

READ "THE WAR ILLUSTRATED." 2^D. WEEKLY.

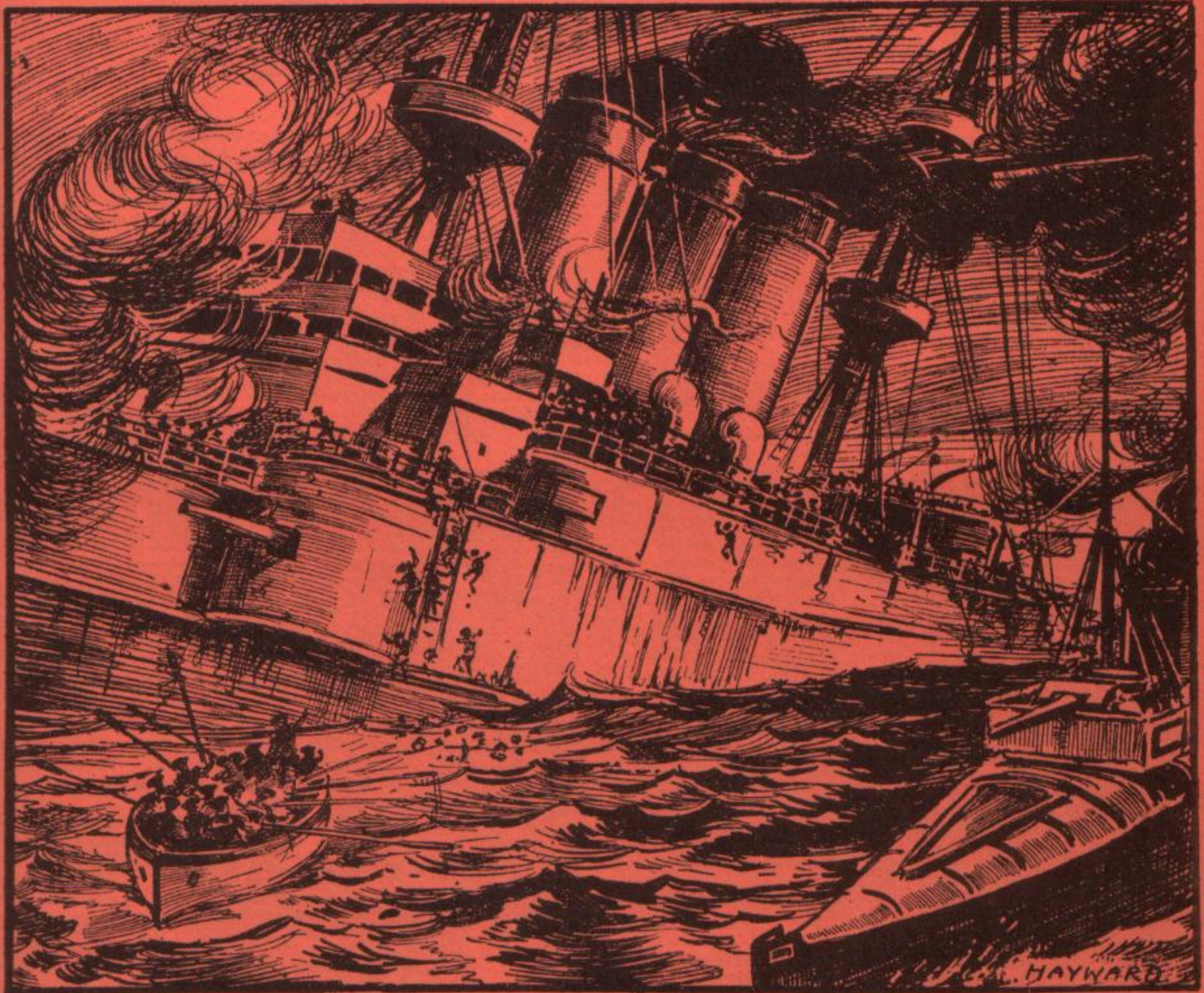


The Magnet Library

A GRAND COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY IN THIS ISSUE.

No. 343.

September 5th, 1914.



**THE SINKING OF THE FIRST
GERMAN DREADNOUGHT!**

FREE PLATE ^{OF} OUR NOBLE KING!

**The EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT
WITH HIS READERS.**

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In this magnificent, long, complete tale of the chums at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton & Co. have a visit from Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and, as usual, a great deal of unpleasantness results. The chums of the Remove decide that Ponsonby & Co. must be taught a sharp lesson; and Squiff, as the new junior at Greyfriars is called, claims the right to administer the required lesson.

This he does in his characteristically vigorous fashion, which is entirely effective. Ponsonby & Co., the "smart set" at Highcliffe, are treated to a "high old time," and Mr. Mobbs, the snobbish Highcliffe master, comes in for his share of trouble. Altogether, the enterprising Squiff is entirely successful in his daring scheme to create

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

C. M. S. (Birchington).—Many thanks for letter. Will do my best.

Isaac Dunne (Eccles).—Sorry, but I am afraid I cannot do as you suggest.

"Cornstalk" (Banbury).—Harry Wharton has no parents.

Miss Marie Wilcock (Yorks); David L. Carver (Australia); and "A Constant Reader" (Bristol).—Many thanks for your letters.

R. B. (Dublin).—Carry with you in your pocket a packet of acid-drops, and when you feel a desire to smoke put one of the tablets in your mouth. This has been found very satisfactory.

Fred Scarisbrick.—Billy Bunter is known to be the biggest funk at Greyfriars.

J. Rowland Nelson (Yorks).—The story "Self-Condemned" has a lot to do with Highcliffe, as also does the grand Double Number, which you have no doubt seen by this time.

AN APPEAL TO ALL MY LOYAL READERS.

By the time these words appear in print, it is all too probable that a crisis will have arrived in the affairs of our beloved country, which is engaged upon a terrible struggle in a just cause. In any case, the situation will be one in which it is necessary for every citizen to keep his head, and do all in his power to help the Government of the country. We cannot, of course, all of us go on active service; those who are able will already be serving the Colours. But one thing we can all do to help—we can take the advice which has been impressed upon us again and again—namely, to *alter our habits as little as possible*. This, I think, is the best possible advice to follow. In time of war we are all dependent upon one another; the sudden alteration of the habits of any section of the public is bound to upset business, to cause loss of employment and widespread distress. In this time of stress I have no hesitation in calling upon all patriotic readers, as fellow-Britons loyal to their country and loyal to the paper which has so long enjoyed their patronage, to rally round the good old "Magnet Library" now as they have always done in the past. I am bold enough to say that it is my chums' actual duty not to give up reading "The Magnet Library," but to order it as usual every week. This is the only way to enable our splendid little journal to weather the storm, and I am confident that my chums will stand by me and by their favourite paper.

The Editorial, Commercial, and Printing Works staffs of "The Magnet Library" have already contributed their full quota of citizen soldiers to serve under the Flag, and I am holding myself ready to respond to the call of duty at a moment's notice. When these words are read, in fact, I shall be with the Colours. Needless to say, however, I have made every arrangement beforehand for a special programme to be carried out in "The Magnet Library," which will be left in thoroughly capable and efficient hands. The paper will be conducted, as before, upon lines which will ensure the best school tales, the best war stories and pictures, and the best serials being presented to my readers.

On patriotic and personal grounds, then, I appeal to all my chums to give me their loyal and steady support through thick and thin, so that when the storm is past, and times are happily calm again, the good old "Magnet Library" will emerge stronger, brighter, and better than ever.

Yours, in true comradeship,

THE EDITOR.

DAISY RIFLE BOYS.



Every boy (and every boy's father) should send a postcard to us for a

Free Copy of "The Diary of a Daisy Boy,"

Written by a man who knows boy nature thoroughly. Sixteen pages of wholesome humour, happily illustrated, and in addition a "Manual of Arms," "A Few Hints on Shooting," and "The Target and How to Score." Of course it tells about the Daisy Air Rifle, a "real" gun for boys, that furnishes endless amusement and at the same time gives that true training and development of hand, nerve and eye that makes for healthy, successful manhood. The "Daisy" is modelled after the latest hammerless rifle and shoots accurately, using compressed air instead of powder. No smoke, no noise, and perfectly safe in the hands of any boy.

"1,000 SHOT DAISY," an Automatic Magazine Rifle • 10/6
 "500 SHOT DAISY," Do. Do. 7/6
 "20th CENTURY DAISY," Single Shot - - - 3/6

Sold by Hardware and Sporting Goods Dealers everywhere, or delivered free anywhere in Great Britain and Ireland on receipt of price by

WM. E. PECK & CO. (Department 8)
 31, Bartholomew Close, LONDON, E.C.

WORTH POUNDS. Valuable Book containing 128 Profitable Spare-time Employments, 41 Money-making Schemes, 226 Priceless Trade Secrets (which have and can make fortunes), 147 Patent Medicine Formulas, Hundreds Testimonials. Only 1/2 post paid.—Wilkes, Publishers, Stockton, Rugby, Eng.



ACCORDIONS

These beautifully finished organ-toned instruments, made of the finest selected materials, are unsurpassed for power and richness of tone, for which these instruments are famous. All the latest improvements. Exceptionally low prices.

Sent on Approval. Easy Instalments. Catalogue Free.

Douglas, 88, King's Chambers, South St., London, E.C.



VENTRILOQUIST'S Double Throat; fits roof of mouth; astonishes and mystifies; sing like a canary, whine like a puppy, and imitate birds and beasts. Ventriloquism Treatise free. Sixpence each, four for 1s.—**BENSON (Dept. 6)**, 239, Pentonville Road, London, N.

6/6 each



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Trains the eye and cultivates the judgment. Range 100 yards. Targets 9d. per 100. Noiseless Ball Cartridges, 9d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. Send for list. **CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, Whittall Street, BIRMINGHAM.**

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Cameras, send postcard for Samples and Catalogue **FREE**.—Works: **JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

NO STAMP COLLECTOR SHOULD MISS THIS OFFER.

To circulate Lists and Sheets we present free 1,000 best Mounts and a Perforation Gauge to every purchaser of our Royal Packet, which contains scarce Natal Queen Victoria, Ceylon K.G., Cuba unused, Malay, Australia, Victoria, Japan, Chile, Great Britain I.R. Off., Mauritius, Ivory Coast 1913, Argentine, scarce Zanzibar, &c. Post free 3d. (abroad 5d).—**HORACE MILLER & Co., Whitstable.**

89 CONJURING TRICKS. 57 Joke Tricks, 60 Puzzles, 60 Games, 12 Love-Letters, 420 Jokes, 15 Showgraphs, 62 Money-making Secrets (worth £20) and 1,000 more stupendous attractions, 7d. P.O. lot.—**HUGHES, PUBLISHER, Harborne, BIRMINGHAM.** 25 Screaming Comic Readings, 7d.

Applications with regard to Advertisement Space in this paper should be addressed: Advertisement Manager, **PLUCK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.**

GOD SAVE THE KING!



C.H.13.

HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.

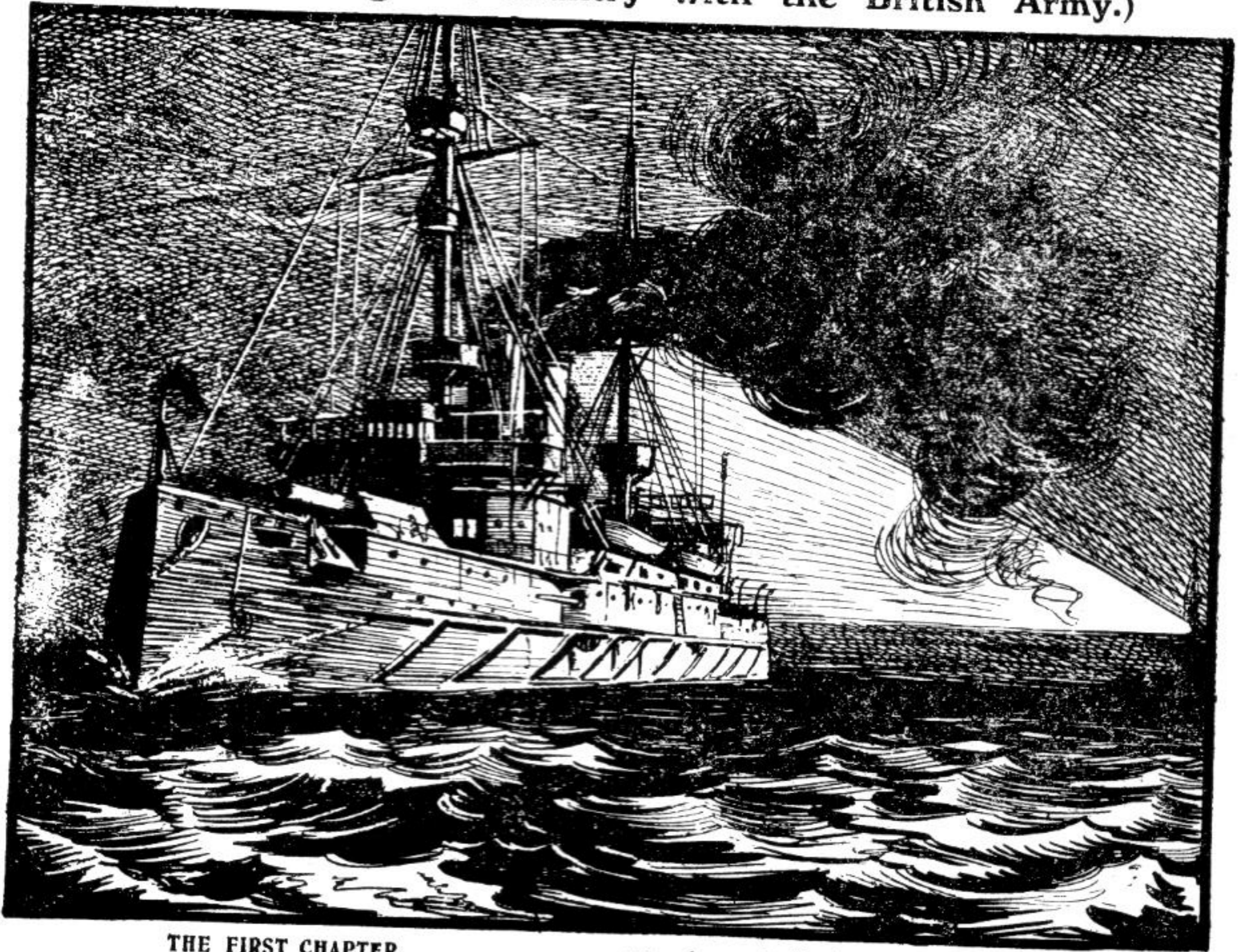
A SPECIAL WAR SERIAL!**THE FIRST INSTALMENT!**

A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle between the
British Empire and its Hated Foe.

By W. B. HOME-GALL.

(Now Serving His Country with the British Army.)



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bombardment from the Clouds.

Boom, boom, boom!

Loud, sullen, and defiant, the roar of the artillery rang out over Salisbury Plain, where two British Army Corps were engaging in a sham-fight on a large scale.

From the ear of the captive balloon, Captain Charles Horsham, balloon section, Royal Engineers, surveyed the stirring scene.

To right and left stretched the long, jagged line of the advancing invaders. Massed in a valley on the left rear was their cavalry. They had formed a curtain for the advance of the infantry earlier in the day; and now, unless the defenders should make a mistake, and give them an unexpected opening, their work for the day was over.

From a small hill in the centre of the attack a small, wiry figure, surrounded by a brilliant staff, was witnessing the fight.

It was Field-Marshal Lord Roberts. By his side rode the military attaches of all the great Powers.

So far, the day had been a marked success, and the foreign representatives unanimous in praise of the way the troops had been handled.

Nothing could have excelled the dispositions of both

No. 343.

generals; and, if the defenders had been compelled to retreat, it was only because they were numerically inferior.

But now, just as the day would have ended without a mistake having been made on either side, there came a hitch in the proceedings which spoilt everything.

Overpowered by the massed guns of the invaders, all the defenders' artillery within sight had been forced to limber up and retreat; and yet, to Captain Horsham's annoyance, there were at least two guns which continued firing upon the advancing army, and the umpire had halted the invaders until the mysterious guns were silenced or captured.

Presently a "galloper" dashed up from the general's staff.

"Can't you locate those guns, Horsham? In five minutes the umpire will put our whole artillery out of action!" he cried angrily, as the orderly in the balloon-waggon handed him the telephone-receiver.

"I can't make it out. The defenders' remaining batteries are on their left flank, three miles away. It must be— Good heavens, Vere, look to the north-east! That is where those guns are firing from!" he added.

For, turning to speak to the aide-de-camp, a flash in mid-air had attracted his attention; and, to his amazement, he saw, some two thousand feet above the earth, what looked

like an enormous bird poised midway between the contending armies.

From a platform immediately beneath this strange aerial apparition came flashes of almost invisible flame, at regular intervals, so slight that Horsham, intent upon searching the ground for the foe, had not noticed them before.

At that moment the airship—for such it undoubtedly was—ceased firing, and flew swiftly towards the right flank of the invading army.

"Good heavens, Vere, if that aerostat is in the hands of our foes!" cried Horsham, in agitated tones. "It is, too! See, she is firing on our men!" he added, horror-stricken, as the airship, having reached the furthest end of the long, straggling line, commenced spitting fire upon the devoted regiments, hurling into their ranks shell after shell.

But, as the airship drew nearer, firing as she flew, Horsham breathed again; for, instead of heaps of dead and dying marking the track of this new instrument of warfare, it left nothing more terrible behind it than section after section of astounded soldiers.

It spoke volumes for the discipline and courage of the troops that, all unprepared though they were, helpless though they must have felt themselves in the presence of the flying-machine, which held their lives at its mercy, not a man broke ranks or wavered as it passed over the army, dropping dummy shells loaded with a small detonating charge in front, behind, and around them.

His field-glasses glued to his eyes, Captain Horsham watched the weird machine approach.

It was evidently a flying-machine worked by human agency, for he could distinguish at least two people moving about on its deck. But it was entirely different from any other airship he had ever seen.

There was no balloon or gasbag attached to it, as far as he could see. A large screw propeller, revolving at an immense speed, drew the huge, cigar-shaped bulk, which gleamed with the white sheen of aluminium, through the air at a great speed. Over the stern was a large, fin-shaped rudder, which twisted to all angles as the man at the steering-wheel wished to ascend or descend, to turn to the right or to the left.

The platform held a small deckhouse, and four guns of a peculiar shape, from two of which, pointed downwards over the side, came the dummy shells which had so alarmed the Engineer officer.

Beneath this platform hung four coils of twisted wire, each about twenty feet long, and at their extremities a pair of bright steel clutches.

Trembling with excitement, Captain Horsham watched the airship, until at last it came to a halt within twenty yards of his balloon.

"Hallo, Captain Horsham!" cried a shrill, treble voice from the platform of the aerostat. "Race you to the North Pole and back for a tanner!"

Horsham started, and glanced searchingly at the curly-headed boy leaning over the rail which surrounded the platform of the airship, but failed to recognise him, for he wore a complete motoring outfit, including mask and goggles, as did a tall, well-built young fellow steering the ship from a conning-tower just abaft the deckhouse.

"No, thanks; unless you care to give me a tow!" laughed Horsham, declining this sporting offer.

At this moment an aide-de-camp from the Commander-in-Chief's staff galloped towards them.

"Lord Roberts sends his compliments to the director of this airship, and he would like to examine the invention closer."

"It is for that very reason I am here," replied the steersman. "But I have not yet exhibited all the Falcon's perfections."

Without waiting for the aide-de-camp to reply, he pressed a button, and three loud, shrill whistles issued from the body of the vessel.

The next minute a large motor-car dashed across the plain, until it was some five hundred yards from the road, and the same distance from the nearest soldier, when the driver and another man alighted, and drew from the body of the vehicle six life-sized wooden figures, which they speedily grouped round a dummy cannon they had brought with them; then they re-entered the car and drove off.

Majestically the airship rose in the air, until it was a mere speck in the cloudless sky; then like a hawk swooping on its prey, it dropped to within a thousand yards of the dummies, and an almost invisible spear of flame leapt towards the target.

There was a blinding flash of light, a loud detonation, and, to the astonishment of the onlookers, they saw the figures and the dummy cannon shattered into a hundred pieces.

"Blue lightning!" ejaculated Colonel Giraud, a dapper little attaché in the uniform of the French artillery. "It is wonderful—it is magnificent; but it will spoil the war!"

"Bah! You forget, colonel, that these are peace manoeuvres. In war, that flying-machine would be blown

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

to pieces ere it could fire a shot!" retorted Major Karl Seigner, of the German Army.

"Non, non, non! It ees not zo! The nation that owns that ship of the air will rule the world!" insisted Colonel Giraud emphatically.

"And that nation will be Germany!" muttered Major Seigner between his clenched teeth.

But he deigned no audible answer, and contented himself with a contemptuous shrug.

The airship, after demolishing the dummies, was approaching the field-marshal in a series of graceful swoops, its glittering sides shining like silver in the afternoon sun.

Suddenly a cry of astonishment burst from every lip.

The airship had vanished!

A minute later, however, it was seen that no miracle had taken place, but that in some way, known only to its inventor, the airship had assimilated itself so nearly to the colours of sky and clouds as to be practically invisible at a distance. Presently its long tentacles touched the earth, and, digging themselves into the soil, held the airship fast.

"I must congratulate you, young gentleman, on having produced the first heavy airship that can really fly. However, I must say that you have taken great liberties with his Majesty's force!" said Lord Roberts as the young inventor came to the side of the platform and removed his goggles, revealing a strong, handsome face, and a pair of dark brown eyes, so clear and piercing that they seemed to read the innermost thoughts of those upon whom they alighted.

"I am sorry, my lord, but the War Office neglect drove me to this course. Letter after letter describing my ship, the Falcon, and her capabilities have remained unanswered," was the reply, in firm, even, courteous tones.

"It was doubtless the description of your vessel's powers that induced the authorities to shelve your letters. You can have no idea how many impossible inventions and schemes are offered to us every day, Mr.—"

"Thorpe Thornhill," replied the inventor, as Lord Roberts stopped and looked inquiringly at him.

"Mr. Thornhill," continued the field-marshal, "I must frankly own that, had I been told it possible for any flying-machine to do what your ship has done this afternoon, I would not have credited it. You will, of course, offer your invention to his Majesty's Government?"

"That is my intention, sir. My experiments, and the construction of this ship, have swallowed up every penny I possess. I should be glad if you could complete the bargain at once!" returned Thornhill impetuously.

"I am afraid I have no power to do that without consulting my colleagues," replied Lord Roberts, with a smile.

"But I must have money, and at once!" insisted the inventor. "I owe for aluminium and chemicals, and I have not paid my workmen for a month."

"I will see the Secretary of State for War. Perhaps in a week—" began Lord Roberts, when Thornhill interrupted him wildly.

"A week? I tell you I must have money at once. I will be at the Hotel Balfour to-morrow morning at eleven, when I will expect to receive a definite offer from the War Office. Good-afternoon, my lord!"

Taking off his cap, Thornhill returned to the steering-wheel; a not unpleasant humming noise was heard, as though the air was filled with countless insects, and the airship rose from the ground.

"Remember! Eleven to-morrow morning at the Hotel Balfour!" cried Thornhill, as the Falcon bore him swiftly heavenwards.

Many eager eyes sought to follow the flight of the airship; but, flapping its huge wings, the Falcon arose in constantly increasing circles, until presently it darted off in an easterly direction, and was lost to view.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Traitors in Our Midst!

The manoeuvres over, Lord Roberts and his staff turned their horses' heads towards Salisbury.

"Are we not close to Amesbury?" asked Karl Seigner of an English officer.

"About three miles in that direction," returned the officer, pointing with his riding-whip over the rolling plain.

"Goot! Then I will look up an old friend who lives near the town and perhaps stop the night with him. Good-evening, gentlemen!"

And, without a word of apology to Lord Roberts, he wheeled round his horse and galloped off.

The other attaches exchanged meaning glances as they noted the German's breach of etiquette, for they were the

NEXT
MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

field-marshal's guests during the manœuvres; but Lord Roberts himself took no notice of the incident, save for a grim smile which hovered for a moment over his lips.

He knew well enough that despite his assertion, Major Seigner would not sleep in Amesbury that night.

Neither was his lordship very much surprised when, shortly after his arrival in Salisbury, Colonel Giraud's orderly arrived with a politely worded note of apology from the French attache, excusing his absence from dinner that night on the plea of important business which compelled him to go to London without delay.

Lord Roberts was closeted with Captain Horsham when the note reached him.

"Germany has got the start, but France is not far behind," he said, with a smile, as he handed the note to Horsham. "You say you know Thorpe Thornhill. Is he staunch?"

"Staunch and true to the core. Unless he is greatly altered since we were at college together, he would rather blow his flying-machine to pieces than sell it to a foreign Power," returned Horsham confidently.

"I hope so; but you must not forget he is smarting under official neglect," returned Roberts thoughtfully. "However, we must chance all that. You had better go to town and see the Secretary of State for War to-night, if possible. We must buy the Falcon at any cost, if only to keep it from other hands. Whilst you are getting ready I will write a letter for you to deliver to him. By the by, who is this Thornhill?"

"His father was in the Service, I believe, and died when Thorpe was but a boy, leaving him very well off. I was with him at Eton, and, later, at Oxford; but after we left college I entered the 'shop,' and he gave himself up to scientific research, so we have seen very little of each other, sir."

"And the boy who was with him?"

"Oh, that's his brother, Dick Thornhill! I saw him once or twice at Oxford when he was on a visit to his brother. Thornhill told me that, young though he was then—and he cannot be much more than seventeen now—he had shown a decided genius for experimental chemistry. However, as far as I could see, his chief characteristic was love of fun and practical joking," returned Horsham, laughing.

About the time the conversation recorded above took place Major Karl Seigner was impatiently striding up and down the platform of Basingstoke Station, awaiting the London train.

As Lord Roberts had shrewdly suspected, his declared intention of passing the night at Amesbury was only a blind, for he did not draw rein until he had reached Andover, where, having stabled his horse, he entered the station, to find that the next train to London did not stop at Andover; but, by boarding a local, he could join the express at Basingstoke.

For two hours he paced the platform impatiently, cursing the ill-luck which forced him to wait for a train which, leaving Salisbury after the field-marshal's staff had reached that town, would probably have on board somebody who knew him.

After all, he nearly missed his train, for, grown tired of promenading up and down the unfrequented platform, the arrival of the London express found him outside the station, the doors of which were soon blocked by a crowd of returning excursionists, and the train had actually started ere he managed to fight his way through and fling himself into a first-class compartment, falling over the feet of the solitary occupant on his back.

"Thunder and lightning! Your feet take up the whole of the carriage!" he growled, as he picked himself up from the floor and glared at his companion.

"Sare, it is your feet that are zee pig feet," retorted the other angrily. Then, as he recognised the new-comer, he cried: "Ah, eet ees Major Seigner. This ees not zee way to Amesbury, my friend."

Major Seigner started, and his glare became positively malicious as his eyes alighted on the dapper little Frenchman, for it was Colonel Giraud whom Fate had made his travelling companion.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Going to report on this wonderful airship, I suppose?" he snarled angrily.

"I travel on zee business of my country," was the cautious reply. "But you—were you afraid you might dream of this so wonderful airship that you did not at Amesbury repose?"

"Not I!" almost shouted the German. "Airships and submarines may be good toys for fools or Frenchmen; we Germans prefer to trust to our own right arms. Pshaw! The first gale of wind, the first well-aimed shell, and—pouf!—where is your airship then? Thunder and lightning, it was the pig-headed stupidity of the British staff that drove me away. Bah! They are only overgrown schoolboys!"

Colonel Giraud tugged fiercely at his grey moustache.

"I am a Frenchman. For five hundred years we have fought, and fought, and fought zee Engleesh. We do not love them now, but we respect them. Zee Engleesh soldier

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

ees of the bravest brave, zee Engleesh officer ees zee gentleman always. I salute zee Engleesh officer."

"Well, you ought to know," yawned Seigner insolently; "the English have beaten you often enough."

Colonel Giraud bounded from his seat, his iron-grey moustache literally bristling with rage.

"Sare, you have insulted me, that I forgive; but you have insulted my country, and that a Frenchman forgives nevaire. I demand zee satisfaction!" he cried, gnashing his teeth with fury.

"When and where you like, monsieur, after our return to the Continent. You seem to have forgotten that duelling is murder in English law."

"No mattaire. We can obtain leave, and there are sands outside Boulogne," returned Colonel Giraud significantly. And the rest of the journey was passed in contemptuous silence.

Major Karl Seigner had deliberately forced on the quarrel, for he guessed Colonel Giraud's mission to London, and looked upon the contemplated duel simply as a means of removing him, should he prove a dangerous competitor for the Falcon.

Arrived at Waterloo, Colonel Giraud gathered up his luggage, and, with a sarcastic "To our next meeting, monsieur," sprang from the carriage, whilst Seigner alighted with an angry snarl, and, jumping into a taxi, ordered the driver, in a voice sufficiently loud for Giraud to hear, to drive him to Liverpool Street Station.

But barely had the cab turned into Waterloo Road ere he countermanded the order, and was driven to the German Embassy instead.

"Is his Excellency within?" he demanded of the hall porter who came forward to receive him.

"No, Herr Major; he is at Lord Bigton's reception," replied the man, with the constrained civility a servant always gives to one he dislikes, but fears. "His Excellency intimated he would be home by midnight," he added.

"Tell him I have returned to town on most important business, and that I beg the favour of an interview to-night."

From the Embassy Major Seigner hastened to the expensive suite of chambers he occupied when in town, in preference to living at the Embassy, where he changed into evening-dress, and, hailing a cab, was driven to St. James's Restaurant.

As the commissionaire opened the door of the taxi a newsboy hastened by, shouting:

"Airship on Salisbury Plyn! Bombarded from the clouds! Manœuvres stopped!"

"Paper!" shouted the major, as he alighted, and, snatching the evening sheet from the boy, he entered the restaurant.

Evidently he was known there, for as he entered the large dining-room a waiter, unmistakably from the Fatherland, came obsequiously forward, escorted him to a corner table, and presented the menu.

"Mock turtle soup—no fish. Any news of Hartz?" He asked the question in the same tones as he used when ordering the various courses.

The waiter shook his head. Seigner continued:

"Ptarmigan—he must be found—cutlets. You understand me—must! No sweets. Wine, No. 10."

Whilst the waiter hastened away to fulfil his orders, that gentleman spread open the paper, and turned to where, in big black headlines, the appearance of the airship which had caused his journey to London was announced.

It was a highly coloured, but, on the whole, fairly accurate report of what Karl Seigner had himself seen.

Major Seigner had just finished his second course, when a big, fat, unwieldy man rolled past the table at which he sat, and seated himself some three tables away.

For a minute their eyes met; then Seigner continued eating his dinner, whilst the fat man, with much puffing and grunting, rolled into his seat.

"Waiter, this bread so hard is, I cannot bite it!" roared out the fat man presently.

With a quick fling of his arm, Major Seigner sent his roll on to the floor.

"Waiter, bread!" he commanded, in turn.

Whisking the basket from under the fat man's hand, the waiter carried it to the major, who, inserting his fingers among the loaves, drew out not only a roll, but also a small, neatly-folded note, which, after a quick glance round to assure himself he was unobserved, he hastily perused. It was written in German, and ran:

"Johann Hartz visited Colchester some five months ago. All trace of him is lost. Supposed to have returned to the Continent."

"That's impossible!" muttered the major, as he tore the paper into little bits. "He is most probably lurking about the coast, waiting for an opportunity to get his wife and family over."

Dinner concluded, he leaned back in his seat, and, with half-closed eyes, sipped dreamily at a liqueur.

Presently he raised the evening paper from the seat behind him, underlined the paragraphs dealing with the airship, and called for the bill.

It was getting late, and the tables near him were unoccupied, so he ventured to whisper to the waiter as he leaned over the table, adding up the bill:

"Summon officers' meeting at Gymnasium Club for to-morrow night, usual time. Let Stormitz have paper."

Then, paying his bill, he left the building, and made his way to a Service club, to which his position as German Military Attache gave him admittance.

As Big Ben boomed out the hour of midnight, Karl Seigner was ushered into the private room of the German Ambassador.

Baron Heilman was standing with his back to the fire, eagerly perusing the account of the airship Major Seigner had read in the restaurant.

"Good-evening, Seigner! I suppose this grossly exaggerated account of a navigable balloon is your excuse for leaving Salisbury without orders?" he demanded angrily, tapping the paper with one finger.

"It is, Excellency. And, with all respect, I think when you have heard what I have to say you will agree that I have done right," returned Karl Seigner respectfully.

"Well, go on!" was all the encouragement he received.

"The account in that paper is no exaggeration—in fact, I think it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this new airship. It is no balloon, but a veritable flying ship, heavily armed, easily managed, and capable of casting high explosives into the midst of an army with a precision which would sweep an army corps off the face of the earth in a couple of hours. As I say, it is not a balloon, but essentially a flying-machine, capable of raising itself from the ground by its own wings, and, being heavier than air, instead of lighter, is less likely to be blown out of its course by a cross or head wind.

"I tell you, Excellency," he continued, warming to the subject, "the Falcon alone will revolutionise warfare. We have nothing that can contend against it. With the Falcon, and—who knows?—perhaps a score sister-ships, England will be able to dictate terms to the world, and then farewell to our dreams of German expansion."

Evidently Baron Heilman was impressed by the attache's earnestness, for he paced the room with agitated steps.

"But how can we prevent it? What can we do? Doubtless England has already secured the airship, and we are powerless to prevent her!" he cried anxiously.

Forgetting the iron etiquette of the German Court, Karl Seigner approached the agitated ambassador, and laid his hand on his arm.

"The Falcon may yet belong to Germany!" he hissed, rather than spoke, the words. "The inventor has been snubbed by the War Office; he has spent his entire fortune on this ship, and to-morrow morning he will await at the Hotel Balfour an offer from the British Government for his ship. Every man has his price, as an English statesman once said. Give me unlimited power, place the whole resources of the German Empire at my disposal, and ere the sun sets to-morrow night the Falcon shall be under the German flag."

The ambassador shook his head doubtfully.

"I dare not! What if the Emperor repudiated our bargain? Besides, it might require millions of marks to bribe this man, and then we should be obliged to appeal to the Reichstag," he objected.

"It is not to money alone I would trust. There are many things money cannot buy. For instance, rank, position—ay, perhaps the title of prince. That is surely not difficult to obtain. One stroke of the Kaiser's pen, and the poorest peasant would become the equal of a crowned head."

Baron Heilman sank into a chair, and wiped the perspiration from off his forehead.

"Think what the possession of the Falcon means to Germany!" persisted Seigner. "Destroy her coaling-stations, reduce her forts to ruins, sink her ships—where then would the might of England be? She would sink to the low estate of a third-class Power, and Germany—our Germany—her only rival vanquished, would reign supreme, queen of the world. Excellency, in your hands is the fate of the world! Let this moment slip by, and it may be lost for ever. Choose which it shall be. Shall your name go down to posterity as that of the man who gave Germany the mastery of the world, or as the wandering coward who allowed her rival to step into the place which this night I offer to her?"

For a moment the ambassador hesitated; then, rising to his full height, he cried:

"By Heaven, I will do it! The Falcon shall belong, at any cost, to Germany! But what—what if you fail?"

"I will not fail," returned Seigner confidently.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Briton's Reply!

"A gentleman to see you, sir!" announced a waiter, entering the Thornhills' private room at the Hotel Balfour.

"Colonel Giraud, Military Attache, Embassy of Paris," Thorpe read from the card which the waiter handed him on a silver salver. "I know no one of that name."

"Won't any gentleman start the bidding, please? One million pounds, Colonel Giraud? Going at one million pounds!" cried Dick laughingly, imitating an auctioneer.

"That's about the ticket!" assented Thorpe. "But they might as well save their breath and my time: the Falcon shall never fly any colours but the grand old rag."

"Oh, let him come up, Thorpe! We might as well hear what he has to say," urged Dick.

"All right; as you like. Show the gentleman up!" he added, turning to the waiter, who bowed and left the room.

The next moment Colonel Giraud stood bowing politely on the doormat.

"Gentlemen, your servant! I have called to offer my homage to the greatest aeronaut of his age!" he said, as he advanced into the room.

"You are very kind, monsieur; but I fear I do not quite deserve so eulogistic a title," returned Thorpe, smiling indulgently. "But pardon me, Monsieur le Colonel, if, to avoid disappointment and waste of time, I say the Falcon is not for sale."

"Ah, then, I see, monsieur is—what you call it?—a philanthropist! He means his so great, so wonderful invention for the good of humanity, for the use of the whole world!" said Colonel Giraud.

"Well, not exactly the whole world, but a good slice of it. In fact, my airship will, I hope, belong to the British Empire," replied Thorpe.

"Will, you say! Then the bargain is not completed!" cried Giraud eagerly. "Have pause, monsieur—have pause! Your countrymen love not the inventor! They will keep you dallying about, promising this, objecting to that, until there comes some other with a newer and better airship!"

"A newer airship may be brought out, but I defy the world to provide a better one!" cried Thorpe indignantly.

"France, on the other hand, welcomes with open arms any who will help to make her invincible. See, I am but a humble officer of the French Army; yet on my own responsibility will I offer you five hundred thousand francs for your airship, and another five hundred thousand for the drawings from which it was made! What! Ees eet not sufficient?"

"Not nearly enough, monsieur," returned Thorpe firmly. "If you offered me all France, with her colonies thrown in, it would not be sufficient to buy the secret of the motive power by which my ship is moved, let alone the ship itself!"

"But, monsieur—" began Colonel Giraud, when Thorpe stopped him, saying quietly:

"One moment, Colonel Giraud. Let us suppose our places are reversed—you the owner of the Falcon, I the representative of another nation seeking to purchase it. Tell me, on your word of honour as a soldier, what your reply to a similar request would be."

"Thus would I speak! 'Go, sare, before I pull zee nose of zee man who would try to bribe Jules Giraud from zee path of honour!'" cried the colonel.

Thorpe Thornhill and his brother looked at each other, not daring to speak lest they should burst out laughing, so unexpected was Giraud's reply. Then Thorpe strode to the Frenchman's side, and, seizing his hand, cried:

"Colonel Giraud, I am proud to make your acquaintance! Rest content that, unless you consider Britain an enemy to your country, no foe of France shall ever possess an airship built by me!"

"Monsieur, you are worthy to be a Frenchman!" returned the colonel.

And, with a low bow, he strutted from the room, having paid Thorpe the greatest compliment it was in his power to bestow.

Barely had Colonel Giraud taken his departure ere they were interrupted by another visitor in the person of Major Seigner.

Major Seigner did not give Thornhill the opportunity of refusing to see him; for he followed so closely on the waiter's heels that he could not help hearing Dick say, as his brother passed on the card:

"It is the German beast who scowled at you all the time you were talking to Lord Roberts yesterday, Thorpe!"

"I remember. But we'd better see him. It is as well to let him clearly understand that the Falcon is not for sale to outsiders," returned Thorpe, nodding to the waiter.

"Ach, is it so?" cried the major, stepping forward, and making his repulsive face almost hideous by an attempt to

smile at Thorpe and frown at Dick simultaneously. "No, no, my young friend, I think not! It is not wise to send away a purchaser before you know what he is willing to pay!"

"It is not a question of money, Herr Seigner. My brother and myself are resolved not to sell our airship to anyone except the British Government," returned Thorpe.

"So? Perhaps, as you say, it is not a question of money. Money is goot, but there are things better than money," hinted the German.

"I agree with you, Major Seigner. Honour, patriotism, good name, are all beyond price to an honest man," interposed Thorpe.

"Goot—very goot! But why should we play at cross purposes, my friend? We are men of the world. Let us talk business," said the German, seating himself and tapping Thorpe on the arm, trying to be friendly, but only succeeding in being impertinent. "There shall be no beating about the bush between us. I come from my ambassador, who will back me up in everything we agree upon. What do you say to a million pounds sterling, paid in four half-yearly instalments of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds each?"

"It is a large sum, but not large enough to tempt me to betray my country," returned Thorpe coldly.

"Stop, stop! There is more to come! That money will carry with it the title of prince!"

"It is not half enough!" declared Dick emphatically.

"Not enough?" was all Seigner could gasp.

"Not likely! Just trot back to the ambassador and tell him, with my love, that, if the Kaiser will abdicate and make Thorpe Emperor of Germany, and me King of Prussia, we may think about it!" was the laughing reply.

"Thunder and lightning, you make game of me! But I have no time to waste on children!" roared Major Seigner angrily. Then, turning to Thorpe, he added, as calmly as the rage which consumed him would allow: "I can offer no more, Mr. Thornhill!"

"Major Seigner, I have listened to you, to see how far you would go," returned Thorpe, rising. "Now, listen to me. Your million pounds would mean a million curses; for, for every pound, a drop of blood would be shed to satisfy the insatiable ambition of your people. As to the offered title of prince, I have yet to learn that the honour of being an English gentleman is not a greater distinction than any a foreign potentate can bestow. Return to him who sent you, and say that, rather than see the Falcon in the hands of my country's foes, I would destroy her—ay, though I perished in her wreck! Good-morning!"

"You refuse?" asked Major Seigner incredulously.

"Absolutely and finally refuse!" returned Thorpe.

White to the very lips with rage and baffled hate, Seigner took a step forward, as though to strike the young Englishman; then, thrusting his face close to Thornhill's, he hissed:

"Fool—mad, quixotic fool—you shall suffer for this! What I offered to buy at a price such as was never offered for a single invention before, I will take! Guard your ship as you may, surround it with armed men, lock it behind stone and granite, hide it in the trackless desert, the long arm of Germany shall reach it—and you!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. No Luck for the German!

So fierce, so full of hate and vague threat were the German officer's words that Thorpe Thornhill stepped back, overcome for the moment by the virulent expressions and angry glare of the speaker.

The next moment his face grew white, but it was not with fear. Major Seigner never knew how near he was to a thorough thrashing at that moment.

"Thank you for the warning, Major Seigner, but it was scarcely necessary. I know how to protect that which I have invented. You speak about the long arm of Germany. Let me give you a bit of advice. Keep your distance from the Falcon, or by heavens, you shall learn what it is to come within reach of an Englishman's strong arm! Now go!"

Karl Seigner was no coward, but he shrank from the angry young Englishman, and, picking up his hat, made towards the door.

With his hand on the latch he paused, as though unwilling to abandon all hopes of the airship.

"Are you quite resolved?" he asked. "Remember, on one hand a million pounds, and the honour of becoming a prince of the German Empire; on the other—"

He ceased speaking, and shrugged his shoulders; then, throwing open the door, made a hurried exit, for, losing all patience, Thornhill had advanced towards him, with flashing eyes and clenched fist.

Suddenly, from the landing without, came a frank, manly voice, saying:

"Hallo! Look where you are going to, man!"

"Ach, it was you; putting yourself in my way on purpose! Spy!"

"It strikes me you are doing work of that kind yourself," returned the first voice. Then a step was heard approaching the door, and the next moment Captain Horsham entered.

"Hallo, Thornhill! Your visitor seems disappointed with his interview," he said, approaching the young inventor, and shaking him by the hand. "What was that he was muttering about a million pounds and a principedom?"

"The Germans seem to value my airship more highly than our Government," laughed Thorpe—"that's all. Now, I suppose you have come on the same errand? Well, I dare say we can come to terms."

"Do you mean to say you have absolutely refused his offer?" asked Horsham, in astonishment.

"Rather! If he doubled and trebled it, it would be the same. I at present hold the balance of power in my hand, and is it likely that I will throw it in the scale against my own country?"

"I told Lord Roberts as much," returned Horsham. "But I say, old boy, I have come to bargain. The Government will find all the money you require to establish works for the construction of airships, and employ you as their aeronautical expert at twenty thousand a year. They will also purchase your airships at a fixed sum as completed."

"What do you say, Dick? I hate huckstering. Should we close?" demanded Thorpe.

"Like birds!" replied his brother.

"All right; that's settled. Now, Dick, old boy, if you are going to catch the eleven-thirty at Liverpool Street you must look slippy. Get the work on as quick as you can, there's a good chap. The Government will be only too pleased to have a pair of airships instead of one—"

"What! Have you a second airship on the stocks?"

"Yes; and nearly finished. Dick is superintending its building," returned Thorpe.

Dick Thornhill having taken his departure, Captain Horsham and Thorpe entered the former's motor-car, and were soon speeding down Edgware Road, on their way to the open country beyond Wembley.

Ten miles further on, guided by his companion, Horsham turned down a country lane to the borders of a small wood, where they alighted.

"Your machine has to be well guarded, Thornhill, if it is here. What ever made you choose a spot so far from all habitation?" asked Horsham.

"Oh, I've taken precautions! If you doubt me, walk on ahead a little way," suggested Thorpe.

Horsham obeyed; but barely had the thick undergrowth screened him from Thornhill's view ere he found himself confronted by a man clad as a gamekeeper, whose gun looked more like a double-barrelled rifle than a shot-gun.

"Hallo! What are you doing here?" demanded the latter roughly. "We don't allow any strangers in these woods."

"I have heard that an airship is being built in this wood. Those notes are yours if you take me to it."

The man nodded his head, and, beckoning him to follow, led the way to a small hut, the door of which he threw open.

"Step in a minute, will you, sir, whilst I see if the coast is clear?"

Unsuspectingly, Horsham obeyed. The next moment the door was slammed to. He heard the key turned in the lock, and knew he was a prisoner.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this grand new serial next Monday. Tell all your chums, and take them with you to ORDER IN ADVANCE! One Penny Only.)



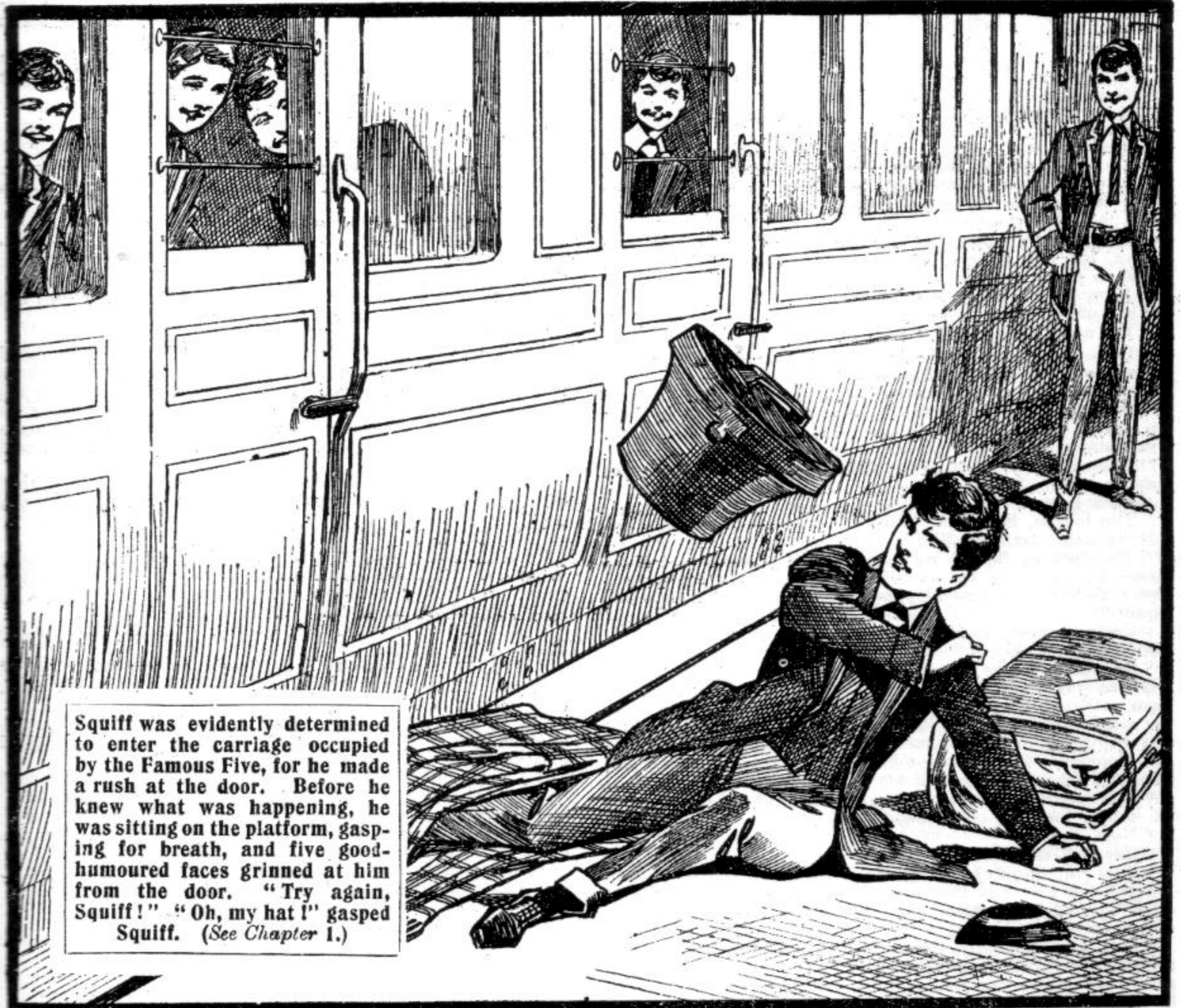
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" in Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

A COOL CARD!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the
Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Squiff was evidently determined to enter the carriage occupied by the Famous Five, for he made a rush at the door. Before he knew what was happening, he was sitting on the platform, gasping for breath, and five good-humoured faces grinned at him from the door. "Try again, Squiff!" "Oh, my hat!" gasped Squiff. (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Admittance!

"No room!"
Bob Cherry spoke politely but firmly.
"But—"

"No room!" chorused the rest of the Famous Five, with equal politeness and with equal firmness.

Harry Wharton & Co. were returning to Greyfriars after having been to Lantham to witness the First Eleven's match at that place. Wingate was bringing his men home victorious, and the juniors were jubilant.

There were six seats in the carriage, and there were only five members in the Co., but the bags which had contained various supplies of "tuck" fully accounted for the other seat.

So when a youth with a freckled, sunburnt face, with a rug over his arm and a bag in his hand, presented himself at the door of the carriage, he was met with the unanimous assurance that there was no room.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

"Lots of room further down the train!" said Frank Nugent reassuringly, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, hastened to assure the stranger that further down the train the roomfulness was terrific.

But the sunburnt youth did not depart.

"Seems to me that there's an empty seat there," he remarked, "and all the other carriages seem to be pretty full up."

"That's all right," said Harry Wharton. "The train doesn't start for two or three minutes yet, and you've lots of time to find a place."

"Thanks! I've done enough walking up and down this train. I think I'll come in here, if you don't mind."

"There's the rub; we do mind," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Well, I'll come in whether you mind or not, then."

The Famous Five grinned.

The strange youth seemed very determined. But they were determined, too. And the chances were just five to one that he wouldn't come in.

A Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

The sunburnt youth put his foot into the carriage. Bob Cherry shoved his boot forward, and the stranger's foot disappeared again.

"Haven't I told you that there's no room?" said Bob.

"There's a seat——"

"Engaged!"

"Why couldn't you say so before, then?" exclaimed the other. "If there's another of your party, that alters the case. But is that straight?"

"Quite straight, my cheerful infant," said Bob. "The seat's engaged with a bag, also a bat, also an umbrella. You can see that for yourself. Besides, we're expecting another chap to join us here."

"Oh, rats!"

"Eh?"

"If the other chap hasn't come, you've no right to keep a seat for him in a crowded train. So I'll come in."

"You won't!"

"I will!"

The Famous Five looked grimly at the stranger. His determination rather interested them. He was a fellow of about their own age, sturdily built, with a somewhat rugged but very healthy and pleasant face. He looked particularly fit; his step was springy, his eyes clear and steady. He wore a soft felt hat slouched over his forehead, looking a good deal more comfortable on that hot day than the small caps of the Greyfriars fellows. Upon his leather bag were inscribed the initials "S. Q. I. F." They were evidently only the initials of a surname and three Christian names, but Bob Cherry, who was given to being humorous, chose to make a single surname of them.

"Now, look here, Master Squiff——" he began.

The sunburnt lad looked surprised.

"My name isn't Squiff," he said.

"Isn't it? Then I can only conclude," said Bob severely, "that you have pinched that bag."

The other boy glanced at the bag, and grinned.

"Oh, you are being funny!" he remarked. "Well, there isn't much time to be funny now; the train's going to start. I'm coming in."

"Your mistake!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You're staying out."

"Look here——"

"The fact is, Squiff——"

"My name isn't Squiff."

"The fact is, Squiff, we're expecting a chap, and if he comes by this train we want him with us. We can't leave Peter Todd out because of a Squiff. It's not to be expected, Squiff."

"Certainly not, Squiff."

"Run away, Squiff!"

"Go and eat coke, Squiffey!"

There was a chuckle from a crowd of fellows on the platform. A good many Greyfriars fellows were returning from the match by that train. Most of them were in high spirits and willing to improve the shining hour by gently ragging the stranger. The sunburnt lad looked round at them, and then laid down his bag and his rug.

"I'm coming into this carriage!" he said. "I'm coming in, if only for your confounded cheek!"

"Now, Squiff——"

"Keep off the grass, Squiff!"

"Buzz off, Squiffey!"

Squiff—to give him the name the Removites had bestowed upon him—did not buzz off. He made a charge at the carriage.

Squiff was evidently determined. But something more than determination was required to effect an entrance into a carriage where five juniors were holding the fort. Before he knew what was happening, Squiff was sitting on the platform, gasping for breath, and five good-humoured faces grinned at him from the door.

"Try again, Squiff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, make room, you fags!"

Coker of the Fifth came along the train, with Potter and Greene of the same Form. The three Fifth-Formers, after a glance at Squiff, looked into Wharton's carriage.

"No room!" said Bob.

Coker frowned. As a Fifth-Former and a senior, Horace Coker regarded himself as monarch of all he surveyed where mere juniors were concerned. He waved a lordly hand at the Famous Five.

"We want three places," he said.

"No room!"

"Some of you fags can clear out!" said Coker. "Come on, Pottey! Come on, Greene! We'll soon shift these fags."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" in Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

"What-ho!" said Potter and Greene.

"All hands repel boarders!" sang out Bob Cherry.

Now, the Famous Five had certainly been a little in the wrong in refusing admission to Squiff. But they were quite in the right in declining to turn out to make room for the three seniors. And the chums of the Remove were famous for standing up in defence of their rights.

Coker and Potter and Greene scrambled in at the door. Coker was immediately grasped by three or four pairs of hands, and he collapsed on the floor of the carriage, and Johnny Bull sat on his back and kept him there, face downwards. Potter and Greene were sent whirling back. Potter sat down, and Greene brought up against an automatic sweet machine with a bump.

Squiff was on his feet by this time. But he did not try to get into the carriage. Horace Coker's legs were protruding from the doorway, and his boots were lashing about wildly. Squiff grinned and went down the train.

"Lemme gerrup!" gasped Coker of the Fifth. "You cheeky fags! Groogh! Gerroff my back! Gerroff my beastly back! Yaroooh! I'll skin you! Ow!"

"Stand on his neck!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Ow! Gerroff! Yoop!"

"Coker, old man, you're superfluous," said Frank Nugent. "We told you there was no room. We told you quite plainly."

"The plainfulness was terrific."

"Yaroooh! Gerroff! Potter! Greene!"

"Look out, the train's just going!" said Harry Wharton.

"Now then, all together!"

Five pairs of hands closed on Horace Coker. He shot out of the carriage like a stone from a catapult.

"Ow!"

Coker sat on the platform, gasping. The guard slammed the door of the train. A few moments later, and it began to move. Coker staggered to his feet and shook a huge fist at the grinning faces in the carriage. The Famous Five kissed their hands pleasantly to Horace Coker, and the train glided out of the station, leaving Coker standing there, still shaking his fist.

"Poor old Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Always biting off more than he can chew, and always getting it in the neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peter Todd didn't turn up, after all," said Harry Wharton. "I hope that chap Squiff has got a seat in the train. He looked a decent chap. Now I come to think of it, I don't think we had any right to keep him out."

"Go hon!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Rather late in the day to think of that!"

"Well, he was a cheeky beast!" said Johnny Bull. "And he's got left, as Fishy would say. Still, it was rather thick to keep him out."

"Yes; I hope he hasn't lost the train," said Wharton, rather repentantly. "As for Coker, it serves Coker right! I rather liked the look of that chap Squiff."

But the juniors soon forgot all about Squiff, as they settled down for the run to Courtfield, and discussed the match they had just seen, and all the things they intended to do during that term at Greyfriars. As for Squiff—or whatever his name was—they never expected to see him again. But they were destined to have a great deal to do with the sunburnt lad upon whom they had bestowed that peculiar name.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Cool Card!

"COURTFIELD!" said Bob Cherry.

The train stopped.

It was the last change for Greyfriars. From Courtfield Junction the local train was to take the fellows to Friardale, the village near the school. The Famous Five turned out of their carriage, laden with bags.

Billy Bunter, the fattest junior in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, rolled up, and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, have you seen Toddy?" he asked.

"No. He was to have rejoined us at Lantham, but the silly ass must have got lost or something!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, rotten! The fact is, Todd owes me half-a-quad that I lent him," said Billy Bunter, "and I'm a bit short of money, as it happens. I suppose one of you fellows couldn't lend me a few bob to get a snack at the buffet here——"

"Quite right; we couldn't!" agreed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm expecting a postal-order when I get to the school, and——"

"Same old postal-order!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Same old Bunter! Same old Anantas! Same old whoppers! Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's our train!"

And the chums of the Remove rushed to secure a carriage. The "local" was much longer than usual, extra carriages having been put on to accommodate the rush of Greyfriars fellows returning from Lantham.

The Famous Five crowded into a carriage, and as they took their seats a sunburnt lad followed them in. And the juniors all exclaimed at once:

"Squiff, by Jove!"

It was Squiff!

He grinned serenely, and planted himself in a corner seat; he was evidently a cool card.

"Glad you didn't lose the train, Squiff," said Bob Cherry.

"So you're coming on to Friardale—what?"

The sunburnt stranger nodded.

"That's my station—Friardale!" he said.

"Well, you can stay in this carriage, if you like."

"I mean to!"

"Now, don't put it like that!" remonstrated Bob. "If you put it like that, I shall feel bound to pitch you out on your neck!"

"Oh, rats!"

"By Jove," said Bob Cherry, "I've a jolly good mind——"

Bob was interrupted. A thin-faced, keen-eyed junior came up to the door of the carriage, and looked in.

"I guess I'll come in here!" said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior in the Greyfriars Remove.

"I guess and calculate we're full up!" said Bob Cherry.

"I reckon you'd better kinder hop along the train, Fishy!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming with you!" said Billy Bunter, rolling up as the American junior went further along.

"Make room for me!"

"Can't be did! All seats full; and you need room for two, anyway!"

Bunter blinked into the carriage.

"Oh, really, you know! Turn that fellow out; he ain't a Greyfriars chap!" said Bunter, blinking at Squiff. "I say, kid, get out, will you?"

The sunburnt lad laughed.

"No jolly fear!" he said.

"Pitch him out, you fellows!"

"I should want some pitching!" remarked Squiff.

"Now, look here, Squiff——" said Bob Cherry.

"Squiff!" said Bunter. "He, he, he! What a name! He, he, he!"

"My name isn't Squiff, you fat chump!"

"Squiff, I really think you'd better get out!" said Bob.

"You're too fresh—altogether too fresh!"

"Rats!"

"You're too cheeky, Squiff! It's up to me to put you out!" said Bob. "Now, hop out, and save me the trouble of landing you on your neck!"

Squiff laughed.

"You couldn't do it!" he said.

"What!"

"Deaf?" said Squiff. "I said you couldn't do it!"

"My hat! I'll——"

"Hold on, Bob! Let him alone!"

"Look here, I'm not going to have a Squiff checking me!" roared Bob.

"Well, you cheeked me, to begin with!" said Squiff.

"I'm not looking for trouble, but if you try to pitch me out, I shall——"

"Well, what will you do, Squiff?"

"Bump you over, jolly quick!"

"Then I'll give you a chance!" said Bob.

And he laid a pair of powerful hands upon Squiff. Bob Cherry was a famous fighting-man in the Greyfriars Remove. He fully expected to whirl Squiff out of the carriage with a single swing of his strong arms. But it did not happen. He dragged at Squiff, and pulled at him, but Squiff did not come out of his seat. There was evidently a great deal of muscular force in the lithe, well-knit body of Squiff.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Bob. "It's a strong beast—a very strong beast! But I'm jolly well going to shift him! It's up to me now!"

"I'll lend you a hand!" said Johnny Bull.

"Here, fair play, you know!" exclaimed Squiff. "Two to one ain't fair play! We don't go for fellows two to one in New South Wales!"

"Oh!" said Bob, pausing. "You come from New South Wales, do you?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you say so before?" growled Bob, taking his hands from Squiff's shoulders. "If I'd known, I wouldn't have handled you. I didn't know you were a stranger in the giddy land. You can stay there!"

"Thanks! I'm going to!" said the youth from New South Wales cheerfully. "You couldn't shift me in a month of Sundays!"

"By George, he's simply asking for trouble!" exclaimed Bob, exasperated. "This time he goes out on his neck!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

And Bob simply hurled himself upon the lad from the land of the Southern Cross. The next moment Bob lay on his back on the floor of the carriage, not quite knowing how he had arrived there.

"B-b-b-by Jove!" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry sat up, a little dazedly.

The porter slammed the door of the carriage, and the train moved out of the station. It was too late to settle the question whether Squiff should be ejected. He was booked for the journey to Friardale now.

Bob Cherry rose slowly to his feet. His companions were grinning. It tickled them to see the mighty Bob floored so easily by the sunburnt stranger.

"By gum, there's more in that merchant than meets the eye," said Bob, dusting down his clothes. "You did that very well, Squiff."

"I'll do it again if you like," said Squiff.

"Well, there isn't room in this carriage to teach you manners," said Bob. "But if you were coming down to Greyfriars, my son, I should put you through it, I can tell you."

"I am coming to Greyfriars," said Squiff.

"What!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wharton. "Do you mean to say you're a new boy for Greyfriars, Squiff?"

"Yes."

The juniors looked at the Australian with new interest. It had not occurred to them before that he was a new boy for the school.

"Oh!" said Bob. "So you're going to be a Greyfriars chap—what?"

"That's so."

"Well, if you come into the Remove, we'll make it a point to knock some of the cheek out of you. You're altogether too fresh for a new kid."

"I'm coming into the Remove," said Squiff.

"Oh, that's settled, is it?"

"Yes. I was examined a few days ago, and they're putting me in the Lower Fourth—that's the Remove, ain't it?"

"That's it," said Bob. "We're in the Remove. And I warn you, Squiff, that if you're so jolly fresh, you'll find heaps of trouble waiting for you."

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Squiff calmly. "I can look after myself pretty well, I fancy. I'm not exactly a tender-foot."

"I was thinking," said Bob witheringly, "of giving you a tremendous wallop for your cheek. But as you're a new boy, I'll let you off. I don't want to be rough on a new kid, and you'll get lickings enough, I expect, without me piling in."

And Bob sat down. The train was gliding through the green countryside towards Friardale. The Famous Five were soon chatting cheerfully, almost forgetting Squiff, sitting in his corner. The Australian junior listened to their talk for some time, and then took a book from his pocket and began to read. Bob Cherry happened to notice the title on the cover of the book, and he grinned as he saw it—"Cricket for Beginners."

"Learning the game, Squiff?" he asked.

"I was looking through the rules," said Squiff. "Do you play cricket at Greyfriars?"

"Do we play cricket?" ejaculated Bob indignantly. "Well, yes, I should say we do! Every Form in the school has its own eleven, down to the fags in the Second. We play the game there, I can tell you!"

"Oh, good!" said Squiff. "Then I suppose I shall play in the Remove Eleven?"

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

Squiff looked at them in surprise.

"Where does the cackle come in?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Here's a chap learning the rules of cricket, and asking if he will play in the Form team! Why, you young ass, I tell you we play cricket—with the accent on the 'play.' We don't put toddling infants, just learning the rules, into the Form team! When you've been at Greyfriars about a term or two, and have learned the difference between a bat and a wicket, you may have a chance of playing in a practice match—perhaps!"

"I can play cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be cheeky, dear boy!" said Wharton, with a wave of the hand. "Go on learning the rules, and don't be cheeky."

"But——"

"In the Form Eleven, by jingo!" said Nugent indignantly. "I never heard of such cheek! A new kid too—just learning the rules! It takes the cake!"

"But I tell you——"

"Oh, rats! I suppose you play baby cricket!" snorted

Nugent. "You close up your head, my son, and don't be cheeky."

"But—"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob. "Cheese it, Squiff! You're an ass, Squiffy! You're several sorts of a chump, Squiffy! Ring off, Squiffy!"

Squiff stared at the juniors for a moment, and seemed on the verge of making a hot retort. But he did not. He grinned instead, and returned to his book. He was reading the "Laws of the Game" through, and the juniors smiled as they saw it. But Squiff did not seem to be disturbed by their smiles. He read on calmly and cheerfully, while the chums of the Remove chatted and the train ran on to Friardale.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Bunter Stands Treat!

"HERE we are, my infants!"

Bob Cherry jumped out of the carriage in Friardale Station. Boys of all ages and sizes were pouring out of the train. The long platform, bordered with flower-beds, was swarming with Greyfriars fellows.

The Famous Five walked out of the station together, gathering up their friends as they went. Mark Linley and Tom Brown, the New Zealander, joined them, and Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, and Hazeldene and Fisher T. Fish.

Dick Penfold met them outside the station. Penfold, the son of the village cobbler, was a scholarship boy at Greyfriars, and a great chum of the Famous Five. Billy Bunter joined the party too. Bunter's study-mates at Greyfriars—Todd and Dutton—had not arrived yet, having got left behind at Lantham, and Bunter attached himself to Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say, you fellows, shall we stop at Uncle Clegg's?" asked Bunter. "I could just do with some ginger-beer. I'm standing treat."

"Yes, we know how you stand treat!" grinned Bob Cherry. "And we're not stopping at Uncle Clegg's. Come on, you chaps; we'll walk to the school."

"I say, you know, I'd rather take the hack—"

"Take it, then, my fat tulip!"

And the Co. started off cheerfully.

Bunter grunted, and looked round him through his big spectacles. He wanted refreshing ginger-beer at Uncle Clegg's, and he wanted to drive to the school; but he wanted somebody else to foot the little bill.

His eyes fell upon Squiff, who had come out of the station by himself, and was looking round. New boys were a wind-fall to Bunter of the Remove—they did not know his little ways, and he generally found it easier to extract loans from them than from fellows who did know him. Billy Bunter rolled towards Squiff with an agreeable grin on his fat face.

"Hallo, Squiff—"

The Australian looked at him.

"My name isn't Squiff, fatty!"

"Well, what is your name, old chap?" asked Bunter affably, glancing at the bag in the Australian's hand, which bore the initials "S. Q. I. F."

"My name is Field."

"What do the other letters sand for, Field, old fellow?"

"Sampson Quincy Iffley."

"My hat!"

"Well, what's the matter with you, Tubby?"

"He, he, he! What a lovely set of names!" giggled Bunter. "Do you use 'em all every day, or keep some of 'em for Sundays?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Squiff, turning away.

But Billy Bunter did not mean to let the new boy escape him.

"Hold on, Field, old chap! Only my little joke, you know!"

"I don't like your little jokes, Fatty!"

"Ahem! That's all right, Squiff—I mean, Field, old fellow. You come along with me, and I'll look after you," said Bunter. "I'm an awfully good-natured chap. I look after new boys a lot. How would you like a ginger-pop after your journey—what?"

"First-rate!" said Squiff.

"Then come along with me," said Bunter. "This way! I'll take you to the place. Never mind about your box—that'll be sent on to the school. Come along!"

And Billy Bunter led his victim to Uncle Clegg's. Arrived there, Bunter ordered two ginger-beers and a dozen tarts.

"Pile in, Field, old man," he said hospitably. "I'm standing treat!"

"You're awfully good!" said Squiff, evidently a little surprised. From Billy Bunter's look, Squiff would never have supposed that he would take a new boy under his wing and

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

treat him in this hospitable manner. Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Not at all, Field! I can see that we shall get on together," he said. "I hope they'll put you into my study—that's No. 7 in the Remove. I'm digging with Todd and Dutton now. Peter Todd's rather a beast, and Dutton is as deaf as a post. I'd like you in my study. I like chaps from—from New Zealand—I think I heard one of the fellows say you were from New Zealand—"

"New South Wales," said Squiff.

"Yes, I knew it was there somewhere," said Bunter, whose knowledge of geography was decidedly vague. "I heard one of those rotters say you were from the Colonies. The rotters were talking about you."

"What rotters?" asked Squiff.

"Those rotters you were travelling with."

"They looked very decent chaps to me."

"Oh, appearances are deceptive!" said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "They're rotters. They were telling Penfold you wanted to come into the Remove Eleven."

"So I do."

"Well, there won't be any chance for you, especially if you're a good player," said Bunter. "Wharton is skipper of the Form eleven, and he keeps me out. Personal jealousy, you know—doesn't want to be put in the shade. That'll show you the kind of rotter he is. Have another tart?"

"Thanks!"

"That fellow Penfold, who met them outside the station," said Bunter—"did you notice him?"

"Not specially."

"Well, what do you think he is?" said Bunter, with a sniff. "He's a scholarship kid, and his father's a cobbler in the village. And those rotters chum up with him more than they do with me. Shows you what sort of fellows they are!"

"Yes, it does," agreed Squiff. "They must be pretty decent, I should say."

"I tell you the kid's a cobbler!"

"Well, is there anything wrong in being a cobbler?" asked Squiff.

"Oh, you don't seem to understand!" said Bunter; and certainly Squiff was never likely to understand Bunter's point of view. "I'm not a snob, you know, but I draw the line at cobblers. Have another tart. Just come from New Zealand, I suppose, what?"

"New South Wales," said Squiff.

"Well, isn't New South Wales in New Zealand?"

"Of course it isn't."

"Oh, I see! New Zealand is in New South Wales," said Bunter. "I knew it was one way or the other."

Squiff chuckled.

"Do you learn geography at Greyfriars?" he asked.

"Yes; we have to mug that up with a lot of other rot," said Bunter.

"Well, next time you see a map, you may pick up that New South Wales is in Australia," said Squiff.

"Is it?" said Bunter. "Yes, I knew it was there somewhere. Have another tart?"

"Thanks! I've had enough!"

"Then I'll finish them," said Bunter, and he did. "How much does that little lot come to, Mr. Clegg?"

"Two shillings and fourpence," said Mr. Clegg.

Bunter ran his fat hands through his pockets.

"My hat! I remember now I lent my last quid to Lord Mauleverer," he said. "I suppose you wouldn't mind settling for this, Field. I'll square up directly we get to Greyfriars, of course."

Squiff gave him a sharp look. He was beginning to have his suspicions of Billy Bunter.

"Oh, all right!" he said, not very graciously.

He paid the two shillings and fourpence, and they left the shop.

"Better take a cab to the school," said Bunter. "I'll stand treat."

"How can you stand treat if you've not got any money?" demanded Squiff.

"Ahem! I mean you can pay the cabby, and I'll settle up directly we get to Greyfriars," said Bunter. "Lord Mauleverer will hand out that quid the moment I see him. Old Mauly is rolling in money."

"I think I'll walk," said Squiff.

"It's a jolly long way, and I don't suppose you'd know the way," said Bunter. "I'm rather too tired to walk, or I'd come with you. Better take the cab. I'm standing treat."

ANSWERS



"Squiff!" said Bob Cherry, in awe-inspiring voice. "Stand forward! What is your name?" "You jolly well know my name," howled Squiff. "Two smites with the bolster, executioner!" said Bob Cherry calmly. And Peter Todd, swung the bolster round, and brought it down across the boy's shoulders. (See Chapter 7.)

"I don't want you to treat me," said Squiff bluntly. "If it's a long way we'll take the cab, and I'll stand half."

"I'd rather stand treat, old chap; but just as you like," said Bunter; and a few minutes later they were rolling towards Greyfriars in the station hack.

Arrived at Greyfriars, Squiff paid the cabman, and they entered the gates.

"Lemme see, I owe you three-and-sevenpence now, if you gave him half-a-crown," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I'll tell you what, Squiff. Hand me six-and-fivepence, and make it an even half-quad, will you? Then I'll see Mauly—"

"Why not see Mauly now, and settle up?" asked Squiff. "Ahem! I don't think Mauly has arrived yet," said Bunter. "He may not be here till later."

"I never lend money," said Squiff coolly. "Better make it an even half-quad—"

"Better not, I think," said Squiff. "Oh, all right!" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "So-long! I can't give you any more of my time now; I'm full up with engagements."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

And as there was nothing more to be squeezed out of the new boy, William George Bunter strolled away, and left the junior from New South Wales to his own devices.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. No. 1 Study Celebrates!

"SQUIFF! What a name!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, that isn't his name—that's only his initials added together," said Bob Cherry. "I don't know his name. Squiff will do."

"And he wants to play in the Form eleven!" roared Bol-sover major.

"Yes; and he's studying 'Cricket for Beginners' as a start!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What awful cheek!"

"Oh, he's got plenty of cheek! Tons of it!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

"We'll take some of it out of him in the Remove!" said Bulstrode.

"Studying 'Cricket for Beginners,' and wants to play in the Form eleven!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "Well, that does take the cake!"

"The cakefulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, to give him all his names, had entered the School House, and he heard the buzz of voices from the junior common-room. He grinned as he looked in. The Famous Five were relating that example of the awful cheek of the new kid, amid roars of laughter from a crowd of juniors.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, spotting Squiff in the doorway. "Come in, Squiff! Come and tell us something about cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I dare say I could tell you more about it than you know," said Squiff.

"Of course you could! Haven't you just been reading it up in 'Cricket for Beginners'?" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The game of cricket," said Tom Brown solemnly, "is played with a bat and a ball. The fellow with the bat is called the batsman. The fellow with the ball is called the bowler. Have you got as far as that, Squiff?"

"Farther than that!" said Squiff calmly.

"Oh, good! Do you know the difference between a wicket and a duck's egg?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Squiff. "Will somebody show me the way to Mr. Quelch? I've got to see my Form-master."

"Oh, certainly!" said Bob good-naturedly. "I'm your man, Squiff."

"My name isn't Squiff!" exclaimed the Australian.

"My dear chap, you've started here as Squiff, and Squiff you'll remain!" grinned Bob.

"What is your name?" asked Bolsover major.

"Sampson Quincy Iffley Field."

"What!"

"Which!"

"How?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Life's too short for a name like that," he said. "We shall make it Squiff, and save time. This way to Quelch, Squiff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry led the way to the Remove-master's study. He knocked at the door, and Mr. Quelch's metallic voice bade him enter. Bob opened the door.

"Squiff, sir! I—I mean the new boy," said Bob.

"Oh, Field!" said Mr. Quelch. "Come in, Field!"

Field came in, and Bob Cherry retired, closing the door after him. Bob made his way up to No. 1 Study, the quarters of Wharton and Nugent.

There were big preparations going on in No. 1. The Famous Five intended to celebrate the First Eleven victory with a feed on an unusually large scale. They were in funds, and there were several hampers to be drawn upon, so that study feed was likely to be something of a record. Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were there; and a sturdily-built fellow with a rugged, good-humoured face, whom Bob greeted with great heartiness.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Old Trumper!"

It was Dick Trumper, of Courtfield County Council School, the old rival of the Remove fellows in cricket, and a good many other things. He had looked in to see the chums of the Remove on their return, and to make the arrangements for a forthcoming cricket match.

"Just in time for the feed, Trumper, old man!" said Bob. "We're going to knock spots off you at cricket."

Trumper grinned rather ruefully.

"I think that may turn out right," he remarked. "I was just speaking to Wharton about the match next week. Half

my team are away, and so the Courtfield eleven won't be in great form. So you may possibly pull it off!"

"Oh, we'd pull it off anyway!" said Bob cheerfully. "Don't you worry about that, Trumper. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What does that porpoise want?"

Billy Bunter blinked into the study.

"I say, you fellows, do you want any help with the cooking—"

"Thanks, no!"

"Can I assist you in any way—"

"No, thanks!"

"Ahem! Of course, I can't desert you on a special occasion like this!" said Bunter, coming into the study. "Toddy's just arrived. So's Mauly."

"Go and tell them to come here," said Wharton.

"Oh, certainly! I'll bring 'em along!" said Bunter, greatly relieved at not being ejected from the study "on his neck," as was very frequently the case when he invited himself to a feed. "Sha'n't be long, you chaps!"

The feed was ready when Billy Bunter returned with Peter Todd and Lord Mauleverer. Tom Brown and Penfold and Hazeldene had come in also, and Mark Linley, so the study was pretty well crowded. Vernon-Smith dropped in, and Bulstrode. It was a case of standing room only, but the juniors did not mind. The feed was going strong when Sampson Quincy Iffley Field came along the Remove passage, and glanced in at the open doorway.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's the cheerful youth who wants to play in the Remove eleven, and has just begun to study 'Cricket for Beginners.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want No. 14 Study," said Squiff. "Can you tell me where it is?"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "That's my study."

"Mine, too!" said Squiff.

"Do you mean to say they've put you into my study?" said Johnny Bull. "Fishy and I have had it to ourselves ever since Rake left. Look here, young hopeful, couldn't you get into some other study. You have him, Todd. He will tell you a lot of things about cricket."

"For beginners!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks. I've got one duffer in my study already," said Peter Todd. "Bunter's enough to turn a chap's hair grey. You have him, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Thanks. Bull can keep him. I don't want instruction in cricket for beginners!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come in, Squiffy," said Nugent hospitably. "Room for one more! Come and join in the feed; but don't tell us anything about cricket! We bar that!"

"Yes, come in," said Bob Cherry. "Your study's at the end of the passage. But come in and have a whack."

"Trot in," said Wharton.

"You're very good," said Squiff.

"My dear chap, you're more than welcome. Besides, it's an honour to us to entertain an authority upon cricket—for beginners!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff laughed, and came in. In spite of Squiff's awful cheek, as the Removites naturally regarded it, they had taken a liking to the young Australian, and Bob Cherry had quite forgiven him for the fall in the railway carriage. And the Famous Five were always kind to new fellows, if they were at all decent; and Squiff certainly looked a very decent fellow. Squiff joined in the feed with great heartiness, evidently having brought a good appetite with him from New South Wales. He joined, too, in the cheery chat, but when he ventured upon the subject of cricket, he was interrupted by roars of laughter. His studying "Cricket for Beginners" had become a standing joke, and the Removites declined to believe that he knew anything at all about the game.

"By Jove, there's a chance for you, Trumper, old man!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You're short of men for the match next week."

"Yes," said Trumper.

"We'll lend you Squiff. Play him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thank you for nothing," grinned Trumper.

But Squiff looked quickly at the Courtfield captain.

"Is that so?" he asked. "Where are you playing?"

"I'm playing these chaps," said Trumper. "And it's true that we're short in the team; but we're not looking out for beginners. Thanks all the same."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff looked thoughtful, but he said no more on the subject then. But when the feed was over, and Dick Trumper took his departure, Squiff joined him in the Close, and walked down to the gates with him.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY

FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE

COUPON.

M

343

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, GEM, No. 343, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.

See Page 26, "The Gem" Library, Number 343.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" In Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

"I'd like a little talk with you," said Squiff cheerily. "I'll come part of the way home with you, if you don't mind." Squiff had already learned all about Trumper.

"Certainly," said Trumper, with a smile. "Don't give me any instruction in cricket, though. I've got past the beginner stage."

But as it happened, it was about cricket that Squiff talked, as they walked down the Courtfield road; and what he had to say on the subject seemed to interest the junior captain of Courtfield very much. When they parted they shook hands very heartily, and Squiff returned to Greyfriars with a grin on his face. And Trumper was grinning, too, as he walked on homeward. Apparently, the two fellows had some little secret between them now; and, apparently, it was of a humorous nature.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Makes a Mistake!

FISHER T. FISH, the American junior, was in his study when Squiff came in. Johnny Bull, who shared that study with Fish, was still in No. 1. Fish looked round as the sturdy figure of Squiff was framed in the doorway. He grinned.

"Hallo! The great cricketer?" he remarked.

"Exactly," assented Squiff.

Fish laughed. Squiff and cricket seemed likely to remain a standing joke in the Remove, unless, indeed, the new boy should show that he could play the game up to the standard of the Remove. But nobody expected that to happen.

"I guess I hear that you want to play in the Form eleven?" grinned Fish.

"Why not?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, I don't play in the Form eleven," said Fish.

Squiff looked him over with a keen and critical eye. The weedy form of the Yankee junior did not seem to impress him very favourably.

"I don't suppose you do," he said. "You don't look much of a cricketer, anyway."

Fish stared at him. Fisher T. Fish prided himself upon a good many things, but especially upon the way he could play cricket. It is true that nobody else in the Remove saw any cause for pride in the way Fisher T. Fish played cricket. Fisher was always willing to show the fellows how they did things "over there" in the United States. But his performances were not exactly in keeping with his words.

"Waal, you cheeky galoot," said Fish. "I tell you I'm a first-rate, gilt-edged cricketer, sir, and I could show these mugwumps some points about the game, if they were willing to learn! As for you, you haven't got past the A B C of it yet."

Squiff grinned.

"Oh, don't stand there grinning like a Chinese idol!" said Fish irritably. "Buzz along. I guess I'm busy. Thunder! What are you dumping down those books in this study for?"

"My study!" explained Squiff.

"By gum! You don't mean to say they've planted you here?"

"But I do."

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Fish. "There really ain't room for three in this study. Couldn't you varnouse further along the passage?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Well, if you dig in hyer, you'll have to mind your P's and Q's," said Fish. "I can't stand cheek from anybody. I guess you're rather fresh for a new kid."

"Sorry!"

"Well, you toe the line, and you'll be all right," said Fish, beginning to think that the new boy would be very easy to handle. "Just you keep your place, and remember that you're only a new kid."

"Certainly."

"I guess I'm head of the study," went on Fish. "As a new kid, you will be expected to make yourself useful."

"Yes?"

"Yep! Frinstance, it's up to you to lay the tea-table, and wash up the things after tea," said Fish.

"Really?"

"You bet! Then you'll have to keep the study tidy, and look after the fire when we have one. In fact, a new kid like you will be expected to fag for the study."

"Anything else?"

"Yep! You can unpack those books for me. And go down into the hall and fetch a bag I've left there. You'll know it by the initials, F. T. F."

"Is that all?" asked Squiff calmly.

"I guess that's all at present. You'll be expected to do anything you're told," said Fish, quite pleased at the idea of being fagged for. Fish was not a fighting-man, but he was quite willing and ready to take the upper hand of a fellow who appeared to be disinclined to go on the war-path. He began to think that this quiet new boy would be in his hands like clay in the hands of the potter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"And suppose I don't?" asked Squiff.

"Eh?"

"Suppose I don't do as I'm told?" asked Squiff, as gently as the cooing dove.

"Oh, in that case I shall probably lick you with a cricket-stump," explained Fish. "I guess I shall consider it up to me to teach you manners."

"Then you'd better start at once," said Squiff cheerfully.

"I'm not going to fag for the study, not by long chalks."

"Hey?"

"I'm not going to wash up tea-things, and I'm not going to look after the fire, and I'm not going to fetch your bag up out of the hall," Squiff explained.

"By gum!"

"In fact, I'm going to do pretty much as I like in this study," said Squiff, "and if there is any licking with a cricket-stump there will be trouble—heaps of it."

Fisher T. Fish flushed red. He looked the new boy carefully over. The thin Yankee was taller than the new junior, but not nearly so fit. Squiff looked at him with a smile, and that smile caused Fish to imagine that he had a very easy person to deal with. Fisher T. Fish had made many mistakes, but he had never made a bigger mistake than that! He came towards the new junior, and flourished a bony set of knuckles under his nose.

"See that?" he inquired.

"Certainly."

"Well, I guess you'll get that on your nose, Master Squiff, if you don't hop down and fetch my bag instanter."

"Right-ho! I'm ready."

"Ready to fetch the bag?"

"No; ready to be dotted on the nose."

"You slabsided mugwump, haven't I told you I won't have any of your cheek?" roared Fish, crimson with anger.

"I guess I'll wipe up the floor with you, and teach you how to behave yourself as a new kid. I guess—"

"Hallo, is this a guessing competition?" asked Johnny Bull, coming into the study.

"This hyer galoot is giving me lip!" said Fish savagely.

"I'm not standing lip from any man-jack, sir, and I'm going to wipe up the study carpet with him. I guess I'll make him think his name is Dennis before I've done with him—just a few."

"Pile in!" said Squiff cheerfully.

"Yes, pile in!" said Johnny Bull, with a chuckle. "I'll see fair play. Rather a new thing to see you in the role of a warrior bold, Fishy! Pile in!"

"I guess I'm just going to begin," said Fish, hesitating a little as he observed that the new junior did not show any signs of funk.

"You're a jolly long time beginning," said Squiff.

"I guess—"

"Oh, cheese it; you're all gas!"

But that was too much for Fisher T. Fish. He made a rush at the new junior, hitting out with his bony knuckles. Squiff retreated round the study table, guarding his face; and Fish, encouraged by his retreat, pressed him harder.

All of a sudden Squiff halted, and his right came out like a flash. Fisher T. Fish caught it on the end of his long, sharp nose, and sat down on the carpet with a bump.

"Ow! By gosh!" gasped Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull. "Go for him, Fishy!"

"Ow! Thunder! Ow!"

"Come on!" said Squiff invitingly. "I kinder guess and calculate that you haven't really started yet. Come on!"

Fisher T. Fish scrambled painfully to his feet. He clasped his nose with both hands, and snuffled. It had been rather a hard knock, and Fisher T. Fish did not want any more. He mopped his nose with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief came away reddened.

"Ow!" snuffled Fish. "Grooh! I guess I've a good mind to make cat's-meat of you, you cheeky galoot! Grooh! But I guess I don't believe in being hard on a new kid. I'll let you off! Grooh!"

"I'm not asking to be let off," said Squiff.

"Grooh! I guess I'll let you off all the same. You needn't fetch that bag!"

Squiff chuckled.

"I left my bag down in the hall," he remarked. "Go and fetch it up. You'll know it by the initials S. Q. I. F."

"What-a-at!"

"Getting deaf?" asked Squiff. "Go and fetch my bag. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. You told me to fetch your bag, and tried to punch my nose because I wouldn't. Well, now I tell you to fetch my bag, and I'm going to punch your nose if you don't. See?"

"I—I—I guess—"

"You'd better guess that you'll fetch that bag," said Squiff.

"I reckon I'm not fetching any old bag!" roared Fish.
 "Then look out for your nose," said Squiff, advancing with his hands up.

Fisher T. Fish backed away in alarm. He cast an appealing glance towards Johnny Bull; but that youth was roaring with laughter, and not at all inclined to interfere. Fisher T. Fish's little attempt at bullying the new boy had recoiled upon himself, and Johnny Bull's opinion was that it served him right.

"I—I guess—" stammered Fish. "Hyer, hands off! I reckon I was only joking, you galoot!"

"Well, I'm not joking," said Squiff. "Are you going to fetch that bag?"

"Nope!" yelled Fish.

"Then here goes!"

"Hold on!" gasped Fish, scudding round the study table.

"I—I guess I don't mind lending a new kid a hand in getting his things straight. I'll go and fetch that bag!"

"Back up, then!"

And Fisher T. Fish fetched the bag. The expression upon

his face was very peculiar as he brought it into the study. Squiff nodded.

"Thanks!" he said. "Next time you rag a new boy, find out first whether he comes from New South Wales. We don't stand it in my part of the world, you know!"

Fisher T. Fish only grunted in response. He did not feel inclined to argue with the cheery youth from New South Wales. He had had quite enough of Squiff.

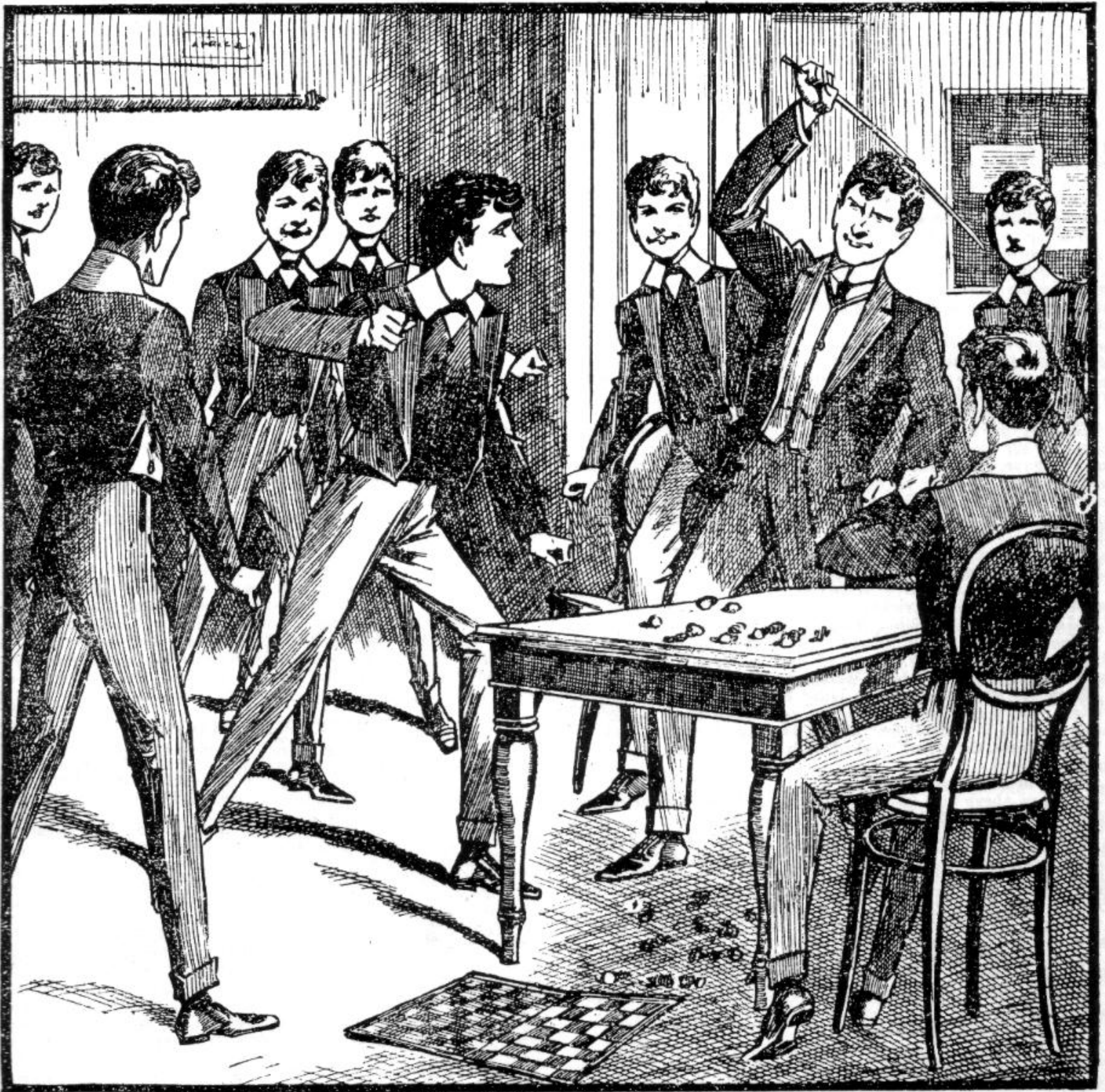
THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
 Mate in One!

"SHUSH!" murmured Bolsover major
 And the juniors "shushed" as Squiff came into the common-room.

Squiff looked round him rather suspiciously. The juniors were all grinning, and the new fellow could guess easily enough that he had been the subject of the conversation, that had suddenly stopped when he came in.



At the present time the thoughts of all patriotic British boys are centred upon the question of how they may best serve their King and country. The ambition to become a soldier of the British Army is naturally uppermost in thousands of breasts—and well it is for Britain that it is so! Our picture shows two recruits who subsequently become the one a Lifeguardsman and the other a Highlander—two of the finest types of soldiers in the world.



Swish! Horace Coker's cane whistled through the air, and descended upon Wharton's shoulders. The captain of the Remove gave a yell, and jumped up. His knees caught the chess-board, and it went flying, and the pieces and pawns shot off in a shower to the floor. "Mate in one!" gasped Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 6.)

He was quite right. The Remove were taking a great deal of interest in Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. That set of names, if nothing else, attracted attention. And the peculiar nickname Bob Cherry had manufactured from the Australian junior's initials stuck to him. He was never likely to be called anything but Squiff. And the opinion of the Remove was that Squiff was altogether too fresh for a new kid.

Most of the fellows liked his looks. He was so sturdy, healthy, and good-natured that they could not help rather liking him. But it was agreed on all hands that he had too much nerve for a new fellow, who hadn't been more than a few hours at Greyfriars.

New kids often wandered about the place like lost sheep, and were thankful if anybody took the trouble to speak a word to them. They would be very meek when they were put in a study, and have their best manners on towards the occupants of the study.

Not so Squiff! That young gentleman walked about as if the school belonged to him, looking like anything but a lost sheep. And his encounter with Fisher T. Fish was already the talk of the Remove. Johnny Bull had related it, and

the juniors had chuckled over the sudden downfall of Fisher T. Fish.

At the same time, it was agreed that Squiff was too cool. And the Removites unanimously agreed that a dormitory ragging, to take some of the cheek out of him, was a really excellent idea.

And so there was quite a little entertainment in preparation for Squiff that night in the Remove dormitory. On the night of a great cricket or football victory at Greyfriars both masters and prefects were less on the look-out than they became later. Many little freedoms were allowed. And the Removites intended to take advantage of that circumstance to put Squiff through a "course of sprouts," as Fisher T. Fish described it in the American language.

Probably Squiff guessed that there was something on, for the cheerful youth from the Antipodes had all his wits about him. But he made no remark upon the matter, preferring not to meet troubles half-way. He strolled over to the chess-table, where Wharton was playing with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The nabob was a past-master in chess, and he could give

Wharton a rook and win. Wharton was wrinkling his brows over a difficult situation when Squiff arrived and looked on. Several other juniors were looking on, too. And Bob Cherry remarked, with a chuckle:

"Let Squiff give you a tip, Wharton. I dare say he knows as much about chess as he does about cricket. Have you ever studied 'Chess for Beginners,' Squiff?"

And there was a laugh.

Squiff looked over the board.

"I could give you a tip, Wharton, if you like," he said.

"Oh, could you?" said Wharton, a little nettled, for he was in a fix, and could see no way out. "Go it, then! You don't mind, Inky?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned.

"Not at all, my esteemed chum. If the honourable and esteemed Squiff can give you the tipfulness, let him rip!"

"Bishop to rook's fourth," said Squiff.

Wharton examined the board again.

"By Jove!" he said. "That does it! Inky, old man, you're in the fix now!"

And the Nabob of Bhanipur admitted that the fixfulness was terrific.

Inky was mate in three. But the gleam of conflict was in the eyes of the dusky junior now. He looked up at Squiff.

"Perhapsfully you will play me a game, my esteemed Squiff?" he remarked.

"Pleasure!"

Wharton gave Squiff his chair, and the juniors gathered round to see how Squiff would shape against Inky. Inky politely gave him white, and Squiff opened with the Muzio gambit, Inky playing up to him. The youth from New South Wales evidently knew something about chess; for that opening, strong as it is, requires a good player to be made effective.

And when Inky was mated at the twentieth move, there was a buzz of surprise.

"By Jove!" said Harry Wharton. "Squiff isn't such an ass at chess as he is at cricket!"

"Mate, Inky!" chuckled Bob. "Oh, how could you?"

"The matefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ruefully. "My esteemed and ludicrous Squiff, you are a terror. You try him, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton sat down in Hurree Singh's place, and took white. He tried the four knights game. But at the tenth move he was in difficulties; at the twelfth, Squiff smiled.

"Wherefore the grin?" asked Bob Cherry, who was scanning the board.

"Mate in one!" said Squiff.

Just then there was an interruption. Horace Coker of the Fifth looked in at the door of the junior common-room, with a walking-stick in his hand. Coker of the Fifth glanced round, evidently in search of someone. The great Coker was apparently on the trail of vengeance, for having been made to lose his train at Lantham. But Wharton did not observe him; his eyes were on the chessboard.

"Blessed if I can see your mate in one!" he said. "I know I've got you mate in two, anyway!"

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Coker, striding up to the table.

Wharton looked up, and waved Coker back with an impatient hand.

"Don't bother now, Coker."

"What!"

"Run away; I'm busy!"

Coker of the Fifth almost exploded. To be told to run away by a Remove fag, because the said fag was busy, was a little too much for Horace Coker.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared Coker. "I lost my train at Lantham to-day—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"And I'm going to give you a licking."

"Do run away, Coker!"

Swish!

Horace Coker's cane whistled through the air, and descended upon Wharton's shoulders.

The captain of the Remove gave a yell, and jumped up. His knees caught the chess-table, and it went flying, and the pieces and pawns shot off in a shower to the floor.

"Mate in one!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton fairly hurled himself upon Coker. Big and burly as Horace Coker was, the attack made him stagger, and Wharton, hooking his leg in Coker's, brought the big Fifth-Former to the floor with a tremendous bump, sprawling over him.

Half a dozen Removites piled in at once, and Coker was seized by as many pairs of hands as could find room to seize him.

The Removites were indignant and decidedly "wrathy." Coker of the Fifth was a great man—according to Coker—but for a Fifth-Former to invade the junior common-room to

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

lick a junior was an outrage that was not to be tolerated for a moment. And the Removites proceeded to take it out of Coker.

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker, as the juniors piled on him. "Leggo! Lemme gerrup! You young villains—you awful sweeps! Yaroooop!"

"Bump him!" roared Bob Cherry.

More and more hands seized Horace Coker. The big Fifth-Former struggled furiously, but he struggled in vain. He was lifted from the floor, and bumped down, and he gave a tremendous yell. He was being bumped on the scattered pawns and rooks and bishops, and it was painful.

"Yaroooh! Oh! Yah! I'll smash you! Leggo! Yaroooop!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Chuck him out!" shouted Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha! Outside, Coker!"

"Great Scott! You young scoundrels! Leggo! I'll—I'll—I'll—Yow-ow-ow!"

Bump!

Coker of the Fifth sprawled in the passage outside the common-room. He jumped up, breathless and dusty and dishevelled, and foaming with fury. The doorway was blocked by a grinning crowd of juniors, and foremost among them was the new boy from New South Wales. They were ready for Coker!

"This way, Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Come and have some more!"

"Come on, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker looked for a moment as if he would charge through the crowded doorway. But the reception that was ready for him was a little too hot, and Coker changed his mind, and strode away. A yell of laughter followed him.

"Mate in one!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chess-game was hopelessly finished; and whether Wharton had really been mate in one, or Squiff had been mate in two, remained an open question. But there was no doubt whatever that Coker of the Fifth had been mate in one, as Bob expressed it, and both Wharton and Squiff were satisfied with that result.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Dormitory Ragging!

"BED!" said Loder of the Sixth, looking into the junior common-room. "Now then, get a move on, you young sweeps."

"Same old Loder!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"He hasn't learned any better manners yet."

"What did you say, Cherry?"

"Nice evening," said Bob Cherry affably. "It will be dry to-morrow if it doesn't rain. On the other hand, it will be rainy if—if it rains!"

"Take fifty lines, Cherry! Now get off to bed!"

The juniors cleared off. Gerald Loder saw lights-out in the Remove dormitory, and then hurried down to his study, where he was entertaining a little party. Loder was not likely to take any notice of noise in the dormitory that night, unless it was very pronounced indeed, as the juniors knew. They were not likely to be interrupted in dealing with the new boy.

After Loder's footsteps had died away down the passage Bolsover major sat up in bed. Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, was always to the fore when there was any ragging to be done. But on this occasion the Remove were all in it. Even the Famous Five, who were generally down on rags, saw no reason why the extremely cool youth from the Antipodes should not "go through" it.

"Up with you," said Bolsover.

The Removites turned out, with two exceptions. One was Billy Bunter, who never turned out of bed if he could help it. The other was the new junior. Squiff did not see any reason for getting up.

But he was very wide-awake, and his eyes were very wide open, as the juniors lighted candle-ends and bicycle lamps to illuminate the proceedings.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That kid isn't up!" said Bob Cherry. "Squiff!"

There was no reply from the Cornstalk.

"Squiff!" roared Bolsover major.

"My name's Field!"

"Never mind what your name is," said Bolsover major.

"You're Squiff now, and you've got to answer to the name of Squiff. Savvy?"

"Rats!"

"By George, if you say rats to me, I'll start the proceedings with a jolly good hiding!" exclaimed Bolsover.

"Rats!"

Bolsover major made a rush towards the new boy's bed

Bob Cherry promptly stepped into the way, and the burly Removite had to pause.

"Get aside, ass!" he rapped out savagely.

"Not this evening," said Bob calmly. "There's not going to be any hidings handed out, my son. This is a dormitory rag, but there's not going to be any bullying. Any silly ass starting bullying will be jolly well ragged himself."

"Look here—"

"Quite right," said Harry Wharton. "Don't be such a beastly bully, Bolsover!"

"Do you think I'm going to have that South-Sea Islander saying rats to me?" demanded Bolsover major fiercely.

"I don't see why not," chimed in Tom Brown. "I'm a South-Sea Islander, and I'll say rats to you fast enough, my pippin. Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, cheese it, Bolsover!" said Peter Todd. "We're going to teach the dear boy lessons for his own good, and bullying is barred."

Bolsover major grunted discontentedly, but he gave in; he had to. The Famous Five were joining in the fun, but they did not mean to have any bullying, and Bolsover major had to toe the line.

"Gentlemen!" said Bob Cherry, while Squiff sat up in bed, and looked on with an amused grin. "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! We find a new kid among us, who is altogether too fresh."

"Hear, hear!"

"For his own good; simply for his own good, and not at all for the fun of the thing, we are going to put that fresh young person through it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Squiff, you are called upon to rise to the occasion! Entirely for your own sake, we are going to initiate you into the mysteries of the Remove. You have probably heard that new kids in schools have to go through a process of initiation. If you pass the test, you will be declared a duly elected and esteemed member of the best Form at Greyfriars—that's us! If you show the white feather, you will be despised with universal despision, and condemned to associate with such persons as Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Arise, Sampson Quincy Iffley Whiffley Squiff!"

"Hold on," said Squiff coolly. "If this is a little game you work off on new boys, I don't mind going through it. You won't catch me showing the white feather. You can get on with your blessed initiation."

"Arise!"

Squiff grinned and arose.

"Gentlemen, form the court!"

The Removites, composing their faces solemnly, formed in a circle, into the centre of which Squiff was walked. Squiff did not seem to be impressed by the gravity of the proceedings. He more than suspected that the process of initiation had been invented for his especial benefit. As a matter of fact, it was a half-forgotten survival of an old custom, belonging to the rough old days when public school life was a great deal harder than at present. Bolsover major and Skinner and Snoop and one or two others would have been willing to revive the process of "initiation" in all its ancient roughness; but the Famous Five were there to see that they did nothing of the kind.

"Order in the court!" said Bob Cherry, who had constituted himself master of the ceremonies. "Russell, you are grinning."

"Was I?" said Russell, grinning more broadly than ever.

"You were—and are! Todd is appointed official executioner. Executioner, do thy duty! Two smites with a bolster!"

Whack! Whack! The executioner did his duty at once. Russell roared.

"Chuck it, you silly ass!"

"Silence in court! Did I see you grinning, Penfold?"

"I hope not."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The candidate was blindfolded, a handkerchief being tied tightly over his eyes. Then the Grand Master spoke in a deep and awe-inspiring voice.

"Silence!" exclaimed Bob. "Gentlemen, the court is now constituted. Our business is to examine the candidate for Remove honours, and decide whether he is fit to become a member of the ancient and honourable body known as the Greyfriars Remove. Squiff, stand forward!"

"Here I am!" said Squiff.

"What is your name?"

"You jolly well know my name!"

"Answer my question. I am speaking now in my capacity as grand master."

"Oh, rot!"

"Executioner, two smites!"

"Here, hold on!" roared Squiff, as the bolster descended. "I'll jolly well punch your head. Here, fair play, you rotters!"

Two juniors seized the warlike Squiff at once, and held him while he received the two smites.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"This is not a dog-fight," said the grand master, frowning. "The candidate has to answer questions, or he is handed over to the executioner. What is your name?"

"Ow!"

"Nonsense! I do not believe that is a name."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Candidate, what is your name?"

"Field."

"Front names?"

"Sampson Quincy Iffley."

"And what do you mean, sir, by coming to a respectable school with a set of names like that?" demanded the grand master severely.

The candidate was about to make a warm retort, but he saw the executioner ready with the bolster, and he restrained himself.

"Well, they're my names, you know," he explained meekly. "I'm named after my uncles—Sampson, Quincy, and Iffley. It wasn't my fault; I didn't do it myself. I was present at the christening, but I wasn't allowed a say in the matter."

"Very good. The candidate's explanation is accepted. But he is hereby given warning that life is too short for Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, and he will therefore answer to the name of Squiff."

"Oh, I don't mind! Any old thing!"

"Next question. Where were you born?"

"New South Wales."

"How old are you?"

"Old enough to know that that isn't your business."

"Two smites, executioner."

Whack, whack!

"Yaroooh!"

"Now," resumed the Grand Master, "is it your ambition to become an honourable and worthy member of the Greyfriars Remove?"

"Ow! Yes."

"Are you prepared to go through the test without showing the white feather?"

"Yes."

"Good! Gentlemen, the candidate has answered questions satisfactorily, and I move that we proceed to the test."

"Here, hold on—"

"Get out the gun!"

"Right-ho!"

Squiff gave a jump.

"You silly asses! Don't you fool around me with firearms! But I don't believe you've got any. Gammon!"

"This is the test, candidate. If you show the white feather you will not be admitted to the honourable company of the Remove. The gun will not go off. If there should be an accident, and your brains should be blown out, we shall all be very sorry indeed—but it is not likely to happen. It seldom happens. Have you got the gun, Hazel?"

"Here you are!"

"Present! Mind you don't press the trigger."

"I say," came a whispering voice, "it's loaded, you know!"

"That's all right."

"But it might—"

"Shush!"

"Gammon!" yelled the blindfolded junior. "I don't believe you've got a silly gun. You wouldn't be allowed to have one."

"The Cadet Corps of Greyfriars, Squiff, are provided with rifles. I repeat that there is practically no danger if you keep still."

"Oh, rats! Gammon!"

But Squiff gave a jump as a cold round rim was pressed hard to his forehead. As he was blindfolded, he could not see what it was, but he knew what it felt like. And he could not help a shiver running through his limbs for a moment.

"Finger on the trigger!"

"Right!"

"Keep still, Squiff, or it may go off!"

The round cold rim pressed harder on the forehead of the blindfolded junior.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Passed With Honours!

SQUIFF stood quite still.

He was breathing hard, but he did not move.

He no longer thought that it was "gammon." He knew that the cadet corps at the school would be provided with rifles, and that it would be easy enough for the juniors to smuggle one up into the dormitory if they chose.

17

NEXT
MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

And the cold rim pressed to his forehead felt exactly like the muzzle of a rifle.

"You silly asses!" said Squiff, in rather a strained voice.

"Is that thing loaded?"

"Is it loaded, Hazel?"

"I didn't look," said Hazel.

"Then mind you don't press the trigger."

"All right—I won't."

"Be careful!"

"Look here," said Squiff. "How long is this going to last? I don't like it. Just like you silly asses to have an accident."

"Are you showing the white feather, candidate?"

"No, I ain't, hang you! We don't grow the white feather where I come from. But I'll jolly well punch your head, all the same!"

And Squiff stood as firm as a rock. As a matter of fact, he was feeling decidedly uneasy, but he was determined not to show it.

"By Jove!" said Harry Wharton's voice. "He's standing it jolly well. No sign of the white feather."

"Bravo!"

"Will you take it away, you thumping asses?" said Squiff, in a suppressed voice.

"Take it away, Hazel!"

The cold rim was drawn from Squiff's forehead. He drew a breath of relief.

A few moments later the blindfolding handkerchief was taken from his eyes. He blinked round, dazzled a little by the light.

"You thundering asses!" said Squiff. "You thumping duffers! You ought to have a jolly good hiding all round for playing such tricks! I'm jolly well going to give you a licking, Bob Cherry. And I'm going to chuck that gun out of the window. You're not going to keep it here. Where is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's that gun?" roared Squiff. "I tell you, I'm going to chuck it out of the window. It's a bit too dangerous for you thundering duffers to play tricks with."

"Hand him the gun, Hazel," grinned Bob.

Hazel, amid a roar of laughter, drew a small tin cup from his pocket, and handed it to Squiff. The Australian junior took it mechanically, and stared at it blankly. The laughter of the Removites enlightened him as to what had really happened.

"You—you spoofing rotters!" howled Squiff. "Do you mean to say that there wasn't a gun at all?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you shoved this blessed tin cup against my napper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff's glare of wrath made the juniors almost double up with laughter.

"Only a little joke, Squiffy," explained Bob Cherry, as soon as he could speak. "You've come through the test very well. Some fellows have howled and yelled when they felt an egg-cup shoved against their forehead like that. You stood it well—very well indeed."

"You—you howling ass!" roared Squiff. "So you were spoofing me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff, greatly incensed, made a rush at Bob Cherry. Fully believing that it was the muzzle of a gun—which might have been loaded—pressed to his forehead, he had gone through several very uncomfortable minutes. It had been a strain on his nerves, and to find that there had been no danger after all was distinctly exasperating. His sudden rush took the raggers by surprise, and he closed with Bob Cherry, and was rolling over with him on the floor before a hand could be raised to intervene.

"Yaroo!" roared Bob. "Hellup! Draggimoff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A dozen hands seized Squiff, and he was dragged off. Bob Cherry scrambled to his feet.

"By Jove! I'll—I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "This isn't a dog-fight, Bob! Get on with the initiation."

Bob Cherry calmed down.

"Right-ho! The next test is the blanket test. Get a blanket."

Four juniors took a blanket by the corners, and Squiff was dropped into it. He sat up in the blanket, gasping.

"Look here—"

"Up with him!"

"I say— Yow-ow! Oh!"

Squiff shot up into the air as the blanket was swung upward. He came down again in the blanket with a gasp.

"Four times, and the Fourth right up to the ceiling!" said Bob Cherry.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" in Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

Up went Squiff again. It was the Australian's first experience of being tossed in a blanket; but he was quick enough to see that it would not hurt him unless he struggled. If he struggled, he was very likely to fall out of the blanket and get a nasty bump. His nerve was like iron, and he took it with great calmness. He had a peculiar feeling of floating in the air as he left the blanket, and he felt dizzy as he came down, but he landed squarely enough in the blanket. Up he went again, and again, and the fourth time he almost reached the ceiling, but his coolness was unshaken.

"Give him another," exclaimed Bolsover, "and let him roll out!"

"Rats! Don't be a bully! Squiff, you have passed the second test. You can get up."

Squiff got up, feeling a trifle dizzy, but otherwise quite himself. He was none the worse for his experience.

"Now, he's got to run the gauntlet," said Bolsover major.

"No he hasn't. Gentlemen, I put it to you that the candidate has passed the tests satisfactorily, and is entitled to be admitted as an honourable member of the Greyfriars Remove."

"Hear, hear!"

"Glad you're finished," yawned Squiff. "If you're done, I'll get back to bed. You can call this initiation if you like, but I call it playing the giddy ox! Rats!" And Squiff went towards his bed.

"I tell you it's not finished!" roared Bolsover major. "He hasn't half been through it yet. He's going to run the gauntlet!"

"Rot!"

"Shut up!"

"And he's going to be bumped!" said Bolsover major.

"Bow-wow!" said Bob.

"I'm not going to run the gauntlet, and I'm not going to be bumped," said Squiff. "'Nuff's as good as a feast! You can go and eat coke!"

"Then I'll jolly well bump you myself!" roared Bolsover. And he rushed at the new boy. Squiff snatched the pillow from his bed, and met the bully of the Remove with a mighty swipe, which sent him staggering back, to collapse in a heap on the floor, with a loud bump and a louder yell. And as he sprawled on the floor, Squiff rushed at him, and belaboured him with the pillow right and left.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad!" grinned Lord Mauleverer. "Bolsover is getting it in the neck—what?"

"Yaroo!" roared Bolsover. "I—I'll scalp you! I'll—"

He escaped from the swiping pillow at last, and leaped to his feet. There was a sudden shout:

"Cave!"

Footsteps were heard in the passage. There was a quick blowing-out of candles, and a rush into bed. The dormitory door opened.

"Ahem!" It was Mr. Quelch. "Ahem! I fancied I heard a noise here. Please let there be no disturbance to-night, or I shall be obliged—ahem!—to return!"

And the door closed again.

"Good old Quelch!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He knew there was a rag. He's a brick!"

"I'm going to lick that new cad now," growled Bolsover major.

"Quiet, you ass! Quelch's given us warning!"

"I don't care! I—"

"But we care!" said Tom Brown. "It means lines all round if there's any more row. Stick in bed, or you'll get a thumping yourself."

"Yaas, begad!"

"Shut up, Bolsover!"

"Well, I'll lick him to-morrow!" grunted Bolsover.

"You'll find me all there," chuckled Squiff. "You couldn't lick one side of me! I'm your mutton, with the wool on!"

And Squiff settled down calmly to sleep, not at all perturbed by the prospect of encountering Bolsover major's wrath on the morrow.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Cricket!

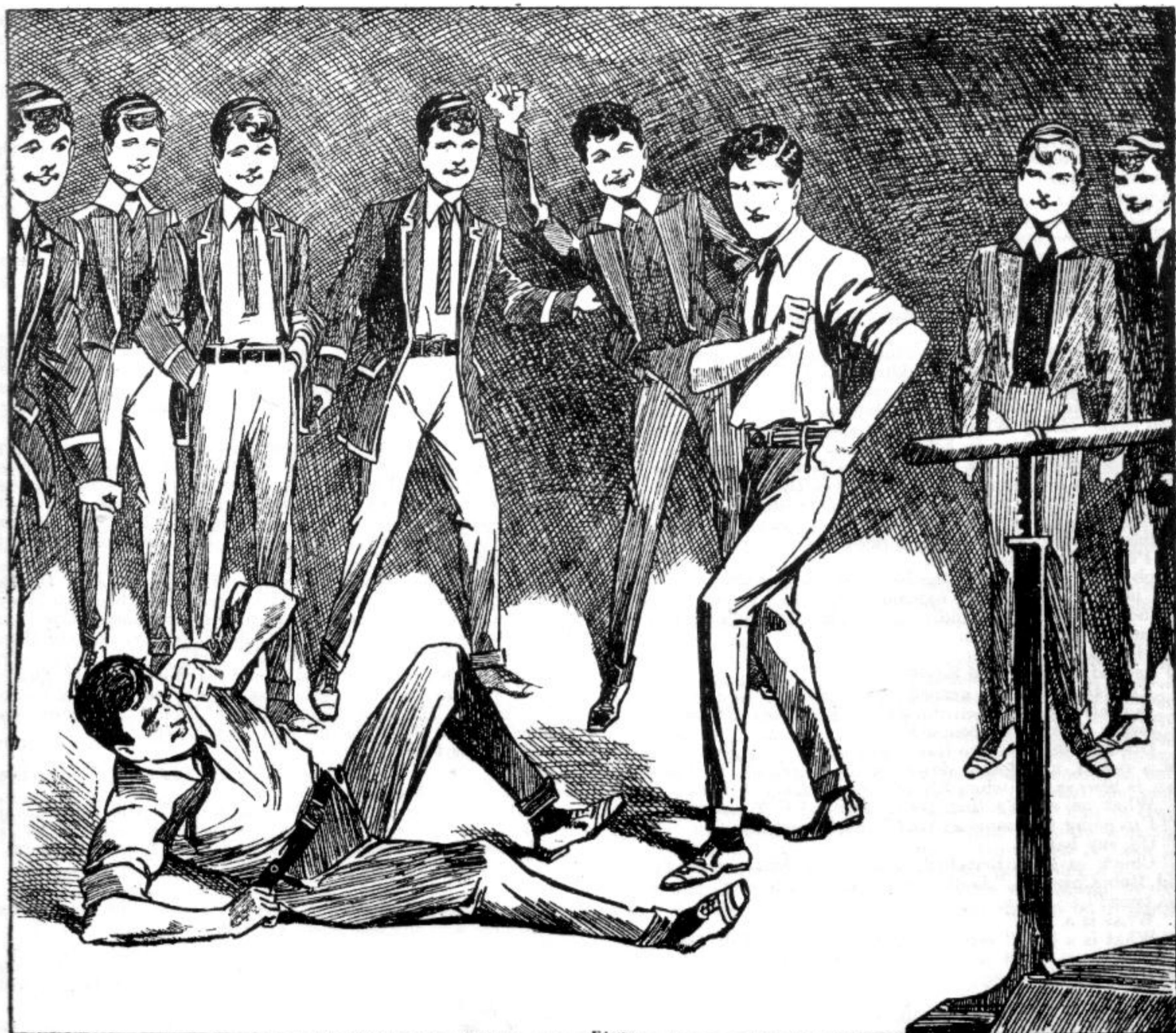
"COMING down to cricket?"

Bob Cherry slapped Squiff on the shoulder as he asked the question, as the Remove came out of their Form-room after lessons the next morning.

Squiff grinned.

"Certainly!" he said. "If I watch you fellows play, perhaps I shall be able to pick up a few tips about the game—what?"

"That's it," said Bob. "We'll be glad to give you any tips we can. Cricket's compulsory here, you know; fellows have to turn up to regular practice. Not that anybody ever



A heavy drive on the chin stopped Bolsover—and then for a couple of minutes the two juniors went it hammer and tongs. Crash! Bolsover major was down, and he lay where he had fallen, panting. (See Chapter 11.)

wants to cut it—excepting rotten slackers like Bunter and Snoop. You don't look like a slacker. No reason why you shouldn't learn the game. Not much time left, either. We shall be starting footer soon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Ahem! You're awfully good to offer to show me," said Squiff. "I'll come along with pleasure."

"Have you got a bat?"

"Oh, yes, I've got my outfit, though, of course, I can't be expected to use the things like you fellows do."

Bob looked at him suspiciously.

"Well, come along, and show us what you can do!" he said. "Fetch your bat!"

And Squiff accompanied the Famous Five to the cricket pitch on Little Side. A good many of the Remove went with them, curious to see how the new fellow would shape. Squiff looked over the cricket pitch with an innocent air as if he had never seen one before.

"Go to the wicket," said Bob. "I'll send you a few down, and we'll see if you can bat."

"The wicket?" repeated Squiff, as if he did not know what that was.

"Yes. You know a wicket when you see one, I suppose?"

"Well, yes," said Squiff. "But wait a minute. I'm learning this thing, you know, and I believe in being thorough." And to Bob's blank amazement, he took a book out of his pocket, and opened it with a thoughtful air. It was "Cricket for Beginners." And Squiff began to read out seriously.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

"The wickets shall be pitched opposite and parallel to each other, at a distance of twenty-two yards. Each wicket shall be eight inches in width, and consist of three stumps, with two bails on the top. The stumps shall be of equal and sufficient size—"

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Do you mean to say that you don't know all that already? And you had the blessed cheek to say you'd play in the Form Eleven! Oh, crumbs!"

"I'm a learner, you know," said Squiff meekly.

"Oh, get on the crease!"

"Which crease?"

"Eh?"

"There are two creases, you know; the popping crease and the bowling crease. The popping crease," went on Squiff, reading from his valuable book, "shall be marked four feet from the wicket, and parallel to it, and shall be deemed—"

"Cheese it!" roared Bob, dragging the new junior to the wicket. "Now stand there!"

"Yes."

"You've got to keep the ball from hitting the wicket—see?"

"Yes; I've been told that before."

"And you're only to use the bat to do it with."

"Mustn't I stop it with my boot?"

"You ass—that would be l.b.w."

"What's that?"

"Leg before wicket!" shrieked Bob.

"Oh!" said Squiff. "Then I mustn't put my leg before the wicket?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "And this is the merchant who was proposing to play in the Form Eleven! Carry him away and bury him, somebody!"

"Well, I'm trying to learn, you know," said Squiff apologetically. "I'm afraid I shall give you a lot of trouble. But it's very, very kind of you to teach me."

"Well, well, that's all right," said Bob, mollified. "You seem to be a frightful ass; but if you want to learn, I'll help you to any extent. It's up to anybody to help a chap who wants to learn to play cricket. I wonder you've never learned; they play a lot of cricket in Australia, don't they?"

"They do!" said Squiff.

"Then you ought to have picked it up. But it's never too late to mend. Now, then, don't stand like a sack of coke. Try to look like a human being, and less like a dummy."

"I'll do my best."

"Now, I'm going to pitch down a few. Try to stop them."

"I'll try."

Bob Cherry went to the other end. Squiff stood at the wicket, with a peculiar straddle, and holding his bat as if it were a spade. The juniors yelled with laughter as they looked at him. Even Billy Bunter knew more about batting than that. Harry Wharton kindly and patiently gave the new boy some instruction in holding a bat, and Squiff listened to it with great meekness. He was, in fact, so humbly patient and desirous to learn, that the chums of the Remove felt that it was up to them to take some trouble with him. Certainly, to judge from appearances, it would require a good deal of trouble to turn Squiff into a cricketer.

"Play!" chirruped Todd.

Bob Cherry sent down the ball. He sent down a very easy one, in order to give the batsman a chance. Squiff looked at it, and waved his bat wildly in the air, and the ball knocked the middle stump down.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that out?" asked Squiff.

"Yes, that's out!" gasped Wharton.

"Is it always out when the stumps are knocked down?"

"Great Scott! Of course!"

"Good; I'm trying to learn, you know." And Squiff took out a pencil, and jotted down on his shirt-cuff. "The batsman is always out when his wicket is knocked down."

"What on earth's that for?" demanded Wharton.

"I'm going to memorise that!" exclaimed Squiff.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Chuck us back that ball, and let the image try again!" said Bob Cherry. "Look out, Squiff! I'll bowl you a lob this time!"

"What is a lob?"

"What is a lob?" repeated Bob faintly. "Well, look at it, and you'll see what is a lob. I needn't ask you what is a howling idiot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry sent down a lob, and Squiff flourished his bat wildly in the air, and made a mighty smite at space. He spun completely round, and sat down on the ball, which had trundled up to the wicket. Then he gasped.

"Oh, dear! Great pip! Did I hit the ball, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You're sitting on it!"

"My word! So I am! There's a lot more in batting than meets the eye," said Squiff, as he got off the ball. "I think I shall want some practice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, you'll want some practice," gurgled Todd. "Just a little bit—just a little tiny bit! Just a decimal fraction."

"Let's see what he can do with the ball," said Wharton.

"Stand clear, you chaps—goodness knows where he will chuck it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll try!" said Squiff.

And he took the ball, and Wharton took the bat.

Squiff's preparations for bowling almost doubled the Removes up. He grasped the round red leather with the air of a fellow determined to do or die, and charged up to the crease and swung up his arm. But he did not bowl. He walked back again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you up to?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"That's all right. I'm going to make sure before I bowl."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff charged again, and this time he hurled the ball. There was a wild yell from Bob Cherry, who was standing a dozen yards away. The ball had caught him on the foot, and Bob hopped on one leg, and roared:

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the ball gone?" asked Squiff, looking round.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ask Bob Cherry!"

"Yow! Ow, ow!"

"Chuck it back!" said Squiff. "I'm going to try again! I feel as if I'm getting the hang of the thing now, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't give him that ball!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Hold him! Give me that bat, and hold him till I get to him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Squiff did not wait till Bob Cherry got to him with the bat. He walked off the pitch, whistling cheerily, leaving the juniors in convulsions, with the exception of Bob Cherry. Bob was the only fellow who could not see anything funny in Squiff's bowling.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Drops Squiff!

"WHERE'S Squiff?"

Billy Bunter asked that question after lessons that afternoon. The Owl of the Remove wanted to see Squiff, and apparently wanted to see him badly. But nobody seemed to be able to tell him where Squiff was.

Certainly, he hadn't gone down to cricket. In spite of the willingness of the Famous Five to help the new junior on with his cricket, they were not keen to get him to practise. Bob Cherry felt a twinge in his foot at the mere idea of it. Bob's opinion was that when Squiff wanted to practise cricket, he ought to go away to a desert island, and do it all by himself.

So Billy Bunter asked after Squiff in vain. And Bunter was very much annoyed. Bunter had come back to Greyfriars for the new term in his usual impecunious state, and though he was expecting several postal-orders, none of them seemed to have "materialised" yet. New boys were Bunter's game, and he had made hardly anything out of Squiff yet, so the Owl intended to devote quite a lot of attention to Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. And now the junior with so many names had disappeared.

"Where is that ass Squiff?"

"Gone out, I think," said Peter Todd. "I saw him carrying out a bat after lessons."

"What on earth did he want with a bat?" said Russell.

"Goodness knows! Perhaps he's going to read up about it in his book, and discover which end of it to take hold of," said Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's gone out," said Ogilvy. "I saw him go out of gates. He had his bat under his arm."

Bunter grunted.

"Gone out to get out of my way, I suppose," said Bolsover major. "He's dodging me! He knows I'm going to lick him!"

Peter Todd laughed. Squiff did not give him the impression of a fellow who would go out of his way to dodge even so awe-inspiring a person as Bolsover major.

Billy Bunter rolled down to the school gates to look for Squiff. Bunter was badly in want of ginger-beer and jam-tarts, and Squiff was the only possible source of supply. But it was quite an hour later that Squiff came in. He came striding along the road from the direction of Courtfield, with a healthy flush in his sunburnt cheeks and a bat under his arm and a smile on his face. Billy Bunter was still waiting for him.

"I say, Squiff, I've been waiting for you!"

"Good!" said Squiff. "You owe me three-and-sevenpence, I think!"

"Ahem! I—I wasn't thinking of that!"

"I was!" said Squiff.

"The fact is, Squiff, old man, I've been disappointed about a postal-order," Bunter explained, trotting in with the new junior, his little fat legs going like clockwork to keep pace with the Australian's vigorous stride. "I was thinking that, as you have plenty of ready cash—ahem!—you wouldn't mind—"

"Waiting for the three and sevenpence? All right!"

"H'm! I didn't mean exactly that. The fact is—"

"The fact is," said Squiff, "I don't believe in lending money or in owing money! You needn't settle up the tuck-shop account—I know you don't mean to, anyway! But you owe me one-and-three for your half of the cab yesterday, and I want you to square that up. Fifteenpence, please!"

"Of course, I'll square up if you like," said Bunter, with dignity. "Several fellows owe me a lot of money. I lent my last half-quid to Peter Todd, and Wharton owes me five shillings, and Bob Cherry owes me a quid from last term. I didn't want to worry them for the money—ahem!—at the beginning of the term. There's Lord Mauleverer, too. But

look here, you lend me half-a-quid now, and I'll square up when they settle with me!"

Squiff grinned. He had not known Billy Bunter very long, but he was beginning to understand him very well indeed. Squiff was "all there."

"I won't lend you any money!" said Squiff. "But I'll tell you what I will do—I'll show you how to get some."

"Good!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his big spectacles. "Pile in! I'm your man! How?"

"Make the fellows pay what they owe you!"

"Ahem! I don't want to bother them, you know—"

"Oh, that's rot!" said Squiff coolly. "If they owe the money, they ought to pay it. And they're flush with tin at the beginning of the term so it's just the time to tackle them."

"You—you see, I—I don't want to worry them! Besides, they're rather beasts, you know!" stammered Bunter.

"They—they might lick me if I dun them for it!"

"I'll see that they don't lick you," said Squiff. "I'll stand by you—after the way you stood treat to me yesterday, too. Rely on me! Come on!"

"I—I say— Where?"

"We'll try Lord Mauleverer first. I've heard that he's a millionaire, so there's no earthly reason why he shouldn't settle up the quid he owes you!"

"B-b-b-but—" said Bunter, in dismay.

"Oh, come on!" said Squiff, taking the reluctant Owl of the Remove by the arm. "I'll see you through!"

"Look here," said Bunter, "I'm not going to dun them! I'll let them keep my money as long as they like. I dare say you mean well, Squiff; but I can't have you interfering in my affairs like this! In fact, mind your own business!"

"I'm making this my business!" said Squiff composedly.

"I'm not going to see you done, Bunter! I suppose they really owe you the money—what? If you've been lying to me, I shall take you by the neck and lay this bat round you! Have you been lying?"

"N-n-n-no!"

"Then come on!" said Squiff. "I'll take you round to all the bounders, one after another, and make them settle up the money they owe you!"

"Oh, really—"

"This way!" said Squiff. "There's Mauleverer over there. We'll start on him. When he squares up that quid you can square up my fifteenpence. See?"

And, with an iron grasp upon Bunter's arm, Squiff led the dismayed Owl of the Remove up to Lord Mauleverer. The schoolboy earl was chatting outside the School House with Vernon-Smith, and he glanced in some surprise at Bunter's dismayed face, as Squiff marched him up.

"Bunter wants you to settle," said Squiff.

"Begad! Settle what?"

"The quid you owe him!"

"Begad!"

"I—I—I— It was a—a mistake!" stammered Bunter.

"M-m-mauly doesn't owe me a quid! I—I really meant to say that I owe Mauly a quid! That's what I really meant!"

"Oh, that was what you meant, was it?" said Squiff.

"You shouldn't make those mistakes, Bunter. You're liable to get a bat laid round you! We'll try Wharton, then. There's no reason why Wharton shouldn't settle up the five bob he owes you from last term. Come on!"

And Squiff marched the dismayed Bunter off to the cricket-field, leaving Lord Mauleverer and Vernon-Smith laughing.

Harry Wharton was looking on while Nugent bowled to Johnny Bull, when the Australian junior came up with Bunter. Squiff tapped him on the arm.

"Hallo!" said Harry. "Want to play cricket again? Would you mind waiting till we're finished, so that we can get out of danger?"

"I'm not thinking of cricket just now. I'm helping Bunter to collect some money that is due to him," said Squiff. "He's going to settle up fifteenpence he owes me when you've paid him the five bob you borrowed of him last term."

Wharton jumped.

"Five bob! I! Why, what—"

"I—I—I—I don't exactly mean that, you know!" faltered Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, it—it wasn't Wharton at all!"

"You fat Ananias!" growled Wharton wrathfully. "If you say that I owe you money—"

"It—it was a mistake; you know! Squiff is so hasty!"

"Then there's Bob Cherry," said Squiff.

"Me!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Bunter wants the quid you owe him!"

"Oh, I owe Bunter a quid, do I?" said Bob Cherry, his eyes gleaming. "I'll give Bunter what I owe him—with interest!"

"Yow! Ow, ow!" roared Bunter, as Bob Cherry took hold of his fat ear. "Leggo! Yow! Ow! I—I didn't mean that, you know! It was Squiff's mistake!"

"Do I owe you a quid?" demanded Bob, compressing his grip on Bunter's ear.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

NEXT MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

"Yow! Ow! No."

"Do I owe you anything?"

"Grooh-hooh! No!"

"Then you can have that for nothing," said Bob, giving Bunter's fat ear a final twist, eliciting a wild yell from the fat junior.

"Bunter seems to be making a lot of mistakes," Squiff remarked calmly. "But there's still Peter Todd."

"Oh, there's Peter Todd, is there?" asked the owner of that name.

"Yes; Bunter lent you his last half-quid—"

"Did he?" said Todd, with gleaming eyes.

"Well, he says so; but perhaps it was another mistake."

"Yes, I think it must have been a mistake," said Todd, taking Bunter by the shoulders and jerking him away from Squiff. "Do I owe you a half-quid, Bunter?"

"Nunno!"

"Then why did you say I did?"

"It—it was a—a—a mistake—"

"You mustn't make those mistakes," said Peter Todd.

"When you make mistakes like that, Bunter, I feel it my duty, as head of the study, to teach you to be more careful. I'm going to kick you all the way to the School House."

"Ow! Yow! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter roared as Todd's boot came into heavy contact with his person. He broke into flight, and Todd chased after him, letting out his feet alternately, and at every kick Bunter uttered a wild yell. There was a roar of laughter from the cricketers as the two juniors disappeared in the distance, Todd dribbling Bunter across the Close like a football.

"Dear me!" said Squiff. "Bunter seems to make a lot of mistakes. It seems that nobody owes him any money at all, and I shall never get my fifteenpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd came back to the cricket-field with a flushed face, but a satisfied expression, as of a fellow who had done his duty, and done it well. He had done it very well indeed; and the Owl of the Remove found it very painful to sit down for some time afterwards. But he did not make any more attempts to extract loans from the new junior. It dawned upon Billy Bunter that Squiff had made that round of debt-collecting with humorous intent, and he felt that the youth from New South Wales was too hard a nut for him to crack. Indeed, Bunter stated to all who would listen to him that he was "done" with Squiff. He had intended to take the fellow up, Bunter explained, and look after him a bit, but under the circumstances he felt that he was bound to drop him. And Squiff seemed to be quite satisfied to be dropped.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Lost Ball!

SQUIFF joined the Remove fellows when they went down to the cricket on Saturday afternoon. He had his bat under his arm, and so, apparently, intended to play some more cricket. There was no match that afternoon, but the Remove cricketers intended to put in some practice to get into form for the match with Courtfield the following week. The match with Trumper & Co. of Courtfield County Council School was the first match of the term for the Remove, and they meant to win it. As Trumper's team was not up to its usual form, owing to many of the fellows being away, the match was not likely to be a difficult one; but Wharton did not mean to leave anything to chance. Trumper & Co. were great cricketers, and the match with them was generally one of the toughest in the Remove list of fixtures.

"What are you going to do with that bat, Squiff?" asked Nugent.

Squiff looked at him.

"Practise!" he replied.

"Ahem!"

"I understand that cricket practice is compulsory here," said Squiff. "Cherry told me so the other day."

"Hum!" said Bob. "That's quite right. But the fact is, Squiffey, we don't want to be lamed or brained."

"Well, I'm bound to get some practice," said Squiff.

"If I brain you or lame you, of course, I shall be sorry. But a chap has to take his chance. Besides, there's a chap coming to see my practice—a chap named Trumper—the fellow who was here the other day. If you won't let me play for the Remove, I'm going to see if I can play for Trumper, and I want him to see how I shape."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Trumper!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he spotted the Courtfield captain coming in at the

21

gates. "I didn't know you'd got so chummy with Trumper, Squiff."

"Why not?" said Squiff. "Trumper's a jolly decent chap, and he knows something about cricket."

"One of the best!" agreed Bob Cherry. "But he's as likely to play you in his team as—as Wingate is likely to play you in the First Eleven."

"Oh, I don't know! Look here, you don't want me in the Remove team—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle!" said Squiff. "Do you want me, or don't you?"

"Ha, ha! No, thanks!" yelled Wharton. "Not just now!"

"Then if Trumper likes to play me, you can't raise any objection."

"If Trumper wants you to brain him, my dear chap, it's Trumper's bizney; but I should think he could find an easier way of committing suicide."

"Then there's no objection?"

"Ha, ha! None at all."

"Then I shall play for Trumper if he'll have me, and do my best against your lot next Wednesday," said Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trumper joined the Removites as they reached the cricket-field.

"Come to see Squiff at cricket?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing. "Well, it's rather dangerous to let him go, but we'll give you a chance to see him. It's worth seeing—better than anything I've ever seen on the cinema."

Trumper laughed.

"Well, he looks like a cricketer," he remarked.

"Well, yes," said Harry, with a glance at Squiff's active and well-knit frame. "He ought to be able to play, and he comes from a place where they play jolly good cricket, I know. But he can't play for toffee!"

"Send him down a few, Trumpy, old man," grinned Bob.

"I don't mind," said Trumper.

Bob Cherry tossed him the ball. The Removites gathered round with great glee, but they were careful to keep at a safe distance. There was no telling what Squiff might do with either bat or ball.

Squiff took up his position at the wicket, holding the bat by the extreme end of the handle, and leaning over it in the form of a semicircle. His attitude at the wicket made the juniors shriek. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth came to look on, and Coker of the Fifth condescended to stop on his way to Big Side to look at Squiff. The fame of Squiff's cricket had spread through Greyfriars, and fellows came from all quarters to see him. Temple of the Fourth said that it was funnier than the front page of "Chuckles," and the other fellows agreed with him.

"Play!" gurgled Bob.

Trumper sent down the ball, grinning. Squiff made a wild sweep in the air with his bat, and it flew from his hands, described a circle in the air, and dropped upon the turf. The wicket was down before the bat landed on the ground. Squiff looked round in a surprised sort of way.

"Where's my bat?"

The juniors shrieked.

"I say, that doesn't count, does it?" asked Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I'm not in practice yet—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try again!" said Trumper. "Field that ball, somebody."

Bob Cherry tossed the ball back to Trumper, and set up the bails again. Then he retreated for safety. A cricket-bat flying through the air was not safe, and Bob did not want to have his brains knocked out, even for the fun of watching Squiff play cricket.

Trumper bowled again, and Squiff swept his bat round in a circle. The ball did not hit the wicket, but the bat did, and all three stumps flew out of the ground.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that out?" asked Squiff.

"Out?" gasped Wharton. "Yes, I should rather say so!"

"But the ball missed the wicket—you call it a wicket, I think?"

"Yes, we call it a wicket. But don't you see that you've thumped it down with your bat, you ass? That's out!"

"Wait a minute! I'm going to make sure of that," said Squiff, with a wise air; and he drew out his famous book and opened it.

The juniors screamed with laughter as he read aloud:

"The striker is out if in playing at the ball he hit down his wicket with his bat or any part of his person or dress." Yes, that's right enough! I suppose that would be out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't seem to get on with the batting," said Squiff.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" In Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

"There's nothing to laugh at, Trumper. Everything has to have a beginning, and I'm studying 'Cricket for Beginners,' you know. In a short time I expect to know all about it. Just you see what I can do with the ball, that's all."

"Run for your lives!" shouted Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a hasty scudding back as Squiff took the ball, and Trumper went to the wicket. Trumper was almost doubled up with laughter. The whole thing seemed to strike him as even funnier than it seemed to the Greyfriars juniors.

Squiff grasped the ball, took a quick run, and turned himself into a sort of amateur catherine-wheel, and the ball flew. It did not fly towards the wicket, however. It flew over Squiff's own head, and there was a rustling sound as it swept through the leaves of the trees in the Close at a considerable distance.

"Well bowled!" roared Bob Cherry. "Lost ball! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lost ball!" said Squiff. "There's something about that in the rules." Out came his book again, and he read loudly: "If a ball in play cannot be found or recovered any fieldsmen may call 'Lost ball!' and six runs shall be added to the score—"

"But which side takes the six runs?" asked Squiff. "It doesn't seem to say that in the book."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Has somebody got another ball?" asked Squiff. "Of course, you needn't count the six runs, as this is only practice; but I want a ball to bowl with, you know."

Bob Cherry brought out another ball, and handed it to Squiff and retreated.

"Go it, Squiffy!"

Squiff "went it." This time the ball whizzed away over the cloisters, and disappeared from sight.

"Lost ball!" shrieked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give me another ball!" said Squiff. "I'm jolly well going to take that wicket!"

"You're jolly well not going to lose any more balls!" howled Bob Cherry. "Cricket balls cost money, my son!"

"But I've got to practise—"

"Then you'd better order down a ton of cricket balls to start with. You can run away and play now. We've got to find those blessed balls. What do you think of Squiff's cricket, Trumper? Would you like him in your team?"

"Oh, I could make a cricketer of him!" said Trumper. "I'll take him in hand, if you like, and we'll see the result. You come along with me, Squiff. We're practising on the common this afternoon. Nothing like seeing really good play to help you on."

"I'm your man!" said Squiff.

And he walked away cheerfully with Trumper.

"Hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "You'd jolly well better find those balls you've lost before you clear off, you ass!"

But Squiff seemed suddenly deaf. He walked away, and disappeared with Trumper, and the Removites had the pleasure of hunting for the lost leather before they began their afternoon's practice.

Trumper chuckled gleefully as he walked away down the Courtfield road with Squiff. Funny as Squiff's cricket seemed to the Greyfriars fellows, Trumper seemed to think it funnier still.

"Well, what do you think of my cricket?" grinned Squiff.

"Will you play me next Wednesday?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Trumper. "I'll play you!"

Which would have astonished the heroes of the Remove very much if they had heard it.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Major is Surprised!

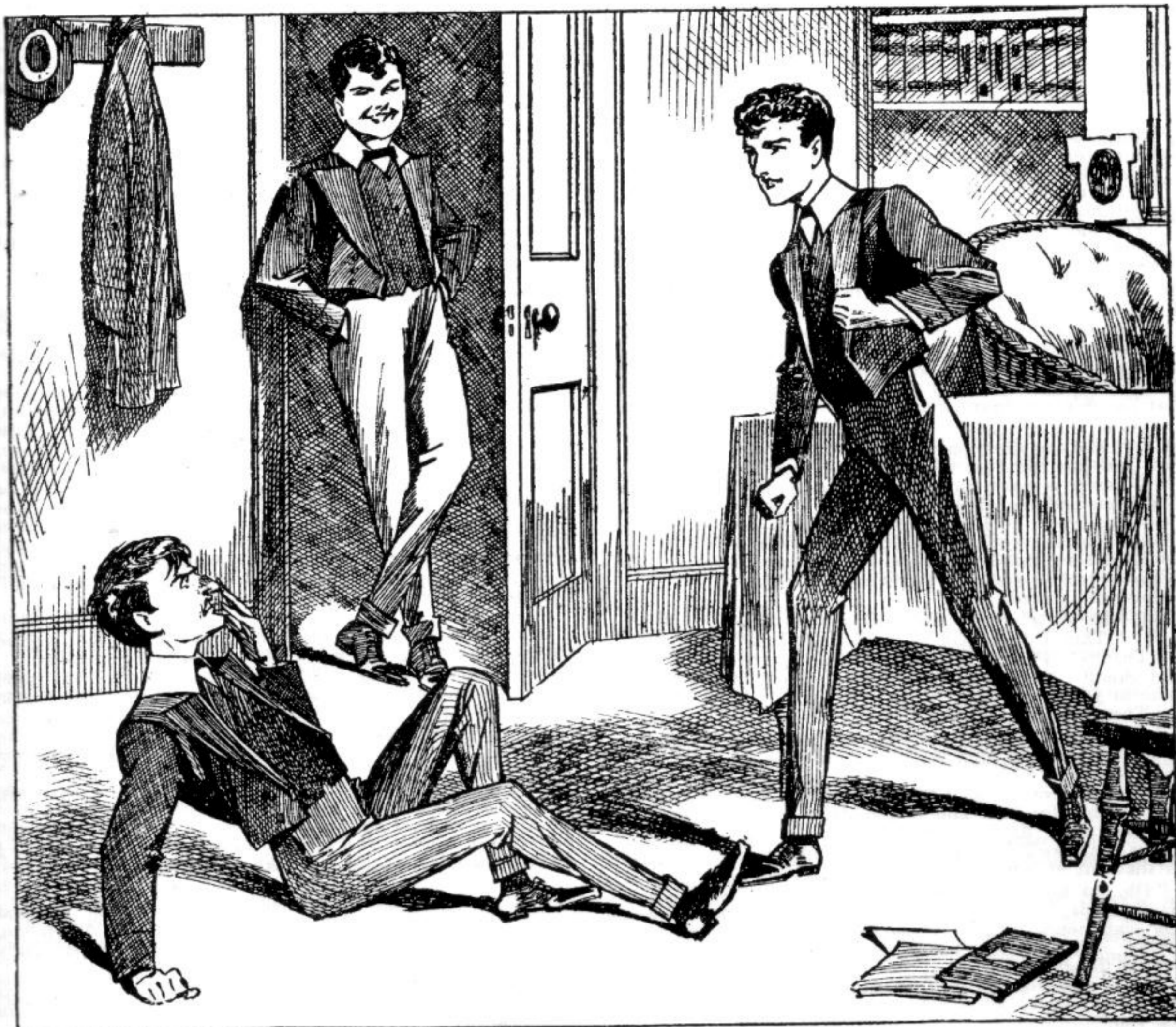
"HERE comes the silly ass!" said Bolsover major.

The bully of the Remove made that remark loudly enough for Squiff to hear it as the new junior came towards the School House, with his bat under his arm.

There was a group of Remove fellows outside the School House, chatting, when the Australian came back from Courtfield. Squiff glanced for a moment at Bolsover major, but made no reply to the remark.

Ever since the ragging in the dormitory on Squiff's first night at Greyfriars, Bolsover major had been extremely unpleasant to the new junior, and seemed bent on provoking him into a quarrel; but Squiff had kept the peace so far.

But Bolsover was far from attributing that to its real reason—a desire to keep the peace. His idea was that the new junior was afraid of him, and that was reason enough for Bolsover to desire to bully Squiff. The Australian's self-confidence irritated Bolsover major. A good many fellows thought that Squiff was altogether too cool for a new kid,



All of a sudden Squiff halted, and his right came out like a flash. Fisher T. Fish caught it on the end of his long, sharp nose, and sat down with a bump. "Ow! By gosh!" gasped Fish. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull. "Go for him, Fishy!" (See Chapter 5.)

but Bolsover major seemed to take it quite personally. He had informed his friends that he intended to take Squiff down a peg or two and put him in his place; and Skinner and Snoop and the rest applauded his intention.

"Been playing cricket at Courtfield—eh?" said Bolsover, as Squiff would have passed him without replying to his offensive remark.

"Yes," said Squiff.

"Must be silly asses to waste their time on you!" said Bolsover. "You seem to have got jolly thick with those Courtfield fellows all at once!"

"Quite so!" assented Squiff.

"Perhaps Trumper's going to play you against the Remove next Wednesday?" sniffed Bolsover.

"Perhaps!"

Bolsover paused. It was really difficult to pick a quarrel with a fellow who persisted in speaking politely and not taking offence. But it was the case of the wolf and the lamb over again, though Squiff was not exactly a "lamb," as the bully of the Remove was destined to discover.

"Well, I don't believe you've been out to play cricket," said Bolsover at last. "You've been keeping out of my way."

"Keeping out of your way!" repeated Squiff.

"Yes."

"Well, you're not exactly a thing of beauty, and it's not what I should call a pleasure to look at you," said Squiff calmly. "But I shouldn't take the trouble to keep out of

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

your way. Faces like yours can't be helped, and a fellow has to put up with them."

There was a giggle from Skinner and Snoop and Stott, and Bolsover's face turned a dull red with anger.

"You cheeky young rotter!" he exclaimed. "You've been skulking out of the way because I owe you a licking, and you know it!"

"Oh, is that it?" asked Squiff cheerfully.

"Yes, that's it!"

"All serene! I've been skulking out of your way because you owe me a licking," said Squiff. "Now that's settled, perhaps you'll get out of my way. I want to go in to tea. I'm hungry."

"You're jolly well not going to get out of the licking, all the same!" roared Bolsover. "You're a rotten funk!"

"Anything else?"

"I'm going to lick you."

"Good! You won't be satisfied, I suppose, till you've done it?"

"No, I sha'n't!" said Bolsover, somewhat puzzled by the new junior's calmness. For a funk, Squiff certainly looked very cool and composed.

"Well, in that case, the sooner I get it over the better!" said Squiff resignedly. "I don't want any trouble with you, Bolsover—"

"I dare say you don't!" sneered the Remove bully; "but you're going to get it all the same. You're too fresh for a new kid, and you want teaching manners."

"But you couldn't teach me manners."

"Couldn't I? I'll jolly well—"

"You see, you haven't any yourself," explained Squiff.

There was another chuckle from Snoop & Co. They were rather enjoying it. Bolsover did not quite seem to be a match for the new junior with his tongue, whatever he might be with his fists. The burly Remove glared round at his followers.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Ahem!" murmured Snoop.

"Shut up! If you want something to cackle at, you can watch me wipe up the ground with this cheeky sweep!"

"Hadn't we better get into the gym?" asked Squiff.

"We sha'n't be interfered with there, you know, and you want to make a thorough job of it, don't you?"

"You want a chance to dodge off!" growled Bolsover.

Squiff laughed.

"No; I'm going to see it through," he said. "Come into the gym, and give me that awful licking. I'll grin and bear it if I can."

"I'm coming!" grunted Bolsover, more and more puzzled. He wondered whether there was more in Squiff than he had supposed. But he was a head taller than the Australian, and much bigger in every way, and it really did not seem that Squiff would have any chance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting them on the way to the gym. The Famous Five had just come off the cricket-field.

"Bolsover is going to lick me," said Squiff. "He thinks I've been dodging it, and he doesn't mean to let me get away this time. So I'm going through it to get it over. No good having these things hanging about, you know."

"Look here, Bolsover, let him alone," said Harry Wharton. "You're too big for him, and it's not fair play."

Bolsover sneered.

"If the kid's afraid, and says so, I'll let him off," he said. "Then I'll just pull his ear for his cheek. But—"

"Thanks! I've an objection to having my ears pulled," said Squiff. "I'd rather have the licking, if it's all the same to you."

"Then come on, and don't jaw!"

"You fellows can come and see fair play," suggested Squiff. "You can stop Bolsover before he quite kills me, you know."

"Oh, we'll come!" said Wharton. "But look here, Squiff, he's too big for you, and if you don't want to fight him, you need not. As for pulling your ears, and so on, if he begins that, we'll give him the frog's-march, and soon take all that out of him."

"Oh, let him rip!" said Squiff. "I've been in a good many scraps, but I've never been licked yet. It will be a new experience, and new experiences are always worth having. Shall we have the gloves on, Bolsover?" They were in the gym now.

"No!" growled Bolsover. "This won't be a fight. You can't stand up to me for two minutes. I'm just going to lick you."

"Just as you like. Rounds or not?"

"No, you ass! You couldn't last a round."

"Please yourself!" yawned Squiff. "Will you hold my bat, Cherry? One of you might take my jacket. Thanks! Now I'm ready to be slaughtered, Bolsover."

The chums of the Remove looked on in perplexity. They were quite ready to chip in and put a stop to Bolsover's bullying; but they could not chip in against Squiff's own wish. He had to have his way. And his coolness indicated that he had no fear of the result of the combat. But if he could stand up against the burly Bolsover, his boxing would have to be very different from his cricket.

The juniors formed a ring, with eager faces. The Australian's coolness impressed them, in spite of themselves, and although they did not think he would have a chance of victory, they knew that he would fight as long as he could stand. And the "mill" was likely, therefore, to be one of unusual interest.

"Go it!" sang out Snoop. "Smash him, Bolsover!"

"You'd better have the gloves on," said Harry Wharton.

"If the kid's afraid of being hurt, he can have the gloves on!" jeered Bolsover. "I don't mind!"

"Thanks! I'm not afraid of being hurt!" said Squiff.

"Pile in! I'm waiting to go in to tea, you know, and you're wasting time."

"You won't feel much inclined for tea when I've done with you," said Bolsover, pushing back his cuffs. He did not trouble to take his jacket off.

"Oh, come on, and not so much gas," said Squiff.

Bolsover grunted with wrath, and rushed at him. The Famous Five looked anxious; they fully expected to see Squiff swept off his feet by that rush. And they liked the Australian junior, and did not want to see him hammered by the bully of the Remove.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

But there was no occasion for anxiety, as it happened. Squiff was "all there."

He side-stepped with sudden quickness, and Bolsover blundered past him, and as he passed Squiff's right came out like a hammer, and caught the burly junior on the side of the jaw. Bolsover tumbled over like a felled ox, and crashed on the floor. There was a gasp of astonishment from the onlookers.

"My hat!"

"I'm blown!"

"By gum!" murmured Fisher T. Fish. "What a sock-dolager! And that's the galoot I came near scrapping with, by gum! I guess I was lucky to get off—just a few!"

Bolsover sat up dazedly. He put his hand to his jaw, and blinked round him. A circle of grinning faces looked down on him.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bolsover.

Squiff looked at his watch.

"I don't want to hurry you, Bolsover," he remarked.

"But it's past tea-time, and I'm hungry. Is this the finish?"

"The—the finish!" Bolsover scrambled up, red with rage.

"I'll finish you!"

He tore off his jacket and hurled it to the floor. Then he rushed at Squiff like a bull, his big fists hammering out. Bolsover was a bully, but he had plenty of pluck. That knock-down blow would have sickened a good many fellows, but it had only whetted Bolsover's appetite, as it were. Squiff had no chance of avoiding the rush this time—but he did not seem to want to. He stood up to it, his eye clear and steady, his guard perfect, and Bolsover's rain of blows never reached him. Squiff backed away a few steps, and that was all. A heavy drive on the chin stopped Bolsover, and then for a couple of minutes the two juniors "went it" hammer and tongs.

Crash!

Bolsover major was down again, with a crash that seemed to shake the floor. He lay where he had fallen, panting.

Squiff was breathing a little hard now, but he was quite cool. There was a cut on his lip, and a bruise on his cheek, but that was all. Bolsover's nose was streaming red, and one of his eyes was closing, and the other persisted in winking painfully. The bully of the Remove blinked up at the cool Australian.

"My word!" he gasped. "Oh, crumbs! You—you beast, where did you learn to hit like that!"

"Oh, we're hard hitters in New South Wales, you know," said Squiff calmly. "I offered to have the gloves on. I fancied somebody would get hurt, somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bolsover!" yelled Snoop, not with the slightest belief now that Bolsover major could lick the Australian, but with a secret inward keenness to see the Remove bully thoroughly licked.

Bolsover staggered up. He had had enough; he could not see Squiff very clearly, and he did not want to "go it" in the least.

"Done?" asked Squiff.

"Ow! Yes, I'm done," said Bolsover major. He hesitated a moment, and then held out his hand. "You're a good man—a dashed good man, and I'm sorry I jumped on you!"

Squiff shook hands frankly enough with his opponent.

"Good man!" he said. "All serene! A little tiff like this only makes fellows better friends. I think I'll go in to tea now, if you'll excuse me."

Bolsover went ruefully to bathe his nose and eyes, and Squiff put on his jacket and walked cheerfully out of the gym. Bob Cherry thumped him on the shoulder with a chuckle.

"You blessed fraud!" he exclaimed. "You never let on that you could scrap like that! Do you know, I was letting you off a licking, because you were a new kid, and—ahem!—I think perhaps now I was letting myself off!"

"Perhaps you were!" grinned Squiff. "Only I should have had more trouble with Bolsover if he'd been cool; he was in too great a hurry, that's all. I'm much obliged to you for letting me off a licking—though I think I could have looked after Sampson Quincey Ifley Field."

"I think you could!" grinned Bob. "But I'll have the gloves on with you after tea—only in a friendly way, you know."

"Right-ho!"

And after tea nearly all the Remove adjourned to the gym to see Bob Cherry and Squiff with the gloves on. It was a friendly but a very tough "scrap," and it ended with honours easy. And as Bob was a celebrated fighting-man in the Remove, Squiff's prowess won him a great deal of respect among the juniors.

"What I can't understand," said Bob, as he peeled off the gloves, "is why a fellow who can scrap as you do should be such an ass at cricket!"

Squiff chuckled.
 "Perhaps you'll see me play a good game of cricket some day," he suggested.
 "Perhaps," said Bob doubtfully. "I should be jolly glad to, but there doesn't seem to be much chance of it!"
 "You never can tell," said Squiff easily.
 But Bob Cherry shook his head with a smile. He would require a great deal of convincing before he could believe that Squiff, with all his powers in other directions, would ever make a good cricketer.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Bunter Smells a Rat!

"IT'S jolly queer!"
 Thus William George Bunter.
 And Peter Todd, who had just come into No. 7 Study, and heard that muttered remark, asked:
 "What's jolly queer, Fatty?"
 Billy Bunter blinked up through his big spectacles. It was Tuesday afternoon, and lessons were over for the day. It was getting near tea-time, but Billy Bunter, for once, was not thinking about tea. He was sprawling in the armchair in No. 7 Study, with a deep wrinkle of thought in his fat brow.
 "Hallo, Todd! I—I was only thinking!" Bunter stammered.
 "Only," said Todd, "first time I've ever known you do anything of the sort. What's jolly queer, you fat bounder?"
 "I wasn't thinking of your face—"
 "Why, you cheeky porpoise—" exclaimed Todd indignantly.
 "It's about Squiff," said Bunter. "I mean that fellow Field, you know. Isn't it jolly queer? He's gone out again."
 "Nothing extraordinary in Squiff going out, is there?" asked Todd.
 "He's taken his bat with him."
 "Well, I suppose he's taking it for a walk, as he can't play cricket with it," said Todd. "I don't see that you need worry your poor little brain about it!"
 "It's jolly queer!" said Bunter, rising. "So-long!"
 Bunter waddled out of the study. He was in a very thoughtful frame of mind, but he did not feel inclined to confide his thoughts to Peter Todd. If Todd had guessed what was at the back of Bunter's mind he would probably have descended upon him in great wrath with a cricket-stump.
 Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting outside the School House, when Bunter came out. Bunter paused, and blinked at them.
 "Squiff hasn't been playing, has he?" he asked.
 The juniors laughed. They always laughed when they thought of Squiff and cricket at the same time.
 "No," said Bob. "He seems to have chucked practice, unless he's doing it along with the Courtfield chaps. I wish them joy of him."
 "Jolly queer that Trumper should bother his head about him, ain't it?" said Bunter.
 "Well, he's a good-natured chap."
 "Squiff is just the sort of fellow one would take to be a good player, from his looks," Bunter remarked.
 "Appearances are deceptive," Harry Wharton remarked.
 "He always takes his bat out with him," said Bunter, "and he always goes down towards Courtfield. I've noticed that."
 "You generally do notice things that don't concern you," said Bob. "What have you got in your fat napper now?"
 "Oh, nothing!" said Bunter. "Queer, though, wasn't it, the way Squiff chummed up with Trumper, when he hasn't been here a week yet."
 "Why shouldn't he? Trumper may be teaching him something about cricket—and he certainly needs it."
 "He was saying something about playing for Trumper on Wednesday."
 "That was a joke, of course. Trumper wouldn't be such an ass. Why, Squiff plays cricket worse than you do."
 "Oh, really, Cherry! I think it's odd his chumming up with that Board-school bounder—"
 "That what?" asked Bob, taking Bunter by the collar.
 "Are you alluding to Trumper, who is worth fifty thousand of a fat, lazy toad like you, Bunter?"
 "Ow! Yow! Leggo!"
 Bob Cherry let go, after giving Bunter a whirl with his powerful arm. Billy Bunter spun six yards away and collapsed on the ground. He scrambled up, and shook a fat and furious fist at the grinning Co., and waddled away towards the school gates.
 "Beasts!" he murmured. "And asses—silly asses! I believe I've jolly well spotted the little game—rather! And if I have, I'll jolly well make that beast Squiff shell out—rather!" And Bunter chuckled a fat chuckle as he rolled away down the Courtfield Road.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Bunter did not go so far as Courtfield. He climbed to the top of a little knoll, whence he could obtain a view of the common where the Courtfield fellows played cricket after school hours. It was an hour later that Billy Bunter rolled back to Greyfriars, and he was grinning as he went, as if over an excellent joke.

When he came into the School House, the grin on his fat face was so pronounced that several of the fellows noticed it.
 "What's the matter with you, porpoise?" asked Peter Todd. "Been squeezing an extra big loan out of somebody?"

"I've been for a walk," said Bunter—"just a little trot down towards Courtfield. He, he, he!"

"Well, what are you he, he, heing about?" demanded Todd.

Bunter chuckled again,
 "I could tell you something if I liked," he remarked.

"Lies, most likely!"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"The fat bounder looks as if he's found something out," remarked Bolsover major. "What is it this time, Tubby?"

"I know what I know," said Bunter mysteriously.

"That's not much, anyway."

"I dare say I could surprise you fellows. Perhaps some fellows are taking you in, and perhaps they ain't," said Bunter.

Bolsover and Todd looked astonished. The fat junior's remarks were decidedly mysterious.

There was no doubt that Bunter had found something out, or thought he had. And when the Owl of the Remove was in possession of information, he never could keep it to himself.

Even when he wanted to keep the secret, his desire to show off his knowledge was too much for him.

"What are you talking about?" Bolsover demanded.

"I dare say you'll find out—in time."

"Blessed if I'm going to take the trouble to find out, you fat ass!" yawned Bolsover; and he walked away.

"He, he, he!"

"Stop going off like a cheap alarm-clock, duffer," said Todd. "If there's any joke on, why can't you tell a fellow, instead of cachinnating like that?"

"He, he, he! I know what I know!"

"Fathead!" said Todd.

And he turned away, not sufficiently interested in what Bunter knew, or didn't know, to take the trouble of pumping the fat junior.

Bunter snorted. He was really desirous of keeping his secret, if secret it was; but, at the same time, he felt an irresistible desire to make a display of secret knowledge. But the entrance of Squiff just then turned his thoughts in another direction. He rolled up to the Australian at once.

"Hallo, Squiffy! Finished your practice?"

Squiff started a little.

"Practice?" he said.

"Yes," grinned Bunter. "Practice! Cricket practice!"

"So you've been practising out of doors, Squiff?" asked Bob Cherry.

Squiff nodded calmly.

"Yes. You asked me to go away and practise on a desert island, you know. There are no desert islands going; but I found it all right on Courtfield Common."

"I don't quite see how you could practise by yourself, though."

"I met Trumper and some of the Courtfield chaps," explained Squiff. "They were kind enough to take me in hand."

"Jolly good-natured of them, I must say, considering the way you play!"

"Yes, considering the way I play!" assented Squiff.

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo—hallo—hallo! What is that image cackling about?"

"He, he, he! Will you come over to the tuckshop, Squiffy?"

"No, I won't!" said Squiff.

"I'll stand treat!" said Bunter.

"Rats!"

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Rot!"

"And you can advance me a few bob on it," said Bunter calmly. "I should really like you to, Squiffy!"

"I dare say you would," said Squiff, with a laugh. "But I'm not going to do it. I know you and your postal-orders, you see!"

"And I know you and your cricket!"

"Eh?"

"I saw you at practice," said Bunter. "I happened to be coming along the Courtfield Road, Squiffy, and I saw you."

In fact, I watched you for an hour or more. It was very interesting—very!"

Squiff's expression changed.

"You fat, spying beast——" he began.

"He, he, he! I suppose a fellow can take a walk on the common if he likes!" chuckled Bunter. "It doesn't belong to you, Squiffy. Will you come to the tuckshop?"

"No, you fat rotter!" said Squiff, frowning.

"All right; then I'll tell the fellows what your practice was like."

"We know what it's like," said Bob Cherry. "You can't describe anything funnier than we've seen already, Bunter!"

"He, he, he!"

"Hold on!" said Squiff. "I—I don't want—I mean, I'll come to the tuckshop with you if you like, you—you oyster!"

"Come on!" said Bunter.

Bob Cherry looked after them in surprise. After the exhibition Squiff had given of his cricket prowess on Little Side at Greyfriars, Bob did not see why he should mind what Bunter had to say about his performances on Courtfield Common, in company with Trumper & Co.; but Squiff evidently did mind.

He was plainly angry at Bunter's having spied on him, and he was yielding to the fat junior's demand to keep him from talking about what he had seen. And Bob could not help feeling puzzled. However, he reflected that it was no business of his, and dismissed the matter from his mind.

Squiff entered the tuckshop with Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove proceeded to give an extensive order. Mrs. Mimble, however, made no movement to supply him with the numerous articles he ordered. Mrs. Mimble looked very grim.

"Don't you hear me, Mrs. Mimble?" exclaimed Billy Bunter irritably. "Ginger-beer, and jam tarts, and cake—quick! I'm hungry!"

"You haven't paid up your old account yet, Master Bunter," said the good dame, with great firmness. "You know I have told you I shall let you have nothing without the money!"

"Field's paying."

Mrs. Mimble looked inquiringly at the Australian junior. Squiff did not look as if he felt very friendly towards Bunter at that moment; but he nodded.

"Give the fat beast anything he likes up to two bob, ma'am," said Squiff, throwing a two-shilling piece on the counter. "That's all you'll get out of me, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Squiff, if you put it like that, I shall decline to let you stand treat at all!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Well, I do put it like that."

"Ahem! Under the circumstances, I can overlook your bad manners, Squiff. I'm afraid that two bob won't be enough, as I'm hungry!"

"Two bob will have to be enough," said Squiff quietly.

"You know what I'm giving it to you for, Bunter. And if you don't keep your silly mouth shut, after I've bribed you, I'll give you such a hiding that you won't be able to crawl round for a week afterwards. I mean that. Keep it in mind!"

And Squiff walked out of the tuckshop without deigning another glance at the fat junior.

Bunter blinked after him furiously; but his fat face cleared as he started on the tarts and ginger-beer which Mrs. Mimble supplied in exchange for the two-shilling piece. There were several fellows in the tuckshop, and they regarded Bunter very curiously, wondering what was "up" between him and Squiff.

"What's the little game?" asked Bulstrode. "What is Squiff giving you money for, Bunter?"

"It's a loan," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow——"

"Oh, ring off that!"

"Some fellows can take my word," said Bunter loftily.

"Not fellows who know you," chuckled Bulstrode.

"Squiff ought to know you better by this time. Blessed if I can understand it! Looks to me as if you're screwing this money out of him somehow!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"So it does to me," said Skinner. "Bunter has all sorts of ways of screwing money out of chaps. It's rather rotten for Bunter to be squeezing cash out of an innocent youth from New Zealand, or wherever it is. Under the circumstances, I think we ought to help Bunter finish the tarts!"

"Oh, really Skinner—— Skinner, you beast, let my tarts alone!"

"I agree with Skinner," said Snoop, collaring a tart with each hand. "Bunter is up to some dirty trick, I'm sure of that. My word, these are ripping tarts!"

"Jolly good!" agreed Skinner, with his mouth full.

"Topping!" murmured Bulstrode, who had also helped himself.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

"You—you rotters!" yelled Bunter. "You—you burglars! Leave my tarts alone! You—you—you blessed thieves! You—you——"

But while Bunter was wasting his time in talking, the three juniors were scoffing the tarts; and Bunter ceased to speak, and wired in at top speed himself. But more than half the tarts were "scoffed," and Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop in a state of breathless indignation. He looked for Squiff, and found the Australian in his study.

"I say, Squiff——" began Bunter, blinking in at the door.

"Clear off!" growled Squiff.

"I—I've been robbed! They've been scoffing my tarts——"

"Serve you jolly well right, considering the way you got 'em!"

"Of course, I'm going to settle up that two bob out—out of my postal-order to-morrow. I should utterly refuse to accept money from you, Field, as you ought to know. But you can hand me out another two bob now, and I'll square it up all together!"

"Not a red cent!" said Squiff.

"Very well. If you refuse to oblige me in the matter of a small loan, of course, you can't expect me to keep your beastly secrets! As a matter of fact, I don't approve of your trick of spoofing people——"

"You'll hold your tongue," said Squiff. "I'll stand you another bob to-morrow if you like. That's the limit!"

"To-morrow won't do!"

"And if you say a single word," said Squiff impressively, "look out for squalls, that's all. I'll break a cricket-stump over your fat caracase! I mean it! Let me hear a single word about what you've been spying out, and the licking you'll get will be a record!"

"Look here——"

"Now get out of my study!"

And Squiff forthwith bundled Billy Bunter neck and crop out of the study, and slammed the door after him.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter, putting his collar straight in the passage. "Yah! Beast! I'll jolly well go and tell—ahem!—no, I won't! I suppose a bob to-morrow is better than nothing, in—in case my postal-order doesn't come. And—and the beast would wallop me—the rotter—and—and I don't think I could lick him—ahem! Beast!"

And Bunter's secret, whatever it was, remained untold.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trumper's Recruit!

THE next day was Wednesday, and a half-holiday. That afternoon the Remove were playing the Courtfield team, who were coming to Greyfriars for the match.

Harry Wharton & Co. were very keen about that match; and Squiff seemed very keen about it, too. After morning lessons, the chums of the Remove went down to the pitch for a little final practice before dinner, and Squiff accompanied them. He looked on while the juniors were at the nets, with his hands in his pockets, and a critical expression on his face.

When they came off, he joined them.

"Well, what did you think of the cricket, O judge?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Not bad," said Squiff.

"Not bad!" murmured Wharton. "No. Not quite what you're used to, of course; but not bad. Thanks awfully! Praise from Squiff is praise indeed."

"You shape pretty well for juniors," said Squiff.

The chums of the Remove stared. For a fellow who knocked down his own wicket and bowled a ball over his own head, to tell them that in his opinion they shaped pretty well, very nearly took their breath away.

"Oh, don't talk out of the back of your neck," growled Johnny Bull. "What do you know about cricket, you duffer?"

"Well, I'm learning," said Squiff. "I'm reading up 'Cricket for Beginners,' you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've been having some practice with the Courtfield chaps, too!"

"Any casualties?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be a good match," said Squiff, unheeding.

"It will," agreed Wharton. "Not that you know anything about it, Squiff."

"But we shall beat you, I think," added Squiff.

"Eh!"

"What!"

"I think we shall beat you," said Squiff.

"You—we—who?"

"Our team," said Squiff. "Didn't I mention to you the other day that I should probably be playing for Courtfield?"

Another Grand Instalment of "A WORLD AT STAKE" in Next Week's "MAGNET" Library.

You said there was no objection, although I'm a member of the Remove. Trumper being short of men, you know—"

"Short of brains, too, if he played you!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The shortfulness of the brainful Trumper would be terrific," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

"Well, he's playing me."

"Oh, come off!"

"Fact!" said Squiff.

"Don't be funny," said Wharton warmly. "What do you tell us that for? You can't expect us to swallow it, I suppose."

"You can swallow it or not, as you like," said Squiff calmly. "But Trumper's going to play me. Why, you offered him my services yourselves—don't you remember?—in the study—"

"Trumper couldn't be such a thumping ass," said Harry Wharton, in astonishment. "I know he's a good-natured chap; but that would be carrying good-nature too far. It simply means a wicket thrown away."

"It's gammon!" said Johnny Bull. "Trumper isn't playing him, of course."

"Honest Injun!" said Squiff.

"Well, my hat! If you really mean it—"

"Haven't I said honest Injun?"

"Well, then, Trumper must be dotty!" said Bob Cherry, with conviction. "Stark, staring, raving, dangerous dotty!"

"The dottiffulness must be—"

"Terrific!" grinned Nugent.

"He must be potty," said Wharton. "It's throwing the match away. One wicket will make all the difference. The duffer will throw his wicket away—he can't bowl—and he will be a passenger in the field. I can't understand what Trumper's doing it for. If it's good-nature, it's time he was stopped. What the dickens will his team say about it?"

"They're all agreeable," said Squiff.

"Oh, rot!"

"I put it to them," said Squiff. "If anybody had raised an objection, I should have slid out. But they all said they'd be glad to have me."

"Then they must all be as dotty as Trumper," said Wharton, in blank amazement. "Trumper's seen you at practice."

"Yes; that's his reason."

"He knows that you're a howling idiot—"

"Thanks! Same to you, and many of them," said Squiff imperturbably.

"I mean at cricket. You play worse than Bunter. You don't know how to play at all. You are simply a dangerous duffer with a cricket-ball. I don't half like this," said Wharton, frowning. "It looks as if Trumper wants to turn the match into a farce. I think cricket ought to be taken seriously. If Trumper is doing this for a joke on us—"

"They'd hardly throw a match away for a joke," said Bob.

"It's just good-nature, I suppose—good-nature gone mad." Squiff shrugged his shoulders.

"You may find that I've improved a bit," he suggested.

"Oh, rot!"

Billy Bunter met them as they went in to dinner. He turned his big spectacles upon Squiff with a meaning look.

"Lend me a bob, Squiffy?" he asked.

Squiff tossed a shilling to the Owl of the Remove, and walked on into the dining-room. The astounding information imparted by the Australian junior soon spread; and at the Remove table, at dinner, Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was the cynosure of all eyes. Why Dick Trumper, who was a splendid cricketer, and knew all about the grand old game, should think of playing a duffer like Squiff was a mystery. Indeed, some of the fellows persisted that the Cornstalk must be gammoning. Or else, Tom Brown suggested, he had gone to sleep and dreamed it.

But if Squiff was gammoning, he kept it up, and if it was a dream he evidently believed it would come true; for after dinner he changed into his flannels, in readiness for the match. The sight of Squiff coming out of the house in spotless white, with his bat under his arm, evoked a general chuckle.

"Still dreaming?" asked Tom Brown pleasantly.

Squiff nodded.

"Wake up before the Courtfield fellows come," grinned Bulstrode.

"Either he's dreaming, or we're dreaming, or Trumper's got sunstroke or something," said Bob Cherry. "Play that duffer—that rank chump! Rats!"

"We'll know when the Courtfield chaps get here," said Nugent. "Until Trumper tells us so with his own mouth, I sha'n't quite believe he's such an idiot."

The Remove eleven proceeded to the cricket-ground to wait for the Courtfield team there. Squiff went down to the pavilion with them, cool as a cucumber, seemingly not at all disturbed by the curious glances that were cast at him. The news was spreading, and fellows of other Forms came to see Squiff in flannels. He certainly looked very fit and well in flannels, but the juniors were thinking of the exhibition he had made on the cricket-ground, and they could not help

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 343.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

laughing. They were anxious for Trumper to arrive, for the mystery to be cleared up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!" exclaimed Bob Cherry at last.

The Courtfield crowd were entering the gates. They came down to Little Side. There were a dozen of them. And the Removites greeted them with a general shout:

"Is it true?"

"Is what true?" asked Trumper.

"Are you playing Squiff?"

"Squiff! Oh, Field? Yes."

"You're playing him?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, scarcely able to believe his ears. "You're going to play that howling ass—against us!"

"Certainly! Field tells me that he's asked you whether there was any objection, as he's a Greyfriars chap, and you gave your consent."

"Oh, there's no objection! It's not that. But what are you doing it for?" asked Wharton dazedly. "Isn't there a born idiot you could find in Courtfield, without coming here for one?"

Trumper laughed.

"Perhaps you haven't judged him quite correctly," he suggested. "I know something about cricket, you know. I think he'll do. If you don't object to a member of the Remove playing in a Courtfield side—"

"Not a bit! If you were short of a man, we'd offer you one," said Wharton. "But we could offer you something better than that. There's Bolsover major, or Ogilvy, or Russell—"

"Quite satisfied with Field, thanks!"

"But—but why?"

"Well, you see, my team's a bit below the usual strength," explained Trumper. "Some of the fellows are away. I've had to put in several reserves, and so we're not quite up to par. So we're glad to have Field."

"Quite dotty!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Quite a hopeless case."

The Courtfield fellows grinned. The Famous Five looked at them—Grahame, and Wickers and Buller and Solly Lazarus and the rest—all seemed to be quite satisfied with Trumper's selection of that extraordinary recruit. It was simply an amazing mystery, and the Remove fellows confessed that they gave it up.

"Well, it's your own look-out, I suppose," said Harry Wharton at last. "I warn you that you're chucking the match away."

"We'll chance it," grinned Grahame.

"Yeth, rather!" said Solly Lazarus, with a fat chuckle. "Let's get to bithneth, dear boys, and we'll thee how it turns out."

"We jolly well know how it will turn out," said Bob Cherry. "But it's your own bizney, I suppose. Pile in!"

"We're ready," said Harry.

The two skippers tossed, and Trumper had the best of it, and elected to bat. Round Little Side there was a crowd much larger than usually gathered to see a junior match. For Squiff's fame as a cricketer was spread far and wide, and fellows came from all quarters to see his performance. They confidently expected that, if he distinguished himself in any way, it would be by braining the wicket-keeper, or crippling a fieldsman. Fellows of the Fourth and the Shell and the Fifth came down to Little Side, prepared to laugh themselves breathless.

"Man in!" said Trumper.

He signed to Squiff, and went out to the wicket. There was a general gasp of surprise as Squiff followed him to the pitch.

"He's opening the innings with that—that image!" said Bob Cherry, passing his hand across his brow in a dazed sort of way. "Is this a giddy dream?"

"The dreamfulness of the esteemed Trumper must be terrific, and the wakefulness will be a shock to him!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Get into the field," said Harry. "Mind that ass doesn't brain you when you keep wicket, Bulstrode!"

"I'll give him a jolly wide berth, I know that!" said Bulstrode.

"He'll smash his wicket, and it will be one down for nought," said Bob Cherry. "Trumper must be an awful ass to start with a duck's egg! I thought he had some sense."

Wharton tossed the ball to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Get that silly ass out first ball, Inky! We don't want the match turned into a blessed comic cinema."

"The outfulness will be terrific!" promised Inky.

The crowd were already laughing. Squiff, who was to receive the first over, had taken up his position at the wicket in his usual extraordinary manner. He was leaning over his bat in the form of a U upside-down, with his legs wide apart, and looking about as helpless to deal with a ball as a batsman

27

NEXT
MONDAY—

"RUCTIONS AT HIGHCLIFFE!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early!

possibly could look. The Remove cricketers went into the field, accompanied by a chuckle from the spectators. The Courtfield batsmen, in a group outside the pavilion, were grinning, too. Indeed, if Squiff had purposely intended to look as funny as possible, he could not have succeeded better.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh grinned as he gripped the ball, and prepared to bowl. He meant to knock out that absurd batsman with the first ball. And the ball came down from the dusky hand like a whizzing shell.

Then, all of a sudden, a change came over that absurd-looking batsman. He straightened up, his hands took a business-like grip on the bat, and the willow gleamed in the air as it swept to meet the ball.

Smack!

"He—he's stopped it!" gasped Bob Cherry, almost falling down in his astonishment.

"M-m-my hat! They're running!"

"Running, by Jove!"

They were. For that swipe of the bat had driven the ball far out into the country, and the batsmen had run four before it came home. And the bats were safe on the crease in good time, and the Greyfriars fellows rubbed their eyes, and wondered if it was a dream.

"Four!" stuttered Bob. "That—that idiot has taken four! Four! First ball of the first over—four! Well, that beats the band!"

"Extraordinary fluke!" said Nugent.

Of course, it was a fluke—there wasn't a Greyfriars fieldman who had the slightest doubt about that. And they watched Inky again, prepared to see the wicket knocked into smithereens. But it was noted that the batsman had abandoned his absurd attitude now, and was standing up to the bowling in a business-like manner. And when the ball came down, with lightning speed, the willow glanced to meet it, and the leather shot away past point and cover-point, and the batsmen were running again.

Two—and they made good! Nugent sent in the ball, and Inky caught it. But the Nabob of Bhanipur was not grinning now. There was quite a serious expression upon his dusky face. Inky was a first-rate bowler, and he knew when he was facing a first-rate bat; and he knew it now.

And Wharton knew it.

He knew that the second stroke was no fluke, even if the first had been, and he knew that the smiling Australian standing at the wicket was as good a bat as any in the Remove—as good, if not better. And one word dropped from Wharton's lips:

"Spoofed!"

Clack! Willow and leather met again, and Wharton was not surprised to see the ball disappearing against the blue, and the batsmen running, once—twice.

"Spoofed! The awful fraud!"

"Spoofed!" gasped Bob Cherry. "He—he—he can play!"

He certainly could; and he proceeded to open the eyes of the Removites on that subject, and to open them very wide indeed!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Squiff the Spoofer!

SQUIFF did not seem conscious of the amazement that his performances were exciting in the crowd round the cricket-ground.

He did not glance round at the sea of faces, where the expressions had changed from merriment to blank wonder.

All his attention was devoted to the game. And he was playing it marvellously. Even Harry Wharton, the champion junior batsman of Greyfriars, had seldom batted as well as that. And it did not seem to cost Squiff an effort. Hurree Janset Ram Singh's bowling was always dangerous; but there did not seem to be any danger in it for Squiff.

Squiff dealt with it as easily as if the ball had been trundled down by a fag of the Second Form, instead of by the best bowler the Remove could produce.

The over gave Courtfield twelve; and then the field crossed, and Trumper had the bowling. Tom Brown went on to bowl against the Courtfield skipper. He glared at Squiff as the latter lounged carelessly aside.

"You spoofer!"

Squiff grinned.

"Why didn't you tell us you could play cricket?" demanded the New Zealand junior indignantly.

Squiff only chuckled.

The New Zealander bowled to Trumper, and he was lucky. Trumper was clean bowled at the third ball, after adding two to the score, and he looked a little blue as he came out. He was generally good for forty at least. And the Removites were greatly relieved to see the Courtfield skipper dismissed for two. Now they had discovered that they had provided Courtfield with a first-class batsman, their confidence in an

easy win was considerably diminished. But they were keener than ever to win. It would be too utterly rotten if they were beaten by Courtfield, with the assistance of a fellow whom they had regarded as a hopeless duffer at the game.

Grahame joined Squiff at the wickets. Grahame was a good and reliable bat, and he backed Squiff up well. But when Squiff had the bowling, there was a buzz of excitement in the crowd.

He was a terrific hitter. He seemed to take rash chances, too; but they always turned out well. And as for chances for the fieldsmen, there simply weren't any. And the leather-hunting the Remove fieldsmen had during the next hour made them hot and breathless and exasperated. For it was a member of the Remove who was giving them all that leather-hunting—a spoofing bouncer who ought to have been playing for his own Form instead of against it. And yet in fairness they had to remember that Squiff had offered, indeed asked, to play for the Remove, and that his offer had been laughed to scorn before he had made that ridiculous exhibition at practice. Squiff had spoofed them, but it was only his own peculiar way of retorting upon the doubting Thomases who had refused to believe that he could play cricket.

It was pretty plain now that he could play it—and it was plain why the Courtfield fellows had been willing to put him in their team. His practice with them on Courtfield Common had, of course, been very different from his practice on Little Side with the Remove fellows.

The Remove cricketers were in great form that afternoon, and they needed it. The bowling was very good, and accounted for the Courtfield wickets much faster than usual. But there was one wicket that they could not touch—one wicket against which Hurree Janset Ram Singh and Tom Brown and Peter Todd exhausted their skill in vain—and that wicket was Squiff's.

Squiff's wicket was impregnable.

One by one the wickets fell, and the fieldsmen gave up hope of seeing Squiff's stumps go down. He had been first man in, and it was pretty clear that he would be "not out" at the finish of the innings. When Trumper called "last man in" the score was at a hundred, and of that hundred, fifty-five belonged to Squiff. Squiff's last partner had been dismissed with the last ball of an over, so Squiff had the bowling again now, and he proceeded to make hay of it. Balls fast and slow and medium seemed all the same to him, yorker or googly had no terrors for him. He put "paid" to them all. The score jumped to 116, and the field crossed over; and the Greyfriars players drew a deep, deep breath of relief when Tom Brown knocked over the Courtfield wicket, and Courtfield were all down for 116—Squiff not out!

Squiff walked off the field, with his bat under his arm, calmly and cheerfully. He was a little flushed, but otherwise his long and heavy innings did not seem to have told upon him in any way.

He was surrounded at once by the indignant Removites. Bob Cherry brandished an indignant fist under his nose.

"You spoofing villain! Why didn't you tell us you could play?"

Squiff grinned serenely.

"But I did tell you!" he replied.

"Well, ye-es; but we didn't believe it!"

"That's your look-out!"

"But that exhibition you made at practice!" shouted Wharton. "What did you mean by that, you fraud?"

"Only my little joke," said Squiff coolly. "You had made up your minds that I couldn't play, so I pulled your leg. Serve you jolly well right!"

"So you—you were pulling our leg all the time!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"And the pullfulness was terrific!" groaned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Squiff chuckled.

"You should have given me a chance," he said. "A chap can read 'Cricket For Beginners' without being a duffer at cricket, I suppose?"

"But—but why—"

"I wanted something to read in the train, and I found that on a railway bookstall and bought it," said Squiff. "Every fellow ought to know the laws of cricket by heart. I freshened them up in my memory by reading them through, that's all. And you duffers—"

"Us—us what?"

"You duffers," said Squiff coolly. "You duffers concluded that because I was reading 'Cricket For Beginners' that I couldn't play, and you set me down as a mug. And when I said I'd play for the Remove you jumped on me."

"Well, we—we didn't know—"

"You—you see—"

"Oh, yes, I see!" said Squiff, with a nod. "You were so jolly well satisfied with yourselves, that you didn't think a

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

A COOL CARD!

(Continued from page 28.)

stranger could teach you anything. That's all right—I didn't mind—but as you had settled it in your minds that I couldn't play cricket, without giving me a chance to show what I could do, I thought I'd pull your leg a teeny-weeny bit. So, as you had settled it among yourselves that I was going to play the giddy ox on the cricket-ground, I played the giddy ox—just to please you, see? I didn't want to disappoint you when you'd made up your minds about it."

"You—you spoofer!"

"And Trumper was kind enough to enter into the little joke. I told him I could play, you see, and he gave me a chance to show what I could do," said Squiff. "I satisfied Trumper that I wasn't exactly the mug you fellows supposed. Why, you duffers, I've played cricket ever since I was as tall as this bat! I was brought up on it! I've played, and talked, and eaten, and drunk cricket since I was a nipper!"

"Oh!"

"And still I'm not above reading over the rules of the game when I've got a quarter of an hour to spare, you know."

The Famous Five looked rather sheepish. They realised that they had jumped to conclusions a little too quickly. That unfortunate volume in Squiff's hand in the railway-carriage had given them the impression that he was a beginner at the game. His offer to play for the Remove they had received as pure, unadulterated cheek; and they admitted, in fact, that they had condemned him untried, and that the humorous youth from New South Wales was fully justified in "pulling their leg" in return, in the extraordinary way he had done.

But the Removites could be excused for not seeing the joke in quite so humorous a light as it appeared to the Courtfielders, who were roaring with laughter at the amazed faces of the Removites.

It was time for the home innings, and Herry Wharton opened it with Bob Cherry. Trumper led his merry men into the field, and there was a buzz as he tossed the ball to Squiff for the first over. The Removites were wondering whether the redoubtable Squiff could bowl as well as he could bat. They were not left long in doubt. Sampson Quincy Iffley Field went on to bowl against Harry Wharton, and Wharton just stopped the ball—just, and no more. And that one ball was enough to tell him that the Remove had gained a new bowler as good as Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh—though, unluckily, just now it was Remove wickets that he was bowling to.

Harry Wharton was very, very careful during that over, and the over gave him only two. The score rose a little in the next, when Bob Cherry knocked Wickers' bowling all over the field. Then Squiff was sent on again to bowl to the captain of the Remove once more.

The Remove fellows watched it breathlessly. Nor were they surprised when Wharton's middle stump was whipped out of the ground, leaving the wicket looking as if it had been on a visit to the dentist's. And Trumper chirruped:

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Oh, my word!" murmured Bob Cherry. "And that's the chap we thought couldn't play cricket. Oh, my only Uncle Sam!"

After that the Remove batsmen went to the wickets in fear. And they had reason to fear and tremble.

For the wickets went down at a record speed, and when last man in was announced the board showed the utterly "rotten" score of 40 for the Remove. And Trumper grinned as he asked Squiff if he could manage another over.

"A dozen if you like," said Squiff cheerfully.

Trumper grinned.

"One will be enough, I fancy," he said. "Go in and put 'em out of their misery."

And one proved to be enough, the wicket going at the first ball. And the Courtfield fellows came streaming off the field, winners of the match by the total of 116 runs to 40—a result which afforded them ample cause for satisfaction.

And Harry Wharton & Co. were not quite sure in their minds whether they wanted most to bump Squiff for pulling their leg, or to hug him as a new and amazingly valuable recruit for the Remove eleven. But satisfaction outweighed all other feelings when they reflected what a rod in pickle Squiff would be for Redclyffe and St. Jim's. So they magnanimously forgave Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, and from that day forth the Form eleven found a pillar of strength in Squiff of the Remove.

THE END.

(A magnificent long complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "Ructions at Highcliffe," by Frank Richards. Order early.)

Our Grand New Ferrers Lord Serial Story.



THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By SIDNEY DREW.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord and his old companions, Rupert Thurston, Ching-Lung, the Chinese prince, Gan-Waga, the Esquimo, with Hal Honour, Prout, Maddock & Co., are once more on board the submarine, the Lord of the Deep. This time they are in chase of Lord's wonderful machine, named the Unconquerable, which is a marvellous combination of submarine and airship. The Unconquerable has been stolen by the millionaire's enemies, but a temporary fouling of the propellers enable Prout and Barry O'Rooney to get aboard. They overpower three of the four men aboard; then there remains a mad Zulu to be dealt with. Martin Arkland and Job Sanday, two of Barry's prisoners, are terribly frightened of him, and beg the Irishman to shoot the native. After a visit to the galley, they set out to chase the madman, and see him go down a ladder.

(Now go on with the story.)

In Terrible Danger!

"He'll freeze to dith av he sthays down there! Phwat's the maniac doing?"

He could have shot the man there and then. The spluttering torch stood upright in the bung-hole of an empty barrel. Black Harry was slushing and cutting at a padlock with an axe. The cold was terrible, and there was a powerful smell of ammonia. It was here that the great cylinders of compressed air were kept, the air that rushed into the tanks to raise the vessel when the water was driven out of them. The air was compressed almost into a liquid state, and the cold given off froze Barry's breath and whitened his beard. How the almost naked Zulu bore it even for a second was more than the Irishman could understand.

The lock gave way, and, with an exultant yell, Black Harry flung the axe aside, and snatched up the torch.

"Thank ye for getting rid of the chopper," said Barry grimly. "Now ye're goin' through the mill, me bhoys! Oi'll borrow your chopper!"

On either side of the low room stood the cylinders, almost hidden in snow. The floor was white with it.

"Hands up!" roared Barry, as he pressed down a switch. "Hands up, or Oi shoot, Harry, and Oi don't want to have to kill ye!"

The Zulu leapt round, and yelled. He rushed at one of the taps. They were wrapped in flannel, for the touch of the naked metal at such a temperature would have peeled the skin from a man's hand. There was a shrill hiss, and the dull, red gleam of the torch blazed into a dazzling, blinding globe of blue flame. Imp seemed suddenly to go mad. He leapt up, fell back, rolled in the snow, and bounded up again and again.

Barry fired at the jumping, howling figure of the Zulu, and Daft Black Harry dropped back into the snow.

Holding his breath, Barry O'Rooney staggered forward and shut off the tap. With one hand pressed over his mouth and nostrils, he swung the torch round his head. It blazed like a meteor. Then, with his lungs nearly bursting, Barry picked Imp up in his arms, and lurched heavily out. The torch went on blazing in a pool of melted snow. The wretched man, who lay there dead and stiffening fast in the terrible cold, had turned on a cylinder of oxygen gas.

In about half an hour Imp came crawling back to the saloon, looking a very sick and subdued dog. Barry was in low spirits. He took a couple of blankets and a needle, and went away. The searchlight of the Unconquerable was flashing its rays through the glassy darkness. Barry came up with a gruesome burden on his shoulders. He had com-

(Continued on page iv. of cover.)

mitted no crime in shooting Black Harry. It was his life or theirs, but Barry felt miserable over it.

"Oi can't rest wid you on the ship," he said, as he stitched away. "Faith, ut's a marvel we're aloive to use a needle!"

Prout came down to help him with his diving-suit. The chamber filled, and Barry pushed the corpse into the sea. It drifted away into the gloom.

"By honey, I'm as right as rain now!" said Prout. "We must feed the prisoners, so I'll fry some bacon and eggs for all of us!"

It struck Barry an hour or so later that they were wasting something they could not replace. It would be just as well to show the light at intervals, and it would save electricity. Whistling to Imp, he made for the conning-tower. Barry yelled aloud, for, nodding and swaying from side to side, barely ten feet away from the glass, was a hideous, oblong bundle wrapped in grey flannel.

Daft Black Harry had returned with the turn of the tide, and seemed to be beckoning eerily for admittance.

A Meeting and Two Strange Messages.

Big Jeff Sanday lifted himself out of the easy-chair, and looked into the depths of his new silk hat. It was the first silk hat he had ever worn, and his private opinion of it was that it would be more useful as a receptacle for coal than as a head ornament.

"So I'm to clap on all steam, and bolt, Mr. Barkey?" he asked, in his husky little voice.

Paul Guthrey's London manager, a very spruce and well-groomed young gentleman, inclined his head.

"I merely suggest it, captain," he answered. "You have the money. There will be awkward questions asked at the inquiry."

"By gum, I don't doubt it!" grinned the big man. "You can't crumple up even an old tin tank like the Gurdon in British waters without somebody wanting to know the reason why. To tell the truth, I ain't particular keen on facin' any inquiry. Luckily, I've got a pal on a Dutch eel-boat, and she'll be droppin' down river to-night. 'Olland ain't a bad place for a rest. Good-day, sir!"

Captain Sanday left the great pile of offices that the industry and business genius of Paul Guthrey had erected. Jeff had made his fortune at last, and it lay safe and secure in the breast-pocket of his frock-coat. He was shaved and dapper, and wore a pink rose in his buttonhole. His heart was light and joyous. It had been a great and glorious scoop, that had ended in victory.

Ferrers Lord knew the truth, but the memory of the millionaire gave Jeff no uneasy qualms. Ferrers Lord did not snare sparrows when eagles were to be hunted. Jeff made his way through the bustling crowds, and turned into a hotel-bar for a bottle of the best wine to be bought.

"Fancy me ordering champagne!" he thought. "Fancy me striking a full cargo of golden luck at last! Here's luck to you, Jeff!"

He ordered a two-shilling cigar, and sat down to enjoy himself for half an hour. He would have felt more at home in one of the little dockside public-houses lower down the Thames than in that gilded saloon; but he was in no hurry.

"The tide don't ebb till eleven," he reflected, "and these duds ain't quite the thing for a dirty eel-boat. By gum, what a scoop! Twelve thousand pounds in notes safe in the locker, and more to come for the axing. More luck to you, Jeff! And if I didn't see Ferrers Lord's eyes twinkle when I spat it out, may I never see blue water again! He's a sport, a man every inch—just the man to admire plucky play even if he lost! I'm safe enough from him. Wish Boss Guthrey felt as safe, the mad idiot! Eh? Avast, there, my lad!"

A grip on the shoulder brought Big Jeff round with great suddenness.

"What, Kennedy!" he cried. "Surely it ain't never you?"

"It's Mike Kennedy right enough. I had to look hard before I was sure it was you. Lucky dog! You've come into a fortune, have you?"

The stranger, who was barely an inch less in height and two in girth than Big Jeff, drew up a chair and sat down. Jeff called for another glass and cigar, and pushed over the bottle. He felt it was not easy to lie to this black-bearded, bronzed acquaintance of years ago.

"S-sh!" he whispered. "You've seen the papers, of course. Ken? I've barnacled my boat. The salvage is in the locker, and I'm deserting!"

"I see. They've paid you up; but the weather'll be too dirty to face. You always were a fellow for taking risks," nodded Kennedy. "I read something about it, but didn't take much notice at the moment. Well, you've got the nerve! I'm just back from China, with a fairish pile. Had to take risks to get it, but not in your way. There's nothing like going straight, after all!"

Big Jeff took a long and thoughtful drink.

"Wouldn't I 'ave gone straight, too, if I'd had your job?" he growled. "You were workin' for a millionaire Chinese prince, and there was me puntin' along a filthy old tramp under a frying sun year in, year out. If you only did know what I've done, Mike, your eyes 'ud fall out. You'll 'ear quick enough, though, and say I'm a terror!"

"Kennedy, Kennedy, please!"

A telegraph-boy walked down the saloon, calling out the name.

"That's for me, youngster. Let me see if I want to send an answer. No; it's all right."

The man from China opened the envelope. He looked at Big Jeff for a moment, and handed the boy a shilling for himself. Then he began to chuckle, and reached a big brown hand across the table.

"Squeeze that, you ugly pirate," he laughed, "and squeeze it hard! Now I do know! Man alive, how did you work it?"

"Wait! You've got no orders to stop me, for, by gum, if you have, I'm up to a fight!" said Big Jeff, with fire in his eyes. "Show me the thing!"

"You couldn't read it if I did, for it's in cipher," answered Kennedy. "On my honour, it doesn't mention you at all! Pure accident made me come in here. Curious we should cross each other's bows after more than seven years, only for me to hear this. Come, tell me about it!"

Big Jeff Sanday hesitated, as well he might. Ching-Lung was Ferrers Lord's dearest friend, and Kennedy was Ching-Lung's most trusted servant. The meeting savoured more of shrewd detective work than of coincidence.

"If you came in by accident, 'ow is it you got that wire? You're lyin' hard, Kennedy. 'Ow did you get that wire?"

"Jove, I never thought of that, Jeff! I know no more than you, and that's the truth. It looks mighty suspicious, I agree!"

"And I'm not mentioned in it, aren't I?" added Sanday, with an oath. "Then who told you I'd done the job?"

"You did yourself. I put two and two together. Here's the telegram, and here's the code—my master's code. Read it for yourself!"

Big Jeff slowly worked out the cipher message.

"You don't seem to be lying to me, Mike," he said at last; "but that don't make me feel no more comfortable. Look at the time. That was sent off only ten minutes ago. Somebody has dogged you, and they may be watchin' me as well. You'll 'ave to wait to 'ear that yarn." His fat, double-chinned face had turned quite pale. "I'm off! Don't try and stop me, for I've a barker, and I'm quick to shoot!"

"I tell you I've got no intention of stopping you. What business is it of mine? I'm not a shareholder in the Paul Guthrey Line," said Kennedy.

Sanday stood up and glanced nervously round him. There were about a dozen other people in the saloon, all City gentlemen in tall hats, who were sipping sherry wine and bitters before departing homewards for dinner. Kennedy's eyes watched the bulky figure go waddling out.

"Submarine stolen from cave. Now searching North Sea. Come Ferrers Hall," he muttered, repeating the telegram that had reached him in such a mysterious fashion. "And Big Jeff did it, or helped. Well, we live and learn."

The Windmill Rocks, as Kennedy knew, were close to the cave. Sanday's confession that he had "barnacled" or maliciously thrown away his ship on those very rocks had opened his eyes to the truth. A great firm like Guthrey's did not wilfully wreck their vessels for the sake of the insurance.

"There's something big on," said Mike Kennedy to his cigar. "I've come in time for fun, I hope. Hallo, Tommy! Is this another for me?"

It was the same telegraph-boy. Kennedy tore open the second envelope, and read:

"Telephone 08614, Wapping."

Ching-Lung's trusty henchman had learned to obey before he had learned to command. He, too, went out. A man rose and followed him. Kennedy shut himself in a public telephone-box, dropped his pennies into the slot, and was given the number he had asked for. The man who had shadowed him peeped in through the glass door. The moment Kennedy left the box he entered it.

"Beg pardon, miss," he said; "do you mind giving me the number I just called? I forgot to write it down, and I shall want it again."

"Wapping 08614," replied the telephone-girl obligingly.

Meanwhile, Michael Kennedy was on his way to his hotel in a taxi-cab. He was smiling now. He collected his luggage, paid his bill, and drove to the millionaire's house. The windows in front were shuttered, but a servant in livery answered the bell. He stood aside with a salute for the big man to pass.

"Chan-song-Pu?" asked Kennedy briefly.

"He has his Highness's suite, captain," replied the servant. "You will find him there."

(This Grand New Serial will be continued Next Monday. Order Early.)

