anyway, they'll stop."

"Good egg! But it's pretty dark along here, and a good many cars pass. Not going to stop every blessed car that comes out of Headland this evening, I suppose?" grinned Bob.

"No, fathead! There's a light every hundred yards or so. One of you can watch for the car under the light, and whistle when it passes. I shall hear you here, and then I'll hop into the road, and show the red light."

The Bounder had thought of everything. Harry Wharton took up his post under the electric light standard to watch for the car. Fifty yards down the road the rest of the juniors waited in the deep gloom. The Bounder had his lantern ready. It was a dark-lantern, and the light was shut off at present.

Ponsonby and his friends did not seem to be in a hurry to leave Headland. Several cars passed Wharton, but





Vavasour came forward with visible reluctance. He had selected Nugent as the least dangerous-looking of the party. But as Frank Nugent took off his coat, and rolled back his sleeves, his look was very grim, and Vavasour liked less and less the prospect of facing him. (See Chapter 14.)

Ponsonby's was not among them. It was past nine o'clock when Wharton heard the zip-zip of Ponsonby's car, and recognised it as it swung into the radius of the electric light.

The car was much like other cars, but he recognised the chauffeur. And the car was open, and four juniors could be seen seated in it. As it came closer he recognised Hazel and the Highcliffians.

Phip!

Wharton stepped back at once into the shadows and whistled.

The car rushed on.

But less than a minute later, the chauffeur put on his brakes. A red light was gleaming out ahead in the darkness of the road. Ponsonby started up in his seat.

"What are you stopping for, Jones?"

"Road's up, I think, sir."

"It wasn't up when we came by this morning."

"Well, there's a red light right in the middle of the road."

The car had slowed down, and it came to a halt within a couple of yards of the red light. Who was holding the light could not be seen. He was buried in the gloom, made denser by the light gleaming in front of him.

"Hallo!" called out the chauffeur. "What's wrong?"

There was a sudden rush of footsteps in the darkness.

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"Nothing wrong, cocky," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We've stopped you to speak to our dear friends here."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed chauffeurful friend."

"Greyfriars cads!" exclaimed Ponsonby, as the juniors surrounded the car.

Peter Todd and Johnny Bull had laid hold of the chauffeur, who was almost stuttering with astonishment.

Bob Cherry grinned into the car.

"Will you kindly step out, dear boys?" he asked. "I have to say with you, as somebody or other remarks in Shakespeare."

Ponsonby gave him a fierce look.

"You've no right to stop us on the road like this!" he exclaimed.

"What's the trouble, Bob?" asked Hazel uneasily. "I suppose you're not thinking of ragging my friends while they're with me."

"You've hit it," said Bob.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"'Nuff said! Are you getting out, Ponsonby?"

"No!" roared Ponsonby. "Drive on, chauffeur! If they get run over it's their own look-out."

But the chauffeur was not willing to risk a fatal accident

**WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!"** By FRANK RICHARDS.



to oblige Ponsonby. And there were two pairs of sinewy hands upon him, too.

"I say, gentlemen, you mustn't do this, you know," the chauffeur expostulated.

"Of course we mustn't," agreed Bob. "But we're going to, all the same. These fellows played a dirty trick on us to-day, and this is where we get even—see?"

Harry Wharton came up breathlessly.

"Yank them out!" he exclaimed.

"Look here, Wharton—" began Hazel savagely.

"Rats! Have them out on their necks, if they won't get out! You can stay in, Hazel. Those three cads are going through it!"

"The police will hear of this," said Ponsonby fiercely.

"You are breaking the law. Hold on! We'll get out."

"You'd better buck up, then."

Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour stepped unwillingly out of the car. They were almost white with rage and apprehension, but they realised that there was no help for it. They had "done" the Greyfriars fellows that day in the meanest possible manner. Now their turn had come.

"If you rag my friends, I'm done with you, Wharton!" exclaimed Hazel passionately. "How dare you!"

"Bosh! You planted them on us to-day, and you know they swindled us by umpiring against us. It was a trick to spoil our match, and you know it. I'm willing to believe you didn't know they intended it; but you know it now."

Hazel was silent. He knew it well enough. Wharton turned to the chauffeur.

"Drive on," he said.

"Don't go without us, Jones," called out Ponsonby.

"Hazel, you rotter, get out, and stand by us!" growled Gadsby.

Hazel made a movement to step from the car, and Johnny Bull grasped him and pitched him back into it. The three Highcliffians were already in the grasp of the Greyfriars juniors, and quite helpless. The chauffeur looked on, amazed and undecided.

"You can drive a car, Smithy," said Wharton.

"I'm ready. What's the little game?"

"If that chap doesn't drive off, pitch him out, and take the car. We'll take these fellows twenty miles into the country, and leave them a walk home."

"You mustn't—" began the chauffeur.

"That's all right. We're going to. Order your man to drive home, Ponsonby, or we'll do as I've said—and I give you one second."

Ponsonby knew that the captain of the Remove meant what he said. In a voice choking with rage, he ordered Jones to drive on to Shoremouth. The chauffeur obeyed, and the car vanished up the road, with Hazel gasping in it. Johnny Bull had not handled him gently. Ponsonby glared at his captors with fury in his eyes.

"Now, you hounds, what are you going to do?" he hissed.

"You'll see soon enough. Bring them off the road, you fellows."

"I tell you—" yelled Gadsby.

"Shut up!"

And the three Highcliffians, almost foaming with rage, were marched off the road into the shadows of the cliffs by the victorious juniors of Greyfriars. They had had their innings that day, and they had done their worst, and now it was the turn of the juniors they had betrayed—and there was trouble ahead for Ponsonby & Co.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Rough Justice!

PONSONBY & CO. were hurried away in the grasp of the Greyfriars juniors, furious and apprehensive. What was going to happen to them they did not know, but they were quite sure it was going to be something extremely unpleasant.

A couple of hundred yards from the road the juniors halted on the sands. It was dusky there, but the stars glimmering in the blue vault of heaven afforded sufficient light for the juniors' purpose. They were at a good distance from the town, and the shore was silent and deserted.

"Here we are," said Harry Wharton. "Keep hold of those cads. They'll bolt if they get half a chance. We know how plucky they are."

"What-ho!"

"Very plucky of you, more than two to one," sneered Ponsonby. "If there were as many of us as there are of you—"

"There are—for what we're going to do," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Now, you played a dirty trick on us to-day. You got that howling ass Hazeldene to bring you along, because we couldn't make a row with the St. Jim's fellows there. You wedged yourselves in as umpires, with

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the deliberate intention of giving unfair decisions and cheating us out of the match."

Ponsonby's lips curled.

"Rotten players always go for the umpire," he said. "You were beaten because you couldn't play cricket."

"Why, you rotter—" began Bob Cherry hotly.

But Wharton made a gesture, and the indignant Bob relapsed into silence.

"We won't argue with the cads," said Harry. "They know very well that they acted like beastly blackguards. We might have been beaten, anyway; but we hadn't a chance with those two swindlers against us. Now they're going through it."

"Eight to three!" sneered Gadsby. "Is this what you call fair play?"

"Quite. You fellows can either fight, or take a ragging, whichever you prefer. Three of us to three of you, and the rest of us won't interfere. They'll see fair play, and see that you don't bolt."

"Hear, hear!"

The Highcliffe fellows exchanged glances. They had expected a merciless ragging, such as they would have bestowed if the odds had been upon their side. But they had only fair play to expect from the Greyfriars juniors. But the prospect was not agreeable. They were not fond of fisticuffs on fair lines.

"Pick out your men," added Wharton. "We'll give you an example of fair play, though you don't deserve it. Choose which you like."

"We don't want to fight—" began Vavasour.

"Naturally. But it isn't a case of what you want, but of what you're going to get."

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"And if we don't—"

"If you don't," said Wharton grimly, "we'll duck you in the sea to begin with, and then give you the frog's march, and then make you run the gauntlet, and some more nice things to follow. Take your choice."

Ponsonby's choice was soon made. A fight, much against the grain as it was, was better than a ragging.

"We'll fight you, hang you!" he said sullenly.

"Choose your men, then!"

"Oh, I don't care! You, if you like!"

"Right-ho!" said Wharton, cheerfully enough. "It's me against Ponsonby, you fellows. Now, Gadsby and Vavasour, buck up!"

"I—I—I'll take Nugent!" muttered Vavasour unwillingly, after running his eye over the grim faces round him.

"I'm your man!" grinned Nugent.

"Take me, Gaddy!" implored Peter Todd. "I'll promise you a really high old time. Be a good chap and take me!"

"You sheer off!" exclaimed Tom Brown indignantly. "Gaddy is going to choose me, ain't you, Gaddy? Say the word!"

"Me, me, me!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Make it me, Gaddy; there's a good chap! By Jove, I'll forgive you all your dirty tricks if you'll give me a chance of giving you a good hiding!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I choose Vernon-Smith," said Gadsby sullenly.

The Bounder smiled grimly. He knew the reason of Gadsby's choice. Smithy, in his wild days, had been hand-in-glove with the Highcliffe "nuts." Gadsby probably thought that the Bounder would go easy for the sake of old times. Never had he made a greater mistake. The Bounder was the angriest of all at the trick the Highcliffians had played, and the most determined of all to exact a summary vengeance for it.

"That's settled, then!" said Harry Wharton. "As skipper, I claim to begin. When you're ready, Ponsonby—"

"I'm ready!" growled Ponsonby, throwing his jacket on the sand.

"I'll keep time for you!" said Johnny Bull, taking out his watch. There was light enough from the stars to see the dial.

Wharton stepped forward, and Ponsonby faced him sullenly. Ponsonby was the pluckiest of the three, but he was extremely unwilling to face the stalwart captain of the Greyfriars Remove. But as there was no help for it, he resolved to do his best.

"Time!" said Johnny Bull.

And they started. Ponsonby put up an unexpectedly good fight. Savage rage and hatred supplied to some extent the place of courage. There was a good deal of punishment given and received in the first round. The other fellows stood round in a ring, looking on; Bob Cherry and Peter Todd keeping their arms linked in those of Gadsby and Vavasour. They did not intend to give the latter a chance to bolt while Ponsonby was occupied with Wharton.

"Time!"

Ponsonby was gasping at the end of the round. Late hours



and cigarettes did not improve his wind. But he came up determinedly for the second round.

In that round Wharton let himself go. His fists hammered upon Ponsonby right and left, on face and chest, till Ponsonby was fairly swept off his feet. He fell with a heavy bump, and Johnny Bull began to count. Ponsonby did not attempt to rise.

"Buck up!" said Johnny Bull. "You'll be counted out!"

"Stop counting, Johnny!" said Wharton quietly.

"Eh—what?"

"The rotter wants to be counted out. He's not done yet. You can lie there as long as you like, Ponsonby, but you're going to be licked all the same."

Ponsonby, snapping his teeth, leaped to his feet. Johnny Bull put away his watch with a snort of disgust.

"No good keeping time for a rotter like that. Pile in!"

They were at it again, hammer and tongs. Rounds were no longer observed. The juniors looked on keenly; Vavasour and Gadsby with troubled faces, anticipating what was to come to them in their turn.

Ponsonby went down several times, and each time Wharton gave him ample time to get up. But malingering did not serve his turn; he had to go on till he was fairly licked. He was licked at last, and lay upon the sand, gasping.

"Done?" asked Harry.

"Yes, hang you!" groaned Ponsonby.

"Clear off, then. Now, Smithy, you and Gadsby!"

The Bouncer stepped up cheerfully. Ponsonby sat on the sand, mopping a streaming nose, and caressing damaged eyes. Never had he had so tremendous a licking, and he was likely to remember it for a very long time.

If Gadsby hoped that Vernon-Smith would spare him for old time's sake, he was woefully disappointed. The Bouncer "sailed in" with a will. Gadsby was knocked right and left, and he had less chance than his leader had had.

"Go it, Gaddy!" quavered out Vavasour, rather with the hope of putting off his own punishment as long as possible than in the hope that Gadsby would succeed in getting the better of the Bouncer.

Gadsby fought his hardest, and the Bouncer had a good many hard knocks; but he did not seem even to notice them. The tussle lasted ten minutes, and at the end of it Gadsby lay panting on the sand. He was evidently "done."

Vernon-Smith slipped on his jacket quietly. He was satisfied.

"Now, Vavasour—"

Vavasour came forward with visible reluctance. He had selected Nugent as the least dangerous-looking of the party. But, as Frank Nugent took off his jacket and rolled back his cuffs, his look was very grim, and Vavasour liked less and less the prospect of facing him. He cast a hunted look round him, and made a sudden bolt, and broke through the ring of juniors and ran.

"Bolted!" roared Bob Cherry. "After him!"

"After him!" yelled Todd.

The juniors dashed in pursuit. Vavasour ran his hardest, but he was not in condition. In a couple of minutes he was run down, and he threw himself on the sand, quivering and yelling.

"Lemme alone! Hands off! I'll yell for help! Yah! Oh, lemme alone!"

Wharton's lip curled with disgust.

"Did you ever see such a rotten funk?" he exclaimed scornfully. "Get up, you worm, and take your licking!"

"I—I won't! Lemme alone!"

"You'll be licked or ragged!" said Nugent. "Rag the rotter, for goodness' sake! I should be ashamed to lay a finger on such a rotten funk!"

"Let me alone!" yelled Vavasour. "I—I—I didn't do anything, did I? I haven't umpired for you. It was Ponsonby's idea, and Gadsby helped him. I—I was down on it all the time. I—I told Pon it wasn't fair play, I give you my word!"

"What's that worth?" sniffed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, let the rotten funk alone!" said Wharton. "He's not worth licking. Bump him and let him sneak off."

"Yarocoh—leggo—oh, oh, oh!"

Bump, bump, bump!

The juniors left Vavasour gasping on the sand, and returned to the spot where they had left Ponsonby and Gadsby. The latter two were putting on their jackets, their discoloured faces furious with wrath. They had heard Vavasour's confession, and could no longer even pretend that they had not plotted to cheat the Greyfriars fellows in the cricket match.

"Now cut off!" said Wharton. "You can walk back to Shoremouth; it's only twenty miles or so, and it will do you good. It will be a lesson to you to keep clear of us in the future!"

"I'll make you sorry for this!" snarled Ponsonby.

"Oh, rats!"

Ponsonby and Gadsby limped away. Vavasour joined them in the road. Harry Wharton & Co., quite satisfied, walked back to Headland. The Highcliffe fellows dragged weary and limping limbs towards the distant town of Shoremouth.

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NEXT  
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ONE  
PENNY.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Gadsby. "We've had an awful time! Who'd have thought those rotters would have had the cheek to waylay us like this? I wish you'd never thought of that rotten scheme, Ponsonby!"

Ponsonby ground his teeth.

"I'll make 'em smart for it!" he said savagely.

"I don't see how. I've had enough of them," said Gadsby, with a groan. "I know I've got two black eyes. Ow, ow! I'm jolly well going to leave the beasts alone! They're not safe to go for! Ow, ow! Yow!"

"It's safe enough, what I'm thinking of," said Ponsonby, with a dark look. "I'm going to get at them through Hazeldene. They've set out to be a sort of Dutch uncles to that fool, on account of his sister Marjorie. The more he plays the giddy goat, the more it will make them squirm. Especially that villain Smithy. Marjorie knows he first led her brother into gambling, or she thinks so. And the more Hazel goes to the dogs, the more she will dislike Smithy, and he's mighty keen to get into her good graces. That's the way we're going to pay them out."

"Jolly easy way, I should say, if they care what becomes of Hazel," grunted Gadsby. "I never saw a chap more inclined to look for trouble than that silly chump."

"Exactly; and that's where we come in. If he doesn't come a mucker, it won't be my fault," said Ponsonby, his eyes glinting.

"I say, I can't walk to Shoremouth, you know," groaned Vavasour. "I can't absolutely. I'm fagged already."

"Oh, rats! We shall meet the car on the road," said Ponsonby. "Jones wouldn't be idiot enough to leave us quite in the lurch. We shall find him on the road."

"There's the light!" said Gadsby.

The chauffeur was waiting for them on the road. The three Highcliffians climbed into the car, and Hazeldene grinned a little at the sight of their damaged faces.

"You look as if you've had a rough time," he remarked.

"If you really did play it low down on them, as they say, I can't say I'm surprised, Ponsonby. It was a rather rotten trick!"

"Was it?" snarled Ponsonby.

"Yes, it was," said Hazel. "I hadn't any idea that you intended anything of the kind. I think it was rotten, and you deserve what you've got."

"Somebody else is going to get something, to make up for it, you can take my word for that!" said Ponsonby through his set teeth. He did not add that the "somebody else" was Hazeldene himself.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Sticks!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came back into their places at the cinema entertainment some time before the finish. They had lost no time in returning after dealing with the Highcliffe fellows. Vernon-Smith and Wharton showed in their faces some pretty plain signs of the combat, but they had the consolation of knowing that Ponsonby and Gadsby were in a much worse plight. As they dropped into their seats Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, where have you been?" Bunter always wanted to know.

"Find out!" said Bob Cherry politely.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

But the light went out then for a new film to come on, and Billy Bunter had to leave off asking questions.

When the show was over, and the juniors left, the St. Jim's fellows could not help glancing at Wharton's and Vernon-Smith's damaged faces.

"Been looking for trouble, you chaps—what?" asked Figgins.

"Yes—and finding it!" said Harry, with a smile. But he did not make any further explanation; and the St. Jim's fellows, not being blessed with Billy Bunter's inquisitiveness, did not ask any further questions.

They returned to the hotel to supper, and went up to bed. Billy Bunter followed Harry Wharton & Co. up to their quarters.

"I say, you fellows, where am I going to sleep?" he inquired.

"Anywhere you like!" growled Bob. "On the floor or on the roof or in the coal-cellar. Take your choice!"

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"You don't mean to say that you haven't engaged a room for me?" he exclaimed.

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"If you call this treating a visitor decently, I don't!" said Bunter. "I call it rotten! If it wasn't so late I should

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WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS! By FRANK RICHARDS.



certainly go back to Shoremouth. Ponsonby begged me to go back in the car with him, and I stayed with you fellows instead. The question is—where am I going to sleep?"

"I suppose we must put the fat boulder up," said Todd. "You can share my bed, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Todd, I don't like sleeping double. If I can't have a bed to myself—"

Todd glared at him.

"You don't like sleeping double?" he snapped.

"Certainly not!" said Bunter loftily. "I'm accustomed to comfort."

"Then you don't want half my bed?"

"No, I don't! I want—"

"All serene! I'll give you a blanket, and you can sleep on the floor," said Peter Todd grimly.

"I say, Toddy, of course I can't do that! Now I come to think of it, I really don't mind whacking out your bed."

"But I mind," said Todd coolly; "and you can sleep on the floor, or clear out!"

"I refuse—"

"Or you can go down and book a room for yourself," said Todd. "I dare say the landlord has another room or two."

"Very well, I will do so. Lend me half-a-quid—"

"Rats!"

"Will you lend me half-a-quid, Smithy?"

"No, I won't!"

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

Wharton went into his room.

"I say, Bob Cherry—"

Bob followed Wharton and slammed the door.

"Franky, old man—"

Nugent walked away.

Billy Bunter blinked round furiously, and followed Peter Todd into his room. It was a small room, with a single bed in it, and Bunter blinked round it disparagingly.

"I say, Toddy, you have got pretty cheap quarters here."

"Dear enough for me," said Todd. "If you don't like 'em you can get out."

"I happen to have left my purse at Shoremouth. As you are determined to be mean about that half-quid I shall have to share your bed."

"You jolly well won't share it!" said Todd, getting into bed. "There's a blanket for you, and there's the floor."

"I can't sleep on the floor, you beast!" roared Bunter.

"Then stay awake!"

Bunter blinked at him furiously. Peter Todd turned over to go to sleep. Bunter approached the bed.

"I say, Toddy, old man, I know you're j-j-joking—"

"Shut up! I'm tired, and I want to sleep!"

"I say, old fellow—"

Swish!

Todd's bolster swept through the air, and Bunter sat down on the floor with a tremendous concussion.

"Now shut up!" said Todd, glaring at him. "If you jaw any more I'll get out of bed and start on you with the pillow."

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Shut up!" roared Todd.

And Billy Bunter shut up. With a furious face he rolled himself in the blanket to sleep on the floor. But the Owl of the Remove could sleep anywhere—he was a first-rate sleeper—and he was soon buried in slumber, and making night hideous with a deep and unmusical snore.

He was still fast asleep when Peter Todd awoke in the morning. Todd sat up in bed and grinned. He awoke Bunter by the simple process of hurling a pillow at him.

"Yaroooh! Oh!" Bunter sat up on the floor and blinked. "Wharrer that? Oh, Todd, you beast! What did you wake me for? I—I haven't slept a wink!"

"Time to get up, porpoise!"

"If you're getting up now, Toddy, I'll have your bed. I don't want to come down to brekker till about ten."

"If you get into that bed," said Todd, who was already up. "I'll empty the water-jug over you! You're not going to slack here!"

And Bunter had to come down very early that morning. But he consoled himself by making a tremendous breakfast, easily putting Fatty Wynn into the shade. The large party of juniors had a big table to themselves, and they kept a waiter very busy. And the Greyfriers ventriloquist, who was feeling very "edge-wise" towards his study-mate, kept him a little busier.

"Waiter," said a voice that ought to have been Peter Todd's, "what do you mean by bringing me rotten eggs?"

William, the waiter, hurried to the table. In expectation of tips, William was taking great care of the juniors—indeed, looking after them in quite a fatherly manner.

"Sorry, sir! What's the matter with the heggs?" asked William, quite distressed. "They was quite fresh."

"Don't talk nonsense!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped William.

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"Dash it all, draw it mild, Toddy!" expostulated Harry Wharton. "What the dickens are you ragging William for?"

Todd looked up from his breakfast.

"Eh? Who's ragging William?" he demanded.

"If the eggs ain't fresh—" began William.

"The eggs are all right," said Todd, in surprise. "Never better."

"Then what for did you say they was rotten, sir?" demanded William, nettled.

"Eh? I didn't! I heard somebody—"

"It was your voice, sir, at any rate, sir," said William, looking quite grieved; "and really, sir—really—"

"Oh, my voice, was it?" said Peter, glaring at Bunter. "We've got a ventriloquist in the party, William. He plays rotten tricks, William. So I chuck a cup of tea over him, William. Like that, William!"

"Groooogh!" roared Bunter, as Peter suited the action to the word.

"And I follow it up with an egg, William! Like that, William!"

Squash!

"Yarooogh! Todd, you beast—groogh—"

"And then I let him have the pepper, William. Like that, William!"

"Grooh—hohhoh! Atchoo—atchoo—atchoooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter jumped up from the table. William, the waiter, retreated, grinning. But Billy Bunter did not grin. He was smothered with tea and egg and pepper, and he was furious.

"Yow-ow! You rotter! Groogh! I'll—I'll—"

"You won't play any more ventriloquial tricks in a hurry," chuckled Peter. "Better go and get a wash. You can't have brekker in that state. I won't allow it!"

"Beast! Yow-ow! I—I'll—"

"Buzz off!" said Peter, taking up another egg. "I give you two seconds!"

The two seconds were enough for Billy Bunter, and he disappeared.

When he came back the juniors had finished breakfast and had gone out. Bunter consoled himself with a second breakfast, in the comfortable assurance that Harry Wharton & Co. would have to pay the bill. But he did not see the juniors again that day till evening. They had gone on a steamer excursion, and with extraordinary forgetfulness had not mentioned to Bunter that they were going.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly when they came in to a rather late dinner.

"Nice sort of pals, you are, leaving me in the lurch!" he growled. "I had a good mind to clear off before you came back."

"Pity you changed it!" said Bob Cherry unsympathetically.

"However, I've had a good time to-day!" said Bunter. "They do you jolly well at this hotel! I've told them to put all the things on your bill, Wharton. I suppose that's all right? I'll settle up later."

"You cheeky fat rotter—"

"It's not much," said Bunter, with dignity. "I've had a good many ices, but only about three dozen tarts—they had to be specially sent for. But the people here are really very obliging. And a dozen ginger-beers and lemonades, and some cakes, and some other things. It won't be more than a couple of pounds."

"A—a couple of pounds!"

"That's all! I'll settle up at Shoremouth. I'm expecting a postal order there."

"I'll jolly well tell the manager not to put anything more on our bill for you!" Harry Wharton exclaimed, in dismay.

"If you're going to be mean, Wharton—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I dare say some of my friends among the St. Jim's chaps will lend me a quid or two," said Bunter, with dignity. "Figgins will—"

Wharton took the Owl of the Remove by the neck, and shook him till his teeth rattled.

"If you borrow a single tanner of the St. Jim's chaps, we'll squash you!" he said.

"Ow! Wow! Yow! If you sh-sh-shake me like that—"

"Do you understand?"

"M-m-my glasses will fall off," gurgled Bunter, "and if they get broken—"

"Do you understand?" roared Wharton.

"You—you'll have to pay for 'em! Groooogh!"

Wharton released the fat junior as Figgins & Co. came on the scene. Billy Bunter scored, for during the remainder of their stay in Headland the juniors did not let him go out of their sight, lest he should carry out his threat of "squeezing" the St. Jim's fellows for a loan. Bob Cherry suggested



taking him out in a boat and dropping him overboard as the best way of getting rid of him, but as that was not feasible, they had to make the best of the Owl of the Remove.

And when the stay came to an end, and the Greyfriars party started for Shoremouth, Billy Bunter was with them. Figgins & Co. saw them off at the station, and they parted on the best of terms.

Billy Bunter settled himself down comfortably in a corner seat.

"We're going to have a good time at Shoremouth," he remarked. "If you like, Wharton, I'll play for you in the match here. I can overlook what you've done, and—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Or rather, on second thoughts, I'm afraid I sha'n't have time to play for you," went on Bunter calmly. "After all, you fellows are scarcely up to my form, and I shall be very busy looking after Marjorie. Marjorie and I are going to be a very great deal together, I can tell you, and I—Yah! Oh, you beast, Cherry! Yow! Ow!"

Bunter roared as Bob Cherry's big fist smashed his hat down over his eyes. And for the rest of the journey Bunter did not deign to talk to the juniors any more, for which relief they were duly thankful.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER, Trouble Ahead!

"MARJORIE!"

"Clara!"

"Here we are again!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

It was a warm greeting. Glad enough were Harry Wharton & Co. to see their girl chums of Cliff House School once more.

The two girls had come to the station with Hazeldene to meet the party. Hazel was not looking very joyful. Apparently the meeting did not afford him any extraordinary amount of pleasure. But Marjorie and Clara looked very sweet and charming and very pleased. They had been looking forward to the arrival of their old friends of Greyfriars.

"Jolly glad to see you again, Marjorie," said Bunter, rolling forward at once. "How topping you look!"

Marjorie was talking to Wharton, and did not seem to hear, and the Owl of the Remove turned his kind attentions to Miss Trevlyn.

"Quite sunburnt, Miss Clara," he remarked. "Jolly place this, ain't it? I'm going to look after you here, and see that you have a really good time, you bet!"

"We saw a cricket match here yesterday," Miss Clara was saying to Bob Cherry, and she, too, seemed deaf to Bunter's dulcet tones. "Some of your friends were playing—the Grammar School boys, you know—"

"I say, Miss Clara—"

"And Gay was very clever," went on Miss Clara, determinedly deaf. "We shall be very glad to see your match when it comes off. You didn't have good luck with your last?"

"No, our luck was out," said Bob, "owing to—to circumstances. But we took it out of the circumstances afterwards." A remark which puzzled Miss Clara somewhat.

Bunter grunted, and turned to Hazeldene.

"I say, Hazel—"

"Oh, don't bother!" said Hazeldene.

"Ahem! You're not looking very fit, Hazel, old chap!"

"Oh, rot!"

"A giddy time by the giddy sea—what?" said Bunter, with a wink. "Oh, you're a sad dog, Hazel! I know you!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Hazel, with an uneasy glance towards his sister.

"Ahem! How's Ponsonby—eh? I intend to see a good deal of those chaps while I'm here!"

"Bosh!"

Hazel's manner could not be called courteous. Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

"Any luck on the gee-gees?" he asked. "Quite a good thing there's a racecourse near this place, ain't it? How did they use you?"

"Shut up, you fool!" said Hazel, in a fierce whisper. But it was Billy Bunter's turn to be deaf.

"Ripping to be on a vac, and able to do as you like without a rotten prefect dropping on you, ain't it?" he said confidentially. "Have you made anything on the gee-gees?"

"Cheese it, you fat idiot! I—I haven't been betting!"

Bunter winked knowingly.

"Oh, draw it mild, Hazel! I know—"

"You fellows will excuse me," said Hazel, turning his back on the Owl of the Remove without ceremony. "Marjorie wanted me to come here, but I've got an engagement this afternoon. See you later."

And Hazel lifted his straw hat to the girls and walked away, and disappeared at once into the crowd.

Wharton saw a shade come over Marjorie's face, and the girl looked very thoughtful as they left the station. Outside, Shoremouth was shimmering in the blaze of the sun. It was a sultry afternoon.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 340.

Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"How is Hazel getting on here?" asked Harry, who saw what subject was uppermost in Marjorie's mind.

Marjorie coloured a little.

"I am afraid his holiday is not doing him much good," she said frankly. "He has met some friends here whom—whom I don't like very much."

"The Highcliffe fellows?"

"Yes. And—and I think Hazel has been very reckless in their company. We have seen very little of him; he is hardly ever at home. When he comes in to a meal he generally brings Ponsonby with him. Father and mother like Ponsonby; he can be very agreeable. But—but I can't like him. I can't help thinking that his friendship is bad for Hazel, and—and I wish they were not so much together. But now you are here it will be different. Hazel will be with you."

Wharton nodded, but he had his doubts about it. With Hazel in his present humour, Ponsonby & Co. were more in his line.

The Hazeldenes had a bungalow near the sea, where Miss Clara was staying with her friend. Wharton and Bob Cherry walked with the two girls as far as the bungalow, and then they parted, and the two juniors went to their hotel, where the other fellows had already arrived. They found Billy Bunter in a very bad humour. The fat junior had fully intended to walk home with Marjorie and Clara, but Peter Todd and Johnny Bull had taken his arms and walked him away, deaf to his expostulations. But Bunter cheered up over tea—a "high" tea, which Bob Cherry had ordered on a lavish scale.

"I say, this is all right," said Bunter. "Pass the cake, Peter. If you keep this up I sha'n't be sorry I've come along with you chaps, instead of accepting Ponsonby's pressing invitation. Ponsonby's people have a very decent place here—rather better than sticking in a blessed hotel—but—"

"So you're staying here, are you?" growled Johnny Bull.

Bunter blinked at him.

"That's all right, Johnny, old chap. I'm not going to desert you, depend on me. Pass the jam, young Nugent. I hope you've booked a decent room for me, Peter."

"If you're going to stay I'll have an extra bed shoved in my room for you," said Todd. "I suppose it's up to me to stand you."

"Ahem! Pass the biscuits, Franky. I shall have to ask you fellows to stand the exes here for a day or two, until I've sent the address, you know. If you fellows had let me know where you were going to stay I should have had a remittance waiting for me. But I want you to keep a very careful account, Wharton, so that I can settle up in full."

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton.

"Look here, Wharton, I insist upon your keeping an account, otherwise it will be quite impossible for me to remain."

Br-r-r-r!

"Well, if you insist upon my remaining as a guest, of course I can't refuse, as you're so pressing," said Bunter gracefully. "Pass that other cake, will you? I like cake. I say, Smithy, you've not finished tea yet."

A waiter had brought in a note for Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder rose from the table. Bunter blinked at him inquisitively, but the Bounder did not deign to satisfy his curiosity. He quitted the room quietly.

In the vestibule Hazeldene was waiting for him. There was an anxious expression on Hazel's face, and a grim look on Vernon-Smith's.

"Well?" said the Bounder tersely.

"I—I haven't had a chance of thanking you for sending me that—that little loan, you know," said Hazel nervously.

"That's all right—two quid," said the Bounder, apparently understanding that Hazeldene had come to return the loan. Hazel flushed.

"I—I haven't come to settle," he muttered. "I don't mean that."

"Come up and have tea with us," said Vernon-Smith.

"Thanks! I've had tea. I wanted to ask you—"

"About our plans?" asked the Bounder calmly. "The match isn't fixed yet. Wharton's got to see Gordon Gay about that."

"Hang the match!" muttered Hazel.

"We're going bathing in the morning," went on the Bounder. "There's jolly good bathing here. Your people are coming down, too. I suppose you'll be with us?"

"I—I don't know. Look here, Smithy, I—I believe you know what I wanted to see you for. Can you lend me a few quids," blurted out Hazel, "till—till—"

"Till doomsday?" asked the Bounder ironically.

"Well, if you won't—"

"Look here, Hazel," said the Bounder quietly, "you're playing the giddy ox again. I know that."



Hazel looked sullen.  
 "I suppose I can amuse myself my own way?" he snapped.  
 "Yes, I suppose you can, so long as you foot the bill yourself," agreed Vernon-Smith, "I'm not made of money, you know, and you owe me a good many quids. I've told you before that I won't lend you any money to gamble with, and I'll tell you again. Nothing doing."  
 "I must have a few quids to-day!" said Hazel.  
 "What for?"  
 "Oh, never mind what for. I'm stony. But if you won't lend it to me, I know where to go for it. So-long!"  
 "Hold on!" said the Bounder, as Hazel was turning sullenly away. "I suppose you mean you are going to your sister for it?"  
 "That's my business," said Hazel angrily.  
 "Marjorie will suspect what you are up to."  
 "Thanks; but I don't want your opinion about that!"  
 The Bounder bit his lip.  
 "How much do you want?" he asked.  
 "Three quids."  
 "Will you spend to-morrow with us?"  
 "I—I can't. I've promised Pon—"  
 "Never mind Pon. You can change your mind if you like. Dash it all, Hazel, we're your friends, you know. Come with us to-morrow, there's a good chap!"  
 "All right," said Hazel, "I'll come. Now—"  
 Vernon-Smith quietly extracted three sovereigns from his pocket, and Hazel's fingers closed on them. He hardly stayed to thank the Bounder, and hurried away. Vernon-Smith returned to the tea-room with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes Hazel!" said Bob Cherry, who was looking out of the window. "Has Hazel been here? Why didn't he come up?"  
 "I've just seen him," said Vernon-Smith briefly. "He's arranged to come along with us to-morrow."  
 "Oh, good!"  
 Wharton gave the Bounder a quick look; but Vernon-Smith avoided his glance. Harry had never felt so friendly towards the Bounder as at that moment. It was a new role for the Bounder, that of guardian angel to a reckless youth, and it showed how complete had been the change in him. Vernon-Smith, with his hard and resolute character, had thrown his own reckless past behind him when he had once made up his mind to do so; but in reclaiming Hazeldene he had a harder task.  
 "Good for you, Smithy!" Wharton said later, when they were together. "Hazel is spoiling the holiday for Marjorie by playing the giddy goat. If you can keep him from making a fool of himself—"  
 "I'm going to try," said the Bounder.  
 "I hope you'll succeed."  
 The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. He hoped so, too; but he could not help having his doubts about it.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

By the Sunny Sea!

A STURDY, good-looking youth came in while the Greyfriars party were at breakfast the next morning. It was Gordon Gay, of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School, the fellow with whom Wharton had arranged a match at Shoremouth. The Greyfriars juniors greeted him warmly, and Gay joined them at breakfast.

"I hear you've been playing cricket here already," Harry Wharton remarked.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Yes. Carboy's people live here, you know. You know Carboy of the Fourth? He's got six of us staying with him here. There's a Shoremouth junior cricket club, and Carboy is a member, so we all squeezed in while we were here," said Gay, laughing. "They're lending us the ground for our match. There are seven of us, with Carboy, and we're going to play four Shoremouth chaps to make up the eleven. One day next week suit you?"

"Any day you like," said Harry.

"Make it Wednesday, then. Stumps pitched at ten—what?"

"Right-oh!"

"What luck did you have with the St. Jim's chaps?"

"Rotten!" said Wharton, with a smile. He did not explain that the bad luck was chiefly due to the peculiar umpiring of Ponsonby and Gadsby.

Billy Bunter blinked across the table at Gordon Gay.

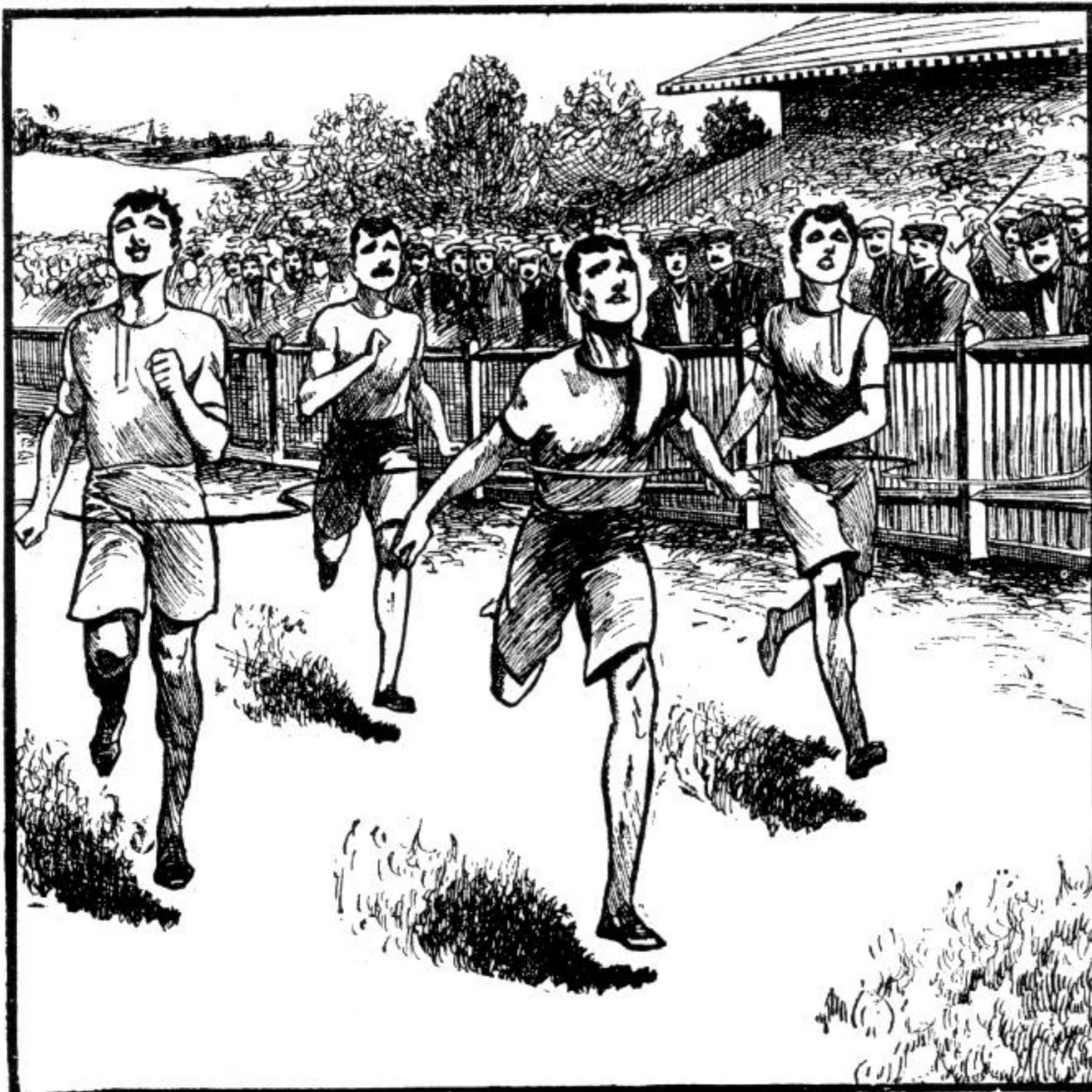
"If you're short of men, Gay, I'll play for you with pleasure," he said. "I'm rather a dab at cricket, and I'm not playing for Wharton."

Gordon Gay looked at him with a smile. Billy Bunter might be a dab at cricket, but he certainly did not look as if he were a dab at anything but eating. At that he was certainly a great dab, to judge by his present performance.

"Thanks!" said Gay politely. "But we've arranged with the Shoremouth chaps—four of them."

"Oh, you can leave one of them out," persisted Bunter. "The fact is, I should like a game."

AMBITIONS.—No. 17.



Thousands of my chums take a great interest in athletics, and many performers of no mean merit on the running track are numbered among the readers of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY. To become a champion athlete is naturally the ambition of them all, and every Magnetite will wish them the best of luck in their efforts to "breast the tape" ahead of their rivals.





A head appeared on the water below the cliff—a hand was thrown up. Hazel's white face glimmered in the waves. The Bounder gave him one glance, and dived from the cliff! (See Chapter 19.)

"Shut up!" said Johnny Bull. "The fat duffer can't play cricket, Gay!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Ring off!" said Johnny Bull, who had an almost ferocious way of speaking plainly at times. "You make me tired!"

Bunter blinked at him angrily.

"Oh, you're an ass, Johnny Bull!" came a voice that appeared to be Gordon Gay's.

Johnny Bull started.

"I tell you he can't play, Gay!" he exclaimed sharply.

"And I don't like being called names."

Gay looked at him in surprise.

"Keep your wool on!" he said good-humouredly. "Who's calling you names?"

"You called me an ass."

"I did!" exclaimed Gay, in surprise. "My dear chap, you're dreaming dreams— Hallo, what on earth's the matter?"

"Yaroooh!"

Bob Cherry had suddenly jumped up, caught Bunter by the collar, and yanked him over the back of his chair. The

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Owl of the Remove landed on the floor with a terrific bump. Bob proceeded to roll him over with his boot.

"Is that a game?" asked Gay, in astonishment.

"Yes," said Bob. "A little game we've invented for Bunter's special benefit. Bunter is a ventriloquist, and he has a trick of imitating voices, and we always show our appreciation like this."

"Yow-ow-ow! Leave off! It was only a j-j-joke!" howled Bunter.

"Oh!" ejaculated Johnny Bull, turning red. "I—I beg your pardon, Gay! It was that fat ass ventriloquising again."

"Yow-ow! Bob Cherry, you beast—"

"That'll do, Bob," exclaimed Harry Wharton, laughing.

"You're astonishing the natives, old chap. Chuck it!"

"A painful but necessary duty, Gay," Bob explained as he returned to the table. "Necessary for me, and painful for Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter scowled ferociously as he returned to the breakfast-table. Ventriloquism was evidently at a discount now. After breakfast Gordon Gay took his leave, and the



juniors prepared for their morning excursion. Lord Mauleverer prepared for it by stretching himself upon a lounge on the terrace and closing his eyes. When the party gathered in the hall his lordship was missing.

"Slacking somewhere," said Bob Cherry. "Wait a minute. I'm looking after Mauly."

Bob looked for the noble youth and found him. Lord Mauleverer opened one eye apprehensively at Bob's heavy footsteps. But he did not rise.

"We're starting, Mauly!" said Bob.

"Yaas."

"We're just going, fathead!"

"Hope you'll have a good time, begad!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"You're coming with us!" shouted Bob.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Can't, my dear fellow."

"Why can't you?"

"Tired."

"I see!" said Bob, with a cheerful grin. "You've got a sort of tired feeling—feel as if you'd better spend the morning slacking—what?"

"Yaas."

"Don't feel as if you could get off that lounge by yourself—eh?"

"Exactly, dear boy."

"That's all right. I'll give you something to cure all that," said Bob cheerfully, and he laid hold of Lord Mauleverer's ankles and had him off the lounge in a twinkling.

"Feel better now?"

"Oh! Ow! My hat! Begad!"

"Feel as if you can walk?" asked Bob, with friendly solicitude. "If you don't, I haven't the least objection to pulling you along by your feet."

"Oh, begad! I—I'll walk!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"No, you won't; you'll run!" grinned Bob.

And he took the noble youth's arm, and ran him downstairs at top speed. Lord Mauleverer arrived in the vestibule in a breathless state.

"Here he is," said Bob. "He thought he was going to slack to-day, and I thought he wasn't. Second thoughts are best. Kim on!"

And Lord Mauleverer resigned himself to his fate. In a merry party, the juniors proceeded to the beach, where they met Mr. and Mrs. Hazeldene, and Marjorie and Clara and Hazel. The shining waters were already dotted with bathers, and Harry Wharton & Co. were not long in joining them. Marjorie and Clara were both swimmers, and most of the juniors could swim; and Bunter especially assured the girls that there would be no danger, as he would be there.

Hazel did not join them. He remained with his parents for a while, and then strolled away. The Bounder had also remained out of the water, and when Hazel walked away in the crowd, Vernon-Smith disappeared too, keeping an eye on Hazel as he threaded his way among the crowd of merry-makers on the front.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Bounder's Way!

"HALLO, dear boy!"

Ponsonby of Highcliffe greeted Hazeldene cheerily, at the same time winking at Gadsby and Vavasour with the eye that was furthest from Hazel.

The three cheerful young blackguards were seated on the rocks, under the shade of the big cliffs at the end of the bay. Excepting for the swimmers in the sea, they were out of sight—it was quite a secluded spot. And in that secluded spot Ponsonby & Co. were enjoying themselves after their own fashion.

Ponsonby had thoughtfully brought a pack of cards with him, and the young rascals were using a flat rock for a card-table, and they sat round the cards, smoking cigarettes. Ponsonby & Co. were "seeing life," as they called it, on their holiday.

They welcomed Hazeldene as he came up, quite effusively. They had already won all his available cash from him, but he had evidently obtained a new supply. His eyes glistened at the sight of the cards.

"Glad you were able to join us!" drawled Gadsby. "I fancied the excellent Wharton would be keeping too sharp an eye on you."

Hazel scowled.

"Wharton's not my master, I suppose!" he exclaimed, touched on his weakest spot, as the cad of Highcliffe fully intended he should be.

"I hope not; but I fancy the great man thinks he is," said Gadsby lazily. "However, here you are! You want your revenge—what?"

"That's it," said Hazel.

"Well, squat down!"

Ponsonby gathered up the cards, and slipped them into his pocket. The Highcliffians had been playing nap, but Ponsonby had another set of cards for use with Hazel. The foolish and reckless lad had no suspicion that he was in the hands of a gang of young sharpers.

It was not only his money the young rascals wanted, though that was very useful to them. Their own little flutters on the races had not ended well, for there they came in contact with sharpers who were sharper than themselves. Hazel was very useful for the purpose of replenishing a depleted exchequer.

But, besides that, the Highcliffe trio intended to score off Harry Wharton & Co. by leading Hazel into their own rascally ways. The deeper they plunged him into the mire the more they were pleased.

"Of course, it's understood that we play only for the ready," Gadsby remarked.

Hazel's I O U's were no use to the Highcliffians, as they were worth exactly the value of the paper they were written on, and no more.

"I'm in funds," said Hazel.

"Oh, good!"

They began to play. Hazel's luck was decidedly bad. He had not the steady head that was required for card-playing; but if he had been ever so good a player, his skill would not have helped him much, considering the cards that were being used. Hazel had four or five pounds, and the Highcliffians wondered where he had obtained it, not guessing that the greater part of it came from the Bounder.

The juniors were too busy with their game to notice a light footfall on the rocks. Vernon-Smith, leaning against the cliff at a little distance, almost out of sight, watched them with a moody brow. He had guessed that something of the sort was on, and for that reason he had followed Hazel. But now he was there, it was not easy to decide what to do. Hazel was his own master, and it was quite certain that he would not listen to a word of advice, and that he would not leave his precious friends while he had a coin left. The fever of gambling was in his veins.

Hazel's money did not last long. It passed into the keeping of Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour. The white, set look in his face showed the sharpers when he was "stony."

"Not finished, dear boy?" yawned Gadsby.

"I—I'm stony!" muttered Hazel. "I suppose an I O U

Ponsonby laughed.

"We're not collecting wastepaper!" he remarked. "You'll excuse us, Hazel, old chap, but you are a bad payer!"

Hazel crimsoned.

"Look here, I've got something else," he said, drawing a gold watch from his pocket. "That's worth five quid!"

Ponsonby took up the watch, and examined it curiously.

"That's a lady's watch," he said.

"My sister gave it to me."

The Highcliffe fellows exchanged glances.

"Well, if you really want to go on——" murmured Ponsonby.

"You're bound to give me my revenge!" said Hazel bitterly. "You've won all my money, anyway!"

"All serene! I'll give you four quid for the giddy ticker!"

Ponsonby slipped the watch into his pocket, and threw down four sovereigns. Hazel caught the money up eagerly.

The Bounder was still watching, with a hard, bitter look on his face. This was the fellow he was trying to save from himself. It looked a hopeless task.

The new supply of cash lasted Hazel about twenty minutes. When it was gone, he sat with a white and stunned look on his face. Ponsonby looked at him curiously.

"Pretty near time to get back, I think," he drawled.

"I—I——" Hazel stammered. "I—I say, Pon——"

"Stony?"

"Yes. But that doesn't matter. Only—only that watch——" Hazel almost choked. "My—my sister lent it to me! She—she didn't mean——"

Ponsonby rose with a yawn. Then he caught sight of the Bounder. Vernon-Smith was advancing towards them. The black look was gone from the Bounder's face. His manner could not have been more agreeable. He gave the Highcliffians a cordial nod.

"Having a good time—what?" he asked.

# ANSWERS

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Hazel looked guiltily at the Bounder. He was ashamed of being caught thus occupied, after the promises he had made. But his chief thought was that he might possibly screw a fresh supply of money from Vernon-Smith.

"I say, Smithy, lend me a quid!" he muttered.

"What do you say to a little game, Smithy?" asked Ponsonby, surprised and pleased by the friendly manner of the Bounder.

A little game with the millionaire's son, with marked cards, was a pleasant prospect for the three young sharpers, and they were quite willing to forget old troubles for the sake of it.

The Bounder nodded.

"Just what I was thinking of," he said.

"So you've given your goody-goody friends the go-by!" grinned Gadsby.

"Oh, a chap can't keep up to concert-pitch all the time!" said the Bounder coolly, as he sat down. "If you fellows want a little game, I'm your man! I haven't any cards—"

"I suppose our cards are all right?"

"Of course! There's a quid for you, Hazel!"

Hazel clutched the coin eagerly. Ponsonby & Co. exchanged glances of satisfaction. Gadsby reflected that this was a really topping way of repaying the Bounder for the black eye he had given him a week before. The young rascal intended that the son of Samuel Vernon-Smith, the millionaire, should pay very dearly for that little game.

Vernon-Smith opened a little leather purse, which simply bristled with sovereigns and half-sovereigns, and the Highcliffians' eyes gleamed with greed. There was a wad of banknotes in the purse, too. Certainly the Bounder was a pigeon worth the trouble of plucking—if he could be plucked. And with marked cards to play with, Ponsonby & Co. had no doubt on that point.

Vernon-Smith took up the cards and shuffled them. Not by the flicker of an eyelid did he show suspicion. Ponsonby did not dream for a moment that the Bounder knew as well as he did that the cards were marked—that he knew the marks better than Ponsonby himself, and was far better skilled in the noble art of card-sharping. Not for a moment did it occur to him that Vernon-Smith had stepped into the game with the simple intention of "skinning" the young rascals as they had skinned Hazel, and with a complete confidence that he could do it without the slightest difficulty. For Ponsonby & Co., sharp as they believed themselves to be, were little better than infants in dealing with the Bounder of Greyfriars.

The three Highcliffe fellows began cheerfully enough. But their cheerfulness gradually faded away. When they had the dealing they won, but the Bounder was carefully biding his time. When the deal came to him, he shuffled the cards carelessly, and yawned.

"This is a bit of a bore, playing for bobs!" he remarked. "Make it half-quids!"

"Done!" said Ponsonby at once. "Quids, if you like!"

"Right-ho! Quids, then!" said the Bounder. "I don't mind—luck must turn sooner or later!"

Hazel's money was already gone, and he sat looking on without speaking. If he could not play, it was next best to watch the play.

Ponsonby found himself with a good hand. The Bounder appeared to reflect and hesitate.

Ponsonby grinned.

"Make it nap!" he suggested. "You used to be a sport, Smithy."

"Hum!" said Vernon-Smith, still seeming to hesitate.

"Well, all right! In for a penny, in for a pound! Nap!"

"Get it!" grinned Ponsonby.

The Bounder proceeded to get it. And when he had got it the Highcliffe fellows looked blank and blue.

"You owe me five quid each, please," said the Bounder calmly.

And with sickly looks the young rascals paid up. They were well supplied with money, but it very nearly cleared them out. Hazel gave the Bounder an envious look.

"Rotten that you should have so much luck!" he growled. "I never get a hand like that, somehow."

Vernon-Smith collected up fifteen sovereigns with a sardonic smile. Ponsonby & Co. exchanged looks. With sovereign points they would not be long in winning it back, and a great deal more with it. But they did not know the Bounder.

"So you've had bad luck, Hazel," said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rotten."

"Lost much?"

"About ten pounds altogether, I suppose."

"And your sister's watch?"

"Never mind that," said Hazel, flushing.

"I'll take that watch off you, Pon," said the Bounder. "I saw you give Hazel four quids for it. I'll make it five."

"Right-ho! I want some cash to go on with," said

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ONE  
PENNY.

Ponsonby, very readily. As a matter of fact, he was down to his last sovereign.

Vernon-Smith handed over the five pounds, and took Marjorie's watch, and slipped it into his pocket. Then he rose to his feet.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the three Highcliffe fellows together. "You're not going?"

Vernon-Smith nodded calmly.

"Yes, I'm going."

"You've got to give us our revenge," howled Gadsby angrily. "You're not going to walk off with our cash like that."

"Not with these cards!" said the Bounder, with a smile. "I chipped in here for a reason. Hazel, old man, look at this card. It's an ace—see?"

"Yes," said Hazel, in wonder.

"Now look at the back of it. Do you see that pink spot?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Look at the other cards, and you'll find the same spot on all the aces. Look at the kings, and you'll find that the corner of each card is extra rounded."

"Wha-a-at!"

Ponsonby leaped to his feet, red with rage.

"You—you dare to insinuate——" he yelled.

The Bounder looked him steadily in the face.

"I don't insinuate anything," he rapped out. "I state it plainly. These cards are marked."

"Liar!"

"You—you rotters!" yelled Hazel furiously. "Why, I can see it now. You've been cheating me all the time! You—you swindlers!"

"Of course they've been cheating you, Hazel," said the Bounder quietly, "and I chipped in to play their own game on them. I've had marked cards played on me often enough to know the ropes. You can scowl as much as you like, Ponsonby. I fully intended to get back what you've robbed Hazel of, and I've done it. Put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Hazel was clenching his fists with fury. The discovery that he had been cheated made him almost beside himself. The three Highcliffians drew together, whispering. Ponsonby looked bitterly at the Bounder.

"You're mighty clever, Smithy," he said, between his teeth, "awfully clever! But there's one thing you've forgotten."

"What's that?" smiled the Bounder.

"That we're three to one. And if you don't hand back that money at once we'll pile on you, and take it, and give you the ragging of your life into the bargain!" hissed Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"I didn't forget that," he said.

"You—you didn't!"

"No. I'm quite ready for you to pile on me. If I couldn't handle three bunny rabbits like you fellows I'd hang myself," said the Bounder contemptuously. "Come on, as soon as you like. I'm waiting."

"Three to two, not three to one," said Hazel, as the Highcliffians came on. "I'm with you, Smithy!"

"Good for you, Hazel!"

Hazel, in fact, started the attack. He rushed straight at Ponsonby, and closed with him, and they rolled on the rocks. Vavasour and Gadsby rushed upon the Bounder, but they had reason to repent it. A terrific right-hander between the eyes sent Vavasour rolling a dozen feet away, and Vernon-Smith followed it up with an upper-cut that laid Gadsby on his back with a bump.

And the two fallen juniors decided to stay where they were. They had had enough of the Bounder.

Ponsonby and Hazel were fighting furiously. Hazel was not a great fighting-man, as a rule; but the discovery of the swindle had enraged him so much that he seemed to have the strength of two or three fellows. Ponsonby was knocked right and left, and he went down at last with a closing eye and a streaming nose, and remained on the ground.

"Get up!" shouted Hazel. "You swindler, you thief, get up!"

Ponsonby only groaned.

"That's enough," chuckled the Bounder. "Hazel, old man, I didn't know you were such a giddy prizefighter. Let him off now. You don't want to kill him! Come along."

Hazel panted. He would willingly have given Ponsonby some more, but Vernon-Smith took his arm, and drew him away. And the two juniors walked away from the scene, leaving Ponsonby & Co. groaning in chorus, the three young rascals having made the discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard.



## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

## In Peril of His Life!

**H**AZEL breathed hard as he walked away with the Bounder. Vernon-Smith did not take the path back to Shoremouth. He did not wish Hazel to be seen until he had had time to calm himself. They walked along in silence by the cliff-path over the bay. On their left, rough and precipitous, the cliff descended almost sheer to the shining waters. Hazel came to a halt abruptly.

"I—I say, Smithy—" he faltered.

The Bounder stopped, and looked at him with a smile.

"Well?" he said.

"I—I say, I've been an awful ass," said Hazel remorsefully.

The Bounder smiled again. Hazel was in one of his moods of repentance, and the cynical Bounder only hoped that it would last as long as the vacation. "I've acted rottenly. Of course, I never suspected those fellows of being such awful cads, or I wouldn't have had anything to do with them. I—I— Will you do me a favour, Smithy? I know I don't deserve it."

"You don't!" agreed the Bounder.

"But—but that—that watch—"

"Here it is," said Vernon-Smith, handing it over. "Did you think I was going to keep it, you donkey? It's your sister's."

"She lent it to me. Goodness knows what she'd have thought if I hadn't been able to take it back to her!" said Hazel, colouring. "I—I was an ass and a brute! I'll pay for it, Smithy, as much as you gave Pon—"

"Fathead!" said the Bounder. "Do you think I'm going to keep what I won from those cads? I'm not a welsher, if they are. I played their own game on them, to make them disgorge. That watch belongs to your sister, and you'll hand it back to her, and you won't say a word. Marjorie mustn't know anything about it."

"You're a good chap, Smithy," said Hazel gratefully.

"But—"

"And here's your ten quid."

"What!"

"Take it, it's yours. It's certainly not mine," said Vernon-Smith. "If I kept it I should be a swindler. I was only making them shell out, so that I could give you back what you've been swindled of."

Hazel's hand trembled as he took the money.

"Only remember," said the Bounder, "no more fluttering here. I want you to promise to run straight this vac."

"Honour bright!" said Hazel. "There—there isn't much fun in it, either. It's only playing the giddy goat. I haven't had an hour's peace of mind since I met Ponsonby here. But—but I don't like to keep this."

"What rot! It's yours, isn't it?"

"Well, yes."

"Shove it in your pocket!" said the Bounder. "And now we'll trot back to the others. Your sister will miss you."

Hazeldene drew a deep breath.

The discovery that Ponsonby & Co. had been cheating him at cards had cured him of any desire for their company, and after the way he had handled Ponsonby it was scarcely possible that they could be friends again, and he was glad of it. And for the time, at least, his desire to play had vanished. Now that he was out of the toils there was the prospect of a healthy and happy holiday before him, and his face brightened up, and his heart grew very light.

"Let's get back to the others," he said, with a cheerfulness he had not displayed for a long time past.

"Right-ho!"

They moved along the cliff-path. A sudden step on the rocks near them made Hazel turn his head. He caught sight of the face of Ponsonby looking over a rock, and a raised hand with a stone in it.

"Look out!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

Hazel started back.

A sudden cry rang from his lips as he staggered on the verge of the precipitous path. He had forgotten his dangerous position. Ponsonby's red and savage face went white, and he lowered the hand that grasped the stone as he saw Hazel's danger.

"Look out!" he shrieked.

Vernon-Smith sprang to his comrade's assistance. But he had no time to reach him. Hazel had lost his footing on the edge of the cliff, and he shot downwards while the Bounder's outstretched hand was still a foot away.

Splash!

Twelve or fifteen feet below, Hazel struck the water and vanished from sight. The water was deep close up to the high cliff. Vernon-Smith knew there was at least twenty feet of water there, and Hazel was a poor swimmer.

He did not look at Ponsonby. That wretched youth, overcome with horror at what he had caused, stood rooted to

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the rocks. The Bounder tore off his jacket and threw it down and knelt on the edge of the cliff-path, looking downwards, watching for Hazel's head to appear. There was a shout from the distance. The spot where the Bounder knelt was in full view of the bathing beach, and a score of eyes had seen the accident. Marjorie had recognised her brother and the Bounder together at the distance, and she had seen Hazel's fall. Her face was white as death.

"Save him—save him!"

The girl's voice came from the distance to the Bounder's ears. He did not turn his head, but it nerved him, if he needed nerving, to what he was going to do. Between the spot where Hazel had fallen and the bathing beach great masses of rocks jutted into the sea, and the swimmers were barred off from rendering help.

A head appeared on the water below the cliff; a hand was thrown up. Hazel's white face glimmered in the waves.

The fall seemed to have dazed him; he was not swimming. The Bounder gave him one glance, and dived.

It was a dangerous dive, for under the smiling waters there were sharp points of rock, and if the diver had dashed upon them he would have dived to his death.

But the Bounder's luck held good. He cleaved down through the waters, and came up within six feet of Hazel.

The unfortunate junior had gone under again, and the Bounder, dashing the water from his eyes, looked round for him in vain.

Ponsonby shouted from the cliff.

"There—there he is!"

Vernon-Smith caught a glimpse of wet hair in the water. He struck out for it, and grasped Hazel's collar as he was sinking again.

His powerful grasp brought the sinking junior to the surface.

Hazel's eyes were half-closed; he was incapable of helping himself. But the Bounder's grasp was strong and firm, and he was a splendid swimmer.

"Hold on, Hazel! Buck up, old chap! I've got you."

Hazel looked at him dazedly, and then his eyes closed. He was insensible now. The Bounder held him fast, keeping his chin above water, and struck out, keeping himself and Hazel afloat.

A few strokes brought him to the cliff; but it rose sheer from the water. There was not even a crevice upon which he could gain a hold.

With set teeth, the Bounder swam along the cliff, seeking for a hold. But he found none. He looked about him almost despairingly. There was nothing for it but to strike out for the ridge of rocks running out into the bay, and it was more than doubtful if he would reach it alive with his burden. But it never crossed his mind for a moment to let go.

Hazel's eyes opened again, and he began to struggle feebly.

"Quiet!" muttered the Bounder. "Keep still!"

He swam on powerfully, keeping Hazel afloat. The junior's feeble struggles incommoded him. With failing strength he pushed on towards the distant rocks. Like music to his ears came a shout ringing across the waters:

"Hold on! We're coming!"

A boat was dashing towards him from the open sea. Gordon Gay was standing up in it, his eyes on the brave swimmer. Four juniors were tugging at the oars, rowing as if for their lives.

"Help!"

"We're coming! Hold on!"

The boat dashed up, and as it swept past the swimmer Gay was on his knees, and, reaching out, he grasped the Bounder. A few moments more and Vernon-Smith and Hazel were dragged into the boat.

They sank down exhausted in a pool of water. But the Bounder sat up almost immediately, cool and composed as ever.

"Thanks!" he said. "That was a near thing."

"We saw Hazeldene drop," said Gay. "We were a good distance, but we came up as quick as we could. It was jolly plucky of you to go in for him like that!"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders in his old way.

"Well, I couldn't very well watch him drown, you know," he remarked. "But I fancy we should have gone down together if you hadn't come up. Hallo, Hazel! How do you feel? Safe as houses now, old chap."

Hazel gasped.

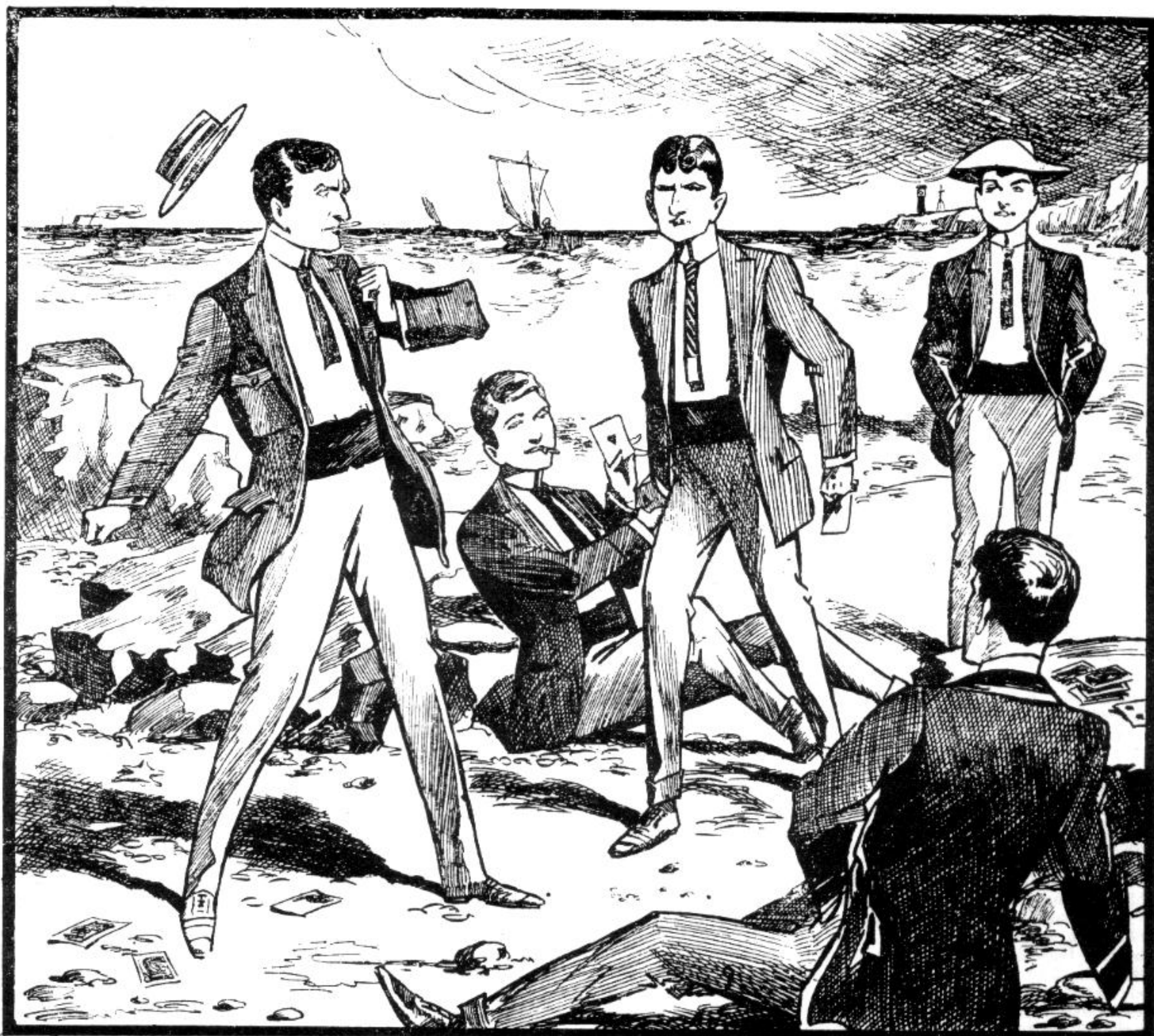
"Smithy, you—you've saved my life!"

"These chaps have saved both of us, you mean," said the Bounder lightly. "We were jolly near gone, old chap. Gay, would you mind pulling round to the bay? I think Hazel's people saw him fall from the cliff, and they must be jolly anxious. They can't see us from here."

"Row like thunder!" said Gordon Gay.

The Grammar School juniors were good oarsmen. In a few





Ponsonby leaped to his feet, red with rage. "You—you dare to insinuate——" he yelled. The Bounder looked him steadily in the face. "I didn't insinuate anything!" he rapped out. "I stated it plainly. The cards are marked!" (See Chapter 18.)

minutes the boat was dashing into the bay. Vernon-Smith helped Hazel cut on to the beach. His father and mother were there, and Marjorie.

"It's all right," said Hazel. "I'm not hurt, mater. All serene, dad. Smithy fished me out. Jolly lucky he was with me, Marjorie."

"Jolly lucky!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Smithy, old man, you're a giddy hero!"

"The hero-fulness of the esteemed Smithy is——"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry, slapping the Bounder on the shoulder.

"Hurrah!"

The Bounder coloured.

"For goodness' sake, don't make a fuss——" he began.

"We'll jolly well make a fuss!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Get into this bathing-machine, and get that wet clobber off."

Marjorie pressed the Bounder's hand.

"It was brave of you—noble," she said in a low voice. "You risked your life to save him, and—and you might——"

Her voice broke.

"All's well that ends well," said the Bounder lightly.

And he went into the bathing-machine with a light heart. The Bounder was the hero of the hour, and Hazeldene's people did not seem to be able to make enough of him. There was only one dissentient voice in the chorus of acclamation. Billy Bunter was heard to remark, with a sniff, that any

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fellow—especially himself—would have done what the Bounder had done. But Bunter had no sooner made that remark than he was seized by three or four pairs of hands, and bumped on the sand, and he did not make the remark again.

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

### Playing to Win!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were thoroughly enjoying their stay in Shoresmouth. The one cloud on the horizon had vanished. Hazel gave them no more trouble. Nothing more was seen of Ponsonby & Co.

They were careful to give the Greyfriars fellows a wide berth. And Marjorie's heart was lightened by the lifting of the cloud from her brother's face. She knew that his connection with the cads of Highcliffe was ended; and, although she did not know all the circumstances, Hazel had told her enough for her to know that it was due to the Bounder. And she was very kind to the Bounder; and, for reasons best known to himself, Vernon-Smith attached a great deal of importance to Miss Marjorie's opinion of him. Hazel was very much on his good behaviour now. He joined heartily in all the sports and excursions of the Greyfriars party, and began to enjoy his holiday as he had certainly not enjoyed it while he was playing the "giddy goat." He joined heartily, too, in the

"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!" By FRANK RICHARDS.



cricket practice, of which the juniors did as much as possible, in preparation for the match with the Grammarians.

He was looking unusually fit and well when the day of the cricket match came round. Harry Wharton & Co. were determined to pull off a victory, and they were all very fit and in great spirits that day. Even Lord Mauleverer bucked up wonderfully, and announced his intention of playing the game of his life.

Harry Wharton & Co. were early on the cricket-ground, but they found Gordon Gay and his team already there. They had already chummed up with the Grammarians, and were quite old friends by this time. Hazel arrived with his people and Clara.

"Feeling fit—eh?" asked Wharton cordially.

"Fit as a fiddle," said Hazel cheerfully. "I shall play a better game this time. We'll give them a tussle, at all events."

"We'll give 'em a licking," said Bob Cherry. "Gay, old chap, you're going to have the time of your life!"

Gordon Gay laughed.

"Exactly what we intend for you," he said.

Both teams were in great form. Gordon Gay won the toss, and the Grammarian team batted first. They batted well, too; but the bowling of Hurree Janset Ram Singh and Tom Brown was "terrific," as Bob described it, and the Grammarians were all down in their first innings for a total of 70.

But the Grammarian bowling was also well up to the mark, and the Greyfriars first innings totalled only a couple more—72.

"Doesn't look much like a win, does it?" Billy Bunter remarked to Marjorie. "They want a chap who can really play that bowling, you know. Now, if I were at the wickets, you'd have seen a score a bit different from that."

"I'm sure we should!" said Marjorie, laughing.

"Yes, I suppose a duck's egg would have made a difference," remarked Miss Clara.

"I don't mean a difference that way," said Bunter, exasperated by that wilful misunderstanding of his meaning. "I mean— Look how that duffer Bob Cherry batted, for instance!"

"Eh?" said Bob Cherry's voice close to the fat junior.

Billy Bunter blinked round in alarm.

"I—I mean Bob Cherry batted remarkably well. But that ass Bull—"

"Well, what about me?" asked Johnny Bull, laying an iron hand on the shoulder of the Owl of the Remove from behind.

"Ahem! I—I mean that I was just going to congratulate you on your splendid batting, Johnny, old man," said Bunter feebly. "That—that's what I mean."

"The meanness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay & Co. went on to bat again in the sunny afternoon. The score was bigger this time. Hazel had the good luck to catch Gay out, and his comrades gave him a cheer; but the total for the innings was 110. And Gordon Gay & Co. wore satisfied smiles. They flattered themselves that that was a figure that the Greyfriars team would not find it easy to beat.

"Total hundred and eighty," said Bob Cherry. "We shall have to look lively, my infants."

"The liveliness will be—"

"Yes, I know—terrific. If you go to sleep at the wicket, Mauly—"

Lord Mauleverer grinned cheerfully.

"Begad, I'm going all out this time!" he declared.

"You haven't an earthly," said Billy Bunter. "I'm sorry to say it, but really, you know, you haven't an earthly. Perhaps Gay would be willing to let you make a change in the team, Wharton, if you wanted to play me."

"Gay might be willing," grinned Wharton. "It would make it a walk-over for him. But I shouldn't be willing, my fat tulip. You stick to the buns and the ginger-beer, Bunter; that's your line."

Billy Bunter grunted; but he took the advice, and he stuck to the buns and the ginger-beer most faithfully.

The second innings opened badly for Greyfriars. Gordon Gay, who was nearly as good with the ball as with the willow, took three wickets in the first over; and Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh came out ruefully one after another. As Bunter remarked, in the intervals of ginger-beer and buns, it was quite a procession. But with Harry Wharton and Tom Brown at the wickets, a change came over the scene, and the score began to go up. At fifty, however, Wharton was clean-bowled by the Australian junior, and a few minutes later Tom Brown was caught out.

"Five down for 50!" sniffed Bunter. "This is where—"

"This is where you shut up!" growled Johnny Bull. And Bunter sniffed and shut up.

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Nugent minor and Peter Todd were batting now. Dicky Nugent did very well, and the Greyfriars fellows gave the fag a cheer for 10 runs. Six down for 60. Johnny Bull joined Todd, and the score went up again by leaps. When Johnny Bull fell to a deadly ball from Wootton major of the Grammar School, the board marked 90. Todd was caught out in the following over. Herbert Vernon-Smith was at the wickets with Lord Mauleverer. The Greyfriars fellows were a little anxious now. Vernon-Smith was a pillar of strength to his side, but Lord Mauleverer had the bowling, and the juniors watched him with all their eyes. Greyfriars wanted 18 to tie—19 to win! There was a cheer as Mauleverer ran a single. It gave the bowling to the Bounder, and the juniors knew what the Bounder could do.

But the Bounder did not have his usual good luck. He had brought the score to 99 when he was caught out by Gordon Gay.

"Phew!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the Bounder carried out his bat. "Last man in, Hazel. This is where you play up like a giddy Trojan, or we're beaten to the wide!"

Hazeldene nodded without replying, and went to the wicket. Ten wanted to win, and Hazeldene and Lord Mauleverer to get them. His lordship had promised to buck up, and it was needed now. Harry Wharton & Co. looked on with keen anxiety. The smiles of the Grammarians in the field showed that they intended to make short work of the tail of the innings.

But Hazeldene stopped the bowling very carefully, and lived through the over. Then Wootton major went on to bowl against Lord Mauleverer. And Bob Cherry gave a shout:

"Buck up, Mauly."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer's sleepiness had vanished; he was keen and alert at the wicket. He knocked away the first ball for 2; and the second ball for another 2; and the third ball for a single. Hazeldene was facing the bowling now, and the excitement was very keen. The Co. could not help remembering Hazel's last exhibition of batting against Figgins & Co. But Hazel soon showed that he was in quite different form now.

He stopped one ball, and then another. Then he hit out, and the batsmen ran 3 before the ball came in, a couple of seconds too late!

One wanted to tie—2 to win! The field crossed over, and Hazel still had the bowling. He stopped a ball, and then another and another, and then away flew the leather, and the batsmen were running again!

End to end, and the scores had tied. But they were running again, and the ball was coming in from Gordon Gay's sure hand—dead and straight for the batsman's wicket.

Hazel ran his hardest. The juniors watched him breathlessly.

Clump!

Crash!

The wicket was in pieces; but the bat had touched the crease in time, and the umpire shook his head.

"Not out!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Hazel!"

"Hip-pip!" said Miss Clara joyously, and Marjorie clapped her hands. Hazel had scored the winning run, and the Greyfriars Remove were the victors in a hard-fought match. The batsmen received quite an ovation as they came off.

"Begad, you know!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a yawn, and dodged Bob Cherry's thump aimed at his shoulder. "Begad, it was a jolly good game, though rather exhaustin'! Anybody got a ginger-pop to save a chap's life?"

And Bob Cherry jerked away a glass Billy Bunter had just filled, and passed it to his lordship, heedless of Bunter's howl of expostulation.

Harry Wharton & Co. were elated over the result of the match with Gordon Gay's team; but there was still better to come, as Bob Cherry remarked when Bunter announced that he was departing. Bunter explained that his old pal D'Arcy of St. Jim's was simply yearning for his company, and so he was bound to cut short his visit at Shoremouth, and the Owl of the Remove seemed to anticipate a general falling of faces when he made that announcement. But the faces did not fall—quite otherwise.

In fact, in spite of the loss of William George Bunter's esteemed company, the Greyfriars party contrived to have a very good time; and the golden summer days passed quickly and merrily for the Greyfriars juniors by the sunny seaside.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton and Co. next Monday, entitled: "Wild Women at Greyfriars!" by Frank Richards. Usual size—usual price. Order in advance.)



The Second Long Complete Story contained in this Issue.



**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**"The Terrible Trimm."**

"I'M tired of this weather!" grunted Reggie Upton, throwing a stone viciously at a lump of seaweed that came hurtling towards the beach on the crest of a wave.

"I'm jolly well tired of a lot of things, Reg!" answered his cousin, Douglas Lake. "I'm sick of loafing about doing nothing. I know, old chap, it's awfully good of your pater to have me and the mater to live with you all, but—"

"Rot! Not doing anything. Don't you swot away at all sorts of things—carpentering, gardening, and goodness knows what? And, besides, if the guv'nor chooses to have his sister and her son to live in his house, I suppose he can, can't he?"

"Yes, that's all right, Reg, old fellow. But here am I, a great lout of seventeen, with my mother—who hasn't got a cent—living on charity when I ought to be earning my living and helping the mater!"

"Charity be blowed! Aren't we jolly good pals? Well, then, where's the charity? If you talk that sort of stuff you and I will be having a serious row, and that's a fact, so chuck it. Come on, let's go home; I'm as hungry as I can stick!"

"Right-ho!" said Douglas; and the two boys started to climb the side of the cliff up to the Headlands, Mr. Upton's fine house on the west coast.

True, there was a path that led, in a gentle fashion, from the beach, but neither of the boys ever dreamt of using it.

When they were about halfway up, Reg turned and looked down at the foaming beach, and out to where his 12-ton yacht lay tugging at her anchor.

"Look at Pierrette dancing a tango, Douglas!" he cried.

"Bless her!" answered his cousin, looking down at the trim boat. "I wish this storm would blow itself out instead of spoiling all our sport! It's been blowing great guns for eight days now!"

"Well, it can't last much longer—that's one comfort!" grunted Reg, resuming his climb.

When at last they reached the house, the two made their way to the dining-room, and from the secret places of a big, old-fashioned sideboard extracted a home-made cake from which Reg cut out two hefty slices.

Douglas picked up a copy of "Treasure Island," that he was reading for the fourth time, and was soon lost to everything but the doings of the terrible Silver. Reg had nothing to read, but seeing a copy of "The Times" lying on the table, picked it up and looked aimlessly over the front page. He had got into quite a habit of reading the "Personal" column, and glanced at it now.

Suddenly his eyes sparkled, and he looked at Douglas as

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though about to speak, but changed his mind. Instead, he put the paper under his arm and went out of the room.

He made straight for the study, where he found his aunt and father engaged in an earnest talk.

"I beg your pardon!" he said. "I'll come back again, pater!"

"No; it's all right, Reg!" answered his aunt. "I've finished with your father—for the present!" she said, smiling at Mr. Upton as she went to the door, which Reg held open for her.

When Reg had closed the door, his father stood looking out of the window, where he remained in deep thought for some time. Then, turning round, he spoke to his son:

"Tell me, my boy," he said, "does Douglas ever speak to you about wanting to go away from here with his mother?"

"He was saying something about it this morning, dad. Why?"

"Because your aunt was only saying when you came in that she thought it was time for Douglas to make a start in the world."

"Father," said Reg, "why is it they have no money? Uncle Peter was a rich man, wasn't he?"

"Everybody thought so, Reg. And he certainly ought to have been, for he inherited a large fortune; but what he did with it nobody has any idea. He left all that he possessed to his wife. But the solicitors were only able to find about five hundred pounds at his bank. To Douglas he left that barren little place over there, Crag Island. And what is the good of that, I should like to know?"

Mr. Upton pointed along the coast to where about two miles from the shore, Crag Isle was just visible.

"He was a queer man, Reg, and lived for the last ten years of his life alone on that island, with only an old blind ruffian of a man called Trimm for company. But he made your aunt a handsome allowance, and sent Douglas to a good school, so that she naturally thought that he would leave some money."

"The funny thing about it is that Mary's allowance was always paid her every six months in gold, either by your uncle, or by the man Trimm—generally by Trimm, I believe. Well, now your aunt wants to sell the island and go to London to try and start Douglas in some business with the money. But whoever would buy a place like that?" concluded Mr. Upton, pointing to Crag Isle. "Why she won't let me give her some money I don't know—she's my own sister—but she won't!"

His father dropped into a big armchair by the window, and Reggie went up to him.

"Well, old chap," said Mr. Upton, "what do you want to see me about?"

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"Father," answered Reg, putting "The Times" into his hand and pointing to the advertisement, "look there!"

Mr. Upton read:

"Island for sale on West Coast. Large house and cottages. Two miles from mainland."

"Well, old fellow, what of it? I have just told you that Mary was trying to sell Crag Isle. I don't suppose that anyone will buy it, but I should hate it to go to a stranger all the same!"

"Then give it to me, dad!" exclaimed the boy, with bright cheeks and gleaming eyes.

"Give it to you, Reggie? Why, what on earth would you do with it if you had it?"

"Do with it? Oh, hundreds of things! Build cottages—if I could—and grow vegetables and things. And I'd just love to make a camp there so that I could give some of those poor chaps in the Black Country fine, free holidays!"

Mr. Upton looked thoughtfully at his son.

"And father," continued Reggie, "I've already got the Pierrette to take me and my friends to the island. Do say 'Yes,' dad!"

In his excitement he sat on the arm of his father's chair, putting his arms round his neck.

"Well, old boy, there's something in the idea. I like you for thinking of the fellows in the Black Country, and it would be nice to keep it in the family, as I said before. Anyhow, I'll think it over. Let me see, you're seventeen in ten days' time, aren't you?"

"Yes, dad!"

"All right, old chap; get away now. I've got some letters to write. Leave 'The Times' with me, by the way!"

Reg left the study with a light heart, for he knew that he was going, at last, to realise his great dream.

He was going to have an island of his own.

Not a word did he say to Douglas, though he was simply boiling over with excitement to do so.

When at last his birthday came round, he was up and about hours before breakfast was ready. He went out and gazed at Crag Island, and then fussed about on board the Pierrette seeing that everything was in order.

Just as he reached the top of the cliff on his way back to the house, he heard the breakfast-gong sound.

Flying up to the house he entered the room, to find everyone gathered round the table.

But they were all standing up, and all, with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Upton, looked a little puzzled.

Directly Reg entered, his father walked up to him, and, standing with his hand on his son's shoulder, addressed the assembled company.

"Allow me," he said solemnly, "to introduce you to his Majesty the King of Crag Island!"

Douglas rushed at him with a loud "Whoop!" but was pushed on one side by Mrs. Upton, who wanted to wish her boy "Many happy returns of the day!" Then Aunt Mary had to hug him, and altogether it was the most exciting breakfast he could remember.

"Now, then, Douglas," he said, when things had quieted down a little, "we'll jolly well be partners in the kingdom, so don't let's hear any more rot about you going to London. London!" he added scornfully. "Fancy you in an office!"

Mrs. Lake smiled at her son.

"Well, Douglas, I think we'll postpone the visit for a bit now," she said.

After breakfast they all went out on to the cliff and looked at the island through glasses. It was only about two miles from the shore, but was about ten miles along the coast from the Uptons' house.

"When can Douglas and I start, father?" asked Reggie.

"To-morrow?"

"Well, I suppose you won't be happy till you get there," said his father, "so I expect we must let you go to-morrow—eh? mother?" he said, turning to Mrs. Upton.

"Yes, I suppose so," she answered. "But, oh, Reggie, do be careful!"

"Why, we're always careful, aren't we, Douglas?" laughed Reg to his cousin.

"Rather!" said Douglas, with so much force that everyone laughed.

"So be it, then, my boy," said Mr. Upton. "You start to-morrow. In that case you'd better get some provisions and things on board the Pierrette to-day."

That was something like an idea, and the two boys—and everyone else, for that matter—set about the work with a will.

Mrs. Upton got together blankets, and cushions, and jams, and potted meat; Mrs. Lake went down to the village and bought tinned milk, cocoa, biscuits, and a huge cheese; and old Martha, the cook, baked a store of her special bread for them, as well as some cakes.

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And don't go a-bolting 'em all the first day, Master Reggie," she said earnestly.

Then everything had to be stowed away on board, and by the time that was done it was nearly supper-time.

The two explorers, as they called themselves—and, indeed, in a sense that's what they were—were just about ready for bed by ten o'clock, and by a quarter past they were both roaming over the splendid seas of dreamland.

But by six o'clock next morning they were both dressed and ready to start. They went round to their sleeping relations, bade them good-bye, and went down to the beach. By seven the Pierrette was dancing away out to sea with her little dinghy jumping along in her wake.

They had to steer straight out to sea and then circled to the island on account of the giant rocks that guard the wild coastline.

When the Pierrette was about six miles from Crag Island, Douglas called to his cousin:

"I say, Reg, isn't that fishing-smack signalling to us?"

"Looks like it," answered Reg. "I wonder if something's wrong? We'd better go and see, anyhow."

In fifteen minutes they had got within hailing distance of the smack, which was one of a small fleet of six. The skipper told them, through a megaphone, that one of his men had hurt his foot and wanted to be put ashore if possible.

"We're bound for Crag Island," sang out Reg.

"That'll do," came the answer.

Douglas, being the "crew," put off in the dinghy and returned with a man of about twenty-five who had his foot in a rough bandage.

When, after some difficulty, he was got on board, Douglas followed, and the Pierrette headed for the island again.

The boys were surprised to learn that the man, whose name was Lane, lived on Crag Island.

"But I didn't know that anyone lived there now!" exclaimed Reg.

"Oh, yes; there's half a dozen of us. Old Mr. Lake, the gentleman who owned the island, used to charge us a pretty stiff rent, but since he died things have got worse still—the rents have been put up another shilling a week."

They were drawing near to their journey's end now, and conversation ceased for a bit. Reg and Douglas, neither of whom had seen the island before, were lost in thought as they looked at its rugged coastline and thickly-wooded hills.

It was about midday by the time they anchored in the tiny bay, and Douglas suggested "grub." So they made a start on one of old Martha's loaves and the cheese, and, of course, Lane joined them. After the meal he complained of pain in his injured foot, and Reg opened his little medicine-chest and bandaged it up for him. It was nothing much of an accident—a nasty sprain—and though it was very painful, with care it would be better in a couple of days.

Close to the beach there were six whitewashed cottages. Reg asked Lane who lived in them.

"Just us chaps," he answered. "Two of them—the two on the left with broken windows—are empty."

"Then where's Mr. Lake's house?" asked Douglas.

"Up there among the trees," said Lane, pointing to where—on the top of the hill—the wood was thickest.

"Well, it seems to me we'd better start unloading," remarked Reg, after he had taken another long look at his kingdom. "What do you say, Douglas, to getting some of the things ashore and stowing them in one of the empty cottages?"

"Right-ho!" answered the "crew" cheerfully. "We must get Lane ashore, too," he added, smiling at the man.

"Perhaps we had better do that first."

Lane had looked rather puzzled ever since Reg had suggested getting the things ashore.

"Are you coming to camp here, sir?" he asked Reg.

"That's the idea," answered the King of Crag Island, laughing.

"Have you got old Trimm's permission?"

"No," said Reg, laughing again.

"Then, sir," Lane said seriously, "be careful, that's all."

They got Lane ashore, and sat him in a chair in his cottage—a wretchedly dilapidated hovel. Douglas made a mental note that he would alter that as soon as he got settled down.

They began the work of unloading the Pierrette, which occupied the two explorers till it was time for another meal.

Just as they had finished their supper, the fishing-smacks returned, and one by one the men came in to ask how Lane was getting on. They remained chatting with Reg and Douglas for some time.

One weather-beaten old fellow was particularly interested in them, and was evidently dying to find out what they had come to Crag Island for.

"Have you got old Trimm's permission?" he asked, in the same serious way that Lane had done.

"No," answered Reg cheerfully.





Reg felt himself going cold all over as he watched the lid of the old chest slowly open, pushed up by a big, hairy arm that could only belong to Trimm. "At him!" he yelled suddenly, and sprang from the bed. (See Chapter 3.)

"Then you look out, young sirs!" said the old fellow. "He's a bad 'un is Trimm, and since old Mr. Lako died he thinks he's a sort of king here."

"Well, he won't think so much longer," retorted Reg, laughing, as he and Douglas made their way down to the dinghy, for they were to sleep on board that night.

Once on board, they rolled themselves up in their sleeping-bags, and, with the surf sighing on the beach and the stars twinkling down on them, slept the sleep of the just until the sun was well up in the sky.

Jumping up, the two threw their things off and plunged over the side into the dancing waters. Then, after a rub down with hard towels, they got into the dinghy, rowed ashore to their stores, and cooked themselves a breakfast of fish that had been given them by Lane.

"And now," said Reg, when the last drop of cocoa had been drunk, "we'll go and see the terrible Trimm. If he gives us any sauce, well, he'll have to be packed off, that's all."

"Rather, the old scoundrel!" agreed Douglas.

But they were going to find that Trimm was a bigger handful than they had expected.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The House on Crag Island.

**F**OLLOWING Lane's directions, they had made for an opening in the wood, where they struck a path leading up to the summit of the hill. After climbing for some time through the thick overhanging trees, they came upon an opening, in the centre of which stood a big, square, forbidding-looking house.

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It was one of those houses that give you an unpleasant feeling the moment you set eyes on them.

All the blinds were down, the windows were caked in dust, the stone steps leading to the great front entrance were chipped and dirty. There was no sign of life about the place at all.

The two boys stood looking at it in silence for a few minutes, then Douglas broke the silence:

"Whatever could have made the pater come and live in a place like this?" he said, in a hushed voice.

"Goodness only knows, old chap!" answered Reg, in the same low tone. "But we may as well go round the back and see if there is any way of getting in."

When they got round to the back of the house, after having pushed their way through a lot of overgrown and cobwebby bushes, the two explorers noticed a small door, partly open.

"I wonder why that door is open?" said Reg. "This place makes me feel all goose-fleshy, so-let's go quietly and look in. Anything might happen here!"

Tiptoeing to the door, they found themselves looking into a large kitchen, and at the table sat the most unpleasant creature either of them had ever seen.

The first thing they both noticed were the blind, staring eyes looking out from under great, bushy eyebrows. The man sat holding a piece of almost raw meat in his hands, at which he gnawed like some beast of prey. His enormous, hairy arms were bare almost to the shoulder, and, hanging to his right wrist by a piece of twisted hide, was a club.

Douglas gripped Reg by the arm.

"Trimm!" he whispered.

But not so softly that the blind giant did not hear him!

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Springing to his feet, and grasping his club, he dashed to the door with almost uncanny certainty, and out into the open towards the two boys.

So unexpected was the onslaught that both Reg and Douglas stood rooted to the spot, and would most certainly have been badly hurt had not Douglas found his voice, and called;

"Trimm! Trimm! What are you doing? I am Douglas Lake!"

The blind man stopped as though suddenly hit, and rolled his head about.

"Say it again! Say it again!" he muttered.

Douglas repeated what he had said, adding:

"And this is my cousin, Reggie Upton, with me. We have come to camp on the island for a bit."

"Ay; you've got your father's voice! I'm sorry, sir, that I behaved as I did; but I'm so lonely these days, that hearing you speak so suddenly I thought it was thieves."

"Thieves," laughed Douglas. "I shouldn't think there was much to steal in this place."

"You never know!" mumbled Trimm. "But come inside, young gentlemen—come inside, and sit down for a bit!" he added, leading the way back to the kitchen.

"What an awful-looking beast!" whispered Reg to his cousin. "I wouldn't like to trust him much!"

There was no time for Douglas to answer, as by that time they were inside the kitchen.

Trimm did not seem to want to talk. He went on munching at his meat in a way that nearly made both the boys sick, though they weren't squeamish, as a rule. Occasionally he muttered to himself.

After a bit Reg said to his cousin:

"I should like to look over the house, Douglas."

Trimm raised his head quickly, and Reg noticed a scowl pass over his evil face.

"There's nothing to see!" he said gruffly.

"Well, I would like to see it, anyhow!" retorted Reg firmly.

"Very good, sir! I'll just go upstairs and tidy my room up a little before you go into it," said Trimm, rising and leaving the room.

The two boys sat listening to the steps of the blind man echoing through the great empty house. The certainty with which he found his way about gave an uncanny feeling to the whole proceeding.

Presently they heard him overhead, shifting something heavy from one part of a room to another.

"What on earth is he doing?" asked Reg.

"Goodness only knows," answered his cousin. "Let's go up and see!"

"Right-ho! But I'll jolly well keep my eyes open! I don't like the look of that club, or his great hairy arms!"

They stepped out into the dark, musty-smelling passage.

"Ugh! What a place!" whispered Reg.

A little light filtered through from the kitchen—just enough to show up the eerie, great rooms and the filthy state of the hall.

They went upstairs, making as much noise as they could, so as to let Trimm know that they were coming. It didn't seem safe to take him unawares.

He met them in the passage. He was puffing a little, as though he had been doing some heavy work.

"Is this the room you use?" said Douglas, walking past him through the door.

"Yes, sir. It was your father's, sir; and he told me that after he was gone he'd like me to sleep in it."

"Oh, he did, did he?" remarked Reg. "Well, I think Mr. Lake's son and I will use it while we are here, so you'd better fix yourself up in another room in some other part of the house. There are enough of them, anyhow, to choose from."

"I don't think you'll like this one, sir," answered Trimm, scowling slightly. "The wind in the trees makes an awful noise, sir; and there are rats in it, too!"

"Ah, well, we'll manage all right, I expect!" replied Reg airily, for he was determined to let Trimm know that he wasn't going to be king of Crag Island any longer. "We'll get off now, and bring our things up. You can take the blankets and things off the bed, as we have brought our own."

And with that, his Majesty King Reginald strode down the stairs, followed by his Prime Minister, Douglas Lake, Esq.

Once outside, the two walked quickly and without speaking for some distance. Then:

"Well, we've tumbled on a queer sort of business!" said Reg. "And I think we're going to have trouble before we're through with it, too!"

"Same here," agreed Douglas cheerfully. "And there's some mystery about the place that we must get to the bottom of, Reg. Tell me, what the dickens was Trimm shifting?"

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about when he went upstairs just now? Something jolly heavy, for it made enough noise, and it made him blow, too, and I guess he's fairly hefty."

"I don't know, old chap. But I'm just certain that he's not at all glad to see us, though I can't make out why. I didn't tell him that the island belongs to me, and I'm not going to, either."

"Why not, Reg?"

"I don't know, except that I have a feeling that it would be better not to."

"Right you are, your Majesty!" answered Douglas, laughing.

All at once he stopped, and gripped Reg by the arm.

"I say——" he began, and then he broke off.

"What is it, Douglas?" asked Reg, looking round him, not knowing what to expect.

"I suddenly thought how fine it would be if we could find that Trimm has, in some way, got hold of my governor's money; but it's too silly to expect anything of that sort!"

"What made you think of it?"

"I don't know, unless it was all that bumping about upstairs, and the ghostly look of the house. I must be getting scared!" laughed Douglas.

"But do you think that your pater had money on the island?"

"Well, where else could it have been? He wasn't a poor man by any means, and yet, though he left the mater all he possessed, there was only a mouldy five hundred in his bank. I shouldn't be a bit surprised——"

"By gum, Douglas," broke in Reg, "there may be something in it! Anyhow, it would explain Trimm's evident dislike to our being here at all; and, now I think of it, he didn't want us to have that room where he was bumping something heavy about. Suppose he has got your pater's money stowed away in that big chest that is standing in the far corner?"

"Well, let's hurry back and get our things!" exclaimed Douglas excitedly. "I was afraid you would think there was nothing in my idea; but now——"

"Nothing in it? Why shouldn't there be a lot in it? I'd just love to see you and your mater well off, old chap, and if I can give you both a hand—well, you can bet I'll do it!"

"Thanks, Reg!" was all that Douglas answered; but there was a lot behind the two little words.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Secret of the Chest.

IT was late in the afternoon when the two arrived with their things on a handcart which they had borrowed from Lane, and they had found it a slow, hard job wheeling it through the thick wood and over the uneven ground.

Lane's foot was a lot better already, and the two boys had asked him to come up and keep them company at the house as soon as he could walk, which he said would be the next day.

They found Trimm sitting outside the same door when they arrived. He rose as soon as he heard the handcart come to a standstill, and walked towards them in a way that made it almost impossible to believe that he was blind, until the great red-rimmed, staring eyes were noticed.

"I moved my things out of the room, sir," he said; "but I don't think you'll like it. If you wish to change into another one in the morning, I should be glad to move back again."

"Very good, Trimm," answered Douglas shortly. "However, I expect we shall be all right. By the way, one of the fishermen called Lane will probably be up here to-morrow, and will sleep in the room next to ours."

Trimm wheeled round sharply.

"And what right has he poking about up here? A lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, who——"

"That will do, Trimm, thank you," said Reg. "Come on, Douglas, we'll shift our things upstairs."

So upstairs they went with their sleeping-bags and the clothes they had brought with them. Trimm's "tidying" had not amounted to much. The floor was filthy, and so were the windows.

"Let's go down and get some water and brushes and scrub the place out," suggested Douglas.

"Good idea," answered Reg, and, much to Trimm's disgust, the two repaired to the kitchen, where they found buckets, water, and brushes.

After they had been at work for a little time Reg suddenly called to his cousin:

"I say, Douglas, come and look at this door. I hadn't noticed that it had a loophole in it. I wonder what it's for?"

"Loophole?" said Douglas, coming across the room. "Why, so it has. Funny thing you can't see it from the outside. That's a tricky little flap that has been made to cover it."



Reggie closed the door in order to have a better look at it. It was a massive oak affair, evidently built with the idea of resisting attack.

"I say, Douglas," he exclaimed, "do you see that there ought to be a bar to fit across to prevent it from being opened from the outside? I wonder where that bar is?"

"P'raps that's what old Trimm was bumping out of the room when we heard him from downstairs," answered Douglas suspiciously. "Let's have a look in one of the rooms round about. He couldn't have taken it far."

Sure enough, in a little sort of cupboard of a room, was a thick and heavy iron bar, leaning against the wall. It was quite plain that it had only been there a little while, for there were fresh marks on the thick dust that lay all around.

"I don't like this, Reg!" exclaimed Douglas. "What sort of a game is Trimm up to, do you think? Why did he not want us to have that bar in the room? There's no other way of locking the door, either."

"I'm hanged if I know what he's up to!" mused Reg; "but I do know that we'll jolly well carry it back to our room again. What do you say?"

"I say 'yes,'" They caught hold of it, and, with some trouble, carried it back to their bedroom.

"Phew!" murmured Douglas, as they put it down. "I don't wonder the old brute puffed a bit!"

"Nor I," answered Reg. "But what a hefty beast the old scoundrel must be. I shouldn't like—"

He broke off suddenly as a stair creaked. Putting his fingers to his lips he crept noiselessly to the door, and peered over the banisters. There, just below the level of the landing, crouching in a listening attitude, was the giant form of the blind man, and grasped in his hand so tightly that the veins stood out was the club.

Noiselessly creeping back again, Reg went on talking about the Pierrette, the fishermen, the island, and anything that came into his head. Then:

"I think we may as well go down and get some food," he said in a loud voice, walking to the stairs, when he saw that Trimm had disappeared.

He told Douglas of what he had seen, and the two boys looked at each other for a few seconds without speaking.

"And what the blazes is the meaning of that?" said Reg in a low voice, as they prepared to go downstairs. "I'll tell you what, I believe you were nearer the truth than you thought when you said that Trimm was hanging on to your money."

"I'm beginning to think so myself," answered Douglas.

They found Trimm sitting in the kitchen mumbling to himself as usual. It was getting dark, and the fading light only served to make the man look more repulsive and evil than ever.

Going to the cupboard in which they had stored their eatables, Reg took out some food, and the two made a meal, which they washed down with water. They strolled about outside the house for a little while, and then, being about worn out with hard work and excitement, decided to turn in.

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They returned to the kitchen to get a candle from their store cupboard, and found that Trimm had disappeared, nor could they hear a sound in the house.

Everything inside the great, gaunt building was by now in utter darkness, and the flickering candle seemed to make it more ghostly than ever. There was a feeling, which each boy felt but kept to himself, of lurking danger at every gloomy corner, and they were glad when they reached their own room.

"Shall we put the bar up?" asked Douglas.

"I don't think we'd better put it up to-night," answered Reg. "We don't want Trimm to think we suspect him of anything yet. But I shall sleep light, all the same."

"Same here!" exclaimed Douglas, with conviction.

But it's one thing to say you'll sleep light after a hard day in the sea air, and quite another thing to do it. They lay in their sleeping-bags, which they had placed on the great four-posted bed, staring out of the window at the rising moon for a little while, and then, with their brains teeming with thoughts of hidden money, Trimm, and all sorts of things, dropped off to sleep.

For about three hours they slept heavily, and then Reg woke up with a horrid feeling that something was going to happen. He put it down to nightmare, and tried to drop off again; but it was no good. He was wide awake.

The moon was over the house by this time, and the room was plunged in semi-darkness. Reg lay staring at the window and listening. But not a sound came from the vast, empty rooms. So silent was the place that the very stillness got on his nerves. He thought he would wake Douglas up and have a "jaw," but put the thought from him as being childish. A breeze sprang up, and rustled, in a ghostly way through the great trees outside.

This disturbed an owl, who went shrieking past the house. A cloud passed over the moor, and blotted out the view from the window. The wind increased and rattled the window, then—

Creak!

Reg felt his back going cold. What was it? He glanced towards the door, and wished he'd listened to Douglas after all, and barred it.

Creak!

There it was again. The wind was whistling round the house, and clouds were scudding over the sky. Suddenly the light grew better, as the moon came out and shone on the view outside.

And then, indeed, Reg felt himself going cold all over. For the lid of the great chest in the corner was slowly opening. His legs tingled as he lay watching. Slowly, slowly, the lid was pushed further and further back by a big, hairy arm that could only belong to Trimm, until it was wide open and resting against the wall.



Springing to his feet, the blind old man dashed up to the door with almost uncanny certainty, grasping his huge club firmly in his great hand. "Trimm!" shouted Douglas. "What are you doing? I am Douglas Lake!" (See Chapter 2.)



Then came Trimm's hairy face and great staring, red-rimmed eyes, and in his other hand was the club.

That brought Reg to his senses. He must reach him before he got out!

"At him!" he yelled, starting from the bed; but in his excitement he caught his foot in the sleeping-bag and fell to the floor.

"What's the matter, old chap?" asked Douglas, sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"Look at the beast!" said Reg, pointing towards the chest.

"You're dreaming, old man," answered his cousin; "there's nothing there!"

And it was true, the chest was shut.

The two lay awake for some time talking. Douglas was convinced that his cousin had been dreaming, and Reg was quite sure that he had been wide awake. Eventually they once more fell asleep and slept peacefully till the morning.

Before they went down to the kitchen to cook their breakfast, Reg examined the chest and tried to find some way of opening the bottom. It had occurred to him that it must be there simply to conceal a trapdoor; but he could do nothing with it. He pushed and pulled all to no purpose. It was as firm as a rock.

As they sat drinking their cocoa and munching scones, Trimm came into the kitchen. He seemed in very good spirits, and chaffed Reg with having had a nightmare.

"I heard you shrieking out in the night like a frightened schoolgirl!" he said, with a sneer on his evil face. "I thought that room wouldn't suit you!"

But the boy refused to be drawn. He rose and walked to the door.

"Come on, Douglas," he said; "let's have a look at the other side of the island."

They strolled away, and in about half an hour's time reached the beach. From here the mainland was easily seen, and, with Reggie's glasses, they could make out his father's house.

"How fine it would be if we could go back and tell your mater that we had found the money," said Reg, putting his glasses away, "for I'm sure now that Trimm has good reasons for living here and for not wanting anyone else on the place."

They wandered about for about two hours, and then made their way back to the house, arriving there at about mid-day. They were just thinking about getting their dinner when a knock came at the kitchen door, and Lane entered, walking quite well.

"That old bounder Trimm is talking among the men down at the cottages, saying that he is going to frighten you both off the island," he said, when they had shaken hands with him. "He's very amused about something, and when Trimm is in good spirits it generally means trouble for somebody, so I thought I'd come up and see if I could be of any use. My foot's all right now; it must have been just a slight strain."

After they had talked for a little while Reg decided to tell Lane of all their suspicions, not omitting what he had seen the night before.

Lane was very interested, and suggested that they should go and examine the room again.

They went upstairs, and once more overhauled the chest.

"I suppose it's ridiculous to imagine that Trimm really came out of it," said Reg wonderingly; "yet I'll swear I saw him."

Lane bent over the chest and opened it, and pushed and pulled at the bottom in the same way that Reg himself had done.

"It seems solid enough," he said. "But half a mo!" he exclaimed, as a thought struck him. "What about sliding it?"

He did so, and, to everyone's delight, the thick boards moved. Lane gave a good pull, and there before their astonished eyes was a dark opening in the floor, with a flight of stone steps leading down into the blackness beyond.

"By gum, this is getting serious!" said Douglas.

"And it's getting jolly exciting, too!" exclaimed Reg, his eyes gleaming. "I'm going down to have a squint."

"Well, don't go too far, now, sir," warned Lane. "It will be better to have a real exploration at night-time. Trimm might be back at any moment."

"That's true," answered Reg regretfully. "Well, then, close it up again for the present."

Lane did so, and was just catching hold of the lid to shut it when a cough sounded on the stairs. So engrossed was he in his task that the unexpected sound caused him to drop the lid with a bang, and as the three turned round they beheld a well-dressed man, of about forty-five, standing in the doorway.

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"Why, Douglas, old boy," he said, "I had no idea you were here! Won't you introduce me to your friend? Lane I know already."

"How do you do, Uncle Joshua?" replied Douglas, not, however, taking the proffered hand. "This is my cousin, Reginald Upton."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lake. "I suppose you are the owner of the smart little boat I saw in the bay? I was just-thinking as I walked up with Trimm, that we ought to arrange a little race. I have come over in my own boat."

"Right you are," agreed Reg.

"You walked up with Trimm, Uncle Josh?" asked Douglas.

"I did, my boy. Why?"

"Oh, nothing; only in that case it's rather funny you did not know I was here. I should have thought he would have told you. Are you here on pleasure, too?"

Joshua Lake laughed good-naturedly.

"Pleasure? Good gracious, no! Only I have to come over occasionally to see that Trimm hasn't burnt the house down, that's all."

"Why, what does it matter to you?"

"My dear Douglas," answered Lake, looking at him searchingly, "I naturally want my brother's house and property to be well looked after. But I think Trimm is to be trusted."

Douglas didn't answer. But he had hard work not to tell his uncle that the island belonged to Reg, and that in any case it was nothing to do with Joshua Lake what happened to it. It had been left to him.

"Well, if you've nothing to do, what about having a friendly race now?" asked Lake cheerfully.

"I'm quite willing," said Reg. "Come on, Lane—come and give us a hand."

"And I'll take Trimm. He's blind, but he's the most useful man in a boat that I know. The fellow I brought with me is a regular tenderfoot," said Lake.

The three went down to the beach, followed by Trimm and Lane, who seemed to be in earnest conversation the whole way, Trimm gesticulating with his club in a vehement fashion.

"Now, what's he come here for?" mused Douglas. "He hates my mother, and has always behaved like a cad to her; and he doesn't love me, either."

"Well, he can't do us much harm," answered Reg.

"I'm not so sure of that," said his cousin.

In another ten minutes both the yachts were sailing easily out of the bay. The Pierrette hove to, to allow the other boat to come up level with her.

"Do you see the floats of those lobster-pots out there?" shouted Lake, pointing to some floats about half a mile away.

"Ay, ay!" sang out Reg.

"Well, I'll race you round those. Are you ready? Right! Then off we go!"

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### The Trap.

THE Pierrette led off in great style. Josh Lake's boat, the Pickle, following about two lengths astern. Just before they reached the floats, Lane called out:

"We're beating them hands down!"

Reg just glanced back, and saw that the Pickle was by now quite twenty yards behind. They circled the floats, and were returning to the starting-point, taking it easily, when a startled exclamation burst from Lane's lips.

"What on earth are they playing at?" he cried. Then, seizing a boathook, he shouted in alarm: "Look out, you lubbers; you'll run us down! By gad, that's what they're going to do!"

Reg and Douglas, both absorbed in their work of sailing the yacht, looked up at this, and beheld the Pickle, instead of following their course round the floats, heading straight for the Pierrette.

Josh Lake, his face flushed with anger and excitement, was at the tiller. Trimm stood at the bows, his blind eyes wide open, his club grasped in his hands.

"Hard a-starboard!" commanded Lane, slacking the main sheet.

Reg obeyed instantly, with the result that the Pierrette turned towards the Pickle and sailed past her. As they passed, so close that Lane could have knocked Trimm over the head with the boathook, Reg laughed, and a foul oath escaped from the lips of the blind man. After that, they sailed quietly back to shore, all pretence at a race being abandoned by Josh Lake.

"The coward!" said Douglas. "He meant to have us then, Reg! And he would have done, if it hadn't been for Lane keeping his head, and altering the course like that."





Lane ran for the Pierette's dinghy, with Trimm following close on his heels, cursing and shouting. Lane jumped into the boat, and Trimm followed him into the water until nearly up to his shoulders, when he stopped and shook his club and cursed in a hurricane of rage. (See Chapter 5.)

"That's a fact," answered Reg. "But what's the idea? Where does your uncle come in in this business? I can understand that Trimm may have jolly good reasons for not wanting us here, but your uncle! It beats me; but I suppose we'll find out soon enough."

Lane's face was white with fury.

"I'll find out right enough," he gasped. "I'll—"

"We must go carefully, old son," said Reg. "What we have got to do is to best these two, and find out what they have done with Douglas's money, for nothing will ever make me think now that they've not in the plot together."

A few minutes afterwards the three were standing on the beach, waiting for Josh Lake to come ashore with Trimm. It was a nasty time, as they could not be certain what line they would have to take. All the fishermen were away. There was no hope of any help.

As soon as he reached land Josh Lake came up to them, mopping his face with a handkerchief.

"My dear boys—my dear boys, what must you think of me! Never had such a turn in my life! The tiller, in some extraordinary way, got stuck, and nearly caused me to run you down. Thank goodness, you altered your course in the nick of time!"

"Your tiller got stuck!" snorted Lane. "Why—"

"Yes, it was a narrow escape," said Reg hastily, to stop Lane putting them on their guard. "But all's well that ends well. Shall we make a move for the house?"

"By all means," answered Josh. "Let's get back, and forget all about it."

"I'll see you don't!" muttered Lane under his breath.

They all went back to the house in the same order that they had come down, but Trimm and Josh were silent this time. Douglas had hardly spoken a word. He was furious and disgusted with his uncle, and was in mortal dread that something would happen to Reg at the hands of his father's brother.

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When they reached the house the boys and Lane went up to their room, when they shut the door and barred it, and proceeded to talk things over. From their window they could see Josh Lake and Trimm strolling up and down, in earnest conversation, outside.

But talking didn't do much good, and at last Reg said:

"Look here, I'm going down to have a look at that secret passage. Give us a hand to slide the bottom of the chest away, Lane, will you?"

"I'll stay and watch those two scoundrels, Reg," said Douglas. "If I see them coming into the house I'll sing out. Take a candle with you, old chap."

Lane lifted the lid of the chest and opened the trapdoor. An earthy smell filled the room, and, for a moment, made Reg hesitate in his resolve. But he shook off his nervousness, and, grasping the lighted candle Lane held out to him, stepped into the box.

A clammy breeze blew up and made the candle flicker as he descended the stone steps.

"The air must come from somewhere," he said to himself. "I expect this leads down to the beach."

There were, in all, about twenty steps, and at the bottom they became moist and slippery. With his heart beating against his side Reg started to creep down the dripping passage-way.

The squeaking of rats began to break the silence, and made the earthy-smelling place seem more lonely than ever. Suddenly the candle, which was caking his hand in hot wax, was dashed from his hand as a frightened bat burped up against him.

He stooped to feel for it, afraid that every moment his hand would touch some creeping thing, and at last he found it. He had matches in his pocket, but he did not light his candle again, preferring to keep it in case of emergency.

The tunnel began to wind, but still Reg kept on.

It seemed to him that he had travelled miles—in reality he

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had gone about a hundred yards—when a faint glitter of light seemed to be shining on the wet wall some distance ahead.

Reg stopped, as though turned to stone, hardly breathing for fear of betraying himself, his eyes fixed on that glimmer.

Was it daylight?

It did not seem to be coming any nearer to him so, at last, taking his courage in both hands, he stole forward again.

A little while, and the low rumble of a human voice fell on his ears! Still, inch by inch, he crept forward, and then saw that the light was shining on the roof of the tunnel. A few more yards and he came to the top of another flight of steps still leading downwards.

The rumbling of the voice was much plainer now, and he recognised whose it was. It was Trimm's. Then another voice, the voice of Josh Lake, spoke.

"We'll arrange the stuff on this table all ready for fetching away this evening," he was saying. "We ought to have done it long ago, as I have often told you before, but you are so pig-headed!"

"That's as may be," growled Trimm. "But I'm no fool, and I want to be sure of my whack!"

Josh said nothing in reply, but it was evident that he was busy. Reg could hear that something heavy had been lifted and put on what sounded like a wooden table. Then the sound was repeated again and again.

At all costs he must see what was going on!

The steps wound round, so that to get a view of the scoundrels he was obliged to descend about half-way. Taking his boots off—though stepping on the dank ground made him shudder—he once more moved slowly forward.

Keeping against the inside wall, he crept down until he could see the queer couple. They were in a sort of room in which stood a table and a couple of chairs, green with mildew. On the table were six canvas bags—money-bags! There seemed to be many more, for Josh Lake kept on retiring to a dark corner, which Reg couldn't see without running the risk of being discovered, and returning with one in each hand, which he placed on the table.

Reg retreated a little way up the steps again. He had seen enough, but he wanted, if possible, to hear some more! He didn't have to wait long.

"There," said Josh, at last, "that's the lot. To-night, when we've done it, and if it goes off all right, you go straight to the Pickle, and I will come here, and bring the money down to you. While I'm fetching the other bags you stow the ones I have brought down away, so that we can get off directly I arrive with the last load. See?"

"Ay, ay; I see all right!" growled Trimm. "But what about that fool Lane? We must get him out of the way somehow."

"Don't you worry about that," laughed Lake. "I'll see to him!"

So Douglas had been right after all. Reg had heard enough. Picking up his boots, he made as quickly as he could back to the room. All fear had left him now. Excitement reigned in its stead.

"Thank goodness you've come, old chap!" exclaimed Douglas, as Reggie's head appeared. "Great Scott! What a mess you're in. I think old Josh and his pal Trimm must have gone down to the beach. Anyway, they went off together in that direction. What's it like down there, Reg? Did you make any startling discoveries?"

Reg, in a rapid speech, told them all that he had seen and heard.

"The blackguards!" exclaimed Douglas. "That's my mater's money all right. But how are we going to stop them getting off with it?"

"We must watch them carefully, and trust to luck, I suppose," said Reg. "Anyhow, we know for certain what their game is. Let's go downstairs now!"

"You'd better clean yourself up a bit first, sir," said Lane.

"By Jove, that's a fact!" said Reg.

Douglas was all impatience to get at the thieves, but Lane seemed thoughtful, and did not speak while Reg was changing his clothes. Just before they went downstairs, however, he said:

"What did they mean by saying 'when we've done it,' I wonder?"

Douglas and Reg looked at him.

"And what do they want to get rid of me for?" he continued. "Some dirty business, I'll be bound!"

"Well, we sha'n't find out up here," said Douglas impatiently. "We must keep our eyes skinned, and hope for the best, that's all! Come on, you chaps!"

"I don't like it, sir!" said Lane seriously, as they opened the door.

When they reached the kitchen they found that the two plotters were there already, and that the table was laid more carefully than usual, as though for some special occasion.

"That's right!" said Josh Lake as they entered. "Just to

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show that there's no ill-feeling over the accident of this afternoon let's have a jolly meal all together. You sit over there, Lane," he continued, pointing to a chair by itself on one side of the table. "You sit on my right, Reg, my lad; you sit next to him, Douglas, and Trimm will take the other end of the table. Now we're all settled!"

Reg looked across at Lane. They had both noticed that Josh Lake had so arranged matters that he sat with his back, and nearest, to the door, and also that Reg and Douglas were between the two scoundrels. Lane, in a sense, was cut off, for the table took up nearly all the room.

However, nobody betrayed any anxiety, and the meal passed off, outwardly at any rate, in a friendly fashion. But the storm broke with unexpected suddenness, as is the way with storms.

With the best intentions in the world, it would have been hard for anyone to arrange a really complicated dinner with the resources of the lonely house on Crag Island to work on. Therefore, after about half an hour the meal had come to an end.

Josh Lake sat crumbling at a piece of bread, and smiling to himself. Trimm, at the other end of the table, sat moody and silent. Reg, Douglas, and Lane were quietly watchful.

All at once, as if suddenly remembering something, Josh spoke.

"Dash it all!" he exclaimed, in an annoyed voice. "I forgot to tell my man to overhaul the rudder of my boat, and he hasn't got brains enough to think about doing it for himself. Would you mind strolling down to the beach and telling him to do so, Lane?"

Lane, taken off his guard, hesitated, and seemed about to depart, when Reg remembered what Lake had said in the underground room about "getting rid of Lane." His heart began to beat a little quicker. The plot was evidently growing thicker!

"I'm afraid I can't spare Lane now, Mr. Lake," he said firmly. "I may be sailing to the mainland myself to-morrow, and I want Lane to give me a hand with the packing now. In fact," he added, "as we seem to have pretty well eaten everything I think we may as well make a start at once, Lane."

Lane rose immediately, and walked to the door.

"I'll go and lay the things out now," he said, "ready for you when you come up, sir, to say what is to go."

No sooner had he shut the door behind him than Josh Lake, making no further pretence at friendliness, rose and put his back against it.

"Now then, Trimm!" he commanded, while Reg and Douglas wondered what was going to happen.

From his pocket Trimm produced a sheet of paper and a fountain-pen, evidently Josh Lake's.

Reg half rose from his chair, and looked from the blind scoundrel's face to the evil countenance of Josh. To his horror he realised that the man was covering him with a revolver. A cry of surprise escaped him, and at the same moment Trimm's hairy arm shot out, and his great hand closed round Douglas's throat.

"I advise you not to move a finger, Upton," said Lane, walking towards him, and still covering him with the revolver. "If your cousin is not a fool he will sign that paper, otherwise Trimm knows what to do, and will have no objection to doing it, either!" he added, with a laugh.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### The Treasure of Crag Island.

REG looked round to where his cousin struggled in the grasp of the blind man, who leant over him, muttering uncouth sounds.

"What is the paper, anyhow?" asked Reg.

"Oh, nothing more terrible than a statement that he hands over his inheritance and all it contains to me, that's all!" answered Lane. "It was my brother's, and I mean to keep it. In fact, I—"

"What do you mean by inheritance?" asked Reg. He was determined to keep up the game, for he saw a way out.

Evidently Lane did not know that it was no longer in Douglas's power to sign away the island.

"What do I mean? Why, the island, of course. What else should I mean, you young fool?"

"Oh, I didn't know what you might mean!" answered Reg contemptuously. "And suppose Douglas doesn't sign—what then?"

"Why, then, my young lawyer," sneered the man, "I and my friend Trimm will be under the painful necessity of putting you away somewhere where you will remain for ever. That's the answer to your 'What then.'"

"Do you mean you will murder us?"

"Well, that's a nasty word, but I suppose it comes to that.



My yacht is all ready, and we could be across in France before anyone even got anxious about you!"

"Douglas, old man," said Reg, trying to keep a sound of triumph out of his voice, "there's nothing for it—you'd better sign!"

Douglas, his hand shaking with anger and the pain of Trimm's mighty grip, took up the pen. Josh Lake, in his excitement, leant across, forgetting to keep Reg covered, watching Douglas as he prepared to write his name to the foot of the document.

Collecting all his strength, Reg aimed a blow at Lake's head, at the same time calling "Lane, Lane!" as loud as he could. There was a snarl from Trimm as his hands closed round Douglas's throat again, a hoarse curse from Josh Lake, who sprang to his feet again and rushed at Reg. Then the door burst open with a crash, and Lane threw himself at Trimm, who was throttling Douglas with all the savagery of a maniac.

Reg jumped towards Lake, and, seizing the wrist that held the revolver, bent it backwards until, with a groan, the scoundrel let it fall to the floor, and closed with him. Reg fought and wrestled as he had never fought before, but Lake was a powerful man, and he felt himself being forced backwards to the ground, when, suddenly, they were both knocked down as the great blind man rushed past them and out of the door.

They heard him pushing his way madly through the bushes—going in the direction of the beach.

Lake loosened his grasp of Reg as he heard the sound of Trimm's receding steps, and the boy sprang to his feet—leaving the older man sprawling on the floor—but before anyone could stop him, Lake sprang to his feet and followed Trimm out into the night.

"Quick—the money!" gasped Douglas. The three dashed up to their room. Seizing a candle apiece, they tore open the floor of the chest, and, Reg leading the way, descended into the tomblike passage.

They reached the little store-room and looked round. On the table stood about twenty bags, each containing money, though how much they had no time to even guess. Nobody could have carried more than two at a time.

Reg, turning to his two companions, suddenly blew their candles out. The scraping of feet could be heard, coming from the opposite direction.

"Quick!" he whispered. "I have a plan! Follow me up the stairs!"

"What——" began Douglas, but was stopped by Reg putting his hand over his mouth, for someone was moving about in the room, and the steady light of a lantern could be easily seen.

The lantern, or whatever it was, was placed on the ground, and the three listeners heard the sound of the steps retreating again, but slowly as though a heavy load was being carried. In silence they waited until the sound died away, and then went down to the room to see what had happened. Sure enough, two of the bags were missing!

"Listen!" said Reg. "That was old Lake, and he is taking the cash to the head of the passage, which must be close to the beach. There it will be taken by Trimm on to the Pickle."

"Well, then," exclaimed Douglas excitedly, "let's get after them!"

"Wait a second, old chap!" said Reg. "Why not let old Lake do the work? When he comes to the last load we'll grab him and take it down to the beach ourselves. We shall be able to settle old Trimm all right!"

"Yes; but all the money will be on the Pickle!" protested Lane.

"Well, I suppose we can sail her, can't we?"

"By Jove, that's a great idea!" chuckled Lane. "I'll tell you what; I'll sneak back quickly to our room and bring a bit of rope—it may come in useful to tie up old Lake with!"

Reg and Douglas took up their position at the head of the steps again, and soon Lake returned—departing once more with two of the bags.

By the time Lane returned, Josh Lake had made five journeys, and was getting a bit done up, to judge by the puffing and blowing that reached their ears.

They didn't move from their hiding-place until he had made another two trips, but after that they went down to have a look. There were just two bags left.

"It's now or never!" whispered Lane as the faint sounds of the scoundrel's steps were heard once more. Reg and Douglas felt that their hearts would jump right out of their sides if they did not get to work soon.

"I'll tell you what!" whispered Lane hurriedly, unwinding the coil of rope he had brought. "You get back up the steps, and I'll get under the table. When the old blackguard walks up to it to take the last two bags, I'll fasten his legs together."

As Lane crawled under the table the two boys retreated for the last time and waited, trembling with excitement.

The steps came closer and closer. They entered the room

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and shuffled up to the table. The two boys crept a little way down the stairs.

Suddenly there was a curse and a crash as Lake fell to the damp floor.

Turning him over, Lane pulled his hands behind him and bound them together with the other end of the rope, and then loosened the knot round his ankles.

"You stay here!" he said to the prisoner. "And don't you dare to move for a couple of hours. If you attempt to follow us I will tie you so that you cannot move, and leave you here for the rats!"

"Come on, boys!" he added. "Bring the money!" Putting the light out, they stole forward again. Soon they could see the moonlight shining through the entrance, and could hear the sound of the surf on the beach.

Just outside crouched the listening form of Trimm, one hairy hand tugged at his beard, the other grasped his club.

Douglas quickened his pace, emerged into the moonlight, and threw himself at the blind man's throat. There was a startled, choking cry. Lane and Reg, hurrying up, saw Trimm rise to his feet, lifting Douglas as though he had been a baby. Then they, too, closed with him.

The strength of the man was terrific; he hurled them about as a bull tosses dogs. But at last the strain began to tell on him. Little by little they got him to the ground, where, still struggling feebly, he lay gasping for breath.

Lane grasped the two hairy wrists. "Now then," he said to the boys, "off with you to the Pickle! Never mind me! Get her anchor up and clear off!"

There was something in his voice that made them obey. Dashing down to the water's edge, they jumped into the Pickle's dinghy and pulled off to her.

Lake's man looked rather surprised to see them; but he was evidently past thinking about anything—and no wonder! He readily got the anchor up; and in a few short seconds the boat began to move out of the bay.

"I'm hanged if I like leaving Lane though!" said Reg.

"Same here!" answered Douglas, mopping his face. "But —" He broke off suddenly, and pointed to the beach. "Look, Reg! Lane is running to our dinghy! Trimm is after him!"

Reg looked. And sure enough there was Lane running for the Pierrette's dinghy, with Trimm following, cursing and shouting. But Lane had the advantage, and reached the boat. He jumped in and pulled with all his might. Trimm followed him into the water until nearly up to his shoulders, when, he stopped and shook his club and cursed in a hurricane of rage.

Lane reached the Pierrette, and got the anchor up. Reg, telling Lake's man to follow him, got into the Pickle's dinghy and rowed over to the Pierrette.

"Well done, Lane!" he said, shaking hands with him. "We've scored properly! All the fishermen are away, too; so that those two blackguards are prisoners!"

"That's so!" grinned Lane, who was still panting for breath. "And we'd better sail out to the men and tell them not to return to the island for a day, or—or until we tell them to. What do you think?"

"Yes, that's a good idea! You take this chap with you and go and tell them. Douglas and I will sail straight home to tell our people what has happened. Follow us as soon as you can, Lane!"

At about four a.m. the slumbering people at the Headlands were surprised to hear a thundering at the hall door, where they found Reg in a great state of excitement. Douglas had remained behind in charge of the money.

As well as he could Reg told the whole story.

Then they all went down to the boat, and carried the bags of gold up to the house, where Mr. Upton locked them up in his great safe. Then Lane returned, followed by the little fleet of fishing-smacks; and great was the rejoicing among the men to hear that Trimm had been at last found out to be the scoundrel they had always thought him.

The people living round still tell of how the police were taken across to the island on board the Pierrette, to return with Josh Lake and Trimm handcuffed together; and some of the women still shudder to think of the awful look on the face of the blind man.

Crag Island is a very different place now, and many a poor family has cause to bless the day that the "two young gentlemen" first took possession, and turned it into a happy holiday-place for tired workers.

In fact, as Mr. Upton said, when the great house was opened as a convalescent home:

"No man could have made a better investment than I did when I made my son the King of Crag Island."

And then the people cheered louder than ever!

THE END.

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!" By FRANK RICHARDS.



*The Third Grand Complete Story Contained in This Issue.*

# THE REDSKIN'S DEBT!

∴ A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Thrilling Adventure in The Wild West. ∴

By **HARRY DORRIAN.**



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### The Emigrant Train—Preparations for An Indian Attack.

**A** LONG train of white-topped waggons, drawn by lean and tired-looking horses and oxen, came slowly winding over the prairie of the far North-West. By the side of the waggons rode numerous horsemen—hardy, fearless, bronze-faced specimens of manhood—ranging in age from the grizzled old trapper of three score to the newly-fledged young bird that had but lately left the mother-nest. Within the waggons rode the womenfolk, keeping a jealous eye on all the household gods that they had brought with them to this wild region, where they proposed to build a new home.

Five hundred souls in all composed this emigrant train, which, under the command of Captain Halstead, had set out for the land of the Yellow Stone some two months before. At the head of the train rode the captain, and by his side a couple of young men—his son, Frank Halstead, and his nephew, John Walton.

"Well, lads," the captain was saying, "we have escaped trouble with the Indians so far, but now we are right in the heart of the Sioux country. The two chiefs, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, are on the warpath with a large party of braves, and we may expect to fall in with them at any time now. The best thing we can do is to form a camp right here."

The two young men agreed, and the word was passed round to halt and form camp at once. Under the direction of their energetic captain, the immigrants formed a large circle of the waggons, in the centre of which they corralled the horses and oxen, and then set about forming their defences.

Night comes down swiftly on the prairies, and hardly had all the arrangements been satisfactorily completed when darkness set in. As by this time the coming of the white men was probably known to the Indians, no efforts were made to conceal the whereabouts of the camp. Fires were lighted, and the settlers sat round them far into the night, the men smoking and talking over the probability of an Indian attack, and the women knitting, sewing, and chatting, as unconcerned as though they were seated beside the hearths of the homes they had left behind them.

Prominent among the smokers was a grizzled old trapper named Seth Challoner. He was a man of herculean strength and undaunted courage. Though "Seth" was his baptismal name and "Challoner" his surname, it was but rarely he was addressed by either one or the other. Quickshot was the

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name he generally answered to, and Quickshot was what his comrades delighted to call him.

He was a man remarkable for several things. First, the deadly precision of his aim and the celerity with which he could reload—hence his nickname; the evenness of temper, innate nobility of character and generosity; and last, but by no means least, his remarkably pretty daughter Edith, who now, for the first time in all the eighteen years of her life, accompanied her father upon his prairie excursion.

If old Quickshot was a rough diamond, Edith, his daughter, was a gem of the first water. From her father she inherited a sweetness of disposition which betrayed itself in her every action, and from her dead mother she inherited a personal beauty that had turned the head of every unmarried man in the camp.

But of all the suitors that she had—and she had many—two outstripped all other competitors for her favour; and they were Frank Halstead, the captain's son, and his cousin, John Walton.

Thoroughly unlike were the young men, both in features and in disposition. Frank's complexion was dark, and his hair was brown; John's was fair, with hair approaching sandy. Frank was open and free-handed, John was secretive and close-fisted. Both disliked one another instinctively; their natures were too dissimilar to agree. But both loved old Quickshot's fair daughter, and this fact increased the gulf between them, and angry words passed frequently between the two cousins.

As yet Edith herself had shown no decided preference for either. She had known both young men nearly all her life, and liked them both as a sister, but, as she often told herself, that was all.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### "Indians!"—A Desperate Struggle—Unexpected Aid.

**I**T was early dawn when suddenly the thrilling cry was raised in the settlers' improvised camp:

"Indians!"

The men left their various occupations and sprang to their arms, and, under the joint direction of Captain Halstead and Quickshot, prepared to offer a formidable resistance to the approaching Redskins.

A barricade, consisting of provision barrels, boxes, cooking utensils, and waggon covers, had been erected, and behind this the women and children were placed in comparative safety, while their husbands, fathers, and brothers awaited the coming of the enemy sheltered within the waggons, in

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the coverings of which holes had been made to enable them to shoot through.

On came the Indians, painted and feathered, uttering wild shouts and deafening yells. There were about fifteen hundred of them, all mounted, for the Sioux are horsemen. At their head rode the two great chiefs whose names afterwards became famous throughout the world—Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.

Contrary to the expectations of Captain Halstead and old Quickshot, the Redskins did not immediately rush to the attack. A council of war was held by them just out of rifle-range, and when it broke up the anxious settlers saw that the Redskins were forming themselves up into three bodies of about five hundred braves each.

Two of the parties, led by Crazy Horse and another chief, rode off in opposite directions, while Sitting Bull himself, with his picked braves, remained in his original position.

"Say, cap, we're in a mighty bad fix this time, and no mistake!"

Captain Halstead looked grave. He, his son, nephew, and Quickshot stood talking the situation over. The manoeuvres of the Indians had not escaped the sharp eyes of the last-named, and it was he who was responsible for the statement that the position the immigrants were in was not exactly an enviable one.

"Look yere," he continued, "them pesky varmints have bruk up into three parties; their object is to attack us simultaneously. Sittin' Bull's kept the best part of the braves along with him, an' intends to come at us from the north-east; the other two parties will charge the camp from the sou'-west and the west. So we'll have to follow their lead, I reckon——"

"And break up our men into three parties to repel their attack?" interposed Frank.

"Adzactly! You've hit it, youngster. Now, then, cap," addressing the elder Halstead. "Ef I might make so bold as to presoom, I would suggest that you take a hundred and fifty of our men and guard the north-east from Sittin' Bull and his warriors; I'll take a hundred and look arter the sou'-west, which I guess'll be attacked by old Crazy Hoss; and young Frank here'll take the other hundred and look to the west o' the camp. What d'ye say, cap?"

"Your advice is sound, Seth."

John Walton stood by, frowning darkly. He was too years the senior of Frank Halstead, and it wounded his jealous nature to think that his cousin should be given a command while he himself would have to fight in the rank and file. He bit his lips to suppress his rage, and then, in a voice of subdued passion, he turned to Captain Halstead and said:

"Do you not think Frank is too young and inexperienced to be placed in such a position of trust? If he makes a mistake it will be fatal to us all."

Quickshot looked at the speaker contemptuously. He had but a poor opinion of John Walton's courage, and he recognised the jealousy and wounded pride that prompted him to speak as he had done.

"I think," he said, speaking slowly and clearly, "that ye needn't be under no manner of fear about young Frank here. He's got as level a head on him as a man twice his age; and as to courage, I'd back his pluck ag'in anyone in the camp—you included, John Walton."

Walton made no reply, although his eyes flashed ominously. He turned and strode away, leaving the three men to discuss means of defence. Seth Challoner's advice was carried out to the letter. With a hundred and fifty men Captain Halstead took up his position, prepared to battle with the renowned Sitting Bull; Quickshot and his hundred repaired to the farther end of the camp to repel the onslaught of Crazy Horse and his braves; whilst Frank and his followers prepared to resist the coming of the besiegers from the west. Hardly had all preparations been successfully accomplished, when from the spot where Sitting Bull was stationed a thin column of smoke ascended into the still air. It was the signal for the attack, and the immigrants saw the three bodies of mounted Indians advance upon the camp at a furious rate.

This was Frank's first real fight, and he felt a queer trembling come over him as he saw the dusky horde with whom he was to engage come pouring over the prairie, and heard the wild screams and war-whoops in which they indulged. It was not fear, however, that assailed him, but a sense of keen excitement, which, however, in the space of a few seconds passed away, leaving him cool and collected.

He had stationed his men as Quickshot had suggested, in a double row. The front row were to fire at the word of command, and then retire and reload with all despatch, while the second row fired, in their turn, upon the enemy.

"Steady, men!" he cried, in a clear voice that could be heard above the noise made by the coming foe.

Over the ground the Indians came thundering along, sending volley after volley of arrows to precede them, but which, luckily, fell short of their mark.

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"Are you ready?" shouted Frank, as a few bounds of the wiry mustangs brought the foe within range.

"Fire!"

Fifty rifles rang out, and when the smoke had cleared away it was seen that a score of the enemies' ponies were dashing away riderless over the plain. But still the Indians came on. They were fighting in a desperate cause, for Sitting Bull had announced that the first man who fled should die by the torture, to which even death from the firesticks of the white men was preferable.

"Quick!" shouted Frank. "Number two company, advance! Fire!"

Again the leaden messengers of death rattled round the hapless Redskins; but still they came on, although fifty of their warriors lay bleeding on the ground. During the interval the first company had reloaded their rifles, and, at the word of command, they discharged them into the faces of the foe. It was the last volley that was fired, for the Redskins were so close that the faces of some of the dead were blackened by the powder from the discharge.

Wielding their spears, tomahawks, and clubs, they leapt from their horses and rushed on foot upon the defences of the white men. A hand-to-hand conflict ensued. The Indians, maddened by the losses they had sustained, and forgetful of their previous fear in their lust for the blood of the palefaces, came pouring into the camp, giving vent to the wildest and most appalling yells and screeches.

Terrified by the hideous commotion, the women and children in the background set up an agonised screaming, which added to the horrors of the pandemonium.

With rifles clubbed, the white men stood at bay, their faces set and stern, and a fixed resolve in every heart to fight the savage foe till the last drop of their life-blood had left their veins.

It was a scene of the wildest horror and bloodshed—a scene that has often been enacted upon the grand and beautiful prairies. It was a fight to the bitter end between those mortal enemies—the Red men and the white. The immigrants wielded their clubbed firearms with the strength and frenzy of desperation, and many an Indian warrior was laid low, and his spirit wafted to the happy hunting-grounds, by the powerful blow from the butt-end of a musket.

But, on the other hand, as minute after minute passed the gallant hundred dwindled. Tomahawks crashed through their brains, arrows pierced their noble hearts, and they fell fighting to the last. One man after another thus dropped and died; but the sight of his death, instead of awaking terror in the breasts of his comrades, only spurred them on to almost superhuman efforts at retaliation.

And so the ghastly conflict waged on. Frank, his brown hair clotted with blood, his usually merry, ruddy face white and set, stood his ground, beating down with his strong young arm Redskin after Redskin as they came pouring in over the broken-down barricade.

In the meantime how was the fight progressing in the other parts of the camp? Quickshot and his men had been fortunate enough to get four shots at the enemy, which had so disconcerted the Red men that they made but a feeble attempt upon the camp, which the white men had readily repulsed.

While half Quickshot's garrison were engaged with the Indians in a hand-to-hand conflict, the other half, under the orders of their leader, had reloaded, and sent another disastrous hail of bullets into the tightly-packed ranks of the enemy.

This last volley was too much for the enemy. With a wild cry of terror, they turned and fled over the prairie, forgetful of the threats of Sitting Bull and the dire consequences which would ensue.

And Quickshot and his men, again reloading as they came, advanced to the succour of Frank and his hard-pressed little army. But, critical as was Frank's position, his father was in still worse plight. With his handful of men he stood facing Sitting Bull and his five hundred painted warriors. Only once had Captain Halstead been able to fire upon the oncoming foe, and, even before the smoke of the first discharge cleared away, the hideous faces of the Redskins appeared through the mist hardly a stone's-throw distant.

The fight was hopeless almost from the commencement. In the first mad rush the Indians had overturned the waggons which formed the white men's only defence, and over the debris they came, dealing death with their keen tomahawks and crushing the lives out of the palefaces with their ponderous clubs.

Of the original hundred and fifty scarce fifty remained. The rest lay bleeding and mangled upon the ground which they had given their lives to obtain. The situation was more than critical—it was utterly hopeless. Unless something unforeseen and un hoped for happened a few minutes would see the end of all.

**WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!**

By  
FRANK RICHARDS.



Captain Halstead looked about him with an expression of despair in his eyes. Already his arm, weakened by age, was beginning to tire. Was he to be the next one to spill his blood on the already gore-bespattered earth? On they came, these merciless enemies; a dozen tomahawks waved before his eyes. He made his last stand with the remnant of his followers around him. Death was their lot now, and they knew it! But theirs was not the intention to die alone; at least some of the Indians would accompany them to their last resting-place.

A volley of arrows laid low a few more of the devoted band, and then the savages drew back, preparing for one last final charge that should carry all before it.

At that moment—above the din of the battle, the groans of the wounded, and the fierce cries of the combatants—arose a shout—a shout that nerved these desperate men to still further exertions. It instilled fresh hope into their despondent hearts, for they knew that succour was at hand.

Whence came this timely aid they could not imagine. It was not from their own party, for the battle at the west point of the camp was still raging fast and furious.

From the eastward a troop of horsemen came spurring over the prairie. Above the thunder of their horses' hoofs as they beat the hard prairie ground, above the babel of the battle, arose that shout from a hundred white throats. On, on they came, and as they came they fired among the seething mass of Indians.

At the head of the rescuing party rode a man—a quaint figure with a mass of long, red hair streaming in the wind. In each hand he held a six-chambered Colt's revolving-pistol, then an almost unheard-of novelty on the prairies. The Indians turned to repel the unlooked-for attack; but the sight of that strange figure with the ruddy locks sent a spasm of terror into each dusky heart.

Crack, crack, crack! rang out the revolver, and at each crack a man among them dropped. The Indians dreaded the white man's long "firestick," which shot out flame but once in a while; but never before had they seen anything to compare with those awful weapons, which, small as they were, seemed to pour out an endless discharge of smoke and bullets.

They were seized with consternation. Truly the gods of the white men had come to their aid in the moment of their need! And so, with one accord, the dusky warriors fled, their noble chieftain, Sitting Bull himself, setting them the example, and covering the ground at a great pace, considering his bulk and the shortness of his legs.

Not content, however, with scaring off the Redskins, the avengers followed up their success, and pressed on in the wake of the flying Indians. Nearly every man amongst them was armed with the same destructive little weapon as was the chief, and, as they rode on, they kept up an incessant fusillade, and Redskin after Redskin dropped in his traces, never to rise again.

Soon the prairie became dotted, almost as far as the eye could reach, with Indians, fleeing and dead; and still the avengers rode on, leaving behind them a trail of dead Indians.

The surviving emigrants leaned upon their battered rifles, faint and weary, yet with a deep thankfulness at heart for the miraculous deliverance which had come to them.

Frank's first thought was for his father. Picking his way over the fragments of broken waggons, and the dead and stiffened bodies of friends and foes, he made his way to the spot where his father had last been seen, surrounded by his brave men. An agony of doubt was in the young man's mind. Was his father still living? Or was he, as was many another brave fellow, lying cold and dead upon the earth?

"Frank, my boy!" The well-known accents fell upon his ears; he looked up, and in another second father and son were locked in each other's arms.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Wounded Indian—Cowardice Unmasked.

**B**ACK over the prairie came the returning band, uttering shouts that would have done credit to their enemies the Indians.

Still in advance of them rode the curious figure which at first, to the beleaguered immigrants, had seemed that of an angel of deliverance.

As they neared the camp this man raised his hand, and immediately all were silent. He recognised that this was no moment for jubilation; a battle had been fought, and many a brave defender was lying cold and dead.

Silently, then, the mounted men rode up to the camp, and, following the example set by their leader, they took off their hats in honour of the dead.

Captain Halstead, leaning on his son's shoulder, advanced to meet the returned victors. On his right strode Quickshot, his grizzled beard sprinkled with blood; not his blood, however,

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for he had escaped marvellously without a wound, though he had been in the thick of the fight the whole time.

"Jumping thunder!" he ejaculated, stepping back with astonishment as his eyes fell upon the foremost horseman. "May I never, ef it ain't old Higginbottom!"

"It jest air old Eph Higginbottom, an' no other," returned the man with the red locks, springing to the ground. "Who'd 'a' thought o' meetin' you hyur, Seth Challoner? Say, but ye were in a nasty pickle. Rather a good job I was passin' an' called in; ain't it?"

"That's so," replied the other nonchalantly. "Now, see here, Eph. Let me introduce you to Captain Halstead and his son. I don't forget that we're deeply in your debt, Eph, but I ain't a good hand at palavering, so I'll let the cap do the talking, ef it's all the same to you."

"I don't want no talkin'," replied Eph. "Jest shake, cap," extending his hand. "Me an' my pards, we don't want no thanks. We've been a bit of use to you, an' we've settled a little score we had ag'in them pesky Sioux. We'd ha' settled Settin' Bull, too, an' that durned Redskin Crazy Hoss, on'y we couldn't get up to 'em. No, ye don't, cap—not a word!" as Halstead was about to express his deep thanks. "Ef it's all the same to you," continued Eph, "we'll stay an' help ye clar up a bit."

He had fully made up his mind that he would not accept any thanks from those to whom he had indeed proved a friend in need; and so Captain Halstead and his son had to be content with warmly pressing the old trapper's hand.

Then the whole party turned and entered the encampment. What a scene of distress was revealed to their eyes! Women, half-distracted with anguish, were running about wildly seeking for husbands, fathers, brothers, and lovers; seeking for them, and finding them, for the most part, cold and dead, with the life-blood which they had shed dyeing crimson the grass whereon they lay.

Of the three hundred and fifty who had resisted the Indian attack scarce one hundred and fifty remained alive, and they, with the assistance of Eph Higginbottom's men, dug two pits, to one of which they consigned the bodies of the dead Indians and to the other the corpses of their own comrades.

Frank Halstead accompanied the men on their round. In places the dead lay piled on one another, so fierce had been the fight. White men and red lay side by side, at peace at last. Frank shuddered as he looked on the dead bodies of the Indians, whose faces, streaked with yellow and bright vermilion paints, looked even more ghastly and revolting in death than they had done in life. He shuddered, and a cold perspiration stood on his forehead as he bent to lift the body of a feathered and painted brave, who was about to be consigned to his last resting-place. As he stooped the sound of a slight moan came from the heap of dead at his feet.

Darkness was fast creeping over the scene of carnage, and, in the dim, uncertain light, Frank could not at first ascertain from what lips had come that token of still existing life.

Again the moan sounded, feeble, yet clear and distinct. Frank, guided by the sound, stooped, and found an Indian still living. His foot was caught in a tattered shred of canvas, and in his skull was a ghastly wound that had been inflicted by a heavy blow.

Tenderly and carefully Frank lifted the fallen man. A short while ago these two had stood face to face, each eager for the other's death; but now the fury and bloodshed of the battle had passed away, and Frank Halstead's only effort was to resuscitate the wounded Indian. He called to one of his men and bade him bring water, which the man went readily enough to do, not dreaming for a moment that it was needed for any other purpose than to revive a fallen comrade.

When the water arrived Frank bathed the wounded head, and poured a few drops of spirit down the Indian's throat. For some time no other signs of life showed itself than by the faint moans which escaped the sufferer's lips; at last the eyelids fluttered, and finally opened. There was a strangely pathetic look in the eyes that gazed up to Frank's face. The wounded man muttered something too low for Frank to hear; he bent down, and placed his ear close to the Indian's mouth. Again came the faint whisper—it was but a single word, an Indian name: "Anesta."

"What does he mean?" asked Frank of himself, with a puzzled look. "Can it be the name of his sweetheart—some dusky damsel? Ah, no; Indians don't have sweethearts—only squaws!"

"What are you doing there?" asked a harsh voice. Frank looked up in surprise, and saw his cousin, John Walton, facing him.

"I'm trying to revive this poor chap. Just lend me a hand to carry him to the enclosure, like a good fellow."

Walton stooped, and peered at the prostrate form in the half light, and then, uttering a cry of amazement, sprang to his feet.

"What! An Indian?"



"Yes; an Indian! Come, John, don't waste precious time!"

"Precious time! Are you mad, boy? Put your heel on the wretch's face and stamp his dirty life out; or, if you won't, I will for you!"

He pushed Frank on one side, and was preparing to put his threat into execution, when Frank, his eyes blazing with anger, seized him by the collar.

"Leave go, you meddling fool!" cried Walton.

But Frank would not leave go, and he forced Walton back a pace or two.

"There are two ways of killing a man," he said, still grasping his cousin in his strong hold. "One in open and fair fight, when it is his life or yours; one by murder! You shall not murder that man, John Walton! I swear it! Where have you been all through the day?"

At the question the other man's face turned white with rage.

"Where do you think I've been? Where should I be but in the front rank, fighting the Indians?"

"You lie," said Frank, in a low voice, "and you know it! Shall I tell you where you were all through the fight? You were in the provision waggon, hidden among the flour-barrels. That's where you were, you skulking coward!"

"You—you did not see me!" stammered Walton, turning green with fear.

"No," said Frank; "I did not. I had other work to do beside looking after the hiding-places of cowards like you! I did not see you; but I can see the flour with which your coat is covered."

"It is not flour!" boldly replied the other. "You cur, you are trying to lie my character away, because you know that you have no chance against me with Edith Challoner!"

"Silence!" replied Frank sternly. "Do not bring that young lady's name into the conversation! I repeat that it is flour. You are covered from head to foot in it. Bah!"—taking his hand, which was now covered with the white powder, from the other's collar and putting it to his mouth. "I never tasted flour if this is not it!"

"Look here, Frank Halstead," said Walton, in a low voice of fury, "if you ever mention this to a living soul, I will kill you, as sure as my name is John Walton! Do you hear?"

Frank laughed disdainfully.

"Your threats do not frighten me in the least; but for the honour of our family—to which, unfortunately for us, you belong—I will not proclaim your cowardice. Now, kindly help me to carry this Indian!"

Cowed and abject, the other obeyed, and between them the body of the Indian was carried to the waggon which was being temporarily used as a hospital. On the way they encountered their new ally, Ephraim Higginbottom, and Quickshot.

"Land sakes!" cried the former, in astonishment. "Durn my eyes ef they ain't cartin' an Injin along! Fight 'em fust, an' cure 'em after! Waal, I reck'n this's cur-us!"

"That's right, boys!" said Quickshot heartily, as the trio passed him by. "The next best thing to pluck is humanity. I'm glad to see you know how to practise both. A wounded enemy should be as sacred as a wounded friend." Then, as the little procession passed him by, he whispered in Higginbottom's ear: "Two of the bravest and smartest lads in the camp! My little gel will be a lucky woman if she can get either for a husband."

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Fort Ephraim.

"SAY, but they're pretty little toys," said Eph Higginbottom, fingering his Colts lovingly. "I wouldn't trust 'em for a long shot like I would this old chap, though!"—patting an antiquated gun which he carried slung to his back. "Now, cap," he continued, addressing the elder Halstead. "Ef I might presoom to ask, what's the next move on the board? It ain't likely, ye know, that ole Sett'n' Bull's goin' to set down peacefully under this bust-up of his. I guess he an' Mister Crazy Hoss'll come meanderin' back later on, with a fresh supply of Injins at their heels. Now, what lay are ye on? Air ye goin' to pack up an' scoot, or air ye goin' to stop on an' see the fun out?"

"The latter, my friend," said Captain Halstead. "I'm an Englishman, you know, and the more Sitting Bull and his men try to get us out of this country the more resolved am I to stay here."

"Then ef you're goin' to stay ye'll have to build a fort."

"That's what I intend to do, if the Indians will leave us in peace long enough."

"Cap," said Eph, his eyes twinkling, "I admire ye Britishers! Now, ye say ye owe me jest the least bit of a turn?"

"A turn which I never can repay."

"That's whar ye're wrong. Ye jest kin. Ye kin make me one o' the proudest men on the par-airies."

"How?"

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NEXT MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"This fort o' yourn—what ye're goin' to build—call it after me—'Fort Ephraim'—an' we're quits."

"It shall be done!" replied the captain enthusiastically, grasping the old trapper's horny palm. "This very day you shall lay, not the first stone, but the first log of Fort Ephraim."

"Look hyur," said Eph solemnly, "I ain't a man to take a big favour like this hyur without doin' somethin' to aim it. Thet bit o' a scramble wi' the Injins ain't no account no way—at least, not compared with a thing like this. Ef I'm to have the honour o' namin' Fort Ephraim, I'm goin' to hev me finger in the pie in other ways, I reck'n."

"How?" asked the mystified captain.

"I'm jest goin' to help build it, an' thet's all about it. We wuz after bufflers, but bufflers ain't no manner o' use up this side o' Ameriky; they're about as dead as George Washin'ton, an' thet's all about it. Eph Higginbottom ain't been trappin' around the paraires for nigh on sixty years without layin' a bit by fer bad weather. Ye kin bet yer life on that. So I'm goin' to up an' say to those boys o' mine, 'Boys, will ye help build Fort Ephraim? Ef ye want pay fer doin' it ye shall have it, an' ef ye don't want pay I'll say thank'ee.'"

Without giving Captain Halstead time to reply Eph stalked out, and, mounting an overturned waggon, cleared his throat loudly to attract attention.

"Friends," he began, when the crowd had assembled around him, "it's like this hyur! Cap Halstead's goin' to build a fort on this hyur spot. The cap he reck'ns he owes me a turn, an' he's fixed it up to call the new fort Fort Ephraim, which, as some of ye is perhaps aware, is my name. Wall, boys, it's like this hyur. It's a tarnation big honour for a man like me, an' I reck'n as how one good turn deserves another, so I've promised to lend a hand in the building. Now, boys, what I wanted to say is that it's like this hyur. Bufflers up north ain't no manner o' use any way."

"That's so, Eph! Ye kin bet yer last dime on that, anyway!" roared the crowd.

"And," continued Eph, "I want ye all to stand by me an' see as how I don't break my word. I want yer help. Ef it's pay ye want—well, Eph Higginbottom's reck'ned rather warm up in Noo Orleans, and he'll square the bill."

"No, no!" shouted the crowd. "Durn yer pay! Get down; we don't want yer dirty dollars! We'll see the fort through. Hooraw fer Fort Ephraim!"

"Boys," said the old trapper, bowing deeply, "ye're real pards an' gen'lemen, every one of ye."

One red face amid a crowd of white, and the white men did not look upon the red man with a favourable eye. Indeed, it was a wonder that among a crowd of rough trappers and settlers, such as composed the inhabitants of what was soon to be Fort Ephraim, the Indian had not ceased to live; but those who deemed it a good act to take his life were deterred from doing so by the fact that Sleeping Water, as the Redskin was called, was under the guardianship of Frank Halstead, Quickshot, Captain Halstead, and Eph Higginbottom. Of these four men the wilder characters stood in wholesome awe, and Sleeping Water went among them unharmed.

The wound in his head had appeared at first more serious than it really was. Under the care of Frank Halstead he had soon rallied, and a day or two had set him on his legs again—weak, certainly, from the loss of blood which he suffered from, and only a shadow of his former self in appearance, but still, well on the road to recovery.

His attitude to Frank was one of the deepest devotion and gratitude. He followed the young fellow like a faithful dog, hardly letting him out of his sight for a single moment.

To John Walton, however, he manifested every sign of repugnance and distrust, wherewith all marvelled, for it was generally believed that John Walton was as instrumental in saving the Indian's life as was Frank Halstead.

Two or three days had gone by since the eventful day of the fight, and as yet nothing fresh had been heard or seen of Sitting Bull and his warriors. The white men were lulled into a sense of security, and the building operations of the fort progressed apace; day by day it grew, the men put all their best efforts into it, and, in many cases, even the women lent a willing hand in fetching and carrying, some thinking that hard work would tend to make them more forgetful of the sorrow that gnawed at their heartstrings.

Eph Higginbottom was in his element. He went about with a beaming face, directing and overseeing, getting in everyone's way, being abused heartily for his pains, and bearing it all with an unchangeable, exasperating smile on his long, thin visage.

"So this hyur's goin' to be Fort Ephraim!" he muttered



to himself one day, surveying the rough logs that formed the groundwork of the fort. "Look hyur, old Eph, it's a deal too much honour fer a darned ole skunk like yew. If ye ain't almighty keerful ye'll be gettin' too big fer yer mocassins!"

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### The Chase and its Ending—The Fort Finished.

IT was night—dark and moonless. All day long had the work of the fort been progressing steadily, and, now that night had come on, the tired workers lay about, taking their well-earned rest. A dozen men patrolled the fort, to keep watch and give the alarm in case of an Indian advance.

Frank Halstead lay apparently sleeping soundly on the bare ground; close to his feet lay the Indian, Sleeping Water. Presently the Indian lifted himself up on his arm, and listened to the young Englishman's breathing. The Indian then rose to his feet, and cast a searching glance around him. All was peaceful and quiet, save for the tramping of the sentries as they paced to and fro on their beats. Then, crouching down again, swiftly and noiselessly he glided away into the darkness.

But Frank Halstead was not asleep, and Sleeping Water's suspicious movements had not escaped him. As cautiously and as silently as the Indian himself he stole after the crouching Redskin.

Worming their way along like a couple of snakes, the two men moved forward. It was a dangerous enterprise, for had the sentries caught sight of the moving bodies they would probably have fired upon them. But Frank did not stop to weigh the danger; he was consumed with a burning curiosity as to Sleeping Water's intentions. He would, an hour ago, have staked his existence on the Indian's fidelity; but now things had changed. Here was the Indian stealthily stealing his way out of the fort in the dead of night. What was his purpose? Was it to make his escape, or was it to regain his companions, and lead them on to attack the sleeping camp? In either case the man would be guilty of base ingratitude; but Frank felt that it could not be so. Sleeping Water's was a lofty nature, and one incapable of such vileness, and so Frank continued cautiously in the other's track, resolved to find out the meaning of his curious manoeuvres. On they crept, close up to the unconscious sentry; and then, as the man turned on his heel and retraced his steps, Sleeping Water swung himself noiselessly over the unfinished walls of the fort, and dropped down on the other side on to the open prairie.

Frank was a very few seconds behind him; and then the two glided on through the tall, rank grass, the Indian never for a moment imagining that his every movement was being watched.

On they went, the apparent goal the woods which were situated about a couple of miles from the encampment.

It was from this wood that the settlers had procured the huge redwood logs which they used for building the fort, and the constant passing to and fro over the ground had worn away the grass, and a smooth, clear track existed between the fort and the wood.

After leaving the camp about a quarter of a mile in the rear Sleeping Water left the shelter of the tall grass and took to the beaten track. He no longer sought to conceal himself by crouching, but arose to his full height, and passed over the ground quickly at a swinging stride.

To Frank the situation seemed to get more perilous every moment. Suppose that Sleeping Water was indeed faithless? Suppose that within the shelter of the wood lay a large body of Redskins, waiting for Sleeping Water to guide them to the most vulnerable part of the half-built fortifications? Frank put his hand to his pistol-pocket and drew out his pistol. He looked at it. Good! It was loaded. If his suspicions proved correct he would fire. The shot would in all probability cost him his life. But what of that? The white men would be alarmed by the report, and would be in readiness to receive the foe. With these thoughts passing through his mind, they at last entered the cover of the woods.

Suddenly Sleeping Water stopped, and gave a long, low whistle. Frank dropped to the ground. It was to be, then, as he had feared. The Indian had come to meet others; he was indeed vile and faithless. Frank clutched his pistol, and lay there waiting. In a few moments an answering whistle, low and clear, came sounding through the woods. A minute later and there was a rustling of the underwood and a crackling of branches; a figure, lithe and graceful, came bounding forward, and sprang into Sleeping Water's arms.

Frank rose cautiously to his feet, his mind filled with wonder.

"Anesta!" murmured the Indian, in a low tone. And then he continued speaking rapidly in his own language, the newcomer all the time clasped to his breast.

A sudden light dawned upon Frank. Here he had been

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expecting some sordid tragedy, but instead of a tragedy he had blundered up against a romance. His face and neck burned with shame. He was conscious of the fact that he was playing the spy upon a pair of lovers, and his honourable nature revolted at the idea.

"Sleeping Water!"

The Indian started, and the girl in his arms gave a low, terrified scream.

"Hush! Do not be afraid. It is I—Frank Halstead." Our hero advanced a few paces, and stood before the pair. Then he continued: "I have done you a great wrong, Sleeping Water. I thought that you mean to betray us, and I followed you. Forgive me! I did not know."

"It is Sleeping Water who should ask to be forgiven," replied the Indian. "Three times has he stolen from the camp in the dead of night to meet his beloved. But each time he has returned, as he will return to-night, for Sleeping Water does not forget that he is a prisoner."

"You are not a prisoner, Sleeping Water; you are my friend."

"Sleeping Water is your slave. His life is yours, for it was you who saved it."

The girl, who hitherto had kept her face hidden on her lover's breast, turned at these words, and looked gratefully at Frank. Timidly she took a step nearer to him, and then, gaining courage, she seized his hand and pressed it to her lips.

Frank was almost staggered by the extreme beauty of the dusky maiden; he had never before thought that a child of the Indian race could be so beautiful.

"Truly," he thought, "so lovely a girl as this is well worth all the dangers which my friend Sleeping Water has risked!"

"Farewell, Anesta," said the Indian; "Sleeping Water must leave thee!"

"What are you talking about?" interrupted Frank. "Look here, Sleeping Water, my good fellow, you are not a prisoner but a free man, if, as you say, your life belongs to me. See here! I give it as a present to your pretty squaw. I will return to the camp alone, and say that you have gone back to your own people. Farewell!"

He held out his hand, and the Indian grasped it between both of his. He could not stammer out his gratitude, try as he might; and then Frank, slipping his pistol and ammunition into the Indian's hand, turned to retrace his steps to the encampment. Hardly, however, had he taken a half-dozen steps when Anesta sprang after him, and threw her arms about his neck and pressed her soft face to his burning cheek.

And Sleeping Water looked on and didn't seem to care a bit!

Quickshot was the architect of the new fort; his plans were simple, and were admirably suited to the purpose in view. In less than a week after the disappearance of Sleeping Water, Fort Ephraim was an accomplished fact. It consisted in the first place of a strong wall built of the trunks of the hard redwood trees, about ten feet in height, and surmounted by a double row of sharp stakes, which made it insurmountable.

This wall was about half a mile in circumference, and on the inner side a platform ran around it about four feet from the top, so that the defenders of the fort could fire down upon a besieging enemy. Within the shelter of the outer wall a number of wooden shanties had been erected, in which the different families had taken up their abode. One part of the enclosure was railed off for the cattle and waggons. The former were, however, turned out during the day to graze upon the prairie, but at night were driven into the enclosure.

For the first time since they had put their foot on the prairie the settlers felt at ease; they did not fear an Indian attack. Indeed, some of the younger and more adventurous spirits almost wished to see Sitting Bull and his men come scampering over the plains, so that they might try the strength of their new position.

Eph Higginbottom walked about in great glee. He looked upon the wooden fort as one of the marvels of the age.

"I think," he remarked in an apologetic tone to Quickshot, "it's real grand! That's only one little thing as I would suggest."

"What's that?" inquired Quickshot.

"Wall, don't you think it 'ud be a good idea to have the name up somewhar?"

"What?" replied Quickshot, shouting with laughter. "Have the name over the door, like a store in the Broadway, New York?"

But, the matter coming to the ears of Captain Halstead, Eph's wish was carried out, and "Fort Ephraim" was painted up in huge white letters that could be read more than a mile away.

Sitting Bull and his Sioux had not put in an appearance



since the memorable day when Eph and his followers had come to the rescue of the settlers in the nick of time. By degrees the emigrants began to believe that they had seen the last of the Indians, and they started cultivating the land that lay under the walls of the fort. The ground was rich and fertile, and it soon yielded a good return for the labour spent on it.

And so the days passed happily away. Eph and his followers remained on and on, though they threatened that each week would be the last of their stay.

Even some of the poor women who had lost their dear ones on the first day of their coming began to look less sad, and began to take a fresh interest in life, and put their sorrows behind them.

Although the garrison of Fort Ephraim numbered some two hundred and fifty men—mostly rough trappers and backwoodsmen—disagreements were singularly uncommon among them. All seemed to live in perfect peace and unison—all save one, and that one John Walton!

In his heart was bitterness and rage. Since the day of the Indian attack Edith Challoner had treated him with marked coldness, and had avoided him upon every and all occasions.

On the other hand, to Frank Halstead she was all smiles and sweetness. And Walton formed a plan of vengeance against his cousin, whom he imagined had betrayed the secret of his cowardice in order to poison Edith's mind against him, and thereby secure himself in her good graces.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER. John Walton's Treachery!

"HALLO, Frank! Where are you going?"

Frank, gun on shoulder, was in the act of passing through Quickshot's patent gateway. He turned in surprise at the friendly and almost cordial tone of his cousin's voice.

"I'm going to have a shot at some of the birds in the wood," he replied, smiling back at Walton.

"Oh, well, I should like to stretch my legs, too. Can I come with you?"

Never since the quarrel over the body of Sleeping Water had John Walton made any friendly advances to his cousin, and Frank was thunderstruck at the sudden change in the other's manner. However, he never suspected for a moment that any evil intentions lay underneath Walton's friendly exterior, and, glad to be again at peace with the son of his father's sister, he willingly assented to his proposed companionship.

Walton snatched up his gun, and together the two young men passed out of the fort and on to the open prairie.

"That's right, boys!" said the elder Halstead, who, leaning up against the wooden walls of the fort, was contentedly contemplating the fertile, cultivated grounds that stretched around him. "Good friends again, I see; that is as it should be. Good sport to you both!"

Frank and his cousin traversed the same ground that the former had passed over that night months before, when he tracked the unsuspecting Sleeping Water to the rendezvous with his sweetheart.

The scene, however, was now changed; for above them the sun shone brightly in a clear sky, while behind them they were leaving, not the dismantled and still bloodstained encampment, but their new fort and the cultivated fields of the settlers. Walton talked incessantly; he seemed to be in the highest spirits; but a sense of uneasiness underlay all his seeming light-heartedness, which his cousin was not slow to remark. But Frank in his mind put it down to the memory of their last conversation together when he unmasked Walton as a coward and a poltroon.

No word of this subject was, however, mentioned between them, neither was the name of the girl for whose hand they were rivals spoken.

Walton's conversation was principally on the subject of Old Eph and his eccentricities. He spoke of the old man in a good-humoured, bantering way, to which Frank, who highly respected the old trapper, could take no exception.

And so, telling jokes, and laughing heartily at their own wit, these two seemingly light-hearted young men went on their way.

It was a relief to at last reach the shelter of the great trees; and, before commencing their sport, the cousins threw themselves on the soft turf at the foot of a huge redwood, pulled out their pipes and indulged in a quiet smoke.

"Time's up!" cried Walton, springing to his feet. "Come along, Frank. Hallo! Here's a fine shot"—as a young deer, startled by the sound of his voice, went scampering over a clean stretch of ground, offering a clean shot to a respectable marksman. "Quick! Where's your gun? Mine's not loaded."

Frank sprang to his feet, and, bringing his rifle to his shoulder, took aim and fired. The shot was unsuccessful, however, for the graceful animal, with a few more leaps, bounded out of sight.

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"Confound the luck!" said Frank, half apologetically to his cousin. "It was the hurry, old—"

He started back in dismay. John Walton stood facing him. The whole expression of his face had undergone a sudden and miraculous change. Gone was the expression of good humour and the frank smile; in their place was the stullen scowl which Frank so well knew, and a gleam of diabolical hatred in the pale eyes.

For an instant Frank thought that the sudden change of temper was due to his erring shot, but the first words Walton spoke undeceived him.

"So Mr. Frank Halstead, you are in my power! We have an old score to settle, and there is no time like the present."

"I—I don't understand you. I thought we were friends again, John."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the other maliciously. "You thought! Ah, stand back, or I'll blow your brains out!" he screamed, as Frank advanced towards him.

"Come, John, enough of this. I know your gun is not loaded; but I don't care for such jokes."

"Jokes!" shouted the other. "You will find out to your cost, Halstead, this is no joke. My gun is loaded! Yours is empty! Ah, you fell into my trap almost easier than I dared hope! Listen to what I have to say. You found out through your cursed inquisitiveness that I lay hid during the Indian attack, and you promised never to speak of the matter."

"And I never have. I have never spoken of it to a living soul."

"Curse you, you lie! You told Edith Challoner. You knew that she cared for me more than she did for you, and you told her I was a coward. You blackened my character in her eyes so that you might profit. Don't deny it! Has she been the same to me since that day? No. She shuns me. She looks on me with contempt. And through you—you! Ah, I will kill you for it!"

Walton's whole body trembled with fury, and his at no time handsome face was disfigured by the emotions of his evil passions.

Frank Halstead, pale but calm, stood looking him full in the face. At his feet lay his useless gun, and his arms were folded on his breast.

"I have not told Edith Challoner of your cowardice. Why she has altered to you I cannot tell, but it is not through my agency."

"Down on your knees, you cur! Do you think your lying tongue will save you now? Down on your knees, for I am going to kill you!"

"You dare not!"

"Dare not!"

Walton raised his gun, took deliberate aim, and pulled the trigger. There was a flash, a sharp report, and Frank Halstead fell on his face.

When John Walton reappeared at Fort Ephraim he was torn and draggled. On his face and hands he bore several seemingly deep gashes, from which a profusion of blood had flowed; his clothes were rent; he was hatless and covered with dust and blood mingled; altogether he was as sorry a spectacle as one would wish to meet.

As he limped painfully up to the fort a group of anxious men rushed out to meet him.

"What's the matter?" shouted Quickshot, as he caught a glimpse of the bedraggled scarecrow.

"Matter!" gasped Walton. "Indians!"

"For Heaven's sake, where's my boy—my son?" cried the elder Halstead, running forward as Walton dropped, apparently fainting, to the ground.

"Dead!" groaned Walton. "He was killed by my side. We were surrounded by Indians. We kept them at bay with our clubbed guns, and then we made a dash for liberty. Poor Frank fell, and— Ah!"

He gave a convulsive shudder, and then lay still, silent, and to all appearances lifeless.

It was an admirable piece of acting.

The men picked him up and bore him tenderly into the fort. Then the great gate was shut, and the garrison of Fort Ephraim mounted the platform, and stood, rifles in hands, awaiting the expected Indian attack.

"A few scratches, that's all," said Quickshot, who, in addition to his other accomplishments, added the science of medicine, leaning over John Walton, who lay on a truckle-bedstead in the old trapper's hut.

"I can't understand," he continued, "where all this blood came from. The scratches he's got ain't deep enough to hurt a flea."

Captain Halstead stood by the bedside with a look of awful anguish on his face.

"He has come back," he thought, gazing almost angrily at



the prostrate Walton; "but where is my boy—my Frank? Dead—dead—dead!"

He turned and staggered from the shanty, his hands clasped together, and his grey head bared to the sun.

"Look here, young man," said Quickshot. "I guess you had better get up. There's nothing the matter with you."

"But I am covered with wounds!" groaned the invalid piteously.

"Wounds! Why, your wounds aren't a bit worse than those Tim O'Grady's wife gives him with her nails when they have a bit of a tiff. Come! up with you! It strikes me I've got a worse case on my hands now in the poor old cap. Poor Frank! Poor boy! Dead! I can't believe it!"

Quickshot hurried from the room in quest of Captain Halstead.

Walton rose, seemingly painfully, from the bed and limped towards the door. As he did so a slight figure in a white dress, and with a still whiter face, stood before him.

"Where's Frank?"

"Dead, with an arrow in him. We tried to fight our way through. I escaped, but, Edith, he, poor fellow, fell."

"You escaped!" she said bitterly. "Why is it you? Oh, Frank, Frank!"

She buried her face in her hands and sobbed bitterly.

He stood before her, going from pale to red.

"Is it such a crime, then," he asked, with an attempt at bravado, "for me to live? I earned my life—I fought for it. He was unlucky; I was fortunate; that is all."

"That is all!" she echoed mockingly, lifting her face and looking him straight in the eyes. "You fought! No, not you—you ran and left him to his fate. Ah, I know you are a coward, John Walton. Where were you when the Indians attacked this camp before the fort was built? Hiding among the flour-barrels in the provision waggon, when you should have been fighting shoulder to shoulder with our brave men. Bah! You are not fit to breathe the same air with men—real men, not cowards like yourself!"

"Frank told you this lie!" he said, in a furious voice.

"It is no lie, and Frank did not tell me. I did not know that he knew of your shame. I saw you myself."

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Sleeping Water Repays His Debt!

**F**RANK HALSTEAD was not dead; the bullet which his cousin had fired at him had only grazed his temple and glanced off the bone of his skull. The force of the blow had, however, stunned him, and the bullet had inflicted a nasty flesh wound, from which the blood had poured in streams; and it was with this blood that John Walton had smeared himself before returning to Fort Ephraim.

When Frank's senses returned to him he gazed about him in astonishment. Where was he? Well he might ask the question.

He was in a circular room, small in circumference, but marvellously high. As he looked upward he saw the walls far above him, as though he lay in some gigantic chimney. He lay upon a bed of soft, dry fern, that was spread upon the floor. The only contents of the room, beside the bed, were a couple of roughly-made stools, a table equally clumsy in manufacture, and numerous strips of tassajo, or dried buffalo meat, which hung from some pegs which had been driven into the uneven, wooden wall.

He tried to rise, but he felt strangely weak and ill; his head ached, too, and throbbed painfully. He raised his hand and found a fresh surprise—his forehead was enveloped in bandages.

What did it all mean?

Then across his memory flashed the scene in the forest—the wordy war with John Walton, and the shot which his treacherous cousin had fired. But still that did not account for his present position. Where was he now? That was the question.

He raised his voice and gave a feeble shout.

A moment later there came a sound like the rustling of leaves, a gleam of sunlight fell across the room, and as he looked up he saw a form bending over him.

"Who is it?" he asked in a dazed manner; and then, a moment later, he continued: "An Indian! A woman, too! Who are you? Ah, I know who you are! You are Sleeping Water's squaw."

Then he sank back into insensibility. It was many days ere he again recovered consciousness; he was in a raging fever. Of all that passed about him he knew nothing; he did not see the faces of Sleeping Water and his squaw, as hour after hour, day after day, they watched over him and tended him and fought for him with death.

Well and nobly was Sleeping Water repaying Frank Halstead for the kindness that he had shown to the Indian. Never for an instant was Frank's bedside left unwatched.

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When Sleeping Water left it to take some well-earned rest. Anesta took his place. And so the fight for life went on.

At last, late in the afternoon in the tenth day after his first return to consciousness, Frank woke up. Before the unremitting vigils and care of the two Indians death fled, and our hero once again came back to life.

A week later he was allowed to sit up, and later still he could move about the little room with the aid of a stick and the faithful Anesta's arm. The room which had hitherto been such a source of curiosity to him, he found was nothing more nor less than the hollow interior of a huge redwood-tree, in which Sleeping Water and his squaw had taken up their abode in preference to returning to their own people. Here they had lived, ranging the woods for their food, and happy in each other's company, till one day Sleeping Water, in his search for game, had stumbled over the dead body, as he then thought, of Frank Halstead. He had carried the body to their tree-home, intending to anoint it in the Indian custom, and then to give it decent burial; but, to his and Anesta's joy, Frank had shown some sign of life, and that was how Sleeping Water's lodge came to be turned into a hospital.

It was a month to a day since John Walton had sought to murder his cousin that Frank Halstead stood with his Indian friends once more under the familiar walls of Fort Ephraim.

The wall of the fort was crowded with men, who stood upon the platform, wondering who the new-comers were. Two were Indians. But who was the third figure that was leaning on them for support? A few moments of anxious speculation passed, and then the deep voice of old Quickshot rang out:

"Frank Halstead, by all that's glorious!"

What a shout went up from those two hundred and fifty throats! It seemed as though the solid wall of the fort almost rocked. The huge gate flew up, and the settlers came pouring out with words of glad welcome to one who, it seemed, had risen from the dead.

Suddenly the clamour was stilled, and the rough men stood sympathetically on one side. Down the path thus left open came an old man. Could this be bluff, hearty Captain Halstead? The old man with the furrowed face and trembling limbs. It was indeed he.

He came tottering forward, his whole face lighted up with joy un hoped for.

"Frank! My boy, my boy!"

An instant later father and son were pressed heart to heart. And so Frank Halstead was welcomed home.

There was still another who rejoiced in Frank's return.

Edith Challoner lifted her blushing face from our hero's breast.

"Frank," she whispered, "it was always you that I cared for. I did not know it once; but when I thought I had lost you for ever, then I knew that you were the only man in the world for me."

A babel of angry voices outside Quickshot's shanty, wherein the lovers stood, aroused them from their happiness.

"Lynch him! Lynch him!" roared the crowd.

Frank went to the door and looked out. Against the wall crouched a cowering object, and around him stood a mob of angry men.

Frank's story was known throughout the fort, and his would-be murderer was about to pay the penalty of his crime.

"Stop!" cried Frank. "That man has done you no wrong; it is I whom he has sought to harm. His life should be mine. Will you give it to me?"

"Ay, ay!" cried the men.

"Then I give it to him. Go!" he said, addressing Walton.

"Go to my father. He will deal with you as he thinks fit."

And John Walton obeyed the command.

An hour later the whole of the inhabitants of Fort Ephraim turned out and stood round the great gateway. In the midst of the throng came Quickshot and Captain Halstead, and walking between them, abject and frightened, John Walton.

When they reached the gate they came to a halt.

"Go!" cried Captain Halstead. "Go, and never return again; if you do, neither my son nor I will stand between you and the death your villainy so richly merits."

And John Walton, followed by the shouts of execration of the settlers, passed out of Fort Ephraim, and shook the dust of the place off his shoes for ever.

Later on there was another leave-taking, but one of quite a different kind, at Fort Ephraim. Sleeping Water and Anesta returned to their forest home. Not all the persuasions of Frank and his father would induce them to stay, and so they departed, laden with presents which the settlers showered upon them; for they could not forget that the hero of the day owed his life to the skilful nursing of Sleeping Water, and to the tender care of his squaw.

THE END.



Our Grand New *SIDNEY DREW* Serial.

# THE UNCONQUERABLE!



**A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.**  
**By SIDNEY DREW.**

~~~~~  
**READ THIS FIRST.**

Ferrers Lord, the renowned multi-millionaire and scientist, once again has a surprise prepared for his faithful band of friends and followers! Ching-Lung (the Chinese prince), Rupert Thurston, Gan-Waga (the Esquimo), Prout, Maddock, and Barry O'Rooney—all are gathered together again, and conducted on board the latest vessel which the mighty brains of Lord and Hal Honour, his engineer, have produced. The vessel, which appears to be a peculiarly constructed submarine, bears the proud name Unconquerable. By its amazingly ingenious mechanism, it steers and controls itself perfectly, both above and below water. Then comes the crowning moment of this astonishing trial trip. "All hands on deck!" shouts the millionaire. "Hold fast!" Then came the miracle. The Unconquerable leapt clear of the water, and, spreading out four vast wings, she righted herself, and skimmed along like a gigantic flying-fish a full hundred yards above the placid sea. The trial is a wonderful success, and the Unconquerable is taken back to the cave in the rocks which serves as a hiding-place. Meanwhile, a vessel runs on Windmill Rocks, and the crew are rescued by Ferrers Lord and his men. Gan-Waga goes fishing, but, while hauling in a big fish, overbalances and falls into the sea. He comes to the surface in time to see a boat floating past, and, jumping in, is staggered to see the bound forms of Prout and Schwartz, who were supposed to be guarding the Unconquerable! They say that two masked men came into the cave, pressed revolvers to their heads, and forced them to enter a boat. A search is quickly made, and Ferrers Lord finds that his wonderful craft has disappeared. He orders the Lord of the Deep to be got ready. Gan-Waga, despite the seriousness of the occasion, prepares a practical joke on Joe.

(Now go on with the story.)

**Held up at Sea—Big Jeff Receives a Warning—A Change of Cabins—What Passed Across the Disc of the Moon.**

"Steamer ahoy! Bring to, for I want to board you!"

The astonished crew of the s.s. Karatakia were momentarily dazzled as a blinding searchlight swept the vessel. She was plodding along across the North Sea with a cargo of tramway-rails and drain-pipes. On her funnel she carried the four black crosses on a yellow band that denoted the gigantic Guthrey combination of cargo boats. She had left Hull on the flood-tide, and she was not sparing her coal.

The light went streaming upwards and died out. The order was repeated in ringing tones, each syllable as clear as the note of a silver bell.

Dan McRory, the skipper, bit his clay pipe off short, and rubbed his eyes to clear the air of luminous spots that danced before them. Dan had been three-and-thirty years at sea, but when he saw a great conical object that had come from nowhere keeping pace with them within a cable's length, the ancient mariner opened the throat of the siren in utter dismay.

"Steamer ahoy! Ahoy, Karatakia! Bring to! I want to come aboard! Stop your siren, man!"

The Yankee-Irishman, more curious than startled, passed the order to reverse the screws. In an instant all the men on deck were hanging over the rails staring at the extra-

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Next Monday's Number of The "MAGNET" will be the usual price, 1d., and will contain a Splendid, Long, Complete Story, entitled:

ordinary craft. One man alone was visible on her deck, and he carried a megaphone.

"Durn if I know who you are, and why you're stoppin' me!" bellowed Dan McRory. "I carry the Stars and Stripes. Who are you, anyway?"

"Don't worry, captain! If I waste any of your time I'll give you a tow and make it up. I fly the Union Jack. May I come aboard?"

"Gee-whiz!" thought the skipper. "If this ain't a yarn to tell when I'm in New York! It'll scare 'em mad! Whoa! You'll tow us—honest, hey?"

"If I waste more than twenty minutes of your time, I'll tow you twenty knots. Get ready! Catch! All right! We'll see to the fenders!"

There were a dozen men on the deck of the unknown vessel now. Two ropes were thrown, and the submarine and the Karatakia touched without a jar.

"You are Captain McRory!" said the stranger in the white uniform. "I am sorry to have to stop you. I want to see Geoffrey Sanday."

"I guess you can't, stranger. Big Jeff has cleared off to bed. What name shall we tell him? Admiral which, or who?"

"Tell him Ferrers Lord."

"Honest? Seems to me I've struck that name previous."

**"WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS!"** By FRANK RICHARDS.



Ferrers Lord! I can't hitch on to it, but I know it. Want Jeff—honest, sir?"

"Honest."

McRory gave the order. His eyes were on the submarine. He fancied that the stranger was there to inquire about the recent wreck.

"Gee!" he drawled. "I ain't surprised when you git talkin' big about your Navy, when you can build duckers like her and keep mum. She's a dove! She's a peach! It's the size of her knocks me sideways. Why, ours is rotten pill-boxes in comparison."

Big Jeff came swaggering up, bare-footed, and with a macintosh buttoned over his pyjamas. He saluted and coughed.

"We have nearly a quarter of an hour," said Ferrers Lord. "I shall keep my promise. You will save your coal and save time, captain, if we are late."

He beckoned to Sanday, and, without any hesitation, the big man followed him down and across the gangway. The millionaire shut the door of the conning-tower. Big Jeff folded his arms and smiled. Then he saluted again.

"What was your price, Sanday?"

"A clear 'undred thousand, sir. Your man had the same, and the other fifty thousand goes to the crew! 'Ow could I resist it? Arkland—or Blinker, as I calls him—put me up to it. I'm artful, and I was artful enough to get ten thousand down afore I'd touch it. It was robbery, but I took a sportin' chance. The chance won. As a matter of honesty, I suppose I ought to 'ave said 'No,' and warned you. It was four pound fifteen a week and a share of the profits, that never came off, against a fortune. So I just combed the bottom out of the old boat, and Arkland did the rest."

"And when do you get the rest of the money, Sanday?" asked the millionaire coolly.

"Why, sir, it comes when the boat is delivered, or Arkland proves he's done it in—destroyed it, that is. I'm safe for fifty thousand dollars, and I can't shift till the Board of Trade inquiry is over. It was more the piracy dodge than the money that appealed to me. We've taken your boat, sir, and we did it finely. Ten thousand pounds is just ten thousand. I'm not a man to speak of past things, sir, but I stood by you one night in Suez fifteen years ago."

Ferrers Lord glanced at the chronometer.

"That is true," he answered; "and it was a tight corner. You did well not to recognise me at our early interview. It was your own fault that I did not stand by you. You are a rogue, Sanday, and you know it. You fought well that night for a mere stranger, and I may pay you yet for having helped to rob me of my vessel. Time is growing short. You are certainly not a liar, and I know you are not a coward. You want your money, and I want my boat. This man Arkland—will he keep his contract with Guthrey, or is he playing a more profitable game?"

The big man laughed noiselessly, but so deeply, that his bulky body quivered from forehead to toe.

"I'm trusting him!" he chuckled. "He can't get the money from dear Paul, if I don't. I only want mine from Paul. Sure as sin is sin on land and sea, he'll do Paul Guthrey. Paul will brass up to us both. Then I'm satisfied. But Guthrey 'll never see your boat, sir. Not he! Arkland's got more dodges in his 'ead than a canary has got feathers. He'll sell that boat to Germany or Russia. That's the one thing that makes me feel a bit ashamed of my part in it, sir; but I'm Lincolnshire born, and a contract's a contract. I want my money for a start, to be paid for what I've done. All these years I've punted a Yankee boat about, but, once I'm paid, I don't like the idea of Guthrey, Germany, or Russia 'aving your machine. I'll do anythink I can to get it back, sir."

"You're a born rogue, Sanday," said Ferrers Lord. "Rogue or otherwise, I cannot help admiring your pluck and impudence. You have made a bold bid for fortune. Well, I do not want to rob you of your chance. My quarrel is not with you. Had your honesty been equal to your courage, you would have had me for a true friend. You have your ten thousand pounds, and you may obtain the rest. Be careful. You need say no more. It is useless to tell me that Paul Guthrey, in your estimation, is mad. I said you may get your money. You will get it. Be careful. If it comes easily, it goes lightly. Our time is up. Be careful, I repeat, for your hundred thousand pounds may lurn not only your fingers, but your heart."

Big Jeff laughed, but as the millionaire's steel-grey eyes flashed up at him, the laugh was suddenly checked.

"But he is mad just to keep you from winnin' a silly flyin'-machine prize, sir," he said huskily. "If it 'ad been a foreign thing, sir, you might 'ave—"

"That is enough. You are a Britisher, and I like the flag you sail under, for it is the flag of our cousins and our brothers. What you have helped to steal from me is

not a toy. Out of my sight! There is barely a minute to spare. And muzzle your tongue, Captain Sanday. Cast off!"

"Cast off!" bellowed Ben Maddock.

The instant the gangway had been crossed by Jeff Sanday, it was cut adrift. It thumped against the Karatakia's plates in the seething swirl. Men and submarine had vanished, leaving their hawsers behind. Captain McRory gazed at the bubbles, and felt that he was not born yet. Tom Prout wore a smile at last. He grasped the wheel with his brawny left hand, and saluted with the other as Ferrers Lord traced out the course. Prout's face was wreathed in smiles. Down went a lever, and the submarine raced ahead. It was life, not ghostly automatons.

"By honey," he murmured joyously as he felt the drag of the wheel, "this 'ere is joy! Go hon, my beauty! I'm looking arter you, so get along, my honey!"

The only person who refused absolutely and finally to be troubled by troubles and worried by worries was Gan-Waga. When people are very desperate or very happy they have a catch phrase which states that they do not mind if it snows. In his most dreary moments Gan would have cheered aloud to see it snow. He would have danced with joy to see the Thames frozen down to the very mud and Nelson's monument converted into an icicle. He loved to sit and slumber on the frosty ammonia-pipes in the cold-room of the submarine, but Herr Schwartz, who knew that Gan-Waga took away more than the cold fresh air when he got inside, kept a tight hold on the keys.

"Chingy," lisped Gan.

"My dearest child," said Ching-Lung, "what can I do for you? Do for once chase yourself away and amuse yourself."

Hal Honour was pulling steadily at his pipe. His face never betrayed him, but Ching-Lung and Thurston both looked anxious and gloomy.

"Yo' a nastifuls tempers brutefuls," retorted the Eskimo, "and I nots loves yo' no morer. I puts de fishes in yo' bedses nows."

"I don't mind; I'm going to sleep here," said Ching-Lung. "Don't worry me, Wagtail. Put 'em in the swimming-bath."

"But I goings to sleeps in deres, you silliness. Nots wantses dems deres, and dey do no butterfuls good in ole Joe's beds, Chingy."

"Are they in Joe's bed?"

"Alls de times, Chingy. Where else I put dems?" said Gan gravely. "De wurstests is ole Joe—he not like fishes, de silliness."

Even Hal Honour laughed.

"Well, then, what's the trouble?" said Ching-Lung. "Pollack aren't worth eating at any time, and I should be a bit hungry before I started on congers. Trust Joe to put them away for you. I'd sooner eat them than sleep in the same bed with them all the year round. Keep away from Joe and close to me. He's one of the best tempered in the world, but, like the worm, he may do a twist. It's really a shame to upset poor Joe."

"Ho, yaus. I never tink of dats, Chingy," gurgled the Eskimo. "Dats remembers me, Chingy. I putses dem in ole Barry's bed nows, Chingy."

"Marvellous," said Ching-Lung. "He can take the fish out, but it'll puzzle him to take out the damp and smell. Gan is a thoughtful creature. Wonder if it's possible to get Joe really wild. He's got the temper of a saint, good luck to him. I haven't got the heart to try to-night. The chief doesn't seem to care a rap, but that's his way. The quieter he is the more serious he is. That's where the trouble comes in."

"And you?"

Hal Honour pointed his pipe at Ching-Lung. The prince screwed up his face.

"And me—or is it I? It doesn't matter about the grammar, Hal. I ought to be at home. The more I'm in trouble, the more I laugh now and then. Yes, I ought to be at home. There's more trouble brewing at Kwai-hal. And I'm going there, for I ought to be there. Oh, how I wish I were Rupert, or like you! Take my advice, and never be born a prince. It's a silly way to be born; all work and little play, and plenty of bombs and daggers to keep you wakeful."

"Poor old Ching!" said Rupert Thurston. "You're terribly overworked. If this hadn't happened we might all have gone with you. It's not that I'm in love with the place. I—hang the light! It blinks like an electric tram bumping over the points."

"Apologies," said Hal Honour, rising.

Thurston called to him not to go, but the burly engineer only smiled, and went away to find out what was wrong with the current.

(Continued on page iii of cover.)



## THE UNCONQUERABLE!

(Continued from page 48.)

"We're rising," said Rupert Thurston, after a pause. "What's the weather? Has Prout ticked it off yet?"

"Clear moon with ring; calm; slight northerly breeze," answered Ching-Lung, glancing at the indicator. "Temperature forty-one, barometer twenty-nine odd. What's that? No ma—no, no—oh, no matches? I'll take old Tommy up a box. Tommy will swear that the spelling was the fault of the indicator. He spells it 'mutches.' I used to put it down to a bad pen at school when I couldn't spell. We're down again, Ru. What's this duck-pond game about? Come and see."

Although Gan-Waga was the utter limit when matters went averse, Joe the carpenter could sit unruffled and placid when other men raved and tore their hair. In an emergency Joe was the best in the world. There was no emergency, so Joe repaired to his cabin with a half-smoked cigar in his mouth. He undressed, turned out the light, turned down the bedclothes, and sprang into bed.

Joe only said one wrong word, but he got out of bed quickly. He switched on the light. It was not a desirable bed to sleep in. Gan-Waga had been too generous; on second thoughts he had decided not to take all the fish away from Joe, but to divide them equally between the carpenter and Barry O'Rooney. Joe had done the pollacks and congers no good in that brief time, for he had rather flattened them. He held his nose. Suddenly a smile of delight illumined his classic features. He was in the wrong cabin, in the wrong pyjamas. Hanging on the wall was one of those little clocks in a green marble case that never came from any place but dear old Connemara, and over the pocket of his pyjama-jacket was embroidered a shamrock. Joe shed those pyjamas promptly, scrambled into his shirt and trousers, picked up his other belongings, and went elsewhere. But before going he folded up the pyjamas nicely, and made the bed look a dream of joy for a tired Irishman.

"Got it at last," grinned Joe. "Ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, that Eskimo! Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'd give a fiver to hear old Barry's remarks."

He was still laughing when the vessel began to ascend. This time he did not turn the light out, for it went out of its own accord. Joe stretched out his legs luxuriously, and then uttered a yell as his naked feet encountered something sickening, clammy, and cold.

"Look, Ching! Look, Rupert!" cried Ferrers Lord. "The Unconquerable."

The moon was dropping down into the misty sea. A dark shape crossed her pale disc and vanished, and Ferrers Lord took the wheel.

### Will-o'-the-Wisp—Compliments in the Conning-Tower.

"What was her course?"

No one could answer Thurston's question, for the glimpse of the aero-submarine had been of too brief duration. They had seen, but had they been seen by, the thieves? If they had, Arkland would be on his guard. Ferrers Lord bit his lip. He was in a dilemma.

"It is rather like hunting for a very small needle in a very large load of hay," he said, after a moment's silence.

"Quite so, old chap," agreed Ching-Lung; "but in whatever game you play, you must always make allowances for luck. We've seen her, and that's something. She's somewhere within the radius of a six-mile half-circle, ourselves being the centre, if a half-circle can have a centre. But where are they taking her? Was she heading for Russia? With a few like her, it would be odds on Russia if she had another go at the Japs."

"By honey, she'd eat them, without salt or Worcester sauce to help 'em down!" remarked Prout.

Luck! The Unconquerable was a will-o'-the-wisp, mistress of sea and sky and the gloomy recesses of the watery underworld. No man born had hunted so elusive a quarry. She left no trail while she chose to make her course under the sea. She was invulnerable when she chose to soar into the air. But why was she so near, after her long start? Here was a riddle—a question they were all asking themselves.

"A breakdown," said the engineer, suggesting an answer to the puzzle.

"It is very probable, Hal. A thief's first instinct is to get away as far as he can from his pursuers. She has power enough to run for six or seven days, to carry her a good many thousand miles. Arkland may not thoroughly understand her yet. Steady! We are going too fast."

The Lord of the Deep slowed to a standstill, and rested on the sand. The steel shutters of the saloon rolled back,

and through the glass, toughened and hardened into adamant strength, Ching-Lung and Thurston watched the grotesque forms of the divers. They were tapping the submarine cable.

"Send these off, Ching, if you please!" said Ferrers Lord. "The first one will clear the wire for us."

Ching-Lung was an expert telegraphist. It was a formidable heap, but he checked off the cipher messages in fairly quick time.

"Well, if the Unconquerable happens to bob up in any part of the civilised globe, and we don't hear about it after that lot, I shall be more than slightly surprised," he said. "I've slung in cables to half the places on the map, and glutted the wire for thirty good hours to come. They'll rush them along as fast as they can go. Everybody has to wait for the chief, Rupert, except Mr. Arkland."

Ferrers Lord had his agents everywhere. The shutters closed, the water was pumped from the tanks, and the Lord of the Deep rose to within three fathoms of the surface. Above the water appeared a square object, painted a dull grey. It was the eye of the submarine, and Benjamin Maddock was told off to watch the screen on which the picture of sea and sky was brilliantly reflected by the lenses above.

"I looks at it like this," remarked Prout. "If Arkland plays the goat, and lets the thing steer herself and run herself, like she did, we'll nobble her, sure as tintacks ain't treacle-tarts! If, on the contrariwise, by honey, he acts like a sensible man, and sticks to the wheel and gets his engines attended to, it's a certain case of good-bye, Dolly Grey, and we won't go 'ome till mornin', and more so!"

"Oh, go and eat eoke and clinkers!" growled Maddock politely. "If you was at her 'elm, you'd bust her, and we'd bag her in forty winks of a fly's eye! It's you and your snorin', lazy ways that lost her, and caused all the trouble. It makes me cry to think of it. Oh, if I'd only been there, souse me!"

Prout felt a strong inclination to introduce his knuckles to the bo'sun's features. Maddock ordered him to put his helm down as the reflection of a steamer crept over the disc. They passed within eighty yards of her. Then the head and shoulders of Barry O'Rooney hove in sight.

"Ye haven't seen a two-legged menagerie about wid a face loike a tallow-factory struck by loightning, have ye?" inquired the Irishman.

"No, not lately," replied Maddock. "What's the Eskimo been doin' now?"

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand new serial next Monday.)



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# My Readers' Page

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 is always  
 pleased to  
 hear from  
 his Chums,  
 at home or  
 abroad.

**FOR NEXT MONDAY:**

## "WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS."

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

Our next long, complete, school story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars is full of fun and wild frolic from beginning to end. The Suffragettes turn their attention to Greyfriars, and great is the disturbance caused by the determined ladies. It is only natural that the juniors wish to get their own back, and then the fun becomes more lively than ever!

The "invasion" of the school leads to the most unprecedented and side-splitting incidents; and, altogether, the most riotous merriment is caused by the appearance of the

## "WILD WOMEN AT GREYFRIARS."

### A PERSONAL NOTE TO ALL MY FRIENDS.

I have timed this, our Special Summer Number, to appear at the very climax of the holiday season, when very many of my thousands of readers will be at the seaside or in the country on pleasure bent. To all those fortunate ones this Special Number of their favourite paper will come as an extra treat, which will add zest to the enjoyment of even the pleasantest holiday. But what of those to whom the opportunity or means of taking a happy and health-giving holiday are denied? And quite a numerous band they are, I am afraid! It is to these less fortunate comrades that this great issue is more specially dedicated. It is my hope that the brightness and interest of the specially-written stories, and especially the light-hearted holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., will help to keep my stay-at-home chums in that bright and cheerful frame of mind which is worth more than any holiday. In a word, therefore, I shall expect every one of my "Magnetite" chums, whether holiday-making or not, to give himself up entirely to the pleasures of "a real good read" as long as this Special Summer Number of "The Magnet" Library is in his hands. I have spent long hours of work and thought in preparing this issue, but I feel they are as nothing compared with the hours of enjoyment which my great company of readers will reap from the fruits of my labour. In this hope I am repaid a thousandfold.

### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Two School Girls."—Thank you for your letter. It is generally presumed that Cousin Ethel prefers Figgins even to Tom Merry. I will most certainly consider your suggestion.

"Anxious."—A splendid idea. I wish you all success.

"Australian."—Thank you for your letter, and also for endeavouring to secure new readers.

### EXPRESS TRAINS AT TOILET.

By the courtesy of the Great Western Railway the writer was permitted to see how the great express trains are prepared for the road, and to witness the extremely elaborate toilet which they go through ere they are despatched to the departure platform at Paddington.

#### Their Daily Bath.

It may perhaps be mentioned that, though every railway has its own particular rules and regulations regarding the preparation of express trains for the road, the system here

described is practically the same as is adopted by all railway companies. When an express train arrives at Paddington on the completion of its journey an inspection is at once made of the wheels, brakes, and running gear of each carriage. The interiors of the carriages are also inspected. If any repair is required to be done to a carriage either in connection with the running gear or the interior a green ticket is fastened to it. If the repair is of an especially important character a red ticket, in addition to the green, is also fastened to the carriage. All the carriages are then taken by a shunting engine to the West London depot, whilst the engine belonging to the train is sent to Westbourne Park to be overhauled.

On arriving at the West London depot the carriages are given their daily bath. This is done by passing the train through what is known as the washer. This machine consists of four solid iron poles somewhat higher than an ordinary railway carriage, two poles about six feet apart being fixed in the ground at each side of the railway track. Between the two iron poles at each side are four revolving brushes, in appearance very like an ordinary hairdresser's brush, but longer, which revolve at immense speed. Two of the brushes reach from the bottom of the window to the step-board, whilst the other two fit the length of the windows, which, of course, are closed throughout the length of the train. The brushes revolve in steel pipes, from which water is poured on the carriages so that the train emerges from the "washer" completely brushed down and thoroughly cleaned. Then an inspector appears on the scene and duly notes the coaches to which green or red tickets are attached. These carriages are then detached from the train and sent to the "shops" at the depot to be put in order.

#### At the Depot.

At this point of the train's toilet the real significance of the green and red tickets becomes revealed. There are certain injuries which a coach may sustain that may take two or three days to repair, but the injuries may not be of such a character as to interfere with its running, and it is not therefore put out of traffic, but is sent out with the other coaches with the repairs perhaps only partially finished, to be completed when the coach arrives again at the depot. A green ticket indicates that the injury to the coach may be repaired in this manner. When, however, a red ticket is also attached to the coach it means that it must on no account be sent out of the depot until the required repair is completed. Injuries to any part of the running gear or brake are indicated by red tickets. Sometimes such an injury can be repaired in an hour or so, but if it should happen that it cannot be repaired in time for the coach to go out with the rest of the train a red ticketed coach is always put out of traffic.

It may here be explained that all trains on main line systems are kept as far as possible in the same "make-up"—that is of identically the same coaches—for six months at a time. When a coach goes out of traffic its place in the train from which it has been taken is not supplemented by another unless there is special need to do so. But whilst a coach is out of traffic it is a dead loss on the company's hands, and therefore so far as is entirely consistent with public safety everything is done to avoid putting a coach out of traffic.

On an average over five hundred passenger coaches are passed through the West London depot every day. There are twenty-one sets of rails, over which long strings of coaches are constantly being shunted; and to the novice the men walking about that iron network seem to be courting certain death. As a matter of fact an accident is of very rare occurrence; every man working at the depot knows the rules and regulations laid down for his safety, and it is only when he neglects to observe them that an accident occurs.

(Another Grand  
 Article  
 next week.)

*The Editor*